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III Convegno Internazionale DA BOLOGNA VERSO IL MONDO



THE MIRROR OF HERMES

Languages, Symbols, and Oracular Mediations across Wisdom Traditions

October 17-19, 2026

Conference Overview

The conference aims to investigate the function of the oracle not only as a historical-religious phenomenon, but as a cornerstone of wisdom traditions and Hermeticism. In an era of profound transformation of epistemic paradigms, we intend to explore how the "oracular word" has constituted, between East and West, a privileged language for mediation between the cosmic order and human reality.

Saturday, October 17, 2026

**"Prof. Marco Biagi" Hall - Santo Stefano District - Baraccano Complex,
Via Santo Stefano, 119, Bologna, Italy**

9:15 - Reception and Participant Registration

9:45 - Welcome and Introduction

10:00 – The Oracular Word: Sibyls, Incantations, and Prophecies (Paola Goretti)

In the pre-classical tradition, the voice of the divine bursts forth through an act of possession; in the revealed tradition, it is substantiated by the truthfulness of the Scriptures. The Oracular and the Prophetic alternate between remote or Christianized mantics, bound to the song of eternity. And Diotima, mediator of Eros, teaches the generative, birthing, enrapturing word.

10:45 – The Hermetic Mirrors of Tradition (Wouter Hanegraaff)

Translation and Reinterpretation in the History of Hermetic Reception: This contribution analyzes the reception of the Corpus Hermeticum, investigating how translations—from early Christian interpretations to occultist and academic rereadings—have often superimposed ideological frameworks onto the original contents. The goal is to deconstruct these stratifications to recover the authentic intention of Hermetic wisdom.

12:15 – Oniric Oracles (Maurizio Paolillo)

The Dreams of Emperors in Ancient China and the Power of Images: The sovereign's sleep as a battlefield—in ancient China, a nightmare could decide the fate of a kingdom. Emperors' dreams transformed into legendary icons and millenary talismans, where the art of the brush renders the invisible tangible.

13:00 – Lunch Break

14:30 – The Oracular Function in High Magic (Henrik Bogdan)

The Occult Side of King Charles XIII through His Secret Manuscripts: Among Masonic rituals and forbidden grimoires, high magic was a language used to dialogue with the divine and govern destiny between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

15:45 – Kabbalah and Oracles in the Renaissance (Flavia Buzzetta)

From Pico della Mirandola's Florence, a Journey Toward Pax Philosophica: Chaldean Oracles, Orphic hymns, and the "Celestial Lion" of Pierleone da Spoleto offer a vision of how Kabbalah and ancient mystery wisdoms became operative keys to regenerate mankind and unveil the secret unity of the cosmos.

16:30 – Coffee Break

16:45 – Geographies of the Sacred: Oracular Languages between Eurasia and the African Diaspora (Morena Poltronieri – Ernesto Fazioli)

An investigation spanning the signs of the Irk Bitig, astragalomancy (dice/knucklebone divination), the ecstasy of Japanese Itako, and Afro-Brazilian Búzios (cowrie-shell divination). The presentation analyzes how different traditions codify the message of destiny, transforming physical media into wisdom mediation.

17:30 PM – Closing Remarks

Sunday, October 18, 2026

ORACLES IN ART

Venue: Conference Hall MAMbo - Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna

Via Don Giovanni Minzoni, 14

14:30 – Reception

15:00 – **Oracles and Art: Images That Precede the World (Jari Casagrande)**

Between Symbol, Body, and Vision of the Invisible

15:30 – **The Flood / La Piena (Francesca Grilli with Azzurra D'Agostino)**

Inspired by the project of the same name, this experience explores the vital bond between body and water. It invites reflection on the millenary connection between humankind and the environment, moving toward a new coexistence and ecological transformation through the artist's work.

16:15 – **THIRD EYE. TRINITY TAROT (Ugo Dossi - Martina Mazzotta with Alla Kolpakova - Stefan Göppel)**

During the event, the audience will have the opportunity to experience live the interactive virtual model presented in 2025 by Ugo Dossi at CERN: a synthesis of art and science that combines 28 archetypes of the Trinity Tarot with individual experience, producing a personalized 3D oracle for every participant

18:30 PM – Closing Remarks

Monday, October 19, 2026

ORACLES

Suspended Time between Myth and Language

Venue: Cinema Modernissimo - Cineteca Bologna

Piazza Re Enzo, 3

14:00 – Reception

14:30 – **The Oracle as the Tragedy of Truth (Introduction by Jari Casagrande)**

An analysis of the oracle in Pasolini's masterpiece: unlike modern forecasting, myth fulfills destiny precisely through the attempt to escape it. A journey into the paradox of Oedipus who, between tragic irony and blindness, relinquishes sight for an interior and absolute vision.

Followed by the screening of: *Oedipus Rex (Edipo Re)* by Pier Paolo Pasolini (104 min)

17:00 – Beyond Time: Language as a Prophetic Tool (Introduction by Sabina Guidotti)

From myth to the science fiction of *Arrival*: the non-linear language of the Heptapods grants an oracular faculty. This presentation analyzes the link between semantics and temporal physics: if the future were already known, with all its joys and sorrows, prophecy would become a conscious ethical choice.

Followed by the screening of: *Arrival* by Denis Villeneuve (116 min)

Biographies

Henrik Bogdan is Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Gothenburg. His main research areas include Western esotericism, new religious movements, and Freemasonry. He has published numerous essays on these topics; his most recent works include *The Study of Religion in Sweden* (Bloomsbury 2024) and *The Magical Diaries of Leah Hirsig, 1923–1925* (Oxford University Press 2025). He serves as the secretary of the European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism (ESSWE) and edits prestigious academic series for Oxford and Palgrave.

Flavia Buzzetta is the Scientific Director of the Hausbrandt Foundation and an Associate Researcher at the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), within the LEM and Centre Jean-Pépin. She earned her PhD from the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris and has been the recipient of prestigious international fellowships. Her research analyzes intellectual exchanges between the Jewish and Christian worlds during the Renaissance, with a focus on magic and Kabbalah. Her books include *Magia naturalis e Scientia cabalae in Giovanni Pico della Mirandola* (Olschki 2019).

Jari Casagrande, following his classical studies, directed his research toward philosophy, psychology, and mythology, publishing essays on Assyrian-Babylonian culture. The core of his work centers on the Jewish Kabbalah, explored through the analysis of Isaac Luria's texts and the teachings of contemporary masters. He is actively engaged in public outreach, holding conferences and seminars on the subject, and teaches at the Academy of Hermetic Studies.

Azzurra D'Agostino, winner of the 2026 Strega Prize for Poetry, has published several poetry collections, receiving prestigious awards such as the Carducci Prize. A writer for theater and the performing arts, she also authors illustrated books and children's fiction. Her most recent novels include *La notte in cui ho ucciso Kurt Cobain* (Il Castoro 2024) and *Due notti* (Il Castoro 2025). She leads poetry workshops for institutions and people of all ages.

Ugo Dossi is an international artist whose work revolves around the creativity of the unconscious, sensory and extrasensory perception, and the virtual dimension. He has twice exhibited at Documenta in Kassel and at the Art Biennials of Venice and Paris. His work has been featured in numerous solo exhibitions at international institutions, including recent

shows at the Reiss-Engelhorn-Museum in Mannheim (2024), the Warburg Institute in London, and CERN in Geneva (2025).

Ernesto Fazioli is a researcher and essayist specializing in Hermetic-anthropological studies, focusing on astrology, tarot, myth, and art symbology. A member of ESSWE, he has presented his research through exhibitions and lectures both in Italy and abroad. Since 2007, he has coordinated the International Tarot Museum and, since 2024, the Academy of Hermetic Studies. He has authored numerous volumes intertwining Hermetic culture with the history of famous historical figures.

Paola Goretti is an art and costume historian specializing in the aesthetics of light and sensory integration. She has collaborated with institutions such as the Hermitage Museum and taught at the Università dell'Immagine in Milan. Since 2013, she has collaborated with Il Vittoriale degli Italiani on fragrance-related projects. Her recent books include *La rosa di Bologna* (Minerva 2022) and *Tu m'inambri* (Cinquesensi 2023). She has curated major art exhibitions in Pistoia, Bologna, and at the Reggia di Venaria.

Francesca Grilli is a visual artist based in Bologna and Brussels. Her expressive research spans visual and performing arts. Over the years, her works and performances have been presented at major international institutions, including MAXXI in Rome, Kaaaitheater and BOZAR in Brussels, the National Museum in Oslo, and the Palais de Tokyo in Paris. She also represented Italy at the 55th Venice Biennale.

Stefan Göppel artist govar GmbH

Sabina Guidotti is a writer, editor, and creative writing instructor. After graduating as a screenwriter from the Accademia Nazionale del Cinema, she worked in film as a dialogue writer and screenwriter alongside her mentor Vincenzo Cerami. In theater, she collaborated with Ascanio Celestini, while in fiction literature she served for years as an editorial consultant for Mondadori. She is the author of several books, including *L'Ipotesi* (with a preface by poet Alda Merini) and *Un occhio verde e uno blu* (preface by F. and R. Guccini).

Wouter J. Hanegraaff (1961) is Professor of History of Hermetic Philosophy and Related Currents at the University of Amsterdam. He has published numerous works in the field of esotericism in Western culture and the history of Hermetic traditions from antiquity to the present day. His most recent books are *Hermetic Spirituality and the Historical Imagination: Altered States of Knowledge in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge University Press 2022) and *Esotericism in Western Culture: Counter-Normativity and Rejected Knowledge* (Bloomsbury 2025).

Alla Kolpakova Project Lead EMIXAR govar GmbH

Martina Mazzotta is an art historian, essayist, and curator with a background in philosophy and a PhD in History of Art. Her research explores the connections between philosophy, visual arts, music, and science. She is an Associate Fellow at the Warburg Institute in London, where she is curating exhibitions dedicated to Max Ernst and the Tarot tradition, and she is a UK correspondent for *Il Sole 24 Ore*. She has curated international exhibitions on modern masters such as Kandinsky, John Cage, and Jean Dubuffet.

Morena Poltronieri is a researcher and essayist with a background in Anthropology and History of Religions. Her research focuses on Hermeticism and Tarot iconology, investigated through symbolic and historical-initiatic perspectives. A Full Member of ESSWE, she is the founder of the International Tarot Museum and a member of the scientific committee of the Academy of Hermetic Studies. Her extensive publications analyze the intersections of symbology, art, and architecture on a global scale.

Maurizio Paolillo is Professor of Chinese Philology, Literature, and Language at the University of Naples L'Orientale. A specialist in Taoist literature, landscape aesthetics, and feng shui, he has authored one hundred publications and five monographs, including a recent translation of the Daodejing (2023). Previously a visiting scholar at several Chinese universities, he directs the Sinologica book series and collaborated on the 30th International Carlo Scarpa Prize for Gardens awarded by the Benetton Foundation.