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Hermeneutics

By Robert Bruce Baird

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Hermeneutics

Constantine is a hero of the Christian faith just because he stopped feeding them to the lions and supposedly converted to being a Christian. His children had a tutor named Lactantius who I often quote in regards to those who would lie or "forge" in the pursuit of power through religion. He should know from first hand experience to be sure. The Council of Nicaea was the site of the greatest achievement of Constantine who many scholars credit as the primary creator or editor of the Bible and what is the basis of Roman Empire to this day.

"The influence of the great Alexandrian Schools had not helped the early Christians in their work of propaganda. While the Church of Rome held up the Jewish Bible as the sole authority upon every subject, the Gnostic Schools of Alexandria and Ephesus had turned out thousands of students who recognized the absurdity of such a claim. The scattered communities of orthodox Christendom, echoing the church in Rome, were teaching that the Jewish Scriptures were the only revelation of God, and therefore not to be compared with the Scriptures of other nations. But three prominent Jewish scholars had already proved the similarity between the Laws of Moses and the philosophies of Plato, Aristotle and Pythagoras. Christians claimed that Jesus was a unique character, while the entire pagan world knew that the legends surrounding Jesus' life were identical with those of pagan gods. Students of comparative religion recognized their similarity to the traditions of great spiritual Teachers who had preceded Jesus.

The Church now found herself in conflict not only with the 'religious' ideas of her self-chosen adversaries, but with their 'scientific' views as well. The orthodox Church Fathers declared that God made the world out of nothing. The Gnostic Fathers denied this unphilosophical assertion and held that the universe was the result of a gradual unfoldment from within without. {As Above, So Below} Christianity asserted that the earth was flat, and against this theory was pitted that of Aristarchos of Samos, who had been a member of the Alexandrian School in 280 B.C., and had taught the sphericity of the earth as Pythagoras had taught it before him.

In the fourth century, Science and orthodox Christianity came to a deadlock, the bone of contention being the idea of the sphericity of the earth. Criticizing the ancient theory of the roundness of the earth, Lactantius, one of the most polished rhetoricians among the Christians, indignantly inquired:

'Is it possible that men can be so absurd as to believe that crops and trees on the other side of the earth hang downward, and that men have their feet higher than their heads? If you ask them how they defend those monstrosities, how things do not fall away from the earth on that side, they reply that the nature of things is such that heavy bodies tend toward the center, like the spokes of a wheel, while light bodies tend from the center to the heavens on all sides. Now I am really at a loss what to say of those, who, when they have once gone wrong, steadily persevere in their folly and defend one absurd opinion by another.'

But this statement, although written by a prominent member of their own faith, was objected to by the Christians themselves. When had they ever claimed that there 'were' people on the other side of the earth? {Indeed their maps often indicate there was no China. This is a corollary to the Flat Earth fiction. It was the reason they touted the Marco Polo discoveries, even though they had Nestorian priests in China when Genghis Khan arrived and we now have Byzantium coins from archaeology in the Chinese digs dated to the 5th century as we have shown, etc.} The Bible stated that the only persons who survived the Flood were the three sons of Noah, and their work was clearly described. Shem had repopulated Asia, Ham had done the same for Africa, and Japhet was the ancestor of the European peoples. Therefore to quote St. Augustine: 'It is impossible that there should be inhabitants on the other side of the earth, since no such race is recorded in the Scriptures among the descendants of Adam.' {This is from a man self-confessed as a sexual deviate and who as a Manichean said the Scriptures were only fit for children. When I say he is a deviate I'm being kind. The American Psychoanalytical Association says more in his book "Confessions".)

As if that were not enough of an argument to convince any thinking man, St. Augustine offered another which was certainly irrefutable! It would be impossible, he said, for men to be on the other side of the earth, for in that case 'in the Day of Judgement, men on the other side of the earth would not be able to see the Lord descending through the air.'

By the sixth century, the flatness of the earth had been definitely established by the Christian Church. In his great work, 'Christian Topography', Cosmos Indicopleustas {He was a mariner who traveled to India, and his word would carry some weight as a seafarer. Thus a little thing led to him getting a Nestorian priesthood as a reward for putting the Pope officially on the map, at the center of the Universe.} describes the earth as a quadrangular plane, extending four hundred day's journey east and west and exactly half as much north and south. {No wonder the Khan offered to make all of China Catholic, if Marco Polo could get the Catholic scholars to debate his scholars. This event never happened because the two Catholics who set out with the Polos returned under protection of Templars, almost as soon as they got their first slaves.} This quadrangular plane he said to be enclosed by mountains, upon which the sky rests. As the mountain 'on the north is larger than the others, it intercepts the sun's rays and produces night. The plane of the earth is not exactly horizontal, but inclines slightly from the north. Therefore rivers like the Tigris and Euphrates, which run southward, have a rapid motion, while the Nile, which runs northward, naturally moves more slowly.'

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In addition to the pagan and idolatrous religions of the "heathen" and their absurd scientific views concerning the sphericity of the earth, there were the teachings of the great pagan philosophers which had to be refuted also if the Christian Church were to become the ruling force of the day. The orthodox Fathers devoted all their time and energy to this task. But in spite of their best efforts, the Pagans laughed quietly at Christian ignorance. The Church was in a quandary. {Can you imagine this kind of writing being read in a school that taught history, today?} How could she continue to refute the pagan doctrines unless she understood the theories she was trying to combat?

{By bafflegab and co-opting, great steps were taken and the Council of Carthage in 397 AD had made woman slave to man, so it was just a matter of making salvation easy to get. Then men could sin and pay no heed as they confessed each Sunday if they went to church at all.}

In self-defence, the Church decided to adopt new tactics. She would establish a School of her own in Alexandria, the city of Schools. {They also struck a deal with the Celtic Church which never accepted the reduction of women, but thought it would be able to make more inroads working from within rather than without. Bangor in Ireland became a leading university for Catholic scholars like Columbanus.}

This School would serve two purposes: first, it would enable her to introduce Christianity into this hotbed of heresy; {Where they later succeeded in whipping up a frenzy against the smartest woman of her time. Hypatia of Alexandria was killed by tearing her arms and legs out of their sockets and her body was displayed all over the city of light and spirit.} second, it would give the Church Fathers an opportunity to study the pagan doctrines, and thus give a greater appearance of authority to their Refutations. As the Reverend Father Stebbing points out, this School

...aimed at using philosophy, especially the speculations of Plato, to serve the cause of the Church, and to answer the objections of pagan philosophers on their own grounds, {But it is well to remember Plato had to answer to religious bigots or face the same fate as Socrates. This made him couch his 'speculations' in ways that could be interpreted in favour of theologians or power-mongering and hateful priests.} demonstrating that true philosophy led the way to Christianity and not to Paganism. {They may also have co-opted the hermetic Gnostics by calling their scholars Hermeneuts at this time. It may have been through Aquinas too, I am not sure about the rip-off of the title but I am sure they became gifted at creating confusion.}

Early in the second century, then, a Christian School was established in Alexandria. At first it was a school for children only, located almost at the door of the Old Museum, from which the majority of Christians, owing to their ignorance of science, art, and philosophy, had hitherto been debarred. Out of this grew the famous Catechetical School. Its first director was Pantaeus, a converted Stoic, who was deposed and sent to India as a missionary in the year 191. He was followed by Clement of Alexandria, whose study of Greek and Egyptian philosophy had convinced him that truth could be found even in the heathen systems. But Clement's eclecticism met with no enthusiasm from his superiors, and in the year 203 he was deposed and replaced by his pupil Origen, who was only eighteen years old at the time.

Origen's work for Christianity commenced with a deep and profound study of the Hebrew Scriptures. Dissatisfied with the translations which were then extant, Origen determined to make his own

translation. {So we have an eighteen year old 'Divinely Inspired' Scripture writer to join Jerome who was making the Vulgate for his Roman bosses who had replaced wiser men who would not do as requested.} He brought out what is known as the Hexapala, or six-fold edition of the Old Testament, in which he set forth, in separate columns, the various versions of the Scriptures, including his own. In addition to this, he brought out three Greek versions of the Psalms. Some notion of the magnitude of Origen's work (which occupied twenty-eight years of his life) is gained by an examination of some recently discovered manuscripts. One may be found in the Ambrosian {Is this Ambrosian?} Library in Milan, and another in the collection of palimpsests discovered in Cairo. {Da Vinci's bicycle that shows time viewing is fastidiously avoided by academics.}

Origen's knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures convinced him that the orthodox Church was making a fatal mistake by denying the authenticity of certain documents. He openly rebuked the Church for rejecting the Book of Enoch, {Hurray!} which contained the history of the early races of mankind and completely destroyed the Jewish chronology. {Even more, it explains the nature of psychic things the soul of any man can do. Thus people would think less of their saintly magicians and prophets if they too understood.} He also called attention to the 'esoteric' doctrines of Moses which the Church had failed to notice. {But the Masons call him their Master Mason because they know this important reality.} He discovered that Moses, in addition to the teachings of the Covenant, {The Ten Commandments were in the Egyptian Book of the Dead and the Tibetan one before that.} had communicated some very important secrets to the seventy elders, enjoining them to disclose these facts only to the worthy. {HMMM-mm!}

Origen's fearless attitude toward the accepted Scriptures of the Christians, as well as his openly-professed interest in Neoplatonism, aroused the wrath of the Patriarch of Alexandria. Origen was banished from the city in the year 232. But his thirty years of study had convinced him of the truth of Neoplatonism, and in the School which he subsequently founded in Caesarea, Origen openly taught the doctrines that he had learned from Ammonius Saccas.

Ammonius, who later became the teacher of both Clement and Origen, received his early education in the children's school which preceded the Catechetical School. He was born in Alexandria about the middle of the second century. His parents were very poor, and the boy was obliged to add his share to the family earnings by working as a porter on the docks located in the Egyptian, or Rhakotis portion of the city. There he saw ships from far-off lands, he heard queer dialects and met many strange people. Perhaps he gained his first acquaintance with the philosophies of the East from some Hindu sailor. The Song of Krishna is always on the lips of the son of Hindustan.

The parents of Ammonius were devout Christians, and Ammonius was sent to the Christian School, where he learned about the Christian Christ. He must have heard that Krishna, too, had been immaculately conceived, was persecuted by a wicked King, and had finally died upon a cross. Why were the stories of the two Christs so similar? Could it be possible that both were legends? If that was the case, there must be other legends of Christ in other lands. The priest told him there was only 'one' Christ. All the others were imposters. The priest told him to 'believe' but he wanted to 'know'. So he left the Christian School, and started out upon his journey of honest investigation.

When he grew older he attended some of the lectures in the pagan schools and eventually became

acquainted with the basic ideas underlying all the great philosophies. {He would have been a couple of centuries too late to study with Cleopatra at the feet of a man real scholars think taught Jesus.} He pondered over the profound statements that he heard, and often in the night their meaning, it is said, was revealed to him in dreams and visions. In the course of time people began to speak of him as 'theodidaktos', the "god-taught". But Ammonius was a modest man, and called himself merely a 'Philalethian', or lover of truth. He started the Neoplatonic School in Alexandria in the year 193 A.D." (1)

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Socrates and Sages

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You can easily see why it takes more than an Encyclopaedia to be able to follow what is going on from just this little quote. There are many twists and turns to follow in the pursuit of knowledge and its power that has been the purpose of many secret agencies since 'his'—story began. Even before the records of history that extend (by way of stones and symbols) to the beginnings of man's thoughts. These beginnings did not start with language due to some God-given gift and they did not need alphabets or other form and structure such as Locke's 'tabula rasa' would have us believe. Here we see the Jewish and Muslim as well as Catholic myth-makers were involved in cryptic or coded information. It is important to remember that the Islamic people didn't have as complete a 'Dark Ages' destruction of knowledge despite the efforts of Caliph Omar. Hermes Trismegistus is reckoned by many to have been the cause célèbre or namesake of Hermetics and yet Barrett would have us believe he and his work did not exist until the Catholic Churchians had developed Hermeneutics. Talk about 'revisionist history' or Hellenized plagiarism!

"Hermes Trismegistus

There is considerable doubt as to when the works of Hermes Trismegistus were written, but it is certain that no one person by that name ever existed. The name means Hermes the thrice-greatest, Hermes being the Greek God of the spoken word – the 'logos' – identified with Mercury, the winged messenger God of the Romans, and with Thoth, the Egyptian God of writing, itself a magical activity not understood by the common man {Emphasis added.}.(Note that Mercury – both the astrological planet and the liquid metal – was of supreme importance in alchemy.) Thoth was the historian, and the creator of the all-important calendar by which not only history, but the movement of the Sun, Moon and stars could be measured. {Marshack is a well-respected authority and has proven a 15–30,000+ year old calendar of great precision existed in the Iberian region of Portugal.} As the scribe of the Gods Thoth was the custodian of all knowledge. Knowledge is power; knowledge known only to the few is even more so. Under the intermingling of philosophers and religious scholars of different cultures {Read propagandists or myth-makers}, Thoth/Hermes became the God of esoteric knowledge and power. A priest, philosopher or magician whose works were ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus, was the human amanuensis of the Gods.

Whoever or how many people 'he' was {If Moses, then it would have involved his sister Mariae, who has alchemic treatises intact and credited to her, it might mean 'he' is a 'she'.}, Hermes Trismegistus was the author of what became known as the Hermetic texts, or the 'Corpus Hermeticum', a vast amount of writing on esoteric religion. (The complete 'Corpus Hermeticum' in English translation fills three large volumes.) {We will see more factual reference to thirteen.}

It was thought at one time that Hermes Trismegistus lived at around the time of Pythagoras, or perhaps of Moses; references in the Hermetic texts to the teachings of Jesus {Iesa would have been the original name in another language. Jesus of Nazareth was named after this concept of the sun [son] and 'Brotherhood of Man'.} were believed to be prophetic foreshadowings of these great truths. {If Jesus studied to find discipline and truth 'within' 'the living father' so should everyone. Thus the idea of an

easy and accessible, by 'special dispensations' and confessions type of 'Salvation' would not have such credibility or market acceptance. Pardon my coarse use of business terms to apply to the effort of these 'religious scholars' who like to be thought of as having 'Divine Inspiration'.} Later scholarship, however, has shown that the 'Corpus Hermeticum' was written sometime in the first five centuries AD, largely in Egypt, as a fusion of Greek and Egyptian esoteric teachings.

{But Michael Grant, in his well-respected 'The Rise of the Greeks' makes note that the cult of Thoth/Hermes and its equivalent 'Imhotep/Asklepios' was the main intellectual belief during the time of Pythagoras. Others know Pythagoras as a Therapeutae ['Dead Sea Scrolls Deception' by Baigent and Leigh, as well as Rabbis galore.] which is the origin of the Essenes that Gardner tells us are an outgrowth of 'The Great White (not racial) Brotherhood of Master Craftsmen'. The real answer is far more ancient, as we shall see, but for now it is important for you to know these things at a minimum, in order to judge what is being said.}

The Hermetic texts were known to Islamic scholars in medieval times, but it did not come to the attention of the West until they were translated into Latin in 1471 {There are others who even dispute this date. How did Albertus, Aquinas and Bacon get their knowledge? etc.} by the Italian Marsilio Ficino. The texts included works on religion, philosophy, magic, medicine, alchemy and astrology, all of which were closely linked. They include among many others the 'Emerald Tablet', or 'Tabula Smaragdina', which begins with the saying usually shortened to 'As Above, so below', {There is a great book of recent date by this name in New Age bookstores. Barrett uses the Dictum of Hermes Trismegistus on his back cover flap as it is taken from Macoy's 'General History, Cyclopeda and Dictionary of Freemasonry', 1850.} and which discusses the Philosopher's Stone; 'Poimandres', 'The Good Shepherd', a Gnostic text about the infinite light of God, and man's journey to enlightenment, and the 'Perfect Sermon of Asclepius' {A variant of Asklepios which was mentioned before.} which speaks of the divine Unity above a hierarchy of spiritual beings, and of man, who possesses both body and spirit, having a divine nature." (2)

Thus you see the 'living father within' that Jesus taught about; and even Barrett admits the 'Source' of the teaching of Jesus is the Grail which has a lot to do with the Dag (or Nag) Hammadi 'finds'. These were deciphered from Coptic in 1971 and I highly recommend 'The Gospel of Thomas'. So the 'churchians' in hot pursuit of this knowledge the Gnostics hid in protective urns when they were defending Alexandria's Library through four attacks, also wanted to keep people 'ignorant'. Jesus did

not! The Cathars were later genocidally dealt with in a Crusade. This IS serious business, and it was not long ago that anyone speaking such things would be the victim of 'Blasphemy Laws' (ended in 1951 in England) or worse. I can attest to major problems in my own life despite our apparent freedoms; but this is not the forum for such digressions.

It is important to deal with his assertion that Islamic scholars 'in medieval times' knew hermetics or alchemy. He seems to suggest in a back-handed way that there was no earlier date for these things even in the relatively free Islamic world. This is a lot like the 'flat earth' and a host of other fictions that seek to minimize knowledge before the obvious Empire-builders had destroyed the egalitarian (Gaian or matriarchal in some cases) truth, of even better times. Better than any yet achieved, not just better than Greeks who made an art of slavery and Romans who the Greeks correctly called 'barbarians'.

Forensic analysis is the science and art of detective work. It comes in handy to have been an owner of a Public Relations firm (after being an auditor) for twelve years as I waded through the possibilities of 'spin-doctoring' at work by the Bible Exegesists. They sometimes call themselves hermeneuts or other high-falutin' names that would get any bum a coffee, and some change. Here is the real perspective of

the Arab scholars from a highly credible Encyclopedia from 1996:

"THE SOURCES OF ALCHEMY AMONG THE ARABS

Pythagoras is often mentioned in Arabic philosophy and in gnostic literature. Jaldake calls him 'al-mu' lallim al-awival' because he acquired the science from hermetic texts.

SOCRATES {Teacher of Plato and Aristotle, also mentioned as an alchemist in Mark Haeffner's 'Dictionary of Alchemy along with these same people. Yet no anthology of Aristotle in my local library mentions his 'Secretum Secretorum'.}

Socrates is considered not only as a wise man but also as an alchemist {HIS teacher Archelaos was too.}. Jabir calls him 'the father and mother of all philosophers' and considers him as the prototype of the real chemist. From Socrates to Jabir, there is a continuous tradition which attributes entire treatises to him {All kept from unwarranted viewers.}. Jabir affirms that Socrates was opposed to writing down of alchemic knowledge to avoid its exposition to the ignorance of the masses. Most references to Socrates refer to his arithmetical speculations (theory of balance) and also to artificial generation {Homonunclus to be covered more later.}.

PLATO

In reference to his book the 'Liber Quartorum' he says: 'The contents of this book are mainly alchemic but it contains also information on geometry, physiology and astrology. The ancient authors cited are Aristotle, Ptolemy, Hipparchus, Proclus, the Sophists {Not alchemists and too open about their knowledge for the liking of Socrates who compared them to prostitutes who sell their beauty for money.}, Ostanes, Hermes, Asclepius and Hippocrates

ARISTOTLE

He wrote a book on alchemy for his disciple Alexander... It includes three chapters (1) About the great principles of alchemy; (2) Alchemic operations; (3) The elixir. Pythagoras, Democritus, Asclepiades, Hermes, Plato, Ostanes, and Balins are mentioned in the text. We also have a dialogue between Aristotle and the Indian Ykh+n sent by the Indian king as messenger to Alexander...

Zosimus and his contemporaries {Third century AD. much after these others, and in line with what Barrett says.} who collected their predecessors' traditions insist on their connections with the Egypt of the Pharaohs or with the Persia of Zoroastra and Ostanes. We can find texts under the name of Agathodaiman compared with Hermes. Some written pieces even say that alchemic texts were engraved in hieroglyphs on steles {Stones that could be rubbed with charcoal and parchment would pick up the symbols and formulas – thus ancient libraries.} but it was absolutely forbidden to divulge them.

HERMES AND HERMETIC LITERATURE

According to Ibn al-Nadim (351, 19) Arab alchemists considered the Babylonian Hermes as the first one to have mentioned the art of alchemy. Exiled by his countrymen, he came to Egypt where he became king {Guilds and knowledge were prerequisites to achieve high office in ancient times, for example the Tuatha de Danaan leader – Lugh.}. He wrote a certain number of books on alchemy and was equally interested in the hidden forces of nature.

The 'Fihrist' gives a list of thirteen books of Hermes about alchemy but in fact some of them are about magic." (3)

At the very least we can be assured that someone knows alchemists weren't hermits hiding in caves working on making manure into gold. That is the way many books and even Time/Life Video portrays them. They called Carl Jung an alchemist as well. That may be, in some definitions of the word; but I never read where Jung thought of himself in that manner even though he wrote a book on Psychology and Alchemy. His interest was more in the archetypal primordial symbology, and the truth aspects of it. If we were to accept Jung as an alchemist, then all Masons or at least the high level ones in Rosicrucianism are alchemists. It is true that some of the attendees at Eranos were alchemists and that Jung was a hermeticist, I suppose. It is not an easy title to throw around and I have been a student of these things for many years, but still wouldn't call myself an alchemist and certainly not a Spagyricist.

Many of the items and people mentioned will be dealt with as we proceed but there are many others who have traveled this awesome road in pursuit of something less than what is right. Personally I agree with Mr. Barrett about no one person being able to truly know so much. The 'Thrice-greatest' appellation is either psychopompous braggadocio or a guise to mislead. The Three laws of the magi require intense study and two would likely be the maximum that anyone has actually achieved unless we are to go back to the designer of the Great Pyramid. The application of all knowledge that exists in that one monument is beyond the perception of all but a few writers, among the hundreds of thousands who hold forth on its meaning.

It would be interesting if the Russians really did have the 'Philosopher's Stone' that some claim they

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are selling under the name of 'Red Mercury'. Atomic research is only one way of getting this kind of knowledge and I believe it requires spiritual knowledge and attunement as well. This perception is shared by alchemists who I have befriended, and by Rosicrucian inner sanctum people who think highly of my knowledge in the area. Paracelsus was a prodigy in the field and I have his formula for making the 'Stone'. It would not avail me any good to try to make it, unless I had prepared myself in the manner attributed to Jesus as he spent forty days in the desert without food and water. For esoteric scholars who have not traveled any distance along the path towards such attunements it makes little sense for them to comment on alchemy. Israel Regardie was Aleister Crowley's personal secretary and he wrote books on the subject as well as an educational approach from the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (HOGD). In his book 'The Philosopher's Stone' he said the whole meaning was metaphoric for a spiritual transmutation only. Twenty–some years later when he did a reprint, he knew better.

This is part of my book on Alchemy which is available at [World–Mysteries.com](http://World-Mysteries.com)

Socrates and Sages



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