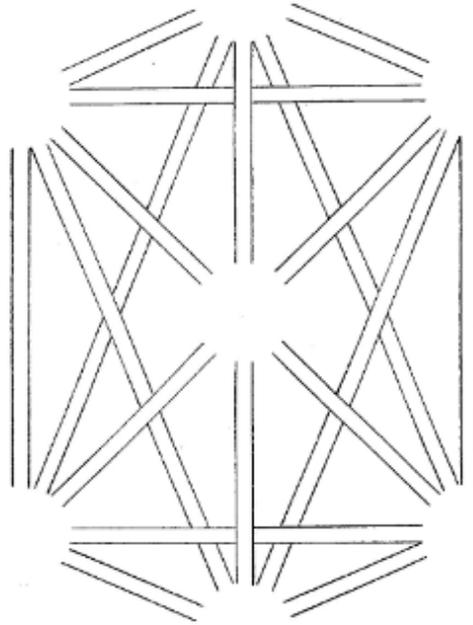


## The Hebdomian Way



Symbol Of The Hebdomian Way

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### Preface

The Hebdomian Way is a modern hermetic ἐπιστήμη (épistémé) - that is, a praxis with an associated esotericism - of our own devising, representing the learning and discoveries which resulted from our individual and years-long esoteric quests for Lapis Philosophicus {1}. Quests which initially involved following another modern but Occult-based and politically-orientated

ἐπιστήμη.

Unlike that Occult praxis, the Hebdomian Way is a purely esoteric, mystic, individual way and philosophy, that does not involve any Occult practices, and eschews all politics and political ideologies, and all notions of changing the world and societies by any means be such means political, religious, ideological, social or Occult.

As an esoteric philosophy concerned only with individual development and the individual interior quest for, and the individual discovery of, Lapis Philosophicus, there is no national or regional or "worldwide" group or Order or organization, no leader or leadership, no inner cabal. There is thus no membership and there are no members, no local groups or organizations or associations or "chapters" or "temples" or "cells". There is no recruitment, no proselytizing, no dialectical methodology, no myths or legends ancient or modern or Occult; nothing antinomian, and no codes of practice, and no personal or communal codes of personal behaviour to be accepted or adhered to.

As described in the section *The Hermetic Quest And Pathei-Mathos*, the Hebdomian Way is simply a personal learning by means of a graded journey of seven stages each of which stages involves a suggested practical task.

The term Hebdomian has been derived by us from the Greek ἑβδομάς (and thus the Latin hebdomad) which word occurs in the Greek text of the Corpus Hermeticum, especially the Ποιμάνδρης (Poemander/Pymander) tractate, and also in the Greek text of Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride* in connection with (i) an ancient Egyptian interpretation of Pythagorean mathematics, (ii) the Greek Goddess Athena, and (iii) the myth of Isis and Osiris. Given the term ἑβδομάς is also connected to Anton Long's hermetic Seven Fold Way it seemed to us an appropriate term to describe our new, modern, but anciently derived esoteric way.

Plutarch - *De Iside et Osiride* 10 (354f) - wrote:

δοκῶ δ' ἔγωγε καὶ τὸ τὴν μονάδα τοὺς ἄνδρας ὀνομάζειν Ἀπόλλωνα καὶ τὴν δυάδα Ἄρτεμιν, Ἀθηναῖν δὲ τὴν ἑβδομάδα, Ποσειδῶνα δὲ τὸν πρῶτον κύβον εἰσκέειν τοῖς ἐπὶ τῶν ἱερῶν ἰδρυμένοις καὶ δρωμένοις νῆ Δία καὶ γραφομένοις.

It should be noted that contrary to modern convention we return to the older tradition of capitalizing certain words and terms, such as Wisdom, Lapis Philosophicus, and Nature, in order to distinguish them; and that we also use variant spellings of certain words and terms, such as connexion and paganus instead of the modern 'connection' and 'pagan', which and for instance in the matter of paganus implies that it refers to our particular, or an older, definition rather than what has become associated in recent times with the term 'pagan'.

In terms of dates, we often use the abbreviation 'ev' which means "era vulgaris" which was sometimes used in English as an alternative to "ce"

(common era) following the publication, in 1655 ev, of an English translation of a book by Johannes Kepler who used the term *annus aerae nostrae vulgaris*.

The Seven Oxonians  
October 29, 2021 ev

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{1} Lapis Philosophicus refers to that which is sought by means of an individual hermetic (esoteric, alchemical) quest: which is Wisdom, whereby Wisdom is meant a balanced, rational, personal judgement and a particular knowledge of a paganus kind concerning livings beings, human nature, Nature, the Cosmic Order (κόσμος) and our connexion to such manifestations of the μονάς.

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

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

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

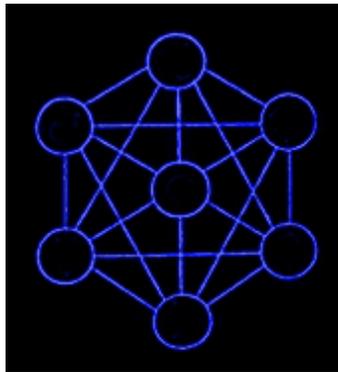
ἀναγράψαντες δὲ τοὺς νόμους εἰς τοὺς κύρβεις ἔστησαν ἐν τῇ στοᾷ τῇ βασιλείῳ καὶ ὤμοσαν χρῆσεσθαι πάντες. οἱ δ' ἑννέα ἄρχοντες ὀμνύντες πρὸς τῷ λίθῳ κατεφάτιζον ἀναθήσειν ἀνδριάντα χρυσοῦν, ἔάν τινα παραβῶσι τῶν νόμων: ὅθεν ἔτι καὶ νῦν οὕτως ὀμνύουσι.  
Athenian Constitution, 7.1

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

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

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## The Hebdomadary



The term Hebdomadary in the context of the Hebdomian Way refers to the individual who is undertaking an esoteric journey or quest (ἕβδοδος) for Lapis Philosophicus by means of following the path that is the Hebdomian Way. The Way consists of seven stages which ancient hermetic tradition symbolized by the seven classical planets beginning with Lune, the Moon, and ending with Saturni, Saturn:

Saturni	Iovis	Martis	Solis	Veneris	Mercurii	Lune
						

The illustration is from a copy of the Latin text known as the Picatrix and which Latin texts date from c.1300 - c.1459 ev, with a manuscript in the British Library known as Sloane MS 3679 providing a useful summary of the text, a table of contents, and a listing of the seven planets.

The Latin Picatrix derives from a Spanish translation of an earlier Arabic text known as Ghayat al-hakim (c.1050 ev) where the seven planets are symbolized thus:



The seven stages were symbolized in various ways in later texts, such as in the book *Azoth Sive Aureliae Occultae Philosophorum* published in 1613 ev which included the following illustration using planetary symbols still in use:



The above illustration also includes (in the lower triangle) the sigils of the three fundamental alchemical substances, Sulphur, Salt, and Mercury, whose combinations provide Azoth, the living water of life, illustrated in colour in the *Rosarium Philosophorum*, {1} an 18th century manuscript containing an English translation of *De Alchimia Opuscula Complura Veterum Philosophorum* published in 1550 ev. {2}



### The Hermetic Quest And Pathei-Mathos

The hermetic quest was described in terms of a journey, the progression, from the first, lower, sphere to the seventh, higher, sphere in the Ποιμάνδρης (Poemander/Pymander/Poemandres) tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, written in Hellenistic Greek, and which dates from between c. 100 and 230 ev.

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

"Thus does the mortal hasten through the harmonious structure, offering up, in the first realm, that vigour which grows and which

fades, and - in the second one - those dishonourable machinations, no longer functioning. In the third, that eagerness which deceives, no longer functioning; in the fourth, the arrogance of command, no longer insatiable; in the fifth, profane insolence and reckless haste; in the sixth, the bad inclinations occasioned by riches, no longer functioning; and in the seventh realm, the lies that lie in wait." {3}

In the Hebdomian Way the seven spheres are as anciently named and in the sequence Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, with each sphere associated with a *pathei-mathos*, πάθει μάθος, where by *pathei-mathos* in the context of the Hebdomian Way is meant a personal learning from or a personal discovery due to a particular and practical experience.

What is learned is germane to the individual, but the fundamental aim of each learning experience, each task, is to develop the faculties, both physical and perceiverational, of the individual with the perceiverational faculties including insight, rational understanding, and empathy. Thus, the task, the learning experience, of the stage associated with the sphere of the Sun involves the perceiveration of one's own *physis* (φύσις) - our character, persona, psyche, being, nature - and the perceiveration of the *physis* of Nature and of the *κόσμος* (cosmic order) beyond, and thus of the connexion between one's own *physis* to (α) Nature, to the living beings, (emanations) of Nature on our planet including other human beings, and to (ω) the *Kosmos* beyond, and which *Kosmos* includes (i) other star-systems in our Galaxy and the planets around some of those stars and the possible living beings (life-forms) on some of those planets, and (ii) the billions of other Galaxies with their star-systems and planets and possible life-forms.

This personal learning by means of a graded journey of seven stages each of which stages involve a suggested practical task is all that is involved in the Hebdomian Way. There is thus no initiation, ritualized or otherwise; no ceremonies or rituals Occult or otherwise, and no named Grades such as the one which some Occult praxises term 'Adept'.

The quest, or progression along the Way, is simply the natural change, the evolution, which can occur in the *physis* of the individual by means of undertaking the suggested tasks in the suggested order.

### **Philosophical And Hermetic Foundations Of The Hebdomian Way**

The Hebdomian Way is based on two philosophical principles. The first, deriving from hermeticism and alchemy, is that there is an inner - an esoteric, *batin* {4} - nature to Being and to we human beings which is not perceptible to our physical senses and which cannot be discovered by the experimental method of science.

The second principle, also hermetic and alchemical, is that this inner nature can be apprehended, or represented, by a particular symbolism or by various symbolisms and also by the relationships between symbols, because of the Aristotelian principle that existence/reality is a reasoned order (*κόσμος*)

capable of being rationally understood, with human beings in their natural state of physis (φύσις) - or fitrah - an eikon (εἰκὼν) of that ordered structure. Hence Marsilii Ficini in his *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda* writing in 1489 ev that:

"Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona."

"How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned." {5}

Which is a re-expression of the hermetic principle *quod est inferius est sicut quod est superius* (what is above is as what is below) from a Latin version (Liber Hermetis de alchimia) of a commentary on the Arabic alchemical text al-Lawh al-Zumurrud, The Emerald Table. {6}

As Ficini goes on to explain - Est igitur non solum corporeus, sed vitae insuper et intelligentiae particeps. Quamobrem praeter corpus hoc mundi sensibus familiariter manifestum latet in eo spiritus corpus quoddam excedens caduci sensus capacitatem - the world/kosmos (mundus) and by extension we ourselves as part of the kosmos are not only material (corporeal) but also imbued with the vitae (Life; Being; ψυχή) and the intelligentiae (apprehension) of that which is above; and that beyond obvious outer appearances there is a hidden, an inner, animating (spiritus) aspect which our 'lower', more mundane, senses are unaware of.

### **Hermeticism And Alchemy**

Alchemy, al-χημεία (from χῆμεία) is the flowing, the changing, and the secret, or esoteric, alchemy was often understood not as a transformation, a changing, of inert, lifeless, substances (metallic, chemical or otherwise) but as the transformation, the changing, of the alchemist: as a type of symbiosis between the alchemist and the substances (ὕλη) or *materia* being used such as the living ones associated with a particular septenary sphere or several or all of the spheres, and which living *materia* in Arabic texts included the Ruhaniyyat - celestial beings - associated with the seven spheres and the human-made *imago* - "a semblance"- by which an individual can re-present them and which representations include sigils.

This alchemical symbiotic transformation was arguably first described in the Ποιμάνδρης tractate: as the quest, ἄνοδος, through the seven spheres and thus as the desire to both know/discover the physis of beings, νοῆσαι τὴν τοῦ τῶν φύσιν, and to acquire knowledge of, to know, the theos, γνῶναι τὸν θεόν, where the theos is later described as ἀρρενόθηλος, both male-and-female. In the same tractate it is written that there are seven celestial διοικητάς:

"Theos, the perceivation, male-and-female, being Life and phaos, whose logos brought forth another perceivation, an artisan, who - theos of Fire and pneuma - fashioned seven viziers to surround the perceptible cosmic order in spheres and whose administration is described as fate." Poemandres, v. 9, translated Myatt, *Corpus*

*Hermeticum*, op.cit

Thus, the Hebdomadary could be considered as a modern alchemist in the hermetic tradition.

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{1} MS Ferguson 210, University of Glasgow Library.

{2} A copy of *De Alchimia Opuscula Complura Veterum Philosophorum* is available at <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=SQ9Non4XspUC> [Accessed November 2021]

{3} Poemandres, v. 25, translated by D. Myatt, *Corpus Hermeticum, Eight Tractates*, 2017, ISBN 978-1976452369. It should be noted that Myatt reads (with several of the MSS) ὑπερηφανίαν not προφανίαν.

Myatt's commentary on the Poemandres tractate explains much about Hellenic hermeticism and which hermeticism arguably influenced the much later Arabic Ghayat al-hakim.

{4} The term batin and the following term fitrah are taken from Islamic philosophy.

{5} The translation is by Myatt, from his commentary on section 2 of tractate IV in *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, op.cit.

{6} The title refers to a precious jewel - emerald - and recalls the meaning of Lapis in the alchemical term Lapis Philosophicus, qv. the *Preface*, footnote {1}. Incidentally, Zumurrud is a female character in two of the stories from the Persian/Arabic tales known in the West as The Thousand And One Nights. She is from Samarkand with her full name being "emerald from Samarkand", زمرد سمرقندی

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## The Seven Tasks

The tasks which follow have been found by experience to be effective in developing the necessary personal physis. Most them involve some physical effort, with several also involving distancing one's self from the modern world and living in a more simple, and outdoor, way.

1. Moon Sphere.

Obtain copies of and read tractates I, III, IV, and XIII of The Corpus Hermeticum. The book containing the tractates should have a scholarly commentary and if a translation is required two different versions should be

obtained, read and compared. {1} Afterwards, write an essay concerning your understanding of Hellenic Hermeticism.

## 2. Mercury Sphere.

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

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

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

## 3. Venus Sphere.

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

## 4. Sun Sphere.

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

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

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

## 5. Mars Sphere.

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

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

## 6. Jupiter Sphere.

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

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

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

## 7. Saturn Sphere.

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

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