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# THE HERMETIC JOURNAL



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## Editorial

I am sure my readers will forgive me if I occasionally use this Editorial column to outline the directions in which the work of the Journal seems to be unfolding. The autumn issue seems to be the time when I am drawn to look at the results and inner direction of my work and share this with subscribers. As the Hermetic Journal enters its sixth year of publication I feel it has reached a kind of mid-point in its development. From faltering beginnings in which I did not have the confidence to place difficult and obscure items before my readers, the inner essence of the Journal slowly revealed itself (to me as much as to my readers !), and now has I believe reached a kind of maturity. As its being emerged a number of my subscribers finding it too difficult, too obscure, or in some way not meeting their needs chose not to renew their subscriptions, and this produced a crisis some two or so years ago which I decided I had to confront, stick to my course and see through. This proved the best decision, and now I am extremely lucky to have a group of individuals, who by their subscription faithfully support the Hermetic Journal and allow for the publication of important articles and source material. The Hermetic Journal is not entirely planned consciously. In a sense, in preparing each issue I create a space into which material and articles can present

themselves. Just as in our inner work, say with ancient alchemical texts and symbols, we have to allow ourselves to be open to the promptings of intuition, so in a sense each issue is not entirely intellectually planned, but rather I try to open myself and empathise with what is trying to find its way into its vessel. I do not commission articles for the Journal, and though I often encourage people to write and share their insights with others, I wait and see what appears at the time. This is a rather dangerous course as it means I have sometimes to write a considerable section of the Journal. However, of the articles that appear under my name, few are truly my own statements (as Editor I have to ration myself in this regard) but most are in fact pieces of research I have undertaken into some historical figure, esoteric movement or whatever, so really are merely reflections of traditional or source material. My own creative work, in a sense, has yet to emerge.

The Journal has given birth to a number of projects. The Magnum Opus venture continues its important task of reviving and restoring hermetic literature, rescuing important texts from oblivion and neglect. This is not a profitable venture and regrettably the only people to make money from these publications will be the book collectors and second hand dealers in esoteric books some 10 or so years from now. However, the fact that I can do no more than scrape a living from publishing these items has its positive side in that it impels me to keep producing more items. It creates the kind of pressure that can be very creative. The Magnum Opus project will I am sure be recognised as one of the most important esoteric publishing ventures of the late 20th century.

The newly announced Journal of Rosicrucian Studies will not affect the Hermetic Journal. It is a focussing of research into the sphere of Rosicrucianism, and is linked to the annual Rosicrucian Symposium with the aim of fostering interest in the Rosicrucian tradition.

The Hermetic Research series does not yet seem to have captured the interest of my readers, but perhaps future titles

will attract people. The aim of the series is to provide a forum for the publication of present day research in the Hermetic tradition. To make it financially viable is a most important part of the work.

I feel, however, that the work of the Hermetic Journal must deepen as well as broaden, and I hope to be able to announce shortly some ways in which my readership can undertake in a guided way, inner meditative work upon the substance, the matter of hermetic symbolism.

As I sit here in my study/workshop, I am aware of the links that the work of the Journal has forged for me over the past five years with those many people all over the world sincerely pursuing their own research and study of the hermetic tradition. In much of what I do now I am conscious of being part of this subtle web of contacts. The Hermetic Journal arises, in a sense, from this subtle web and reflects what is working within my group of subscribers, through the feedback, encouragement and helpful criticism each of you give to me, the insights and research you share in your letters.

Being Editor of an esoteric Journal can have its dangers. One can become rather inflated with a sense of ones own importance, laying down the law on certain of ones pet topics, setting oneself up as some kind of superior 'initiate' or 'spiritual Teacher'. I hope I have avoided such temptations. They work in all of us in different ways and anyone who takes a step into esotericism eventually has to encounter and avoid being taken over or overshadowed by these difficult archetypes.

After five years the Hermetic Journal has become to me like a living being. Although I nourish and tend it with my work and energies, I believe it has now developed its own inner life, and so reflects Hermeticism not from my own ideosyncratic view but by means of its subtle web of contacts reflects the views and insights of many people from all parts of the world working honestly with the Hermetic current.

Adam McLean

## REPORT ON THE 1983 ROSICRUCIAN SYMPOSIUM

The first annual Symposium on Historical Rosicrucianism held in London on the 26th of June 1983 was a considerable success with around 90 people attending. There were seven speakers in all, who each reflected different viewpoints on the Rosicrucian phenomenon, that, however, seemed to complement each other and weave together a picture of the importance and value of Rosicrucian studies to our time.

The Symposium opened with a talk by Christopher McIntosh who surveyed the early history of the Rosicrucian Movement, and had us look again at the Rosicrucian myth set out in the 'Fama'. This provided an excellent foundation upon which the other speakers could build their own contributions.

Peter Dawkins being at the last minute unable to attend, was replaced by his friend and colleague Paul Baker, who spoke of the ways in which Francis Bacon worked secretly behind the scenes to encourage and develop the Rosicrucian Movement. Paul told us of Bacon's secret society 'the Knights of the Helmet' that met in Canonbury Tower, and which seem to be in some way linked with the Rosicrucians. The Baconian ideas sparked off some lively discussion.

The morning session was brought to a close by Bob Stewart, who reviewed the hermetic influence on music at the time of the Rosicrucians. He also showed us some charts, which outlined an esoteric system that possibly underlay some of the music of that period, and used a Monochord that he built based on the famous diagram of Robert Fludd, to illustrate the scales of harmonics that lie hidden within a single stretched string. Bob also played some of his music on his psaltery which incorporates these non-tempered scales and musical intervals.

The afternoon session began with a talk by Deirdre Green on Jacob Boehme and the Rosicrucians in which she illustrated how the ideas and mystical perceptions of the 'Teutonic Theosopher' paralleled some of the principles of Rosicrucianism outlined in their manifestos.

Joscelyn Godwin provided a critical note, by surveying the ways in which Rosicrucianism has been handled in recent times by various occultists, including Madame Blavatsky, Rudolf Steiner and Manly Palmer Hall. He showed that often people have projected their own inner biases upon Rosicrucianism, and cautioned us against too 'Romantic' a view of the Rosicrucian Myth, in order to let us become aware of the dangers of setting the Rosicrucian Myth up as an inner esoteric prop for us accepting the evolutionary materialism of our present age.

Gareth Knight then spoke of his own work with the Chymical Wedding allegory, and in particular his use of this as the basis for a series of guided meditations and inner rituals he undertook last year at Hawkwood College with a group of people he has come to work with over the years. He stressed how such allegories still possess inner power when worked with in the imagination, through meditation and ritual. In sharing his experiences with us he showed that mere intellectualising over such allegories was insufficient, and that only inner work could unlock the power inherent in the Rosicrucian symbolism to tinge and transform the soul.

To conclude the formal Symposium, I showed some slides of the Walled Garden of the Planets, built in 1604 at Edzell Castle in Scotland, which incorporates a series of three times seven sets of carved stone panels reflecting the archetypal material used in the Hermetic tradition. The site had definite Rosicrucian connections through the family of its builder, Lord David Lindsay of Edzell. The symposium concluded with a forum where all the speakers answered questions from the audience.

The meeting was a considerable success, and a good and open atmosphere seemed to be created. It confirmed the interest in the subject and has definitely established this as an annual event, and although it did not quite cover the costs the I will be more than willing to subsidise it in future. It also decided me to publish a single-issue-a-year Journal of Rosicrucian Studies which will include transcripts of some of the papers presented at each Symposium, this effectively being a Proceedings of the Symposium for Historical Rosicrucianism, allowing those who were unable to attend to share in the event. It will include much additional material and will be a forum for the encouragement of and publication of research in new insights into this important esoteric current.

I would like to thank all those who helped with the behind the scenes organisation which went so smoothly, all the lecturers for volunteering to speak, and to all those who through attending the conference made it possible and worthwhile.

## THE RETRIEVAL OF ALCHEMY

Elemire Zolla °

### Alchemy Eclipsed

Alchemy was the universal esoteric interpretation and manipulation of the mineral world up to the XVII and XVIII centuries in Europe. The main reason for its subsequent fading out of the scene was possibly the change that slowly came over craftsmen's guilds in Europe after the Renaissance, when they ceased little by little to withhold the secret of their techniques. The pivotal event was the publication of the first technical encyclopedias (such as the Theatre des instruments mathematiques et mecaniques of Jacques Besson in 1578). Guilds also failed from then on to relate their technical procedures to a symbolical frame of reference based on metaphysics. Crafts ceased to have an esoteric basis. This spelt ruin in the long run to most arts -- architecture in the XVIII century definitely lost sight of its Pythagorean foundations, the "science of divine proportions" was no longer applied to building. As for alchemy, which had always been both the most esoterically exclusive and the most metaphysical-minded craft, it was totally eclipsed, and with it a great part of traditional medicine.

The fatal change occurred in the XVIII c.. Yet to the very last there were signs to the contrary. Newton had devoted his best and maturest energies to the study of alchemy. Leibniz had joined the Rosicrucian society and become secretary to one of its chapters thanks to his immense alchemical erudition.

Transmutations were rumoured of well into the XVIII c., following the one in whose celebration Emperor Ferdinand III had a medal struck in 1648. A strong economic appeal attached to alchemy apart from the production of gold. Florentine porcelain was the result of the alchemical experiments of the Grand Duke whose decorated workshop can still be visited in Palazzo Vecchio. As for Dresden china, its origins are worth while going over.

A mysterious traveller befriended a youthful student of alchemy in Berlin in 1701. The youth later boasted of having received a gift of transmutatory powder, and immediately the King ordered him arrested. He had fled in time to Saxony. Here the Duke granted him shelter but had him locked up when he attempted to move out of the Dukedom. In jail he was furnished with all the necessary equipment and enjoined to show results. Meanwhile the mysterious traveller had reappeared in Berlin, to mount a vain attempt at liberating the young prisoner.

At last the Duke of Saxony was presented with a token of the art: the sort of artificial jade that is since known as Dresden china. The inventor did not survive long. The Ducal revenues soared high.

Manget, Arch-Physician to the King of Prussia, had gathered and published in 1702 a Bibliotheca chemica curiosa, a massive collection of most European alchemical textbooks -- among them that of the Pseudo-Ficinus in which electric batteries are clearly hinted at, and the contemporary one of Borrichius,

the Dane who sought to prove that alchemy had guarded in previous centuries the doctrines later divulged by Paracelsus, besides such secrets as the formula of flexible glass Roman Emperors had feared might upset the gold standard, and that of the "subtle" oil capable of keeping lamps burning indefinitely. Borrichius affirmed that Roger Bacon concealed and yet hinted at his knowledge concerning self-propelled carriages, airplanes, microscopes, telescopes, cameras, caustic rays, and gunpowder.

Not only the courts and the nobility were interested -- an alchemical weekly appeared in Hamburg in 1746, and Goethe frequented a group of practising alchemists in his early youth, and also tried his hand at transmutations.

Ever since, a self-styled alchemy has survived in Europe and America near the mad and pathetic fringe of society. Few reliable erudites have taken care of the texts and after Goethe very few writers have dealt seriously with the subject. Nathaniel Hawthorne left some posthumous papers in which his wide knowledge of the lore is apparent, and August Strindberg even worked at the crucible and left some important notes about the results.

If there was a chain of adepts, they remained successfully inconspicuous. It is safe to mention only one real connoisseur, who signed himself Fulcanelli, between the two wars.

### Buried Treasures of Alchemy

Chemistry and pharmacology are as it is heavily indebted to sections of alchemical knowledge that ended by being eventually divulged, so it is probable that much more never leaked out. One suspects that the most important procedures remained carefully guarded. Of this, evidence abounds. The old theme of Borrichius can now be taken up and implemented with new instances. In 1974 the French chemist Joseph Davidovich made known through a press release of Agence Press that his experiments had led him to surmise that between the Late Stone and Early Copper ages there had developed a technique whereby crushed rock or rubble were mixed with silt for Aluminium and Silicon and a binder was formed by adding strongly alkaline salts, the slurry being dumped into moulds where it hardened into stone. The procedure should explain megalithic constructions, pyramids and also the Easter Island statues. One is reminded of the legends which speak of a similar feat as performed by Solomon and by Merlin, the arch-builders.

In the Graeco-Roman world alcohol was known to the adepts; on one occasion they made a public display of it, when they saturated it with salt, and soaked the hair of the celebrants of Dionysian festivals with the mixture, and set fire to it at the peak of the celebration. The flames blazed but did not burn. "Our fire does not burn" was a refrain of the alchemists. Roman army engineers used an acid that bored through rocks; alchemists boasted of their "corrosive waters".

The so-called "vitrified forts" in Scotland, Ireland, Germany and Hungary prove that stones were soldered by vitrification at high temperature or otherwise, in the first century AD at least, and alchemical texts often refer to "Vulcan's vitrification".

At the threshold of our times one can draw up a long list of secrets known to the great Neapolitan alchemist of the XVIII century, the Prince of San Severo. He tintured marbles and stones, employed solid cements, and also metallized the circulatory system of human beings. In the crypt of the San Severo chapel in Naples two skeletons are still on display with all their arteries and veins intact. Probably the Prince injected first sulphur and then lead alchemically treated into the system.

As for Chinese antiquity, certain Tsing tombs contain aluminium and alloys

requiring temperatures of 2300 degrees centigrade. Recently, in 1968, an even more baffling challenge to our present day knowledge was unearthed in Hopei -- the corpse of the dame of Tai, whose skin was perfectly elastic after 2000 years. She was not mummified, nor dried up, nor embalmed. In the tomb there was a liquid containing mercury and she was clad in gold and jade. The substances Chinese alchemists claimed to energize were there.

Another challenge to modernity stands in a courtyard of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque in Delhi, where the iron pillar erected by King Chandra Varman in the V century has stood untouched by rust for 1500 years. Alchemists often mention ways of quenching the thirst for water in the inner core of iron.

Alchemical processes were supposed to take place as a result of a change in the inner vibratory balance of substances. Cameron, in his great treatise on Avicennian physics, made the point conclusively. Now we happen to have proof that the ancient Egyptians, whose schools of alchemy were the greatest in the ancient world, knew how to cause such an effect at least in one case.

The so-called King's Chamber in the pyramid mummifies the corpses of animals that happen to stray into it. It has been discovered that pyramids of given proportions preserve meat and also sharpen blunted blades, causing the molecules at their edges to point again outwards, provided the meat or the blade is placed at a point corresponding to the location of the King's Chamber.

An alchemist would explain that Plato attributed to fire precisely the form of a pyramid and that he was thinking of the highest kind of fire, that which is invisible and does not burn, but only purifies. We are supposed to try out other causal explanations. It has been suggested that the walls of a pyramid reflect the 1cm. wavelength radiations from the sun, given a certain alignment of the pyramid to the earth's magnetic field. The intensification of these radiations in the King's Chamber probably releases the molecules of water from biological structures and corrects the inclination of molecules along the edges of blades. If this is true, an alchemist would be correct in saying that the pyramid draws down from the sun a life-preserving energy.

### The Alchemist's View of the World

The first step in the quest for possible alchemical truths should not simply be a provisional acceptance of the alchemical general outlook. One should in fact reverse tables, and start looking on our assumptions through the eyes of an alchemist.

He would not be interested in formulas. His mind would search for causes in the ancient sense, of a material, a formal, and a final cause, and in this respect he would find us sorely lacking.

According to Fulcanelli, the modern adept, an alchemist would consider our formula for water,  $H_2O$ , unbelievably superficial. Two parts of hydrogen combine with one of oxygen and water results, but how do we account for all the properties of water that are absent in both gases? What agent causes water to crystallize according to certain patterns at certain temperatures? To the alchemist it is the formal cause of water, and of this there can be no mention in a chemical formula, bound to the realm of material causes. But even within this narrow precinct, why is it that the formula ignores the third factor in the formation of water, fire? The obvious answer would be that it acts as a catalyst. But to an alchemist fire is hidden in the inner grain of every substance. Take a lump of sugar, and break it up in the dark, a blue light will show. Where does it come from? Was it in the crystals? Fire is everywhere, oxydation is a result and not a cause. And so on. So let us "moderns" accept experimentally to be the losers in the dispute. The next step will be to train our minds to focus on what were the main objects in the eyes of an alchemist. Who puts the question is more important than who gives the answers; alchemists

put different questions to Nature because their attention was drawn to a different range of objects, in which the gist of life and reality seemed to be summed up. Their selection of relevant objects and facts implied that metaphysics was the experimentally valid pattern of reality.

For instance metaphysics teaches that Unity is manifested primarily in triads. Alchemists actually saw plants yielding three distinct parts, when subjected to distillations: their soul or volatile oil, their spirit or alcohol, their body or salt, just as men subjected to analysis show a soul, a spirit, and a body, and as minerals and metals have a sulphurous principle that colours them, a mercurial principle that becomes apparent in their fumes and in their liquefaction, a salt that binds these two together. Alchemists verified metaphysics in their daily work. Facts that loomed large in their view, we hardly bother to notice. For instance, cases of hypersensitivity to metals, especially in people endowed with spiritual gifts. This was considered a sign of the unstable, suffering condition of metallic inner balance. The cases of human skin becoming resistant to fire, on the other hand, imply an inner stability of the flesh, resembling, in alchemical jargon, that of gold. As a matter of fact, when we speak of hysterical or maniacal anaesthesia, we fail to explain away the resistance of the tissues that ought to be scorched in fire-walking, such as is even today practised in Europe, in Thessaly at the gatherings of the Anastenarides fraternity, not to mention the Asiatic and the African evidence. Even more revealing, as to the inner structure of reality, an alchemist would consider the cases of holy men influencing their bodily structure to the point of inducing at will a comatose condition, which in yoga is known as nirvikalpa-samadhi. Such comatose bodies were supposed to have medicinal properties, that were considered, in alchemical jargon, as cases of projection of the quality of philosophic stones that they had reached. An alchemist in present day Italy would consider as the most important fact recorded by the press in recent times, the case of a devotee who plunged herself into a sort of catalepsy and has remained in this condition for years. The ailing seek contact with her body.

We would not think of building a general theory on such events, for us they have to be justified by a theory.

Products from the borderline between death and life were to the alchemist the main facts of life. From mummies there oozed out a medicinal oil that even restored vitality to dead wood and revived dead flowers. From the flesh of certain saints exuded an oil of such power that it passed through heavy slabs of marble. It was called myron in Greece, manna in Italy. Alchemists felt that it concealed the secret of vitality, and therefore looked with a knowing eye upon "popular superstitions" such as the worship of the body of St. Nicholas and of St. Andrew, in Bari and Amalfi respectively. In Naples a clot of the blood of St. January liquefies every year during the mild season, when the phial in which it is sealed is shaken amid scenes of wild communal invocations -- alchemists were interested in such phenomena as craftsmen. Alchemical recipes for rejuvenation were based on the possibility of obtaining the supreme, "holy" balsam from the body, therefore patients were drastically purged and even snake's poison was administered to them -- just as metals were dissolved and distilled. Patients were supposed to skirt death -- their hair, nails and teeth had to fall, their skin was supposed to scale off. An author of the late XVIII c., Le Breton, informs that the condition induced by the elixir was similar to sleep-walking to to mania -- or rather to the state of one who faces death in a quiet disposition of mind. Then the oils were supposed to ooze out.

Alchemists were constantly experimenting with all the means of preservation in the vegetable and animal kingdom. Van Helmont relates that the use of burping sulphur to preserve wine, led him to experiment with oil of sulphur as a medicine and an embalming substance, since, he remarked, blood is the wine of our life. George Starkey picked up the idea and went one step further: he

discovered that it transformed meat into a "mumial balsam".

Alchemists felt that they alone could unravel a mysterious passage in the Gospels, when Jesus announces: "Where the corpse shall lie, the eagles will gather." Van Helmont explained that noble eagles would not be attracted to a carrion, but would certainly detect from a distance the magnetic presence of an oily balsam.

A recent author, Larcher, has suggested that this oil contained the pure philosophic sulphur of the alchemists. He recalls that a Jesuit in Naples in 1627 experimented mixing the bones and the clotted blood of St. Pantaleo with the oil exuded from the body of St. Nicholas. The mixture mysteriously boiled and blended (the resulting substance is still kept in the cathedral of Bari). This would correspond to the typical opus of alchemy. Larcher even suggests that the liquefaction of St. January's blood is due to an alchemical transmutation.

The alchemists thought that the body has the latent possibility of producing or releasing the life-giving and, in certain cases, glorifying substance, like certain trees produce balms capable of preventing decay, and like the metal-producing earth has, given certain conditions, the capacity of producing gold, in which the inner balance is unshakeably stable.

Since this phenomenon was frequent in saintly men, the conclusion appeared obvious that death is not natural, but caused by sinfulness. In our present state the oil is the result of a holy disposition and of excruciating pain, of the very pangs of death, but this must be the consequence of a fall.

To alchemists the Christian dogma of the natural immortality of Adam, of the divine restorative energy that prevented in him illness and old age, was a verifiable fact.

### The Nature of Light

The eye should be riveted to those special moments in which the divine life-giving energy becomes tangential to the human level, in which the insertion of that energy in a visible body is openly revealed, when primal matter, the salt of life, is seen working unhampered on animal tissues. Alchemists felt that this divine energy showed an intelligence and an imagination, the very kind of intelligence and imagination they were bent on acquiring. They identified it with the essence of light. Al Ghazali speaks as an alchemist when he says that light can be applied only metaphorically to anything that is not God, the Creator and the Sustainer.

Man subsists because this light, in its pre-visible form, imparted heat and motion to the pupil-like black spot, the punctum saliens of the embryo, and ever since uninterruptedly descends from the realm of pure energy into the heart, energizing it. Fludd explained that light, this heavenly bread, gathered in the aortal artery, whence it was apportioned out to the various winds or moving spirits of the body, from the highest intellectual ones to those of the will, that resemble the heavenly waters of the outer world, and finally to those that attend to the functions of the body -- and resemble the lower waters of the outer world. These rise up, are distilled, then refined back to their purest condition by the perpetual backwards and forwards motion through the labyrinth of plaited and interwoven threads of the circulatory system. In the spark of light and life, in the heavenly bread that cooks and distills the earthly bread -- the lead-like mass of food in the body, turning it into golden blood and finally absorbing it into itself -- an alchemist must be at work. He, the invisible supreme Alchemist, is concealed in blood as in his choicest medium, but from it he exhales, becoming the spirit of man, man's inmost self: Inner Light. To this Scriptures all over the world allude. The Chandogya Upanishad talks about the small man in the secret chamber of the heart, where the essence of the cosmos is hidden. St. Peter expresses the same idea, talking about "the man hidden in

the heart, incorruptible.....a quiet soothing spirit". This Man within man is the One substance mentioned by the Emerald Tablet, thanks to whose adaptations and conjunctions all things are born. He is invisible. Light is in itself invisible, and for the alchemists the Sun was in fact black. Its rays sparkle when they hit the terrestrial slime carried by the winds. That is why heat diminishes as one rises higher above the earth. Sunlight penetrates the suspended slime and uses it as its vehicle, turning it into philosophic mercury. Sunlight behaves like sulphur, and is called, when it joins the slime, philosophic sulphur. The word sulphur is in Indo-European a compound of suel and plos: liquid sun.

### Light into Earth

The union of mercury and sulphur forms the salt of life, the life-giving good earth. Earth should be taken -- in this context -- in the sense of Rumi's verses:

"The earth is the warp and weft of thy body,  
What holds it and fixes it together."

This "earth" or "sperm of life" hovers over us in the atmosphere. Up in the sky, when warmed, quickened and fermented by friction, it releases its sulphur and the sky is streaked with lightning. Otherwise, this grace or salt of life descends as gentle rain or dew into the soil. Rainwater and dew were among the substances most used by alchemists, who extracted, especially from the latter, a powerful solvent and a medicine. Dew in Sanscrit is rasah and rseen means spermatic. From the same root comes also arsenic. This in fact is the primal product of the "sperm of life" when it is trapped in a crude, venomous soil. Other types of soil turned the "sperm" into antimony which was in the eyes of the alchemists of a somewhat similar nature. The nethermost point reached by light in its descent into the bowels of this world was realgar. From these extremities of crudity, the soul of light could be extracted and turned into a most powerful medicine.

In the bowels of the earth the spiral of light combines with the various soils to form the different metals and stones, up to gold and rubies. Thus loop upon loop the spiral of Light unfolds: everything is a gradation of light. Rumi wrote:

"The beautiful sun is linked  
to the embryo in the womb,  
lends sparks to steel, ripens fruits,  
strengthens the heart, changes stone to gold!  
By hidden means, remote from our senses,  
the sun in heaven has many ways  
in the heart of the mountain  
of making the ruby red."

It is the perfect balance of the components of gold and of rubies that interests alchemists, and they seek to capture the agent that achieves the miracle. In fact from all substances the alchemist endeavours to release the life-enhancing soul of light, to extract the particle of light that works each body into its proper shape, in other words, in pure form.

All this was comparatively easy with plants. One squeezed out their juice and kept it in a phial in the dark so that the light of the plant was prevented from joining the light of the atmosphere. Once fermentation had set in, the spirit or alcohol of the plant was extracted and utterly purified. It was called the sky of the plant because it burned with an azure flame: Paracelsus called it alcohol because it was the subtle essence, like the powder of antimony, "kohol", is the subtilised mineral. With an intense heat the oils were extracted from the phlegm of the plant, whose hot and moist soul they vehicled. In the third phase, the residue was calcinated, distilled, recalculated until it became a white salt. The three parts of the plant were then reunited, and formed the stone of the plant, that contained its triadic form detached from its matter, in its most

projective state, as a ferment -- incalculably more effective than the plant in its natural, unpurified state.

The alchemist is the redeemer of nature, that appears to his eyes as imperfect and ailing. What else can the Zoroastrian Gathas or the Epistle of St. Paul mean, when they speak of suffering, moaning nature that depends on the redemption of man to be redeemed in her turn?

The sacrifices of bread and wine in various religions became eloquent in the light of alchemy, that considered the two processes of brewing and baking as a killing respectively of the soul of the grape by its spirit, and of the spirit of bread by its soul. Reuniting the spirit and the soul in the sacrificial cup, one intimates the procedure of alchemical purification. Bread and wine are the flesh and the blood of the Cosmic Man.

### The Method for the Extraction of Light

One should carefully examine the alchemists' assertion that minerals and metals had first to be killed and then resurrected in glory, that the primal task was to dissolve their bodies in a solvent. I think it should be taken to mean that the bodies had to disappear entirely in their menstruum. There are many receipts for various kinds of menstrua (one prescribes a purification of saltpetre and vitriol with water -- this water was reduced to its salts, which were calcinated and then distilled into an essence that extracted the essence of metals; another receipt starts from germinating wheat, which is steeped in rain water, and then dried, boiled, and distilled -- its residue is a burning lye, from which a pure water is extracted; another receipt, for the menstruum of antimony, starts from ammonium chloride, which has to be sublimated into crystals, which are macerated in pure alcohol, and distilled). Such menstrua were supposed to "extract the essence" of the metals and minerals. This meant in the first place that the metals and minerals as such were no longer ponderably present. Paracelsus explains that oils are to be distilled from metals "until the metal disappears", and then the oil has to putrefy and the viscous product must become white, further to be dissolved first in wine and next in water.

The Hindu treatise, the Rasarnava, is even more explicit. Mercury mixed with juices of many plants is distilled seven times, then mixed with copper and again distilled until no trace of copper-like or tin-like properties is left. Then the product is mixed with vitriol, alum, borate and alkalis until it finally disappears. At last we have "dead" mercury, in which there no longer remains any sign of mercury's moistness, mobility, sheen, weight, volatility: and yet into this new substance the form of mercury has been impressed. The explanation of this material disappearance on the one hand and formal permanence on the other we find in the Dhyānabindupanishad which says that the 100,000th part of a grain of rice is its soul, and that the 100,000th part of the soul is the Lord of the universe, whose 50,000th part is the Supreme Self, and still further beyond lies the Absolute. One is reminded of Wheeler's present day theory of the geometry of spaces inferior  $10^{-16}$  cm. (0.0000000000000001 of a centimetre), in which space as such develops an energy superior to that of nuclear fission.

Alchemists thought that by processing substances according to their prescriptions the form was preserved and its energy heightened more and more as one proceeded with the dilution, beyond the disappearance of all ponderable traces.

One of the legends alchemists were most fond of repeating and very often had sculpted in their homes, tells of the Sybil, who offered a Roman Emperor her book of secrets; the Emperor refused to pay the price she asked, so she destroyed half of the book and doubled the price. The story goes on and on, until the Emperor pays an enormous price for a minimal fragment.

Hahnemann, the founder of homeopathy, worked along the lines of alchemy, though he never acknowledged it. Most of his writings seem to be an echo of Paracelsus. The fundamental idea of homeopathy is that illnesses are factors preventing certain spirits in the body from functioning properly, and that the disturbing factor and the illness must be of an identical nature. That man contains every thing in nature, and that we become irritated by external things because they lie outside us, had on the other hand already been among the basic teachings of Boehme's alchemy.

Hahnemann started by noticing that in scarlet fever the symptoms are the same as in belladonna poisoning. To use Boehme's jargon -- Saturnine Belladonna attacks the saturnine functions of the body, preventing our inner Saturn from drying and cooling the tissues. The symptoms of the poisoning and of scarlet fever are therefore the same. Small doses of the herb will nourish, excite Saturn's functions, but strong ones will overwhelm and paralyze Him. The same agent harms and heals. Hahnemann experimented on himself that half an ounce of quinine a day causes the symptoms that small doses cure. Hahnemann thought that the law was extensible to all fields of being. He gave the example of military bands. The approaching thuds of enemy battalion paralyzes with fear, but a similar beat of our drums emboldens; we feel exhilarated when our fifes reproduce the whimpering of frightened whelps.

Hahnemann adopted from alchemy the idea that substances should be killed. He diluted them until they ceased to materially exist. But he claimed that, precisely at this point, their formal properties were heightened, the substance having left its form, its imprint in the solvent. This has always been the stumbling block of homeopathy, though evidence in favour is not so very hard to come by.

Charles Darwin, when studying the carnivorous plant *drosera rotundifolia* that exudes a gluten which absorbs insects, noticed that the production was inhibited by a solution of ammonium sulphate. But he further discovered that this was true even when the phosphate was diluted in a proportion of 1 to 20,000. He wrote to his friend Donders that this made him sad.

Fish that swim in groups, homeopaths point out, tend to place more space between each other, as one further dilutes certain substances in their water. Such apologetics serve both homeopathy and alchemy. Phenomena that cannot be measured, such as the direction and speed of the molecules of water, might well carry the message, the "imprint" of the substance that was diluted in the water and has materially disappeared. Many facts in biochemistry remain inexplicable unless one accepts homeopathic-chemical premises. The cells that produce antibodies must possess some kind of imprint of the free antigens which their antibodies destroy by fitting into them like keys in a latch.

In recent years a most delightful "alchemical" riddle has set physicists wondering -- the strange behaviour of certain alloys of nickel and titanium, and eventually also of cobalt, of gold and cadmium, and even of manganese and copper. A coil of one of these alloys is heated to a given degree and subsequently refrigerated and extended to form a straight line -- when it is again heated, at a degree slightly inferior to the previous one, it coils back into the identical spiral. Where, how, was the memory of the past form stored?

Another of Hahnemann's procedures I suspect of alchemical origin, the rhythmical shaking of his medicines. Borrichius gave a prescription for the extraction of the sulphur or oily soul of gold: a veil of powdered gold "shaken" for a long time and then heated in a retort, will yield red drops of oil. I suspect Norton's Ordinal of Alchemie is suggesting something about the uses of rhythm in the lines:

"Joyne your Elements Musically

For two causes, one is for Melody:  
Which their accords will make to your mind,  
The true effect when that ye shall finde  
And also for (.....) Harmony."

Besides actual "shaking", the number of circulations in the alembic might also have been a means of imparting a certain influence of the substance.

A survey of the common elements between homeopathy and alchemy may end with a small but meaningful detail. In accounts of transmutation it is related that the adept always throws his transmuting powder onto the mineral or metal, taking care not to touch it with his hands. The very same precaution is used with homeopathic pills.

If alchemy is a form of homeopathy it becomes clear why plates and vases of alchemically treated material impart their properties to the content, or why mineral waters containing alchemical forms effect a rejuvenation.

The first document of Chinese alchemy refers to the first phenomenon. *Ssu Ma Ch'ien* relates that a warlock approached the Han Emperor *Wu Ti* saying: "Sacrifice to the oven and you will learn all about the gods. Summon them and you will turn cinnabar powder into yellow gold. With such gold you will make vases to eat and drink out of. Thus you will prolong life and see the immortals."

In Buddhist doctrine the idea of such vases and drinking goblets produced the symbol of the Chintamani. In European esoteric literature it gave birth to the Holy Grail that turns victuals into the supreme nourishment and is therefore the true monstration.

As for alchemical spas, one is mentioned in the Gospels, the pool of *Pethesda*. Only once a day a physically inexplicable quivering motion of the water showed that a medicinal essence was present in it. It was therefore said that an angel had stirred the surface. Only the first person that took a plunge, at that very moment, was cured.

Such pools existed also in England. The Historia Regum Britanniae informs about "mystical stones in which one bathes".

### How to Decode Alchemical Texts

I have dwelt on the preliminary condition, total empathy. This may not solve the problem of the texts.

The general frame of reference is metaphysics, and since all religions are based on metaphysics, which is their transcendent meeting-ground, any religion may be used to formulate alchemical truths. Theological idioms are all suitable vehicles of the alchemical tradition. This is obvious in Islam. It could be easily proved of Zoroastrianism. It is evident in Hinduism and Taoism. Also Buddhism can expound alchemy in its own terms, and we find clear proof of this in the Kevaddha Sutta and the Agganna Sutta, in which the substance beyond the elements and the luminous precosmic Man are dealt with.

Alexandrian chemists speak in terms of Egyptian mythology, and during the Renaissance the habit of couching alchemy in ancient mythology was revived. In Byzantium alchemy became Christian. Up to the XVIII century it was explained in terms of Christian theology. Especially the creation of the world in Genesis was interpreted as an alchemical opus. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil carried fruits containing burning sulphur and corrupting humidity or mercury, and after eating them, Adam, who was golden, suffered the fate of gold that is poisoned by the fumes of lead. He had been created out of dust (aphar), which was interpreted as the powdered sulphur of gold (ophir). A golden body was needed to redeem him, and Mary was the result of a pure semen of red earth, of an alchemical semen dropped on her leaden womb, whereby a transmutation of the flesh took place: an immaculate conception. The Virgin was the philosophic mercury or solvent of bodies, as Isis had been in ancient

Alexandria. That the Mass was on the other hand an alchemical opus was a widespread notion in the XVII c.. But besides metaphysics and religion alchemists used puns and riddles and picture-puzzles, and even playful deceits and cryptograms. They sometimes practised a sort of pictorial shorthand writing, as when Aries, the first month, stands for the primal matter. It is a sort of "intentional language", like the language of Tantra (samdhabhava), in which monkey stands for mind, and crocodile for lungs, because the latter is slow and the former swift.

We have in alchemy the same admixture of idiosyncratic allusions and universal symbolism as in Safavid rugs, bordered with peonies (zakar), because these are written like ziker, invocation. In French alchemical texts when we read crab it might refer to a crab and to the symbolism universally connected with crabs, but it also might mean distillation or the resulting oils, since the Greek word for crab, astakos, was akin to staktos, distillation, and to stakte, oil. French alchemists in fact used false Greek etymologies to dissemble their meanings. Fulcanelli has a typical way of suggesting as much when he embarks on a funny sham-erudite defence of the jocosé thesis that French derives not from Latin but from Greek. He means of course alchemists' French. The custom must have been picked up from Jewish esotericism, in which it was common to attribute Greek etymologies to Hebrew words since the times when Philo interpreted as Greek the names of the rivers of paradise.

All this makes the going difficult enough, but when it comes to top secrets the ingenuity becomes even more subtle. When one isolates according to a certain division of space certain sections of an innocent-looking page of Roger Bacon, the formula of gunpowder results. An English wartime breaker of military codes discovered this.

### A Program

Once the data concerning the interpretation of alchemical jargons are gathered, one should select the main terms and tabulate the various clusters of words in which they are to be found. Of course only texts of an assuredly traditional character would come in for consideration. This alchemical dictionary should be founded on the texts themselves, with no interference on the part of the compilers.

After this second phase, the various dictionaries of the different traditions could be compared. At this point the greatest results would be reaped. Many secrets would then lie open, because the area covered by the law of secrecy in the various traditions is not the same. I may mention that many otherwise mysterious passages in European texts become clear when read in the light of disclosures contained in the writings of the Persian shaykhyā school. For instance the homeopathic character of alchemical preparations is well supported by the common notion of Persian alchemy, that the art derives from two particular Names of God: El Latif, the Subtle and the Subtilizer, and El Karim, the Generous. An example is commonly given of their combination in nature: an oil that dropped on the back of the hand oozes out of the palm.

Last and foremost one should seek contact with the living representatives of the alchemical tradition who might be willing to reveal, like such Masters as Ogotemmel the Dogon or Black Elk the Oglala Sioux, to persons of unimpeachable objectivity the right interpretations. Such masters may still be found in certain Asian countries.

This program defies the forces of a single researcher; only an association could attempt the tabulation of the data, the comparison of the schools, the grandiose task of a new spiritual archaeology.

## THE BALANCE OF GOLD AND SILVER

Michael Jones ◉

The world is a precipitation out of the nature of man  
- Novalis, Fragments

What we have called etheric forces are invisible forces that can only be directly perceived in the spirit, although there are indications that science may come to recognize them through their effects on the earth. The etheric forces associated with the planets can be observed through the parallels between planetary rhythms and the cycles of weather and plant growth. Light, which is translucent, has a more direct effect on the life of the earth. When light is concentrated into a point we become aware of it as a source of light, illuminating the darkness, casting shadows, and reflecting back from objects. It is clearly in something of a middle realm between visibility and invisibility and can be considered as somewhat denser than the entirely invisible etheric forces of the planets. Unlike the planets, the sun has densified its etheric stream into light, which provides the material matrix into which all substances are woven. Cosmic forces are radiated from the bounds of the universe and mediated by the planets to produce a great variety of incipient substances. They are then materialized by the light of the sun and finally densified by the earth.

All this took place in ancient times when the mineral earth was first condensing out of etheric forces like water 'condensing' into ice. Only a memory of these life patterns is preserved in the rhythms of the present planetary system. However, there is one earthly substance that has not been formed out of the etheric streams coming from the depths of the cosmos but represents only the densification of sunlight by the earth; and that is the metal gold. Gold was not interwoven by the planets. Other substances have their origin in the depths of space; were interwoven by the planets, differentiating their structure; then carried into further densification by light, finally being transformed into matter on earth. Gold does not come from the depths of the cosmos, but is a direct densification of sunlight by the earth. Although coarser than the planetary etheric streams light had a fructifying and vivifying effect upon the dense earth forces and at an early stage in evolution brought about all kinds of life-forms on earth, pushing the evolutionary process along too swiftly. The tempering influences of the planetary etheric streams were not strong enough to transform all the light pouring from the sun before it was gripped by the earth. The direct sun forces began to bring substance into a self-sufficient balance, which would have been a backward step in evolution and something that should be reserved for the distant future. Gold was secreted by the earth in an attempt to heal and neutralize the sun forces that threatened to speed evolution towards a premature conclusion.

Gold reveals its backward nature in its reluctance to enter into chemical relationships with its fellow elements -- its 'nobility'. Whereas most substances are bound in the form of compounds, gold is distributed in the rocks of the

earth but remains itself. It is often found close to the surface of the earth because the rocks about it are worn away by weather while gold remains resistant to change. Many qualities of gold indicate its relationship to light -- its colour for instance -- but perhaps its 'separateness' speaks most eloquently of its kinship to the sun and to the 'little sun' in man -- his ego. The ego in man is his own individual spirit and separates him from his environment. Man can only speak the word 'I' for himself. It is in this separateness that the ground of freedom is given; just as the sunlight makes individual objects visible so that we can distinguish things, the ego allows us to know for ourselves.

The ether stream from the sun enters earth directly in the substance gold, and indirectly in the other earthly substances which have passed through the planetary interweaving. Because of the failure on the part of the planets to temper and transform this direct stream an imbalance is set up in nature. The gold stream would have tended to make the earth less and less able to achieve chemical relationships between the elements and created an increasingly dense, impermeable planet. More matter would have been pushed down below the threshold of lead (atomic number 82) until it began to break up in radioactivity. The earth is like a cup that receives forces from the cosmos and transforms them into substance that can support life, but there is a limit to what it can carry. The separation of the moon -- the creation of a new planet -- removed the densest elements to another sphere where their activity could become rhythmical. This was also a process of transformation, for by moving into another sphere -- into the moon -- their whole nature was changed. A new etheric current was set up from the moon and, working in opposition to the sun current, gave rise to the metal silver on earth, a sign of the restoring of equilibrium to the life of nature. The moon has no light of its own but reflects the sunlight to earth in rhythmic change.

Unlike gold, silver is rarely found in a pure state although it is often found with gold. Most of the silver on earth is found diluted in the sea where it perhaps acts as a receiver for the tidal influence of the moon. Its mirroring quality is well-known, and its ability to form and re-form compounds under the influence of light is the basis of photography. Whereas homoeopathic gold works medically on the bloodstream -- the physical basis for the ego in man -- silver tends to dull consciousness and is used in the regeneration of the reproductive processes. Silver here reveals its connection with sex, a powerful force in bringing people into relationship and the maintainer of the laws of heredity. It is as if silver is a kind of tamed and transformed gold, forming a new connection with light and entering into a deeper bond with the evolving earth.

Gold and silver represent a polarity in the etheric world, the densifying and individualizing gold stream is opposed by the lively rhythmic and selfless stream of etheric silver. An insight into this polarity is echoed, albeit in a rather materialistic form, in Occult Chemistry by Leadbeater and Besant. They claimed to have clairvoyantly traced two 'ultimate atoms' in the spiritual world as the basis of all substances. Both 'atoms' are vortices of forces and, like our silver and gold, one reflects a flow back to its spiritual source while the other replenishes itself. According to the authors a hydrogen atom contains eighteen of these 'ultimate atoms' while the heavier elements contain many more, organized in chains. However, the background of the two ether streams into which the planets and stars weave the light of the minerals is not detailed in their work.

Rudolf Steiner alluded to the departure of the moon from the main body of the earth as bringing about a balance between the sun and the remaining earth. He also made it clear that not all the harmful elements were removed with the moon but that some remained behind acting in a sense as trespassers and parasites with a baleful influence on the earth. I believe we are justified in naming the finely distributed radioactive materials as part of a sphere that

remained behind -- a sphere of over-abundant sun-forces which the earth was unable to bring to rest as gold and which plunged downward into densification. Their very heaviness gives them away as belonging to the extreme end of nature and their quality of radioactive decay destroys life, interfering with the processes of reproduction and heredity. They represent that part of the meeting between sun forces and earth forces that could not be tamed by the earth and made productive for evolution and they still exhibit characteristics of an intense activity belonging rightfully to another sphere. It is interesting that many naturally occurring elements contain very small amounts of a denser isotope indicating that the 'left-behind moon' has spread its influence widely. It is only through man that these substances have been concentrated and new elements forced from them of an even greater density and instability.

The ancient miners who brought metal ores up out of the earth and treated them in their furnaces thought of the metals as seeds planted in the earth by the gods. The furnace was a type of womb in which the metal seeds could be made to develop. An eighteenth century writer has formulated this way of thinking:

What Nature did in the beginning we can do equally well by following Nature's processes. What perhaps Nature is still doing, assisted by the time of centuries, in her subterranean solitudes, we can make her accomplish in a single moment, by helping her and placing her in more congenial circumstances. As we make bread, so we will make metals. Without us, the harvest would not ripen in the fields; without our millstones the corn would not turn into flour; nor the flour to bread by stirring and baking. Let us then co-operate with nature in its mineral as well as its agricultural labours, and treasures will be opened up to all.

Today we can perceive a kind of anti-womb or death chamber in the reactor when the seeds of the left-behind moon substances are unnaturally subjected to further densification and loss of 'inner heat'. Instead of working in a reverent harmony with nature, men are working against it. What takes place in the reactor is reversing the will of evolution. Through artificial nuclear fission densification continues on earth without any corresponding spiritual sacrifice. This process is expressed in the substances themselves and also in our social life in the tightening of security and centralization of power and the apparent justification of materialism that arises through seeing energy released from matter. Man's enlargement of and relinking with the 'left-behind' moon sphere in the earth undermines the equilibrium of nature, and its proliferation demands from him the creation of a counter-current of equal power.

This article is extracted from Michael Jones' recently issued book - NUCLEAR ENERGY : A Spiritual Perspective. Floris Books, 21 Napier Road, Edinburgh. Paperback 104 pages £2.75.

## AN HERMETIC ORIGIN OF THE TAROT CARDS ?

### A CONSIDERATION OF THE TAROCCHI OF MANTEGNA

Adam McLean ©

It has become almost universally accepted as the received wisdom of the Western esoteric tradition that the Tarot card images embody a system derived from the Jewish Kabbalah. This view seems to derive from the mid-nineteenth century French Occult Schools, and particularly was promulgated by Eliphas Levi and later incorporated through Westcott, Mathers and Waite in the teachings of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn from which our twentieth century tradition of occultism has been derived. Other esotericists have even tried to link the Tarot images back further into Egyptian iconography and suggest that the Jews may have received this esoteric system during the time of their stay in Egypt. In part this association of the Tarot with Jewish esotericism lies in the fact that there are 22 major arcana cards in the modern Tarot pack and this parallels the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet, which lies at the heart of the Kabbalistic system.

I would, however, like us to pause and consider for a moment, before we return to the established view, the implications of the regrettably neglected early Tarot pack, the Tarocchi of Mantegna. This is one of the earliest known Tarot or Tarocchi packs, being dated to c.1465, contemporary with the Visconti-Sforza deck of the mid-fifteenth century which is recognised as the earliest Tarot. (Some authorities suggest that the Tarocchi of Mantegna may be earlier than the Visconti-Sforza.)

Little is known of the Tarocchi of Mantegna and what we do know entirely contradicts their name. They are wrongly attributed to Andreas Mantegna (1431-1506) the painter and printmaker of the School of Padua, and rather are seen as emanating from the School of Ferrara. They are not a "Tarocchi" pack in the true sense of that technical term, and they are not cards but a set of prints. Kenneth Clark, the well know art historian of the Renaissance, attributes them to a Parrasio Michele, Master of the School of Ferrara. They consist of a set of 50 finely executed engravings divided into five decades, which could be characterised as :- 1 The Archetypal Social Stations of Humanity ; 2 The Nine Muses and Apollo ; 3 The Liberal Arts ; 4 The Cardinal Virtues ; 5 The Heavenly Spheres.

The symbolism of these cards, or perhaps we should say "emblems", would seem to derive from the Hermetic tradition which is now recognised as underlying the Italian Renaissance of the mid-fifteenth century. It was during this period that the Platonic Academies of the Medici's were set up and Ficino and other scholars began translating texts such as the Corpus Hermeticum and the works of Plato, some of which were brought to the Court of Florence from Constantinople by Gemistus Plethon (c.1355-1450), a Greek Scholar who was probably an initiate of a "Platonic" Mystery School in the East. This reconstruction of hermetic and neoplatonic esotericism is reflected in such ideas as the Muses, the Liberal Arts, the Cardinal Virtues, and the Heavenly Spheres, and it is my view that the Tarocchi of Mantegna should be seen as an emblem book of this hermetic current. The fact that its designs show parallels with the later Tarot decks should therefore be of the greatest interest both to students of Tarot and of Hermeticism.

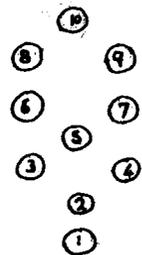
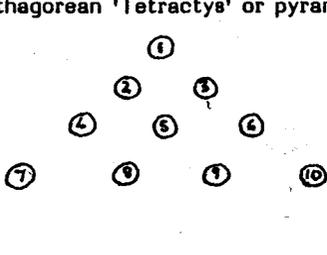


The first decade shows us a sequence reflecting the state or condition of humankind, from the lowly beggar to the Pope. These are :-

- |                        |           |
|------------------------|-----------|
| 1 Beggar               | 6 Knight  |
| 2 Servant              | 7 Duke    |
| 3 Artisan or Craftsman | 8 King    |
| 4 Merchant             | 9 Emperor |
| 5 Gentleman or Squire  | 10 Pope   |

There is in this sequence both a reflection of the social conditions of humankind and also the stages of an inner development, from the lowly 'beggar' state of soul, to the fully spiritualised 'Pope' facet of the soul.

Interestingly, these fit well onto the tree of life diagram corresponding to the sephirot quite tightly, but can also equally well be tied symbolically to the Pythagorean 'Tetractys' or pyramid.





The second decade consists of images of the nine muses and Apollo. These Muses preside over certain arts and instruments of these arts.

Calliope	'Beautiful voiced'	epic poetry and eloquence	Trumpet stylus
Urania	'Heavenly'	astrology	compass and celestial globe
Terpsichore	'she who loves dancing'	lyric poetry and dance	lyre or cithera
Erato	'arouser of desire'	Erotic or Love poetry	tambourine
Polihymnia	'many hymns'	heroic hymns Mimic Art	lyre or Portative organ
Thalia	'the festive'	comedy and pastoral poetry	violin mask of comedy
Melpomene	'the singer'	Tragedy	horn mask of tragedy
Euterpe	'giver of joy'	music and lyric poetry	double flute
Clio	'giver of fame'	history	scroll
Apollo			

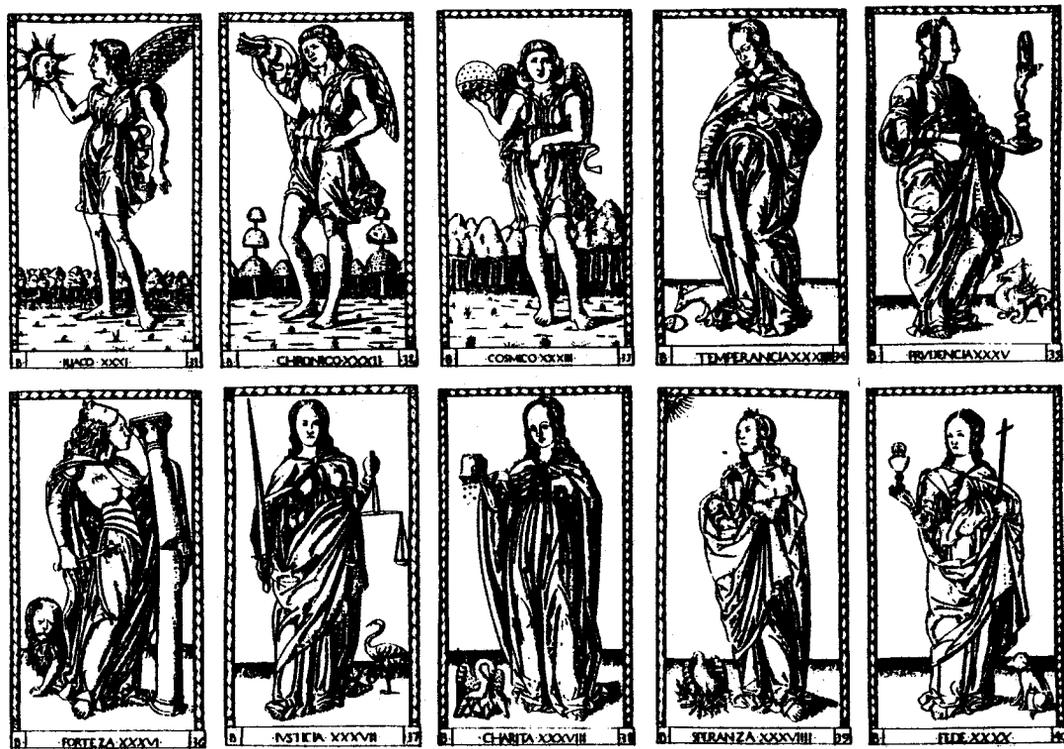
This group represents the archetypal sources of creative inspiration for the soul, and these muses work in the realm of the imagination. The soul can draw upon these ten different inner spiritual resources for its inspiration and transmutation.



The third group consist of the Seven Liberal Arts with the addition of Poetry, Philosophy and Theology to bring the number up to ten. The Liberal Arts lay at the basis of Scholasticism and consist of the Trivium of Grammar, Rhetoric and Dialectic, which trained the mind in the use of language, and the Quadrivium Geometry, Arithmetic, Music and Astronomy, which four constituted the domain of Medieval science. Each of these bear a symbol

Grammar	File and Vase
Logic	Veiled Dragon
Rhetoric	Sword
Geometry	Circle, Square, Triangle
Arithmetic	Coins or counters
Music	Flute
Poetry	Flute and a Vase
Philosophy	Arrow and Shield (Athene figure)
Astrology	Sphere of Stars and pointer (Angelic figure)
Theology	Sphere of Heaven and Earth (Androgyne figure)

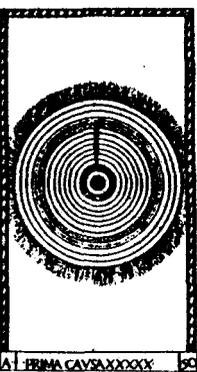
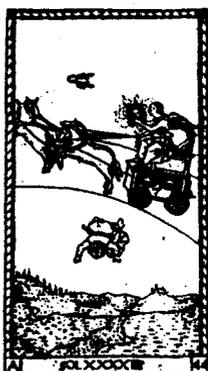
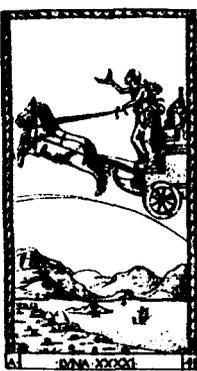
This group are the archetypes that work behind human thinking.



The fourth decade consist of the Seven Cardinal Virtues appearing as female figures together with Three Spirits (or Genius') of Life (or the Sun), Time and the Cosmos, these being shown as male Angels, each carrying a symbol. The seven Cardinal Virtues also have animal figures beside them.

Iliaco	Sun disc	
Chronico	Ouroboros Dragon	
Cosmico	Heavenly Globe	
Temperance	Two vases	Dog, Cat, weasel, or stoat-ermine
Prudence	Mirror	Dragon
Strength	Sceptre	Lion
Justice	Sword and scales	Crane
Charity	Wallet, offering charity	Pelican
Hope	in attitude of prayer	phoenix
Faith	Chalice and Host	Dog

These represent that which works in the higher soul of humanity as the virtues dwelling in the conscience. As the aspiring soul develops towards inward perfection, rising to an awareness of the the spiritual genius behind the life force (the Sun), Time and Space, then there will inwardly develop from the seed of conscience rooted in the soul, the Virtues, which will unfold and grow from within to express themselves in ones outer actions.



The final decanate is that of the heavenly spheres - the seven planets and the three higher spheres each having a symbol.

- |               |                     |                                       |
|---------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Luna          | Moon disc           |                                       |
| Mercury       | Flute               | Caduceus with two intertwined dragons |
| Venus         | Seashell            | Cock                                  |
| Sun           | Sundisc             | Ducks                                 |
| Mars          | Sword               | Scorpion Crabs                        |
| Jupiter       | Arrow (thunderbolt) | Dogs (hunting)                        |
| Saturn        | Scythe              | Eagle                                 |
| Eighth Sphere | Starry Disc         | Ouroboros                             |
| Prime Mover   | Empty Sphere        |                                       |
| First Cause   | Cosmos              |                                       |

This represents the highest spiritual principles working as the planetary forces behind all the aspects of the world.

To summarise		
The First Decade	Stations of Humanity	Archetypal powers in the outer world of humanity externalised in social forms
The Second Decade	Muses	Archetypal powers of in the imagination of humanity, expressing themselves in artistic creation
The Third Decade	Liberal Arts	Archetypal powers in human thinking expressing themselves in the patterns of human thought
The Fourth Decade	Cardinal Virtues	Archetypal patterns in the conscience of humanity expressing themselves in the inner development and spiritual refinement of the soul
The Fifth Decade	Cosmic Spheres	Archetypal patterns in the Cosmic order expressing themselves in all facets of the universe

So we have here the cosmic spheres of the fifth decade representing the Macrocosm and the first decade being a kind of reflection of this in the Microcosm, while between these two polarities are found the Muses, Liberal Arts and Cardinal Virtues, the channels through which the soul experiences the archetypal powers lying behind its feeling, thinking and willing, and can thereby develop its imaginative, intellectual and spiritual gifts. This reflects the Renaissance ideal propounded in the Neoplatonic academies which inspired artists, writers and musicians, and brought great works of the creative human spirit into being which transformed the outer restrictive social forms of the medieval period and gave a new impulse of freedom to the spiritual seeking of humanity.

So it should be obvious that these cards and their symbolism arise out of a Neoplatonic and hermetic current, but they should not be seen as entirely limited symbolically to this period or set of ideas. For this very early Tarocchi of Mantegna designs, through reflecting this hermetic system of ideas also may have provided the archetypal forms for some of the later and more familiar Tarot packs. We note certain obvious parallels.

Mantegna	Modern Tarot	Mantegna	Modern Tarot
1 BEGGAR	FOOL	36 FORTEZA	STRENGTH
3 ARTISAN	MAGUS	37 IUSTICIA	JUSTICE
8 KING	HIEROPHANT	43 VENUS	THE LOVERS
9 EMPEROR	EMPEROR	44 THE SUN	THE SUN
10 POPE (Note that the Pope here appears female)	PRIESTESS	45 MARTE	THE CHARIOT
27 POESIO	THE STAR	46 JUPITER	THE WORLD
34 TEMPERANCE	TEMPERANCE	47 SATURNO	DEATH

So could it not be that our present day Tarot cards should perhaps be seen as arising out of the Hermetic ideas at the foundation of the Renaissance, rather than from the Jewish Kaballah? I believe this view requires indeed demands some attention, even though it might upset the established and engrained ideas of twentieth century occultism.

## THE SECOND LITTLE WORLD

Andrew Mouldey ©

Understand that thou art a second little world and that the sun and the moon are within thee, and also the stars.                    -Origen (1)

The phenomenology of religion seeks to understand rather than to explain, to see rather than to judge. Through a procedure known as 'epoche' or 'bracketing' the researcher suspends normative and ontological assumptions so as to attain a disciplined empathy with the phenomena he is investigating. By avoiding the two bugbears of reductionism and theological exclusiveness he is able to approach a ritual, myth or an entire symbolic universe on its own terms.

Few scholars would deny that phenomenological method has brought a Copernican revolution to the study of religions, but there is one consequence of this development about which they are understandably cautious. The endeavour to comprehend archaic or exotic religious values tends to have a transformative effect on the researcher. In other words the phenomenology of religion is itself religious. As Mircea Eliade has pointed out:

.....a considerable enrichment of consciousness results from the hermeneutical effort of deciphering the meaning of myths, symbols, and other traditional religious structures; in a certain sense, one can even speak of the inner transformation of the researcher, and, hopefully, of the sympathetic reader. What is called the phenomenology and history of religions can be considered among the very few humanistic disciplines that are at the same time propaedeutic and spiritual techniques. (2)

To many scholars such a claim is of questionable orthodoxy. To go further and suggest that the transformative effect of phenomenology could lead to the rediscovery of the Hermetic view of life smacks of heresy. Yet Eliade has shown the vision to entertain this possibility. In 'Images and Symbols' he writes that the history of religions might enable modern man to recover the anthropomorphic symbolism of his body and so obtain:

.....a new existential dimension, totally unknown to present day existentialism and historicism: this is an authentic and major mode of being, which defends man from nihilism and historical relativism without thereby taking him out of history. (3)

The doctrine of correspondences between man and the cosmos is a fundamental premise of the Gnostic-Hermetic world picture. In this paper I will be bringing phenomenological method to bear on this idea and, hopefully, sharing with the reader the "enrichment of consciousness" this line of research has brought to me.

The symbolic correspondences between different levels of the cosmos, that are self-evident to archaic man, seem arbitrary in our post-Renaissance civilization. As Eliade has shown, the world is a cipher for archaic man that "speaks" or discloses itself to him through symbols. These symbols not only

reveal other dimensions of reality to him, they also unify his experience of them. For example, the symbolism of the moon "reveals a connatural solidarity between the lunar rhythms, temporal becoming, water, the growth of plants, the female principle, death and resurrection, human destiny, weaving and so forth." However this correspondence "between the various levels of cosmic reality and certain modalities of human existence" becomes evident "neither spontaneously in immediate experience nor through critical reflection. It is the result of a certain mode of 'being present' in the world." (4)

From a microcosmic perspective it is not only the world that is a cipher, but man, as a universe in miniature is himself a cipher. The duality of subject and object, man and world is replaced by the unity of world and world. By regaining the image of man as microcosm it is possible to break free of the inexorable dualism postulated by Cartesian philosophy. This is indeed an entry into "a new existential dimension", but this situation has yet to be specified phenomenologically. Accordingly I will follow the usage of Henry Corbin and call the microcosmic mode of being "imagination".

For modern man, with his autonomous ego, the imagination offers little more than a digression; yet if he could regain the image of himself as a microcosm he would cease to daydream and begin to imagine in the true sense of the word. (5) Such imagining is the basis for a spiritual discipline which, as Corbin has pointed out, requires a sacred cosmology:

Unless we have access to a cosmology structured similarly to that of the traditional oriental philosophers, with a plurality of universes arranged in ascending order, our imagination will remain out of focus, and its recurrent conjunctions with our will to power will be a never-ending source of horrors. (6)

As long as man retains the subject-object split, his imagination will be "out of focus"; only when he is free of this dualism does it become possible to enter the dimension Corbin calls "the mundus imaginalis". While the imaginary is the product of an alienated ego in a state of daydream, the imaginal is an ontological dimension of existence. In Iranian Shi'ite mysticism this realm is called the celestial earth of Hurqalya, the "world in which spirits are corporealised and in which bodies are spiritualised."

The theosophists of Iran locate Hurqalya between the world of Platonic forms and the world of the senses. Man is able to enter this intermediate realm by means of a faculty that is "independent of the physical organism and able to continue to exist after the latter has disappeared." However the mode of operation of this subtle organ cannot be understood in terms of the subject-object dichotomy. "Consciousness and its object are inseparable" (8) in Hurqalya and imagination and perception are two aspects of a single act. The "object" is wholly constituted in consciousness, as in imagination, but it subsists independently of the conscious subject as in perception. This act of cognition-imagination could be likened to an agent in the crystallisation of imaginal entities.

On the level of empirical consciousness imagination and perception are distinct acts, but as the subject and the object of cognition converge in the unity of a microcosmic mode of being imaginal reality is constituted in the soul and man is able to perceive things in Hurqalya.

The kind of sacred cosmology that Henry Corbin expounds will be familiar to readers of the Hermetic Journal. To conclude I would like to correlate Corbin's "static" conception with Jung's "dynamic" view of the same reality. While Corbin thinks in terms of a cosmic hierarchy, Jung considers the imaginal from the point of view of the individual's inner life. However this distinction should be regarded as indicating no more than a difference of emphasis (10).

According to Jung the archetypes are the structural principles of the psyche. Yet they are rooted in the body's materiality so that "the deeper layers of the psyche lose their individual uniqueness as they retreat further and

further into darkness." As the archetypes merge into the autonomous functional systems they become increasingly collective until they are extinguished in the body's carbon. "Hence 'at bottom' the psyche is simply world." (9)

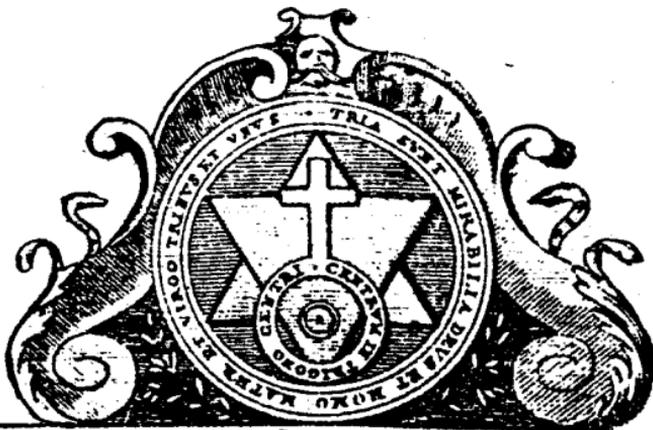
Corbin's cosmology follows the hierarchy in the opposite direction as it ascends into the Orient of Light. But this is not all; Jung maintained that the further the "layers" of the psyche recede from ego consciousness in either direction, the more time and space become relativised. As the hierarchy rises it enters a realm of timeless light that is finally extinguished in the One that is beyond time and duality. From a gnostic perspective this non-dual principle is infinitely removed from the subterranean depths of the collective unconscious. The latter are wholly immanent, while the former transcends even the Orient of Light. (11)

As "a second little world", man encapsulates the entire cosmic hierarchy within himself. Yet to understand this, in the way Origen advocated, is a lifetime's occupation. Here the phenomenologist is bound to ask about the mode of being implied by this realisation. Jung would have answered in terms of "wholeness" of the realisation of the Self (12) and Rene Guenon spoke of "the primordial state". However it is important to qualify this correlation; wholeness, in Jungian psychology, is the culmination of the individuation process while the primordial state is only the first stage of metaphysical realisation which ultimately transcends all conditioned modes of being.

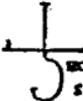
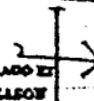
Because phenomenology is, by definition, concerned with what is manifest (i.e., phenomena) these higher states exceed its range. For the metaphysician ontological levels beyond formal manifestation are his proper concern, in phenomenology they must be regarded as a borderline concept. Accordingly I intend to present a phenomenology of the primordial state, in a later paper; a condition which, as Rene Guenon has said, is our eternal birthright.

#### Notes

- (1) Cited in C. G. Jung, *The Psychology of the Transference*, Collected Works, 16; pg.197.
- (2) Mircea Eliade, *The Quest*, University of Chicago Press, 1969; cited in the preface.
- (3) Mircea Eliade, *Images and Symbols*, Sheed & Word, 1961; pg.36.
- (4) Mircea Eliade, 'Methodological Remarks on the Study of Religious Symbolism', in *The History of Religions: Essays in Methodology*, eds. Eliade & Kitagawa, University of Chicago Press, 1959; pg.99.
- (5) Cf. James Hillman, *The Myth of Analysis*, Harper, 1978; pg.86:- "From alchemy.....we have been given distinctions between false and true imagining, which, so it was said, goes from the heart to the heart of the universe, the sun, and thence to the macrocosm."
- (6) Henry Corbin, *Mundus Imaginalis*, Golgonooza Press, 1976; pg.18.
- (7) Henry Corbin, *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth*, Princeton-Bollingen, 1977.
- (8) Corbin, *Mundus Imaginalis*; pg.14.
- (9) C. G. Jung, *The Psychology of the Child Archetype*, Collected Works, 9 (i); pg.173.
- (10) I owe this distinction to R. T. Wallis who applies it to Plotinus in his *Neoplatonism*, Duckworth, 1972; pg.5.
- (11) For this important distinction see Henry Corbin, *The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism*, Shambala, 1978.
- (12) See C. G. Jung, *Collected Works*, 18; pg.695-6:- "The realisation of the self also means a re-establishment of man as the microcosm, i.e. man's cosmic relatedness."
- (13) See Rene Guenon, 'Oriental Metaphysics', in *The Sword of Gnosis*, ed. Jacob Needleman, Penguin Metaphysical Library, 1974; pg.40-56.



רוחאלתים


 MORTI MAGICI INGRESSVM HESPERIVS CVSTODIT DRACONE  
 SIVE ALCIDR COLCHICAS DELICIAS NON CVSTASSET LASO 

MAJDOVTORIB  
 SIBI CORVI  
 METVRESTATAM  
 COLCHICAT  
 TVVOCAREZZ  
 SAPIVVS

DRACONE SPER  
 VITAE GEMVLL  
 CERVE ORBIS  
 SIVE GIBS TRAVV



QVI SCIT  
 DONOVREAS APT  
 ET LAPARS INVE  
 FACIT DE TERRA  
 CEEVM  
 ET DE CAELOTR  
 PARTITIONAM



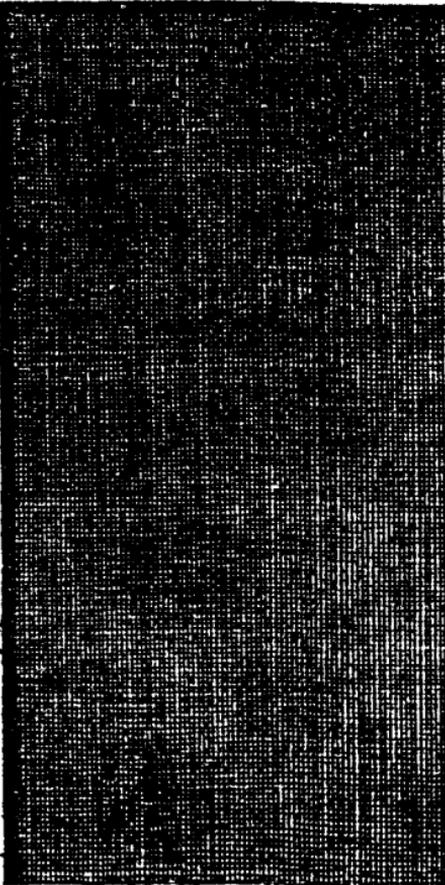
VI FICIONVLEAM  
 TERRAM CVPER  
 CAPVT TVVM  
 SIVE PERNIS  
 SIVE HESPERIVS  
 COCVICTR SIVTA



ALOVPT MOVIS  
 DEAL BANDO  
 MAZOFAN VEVRE  
 SIVE VAVREBLA



PLVS HORTER  
 SIBVVS CIVT  
 METAS HET ALIV  
 ET O-STVCTO  
 GAVINET TVCVI



SI REDES NOV YI

USI QVVS OCCVLTVM VERT  
 VT GERMINET



SOPHI APERIRE TERRAM  
 SALVTM PRO POPVLO

## AN ALCHEMICAL GATE IN ROME

Adam Mclean ©  
with the assistance of Fabrizio Marulli

A few months ago, one of my Italian subscribers, Fabrizio Marulli, was kind enough to bring to my attention a little known Magical or Alchemical Gate in Rome. I was immediately fascinated by the existence of this carved stone gate or portal and asked Fabrizio Marulli for further information. He most helpfully prepared a translation from Italian of the relevant sections of a small book 'La Porta Magica Di Roma' originally written in 1915, but recently (1979) reprinted. The author of this book, Pietro Borgia, was initiated into an occult brotherhood or magical academy, the Fratellanza Magico-Terapeutica di Myriam (The Magico-Therapeutic Brotherhood of Myriam) which was founded by the famous nineteenth century adept Dr Giuliano Kremmerz.

The book describes a number of carved epigrams found in the Villa Palombara, which was built by a 17th century student of Alchemy and esotericism, the Marquis Palombara. This villa in Rome stands between the Via Merulana and Piazza Vittorio Emanuele, and it is in this Vittorio Emanuele Square that the Magical Gate (originally opening into the Palombara estate) can still be found. Many people still pass it by unknowingly, as the square is occupied by an open air market which conceals the gate itself.

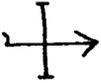
The gate is of great interest both historically and symbolically, and bears upon it the signs of the planets and a number of alchemical inscriptions. It is thus a quite unique and important alchemical monument, and can be dated to 1680. There is a considerable amount of historical information given in the Pietro Borgia book, concerning the personalities involved in the esoteric group that built this alchemical gate, however, for this present article I shall just concentrate on the symbolism of the gate itself. I hope to be able to have a future article on the historical aspects, as they undoubtedly have a bearing on the influence of alchemical and especially Rosicrucian ideas during the late 17th century.

The carved stone gate bears the signs of six of the planets on its jambs - on the right, Jupiter, Venus and the Sun ; on the left, Saturn, Mars and Mercury - while the Moon crescent is shown on the door step itself. There are ten inscriptions carved on the frame. Above the lintel of the door, and forming a portico or pediment, can be seen an elaborate symbol of interlaced triangles, which has a definite Rosicrucian origin.

This symbol was originally published as the frontispiece to the Parabola or Golden Tract Concerning the Philosophers Stone by Hinricus Madathanus Theosophus, an anagrammatic pseudonym for the Paracelsian physician Hadrianus a Mynsicht (c.1590 - 1638) who had definite connections with the Rosicrucians.



This is a statement of the first stage or regimen of the process, in which the matter descends into saturnine NIGREDO, symbolised in Alchemy by the Black Crow or Raven. Only when this nigredo stage is inwardly digested and overcome and the blackness give birth to White Doves, can one be said to have achieved anything in the Great Work.



The next stage is that of Jupiter, seen of the right jamb. The text there says, "THE DIAMETER OF THE CIRCLE, THE TAU OF THE CIRCLE AND THE CROSS OF THE ORB, ARE OF NO USE TO THE BLIND".

In Pietro Bornio's book, there is an interesting commentary on this epigram in which he outlines the alchemical symbols arising out of this description  $\odot$  (Saltpetre) or  $\ominus$  (Salt), and  $\oplus$ ,  $\otimes$ , and  $\ominus$ , as substances symbolic of various processes. Without the key to these symbols, one is as if blind. This second (or Jupiter) stage thus involves us becoming aware of the esoteric significance of symbols and thus being able to recognise these processes as they appear in the work. Unless we are able to see the spiritual in the material, then we will not be able to proceed beyond this stage in the work.



The next regimen is that of Mars on the left jamb. here is seen in Latin "HE WHO KNOWS HOW TO BURN BY WATER AND TO WASH BY FIRE, MAKES HEAVEN OUT OF EARTH AND PRECIOUS EARTH OUT OF HEAVEN".

Here a paradox is put before us, "washing by fire, and burning by water". Only by the alchemist getting beyond the outer appearance of the Elements and becoming aware of the subtle forces behind these Elements can he make progress through this stage. It is the inner nature of the Elements that are to be worked with here, and not their outward form. Through these chemical processes of burning by water or washing by fire, can the spiritual be incarnated or the earthy spiritualised. In physical Alchemy, burning by water, often refers to the action of a strong acid or alkali on a substance, while washing by fire refers to purification through repeated sublimations or distillations. There are, of course, analogous processes in Soul Alchemy.



The Venus Stage follows as the fourth and here we are told "IF YOU MAKE THE EARTH FLY ABOVE YOUR HEAD, YOU WILL TRANSMUTE THE WATERS OF TORRENTS INTO THE STONE FROM ITS (THE EARTH'S) FEATHERS".

To get through this stage we have to so spiritualise the earthly substance that it is transformed into a subtle substance so purified of its earthly nature that it rises into the air. In terms of Soul Alchemy, we are able at this stage to free ourselves of outer earthly connections and are thus inwardly free to soar consciously into the spiritual. the 'waters of torrents' here probably refer to the ever-flowing chaotic primal energies in the soul which can be made into a solid foundation, a Stone, in the soul, by working with the feathers of the purified earth i.e. the spiritual principle that makes the earth fly.



The following stage is that of Mercury, where the text reads, "IF THE AZOTH AND THE FIRE WHITEN LATONA, DIANA WILL COME NAKED".

Azoth was to the Alchemists that which unites the first and last (A and Z, Aleph and Teth, Alpha and Omega). It was thus the principle that ties and weaves together spirit and matter. We can identify this as a formative structural element in the Soul which when enlivened and energised by the fire of enthusiastic life energy, can work upon the LATONA. Now, Latona to the alchemists was an impure, unresolved stage of the work. Latona was an imperfect body composed of Sun and Moon  $\odot \text{ } \ominus$  (thus the fusion of these two in the Mercury symbol  $\text{☿}$  of this stage), though not properly integrated or resolved. (In Classical mythology Latona was the Mother of Apollo  $\odot$  and Diana

)). This Latona is spotted, speckled with black or sometimes red. When Latona is purified then the perfect White Stone of the Moon is born, so this stage produces the White Stone or Tincture.



The sixth and penultimate stage is that of the Sun. The text has, "OUR SON, WHO WAS DEAD, LIVES. THE KING COMES BACK FROM THE FIRE AND ENJOYS THE OCCULT MARRIAGE".

Here the masculine principle, the King, is reborn in the substance of the Alchemist's work as the Red Stone or Tincture, echoing the Lunar Stone of the previous stage. These two highly purified principles must unite together 'enjoying the occult marriage', the inner union of the opposites. (We note the symbols ♀ and ♂ are partly upside-down reflections of each other.



The final stage corresponds to the Moon, and the complex symbol surrounding the Lunar crescent unites the Martial, Venereal, Saturnine and Jupiterian symbols. The text says, "IT IS THE TRUE SAGES OCCULT WORK TO OPEN THE EARTH SO THAT IT WILL BEAR HEALTH FOR PEOPLE."

This is the end or aim of the Alchemist's work. If he does not aim for this he will undoubtedly fail. Only if he is motivated to seek to open the secrets of the material world for the purposes of bringing health and healing to others, will he be selfless enough to succeed in his task. If, instead, he is motivated not primarily to help others, but to seek glory or worldly wealth through Alchemy, then he will not succeed.

On the Threshold of the Alchemical Gate is a Latin statement which reads forwards, SI SEDES NON IS, 'If you stay, you don't proceed', and backwards, SI NON SEDES IS, 'If you don't stay, you proceed'.

Thus we see this impressive Alchemical or Magical Gate in Rome with distinct Rosicrucian connections, eloquently expresses in stone a picture of the alchemical process seen as taking place through seven stages corresponding to the planets. It bears within its symbolism the ideal of the Rosicrucian Alchemist who uses his alchemical wisdom for the benefit of humanity as a whole.

Further, the symbolism of this Gate is especially connected with the allegory of the Parabola or Golden Tract of Hinricus Madathanus. For in this allegory, the central figure, a young man seeking enlightenment and initiation into a Brotherhood of Adepts, comes in his inner journey to a gate which leads into a Magical Garden. He was able to open this gate with a special key and once inside the Garden meets with a maiden and a youth who are to be joined in an alchemical marriage. The young prince dies and melts into the body of his beloved who also dies. The hero of the allegory has to bring them back to life again through his alchemical skill. Firstly, through his art the young Queen is reborn, then finally the King. In the closing scene of the allegory, this reborn King and Queen show the adept their precious gifts for restoring the natural powers and for the recovery of health for all the people of their kingdom. We see quite clearly the stages of the allegory parallel exactly the symbolism of the Gate.

The group of esotericists who built this gate and the associated epigrams around the Villa Palombara certainly continued the Rosicrucian tradition in Rome at the end of the 17th century. One question remains unanswered. What exactly did lie on the other side of this Gate, when it was in use ? A Magical Garden, a place of Rosicrucian initiation ?

## THE SCHOOL OF GERONA RESTORING AN ANCIENT KABBALISTIC CENTRE IN SPAIN

Adam McLean ◉

At this moment in North Eastern Spain in the Catalan town of Gerona, Jose Torres with a small band of helpers labours to restore the old Jewish Quarter and to revive interest in the Kabbalah by establishing a Centre for Kabbalistic Studies, under the name The School of Isaac the Blind. A documentary programme on the work of Jose Torres and the historical links of Gerona with the Kabbalah, researched and presented by Patrice Chaplin and produced by Margaret Wyndham, was recently broadcast on Radio 4 in the United Kingdom. This programme intrigued and fascinated me and made me look closely at the early Kabbalistic Schools in Spain to see what lay hidden in its history.

What emerges is that there was an important School of Kabbalistic Studies in Gerona in the 13th Century, centred around the mystic and Kabbalist Nachmanides (Moses Nahmanides 1194-1270) held in high regard in Kabbalistic tradition under the title 'The Ramban'. (Only the greatest of Kabbalistic teachers were awarded such titles). This School of Gerona in turn derived from the Kabbalistic School in Provence hundreds of miles to the north, inspired by Rabbi Abraham ben David of Posquero (1120-1198) named 'The Raavad'. This Provence School worked with the mystical ideas that were externalised at this time as the Sepher Bahir, one of the most profoundly mystical and obscure of early Kabbalistic books. The Bahir, in a sense, reflects an influence of Gnostic and Neoplatonic ideas upon Jewish esotericism. Such ideas were taken up and developed further by the son of the Raavad, Isaac the Blind, who worked in Provence with two pupils, Rabbi Ezra and Rabbi Azrael, both of whom came from Gerona. These three established a stream of mysticism that was passed on in turn to Nachmanides in Gerona who developed it to its fullest intensity.

Thus we can identify a School of Kabbalistic mysticism working together the Jewish esotericism of the Mercavah and Heckhalot mysticism, with Neoplatonic and Gnostic thought. These Neoplatonic and Gnostic streams already existed in Spain through the influence of the Arabic scholars, and Spain at that time (11th - 13th Centuries) was a place where Arabic, Jewish and Northern European Scholars could meet and exchange ideas. It was the time and place where Eastern and Western esotericism wove together a new synthesis of mystical and spiritual impulses which was to manifest outwardly in the sudden development of Hermetic Alchemy, in the hermetic memory systems, as the inspiration behind the Western symbolic tradition which came to fruition shortly after this period, and in the 'Sephiraic' or new Kabbalah that appeared in Europe.

The School of Gerona was central to this process, not that we should see it as profoundly eclectic, but rather that it opened the way to a universalising of Jewish esotericism by cross fertilising it with other mystery streams, so that a new impulse could arise. These Jewish scholars in Provence and later in Gerona, lived in a foreign country, within small Jewish communities, rather than at the centres of Jewish orthodoxy. Just as they had to adapt their outward customs

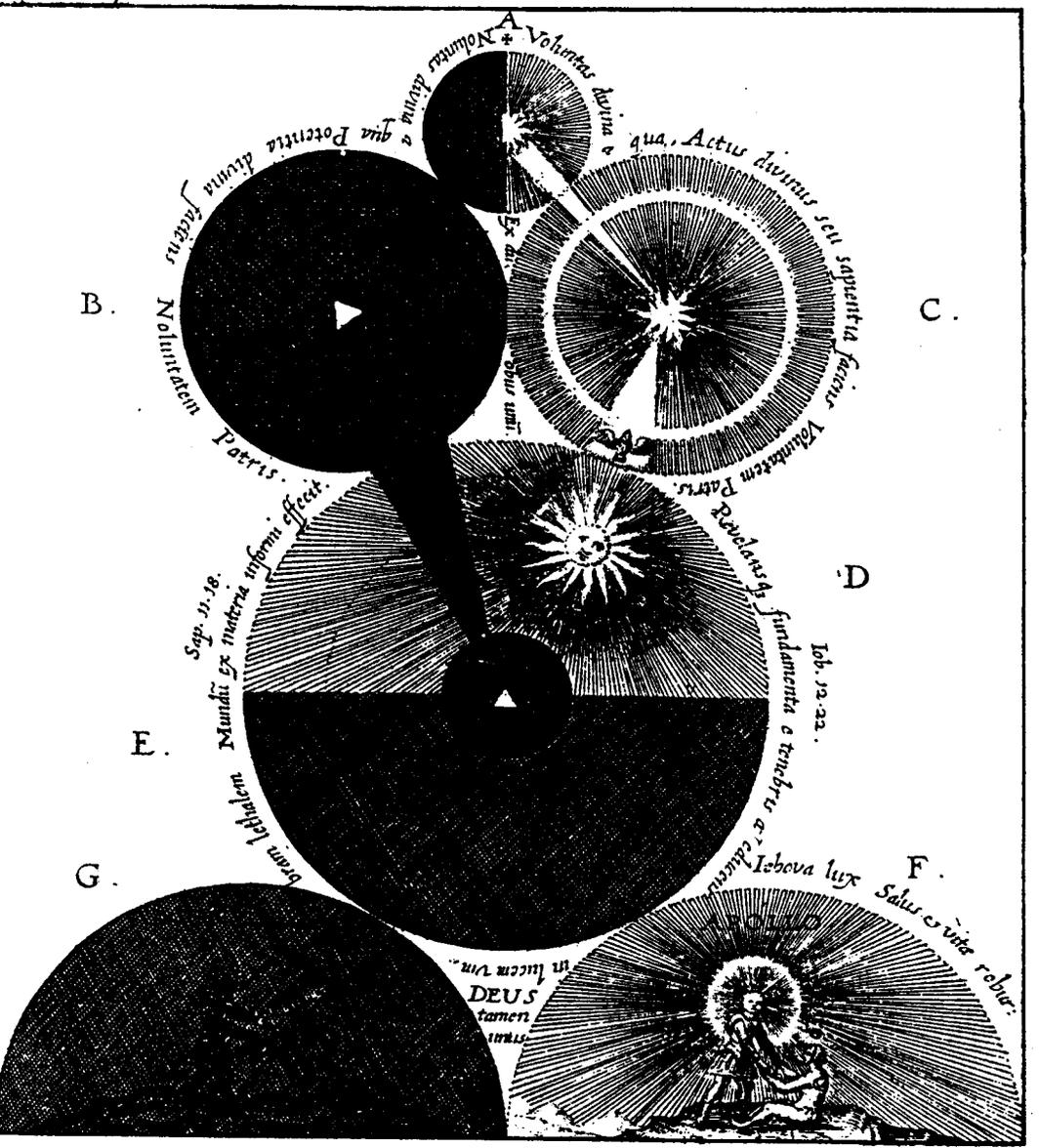
and social habits and learn to live alongside Christians and Moslems, so this openness to outer society also was transferred into the realm of ideas. Thus these sensitive mystical Jewish scholars opened themselves to the other mystery streams of the West and what arose from this cross fertilisation was a profound outpouring of esoteric knowledge, made visible in the publication of the Bahir and later the Zohar. Through the work of Gersholm Scholem it has become widely accepted that the naive view of the Zohar, as an early book of Jewish esotericism dating to the 2nd century AD, is no longer supportable. In his 'Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism' Professor Scholem convincingly demonstrates how the Zohar arises out of the background of 13th century Spain, and that one does not need to go back earlier to a supposed 2nd century source to account for the material in the Zohar. Indeed, there are many inaccuracies in the text indicating that a 2nd Century manuscript source is untenable. Instead, we have to see the Sepher Ha-Zohar arising from the pen of Moses de Lion (1238-1305) also working in Northern Spain during the late 13th Century. Scholem shows that the Zohar arises out of this cross fertilising of various esoteric streams in 13th Century Spain, and particularly through the activity of the School of Gerona and Nachmanides.

The interweaving of mystery streams gave new mystical insights and impulses and (like hybrid vigour in plants) produced an outpouring of a new system or codification of Jewish esotericism in the light of Gnostic and Neoplatonic ideas. This particularly was seen in the 12th century Bahir and the 13th Century Zohar, which are in fact the true sources of Kabbalah in the West, rather than the ancient Jewish esotericism. During this period the doctrine of the Sephiroth as spheres or emanations out of the Ain Soph was fashioned, which we of course recognise as the central motif in European Kabbalah. The undoubtedly earlier Sepher Yetzirah, while referring to the 'Sephiroth', uses this term in the sense of 'Numbers' rather than of spheres or emanations. The ultimate source of the modern Kabbalistic doctrine of the Sephiroth seems to lie in 12th and 13th Century Provence and Northern Spain, and one of the main channels for these mystical ideas was Isaac the Blind. (Rabbi Asher, writing a century later, goes so far as to refer to Isaac as the 'father of Kabbalah'.)

Perhaps it is time that esotericists recognised the fact that it is naive to say that the Kabbalah we have known in the Europe for some hundreds of years, is necessarily the hidden or spiritual 'tradition' behind the Jewish religion, and how often we see that view expressed in the opening pages of popularist books on the subject. The major Jewish theologians do not recognise this Kabbalah as authentic, and ideas such as the Sephiroth, the Ain Soph or the Shekinah, are of little interest to them. It is possible to be a learned and spiritual Rabbi and not to have any grounding in European Kabbalah, indeed even to reject it as nonsense. Jewish spirituality has other channels than the European Kabbalistic system. Rather we should perhaps see the source of the Kabbalistic system of ideas as lying in early medieval Spain, in the meeting and interweaving of Jewish, Gnostic, Hermetic and Neoplatonic Mystery streams. It was from this same melting pot that the Alchemical tradition of northern Europe was born, and the ideas underlying the Ceremonial Magic of medieval and Renaissance times. In a sense, the three facets of the Hermetic tradition, Alchemy, Kabbalah and Magic, are three streams outpouring from this period in Spain, reflected through the three facets of the human soul. Thus Alchemy is the mystery art and science for transforming our feelings, through meditation upon symbols and working with matter ; Kabbalah is the inner mastery through a mystic immersion in the intellect, providing a path to spiritualising our being through thinking ; while Magic is the tinging of the soul through reaching out and encountering spiritual beings by the exercise of the forces bound up in our inner will.

Thus I begin to grasp what impels this man Jose Torres to work incessantly against great odds, trying to overcome prejudice, indifference and opposition, with little support either from Spanish officialdom, archaeologists or the international Jewish community. He has sunk all of his own personal funds into this project. It might seem an anachronism to be restoring the old buildings of the Jewish Quarter of Gerona where Nachmanides and his disciples lived, or to try and set up a School for Kabbalistic Studies, but Jose Torres has perceived something very real and valuable that inspires him and drives him on. For Gerona is the centre from which the Kabbalah as we know it emerges, and it is also a symbol of the source of the Kabbalah in Europe.

I do wish Jose Torres every success in his work. Perhaps by restoring and reactivating the energies of this old mystery centre something may spill over into the outer world, a little gleam of light that might touch our souls and have us look at the profound spiritual wisdom of various traditions woven through many centuries into the Kabbalah.



Voluntas divina

Actus divinus sui sapientia faciens

Voluntas faciens

Noluntatem

B.

C.

Patris

Revelans fundamenta a tenebris et caliginibus

D.

Mundi ex materia informi facti

Sap. 11. 18.

Iob. 12. 22.

E.

Iehova lux

F.

Salus est vita rebar

G.

DEUS tamen in lucem veni

This illustration from Robert Fludd's *Mosaical Philosophy* is a mandala seeking to unite inwardly the duality of light and darkness. These have often been used to picture the polarities of the light of goodness and the darkness of evil, the spiritual light and the earthly darkness. The "Devil" seen as an antithesis of the light emanating God is often pictured as inhabiting a dark realm. We have seen in this Alchemical Mandala feature, how the alchemical tradition was open to polarities but not to dualism. Alchemists saw polarities as creating energy and dynamism in the soul, and recognised them as opposites that emanated from an original unity into manifestation. Indeed, an important part of the alchemical work was to unite the polarities in an inner marriage or conjunction of the opposites.

Robert Fludd shows us in this mandala, a sphere at the top, half dark-light (the left side is significantly the dark half), in which the light and darkness are united together. It is the primal source of light and dark. Darkness is seen not merely as the absence of light, but a quality in itself. Light is the willing or Volunté of the Divine, while Darkness is the realm where the will of the Divine either has not permeated or has withdrawn, the Nolunté of God. These two are, however, united on the highest spiritual level, the right and left hand of God.

On a first level of manifestation these two facets separate into two realms (ex unius duabus) - a dark realm on the left and a light filled realm on the right. The dark sphere has the text "Divine Nolunté, from which the Divine Power performs the Nolunté of the Father". Thus this darkness is the primal chaos or dark prima materia, the web, dark fabric or matrix of universal space. It emanates from the Divine by his Nolunté, ie by his withdrawing his will from it, but it has its own inner being. This is pictured by the  $\Delta$  at the centre, the reflection of the trinity in darkness (perhaps also, the waters in the darkness below, which were separated from the light of the waters above, in the Genesis picture). The realm on the right is centred upon a raying out of light from the centre to the circumference. The text has, "Divine Volunté, through which the Divine act or wisdom performs the Will of the Father".

The central space of the mandala shows a new synthesis where the light and dark spheres, formerly polarised and separate, are brought into a relationship. This occurs by the light sphere now manifesting as the Sun circulating around the dark realm, on this level incarnated as the inner body of the Earth. This realm is thus divided into a light and dark half through the alternation of day and night. The descent of the light sphere into the body of the Sun is seen as a descent of the Dove of the Holy Spirit, while the Dark Sphere condenses to turn into the Earth body. The text around this (from Job) has "God revealed the foundation of the world out of darkness, and He discovereth and bringeth forth into Light the deadly shadow." However, God remains still one "Deus tamen unius", and the spiritual can be found through either realm.

The two lowest hemispheres show the dark realm of the DIONYSIAN Mysteries and the Light realm of the APOLLONIAN Mystery stream. These are the two archetypal means of becoming initiated and thereby conscious of the spiritual. Through the Gate of Dionysius we penetrate into our inner darkness, and by an encounter and coming to terms with the passions of our inner earthly nature, become more spiritually aware. The Gate of the Apollonian stream lies through elevating our consciousness towards high ideals, to the heights of light filled inspiration.

This mandala shows that to perceive both the Volunté and Nolunté of the highest spiritual, one must work through both these channels. Merely to work with one facet would be to separate the realms and become stuck on the first level of manifestation (spheres A and B). We must work through both spheres to be able to rise to the full vision of the Divine in sphere A. I have chosen to read this from above downwards, though another view can be had by reading it from below upwards.

A LOOK AT ALCHEMICAL TRANSMUTATION  
FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF FUNDAMENTAL PHYSICS

Adam McLean ©

As I have indicated in the pages of this journal before, there is much for the hermeticist to learn from the developments in modern science and particularly from fundamental physics, and we must remember that alchemists were at the forefront of the scientific developments of their own times.

That the recent confirmation, by an international research team at CERN (the high-energy physics laboratory in Switzerland) of the existence of the Intermediate Vector Bosons the charged  $W$ -particles discovered in bubble chamber photographs in Jan 1983 and the  $Z^0$  in May 1983, should be of great interest to the readers of an esoteric Journal, might seem to some of my readers as if I am putting the obscure before the arcane. But if you will bear with me a moment perhaps I can arrest your interest and share my enthusiasm for the implications of this discovery, for it leads to something close to the heart of Alchemy, and possibly a new understanding of the transmutation of the elements.

These particles  $W^+$ ,  $W^-$  and  $Z^0$ , were till now merely hypothetical entities called Intermediate Vector Bosons, predicted by a theory of sub atomic particles that unites the Electromagnetic Forces with the Weak Interactions.

So what, one might say, is the relevance of this obscure theory? Well, the electromagnetic forces are mediated by particles or quanta called photons, and these forces are responsible for many of the phenomena of the world we are directly familiar with. In particular, the electromagnetic forces are responsible for, and the mechanism through which, chemical changes take place. The re-organisation of chemical bonds, the way in which substances change in the test tube, are entirely through the activity of electromagnetic forces.

The Weak Interaction on the other hand is much more obscure, but perhaps it can be seen best in Radioactive decay. The processes by which various different forms or isotopes of the chemical elements change into one another, are controlled by the Weak Interaction. In a sense, the Weak Interaction is the Alchemical force that changes one element (and nucleus) into another.

These two forces have up till now been thought of as working within separate domains, and being completely independent of each other. However, physicists theorised that if the intermediate vector bosons existed then the weak forces could be seen as a special case of the electromagnetic interaction, and unified into one theory. Not only that, but in addition the electromagnetic and weak forces could interchange under certain conditions.

Perhaps the reader is still unconvinced that there is anything in this obscure realm for alchemists to concern themselves with. The implications of this discovery are, however, very significant, for it means that there is no fundamental reason why electromagnetic forces familiar in chemical reactions cannot under certain conditions be transformed into weak interactions. This only requires that the quanta of the electromagnetic field, the photons, transform

themselves into intermediate vector bosons, the quanta of the weak forces, and this is allowed by the theory unifying these two forces of nature. If the energetics are right, then there is no theoretical reason against the forces available in chemical reactions (which do not in fact change the atomic structure of matter only the internal architecture of molecules) appearing as weak interactions that transmute one chemical element into another. A mechanism for the transmutation by the alchemists of base metal into Gold comes suddenly into focus!

So the only difficulty lies in the energies of the forces, and not in some inherent theoretical barrier. In particular, these forces are mediated by quantum effects, which means that they will certainly come about but the probability of the electrochemical energies of chemical reactions appearing as weak interactions changing the inner structure of the nucleus will be extremely small. If there could be some way of altering the wave of probability associated with such a reaction then it could come about at a different rate. As esotericists, we recognise powers in the cosmic scheme greater than the fundamental forces of physics. These forces, as I indicated in an earlier article The Ethers and the Fundamental Forces of Physics (Hermetic Journal No. 9) are manifestations of the etheric level and the way in which it plays its formative energies into the material. Physicists in investigating these forces are in fact looking from below, from the side of matter, at the etheric super-structure of the material world. As esotericists we know there are levels or planes more subtle than the etheric-physical, and in particular the plane of consciousness lies above the etheric-physical level. It would be trite to say that 'Mind rules over matter', but let us look a little deeper at this, for physicists themselves recognise the uniqueness of the plane of consciousness in the creation of their theories, and have designed theoretical experiments which show that one cannot leave the consciousness of the observer out of account.

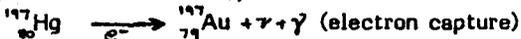
The physical-etheric structures are bounded energetically by quantum effects, and these quantum effects are described mathematically by waves of probability. If it is possible for human consciousness to affect these probability waves then it is possible for the human consciousness to alter the energetics of the weak interactions coupling to the electromagnetic forces. In other words, if an alchemist could subtly change on the plane of consciousness a probability wave (which after all is not a material thing but an abstract entity), then certain transmutations could take place. Now, it is obvious from our studies of the hermetic tradition that above all, these old sages certainly had the ability to transmute consciousness in various ways. So if probability waves can be affected by consciousness then they certainly would have the knack. The J.B. Rhine Psi-experiments at Duke University some decades ago, indicated that human consciousness could influence in a significant way the waves of probability associated with simple random processes such as the roll of dice or fall of cards. Indeed, recently some parapsychological experiments have suggested that human consciousness can affect the weak-interaction quantum process that works in the radioactive decay process of  $\beta$ -emission. This process has a probability wave which determines the rate of decay of a given sample of material. Although one cannot quantum mechanically predict when the next decay of a nucleus will take place, one can determine the probability that a certain number of such decays will take place in a given time. Some experiments indicate that human consciousness may be able to affect this pattern.

So perhaps we could look at the famous 'base metal into gold' transmutation of the alchemists and see if there is any way this can be reconciled with, or given a mechanism acceptable to our present day understanding of physical science.

So let us look at processes allowable and acceptable to any scientist nowadays. We have initially to explain the term isotope. The chemical elements

Lead, Gold, Sodium, Chlorine, Oxygen, etc., all exist in different atomic forms, having slightly different nuclear structures. The nucleus of an atom is made up of charged protons and uncharged neutrons. The number of protons entirely determines the chemical nature of the atom, whether it is Gold or Mercury, Sodium or Chlorine. The number of neutrons within the nucleus can vary without affecting the chemical properties of the atom. These different forms of each element, having different numbers of neutrons are called isotopes. Some isotopes are unstable and radioactively decay to form stable isotopes. The main mechanism for this is through the weak interaction.

With Gold the situation is quite simple as far as isotopes are concerned, there being only one stable isotope  $^{197}_{79}\text{Au}$ . This has 79 protons and  $197-79 = 118$  neutrons in its nucleus. In the case of Mercury there are 6 stable isotopes found in nature, while Lead has even more. If we look at the table of isotopes and see what happens for Atomic number 197 we find that a particular isotope of Mercury  $^{197}_{80}\text{Hg}$  decays to form  $^{197}_{79}\text{Au}$ ,



The half life of this process being about 64 hours. Thus if an alchemist could get hold of or make Mercury-197, then he need only wait around for 64 hours and one half would have turned into pure Gold, in a further three days three-quarters of it would be Gold, and so on. Of course, Mercury-197 does not exist naturally being too short lived, and would have to be made by a nuclear transformation process which would presumably not be available to alchemists of ancient times. However, their oft repeated statement "Our Mercury is not the Common Mercury" is rather suggestive. Now, today it is easy to get hold of Mercury-197 (provided one has a government license !) It is a readily available from your local Radio-chemical supplier, and is used in medical applications. Just make sure you get a fresh supply, as it turns into Gold very quickly ! (Ancient alchemists were not so lucky as to have such laboratory suppliers in every major city).

One possible method of making Mercury-197 is from Platinum (well known to the alchemists as 'white-gold'). By irradiating Platinum with alpha particles one could theoretically make Mercury-197. If the ancient alchemists could get access to a radioactive source of alpha-particles of the right energy then they could in theory prepare Mercury-197 from Platinum. This 'uncommon' Mercury would then turn to Gold. This is not the only possible route to Gold, another way would be through Lead-197 which decays through an intermediary to Mercury-197, however, all the processes in this chain involve quantum effects, and each of these quantum effects has a probability wave associated with it. If human consciousness can effect these probability waves, then the rates of reaction could be partially or even radically changed. The existence of the intermediate vector bosons and thus the coupling of the electromagnetic field to the weak interaction means that chemical energies could be 'borrowed' in quantum sense.

Particle physicists have to screen their sensitive detection apparatus from cosmic rays raining down from above. Some of these cosmic rays are exceedingly active particles, being nuclei of carbon and iron travelling at speeds very close to that of light (probably fragments of supernovae explosions). Such high energy particles crashing into an experiment in a flask or crucible, could provide the extra energy that would allow certain transmutations to occur easier. The ancient alchemists were patient people prepared to wait for just such a special moment tirelessly repeating their experiments.

If the ancient alchemists could alter the quantum characteristics of these material processes, there is now with the discovery of these new particles no theoretical objection or obstacle in physical science to say that they could not have turned Lead or Mercury isotopes into Gold.

URANIA : CEREMONIAL MAGIC OF THE GODDESS by  
Olivia Robertson, Cesara Publications, Clonegal Castle,  
Enniscorthy, Eire. PB 66 pages, £2.75, \$5.50.

Olivia Robertson is well known as the organiser of the Fellowship of Isis, an international group dedicated to reviving interest in the Goddess. Her latest book is a detailed description of a series of extended ritual forms that can be used when working magically with the goddess aspect. It is arranged in three parts - Cosmic Magic, Elemental Magic and Planetary Magic. Under Cosmic Magic, she uses two Goddesses Inanna and Neith as the representative archetypes of Space and Time respectively. In Part Two, Elemental Magic, she shows us how to work the Sun Magic of the Life force through the Oracle of the Goddess Kundalini, the Moon Magic of the Tides through the Oracle of the Goddess Artemis, and the Earth magic of Transformation through the Oracle of the Goddess Hertha. The Planetary Magic invokes the energies of the planets through the Goddess forms - Mars through the Morrigan, Venus through Lakshmi-Vishnu, Mercury through Sophia, Jupiter through Hathor, Saturn through Astarte, Uranus through Sarasvati, and Neptune through Ngame. The rituals are very detailed even including instructions on the right music to be used at points in the planetary workings. They also balance the polarities using Magicians and Enchantresses in different roles within the workings. Of course, although it would be marvellous to make all the different coloured magical robes and the special symbolic equipment, and find enough similar-minded people to undertake such rituals, this is impractical for most people. However, the rituals are so evocative and well described that they could be used as the basis for a series of inner meditative exercises in which one builds up an inner picture of the ritual working.

THE SIGN OF THE DOVE by Elizabeth Van Buren. Neville  
Spearman, 1983, 186 pages, illustrated, £6.95.

This book left me quite breathless as it rushed me through a mass of material spanning many millenia in a sentence, from ancient Sumeria, to our present age, back through the time of the Crusaders and the Templars, to the pyramids of Egypt, on again to the Merovingian Kings, tracing symbols and historical patterns. The authoress has written three other books, Rainbow Round the Sun, Lord of the Flame and Secret of the Illuminati, which if read together will help us to grasp the whole picture she is presenting to us. Elizabeth Van Buren is very sensitive to the inner significance of certain archetypal myths, that are important in the soul of Western people, for example the idea of the descent of the Spiritual from above and the importance of our sense of being part of a Cosmic dimension, which today have united in the picture of the 'spacemen' from remote star-systems who involve themselves in human evolution (as in the works of Von Daniken). The idea of divine 'Kingship' and 'Priesthood' is another archetypal spiritual myth which provides the force inspiring the current research into the Priure of Zion and the Holy Blood line (Baigent-Leigh-Lincoln); the idea of the Apocalypse and the Millenium; the idea of secret orders working behind outer history. These and many other archetypal themes have been woven here into one intense book that demands that we see human evolution within a very large and powerfully drawn picture.

Elizabeth Van Buren is, of course, aware that the picture she presents will offend, annoy and repel some people, but she has steeped herself in these archetypal myths and has brought forth, not a negative destructive apocalyptic view, but a message of hope. Perhaps we can see in this book that the archetypal myths of the West bear within them powers of positivity that can strengthen the soul bowed down through the weight of the materialism of our outer western society. As we approach the end of the century there will be a number of people bringing messages of doom and despair. Whether one agrees with the details of Elizabeth Van Buren's thesis or not, we must admire her positivity and I hope that esoteric writers can catch this kind of mood and seek to reveal the sources of inner strength and soul power that are woven into the Western myths as part of our inherited collective unconsciousness. The last decade has been one of the negative repression of the soul. If humanity collectively could touch on the inner power of soul transformation in these myths then the next decade could instead be one of elevation and enobling of our soul's energies.

THE GOLDEN DAWN : Twilight of the Magicians by R.A. Gilbert. Aquarian Press 1983, 144 pages, £3.95.

The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn was the cornerstone of all modern occultism, but from the very moment of its foundation in 1887 its true nature and even its history have been the subjects of fierce debate. A great deal has been written on its history, rituals and influence, but much of the tale remains to be told. In this clear and concise account of the Order the story is brought to completion. For the first time the the Order's Historical Lecture (written by its founder W Wynn Westcott) is printed in full from a previously unknown manuscript. The whole text of the famous 'Anna Sprengel' letters is given in a new translation, and the turbulent history of the Order up to its dissolution in 1914 is recounted with the aid of new material from both privately printed and manuscript sources. R.A. Gilbert is an acknowledged authority on the Occult Revival and is a secondhand and antiquarian bookseller specialising in the occult, folklore and theology. - from Publishers advance publicity notes

FAIRY TALES : Allegories of the Inner Life by J.C. Cooper. Aquarian Press, 1983, 159 pages, many black and white illustrations, £3.95

The popularity of fairy tales, and their constant appeal to all nations, cultures and ages spanning thousands of years, suggest that they have as much to teach the adult as the child through their different levels of application and understanding. But although the tradition of fairy tales appears in nearly every culture, the themes running through them are comparatively few and show a remarkable similarity all over the world. There are a number of basic and often almost identical plots, incidents and characters, the same themes appearing in early tribal lore, peasant cultures and sophisticated courts alike. This book examines these constantly recurring themes and motifs in classic fairy tales - including Cindarella, Sleeping Beauty, Hansel and Gretel, the Frog Prince and Red Riding Hood - and shows how they relate to the symbolic processes of the unconscious mind. - from Publishers advance publicity notes.