H.E.R.M.E.S.

Newsletter
Spring Equinox 2012

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H.E.R.M.E.S.’ PURPOSE:

§ 1: To advance and balance the Academic Study of Esotericism.

§ 2: To establish and maintain an international and interdisciplinary Academic Research Society in the field of Esotericism in relation to Religion, Philosophy, Science and Art.

Website: www.h-e-r-m-e-s.org

INTRODUCTION

It is with great pleasure that I hereby introduce our Spring Equinox Newsletter 2012. It contains an illuminating article on ‘Isaac Preston Cory, Isis Unveiled (1877) and Cosmology’ by Jeffrey D. Lavoie, doctoral candidate at the University of Exeter and author of the recently published book: The Theosophical Society: The History of a Spiritualist Movement. In this article Lavoie explores how important Cory’s work, especially his Ancient Fragments, was to Blavatsky and how she made use of it.

While the nineteenth-century no doubt was a century of progress, with a view to the future, many like Cory and Blavatsky turned their gaze towards the realms of ancient knowledge. This is equally witnessed by great works of art such as Gustave Moreau’s Hercules and the Hydra (1876) which also is included in this newsletter together with a note on his life and his connection to esotericism.

Finally, a comprehensive list of the forthcoming conferences related to esotericism is included. I am happy to declare that the coming season has such an inspiring amount to offer in relation to the academic study of esotericism. I hope you will enjoy this newsletter and I thank you for your support.

Respectfully,

Tim Rudbøg, Director of H.E.R.M.E.S.
ARTICLES

Isaac Preston Cory, *Isis Unveiled* (1877) and Cosmology

by

Jeffrey D. Lavoie

Introduction

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831 -1891) one of the founders of the Theosophical Society wrote several major works in her attempt to differentiate her ‘Theosophy’ from mainstream Victorian Spiritualism (the religious movement from which the Theosophical Society emerged). One such work was *Isis Unveiled* written in 1877 which was meant to be her defense against philosophical materialism which she believed was threatening to dominate nineteenth-century Western culture. The subtitle clearly stated the aim of this work ‘a master-key to the Mysteries of Ancient and modern Science and Theology’; this subtitle communicated Blavatsky’s desire to ‘unveil’ the ‘ancient wisdom tradition’ which she believed was the underlying current of all world religions.1

*Isis Unveiled* was initially released as a two-volume set and the first volume was titled ‘Science’ which attempted to validate the numerous accounts of Spiritualist phenomena; the second volume was called ‘Theology’ and it suggested that all the various world religions could be traced back to one universal religious tradition. Numerous subjects were also explored throughout this work including psychometry, correspondences, an emanationist view of the world, the existence of hidden Adepts possessed with supernatural abilities, and an esoteric interpretation of Genesis.2

One of the main focuses of this work was to promulgate Blavatsky’s early view of cosmology (the nature of the universe and its relation to time, space, and evolution) for which she relied upon her own assimilation of both religion and science for validation (her cosmology would evolve into a more advanced structure in her 1888 work *The Secret Doctrine*).

Shortly after its publication in 1877, a source analysis of *Isis Unveiled* was performed by one of Blavatsky’s contemporaries- a disgruntled Spiritualist named William Emmette Coleman. Coleman concluded that while Blavatsky cited close to a thousand individual sources it seemed more probable that she had only consulted about a hundred separate works in compiling this work (Blavatsky seemingly conceded this point in a final article entitled ‘My Books’ written shortly before her demise in 1891).3 Despite his harsh conclusion, the only proof Coleman offered for evidence was in the form of a short article published as an appendix to Vsevolod Solovyoff’s *A Modern Priestess of Isis* (1895) which listed some of the sources from which Blavatsky had allegedly borrowed (though in some cases Coleman was mistaken as Blavatsky used and cited these sources properly). Regardless of the veracity of Coleman’s conclusion one thing remains known- one of the sources that Coleman ‘revealed’ was Isaac Preston Cory and his *Ancient Fragments*.

The influence of Cory’s work on Blavatsky was further exhibited in its inclusion in ‘The Secret Doctrine Reference Series’ published by the Wizard’s Bookshelf a company started by Richard Robb which sought to reprint ‘some of the books quoted or referred to in the S.D…[in order] to guarantee future generations access to the ideas contained in the already rare and difficult-to-obtain titles of past centuries.’4 Thus, the influence of Cory was observed even in her

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1 Blavatsky’s term ‘wisdom tradition’ was her reconceptualization of the *prisca theologia*. Blavatsky held that this ancient wisdom was the hermeneutic key to interpret scientific data: ‘our work, then, is a plea for the recognition of the Hermetic philosophy, that anciently universal Wisdom Religion, as the only possible key to the Absolute in science and theology.’ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, pp. vii, xi, 131, 162, 436; II, pp. 99, 142.


later magnum opus The Secret Doctrine which was published in 1888; however, Cory’s influence began much earlier as can be evidenced in her first major work- Isis Unveiled. The influence of Cory was confirmed in the researching of this article and suggests that Blavatsky specifically relied upon his writings in the construction of her cosmology. This obvious influence that Cory exerted on Blavatsky prompts the question, ‘who was this individual and in what ways did his writings influence Blavatsky and her cosmology?’

A Biography

Isaac Preston Cory (1801 - 1842) was a graduate of Cambridge University and was employed as a registered barrister-at-law. On 28 May 1824 Cory was elected as Junior Fellow of Caius College, and on 12 April 1839 he was promoted to Senior Fellow. Cory wrote on diverse subject matters ranging from an eight-volume set on The Principles of Law (1841?) to a work on Ancient and Modern Philosophers which was originally published in a condensed form as an appendix to Ancient Fragments in 1831. Little is known about Cory’s life, aside from the following biographical article which was written for The Oxford Dictionary of National Biographies:

Cory, Isaac Preston (1801/2–1842), writer, was the son and heir of Robert Cory FSA, an attorney at Great Yarmouth and mayor of the town in 1815. His father’s library of topographical, architectural, and miscellaneous works was sold on the latter’s death in 1840. Cory was educated at the grammar schools at Saffron Walden and Norwich before matriculating at Clare College, Cambridge, in 1820. Five of his brothers were subsequently educated at Cambridge. In 1821 he migrated to Gonville and Caius College, where he was elected to a scholarship in 1822. Graduating BA in 1824 (as thirteenth wrangler) and MA in 1827, he was elected in 1824 to a fellowship of Caius, which he held until his death. He was Hebrew lecturer at Caius from 1839 to 1841. His chief academic work was a compilation of Ancient fragments of the Phoenician, Chaldean, Egyptian, Tyrian, Carthaginian, Indian, Persian, and other writers (2nd edn, 1832; rev. edn, 1876). In 1832 he was called to the bar at Lincoln's Inn, and subsequently published a Practical Treatise on Accounts (1839), which described methods of bookkeeping and discrepancies between the law and reality of commercial practice. It was reprinted in 1980. He died, unmarried, at Blundeston, Suffolk, on 1 April 1842 aged forty.

As noted above, Cory is an obscure figure and only a scant amount of information has been printed about his life aside from this above summary; however, it seemed that Cory’s untimely

<http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/ts/sdrefs-r.htm> [accessed on 2 March 2012]

5 The only biography that has been formally published (aside from the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography referenced above) about Isaac Cory was an introductory section in the 1975 reprint of his Ancient Fragments in the section titled ‘Notes on the Wizard Edition’ though it was exceptionally brief and focused primarily upon Thomas Taylor.


9 This biography was derived from two main sources: J. Venn and J. A. Venn, Alumni Cantabrigienses: a biographical list of all known students, graduates, and holders of office at the University of Cambridge, from the earliest times to 1900, 10 vols.
demise at age forty provides one possibility for this lack of biographical information about this otherwise fascinating character.\textsuperscript{10}

Despite this premature death Cory remained a productive writer who published multiple writings including: \textit{The Principles, Law, and Practice of Accounts, Official Accounts} (1839), \textit{Metaphysical Inquiry into the Methods of Scientific Investigation used by the Ancient and Modern Philosophers} (1833), \textit{Inquiries into the Recondite Theology of the Heathens, and the History and Chronology of Egypt} (1837), \textit{A Practical Treatise on Accounts} (1839), a booklet titled \textit{Competition: Its Abuse One of the Chief Causes of the Present Distress among the Trading, Manufacturing, and Commercial Classes} (1842)\textsuperscript{11} and of course \textit{Ancient Fragments} (1826).\textsuperscript{12}

\textbf{Isaac Cory’s Connection to Helena Blavatsky}

\textit{Ancient Fragments} was first published in 1826 and was revised in 1832 though in this reprinting ‘some sort of mechanical device is thought to have been utilized for sequential page numbering. It malfunctioned. The first time on page 51, then on 63, etc., repeating these and other numbers on continuing text.’\textsuperscript{13} Given Blavatsky’s quotations of Thomas Taylor’s ‘Chaldean Oracles’ and the pagination employed in \textit{Isis Unveiled} it seems apparent that Blavatsky referenced these earlier editions (as opposed to E. Richmond Hodges ‘Enlarged Edition’ of 1876 which omitted the ‘co-called oracles of Zoroaster’ because he had ‘every reason to reject them as spurious’).\textsuperscript{14}

Based on his writings and the above biographical information, Cory seemed to have been proficient in both Hebrew and classical Greek. In his \textit{Ancient Fragments} Cory acknowledged his indebtedness to the works of a dear friend for help in preparing this compilation- the renowned (though underappreciated) Platonist of the nineteenth century –Thomas Taylor (1758 – 1835). Cory gave full credit to Taylor ‘for the addition of about fifty more’ Oracles of Zoroaster ‘and for the references to the works from whence all were extracted.’\textsuperscript{15} Based on Cory’s personal admission that Taylor was a ‘learned and respected friend’ and considering a handwritten inscription on the cover of Cory’s personal edition of Taylor’s \textit{Two Treatises of Proclus} it appeared that these two individuals shared a deep relationship.\textsuperscript{16} While the exact nature of this relationship remains unknown, this connection provides a possible understanding as to why Blavatsky utilized Cory’s writings.\textsuperscript{17}

Blavatsky was familiar with Thomas Taylor as she continuously defended his translations despite the fact that he was known as an eccentric and the prevailing attitude towards his translations were that they were ‘handicapped by his texts and his level of Greek comprehension.’\textsuperscript{18} It seems logical that Blavatsky had been introduced to Taylor’s writings and translations through the Platonist Alexander Wilder (1823-1908) who was also instrumental in aiding Blavatsky with writing/editing the manuscript version of \textit{Isis Unveiled} and who is the...
person credited with publishing the introductory section to this work titled ‘Before the Veil.’

Wilder’s own appreciation for Taylor was exhibited in his introduction to Taylor’s dissertation *The Eleusianian and Bacchic Mysteries* where he noted that (despite the fact that Taylor’s interpretations were not widely accepted by classical scholars) Taylor ‘was endowed with a superior qualification.’ Wilder went on to say that ‘others may have known more Greek, but he knew more Plato.’ Thus, it seems entirely possible that given Wilder’s direct and notable influence on the writing and editing of *Isis Unveiled* that Blavatsky had become familiar with Isaac Cory though his connection to Thomas Taylor (perhaps at the suggestion of Wilder).

It is not surprising that Blavatsky made no use of Cory’s other major writing *History and Chronology of Egypt* given that he relied heavily upon the biblical linear view of time and James Ussher’s classical chronology in this work. Blavatsky openly spoke against Ussher’s chronology in the pages of the *Theosophist* (following the publication of *Isis Unveiled* in 1877) as this would have been in opposition to Blavatsky’s construction of an Eastern cyclical chronology that she was considering in *Isis Unveiled* and which she assimilated more fully in *The Secret Doctrine*. Also, Cory’s orthodox Christian philosophy would be at odds with Blavatsky’s belief in the universal wisdom tradition (her reconceptualized form of the *prisca theologia*) which she believed was the root of all the world religions even Christianity. Cory personally held that it was:

> impossible that the Christian doctrine should have been derived from Heathen sources…the current account of the creation, combined with this physical triad, which shadowed forth to them the divine mystery, appears to have become the stumbling block, which set mankind to refine upon the truth; that hence they mistook the type for the archetype, the solar triad for the spiritual, and they fell into errors of attributing eternity to matter, of placing a Monad above the Trinity, with the Pantheistic opinion that the Deity was no other than then universe itself. The doctrine of the succession of worlds, the Metempsychosis, and Demonolatry would follow naturally enough by an extension of their system from the particular circumstances of the creation to those attendant upon the deluge...23

Based upon these beliefs, Cory would seemingly have disapproved of the philosophical ideals of the Theosophical Society (and especially Blavatsky’s use of his work to defend her cosmology). Despite this philosophical disagreement, Blavatsky relied heavily upon Cory’s *Ancient Fragments* particularly to validate her theories of evolution, time, and origin (cosmology). In the next section, three instances will be noted in which Blavatsky employed Cory’s *Ancient Fragments* in her defense and construction of cosmology.

**Blavatsky’s Cosmology and Ancient Fragments**

One of the elements that Blavatsky continuously employed (which proved her belief that she was revealing this hidden ancient wisdom tradition) in developing her concept of cosmology in *Isis Unveiled* was the story of Berosus. The conversation noted in ‘Berosus: From Alexander Polyhistor—On the Cosmogony and Causes of the Deluge’ contained Berosus’ interactions with...
the fish-creature named Oannes. According to this tale, Oannes taught the people of Babylonia letters, science, and every type of art. He taught them to construct homes, to found temples, to compile laws and most importantly the principles of geometrical knowledge. Oannes explained to the Babylonians how the creation of the world occurred—through a process that Blavatsky viewed as a proper understanding of evolution: ‘there was a time in which there was nothing but darkness and an abyss of waters, wherein resided the most hideous beings, which were produced of a two-fold principle.’ Some of these strange creatures included hippocentaurs, bulls with human faces, dog creatures with fins and other two-fold creatures. According to Blavatsky’s interpretation, this story proved the existence and validity of evolution within the ancient wisdom tradition which even made provision for the ‘intermediate links’ that Darwinian evolution had never discovered; thus, exhibiting a balance of ‘science’ and ‘theology’ that included a descent/ascent from spirit into matter.

Blavatsky further postulated in *Isis Unveiled* that Darwinian evolution was only a piece of a larger evolutionary scheme. Rather, she critiqued Darwin’s form of evolution ‘as being backwards from the ancient doctrine which maintained that all things had their origin in spirit—evolution having originally begun from above and proceeded downward, instead of the reverse, as taught in the Darwinian method.’ Blavatsky viewed evolution as moving from complex/spirit to simple/matter (and then back to complex) in opposition to the accepted Enlightenment view of evolution which saw the simple preceding the complex. Blavatsky believed that her larger (regressive) view of evolution was proven through this story of Oannes which confirmed her own modified evolutionary theory—that all life began as a spirit and eventually descended into material form and through the Darwinian process of evolution made its journey back into spirit.

The second instance of Blavatsky utilizing Cory in the defense of her cosmological structure of time and spiritual evolution is found in the first volume of *Isis Unveiled*. In this volume the following cosmology was set forth:

Imagine a point in space as the primordial one; then with compasses draw a circle around this point...The circle itself is composed of innumerable smaller circles...There is a certain distance between each of the spheres, purposely marked; for after the accomplishment of the circles through various transmigrations, the soul is allowed a time of temporary nirvana during which space of time the atma loses all remembrance of past sorrows. The intermediate ethereal space is filled with strange beings. Those between the highest ether and the earth below are the creatures of a ‘middle nature;’ nature-spirits, or, as the kabalists term it sometimes, the elementary.

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29 Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, p. 133: Blavatsky noted that evolution could only explain our present race and that Oannes' teachings proved that the infant world was created out of water and that all beings originated from the *prima materia*; 154: Blavatsky stated that Berosus noted the gradual modification of mammals long before Haeckel's *Anthropogeny*; 349: Berosus was used to justify Blavatsky's belief in her cosmological structure of spiritual evolution; II: 271: Blavatsky used Berosus to show that a more ancient account than Genesis existed and that there was nothing but darkness and an abyss of waters; 275: Blavatsky noted Berosus to prove her belief that Hindu Cosmogony and nineteenth-century evolutionary theories could be harmonized.
Blavatsky went on to explain that this cosmological structure was ‘either a copy of the one described to posterity by Berosus, the priest of the temple of Belus, at Babylon, or the original.’

This quote implies that Blavatsky believed her cosmology was the same identical system which had been taught directly to Berosus the priest of the temple of Belus by Oannes the Chaldean man-fish giving her cosmology a sense of authority and historical precedence. Blavatsky again cited Cory’s *Ancient Fragments*, though no conversation pertaining to any cosmological structure that included ‘innumerable circles’, ‘transmigrations’, or ‘nirvana’ was ever attributed to Oannes or Berosus in this work. Rather, this mythical conversation appears to have been left ambiguous as noted in the following quote from *Ancient Fragments*:

> This Being (Oannes) gave them an insight into letters and sciences, and arts of every kind. He taught them to construct cities, to found temples, to compile laws, and explained to them the principles of geometrical knowledge. He made them distinguish the seeds of the earth, and shewed them how to collect fruits; in short, he instructed them in every thing which could tend to soften manners and humanize their lives. From that time, nothing material has been added by way of improvements to his instructions (emphasis added).

According to Blavatsky’s eclectic assimilation of ‘theology’ and ‘science’ she apparently believed that these ‘principles of geometrical knowledge’ were the concepts of ‘innumerable circles’, ‘transmigrations’, and ‘nirvana’; thus, (as noted above) Blavatsky was attempting to connect her view of cosmology with a historical ‘theology’ (or more accurately- mythology). This revelation of cosmology had been discovered by assimilating Eastern and Western religions combined with the guidance of a highly evolved race of masters which allowed Blavatsky for the first time in history to publically ‘unveil’ this missing information from an ancient account in the pages of *Isis Unveiled*.

Blavatsky also connected this ‘intermediate ethereal space that was filled with strange beings’ found in her cosmological structure to Oannes’ description of strange beings that included two-headed human beings with wings, and human-goat creatures which Cory described as ‘creatures with limbs of every species of animal.’

In fact Blavatsky used these images to prove and justify the existence of her own controversial ‘theory of elementals.’ This connection reveals that Blavatsky used Cory’s *Ancient Fragments* as a loose blueprint for her unique construction of cosmology and soteriology.

The third instance in which Blavatsky utilized *Ancient Fragments* to justify her cosmology was connected to her belief in the ‘eighth sphere’ as evidenced in her quotation of an ambiguous poem from this work. In this instance Blavatsky cited the ‘Magical and Philosophical Precepts of Psellus’ as precedence to verify her own cosmological theory that a soul could escape annihilation in the eighth sphere by repenting and ‘by exercising the remnants of his will-power, strive upward, and like a drowning man, struggle once more to the surface.’

Blavatsky quoted from Cory: ‘Stoop not down, for a precipice lies below the earth. Drawing under a descent of SEVEN steps, beneath which Is the throne of dire necessity.’

Though even the most forgiving reader would observe that this poem of Psellus was divorced from its original context and had nothing to do with a cosmological eighth sphere, nevertheless, this quotation illustrates Blavatsky’s intent to ground her ancient wisdom tradition in Cory’s ancient history. Blavatsky was justifying and defending an important piece of her cosmological structure— the eighth sphere (the place where material monads were annihilated) by referencing this misinterpretation of Cory’s *Ancient Texts*. It

33 Cory, *Ancient Fragments*, p. 58.
should be noted that this eighth sphere would become an important concept in Blavatsky’s later teachings though it would eventually be replaced by her conceptualization of karma.

It has been shown in this article that Blavatsky cited Isaac Cory’s *Ancient Fragments* (over fifteen times in *Isis Unveiled*) to validate her own unique cosmological construction of the universe (including justifying her theory of evolution, elementals, and the eighth sphere as well as her unique assimilation of Oriental concepts). As noted at the onset of this article, the concept of assimilating contemporaneous ‘science’ and ‘theology’ using ancient texts (along with the teachings of highly evolved masters) stemmed from Blavatsky’s belief in the existence of an ancient universal wisdom tradition which had been hidden and scattered across world religions and could only be ‘unveiled’ by an adept like herself; thus, the goal of *Isis Unveiled* was ambitious-to recover and unveil this wisdom to the public at large. It would be appropriate to conclude that (regardless of their apparently conflicting ideologies) Isaac Cory was one of Blavatsky’s main sources in her construction and defense of her cosmology in *Isis Unveiled* (and even influenced her later work in *The Secret Doctrine* [1888]) providing the ancient precedence that would allow Blavatsky to both validate and attached her newly constructed views of time and spiritual evolution in the annals of ancient history.
[Gustave Moreau, *Hercules and the Hydra*, 1876]
A note on Moreau’s life and his connection to esotericism
by Tim Rudbøg

Gustave Moreau (1826–1898) is generally acclaimed as one of the most celebrated French symbolist painters of the nineteenth-century. Like other symbolists of the time many of his great works invites his spectator into an ancient world of mythological figures with strong aesthetic overtones of romanticism and imagination. The symbolists, in reaction to the more dominant positivism, realism, impressionism and materialism of the day, sought to communicate ideas and things by the use of symbols and believed that it was possible to express individual spiritual and moral messages by using forms, moods and colors.

In recent years it has become quite clear that the artistic expression of Moreau and other symbolists was highly influenced by the revival of esoteric ideas, ancient knowledge and currents such as Theosophy and Rosicrucianism.\(^36\) The inner world including the realms of dreams, visions, intuitions and the imagination took precedence over the concrete. Moreau once wrote ‘I am dominated by one thing, an irresistible, burning attraction towards abstraction.’\(^37\)

Moreau also gathered with other artists and esotericists in the Salons de la Rose-Croix founded in Paris in 1892 by the French occultist, rosicrucian and novelist Joséphin Péladan (1858-1918).\(^38\)

The year before, Moreau had become a professor at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris where he received many promising artists, such as Henri Matisse, Georges Rouault and Jules Flandrin. Moreau’s own workshop was in 1903 opened to the public as the enchanted Musée national Gustave Moreau, which still is in operation today.

Moreau’s Hercules and the Hydra (see above) was exhibited at the famous Salon (est. 1725) in Paris in 1876. Beyond its incredible skill and beauty it is significant how Moreau emphasized Hercules as a radiant solar deity holding the laurel leaves sacred to Apollo. Hercules here becomes the illuminated god of light, the initiate, who bravely faces the dark forces of the underworld personified by the many headed Hydra.\(^39\) This theme of light versus darkness is classical to the initiatory cycles of the initiate’s struggle with the titanic forces and here turns into an aesthetic experience that momentarily gives living access to the ancient realm of myth and foreshadows what awaits the champion to be.

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Call for Papers - The 4th Israeli Conference for the Study of Contemporary Spiritualities (ISCSC)

This year's conference's central theme is the therapeutic/psychological discourse within contemporary spiritualities, e.g., therapist-client relationship within the spiritual field, the psychologization of religion, mind-body-spirit connections. This theme does not in any way limit all other research topics, and the conference will be open to all research fields within the study of contemporary spiritualities.

Mito y Magia en Grecia y Roma

Probablemente los dos aspectos del Mundo Antiguo que más interés suscitan son el mito y la magia. Aunque los estudiosos de ambos se plantean con frecuencia su definición y su justificación conceptual, su simple mención desencadena variadas connotaciones y abre ante nosotros un haz de fascinantes perspectivas. El objeto del presente Coloquio es estudiar las relaciones entre los relatos míticos y el mundo de la magia en Grecia y Roma, a partir de dos grandes secciones temáticas. 1. La magia en el mito; 2. El mito en la magia

2nd Annual INASWE Conference

The Second Annual Conference of INASWE, the Israeli Network for the Academic Study of Western Esotericism, will take place at the University of Haifa on 22 March 2012. International Guest Speakers: Per Faxneld (Stockholm University) & Peter Forshaw
Call for Papers - Perspectives in American Freemasonry and Fraternalism  

The National Heritage Museum announces a call for papers for its biannual symposium, “Perspectives on American Freemasonry and Fraternalism,” to be held on Saturday, April 7, 2012, at the Museum in Lexington, Massachusetts.

Call for Papers - Tarot at the 2012 PCA/ACA Conference  

The Tarot area of the PCA/ACA conference in Boston (11-14 April 2012) is open for submissions.

From Alchemy to Chemistry  

A symposium with three speakers from the Society for the History of Alchemy and Chemistry (SHAC), hosted by the National University of Ireland, Galway.

Call for Papers - Science and the Occult: From Antiquity to the
Early Modern Period

The fascinating recurrence of alchemical symbols in European, American, and Islamic thought, as well as specific non-rational methods employed by many scientists to promote rational discoveries from Ancient times through the Early Modern Period, will be the focus of this conference. West Lafayette, USA.

Body, Soul, Spirits and Supernatural Communication, Pécs, Hungary

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Body, Soul, Spirits and Supernatural Communication, Pécs, Hungary

The Internationales Kolleg Morphomata of the Universität zu Köln will be hosting a symposium on 'The Materiality of Magic'.

Association for the Study of Esotericism Fourth Annual Conference

The Association for the Study of Esotericism (ASE) is seeking paper and panel proposals for its fourth International North American Conference on Esotericism to be held at the University of California, Davis.
Call for Papers - Astrology in Time and Place: Cross-Cultural Questions in the History of Astrology  
June 23, 2012 - to - June 24, 2012

We invite abstracts for this academic conference which will consider the questions which arise from the transmission of ideas in the theory and practice of astrology. Such transmission may be between cultures, or through time in the same culture. Issues may also be addressed of comparison between cultures. Bath, UK.

Call for Papers - Esoteric Traditions in the Ancient and Modern World  
July 12, 2012 - to - July 24, 2012

International Conference in Alexandria, Egypt, July 12-24 2012 Conference: 6 days in Alexandria Tour (optional): 3-day cruise on the Nile & 3 days in Cairo

Conference description: The purpose of the Conference will be to examine the source and foundations of the mystery and esoteric traditions; their expressions and nuances in the ancient and contemporary world along with the interface between ancient wisdom and modern scientific paradigms. As we will be returning to the cradle of so-called "Western Esotericism" for this event, the Conference will be focusing upon the Hermeticism of Alexandria, neo-Platonism, former ancient Mysteries, and the modern Theosophical Movement; in view of their phenomenology, social impact, and nuances in the shaping of cultural and spiritual aspects of the contemporary western world. Special emphasis will be given to the Theosophical Society; its foundational structures and orientation, successions, impact, and its role as an artery in the continuation of esoteric culture and Higher Age teachings within the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. Alexandria, Egypt.
CFP - 'Magic is Might 2012': An International Academic Conference Exploring the Cultural Influences of the Harry Potter Books and Films

July 23, 2012 -to- July 24, 2012

The Harry Potter series has become a publishing phenomenon that has captured the imagination of children and adults all over the world. The stories created by J.K. Rowling have inspired extensive multidisciplinary academic discussion, ranging from cultural and literary analyses, sociological and philosophical interpretations, design practices, to recognised medical publications. Conferences have taken place that focused on the impact that the novels have had on the world and their educational contribution and edited collections have been produced centering on themes of philosophy, religion, sociology, and critical analysis, to name just a few. The characters' relationships, the political and social systems, and cultural commentaries woven into Rowling’s writing are just some examples of what makes the Harry Potter series an exciting framework for academic discourse in a number of areas. This two-day event will feature twenty 15-20 minute presentations on papers relating to popular culture and the Harry Potter series. We will encourage intensive and lively discussion and debate around the papers over the two days in this intimate setting. Wizards, muggles, established academics and postgraduate students are invited to submit papers. Post conference, full papers will be put together into a collection that will be available online. Limerick, Ireland.

Call for Papers - Capturing Witches: Histories, Stories, Images

August 17, 2012 -to- August 19, 2012

400 years after the Lancashire Witches

In 2012, a year-long programme of events in Lancaster and the surrounding area will mark the 400th anniversary of the trial and execution of the first group of Lancashire Witches. A second trial occurred in 1634 and although pardoned, the accused were re-imprisoned in
Lancaster Castle. The case of the Lancashire Witches and their supposed crimes interwove fact and fiction, local hostilities and more exotic ideas of witches' sabbats that were usually associated with continental witchcraft. They became a cause célèbre, like the witches of Trier and Fulda (Germany), Torsåker (Sweden) and Salem (North America). This interdisciplinary conference uses the Lancashire witches as a focal point to engage with wider questions about witchcraft: its definitions as maleficium (evil doing) or demonology in trials, the various traditions of witchcraft across centuries and continents, and the ways in which contemporary practice engages with these. Capturing Witches: Histories, Stories, Images will focus particular attention on how witchcraft is theorised and represented in and through history and across cultures. We particularly encourage considerations of literary, musical, artistic and filmic representations of witchcraft. Lancaster, UK.

Call for Papers - Contemporary Esotericism

August 27, 2012 -to- August 29, 2012

***Call for Papers*** International Conference: Contemporary Esotericism Department of History of Religions, Stockholm University, Sweden. August 27-29, 2012 Keynote speakers: - Wouter J. Hanegraaff (Center for History of Hermetic Philosophy and Related Currents, University of Amsterdam) - Christopher Partridge (Religious Studies, Lancaster University) - Kocku von Stuckrad (Study of Religion, Groningen University).

Call for Papers - Edges of Freemasonry

September 07, 2012 -to- September 08, 2012

The School of Social Sciences and Humanities at the University of Tampere is organizing
an international conference on Freemasonry, Western Esotericism and the development of the Enlightenment ideas. The conference is organized in association with the Research Lodge Minerva No. 27 of The Grand Lodge of F. & A. M. of Finland. The themes focus on historical developments, although other aspects will also be presented.