THE HERMETIC SCIENCES

DEVELOPMENT OF ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL ALCHEMY
SPIRITUAL REBIRTH IN GREEK CHTHONIC MYSTERIES
Descent into the Divine Underworld

• 600 B.C.E.: In the days of Pythagoras, the deepest spiritual mysteries of the Greeks were chthonic, that is, involved communication and inspiration from the Divine Underworld.

• Their experience of the One God came through nature and the Earth, whom they called Ge, allegorized by the Goddess Demeter in the Eleusinian Mysteries.

• Deep under the Earth was the court of the Divine King Hades, also named Pluto for the “Wealth” that he bestowed upon humanity from out of the Earth—metals, fruits, and other treasure.

• His Queen, Persephone, the eternally young and beautiful Kore, who mediated arts, sciences, agriculture, music, and all the treasures of culture to humanity through chosen philosophers. She was also the source of divination, communication with dead ancestors, and prediction of future events.
But She was accessible only to those who had been spiritually reborn as *kouroi* or divine humans. Pythagoras taught the mysteries of divine rebirth.

He was a *Pholarchos* or Priest of the Mysteries of Apollo Ouilios, an office that oversaw both healing and divine revelation. He would guide carefully prepared disciples through the perilous descent into the Divine Underworld into the Presence of the *Kore*. Once She had accepted the disciple, She completed the Mysteries of Rebirth.

“The *Pholarchos* was a Greek title meaning Master of the Lair, because the method for descent into the Divine Underworld was like the hibernation of a lion in a lair.

The disciple was brought into an hypnotic trance-like sleep in a sacred cave by the *Pholarchos*. The descent took three days and two nights to accomplish, during which the disciple’s sleeping body needed protection.

The *Pholarchos* not only guarded the body, but communicated psychically with the disciple’s *psyche*. He guided it through the many perils, gateways, and portals of the descent, and then on the return journey. He used a kind of flute with harmonic intoning and chanting to keep communication with the soul.
PYTHAGOREAN EXOMATOSIS

- KROTONA: The Pythagorean Mystery School
- Exomatosis = Conscious soul travel ("astral projection")
- Became basis for alchemical separation of Body, Soul, and Spirit to purify Body and Soul (Spirit was by nature already pure).
- Pythagoras taught from behind a veiled screen.
- Sometimes the teacher was his wife, unrecognized and hidden by the veil.
- The Golden Verses of Pythagoras
- Spiritual rebirth:
  - Philosophical and Scientific Study
  - Moral practice and Lifestyle for Purification of the Soul
  - The Ascent of the Soul (Psyche) through the planetary deities (daimoneia)
  - Ultimate Union with the Monad (Godhead)
- THE TETRACTYS MATHEMATICAL ALLEGORY
- Basis for the later Jewish Kabbalistic Tree
EMANATION OF THE ALL FROM THE PRIMORDIAL ONE

MONAD: The Highest Self or “Flower of the Soul”

NOUS: The illuminated or enlightened Higher Mind

PSYCHE: The Soul that incarnates

BODY: The physical world and physical bodies into which psyche incarnates
300 B.C.E. PLATO’S *TIMEUS*
200 B.C.E. HELLENISTIC JEWISH KABBALISTIC HAGGADA
40 C.E. MYSTERIES OF HERMES TRISMEGISTOS
150 C.E. KORE KOSMOU

ASCENT AND RETURN TO THE EIGHTH HEAVEN OR *OGDOAD*

REINCARNATION
### A.D. 100: Neo-Pythagorean Ascent of the Soul

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes of The One</th>
<th>Beauty</th>
<th>Wisdom</th>
<th>Goodness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connecting Property</td>
<td>Love (Erôs)</td>
<td>Truth (Alêtheia)</td>
<td>Trust (Pistis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle of Salvation</td>
<td>Erotic Madness</td>
<td>Divine Philosophy</td>
<td>Theurgic Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Path of:</td>
<td>Aphrodite Eros</td>
<td>Athena Hermes</td>
<td>Hekate Helios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stages of Ascent:</td>
<td>Desire for:</td>
<td>Contemplation of:</td>
<td>Operation by:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- material</td>
<td>- body</td>
<td>- sense</td>
<td>- material rite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- aetherial</td>
<td>- soul</td>
<td>- reason</td>
<td>- mental rite</td>
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<td>- empyrean</td>
<td>- spirit</td>
<td>- intuition</td>
<td>- unitive rite</td>
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- **THEOSIS**: Becoming Godhead through “like attracts like”
- **THE THREE PATHS**: Beauty (Love, Devotion); Wisdom (Gnosis, Jnana); Goodness (Trust in operations of Theurgical Rituals, Sacrifice)
- **ASSOCIATED GODDESS-GOD UNION DEITIES**: Aphrodite-Eros; Athena-Hermes; Hekate-Helios
PLATO, HERMES, PLOTINUS, CHRISTIANS

The Sensible (Mundane) and Supersensible (Supermundane) Cosmos

Visible Cosmos

Matter

The Earth

Seven Planets

Fixed Stars

World Soul

Divine Mind Gods and Forms

The One

Invisible Cosmos
PYTHAGOREAN MACROCOSM/MICROCOSM AS MODEL FOR ALCHEMY

• Pythagorean Monochord
• The “harmony” of the seven planetary spheres (PLANETS) beneath the Eighth Sphere or Ogdoas (ZODIAC, or realm of fixed stars, constellations)
• Imprinted into the human Psyche (Soul)
• Neo-Platonic (Chaldean) Cosmos becomes model for Medieval Alchemical Labs, glassware, and apparatus
ALCHEMICAL ORIGINS IN ANCIENT METALLURGY

- Greek *Pur*, *pyr- “fire”*
- Purification by fire
- BRONZE AGE: Separated copper and tin from their natural ores to make bronze weapons and utensils by extremely hot fires
- IRON AGE: Hotter smelting ovens to make iron tools and weapons
- PURIFIED GOLD from ore
- SPIRITUAL ALCHEMY
- ALLEGORICALLY, alchemy would purify Body and Soul with fire, Spirit would ascend, then recombine to make medicines and purified physical objects
MIRIAM THE JEWESS

nub

Gold.

asem

Electrum.

hat

Silver.

Xomt

Copper.

men

Iron.

teht

Lead.

chesbet

Blue Stone, or Enamel, or Sapphire.
Alexandrian Distillation Apparatus as a Magical Microcosm
KLEOPATRA OF ALEXANDRIA
Microcosmic Glassware
Ancient Indian and Chinese Alchemy
Replicating Philosophical Hindu Cosmos
VISION OF THE ALCHEMICAL TRANSFORMATION AND PURIFICATION OF MATTER BY SUFFERING

The composition of the waters, and the movement, and the growth, and the removal and restitution of bodily nature, and the splitting off of the spirit from the body, and the fixation of the spirit on the body are not operations with natures alien one from the other, but, like the hard bodies of metals and the moist fluids of plants, are One Thing, of One Nature, acting upon itself. And in this system, of one kind but many colours, is preserved a research of all things, multiple and various, subject to lunar influence and measure of time, which regulates the cessation and growth by which the One Nature transforms itself.

I slept, and I saw a certain sacrificing priest standing before me and over and altar which had the form of a bowl. And that altar had fifteen steps going up to it.

Then the priest stood up and I heard from above a voice say to me, "I have completed the descent of the fifteen steps and the ascent of the steps of light. And it is the sacrificing priest who renews me, casting off the body's coarseness, and, consecrated by necessity, I have become a spirit."

And when I had heard the voice of him who stood in the altar formed like a bowl, I questioned him, desiring to understand who he was.

He answered me in a weak voice saying, "I am Ion, Priest of the Adytum, and I have borne an intolerable force. For someone came at me headlong in the morning and dismembered me with a sword and tore me apart, according to the rigor of harmony. And, having cut my head off with the sword, he mashed my flesh with my bones and burned them in the fire of the treatment, until, my body transformed, I should learn to become a spirit. And I sustained the same intolerable force."
And even as he said these things to me and I forced him to speak, it was as if his eyes turned to blood and he vomited up all his flesh. And I saw him as a mutilated image of a little man and he was tearing at his flesh and falling away.

And being afraid I woke and considered, "Is this not the composition of the waters?" I thought that I was right and fell asleep again. And I saw the same altar in the shape of a bowl and water bubbled at the top of it, and in it were many people endlessly. And there was no one whom I might question outside of the bowl. And I went up to the altar to view the spectacle.

And I saw a little man, a barber, whitened with age, and he said to me, "What are you looking at?"

I answered that I wondered at the boiling water and the men who were burning but remained alive.

And he answered me saying, "The spectacle which you see is at once the entrance and the exit and the process."

I questioned him further, "What is the nature of the process?"

And he answered saying, "It is the place of the practice called the embalming. Men wishing to obtain virtue enter here and, fleeing the body, become spirits."

I said to him, "And are you a spirit?"

And he answered, saying, "Both a spirit and a guardian of spirits."

As he was saying these things to me and the boiling increased and the people wailed, I saw a copper man holding a lead tablet in his hand. He spoke aloud, looking at the tablet, "I counsel all those in mortification to become calm and that each take in his hand a lead tablet and write with his own hand and that each bear his eyes upward and open his mouth until his grapes be grown."
THE ALCHEMISTS

• In A.D., 296, the Emperor Diocletian sought out and burnt all the Egyptian works on Alchemy and other occult sciences.
• In A.D. 320 we find Julius Firmicius, the Astrologer, attributing a good or bad constellation of the heavens to the professors of Alchemy.
• ZOSIMUS, the Panopolite, wrote "Of the Divine Art of Making Gold and Silver".
• Synesius about A.D. 400, has Alchemical references.
• Cedrenus (A.D. 491) gives an example of a magician who professed Alchemy.
**MORIENUS** (a Hermit, whose works were translated from Arabic into Latin as early as A.D. 1182) learned the Art of Transmutation, or the Great Elixir, at Rome from Adsar, an Alexandrian and a Christian, and afterwards taught it to Calid, or Evelid, the son of Gizid the Second, who was King of Egypt about the year A.D. 725. Successors continued the science.

**GEBER**, about A.D. 730, devoted his life to Alchemy. His true name was Abou Moussah Djafar - Al Sofi, or "The Wise". He was born at Houran, in Mesopotamia, and we are indebted to him for the first mention of corrosive sublimate, red oxide of Mercury, and nitrate of Silver.

**AFARABI** (A.D. 900’S) enjoyed the reputation of being the most learned Islamic philosopher of his age.

**AVICENNA**, born at Bokara A.D. 980, died 1036 - real name was Ebu Cinna.
Medieval Arabic Alchemy From Greek and Indian Texts and Alchemists
ARABIC RULER CONSULTS ASTROLOGERS
• After this time but few Arabian philosophers of note are mentioned by name, but Alchemy began to attract attention in Spain, into which country the Moors had introduced it, and it encouraged the attentive study of Arnauld de Villeneuve, Raymond Lulli, and Roger Bacon, who, in common with like philosophers, sought, he says, "to hide the discoveries of the wise from a multitude unworthy to possess them."

• Artephius wrote, in the 12th century, the "Art of Prolonging Human Life";

• William de Lorris begun the Roman de Rose about A.D. 1282, and was assisted by Jean de Meung, who wrote the "Remonstrance of Nature to the Wandering Alchemist", and the "Reply of the Alchemist to Nature".

• Emperor von Hohenstauffen, perhaps most brilliant European ruler, supported an alchemical lab.
Robert Grostete, Bishop of Lincoln, 1235, and Michael Scott of Balwirie, country of Fife, laboured under the imputation of Magic, Astrology, and Alchemy.

In the year 1256 PICATRIX, of Spain, compiled a Magical Work - a Summary of 224 old works on the occult sciences.

Cecco d'Ascodi was burnt at Florence in 1327.

John Dowston, an Englishman, lived in 1315 and wrote two treatises on the Philosopher's Stone.

Peter, of Lombardy, in 1330, wrote a complete treatise on Hermetic Science.

John de Rupicissa flourished in 1357 and wrote several works.

Charles VI, of France, wrote the "Treasury of Philosophy".

Robert, of York, lived in 1350 and wrote "De Magia Coeremoniali", "De Mysteris Secretorum", and "De Miribilibus Elementorum".
• **ALBERTUS MAGNUS** (born 1193/1206, died 1280/1314), the actual designer of Cologne Cathedral; learned Hermetic philosopher, Alchemist.

• **Isaac Hollandus** wrote in the 14th century "De Triplici Ordini Elixiris et Lapidis Theoria" and "Mineralis Opera seu de Lapide Philosophico."

• **Bernard of Treves** (born 1406, died 1490, at Rhodes) was author of several treatises, of which the chief are "The Book of Chemistry", "Verbum Dimissum", and an essay, "De Natura Ovi."

• **NICHOLAS FLAMMEL** had by chance purchased in the year 1357 an old book, written in Latin by "Abraham Patriarch, Jew, Prince, Philosopher. Priest, Levite, Astrologer". He wrote the "Philosophic Summary" three treatises upon Natural Philosophy, and an Alchemical allegory, entitled "Le Desir Desire" and died in 1415, aged 116 years, having from a poor scrivener enriched himself with great wealth, which he applied to charitable purposes. **Revived after WWII by the Philosophers of Nature in France**

• **BASILE VALENTINE** (born 1414) "Triumphal Chariot of Antimony."
ALBERTUS MAGNUS
1196-1280
LIBER SECRETORUM
Book of Secrets
• **Sir George Ripley** was accused of providing means for the Knights of St. John by means of the Philosopher's Stone, and in 1477 dedicated to King Edward IV, his "Compound, of Alchemy", or the twelve gates.

• **SANDIVOGIUS** (born about 1550 died 1636 was a well-known Alchemist to whom all later writers deferred.

• **Peter d'Apona** (born near Padua 1250 wrote several works on Magic and was accused by the Inquisition of possessing seven spirits each enclosed in a crystal vessel who taught him the seven liberal arts and sciences. He died upon the rack.

• **Alain de Lisle, of Flanders**, had the name of the "Universal Doctor", was born about 1188 and died a Friar of the Abbey of Citeaux in 1298 aged 110 years.

• **Pope John XXII**, was a friend of **Arnauld de Villeuneuve** and wrote a work on Transmutation and had a famous laboratory at Avignon.
• John Aurelio Augurello (born 1441, died 1524) dedicated to Pope Leo X an Alchemical work, entitled "Chrysopeia".
• The Abbe TRITHEMIUS, the friend and master of CORNELIUS AGRIPPA, wrote works on Geomancy, Sorcery, Alchemy, and the movement of the World by Presiding Angels.
• About 1488 Koffsky wrote "Tincture or Minerals".
• Henry VI of England patronized Alchemy, and licensed Lancashire Alchemists Trattord and Ashton.
• Phillpus Aurelius Theophrastus Bombastus PARACELSIUS de Hohenheim revolutionized alchemy and medicine.
• Contemporary with him was the celebrated Dr. Faustus, a Pole; he is mentioned by Camerarius Wierius, Melancthon, Gesner, and Luther.
CORNELIUS AGrippa
1486-1535
• **Jerome Cardan** (born 1541, died 1576) claimed the faculty, at will, of divorcing the soul from the body. **Pythagorean Spiritual Alchemy** separated **Body, Soul, Spirit, then recombined**

• **The Rosicrucian Fraternity.** The leaders were **FLUDD** in England, **MAEIR** in Germany, **VAUGHN** in England; this latter was the author of many valuable works; his "Fame and Confession" in English claims for the society the translation of Arabian books on Alchemy.

• **ASHMOLE**, in the latter part or his life, gave much attention to Alchemy, as also **Wren, Boyle, and Isaac Newton** (suffered for several years with mercury poisoning).

• Pomponaz Basil, 1517, writes: "There are men, who, through the power of the will can produce most marvelous phenomena and cures. But in order to effect these perfectly you must have faith and love, and a fervent desire to help the sick and for this every one is not qualified. The sick, too must have faith".
Medieval Arabic Alchemy From Greek and Indian Texts and Alchemists
Alchemists Laboratory
CORPUS HERMETICUM

Bought from Moslem scholars in the 15th Century with financing from the Medici family and the Florentine Fratres Lucis

Translated by Marcellio Ficino

Hermetic Philosophy quickly became all the rage with scholars and Church scholastics.
TRISMEGISTUS DE BRY
I. IT IS TRUE, WITHOUT FALSEHOOD, AND MOST CERTAIN
II. WHAT IS BELOW IS LIKE THAT WHICH IS ABOVE, AND WHAT IS ABOVE IS LIKE THAT WHICH IS BELOW, TO ACCOMPLISH THE MIRACLE OF THE ONE THING
III. AS ALL THINGS WERE FORMED FROM ONE, BY THE THOUGHT OF ONE, SO ALL THINGS ARE BORN FROM THIS ONE THING, BY CHOICE
IV. ITS FATHER IS THE SUN, ITS MOTHER THE MOON, THE WIND CARRIES IT IN ITS BELLY, ITS NURSE IS THE EARTH
V. IT IS THE AUTHOR OF ALL PERFECTION THROUGHOUT THE WORLD
VI. THE POWER IS STRONG WHEN CHANGED INTO EARTH
VII. SEPARATE THE EARTH FROM THE FIRE, THE SUBTLE FROM THE GROSS, GENTLY AND WITH CARE
VIII. ASCEND FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN, AND DESCEND AGAIN TO EARTH, TO UNITE THE POWER OF HIGHER AND LOWER THINGS; THUS YOU WILL OBTAIN THE GLORY OF THE WHOLE WORLD, AND THE SHADOWS WILL LEAVE YOU
IX. THIS HAS MORE STRENGTH THAN STRENGTH ITSELF, FOR IT OVERCOMES ALL SUBTLE THINGS AND PENETRATES EVERY SOLID
X. THUS THE WORLD WAS FRAMED
XI. HENCE PROCEED WONDERS, WHICH MEANS ARE HERE
XII. THEREFORE I AM HERMES TRISMEGISTUS, HAVING THE THREE PARTS OF WORLD PHILOSOPHY
XIII. THAT WHICH I HAD TO SAY OF THE OPERATION OF THE SUN IS PERFECTED
HERMETIC
ALCHEMY-ASTROLOGICAL MICROCOSM

Opposite of Mandala:
Earth in Center, Not God
Mankind is Midway between Divine and Mundane Worlds
Medieval European Alchemy Becomes Totally Integrated With Hermetic Philosophy
THE MEDIEVAL EUROPEAN HERMETIC SYNTHESIS

• PYTHAGOREAN SPIRITUAL REINTEGRATION
• ALCHEMY
• ASTROLOGY
• KABBALISTIC PHILOSOPHY (Christian Cabala)
HERMETIC MANDALA
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sefirah</th>
<th>Dignatory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keter (Crown; Divine Will)</td>
<td>= Voluntas (Will)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hokmah (Wisdom)</td>
<td>= Sapientia (Wisdom)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binah (Intelligence)</td>
<td>= Veritas (Truth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hesed (Mercy, Love)</td>
<td>= Bonitas (Goodness)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gevurah (Strength)</td>
<td>= Potestas (Power)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tifaret (Beauty)</td>
<td>= Virtus (Virtue)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netzah (Endurance)</td>
<td>= Eternitas (Eternity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hod (Majesty)</td>
<td>= Gloria (Glory)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yesod (Foundation)</td>
<td>= Magnitudo (Greatness)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Johann Valentin Andreae
Lutheran pastor who may have taken part in writing the Fama Fraternitatis
Frederick V, Elector Palatine of Prussia
Major Rosicrucian hope for world-altering reform
Democracy
Science
Protestant Vision
Alchemical Wedding represents spiritual alchemy based on general "recipe" for the Philosopher's Stone or Alkahest
Also may be a political recipe for the "marriage" of Rosicrucianism and Protestantism
Puritan and other Protestants already attacking Rosicrucianism, Science, and Hermetic Renaissance as inspired by devil
Cromwell would lead a massive persecution to stamp out Rosicrucians and Hermeticists, including forbidding of public meetings to discuss such topics

ALLIANCE between Templar families and Stone Masons allowed Hermeticists to be inducted as "Speculative" Masons so they could legally meet in secret (Tyler)
ALLIANCE between Hermeticists and Albigensian engravers for publication of philosophical texts using GRAPHIC ALLEGORY, EMBLEMS, and CIPHER for secrecy
Alexandrian Alchemy

School of Panopolis (Akhmim)
Hermetic Synthesis

Arab Alchemy and Hermetic Sciences

Johannite Mysticism
Asia Minor/Egypt

Gnostic / Manichaean

Bogomil / Cathar

Knights Templar

Protestant Mysticism

Arian Celtic / Gallican Churches

European Alchemy and the Hermetic Renaissance

Masonic Guilds

Comacine Community

Freemasonic Guilds

ALLIANCES: Templars with Stone Masons; Hermeticists with Albigensian engravers

ROSICRUCIAN ENLIGHTENMENT
BOTTICELLI AND APPLICATION OF HERMETIC PHILOSOPHY TO IMAGERY
PRIMAVERA

Has been called one of the most esoteric Hermetic images ever created
Renaissance imagery steeped in Greek mythology, biblical legend
• Synthesis of Christian and Classical or “Pagan” symbology

Celestial Spheres coordinated with the Nine Muses of Greek Mythology
• Ex.: Euterpe attributed to Jupiter

Apollo (Sun) on Throne—Deity of Prophecy and Inspiration
• Holy Spirit

Thalia (“Prospering”) at top and bottom
• Mother of the Corybantes (ecstatic female devotees of Dionysos)

Musical Modes connected to seven planets and eighth zodiacal sphere on right
Poetic Meters connected to Muses on left
• PLEASE NOTE: The tempered scale is not mathematically pure. That is, in all musical scales regardless of culture, one octave is a bit less than double the vibration (A 440 to A-Prime 880 is actual A-Prime 875 or so). In T:.H:.G:. we DO use perfect Pythagorean octaves on the attunement tape, so it sounds a bit “sharp” to our imperfect ears.

• “The Pythagoreans proposed that, for evolutionary or ‘intelligent’ octaves to have a fully harmonious ‘ring’ to them, it was necessary to exceed the bounds of ordinary practical music and actually introduce the additional concentrations of resonance at the points of vibrational retardation - between the notes ‘mi-fa’ and ‘ti-Do’. These additional concentrations of resonance, or ‘metaphysical semitones’, were to be created, in time, by the individual himself. Remember the seven-tone octave of practical music reflects a natural cosmic process which is in reality disharmonious. That is, without the two additional semitone ‘shocks’ it is not possible for a developing scale of ‘intelligent’ resonance to exactly double its rate of vibrations and so square its possibilities. In other words, in lacking the aforementioned semitones the natural, living octave must, given time, either ‘decompose’ (involve), or be deflected or consumed by other more powerful orders of energy and form passing through its given sphere of influence - hence the vast multiplicity of natural forms existing in the universe and why, as has already been suggested, there are no apparent straight lines in nature.”
The Hermetic Dimensions of PRIMAVERA
PRIMAVERA
A complex Hermetic composition using Cabalistic horary astrology and magical sigils to make medicines, talismans, and other magical devices. Hermetic painters were Renaissance equivalent of Greek sculptures creating dynamic images of the gods to make contact with their energies in worship (Idol-latreia)
MADONNA AND CHILD

OFTEN FIND POMEGRANITES AND OTHER SYMBOLS OF MAGDALENIC BLACK VIRGIN AND OTHER HERETICAL OCCULT THEMES
The Art of Memory

• CICERO AND OTHER ROMANS
  • Associating Topics with Spaces (Rooms)
  • Used by Neoplatonists, Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinus, etc.

• GIORDANO BRUNO
  • Complex architecture for Grand Summa of all the Liberal Arts

• TRIVIUM and QUADRIVIUM
  • Grammar, Rhetoric, Dialectic
  • Music, Mathematics, Geometry, Astronomy

• VISUALIZATION AND ALLEGORIZATION

• ROSICRUCIAN VAULT OF R.C.