

Foundations of Western Esotericism

History Of Ideas · Answer Key · 15 Questions

1. Which 15th-century scholar was commissioned by Cosimo de' Medici to translate the Corpus Hermeticum, sparking a Renaissance revival of Neoplatonism?

- A) Marsilio Ficino**
- B) Pico della Mirandola
- C) Giordano Bruno
- D) Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa

2. The term 'Theosophy' was popularized in the 19th century by which co-founder of the Theosophical Society?

- A) Rudolf Steiner
- B) Alice Bailey
- C) Helena Blavatsky**
- D) Annie Besant

3. In the context of Renaissance occult philosophy, what is the primary focus of 'Natural Magic' as defined in Agrippa's 'De Occulta Philosophia'?

- A) Invoking celestial spirits for political power
- B) Manipulating the sympathetic qualities of the physical world**
- C) The direct worship of lunar deities
- D) The synthesis of kabbalistic ciphers for alchemy

4. Which 17th-century intellectual movement, associated with the 'Fama Fraternitatis', influenced the development of speculative Freemasonry?

- A) Rosicrucianism**
- B) Swedenborgianism
- C) Gnosticism
- D) Hermeticism

5. What is the 'Tetractys', a triangular figure of ten points sacred to the school of Pythagoras, intended to symbolize?

- A) The four elements of the zodiac
- B) The hierarchical structure of the Olympian gods
- C) The mathematical organization of the cosmos**
- D) The stages of alchemical transmutation

6. John Dee, a polymath in the court of Elizabeth I, is historically noted for his development of which esoteric system?

- A) The Enochian angelic language**
- B) The Tarot of the Golden Dawn
- C) The Goetia of Solomon
- D) The Qabalah of the Nine Chambers

7. Which concept in Paracelsian medicine argues that 'like cures like' and that natural objects resemble the body parts they are intended to heal?

- A) The Law of Contagion
- B) The Doctrine of Signatures**
- C) The Alchemical Salt Principle
- D) The Vitalist Flux

8. The 'Emerald Tablet' (Tabula Smaragdina), foundational to Western alchemy, is traditionally attributed to which legendary figure?

- A) Zosimos of Panopolis
- B) Hermes Trismegistus**
- C) Geber
- D) Albertus Magnus

9. In Aleister Crowley's 'The Book of the Law', what is the central axiom that summarizes his philosophy of Thelema?

- A) Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law**
- B) As above, so below
- C) Love is the law, love under will
- D) Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel

10. Which ancient religious movement, often characterized by its dualistic cosmology and focus on 'gnosis' (secret knowledge), was a major rival to early Christianity?

- A) Manichaeism
- B) Mithraism
- C) Gnosticism**
- D) Neo-Pythagoreanism

11. What is the primary function of the 'Sephirot' in the Jewish mystical tradition of Kabbalah?

- A) To act as names for demons in the Goetia
- B) To represent the ten emanations through which the Ein Sof reveals itself**
- C) To serve as a map for planetary travel in the astral plane
- D) To provide a system for deciphering ancient Hebrew manuscripts

12. The 'Kybalion', published in 1908, claims to be based on the ancient teachings of which philosophy?

A) Hellenistic Stoicism

B) Hermeticism

C) Epicureanism

D) Neo-Platonic Gnosticism

13. Which Victorian-era secret society is considered the primary source for the modern revival of ceremonial magic and the Western Mystery Tradition?

A) The Ordo Templi Orientis

B) The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn

C) The Rosicrucian Order (AMORC)

D) The Society for Psychical Research

14. In alchemical symbolism, what does the 'Coniunctio' represent?

A) The separation of sulfur from mercury

B) The union of opposites, often depicted as the King and Queen

C) The final stage of calcination

D) The solidification of the prima materia

15. Emanuel Swedenborg's concept of 'Correspondences' suggests that:

A) All physical objects have a spiritual counterpart

B) Planetary movements dictate human destiny

C) Astrological signs correspond to specific chemical elements

D) Language originated from a single divine source