

CONSCIOUS ARCHITECTURE: THE INFLUENCE OF HERMETIC
PHILOSOPHY ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF ARCHITECTURE
DURING THE RENAISSANCE PERIOD

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ABSTRACT

CONSCIOUS ARCHITECTURE: THE INFLUENCE OF HERMETIC PHILOSOPHY ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF ARCHITECTURE DURING THE RENAISSANCE PERIOD

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During the Renaissance, a theory of Architecture recognized building as a sacred act, and the built environment itself as a sacred domain. This theory was the product of a philosophically oriented mindset, tainted with a passion for an ancient tradition based in Egypt, a passion that was triggered by long-term exposure to Oriental Esotericism. The link between Theological Philosophy and Architecture was perhaps most emphasized during the 15th and 16th centuries, manifestations of which can be traced in the realm of Renaissance Hermeticism. Renaissance intellectuals from various parts of Europe had an appreciative attitude towards a ‘sacred wisdom’ authored by a mysterious and legendary *Hermes* who, within Western imagination, was the descendants of a royal

bloodline traced to Zoroaster. This occult-obsessed mentality was projected unto the theoretical and practical domains of Renaissance Architecture, where representations of Hermetic philosophy were adopted in the design of both public and domestic buildings. Reoccurring themes of the ethical and cosmological principles of Hermeticism in Renaissance Art and Architecture provide a stark testimony of the influence of Environmental philosophy on the meaning of Western Architecture.

Keywords: Environmental Philosophy, Renaissance Esotericism, Hermeticism, Western Architecture, Symbolism

ÖZ

BİLİNÇLİ MİMARLIK: HERMETİK FELSEFENİN BATI RÖNESANS MİMARİSİNDE KURAM VE UYGULAMA ÜZERİNE ETKİSİ

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Rönesans Dönemi'nde, mimarlık kuramı yapıyı kutsal bir sanat; yapılı çevreyi de kutsal bir alan olarak tanımladı. Bu kuram, felsefe tarafından yönlendirilen bir zihin durumunun ürünüydü. Üzerinde, pagan dinine duyulan tutkunun izi bulunduğu gibi; bu duruma Doğu esoterizmine (bâtînlilik) uzun süreli maruz kalış da yol açmıştı. İlahî felsefe ve mimarlık arasındaki bağ, belki de en yaygın olarak on beş ve on altıncı yüzyıllarda gerçekleşti. Bu anlayışın geçerlilik kazanması, belli ki yeniden canlandırılan ve temeli Kaldeliler İskenderiyesinde yaygın bir antik dünya görüşü geleneği olan, Rönesans Hermetisizmi içinde oldu. Avrupa'nın çeşitli bölgelerindeki Rönesans aydınları Mısır ülkesinden yayılan kutsal bilgeliği takdir ediyordu. Onlar, hikmet okulu denilen geleneğin, hürmet

edilen kurucularına hayranlık besliyordu. Batı imgeleminde, bu kurucuların, Thoth-Hermes-Mercurius'a kadar geri giden asil bir nesilden geldiği nakşedilmişti. Batı Rönesansı'na özgü, bilgi arayışındaki zihniyet, düşünsel gelişimin hem kuramsal hem de uygulamalı alanlarında ifade edildi. Hermetisizmin görsel ve edebî simgeleri sanat ve mimarlık eserlerinde sürekli olarak betimlendi. Tekrarlayan bir efsane ve gizemcilik teması, Doğu'ya ait doğa felsefesinin Rönesans dönemi mimarisine katılan aktörler üzerindeki etkisi hakkında sağlam bir tanıklık sağlar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çevre felsefesi, Rönesans batınlığı, Hermetisizm, Batı Mimarisi, Sembolizm.

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I can't express my gratitude enough to my parents, whom without I wouldn't have evolved into the person I am today. It was them who made it possible for me to obtain the levels of education I now have. Their presence in my life has been and will forever be a blessing.

I also wish to express deep gratitude to my one and only sister, Sahar, who is an unrelenting source of strength and confidence. It was her selfless and generous spirit that carried me all the way through the obstacles and struggles posed by my disability. She, along with four precious cats, has been and forever shall be a source of hope and determination for me.

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Coming to the thesis itself, it's crucial for me to express that my intentions behind this scholarly endeavour stem from both a sentimental and professional core of being, as I consider the value of this undertaking to be both a personal triumph and public duty. From very early on, a passion for the arts had begun simmering, in middle school, it manifested as a love for history, geology, religion, and literature. By the time I received my high school Diploma, a desire to pursue a major in Architecture was made evident, however, due to an eye-sight disability, a less vision-demanding venture had me choose Interior Design instead. During the span of my bachelor's degree, I have stumbled across several influential and inspirational figures, one of whom was Alain de Botton, and his extraordinary book *The Architecture of Happiness* (2006). A course I undertook was labelled *Environmental Behaviour*, which left a lasting impression on me for the years leading up to the Graduate phase of my education. It's worth mentioning that during my years as a student in the Interior Design programme, I was introduced to the multi-disciplinary approach, as most classes were a collective sit-down between students from the three schools of Fashion, Interior Design, and Architecture. In addition, we were instructed to adopt a multi-disciplinary approach into our studio projects, where a major focus was directed towards the mental and physical experience of space, which in turn, brought into attention the relationship between the human psyche and their surrounding environment.

After receiving my bachelor's degree, I devoted my time to the study of Environmental Psychology, the biochemical fabric of both humans and Nature, and how the similarity between the two is essentially what defines the human-environment relationship. This had ultimately triggered an avid curiosity for the occult teachings of ancient traditions.

By the time I decided to embark on a new journey, an obsession with Cosmology, Astrology, Magic, and Philosophy, combined with a knack for multi-dimensional research and analysis, had led me to pursue a master's degree in History of

Architecture, as a dual field of study it's best suited for bearing the fruit of various interconnected disciplines. If there was any hope for me to find common ground between two independent realms of interest, it would most certainly be at the intermediary between art and science.

Besides institutional influences, the topic of this thesis was mainly determined by a wonderful course I undertook in the Architectural History programme, labelled *Cosmological Thought and Architecture*, conducted by Prof. Dr Ali Uzay Peker, which provided me with the clue I needed to build a bridge between concepts of mysticism, tool of symbolism, and meaning of Architecture.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This scholarly undertaking is an attempt to open doors in some of the least charted domains within the field of Architectural History, namely that of Environmental philosophy. Between humans and Nature, an intimate relationship endures ceaselessly, the phenomena of which are of major concern for psychoanalysts, anthropologists, and phenomenologists. This concern, however, is not adequately shared by most architects and architectural historians. The mysterious symptoms of the human-environment intercourse, along with the lack of scholarly attempts at investigating the link between that interaction and the meaning of Architecture within the field of Architectural History, are primary motives behind pursuing this investigation.

It is crucial to make understood, that Architecture is the product of the human mind, it is a physical manifestation of the mental landscape, and in that sense, a symbolic embodiment of specific philosophical conceptions. The mental landscape is shaped by the human experience of their surrounding environment, the lasting impressions formed by that experience represents the foundation upon which a philosophical theory of *Conscious Architecture* is built.

At a time when caves served as means for survival, natural formations resembling a cave were perceived as sacred sanctuaries which, parallel to the warm embrace of a mother, or the reassuring presence of a father, offered a sense of security and serenity. It was from the experience of such sensations that the notion of a

Conscious reality was conceived.¹ The lonely prospect of an isolated existence was the psychological trigger behind the belief in an invisible god or intermediary spirit lurking somewhere in the endless void, and thus the belief in an afterlife or an ultimate return to a divine origin was also the product of a sensitive intellect, that is attentive and sympathetic in how it observes and understands the world surrounding it. Based on perceptions of a *Conscious* reality, a desire to connect and communicate with the divine had prompted the building of structures that resembled those earthly sanctuaries formed by Nature, with hopes of receiving the protection and blessing of a superior race.

The mind, therefore, is the active weaving machine, by which mental perceptions of a *Conscious* reality are weaved, the body is the mind's working tool, by which physical reflections of those perceptions are reconstructed. Thus, built structures that both the mind and body fashion are physical manifestations of the human-environment intercourse, shaped to reflect philosophical conceptions of a *Conscious* reality, and thus can be considered as reconstructions of *Consciousness* itself.

During the course of the human-environment relationship, the desire to be an integral part of the divine collectiveness has never ceased to grow, as sentiments of awe, wonder, and admiration towards the infinite universe continued to consume the sensitive mind, prompting the building of more philosophically conceptualized Architecture, which began to gradually grow grander in both mental value and physical appearance, as keeping up with the rushing flow of emotion and understanding.

¹ An ensouled planet Earth, another phrase for Mother Earth. A notion that applies to the universe, as being a living, or conscious, entity.

The sensory experience of Nature was not exclusive to earthly wonders, but heavenly also, as the wandering gaze was fixed upon the sky, the perception of an ensouled Earth expanded further to include the cosmos, and structures that rose towards heaven were built to accommodate the envoys of a celestial kingdom, posing as stepped stairways between the realm above and that below.

The sky, so vast, so limitless, it seemed to encompass the universe as skin does to bones. So awe-inspiring and captivating it was to witness the delicate switch between day and night, how the light of the Sun pierced across the distance and engulfed the Earth with its warmth, a new-born every day. Or how the face of the moon glowed in the sea, a pearl adorning a black ocean. The sight of such phenomena never ceased to feed an obsession with divinity, as the craftsmen of such wondrous works were believed to reside in heaven.

Over time, several methods and techniques were invented for the sole purpose of observing and comprehending the universe, one such invention was Cosmography, which incorporates both illustrative and descriptive observations and analysis of the cosmos. Math, Art, and literature were cryptic expressions used in the translation of cosmological conceptions from the mental into the physical realm.

A quest to unravel the mysteries of the universe had inspired the production of numerous cosmographies, manifested as astral charts and celestial maps. Accordingly, the geometric form of built structures began to adopt similar schemes as to those detected in the sky, an aspect that enhanced the symbolic value and boosted the imposing presence of such buildings in the minds of spectators, as Architecture was perceived as a reproduction of the living universe. Sacred structures were designed to echo a divine order, the structural body climbs heavenward around a vertical axis, with its members symmetrically assembled around a fixed centre, in a spiral path parallel to that of celestial motion, in an

attempt to reproduce on Earth, the perfection of a divine creation in heaven, for the purpose of integrating both worlds into a whole and complete existence.

For a long time, it was widely recognized by ancient traditions that structures built upon design principles corresponding to those of a grander scheme are sacred, and thus possess an intellectual mastery equivalent to that of the human mind, capable of either elevating or dimming the occupant's state of consciousness.²

Based on those notions, a general understanding of a *Conscious Architecture* can be deduced from the intricate bond formed between humans and Nature, the network pattern of which depicts a triangular diagram, where a link between the boundless universe and the bounded building is established through the human mind (Figure 1).

A *conscious Architecture* is my reinterpretation of a theological philosophy perpetuated by Western thought during the Renaissance period, in which a perception of Architecture resonates with the phenomenological views of modern science. As primitive perceptions of haunted caves were dismissed by mainstream scholarship as superstitious opinion up until recently, as the multi-disciplinary attitude of the twenty-first century has successfully unfolded the factual basis for such interpretations of Architecture. The premise of a 'fantasy based on reality' has perhaps never been more seriously embraced and thoroughly contemplated than during the last few years, which makes the pursuit of this investigation all the more compelling.

The goal of this study is to paint an image of Architecture that is contemplative rather than assertive, where instead of approaching the building objectively, a subjective approach is adopted throughout the investigative process. By the end of

² Ackerman, Ph., 1953, 3-7. Ackerman states that "To make sure that celestial patterns were authentically reflected, early architects and stone-masons were usually closely connected with the cult."

this journey, I hope to somewhat liberate the spirit of Architecture from the bruising clutches of objectivity, which tends to impose irreversible judgment on the identity and meaning of Architecture, either through aesthetic criticism, stylistic categorisation, or industrial classification. This goal can be achieved through blurring the conventional understanding of Architecture, as diminishing any sense of conviction is possible by inflecting doubt.

Ultimately, the intention here is to evoke wonder rather than certainty, as the meaning of Architecture is, like *consciousness*, a mystery, and it ought to remain a mystery if any chance of unravelling it remains to be true. As the Renaissance philosopher Cusanus states, “*To know is to be ignorant*”.³ Intellectual progress is achieved through asking questions rather than seeking answers, for revelations spring from an awareness of ignorance. Hence, to unravel the meaning of Architecture, a heavy dose of subjectivity is required.

1.1 Review of the Sources

Throughout the examination process of this investigation, one issue was glaringly prevalent, which is an unjustifiable resistance towards a free and open form of discussion, the signs of which are most easily detectable among scholarship dating to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The tendency among scholars has been to desensitize the History of Architecture, as rigid interpretations had reduced Architectural meaning to merely the product of necessity. This tendency, in my opinion, stems from a lack of empathy towards our external surroundings, as it allows us to forget that Architecture is not merely a physical place we occupy, but also a psychological experience we grow up with. Another contributing factor to this tendency is an unwavering faith in functionalism, which, at the dawn of the industrial age, had altered the moral and ethical priorities of human society, as it

³ The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy, 2007, 183.

emphasized the authority of objective diagnosis and scientific fact over superstitious opinion and imaginative theory.

These observations are elaborately discussed in Pérez-Gómez's book, *Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science* (1983), which underlines the dismissive mentality that had plagued the field of Architectural History for nearly two centuries, as a misinterpretation of rationalism had resulted in the split between art and science. *Rationalism*, as I see it, flourishes from the contemplation of knowledge, it is an agent of progressive thought, and thus does not complement attitudes of determinism or discursiveness, which seek to divide and conquer, instead of unite and liberate; When it comes to reinterpreting Architecture, the building is removed from the wider context connecting it to its surrounding environment, subjecting it to the segregating framework of *territorialism*, causing the identity of the building to be confined by space and time, and the history of its being completely isolated from that of other buildings. Whereas a rational approach would reveal that, despite the variation in colour, form, or size, the built environment is a collective system, that's interwoven with both the natural system of the world and the sensory system of human consciousness, and thus cannot be objectified by stylistic terms or archetypal labels.

My views on the History of Architecture are essentially shaped by a range of visionary and distinguished figures in the field, Spiro Kostof being a worthy mention, whose book *A History of Architecture* (1985) echoes much of what was discussed in Pérez-Gómez's book, *Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science* (1983). Kostof represents Architectural History as the study of, not merely the selective array of building, but also the collective team of actors and producers working behind the scenes.⁴ Kostof paints a sympathetic image of Architecture

which considers the multi-dimensional circumstance of its evolution, giving the building a voice to express itself freely. Another inspirational work is the thesis titled *Stars, Stones, and Architecture: An Episode in John Dee's Natural Philosophy* (1995), by Brent M. Wagler. Supervised by Pérez-Gómez, this academic masterpiece had successfully established a bridge between Natural Philosophy and Western Architecture during the Renaissance period, the building blocks being the sacred principles of number and geometry. Finally, Lethaby's book *Architecture, Mysticism, and Myth* (1892) is a major source of reference in this investigation, as a poetic diagnosis of Architecture had revealed a deeper and more mystifying dimension of meaning.

It's important to note that, due to it being fundamentally inspired by the subjective approach of recent scholarship, this investigation employs similar tactics; this study aims to approach the theory and practice of Architecture from a philosophical point of view, rather than mathematical, paying less attention to the fact of the matter, and more to the likelihood of chance. It considers the contributing role of all those involved in the act of building, however minor the level of their participation was, with the intention of gathering as many circumstantial evidence as possible, identifying the motive behind the act, and potentially unravelling the hidden implication behind the outcome.

Based on what the examination of material evidence had revealed, it's safe to assume that a philosophical theory of Architecture has the highest potential of emergence in the field of Philosophy, rather than Architecture itself. Architectural theorists of the twenty-first century have relied on ancient concepts of mysticism and metaphysics as basis for their reinterpretation of Architectural meaning, exploring the fields of Semiotics, Biochemistry, and Psychology, for gathering the

⁴ Engineers, Architects, Designers, and Builders.

construction material necessary for building bridges between Architecture and other fields of study.

According to Kostof, the built environment is not an exclusive term, it applies to tunnels and caves as much as it applies to palaces and theatres. The size and shape of occupied space is no basis for measuring its value or significance, nor does it define the purpose and meaning of its existence. The aesthetic evaluation may instead provide clues to the geographic and climatic qualities of the place, as well as the degree of technological sophistication characteristic of the time, within which the building was built. However, unravelling the intellectual and cultural meaning of the built environment requires an encompassing scope of analysis, which evaluates where the building stands within the wider matrix of the city, and how its location correlates with neighbouring structures. It also evaluates the mental fabric of the region, by reviewing the literary and graphic documentation of data, which may provide clues to how the building was used or perceived by members of the society at the time. Furthermore, the investigation should establish a general understanding of external reference sources,⁵ which can bring to light the testimony of foreign entities⁶ who may have influenced the intellectual and behavioural patterns of the region, through verbal or physical interactions.

These are some of the defining aspects that should be considered while evaluating the built environment, besides the primary roles of the patron, architect, and builders. In contrast to this multi-dimensional approach, studies conducted

⁵ Concerning neighbouring regions or nations, or relevant timeframes. Usually, the cultural fabric of particular societies has been influenced by that of different societies to a certain degree, whether via trade relations, commerce, travel, or war. This often is a key factor in Architectural works bearing similar traits while existing in separate regions.

⁶ Travellers, tradesmen, ambassadors, or prisoners, who gained access to the region via an act of peace or war.

between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries had been rather dismissive of these sentiments, as histories of Architecture were, for the most part, written by either architects or Art critics who tend to treat the building as an artefact dressed to impress, where appearances count as basis for judgment, and the decorative ornaments adorning its external skin deserved more praise and attention than the raw composition of its anatomy. Detached from its surroundings, the monument stood frozen, the sound of its words muffled, and the power of its influence unrecognized.

It is thus more likely for a sympathetic reinterpretation of Architecture to form in a receptive mind, void of pride or prejudice, and a tolerant mentality, willing to indulge possibilities. The theory of *Conscious Architecture* is essentially a provocative approach meant to stimulate a transparent form of discussion, an approach that is sensibly sensational, eager to speculate truths, and contemplate facts, it addresses the object of the matter with a reasonable dose of suspicion, giving Architectural meaning the benefit of the doubt it requires for transcendence.

The theory of *Conscious Architecture* owes its conceptions to the marvellous work of Alain de Botton, *The Architecture of Happiness* (2006), and Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* (1975), as exemplary representations of the phenomenological approach to the meaning of Architecture.

CHAPTER 2

WESTERN ESOTERICISM

2.1 The Teachings: The Three Pillars of Hermetic Thought

The Renaissance period played witness to an extraordinary level of mental activity, marked by an obsession with the secret knowledge of an ancient and mysterious tradition, an obsession that was enabled by a long-term exposure to Oriental literature, particularly that concerned with the occult arts and sciences of Egyptian wisdom, which would later become the foundation of *Western esotericism* starting from the fifteenth century onwards.

Western thought was already aware of an esoteric tradition propagated in the East as early as the eleventh century, but it was not until the fifteenth century that the initiative was taken to recover and study the accumulated source materials.⁷ Around 1460, a mysterious manuscript attributed to *Hermes* had appeared, the *Corpus Hermeticum*, which arrived at Florence in the hands of a monk travelling from Macedonia, seemed to possess great importance, most passionately expressed in the manner of urgency that Cosimo de' Medici took when he

⁷ *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, 2007, 113. According to this text, the Arabic-Latin translation movement began in the eleventh century (*The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 26). Faivre states that “Up to the twelfth century, astrological knowledge was virtually limited...”, pointing out on page 68 to the fact that the Middle Ages were already aware of the *Asclepius*, a fragment of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, prior to the 1460 discovery. Based on this it could be concluded that, unlike previously existing texts, the *Corpus* played a critical role in shifting the intellectual climate of Western thought, hence it's the main material source in this investigation.

commissioned Marsilio Ficino to translate the mysterious manuscript while putting Plato on hold temporarily.⁸ With the first Latin translation published in 1471, began the rapid flow of editions, studies, and commentaries of this remarkable work. Along with the invention of the printing press in 1450, the intellectual climate of Europe was quickly saturated by the influx of *Hermeticism*. It's important to keep in mind that, besides the *Hermetic Corpus*, there were numerous literary works that dealt an equal amount of influence on the evolution of *Western esotericism*, most notably are *Kitap Sirr al-Asrar* (Arabic for The Secret Book of Secrets), *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* (Arabic for The Destination of the Sage, also known as the Picatrix), the *Jabirian Corpus* (The Works of Geber), which included the celebrated text of the *Emerald Tablet*, and the Neoplatonic fragments of the *Chaldean Oracles*. And yet, the *Corpus Hermeticum* remains the best-suited reference source for this investigation, as esoteric knowledge had not received the unprecedented attention and popularity it did until the appearance of the *Corpus Hermeticum* in Florence at the dawn of the fifteenth century. The discovery of this manuscript is what aroused interest in former works, prompting scholars to revisit the Medieval and Byzantine archives, and bringing the various currents of thought together in a melting pot, including Neoplatonism, Gnosticism, and Kabbalah.⁹

The term *Hermetic* was generally used during the Dark Ages as a synonym for 'hidden' or 'concealed'. Later, the term became loosely associated with any unorthodox thinking that developed in Europe up until the seventeenth century. And since the common tendency amongst Renaissance intellectuals was to seek

⁸ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 38.

⁹ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 98.

elsewhere than in Hermetic texts for compatible reference points, the term *Hermetica* came to represent the collective body of literature which depicted the title *Hermes*, personalities resembling *Hermes*, or mystical themes of, hidden knowledge, forbidden science, secret truth, occult wisdom, or divine vision.¹⁰

Considering the circumstances of its conception, and the encompassing range of its influence, the date and origin of the Hermetic school have been the subject of intense debate among scholars; According to Renaissance thought, the teachings of *Hermes* were the “*earliest theology*”, and the so-called *Hermes* as the “*first theologian*”¹¹, going as far as endorsing the Egyptian belief that *Thoth-Hermes* was the author of all books, making it difficult to identify which texts belonged to this field of thought, or how many literary works were produced by this mysterious entity.¹² In addition to the animosity surrounding the author’s true identity, the uncertainty surrounding this tradition is characterised by a gravitating allure of mystery, which has, for the longest time, compelled theologians and philosophers to adopt it into their own faith, by the time the *Corpus Hermeticism* arrived in Florence, it had already been excessively modified; the original teachings underwent a series of transformations, initially from verbal speech into

¹⁰ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 30-40.

¹¹ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 39.

¹² *Hermetica*, 1992, Introduction section. Copenhaver briefly traces the history of this philosophical school, using early references of this work from as early as the Grecian period, 3rd century BC. These references depict Thoth, the Egyptian Hermes, as the inventor of writing and scribe of the ancient shrines of Egypt, suggesting that thousands of books were written by him. Thoth has also been accredited with the task of transferring the sacred knowledge from hieroglyphic carvings into written books, which later came to be translated into Greek. Based on this one possibility presents itself, the term “book” didn’t imply the same meaning of today’s general convection.

carved symbols, later transferred into written words by priests and scribes for preservation purposes. The process of translating these scriptures into other languages subjected the original text to the prejudices of misinterpretation and misconception.¹³ By the time these fragmented texts were brought together into a single compilation, the pure spirit of these teachings had been irreversibly altered. Hence, it is a fruitless attempt to approach Hermeticism as a historical or archetypal phenomenon, but rather as a divine symbolic language perpetuating under the symbols and allegories of the ancient mysteries;¹⁴ based on the Hermetic position, knowledge of the eternal universe, is also eternal, the path into obtaining divine Truth could not be taught by means of words or symbols, and that the total understanding of God required the personal experience of the created universe itself.¹⁵ Therefore, while Hermetic teaching manifested in the material

¹³ *Hermetica*, 1992, 58. In a discussion between *Asclepius* and *King Ammon*, a paragraph reads “My teacher, Hermes - often speaking to me in private, sometimes in the presence of Tat - used to say that those reading my books would find their organization very simple and clear when, on the contrary, it is unclear and keeps the meaning of its words concealed; furthermore, it will be entirely unclear (he said) when the Greeks eventually desire to translate our language to their own and thus produce in writing the greatest distortion and unclarity...The very quality of the speech and the (sound) of Egyptian words have in themselves the energy of the objects they speak of.” *Asclepius* then goes on to say, “keep the discourse uninterpreted”. This may imply that the author of the *Corpus Hermeticum* was aware that the fragmented text was neither accurate nor original during the time of its conception.

¹⁴ *The Lost Keys of Masonry*, 1924, 24.

¹⁵ Disciples of the mystery school are taught to pursue a practical approach when it comes to obtaining answers regarding the mysteries of the universe, this approach involves both the body and mind. The physical experience of Nature exposes the bodily senses to the elements, whatever information was gathered from this experience is then transferred to

world as written work at a particular time and place, the illuminating and symbolic value it embodies ought to remain concealed.¹⁶ Hence while the modern position sustained by available evidence concluded that the *Hermetic Corpus* was compiled between the first and third centuries AD, it would be wise to consider that, according to Renaissance thought these writings belonged to an earlier theology traced back to Grecian Egypt.¹⁷

The *Hermetica* was perceived by Renaissance thinkers as a divine revelation unfolded to seekers of truth by a *Divine Intellect* or *Universal Mind*. This sacred wisdom was assumed to hold the key to Mankind's salvation, and thus was sought after by individuals from various backgrounds and professions. The *Hermetica* consists of a series of discourses in the form of dialogues between teacher and disciple, and while to the average reader it may appear as such, a less obvious implication indicates that perhaps the discussion is a monologue occurring within the author's mind; In a discourse between *Poimandres* and *Hermes Trismegistus*, the *Divine Intellect* makes itself visible to *Hermes*, who was in a meditative state of mind, and unfolds to Him the mysteries of creation. After receiving enlightenment, *Hermes* is taught that the key to obtaining true knowledge is Mind, as it is the divine instrument to liberating the soul from the chains of physical

the mind, where it's contemplated and meditated upon. The mind's ability to process recollected data and extract hidden knowledge is what Hermetic thought glorifies as the liberating and illuminating role of the mind, as it comprehends God through reason.

¹⁶ *Hermetica*, 1992, 37 and 50. Concerning the nature of sacred knowledge, or the knowledge of god, the text states "This thing cannot be taught, nor can it be seen through any elementary fabrication that we use here below." Further explaining that god can be seen with bodily sight as a material cosmos, but can only be understood through the mind's eye which is, like divine essence, incorporeal.

¹⁷ *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, 2007, 147.

existence.¹⁸ According to the *Hermetica*, the path into salvation is a journey involving both the mind and body, which entails a very strict and comprehensive process of initiation.¹⁹

Hermetic philosophy presents a threefold cosmology, in which the *Trinity* is a dominant theme, and a special emphasis on number three is potent.²⁰ According to the text, the universe was created by the *Uncreated Creator*, otherwise referred to as the *Master Architect*, with the assistance of the *Created Creator*, or *Master Builder*, and their *Created Creation*, which contains troops of *Craftsmen* and their *Craftworks*. *Hermes* is depicted as the *Master Builder*, son of the father, sent into the material realm to establish order and coherence. Man, having been created by the *Master Builder*, is the grandchild of the father, a fellow *craftsman* and active participant in the divine brotherhood.²¹ The created universe is stated to have four gates that are represented by four essential elements (fire, water, air, and earth), which are the building blocks of the cosmos, the physical body of the *Master Architect*, and material manifestation of His Temple (Figure 2).²²

¹⁸ *Hermetica*, 1992, 1-8.

¹⁹ *Hermetica*, 1992, 31. A vague indication to what the attainment of enlightenment might imply is that “the knowledge of it is divine silence and suppression of all the senses...He stays still, all bodily senses and motions forgotten. Having illuminated all his mind, this beauty kindles his whole soul and by means of body draws it upward, and beauty changes his whole person into essence.”

²⁰ *Hermetica*, 1992, 26, 59, 72.

²¹ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 16, 78.

²² *Hermetica*, 1992, 63.

Thus, the Hermetic *Trinity*, parallel to that of the Christian faith, represents the sympathetic bond between soul, mind, and body, in resonance with the statement “*God is One in essence, yet three in aspect*”.²³ Another reference to number three can be traced in the title *Hermes Trismegistus* (Hermes Thrice-Greatest), interpreted by some scholars as a reference to three persons sharing the name *Hermes*, or three states of consciousness that *Hermes* experienced through His journey to heaven.²⁴ It could also be argued, that number three symbolizes the three stages of human evolution: childhood, maturity, and decay, regardless, this number held both theological and cosmological significance in *Western esotericism*.

Besides the *Trinity*, *Dualism* was an equally significant principle, in which the *mirror* theme is strongly emphasised.²⁵ *Hermeticism* is a twofold philosophy, it describes the universe as the offspring of divine marriage between the conscious light and lifeless Matter, indicating that creation is the embodiment of two opposite forces, and thus contains both light and darkness. The *Hermetic* text depicts the fall of Man as an intimate encounter between the human soul and Nature, in which a binding affair resulted in the imprisonment of the soul within a physical body.²⁶ Hence a human is twofold, possessing an immortal soul confined within a mortal body, the stronger desire grows for the materialistic, the lower

²³ *Black Athena*, 1987, 131; *The Lost Keys of Freemasonry*, 1924, 34.

²⁴ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 29. The three Hermetic phases may also be interpreted as childhood, maturity, and decay. Or simply: birth, death, and rebirth. In Hermetic terms, the three phases are more specifically referred to as descent, conversion, and reascension.

²⁵ *Hermetica*, 1992, 62; *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 57.

²⁶ *Hermetica*, 1992, 3.

consciousness sinks into oblivion, and more vulnerable the human soul becomes to the torment of fate and death.²⁷ In this context, the Mind is a double-edged sword, capable of either releasing or suppressing the divine essence within the human being; where choosing to *think* enables consciousness to *know* and break free from ignorance, but choosing to *not think* dims consciousness, trapping it within an endless cycle of illusion. Thus, the intention of the *Hermetic school* was to guide the student through a stepped path leading to the liberation of the soul from its bodily prison, which could only be possible by elevating the mind into higher levels of consciousness.²⁸ Hence practises such as asceticism, celibacy, and self-mutilation, are common in this culture.²⁹

Lastly, is the concept of *universalism*, which all previous principles revolve around and stem from, is supported by the theory of *Emanationism*, and articulated in the statement “*the All is One, and the One is All*”.³⁰ This conclusive lesson embodies both the theological and cosmological dimensions of *Hermetic Philosophy*; According to the *Corpus Hermeticum*, the universe emerged from the original *monad*³¹, in a manner parallel to rays of light emanating from a single star. Thus, all created works in the universe are connected by way of sharing One point of origin, like the multitude of cells of a single organism, the macrocosmic

²⁷ *Hermetica*, 1992, 16, 24, 32.

²⁸ *Hermetica*, 1992, 5, 6, 24. The phrase “vice of ignorance” is a common recurrence throughout the text.

²⁹ *The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor*, 1995, 70.

³⁰ *Hermetica*, 1992, 44, 58, 67.

³¹ *Hermetica*, 1992, 15-17.

reflection is a reflection of the microcosm.³² The seven *Universal Laws* are based on this principle, particularly the law of *Correspondence*³³, which states that “As above, so below”³⁴, otherwise explained in the Platonic statement, “*the universe is so interconnected that heavenly things exist on earth in an earthly condition and earthly things, in turn, exist in heaven at a heavenly level*”.³⁵

The wisdom which *Poimandres* had unfolded to *Hermes* was a vision of how creation came to be, as light emanated from the One and descended upon the darkness, transmuting Dark Matter into the four elements and giving birth to all living things.³⁶ To establish order in the material realm, the *Divine Intellect* separated the intermingled elements, through “*will*” power and by speaking the “*holy word*”³⁷. The *Divine Intellect* then created a second Mind, who in turn created seven governors, their vessel is fire, the most penetrating and active of the four elements, the seven encompass the world in circles.³⁸ Besides maintaining

³² *Hermetica*, 1992, 62.

³³ *The Golden Thread*, 2007, 99.

³⁴ *Hermetica*, 1992, 35

³⁵ *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, 2007, 147. The author elaborates “The source of this Platonic wisdom is a tract on magic by Proclus, the last major Greek thinker in a tradition that Ficino traced back through an “ancient theology” to Zoroaster and Hermes Trismegistus”.

³⁶ *Hermetica*, 1992, 13.

³⁷ *Hermetica*, 1992, 30.

³⁸ *Hermetica*, 1992, 59-61.

order and balance, the governors assist the *Master Builder* (second Mind) in the building of the father's Temple, as fellow craftsmen, and since the construction team emerged from a single source and share a common goal, the form of the Temple reflects the harmony and unity of their divine nature. According to the *Hermetica*, this Temple called the universe, is spherical, having been created by a *Universal Mind*, it is shaped as a head, and like a womb, it embodies the All within.³⁹ Inside the Temple, the government of the universe is ruler by the *Divine Intellect* (first Mind and *Master Architect*), fixed at its centre is the Sun (second Mind and *Master Builder*), and surrounding it is the remaining six governors (craftsmen).⁴⁰

The principle of *universalism* was the inspirational theme behind most works of Art and Architecture during the Renaissance period, manifested in applications of centralism, axiality, and symmetry, as a universal unity between the members reflected a celestial harmony and a cosmic scheme.

A fresco painting by the Italian Artist Michelangelo, which forms part of the Sistine Chapel's ceiling, depicts the creator as a man of age, superimposed on a reddish background setting, the outline of which bears striking resemblance to a section view of a human brain (Figure 3). The choice of colour corresponds with the *Hermetic* description of the *Divine Intellect*, whose symbolic colour complements His divine fiery nature, red. The colour framing the figure of Man, on the other hand, is green, which is the symbolic colour of Earth, "*the nurse who feeds terrestrial creatures, settled in the beautiful cosmos like sediment.*"⁴¹

³⁹ *Hermetica*, 1992, 32.

⁴⁰ *Hermetica*, 1992, 38.

⁴¹ *Hermetica*, 1992, 38.

Surrounding the green fields is a blue belt, the symbolic colour of the Moon, a fellow governor and craftsman, whose element is Water. The choice to distinguish the domain of Man from that of divinity was probably deliberate on Michelangelo's part, as the *Hermetica* clearly states

There are these three: God the father and the good, the cosmos, and the human. God holds the cosmos, the cosmos holds the human. The cosmos becomes the son of god, but the human becomes the son of the cosmos, a grandson, as it were.⁴²

indicating that between the mortal and immortal, a barrier stands, and the intermediary agent connecting the two is the cosmos, which is represented by the government of seven, of whom the Moon is closest to Earth. About the Moon, the *Hermetica* states “...nature's instrument, transforming the matter below... between the two, the immortal and the mortal, is the circling moon.”⁴³, indicating that the Moon represents the intermediary realm where the world above and that below intersect. Thus, it can be assumed that Michelangelo's *Creazione di Adamo* was painted in accordance with the teachings of *Hermes*.

2.2 The Teacher: The Eternal Legacy of Hermes

The *Corpus Hermeticum* depicts *Hermes* in some instances as a disciple, a teacher in others. He appears as the sage or mystic, who encountered a *Divine Intellect* (*Poimandres*), in the following episodes, *Hermes* appears as the teacher, who having been initiated, proceeds to unfold the mysteries of the universe to His disciples who, like Him, are of divine origin.⁴⁴ The *Hermetica* speaks of a

⁴² *Hermetica*, 1992, 34.

⁴³ *Hermetica*, 1992, 38-39.

Hermes who was sent to the lower world as a guide and instructor to Mankind, being the manifestation of the light, soul, and mind of the Lord, reincarnated on Earth.⁴⁵ *Hermes* represents the principles of *Hermeticism*, as a threefold being with a dual nature and universal consciousness.⁴⁶

It is unclear whether the entity known as *Hermes* has ever actually existed, but the attention and fame He enjoyed in Western imagination have been vividly reflected, most likely due to the proximity *Hermes* was believed to maintain with mortal beings, making Him seem like the most humble and indulgent amongst other immortals.

The Renaissance regarded *Hermes* as a Philosopher, Astrologer, Alchemist, and Magician, even more, He was considered the founder of the Alexandrian Chaldean mystery school, who bore the key to obtaining sacred wisdom and unravelling universal Truth.⁴⁷ *Hermes* was also recognized as the author of the *Hermetica*, to Him was attributed the authorship of all esoteric texts.⁴⁸ The Christian Renaissance saw in Him a faithful messenger of god, who was the ‘mediator’ connecting heaven to Earth, a ‘saviour’ and ‘liberator’ of the human soul, going as far as associating Him with Christ, and the Archangel Michael.⁴⁹ In

⁴⁴ *Hermetica*, 1992, 58; *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 77, 78.

⁴⁵ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 78.

⁴⁶ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 31.

⁴⁷ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 39.

⁴⁸ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 77.

Judaism, *Hermes* was a prophet and saint, assimilating Him to Moses, and identifying Him with *Hiram Abiff*, the ‘Builder’ of king Solomon’s temple.⁵⁰ In a similar light, the Humanists regarded Him as the patron of logic and rationalism who, according to Boccaccio, was the “*interpreter of secrets and dissolver of the clouds of the mind*”.⁵¹

Most mythographers of the Renaissance based their perceptions of *Hermes* on the representations of Egypt and the Near East, at the same time as archaeological documents were coming to light rapidly.⁵² Hence, in order to develop an understanding of the position *Hermes* sustained within Western imagination, it is necessary to trace the legacy of this legendary entity.

According to Greek mythology, *Hermes* was the child of a secret affair between *Zeus* and *Maia*, born and raised in a cave on the top of Mount Cyllene in Arcadia (southern Greece).⁵³ In the *Homeric hymn to Hermes*⁵⁴, *Hermes* appears as the playful demigod who bore one face by day and another by night; By day, he’s an inventor of delightful craftworks, who invented a seven-stringed lyre from the shell of a tortoise, which produced enchanting music that could ward off evil.

⁴⁹ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 22.

⁵⁰ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 76.

⁵¹ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 26.

⁵² *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 30.

⁵³ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 87.

⁵⁴ Rayor, D. J., 2014, 55-74.

However, by sunset, the graceful and charming side of this god shifts swiftly into mischief. In a diabolical account of theft, *Hermes* attempts to steal the divine cattle of *Apollo* under the cover of the night, cautiously and calculatingly leaving no trace behind. Thereafter, *Hermes* sacrifices two bulls at the altar of fire, proceeding to cut the flesh into twelve pieces, and preserving them on a rooftop. For all the effort put into erasing His tracks, *Hermes* is captured by *Apollo* and brought before *Zeus* to face justice. In an attempt to cheat justice, *Hermes* smoothly turns to deceptive words, managing to manipulate the heart of *Apollo* into lenience, compelling the Sun-god to admire His wits and skills through a captivating performance of His lyre.

The significance of the Homeric ode lies in the allegorical implications concealed within; For instance, the seven-stringed lyre bears the numerical significance of number seven in *Hermetic Philosophy*, which holds multiple meanings; Seven governors, seven craftsmen, seven worlds, seven planets, each associated with seven Liberal Arts, and abide by seven Universal Laws. The spell-casting music produced by the lyre had the power to influence *Apollo's* thought and movement, this can be linked to the Hermetic allegory that can be linked to the Pythagorean theory of 'the music of the spheres' which assimilates the delicate harmony manifested in creation to musical harmony, alluding to the *Hermetic* narrative of a celestial government established to build and perpetuate a harmonious mode of existence. In that sense, the influence that the lyre had on *Apollo's* psyche symbolizes the divine ability to manipulate the rhythm of the world soul. The diabolical account of theft and ritual also bears cosmological significance, as divided the sacrificial flesh into twelve portions and scattering them across a rooftop can be linked to the twelve constellations of the Zodiac adorning the sky. Whereas making the sacrifice on an altar of fire can be tied to the Hermetic claim that fire is the craftsman's instrument of creation, as

Mind, which is the most penetrating of all the divine thoughts, has for its body fire, the most penetrating of all the elements. And since mind is the craftsman of all beings, it uses fire as an instrument in its craftwork.⁵⁵

In tune with His divergent character, *Hermes* wore several professional hats, where due to His mobility and flexibility, He earned the title ‘Messenger of the gods’, maintaining a line of communication between mortal humans and divine intelligence. Whereas His mastery of speech and interpretation promoted Him to become ‘Counsellor of the gods’, relied upon for settling disputes and offering advice. *Hermes* also appears in Greek mythology as a psychopomp who manages the circulation of souls by guiding them back and forth between the land of the living and the underworld. His grandeur, however, is best manifested in His function as a ‘Builder’, possessing the necessary skill and talent for invention and construction, this made Him illegible to participate in the creation of the universe. According to the *Hermetica*, amongst the various tasks that God assigned to *Hermes* was the building of the Lord’s Temple in the material world.⁵⁶ The ‘Builder’ title resonates the loudest with *Thoth*, whom the Egyptians regarded as the builder of the pyramids, and thus is the most crucial form of identification in this investigation.

The plausible derivation of the name *Hermes* is from the Arabic term for “Pyramid”, *Haram*, in essence with His Egyptian roots, as it was the name the Greeks gave to *Thoth*, a local divinity of Middle Egypt.⁵⁷ The link between

⁵⁵ *Hermetica*, 1992, 34.

⁵⁶ *Hermetica*, 1992, 53, 59.

Hermes and *Thoth* was established in the third century BC, through travelling routes stretched between Greece, Babylonia and Egypt.⁵⁸

According to Egyptian religion, *Thoth* was the god of the Moon, inventor of writing, astronomy, music, and the three-stringed lyre, who was believed to have taught the Egyptians navigation, magic, philosophy, civil Engineering, the craftsmanship of weaponry and machines of war. And like the Greek *Hermes*, *Thoth* had a divergent line of work, as a ‘secretary of the gods’, He was an assembler, adviser, and councillor, a watcher over Mankind, a conductor of souls, a priest in the shrines of *Heliopolis*, a scribe of sacred wisdom, an initiator into the mysteries, and an interpreter of secrets.⁵⁹

Amongst the various attributes, two stand out as the most significant; the ‘scribe’ of wisdom and the ‘Builder’ of a city.⁶⁰ Reports from different sources describe *Thoth* as the author of all books, as well as a stonemason who constructed statues for divination purposes, which were sometimes used as intermediary vessels to receive messages from the god who erected them.⁶¹ *Thoth* was also believed to have control over the flow of the Nile river through works of Architecture, a notion that belongs in the occult domain of witchcraft, and was regularly

⁵⁷ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 76.

⁵⁸ *Black Athena*, 1987, 98, 99. The author states that “The names of nearly all the gods came to Greece from Egypt”.

⁵⁹ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 76-77.

⁶⁰ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 78.

⁶¹ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 88.
Hermetica, 1992, 81.

discussed by Western thinkers during the Renaissance.⁶² The celebrated Medieval text, the *Picatrix*, was probably the source of inspiration behind this notion, as it contains the blueprints for an ‘ideal city’, allegedly designed by *Thoth-Hermes*.⁶³

The significance of the title ‘scribe’ of wisdom lies in the cosmological implications behind it, which indicates that, rather than being the original source of sacred wisdom, *Thoth-Hermes* merely holds the ‘key’ to obtaining it, as the *Hermetica* depicts Him as a guardian to the portals of knowledge, indicating that He personifies the path rather than the destination.⁶⁴ The *Corpus Hermeticum* recognizes the distinction between the singular source of light and the multitude of rays emanating from it, as it repeatedly describes God as the *uncreated creator* from whom all created things emanate, and that the *Divine Intellect* is the physical manifestation of God in the physical realm, thus while the created universe is a mirror reflection of the creator, the sympathetic bond between them is merely a father-son bond, and does not insinuate that they are the same entity.⁶⁵ This narrative was mystically reproduced by the *Homeric hymn to Hermes*, where *Hermes*’ behavioural pattern was shaped by His interaction with other characters, specifically *Apollo*, the Sun-god; *Hermes*’ mental and physical responses were motivated by jealousy, which was the result of being bound to a cave on earth while His privileged sibling roamed the avenues of heaven. This twist of fate

⁶² *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 18.

⁶³ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 87-89.
The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy, 2007, 153.

⁶⁴ *Hermetica*, 1992, 24.

⁶⁵ *Hermetica*, 1992, 26.

ignited the desire to cross boundaries and join the province of fellow immortals. In a cosmological context, the Sun shines brightly from within as a natural source of light, while the Moon borrows its light from the Sun, giving off the impression that they are equals in status, when in fact are the co-partners in a divine plan. In that sense, *Hermes* is a seeker of wisdom who is a disciple first and teacher second, he personifies the process of transition from one destination into another. Thus, the Moon symbolizes a sailing vessel parked at the gates of heaven, this narrative would later play a critical role in the examination of Renaissance works of Art and Architecture.

The Egyptians considered *Thoth* the ‘heart’ and ‘tongue’ of the Sun-god, Ra. He was in charge of translating the *Will* of the Lord into voice and speech, where according to a statement made by Manetho, Thoth was a “*high priest and scribe of the sacred shrines of Egypt...dwelling at Heliopolis*”, the city of the Sun and cult centre of Ra.⁶⁶ *Thoth* was the Ibis-headed magician-god, performing the dual task of councillor in the world of the living, and guide to souls of the dead in the underworld, thus resembling the two-faced Moon, who is active both above and beneath the surface, one face salutes the Sun, while the other embraces the shadows.

Thoth-Hermes was later given the name *Mercurius* by the Romans, which as Augustine suggested, means *medius current* (running in the middle).⁶⁷ Recognized as the god of the three-headed Mercury⁶⁸, he was the patron of trade, commerce, and travel, the founder of a city, and the builder of the Pyramids.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ *Thoth, the Hermes of Egypt*, 1992, 58-59.

⁶⁷ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 82.

After having absorbed and digested the accounts of various ancient traditions, Western imagination had painted an extraordinary image of *Thoth-Hermes-Mercurius* which continued to impress learned minds to this day. The Renaissance had restored *Hermes* to His former glory, as the ‘earliest theologian’ and ‘father of the philosophers’, founder of the liberal arts and occult sciences, author of the *Hermetica*, and bearer of wisdom. *Hermes* embodied the principle of Humanism, as an advocate for human empowerment and freedom of speech, who was described as the ‘protector of poets’⁷⁰. At the same time, *Hermes* was a prince of darkness, an inventor of tricks, a conjurer of lies, and a master of disguise.⁷¹

2.3 Iconography: The Recurrence of Hermetic Symbols in Art Throughout the Ages

Considering that perceptions of *Hermes* within Renaissance imagination were inspired by representations of a Grecian origin, an examination of the archaeological findings could potentially reveal the link between ancient mythology and Western thought. The *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* is an obligatory reference in that regard, as it was the inspirational work behind several Latin publications, which helped bolster *Hermes*’ reputation.

There are two emblems that can be detected in this text, the ‘long-winged Bird’ and ‘double-snaked staff’, the former being a sign that *Apollo* supposedly

⁶⁸ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 79.

⁶⁹ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 85.

⁷⁰ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 30-31.

⁷¹ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 28-31.

identified with *Hermes* during His search for the thief, while the latter was a magical device that *Hermes* used to bewitch *Apollo's* cattle into following *Him*. Both emblems can be traced to an Egyptian Babylonian tradition; the sacred animal associated with *Thoth* was the 'long-winged' Ibis⁷², while societies of the Near East held the belief that the gate to heaven was guarded by an Eagle.⁷³ Both winged creatures are complementary with the flexible and airy *Hermes*, who descends to earth in the breath of passion and ascends to heaven in the breath of contemplation.⁷⁴ Likewise, the "double-snaked staff" is an equally indicative motif, also known as the *Caduceus*, it represents the collective premise of *Hermetic Philosophy*. When dissected, each component of the spell-casting instrument embodies a distinct meaning, whereas collectively, the *Caduceus* symbolizes the spirit of *Hermeticism*, and by that, *Hermes* himself; The *Caduceus* is a staff with twin Snakes intertwined around it, a pair of wings are often depicted adorning the tip of the staff. In Ephesus, a bas-relief dating to the same period as to when the *Corpus Hermeticum* was compiled, between the first and third centuries AD, depicts *Hermes* with winged footwear, holding a *Caduceus* in His left hand, and dragging along a Ram with His right (Figure 4). This representation recalls to mind the *Homeric* account, which depicts *Hermes* as the felon behind an undercover robbery. The stone-carving clearly depicts a chain linking the ram to a

⁷² *Hieroglyphics of Horapollo Nilous*, 1950, 56-57.
Thoth, the Hermes of Egypt, 1922, 64.

⁷³ In ancient Mesopotamian art representations of winged discs resembling an Eagle are common. In Persian mystical traditions, Shamanic mythology, and Hellenistic theology, representations of the sacred Eagle are easily dedicated. In Jewish mysticism, the image of a double-headed Eagle is an essential theme. The Eagle motif is also common in Sufism.

⁷⁴ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 39.

Solar disc, symbolizing the Sun-god *Apollo*, whereas the winged feet symbolize the mobile and intermediary function of *Hermes*.

At the same location, another bas-relief depicts a cosmological representation of the *Caduceus* (Figure 5), in what appears like a colonnade of four pillars, the design of which resembles the paws of a beast, while their capitals join joined by a bowl-shaped entablature.⁷⁵ Framed by the colonnade, is a Snake emerging from the shell of a Tortoise below, the Snake climbs its way upward, twisting and turning around a ring at the middle until it finally reaches the hemispherical vessel above. The stone-carving can be interpreted as a depiction of the threefold universe, and the sacred path of illumination, in which the tortoise symbolizes the world below, the bowl symbolizes the world above, and the ring symbolizes the realm in between. The rising snake, on the other hand, symbolizes the ascension of consciousness heavenward, and the pursuit of enlightenment. Both artefacts flank the bottom of the steep street, named *Clivus Sacer* (Sacred Road) by archaeologists, as it descends westwards from the Upper State Agora to Domitian Square, which leads to Kuretes Street down towards the Library of Celsus.

In the Temple of Seti at Abydos, Upper Egypt, a representation of the Egyptian god *Thoth* depicts an Ibis-headed figure wielding a pair of staffs in His left hand, each distinguishable from the other by a distinct type of flower and snake (Figure 6), together the staffs symbolize the union of the Upper and Lower halves of Egypt. The magician god appears holding out the *Ankh* (key of life) to King Seti, giving a clue to His identity as a guide to the portals of light, and gate keeper through whom the transition into the afterlife is facilitated. Between the two

⁷⁵ To the naked eye, the object depicted in the bas-relief appears to be a three-legged alter, however, considering where the bowl-shaped vessel is positioned, a four-legged alter would be required in order to provide the physical balance to lift the vessel up. Assuming the bas-relief is depicting a section view of the alter, only three legs would be visible.

figures lies what appears to be a ritualistic vessel containing seven Lotus flowers, which further supports the theory that a funerary ritual is probably the subject of this artwork, as the depiction of seven flowers is a clear reference to the seven governors that encompass the universe in whirling circles, and through whom the human soul transcends towards divinity.

Other representations of *Thoth* in the Temple of Seti depict Him as a scribe dressed in priest clothing, holding a writing tool in one hand and a stone tablet in the other, scenes that carefully capture the documentation process of sacred wisdom (Figure 7).⁷⁶ In the same complex at Abydos, an indicative motif bears a stark remarkable to the *Caduceus* found at Ephesus (Figure 8), depicting a cosmological representation of the threefold universe in which the intermediary realm is represented by a four-stepped column resembling a tree, the duality of creation is represented by a pair of snakes emerging from either sides, both crowned with a disc. The physical world is represented by a crescent-shaped base, resembling a bowl or chalice which contains the wholeness of the universe. A representation of the *Divine Intellect* can be traced in the upper part of the motif, which depicts as a pair of eyes, symbolizing the Sun and Moon. The stepped tree is crowned with a blossoming flower, symbolizing creation, as a substantial manifestation of the sacred marriage between light and darkness.

In contrast to the *Ibis-Thoth* who operates in the celestial realm, the *Baboon-Thoth* assumes earth as His base of operation, as maintaining intimate footing with Mankind is crucial for exercising His tutorial activities.⁷⁷ The intellectual intercourse between immortal gods and mortal humans was repeatedly depicted in

⁷⁶ *Hieroglyphics of Horapollo Nilous*, 1950, 58, 59.

⁷⁷ *Hieroglyphics of Horapollo Nilous*, 1950, 31.

Egyptian artefacts, dating as early as the fourteenth century BC, where bronze or alabaster figurines show the *Baboon-Thoth* seated across from a scribe or priest, in a manner reminiscent of a teacher and student (Figure 9).⁷⁸ Other depictions of the *Baboon-Thoth* show Him emerging from the figure's head, emphasising His role a guide and protector of scribes, and illuminator of intellect (Figure 10).⁷⁹ A critical piece of evidence that solidifies the connection between the Moon-god and Sun-god is a limestone relief dating to the Grecian period (Figure 11). The stone carving depicts the *Baboon-Thoth* holding out the right eye of Ra, contained in a bowl-shaped object. Crowning His head is a Lunar disc, a clear recognition of Thoth's astral character as a Lunar god.⁸⁰ Above the ape is two-winged discs, one of which depicts a snake emanating from it. The winged disc centred at the top represents the realm of light, a symbol of the *Divine Intellect*. In the second depiction of a winged disc, the snake represents intermediary realm, where spiritual communication occurs, indicating that a divine revelation has descended upon *Thoth*, saturating the Moon-god with astral luminance. Considering the symbolism concealed within, the stone relief can be interpreted as a cosmological configuration of the threefold universe, in which *Thoth-Hermes* is featured as a receiver of profound knowledge and bearer of light, whose enlightened Mind is a container of sacred wisdom, and whose body is the crescent-shaped throne of the Sun.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Dothan, T., Regev, D., 2011, 212-215.

⁷⁹ *Thoth, the Hermes of Egypt*, 1922, 62.

⁸⁰ Dothan, T., Regev, D., 2011, 219, 220.
Thoth, the Hermes of Egypt, 1922, 64.

Based on the archaeological material, it's plausible to assume that depictions of the personality known as *Thoth-Hermes-Mercurius*, are representations of the Theological philosophy recognized by Renaissance intellectuals as *Hermeticism*. The ancient wisdom that Western imagination regarded as a divine revelation inherited by Hermits and sages is an echo of an Oriental school of thought, whose founding fathers were the devout initiates of Alexandria. Thus, representations of *Hermes* or His teachings during the Renaissance can be approached from a Greek or Egyptian perspective. It would also be plausible to assume that artists and architects of the fifteenth century shared a view of the world familiar to that of ancient occultists, and possessed a mentality that, not only approved of such philosophy, but also greatly admired it. The plausibility of this opinion is supported by the surmountable amount of case studies in which *Hermes* can be detected, whether in the field of literature, art, or Architecture, *Hermetic* imagery was a dominant theme in the Western Renaissance.

The *Emblematum liber* of Alciati is one such literary example, published in 1531, it contains a series of allegorical poems accompanied with illustrations that reflect an undeniable obsession with *Hermeticism*.⁸² In one page a round temple appears, in which a series of columns define the boundaries of a circular space (Figure 12). At the centre is an altar upon which is a lance-shaped object, with two pairs of birds hovering around it. The round temple is a reconstruction of the spherical universe, the *Divine Intellect* who commands it is represented by the centralized altar. The elongated object above the alter is the vertical axis around which the universe revolves eternally. Two pairs of birds, each fluttering their wings in the

⁸¹ *Hieroglyphics of Horapollo Nilous*, 1950, 35; *Thoth, the Hermes of Egypt*, 1922, 58, 59.

⁸² *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 30.

opposite direction, represent the transcendence of consciousness, which travels in a spiral path around the vertical cord, symbolizing the descent and reascension of the soul, as well as the fall and rise of Man. In another page, a metaphorical representation of *Hermes* appears, in which His body and the *Caduceus* are one and the same (Figure 13). Once again, a pair of serpents can be seen wrapped around a single staff, and parallel to the previous illustration, two pairs of wings adorn both ends of the staff. An intriguing aspect of this image is the winged hat crowning the staff, insinuating that an invisible head lies beneath it, which further emphasises the cosmological meaning of the *Caduceus* as a symbol of the *Universal Mind*. In both illustrations, the principles of Hermetic teaching are easily traced; the *Universalism* of the *Trinity* is represented by the vertical bridge connecting the world above to that below, whereas *Dualism* is represented by the mirror symbolism of the double wings or serpents, which symbolize the *correspondence* between the spiritual and physical realms, an allegorical representation of the divine marriage between light and darkness.

In 1555, Achilles Bocchi published His *quaestionum Symbolicarum* (symbolic questions), a text that clearly recognizes the threefold identity of *Hermes* as ‘thrice greatest (Figure 14). Later, Vincenzo Cartari’s *Le Immagini Della Posizione Degli Dei degli antichi* (The images of the position of the gods of the ancients) was published in 1556, the text describes *Hermes* as ‘Mercury the god of eloquence’, and the *Caduceus* as ‘the fortune bringer Sun and Moon’, in reference to the connection *Thoth-Hermes* maintains with *Ra-Apollo*. A graphic edition of this work was published in 1607, which depicts the threefold *Hermes* on several.⁸³ On one page, *Hermes* appears in the presence of two astral gods, *Apollo* and *Anubis* (Figure 15). *Hermes* is depicted wearing a winged helmet over His head

⁸³ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 30.

and carrying a lamp around His shoulders. In the middle, the Sun-god is depicted with winged feet, resembling those of *Hermes*, raising a sword up to the sky with His right hand. On the right, a dog-headed *Anubis* is depicted with barefeet, in His right hand is a feather, while in His left is a *Caduceus*, which in contrast to *Hermes*, is stripped of wings. A column appears in the background, crowned with three heads crowned with winged helmets. Based on what was unfolded by the *Hermetica*, the scene depicted in this illustration is a cosmological representation in which the divine trio symbolize the threefold anatomy of the universe; The Sun is fixed at the centre, closest to it is the Moon, followed by the Earth. Observing closely, the armed figure posing in the middle represent the Sun, the sword symbolizes the penetrative rays radiating from the Sun. Close to the Sun is a mobile *Hermes* who, in resonance to the Homeric ode, appears walking off with *Apollo's* cattle, symbolizing the light-bearing Moon. Further away from the Sun is a fixed *Anubis*, the feather He carries symbolize the judicial phase of the afterlife which takes place in the underworld, an indication to the identity of *Anubis* as ruler of darkness. Together, the three figures symbolize the intermediary character of *Hermes*, as a 'wanderer' of both heaven and Earth, and a threefold link between the immortal and mortal. This is further articulated by the three-headed motif appearing in the background, which symbolizes the Oneness and unity of the *Triplex*, and harmonious dynamic of the universe.⁸⁴ In another page, a depiction of *Hermes* is reminiscent of that found at Ephesus (Figure 16). It shows the mysterious god grabbing unto the horns of a ram with His right hand and raising a *Caduceus* up towards the sky with His left.

Based on this brief analysis of Renaissance literature it can be concluded that, the *Caduceus* is an iconographic reconstruction of the theological and cosmological

⁸⁴ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 80-82.

dimensions of *Hermetic Philosophy*, and a representation of the path of illumination lying between heaven and Earth. Also, it embodies the dual aspect of the path, as it pursues both a practical and theoretical approach to divinity, incorporating both body and mind in the attainment of enlightenment.

CHAPTER 3

RENAISSANCE HERMETICISM

3.1 Depictions of Hermes in Works of Architecture

In 1488, and only ten years after the publication of the *Corpus Hermeticum* in Florence, an artist inlaid the pavement of Siena Cathedral with a marvellous panel, still visible (Figure 17): it depicts *Hermes* as a tall and venerable bearded man, dressed in a robe and cloak, wearing a brimmed mitre, and surrounded by various persons, with the inscription “*Hermes Mercurius Trismegistlls Contemporaneus Moysi*” (Hermes Mercurius Trismegistus, a contemporary of Moses).⁸⁵

The floor mosaic at Siena depicts a pair of winged lions, resembling the Egyptian sphinx, with their tails intertwined in a manner parallel to the twin serpents of the *Caduceus*. A note in *Hermes*’ right hand reads:

Deus omnium creator secum Deum fecit visibilem et hunc fecit primum et solum quo oblectatus est et valde amavit proprium filium qui appellatur Sanctum Verbum

And God, creator of all things, from Himself generated a visible God and this was the first and only in whom He was delighted and strongly loved. His own Son who is called Holy Word

⁸⁵ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 40.

This quotation derives heavily from the *Corpus Hermeticum*, more specifically from the *Divine Poimandres*, which alludes to the moment of creation and process of *emanation*, from which emerged the first child of God, the *Divine Intellect*.⁸⁶

The revelation being unfolded by *Hermes* reads:

suscipite o licteras et leges egyptii
Egyptians, receive the letters and the laws!

As already mentioned, the Western Renaissance has assimilated *Hermes* to Moses, as they both were believed to have received enlightenment from the *Divine Intellect*, rendering both personalities as devout students of the mysteries. The name *Hermes* or *Mercury* can be thus interpreted as a title of honour, bestowed upon one or more enlightened thinkers, or a receiver of sacred wisdom. A recurring theme in Renaissance portraits is the relational aspect of *Hermes*, as He often appears in the middle as an intermediary between the seeker and their goal, indicating that one must pass through *Hermes* in order to get to the other side.

The case of Schifanoia Palace (1470) is quite indicative of the ancient lore, located in the Italian city of Ferrara, it was a property of the Este family, the decorative dimension of which is heavily saturated with Hermetic symbolism, especially that which pertains to the divine *Trinity*.⁸⁷ This case is a stark testimony to a blending of the faiths, where mythical deities are disguised as catholic saints, signalling the start of an intellectual revolution that foresaw the reincarnation of ancient paganism, a revolution that had manifested in works of art and

⁸⁶ *Hermetica*, 1992, 58. The text describes ‘god’ as “the master, maker, father and container of the whole universe, the All who is One and the One who is All.”

⁸⁷ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 28.

Architecture all across Europe. In early instances, *Hermes* would play the role of Moses or Christ, whereas, in later instances, *Hermes* would reappear as a sage resembling an Egyptian priest. The fact that *Hermes* was afforded the highest rank in the state religion makes it seem as though steps were deliberately taken to ensure that survivors of ancient cults are effectively revived to their original form by the dawn of the sixteenth century.⁸⁸

The fresco cycle in *Sala dei Masi* (Room of the fields, otherwise known as Hall of the months) at Schifanoia, was the collaborative effort of a team of artists which included Francesco del Cossa and Cosmè Tura. Commissioned by Borso d'Este and installed between 1469 and 1471. The chamber is a reconstructed model of the universe, where the twelve allegories of the Zodiac are depicted on the walls in accordance with the seven planetary governors, each allegorical field is divided into three zones, probably in reference to the Hermetic *Trinity*, as the Upper zone represents celestial government, while the Lower is the terrestrial realm, and in the middle is the intermediary realm where both worlds collide (Figure 18). The fresco cycle reflects continuity, harmony, and unity, as the fields are stacked together to create an uninterrupted sequence of events. The threefold composition of the fresco cycle is also a clear recognition of the Hermetic law of

⁸⁸ *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, 81-83; *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 28. Considering the anti-pagan spirit of Early and Medieval Christianity, it would have caused utter panic to allow entry for occult traditions from the East into Western culture, which would've resulted in the rushed elimination of ancient wisdom, and loss of all intellectual heritage from the past. Thus, steps were taken in order to gradually reveal the original roots of these mythical entities, as a way to soften the blow. This is most fascinating to witness in the evolution of Architecture between the Middle Ages and Renaissance, which depicts a transition from Christian Paganism into Primitive Paganism.

correspondence, as the middle stripe represent a doorway that regulates the flow of consciousness between higher and lower planes of existence.⁸⁹

The allegory of June: Triumph of Mercury depicts *Hermes* riding a lofty chariot, symbolizing the orbital path of planet Mercury (Figure 19). He holds the *Caduceus* in His left hand and a lyre in His right, in reference to the Homeric ode and *Hermetic Corpus*, which indicate His role as an administer of law and order (Figure 19a).

A concentrated analysis of the upper section of the allegory reveals a pair of winged creatures stationed near the triumphal chariot, a herd of cattle appear in the right corner of the scene, and across from them the corpse of *Argus* lays motionless on a hill (Figure 19b). This portion is indicative of the divine authority that *Hermes* possess as a governor and craftsman, as the hundred-eyed *Argus*, whom *Hermes* allegedly slayed, symbolizes the star-dotted firmament (Figure 19c).⁹⁰ Whereas the cattle symbolize the twelve constellations of the Zodiac that *Hermes* crafted from the sacrificial flesh of two bulls. Shifting to the left corner of the painting, a musical band of three appear surrounded by a pack of howling dogs. This portion of the painting is indicative of the role *Hermes* plays as maintainer of balance and harmony. Choosing to wave His *Caduceus* in the direction of *Argus* while his lyre in the direction of the musical trio, is perhaps also significant; Since the *Caduceus* symbolizes spiritual transcendence, cosmic unity, and universal correspondence, it is a cosmological symbol that fits comfortably into the realm of divine craftworks, indicating that the path of illumination leads to a home in the stary heaven. On the other hand, the lyre is an

⁸⁹ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 51, 52.

⁹⁰ Freedman, L., 2014\2015, 206-214.

instrument of manipulation, it symbolizes the divine harmony that governs the universe, a harmony identical to that of music, and thus is a mystical symbol that complements the collaborative performance of justice and equilibrium.⁹¹

Based on what this analysis had revealed, it can be assumed that the upper section of the fresco designates the celestial sphere of planet Mercury, which is governed by the threefold spirit of *Hermes*, as perceived by Renaissance thought.

The middle section of the fresco depicts *Hermes-Mercury* in the house of Cancer, the astrological sign of which is represented by a lobster (Figure 20). This indicates that *Hermes* transcends gloriously when settled at this lunar house. According to Renaissance astrology, Cancer is the only house of the Moon and the first sign of the Watery Triplicity, often represented by watery creatures.⁹² This house represents the inner and more private aspects of the human being, such as insight and wonder. Cancer administers the faculties of the brain responsible for perception and imagination, which shapes the respiratory system of the mind. In that context, Mercury in Cancer is hypersensitive and aware of its surroundings, thus a shifty and airy *Hermes* in Cancer is more poised and vigilant, as He is consumed by the desire to unravel the hearts of those other than Himself. In the painting, a female figure can be seen seated on a throne wielding a wand in her right hand, symbolizing the feminine energy of the watery Cancer, which exhibits sensuality and elegance. A lady stands before her, with her hands folded together in a display of caution and discipline, in a manner reminiscent of the *Baboon-Thoth* who appears in the company of priests and scribes. This perhaps implies that, when in Cancer, *Hermes* is an attentive student who is dedicated to

⁹¹ *Hermetica*, 1992, 46.

Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, 1964, 78.

⁹² *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, 2007, 158.

the pursuit of enlightenment, and like the light-receiving Moon, has devoted Himself to the task, as He patiently awaits the gift of divinity. During His stay at this lunar house, *Hermes* resembles a missionary climbing on board a ship and sailing towards the portals of knowledge with the Moon as His guide, and the Sun as His destination. This narrative is further emphasized by the male figure that appears on the right side of the scene, who appear to be taming a silver snake, in a manner reminiscent of a hunter and prey, which perhaps indicates that, when in Cancer, *Hermes*' observation and detection skills are sharp enough to seize the light.

It is thus plausible to assume that the middle section of the fresco represents the intermediary bridge between the celestial and terrestrial spheres, where the astral troops of the fixed constellations reside, operating as doorways between the spiritual world above and physical world below.

Finally, the lower section of the fresco depicts Duke Borso d'Este, the patron who commissioned the painting of those frescos, where he is depicted riding toward the palace along with his entourage of followers. In the background a landscape with the Po River is depicted, perhaps in correlation with *Thoth*, whom the Egyptians regarded as regulator of the Nile.

Considering the multi-dimensional symbolism traced in *The allegory of June*, this fresco is a stark testimony to the Western appreciation of an esoteric shade of knowledge, one which acknowledges the deep-rooted influence of Egyptian religion on Greco-Roman philosophy. *The allegory of June* realizes the Chaldean Alexandrian origins of the Greek *Hermes*, as the graduate of a Mystery school administered by the Moon-god, *Thoth*. It insinuates that, when at the Moon's house, Mercury is most eloquent and articulate, as His devices of speech and interpretation are touched by grace and transparency, affording His words gravity and resonance, as the poetic tone he adopts renders his message more captivating and mind-gripping. The Moon was considered by Renaissance astrologers to be

the ‘revealer of hidden things’, invoked for the purpose of unravelling secrets or unearthing treasures, thus being under his influence, *Hermes*’ deduction skills reach their highest potential, and as patron of logic and reason, qualifies him to attain True wisdom.

The symbolism etched into the artwork of this fresco is indirectly emphasized by *The allegory of May: Triumph of Apollo* (Figure 21), which depicts *Apollo* in Gemini, the airy house of Planet Mercury, as a clear recognition of the connection between the Sun-god and *Hermes*. Likewise, this representation borrows heavily from the Homeric ode, which recounts the lyre performance that *Hermes* used to calm *Apollo*’s rage, as the scene shows two male figures, one of whom is blowing into a musical instrument (possibly a trumpet), while the other is expressing relief and serenity, both figures appear poorly dressed, with much skin exposed, indicating that, when in Gemini, the mighty *Apollo* is humbler and more empathetic. Below the two figures is the sign of Gemini, represented by twins, symbolizing the relational and intermediary character of *Hermes*, as a patron of communication. The twins are depicted with their hands joined around the Sun, the morning star whose arrows of light appear contained and sedated under the roof of Gemini. This representation realizes that, under the guidance of *Hermes*, the Sun-god is thoughtful and compassionate, as the piercing rays of his ethical and moral principles are swayed towards tolerance and leniency, rendering his leadership in the world government gentler, while the gifts of his revealing light more generous.

The appearance of the *Corpus Hermeticum* has not only revived the pagan legacy of *Hermes*, but also perpetuated it under the visual projections of Western imagination, as the production of numerous editions and commentaries of the *Hermetica* provided a mythographic source for artists and architects during the Renaissance. *Hermes* repeatedly makes remarkable appearances in Italy, at the

request of distinguished members of the elite society, the houses of Este, Farnese, and Chigi, being a few notable mentions.

At the reception hall of the Farnesina Villa, visitors are greeted with a fresco cycle adorning the ceiling of the *Psyche loggia* (Figure 22), in which the presence of *Hermes* can be detected on several occasions. In what could be considered an expression of raw determinism, members of the church had invested generously in lavish decorations that paid tribute to legends of pagan characters, as a household contributor, members of the Chigi family were involved in the saturation of monumental establishments with images of Grecian mythology, in a public display of devotion for an esoteric tradition born in Egypt.

The *Psyche loggia* is dedicated to *Psyche*, the Greek goddess of the soul, as the term *Psyche* in Greek translates into ‘breath’ or ‘blow’, which can be interpreted as ‘life’ or ‘consciousness’. The painting depicts the epic of *Psyche*, who once a mortal, endeavours to reunite with her lover, attaining immortality in the process. In this context, the one *Psyche* falls in love with is an immortal god who, upon her witnessing his true identity, retreats back to heaven while leaving *Psyche* behind on Earth. The journey that *Psyche* pursues symbolizes *reascension*, which the *Hermetica* describes as the ultimate reunion with the divine. The myth also mentions that in order to reach her destination, *Psyche* must complete four excruciating tasks, upon the fourth of which, *Psyche* fails and is locked inside a dream. In an act of sympathy, *Psyche* is lifted to heaven by *Hermes* who, as way of reuniting her with her beloved, grants *Psyche* the elixir of immortality, enabling her to pass through the gates of heaven and join fellow immortals. This narrative bears stark resemblance to the Hermetic concept of enlightenment, which describes *reascension* as a transition from a physical to a spiritual state of existence, in which consciousness is free and boundless, a goal that demands wholehearted abandonment on materialistic gain, and unwavering dedication to the cause, where the deification of consciousness is the product of divine love.

The symbolism in having to complete four tasks also embodies a Hermetic meaning, as it refers to the four gates of the elementary realm, representing the cross of Matter and thus the four steps a soul must climb to reach the light at the end of the tunnel.

In that regard, the *Psyche loggia* can be interpreted as the intermediary realm where the path between heaven and Earth lies, making the reception hall of the Farnesina a physical manifestation of the Hermetic phase of *reascension*, both plainly and symbolically; designed by Raphael Santi and his team of artists in 1517-18, the multi-dimensional representation depicts *The council of the gods* (Figure 23), on a stage where each character is distinguishable by the sacred animal associated with them. For instance, an eagle appears beside *Zeus*, god of storms and thunder, whose right foot appears resting on top of a globe, illustrating his divine status as ruler of heaven. *Ares* (Mars) is depicted wearing a helmet crowned with what resembles a dragon and holding a spear, in sync with his status as god of war. While *Apollo* is depicted seated alongside *Artemis*, his twin sister, with her palm resting on top of a seven-stringed lyre. A three-headed *Cerberus* appears beside *Hades* who, like the dog-headed *Anubis*, rules the underworld. Lastly, a Sphinx is depicted beside *Hermes*, who appears holding the *Caduceus* in His left hand and a bowl in His right.⁹³

The cosmological symbolism of this painting can be detected in the intentional arrangement of these characters on the stage, which in turn presents a dynamic and poetic representation of the threefold universe; while a divine conference is taking place, all attention seems to be directed at *Cupid*, the winged figure who is

⁹³ It's worth reinstating that, these forms of identification are echos of Egyptian iconography, since the falcon was associated with Horus, the dog with Anubis, and the Sphinx with Ra. It's also worth noting that, in Egyptian mythology, the Sphinx symbolized guardianship and royalty.

probably the trigger behind this court hearing. He proceeds to present his case before a contemplating judge (Jupiter\Zeus), and an intervening mother (Venus\Aphrodite). While on the right, *Cupid* is at the centre of attention, two figures appear occupied by another affair on the left; *Hermes* and *Janus* appear on the side of the stage where *Psyche* is depicted, the illustration captures the moment her receiving the gift of immortality and stepping over the threshold between life and death. In Roman mythology, *Janus* is the god of transitions, often depicted as a double-faced head, indicating his function as a gate or doorway, symbolizing beginning and end. The side of his head that reflects youth is turned in *Psyche*'s direction, while that which reflects decay is turned in the council's direction, probably symbolizing the transition from ignorance to wisdom upon awakening (Figure 23a). Both *Janus* and *Hermes* complement each other in terms of their base of operation; Like a key to a door, both characters personify the shift from one existence into another. This claim is perhaps supported by the stark resemblance that *Janus* exhibits to the sign of Gemini, as both are represented by twin heads (Figure 24). The bowl that *Hermes* appears to give to *Psyche* can be interpreted as the *Bowl of the monad*, which the *Hermetica* describes as the hemispherical womb that contains creation, otherwise referred to as the cosmic body. This perhaps indicates that by receiving this gift from *Hermes*, *Psyche* has gained True knowledge of God and perfect understanding of creation. Lastly, the Sphinx that appears beside *Hermes* is a clear recognition of this character's Chaldean Alexandrian origins.

Considering the various implications of this artwork, it can be assumed that the scene displayed here is a representation of the threefold universe, where the right side in which the council appears symbolizes the spiritual realm, the left side in which *Psyche* appears symbolizes the physical realm, and the middle ground in which *Hermes* and *Janus* appear symbolizes the intermediary realm. This interpretation seems to coincide with the geometric layout of the Farnesina, which

depicts a (U) shaped floor plan where spatial arrangement is reflects symmetry and centrality. The eastern and western wings of the mansion are connected by a third link at the middle, this intermediary area features the reception hall, which was decorated by images of *Hermes*, making it seem as if the legendary god was deliberately appointed to receive guests of the family in a manner similar to receiving Psyche into the wings of heaven.

Once again, *Hermes* reappears in the Farnesina at the *Sala di Galatea*, where He can be detected in the fresco cycle adorning the vaulted ceiling. Installed by Baldassare Peruzzi around 1511, the fresco cycle supposedly depicts Chigi's birth chart, which represents the position of planets in the zodiacal signs on Chigi's astrological birth date (Figure 25).⁹⁴ Parallel to the Schifanoia incidence, *Hermes* is depicted in a lunar house, this time in Scorpio (Figure 25a). In contrast to Cancer, Scorpio is darker and more intense when it comes to the interpretive and analytical powers of the mind, which can only be compared to diving deep into a bottomless sea, as the curiosity and desire 'to know' is remarkably intensified. In the *Galatea loggia*, Baldassare paints an elegant Mercury who exhibits traits of delicacy and gracefulness. In Renaissance astrology, the Moon is represented by a silver colour, while Scorpio by red, this can easily be traced in this fresco, as *Hermes* is dressed in silky silver clothing, red winged hat and red winged feet, while the snakes of His *Caduceus* are painted silver, and its wings red.

This *Hermes* appears driven by a mischievous desire to unravel a forbidden secret, giving an impression of being a private and mysterious agent, who is compelled to seek the invisible rather than the visible. This perhaps indicates that, when in Scorpio, *Hermes* is a skeptic brimming with doubt and suspicion, unsatisfied with what appears to Him and more interested in what's hidden from Him. In that

⁹⁴ Quinlan-McGrath, M., 1984, 93.

sense, a Scorpion *Hermes* symbolizes a contemplative mentality and a deep state of thought, which is determined and unyielding, and thus more resemblant of the magician-god, *Thoth*.

The presence of *Hermes* can be generally detected in other areas of Chigi's mansion, as traces of his *Caduceus* can be seen over the main portal into the *Sala della Prospettiva*, as well as on the ceiling of Chigi's wedding bedroom, both on the second floor of the building.⁹⁵ Rendering this Renaissance villa a prominent base for the eternal *Hermes*.

Another prestigious family that invested in perpetuating the legacy of *Hermes* is the house of Farnese, whose properties in Italy serve as witnesses to the family's wealth and power as a Renaissance patron, including the Palace in Rome and Villa at Caprarola, both of which played host to the legendary *Hermes*. In 1556, Cardinal Alessandro Farnese had commissioned the architect Vignola and Zuccari to participate along with others in the building of a palace,⁹⁶ which would reflect the period's obsession with Oriental esotericism; Designed as a pentagonal fortress, the five-pointed star is a cosmological representation of the five building-blocks of the universe: Fire, water, air, earth, and space (Figure 26), a diagram most visibly popular in magic texts concerned with ritualistic and ceremonial practices, such as the *Key of Solomon*, a Renaissance work rich with prayers and spells inscribed within geometric configurations.

The *Sala della Cosmografia* at the Farnese Villa, is a great hall where a celestial map of heaven covers the entire ceiling, while geographic maps of earth cover the

⁹⁵ Quinlan-McGrath, M., 1984, 101-102.

⁹⁶ Partridge, L., 2001, 263.

walls (Figure 27).⁹⁷ At the centre of the cosmic ceiling, a seven-stringed lyre appears superimposed on the body of an eagle, symbolizing cosmic order and harmony. This is further indicated by the central position in which the eagle was painted, symbolizing the centrality of the celestial government of seven (Universal Mind), which was established to maintain law and order in the universe.

On another occasion, a fresco of *Hermathena* was installed at the Cardinal's private study, painted by Federico Zuccari around 1566, it depicts *Hermes* and *Athena* fused together in a single body (Figure 28). The hybrid is depicted wielding a *Caduceus* in its right hand and a spear in the left, a tortoise rests under Mercury's winged foot, while an Owl nests beside *Athena*. The tortoise has been, like the Ibis and Baboon, associated with *Hermes* in Greek mythology, wherein the Homeric ode, *Hermes* is alleged to have crafted the seven-stringed lyre from the shell of a tortoise.⁹⁸ In addition to the *Caduceus* found at Ephesus, the shell of a tortoise can be detected at the bottom of the bas-relief, this reoccurs in another stone-carving located near the former (Figure 29). This perhaps indicates that the tortoise represents the physical world, as its shell resembles the encompassing womb, or bowl, that contains all creation.

Whereas the fusion of speech and wisdom manifested in the *Hermathena* motif implies an ethical and mystical meaning parallel to that unravelled in the placement of Mercury in Cancer or Scorpio, which indicates that *Hermes*, who personifies Mind, may wander aimlessly unless guided by the light of reason which is, in this case, personified by *Athena*. Thus, *Hermathena* resembles the

⁹⁷ Quinlan-McGrath, M., 1997, 1047.

⁹⁸ McGrath, E., 1987, 240-242.

Caduceus, as both motifs symbolize the dual effort of both the mind and body in pursuing enlightenment.⁹⁹

The image of the intermediary *Hermes* had evidently haunted the imagination of, not only painters but sculptors as well, as skilfully expressed by Giovanni de Bologna in his bronze *flying Mercury* (1580). The sculptor depicts an ascending *Hermes*, whose right hand is pointing towards heaven while his legs are pushing against gravity, with the wind of *Zephyrus* blowing beneath his feet, and winged *Caduceus* resting in his left hand (Figure 30).¹⁰⁰ This sculpture represents the three Hermetic phases of *emanationism*, *conversion*, and *reascension*, symbolizing the journey of the mind towards divine consciousness.¹⁰¹ Andriaen de Vries, having been inspired by Giambologna's *flying Mercury*, produced his own version of the intermediary *Hermes*, around 1593, which borrows heavily from the Greek epoch of *Psyche*. As *Hermes* is depicted lifting *Psyche* up heavenward, where the outline of their integrated bodies strongly resembles that of the spiral motion the twin-serpents of the *Caduceus* create during their climb (Figure 31), which correlates with the Hermetic description of consciousness, as a 'whirled soul', constantly spinning in a spiral motion.¹⁰²

3.2 Cosmography: The Case of Francisco de Holanda

During the fifteenth century, cosmography was a subject of interest for astrologers, navigators and physicians, but most importantly, for painters and

⁹⁹ Rubin, P., 1987, 83.

¹⁰⁰ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 41.

¹⁰¹ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 29.

¹⁰² *Hermetica*, 1992, 31-32.

architects. It was an attempt to comprehend the universe through mathematical principles of number and geometry, the outcome of which became the inspirational foundation for sacred craftsmanship. Parallel to the various astrological and astronomical depictions in works of art, there was an equally great amount of evidence revealing an unprecedented interest in the cosmological manifestations of Hermetic philosophy.

The 'image' enjoyed fine treatment during the Renaissance period, it was believed to possess intellectual mastery and embody esoteric wisdom. Natal charts, astral maps, and talismans were particularly perceived as gateways into Heaven, through which souls can travel and communicate back and forth ¹⁰³, a notion that Renaissance thought adopted from an ancient Egyptian source of knowledge.¹⁰⁴

As explained previously, the *Corpus Hermeticum* presents a threefold universe, where the upper and lower realms intersect at an intermediary point, with *Hermes* being the personification of that connection. *The Divine Poimandres* offers a detailed account of how order was established in the world, clearly depicting a Heliocentric universe in which the Sun is fixed at the centre, surrounded by the six planets, and twelve constellations of the zodiac.

In mathematic terms, heaven is represented by a circle, while Earth by a square, indicating that the world of immortals is, as a circle, infinite, boundless, centred, and whole, whereas the realm of mortals is, as a square, bound by the chains of Matter, which are four in number. *The Divine Poimandres* clearly depicts the universe as “whirled circles” that encompass the world, “letting them turn from an endless beginning to a limitless end, for it starts where it stops. Revolving as Mind

¹⁰³ *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, 2007, 151.

¹⁰⁴ *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, 2007, 148.

wished them to”.¹⁰⁵ Whereas in describing the physical realm, the *Hermetica* states

the circles brought forth from the weighty elements living things without reason (for they no longer kept the word with them); and the air brought forth winged things; the water things that swim. Earth and water had been separated from one another as mind wished, and (earth) brought forth from herself the living things that she held within, four-footed beasts (and) crawling things, wild animals and tame.¹⁰⁶

Based on this, it’s plausible to assume that the intermediary realm is represented by a “*squared circle*”, since Man (child of the cosmos), as stated by the *Hermetica*, is twofold, having both an immortal soul (circle) and mortal body (square). Thus, the symbol of creation was recognized by Renaissance thought as a “*squared circle*” and was often manifested in works of art and Architecture as an octagon, or eight-pointed star.¹⁰⁷ Leonardo’s rough sketches depicts a perception of reality consistent with Hermetic teaching, where the universe is represented by globe gores (Figure 32). At the top-right corner of the page appears a circle inside a square, elsewhere are spherical globes symbolizing the *Universal Mind*, another globe sliced into eight octants, each flattened into the shape of a Reuleaux triangle, oriented in a similar way as a four-petal flower. The left side

¹⁰⁵ *Hermetica*, 1992, 2-3.

¹⁰⁶ *Hermetica*, 1992, 2-3.

¹⁰⁷ *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, 2007, 173-174. The author asserts that it was Nicholas of Cusa who first attempted to “square the circle”.

shows circular arches wrapping around a sphere, a triangle, as well as a human face can also be detected.¹⁰⁸

These cosmological conceptions were colourfully and elaborately reproduced by Francisco de Holanda, a Renaissance architect who, after travelling from Portugal to Italy around 1540, became Michelangelo's student. In 1545, Hollanda produced a collection of 154 illustrations which vividly depict the process of creation in absolute consistency with the *Corpus Hermeticum*. The *Emanation* phase (Figure 33) depicts a triangle inside a circle, from which two triangles appear descending downward, resembling the spill of liquid from a chalice. The Greek alphabet (Α) marks the upper side of the triangle, while the alphabet (Ω) marks its lower end, indicating that in God is the beginning and end of all things, who is not contained by any number but in Him all numbers are generated and contained.¹⁰⁹ The Greek alphabets may also be assumed to imply that God is eternal, as the *Hermetica* states

The everliving differs from the eternal. God did not come to be by another's agency, and, if he came to be, it was by his own agency. He never came to be, however, he comes to be always. This is the eternal being through whom the universe is eternal, the father who is eternal because he exists through himself.¹¹⁰

The image that Hollanda paints is inspired by Hermetic philosophy, where the three triangles symbolize the Hermetic *Trinity*, while the circle from which those

¹⁰⁸ *HOC*, 2007, Vol 3, chapter: 10, 376.

¹⁰⁹ *Hermetica*, 1992, 17.

¹¹⁰ *Hermetica*, 1992, 25.

triangles emanate symbolize the Oneness of God, who is the singular source and origin of life. In keeping up with the *Hermetica*, the second emanation of a second Mind is represented by the middle triangle, symbolizing the sympathetic bond shared between the Master Architect and His firstborn, the Master Builder. Whereas the third emanation of Man is represented by the third triangle which appears dipped in the elements, symbolizing the duality of the human being, whose body is material while his consciousness is mental. Furthermore, the created universe is depicted as an infinity of whirled circles, symbolizing the spiral motion of craftsmanship, which the *Hermetica* describes as “snake-like”.¹¹¹ This page of the sketchbook is a vivid and accurate reanimation of the Hermetic account of creation, in which the macrocosm is a mirror reflection of the microcosm, indicated by the singular circle above and the multitude of circles below. It also depicts *universalism* in the manner in which the three emanations are intricately contained by One circle, symbolizing the Oneness of the All.

Following the *Emanation* phase is *Conversion* (Figure 34), represented by Hollanda as an encircled triangle hovering over Earth. According to the *Hermetica*, the *Divine Intellect* created a second Mind, who then created seven governors, together they represent the team of craftsmen in charge of building the universe, using fire as their instrument in their craftwork. This can be clearly traced in the choice of colour Hollanda used to distinguish the creator from creation, where the Sun appears as a white triangle inside a red circle, symbolizing consciousness as an ensouled Mind, of whom the *Hermetica* states

*In this way, the craftsman (the Sun) binds heaven to earth,
sending essence below and raising matter above, attracting
everything toward the Sun and around it, offering everything*

¹¹¹ *Hermetica*, 1992, 31.

*from himself to everything, as he gives freely of the ungrudging light.*¹¹²

The third and final phase of creation is preserving balance and order (Figure 35), represented by a harmonious arraignment of spheres, through which a *universalism* of the Trinity is manifested. In this ripe state of creation, three realms appear floating in the cosmic waters of the encompassing womb. The Upper realm is represented by a “head”, symbolizing the *Divine Intellect* and Master Architect of the universe. Emanating from the creator’s mouth is two triangles, symbolizing the breath of life ensouling the lifeless Matter, painted as beams of light. Choosing to depict ensoulment as light emanating from the lord’s mouth consists with the Hermetic narrative of “divine will” embodied in the “holy word”, which manifests in God as “voice”.¹¹³

Another page of Hollanda’s sketchbook depict the universe and Man’s place in it (Figure 36), where a male figure appears standing beside a tree, his head radiates with the luminance of the *Divine Intellect* who, once again, is depicted by a “head”. Descending from the *Divine Intellect* is a triangle, from which a thread of seven circles emerges, symbolizing the second Mind and seven governors. This page paints an empowering view of Mankind, as an inheritor of divinity, a receiver of the Lord’s blessing, and fellow participant in the divine brotherhood of craftsmanship, possessing Mind and, as the *Hermetica* states,

According to the father's will, and unlike other living things on Earth, mankind, the third living thing, came to be in the image of the cosmos, possessing mind as well as a relation not only of

¹¹² *Hermetica*, 1992, 59.

¹¹³ *Hermetica*, 1992, 45-46.

sympathy with the second god but also of thought with the first god. For they have perception of the former god as of a body, but they take thought of the latter as of a mind without body, as of the good.¹¹⁴

On another page of his sketchbook, Hollanda paint a rather peculiar and mysterious scene, revealing on one side the corpse of an old man, while on the other the destruction of a tower. Looking closely, one can see the nude figure laying on the motionless on the ground, in his arms he seems to have been carrying two bowls, filled with goods that have spilled upon his fall. Beside the diseased man, three figures appear to be in a celebratory mood, two of them had wrapped themselves with the old man's clothing, the third points at the corpse while wearing an expression of joy. The scene can be assumed to imply an act of murder and theft, this assumption stems from the legend of *Hiram Abiff*, a Kabbalistic allegory adopted by members of *Freemasonry*, the modern institute of Jewish mysticism.¹¹⁵ In the Masonic legend, *Hermes* is the skilled builder who assists King Solomon in building his Temple, but is later faced by a grim fate when three of his craftsmen ambush Him in an act of betrayal and murder Him on the spot.¹¹⁶ This was supposedly the consequence of refusing to divulge the key to His knowledge and wisdom, which enticed the persistent builders to obtain it by force, which ultimately led to the shocking disappearance of the corpse and the secret along with it. Upon the unfoldment of these tragic events, the three turn repentant and remorseful, as God instructed them to seek redemption and

¹¹⁴ *Hermetica*, 1992, 26.

¹¹⁵ *The lost keys of Masonry*, 1924, 13.

¹¹⁶ *The lost keys of Masonry*, 1924, 36.

salvation. With a small lamp as their only hope and guide, the three are sent to labour and complete the sacred work, as it is the only way that their Master is resurrected back to life.¹¹⁷ The symbolism embodied in this solar allegory is maybe interpreted as the tension between light and darkness, soul and Matter, where each struggle to devour the other. According to the *Hermetica*, the Master Architect sent his son to the world below to build his father's Temple in the physical realm, where upon descent, the son, who is the soul and light of God, was engulfed by the cosmic waters, and absorbed into the elements, resulting in his confinement within a physical body, where under the veil of darkness he is rendered invisible to the eyes of ignorance. The threefold agency, which can be represented by a triangle, symbolize the cosmos, being an elementary manifestation of the universal Mind, created in the image of the divine creator who is "One in essence, yet three in aspect". Whereas the mission appointed to this threefold agency symbolize the goal of the sage, as it seeks truth and divine wisdom, pursuing the path of illumination in hopes of reuniting with the lost redeemer. Beyond ethical revelations, the epoch is expected to embody cosmological meanings as well, as the name *Hiram* is suggested to be a reference to the Sun, while the threefold search for *Hiram* symbolize the contemplative observation and study of the cosmos.¹¹⁸

These implications behind Hollanda's painting are perhaps further emphasized by the scene depicting a demolished monument, as a seven-stepped tower appears with the upper portion of its body incomplete, indicating that the construction had halted halfway through its development, symbolizing a break in the chain of command due to the absence of the Master Builder. This break, it seems, had

¹¹⁷ *The lost keys of Masonry*, 1924, 41-49.

¹¹⁸ *The Open Court*, 1903, 439.

disabled all lines of communication between mortals and immortals, as the tower symbolizes the bridge between heaven and Earth, raised seven levels high in imitation of the sevenfold order of the *Universal Mind*. This narrative can also be traced in the biblical myth of Babel's tower, which upon disorder and chaos shrouding the builders with confusion, never managed to reach the completion phase. The tower, in this case, symbolizes the unity and Oneness of collective consciousness, while the obstacle of comprehension and speech symbolizes disintegration and separation from the source, this obstacle is ignorance of God.

Other pages of the *Mundi Imagines* depicts a figurative and geometric representation of Hermetic philosophy, which capture the cosmic order and path of illumination paved within it. On one page, the Master Architect and Master Builder appear seated side by side on a ring-shaped throne (Figure 38). Between the two male figures is a bird, together they represent the divine *Trinity*, where the threefold forces of soul, mind, and body are connected as One. Adorning the throne is the celestial government of seven, each governor is depicted as a radiating star, in correlation with the Hermetic description that identifies these intellectual beings as bolts of light, or energy.¹¹⁹ Below the throne, four birds appear blowing the breath of life into a globe, together they depict a *squared circle*, which symbolizes the four instruments of craftsmanship and the crafted body of the universe. A second globe can be detected at the left corner of the painting, emanating from it is a beam of light, the radiance of which is directed towards Earth, symbolizing the second Mind, the Sun, who appears nurturing the planet with light and crafting ensouled vessels from the four elements. The Greek alphabets (XXII) appear inside the radiating globe, clearly indicating that this illuminating star is indeed the second emanation.

¹¹⁹ *Hermetica*, 1992, 60.

Comprehensively, this page depicts the threefold universe, where if a line was to be drawn between the first Mind, second Mind, and Earth, the form of a triangle would appear. Hollanda had artistically used the language of number and geometry to reproduce a graphic representation of Hermetic cosmology. The painting clearly depicts the principle of *correspondence* between the world above and that below through the arrangement of forms and figures. It incorporates the principle of duality in distinguishing the image of the creator from that of creation, as the *Divine Intellect* is depicted as a Man's figure, while all else is depicted by a geometric form. The principle of *Universalism* is also expressed in the intimate manner in which the arms of both the Master Architect and Master Builder are tangled together, reflecting divine unity and harmony.

Another painting relating to this depicts the divine reunion between father, son, and grandchild, where the Master Architect and Master Builder appear bestowing a halo upon a female figure (Figure 39). Once again, the three figures are seated in a triangular arrangement, with the initiated human placed at the centre. The painting is reminiscent of the *reascension* of *Psyche*, who was lifted by a Lunar *Hermes* towards heaven. Similarly, the light-bearing *Baboon-Thoth* is often depicted crowned with a Lunar disc which, as Hollanda portrays it, is represented by the triangular layout of the three figures, as well as the three winged guardians carrying them, which resembles the crescent Moon. Below the *Trinity* is a view of the physical realm, depicted as a spherical globe surrounded by winged entities, symbolizing the governing forces of the universe, who participate in the craftsmanship and maintenance of God's Temple.

3.3 The Pattern of Consciousness: An Episode in Leonardo da Vinci's Pursuit of Enlightenment

The origins of the squared circle concept can be traced back to Egypt, where a cosmological representation of the universe was found engraved into the roof of a chapel dedicated to Osiris, in the Temple of Hathor at Dendera, dating back to the

first century BC (Figure 40).¹²⁰ The diagram depicts two circles superimposed on a cross, the outer circle represents the spiritual realm, while the inner circle represents the physical realm, binding the two together is the intermediary realm of elements, represented by two cross signs. One cross can be traced into the four female figures who appear supporting the inner circle on four sides of the diagram, while the other can be traced in the four pairs of falcon-headed figures, together they represent the dual foundation of creation, as the four elements of Matter and eight primordial deities of the Ogdoad.¹²¹ A geometric analysis of this cosmological diagram reveals an octagonal plan, consisting of the solar and lunar cross signs, otherwise recognized as a *squared circle*. The inner circle depicts a synthetic view of the created universe, which reproduces the planets and constellations in their relation to each other.¹²² This indicates that the *squared circle* instead symbolizes the threefold universe, as a circle and square intersected by an octagon.

Another clue that strengthens the ties of this symbol to Egypt leads to *Seshat* who, according to Egyptian religion, is the goddess of writing, who was considered to be in charge of preserving the sacred archives and regulating the flow of wisdom between the domain of immortals and mortals. In addition, she was the female assistant and consort of *Thoth*, sharing a common line of profession with the Moon-god (Figure 41). Like *Thoth*, *Seshat* was the founder of astronomy,

¹²⁰ Lehmann, K., 1945, 5.

¹²¹ *Thoth, the Hermes of Egypt*, 1922, 49-50. The text describes the Ogdoad as the council of Eight that emerged in *Hermopolis*, the city of Thoth, otherwise known as the 'city of Eight'.

¹²² *HOC*, 1987, Vol. 1, chapter: 7, 121.

astrology, Architecture, and civil engineering, depicted by Egyptians as a female figure crowned with a seven-sided star emblem resembling a flower (Figure 41a). Various studies this emblem offer plausible interpretations, for instance, in reference to *Seshat's* functions and attributes, the symbol's resemblance to a hut, the emblem was suggested to symbolize sheltering, or construction. This interpretation implies that certain hieroglyphs may represent a plan or elevation drawing.¹²³

With that in mind, a cosmological interpretation of the emblem based on *Seshat's* relationship to *Thoth* may indicate that the seven-pointed star represents knowledge of God, as it symbolizes the celestial government of seven, this interpretation is perhaps supported by the appearance of the symbol above *Seshat's* head, implying that the divine instrument of illumination is Mind, and a vision of the sevenfold cosmic order manifests in an enlightened intellect. Above the seven-pointed star, a semi-circular arch appears, which resembles an encompassing embrace, probably symbolizing the cosmic womb, or container, that embodies collective consciousness. It's also worth mentioning that, visualizing an inverted view of the arch would reveal a containing vessel such as a chalice or bowl (Figure 41b). Another revelation that can be traced in this emblem is a crescent, and if *Seshat's* head represents the light bearing mind, then a fascinating vision of two crescents encircling the light of 'knowing' (Figure 41c). Whether the emblem symbolizes a lantern, a domed roof, a storing vessel, or the vault of heaven, the essential meaning remains the same, which is a multi-dimensional symbol of the mysteries that represents divine consciousness and enlightenment.

¹²³ Magdolen, D., 2006, 65-71.

The emblem of *Seshat* unexpectedly reappears in yet another fascinating motif, where at the ancient city of Abydos and amidst the ruins of the Osireion complex, the *pattern of consciousness* was carved repeatedly on several walls (Figure 42). The diagram depicts a multitude of intersecting circles, where the intersection area appears to resemble flower petals (Figure 42a). Upon further inspection, the motif appears to be a cosmological representation of Hermetic teaching; The process of reproducing this diagram simply requires a ruler and compass, as the primary component of its manifestation is a circle. To understand how this geometric diagram correlates with the principles of Hermetic thought, a detailed reanimation of the drawing process is necessary, as it resonates loudly with the Hermetic process of creation.

The first step is defining a beginning point, designated by a single dot in space, a circle is then drawn from this point, and recreated six times around the centre. The multiplication of circles can continue endlessly, however in this case, a total of 19 circles including the original one. The network is then sealed with a circular border, containing within the spiralling web of interwoven circles (Figure 43). From the reproduced diagram, a limitless number of variables can be traced, the *Caduceus of Hermes* being one of them (Figure 43d).

In reference to the Hermetic myth of creation, the All emanated from the One, parallel to how the multitude of circles emanated from a single point of origin. The pattern reflects the unity of the All by the centrality of the One, indicating that the plenitude is interconnected by the singular. The correspondence between the world above and that below is reflected in how all circles are identical, since the macrocosm is an imitation of the microcosm. The principle of *universalism* can also be traced in how the circular framework contains all emanations within, creating a harmonious Oneness of the All. Furthermore, the manner in which the initial six circles surround the seventh one correlate with the heliocentric cosmology of the *Hermetica*, as it places the Sun at the centre of the cosmic order,

with the six governors surrounding it. Inside the original circle is a six-sided flower depicting a hexagon (Figure 43a), it represents the duality of creation, as a product of a divine marriage between soul and Matter.

The *pattern of consciousness* can be traced in various works of art and Architecture across different parts of the world, whether as a floor mosaic (Figure 44), a ceiling fresco (Figure 45), or stone-carving (Figure 46), this symbol is a reoccurring theme.

A valuable clue to the Hermetic identity of this symbol was elaborately unravelled by the Renaissance intellectual, Leonardo da Vinci, whose study of this diagram is a clear indicator of an avid curiosity and obsessed mentality towards an ancient tradition of occultism and symbolism. The inspection work performed by Leonardo indicates that he believed the secrets laying underneath the surface could potentially reveal the path to divinity; On several pages of the *Codex Atlanticus*, Leonardo seems to be conducting a dual investigation, taking both a mathematical and philosophical approach, where a series of formulas accompanied with cryptic descriptions document the perceptive observations and mystical theories about the Egyptian symbol. On one page, the diagram is dissected into seven circular portions, distinguished by red markings, a triangle is then drawn outward from the centre, probably in an attempt to measure the area between the first and second emanation, this triangle is reminiscent of Hollanda's representations of *emanationsim*, thus it represents the pyramid-shaped beam of life, or tunnel, connecting worlds together (Figure 47). Looking closely, a series of six circles seem to be drawn within, crossing through the knitted thread of petals, perhaps implying that the seven governors encompass the universe in circles identical in form to that of consciousness.

Leonardo continues this dual analysis throughout the journal, where he extracts distinct configurations from the general pattern, such as a hexagram or cube. He also seems to have realized that, as a pattern of consciousness, the symbol does

not represent a fixed system but rather a spinning one, constantly revolving in an eternal cycle. This realization is detected in the spiral motion of the flower drawn on several occasions, which resembles the rotation of a wheel (Figure 48). Other pages of his journal reveal Leonardo's squaring of the circle where, besides triangles and spirals, the *flower of life* appears fitted inside a square (Figure 49).

CHAPTER 4

THE APPLICATION OF HERMETIC CONCEPTS IN THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF ARCHITECTURE

4.1 Architectural Design as Divine Vision: Leonardo da Vinci's Hermetic Approach to Architecture

Long-term exposure to the mystical teachings of the Egyptian lore had dramatically influenced the Western perception of reality during the Renaissance period, inspiring patrons of art and Architecture to invest generously into the revival and perpetuation of an esoteric tradition, established by a royal bloodline of Hermits, as extraordinary efforts were dedicated to celebrating the radiant spirit of *Hermes*. In His name, graphic biographies were produced, and elaborate artworks were installed. whether in the public or private sphere, images of Him rippled throughout cathedrals and palaces, painted on walls, floors, and ceilings, in a manner that reflected a deep admiration for His eternal legacy, and a clear recognition of His divine origins.

Beyond the visual satisfaction or decorative function, representations of *Hermes* or Hermetic conceptions were believed to possess a psychological and mystical dimension, which had a powerful influence on human consciousness and behaviour; As already mentioned, the 'image' was considered by Renaissance intellectuals to possess intellectual mastery, used in some cases as a ritualistic medium, where the mere act of drawing certain diagrams or symbols was

perceived as sacred,¹²⁴ as it created a line of communication between the mortals and immortals. This narrative stems from the Hermetic theory of correspondence, where a bridge between the spiritual and physical worlds is essentially intellectual, thus any form of communication with the divine is psychic, as it strictly occurs within the mind. In that context, ritualistic occult practices of magic entailed repeatedly chanting specific words while constantly gazing at certain images, a process that helped engrave the identification code of a deity within the practitioner's consciousness, a code which was supposedly decipherable by intellectual beings occupying heaven.¹²⁵

Architectural drawings by Leonardo da Vinci are one out of many testimonies of the Renaissance appreciation of the 'image' and theo-philosophical significance it embodies. Having attempted to measure consciousness, Leonardo adopted the geometric form of whirled circles in his temple designs, as it exhibits similar centrality and symmetry to that of the Egyptian symbol (Figure 51).¹²⁶ The principle of universalism, unity, and Oneness is roughly demonstrated in his floor plan, which depicts One circle at the centre surrounded by eight smaller circles. A similar design is redrawn on the same page, showing a more detailed representation of the *squared circle*. Leonardo also provides a three-dimensional rendering of his designs where, as an imitation of the spherical universe, a domed roof is extruded from the circular plan, symbolizing the intermediary sphere of heaven where lunar and solar crosses intersect to create an octagonal order. On another page of his journal, Leonardo reproduces the *squared circle* more

¹²⁴ *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, 2007, 151-160.

¹²⁵ *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, 2007, 147-165.

¹²⁶ *Leonardo da Vinci*, 2006, 89-95.

accurately, where the solar cross is drawn with curved edges, while the lunar cross with sharp edges, in reference to the contrasting natures of the soul and elements (Figure 52).

The choice to reproduce the *squared pattern of consciousness* in the design of buildings is a clear indication that Architecture was perceived by Renaissance intellectuals as a reconstruction of the universe, and thus was shaped to reflect celestial harmony and divine craftsmanship. The participants involved in these visionary projects acknowledged that the meaning of these sacred monuments was primarily philosophical rather than exclusively functional, and that gaining the opportunity to participate in the manifestation of such works was a hard-earned privilege which awarded them a status equivalent to that of God.¹²⁷

According to the *Hermetica*, metaphysical theories should be applied to Architectural design, where the creator is depicted as a Master Architect, and the universe as His Temple, the construction of which is a collaborative project commissioned from a Master Builder and His team of craftsmen.

This Architectural narrative resonates with the ancient belief that *Thoth-Hermes* was the founder of a city and builder of the pyramids, a belief that is elaborately documented in the *Picatrix*, an Arabic text dating to the tenth century.¹²⁸ A Latin translation of the text was published in 1256 at the command of King Alphonsus of Castile, which was widely distributed in Europe, as it fuelled the tendency to

¹²⁷ *Architectural principles in the age of Humanism*, 1949, 38.

Perspective Hinge, 1997, 34.

Quinlan-McGrath, M., 2013, 82.

¹²⁸ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 18.

The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy, 2007, 153.

portray *Thoth-Hermes* as an Architect, Builder, and Artist during the Renaissance.¹²⁹ Like the Homeric *Hermes*, who masterfully crafted musical instruments, he was also regarded as the builder of a city named after him, *Hermopolis*.¹³⁰ A passage from the *Picatrix* reads:

According to the (Chaldeans) Hermes was the first who constructed images by means of which he knew how to regulate the Nile against the motion of the moon. This man also built a temple to the Sun, and he knew how to hide himself from all so that no one could see him, although he was within it...

Thus, a connection between a sage, mystic, magus, and an architect, engineer, scientist, found fertile ground in Western thought during the Renaissance, as the result of a receptive mentality towards Oriental esotericism.

4.2 The Building: The Case of Philibert De l'Orme

Tangible manifestations of the *squared circle* can be found across Italy, the centralized scheme was a recurring theme in Western Architecture during the Renaissance. However, one particularly expressive example lies in the northern outskirts of France, Château d'Anet is a monumental representation of the Hermetic thought, in which principles of the Trinity, duality, and universalism, are excessively applied unto various aspects of its design, whether it was the spatial arrangement, geometric form, decorative patterns, accessibility features, or circulation layout. The project of Anet was commissioned from Philibert de l'Orme by Diane de Poitiers in 1548, a noblewoman in the royal court of France.¹³¹

¹²⁹ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 88.

¹³⁰ *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 115.

During the 1530s, Philibert de l'Orme had reportedly visited Rome where he gained the opportunity to inspect the relics of Classical Antiquity,¹³² meanwhile, Michelangelo had just begun working on the Capitoline Hill project.¹³³ The significance of this coincidental encounter between Philibert and Michelangelo lies in the stark resemblance between the design of Anet and Campidoglio, where both establishments incorporate the *pattern of consciousness* as a centralizing and harmonizing component. Philibert would revisit Rome in 1536 to inspect Michelangelo's work, where soon after he published a philosophical treatise concerning Architectural meaning in 1567, titled *Premier tome de l'architecture*.¹³⁴ Much Like Leonardo da Vinci, Philibert had a taste for Oriental esotericism and Latin Hermeticism, evident by his contemplation of the divine proportions of the comic Temple in his book.

The plan of this lofty pleasure-house is relatively simple (Figure 53), consisting of a large quadrangle surrounded on three sides by two-storey buildings with steeply pitched roofs. The fourth side facing the entrance was enclosed with curtain walls brought forward and returned from the two wings to form the very curious composition of the entrance front. The gardens lay at the back of the house and were overlooked by a terrace with an elaborate cryptoporticus underneath. This terrace communicated with the gardens by a flight of stairs in the form of a

¹³¹ *Studies in French Renaissance*, 1905, 145.

¹³² *Studies in French Renaissance*, 1905, 137-138.

¹³³ *The Quest for an Appropriate Past in Literature, Art and Architecture*, 2018, 222.

¹³⁴ Evans, R., 1986, 13.

crescent, as Philibert was particularly fond of spiral ramps.¹³⁵ At the two angles of the garden, north-east and north-west, stood two pavilions, and in the centre between them the garden wall broke outwards into a circular projection, enclosing a great hall of entertainment. While not much seems to have survived of Philibert's work, the chapel is among the most important parts of Anet that remain intact (Figure 54).¹³⁶

The plan of the chapel consists of a circle 28 ft. in diameter, with recesses 14 ft. wide, which have elliptical arches, and are divided by piers with engaged Corinthian pilasters at the angles, carrying an entablature that runs all around the building like a ring wrapped on a finger (Figure 55). Above the arches and entablature is a hemispherical dome, coffered diagonally, with an opening in the crown to the lantern and cupola, resembling the oculus of the Pantheon at Rome (Figure 56). The coffering of the dome is mirrored on the floor, evoking the illusion that the coffered dome above is as flat as the ground below, or the ground below is as coffered as the dome above (Figure 57). In the spandrels of the arches are eight fine female figures, those on the east and west sides holding olive branches, while those on the north and south sides are holding trumpets.

The interior of the vaulted ceiling is dressed in an elaborately meshed armour, designed in the likeness of a ribcage, it was gracefully weaved from the multitude of arching lines. The complexity of the adoration pattern was produced from the simplicity of mere threads emanating from the One and whirled around the centre, at which point the whole scheme is tightly knitted. Like the reverberation of sound waves or the rippling surface of the water, the intricate matrix was progressively

¹³⁵*The Quest for an Appropriate Past in Literature, Art and Architecture*, 2018, 217.

¹³⁶*Studies in French Renaissance*, 1905, 147-150.

fashioned from an expansive extrusion of lines, stretched between the oculus and base of the dome, following a consistent rhythm, the lines climb around each other, twist, and intersect continuously as they extend further until the internal shell of the dome is fully encompassed.¹³⁷ A lingering gaze could easily put the mind in a state of wonderment, as the illusion of an image in motion is gradually evoked, and the vision of a spinning vault is installed unto one's imagination.

Directly beneath the entablature and facing the main access is an opening into an outdoor view, through which arrows of sunlight penetrate through the thick skin of the hall. The window is opened in an empty vaulted space that's itched into a curved wall, two more identical windows are opened on the east-side and west-side (Figure 58). Thus, a series of three windows opened in three wall niches creates a threefold connection between privates and public spheres. An altar is placed inside the curved wall, sitting beneath the window and carrying three candles, the middle one placed on an elevated stage (Figure 59).

Looking from the outside in, the external facade consists of two towers with pyramidal tops, each crowned with an ornament depicting a lunar disc attached to a pair of globes that vary in size (Figure 60). At the middle, between both towers, is a curious emblem depicting a pair of intersecting crosses, and like the twin globes, the crosses vary in size (Figure 61), the smaller one combined with a set of four crescents, distributed at the tipping ends of the cross, the larger cross depicts a fruitful three-branched tree, from which three Lotus-shaped flowers appear blossoming.

Based on these observations, it can be assumed that the chapel of Anet represents the *Divine Intellect*, *Universal Mind*, or *collective consciousness*. Philibert had adopted a circular plan in which roundness is a dominant feature, implemented in

¹³⁷ Evans, R., 1986, 11.

the domed ceiling, curved walls, and spiralling decorative patterns. I shall explain how a dual analysis of both the internal and external shells of the chapel can unravel the Hermetic symbolism etched into the fabric of its design.

Beginning with the marble floor pavement, at the centre of which a cosmological diagram depicts a series of six circles (Figure 62). At the centre of the diagram, the original circle represents the created universe, surrounding it is a circle that is divided by a cross into four equal portions, which represents the four elements. The third circle depicts the intersection of the solar and lunar crosses, symbolizing the *squared circle*, a representation of the intermediary realm of ensouled Matter. The fourth circle depicts twelve squares, representing the zodiacal realm of intermediary beings. The twelvefold order is reproduced in the fifth and sixth circles, whereas the largest circle which defines the floor plan of the chapel, represents the *Universal Mind*, the celestial government that encompasses the universe in whirled circles.

Considering that the ceiling design is a mirror reflection of the floor plan, the coffered dome symbolizes a physical reanimation of the *Universal Mind*, where the intricate web of ribbons represents the spiral motion of divine consciousness, and the oculus at the centre of the ceiling represents the Upper realm of light, from which the multitude of craftworks emanates (Figure 63). The ceiling design is thus an Architectural representation of the “*cosmic connections and astral circuits*”¹³⁸ shaping the universe. The *Hermetica* describes the bodily experience of physical reality as “*phantoms and shadowy illusions*”,¹³⁹ this concept can be traced in the visual effect the floor pavement has on human perception, as the

¹³⁸ *Hermetica*, 1992, 17.

¹³⁹ *Hermetica*, 1992, 22.

optical illusion created by the concrete fabric of interwoven ribbons can inspire the image of a spinning wheel in the spectator's mind, this mental hallucination can thus create the illusion of a spinning ceiling or floor, inspiring the perception of Anet chapel as a Conscious manifestation and ensouled vessel.

Based on these revelations, the chapel of Anet can be interpreted as the *Divine Intellect*, who is the world soul and *Universal agent*, within which the vision of a threefold universe is generated, and the craftsmanship of its body perpetuated. Inside this Architectural vessel, a law of *correspondence* governs the relationship between the members and the whole, where the hemispherical dome is an extruded imitation of the circular hall. The integral quality of the chapel resembles is, as limbs to a body, harmoniously and interconnectivity designed, rendering the chapel an appropriate and worthy receiver of consciousness. The chapel may also symbolize the transition between ignorance and enlightenment, as the ceiling above and the floor below represent the contradictory forces of light and darkness, where above lies a pure manifestation of God, while below lies a shadowy reflection of His consciousness (Figure 64). As a whole, the tightly knitted fabric of the chapel integrates both illumination and oblivion into a single Architectural unity, the internal shell of which is a melting pot, where the soul spilling from the chalice above and Matter spilling from the chalice below are mingled together, and the product of their fusion is a spherical embodiment of divine consciousness. In that context, the outdoor environment surrounding Anet chapel represents the macrocosm, which consists of heaven above and Earth below, as an intermediary, it exhibits the dual characteristics of both worlds.

The *squared circle* depicted at the centre of the floor pavement is reproduced on a larger scale in the Architectural design of the chapel, where the solar cross, or circle, is designated by the three window openings, including the fourth point of entrance. Whereas the lunar cross, or square, is represented by the four right-angle corners of the building. Together, they create an octagonal form parallel to that

depicted in the cosmic ceiling of Dendera's Temple (Figure 65). It is worth mentioning that the solar cross symbolizes the celestial realm both aesthetically and functionally; As the windows opened at three of its sides not only connect the microcosm to the macrocosm, but also allow the astral light of the Sun to pierce through external skin and illuminate the inner shell of the chapel.

This allows us to observe how a decorative pattern was regenerated in the geometric order of the design, as a way of communicating Heretic thought both theoretically and practically. Rendering the conscious experience of Anet chapel a multi-dimensional learning process of sacred wisdom and universal Truth, where the contemplation of the building is made complementary to the contemplation of God. It can thus be imagined, that being outside the chapel is parallel to being underwater, where human consciousness is submerged in the vice of ignorance. The path into the gate of entrance is the path of illumination, which can only be crossed by the guiding spirit of *Hermes*. Whereas entering the chapel is parallel to entering the portal of light, symbolized by the transcendent *Psyche* and meditating *Baboon-Thoth*. Upon entrance, the mind and body are enticed by awe and wonder into a deep and concentrated state of thought, in which the centralized and symmetrical proportionality of the building serves to lead the body in the light's direction, while the visual effects of symbolic representations help unlock the unravelling spark buried within the mind, ultimately liberating the human consciousness.

In that sense, the plan of the chapel represents a divine vision conceived within the creator's mind, and thus the body of the chapel is a materialization of that vision. Prior to construction, the ground floor represents nothingness before the beginning, the design process represents the unfoldment of a divine order within the designer's mind, the mathematical visualization of this order on physical paper represents the moment of creation, when light descended upon darkness and soul fused with Matter. The act of building, which marks the transition of theory into

practice, represents the craftsmanship of the universe, symbolizing the conversion of consciousness from a spiritual into a physical state of existence, and the conversion of a divine plan from an intangible into a tangible substance.

In other words, a divine scheme was conceived within Philibert's mind who, having been exposed to occult teaching and inspired by Hermetic tradition, had obtained a higher state of consciousness, which enabled him to receive the blueprint of the cosmic Temple, and participate in the craftsmanship of divine works in the world below. In that sense, the chapel of Anet is a reconstruction of heaven on Earth, hence an intermediary bridge between two realms, and a vessel of communication between mortal and immortal beings.

The moment of creation occurred at the centre of the circular hall, the floor pavement which depicts the *pattern of consciousness* is an indicator to where the rippling of light occurred in the lifeless waters. In that sense, the floor of the chapel symbolizes cosmic space, or the cosmic womb, whereas the pattern paved on it symbolizes creation, or consciousness. The coffered ceiling symbolizes the intermediary realm which, recognizing its face in the mirror, watches over Earth where an imitation of its image is reflected upon the surface. This mirror symbolism that is most characteristic of Hermetic thought, is manifested in how the floor pavement and ceiling design mirror each other, symbolizing that "As above, so below", and indicating that, once inside, a line of communication is simultaneously activated.

These interpretations are perhaps strengthened by the marble material of the floor pavement, as a semi-reflective material, it symbolizes the fluid and organic sea.¹⁴⁰ A cosmic harmony, unity, and correspondence manifest through this mirror symbolism, as the dome of heaven is supported by the floor and pillars of

¹⁴⁰ Barry, F., 2014, 630-631.

ensouled elements, any alteration or damage that may befall the lower body will accordingly effect the upper body, parallel to how consciousness requires a vessel in order to come into being. This implies that, when standing at the centre of the hall, human consciousness is tuned back into the system, and reunited with the *Universal Mind*.

Based on these interpretations, it can also be assumed that the walls and pillars connecting the floor to the ceiling represent the elementary forces of the intermediary realm, symbolizing the chains that confine a soul within a body, parallel to bone and skin, it is the binding thread from which the cosmic body is weaved, and the spherical head inside which the universe lives eternally.

An equally gripping reanimation of Hermetic teaching reoccurs on an even larger scale in the public domain, as the external facade of the chapel's body depicts a ripe model of the universe, one which further indicates that, however many limbs the building may outgrow, an Architectural Oneness is consistently maintained throughout all emanation processes (Figure 66). The same central axis around which the domed chapel had spiralled into existence, was used to raise a pair of identical towers where, in contrast to the hemispherical roof of the chapel, were topped with a pyramid-shaped roof. A dual analysis of both the decorative and structural aspects of the entrance gate shall further emphasize this Hermetic interpretation of Anet chapel.

The threefold ornament resting on both pyramid-shaped roofs may give clues to the cosmological meaning of the gate structure, as they both consist of a three-part series; In the case of the sculpted ornament being dissected, each of its parts can be matched to the gate's elevation, where the large globe represents the ground floor, the intermediary globe represents the middle floor, and the crescent represents the third floor (Figure 67). With that being considered, it is safe to assume that the entrance gate is an Architectural manifestation of the Hermetic *Trinity*, where the ground floor symbolizes Earth, the third floor symbolizes

heaven, whereas the middle floor symbolizes the intermediary realm in between. The entrance gate represents the *Trinity* both vertically and horizontally, as three openings appear in each one of the three floors, where three doorways at the ground and middle levels, as well as two windows at the third, function as a bridge between the macrocosm and microcosm.

This is yet another example of how a decorative ornament can inspire Architectural design, as both the ornament and gate share a stark resemblance to one another in terms of the design concept and structural anatomy (Figure 68). A peculiar discovery emerged from an attempt at merging the ornaments decorating the roof of both towers, which implies that the entrance gate does indeed symbolize the intermediary path leading to the celestial portal of heaven; What the fusion experiment seems to depict is the *Triplicity of the Moon*, an astrological symbol consisting of two crescents connected by one disc at the centre (Figure 69). There perhaps is no other symbol that resonates more with the character of *Thoth-Hermes-Mercurius* than the Lunar *Triplicity*, as it correlates with the threefold spirit of this deity, who resides at the intermediary realm, and whose feet are on the ground while arms are raised towards heaven. Each crescent embracing a different side of the same coin, while at the centre, the union of both sides is divine consciousness, symbolized by the disc-bearing crescent of the Moon-god, *Thoth* (Figure 70).

Thus, the symbolism of the *Triplicity* indicates that the entrance gate of Anet chapel represents a *Hermes* who is initiated and enlightened, a Mercury who stands on equal footing with the Moon, serving as link between mortal beings and the silver prince, as *He* helps guide those seeking salvation into the harbour, where the sailing vessel of the Moon awaits their arrival patiently. The entrance gate can also be assumed to symbolize the key to unlocking the mysteries of the universe, as the domed hall it leads to is an Architectural embodiment of divine revelation. This interpretation is perhaps supported by another experiment, one

which further indicates that the gate personifies the three-headed Mercury, where the ornament sitting above the pyramid-shaped roof bears striking similarity to the planetary symbol of Mercury (Figure 71).¹⁴¹

Another experiment that brings to the surface a significant clue to the meaning of the chapel's gate, is a fusion of the pyramid-shaped roofs of the twin towers, which reveals the geometric pattern of a hexagon, identical to that detected by Leonardo in the *Pattern of Consciousness* (Figure 72). As mentioned earlier, the six-pointed flower is a symbol of the *Divine Intellect*, as the hexagonal form it reflects is a representation of the divine marriage between soul and Matter, and thus the aftermath of this marriage, their first born, *Consciousness*. The integration of these two triangles or pyramids personifies the duality of the *Universal Mind*, the mental fabric of which is weaved from two contradictory forces, one is ascending upward while the other descending downward, yet both climb around the same vertical axis, causing tension to spiral between them. This narrative is reminiscent of the *Caduceus* of *Hermes*, as the entrance gate represents the twin serpents spiralling around a road, the winged crown adorning the tip of the *Caduceus* is represented by the domed hall (Figure 73).

These philosophical perceptions are collectively embodied by the meticulously detailed craftsmanship of the ornament resting upon the domed roof of the chapel, which depicts an eight-sided emblem, identical to the *squared circle* of Dendera's ceiling, which was a dominant theme in Renaissance art. The ornament resembles a tree, with four of its branches extending further than the others, distinguished by the golden petals of a flower. The four short extensions of the ornament are decorated with a crescent for each, and at the heart of the sculpture, an eight-pointed star brightly radiates. Choosing to hang this ornament above the domed

¹⁴¹ *Influences: Art, Optics, and Astrology in the Italian Renaissance*, 2013, 27.

part of the building is a clear indication to the cosmic harmony and unity that this monument conceptualizes, as it insinuates that the entrance gate relates to the inner chapel both practically and mystically, where the crescents adorning the twin towers are also adorning the chapel's head.

Looking closely at this Ornament, two fascinating clues can be unravelled, as the lunar cross featuring four crescents depicts the planetary seals of the Sun and Moon superimposed on one another; The planetary seal of the Moon, for instance, depicts four crescents inside a cross (Figure 74), whereas the planetary seal of the Sun depicts, what appears to be, a cross inside a square with crescent-shaped angles (Figure 75). This strongly implies that the tree-shaped ornament symbolizes the light-bearing Moon, the enlightened Mind, the night's Sun, who personifies the portals of knowledge. This is perhaps a new interpretation of the *squared circle*, as a symbol of the lunar disc, rendering it both a cosmological and mystical symbol of Hermetic teaching. What this also implies, is that the domed hall of the chapel does indeed symbolize the *Divine Intellect*, as an emblem of the Sun-bearing and truth-revealing god adorns its roof.

It is thus plausible to assume, that Anet chapel was shaped to reflect the philosophical principles of *Hermeticism*, as it symbolizes a *Universalism* of the *Trinity*, where a threefold scheme was applied to both the design of both internal and external domains of the building. In light of what this multi-dimensional had revealed, a sense of deliberateness on behalf of the construction team is potent, as the specific placement of certain objects seems to correlate with the Architectural identity of the building, engraving a specific message or meaning to each member of its bodily structure. This deliberateness in design occurred in an equally suggestive manner, as puzzle pieces, each limb possessed a particular fragment of the mystery, where a whole version of the truth would be the outcome of a contemplative and meditative process pursued, not by a prejudice or fearful mind-

set, but rather an experimental and progressive mentality, one that is especially interested in the occult teachings of an Oriental philosophy.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Untold Bits and Pieces

Remarkably, the scope of material evidence goes beyond the capacity of what this investigation is capable to unravel, as the application of Hermetic concepts in the theory and practise of Renaissance Architecture was not exclusive to the erection of individual structures, but was further incorporated into more intricate construction projects; the passage which was previously recited from the *Picatrix* in the fourth chapter of this thesis was a small portion of text extracted from a wider context, in which an elaborately detailed description of an ideal city is depicted, designed and built by the legendary *Hermes*, in dedication to the *Divine Intellect*, the name of the city is *Adocentyn*.¹⁴² Visions of gods partaking in the raising of actual towns and settlements were thoroughly discussed and contemplated in several written documents. *Sforzinda* was Filarete's narrative of a *Utopia*, as a plan of an "ideal city" is featured in his treatise (1461-64).¹⁴³ The city plan that Filarete designed depicts a *squared circle*, where an octagon is enclosed

¹⁴² *The Eternal Hermes*, 1995, 115.

¹⁴³ Lang, S., 1972, 391.
Leonardo da Vinci, 1981, 88.
Cummings, L. A., 1986, 990.

within a circle, creating a round layout of the overall scheme (Figure 76).¹⁴⁴ *La Citta del Sole* (Italian for the City of the Sun) is another testimony of the influence of Hermeticism on regional planning during the Renaissance. Written by the Renaissance philosopher Tommaso Campanella in the early seventeenth century, the text draws a comprehensive image of the ideal city and society inhabiting it.¹⁴⁵ Parallel to the *Corpus Hermeticum*, a dialogue between two figures is initiated, with the notion of a *Utopia* being at the core of their conversation. The author proceeds to describe in great detail the ideal city to which he had allegedly travelled, located somewhere in Southern Asia. In his account, a comprehensive multi-dimensional analysis is conducted within the scope of Hermetic philosophy, wherein an ideal world, the collective existence of the built environment lives and evolves on earth below in perfect sync and harmony with heaven above, and the human affairs of daily life are thus managed and organized under the law of a universal government. The author explains that in such a world, three figures of authority work cooperatively to bring about order and stability, they operate under the leadership of a single ruler, named Hoh, the names of the three governors are: Love, Wisdom, and Power (Figure 77). This narrative was undoubtedly inspired by the Hermetic worldview of a *Universal Trinity*, plainly applied to the political dynamic of the city. In that sense, the text presents a cosmological model of the built environment is reconstructed, in which a Hermetic theory of Architecture is manifested. Unrestricted or strained by virtual boundaries of scholarship, the Renaissance author demonstrates freely a multi-disciplinary approach, where aesthetic values of number and geometry are integrated with the ethical and moral

¹⁴⁴ Lang, S., 1972, 63.

¹⁴⁵ Spielvogel, J., 1987, 191.

structures of society, allowing the sphere of logic and rationale to mingle with that of spirituality and scepticism, and give birth to a level of consciousness equivalent to the divine.

The city of the Sun was one of many visionary works, inspired by earlier Utopian models, such as the *City of Adocentyn* in the *Picatrix*, and the *Atlantis* of Plato. In addition, regional plan drawings had been published by visionaries from various backgrounds and professions during the Renaissance period, the *City of Sforzinda* by Filarete, the Duke and Architect of Milan, and the *Tabula Ceбетis* by Filips Galle. Some of these visionary schemes found their way into the realm of physical reality, as actual cities bearing great resemblance to the Hermetic model were founded in the years leading up to the seventeenth century, like the Italian town of *Palmanova*, and that of *Grammichele*, also in Italy.

5.2 Author's Position

Based on looking again at the versatile body of material evidence a piece of knowledge comes into awareness, that during the Renaissance period, all boundary lines between the domain of practise and another were blurred, as a distinction between literary and architectural representations wasn't recognized by intellectuals of the time. The symbolism traced in material sources can also be traced in works of art and architecture, thus it can be assumed that the meaning of architecture can be deduced from different fields of study and varying spheres of human achievement. Based on this assumption, it would be reasonable to reintroduce Renaissance architecture as a multi-dimensional form of knowledge, which, parallel to a text contains a distinct message, and is capable of both the preservation and divulgence of distinct knowledge. As buildings didn't merely exist to shield its occupants from cold and rain, but also to tell a story, to teach a lesson, and to evaluate human consciousness.

According to Renaissance thought, the “image” possessed intellectual mastery, likewise, representations of the “image” are also considered conscious and active and can deal a considerable amount of influence on both a physical and mental level. The architecture was, based on these perceptions, a reconstructed representation of the “image”, and thus regarded as a conscious being and ensouled vessel, and parallel to all created things in nature, is an integral part of the collective organism of the universe.

In that regard, Renaissance intellectuals perceived works of architecture as perpetuated symbols that hold a multi-dimensional value, which is equivalent to that of the poem, rather than an essay, as it exhibits an alluring sense of mystery and obscurity, easily and always saying more than what it means, and like the universe, never ceases to have hidden secrets. The Renaissance mindset was always swayed by the charm of esotericism, and the prospect of lost or concealed seemed more appealing than that of obvious fact, thus, in my opinion, is a fascination stemming from the primal instinct of curiosity, as the *“desire to know” was considered most basic and essential basis in the pursuit enlightenment, and that “philosophy begins in wonder or amazement”*.

God was unseen yet seen, the more learned one becomes of god, the more ignorant they find themselves to be. Similarly, architecture cannot be absolutely understood, and like a poem, a new and different meaning arises with every new and different attempt to read it.

The theory of conscious architecture was recognized by the Renaissance intellect on both a psychological and bio-chemical level, despite the absence of certain scientific designations, an awareness of a connection between spatial properties and behavioural patterns was widely recognized. The physical traits of any built environment played a crucial role in shaping human perception, stimulating certain emotions, and provoking particular responses.

It is my firm belief that what Renaissance minds perceived as “magical” influences, was in fact the philosophical premise of what contemporary studies classify as “phenomenology” and that an investigation into what Renaissance thought recognized as a mystical experience of architecture, is also incidentally an investigation into the recently established realm of “environmental psychology”. As what the ancient people of Greece, Egypt, and Babylon perceived to dwell within sacred structures to a spirit, is likely a primitive, or rather, theological model of what modern science considers to be a form of vibration and frequency. Based on those assumptions, the theory of a conscious built environment during the western Renaissance does not overstep the bounds of fantasy.

5.3 Open Ending

Having briefly explored the vast influence of hermetic philosophy on the understanding of architecture during the Renaissance, it is plainly obvious that a thorough and fulfilled study of its vastness goes beyond what the limited scope of this investigation may ever hope to satisfy. The vastness of this influence was radical and penetrative enough to make any attempt to dive in, however brief the dive may be, makes the effort worthwhile, as the sight of accumulated fruit at the finish line can serve to inspire future attempts.

In the end, this scholarly work has served its purpose; as the goal wasn't to produce absolute results, or flawless records, but rather to “soften the rigged line of interpretation” and allow the building to speak instead of being spoken for. The multi-dimensional approach to any field of study ultimately poses more questions than it offers answers, which makes it the best-suited approach to understanding architecture. After all, architecture is a product of teamwork, a variety of key components are involved in the creation of any built environment.

Hence, amidst all mysteries and uncertainties, a single truth prevails, that architecture is shaped and defined by a set of circumstances, how many there maybe is an open discussion. Whether it be conscious or unconscious, deliberate or random, a specific order of things is determined by a specific of individuals; the patron, architect, painter, sculptor, builder...etc., their choices are determined by both internal and external factors.

Thus, architecture is like the universe, threefold; because it's created by a threefold mind, and thus manifests upon the three pillars of recognition, perception, and wilfulness. Since the mind is unbound by space and time, seeing how the streams of thought are ceaselessly travelling across the globe in an endless cycle, likewise, architecture is boundless, and any attempt at unravelling it should take into consideration the multi-dimensional root of its existence.

It would be wise to acknowledge that a lack of focus was an unavoidable defect in this investigation, as it was a consequence of the nature of this approach, which demanded a clear reintroduction to the philosophy of hermeticism and the esoteric tradition it originated from. As well as the diversity of case studies, which in their versatility served to underline the wide and encompassing influence of hermetic thought, yet at the same time, prevented a thorough and detailed analysis of a distinct piece of evidence. The focus of this journey has been to emphasize the relationship between human perception and the built environment. This goal was somewhat easy to achieve, due to the abundance of reference sources attributed to Renaissance intellectuals.

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APPENDICES

A. FIGURES

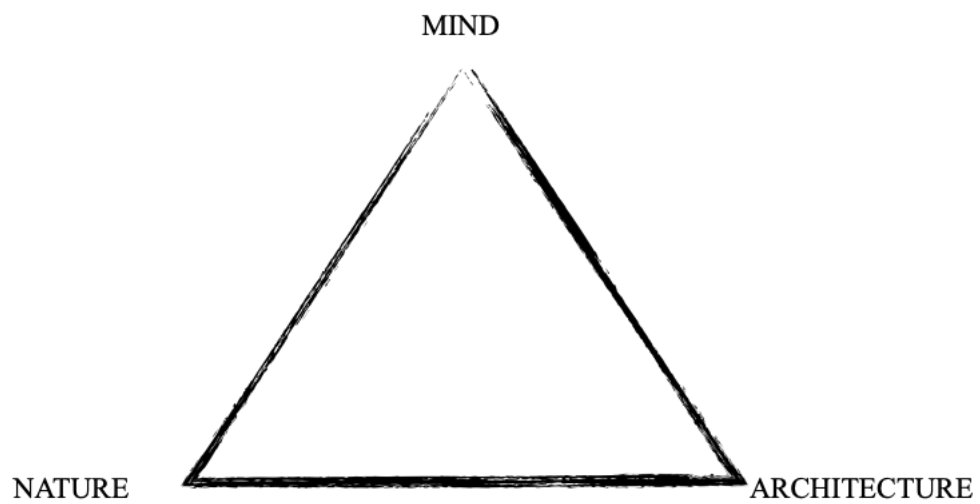


Figure 1: The Trinity of the philosophical approach. This triangular diagram displays the ideological pattern upon which a philosophical theory of Architecture is built. (Author's drawing).

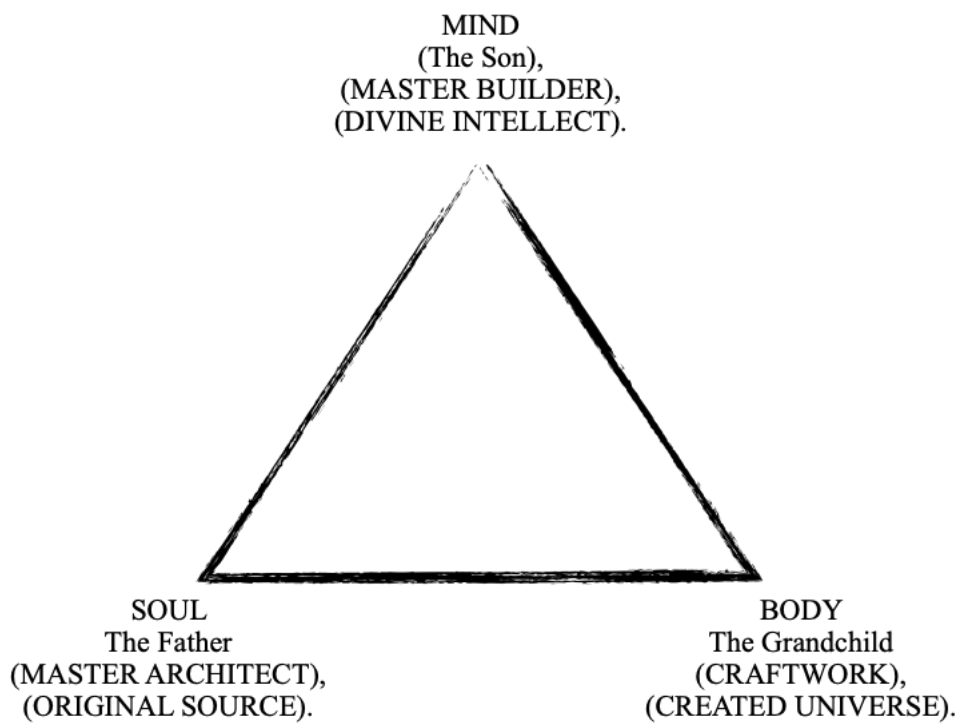


Figure 2: The Hermetic Trinity. This triangular diagram illustrates the threefold philosophy of Hermes. (Author's drawing).

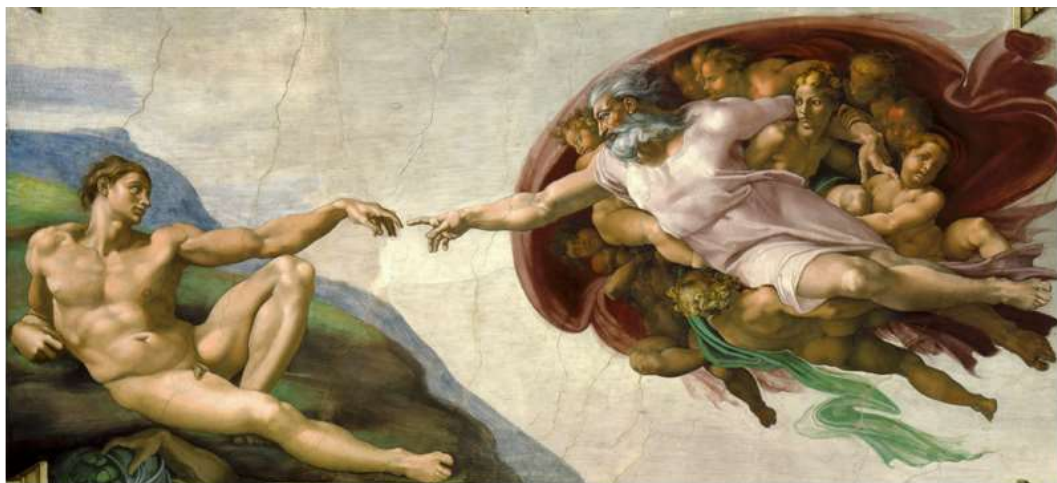


Figure 3: “*Creazione di Adamo*” (*The Creation of Adam*). By Michelangelo, Sistine Chapel, Vatican, Italy.

Source: Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Michelangelo_-_Creation_of_Adam_\(cropped\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Michelangelo_-_Creation_of_Adam_(cropped).jpg).

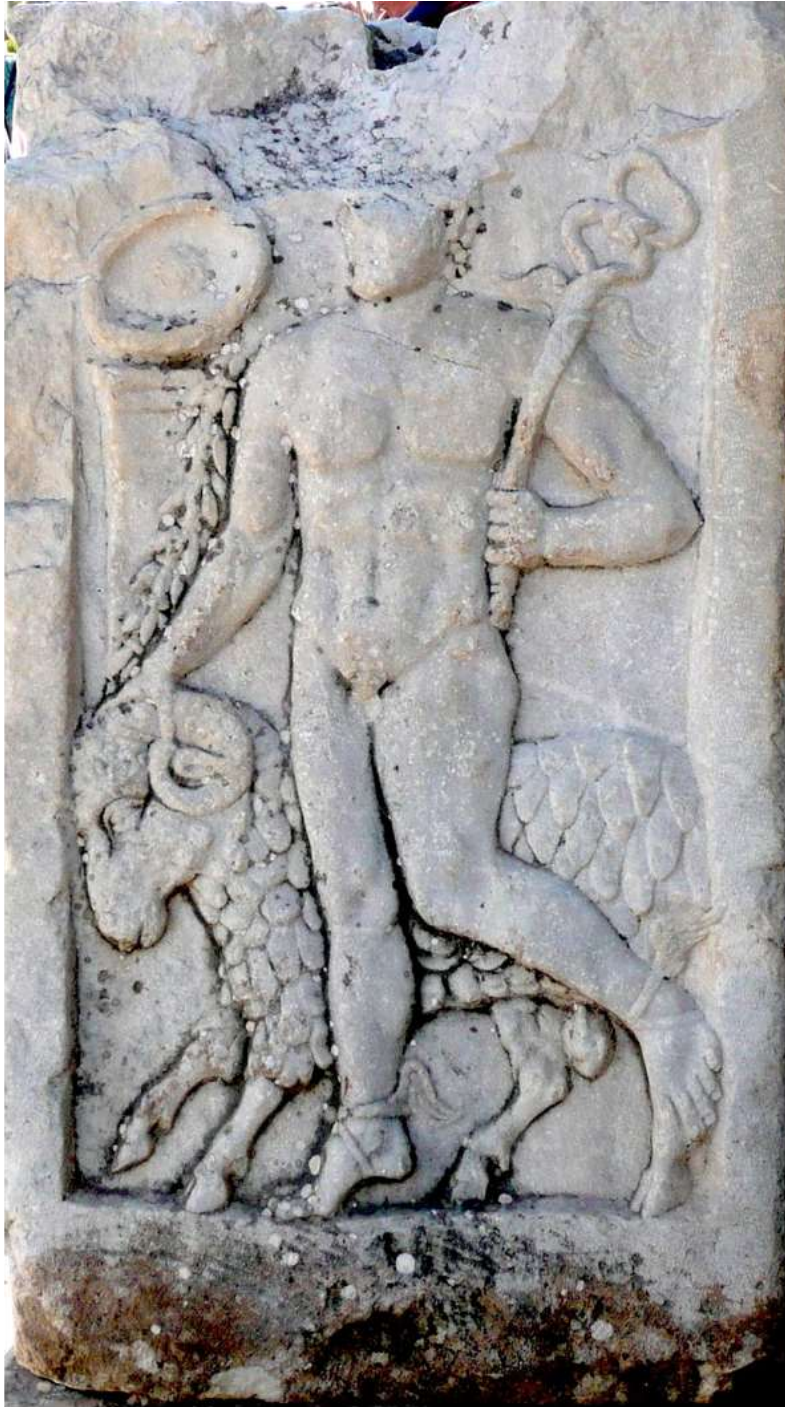


Figure 4: A bas-relief depicting Hermes as he attempts to steal the divine cattle of Apollo. Dating to the Ptolemaic period, Ephesus, Turkey.

Source: Source: <https://tarihvearkeoloji.blogspot.com/search?q=hermes>.



Figure 5: A bas-relief depicting the *Caduceus*, a symbolic representation of the three Hermetic phases, and the threefold universe. Dating to the Ptolemaic period, Ephesus, Turkey.

Source: Source: <http://www.my-favourite-planet.de/english/middle-east/turkey/ephesus/ephesus-gallery-1-012.html>.



Figure 6: The *Caduceus* of Thoth. This wall-carving depicts an Ibis-headed Thoth accompanied by King Seti in what appears to be a ritual setting. Dating to the 19th Dynasty, 1292 -1189 BC, Temple of Seti, Abydos, Egypt.

Source: Source: <https://sailingstonetravel.com/abydos-abode-of-osiris/>.



Figure 7: A bas-relief depicting The Ibis-Thoth as a scribe, accompanied by another figure (possibly King Seti) during a scribing session. Dating to the 19th Dynasty, 1292 -1189 BC, Temple of Seti, Abydos, Egypt.

Source: Source: <https://beverleyhowarth.com/ancient-sacred-sites>.



Figure 8: The stepped path between two worlds. This bas-relief depicts a cosmological motif in which the universe is the product of divine marriage between two opposite forces, represented by the twin serpents below and blooming flower above. Dating to the 19th Dynasty, 1292 -1189 BC, Temple of Seti, Abydos, Egypt.

Source: <https://sailingstonetravel.com/abydos-abode-of-osiris/>.



Figure 9: An alabaster statue depicting the Baboon-Thoth accompanied by the royal scribe Nebmertuf in what resembles a classroom setting. The Moon-god appears seated with his legs crossed on a higher level than that of the scribe, indicating the distinction in status between teacher and disciple. Dating to the 18th Dynasty, reign of Amenhotep III, 1391-1353 BC, the Louvre Museum, Paris, France.

Source: <https://www.akg-images.com/archive/-2UMDHUFGQ90V.html>.



Figure 10: A sculptor of the high priest Ramesses-Nakht which depicts the Baboon-Thoth emerging from his head, indicating the deity's distinct position as divine intellect, Universal Mind, bearer of light, and guide to the gates of knowledge. Dating to the 20th Dynasty, Ramesside Period, 1189-1077 BC, the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, Egypt.

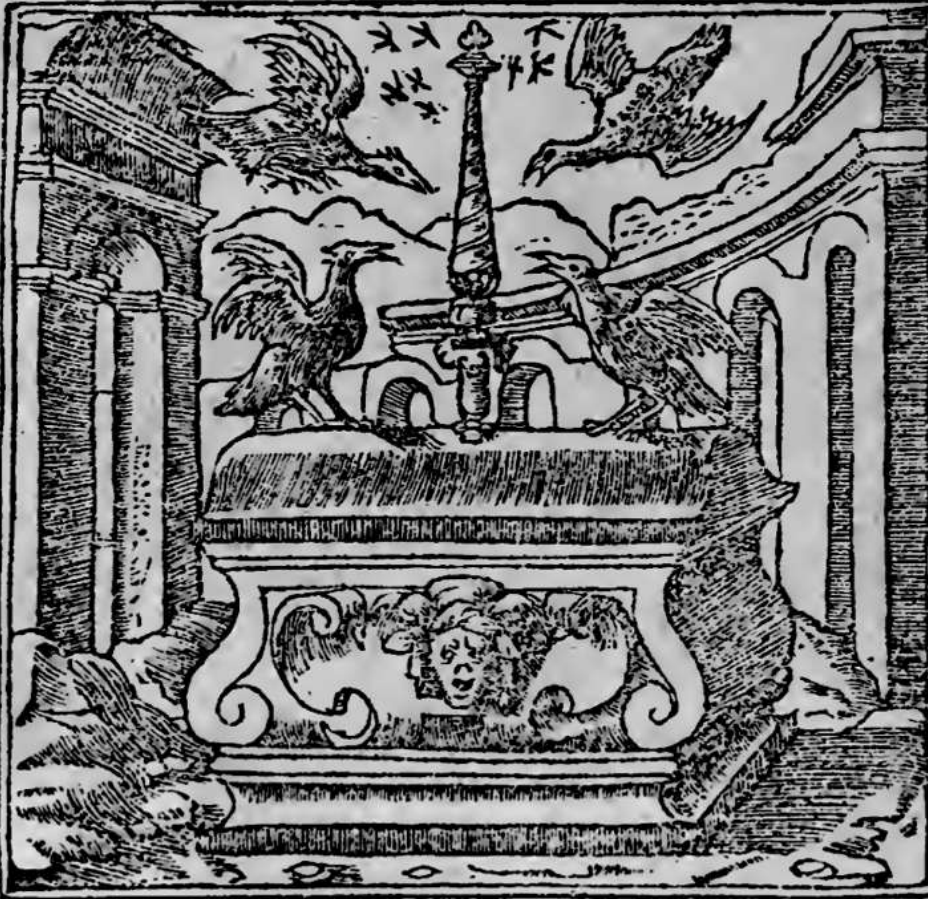
Source: Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/df/Statue_Ramessesnakht_02_Legrain.png.



Figure 11: The enlightened Mind. This limestone relief depicts the Baboon-Thoth crowned with a Lunar disc, in his hands is the light (eye of Ra) contained in a bowl, and upon him, a winged serpent is descending, indicating that the Moon-god has received divine intelligence and thus was illuminated. Dating between the 4th and 3rd centuries BC.

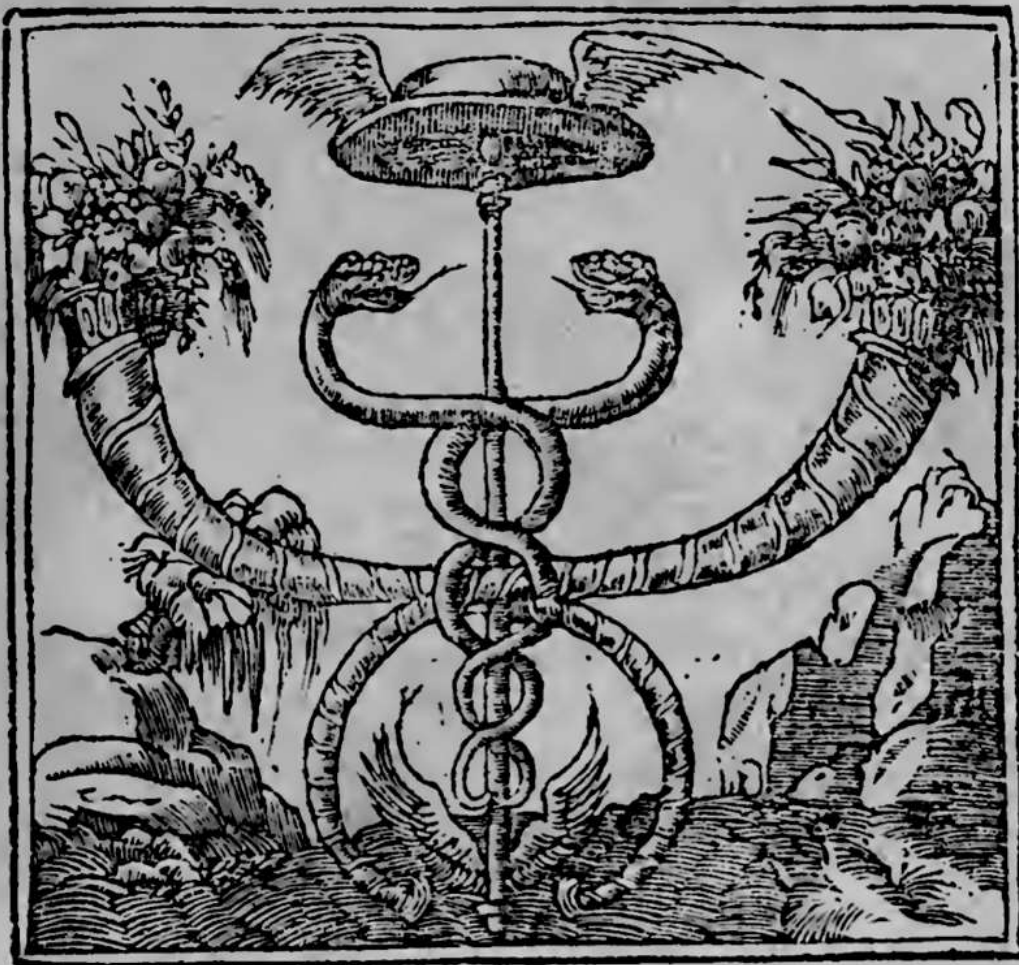
Source: <https://www.cb-gallery.com/en/produkt/serpentin-relief-mit-darstellung-des-thot/>.

Concordiæ Symbolum.



*Cornicum mira inter se concordia uitæ est,
Inq; uicem nunquam contaminata fides.
Hinc uolucres hæc scepra gerüt, q; scilicet omnes
Consensu populi stântque, cadúntque duces:
Quem si de medio tollas, discordia præeps
Aduolat, & secum regia fata trahit.*

Figure 12: Page 40 from the *Emblemata*, 1548, depicting a Hermetic cosmology, in which the round temple symbolizes the spherical universe, the alter and lance at the centre symbolize the vertical axis, while both the ascending and descending pair of birds symbolize the spiral motion of consciousness.



*Anguibus implicitis, geminis caduceus alis,
Inter Amalthææ cornua rectus adest.
Pollentes sic mente viros, fandi que peritos
Indicat, ut rerum copia multa bect.*

Figure 13: Page 97 from the *Emblemata*, 1548, depicting Hermes and the *Caduceus* as one and the same, where the twin serpents climbing the staff symbolize the spiral motion of progressive thought (consciousness), whereas the winged hat crowning the tip of the staff symbolize the Hermetic phase of *Reascension* (enlightenment).



Figure 14: Page 138 from the *quaestionum Symbolicarum*, 1555, depicting Hermes holding a seven-branched candle tree, symbolizing the seven swirling circles engulfing the universe, identified by the *Hermetica* as the government of heaven. This representation pays tribute to the rite of meditation and contemplation, captured by the expression of awe and wonder drawn on Hermes' face as he admires the marvellous work of the creator.



*Imagine di Mercurio Dio della eloquenza, scorta de
 passaggieri, Dio de Pastori, inteso anco per la forza del
 Sole, & imagine del Dio Anubi Dio della sagacità appo
 gli Egittij, che è un istesso con Mercurio, & il caduceo
 qui significa il Sole & la Luna il demone la fortuna, l'a-
 more, et la necessità che vanno co' l'nascimento humano.*

Figure 15: Page 311 from *Le Immagini della posizione degli Dei degli antichi*, 1556, depicting a personified representation of the threefold universe, where Apollo symbolize the realm of light, Anubis symbolize that of the underworld, whereas Hermes symbolize that in between. This representation adopts heavily from the *Homeric hymn to Hermes*, as well as the ancient concept of the “three-headed Mercury”).



Immagine di Mercurio messaggiero de dei dio della elloquentia, & de mercanti, questo dinota la fauella esser messaggiera & discoprivrice della mente & del core, il caduceo poi è segno di concordia, vnione, & pace, con alcuni animali à lui sacрати, dinotanti la industria & vigilanza nel contrattare, è ne negotij.

Figure 16: Page 289 of *Le Immagini della posizione degli Dei degli antichi*, 1556, depicting Hermes wielding out his Caduceus, a ram and a chicken appear beside his feet. This representation bears great resemblance to that depicted on the bas-relief at Ephesus.



Figure 17: A floor mosaic depicting Hermes as a bearded wise-man dressed in priestly clothing, indicating his mysterious past and intellectual standing as a mystic, sage, and wanderer. By Giovanni di Maestro Stephano, 1488, Siena Cathedral, Italy.

Source: Source: *The Eternal Hermes* 1995, 148.



Figure 18: The Sala dei Masi of Schifanoia, depicting an astrological fresco cycle that illustrates the twelve months of the year in correlation with the twelve zodiacs and seven planets. The fresco cycle vividly depicts the Hermetic principle of *Correspondence*, denoting the influence of occurrences in heaven on the human affairs of daily life.

Source: <https://www.italianways.com/the-hall-of-the-months-in-palazzo-schifanoia/>.



Figure 19: *The Allegory of June: Triumph of Mercury*. The detail of the upper section depicts Hermes riding his celestial charioteer. By Francesco del Cossa, late 1460s, Ferrara, Italy.

Source: Freedman, L., 2014, 2015.



Figure 19a: A cropped fragment of the fresco showing a magnified view of Hermes, who appears wielding the *Caduceus* in one hand, and a lyre in the other.



Figure 19b: The musical band of three, and the howling troops of hounds.



Figure 19c: The corpse of Argus, and the herd of cattle.



Figure 20: *The Allegory of June: Triumph of Mercury*. The detail of the middle section depicts the ruling spirit of planet Mercury residing in the fourth house of the Zodiac, Cancer.

Source: http://www.engramma.it/eOS/index.php?id_articolo=1245.



Figure 21: *The allegory of May: Triumph of Apollo*. The detail of the middle section depicts the ruling spirit of the Sun residing in the third house of the Zodiac, Gemini.

Source: http://www.engramma.it/eOS/index.php?id_articolo=1245.

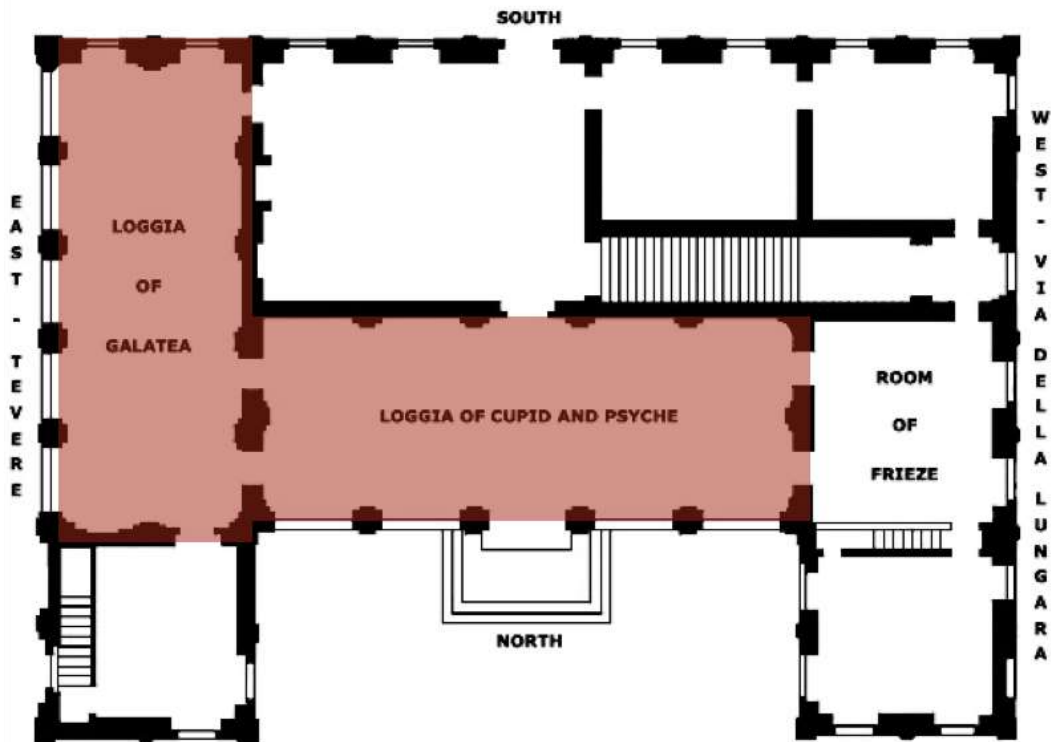


Figure 22: The floor plan of Farnesina Villa, early 16th century, Rome, Italy.

Source: <http://www.romainteractive.com/eng/trastevere/villa-farnesina.html>.



Figure 23: The *Psyche Loggia* of Farnesina. The fresco cycle depicts “*The council of god*”s in which Hermes appears posing at the threshold between earth and heaven, as an intermediary figure stationed at the gate to heaven. By Raphael and his team of artists, around 1517, Rome, Italy.

Source: <https://www.teggelaar.com/en/rome-day-6-continuation-6/>.



Figure 23a: A cropped fragment of the fresco showing a concentrated view of the intermediary realm, depicting Hermes wielding his *Caduceus* in one hand and a bowl in the other. Psyche appears receiving the elixir of immortality from Hermes, next to whom Janus stands alongside a Sphinx.



Figure 24: A Roman sculpture of the double-headed Janus depicts curious resemblance to the Zodiac sign of Gemini, the astrological house of planet Mercury.

Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Janus1.JPG>.



Figure 25: A ceiling plan of the Farnesina's garden loggia.

Source: Quinlan-McGrath, M, 1984, 18.



Figure 25a: A cropped fragment of the ceiling fresco showing the planets Mercury and Mars in the houses of Scorpio and Libra, placed within a hexagonal framework.

Source: Quinlan-McGrath, M, 1984, 19.

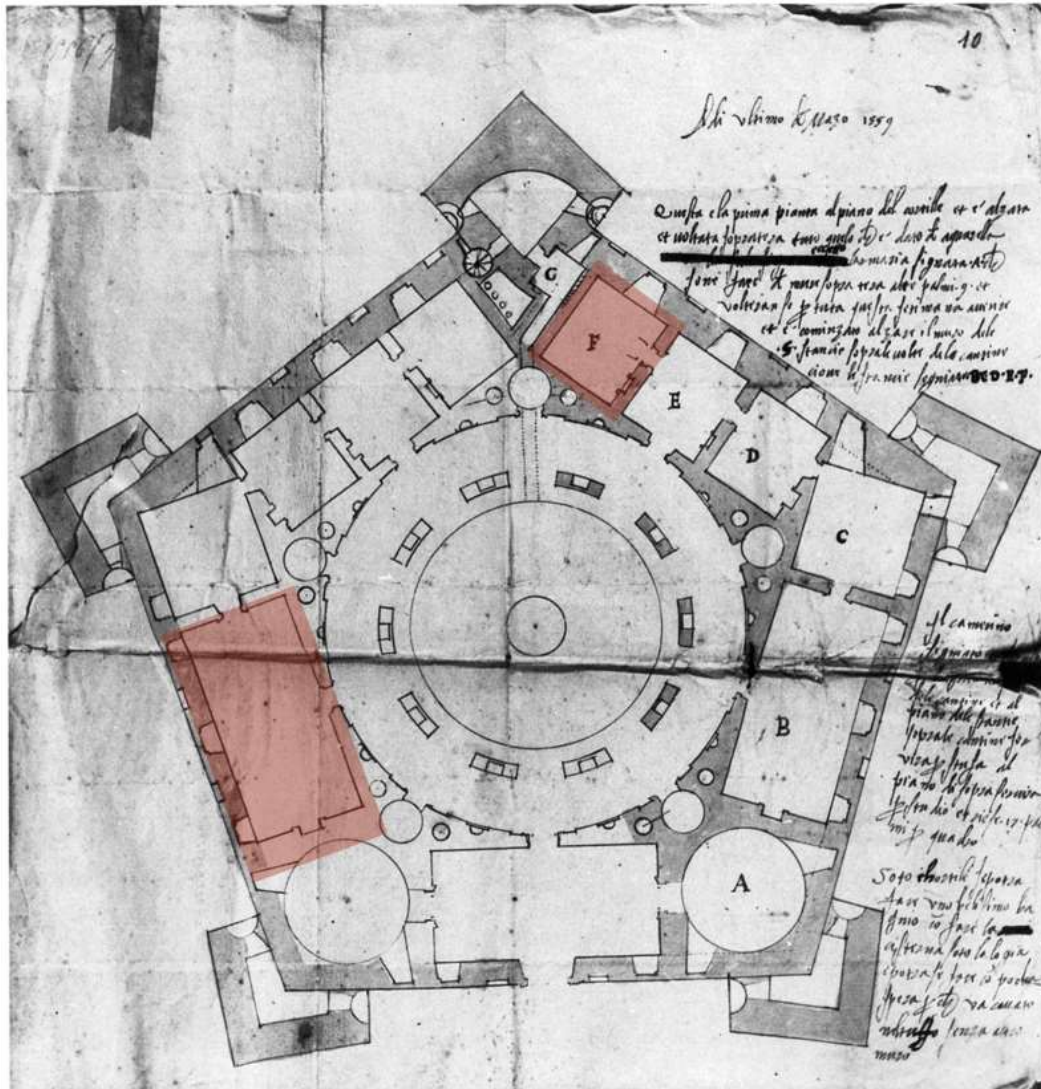


Figure 26: The floor plan of Farnese Villa, Caprarola, Italy. The shaded area of the west-wing designates the *Sala della Cosmographia* (the Map Hall), while the shaded area of the right-wing designates the private study of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese.

Source: Partridge, L, 2001, 265.



Figure 27: The vault of the *Sala della Cosmographia*. Created by Giovanni de' Vecchi and others between 1573 and 1575.

Source: Renata R. Nagy, 2018, 138.



Figure 28: A painting of *Hermathena* haning at depicted in the centre of *Stanza dell'Ermatena* (Alessandro's private room). By Federico Zuccari, 1566.

Source: McGrath, E, 1987, 69.



Figure 29: A base-relief depicting a cosmological motif, in which the physical body of a tortoise symbolize the spherical form of the universe.

Source: <http://www.my-favourite-planet.de/english/middle-east/turkey/ephesus/ephesus-gallery-1-012.html>.

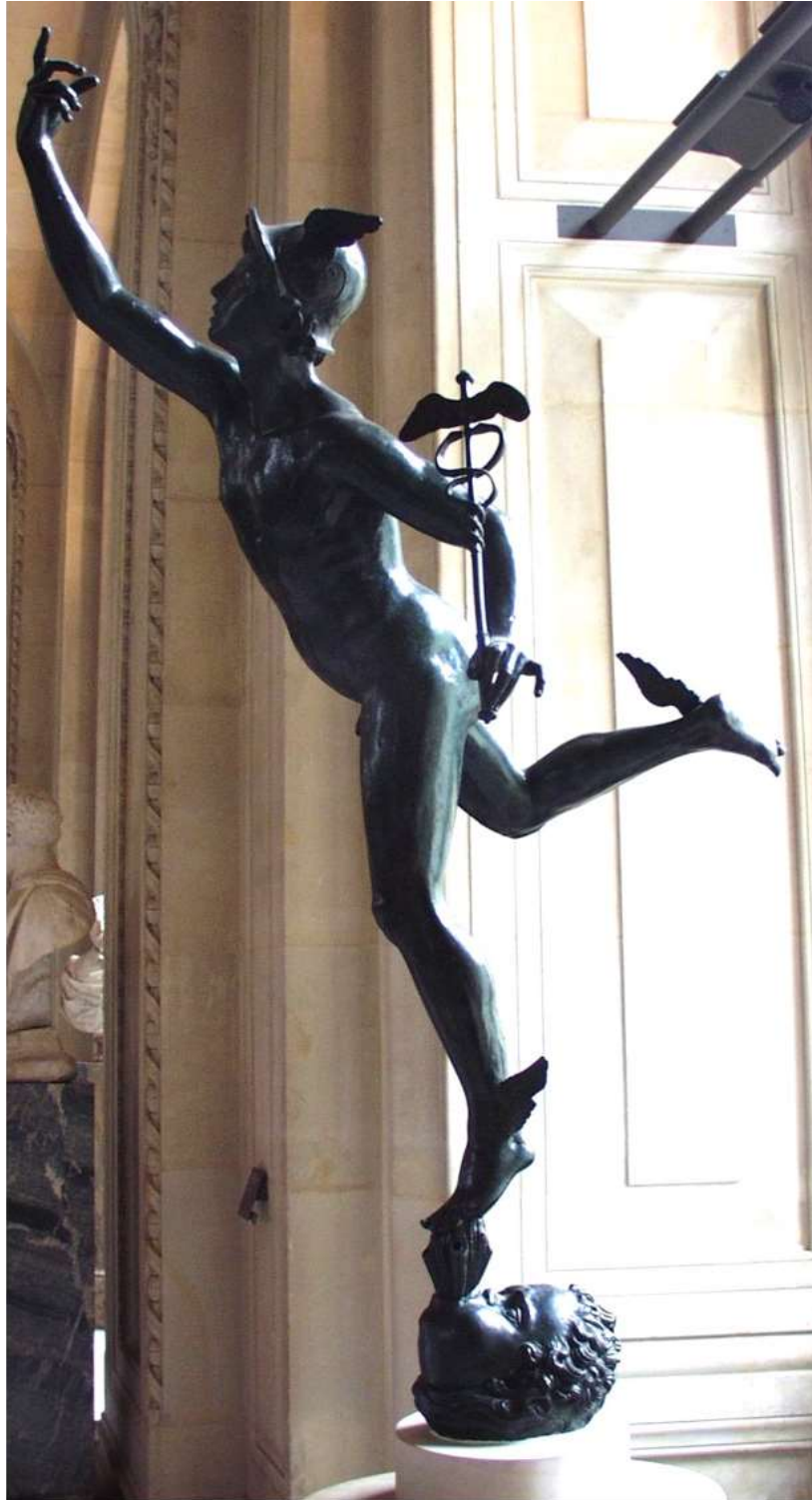


Figure 30: “The Flying Mercury”, by Giambologna, 1580.

Source: https://www.wga.hu/html_m/g/giambolo/2/51giambo.html



Figure 31: “Mercury and Psyche”, by Adriaen de Vries, 1593.

Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/36/Adriaen_de_vries%2C_marcurio_che_solleva_psiche%2C_xvi_sec._03.JPG.

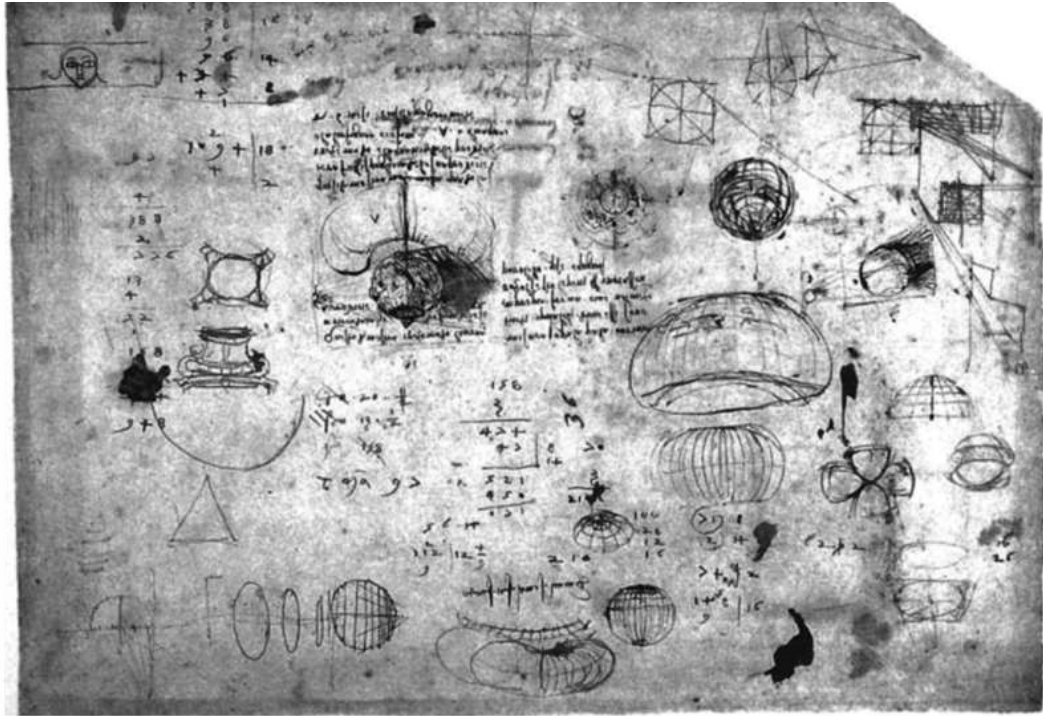


Figure 32: A page from the *Codex Atlanticus* depicting geometric manifestations of the universe, in which the square and circle are dominant. By Leonardo da Vinci, Milan, Italy.

Source: *The History of Renaissance Cartography*, Vol. 3, Chapter: 10, 376.



Figure 33: *EMANATIONISM*. This page of *De Aetatibus Mundi Imagines* depicts the emanation of the multitude from the singular, represented by a series of three triangles emerging from One circle and descending into Matter, upon which the process of creation spirals into motion, represented by an infinite whirling of circles.

Source: <http://bibliodyssey.blogspot.com/2008/12/de-aetatibus-mundi-imagines.html>.



Figure 34: *CONVERSION*. This page of *De Aetatibus Mundi Imagines* depicts the creation process, where the craftsman (who is the Sun) who binds heaven to Earth and ensouls Matter is represented by an encircled triangle.

Source: <http://bibliodyssey.blogspot.com/2008/12/de-aetatibus-mundi-imagines.html>.



Figure 35: *UNIVERSALISM*. This page of *De Aetatibus Mundi Imagines* depicts the threefold universe as a series of globes that are connected by pyramid-shaped cords, the source of this cord is the original creator who is represented by a head (Mind).

Source: <http://bibliodyssey.blogspot.com/2008/12/de-aetatibus-mundi-imagines.html>.

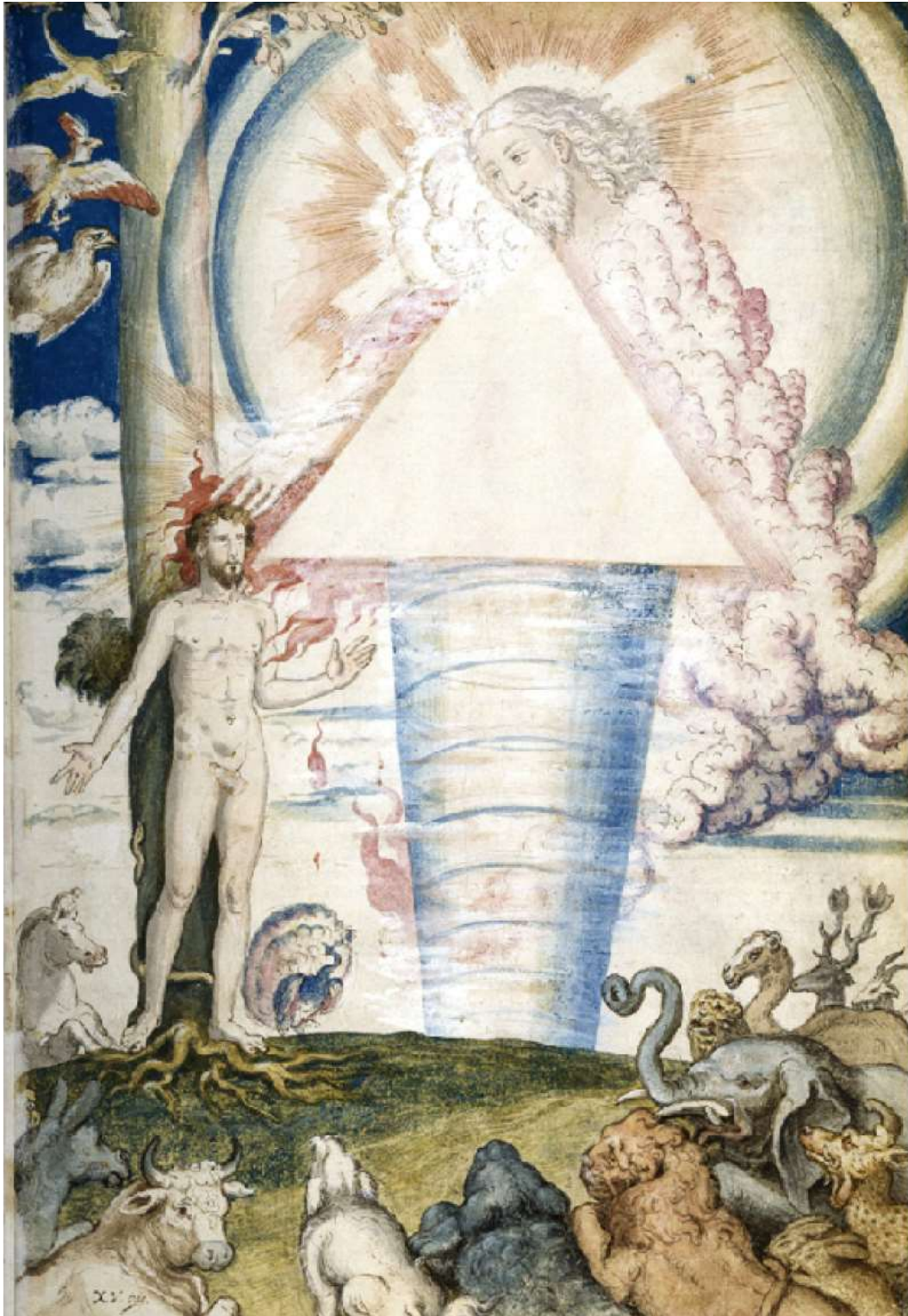


Figure 36: *The creation of Man*. This page of *De Aetatibus Mundi Imagines* depicts the Heretic Trinity in which the Mind (divine intellect), Body (physical universe), and soul are connected. The representation depicts the illuminating ray of light descending from the divine intellect upon Man, indicating Man's distinct position in the Lord's kingdom as a twofold being, possessing both an immortal soul and mortal body.

Source: <http://bibliodvssev.blogspot.com/2008/12/de-aetatibus-mundi-imagines.html>.

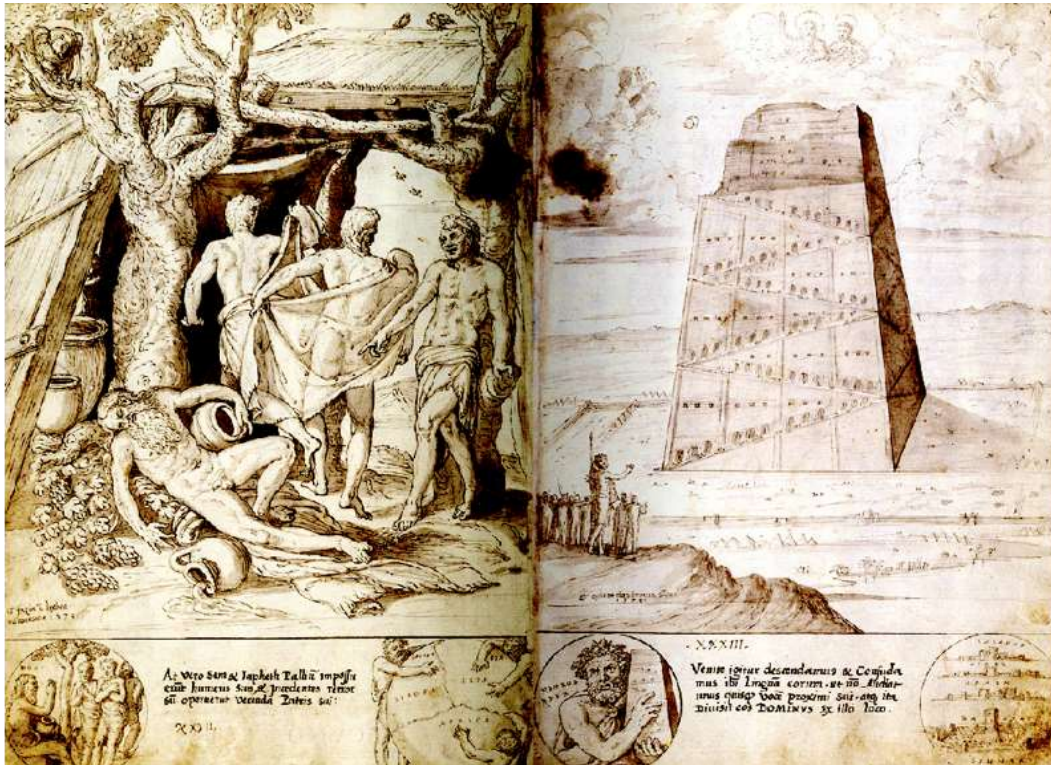


Figure 37: Mythical Allegories of Hermetic philosophy. This page of *De Aetatibus Mundi Imagines* depicts a Kabbalistic narrative in which Hermes is identified as *Hiram Abiff*, the builder of Solomon's temple who fell victim to a premeditated murder attempted by three fellow craftsmen. The left part of the painting depicts a pyramid shaped structure that is seven levels high, the tipping edge of which is demolished.

Source: <http://bibliodyssey.blogspot.com/2008/12/de-aetatibus-mundi-imagines.html>.

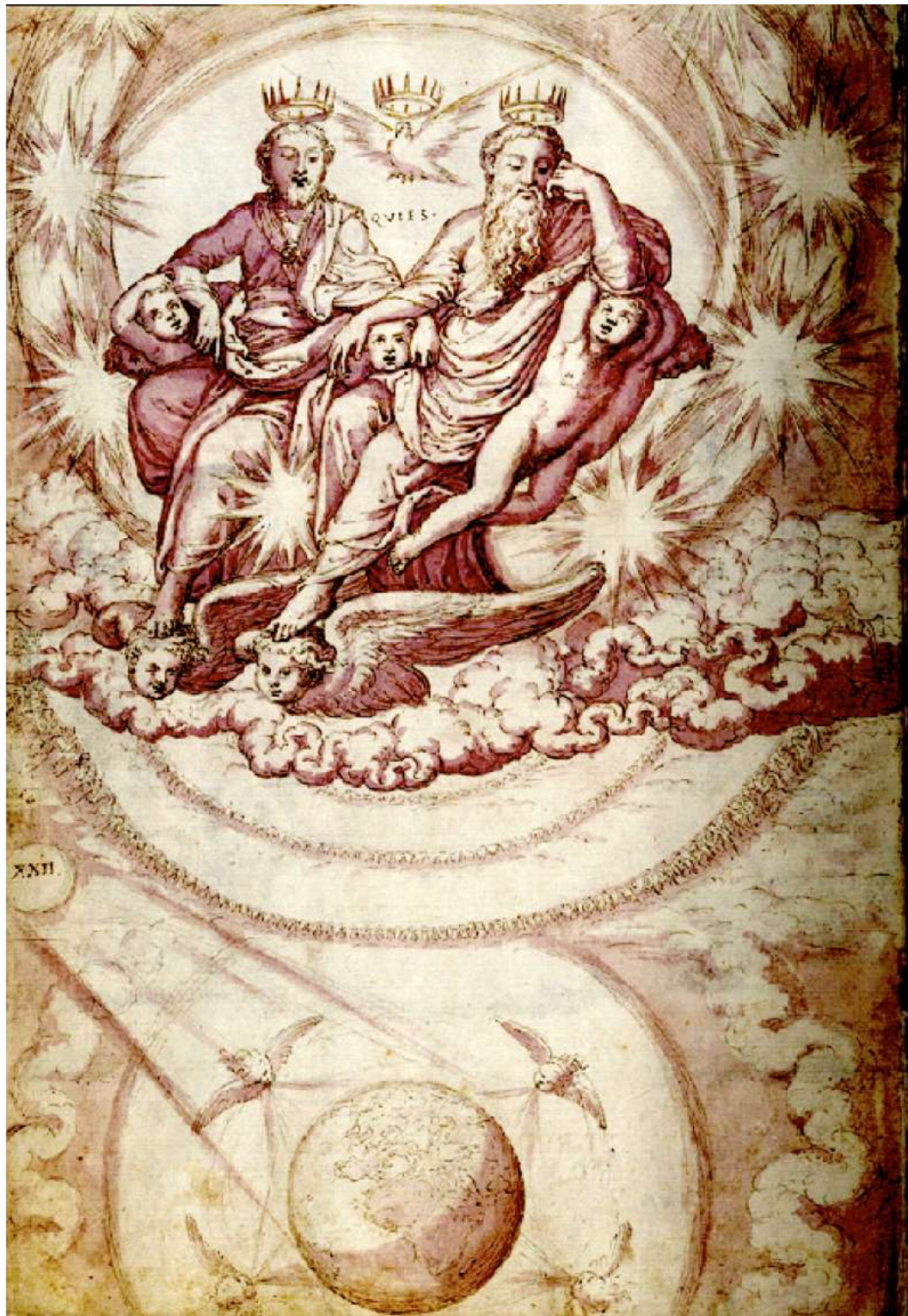


Figure 38: **38** The Hermetic Trinity. This page of *De Aetatibus Mundi Imagines* depicts the Master Architect (soul) seated alongside the Master Builder (divine intellect) on what resembles a ring-shaped throne, adorning it is the seven governors, and below it is the elementary realm (body).

Source: <http://bibliodyssey.blogspot.com/2008/12/de-aetatibus-mundi-imagines.html>.



Figure 39: *REASCENSION*. This page of *De Aetatibus Mundi Imagines* depicts a mystical representation of Hermetic philosophy, in which the soul of Man has attained enlightenment, reascended to heaven, and reunited with the creator, becoming One with the whole. This representation pays tribute to the Hermetic narrative of an ultimate return to the One from whom the All emanated.

Source: <http://bibliodvssev.blogspot.com/2008/12/de-aetatibus-mundi-imagines.html>.

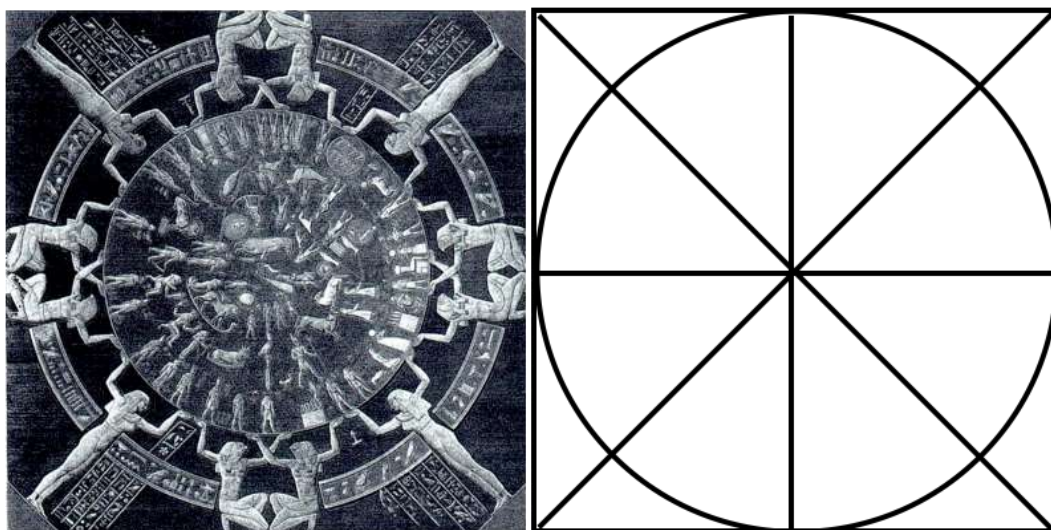


Figure 40: Dendera Zodiac. A late Egyptian cosmological representation engraved into the ceiling of the chapel of Osiris. Temple of Dendera, Egypt.

Source: *The History of Renaissance Cartography*, Vol. 1, Chapter: 7, 121.



Figure 41: A bas-relief depicting Seshat in the presence of Thoth in what appears to be an inscribing session.

Source: <https://seedofthesoul.com/blog/f/thoth-and-seshat>.



Figure 41a: A cropped fragment of the bas-relief that clearly shows the seven-pointed emblem depicted above Seshat's head.

Source: https://www.reddit.com/r/Egypt/comments/mm2jp8/seshat_sesha_sesheta_was_the_goddess_of_writing/.



Figure 41b: An inverted view of *Seshat's* emblem that is reminiscent of the Lunar disc of the *Baboon-Thoth*.

Source: https://www.reddit.com/r/Egypt/comments/mm2jp8/seshat_sesha_sesheta_was_the_goddess_of_writing/.

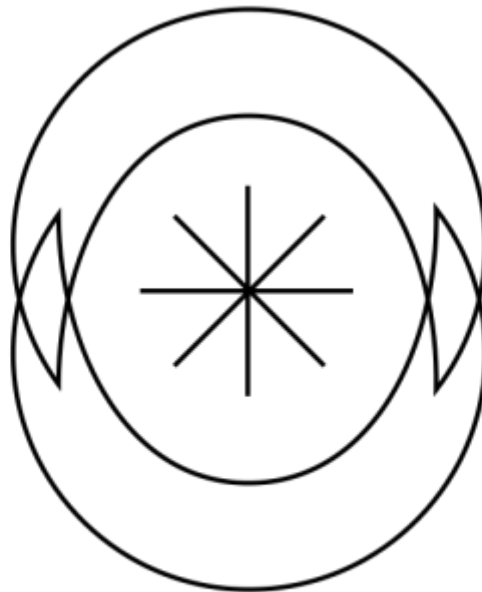


Figure 41c: A view of divine consciousness, attained by the union between the sphere of light and that of darkness, otherwise represented by an intersection between the receiving lunar crescent and revealing solar light. (Author's drawing).



Figure 42: *The Pattern of Consciousness*. On the damaged walls of the Osireion complex, this fascinating symbol was repeatedly engraved. Abydos, Egypt.

Source: <https://sailingstonetravel.com/abydos-abode-of-osiris/>.



Figure 42a: A cropped fragment of the wall-carving closely shows two *Patterns of Consciousness* attached to each other.

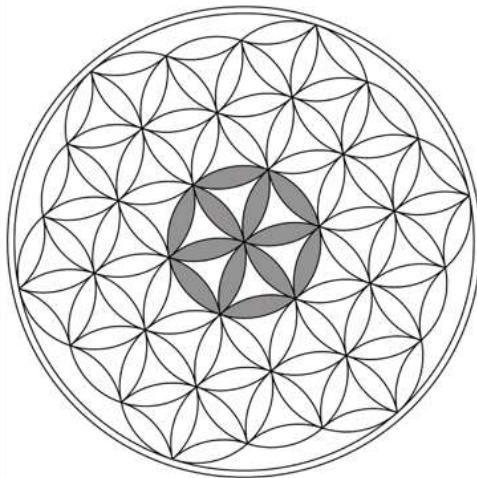


Figure 43a: The hexagon is produced from the intersection of two triangles, each pointing in the opposite direction of the other.

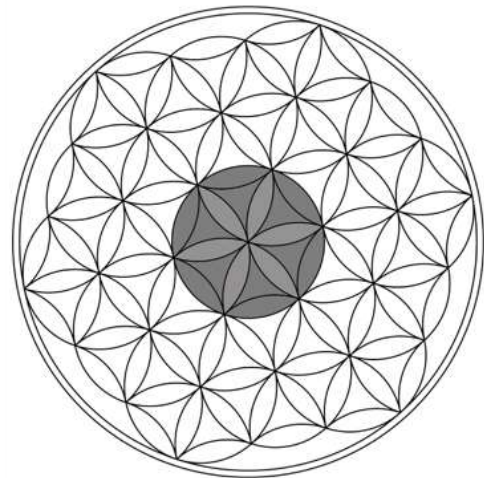


Figure 43b: **43b** The circle has no point of beginning nor end, parallel to the soul, exists eternally.

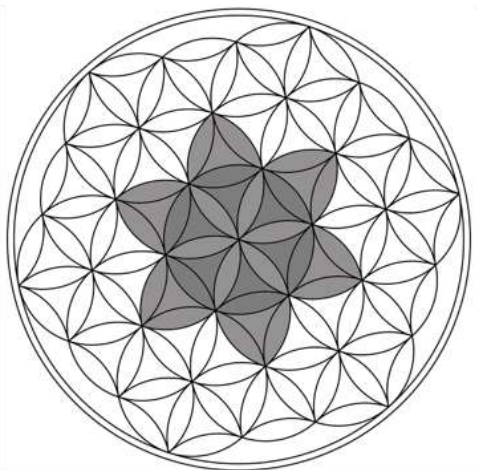


Figure 43c: The flower denotes the blossoming of life, parallel to the created universe, the multitude of petals springs from the One source.

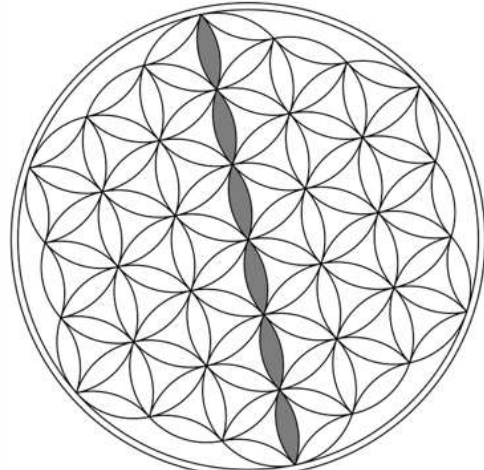


Figure 43d: The chain of petals is the thread of life, parallel to the *Caduceus*, evolves in the motion of a spiral.

Figure 43: A personal attempt to extract hidden symbolism from *The Pattern of Consciousness*, the scope of potential outcomes seems to be limitless, hence only a few compositions are traced as evidence of the Hermetic origin that this pattern had emerged from. (Author's analysis).



Figure 44: Floor mosaic dating to the first century BC, Ephesus, Turkey.

Source: <https://floweroflifemystery.wordpress.com/image-gallery/>.



Figure 45: The decoration in the chapel of The Monastery of Saint Paul the Anchorite, dating to the fourth century, Egypt.

Source: <https://floweroflifemystery.wordpress.com/image-gallery/>.



Figure 46: Ottoman cemetery headstone decoration from the antique field of ancient Smyrna, dating to 1400 AD, Izmir, Turkey.

Source: <https://floweroflifemystery.wordpress.com/image-gallery/>.

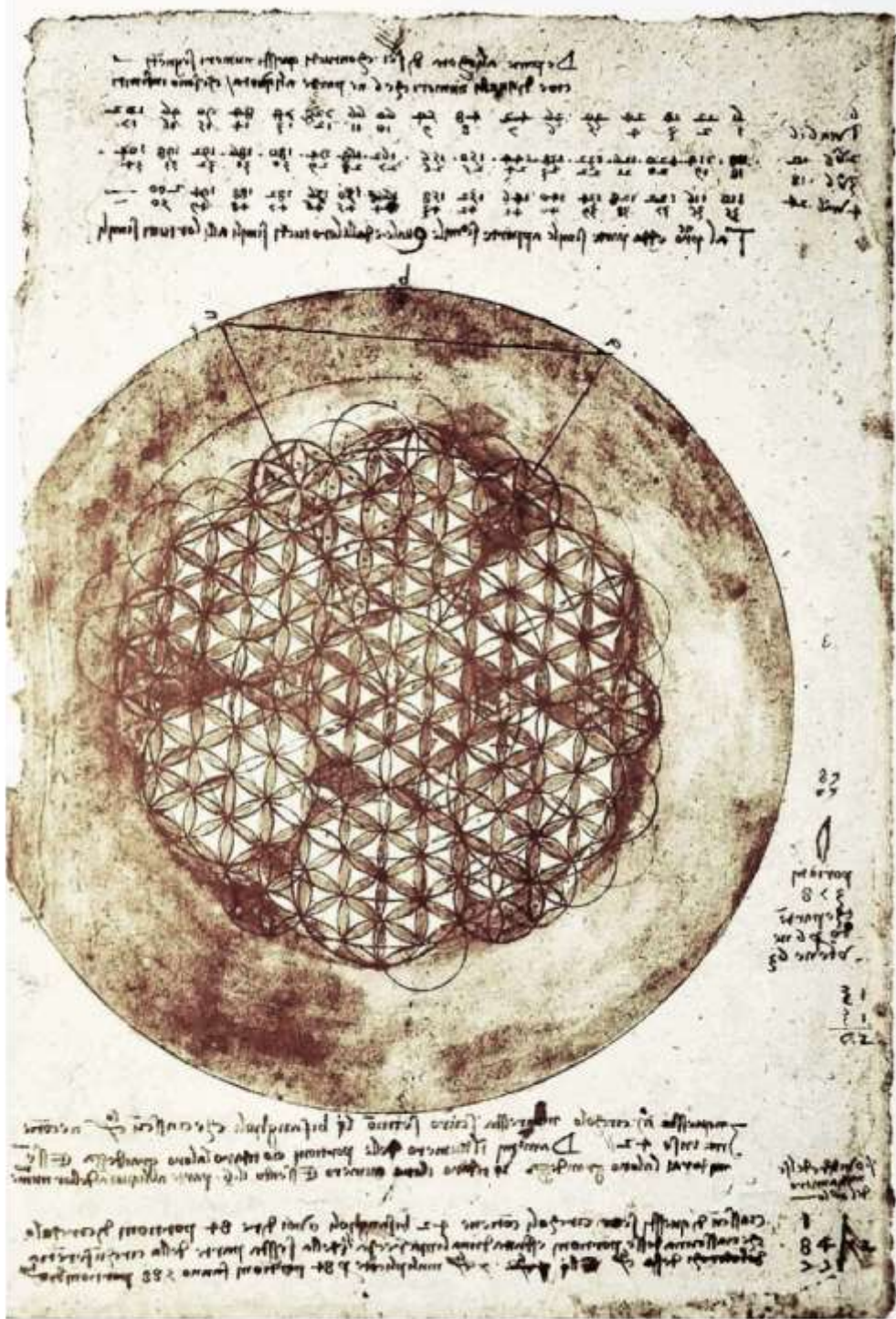


Figure 47: A page from the *Codex Atlanticus* depicts the Pattern of Consciousness along with analytical inscriptions. By Leonardo da Vinci, Milan, Italy.

Source: <http://monkeybuddha.blogspot.com/2012/10/flower-of-life-drawings-by-leonardo-da.html>.

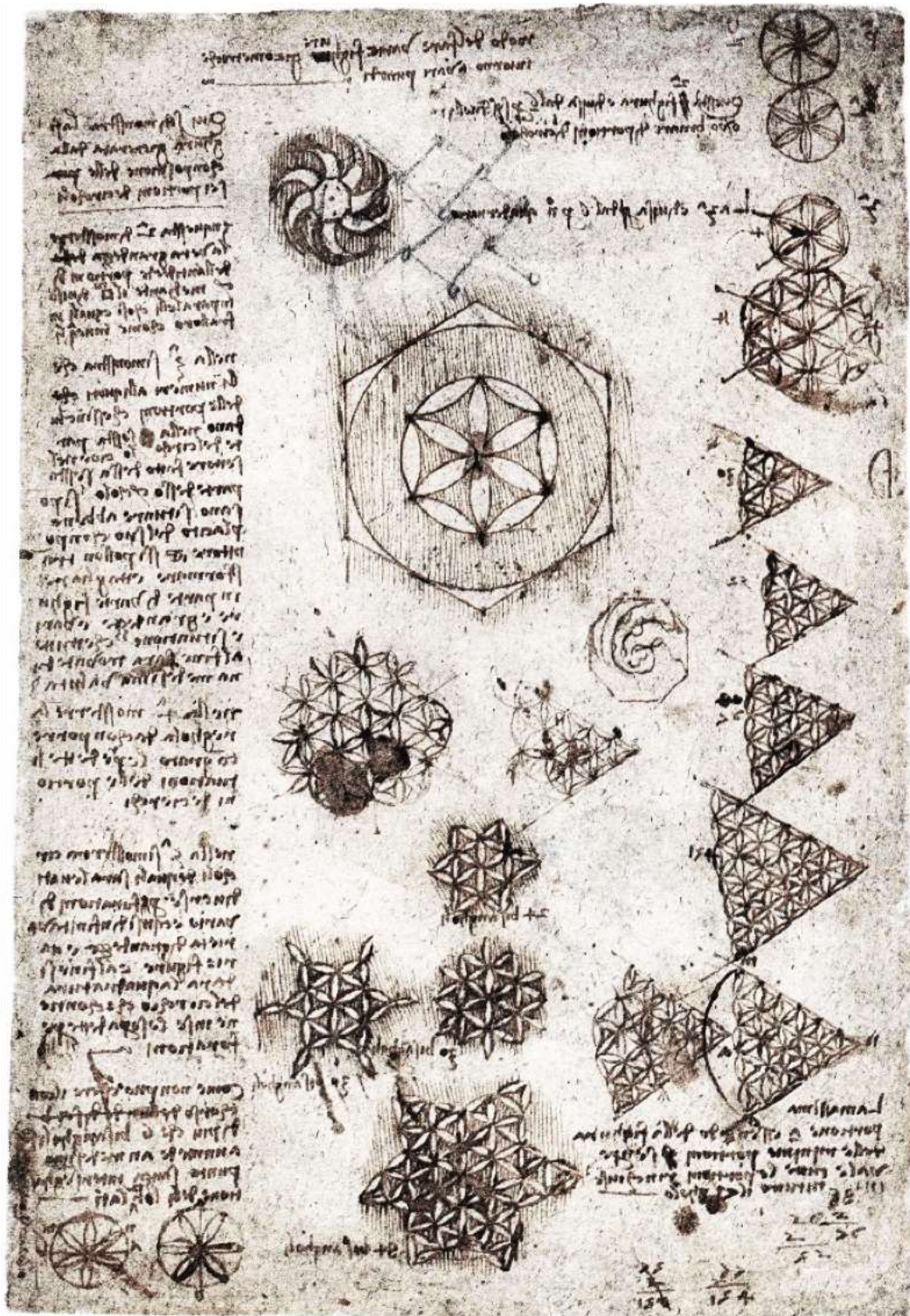


Figure 48: Leonardo's analysis of *The Pattern of Consciousness*, in which the six-pointed flower, hexagon, circle, and triangle are visibly dominant.

Source: <http://monkeybuddha.blogspot.com/2012/10/flower-of-life-drawings-by-leonardo-da.html>.

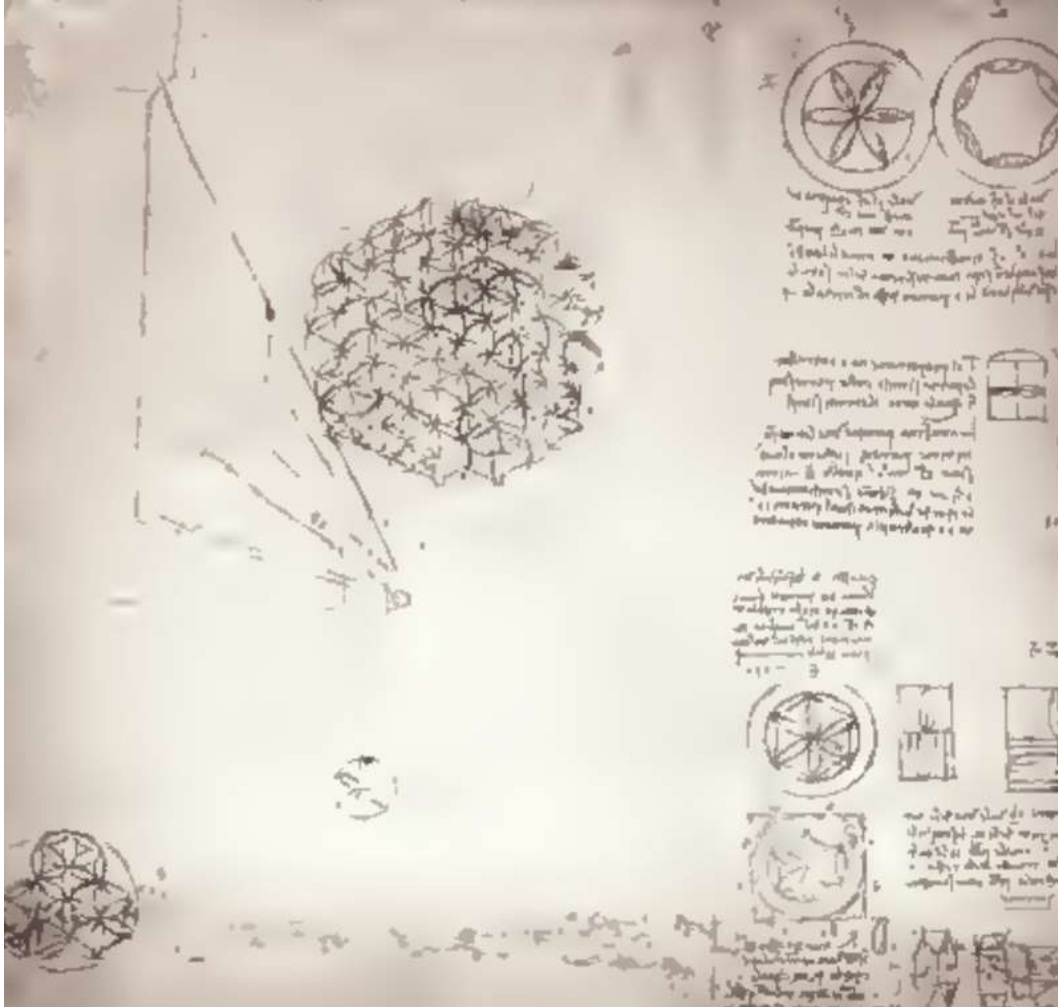


Figure 49: Leonardo's analysis of *The Pattern of Consciousness*, in which a cube is traced in the hexagon formed by the six-pointed flower.

Source: <http://monkeybuddha.blogspot.com/2012/10/flower-of-life-drawings-by-leonardo-da.html>.

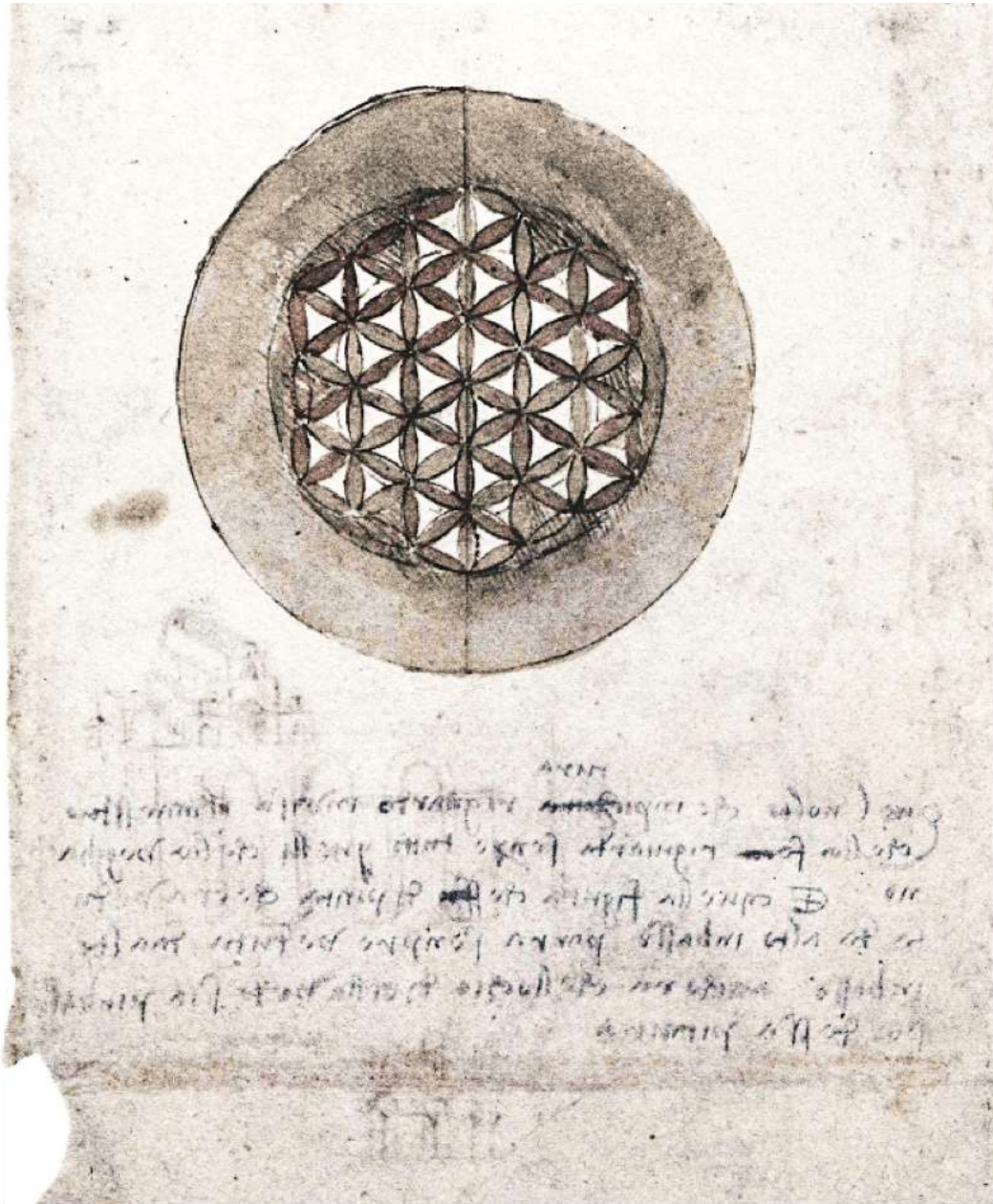


Figure 50: A page from the *Codex Atlanticus* depicting *The Pattern of Consciousness* sliced in half by a line drawn at a middle point inside the diagram.

Source: <http://monkeybuddha.blogspot.com/2012/10/flower-of-life-drawings-by-leonardo-da.html>.

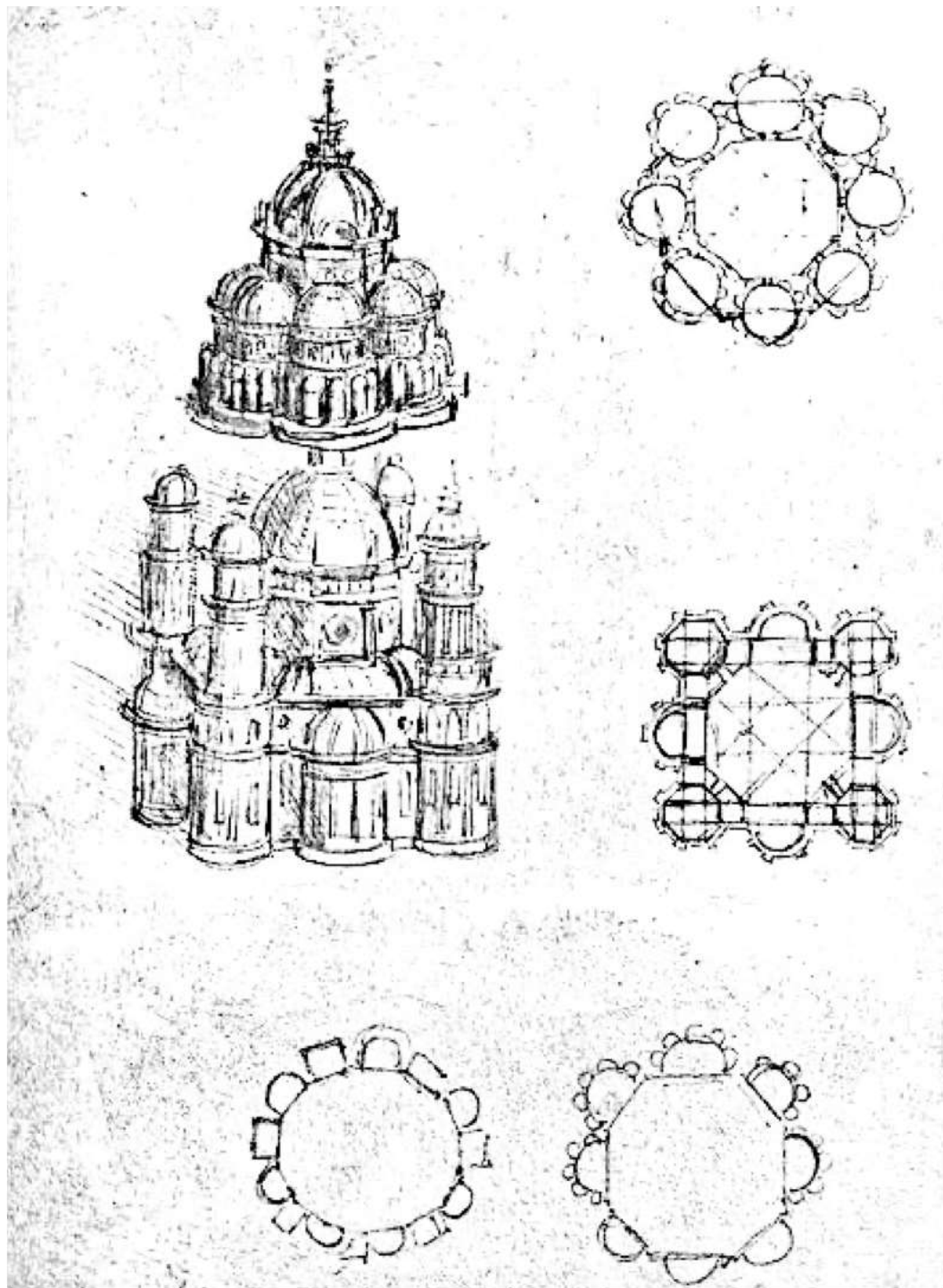


Figure 51: The Architectural drawings of Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript B, Institut de France, Paris.

Source: Principles of Architecture in the Age of Humanism, 1988, 27.

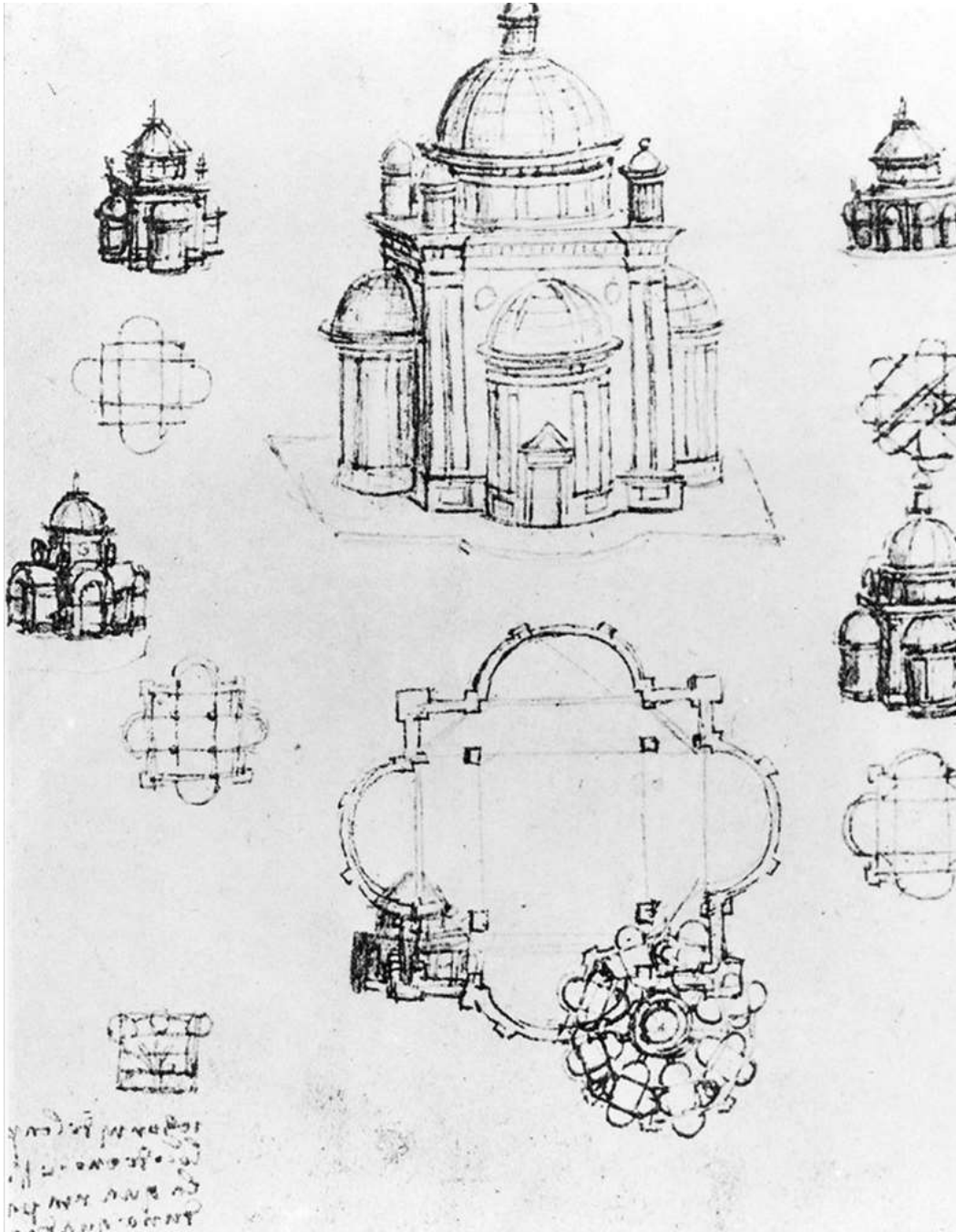


Figure 52: The Architectural drawings of Leonardo da Vinci. Manuscript B, Institut de France, Paris.

Source: Principles of Architecture in the Age of Humanism, 1988, 27.

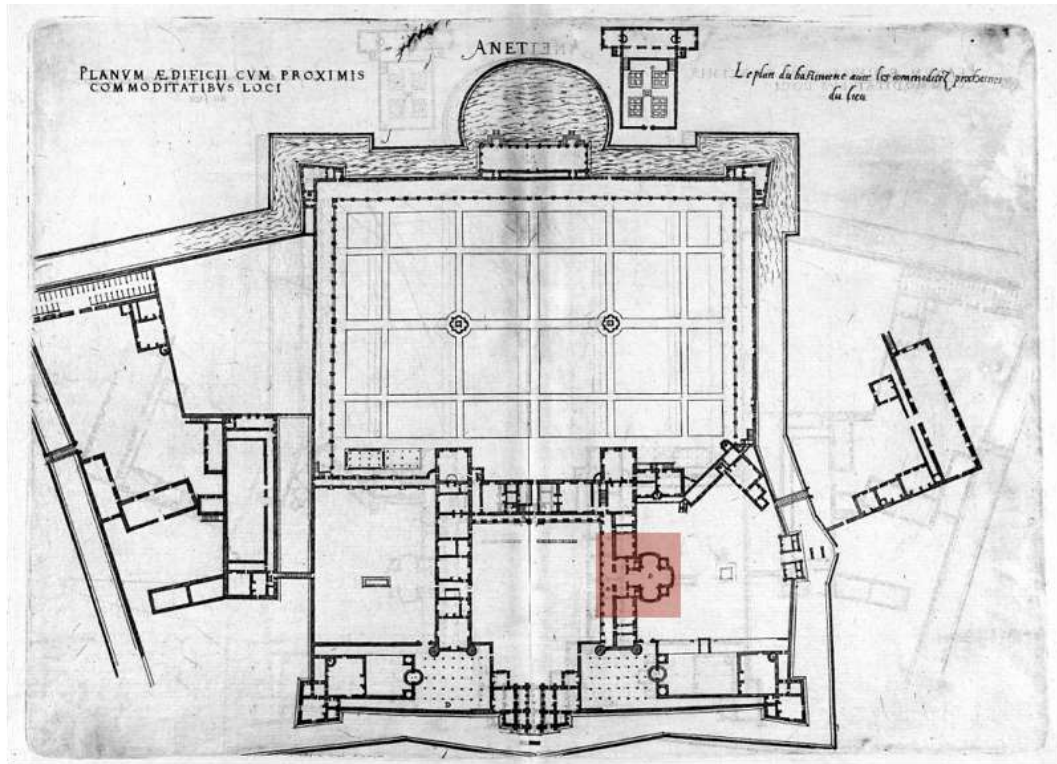


Figure 53: Floor plan of Château d'Anet, by J. A. Du Cerceau, seventeenth century century.

Source: Studies in Architecture, 1905, 146.

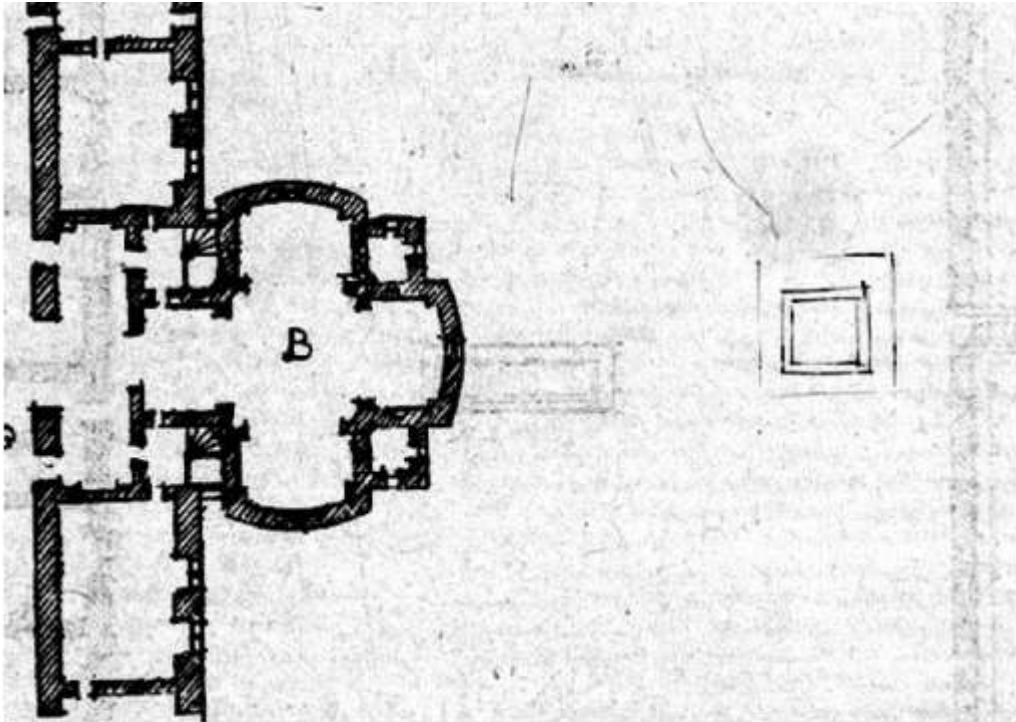


Figure 54: A cropped fragment of the floor plan shows a magnified view of Anet chapel.

Source: *Studies in Architecture*, 1905, 146.

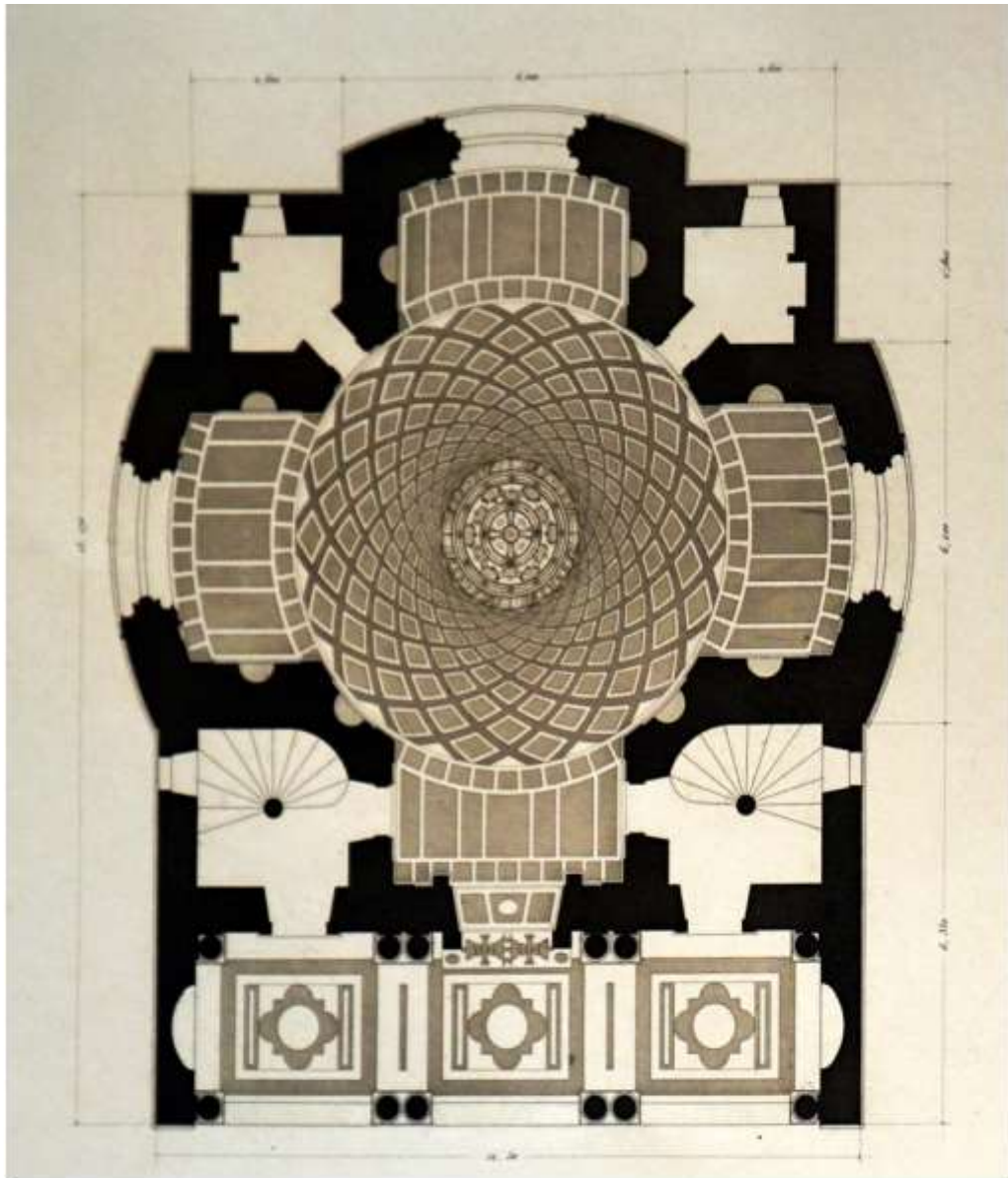


Figure 55: A floor plan of Anet chapel.

Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e3/Monographie_du_ch%C3%A2teau_d'Anet_88957.jpg.



Figure 56: A view of the chapel's ceiling.

Source: <https://culturezvous.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/chateau-anet-4.jpg>.



Figure 57: Floor pavement of the chapel hall.

Source: <https://www.skyscrapercity.com/threads/french-churches-with-renaissance-architecture.1811356/page-3>.



Figure 58: A closer view of the chapel's window, clearly showing the arched niche of the wall, through which the ray of the Sun penetrates through the chapel's body.

Source: <https://agfg-franconville.fr/chateau-d-anet/>.



Figure 59: A view showing the alter beneath the window, decorated with three candles.

Source: <https://www.skyscrapercity.com/threads/french-churches-with-renaissance-architecture.1811356/page-3>.



Figure 60: A sculpted representation of the universe which rests at the tip of both towers.

Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Château_d%27Anet_-_Anet_-_Eure-et-Loir_-_France_-_Mérimée_PA00096955_\(19\).jpg?uselang=fr](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Château_d%27Anet_-_Anet_-_Eure-et-Loir_-_France_-_Mérimée_PA00096955_(19).jpg?uselang=fr).



Figure 61: A sculpted representation of the universe which rests at the centre of the chapel's dome.

Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Château_d%27Anet_-_Anet_-_Eure-et-Loir_-_France_-_Mérimée_PA00096955_\(47\).jpg?uselang=fr](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Château_d%27Anet_-_Anet_-_Eure-et-Loir_-_France_-_Mérimée_PA00096955_(47).jpg?uselang=fr).

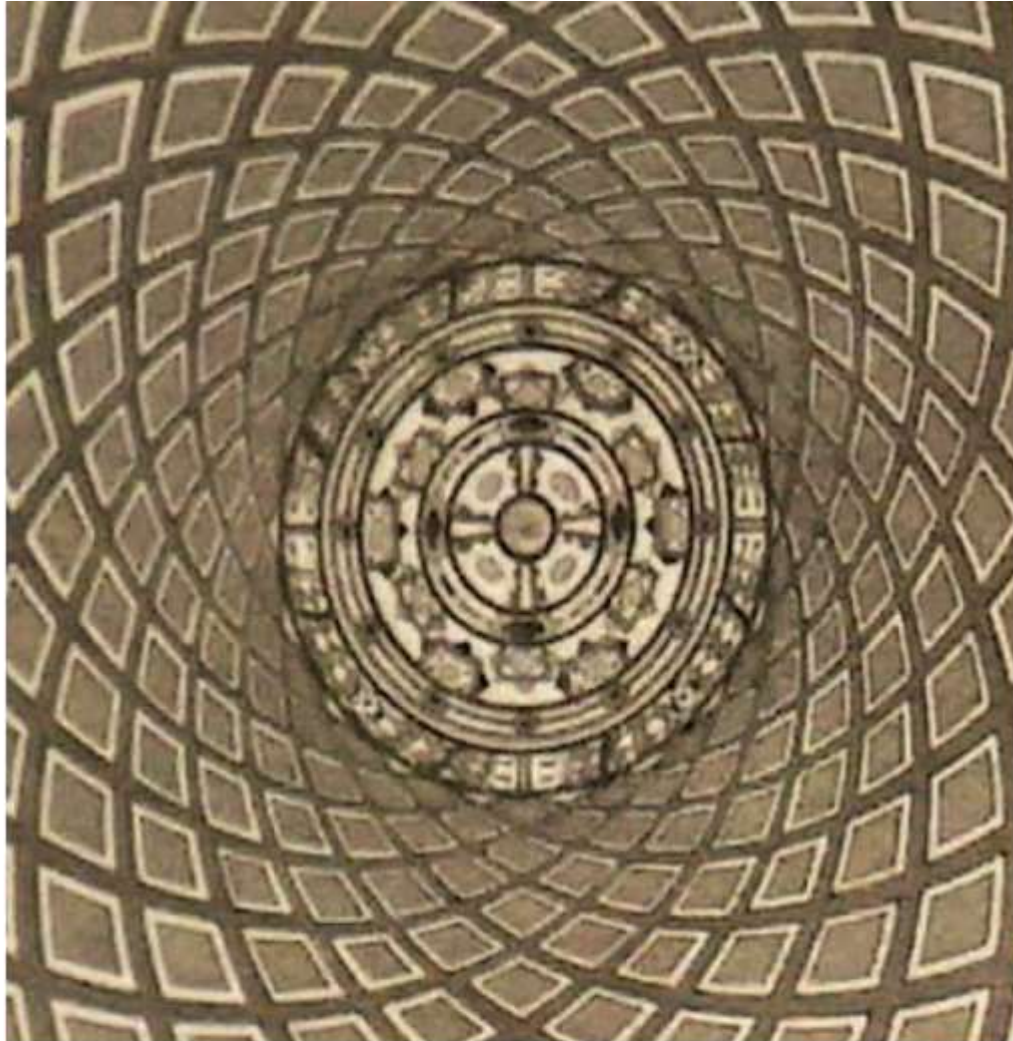


Figure 62: A distinct view of the floor pavement, closely showing the cosmological scheme generated at the centre of the hall.

Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e3/Monographie_du_chateau_d%27Anet_88957.jpg.



Figure 63: A view of the chapel's interior.

Source: <https://www.skyscrapercity.com/threads/french-churches-with-renaissance-architecture.1811356/page-3>.



Figure 64: The view into the chapel's interior from an entrance point.

Source: <https://www.skyscrapercity.com/threads/french-churches-with-renaissance-architecture.1811356/page-3>.

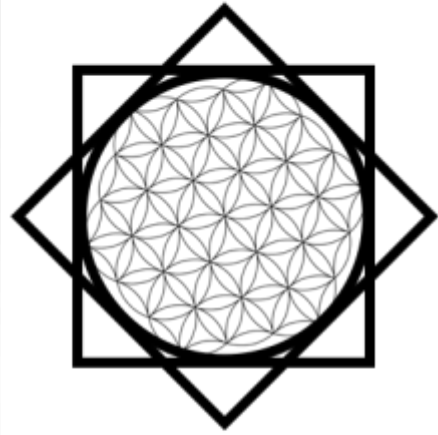
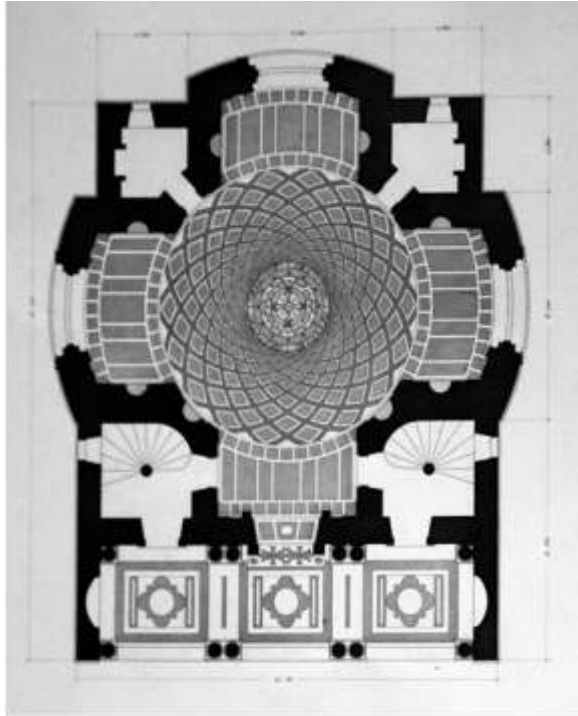


Figure 65: The chapel's skeletal layout is a mirror reflection of the cosmological *Pattern of Consciousness* superimposed on the astral map of Dendera's ceiling.

Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e3/Monographie_du_chateau_d%27Anet_88957.jpg.



Figure 66: A view of the chapel's external facade, showing the integral anatomy of the chapel.

Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/56/Chateau_d%27Anet%2C_chapelle.jpg.



Figure 67: When dissected, the anatomy of the chapel can be matched to that of the ornament adorning the tower's roof, as they both are threefold.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Château_d%27Anet#/media/File:Chateau_Anet_-_chapelle.jpg.



Figure 68: The elevation of the entrance is three levels high; manifestations of the Trinity can also be detected in the threefold formation of the ornament adorning the roof of both towers.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Château_d%27Anet#/media/File:Chateau_Anet_-_chapelle.jpg.

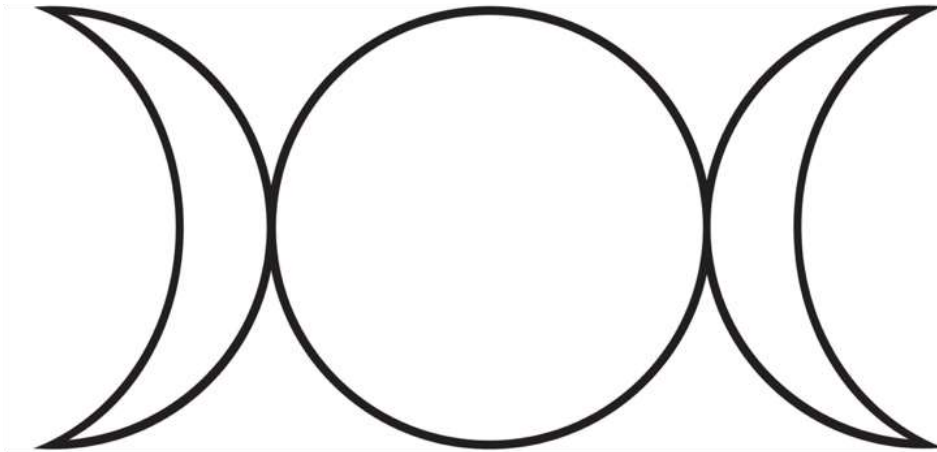
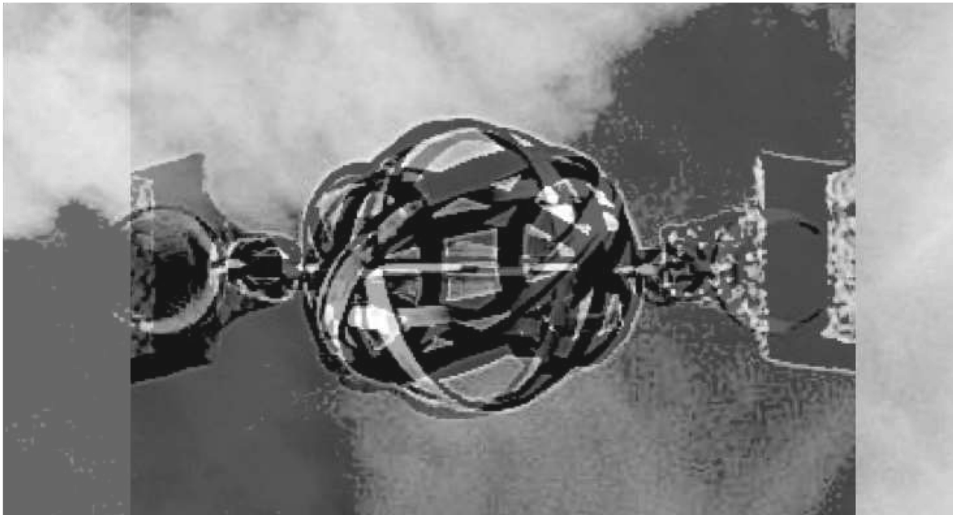
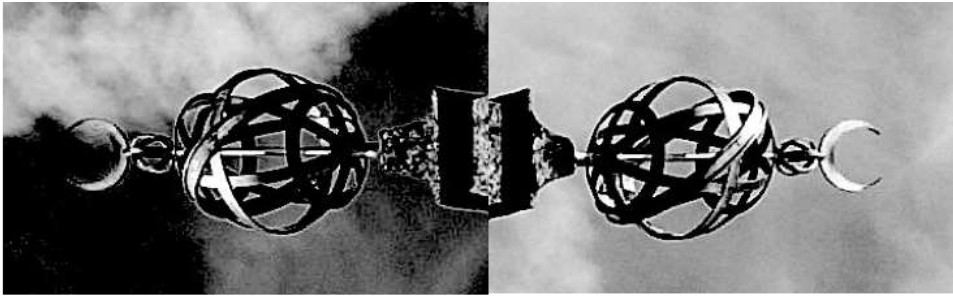


Figure 69: A fusion of the two ornaments adorning the roof of both towers reveals a new combination, the *Triple* symbol of the Moon, which consists of two crescents united by a disc in the middle.

Source: <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/cb/Triple-Goddess-Waxing-Full-Waning-Symbol.svg>.



Figure 70: The integral anatomy of the chapel is a mirror reflection of the Lunar disc often depicted crowning the Baboon-Thoth, as the pyramid-shaped roof of both towers represents the double-edged crescent, while the domed court represents the circular disc, the integration of both is an Architectural reanimation of the created universe.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Château_d%27Anet#/media/File:Chateau_Annet_-_chapelle.jpg.



Figure 71: The ornament adorning the roof of both twin towers bears stark resemblance to the planetary symbol of Mercury.

Source: *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, 2007, 155.

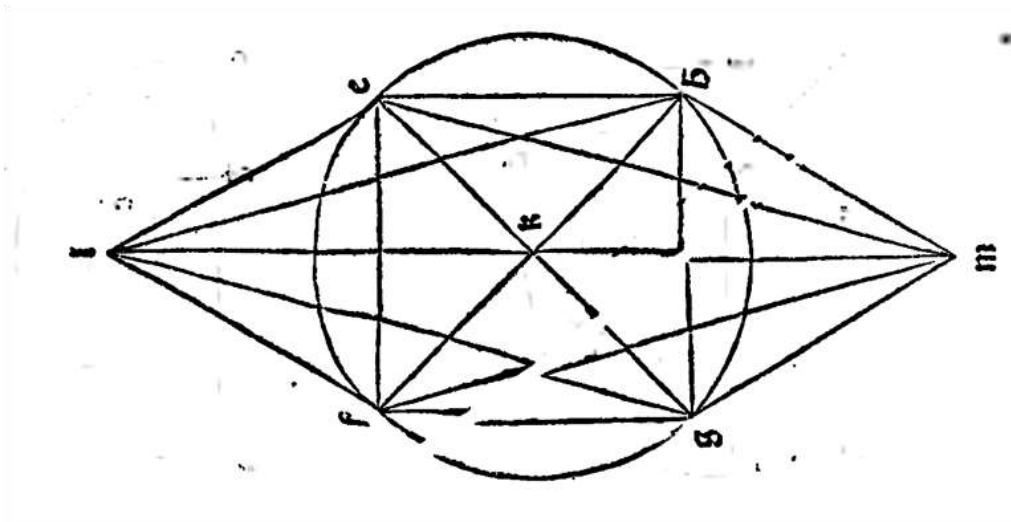


Figure 72: A fusion of the two pyramid-shaped roofs of both towers reveals a geometric composition that bears Hermetic implications. A two-dimensional prospect reveals a pentagon, while a three-dimensional prospect reveals a dual polyhedron. This motif is a collective representation of Hermetic philosophy, as it illustrates the mirror symbolism characteristic of Hermetic metaphysics, which indicates that a law of correspondence governs the universe in its entirety, creating a reality in which what is above is reflected below.

Source: *Divina Proportione*, 1509, 9.



Figure 73: The external design of the chapel bears stark resemblance to the *Caduceus* of Hermes.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Château_d%27Anet#/media/File:Chateau_Annet_-_chapelle.jpg.

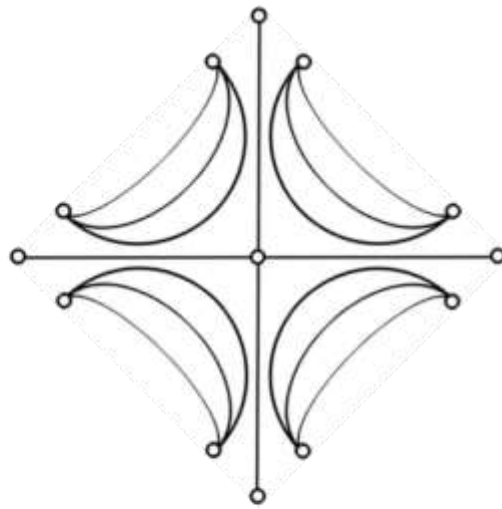


Figure 74: The planetary seal of the Moon.

Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e3/Monographie_du_chateau_d%27Anet_88957.jpg.

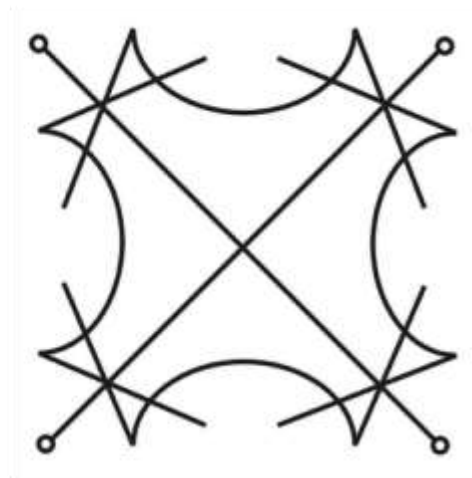
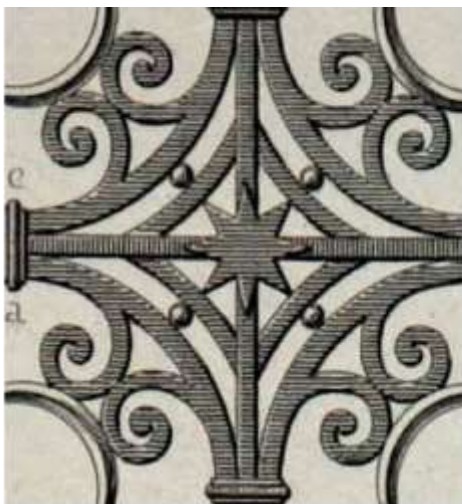


Figure 75: The planetary seal of the Sun.

Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e3/Monographie_du_chateau_d%27Anet_88957.jpg.

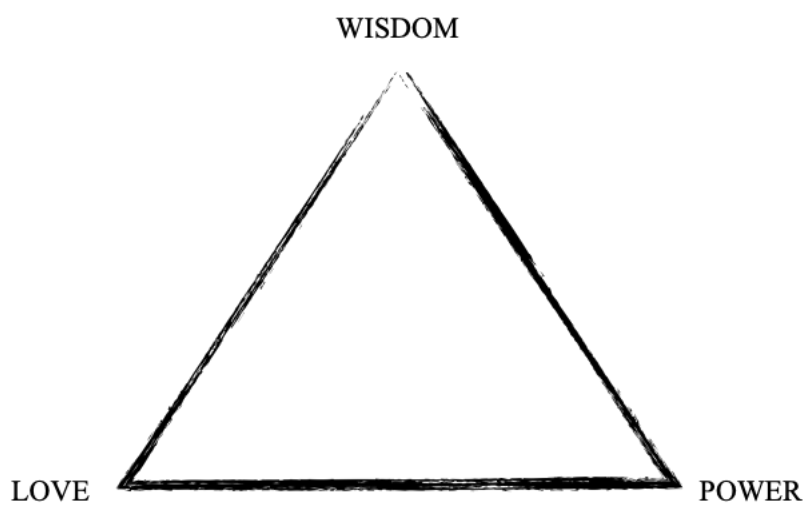


Figure 76: The threefold government of a “ideal city”. (Author’s drawing).

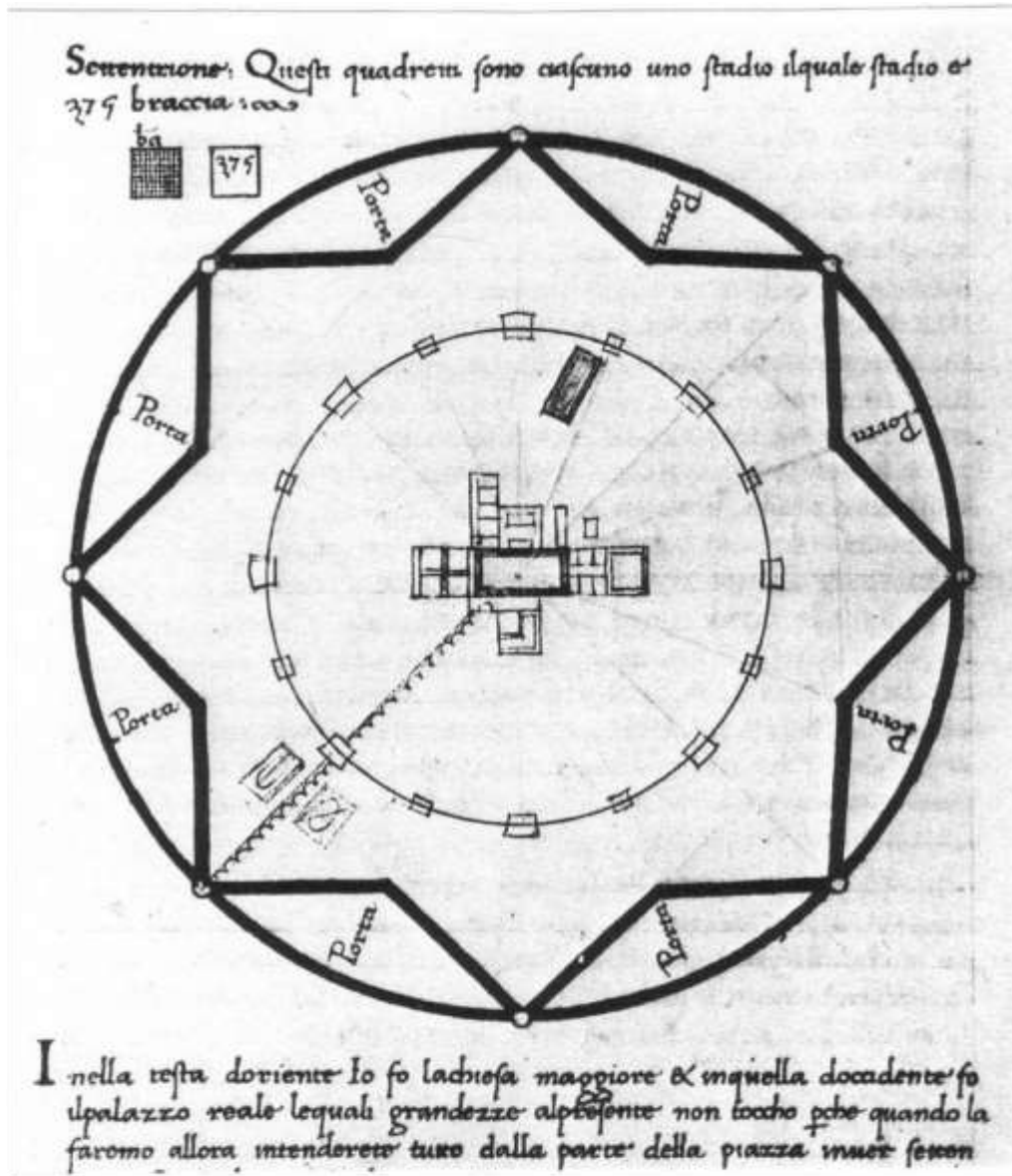






Figure 77: The Sforzinda of Filarete. The layout of the city is a mirror reflection of the astral map of Dendera's ceiling, as it depicts an eight-pointed star inside a circular wall.


Source: Lang, S., 1972, 63.

B. LIST OF TABLES

B1. REPRESENTATIONS OF HERMES IN WESTERN LITERATURE



ARTWORK	TIME OF CONCEPTION	PLACE OF CONCEPTION	NAME OF THE SOURCE	NAME OF THE AUTHOR	SIGNIFICANT DETAILS
	15th century, around 1475.	Florence, Italy	Miscellanea di Alchimia.	-	Hermes is pointing up towards an eight-pointed star symbol.
	16th century, around 1531.	Augsburg, Germany	Emblematum Liber.	Andrea Alciato	Hermes using a caduceus to influence the flow of the river.



	<p>17th century, around 1617.</p>	<p>Frankfurt, Germany</p>	<p>Symbol aureae mensae duodecimum</p>	<p>Michael Maier</p>	<p>Hermes points with his left hand a union between the Moon and Sun, while his right hand carries a model of the universe.</p>
	<p>16th century, around 1560.</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>De chemia senioris simi philoso phi, libellus, utbrevis, ita artem discentibus, et exercen tibus, utilissimus et vere aureus, nunc primum in lucern aeditus. Ab artis fideli</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>Hermes unfolds the mystery teachings in the form of a book.</p>


			filio.		
	16th century, around 1579.	Florence, Italy	The Lament of the Art of Painting	Cornelis Cort after Federico Zuccaro	Hermes performing his psychopomp duty, as he guides the souls of the dead from the world below into that above.



	<p>16th century, around 1597</p>	<p>Rome, Italy</p>	<p>The west wing of the Palazzo Farnese</p>	<p>Annibale Carracci</p>	<p>Mercury delivers the apple of discord preceding the judgment of Paris</p>
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B2. WESTERN COSMOGRAPHY





COSMOGRAPHIC WORK	TIME OF CONCEPTION	PLACE OF CONCEPTION	ORIGIN	CREATOR
	13th century, Medieval period.	-	Medieval Bible	-
	17th century, around 1617.	Britain	Utriusque cosmi maioris scilicet et minoris metaphysica, physica atque technica historia, in duo volumina secundum cosmifferentiam diuisa	Robert Fludd



	<p>15th century, around 1440.</p>	<p>Nuremberg, Germany</p>	<p>Liber chronicarum Hartmann Schedel</p>	<p>Anton Koberger</p>
	<p>15th century, around 1490.</p>	<p>Venice, Italy</p>	<p>Sphaera Mundi [Sphere of the World]</p>	<p>Johannes de Sacrobosco</p>

	<p>16th century, around 1510</p>	<p>Florence, Italy</p>	<p>Dialogo di Antonio Manetti, cittadino fiorentino, circa al sito, forma & misure dello Inferno di Dante Alighieri poeta eccellentissimo [Dialogue of Antonio Manetti, Florentine Citizen, Concerning the Site, Form and Measurements of the Inferno of Dante Alighieri, Most Excellent Poet]</p>	<p>Antonio Manetti</p>
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	<p>17th century, around 1671.</p>	<p>Amsterdam, Germany</p>	<p>Ars magna lvcis et vmbrae, 2d ed.</p>	<p>Athanasius Kircher</p>
	<p>13th century</p>	<p>Florence, Italy</p>	<p>Siena Cathedral</p>	<p>-</p>

	13th century	Florence, Italy	Siena Cathedral	-
	13th century	Florence, Italy	Siena Cathedral	-
	13th century	Florence, Italy	Siena Cathedral	-


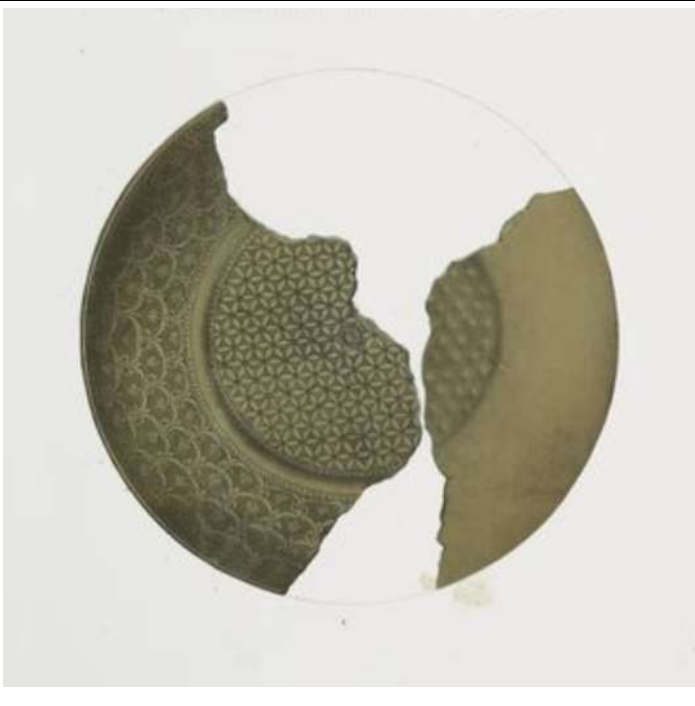
	13th century	Florence, Italy	Siena Cathedral	-
	13th century	Florence, Italy	Siena Cathedral	-
	13th century	Florence, Italy	Siena Cathedral	-
	15th century	Florence, Italy	The dome of the Florence Cathedral	Giorgio Vasari and Federico Zuccari



	15th century	Florence, Italy	The floor of the Florence Cathedral	-
	15th century	Rome, Italy	Borgia Apartments	Pinturiccchio

B3. THE PATTERN OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN WORKS OF ART AND ARCHITECTURE ACROSS THE GLOBE

PATTERN OF CONSCIOUSNESS	PERIOD	LOCATION
	15th century, around 1400.	India
		China

	850 BC	Levant
	1600 BC	Mycenae, Greece

	800-700 BC	Baghdad, Iraq
	700 BC	Nimrud, Iraq

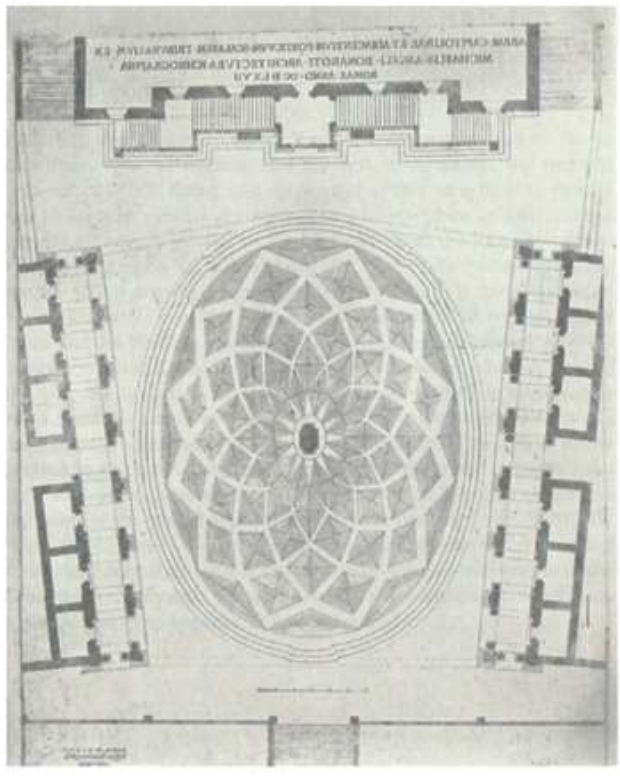

	100-500 AC	Córdoba, Spain
	20 BC	Israel



800-700
BC

Idalion, Cyprus

<p>The image is a detailed architectural floor plan of Siena Cathedral, designed by Bernardo Rossellino. The plan is cross-shaped with a central octagonal dome. The nave is wide and features a series of bays with various floor treatments. The apse at the top is large and contains a mosaic of the Last Judgment. The transept and choir are also intricately detailed with various rooms and niches. The entire plan is enclosed within a decorative border.</p>	<p>13th century</p>	<p>Siena Cathedral</p>
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	<p>16th century</p>	<p>The ancient Capitoline Hill</p>
	<p>16th century</p>	<p>The ancient Capitoline Hill</p>



16th
century

The
ancient Capitoline
Hill

C. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKE ÖZET

Bu tartışmanın amacı, Mimarlık ile diđer çalışma alanları arasında, özellikle de varoluşun amacını ve hayatın anlamını kavramakla ilgilenenler arasında bir bağlantı kurmaktır, çünkü bu tür düşünce alanları, Mimarlık anlayışımızı genişletme ve inşa edilmiş olan çevreyi algılama biçimimizi yeniden şekillendirme potansiyeline sahiptir.

Bu tartışma, on sekizinci ve on dokuzuncu yüzyıllara tarihlenen gelişkin bir irfan bilincinden çıkmaktadır. Eleştirel bir bakışla, bunun öncesinde, Mimarlık yalnızca bir zorunluluğa, bilim ve din arasındaki irrasyonel bir çatışmaya indirgenmiş, daha sonra endüstriyel ve teknolojik devrim tarafından takip edilerek, inşa edilmiş olan çevreye ilişkin algıları sığ bir görüşe dönüştürmüştü. Bu tartışma, Mimarlığı, değerini ve anlamını estetik veya işlevselcilik ilkelerine dayalı olarak ölçmeye çalışan nesnellik ve olgusallık sınırlamalarından kurtarma arzusuyla tetiklenmiştir. Bu tartışmanın ardındaki bir başka zorlayıcı sebepse, yirminci ve yirmi birinci yüzyıllar arasında yürütülen son çalışmaların ortaya koyduğudur ki bu, araştırmanın, keşiften ziyade anonim olmaya doğru bir yolculuk haline geldiği ve fiziksel gerçeklik ürününe yaklaşımın fantezi alanına derin bir dalış olduğu bilimsel tutumda, sarsılmaz bir inançtan güçlü şüphe tutumuna kayda değer bir geçiştir. Mimariyi yeniden yorumlamaya yönelik son girişimler, disiplinler arası söylem için sınırsız bir kapasiteye sahip, kendi dışındaki dünyalarla ilişki kurabilen ve dolayısıyla bir entelektüel diller gerçeği tarafından anlaşılabilen aşkın bir anlam boyutunu ortaya koymaktadır. Bu nedenle, bu tartışma öznedir. Etkileyici bir şekilde aktif ve entelektüel olarak usta bir varlık olarak, Doğanın kolektif sistemiyle karmaşık bir şekilde harmanlanmış olan Mimariye karşı merak uyandırmak ve empatiyi teşvik etmek amacıyla başlatılmıştır. Bu anlamda araştırma süreci, Mimari anlamı şüphenin yararına ödüllendirmek ve varlığının

aşkın özünü sürdürmenin bir yolu olarak, cevaplardan daha fazla soru üretecektir. Bu bağlamda, Mimari teori ve pratiğine yaklaşım öncelikle felsefi olduğundan ve maddi kanıtların ele alınması fazlasıyla şiirsel olduğundan, bu tartışmanın genel tavrı, determinizm veya kesinlikten yoksundur.

Disiplinler arası ve çok boyutlu bir inceleme yöntemiyle, araştırma, temeli Batı Rönesansı'nda tespit edilen Mimari anlam ile doğa felsefesi arasında kalıcı bir köprü kurmayı ummaktadır. On beşinci yüzyıldan on altıncı yüzyıla uzanan bir dönemde, felsefi yönelimli bir zihniyet, görkemli bir şekilde derin bir Mimarlık anlayışı, gizli bilgi zevki ve Okült bilgelik takıntısı olan bir zihniyet geliştirmişti. Rönesans düşüncesine göre inşa etme eylemi kutsal olduğu gibi, gökyüzünde izlenen ilahi bir planı yansıtacak şekilde tasarlanan yapılar da kutsaldı. Teolojik felsefe ile Mimari teori arasındaki bağlantı, Batı kültürünün çeşitli yönlerinde, özellikle edebiyat ve sanat eserlerinde sürekli olarak ifade edildi.

Rönesans Mimarisinin bir incelemesi, bir binanın bir güneş sistemine benzediği, Tek Güneş'in merkeze sabitlendiği ve çok sayıda gök cismi etrafında dairesel olarak dizildiği, tekrar eden bir merkezîyetçilik ve simetri temasını ortaya koymaktadır. Dairesel bir şemanın örnekleri, Batı Mimarisi tarihi boyunca, tezahürünün hem teorik hem de pratik alanlarında kolayca tespit edilen tekrarlayan bir modeldi. Leonardo da Vinci'nin Kabataslak eskizlerinden Philibert de l'Orme'un hesaplanmış işçiliğine kadar, dairesel bir zemin planı, kubbeli bir çatı ve merkezde tek bir noktaya bağlı simetrik uzuvlar içeren mimari tasarımlar, Avrupa'nın farklı yerlerinde bulunan Sanat ve Mimarlık eserlerinde geniş çapta izlenebilir. Çeşitli durum çalışmalarının çok boyutlu bir analizi, on beşinci yüzyıla kadar hüküm süren ve Batı dünyasının zihinsel dokusuna sızmayı başaran gizemli bir düşünce akımına geri götüren ipuçlarını ortaya çıkarmış, bu sayede on altıncı yüzyılda Avrupa'nın entelektüel iklimini tamamen doyurmayı başarmıştı. Rönesans düşüncesine göre bu düşünce akımı, Doğru bilgi birikiminin onun elinde olduğuna inanılan, Aydınlanmayı kişileştiren gizemli bir kişilik olan

Hermes adında biri tarafından kurulmuştur. Bu ışık taşıyıcısı, zamanın entelektüelleri tarafından büyük saygı gördü, çünkü Rönesans sırasında *Hermes*, en eşi görülmemiş şöhreti ve popülerliği kazandı ve sadece adının anılması, geçerlilik kazanmanın etkili yoluydu.

Hermes, batılı tasavvur dâhilinde, bir zamanlar Mısır merkezli bir Gizem okulunun sadık bir müridiydi ve Okült sanatlar ile bilimlerin gizli öğretilerini, o sıradaki öğrenciliği sırasında öğrenmiş, inisiyasyon sürecinin sonunda aydınlanmaya ulaşmıştır. Bu ezoterik geleneğin Rönesans entelektüelleri tarafından çok eski olduğuna, İncil'deki Musa'dan bile önce geldiğine inanılırken, bunun belgelenmesi daha sonra İskenderiye'de gerçekleşmiştir. Dünyanın dört bir yanına dağılmış ezoterik geleneklerin kolektif ruhunu somutlaştırıyor gibi olan *Hermes'in öğretileri*, ilahi bir zekâ tarafından ortaya çıkarılan ilahi bir vahiy olarak algılandı ve bu nedenle şimdiye kadar var olan “en erken teoloji” ve “ilk felsefe” olarak kabul edilmiştir.

Gerçek kökenlerini örten belirsizlik perdesine ve kurucu atalarının gerçek kimliğine rağmen, Rönesans, 15. yüzyılda Batılı düşünürler tarafından bu Gizem okuluna *Hermetizm* terimi bahşedildiği için, bir Doğu mezhebinin kışkırtıcı ve güçlendirici ilkelerine inanarak Arapça metinleri ve ezoterik yazıları meşrulaştırmıştır. Bu geleneğin kapsayıcı etkisi göz önüne alındığında, sadece ilahiyatçılar ve filozoflar tarafından değil, sanatçılar ve mimarlar tarafından da yoğun bir merakın hedefi olurken, eski bir bilgeliğin gizli bilgisinin tıp, mühendislik ve Mimarlık gibi çeşitli disiplin ve mesleklere dâhil edilmesi şaşırtıcı değildir. Bu merakın tezahürü, Rönesans döneminde seçkin şahsiyetlerin ürettiği duvar resimlerinde, fresklerde, mozaiklerde, heykellerde ve eskiz defterlerinde tasvir edilen kozmolojik motiflere ve astrolojik diyagramlara canlı bir şekilde yansımaktadır.

Arkeolojik kanıtların seçici bir incelemesi, Avrupa Rönesans'ı sırasındaki çoğu Mimari tasarımın Yunan kökenlerini ortaya çıkardığından, *Hermetizm*'i bu

tartışmanın ana konusu yapan, Batı düşüncesi üzerindeki bu etki derecesidir. Batı edebiyatında etkili kabul edilen *Homeros ilahilerinden* yola çıkarak, *Hermes'e* adanmış bir ilahi, efsanevi tanrıyı, Güneş tanrısı Apollo ile tuhaf bir bağlantısı olan kurnaz ve sevimli bir çocuk olarak tasvir eder. Bu ,ilahi, ateşin ve yedi telli lirin icadını Hermes'e atfeder, aynı zamanda büyüleri esası *Caduceus'u* sallayarak bulutların, nehirlerin veya sığırların hareketine hükmettiği için büyü yapma güçlerini de tanımlar. İlahide anlatılanların çoğu, MÖ 3. yüzyıl ile MS 2. yüzyıl arasında tarihlenen alçak-kabartmalarda ve vazo resimlerinde izlenebilir. *Caduceus'un* (iki yılan sarılı asa) tasvirleri de, Mısır'daki tapınak duvarlarında boyanmış olarak bulunabilir; burada İbis-başlı *Thoth'un*, her birinin etrafına bir yılan dolanmış iki asayı kullandığı görülebilir.

Bu araştırmanın esas olarak ilgilendiği bir diğer el yazması da, *Corpus Hermeticum'dur*. 1460 yılı civarında, Hermes'e atfedilen, *Hermetic Corpus* olarak bilinen, derlenmiş bir dizi metin ortaya çıkmıştır; bu metnin, tüm ezoterik bilgilerin ortak bilgisini içerdiğine inanılmakta ve zamanın mitografları ile âlimleri tarafından ortak bir referans kaynağı olarak kullanılmaktaydı. 1471'deki ilk Latince yayından sonra, *Hermetica* terimi, astroloji, ritüel veya mistisizm ile ilgili ortak literatür bütünü temsil etmeye başlamıştır. Böylece, on beşinci yüzyılın sonunda, Batı *Hermetizmi*, çeşitli felsefi akımların bütünleştiği ortak payda haline geldi.

Felsefi bir teoloji olarak *Corpus Hermeticum*, bilim ve dinin ayrı alemler olduğunu değil, aynı madalyonun iki yüzü olduğunu kabul ettiği için hem zihin hem de ruh meseleleriyle ilgilenmektedir. Doğa fenomenleri, fiziksel elementlerin kimyasal dönüşümlerinin iyi ve kötü terimleriyle açıklandığı etik bir bağlamda düşünülür. Sesin frekansı, enerjinin titreşimi ve ışığın parlaklığı hakkındaki tartışmalar, metafizik bir ilahi “irade” kavramının tüm Doğal nedenlerin arkasındaki yaratıcı güç olduğu kabul edilerek, şiirsel olarak yürütülür. Bu bakımdan teosofi (mistisizm/tasavvuf) ve kozmoloji (metafizik) birbiriyle ilişkili

olarak, kozmik düzenin ve Doğal dünyayı yöneten yasaların anlaşılmasına dayalı olarak ruhun yükselişine ve bilincin yüceltilmesine ulaşılarak kavranır.

İkili bir felsefe olarak *Hermetic Corpus*, yaratılışı, tek bir yaşam damlasının su yüzeyinin sonsuz dalgalanmasına neden olduğu ışık ve karanlık arasındaki kutsal bir evlilik olarak tasvir eder. Evren, Tek ruhun sonsuz bir okyanus tarafından yutulduğu ilahi aşkın ürünüdür ve yavrular sonsuz bir evrendir. Metaforik olarak yaratılış, kozmosun görünen beden, ilahi özün ise görünmez tin olduğu bir ruhun bir beden içinde hapsedilmesi olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Evren, makro kozmosun, mikro kozmosun ayna yansıması olduğu ilahi bir aklın fiziksel bir tezahürüdür. *Hermetica* ayrıca, Üstad Mimar ve orijinal yaşam kaynağı olan Tek bir yaratıcı olduğunu açıklamaktadır. Bir'den Her şey doğar, bütün Bir'in içindedir ve onun tarafından kapsanmaktadır, bu nedenle evrendeki her şey uzuvlar gibi tek bir canlı organizma olarak bir bedene bağlıdır. Bu birbirine bağlı evrende, ışığın (bilinç) ve karanlığın (ölüm) iki belirleyici gücünün durmaksızın mükemmel bir uyum içinde işlediği her şeyde bir uygunluk yasası işler.

Hermetik felsefenin Teosofik alanı, Bir'den bir yayılım olarak tanrının suretinde yaratılan İnsanlığın kaderine odaklanır. İnsanlık iki yönlüdür, ölümlü bir bedene hapsedilmiş ölümsüz bir ruha sahiptir. Yolculuğun hem zihni hem de bedeni içeren ritüel bir süreç olduğu bu senaryoda İnsanlığın kaderi, kaynağa geri dönmek ve tanrı ile yeniden birleşmektir. Başka bir şekilde, bilginin hedefi olarak da bilinen bu kader, yani aydınlanmaya giden yol, kişinin zihninde gömülü olan ilahi kıvılcımı yeniden uyandırmak ve bilincin varoluşun daha yüksek planlarına yükselmesine izin vermek amacıyla zihni sakinleştirmek ve duyuları keskinleştirmek için tasarlanmış son derece yorucu ve zahmetli bir rutindir. Bu mistik düalizm anlayışına dayanarak, *Hermetica*, zihni, kendi kendine büyüeyebilen veya kendi kendini yok edebilen iki ucu keskin bir silah olarak tanımlar. Kutsal miras olarak zihin, bilginin kapılarını açmanın ve bilinci cehaletin esaretinden kurtarmanın ilahi anahtarı olarak bir aydınlanma aracıdır.

Kozmoloji ile ilgili olarak, Hermetic Corpus, Üst ışık âleminin ve Alt karanlık âleminin ara âlem tarafından birbirine bağlandığı üçlü bir evren sunmaktadır. Bu kozmolojik anlatıda, evrenin biçiminin küresel olduğu, bilincin modelinin sarmal olduğu, gezegensel kürelerin hareketinin dairesel olduğu ve ruhun aktif durumunun dalgalı olduğu yerlerde sayı ve geometrinin matematik dili yoğun olarak kullanılmaktadır. Üstad Mimardan (kutsal ruh), orijinal babanın oğlu, ışığı ve ilahi akıllı olan Bir Yapı Üstadı ortaya çıkmıştır. Yapı Üstadı, yaratılan dünyada yasayı tesis etmek ve düzeni sağlamak amacıyla yaratılan yaratma makinesinin arkasındaki yönetim ve idare gücünü temsil eden yedi zanaatkâr yaratmıştır. Yedi kişinin yönetimi, günlük insan yaşamını etkileyebilecek ara zekâ biçimleri olarak, cennet (ruhsal âlem) ve Dünya (maddi âlem) arasındaki kesişme noktasında konuşlanmış etkileyicilerin şeytani birliklerini temsil eden ve bu nedenle *Hermetica* tarafından “kaderin hükümeti” olarak tanımlanan on iki zodyak yaratmıştır.

Hem Teosofik hem de kozmolojik alanlar, *Üçlü Birlik*, *İkilik* ve *Evrenselcilik* olarak ayrılabilen benzer felsefi kavramlar etrafında döner. Hermetik *Üçlü*, üçlü evrene ve ruh, zihin ve beden üçlüsüne atıfta bulunur. *Düalizm*, ilahi akıl ve ruhsuz Madde tarafından temsil edilen, ışık ve karanlığın karşıt güçlerine atıfta bulunur. Son olarak, *Evrenselcilik*, Hermetik felsefenin en temel ilkesini, diğer tüm kavramların ortaya çıkarıldığı kapsayıcı vahiy olarak öne çıkarır. “Bir Her Şeydir ve Her Şey Birdir” diyen *Hermetica*'ya göre evren, çokluğun tekil olanın ayrılmaz bir parçası olduğu ve yaratılan tüm şeylerin uyumlu bir şekilde tek bir kolektiflik olarak var olduğu Evrensel Akıl'dan doğan girift bir ayrıntılar ağıdır.

Bu felsefi kavramlar, *Hermetica*'nın mistik ve metafizik açıklamalarının sanatçılar ve mimarlar tarafından yaratıcı bir şekilde yeniden üretildiği, görsel olarak kışkırtıcı ve düşündürücü tasarımların hem kamusal hem de konut Mimarisini, Babil ikonografisi, Mısır sembolizmi ve Yunan mitolojisinin pagan imgelemi ile aştığı Rönesans sırasında, Batı düşüncesi tarafından coşkuyla benimsenmiştir.

Dairesel çerçeveler içinde yer alan ve sembolik renklerle boyanmış burçlara ilişkilendirilmiş gezegen tanrılarının tasvirleri, yapı kompleksi içindeki her alanın amacına ve anlamına uygun olarak duvarlara, zeminlere ve tavanlara yerleştirilerek binayı, evrenin yeniden oluşturulmuş bir modeline ve dolayısıyla Hermetik düşüncenin fiziksel bir tezahürüne dönüştürmüştür.

Bu tezahürler, Mimarlığın yalnızca dekoratif boyutuna özel değil, aynı zamanda, mekânsal düzenleme, dolaşım düzeni, erişilebilirlik noktaları ve inşa edilmiş olan yapının sağlam oluşumu adına, anatomik olarak da, *Hermetizm*'in felsefi kavramlarını yankılayarak tasarlanmıştır. Çıkış, pencere, bölme ve kat seviyelerinin sayısı ve konumu, yapıyı bilinçli ve entelektüel olarak usta bir varlık olarak algılayan, kolektif sistemin ayrılmaz bir parçası olarak semavi bir uyum ve ilahi bir zanaatkârlığı yansıtacak şekilde şekillendirilmiş, okült takıntısı olan bir zihniyet tarafından belirlenmektedir. Mimari düzen, kozmik beden bir taklidi olarak, yapısal anatominin tüm parçalarının bir vücuda uzuvlar gibi birbirine bağlı olduğu ve tek bir üyenin düzensizliğinin, bütünü bozulmasına ve düşmesine neden olacağı orantılı Birlik sergilemektedir.

Edebi ve görsel kaynakların gözden geçirilmesi, Thoth-Hermes-Mercurius tasvirlerinin ortak bir payda olduğunu tekrarlayan bir görünüm modelini ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Hermes, Rönesans tasavvuru içinde, bir *Caduceus* sembolünün ortak bir gösterge olduğu Mısır ve Yunan sanatında tespit edilenlere benzer kişilik özellikleri ve bedensel duruşlar taşımaktaydı. Efes'te bulunan bir alçak-kabartma, Hermes'i, bir elinde ikiz yılanların birbirine dolandığı kanatlı bir asayı, diğerinde Güneş'e zincirlenmiş bir koçu tutarken tasvir etmektedir. Bir çift kanat, esasını süsleyenlere benzer şekilde ayaklarını süslemektedir. Taş oymacılığının tasvir ettiği şey, *Hermes'e Homeros İlahisinde* anlatılanla tıpatıp aynı olan bir sahnedir; burada kurnaz bir tanrı, Apollon'un kutsal sığırını çalmak için gece boyunca dolaşır, karanlığın örtüsünün altına kıvrak bir şekilde süzülerek sürüyü bulunduğu yerden uzaklaştırmak için sihirli asasını kullanır. Efes'te bulunan alçak-kabartma,

Corpus Hermeticum'un derlendiği iddia edilen aynı döneme, MS birinci ve üçüncü yüzyıllar arasına tarihlenmektedir. Abydos'taki Seti Tapınağı'nda bulunan bir duvar resminde, Thoth'un iki asa tuttuğu, her bir asanın etrafına bir yılanın dolandığı ve her asadan Mısır'ın Yukarı ve Aşağı yarısını simgeleyen bir çift farklı çiçek sarktığı görülmektedir. Daha sonra Rönesans döneminde Thoth'a, Batılı düşünürler tarafından paylaşılan bir algı olan Hermes adını Yunanlıların verdiği bilinmektedir.

Benzer şekilde, Hermes'in Rönesans sırasındaki temsilleri, Andreae Alciati'nin *Emblemata*'sında (1548) antik geçmişten gelen görüntüleri yansıtır ve Hermes, üzerinde kanatlı bir miğfer bulunan ve iç içe geçmiş iki yılanla süslenmiş bir asa olarak Caduceus'un kendisi şeklinde görünür. Achille Bocchi'nin *quaestionum Symbolicarum*'unda (1555) Hermes, sol elinde bir kandil ağacı taşır, ondan sarkan ve her biri yedi Beşeri İlimden biriyle ilişkili yedi gezegensel küreyi yöneten yedi valiyi sembolize eden yedi mum vardır. Bir kez daha, Vincenzo Cartari'nin *Le Immagini della posizione degli Dei degli Antichi*'sinde (1556) Hermes, yanında kılıcını yukarı kaldırmakta olan silahlı olan Apollon ile bir elinde bir tüy, diğerinde bir Caduceus ile köpek başlı Anubis bulunurken, kanatlı miğferi ve ayaklarıyla, omuzlarının üzerinde bir koç taşıyarak yeniden ortaya çıkmakta. Bu resim, Efes'teki taş oymacılığının ortaya koyduğunu yansıtmaktadır.

Hermes'in temsilleri, edebiyat alanının ötesinde, Siena Katedrali'ndeki zemin mozağinden (1488), Schifanoia'daki duvar resimlerinden (1470), Farnesina'nın fresk döngüsünden, Alessandro'nun özel çalışması olan (1566) tavan resmine kadar Mimarlık eserlerinde izlenebilmektedir. Hermes, günümüze kadar gelen izler bırakmıştır. Hermes'in büyük ölçekli ve daha hareketli temsillerinin, Giambologna tarafından yapılan Uçan Merkür (1580) adlı heykelinde ve Andriaen de Vries tarafından yapılan Merkür ve Ruh (1593) adlı eserinde reproduksiyonu yapılmıştır.

Öğretmenin yanı sıra, öğretilerin tezahürlerinin de astrologlar, kozmograflar, ancak en önemlisi sanatçılar ve mimarlar tarafından reproduksiyonları yapılmıştır. *Hermetica*'nın Teosofik ve kozmolojik vahiylerinin, Leonardo da Vinci tarafından *Codex Atlanticus*'ta izlenebilecek şekilde, bazen her biri bir üçgen şeklinde dört parçaya bölünmüş küre ve küre eskizleri olarak görsel olarak reproduksiyonu yapılmıştır. Hermetik felsefenin daha renkli ve hareketli temsillerinin, De Holanda tarafından *mundi Imagines* (1543-1573) adlı eskiz defterinde reproduksiyonu yapılmıştır. Resimlerinde, evrensellik ilkesi, ışık huzmelerinin merkeze sabitlenmiş tek bir kaynaktan yayıldığı merkezilikle ifade edilmiştir. Özgün Yaratıcı daire, türümcülük (*emanationism*) bir üçgen ve yaratıcı güç (bilinç) spirallerle, tam olarak *Hermetica* tarafından tasavvur edildiği şekilde temsil edilmektedir. De Holanda tek bir resimde, Üçlü Birlik, Düalizm ve Evrenselcilik'in üç ilkesinin ittifakla tek bir birleşik vizyona dâhil edildiği Hermetik felsefenin ortak öncülünü tasvir etmektedir. Resim, Yapı Üstadının (ilahi akıl) çocuğu olduğu üç katlı evreni, ışık (ruh) ve karanlık (Madde) arasındaki ilahi birliğin ürünü olarak tasvir etmektedir. Tanrı'nın sağ eli olan Yapı Üstadı, babanın “iradesini” onun kutsal ruhunun ışığını aşağıdaki dünyada yeniden canlandırarak yerine getirmektedir, böylece maddi âlemde tanrının bir yansıması tezahür etmektedir. Yapı Üstadı, bir kafa ile temsil edilir, ağzından “kutsal söz” söylenir ve iki piramit şeklindeki yayılım dışarı verilmektedir. Tek yaratıcı ile yaratılan evren arasında, ortada, cennet ile Dünya arasındaki köprü olarak, aracı âlemi simgeleyen bir küre bulunmaktadır. De Holanda'nın bu olağanüstü eserinin Roma'yı ziyaret ettikten ve Michelangelo'nun öğrencilerinden biri olduktan sonra ortaya çıkardığını belirtmekte fayda vardır çünkü İtalya, *Corpus Hermeticum*'un ilk geldiği liman olduğu için bu durum olası etki kaynağını gösterebilir; ayrıca antik pagan geleneklerinin alışılmışın dışında olan öğretilerine derin ilgi gösteren şüpheçiler, okültistler ve hümanistler için ana beslenme alanıdır.

Eski Mısır'ın arkeolojik kaynakları daha fazla kazıldıkça, Abydos'taki Osirion kompleksinin duvar kalıntılarında, birbirine geçmiş bir dizi daireyi betimleyen büyüleyici bir sembolün tekrar tekrar işlenmiş olması, bu araştırmanın kanıtlarına yeni bir eklemeyi gün ışığına çıkarmıştır. Tüm daireler aynı şekilde oluşturulduğundan ve kesişme bölgeleri eşit olarak bölündüğünden, geometrik diyagram en doğru şekilde oluşturulmuştur. İlk bakışta, model anlaşılabilir bir şekilde karmaşık görünmekle beraber, bir kez incelenip yeniden oluşturulduktan sonra, temel yapının basit olduğu açıkça ortaya çıkmaktadır. Diyagram, bir su yüzeyindeki dalgalanmalara benzeyen bir görünüm yaratarak, dairesel bir hareketle merkez etrafında dönen çok sayıda dairedir. Bu modelin yeniden yaratılma biçimi ve gözlemleyen göz üzerindeki görsel etkisi, Hermetik öğretisi ile yakından ilişkilidir, çünkü yaratılış bir teklikten çıkan bir çokluk olarak tanımlanır ve yaratılışın hareketi sarmaldır, dolayısıyla evren küreseldir. Bu modelin ayrıntılı bir analizi, Leonardo da Vinci tarafından yapılmıştır ve bu, onun Hermetik gelenek konusundaki farkındalığını ve bu sembol ile Mısır dininin ezoterik öğretileri arasındaki mevcut bağlantıyı açıkça göstermektedir.

Daha da büyüleyici olan, bu modelin Rönesans Mimari eserlerinde, özellikle de on altıncı yüzyılın ortalarında Philibert de l'Orme tarafından tasarlanan Fransa'daki Château d'Anet'te yeniden ortaya çıkmasıdır. Anet'in şapelinin çok boyutlu bir değerlendirmesi, Hermetizm'in, Avrupa'nın farklı bölgelerinde yer alan Mimari üzerindeki şaşırtıcı etkisini göstermektedir. Kubbeli yapının hem dış hem de iç kabukları, kasalı tavanla donatılmış ve kavisli duvarlarla tanımlanmış dairesel bir kat planına uygulanmış olarak, Hermetik ilkelerin merkezîyetçilik kavramını içerir. Şapelin girişi, orta bir noktada kesişen iki özdeş kuleden oluşan üç katlı bir yapıya sahiptir. Şapel salonunun içindeki üç pencere, iç ve dış dünya arasında çapraz bir bağlantı oluşturmaktadır. Zemin döşemesi Hermetik deseni tasvir ederken, tavan zemin döşemesinin tasarımına benzer bir kafes tasarımı ile bezenmiştir. Bu, benzerlik yasasının “Yukarıda nasılsa, aşağıda da öyledir” dediği

gibi, Hermetik felsefenin özelliđi olan ayna etkisi yaratmaktadır. Binanın süsleme gibi diđer yönleri, Hermetik kozmolojide izlenenlere paralel geometrik konfigürasyonları tasvir etmektedir. Varsayım olarak kalsa da Philibert de l'Orme'un Anet projesini, 1530'da Roma'yı ziyaret ettikten sonra üstlendiđi ve Michelangelo ile aralarında belirli bir etkileşimin gerçekleştiđi düşünülebilir.

Özetle, Rönesans döneminde Hermetik felsefe ile Mimarlık arasında bir köprü kurulduđu için bu araştırma amacına başarıyla ulaştı ve bu ezoterik geleneđin Batı düşüncesi ve hayal gücü üzerindeki büyük etkisi yeterince tartışılabilir. Hermetik düşüncenin tezahürleri etkisinin kapsayıcı boyutu nedeniyle büyük miktarlardadır. Teosofik motifleri veya kozmolojik diyagramları betimleyen durum incelemelerinin sayısı, bu çalışmanın sınırlı kapsamının tam olarak ele alabileceđinin ötesine geçer. Ayrıca, bu ezoterik geleneđin tezahür ettiđi ölçek aynı derecede büyüktür, çünkü Hermetik kavramlar Mimarlığın anlamına ezoterik bir yaklaşımın ürünü olan Ütopya teorisi içinde mahallelerin ve şehirlerin tasarımına uygulanmıştır.

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