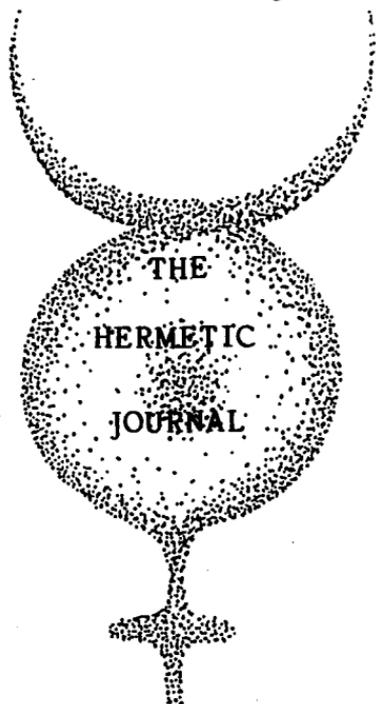


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EDITORIAL

We all recall how 1984 was ushered in with gloomy predictions of the fictional Orwellian nightmare (and in the social-political sphere we have certainly in this past year seen a consolidation of centralist governmental control under the lie of giving people more freedom). However, for myself and the perspective of the work of the Hermetic Journal, the past year has not left behind any feeling of negativity and despair, but rather it appeared spiritually as a bridge in time to a previous age. In my years of working with and studying closely, hermetic, alchemical, mystical and Rosicrucian material, I have at moments felt a special closeness to the spirit of that material as if

something of the creative energies woven into such texts had reached out across time to me. Of course, this is in no sense unique to me and most serious students and researchers of this material have similar experiences, indeed it is often such experiences that confirm and continue to inspire our further research. But 1984 appeared to me as especially charged spiritually. I experienced it as a time bridge linking me and my work back to the late 16th and early 17th century renaissance in esotericism, and felt an especial closeness to many of the personalities who were creatively working out of the esotericism of that age. And from that sense of being linked back in time there remained echoing within me the feeling that the esoteric spiritual philosophy of that renaissance period, which was

at that time frustrated from achieving its full flowering, is even now seeking to incarnate itself and find its expression in our age. Of course this might seem rather fanciful and such feelings if allowed full rein can often degenerate into naive romanticism, wishful thinking and the worse sort of sentimentality. There is happily no need to overly romanticise or invoke special karmic connections with personalities of that age, for I find the expression of such ideas are often merely projection and tedious self aggrandisement. Rather we can express the same intuitive feeling in a less personal and more universal way by viewing the collective unconsciousness or inner psyche of humanity as an organic entity growing and changing through the centuries. The seed or essence that was sown by those working in the hermetic tradition of three or four centuries ago, unable to mature during those turbulent times has now flowered and is beginning to fruit. The psychic structure of humanity obviously lives on a longer time scale than an individual life and inner changes take many generations to work through. Through an inner digestion over the centuries our souls are now ready to work with the esoteric material and spiritual impulses of that age.

During 1984 I felt this special closeness to the spiritual seeds sown in the 16th/17th century, but was also led to realise the parallels of this esotericism with the new exciting discoveries at the frontier of present day science. 1984 especially confirmed for me that the esoteric spirituality of three of four centuries ago, is still so powerfully relevant to our age, in that the ideas at the forefront of contemporary science, in fundamental physics and cosmology, fit readily into an hermetic interpretation (and my subscribers will find that during the last year I have often written on this theme in the Journal). This sense that 1984 was a bridge across time to the hermetic esotericism of a previous age, is not just my own projection. I have found this confirmed by many other people working in diverse ways with esotericism. During

1984 I received a number of letters from individuals who like myself sensed a special link with these earlier spiritual currents, and I was grateful to share my similar impressions with them in correspondence. 1984 saw the foundation of the first public research library devoted to this tradition (a full report on which I am pleased to include in this issue), and in the United States a group of scholars felt the need to form an Hermetic Academy to encourage the scholarly reappraisal of Hermetic ideas.

On the outer as well as the inner planes 1984 has proved such a vital and important year that I believe we will come with hindsight to see it served to anchor or provide a foundation stone in time upon which esotericism can incarnate itself further in our age.

The world we live in is a grim one with millions of people starving in Africa, the horrible tragedy of Bhopal, and although in Britain our problems might be of a lesser dimension, on the personal level the pain of unemployment and the lack of hope among young people often leads to the despair of drug abuse and the distortion of positive soul forces in the soul. This outer gloom that exists in our society, which so easily can depress our spirits and close us to that which is positive in humanity, I feel in 1984 has been counterpoised in the inner world by this special link with the spiritual forces of renewal, transformation and regeneration that are so much alive in hermeticism.

We will in no way see the development of a large movement towards these spiritual ideas, but I believe the stream of inspiration which has begun to flow across time can now be tapped by those who actively seek the spiritual in this way. And even if during the next few years only a few people have their spirits raised in this way, that little glimmer of positivity in the soul can radiate out to their fellow human beings, like a spiritual tincture transmuting dark despair into belief in the worthiness of human life and the exciting potentialities of the inner quest.

Ada M'Lee

Dr Deirdre Green and I as co-judges in the Rosicrucian Vault Competition have decided to award the prize to Rafal Prinke, and would like to take this opportunity to congratulate him for his fine winning entry. Rafal Prinke lives in Poland and continues to undertake valuable research into the historic roots of Hermeticism, which I trust he will continue to contribute to the pages of the Journal. I hope the prize money might help him to acquire some much needed research books and materials. The standard of entries to the competition was so very high that I decided that in order not to waste important research and the efforts of the other contributors I will shortly publish the "Compendium on the Rosicrucian Vault", containing most of the entries to the competition together with some additional material. In particular, during my research for this book, I uncovered what I now believe to be the first ever translation into English of the Fama Fraternitatis, the Rosicrucian Manifesto which first announced the existence of the fraternity and introduced the story of Christian Rosenkreutz and the Vault. I have located here in Edinburgh a manuscript English translation from which I think it can be definitely established that the "Vaughan" translation printed in 1654 was derived, and also the Earl of Balcarres Scottish dialect version that Frances Yates mentioned, a copy which I have also examined. The manuscript I have recently uncovered is contained in the alchemical papers of Sir George Erskine, privy counsellor and the closest friend of James VI and I (they were in fact brought up and educated together from childhood). I include an exact transcription of this important document in this new book which I will be able to begin printing once this present issue of the Journal is despatched. This will be published as No 4 in the Hermetic Research Series. Full details are given overleaf.

A further work I hope to publish in the Hermetic Research Series probably in May is a transcription in English of the first four books of the Lesser Key of Solomon or the Lemegetton. The first book, the Goetia, is of course available in the Mathers-Crowley version, but the other three books - Theurgia Goetia, the Art Pauline, Art of Almadel - have never to the best of my knowledge been published. One of my subscribers Kevin Wilby has undertaken a transcription of the work from a manuscript in the British Library. It is an important sourcebook on Solomonian Magic and one section throws new light on the Steganographia of Trithemius.

The Five Books of Mystical Exercises of John Dee, which I had hoped to be able to publish this month has been unavoidably delayed, but I will let my readers know as soon as it is available, as considerable interest has been expressed in this volume. A number of works are in preparation at present but I am not quite sure at this date as to what the next item in the Magnum Opus Series will be.

I hope my subscribers will welcome the new cover for the Journal, which one of my subscribers, Anthony France, was kind enough to design for me. Offers of assistance like this are invaluable to me. People who know me realise that I often cannot find sufficient time to devote to matters like the cover design, for the chores of bookbinding, and preparing material for publication, as well as the routine office work, do consume so many hours of each day and I am unable to afford to employ a secretary. So it is very agreeable when people volunteer to help.

A DOOR WILL OPEN FOR EUROPE

Marcel Messing ◉

Since January 1, 1984, the Amsterdam library BIBLIOTHECA PHILOSOPHICA HERMETICA has become known to the public. On national and international levels the press has paid wide attention to this library, the largest private hermetic-christian library of Europe.

The publications comprise : a 37 page article in the Dutch esoteric magazine Bres (No. 103, January 1984); a six page article in the French weekly Le Figaro Magazine (May 5th, 1984), with a circulation of approximately one million; the library was mentioned in the German weekly Die Zeit (July 6, 1984); there was a 7 page article in the French esoteric magazine 3^e Millénaire (June/July 1984); a 1 1/2 page long article in the cultural supplement of the Dutch newspaper NRC/Handelsblad (27th July, 1984). Within the November/December period, articles will be published in the Swiss journal Cahiers des Cathares, the American esoteric magazine Cauda Pavonis and in the Dutch Journal for librarians Open. And now this present article in the English magazine The Hermetic Journal published by Adam Mclean.

Several contacts with the worlds press and e.g. with the broadcasting companies will most likely result in arrangements with them in the coming months.

Within one year, then, millions of people - especially in Europe - have become acquainted with the Amsterdam Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica.

Reactions

The response to these articles has been overwhelming. Thousands of people reacted : by letter, by telephone or by visiting the library. Within an exceptionally short period of time a lively network of contacts within Europe and North America developed. Contacts and agreements were made with e.g. several foundations, esoteric movements, universities and educational establishments in general, whereas also individual contacts were made with several interested persons, with authors in several countries and with antiquarian booksellers all over Europe and North America (e.g. in Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Frankfurt, London, New York, Paris, Stuttgart and Zürich).

Meanwhile friendly contacts have developed with libraries such as the Herzog August Bibliothek at Wolfenbüttel, the place where the complete correspondence of Johann Valentin Andreae - consisting of more than 3000 letters - is preserved; the Bibliotheca Medicea Laurenziana in Florence; Yale University Library (Mellon Collection) at New Haven (U.S.A.); the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York; the University of Strathclyde Library (Young Collection) in Glasgow; the Museum Plantin-Moretus in Antwerp; the Amsterdam University Library; the Koninklijke Bibliotheek (Royal Library) in the Hague;

the Freemasons' Library in The Hague; the British Library in London and the Philosophical Research Society of Manly P. Hall.

In addition, through many national and international congresses and symposia, exchanges of thoughts could take place, and the library could become more widely known.

Within one year a great number of people have become acquainted with the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica. But acquainted with what? Acquainted with what purpose or meaning? To answer this question allow us to carry you back in time, time which is continuously illuminated by eternity, time which lies behind us like a snake's skin, while the spiralling movement of the snake itself goes on and on.

Wisdom is....

Wisdom is. Nobody owns it. It is not fully understood or defined. Wisdom is. It is the perpetual Truth and Love. It knows no boundaries, no definitions, no structures, no organisations. Wisdom is. Everything has sprung from it, everything shall return to it. It is the Bride of Light, the tender whisper in all creatures.

Wisdom builds its House on seven pillars, and only he who seeks it in his heart shall be found by it. Wisdom is. It turns the scientists' judgement into foolishness, the mockers' vanity into delusion, worldly knowledge into a cloud in the infinite Light.

Wisdom flourishes within all creatures, it acquires its scent in perfection, speaks all languages where mouths are silent. Wisdom is. It links everything and everybody with the one Arbor Vitae, with the one Source, with the one Truth of the everlasting Light. Those who breathe in Wisdom are linked with it, they live from heart to heart. The hearts of those who turn away from it shall be clouded; they will live in a fragmentary consciousness of the One. Wisdom is. He who forsakes it will encounter the wilderness of the other consciousness; he will meet thorns and thistles and will leave the paradise of the All-One-Being. Wisdom has no choice ... It is.

When man turns away from Wisdom, he turns away from the Truth, from Love, from Light. He creates his own surroundings out of a fragmentary consciousness and creates a world that reflects himself. When the Light-crystals in the mind are split into good and evil, a tree of good and evil will sprout from the seed of ignorance. The tree of illusion, the tree of dichotomy. Wisdom, however, remains. The Truth remains. Love remains. Man may build himself a house of limitations, but the House of Wisdom is founded on seven pillars.

When man can no longer reflect the Light, he reflects his limitations wherever he goes. He becomes the stream which separates from the Source, the branch which breaks from the one Arbor Vitae.

But Wisdom, Light and Love never departs the errant man. "God does not forsake the work of His hands". The Light shines, if gloom gathers. And Wisdom keeps revealing God's Great Plan. There is always a way "back", the connection with the All remains possible. For Wisdom is. It links the wandering with the Sons of Wisdom, God's messengers. It points at the heart of every religion: the religion of the heart. For Wisdom is.

For Wisdom and Light "God's Sons" emanated. They tried to link man with the One Source. The source of Wisdom, Love and Light. We know them under many names: Rama, Krishna, Hermes Trismegistos, Abraham, Moses, Orpheus, Aglaophemus, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Vardhamana, Buddha, Lao Tse, Confucius, Zoroaster, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel... They all drew attention to the deep ignorance of man and showed him the path of inner redemption. Buddha

already sighed: "The root of all sorrow lies in the very beginning and is being concealed in ignorance, from which life originates". And Lao Tse said in his Tao Teh King: "The highest knowledge is to know not. However, it is extremely painful to know how scant our knowledge is". Therefore Hermes already spoke the words: "Stop and become sober: perceive with the eyes of your heart again! And if all of Thee cannot do this, then at least those who are able to do so. For the wickedness of ignorance floods the whole world, destroys the soul which is locked in the body and prevents it from docking into the port of salvation". Ignorance is the true cause of sorrow, "Father forgive them; for they know not what they do," the teacher Jesus was to sigh. Seen from the human awareness of time they carried out their task in the course of time, the period before Christ - as western chronology it so considers.

In Christ all that took place "before" Him and all that comes into activity after Him is connected in the circle of the present, a zeropoint in chronology, the symbolic year one.

What under the name of MELCHIZIDEK had been transmitted to Abraham under the symbols of bread and wine, is the work of Christ the Christ as Light, Love and Wisdom, one with the Father, the All.

What Christ as a planetary Spirit bestows on the earth is the spiritual power of the Sun which can fulfil the christian mysteries in the heart of man. All peoples of the world have recognised the Sun as the source of all life. The Indian called it AGNI, the Egyptian called it HORUS or RA, the Babylonians MARDUK and later SHAMASH, the Persians spoke of MITHRAS, the Greeks of ADONIS, HELIOS or APOLLO-DIONYSIOS, the Norwegians of BALDUR or ODIN.

Countless temples, pyramids and monuments have been dedicated to the Sun: the Cheops pyramid in Egypt, the Yucatan temple in Mexico, the sun towers in Ireland, the Zikkurats in Babylonia, Stonehenge in England and Carnac in France. Countless lips formed their holy prayers addressed to the Light of the Sun; from Echnaton to St. Francis. And many a mountain became a sacred sun altar for this Light, like the MONTSEGUR, the TABOR, the OLYMPUS, the MERU and mount ATHOS. That which was worshipped and glorified, for which numerous people joined hands and reached out, what in several countries was expected in the deepest darkness of winter solstice, it is always the Light, the Light of the SPIRITUAL SUN, which is the CHRIST. It is the Light that is reflected by the Sun, which illuminates the earth in our solar system. It is the Light that keeps shining in the darkness...

In the boundless mystery of Golgotha this Light is drawn around the earth like a "cloak without seams".

What is freed by this immense deed of Love is the Strength of the Comforter, the Strength of the purifying, Sanctifying Spirit who unites with every one who lets the inner Christ come into activity within his heart. For in the heart is the "Kingdom of God", called Atman-Brahman by the Indian, Osiris in the heart by the Egyptians and called the precious jewel of the lotus by Buddha. It is the golden grain of corn, Jesu, the Rose of the heart, from which this inner Kingdom, this All-Consciousness can begin to flourish. The heart is the true "grotto" of Bethlehem, the "Granary" by which the radiant shape within man is fed, is nourished.

By Christ the periods of time before and after Christ are abolished in the zero of eternity, in the perpetual potentiality of the present.

"And look, I am with you all the time till the completion of the world", the Christ says.

All those who were seized by the Light bore testimony to it; to this day. Despite persecution, hatred, murder, death by fire, being bricked up alive,

gossip or denial. There has always been testimony to this Light. Now in private, then again openly. Sometimes by maintaining silence, by speaking or writing... He who was touched by the Light has always tried to pass on his experience, to actuate it, to express it, to sing it, to write it down. In Upanishads, in Gathas, in Mudras, in Hieroglyphs, in Psalms, in Proverbs; in poems, in manuscripts, in books... Between what is written on the ancient clay tablets, the tables of the laws, the parchment and contemporary books there often is a mere difference in time. The contents, however, repeatedly refer to the one and the same Truth, to Wisdom. For Wisdom is.

Besides the spoken word, an immense tradition of the written word developed in the Occident. Thousands who were seized by the Light have testified to it by means of hieroglyphs of Light. Many stood in the Light, breathed from it; others looked for it intensely and experienced its touch.

For the first time in the history of Europe the principal currents of hermetic christianity have now - together with other essential christocentric currents - been brought together in a unique library: the BIBLIOTHECA PHILOSOPHICA HERMETICA, a library which will have reached its completion in the year 2000.

THE TRADITION OF HERMETIC CHRISTIANITY

"It is true!
It is certain!
It is the whole truth!

Things below are like unto things above, and that which is above is like unto that which is below, for the fulfilment of the wonders of One only thing.

And like all things
emanate from the One, through one intermediary
thus all of them are born of this one Marriage.

The Sun is the father;
the Moon its Mother.
The Wind has borne it in the belly
Thereof, the Earth is its nurse."

HERMES TRISMEGISTOS (from: The Emerald Tablet)

It is about the year 1460.

COSIMO DEI MEDICI, uncrowned sovereign of Italy, commissioned the monk Lionardo to fetch some manuscripts from Macedonia. Lionardo was one of those numerous intermediaries who collected manuscripts by the classical Greek and Roman authors for the Medicis. The manuscripts were to find their destination in the LAURENZIANA, founded in 1444, and at that time the largest hermetic-christian library of Europe.

Lionardo returned from his journey with something very special; he brought Cosimo a manuscript consisting of fourteen treatises, the CORPUS HERMETICUM. It is attributed to HERMES TRISMEGISTOS, the Greek name for the Egyptian god Thoth, whom the Romans called Mercury, messenger of God. The Corpus Hermeticum soon became known as the Codex Laurentianus. Numerous treatises were attributed to this Hermes Trismegistos, such as the TABULA SMARAGDINA (the Emerald Tablet), the ASCLEPIUS and PIMANDER. Although it was presumably Apuleius of Madaura who had translated the Asclepius into Latin as early as in

It will be via Greece that Hermes Trismegistos' Egyptian theory of wisdom, from the Orient - the land of the rising sun - shall be passed on to the Occident - the land of the setting sun - and then particularly by PYTHAGORAS, PLATO and the NEO-PLATONISTS.

In the Occident we see a synthesis developing between the theory of wisdom emanating from Egypt and the initiated knowledge of the christian mysteries, which in turn have their roots in the pre-christian mysteries in general, all coming from one and the same Source. It certainly is neither without significance that in the Bible we can, regarding Jesus, read the text : "From Egypt I called my son". It is in this country that also Abraham, Moses and Aaron acquired their initiations.

In, for instance, Manichaeism and Priscillianism, in the work of the Triple League of Light (Grail, Cathar and Rosy Cross), in alchemy, mysticism and rosicrucianism we can to a greater or less extent follow the influence of hermetism in esoteric christianity, regarding that, besides this, the effect of inner christianity could find its way in an often specific way in various, groups and individuals.

Thanks to Ficino's work and the initiatives of Cosimo and Lorenzo dei Medici the Corpus Hermeticum could find firm ground in Europe. Through an elite of highly gifted people, to which besides Ficino and the Medicis also ALBERTI, POLIZIANO, LANDINO and PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA belonged, a veritable Renaissance developed in Italy with respect to religion, learning and art. Artists like Botticelli, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Titian, Albrecht Durer and many others found their inspiration with Ficino. It was a Renaissance in which the universal for then the homo universalis (the universal man) was the central point. Focuses of this Renaissance were the Academia Platonica, of which Ficino had control, and the Laurenziana library.

"And Christ, as a solitary person, has by His example given people more inspiration into leading a sincere and sacred life than all orators and philosophers can do with words," Ficino once wrote in a letter to Lorenzo dei Medici.

It was in and from Christ, in connection with the wisdom of Hermes Trismegistos, that Ficino found the inspiration for his gigantic work.

How much Ficino himself appreciated Hermes Trismegistos may well appear from his introduction to Hermes Trismegistos' book, which he dedicated to Cosimo dei Medici, Pater Patriae, Father of the Country.

"They called him Trismegistus, which means the thrice greatest of all, as he was, and the greatest philosopher and the greatest priest and the greatest king. For the Egyptians had, like Plato writes, the custom of selecting their priests from the caste of the philosophers, and their kings from that of the priests. Now where Mercury stood out high above all philosophers in insight and doctrine, he was appointed priest. And where he surpassed the priests in holiness of life and in religiousness, he obtained royal dignity. And by his legislation and rule he overshadowed the lustre of the preceding kings to such an extent that he was rightly called the thrice greatest.

Among the philosophers he was the first to lecture with deep insight into God's majesty, into the order of supernatural beings and into the changes of the souls. He has therefore been called the first theological writer. After him came Orpheus, whom the second place in ancient was allotted.

Aglaophemus was initiated in the holy doctrine of Orpheus and in theology he was succeeded by Pythagoras. His follower was Philolaus, teacher of the divine Plato. In consequence we are dealing with a harmonious and consistent school of ancient theology, formed from a

curious chain of six theologians beginning with Mercury and reaching its completion in the divine Plato. Now Mercury wrote a long series of books about the knowledge of the divine.

By the immortal God ! What concealed mysteries, what staggering oracles are revealed in these works ! Besides as a philosopher he repeatedly speaks as a prophet and predicts what is to come. He foresaw the end of the old religion and the rise of a new faith, the coming of Christ, the last judgement, the resurrection of the world and the glorification of the blessed and the punishing of the sinners..."

By Ficino's translation the Corpus Hermeticum was rescued from oblivion all at once. Before 1641 no less than 22 editions of it were published. Its influence was enormous. To this day, however, there is discussion about the actual antiquity of the Corpus Hermeticum. Some people even dispute whether Hermes really is the author of this work and whether Hermes really was of Egyptian origin, as was the opinion of the critic CASAUBONUS in the 17th century. Much more essential than the historically correct date and whether there ever had been a person who was called Hermes Trismegistos, is the spiritual significance of the Corpus Hermeticum, which is affirmed by all esotericists.

From the various esoteric instructions one can learn, for that matter, that the name Hermes Trismegistos not so much refers to one single person as to a royal and priestly family of Egyptian initiators who passed on their doctrine of wisdom in the Egyptian temples to those who had been ennobled to that end. Hermes Trismegistos is the collective term for the royal and priestly family that brought wisdom into the Egyptian temples. They were key-bearers of the secrets of the pyramids, ennobled in royal wisdom, true religion and original art.

One of the most famous temple-towns of their day was Hermopolis.



Hermes Trismegistos, pavement, Siena Cathedral.

He who has understood the splendid picture on the marble slabs of the pavement of Siena Cathedral appreciates that the Orient has passed on the hermetic wisdom to the Occident in the shape of the Corpus Hermeticum and that this theory of wisdom in connection with the christian mysteries will be determining for what within esotericism is called the development of Manasman in the Age of Aquarius. The Manasman is the man who enters into the mind-soul consciousness, the man who has entered into a bond with Pimander, the power of Mind.

At the foot of the picture we find the text : "Hermes Mercurius, Trismegistus, contemporary of Moses". In his left hand he holds a kind of tablet supported by two sphinxes, on which an almost entirely intact text in Latin can be read : "God, the creator of all things, created a second perceptible God ... and was delighted and loved him like Himself ... he, who is called the Holy Word".

The man dressed in Oriental clothes and wearing a turban here symbolises the Orient, Egypt. He is the first to receive the Corpus Hermeticum from the hands of Hermes, as we can see in the picture.

"Receive the scripture and the law, O Egyptians," we can read, then, on the book Hermes hands him. And behind the man dressed in Oriental clothes stands a western man, dressed in a monk's habit, with no beard, looking in the direction of Hermes Trismegistos. He symbolises the Occident, which after the Orient receives the Corpus Hermeticum as a foundation of the tradition of hermetic christianity.

Why a Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica ?

It is due to the spiritual work of many people that hermetic christianity could become respected in the history of western civilization.

Not only has hermetic christianity lost nothing of its topicality to this day, a wide, rising mainstream it also underwent the influence of many esoteric christian side-branches. At present it has in a very special way taken shape in the universal symbols of the Rose and the Cross. It is due to the spiritual work so many people have already carried out that for instance Rosicrucians like RUDOLF STEINER, MAX HEINDEL, JAN VAN RIJCKENBORGH and CATHAROSE DE PETRI could enter into the tradition of a universal christianity which in its very essence is rooted in the pre-christian mysteries.

That the wisdom of the Corpus Hermeticum has maintained its importance to this day may appear from Jan van Rijckenborgh's book, consisting of four volumes - which has been translated into several languages - De Egyptische Oergnosis en haar Roep in het Eeuwige Nu ("The Ancient Egyptian Gnosis and its Call in the Eternal Now") [published by De Rozenkruispers, Bakenessergracht 5, 2011 JS Haarlem, The Netherlands], an esoteric elucidation of the Tabula Smaragdina and the Corpus Hermeticum.

It is from the pre-christian mysteries that we can see how hermetic christianity through Hermes Trismegistos, Orpheus, Pythagoras, Philolaus, Plato, the neo-Pythagoreans (Apollonius of Tyana) and the neo-Platonists (Ammonius Saccas, Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus and Proclus); through the medieval mysticism of which the seed had been laid by Dionysius the Areopagite (ca. 460-540), who influenced many mystics (Meister Eckehart, Tauler, Suzo, Ruusbroeck, Geert Groote, Thomas a Kempis); through alchemy and the exceptional work of the Triple League of Light reached great prosperity at the time of the Renaissance, continuing its way in 17th century Rosicrucianism and the 18th century gnostic freemasonry and finally - after the powerful impulses

of theosophy (H.P. Blavatsky), anthroposophy (R. Steiner) and the various grail movements (of Glanstonbury and others) - finds its realisation in the pure christianity of action, under the symbols of the Rose and the Cross.

This entire mighty stream is pushed along by the Christ, who manifests himself as an everlasting Love and Light in the drift of events.

It is this immense tradition which contains the "treasure" of the Occident. It is this tradition which, by the powerful work of the TRIPLE LEAGUE OF LIGHT (GRAIL, CATHAR and ROSY CROSS) has become a living reality in these times, a House of the Holy Spirit, a field of force of Light.

When on March 16th, 1244 the "last" Cathari were burnt at the foot of Montsegur, a troubadour witnessing this horrible occurrence shouted : "Seven hundred years hence the laurel shall become green again".

In 1944, in the valley of the Ariege, A. Gadal disbands the prophecy in the presence of seven people. On May 5th, 1957 the grand masters of the Lectorium Rosicrucianum, Mr Jan van Rijckenborgh and Mrs Catharose de Petri, and the patriarch of the said brotherhood of the Cathari Mr A. Gadal erected the Galaad monument in confirmation of the living reality of the Triple League of Light : Grail, Cathar and the Rosy Cross. It is due to this Triple League of Light that the House of the Holy Spirit could develop, a field of force of Light within which the christian mysteries can be effectuated in the heart of the candidate.

Standing in the reality of this field of force - a field of force which is not bound to any structure or organisation - it is the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica in Amsterdam which disseminates the tradition of hermetic christianity as a living proof and as an organic activity in the shape of books and manuscripts.

A wave of intense longing and seeking sweeps over the world. Once again there is ample activity of the Light, now that, from the Jar of Aquarius, living water is poured out over the world and mankind.

"A door has been opened for Europe", as it had been predicted in the Fama Fraternalitatis. What was once transmitted in a whisper behind the veil of the mystery-temples, shall once "pervade the earth in open language", so the Confessio Fraternalitatis already says.

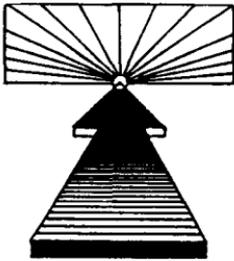
Now that it, in the year 1984, is exactly 500 years since CHRISTIAN ROSENKREUZ was laid down in the "tomb" to await the time of the full revelation of the christian mysteries, that for which the Universal Brotherhood Christi has made all the efforts shall come about in the coming years.

In order to give publicity to the christian mysteries and their grand universal tradition in Europe and to disclose these, Mr J.R. Ritman founded the Amsterdam Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica on March 16, 1957.

Time and time again we can observe in history how at certain points of time gnostic libraries were disclosed, often in connection with a gnostic Brotherhood. In this context we think of the library of the Essenes; of the libraries which were related to the Platonic and neo-Platonic philosophy; of the library of Nicholas of Cusa; of the library of Geert Grootte; of the Medicean Laurenziana Library; of Besold's private library, from which the Tübingen Circle drew its inspiration for the Rosicrucian Manifestos as they became known under the name of Johann Valentin Andreae; and of the Goethe Library in which Rudolf Steiner worked for years on end.

Working, speaking, writing and acting from the wide current which has its origin and its end in one and the same Source, the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica will try to make the most of the potentialities it has been given.

Blueprint for the future



The aims of the near future will consist of the realisation of the following projects :

The production of a Brochure. By means of this brochure foundations, esoteric movements, libraries, educational institutions, official bodies and the like will be informed of the existence of the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, its aims and its contents. This brochure will, translated into several languages, be distributed throughout Europe and North America.

The composition of a Catalogue. In the next seven years an extensive, copiously illustrated catalogue will be written in a scientific way. It will consist of four or five volumes and contain a description of the complete history of hermetic christianity. This catalogue, too, will be distributed in Europe and North America.

The composition of a European-American hermetic-christian journal. For the formation of the editorial board a selection will be made from the network of contacts with authors. From a universal approach this journal will focus on the hermetic-christian tradition as well as on spirituality in general. The journal will possibly be distributed in several languages.

The founding of a private publishing-house with a view to disseminating the hermetic christian tradition of the Occident and spirituality in general, as it has been manifested in the West.

What does the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica contain ?

First of all it must be noted that the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica consists of two libraries.

The first one is the so-called key-library containing the key collection of books and manuscripts covering the period from the 13th to the 18th century. This library is situated at 19, Bloemgracht. Besides this key-library there is a so-called work -library which has its seat at 15-19 Bloemstraat, where one can find - besides the copies of the ancient books - the books, manuscripts and journals covering the period from the end of the 18th century up to and including the 20th century. Ever since the library manifested itself the work-library has been used by the staff members of the library; there they can perform their indispensable activities. In the work-libraries there are, besides the books, manuscripts and journals, two show-cases in which ancient books or manuscripts are regularly exhibited; four Renaissance paintings : the so-called quadrivium by the painter Michelino ; several busts, including the bust of Lorenzo and of Cosimo dei Medici and several pictures and drawings concerning hermetism, alchemy, mysticism and rosicrucianism.

The books

In the work library one finds - analogous to the key-library - four principal sections: HERMETICS, ALCHEMY, MYSTICISM and ROSICRUCIANISM. Then there is a number of subsections, most of which are being built up.

This applies to the following sections, in alphabetical order: Anthroposophy, Biblia and Judaica, Bibliographical reference books, Catharism, Comparative religions, Essenes, Freemasonry, Gnosis, Gospels, Grail, (Christian) Kabbalah, Krishnamurti, Manichaeism, (General) Modern esotericism, Symbolism, Templars, Theosophy.

There is also a number of series of bound back volumes of journals like Ambix, Antaios, Eranos, Hermetic Journal, Gralswelt, l'Initiation, Lotusbluten, Sphinx and Symbolon.

Then there is a number of recent esoteric journals available like Aries, Bres, Cauda Pavonis, Gralswelt, Hermetic Journal, Jonas, Levensteken, Pentagram, Philosophy Religion Science (P.R.S.), Prana and Theosofia.

The four principal sections

Below one finds a small selection of the ancient books of which there are often copies in a more recent edition in the work-library. These books are nearly always first or second printings. When acquiring ancient books we always try to remain with the source as close as possible.

Hermetics



As the origin and the development of the hermetic tradition have already emerged in preceding discourses, suffice it to mention the most important authors and works.

In chronological order we mention : Omnia opera by PLATO (1539); the works of neo-Platonists such as PORPHYRY (De vita Pythagorae, 1610) and PLOTINUS (Opera, translated by Marsilio Ficino, 1492). By APPOLLONIUS OF TYANA : Epistolae (1709).

Of the early christian Fathers of the Church we find works of ORIGEN, CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA and LACTANTIUS, and others.

Through medieval works like those of ALBERTUS MAGNUS (De formation in utero materno, 1538), NICHOLAS OF CUSA (Opera. Basileae, officina Henricpetrina, 1565) and DANTE's Divina Commedia (1564), we can follow the hermetic line in the many works of MARSILIO FICINO (like the Sopra lo amore, 1544; De religione Christiana, 1510; Theologica platonica, 1482); PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA (Omnia opera, 1498); PÓLIZIANO (Omnia opera, 1498); the revolutionary works of GIORDANO BRUNO (De la causa, principio et uno, 1584 and De l'infinito universo et mondi, 1584); the works of COMENIUS (Unum necessarium, 1713); CAMPANELLA (Civitas solis, 1643) and a series of other authors.

There are several books concerning HERMES TRISMEGISTOS, such as Hermes Trismegistos, Ascleipus, 1657; Hermes Trismegistos, Erkanttuss der Natur, 1706. Hermes Trismegistus, Libelli integri; Et fragmenta. Asclepii, 1591. Hermes Trismegistus. Mercurius Trismegistus, Pimander. Asclepius, 1505.



By Alchemy one usually understands the ancient science of finding the "Philosopher's Stone". The word is cognate with the Arabic word Al (the) and the Greek word chemo (to pour). The Italian word alchimia refers to the "art of making gold" and the Arabic al-kimija means chemistry and originally "philosopher's Stone". It may also be connected with the Egyptian word kemi, which means "black" and has something to do with the name Egypt.

The roots of alchemy are very old and in several cultures the art of it was or is practised (China, Egypt, India, Greece, Europe).

In the Hellenistic period Alexandria also was a centre of alchemy. In view of the alchemic texts on the Tabula Smaragdina Hermes Trismegistos was considered the founder of alchemy for a long time.

When the Hellenistic culture drew to a close, it was the Arab world which absorbed the knowledge of the Greeks and with that their alchemy.

Between 800 and 1300 we therefore see the coming into prominence of influential Arab scholars and alchemists such as AL-KINDI, AL-FARABI, AVICENNA and AVERROES. It was only through the Arab culture that the West was able to well absorb the Greek knowledge and with that also alchemy. Especially JABIR IBN HAYYAN (721-803) by his works had a strong influence on alchemy.

Of high importance, too, was the work Turba Philosophorum (the philosophers' conference) which the West got back through the Arabs.

For a long time western alchemy mainly focussed on EMPEDOCLES' theory of the four elements, which was extended by ARISTOTLE. Aristotle put the case that the four properties: hot, cold, humid and dry, formed the basis of the four elements : fire, air, water and earth.

Medieval alchemy was mainly based on the theory of the Greeks, the Egyptians (Hermes) and the Arabs, while it also contains scholastic elements.

In the middle ages it was especially ALBERTUS MAGNUS, teacher of St Thomas Aquinas, ROGER BACON, RAYMONDUS LULLIUS, PETRUS BONUS and BASILIUS VALENTINUS who occupy an important place. In the 16th and 17th centuries alchemists like PARACELSUS (1493-1541) [founder of the theory of the three principles : salt, sulphur and mercury, corresponding with body-earth, soul-air and mind-water]; ROBERT FLUDD (1574-1637); HEINRICH KHUNRATH (1560-1605); MICHAEL MAIER (1568-1622); MICHAEL SENDIVOGIUS (1556-1636); JAN BAPTISTE VAN HELMONT and others put their mark upon alchemy.

Roughly speaking alchemy can be divided into four currents of alchemists :

- a. The theoreticians who commented upon the various authors.
- b. The metallurgy-scientists and those who studied the minerals.
- c. The coiners and swindlers who shrank from nothing to emphasize their deceit by means of all kind of magical actions. Under the disguise of searching for the "Philosopher's Stone" they were actually looking for fame, power and pecuniary profit.
- d. The spiritual alchemists who, according to what they said, practised the only true alchemy, the divine art leading to the discovery of the "Philosopher's Stone" in man himself. In this form of alchemy it comes to four elements : fire, air, water, earth; three principles : salt, sulphur and mercury; two seeds: male and female, and one fruit : the tincture developing from the amalgamation of the masculine and the feminine. ZOZIMOS already described the spiritual transformation of the alchemist in the Opus Magnum. In his writings BASILIUS VALENTINUS states that the true alchemist should unite the masculine and the feminine into the chemical nuptials; PETRUS BONUS

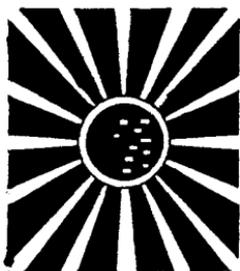
emphasized the spiritual side of alchemy as an art which was revealed by God; ROBERT FLUDD and MAIER saw alchemy as a royal art coming from God; FLAMEL drew a parallel between the Philosopher's Stone and the Christ in man, and PARACELTUS once remarked : "The light of nature is the quinta essentia, extracted by God Himself from the four elements, and it lies in our heart".

It is this last category of alchemists with whom we can find the true "noble art", the art of inner transmutation and transfiguration by means of Philosopher's Stone in the heart. This, for that matter, does not rule out that they were not infrequently interested in the metallurgical side of alchemy, which in its very essence also has to do with the art of transformation.

In the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica one finds many alchemical works concerning this last-mentioned category, often imbued with hermetic influences. We mention, in alphabetical order, only some of the most important authors and works.

A.B.C. vom Stein der Weisen (1778-1779). ALBERTUS MAGNUS, Secretorum tractatus (1610) and De cosa minerali (1557). De alchimia opuscula complura (1550). ALI PULI, Centrum naturae concentratum. Of een tractaet van het wedergeboorne sout der nature (1694). ALTUS, Mutus Liber (1677). ARNALDUS DE VILLANOVA, Chymische Schrifften (1683). Ars chemica. HERMES TRISMEGISTUS, Tabula Smaragdina (1566). ELIAS ASHMOLE, Theatrum chemicum Britannicum (1652). ROGER BACON, De arte chymiae (1603). BASILIUS VALENTINUS, Von dem grossen Stein der Uhralten. Neben angehängten Tractätlein (1651). BERHARDUS TREVISANUS, Chemische Schrifften (1643), ROBERT BOYLE, Chymista scepticus vel dubia et paradoxa chymoci-physica (1668). DREBBEL, Gründliche Auflösung von der Natur und Eigenschafft der Elementen (1715). Karl von ECKARTS-HAUSEN, Chimische Versuche über die Radical-auflösung der Körper (1801). NICOLAS FLAMEL, Das Buch de hieroglyphischen Figuren (1673). GEBER, De alchimia. Liber investigationis. Liber trium verborum. Epistola (1529). HERMES TRISMEGISTUS, Apocalypsis (1608); Gülden Tractatlein (1674); Tabula smaragdina (1566). Hermetisches Museum (1783-1785). HEINRICH KHUNRATH, Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae (1608). LAMBSPRINGK, De lapide philosophico (1625). RAIMUNDUS LULLIUS, Mercuriorum liber (1567). MICHAEL MAIER, Civitas corporis humani (1621). Musaeum hermeticum (1625). THEOPHRASTUS PARACELTUS, Chymische Schrifften (1598); Wunder Artzney und verborgene Geheimnisse Allerheimnisse (1586). MICHAEL SENDVOGIUS, Fünf und fünfzig Briefe (1765). GOOSEN VAN VREESWIJK, De Goude Leeuw (1671). GEORG VON WELLING, Opus mago-cabalisticum et theologicum. Vom Ursprung und Erzeugung des Saltzes (1719).

MYSTICISM



Mysticism is based on knowledge of God obtained from one's own experience. The christian mystic eventually discovers that the Christ is in him or herself. There is no need for a priest as an intermediary. Man himself should become a king-priest. Therefore the church very often dissented from mysticism. Yet many mystics came from the ranks of the church. Priests, monks, beguines; it was especially they who, by their mystical experiences, tried to propel the church to innovation. What usually awaited them was, just like the alchemists, unfortunately the charge of heresy or worse...

Especially in the middle ages mysticism had an enormous influence in Europe

and even far outside it. DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE (ca. 460-540) from Asia Minor, a disciple of St. Paul, had already sowed the seed of the later christian mysticism of the Occident. As one of the men of consequence he shall connect Plato's spiritual wealth and the ideas of the neo-Platonists like PLOTINUS and PROCLUS with the Indian doctrine of wisdom in order to pave the way for christian mysticism.

Numerous later christian mystics referred to his work, especially in their definitions of what God is not. In the early middle ages it was mystics like HILDEGARD VON BINGEN, HADEWYCH and St FRANCIS OF ASSISI who let their experiences of the inner sun of Christ shine over the Occident. Christian mysticism culminated in MEISTER ECKEHART (1260-1327), a contemporary of the great Dante. Influenced by Dionysius the Areopagite, Plato, Plotinus and Proclus, he sowed his enlightened christian ideas into the hearts of a whole later generation of mystics. Through the spoken and the written word he keeps mentioning God's rebirth in man. The "sparkle of the soul", the inner Christ, should be kindled. The German mystic JOHANN TAULER (1300-1361), the Dutch mystic JAN VAN RUUSBROEK (1293-1381), the Swabian mystic HEINRICH SUZO (1295-1365) and many others were touched to the heart by Meister Eckehart. Tauler speaks of the "Godlike essence in man", Suzo does not omit chanting "God's eternal wisdom", the Sophia, and Ruusbroeck - who was a friend of Tauler and GEERT GROOTE, founder of the "Brethren of the Common Life" - wrote his book Dei chierhei der gheestelijke Brulocht.

THOMAS A KEMPIS (1380-1471), author of the world famous book "De Imitatione Christi", as well as NICHOLAS OF CUSA were inspired by Ruusbroeck and Eckehart.

In the 16th and 17th century we see mystics like TERESA OF AVILA (1515-1582), who spoke of the "intimate intercourse with God" and St JOHN OF THE CROSS (1542-1591), poet of the Spiritual Canticles, who let the Light of the inner Christ shine over Europe. The German mystics SEBASTIAN FRANK (1499-1542), VALENTIN WEIGEL (1533-1588), SCHWENCKFELD and many others referred to the inner Christ in the heart, just like the French mystic MADAM GUYON and the English JANE LEADE.

A culmination in mysticism is reached in JAKOB BOEHME (1575-1624), whose work not only influenced Rosicrucianism, but also, to this day, brought about a philosophical reformation in those who were receptive to his "Aurora". After him many mystics left their mark upon the christian Occident, like ANGELUS SILEZIUS, LOUIS CLAUDE DE SAINT MARTIN (the "unknown philosopher") and WILLIAM BLAKE.

In the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica many important works of the mystics in the history of christian mysticism are represented, like works of Johann Arndt, Jakob Boehme, Meister Eckehart, Karl von Eckartshausen, Sebastian Frank, Joh. Georg Gichtel, Jeanne-Marie Guyon, Jane Leade, John Pordage, Jan van Ruusbroeck, Louis Claude de Saint Martin, Schweffeld, Angelus Silezius and Tauler.



As a guest lecturer Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) once said to his German audience : "Wisdom builds its House on seven pillars : it is the seven sciences. This House first stood in Egypt, then in Persia, then in India, then in Italy and now in Germany".

In the Germany of before the Thirty Years' War the expectations as to a reformation were at its strongest. It was in this country that a great philosophical, literary and especially religious tradition had been built up. It was therefore Germany which had a fertile soil for the dissemination of the christian mysteries under the symbolic name of CHRISTIAN ROSENKREUZ. What as early as in the middle ages had been freed of the power of Christian Rosenkreutz in the mystery of the C.R.C. and the College of Twelves was to be developed in the work of the 17th century Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross ; active from the Christ-impulse under the symbols of the Rose and the Cross. A House of the Holy Spirit had to be built, a field of force of Light.

When the Rosicrucian Manifestos see the light, a turbulent wave swept over Europe. The Fama Fraternitatis (1614), the Confessio Fraternitatis (1615) and the Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosenkreutz anno 1459 (1616) appeared respectively.

Johann Valentin Andreae is mentioned as one of the main joint authors of the Manifestos. The Fama and the Confessio not only reflect the spirit of that time, but they primarily show the way to the christian mysteries, as it is so beautifully transmitted in the initiation-narrative of the Chymische Hochzeit - a work bearing resemblance with Dante's Divina Commedia. On the fourth day of the Chemical Nuptials we are told that "Hermes is the Original Source".

The Manifestos proceeded from the Tübingen Circle, which drew its inspiration partly from BESOLD's extensive private library. The enormous wave of perturbation made people into advocates or adversaries of the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross. The crowd did not understand the spiritual significance of the Rosicrucian impulse sufficiently, so that many charlatans, would be Rosicrucians and would be alchemists could cause a lot of confusion. IRENAEUS AGNOSTUS defended the true spiritual Brotherhood and criticised all that had to do with pseudo-Rosicrucianism. MICHAEL MAIER and ROBERT FLUDD wrote works in defense of the true Rosy Cross (Silentium post clamores and Summum Bonum respectively). THEOPHILUS SCHWEIGHARDT explained in his book Speculum Rhodo-stauroticum what should be meant by the House of the Holy Spirit and Andreae himself, too, wrote several books, which for many people did not always elucidate the situation. On top of this turmoil Andreae dissociated himself from Rosicrucianism as it was understood by the crowd. He tried to carry on his work in the Societas Christiana, where he, having done his tiring work, handed on the torch to COMENIUS, who especially in England disseminated the Rosicrucian thought in the gnostic freemasonry (Royal Society).

After the 17th century many impulses will follow, as it may appear from the publication of the Geheime Figuren. Die Lehren der Rosenkreutzer aus dem 16ten und 17ten Jahrhundert. Oder einfältig ABC Büchlein (Altona, 1785-1788). The Geheime Figuren form a compendium in which all esoteric-christocentric ideas of that time find concrete shape. Therefore it contains ideas and symbols from hermetism as well as from the christian Kabbalah, alchemy, mysticism and Rosicrucianism, at which we can perceive the influence of

authors like Jakob Böhme, Georg von Welling, Khunrath and Maier.

In various Rosicrucian movements and in individual we can still follow the activity of the christian mysteries under the symbols of the Rose and the Cross up to the present day Lectorium Rosicrucianum, which succeeded in realising the House of the Holy Spirit with the help of the Brotherhood of Life and the Universal Fraternity.

In the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica one finds several books and manuscripts concerning Rosicrucianism. We find for instance, the works of Johann Valentin Andreae and the books that have been of influence on the Fama Fraternitatis, like TRAJANO BOCCALINI's work De ragguagli di Parnasso (1614-1618); and of course the first printings of the Fama Fraternitatis and the Confessio, the various Rosicrucian works of Robert Fludd, Michael Maier, Schweighardt and Irenaeus Agnostus as well as several editions of the Geheime Figuren, among which there are two manuscripts.

MANUSCRIPTS



The manuscript department forms a special part of every library. The manuscripts in the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica quite simply form a precious treasure.

It is not without significance that a number of extremely rare and very fine 13th century GRAIL MANUSCRIPTS have found their ultimate destination in the library.

These are inspired by the poetical works of ROBERT DE BORON, named Li Livres dou Graal, which were later rewritten in prose for which also CHRETIEN DE TROYES' Perceval served as a source of inspiration. Besides these wonderful Grail manuscripts, which at the same time - in

the form of splendid miniatures - relate the story of Lancelot, La Queeste del Saint Graal and Mort de roi Arthur, the library is also in possession of a book dating from 1532 : Cest l'histoire du saint Graal (This is the History of the holy Grail).

What is certainly worth mentioning is the manuscript by RAIMUNDUS LULLIUS which dates back to 1446 and is entitled Theoreticae Testamentum. Then there is a 15th century Greek manuscript of the Golden Poems of Pythagoras; a German manuscript about the Quinta Essentia by BASILIO VALENTINO dating from 1480; a Dutch manuscript without date about Ali Puli; an English manuscript dating from 1650 : Of the infinite Universe and innumerable worlds by GIORDANO BRUNO; a French manuscript concerning Les clavicles de Salomon (The keys of Salomon) dating from 1781; a wonderful manuscript of the Geheime Figuren der Rosenkreutzer aus dem 16ten und 17ten Jahrhundert. Aus einem alten Manuscript zum erstenmal ans Licht gestellt, Altona 1785; a manuscript in Dutch by G.A. SALLWIGT (Welling) dating from 1708, entitled Opus Mago-Cabalisticum et theologicum. Van den oorsprong en afkomst des Zounts. And finally a splendid 18th century manuscript by ISABELLE VON HL. GEIST: Das dritte Thail der Emblematum.

The library aims at expanding the number of manuscripts correlating with the hermetic-christian tradition.

APPOINTMENTS

For the time being the library will be open on Mondays and Tuesdays from 9.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. for all those who, in one way or the other, seriously occupy themselves with hermetism, e.g. with a view to the preparation of lecture, publications, research, etc. If one would like to be considered, one is requested to contact Mrs. J. Bouman M.A. by telephone (020 - 25 80 79 or 020 -25 90 96).

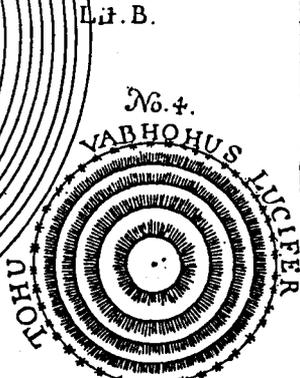
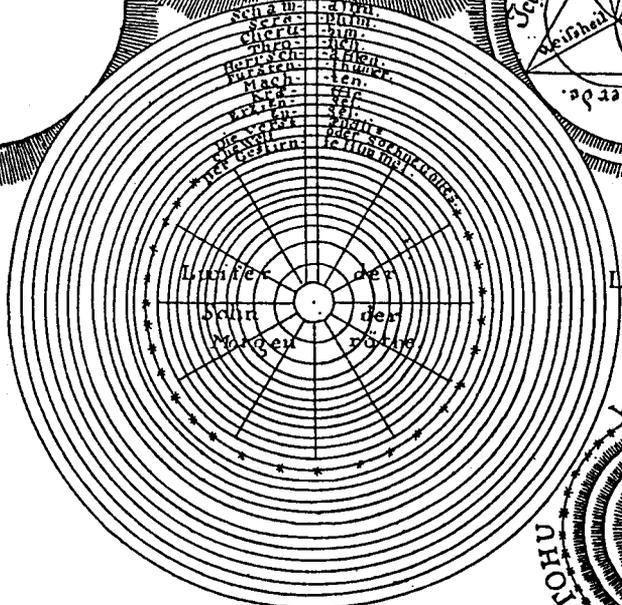
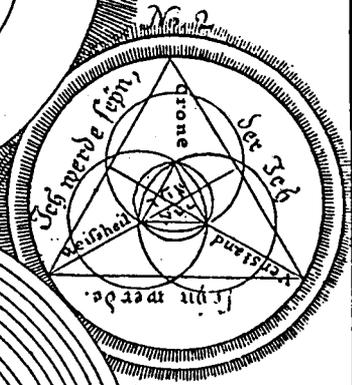
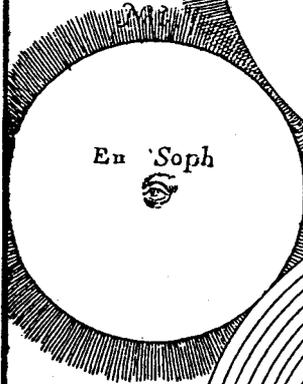
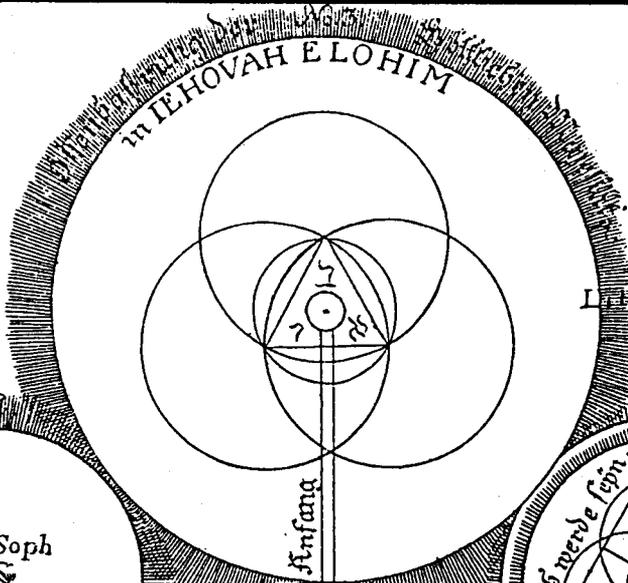
The library is unable to lend out any books or manuscripts and these must be consulted on the library premises.

Present staff

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| Mr J.R. Ritman | Founder of the Library; general co-ordination and final responsibility |
| Mr F.A. Janssen Ph.D | Librarian, keeper of the books and manuscripts; responsible for among other things the management and the bibliographical aspect of the library. |
| Mr M.M. Messing M.A. | Research fellow; responsible for the factual aspects of the hermetic-christian tradition. |

Mr Janssen and Mr Messing are assisted by Mrs J. Bouman M.A. and Mrs M. Messing-Groot respectively.

The library also has a number of freelances at its disposal.



CLAVIS OP. Tab. I.

For this issue, rather than adopting the usual form for this feature and commenting in depth on the symbolism of a mandala, I will instead allow an important alchemical writer to speak for himself. So I reproduce here an engraving from the edition of the *Opus Mago-Cabalisticum* of Georg von Welling which was published in 1788. This edition had three treatises, one on Salt, one on Sulphur and a third on Mercury, with a shorter section appended called the *Clavis Opera*, the "key to the work". The book was illustrated with fifteen fine engravings (each containing a number of diagrams) which have in my opinion never been adequately investigated or commented upon. I have chosen the first illustration from the *Clavis* for this feature, and I have to thank Gisela Kirberg for translating the text referring to this illustration from the original German for me. I think the reader will agree that Von Welling's text and illustrations provide a fascinating glimpse into a stream of alchemical esotericism preserved into the late eighteenth century, and that this is one work that should be translated and published in an English edition. Because of the length and difficulty of the text I have not been able to find anyone willing to take on such a project, however this short extract gives a picture of what was working through Von Welling's great treatise.

Diagram No. 1. - En Soph

This is the unfathomable deep of the Divine Majesty, which cannot be conceived of in terms of space and time, but is an everlasting, never ending eternity, a continuous welling up of unimaginable joy within its own light, without a single manifestation or designation. Thus says Christ, son of the living God (Matth, xix,17; Mark,x, 18; Luke,xviii) : 'No one is good except God alone'. And as 'God' and 'good' in the German language have originally the same meaning, so the Lord Jesus wanted to say with these words, that this unfathomable deep of the inexplicable Majesty is the infinite goodness, namely God - that is, good. And there was, before any of this good or God was manifest in Creation, not other word to name this but GOOD, that is the inherent, goodness, namely God, according to the words of our Lord Christ as quoted above. In the original text of the scripture 'good' means , per Athbatsch, but , that is: soul. The original text of the Scripture says (Gen. II, 7) '... and He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Thus the man became a living creature' (nepesch).

These words tell us the true origin of our souls, and how perfect they were before the fall of Adam. Our Saviour says : 'No one is good except God alone'. Thus this unfathomable Majesty, or GOOD, is only one God, as Moses (Deut VI,4) testifies to Israel when he says : 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, one Lord. There is no other' (VI,35). This our God has neither a beginning nor an end. He is not within time, but all times are revealed through creation, and they will end after their own manner, when everything will have been made subordinate to Christ, the prince of victory and ruler of all the world, 'then the Son himself will also be made all things subject to Him, and thus God will be all in all' (I. Cor. xv,28). 'On that day the Lord shall be one Lord and his name the one name' (Zach. xiv,9).

Diagram No. 2 - Ehjeh ascher ehjeh : I am that I am.

This diagram is not an illustration, but a meditation on the infinite divinity and on the words of our Lord and Saviour, (Matth. xxviii,19) 'in the

name of God the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit'. To make an image of God has been most strictly forbidden and punished (Exod. xx,4,5; Deut. vi,15,16,17,18,19; v,8). Moses says (Deut. vi,15) 'On the day when the Lord spoke to you out of the fire on Horeb, you saw no figure of any kind'. (iv,33) 'Did any people ever hear the voice of God speaking out of the fire'. ((iv,36) '...and on earth He let you see His great fire'. (iv,24) 'For the Lord your God is a devouring fire'. (ix,3) 'Know then this day that it is the Lord your God himself who goes at your head as a devouring fire'. All of these things a true Theosophus must meditate on in a devout spirit. Then he will know and understand fully the nature of the true God : Father, Son and Holy Spirit, (without any of the sectarian hue and cry, and the definitions and descriptions which sick minds think up), as far as it is possible to understand Him in this our mortal soul. The fact that a burning light is a devouring fire does not require any proof other than holding one's finger into it. The Almighty God has appeared to Moses in a bush (Exod. iii), in a fiery-flame, (namely the Angel of the Lord, Christ), and we have quoted above the many times He has been referred to as a fire by Moses. No reasonable human being would deny that the effect of a flame is threefold, namely one of glowing, warming and burning, yet it is only one thing (essentialis substantia), but its manifestation is threefold and it would be absolutely impossible to separate one of these effects from the light or flame and it still remaining a light or flame. But enough, and no more of this !

Diagram No.3 - The Manifestation of the Divine Majesty in Jehovah Elohim.

...To give a complete explanation of this diagram will not be easy. The Almighty God is without beginning and without end and within Himself contains the highest and most sublime ecstasy , and there was nothing outside Him which could have added to it. But in order that something could share and partake in this sublime joy and perfect bliss, now and in all eternity for the praise and honour of His unfathomable Majesty, He has in the beginning created the spirit-world (Lit. B), of which has been spoken extensively in this work, as far as is possible to speak of it. The scripture says that God has created the world from nothing. But this Nothing is as inconceivable and indescribable as the divinity itself, and such a Nothing, as it is taught in the schools, is to be found neither within God nor without Him.

For before creation there was nothing but God everywhere, and nothing other than God. Therefore any descriptions of the void are but pathetic and pedantic sophistry. For the enlightened man must follow from this, inevitably, that all creation, whatever its name, has emanated from God Himself. And because God is the most perfect and greatest Good, it could not be in any other way than that all creation is equally perfect and good, insofar as one part can partake of the whole to which it belongs. Thus the Scripture says (Gen. i,31) : 'And God saw all that he had made, and it was very good'. But what was this very first emanation (the so-called Nothing or Void) from the Divine Majesty ? Although it is called three different things, it has no real name by which it can be conceived. Therefore it is called Nothing. The wise men, however, call it, in its separated substance, Salt, Sulphur and Mercury, a single being, Aeschmajim, a fiery water, see Lit.C. In this spirit-world Lucifer, Son of the Dawn was the centre point (see Lit. B), the most powerful Prince, and around him were the other hierarchies or angel-worlds. The starry sky was everywhere, an unfathomable space filled with star worlds...

...A brief account has been given above of how this fallen prince was created in goodness and perfection as the very first emanation of the Divine Majesty, together with the angels who fell with him and all other angels and spirits. But because he has raised himself, through the power of his glory, to rule independently in his realm, like the Almighty God his creator, he has broken away from the unity of the first Being of Light, and has become a tangible but indescribable darkness. His origin was light = fiery water; his separation from the divine transformed him, together with all his countless millions of angels, into a thick salt = Sulphur salty water, Thohu Vabhohu, a chaos in which the sums of all the creatures of this cosmos, those on the surface as well as those in the womb of the earth as well as in the sea and all waters, were contained, concealed and locked, and formed after the ideas in Fiat. But how through, God's grace, was this our world or sun-system separated and created out of that thick, dark watery morass, and conceived as archetypes in Fiat, and made manifest during the six days of creation? This we have gone into in some detail in part 1 of this treatise on Salt, on the basis of the text of Genesis. Thus it remains only to be repeated that through Lucifer's fall the original being of Light, from which emanated all creation in the spirit-world, is not manifest on this earth in its original unity but specifically in each and every creature in and on this sublunary world according to its kind and character, and thus it is called, in analogy to a higher principle, Salt, Sulphur and Mercury....

...But to say a few more words about the diagram Thohu Vabhohu : the undissoluble integrity of the words with which the divine spirit in Moses has described creation, that although the waters Aesch-Majim are separated from our s, Majim, and the heavens are filled with our sun-system, yet these flow into our waters and the ideas of all seeds are introduced into it, as into a Matrix, and these then are enclosed in this Matrix in the earth, being the whole body, and become corporeal. No true Theosophus can deny that a watery light or fiery water (Aesch-Majim) comes closest to the conception conceived in Elohim through Fiat, yea, that the forms of the ideas of all creatures are inherent within them, nor that Aesch-Majim (a fiery salt-spirit) is the conservation of all bodies until they disintegrate. But that this Sulphury, Mercurial, Salt-spirit is to be found more in one creature than in another and that it is contained in these creatures almost indestructably - this must be well known to a true philosopher. This is also why they have trodden so many paths to get this universal Mercury, which is also universal Sulphur and Salt. But a diligent reader of their works will also have noticed how many of them have gone astray most dreadfully. There is nothing more nonsensical and ridiculous than for people to combine all the Principia of these authors to try and reduce them to one Principium, as their teachings are contradictory within themselves. If the compass needle does not have an eager magnet, it will inevitably lead the seafarer to destruction. Therefore, a good magnet is the basis for all seafaring. If one has it, the Vessel is easily found. But those who plan their seafaring and fishing in accordance with the elements like wind and weather, easily reach their goal, but they must be able to make the correct Manson (sic), otherwise their fishing will be all in vain, and all their seafaring to Colchis would be for nothing. Therefore, some knowledge of astronomy would be very useful to such a seafarer, at least he should have a fair idea of the aspects and movements of the planets, otherwise he will find instead of the dust of the Earth Hevila nothing but empty wind and water, without having seen a single speck of the right Apar, Bdelion and Onychel, from which it gained, through an interchange of letters, the true Ophir.



SPIRITUAL
COSMOLOGY
IN
MODERN
SCIENCE

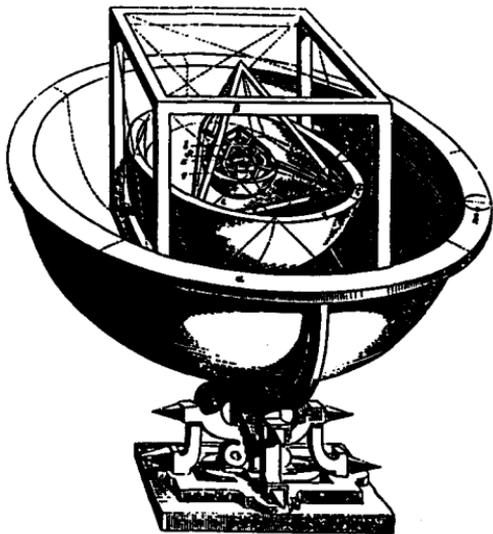
Adam
McLean ◉

Our present age is a challenging one for esotericists and those sensitive to a spiritual view of the world. The pace of philosophical and scientific ideas has to a great extent outstripped that of twentieth century esotericists. This has often led to the development of an attitude of soul amongst some present day esotericists, that contemporary scientific and philosophical ideas are in a sense unsound and that only by our adherence to tradition can we remain in touch with the spiritual ground of creation. Thus there is the tendency among some people to elevate ancient philosophy and traditions of esoteric ideas to the level of absolute truths. However, as I have stated many times before in the pages of this Journal, the hermeticists of past centuries were fired by an enthusiasm for the new ideas pouring through their society. The Renaissance was not merely a time of the revival of ancient classical philosophy, mythology and the mystery traditions, but a period fired by the excitement of new intellectual, artistic and esoteric discoveries. Giordano Bruno, for one, was creatively inspired by such enthusiasm and intellectual curiosity grounded in esotericism. His tragic execution was a result of establishment fear of his new ideas as much as his championing of ancient spiritual philosophies which appeared as heresies to orthodox churchmen. Bruno especially dared to contemplate the cosmos from a perspective that few were able to take. A factor in Bruno's execution was the fact that he dared to contemplate the cosmos following Copernican ideas in such a way as to remove the Earth from its former privileged place at the centre of Creation, but he went even further in suggesting that there could be an infinity of worlds in the stars, thus removing the human kingdom from thinking of itself in a naive way as the nub and pinnacle of God's creation.

A few years later Galileo working entirely out of physical observation and mathematical science came from this different angle to similar conclusions, and Kepler began to publish new ideas on the structure of the Cosmos that went against the prevailing orthodoxy and indeed the esoteric tradition of the time (for Robert Fludd wrote against Kepler's new cosmology seeking to defend the tradition of the Earth-centred Ptolemaic world view).

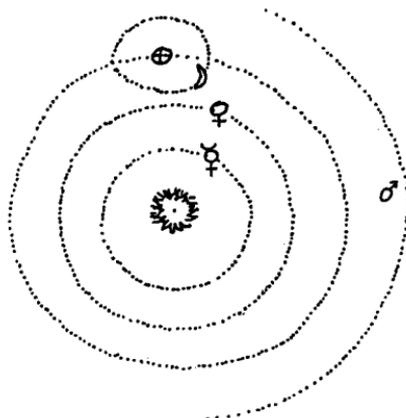
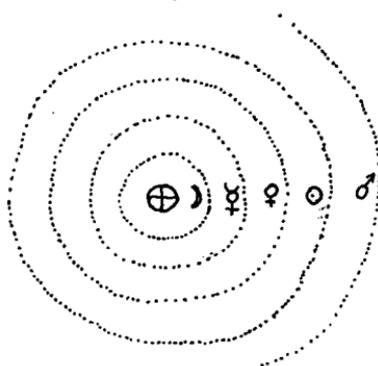
Giordano Bruno had the courage to seek the spiritual not merely in the ancient traditional esotericism in which he was well schooled but to find the spirit in the new picture of the cosmos that was beginning to arise through the work of Copernicus.

It seems strange to me that esotericism still has not taken Bruno's perceptions fully on board and that to a great extent twentieth century occultists still incarnate their cosmology within a pre-copernican world view. Of course, the Ptolemaic universe presents us with a symbolic picture rather than a physical one, and in this sense still has a certain truth to it. However, definite problems arise when we follow up its implications further.



One of the central ideas of hermetic esotericism is that "as above so below" - that which is built into the fabric of the Macrocosm is found within humanity. How can we square this with the new ideas of cosmology arising in the last decades of the twentieth century ? Do the discoveries of present day astronomers, physicists and cosmologists provide us with any spiritual perceptions ?

Certain problems arise when one tries to overlay our modern picture of the Universe with the Ptolemaic cosmo-conception within which esoteric-spiritual has been formulated up to now. An attempt to address the contradictions and unite these two world views was made by the great occultist Rudolf Steiner during the early decades of this century. Steiner knew that if we use the Ptolemaic world view as the basis for a spiritual journey through the cosmic spheres then we begin from our earth realm and ascend through the planets in the sequence, $\text{♃}, \text{♀}, \text{♀}, \text{♁}, \text{♂}, \text{♃}, \text{♄}$, to the fixed stars, however, if we try to undertake the same journey within the post copernican universe then the sequence must be different $\text{♃}, \text{♀}, \text{♁}, \text{♁}, \text{♁}, \text{♂}, \text{♃}, \text{♄}$. The sphere of the Moon is around the earth as in the Ptolemaic view, but the sphere of Venus or the region of space swept out by the planet Venus, must be traversed before one can come to the Mercury sphere, which lies closer to the sun and is nested within the Venus sphere.



Steiner's attempt to unite this with the old philosophy was clumsy and in fact quite refutable by any historian of astrology. For he claimed that what the ancient philosophers called 'Mercury' was actually 'occult Venus' and their 'Venus' was 'occult Mercury'. Such word juggling is entirely unconvincing to anyone who has deeply pondered upon these matters, and so most esotericists this century have clung to the traditional Ptolemaic world view, claiming it represents reality in an archetypal symbolic manner.

In this sense the Ptolemaic world view can be a representation of reality, but in the last few years I have felt a little uncomfortable with its dominance of our esotericism, for by slavishly adhering to it as the foundation for esoteric ideas, I fear we cannot take into our hermetic philosophy the profound spiritual implications for modern physics and cosmology. In the closing decades of the nineteenth century there was a revival of esotericism, which was to a great extent fired by the desire on the part of a group of occultists to recast esoteric ideas in a form suited to and compatible with the outward scientific and philosophical ideas of their age. Madame Blavatsky especially through her lengthy book 'The Secret Doctrine' built a bridge between the new ideas of evolution built on a radical reassessment of the age of the earth (arising through the newly emerging science of geology and the study of the fossil record), and a new esotericism (which she claimed came from ancient 'Esoteric Bhuddist' sources). Her ideas of vast cosmic periods or 'Rounds of Evolution' was further developed by the theosophists, and especially by Rudolf Steiner in his anthroposophical cosmology of planetary evolution - The Ancient Saturn, Ancient Sun, Ancient Moon and Earth periods.

I think we can see that when esotericists reach out and embrace the fundamental ideas of their own time then a vitality can be breathed into their work. During phases where esotericism is in retrenchment (as was so, say, during the 1940's and 50's) then it may be best to sink back into the old traditions. However, I believe that as we approach closer to the end of this century, we are witnessing an active phase where esoteric ideas must be recast in the metal of our present age.

Over the past year or so I have been contemplating the mysteries and esoteric ramifications of contemporary science. I find there so many clear links with hermetic ideas, and have tried to share my enthusiasm in the pages of this journal. I would now like just to indicate a few perspectives we could take that might help us step a little further in the direction of incarnating an esotericism consistent with contemporary cosmology, and how we might breath spiritual life into the hard facts that underlie present day scientific discoveries on the nature of our Universe.

To take such a step is initially rather difficult for us. The scientific view of the cosmos talks of vast distances, seemingly incomprehensible on our human scale, of objects in space so immense as to dwarf our planet Earth and indeed our solar system. How can we retain a human picture within the vast expanse of the Universe uncovered by the powerful telescopes of the present day astronomers? We sense their excitement at their discoveries, but how can we map the human onto this vast space? And how can we find that which is below in the Microcosm in that which is above in the new picture of the Cosmos that is emerging this century.

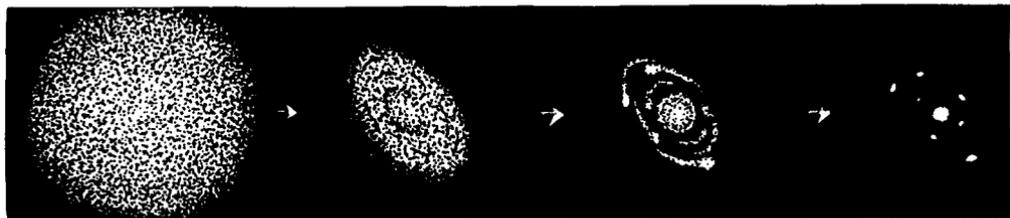
I believe we have to try to identify actual physical structures found in the new cosmology and see what spiritual life can be found there. It may seem terrifying to try to place ourselves in such immensity but if we undertake this we will find that there are certain parallels with the Ptolemaic esoteric picture though on a more vast scale.

Those of my readers who are so inclined could use the following indications

as the basis for a meditative journey.

We begin with the solid ground of our Earth planet. We can detect our first cosmic 'sphere' lying just above the Earth and below the Moon. This is a special space dominated by the Earth's gravitational field, in which objects can be bound to orbit around our planet as satellites. This space has certain spiritual qualities connected with reflecting back to the Earth part of its own essence. We see this in the recent use of this space for artificial satellites, which are used to provide communications, or investigate and measure aspects of the Earth and Cosmos that cannot be done within the Earth sphere itself. This sphere is a cosmic mirror which reflects back to us our negative as well as positive facets (thus it is no surprise that there is an attempt at present through the 'Star Wars initiative' to militarise this special region of space). The Earth's magnetic field also permeates this sphere and creates complex bands or belts of energy.

The next astronomical sphere that we can identify is that of the Solar System, the Sun with his planets. This first came into being over 5 billion



years ago, condensing out of a cloud of interstellar dust and gas. In a sense we must view ourselves as living in the solar system rather than merely on the earth. For the other planets form a continuum reaching from hot dry Mercury, where 'lead melts at Noon' (as Ray Bradbury so aptly said), out to the cold remoteness of Pluto and beyond. The planets condensed out of the disc of dust spread between these extremes that formed around the primal Sun, and in a sense we could say that only through Mercury occupying his hot seat and Pluto his dark icy realm, could a temperate region come about in which our Earth could make her orbit. Spiritually speaking, the various planets take on their various paths in order to create a space in which the Earth can make her stable and harmonious orbit balanced between the fiery heat of the Sun's rays and the cold darkness of remote space. The sun and all the planets are in a sense merely different facets of the embodiment of this one great being of the solar system, and are linked together through ties of destiny. Cosmologists reflect this in their idea that one cannot understand how the earth was formed in isolation from the sun and the rest of the planets. One must link them together as manifestations of the formation of the solar system. (Thus Selenology, the study of the Moon's geology, has thrown new light upon the way in which the earth formed itself in the earliest ages.)

The planets are thus merely parts of one being, mutually supporting and gravitationally linked together, and in that they are different organs, as it were, of the solar system, we see some basis for the role of the planets in astrology.

The next astronomical structure we must consider in our new picture of the Macrocosm, is the group of stars to which the Solar System belongs. Our Sun is part of a cluster of many thousands of stars on the outer part of one of the Galaxy's spiral arms (astronomers call it the Orion arm). This group of stars is tied together gravitationally to form a coherent group. Our nearest neighbours are the Alpha Centauri triple star system, while not too far away

lies the blue giant Sirius with his dwarf companion. The spiral arms of our galaxy have many such groups or clusters of stars, one of the best known is the Pleiades in Taurus, known to be one of the youngest open clusters of stars in the Galaxy. In some such clusters the stars are packed very close together so that they have a strong effect on each other, while in other clusters stars are all of a similar age and type. The group to which our sun belongs, is composed of a mixed population of stars and is sufficiently far from the centre of the Galaxy that we are not strongly affected by gravitational tides and intense bands of radiation in which life as we know it could not have evolved. Our cluster condensed late in the development of the Galaxy out of the remnants of an earlier population of stars, and consequently this primeval cloud of dust was composed of significant proportions of heavier elements like, carbon, silicon, calcium, iron, etc., which we know are the essential building blocks for the substance of our bodily nature. We can picture this cluster or Cosmic Sphere as presided over by spiritual being, that waited till certain conditions were right to begin its outer manifestation, initiating stellar formation in the dust of one of our Galaxy's arms. Cosmologists presently picture this as gravitational or density waves passing out from rhythmically from the galactic centre. The impression of this wave pattern on the dust of the Galactic disc produced the conditions in which stellar clusters like our own could come into being. It is purely a philosophical matter and the language one uses to picture reality to oneself, as to whether one sees this as mechanism or the work of being. Most of the stars which we picture as forming the "constellations" are members of our local star cluster. Within this cluster there are streams of energy arising from the Galactic centre and the disc and spiral arms. These energy streams which have definite orientations could be seen as the mechanism behind any influence from the "zodiac" or ecliptic and the basis for the different influences of the astrological signs. For example Sagittarius lies in the direction of the Galactic centre, which surely has a different quality from Gemini whose background is in the direction of deep intergalactic space.

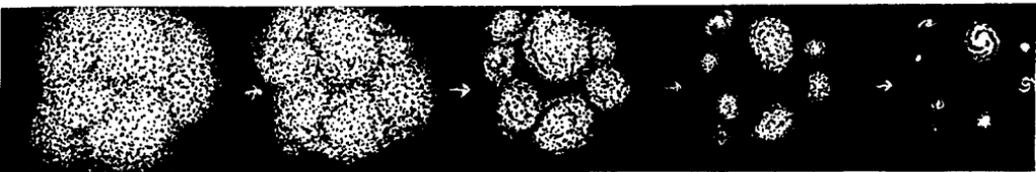
The fourth astronomical sphere is that of our Galaxy seen as a totality. The Galaxy visible in the night sky as the Milky Way, is a vast island of thousands of millions of stars tied together gravitationally. It is of vast size being about 100,000 light years in diameter, and in form can be likened to a flattened disc with a central region bulging out from the flat profile of the outer disc. It has a complex many layered architecture, astronomers have identified seven distinct structures in its makeup, with a central dense core which present speculation suggests could be a huge "black hole" or region of extreme gravitational energy. The Galactic as a whole rotates in about 220 million years, and since it is about 12 billion years old, it has gone through about fifty revolutions, or is about 50 Galactic Years old, and probably about halfway through its life as a bright active galaxy. It has gone through two phases of stellar evolution. In its early years it was probably a large elliptical cluster condensing out of almost pure hydrogen and helium forming relatively short lived stars which burnt these fuels quickly, going supernova and exploding to leave a debris transmuted into heavier elements which formed the disc with later its spiral arms. It was here that our own cluster of stars could come into being as the Galaxy's second generation. [The stages in the evolution of stars seem to have certain archetypal parallels with the alchemical process - they go through certain colour changes in sequence, from the initial darkness of the nebula of gas, to their incarnation as a hot blue star, then through a sequence of white, yellow (the stage our Sun is at), to the red stage, with ultimately the formation of a white dwarf, neutron star or black hole. During all these different stages in their evolution, stars are

involved in the alchemical nuclear transmutation of lighter elements into heavier ones.] As esotericists we should try to sense the being that lies behind the destiny of our Galaxy. The way in which that being has unfolded its activity has determined the parameters of our life, the particular way in which our life force has been able to incarnate.

The next astronomical structure we can identify as a Cosmic Sphere is the Local Group of galaxies to which our Galaxy belongs. This is a small group of about 30 galaxies linked together gravitationally as neighbours into a sphere of space about 5 million light years in diameter, separated from the nearest group of galaxies (the Virgo Cluster) by about 100 million light years.

Within the Local Group we have the famous Andromeda spiral galaxy which is visible to the naked eye, and is often thought of as a sister to our own Galaxy some 2 1/2 million light years distant, while on the outskirts of our Galaxy we have the irregular Magellanic Clouds, the Ursa Minor, and Draco systems and a group of elliptical galaxies in Leo. In some strange way this local group of galaxies are tied together in their destiny and have a common origin. The members are of different types, elliptical and amorphous clouds, as well as the spiral galaxies. This sphere of our Local Group has been able to bring into being three spiral galaxies including our own which have a stellar population capable of incarnating life as we know it. The other galaxies may be part of a process of galactic evolution which leads in a different direction with different types of stars. However, this whole group to which we belong has arisen out of a process of galactic formation and we can see this as a definite sphere of being.

The sixth astronomical sphere leads us so far out into galactic space that we can barely conceive of the vast distances involved. The groups of galaxies like our own Local Group or our nearest neighbour the massive Virgo Cluster of 2500 galaxies, are themselves tied together to make Superclusters which form sheets or string like structures in the Cosmos, with voids in between. Our Local Group is thought to be tied into a supercluster or metagalaxy centred upon the Virgo Cluster. These superclusters are the result of the clumping together of galaxies in their formation, and this irregularity in the fabric



of the Cosmos is now thought by cosmologists to be the result or reflection of irregularities and asymmetries in the earliest moments of the process of creation. Indeed, although we have travelled out a great distance in space, we have because of the finite velocity of light also travelled far back in time. So it should not be too surprising that on this vast scale we see reflected something of the early period of the creation of the universe. The beings that work in the Superclusters are in fact closer to the process of the creation than, say, the beings active in stellar systems. The threading of the superclusters of galaxies is cosmologically a result of the first few instants of creation. It is interesting that Dionysius the Areopagite in describing his hierarchy of angelic beings in the Cosmos, has the Beings furthest remote from the Earth - the Thrones, Cherubim and Seraphim of the first hierarchy - in fact, closer to the divine realm, as agents in the Creation. And, in a sense, modern cosmology confirms or at any rate echoes this view that the further we move out from the Earth sphere to the periphery

of the Cosmos the closer we come to the forces of Creation.

The ultimate sphere we can conceive of is the Universe as a totality. The outermost edge of the Universe is paradoxically (since distance in space is also time past) the first moment of Creation - the Big Bang of present day cosmology. These vast regions of space, the realm of the quasars, we will never travel to physically, but that does not mean that we cannot touch upon them in spirit. For in these deep regions of space is the reflection of the work of the Spiritual Hierarchies involved in the Creation. No space probes can ever be sent to these regions, and the only way we can relate to them must be through our intellectual curiosity and our sense of spiritual wonder. For in those vast empty spaces on the outermost edge of the Universe we come closer to the mystery of Creation.

I have pictured seven cosmic spheres leading from the Earth to the outermost edge of the cosmos. This Macrocosmic picture based on our present day view of the cosmos will be seen to have archetypal links with the hermetic cosmic picture of previous centuries based on the Ptolemaic world view. I will not pursue these archetypal links here but will leave this perhaps for some future article, and merely tabulate the corresponding spheres.

Ptolemaic	New cosmological picture
Moon sphere	sublunary
Mercury sphere	solar system
Venus sphere	local star cluster
Sun sphere	The Galaxy
Mars sphere	local group of galaxies
Jupiter sphere	Supercluster
Saturn sphere	Universe as totality

I believe we can also see, apart from the seven astronomical spheres, four stages known to cosmologists, and my earlier article 'An esotericist Looks at Cosmology', Hermetic Journal No 24, touches upon these matters and tries to put these ideas in an esoteric context.

The view of cosmic evolution articulated by Blavatsky and Steiner was couched in the scientific language of their times. 75-100 years later we have to recast their perceptions in a new form which reflects the new discoveries in cosmology and physics since those days.

As an esotericist and one who has an interest in the scientific ideas of my own era, I can see a means of linking these together. Just to take the picture Steiner described in his 'Outline of Occult Science' (1907), he there indicated, following Blavatsky's theosophical ideas, four phases of spiritual evolution in the cosmos - Ancient Saturn, Ancient Sun, Ancient Moon, and the Earth planetary stage. These can, I believe, be found in the Big Bang of the cosmologists.

Ancient Saturn is the realm of the first instants of Creation (see my earlier article) when extreme gravitational forces, emerging out of the first Planck instant (10^{-43} sec) of the Universe, wrapped space around itself in torturous whorls and rapidly changing quantum-gravitational vortices. As the universe rapidly expanded these kinks in the fabric of spacetime remained. Thus Ancient Saturn, or its remnant is also found on the outer boundary of the cosmos, for the results of this process can be seen in the clumping of galaxies into superclusters.

The next phase in the creation occurred only a minute fractional part of a second later when the strong nuclear forces separated from the gravitational superforce, and pairs of particles were pulled out of the fabric of spacetime

by this transfer of gravitational energy into the nuclear force. This was the hadron era during which a process occurred which has been called 'cosmic inflation', one of the consequences of which was the smoothing out of the gravitational vortices and the establishment of a balance between matter and radiant energy in the Cosmos. A reflection of this can be recognised later in the Universe, when the clouds of gases condensed and began to fuse their atoms of hydrogen and helium in the process of the early stellar formation in galactic nuclei, for this process arose as a direct consequence of the particular balances of hydrogen and helium, and nuclear matter and electromagnetic energy established in the earliest instants of the Cosmos. This could be seen as the Ancient Sun Era.

Next we have the time when these hot stars having burnt their fuel quickly, gravitationally collapsed and went supernova, exploding and ejecting their matter into the galactic dust clouds. The force at work here was the Weak Nuclear Interaction, the cosmic alchemical force that turns one element into another in the heart of a star. It is from this cosmic dust in the galactic spiral arms that the next population of stars like our sun condensed and our Earth was formed. Indeed, the elements of our bodies have all been formed in these supernova explosions. We are in a sense, stardust. It never ceases to amaze me to think that almost all the atoms that form my body were born in the heart of stars that exploded thousands of millions of years ago. This phase, which was also prefigured in the first instants of the creation of the Cosmos during the time of the Lepton Era (about 10^{-2} sec) when the weak forces separated out, can be connected the Steiner's Moon stage.

Finally, our own age is one in which the Electromagnetic forces came to dominate the Cosmic soup of particles and energy. Towards the end of the first second of the Big Bang the electromagnetic forces separated out from the initial universal superforce and a great blast of electromagnetic radiation filled all the entire cosmos which at that time was only a few thousand kilometers in diameter. Interestingly, the remnant of this primal event can still be detected as a Cosmic Microwave background radiation. In the longer term the electromagnetic forces have come to dominate, in those realms lying outside of the centres of stars, and thus especially in the world of the planetary bodies. These electromagnetic forces are the physical mechanism for producing chemical reactions, which we recognise as the medium out of which living systems develop and grow. Thus the present age, that of the Earth embodiment of planetary evolution in Steiner's sense, the fourth 'round' of the theosophists, is the age dominated by the electromagnetic interaction.

Though in this article I can only sketch and superficially examine the ideas living at the heart of contemporary cosmology, I hope I have been able to show that, in this leading edge of human speculation on the mysteries of Creation, we see definite links with archetypal spiritual ideas that have been pursued in the esoteric tradition for many centuries. Often it seems merely a matter of semantics as to whether one describes a process of creation in the universe as a mechanism or the work of being. For example, the large scale structure of the galactic superclusters, is prefigured in the earliest moments of creation in random quantum gravitational vortices in a minute region of space, which when amplified up through the cosmic expansion, later appear as kinks or waves in the geometry of space that act as foci which matter gravitates towards, forming the vast sheets of metagalaxies or superclusters. It does not depart from the truth at all, to poetically describe this process as taking place through the work of great beings who impressed their pattern into the everchanging quantum gravitational vortices existing in the first moments of creation, our Ancient Saturn Era.

If we follow up these matters in detail, I believe we can form a

cosmological description that can be interpreted either in a scientific or an esoteric way. In this sense there is no contradiction between the new science and a hermetic esotericism, though these different descriptions of the world may use radically different languages in describing the same events in Creation. We are, at the close of the twentieth century, approaching a time when the esoteric can no longer be dismissed as a cranky concern with outmoded ideas, for we can reflect in hermetic esotericism the latest discoveries at the leading edge of contemporary science. For myself, and I expect many of the readers of this Journal, who are able to think and contemplate the world both through scientific ideas and esotericism, it is only a matter of subtly altering the way one describes these facts, to shift from a scientific statement to an esoteric spiritual one, and back again. It is ultimately, merely a matter of the language one uses to picture reality to oneself as to whether one is adopting a scientific or a spiritual view of creation.

The esoteric spiritual language has one dimension more to it than the scientific, for unlike scientific thinking which is tied to the present moment of discovery, the esoteric has depth in that it links into a whole tradition of contemplation of the mysteries of Cosmic Creation and our place within this as human beings. Our esoteric science has wrapped within it many millenia of speculation and creative contemplation, and those who become attracted to its mysteries know the depths that lie within it.

I hope this article has shown just how easily our hermetic esotericism can address and take into itself the profound implications and discoveries of present day physical science.

In the last issue I chose to introduce this series of hermetic allegories with Thomas Vaughan's Invisible Mountain of the Magi. In this allegory we found a clear statement that the quest, the search for the place where riches can be found, must take us into our own spiritual centre, our inner core. We can only take this path when we are cut off from outer perception in the dark of the Soul's midnight, and at the point when we are prepared to face up to this pain and inner darkness within our beings, a guide will appear and lead us in the right direction. Those who strive to penetrate the centre of their innermost being without a sense of the spiritual will find only bleak existential emptiness, but if we are able to retain an inner contact with the spiritual (pictured as the inner guide) then we come to see not emptiness but a great inner mountain. As we gaze upon this mountain at the centre of our souls we experience it as one stage of an ongoing process. The mountain is shaken by a great wind (the air element) breaks down its hard stony strength releasing various astral entities into the soul. We have to try to keep our consciousness upon the inner mountain and not be tempted to follow these beings whose existence feeds upon misleading us into fantasy or misplaced fear. The shattered rocks are further overthrown by an earthquake (action of the earth element), and finally a fire consumes the earthly dross and rubbish. Out of this breaking down of the hard rigid substance that formerly surrounded our innermost essence, we are able to perceive in the inner dawning following this dark night our soul's treasure, the tincture with which we can tinge and transform our perception of the world. This tincture arises in ourselves when having undergone this inner process, we come to possess a sense of the spiritual core in our souls. Only when we possess this inner solidity are we fully able to bring a creative spiritual quality to our life, and it is this Philosophers' Stone or Tincture, that is our greatest treasure. Possession of this Philosophers' Stone is more valuable than mere gold or similar riches for it enables us to make the most of our potentialities.

The second allegory in this sequence I have also taken from Vaughan's Lumen de Lumine. In this we are led by a female guide the personification of Nature, deep into the earth. These allegories should be seen as excellent starting points for meditative journeys.

It was about the dawning or daybreak when, tired with a tedious solitude and those pensive thoughts which attend it, after much loss and more labour, I suddenly fell asleep. Here then the day was no sooner born but strangled. I was reduced to a night of a more deep tincture than that which I had formerly spent. My fancy placed me in a region of inexpressible obscurity, and - as I thought - supernatural, but without any terrors. I was in a firm, even temper and, though without encouragements, not only resolute but well pleased. I searched every way for discoveries but was still entertained with darkness and silence; and I thought myself translated to the land of desolation. Being thus troubled to no purpose, and wearied with long endeavours, I resolved to rest myself, and seeing I could find nothing I expected if anything could find me.

I had not long continued in this humour when I heard the whispers of a soft wind that travelled towards me; and suddenly it was in the leaves of the trees, so that I concluded myself to be in some wood or wilderness. With this gentle breath came a most heavenly, odorous air, much like that of sweet

brs, but not so rank and full. This perfume having blown over, there succeeded a pleasant humming of bees amongst flowers; and this did somewhat discompose me, for I judged it unsuitable with the complexion of the place, which was dark and like midnight. Now was I somewhat troubled with these unexpected occurrences when a new appearance diverted my apprehensions. Not far off on my right hand I could see a white, weak light - not so clear as that of a candle, but misty and much resembling an atmosphere. Towards the centre it was of a purple colour, like the Elysian sunshine, but in the dilation of the circumference milky; and if we consider the joint tincture of the parts, it was a painted Vesper, a figure of that splendor which the old Romans called Sol Mortuorum. While I was taken up with this strange scene there appeared a sudden commotion in the middle purple colours, and out of their very centre did sprout a certain flowery light, as it were the flame of a taper. Very bright it was, sparkling and twinkling like the day-star. The beams of this new planet - issuing forth in small skeins and rivulets - looked like threads of silver, which, being reflected against the trees, revealed a curious green umbrage; and I found myself in a grove of bays. The texture of the branches was so even - the leaves so thick and in that conspiring order - that it was not a wood but a building.

I conceived it indeed to be the Temple of Nature, where she had joined discipline to her doctrine. Under this shade and screen did lodge a number of nightingales, which I discovered by their whitish breasts. These, peeping through their leafy cabinets, rejoiced at this strange light, and - having first plumed themselves - stirred the still air with their music. This I thought was very pretty, for the silence of the night, suiting the solitude of the place, made me judge it heavenly. The ground, both near and far off, presented a pleasing kind of checker, for this new star meeting with some drops of dew made a multitude of bright refractions, as if the earth had been paved with diamonds. These rare and various accidents kept my soul busied, but to interrupt my thoughts, as if it had been unlawful to examine what I had seen, another, more admirable object interposed.

I could see between me and the light a most exquisite, divine beauty - her frame neither long nor short but of a middle, decent stature. Attired she was in thin loose silk but so green that I never saw the like, for the colour was not earthly. In some places it was fancied with white and silver ribbons, which looked like lilies in a field of grass. Her head was overcast with a thin, floating tiffany, which she held up with one of her hands and looked as it were from under it. Her eyes were quick, fresh and celestial but had something of a start, as if she had been puzzled with a sudden occurrence. From her black veil did her locks break out, like sunbeams from a mist. They ran dishevelled to her breasts and then returned to her cheeks in curls and rings of gold. Her hair behind her was rolled to a curious globe, with a small short spire, flowered with purple and sky-coloured knots. Her rings were pure, entire emeralds - for she valued no metal - and her pendants of burning carbuncles. To be short, her whole habit was youthful and flowery: it smelled like the East and was thoroughly aired with rich Arabian diapasons. This and no other was her appearance at that time; but while I admired her perfections and prepared to make my addresses she prevented me with a voluntary approach. Here indeed I expected some discourse from her; but she, looking very seriously and silently in my face, took me by the hand and softly whispered that I should follow her. This, I confess, sounded strange; but I thought it not amiss to obey so sweet a command, and especially one that promised very much but was able in my opinion to perform more.

The light which I had formerly admired proved now at least to be her attendant, for it moved like an usher before her. This service added much to

her glory, and it was my only care to observe her, who though she wandered not yet verily she followed no known path. Her walk was green, being furred with a fine, small grass which felt like plush, for it was very soft, and pearled all the way with daisies and primrose. When we came out of our arbours and court of bays I could perceive a strange clearness in the air, not like that of day, neither can I affirm it was night. The stars indeed perched over us and stood glimmering, as it were, on the tops of high hills; for we were in a most deep valley and the earth overlooked us, so that I conceived we were near the centre. We had not walked very far when I discovered certain thick, white clouds - for such they seemed to me - which filled all that part of the valley that was before us. This indeed was an error of mine; but it continued not long, for coming nearer I found them to be firm, solid rocks shining and sparkling like diamonds. This rare and goodly sight did not a little encourage me, and great desire I had to hear my mistress speak - for so I judged her now - that if possible I might receive some information. How to bring this about I did not well know, for she seemed averse from discourse. But having resolved with myself to disturb her, I asked her if she would favour me with her name. To this she replied very familiarly, as if she had known me long before.

"Eugenius" - said she - "I have many names, but my best and dearest is Thalia, for I am always green and shall never wither. Thou dost here behold the Mountains of the Moon, and I will shew thee the original of Nilus; for she springs from these invisible rocks. Look up and peruse the very tops of these pillars and cliffs of salt, for they are the true, philosophical, lunar mountains. Did'st thou ever see such a miraculous, incredible thing?"

This speech made me quickly look up to those glittering turrets of salt, where I could see a stupendous cataract or waterfall. The stream was more large than any river in her full channel; but notwithstanding the height and violence of its fall it descended without any noise. The waters were dashed and their current distracted by those salty rocks; but for all this they came down with a dead silence - like the still, soft air. Some of this liquor - for it ran by me - I took up, to see what strange woollen substance it was that did thus steal down like snow. When I had it in my hands it was no common water but a certain kind of oil of a watery complexion. A viscous, fat, mineral nature it was, bright like pearls and transparent like crystal. When I had viewed and searched it well, it appeared somewhat spermatic, and in very truth it was obscene to the sight but much more to the touch. Hereupon Thalis told me it was the First Matter and the very natural, true sperm of the great world. "It is" - said she - "invisible and therefore few are they that find it; but many believe it is not to be found. They believe indeed that the world is a dead figure, like a body which hath been sometime made and fashioned by that spirit which dwelt in it, but retains that very shape and fashion for some short time after the spirit hath forsaken it. They should rather consider that every frame, when the soul hath left it, doth decompose and can no longer retain its former figure; for the agent that held and kept the parts together is gone. Most excellent then is that speech which I heard some time from one of my own pupils. 'This world' - saith he - 'of such divers and contrary parts, would not have reached unity of form had there not been One who did join together such contrary things. But, being brought together, the very diversity of the natures joined, fighting one with another, would have discomposed and separated them, unless there had been One to hold and keep those parts together which He at first did join. Verily the order of Nature could not proceed with such certainty, neither could she move so regularly in several places, times, effects and qualities, unless there were some One who disposed and ordered these varieties of motions. This, whatsoever it is, by which the world is preserved and governed, I call by that usual name God.'

"Thou must therefore understand, Eugenius" - said she - "that all compositions are made by an Active, Intelligent Life; for what was done in the composition of the great world in general, the same is performed in the generation of every creature, and its sperm in particular. I suppose you know that water cannot be contained but in some vessel. The natural vessel which God hath appointed for it is the earth. In earth water may be thickened and brought to a figure; but of itself, and without earth, it hath an indefinite flux and is subject to no certain figure whatsoever. Air also is a fleeting and indeterminate substance, but water is his vessel; for water being figured by means of earth the air also is thickened and figured in the water. To ascend higher, the air coagulates the liquid fire, and fire incorporated involves and confines the thin light. These are the means by which God unites and compounds the elements into a sperm, for the earth alters the complexion of the water, and makes it viscous and slimy. Such a water must they seek who would produce any magical, extraordinary effects; for this spermatc water coagulates with the least heat, so that Nature concocts and hardens it into metals. You see how the whites of eggs will thicken as soon as they feel the fire; for their moisture is tempered with a pure, subtle earth, and this subtle, animated earth is that which binds their water. Take water then, my Eugenius, from the Mountains of the Moon, which is water and no water. Boil it in the fire of Nature to a twofold earth, white and red; then feed those earths with air of fire and fire of air; and thou hast the two magical luminaries. But because thou hast been a servant of mine for a long time, and that thy patience hath manifested the truth of thy love, I will bring thee to my school, and there will I shew thee what the world is not capable of."

This was no sooner spoken but she passed by those diamond-like, rocky salts and brought me to a rock of adamant, figured to a just, entire cube. It was the basis to a fiery pyramid, a trigon of pure pyrope (garnet), whose imprisoned flames did stretch and strive for heaven. To the four-square of the front of this rock was annexed a little portal and in that hung a tablet. It was a painted hedgehog, so rolled and wrapt up in his bag he could not easily be discomposed. Over this stood a dog snarling and hard by him this instruction: 'Softly, or he pricks'.

In we went, and having entered the rocks, the interior parts were of a heavenly, smaragdine colour. Somewhere they shone like leaves of pure gold, and then appeared a third inexpressible, purple tincture. We had not gone very far when we came to an ancient, majestic altar. On the offertory, or very top of it, was figured the trunk of an old rotten tree, plucked up by the roots. Out of this crept a snake - of colour white and green - slow of motion like a snail and very weak, having but newly felt the sun that overlooked her. Towards the foot or basis of this altar was an inscription in old Egyptian hieroglyphics which Thalia expounded, and this is it:

TO THE BLESSED GODS
IN THE UNDERWORLD
N.L.

From this place we moved straight forward till we came to a cave of earth. It was very obscure and withal dankish, giving a heavy odour - like that of graves. Here we stayed not long, but passing into this churchyard we came at last to the Sanctuary, where Thalia turning to me made this her short and last speech.

"Eugenius, this is the place which many have desired to see, but saw it not. The preparatives to their admission here were wanting. They did not love

me but mine. They coveted indeed the riches of Nature, but Nature herself they did both neglect and corrupt. Some advantages they had in point of assault, had they but studied their opportunities. I was exposed to their hands but they knew me not. I was subject in some measure to their violence, but He that made me would not suffer me to be rifled. In a word, the ruin of these men was built on their disposition. In their addresses to me they resembled those pitiful things which some call courtiers. These have their antics and rants, as if they had been trained amongst apes. They scrape - as one hath well expressed it - proportions mathematical, make strange legs and faces, and in that phrase of the same poet

'Vary their mouths as 'twere by magic spell
To figures oval, square and triangle.'

So these impudent sophisters assaulted me with vainglorious humours. When I looked into their hearts there was no room for me. They were full of proud thoughts and dreamed of a certain riotous happiness which must be maintained by my expenses and treasures. In the interim they did not consider that I was plain and simple, one that did not love noise but a private, sweet content. I have, Eugenius, found thee much of my own humour. I have withal found thy expectations patient. Thou can easily believe where thou hast reason to thy faith. Thou have all this while served without wages: now is the time come to reward thee. My love I freely give thee, and with it these tokens - my key and seal. The one shuts, the other opens: be sure to use both with discretion. As for the mysteries of this my school, you have the liberty to peruse them all; there is nothing here but I will gladly reveal it to thee. I have one precept that I shall command to thee, and this is it: you must be silent. You shall not in your writings exceed my allowances. Remember that I am your love, and you will not make me a prostitute. But because I wish you serviceable to those of your own disposition, I here give you an emblematical type of my Sanctuary, with a full privilege to publish it. This is all, and I am now going to that invisible region where is the abode of the immortals. Let not that proverb take place with you: Out of sight, out of mind. Remember me and be happy."

These were her instructions, which were no sooner delivered but she brought me to a clear, large light; and here I saw those things which I must not speak of. Having thus discovered all the parts of that glorious labyrinth, she did lead me out again with her clue of sunbeams - her light that went shining before us. When we were past the rocks of Nilus she shewed me a secret staircase, by which we ascended from that deep and flowery vale to the face of this our common earth. Here Thalia stopped in a mute ceremony, for I was to be left all alone. She looked upon me in silent smiles, mixed with a pretty kind of sadness, for we were unwilling to part. But her hour of translation was come, and taking - as I thought - our last leave, she passed before my eyes unto the eternal, into the ether of Nature.