Hermeticism: Rise and Fall of an Esoteric System: Part II

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Abstract

This is the second part of an article examining the appearance, early in the Common Era, of texts believed to contain revelation from the god Thoth/Hermes/Mercury and teachings of the ancient Egyptian priesthood. It explores the evolution of Hermeticism, which has continued to influence the western esoteric tradition and remains an important pillar of modern esotericism. Part II begins with an examination of the applications of Hermeticism during the Renaissance and concludes with a discussion of its continued relevance in modern times.

Applications of Hermeticism

Marsilio Ficino, Cornelius Agrippa, Robert Fludd, and Giordano Bruno approached Hermeticism as a broad, all-encompassing field. But a number of Renaissance scholars focused on specific applications. One of them was the Austrian nobleman "Paracelsus" (1493–1541), whose full name was Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus Von Hohenheim.[1] A close contemporary of Agrippa, Paracelsus applied Hermeticism to medicine. His parallel interest in alchemy will be discussed later. Paracelsus prescribed mineral and herbal remedies, laying important groundwork for modern pharmacology; but he also devoted much time and energy to what we would call alternative therapies. He created astrological talismans for curing a variety of physical and psychological maladies. In *The Archidoxes*, Paracelsus devoted a whole chapter to remedies for impotence, one of whose causes he believed was witchcraft. To ward of such attacks, the patient should "take a piece of horseshoe found in the highway, of which let there be made a trident-fork on the day of Venus and the hour of Saturn."[2] The suitably inscribed trident talisman is shown in Figure 1. Like Agrippa, Paracelsus also invented an alphabet (which he called the "Alphabet of the Magi") for engraving angelic names on talismans.

Paracelsus regarded magic as an indispensable ingredient in healing work. Comparing his own methods to those of the clergy, he asked: "What Divine that is ignorant of magic…can heal the sick, or administer any other help to him by his faith alone?"[3] He was scathing in his criticism of the medical establishment, which he regarded as incompetent. As a result, Paracelsus was continually persecuted by fellow physicians; nevertheless his work had lasting influence. He is mentioned by name in the *Fama Fraternitatis*, the first of the Rosicrucian Manifestos.[4] And among his later admirers was the German esotericist Jakob Böhme (1575–1624).

The Italian philosopher Tommaso Campanella (1568–1639) applied Hermeticism to political theory. Like many other Dominican friars who dabbled in Hermeticism,[5] he fell afoul of both ecclesiastical and civil authorities. He spent 27 years in prison for his role in a failed rebellion against Spanish oppression in southern Italy. However, while incarcerated, he wrote a num-

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ber of important books. His most famous work, *City of the Sun*, was a utopian vision inspired to some degree both by Plato's *Republic* and by the magic city of *Adocentyn* in the *Picatrix*.[6] Campanella's city was designed on Hermetic lines. A large, domed temple, atop a central hill, dominated a circular city consisting of seven concentric, tiered rows of buildings. The temple clearly corresponded to the Sun and the concentric tiers to the planets. Seven lanterns, representing the planets, hung in the temple; and elaborate planetary symbols adorned the walls of the buildings. Christian images were not neglected, and representations of Christ and the 12 apostles were given prominent positions on the city's outer wall.[7] The city was ruled on magical principles by the sun-priest, an autocratic leader who derived his power from the great magus, Christ—or perhaps from Hermes Trismegistus. Following the idealistic theme, the population was virtuous and lived an idyllic life of peace and harmony. Education and medical care were provided by magi-priests who reported to the sun-priest.

Hermeticism envisioned a universe in which gods, planets, the zodiac, and the myriad lives on Earth form an organic, sentient whole. Activity in one part of the universe can affect all other parts. Celestial bodies—and the exalted intelligences that animate them—influence human activity; but, in return, humankind can influence the celestial powers and its own destiny through magic…In itself ethically neutral, magic could be used for either destructive or constructive ends.

Over time, Campanella's utopian vision expanded from a city to the whole world. He envisioned a benevolent, imperial theocracy backed by Spanish military might and headed by the pope, who would function as a latter-day Egyptian pharaoh. He tried unsuccessfully to interest Pope Urban VIII, who was otherwise sympathetic to Hermeticism, in his plan. Undaunted, he moved to France, where a modified version—based on French instead of Spanish military might—appealed to the powerful Cardinal Richelieu.[8] Richelieu's prodigy, King Louis XIV, eventually assumed the title "Sun-King."

Alchemy attracted the attention of many people during the Middle Ages, including Albertus Magnus and his student, Thomas Aquinas, who is believed to have written an alchemical text shortly before his death.[9] But alchemy was neglected during the Florentine revival in favor of magic and astrology. It finally came into its own in the 17th century with the work of Paracelsus, mathematician John Dee, Robert Fludd, and many others. Two alchemical texts were published along with the Rosicrucian Manifestos in 1614–1616: *Consideration of the More Secret Philosophy by Philip à Gabella*, a paraphrase of a work by Dee, and the much longer alchemical allegory, "The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreuz" by German Protestant theologian Johann Valentin Andreae (1586–1642).[10]

By the 17th century, Kabbalistic concepts were being incorporated into alchemy, as they had been into Hermeticism a century earlier. Furthermore, the goals of alchemy had broadened. The transmutation of metals remained of interest, but it was viewed primarily as a demonstration of the spiritualization of matter and the personal transformation of the alchemist. Transmutation represented the descent and ascent through the concentric spheres that surrounded the Earth—or the Sun, when the Copernican model finally took hold. A further goal of alchemy was to discover the elixir of life.

Like other Renaissance Hermeticists, Paracelsus viewed his alchemical studies and his religion as parts of a seamless continuum. He affirmed that "the foundation of these and other

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arts be laid in the holy Scriptures, upon the doctrine and faith of Christ."[11] After providing detailed instructions on the process of transmutation, he ended with this prayer:

> Whosoever shall find out this secret, and attain to this gift of God, let him praise the most high God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; the Grace of God let him only implore that he may use the fame of his glory, and the profit of his neighbor. This the merciful God grant to be done, through Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord. Amen.[12]

Paracelsus insisted that alchemical transmutations, like talismanic magic, had to be performed when the Sun, Moon, and planets were in favorable alignment;[13] otherwise the process could be ineffective or dangerous.

A number of individuals combined careers in mathematics and science with a profound interest in Hermeticism. One was John Dee (1527–1608), a respected mathematician who wrote the preface to an English translation of Euclid's *Elements* and contributed to the theory of navigation. His mathematics also embraced concepts of number studied by esotericists from Pythagoras onward.[14] Dee served as astrological adviser to Queen Elizabeth I[15] and gained international fame as an alchemist. He devoted the latter part of his life, assisted by the unscrupulous Edward Kelley, to communicating with angels. There too, Dee's "studies in number, so successful and factual in what he would think of as the lower spheres…could be extended with even more powerful results into the supercelestial world."[16] Eventually public opinion turned against him, and he died in poverty.

Isaac Newton (1643–1727) held the prestigious Lucasian chair in mathematics at Cambridge and wrote the *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, one of the most influential books in the history of science. He also translated the *Emerald Tablet* into English and dabbled in alchemy, even setting up an alchemical laboratory on the grounds of Trinity College.[17] Elias Ashmole (1617–1692), noted antiquarian and charter fellow of the Royal Society in London, was an astrologer and alchemist. Robert Boyle, "father" of modern chemistry, who was offered the presidency of the Royal Society, was schooled in Paracelsian alchemy.[18]

For leading scientists to be interested in alchemy might seem paradoxical today, but we must remember that Renaissance science—or "natural philosophy" as it was still called—coexisted and competed with modern reductionist science during the early years of the Royal Society. Indeed, the Society was widely regarded as the manifestation of the Rosicrucian "Invisible College."[19] Within a few decades the Royal Society became a bastion of empirical science and resisted pressure to publish Isaac Newton's papers on alchemy.

Decline and Revival of Hermeticism

The decline of Hermeticism had multiple causes. Pre-Reformation ecclesiastical attitudes were always mixed. Giovanni Pico was interrogated by the Inquisition but eventually received papal support for his work. Tommaso Campanella received a fair hearing in Rome, but his proposals for a papal utopian autocracy were rejected. Giordano Bruno was executed, and Cornelius Agrippa narrowly escaped a similar fate.

The Scientific Revolution obviously challenged the worldview on which Hermeticism was based. However, as we have seen, Bruno embraced the Copernican model of the solar system; and Renaissance natural philosophy and the new empirical science competed for influence in the late 17th century. The Enlightenment, which built upon the Scientific Revolution, was a more serious threat, seeking to depict Hermeticism—along with traditional Christianity—as superstition. Since that time, magicians have been ridiculed by the scientific community as much as they have been condemned by the church.

By then, Renaissance Hermeticism had already suffered a major setback of a different kind. The Swiss classical scholar and philologist, Isaac Casaubon (1559–1614), used emerging methods of textual criticism[20] to demonstrate that the classical Hermetic texts were not nearly so old as previously believed. The vocabulary was relatively modern, and the texts

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referred to events in the early Christian era. The implication from Casaubon's findings was that whoever wrote the texts did not predate Moses and Plato but postdated Christ! The "prophecies," which so fascinated the church fathers were not prophecies at all; they were written by people familiar with emerging Christian doctrine. Academic historians now believe that the texts were written in the first three centuries CE. We also know now that the title "Trismegistus" was itself comparatively modern.[21]

The realization that the Pseudo-Hermes was not the "Gentile Prophet" of Old-Testament times destroyed any expectation that the Hermetic teachings might have something valuable to contribute to Christianity. It gave orthodox elements of the Counter-Reformation ammunition to stifle what influence Hermeticism still had in upper echelons of the Roman church. In a deliberate snub to Renaissance Neoplatonism, and Hermeticism to which it had given legitimacy, the Council of Trent reaffirmed the Aristotelianism of Thomas Aquinas as the official philosophy of the Catholic Church. The Protestant reformers were no more sympathetic. They strongly condemned sacramental magic—"hocus pocus" summed up popular attitudes to Eucharistic transubstantiation[22]—and their condemnations overflowed into other kinds of magic.

Despite these unfavorable developments, many people were unfazed in their interest in Hermeticism. Robert Fludd and Tommaso Campanella were most productive in the early decades of the 17th century, and the study of alchemy peaked at about the same time. As late as the 1650s, Athanasius Kirchner—a member, no less, of the Society of Jesus, which was founded to spearhead the Counter-Reformation—published his *Oedipus Aegyptiacus* containing numerous references to the Hermetic literature.[23] Kirchner surmised that Egyptian hieroglyphics, which Hermes (the inventor of language) must have designed, were sacred talismans.[24] Kirchner was never persecuted by the Roman church, but he was nearly killed by an advancing army of Protestants for whom Jesuits were anathema.

Reductionist science challenged notions of universal, organic interconnectedness. And Enlightenment rationalism branded the Hermetic teachings as medieval superstition. Hermeticism was forced onto the defensive, but it never died out. The teachings were preserved in Rosicrucian and Masonic organizations. They also influenced the arts, as exemplified by the plays of Shakespeare, the music of Mozart, the writings of Goethe, and the poetry and art of William Blake.

Individual Protestants took an interest in Hermeticism, ignoring negative attitudes to magic on the part of ecclesiastical authorities. For example, Jakob Böhme was a Lutheran; and the Rosicrucian Manifestos were published in the Calvinist Rhine Palatinate. Perhaps the very demystification of Protestant beliefs and practices spurred compensatory interest in Hermeticism among those with a hunger for mystery.[25]

The longer-term impact of the deteriorating environment of the 17th century was to drive Hermetic studies underground. Whereas Hermeticism had long been a topic of open discourse, it retreated more and more behind the closed doors of private salons or occult societies. Some of them eventually evolved into Masonic or Rosicrucian lodges.

The first reference to Freemasonry, in anything like its present form, can be found in the minutes of a 1598 meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland.[26] Elias Ashmole, whose role in the Royal Society has already been mentioned, was inducted into a Masonic lodge in Warrington, England, in 1646.[27] Within 100 years, multiple branches of Freemasonry operated throughout

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Europe and North America and even in Russia. What level of organized Rosicrucian activity existed in the 17th century is less clear. The Manifestos (which called for the reform of Christianity and major advances in science, education, and medicine) were published in 1616–1617, shortly after Casaubon's findings were published. They attracted widespread attention, inspiring Robert Fludd, Elias Ashmole, Thomas Vaughan (who translated the the *Fama Fraternitatis* into English), and numerous others. But there is no evidence that a cohesive "fraternity" ever existed, and regional groups seem to have been small and short-lived.[28] Large-scale Rosicrucian organizations date from the mid-19th century.

Continued Relevance

Diehard believers still hold onto a shred of hope that there was a real Hermes Trismegistus and that the Hermetic texts are authentic. One of many 20th-century Hermetic works describes Hermes as "father of Occult Wisdom; the founder of Astrology; the discoverer of Alchemy."[29] In the influential work, *The Secret Teachings of All Ages*, Manly Palmer Hall (1901–1990) speaks of Hermes as being a real god-man.[30]

Regardless of when the Hermetic texts were written, they may contain traces of ancient Egyptian, Chaldean and Persian religion.[31] It is not out of the question that an oral tradition preserved teachings from earlier times and that the authors compiled and commented upon those teachings. Furthermore, the teachings may well express elements of a perennial philosophy and/or were inspired by Intelligences beyond the human level.

In any event, the Hermetic texts' intrinsic validity has to be evaluated separately from their authenticity; and the teachings have obvious merit. The philosophical mindset of the Hermetic teachings was a combination of Platonism, Stoicism, Gnosticism, and Neoplatonism; this last emerged in the third century with the work of Ammonius Saccas, Plotinus, Porphyry, and Iamblichus. The teachings themselves were representative of the esoteric cultures of Egypt, Mesopotamia, and other parts of the region. Most likely the texts were written in Alexandria, which, by the first century CE, had become a general melting pot of Roman, Greek, and Middle Eastern thought.

A major Hermetic revival began in 19th-century France. Alphonse Louis Constant (1810–1875) adopted the title of magus and wrote a number of books and articles on ceremonial magic under the pseudonym Éliphas Lévi. His books disclosed information that had previously been discussed only in secret societies. Lévi acknowledged that the classical texts were probably creations of the Alexandrian school,[32] but he affirmed an authentic Hermetic tradition and seemed to believe that the *Emerald Tablet* was actually the work of Hermes. One of Lévi's lifelong ambitions was to see a rapprochement between magic and Christianity, as had been attempted during the Renaissance.

Another Frenchman, the Marquis Saint-Yves d'Alveydre (1842–1909), made an interesting contribution with his creation of the "archeometer."[33] The device, which may have been inspired by a passage in the early Kabbalistic text, the *Sefer Yetzirah*,[34] consisted of a disc inscribed by correspondences between numbers, letters, colors, musical notes, signs of the zodiac, and planets (Figure 2). D'Alveydre claimed that it provided the key to understanding all ancient science and religion. Reportedly he obtained a patent for the device in 1903.

The Hermetic Society of the Golden Dawn was established in London in 1888. Structured along Masonic lines, with graded initiations, its stated mission was to preserve "the body of knowledge known as Hermeticism." A larger mission was to promote the philosophical, spiritual, and psychic evolution of humanity.[35] Drama and rituals were performed resembling ancient mystery rites,[36] and a broad range of esoteric topics were studied, including magic, astrology, and the Kabbalah. Although members of the Golden Dawn drew upon relevant Hebrew texts,[37] their Kabbalistic teachings were strongly influenced by Hermeticism. The Society's work was protected by initiatory oaths, but publications by individual members soon brought the teachings to a wide readership. The Golden Dawn's influence on modern western esotericism was immense.[38]

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Modern Rosicrucian organizations include Hermetic teachings in their study curricula. Alchemy also continues to command interest. Despite John Dee's contention that alchemy would become almost impossible after his time, on account of humanity's increasing "barbarism," several individuals are reputed to have achieved the transmutation of metals.[39] Alchemy has also interested Jungian psychologists who see in its imagery archetypes from the collective unconscious.[40] Emphasis on the symbolism of alchemy is now so strong that the transformative aspects—transformation of the alchemist as well as the tinctures in their retorts—are often overlooked.

Hermeticism and the Tarot

An important expression of Hermeticism, which remains popular today, is the Tarot. The word "Tarot" is French, but it is derived from the plural Italian word *tarocci* (possibly "trumps" or "triumphs"), believed to refer to a card game.

While there is some evidence that the Tarot was known in early medieval Europe and the Middle East, the oldest extant Tarot deck dates from about 1460. The hand-painted deck was commissioned by Duke Filippo Maria Visconti of Milan and his successor Francesco Sforza.[41] The 74 unnamed, but recognizable, cards were divided into two sections resembling the Major and Minor Arcana familiar today.[42] From the same period, a set of 50 woodcuts is attributed to Andreas Mantegna, painter and printmaker in Padua. Some of Mantegna's "cards" have captions like "The Emperor" and "Justice," which appear in the modern Tarot; but they also include "Poetry," "Jupiter," and "Chief Agent." Mantegna and the unknown creator of the Visconti-Sforza deck were contemporaries of Giovanni Pico and doubtless knew of his and Marsilio Ficino's interest in Hermeticism. The artwork of the Visconti-Sforza deck (Figure 3) is of a high order and recalls the classical themes of Ficino's talismans.

The French Freemason Antoine Court de Gébelin (c.1719–1784) recognized ancient symbols in the Tarot and concluded that they were of Egyptian origin. He also suggested that the Major Arcana could be correlated with letters in the Hebrew alphabet.[43] Soon thereafter, Tarot cards began to be used for divination, meditation, and esoteric study. A century later, the Tarot became the subject of intense study by Éliphas Lévi and other French occultists. Lévi claimed that:

> A prisoner devoid of books, had he only a Tarot of which he knew how to make use, could in a few years acquire a universal science, and converse with an unequalled doctrine and inexhaustible eloquence.[44]

At about the same time, the Tarot entered the repertory of the Society of the Golden Dawn; and, in due course, it spread to other western esoteric bodies.

The Tarot reveals obvious Hermetic influence and seems to have a direct link with Renaissance Hermeticism. Tarot cards are talismans, albeit now serving purposes other than magic. Whether a separate link can be established with Egyptian Hermetism is less clear. Nevertheless, Golden Dawn initiate Aleister Crowley referred to the Tarot as the "Book of Thoth."[45] And the artwork in the popular Waite-Smith deck[46] has an Egyptian flavor that calls to mind the mythical setting of classical Hermetic teachings.

Concluding Remarks

Hermeticism has had an enormous influence on the western esoteric tradition. Even though the classical Hermetic texts turned out to be more recent than originally believed and cannot be traced to the god-man Hermes, their powerful message has resonated with seekers for nearly two millennia. Regardless of their origins, the Hermetic teachings speak for themselves.

Classical Hermetism and the later Hermeticism envisioned a universe in which gods, planets, the zodiac, and the myriad lives on Earth form an organic, sentient whole. Activity in one part of the universe can affect all other parts. Celestial bodies—and the exalted intelligences that animate them—influence human activity; but, in return, humankind can influence the celestial powers and its own destiny through magic. Hermetic magic was a broad field that in-

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volved the use of minerals, herbs, perfumes, color, talismanic images, spoken or chanted invocations, and many other artifacts. In itself ethically neutral, magic could be used for either destructive or constructive ends. Humanity had divine potential, and to become a magus was within the reach of anyone willing to invest the necessary time and resources and to attain the required moral perfection.

Hermeticism, and the Kabbalah with which it overlapped in western esotericism, were embraced by leading Christians. Scholars, magicians, priests, and even some popes saw no conflict with their faith; in fact, they envisioned ways in which Hermeticism could enrich Christianity or serve as a basis for needed reform. Christ and many of the saints were viewed as powerful magi, and Hermetic practitioners saw themselves as legitimate successors. More orthodox Christians felt threatened to the point that they felt compelled to oppose Hermeticism by any means at their disposal, including the torture and execution of those involved.

Reductionist science challenged notions of universal, organic interconnectedness. And Enlightenment rationalism branded the Hermetic teachings as medieval superstition. Hermeticism was forced onto the defensive, but it never died out. The teachings were preserved in Rosicrucian and Masonic organizations. They also influenced the arts, as exemplified by the plays of Shakespeare,[47] the music of Mozart,[48] the writings of Goethe,[49] and the poetry and art of William Blake.[50] Hermeticism finally enjoyed a major revival in the late 19th century, and it survives today as a major component of modern esotericism. Numerous books on magic, alchemy, and mundane and esoteric astrology continue to be published for readers at every level of understanding.

In this post-modern age, when trust in rationalism and scientific reductionism is eroding, people are attracted to a worldview that honors belief in a live, sentient, integrated cosmos. Travel through the "spheres," planes, or however else we choose to represent levels of reality, remains a goal of every mystic. Correspondingly, the invocation of power from higher spheres is the goal of every white magician. To be sure, we are dismayed by some aspects of Renaissance magic—as much as we are repelled by the crude sorcery, prevalent in prehistory and continuing today, that Hermetic ideals never touched. However, we have opportunities to develop new attitudes to magic; and, in that regard, much depends on perspective. What, from below, might seem like a futile attempt to defy inviolable laws of nature is seen from above as the use of higher mind—*Nous*, *Mens*, or *Manas*—to manipulate subtle energy within a framework of more comprehensive laws. We are reminded that the initiatory path demands mastery of magic as an instrument of service and the means to build a new world order for the Aquarian Age.

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[1] The name "Paracelsus" meant "comparable to Celsus," the latter being the famous Roman physician whose work dominated western medicine until the 16th century.

[2] Paracelsus, "Celestial Medicines," *The Archidoxis*, treatise II, chap. 1, trans. R. Turner (Paris: Ibis Press, 1656/1975), 114. Quote transcribed into modern American English.

[3] Paracelsus, "Of Occult Philosophy," *The Archidoxis*, treatise II, chap. 1, 81-82. Quote transcribed into modern American English.

[4] *Fama Fraternitatis*, 1614. See the discussion in Frances Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (London: Routledge, 1972), 61, 301.

[5] Considering the number of Dominicans who engaged in Hermeticism, it is ironical that the Order played so prominent a role in the Inquisition that persecuted them.

[6] Frances A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), 370. In the Hermetic view, Plato's utopian dream was perfectly understandable since he had derived his wisdom from Hermes.

[7] *Ibid*.

[8] *Ibid*., 376, 384-392.

[9] Thomas Aquinas (attributed to), *Aurora Consurgens*, ed. Marie-Louise von Franz (Toronto: Inner City Books, 2000).

[10] The primary manifestos were the *Fama Fraternitatis* and the *Confessio Fraternitatis*. The mythical Christian Rosencreutz, mentioned in the *Chymical Wedding*, was viewed as a magus in the Hermetic tradition.

[11] Paracelsus, Prologue to "Of Occult Philosophy," treatise II, chap. 1, 30. Quote transcribed into modern American English.

[12] Paracelsus, "Secrets of Alchymy," treatise II, chap. 8, 28. Quote transcribed into modern American English.

[13] Paracelsus, "An Election of Time to be Observed in the Transmutation of Metals," *The Archidoxis*, treatise II, chap. 1, 159-160.

[14] Dee's preface to Euclid began with an invocation to "Divine Plato." See Frances A. Yates, *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age* (New York: Routledge, 1979), 94. Plato had been the primary expositor of Pythagoras' theory of number.

[15] Dee may have served as the model for the magus Prospero in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

[16] Yates, *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Ag*e, 96.

[17] Skeptical colleagues dismissed his interest as a symptom of encroaching dementia.

[18] Boyle declined the presidency of the Royal Society because of reluctance to swear an oath.

[19] Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, 248. The Rosicrucian Manifestos promised that the Invisible College would teach "without books or marks all the languages of the world…and draw man from error."

[20] The methods he used came to be called "higher criticism" and were applied to scripture, outraging religious conservatives.

[21] The name appeared on an inscription on the second-century BCE Ibis shrine at Sakkara, Egypt. See Clement Salaman, Dorine van Ovin, and William D. Wharton, *The Way of Hermes* (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 2000), 80.

[22] The term was a contemptuous parody of the words of consecration: *Hoc est enim corpus meum.*

[23] The three-volume work was published in Rome in 1652–1654.

[24] That notion seems less fantastic when we recall that the medieval Kabbalists believed that the Hebrew alphabet was of sacred origin.

[25] Tobias Churton, *The Magus of Freemasonry* (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 2004), 136.

[26] Charles W. Leadbeater, *Glimpses of Masonic History* (Adyar, India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1926), 243.

[27] Churton, *The Magus of Freemasonry*, 92-117. Churton depicts the Craft, in the 17th century, as being in transition from operative (guild) masonry to modern speculative Freemasonry.

[28] For a discussion of the Rosicrucian movement, see Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*. The Brotherhood of the Rose Cross was so secret there are doubts that it ever existed except in concept. The growth of imitative Rosicrucian organizations was severely limited during the Thirty Years War and the witch-hunts that followed. By the end of the 17th century, "Rosicrucian" had acquired a pejorative sense.

[29] *The Kybalion* (Chicago: Yogi Publication Society, 1908/1912), 17. Authorship of *The Kybalion* was attributed to "three initiates."

[30] Manly Palmer Hall, *The Secret Teachings of All Ages: An Encyclopedic Outline of Masonic, Hermetic, Qabbalistic and Rosicrucian Symbolical Philosophy* (Los Angeles: Philosophical Research Society, 1928). The book was published when the author was only 27 years old.

[31] Salaman et al., *The Way of Hermes*, 84.

[32] *The History of Magic*, trans. A. E. Waite (San Francisco: Weiser, 1913), 79-80.

[33] The archeometer is mentioned in correspondence between d'Alveydre and Papus (Gérard Encausse). See the latter's *The Qabalah* (San Francisco: Weiser, 1892/1977), 28-35. Figure 2 is reproduced from http://kingsgarden.org/English/Organizations/OM.GB/Alveydre/Archeometre.html (accessed December 24, 2008).

[34] *Sefer Yetzirah* (short version), 2:2-6, trans. A. Kaplan (San Francisco: Weiser, 1997), 262-263.

[35] Israel Regardie, *The Golden Dawn* (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1940/1971).

[36] Mary K. Greer, *Women of the Golden Dawn* (Rochester, VT: Park Street Press, 1995). See also W. Wynn Westcott, "Historic Lecture" (London: Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn).

[37] On the other hand, a major source was *Kabbala Denudata* ("Kabbalah Unveiled") by the 17th-century Christian Kabbalist, Knorr von Rosenroth.

[38] The original Society of the Golden Dawn did not last long into the 20th century, but derivative organizations still operate on both sides of the Atlantic, including the Builders of the Adytum.

[39] They include the Count of Sainte-Germain (1710–1784?), Jean Julien Fulcanelli (1877–1932), and R. A. Schwaller de Lubicz (1887–1961). For a discussion on famous alchemists throughout history see Kenneth R. Johnson, *The Fulcanelli Phenomenon* (London: Neville Spearman, 1980), 25. Also: Jacques Sadoul, *Alchemists and Gold* (London: Neville Spearman, 1970), 59-187.

[40] See, for example, Carl G. Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953); *Mysterium Coniunctionis* (Princeton University Press, 1977); *Alchemical Studies* (Princeton University Press, 1983). Also,

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Marie-Louise Von Franz, *Alchemy: An Introduction to the Symbolism and the Psychology* (Toronto: Inner City Books, 1981).

[41] A reproduction is available from Lo Scarabeo, Torino, Italy.

[42] The Visconti-Sforza deck must have contained at least 76 cards because two of the missing ones left obvious gaps in the minor arcana. Missing from the major arcana are The Devil and The Tower.

[43] Antoine Court de Gébelin, *The Primitive World, Analyzed and Compared to the Modern World*, vol. viii (Paris, 1781).

[44] Éliphas Lévi, *The Mysteries of Magic* (London: Kegan, 1897), 285.

[45] Aleister Crowley, *The Book of Thoth: Egyptian Tarot* (San Francisco: Weiser 1944/1969).

[46] The deck is often referred to as the "Rider Deck," after its publisher. The deck was designed by Arthur Waite and Pamela Coleman Smith, both members of the Golden Dawn.

[47] Yates, *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Ag*e, 148-192.

[48] Jacques Henry, *Mozart the Freemason* (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 1991). Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, published in 1791, is replete with occult symbolism.

[49] Matthew M. Ryder, "Goethe, Lessing and Schiller: German Dramatists, Freemasons, Poets and Romanticists," http://www.freemasons-freemasonry.com/ (accessed September 15, 2008).

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Figure 1. Talismanic Image for Combating Assaults on Potency
(after Paracelsus)

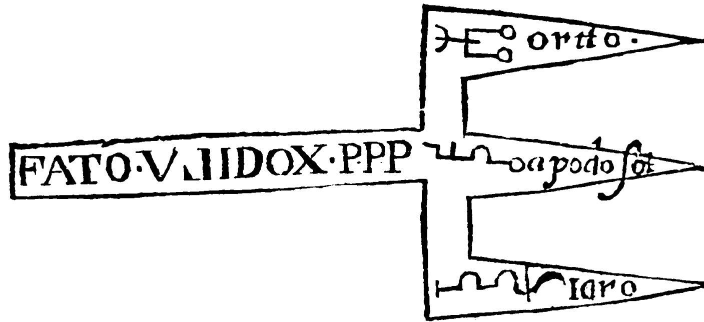

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Figure 2. Saint-Yves d'Alveydre's Archeometer

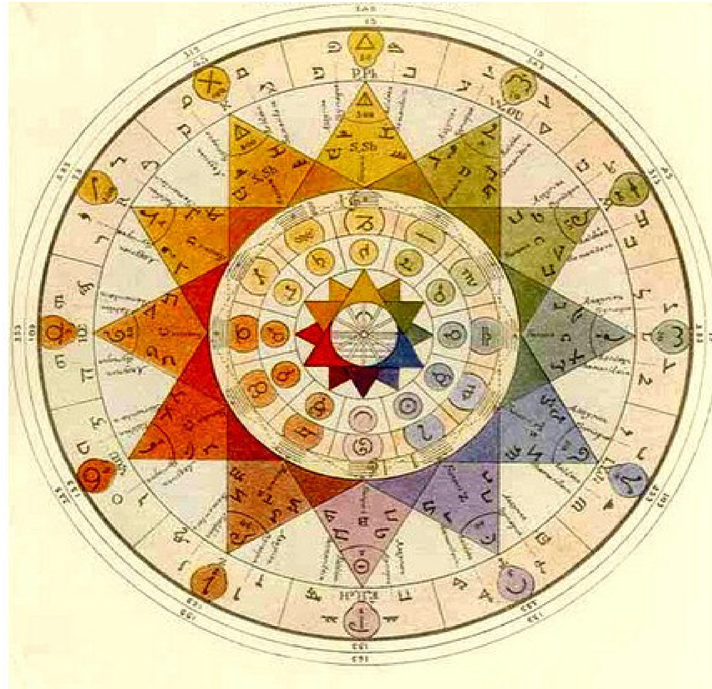

Figure 3. Two Cards from the Visconti-Sforza Tarot Deck
(with modern names)

The Hermit

The Star

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