

The hermetical allegory of SUBAT

*Cadmus rotam vertit, et sulphuri nostro primum figit clavum,
et sic per primam rotationem creatus Sol habetur philosophorum.*

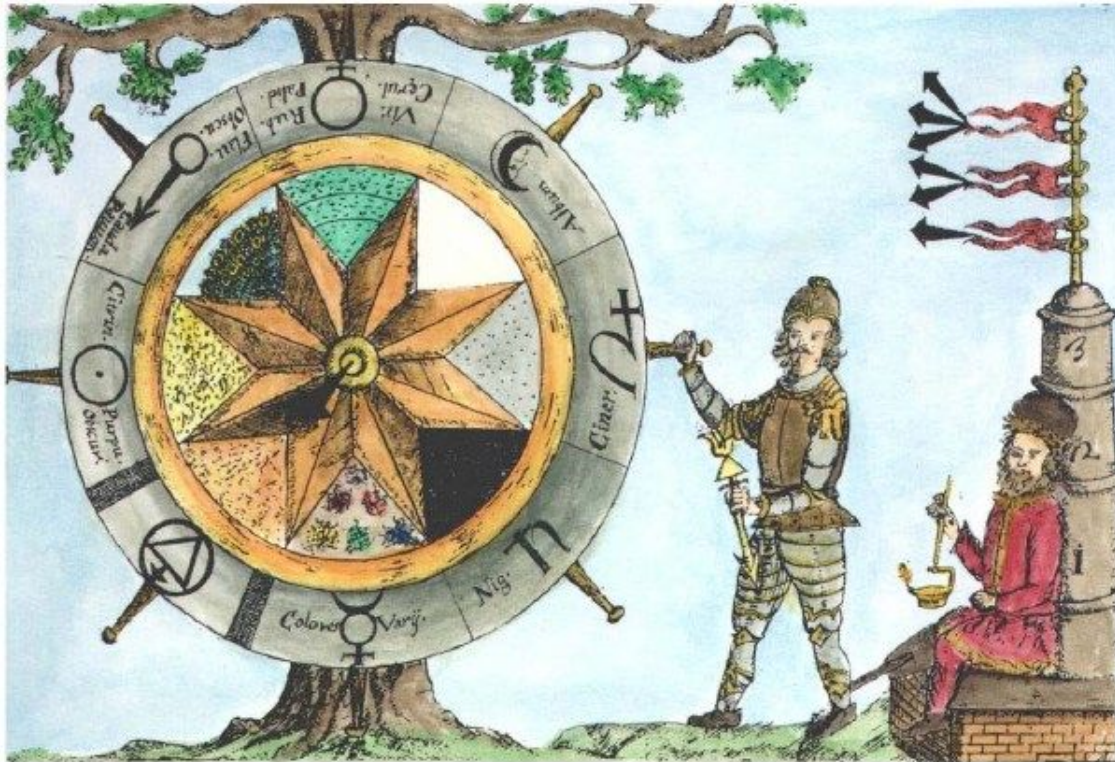


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This image, which has been chosen as the emblem for SUBAT action, is Plate IX from "Speculum Veritatis", a famous 17th century hermetical manuscript, reproduced here in a coloured version by Adam McLean.

It shows Cadmus turning the wheel on which the seven traditional metals (clockwise from 9 o'clock: gold, iron, copper, silver, tin, lead and mercury) as well as sulphur are represented, each associated with specific colours, representing a cycle of eight (or seven plus the quiescent phase of sulphur) alchemical processes which must be run through in sequence to develop the work. The furnace on the right has three sections, and on its top it bears three flags; this indicates that Cadmus' cycle must be run through three times in all. The figure sitting near the furnace is Vulcanus.

The figure also can be interpreted as highlighting the essence of the SUBAT project, which consists of an appraisal of different battery technologies (represented by the different metals), and in particular the NiCd battery (represented here by Cadmus after whom the cadmium metal was named). The three turns of the wheel stand here for the three pillars of the study (technical, ecological and economical).

This allegorical representation reminds us of the wisdom of the old philosophers, which, being of a hermetic nature and thus difficultly accessible for the lesser mind, may largely be forgotten in today's materialistic world, but which, through assiduous study, will provide valuable insights towards the construction of our image of the world.