

The Sevenfold Seeking And Noesis Of The Hebdomian Way

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Seven Oxonians
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Image Credit:
The Horae (ὥραι)
Attic red-figure vase, c. 500-450 BCE
Antikensammlung, Berlin

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I. The Sevenfold Seeking

The Hebdomian Way is a modern hermetic ἐπιστήμη, épistémé: a means to change the φύσις, physis - the character/nature/perception - of an individual by practical means involving a seeking or quest; which seeking derives from ancient hermeticism and which practical means, as the term hebdomian implies, involves seven stages with the goal being the discovery of wisdom understood in hermetic terms as a balanced, rational, personal judgement and a particular knowledge of a paganus kind concerning livings beings, human nature, Nature, the Cosmic Order (κόσμος) and our connexion to such emanations of what has been variously termed Being, The-Unity, The One-The Only (τὸ ἓν), and The Monas (μονάς).

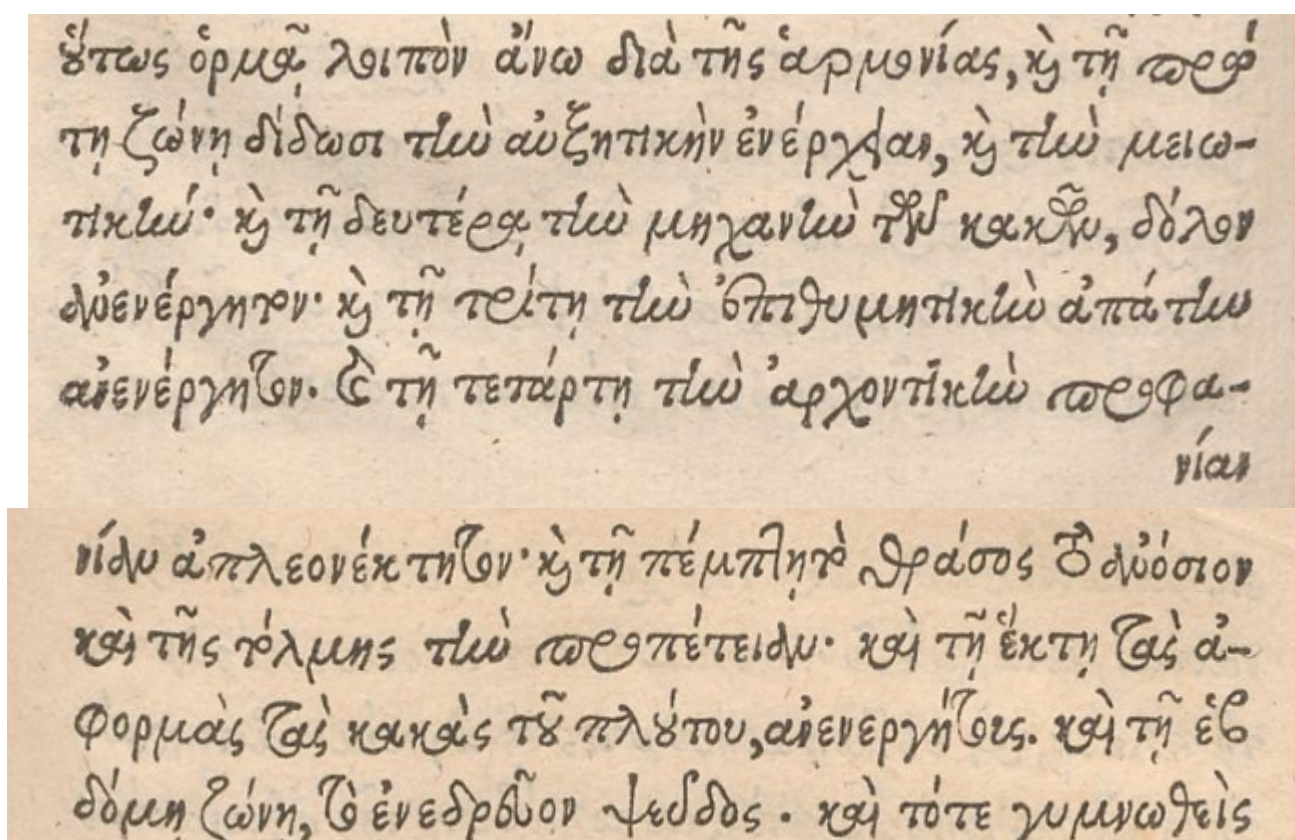
This sevenfold seeking (ἀνοδος) for wisdom - to "learn what is real, to apprehend the physis of beings, and to have knowledge of the theos", Μαθεῖν θέλω τὰ ὄντα καὶ νοῆσαι τὴν τούτων φύσιν καὶ γινῶναι τὸν θεόν - has been described and written about, in the cultures of European lands, for around two thousand years beginning with the text of the Ποιμάνδρης (Poemandres) tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum written between c.100 and c.230 ev from which the foregoing quotation is taken, with ὁ θεός, the theos, variously understood over the centuries: from the pagan *the* divinity, the chief /divinity/god such as Zeus in ancient Greek mythoi; to the μονάς and the τὸ ἓν (Monas and The One-The Only) of Hermeticism, of the Gnostics, and of some alchemists of Renaissance Europe; to the monotheistic God/Allah of Christian and Muslim theologians and other alchemists; to more modern non-theological interpretations as Being, the source of beings. {1}

The sevenfold manner of this seeking, this anados through the seven spheres of the 'harmonious, ordered, structure',

{2} is described in the Poemandres tractate in the following terms:

καὶ οὕτως ὀρμῆ λοιπὸν ἄνω διὰ τῆς ἁρμονίας, καὶ τῆ πρώτῃ ζώνῃ δίδωσι τὴν αὐξητικὴν ἐνέργειαν καὶ τὴν μειωτικὴν, καὶ τῆ δευτέρῃ τὴν μηχανὴν τῶν κακῶν, δόλον ἀνενέργητον, καὶ τῆ τρίτῃ τὴν ἐπιθυμητικὴν ἀπάτην ἀνενέργητον, καὶ τῆ τετάρτῃ τὴν ἀρχοντικὴν προφανίαν ἀπλεονέκτητον, καὶ τῆ πέμπτῃ τὸ θράσος τὸ ἀνόσιον καὶ τῆς τόλμης τὴν προπέτειαν, καὶ τῆ ἕκτῃ τὰς ἀφορμὰς τὰς κακὰς τοῦ πλοῦτου ἀνενεργήτους, καὶ τῆ ἑβδόμῃ ζώνῃ τὸ ἐνεδρεῦον ψεῦδος.

"Thus does the mortal hasten through the harmonious structure, offering up, in the first realm, that vigour which grows and which fades, and - in the second one - those dishonourable machinations, no longer functioning. In the third, that eagerness which deceives, no longer functioning; in the fourth, the arrogance of command, no longer insatiable; in the fifth, profane insolence and reckless haste; in the sixth, the bad inclinations occasioned by riches, no longer functioning; and in the seventh realm, the lies that lie in wait." Poemandres, v. 25, translated by D. Myatt {3}



Ερμού του Τρισμεγίστου Ποιμάνδρης Ασκληπιού Ὅροι πρὸς Ἄμμωνα Βασίλεια
1554 ev. pp.8-9

In modern terms, the human traits described as being 'offered up' (δίδωμι) during the sevenfold seeking are:

- 1. That vigour - enthusiasm - which grows and which fades.
- 2. Those dishonourable machinations.
- 3. That eagerness which deceives.
- 4. The arrogance of authority over others.
- 5. Profane insolence and reckless haste.
- 6. The bad inclinations occasioned by a comfortable life-style.
- 7. The lies that lie in wait.

What is noticeable is that in the Poemandres text the stages, the seven spheres of the harmonious structure, are not assigned names (denotata) or designated by 'grades' or associated with the seven classical planets Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn. Such associations were later developments as was this sevenfold seeking for wisdom being described as the quest for Lapis Philosophicus understood as the attainment by an individual of wisdom. {4}

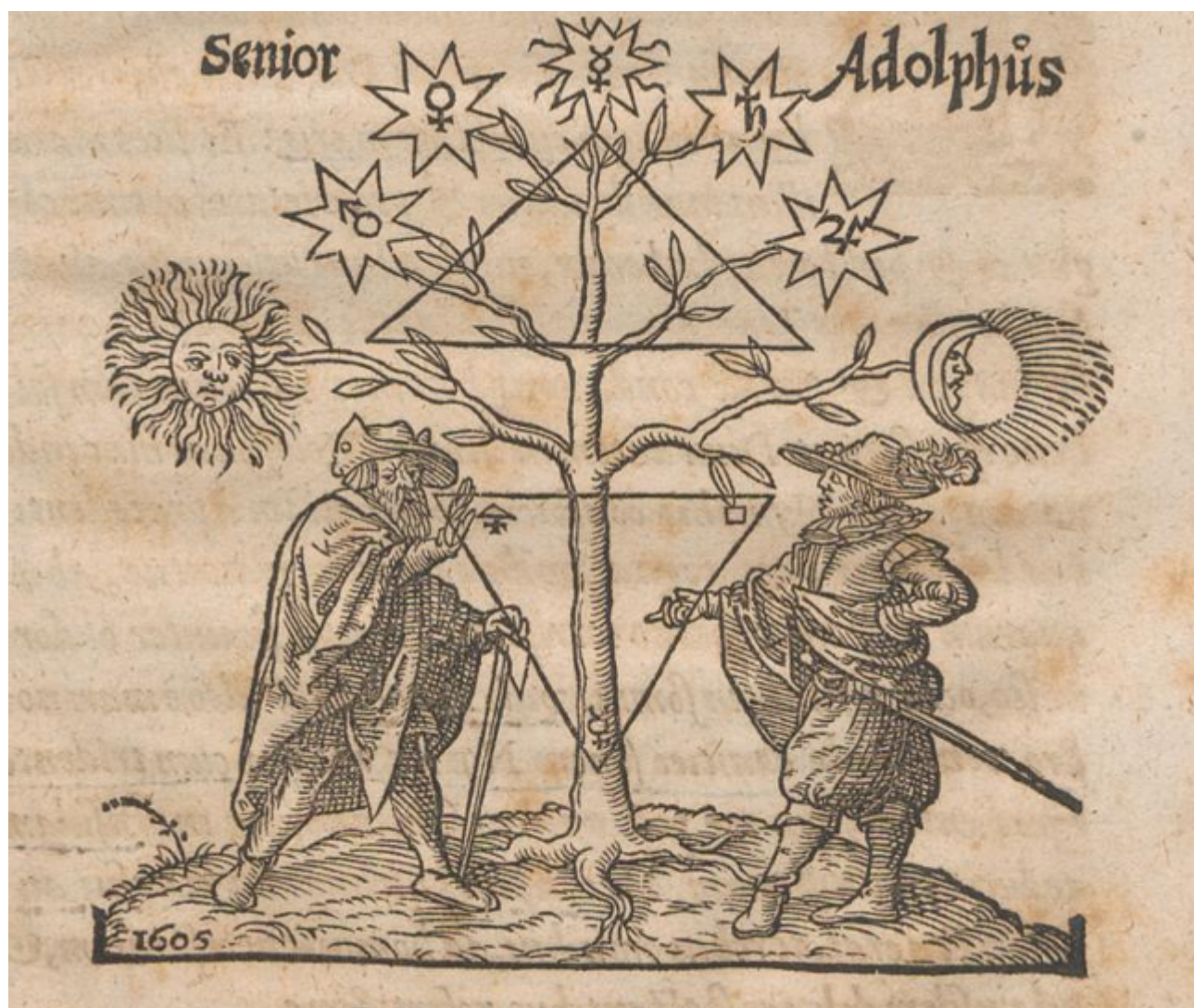
Such an association with those named planets inevitably, given the nature of gnosticism, hermeticism, and alchemy, led over the centuries - as Evola noted {5} - to diverse arrangements for their order.

One such arrangement was:



Azoth Sive Aureliae Occultae Philosophorum, 1613 ev. p. 57

Another, depicted as a living tree and on the title page, was:



Azoth Sive Aureliae Occultae Philosophorum, 1613 ev.

One of the oldest illustrated arrangements, so far discovered, is that given in the Arabic text Ghayat al-hakim dating from c.1050 ev where the named spheres are in the order (if read from right to left) Saturn-Jupiter-Mars-Sun-Venus-Mercury-Moon:

زحل المشتري المريخ الشمس الزهرة عطارد القمر
 ♄ ♃ ♂ ☉ ♀ ☿ ☾

Furthermore, Cicero in Book VI of his De Re Publica - a section commonly known as Somnium Scipionis - written at least a century before the text of the Poemandres tractate and over a thousand years before Ghayat al-hakim, mentions the seven spheres in the following order: Saturn-Jupiter-Mars-Sun-Venus-Mercury-Moon. Which is a descending order from the supreme deity to the embedded constant stars to the seven spheres below them. {6}

Which descending arrangement is reversed in many Renaissance texts including the following which helpfully numbers them from 1-7:



Azoth Sive Aureliae Occultae Philosophorum, 1613 ev. p. 66

In his 1564 (ev) work *Monas Hieroglyphica* John Dee provides another sequence:



Monas Hieroglyphica, 1564 ev

A later work (1682 ev) provides two sequences both with the Sun at the centre:

Die sieben Gestalten oder Geister / von welchen Apoc. 1. stehet.	h. C. Erste /	Gestalt	Herbe / Begehren / Wille.	1. Finster-Welt; Gleichnüss an einer Kerzen.	Das ander Principium, Licht-Welt: Gott der Sohn: Wort: Herbe Gottes: wird hievon genennet ein lieber und barmherziger Gott.		
	♀. ♃. Ander /		Bitter oder Stachel.				
	♂. ♀. Dritte /		Angst / gehet zu dem Feuer-bliß.				
	○. Vierdte.		Feuer. { Finster-Feuer. / Licht-Feuer.			2. Finstere Welt; Gleichnüss am Feuer einer Kerzen.	Licht- oder Liebe-Feuer. / Finster oder grimmig Feuer.
	♀. ♂. Fünffte /		Licht oder Liebe / daraus das Wasser des ewigen Lebens fleusset.			3. Licht-Welt; Gleichnüss an dem Licht einer Kerzen.	Das erste Principium. Finstere Welt: Hier von wird Gott der Vater ein zorniger eyfertiger / und Gott der Mutter / und ein verzehrendes Feuer genennet.
	♃. ♀. Sechste /		Der Laut oder Thon / Klang oder Mercurius.				
	A. h. Siebende /		Wesen oder Natur.			Das dritte Principium; Welches ist Diese vier-elementarische Welt: eine Aufgeburt aus dem ewigen inwendigen Welten: ein Spiegel derselben / da Licht und Finsternüss / Gutes und Boses ineinander vermenget ist: Diese ist nicht ewig / fähet sich an und endet sich / oder hat Anfang und Ende.	

Jakob Böhme, De Signatura Rerum, 1682 ev .p.252

Such association of the seven spheres of the ἄνοδος with the seven classical planets also led to often varying tables of correspondences giving what were assumed or believed to be the attributes or the qualities or the nature of each sphere, with for example the sphere of Saturn attributed in one work to the metal Lead, the alchemical stage of Putrefaction, and the constellation Capricorn:

B. à Portu Aquitanus.

<i>Pigmei.</i>	<i>Silvani.</i>	<i>Vulcani.</i>	<i>Penates. Superi.</i>	<i>Heroes.</i>	<i>Nympha.</i>	<i>Lemures. Manas.</i>
♄ <i>Plumbum.</i>	♁ <i>Stannum.</i>	♂ <i>Ferrum.</i>	☉ <i>Aurum.</i>	♀ <i>Cuprum.</i>	♀ <i>Mercurius.</i>	☾ <i>Argentum.</i>
<i>Mysterium ex- treme unctio- nis.</i>	<i>Mysterium. Ordinis.</i>	<i>Mysterium. Contritionis.</i>	<i>Mysterium. Altaris.</i>	<i>Mysterium. Conjugij.</i>	<i>Mysterium Con- firmationis.</i>	<i>Mysterium. Baptismatis.</i>
<i>Sal marinum.</i>	<i>Sal armonia- cum.</i>	<i>Sal petra.</i>	<i>Sal commune.</i>	<i>Virriolum.</i>	<i>Alumen plu- mosum.</i>	<i>Alumen.</i>
<i>Splen.</i>	<i>Epar.</i>	<i>Fel.</i>	<i>Cor.</i>	<i>Renes.</i>	<i>Pulmo.</i>	<i>Cerebrum.</i>
<i>Antimonium.</i>	<i>Vismat.</i>	<i>Chobolt.</i>	<i>Sulphur.</i>	<i>Thutia.</i>	<i>Cinabrium.</i>	<i>Talc.</i>
<i>Capricornus.</i>	<i>Libra.</i>	<i>Aries.</i>	<i>Leo.</i>	<i>Taurus.</i>	<i>Virgo.</i>	<i>Cancer.</i>
<i>Noctua.</i>	<i>Columba.</i>	<i>Struthio.</i>	<i>Aquila.</i>	<i>Pavo.</i>	<i>Ciconia.</i>	<i>Cinnus.</i>
<i>Linum.</i>	<i>Hordeum.</i>	<i>Avena.</i>	<i>Triticum.</i>	<i>Pisa.</i>	<i>Milium.</i>	<i>Siligo.</i>
<i>Vrsus.</i>	<i>Ovis.</i>	<i>Equus.</i>	<i>Vnicornu.</i>	<i>Alces.</i>	<i>Panthera.</i>	<i>Tigris.</i>
<i>Bufo.</i>	<i>Aranea.</i>	<i>Scorpio.</i>	<i>Draco.</i>	<i>Lacerta viridis.</i>	<i>Basiliscus.</i>	<i>Serpens.</i>
<i>Decrepitas.</i>	<i>Senectus.</i>	<i>Virilitas plena.</i>	<i>Virilitas prima.</i>	<i>Iuvenilitas.</i>	<i>Pueritia.</i>	<i>Infantia.</i>
<i>Calx metallo- rum.</i>	<i>Oleum vel resi- na metallorum.</i>	<i>Sal metallo- rum.</i>	<i>Tinctura metal- lorum.</i>	<i>Crocus metallo- rum.</i>	<i>Mercurius me- tallorum.</i>	<i>Liquor metal- lorum.</i>
<i>Putrefactio.</i>	<i>Destillatio.</i>	<i>Calcinatio.</i>	<i>Transmutatio.</i>	<i>Coagulatio.</i>	<i>Sublimatio.</i>	<i>Solutio.</i>
<i>Dij terrestres.</i>	<i>Dij aerei.</i>	<i>Dij ignei.</i>	<i>Dij caelestes.</i>	<i>Dij mortui.</i>	<i>Dij aquei.</i>	<i>Dij infernales.</i>

Hæc tabula inferenda est pagina 109. secundæ partis, ante prologum lib. 12. portarum Georgij Ripley.

Theatrum chemicum, præcipuos selectorum auctorum tractatus de chemia et lapidis philosophici antiquitate, Volumen secundum. 1659 ev. p.10

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II. Noesis And The Star Game

One esoteric and important feature of The Hebdomian Way is that the seven stages although in a particular sequence are named only initially and purely for convenience and have no correspondences or any attributes associated with them - mythological, alchemical, astronomical, philosophical, psychological, Occult, or otherwise - save for those personal qualities associated with a particular stage or sphere in the Poemandres tractate. That is, The Hebdomian Way returns to the primary hermetic source since the essence of that Way is changing the individual through pathei-mathos - πάθει μάθος, the personal learning or discovery resulting from practical experiences and challenges - with everything external or internal to this considered as unnecessary, unhelpful, and distractive.

The sequence of The Hebdomian Way is the Ciceronian and ancient one of Moon-Mercury-Venus-Sun-Mars-Jupiter-Saturn although as was often done in medieval and Renaissance times in Europe this particular order could be and often was inverted, as Evola mentions:

Nell'antica tradizione ellenistica, riportata da Stefano (247), l'ordine è diverso. Le regioni sideree, associate agli dèi e alle metallità sacre a ciascuno di essi, hanno il seguente ordine: Saturno (Piombo, ♄), Giove (Bronzo, ♁), Marte (Ferro, ♂), Sole (Oro, ☉), Venere (Rame, ♀), Mercurio (☿), Luna (Argento, ☾). Questa disposizione però si può ricondurre ad una simmetria rispetto al Sole che sta al centro, con sopra Saturno, Giove e Marte, triade di divinità maschili, e sotto, in simmetria, Venere, Mercurio e Luna triade di divinità femminili (il Mercurio come «Donna dei Filosofi»): come nel grafico riportato a p. 173. L'itinerario spirituale allora sarebbe, per così dire, a spirale: partendo da un dio maschio superiore, si discenderebbe per ricongiungersi con la divinità femminile sim-

Evola, op.cit., p.172

In the practical and uncomplicated Hebdomian Way such a reversal has no significance, for what is significant is the pathei-mathos which could 'offer up' the trait of a particular stage howsoever that stage is named or not-named.

Which is why the noetic version of The Star Game (see section III) can be used as an experiencing and understanding

of the Hebdomad and the sevenfold seeking, *sans* denotata, thus betaking the individual beyond the unnecessary need for both a dialectic of opposites and the exegesis of the written word, an exegesis evident for example in the various and varying translations/interpretations of the tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum. Which personal and noetic experiencing and understanding of the Hebdomad and the sevenfold seeking forms a necessary part of the pathemathos of the first stage of the Hebdomian Way, with noesis understood as a silent, contemplative, way of knowing and 'thinking' as intimated in the enigmatic tractate XIII of the Corpus Hermeticum:

i) σοφία νοερὰ ἐν σιγῇ

noetic sapientia is in silence. (v.2)

ii) νοερῶς ἔγνωσ σεαυτὸν

Through noesis you have obtained knowledge about yourself. (v.22)

Of which translation Myatt writes {7} in his commentary:

2. *noetic sapientia*. For a variety of reasons, I have used the term *noetic sapientia* to denote σοφία νοερὰ.

i) The metaphysical terms νοῦς νοερός, νοῦς οὐσιώδης, and νοῦς ζωτικός occur in Proclus, *qv. Procli Diadochi In Platonis Timaeum Commentari*, Volume 5, Book 4, 245-247; *Procli in Platonis Parmenidem Commentaria*, II 733 and IV 887. Interestingly, Proclus associates νοερός with the three 'septenary planets' Mercury, Venus, and the Sun.

Here, σοφία νοερὰ may well suggest a particular hermetic principle which requires contextual interpretation.

ii) As noted in my commentary on Poemandres 29 - where I used the Latin *sapientia* in respect of σοφία - in some contexts the English word 'wisdom' does not fully reflect the meaning (and the various shades) of σοφία, especially in a metaphysical (or esoteric) context given what the English term 'wisdom' now, in common usage and otherwise, often denotes. As in the Poemandres tractate *sapientia* (for σοφία) requires contextual - a philosophical - interpretation, as Sophia (for σοφία) does in tractate XI where it is there suggestive, as with Aion, Kronos, and Kosmos, of a personified metaphysical principle.

iii) In respect of νοερός, the English word 'intellectual' has too many irrelevant modern connotations, with phrases such as 'intellectual wisdom' and 'the wisdom that understands' - for σοφία νοερὰ - unhelpful regarding suggesting a relevant philosophical meaning. Hence the use of the term 'noetic' which suggests a particular type of apprehension - a perceiviation - whereby certain knowledge and a particular understanding can be ascertained.

Thus, *noetic sapientia* implies that the knowledge and understanding that is noetically acquired transcends - or at least is different from - that acquired both (a) through observation of and deductions concerning phenomena and (b) through the use of <denotata> whereby beings are given 'names' and assigned to abstractive categories with such naming and such categories assumed to provide knowledge and understanding of the physis of those beings. [In respect of physis, *qv.* the comment on φύσεως μιᾶς in section 12.]

In addition, given what follows - ἐν σιγῇ, 'in silence' - such knowledge and understanding does not require nor depend upon words whether they be spoken or written or thought. Hence, the 'source' of mortals is in, can be known and understood through, the silence of noetic sapientia.

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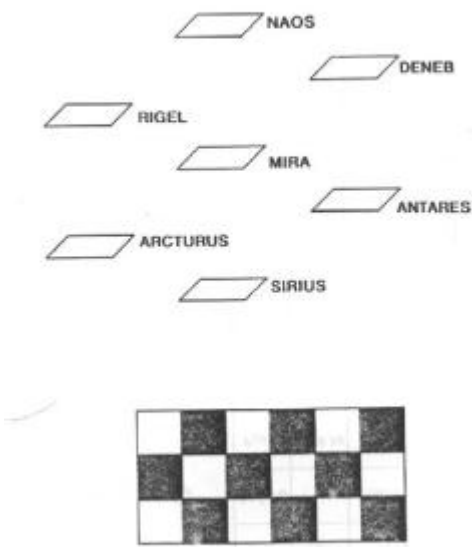
III. The Noetic Star Game

The noetic Star Game is the use of The Star Game as either (i) a type of silent contemplative meditation by one person who plays one side - the 'white pieces' - against the other side - the 'black pieces' - with an objective determined beforehand, or (ii) against a partner, as in chess, again with an objective determined beforehand.

In both instances the game can be useful in developing an insight into the hebdomad and such matters as the flow and transformation - unfolding, and loss - of beings (symbolised by the pieces) through causality and otherwise; and how symbols as in mathematics and symbolic logic can enable diverse and sometimes new connections to be perceived, *sans* denotata.

The Star Game itself is a three-dimensional seven-board game developed by David Myatt in 1975 with the seven boards, each board of nine white and nine black squares, placed in a spiral one above the other, representing the hermetic hebdomad, and named after the stars Naos, Deneb, Rigel, Mira, Antares, Arcturus, and Sirius.

The Boards



The pieces are designated by symbols and which symbols can be of two types: purely symbolic using a combination of Greek letters or alchemical using alchemical sigils. Each side - or player - as in chess has a set of either white pieces or black pieces, with each player having 27 pieces consisting of three sets of nine combinations. In terms of Greek letters the nine pieces for each player are:

$$\alpha(\alpha) \alpha(\beta) \alpha(\gamma) \beta(\alpha) \beta(\beta) \beta(\gamma) \gamma(\alpha) \gamma(\beta) \gamma(\gamma)$$

Each piece is thus marked with the appropriate symbol - for example $\alpha(\alpha)$ - with each piece allowed to move across a board, or up or down from board to board, according to its type. Only a $\gamma(\gamma)$ type of piece can capture other opposing pieces, and a captured piece is removed from the boards and plays no further part in the game. The basic rule of play is that after a piece has been moved - whether across a board or from one board to a higher or lower board - it is transformed into another piece according to a set sequence and then can be moved according to its new designation. Another rule is that pieces can only stay on the Mira board for three moves: once placed on Mira, the player has three moves before it must be moved to another board. Thus, if a $\alpha(\alpha)$ piece is on Mira it cannot escape since it can only move across the board in which case the piece is forfeited and removed from the game.

The set sequence, for symbolic Greek pieces, is:

$$\begin{aligned} \alpha(\alpha) &\rightarrow \alpha(\beta) \rightarrow \alpha(\gamma) \rightarrow \beta(\alpha) \rightarrow \beta(\beta) \rightarrow \beta(\gamma) \\ &\rightarrow \gamma(\alpha) \rightarrow \gamma(\beta) \rightarrow \gamma(\gamma) \end{aligned}$$

Thus, a $\alpha(\alpha)$ piece when it is moved becomes a $\alpha(\beta)$ piece; $\alpha(\beta)$ becomes $\alpha(\gamma)$ and so on. When a $\gamma(\gamma)$ piece is moved it reverts to being a $\alpha(\alpha)$ piece.

In terms of alchemical sigils, the pieces are:



Alchemical Mercury, Alchemical Salt, Alchemical Sulphur

and the sequence is:

$$\underbrace{\begin{aligned} \text{Mercury}(\text{Mercury}) &\rightarrow \text{Mercury}(\text{Salt}) \\ \text{Mercury}(\text{Salt}) &\rightarrow \text{Mercury}(\text{Sulphur}) \end{aligned}}_{\text{Mercury}(\text{Sulphur})} \rightarrow \underbrace{\begin{aligned} \text{Salt}(\text{Mercury}) &\rightarrow \text{Salt}(\text{Salt}) \\ \text{Salt}(\text{Salt}) &\rightarrow \text{Salt}(\text{Sulphur}) \end{aligned}}_{\text{Salt}(\text{Sulphur})} \rightarrow \underbrace{\begin{aligned} \text{Sulphur}(\text{Mercury}) &\rightarrow \text{Sulphur}(\text{Salt}) \\ \text{Sulphur}(\text{Salt}) &\rightarrow \text{Sulphur}(\text{Sulphur}) \end{aligned}}_{\text{Sulphur}(\text{Sulphur})}$$

It is for each individual to decide which type of symbolism to use, with the alchemical one and the boards of The Star Game illustrated in the following image:



Image 1
The Star Game

The image shows how the pieces are often constructed: as cubes (of wood or other material) with the sides painted with symbols in sequence. Thus, on the six faces of one cube its faces/sides would be marked $\alpha(\alpha)$ $\alpha(\beta)$ $\alpha(\gamma)$ $\beta(\alpha)$ $\beta(\beta)$ $\beta(\gamma)$. In use, the symbol on the top of the cube - for example $\alpha(\alpha)$ - is the 'active' symbol, and designates the type of piece. When this $\alpha(\alpha)$ piece is moved, it becomes $\alpha(\beta)$ with the cube turned so that the $\alpha(\beta)$ symbol is at the top. On its next move, this $\alpha(\beta)$ piece would be transformed into $\alpha(\gamma)$ and the cube turned again so that the $\alpha(\gamma)$ symbol was at the top. This method of marking pieces also means that each player has to make extra (spare) pieces.

At the start of the game, each player has six particular pieces on Sirius, three pieces on Arcturus, six pieces on Antares, three on Rigel, six on Deneb, three on Naos, and none on Mira. As in other board games, the players take turns to make their moves.

The Moves

After a piece has been moved and changed to the one next in sequence it moves according to the type of piece it has become. Thus, $\alpha(\gamma)$ becomes $\beta(\alpha)$ and moves according to the rules for a β piece.

° The α pieces - $\alpha(\alpha)$ $\alpha(\beta)$ $\alpha(\gamma)$ - can move only across the board they are on to any vacant square.

° The β pieces - $\beta(\alpha)$ $\beta(\beta)$ $\beta(\gamma)$ - can move across the board they are already on to any vacant square, and up, or down, one level - for example, from Arcturus up to Antares, or down to Sirius.

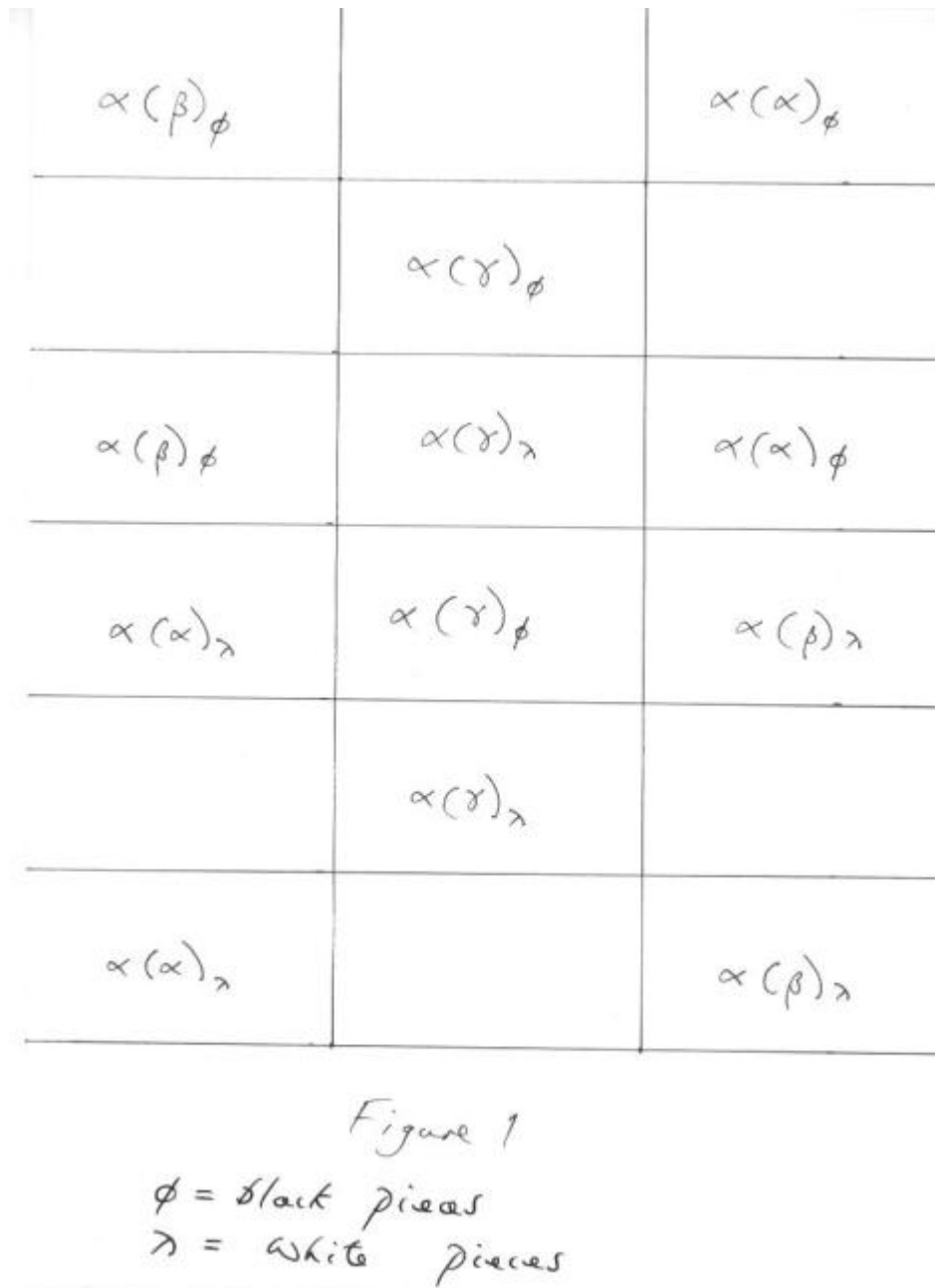
° The γ pieces can move to any (vacant) square on any board and a $\gamma(\gamma)$ piece can capture any opposing piece on any square on any board, with the captured piece removed from the board and playing no further part. Once moved the $\gamma(\gamma)$ becomes $\alpha(\alpha)$ and as an α piece can only move across the board it has landed on.

The player or players decide before the start whether or not to allow a rule variation that increases the difficulty of the game: that pieces on Naos cannot be captured by a $\gamma(\gamma)$ piece.

Initial Placement

The initial placings are as follows:

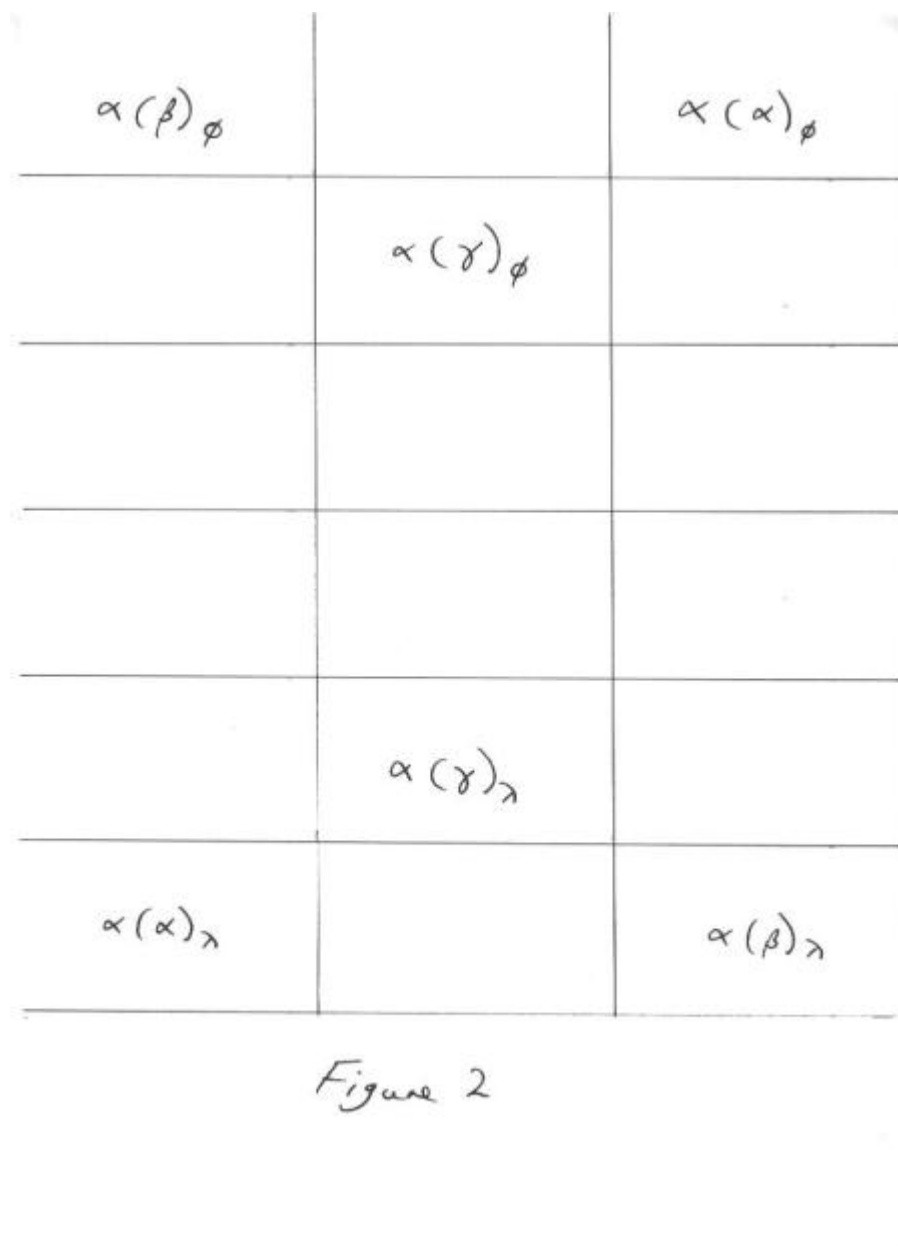
° Six pieces are placed on Sirius - two sets of alpha pieces - for white, and six for black as in Figure 1.



Sirius

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° Arcturus has three pieces for white and three for black, as in Figure 2:



Arcturus

ooo

- ° Antares has six pieces for white and six for black - two sets of beta pieces, placed exactly as the pieces on the Sirius board.
- ° Mira has no pieces on it at the start.
- ° Rigel has the three remaining pieces (for each player) of the beta sets, placed as the alpha pieces on Arcturus.
- ° Deneb has six pieces of white and six of black from the gamma set, placed as the alpha set on Sirius.
- ° Naos has the three remaining pieces of the gamma set, placed the same as the alpha sets of Arcturus.

The Objective

The objective is flexible and decided by the player or players before the game. The standard objective is to place three particular pieces on certain squares on Mira, with the type of these pieces and their placing on that board decided beforehand. One such placement is,

$\alpha(\beta)_\lambda$		$\alpha(\alpha)_\lambda$
	$\alpha(\gamma)_\lambda$	
	$\alpha(\gamma)_\phi$	
$\alpha(\alpha)_\phi$		$\alpha(\beta)_\phi$

Figure 3

where the sub-script λ indicates the winning position for the player of the white pieces, with the three other pieces the winning position for the player of the black pieces. The first to so place such pieces, wins the game.

The player or players can also decide beforehand to waive the rule that allows pieces to only stay on the Mira board for three moves.

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IV. The Seven Stages

The Overcoming

- ° 1. That vigour - enthusiasm - which grows and which fades.
- ° 2. Those dishonourable machinations.
- ° 3. That eagerness which deceives.
- ° 4. The arrogance of authority over others.
- ° 5. Profane insolence and reckless haste.
- ° 6. The bad inclinations occasioned by a comfortable life-style.
- ° 7. The lies that lie in wait.

Thus, and as an example, the second stage is the 'offering up' - the overcoming - of "dishonourable machinations" with the pathei-mathos involved a series of physical challenges, detailed below, which for many would be quite challenging with those who, before beginning their seeking have achieved such challenges setting themselves greater challenges and achieving them, such as instead of the suggested, for a man, training for and running a Marathon in four and a half hours, running one in four hours or much less.

How does or how can the overcoming by the Hebdomadary - the seeker - of such physical challenges distance a person from dishonourable machinations? Because practical experience over decades by a variety of persons has revealed that the training can and should take months, is physically and mentally demanding and time-consuming, and distances one metaphorically and often physically from a world where "dishonourable machinations" may be and possibly have been personally advantageous to the seeker and probably known to have been used by others either against the seeker or otherwise.

The Tasks

1.

Obtain copies of and read tractates I, III, IV, and XIII of The Corpus Hermeticum. The book containing the tractates should have a scholarly commentary and if a translation is required at least two different versions should be obtained, read and compared. {8} Afterwards, write an essay concerning your understanding of Hellenic Hermeticism. If an individual unversed in the classics has a desire to do so they can learn Hellenistic Greek and undertake their own translations. In understanding hermeticism the individual may find the study and use of the noetic Star Game helpful.

2.

For men, (a) walking thirty-two miles, in rural terrain, in less than seven hours while carrying a rucksack weighing at least 30 pounds; (b) running 26 miles and 385 yards (a Marathon) in four and a half hours; (c) cycling two hundred or more miles in twelve hours.

For women, (a) walking twenty-seven miles in under seven hours while carrying a rucksack weighing at least 15 pounds; (b) running 26 miles and 385 yards (a Marathon) in five hours; (c) cycling one hundred and seventy miles in twelve hours.

Those who, before beginning their quest have already reached such standards should set themselves greater physical challenges and achieve them.

3.

With an existing partner, or after finding a suitable partner willing to undertake the task with you, find a hill or mountain in an isolated area - or a desert area miles from any human habitation - which affords an unobstructed night-time view of the stars and wild-camp there for at least three days and nights.

4.

A living alone in an wilderness area, near water suitable for drinking, for a three month period taking with you all that is required in a rucksack which you carry on your own back. You can either (i) build your own shelter from local materials and find your own food by hunting, fishing, and gathering, or (ii) take a tent and sleeping bag and on a monthly basis purchase and take back to your site such food supplies as may be needed from a locality situated at a suitable walking distance, with around 10 miles being suggested.

During the task you should maintain your isolation and have no means of communication with the outside world, use only candles (in a lantern) for illumination, have no means of measuring the passing of time (such as a watch) and no means of reproducing music or any other form of entertainment.

The Hebdomadary should keep a handwritten journal to record their musings.

5.

Write a full length novel of whatever genre, two of whose characters should be based on or inspired by either contemporary or historical persons you find interesting or inspiring or have an empathy for or a dislike of. The novel can also be based on your own life and/or experience and involve a locality and/or persons you know.

You should undertake the necessary contemporary or historical research in terms of plausible characters, scenarios, dialogue and locations, and if necessary read several published contemporary or historical novels to ascertain for yourself how various novelists structure their story, describe characters and events, and employ dialogue.

6.

The task begins at a full moon in Autumn and lasts seven days and nights and is to stay alone for that period in an isolated underground cavern where or near to where drinkable water flows, taking all that is required for the duration of the rite, including water if there is no drinkable water available, and food consisting of bread and cheese and, if you so desire, a supply of wine or beer. If a such an underground cavern cannot be found, then a suitable alternative is an isolated dark cave with, if necessary, its entrance suitably screened to avoid an ingress of light.

The only light is from candles (housed in a lantern) and no means of communication with the outside world, no timepiece, mechanical or otherwise, and no modern means of reproducing music nor any other means of personal entertainment should be brought.

The Hebdomadary should arrange for a trusted person or their partner or a family member to end their isolation after seven days.

7.

The task involves the Hebdomadary - alone or with their partner - walking, in isolated terrain, a distance of at least 210 miles in 21 days carrying appropriate equipment for camping and supplies of food and water to last several days with their route enabling them to find suitable sources of drinking water when necessary. Supplies of food, if dehydrated or freeze-dried, should last as long as practicable, and then when necessary and possible food can be bought en route. The journey is to end at or near a site which the Hebdomadary finds they have an empathy with or if accompanied by their partner that they both have an empathy with. The Hebdomadary and/or their partner should keep a handwritten diary of their journey.

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Footnotes

{1} Being itself has been variously understood, through for example traditional metaphysics, through the ontology of Martin Heidegger, and as the numinous/The Numen in Myatt's philosophy of pathei-mathos.

{2} As noted in our essay *Julius Evola, The Seven Fold Way, And The Corpus Hermeticum*,

An axiom of Greco-Roman (Hellenic) hermeticism is that the κόσμος is a reasoned order and has an ordered structure which human beings, by virtue of possessing the faculty of reason, are - in their natural state of physis (φύσις) or fitrah - an eikon (εἰκὼν) of since as stated in a Latin version (Liber Hermetis de alchimia) of a commentary on the Arabic alchemical text al-Lawh al-Zumurrud, The Emerald Table, *quod est inferius est sicut quod est superius*, 'what is above is as what is below'.

Which is why tractate II of the Corpus Hermeticum states that there is a "cosmic order on Earth: A cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings," τὴν γῆν κοσμήσαι κόσμον δὲ θεοῦ σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον.

Hence also why the twenty-sixth chapter of the book *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda* by Marsilii Ficini (published in 1489 ev) has as its heading: *Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona*, 'How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned.'

Source: <https://archive.org/download/evola-7fw-v3/evola-7fw-v3.pdf>

{3} *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, 2017. ISBN 978-1976452369

{4} As described in *Julius Evola, The Seven Fold Way, And The Corpus Hermeticum* (op.cit) and elsewhere:

As a term Lapis Philosophicus means the "jewel of the alchemist", since the term Philosophicus means an alchemist and not, as is commonly said, a philosopher, just as lapis (qv. λίθος τῶν σοφῶν) when used in Latin alchemical texts means "jewel" and not "stone".

For Hermetic tradition relates that λίθος as a jewel, or precious stone, was attested by Herodotus, who in *The Histories*, Book II, 44, wrote, in reference to "the sacred Temple of Heracles", ἡ δὲ σμαράγδου λίθου λάμποντος τὰς νύκτας μέγαθος.

It was possibly used in the same way by Aristotle who wrote, in reference to the Nine Archons,

ἀναγράψαντες δὲ τοὺς νόμους εἰς τοὺς κύρβεις ἔστησαν ἐν τῇ στοᾷ τῆ βασιλείῳ καὶ ὤμοσαν χρῆσεσθαι πάντες. οἱ δ' ἐννέα ἄρχοντες ὁμνύντες πρὸς τῷ λίθῳ κατεφάτιζον ἀναθήσειν ἀνδριάντα χρυσοῦν, ἐάν τινα παραβῶσι τῶν νόμων: ὅθεν ἔτι καὶ νῦν οὕτως ὁμνύουσι. Athenian Constitution, 7.1

Also, as noted in *English-Greek Dictionary: A Vocabulary of the Attic Language* by S. C. Woodhouse, published by Routledge & Kegan Paul in 1910, the term λίθος describes a jewel, as in Plato:

ὦν καὶ τὰ ἐνθάδε λιθίδια εἶναι ταῦτα τὰ ἀγαπώμενα μόρια, σάρδιά τε καὶ ἰάσπιδας καὶ σμαράγδους καὶ πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα: ἐκεῖ δὲ οὐδὲν ὅτι οὐ τοιοῦτον εἶναι καὶ ἔτι τούτων καλλίω. Phaedo 110 δ-ε

{5} *La Tradizione Ermetica*, Second Edition, Edizioni Mediterranee, 1996. ISBN 978-8827211595. p.172

English translation of Italian edition: *The Hermetic Tradition - Symbols and Teachings of the Royal Art*. 1995. ISBN 978-0892814510.

{6} Ex quibus summum globum possidet illa, quam in terris Saturniam nominant. Deinde est hominum generi prosperus et salutaris ille fulgor, qui dicitur Iovis; tum rutilus horribilisque terris, quem Martium dicitis; deinde subter mediam fere regionem Sol obtinet, dux et princeps et moderator luminum reliquorum, mens mundi et temperatio, tanta magnitudine, ut cuncta sua luce lustret et compleat. Hunc ut comites consequuntur Veneris alter, alter Mercurii

cursus, in infimoque orbe Luna radiis solis accensa convertitur. Infra autem iam nihil est nisi mortale et caducum praeter animos munere deorum hominum generi datos; supra Lunam sunt aeterna omnia.

{7} Commentary on tractate XIII. *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, op.cit. In the cited quotation we have, with his permission, replaced Myatt's term 'denotatum' with the plural 'denotata' - enclosed within angular brackets - to avoid confusion, since Myatt idiosyncratically uses the singular 'denotatum' as an Anglicized term for both singular and plural instances.

{8} Recommended translations with commentaries: (i) Copenhaver, *Hermetica*, 1995, Cambridge University Press, ISBN 978-0521425438 (ii) Myatt, *Corpus Hermeticum, Eight Tractates*, 2017, ISBN 978-1976452369

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