

Art Section

NEWSLETTER

For those active and interested in the Art Section of the School of Spiritual Science

Issue No. 52

Autumn-Winter 2019

Rudolf Steiner's Planetary Seals: Highlighting Their Metamorphosis by Correcting Their Orientation

by Brian Gray

Preface

My background in architecture led me to study of the First Goetheanum and, for the past 35 years, to teach the drawing of Rudolf Steiner's Seven Planetary Seals. I teach Planetary Evolution and am very familiar with Steiner's remarkable work on this theme.

Over 35 years ago I discovered that the orientation of the five planetary seals displayed in the program for the 1907 Munich Congress – with the planetary glyphs written into the top of each seal – are not consistent with their true metamorphic relationships as they are displayed. Their orientations do not agree with the way Carl Kemper constructed them in his book *Der Bau*, nor do they agree with the orientation of the column capitals in the First Goetheanum. This “mistaken” orientation of the seals prevents one from discovering their laws of metamorphosis and from entering into their living unfoldment. This is clearly not what Rudolf Steiner intended. Displays of the seven planetary seals need to be corrected. This article attempts to make that clear. Images in this article show how one finds the “corrected”

proper sequence and orientation of the seven planetary seals. Color photographs displaying the seals overlaying one another

in their corrected sequence are included.

These illustrations also appear on the website of Wise Cosmos Educational Initiative at WiseCosmos.com, and brief videos on this theme may be found on the Wise Cosmos YouTube channel. The Seven Planetary Seals designed by Rudolf Steiner are very

important to help us artistically awaken to the spiritual world and the stages of cosmic and human evolution.

Introduction

While serving as General Secretary of the German Section of the Theosophical Society, Rudolf Steiner introduced new artistic impulses into the 1907 Congress of the Federation of the European Sections of the Theosophical Society. He hosted this Congress in Munich, and his focus on reuniting the arts with spiritual life was a significant departure from previous gatherings. In Steiner's words, at the 1907 Munich Congress he and Marie von Sievers led the way in providing “an artistic element directed toward the purpose of not leaving the spiritual life henceforth void of art within the Society” (from Chapter 38 of *The Story of My Life* by Rudolf Steiner).



Brian Gray, Metamorphosis of Rudolf Steiner's Saturn + Sun + Moon + Mars + Mercury + Jupiter into VENUS Planetary Seals, colored chalks on blackboard

Rudolf Steiner artistically created metamorphic Planetary Seals

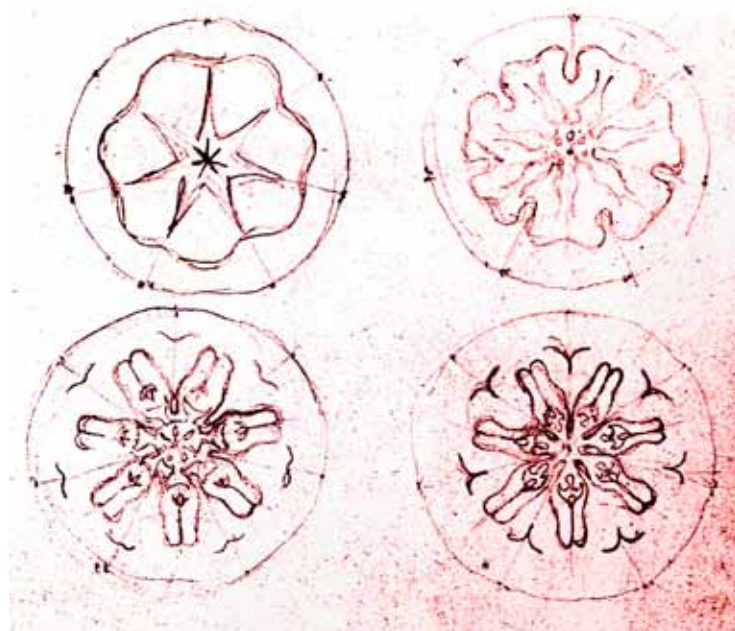
as an expression of cosmic and human development. The first five (of seven) Planetary Seals were printed in the program of the Munich Congress. However, the second through fifth Planetary Seals as printed in the program were incorrectly oriented – they were “rotated” out of their lawful relationship to the first Seal. Because this fact has been forgotten, the dynamic metamorphic principles expressed in the sequence of Planetary Seals have become obscured for viewers. In 1911 Rudolf Steiner spoke about what he intended:

“When we rest our physical eyes upon any one of these figures, it is not the physical eye alone but the whole organism and, above all, the streams of the ether-body which are set into a special kind of motion by the course of these lines and by the form of these figures, so that the ether-body moves differently according to which of these figures one is contemplating....

“These figures are the means by which we are instigated to create in ourselves the thought-forms, that is, the movement-forms in our ether-body... in a rhythmic sequence, so they form a complete whole, the sort of whole which corresponds to a particular stream of development in the outer etheric world.... The sequence of forms, which accord with the perfecting of our ether-body, is shown in the sequence of these figures, one after the other.

“When we place before us such symbolic figures and are able to look more deeply into them, they can be a help in attaining those goals toward which we are striving in our own spiritual development. And when, by means of such a correct sequence we create appropriate thought-forms, we can then deepen our understanding of the rhythms that hold sway among the seven parts of the human organism. We have not placed these figures here merely as decoration, but because they are intimately connected with those goals toward which we are here to strive.” (From a lecture given by Rudolf Steiner on October 15, 1911; trans. Virginia Brett.)

On the following pages (and in the short video introduction at WiseCosmos.com and on the Wise Cosmos YouTube channel),



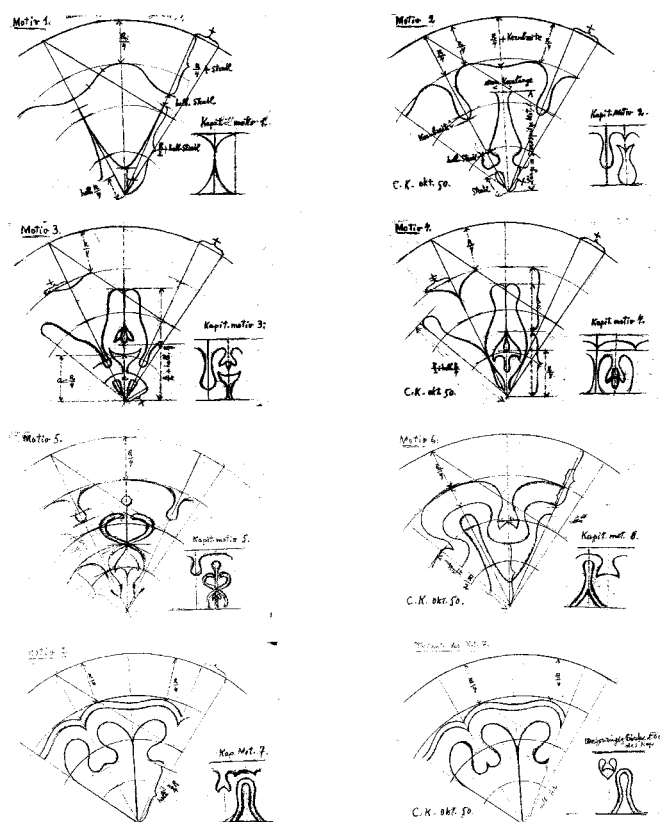
Rudolf Steiner, Sketch of Four Planetary Seals

I reveal all seven Planetary Seals in their correct orientation, opening a way for us to work with them consciously to enter into and understand the dynamics of metamorphosis. These are not seven different forms; they are seven stages of one unfolding living organism.

Drawing of Four Planetary Seals by Rudolf Steiner

In Rudolf Steiner’s original sketch (see illustration previous column) the consistent orientation of the first four seals to each other shows the validity of the “corrected” alignment I am proposing.¹

Drawing of Seven Seals by Carl Kemper in *Der Bau*



Proportionen bei den sieben Siegeln

Carl Kemper’s construction of the seven planetary seals (above) orients each of the seals consistently with one another, in agreement with the column capital alignments. Kemper’s consistent pattern of constructing the planetary seals on this drawing confirms that their orientation needs to be “corrected” from the way the planetary seals are typically displayed.²

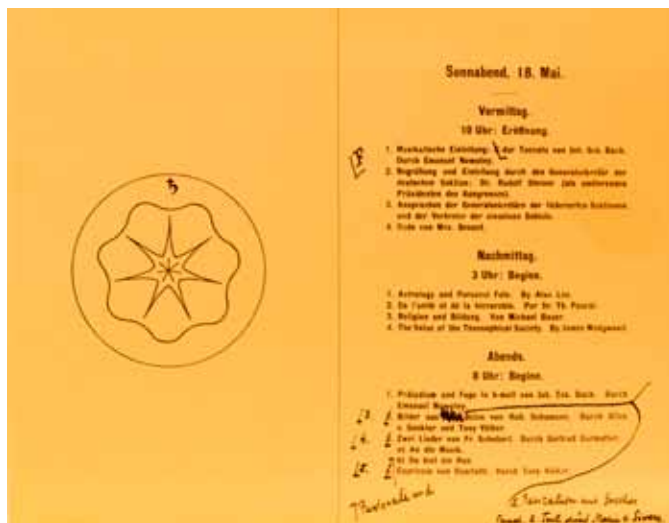
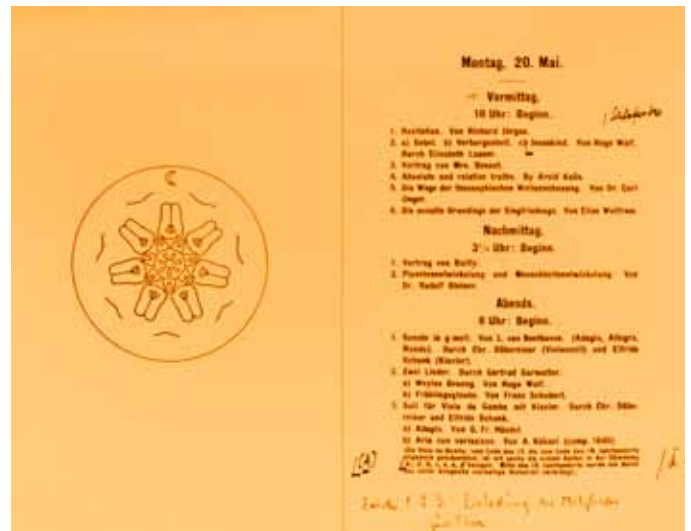
Original Program of the Theosophical Congress of Whitsun Held in Munich 1907

This program contains the earliest printing of Rudolf Steiner’s first five planetary seals. Unfortunately, only the first seal (Saturn) was printed in the correct orientation; the other four were “rotated” relative to Saturn. On page 4 the program cover and other pages are shown.³

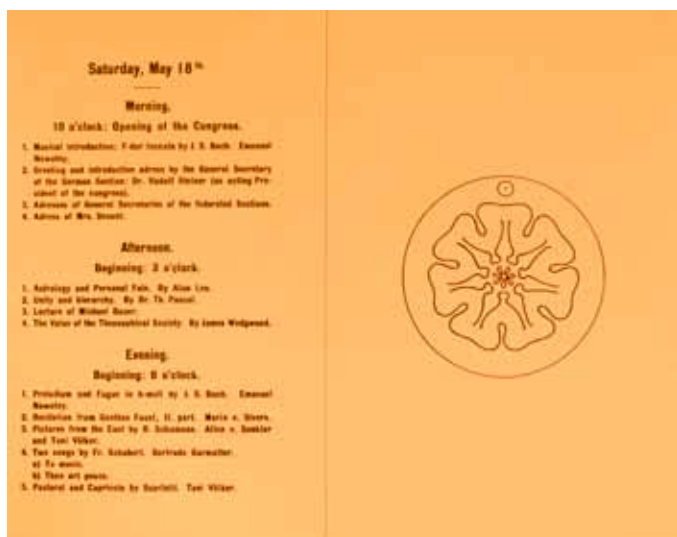
Original Program of the Theosophical Congress of Whitsun held in Munich 1907

This program (cover to right) contains the earliest printing of Rudolf Steiner's first five planetary seals. Only the first seal (Saturn) was printed in the correct "upright" orientation shown here; the other four seals were "rotated" in relation to the Saturn seal.

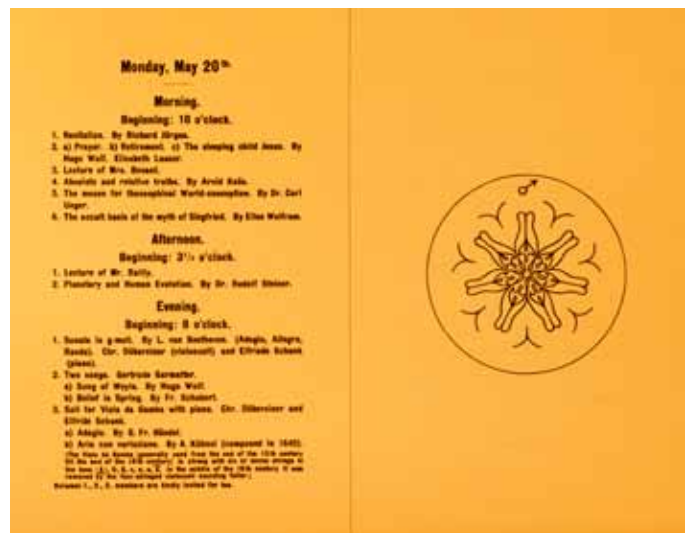
The illustration below shows the Saturn Seal and the Saturday Congress program text in German.⁴



This Congress program contains the earliest printing of Rudolf Steiner's first five planetary seals. The Sun seal shown below must be 'rotated' relative to the Saturn seal to view the metamorphic sequence properly. Below is shown the Saturday program in English and the Sun Seal for the Sunday program.⁵



In the Congress program the Moon seal shown above right must be 'rotated' relative to the Saturn seal in order to view the metamorphic sequence properly. The illustration shows the Moon Seal and the Monday program in German.⁶



The Mars seal from the program (shown above) must be 'rotated' relative to the Saturn seal in order to view the metamorphic sequence properly. The illustration shows the Monday program in English and the Mars Seal for the Tuesday program.⁷

Unfortunately, in the Congress program only the first seal (Saturn) was printed in the correct orientation. The Mercury seal shown below must be "rotated" relative to the Saturn seal in order to view the metamorphic sequence properly. The illustration

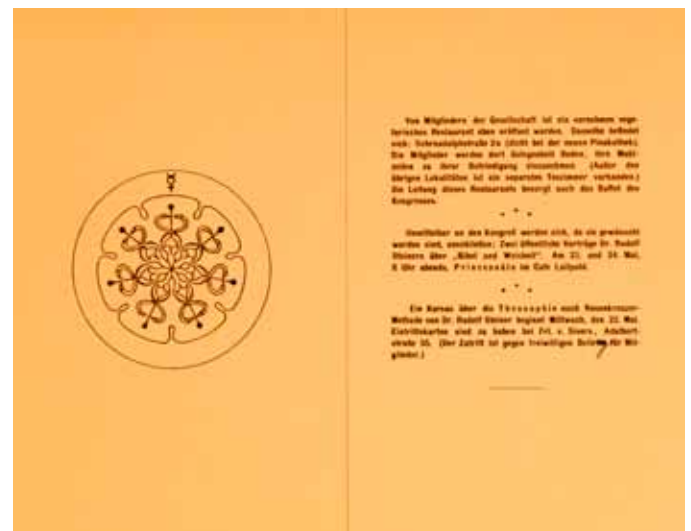
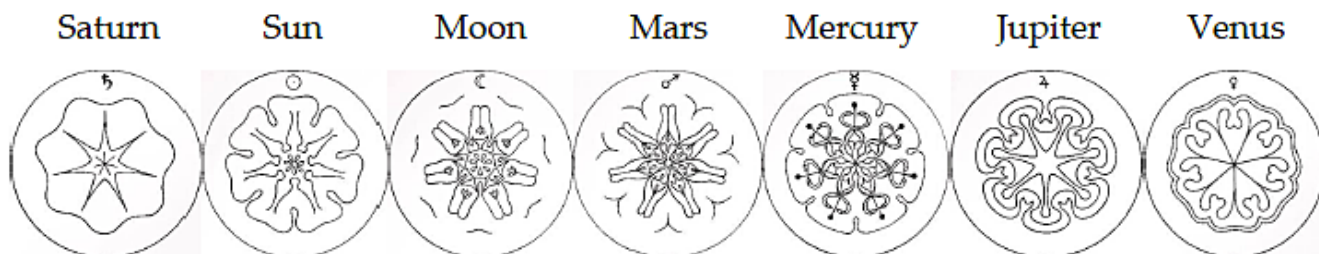


Figure 1.
Original
Planetary
Seals with
Glyphs



shows the Mercury Seal and the program end notes in German.⁸

Figure 1 above shows the original Planetary Seals with glyphs from the 1907 Munich Congress brochure. Note the vertical orientation of middle five seals relative to first (Saturn) and seventh (Venus) seals.

the exact center of the large cupola, each column capital maintains a consistent orientation to the others, revealing their metamorphic relationships.¹⁰

The Seven Planetary Seals and First Goetheanum Column Capitals

Figure 2.
“Corrected
Version” of
Planetary
Seals

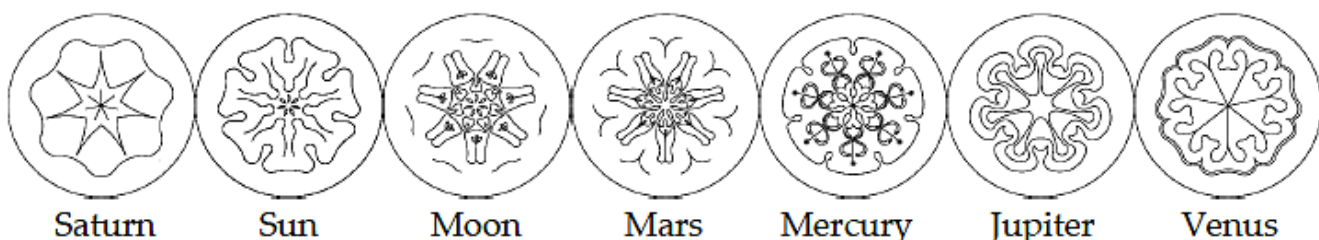
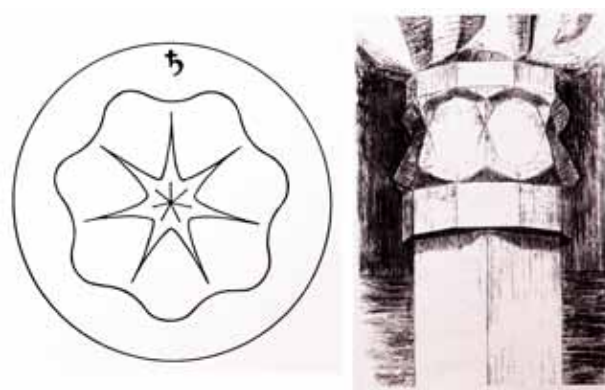
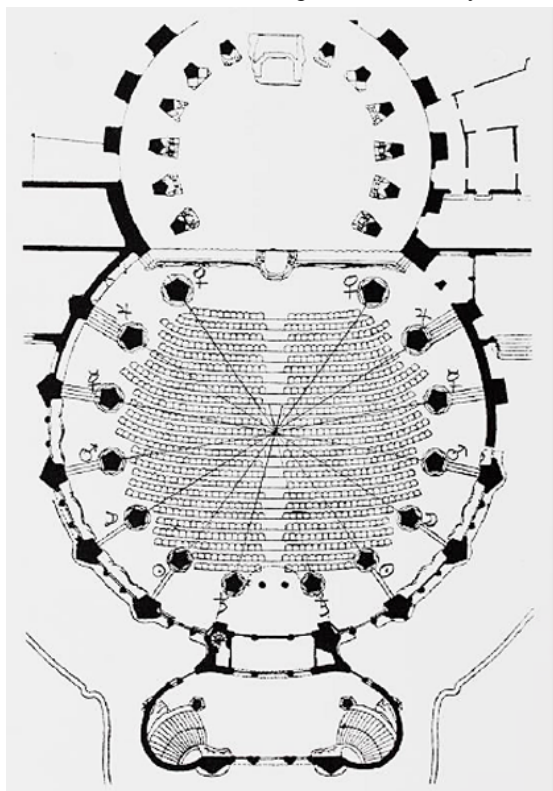


Figure 2 above shows a “corrected version” of the seven Planetary Seals. In it the middle five seals are “rotated” to align with first and seventh seal. The corrected version reveals the true metamorphic sequence between the seven planetary seals and agrees with orientation of the seven planetary column capitals in the First Goetheanum.⁹

First Goetheanum Ground Plan as Designed by Rudolf Steiner

Since each of the seven column capitals was axially centered on

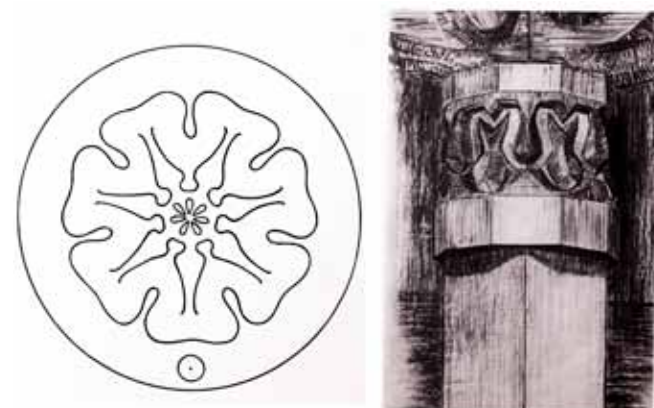


Saturn Seal and Goetheanum Column

In the comparative illustration above, the “upright” Saturn seal corresponds with the Saturn capital in the first Goetheanum, which was axially oriented to the exact center of the large cupola.¹¹

Sun Seal and Goetheanum Column

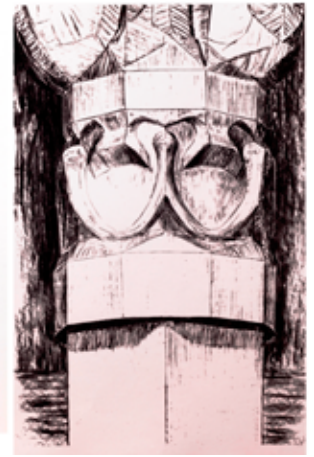
In the illustration below, the “inverted” Sun seal corresponds with the Sun capital in the first Goetheanum, which was axially oriented to the exact center of the large cupola.¹²





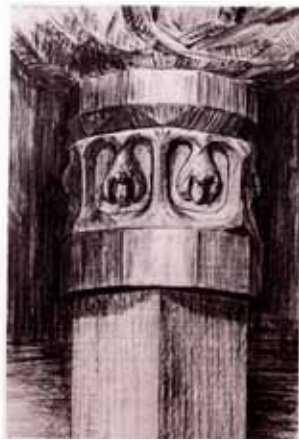
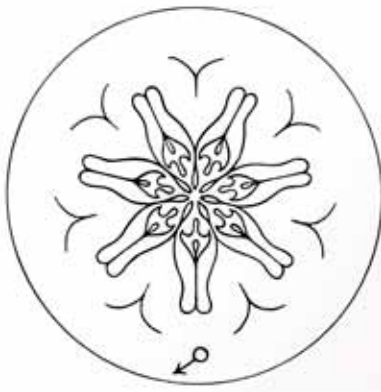
Moon Seal and Goetheanum Column

In the illustration above, the “inverted” Moon seal corresponds with the Moon capital in the first Goetheanum, which was axially oriented to the exact center of the large cupola.¹³



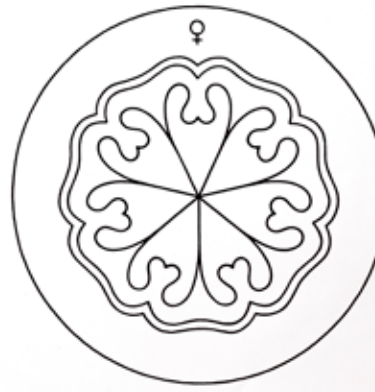
Jupiter Seal and Goetheanum Column

In the illustration above the “inverted” Jupiter seal corresponds with the Jupiter capital in the first Goetheanum, which was axially oriented to the exact center of the large cupola.¹⁶



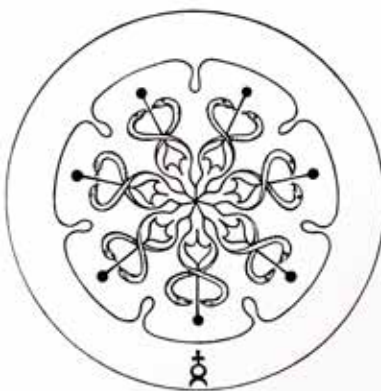
Mars Seal and Goetheanum Column

In the illustration above the “inverted” Mars seal corresponds with the Mars capital in the first Goetheanum, which was axially oriented to the exact center of the large cupola.¹⁴



Venus Seal and Goetheanum Column

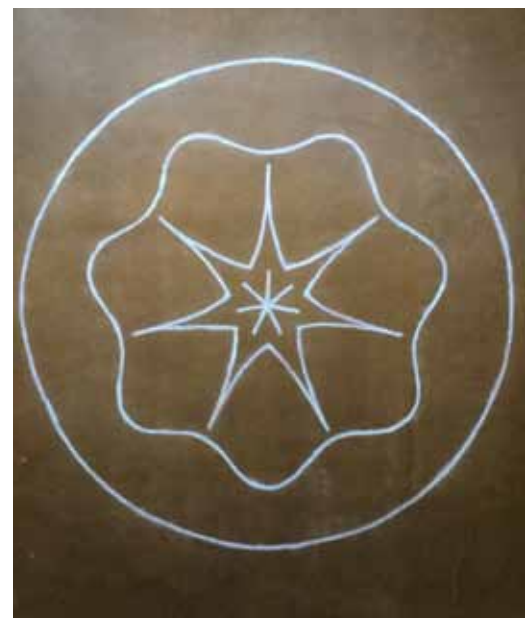
In the illustration above the “upright” Venus seal corresponds with the Venus capital in the first Goetheanum, which was axially oriented to the exact center of the large cupola.¹⁷



Mercury Seal and Goetheanum Column

In the illustration above the “inverted” Mercury seal corresponds with Mercury capital in the first Goetheanum, which was axially oriented to the exact center of the large cupola.¹⁵

Rudolf Steiner's Saturn Seal



SATURN¹⁸

Rudolf Steiner's Sun Seal



SUN¹⁹

Rudolf Steiner's Mars Seal



MARS²¹

Rudolf Steiner's Moon Seal



MOON²⁰

Rudolf Steiner's Mercury Seal



MERCURY²²

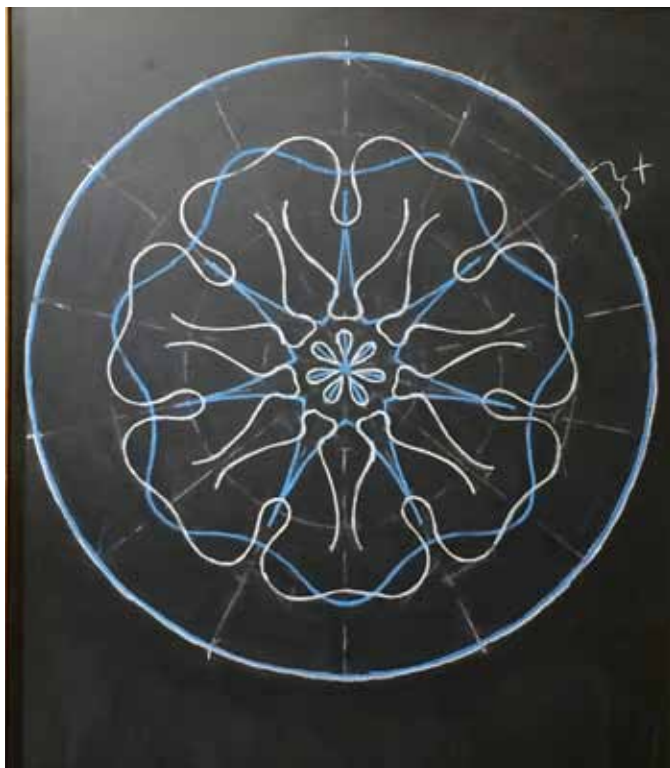
Rudolf Steiner's Saturn Seal



SATURN²³

The Metamorphosis of the Seals

Drawing in colored chalks, I will now indicate, by overlapping two or more successive seals in different colors, how each seal metamorphoses into the form of the succeeding seal(s).



Rudolf Steiner's Sun Seal: Metamorphosis of Saturn into SUN



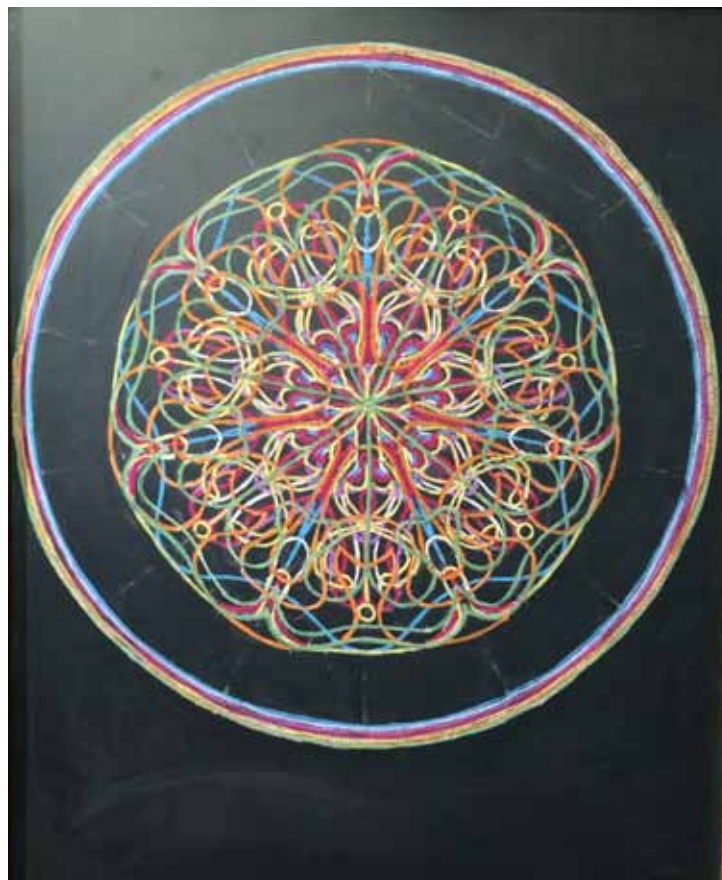
Rudolf Steiner's Moon Seal: Metamorphosis of Saturn + Sun into MOON



Rudolf Steiner's Mars Seal: Metamorphosis of Saturn + Sun + Moon into MARS



Rudolf Steiner's Mercury Seal: Metamorphosis of Saturn + Sun + Moon + Mars into MERCURY



Rudolf Steiner's Venus Seal: Metamorphosis of Saturn + Sun + Moon + Mars + Mercury + Jupiter into VENUS



Rudolf Steiner's Jupiter Seal: Metamorphosis of Saturn + Sun + Moon + Mars + Mercury into JUPITER

The author is very grateful for the following resources, as well as the generous contributions of many wise helpers, including Lelan Harris, Jeff Cleveland, John Cleveland, Leslie Loy, and Molly Toral. Without these and many others, this presentation would not be possible.

Steiner, Rudolf. *Sieben Kapitel aus dem grossen Kuppelraum vom ersten Goetheanum als Offenbarer von Stützkraften: Einführung und Zeichnungen ; Rudolf Steiners Text von 1907 in fünfzehn Sprachen ; Daten, Motive als Silhouetten und Umrisse auflösen Folien*. Edited by Rex Raab. Dornach: Verlag am Goetheanum, 1995. Print. ISBN 3723507069, 9783723507063.

Steiner, Rudolf. *Rosicrucianism Renewed: The Unity of Art, Science & Religion: The Theosophical Congress of Whitsun 1907* (CW 284). Ed. Joan DeRis Allen. Trans. Marsha Post. London: SteinerBooks, 2007. ISBN-10: 0880106115, ISBN-13: 978-0880106115.

Kemper, Carl. *Der Bau: Studien zur Architektur und Plastik des Ersten Goetheanum*. Herausgegeben von Hilde Raske unter Mitarbeit von Albert von Baravalle, Friedrich Häusler, Heinrich Kern und Georg Unger. Stuttgart: Verlag Freies Geistesleben, 1966. ISBN-10: 3772505341, ISBN-13: 978-3772505348.

Friedrich Kemper. *Rudolf Steiner's Seven Signs of Planetary Evolution*. Ed. Paul M. Allen; Trans. Virginia Brett. Spring Valley, NY: St. George Publications, 1980.

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Brian Gray is the former Director of the Foundation Program in Anthroposophy at Rudolf Steiner College, Fair Oaks, California, USA. For more information about these or other educational materials, contact Lelan Harris, Executive Director, Wise Cosmos Educational Initiative at Lelan@wisecosmos.org. OR Brian Gray: BGrayStar@sbcglobal.net

Endnotes (Sources of Images)

¹ Carl Kemper, *Der Bau: Studien zur Architektur und Plastik des Ersten Goetheanum*. Edited by Hilde Raske with contributions by Albert von Baravalle, Friedrich Häusler, Heinrich Kern and Georg Unger. Stuttgart: Verlag Freies Geistesleben, 1966. ISBN-10: 3772505341, ISBN-13: 978-3772505348. Page 138.

² Ibid.

³ Rudolf Steiner, *Rosicrucianism Renewed: The Unity of Art, Science & Religion: The Theosophical Congress of Whitsun 1907* (CW 284). Edited by Joan DeRis Allen. Translated by Marsha Post. London: SteinerBooks, 2007. ISBN-10: 0880106115, ISBN-13: 978-0880106115. Plates section at end.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Figure 1 shows the original planetary seals and glyphs by Rudolf Steiner. Figure 2, the "Corrected Version," is based upon the research of Brian Gray.

¹⁰ Kemper, *Der Bau*, p. 189.

¹¹ Rudolf Steiner, *Sieben Kapitele aus dem grossen Kuppelraum vom ersten Goetheanum als Offenbarer von Stützkräften: Einführung und Zeichnungen ; Rudolf Steiners Text von 1907 in fünfzehn Sprachen ; Daten, Motive als Silhouetten und Umriss auf losen Folien*. Edited by Rex Raab. Dornach: Verlag am Goetheanum, 1995. Print. ISBN 3723507069, 9783723507063.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Drawn by Brian Gray in pastel.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.



Brian Gray Drawing Composite Venus Seal on Blackboard

A Report from the Art Section in Great Britain

by Christian Thal-Jantzen

Summer Conference 2020

9th – 12th August at Tobias School of Art, East Grinstead

The Art Section in Great Britain (GB) is planning a conference in August 2020 to be held over four days for members of the School of Spiritual Science that are or intend to be active in the Art Section. We will be meeting at Tobias School of Art in Sussex with catering and accommodation at Peredur Centre for the Arts. We will follow on from our fruitful conference last August when we built each day on a freely rendered First Class Lesson, followed by artistic work both individually and in groups, and rounding off with group reflection and sharing our experience. If you are interested, please let us have your email address and we will keep you informed.

Section Coordinator

The Art Section in GB is still without a Coordinator to liaise with the Goetheanum and the College of Section Coordinators in GB. The Coordinator seeks to be in touch with all artists active in the Society and Section and to chair the Section Carrying Group. At present Liri Filippini has agreed to be the Section contact person and will be attending the College of Section Coordinators meetings with the Council of the Art Section in GB.

Exhibition Space and Archive

One of our current concerns is how to store and display a growing archive. We recently took possession of a number of pieces of sculpture made by John Salter including a magnificent series of seven metamorphoses. At the present time we have an archive space with Novalis Trust in Stroud, for which we are very grateful. But we need much more space both for storage and to exhibit work. There are currently discussions with Aonghus Gordon of Ruskin Mill Trust. Any other offers of help would be appreciated.

Art Association

The Art Association is a Group of the Art Section in GB; it is the membership body that you can join if you wish to support, follow, and be active in the Art Section. The Art Section as part of the School of Spiritual Science is not a membership body and cannot take on financial and legal responsibilities. If you wish to join, you can go to www.artsection.org The annual contribution is £35.00.

E: christianthaljantzen@outlook.com

Art Section interim contact person: Liri Filippini.

E: liri.filippini13@gmail.com

NOTICE FROM THE EDITOR:

I apologize for the unusual lateness of this issue of the Newsletter. Over the last few months I have been involved virtually full-time in helping launch the Lightforms: art + spirit art center initiative in Hudson, New York (see following article) The next issue of the Newsletter (#53) should follow soon after this one to get us back on schedule. Part 2 of our article on Marie Krösche from issue #51 will appear in the next issue.

David Adams