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Editorial

With the Hermetic Journal now in its third year of publication and 9 issues published, perhaps this is a good time to review its development and future prospects.

The Journal is committed to publishing original and substantial articles of occult research, and I regret that often this material is a bit intimidating to the novice. I have had a number of regrets from subscribers who do not wish to continue as they feel that the Journal is becoming too heavy and difficult, however, I do not feel it within my personal field of interest and abilities to try to produce a more popular format. The Hermetic Journal is not attempting to popularise occultism. It is a research journal making available source material and commentary that should be of interest to serious researchers and students of the hermetic tradition.

In the earlier issues 1 - 4 I tried to include material of a more introductory nature but the Journal has

evolved and developed since then, so that quite difficult material can now be presented. Often articles may seem more difficult than they actually are, because they may in turn be based upon ideas introduced in an earlier issue. This applies especially to the Alchemical Mandala feature. Perhaps some difficulties in understanding have arisen because some of the readership have not had access to earlier issues. Thus I have determined to reprint all the back issues.

Of course, a number of subscribers, contributors and personal friends share my enthusiasm for this approach and their help and encouragement is greatly valued by me. So the Journal will continue in its present format and with its present editorial policy, even although the subscriptions may suffer a little.

Publishing in the occult realm is very difficult for anyone who wishes to make a project financially viable and to hold on to their integrity. The general public are interested in anything of a sensational or exaggerated nature and quite a few magazines eventually tend to reflect and pander to this. My publications must and will remain specialist occult publications for specialists. The Magnum Opus venture which exists in parallel with the Hermetic Journal similarly meets an extremely small market and indeed there seems no likelihood of this project showing any financial returns in the immediate future. However material will continue to be produced as funds become available. Within the first 18 months of Magnum Opus 4 volumes have been issued which is a fairly brisk rate of publication.

Much more could be done, of course, if I could enlarge my subscription list and increase my book sales, and I welcome any assistance from sympathetic subscribers in publicising the existence of the Journal.

One definite direction the editorial policy has taken is that of encouraging interest and research into the foundations of an Etheric Science. The development of a coherent science of the Ethers, I believe will meet a very real challenge of our times in producing a true alternative to materialism. A coherent and internally consistent metaphysics of the Ethers could provide an inspiration for the development of methods of organic agriculture, the spiritual use of landscape, architecture, healing, alternative energy systems, creative craftworking, and many other practical activities.

Thus I have now set myself the task as editor of the Hermetic Journal of fostering an interest in the research development, and synthesis of a consistent and coherent Etheric Science, and I am willing to assist in what ways I can with any work undertaken along these lines, and therefore I welcome any correspondence on this subject. In time I would hope to formulate a definite project in this sphere, under the umbrella of the Hermetic Journal.

So I hope subscribers will recognise the solid foundation of 9 issues upon which the Hermetic Journal rests, and that they will also see that there are still exciting discoveries to be made in the field of occult research, and that there are the possibilities of valid projects that can be undertaken to apply the wisdom of the Ancient Hermetic Tradition to our world today.

Adam McLean

News & Information

One of my correspondents, D.N. Redgrove, has pointed out that the work 'The Kettar Malcuth of Rabbi Solomon' referred to in the article on The Virga Aurea (Hermetic Journal No 8), has been published in recent times in a translation made by Professor Bernard Lewis as The Kingly Crown, London 1961. The work, which I have recently examined, is an extended poem with a Kabbalistic foundation in three parts, describing the divine attributes, the cosmic spheres, and the soul architecture of man, and is ascribed to Avicbron (Ibn Gabirol) (1020? - 1058?).

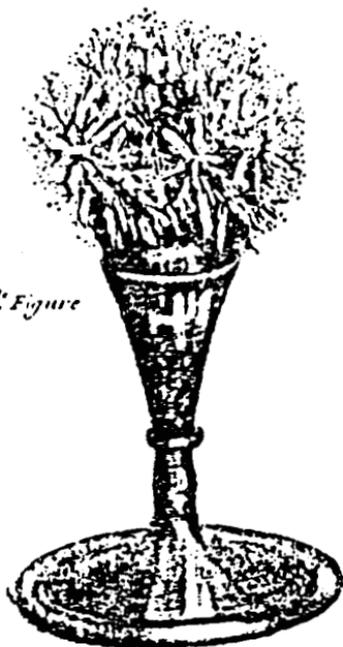
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WANTED one copy of John Read's Prelude to Chemistry. Please write to the Editor, the Hermetic Journal mentioning price and condition of volume.

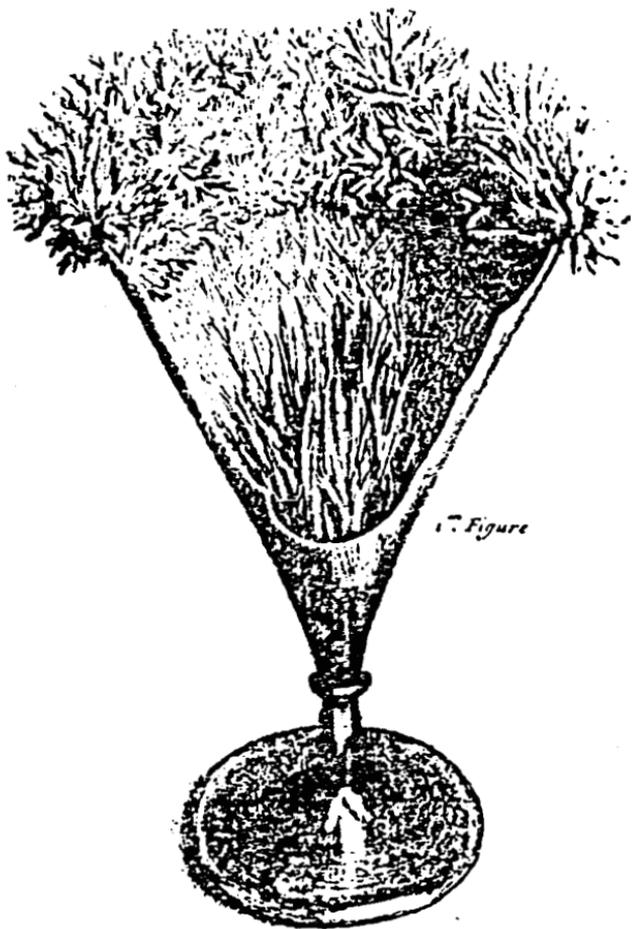
* * * * *

PROPOSED WEEKEND COURSE ON ALCHEMY

Adam McLean would like to hear from any subscribers who would be interested in principle in attending a weekend course on Alchemy. This could include some practical experiments in etheric science, meditation exercises, working with alchemical symbols, and lectures on various facets of alchemy. This is at present merely a proposal under consideration for next year (1981), practical details, venue, cost, etc., would have to be arranged later, and it is necessary to be sure that that enough people would be interested in attending before making any definite arrangements. So anyone interested please write and say whether in principle they would be able to attend, there being no need of any definite commitment at this stage. If there is insufficient potential interest then this proposal would have to be shelved.



1^{re} Figure



2^{de} Figure

FRONTISPIECE

An example of alleged 'chemical vegetation of iron', obtained by the French chemist Louis Lemery and included in L'History de l'Academie Royale des Sciences of 1707, (Paris, 1730).

PALINGENESIS

Kenneth Rayner Johnson ©

Woven into the massive latticework of alchemical literature is a curious and little-considered concept of growing an 'alchemical tree' within an hermetically sealed flask. Some writers on alchemy have considered this as perhaps simply another example of the type of convoluted symbolism to which the classic authors were so dedicated. Others, more mystically inclined, have seen the so-called Philosopher's Tree as an alchemical reflection of the Tree of Life of Qabalistic philosophy.

And yet there have been several independent claims that this technique has actually been demonstrated by the alchemists themselves, dating back to Paracelsus and even earlier and forward to the more recent work of the English operant, Archibald Cockren, (died c. 1950).

As the more deeply versed students of hermeticism will know, this operation has come to be known as palingenesis.

According to Manly P. Hall, founder-president of the Philosophical Research Society of Los Angeles, palingenesis was, so far as the Greek Stoics and Pythagoreans were concerned, akin to metempsychosis, or reincarnation. The technique involved reconstituting plants from their own burnt ashes. It was thus hoped to demonstrate that consciousness, intelligence and individuality survived physical dissolution. Hall equates the process with the supposed rebirth of the entire cosmos from periodical states of inertia or 'sleep' and that of the earth, following apocalyptic cycles. This would, of course, be consonant with the modern scientific theory of a Cyclic or Pulsating Universe - one which collapses upon itself from time to time, eventually to explode again and form a fresh universe. This would, in addition, seem to square with the Hindu philosophical conception of cosmogenesis in which the earth and the universe are seen as living entities which undergo the Days and Nights of Brahma.

Says Hall : 'Some students of Hermetic philosophy affirm that by means of palingenesis it would be possible to resurrect the human body even at a long interval after death. Those attempting this experiment attacked their problem without a proper understanding of the issues involved, for no Hermetic formula should be taken literally. Palingenesis is actually the resurrection of the spiritual soul from the

irrational material organism. The human body is the Hermetic bottle. The Tree of the Soul is burned by human degeneracy ; by palingenesis, however, it is proved that no matter how man may descend in vice and degradation, the spiritual elements are not lost, but can be reassembled by the alchemical art, and the Tree of Life caused to grow again within the human nature.' (1)

So much for the spiritual interpretation, as applied to the human being. This notwithstanding, there is some indicative evidence within alchemical literature and commentary which indicates that the actual process of palingenesis can be and has been performed at the metallic/vegetable level and on a physical basis. Let us now examine some of the more notable examples of this.

Possibly the most famous and intriguing of contemporary examples is that of the aforementioned Archibald Cockren, by profession a trained masseur and physiotherapist, who set up an alchemical laboratory in the 1930's in Boundary Road, London N.W.8. During the 1914-18 War, he worked at the Russian Hospital for British Officers in London, which was financed by exiled Russian nobles, and at the Prisoner of War Hospital and the Military Hospital at Millbank.

In 1918 he was transferred to the Australian Army and by the following year was a member of the Peace Conference Staff of the Australian Prime Minister.

According to Ithell Colquhoun, her distant cousin Edward Garstin (see The Hermetic Journal, No. 6, Winter 1979 for a personal memoir of Garstin), visited Cockren's laboratory. The alchemist showed him his sealed glass Philosopher's Egg, an ovoid vessel 'containing layer upon layer of basic matter in the traditional colours of black, grey, white and yellow'.

These, says Miss Colquhoun, 'had blossomed into a flower-like form, a pattern arranged like petals around a centre, all of a glowing orange-scarlet... By keeping his basic matter for a long time at a constant gentle heat, Cockren had caused it to grow ; it had branches like a tree, as Edward told me. Cockren would not divulge what substance he had used as a basis, but remarked that he always kept "an open pentagram" in the laboratory while he was at work.' (2)

Miss Colquhoun speculates that this latter may have been akin to the Octacle used by the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. For although she says Cockren was not a member of Garstin's Lodge, 'he may well have had some other GD connection'.

In 1940, Cockren's now-classic work, Alchemy Rediscovered and Restored was published by Rider and Co. It is long out of print, but a facsimile edition has been made available by Health Research, P.O. Box 70, Mokelumne Hill, California 95245.

In a chapter on the praxis, Cockren describes his alchemical tree as a 'crystalline formation, rather like a coral plant in growth'. He says the plant's 'flowers' are crystal petals which continually change colour. From a later stage of this process, Cockren claimed, the White Elixir could be derived.

Edward Garstin was apparently not the only person to see and comment

upon Cockren's alchemical tree. The writer C.R. Cammell, who appears to have penetrated several occult circles, visited Cockren's second laboratory in Holburn, London, in March 1940. He described the tree as follows :

'When I first saw it, the Tree had just sprouted from the dark metallic mass which is the alchemists' "Sign of the Crow". It was very small ; but during the months that I knew Cockren and visited him, I watched it grow in the Hermetically sealed "glasse" just as described by Paracelsus, truly a "wonderful and pleasant shrub". The form of the "leaves" was somewhat like those of a cactus - of pure gold.' (3)

Both Cammell and Miss Colquhoun concur that Cockren's chief inspirational sources were the writings of the Lullian disciple George Ripley, and Basil Valentine. Oddly enough, however, the two writers do not agree upon the time, place, and manner of Cockren's death. Miss Colquhoun says he was killed when a direct hit destroyed his laboratory during the Blitz of the Second World War, while Cammell avers that although Cockren's laboratory was wrecked by the 'nearby' explosion of a bomb, its equipment was miraculously unharmed. Cammell says that Cockren died in Brighton 'about 1950' and 'on the threshold of final triumph'.

It appears that the concept of palingenesis is originally derived from an interpretation of the corpuscular physics of Democritus (c. 460 - c. 370 B.C.). Democritus postulated that every atom possessed the faculty of regenerating its entire being and that the last drop of seed contained the complete anatomy of any species.

This theory was revived by Paracelsus (1493-1541) and developed on a theoretical and experimental basis. In his Curiositez de la Nature, (Paris, 1709), Pierre le Lorrain, Abbé de Vallemont, quotes from Paracelsus' De Natura Rerum, Book VI. Under Paracelsus' system, all bodies possessed a subtle indestructible form which was distinct from the three fundamental principles of phlegm (mercury), grease (sulphur) and ash (salt). These three materials, said Paracelsus, should be mixed in a cucurbite and subjected to a gentle heat until they liquefy and blend :

'At the moment when you thus have your three Principles mixed together, put the vessel in the belly of a horse for as long a time as it takes for the material to purify. If you deposit this matter in good earth, you will shortly see the Tree which was quiescent vivified.'

Elsewhere, in Book II of his Liber Paramirum, Paracelsus reaffirmed his concept of the subtle body :

'It is equally true above all that there exists in man an invisible body, which has by no means been constituted of the three aforesaid substances ; that is to say that man has a body which is not accessible to the physician. The origin of this is the breath of God.' (4)

Vallemont himself believed in the physical reality of being able to resuscitate plants from their calcined ashes and even extended the possibility to animals and human beings. With scarcely concealed

enthusiasm, he wrote :

'... by a most innocent magic, we will bring back the phantom of plants, which are decayed and reduced to dust. Perhaps we might even enliven ourselves in the distant future. And what will hinder us from doing to animals that which has already been done with such delightful success with plants ?' (Curiositez de la Nature, op cit.)

He went on to extend the potential to the kingdom of metals and, in the same work, cites the authority of the poet and historian Pierre Mathieu (1563-1621), author of a History of France. In that book, says Vallemont, Mathieu, an intimate of King Henri IV, said that an ingot of gold in the form of a tree, which had grown in a mine at St. Martin-la-Plaine, Lyonnais, was presented to the king.

Vallemont calls the Philosopher's Tree the 'Tree of Diana'. (Fig 1 below). He also includes in his book a plate showing a sparrow, allegedly resuscitated by palingenesis ! (Fig 2 below).

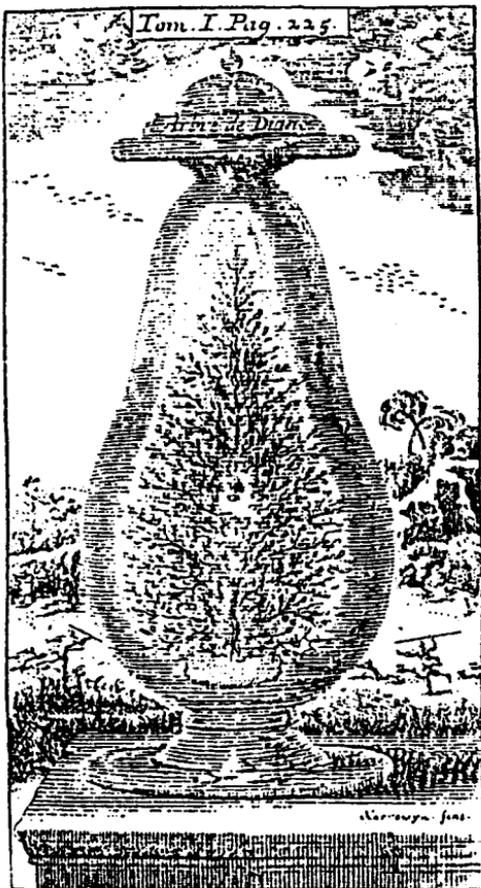


Fig 1 Vallemont's 'Tree of Diana', from Curiositez de la Nature et de l'Art sur la Vegetation, 1723.

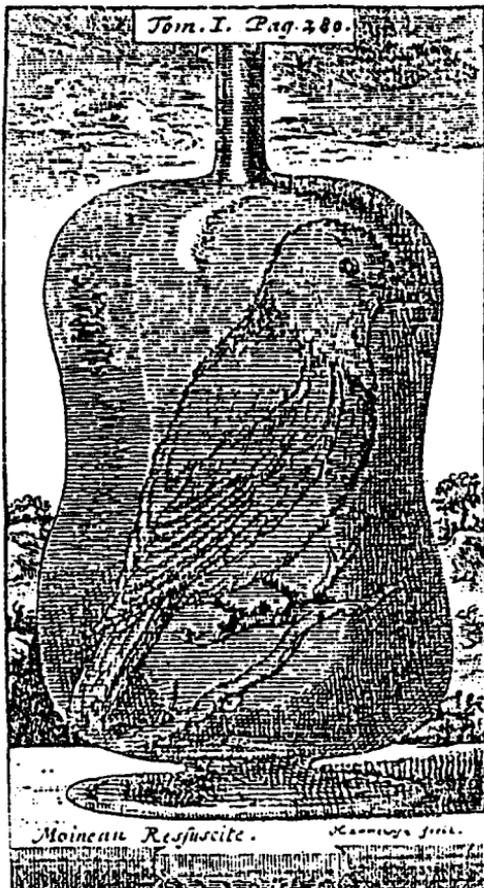


Fig 2 Animal Palingenesis: 'a resuscitated sparrow', from Vallemont's Curiositez de la Nature.

The English naturalist Sir Kenelm Digby (1603-1665) was another believer in the process of palingenesis. In A Discourse Concerning the Vegetation of Plants, (London, 1661), he wrote :

'We can resuscitate a dead plant ; render it immortal, and in making it revive from the midst of its ashes, give to it a species of glorified body...'

It might justifiably be argued that, as a follower of the Sympathists, Digby was merely embracing St. Paul's doctrine of the glorified or transfigured body in which he uses the analogy of a seed (See Corinthians I. 15:42-43). Yet Digby claimed that the secret of palingenesis was actually communicated to him by the contemporary German Jesuit scholar Athanasius Kircher, author of Oedipus Aegyptiacus (1654) and Mundus Subterraneus (1664) (See Fig. 3 opposite).

Inspired by Book IV of Paracelsus' De Natura Rerum, Kircher outlined in the latter work a nine-stage process to effect palingenesis of plants. I give these steps in full here, so that they may later be compared with the processes of other operants in both the vegetable and metallic kingdoms.

- 1 Take four livres of the seeds of the plant which you desire to be born of its ashes ; this seed should be well matured. Grind in a mortar ; put the whole in a suitable glass vessel of the height of the plant from which you took the seeds ; seal up the vessel carefully and keep it at a low temperature.
- 2 Choose an evening when the sky is very clear and calm and expose your crushed seed to the night dews on a large plate, so that the seed becomes strongly impregnated with the vivifying virtue which is in the dew.
- 3 With a large spotless linen, attached to four stakes in a meadow, gather eight pints of this same dew and pour it into a suitable vessel.
- 4 Put your seeds, soaked in dew, back in their vessel before the Sun rises, because it will evaporate the dew ; place this vessel, as before, over a low temperature.
- 5 When you have amassed enough dew, it will be necessary to filter and distil it, in order that no impurities remain. The sediment which remains will be calcined to extract from it a salt which is pleasant to see.
- 6 Pour the distilled dew and steep this salt on the seeds and next seal up the vessel with powdered glass and borax. In this state the vessel is set for a month in fresh horse manure.
- 7 Take out the vessel ; you will see at the bottom the seed which will grow like a jelly ; the spirit will be like a little coat of diverse colours, which floats above the whole of the matter. Between the coating and the muddy substance at the bottom, one will notice a species of greenish dew which represents a harvest.



- 8 Expose this well sealed vessel in summer, by day to the sun and by night to the moon. When the weather changes and is rainy, it will be necessary to keep it in a dry and warm place, until the return of good weather. It will sometimes occur that this work will be perfected in two months and sometimes only one month will be necessary. The signs of success are when one sees that the muddy substance swells and rises, that the little coat or spirit diminishes every day, and that the entire matter thickens. When one sees in the vessel, as in the reflection of the sun, subtle exhalations being born, and the formation of light clouds, these are the first rudiments of the arising plant.
- 9 Finally the whole of this matter becomes a blue powder and when this is raised by the warmth, it will grow a trunk, leaves, flowers and, in a word, one sees the appearance of a plant which emerges from amidst its ashes. As soon as the heat subsides, the whole spectacle vanishes, all the matter becomes disturbed and precipitates to the bottom of the vessel to form a new chaos. The return of new warmth always resuscitates this vegetable phoenix hidden beneath the ashes. (5)

The discerning student will notice the similarity of this process to that indicated by the famous Mutus Liber, or wordless book, especially in Kircher's stage number three. Plate IV of Mutus Liber shows precisely this method of collecting the spring dews. (see figure opposite)

A similar operation, employing maidenhair grass, was outlined by the traveller Balthasar de Monconys (1611-1666), who is believed to have known Kircher in Rome :

'Close up in a hermetically-sealed vessel the spirit which you have extracted from maidenhair grass, and throw therein all the salt which you will have of the calcination of these sediments, and you will see the increase of the grass in this vessel in spring, drying up in winter, and afterwards successively being reborn unto infinity'
(6)

The physician-philosopher Joseph Duchesne, Lord of La Violette (1544-1609), also known as Quercetanus, is another authority who testified to the reality of vegetable palingenesis. He claimed that he had seen, at the home of an unnamed Polish adept in Cracow, twelve glass vessels, each containing an example of resuscitated vegetation. The same story was also reported by the mystical writer Jacques Gaffarel (1601-1681), librarian and collector of rare and precious books for Cardinal de Richlieu. (8)

It is interesting to speculate whether the anonymous Polish adept whom Quercetanus visited might have been none other than Michael Sendivogius (1566-1646), disciple of Alexander Seton and inheritor of his manuscripts and powder of projection. Following Seton's death in late 1603 or early 1604, as the result of torture by the Elector of Saxony Christian II, Sendivogius spent the rest of his life trying to obtain the powder and elixir, once his Master's supply had been exhausted and it is quite possible that he attempted some experiments in palingenesis. It is certain that, for a considerable period, Sendivogius had a house at Cracow.

As late as the 18th and beginning of the 19th century there remained

some lingering interest in palingenesis. The physician Ebenezer Sibly (1781-1800), who gained his M.D. at Aberdeen University, was also a keen student of and author on astrology, Qabalism, magic, philosophy, religion and alchemy. And in his highly popular Illustration of Astrology (9), Sibly outlined his own version of the palingenetic process at a vegetable level :

'Take any whole herb, or flower, with its root, make it very clean, and bruise it in a stone mortar quite small ; then put it into a glass vessel hermetically sealed ; but be sure the vessel be two parts in three empty ; then place it for putrefaction in a gentle heat in balneo, not more than blood warm, for six months, by which it will be all resolved into water. Take this water, and pour it into a glass retort, and place a receiver thereunto, the joints of which must be well closed ; distil it in a sand heat until there comes forth a water and an oil ; and in the upper part of the vessel will hang a volatile salt. Separate the oil from the water, and keep it by itself, but with the water purify the volatile salt by dissolving, filtering, and coagulating. When the salt is thus purified, imbibe with it the said oil, until it is well combined. Then digest them well together for a month in a vessel hermetically sealed ; and by this means will be obtained a most subtil essence which being held over a gentle heat of a candle, the spirit will fly up into the glass where it is confined, and represent the perfect idea or similitude of that vegetable whereof it is the essence ; and in this manner will that thin substance, which is like impalpable ashes or salt, send forth from the bottom of the glass the manifest form of whatever herb it is the menstruum, in perfect vegetation, growing little by little, and putting on so fully the form of stalks, leaves and flowers, in full and perfect appearance, that any one would believe the same to be natural and corporal : though at the same time it is nothing more than the spiritual idea endowed with a spiritual essence. This shadowed figure as soon as the vessel is taken from the heat or candle returns to its caput mortuum, or ashes again, and vanishes away like an apparition, becoming a chaos or confused matter.

To make a vegetable more quickly yield its spirit, take of what vegetable you please, whether it be the seed, flowers, roots, fruits or leaves, cut or bruise them small, put them into warm water, put upon them yeast or barm, and cover them up warm, and let them work three days, in the same manner as beer ; then distil them, and they will yield their spirit very easily. Or else take of what herbs, flowers, seeds, etc, you please ; fill the head of a still therewith, then cover the mouth with coarse canvas, and set on the still, having first put into it a proportionable quantity of sack or low wine ; then give it fire, and it will quickly yield its spirit ; but observe, that, if the colour of the vegetable is wanted, you must take some of its dried flowers, and fill the nose of the still therewith, and you will have the exact colour of the herb.'

To make his process clearer, Sibly included in his book an illustration, a facsimile of which I give here. The annotations, as explained by Sibly, are as follows :

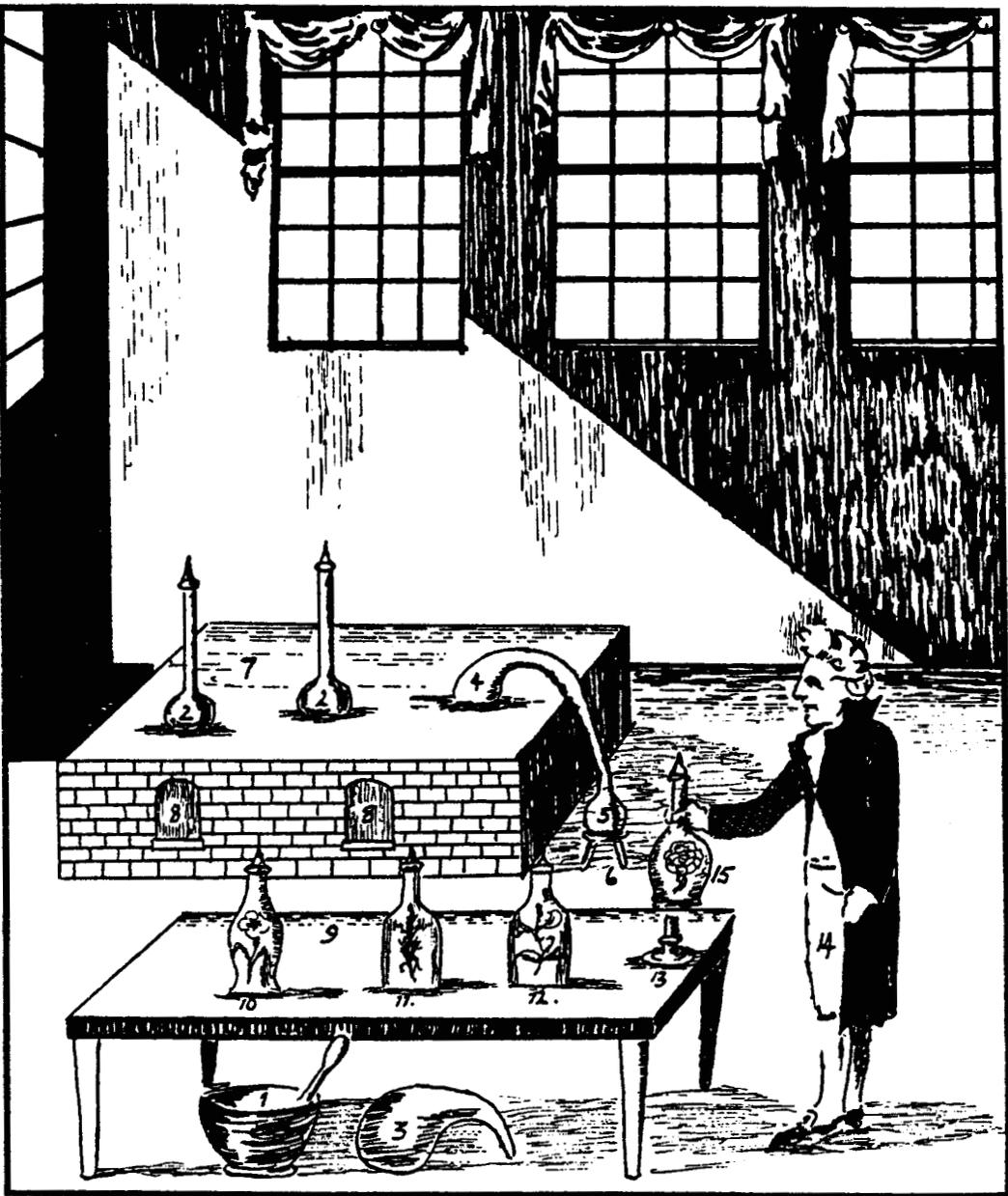


Fig 4 A reconstruction of Ebenezer Sibly's experiments in vegetable palingenesis, from his Illustration of Astrology (1792).

1. a stone pestle and mortar, wherein the herbs etc are to be bruised before they are placed for putrefaction,
2. glass vessels, hermetically sealed, containing the bruised herbs,
3. an empty glass retort,
4. a retort filled with the essence of an herb, and put into sand heat for distillation,
5. a glass receiver joined to the retort to receive the oil and spirit,
6. a stool on which rests the receiver,
7. the furnace made with different conveniences either for sand heat or balneo,
8. the furnace holes wherein the fire is placed,
9. a table whereon are placed the glass vessels hermetically sealed,
10. a vessel containing the representation or similitude of a pink in full bloom,
11. the representation of a sprig of rosemary,
12. the representation of a sprig of baum,
13. a candlestick with a candle lighted for the purpose of heating the spirit,
14. a chemist in the act of holding the glass vessel over the lighted candle,
15. the idea of a rose in full bloom.

Of all the alchemical works to which I have had access, few appear to divulge any actual formulae for the metallic equivalent of palingenesis. Yet the alchemists were in accord about the generation of metals : all claimed that they grew, or were formed, in the earth's own natural crucible, under the influence of the corresponding planets and the heat and compression of aeons. And they sought to repeat this process, greatly speeded up and in miniature, within the laboratory.

Towards the end of 1979, Jon Symon produced what appeared to be a 17th century alchemical work, A Hermetic Treatise under the Acorn imprint (10). (See review in The Hermetic Journal, No. 7, Spring 1980). In it was a brief recipe purporting to demonstrate how to make quicksilver, or mercury grow into a tree. It reads as follows (spelling modernised for easier reading) :

'Dissolve silver in aqua fortis, what is dissolved evaporate. into thin air at the fire, that there may remain at the bottom a thick unctuous substance ; then distil fountainwater twice or thrice, and pour it on that thick matter, shaking it well ; then let it stand a little, and pour into another glass vessel the most pure water, in which the silver is ; add to the water a pound of quicksilver, in a most transparent crystalline glass that will attract to it that silver, and in the space of a day will there spring up a most beautiful tree from the bottom, and hairy, as made of most fine beards of corn, and it will fill the whole vessel, that the eye can behold nothing more pleasant. The same is made with gold with aqua regia.'

Of all the procedures we have examined, this latter would appear to be the type of process Archibald Cockren might have followed in cultivating his own Philosopher's Tree.

Unfortunately, I know of no contemporary alchemist who has attempted this or similar operations. And the current prices of gold, silver, and

mercury are, to say the least, preventive. It is possible, however, that a European alchemist such as, say, Roger Caro, author of Plejade Alchimique and Concordances Alchimiques or some of his collaborators may have experimented in processes of palingenesis. Certainly, I understand that Caro has published a record of the Great Work's successive stages, illustrated with colour photographs. And many of the proceedings followed by the late Armand Barbault, as outlined in his Gold of a Thousand Mornings, seem to have some links with the theory of palingenesis.

As for palingenesis at the animal level, as Vallemont's illustration of the sparrow seems to indicate, it would appear to have more in common with the medieval concept of the homunculus - a precursory attempt at creating life in a test tube, perhaps - than with alchemy proper.

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AN ACCOUNT OF AN EXPERIMENT TO GROW A TREE OF SILVER

By Adam McLean ©

I decided to repeat the experiment of growing a silver tree as outlined in the foregoing article by Kenneth Rayner Johnson. This experiment involves no special subtle transmutation, but the chemically respectable process of the precipitation of metallic silver from a solution of silver nitrate by the chemically more electropositive metallic mercury. For the first experiment (A) a 10% solution was used - 10 grams silver nitrate made up to 100 ml solution in water. About 20 grams of metallic mercury was introduced into the solution at normal room temperature in a 100 ml round bottomed flask, in small quantities at a time. As the mercury entered the transparent solution a brown precipitate immediately formed as a kind of veil in the solution, but within a few minutes this disappeared. One observed within the space of 15 minutes, small growths forming on the surface of the bubble of mercury, and within a hour a kind of grey mossy precipitate had formed around the mercury which had been completely transformed. As the experiment had reached a stasis and equilibrium, more mercury was introduced and within a further $\frac{1}{2}$ hour small tree like growths began to press up out of the mossy precipitate at the bottom of the flask. These forms were very delicate and the slightest vibration disintegrated them. After a third addition of mercury, more rigid crystals of silver began to form within a further hour or so. These rigid crystals began to act as the trunks for the trees of silver which precipitated in the form of ramifying branches and fine leafy structures. These were much more stable and indeed the forms have now (at the time of writing) survived some few weeks. A second experiment (B) was undertaken with a more dilute solution 5% silver nitrate, though with the same experimental method, and in this case a pattern more of radiating outward crystals shaped itself.

It seems likely that this experiment could be a sensitive equilibrium for revealing etheric forces in test substances, as the crystallisation process could focus around substances introduced into the experimental solution. Thus perhaps homoeopathically prepared substances could reveal their forces in the forms of the crystals, or even the special healing properties of waters from holy wells could be used to make the initial solution of silver nitrate. However, due to the high cost of silver salts, it is unlikely that anyone could afford to undertake the hundreds of such experiments necessary to validate such a technique. Perhaps other metallic solutions could be used which are not quite so expensive.

I would welcome any feedback from anyone who has performed this or any related experiments.





ILLUSTRATION B

In this series of elementary meditative exercises, no special postures are required but that in which one is most comfortable, nor are any special breathing rhythms used. Meditation should be undertaken when one is not too tired, and the best situation is probably lying down in a quiet nearly dark room, and it is essential to have privacy and no possibility of being disturbed.

All these exercises begin with the Philosophic Egg or Retort Meditation, described in the first issue, which leads one into an inner meditative space. Within that space, we shall perform short exercises, and then close the meditation with the Retort exercise reversed, that is leading one out of the inner space back to normal consciousness.

THE HEART CENTRE

In some of these meditative exercises we have worked with the soul counterparts of physical organs in the body. For this meditation we will relate to the heart.

Place oneself in the retort of one's being through our basic meditational exercise. When one is within the inner space become conscious of the rhythmic beating of the heart. Allow this perception to grow until the heart is at the centre of the retort experience. Then using the Separatio-Conjunctio technique, try to become detached from the physical perception of the heart's beating and instead to touch inwardly on the spiritual essence of the heart.

As this experience develops, begin to picture the heart as at the centre of a lemniscate, a figure of eight, and having four divisions at the meeting point of the four arms of the lemniscate. Feel how a current flows out and upwards from the heart centre reaching out spiritually to the heights of the Cosmos, and how it turns around and returns to the centre bringing an essence of the Cosmic realm with it. Let this sense of a cycle of cosmic nourishment form itself into various pictures - streams of light, or flowing of energies.

Now picture the lower part of the lemniscate, how it reaches down deep into one's being and carries this Cosmic nourishment into the depths of one's soul, into the realm of one's will, one's actions in the world. The lower limb of the lemniscate turns at the periphery of one's being and returns to the centre carrying with it, as a feedback, an essence, the fruit of one's actions.

Then unify the whole picture and experience the heart as this fourfold centre of one's being within the lemniscate. To conclude this exercise allow oneself to slip back into physical perception of the heart's beating, and at the same time realise that the physical heart is the physical body of the soul heart, the heart centre which one touches upon in performing this meditation.

THE MIRROR OF WISDOM

Adam McLean ©

The Mirror of Wisdom is a large engraving incorporating a synthesis of Kabbalistic ideas and symbolism with the Masonic Tradition. It was probably produced sometime in the late 19th century as part of an initiation document of a French Masonic order. It was published together with an analysis of its symbolism in The Rose Cross, the Transactions of the Societas Rosicruciana in Scotia produced for a few issues in Edinburgh during the last few years of the 19th century. I have extracted the following notes from that article incorporating them with my own comments.

The plate is in the form of a temple with two pillars on left and right over which spreads a semicircular canopy. On the top of the pillars are seated two cherubs who draw back the veils of the holy of holies as in a Jewish Tabernacle. Below this is seen a central area in which is the tree of life. Two gates lie at the base of the columns, and a third gate is found at the bottom centre of the plate. A set of panels are seen on each side of this central gate, the whole providing a foundation for the structure of the temple. From the outside of the temple two ladders are set up (Jacob's Ladder and the Ladder of the Angels of the Shemhamphorash) which can be used to climb to the tops of the pillars.

At the very top of the plate surmounting the circular canopy is Kether, the Crown, held by the hands of two cherubic forms. On each side are seen in Hebrew letters AUR אור, AYN SUPH אֵין סוּפ, the limitless light. Beneath is

The Angelic World
The Planetary World
The Lower World

with the Three Supernals - Kether כתר, Chokmah חכמה, and Binah בינה, within realms identified with the elements - Fire, Air and Water. Below these again is the Celestial light shining over MeZRACH מזרח, the 'East', all this being revealed through the fact that the veils have been drawn apart by the two cherubs. Beneath this is the Terrestrial Globe, in front of which is the 'All Seeing Eye' within the triangle inscribed with the words 'God saw that the light was good'.

At the three vertices of the triangle are the three Mother Letters

א	ב	ש
Aleph	Mem	Shin
Air	Water	Fire

The Kabbalistic Tree of life shown in the central area of this engraving is quite conventional in layout although the arrangement of 22 paths which has come to be accepted as running between the sephiroth is not here used, and Masonic symbols are associated with the sephiroth.

KETHER - Crown - Sword and Sceptre on the altar
 CHOKHMAH - Wisdom - The Tables of the Law of Moses above the altar
 BINAH - Intelligence - Crossed Pens of the Scribe Ezra above the altar

These symbols being shown within triangular areas within the sephiroth. Three steps lead up to the Supernal Triad.

The lower grouping of the sephiroth have a square area within which their symbolic correspondences are shown.

CHESED - Mercy - Flagon of oil, symbolic of the Almighty pouring out of Mercy above the altar
 GEBURAH - Severity - Emblems of Justice, a dagger, a pistol and the stocks, above the altar
 TIPHERETH - Beauty - Compasses, the emblem of the Master
 NETZACH - Victory - Level of the Senior Warden above the altar
 HOD - Glory - Plumblin of the Junior Warden above the altar

The two pillars of King Solomon's Temple are shown within the sephiroth Netzach and Hod.

YESOD - Foundation - a straight sword, emblem of the Inside Guard.
 MALKUTH - Kingdom - door with lock and key, and across it the curved sword of the Outer Guard or Tyler

Identified with these Seven Lower Sephiroth are the seven planets and their corresponding Archangels :

Sun	- Zadkiel (☩)	Mercury	- Raphael (☿)
Jupiter	- Gabriel (♃)	Moon	- Zaphiel (♁)
Saturn	- Michael (♄)	Venus	- Kamael (♀)(Samael)
Mars	- Ariel (♂)(Anael)		

On the engraving these seem to have been rather garbled, and I indicate the more usual arrangement in the brackets.

Around the oval are shown the Thirty Two paths of Wisdom, as are described in Johannes Stephanus Rittangellius' Hebrew text 1642, usually included in translation with the Sepher Yetzirah. These Thirty Two paths are composed of the 10 Sephiroth and 22 Hebrew letters, with various Intelligences associated with each path.

At the four corners of the rectangle are found three small circles containing symbols within a square :

upper left corner	Fire in a furnace	
	Air blown by bellows	
	Water coming from a fountain	
upper right corner	Crown	emblem of King
	Tables of the Law	emblem of Priest
	Crossed Pens	emblem of Prophet

lower left corner Heart (Feeling)
 Brain (Thinking)
 Sight (Perception)

lower right corner Body
 Soul
 Spirit

Around this rectangle on three sides are the names of the 33 Degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite.

Below these are the names of the seven grades of the Modern French Rite.

On the right and left pillars are the signs of the zodiac identified with the months of the year, here named in Hebrew. At the base of these two pillars are two gates.

THE LEFT GATE - The Gate of the Eternal

Central doorway with three arches. Around the door 'The Lord Bless thee and keep thee'. On the three arches are three fountains

- 1 The Fountain the Blessing
- 2 The Fountain of Life
- 3 The Fountain of Living Waters

THE RIGHT GATE - The Gate of the Elect

Central doorway with five arches

- 1 The Gate of Tears
- 2 The Gate of Trouble
- 3 The Gate of Prayer
- 4 The Gate of the House of Many
- 5 The Gate of Heaven

5 final
 letters
 WYD

The Lord
 cause His face
 to shine
 upon thee
 and be gracious unto thee

- 1 The Sense of Feeling
- 2 The Sense of Taste
- 3 The Sense of Smell
- 4 The Sense of Hearing
- 5 The Sense of Sight

5 organs
 of speech

Gutturals
 Palatials
 Linguals
 Dentals
 Labials

At the bottom centre of the engraving is shown a Gate with seven steps, and encirclements.

THE CENTRAL GATE - The Gate of Gates

1	'	Araboth	The Temple of the Holy of Holies
2	Firmaments	Machon	The Temple of Love
3	Heavens	Maon	The Temple of Merit
4		Zebul	The Temple of Favour
5		Schechakim	The Temple of Essence of Heaven
6		Rokea	The Temple of Purity
7		Halon	The Temple of Clearness of Sapphire

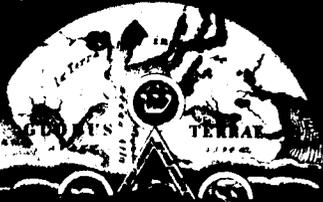
7 Temples

170734

LE GRAND

170734

LE MONDE DES APRES
LE MONDE DES OBITES
LE MOND BILIKEM
Aperçu du GOUVERNEMENT celeste



FEVRIER
MARS
AVRIL
MAY

JUN
JULI
AUGUST

SEPT
OCTO

NOVEM

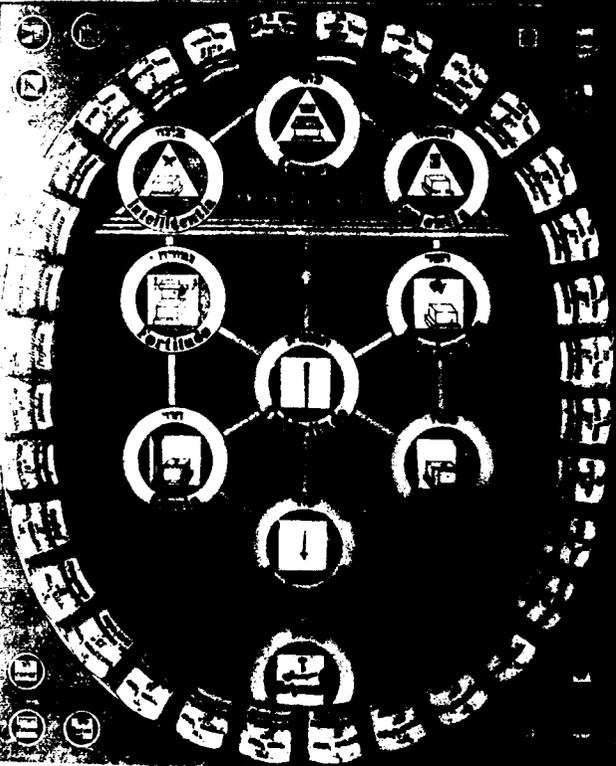
DECEMBR

JANVI

FEBRU

MARS

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OCTO

NOVEM

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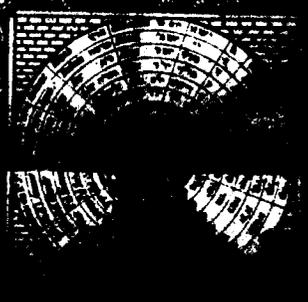
MARS

AVRIL

MAY

JUN

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Textual content in the bottom right section.

Textual content in the bottom right section.

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1	Earth	May the Lord	Beth
2	Land	lift up	Gimel
3	Plain	His Countenance	Daleth
4	Land of Forgetfulness	upon thee	Kaph
5	Land of Solitude	and grant	Phe
6	Arka Earth	thee	Resh
7	World	peace	Tau

1	Kindness	The Voice of the Lord is upon the Waters
2	Power	The Voice of the Lord is Powerful
3	Divine Law	The Voice of the Lord is full of Majesty
4	Victory	The Voice of the Lord breaketh Cedars
5	Majesty	The Voice of the Lord cleaveth Flames of Fire
6	Foundation	The Voice of the Lord makes the wilderness to tremble
7	Monarchy	The Voice of the Lord Maketh Hinds to travail

On each side of the Central Gate of Gates stand two sets of panels showing the Fall with Adam and Eve eating of the Tree and their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. On the outside of these on either side are four panels in all of text. Reading from right to left these are :

PANEL I The Fountain of Sevens

1	Seven Spheres (Sephiroth)	Seven Colours (Pigments)
2	Seven Temples	Seven Notes (in Music)
3	Seven Springs	Seven Voices (Psalm xxix)
4	Seven Heavens (Firmaments)	Seven Days (in the week)
5	Seven Strata (in the Earth)	Seven Years (in Sabbatical cycle)
6	Seven Planets	Seven Weeks (between Passover and Pentecost)
7	Seven Apertures (2 Eyes, 2 Ears (2 Nostrils, 1 mouth)	Seven Days (in the Festivals Passover & Tabernacles)

- 1 Seven Days shall ye eat unleavened bread
- 2 The Seventh Day the Children of Israel crossed the Red Sea
- 3 Seven days shall ye dwell in booths
- 4 Seven guests invited into the Tabernacle (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, David, Solomon)
- 5 Seven Branches In the Golden Lamp of the Tabernacle
- 6 Seven Lights
- 7 Seven Sprinklings upon the altar on the Day of Atonement

Seven Hymns the Levites sang in the Holy Temple
 Seven Persons are called to the reading of the Divine Law (Sabbath)
 Seven Blessings in the Sabbath Service, viz.

The Shield of Abraham
 Reviveth the Dead
 The Most Holy God
 Who sanctified the Sabbath
 Unto Him we give thanks
 Who shall restore His Divine Presence unto Zion
 Who blesseth His people with peace.

Seven whose names form the initial letters M. A. N. A. B. T. Ch.
 Seven days shall he be with his mother - Exodus xxii, 29
 Seven Days of Purification
 Seven Days of Impurity.

With Seven species of Fruit the Promised Land was noted
Seven Blessings are pronounced at a Wedding Ceremony
Seven days Feasting (first week after marriage)
Seven days of Mourning after the dead.
Whosoever slayeth Cain shall be avenged Sevenfold
Seven circuit are made on the day of 'Rejoicing of the Law'
Seven of clean animals Noah took into the Ark
Beer-sheba, called so because it contained Seven Wells
Seven years Jacob served Laban for Rachel
Seven years Jacob served Laban for Leah
Seven Kine - Seven Ears of Corn Pharoah saw in his dream
Seven years of Plenty - Seven years of Famine
Seven qualities characterise the Fool
Seven qualities characterise the Wise
Seven times 'The Lord is God' is pronounced at the conclusion of
the Atonement Service.

PANEL II

The Knot of Three and Seven Spheres (or Numbers) is the secret of the observance and delight of the Holy Sabbath, for this is the true and perfect union in the secret of "And a river came forth from Eden to water the garden" ; "whosoever observeth the Sabbath, and calleth it a delight, shall be the guests of the Ten Spheres (Sephiroth) and rejoice in the Kingdom of Heaven" ; "In remembrance of the work of Creation."
Ten Times the words "And the Lord said" are repeated in the record of Creation, viz.,

- 1 And the Lord said Let there be Light
- 2 And the Lord said Let there be a Firmament
- 3 And the Lord said Let the Waters be gathered together
- 4 And the Lord said Let the Earth bring forth grass
- 5 And the Lord said Let there be Luminaries
- 6 And the Lord said Let the Earth bring forth living things
- 7 And the Lord said Let us make Man
- 8 And the Lord said be fruitful and multiply
- 9 And the Lord said behold I have given unto you

Ten generations from Adam to Noah
Ten generations from Noah to Abraham
Ten Miracles
Ten times Abraham found faithful
Ten plagues were sent upon Egypt
Ten words, or Commandments
The tenth of the month is the day of Atonement
Ten men form a quorum for Divine worship

PANEL III

"Behold and see, seek and search, be wise and understand, that the Three-fold Cord be not broken" Sepher Yetzirah Chap III 41

Truth Justice Peace

Three Cubits (or mothers) - and the secret is
Guilt, Merit, and Statute balances between them

- Three Cubits - in the World
Air, Water and Fire. The Heavens were created from Fire, the Earth from Water, and the Air balances between them
- Three Cubits - in the Year
Fire, Water and Wind. Heat was created from Fire, Cold from Water, and the Wind balances.
- Three Cubits - in the Soul of Man
Fire, Water and Wind. The Head is created from Fire, Intestines from Water, and the Frame from Wind balances between them
- The Letter Aleph - was (created) crowned with Wind, and sealed the Air in the World, Life in the Soul and the Frame in the Body
- The Letter Mem - was (created) crowned with Water, and produced Earth in the World, Cold in the Seasons of the Year, and Intestines in the Body
- The Letter Shin - was (created) crowned with Fire, and created Heaven in the Higher World, Heat in the Seasons of the Year, and the Head in the Body
- The Threes - Thought - Word - Act
- Three Yods, 'Heads' in the letter Shin, signifying
" He Was, He Is, He ever will be,
He hath reigned, He doth reign, He will ever reign,
Holy, Holy, Holy."

PANEL IV

"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, with all thy Soul, and with all thy Might."
"And thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."
"And thou shalt love the stranger."

- | | | |
|--------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Three Crowns | 1 | The Crown of the Divine Law |
| | 2 | The Crown of the Priesthood |
| | 3 | The Crown of the Monarchy |

The Priest, the Levites, the Israelites
Three men are called to the Law on week days
Three who eat at one table, and discussed the Divine Law thereat, are as if they had eaten at God's table
Three persons partaking a meal at one table, say grace in quorum
Three Matzos (unleavened cakes) on Passover night
Three Gates (Book of the Talmud) Bova 1st, 2nd, 3rd
Three daily Prayers : Morning, Afternoon, Evening
Three meals to be partaken on the Sabbath
Three times daily the 'Prayer of David' is said
Three Cities of Refuge
The Study of the Divine Law, Divine Worship, and Benevolence are the three pillars the world rests on
Repentance, Prayer and Charity mitigate wrath
The Holy Law, the Prophets and Holy Writings
He journeyed, he came, and he pitched his tent
The Pillar of Fire, the Pillar of Cloud, the Mighty Wind
Three times in the year the males of Israel were to appear before the Law on Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles.
Three days of bordering before Mount Sinai
Three Angels visited Abraham

Three Tongues, Three Cakes, the Third day of Circumcision

The third day Abraham lifted up his eyes to Heaven

Three Watches in the night

Three times 'The Keeper of Israel' is said daily, "who is like unto Thee among the mighty, O Lord!"

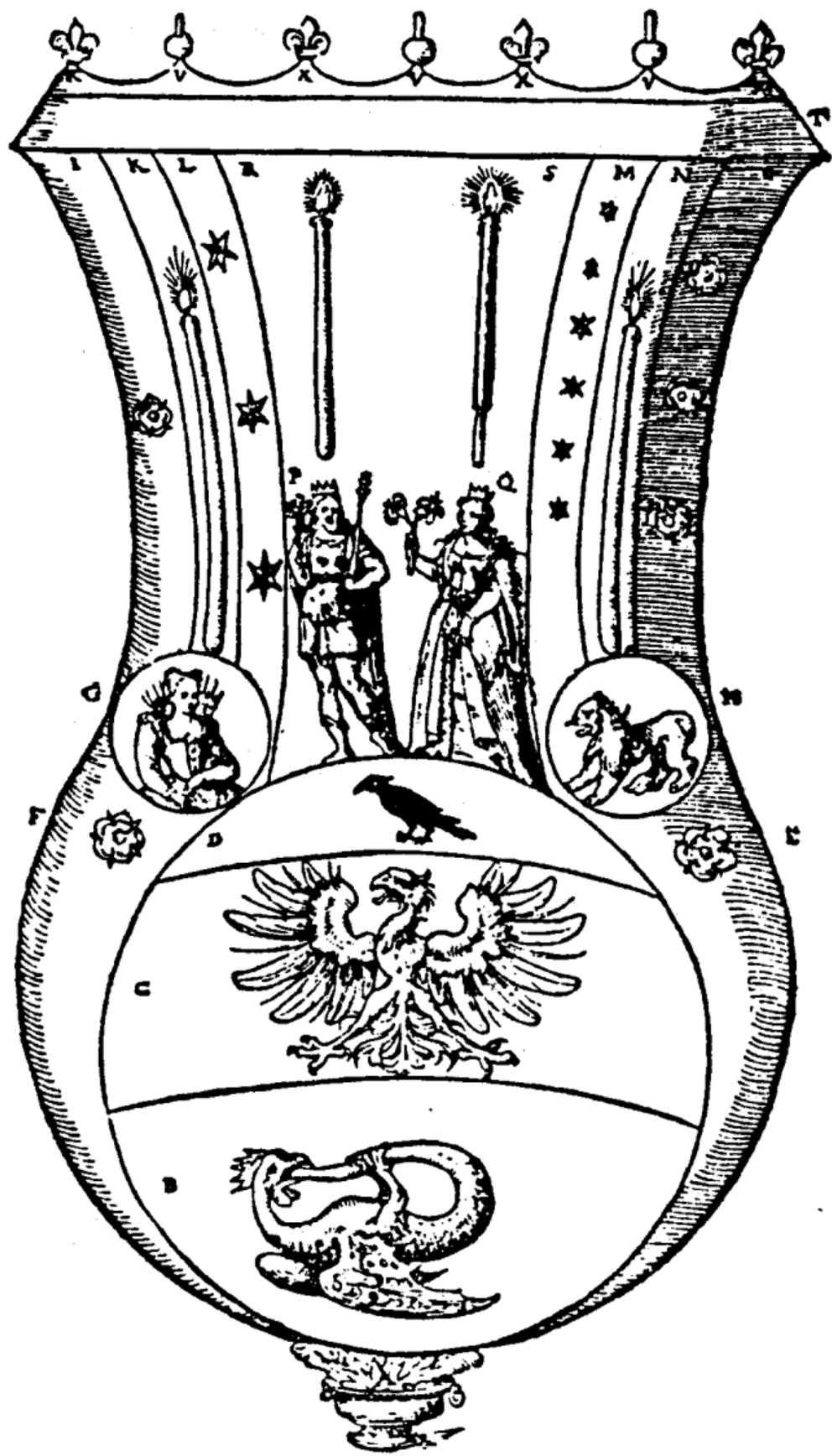
These four panels provide a synthesis of traditional ideas in the Jewish Religious tradition and practise, under the headings of number symbolism of the Three, the Seven and the Ten. Many of these correspondences might seem of interest only within the Jewish tradition but others have more universal significance. It is interesting that the masonic tradition that compiled the material for this engraving must have had a deep knowledge of the esoteric side of the Jewish tradition.

If we look now at the plate as a whole one can see it as a representation of the path of development for man through wisdom of the spiritual world. The foundation panels of this Mirror of Wisdom reveal the inner significance of the Fall of Man and the relationship of this to the Tree of Knowledge. Part of this Knowledge is revealed in the panels of numerical correspondences. This understood, the seeking soul can enter in through the Central Gate. A further two gates which he must enter upon are revealed at the bases of the Pillars of the Polarities of the Universe. Thus the soul stands at the threshold of the inner part of the Temple which he must approach through the 33 degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Masonry or the 7 degrees of the French Rite. In working through these grades he works inwardly to gain within himself the 32 paths of wisdom, the various forms of intelligence, from the Admirable or Hidden Intelligence through to the Administrative Intelligence. This gained a true perception of the Kabbalists Tree of Life is revealed, which is mirrored in the grades, ritual and tools of Masonry. When his awareness rests within the realm of the Supernal Triad he is able to gaze through the veils parted by the cherubis beings and can perceive the spiritual ground of the world, and the hierarchy of spiritual beings rising to the limitless light of the highest realms of the spiritual world.

A short cut to this process of initiation and gradual inner development, can be achieved through the ascent of Jacob's Ladder or the Ladder of the Angels of the 72 Names of God, from Vehuviah to Mumiah. This characterises the Mystical Path as opposed to the occult process of inner development. This mystical perception is given to few by the Grace of the Divine. The occult path, on the other hand, is for the many, who through their own inner effort can aspire to a spiritual perception through the gradual measured process of initiation in the masonic-kabbalistic tradition.

This remarkable document should be of considerable interest to historians of the esoteric tradition in Masonry. From its provisional dating one wonders if it might have had a connection with the esoteric stream that gave rise to the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, which had a documented link with the Societas Rosicruciana.

It will certainly repay much study and contemplation.



In this Alchemical Mandala feature, there will be shown three versions of the same mandala form found in Andreas Libavius, *Commentariorum Alchymiae*, Frankfurt, 1606. These three thus illustrate different ways of presenting the essence of a mandala, and afford us an excellent opportunity of seeing the inner workings of the mandala. These are also particularly interesting, in that they tie together many of the symbolic threads explored in previous mandalas in this feature with the bird symbolism described in a previous article, *The Birds in Alchemy* (*Hermetic Journal* No.5).

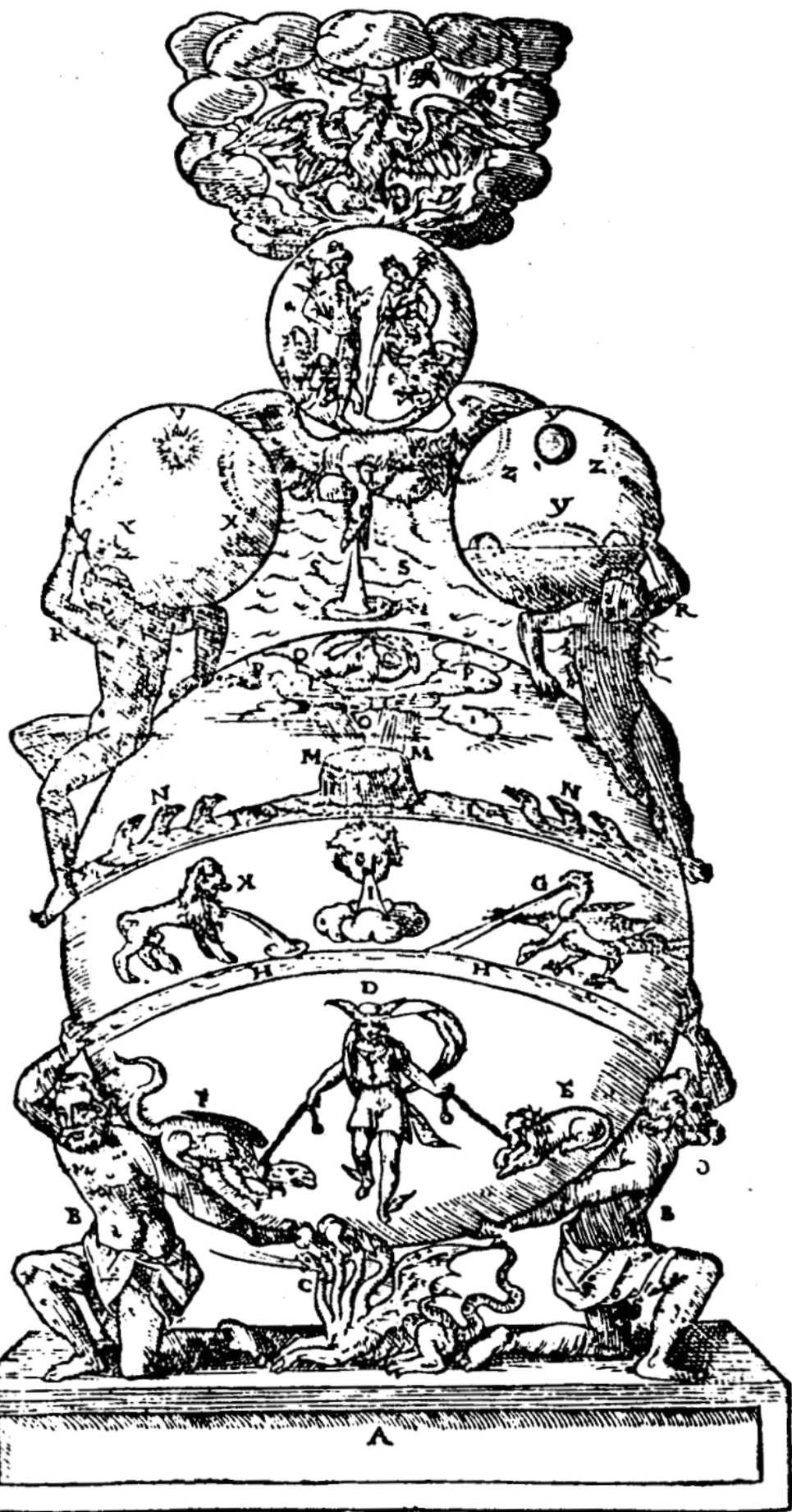
MANDALA 1

This is described in the text as an emblem of Heinrich Kuhdorfer and is assigned a date of 1421 by Libavius. The text includes a minute description of the plate which is quoted below as it describes various colours to be associated with parts of the illustration :-

- " A. A small charcoal fire under the glass.
 B. This space is filled by a winged serpent with a long tail, wearing a crown like the fabulous basilisk. It lies on its back with its feet in the air, and bites its tail, which is doubled back, thus being the dragon which is said to eat its own tail. It is of horrible appearance, green in colour, with a grey or ashy tail.
 C. Here an eagle is to be painted with saffron feet and beak, wings outspread, many coloured plumage in the wings, body and tail, some feathers being white, others black, green, yellow, as in a picture of the peacock's tail, or the rainbow.
 D. In the field, a black crow.
 E. A red rose on a silver field.
 F. A white rose on a red field.
 G. A maiden's head, silver, representing the Moon.
 H. A lion's head, gold, representing the Sun.
 I. One red rose on a silver field
 K. A saffron-coloured candle.
 L. Three gold stars on a silver field.
 M. Six dark blue stars on a golden field.
 N. A white or silver candle, may also be saffron-coloured.
 O. Three white roses on a red field.
 P. A king holding red or blood-coloured lilies in his hand.
 Q. The king's wife or mother holding white or silver lilies.
 R. A silver candle.
 S. A red candle.
 T. A plate of a crown, gold.
 V. Candles in an apple.
 X. Gold and silver lilies. "

MANDALA 2

One can see that this mandala is a much more elaborate version of the former and a detailed description also occurs in Libavius' text :-



" A. A pediment or foundation, like the earth.

B. Two giants or Atlases, resting on the foundation, who, to the left and right, hold up a globe on their shoulders and prop it with their hands.

C. A four headed dragon, breathing forth, upwards towards the globe, four stages of fire ; from one mouth there must come as it were air; from the second, thin smoke; from the third, smoke with fire; from the fourth, pure fire.

D. Mercury with a silver chain; beside him, two beasts bound with the chain and crouching.

E. A green lion.

F. A dragon crowned, single-headed. These two beasts mean the same thing, namely, the mercurial liquid which is the first matter of the stone.

G. A three-headed silver eagle, two heads drooping and as it were fading, while from the third it must pour forth white water or the mercurial liquid into the place of the sea, marked H.

I. A picture of a wind(god) blowing downward to the sea beneath.

K. The picture of a red lion, from whose breast is to flow red blood into the sea beneath, which must be so coloured as to seem a mixture of gold and silver, or of red and white.

L. An expanse of black water, as in chaos : there is signified (thereby) putrefaction. From this emerges a sort of mountain, black at the base, white at the summit, with an overflow of white streaming down from the summit. For it is the symbol of the first solution and coagulation, and again of the second solution.

M. The aforesaid mountain.

N. Black heads of crows looking out from the sea.

O. A silver rain falling from clouds on to the summit of the mountain, whereby is figured, firstly, the nutrition and ablution of Lato by Azoth; secondly, the second solution whereby the element of air is brought forth from earth and water. Earth is the appearance of the mountain ; water is that first liquid of the sea.

P. The shape of clouds, from which comes dew, or rain, and the nutritive liquid.

Q. The form of the sky, in which must lie a dragon, on his back, eating his own tail ; this is the image of the second coagulation.

R. A negro and a negress, holding up two globes, above and to the side of them. They are supported by a larger globe, and signify the blackness of the second operation, in the second putrefaction.

S. Here let there be represented a sea of pure silver, which typifies the mercurial liquid, the medium by which the tinctures are connected.

T. Here paint a swan swimming on the sea and spewing out of its mouth a white fluid. This swan is the white elixir, the white chalk, the arsenic of the philosophers, common to both ferments. It should support on its back and wings a globe placed above it.

V. An eclipse of the sun.

X. The sun rising from the sea, that is from the mercurial water, into which also the elixir must pass. Thereupon comes forth the real eclipse of the sun. On either side of it should be painted a rainbow, to indicate the Peacock's Tail, which then appears in the coagulation.

Y. An eclipse of the moon, which should also have a rainbow at the sides, and near the rainbow part of the sea for the moon to sink into ; this is the symbol of the white fermentation. The sea in both pictures should be a little dark.

Z. The moon sinking into the sea.

a. A king, in a purple robe, with a gold crown, having a lion standing beside him.

b. A queen, decorated with a silver crown, stroking a white or silver eagle which perches beside her. In one hand the queen should carry a white lily, the king a red lily.

c. A phoenix perched on a globe and burning itself ; from the ashes must fly a number of birds silver and golden. For this is the symbol of augmentation and multiplication. "

MANDALA 3

This mandala expresses the alchemical process of development along a vertical axis. There is a definite fourfoldness to the lower part of the mandala, the globe with the two 'Atlas' like supporters and two figures resting upon the upper part of the globe in turn supporting the upper part of the mandala which is more threefold in essence. There is a solidity about the lower part of the mandala, indeed this is emphasised by its being supported by the Atlas figures kneeling upon a rectangular base ; whereas the upper part is more an equilibrium of disparate elements - the three globes which are held together in a balance. So the key to this mandala is a transformation from the fourfold to the threefold, from the four Elements to the three Principles. Both of these facets of the mandala process are subdivided into a series of stages in which polarities are experienced and symbolised by various animal forms, and in particular bird forms.

At the bottom of the spherical vessel in which the transformation of the Elements occurs, a four headed dragon energises the process through the four degrees of heat - Earth of Fire, Water of Fire, Air of Fire, and Fire of Fire.

Within this vessel one can recognise three distinct layers. In the lowest layer, certain polarities express themselves in a separation of the archetypal Sun and Moon forces, this being symbolised by the Sun with Lion standing upon it, and the Moon with the Virgin upon it. The Red Blood of the Lion pours into the Sun disc, while the Moon disc is nourished by white lilies, symbolic perhaps of the White Milk of the Virgin. These two discs are balanced by a central sphere in which three cherubs mingle their forces, so it is essential that this polarity must be balanced by the third element. This is seen vertically in the symbols of the triple-headed Eagle above and Lion below. The Gluten of the Eagle and the Green Lion were also components of the Coniunctio. So we have a quaternity, polarised into a duality, but united in a triplicity, forming the first inner stage of the process. At the boundary of this stage and the next, we see an eclipsed Sun, and when we remember that an eclipse of the Sun is a conjunction of the Sun and Moon, the Moon covering the Sun disc, we will recognise this as a suitable symbol of the conclusion of the first Conjunction.

The next stage involves a working through Air and Water as the two circular inserts on the left and right respectively indicate. This is a period of Putrefaction or Nigredo during which outer blackening an inner evolution of forces is free to occur. At the conclusion of this stage of the process we see the bird symbol of the Nigredo, the Black Crow or Raven surmounting the Sun-Moon globe which is just coming out of eclipse.

This final stage of the first part of the process involves a separation-conjunction cycle, which is indicated by the ascending birds on the right and descending birds on the left. We are reminded of the detailed symbolic description of the Alchemical process given in the Crowning of Nature manuscript (see article in the Hermetic Journal No. 7 or the Crowning of Nature, edited by Adam McLean published by Magnum Opus Hermetic Sourceworks in 1980). Earth and Water are intimately related in this Separation and Conjunction and we note that, as the birds ascend from the land water is expelled into the ocean, and as the birds in the conjunction phase the land seems to sink down into the water. This process of separation and conjunction cycles reaches fruition in the Ouroboros, the snake, here in bird form as a cockerel, swallowing its own tail, and this integration of the elements closes the first part of the work.

The alchemist now possesses the integrated substance of the work, the philosophical Mercury, one might say. And now he must polarise this again to form the White and Red Tinctures. This is shown above in the three globes. The dark male and female figures supporting the two globes represent the unperfected polarisation, but when this is brought together in the third globe, which is dual Solar/Lunar, then the true archetypal polarities can appear as the King and Queen. From these the two tinctures of the Sun and of the Moon are evolved. In the Phoenix, the Solar fire Tincture shown above resurrecting upon its pyre, and in the White Swan, the Lunar earthly Tincture, standing upon the cube of the earth. These tinctures in a soul sense, are processes in alchemy which colour the astral body or aura of the operator.

All three mandalas incorporate the same process, though they approach it through different symbolic sequences, but the experienced student of Alchemy should find the key to the integration of these symbolic descriptions. It is an essential task in the inner digestion of alchemical truths, to be able to recognise the same process described in different symbolic patterns, even although these outer symbolic descriptions may be inconsistent and mutually incompatible. Thus the student of Alchemy often in facing paradox in the outer symbols is lead to an inner grasp of some alchemical truth.

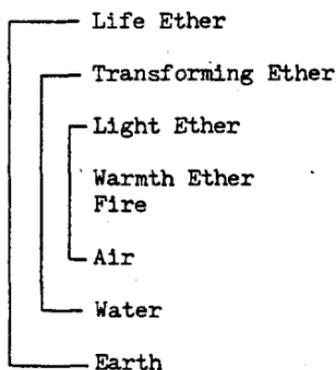
THE ETHERS AND THE FUNDAMENTAL FORCES OF PHYSICS

Adam McLean ©

The esoteric philosophy which underlies the alchemical tradition recognises a level of being above the purely material, which acts as the ground out of which form is woven into material processes. This level of being is variously described as the supra-physical world, the realm of the formative forces, or the Ethers.

The qualitative science of Alchemy also recognises a division of the material world into four distinct qualities of matter, the four Elements, Fire, Air, Water and Earth. Behind these elements are found the interweaving of the four Ethers, which work and act as vehicles for the transformation and moulding of form within these elements. These ethers are described in many different ways in alchemy, but one recognises them, for example behind the symbols of the fiery dragon-snake, the various bird forms in alchemical symbolism, the idea of the Quintessence, the Tincture and the Philosophical Mercury, and in many other symbolic descriptions. The esoteric philosophy of these etheric forces has been codified at various times in the tradition, and towards the end of the 19th century a particular description arose which is of great value, in that it describes the Ethers in such a way, that they can be related directly to the most up to date discoveries of modern physics in understanding the inner nature of matter.

The Ethers are related to the Elements in this picture as shown opposite. Here we have the ascending scale of the Elements and Ethers in terms of their density or subtilty. There are thus seven levels. The Fire Element is identical to Warmth Ether. In this sense it is double, Janus-headed. Fire looked at from the outer side is an element, from the inner side an ether. Light Ether is the higher octave of the Air Element, and radiates and transmits etheric force through the material world. The Transforming Ether (also called by some occultists the Chemical or Sound Ether) relates as the higher octave of



the flowing, ever changing Water element, and it promotes the multiplicity of potential forms within the material realm through its transmutative quality of etheric force. Life Ether is that aspect of the formative forces which brings about the independent living entities, from the simple living cells up to complex beings living in matter bodies, that can only arise through their anchoring their being to the Earth. This is made possible through the activity of the Life Ether, in bringing life into the densest of substances.

The interconnections of the Ethers and the Elements in Cosmic Evolution was revealed in great detail during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, through two great occultists, Madame Blavatsky and Rudolf Steiner. In this picture the evolution of the Cosmos proceeds through a series of seven stages beginning with the exteriorisation from the spiritual world of the warmth ether in potential as the Fire element in actuality. Then follows a second cosmic period in which the light ether and its material shadow the Air element come into being. The etheric world later densified further in a third stage into the Water element and its etheric counterpart the Transforming ether. And finally in the fourth stage, that of our present era of evolution on the Earth planet, the Earth element came into being, precipitated out of the etheric world, and the development of individual life forms, which characterises this period, was possible through the life ether. This whole picture is well known in Eastern Esotericism, in the Tattvas of Indian Tantric philosophy, and in the West is only thinly disguised beneath many alchemical texts on cosmic evolution.

During the twentieth century, man has penetrated through the materialistic scientific method into a deep encounter with the material ground of the world. However, in all the sciences, each new step man takes which initially seems a breakthrough into understanding some facet of the world in purely materialistic terms, on closer examination proves disappointing to the materialist. It appears as if the material ground, the fundamental explanation of the world in purely material terms, eludes him, but then seems only to be one small step away from his gaze. Thus the materialist comes up against the maya of the material world. The student of occultism will of course realize that material processes can never be completely explained in material terms. The higher spiritual realms have a part to play, and in particular the Etheric formative forces are the ground, the foundation, for material processes. However, one must not underestimate the great strides taken by modern physics in grasping the fundamental ground of the world.

It is the purpose of this article to show that within the domain of modern fundamental physics, the experiments undertaken by particle physicists with their high energy accelerators, and the speculations of theoreticians, have resulted in an encounter with the etheric level of reality, albeit through purely materialistic workings. I would further suggest that many of the contradictions in the materialistic physicists view of the fundamental ground of reality could be avoided by the recognition of the existence of a meta-physical level, the realm of the etheric forces which the physicist touches upon in his experiments. Indeed, these physicists are working with and exploring the inner structure of these etheric forces, and though they would not recognise the term, they are in a sense involved in a kind of esoteric research.

So I would like to indicate in this article the parallels between the western esotericism of the Ethers and the discoveries of modern fundamental physics.

When the ethers are free, within their own sphere, they take on the particular formative role working from without upon the Elements of the material world, which I sketched earlier. However, through the process of cosmic evolution, part of these Ethers was pressed down into the corresponding element, and was as if entombed and deeply woven into the heart of the material elements. I suggest that these 'entombed', 'congealed', or 'fallen' ethers, are indeed that which the physicists encounter as the fundamental realm in their relationship to matter. These will be recognised as the four fundamental forces of physics.

Life Ether	-	Strong Interactions
Transforming Ether	-	Weak Interactions
Light Ether	-	Electromagnetism
Warmth Ether	-	Gravity

In contemporary physics the interaction between the material particles of the Universe can be completely described by means of these four fundamental forces, or 'fields of force'. Much of the theoretical energies of physicists today is involved in trying to explain all these forces within a general law, the search for a 'Unified Field Theory', which will reduce these four fundamental forces to special cases of a single interaction.

These four forces are here related to the Ethers in a way which echoes their individual character. For those unfamiliar with the language of modern physics I will just sketch in a short description of each of these fundamental forces. The material physicist sees the world as being composed of various particles of matter, from galaxies and stars, down to the inner constituents of the atom. The four fundamental forces completely describe the possible interactions between such particles, from the macrocosmic down to the microcosmic scale.

GRAVITY

This fundamental force operates between all particles of the universe, but only becomes of great significance on the large scale, where large masses are involved. It was the first fundamental force to be recognised and described by physical science, and was the foundation of Newton's physical theory. Newton's theory of Gravitation explained the movements of the planets in material terms, so that one no longer needed metaphysical entities such as angels and prime movers to account for the planets' movements. As far as is presently understood by physicists, Gravitation is a large scale phenomenon, and its significance, its importance, falls off as we approach the microscopic world of the atom. It formed the cornerstone of Albert Einstein's attempt to unify physics through the General Theory of Relativity. Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity was a special case of the General Theory (in that it dealt only with non-accelerating reference frames), and its fundamental postulate, well known to the layman, was that mass and energy are interchange-

able ($\text{Energy} = \text{Mass} \times \text{C}(\text{velocity of light})^2$). In the esoteric philosophy of the ethers we find that idea paralleled in the dual nature of the warmth ether \leftrightarrow fire element. The ether is the energy parameter, the Fire Element the mass parameter, of the same underlying phenomenon. We find in the descriptions of the stage in Cosmic Evolution during which the warmth ether was precipitated out of the spiritual world (the stage called by Steiner the 'Ancient Saturn stage of Evolution', or by Madame Blavatsky the 'First Planetary Round of the Cycle of Evolution'), a picture of the external Cosmic Warmth becoming internalised as warmth currents which began to gravitate to a definite centre, forming a globe or planet of warmth fire separated off from the Cosmos. Modern cosmology recognises the role of the gravitational forces in condensing the cosmic hydrogen into stars and galaxies, and I think we can see in these descriptions an archetypal picture of the relationship between gravity and the fallen warmth ether or fire element.

ELECTROMAGNETISM

The next fundamental force is that of Electromagnetism. What exists cosmically as light ether becomes entrapped in matter as electricity. Electricity became recognisable as a realm for scientific enquiry in the 18th and 19th centuries, during which time new discoveries in this realm lead to the realisation that Electricity and its sister Magnetism were two facets of the same phenomenon, and James Clerk Maxwell related them through intuitively arriving at his famous field equations. Maxwell's equations tied together electromagnetism and the wave nature of light. Nineteenth century physics had described light as a wave motion in the universal ether, and Maxwell was to unify this with the new phenomenon of electromagnetism. This simple (and esoterically sound) idea of light as an Electromagnetic wave in the cosmic ether was, however, insufficient to explain further phenomena discovered in the twentieth century, and so the theory was expanded, and a Quantum theory of Electromagnetic Radiation was devised by Max Plank and others. Later the wave mechanics of Shrodinger were welded to a quantum theory of the electromagnetic field by Dirac and others to arrive at the model of the electromagnetic forces as it exists today. Modern physics sees the electromagnetic interaction between particles of matter occurring through the exchange of photons, the fundamental quanta of the electromagnetic field.

THE WEAK INTERACTION

The weak interactions are perhaps not so obvious to the non-physicist but they are nevertheless essential to the holding together of the material of the cosmos, indeed without these forces coming in to play in the atomic activity in stars, the heavy elements of which the Earth planet is made would not have been available in the cosmos to fashion the Earth's material body. The weak interaction occurs between the microcosmic particles that constitute the sub-atomic world. Although not yet fully understood, the weak interaction is the essential force behind natural radioactivity, the radioactivity that is the result of the transformation of one chemical element into another. It was first recognised as a force through the discovery of the phenomenon of natural radioactivity during the late nineteenth century. Nigel Calder in his excellent book The Key of the Universe (BBC Publications, London 1977) describes the weak interaction as 'Nature's Alchemist', that transforms elements one into another. The weak interaction is responsible for the generation of energy

within the body of the earth and thus is the driving force behind volcanic activity and probably the movements of the continental land masses across the face of the earth over long periods of evolution. The weak interaction is involved in the transformation of "heavy" sub-atomic particles, Hadrons and Baryons, into lighter particles called Leptons (electrons and neutrinos) but although it occurs on this sub-atomic level only within an extremely short distance, it has larger scale repercussions as we have seen. Another possible revelation of the weak forces, lies in the fact that these do not preserve symmetry in their interactions. It is a well known (and unexplained) fact that most complex molecules that act as the foundation of life processes in animals and plants, although these can theoretically occur in distinct symmetrical forms, within living substance they are often found with asymmetry, a left handedness in fact. Life is left handed in the sense that the molecular structure of protein bases, the nucleic acids, and other fundamental molecules have a left handed twist. The weak interaction is the only one of the four fundamental forces which breaks the Conservation of Parity law (the 'handedness' law among forces). It may well be that weak interactions may be involved in the interrelationship of the particles that constitute the binding forces in molecules. Thus we see that there is a distinct connection between the weak interactions and the transforming ether of esotericism.

THE STRONG INTERACTION

The fourth and final force necessary for the physicist to make sense of the cosmos is the Strong Interaction, the Nuclear force, that holds together the nucleus of the atom. The atomic nucleus is composed partly of positively charged fundamental particles of matter called protons. These would fly apart through the electrical repulsion of like charges, under the electromagnetic interaction, but a force much stronger than this in intensity at this sub-atomic scale serves to hold these particles together. This is the strong interaction between particles. The strong interaction thus creates within an atom an integral centre of stability, which gives each atom its individual character as a chemical element, thus giving rise to these being used as the solid building blocks for life on a material level. The electrons which orbit around the nucleus of each atom are held by the weaker electromagnetic forces and are in consequence much more errant and free to move from the atom to which they are loosely bound and thus participate in the bonding between atoms. The nucleus bound by the strong forces is thus the point of stability in matter, the foundation of the possibility of life. Thus we can easily see a relationship between the life ether and the strong nuclear interaction. The strong interactions are thought to take place through particles called quarks and an elaborate theory has been developed, which seems almost like a piece of alchemical speculation of the early seventeenth century, which involves arranging particles in patterns of hexagrams (the seal of Solomon) and a triangular arrangement with four to a side (the 'Holy Tetractys' of the Pythagoreans), their position within the pattern being determined by various characteristics such as colour, strangeness, hypercharge, antiparticle, charge, charm, etc. (I think we can recognise in the theoretical nomenclature of the physicists, that a kind of repressed metaphysics manifests itself.) (I will include in a later article for the Hermetic Journal an exploration of the esoteric ramifications of the theories of particle physics.)

It seems that in his investigation of the architecture of matter through his experiments with particle accelerators etc., the physicist touches upon the foundation of matter behind which lie the ethers, and thus something of these four ethers is reflected in his experiments and in the theories he devises to account for the results of these experiments. Physical science has discovered the ghost of the etheric forces trapped in matter in the fundamental forces.

In order to realise the true relationship between these fallen ethers and the true creative etheric forces, we have to look in some detail at the process of the spiritual evolution of the Cosmos. As has been outlined earlier, the true root of the material world lies in the spiritual sphere, the material cosmos is a result of a precipitation out of the spiritual, and this precipitation is primarily brought about through the involution of the Cosmic Ether stream.

Thus the process of Cosmic Evolution begins with the warmth ether weaving an outer planetary body of the Fire element. As a result of the formation of this Fire Planet (the Ancient Saturn of occultism) a kind of shadow world comes into being, a counter-warmth ether realm is formed through the deep penetration of a part of the warmth ether into outer materialisation. This fallen warmth ether realm remains behind in Cosmic Evolution and one facet of its working is found in the gravitational force.

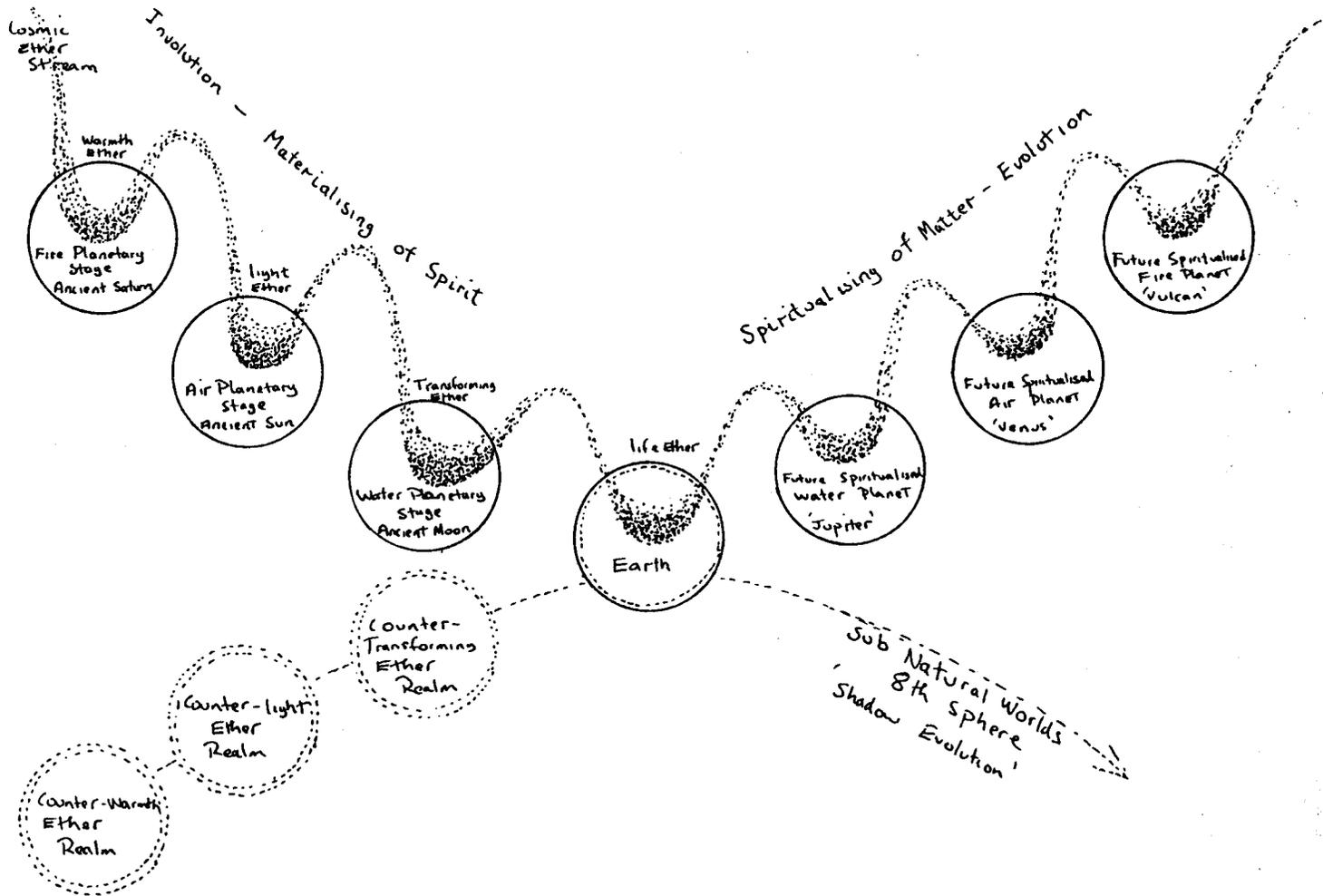
The next stage of spiritual involution weaves the light ether into the outer formation of the Air Planet (the Ancient Sun of occultism), and that part of the light ether which becomes given over into eternal materialisation gives rise to the counter-light ether realm, a shadow planet, one dimension of which is the sphere of the electrical forces.

Next, the transforming ether is pressed into outer form by the impulse of spiritual involution and the Water Planet (the Ancient Moon of occultism) is fashioned in the Cosmos. That part of the transforming ether which becomes too materialised to be spiritualised again at the end of the cycle of the Ancient Moon planetary embodiment is left behind as a kind of fallen shadow planet, a realm of the weak interactions.

At the turning point of this cycle, that is on our present Earth, the life etheric weaves its formative web behind the Earth element, but there also arises the counter realm of the Strong Interactions, the Nuclear forces. These spheres co-exist and interpenetrate at this our present point in the round of evolution.

The Earth stage marks a turning point in the direction of Cosmic Evolution. Now, all that has been woven into matter must evolve and raise this back towards the spirit (the prodigal son must return). The future embodiments of the Earth Planet will involve the throwing off of layers of materialisation through the spiritualisation of the material. Thus the impulse of materialisation is now opposed to the direction of Cosmic Evolution, to the evolution of matter into spirit.

The future cycles of evolution are not fixed in some eternal sense but are merely potential, and depend on the conscious work of various beings. One of these beings is Mankind. Man as a guardian of the Earth Planet has a formative role to play in this process. Out of Man's activity the Earth Planet can become spiritualised or indeed the opposite process could be consolidated. The first half of the Earth Planetary period, which is now completed, was one of materialisation, the second half now begun is that



of the spiritualisation of matter. However the momentum of materialisation still continues and evolution has descended much deeper into this sphere than was necessary. So it is cosmically essential that Man must work to etherialise matter rather than materialising and entombing the ethers.

The more Man works with materialising forces and tendencies the more he builds shadowy planetary embodiments which will bring about a descent of matter into sub-elemental stages, matter cut off from the spiritual archetype. In particular on the Earth, if Man works with the nuclear forces he will bring about the strengthening and eventual triumph of the shadow-life ether realm, and he will build the outer body of this shadow Earth (See my article in The Hermetic Journal No. 3 on The Spiritual Implications of Nuclear Power).

Man's true spiritual task must be to recognise the activity of the ethers in substance and processes, to develop ways of working with substance so that it can become so spiritualised as to be a vessel, a vehicle for the ethers (the Mystery of the Grail), and to take on a creative role in the weaving of life into substance. This true Alchemy works to spiritualise the creative interweaving of the ethers in substance, and stands in complete contrast to the illusory working with the fallen ethers, which moves contrary to Cosmic Evolution in that these activities drag the ether stream into denser materialisation.

As examples of this positive evolutionary activity within humanity we might give that of the preparation of healing substances that act as vehicles for the etheric forces, as in homoeopathy or related alchemical processes, or indeed the use of the etheric body of man itself in healing others. Also the building of material temples (and we think of the great Cathedrals, Stone circles, as well as more recent buildings) which have a presence, an atmosphere, which indicates the focussing of etheric forces through the Sacred Geometry of their architecture. In the artistic sphere material objects can be created (sculptures, paintings, etc) which radiate a kind of force that can be healing for the soul, or a source of inspiration. Colour therapy is a true working with the etheric potentialities of light. The respecting of the etheric currents in the Earth which can be detected consciously by dowsing, and the use of these harmoniously in the realms of agriculture, housing and other human uses of landscape.

The foundations are being laid even now for an Etheric Science, which will work with the positive direction of evolution, and we can see taking place a great struggle within human society and indeed within the soul of man, between the positive forces and the restricting, narrowing, materialising tendency in Earth evolution which has still a massive inherent momentum. The task of esotericism in formulating and giving energy to the establishment of this Etheric Science, in this age of great changes, is indeed of Cosmic significance.

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Reviews

ALCHEMY : A Bibliography of English-Language Writings

By Alan Pritchard Routledge and Kegan Paul jointly with
The Library Association 1980 HB 439pp £30.00

Alan Pritchard has done students of Alchemy a great service in preparing this the first ever comprehensive Bibliography of the subject. Previous to this one has had to consult Ferguson or Duveen which being based on individual collections often have annoying omissions, but this new bibliography is entirely comprehensive and exhaustive. Pritchard, with the support of the Library Association and publishers Routledge and Kegan Paul, has undertaken an enormous amount of research into alchemical texts and writings on the subject in English, and in particular provides masses of references to to articles in Journals. For this alone the book is invaluable as there are many articles of great interest and originality in obscure magazines that one is unlikely to encounter through normal sources of bibliographic information. Alan Pritchard had to personally wade through collections of these occult Journals in order to compile his bibliography of such articles. The Bibliography is divided into sections which make it very easy to use. Section A deals with Alchemical texts and is subdivided into the different countries of origin. Section B is concerned with works written about Alchemy and this is also subdivided into different countries of origin. The third Section C also lists works about Alchemy, this time classified according to subject matter. A full alphabetic index is provided to what amounts to over 3000 items. In his preface, Alan Pritchard shows his openness to the fringe or occult writings on Alchemy which are often ignored by the respectable academic, and his inclusion of all these fringe items makes the Bibliography especially valuable, as one must not underestimate the mass of original material that is published by the less academically respected occult magazines and publishers. Pritchard obviously must have a great love for and appreciation of the Alchemical tradition, and this shows in the painstaking manner in which he has compiled the Bibliography. Unlike many other books, this Bibliography will retain its value over the years, and it will certainly be a constantly consulted reference work on my bookshelf. This book is absolutely essential for anyone wishing to make a serious study of Alchemical literature.

TERRESTRIAL ASTROLOGY - DIVINATION BY GEOMANCY

By Stephen Skinner Routledge and Kegan Paul 1980
HB 293pp many illustrations £15.00

Stephen Skinner's well researched volume on Divinatory Geomancy exhibits his solid scholarship in surveying the source material on the subject. He shows conclusively that Divinatory Geomancy was transmitted to Europe through the Arabic tradition rather than from classical sources. The first four chapters deal with the various facets of the Arabic tradition of Geomancy indicating its possible origin in divination by sand, its Islamic connection, associations with voodoo, and the Sikidy

or Geomantic practice in Madagaskar. Skinner then follows the transmission of geomantic knowledge into the medieval period in Europe. Interestingly, the first translation of an Arabic work on Geomancy into latin was made by Hugh of Santalla (12th cent.) who is also credited with preparing the first latin translation of the Emerald Tablet of Hermes Trismegistus. Many of the early writers on the Hermetic Arts - Gerard of Cremona, Robert of Chester, Michael Scot, Albertus Magnus, Raimon Lull, etc., included references to Geomancy. The author follows the development of Geomancy through the Renaissance and into modern times. The second part of this book is a guide to the Practice of Geomancy, showing the method of working a divination, the generation of the various Geomantic figures used in a particular interpretation, and then itemizes the sixteen figures and their associations and particularly connects these with Astrology in a chapter on Astrogeomancy. An excellent Bibliography and full Appendices make sure of this book's comprehensive coverage of the subject and its value as a sourcework on Geomancy. Through his previous books Stephen Skinner set high standards in his occult scholarship and we have come to expect a solid well researched volume from his pen. He has certainly met his own self-imposed exacting standards in his latest consideration of Divinatory Geomancy and has produced a sourcebook on the subject that I am sure will stand the test of time.

METAL MAGIC : The Hidden Secrets of the Mineral World

By Mellie Uyldert Turnstone Press Ltd 1980 PB 160pp £3.95

A most interesting and original gathering of material on the occult properties of metals. Mellie Uyldert, who has obviously been influenced by Anthroposophy, surveys fifteen metals - the seven planetary metals plus the less familiar Magnesium, Antimony, Bismuth, Nickel, Zinc, Tungsten, Aluminium and Platinum. Each metal is in turn introduced though a consideration of its history and occurrence on the Earth, then its Cosmic-Astrological connection is explained, its special gifts to humanity, its characteristic properties are outlined, its uses in healing, and its inner connection with Man's psyche is shown in detail. There is also appended a excellent chapter on Alchemy. This book has a refreshing perspective on the inner nature of metals, and indicates that we should approach metals as living entities, which connect us to the forces of the etheric world, rather than dead substance. The text reads very well, and as it was originally written in Dutch the translator Jane Fenoulhet must be praised for her excellent translation.

THE MAGICAL TEMPLE : A Practical Guide for the Creation of a Personal Sanctuary

By Michael Kearton
Aquarian Press 1980 PB 95pp £2.50

A useful guide to the practical task of constructing a personal magical temple. The book begins with the inner exercise of building up in magical imagination an Astral Temple. On this foundation the work of building the material temple can be undertaken, and Michael Kearton gives a full account of the practical details and problems encountered in the design, decoration of the temple and the necessary ritual objects. He follows by giving an introduction to ritual working in the Temple, the use of the Qabbalistic Cross and Pentagram Ritual in a

service of Consecration, together with some hints on the technique of path working and inner journeys. This book is in the mainstream of that current of British Occultism represented by Dion Fortune, Gareth Knight, and the Servants of the Light, and much of this material has been available in other writings and correspondence courses, however, Michael Kearton has gathered this together under the theme of the Magical Temple, and provided a book useful for those not too experienced on the occult path.

ELIPHAS LEVI - LETTERS TO A DISCIPLE Letters from Eliphas Levi Zahed to Baron Spedalieri on Magic, Numerology and the Tarot, Now Collected Together for the First Time in Volume Form. Introduction By Christopher McIntosh. The Aquarian Press 1980 PB 128pp £2.95

Eliphas Levi's writings still attract considerable interest and respect some 100 years after his death. It delight to me that this collection of Levi's letters have been published, especially in a paperback edition, as publishers are often reluctant to handle reprints of such obscure material. These letters which were published in English translation in the theosophical journal Lucifer in 1894-5, were written by Levi to one of his foremost pupils, Baron Spedalieri. The painstaking attention and detailed answers to the Baron's questions make one realise how Levi achieved a great reputation among his contemporaries. He obviously cared for the tradition he worked within and deeply wished to communicate the truths he had grasped. The letters range over various subjects, magic, numerology, the Tarot, the Kabbalah, and one or two tantalising glimpses of alchemical ideas. Christopher McIntosh, Levi's biographer (See his Eliphas Levi and the French Occult Revival) provides a short introduction to the historical background to these letters and makes the most important point that they offer a glimpse of Levi that is not afforded by his published popular books. Not only as these letters contain ideas that do not appear elsewhere but they also give a special personal insight into the writer's way of thinking.