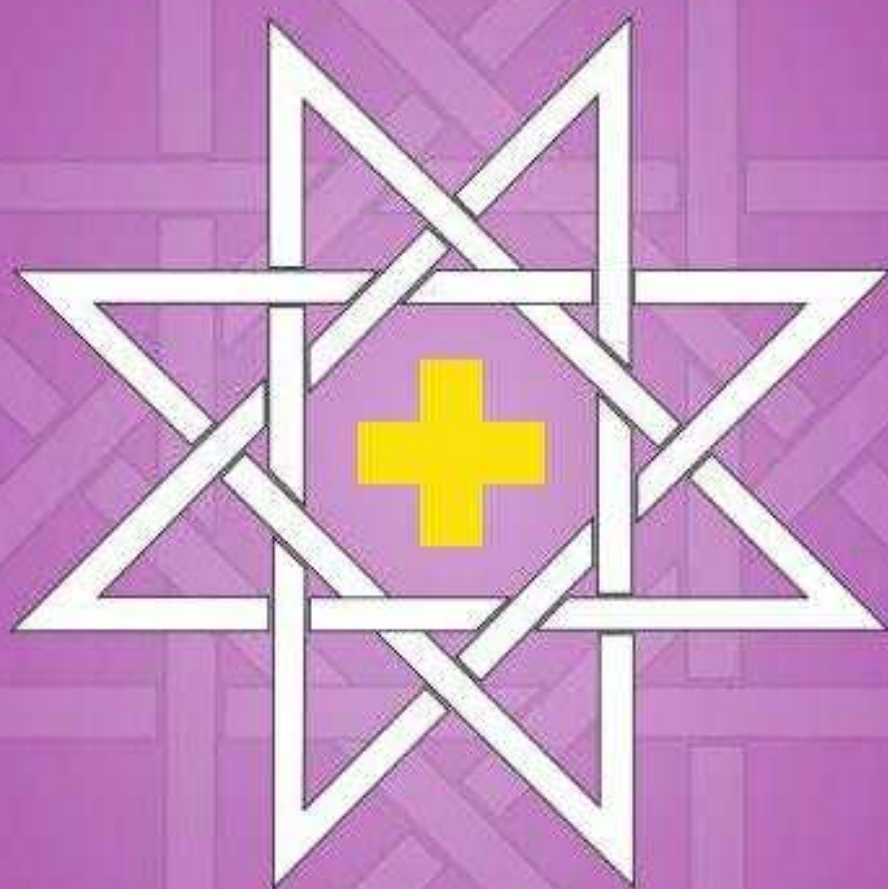


# The Ogdoadic Journal

*of the Western Mysteries*

Vol. 1 No. 2:

*Symbolism of the Ogdoadic Tradition*



ORDO ASTRUM SOPHIÆ

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*Symbolism of the Ogdoadic Tradition*

EDITED BY  
DERIK RICHARDS & KERRY WISNER

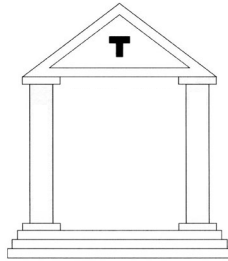
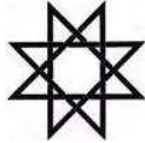
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*To all Companions and Contributors  
with special acknowledgment and thanks  
to the Chiefs of the House of Thoth  
for their dedication to the Ogdoadic Tradition  
and excellence in the Great Work.*



*δέξαι λογικὰς θυσίας ἀγνάς  
ἀπὸ ψυχῆς καὶ καρδίας,  
πρὸς σὲ ἀνατεταμένης, ἀνεκλάλητε,  
ἄρρητε, σιωπῇ φωνούμενε.*

*Receive the spiritual sacrifices  
consecrated by the soul and the heart  
that are uplifted toward thee,  
O thou Unnamed, Unspoken one,  
Thou who art addressed by silence alone.*

Corpus Hermeticum I, 31

## *ACKNOWLEDGMENTS*

WE WOULD LIKE to express our appreciation to all the contributors of this second edition of *The Ogdoadic Journal*. Particular thanks and dedication go to John Graham and Suzanne Savage, the Chiefs of the House of Thoth, located in the West Midlands England. With deep insight and dedication they have established, and perpetuate, the Great Work of the Glorious Star in the UK. Special thanks also go to our friends and magical companions Nina Cooper, Robert Hathaway and Marcus Katz for their excellent and inspiring artwork.

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, 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 [astrum.sophia@gmail.com](mailto:astrum.sophia@gmail.com) in care of Sun Lion Publications. Articles will be accepted at the discretion of the publication team and may be edited, with permission, to better fit the style or format of the journal.

Membership and initiation in the Order, without exception, must proceed through the traditional grade structure. Inquiries to the Order should be submitted to the Administrator-General of the Astrum Sophia at [astrum.sophia@gmail.com](mailto:astrum.sophia@gmail.com), 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 (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>2</sup>

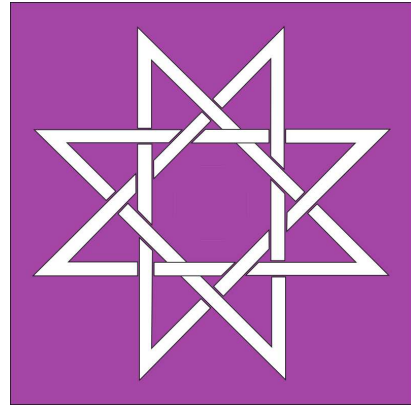


<sup>2</sup> [http://www.bbc.co.uk/gloucestershire/interactive/interactive\\_map/stroud/orpheus\\_pavement.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/gloucestershire/interactive/interactive_map/stroud/orpheus_pavement.shtml)

## *The Star and Regeneration*

WILLIAM STOLTZ, MA

CENTRAL TO THE OGDOADIC or Regenerative Mystery Tradition lie the eight-fold Star and the principle of Regeneration. This striking symbol and its underlying significance are intimately fused in a brilliant design that functions as a high symbol denoting a particular current within the Western Mystery Tradition. The Star, the number eight, and their relationships to the principle of Regeneration appear in many times and guises, including the ancient drama and descent of the Great Goddesses through the underworld to rescue the Son; the ancient solar calendar depicting its movement as a terrestrial regenerative process driven by a celestial power; the Hermetic writings, including the concepts of the seven celestial spheres and the One, the Ogdoad; the seven sacred musical notes and the octave, or eighth from which the scale is reborn; the number eight symbolizing the Christos, or the Agathodaimon, with the power of rebirth; and the number eight linked to the ancient and universal sacrament of baptism, a symbolic vehicle of rebirth within regenerative movements. This is only a partial list, as the eight-pointed Star is an important motif in literature and architecture throughout history.<sup>1</sup>



### **The Regenerative Mysteries**

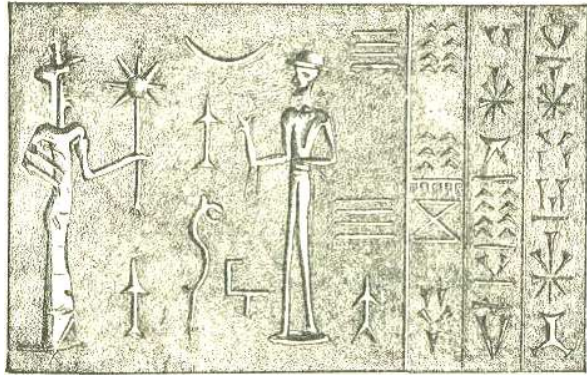
The star is one of the oldest and most universal emblems of spirit. In one sense it is emblematic of the pre-existing masculine and in another of the heavenly field emblematic of the pre-existing feminine. In Qabalistic terminology it represents the unified brilliance of Kether and the principle of pure Being or Godhead. Since the number eight is the numerical representation of infinity and renewal, the octagram (or eight-pointed star) combines these symbols as the ensign of the regenerative power of spirit and of perpetual renewal. This “Star of Regeneration” dates back thousands of years to cultures that also used it to symbolize the mysteries of spiritual rebirth known as the *palingenesis*, or the “new birth.”

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<sup>1</sup> See the introduction to *The Magical Philosophy, Volume 1*.



In the early Mediterranean myths, the eight-rayed star displayed its prominence as a symbol of the personification of the transcendental, divine and eternal, in that it was also the terrestrial and human connection to the celestial powers. The cuneiform script (dated from around 3000 BCE) on the right side of the relief above contains a figure of eight points that is repeated three times. This character, called “DINGIR,” translates as “Goddess” or the Divine. Ishtar, the



*Ishtar & Tammuz with multiple octagrams*

Babylonian Queen of Heaven, was one such bearer of this symbol, and her story is characteristic of myths repeated in numerous times and civilizations. Although names and style may differ from one culture to another, they always maintain the same potent story and message: nature is transformed through the cycle of life, death and rebirth brought about by the virtue of divine providence. Ishtar is separated from her beloved Tammuz, her brother/husband/son, so she descends through the seven gates of the underworld to resurrect him from the forces of death and darkness. Tammuz marks the descent of the solar light and its eventual rebirth as the newborn sun. So lasting and potent is this legend that we find it as a central theme in the myths of the Sumerian Inanna and Damuzi; the immortal Egyptian drama of Isis and Osiris; and the stories of the Christian mysteries.

The Celtic story of Madron (the Great Mother) and Mabon (a Welsh God signifying “Great Son” or divine son of light) is especially analogous to the story of Ishtar and Tammuz. Like Tammuz, Mabon (the divine child) was saved from the underworld by his mother so that his light could once again rekindle the fertility cycle of the earth. Mabon is also the Welsh equivalent of Cernunnos, a fertility god sharing the archetypal nature of the Celtic Herne, the Templar Baphomet, the Roman Pan, and the Egyptian Agathodaimon Khnoum. In another chapter we will touch on the importance of this archetype as the embodiment of the union of heaven and earth and thus a model for the alchemical agent of the lapis philosophorum.



*Ishtar holding her emblem before the moon god, Sin*

As we examine Ishtar’s myth more directly, we also see the specific symbolism of the eight-rayed star mentioned during her journey into the underworld thus:

1. At the first gate her splendid crown is removed (atop her crown is a star of eight rays).
2. At the second gate her necklace with the eight-rayed star is removed.

3. At the third gate her bracelets of gold and lapis lazuli are removed.
4. At the fourth gate her shoes are removed.
5. At the fifth gate her veil is removed.
6. At the sixth gate her outer robe is removed.
7. At the seventh gate her garment is removed.

Then finally, naked in her power and beauty, she enacts the great transformation resulting in the resurrection of Tammuz, the winter sun. As a side note, this event is also reminiscent of the enigmatic mystery of the “sun at night.”

It is not difficult to see similarities in other stories within the great regenerative movements, as well as with the mysteries of Isis and Osiris, the initiatory system of Mithras, the Eleusinian mysteries of Demeter and Persephone, and the extensive process of regeneration cultivated in Orphism: all these are important threads running through the Ogdoadic tradition.<sup>2</sup> Besides the symbolism of eight, these mysteries share the archetype of the Divine Feminine without whom the Mystery of the Regeneration could not be realized. Repeatedly we see the prototype of the Divine Feminine rescuing the dying sun from the underworld to bring forth the divine child – the light reborn.<sup>3</sup> In the ancient Greek city of Eleusis, the site of the most famous of these rites, the Regeneration symbolically took place in the depths of the Telesterion, the embodiment of Demeter the Great Mother. Additionally, the Star linked to Ishtar is a motif commonly found on images and icons of Mary during the Annunciation and on the garment of the Greek Theotokos.

### **The Underlying Purpose**

Through keen initiatory insight the adepts of these mystery schools discovered ways to replicate and transmit this rebirth to others. Not by artificial means did this take place, but through innate qualities and processes skillfully mastered through education and training in the Mysteries. For the mystery of regeneration – or renewal – is in the deepest sense the rebirth of the human psyche. Although the experience of initiation provides a vital link and impetus for rebirth, regeneration is not so much an event as it is a conscious process of living, of dying and – through transformation – of rebirth. This process is at the very heart of the divine alchemy, where the Great Work brings initiates to identify and surrender their lower elements (structures) to a Higher Presence and to the energies of the higher self. As they surrender themselves to a higher level of reality (to the heavenly Ogdoad or to Sophia, the Divine Wisdom, who is the archetype of the Ogdoad), old blocks and structures dissolve, creating new patterns of change. The famous alchemical imperative “Solve et Coagula,” meaning to dissolve and reunite, was a medieval alchemical formula for the Great Work and a means for realizing the vital dynamic of self-transformation. The conscious examination of the self (or to “Know Thyself,” as declared on the Pronaos before Apollo’s temple at Delphi) makes it possible

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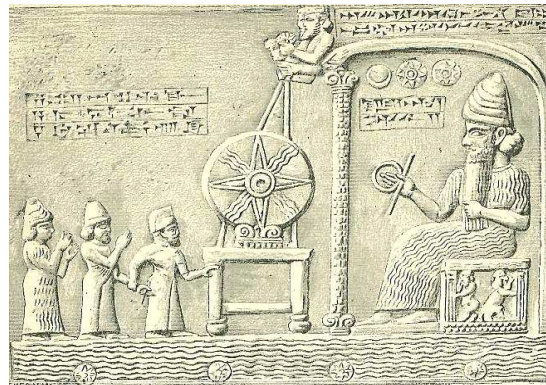
<sup>2</sup> See *The Magical Philosophy, Vol. 2, The Sword and the Serpent*, Chapter VII for more on these mysteries

<sup>3</sup> It was, and remains in some places, a custom in Greece for three women to attend upon a new birth and three women to attend to the newly deceased. This is a remnant of the power in the triple nature of the Divine Feminine.

to purposely rearrange and change patterns and elements within the psyche that are no longer of use. Thus the force of death drives the path of rebirth within the limits determined by the initiate's inherent destiny. The human condition naturally resists this change, but the mystery schools, both ancient and modern,<sup>4</sup> provided an elegant and deliberate structure to assist individuals in undergoing this transformation. Genuine initiation thus helps guide and accelerate the initiate's divine alchemy and eventual rebirth. This mysterious process is precisely what is meant by transmuting base metals into gold through the medium of the Philosopher's Stone: the Lapis Philosophorum. As these words suggest, the Lapis (or Stone) is of earth, just as Philosophorum is of Wisdom (or heaven). By the onset of the Great Work, the initiate's goal and dedication needs to be soundly established in line with the aim of Adepthood and the consequent knowledge of his or her Holy Genius.

### **The Solar Calendar and Regeneration: The Blazing Wheel**

The ancient solar calendar, depicting the sun's movement as a celestial power driving the terrestrial regenerative process, was also part of early religious symbolism. It is noteworthy that the image of the Sumerian sun god Shamash, the sun in its totality, is paired with the eight-rayed star to demonstrate his full power. In the eight-rayed star we can see the sun exerting itself in the eight ancient festivals: the equinoxes, solstices and what have come to be called the pagan fire festivals, which mark the approximate midpoints in the seasonal tides.



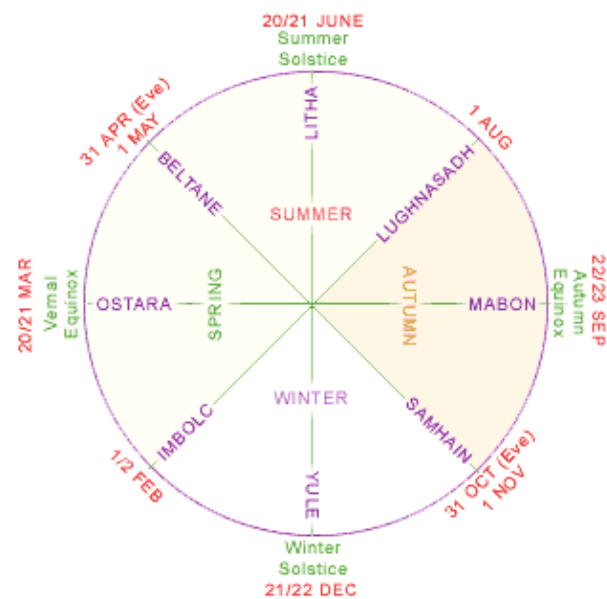
*Shamash*

This calendar, defining the movement of the sun, marks the eight tides that are intrinsic to the celestial cycle of regeneration and rebirth, being the interplay between celestial and terrestrial activity. Even though the calendar is a continuous cycle having no real beginning or end, special significance was granted to the Autumnal Equinox (Mabon), the Winter Solstice (Yule) and the midpoint between them (Samhain) by mystery schools and orthodox religion alike. As we delve deeper into the regenerative myths and the mysteries of the Palingenesis, we observe that the heart of rebirth as a cosmic drama centers around the movement from the autumnal equinox (the descent of light into the underworld) to the winter solstice (the rebirth of light). Central to this drama is Samhain (during *Tempus Consilii*), in which the Great Goddess, lamenting the loss of her beloved, the solar god, traverses the underworld to restore him and thereby to regenerate the world.

<sup>4</sup> By degrees, all ancient schools remain ancient while all modern schools remain contemporary. All lineages have been broken, and restored, at one time or another. It is through a tradition's archetypal spirit and inner plane forces that, as the snake sheds its skin, a tradition is reborn. This author sees little value in the smoke, mirrors and claims of ancient lineage in popular usage. Verily the Church cannot prove "unbroken" transmission let alone our own traditions – be they Pagan, Rosicrucian or Hermetic. An exception may be the Buddhist lineages that maintain complete records of terrestrial and inner plane transmission.

### The Eight Sacred Festivals

While the equinoxes and solstices mark the four major seasonal events or solar tides in the northern hemisphere, the festivals at the mid-points represent the dynamic balance between them. Closer examination of the solar symbol from the Shamash relief above also shows four distinct points and four alternating waves, suggesting the four major solar events and their transitional periods. The quarter points (equinoxes and solstices) are considered masculine solar events, which are complemented by the feminine mid-quarter points. This polarity is an important archetypal dynamic in



the natural regenerative models that were based on natural fertility. In some respects these “mid-points” were just as important to our pagan ancestors as were the equinoxes and solstices. In fact, they were and are celebrated as major festivals, for at these moments time and tide stand still and the gates to the inner planes, or underworld, stand open. Modern Halloween (All Hallow’s Eve) is an example of the enduring celebration of Samhain – even the Catholic Church retains little more than a thin veneer over this pagan legacy, incorporating Samhain into All Souls’ or All Saints’ Day.

As shown in the diagram above, the solar calendar consists of eight festivals that make up the regenerative cycle. The primary solar events usher in the four tides with the fire festivals at the heart of each, as described in *The Magical Philosophy*.<sup>5</sup>

Festival Name <sup>6</sup>	Date	Solar Event	Seasonal Tide
Yule	Around 21 <sup>st</sup> December	Winter Solstice	Tempus Eversionis
Imbolc	1 <sup>st</sup> February		
Ostara	Around 21 <sup>st</sup> March	Vernal Equinox	Tempus Sementis
Beltane	1 <sup>st</sup> May		
Litha	Around 21 <sup>st</sup> June	Summer Solstice	Tempus Messis
Lughnasadh	1 <sup>st</sup> August		
Mabon	Around 21 <sup>st</sup> September	Autumnal Equinox	Tempus Consilii
Samhain	1 <sup>st</sup> November		

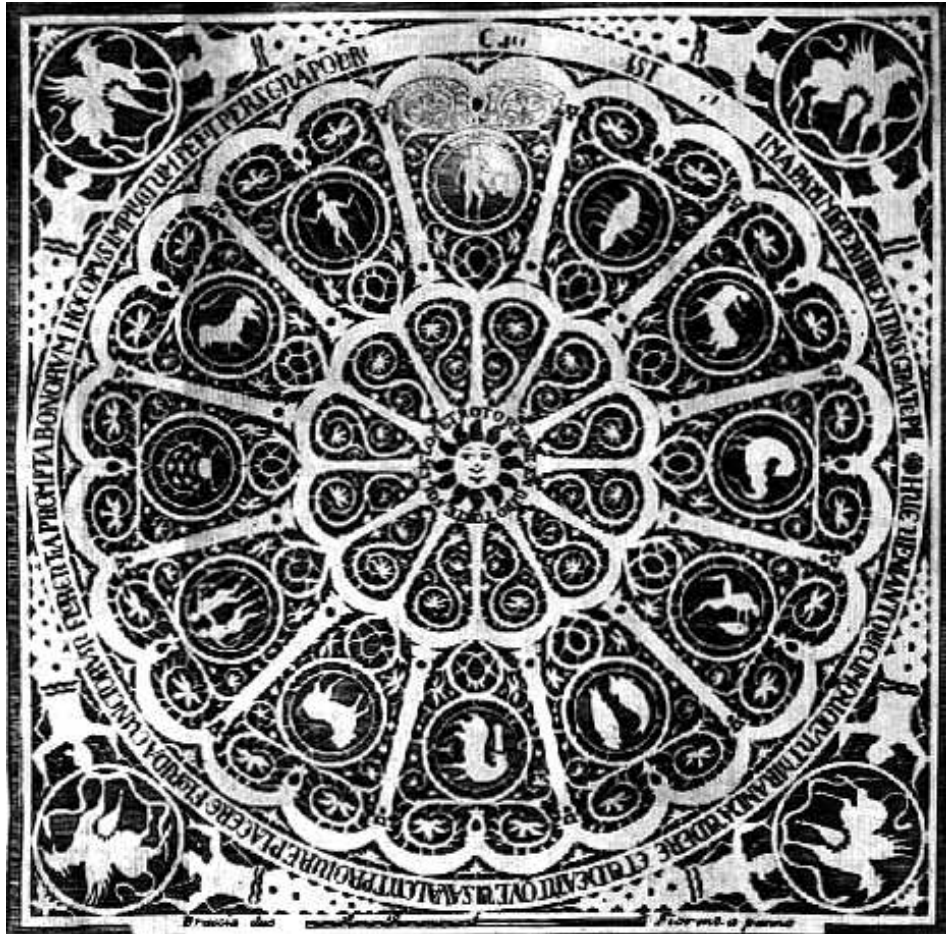
<sup>5</sup> See Volume 2, pp. 201-205.

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix A for a pronunciation guide to these Celtic names.

Finally, the Ogdoadic design from the Florentine Baptistery, from which the Ogdoadic Palindrome is extracted, gives a brilliant summation of our current subject and inspiration of the Blazing Wheel:

*EN GIRO TORTE SOL CICLOS ET ROTOR IGNE*<sup>7</sup>

*The Spiritual Sun has turned the Ages in a Circle and is their Mover with Fire!*



<sup>7</sup> See Appendix B.



## Hermeticism

Hermeticism has been a guiding influence throughout not only the Ogdoadic Tradition, but the Western Mystery Tradition as a whole. Hermeticism traces its influence to the Greek God Hermes, who was considered to be synonymous with the early Egyptian God Djehuti, of which Thoth is a Greek rendering. One source of the Ogdoad arose from the creation myth of Hermopolis, the city of Thoth and the ancient god for which it is named. The *Corpus Hermeticum* is a body of texts with elements dating from the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD; it is still being researched for links to pre-Christian Egypt. During the Renaissance, this text was widely, but mistakenly, believed to be received from the very hand of Thoth himself; realistically it appears to be the work of numerous authors devoted to the Hermetic mysteries. Regardless of their authorship, they have been very influential throughout the Western Mystery Tradition. The important theme of regeneration stands out in chapters 12 and 13 of the Hermeticum, particularly the “Secret Hymnodia,” or hymn of rebirth, often referred to as the Hymnodia Krypte.<sup>8</sup> This piece is of particular and direct interest to the Ogdoadic Tradition, for it is a hymn of the powers of the Ogdoad and a hymn of rebirth and regeneration. In English, the Hymnodia is:

*O powers within me,  
Hymn the One and the All.  
Chant in harmony with my will,  
All ye Powers within me!  
Holy Gnosis, illuminated by thee,  
Through thee I hymn the light of thought,  
I rejoice in the joy of the mind.  
All ye Powers, chant with me!*<sup>9</sup>

This subject of rebirth or regeneration is the central mystery of “The Secret Sermon on the Mount.” It clearly identifies the mystery of being “born from above” as receiving the Regeneration from the mind of Hermes – the Ogdoad. This Regeneration is the same as that conferred in the Third Hall Rite of the Palingenesis used by the Astrum Sophia and the Aurum Solis. The chief initiating officer of this rite is called Hermes, the mediator of the Great Agathodaimon: the Grand Hermetic Androgyne. No doubt “The Secret Sermon on the Mount” was a rich source of material from which the architects of the Ogdoadic Tradition drew inspiration for some of its most important studies.

The central philosophy of the Hymnodia is also evident in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD work of the *Enneads* by Plotinus, the father of Neoplatonism.<sup>10</sup> Its praise of the One (the Ogdoad) was entirely in accord with Plotinus’ philosophy on monotheism and

<sup>8</sup> The Hymnodia Krypte comes from the Corpus Hermeticum XIII sections 17-20

<sup>9</sup> G.R.S. Mead’s translation from the *Corpus Hermeticum* is “Ye powers that are within me, hymn the One and All; sing with my Will, Powers all that are within me! O blessed Gnosis, by thee illumined, hymning through thee the Light that mind alone can see, I joy in Joy of Mind. Sing with me praises, all ye Powers! Sing praise, my Self-control; sing thou through me, my Righteousness, the praises of the Righteous; sing thou, my Sharing-all, the praises of the All; through me sing, Truth, Truth’s praises! Sing thou, O Good, the Good! O Life and Light, from us to you our praises flow!”

<sup>10</sup> See the *Enneads* 2.9.2 Mackenna 1952

polytheism: the One engenders the multiple for the sake of its own expression, which is the act of creation. According to Plotinus, as written in the *Enneads*,

*We must recognize that other men have attained the heights of goodness; we must admit the goodness of the celestial spirits, and above all of the gods – those whose presence is here but their contemplation in the Supreme, and loftiest of them, the lord of this All, the most blessed Soul. Rising still higher, we hymn the divinities of the Intellectual Sphere, and, above all these, the mighty King of that dominion, whose majesty is made patent in the very multitude of the gods.*

Further he states:

*It is not by crushing the divine unto a unity but by displaying its exuberance – as the Supreme himself has displayed – that we show knowledge of the might of God, who, abidingly what He is, yet creates that multitude, all dependent on Him, existing by Him and from Him.*

This philosophy was widely adhered to in many of the most influential mystery schools.

In the Ordo Astrum Sophiæ, a series of high astral workings called “Star Rituals,” or alternately “The Pillars of Creation,” are based on certain formulae found in the *Zohar*. In the latent and deeper structures of this series, each rite is associated with one of the Pillars of the World, which in the *Zohar* pertain to the seven divine emanations. In Proverbs 9:1, we read that “*Wisdom hath built her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars.*”<sup>11</sup> These pillars are the seven lower Emanations (planetary forces) or Sephiroth of the Tree of Life, having their source in Binah, or Sophia (Wisdom), the Supernal Mother. Binah, here representing the Ogdoad, begins the emanation of Spheres at Chesed and ends in Malkuth, the Lower Mother. Malkuth, as the seventh and last Emanation, ultimately receives the divine influences of the Supernal Binah: the Great Sea from which flows the seven watercourses, or lower Sephiroth. The overall architecture of the series logically follows the planetary decent from the Supernal Saturnine principle of Binah to engender Jupiter, Mars, Sol, Venus, Mercury, Luna and then Earth as a lower Saturnine presence. Finally, throughout Gnostic cosmology, we likewise find the eighth heaven, or Divine Ogdoad, ruling over the seven heavens and their corresponding luminaries. The varying cosmologies of the different Gnostic sects, often at odds with one another, present a dizzying array of structures and philosophies. However, one integrative element within Gnosticism is the concept of a heavenly Ogdoad, or transcendent source of its emanations.

### **The Octave as a Regenerative Principle**

We have already determined that in the Ogdoadic Mysteries the emphasis is on the number eight and the concept of Regeneration. This theme shows itself in many ways. Think of a musical octave of eight notes: the eighth note is the same as the first, yet it is also different, as if it were transformed by some magical means. From the eighth note, the

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<sup>11</sup> Referring here to Binah and the Divine Feminine as Wisdom or Sophia.

scale begins again and is thus regenerated at a different and higher resonance. Needless to say, this phenomenon was not lost to mystics, magicians and philosophers, who forged correspondences between the heavens, the classical planets, the notes of the musical scale, the vowels of Greek alphabet, and various associated deities. These correspondences are as follows:

Heaven	Emanator / Creator	Planet	Sephiroth	Modern Note	Greek Vowel
<b>8</b> Ogdoad (consisting of 7 Heavens)	Nous / The ONE	Supernal Triangle / Saturn	Kether / Chokmah	C	Ω Omega
7 <sup>th</sup>		Saturn	Binah	C	Ω Omega
6 <sup>th</sup>		Jupiter	Chesed	B	Υ Upsilon
5 <sup>th</sup>		Mars	Geburah	A <sub>b</sub>	Ο Omicron
4 <sup>th</sup>		Sun	Tiphareth	G	Ι Iota
3 <sup>rd</sup>		Venus	Netzach	F	Η Eta
2 <sup>nd</sup>		Mercury	Hod	E <sub>b</sub>	Ε Epsilon
1 <sup>st</sup>		Moon	Yesod	D	Α Alpha
<b>8</b> Hebdomad (consisting of 7 visible heavens)	Nous / Demiurge	Manifest Universe / Lower Saturn	Malkuth	C	Ω Omega

In these systems the Eight always implies both (1) the origin of the series and (2) the regenerative step operating beyond the seven. Below Ogdoad is the *Hebdomad*, a word meaning a period of seven consecutive days. The Hebdomad consists of the visible heavens (i.e., the physical planets) and culminates in the earth. It was created by the Demiurge, Ialdabaoth, Zeus, Yahweh or Nous, depending on the sect. (Thus the Judeo-Christian God created the world in several days!) Those Gnostic sects that believed the physical universe to be evil also considered the Demiurge to be evil, but most did not.

The term *Ogdoad* refers to the highest Heaven as well as to the series of seven Heavens. In order to achieve Gnosis, or knowledge of the Divine, the initiate had first to pass through the seven lower degrees before receiving the Palingenesis or supreme initiation. Here the Ogdoad is the Nous on a higher plane: the Divine mind of Hermes.

### The Number Eight in Baptism

Even Christianity associates the number eight with Regeneration and New Life. This concept was defined as the *octava dies*, or the mythical “Eighth Day.” On one level this can be seen as the time of the Risen and Regenerated Christos, a time beyond mundane human time measured in units of seven days. The magical sacrament of Baptism celebrated by Christians symbolized the passing of the congregation from “Death in Sin” to a “New Life of Christ,” in an “Eighth Day” without end or beginning, a state outside



physical time and space. This symbology seems to be based largely upon the idea that the seven days of the week (representative of time) are followed by the eighth day (a symbol of eternity). Note that this is just another way of saying that the Hebdomad (7 consecutive days) is followed by the Ogdoad (the 8<sup>th</sup> “Day”). The Sabbath (which was originally on Saturday) is both the beginning and ending of the series, thus it is honored as a holy day; Saturday is associated with Saturn and thus with the completed physical universe (God rested on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, after creation was complete), the 7<sup>th</sup> Heaven, and that aspect of the ONE that we can aspire to comprehend.<sup>12</sup>

In Joseph Campbell’s collection of essays, *The Mysteries*, Hugo Rahner describes the significance of the archetypal 8 and the baptismal font in the Christian mysteries: “*The baptismal font is the grave of transitory life and the womb of the new life of the heavenly Ogdoad....*” The font, nearly without exception, is designed, base and bowl, in the shape of an octagon. If we look at what is perhaps the most famous building in the Ogdoadic Tradition, the Baptistery in Florence (said to be built in the early part of the twelfth century from a much older temple of Mars), it has octagonal designs that are repeated down to the numerous Tessera and Ogdoadic Palindrome on its floor.

Latin writers also knew the symbol of the *sacramentum ogdoadis* or *octavi*, of which Augustine so frequently speaks:

The number eight is the symbol of rebirth through baptism, and at the same time of the eternal life that finds its mystical beginning in the water and its fulfillment in the bliss and eternal peace of the divine vision.”<sup>13</sup>

Although this brief look at baptism has centered around the Christian mysteries, we must remember that the Christos is an archetypal reality represented not only by Christ, but by Mithras, by Osiris, by Damuzi, by Tammuz and by Agathodaimon. These themes are of vital import and prevalence across the regenerative traditions.

## Conclusion

The Glorious Star of Regeneration embodies the central and universal ideal of the Mysteries in an elegantly adaptable design. Each angle of the Star traces the individual celestial influences, while as a whole it represents a transcendent unity and integration with the personal. Here is the showing forth of the radiance of New Life and the ideal of divine aspiration. As a token of enduring life, fueled by the all-pervasive Light of the Divine Mind, it is a glyph of ultimate attainment, being both the summation of the journey and its fulfillment. It is to our tradition what the Cross and Triangle are to the Golden Dawn, the Compass and Square are to Freemasonry, and the Rose and Cross are to Rosicrucianism: it is the central ensign of the Ogdoadic Tradition of the Western Mysteries.

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<sup>12</sup> See the table above.

<sup>13</sup> Hugo Rahner, “The Christian Mystery and the Pagan Mysteries,” in *The Mysteries*, edited by Joseph Campbell.



## Appendix A: Celtic Pronunciation

(by Companion Aster Thalassa)

Yule – is pronounced **Yool** as in “pool”

Imbolc (also Imbolg) – is pronounced **imm**-boll-g (short vowels, emphasis on the first syllable, soft “g” sound)

Ostara – is pronounced oss-**tah**-ruh (short “o” like in “toss”, longer “a” as in “cart”, second “a” is like “u” in “huh”, emphasis on the middle syllable)

Beltane (also Bealtaine) – is pronounced **bell**-tay-n (short “e” as in “tell”, “a” as in “ray”, emphasis on the first syllable)

Litha – is pronounced **li**-thuh (short “i” as in “kiss”, short “a” like the “u” in “huh”, emphasis on the first syllable)

Lughnasadh – is pronounced **loo**-nusserh (long “u” as in “fool”, short “a” as in “arm”, emphasis on the first syllable)

Mabon – is pronounced “a” as in “baboon”, “o” as in “on”, emphasis on the first syllable

Samhain – is pronounced **sam**-’ay-n (short “a”, “m” is lightly pronounced and somewhat nasal, “h” is aspirated not fully pronounced, “ai” is as the “ay” in “hay,” “n” is lightly pronounced and somewhat nasal. Emphasis on the first syllable.) Some people try to describe the pronunciation as “sawayn,” which is not really correct, but gives an idea how the “m” and “h” run together.

**Appendix B: Notes on the Palindrome**

EN = Behold, see.

GIRO = Circle, ring, circuit, course; circular course; turn/wheel around/in a circle.

TORTE = Turn, twist, bend, distort; from the earth's perspective the sun does not move in straight line but rather, on its annual cycle, appears serpentine or twisted.

SOL = Sun.

CICLOS = Cycle, circle.

ET = And, and even, also.

ROTOR = Whirl round; return, revolve, rotate.

IGNE = Fire, brightness, passion, glow of passion.

*EN GIRO TORTE SOL CICLOS ET ROTOR IGNE*

## *Meditations on the Clavis Mystica*

### EXCERPTS FROM THE CORPUS HERMETICUM

*translated by Salaman, van Oyen & Wharton in The Way of Hermes<sup>1</sup>,  
with art by Robert Hathaway & Derik Richards*



*The Spiritual Sun has turned the Ages in a Circle and is their Mover with Fire.*

I. 11. “*Nous*, the Creator, together with the Word, encompassing the spheres and spinning them round with a rushing motion, caused those things he had made to revolve and he allowed them to revolve from no fixed beginning to an end without limit, for it begins where it ends.”

III. 2. “All beings were undefined and unwrought, the light elements were then separated off and raised on high, and the heavy were founded firmly upon the watery sand. All was distinguished by fire, all was raised up to be supported by the breath of life. The vault of heaven appeared in seven circles, and the gods appeared in the form of stars with all their constellations, and heaven with the gods was complete in every detail. The universe was encompassed by air and sustained on its circular course by divine spirit.”

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<sup>1</sup> *The Way of Hermes*. 2000. (Clement Salaman, Dorine van Oyen, William Wharton, Trans.). Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions.

V. 3. “The sun is the greatest god of the gods in heaven, for whom all heavenly gods give way as to a king and master. He, who is so great, greater than the earth and the sea, supports the turning stars.”

V. 5. “O that you could grow wings and fly up into the air, and that, poised between earth and heaven, you might see the firmness of earth, the liquidity of the sea, the course of the rivers and the free flow of the air, the piercing fire, the revolution of the stars, the swiftness of the heavenly movement encircling all these things. What most blessed vision, O son, to behold all that in one moment; the unmoving being moved, the unmanifest being made manifest through what it creates! This is the very order of the universe and this is the beauty of the order.

XI. 15. “Eternity is the image of God; the cosmos, of eternity; the sun, of the cosmos; and man, of the sun. People call transformation death, because the body is dissolved, but in fact life withdraws into the unmanifest.

I shall tell you, as you are listening with such reverence, my beloved Hermes, that all these things that have been thus dissolved and indeed the cosmos, are transformed. Each day a part of the cosmos withdraws into the unmanifest, but the cosmos is never dissolved. This is what happens to the cosmos, these are its cycles and its mysteries. The cycles are a continual rotation and the mystery is the renewal.”

XVI. 4-9. “See how in the central parts of the earth there are many springs of water and sources of fire rising up; and in one place you can see the three natures: fire, water and earth, dependent on one single root. Hence there is believed to be a storehouse of all matter, which gives forth its own abundance and receives in return the substance from above.

“Even so the Creator, that is to say the Sun, ever links heaven to earth, sending his substance down from above, and raising up matter from below. He draws everything around himself and into himself, and from himself gives all to all, bestowing his light in abundance. For it is he whose beneficent powers not only pervade the heavens and the air, but reach down to the lowest depth in the earth and abyss of the sea.

“If there is a spiritual substance then it is the body of the Sun, which his light contains. The Sun alone being near to himself in place and nature knows of what his substance is made and whence it flows. We cannot see him, but by systematic efforts we can understand him.

“The vision of the Sun, however, does not involve effort, for the brilliance of his countenance shines throughout the entire cosmos, both above and below. Wearing the cosmos as a crown he sits at the centre. Like a skilled driver he safely guides the chariot of the cosmos binding the reins to himself, so that it does not run amok. His reins are life, soul, breath, immortality and generation. He slackens the reins so that the chariot can run freely, but not too far from himself; in fact it stays with him.

“In this way everything is created. The Sun bestows on the immortals their everlasting life and he nourishes the eternal regions of the cosmos with the ascending light sent forth from the side that faces heaven; with the descending light that illumines the entire hollow realm of water, earth and air, he enlivens and sets in motion birth and death.

“The creatures in this region of the cosmos he remakes and reshapes in a cyclical movement, exchanging one for another, kind for kind, form for form. In so creating he acts just as he does with the celestial bodies. Change is constant for all bodies: for immortals without dissolution, for mortals with dissolution. Thus the immortal differs from the mortal and the mortal from the immortal.”

XVI. 17-19. “Thus the spiritual world depends upon God and the physical world on the spiritual, and through the spiritual and physical world the Sun receives from God a flow of consciousness, that is of creative power [*tou agathou*]. Around the Sun are the eight spheres, who depend on it; the first is the sphere of the fixed stars, then the six of the planets and the one that encircles the earth. The spiritual powers depend on the spheres, and men upon the spiritual powers. Thus all things and all men are dependent upon God.

“Wherefore the Father of all is God, the Creator is the Sun, and the cosmos is the instrument of his creative power. His spiritual substance governs the heavens, the heavens govern the gods, and the powers, which are appointed by the gods, govern men. This is the host of gods and powers.

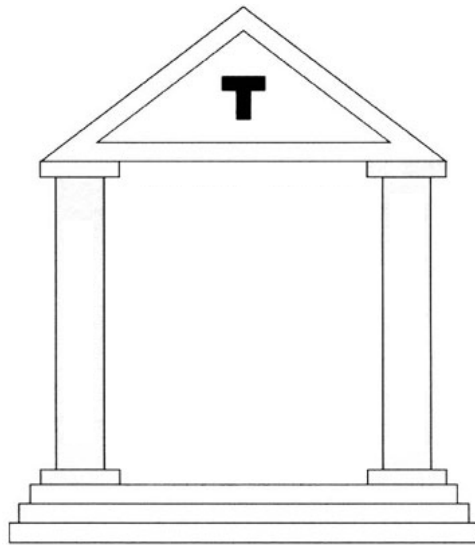
“Through these instruments God by Himself creates all this, and all things partake of God; since this is so, they are God. Therefore in creating all things, he creates Himself; and He can never cease to create, for He Himself never ceases to be. As God has no end, so His handiwork has neither beginning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

ENGI&O+O&+ESOL&IC&LOSE+&O+O&IGNE

## *The Ogdoadic House of Sacrifice & the Egyptian Mysteries*

KERRY WISNER

DEEP WITHIN THE most secluded recesses of the Ancient Egyptian temple of Edfu stands a remarkable structure which I feel may have a direct relationship to the Ogdoadic tradition. For within the Inner Sanctuary, which the Egyptians termed the “Great Seat” or as later generations would term this “the Holy of Holies,” stands a solid granite shrine. While the temple itself dates from the Ptolemaic period (construction beginning in 237 BC and completion of the existing temple ending in 57 BC) the granite shrine that will be discussed in this paper dates to a slightly earlier period. The inscriptions show that it was originally dedicated to a temple completed by Pharaoh Nectanebo II in approximately 350 BC and then later was moved to Edfu. Nectanebo II was the last reigning Pharaoh before the conquest of Alexander the Great. This is significant as it shows the antiquity of this important relic which may give clue to a possible link between the Ogdoadic tradition and this ancient culture. In this paper I would like to draw a comparison between this sacred artifact and the Ogdoadic House of Sacrifice.



*The House of Sacrifice of the Ogdoadic Mysteries*



*The granite structure within the Great Seat or "Holy of Holies" of the Ancient Egyptian Temple of Edfu*

Notice the Ogdoadic depiction of the House of Sacrifice in comparison to the structure from the temple of Edfu. The granite Egyptian structure has pillars carved into corners of this. Clearly these are symbolic in nature as, from an engineering point of view, the structure does not 'need' these. The columns rise to support a pyramid/triangular super structure, as can be seen in the Ogdoadic House of Sacrifice. In Egyptian cosmology the pillars represent the supports of the sky, rising from the marshy wet lands and fertile fields of the earth and extending upward toward the realm of the divine. The pyramid itself was seen as the 'Ben-Ben' or sacred mound which rose from the creative waters of the unmanifest, the Nun. It was upon this mound that Atum first appeared. Atum was considered as the divine principle manifest as the Sun and was seen as the "Great He – She," a combination of both masculine and feminine divine force. It was from this first divine principle that the Egyptians saw all else come into being. Thus, in principle, the symbolism shown is similar to the Ogdoadic House of Sacrifice with its pillars rising from the mundane toward the spiritual, culminating at the apex upon which the divine spark first came forth.

In the Edfu structure, above the opening, the Winged Solar Disc with two Serpents/Cobras is engraved. This is very reminiscent of the image of Agathodaimon as the Winged Serpent rising between the pillars of the Ogdoadic House of Sacrifice. It may be significant to this discussion to realize that Heru-Ur, Horus the Elder, took form as the great winged solar disc with Cobras to either side. Was he an earlier form of the Gnostic Agathodaimon? Heru-Ur appears in Egyptian sacred writings as far back as the Pyramid texts, which are the oldest known religious writings in the world to date.

It may also be important to note that the Ogdoadic House of Sacrifice is emblazed with the Tau Cross upon the upper triangular form. This is a symbol which has been shown to have roots in Ancient Egypt as a representation of the creative force of Nun, the



cosmic waters from which all arose. Thus this may very well reinforce the probable link in symbolism between the Ogdoadic triangular structure and the “Ben-Ben” of the Egyptians.

Finally note that in the photograph on the left, a solid rock cubed altar sets directly in front of the Edfu structure. This acted as a working altar on which sacred objects would be placed. To show the sacredness of this altar it may be important to note that during the ceremony of the mating of Hathor and Horus statues of these two great Neteru (Gods) were placed upon this altar thus enacting their union. In other cases this was used for the placing of replicas of the sacred solar boat. The point is that this was a working altar before which magical and religious rites were performed. This cubed altar is situated in the normal position and in a form that is extremely reminiscent of the bomos of the Ogdoadic tradition which rests before the House of Sacrifice.

The inner sanctuary of any Egyptian temple was a room that was restricted to only the high priesthood and upper royalty. For it was in this room that the image of the Neter (God) worshipped in that particular temple was kept. This image would have taken the form of a gold statue which would rest in a Naos (sacred cabinet) or, in the case of the temple of Edfu, the granite structure shown. The gold statue was seen as a type of talismanic image or link between the temporal world of form and the non-temporal world of the divine. In each temple the divine was seen as manifesting in the form of the Neter to whom the temple was dedicated. The temple of Edfu was dedicated to Heru-Ur, Horus the Elder, also known as Horus the Behdety. He is a brother of Ausir, whom the Greeks knew as Osiris, and as shown above, is mated to Hwt-Hrw, the Goddess Hathor.

In my opinion the similarities between the Ogdoadic House of Sacrifice and the granite shrine from the temple of Edfu seem to be too close to be coincidence. The implications of this, for initiates in the Ogdoadic tradition today, are important. For it would appear that either the founders of the Ogdoadic tradition as we know it today somehow had access to knowledge of this ancient structure and then patterned their teaching upon this, *or* there had been a direct transmission of teachings from the most sacred aspects of Ancient Egyptian temple practice and the Ogdoadic tradition. This later suggestion is not as impossible as it would first seem. Edfu was one of the last remaining temples to practice the ancient teachings of Egypt into the Christian era. It was under the rule of Byzantine Emperor Justinian (527 – 565 AD) that ‘pagan worship’ in Egypt was ultimately outlawed and with this, the final assault on the destruction of the Egyptian priesthood at the hands of zealot Christians occurred. Seeing the inevitable it is highly probable that the few remaining priesthood of Egypt would have been scattered, perhaps helping to create, develop or be absorbed into some of the mystery schools of the time. It is possible that some of these schools evolved into those which exist today. This is something which we may never know with certainty. Nevertheless the granite naos from Edfu offers a tantalizing clue to the Ogdoadic past and points to the clear possibility that Ancient Egypt serves as one of the great systems from which the Ogdoadic tradition has drawn inspiration and knowledge.

## *Magical Implements of the Ogdoadic Temenos*

*Illustrations by* **ROBERT HATHAWAY**

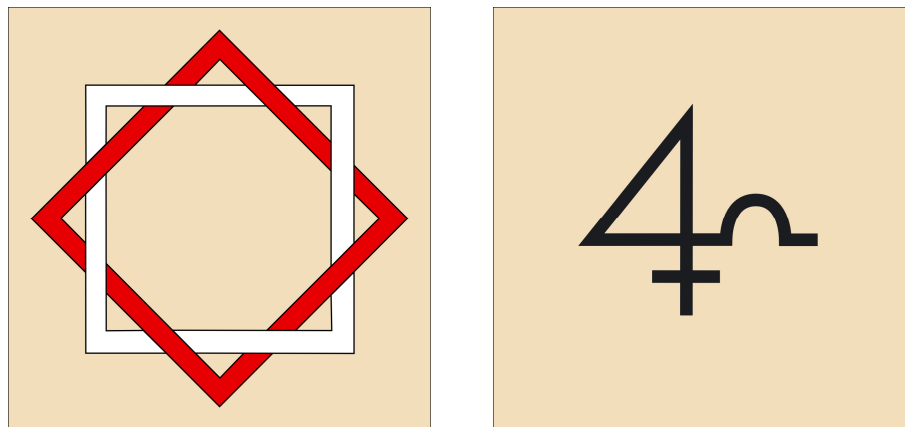
*with text by* **WILLIAM STOLTZ & KERRY WISNER**

IN THIS ARTICLE important magical implements, as used by the Astrum Sophia and Aurum Solis, are illustrated. The designs of these implements, described in Vol. 3 of Denning and Phillips *The Magical Philosophy*, are widely accepted throughout the Ogdoadic Tradition and form both the working regalia, and vital symbolism, of a living Temenos. Additional First Hall regalia, along with illustrations for the Second and Third Halls will be forthcoming in Journal No. 4: "*Praxis of the Ogdoadic Tradition.*" This will also include more thorough details on the proper dimensions and construction of a wider range of symbols, regalia and implements.

As a general rule the work of the First Hall utilizes, as implements of art magic, the following:

- 1) The Tessera or symbol of the Great Work
- 2) The lamp.
- 3) The Bomos or Altar
- 4) The Lamén or Holy Pentacles

### *THE MYSTICAL TESSERA*



*"As She is the Form in all things, so He is in all things the Breath of Life. Hail, entwined emblem of that unity, and symbol of the Work! 'The One whose coming forth is as the Phoenix and whose rising is like unto the Morning Star' shall be thy name."*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Mysteria Magica*, p. 256, 2004 edition

*THE PENTACLE OF THE QUINTESSENCE**THE GREAT PENTACLE*

Native to the Second Hall and its workings are:

- 1) The Elemental Weapons:
  - a) The Fire Wand: a design adapted by the House of the Winged Serpent<sup>2</sup>
  - b) The Water Cup
  - c) The Air Dagger or Burin and
  - d) The Earth Disc
- 2) The Great Wand
- 3) Iubar – the Magic Sword<sup>3</sup>

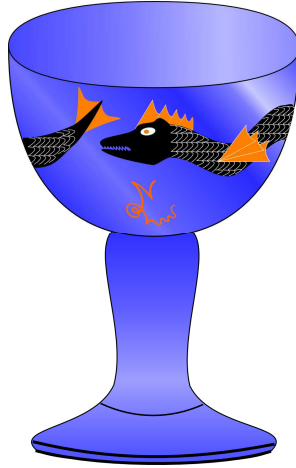
*THE WAND*

*“I, Incorporeal Flame, in the veins of the universe I run as living blood. My spirit is mighty, my energies animate the spheres . . . From the holiest ground do I, the golden one, the brilliant-robed, soar heavenward. My spirit is joyous, joyous! My laughter challenges the void.”*<sup>4</sup>

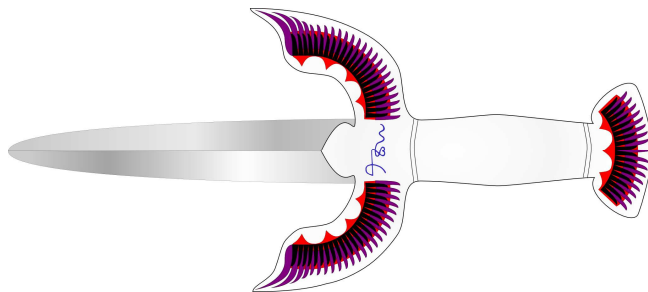
<sup>2</sup> All implements shown are illustrations of the O.A.S. Grand Commandery’s regalia. In this instance the design of the Fire Wand was found to be a potent symbol and tool for its archetype and element. Needless to say the design, as described in “TMP,” remains valid within the Order. Additionally, peculiar to the O.A.S., each implement carries its corresponding Presigillum in the elements’ complementary color. On each implement also rests the seal of the Temenos (not shown).

<sup>3</sup> The design of the Order’s Sword, remaining sub-rosa, is substituted here by a design commonly attributed to the Knights of the Temple.

<sup>4</sup> *Mysteria Magica*, pp. 321-322, 2004 edition

*THE CUP*

*“I am the Soul of Water, pellucid, inexorable. Most pliant is my aspect; but upon the vast rocks of justice and of destiny have I graven my imprint forever, so unalterable is my regenerative will.”*<sup>5</sup>

*THE BURIN*

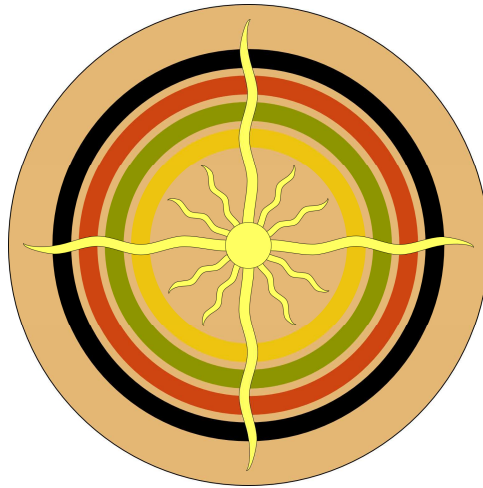
*“Without limitation am I, the winged and shining Selfhood of Air. My ever-splendid breath is the breath of all that lives . . . They who breathe deeply of my vigour shall attain with me to the inscrutable azure.”*<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 313

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 308

## THE DISC



*“I, the essential nature of Earth, beyond rocky crag and in sheltered valley  
I guard the hidden things of future time. I guard them, and give them of myself . . .  
The shadowy cavern, or the stone circle upon the plain:  
they who seek me through either shall pass beyond me, and thus shall they find me.”*<sup>7</sup>

## THE SPEAR



*“We hymn thee, invisible mystical Spear, living Spring of the seed of existence;  
Then let there descend from thy terrible splendor a gentle reflection in blessing while  
praises are raised to thee, ancient yet ageless, great Nature's all-radiant creator.”*<sup>8</sup>

## THE SWORD



*“Mine is all Magick, Mine is all Mystery: Searcher of Secrets, Friend of the fearless -  
Victor invincible, Sunbeam of Steel!”*<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 300

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 265

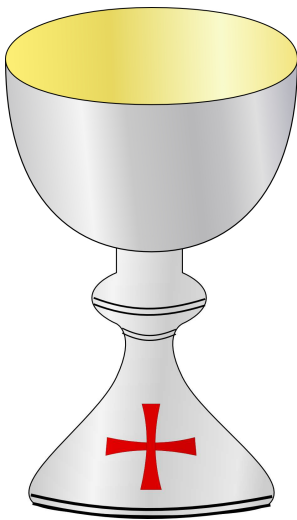
<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 285

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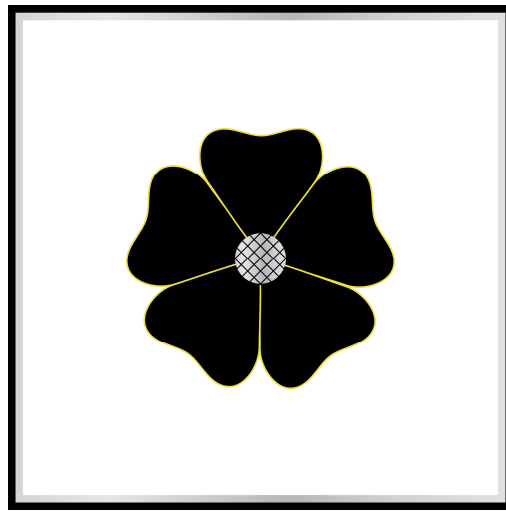
Essential to the Third Hall, that is regalia for the Telesterion of the Adepts, include, but are by no means limited to:

- 1) The Grail
- 2) The Rose of Concealment

*THE GRAIL*



*THE ROSE OF CONCEALMENT*



*“I who am a daughter of the Voice, mine is the deeper mystery: Mother am I of the Logoi and Mother of Life Undying. Myrrha am I, and Marah am I, and Mem the Great Ocean. Within me mingle Time and Eternity: I am the Mother of All Living, and I am the Womb of Rebirth.”<sup>10</sup>*

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 291

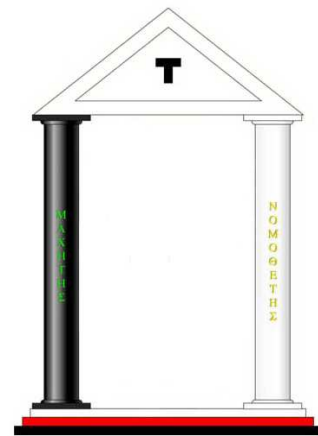
## *Exploring the House of Sacrifice: Part 2: The Steps of the Foundation*

**SUZANNE SAVAGE**

IN PART ONE of “Exploring the House of Sacrifice,”<sup>1</sup> we examined the Five Principles that comprise the structure of the House of Sacrifice. This exploration was done primarily through correspondences to the Qabalistic Tree of Life. Because the vast majority of the Western Mystery Tradition involves Qabalistic study, the symbolism of the Qabalah has become the *lingua franca* of many Western esotericists. Therefore it is not surprising that most magical students view new systems through the lens of the Qabalah they have already learned. But “Exploring the House of Sacrifice” demonstrated an important point: the core of the Ogdoadic system is no mere Qabalistic glyph. Instead, it is an independent, potent system that cannot be apprehended through simple one-to-one correspondences with individual Sephira. Thus Kudos is not merely Kether: aspects of it can also be found in Tiphareth; and Pneuma corresponds not only to the Pillar of Mercy but also to the 11<sup>th</sup> path, as well as to Hod.

While little has been written about the Fivefold Pattern of the House of Sacrifice, even less has been written about the Steps, collectively referred to as the “Foundation” of the House of Sacrifice. You can see them in the diagram here to the right: the first Step is black, the middle red, and the third is white. They lead the Seeker to experience the Mystery that is the House of Sacrifice.

When approaching a new symbol like this, we can begin by looking for basic correspondences. It is a threefold system, so we can look for other sets of symbols containing three. Note, however, that as we progress through the discussion, some of the correspondences appear to contradict each other. In this we shall again see the rich depth of the Ogdoadic symbolism. What becomes apparent is that the Steps are primarily an analogy for progression through the path of the Mysteries to Self-Realisation.



### **Three Degrees of Initiation**

Historically, many esoteric societies have conferred three principle degrees of initiation. Certainly a three-degree structure was found in the medieval guilds with the Apprentice, Journeyman and Master, although the idea may well pre-date that. The Masons drew upon the guilds in creating their own degree structure, and other traditions such as Wicca and many off-shoots of the Society of the Inner Light all utilise a system of three degrees as well.

If one analyses these three degrees across different traditions, they are all broadly similar in their overall aims. The First Degree is the beginning of direct work with the

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<sup>1</sup> See *The Ogdoadic Journal of the Western Mysteries, Vol. 1 No1* , p.34

Order through initiation (although many groups, the Astrum Sophia included, have some form of Outer Court or Probationer period preceding this). The First Degree is about getting used to the tools of the trade, the basic building blocks of the Order's symbolism and initial contact with the inner plane forces. It is about learning the key practices and concepts, and the beginning of alchemical work on the personality. Often there is a study of the elements as well.

The Second Degree is where one begins to use all the tools, gaining real skill as a magician. Contact with your Higher Self is begun and you begin to master the specific techniques of ritual magic. You become fluent in the symbolism and practices of the tradition you are operating in. The Third Degree is when you are working in harmony with your Higher Self. It often involves some kind of death and rebirth. The tools of the magician's trade have been mastered and integrated. Completion of the Third Degree is the entrance into the Greater Mysteries.

Broadly speaking, each magical system thus conducts the seeker through a series of rites and practices to reach Adept hood. Some of the practices may differ from degree to degree (i.e. one Order may do more psychological work in the second degree than the first) but they all end up in a similar place. As we shall see, the Steps demonstrate that journey for us.

### Initial Correspondences

Now that we have an overall idea of the spiritual journey the initiate takes (often as a three-fold process) lets try to apprehend the Steps by corresponding them to other sets of three. As we have seen, the First Step is the colour black, the Second red and the Third



white. This colour scheme clearly invokes the symbolism of Alchemy, with the Body as black, Soul as red and Spirit as white.<sup>2</sup> As we saw in Part 1 of this article, these same alchemical principles relate to the Qabalistic elements of the Psyche, and we can therefore conclude there is a resonance between the Black Step and the Nephesh, the Red Step and the Ruach, and the White Step and the Neshamah. Qabalists will also be keen to note there is a strong relationship to the Middle Pillar, the Three Steps representing Malkuth, Yesod, and Tiphareth respectively.

We can learn more about the Steps by relating them to the Principles of the House of Sacrifice itself, with the Black Step being Sarx, Pneuma the Red, and the Triune Superstructure the White Step.

Further correspondences to the House of Sacrifice are given in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Hall *Rite of Induction*, when the Candidate is brought forward to ascend the Three Steps through a potent magical working. In this rite, the Steps relate to the individual Principles of the Triune Superstructure: when the First Step is ascended, the Magus declares "Thus the Purification, founded in Justice"<sup>3</sup> (Dike); upon the Second

<sup>2</sup> Initiates of the Astrum Sophia are referred to an excellent article in *Messenger VI* (the Order's internal newsletter) which explores the relationship of the Steps to alchemical symbolism.

<sup>3</sup> Phillips, Osborne. *Aurum Solis, Initiation Ceremonies and Inner Magical Techniques*. Leicestershire: Thoos Publications. 2001. p. 90



Step “Thus the Ensealment, founded in Mercy”<sup>4</sup> (Eleos); and, upon the Third Step, “Thus the Dedication, founded in Glory”<sup>5</sup> (Kudos).

More use of the Three Steps can be found in the Third Hall Rite of Palingenesis, where the Steps are connected to the three Veils of the inner mysteries, which are parted for the ascension of the Candidate.<sup>6</sup> I prefer not to say very much on this point, believing quite strongly that initiation ceremonies should not be studied before one experiences them. Nevertheless, there is a beautiful piece of poetry from the Palingenesis which gives us many clues to the Steps-- without revealing too much of the nature of the initiation itself:

The Body had been concealed, hidden away in the darkness of the tomb.  
 But the Spirit perceived its glorious light and hastened to greet it.  
 For the Body had been divinised, transformed by reason of its correspondence to  
 the noble and radiant Spirit that now united with it.  
 Darkness fled from the Body that had put on the Light of Divinity.  
 Body, Soul and Spirit were one in the Flame of Love.  
 This is the deeper mystery, but in the triple reunion the mystery is accomplished.  
 The House is sealed in silence!  
 The figure of perfected human nature is here established.  
 The Shining One arises!<sup>7</sup>

To conclude, we may also liken the Three Steps to the three degrees offered in the Ogdoadic system, namely the Neophyte, the Servitor and the Adeptus.<sup>8</sup>

We can now build a table of the information we have thus far gathered. Be prepared for some surprises as you read down the columns:

System	Black Step	Red Step	White Step
<i>Alchemy</i>	Body	Soul	Spirit
<i>Qabalah</i>	Malkuth	Yesod	Tiphareth
<i>Psyche</i>	Nephesh	Ruach	Neshamah
<i>House of Sacrifice</i>	Sarx	Pneuma	Triune Superstructure
<i>Superstructure of House of Sacrifice</i>	Dike	Eleos	Kudos
<i>Ogdoadic Degrees</i>	Neophyte (1 <sup>st</sup> Hall)	Servitor (2 <sup>nd</sup> Hall)	Adeptus (3 <sup>rd</sup> Hall)

If you study the above table carefully, within each individual system (reading horizontally) the correspondences are clear. But there are some apparent contradictions if you read vertically down each column. Some fit together well: the First Step, being black, corresponds nicely to idea of the Neophyte, as well as to Malkuth. These are places where we begin our journey; the relationship to each other is fairly obvious. Nevertheless, I suspect many Qabalists would argue the Nephesh is more closely related

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p.93

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 102

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, pp.187-190.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid* p.190

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, p.10

to Yesod than to Malkuth, and would thus question its position in this table. Other Qabalistic concepts appear equally misplaced.

A further conundrum relates to the symbolism of the House of Sacrifice itself. We have seen earlier in this article that the Black Step is associated with Sarx while the Red Step is associated with Pneuma. And we have seen that Osborne Philips himself says that the Black Step relates to the Neophyte degree and the Red Step to Servitor. However, we would do well to remember that in the Initiation cycle the First Hall corresponds to Pneuma rather than to Sarx.<sup>9</sup> A whole paper could be written on this concept alone; these are topics that bear further meditation to reveal the potency of the ritual formula.

Again we encounter the same concept we encountered in Part 1 of this article, namely that *the House of Sacrifice is a rich, living and potent magical system of its own*. Correspondences will help illuminate the symbolism, but it must be studied as its own system with its own internal logic. We can look for one-to-one correspondences between systems, but this usually reveals only part of the story. More often than not, it oversimplifies immensely complex symbolism.

To give an example, think of the god Horus. If you were doing a comparative study between the Egyptian Pantheon and the Greek Pantheon, you would try to find a Greek equivalent of Horus. Now, Horus has a Warrior aspect that would certainly make us think of Ares and the planetary energy of Mars. But Horus also has a very strong Solar aspect, and has a role as King and ruler that simply isn't found in Ares. To confuse things further, the Greek role of King is fulfilled more by Jupiter than by the Sun. The discussion quickly becomes muddled. Does that mean that it is wrong to associate Horus with Ares? No, it simply means that particular correspondence doesn't tell the whole story. Each system is different and, while we can use other systems as a comparison, we must see the complexities and nuances which give each their individual character and flavour.

### A Metaphor for Spiritual Progression

Returning to the Steps, what can we conclude from the correspondences we have explored? Above all else, *the Steps are an analogy for the path we tread towards enlightenment*. Whether you are an Alchemist and you go from Body to Soul to Spirit, or you are a Qabalist and you go from Malkuth to Yesod to Tiphareth, you are nevertheless advancing onward. Each threefold system we described above sees the path in a slightly different way, but no matter which one you chose to tread, you will reach enlightenment if you persevere. The Steps are the particular analogy utilised within the Ogdoadic Tradition.

What hopefully has become apparent when examining the Steps is that they are something very different to the Fivefold Principles of the House of Sacrifice. The Steps encompass a totality of their own. In the Principles of the House of Sacrifice, we find a concrete magical formula mirroring both the structure of the macrocosm as well as the microcosm of our psyche. The Steps, on the other hand, are a map, a metaphor for our spiritual progress in the Mysteries. As you progress along



<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, p. 52 and p.84

the path, you work on different aspects of yourself, each Step bringing you closer to your goal of Self-Realisation, which is the House of Sacrifice. One of the definitions for step is “a stage in a progression towards some goal or target,” and this is most appropriate in our discussion of the Steps of the Foundation.

Many students do not like apparent contradictions like the ones presented in our table of correspondences. They want things to be straightforward and linear. But we are discussing the Mysteries, which were taught to me as “something that cannot be entirely explained, only experienced.” This paper set forth an intellectual comparison of systems in order to reach an intellectual understanding of the Foundation of the House of Sacrifice. But it is only deep inner work which will reveal the Mysteries contained therein.

## The Symbol of the Quintessence

DERIK RICHARDS

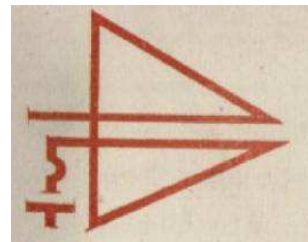
*“Remember, as the power of our soul is always applied to the members through spirit, so the power of the World Soul is diffused in all things through the quintessence, which flourishes everywhere as spirit within the World Body. It is contained in those things which have the most spirit. We could absorb this quintessence more if we knew how to separate it, pure, from other elements.”*

- Marsilio Ficino<sup>1</sup>



LITTLE SEEMS TO BE known about the origins of this mysterious symbol, which plays so integral a role in the modern Ogdoadic Tradition. It appears on the reverse of the Mystical Tessera and on the Pentacle of the Quintessence, the “general Lamén of the Adeptus Minor, worn by him for works which do not require the high authority of the Topaz and which do not directly relate to the mystical development of the wearer.”<sup>2</sup> Regarding this symbol in relation to the Lamén described in *Planetary Magick* the authors write, “The Quintessence is a concept of medieval philosophy which signifies at once the light of the heavenly bodies as their perfected distillate, and the singular resplendence of the ‘personal Star of Destiny,’ that special ‘nucleus’ in the Divine Mind which is both one’s origin and goal.”<sup>3</sup>

Order research has traced this specific symbol back to the 1701 *Lexicon Pharmaceutico-chymicum* by J. C. Sommerhoff where it is cataloged from some earlier source. A similar symbol (pictured right) appears in the curious grimoire *Praxis Magica Fausti*, a text which claims the date of 1571.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately neither of these documents sheds much light on the interpretation of this important symbol, yet there is much that bears further consideration and meditation for the magician who would employ it.



A cursory glance at the emblem reveals a similarity to the Arabic numeral 4, and thus also to the symbol of Jupiter both on account of its Qabalistic number as well as the design of its astrological glyph. We are also informed that, at least with regard to the Pentacle and the Tessera, the symbol is to be illustrated in black – in indigo. Taking another Qabalistic cue from this color, we begin to uncover the subtle combination of Jovial and Saturnine symbolism that comprises our Quintessence. Just as the square and lozenge of the Tessera represent for us the interweaving of the principles of Breath and Body, so do Saturn and Jupiter symbolize the worlds of Noumena and Phenomena. Ficino reflects that Plato “placed the higher part of the soul under the authority of Saturn, that is, in the realm of mind and divine providence, and the lower part under Jupiter, in

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Moore, Thomas. 1989. *The Planets Within*. Great Barrington, MA: Lindisfarne Books, 73.

<sup>2</sup> Denning, Melita & Osborne Phillips. 2004. *Mysteria Magica*. St. Paul: Llewellyn, 249.

<sup>3</sup> Denning, Melita & Osborne Phillips. 1992. *Planetary Magick*. St. Paul: Llewellyn, 142.

<sup>4</sup> Waite, A. E. 1970. *The Book of Ceremonial Magick*. New York: University Books, 112. Image from [http://athenaeum.asiia.org/Praxis\\_Magica\\_Fausti.pdf](http://athenaeum.asiia.org/Praxis_Magica_Fausti.pdf)

the realm of life and fate.”<sup>5</sup> We will return to Ficino’s thoughts on this duality of the soul and its relation to our symbol presently.

Also worthy of consideration are the geometrical implications arising from the Symbol of the Quintessence. The triangle within the symbol is clearly scalene. As Denning and Phillips point out<sup>6</sup>, scalene means “limping” and is thus symbolic of the figure of the Sacred King whose lameness, while expressed in many ways in many traditions, is always a part of his sacrifice and regeneration. Along with this triangle, the other two components of the symbol are the cross and the crescent. These three then can be taken as Sulphur, Salt and Mercury respectively and thus the symbol as a whole is a dynamic synthesis of these potent principles.

Acknowledging the foregoing, we must also allow that one frequently encounters the concept of Quintessence being identified with the principle of Mercury alone. Certainly this leads to some important reflections, such as the often cited correspondence of Mercury to the Soul in the Spirit-Soul-Body schema. But the vast corpus of alchemical literature, as anyone who has delved into it even the slightest bit will be aware, is full of concepts whose meanings seem at times distinct and other times seem to blur together. As is often the case, these apparent contradictions, far from frustrating our purposes, provide some of the most fertile ground for our meditations. Thus we should not be too surprised to find that the inner significance of our Symbol of the Quintessence draws some very deep parallels with alchemical Sulphur. Perhaps further hinting at this, one of many symbols for Sulphur (pictured right) resembles the glyph which we are considering.



There is undoubtedly a great solar significance in our symbol, that “perfected distillate” of the planetary forces. Jung makes the connection between Sol and Sulphur frequently in his works. He identifies the “Paracelsan triad” in which Sulphur represents the Sun and Salt the Moon,<sup>7</sup> elsewhere he writes “It cannot have escaped the alchemists that their Sol had something to do with man. Thus Dorn says: ‘From the beginning man was sulphur.’ Sulphur is a destructive fire ‘enkindled by the invisible sun, and this sun is the Sol Philosophorum, which is the much sought-after and highly praised philosophic gold, indeed the goal of the whole work.’”<sup>8</sup>

So we see sulphur described as the fire ignited by the Spiritual Sun, the illumination of the heart in the descent of the Briatic Intelligence: the opening of the true Intuitive faculty, the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel. Considered in this light it is a fitting emblem for the Great Work, especially as suspended before the Orbis Solis in the form of the general lamen of the Minor Adept.

But why not use one of the more directly familiar symbols of solar attainment in this context? Why not the traditional circular sigil of Sol, the presigillum of the Sun, a hexagram or an octagram? Perhaps the answer is that in referencing the alchemical concept of sulphur we illustrate not only the goal but the journey, the process of obtaining the Gold of the Sun. It contains in itself the initiatic story of the Adept’s achievement of the New Life.

<sup>5</sup> Ficino, Marsilio. 1997. *Meditations on the Soul*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 41.

<sup>6</sup> Denning, Melita & Osborne Phillips. 1975. *The Magical Philosophy Book II: The Apparel of High Magick*. St. Paul: Llewellyn, 57.

<sup>7</sup> Jung, C.G. 1983. *Alchemical Studies*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 277.

<sup>8</sup> Jung, C.G. 1989. *Mysterium Coniunctionis*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 106.

Let us return to the concept of the fiery, destructive nature of Sulphur. Jung writes:

“In his ‘De tenebris contra naturam’ Dorn says: ‘We have said before that the life of the world is the light of nature and the celestial sulphur, whose substrate [*subiectum*] is the aetheric moisture and the heat of the firmament, namely Sol and Luna.’ ... But this light does not shine unhindered, says Dorn. It is obscured by the darkness of the elements in the human body. For him, therefore, sulphur is a shining, heavenly being. Though this sulphur is a ‘son who comes from imperfect bodies,’ he is ‘ready to put on the white and purple garments.’ In Ripley he is a ‘spirit of generative power, who works in the moisture.’ In the treatise ‘De sulphire’ he is the ‘virtue of all things’ and the source of illumination and of all knowledge. He knows, in fact, everything.

“In view of the significance of sulphur it is worth our while to take a look at its effects as described by the alchemists. Above all, it burns and consumes: ‘The little power of this sulphur is sufficient to consume a strong body.’ The ‘strong body’ is the sun, as is clear from the saying: ‘Sulphur blackens the sun and consumes it.’ Then, it causes or signifies the putrefactio .... A third capacity is that of coagulating, and a fourth and fifth those of tincturing (*tingere, colorare*) and maturing (*maturare*). Its ‘putrefying’ effect is also understood as its ability to ‘corrupt.’ Sulphur is the ‘cause of imperfection in all metals,’ the ‘corrupter of perfection,’ ‘causing the blackness in every operation’ ...

“These unfavourable accounts evidently impressed one of the adepts so much that, in a marginal note, he added ‘diabolus’ to the *causae corruptionis*. This remark is illuminating: it forms the counterpoint to the luminous role of sulphur, for sulphur is ‘Lucifer’ or ‘Phosphorus’ (light-bringer) ...”<sup>9</sup>

The inner “light of nature and the celestial sulphur” are obscured by the imbalance and confusion within the Ruach and the Nephesh. The desire to be free from external circumstances provides the impetus for the correct functioning and ordering of the psyche, with the Ruach benevolently guiding the Nephesh. Thus is the Ruach – even still unenlightened with respect to its native World of Briah – “a spirit of generative power, who works in the moisture”, i.e., the watery Nephesh. But the Ruach is not yet the “King of Intellectual Fire,” the light-bringing Lucifer or the luminous Agathodaimon.

The power of sulphur to consume, to “putrefy” is the symbolic death of the initiate. The corruption which it implies is a reference to the “tragic flaw” of the hero / initiate: the influence of the Neshamah on the Nephesh that causes it to seek its own death that it might arise in New Life. This is the previously mentioned “limp” of the Sacred King, whose death is the consumption of the sun by the darkness and whose rebirth is the revelation of the sun shining at midnight, as Apuleius dared to phrase it.

Now is the Palingenesis, the regeneration of the Adept. Ripley confirms the role of Sulphur in this regard:

“Our Sulphur is likened to the holy Ghost,  
For he is quick, called the Spirit of Slyfe,  
In his working of might he is most.  
He raiseth our Body from death to lyfe...”<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Jung, C.G. 1989. *Mysterium Coniunctionis*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 113-115.

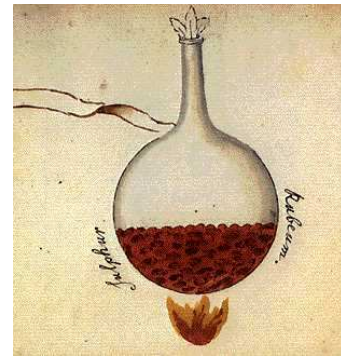
<sup>10</sup> Sir George Ripley, *The Mystery of Alchemists*, (<http://www.alchemywebsite.com/tcbmstry.html>).

Some treatises of the spagyric art further identify two different varieties of sulphur: the white and the red. The *Cabala mineralis* manuscript<sup>11</sup> presents an interesting picture of this:



*“The white sulphur.  
Our sun having been changed into a green colour, passes  
into white sulphur, which is the body animated by the  
incorruptible soul.”*

*“The red sulphur.  
By this the dawn gradually vanishes, our sun rises in  
beautiful and most red grains, and our red sulphur by the  
wise so desired, which however is not the end of the  
work.”*



Jung discusses this “psychic double nature of sulphur (*sulphur duplex*)” and identifies the red sulphur with Sol and the white with Luna. He writes “When the gold (Sol) and his bride (Luna) are united, ‘the coagulating sulphur, which in the corporal gold was turned outwards [*extraversum*], is turned inwards’ (i.e., introverted).”<sup>12</sup> This phrasing of the matter is strikingly similar to what we find in the Magical Philosophy.<sup>13</sup> Initially the “gaze” of the Ruach is turned outwards through the Nephesh. Thus, when the Ruach and the Nephesh are brought into harmony, the Ruach is turned inwards to receive the illumination of the Neshamah. Denning and Phillips write that “The soul being now confirmed in its upward gaze, the downward glance involves no peril.”<sup>14</sup> This is Ficino’s soul, balanced between the influences of Jupiter and Saturn “like Janus having two faces.” This is the Minor Adept who has stepped forth from the Vault: he who Plotinus describes as having turned from the images in the outer temple to the awareness of the Divine within, though the fulfillment of that Quest is yet to come.

These considerations amplify Denning and Phillips’ equation of the Quintessence with that Divine Spark that is both our origin and our goal. Further, Jung states that “Altogether, sulphur is one of the innumerable synonyms for the prima materia in its dual aspect, i.e., as both the initial material and the end-product. At the beginning it is ‘crude’

<sup>11</sup> *Cabala mineralis* manuscript, ([http://www.alchemywebsite.com/cab\\_min1.html](http://www.alchemywebsite.com/cab_min1.html)).

<sup>12</sup> Jung, C.G. 1989. *Mysterium Coniunctionis*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 111.

<sup>13</sup> Denning, Melita & Osborne Phillips. 2005. *The Sword & The Serpent*. Woodbury: Llewellyn, 288-289.

<sup>14</sup> Denning, Melita & Osborne Phillips. 2000. *The Foundations of High Magick*. New Jersey: Castle Books, xxvi



or ‘common’ sulphur, at the end it is a sublimation product of the process...”<sup>15</sup> Essential for our consideration in this matter is also the relationship between the Quintessence and the identity of the One who is both the Source and the Child of our Constellation of the Worshipped. Jung goes on to write that sulphur, due to its chthonic nature, “has close affinities with the dragon, which is called ‘our secret sulphur.’ In that form it is also the aqua divina, symbolized by the uroboros.”<sup>16</sup> This “secret sulphur” is our scintillant solar serpent – Knouphis-Agathodaimon, arisen from the ashes of the body that once was, the skin that was sloughed. This association of the Ouroboros with sulphur as both the beginning and end of the work is deepened in meaning if we reflect that the self-consuming snake often appears in alchemical and hermetic works alongside the phrase ἐν τὸ πᾶν, which is of course our Atziluthic Formula for the Illimitable Kether.

Jung provides us with an excellent conclusion and a springboard for further personal meditation:

“The circle described by the sun is the ‘line that runs back on itself, like the snake that with its head bites its own tail, wherein God may be discerned.’ Maier calls it the ‘shining clay moulded by the wheel [*rota*] and the hand of the Most High and Almighty Potter’ into that earthly substance wherein the sun’s rays are collected and caught. This substance is the gold. In ‘Introitus apertus,’ Philalethes elaborates Maier’s views: there is in ‘our’ mercury, he says, a fiery sulphur or sulphurous fire. This fire is the ‘spiritual seed’ which our Virgin has gathered in herself, because unspotted virginity can admit of ‘spiritual love,’ according to the author of the Hermetic mystery and as experience itself shows. It is to be noted that this virgin, who being ‘unspotted’ (*intemerata*) is obviously analogous to the Virgin Mary, is made pregnant by a seed deriving not from any Holy Ghost<sup>17</sup> but from a ‘sulphurous fire,’ i.e., an *ignis gehennalis*. The virgin is Mercurius..., who, owing to the presence of sulphur, the active masculine principle, is hermaphroditic. Sulphur is the *aurum volatile*..., a ‘spiritual’ gold, the *aurum non vulgi* of the *Rosarium* and at the same time the ‘primum movens, quod rotam vertit axemque vertit in gyrum’ (prime mover that turns wheel and axle in a circle).”<sup>18</sup>

And this noble view of Sulphur as the Spiritual Sun betokens our own “understanding of [our] aspiration and magical authority,” for as it lies upon our heart or underlies our work, it is ever the ensign of our attainment:

*EN GIRO TORTE SOL CICLOS ET ROTOR IGNE*

<sup>15</sup> Jung, C.G. 1989. *Mysterium Coniunctionis*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 111.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Ripley’s identification of Sulphur with the Holy Ghost, quoted earlier.

<sup>18</sup> Jung, C.G. 1993. *Psychology and Alchemy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 382-385.



## *Florence: A City with a Heart of Eight*

JOHN GRAHAM

ONE OF THE PRIME aims of the esoteric initiatory system worked by Astrum Sophia is spiritual Regeneration. While this is predominantly focused on personal regeneration, the Work can lead to regeneration of communities, countries and the planet. The general premise of Regeneration can be symbolised in many different forms depending on the context. Perhaps one of the best-known forms for companions of the Order is the symbol of the eight-pointed Star of Regeneration as displayed, but not limited to, on the Banner of New Life.

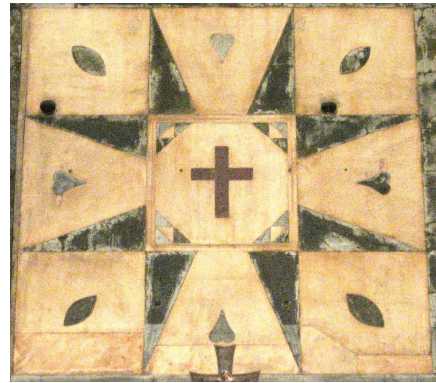
As a basic geometric shape, the eight-pointed star is found in the ritual symbology of various magical groups. However, it was arguably the Aurum Solis, our parent Order, that has most highlighted in public writing the use of the eight-pointed star within a magical context during the 1970s and 80s.

During a recent discussion with a companion about the origin of the Star, I started wondering whether there were any possible links with its use to earlier aspects of the Order in its various forms. This train of thought led me to Tuscany in Italy.

Out of all the cities on Earth, one particular place radiates the Heart of Eight most strongly. Florence, the birthplace of the Renaissance, abounds in countless architectural and artistic depictions of octagons and eight-pointed stars. Indeed, it is practically impossible to walk for more than a few moments through this great city's cobbled streets without finding representations of this symbol in churches, cathedrals, civic buildings and palaces.



Tessera at San Miniato Church in Florence



The Star of Regeneration still shines from the altar of the Baptistery of San Giovanni (the Christian cross is a much later addition).

Key characters from the city's lively and creative history also figure in the "history of the Order" which is outlined in *The Robe and The Ring*. Among these are Dante Alighieri, Guido Cavalcanti, Cosimo, Lorenzo and Guiliano de Medici, Marsilio Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, Angelo Poliziano and Michelangelo Buonarotti. All of them potent and enduring names from the past. All of them trail-blazers. All of them part of a regenerative bursting forth of consciousness, the effects of which ripple down through to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Without the chemistry of Florence and its citizens, the Renaissance as we know it would never have happened.

At the heart of their Florence rose, as it does today, the magnificent Baptistery of San Giovanni. For over 1700 years, the plaza upon which the building stands has been the center of Florence's spiritual life. According to written records, a baptistery building has been on this site since at least 897 A.D., although baptismal sacraments were celebrated here as early as 394 A.D. Dante, having been outcast from the city, surprisingly still referred to the Baptistery as, "my lovely San Giovanni." Anyone who has visited this spiritual powerhouse will fully appreciate his sentiments.

For many centuries the Baptistery was believed to have been an Augustan Temple to Mars converted at a later date to Christian use. Scholars in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries scoffed at this idea, but perhaps this folk-belief is not so far from the truth. During the 20<sup>th</sup> Century it was found to have been built upon 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> Century Roman remains.

Like a number of other buildings in Florence, its structure is octagonal and contains a plethora of stylised eight-pointed stars. Some striking examples of the Tessera which surround the inner octagonal dome are shown below:



Close to the Baptistery's inner heart lies the Palindrome (shown right). Here we are amazed to see a central Sun surrounded by the 12 signs of the Zodiac and the words "*En Giro Torte Sol Ciclos Et Rotor Igne.*" This was quite heretical for the time. Let us recall the Inquisition, which condemned Galileo as a heretic in 1633 and placed him under house arrest in his native Florence during the last years of his life when he suggested the Earth moved around a central Sun. Yet the palindrome predates Galileo's discoveries by hundreds of years, having been laid in the Baptistery in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century.



The palindrome and Zodiac in turn are surrounded by a further Latin inscription which is now only partially legible. Enough of the wording remains to be able to translate this roughly as "*Let all those who wish to behold marvelous things come here. Let them behold that which once seen is indeed capable of satisfying...the higher things of the sky encircle the lower part of the temple.*" What a wonderful expression of the Hermetic maxim, "*As above, so below.*"

In turn this again is encircled by four creatures, possibly griffins. Further flooring symbolises a collection of other animals. Thus, entering through the main door, people who came to Baptism would first have to physically cross this world of beasts and elemental things. Next they would experience the stary wisdom of the Zodiac, finding the Spiritual Sun at the center. Only then could they reach the octagonal font of Baptism. It's a magical glyph that repays meditation.



Another eight-pointed star adorning the Baptistery

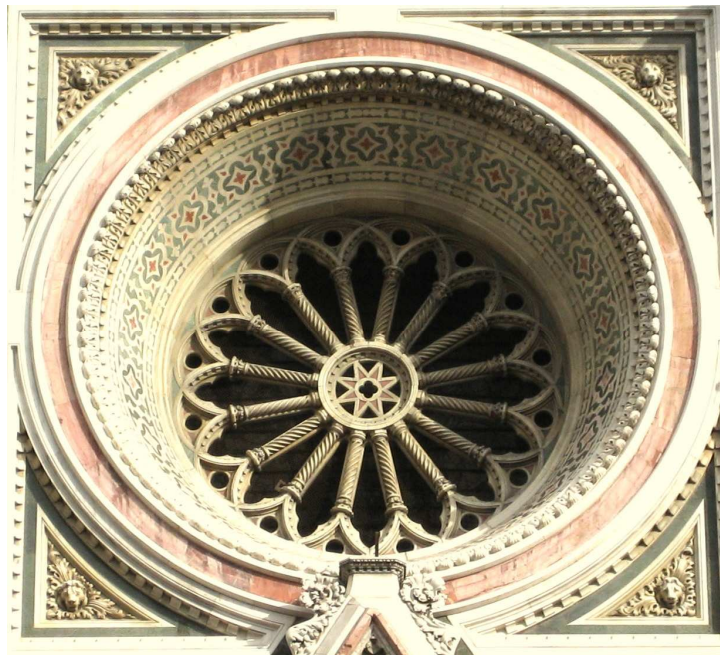
For many seekers over the centuries, the Baptistery was built in an octagonal shape to symbolise the “*octava dies*” or the mythical “*Eighth Day*” of Christian spirituality.

On one level this can be seen as the time of the Risen and Regenerated Christos, a time beyond the mundane human time measured in units of seven days. The magical sacrament of Baptism celebrated here symbolised seekers passing from “*Death in Sin*” to the “*New Life of Christ*,” an “*Eighth Day*” without end or beginning, a state outside usual time and space.

This particular expression of “Ogdoadia” may not be everyone’s cup of tea. However, viewed

within the broader range of symbolism centred around the number eight and the concept of Regeneration it provides a valuable additional piece to our understanding of the overall jigsaw.

On the same square and almost overshadowing the Baptistery rises the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore. This spectacular building contains many more examples of eight-pointed stars and shapes inside and outside. Perhaps the most striking is that lying at the center of the Cathedral’s largest front window (shown below). Inside the centre of the Cathedral lies a vast high altar and choir enclosure. This enclosure, octagonal in shape like Brunelleschi’s awe inspiring dome above it, also expresses much of the symbolism of the Baptistery. The emphasis is again on the Risen and Regenerated Christos.

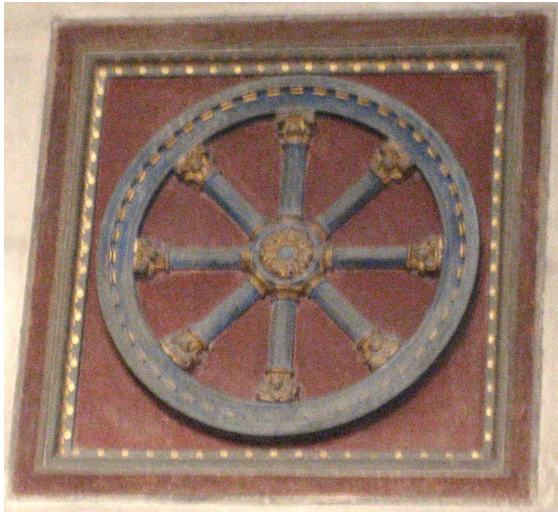






Within the Cathedral you will also find a wonderful bust of Marsilio Ficino, prime adept, inspiring genius of the Careggi Circle and initiate of the Fideli d'Amore (shown left). Ficino played a huge role in translating the works of Plato, Porphyry, Synesius, Iamblichus, Psellus, and Theon of Smyrna. Without his work it is also doubtful the world would have had the breadth of access to the Mysteries concealed in the Corpus Hermeticum.

There are many other fine examples of symbolism focused on eight throughout Florence. There are octagonal sacristies in some churches, as well as an entirely octagonal building designed by Brunelleschi himself. My last two particularly beautiful examples of Ogdoadic symbolism are from the Bargello and are shown below.



Florence is indeed a “City with a Heart of Eight”. May it continue to shine its Regenerative Light down through the Ages:

*“En Giro Torte Sol Ciclos Et Rotor Igne.”*

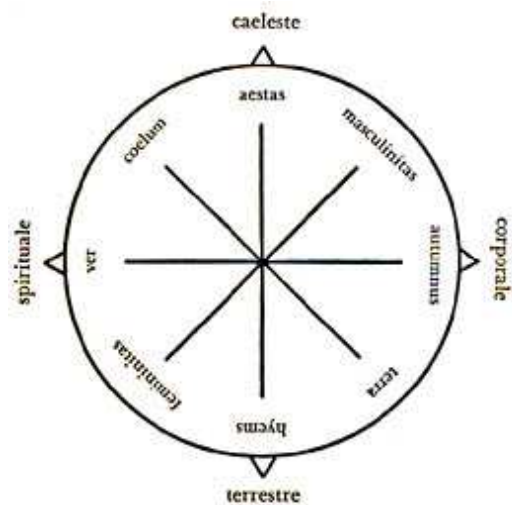
## *The Mysteries of Eight*

JENNIFER WOLFE

NUMBERS HAVE ALWAYS had mystical significance in esoteric traditions. This is certainly true of the number eight, which is so central to the Ogdoadic Tradition. In *A Dictionary of Symbols*, Cirlot summarizes some of the themes of the number eight:

The octonary, related to two squares or the octagon, is the intermediate form between the square (or the terrestrial order) and the circle (the eternal order) and is, in consequence, a symbol of regeneration. By virtue of its shape, the numeral is associated with the two interlacing serpents of the caduceus, signifying the balancing out of opposing forces or the equivalence of the spiritual power to the natural. It also symbolizes – again because of its shape – the eternally spiraling movement of the heavens (shown also by the double sigmoid line – the sign of the infinite). Because of its implications of regeneration, eight was in the Middle Ages an emblem of the waters of baptism. Furthermore, it corresponds in mediaeval mystic cosmogony to the fixed stars of the firmament, denoting that the planetary influences have been overcome.<sup>1</sup>

The number eight is represented in the Jungian archetype of the mandala. This mandala, a symbol of differentiated wholeness (as opposed to the wholeness of the undifferentiated ONE), consists of a circle divided into four by an equal-armed cross. The Circled Cross of the Ogdoadic Tradition is such a shape (Leukothea being the line across, Melanotheos the line down, and Agathodaimon the circle encompassing them). The mandala can represent either the self or the cosmos – the microcosm or the macrocosm. The points on the circle across from each other are opposites. A compass showing the four cardinal directions is a simple example.



A mandala can also represent a double quaternary, or an ogdoad. A familiar example is the cross of the four elements, intersected by the qualities *heat-cold* and *moist-dry*. According to Jung, “The double quaternio or ogdoad stands for a totality, for something that is at once heavenly and earthly, spiritual or corporeal.”<sup>2</sup>

An archetypal example (possibly even the prototype) of this mandala is the division of the solar cycle into four: the two solstices crossing the two equinoxes. The pagan tradition of eight annual festivals (at the solstices, the equinoxes, and the four points midway) form a cycle of eight that gave structure to rural life and the natural

<sup>1</sup> J.E. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, pp. 233-34.

<sup>2</sup> Carl Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, p. 11.

rhythms of birth, growth, death and rebirth. Here is the theme of cyclical regeneration, as the crops die in the winter and are reborn every spring.

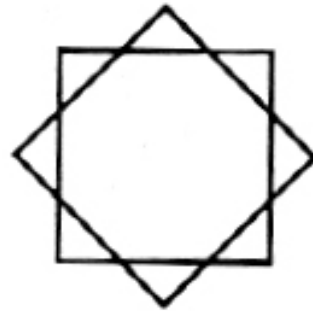
Eight is also a powerful image of a different kind of regeneration: that of a spiral, in which every turn of the circle brings transformation to a new level of being. This is the pattern of seven natural divisions, the eighth being a manifestation of the first on a new plane, transcending the natural order. This division into seven appears, astonishingly, in the color spectrum, the notes of the musical scale, and the days of the week – in sight, sound, and time.

This pattern is mirrored in the classical planets. The sequence of seven planets culminates in Saturn, which is the manifestation of Earth on a higher plane, the transcendence of the material in the Supernal Triangle. It is not surprising that the lemniscate symbol of infinity looks like the numeral eight laid on its side.



### The Sacred Geometry of Eight

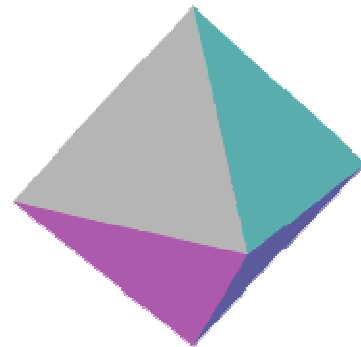
Both of these ideas of regeneration are expressed in eight's geometric properties. As Mead explains, the idea of completion is expressed in the symbol of two interlaced squares (which is, of course, the central image of the Ogdoadic Tradition) and the idea of transcendence is expressed in the surrounding of seven spheres by one:



The *ogdoad* is a term connoting the operations of the living processes behind the symbol of two interpenetrated tetrahedra, and therefore includes all the permutations of their complementary progeny (the cube and octahedron). Thus the ogdoad was divided into a higher and lower tetrad, and in various other ways including the one and the seven as described above; the one and the seven can be represented by the curious geometrical fact that if seven equal circles be taken, and six be grouped round the central one, each circumference respectively will be found to exactly touch two adjacent circles and the one in the middle, while the greater circle can be described round all seven.<sup>3</sup>

In the following passage, Paul Foster Case describes the intrinsic geometric properties of eight:

Every cube contains a concealed octahedron. The corners of this hidden octahedron touch the exact centers of the six inner faces of the cube. ... the Pythagoreans used the cube as a symbol for earth. The octahedron was the solid they made a symbol for air, or spirit. Thus the fact that every cube contains within itself a perfect octahedron became a geometrical representation of the idea that within the outer forms



<sup>3</sup> G.R.S. Mead (1900), *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*, p. 324.

of all things resides the spiritual power which all races of men have called the life-breath, of Spirit.<sup>4</sup>

At its most basic, eight is the cube of two ( $2 \times 2 \times 2$ ), thus the first number that is truly three dimensional.

The following Egyptian inscription from Dar Al-Bahari, dating back to the 22<sup>nd</sup> dynasty, combines this idea of the completion and transcendence of a cycle that returns to its original unity with that of eight as the first mathematic cube: "I am the ONE who becomes TWO; I am the TWO who becomes FOUR; I am the FOUR who becomes EIGHT; I am ONE after that."<sup>5</sup>

### The Christian Mysteries of Eight

Christianity associates the number eight with regeneration and New Life. This seems to be based largely upon the idea that the seven days of the week (representative of time) are followed by the eighth day (a symbol of eternity). In Joseph Campbell's collection of essays, *The Mysteries*, Hugo Rahner describes the significance of eight in the Christian mysteries:

To express this gift of grace ... "in familiar images" and to signify what he believed, in common with St. Paul, about this approximation to the transfigured life of the resurrected Savior, the ancient Christian took from his religious environment a symbol ...: the "mystery of the Ogdoad," the symbol of the number eight.

Christ arose from the dead on the eighth day, the day of Helios; this had been the first day of the Creation and for the Christians it became again the first day. ... According to an ancient Pythagorean conception, the number eight was the symbol of perfection, of eternal, absolute repose. Eight is the number of the cube (eight corners and "2x2x2"), the figure that presents the same area on all sides; eight is the number of the spheres moving around the earth. ... on the liturgical eighth day, the Christian received baptism; and this is the day on which the "Spirit moved upon the face of the waters." Eight persons rode the ark over the waters ... Thus baptism is rebirth to eternal life, so that eternal peace which is symbolized in the age-old image of the Ogdoad, the antithesis of earthly birth. ... The baptismal font is the grave of transitory life and the womb of the new life of the heavenly Ogdoad ...

The Latin writers also knew this symbol, the "sacramentum ogdoadis," ... the "sacramentum octavi" of which Augustine so frequently speaks; the number eight is the symbol of rebirth through baptism, and at the same time of the eternal life that finds its



<sup>4</sup> Paul Foster Case (1987), *Magical Language*.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.



mystical beginning in the water and its fulfillment in the bliss and eternal peace of the divine vision.<sup>6</sup>

Basil the Great (*The Hexaemeron*, PG 29.52 A) wrote,

The day of the Lord is without evening, without succession, and without end. It is not unknown to scripture, and it is the day that the Psalmist calls the eighth because it is outside this time of weeks. Thus whether you call it day, or whether you call it eternity, you express the same idea.



*The Monastery of Chrysostom (N.B. the octagonal towers)*

Another Church Father, John Chrysostom (*On Compunction*, PG 47.415D-16A), wrote

What is the octave? It is that great and glorious day of the Lord, a bright furnace at whose sight the Virtues tremble and which manifests the hastening of the King. The octave calls him, declaring him to be a change of condition and a renewal of the future life. For the present life is none other than seven days which commences from the first day and is perfected in the seventh day.

Finally, I quote Jung describing a 2<sup>nd</sup> century Christian document call the *Clementine Homilies*, in which Adam is the first of a series of eight incarnations of the “true prophet,” the last being Christ: “The eighth prophet is not merely the last in the series; he corresponds to the first and is at the same time the fulfillment of the seven, and signifies the entry into a new order.”<sup>7</sup>

### **The Gnostic Ogdoad**

The idea of the Ogdoad was very important in Gnostic thought. Mead writes, “Before the Gospel was preached, and the Gnosis came, the Great Ruler of the Ogdoad was considered even by the most spiritual among men to be the only God, nevertheless no name was given to him, because he was ineffable.”<sup>8</sup> The term *Ogdoad* also referred to the highest heaven. In order to achieve gnosis, the initiate had first to pass through the seven material heavens. Here the Ogdoad is the higher world: “the divinity, the celestial kingdom, also called by the Gnostics the heavenly Jerusalem.”

The Ogdoad as a spiritual realm transcending the limitations of the material is described in the following excerpt from *The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics*, by Jean Doresse:

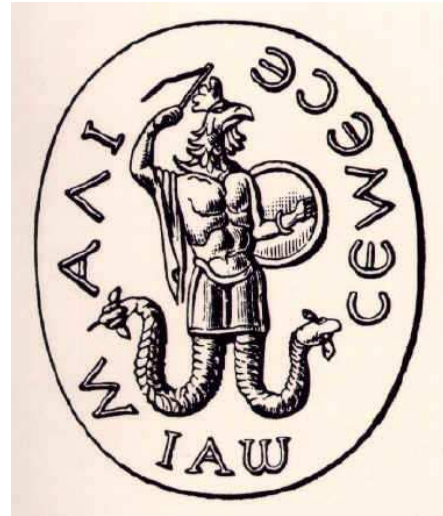
<sup>6</sup> Hugo Rahner, “The Christian Mystery and the Pagan Mysteries,” in *The Mysteries*, edited by Joseph Campbell.

<sup>7</sup> Carl Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, p. 401.

<sup>8</sup> G.R.S. Mead (1900), *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*, p. 266.



In the *Philosophumena*, Basilides explains how, after being created, the god of the lower world lifted himself up into the firmament, which in his ignorance he took to be the upper limit of everything in existence. Here he behaved without perversity, even with goodness. Element by element he built up and organized this lower world, beginning with begetting a Son still better and wiser than himself. This Son he seated beside him in the Ogdoad, that is, in the eighth heaven, which is that of the fixed stars above all the seven heavens of the planets, but nevertheless lower than the highest world, from which it is separated. The name of the great Creator-Archon was Abraxas, whose gematria is 365, equal to the number of the heavens over which he reigned.<sup>9</sup>



The number 365 also, of course, refers to the number of days in the year, and is thus comparable to the seven days of the weeks transcended by the regeneration of the eighth day. In both cases, the Ogdoad refers to the transcendence of the material cycle of time. According to the Ophite story of the Ogdoad<sup>10</sup>, Sophia, the dew of light, falls and gets caught in matter. Through the power of her light, she rises again and her body becomes the starry sky. She herself rises above her body, and dwells in the eighth heaven, the Ogdoad. She gives birth to Ialdabaoth, who in turn gives birth to six other sons: these are the Hebdomad, and presumably the seven planets who rule material creation below her. Above her are the First Man (the Father of all), the Son of Man and the First Woman (Mother of the Living), as well as some other Aeons. The Son of Man (the Christ) descended to abide in the Hebdomad at the right hand of Ialdabaoth. Working as a sort of secret agent, he enables the descendents of Seth to ascend to the Ogdoad. The Ogdoad, where abides the spirit (but not the body) of Sophia, is the goal to which the initiate aspires. Once again, we have the idea of the Ogdoad transcending the material world, represented by the number seven.

Similar themes appear in the writings of Valentinus, a prominent 2<sup>nd</sup> century Gnostic who used the term *Ogdoad* to describe the eight emanations – grouped in pairs of male/female, active/passive principles – by which Creation was effected.

First is the perfect Aeon, the masculine Bythos, the pro-Father, the boundless and unqualified Abyss or Depth. Co-existent with him is the feminine Silence, Grace or Thought. From the primordial union of the pro-Father with Thought emanates Mind (or Intelligence) and Truth (the Only Son, but somehow feminine). These four principles are the root of everything, bringing forth the Word (Logos, masculine) and Life (feminine), who together create primordial Man (masculine) and the Church (feminine). Together, this group of eight principles formed the Ogdoad, which in turn produced further Aeons.

<sup>9</sup> Jean Doresse (1958), *The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics: An introduction to the Gnostic Coptic manuscripts discovered at Chenoboskion*, p. 23.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 37-40.

The Logos and the Life emanate ten more Aeons; primordial Man and the Church emanate another twelve. Thus is produced, together with the first eight, a total of 30 Aeons: the Pleroma, or plenitude.

The 30<sup>th</sup> and last of the Aeons – Sophia, or Wisdom – tries to imitate the pro-Father by giving birth exactly as he did, that is, without a partner. She does not know that this is a privilege reserved for the one unbegotten being, the root of the All. She therefore produces, not another perfect being, but a deformed substance, an abortion, at which she is seized with disgust and remorse. Thereupon the Aeons pray to the pro-Father on behalf of Sophia, and he commands Intelligence and Truth to engender a new couple: the Christ and the Holy Spirit. At the same time he himself emanates a new pair: the Cross (Stauros) and the Limit (Horos<sup>11</sup>). He thus strengthens the Pleroma and separates it from the imperfect and inferior Creation of Sophia. When the Pleroma is thus consolidated, the Aeons join in singing hymns to the pro-Father and of one accord emanate the Perfect Fruit: Jesus the Savior.



Being responsible for the imperfect creation, the Intention of Sophia (itself a Wisdom, called Achamoth) has been excluded from the higher world and whirls about in dark and empty places. But the Christ has pity upon it and gives form to its substance. This Lower Sophia, Achamoth, having thus become conscious of her suffering, springs up in search of the light she has lost, but Horos (the Limit) prevents her from reaching the Pleroma. Sophia, in her fear, sadness and anxiety, prays to him who has abandoned her. Out of this supplication and these emotions there comes the matter from which our world is formed.

The Christ and the Aeons have pity upon Sophia and send her the Savior so that he may be her spouse and allay the passions she has suffered. It is by Gnosis that the Savior corrects these passions and drives them out of her. Thus espoused, the Lower Sophia gives birth to angels.<sup>12</sup>

From this creation proceeds the three principles that interweave to make the lower world: the spiritual, the psychic, and the material:

1. The spiritual plane is the Ogdoad. This is the "intermediate" plane because it lies immediately below the world of light. It is the dwelling of the Mother who generates the spiritual substance.
2. Below the Ogdoad is the psychic plane. This is the Hebdomad – the seventh heaven – inhabited by the Demiurge, creator of the visible heavens and the earth.
3. Still lower, in the material world, is the Cosmocrator, the devil, created by the Demiurge. This is the world of the four elements.

In this story, there seem to be two Ogdoads: (1) the four primordial pairs from which all else emanates and (2) the plane above the material world but below the world of light,

<sup>11</sup> Horos is of different etymology than Horus.

<sup>12</sup> Doresse, pp. 27-29.

wherein dwells “the Mother who generates spiritual substance. Achamoth (the Lower Sophia) purposefully made the second Ogdoad in a form to mirror the first. The following is an account of Valentinus’ mythology given by a Christian:

[The Demiurge] was constituted the Father and God of everything outside of the Pleroma, being the creator of all animal and material substances. For he it was that discriminated these two kinds of existence hitherto confused, and made corporeal from incorporeal substances, fashioned things heavenly and earthly, and became the Framer (Demiurge) of things material and animal, of those on the right and those on the left, of the light and of the heavy, and of those tending upwards as well as of those tending downwards. He created also seven heavens, above which they say that he, the Demiurge, exists. And on this account they term him Hebdomas, and his mother Achamoth Ogdoads, preserving the number of the first-begotten and primary Ogdoad as the Pleroma. They affirm, moreover, that these seven heavens are intelligent, and speak of them as being angels, while they refer to the Demiurge himself as being an angel bearing a likeness to God; and in the same strain, they declare that Paradise, situated above the third heaven, is a fourth angel possessed of power, from whom Adam derived certain qualities while he conversed with him.<sup>13</sup>

Sophia is herself, then, called the Ogdoad, and it is she who actually created the material world:

... the Demiurge imagined that he created all these things of himself, while he in reality made them in conjunction with the productive power of Achamoth. He formed the heavens, yet was ignorant of the heavens; he fashioned man, yet knew not man; he brought to light the earth, yet had no acquaintance with the earth; and, in like manner, they declare that he was ignorant of the forms of all that he made, and knew not even of the existence of his own mother, but imagined that he himself was all things. ... This mother they also call Ogdoad, Sophia; Terra, Jerusalem, Holy Spirit, and, with a masculine reference, Lord. Her place of habitation is an intermediate one, above the Demiurge indeed, but below and outside of the Pleroma, even to the end.<sup>14</sup>

The Ogdoad is also the “place” where Sophia dwells:

The dwelling of Sophia, as the World-Soul, according to our Gnostics, was in the Midst, in the Ogdoad, between the upper or purely spiritual worlds, and the lower psychic and material worlds. Below the Ogdoad was the Hebdomad or Seven spheres of psychic substance. Truly hath “Wisdom built for herself a House, and rested it on Seven Pillars” (Proverbs 9:1).<sup>15</sup>

Mead writes, “The Valentinian Pleroma is said to have been an ogdoad, or group of eight, which was sometimes considered as a dual tetrad – in living symbols, the system of equilibrium behind two equally interpenetrated tetrahedra.”<sup>16</sup> This is, of course, the shape of the eight-pointed star on the Tessera.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103105.htm>

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Mead, p. 333.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., pp. 322-323.

## The Hermetic Ogdoad

Hermetic sources echo ideas very similar to those of Gnosticism and Christianity. As Mahe writes, “Soaring up to the Ogdoad means first of all getting rid of the influence on the seven planets and having access to the superior world, the abode of Divinity.”<sup>17</sup>

In Treatise #23 of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, Hermes Trismegistus explains to his son the mysteries of the Hebdomad (7), of the Ogdoad (8), and of the Ennead (9). The passage ends with a hymn: “Lord give to us a wisdom drawn from thy power which reaches even unto us, that we may show forth the teaching of the Ogdoad and the Ennead.” As Mead explains, the Ennead seems to refer to the Kingdom of highest entities established above the Ogdoad, which itself surrounds and dominates the seven material heavens.<sup>18</sup> He also refers to “the ogdoadic nature of the Corpus Hermeticum, in which the name Ogdoas (=eight) designates the Almighty.” He continues, “according to the medieval mystical tradition Adam returned to the state before original sin on the eighth day.”<sup>19</sup>

The Hermetic text *Poimandres* also discusses the Ogdoad:

The *Poimandres* begins... with this fantastic apparition of the Intellect – the Nous – revealing to the anonymous narrator (the names of Hermes and his disciples appear nowhere in the text) a vision of the Light on high and the Darkness below, the latter being coiled into spirals like a serpent. From this frightful darkness, which is in transformation, is created the moist abyss out of which Fire arises. A holy Word then descends from the Light and covers up the lower, inferior nature, whilst from below the fire flames up over the waters.

Then the Nous explains the meaning of this vision of the two primordial principles and of the confusion taking place between them: out of the Light, out of the supreme Nous, there came forth the Logos his Son. Nous the Father (androgynous Life and Light) then created a second Nous – the Demiurge, god of fire and of wind.

This Demiurge formed the seven rulers of the planetary circles, the masters of Fate. Through the association of the Logos with the Demiurge, the seven circles were made to revolve, producing the lower elements and causing the birth of the various animals.

The first Nous then creates a primordial man in his own image. This Anthropos sees his own reflection in the water and on earth and it fills him with admiration, so he descends into matter, which ensnares him. Thenceforth man is a duality: mortal in his body, immortal in his soul.



<sup>17</sup> Jean Pierre Mahe, “A Reading of The Ogdoad and the Ennead,” in *Gnosis and Hermeticism*, p. 81.

<sup>18</sup> Doresse, p. 243

<sup>19</sup> Mahe, p. 202.

At death, the material body is abandoned by man. The soul re-ascends through the planetary circles, restoring at each of the seven zones, like the taking-off of garments, the accidents and passions it had taken on during its descent to the body it was to animate at birth. At the end of this ascension the soul attains to the Ogdoad, merging with God and becoming itself one of the powers: it enters into God, and – this is the goal to which the Hermetic Gnosis aspires – becomes merged with God.<sup>20</sup>

In his book *The Egyptian Hermes*, Garth Fowden writes,

According to the Poimandres the soul, “denuded of what the planetary spheres had wrought in it, enters with its own strength into the Ogdoadic nature, and with the Beings sings hymns to the Father ... [and] hears certain powers above the Ogdoadic nature hymning God with a sweet voice.” In “The Ogdoad Reveals the Ennead,” we find a similar but more extended account of the soul’s vision as it enters the divine spheres of the Ogdoad and Ennead alluded to in the title. Divine power manifests itself in the form of light, at first to Hermes alone, who in short, ecstatic phrases describes for his pupil the noetic vision that the power brings. Becoming himself *nous*, Hermes beholds the origin of the divine powers, and sees the primordial spring of life.<sup>21</sup>

In these ancient sources we thus have an amazing convergence of symbolic weight placed upon the Ogdoad: the primordial differentiated Source; the true creator of the world, who descended into matter to create man and who planted the means for his eventual liberation from matter; the plane of existence above our own, closer to the Light; the spiritual city of Jerusalem; and the Holy Spirit. All of these are symbols of that to which we, as gnostics, aspire. They are all symbols of transcending the mundane and Knowing the Divine, Regeneration and the New Life.

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<sup>20</sup> Doresse, p. 276-77.

<sup>21</sup> Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes*, p. 110.



*A Vision of the Secret Hymnody*

MARCUS KATZ



*HYMNODIA KRYPTAE*

O powers within me,  
Hymn the One and the All.  
Chant in harmony with my will,  
All ye Powers within me!  
Holy Gnosis, illuminated by thee,  
Through thee I hymn the light of thought,  
I rejoice in the joy of the mind.  
All ye Powers, chant with me!

*For more information about Marcus Katz and his work, visit [www.farawaycentre.com](http://www.farawaycentre.com)*

*Khnoum*

NINA COOPER





## *Biography: Kerry Wisner*

KERRY WISNER WAS first introduced to a number of esoteric concepts as a child by his father who, himself, had been a member of the Rosicrucians (AMORC). In his teens and early twenties Kerry studied Astrology under the instruction of the Theosophical Society and Sybil Leek. Through the years since then, Kerry has continued to receive additional personal instruction from a number of prominent Astrologers both on the west and east coasts of the United States.

In 1980 Kerry was initiated into Wicca through Lady Sabrina of Our Lady of Enchantment, a federally recognized religious organization. She, herself, had been initiated by Robert Moser, the founder of the Arizona based research organization known as Fountainhead. Mr. Moser was also High Priest of the Church of Thebes, an Egyptian based Ceremonial/Wiccan order, and author of the book "Astral and Mental Projection." From 1981 through 1990 Kerry held the position of High Priest of Our Lady of Enchantment, during which time he also served as the primary teacher for this very public Wiccan/Ceremonial organization; conducting classes, workshops, and leading rituals. However on a personal level, it was in the 1980's that Mr. Wisner first became actively involved in the study and practice of Ancient Egyptian religion. It was during this time that he began to amass a considerable library of ancient texts, academically accepted Egyptological resources, as well as contemporary occult literature.

In 1990 Kerry resigned his position with Our Lady of Enchantment. This allowed him the time to focus exclusively on the development and reconstruction of the actual practices of Ancient Egyptian religion and magic. Together with his wife Linda, Kerry began to form the organization that would evolve into Akhet Hwt-Hrw; a school dedicated to the research, practice and teaching of Ancient Egyptian religion. From the beginning a strong emphasis was placed on the traditions associated with the Goddess Hathor, particularly the rituals associated with Hathor's temple of Dendera. In addition, the teachings and rituals of all the Egyptian Gods came to form a part of Akhet Hwt-Hrw.

Today, Mr. Wisner is the author of five books, two correspondence courses, as well as many published articles on the subject of Ancient Egyptian religion. The books and courses are currently available via the Akhet Hwt-Hrw website at:

[www.hwt-hrw.com/](http://www.hwt-hrw.com/)

In 2005 Kerry was initiated into Ordo Astrum Sophiae. For Kerry the Ogdoadic tradition and its current expression found in the Ordo Astrum Sophiae, dovetail very well with Ancient Egyptian teachings. In fact, Mr. Wisner has been struck by the many parallels between Ancient Egyptian ritual practices and those of the order. As a result, in recent years, he has been researching possible connections between ancient and late period Egyptian teachings, early Hermeticism and medieval Alchemy.

In addition Kerry is a certified Hypnotherapist through the National Guild of Hypnotists. He is also trained through the Collin County Law Enforcement Academy of McKinney Texas (an accredited law enforcement academy) as a forensic/investigative Hypnotist specializing in memory retrieval techniques. With a keen interest in philosophy, particularly Taoism, Mr. Wisner is also an avid Martial Artist holding a Black Belt in Kempo Karate and Red Sash in Shaolin Kung Fu.

Kerry currently resides in New Hampshire, USA, with his wife. There they run Fauna Rescue, Inc., a non-profit animal rescue with a website at: [www.faunarescue.org](http://www.faunarescue.org)



### *Biography: William Stoltz*

WILLIAM STOLTZ IS the current Grand Master of the Ordo Astrum Sophiae, a premier Order within the Ogdoadic Western Mystery Tradition. His first contact with Melita Denning and Osborne Phillips was in 1980 in Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota. In 1984 he was made an associate member (Sodalis) of the Aurum Solis College of Thrones and was ordained Magus of the House of the Winged Serpent by Melita Denning. In 1985 he was elected to full Sodalis in the College of Thrones and made Administrator-General of the Aurum Solis. In 1999, after a hiatus, he resumed his Third Hall work and was Ratified as Adeptus Plenus in 2002. He received a Charter of Succession from Osborne Phillips, the past Grand Master of the Aurum Solis, empowering him to establish and govern an autonomous and contacted Order of the Ogdoadic Mystery Tradition.

William also has an extensive background in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn and the R.R. et A.C. He began work with Israel Regardie in 1979 as a serious student of the GD system of magic. During the period of Aurum Solis inactivity in the 1990's he joined the Regardie lineage of the Golden Dawn and became the Imperator of a Golden Dawn temple in the Midwest. He attained the grade of ZAM in 1996 and functioned as a temple chief until his resignation from formal duties in 1999. He continues to hold high esteem for the Golden Dawn and continues to maintain fraternal relations with the Order.

Academically he holds a Master's Degree in Psychology and Human Development from St. Mary's University in Minnesota. With a background in transpersonal psychology he incorporated training in Ericksonian hypnosis and psychotherapy into his degree work. In addition to his study and service to the Western Mystery Tradition he has a background in Eastern systems which include Taoist alchemy and initiation into two branches of Tibetan Buddhism.

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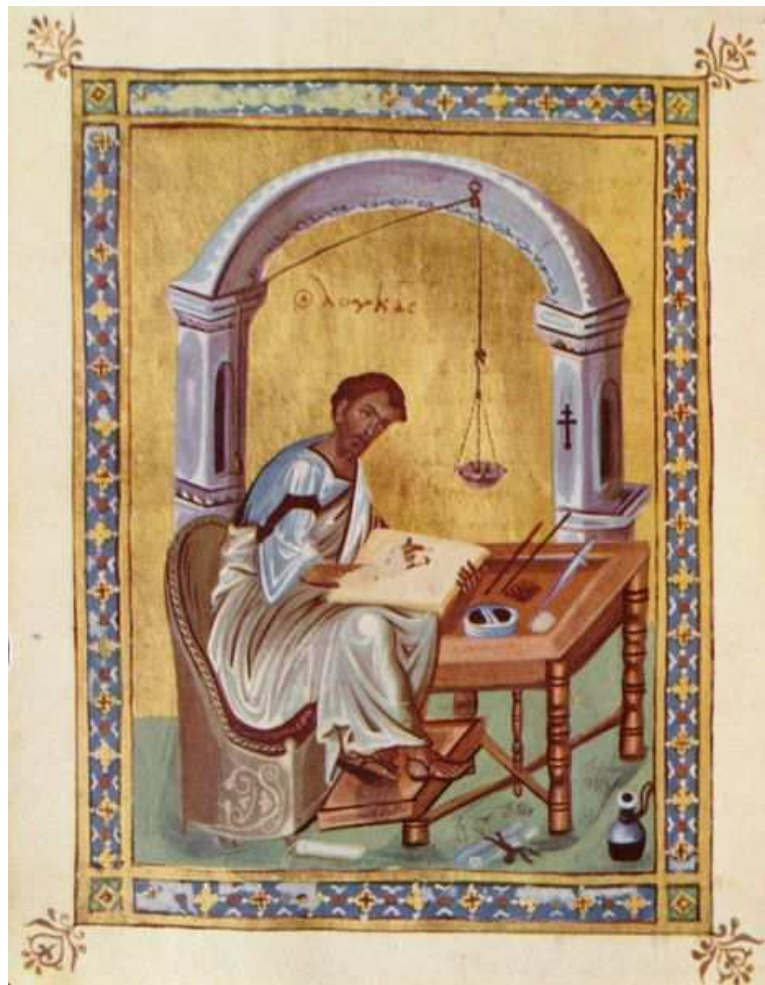
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