



TRENDS IN OCCULTISM

THE FORBIDDEN RITUAL

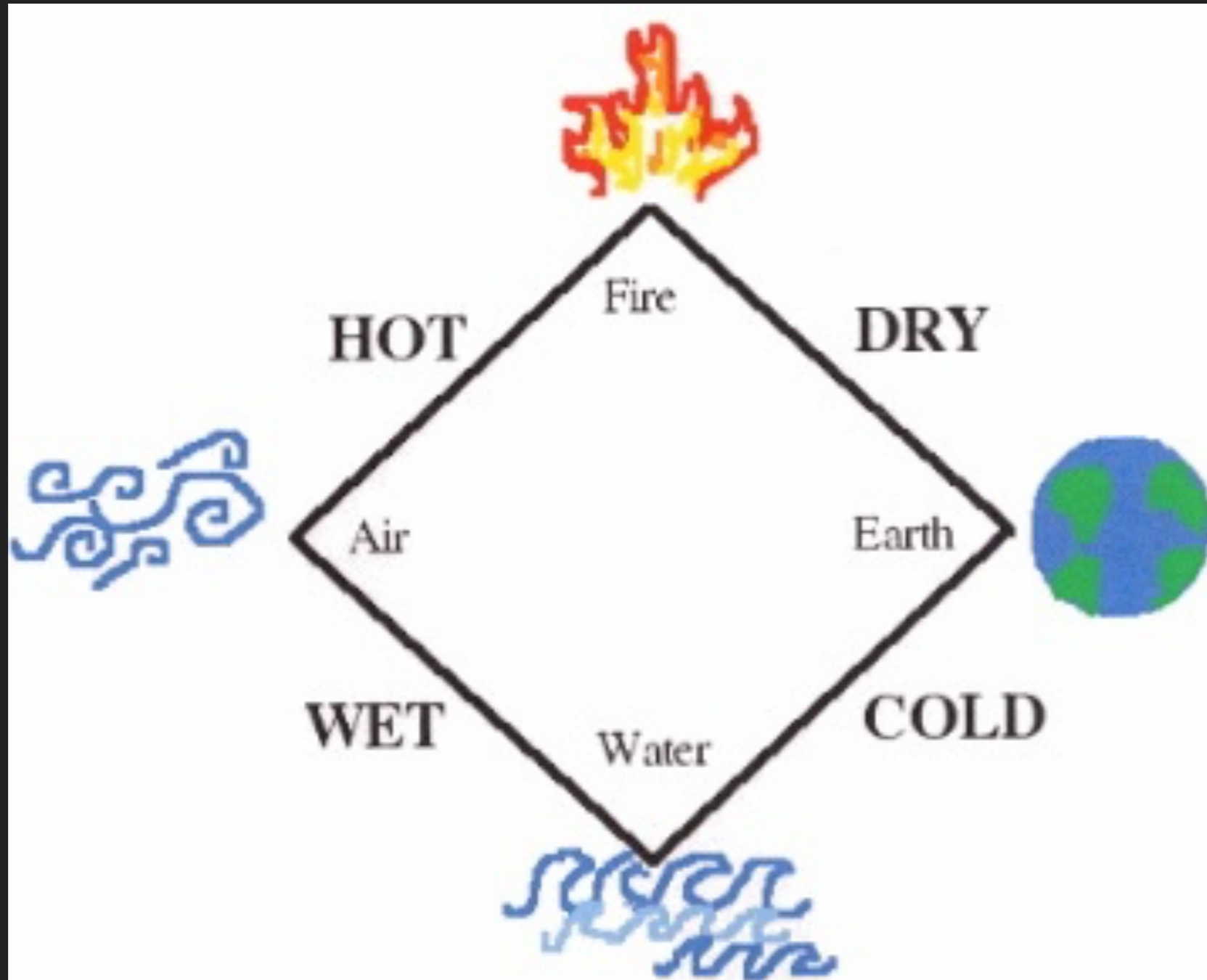
ALCHEMY: THE ART OF TRANSMUTATION

- ▶ Experimental alchemy
 - ▶ Transmutation of material, usually metal, in to another material, usually gold
 - ▶ The creation of the homunculus
- ▶ Spiritual alchemy
 - ▶ The transmutation of the believer or the soul

A HISTORY

- ▶ 1140s: Robert of Chester translates the “Liber de compositione alchimiae” into latin.
- ▶ 1250s: Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas and Roger Bacon getting interested. The great demonology debate.
- ▶ 1317: Papal injunction againsts alchemy
- ▶ mid-14th century: Alchemy becomes infused with spirituality and a means through which to bring about the end of times
- ▶ 15th century onwards: alchemy becomes a personal spiritual journey in some interpretations, a science in others.
- ▶ 17th century: Alchemy comes more and more under fire and ends up a delusion from our ignorant past

ALCHEMICAL PROCEDURES AND BASIC THEORY: ARISTOTELIAN PHYSICS



THE PROCESS

- ▶ Nigredo (Destruction, chaos)
- ▶ Albedo (Purification, washing away of impurities)
- ▶ Citrinitas (Transmutation)
- ▶ Rubedo (the end stage)

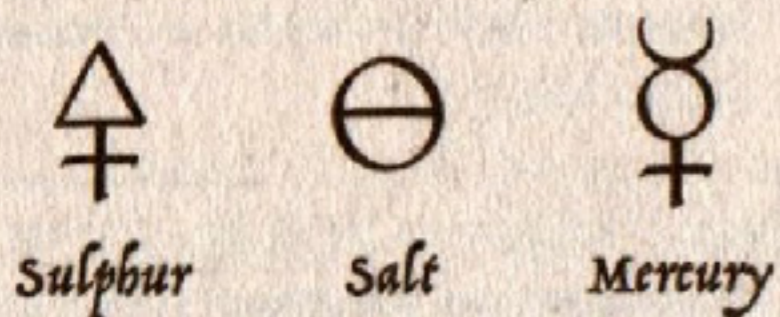
IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

- ▶ Philosopher's stone
 - ▶ Composed of mercury and sulphur (Paracelsus adds salt)

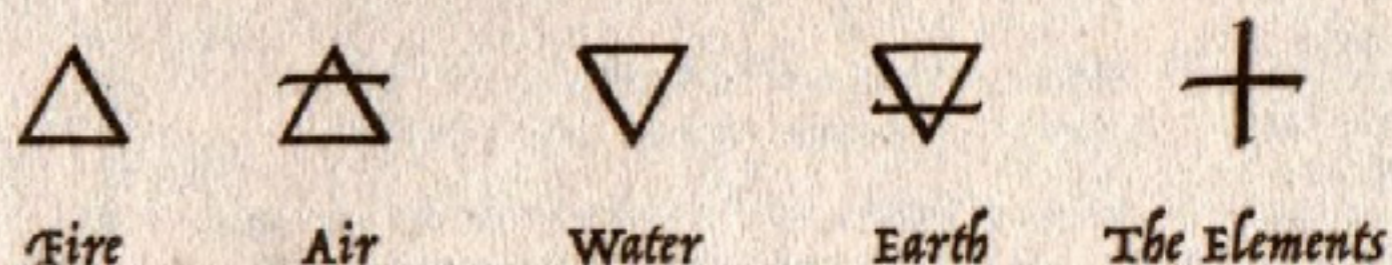
IMPORTANT SYMBOLS

ALCHEMICAL SYMBOLS

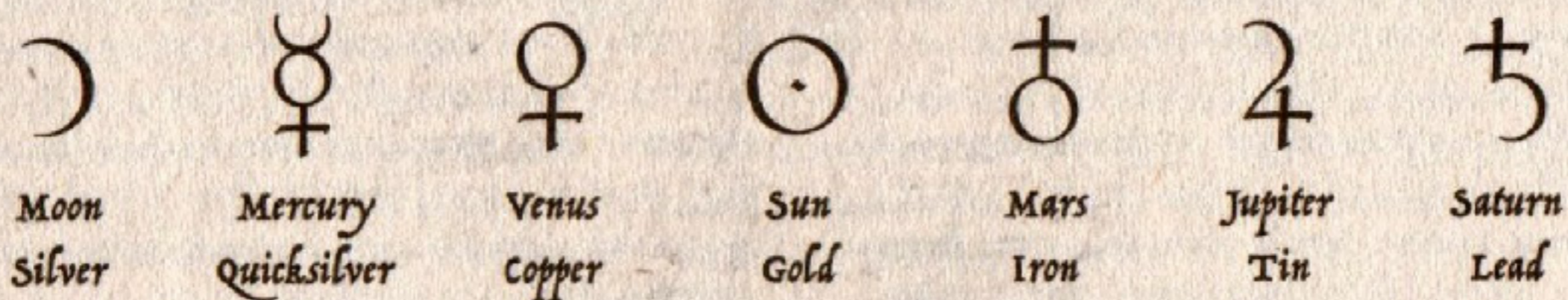
THREE PRINCIPLES



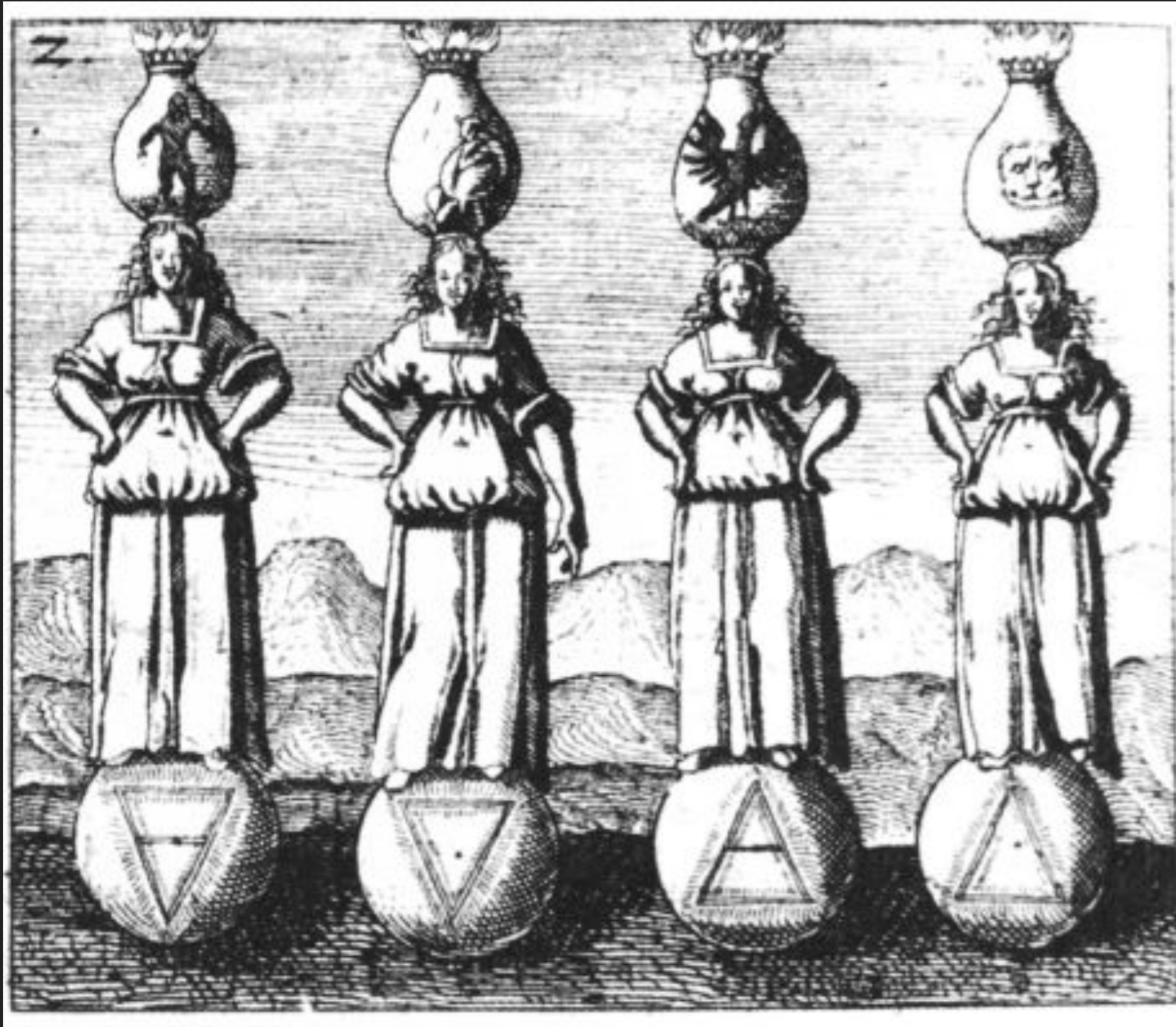
THE FOUR ELEMENTS



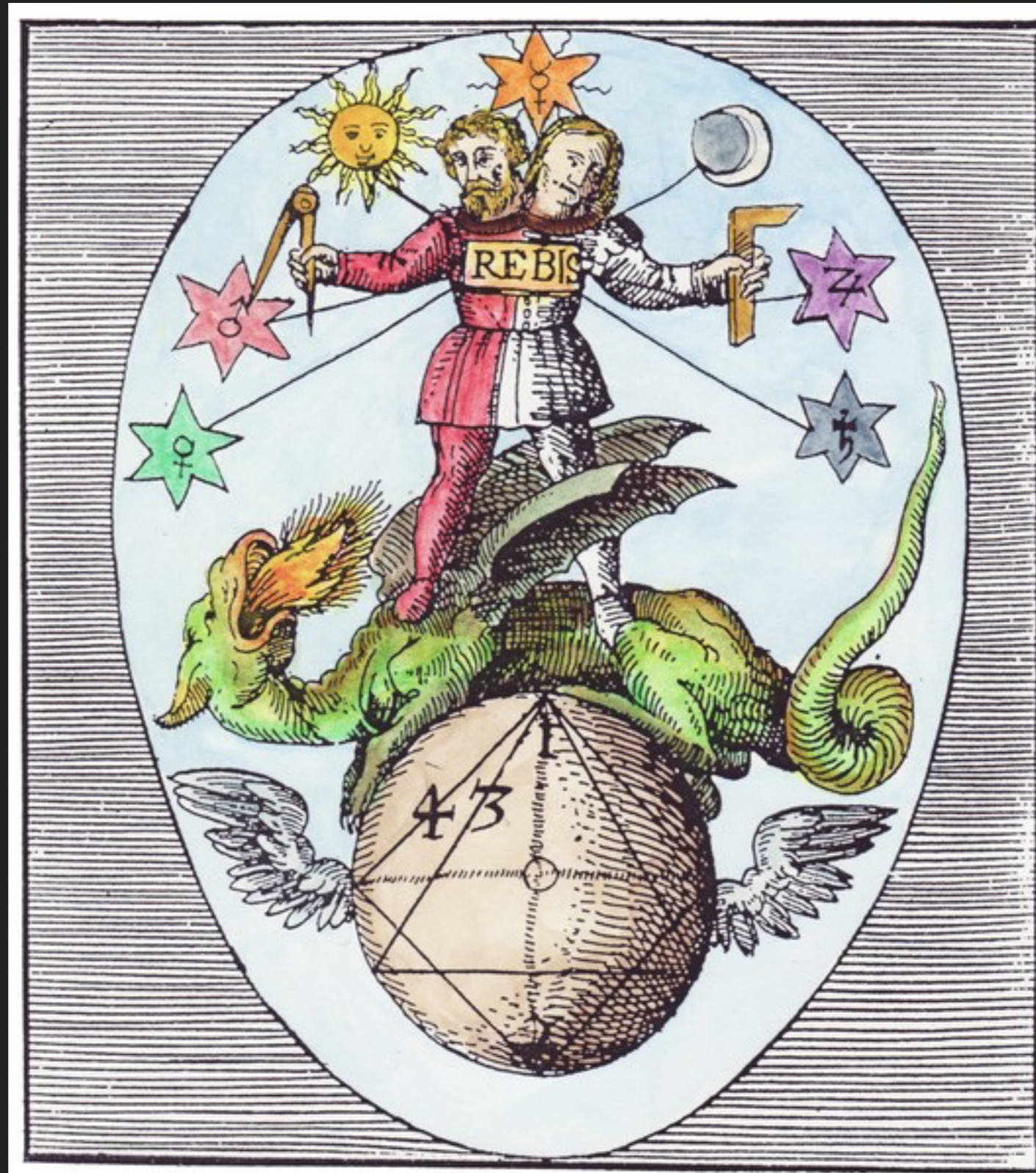
PLANETS & METALS



ILLUSTRATIONS



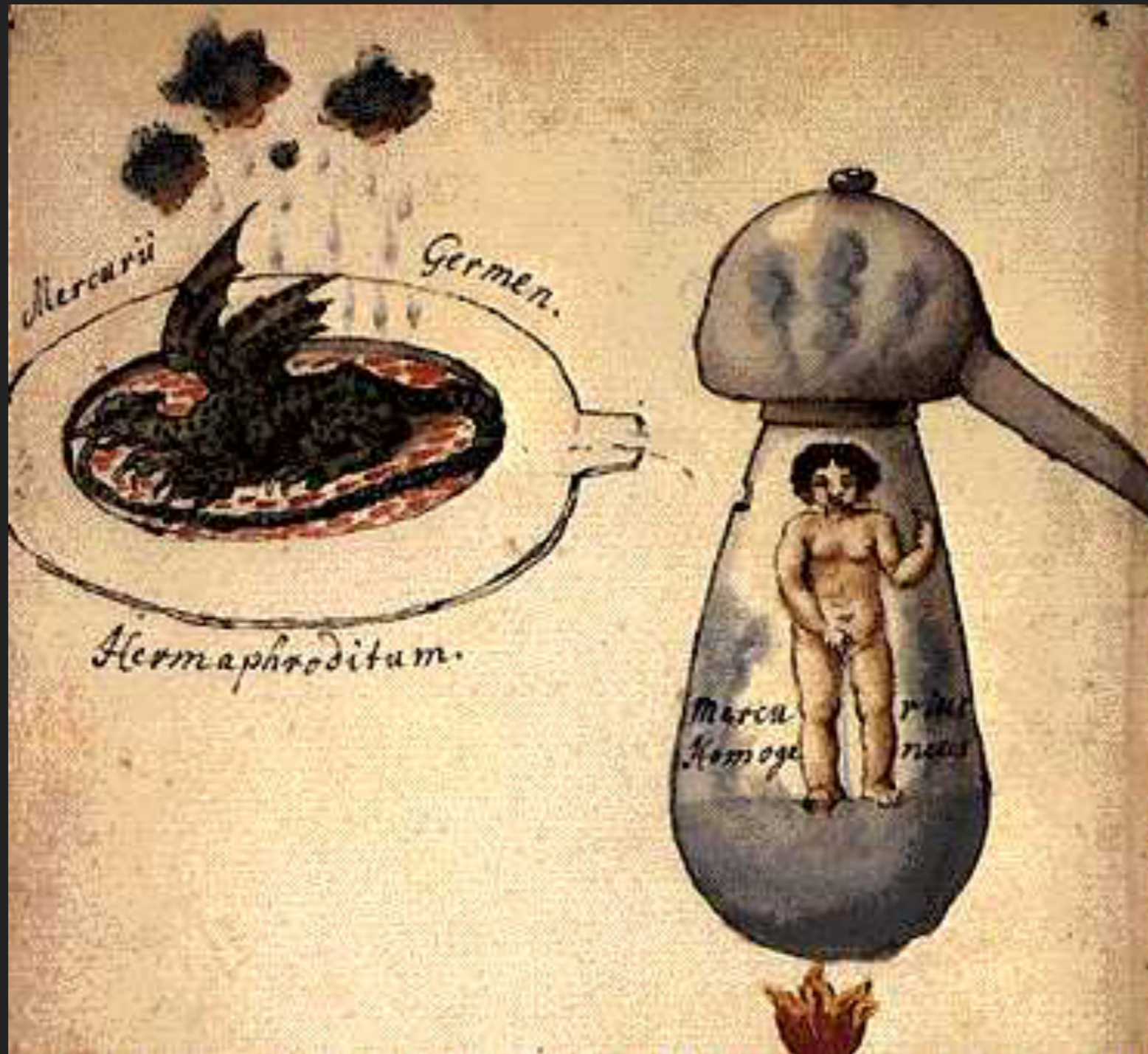
ILLUSTRATIONS



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ALCHEMY VS ASTROLOGY

- ▶ Unified data sets
- ▶ Barnum statements
- ▶ Chaotic datasets
- ▶ Sporadic results (Behaviourism)

THE FORBIDDEN RITUAL

THE POPULAR IMAGE OF ANY OCCULT RITUAL IS THAT IT INVOLVES LOTS OF:

SEX

DRUGS

SACRIFICE (INCLUDING HUMAN)

DEVIL WORSHIP

19TH & 20TH CENTURY COUNTER-CULTURE

- ▶ The occult revival saw the rise of the occult as a counter-cultural current. As a result, it came to include practices which the general public would disapprove of. These rituals became based on:
 - ▶ Reinterpretations of authentic sources
 - ▶ Reinterpretations of contemporary commentaries (Medieval descriptions of witch craft by inquisitors)
 - ▶ New materials (often masquerading as originals)

THE MAGIC OF ABRAMELIN; THE FOREWORD BY MCGREGOR MATHERS

“[...] in order to control and make service of the Lower and Evil, the knowledge of the Higher and the Good is requisite (i.e., in the language of the Theosophy of the present day, the knowledge of the Higher Self)”

NEWLY INTRODUCED THEMES: THE OCCULT GOES PSYCHOLOGICAL

- ▶ The self, and magic as an extension of the self.
- ▶ The will; Magic as a means to influence and if possible dominate, ones surroundings
- ▶ Magic as a window into the psyche (it all happens in your head)
- ▶ Magic as a means to destroy the ego and rise above ourselves

FORBIDDEN RITUAL IN THE MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN

- ▶ An actual injunction against certain rituals, pertained in the introduction to the ritual, because of the extreme, often material, effects the performing the ritual can have.
 - ▶ Coming under the influence of the Devil
 - ▶ Irreversible changes in the natural order of things

ALTERED STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

- ▶ Altered states of consciousness (ASC) are states in which the mind perceives reality in a radically different way from normal perception.
 - ▶ Drugs, usually hallucinogenics
 - ▶ Mental exercise such as meditation, hypnosis, etc.
 - ▶ Deprivation (food, impulses, sleep, water, etc.)
 - ▶ Psychological disorders (Schizophrenia, sleep paralysis, etc.)

HALLUCINOGENIC & OTHER DRUGS

- ▶ Voluntary consumption
 - ▶ As part of a ritual
 - ▶ The drug as a window into higher worlds (A dynamic which changed with the demystification of mind altering substances)
- ▶ Involuntary consumption
 - ▶ Through fungi on bread, the accidental consumption of certain mushrooms, etc.