

MANLY P. HALL



**THE SECRET  
TEACHINGS  
OF ALL AGES**



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ESOTERIC SCHOOLS OF MEDITATION, STUDY AND SERVICE

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**CURTIS SCOTT BUCKSON**

Illustration of the Cave of Knowledge, showing the various figures and the central golden structure.

# XIII

## Introduction



**PHILOSOPHY** is the science of ordering values. The supremacy of any value or substance over another is determined by philosophy. Devising a position of primary importance to order relations when all that is secondary has been assumed, philosophy also becomes the true index of priority or emphasis in the system of speculative thought. The mission of philosophy is to bring out the true values of things in their available substance.

"Philosophy," writes Sir William Hamilton, "has been defined [as] The science of things possible and best, and of the causes in which they are contained [Causa]; The science of effects by their causes [Effectus]; The science of relations between [Relatio]; The science of things possible, inasmuch as they are possible [Wille]. The science of things evidently deduced from first principles [Deductio]; The science of terms, variable and absolute [Terminatio]; The application of reason; its legitimate objects [Terminatio]; The science of the relation of all knowledge to the necessary ends of human reason [Rationis]; The science of the origin and forms of the ego or mental self [Ego]; The science of sciences [Philosophia]; The science of the absolute [von Seelending]; The science of the absolute independence of the ideal and real [von Schelling]; The identity of matter and non-identity [Hegel]; [See *Lectures on Metaphysics and Logic*]."

The highest and grandest principles of philosophy are commonly called its metaphysics, which deals with such abstract subjects as causality, ontology, and the nature of being, logic, which deals with the laws governing mental thinking, or, as it has been called, "the doctrine of fallacies"; ethics, which is the science of morality, individual responsibility, and conduct—associated chiefly with an effort to determine the nature of good; psychology, which is devoted to investigation and classification of those forms of phenomena referable to a mind; epistemology, which is the science concerned primarily with the nature of knowledge itself and the question of whether it may exist in an absolute form and whether, which is the science of the sources of and the reactions evoked by the senses; and the sciences, the elegant, and the noble.

Plato regarded philosophy as the greatest of all sciences, and he was not alone. In the nineteenth century, however, it has become a positive and complicated science of arbitrary and inaccessible notions—yet each substantiated by almost incontestable logic. The lofty terminology of the old Academy which furnished an ideal to the vulgar and ambitious of the gods have been so ably created by orators—who Herodotus declared to be a falling sickness of the wise—who the lexically-minded would now be quite unrecognizable to this great Neo-Platonist. Conceiving rudeness of the increasing superficiality of modern scientific and philosophical thought is inexpressible difficulty towards materialism. When the great astronomer Laplace was asked by Napoleon why he had not mentioned God in his *Théorie de Mécanique Céleste*, the mathematician naïvely replied, "Sir, I had no room for that hypothesis!"

"All men naturally desire to know." To satisfy this common-sense thirst for knowledge, man has explored the communications of his kind, his own senses and the communications of intelligent beings, seeking to determine the relationship between the one and the all, the effect and the cause; Nature, and the grandeur of Nature, the mind and the source of the mind; the spirit and the substance of the spirit; the relation and the unity.

An ancient philosopher observed, "He who has not even a knowledge of common things is a brute and a beggar. He who has an accurate knowledge of terms is a philosopher, but he who knows all that can be known by intellectual energy, is a God among men." Most men in the natural world are dominated by the quality of their thinking. He whose mind is trained to be logical functions a philosopher; not so in the home, in whose rational faculties possible human affairs to a man and in whose life he is devoted to the consideration of abstract ideas is already a philosopher, for he is the guardian of the humanity with which he shares his knowledge.

It is this age the word philosophy has little meaning when accompanied by some other qualifying term. The body of philosophy has been broken up into numerous little pieces in its arrangement, which have become so concerned with their effects on the outer world that they have lost the substance of their own inner life. The ideal function of philosophy is to serve as the stabilizing influence in human thought, by virtue of its scientific nature it should preserve the order of life. Philosophers themselves, however, have frustrated the ends of philosophy by entering in their world-viewing those materialists who are supposed to lead in the straight and narrow path of rational thinking. To list and classify are the more important of the new-epochal methods of philosophy followed the space limitations of this volume. The vast area of speculation created by philosophy will be approached here in a brief consideration of a few of the outstanding systems of philosophy which have shaped the world of thought during the last two or three centuries.

The Greek school of philosophy had its inception with the seven immortal and constant upon whom we have formed the application of Sophocles, "the wise." According to the Greek tradition, these were Thales, Solon, Chilon, Pittacus, Bias, Cleobolus, and Parmenides. Water was considered by Thales to be the primal principle or element, upon which the earth floated like a mass, and earthquakes were the result of disturbances in this universal sea. Solon, Thales was an Ionian, the wisest preceptor of his times became known as the Ionic. He died in 546 B.C., and was succeeded by Anaximander, who in turn was followed by Anaximenes, Anaxagoras, and Aristotle, with whom the Ionic school ended. Anaximander, differing from his master Thales, declared that water and indissoluble infinity to be the primal element, which all things were generated. Anaximenes asserted to be the first element of the universe; that souls had been the Deity itself was composed of it.

Anaxagoras (whom Socratic aspects of atomism) added God to be "an infinite self-moving mind; that this divine infinite Mind, not



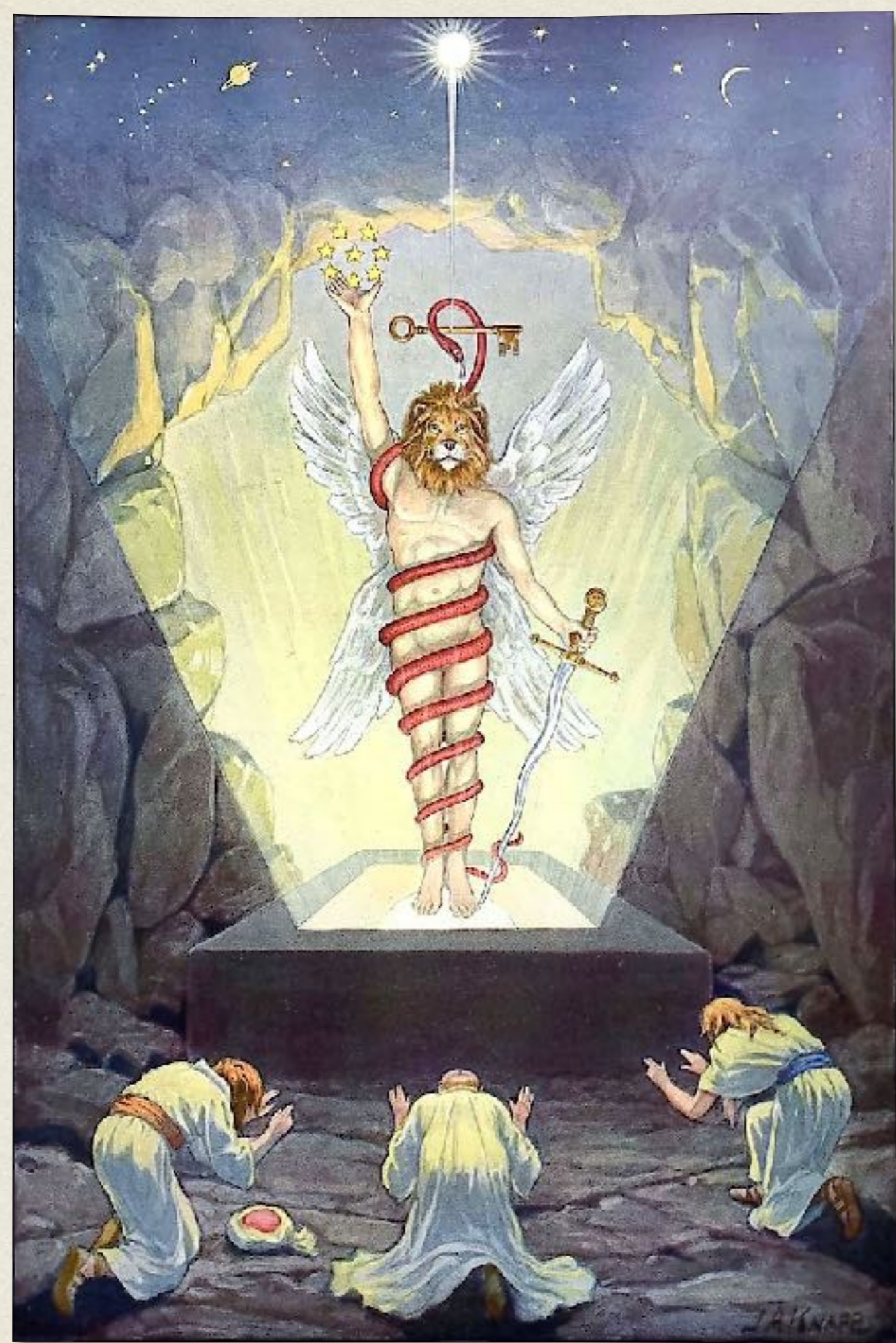
From *Philosophy of Logic and Ethics* BARRITT'S WORK.

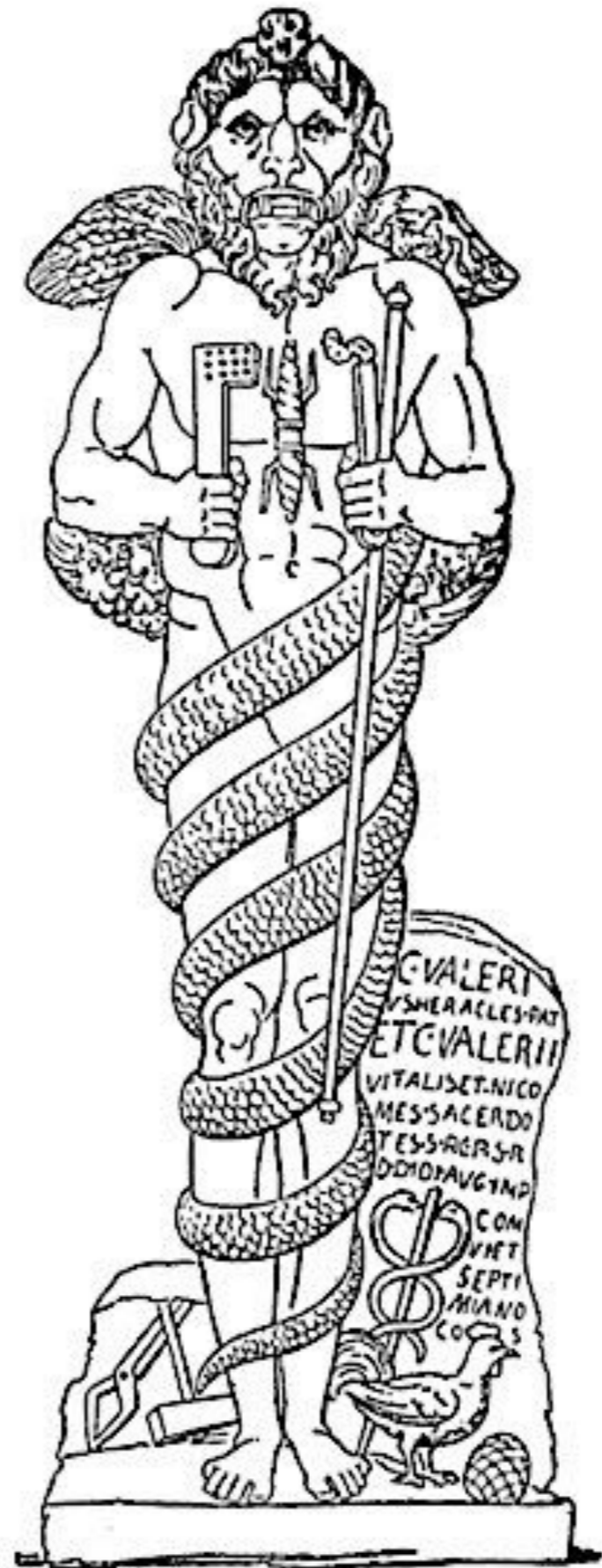
The positive end of the brain, therefore, dominates more attention here made in some respects an outline of the mind by which they unite in generalization elements. The brain is not a mere passive organ, but a field of activity, and the mind is the result of the combination of the various elements of the brain. The diagram is a simplified representation of the brain, showing the various parts and their functions. It is a useful tool for understanding the complex nature of the human mind.

philosophy has been a great and noble science, and it is the duty of every man to study it and to apply its principles to his life. It is the science of the soul, and it is the science of the universe. It is the science of the highest and the noblest, and it is the science of the most beautiful and the most sublime. It is the science of the most perfect and the most complete, and it is the science of the most glorious and the most magnificent. It is the science of the most divine and the most sacred, and it is the science of the most holy and the most precious. It is the science of the most eternal and the most immortal, and it is the science of the most everlasting and the most enduring. It is the science of the most infinite and the most boundless, and it is the science of the most limitless and the most unlimited. It is the science of the most perfect and the most complete, and it is the science of the most glorious and the most magnificent. It is the science of the most divine and the most sacred, and it is the science of the most holy and the most precious. It is the science of the most eternal and the most immortal, and it is the science of the most everlasting and the most enduring. It is the science of the most infinite and the most boundless, and it is the science of the most limitless and the most unlimited.

## MYTHRA IN THE FORM OF THE LEONTOCEPHALIC KRONOS

“At the pinnacle of the divine hierarchy,” writes Franz Cumont, “and at the origin of all things, the Mythraic theology, the heir of that of the Zervanitic Magi, placed boundless Time. Sometimes they would call it Saeculum, or Saturnus; but these appellations were conventional and contingent, for he was considered ineffable, bereft alike of name, sex, and passions.” (See *The Mysteries of Mythra*.) The figure signifies the inevitable victory of boundless Time (Eternity) over every creature and condition. In Time, all beings reach completion; in Time, all wrongs are righted; in Time, salvation is assured to all. The head of the lion signifies that the mortal concept of Time is the despotic ruler of the *animal* – or irrational – creation; that its strength is supreme; and that it devours all the lesser powers which exist temporarily within it. The coils of the serpent represent the motion of the heavenly spheres through the zodiac, which is shown as a human body. The golden key indicates that Time is the key to the mystery of existence. The sword is the instrument by which the demon of man-made Time is slain and his body divided into past and future, while to the gods is given rulership of the everlasting now. The double set of wings signifies the flight of Time through the inferior worlds of the four elements, and the eight stars are the spheres upheld by Time. The dome of the Mythraic cave is ornamented with stars to typify the universality of the divine cult, and the radiant globe upon which the figure stands is the universe. The resurrection of the figure from the darkness of the tomb reveals the ascension of boundless duration from the narrow limitations of man-conceived time. The three kneeling figures are the limitations of the three-dimensional world – length, breath, and thickness – which bow before the limitless Æon.





# The Ancient Mysteries and Secret Societies

## Which Have Influenced Modern Masonic Symbolism

### XXI

#### The Ancient Mysteries and Secret Societies Which Have Influenced Modern Masonic Symbolism



WHEN confronted with a problem involving the use of the reasoning faculties, individuals of strong intellect keep their poise, and seek to reach a solution by obtaining facts bearing upon the question. Those of immature mentality, on the other hand, when similarly confronted, are overwhelmed. While the former may be qualified to solve the riddle of their own destiny, the latter must be led like a flock of sheep and taught in simple language. They depend almost entirely upon the ministrations of the shepherd. The Apostle Paul said that these little ones must be fed with milk, but that meat is the food of strong men. Thoughtlessness is almost synonymous with childishness, while thoughtfulness is symbolic of maturity.

There are, however, but few mature minds in the world; and thus it was that the philosophic-religious doctrines of the pagans were divided to meet the needs of these two fundamental groups of human intellect—one philosophic, the other incapable of appreciating the deeper mysteries of life. To the discerning few were revealed the esoteric, or spiritual, teachings, while the unqualified many received only the literal, or exoteric, interpretations. In order to make simple the great truths of Nature and the abstract principles of natural law, the vital forces of the universe were personified, becoming the gods and goddesses of the ancient mythologies. While the ignorant multitudes brought their offerings to the altars of Priapus and Pan (deities representing the procreative energies), the wise recognized in these marble statues only symbolic concretions of great abstract truths.

In all cities of the ancient world were temples for public worship and offering. In every community also were philosophers and mystics, deeply versed in Nature's lore. These individuals were usually banded together, forming seclusive philosophic and religious schools. The more important of these groups were known as the *Mysteries*. Many of the great minds of antiquity were initiated into these secret fraternities by strange and mysterious rites, some of which were extremely cruel. Alexander Wilder defines the *Mysteries* as "Sacred dramas performed at stated periods. The most celebrated were those of Isis, Sabazius, Cybele, and Eleusis." After being admitted, the initiates were instructed in the secret wisdom which had been preserved for ages. Plato, an initiate of one of these sacred orders, was severely criticized because in his writings he revealed to the public many of the secret philosophic principles of the *Mysteries*.

Every pagan nation had (and has) not only its state religion, but another into which the philosophic elect alone have gained entrance. Many of these ancient cults vanished from the earth without revealing their secrets, but a few have survived the test of ages and their mysterious symbols are still preserved. Much of the ritualism of Freemasonry is based on the trials to which candidates were subjected by the ancient hierophants before the keys of wisdom were entrusted to them.

Few realize the extent to which the ancient secret schools influenced contemporary intellects and, through those minds, posterity. Robert Macoy, 33°, in his *General History of Freemasonry*, pays a magnificent tribute to the part played by the ancient *Mysteries* in the rearing of the edifice of human culture. He says, in part: "It appears that all the perfection of civilization, and all the advancement made in philosophy, science, and art among the ancients are due to those institutions which, under the veil of mystery, sought to illustrate the sublimest truths of religion, morality, and virtue, and impress them on the hearts of their disciples. \* \* \* Their chief object was to reach the doctrine of one God, the resurrection of man to eternal life, the dignity of the human soul, and to lead the people to see the shadow of the deity, in the beauty, magnificence, and splendor of the universe."



From Montfaucon's *Antiquities*.  
A FEMALE HIEROPHANT OF THE MYSTERIES.

This illustration shows Cybele, here called the Syrian Goddess, in the robes of a hierophant. Montfaucon describes the figure as follows: "Upon her head is an episcopal mitre, adorned on the lower part with towers and pinnacles; over the gate of the city is a crescent, and beneath the circuit of the walls a crown of rays. The Goddess wears a sort of surplice, exactly like the surplice of a priest or bishop; and upon the surplice a tunic, which falls down to the legs; and over all an episcopal cope, with the twelve signs of the Zodiac wrought on the borders. The figure hath a lion on each side, and holds in its left hand a Tympanum, a Stratum, a Dinstaff, a Caduceus, and another instrument. In her right hand she holds with her middle finger a thunderbolt, and upon the same arm animals, insects, and, as far as we may guess, flowers and fruit, a bow, a quiver, a torch, and a scepter." The whereabouts of the statue is unknown, the copy reproduced by Montfaucon being from drawings by Ferris Ligorio.

With the decline of virtue, which has preceded the destruction of every nation of history, the *Mysteries* became perverted. Sorcery took the place of the divine magic. Indescribable practices (such as the Bacchanalia) were introduced, and perversion ruled supreme; for no institution can be any better than the members of which it is composed. In despair, the few who were true sought to preserve the secret doctrines from oblivion. In some cases they succeeded, but more often the arcanum was lost and only the empty shell of the *Mysteries* remained.

Thomas Taylor has written, "Man is naturally a religious animal." From the earliest dawning of his consciousness, man has worshiped and revered things as symbolic of the invisible, omnipresent, indescribable Thing, concerning which he could discover practically nothing. The pagan *Mysteries* opposed the Christians during the early centuries of their church, declaring that the new faith (Christianity) did not demand virtue and integrity as requisites for salvation. Celsus expressed himself on the subject in the following caustic terms:

"That I do not, however, accuse the Christians more bitterly than truth compels, may be conjectured from hence, that the cryers who call men to other mysteries proclaim as follows: 'Let him approach whose hands are pure, and whose words are wise.' And again, others proclaim: 'Let him approach who is pure from all wickedness, whose soul is not conscious of any evil, and who leads a just and upright life.' And these things are proclaimed by those who promise a purification from error. Let us now hear who those are that are called to the Christian mysteries: Whoever is a sinner, whoever is unwise, whoever is a fool, and whoever, in short, is miserable, him the kingdom of God will receive. Do you not, therefore, call a sinner, an unjust man, a thief, a housebreaker, a wizard, one who is sacrilegious, and a robber of sepulchres? What other persons would the cryer nominate, who should call robbers together?"

It was not the true faith of the early Christian mystics that Celsus attacked, but the false forms that were creeping in even during his day. The ideals of early Christianity were based upon the high moral standards of the pagan *Mysteries*, and the first Christians who met under the city of Rome used as their places of worship the subterranean temples of Mithras, from whose cult has been borrowed much of the sacerdotalism of the modern church.

The ancient philosophers believed that no man could live intelligently who did not have a fundamental knowledge of Nature and her laws. Before man can obey, he must understand, and the *Mysteries* were devoted to instructing man concerning the operation of divine law in the terrestrial sphere. Few of the early cults actually worshiped anthropomorphic deities, although their symbolism might lead one to believe they did. They were moralistic rather than religionistic; philosophic rather than theologic. They taught man to use his faculties more intelligently, to be patient in the face of adversity, to be courageous when confronted by danger, to be true in the midst of temptation, and, most of all, to view a worthy life as the most acceptable sacrifice to God, and his body as an altar sacred to the Deity.

Sun worship played an important part in nearly all the early pagan *Mysteries*. This indicates the probability of their Atlantean origin, for the people of Atlantis were sun worshippers. The Solar Deity was usually personified as a beautiful youth, with long golden hair to symbolize the rays of the sun. This golden Sun God was slain by wicked ruffians, who personified the evil principle of the universe. By means of certain rituals and ceremonies, symbolic of purification and regeneration, this wonderful God of Good was brought back to life and

became the Savior of His people. The secret processes whereby He was resurrected symbolized those cultures by means of which man is able to overcome his lower nature, master his appetites, and give expression to the higher side of himself. The *Mysteries* were organized for the purpose of assisting the struggling human creature to reawaken the spiritual powers which, surrounded by the flaming



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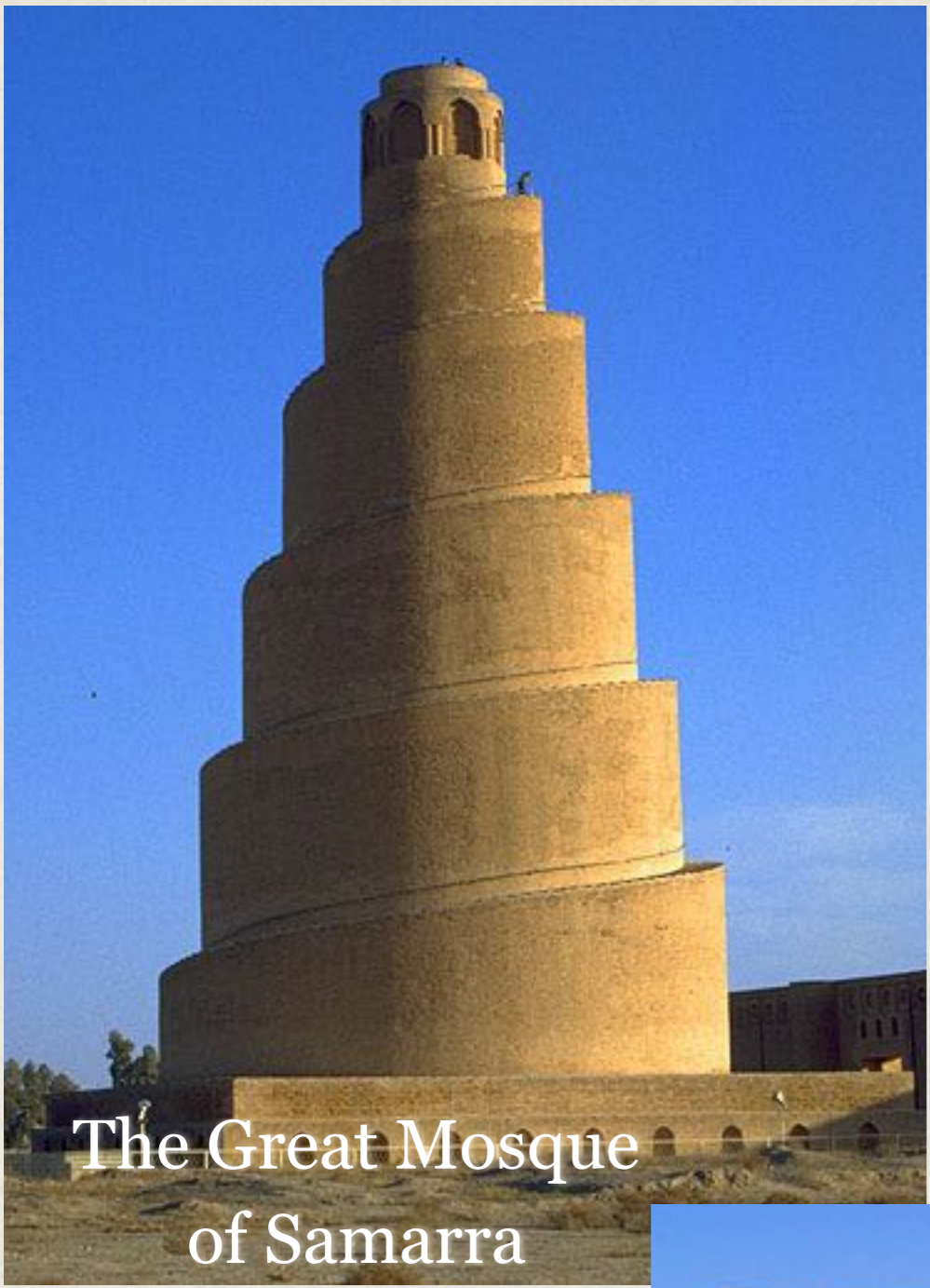
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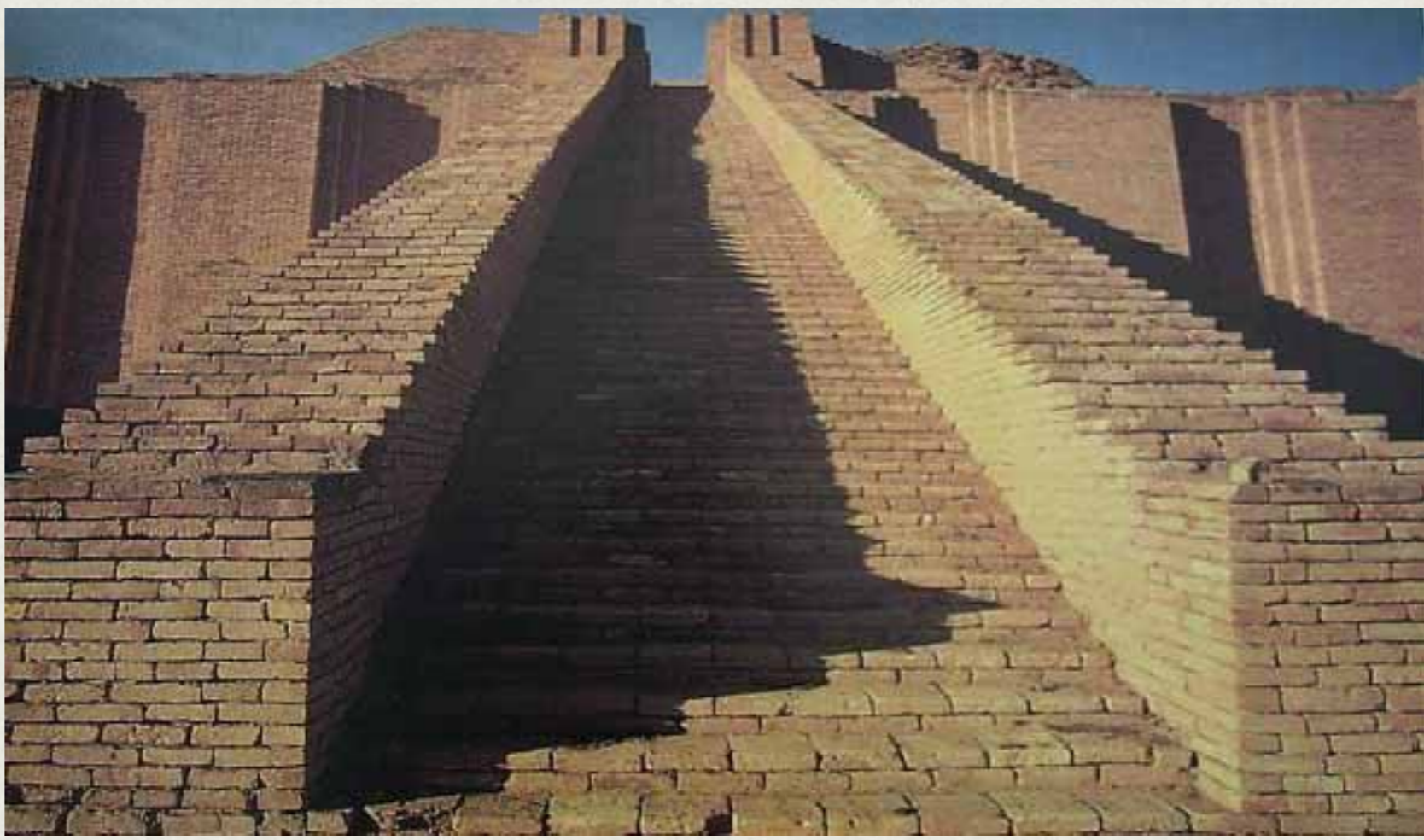
Theseum in Athens



Hatshepsut Temple in Egypt



The Great Mosque  
of Samarra



Mesopotamian Ziggurat





Roman Temple in Nimes, France



The Second Temple Jerusalem (model)

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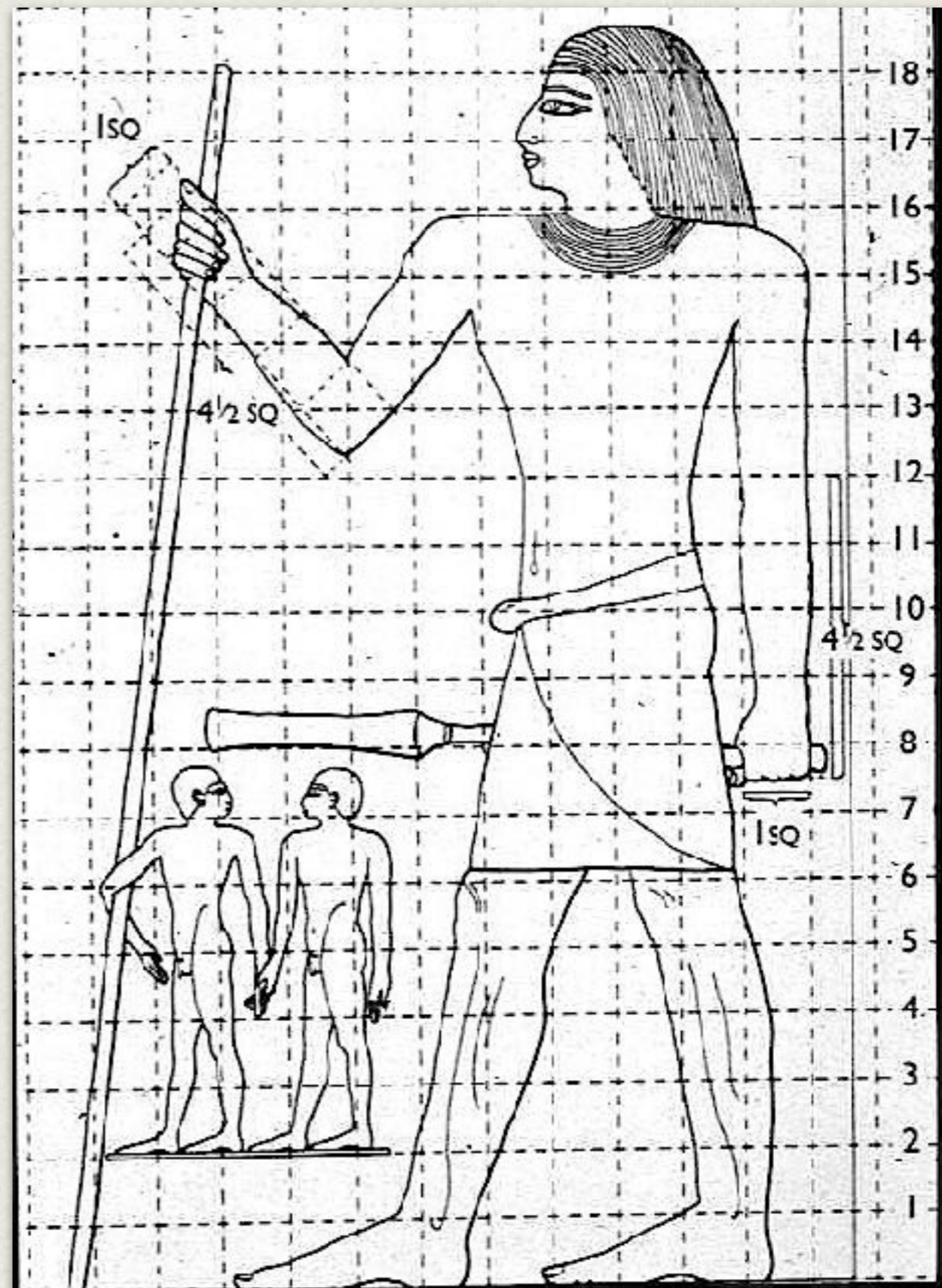
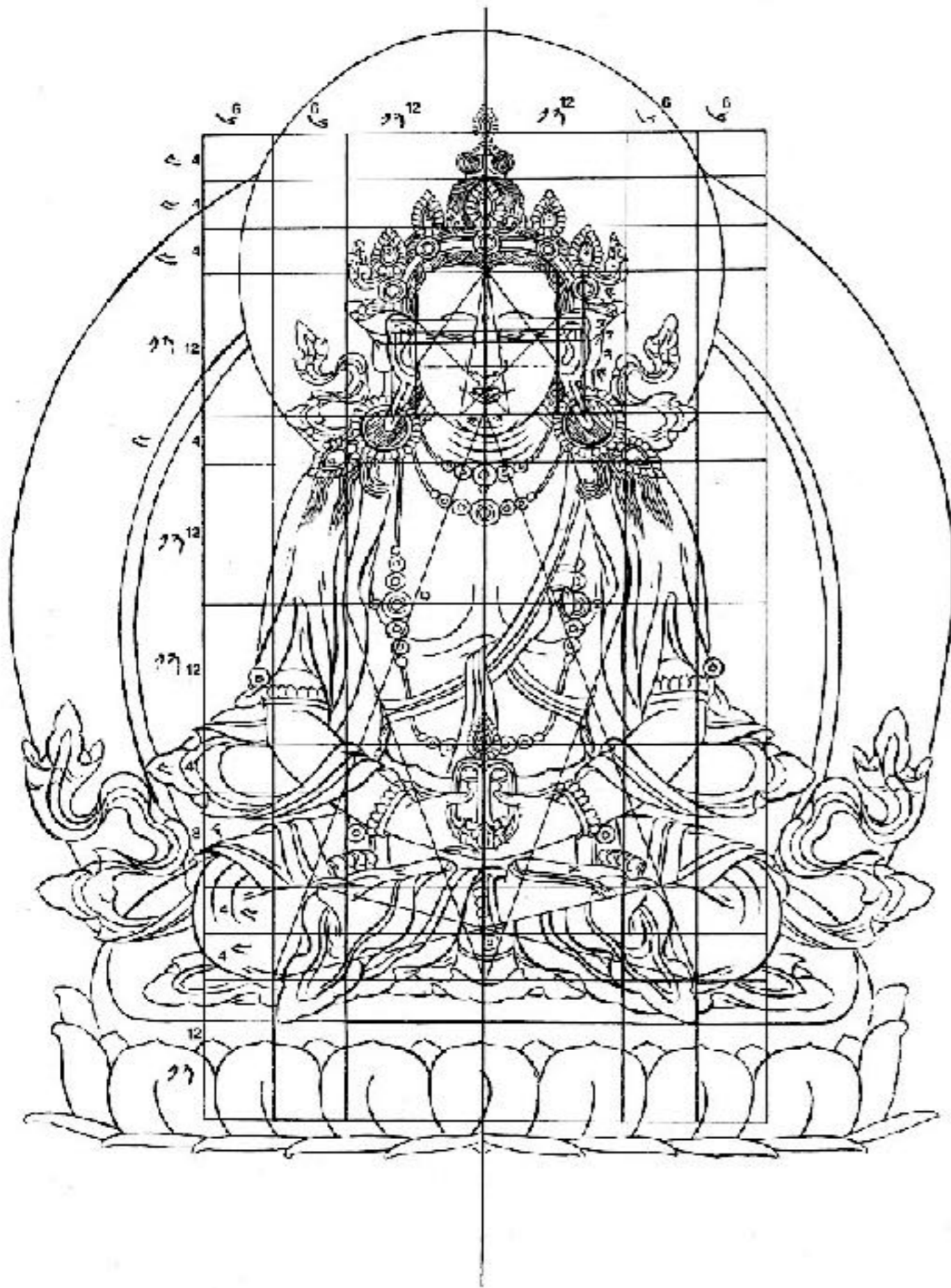
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Class 2: Peaceful Bodhisattvas. Here Amitayus is drawn with Bodhisattva (120-*gor*) proportions. (Wangdrak).

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Sun worship played an important part in nearly all the early pagan Mysteries. This indicates the probability of their Atlantean origin, for the people of Atlantis were sun worshipers. The Solar Deity was usually personified as a beautiful youth, with long golden hair to symbolize the rays of the sun. This golden Sun God was slain by wicked ruffians, who personified the evil principle of the universe. By means of certain rituals and ceremonies, symbolic of purification and regeneration, this wonderful God of Good was brought back to life and became the Savior of His people. The secret processes whereby He was resurrected symbolized those cultures by means of which man is able to overcome his lower nature, master his appetites, and give expression to the higher side of himself. The Mysteries were organized for the purpose of assisting the struggling human creature to reawaken the spiritual powers which, surrounded by the flaming ring of lust and degeneracy, lay asleep within his soul. In other words, man was offered a way by which he could regain his lost estate. (See Wagner's *Siegfried*.)

In the ancient world, nearly all the secret societies were philosophic and religious. During the mediæval centuries, they were chiefly religious and political, although a few philosophic schools remained. In modern times, secret societies, in the Occidental countries, are largely political or fraternal, although in a few of them, as in Masonry, the ancient religious and philosophic principles still survive.

Space prohibits a detailed discussion of the secret schools. There were literally scores of these ancient cults, with branches in all parts of the Eastern and Western worlds. Some, such as those of Pythagoras and the Hermetists, show a decided Oriental influence, while the Rosicrucians, according to their own proclamations, gained much of their wisdom from Arabian mystics. Although the Mystery schools are usually associated with civilization, there is evidence that the most uncivilized peoples of prehistoric times had a knowledge of them. Natives of distant islands, many in the lowest forms of savagery, have mystic rituals and secret practices which, although primitive, are of a decided Masonic tinge. STOAA:21-2



The Underground Mithraic Chamber of San Clemente





# The Ancient Mysteries and Secret Societies

Which Have Influenced Modern Masonic Symbolism



WHEN confronted with a problem involving the use of the reasoning faculties, individuals of strong intellect keep their poise, and seek to reach a solution by obtaining facts bearing upon the question. Those of immature mentality, on the other hand, when similarly confronted, are overwhelmed. While the former may be qualified to solve the riddle of their own destiny, the latter must be led like

a flock of sheep and taught in simple language. They depend almost entirely upon the ministrations of the shepherd. The Apostle Paul said that these little ones must be fed with milk, but that meat is the food of strong men. Thoughtlessness is almost synonymous with childishness, while thoughtfulness is symbolic of maturity.

There are, however, but few mature minds in the world; and thus it was that the philosophic-religious doctrines of the pagans were divided to meet the needs of these two fundamental groups of human intellect—one philosophic, the other incapable of appreciating the deeper mysteries of life. To the discerning few were revealed the esoteric, or spiritual, teachings, while the unqualified many received only the literal, or exoteric, interpretations. In order to make simple the great truths of Nature and the abstract principles of natural law, the vital forces of the universe were personified, becoming the gods and goddesses of the ancient mythologies. While the ignorant multitudes brought their offerings to the altars of Priapus and Pan (deities representing the procreative energies), the wise recognized in these marble statues only symbolic concretions of great abstract truths.

In all cities of the ancient world were temples for public worship and offering. In every community also were philosophers and mystics, deeply versed in Nature's lore. These individuals were usually banded together, forming seclusive philosophic and religious schools. The more important of these groups were known as the *Mysteries*. Many of the great minds of antiquity were initiated into these secret fraternities by strange and mysterious rites, some of which were extremely cruel. Alexander Wilder defines the *Mysteries* as "Sacred dramas performed at stated periods. The most celebrated were those of Isis, Sabazius, Cybele, and Eleusis." After being admitted, the initiates were instructed in the secret wisdom which had been preserved for ages. Plato, an initiate of one of these sacred orders, was severely criticized because in his writings he revealed to the public many of the secret philosophic principles of the *Mysteries*.

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From Montfaucon's *Antiquities*.

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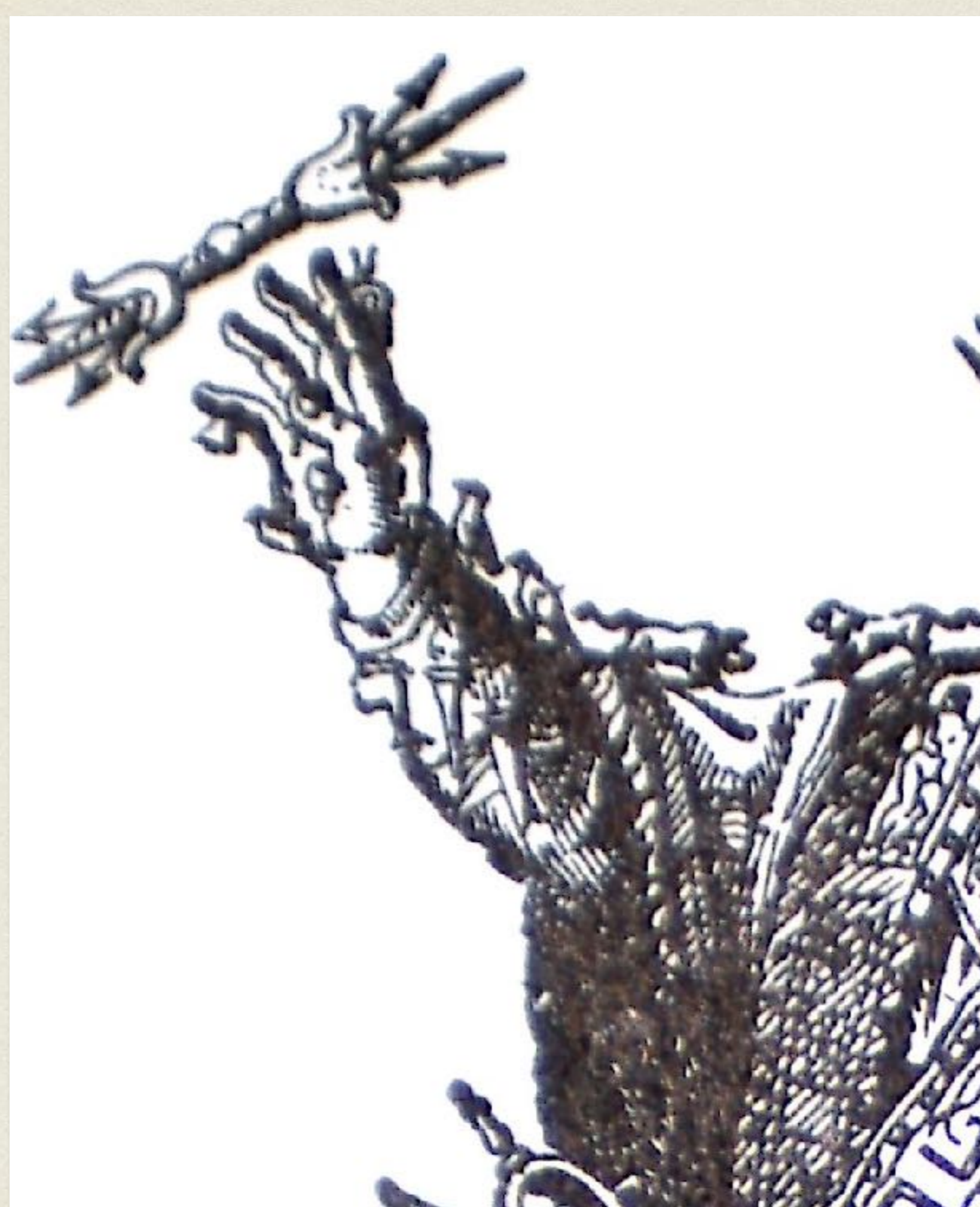
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From Montfaucon's *Antiquities*.

**A FEMALE HIEROPHANT OF THE  
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Sun worship played an important part in nearly all the early pagan Mysteries. This indicates the probability of their Atlantean origin, for the people of Atlantis were sun worshipers. The Solar Deity was usually personified as a beautiful youth, with long golden hair to symbolize the rays of the sun. This golden Sun God was slain by wicked ruffians, who personified the evil principle of the universe. By means of certain rituals and ceremonies, symbolic of purification and regeneration, this wonderful God of Good was brought back to life and became the Savior of His people. The secret processes whereby He was resurrected symbolized those cultures by means of which man is able to overcome his lower nature, master his appetites, and give expression to the higher side of himself. The Mysteries were organized for the purpose of assisting the struggling human creature to reawaken the spiritual powers which, surrounded by the flaming ring of lust and degeneracy, lay asleep within his soul. In other words, man was offered a way by which he could regain his lost estate. (See Wagner's *Siegfried*.)

In the ancient world, nearly all the secret societies were philosophic and religious. During the mediæval centuries, they were chiefly religious and political, although a few philosophic schools remained. In modern times, secret societies, in the Occidental countries, are largely political or fraternal, although in a few of them, as in Masonry, the ancient religious and philosophic principles still survive.

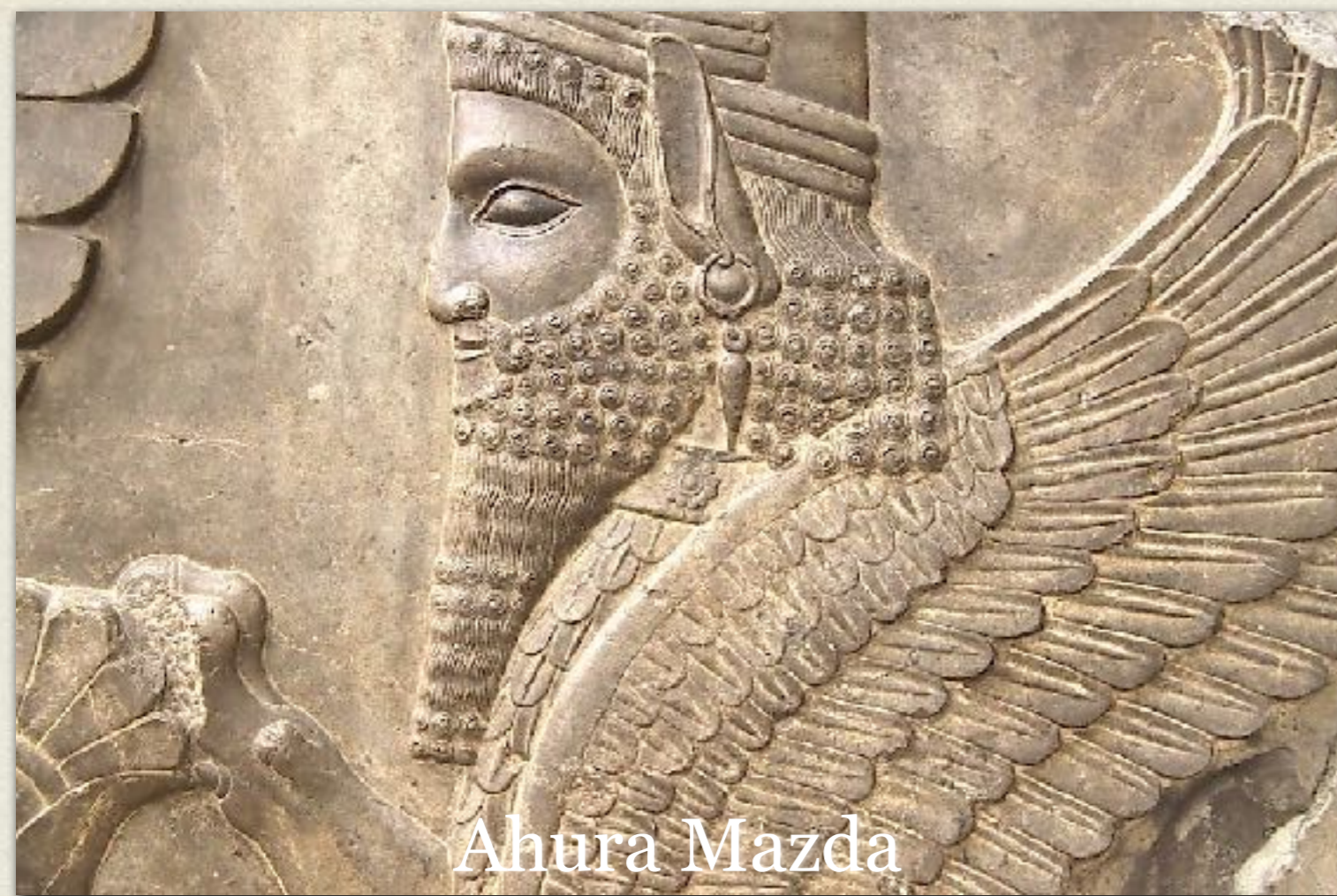
Space prohibits a detailed discussion of the secret schools. There were literally scores of these ancient cults, with branches in all parts of the Eastern and Western worlds. Some, such as those of Pythagoras and the Hermetists, show a decided Oriental influence, while the Rosicrucians, according to their own proclamations, gained much of their wisdom from Arabian mystics. Although the Mystery schools are usually associated with civilization, there is evidence that the most uncivilized peoples of prehistoric times had a knowledge of them. Natives of distant islands, many in the lowest forms of savagery, have mystic rituals and secret practices which, although primitive, are of a decided Masonic tinge. STOAA:21-2



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Ahura Mazda



Angra Mainyu



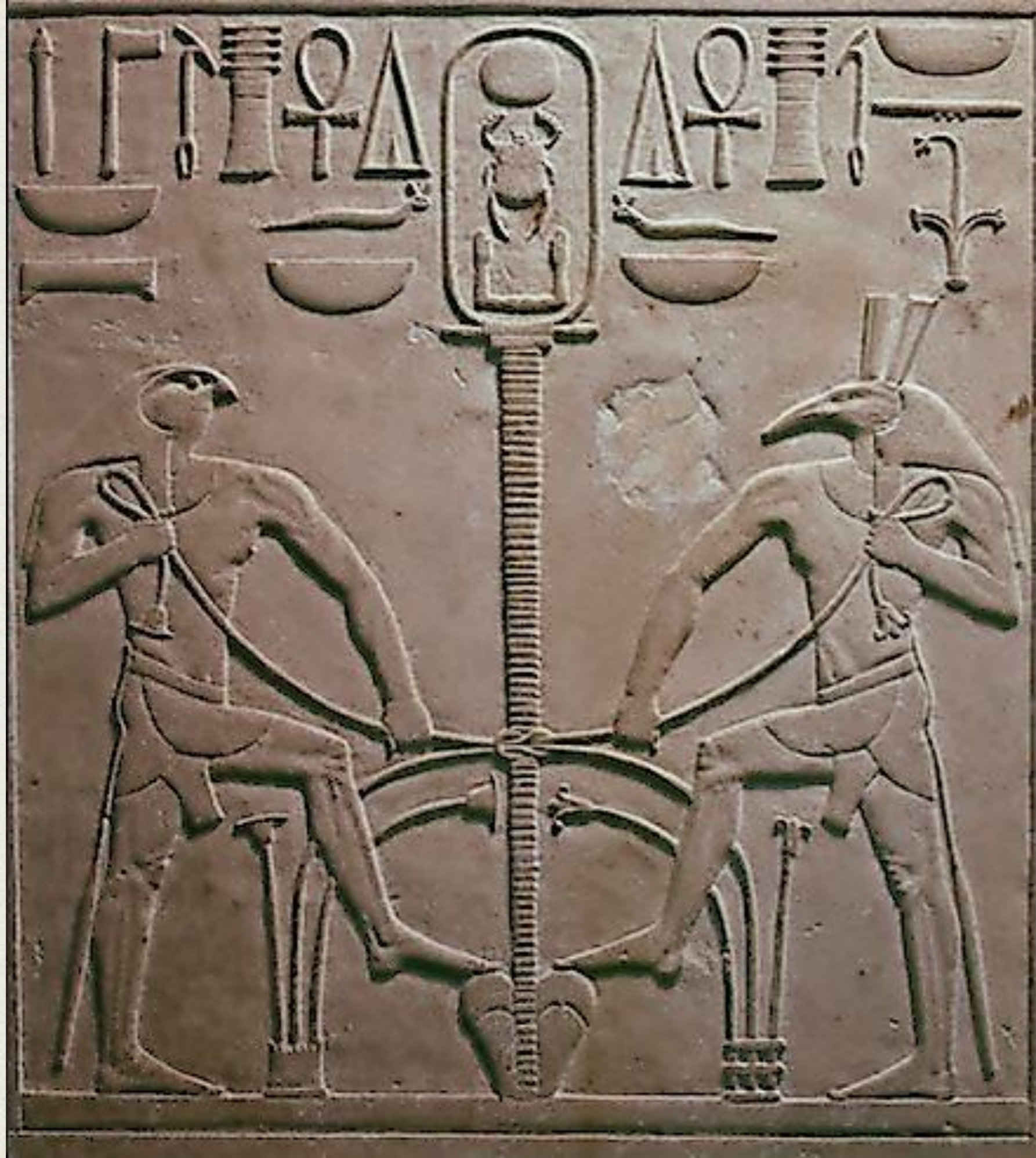
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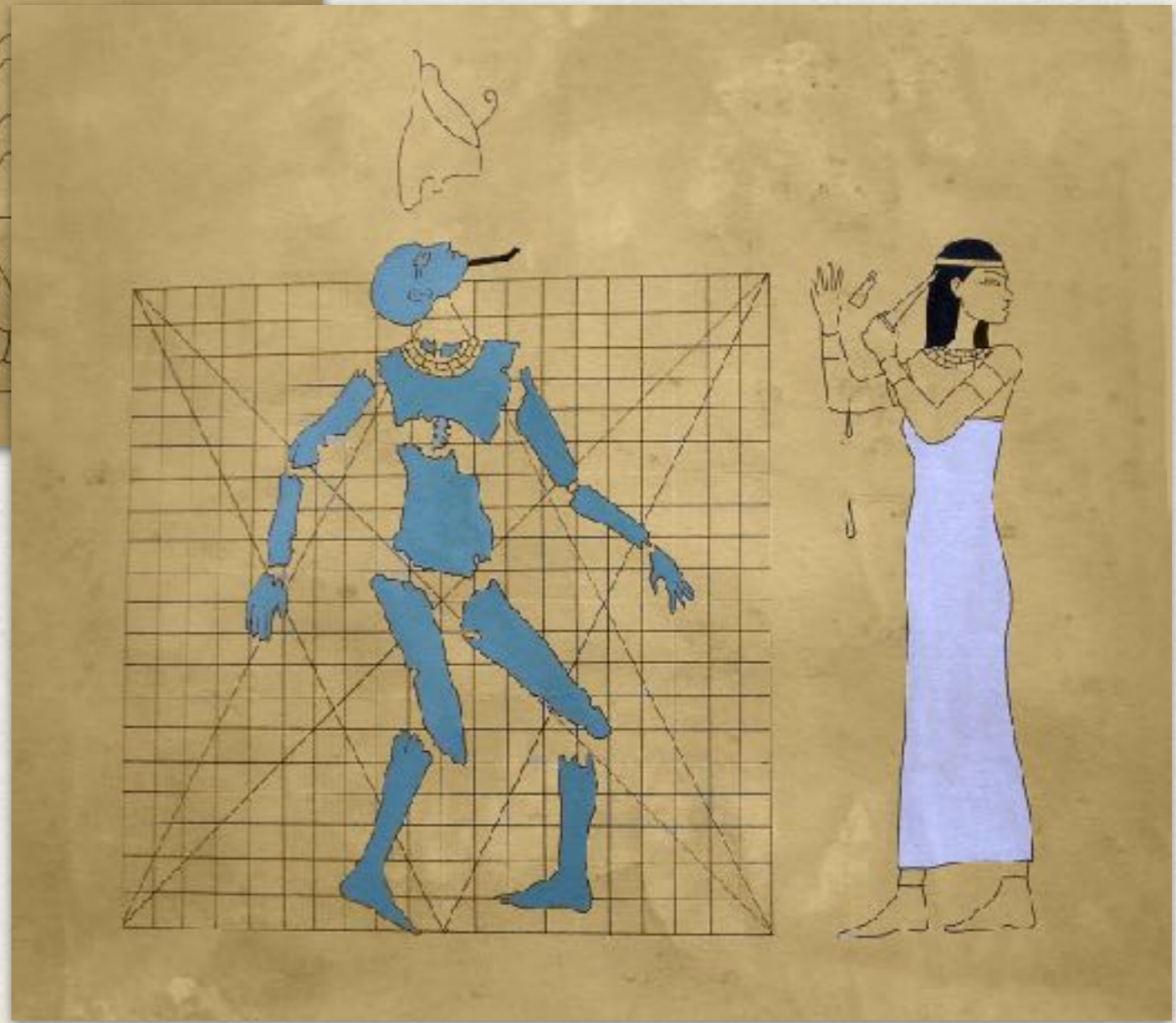


Zurvan













Harpocrates

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## THE DRUIDIC MYSTERIES OF BRITAIN AND GAUL

“The original and primitive inhabitants of Britain, at some remote period, revived and reformed their national institutes. Their priest, or instructor, had hitherto been simply named Gwydd, but it was considered to have become necessary to divide this office between the national, or superior, priest and another whose influence would be more limited. From henceforth the former became Der-Wydd (Druid), or superior instructor, and [the latter] Go-Wydd, or O-Vydd (Ovate), subordinate instructor; and both went by the general name of Beirdd (Bards), or teachers of wisdom. As the system matured and augmented, the Bardic Order consisted of three classes, the Druids, Beirdd Braint, or privileged Bards, and Ovates.” (See Samuel Meyrick and Charles Smith, *The Costume of The Original Inhabitants of The British Islands*.)

The origin of the word *Druid* is under dispute. Max Müller believes that, like the Irish word *Druí*, it means "the men of the oak trees." He further draws attention to the fact that the forest gods and tree deities of the Greeks were called *dryades*. Some believe the word to be of Teutonic origin; others ascribe it to the Welsh. A few trace it to the Gaelic *druidh*, which means "a wise man" or "a sorcerer." In Sanskrit the word *dru* means "timber."

At the time of the Roman conquest, the Druids were thoroughly ensconced in Britain and Gaul. Their power over the people was unquestioned, and there were instances in which armies, about to attack each other, sheathed their swords when ordered to do so by the white-robed Druids. No undertaking of great importance was scatted without the assistance of these patriarchs, who stood as mediators between the gods and men. The Druidic Order is deservedly credited with having had a deep understanding of Nature and her laws. The *Encyclopædia Britannica* states that geography, physical science, natural theology, and astrology were their favorite studies. The Druids had a fundamental knowledge of medicine, especially the use of herbs and *simples*. Crude surgical instruments also have been found in England and Ireland. An odd treatise on early British medicine states that every practitioner was expected to have a garden or back yard for the growing of certain herbs necessary to his profession. Eliphas Levi, the celebrated transcendentalist, makes the following significant statement:

"The Druids were priests and physicians, curing by magnetism and charging amulets with their fluidic influence. Their universal remedies were mistletoe and serpents' eggs, because these substances attract the astral light in a special manner. The solemnity with which mistletoe was cut down drew upon this plant the popular confidence and rendered it powerfully magnetic. \* \* \* The progress of magnetism will some day reveal to us the absorbing properties of mistletoe. We shall then understand the secret of those spongy growths which drew the unused virtues of plants and become surcharged with tinctures and savors. Mushrooms, truffles, gall on trees, and the different kinds of mistletoe will be employed with understanding by a medical science, which will be new because it is old \* \* \* but one must not move quicker than science, which recedes that it may advance the further. " (See *The History of Magic*.) STOAA:22

# Bardic Order

**Earliest period**

**Wydd** (priest, or instructor)

**Intermediate period**

**Der-Wydd** (Druid, or Superior Priest)

**Go-Wydd** (Subordinate Instructor)

**Late period**

**Der-Wydd** (Druid, or Superior Priest)

**Beirdd Braint** (Privileged Bards)

**O-Vydd** (Ovate, or subordinate instructor)

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Taliessin

The Druid of the Celtae answered in every respect to the Magus of the Persians. The Celtic word for magician is Drui, and the magic art is called Druidheacht, and the wand or rod, which was one of the badges of their profession, was called Slatnam Druidheacht. But after all the ingenuity which has been bestowed upon the origin of the word Druid, I am by no means certain that the simple derivation of Mr. Davies from Taliessin, the Welsh bard, may not be the true one. Taliessin says, that it is a compound word composed of the Celtic word Gwydd, a priest, and Dar, superior—superior priest or chief-priest. —The Celtic Druids:95

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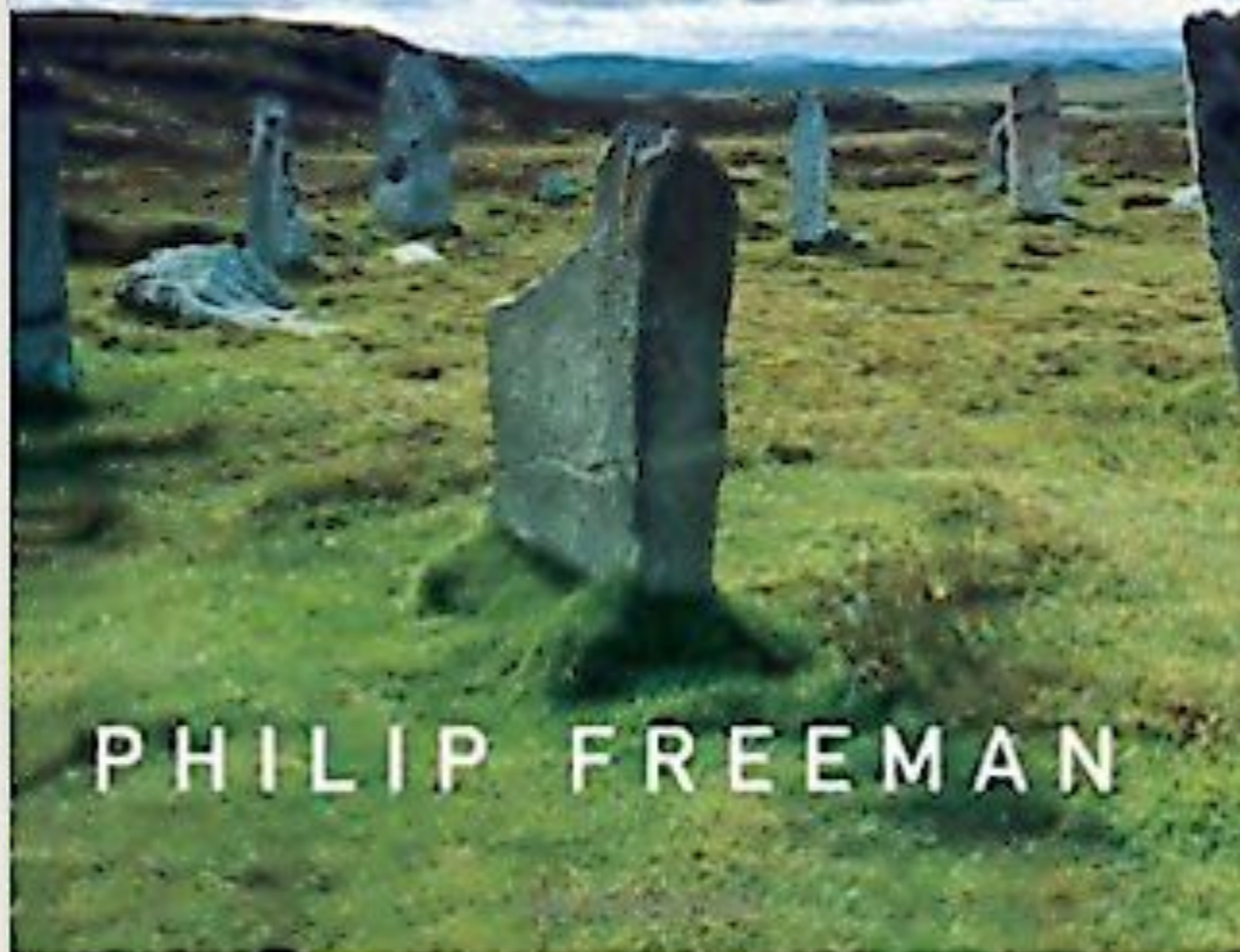
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THE  
**Philosopher**  
AND THE  
**Druids**

A JOURNEY AMONG THE ANCIENT CELTS

PHILIP FREEMAN





BIBLIOTHECA  
REGIA  
MONACENSIS.

*C. Iulij Cesaris belli gallici commentarius primus.*

**C**elta est omnis diuisa in partes tres: quarum unam incolunt belge: aliam aquitani: tertiam q̄ ipsorū lingua: celte: nostra galli appellant. Li om̄es linguis institutis legibus inter se differunt. gallos ab aquitanis garunna flumen: a belgis: matrona et sequana diuidit. horum omnium fortissimi sunt belge: propterea q̄ a cultu atq; hūanitate puncte longissime absunt. minimeq; ad eos mercatores sepe commeant: atq; ea: que ad effeminādos animos pertinent: importāt: proximiq; sunt germanis qui trans rhenum incolunt. q̄bus cū cōtinenter bellum gerūt. qua de causa helueti quoq; reliquos gallos uirtute precedunt: quod fere quotidianis bellis preliisq; cum germanis contēdunt: cum aut suis finibus eos prohibēt: aut ipsi in eorum finibus bellum gerunt. eorū una pars: quam gallos obtinere dictū est: initiū capit a flumine rhodano. contineturq; garunna flumine. oceanū finibus belgarū attingit. etiā a sequanis & heluetis flumen rhenū uergit ad septentrionē. belge ab extremis gallie finibus oriuntur. pertinent ad inferiorē partem fluminis rheni. spectant in septentrionem & orientē solē. Aquitania a garūna flumine ad pyrinos mōtes: et eam partem oceanī. que est ad hispaniā: pertinet: spectat ad occasum solis et septētrionē. Apud heluetios lōge nobilissimus fuit & ditissimus Orgētorix. Is. M. Messalla & P. Pisone cōsulibus: regni cupiditate inductus coniurationem nobilitatis fecit: et ciuitati psuasit: ut de finibus suis cū omnibus copiis exirēt. per facile eē: cū uirtute omnibus prestarēt: totius gallie impio potiri. Id hoc facilius eis psuasit: q̄ undiq; loci natura tuti helueti cōtinerent. una ex pre flumie rheni latissimo: atq; altissimo: q̄ agrū heluetiū a germāis diuidit. altera ex pre mōte iura altissimo: qui est inter sequanos & heluetios. tertia lacu lemanno et flumine rhodano: q̄ punctiā nostrā ab heluetis diuidit. us rebus fiebat: ut et minus late uagarentur. & minus facile finitimis bellū inferre possēt: quade causa hoīes bellandi cupidi: magno afficiebant dolore. p̄ multitudine autē hominum: & pro gloria bellī: atq; fortitudinis: angustos se fines habere arbitrantē: qui in longitudinē milia passuū ducta quadraginta: in latitudinē centum octoginta patebāt. his rebus

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First page of "De bello Gallico", by Julius Caesar - from a 1469 manuscript

Throughout all Gaul there are two orders of those men who are of any rank and dignity: ...of these two orders, one is that of the Druids, the other that of the knights. The former are engaged in things sacred, conduct the public and the private sacrifices, and interpret all matters of religion. To these a large number of the young men resort for the purpose of instruction, and they [the Druids] are in great honor among them. For they determine respecting almost all controversies, public and private; and if any crime has been perpetrated, if murder has been committed, if there be any dispute about an inheritance, if any about boundaries, these same persons decide it; they decree rewards and punishments; if any one, either in a private or public capacity, has not submitted to their decision, they interdict him from the sacrifices. This among them is the most heavy punishment. Those who have been thus interdicted are esteemed in the number of the impious and the criminal: all shun them, and avoid their society and conversation, lest they receive some evil from their contact; nor is justice administered to them when seeking it, nor is any dignity bestowed on them. Over all these Druids one presides, who possesses supreme authority among them. Upon his death, if any individual among the rest is pre-eminent in dignity, he succeeds; but, if there are many equal, the election is made by the suffrages of the Druids; sometimes they even contend for the presidency with arms. These assemble at a fixed period of the year in a consecrated place in the territories of the Carnutes, which is reckoned the central region of the whole of Gaul. Hither all, who have disputes, assemble from every part, and submit to their decrees and determinations. This institution is supposed to have been devised in Britain, and to have been brought over from it into Gaul...

The Druids do not go to war, nor pay tribute together with the rest; they have an exemption from military service and a dispensation in all matters. Induced by such great advantages, many embrace this profession of their own accord, and [many] are sent to it by their parents and relations. They are said there to learn by heart a great number of verses; accordingly some remain in the course of training twenty years. Nor do they regard it lawful to commit these to writing, though in almost all other matters, in their public and private transactions, they use Greek characters. That practice they seem to me to have adopted for two reasons; because they neither desire their doctrines to be divulged among the mass of the people, nor those who learn, to devote themselves the less to the efforts of memory, relying on writing; since it generally occurs to most men, that, in their dependence on writing, they relax their diligence in learning thoroughly, and their employment of the memory. They wish to inculcate this as one of their leading tenets, that souls do not become extinct, but pass after death from one body to another, and they think that men by this tenet are in a great degree excited to valor, the fear of death being disregarded. They likewise discuss and impart to the youth many things respecting the stars and their motion, respecting the extent of the world and of our earth, respecting the nature of things, respecting the power and the majesty of the immortal gods. -'Commentaries on the Gallic War' book 6, ch.13-14

Throughout all Gaul there are two orders of those men who are of any rank and dignity: ...of these two orders, one is that of the Druids, the other that of the knights. The former are engaged in things sacred, conduct the public and the private sacrifices, and interpret all matters of religion. To these a large number of the young men resort for the purpose of instruction, and they [the Druids] are in great honor among them. For they determine respecting almost all controversies, public and private; and if any crime has been perpetrated, if murder has been committed, if there be any dispute about an inheritance, if any about boundaries, these same persons decide it; they decree rewards and punishments; if any one, either in a private or public capacity, has not submitted to their decision, they interdict him from the sacrifices. This among them is the most heavy punishment. Those who have been thus interdicted are esteemed in the number of the impious and the criminal: all shun them, and avoid their society and conversation, lest they receive some evil from their contact; nor is justice administered to them when seeking it, nor is any dignity bestowed on them. Over all these Druids one presides, who possesses supreme authority among them. Upon his death, if any individual among the rest is pre-eminent in dignity, he succeeds; but, if there are many equal, the election is made by the suffrages of the Druids; sometimes they even contend for the presidency with arms. These assemble at a fixed period of the year in a consecrated place in the territories of the Carnutes, which is reckoned the central region of the whole of Gaul. Hither all, who have disputes, assemble from every part, and submit to their decrees and determinations. This institution is supposed to have been devised in Britain, and to have been brought over from it into Gaul...

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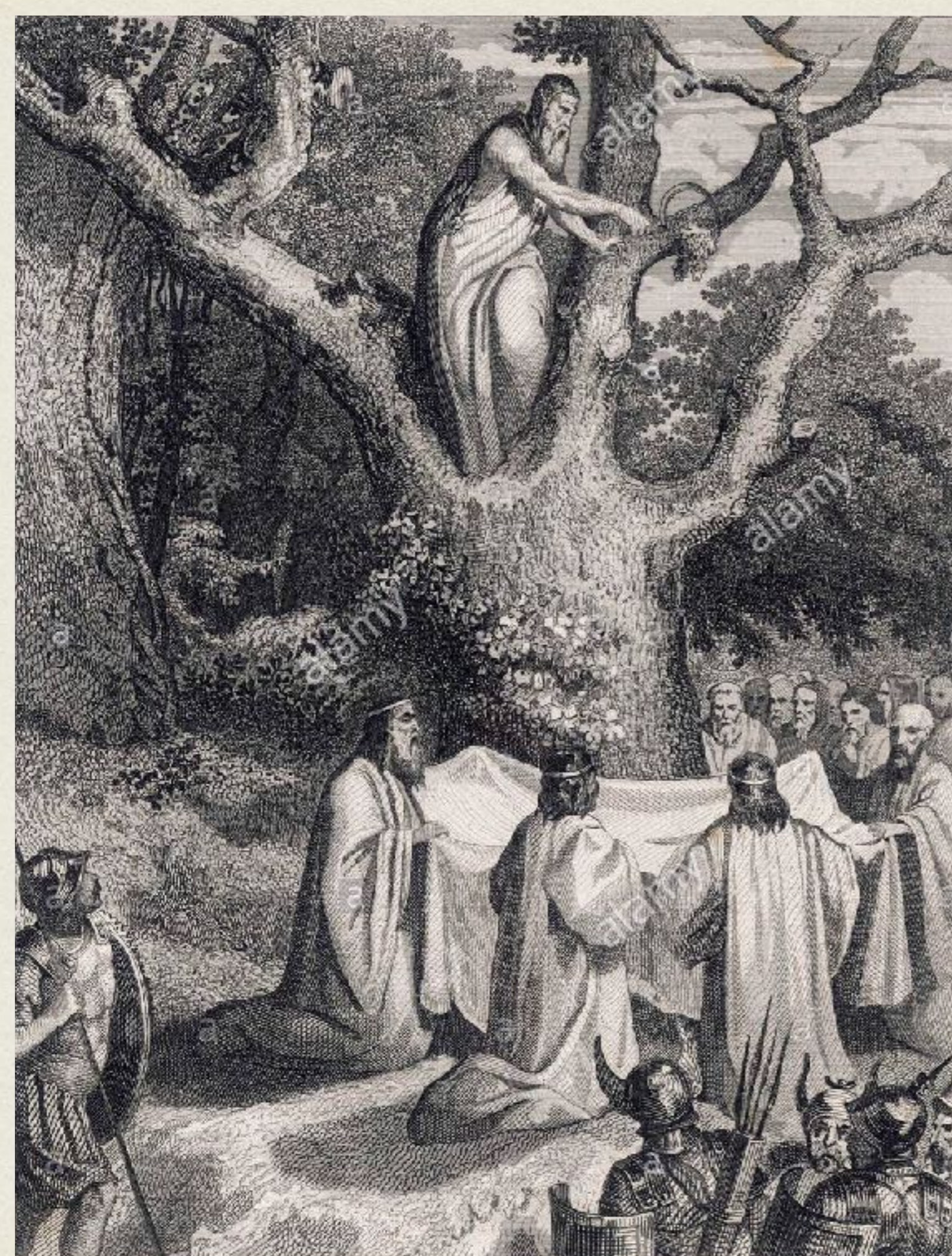
## THE DRUIDIC MYSTERIES OF BRITAIN AND GAUL

“The original and primitive inhabitants of Britain, at some remote period, revived and reformed their national institutes. Their priest, or instructor, had hitherto been simply named Gwydd, but it was considered to have become necessary to divide this office between the national, or superior, priest and another whose influence would be more limited. From henceforth the former became Der-Wydd (Druid), or superior instructor, and [the latter] Go-Wydd, or O-Vydd (Ovate), subordinate instructor; and both went by the general name of Beirdd (Bards), or teachers of wisdom. As the system matured and augmented, the Bardic Order consisted of three classes, the Druids, Beirdd Braint, or privileged Bards, and Ovates.” (See Samuel Meyrick and Charles Smith, *The Costume of The Original Inhabitants of The British Islands*.)

The origin of the word *Druid* is under dispute. Max Müller believes that, like the Irish word *Druí*, it means "the men of the oak trees." He further draws attention to the fact that the forest gods and tree deities of the Greeks were called *dryades*. Some believe the word to be of Teutonic origin; others ascribe it to the Welsh. A few trace it to the Gaelic *druidh*, which means "a wise man" or "a sorcerer." In Sanskrit the word *dru* means "timber."

At the time of the Roman conquest, the Druids were thoroughly ensconced in Britain and Gaul. Their power over the people was unquestioned, and there were instances in which armies, about to attack each other, sheathed their swords when ordered to do so by the white-robed Druids. No undertaking of great importance was scatted without the assistance of these patriarchs, who stood as mediators between the gods and men. The Druidic Order is deservedly credited with having had a deep understanding of Nature and her laws. The *Encyclopædia Britannica* states that geography, physical science, natural theology, and astrology were their favorite studies. The Druids had a fundamental knowledge of medicine, especially the use of herbs and *simples*. Crude surgical instruments also have been found in England and Ireland. An odd treatise on early British medicine states that every practitioner was expected to have a garden or back yard for the growing of certain herbs necessary to his profession. **Eliphas Levi, the celebrated transcendentalist, makes the following significant statement:**

"The Druids were priests and physicians, curing by magnetism and charging amulets with their fluidic influence. Their universal remedies were mistletoe and serpents' eggs, because these substances attract the astral light in a special manner. The solemnity with which mistletoe was cut down drew upon this plant the popular confidence and rendered it powerfully magnetic. \* \* \* The progress of magnetism will some day reveal to us the absorbing properties of mistletoe. We shall then understand the secret of those spongy growths which drew the unused virtues of plants and become surcharged with tinctures and savors. Mushrooms, truffles, gall on trees, and the different kinds of mistletoe will be employed with understanding by a medical science, which will be new because it is old \* \* \* but one must not move quicker than science, which recedes that it may advance the further. " (See *The History of Magic*.) ST0AA:22



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# THE HISTORY OF MAGIC



ÉLIPHAS LÉVI

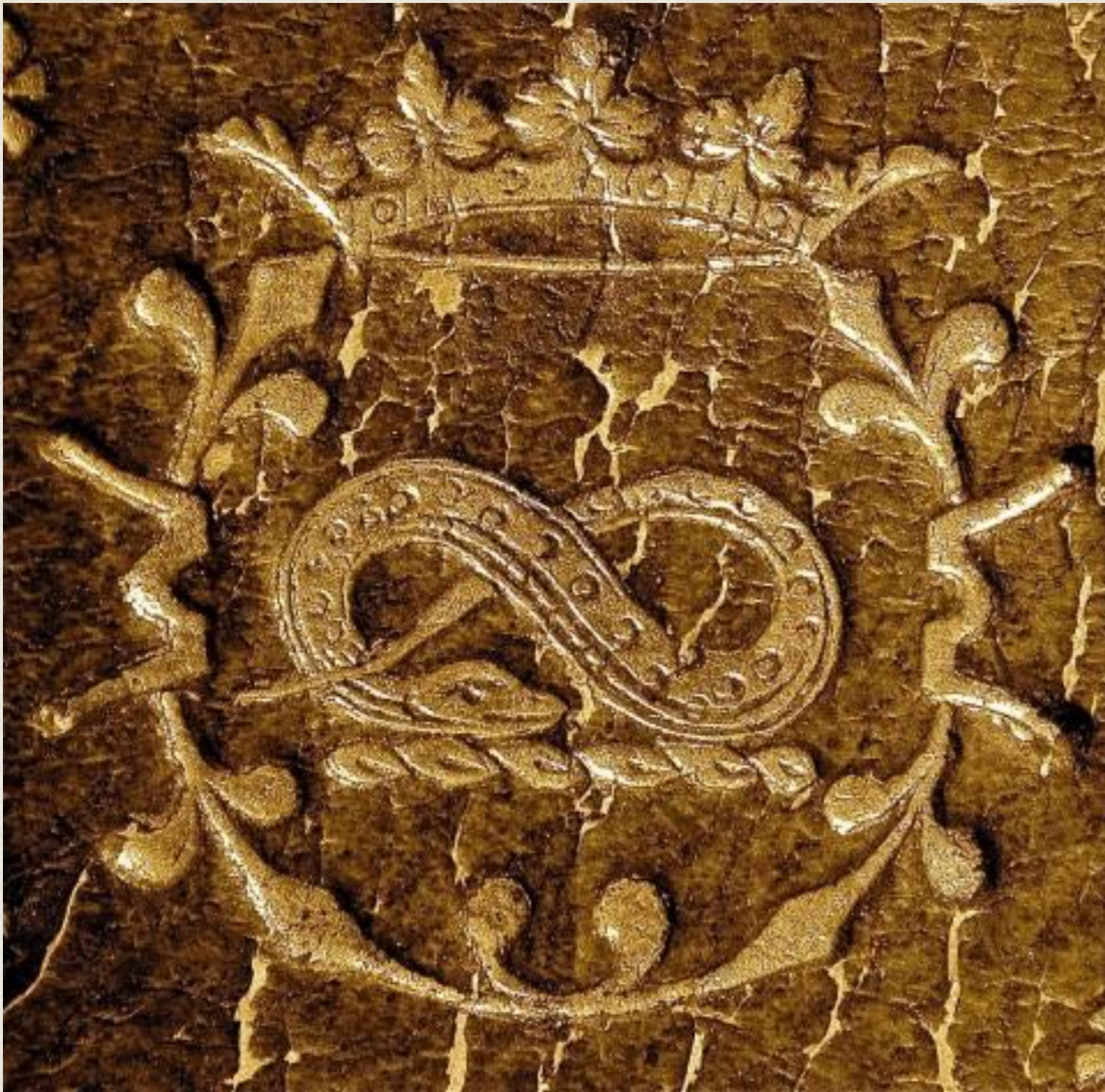
TRANSLATED BY A.E. WAITE

FOREWORD BY DONALD WEISER





"Basic research shows that mistletoe extracts may stimulate the immune system to fight cancer. Studies in humans show that mistletoe treatment may improve symptoms and reduce side effects of cancer treatments. ...More studies are needed to see if mistletoe can be used as supportive therapy in cancer care." –from the website of the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center



There was a celebrated Druidic college at Autun, and, according to Saint-Foix, its armorial bearings still exist in that town. They are azure, with serpents argent couchant, surmounted by mistletoe, garnished with acorns vert, to distinguish it from other mistletoe, it being the oak and not the mistletoe which naturally bears the acorns. Mistletoe is a parasitic plant which has fruit particular to itself.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It was supposed to increase the species by preventing sterility, and it was dignified by other ascribed virtues ; it was the ethereal tree and the growth of the high summit. It was included among the ingredients of the mystical cauldron of Keridwen, in which genius, inspiration and serenity were said to dwell. –The History of Magic:329-30



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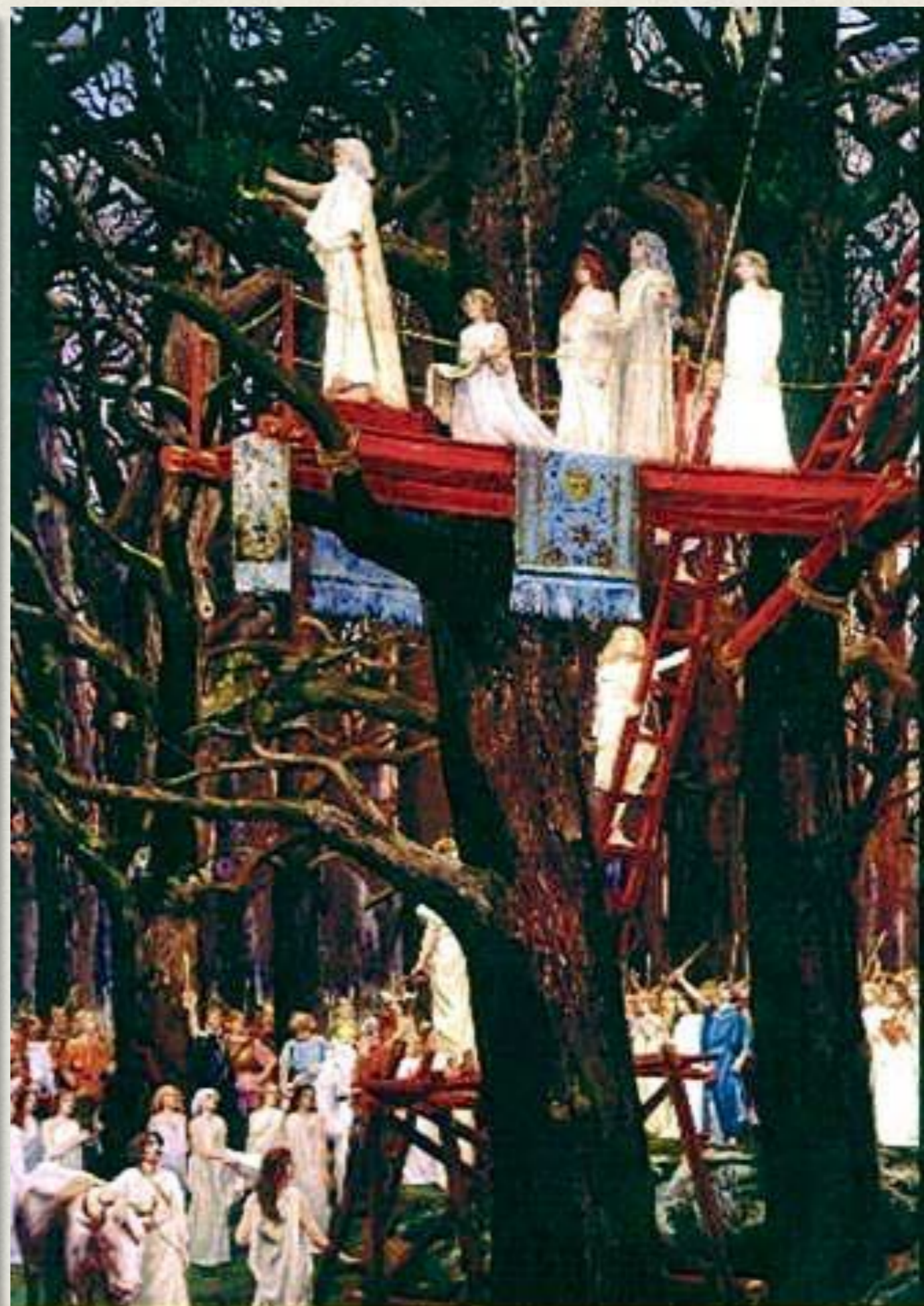
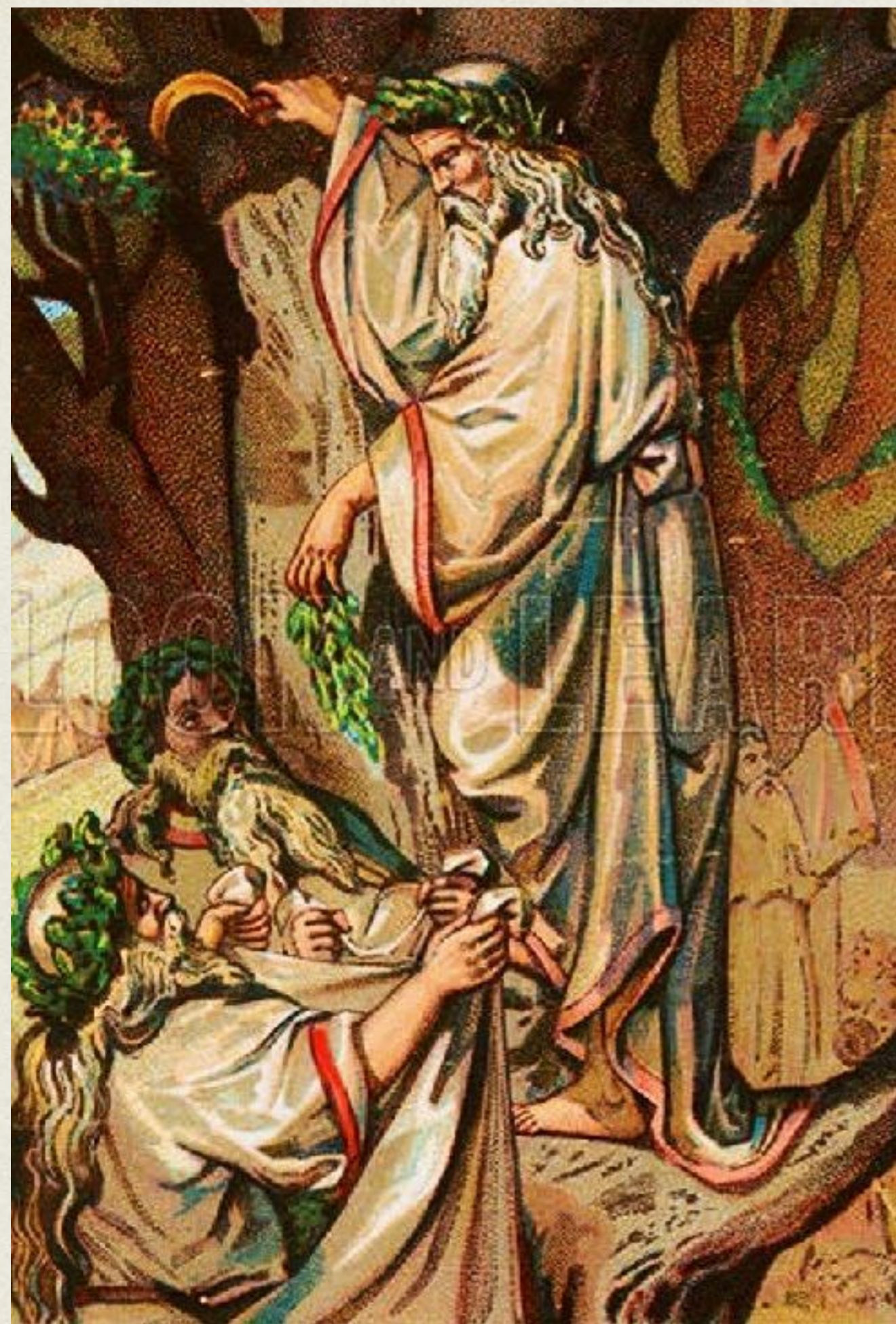
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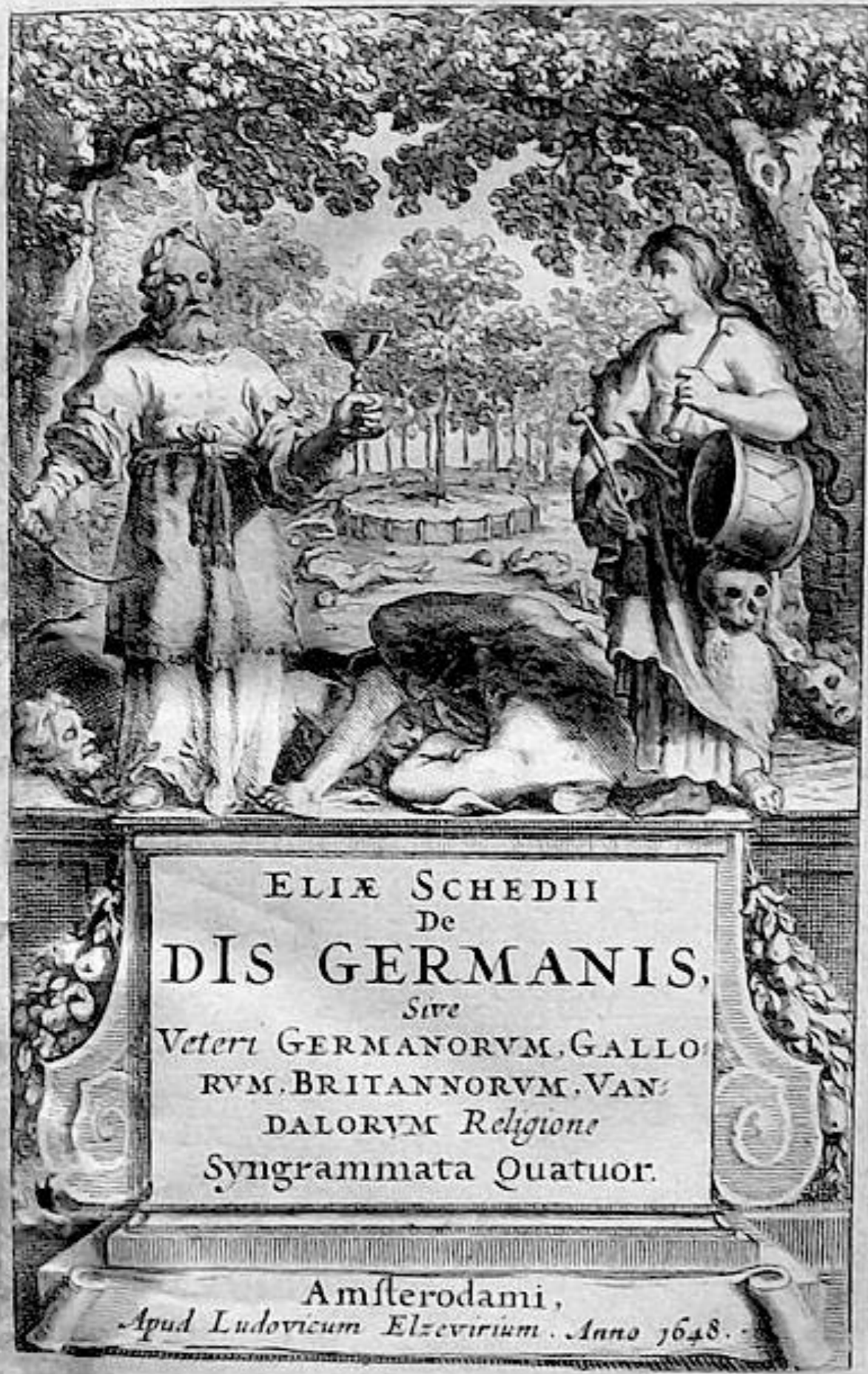
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When the end of the year approached, they marched with great solemnity to gather the mistletoe of the oak, in order to present it to Jupiter, inviting all the world to assist at this ceremony, with these words: The new year is at hand, gather the mistletoe." Pliny says, "The Druids (as the Gauls call their magicians or wise men) held nothing so sacred as the mistletoe, and the tree on which it grows, provided it was an oak. They make choice of oak groves in preference to all others, and perform no rites without oak leaves; so that they seem to have the name of Druids from them, if we derive their name from the Greek. They think whatever grows on these trees is sent from heaven, and is a sign that the Deity has made choice of that tree.

-The Celtic Druids:286-7





“The Druids seek studiously for an oak tree, large and handsome, growing up with two principal arms, in form of a cross, beside the main stem upright. If the two horizontal arms are not sufficiently adapted to the figure, they fasten a cross-beam to it. This tree they consecrate in this manner. Upon the right branch they cut in the bark, in fair characters, the word HESUS, upon the middle or upright stem the word TARAMIS, upon the left branch BELENUS, over this, above the going off of the arms, they cut the name of God, THAU, under all the same repeated THAU.

“This tree so inscribed, they make their *kebla* in the grove cathedral, or summer church, toward which they direct their faces in the offices of religion...” –Elias Schedius, “De Dis Germanis: Sive Veteri Germanorum, Gallorum, Britannorum, Vandalorum, Religione, Syngammata Quatuor”

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The Druids – that is what they call their magicians – hold nothing more sacred than the mistletoe and a tree on which it is growing, provided it is a hard-timbered oak [*robur*]...

Mistletoe is rare and when found it is gathered with great ceremony, and particularly on the sixth day of the moon.... Hailing the moon in a native word that means 'healing all things,' they prepare a ritual sacrifice and banquet beneath a tree and bring up two white bulls, whose horns are bound for the first time on this occasion. A priest arrayed in white vestments climbs the tree and, with a golden sickle, cuts down the mistletoe, which is caught in a white cloak. Then finally they kill the victims, praying to a god to render his gift propitious to those on whom he has bestowed it. They believe that mistletoe given in drink will impart fertility to any animal that is barren and that it is an antidote to all poisons.

—from 'Natural History' by Pliny the Elder

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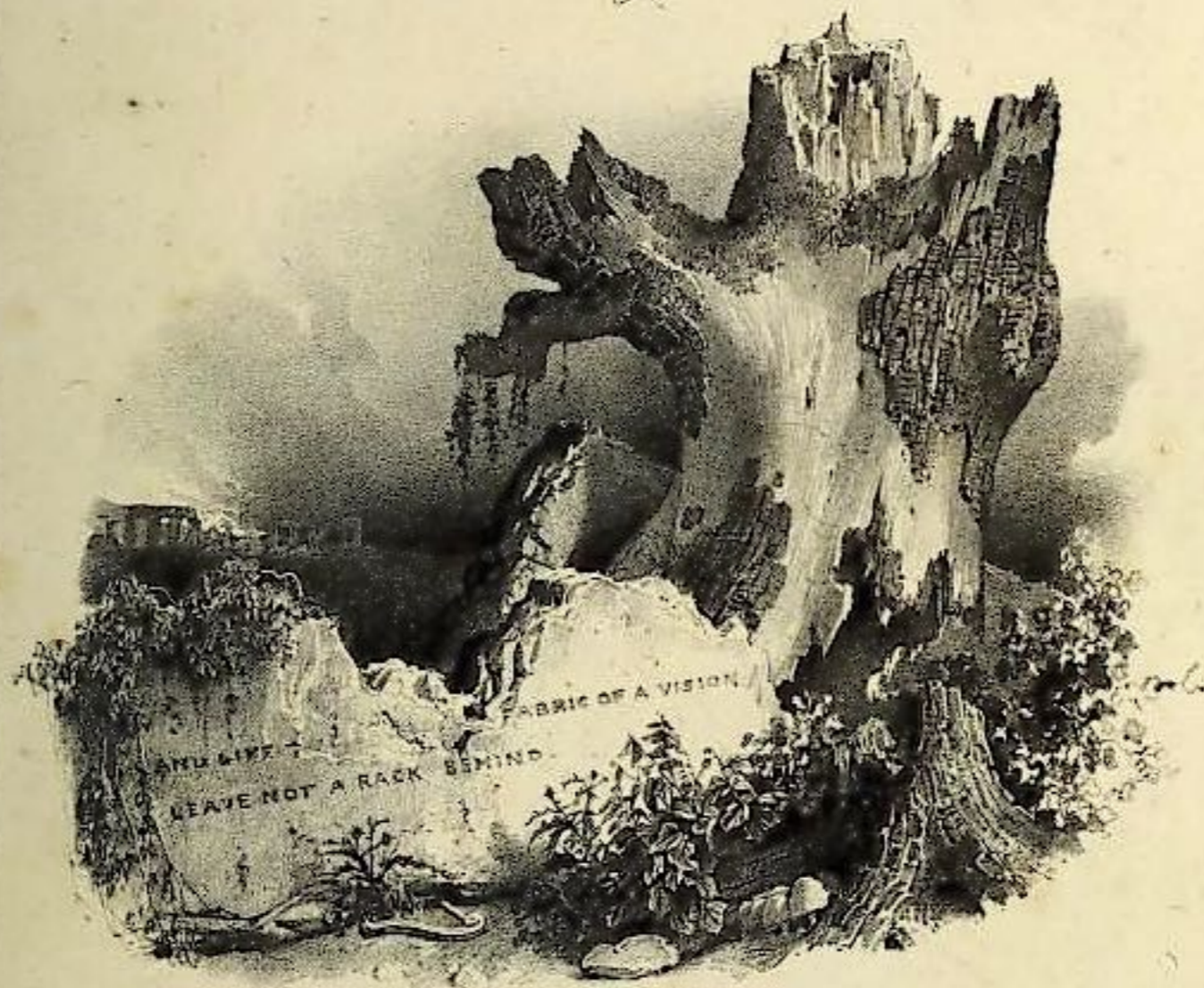
# The Celtic Druids.

BY

Godfrey Higgins Esq. F.F.A.

of Skellow Grange near

Doncaster Yorkshire.



LONDON.

R Hunter 72 S' Pauls Church Yard 1827

THE  
**CELTIC DRUIDS;**

OR,

*An Attempt to shew,*

THAT

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WHO EMIGRATED FROM INDIA,

AND WERE THE INTRODUCERS OF

THE FIRST OR CADMEAN SYSTEM OF LETTERS,

AND THE

BUILDERS OF STONEHENGE, OF CARNAC, AND OF OTHER  
CYCLOPEAN WORKS, IN ASIA AND EUROPE.

BY

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LONDON :

ROWLAND HUNTER, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD; HURST & CHANCE, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD;  
AND RIDGWAY AND SONS, PICCADILLY.

1829.



*L. Hughes del.*

*Printed by W. Day 20 G. Court St.*

AN INWARD VIEW OF STONE-HENGE.