The New York Open Center and The Alexandria & Mediterranean Research Center at The Bibliotheca Alexandrina

Present

AN ESOTERIC QUEST FOR

Ancient Alexandria:
Greco-Egyptian Birthplace of the Western Mind

June 12th to 17th, 2011 • Alexandria, Egypt

Post-Conference Journeys

Journey to Cyprus
Island of Aphrodite, Crossroads of Civilizations
June 17th to 22nd

Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt
June 17th to 22nd
Join us on a Quest for ancient Alexandria, for seven hundred years the greatest center of learning and culture in the ancient world.

The city was a brilliant crucible in which the civilizations of ancient Greece and Egypt intermingled and absorbed streams of wisdom from throughout the known world.

Its legendary Library and Museum made it possible for many of history’s greatest philosophers, scholars, and scientists to flourish and for the city to become the cradle of Hermeticism, Gnosticism and Neoplatonism. Alexandria is a city filled with compelling personalities, from its founder, Alexander the Great, to Cleopatra, the last of the Ptolemaic Pharaohs. Its long list of influential thinkers includes the great Jewish philosopher Philo, the Gnostic Christian Clement, the Neoplatonists Ammonius Saccas and Plotinus, and finally the noble and tragic Hypatia, last of the pagan lovers of wisdom.

The allure and fascination of Alexandria charmed countless generations of philosophers and writers drawn through the centuries to this supreme meeting place of ideas and peoples. Alexandria was the archetypal cosmopolis and it was here that philosophers gave shape to a more brilliant and complete understanding of the world, filled with both science and mystery, to which we today are all indebted.

Our goal will be to bring vividly to life the profound and beautiful ancient worldview that emerged in antiquity’s most influential center of culture and esoteric wisdom, the authentic birthplace of the Western mind.

The conference also includes expeditions to sacred sites in and around Alexandria and evenings featuring music and poetry of the city. We meet each day along the Corniche at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, the contemporary successor to the ancient library, close to the site of its illustrious predecessor and the perfect starting point from which to contemplate the genius and enduring influence of this extraordinary place.

The New York Open Center is one of America’s leading centers of holistic learning and world culture. Since 1984 more than a quarter of a million participants have attended its programs and cultural events which have earned the Center a worldwide reputation. Its conferences are renowned both for their exploration of ancient traditions and for their relevance to contemporary society. Now in its 26th year, the Open Center functions as a beacon of holistic awareness in NYC and a platform for accomplished scholars and visionaries.

The Alexandria & Mediterranean Research Center is one of the centers affiliated with the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, the new Library of Alexandria. Its mission is to research, document and disseminate the tangible and intangible heritage of Alexandria, both modern and ancient. It also relates Alexandria to the Mediterranean cultures, and by honoring its past, seeks to sustain the future of the city.

With special thanks to the Cyprus Tourism Organization.
All Roads Lead to Alexandria

Leonard George, Ph.D.

No better emblem of ancient Alexandria could there be than the Lighthouse on Pharos Island. An ambience unique in history made Alexandria “the city that questioned everything”, and seekers from far and wide were drawn by its bright beacon to probe the nature of soul, body and world as never before. They blazed spiritual and scientific trails that have defined the Western quest ever since. Old Alexandria lives on in the rising spirit of the new, in the evocative physical remnants of the past, and as an image of compelling possibilities. For the pursuer of deepest truth, all roads led – and lead – to Alexandria.

Alexandria, the Cosmopolis:

Global Community, Then and Now

David Fidele, Ph.D.

The Greek philosophers had spoken of the cosmospolis, the “world-city” in which all individuals are related to one another, regardless of country, race, or religion. But with the coming of the Hellenistic age, the idea of global civilization became a tangible reality, and Alexandria its most significant expression – a meeting point between East and West, philosophies and religions, and disparate cultures. Once again, we find ourselves in a global community. But what makes for a genuine world community, and how is the ancient idea relevant for our own times? And in a time of conflict, is there a higher unity that can foster harmony between different religions?

The Ancient Library of Alexandria:

Cultural Interchange and Originality

Mostafa El-Abbadi, Ph.D.

The founding of the Great Library and Mouseion in Alexandria by Ptolemy I began a period of intensive cultural interchange which coincided with the emergence of a concept of universal knowledge. The original achievements of the Ptolemaic period included the works of Euclid in mathematics, Aristarchus of Samos in the formulation of the heliocentric theory in astronomy, and Eratosthenes’ brilliant measurement of the polar circumference of the earth. And the coexistence of both Greek and Egyptian medical traditions led to a virtual revolution in medical knowledge. Perhaps, as Strabo observed, the natural interchange of diverse backgrounds explains much of the originality of Alexandrian scholarship.

Hermeticism as a Philosophy of Hope

Mervat Nasser, M.D., M.Phil.

The Hermetic philosophy represents the intellectual, philosophical and reflective tradition of ancient Egypt. It reached us through the Corpus Hermeticum, manuscripts collected in the city of Alexandria in the second and third centuries. Its enduring legacy is reflected in the work of major European figures of science, philosophy, art and literature and its tendency to emerge at times when humanity is faced with difficulties and uncertainties. Its appeal in our post-modern era stems from our disillusionment with the reductionist view of science and also our rejection of a religious extremism that threatens humanistic values. Hermetism on the other hand preaches no religious dogma but offers instead harmony, reconciliation and transformation.

Greco-Egyptian Oracles

Crystal Addey, Ph.D.

For at least a thousand years, the people living around the ancient Mediterranean turned to oracles, often located in ancient temples, for spiritual, personal and civic advice and guidance. The Egyptians had many oracular temples, including oracles of the gods Horus, Thoth, Serapis and the goddess Isis. Oracles of Isis and Serapis were particularly common and became widespread throughout the Mediterranean. An oracle of Serapis was established in Alexandria by Ptolemy III. Egyptian oracles, like their Greek counterparts, often used dream incubation to obtain oracles from the gods and cult statues of the gods in their oracular practices.

Gnosticism and Hermeticism:

Two Paths of Ascent

Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, D.Phil. and Clare Goodrick-Clarke, M.A.

In Hellenistic Alexandria two radically different world-views emerged over the first centuries CE. Although Hermetic and Gnostic literatures have much in common, they propose different views of human beings, God, time, and the cosmos, and the means to salvation. With Persian and Jewish roots, Gnosticism is complex and various but core ideas can be discerned in the Gnostic religious systems and myths of the second and third centuries CE. The Greco-Egyptian Hermetica were brought from Byzantium to the court of Cosimo de Medici in 1460 and translated by Marsilio Ficino in Florence. They were to become one of the most important founding documents of the Renaissance and the whole subsequent Western Esoteric Tradition.

Alexandria:

Crossroads of Judaism, Hellenism, Gnosticism, and Christianity

Christopher Bamford

Alexandria around the time of Christ opened a new age of infinite possibilities—of paths taken and not taken. During this period, Jewish philosophers like Philo, so-called gnostics like Basilides and Valentinus, Neoplatonists like Plotinus, and Christian theologians like Clement and Origen rubbed shoulders with Egyptian priests, Gymnosophists from India, and alchemical adepts. Out of this mix Rabbinic Judaism, Christianity, and Hermeticism would arise. This talk aims to evoke the amazing richness, newness, and fruitfulness of what was given birth and also considers those spiritual impulses which still perhaps await germination.

Ptolemaic temple of Edfu dedicated to the falcon god Horus
Divine Women:
Cleopatra and Hypatia
Marjorie Roth, DMA, Ph.D.

Cleopatra VII was the last Ptolemaic ruler, and the one most attuned to Egypt’s spiritual roots. She felt a deep link to the goddess Isis, and doubtless took strength from this as she nearly managed to revive Egypt as a super-power of antiquity. Four centuries later, another Alexandrian, Hypatia, drew seekers both pagan and Christian from throughout the Roman Empire to learn the mysteries of the sacred eye that lies buried in the soul. Both women fell victim to the power struggles of the times, but their legacies transcend their turbulent era, and speak to ours.

An Alexandria Quartet:
Callimachus, Philo, Origen and Cavafy
John Dillon

We will examine through the work of four representative Alexandrians - the Hellenistic poet and scholar of the Library of Alexandria, Callimachus; the Jewish Platonist philosopher Philo; the Platonizing Christian philosopher Origen; and the modern poet Constantine Cavafy - what might be considered an ‘Alexandrian’ way of approaching the world, that is to say, allusive, multi-level, and (in the case of the poets, at least) ironic.

Syenesus and Alexandrian Syncretism
Jay Bregman, Ph.D.

After Alexander the Great’s adventure of conquest, the Greek world became cosmopolitan and “modern”. Alexandria was the Hellenistic New York. The tolerant ruling Ptolemies promoted “syncretism”, the combination of religious ideas and practices. “Mysteries” of many traditions were practiced – for example, Roman Emperor Severus Alexander displayed busts of Abraham, Orpheus, Jesus and Apollonius. Synesius of Cyrene (ca. 370-413 CE) studied at Alexandria under the philosophical martyr Hypatia. Primarily a Neoplatonic philosopher in outlook, he became a Christian Bishop. But only on the condition that he continue to count Greek philosophy as the real Canon of Truth!

The Alexandrian Sciences in Baghdad
Ahmed Etman, Ph.D.

Inspired by a treasure trove of ancient Greek and Alexandrian learning and philosophy, Muslims created a society in Baghdad and elsewhere in the Middle Ages that was the scientific center of the world. The Arabic language was synonymous with learning and science for 500 hundred years, a golden age that served as a precursor to modern universities, algebra, and even the notion of science as an empirical inquiry. Europe did not match the scientific learning of the Islamic world until about 1600.

WORKSHOPS

The Golden Thread of the Muses:
How the Museum and Library Came to Alexandria
David Fideler, Ph.D.

The Museum and Library at Alexandria were the first attempts to acquire and preserve all human knowledge and advance the development of knowledge in an institutional setting. This made Alexandria the world's first "university town." But little has ever been written about how the Museum and Library were actually founded. The surprising fact is that these institutions were founded by a member of Aristotle’s school, to advance the kind of systematic research that had begun earlier in Athens. This workshop will explore the earlier Greek “Academies of the Muses,” including Plato’s Academy, and how they led to the formation of the Museum and Library.

The Philosopher Mathematicians of Alexandria:
Euclid and Hypatia
Scott Olsen, Ph.D.

Euclid in his Elements brilliantly proceeds from point, line, and plane to solid, culminating in Book 13 in the five Platonic “regular” solids. Hypatia of Alexandria, "the woman philosopher of antiquity" who taught Syenesus how to build an astrolabe, endured the most savage martyrdom, and can be considered to reflect the highest ideals and virtues of the divine feminine, beauty and "Sophia” or wisdom.

Geometry Lessons from the Great Library
Steve Bass, M.A.

The Library of Hellenistic Alexandria was the greatest repository of intellectual tradition in the history of the West. Its leading writers and thinkers set geometrical patterns that were followed by philosophers and designers for almost two millennia. We will consider the work of some of the Library’s outstanding geometers such as Euclid, Ptolemy, Eratosthenes, and Hypatia, to reveal the Neoplatonic cosmological geometries that informed their mathematical imaginations. How was the radius of the earth measured with only a stick? How did the Pythagorean Tetraktys transform into the Tree of the Kabbalah? And how did Ptolemy’s instructions for mapmaking lead to the Renaissance rediscovery of perspective drawing?

One of the oldest and most complete diagrams from Euclid’s Elements of Geometry
The Emerald Tablet of Hermes Trismegistus
Brian Cotnoir

The Emerald Tablet is a Hermetic alchemical text concerning the cycle of creation. This workshop will explore the origins and meaning of this short enigmatic text. To tease out its meaning we will read several versions of the Tablet and compare it to early Alexandrian alchemical texts as well as to Gnostic writings from the Nag Hammadi library.

Alexandrian Alchemy and the Ascent of the Soul.
Brian Cotnoir

Alexandrian alchemy is an active meditation on creation and the ascent of the soul. It sees substance and process as symbol. This workshop will examine actual alchemical processes and the materials used and, through reading selections from alchemical texts, gain insight into this intriguing worldview and its possible meanings for today.

Nine Measures of Magic:
The Papyri Graecae Magicae
Leonard George, Ph.D.

According to an old Hebrew saying, of the ten measures of magic God gave the world, nine were delivered to Egypt. Nowhere else in antiquity bore such magical repute as the land of the Nile. A library of magical texts found in Thebes has given us an astonishing glimpse into the mentality of ancient magicians. Known as the Papyri Graecae Magicae, these spell-books reveal that practitioners aimed not just at mundane goals like avoiding crocodiles and winning at love, or ritual practicalities such as gaining a spirit-helper and muting talkative skulls during ceremonies, but also at such lofty ends as communing with gods and becoming immortal.

Egyptian Ways of Initiation: The Path of Initiation in Iamblichus’ De Mysteriis and the Hermetica
Crystal Addey, Ph.D.

In the Late Antique period, Greek and Egyptian philosophical, religious and spiritual practices became deeply intertwined in a syncretistic blend of cultural and spiritual praxis. Alexandria was the greatest example of this blend of spiritual cosmologies, mythologies and religious practices. Initiation was absolutely central to ancient religious and spiritual praxis within Egyptian, Greek and Roman contexts and mystery cults. It has long been recognized that some of the dialogues of the Hermetica deal with an initiatory path thought to culminate in a profound philosophical and spiritual gnosis. Less well known is the initiatory aspect of Iamblichus’ dialogue with Porphyry recorded in his work De Mysteriis.

The Hermetica: Wisdom of the Ibis
Leonard George, Ph.D.

The ibis was a common shore-bird of the Nile, often seen on the murky strand between solid earth and flowing water. So it proved an apt symbol for Thoth, Egyptian god of liminality - the space between certainties. Thoth was also lord of writing and magic. It seemed natural, then, in the Greco-Egyptian cauldron of ideas that was old Alexandria, that Thoth would merge with the Greek Hermes, also a deity of trickery, messages and marvels. This fusion gave rise to the writings attributed to Hermes Trismegistus. The Hermetic tomes laid out a path of esoteric remembrance and rebirth that has wound through the centuries to the present.

Alexandria, City of the Logos
David Fideler, Ph.D.

The central concept of Logos holds all the ancient spiritual traditions of Alexandria together, but its meaning has been lost to the modern world. While often translated as “Word,” the actual meanings of Logos are much deeper, referring to the cosmic intelligence present in both the cosmos and the human soul. We will cover the origins of Logos in the most ancient sources, and discuss its importance in the Hermetic Writings, Philo of Alexandria, Alexandrian Christianity, Neoplatonism, and Plotinus. We will also discuss how the Logos was symbolized in myth and sacred writings, including selected parables in the Christian New Testament.
Alexandria and the Cult of Serapis
Alan Cardew, Ph.D.

Ancient Alexandria was the Open Center of Antiquity, bringing together the religious traditions of the Ancient World, and attempting to find a spiritual worldview underlying all systems of belief. Chaldean, Egyptian, Greek, and Hebrew systems and philosophy were fused together in the libraries of Alexandria. At the heart of this process was the Serapeion, a library and temple devoted to the worship of Serapis, a god who was an amalgam of different metals, different times and different religions. We will examine the cult of Serapis and its relationship with other elements of the Alexandrian synthesis.

Synesii and Comparative Religion
Jay Bregman, Ph.D.

We can speak of "Synesii", "mirror images" of the philosophical bishop Synesius who developed a wide ranging Synergeticism. These include Neoplatonists Ficino and Pico in Renaissance Florence with their interests in Platonism, Kabbalah, and Hermeticism; the seventeenth century Cambridge Platonists in England; nineteenth century Romantics such as Coleridge; and the American Transcendentalists (Emerson thought Synesius "magnificent"). In the twentieth century, Mircea Eliade did much to academicize this outlook, and syncretist Joseph Campbell helped to bring it to a broad audience.

The Teaching of Jesus in the Gospel of Thomas
Yasmin Hussein

The Gospel of Thomas is one of the 52 manuscripts written in Coptic and discovered in 1945 in Egypt. It comprises an anthology of 114 logia spoken by Jesus and collected by Thomas. The text is regarded as part of the Gnostic knowledge based on the evolutionary development of consciousness, and raises various questions. Can Gnosticism be "taught" to others, and if so what is the role of the "Savior"? Which path would lead the disciple to enter the stage of living experience? What could the role of Didymos Judas Thomas have been in this process of "Teaching the Unteachable"?

Tarot as the Book of Thoth
Ellen Goldberg, M. A.

Thoth, the Egyptian God of wisdom, writing and magic was recognized by the Greeks to be analogous to Hermes. Their synthesis became Hermes Trismegistus, for whom the western esoteric tradition is named. The Tarot is a living oracle based in this tradition. It is a river of wisdom into which the streams of Kabbalah, Alchemy, Astrology and Hermetic philosophy have flowed. In this workshop we will look at the major themes of the Hermetic Tradition as they are expressed in the Tarot. Our quest for Self-realization can be radically enhanced by engaging the archetypal images in the Tarot. This workshop will include lecture, inner journey and an oracular experience. It will leave you with an ability to use the Tarot for your inner development.

Sufism in the Atmosphere of Alexandria: From Dhul-Nun al-Misri to the Brethren of Purity
Christopher Bamford

Our focus will be on the legendary Sufi saint known as Dhul-Nun al-Misri (796-859) who was an alchemist, a thaumaturge, a reputed reader of hieroglyphs, and a Hermetic/Neoplatonic philosopher, called by Suhrawardi “the leaven of the Pythagoreans.” Dhul-Nun is regarded by many as the founder of Sufism, and is credited with introducing the concept of Gnosis into Islam. We will also explore the transmission and absorption of the wisdom of Alexandria — including Platonism, Hermeticism, Alchemy, and Pythagoreanism — in the Sufi and mystical Jewish traditions. We will end our quest with the Brethren of Purity, who were possibly a medium of transmission of this wisdom back into the West.
The Church of the East
Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, D.Phil.

History as taught today tends to forget that once the largest and most influential Christian churches existed to the East of the Roman Empire, with a reach extending to Central Asia, China and India along the Silk Road. Often dubbed Nestorian, they played an important role in the dispersal of Hellenism to Islam. In Syria and Mesopotamia, Hellenism was a continuous and powerful cultural force, and Muslim theology, philosophy, and science grew on soil saturated with Hellenistic culture. In due course, Constantinople would declare the Churches of the East heretical, but they essentially mediated Hellenistic and Christian thought, alchemy, science and medicine to the Arab culture in these lands.

The Quest for Alexandria:
G. R. S. Mead’s Quest Society
Clare Goodrick-Clarke, M.A.

During the 1890s, G. R. S. Mead (1863-1933) set about translating works of Gnosticism, Hermeticism, Neoplatonism, and early Christianity, revealing a rich, but hitherto almost unknown, metaphysical literature stemming from Alexandria. In these texts there could be discerned, Mead believed, a common metaphysical ground from which to promote the reconciliation of religions. Mead’s works sparked a minor revolution in art and letters. His Quest Society and Journal attracted many eminent intellectuals, including the mystic Evelyn Underhill, Rumi scholar Reynold Nicholson, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, Martin Buber, Gustav Meyrink, and a circle of writers in London including Laurence Binyon, W. B. Yeats, Ezra Pound, and the composer Gustav Holst.

Plotinus

AFTERNOON ACTIVITIES

The Kom al-Shoqafa Catacombs and Pompey’s Pillar
Alexandria’s evocative catacombs, known as Kom al-Shoqafa, consist of a multi-level labyrinth featuring dozens of chambers adorned with sculpted pillars, statues, and other syncretic Romano-Egyptian religious symbols, burial niches and sarcophagi, as well as a large banquet room, where memorial meals were conducted by relatives of the deceased. In addition, the most extensive ancient excavation currently being conducted in Alexandria has revealed what is known as Kom al-Dikka, the ancient city’s well-preserved theater. Our visits to these sites will be led by Dr. Kyriakos Savvopoulos.

The Alexandria National Museum
This impressive museum displays some of the most extraordinary archeological finds made in and around the city during the past decade. Artifacts from the Pharaonic, Greco-Roman, Coptic and Islamic eras can be seen. These include a diorite sphinx, a priest of Isis carrying a Canopic jar, the head of Briniky, wife of Ptolemy II, and Coptic stelae and friezes carved with lions, sheep and grapevines.

A Tour of Lawrence Durrell’s Alexandria
Durrell’s Alexandria Quartet of novels immortalized the city in its cosmopolitan prime between the World Wars when a vast, multi-ethnic, international community was integrated into a vibrant and sophisticated Egyptian and Mediterranean culture. Follow in the footsteps of Justine, Balthazar, Clea and other characters from the Quartet, one of the most unforgettable conjurations of the soul of a city in twentieth century literature.

The Monastery of Abu Mina
The monastery of St. Menas, an hour outside Alexandria, was one of the most important sites for pilgrims in the Byzantine era. The saint was an Egyptian-born Roman legionary martyred in 296. Ruins of the ancient monastery and pilgrim town remain, while the belfry and high walls of the current monastery are visible from miles around.
The Poetry of Constantine Cavafy
Constantine Cavafy (1863-1933) is the great poet of Greek Alexandria, where he lived for most of his life and where he died. Considered by many to be the finest modern Greek poet, his intimate evocations of figures and milieux central to Greek and Alexandrian culture have inspired writers from E.M. Forster to Leonard Cohen. This evening we will enter fully into Cavafy’s work and legacy.

An Evening of Egyptian Folk Music with Atiaf El-Mawlaweya
The ancient Egyptians credited Thoth with the invention of music, and percussion instruments, lyres and lutes were an integral part of the orchestras of the Middle Kingdom. Egyptian folk music today, including the traditional Sufi dhikr rituals, is the closest contemporary music genre to ancient Egyptian music, having preserved many of its features, rhythms and instruments. This evening brings alive this vibrant tradition.

The Pyramids of Saqqara and the Museum of Egyptian Antiquities
June 11, 2011
With Normandi Ellis
If you are new to Egypt or if you want to glimpse its ancient splendor, we strongly recommend a day in and around Cairo prior to the conference. In the morning, we will visit the pyramids and tombs of Saqqara, the oldest necropolis continuously used during dynastic times in Lower Egypt. Even Plato made a pilgrimage to Saqqara to see the tombs of the sage Ptahhotep at this architectural wonder, which is now the largest archeological site in Egypt. This vast burial ground served the ancient capital city of Memphis and contains numerous pyramids, including the famous Step pyramid of Djoser, whose chief vizier, Imhotep, was the master builder behind Saqqara. Saqqara is also home to the first hieroglyphic text, the Pyramid Text of Egypt, the oldest known religious book, whose passages eventually evolved into the Egyptian Book of the Dead. In the afternoon we will visit the incomparable Museum of Egyptian Antiquities in Cairo, with its 136,000 exhibits, a must for any student of the mysteries of Ancient and Ptolemaic Egypt. We will have dinner at an outdoor restaurant, spend the night at our five-star hotel near Giza, and depart by bus the following morning for Alexandria by way of the Coptic monasteries of Wadi El-Natrun.

Cost: single accommodations $530, shared accommodations $400
Includes airport transfer, two nights’ hotel (the 10th and 11th of June), all meals (beginning with dinner on the 10th), and full-day guided tour, entrance fees, and ground transport
**Journey to Cyprus: Island of Aphrodite, Crossroads of Civilizations**  
*June 17-22, 2011  
With Kyriacos Markides and others*

During the Ptolemaic Era, the island of Cyprus fell within Alexandria’s sphere of influence and reached a cultural apex in the time of Cleopatra. Renowned as the birthplace of the goddess Aphrodite, Cyprus’ proximity to Asia and the Middle East has led to a long and fascinating history at the crossroads of Eastern and Western civilizations. Romans, Byzantines, Ottomans and Venetians have all passed through and left their mark. During our time on this resplendent and fascinating island, we will visit ancient archeological sites in Kourion and Paphos, meditate in the serene and beautiful monasteries of Mesopotamos and Kykkos in the Troödos Mountains, surrounded by peaceful and pristine forests, enjoy traditional villages with their warm hospitality, and find plenty of time to relish the blue Mediterranean waters and the unspoiled nature of the Akamas Peninsula on Cyprus’ far western tip. Our last three nights will be spent by the sea near Polis in an atmosphere of fresh breezes, sunlight, and the calm, steady rhythm of breaking waves. We will be joined on our Quest by Kyriacos Markides, author of *Mountain of Silence* and *The Magus of Strovolos*, whose many books on the spiritual culture of Cyprus bring alive the path of Eastern Mystical Christianity and also describe how more syncretic esoteric streams continue to evolve amidst this ancient culture.

**Cost for those traveling with us from main conference:**  
single accommodations $1990, shared accommodations $1870 per person

**Cost for those meeting us in Larnaca on the 17th of June:**  
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**Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt**  
*June 17-22, 2011  
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On this journey to Upper Egypt we will investigate the ancient sites linked to the archetypal goddesses Isis, Mut and Hathor and the gods Osiris, Amun and Horus with Normandi Ellis, author of *Dreams of Isis, Feasts of Light and Awakening Osiris*, the last of which has been called an ecstatic and poetic translation of hieroglyphs from the Egyptian Book of the Dead. We will fly from Cairo to Luxor on the 17th and the following day walk through Karnak, the largest temple complex in Egypt, contemplating the mysteries of creation, the serenity of its lake, and the might of its pharaohs. At Luxor Temple we decode the hidden symbolism first revealed by Schwaller de Lubicz and discover its relationship to the divinity of the pharaohs and queens who ruled Egypt. The following morning we visit the Temple of Osiris at Abydos and explore the mysterious Osiion and the chapels dedicated to the mysteries of the death and resurrection of Osiris and the divine conception of the god Horus. We then travel to the temple of Hathor, goddess of joy, love and beauty, ruler of sun and moon, and take time to observe the astrological ceilings at Dendera. The next morning, we pass the Colossi of Memnon, the statue of a God who once sang to welcome the dawn, on our way to the mortuary temple of Hatshepsut, a woman pharaoh as fascinating as Cleopatra. In the Valley of the Kings we will see the beautiful painted tomb of Siptah and learn the sacred hours of the night through which all souls must pass. On our final day, we sail Lake Nasser to the Greco-Roman Temple of Isis on the Island of Philae to experience the last temple of Ancient Egypt which closed in 642 CE. Throughout this profound journey there will be an emphasis for those who wish on transforming our impressions into memoir writing.

**Cost:** single accommodations $2135, shared accommodations $1885 per person

In addition:

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**POST-CONFERENCE JOURNEYS**

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In addition:
BIOPGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Crystal Addey, Ph.D., is Tutor in Religion and Late Antiquity at Cardinal University and part-time Tutor for the Sophia Centre for the Study of Cosmology in Culture, Department of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Wales, Lampeter. She wrote her doctoral thesis on the role of oracles, divination and theurgy in the writings of the Neoplatonist philosophers Porphyry and Iamblichus.

Christopher Bamford is the editorial director of SteinerBooks and Lindisfarne Press. He is the author of An Endless Trace: The Passionate Pursuit of Wisdom in the West, and has written numerous introductions to the works of Rudolf Steiner.

A speaker at all nine of the Esoteric Quest conferences, he co-authored most recently Green Hermeticism: Alchemy and Ecology.

Steve Bass, M.A., has practiced as an architect in New York City since 1974. He holds a Master of Arts degree from the Royal College of Art, London, where he studied under the direction of Keith Critchlow, and has been visiting assistant professor of architecture at Notre Dame University. He is a fellow of the Institute of Classical Architecture and is author of the forthcoming Proportion in Architecture.

Jay Bregman, Ph.D., is Professor of History and Religious Studies at the University of Maine, USA. He has written on the fourth century CE Neoplatonists Synesius and the Emperor Julian. He also continues to research Neoplatonism in North America, especially the work of the Transcendentalists. He has a musical background and an interest in recent influences of Pythagoreanism on Jazz and Minimalist composers.

Alan Cardew, Ph.D., is Director of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies and a member of the recently formed Centre for the Study of Myth at the University of Essex. He has written on Jung and Heidegger, Hermeneutics, and Nietzsche, is currently pursuing research on the interpretation of myth, and is working on a book on the archaic and the primordial.

Brian Cotnoir is an independent researcher. He has been studying and experimenting with alchemical procedures for 35 years and is author of The Weiser’s Concise Guide to Alchemy.

John Dillon was Regius Professor of Greek in Trinity College, Dublin, between 1980 and 2006. He is director emeritus of the Dublin Center for the Study of the Platonic Tradition. His books include The Heirs of Plato: A Study in Alexandrian Hellenism, The Isle of Pharos in Myth and History, and Alexandrian Hellenism.

Normandi Ellis is author of five books, including the acclaimed Awakening Osiris, translations from the Egyptian hieroglyph. Her nonfiction work includes Dreams of Isis and Feasts of Light. Two more books on Egypt are forthcoming in 2011: A Field Guide to the Egyptian Mysteries and Remembering the Divine Within: Writing Spiritual Autobiography Based on the Egyptian Book of the Dead. A writer and editor, she leads trips to Egypt and owns and operates the PenHouse Retreat Center for writers and spiritual seekers.

Ahmed Etman, Ph.D., is Professor of Classics and Comparative Literature in the Faculty of Arts at Cairo University, and Chairman of the Egyptian Society of Greco-Roman Studies. He has written a number of plays including Cleopatra Worships Peace and The Blind Guest Restores His Sight.


Leonard George, Ph.D., is a Canadian psychologist, educator, author and broadcaster.

His academic affiliations include Capilano University, Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia. Author of two books, Crimes of Perception and Alternative Realities, he has focused for many years on the spirituality of antiquity and as an advisor to the Esoteric Quest conferences.

Ellen Goldberg, M.A., is a psychotherapist who has been working within the Hermetic Tradition for thirty five years. She has been on the faculty of the N.Y. Open Center since 1985 and taught at six previous esoteric conferences.

Ellen is the founder and director of the School of Oracles and has a private psychotherapy practice in New York.

Clare Goodrick-Clarke, M.A., is the author of G. R. S. Mead and the Gnostic Quest, Alchemical Medicine, and The Hermetic Art of Alchemy, forthcoming from Oxford University Press.

An honorary fellow of the University of Exeter (UK), Clare teaches modules on the esoteric body and the history of alchemy in the MA program in Western Esotericism.

Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, D.Phil., is Professor of Western Esotericism and Director of the Exeter Centre for the Study of Esotericism (EXESESO) at the University of Exeter. He is the author of The Western Esoteric Traditions and various studies of Ramon Lull, Paracelsus, John Dee, Emanuel Swedenborg and Helena Blavatsky. He is general editor of the Western Esoteric Masters Series and joint-editor of Aries: Journal for the Study of Western Esotericism.

Yasmine Hussein is a researcher at the Alexandria & Mediterranean Research Center, affiliated with the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in Egypt. Her research writings, articles and presentations specialize in issues related to religious philosophy, history and the archeology of the ancient world. Her interests also concern perceptual and conceptual shifts in religious history.

Kyriacos Markides, Ph.D., is the author of many books including Mountain of Silence, Riding the Lion, Gifts of the Desert, and The Magus of Strovlos. A professor of sociology at the University of Maine, he is a native of Cyprus and remains deeply connected to its culture and history.

Mervat Abdel Nasser, M.D., M.Phil., was born and educated in Egypt and is currently a visiting research fellow at the Institute of Psychiatry, King’s College, London. The author of several books in Arabic on ancient Egypt, ancient Egyptian thought, ancient civilizations and the history of ideas, she is chairperson of The New Hermopolis which aims to establish a cultural village near the ancient site of Hermopolis.

Richard Noll, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist, Associate Professor of Psychology at Desales University in Pennsylvania. He has conducted field work among the Siberian Tungus shamans of northeast China, and has written two books on Jung. His next book, American Madness: The Rise and Fall of Dementia Praecox, will be published by Harvard University Press in 2011.

Scott Olsen, Ph.D., is a Professor of Philosophy and Comparative Religion at the College of Central Florida and the author of The Golden Section: Nature’s Greatest Secret which was awarded first place for design by the Bookbinders’ Guild of New York. Scott lectures widely on the Perennial Philosophy with special emphasis on the Divine Proportion and Transformative States of Consciousness.

Marjorie Roth, DMA, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of Music at Nazareth College in Rochester, NY, where she teaches Music History, Studio Flute, Women’s Studies, and directs the Honors program. She has recently published in a collection of essays on Music & Esotericism and, in August 2009, gave a presentation for the NY Open Center on “Spiritualism & Feminism” in 19th Century Upstate NY.”

Kyriakos Savopoulos, Ph.D., is a researcher at the Alexandria & Mediterranean Research Center and lectures at the Alexandria Center for Hellenistic Studies.

Ralph White is co-founder and creative director of the New York Open Center, one of America’s leading institutions of holistic learning, and editor of Lapis Magazine Online.

He has directed and organized a series of nine international conferences on Western Esotericism, of which this is the latest.

CONFERENCE STAFF:
Director: Ralph White, New York Open Center
Coordinator: Carrie Wykoff, Events That Matter
Registrar: Andrea Lomanto, New York Open Center
Director of Finance: Nancy Rotger, New York Open Center
CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Conference Fee
Course Code: 11SQUEST
Registration through:
December 30, 2010: $1635
February 15, 2011: $1795
April 11, 2011: $1945

The conference fee includes the full conference program, afternoon activities, evening events, all meals, airport transfer, and round-trip coach between Cairo and Alexandria.

Accommodations Fee
Accommodations are provided in Alexandria for the five nights of Sunday, June 12, through Friday, June 17. Participants spend the night of Saturday, June 11, outside of Cairo to travel with the Open Center by coach to Alexandria the next day. Please see below for details.

June 12-17 (five nights) in Alexandria
Single rooms: $575
Double rooms: $330 per person, per room
Sea view single rooms: $630
Sea view double rooms: $375 per person, per room
Upgraded sea view single rooms: $850
Upgraded sea view double rooms: $540 per person, per room
June 11 outside of Cairo
Single rooms: $160
Double rooms: $95 per person, per room

This fee includes dinner on the evening of June 11.

For booking double rooms, please specify whether you will be attending as a couple, sharing a room with a friend, or wish to have a roommate arranged for you by the Open Center (pending availability).

Registration
The Open Center invites you to register on our website at www.EsotericQuest.org, where you will find our complete registration information and payment form. Payment is required to secure your registration.

Payment
All payment is in US dollars. Please pay by credit card, international money order or personal check (US bank accounts only). Prices do not include travel to and from Cairo, Egypt. An affordable payment plan for the conference is available. Please contact Andrea Lomanto at 212.219.2527 ext. 101, or at quest@opencenter.org for details.

Travel Arrangements
Participants must make their own travel arrangements to and from Cairo, Egypt (or home from either Paphos or Larnaca if you are joining us for the Cyprus post-conference trip).

Arrival in Cairo
Participants begin their journey by flying into Egypt’s Cairo International Airport (CAI) where they will be met by a conference representative and travel to their accommodations for the evening. Participants taking advantage of the Pre-Conference Day in Cairo will arrive on June 10. Others will arrive on June 11. An air-conditioned coach meets us on the morning of Sunday, June 12, for the 3-hour ride into Alexandria.

About the Conference
The conference begins with our ride into Alexandria on the morning of June 12. That evening, we meet for an orientation and dinner reception. Each day, we will have morning plenary sessions followed by lunch at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina. Afternoons include activities exploring ancient and modern Alexandria, as well as a choice of workshops to attend, followed by dinner. In the evenings we will gather for a variety of cultural events. The conference ends with our late morning coach ride back to Cairo Airport on Friday, June 17.

Refunds
A full refund, less a $200 processing fee, will be offered for cancellations made by February 15, 2011. Travel insurance is strongly recommended in the event of unexpectedly having to cancel or change your travel plans either before or during the conference, losing your luggage, needing medical assistance, or if the program is affected by circumstances beyond our control. You can purchase it online or from your own travel agent. Travel insurance options are available at www.globaltravelshield.com or www.worldnomad.com.

Offsetting our Carbon Footprint
Our Esoteric Quests take us to many wonderful places around the world, and the Open Center is committed to caring for this planet and its climate. Our brochure is printed on recycled paper and this year we will be offsetting the carbon footprint generated by staff air travel. We invite you to do the same by visiting www.sustainabletravelinternational.org so you can find out how many greenhouse gases are produced by your journey and then purchase Green Tags to make your travel 100% climate-neutral.

Scholarships / Work Study
A limited number of partial scholarships are available. Anyone awarded a scholarship will be expected to assist on site at the conference. Please see our website for a scholarship application form. These requests will be reviewed on a first come, first serve basis.

“The generous nature of this world teaches all beings.”
—Hermes Trismegistus to Asclepius
CONFERENCE PROGRAM INCLUDES:

All Roads Lead to Alexandria — Leonard George, Ph.D.
Alexandria, the Cosmopolis: Global Community, Then and Now — David Fideler, Ph.D.
Alexandria Quartet: Callimachus, Philo, Origen and Cavafy — John Dillon
The Alexandrian Sciences in Baghdad — Ahmed Etman, Ph.D.
Hermeticism as a Philosophy of Hope — Mervat Nasser, M.D., M.Phil.
The Philosopher Mathematicians of Alexandria: Euclid and Hypatia — Scott Olsen, Ph.D.
Divine Women: Cleopatra and Hypatia — Marjorie Roth, DMA, Ph.D.
The Church of the East — Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, D. Phil.
Greco-Egyptian Oracles — Crystal Addey, Ph.D.
Alexandrian Alchemy and the Ascent of the Soul — Brian Cotnoir

POST CONFERENCE JOURNEYS:

Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt, June 17th to 22nd with Normandi Ellis
Journey to Cyprus Island of Aphrodite and Eastern Mystical Christianity, June 17th to 22nd with Kyriacos Markides and others