



A relief carving of the Egyptian god Thoth from the throne back of a seated statue of Ramesses II (1279-1213 BCE), Luxor.



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ESOTERIC SCHOOLS OF MEDITATION, STUDY AND SERVICE

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One of the greatest tragedies of the philosophic world was the loss of nearly all of the forty-two books of Hermes mentioned in the foregoing. These books disappeared during the burning of Alexandria, for the Romans—and later the Christians—realized that until these books were eliminated they could never bring the Egyptians into subjection. The volumes which escaped the fire were buried in the desert and their location is now known to only a few initiates of the secret schools.

THE BOOK OF THOTH

While Hermes still walked the earth with men, he entrusted to his chosen successors the sacred *Book of Thoth*. This work contained the secret processes by which the regeneration of humanity was to be accomplished and also served as the key to his other writings. Nothing definite is known concerning the contents of the *Book of Thoth* other than that its pages were covered with strange hieroglyphic figures and symbols, which gave to those acquainted with their use unlimited power over the spirits of the air and the subterranean divinities. When certain areas of the brain are stimulated by the secret processes of the Mysteries, the consciousness of man is extended and he is permitted to behold the Immortals and enter into the presence of the superior gods. The *Book of Thoth* described the method whereby this stimulation was accomplished. In truth, therefore, it was the "Key to Immortality."

According to legend, the *Book of Thoth* was kept in a golden box in the inner sanctuary of the temple. There was but one key and this was in the possession of the "Master of the Mysteries," the highest initiate of the Hermetic Arcanum. He alone knew what was written in the secret book. The *Book of Thoth* was lost to the ancient world with the decay of the Mysteries, but its faithful initiates carried it sealed in the sacred casket into another land. The book is still in existence and continues to lead the disciples of this age into the presence of the Immortals. No other information can be given to the world concerning it now, but the apostolic succession from the first hierophant initiated by Hermes himself remains unbroken to this day, and those who are peculiarly fitted to serve the Immortals may discover this priceless document if they will search sincerely and tirelessly for it.

It has been asserted that the *Book of Thoth* is, in reality, the mysterious *Tarot* of the Bohemians—a strange emblematic book of seventy-eight leaves which has been in possession of the gypsies since the time when they were driven from their ancient temple, the Serapeum. (According to the Sacred Histories the gypsies were originally Egyptian priests.) There are now in the world several secret schools privileged to initiate candidates into the Mysteries, but in nearly every instance they lighted their altar fires from the flaming torch of *Herm*. Hermes in his *Book of Thoth* revealed to all mankind the "One Way," and for ages the wise of every nation and every faith have reached immortality by the "Way" established by Hermes in the midst of the darkness for the redemption of humankind.

POIMANDRES, THE VISION OF HERMES

The *Divine Pymander of Hermes Mercurius Trismegistus* is one of the earliest of the Hermetic writings now extant. While probably not in its original form, having been remodeled during the first centuries of the Christian Era and inaccurately translated since, this work undoubtedly contains many of the original concepts of the Hermetic cultus. The *Divine Pymander* consists of seventeen fragmentary writings gathered together and put forth as one work. The second book of *The Divine Pymander*, called *Poimandres*, or *The Vision*, is believed to describe the method by which the divine wisdom was first revealed to Hermes. It was after Hermes had received this revelation that he began his ministry, teaching to all who would listen the secrets of the invisible universe as they had been unfolded to him.

The *Vision* is the most famous of all the Hermetic fragments, and contains an exposition of Hermetic cosmogony and the secret sciences of the Egyptians regarding the culture and unfolding of the human soul. For some time it was erroneously called "The Genesis of Enoch," but that mistake has now been rectified. At hand while preparing the following interpretation of the symbolic philosophy concealed within *The Vision of Hermes* the present author has had these reference works: *The Divine Pymander of Hermes Mercurius Trismegistus* (London, 1850), translated out of the Arabic and Greek by Dr. Everard; *Hermetica* (Oxford, 1924), edited by Walter Scott; *Hermes, The Mysteries of Egypt* (Philadelphia, 1925), by Edouard Schure; and the *Thrice-Greatest Hermes* (London, 1906), by G. R. S. Mead. To the material contained in the above volumes he has added commentaries based upon the esoteric philosophy of the ancient Egyptians, together with amplifications derived partly from other Hermetic fragments and partly from the secret Arcanum of the Hermetic sciences. For the sake of clarity, the narrative form has been chosen in preference to the original dialogic style, and obsolete words have given place to those in current use.

Hermes, while wandering in a rocky and desolate place, gave himself over to meditation and prayer. Following the secret instructions of the Temple, he gradually freed his higher consciousness from the bondage of his bodily senses; and, thus released, his divine nature revealed to him the mysteries of the transcendental spheres. He beheld a figure, terrible and awe-inspiring. It was the Great Dragon, with wings stretching across the sky and lightstreaming in all directions from its body. (The Mysteries taught that the Universal Life was personified as a dragon.) The Great Dragon called Hermes by name, and asked him why he thus meditated upon the World Mystery. Terrified by the spectacle, Hermes prostrated himself before the Dragon, beseeching it to reveal its identity. The great creature answered that it was *Poimandres*, the *Mind of the Universe*, the Creative Intelligence, and the Absolute Emperor of all. (Schure identifies *Poimandres* as the god Osiris.) Hermes then besought *Poimandres* to disclose the nature of the universe and the constitution of the gods. The Dragon acquiesced, bidding *Trismegistus* hold its image in his mind.

Immediately the form of *Poimandres* changed. Where it had stood there was a glorious and pulsating Radiance. This Light was the spiritual nature of the Great Dragon itself. Hermes was "raised" into the midst of this Divine Effulgence and the universe of material things faded from his consciousness. Presently a great darkness descended and, expanding, swallowed up the Light. Everything was troubled. About Hermes swirled a mysterious watery substance which gave forth a smokelike vapor. The air was filled with inarticulate moanings and sighings which seemed to come from the Light swallowed up in the darkness. His mind told Hermes that



From Wilkinson's *Manners & Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*.

THOTH, THE IBIS-HEADED. It is doubtful that the deity called Thoth by the Egyptians was originally Hermes, but the two personages were blended together and it is now impossible to separate them. Thoth was called "The Lord of the Divine Book" and "Scribe of the Gods." He is generally pictured with the body of a man and the head of an ibis. The exact symbolic meaning of any latter word has never been discovered. A careful analysis of the peculiar shape of the ibis—especially its head and beak—should prove illuminating.

And he must be acquainted with what are called hieroglyphics, and know about cosmography and geography, the position of the sun and moon, and about the five planets; also the description of Egypt, and the chart of the Nile; and the description of the equipment of the priests and of the place consecrated to them, and about the measures and the things in use in the sacred rites. Then the Stole-keeper follows those previously mentioned, with the cubit of justice and the cup for libations. He is acquainted with all points called *Pædeutic* (relating to training) and *Moschophaltic* (sacrificial). There are also ten books which relate to the honour paid by them to their gods, and containing the Egyptian worship; as that relating to sacrifices, first-fruits, hymns, prayers, processions, festivals, and the like. And behind

all walks the Prophet, with the water-vase carried openly in his arms; who is followed by those who carry the issue of loaves. He, as being the governor of the temple, learns the ten books called 'Hieratic'; and they contain all about the laws, and the gods, and the whole of the training of the priests. For the Prophet is, among the Egyptians, also over the distribution of the revenues. There are then forty-two books of Hermes indispensably necessary; of which the six-and-thirty containing the whole philosophy of the Egyptians are learned by the forementioned personages; and the other six, which are medical, by the *Pastophoroi* (image-bearers)—treating of the structure of the body, and of disease, and instruments, and medicines, and about the eyes, and the last about women."

The Life and Writings of Thoth Hermes Trismegistus



HUNDErrolled, lightningflash- ed, the veil of the Temple was rent from top to bottom. The venerable initiator, in his robes of blue and gold, slowly raised his jeweled wand and pointed with it into the darkness revealed by the tearing of the silken curtain: "Behold the Light of Egypt!" The candidate, in his plain white robe, gazed into the utter blackness framed by the two great lotus-headed columns

between which the veil had hung. As he watched, a luminous haze distributed itself throughout the atmosphere until the air was a mass of shining particles. The face of the neophyte was illumined by the soft glow as he scanned the shimmering cloud for some tangible object. The initiator spoke again: "This Light which ye behold is the secret luminance of the Mysteries. Whence it comes none knoweth, save the 'Master of the Light.' Behold Him!" Suddenly, through the gleaming mist a figure appeared, surrounded by flickering greenish sheen. The initiator lowered his wand and, bowing his head, placed one hand edgewise against his breast in humble salutation. The neophyte stepped back in awe, partly blinded by the glory of the revealed figure. Gaining courage, the youth gazed again at the Divine One. The Form before him was considerably larger than that of a mortal man. The body seemed partly transparent so that the heart and brain could be seen pulsating and radiant. As the candidate watched, the heart changed into an ibis, and the brain into a flashing emerald. In its hand this mysterious Being bore a winged rod, entwined with serpents. The aged initiator, raising his wand, cried out in a loud voice: "All hail Thee, Thoth Hermes, Thrice Greatest; all hail Thee, Prince of Men; all hail Thee who standeth upon the head of Typhon!" At the same instant a lurid writhing dragon appeared—a hideous monster, part serpent, part crocodile, and part hog. From its mouth and nostrils poured sheets of flame and horrible sounds echoed through the vaulted chambers. Suddenly Hermes struck the advancing reptile with the serpent-wound staff and with snarling cry the dragon fell over upon its side, while the flames about it slowly died away. Hermes placed His foot upon the skull of the vanquished Typhon. The next instant, with a blaze of unbearable glory that sent the neophyte staggering backward against a pillar, the immortal Hermes, followed by streamers of greenish mist, passed through the chamber and faded into nothingness.

SUPPOSITIONS CONCERNING THE IDENTITY OF HERMES

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In the Egyptian drawings of him, Thoth carries a waxen writing tablet and serves as the recorder during the weighing of the souls of the dead in the Judgment Hall of Osiris—a ritual of great significance. Hermes is of first importance to Masonic scholars, because he was the author of the Masonic initiatory rituals, which were borrowed from the Mysteries established by Hermes. Nearly all of the Masonic symbols are Hermetic in character. Pythagoras studied mathematics with the Egyptians and from them gained his knowledge of the symbolic geometric solids. Hermes is also revered for his reformation of the calendar system. He increased the year from 360 to 365 days, thus establishing a precedent which still prevails. The appellation "Thrice Greatest" was given to Hermes because he was considered the greatest of all philosophers, the greatest of all priests, and the greatest of all kings. It is worthy of note that the last poem of America's beloved poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, was a lyric ode to Hermes. (See *Chambers' Encyclopaedia*.)

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From *Historia Dorum Fatidicorum*.

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Female Musicians from the Valley of Kings





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From *Historia Doctrinae Patristicae*.

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The Life and Writings of Thoth Hermes Trismegistus



HUNDERrolled, lightning flashed, the veil of the Temple was rent from top to bottom. The venerable initiator, in his robes of blue and gold, slowly raised his jeweled wand and pointed with it into the darkness revealed by the tearing of the silken curtain: "Behold the Light of Egypt!" The candidate, in his plain white robe, gazed into the utter blackness framed by the two great lotus-headed columns

between which the veil had hung. As he watched, a luminous haze distributed itself throughout the atmosphere until the air was a mass of shining particles. The face of the neophyte was illumined by the soft glow as he scanned the shimmering cloud for some tangible object. The initiator spoke again: "This Light which ye behold is the secret luminance of the Mysteries. Whence it comes none knoweth, save the Master of the Light. Behold Him!" Suddenly, through the gleaming mist a figure appeared, surrounded by flickering greenish sheen. The initiator lowered his wand and, bowing his head, placed one hand edgewise against his breast in humble salutation. The neophyte stepped back in awe, partly blinded by the glory of the revealed figure. Gaining courage, the youth gazed again at the Divine One. The form before him was considerably larger than that of a mortal man. The body seemed partly transparent so that the heart and brain could be seen pulsating and radiant. As the candidate watched, the heart changed into an ibis, and the brain into a flashing emerald. In its hand this mysterious Being bore a winged rod, entwined with serpents. The aged initiator, raising his wand, cried out in a loud voice: "All hail Thee, Thoth Hermes, Thrice Greatest; all hail Thee, Prince of Men; all hail Thee who standeth upon the head of Typhon!" At the same instant a lurid writhing dragon appeared—a hideous monster, part serpent, part crocodile, and part hog. From its mouth and nostrils poured sheets of flame and horrible sounds echoed through the vaulted chambers. Suddenly Hermes struck the advancing reptile with the serpent-wound staff and with snarling cry the dragon fell over upon its side, while the flames about it slowly died away. Hermes placed His foot upon the skull of the vanquished Typhon. The next instant, with a blaze of unbearable glory that sent the neophyte staggering backward against a pillar, the immortal Hermes, followed by streamers of greenish mist, passed through the chamber and faded into nothingness.

SUPPOSITIONS CONCERNING THE IDENTITY OF HERMES

Iamblichus averred that Hermes was the author of twenty thousand books; Manetho increased the number to more than thirty-six thousand (see James Gardner)—figures which make it evident that a solitary individual, even though he be overshadowed by divine prerogative, could scarcely have accomplished such a monumental labor. Among the arts and sciences which it is affirmed Hermes revealed to mankind were medicine, chemistry, law, art, astrology, music, rhetoric, magic, philosophy, geography, mathematics (especially geometry), anatomy, and oratory. Orpheus was similarly acclaimed by the Greeks.

In his *Biographia Antiqua*, Francis Barrett says of Hermes: "\*\*\*\* if God ever appeared in man, he appeared in him, as is evident both from his books and his Pymander; in which works he has communicated the sum of the Abyss, and the divine knowledge to all posterity; by which he has demonstrated himself to have been not only an inspired divine, but also a deep philosopher, obtaining his wisdom from God and heavenly things, and not from man."

His transcendent learning caused Hermes to be identified with many of the early sages and prophets. In his *Ancient Mythology*, Bryant writes: "I have mentioned that Cadmus was the same as the Egyptian Thoth; and it is manifest from his being Hermes, and

from the invention of letters being attributed to him." (In the chapter on the theory of Pythagorean Mathematics will be found the table of the original Cadmean letters.) Investigators believe that it was Hermes who was known to the Jews as "Enoch," called by Kenealy the "Second Messenger of God." Hermes was accepted into the mythology of the Greeks, later becoming the Mercury of the Latins. He was revered through the form of the planet Mercury because this body is nearest to the sun; Hermes of all creatures was nearest to God, and became known as the Messenger of the Gods.

In the Egyptian drawings of him, Thoth carries a waxen writing tablet and serves as the recorder during the weighing of the souls of the dead in the Judgment Hall of Osiris—a ritual of great significance. Hermes is of first importance to Masonic scholars, because he was the author of the Masonic initiatory rituals, which were borrowed from the Mysteries established by Hermes. Nearly all of the Masonic symbols are Hermetic in character. Pythagoras studied mathematics with the Egyptians and from them gained his knowledge of the symbolic geometric solids. Hermes is also revered for his reformation of the calendar system. He increased the year from 360 to 365 days, thus establishing a precedent which still prevails. The appellation "Thrice Greatest" was given to Hermes because he was considered the greatest of all philosophers, the greatest of all priests, and the greatest of all kings. It is worthy of note that the last poem of America's beloved poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, was a lyric ode to Hermes. (See *Chambers' Encyclopaedia*.)

THE MUTILATED HERMETIC FRAGMENTS

On the subject of the Hermetic books, James Campbell Brown, in his *History of Chemistry*, has written: "Leaving the Chaldean and earliest Egyptian periods, of which we have remains but no record, and from which no names of either chemists or philosophers have come down to us, we now approach the Historic Period, when books were written, not at first upon parchment or paper, but upon papyrus. A series of early Egyptian books is attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, who may have been a real savant, or may be a personification of a long succession of writers. \* \* \* He is identified by some with the Greek god Hermes, and the Egyptian Thoth or Tuti, who was the moon-god, and is represented in ancient paintings as ibis-headed with the disc and crescent of the moon. The Egyptians regarded him as the god of wisdom, letters, and the recording of time. It is in consequence of the great respect entertained for Hermes by the old alchemists that chemical writings were called 'hermetic,' and that the phrase 'hermetically sealed' is still in use to designate the closing of a glass vessel by fusion, after the manner of chemical manipulators. We find the same root in the hermetic medicines of Paracelsus, and the hermetic freemasonry of the Middle Ages."



From *Historia Doctrinae Patristicorum*.

HERMES MERCURIUS TRISMEGISTUS.

Master of all arts and sciences, perfect in all crafts, Ruler of the Three Worlds, Scribe of the Gods, and Keeper of the Books of Life, Thoth Hermes Trismegistus—the Three Times Greatest, the First Intelligence—was regarded by the ancient Egyptians as the embodiment of the Universal Mind. While in all probability there actually existed a great sage and philosopher by the name of Hermes, it is impossible to extricate the historical man from the mass of legendary accounts which attempt to identify him with the Cosmic Principle of Thought.

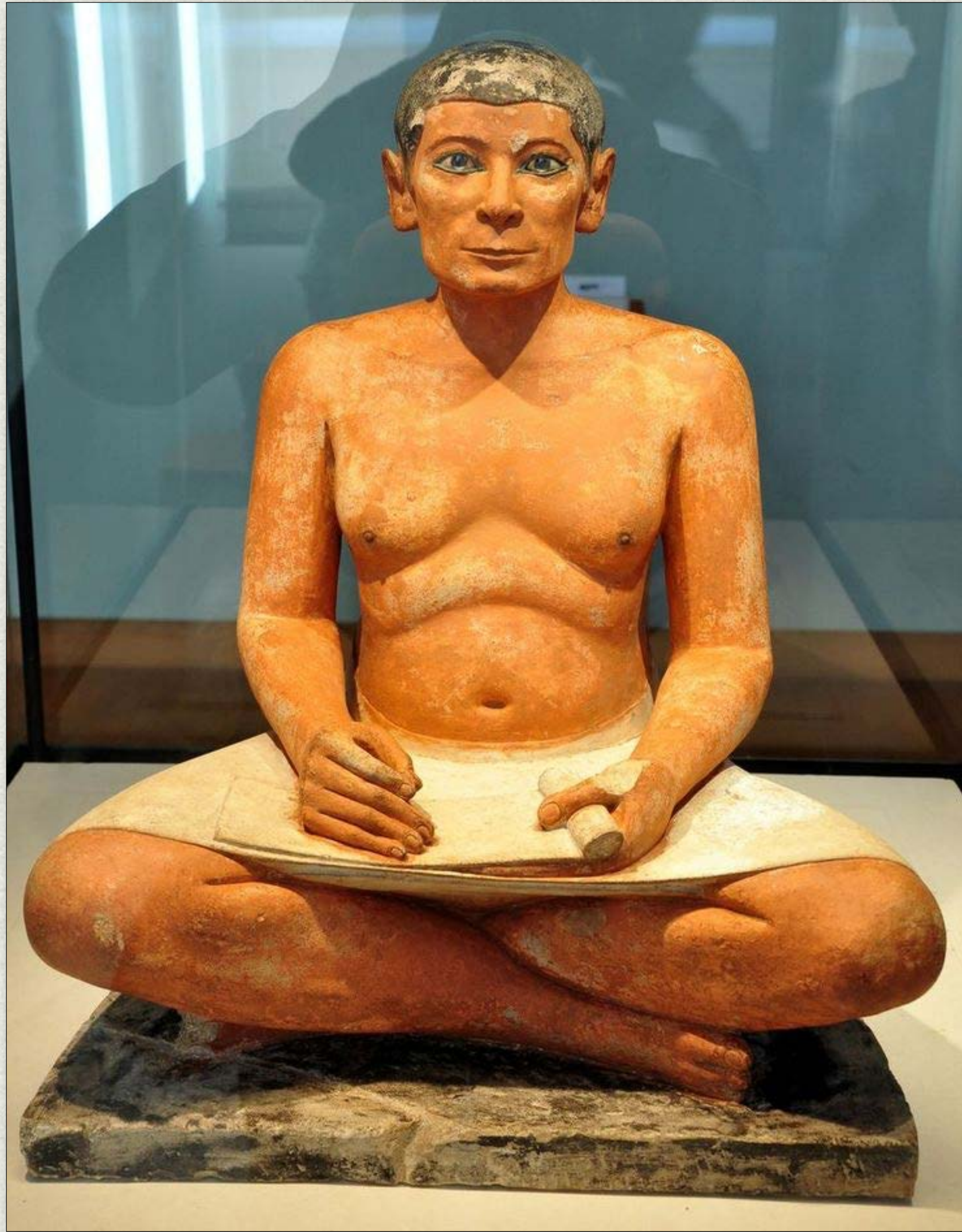
*Pymander*, or, as it is more commonly called, *The Shepherd of Men*, a discussion of which follows. One outstanding point in connection with Hermes is that he was one of the few philosopher-priests of pagandom upon whom the early Christians did not vent their spleen. Some Church Fathers went so far as to declare that Hermes exhibited many symptoms of intelligence, and that if he had only been born in a more enlightened age so that he might have benefited by their instructions he would have been a really great man!

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While Hermes still walked the earth with men, he entrusted to his chosen successors the sacred *Book of Thoth*. This work contained the secret processes by which the regeneration of humanity was to be accomplished and also served as the key to his other writings. Nothing definite is known concerning the contents of the *Book of Thoth* other than that its pages were covered with strange hieroglyphic figures and symbols, which gave to those acquainted with their use unlimited power over the spirits of the air and the subterranean divinities. When certain areas of the brain are stimulated by the secret processes of the Mysteries, the consciousness of man is extended and he is permitted to behold the Immortals and enter into the presence of the superior gods. The *Book of Thoth* described the method whereby this stimulation was accomplished. In truth, therefore, it was the "Key to Immortality."

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Maya's cubit (18th Dyn., Louvre Museum, N 1538)



Egyptian Royal Cubit Measurement Rod

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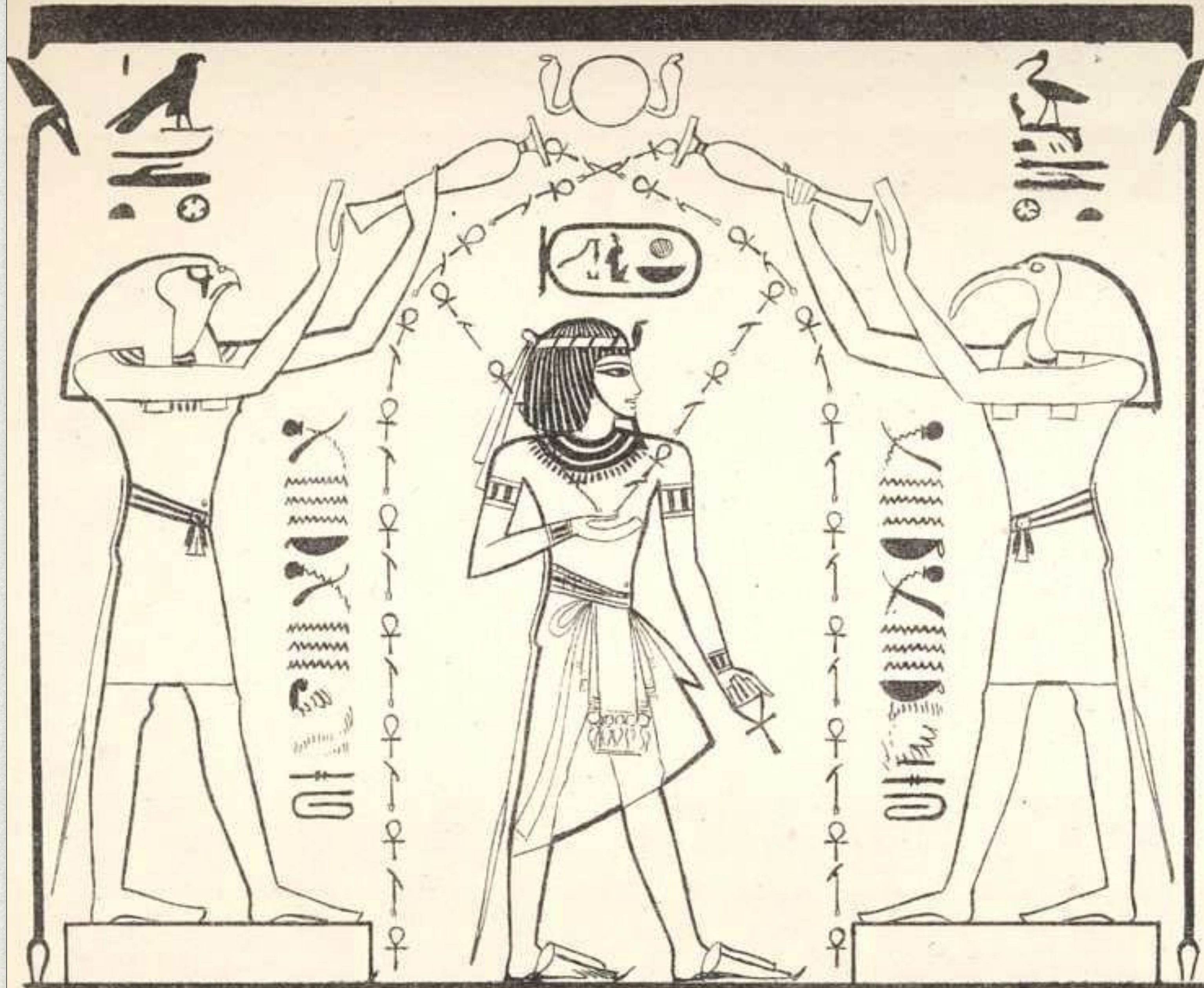
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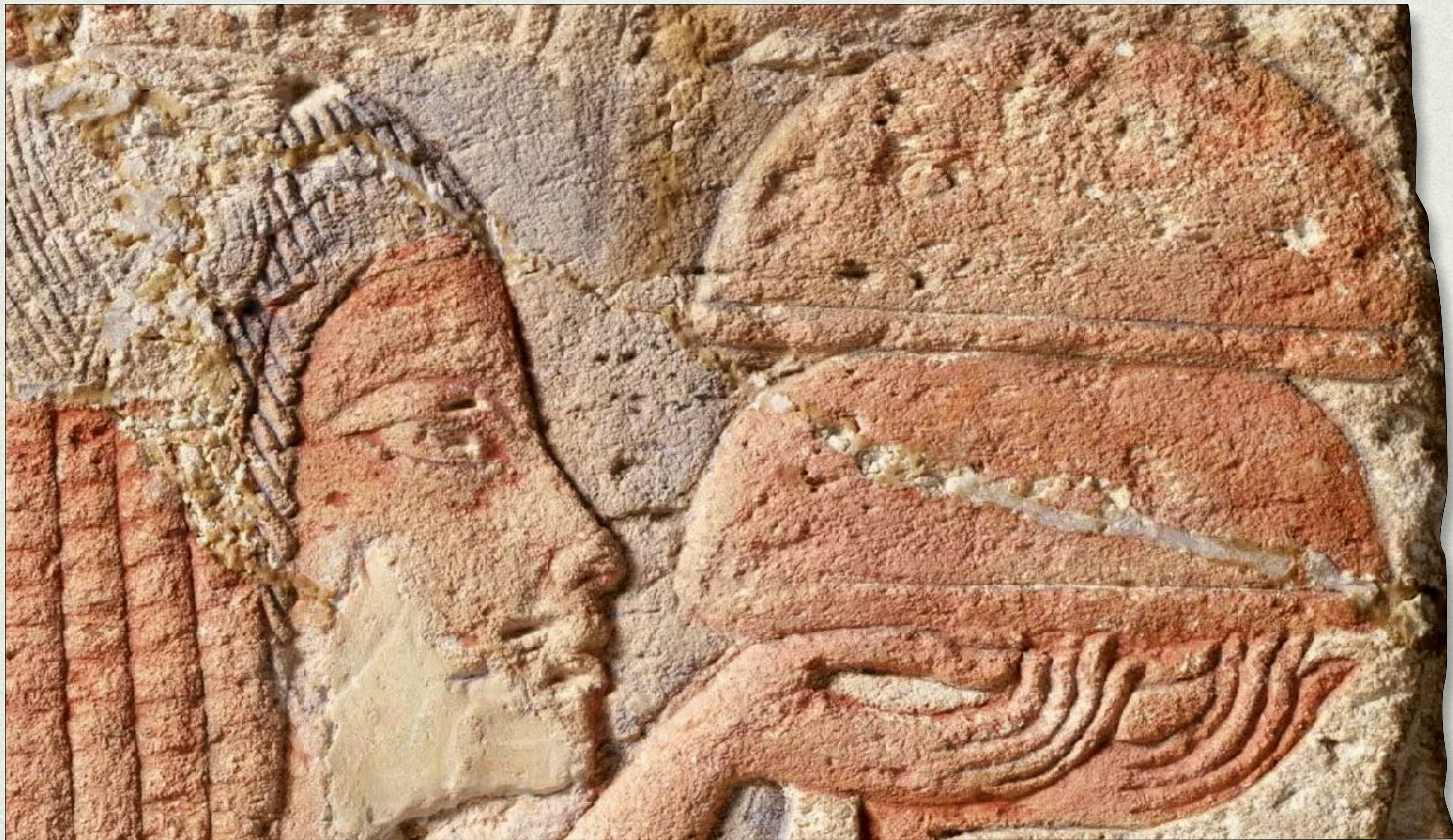
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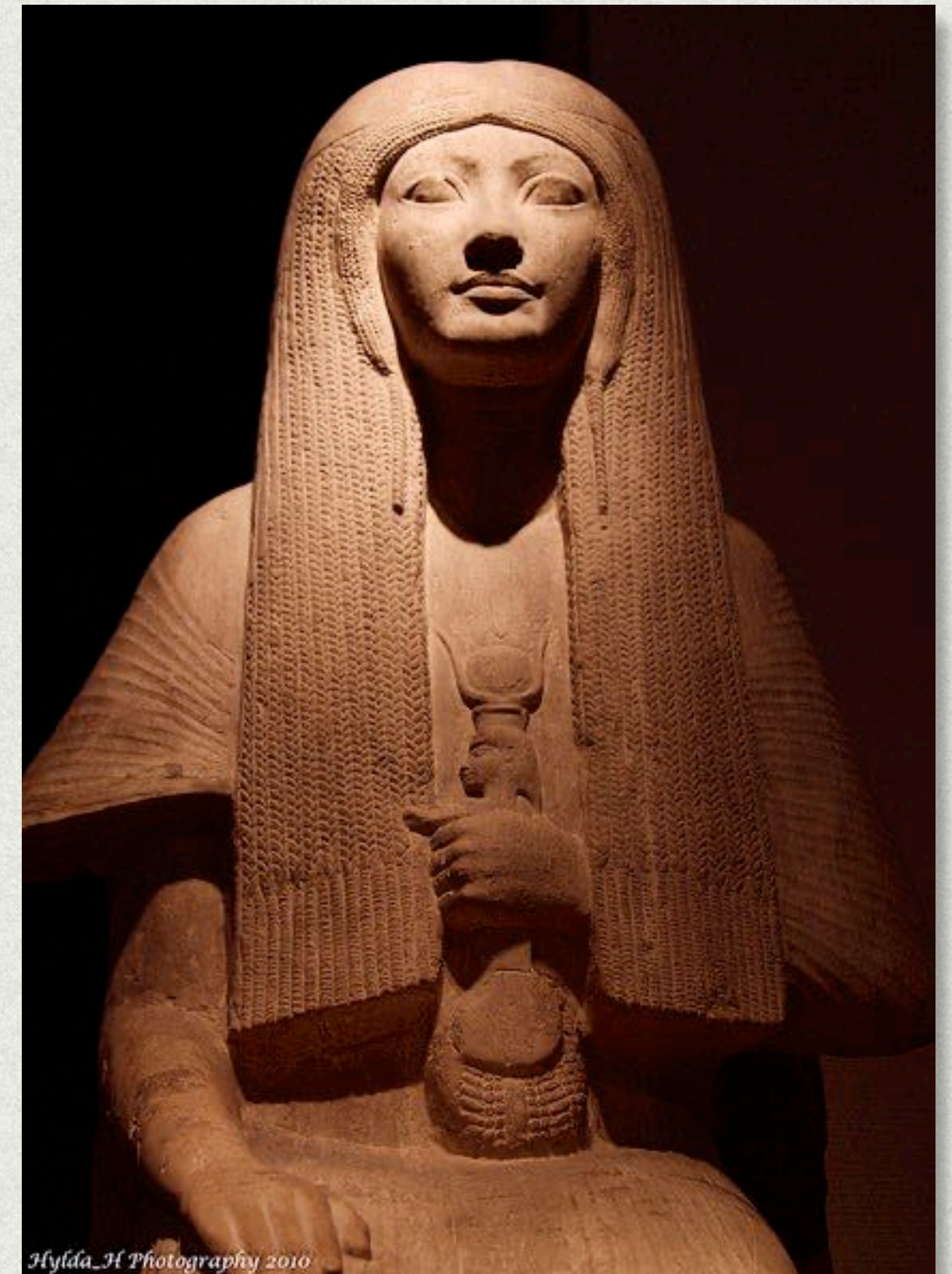
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The high-priest of each great city, and sometimes even the high-priestess, bore a special title. In Thebes the high-priest was called "*first servant of the god Ra in Thebes*"; in Heliopolis the title of the high-priest was "*Great one of visions of Ra-Atem*"; in Memphis, "*Great chief of the hammer in the temple of him of the Southern Wall*", and "*Setem of the god of the Beautiful Face (i.e., Ptah)*"; in Sais, "*governor of the double temple*"; and similarly the high-priestess of Memphis bore the title of "*Nefer-tutu*"; in Sekhem the title of the high-priestess was "*Divine Mother*".  
-The Gods of the Egyptians:101

Granite statue of Roy, who was a High Priest of Amun during the final years in the reign of Ramesses II



Priestess Merit lived during the reigns of Pharaohs Tutankhamun, Ay and Horemheb (approx. 1333 BC – 1290 BC) of the 18th dynasty.

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PASTOPHORAI. From the Greek words *pastos*, a couch or chest, and *phero*, meaning *I bear*, equivalent to couch-bearers. The priests of the first class in the Egyptian mysteries bore this name. In the performance of certain ceremonies they carried an image of a god Osiris whose allegorical death had been represented on an enclosed couch, or rather, perhaps, in a kind of coffin. This title was also applied to other persons who carried images of their deities through the public streets for the purpose of eliciting charity.

–General History of Freemasonry:284

Image-bearer (Pastophorai) with a ram-headed standard - New Kingdom



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There are two persons of the name of Hermes mentioned in sacred history. The first is the divine Hermes, called by the Romans Mercury. Among the Egyptians he was known as Thoth. Diodorus Siculus describes him as the secretary of Osiris; he is commonly supposed to have been the son of *Mizraim*, and Cumberland says that he was the same as Osiris. There is, however, much confusion among the mythologists concerning his attributes. The second was Hermes Trismegistus or the Thrice Great, who was a celebrated Egyptian legislator, priest, and philosopher, who lived in the reign of Ninus, about the year of the world 2670. –Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, v.1, p.336

A relief carving of the Egyptian god Thoth from the throne back of a seated statue of Ramesses II (1279-1213 BCE), Luxor.



FROM WILKINSON'S MANNERS & CUSTOMS  
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Livingstone describes the Ibis flying by night and crying "Aah- Aah," a duplicate equivalent in Egyptian to *Aah-ti*, a name of the moon-god, who was represented by the ibis, and who was the lunar tongue, mouth, or speech of the gods....

The moon is considered to be masculine in Egyptian mythology, but *Aahti* was also a goddess. In the Ritual we read, *"I am the Woman, the orb (hour) of darkness; I have brought my orb in darkness, it is changed to light. I have prepared*



*Taht at the gate of the moon. Its feathers are on my body."* Here the woman is the bringer-forth, apparently under the feathered or ibis image, and Taht, as the young moon, is her messenger. –The Natural Genesis, v1, p.41-2

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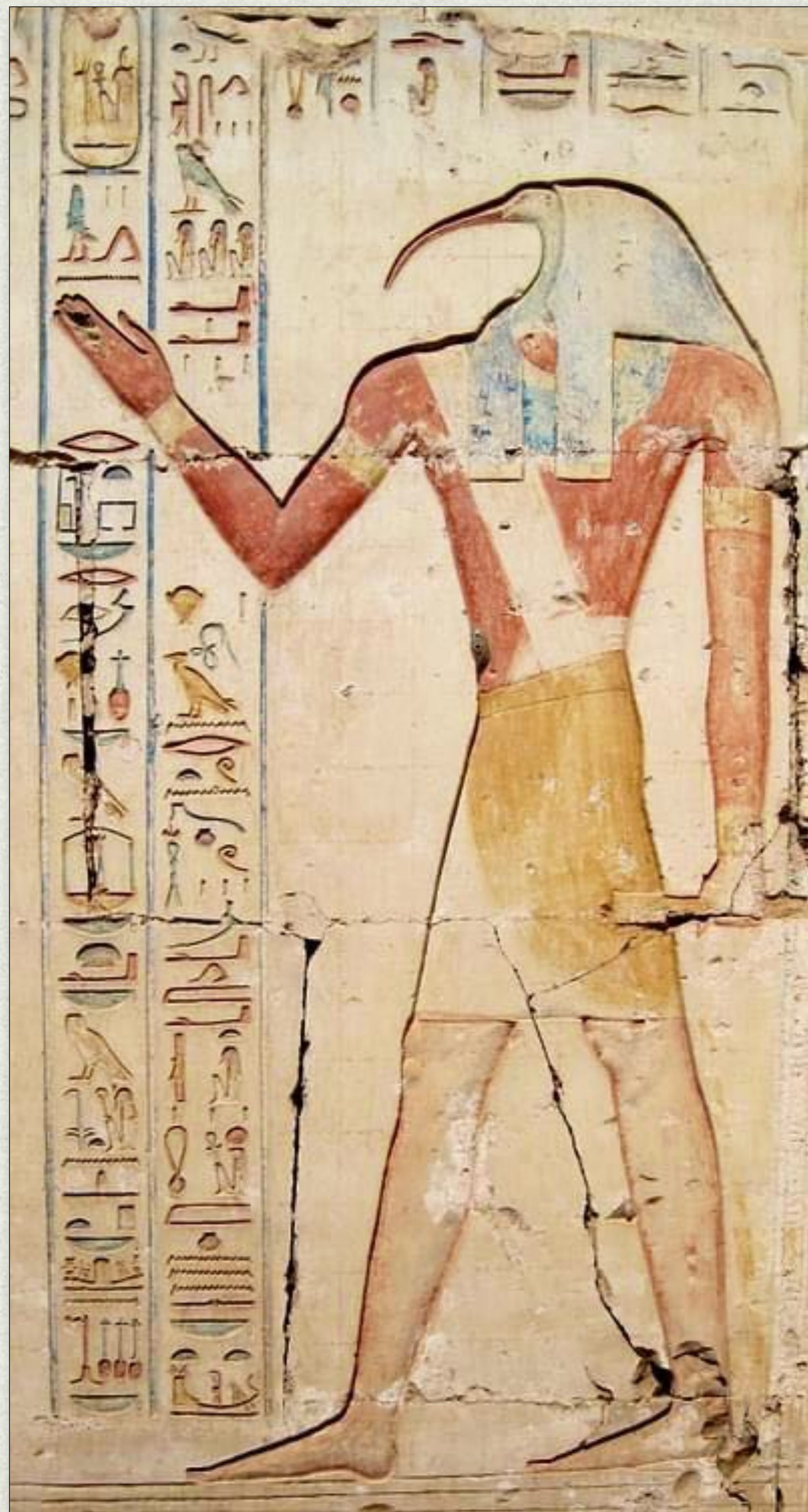


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–Orpheus, by GRS Mead, p.18

A relief carving of the Egyptian god Thoth from the Temple of Ramesses II (1279-1213 BCE), Abydos.



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Bust fragment of Prince Khaemwaset, one of the sons of Rameses II, New Kingdom, 19th Dynasty.

Setna [Khaemwaset] is a recurring character in ancient Egyptian literature. One of the sons of Rameses II, Setna was an accomplished magician, statesman, scholar, and something of an adventurer. That he existed is no question, but like King Arthur and other quasi-historical figures, his exploits have been inflated over the years.

This story dates to several centuries following the reign of Rameses. By this time stories of Setna had reached epic proportions, and the former court scribe was elevated to the status of mythic hero. This is one of the

more complete stories told about him, and certainly one of the best.

Loudly do the people sing of Setna, son of the Great Rameses, most learned man in Egypt. A great scholar, he was able to read all of the old writings and decipher the most ancient texts. No symbol in Egypt was unknown to him, even the ones on the walls of the crumbling temples from the oldest of days. He was also a mighty magician, perhaps the mightiest in Egypt, for he had learned the magical arts from the secret texts that not even the priests of Amen-Ra could read.



One day he read in a crumbling scroll about another son of another pharaoh who had been a scribe and magician: *Nefrekeptah*, the son of *Amenhotep*. He had lived three hundred years earlier and had been regarded as the mightiest magician in Egypt, for he had found and read the Book of Thoth, the secrets of the god of wisdom. The Book of Thoth was a collection of magic that would enable the reader to know the language of the

animals, to cast great spells, even to enchant the sky and the earth itself.

Setna desired the book for himself that he too might drink of its knowledge. He learned that it had been buried with *Nefrekeptah* at the Memphis necropolis. Setna sought his brother, the mighty *Anheru* and asked him for help.

"I will go with you, my brother," said *Anheru*, "I shall be your sword and shield."

Sandstone statue of Khaemwaset, son of Ramesses II and High Priest of Ptah at Memphis. 13th century B.C.

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Nefertari stands in front of the seated god Thoth, with the head of an ibis. The text behind Nefertari is from Chapter 94 of the Book of the Dead.

In the 94th Chapter [of the Book of the Dead] the deceased addresses the "guardian of the book of Thoth," and says, *"I am endowed with glory, I am endowed with strength, I am filled with might, and I am supplied with the books of Thoth, and I have brought them to enable me to pass through the god Aker, who dwelleth in Set. I have brought the palette and the ink-pot as being the objects which are in the hands of Thoth; hidden is that which is in them! Behold me in the character of a scribe! O Heru-khuti, thou didst give me the command, and I have copied what is right and true, and I do bring it unto thee each day."* In the vignette of the chapter we see the deceased seated with a palette and an ink-pot before him. –The Gods of the Egyptians:411



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In the middle of the Nile at Koptos,  
guarded by snakes and scorpions and a  
mighty serpent who cannot be killed,  
in an iron box, in which there is a  
bronze box, in which there is a wooden  
box, in which there is an ivory and  
ebony box, in which there is a silver  
box, in which there is a golden box,  
there you shall find the Book of Thoth!  
-Legend of Setna [Khaemwaset]

Gold chest found in the tomb  
of Tutankhamun

7	1 Atman, <i>Spirit, Essential Self</i>	Unmanifested Logos, <i>Essential Self</i>	Paramatman, <i>Cosmic Monad, Self</i>
6	2 Buddhi, <i>Spiritual Soul</i>	Universal Ideation, <i>Second Logos</i>	Alaya, Adi-Buddhi,
5	3 Manas (Mind), <i>Human Soul</i>	Universal Intelligence, <i>Third Logos</i>	Mahat, <i>Cosmic Mind</i>
4	4 Kama (Desire), <i>Animal Soul</i>	Cosmic Energy (Chaotic)	Cosmic Kama, <i>Womb of Fohat</i>
3	5 Prana, <i>Life-essence, Vitality</i>	Cosmic Life-Essence or Energy	Cosmic Jiva
2	6 Linga-sarira, <i>Model-body</i>	Astral Ideation, <i>reflecting terrestrial things</i>	Cosmic Ether, <i>Astral Light</i>
1	7 Sthula-sarira, <i>Physical body</i>	Cosmos, <i>Physical universe</i>	Sthura- or Sthula-sarira

# Book of Thoth

Gold

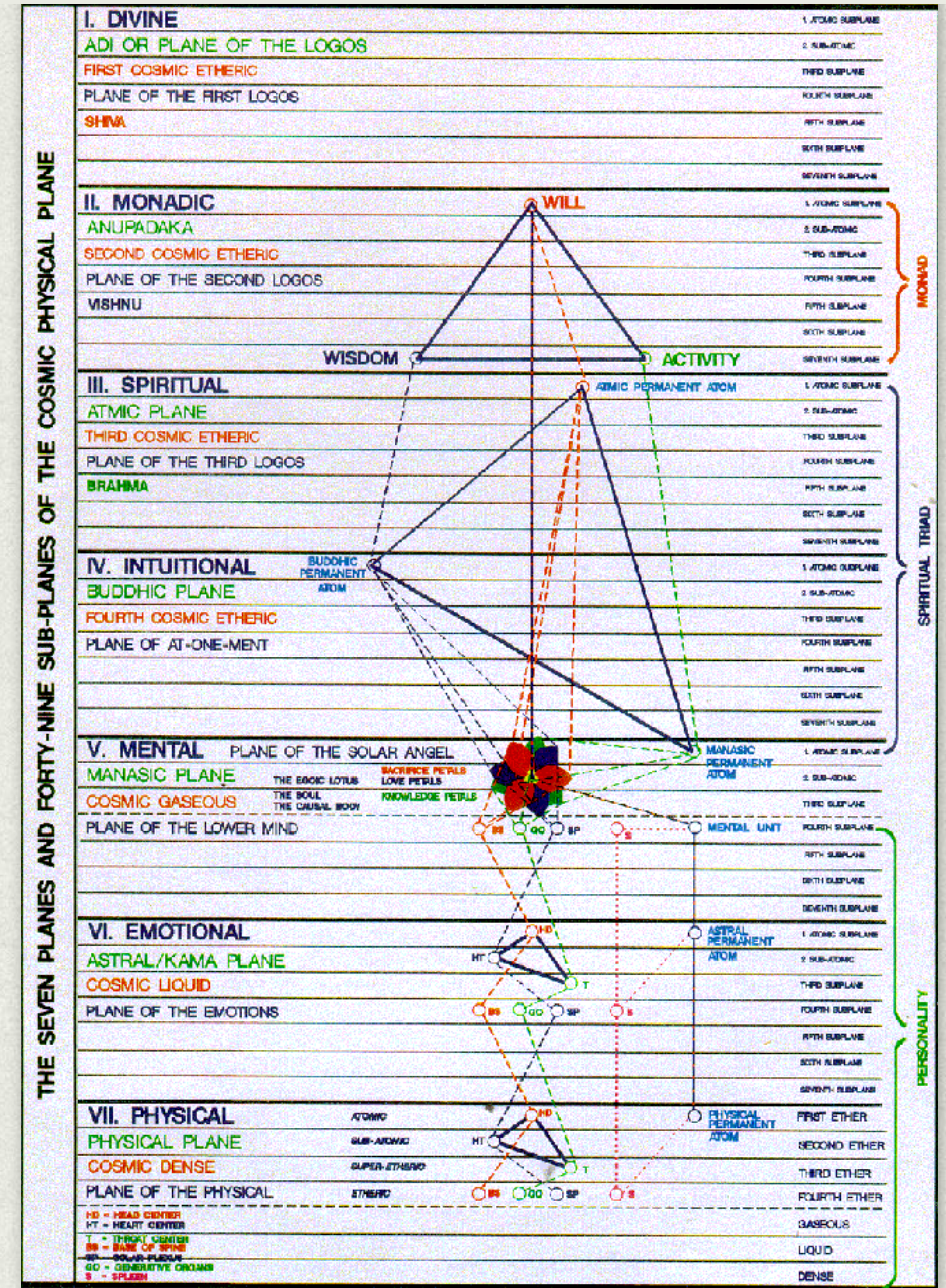
Silver

Ivory and Ebony

Wood

Bronze

Iron



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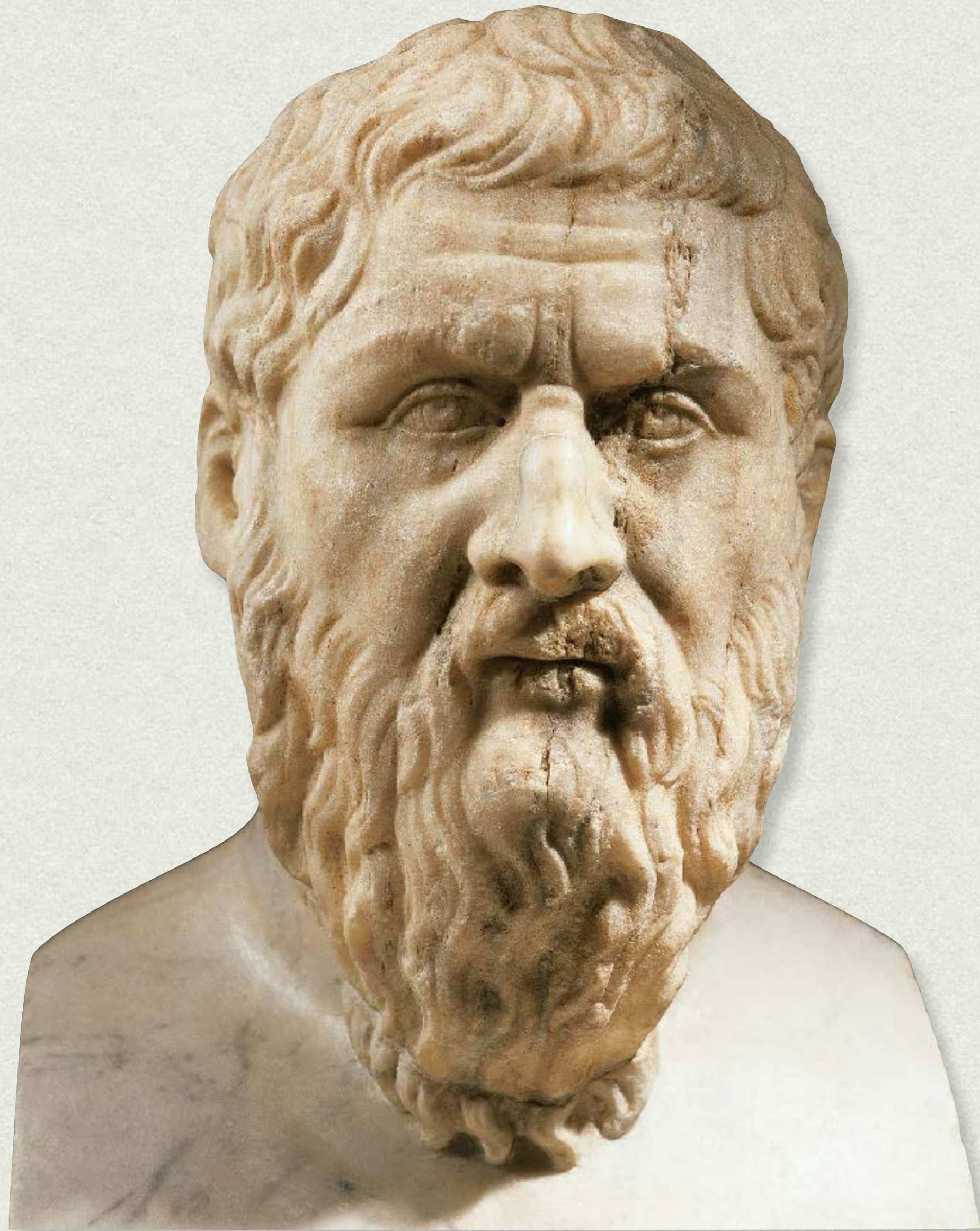
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Plato, marble bust, from an original of the 4th century BCE

The doctrine of Plato was epoch-making in the history of human genius, but it was not his own invention, for, realizing that there is no truth apart from religion, he went to consult the priests of Memphis and to obtain initiation into their Mysteries. In Egypt, however, his initiation could have been imperfect only, for the priests by that time had themselves forgotten the import of their primeval hieroglyphics, as is indicated by the history of that priest who spent three days in deciphering a hieratic inscription found in the tomb of *Alcmene* and sent by *Agesilaus*, King of Sparta. *Cornuphis*, who was doubtless the most learned among the hierophants, consulted the old collections of signs and characters;

in the end he found that the inscription was in the script of *proteus* being the Grecian name of the *Book of Thoth*, consisting of movable hieroglyphics, capable of variations as numerous as there are possible combinations of characters, numbers and elementary figures. But the *Book of Thoth*, being the key of oracles and the elementary work on science, should not have involved such long research before its signs were identified, if *Cornuphis* had been really proficient in the Sacerdotal Art.

Another proof that primeval truths were obscured at this period is the fact that the oracles which registered their protest on the subject were in a style that was understood no longer.  
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Tarot de  
Aleister  
Crowley

1942



I Le Magicien



II La Sacrificatrice



III L'Impératrice



IV L'Empereur



V Le Prêtre



VI Les Amoureux



VII Le Chariot



VIII L'Érémite



IX La Roue de la Fortune



X La Justice



XI La Force



XII Le Soleil



XIII La Lune



XIV La Tour



XV L'Étoile



XVI Le Diable



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XX Le Jugement



XXI Le Monde



XXII La Terre

Illustrado  
por Lady  
Frieda  
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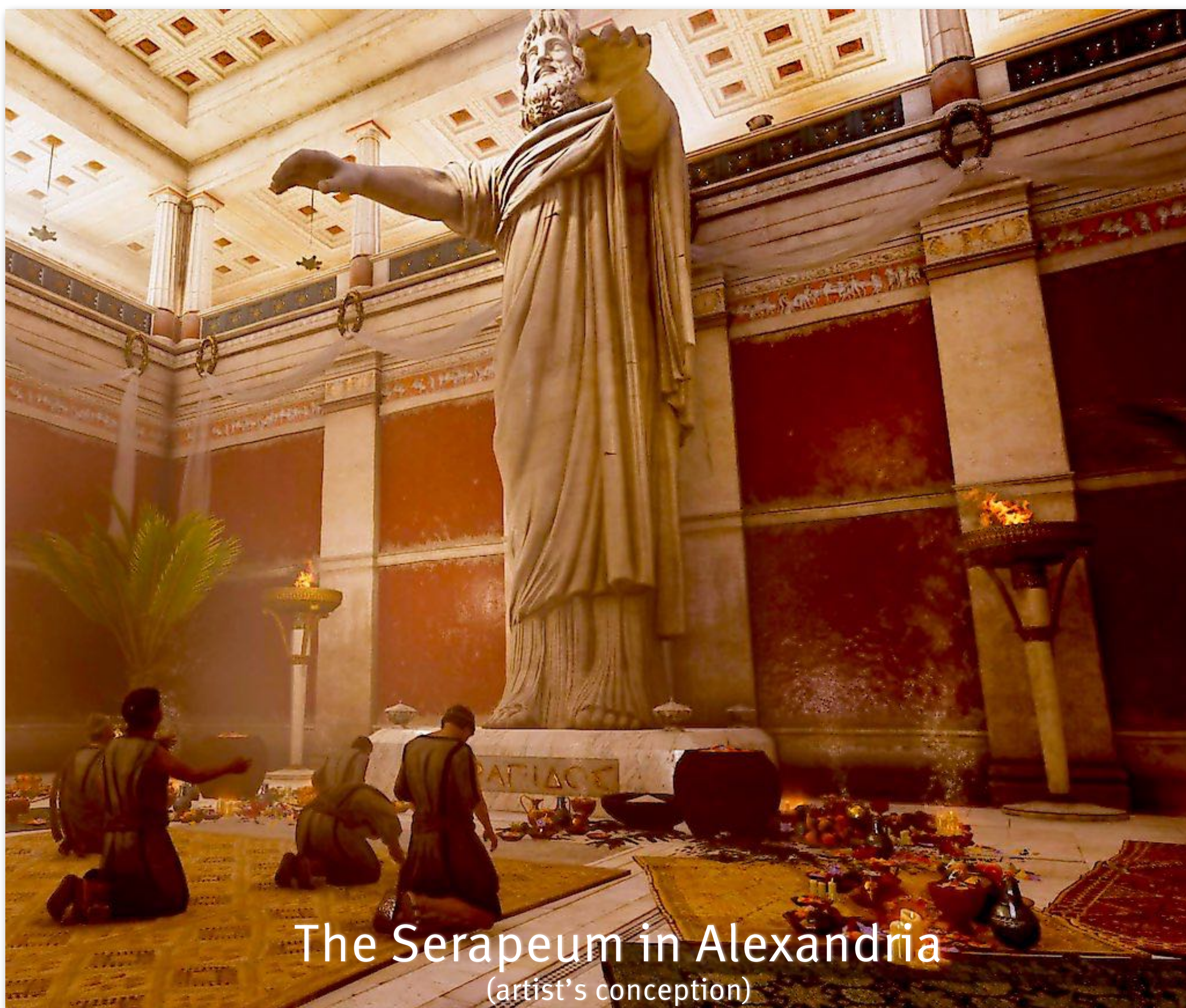
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The Serapeum in Alexandria  
(artist's conception)

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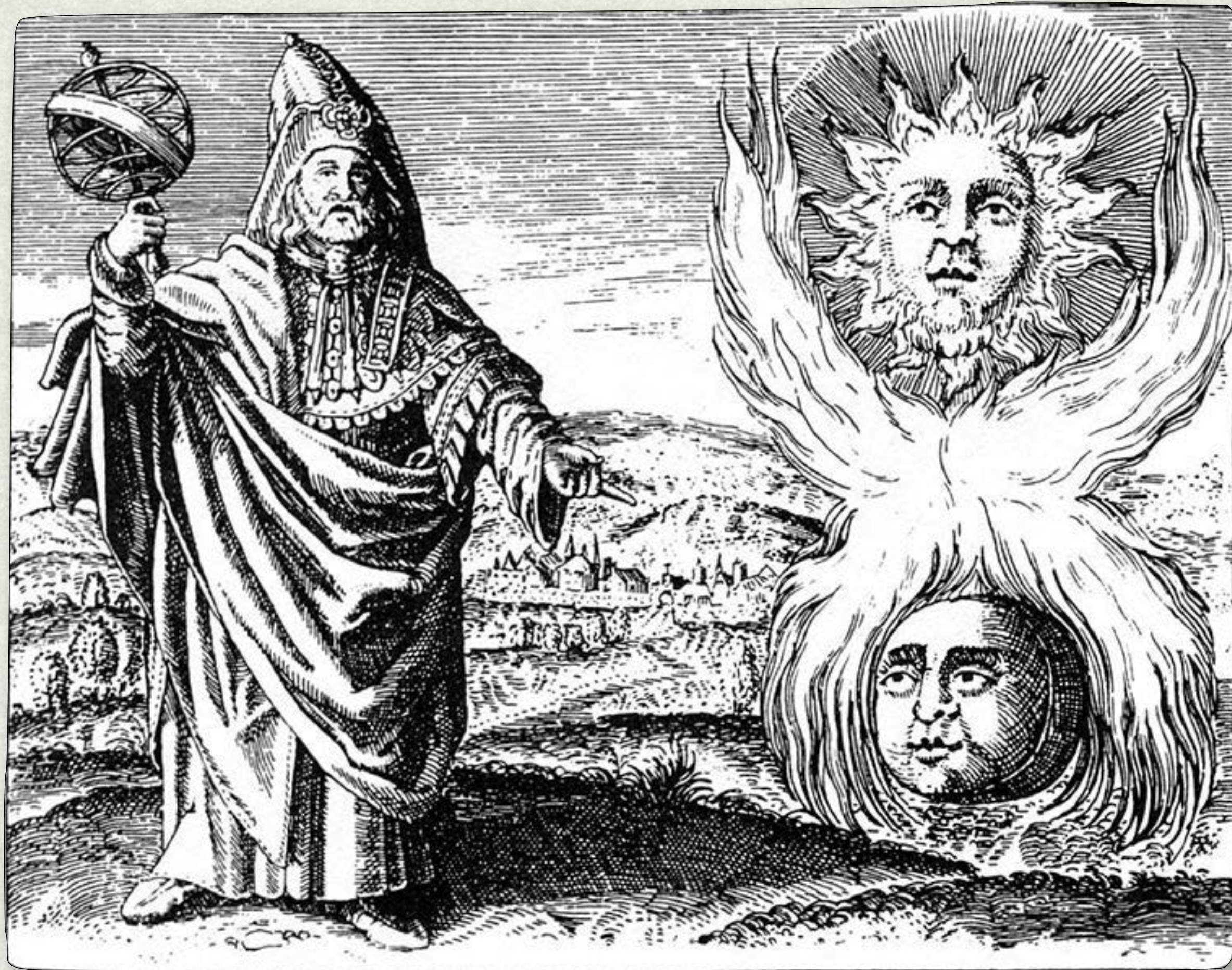


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Hermes Trismegistus and the Divine Pymander

The “very old Book” is the original work from which the many volumes of Kiu-ti were compiled. Not only this latter and the *Siphrah Dzeniouta* but even the *Sepher Jezirah*, the work attributed by the Hebrew Kabalists to their Patriarch Abraham (!), the book of *Shu-king*, China’s primitive Bible, the sacred volumes of the Egyptian Thoth- Hermes, the *Purânas* in India, and the Chaldean Book of Numbers and the Pentateuch itself, are all derived from that one small parent volume. Tradition says, that it was taken down

in Senzar, the secret sacerdotal tongue, from the words of the Divine Beings, who dictated it to the sons of Light, in Central Asia, at the very beginning of the 5th (our) race; for there was a time when its language (the Sen-zar) was known to the Initiates of every nation, when the forefathers of the Toltec understood it as easily as the inhabitants of the lost Atlantis, who inherited it, in their turn, from the sages of the 3rd Race, the Manushis, who learnt it direct from the Devas of the 2nd and 1st Races. –SD1:xlili

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It has been asserted that the *Book of Thoth* is, in reality, the mysterious *Tarot* of the Bohemians—a strange emblematic book of seventy-eight leaves which has been in possession of the gypsies since the time when they were driven from their ancient temple, the Serapeum. (According to the Secret Histories the gypsies were originally Egyptian priests.) There are now in the world several secret schools privileged to initiate candidates into the Mysteries, but in nearly every instance they lighted their altar fires from the flaming torch of *Herm*. Hermes in his *Book of Thoth* revealed to all mankind the "One Way," and for ages the wise of every nation and every faith have reached immortality by the "Way" established by Hermes in the midst of the darkness for the redemption of humankind.

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THE  
D I V I N E  
P Y M A N D E R

O F

*Hermes Mercurius Trismegistus,*  
In XVII. BOOKS.

Translated formerly out  
of the *Arabick* into *Greek*, and  
thence into *Latine*, and *Dutch*,  
and now out of the Original  
into *English*;

By that Learned Divine  
Doctor *Everard*.

London, Printed by *Robert White*,  
for *Tho. Brewster*, and *Greg. Moule*,  
at the Three Bibles in the *Poul-*  
*trey*, under *Mildreds*  
Church. 1650.

JUDICIOUS READER,

This Book may justly challenge  
the first place for antiquity, from  
all the Books in the World, being  
written some hundreds of years  
before Moses' time, as I shall  
endeavour to make good.

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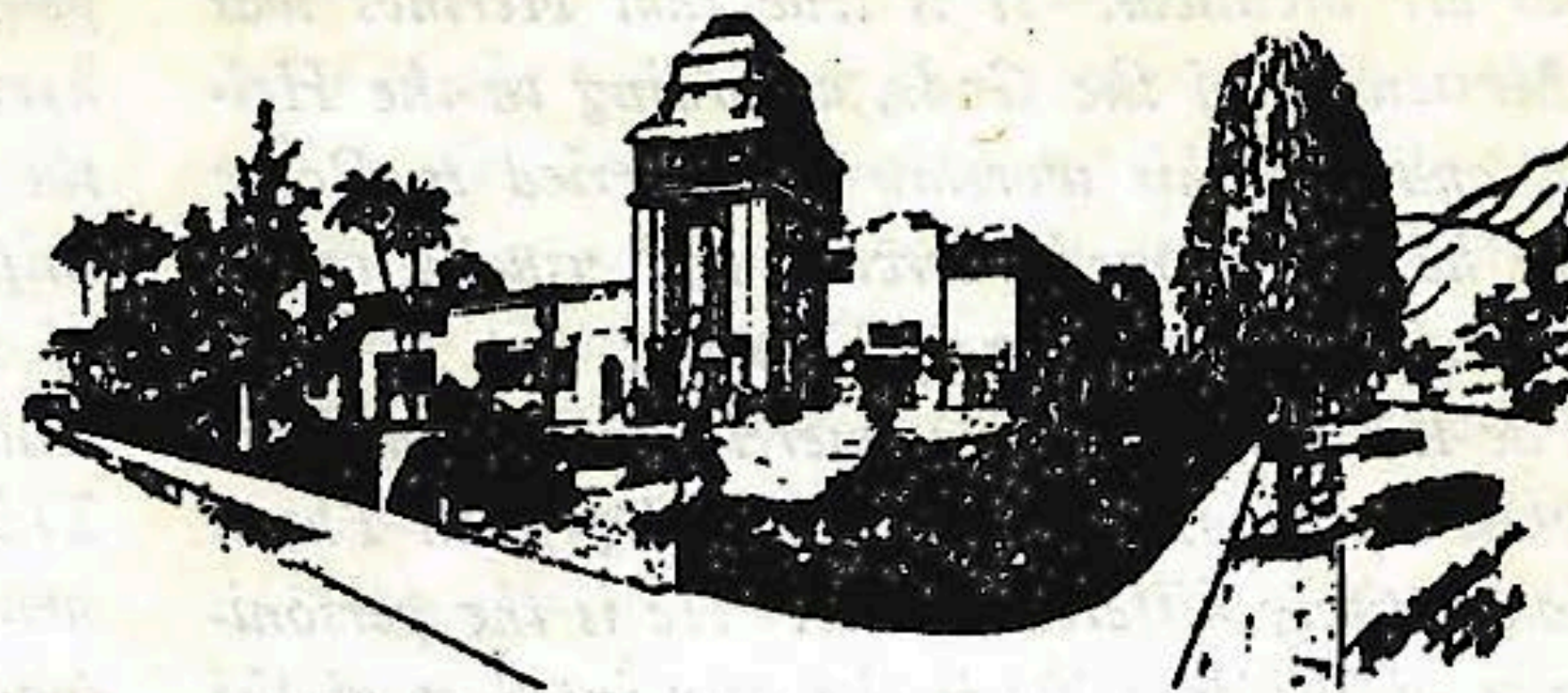
MYSTERIES OF THE UNKNOWN

## Ancient Wisdom and Secret Sects



Scholars point out that little in the text is truly original. In fact, much of the Hermetic world view is grounded in the philosophy of Plato.

A



MONTHLY LETTER

*Devoted to Spiritual and Philosophical Problems -- by Manly P. Hall*

*Los Angeles, April, 1937.*

**HERMES TRISMEGISTUS**

The Hermetic books now known are probably only late versions of older writings. The DIVINE PYMANDER, which is the most important of the Hermetic fragments, does not seem to have been known earlier than the second century, A.D. This has led to the belief that the Hermetic books were actually written

after the beginning of the Christian era by a scholar or a group of scholars, profoundly versed in ancient lore and tradition. It seems to me, however, that there is a deep inspirational quiddity [inherent nature or essence] about these writings which suggests a high and sacred origin. They are too noble intrinsically to

be the production of ordinary mortals. It seems more likely that the older works were fading from the memory of man, and an effort was made to preserve this memory and save the old wisdom from disappearing entirely under the pressure of early Christian proselyting. -MPH's *Monthly Letter*, April, 1937, p.4

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One of the greatest tragedies of the philosophic world was the loss of nearly all of the forty-two books of Hermes mentioned in the foregoing. These books disappeared during the burning of Alexandria, for the Romans—and later the Christians—realized that until these books were eliminated they could never bring the Egyptians into subjection. The volumes which escaped the fire were buried in the desert and their location is now known to only a few initiates of the secret schools.

#### THE BOOK OF THOTH

While Hermes still walked the earth with men, he entrusted to his chosen successors the sacred *Book of Thoth*. This work contained the secret processes by which the regeneration of humanity was to be accomplished and also served as the key to his other writings. Nothing definite is known concerning the contents of the *Book of Thoth* other than that its pages were covered with strange hieroglyphic figures and symbols, which gave to those acquainted with their use unlimited power over the spirits of the air and the subterranean divinities. When certain areas of the brain are stimulated by the secret processes of the Mysteries, the consciousness of man is extended and he is permitted to behold the Immortals and enter into the presence of the superior gods. The *Book of Thoth* described the method whereby this stimulation was accomplished. In truth, therefore, it was the "Key to Immortality."

According to legend, the *Book of Thoth* was kept in a golden box in the inner sanctuary of the temple. There was but one key and this was in the possession of the "Master of the Mysteries," the highest initiate of the Hermetic Arcanum. He alone knew what was written in the secret book. The *Book of Thoth* was lost to the ancient world with the decay of the Mysteries, but its faithful initiates carried it sealed in the sacred casket into another land. The book is still in existence and continues to lead the disciples of this age into the presence of the Immortals. No other information can be given to the world concerning it now, but the apostolic succession from the first hierophant initiated by Hermes himself remains unbroken to this day, and those who are peculiarly fitted to serve the Immortals may discover this priceless document if they will search sincerely and tirelessly for it.

It has been asserted that the *Book of Thoth* is, in reality, the mysterious *Tarot* of the Bohemians—a strange emblematic book of seventy-eight leaves which has been in possession of the gypsies since the time when they were driven from their ancient temple, the Serapeum. (According to the Secret Histories the gypsies were originally Egyptian priests.) There are now in the world several secret schools privileged to initiate candidates into the Mysteries, but in nearly every instance they lighted their altar fires from the flaming torch of *Herm*. Hermes in his *Book of Thoth* revealed to all mankind the "One Way," and for ages the wise of every nation and every faith have reached immortality by the "Way" established by Hermes in the midst of the darkness for the redemption of humankind.

#### POIMANDRES, THE VISION OF HERMES

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Immediately the form of *Poimandres* changed. Where it had stood there was a glorious and pulsating Radiance. This Light was the spiritual nature of the Great Dragon itself. Hermes was "raised" into the midst of this Divine Effulgence and the universe of material things faded from his consciousness. Presently a great darkness descended and, expanding, swallowed up the Light. Everything was troubled. Above Hermes swirled a mysterious watery substance which gave forth a smokelike vapor. The air was filled with inarticulate moanings and sighings which seemed to come from the Light swallowed up in the darkness. His mind told Hermes that



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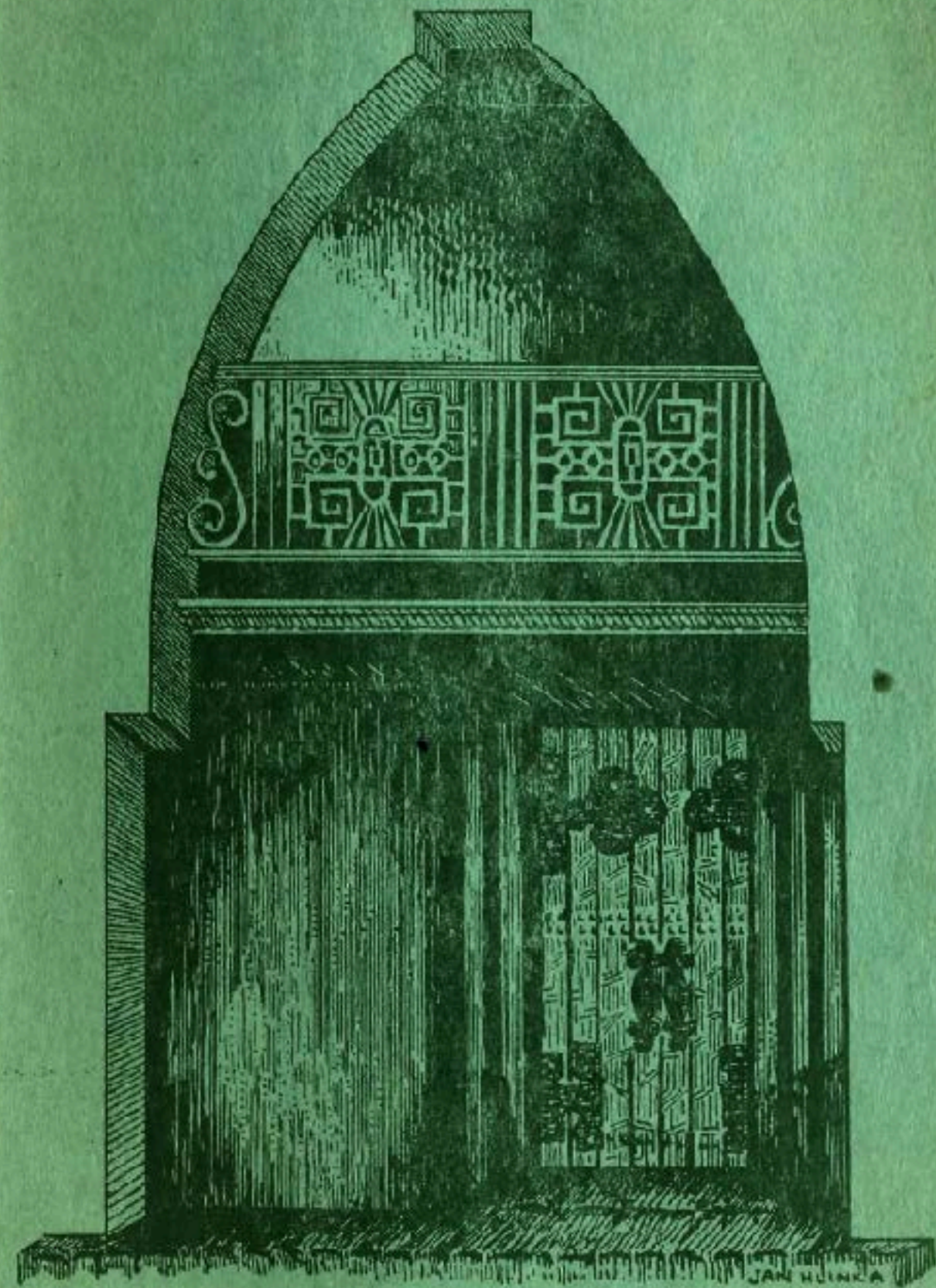
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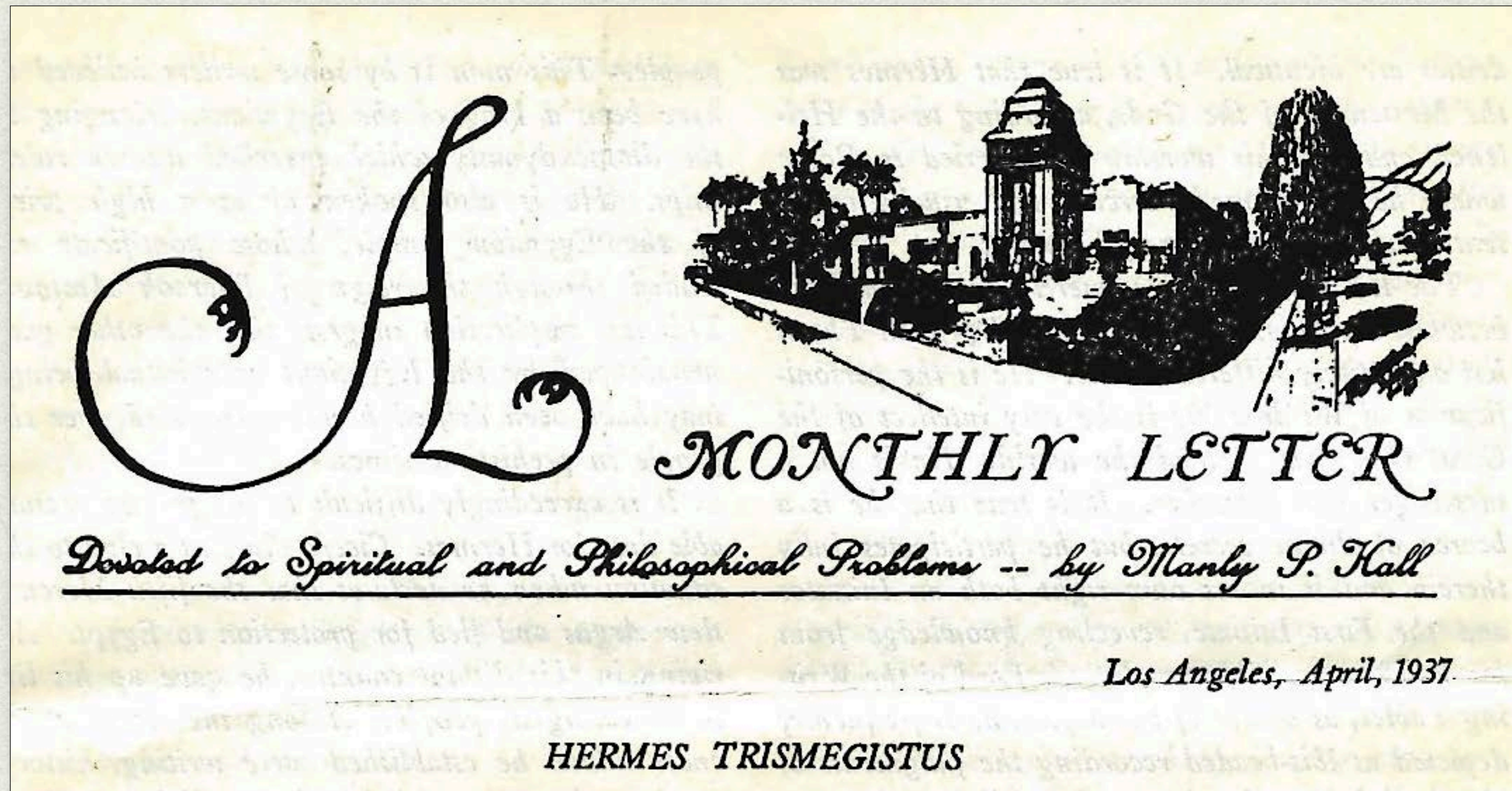
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"And the Governors bowed down to the Man who had been fashioned, the metaphysical Man who had no body but was all soul. And each of the Governors bestowed upon the Man one of His qualities so that He gained inwardly seven natures, which were gifts of the Gods of the Seven Worlds.

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illustration from the 1728 Figures de la Bible;  
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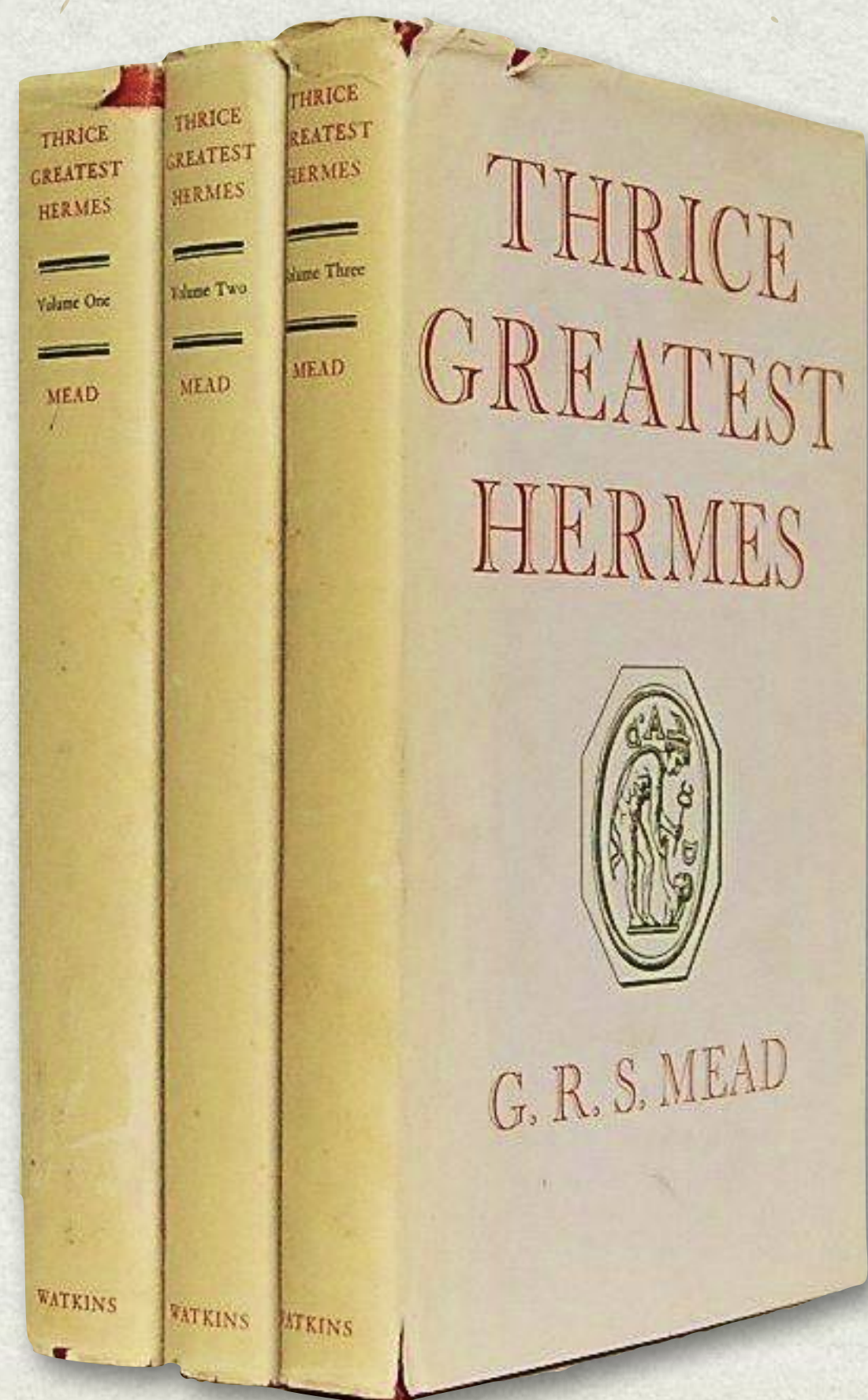
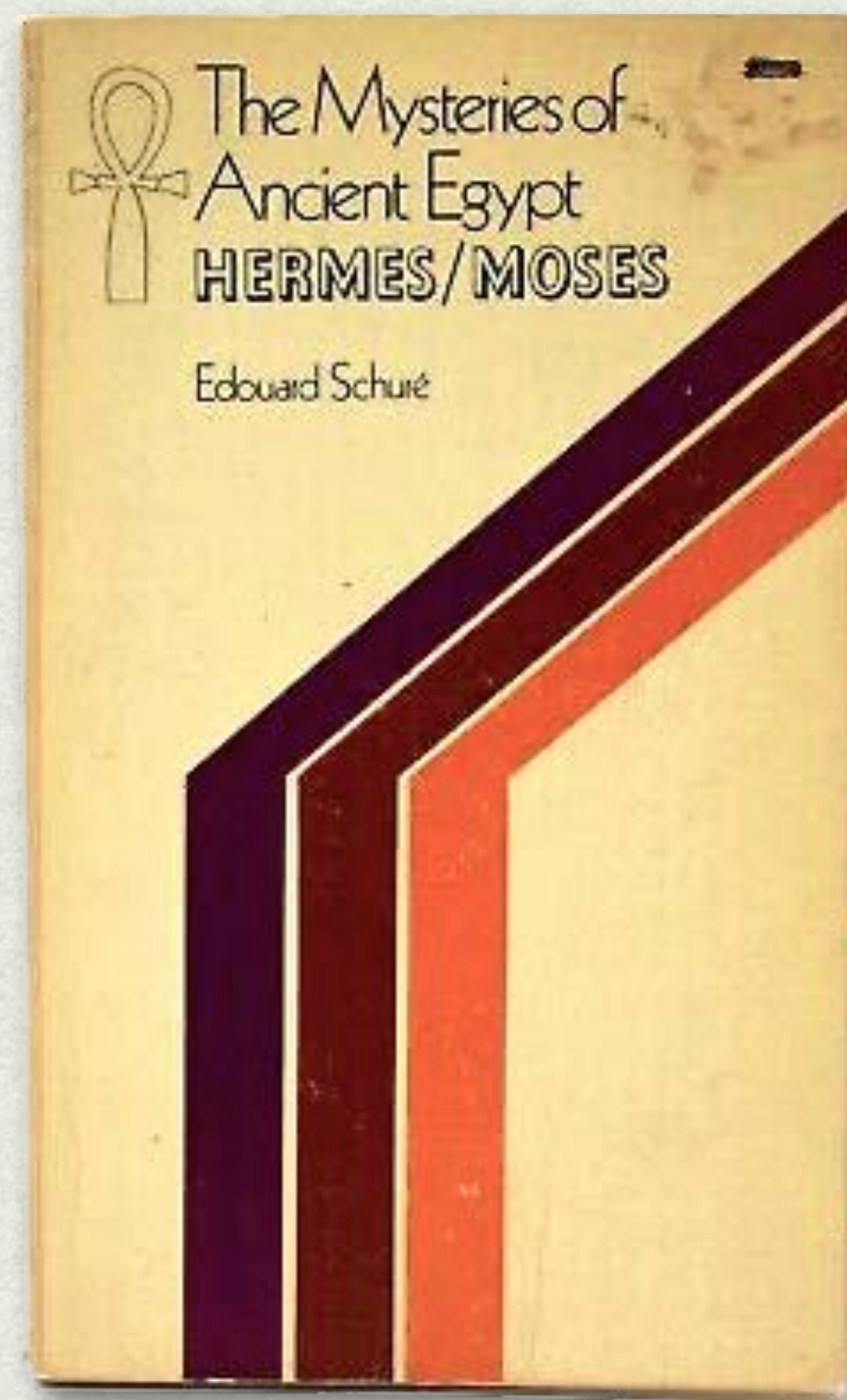
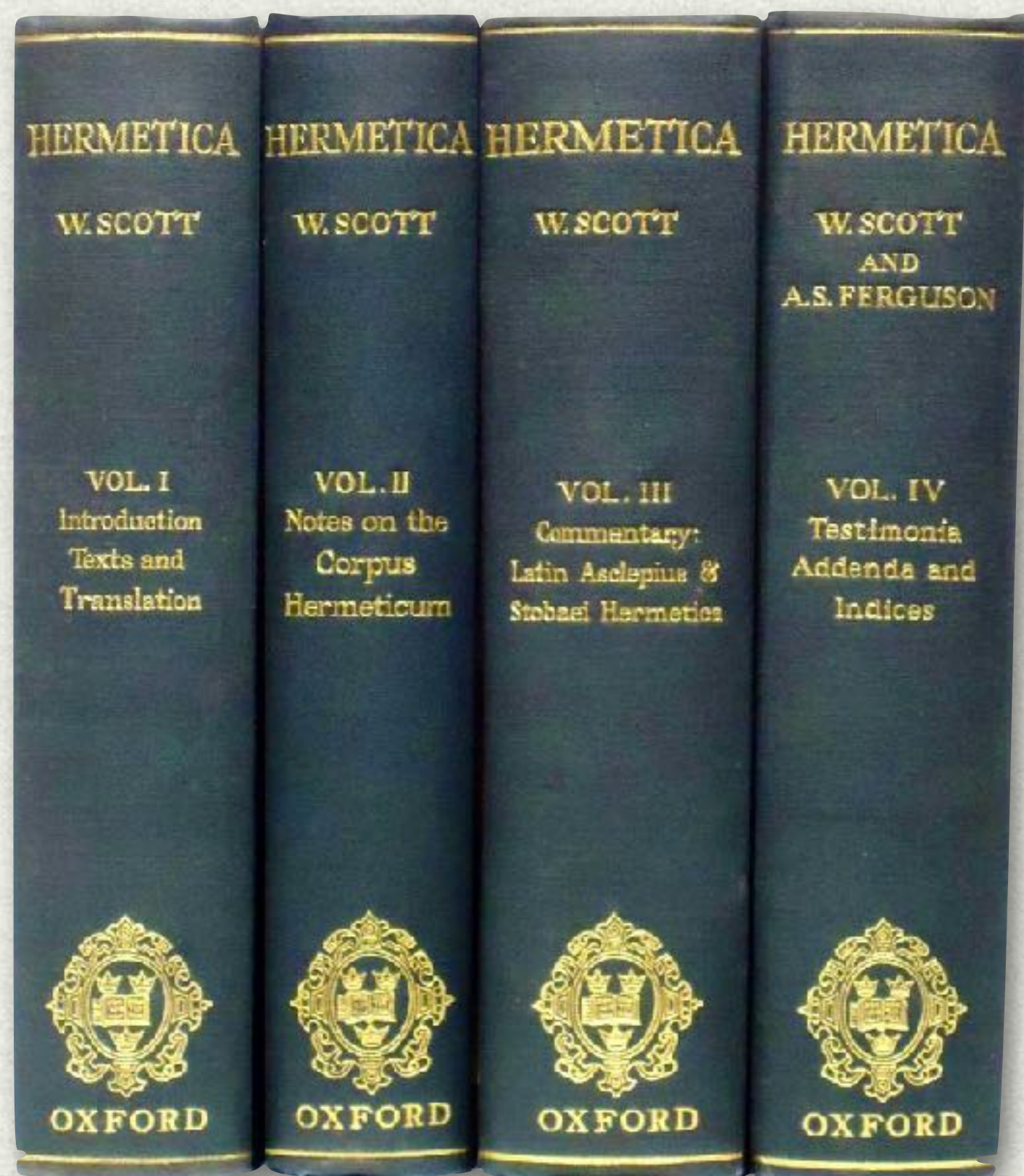
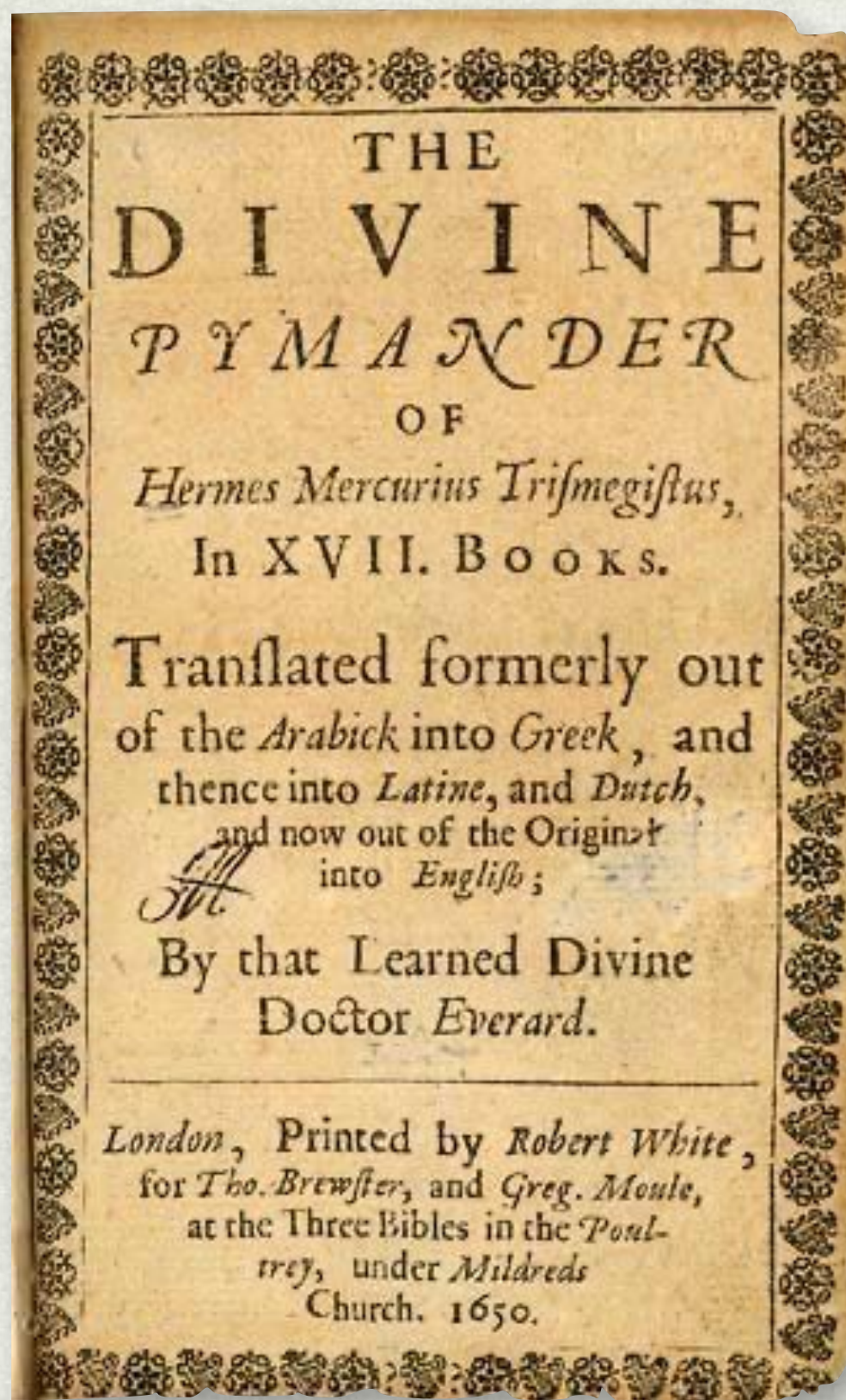


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THE  
DIVINE  
PYMANDER

OF  
*Hermes Mercurius Trismegistus,*  
In XVII. BOOKS.

Translated formerly out  
of the *Arabick* into *Greek*, and  
thence into *Latine*, and *Dutch*,  
and now out of the Original  
into *English*;

By that Learned Divine  
Doctor *Everard*.

London, Printed by *Robert White*,  
for *Tho. Brewster*, and *Greg. Moule*,  
at the Three Bibles in the *Poul-*  
*trej*, under *Mildreds*  
Church. 1650.

1. My Understanding lifted up, all my bodily Senses being exceedingly holden back, as it is with them that are very heavy of sleep, by reason either of fulness of meat, or of bodily labour. Me thought I saw one of an exceeding great stature, and an infinite greatness call me by my name, and say unto me, "What wouldest thou Hear and See? or what wouldest thou Understand, to Learn, and Know!"

2. Then said I, "Who art Thou?"

"I am," quoth he,  
"Poemander, the mind of the Great Lord, the most

Mighty and absolute Emperor: I know what thou wouldest have, and I am always present with thee."

3. Then said I, "I would Learn the Things that art, and Understand the Nature of them and know God."

"How?" said he. I answered, "That I would gladly hear." Then he, "Have me again in thy mind, and whatsoever thou wouldest learn, I will teach thee."

4. When he had thus said, he was changed in his Idea or Form and straightway in the twinkling of an eye, all things were opened unto me: and I saw an infinite Sight, all things were

become light, both sweet and exceedingly pleasant; and I was wonderfully delighted in the beholding it.

5. But after a little while, there was a darkness made in part, coming down obliquely, fearful and hideous, which seemed unto me to be changed into a Certain Moist Nature, unspeakably troubled, which yielded a smoke as from fire; and from whence proceeded a voice unutterable, and very mournful, but inarticulate, insomuch that it seemed to have come from the Light.  
-The Divine Pymander, Book 2, verses 1-5

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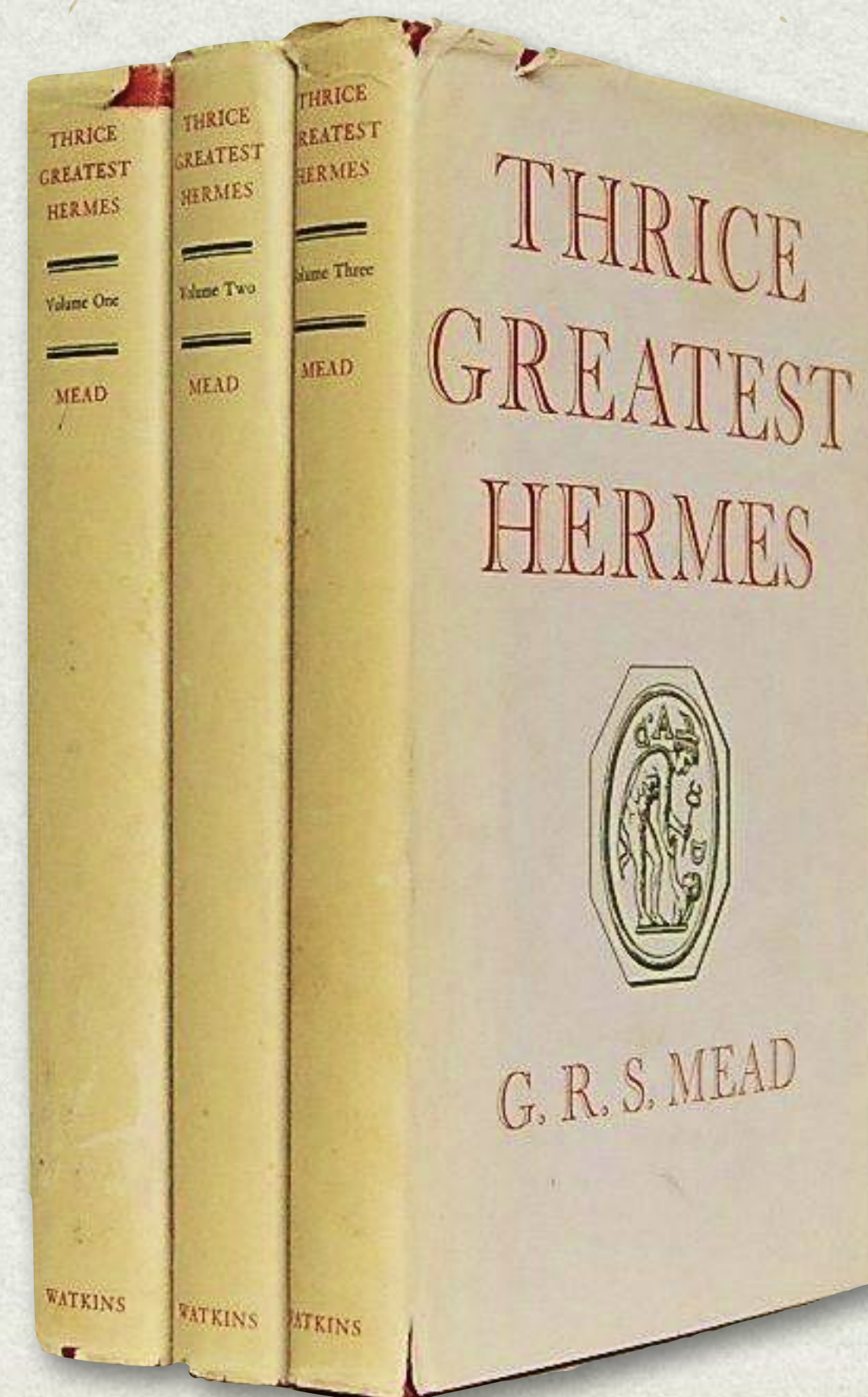
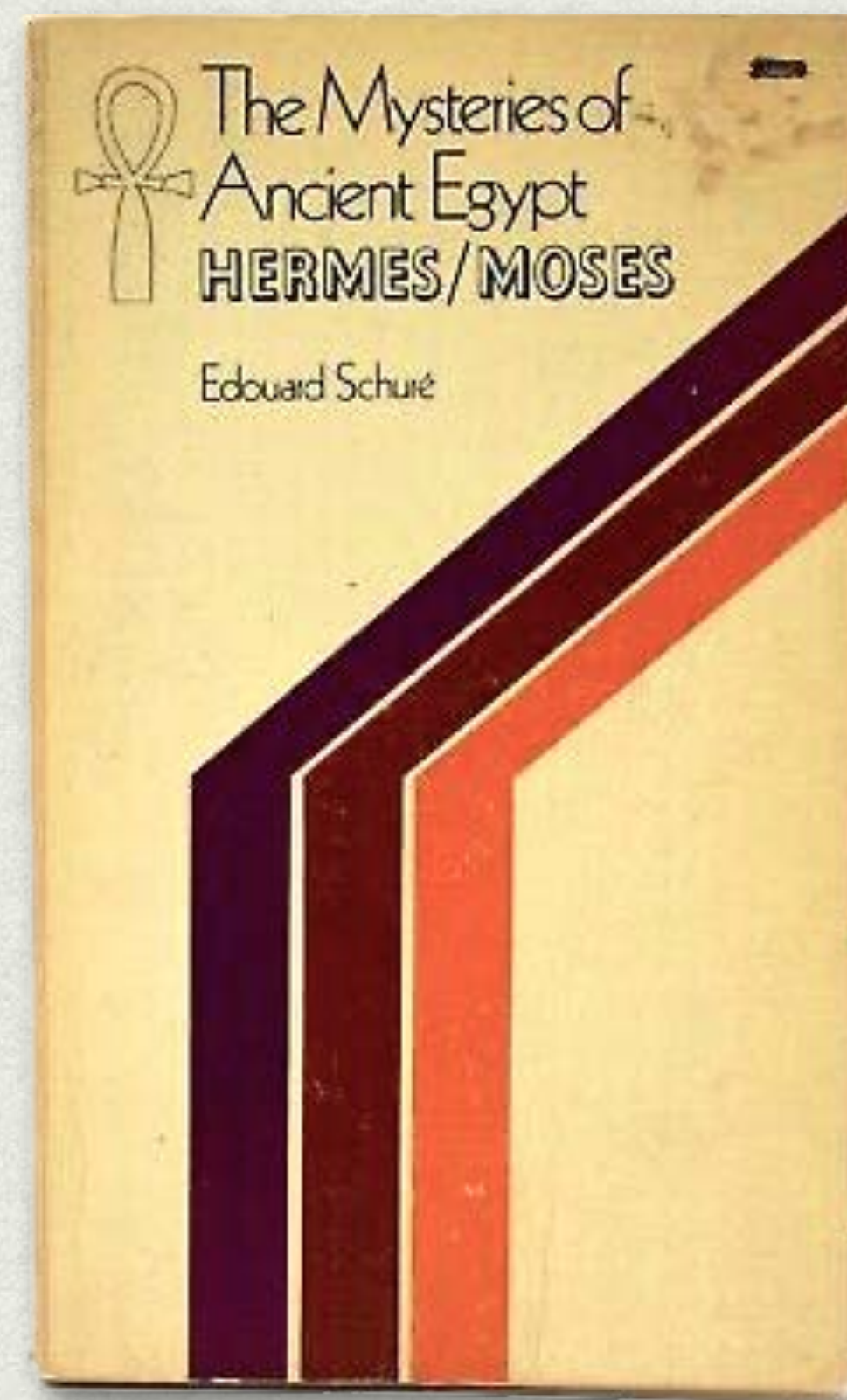
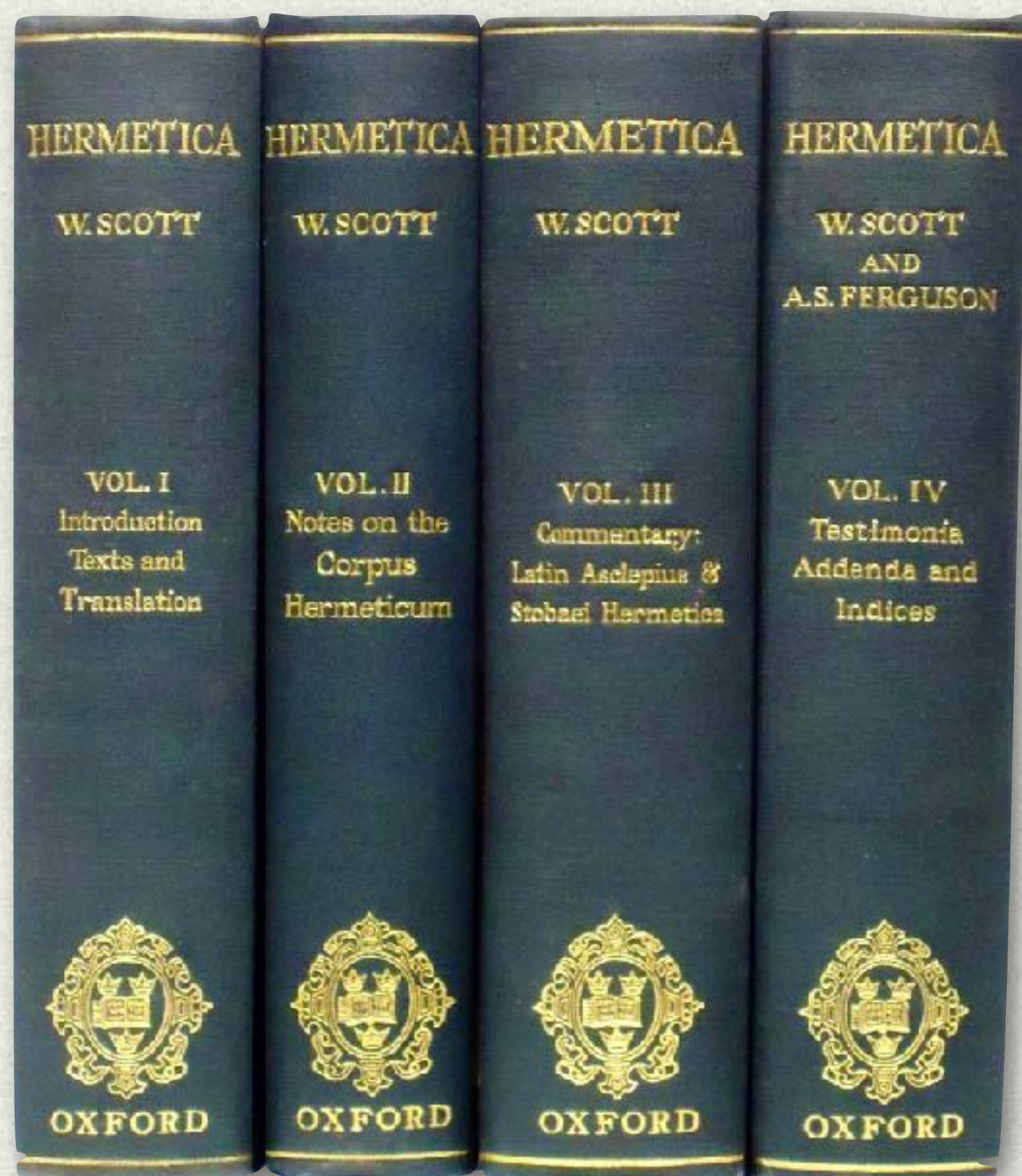
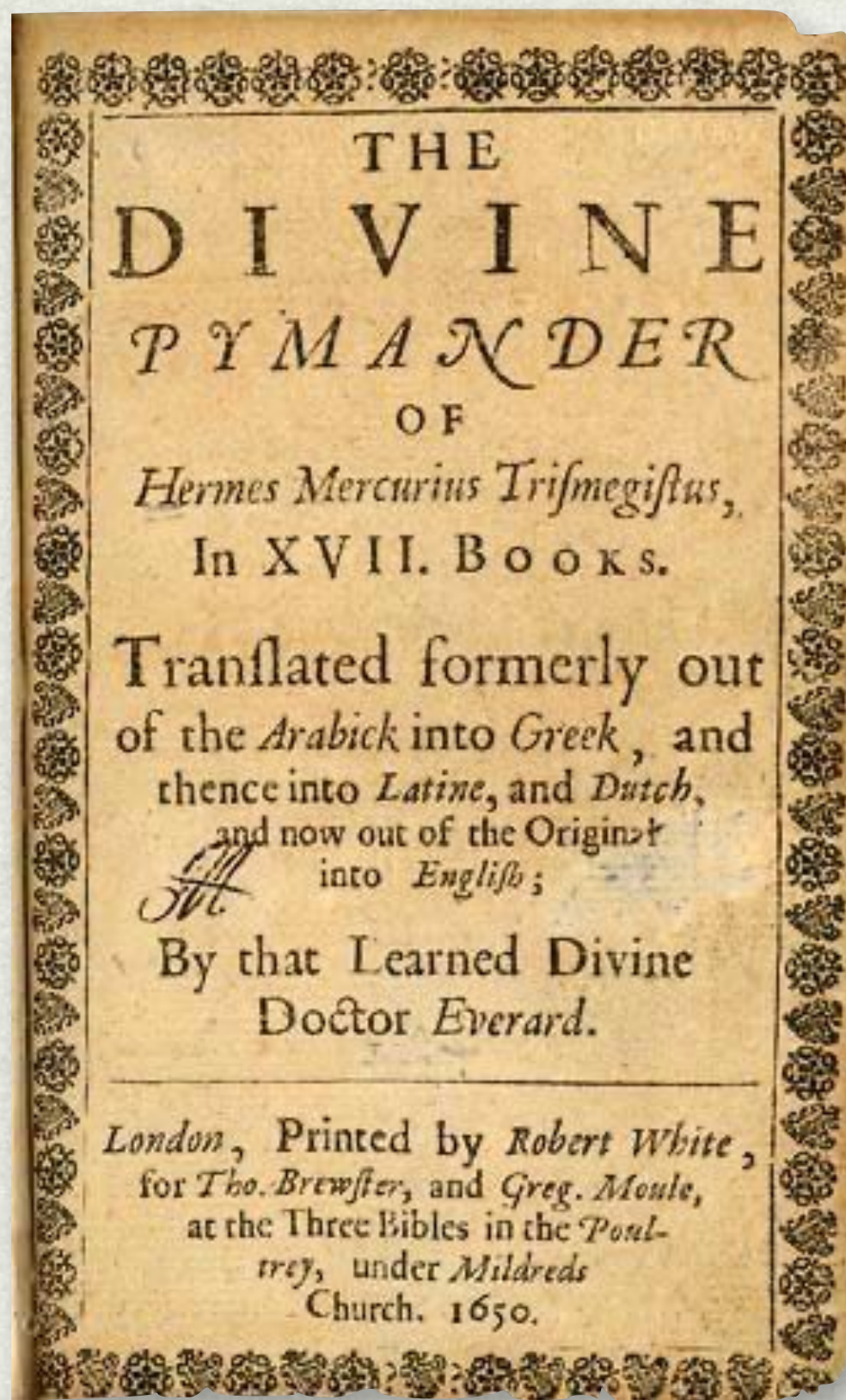
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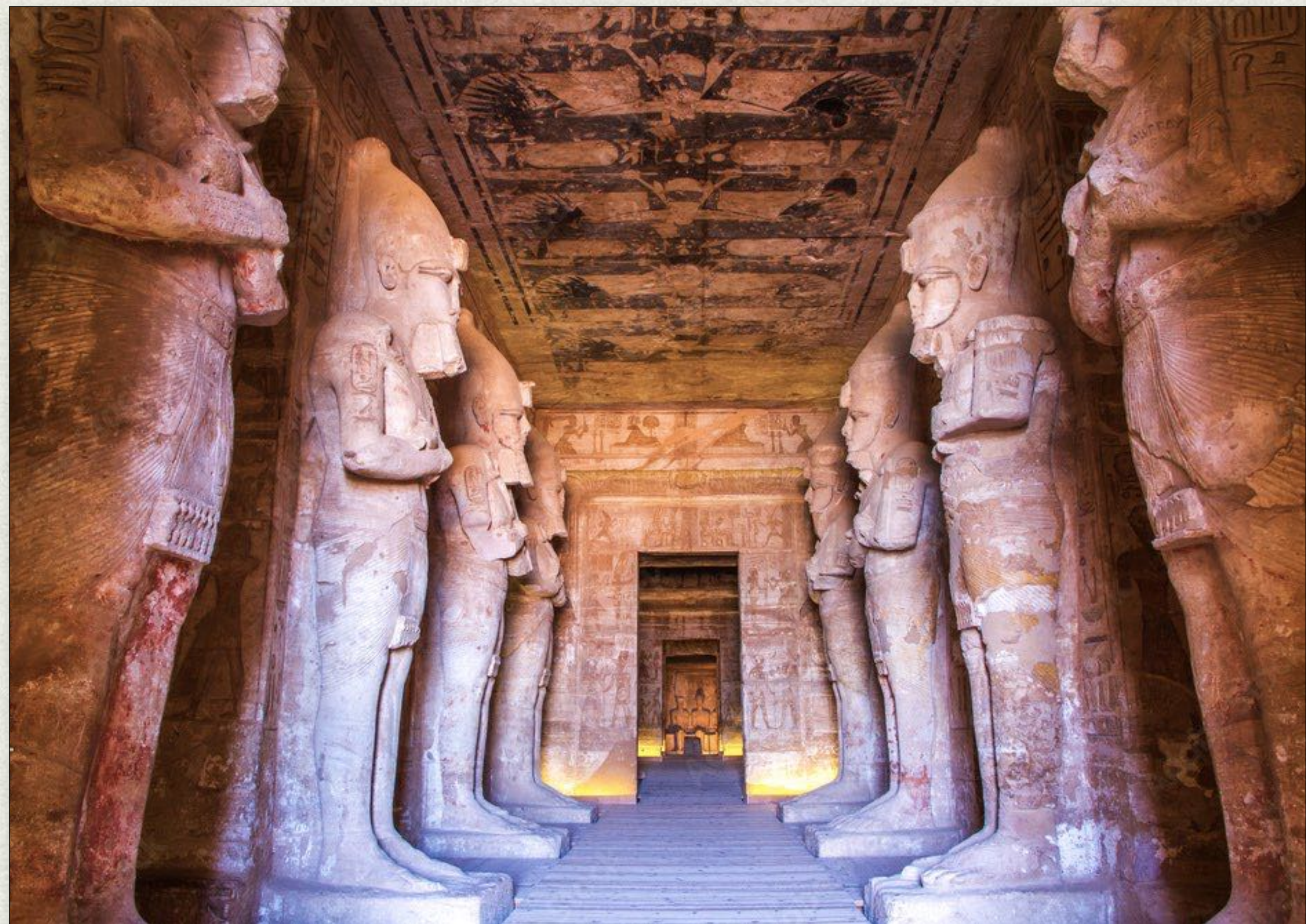
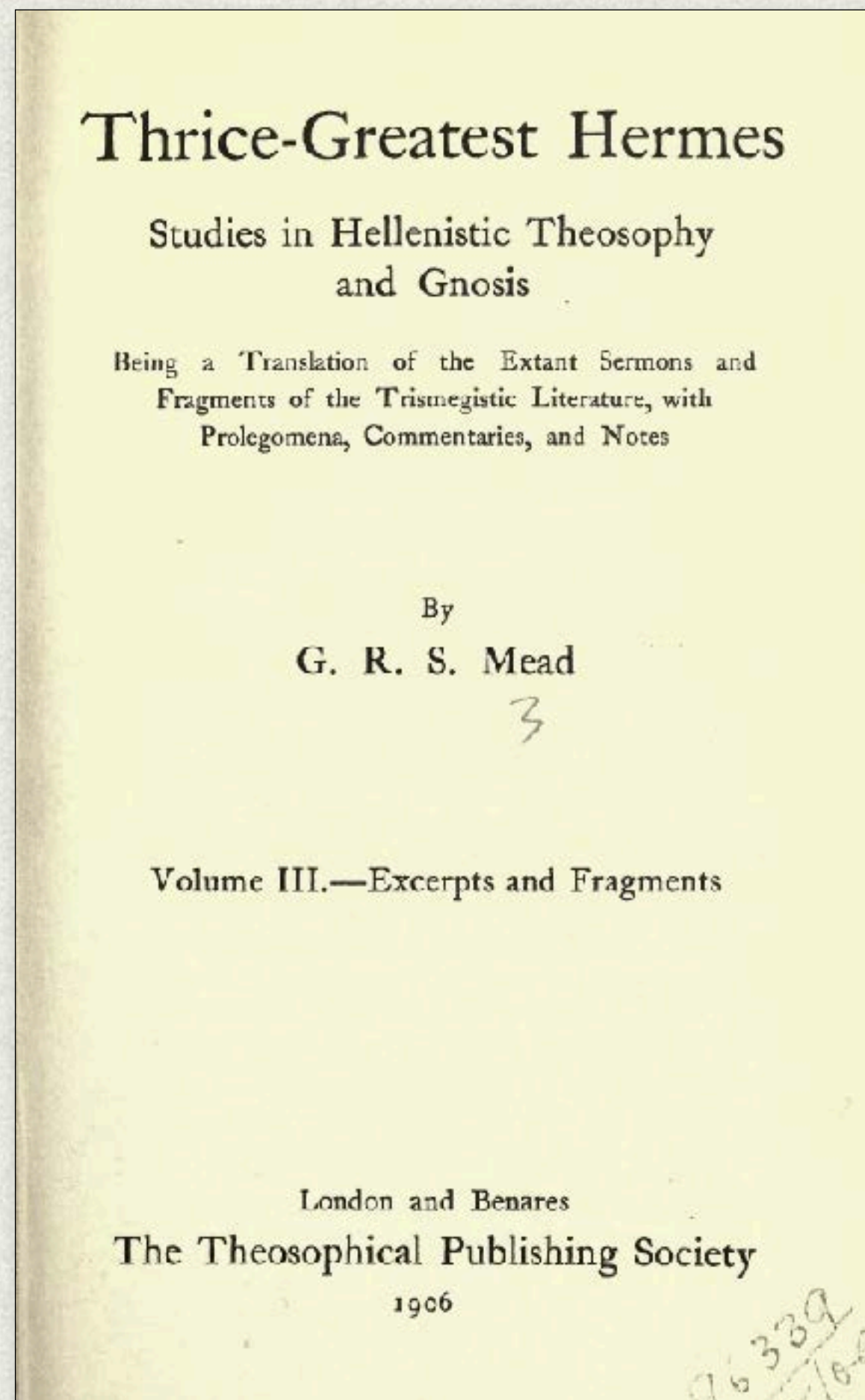


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Ancient bronze dragons carving in the ancient Dragon King Temple along Yangtze River,

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# Thrice-Greatest Hermes

Studies in Hellenistic Theosophy  
and Gnosis

Being a Translation of the Extant Sermons and  
Fragments of the Trismegistic Literature, with  
Prolegomena, Commentaries, and Notes

By  
G. R. S. Mead

Volume I.—Prolegomena

London and Benares  
The Theosophical Publishing Society

1906

"Osiris is the Heavenly Man, the Logos; not only so, but in straitest connection with this tradition, we have an exposition of the Hermes doctrine." —Thrice-Greatest Hermes, v.1, p.13

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