



The Table of Bembine or Mensa Isiaca (detail)





**MORYA FEDERATION**

ESOTERIC SCHOOLS OF MEDITATION, STUDY AND SERVICE

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AN ENCYCLOPEDIC OUTLINE OF  
**Masonic, Hermetic,  
Qabbalistic and Rosicrucian  
Symbolical Philosophy**

*Being an Interpretation of the  
Secret Teachings concealed within the Rituals, Allegories  
and Mysteries of all Ages*

BY  
**MANLY P. HALL**

THE ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOR BY  
J. AUGUSTUS KNAFF

**Subscribers' Edition**



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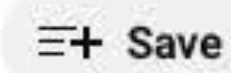
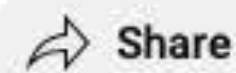
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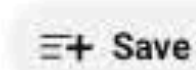
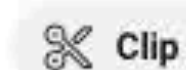
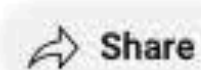


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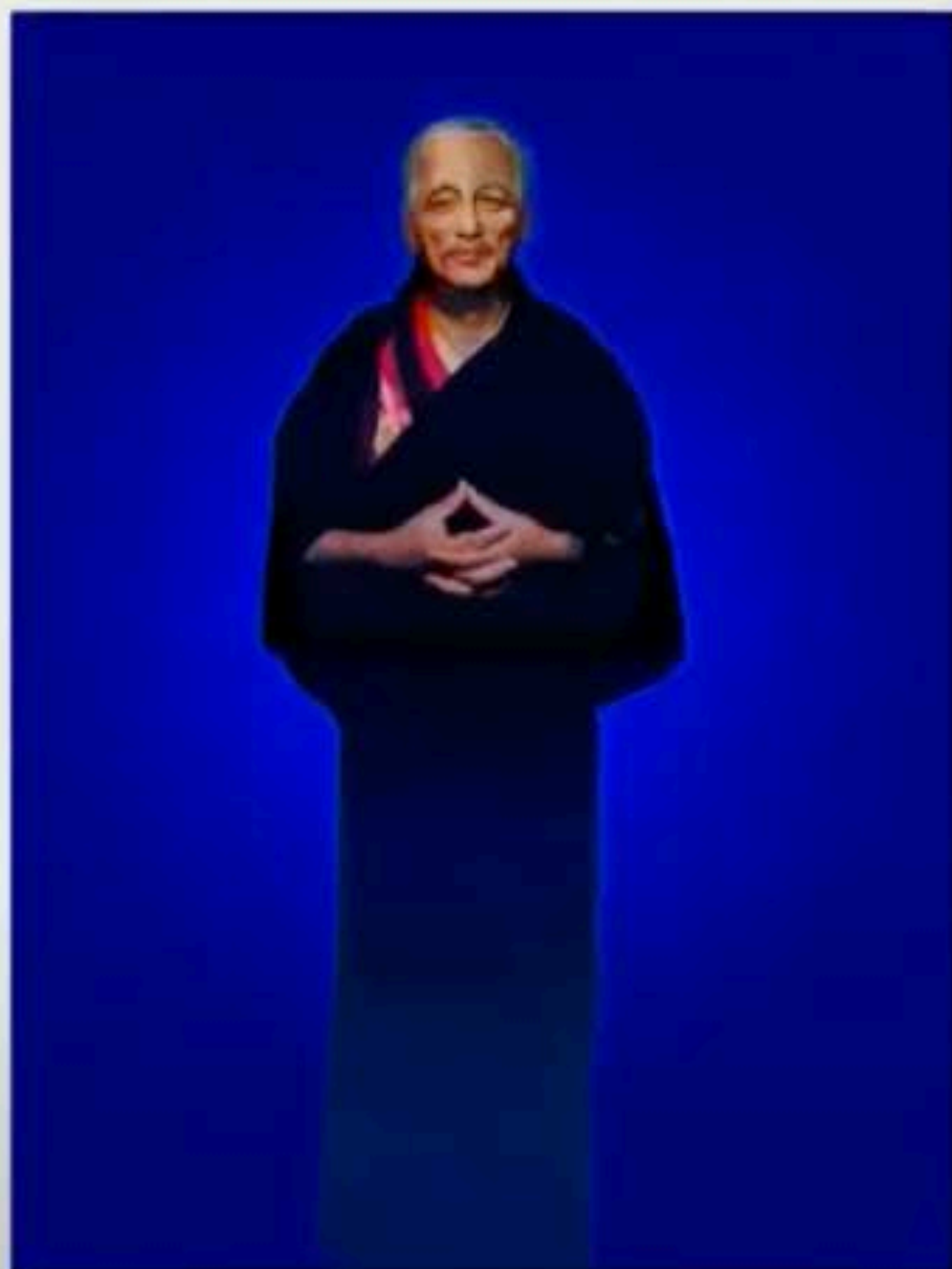


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# A Treatise on Cosmic Fire



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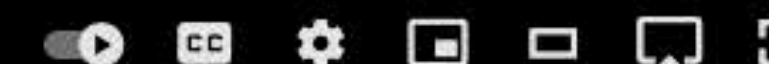
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# A Treatise on Cosmic Fire



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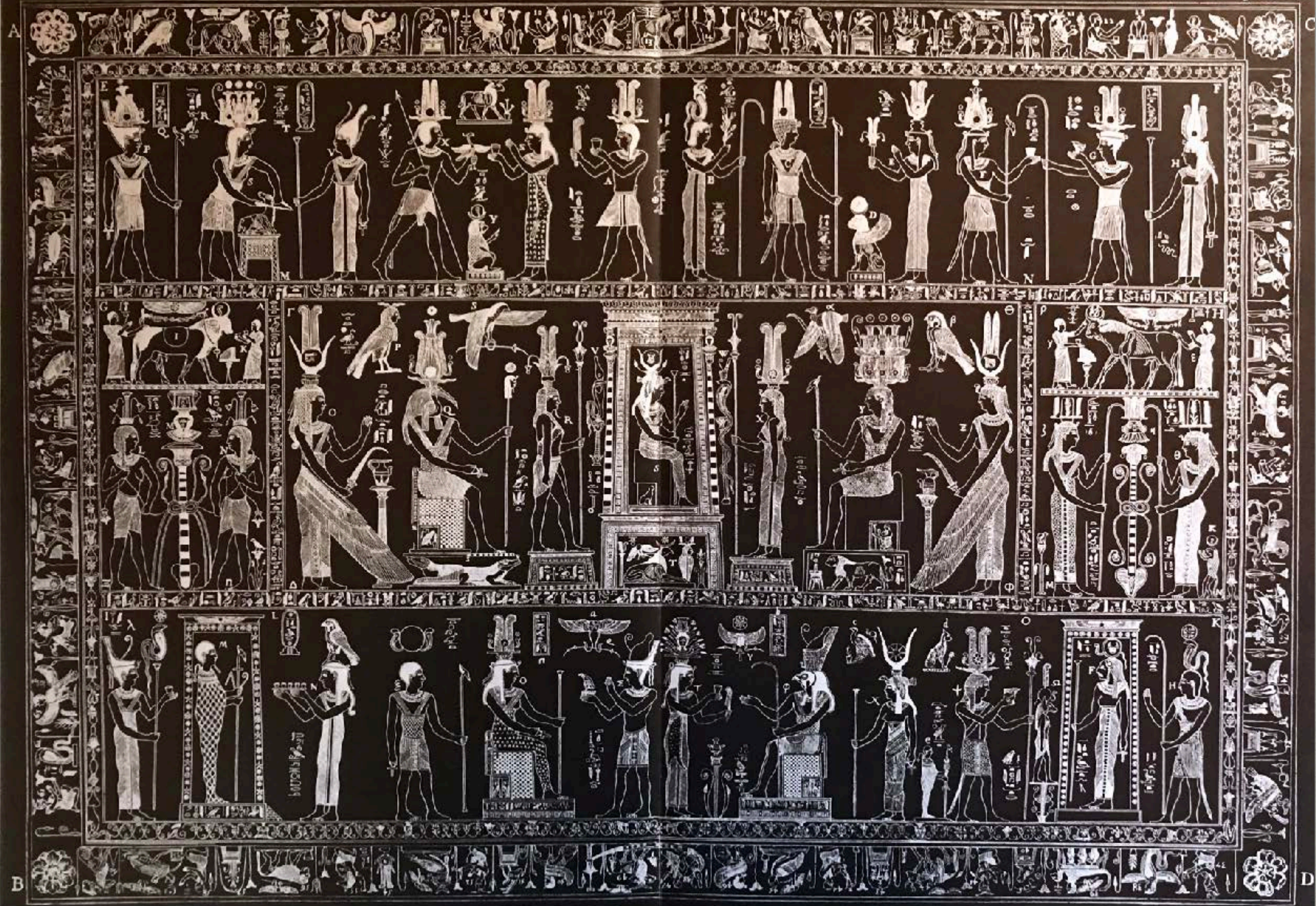
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All individuals who are drawn to spiritual teachings and to a comprehensive program of esoteric [Meditation](#), [Study](#) and [Service](#) are welcome.

Our goal is to help create soul-illuminated servers of humanity—servers inspired by love, spiritual will and spiritual intelligence—who can cooperate in establishing the new culture and civilization of the long-awaited [Age of Aquarius](#).



MENSÆ ISIAE, SIVE TABULÆ AENEÆ VETUSTISSIMÆ, SACRIS ÆGYPTIORVM LITERIS CÆLATÆ VERVS, ET GENVINVS TYPVS, QVAM PRIMVM E MVSEO TORQVATI BEMBI, VNDE ET BEMBINA DICTVR AN. M D LIX. EXTRACTAM AENEAS VICVS PARMENSIS EDIDIT, ATQVE FERD. I. CÆSARI CONSECRAVIT HANC DEINDE IN FORMAM COMMODIOREM CONTRACTAM SERENISSIMO PRINCIPI LEOPOLDO GVILIELMO ARCHIDVCI AVSTRIÆ, SVPREMO BELGII ET BVRGVNDIÆ, GVBERNATORI NECNON MAGNO TEVTONICI ORD. MAGISTRO.



## L VII

### The Bembine Table of Isis

**MANUSCRIPT** by Thomas Taylor contains the following remarkable paragraph: "Plato was initiated into the 'Greater Mysteries' at the age of 49. The initiation took place in one of the subterranean halls of the Great Pyramid in Egypt. The ISIAC TABLE formed the altar, before which the Divine Plato stood and received that which was always his, but which the ceremony of the Mysteries enkindled and brought from its dormant state. With this ascent, after three days in the Great Hall, he was received by the Hierophant of the Pyramid (the Hierophant was seen only by those who had passed the three days, the three degrees, the three dimensions) and given verbally the Highest Esoteric Teachings, each accompanied with its appropriate Symbol. After a further three months' sojourn in the halls of the Pyramid, the Initiate Plato was sent out into the world to do the work of the Great Order, as Pythagoras and Orpheus had done before him."

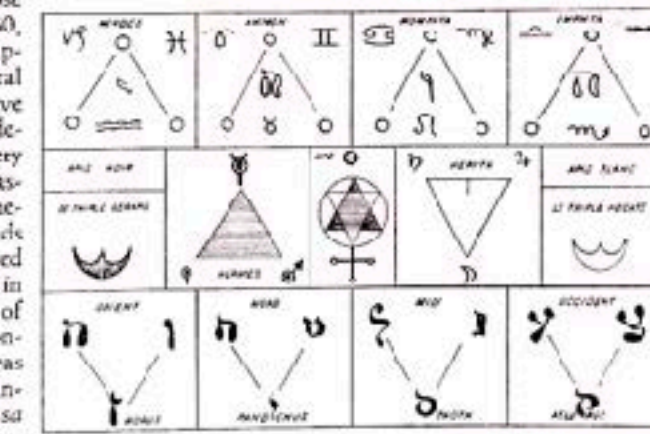
Before the sacking of Rome in 1527 there is no historical mention of the *Mensa Isiaca* (Table of Isis). At that time the Tablet came into the possession of a certain locksmith or ironworker, who sold it at an exorbitant price to Cardinal Bembé, a celebrated antiquary, historiographer of the Republic of Venice, and afterwards librarian of St. Mark's. After his death in 1547 the Tablet was acquired by the House of Mantua, in whose museum it remained until 1630, when troops of Ferdinand II. captured the city of Mantua. Several early writers on the subject have assumed that the Tablet was demolished by the ignorant soldiery for the silver it contained. The assumption, however, was erroneous. The Tablet fell into the hands of Cardinal Pava, who presented it to the Duke of Savoy, who in turn presented it to the King of Sardinia. When the French conquered Italy in 1797 the Tablet was carried to Paris. In 1809, Alexandre Lenoir, writing of the *Mensa Isiaca*, said it was on exhibition at the Bibliothèque Nationale. Upon the establishment of peace between the two countries it was returned to Italy. In his *Guide to Northern Italy*, Karl Baedeker describes the *Mensa Isiaca* as being at the center of the gallery in the Museum of Antiquities at Turin.

A faithful reproduction of the original Tablet was made in 1859 by the celebrated Aeneas Vicus of Parma, and a copy of the engraving was given by the Chancellor of the Duke of Bavaria to the Museum of Hieroglyphics. Aeneas Kircher describes the Tablet as "five palms long and four wide." W. Wynn Westcott says it measures 50 by 30 inches. It was made of bronze and decorated with encaustic or small enamel and silver inlay. Frobisher adds: "The figures are cut very shallow, and the contours of most of them is encircled by threads of silver. The bases upon which the figures were seated or reclined, and left blank in the prints, were of silver and set on a base of wood." (See *Encyclopædia of Antiquities*.) These familiar with the fundamental principles of Hermetic philosophy will recognize in the *Mensa Isiaca* the key to Chaldean, Egyptian, and Greek theology. In his *Antiquities*, the learned Benedictine, Father Montfaucon, admits his inability to cope with the intricacies of its symbolism. He therefore doubts that the emblems upon the Tablet possess any significance worthy of consideration and ridicules Kircher, declaring him to be more obscure than the Tablet itself. Laurentius Pignoris reproduced the Tablet in connection with a descriptive essay in 1665, but his timidly advanced explanations demonstrated his ignorance concerning the actual interpretation of the figures.

In his *Œdipus Aegyptiacus*, published in 1654, Kircher attacked the problem with characteristic avidity. Being peculiarly qualified for such a task by years of research in matters pertaining to the secret doctrines of antiquity, and with the assistance of a group of eminent scholars, Kircher accomplished much towards an exposition of the mysteries of the Tablet. The master secret, however, eluded even him, as Eliphas Levi has shrewdly noted in his *History of Magic*. "The learned Jesuit," writes Levi, "divined that it contained the hieroglyphic key to sacred alphabets, though he was unable to develop the explanation. It is divided into three equal compartments: above are the twelve houses of heaven and below are the corresponding distributions of labor [work periods] throughout the year, while in the middle place are twenty-one sacred signs answering to the letters of the alphabet. In the midst of all is a seated figure of the pantheomorphic IYNN, emblem of universal being and corresponding as such to the Hebrew Yod, or to that unique letter from which all the other letters were formed. The IYNN is encircled by the Ophite triad, answering to the Three Mother Letters of the Egyptian and Hebrew alphabets. On the right are the Iimorphic and Serapian triads; on the left are those of Nephthys and Hecate, representing active and passive, fixed and volatile, fructifying fire and generating water. Each pair of triads in conjunction with the center produces a septenary, and a septenary is contained in the center. The three septenaries furnish the absolute number of the three worlds, as well as the complete number of primitive letters, to which a complementary sign is added, like zero to the nine numerals."

Levi's hint may be construed to mean that the twenty-one figures in the center section of the Tablet represent the twenty-one major trumpets of the Tarot cards. If this be so, is not the zero card, cause of so much controversy, the nameless crown of the Supreme Mind, the crown being symbolized by the hidden triad in the upper part of the diagram in the center of the Tablet? Might not the first emanation of this Supreme Mind be well symbolized by a juggler or magician with the symbols of the four lower worlds spread out on a table before him: the rod, the sword, the cup, and the coin? Thus considered, the zero card belongs nowhere among the others but is in fact the fourth dimensional point from which they all emanated and consequently is broken up into the twenty-one cards (letters) which, when gathered together, produce the zero. The cipher appearing upon this card would substantiate this interpretation, for the cipher, or circle, is emblematic of the superior sphere from which issue the lower worlds, power, and letters. Westcott carefully collected the all too meager notions advanced by various authorities and in 1887 published his now extremely rare volume, which contains the only detailed description of the Isiatic Tablet published in English since Humphreys translated Montfaucon's worthless description in 1721. After explaining his reticence to reveal that which Levi evidently felt was better left concealed, Westcott sums up his interpretation of the Tablet as follows:

"The diagram of Levi, by which he explains the mystery of the Tablet, shows the Upper Region divided into the four seasons of the year, each with three signs of the Zodiac, and he has added the four-entred sacred name, the Tetragrammaton, assigning Jod to Aquarius, that is Canopus, He to Taurus, that is Apis, Vau to Leo, that is Momptra, and He final to Typhon. Next the Cherubim parallel: Man, Bull, Lion and Eagle. The fourth form is found either as Scorpion or Eagle depending upon the Occult good or evil intention in the Damonic Zodiac, the Snake replaces the Scorpion. "The Lower Region he ascribes to the twelve simple Hebrew letters, associating them with the four quarters of the horizon. Compare the Sepher Yetzirah, Cap. v, sec. 1. "The Central Region he ascribes to the Solar powers and the



"The Isiatic Tablet," writes Levi, "is a key to the Ancient Book of Thoth, which has survived to our day in the form of the Tarot cards. It is the Book of Thoth, which was a record of the sacred teaching of the Egyptians, after the death of their civilization, has been crystallized in an hieroglyphic form. Levi, the French occultist, has shown that the Isiatic Tablet is a key to the mysteries of the Tarot cards. The Tarot cards, which are a collection of 78 cards, are divided into four suits: King, Queen, Knight, and Knave. Each suit is represented by a different symbol: King (Man), Queen (Bull), Knight (Lion), and Knave (Eagle). The Tarot cards are used in a game of chance, and the outcome of the game is determined by the cards drawn. The Isiatic Tablet is a key to the mysteries of the Tarot cards, and it is a key to the mysteries of the universe."







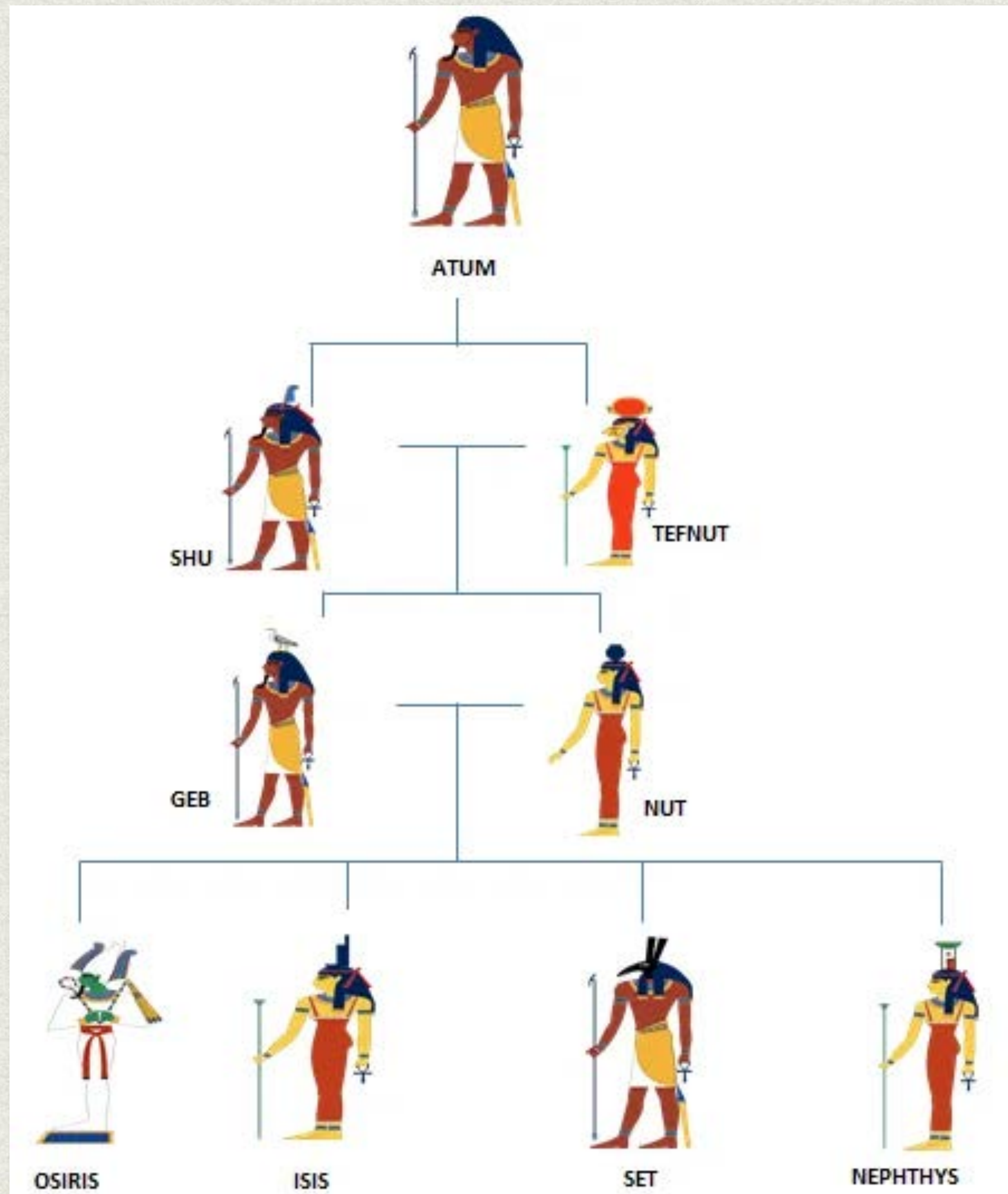
Concerning the theurgic or magic sense in which the Egyptian priests exhibited in the Bembine Table of Isis the philosophy of sacrifice, rites, and ceremonies by a system of occult symbols, Athanasius Kircher writes:

"The early priests believed that a great spiritual power was invoked by correct and unabridged sacrificial ceremonies. If one feature were lacking, the whole was vitiated, says Iamblichus. Hence they were most careful in all details, for they considered it absolutely essential for the entire chain of logical connections to be exactly according to ritual. Certainly for no other reason did they prepare and prescribe for future use the manuals, as it were, for conducting the rites. They learned, too, what the first hieromancers--possessed, as it were, by a divine fury--devised as a system of symbolism for exhibiting their mysteries. These they placed in this Tablet of Isis, before the eyes of those admitted to the sanctum sanctorum in order to teach the nature of the Gods and the prescribed forms of sacrifice. Since each of the orders of Gods had its own peculiar symbols, gestures, costumes, and ornaments, they thought it necessary to observe these in the whole apparatus of worship, as nothing was more efficacious in drawing the benign attention of the deities and genii. \* \* \* Thus their temples, remote from the usual haunts of men, contained representations of nearly every form in nature. First, in the pavement, they symbolized the physical economy of the

world, using minerals, stones and other things suitable for ornaments, including little streams of water. The walls showed the starry world, and the dome the world of genii. In the center was the altar, to suggest the emanations of the Supreme Mind from its center. Thus the entire interior constituted a picture of the Universe of Worlds. The priests in making sacrifices wore raiment adorned with figures similar to those attributed to the Gods. Their bodies were partially bare like those of the deities, and they themselves were divested of all material cares and practices the strictest chastity. \* \* \* Their heads were veiled to indicate their charge of earthly things. Their heads and bodies were shaved, for they regarded hair as a useless excrescence. Upon the head they bore the same insignia as those attributed to the Gods. Thus arrayed, they regarded themselves to be transformed into that intelligence with which they constantly desired to be identified. For example, in order to call down to the world the soul and spirit of the Universe, they stood before the image shown in the center of our Tablet, wearing the same symbols as that figure and its attendants, and offered sacrifices. By these and the accompanying singing of hymns they believed that they infallibly drew the God's attention to their prayer. And so they did in regard to other regions of the Tablet, believing of necessity the proper ritual properly carried out would evoke the deity desired. That this was the origin of the science of oracles is apparent. As a touched chord produces a harmony of

sound, likewise the adjoining chords respond though not touched. Similarly the idea they expressed by their concurrent acts while adoring the God came into accord with basic Idea and, by an intellectual union, it was returned to them deformed, and they thus obtained the Idea of Ideas. Hence there sprang up in their souls, they thought, the gift of prophecy and divination, and they believed they could foretell future events, impending evils, etc. For as in the Supreme Mind everything is simultaneous and spaceless, the future is therefore present in that Mind; and they thought that while the human mind was absorbed in the Supreme by contemplation, by that union they were enabled to know all the future. Nearly all that is represented in our Tablet consists of amulets which, by analogy above described, would inspire them, under the described conditions, with the virtues of the Supreme Power and enable them to receive good and avert evil. They also believed they could in this magical manner effect cures of diseases; that genii could be induced to appear to them during sleep and cure or teach them to cure the sick. In this belief they consulted the Gods about all sort of doubts and difficulties, while adorned with the simulacra of the mystic rite and intently contemplating the Divine Ideas; and while so enraptured they believed the God by some sign, nod or gesture communicated with them, whether asleep or awake, concerning the truth or falsity of the matter in point." (See *Œdipus Ægyptiacus*.)





**Ennead of Heliopolis:** This is one of the most famous groups, consisting of nine deities worshipped in Heliopolis. The Ennead includes Atum, Shu, Tefnut, Geb, Nut, Osiris, Isis, Set, and Nephthys.

Ennead of Heliopolis





**Ogdoad of Hermopolis:** This group consists of eight deities, representing the primordial elements of creation. The Ogdoad includes Amun, Amunet, Heh, Hauhet, Kek, Kauket, Nun, and Naunet.

Ogdoad of Hermopolis





**Triad of Thebes:** This triad includes Amun, his consort Mut, and their son Khonsu. They were primarily worshipped in Thebes and played a significant role in the religious life of the city.

Triad of Thebes





**Triad of Memphis:** This group consists of Ptah, his consort Sekhmet, and their son Nefertum. They were central to the religious practices in Memphis.

Triad of Memphis









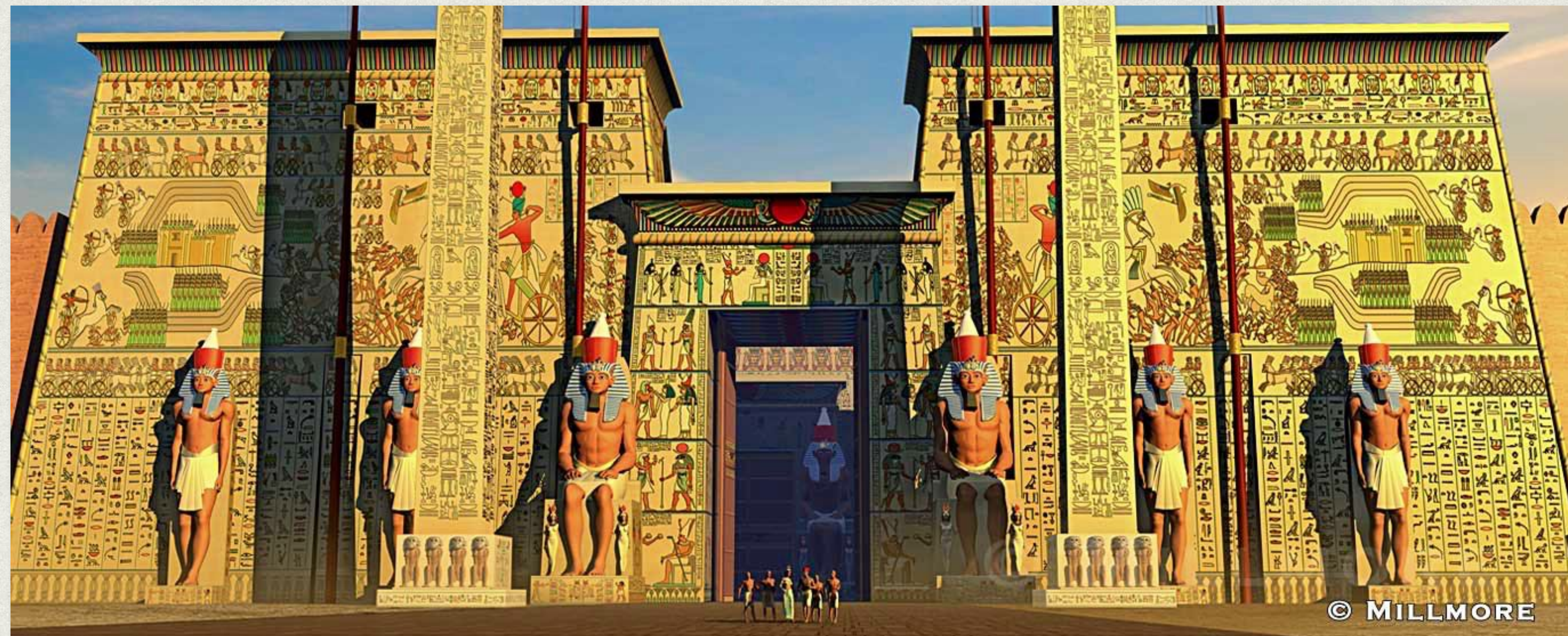
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Ogdoad of Hermopolis









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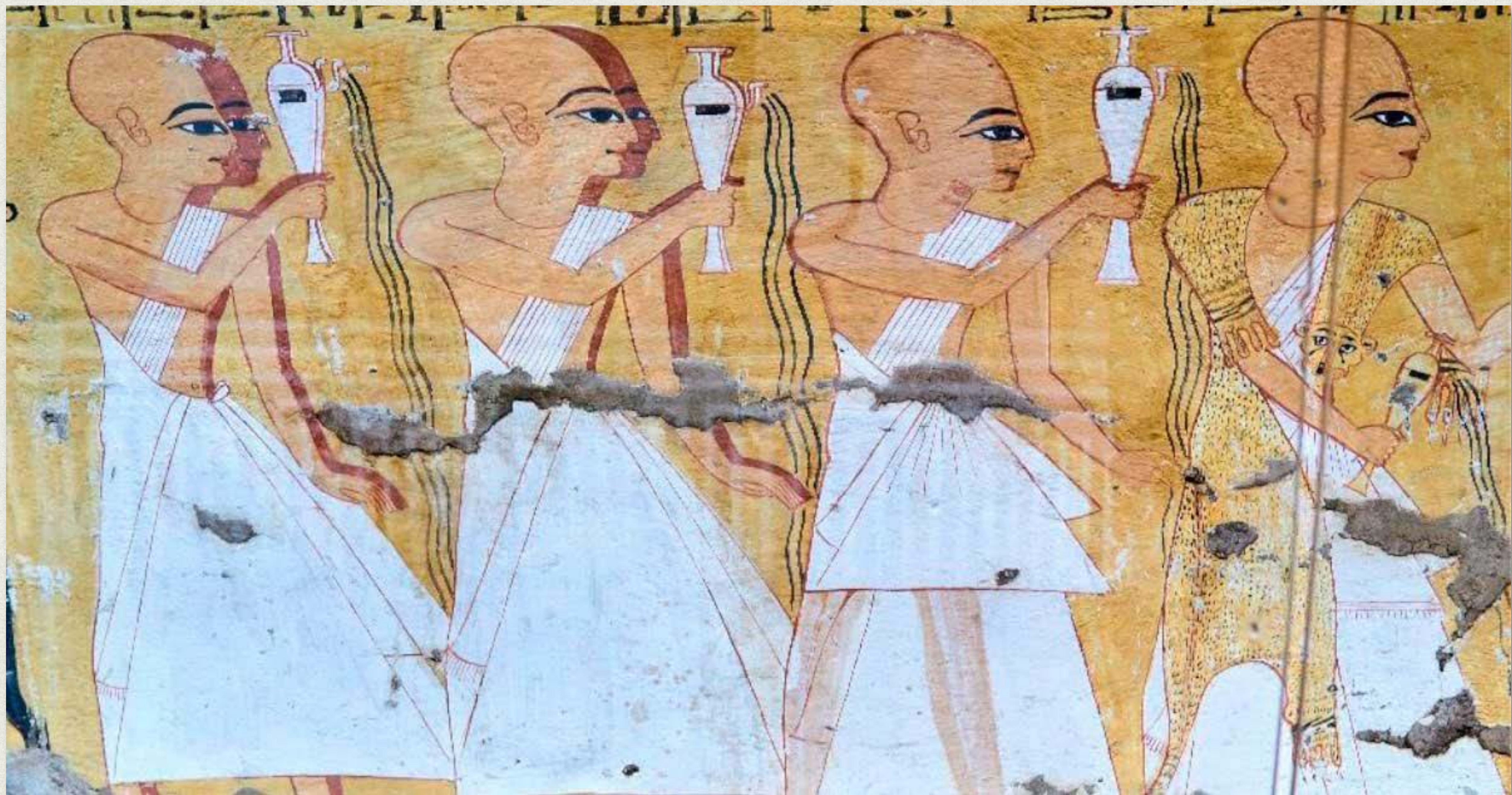




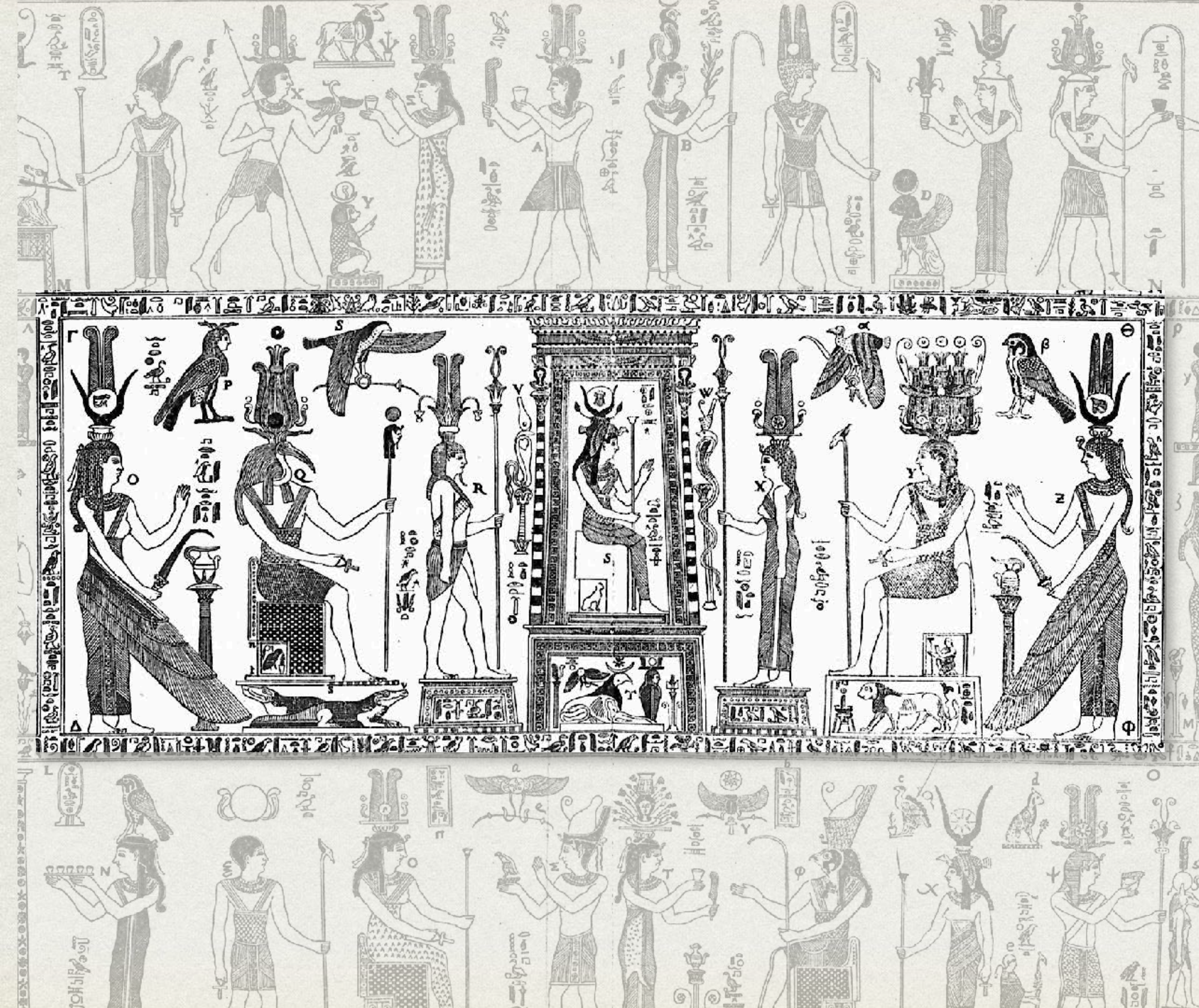












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Egyptian amulets were believed to possess profound spiritual and protective powers that extended far beyond their physical form. Here are some key aspects of their revelatory power:

1. **Spiritual Protection:** Amulets were thought to ward off evil spirits and negative energies, providing a shield of protection to the wearer.
2. **Symbolic Significance:** Each amulet carried specific symbols and inscriptions that invoked the power of gods and goddesses. For example, the Eye of Horus symbolized protection, health, and restoration.
3. **Magical Properties:** Amulets were often made from materials believed to have inherent magical properties, such as gold for eternity and divine connection, or lapis lazuli for protection against evil.
4. **Personalization:** Amulets were sometimes inscribed with the names of the bearers or specific invocations, enhancing their protective qualities and making them unique to the individual.
5. **Funerary Practices:** In burial rituals, amulets were placed with the deceased to ensure safe passage into the afterlife and eternal protection. –egyptmythology.com



## The Bembine Table of Isis



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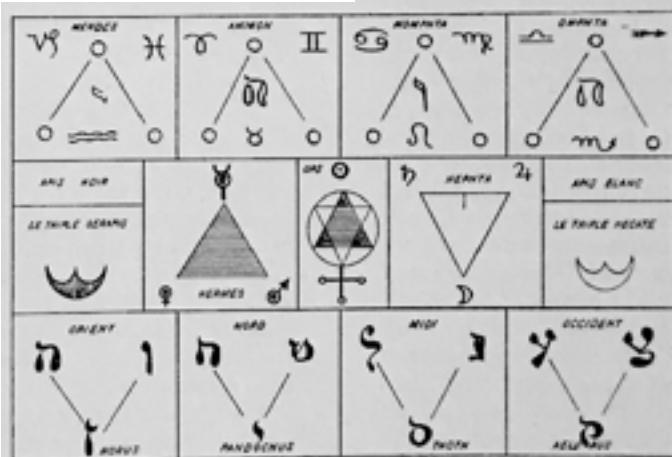
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From Levi's *History of Magic*.

LEVI'S KEY TO THE BEMBINE TABLE.

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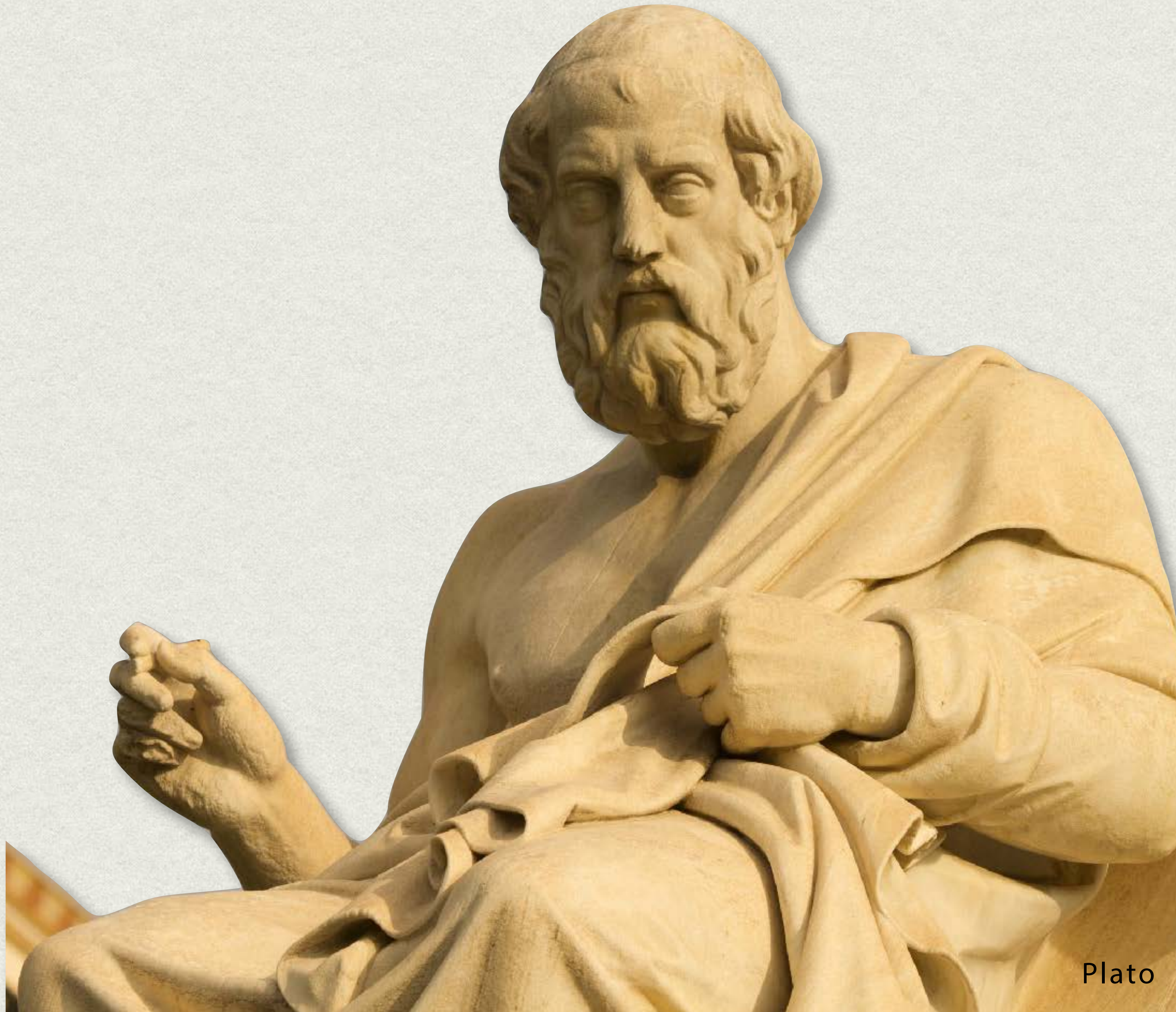
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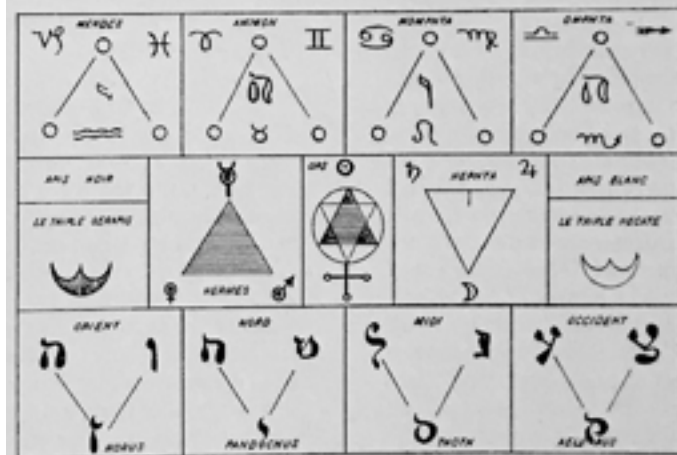
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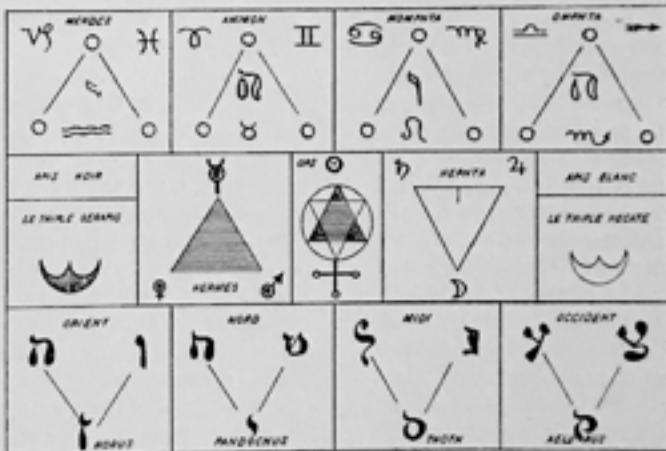
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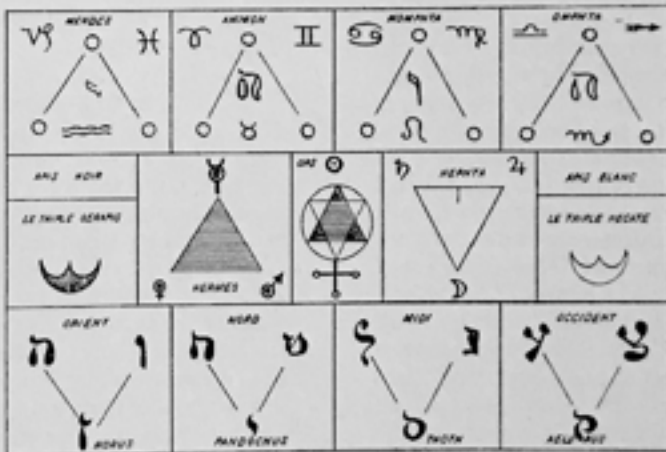
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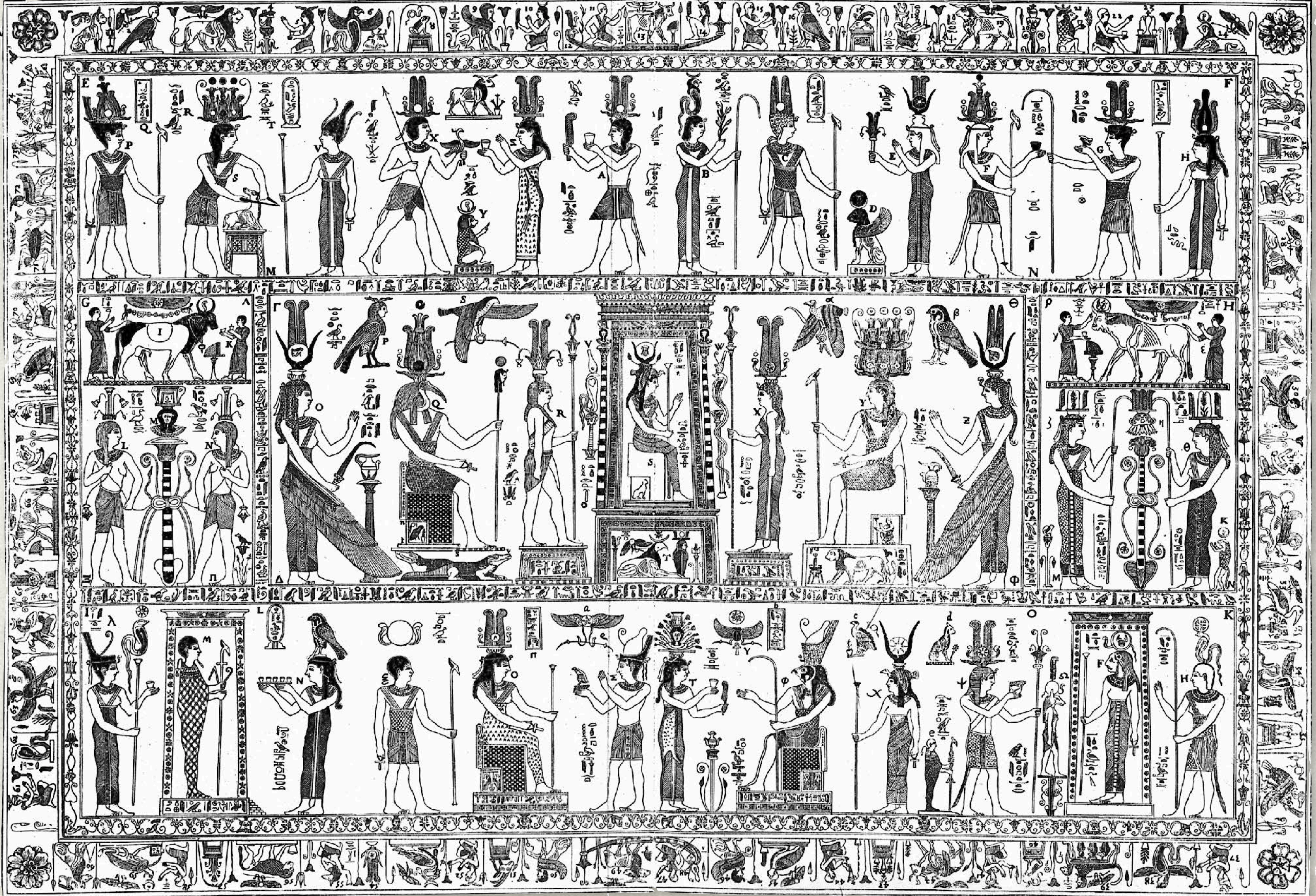
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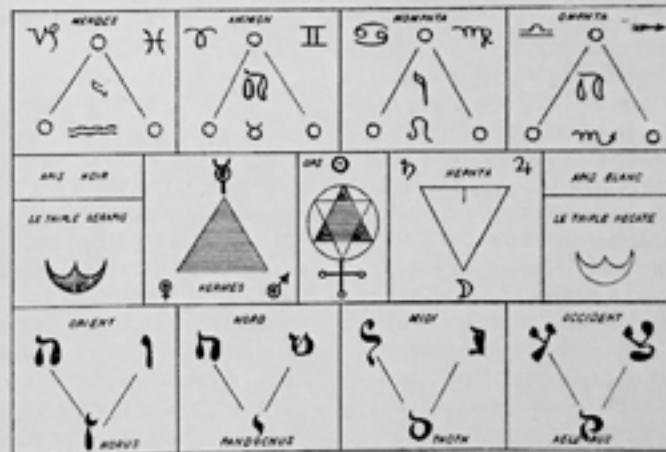
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Levi's hint may be construed to mean that the twenty-one figures in the center section of the Table represent the twenty-one major trumps of the Tarot cards. If this be so, is not the zero card, cause of so much controversy, the nameless crown of the Supreme Mind, the crown being symbolized by the hidden triad in the upper part of the throne in the center of the Table? Might not the first emanation of this Supreme Mind be well symbolized by a juggler or magician with the symbols of the four lower worlds spread out on a table before him: the rod, the sword, the cup, and the coin? Thus considered, the zero card belongs nowhere among the others but is in fact the fourth dimensional point from which they all emanated and consequently is broken up into the twenty-one cards (letters) which, when gathered together, produce the zero. The cipher appearing upon this card would substantiate this interpretation, for the cipher, or circle, is emblematic of the superior sphere from which issue the lower worlds, powers, and letters.

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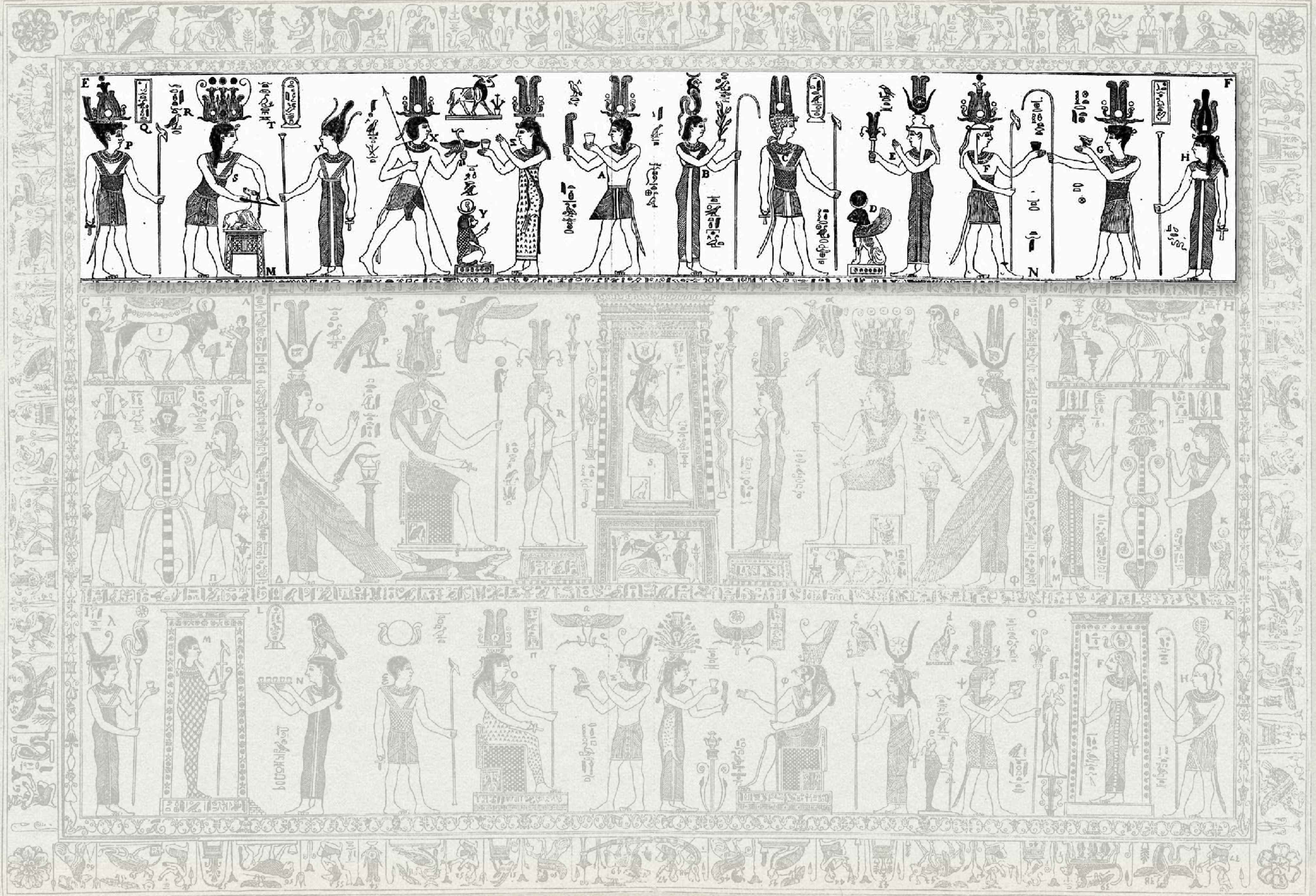
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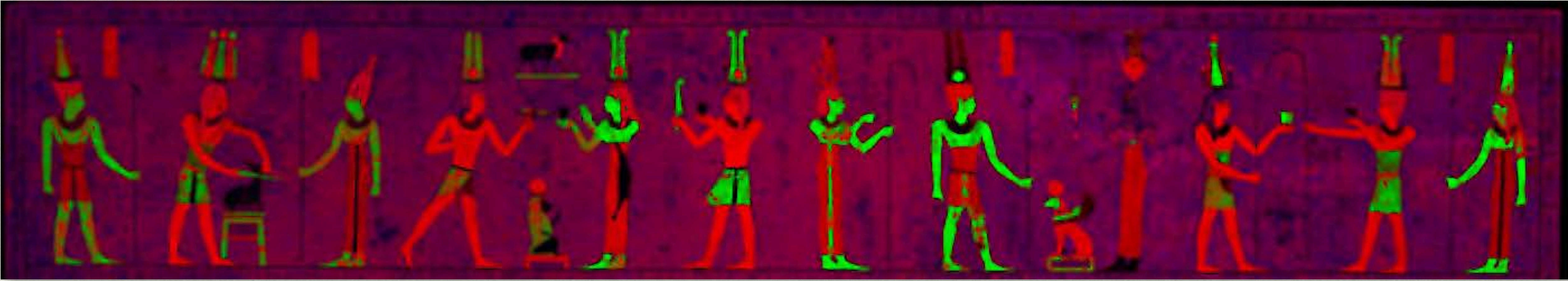
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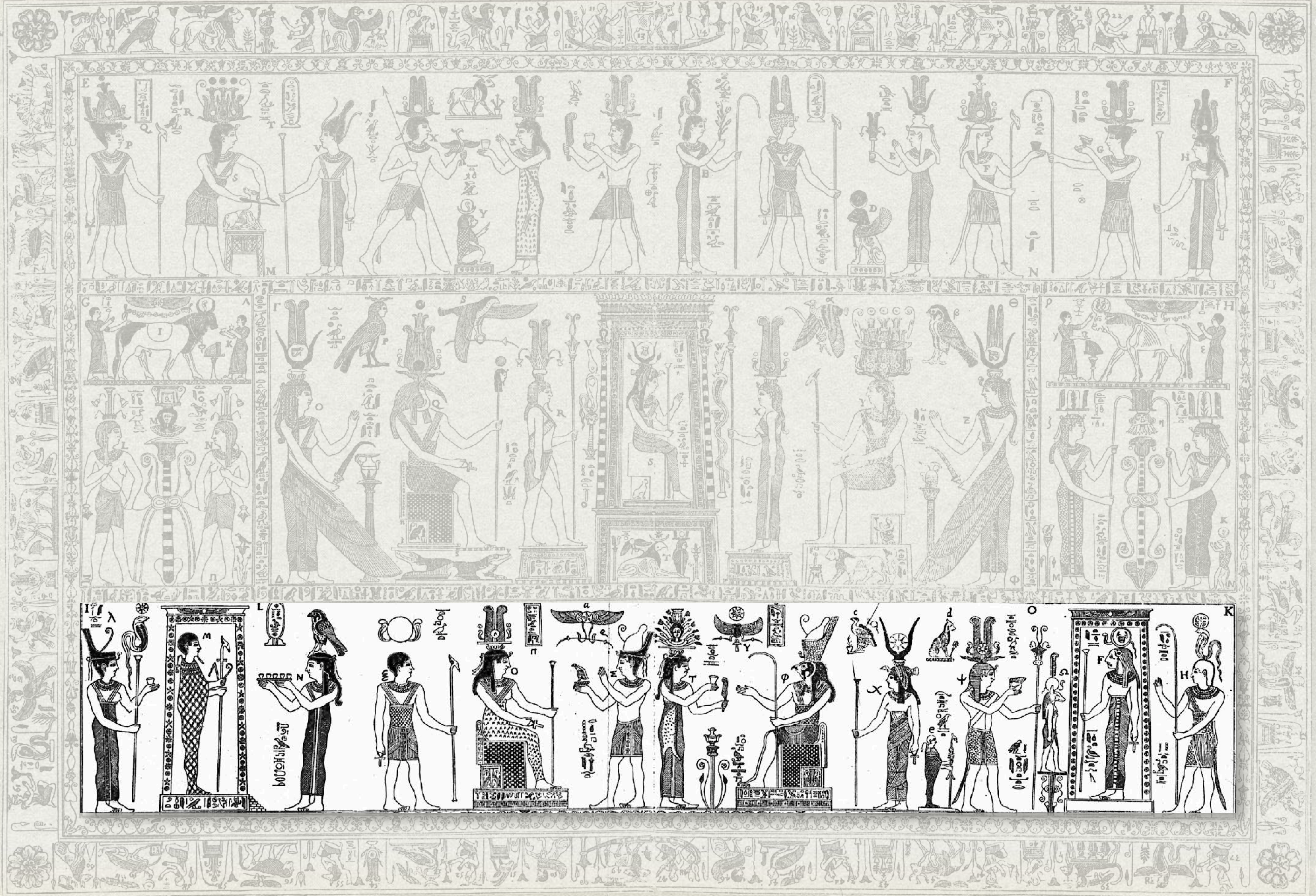




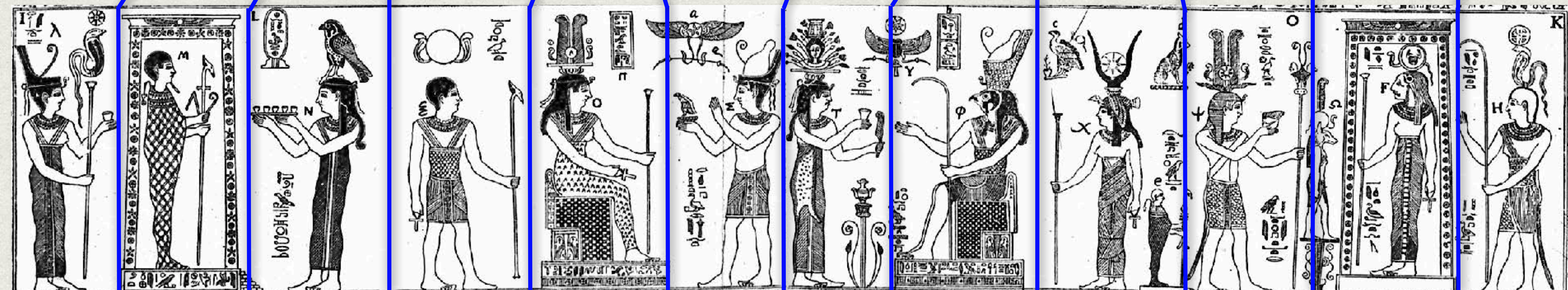
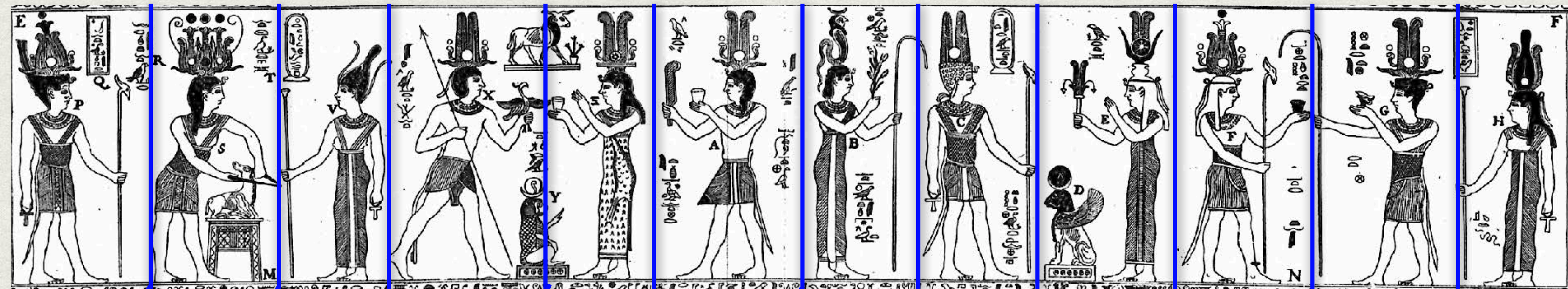
RGB false color overlay of MA-XRF distribution maps of copper (red channel)







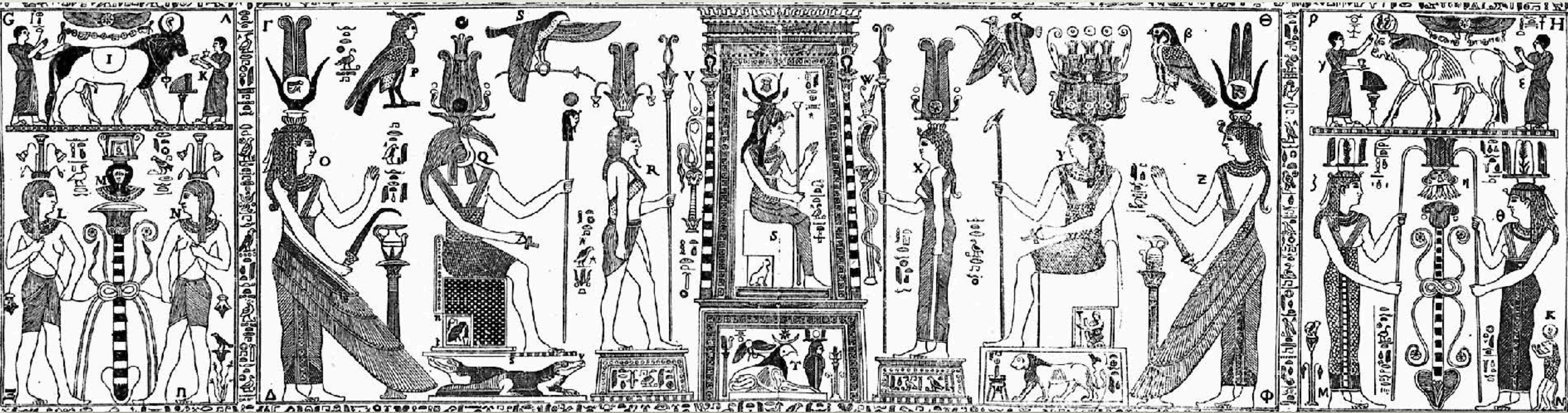








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## The Three Mother Letters

א מ ש

*Aleph, Mem, Shin*



Macrocosmos God Microcosmos



Spirit

Soul

Body

## The Seven Double Letters

ב ג ד כ פ ר ת

*Beth, Gimel, Daleth, Kaph, Peh, Resh, Tau*



## The Twelve Simple Letters

ה ו ז ח ט י ל נ ס ע צ ק

*Heh, Vav, Zayin, Cheth, Teth, Yod, Lamed, Nun, Samekh, Ayin, Tzaddi, Qoph*









L VII

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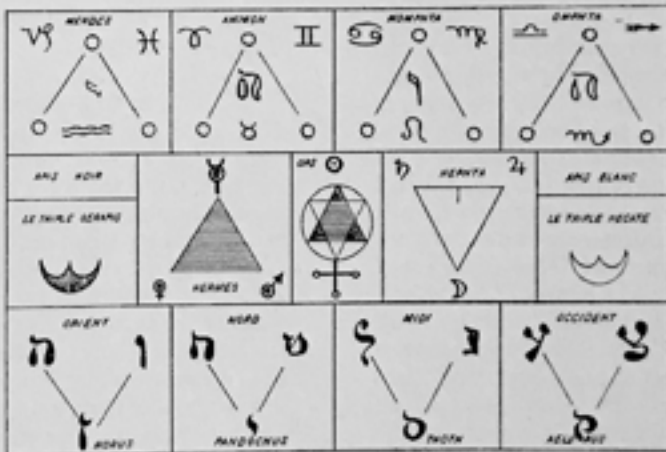
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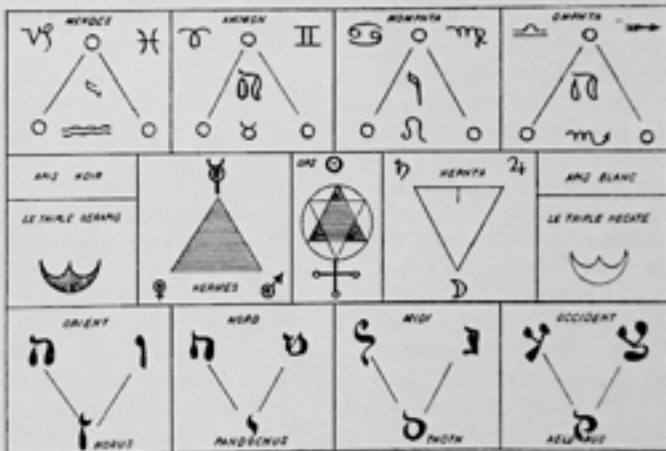
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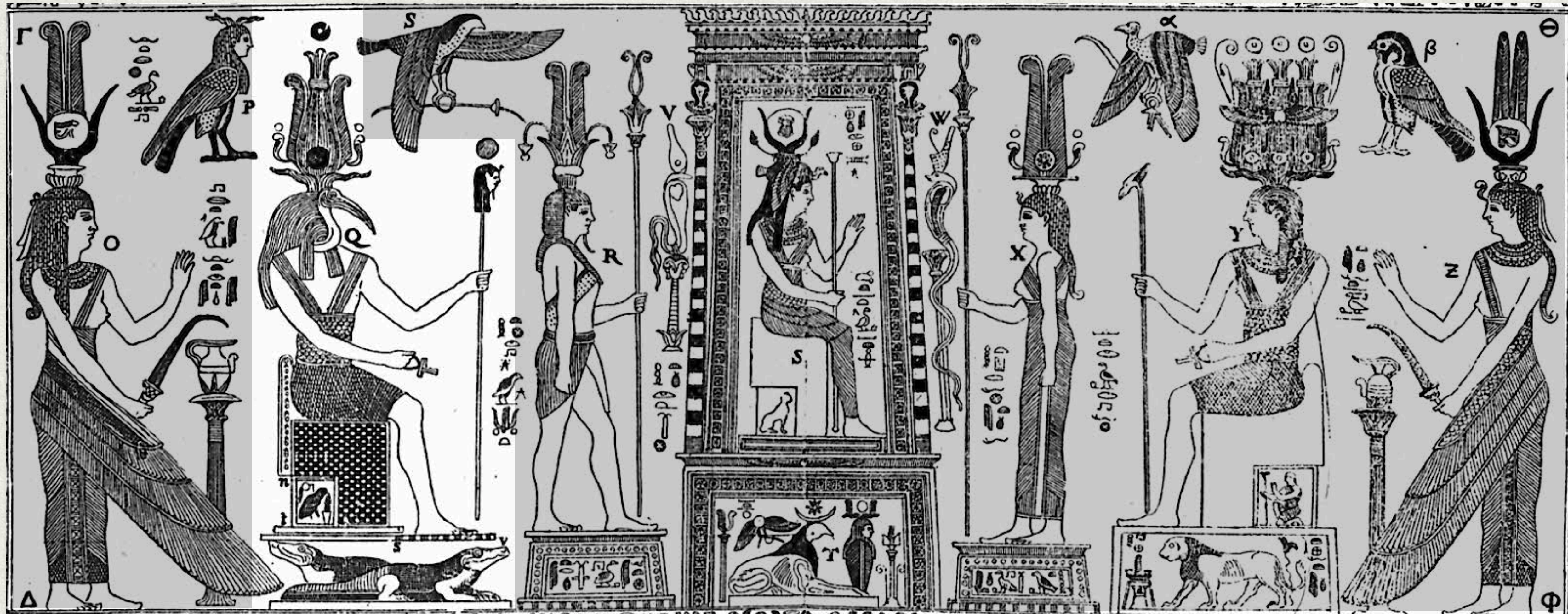
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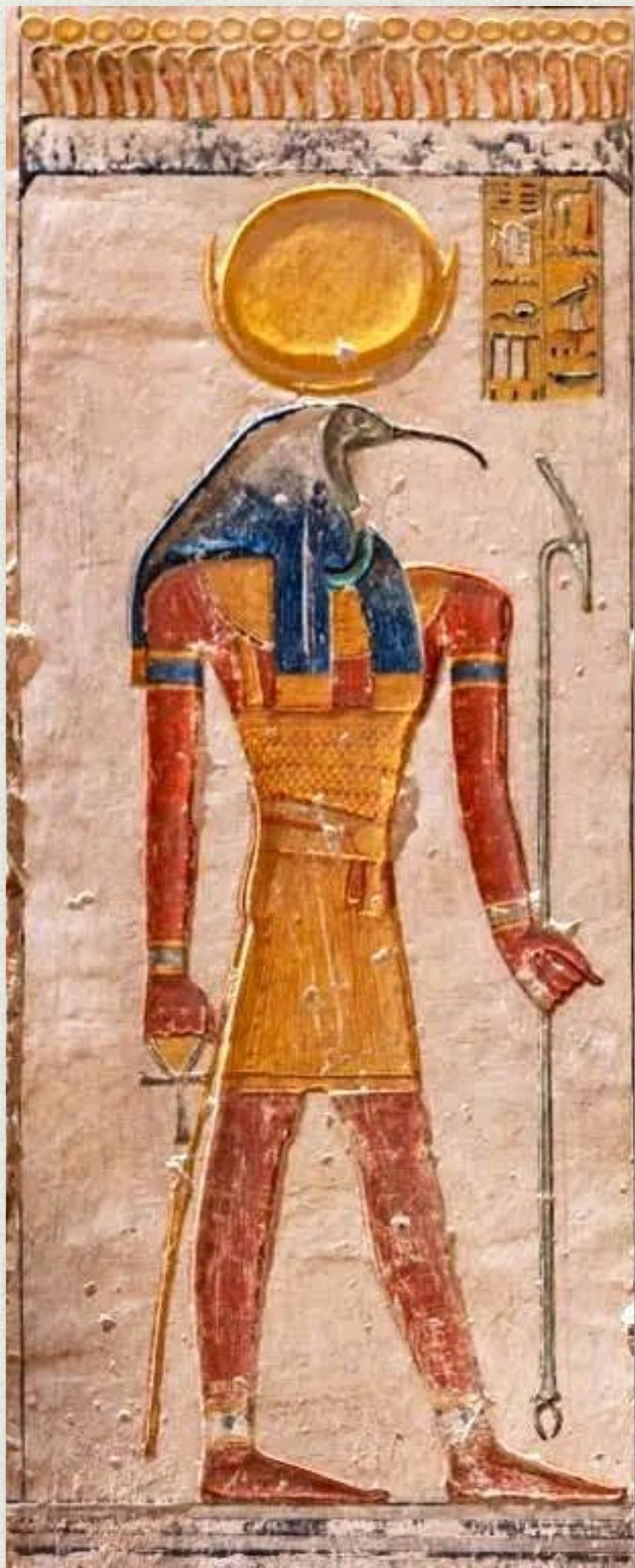
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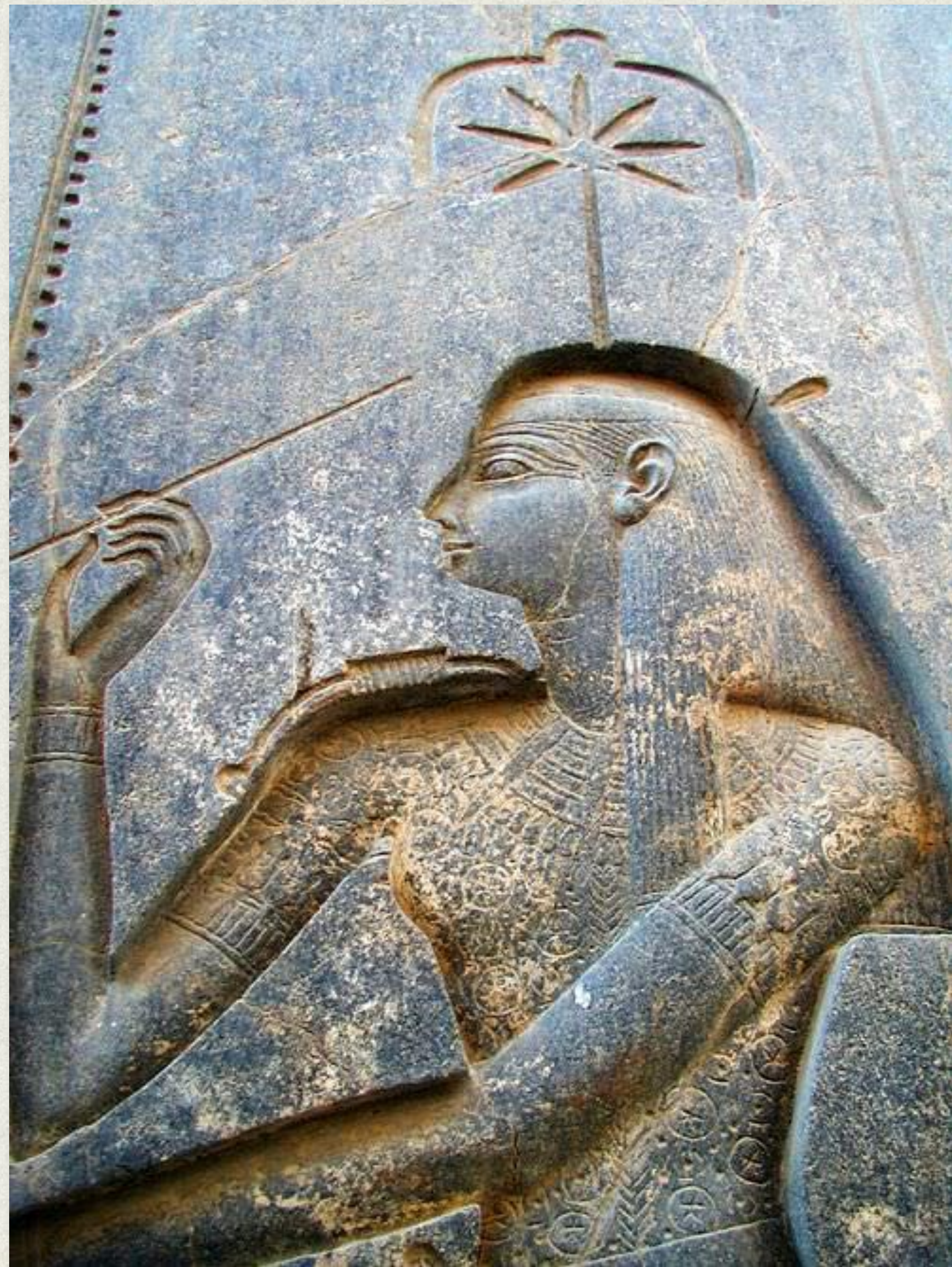




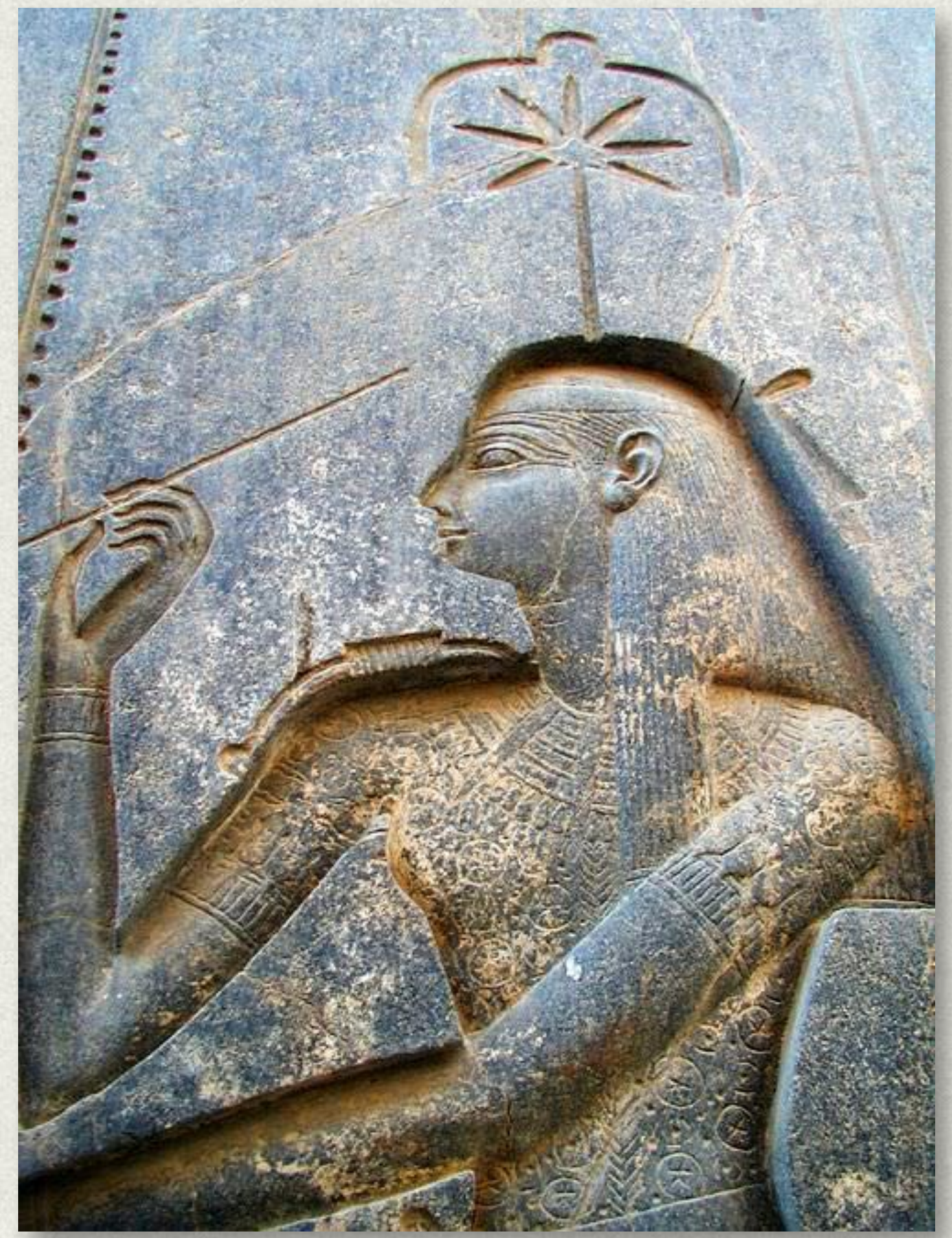
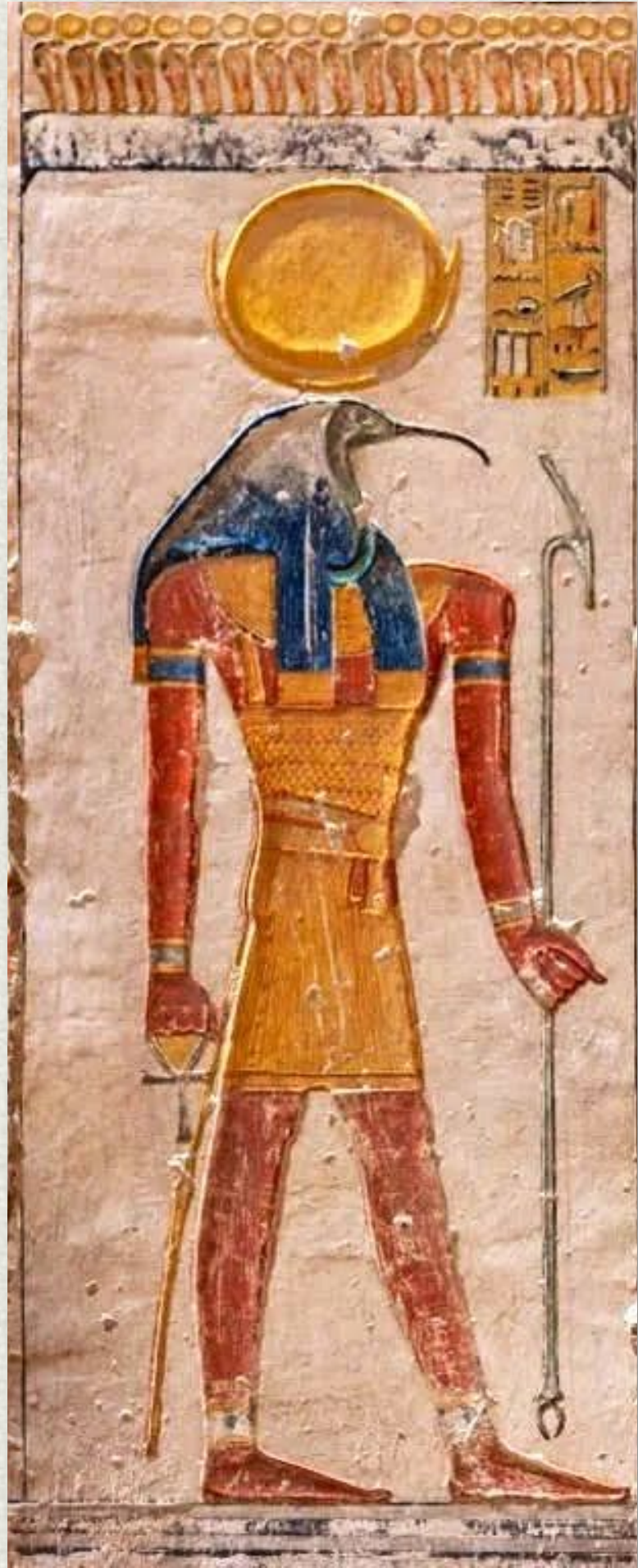
















Serapis





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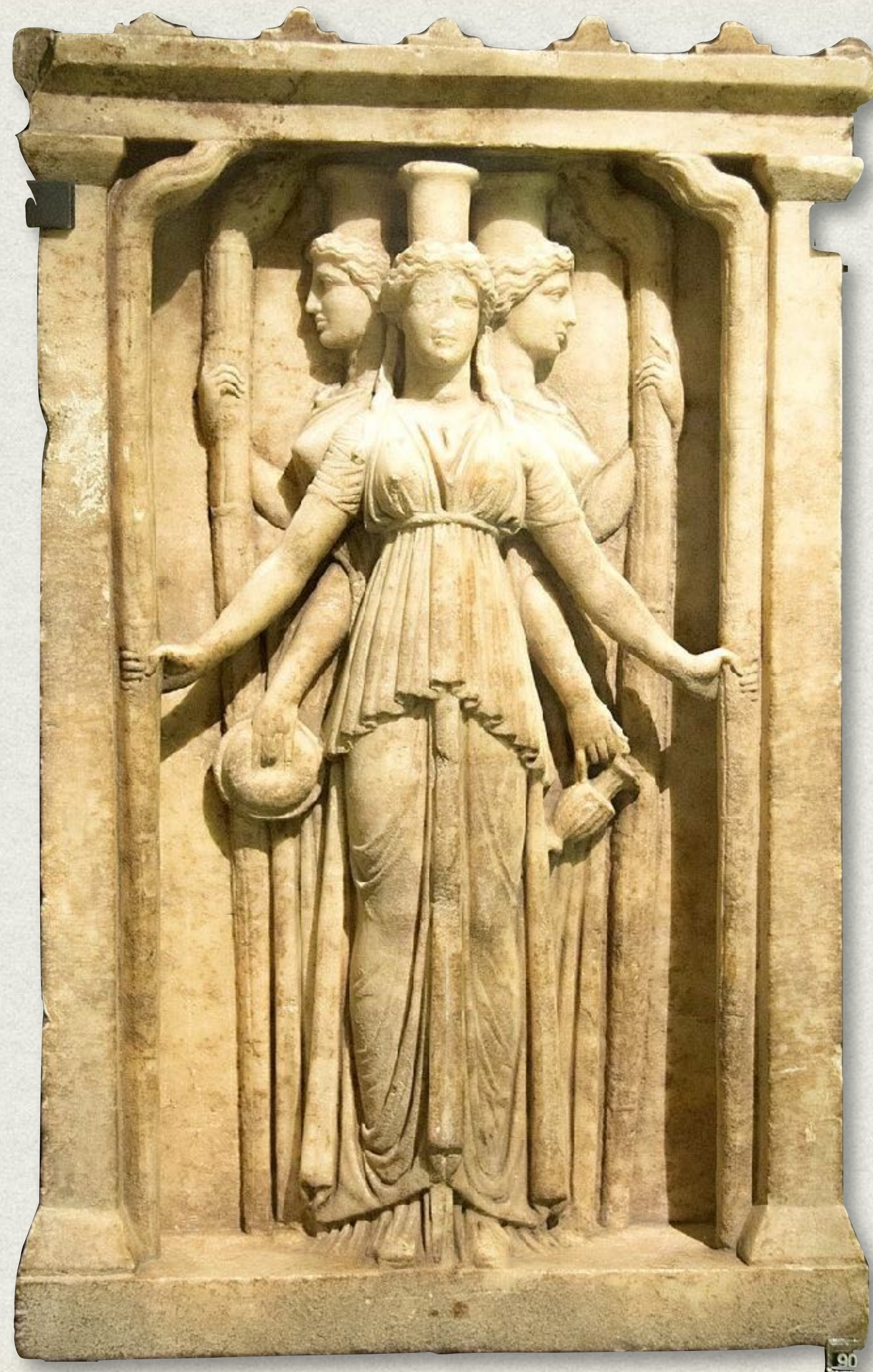




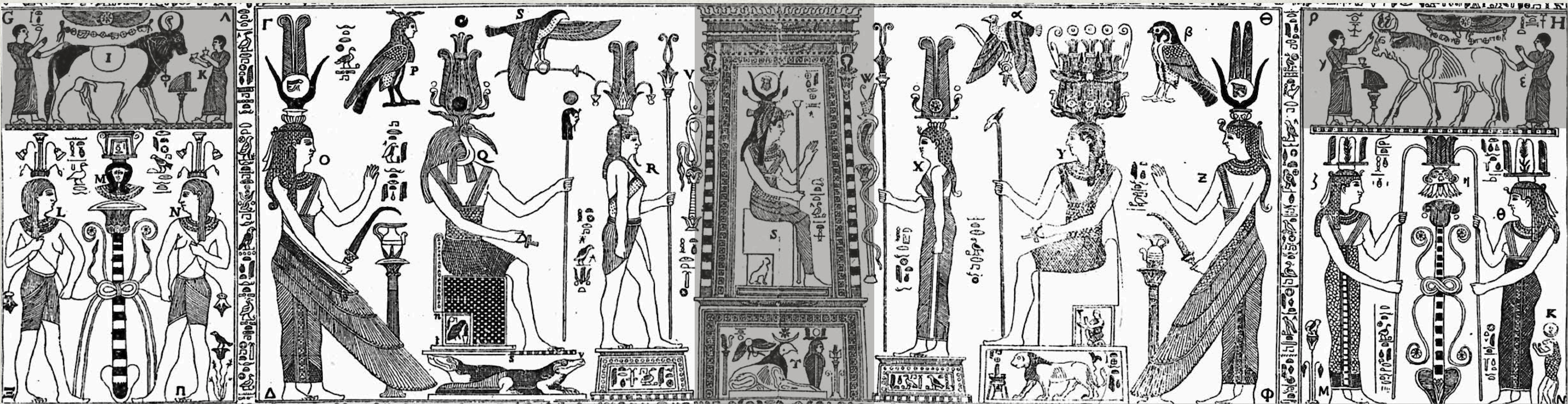






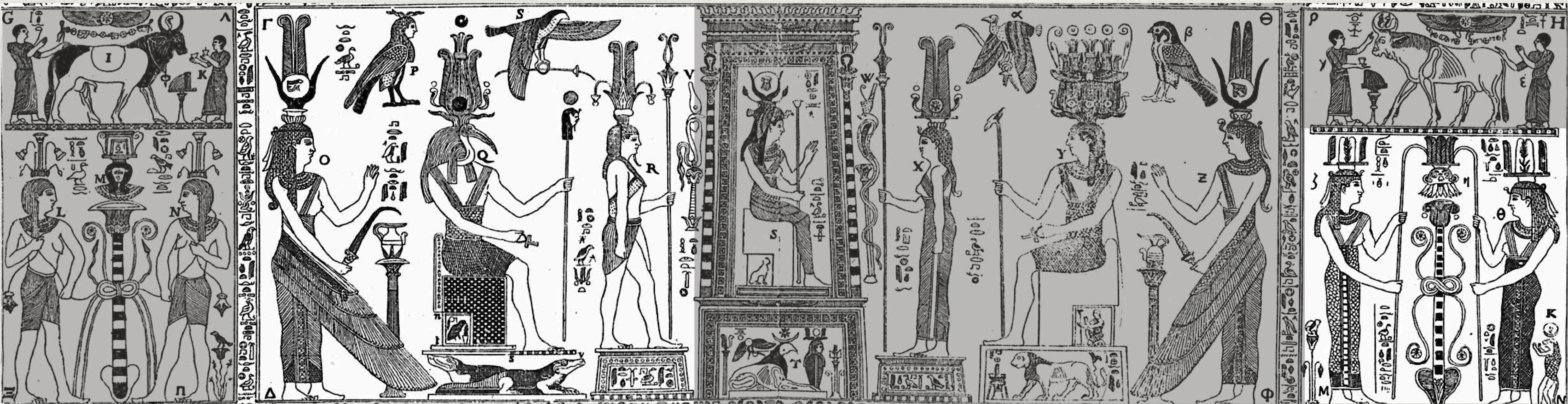






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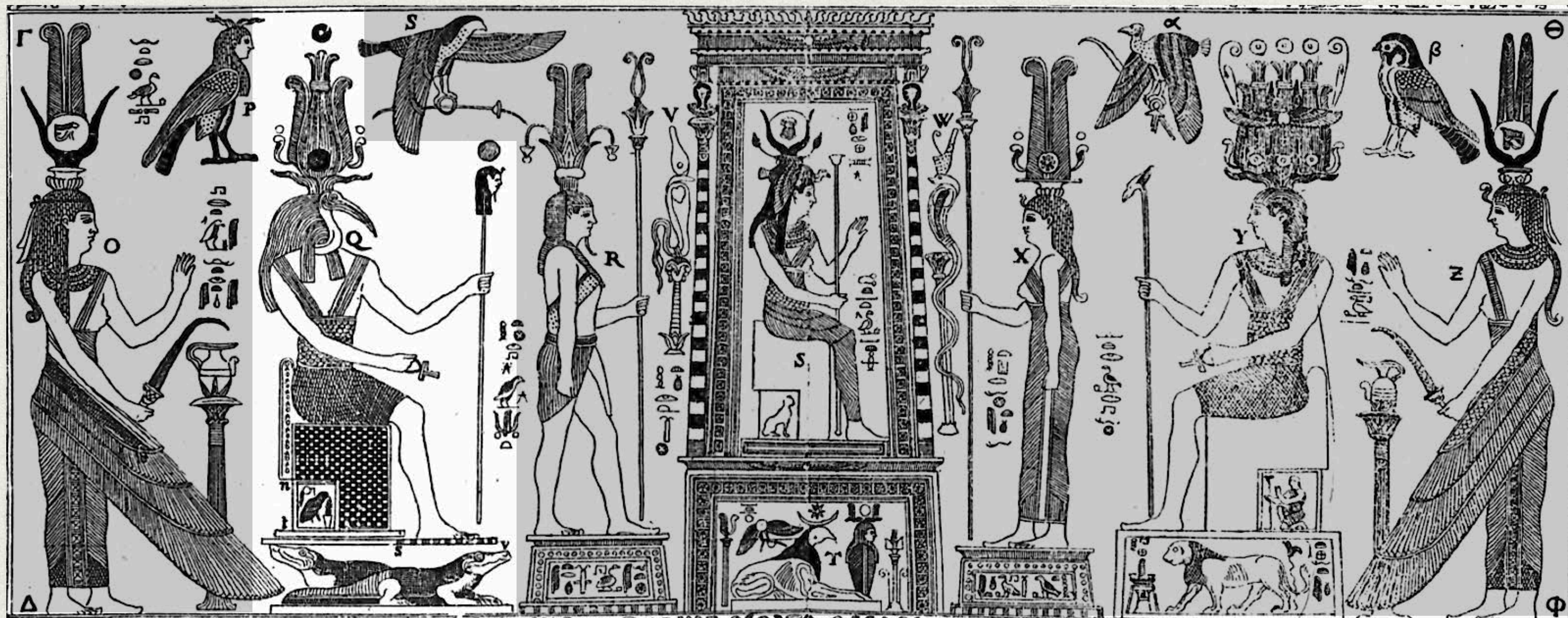


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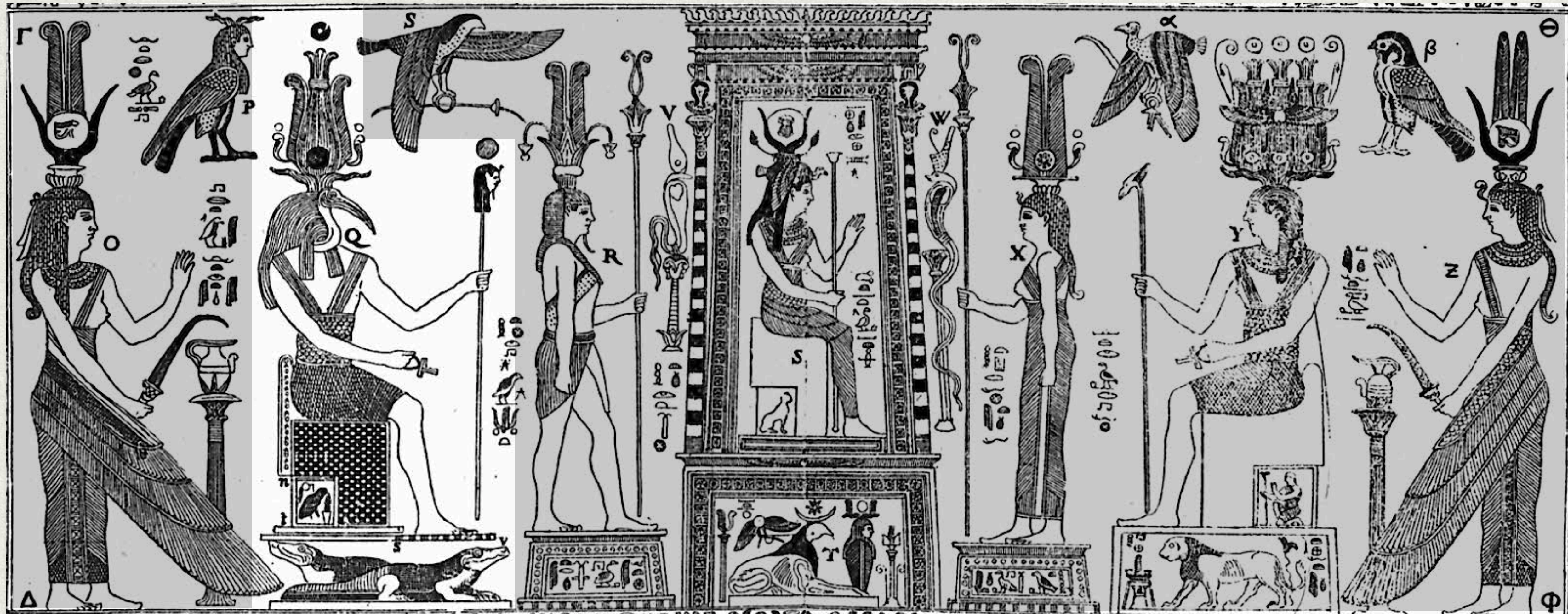












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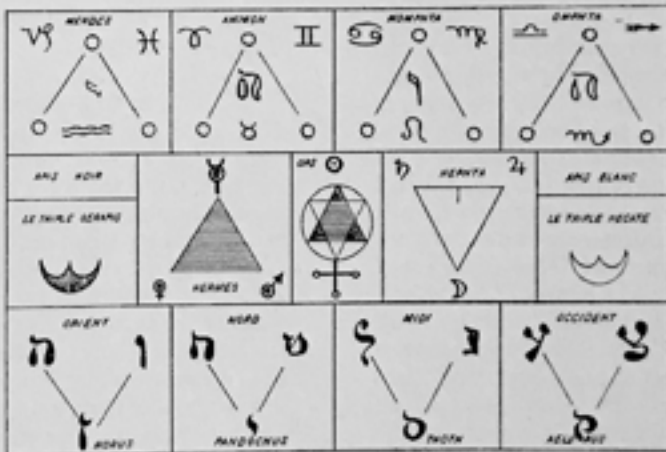
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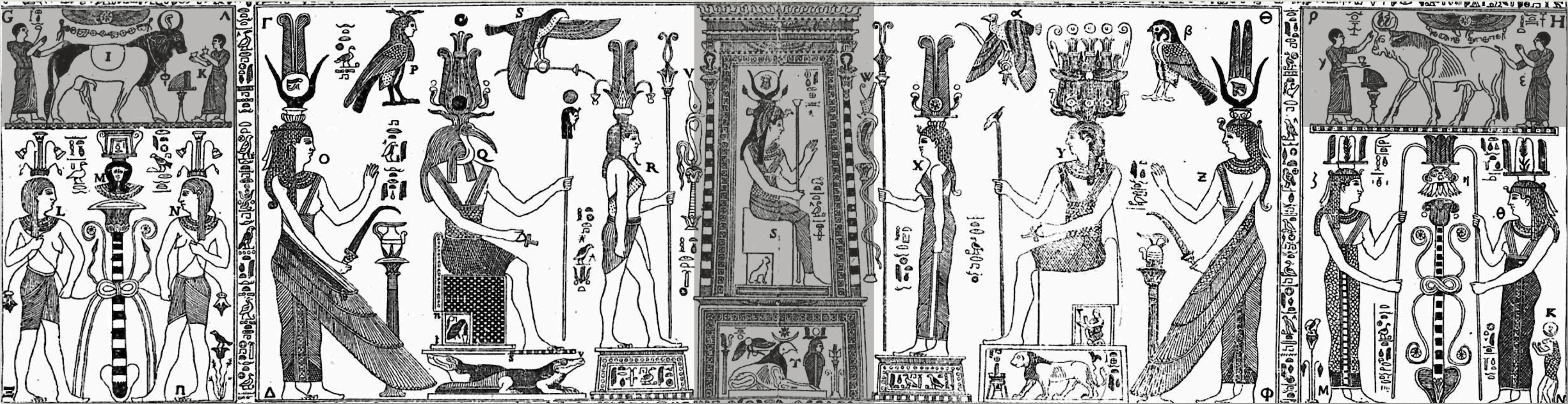
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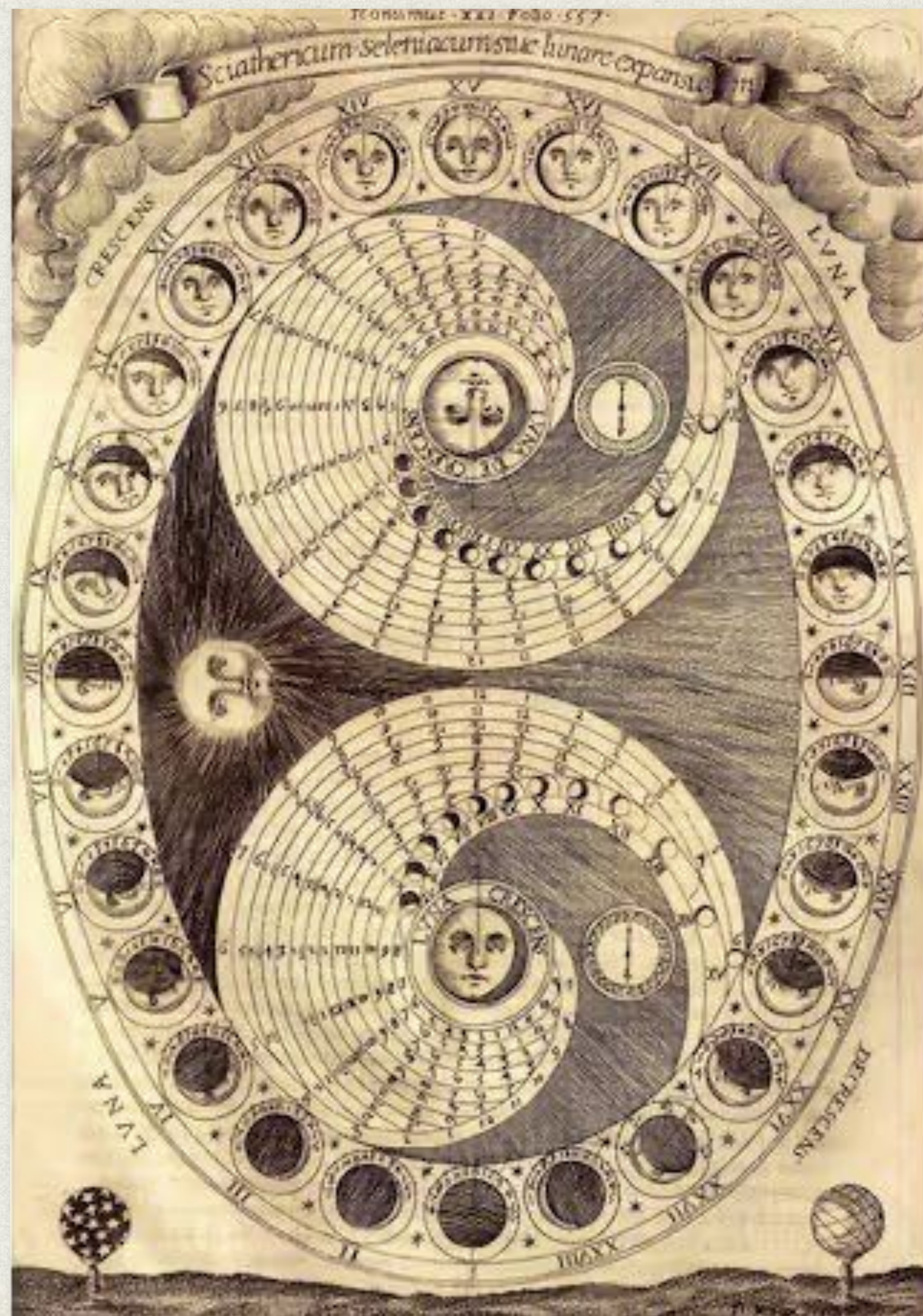












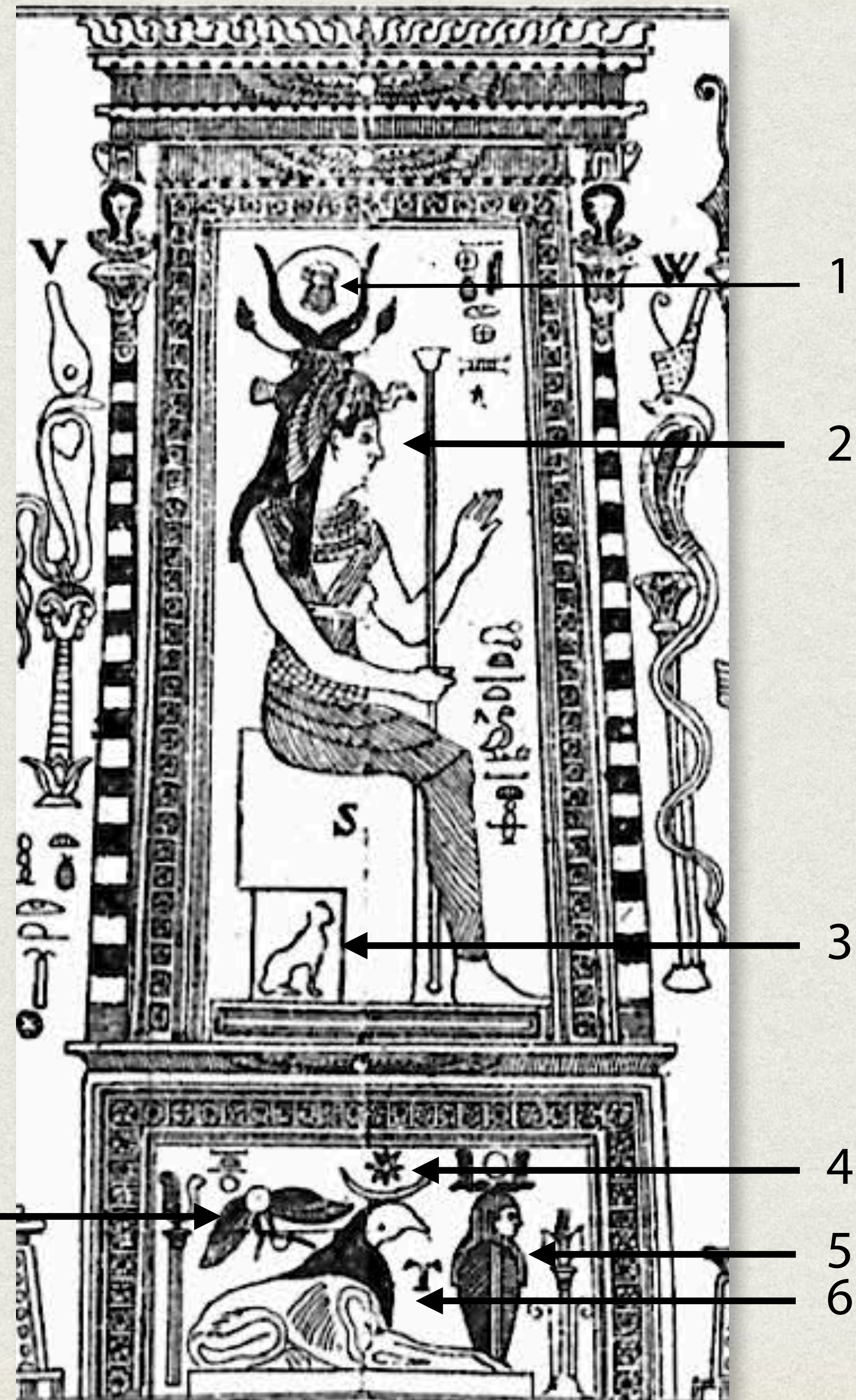














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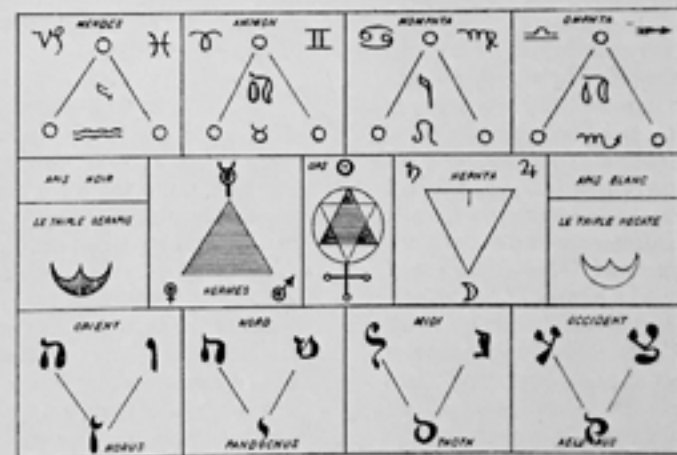
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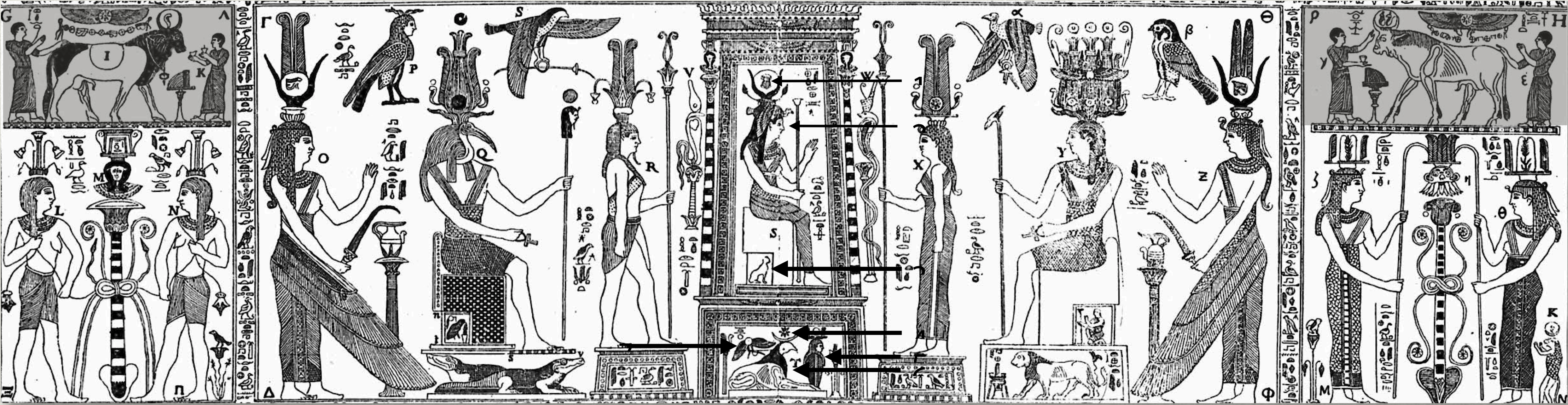
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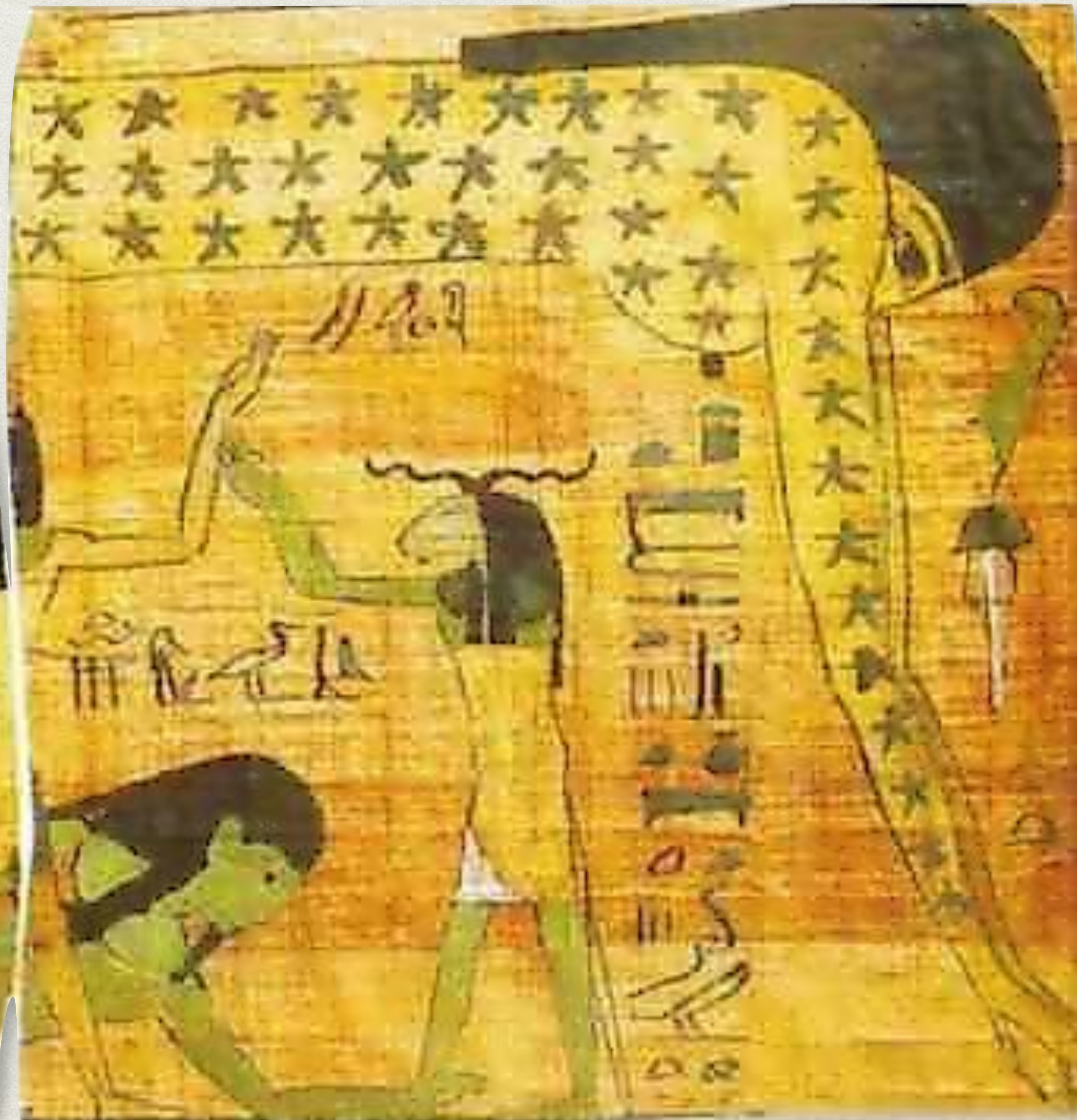




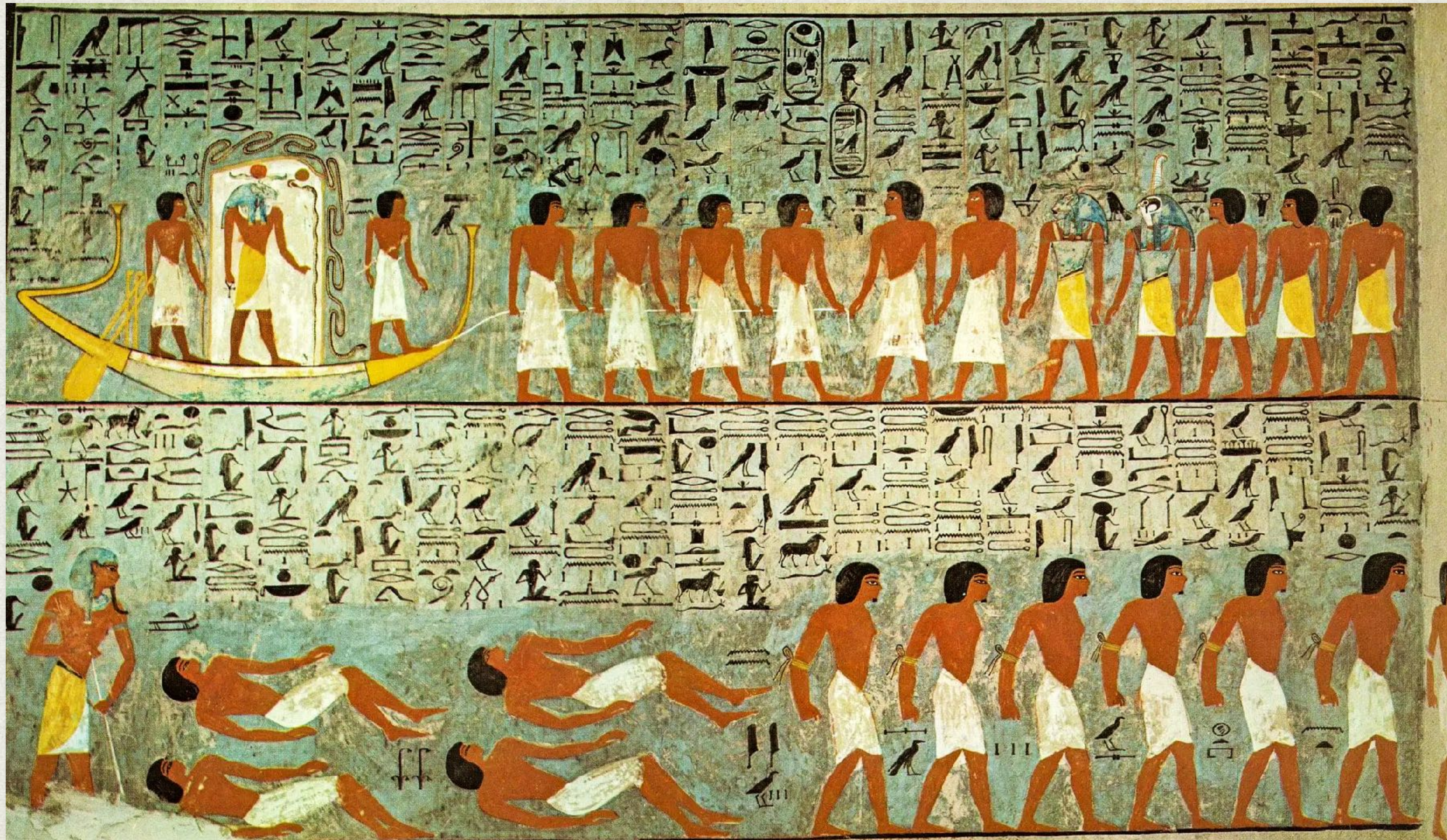














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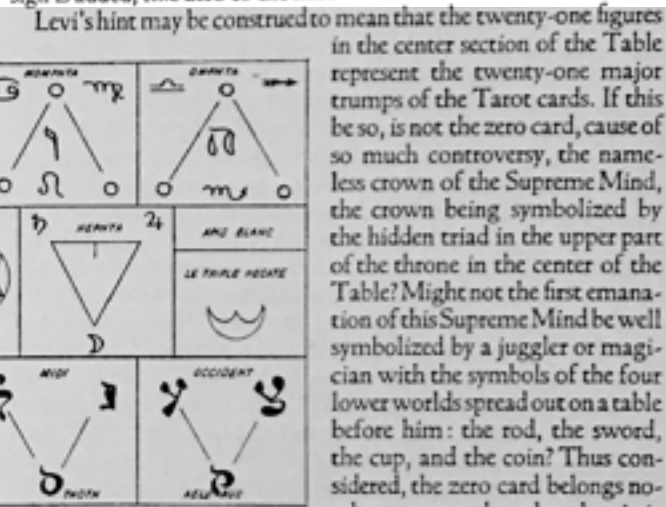
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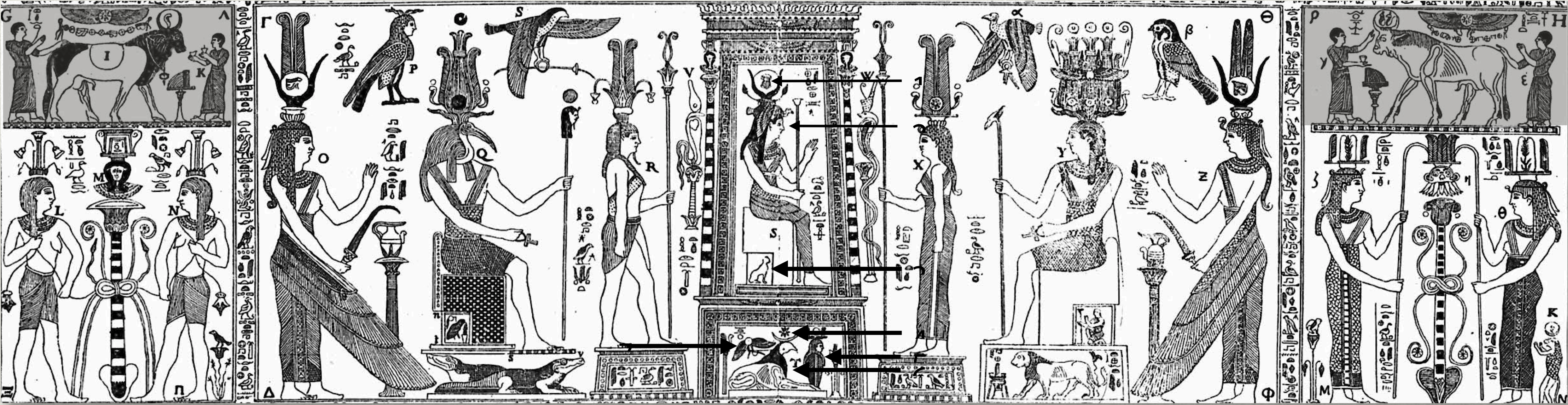
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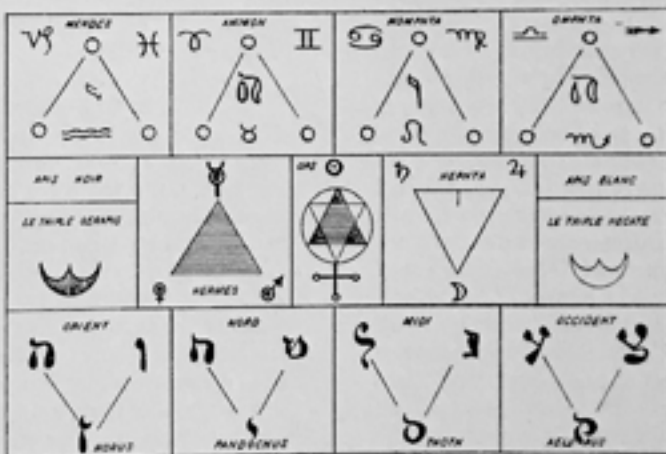
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## The Three Mother Letters

א מ ש

*Aleph, Mem, Shin*



Macrocosmos God Microcosmos



Spirit

Soul

Body

## The Seven Double Letters

ב ג ד כ פ ר ת

*Beth, Gimel, Daleth, Kaph, Peh, Resh, Tau*



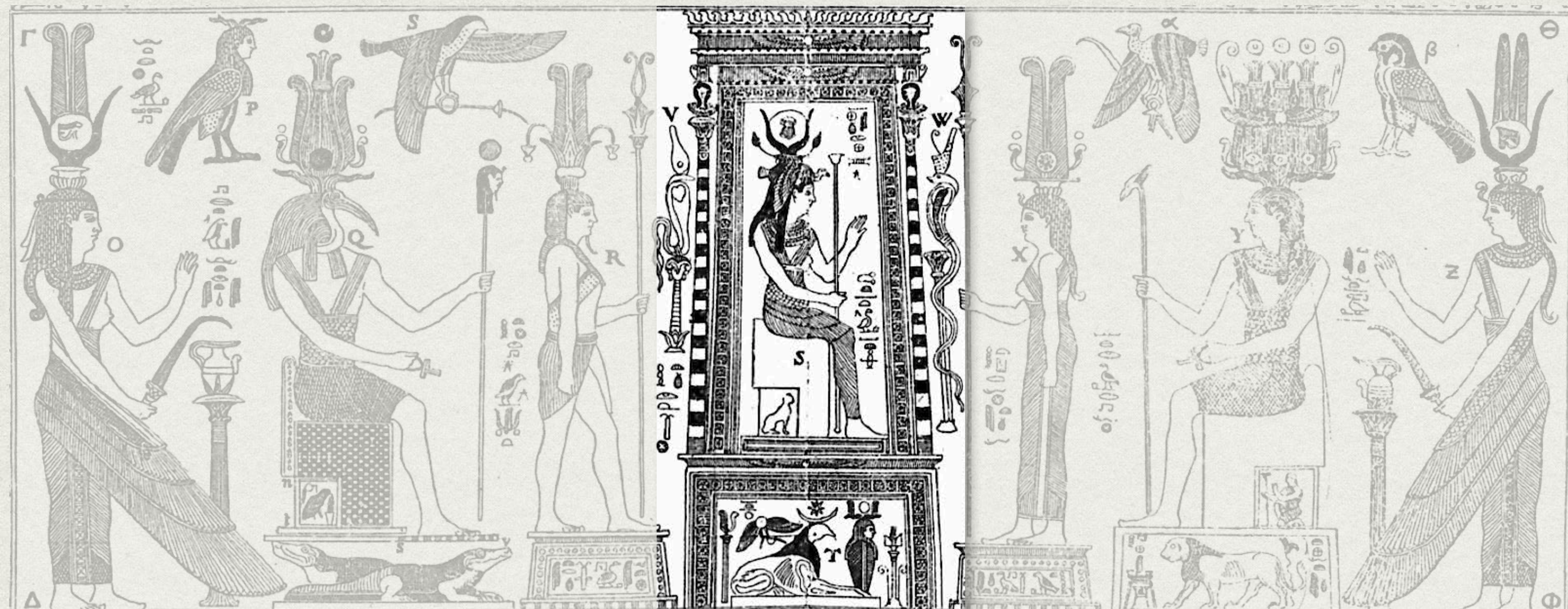
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ה ו ז ח ט י ל נ ס ע צ ק

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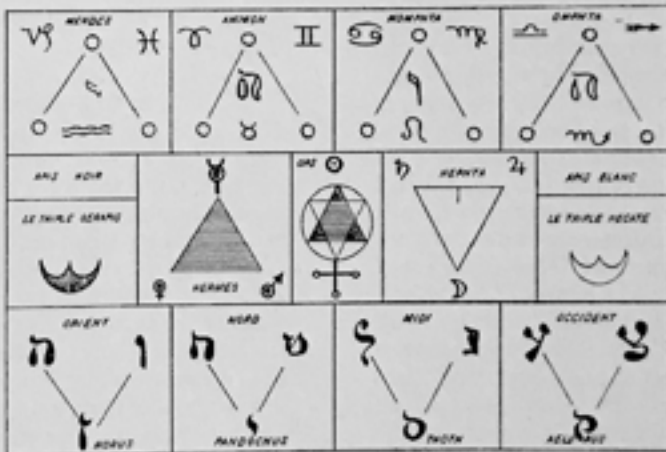
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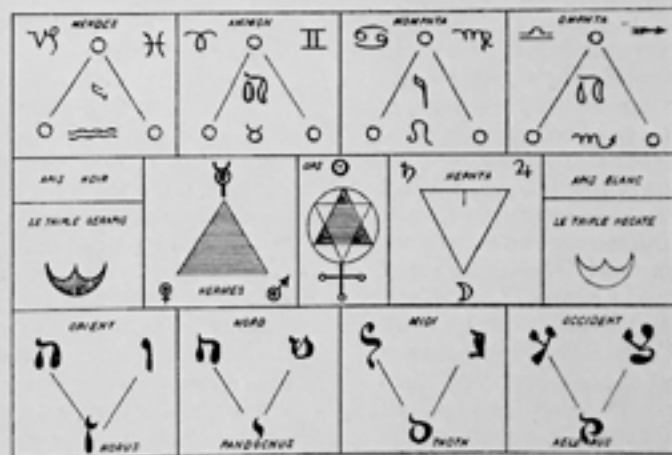
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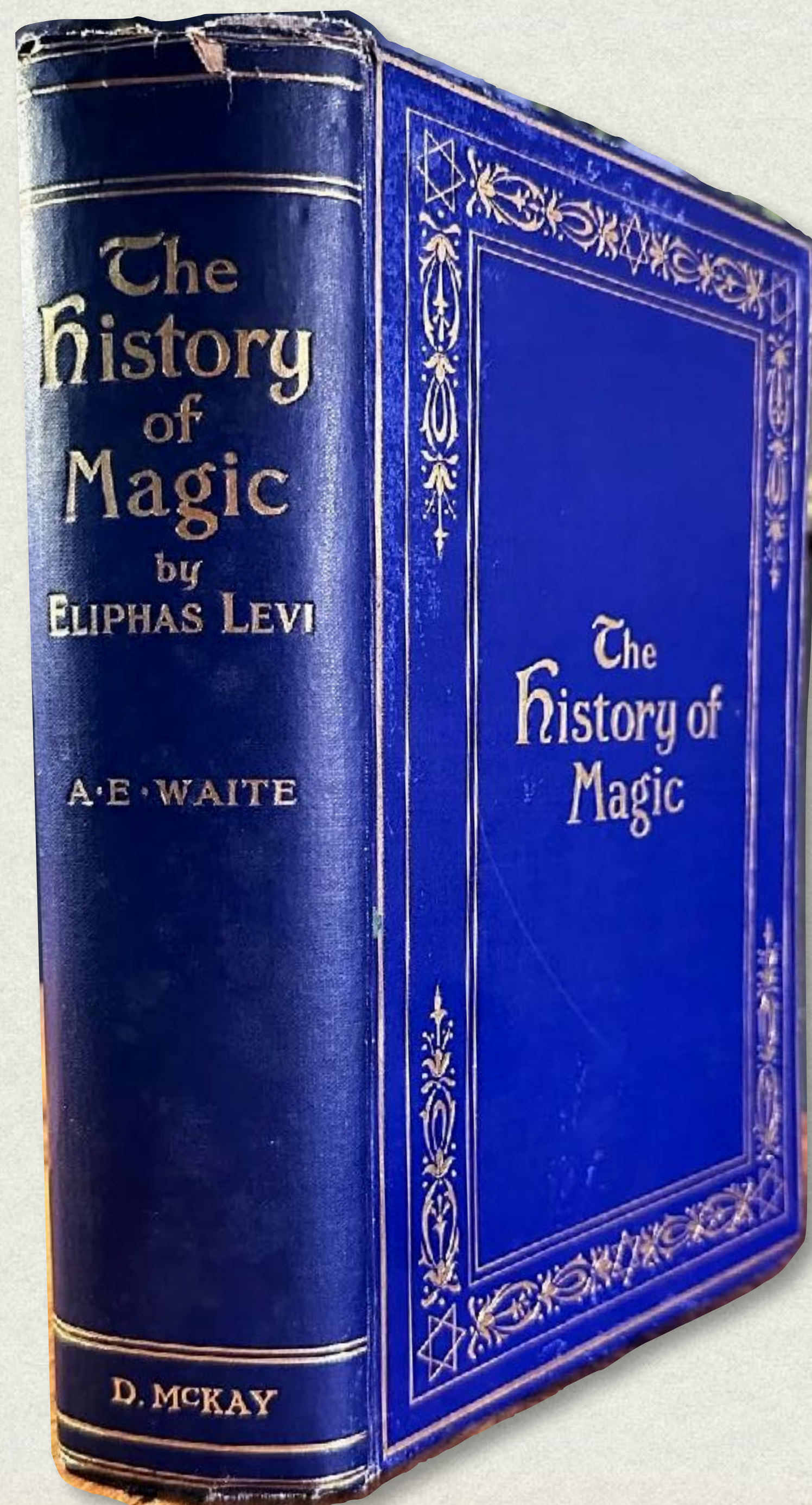
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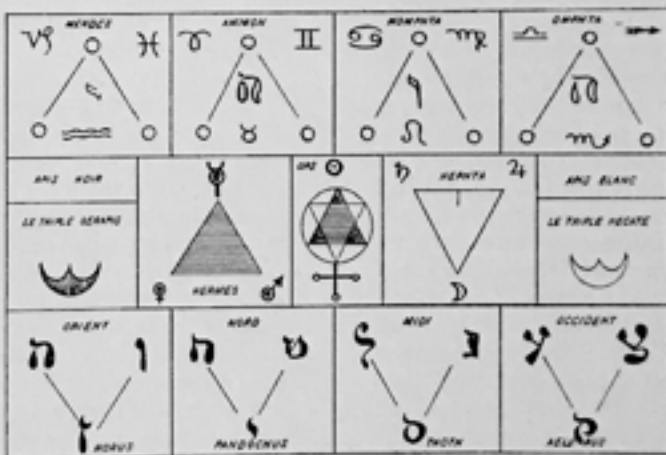
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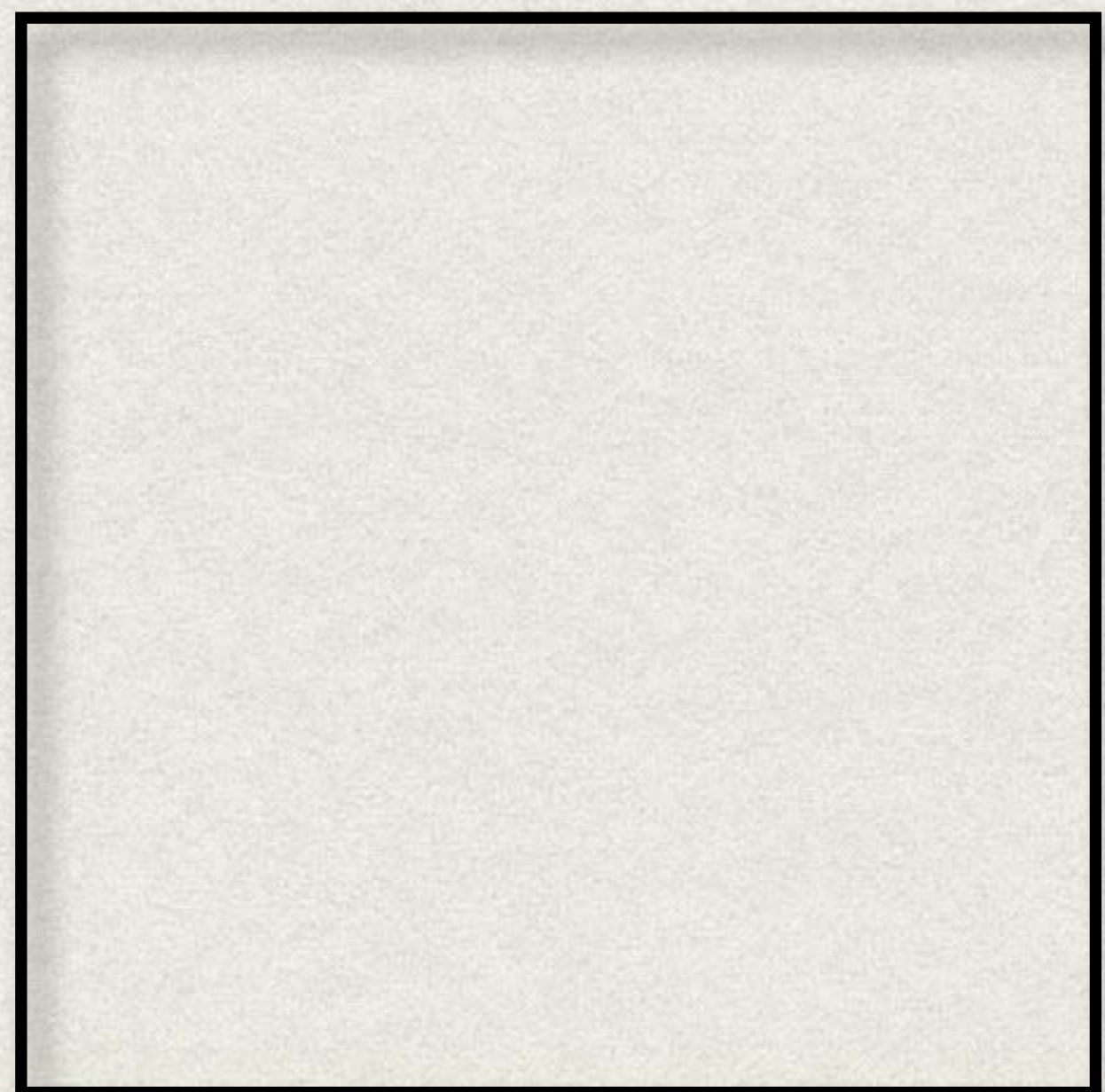
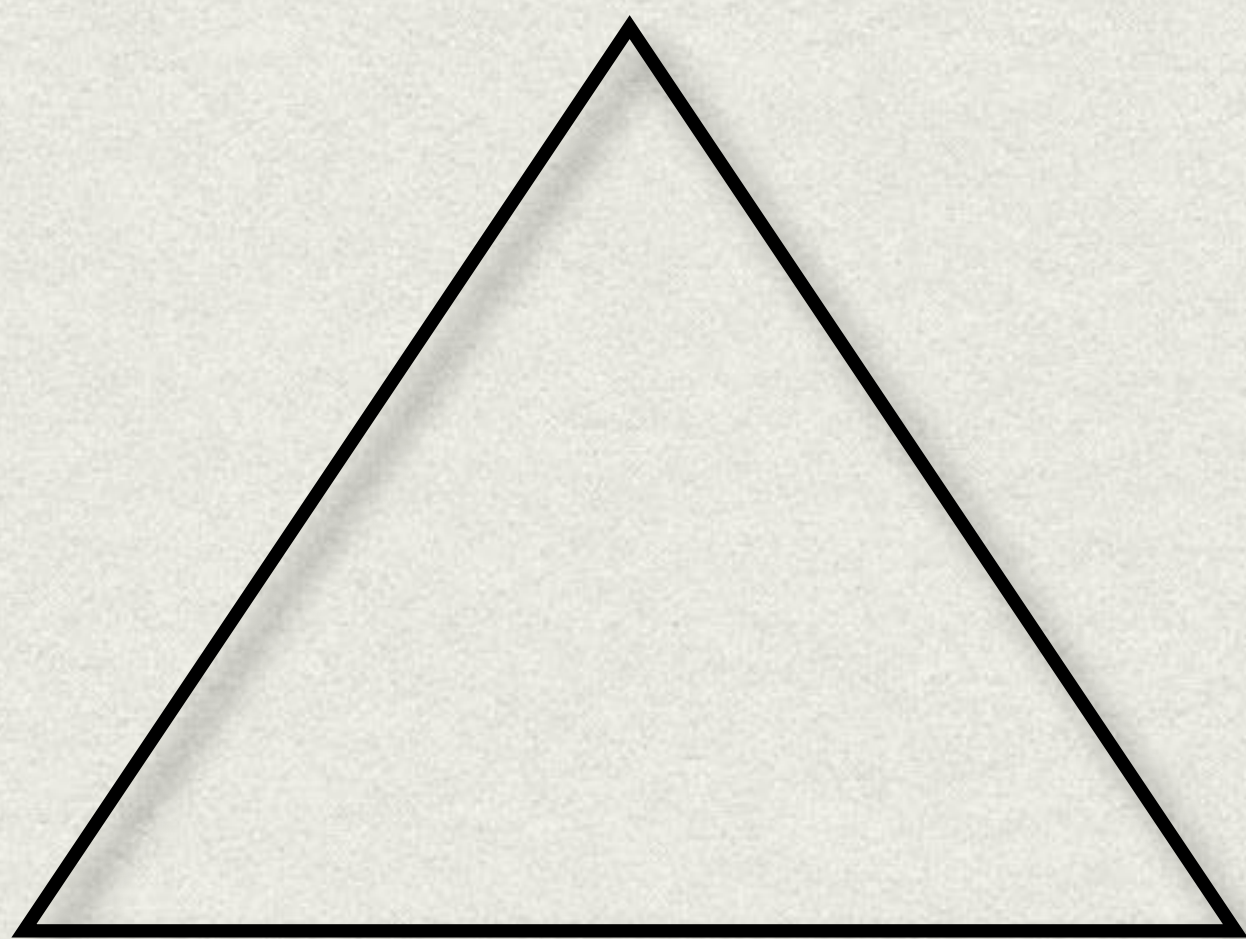








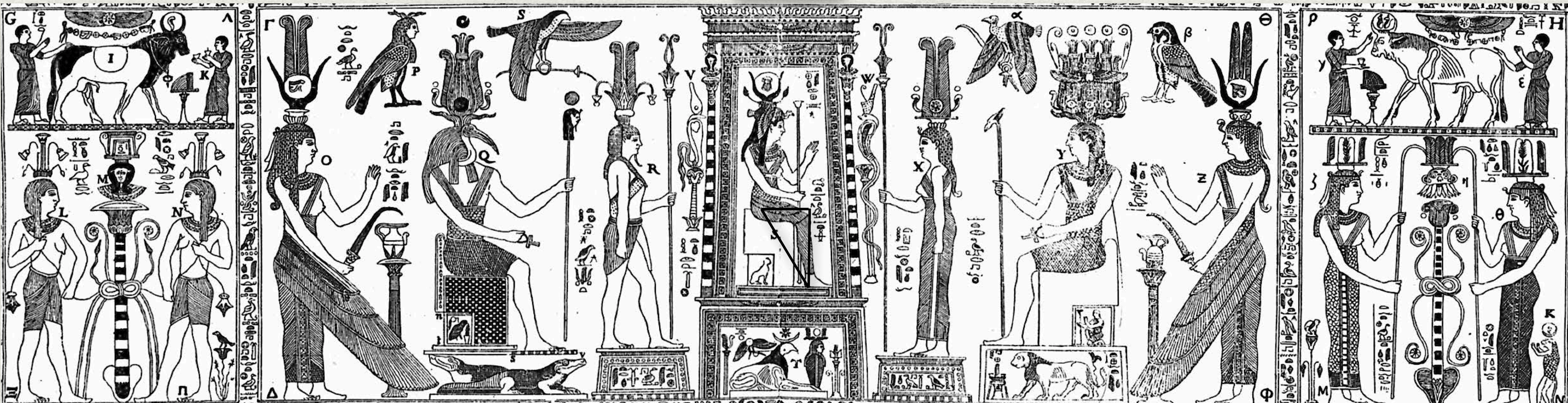








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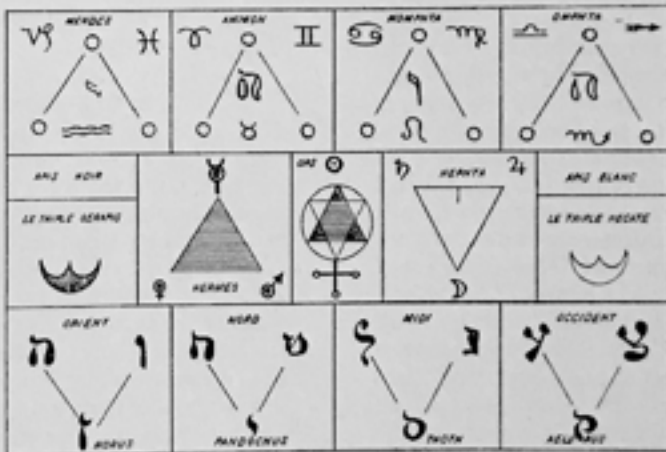
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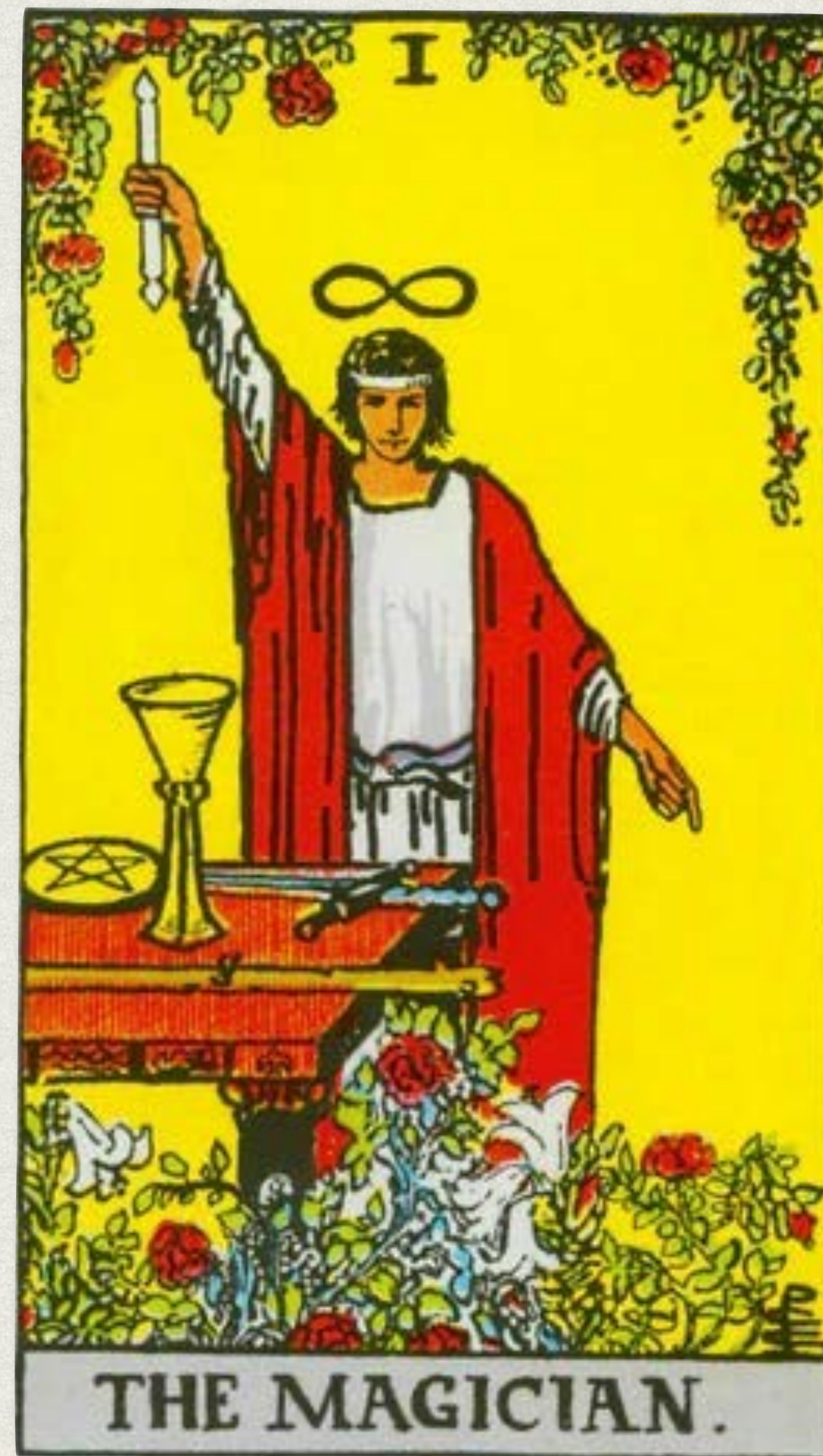
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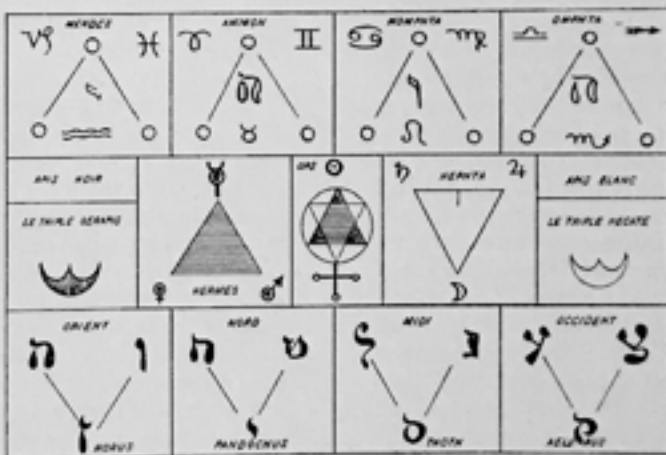
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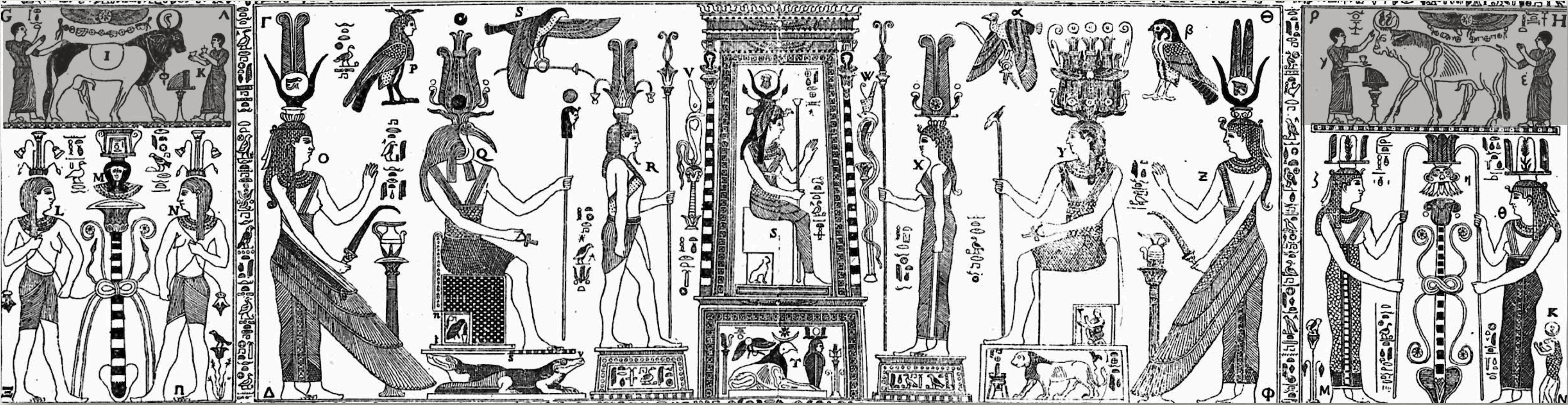
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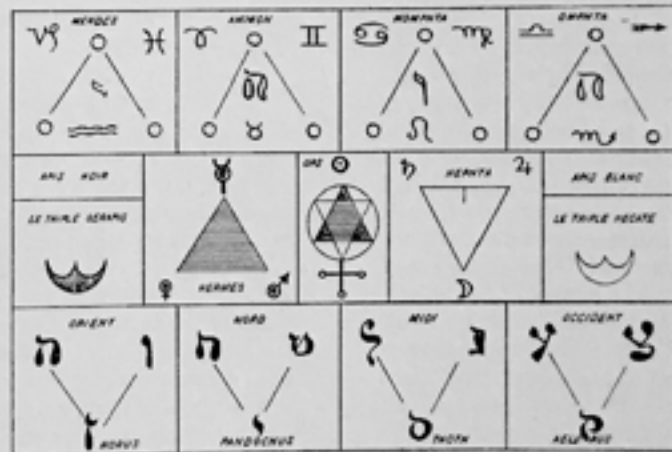
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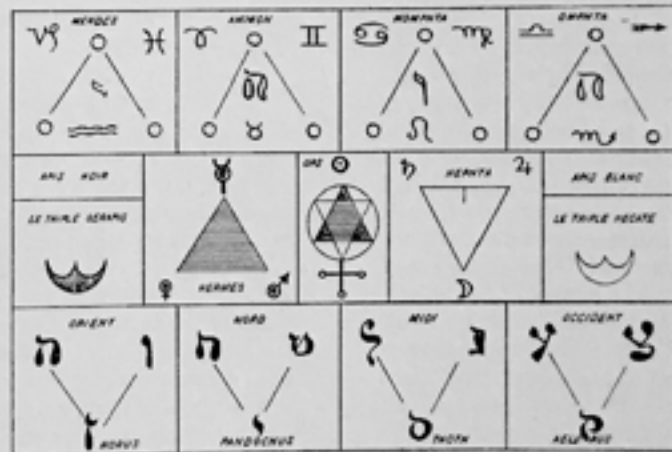
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THE ISIAC TABLET

OR

THE BEMBINE TABLE OF ISIS

BY

W. WYNN WESTCOTT, M.B.

INTRODUCTORY PREFACE

BY

MARY F. HALL

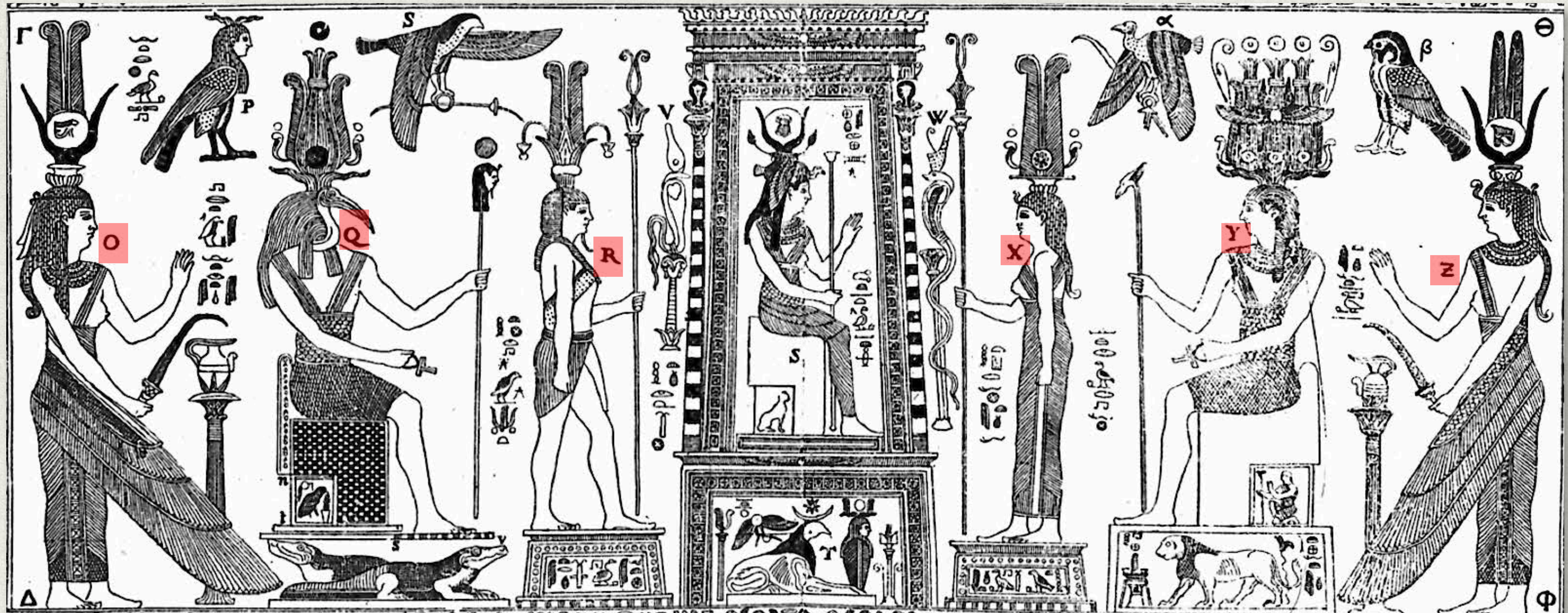




In the centre is placed the most important design, consisting of The Great Gate of the Gods, an architectural canopy over a throne, on which is a seated figure. On the top of the canopy are shewn diverging flames, below is a globe double winged, then a second winged globe, a third is also seen below the seat of the figure: around the sides of the canopy are a series of squares, in which are circles with eight divisions. A column marked with alternate black and white bands and surmounted by a head of Isis, stands on each side of this canopy. Seated within is the figure of a female, dressed from waist downwards with feather markings, and having many closely placed breasts (not shewn in the drawing); on

her head a fillet, and a Numidian bird the Turkey surmounting this, on its back a basket from which arise two Persea leaves and two horns, these latter bound a disc on which is a Scarabaeus. In her right hand is a Lotus flowered sceptre and her left hand is raised in attitude of command. Her seat is plain, but a sitting Dog is engraved on it. Below her seat is another design, an Abacus, within which lies a monster Nepher, part Lion, part Hawk, a Canopus between its fore paws: behind it is seen a Globe Winged and combined with a Serpent, over its head is a crescent Moon, 'and a sun within it. On each side of the Canopy are placed columns, and on each is a Serpent, as if as a guard. –The Isiac Tablet of Cardinal Bembo, p.4 and 5





There are Three principal figures on each side of the goddess, each triad O Q R on the left, and X Y Z on the right, consists of one seated figure, and two standing ones: note that O and Z are

clothed alike: R and X next the canopy have similar pedestals, wands and head-dress: Q is Ibis headed, and Y is a seated female human figure. –The Isiac Tablet of Cardinal Bembo, p.5





This Central Canopy represents the diffusion of the Triform Supreme Mens in the universal ways of the Three Worlds, from which process of evolution this Sensible World or Universe emerges, called by Plutarch the Borne of Horus, and by the Egyptians the Great Gate of the Gods.

The diverging flames on the summit of the canopy mean the eternal and incorruptible supreme Mens, full of Fire, Light, and Life: the influence is communicated to the Intellectual, Sensible, and Elementary Worlds, as pictured by the three winged globes.

The seated figure is the Supreme Mind, or PANTOMORPHOUS IYNX Multiform Sphynx, or Logos, Word, or Soul of the World, and is placed here in the middle, as in the Centre of Universal Nature. The sitting posture denotes Power and Dominion., the Dog is drawn on the seat, because the Isiac lynx is associated with the Dog Star, Sirius, or Sothis: the feather winged clothing of the limbs denotes the sublime velocity of the

higher powers: the abundance of breasts denotes the unlimited powers of creation and preservation: the necklets denote the celestial orbs in constant movement: the fillet on the head, or covering, denotes the hidden procedure of Nature, and the Turkey (the Numidian bird of Martial) of many colors and spots, denotes the variety of created things. The Basket denotes abundance, and the Persea denotes that Wisdom which administers all events: the Horns denote the Moon, and the Scarabaeus and disc the Sun, the sceptre denotes that all things are modelled after the of the Paternal Mens, and the Lotus means the unwearied procession alike by night and day, the raised left hand denotes the ruling power whose every command is fulfilled. This mother of Universal Nature the Egyptians called ISIS, of her they indicted the inscription:--

"I am Isis, I am all that is, that has been, and that will be, and No Mortal has ever yet withdrawn my Veil." –The Isiac Tablet of Cardinal Bembo, p.5



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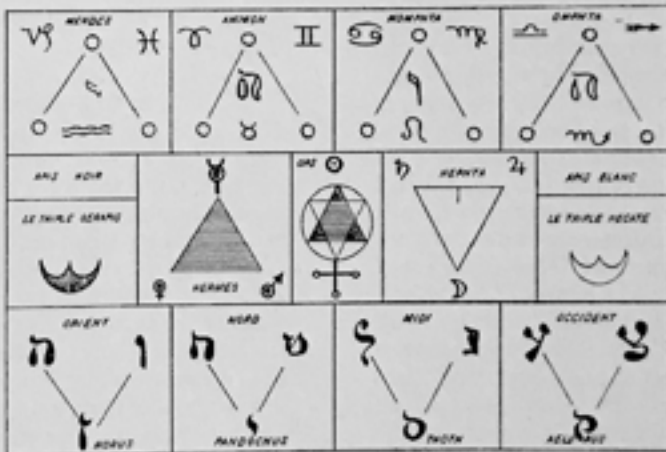
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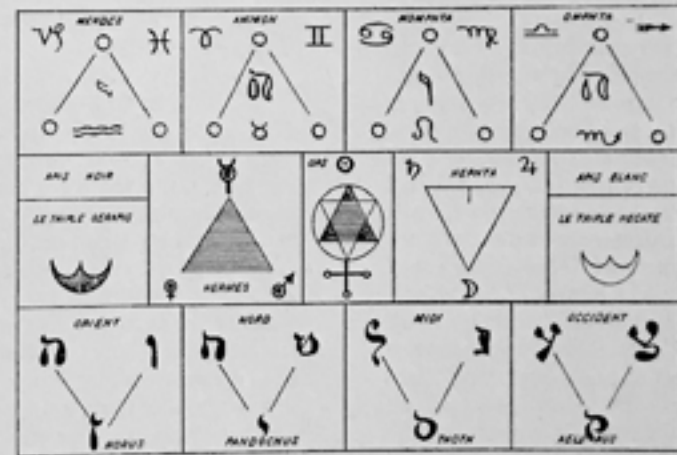
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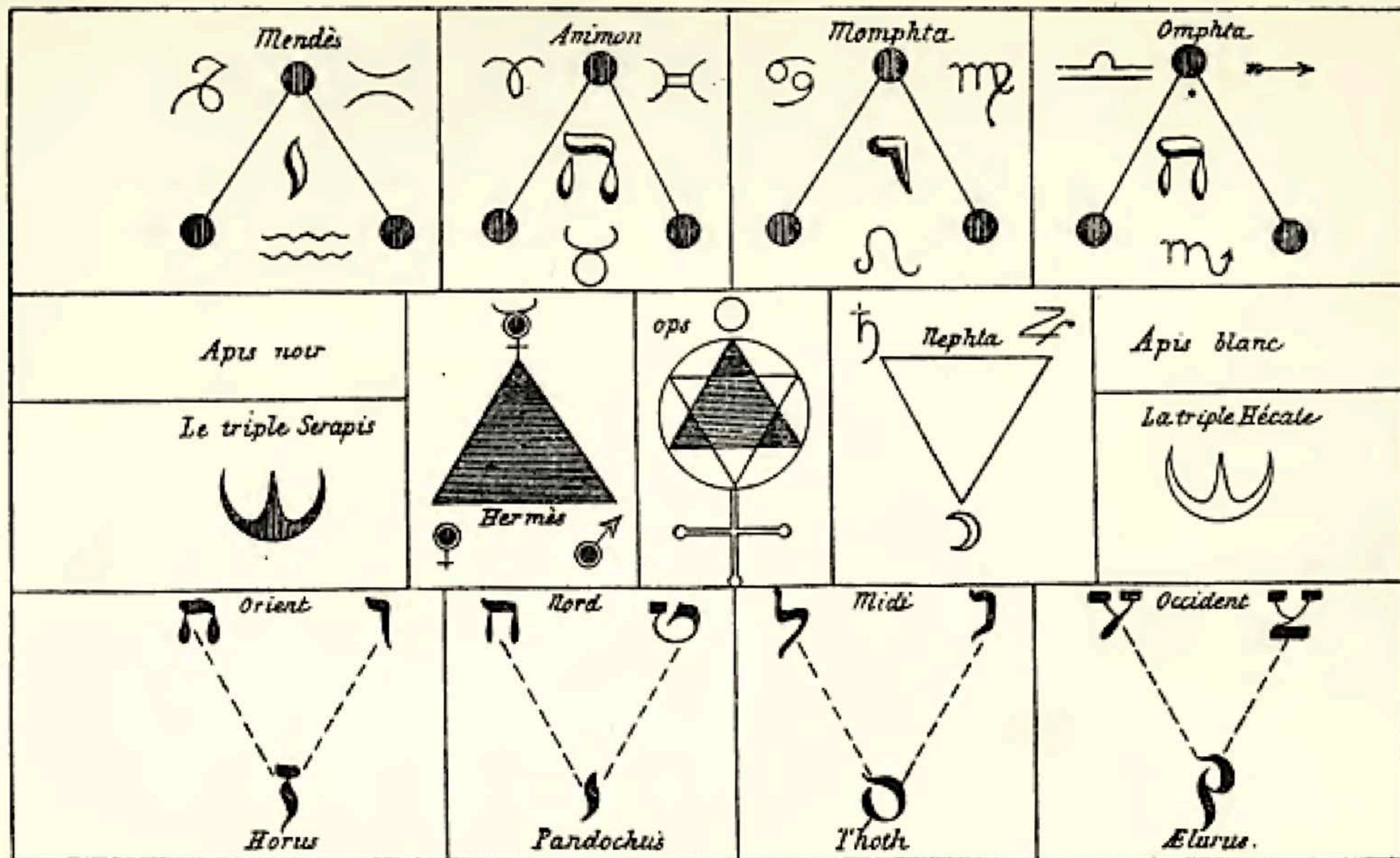
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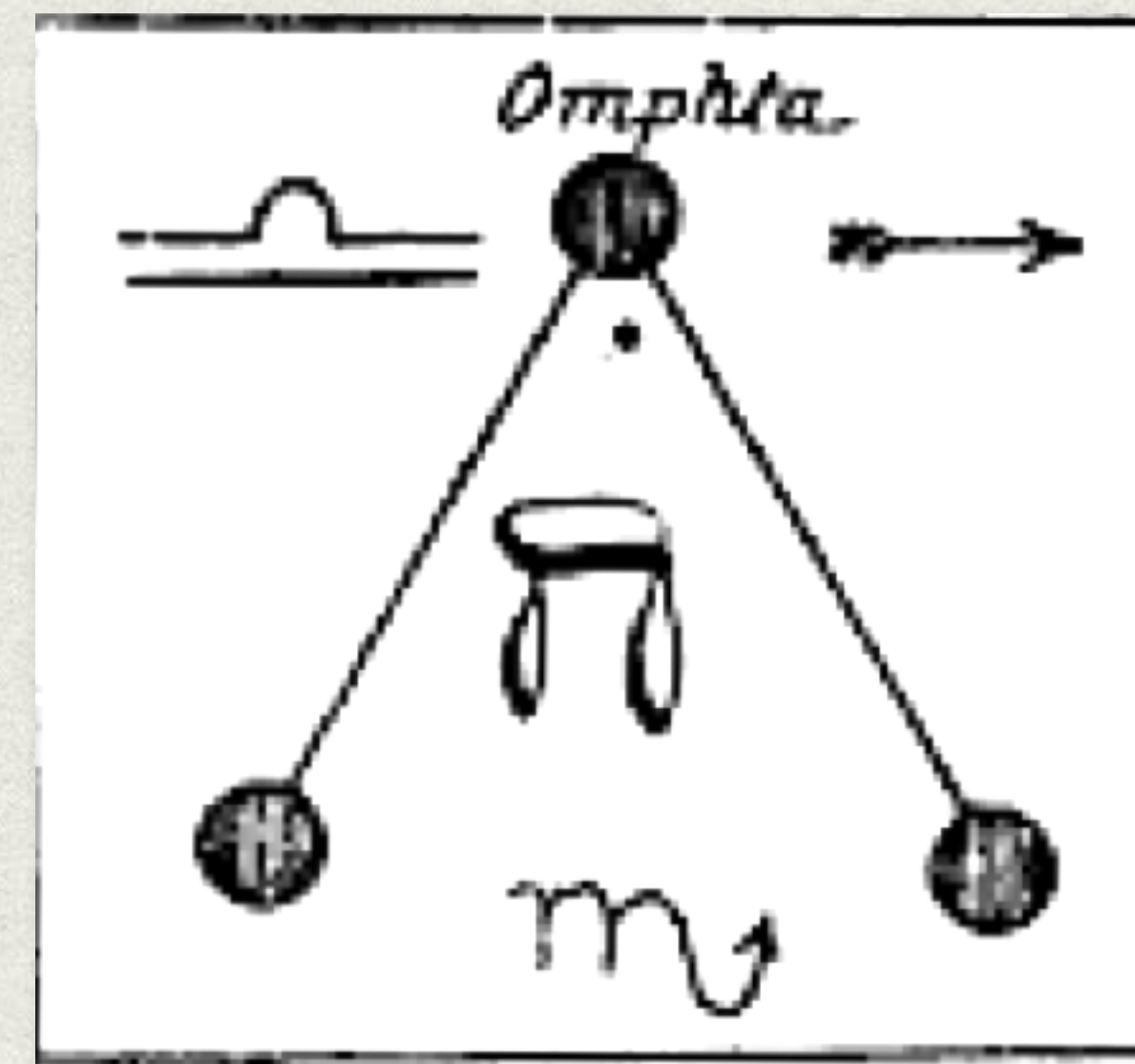
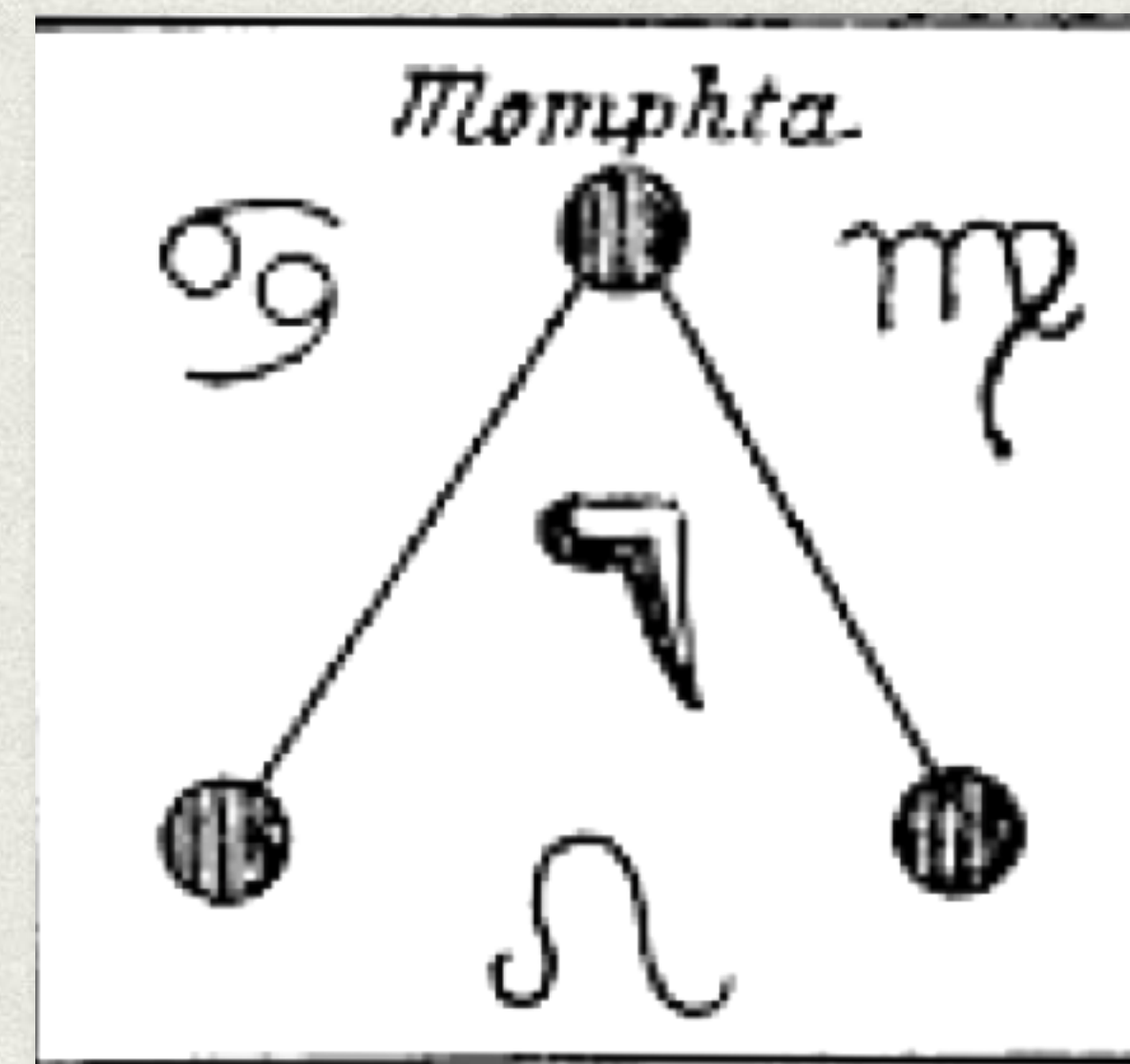
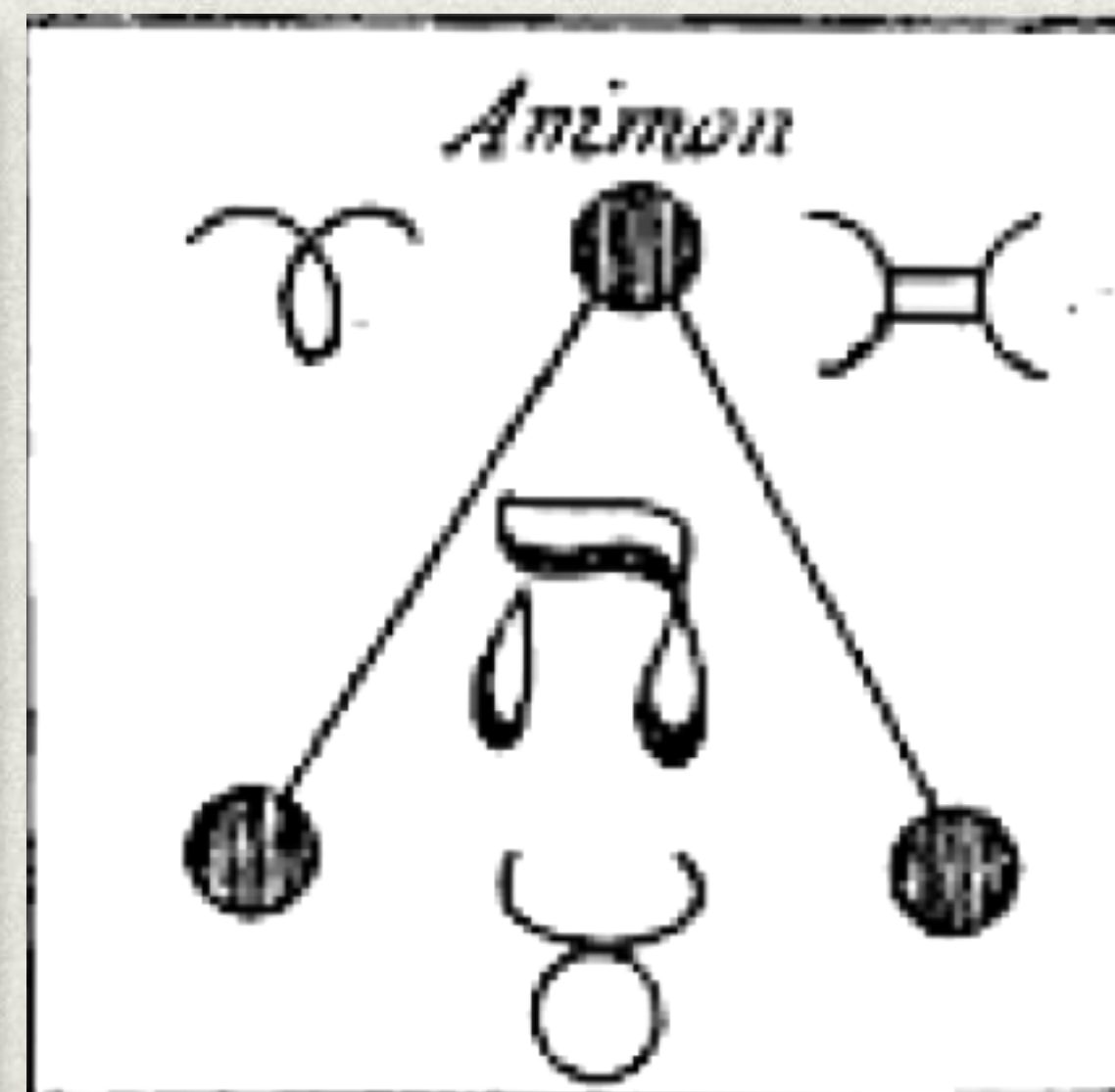
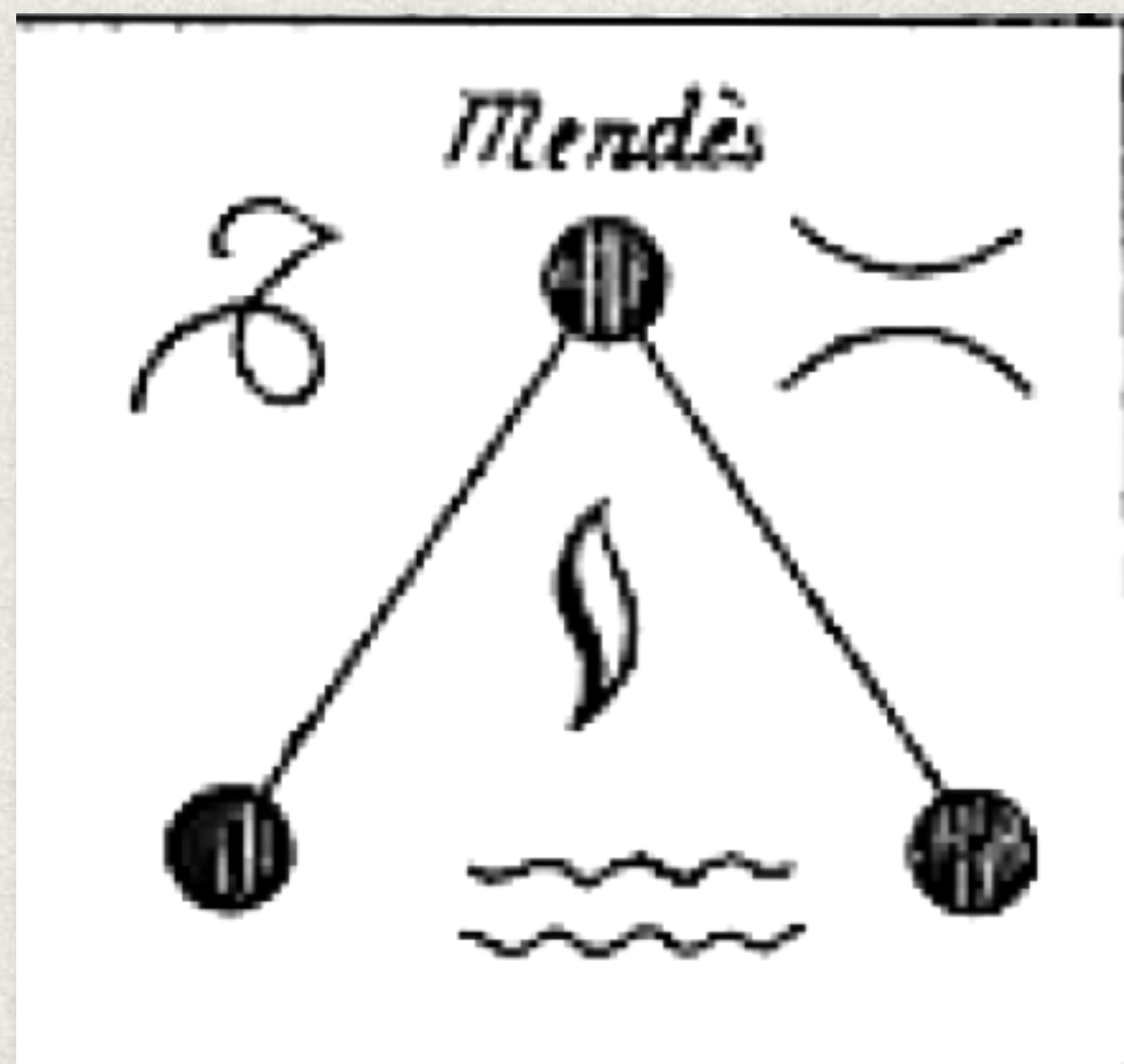


EXPLANATORY DIAGRAM OF THE ASTRONOMICAL AND ALPHABETICAL TABLET OF BEMBO

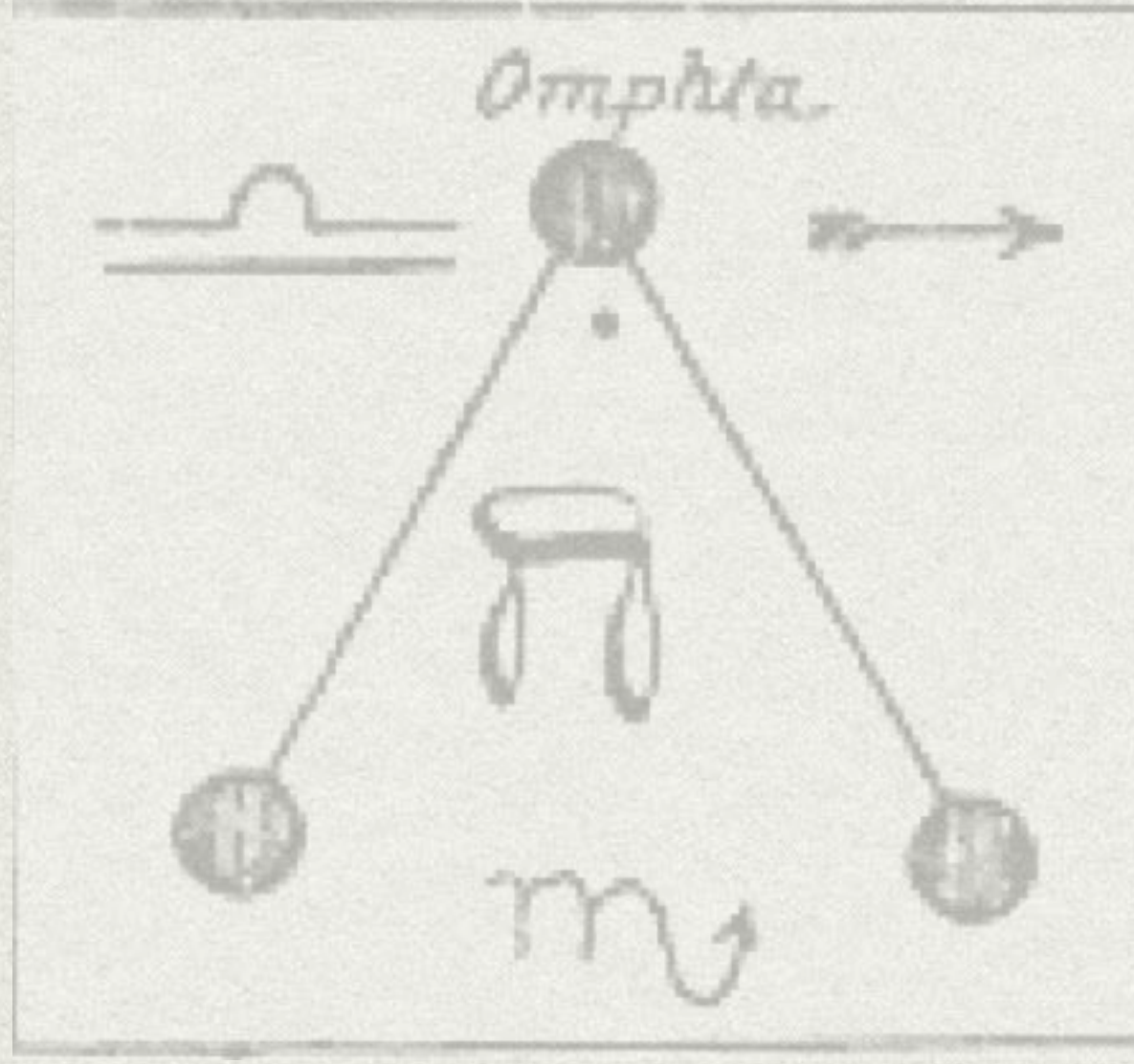
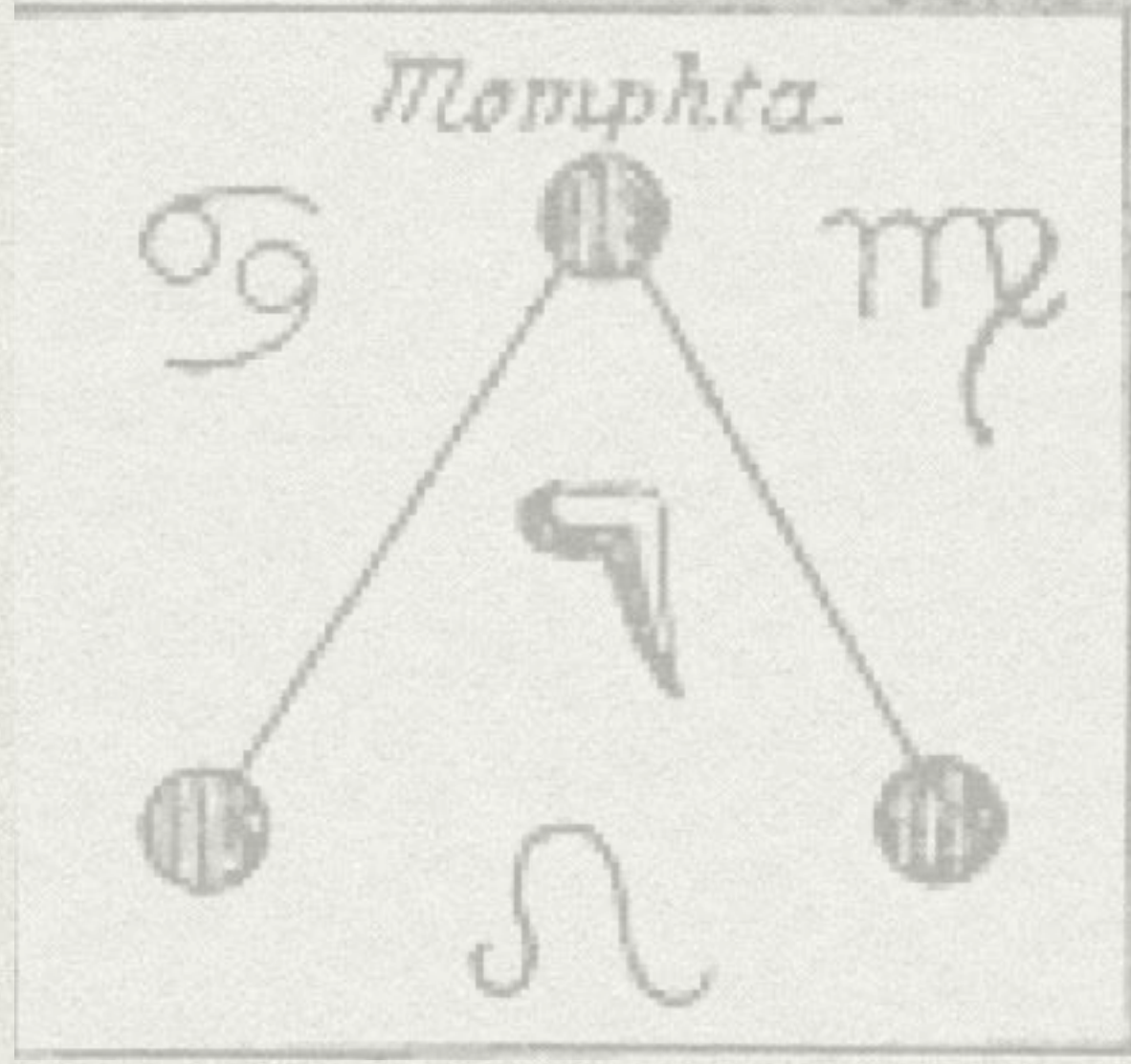
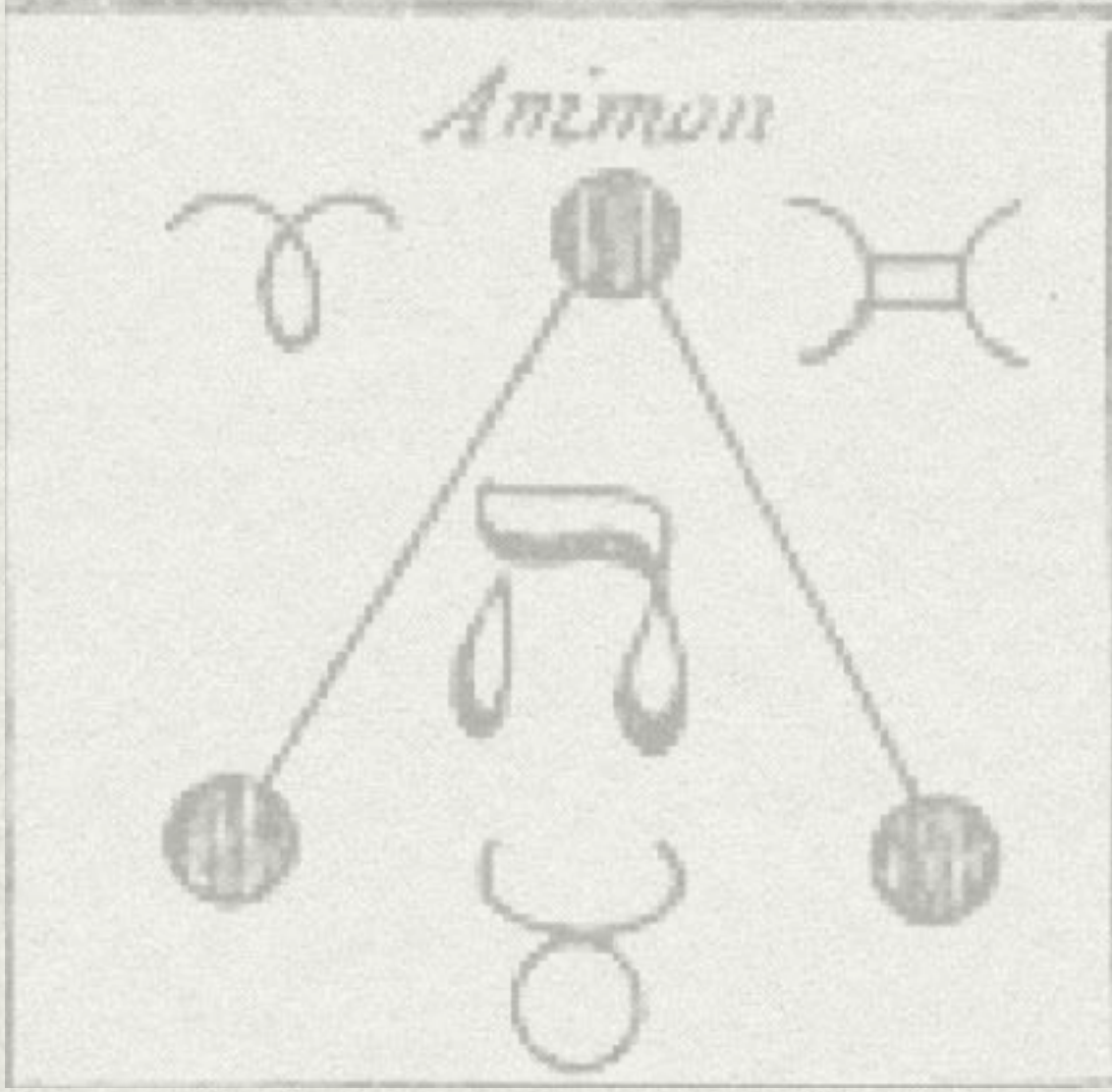
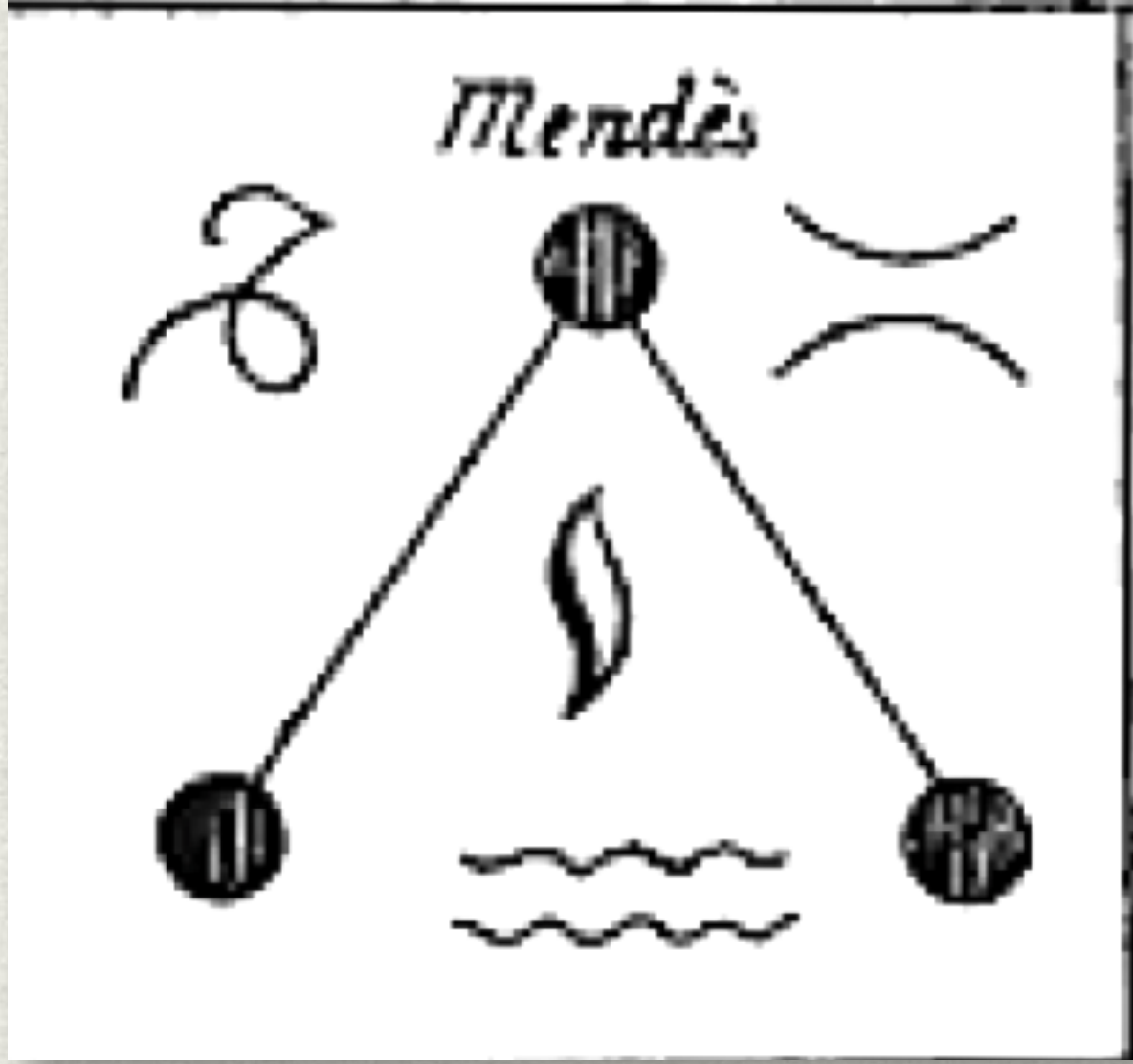








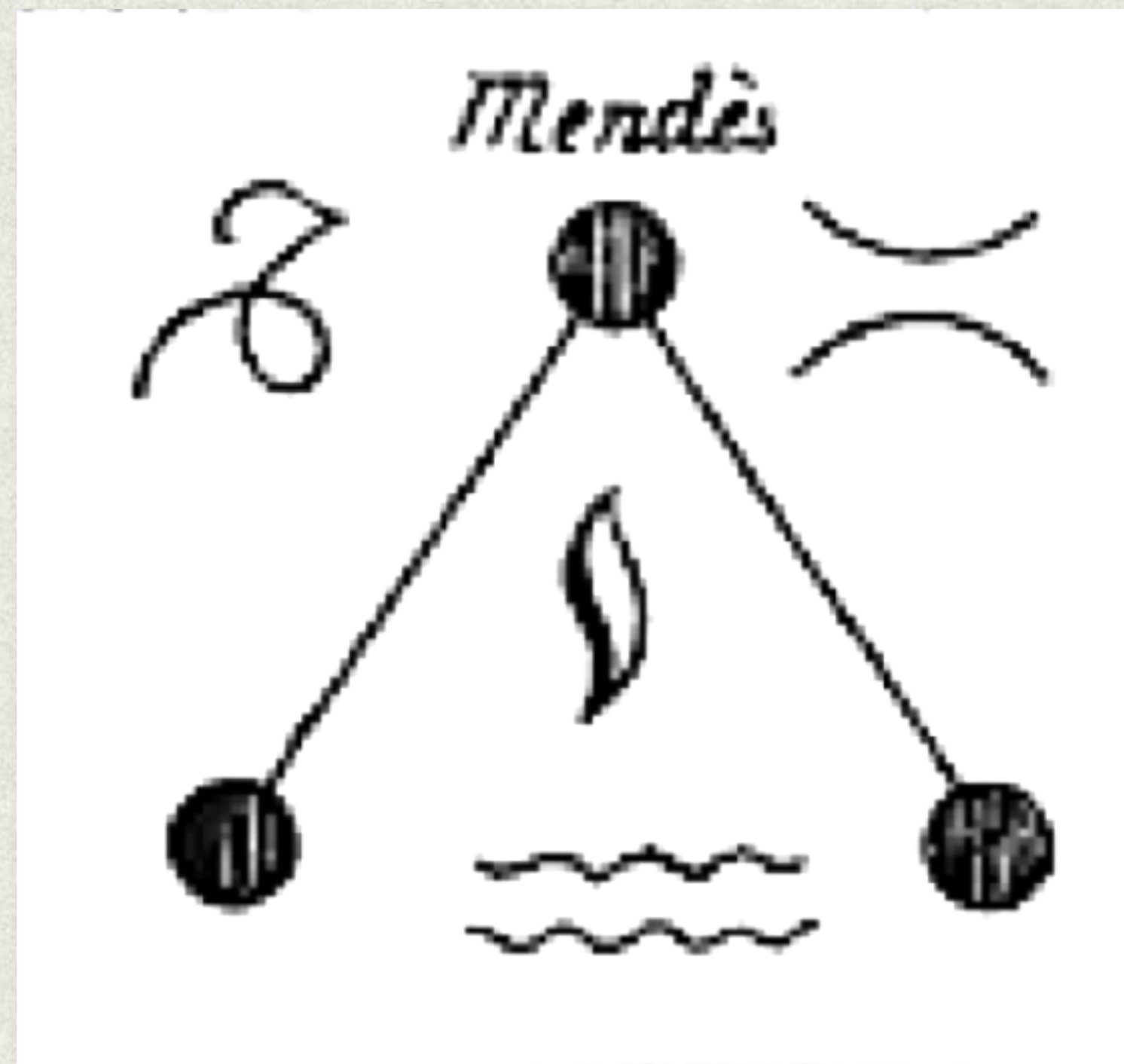




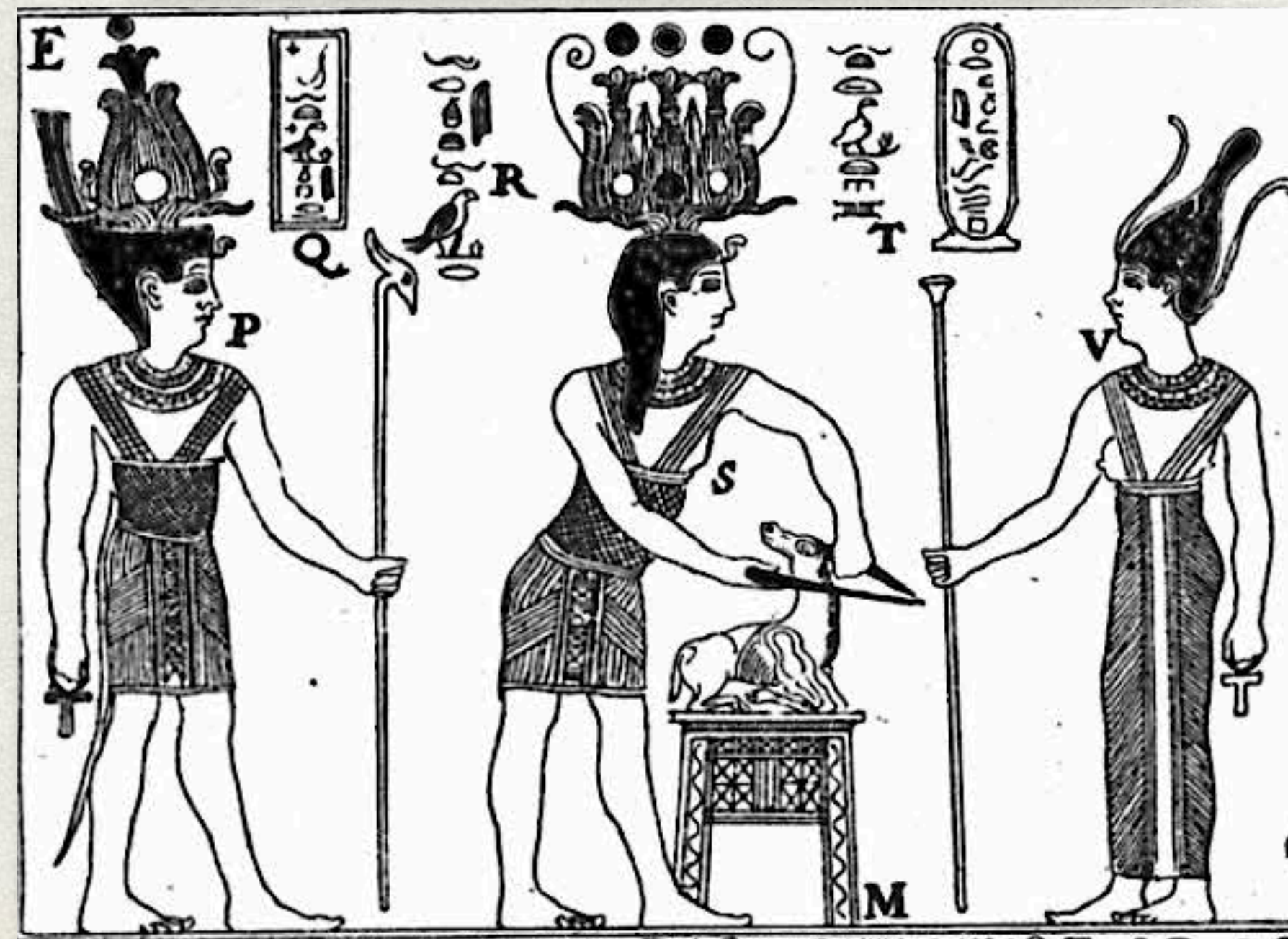


Pater: "Father", the divine or creative aspect.

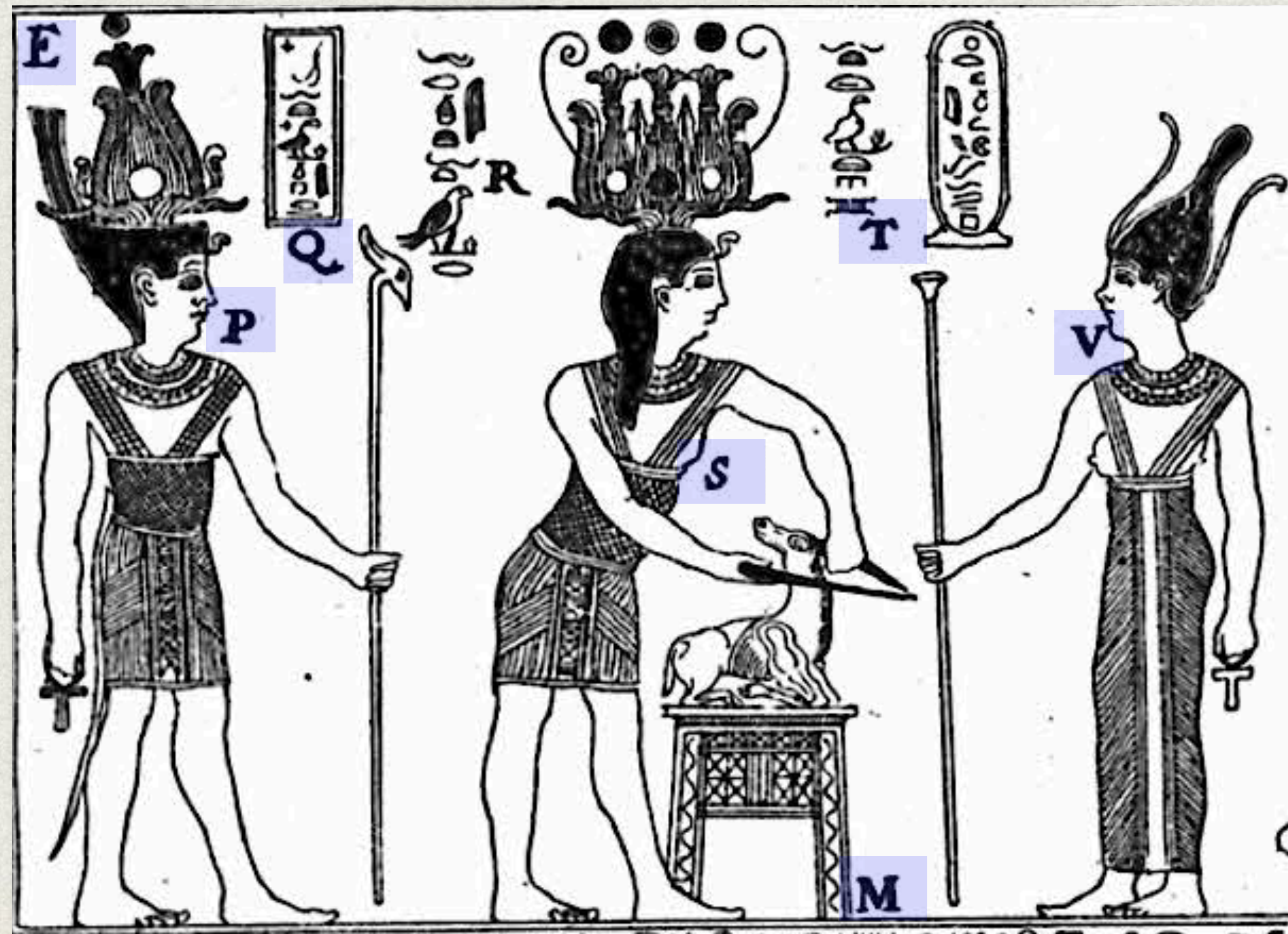
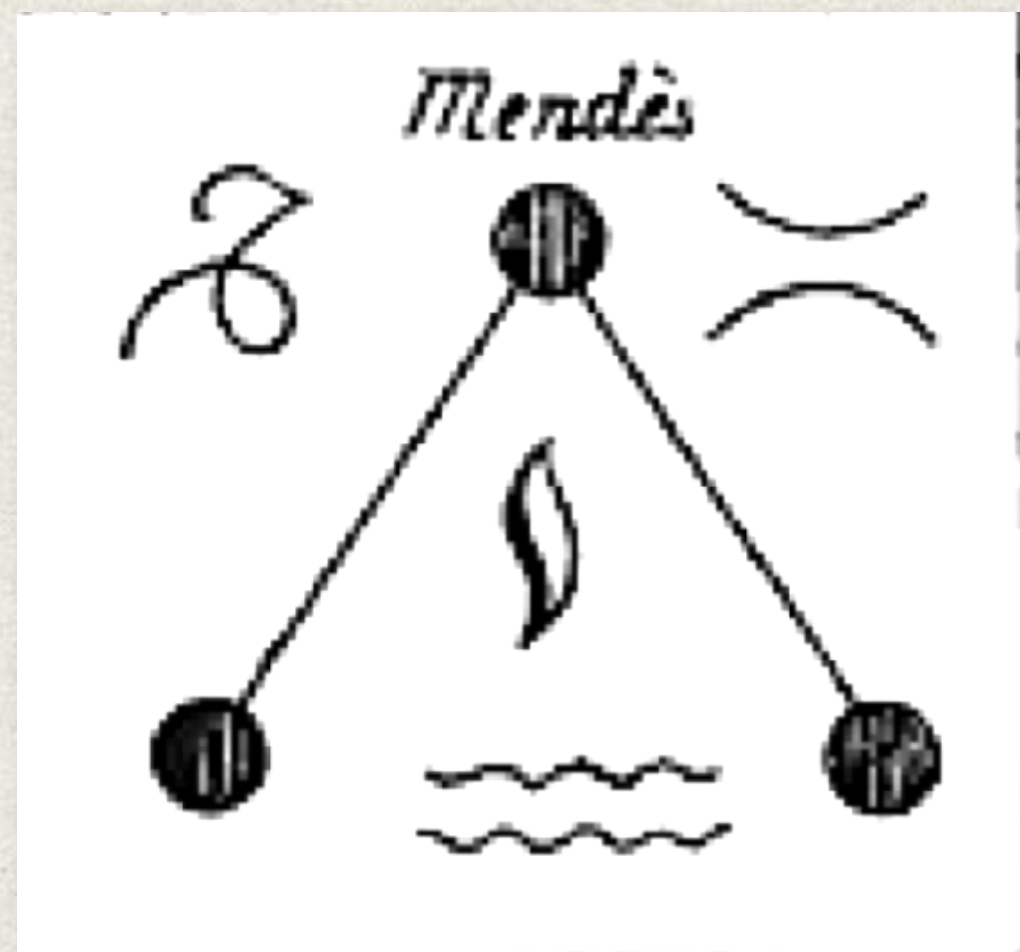
Potentia: "Power" or "Potential", the dynamic, creative force that brings ideas into reality. Potentia symbolizes the active and energetic aspect of the triad, representing the ability to manifest and actualize.



Mens: "Mind" or "Spirit", divine intellect or consciousness.







In the [first triad], S the Pater, V the Mens, or Mother, and P the Potentia, form the Triad of Mendes, the Goat, which is seen on the altar M: this symbol refers to the fecundity of the earth ready to nourish the germs of growth. It was customary to sacrifice goats at this season as an appeal for a favourable season. Capricornus translated into the skies, according to the Greeks, refers to Mendes. P is male, and V a female with tumid breast, each carries a Crux Ansata token of the Apotropaeum Numen, or Intercessory Deity. These are symbolical of the Active and Passive powers of Nature; Q and T are tablets acting as Amulets. -The Isiac Tablet of Cardinal Bembo:7