

Temple of Set Reading List
Category 12: The Pythagoreans
Die Pythagoräer
as of February 26, 2003

MA: Pythagoras, famed as the first Greek philosopher, was one of the only foreigners to be initiated into one or more Egyptian priesthoods prior to the final decadence and destruction of Egypt. Hence it is through the Pythagoreans and their students that many of the most sublime mathematical principles have been passed down to us. Pythagoras was the first to use the pentagram as the symbol of his initiatory order, and death was the penalty for revealing its secret (*phi*). [See also "The Sphinx and the Chimaera" in the *Ruby Tablet of Set*.]

12A. *The Ancient Mysteries of Delphi: Pythagoras* by Edouard Schuré. Blauvelt, NY: Rudolf Steiner, 1971. (TOS-2) MA: "This small paperback contains a concise history of Pythagoras and his Academy at Crotona. A touch imaginative, as per Steiner publications in general, but on the whole a pleasant introduction to the subject."

12B. *Pythagoras: His Life and Teachings* by Thomas Stanley. Los Angeles: Philosophical Research Society, 1970. (TOS-3) MA: "I can forgive Manley P. Hall & Co. a lot as long as they reprint treasures like this: a handsomely-bound facsimile reproduction of the Ninth Section of the 1687 edition of Stanley's *History of Philosophy*. It contains an extensive account of Pythagoras and his doctrines, carefully footnoted to the original Classical sources. Almost any other account of Pythagoras that you come across will have been derived, in whole or part, from this book. The typeface and language are 'very 17th-century', so be prepared for ye eyestrayne. Some extracts will be found in 'The Sphinx and the Chimæra' in the *Ruby Tablet*."

12C. *The Collected Dialogues of Plato* by Plato (Ed. Edith Hamilton & Huntington Cairns). Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961. [Deutschland: *Platon-Die Hauptwerke*, Alfred Kröner Verlag, Stuttgart, 1973] (TOS-4) (LVT-4) MA: "It may sound inadequate to say 'go read Plato' - sort of like saying 'go read the encyclopædia'! The fact remains that this closet student of Pythagoras [cf. Alban Winspear, *The Genesis of Plato's Thought*, NY: S.A. Russell, 1940] incorporated a wealth of Pythagorean philosophy into his Dialogues and letters. This volume remains the standard academic translation. And, since it contains all of Plato's works [in fine print, on microthin paper], cross-referencing - indispensable where Plato is concerned! - is possible." R. Winkhart IV^o: "Beinhaltet als Alternativtitel: Protagoras, Gorgias, Menon, Phaidon, Das Gastmal, Phaidros, Der Staat, Theaitet, Der Staatsmann, Timaios, Kritias, und Die Gesetze." J. Lewis VI^o: "Descending into the waters of Plato is to enter a world where all things are subject to question and resolution through dialogue. Few if any of Plato's adversaries could outdo his finely-tuned mind. Plato is hardly the author to pick for a little light reading, but neither should an understanding of his works be considered an impossibility."

12D. *The Divine Proportion: A Study in Mathematical Beauty* by H.E. Huntley. NY: Dover Publications #0-486-22254-3, 1970. (TOS-4) (TRP-1) MA: "If you enjoyed J. Bronowski's 'Music of the Spheres' episode on Pythagoras in the *Ascent of Man* series/book, you'll like this little book - since it was one of J.B.'s primary sources. The text alternates between aesthetics and mathematics, with some rather hefty formulae included. Supplementary chapters touch upon the Fibonacci Numbers, Pascal's triangle, and other 'golden ratios' of science and nature."

12E. *The Secrets of Ancient Geometry* by Tons Brunes. Copenhagen, Denmark: “The Ancient Geometry” (Nygaardsvej 41, Copenhagen 0), 1968 [two-volume set]. [Deutschland: WU: 24a/73] (TOS-4) (TRP-4) MA: “The word for this work is ‘staggering’. 583 pages long, about \$50. Extensive chapters on the mathematics and architecture of the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, and their offshoots. A wealth of precision diagrams and formulæ.”

12F. *The Theoretic Arithmetic of the Pythagoreans* by Thomas Taylor. NY: Samuel Weiser, 1972 [originally published 1816]. (TOS-4) (TRP-4) MA: “In the author’s words [from the 1816 title page]: ‘The substance of all that has been written on this subject by Theo of Smyrna, Nichomachus, Iamblichus, and Boetius; together with some remarkable particulars respecting perfect, amicable, and other numbers, and a development of their mystical and theological arithmetic.’ A technical text by a distinguished scholar. Compare with #2N and #12E.”

12G. *Pythagoras: A Life* by Peter Gorman. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979. [Deutschland: WU: 29/21-076] (TOS-3) MA: “Quite simply - and in 216 pages - the most well-written, carefully researched, and objective biography of Pythagoras to date. Also included are chapters on philosophers contemporary with Pythagoras, as well as on certain key aspects of his philosophy.”

12H. *The Geometry of Art and Life* by Matila Ghyka. NY: Dover Publications, 1977. (TOS-3) Patty Hardy IV^o: “This covers some of the same territory as #12D, but devotes more space to the aesthetics of harmonic and geometric principles as they are found in living systems and in art. There is some interesting basic material covered [such as a discussion of why fivefold symmetry **cannot** be found in inorganic systems]. Chapters are included on the mathematics of *phi* and the Golden Section, the transmission of geometrical symbols and plans from Pythagorean times through the masonic guilds of the Middle Ages, the Greek and Gothic canons of proportion, and harmonic analysis of biological and architectural forms.”

12I. *The Enneads* by Plotinus (Stephen MacKenna, Trans.). London: Penguin, 1991. (TOS-4). DW: “Plotinus, an ethnic Egyptian living in Rome, produced one of the clearest and most powerful pieces of Egyptian/Pythagorean thinking to be injected into European thought.”