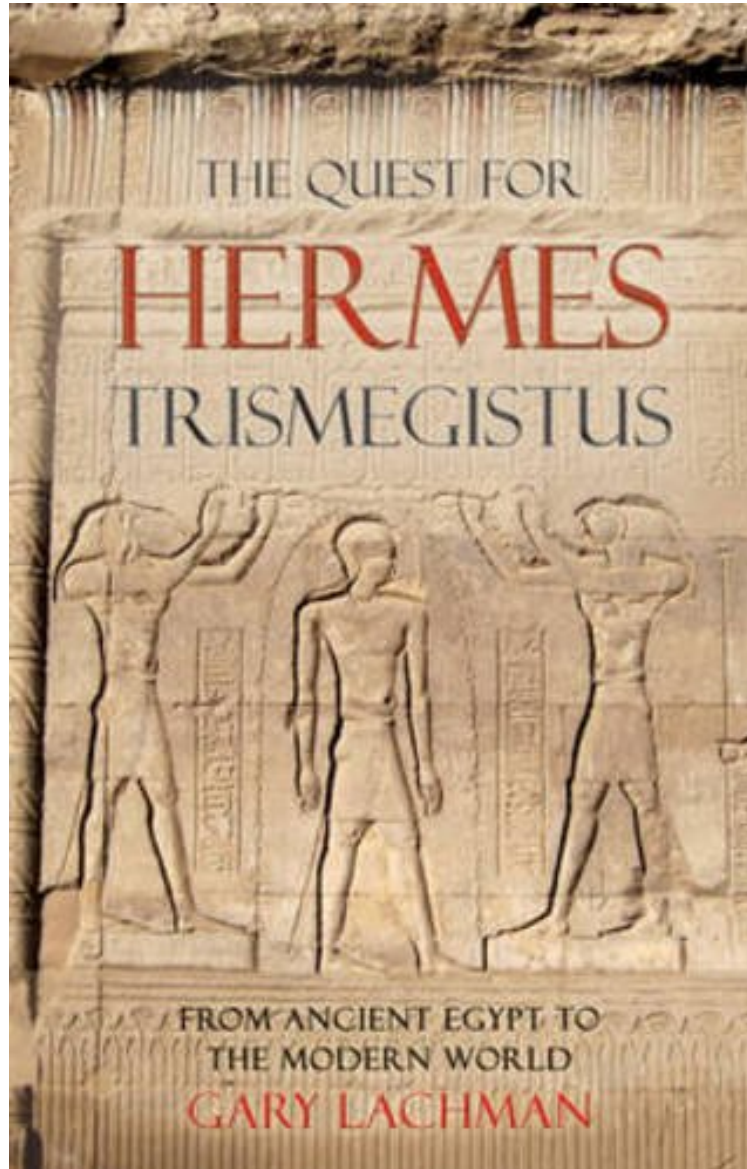


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The Quest for Hermes Trismegistus: From Ancient Egypt to the Modern World

Gary Lachman

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Gary Lachman : The Quest for Hermes Trismegistus: From Ancient Egypt to the Modern World before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Quest for Hermes Trismegistus: From Ancient Egypt to the Modern World:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. The Hermetic Quest: Lachman's Investigation into the Ur-Philosophy of the Western World By Cryptic Counselor During the Renaissance, there was a sage whose work was so legendary that an elderly Cosimo de Medici, eager to read the works of Plato before he died, took his loyal and legendary translator Marsilio Ficino off the job in order to translate the greater man's work. A sage who would cause a stir so great it would trigger a philosophical revolution, change the Vatican's own doctrines, and set off bursts of secretive intellectual and mystical activity to this day. Yet you hardly find this sage mentioned in the syllabi of philosophy or theology classes, or even popular histories. Outside of esotericists and New Agers, his work and impact is virtually forgotten. Who was Hermes Trismegistus? WAS there a Hermes Trismegistus? Gary Lachman- author of many esoteric histories and biographies (the best of which is his *The Secret Teachers of the Western World* - his most comprehensive history to date)- tries to unravel the strange case of the forgotten ur-philosopher. After a great revival of Hermetic thinking in the 16th century, ultimately culminating in Giordano Bruno's quixotic attempt at reviving the Greco-Egyptian mystery tradition, Hermes suffered a literary blow in popularity when Isaac Casaubon's textual analysis declared the supposedly ancient works of the *Corpus Hermeticum* to be a pious fraud cooked up in late antiquity by Christian Neoplatonists trying to convert pagans. Given the textual style was that of biblical greek, Casaubon didn't believe it was possible that the Hermetic works could date from before the 1st century BC- and were more likely conceived in Alexandria around 200-300 AD. The *Hermetica* fell into centuries of disrepute, until 20th century scholars, like Garth Fowden, whose *The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind* took a new textual analysis to the works and determined that they more than likely were a product of an indigenous Egyptian tradition encountering the classical Hellenic mind. Further work by contrarian Egyptologists inspired by esotericist R.A. Schwaller de Lubicz further corroborated Fowden's thesis- indicating that the doctrines found inscribed in ancient Egyptian texts bore a close enough family resemblance to indicate a continuity of tradition between the flourishing of the Kingdom of Egypt and the philosophies that emerged from Alexandria post-hellenization. Lachman is an able guide through not only the history of the *Hermetica* and the hermetic idea, from ancient Egypt to today, but to the core philosophical ideas themselves. While most of Lachman's work focuses more on the personalities around certain ideas than upon the ideas themselves, *The Quest for Hermes Trismegistus* shows us more of his speculative side, as he weaves a narrative of how altered consciousness and psychedelic experience has to inform any proper understanding of the Hermetic works (probably informed by the work of Jeremy Naydler, such as *Shamanic Wisdom in the Pyramid Texts: The Mystical Tradition of Ancient Egypt*). The Gnostics, Pico della Mirandola, Giordano Bruno, Isaac Newton, Freemasonry, Theosophy, The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, Schwaller de Lubicz, Carl Jung, Julius Evola, Jean Gebser, and even Valentin Tomberg all come into the narrative as Lachman takes one on a tour of the whole range of what Hermetic thinking entails- a comprehensively cosmopolitan, mystical worldview, not unlike the Integral Philosophy of Ken Wilber and Sri Aurobindo, only from a decidedly and uniquely Western point of view. Is the Hermetic quest for you? If you'd like to answer that for yourself, this book is as good an introduction to the full sweep of Hermeticism and what it means for the western mind as you'll find, and it ranks among one of the best places to start with Lachman as well, if you're not quite ready to delve into as substantial a tome as *The Secret Teachers*. Highly recommended. 9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Deserving of 4 and a half stars, this is a well researched and wonderous "Quest" for the real or mythical Hermes Trimegestis By Hanbledzoiner Gary Lackman, After I knew him as the bass player in the band Blondie, moved immediately into writing about the occult in all of its various forms. He has steadfastly produced work consistently and has improved as an Author. This is a very well written very well researched study of the infamous Hermes Trimegestis (thrice great Hermes from home we get the phrase hermetically sealed tin can. To be a hermetic automatically implies hermitage and secrecy. No one fully knows the origin of this entity known as Hermes, but Mr Lachman has done an awfully good job at trying to find out. Hermes Trimegestis is attributed as the originator of the phrase "As above; so below" which has enthralled spiritual seekers since time immemorial, which is exactly where Hermes Trimegestis lives. Any study of such a complex and mysterious real or mythical personage requires great diligence and the earnest hard work Mister Lachman Has undertaken for all of his books. The only reason I can't say I love it is that the quest for Hermes Trimegestis will always turn in circles in the sand of Egypt but then I like very much Mister Lackman's approach, so that I wish I could give it four and a half stars. 25 of 26 people found the following review helpful. A delightful reunion By A. W. Mesokosmos I am a writer and a musician as Lachman. I first came across his literary output some ten years ago when I read his *Turn Off Your Mind*, which is a book about the sixties spiritual revival. The book was thorough but left me with a sense of disappointment which was hard to nail down. Having been what I like to think of as an ardent student of esoterica from my teens I somehow felt I had met one more disappointed reductionist who wanted to scythe down every new sprout of genuine insight that might be found in the overflowing dirtpot that was the counter-culture sixties spirituality. I felt that he had missed the essence of what the self-nominated followers of Gurdjieff, Castaneda, La Vey, Crowley, Timothy Leary et al. were all about. Then I came across his *Quest for Hermes Trismegistus* and found out just how wrong I had been about his true colors. This book is a delight. It is well constructed with impeccable research and scrupulous notation. The style Lachman has acquired during the years is almost dazzlingly amicable, sensible, yet fearless. He tackles his humungous subject matter with grace and swift

eloquence worthy of the less than tangible intellectual thicket he covers. The book tells no more, no less than the story of a great, now submerged network of potent ideologies with twists and turns to make it a bit like a detective story sprinkled with romance. And even more, he takes a stance which is for the re-enchantment of the world, and proposes an integratory curriculum for our tormented age. A rare voice, a fine scholar, a mighty storyteller, this book is a joy to read and offers spiritual nourishment for days, weeks and years to come. (And I definitely am going to read his other books on the occult too. Already started the one about Madame Blavatsky.)

From the sands of Alexandria via the Renaissance palaces of the Medicis to our own time, this spiritual adventure story traces the profound influence of Hermes Trismegistus the thrice-great one on the Western mind. For centuries, his name ranked among the most illustrious of the ancient world. Considered by some a contemporary of Moses and a forerunner of Christ, this almost mythical figure arose in Alexandria during the fourth century B.C. from a fusion of the Egyptian god Thoth and the Greek god Hermes. Master of magic, writing, science, and philosophy, Hermes was thought to have walked with gods and to be the source of the divine wisdom granted to humankind at the dawn of time. Gary Lachman has written many books exploring ancient traditions for the modern mind. In *The Quest for Hermes Trismegistus*, he brings to life the mysterious character of this great spiritual guide, exposing the many theories and stories surrounding him, and revitalizing his teachings for the modern world. Through centuries of wars, conquests, and religious persecutions, the fragile pages of the teachings of Hermes Trismegistus have survived. This is a book for all thinkers and enquirers who want to recover that lost knowledge and awaken a shift in human consciousness.

'This book provides a very readable introduction to the history of Western Esotericism. However, the most exciting aspect of the book is Lachman's thesis that Hermeticism is grounded in a common spiritual or religious experience and that this experience can be grounded in recent neuropsychological research. This fascinating hypothesis invites further ... investigation.' -- De Numine 'Truly great individuals are discussed for centuries after their existence. "The Quest for Hermes Trismegistus: From Ancient Egypt to the Modern World" discusses this figure of ancient Alexandria who is an icon of ancient science and philosophy, as the two were closely related in ancient times. Analyzing history and the mindset of the times, author Gary Lachman hopes to explain this figure to modern readers to give them greater insight into a time long past. "The Quest for Hermes Trismegistus" is an excellent addition to any history collection, highly recommended.' -- Midwest Book , May 2011 'It is a bewildering tale which has many twists and turns which Lachman considers not only in its historical but also cultural and philosophical connections across time. He also helps us unravel the development of hermeticism, Gnosticism, and connections across the ages to such seminal and initiatory characters as Rudolf Steiner, G.I. Gurdjoff, Giordano Bruno, Marcilio Ficino, Pico Mirandola, Cornelius Agrippa, Robert Fludd, Dr John Dee, and Athanasius Kircher.' -- Stephen Cox Trust, 2011 'Gary Lachman offers us a fascinating history of the myth of Hermes Trismegistus and the translation of the Corpus Hermeticum ... This is a comprehensive book covering all aspects of the tradition of Hermes, from the early periods through to modern explorations of Hermetic science as it resonates with altered states of consciousness. Lachman is an easy to read author yet has a near encyclopaedic knowledge of esotericism and is hence able to offer many different perspectives on the subject at hand. From the Egyptian influence on Greek philosophy to Islam and the Renaissance, Freemasons and the Rosicrucians this is a truly informative journey through all aspects of Hermes Trismegistus.' -- Living Traditions Magazine 'Immensely erudite and continuing the work of GRS Mead and Frances Yates, the book traces the influence of hermetic thinking through different areas of the Western tradition drawing on a wide range of scholarship. It gives the reader quite a different flavour of the development of Western philosophy than would be found in any standard textbook.' --David Lorimer, Scientific and Medical Network 'Here is an entertaining, mostly historical introduction to a body of religious knowledge that has a deep influence on the course of Western philosophy - Hermeticism...This is a concise and interesting introduction. Lachman covers much historical ground from Alexandria, via the Italian Renaissance and the Order of the Golden Dawn, to today.' -- Northern Earth 'Lachman's [book] at times is quite a deep study of the philosophy and psychology of esoteric spirituality.' --David V Barrett, Fortean Times. About the Author Gary Lachman was born in Bayonne, New Jersey, and has lived in London since 1996. He is a full-time writer with more than a dozen books to his name on topics ranging from the evolution of consciousness and the Western esoteric tradition to literature and suicide and the history of popular culture. Lachman writes frequently for journals in the US and UK and lectures on his work internationally. His work has been translated into several languages. Mr. Lachman's books include *Madame Blavatsky: The Mother of Modern Spirituality* (2012); *Rudolf Steiner: An Introduction to His Life and Work* (2007); *Jung the Mystic: The Esoteric Dimensions of Carl Jung's Life and Teachings* (2010); *The Quest for Hermes Trismegistus* (Floris, 2011); and *A Secret History of Consciousness* (Lindisfarne, 2003).