

Foundations of Western Esotericism

History Of Ideas · Practice Test · 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