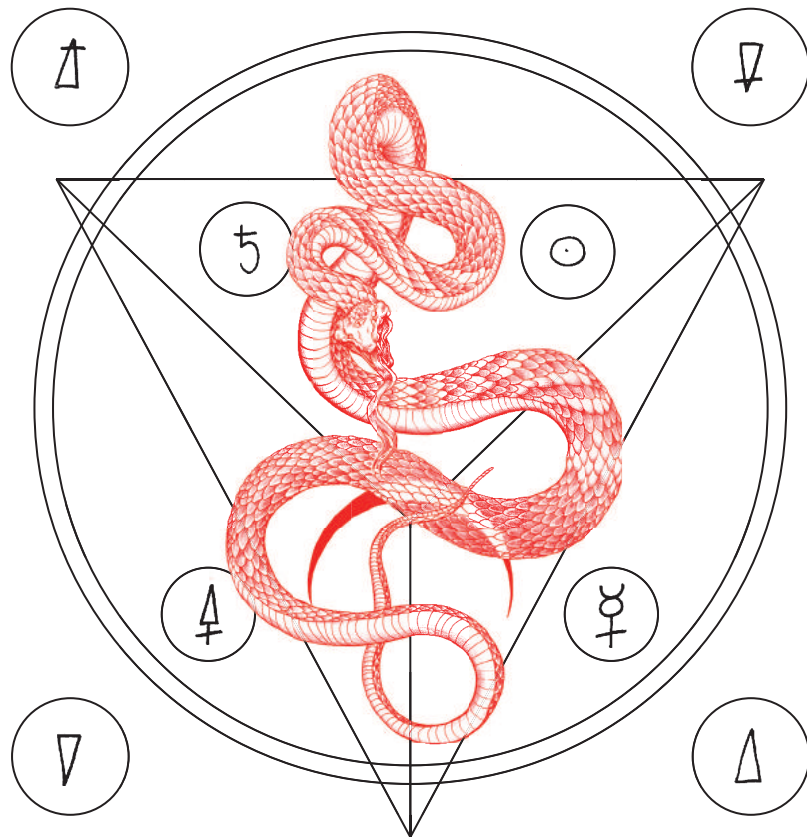


Dictionary
of
Alchemy



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Alchemy is a thousand-year old science that dates all the way back to the cradle of our civilization. The first alchemist is considered to be the ancient Egyptian god Thoth who is widely credited as the author of mathematics, religion and medicine, to name a few.

A forerunner of our science as well as the western occult tradition, alchemy is a most misunderstood subject.

Throughout history alchemists were persecuted for heresy therefore being forced to encrypt the secrets of the Art into metaphora.

The well-known concept of turning lead into gold is not to be taken literally; chemistry is indeed part of the alchemical tradition, however, it is above all a spiritual science.

In the alchemical allegory the lead represents our ordinary, undeveloped consciousness which can be transformed into gold, the fully realized and enlightened Soul

Alchemy is the art of transmuting energies and therefore the transmutation of self. The alchemists recognized that due to the dual nature of our world, everything is just spirit in motion. An operation in the realm of the microcosm can influence the same process in the macrocosm.

As above, so below.

This ABC book will explain the central terminology of this branch of science, however it is but a scratch on the surface of a tradition, that cannot be fully understood without first-hand experience and the ignition of the invisible life force that is within all of us.



AIR

One of the Four Elements.

Air carries the archetypal properties of spirit into the manifested world. It is associated with the operation of Separation and represented by the metal Iron.

AL-KHEMET

The word Alchemy comes from the Egyptian word Al-Khemet that directly translates to "from Egypt". Khemet is the ancient word Egyptians used for their land and it means "black land" or "black".

ALBEDO

The third of four phases of Magnum Opus*.

Following the chaos and blackness of the Nigredo* state a whitening, leucosis occurs. To experience the stage known as Albedo, one must first have been fully immersed in Nigredo, having looked deep within themselves.

The alchemist undertakes a purification in Albedo, which is the washing away of impurities of the Mind and Ego. In this process, the subject is divided into two opposing principles to later be coagulated during Rubedo, the final phase of the Great Work.



ANKH

Ancient Egyptian hieroglyph meaning "life" or "living". The hieroglyph was used by Egyptian alchemists to describe the ascendancy of the spirit (the circle) over the material world (the cross).

Its use dates back over 3,000 years and is a symbolic rendition of the principles expressed in the Emerald Tablet*.

ARCANUM EXPERIMENT

The early alchemists divided their chemicals into four major and seven minor arcana. The alchemists believed that these chemicals could be combined in this experiment that would demonstrate the archetypal forces and evolution of the universe.

The Arcanum Experiment exposed the hidden principles connecting heaven and earth, offering a framework in which to explain both microcosmic and macrocosmic events.

ARISTOTLE

Aristotle (384–322 BC) was a Greek philosopher and scientist.

Aristotle's Alchemical theory includes the thought that all things in the universe were formed from the four elements; earth, air, water and fire.



CALCINATION

The first of the seven major operations in the Alchemy of Transformation*, calcination is linked to the destruction of Ego and material attachment. This is usually a humbling process that occurs naturally as we overcome the trials and tribulations of life.

When we have completely Calcinated the aspects and burned away all impurities of the Self, we can dissolve the pure aspects back into the Soul through the next process, dissolution (page 10).

CHAKRAS

Sanskrit word for “wheel”, “circle” and “cycle”. Seven major centres of spiritual energy in the human body, starting from the root chakra on the pelvis floor to the crown chakra on the top of the head.

CITRINITAS

The Second of four phases in the Magnum Opus*, Citrinitas is a yellowing or xanthosis. This is the transmutation of silver into gold.

Out of the whiteness, clarity begins to occur, and the alchemist can experience all the aspects (colors) of the whiteness as one because unity is found. This may be a euphoric experience for the alchemist, as new energies and knowledge not previously experienced come into play.

COAGULATION

The final of the seven operations in the Alchemy of Transformation.

This stage is where the philosophers stone is attained or discovered deep within.

Coagulation incarnates and releases the Ultima Materia of the soul, the Astral Body, which the alchemists also referred to it as the Philosopher's Stone.

Psychologically, Coagulation is first experienced as a new confidence that is beyond all things, or a Second Body of light, a permanent vehicle of consciousness that embodies the highest aspirations and evolution of mind.

CONJUNCTION

The fourth of the seven operations in the Alchemy of Transformation.

Conjunction is the recombination of the saved elements from Separation into a new substance. Psychologically, it is empowerment of our true selves, the union of both the masculine and feminine sides of our personalities into a new state of consciousness. Physiologically, Conjunction is using the body's sexual energies for personal transformation. The following operation is fermentation (page 13).

COPERNICUS

Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543) was a Prussian mathematician and astronomer who is known for his heliocentric model of the universe that placed the Sun instead of Earth at the centre.



 DISSOLUTION

The second of the seven operations in the Alchemy of Transformation.

Distillation represents a further breaking down of the artificial structures of the psyche. The conscious mind must let go of control to allow the surfacing of the unconscious, rejected or buried parts of our mind.

When the floodgates are opened one can generate new energy from the water. Dissolution can be experienced as “flow,” the bliss of being engaged in creative acts without traditional or personal prejudices getting in the way.

“Now dissolution is not death, but dissolution of a compound; it is dissolved not so that it may be destroyed, but that it may become renewed.

For what is the activity of life? Is it not motion? What then in Cosmos is there that hath no motion? Naught is there, son!”

- The Corpus Hermeticum translated by G.R.S. Mead

DUALITY

Duality is a very strong concept in alchemy.

One of the most common examples of duality is the opposites of Sun and the Moon, Sulphur and Mercury or the Red King and the White Queen describing the law of opposites; male/female, light/dark, active/passive, and high/low.

In eastern traditions, we see this as the Yin/Yang of the Tao. These opposing forces represent separation but seek union and to be in balance and harmony. The alchemist tries to reconcile these differences within themselves and create this union.

DISTILLATION

The sixth of the seven operations in the Alchemy of Transformation.

Chemically, it is the boiling and condensation of the fermented solution to increase its purity. Psychologically, Distillation is the agitation of psychic forces necessary to ensure that no impurities from the inflated ego are incorporated into the next and final stage.

Personal Distillation consists of introspective techniques that raise the content of the psyche to the highest level possible, free from emotions and even from one’s personal identity.

Distillation is the purification of the unborn Self, all that we truly are and can be.

Physiologically, Distillation is raising the life force repeatedly from the lower body to the brain (what Oriental alchemists called the Circulation of the Light), where it eventually becomes a wondrous solidifying light full of power.



ELEMENTS

The four Elements are Earth, Water, Air and Fire.

These four correspond to current scientific knowledge of Plasma, Liquids, Gas, and Solids.

The Fire is our Will, the Life-Force or Chi/Qi as it is seen in eastern tradition. The Water is our emotions, and describes how they can easily flow from one temperature to the next when not under our control. The Air is our Intellect, and the Earth, is our body or matter here on the material plane.

ELIXIR

The Elixir of the alchemists is essentially a liquid version of the Philosopher's Stone and has the same ability to perfect any substance. When applied to the human body, the Elixir cures diseases and restores youth.

EMERALD TABLET

One of the fundamental manuscripts of Alchemy.

The writing of Hermes Trismegistus that is said to contain the secrets of the Art. Many translations have been made, the most known one being by Isaac Newton.



FERMENTATION

The fifth of the seven operations in the Alchemy of Transformation.

Fermentation is a two-stepped process that begins with the decay of the hermaphroditic "child"*, the product of Conjunction, resulting in its death and resurrection to a new level of being.

Fermentation can be achieved through various activities such as intense prayer, desire for mystical union, psychedelic drugs and deep meditation.

The next operation is distillation (page 10).

FIRE

One of the Four Elements. Fire represents the masculine in the divine duality.

Fire is hot, creates pressure, and vibrates at a very high rate and has therefore been a valuable tool for the Alchemist.

When one lives entirely in the inner fire of the spirit, all their veils of consciousness burn, so that their original spiritual being is restored and they become a god-human. This is the meaning behind the Latin INRI - Igne Natura Renovatur Integra (By fire nature is restored in purity), or pure matter is restored by spirit.

G

GNOSIS

The Greek word for knowledge. Signifies dualistic knowledge in the sense of mystical enlightenment, experienced knowledge rather than theoretical knowledge.

GOLD

Gold is the most perfect of the metals. For the alchemist, it represented the perfection of all matter on any level, including that of the mind, spirit, and soul. It is associated with the operation of Coagulation.

GREAT WORK

The Magnum Opus.

The journey of the Alchemist is called the Great Work. This is the process of working with Prima Materia* to create the Philosopher's Stone. The Great Work happens on many chemical, psychological, societal, physiological and planetary levels.

THE FOUR PHASES OF MAGNUM OPUS:

Nigredo/melanosis - blackening

Albedo/leukosis/viriditas - whitening

Citrinitas/xanthosis -yellowing

Rubedo/iosis - reddening

H

HERMAPHRODITE

The Hermaphrodite, or the androgyne, represents Sulfur and Mercury after their Conjunction. It is the child that is born when sun and moon, masculine and feminine, physical and spiritual, unite.

The idea of oneness, completeness and freedom from the world's duality is the main message of the hermaphrodite or androgyne in alchemy.



HORUS' EYE

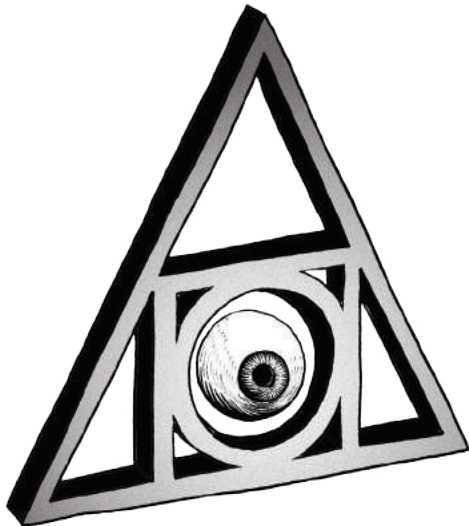
The Eye of Horus is an ancient Egyptian symbol of protection, royal power and good health. The Eye of Horus is similar to the Eye of Ra, which belongs to a different god but represents many of the same concepts.

* Primary Matter, Philosopher's Stone (page 27) Emerald Tablet (page 12)



IRON

Iron is one of the seven metals of alchemy. It is associated with the operation of Separation and is dominated by the planet Mars.



JUNG

Carl Jung (1875-1961) was a Swiss psychiatrist and psychotherapist who helped a lot in ushering a modern revival in alchemical thought. Jung rediscovered the images and principles of alchemy surfacing in the dreams and compulsions of his patients and began a lifelong study of the subject.

Parallels can be found between the Jungian archetypal schema and the four states of the Great Work. In the Jungian archetypal schema, nigredo is the Shadow; albedo refers to the anima and animus (contrasexual soul images); citrinitas is the wise old man or woman archetype; and rubedo is the Self archetype which has achieved wholeness.

JUPITER

The planet Jupiter influences good health, wealth, philosophical and religious matters, ceremony, and the enjoyment of life.

Jupiter corresponds to the liver, arteries of the stomach and abdomen, digestion and assimilation of oxygen and nutrition, antibiotic functions, cell growth, and general energy levels.



K A B B A L A H

Kabbalah (literally meaning “receiving/tradition”) is an esoteric method, discipline, and school of thought that originated in Judaism. Kabbalah emerged in 12th- to 13th-century Southern France and Spain. Traditional practitioners believe its earliest origins pre-date world religions and dates from Eden.

K I N G

The King in alchemy represents man, solar consciousness, or Sulfur. The King is naked in the early operations of alchemy and regains his royal robes at the end of his transformation. The King united with the Queen symbolizes Conjunction.



L E A D

The first and oldest of the seven metals of alchemy. It is associated with the operation of Calcination. In alchemy the ordinary, unawakened Mind is represented as lead.





 MAAT

An ancient Egyptian goddess. Maat is the feminine counterpart to Thoth*. The force which maintained the Universe, otherwise, spirit. The unification of matter and spirit became a centerpiece in alchemical thought.

MAGNUM OPUS

See Great Work (page 14).

MARS

The planet Mars influences intense and often violent energy that brings dynamic power to all its encounters. It increases psychic ability as well as motion and power in the physical realm. Mars corresponds to the muscular system, male sexual organs, marrow, blood formation, adrenaline, and the purging of the body to maintain health.

MERCURY, Hg (CHEMICAL ELEMENT)

One of the three primes, Tria Prima. Mercury represents the fluid connection between high and low. Mercury, also called quicksilver, is a liquid metal that the ancient alchemists could find weeping through cracks in certain rocks or accumulating in small puddles in mountain grottos.

The striking properties of mercury and the possibility to transform it to either poison or medicine convinced alchemists that mercury transcended both the solid and liquid states, both earth and heaven, both life and death. It symbolized Hermes himself, the guide to the Above and Below.

MERCURY (PLANET)

The planet Mercury influences communication, commerce, initiation into the mysteries, alchemy, Kabbalah, astrology, magick, writing, transmission of information and mental skills.

Mercury corresponds to the nerves, speech, hearing, coordination between thoughts and speech or actions, throat, thyroid, nervous system, and spinal fluid.

MOON

The Moon influences water, growth, fertility, conception, emotions, instinct, sub-conscious, psychic phenomena, collective consciousness, rhythm and cycles, genetics, and cultural heritage.

It corresponds to the brain, female organs, stomach, and all body fluids and is also linked to the metal silver.

The Moon is an often used symbol in Alchemy, representing one end of opposites in the dualistic nature of our world. Since the moon is illuminated by the sun rays it is considered feminine.



NEWTON

Born in 1643 in England, Isaac Newton was an established physicist and mathematician, and is credited as one of the great minds of the 17th century Scientific Revolution. Newton developed the principles of modern physics with his discoveries.

Though not generally known as an alchemist, he was a passionate practitioner of the art. Newton wrote over a million words on the subject that were deemed unfit to print by the Royal Society after his death in 1727.

NIGREDO

The Great Work begins in the stage of what is known as Nigredo, or the blackness.

Our consciousness is Prima Materia and the lead in the alchemical allegory. With spirit we can begin the calcination process by placing the Prima Materia into the furnace to eliminate any energies that may be blocking growth. Nigredo can be a very powerful stage, as it often signifies a point in one's life where a spiritual evolution is necessary or eminent following a knowing that the material plane cannot fulfill and a seeking of spiritual truth is inevitable and required. This is a very personal time, where one begins to look deep into the soul, no matter how uncomfortable it may be at first.



THE ONE

The all.

The creative force which encompasses all that is and is not. The one is everything, every potentiality, every outcome; it is the Divine Principle and Prima Materia. The One is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end of the Great Work. This is one of the most perplexing and fulfilling aspects to fully understand, and many of us spend a lifetime attempting to do so.

Everything in Alchemy, as in life, begins with the one.

OUROBOROS

The Ouroboros, the serpent eating its own tail, is the symbol of the eternal principle. It represents the idea that "All Is One", even though the universe undergoes periodic cycles of destruction and creation, birth and death.





PARACELSUS

Theophrastus Philippus Aureolus Bombastus von Hohenheim (1493-1541)

Paracelsus is another well known alchemist. He was a pioneer in medicine in use of chemicals and minerals to treat ailments of the human body and is called the inventor of medical chemistry. He was one of the first alchemists to abandon Hermetism. Paracelsus brought alchemy into a new age. He saw many similarities between the microcosm and the macrocosm and knew man must be in harmony with them to have good physical and spiritual health.

PENTACLE

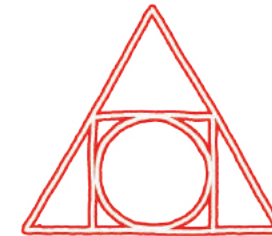
Represents the four elements earth, water, air and fire and the spirit. The circle represents their union.



THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE

The famous Philosopher's stone is the end goal of the Alchemist doing the Great Work. It is an enlightened soul, a consciousness perfected as a stone, a permanent vessel of gold.

The symbol can be used as a key to decrypt alchemical imagery and lend meaning to many other symbols. It describes the relationship between the physical and spiritual realms and our part in that relationship. We can be seen as a Divine being encased in Matter with the intent of performing work on the physical plane.



PRIMARY MATTER

All matter comes from prima materia, the primitive, formless base to all matter similar to chaos, aether and the quintessence, which can only come into existence if impressed by "form." The form came of the chaos of prime matter forming the four elements: fire, air, water, and earth. Creation by the god was the result of blending these four elements together in the correct proportions to produce the infinite varieties of life.



QUEEN

The Queen symbolizes woman and Mercury. The Queen united with the King is the operation of Conjunction.

THE QUINTESSENCE

In Alchemy, the concept of Spirit has great importance, and is viewed as an Fifth or additional element to the original four.

The Quintessence is not only the glue which binds all other elements together; it is also seen as what keeps the elements independent of each other.



RUBEDO

The fourth and last phase of the Magnum Opus.

This is done when our conscious mind peers deep into the subconscious, and brings it back into the conscious mind to be observed. Spirit is entering the soul purifying it to become solidified in our lives. This is when we begin to actually work with spirit and put action to it on the material plane, culminating in the formation of the diamond body.





SALT

One of the three primes, Tria Prima. Salt is the base matter, the body. Salt represents the action of thought on matter, be it the One Mind acting on the One Thing of the universe or the alchemist meditating in his inner laboratory.

SEPARATION

The third of the seven operations in the Alchemy of Transformation.

This process is the rediscovery of our essence and the reclaiming of dream previously rejected by the masculine, rational part of our minds. It is, for the most part, a conscious process in which we review formerly hidden material and decide what to discard and what to reintegrate into our refined personality.

Much of this shadowy material is things we are ashamed of or were taught to hide away by our parents and schooling. Separation is letting go of the self-inflicted restraints to our true nature, so we can shine through. The next operation is conjunction (page 9).

SULFUR

One of the three primes, Tria Prima. Sulfur represents the omnipresent spirit of life.

SILVER

Silver is one of the seven metals of alchemy. It is associated with the operation of Distillation. It is linked to the feminine and the Moon.

SEVEN MAJOR OPERATIONS

IN THE ALCHEMY OF TRANSFORMATION

The following are the seven spiritual and transformational operations in alchemy.

Calcination, Dissolution, Separation, Conjunction, Fermentation, Distillation, Coagulation

SEVEN METALS

Gold dominated by the Sun

Silver dominated by the Moon

Copper dominated by Venus

Iron dominated by Mars

Tin dominated by Jupiter

Mercury dominated by Mercury

Lead dominated by Saturn

SPIRIT

Spirit is the essence of all life and binds the whole of creation together. It permeates all matter and form giving it substance and vitality. Spirit in alchemy is the active presence in all of us that strives toward perfection. Ultimately, it is the One Mind of the universe and therefore inseparable from the All.



THOTH

Ancient Egyptian god of writing and knowledge. The ancient Egyptians believed Thoth gave them the gift of hieroglyphic writing. Thoth is widely credited as the author of science, religion, mathematics, geometry, philosophy, medicine and magic.

TIN

One of the seven metals of alchemy. Dominated by Jupiter



TREE

A widespread archetype in the world's mythologies. The Tree of Life is the central symbol of Kabbalah. Metaphysically the tree expresses the universal force that spreads out in manifestation the same way the plant energy spreads out from its invisible roots to the trunk, branches, leaves and fruit.

TRIA PRIMA

The Three Primes are:

Sulfur: Omnipresent Spirit of life

Mercury: Liquid connection between high and low

Salt: Base matter (body)

When the two opposing principles of Sulphur (masculine) and Mercury (feminine) come together, we get the Salt or body which brings together and reconciles these opposing principles within it in order to exist on the material plane in physical form.

All things which exist contain these three principles, corresponding to the Law of the Triangle, in that when the two come together, the third is born, creating the one.

These are the forces of Creation, and all parts of nature.



V

VENUS

The planet Venus influences herbalism, magick, arts, music, poetry, harmony, proportion, integration, meditation of opposites into a whole, odors, perfumes, and love. Venus corresponds to the skin, kidneys, perspiration, transformation and enrichment of substances within the body, sexual organs, and smell.

W

WATER

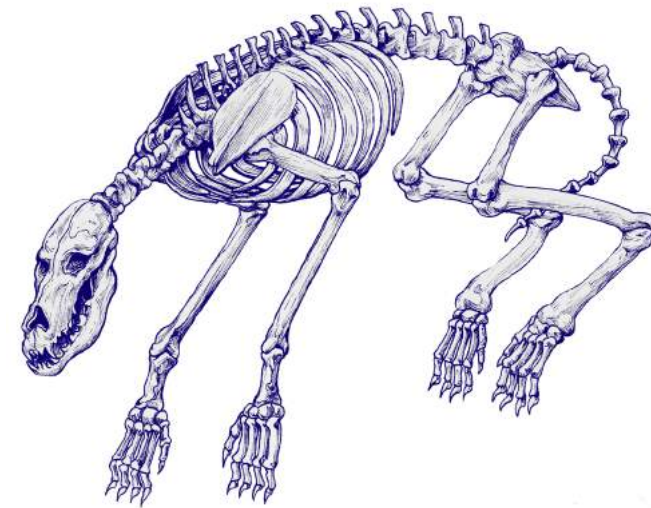
One of the four elements. The Water represents our emotions. Water carries the archetypal properties of cleansing and purification. It is associated with the operation of Dissolution and represented by the metal tin.

Z

ZODIAC

According to the Doctrine of Correspondences in the Emerald Tablet (“As Above, so Below”), the stars must find expression on earth and in mankind.

Astrology and alchemy are in essence looking at the same thing functioning on different realms. Astrology deals with the celestial realm and alchemy with the sub-terrestrial realm of the same thing; the movement and manifestation of spirit.



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