

Study Guide _1

Western Hermetic Tradition - Introduction

Originally published under the title, 'Hermetics, K- C- Q- abbala[h], Golden Dawn and Craft / Wicca', this tutorial provides the historical context for a practical understanding of the Western Mystico-magical Tradition, otherwise known as the Western Hermetic Tradition.

From a Gaian perspective, the tradition culminates in the Golden Dawn [GD] and Wicca [CR]. The main difference between GD- 'Qabalah' and Wiccan 'Craft' approaches is that GDQ is 'high' (uses elaborate ritual pathworking with liturgical flavour based on the Q- version of Tree of Life + customs); whereas CR is 'low' (uses simple 'found objects' + linking formulae, according to '8 paths' of Craft-magic only 1 of which involves pathworking or 'rising on the planes', but all of which employ traditional Craft tools). Both may or may not be 'theurgic' (invoking Anima consciousness), although this is the central practice of the Gaian Covenant.

[** Note that 'Hermeticism' has sometimes also been known as 'Hermetism', which should NOT be confused with 'Hermitism' of the 'anchorites' and monks who live separate from the wider communities either as recluses, or as monks or nuns in monasteries or convents, often originally in the desert. The two traditions have however sometimes coincided, which may make the terms confusing at first. They can be orthographically distinguished by 'i' and 'e'].

[1] HERMETICISM

Esoteric religious, philosophical or magical tradition based on ancient Graeco-Egyptian doctrines attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, an invoked manifestation incorporating and combining aspects of sacred texts of Egyptian god-angel 'Thoth' and Greek god-angel 'Hermes', both concerned with speech, symbols and magic. The two gods are said to be one, but revealed differently in each of the two ancient cultures. Trismegistus united or 'syncretised' the traditions into one, and is considered an 'ectype', 'octave', 'hamr' or 'manifestation' of the syncretised god. Some believe he literally existed in human substance, others that he was an invoked spirit who dictated his teachings.

The tradition also claims to be a 'prisca theologica', a theological cosmology present in all religions and given to humanity from the dawn of time. The Graeco-Egyptian tradition is said to be a late Hellenistic codification and fulfillment of this, using perfect symbols and correspondences revealed by the god himself [!]

It is the basis of the 'western esoteric tradition'. It consists of original 'Hermetic texts', 'commentaries' and later [more recent] 'Hermetic philosophers'.

Most medieval occult philosophers viewed Hermes Trismegistus as an actual [pre-Christian] pagan prophet, who 'foresaw the coming of Christianity'. This view was shared by Lactantius, Cyprian of Carthage, and even St. Augustine [who, however, denounced Trismegistus for idolatry, wrongly accusing the tradition of poly-theism]. Catholic theologians Albertus Magnus (1200-1280), St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) and Roger Bacon (1219-1292) incorporated hermetic principles, including alchemy and astrology.

The mystic Christian poet Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) codified the Christian hermetic cosmology, introduced the developed concept of lucid dream pathworking to scry that cosmology, and further set out principles of hermetic astrology, spiritual alchemy, and gender alchemy.

This period of Hermeticism climaxed with Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa (1486-1535) who compiled the magical treatise 'On Occult Philosophy', whilst Paracelsus (1493-1541) developed medical astrology and Renaissance alchemy; both influenced by early Neo-platonic hermeticism.

Later Christian philosophers of 'magic' during the European Renaissance (1400-1600) developed, codified and enriched earlier materials, often distilling, combining and supporting them with more developed principles of 'alchemy' and 'astrology'. These included Marsilio Ficino (1433- 1499) [translator of 'the Hermetics']; Giovanni 'Pico' della Mirandola (1463-1494) [codifier of Christian Cabala]; and Giordano Bruno (1548- 1600) [astrologer].

The basic texts of Hermeticism are the 'Corpus Hermetica' by Ficino; the 'Emerald Tablet' [encrypted code for transmutation by means of alchemy]; texts attributed to Egyptian priest-magician Imhotep, an octave of god-angel 'Thoth-Hermes' (late 27th C. BCE) [and similar]; and the Nag Hamadi 'Gnostic' library [Egyptian-Greek 'wisdom' texts] including early neo-Platonists.

There are three accounts explaining Hermes being surnamed 'Tris-megistus' or 'Thrice-Great'; these effectively map out the subject matter of 'Hermeticism'. First, in the Emerald Tablet (orig. in Arabic: ca. 7th C), it is said 'he [Trismegistus] knew the three parts of wisdom of the whole universe', which are listed as 'alchemy' [1], 'astrology' [2] and 'theurgy' [3] [or 'Divine Alchemy', for manifestation or invocation of the Divine Elohim]. Secondly, in the 'Poimandres' (Ficino: 1507), he is called 'greatest philosopher [magus], priest and king', applying his hermetic [magical] knowledge to 'cosmology and metaphysics' [4], 'spiritual evolution' [5] and 'world government' [divine politics] [6]. He does this by manifesting Ideas through the Three Hypostases of 'Pleroma' [Presence of Godhead /1st triad of angels]; 'Nous' [Divine Mind/ 2nd triad of angels]; and 'World Soul' or 'Astral Realm of Souls' [Soul/ 3rd triad of angels].

Thirdly and finally, St. Thomas Aquinas reported that Trismegistus 'arrived at something akin to the doctrine of the Trinity' (Summa: 1274). The Suda [10th C] say he is 'thrice-greatest ... on account of his praise of the Trinity [and his fore-knowledge that] there is one Divine Nature in the Trinity' (ibid). Hence hermetic studies include theological topics- 'patristic doctrines' [re 'fount of Godhead' [7]; 'Messianic doctrines' [transcendental self, Divine incarnation] [8]; and 'doctrine of Spirit' [or 'Anima of God'] [9].

[2] K- KABBALA, C- CABALA & Q- QABALAH

Jewish 'Kabbalah' [with a 'K-'] is the oral mystical tradition of Judaism.

It explains the cosmology of the Four Worlds of reality in terms of a 'Tree of Life' model, and offers a magical method of pathworking on the Tree by scrying along a 'lightning path' from each of ten spheres of divine meditation to the next. Moving up the Tree towards Godhead is a process of mystical meditation to raise consciousness to the level of the Divine. Moving down the Tree it is possible to draw spirit-qualities or entities into the lowest realm of phenomenal experience [=Earth, or Malkuth].

Each World is defined by three Sephiroth [spheres], which are reached in meditation through correspondences that involve both chants [sacred Divine Names], and imagined qualities or arrangements [based on number, sound, colour, body part, angelic presence, odour, taste, virtue, etc].

Sephiroth of the Tree of Life are considered to be 'stages of Creation', 'spiritual motivational states' and 'living divine regions'.

The whole Ten Sephiroth form the Four Worlds. The lowest World, that of the spatio-temporal universe [Earth= Malkuth] is unique in that it occupies only one Sephirah. There are paths, straight lines, connecting each Sephirah to each other [these paths are called 'Cinneroth']. Jewish magicians of great skill might move on paths other than the 'Lightning Path', but they are dangerous.

An elusive [11th?] 'Sphere' [or Void?] of 'Da'ath' represents a pre- or post- Creation product of the union of intellect and knowledge, which is variously interpreted as a potential integrator for enlightenment, or ignored or treated negatively in other Kabbalistic approaches. It is not counted among the Ten Sephiroth.

All [10] Sephiroth represent Heavens*, and are Good. The whole system, or interconnecting 'Tree of Life', is experienced as a recapitulated mystical Tree at the centre of each of the Four Worlds. This is rather like an infinite regress of mirrors, except that each experience of the Tree allows real [magical /causal] interactions. [*1st to 6th Heavens are Sephiroth 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4; 7th Heaven 'Araboth' is Triad of SS- 3, 2 and 1; but the heaven of S- 10 is an aspect of Malkuth containing a vision of All Seven Heavens, in late Kabbalah known as the 'Sabbath of Earthly Delights'].

Most Jews accept that the Kabbalah was codified in a work known as 'The Zohar' (13th C), as interpreted by the Rabbi's, especially Rabbi Luria (16th C). It is regarded as providing an oral religious and mystical tradition no less authoritative than that of the scriptures. It is also regarded as a serious undertaking, with terrible risks in the Earth-dimension, therefore normally forbidden to those under 40 years.

'Lurianic Kabbalah' was developed by Rabbi Isaac Luria (1534-1572) and the Safed mystics of Palestine. It looks forward to a 'world Messiah' or 'incarnation of Godhead', regarded as One 'Elohim' [plural masculine and feminine, yet combined and beyond both].

Jews regard The Shekinah as a feminine 'indwelling of Divine Presence', especially as the Messianic Spirit [or Bride] of the Sabbath, who may be invoked through Kabbalah.

Christian 'Renaissance' 'Cabala' [with a 'C-'] is a formulated Renaissance adaptation and development of Jewish Kabbalah to Christian mysticism. It incorporates early aspects of Hermeticism and Gnosticism [neo-Platonism], such as re-defining the Worlds of the Tree of Life in terms of the Three 'Hypostases' of Plotinus, and the Three 'Choirs' [Triads] of Angels of Dionysus (6th C).

Some system of early Cabala was practiced by the Templars, mystic guilds of Knights returning from the medieval Crusades. It is likely that their early practices had Moslem and Arab, as well as Jewish influences. They used Cabala for magical purposes, including healing, blessing [and removal of curses], and theurgy [invocation of angels].

'Cabala' was 'formulated' by Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1486), who tried to bring together Pagan, Jewish, Islamic and Christian beliefs and explain how they might all be shown to be true, by translating concepts in one to those in another, and proposing Cabala as a mystical method of pathworking to semi-mythic worlds where entities from each might be met.

The system included adaptations that involved astrological, alchemic and theurgic concepts and correspondences. [It did NOT, however, anticipate the magical references of 19th C. late hermeticism, such as the systems of Levi and Papus, and later still those of the Tarot].

Cabalists regarded the 'supernal triad' of Sephiroth as constituting the 'Land of Sarras', i.e. of the 'Holy Grail'. The central [6th] Sephirah 'Paradise of the Sun' was regarded as a type of Paradise where all paths lead to the Cosmic Christos, gatekeeper between the unknowable Godhead and the Soul which exists mainly in the lowest Sephirah of Malkuth.

The Abyss placed below the Supernal Triad prevents actual bodily entrance to the Land of Sarras. The emptiness of 'Da'ath' represents destruction of Lucifer's Sephirah after the expulsion of the fallen angels from Heaven. It contains evil spirits, half-formed 'qliphoth' and spirits of the damned.

Hermetic 'Qabalah' [with a 'Q-'] is the occultic tradition, or most recent development from Kabbalah and Cabala. This incorporated other mystical systems, such as especially Tarot-hermetic symbolism, Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism, but also Enochian magic, Theosophy, Tantra, Orphism [revival of Greek Eleusinian mysteries] and Pagan mythology.

The tradition is defined by its use of Tarot-hermetic symbology to enrich and define the Sephiroth, and to increase the Magician's or Mystic's ability to 'rise on the planes'. Thus Qabalists claim to be able to travel (more purposefully than other traditions) in lucid dream by consciously directed scrying meditation on the Tree of Life.

Qabalah is highly ritualised, using ceremonial magic and elaborate correspondences. It derives from the rites of Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism, whose grades it closely follows. It also derives from three late sources of the Western Esoteric Tradition (all magical). Specifically, these are Enochian or 'angel' magic of John Dee (1527-1609); 'ritual magic' of Eliphas Levi (1810-1875); and 'magical Rosicrucianism' of Gerard Encause 'Papus' (1865-1916). It also added Vedic, Taoist and Buddhist elements.

The movement was much influenced by the 'Theosophy' of Helena Blavatsky (1831-1891), which included concepts such as 'spiritualism', 'telepathy' and 'new age'. Outdated and racist elements were removed, especially following the work of Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), founder of 'anthroposophy'.

It eventually led to a pan-European movement, the 'Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn', set up along Masonic and Theosophist lines. The GD specifically set out to develop Qabalah codifying the symbols of the 'Tarot' in terms of the Sephiroth and Cinneroth [Paths] of the Tree of Life. Use of the Tarot, Ceremonial Magic, its Masonic set of ritual grades derived from Rosicrucian practices, Theosophical concepts, and its use of Tantric Magic set it apart from its forerunners.

In Qabalah, an infernal 'Shadow Tree' is recognised running beneath the Tree of Life, deriving from and leading to the Abyss of Da'ath, populated by fallen angels and demons, and communicating via portals in Malkuth [space-time], as well as via 'pitfalls' in the Sephiroth themselves. Half-formed 'Qlippoth' [evil spirits] and 'Shedim' [damned souls] reside in Da'ath.

Qabalists may practise Magic [drawing down], for good or evil; may use the ritual grades to 'raise consciousness to the Divine', achieving progressive enlightenment; or may practice 'Divine Theurgy' to manifest immanent Divinity [usually regarded as feminine Spirit] and thereby achieve a 'New Age' [i.e. per Divine Alchemy]. However, 'theurgy' may also be abused to invoke 'demons'.

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[3] GOLDEN DAWN (1888 to 1947)

This represented the culmination of Hermetic Qabalah and the Western Esoteric Tradition.

Its founders were William Robert Woodman [police surgeon, horticulturalist and leading English Rosicrucian] (1828-1891); William Wynn Westcott [coroner, theosophist and freemason] (1848-1925); and Samuel Liddell 'MacGregor' Mathers [occultist, Master Mason and Rosicrucian] (1854-1918). The first Temple, 'Isis-Urania' was set up in 1888, with Grade Rituals based on 'magical' freemasonry, and a curriculum including Qabalah, occult Tarot, astrology, alchemy and geomancy.

A distinguishing feature was that the 'Secret Chiefs' of the highest grades of the GD could only be contacted by telepathy, spiritualism and other theosophical techniques specifically through Mathers, who became sole founding leader after 1896.

Although rooted in the revival of occult Christianity (early Cabalism its first manifestation; 19th C. Rosicrucian Qabalah its second), it was also a mutually supportive mix of freemasonry, spiritualism, theosophy, psychodrama, tantrism and the frankly magical teachings of Eliphas Levi. The 'Golden Dawn' was committed to a 'New Age', but became increasingly open to other non-Christian religious ideas, experimentation in astral travel and telepathy, and exotic mystical experiences; Rosicrucian Christian elements began to fade.

At the same time GD sought to generate and codify a vastly growing number of magical correspondences; Graeco-Egyptian, and later Eastern and other deities, as angelic and planetary octaves; and a body of ceremonial grades and rituals, many involving complex theatrical staging. Tantric magic and theurgy became prominent.

Despite [or because of?] being an 'occult' [secret] society, the GD attracted a large membership of the leading bohemian figures of the age, including a growing number of artists, actors, poets, writers and intellectuals, many members of other orders and religions.

-- Florence Farr [London stage actress: central figure, who attracted many others], Sara Allgood [Irish actress], Arthur Waite [mystic], Aleister Crowley [occultist], Algernon Blackwood [supernatural writer], W.B. Yeats [poet], Charles Bennett [buddhist], Sir Arthur Conan Doyle [author], Robert Felkin [missionary], Arthur Machen [Welsh author], Edith Nesbit [childrens' author], Maud Gonne [Irish revolutionary], Annie Horniman [theatre producer], Bram Stoker [author of Dracula], Pamela Colman Smith [painter], Evelyn Underhill [Christian mystic], Charles Williams [poet, Rosicrucian and theologian], Frederick Gardiner [stockbroker], Sax Rohmer [author of Fu Manchu], Moina Mathers [artist], J.W. Brodie-Innes [lawyer] -

Due to personality clashes with other members, and frequent absences on the continent, Mathers' authority was questioned among more serious members of the Inner [2nd] Order. This was exacerbated by his elevation of Aleister Crowley, who was unpopular with other members.

In 1899 there was widespread revolt as Adepts wanted to make direct contact with the Secret Chiefs without Mathers as intermediary. There was also substantial disagreement over the overall direction of GD.

By January 1900 two distinct factions had formed, and by March the Adepts forced a split, with Mathers [and Crowley] expelled from the Order. The Isis-Urania Temple also eventually collapsed, after a splinter group called 'Sphere' led by Farr became preoccupied with astral travel. Members of the remaining GD split soon after, leaving four distinct GD groups.

The first 'Yeats-Felkin-Waite' faction was ultimately concerned with continuity of 'original [more serious] GD-practices', and comprised two sub-groups--

(1) 'Stella Matutina' [orig. 'Morgonrothe'] group, [1900-37], which consisted of the principal GD-Adepts, at first led by Felkin (1853-1926) until he departed for New Zealand [1917]. Members such as Yeats, whose orientation was magical, fell away as the Group became more mystically and theosophically oriented [1921]. Mystic psycho-drama was later reinstated by Dion Fortune at the Hermes Temple in Bristol [1919-1937], as part of a blend of ritual freemasonry, feminist Qabalah, and theosophy.

Dion Fortune, alias Violet Firth (1890-1946) also joined other related groups, including the 'Hammersmith Masonic Lodge' as well as the remnant 'GD- A.O.' [1919], before forming the 'Christian Mystic Lodge of the Theosophical Society' and 'Fraternity of the Inner Light' [1927]. From her earliest practice, she was both a 'ceremonial magician' and a Christian feminist 'theurgist', concerned with invoking and manifesting consciousness of the 'feminine Spirit' associated with 'New Age' by means of Qabalah and trance theurgy [Hermes Lodge active member of SM from 1919, nominally from 1927 to 1937; leader of the spin-off 'Fellowship of Inner Light' from 1927 to 1946].

During the later interwar period [1934-37], the group was briefly led by Israel Regardie (1907-1985), who tried to instill a more rigorous approach. However, when the Hermes Temple became semi-redundant, Regardie instead began establishing Temples in America, through a valid branch of the GD initiatory lineage which he viewed as an 'alchemical melting pot where the New Age was incubating' [1937-].

(2) 'GD-Rosicrucians' [1902-1942] led by Waite (1857-1942) formed the 'Societas Rosicruciae in Anglia' [1902], which then became 'Fellowship of the Rosy Cross' [1915]. These were specifically Christian-occultists. Later Charles Williams formed the 'Society for the Co-inherence', based on Christian theurgy, or 'building up consciousness towards the Divine', through 'substitution' and 'exchange'.

Against both of these offshoots, the 'Mathers-Crowley' faction was more concerned with pursuing 'magic for its own sake', but early split between GD-rite Mathers loyalists and Crowleyn Thelemites--

(3) 'Alpha et Omega' or 'A.O.' [1903-39] consisted of 'ceremonial magicians' led by Mathers (1854-1918) and later by Brodie-Innes (1848-1923). Ritual grades followed the original GD plan, with a direction roughly equating to a combination of 'magical freemasonry' with 'mystic theatre'. After 1923 it was led by Moina Mathers, but ceased operating in 1939 at the outbreak of WW2.

(4) 'Astrum Argentum' or 'A.A.' [1907-47] was /is an international GD- descended organisation formulated by Crowley (1875-1947) to practice eclectic, exoteric and synergic ceremonial magic based on the Thelemite doctrine 'Do what you will', Crowley's system of Tarot and other correspondences [Liber 777], theurgy of ambivalent daemons, and 'altered states of consciousness' [some drug-induced]. It combined original and improved GD-rituals with Buddhist and experimental techniques.

In [1912-] Crowley became head of the British 'Ordo Templis Orientis' or 'O.T.O.' concerned with 'Goetia', 'sex magic' and drawing down the 'Scarlet Woman'. Crowley described himself as a 'perfect libertine', and the 'wickedest man in the world'. Following a largely decadent trajectory, despite brilliant intellect and literary skills, he descended into vice, drug addiction, diabolism and perversion.

[4] CRAFT TRADITION: FROM WITCHCRAFT TO WICCA.

Practical or 'craft' denomination of esoteric magical tradition, emphasising feminine immanent spiritual vitality in Nature. Witchcraft is concerned with use and manipulation of natural materials as a means of altering the 'conditions of consciousness' that underlie reality, through imagination and will: by use of correspondences [or keys] in spells and charms; as well as by means of its own body of ritual magic.

As a denomination within the total western esoteric tradition, magical or witch- 'craft' is defined by an array of magical procedures that are both nature and ritual based. Trees, plants, stones and natural objects feature prominently, as do a 'witch's tools', including 'athame', 'pentacle', 'elements of salt [earth], water, fire and smoke [or odour]', 'altar' [or focal point], and 'chalice' [or cup]. Manipulations of these at the correct 'auspices', with correct 'initiatory degree' and natural 'correspondences', cause manipulations of the 'conditions of reality', which are identified with the 'conditions of consciousness', and thereby of larger phenomena in the macrocosm /of space-time.

In Witchcraft, pathworking [Qabalah] or 'rising on the planes' is subordinate to and consequent upon these preliminaries. All paths of magic-working [numbered 1 to 8], mostly non-Qabalistic, are equally prominent. A 'witch' is not merely a 'personality complex', associated with supernatural powers and esoteric occult knowledge; but someone who practices the 'Craft' as defined above, and cryptically-

'Her power is to open what is shut; to shut what is open.

The earth hath bubbles, as the water has, and these are of them'

(Ovid 'Metamorphoses'; Macbeth I-iii-79).

Five types of Witch may be identified [from Dedopulos, 2005: 18-21; Ezzy, 2003: 1-23] --

1_ 'Classical Witch', or 'Archetypal Witch', guided by 3-fold typology of Indo-European 'Goddess', viz. 'bewitching maiden', 'elf-queen' or 'crone' [solitary old woman possessing magical powers]. An 'ectype' or 'octave' of one or all of these, relating to the 'magico-mythic' archetypal witches of European folk and faërie tradition. A stand-out 'witch personality' type. (OR -

2_ 'Wise Woman' or 'Cunning One' [occasionally a man], 'scholar-magicians' living on outskirts of small towns and villages, or in wild forests or woodland, practicing Magic or beneficent magic, conjoined with skills such as herbal medicine, midwifery and divination [2nd sight]. Often hereditary, typically practicing as traditional, solitary or 'hedge' witches; western esoteric 'shaman'. (OR -

3_ 'Quarter Demon', incl. 'Cypher', who performs supernatural acts through dealings with 'evil spirits', winning their co-operation through a 'dismal pact' involving giving up the soul. Include 'Satanic witches' who practice left-hand path of Goetia, often belonging to large Covens using various perverted methods, such as- blood rites, blasphemy, sex magic, wild intoxication and frenzy: more or less an 'evil witch'. (OR -

4_ 'Involuntary Witch' or 'Doppelgänger', who by repression or denial of parapsychic powers, creates a parallel 'shadow being' [hamr], which splits off the main ego when host personality is asleep or day-dreaming, assuming a supernatural body to practice moral deviance as a roving 'dissociative thought-form' [paranormal, semi-substantial multiple personality]. Cf. 'poltergeist', 'magical psychopath'. (OR -

5_ 'Wiccan', a conscious witch of modern type, either female or male, who by training and ritual, subscribes to the 'Wiccan Rede', especially--

'Do what you will
As long as you harm none' (Gardner, 1944).

Belongs to a 'Coven' [=Covenant] practicing circle work according to a Calendar of Solar and Lunar feasts - 8 sabbats, and 13 esbats; guided by 'Goddess theology' and naturalistic ethics of 'naturism' or 'ecology', such as Lovelock's 'Gaia hypothesis' (1975). Some use high magic practices, as in 'Alexandrian Wicca' or 'Old Religion', others more casual and informal approaches as in low Craft tradition. All are eclectic.

As can be seen, types 3_ and 4_ are what are conventionally known as 'witches' in Judaeo-Christian and Islamic theology, of a distinctively unwholesome character; whereas 5_, a comparatively new and usually morally progressive type, is more likely to be open to practical pathworking with an ethical, helping and personal development perspective.

[5] WICCA, GAIA & NEW AGE OCCULTISTS (1924-).

Non-conformist Occultists, calling themselves the 'Order Crotona Fellowship' ran a Rosicrucian Theatre [1924-1942] on the outskirts of the New Forest, forming the nucleus of the 'New Forest Coven', which was joined by Gerald Gardner (1884-1964). Although this was originally a Rosicrucian group, its membership formed the direct lineage of modern Wicca, as well as of the Findhorn Group.

Later Aleister Crowley (1875-1947) began foundational work with Gardner for a ceremonial adaptation of witchcraft, or 'Gardnerian Wicca'. Feminist mystic witch Doreen Valiente (1922-1999) composed many of its rituals, based on OCF reconstructions of Greek Eleusinian or 'Orphic' rites of great antiquity, but also on Dion Fortune's 'Goddess' invocations. This represented thelemite, psycho-dramatic and naturist rather than Rosicrucian foundational influence. Libertarian elements persisted but were gradually sublimated to Orphic, New Age and Cabalistic themes, from the late 1960's onward representing a return to Hermetic purpose.

Meanwhile the fastest growing sub-denomination of 'New Age' was initiated by Dion Fortune (1890-1946), feminist ceremonial magician and psychotherapist with a strong commitment to Christian theurgy. To this she brought pathworking techniques from Hermetic Qabalah, as well as use of psycho-drama, coincidentally also used in many non-Christian 'Wiccan' denominations from the 1960's. Since 1968, leading elements in both movements have been environmentalism, or spiritual ecology, and Goddess theology.

New Age Theurgy. The emphasis in Fortune on 'building up consciousness towards manifestation of the Divine Feminine' has persisted in subsequent 'Gaian' Qabalah. Despite some outdated, unorthodox, morally indefensible and conflicting themes, resilient features of the approach arose out of a modern, feminist interpretation of the Judaeo-Christian 'Messianic' prophecy. As a logical extension of this, and of Jewish Kabbalah per the medieval Zohar, the task of humanity is cast as the building of a new and perfected form of Divine consciousness, that will take shape as the 'Goddess' or 'Anima of Divinity', identified with the 'Holy Spirit'. Fortune identified this Spirit with the Immanent or Becoming Consciousness underlying Nature, which (after Lovelock, de Chardin and Murchie) was later termed 'Gaia'.

Fortune adapted pagan elements within a monotheistic Judaeo-Christian paradigm, the 'goddesses' being ectypes [I call them 'octaves'] of a single Immanent Goddess [Shekinah/ Bride of the Atman]. The Divine Marriage between Equals [One God/ Goddess /Elohim] was also the goal of medieval Cabalistic Alchemy. Hence she would not have seen, for example, a conflict between her 'Rite of Isis' and orthodox Christian beliefs. The Isis system was, in her view, a fulfillment of existing Messianic revelation, using methods drawn from a more naturalistic or Craft- version of Hermetic tradition.¹ This has allowed the two main paths of post-modern Western esotericism to converge in the 'Gaia movement'.

Hope this helps.

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¹ In fact it logically supports Catholic Christian orthodoxy; the masculine Trinitarian polarity of Divinity identified with 'Transcendence', the feminine polarity with 'Immanence'. This does not interfere with the Athanasian Creed or promote sectarianism or Gnosticism, and therefore does not risk heresy. The 'Immanence' looks forward to an 'Omega-point' representing what Teilhard suggests is 'consciousness resonance' relating to the Divine 'Alchemy' of the Elohim, or in apocalyptic Catholic terms with the second coming of the Christos and union with the manifest Shekinah or 'Bride of the Sabbath'.

To Dion Fortune, 'Qabalah' did not represent replacement of existing belief systems or religious programs, but rather a gloss or fulfillment of them for those of a peculiar temperament (its subjective value), yet important for both their personal and collective evolution (its objective value). Other forms of consciousness evolution might be provided to those of different temperaments. Unlike Waite, she came to see Qabalists not as an 'elite', but rather as having a particular organic function in the total plan of Being. 'Gaian Qabalah' represents a practical method and political union for healing individuals and the Earth.