



FACULTEIT DER GEESTESWETENSCHAPPEN
Afdeling Theologie en Religiestudies

**HISTORY OF HERMETIC PHILOSOPHY
AND RELATED CURRENTS**

REPORT 2001



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1. Introduction

In the year 2001, the subdepartment “Geschiedenis van de Hermetische Filosofie en verwante stromingen” (GHF) has completed its starting-up period. The permanent staff was completed and one Ph.D. associate was appointed. In this report we give an overview of the development of the subdepartment, its new projects, and its plans for the future.

2. Appointments

As of February 1, 2001, Mss. Drs. Andréa Kroon has left GHF. As the outcome of an internal job vacation procedure, she was succeeded by Mss. Drs. Hilda Nobach, who is now working four days a week as secretary of GHF.

Mrs. Drs. H. Nobach (1951) has been working since 1968 for several companies, such as the coastal station Scheveningen radio and Fokker aircraft factories. Since 1985 until she has been employed as a secretary at the Universiteit van Amsterdam. Having first started at the department of Political Sciences, since fifteen years she has been working at the department of Dutch Language and Culture.

Following an advertisement in *De Volkskrant* (December 9, 2000) for two Ph.D. associates in the field of western esotericism, a promising amount of reactions was received. Four candidates (two for the earlier, two for the later period) were invited for a job interview. The selection committee consisted of Prof.dr. W.J. Hanegraaff, Dr. J.-P. Brach, Dr. O. Hammer, Prof.dr. R. van den Broek and Prof.Dr. M.B. Pranger; also present during the interviews was Drs. P. Koopman, secretary of the Research Institute for Culture and History (ICH). The two candidates for the position 19th-20th centuries turned out not to be suitable, and it was decided to leave this position open for the time being. For the position focusing on the Renaissance period, the committee unanimously decided to appoint Mss. Drs. Marieke van den Doel.

Mrs. Drs. M.J. E. van den Doel (1970) studied painting at the Gerrit F.Th. Rietveld Academy of Arts, Amsterdam, and Art History (specialization: early modern period) at the University of Amsterdam. She also followed art historical training courses in Italy, worked as PR manager for a museum, and was involved as founder/editor in two journals. In 2000 she completed her graduate studies Art History with a thesis *Nach*



den Regeln wohlgegründete Natürlichkeit: Opvattingen over kunst van Joachim Sandrart (1606-1688). She has had a long-standing interest in magical and hermetic imagery in Renaissance art.

Mss van den Doel has been appointed as Ph.D. research associate (AIO) from 1.4.2001 to 1.4.2005 for a research project called “The Concept of *Imaginatio* as a Key to the Relationship between Hermeticism and Art Theory in the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries”. For a description of this project, see ch. 4.1. of this report.

3. Teaching

3.1. Teaching Program

The minor “Westerse esoterie”, as described in the Report 1999-2000, has been continued without major changes. “Hermetica I” was given by Hanegraaff; Hermetica II by Brach and Hammer; Hermetica III by Brach (theme: Number Symbolism). In addition, Hanegraaff again taught the general propaedeusis course “Inleiding Religies van de wereld”.

Much time has been invested during this year in discussions about, and preparations for the upcoming change to a BA/MA structure. The outcome is as follows:

- The minor “Westerse esoterie” will be continued as part of the new BA program “Religiestudies” (with Hermetica I as a compulsory course; Hermetica II and III as optional courses). Based on the experience built up with the courses so far, it was decided to adapt the structure of the last two courses: after the summer of 2002 Hermetica II will be focused entirely on the earlier period (15th-18th cents.), Hermetica III on the later period (18th-21th cents.). Both seminars will have a thematic focus that will change each year. For course descriptions see the Appendix.
- Within the context of the MA “Religious Studies”, it will be possible to follow a full-time trajectory “Mysticism and Western Esotericism” (in English; both in a one-year variant and in the form of a selective two-year research master). This trajectory also includes courses given by Prof.Dr. M.B. Pranger and Dr. J. Spaans (History of Christianity). More detailed information about the various courses will be provided in the Report 2002. See Appendix for the courses that will be given by GHF staff members in the study year 2002-2003. For further information, see www.amsterdamhermetica.nl (→ Prospective students → MA Program).



3.2. Level of participation

This year, Hermetica I was offered not only as part of the regular day-program but also in the “avondopleiding”; the day program attracted ca. 25 students, the evening program ca. 35. Like in the previous year, the course attracted a relatively large amount of contract students. A smaller amount of these students continued to follow Hermetica II and/or III.



4. Research

4.1. Research Program

For a description of the research program “Western Esotericism and Modernization (coord. W.J. Hanegraaff) and its subprograms, the reader is referred to the Annual Report 1999-2000. The subprogram “Magic and Disenchantment” has been discontinued because its coordinator Prof.dr. M. Gijswijt-Hofstra has decided to focus all her attention on another program in which she is involved. Drs. M.J.E. van den Doel has joined the research program.

New Project:

The concept of Imaginatio as a key to the relationship between Hermeticism and art theory in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (M.J.E. van den Doel)

The proposed project will investigate to what extent the Hermetic and Neoplatonist thought has influenced leading sixteenth and early seventeenth century art theorists. The Italian philosopher Marsilio Ficino (1433-1489) is a key figure in this project. The researcher will examine how and to what extent a number of important sixteenth and early seventeenth century art-theoretical treatises – by e.g. G. Vasari (1511-1574), F. Zuccari (1540-1609), G.P. Lomazzo (1538-1600) and C. van Mander (1548-1606) – are rooted in the Hermetic and related philosophies of Italian humanism. The status attributed to the concept of *imaginatio* plays a major role within this context and will be the main research focus. The proposed project will emphasize how and to what extent mainstream scholarly and art-theoretical ideas are dependent on the Neoplatonist and Hermeticist legacy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Lodovico Lazzarelli and Giovanni “Mercurio” da Correggio (W.J. Hanegraaff)

This project has been finished in June 2001. The manuscript has been submitted for publication to “Arizona Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies”; at the time of writing, the review procedure is still in progress.

Number Symbolism in the Renaissance (J.-P. Brach)

Brach has been working on this project throughout 2001 and has completed it in February 2002. The resulting manuscript will be submitted for publication in the following months.



Theory and Practice of Prayer in Christian Kabbalah (J.-P. Brach)

In progress.

Textual Editions on Number Symbolism (J.-P. Brach)

In progress.

Emanuel Swedenborg's Arcana Caelestia (W.J. Hanegraaff)

Research for this project has been taken up after the completion of the Lazzarelli project (summer 2001). It has already resulted in several lectures and will be continued during 2002 and 2003.

Justinus Kerner and his Patients (W.J. Hanegraaff)

Suspended until completion of Swedenborg and Webern projects.

Swedenborg's Influence in the 19th and 20th Centuries (O. Hammer, W.J. Hanegraaff)

Pro memorie. As indicated in Report 1999-2000, Hanegraaff's Swedenborg Arcana Caelestia project and Hammer's Anthroposophy project are given priority.

Anthroposophy: Esoteric Doctrine and Practice (O. Hammer)

In progress.

Anton Webern: Modern Music and Hermetic Naturphilosophie (W.J. Hanegraaff)

Research on this project has been taken up again recently (March 2002). Since Swedenborg plays a relatively large role in Webern's development, it seems to make sense to work on this project simultaneously with the Arcana Caelestia project.

4.2. Research Output.

W.J. Hanegraaff

[edited with Richard Caron, Joscelyn Godwin & Jean-Louis Vieillard-Baron], *Ésotérisme, gnosés & imaginaire symbolique: Mélanges offerts à Antoine Faivre*, Peeters: Louvain 2001. 948 pp.



- ‘Ironic Esotericism: Alchemy and Grail Mythology in Thomas Mann’s *Zauberberg*’, in: Caron, Godwin, Hanegraaff & Vieillard-Baron, *Ésotérisme, gnoses & imaginaire symbolique*, 575-594.
- ‘Beyond the Yates Paradigm: The Study of Western Esotericism between Counterculture and New Complexity’, *Aries* 1:1 (2001), 5-37.
- ‘Prospects for the Globalization of New Age: Spiritual Imperialism versus Cultural Diversity’, in: Mikael Rothstein (ed.), *New Age Religion and Globalization*, Aarhus University Press 2001, 15-30.
- ‘Westerse esoterie en de eeuw van de rede’ [Western esotericism and the Age of Reason], *Het Bilderdijk-Museum* 18 (2001), 6-7.
- Richard Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites: A Necromancer's Manual of the Fifteenth Century* (Sutton publ. 1997) & Claire Fanger (ed.), *Conjuring Spirits: Texts and Traditions of Medieval Ritual Magic* (Sutton publ. 1998), review in *Religion* 31:1 (2001), 101-104.
- Monika Neugebauer-Wölk (Hrsg.), *Aufklärung und Esoterik* (Studien zum achtzehnten Jahrhundert 24) (Felix Meiner: Hamburg 1999). Review in *Aries* 1:2 (2001), 220-223.
- Moritz Baßler & Hildegard Châtellier (éd.), *Mystique, mysticisme et modernité en Allemagne autour de 1900/Mystik, Mystizismus und Moderne in Deutschland um 1900* (Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg: Strasbourg 1998). Review in *Aries* 1:2 (2001), 223-225.

J.-P. Brach

- Guillaume Postel, *De admirandis numerorum platonicorum secretis* (1549) (coll. “De Pétrarque à Descartes”)(annotated edition and translation, with Introduction), Vrin: Paris 2001. 287 pp.
- [with C. Jambet] ‘Le féminin de Dieu’, in: M. Cazenave (ed.), *Le féminin spirituel*, Desclée de Brouwer/France Culture: Paris 2001, 61-74.
- ‘Quelques réflexions sur les fondements spéculatifs de la symbolique des nombres’, in: Richard Caron, Joscelyn Godwin, Wouter J. Hanegraaff et Jean-Louis Vieillard-Baron (eds.), *Ésotérisme, gnoses & imaginaire symbolique: Mélanges offerts à Antoine Faivre*, Peeters: Louvain 2001, 741-747.
- ‘Le petit traité de la signification ultime des cinq corps réguliers ou éléments de l’éternelle vérité de Guillaume Postel’, in: Sylvain Matton (ed.), *Documents oubliés sur l’alchimie, la kabbale et Guillaume Postel offerts à F. Secret*, Droz: Genève 2001.



'Louis Charbonneau-Lassay' + 'Georges-Auguste Thomas', in: J.-P. Chantin (ed.), *Les marges du Christianisme: "Sectes", dissidences, ésotérisme* (Université Jean Moulin-Lyon III), Beauchesne: Paris 2001, 46-49, 236-238.

'Introduction' (and updated bibliography 1987-2000) to the Italian translation of François Secret, *Les Kabbalistes chrétiens de la Renaissance*, Archeios: Rome.

'Louis Charbonneau-Lassay' + 'Georges-Auguste Thomas', in: J.-P. Chantin (ed.), *Les marges du Christianisme: "Sectes", dissidences, ésotérisme* (Université Jean Moulin-Lyon III), Beauchesne: Paris 2001, 46-49, 236-238.

'Introduction' (and updated bibliography 1987-2000) to the Italian translation of François Secret, *Les Kabbalistes chrétiens de la Renaissance*, Archeios: Rome.

O. Hammer

Claiming Knowledge: Strategies of Epistemology from Theosophy to the New Age. E.J. Brill: Leiden, Boston, Köln 2001. 547 pp.

'Same Message from Everywhere: The Sources of Modern Revelation', in: M. Rothstein (ed.), *New Age and Globalization*, Aarhus University Press: Aarhus 2001, 42–57.

'Sufism som nyandlighet' [Sufism as a New Religious Movement], in: D. Westerlund (ed.), *Levande sufism*, Nya Doxa: Falun 2001, 188–203.

'Mormonerne' [The Mormons]. *Humanist* 2 (2001), 16-40

'Joseph Smith, mormonernes profet' [Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet], in: Terje Emberland & Arnfinn Pettersen (eds.), *VetFyrster i Tåkellan*, Humanist forlag: Oslo 2001, 183-205.

'Newton ockultisten' [Newton the occultist], *Fritänkaren* 4 (2001), 4-8.

'Enhvar sin egen guru' [Persuasions of the guru's craft], in: V. Molnar et al. (ed.), *Vetenskapssocieten i Lund Årsbok 2001*, Vetenskapssocieten: Lund 2001, 136-144.

Claiming Knowledge: Strategies of Epistemology from Theosophy to the New Age. E.J. Brill: Leiden, Boston, Köln 2001. 547 pp.

'Same Message from Everywhere: The Sources of Modern Revelation', in: M. Rothstein (ed.), *New Age and Globalization*, Aarhus University Press: Aarhus 2001, 42–57.



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‘Enhvar sin egen guru’ [Persuasions of the guru's craft], in: V. Molnar et al. (ed.), *Vetenskapssocieten i Lund Årsbok 2001*, Vetenskapssocieten: Lund 2001, 136-144.

Antoine Faivre *Theosophy, Imagination, Tradition* (2000), review in *Theosophical History* 7:7 (2001), 205–209.



5. Further Activities

5.1. Lectures and Congress Participation

W.J. Hanegraaff was invited to give a lecture at three international conferences (Paris, Los Angeles and Louvain) and gave a paper at a fourth one (Kalamazoo); he also gave invited lectures at the University of Lausanne and Arizona State University. J.-P. Brach was invited as speaker at a national and international conference (Besançon and Paris) and gave a paper at an international conference in Kalamazoo. O. Hammer gave an invited lecture at a national conference in the Netherlands and another one at the University of Karlstad, Sweden. In addition, all three lectured during meetings of the Dutch association for the study of Western esotericism (ARIES-Netherlands). M. van den Doel has given several lectures in the context of University of Amsterdam educational programs.

W.J. Hanegraaff

36th International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo (Michigan, USA), 3 March 2001 (paper 'Defusing Magic: Lodovico Lazzarelli and the Wisdom of Hermes').

Université de Lausanne (Switzerland), 11 June 2001 (invited public lecture 'How Magic Survived the Disenchantment of the World')

Arizona State University (Phoenix, Arizona), 1 May 2001 (invited public lecture 'How Magic Survived the Disenchantment of the World')

Colloque Autour de l'oeuvre de Frances A. Yates (1899-1981): Du réveil de la tradition hermétique à la naissance de la science moderne, Sorbonne, Paris, 28 September 2001 (invited lecture 'La fin de la tradition hermétique: Frances Yates et Lodovico Lazzarelli')

Conference The Hermetic Imagination in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), Los Angeles, 6 October 2001 (invited lecture 'Swedenborg in Oetinger's Hermetic Imagination')

Congress Leuven Encounters in Systematic Theology III: Developing a Relational Theology, University of Louvain, 9 November 2001 (Keynote lecture 'The Dreams of Theology and the Realities of Christianity')

ARIES-the Netherlands, Amsterdam, 12 October 2001 (Lecture 'Friedrich Christoph Oetinger en Emanuel Swedenborg').



J.-P. Brach

36th International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo (Michigan, USA), 3 March 2001 (paper ‘Arctic Demons and Polar Intelligences in Cecco d’Ascoli’s Cosmology’).

Colloque *Autour de l’oeuvre de Frances A. Yates (1899-1981): Du réveil de la tradition hermétique à la naissance de la science moderne*, Sorbonne, Paris, 28 September 2001 (invited lecture ‘Entre Agrippa et Fludd: L’évolution de la symbolique des nombres selon F.A. Yates’)

Conference *Langues et Savoirs: Transmission, translation, variations*, Université de Besançon, 1 January 2001 (paper ‘La symbolique des nombres chez Guillaume Postel: Entre tradition et nouveauté’)

ARIES-the Netherlands, 11 January 2001 (lecture ‘The Intelligible Nature of Number in Francesco Patrizi’).

Olav Hammer

Annual conference *Nederlands Genootschap voor Godsdienswetenschap*, 25 May 2001 (invited lecture ‘Anthroposophy on the Internet’).

University of Karlstad (Sweden), 21 May 2001 (invited lecture ‘New Age and Utopianism’).

ARIES-the Netherlands, 7 September 2001 (lecture ‘Persuasive Arguments in Modern Esoteric Movements’).

Marieke van den Doel

UvA Cultural Studies seminar “Verzamelgeschiedenis”, 25 September 2001 (lecture ‘Athanasius Kircher’).

UvA “Actualiteitencolleges” Art History Early Modern Period, 6 October 2001 (lecture ‘Athanasius Kircher in Amsterdam’).

UvA “Actualiteitencolleges” Art History Early Modern Period, 10 October 2001 (lecture ‘Hermetisme en kunst in de zestiende en zeventiende eeuw’).



5.2. Editorial Activities

During the period of discussion the GHF staff members have been involved as editors in a number of journals, book projects and series

W.J. Hanegraaff :

- Editor (with R. Edighoffer and A. Faivre) of *Aries: Journal for the Study of Western Esotericism* (publ.: E.J. Brill, Leiden/Boston/Köln)
- Editor (with J.-P. Brach, R. van den Broek, A. Faivre) of *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism* (forthcoming with E.J. Brill, Leiden/Boston/Köln)
- Editor (with J.A.M. Snoek) of *Western Esotericism and Jewish Mysticism* (forthcoming)
- General Editor of “Studies in the History of Religions (*Numen* Book Series)” (publ.: E.J. Brill, Leiden/Boston/Köln)
- Editor (with G.W. Trompf) of “Gnostica: Texts & Interpretations” (publ.: Peeters, Louvain)
- Member editorial board of *Esoterica* www.esoteric.msu.edu
- Member European editorial board of *Religion* (publ.: Academic Press)
- Member editorial board of *Journal of Contemporary Religion* (publ.: Carfax)
- Member board of editorial consultants of *Nova Religio* (publ.: Seven Bridges Press)

Jean-Pierre Brach:

- Editor of *Politica Hermetica* (publ.: L'Âge d'Homme)
- Editor (with R. van den Broek, A. Faivre, W.J. Hanegraaff) of *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism* (publ.: E.J. Brill, Leiden/Boston/Köln)
- Member editorial board of *Aries* (representative French-speaking countries)
- Member editorial board of *Esoterica* www.esoteric.msu.edu

Olav Hammer:

- Member editorial board of *Aries* (representative Scandinavian countries)



6. New and Current Projects

Website

From september 2001 to february 2002, Lost Boys Interactive Media B.V. has developed a professional website for GHF. The website results from intensive discussion between the GHF staff members and a Lost Boys team coordinated successively by Mercedes de Bruyn and Mirthe Blussé. It is now available under <http://www.amsterdamhermetica.nl> and <http://www.amsterdamhermetica.com>

The site consists of five main sections:

1. An introductory section explaining what is meant by “Western Esotericism” and “History of Hermetic Philosophy and related currents”. This section includes an overview of currents and an interactive “network of relationships” by means of which the visitor is enabled to explore the various dimensions of the field.
2. A section for prospective students, explaining the attractions of studying western esotericism, the structure and content of the BA courses and MA program, as well as other courses of related interest available at the UvA and at other Dutch universities. The section also contains a subsection where GHF staff members and students give a personal account of their motivations and their experiences in studying this field.
3. A section for current students, essentially focused on providing practical information for students involved in the BA courses and MA program. The “paper of the semester” can be published on-line in this section. Particularly important is the possibility for students to download course info and reading lists for each course directly from the site.
4. A section on research programs and organization of GHF. This section includes personal pages of permanent and temporary staff members, with CVs and bibliographies; an overview of GHF research projects; a subsection for news and events; subsections for the journal *Aries* and the monograph series *Gnostica* (both with the possibility of displaying tables of contents and summaries of all volumes); and information on sponsoring.
5. An interactive searchable database of new publications (articles or books) and new websites relevant to western esotericism. Visitors to the site have the possibility of adding new titles and uploading their own papers; these additions are screened by GHF before being made publicly available.



The homepage provides links to introductory pages in French, German and Italian, which contain summaries of the site contents. The titles of news and events are displayed on the homepage as well. From any section of the site, the visitor has access to a glossary of terms. The website is expected to play a crucial role in attracting new students from the Netherlands as well as from abroad, particularly in view of the new MA trajectory “Mysticism and Western Esotericism”.

Aries

During 2001 the first volume (2 issues) of *Aries: Journal for the Study of Western Esotericism* has been published by E.J. Brill academic publishers. At the time of writing, volume 2 nr. 1 has been published as well, and nr. 2 is in press. The journal has been developing very quickly. At the time of writing, the total number of subscriptions is 130 (90 individual; 40 institutional). This is considerably above the average for a new journal, and we can be confident that the number of subscriptions will continue to increase over the next years. Notwithstanding the strict standards of academic quality maintained in the manuscript review procedure, there have been no problems in securing sufficient copy, and at the time of writing there is already a surplus of book reviews. Reactions by colleagues to the journal have been uniformly positive.

Gnostica

In september 2001, the third volume in the series *Gnostica: Texts & Interpretations* (Peeters: Louvain) was published. It concerned a Festschrift of extraordinary length (948 pp.) and importance: Richard Caron, Joscelyn Godwin, Wouter J. Hanegraaff & Jean-Louis Vieillard-Baron (eds.), *Esotérisme, gnoses et imaginaire symbolique: Mélanges offerts à Antoine Faivre*. Several new manuscripts are under review.

Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism.

Editorial work on this reference work has steadily progressed, and will be continued through 2002.



APPENDIX

GHF Courses in Studiegids 2002-2003

Propedeuse

Titel: Introductie religiestudies

Studielast: 7

Semester: 1

Onderdeel: Propedeuse

Ingangseis: Geen

Docent: dr. O. Hammer

Inhoud: Deze module heeft een dubbele doelstelling: het leveren van basisinformatie over een aantal van de belangrijkste religies, en een introductie tot de terminologie en de methodiek van de religiewetenschap. Speciale aandacht zal worden besteed aan religieuze tradities die niet aan de orde komen in later modules van de BA religiestudies, d.w.z. aan religies buiten de sfeer van Christendom, Jodendom en Islam. De nadruk zal liggen op religies in de hedendaagse wereld, en in dit verband zal tevens worden ingegaan op de opkomst van seculaire wereldbeelden in de westerse wereld. Er zal verder aandacht worden besteed aan een aantal onderwerpen die relevant zijn over de grenzen van afzonderlijke religies heen, zoals religie en politiek, religie en gender, en religieuze globaliseringsprocessen.

Onderwijsvorm: Hoorcollege.

Studiemateriaal: Linda Woodhead (ed.), *Religions in the Modern World: Traditions and Transformations*, London 2001.

Kosten: ca. Euro 50,--

Toetsvorm: Schriftelijk tentamen met open vragen.

BA Modulen

Titel: Westerse esoterie (Hermetica I)



Studielast: 7

Semester: 1 (voltijd, deeltijd)

Onderdeel: Basisvak, keuzevak, minormodule

Ingangseis: 4 modules propedeuse

Docent(en): prof.dr. W.J. Hanegraaff

Inhoud: De module biedt een historisch overzicht van de ontwikkeling van “westers-esoterische” religieuze stromingen binnen het laat antieke hellenisme, de Christelijke cultuur en de moderne samenleving. Daarbij zal de nadruk liggen op de ontwikkelingen vanaf de Renaissance tot op heden (vanaf de opleving van de “hermetische filosofie” in de tweede helft van de vijftiende eeuw tot en met de New Age beweging in de huidige samenleving). De module heeft tot doel, inzicht te verschaffen in zowel de samenhang als de historische diversiteit van westers-esoterische religiositeit. Speciale aandacht wordt gegeven aan de vraag hoe deze vormen van religie zich verhouden tot de maatschappelijk dominante stromingen van Christendom en moderniteit.

Onderwijsvorm: Hoorcollege

Studiemateriaal: Verplicht: Frances A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, London & Chicago 1964; Joscelyn Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, Albany 1994, alsmede een serie artikelen. De literatuurlijst en het leesrooster zijn te downloaden op <http://www.amsterdamhermetica.nl> (sectie Current Students → BA courses)

Kosten: ca. Euro 85,--

Toetsvorm: Schriftelijk tentamen met open vragen.

Titel: Westerse Esoterie in de vroeg-moderne periode (Hermetica II)

Studielast: 7

Semester: 2 (voltijd, deeltijd)

Onderdeel: Verdiepingsvak, keuzevak, minormodule

Ingangseis: Westerse esoterie (Hermetica I)

Docent: dr. J.-P. Brach

Inhoud: In deze module wordt de geschiedenis van de westers-esoterische religiositeit in de vroeg-moderne periode (15^e-18^e eeuw) behandeld door middel van close reading van representatieve teksten en ander primair bronnenmateriaal, alsmede een selectie van secundaire teksten. Ieder jaar staat een bepaald thema centraal, dat aan de hand van het te



bestuderen materiaal systematisch wordt uitgediept. In het kader van werkgroeprepresentaties en een afsluitend paper bekwamen studenten zich in het op eigen kracht zoeken en selecteren van secundaire bronnen en het kritisch gebruik ervan bij het interpreteren van primair bronnenmateriaal. Actieve participatie in de werkgroepdiscussies is een vereiste. Een werkbezoek aan de *Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica* maakt vast onderdeel uit van het programma.

Onderwijsvorm: werkgroep

Studiemateriaal: Downloadable informatie over het centrale thema, een bijbehorende literatuurlijst en een leesrooster wordt vanaf een maand voor aanvang van de module beschikbaar gemaakt op <http://www.amsterdamhermetica.nl>: sectie Current Students → Current BA courses.

Voertaal: Engels

Kosten: ca. Euro 50,--

Toetsvorm: mondeling presentatie en schriftelijk paper

Titel: Westerse esoterie sinds de Verlichting (Hermetica III)

Studielast: 7

Semester: 1 (voltijd)

Onderdeel: Verdiepingsvak, keuzevak, minormodule

Ingangseis: Hermetica I

Docent: dr. O. Hammer

Inhoud: Deze module heeft tot doel, de student een dieper inzicht te geven in de belangrijkste veranderingprocessen in de Westerse intellectuele cultuur, en de effecten die deze hebben gehad op de ontwikkeling van westers-esoterische stromingen. Enkele voorbeelden zijn de ontwikkeling van een natuurwetenschap op mechanische grondslagen, de opkomst van historisch-kritisch Bijbelonderzoek, veranderende geschiedsopvattingen, en de nieuwe discipline van de academische psychologie. Dergelijke veranderingen zullen worden onderzocht aan de hand van een specifiek thema (per jaar wisselend) dat van belang is in de Westerse esoterie in deze periode. Het thema wordt uitgediept aan de hand van de analyse van representatief bronnenmateriaal, of (in het geval van hedendaagse vormen van Westerse esoterie) door veldonderzoek. Actieve participatie in de werkgroepdiscussies is een vereiste.

Onderwijsvorm: Werkgroep



Studiemateriaal: Downloadable informatie over het centrale thema en een bijbehorende literatuurlijst wordt beschikbaar gemaakt op <http://www.amsterdamhermetica.nl> (sectie Current Students -> BA courses)

Kosten: ca. Euro 50,--

Toetsvorm: Mondelinge presentatie en schriftelijk paper.

MA modulen

Titel: Western Esotericism and the Quest for Enlightenment I: Theosophy, Illuminism and the Age of Reason.

Studielast: 7

Semester: 1

Onderdeel: MA discipline-specific course

Ingangseis: BA religious studies or equivalent. However, students are expected to have done some extra-curricular reading (see info on <http://www.amsterdamhermetica.nl>: section "Prospective students" → MA Program).

Docent: prof.dr. W.J. Hanegraaff

Inhoud: In this course we will investigate the complex relation between Western esotericism and the Enlightenment, focusing on a number of specific examples. The so-called Age of Reason was also one of the golden ages of esotericism. Moreover, contrary to popular assumptions, many esoteric currents in this period cannot be simply interpreted as "irrational" reactions to the Enlightenment; rather, many of them were themselves deeply influenced by the new rationalism. Also, the 18th century is the period in which Western esotericism changes from a tradition of intellectual history into a tradition of religious minority institutions. An important role in this regard was played by Freemasonry, which created a context where traditional class divisions broke down and an innovative kind of encounter could take place – in some masonic contexts at least – between esoteric thinking and Enlightenment humanitarian ideals.

Onderwijsvorm: Combined seminar/lecture format.

Studiemateriaal: The reading list will be downloadable a month before start of the course from <http://www.amsterdamhermetica.nl>: section Currents Students → Current MA program.



Kosten: ca. Euro 60,--

Toetsvorm: public presentation and written paper.

Titel: Renaissance Esotericism I: Jewish-Pagan-Christian Syncretism

Studielaast: 7

Semester: 1

Onderdeel: MA discipline-specific course

Ingangseis: BA religious studies or equivalent. Students are expected to have done some extra-curricular reading (see info on <http://www.amsterdamhermetica.nl>: section “Prospective students” → MA Program).

Docent: dr. J.-P. Brach

Inhoud: Neoplatonism, late-antique theurgy, hermetism and Jewish traditions – mystical and otherwise – were put to use by many Renaissance writers in order to add new meaning to mainstream Christian religion. We will investigate the resulting syncretic processes in the late 15th and 16th centuries, resulting in a brand of modern Western esotericism which reflects a deep intellectual and spiritual crisis within Western Christianity. The ways in which pagan and Jewish symbols, methods and hermeneutics were adapted to a Christian outlook will come under close scrutiny, as well as the blending of these “biblical” traditions with those of Greek philosophy and of magic. Relevant documents (printed or in manuscript form) will be read, translated and analyzed.

Onderwijsvorm: Combined seminar/lecture format

Studiemateriaal: The reading list will be downloadable a month before the start of the course from <http://www.amsterdamhermetica.nl>: section Currents Students → Current MA program.

Kosten: ca. Euro 60,--

Toetsvorm: public presentation and written paper

Titel: Occult Trajectories I: Mesmerism-Spiritualism-New Thought

Studielaast: 7

Trimester: 2

Onderdeel: MA discipline-specific course



Ingangseis: BA religious studies or equivalent. Students are expected to have done some extra-curricular reading (see info on <http://www.amsterdamhermetica.nl>: section “Prospective students” → MA Program).

Docent: dr. O. Hammer

Inhoud: This course will deal with the several highly influential currents in modern Western culture that have the work of the German physician Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815) as their point of departure. Mesmer created a form of ritualized healing that his disciples and followers were to develop in distinct ways. Some of the more spectacular and seemingly paranormal effects of Mesmer’s treatments led to the development of spiritualist movements, which in turn provoked the birth of parapsychology. The purportedly paranormal abilities of some mesmerized patients led others to conclude that the mind has vast untapped potentials, a belief that inspired the development of several religious and therapeutic movements based on the belief in “mind over matter”. Among these are the New Thought denominations and Christian Science. Yet another line of development led to the birth of clinical hypnosis, as well as Freudian psychoanalysis. Beside reviewing these trajectories of Western culture, this course will introduce a number of methods and theories useful in understanding such ideas and practices.

Onderwijsvorm: Combined seminar/lecture format

Studiemateriaal: the reading list will be downloadable a month before start of the course from <http://www.amsterdamhermetica.nl> (section Current Students -> MA courses)

Kosten: approximately Euro 60,--

Toetsvorm: public presentation and written paper