

The Noetic “Russian Dolls” to Hermeticism: Western Esoterism, within Esoteric Christianity, within Neoplatonism, within Hermeticism

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Abstract

This report offers argued theory & supporting evidence for how the theistic philosophy of Hermeticism intellectually coursed across time to lay groundbreaking path for the development downstream of noetic hybrids known as Neoplatonism, Esoteric Christianity, and Western Esotericism. Accordingly, it is contended that certain Hermetic tenets have long existed philosophically encoded within the foregoing hybrid approaches, ideas and/or movements—all aimed at mastering such a speculative study. Moreover, discussed theory to this report sets forth that since the dawn of said/ three noetic hybrids, at their respective cores—to varying degrees—each of these Hermetic “Russian Dolls” (so to speak) has revolved religiously around a handful of tenets ever central to Hermeticism—hence this Ancient Greek creed, in part, intrinsically carried on in foundational service for: the establishment of each posed noetic hybrid; to reaffirm timeless origin story for all three; and, as a suspected cornerstone to such pagan practice per forms of so-called “secretive societies” to Western Esotericism. Through discussion & analysis of apparent facts concerning certain historical figures—such as Socrates, Plato, Plotinus, Marsilio Ficino, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Leonardo da Vinci, King Henry VIII and others—the chronicled contention offered herein makes it increasingly clear that, throughout the corresponding time periods to said historical figures, as well as for present-day kindred considerations, Hermeticism has always played an important psychological role (if only symbolically) whereby the Hermetic Caduceus currently serves as a standard (or symbol) for public health around the world.

Keywords

Hermeticism, Neoplatonism, Esoteric Christianity, Western Esotericism,

Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci, King Henry VIII, Giovanni Pico Della
Mirandola

1. Introduction

Although millennia have passed since times to Ancient Egypt and Greece, while it is more comparatively obvious to identify, observe or study the remnants physically to such aged cultures, less obvious is to determine what has as so remained—through today—non-physically (metaphysically, intellectually and so forth). This report dares to prove much of what occurred, between then and now, which could have been significant or substantial enough historically to warrant installing the ancient Hermetic Caduceus to symbolically serve as a modern standard for public health around the world; of an original institutional setting established in the United States of America during the early 20th century (discussed more in-depth within this report).

Published in 1908, *The Kybalion* seems a Hermetic handbook of sorts designed in part to directly confront and analyze various identified intricacies within Mentalism (Mentalism defined in section 2 to this paper—“Definitions”).

The Kybalion may have been created and published for a sole purpose of bringing forward the understood teachings of the mythical Hermes Trismegistus—considered by some a Moses-like figure for metaphysical path associated to attaining a so-called “Hermetic illumination”.

Within Christian Bull’s book *The Tradition of Hermes Trismegistus*, Bull describes Hermes Trismegistus as “a legendary Hellenistic figure that originated as a syncretic combination of the Greek god Hermes and the Egyptian god Thoth” (Bull, 2018).

If nothing else, *The Kybalion* seems a carefully crafted book, issued for utility within the modern era, suspected to have been designed to a great degree upon principles and knowledge originally found within the ancient book the *Hermetica*—essentially considered a Bible-like book revered by a seeking Hermeticists.

During the modern era, certain people are estimated to have consciously endeavoured within such a Hermetical realm as a means to satisfy ravenous, leading sorts of desires for learning of a promised philosophical supremacy considered associable to such uber controlling-mindsets of Ancient Egyptian and Greek societies—meanwhile such sorts of ancient elitist-mindsets are generally understood as having been unfazed by the practice and incorporation of slavery within their societal framework and economy.

That said, what is spelled out in *The Kybalion* is posed as being potentially dangerous or harmful in certain ways, possibly per psychological processes designed for the mental conditioning of a human brain (consciously or otherwise) toward becoming of a similar electrochemical alignment to certain elitists of Ancient Egyptian and such Greco ruling classes—sometimes of sought after cereal

fellowships—whereby all such parties involved could have, or may inevitably come to, suffer the mental condition known as Elitism. (Elitism defined in section 2 to this paper—“Definitions”).

Moreover, such highbrow mental conditioning could dangerously manifest wherein any given modern elitist-mindset may fantastically find themselves excessively romanticized by (and/or becoming excessively sympathetic or apologetic toward) the notion of idealized or even possibly deified mental images linked metaphysically to such ancient world, high-hat characters of literal association to slave driving.

2. Definitions

With respect to the concerns of this report, Dualism is defined similarly to how the term is defined within *The Kybalion: A Study of the Hermetic Philosophy of Ancient Egypt and Greece* (Three Initiates, 1908).

In it, the premise of Dualism is addressed within a Hermetic principle called the “principle of polarity” wherein states “Everything is dual; everything has poles; everything has its pair of opposites” (Three Initiates, 1908: p. 32).

With respect to the concerns of this report, Mentalism is defined as:

The study in attempting to discern correlation, if any, existing between electrochemical patterns developed within a brain and individual an/or mass psychology.

Along these lines, perhaps it is appropriate here to introduce another Hermetic principle—also found in *The Kybalion*—in a “principle of mentalism” wherein states “The All is Mind; the Universe is Mental.” (Three Initiates, 1908: p. 26)

With respect to the concerns of this report, Metaphysics is defined as:

The study to better understand: matters concerning spirituality; ultimate reason for existence; and, for what may exist rudimentarily beyond any sort of conceptualized materialistic façade.

In that, the veracity of any resultant determination is considered directly linked to the degree as much can be verified to exist as well per the doctrines, principles and/or creeds respective to the various time-tested metaphysical philosophies of which people have looked toward for any sort of guidance in discerning upon something found not so easy to resolve.

With respect to the concerns of this report, Elitism is defined as:

A leading sentiment to a larger mental program, devising within oneself, which can seem to exist and work to rationally convince an individual that it could be considered a righteous choice to develop a sense of absolutism about one’s own image, in comparison to that seen to another, whereby feelings of supremacy can develop simply by virtue of: holding a particular set of beliefs; perceiving thyself in a particular light; or, being of an association to a particular group of which another is not perceived a member.

3. Hermeticism

Ancient Greek Pagan Lore as a Wellspring to its Creed

The doctrine associated to Hermeticism provides for both the philosophical constructs of morality and Dualism, of which are discussed per the following paragraphs within efforts to simultaneously incorporate.

As per the Hermetic doctrine, Above—defined as the One; the deity Creator—is the only thing a Hermeticist is prescribed to ever consider truly Good within such a universal understanding (Salamah et al., 2001). This apparently is of a rationale designed to reconcile the abundance of so-called “darkness” able to be perceived occurring within our physically shared third dimensional plane of existence.

In such a setting, the term “darkness” is proposed to include an identified glut of rationalized malicious acts perpetrated by humans for excessively self-serving purposes and/or lopsided personal gains perceived—wherein such malevolent acts are proposed, but not limited to include an identified disturbing accumulation of physical rape, murder, war, psychology manipulation, underhanded attacks, and all such maliciousness enacted relating to temptations for, and of, the flesh.

In this, within a dual fashion to philosophical analysis (of the aforesaid Hermetic “principle of polarity”) all such “darkness” thus Hermetically (dually) defaults toward the premised polarity so classified as Below, and/or all that which is considered unable of being associated to Above—that Hermetically to the One.

Hence, by extrapolative logic and analysis, it is deduced that Hermeticism holds that humans can never be considered truly Good, nor should a human ever reasonably be expected to be truly Good, for the foregoing rationale provides that the only universal entity capable of being truly Good is the deity Creator—the One.

While keeping this in mind, if an individual, within themselves, conclusively affirms such a discernment, it is proposed to establish a high relative likelihood that a certain psychic frequency (if you will) will more regularly be tuned-in which, overall, seems to encourage cerebral and/or neurolinguistic patterns to as so develop (within a brain) whereby the electrochemical relationship/connection between a human’s body and its conscience may, somehow, resultantly become trained and/or conditioned to be habitually bypassed.

To switch direction somewhat, to guide the discussion toward considering the aforementioned construct of morality (as per how the Hermetic doctrine provides for as much), it is proposed that such cerebral guidelines ultimately design for encouraging (consciously or otherwise) such a practicing/seeking Hermeticists to fully accept that only the façade of acting Good—per the Abrahamic extreme sense of the word—is reasonable to mentally accept in relation to such impulses chosen/selected for actuation into the physical world.

Associatively, it is proposed that if one figures on describing Hermeticism

within a context of theistic philosophies, that a likely outcome would seem suitable if it was assigned as a Power Theism.

Similarly, within mental arenas as to where an individual's mind may conceptually visit (or stay)—whereupon experiencing great depths of appreciation for sayings such as “Only the strong survive”, “It's a dog-eat-dog world”, and for seeing life generally as a “Survival of the fittest”—Satanism has before been considered for measures of congruence per the notion of a Power Theism.

In that, certain ancient mythology finds association within its legend and lore where parents grow emotionally troubled that their children will inevitably arise to hatch plans, in overthrowing efforts, as only a matter of time, to secure positions atop social hierarchies whereby fathers, granted such high degrees of paranoia (justly founded or otherwise), tragically end out (by hook or by crook) seeking to devour their children (mentally or physically; whether a child is already born or not).

Such family story tends to be primordial in nature, within efforts to explain how and why the universe began and is, and usually is defined by excessively desperate plays for securing tight grips-of-control atop pyramidal social structures—characterized by unhinged acts of competitiveness—wherein even the most cunning or suspecting group member cannot seem to avoid becoming metaphysically entrapped as a servant to the “darkness” (while perhaps mistaking it for the opposite); if not such a place of polarity for which an individual precisely sought intentionally to commit more and more toward mentally from a certain outset. These are the bits to the backstory of Hermeticism—that to the lore of Ancient Greek Paganism.

In this, it is proposed that the origins of such Hermetic lore (such unfolding family tragedies) are likely to have come from these kinds of woeful scenarios playing out, in the flesh, within the various royal houses and imperial courts throughout time, all around the world, but particularly as to how this specific legend grew through Ancient Greece—Hermes being a mythical Greek deity.

In fact, at the mythological center of Ancient Greek Paganism is indeed a power-covetous family, and their story begins primordially upon the creation of the universe. Such legend tells of titanic tales which play out within a terribly contentious family hierarchy; a major part featuring Cronus (the patriarch), Zeus (his son), and Hermes (son of Zeus).

Such lore is full of calamitous power struggle that apparently provided the theistic, spiritual or metaphysical foundations upon which the philosophical backbone of Hermeticism could establish to grow and develop.

Incidentally, whence the imperious Greek Paganism was marginally modified and/or adapted for the Ancient Roman culture, Cronus became Saturn, Zeus became Jupiter, and Hermes became Mercury.

With this in mind, it is offered that whether one considers such elitist lore having to do with the ancients of Greece or Rome: Elitism is Elitism; possibly found to all corners of the world, as such a mental condition is understood being

of universal scenarios, as Hermeticism is designed as a universal theistic philosophy.

Nevertheless, such myth is renown for Cronus/Saturn developing such extreme paranoia and consumption for a vision generated by an oracle—which foretold that his children would inevitably grow to launch hostile bid for his seat-of-power atop their family hierarchy; just as Cronus/Saturn had done similarly before to his father (Uranus)—that Cronus tragically saw it intelligent to devour his children to prevent such a vision coming to fruition.

In such a sense, these monstrous scenarios depicted, wherein a baby is insanely devoured by its father (within devilish designs to preserve a position of power), may either wickedly echo, or ominously ring, of twisted “Satanic scenes” where the only thing that truly matters is seeking to fully appease one’s own unchecked/unbalanced impulses to “darkness” for serving thyself.

The following weblink leads to Francisco Goya’s powerful 19th century painting entitled *Saturn Devouring His Son*.

Saturn Devouring His Son—Wikipedia

Staying on theme, the below weblink connects to Paul Reubens’ masterful 17th century painting, more tersely named *Saturn*.

Saturn (Rubens)—Wikipedia

To reiterate, the Ancient Greek power deity—Cronus—eventually became Satan ...er ... ah ... Saturn within Ancient Roman culture, which may beg of the question: What could be more “Satanic” than eating one’s own child?

NOTE: in such name-fiddling fashion, perhaps now is an opportune moment to recall that Jesus was once referred to as Yeshua—of his original Aramaic name—whereby many historical names are known to have been altered by linguistic translations occurring over time

Moreover, through the following weblink is revealed a harmony of sorts existing between Satanical and Hermetical imagery. There, an image to a “Satanic” Baphomet statue, once displayed at the Oklahoma State Capitol, clearly shows the Hermetic double-snake helix formation—associated to Hermes’s Caduceus—arising from his groin area. The statute appears to be built tall and wide with children gazing up toward the goat-headed creature.

Statue of Baphomet—Wikipedia

Furthermore, in accordance with Ancient Greek Paganism, Hermes’s son (and great-grandson to Cronus) is the goat-headed Pan; bearing a striking resemblance to the goat-headed “Satanic” Baphomet creature.

[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pan_\(god\)](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pan_(god))

In that regard, perhaps at this point is apropos to question from where did the name “Satan” originally derive?

To that end, popular internet etymology of the name “Satan” puts forth that its linguistic usage dates back to at least 500 years before the birth of Jesus Christ/Yeshua whereby “Satan” is essentially proposed as being a metaphysical force associated with the polarity of “darkness” which perpetually runs contrary to, and/or continually pulls against, a human path corresponding to being pushed

higher dimensionally.

Regardless, the fact is that for hundreds of years—including such moments to the time period 500 years before the birth of Christ/Yeshua—the Ancient Greeks were a ravishing naval/military powerhouse within and around a Mediterranean Sea shared by those cultures said having been of such original cautionary usage of the term “Satan”; meanwhile, perhaps of no direct connection, most elitist-mindsets to Ancient Greece honoured a “titanic” power god (Cronus) of which—many moons later—elitist-mindsets to Ancient Rome would rename Saturn, and thus praise accordingly.

Incidentally, possibly of no relevance, there exists a titanically-sized gaseous pattern, which rotates in the form/shape of a hexagon, that spins atop one of Saturn’s planetary poles—of such a colossal size that the gaseous pattern’s diameter is wider than Earth—while a hexagon indeed is characterized by 6 equal-length straightedged sides, 6 points/tips to the shape, and 6 interior angles.

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saturn%27s_hexagon

Having said that, perhaps it is possible that the number 666 could shed any more cryptic associations to an acceptance that such mathematical/geometric analysis (or explanation) is of a greater logic than to serve more spookily as an artifice of fear.

In efforts to wrap up such discussion to this section 3 (“Hermeticism; Ancient Greek Pagan lore as a Wellspring to its Creed”), the following query is posed:

If Cronus/Saturn fundamentally exists within the notional realm of an idealistic Power God, then does there materially exist any difference between the premise of Satan—biblically depicted as a worldly power deity—and Saturn/Cronus within such respective, or collective, efforts to define temporal/worldly Power Gods?

The answer seems unclear within the realm of the absolute.

3.1. Hermeticism, Per a Context of Dualism

For having experienced a deep dive into the study of such Hermetical doctrine, it seems quite possible that (as a result) an individual may then go forward carrying a loaded perception for considering Dualism whereby the related theistic philosophy may, possibly by design, offer a knowledgeable Hermeticist certain “rationales in reason” (idea further discussed below) for building a specified belief that an Intelligent Design (so to speak) universally exists ever ready, perpetually on standby—of the One Creator god’s will—waiting & wanting to increasingly spell upon logic called upon by individuals whom comes to mentally, cerebrally, and/or electrochemically absolve oneself more and more from an internal connectivity to the metaphysical polarity known as Good—in the Abrahamic extreme sense.

NOTE: such said “rationales in reason” are proposed as being essentially bolstered Hermetically by its mental prescription that only the One (the Creator; as so separated to Above) can ever be considered truly Good; which can be inter-

preted as a creed of guidance for encouraging the development of electrochemical/alchemical patterns (such habituated mindsets) that form as so dangerously and/or extremely, isolated, away from as much figured associable to the metaphysical polarity known as Good per both Hermetic and Abrahamic parlance

Furthermore, it is posed that in regards to such a mental effect occurring, within a foregoing scenario characterized by such theoretically high relative degrees of electrochemical/alchemical isolation, as much is assumed to correlate commensurate with the amount of time an individual may spend personally in seek of such practice, thereby cognitive instillation.

Ergo, such a Hermetically trained/conditioned brain, of such high relative degrees of electrochemical/alchemical isolation, at some point theoretically may only be able to as so access that figured associable to the metaphysical polarity known as Evil per both Hermetic and Abrahamic parlance.

3.2. Hermeticism, through Neoplatonism

The following quote was selected from within the below linked Wikipedia article entitled *Neoplatonism*:

<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neoplatonism>

Neoplatonism is a strand of Platonic philosophy that emerged in the 3rd century AD against the background of Hellenistic philosophy and religion (Moore, 2019). The term does not encapsulate a set of ideas as much as it encapsulates a chain of thinkers which began with Ammonius Saccas and his student Plotinus (c. 204/5-271 AD), which stretches to the 6th century AD (Siorvanes, 2018). Even though neoplatonism primarily circumscribes the thinkers who are now labeled neoplatonists and not their ideas, there are some ideas that are common to neoplatonic systems; for example, the monistic idea that all of reality can be derived from a single principle, “the One” (Halfwassen, 2014)

... Neoplatonism had an enduring influence on the subsequent history of philosophy. In the Middle Ages, neoplatonic ideas were studied and discussed by Christian, Jewish, and Muslim by thinkers. In the Islamic cultural sphere, neoplatonic texts were available in Arabic and Persian translations (Kreisel, 1997)...

... Neoplatonism also had a strong influence on the perennial philosophers of the Italian Renaissance thinkers Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, and continues through nineteenth-century Universalism and modern-day spirituality and nondualism. Neoplatonism underpins the mystical traditions in all three of the major Abrahamic religions. (Armstrong, 1993)

The following six commentaries are provided to address selected terms & names found within the preceding quotation; while said commentaries have been fashioned of discussions for relation to contents per the main report—such terms & names are itemized in the short list below in the order they will be discussed in depth as so follows:

- 1) Plato, and his philosophical mentor Socrates
- 2) Nondualism
- 3) Plotinus
- 4) The One
- 5) Marsilio Ficino
- 6) Giovanni Pico della Mirandola

a) For ancient Athenian State-controllers (of such intellectual loyalty to Ancient Greek Paganism), Plato is proposed to have ultimately become more of an appeasing sort of figure than became of Socrates (ironically him being Plato's mentor); Socrates was comparatively known as the more populous favorite whereas Plato had philosophized that slavery was a necessary part of society; whereas Socrates's state-sanctioned "reward" was a death sentence—essentially for his spending so much time walking the streets of Athens, engaging with any particular human in seeking better ways to consider any given idea—Plato wrote *The Republic* (full of dialogues about Socrates, not Plato) about fifteen years beyond Socrates's death, thereby creating some suspicion that such Athenian State-controllers either deemed it strategically smart for a generation-of-time to pass before authorizing the publish of the "book on Socrates" (as Socrates was known having not kept, nor created, any physical record concerning his philosophical approach), or that for Socrates's name & image posthumously only continuing to grow in cultural importance, such an intellectual/Hermetic hand had been forced to align more with that to Socrates as a means to control his image & particular brand of intellectualism (at least to some degree)—which can reveal parallels to whence such Hermetically-minded Roman/Byzantine State-controllers inevitably became compelled to merge their trusty Hermeticism with such an Abrahamic path of progression via taking lead-control of the name & image of Jesus (born named Yeshua) about 700 years beyond the time of Socrates and Plato (NOTE: a more in-depth discussion is offered further along in this report per such elitist Roman Byzantines).

b) Nondualism is assessed as a philosophical approach birthed from naturally running counternarratives to such considerations for Dualism. It is proposed to be an inherently more imbalanced such approach toward framing any sort of noetic ethos while appreciating that a so-called Nondual Awareness has before been described as an extremely basic (or even primordial) sort of perspective upon consciousness, thereby could be considered of philosophy geared toward programming the electrochemical disengagement of a brain from such deemed "burdensome connection" to a human's conscience. As much is offered within an understanding that Dualism/Duality, in its full shape & form, incorporates more robustness to experience per mental spectrum (of range between both understood polarities), and/or per any given so-called Mental Universe sovereign to an individual mind—as dark can naturally turn light per a myriad of conceptual settings; just not so much to a Nondual setting.

c) Plotinus—a Greek philosopher raised in Roman Egypt—is understood as an important figure given that he is popularly regarded as having been the founder of

Neoplatonism within the Roman Empire (Siorvanes, 2018), and the for fact that Plotinus is widely known having found great successes philosophizing within both the Eastern and Western divisions of the Roman empire, all can serve to arguably prove that, at minimum, certain leading Roman elitists (assumedly per such corresponding pagan philosophical circles) found some measure of interest or value in such Platonic philosophy; which was occurring during a period of time that such type Roman elitists were, decade after decade, devising best strategies for stopping, more and more, the spreading of a populous Christianity throughout the Byzantine citizenry—that is until, upon sanctioning the slaughter of St. George (per such stemming efforts)—only to witness even further such spread—did the Roman/Byzantine leaders deem it necessary for their empire to publicly convert to Christianity (more details offered to this point further along within this report).

d) The Neoplatonic principle concerning the One is as well an integral term, idea, and/or premise to Hermetic doctrine and philosophy.

e) Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499 CE), born and died within Republic of Florence territory; then-under House of Medici sway. Marsilio was a Renaissance scholar and priest within Catholicism. Ficino inevitably became renown as an integral figure to an intellectual sort of calling for reintroducing both Hermeticism and Neoplatonism back to Europe as per the Renaissance—if working under a general assumption that the so-called Dark Ages left as much behind. Ficino, having been considered greatly subject to a Medici directive, was the first to translate—from Greek to Latin—historically important portions to both Plato’s original manuscripts, as well as portions to the ancient *Hermetica* book (essentially considered by some as a Hermetic bible of sorts), which included a portion referred to more specifically as the *Corpus Hermeticum* (Barlett, 2011).

f) Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494 CE) was born in Mirandola, Italy—close to Florence—and inevitably died in Florence; meanwhile fellow Florentine savant, Leonardo da Vinci, was born in 1452 within the same regions of Northern Italy.

Within such geographical Italian areas, under a said Medici-directive—of an apparent overseen mission to revisit Neoplatonic and Hermetic doctrines (whereby a hand-in-glove element seems evident)—Marsilio Ficino was set up to lead a college of sorts which would serve as a central locale for top intellectuals to meet within such related discussions. This was known as the Platonic Academy of Florence (Burke, 1987). Over time, meeting with Ficino in such an environment included (but is not limited to) Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Lorenzo de’ Medici, and Leonardo da Vinci (Hankins, 1991; Bortolon, 1967).

Mirandola eventually became recognized for his expert knowledge within the philosophical worlds of both Hermeticism and Neoplatonism. Much of his keen, proven understanding by such doctrines is proposed to have been at least sharpened whilst studying at the University of Padua within the Venetian region of Italy (Baird, 2000)—the University of Padua arguably being the most historically

important institutional bastion for the study of Hermeticism within Renaissance Europe.

In that, the University of Padua is proposed also for being an historically important school for enabling Western Esotericism to “secretively” blossom within Renaissance Italy and Britain (as will be discussed in further detail within this report).

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_esotericism

The following quote was selected from within the below linked Wikipedia article titled *Giovanni Pico della Mirandola*:

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giovanni_Pico_della_Mirandola

(He) was an Italian Renaissance nobleman and philosopher (Grolier Encyclopedia of Knowledge, 1991)... He is famed for the events of 1486, when at the age of 23, he proposed to defend 900 theses on religion, philosophy, natural philosophy, and magic against all comers, for which he wrote the Oration on the Dignity of Man, which has been called the “Manifesto of the Renaissance” (Mirandola, 1486), and a key text of Renaissance humanism and of what has been called the “Hermetic Reformation” (Heiser, 2011).

... Pico was introduced to the mystical Hebrew Kabbalah, which fascinated him, as did the late classical Hermetic writers, such as Hermes Trismegistus. The Kabbalah and Hermetica were thought in Pico’s time to be as ancient as the Old Testament (Chajes & Harari, 2019).

... In the *Oratio de hominis dignitate* (Oration on the Dignity of Man, 1486), Pico justified the importance of the human quest for knowledge within a Neoplatonic framework. The Oration also served as an introduction to Pico’s 900 theses, which he believed to provide a complete and sufficient basis for the discovery of all knowledge, and hence a model for mankind’s ascent of the chain of being. The 900 Theses are a good example of humanist syncretism, because Pico combined Platonism, Neoplatonism, Aristotelianism, Hermeticism and Kabbalah. They also included 72 theses describing what Pico believed to be a complete system of physics. Mirandola’s *De animae immortalitate* (Paris, 1541), and other works, developed the doctrine that man’s possession of an immortal soul freed him from the hierarchical stasis. Pico may have believed in universal reconciliation, since one of his 900 theses was “A mortal sin of finite duration is not deserving of eternal but only of temporal punishment” (Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, 1951)

... In the *Oration* he argues, in the words of Pier Cesare Bori, that “human vocation is a mystical vocation that has to be realized following a three stage way, which comprehends necessarily moral transformation, intellectual research and final perfection in the identity with the absolute reality. This paradigm is universal, because it can be retraced in every tradition.” (Bori, 2007)

Mirandola apparently was quite obsessive about encouraging a public synthe-

sis between a so-called Christian Kabbalah (proposed as essentially synonymous with Esoteric Christianity), Hermeticism, and Neoplatonism, as Mirandola perhaps felt the three philosophical approaches all similarly led back to the same original noetic mothership (if you will).

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Kabbalah

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esoteric_Christianity

Mirandola aged only a modest 31 years, whereby many suspected he was poisoning to death as some wished as much to occur.

Mirandola was known as a supremely effective orator with a vibrant ability for recall. As a result, he tended to command large audiences of enthralled listeners; which could have indeed contributed significantly to the end of his life being so hastened, whereby if he had a knack for publicly embarrassing (intentionally or not) such societal and/or Church leaders within open debate, possibly affiliated death-wishes may have been thusly set aglow in the eyes of those to such a possible embarrassing experience.

Nonetheless, to properly appreciate the full body of Mirandola's cumulative work in public speaking, and such calls for open debate, it is argued viable to consider that his related efforts were intended for to enlighten the minds of those to such observing audiences whereby it was possible that some normally shrouded/'secretive' knowledge was being thereby made more publicly available for a potential understanding as a result of his/such efforts.

To that end, granted a certain reputation known to the House of Medici, it does not seem a far stretch for an imagination to suppose that the Medici, within its core, would have seen it intelligent to form a certain variety of so-called "secretive society" (per such insulative efforts to contain and capitalize), whereas Mirandola may have ultimately wished that any such knowledge or philosophy—possibly held tight per suspected such inner-sanctums—would come out more to a public reveal of greater understanding, for the benefit of power sharing & greater humanity, if information truly is a form of power.

Incidentally, four different members of the Medici family were selected to serve as Catholic pope during/within the 16th and 17th centuries ([Encyclopaedia Britannica, Medici Family](#)).

3.3. Hermeticism, through Esoteric Christianity

Hermeticism Subsumed by the Church

Within the book *The Secret History of Hermes Trismegistus*, author Florian Ebeling (translated by David Lorton) explains essentially how Hermeticism is quite an all-encompassing term which touches on many aspects of life—as do most major theisms. In this, as displayed to Florian's referenced work, Hermeticism shows as a spiritual and/or metaphysical philosophy that readily incorporates the term "alchemy"—interpreted to mean Mental Alchemy as it relates to theory per this report—for which Ebeling basically states has often (historically) been referred to as "the Hermetic art" or "the Hermetic philosophy" ([Ebeling, 2007](#)).

In that sense, in efforts, by comparative analysis, to offer suitable modes for conceptually bringing Hermeticism toward Christianity, the following three mutual associations are proposed per contrasting perspectives to Dualism:

- 1) As Ancient Greek Paganism was anciently once a matter of religion to State policy, respective to Athens and Rome, a contention is proposed that the once more publicly well-known Hermeticism has, over the years, more and more been designed, for a private practice, to pull back toward the shadows of certain high-hat groups and/or of such so-called “secretive societies” to Western Esotericism—including that suspected to an inner-sanctum of the Vatican—whereas a contrastingly more truly open & transparent ideal of Christianity would surely be expected—for all publicly to see—calls to more openness in discussion, as if Socrates and Yeshua themselves, in the flesh, could be imagined guiding the spiritual current and/or course to such a more wisely wandering practice;
- 2) Both theisms propose the son of a god, whereas Hermes is said the mythical son of Zeus (an idealized Power God), Yeshua/Jesus to many was a Prince of Peace; and
- 3) A more common person may see greater wisdom and/or philosophical path within the principles & practice to such a more truly open ideal of Christianity—that being one where a brain’s electrochemical connectivity to their own conscience gets better maintained—whereas if one suffers more genuinely from mental conditions to Elitism, such an individual may see greater sense and/or intelligence within the principles & practice of a more self-serving, veiled, esoteric Hermeticism.

NOTE: that “wisdom” and “intelligence” are antithetically conceptualized per a paradoxical setting of opposite, opposing and/or counterbalancing forces to Dualism, within the context of Mentalism (as previously defined per section 2 of this report)

In such a light, as this report transitions into discussions pertaining to how and when (during the 4th century CE) the Pagan/Hermetic Romans eventually decided to officially turn their Byzantine Empire publicly into a Christian one, this seems like a fitting place to reintroduce the aforementioned Plotinus within a particular context.

In this regard, such a context for doing so, as a matter of intellectualism, finds Plotinus involved granted he is popularly accepted as the founder of Neoplatonism and reportedly, within the 3rd century CE, had experienced great measures of success as a philosopher within both the Eastern and Western divisions of the vast Roman Empire, thusly it is deemed folly to assume that he had not studied Hermeticism during his lifetime within such pre-Christian times and land.

To that end, such a context involves the proposal which provides that Plotinus’s professed ideas naturally, inherently comprised significant parallels to creed long written in the Ancient Geek book the *Hermetica*. Case in point, such ideas accredited to Plotinus involve: consideration for the One (as is to Hermeti-

cism); and, to Dualism being innately involved to an understanding of human nature and/or psyche (as is to the aforesaid Hermetic “principle of polarity”. In fact, said parallels seem to exist to such a degree that an impression can be interpreted whereby Neoplatonism may give the appearance of being a sort of re-branding (if you will) of Hermeticism, minus the Ancient Greek mythology. To this point, the following quote is offered for review from the below-linked Wikipedia article entitled *Plotinus*:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plotinus>

His “One” concept encompassed thinker and object. Even the self-contemplating intelligence (the noesis of the nous) must contain duality. “Once you have uttered ‘The Good,’ add no further thought: by any addition, and in proportion to that addition, you introduce a deficiency.” (III.8.11) Plotinus denies sentience, self-awareness or any other action (*ergon*) to the One (τὸ ἓν, *to hen*; V.6.6). Rather, if we insist on describing it further, we must call the One a sheer potentiality (*dynamis*) without which nothing could exist. (III.8.10) As Plotinus explains in both places and elsewhere (e.g. V.6.3), it is impossible for the One to be Being or a self-aware Creator God.

In this article, contributing evidence is found for making the case that, one way or another, ancient Hermeticism has always been cloaked—nascently or protractedly—within the Church as a result of a Roman infusion of their long-time trusty Paganism; arguably mainly identified as Hermeticism to such elitist-minded Romans.

Such a pagan infusion is understood having been done by way of their establishing influence over Christianity in such capacities to sponsorship, custodianship and/or institutional control.

As much is argued as a valid proposition whilst considering that Ancient Greco-Roman Hermetic doctrine could have long continued being observed and/or practiced by such elitist social-controllers, pulled back away from the public eye (to within the cover of some ancient forms of so-called “secretive societies”), thereby naturally creating a type of *Dual public-private model* for institutional structure & system for how to manage, govern and/or lead an identified citizenry.

Such ancient forms of so-called “secretive societies” are proposed as likely to have formed within the Byzantine (Roman) Empire’s inner core of controlling-elitists.

The following three listed events (historically important points in time) are proposed as being of great significance for the said creation and establishment of the Byzantine Empire’s particularly fashioned *Dual public-private model* for such institutional structure & system:

- 1) The Edict of Milan (313 CE), instituted as the Roman Empire’s first major public sympathies enacted for Christians (Frend, 1965)
- 2) The Council of Nicaea (325 CE), being the first substantial institutional

effort to create a consensus church within the Roman Empire (Mirbt, 1911)
3) The Edict of Thessalonica (380 CE), making Christianity the state religion of the Roman Empire thereby authorizing the persecution of Christian creeds and interpretations not approved by the Church (Herbermann, 1913)

The contention is that certain so-called “secretive societies” of Western Esotericism (as aforementioned) have historically maintained themselves within such said *Dual public-private models* whereby the members of such “societies” are figured to find great intelligence in publicly draping themselves within the more openly-accepted Catholicism and/or Christianity whilst privately more observing and practicing the principles & rituals of the ancient Hermetic creed.

The fact is that such grand Paganism-to-Christianity public conversion was of a decades long process, of a final edict to public conversion that was preceded by about 300 years of a populous spreading of such *Word of Christ* among individuals (namely through the struggling masses) per those Byzantine/Roman controlled lands.

NOTE: that said proposed “populous spreading of such *Word of Christ*” was stated as so in reference to a certain metaphysical spreading of what is suspected to have been of a more truly open ideal of Christianity, whereas such spread was concurrently endeavoured to be squashed by such elitist ruling-Byzantines—even after such type Byzantines apparently deemed it was necessary to slaughter St. George, in 303 CE, within told efforts to prevent such then-further spreading

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_George

To that end, once the Edict of Thessalonica was authorized (in 380 CE) the Byzantine Empire proceeded to then expand its authority, under its military conquest & domain, over all targeted land and territory to inevitably reach a seeming peak size, in around 555 CE, whereupon their militant empire had reached a scope of institutional control over practically all the lands immediately surrounding the Mediterranean Sea; whereas Yeshua/Jesus was said to be more of peace-advising Abrahamic creed.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantine_Empire

Muhammad is said to have been born around the year 570 CE within Mecca (Conrad, 1989) during a time when the Byzantine Empire had established control over lands which pushed to the edge of the modern-day Saudi Arabian border.

Muhammad was of an Arabian people that, prior to 570 CE, surely had experienced the stretch of the said military authority and impressing power of the Byzantine/Roman Empire. It is proposed that Muhammad, along with his people, eventually became convinced and determined that they could unite and discern the interpretations of a militant Abrahamic Peace-advising god as good, or better, than such oppressing Byzantines.

Islamic militant empires are estimated to have risen & fallen around the

Mediterranean Sea between the 6th and 20th centuries CE.

Many Islamic scholars, of Islam's so-called Golden Age (some estimates date it to have occurred between the 8th and 14th centuries CE), were known to have studied & greatly respected the Ancient Greek philosophy of the elitist Plato—later coined Neoplatonism—and that of Aristotle. Incidentally, Plato and Aristotle had both philosophically supported slavery within society, thus metaphysically distinguishing familiar hallmarks (such intellectual insignias) to the sufferance of the mental state of Elitism.

3.4. Hermeticism, in Relation to Elitism

Paganism/Occultism and the Formation of so-called “Secretive Societies” to Western Esotericism

Within efforts for introducing discussions to this section of the report, the following handful of points are offered as characteristics proposed as common to such types of personality which may tend to gravitate toward the habitual practice/observance of tenets to so-called Power Theisms:

- 1) An excessive/imbalanced general distrust of their fellow human;
- 2) An excessive/imbalanced fear of losing an idealized (“magical”) psychological power imagined to be held within themselves—of a mental ability which they may figure enables them measures of control over others of lesser such ability and/or knowledge;
- 3) An excessive/imbalanced insulative fear of public exposure to a truer nature of philosophy, principles and/or doctrine internally practiced within themselves and/or within such “societies” of possible membership; and
- 4) An excessive/imbalanced fear of losing control over procured and/or accrued physical possessions, which may or may not include such fear of losing a perceived control over any assumed seats-of-power held within a social hierarchy.

While keeping the preceding in mind, whether or not activity involved from within any sort of so-called “secretive societies” played a part in the following itemized happenings, as much is provided per forms of evidence that a significant practice of Hermeticism has survived into our modern era:

- 1) The Hermetic Caduceus (Hermes's “magic wand”) is currently a symbol, insignia or some sort of banner for public health and/or modern institutions to medicine; and
- 2) A substantial, populace modern suspicion existing that at the center of certain so-called “secretive societies” to Western Esotericism—such as of Freemasonry, Skull and Bones (a.k.a. The Brotherhood of Death) and so forth—an honouring of pagan deities is found at a point of Mentalism while, at the same time, a large number of prominent positions within Western society's most leading institutions are disproportionately filled by either members of Freemasonry, Skull and Bones, or of the Rhodes Scholarship program; as such positional-roles have been filled, in such a similar style,

over the past 100 years at least.

In furthering upon the point of the Rhodes Scholarship program, its namesake and founding benefactor (upon his death) Cecil Rhodes is estimated being discussed appropriately, per the matter at hand, within the following quote taken from the below-linked Wikipedia article entitled *Cecil Rhodes*:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cecil_Rhodes

While attending Oriel College, Rhodes became a Freemason in the Apollo University Lodge. Although initially he did not approve of the organisation, he continued to be a South African Freemason until his death in 1902. The shortcomings of the Freemasons, in his opinion, later caused him to envisage his own secret society with the goal of bringing the entire world under British rule. (Thomas, 1997)

Incidentally many U.S. Founding Fathers were Freemasons, while other such “Fathers” were more of a Rosicrucian association and philosophy—whilst some members of such situational congress were of simultaneous association, ultimately Rosicrucianism concerns itself with Hermeticism and Mentalism; by some, referred to as Mental Alchemy.

<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rosicrucianism>

Ironically, while many modern-day Rhodes Scholars publicly declare that racism is of the most supremely abhorrent characteristics a human could possibly embody, indeed nary a Rhodes Scholar seems as impassioned about levying such public condemnation upon Cecil Rhodes for some clearly racist ideas expressed within his writings. The fact is that Cecil Rhodes had been recorded as stating, on behalf of the English (Anglo) race, “I contend that we are the first race in the world, and that the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race.” (Rhodes & Stead, 1902)

Incidentally, the following four historically significant occurrences transpired during the earlier years of the 20th century—leading up to the beginning of the nightmarish WWI:

1) A first Western, governmental usage of the Hermetic Caduceus—as a symbol of medicine—became instituted by the U.S. Army Medical Corps in 1902 (Engle, 1929);

2) The infamous U.S. Eugenics movement was hitting its stride in public spheres of consciousness; of a particular forceful promotion—by at least 1906—which was given full momentums of endorsement by many eccentric elitists;

<https://www.nicholls.edu/cheniere/2021/05/20/eugenics-in-the-united-states-the-forgotten-movement/>

3) The Rhodes Scholarship was established, in 1903, following the death of Cecil Rhodes; and

4) *The Kybalion*—as aforementioned, being a Hermetic handbook of sorts—was published in 1908.

3.5. Hermeticism & Western Esotericism

Of a certain historical interest, alive during the same period of time were the following men:

- 1) The infamous Niccolò Machiavelli
- 2) The treacherous King Henry VIII
- 3) Three so-called “holy men” proposed to have significantly influenced King Henry VIII in Hermetical appeals and institution—Thomas Starkey, Reginald Pole and Francesco Zorzi/Giorgi (this “holy man” with two last names)
- 4) The aforementioned Leonardo da Vinci (of *Vitruvian Man* creation) (see **Figure 1**) and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (being the prior-detailed impassioned one to Hermeticism and Neoplatonism)

NOTE: John Dee (1527-1608/9 CE) was apparently of the next generation of Hermetic masters beyond those aforesaid; John Dee being the occultist Hermetic teacher & high spiritual advisor to Queen Elizabeth I—daughter of King Henry VIII (Roberts, 2006; Williams, 1985).

Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527 CE) was born in Florence, Italy and “has often been called the father of modern political philosophy and political science” (Whelan, 2004).

Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519 CE) was born in Vinci, Italy (close to Florence).

Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494 CE)—as previously discussed—was born in Mirandola, Italy (close to Florence), and inevitably died in Florence. Giovanni became renown for his mastery of knowledge associated to Hermeticism and Neoplatonism. He studied at the University of Padua (as previously cited)—being the Venetian-regional institution important for a Hermetical education (as is further discussed within this report).

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Padua



Figure 1. Portrait of Vitruvian Man head; many features to the artwork arguable were based upon Leonardo using himself as the model.

Thomas Starkey (1498-1538 CE), Reginald Pole (1500-1558 CE) and Francesco Zorzi/Giorgi (1466-1540 CE) became historically important—in respective ways relating to theory presented within this report—by way of direct associations with King Henry VIII (further discussion pertaining to these three “holy men” is to follow throughout this report).

In this regard, the telling of the stories of said three “holy men”—particularly as it relates to King Henry VIII—is proposed as useful for the purposes of adding context to theories unfolded throughout this report.

Associatively, a contention is offered arguing that the advisory support of these three “holy men” was deemed very important for Henry to gain a Hermetic knowing, to a related necessary confidence, for turning England against the impositions of the Catholic Church.

The fact is that these three “holy men” were not only steeped in the ways of Catholicism, but also became learned in Hermeticism through their respective amounts of time spent immersed within its study whilst attending the University of Padua. The contention is that upon such a more complete Hermetic realization, Henry may have concluded that he could potentially make a historical bold decision, by cutting off ties with the Catholic Church, and simply pushing ahead with England’s own Abrahamic interpretations/rule under an Anglican Church.

The University of Padua is proposed as having become of a much greater circumstantial relevance (in terms of serving as prime location for Hermetic teachings) once the Byzantine Constantinople fell to the Ottomans in 1453 CE.

The Venetian-based University of Padua is proposed to have become an immensely significant institution, within a modern esoteric sense, due to the British Empire’s successes ultimately found on the global stage; while as much is estimated not possible to have occurred, in the particular fashion in which it did, without the establishment of the BRIC (British East India Company, founded in 1600).

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_India_Company

Incidentally, the Venetian Empire—prior to the 16th century—had accrued centuries of experience for a particular cutthroat blend of seafaring war & commerce led by its Venetian Navy; the Venetian Navy being a suitable predecessor model for the foregoing BRIC to emulate.

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venetian_navy

Regardless, the aforementioned three “holy men”—of further discussion & detail listed directly below—all spent historically important amounts of time studying at the Venetian-regional University of Padua:

NOTE: but first, to reiterate, these three “holy men” are assumed to have directly influenced King Henry VIII toward embracing & enveloping such Hermeticism by, and within, Henry’s inner-rings to council, thereby as so proposed to have aided in provided a foundation for the development & growth of so-called “secretive societies” (to Western Esotericism) within Anglicized culture—including to help foster the quasi-esoterically cultural underpinnings necessary

for Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism to establish themselves within Early Modern Britain

1) Reginald Pole was an English cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church who, separately, spent years of time studying at the University of Padua—the following related quote is from the Wikipedia article entitled *Reginald Pole*:

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reginald_Pole

Pole's studies in Padua were partly financed by his election as a fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, with more than half of the cost paid by Henry VIII himself (*Lambeth Palace Library Research Guide*, 2010).

2) Thomas Starkey also studied at the University of Padua; he was known as a close associate to Reginald Pole—the following related quote is taken from the Wikipedia article entitled *Thomas Starkey*:

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Starkey

(Starkey) attended the University of Oxford and ... went to Padua with Thomas Lupset in 1523. Here he studied the works of Aristotle and admired the government of Venice. By 1529 he had entered the service of Reginald Pole as secretary (*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004). Together with Pole, Starkey went to Avignon in 1532 where he studied civil law, before returning to Padua.

3) Francesco Zorzi (Giorgi), whom may have been the most significant Padua-educated “holy man” to have so importantly—in a historical sense— influenced King Henry VIII.

Moreover, these three “holy men”—their stories (even further discussed along in this report)—are proposed to directly link Renaissance Venice to King Henry VIII's England—all going toward evidence used for arguing that certain Venetians elitists had become of a particularly rationalized “interest of despair” to directly inspire and influence, given “circumstantial opportunity”, a Venetian-style metamorphosis within Renaissance England (details directly below furthering upon the two herein quoted phrases).

Such said “circumstantial opportunity” was identified in the form of the unique amalgam of King Henry VIII's life happenings and temporal desires—detailed further along in the report.

Such said “interest of despair” speculatively relates to the fact that, during early portions to the 16th century, a mighty anti-Venetian sentiment had grown among certain leading figures of other continental European institutions and/or governments whereby such leading Venetians had arguably become perceived as being even too duplicitous and/or backstabbing for such fellow European sufferers to the mental state of Elitism—of a mental state which can manifest within one by the very nature of experiencing extended period of time sitting atop such massive hierarchies of government & crown.

To the point of such Venetian-styled influence upon Renaissance England, as much would have been done initially by winning over the hearts & minds of fel-

low elitist Anglos who had already established themselves within Henry's inner-rings and English royal court. As proposed, such the Venetian vision was to hopefully encourage and ultimately guide London toward morphing into becoming that to a city-state model—a model that had then-already been made successful per the city-states of Venice, Rome, Genoa and Florence.

In that, England would need to create a suitable cultural foundation, along with the necessary socioeconomic infrastructure, that if London did inevitably seek to geopolitically emerge upon the world scene as a supermassive juggernaut of global-domineering success, then at least it would have best chances to gloriously occur in the case that the British Empire went for such a route, which—in the end—is in fact what transpired.

With regard to such domineering emergence for the British Empire, an estimated key per such related developments was their particular blend of seafaring war & commerce—as aforesaid was also key for the Venetian Empire during centuries of its seafaring success; of such paralleling naval models that perhaps it is wise to not consider as much such a coincidence, if taking all into account as previously mentioned, along with recalling that the Venetians were masters of such a model before became the British.

Having said that, perhaps the preceding narratives posed could do well by re-setting such a discussion by asking the following query:

Under what set of circumstances could possibly find such excessively self-serving, elitist Venetians in a position whereby they could assess it beneficial for themselves to help King Henry VIII—by any means at all?

That query will be approached for resolution next in Section 9.

4. King Henry VIII

Henry, and the League of Cambria

Within searching efforts to answer optimally the foregoing query, it is proposed negligent to not make full attempts to appreciate the fact that Henry was looking for support from the Catholic Church to divorce his then-wife Catherine of Aragon (a Spanish princess). This is considered a major point of vulnerability for which could upon be capitalized.

To that end, such a point of vulnerability is argued to have sat atop a list of circumstances that is (as will be discussed further throughout this section) proposed to have set the stage for Hermeticism to not only flourish within the more elitist social-circles to Renaissance England, but also for aiding to a likelihood that such the pagan ethos could increasingly spread and succeed more and more around the world as the British Empire continued to grow globally in scope and sway.

Furthermore, such a successful global spread to Hermeticism is proposed to have been dependant necessarily upon the development of strong grips of loyalty in the form of future prospecting Hermeticists, or those so unwittingly targeted, all around the world, from within such nations to an inevitable “British incor-

poration” (idea further discussed directly below)—whereby Elitism is Elitism, no matter where in the world.

NOTE: in furthering upon such processes for said “British incorporation”, as much is proposed to have occurred where the ends justify the means—per whichever instance imaginable—including (but not necessarily limited to) by: trade; manipulation; negotiation; entrapment; coercion; blackmail; war; submission; and, treaty

The remainder of this section is geared toward depicting an overall possible scenario, likely to have been, to where the stage was set for Hermeticism to spread by and through all the British-related power centres which became (at least in part) to run downstream culturally to the juggernaut itself—the British Empire.

To hereby circle back a bit, as a means to tie different portions of the report together—previously from section 8—it was an aforesaid “mighty anti-Venetian sentiment” which had grown in Europe which spurred certain elitist Venetian leaders to consider any & all means to survive as a war broke out (between 1508-1516 CE) mainly set for the sole purpose of to destroy the Venetian Empire.

This war was called the War of the League of Cambria and, by 1508, the Republic of Venice had already managed to survive about 800 years of the political & religious warring scene characteristic to Western Europe. However, granted the severity of that-current war, they would be forced to wear out their master-manipulator thinking caps to not only survive it, but too its aftermath.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_of_the_League_of_Cambrai

Within this in mind, to here introduce the term Machiavellianism seems a reasonable choice granted it is a political philosophy that congealed within regions to Northern Italy wherein the following duo of Machiavellian powerhouses had, for a longtime, been at work:

- 1) The House of Medici—founded in 1230 CE (Heer, 1998)
- 2) The Republic of Venice—founded in 697 CE (Forzan, 2021)

The fact is that, within the worlds of politics, banking and international commerce, backed by military strength, the Venetians had long been characterized by such a relatively high degree of devilish guile, artful duplicity and/or a shrewd ruthlessness that they thusly became associated with such a notorious tone & tenor—of infamous treachery—that as much arguably served to help the Republic of Venice not only survive into the future, but also (at times) to assist in expansionist military policy put on other nations.

Ironically, as the Catholic Church was central to the League of Cambrai and its efforts to crush the Venetian Empire, the Church’s simultaneous bureaucratic intransigence against Henry—in not authorizing the approval of his divorce from the Spanish princess—seemed to have unwittingly driven Venice and Britain toward developing a bond of sorts together, of mutual benefit, which, in the end, unquestionable helped to ensure the longer-term survival of the Republic of

Venice—as the Vatican-backed Spanish Empire went forward, following Henry’s “unauthorized” divorce, with a new top imperial enemy in its sights: the British Empire.

In any event, during most years to this warring period, the League of Cambria saw Spain and England teaming together—through a Catholic bond—against the Republic of Venice. Hence, the Venetian Empire had geopolitically found itself within a vulnerably desperate situation as they had been severely diminished by that war.

In its wake, a Venetian brain trust (of sorts) is assumed to have spearheaded the creation of strategies & planning designed to successfully assure that the Republic of Venice would not only survive beyond that war, but also for dramatically reducing any future probability that could again see Spain and England politically on the same side of a war, pitted against Venice, for any potential set of circumstances.

Consequently, such assumed strategy session to Venetian planning is proposed to have shortly thereafter (in relative terms) slyly set their sights upon sensing for character flaws in that to King Henry VIII.

In that sense, the contention is that if such exploitive Venetians could seduce and/or prey upon the confidence of Henry enough to turn it against the Catholic Church, by divorcing the Spanish princess, then Spain would most likely in turn have a bigger bone to pick with England than with Venice.

At any rate, indeed once Henry triggered the divorce, Spain and England thusly became chief warring rivals for each other during those decades to follow. The Republic of Venice survived until the year 1797 (Forzan, 2021).

In other words, the premise is that certain members of the aforesaid “Venetian brain trust” inevitably came to identify Henry’s lustfulness for worldly things as a point of weakness for which the beguiling pull of Venice could capitalize, as a matter of good strategy (or foreign policy) whilst Henry was searching for religious support to divorce Catherine of Aragon—which is said to have eventually occurred in 1533.

4.1. King Henry VIII, and the Three “Holy Men” to Hermeticism

As to the preceding narratives, certain Renaissance Venetians are proposed to have identified Henry as a man that could be compromised & captured by a particular Venetian-styled seduction and attraction [say, as to the premise of the entitled *Noetic “Russian Dolls” to Hermeticism*—whereby the notion is that such Venetians in question “knew” before did Henry], and of the human conduits to relay such philosophical approach, so-called “holy men” are estimated to have been the most likely to accomplish as much as such was of the political power structure for a 16th century Europe.

That is to say, of such said Venetian-influenced “holy men”—whom did in fact serve Henry in advisory capacities—it is proposed that respectively within their “holy hearts” came to beat passion more for an Esoteric/Kabbalistic form of Christian interpretation.

Nonetheless, all three “holy men” are proposed to have been of an expert degree of Hermetic education & knowledge resultant to their respective time spent studying at the Venetian-based University of Padua (as cited to follow).

The following bits tell some to their stories one-by-one, interwoven with details deemed relevant to theory set forth throughout this report.

4.1.1. Reginald Pole

First of said three “holy men”: Reginald Pole (1500-1558 CE)

Reginald Pole was mainly known as an English cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church, and he studied at the University of Padua for a determined main reason as to learn better the Hermetic theism and doctrine.

The following quote is taken from the previously cited link to a Wikipedia article entitled *Reginald Pole* (as previously referenced in part):

Pole’s studies in Padua were partly financed by his election as a fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, with more than half of the cost paid by Henry VIII himself on 14 February 1523, which allowed him to study abroad for three years (Lambeth Palace Library Research Guide, 2010; Brotherston Emden, 1974).

Pole is conceptualized to have prototypically embodied the essence of the aforesaid *Dual public-private model*, which can seem so common to robust considerations for the complete identity breakdown of such institutionally vaunted figures per cultures to a Western Esoteric inclination—in such a case, a figure such a Pole could have found great intelligence in publicly draping themselves within the more openly accepted Catholicism and/or Christianity whilst, more privately, Pole seems he could have more been of an observing practice or study within the principles & rituals to an ancient Hermetical creed; whereby (as aforesaid) such *Dual public-private models* most likely founded their roots within the Byzantine/Roman Empire.

More to the point, Reginald Pole *publicly* was a vaunted English Catholic figure for whom Henry strategically desired to support his decision for divorce. More *privately*, Pole studied Hermeticism at the Venetian-regional University of Padua (as afore-cited).

This theoretically made Pole, while cloaked within Catholicism, an ideal man to educate Henry on the creed of Hermeticism as Henry was just then starting to come up with possible solutions to his marital issues whereupon if Henry grew to discover that Hermeticism and/or Kabbalah/Esoteric Christianity had always been shrouded existent within the Church, then as much possibly could have aided in some way to increase Henry’s level of confidence within the bold idea of potentially leading England toward creating its own such path—such new Christian version—within an Anglican Church.

Henry inevitably offered Reginald Pole the title Archbishopric of York (Mayer, 2004)—perhaps as per some sort of reward in exchange for Pole supporting Henry’s final decision to divorce.

4.1.2. Thomas Starkey

Second of the said three “holy men”: Thomas Starkey (1495-1538 CE)

Thomas Starkey, as did Reginald Pole, studied at the University of Padua.

Starkey originally had studied at the University of Oxford. After this, by 1523, Starkey found himself within the regions of northern Italy studying at the University of Padua.

The following quote is taken from the Wikipedia article entitled *Thomas Starkey*, as previously referenced:

(Starkey) went to Padua with Thomas Lupset in 1523. Here he studied the works of Aristotle and admired the government of Venice. (Mayer, 2008)

Beyond 1532, Starkey is said to have returned to Padua in possible search for furthering his Hermetic and/or Neoplatonic acumen.

4.1.3. Francesco Zorzi/Giorgi

Third of the said three “holy men”: Francesco Zorzi/Giorgi (1466-1540 AD/CE)

Francesco Zorzi/Giorgi may be the most significant of the various Padua-educated “holy men” whom influenced Henry within such a proposed context.

Francesco’s story is “suitably” shrouded in seeming duplicity; “suitably” in that he was indeed a leading Renaissance Venetian.

In Zorzi’s case, for starters, such seeming duplicity appears in reference to the way Wikipedia offers his biographical information within two different, unlinked webpages—whereby one is under the name *Francesco Giorgi*, and the other by under the name *Francesco Zorzi*—wherein the one entitled *Francesco Zorzi* only reads in French.

Thereby, at least while this paper was being finalized, Francesco’s biographical information is split between such a duo of Wikipedia webpages in a duo of languages, unlinked to one another, all within a seeming effort to obfuscate.

But why would such a seeming effort to encourage befuddlement (in such a way) even appear possible? Does therein exist conscious efforts to conceal the fact that Francesco was Venetian? If so, then why? Are we left only to speculate? If so, then it shall be done.

From within the below linked Wikipedia article entitled *Francesco Giorgi*, we learn that Francesco was “an Italian Franciscan friar” (Schmitt et al., 2008), and that he had some connection to messaging within Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*. Also, from this article is revealed that Francesco had some association to John Dee—him the aforementioned occultic high-advisor to the daughter of Henry VIII; Elizabeth I—and that historical details concerning Francesco are reviewed comprehensively by Frances Yates within her book *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age*.

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francesco_Giorgi

The following quote is taken from the same referenced Wikipedia article, entitled *Francesco Giorgi*:

Giorgi is extensively discussed in Frances Yates, *The Occult Philosophy in*

the Elizabethan Age

That Giorgi was a Christian Cabalist is a statement that means, not merely that he was influenced vaguely by the Cabalist literature, but that he believed that Cabala could prove, or already had proved, the truth of Christianity. (Yates, 1979)

She also discusses Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* in the light of the theory of Daniel Banes that Shakespeare was familiar with Giorgi's and related writings on the *Cabala*. (Yates, 1979)

A copy of *De harmonia mundi* is listed as once in the Library of Sir Thomas Browne. It is possible that Browne's copy was bequeathed to him from Arthur Dee. John Dee is also known to have possessed a copy of Giorgi's work.

Although the above provided quote reveals some interesting bits to Francesco's bio, nowhere found within the concerning Wikipedia article makes mention regarding the twin facts that Zorzi/Giorgi was: specifically a Venetian sort of Italian; and, a historically significant advisor to King Henry VIII—while the latter bit of information is offered within the aforesaid, unlinked Wikipedia article (which reads only in French) entitled *Francesco Zorzi (théologien)*.

Furthermore—as a suspicion seems to build—per the namesake Wikipedia article entitled *Frances Yates*—her said as being the famously prolific author on all-things-Zorzi—oddly, again, another apparently significant fact fails to get mentioned in a relating bio—this time with an exclusion to officially offer that Yates specially had written much about Francesco Zorzi/Giorgi in particular.

From the Wikipedia article entitled *Frances Yates*:

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frances_Yates

In 1941, she was employed by the Warburg Institute, and began to work on what she termed “Warburgian history”, emphasising a pan-European and inter-disciplinary approach to historiography. Her most acclaimed publication was *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (1964), in which she emphasised the role of Hermeticism in Bruno's works and the role that magic and mysticism played in Renaissance thinking. *The Art of Memory* (1966), and *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (1972) are also major works. Yates wrote extensively on the occult or Neoplatonic philosophies of the Renaissance, which she is credited with making more accessible. (Jones, 2008)

So ... what could be reasonably stand for all such seeming attempts to obscure? Or, perhaps a more poignant question here to ask is: why this seeming attempt to keep such information from people that don't read French?

From the below-linked Wikipedia article entitled *Francesco Zorzi (théologien)*, the concerning and revealing French sentence is put as follows:

[https://fr.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francesco_Zorzi_\(théologien\)](https://fr.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francesco_Zorzi_(théologien))

Entre 1527 et 1533, Henri VIII d'Angleterre prit contact avec lui, comme nombre de juristes et théologiens, pour étayer sa demande de divorce avec

sa première femme Catherine d’Aragon. (Yates, 1987)

This basically translates to: The theologian (Francesco Zorzi) supported Henry VIII’s decision to divorce Catherine of Aragon.

In fact, the French version does not even specifically mention that Zorzi was indeed Venetian, but rather just stated that he was Italian.

Thereby, the searched continued for to officially document that Francesco Zorzi/Giorgi was in fact specifically Venetian, and not just generally Italian. Hence, it was onto a Wikipedia article entitled *Christian Kabbalah*—typically unlinked to other such Zorzi/Giorgi Wikipedia articles; at least during when this paper was being finalized—wherein a certain spilling of such “Venetian beans” (if you will) on Francesco Zorzi was discovered to read:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Kabbalah

Francesco Giorgi, (1467-1540) was a Venetian Franciscan friar and “has been considered a central figure in sixteenth-century Christian Kabbalah both by his contemporaries and by modern scholars”. According to Giulio Busi, he was the most important Christian Kabbalist second to its founder Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. His, *De harmonia mundi*, was “a massive and curious book, all Hermetic, Platonic, Cabalistic, and Pinchian” (Karr, 2013)

Voila!

Regardless, within an effort to close on such discussions concerning Francesco Zorzi/Giorgi, the following evidence-of-linkage is provided below between Zorzi and Henry VIII, from the British Public Records Office, reveals a direct connection (as was existent) between Zorzi and Henry, whereby as much is discerned to show proof that Zorzi had worked on behalf of Henry to deny the authority of the Catholic Pope over Henry’s marital affairs.

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=XiI-AAAAMAAJ&pg=PA538&lpg=PA538&dq=francesco+zorzi+henry+viii&source=bl&ots=4MDBvcYUAU&sig=NvHxT5cDFZtQIORdclfoT5F8dAI&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwifbGfp5bOAhVnyoMKHUsPD944ChDoAQhNMA4#v=onepage&q=francesco%20zorzi%20henry%20viii&f=false>

Either way, it seems as though Zorzi held some “holy” institutional sway. Although, perhaps here is an appropriate point to wonder whether any to such analysis truly matters historically or not?

If it truly matters at all to wonder, then why all the seeming arcane reporting on Zorzi within Wikipedia’s website? The truth seems apparent that Francesco may be a very significant historical figure because (in part) there is good chance that Zorzi is the central figure of whom Shakespeare had in mind when writing *The Merchant of Venice*, which may curiously be part of the reason why Zorzi is currently/contemporarily a barely known Renaissance Venetian to institutional version to history.

Furthermore, could any of these previously posed narratives have anything to

do with why such little open/public debate ever contemporarily seems to get wished/held institutionally regarding any potential philosophical concerns to Hermeticism?

In other words, could as much have to do something with a proposed premise that Hermeticism has always existed within the Christian/Catholic Church in some shrouded or esoteric fashion?

By that, could it all have something to do with an ideal of Hermeticism being at the centre of philosophical principles, practices, and perhaps even religious observation, within a specified model of so-called “secretive societies” since the Roman Byzantines essentially founded as much during the 4th century CE?

5. Leonardo da Vinci & the *Vitruvian Man*

Hermetic Principle to Dual Messaging as so Proposed per Da Vinci’s *Vitruvian Man*

As aforesaid, likewise to Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Leonardo da Vinci had studied with Marsilio Ficino at the Medici-sponsored Platonic Academy in Florence, while the Medici family as well had served as a sponsor to Leonardo.

However, something less focused on more popularly is a particular theme for analyzing Leonardo’s iconic *Vitruvian Man* schematic, which occurs within a context of Dualism, and/or as much consistent with the Hermetic “principle of polarity”, whereby such related observations include, but are not limited to:

- 1) The comparatively more Enlightened look to the man’s Right eye contrasted against a Darker look to the man’s Left eye;
- 2) An arguable artistic homage to opposite cosmic forces within such contrasting bodily poses—such embodied shapes to Order and Chaos—discernible between the man’s Duo of overlain bodily positions, as so observable per an extreme/imbalanced sense of Physical Order (by through the man within his so-called Christ Pose—his T-shaped bodily position) contrasted against such an oppositely extreme/imbalanced sense of Spiritual Chaos (by through the man within an apparently more expressive pose—his X-shaped bodily position); and
- 3) An arguable artistic homage to such opposite mathematical shapes—possibly of a Sacred Geometric perspective to Dualism—observed to theoretically represent such metaphysical polar opposites, whereby an outline to the Equilateral Triangle (in an inverted state) is shaded to surround his left eye, whereas the geometric opposite Circle (or at least a more Circular shape) is shaded to surround his opposite right eye... which could have been done by Leonardo so as to illustrate his estimated mathematical shape(s) figured representative to each such Dual metaphysical pole, of which before has been identified clearly enough to warrant various linguistic assignments, particular to the associated time-tested philosophy, lasting up till today, such as through: Yin & Yang (of an Ancient Chinese perspective); Dark & Light (of an Ancient Native North American perspective); Annihilationism

& Eternalism (of an Ancient Indian perspective); Above & Below (of an Ancient Greek perspective); Good & Evil (of an Ancient Abrahamic perspective); and, Positive & Negative (of a New Age perspective).

With this in mind, while Leonardo was not particularly known as one of the “great” Renaissance philosophers, does that mean he did not hold any concerning philosophical perspectives and/or opinions as did the more well-known such Italian luminaries? And if he did, and he chose to as so advise, would it not be reasonable to assume—given his popularly accepted reputation—that he would have done so by through his artwork?

By this logic, upon further analysis to the artwork, it became noticeable that whence the large circle in the *Vitruvian Man* schematic was—as judiciously as possible—equally split vertically, thence one can determine, for what clearly can be discerned, that the man’s head was almost certainly drawn purposefully offset tilting toward his right half/hemisphere of said split circle.

The theory suggests that by Leonardo drawing the *Vitruvian Man’s* head set tilting toward his right half/hemisphere was meant to, in some fashion, correspond to the reason why he drew the man’s right eye to appear more (than his left eye) enlightened, and the following ideas are proposed as a means to offer such possible reason:

- 1) An artistic device to a DaVinci-fashioned—given such reputation—encrypted variety of super-subtle—even subliminal—impression, cue or nod for heeding any sort of Angelic advice possible to perceive, imagine, or sense beyond as much Devilishly offered contrastingly from such an opposite metaphysical polarity—possibly done in relation to classic notions to more Angelic frequencies being delivered, into a right ear, whilst sitting on one’s right shoulder whereas what could be considered more of a Devilish intelligence had been oppositely so depicted all about the left shoulder & ear; and/or
- 2) Of a possible association to Leonardo somehow theoretically estimating such distinction, between the duo of brain hemispheres, in a general assessment for how the duo function differently whereby such artistic subtleties could have been purposely as so incorporated—along with him designing such optical asymmetry—per efforts to consciously (or somehow unconsciously) suggest that one is wiser for making attempts, in whatever way possible, to assure, in however it can be managed, that an individual over time should error cumulatively more, by however slight the majority amount, toward whatever decision-making elements could functionally/electrochemically associate to one’s right hemisphere over as much to that of a left hemisphere.

NOTE: Dr. Iain McGilchrist discusses associable scientific theory per his book *The Matter With Things*

To close such discussion per the *Vitruvian Man*, while perhaps Leonardo (in

such a way) encoded such messaging in thinking that the world could ultimately become a better place, somehow, if more people shared such a proposed perspective, while he was physically alive, Leonardo may have chosen to not more publicly reveal upon such an opinion and/or perspective due to an excessive fear that the Medici would somehow facilitate the hastening of his complete physical destruction if he had chosen otherwise—as such the untimely death of his colleague, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, may have sealed the deal for Leonardo.

6. Conclusion

Based upon evidence offered to this report, in support of such theory posed, it appears that not only did Hermeticism indeed serve co-creatively to the noetic foundations of various hybrid/derivative religious movements and/or time-tested philosophies—such as to those so-called Hermetic “Russian Dolls” of Neoplatonism, Esoteric Christianity and Western Esotericism—but also that Hermeticism has managed, over the years, to influentially stay relevant enough (in whatever form or fashion) to where the ancient Hermetic Caduceus—in a modern world—became institutionally installed, as a reasonable choice, to serve symbolically as a medicalized banner.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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