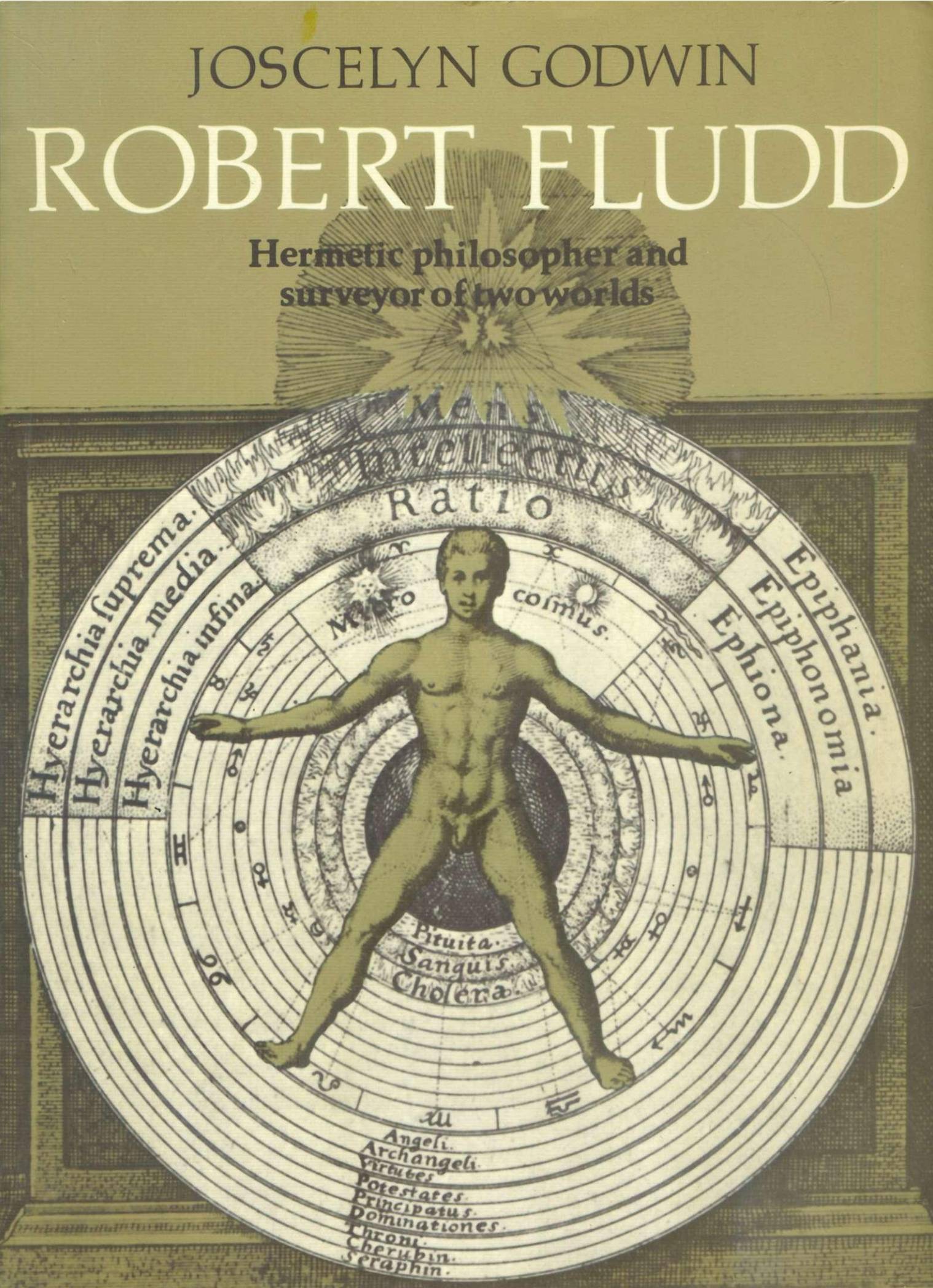
JOSCELYN GODWIN

ROBERT FLUDD

Hermetic philosopher and surveyor of two worlds



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with 126 illustrations

Thames and Hudson

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Introduction

At the start of the seventeenth century the world was still fraught with wonders and nothing seemed impossible. In December 1603 there was a conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter, the hour-hands of the cosmic clock which usher in new epochs and crumble old orders. New stars suddenly appeared the next year in the constellations of the Serpent and the Swan, and fears and hopes were rife throughout Europe. In England, the long reign of the Tudors came to an end, and from the barbarous North rode James Stuart, a weird king who loved learning and lechery, and hated witches and weapons. Britain's Renaissance, if one can so call it, had reached its zenith, and the time of 'Renaissance men' was all but past.

Robert Fludd was such a man. He lived at the very end of the era in which it was possible for one mind to encompass the whole of learning. His was one of the last attempts to do so, and he betrays something approaching despair in his endlessly elaborated plans for a magnum opus that was never finished. His goal was nothing less than to summarize the knowledge of both the universe and man – of macrocosm and microcosm – and the relations between them. How different his vision must have been from the common one of our own time; in place of an infinite material cosmos expanding in all directions beyond hope of description, he could envisage one that passed through a few well-defined regions and then terminated in the utter simplex of God. This unified vision was sundered in his own life-time by Descartes, who laid the foundation for a philosophical separation of matter from intelligence which still holds the race in thrall, thanks to the amazing results that experimental science has wrought in the physical world. Only now, in the last quarter of our century, the knowledge won through the Scientific Revolution is ready to be incorporated into a new system that again takes account of metaphysical realities. The spiral of human development is leading many people back to a world-view not so very different from Fludd's, yet (as is the way with spirals) a little more advanced. The magic of these pictures is that they remind us of the possibility, indeed the imminence, of a cosmic view free alike from the myopia of materialism and the absurdities of naïve spiritualism.

Fludd was born and bred an Elizabethan. His father was Sir Thomas Fludd, the younger son of a Shropshire family who had made his own way through a career of military administration, rising from the humble post of victualler for the Berwick-on-Tweed garrison to that of Treasurer for Her Majesty's forces in the Netherlands. For his services he received a knighthood, and retired to his home in Kent: Milgate House, Bearsted, which though largely rebuilt in the eighteenth century still retains part of the sixteenth-century building. Here Sir Thomas lived until his death in 1607, acting as Justice of the Peace, respected and esteemed by all. So much we learn from the commemorative plaque placed by Robert in Bearsted Parish Church, which also records the marriages of Sir Thomas's other children to knights and gentlefolk. One cannot help wondering what this tough and successful man of the world thought of the career and interests of Robert himself, of whom Paul Arnold says in his *Histoire* that 'his impetuous character and his thirst for knowledge far removed him from the peaceable life of a gentleman farmer'.

Our knowledge of Robert is a blank from his birth in 1574 until 1592, when he entered St John's College, Oxford: a citadel of High Church allegiance in a university that was generally Calvinistic in leanings. There

(Opposite) *Robert Fludd by Matthieu Merian from* Philosophia Sacra, *1626*

he would have known William Laud, later Archbishop of Canterbury, and Sir William Paddy, later physician to James I and a lifelong friend of both Laud and Fludd. Both were concerned for the restoration of music to its proper place in the Anglican liturgy, and Paddy later presented his college with an organ as well as with copies of some of Fludd's works. Others who may well have influenced Fludd as an undergraduate were Dr John Rainoldes, President of Corpus and an expert in Hebrew and rabbinical studies, and Thomas Allen, mathematician of Trinity and a collector of medieval manuscripts. By the time he graduated Bachelor of Arts in 1596, Fludd was sufficiently versed in music to compose his treatise on the subject, and had become expert in mundane and horary astrology. He tells one of his few anecdotes in this connection:

> While I was working on my music treatise, I scarcely left my room for a week on end. One Tuesday a young man from Magdalen came to see me, and dined in my room. The following Sunday I was invited to dine with a friend from the town, and while dressing for the occasion I could not find my valuable sword-belt and scabbard, worth ten French gold pieces. I asked everyone in college if they knew anything about it, but with no success. I therefore drew up a horary chart for the moment at which I had noticed the loss, and deduced from the position of Mercury and other features that the thief was a talkative youth situated in the East, while the stolen goods must now be in the South.
>
> On thinking this over I remembered my guest of Tuesday, whose college lay directly to the east of St John's. I sent my servant to approach him politely, but he swore that he had touched nothing of mine. Next I sent my servant to speak to the boy who had accompanied my visitor on that day, and with harsh words and threats he made him confess that he had stolen the goods and taken them to a place I knew near Christ Church where people listened to music and consorted with women. This confirmed my conjecture that the place was to the south of St John's, and since Mercury had been in the house of Venus, that accorded with the association with music and women. After this the boy was taken into the presence of his companion and flung to the ground. He swore that he had indeed committed the crime, and begged my servant to say no more: he promised to retrieve the belt and scabbard on the following day. This was done, and I received my stolen property wrapped in two beautiful parchments. It emerged that the music-house near Christ Church was the lair of a receiver of stolen goods who had robbed many degenerate scholars, wasting them with gluttony and womanizing. My friend implored me to desist from the study of astrology, saying that I could not have solved this crime without demonic aid. I thanked him for his advice. (*UCH* I, b, pp. 701–3)

Priding himself on having always remained an 'unstained virgin', Fludd had little sympathy for the frailties of the flesh, and sexual desire figured in his philosophy as the very cause of man's Fall.

He remained at Oxford until after his Master of Arts degree in 1598, then left England for the Continent where he travelled for nearly six years in France, Spain, Italy and Germany, supported by his father and working as a tutor in aristocratic families. He names some of his pupils as Charles de Lorraine, fourth Duc de Guise, and his brother François; the Marquis de Orizon, Vicomte de Cadenet, and one Reinaud of Avignon. It was

in Avignon that he was delayed during the winter of 1601–2 while hoping to cross the Alps into Italy, and tangled with the Jesuits on the subject of geomancy, a system of divination from the patterns of thrown pebbles. They disapproved of the science and tried to discredit him with the Papal Vice-Legate. But that gentleman turned out to be an even better geomancer than Fludd himself, and the wandering scholar made a new and influential friend. He said that he was sorry to have to leave Avignon for Marseilles, where he was to tutor the Guises. Our information on his further travels is very slim. He was certainly in Leghorn and Rome, where he met one 'Grutherus', a Swiss in the employ of Cardinal Sextus Giorgio who taught him engineering and the use of the weapon-salve and other 'magnetic' medicines. This would have been before his sojourn in Avignon, where he compiled his knowledge of engineering into a treatise for Reinaud. He must have returned to Italy, for in 1602 he met William Harvey in Padua.

It seems fair to assume that Fludd's vocation as a physician formed itself during these years of roaming, and that his leanings towards the occult, already evident in his hobby of astrology, led him into Paracelsian medical circles on the Continent. Paracelsus's 'chemical' medicine compared with the prevailing Galenic medicine much as homoeopathy does nowadays with allopathy, and its practitioners were looked upon askance by the established physicians. Traditional medicine, still based largely on the balancing of the four humours (choleric, sanguine, phlegmatic and melancholic), had made little progress since the time of Galen himself (second century AD), and had not taken advantage of the discoveries which had been made as by-products of alchemy. Paracelsus, like present day practitioners of fringe medicine, was against surgery and in favour of treating like with like: a principle accepted in vaccination and the very basis of homoeopathy. His was a holistic healing system that treated the patient first and the disease second; thus he considered not just the physical body but the subtler ones as well, and said that a doctor ignorant of astrology is nothing better than a quack. Here, too, his ideas are returning in the treatment of the subtle bodies through radionics and the respect paid to astrology by such as C. G. Jung, who always read his patients' horoscopes.

On his return to England, Fludd entered Christ Church, Oxford, and by May 1605 was able to pass his Bachelor and Doctorate of Medicine. But his allegiance to Paracelsian principles soon led him into difficulties with the medical establishment. He failed his first examination by the College of Physicians and was not allowed to practise. In February 1606 he was examined a second time, and according to the College's records, 'Although he did not give full satisfaction in the examinations, he was thought not unlearned and therefore allowed to practise medicine.' By May, he was exhibiting all the zeal of a recent convert, 'prating about himself and his chemical medicines and heaping contempt on the Galenic doctors'; his name was removed from the roll and he was told to behave himself better. So in 1607 he had to apply again, was thrice examined, and re-admitted as a candidate in December. In March 1608, he again 'conducted himself so insolently as to offend everyone', and was once more rejected. Not until September 1609 was he finally admitted a Fellow in good standing. One feels a little sorry for his father, who died in the midst of these embarrassing proceedings.

The years after Fludd's return to England were also spent assembling his assorted treatises and teaching notes into what was to become his major work, the *History of the Macrocosm and the Microcosm* (*Utriusque Cosmi . . . Historia*). More of an encyclopedia than a history

in the modern sense, this massive work was intended to cover in its first volume the macrocosm – what we would call the external world – in two divisions: God's works, and man's. God's works are the creation and sustenance of the universe and all its inhabitants; man's are the arts and sciences, which for Fludd included things as disparate as music and fortification, astrology and perspective-drawing. The second volume was devoted to man himself, the microcosm, and included both man's God-given faculties (such as prophecy, knowledge of higher worlds, and the physical body itself) and his own inventions which lead to self-knowledge (palmistry, geomancy, horoscopy, etc.). The only major fields of Renaissance learning which Fludd never touched upon were controversial theology and classical philology. As a broad-minded man who was proud that his writings were acceptable to Calvinists, Anglicans and Catholics alike, he had no time for the issues that divided them. As for Greek and Latin literature, he seems to have been interested only in the philosophical works, and of those he knew the Greek ones (the *Corpus Hermeticum*, Plato and the Neoplatonists) only in Ficino's Latin translations. Otherwise, the whole world was his concern, and he could discuss the practicalities of engineering as authoritatively as the mysteries which were closer to his heart.

A tremendous enthusiasm and a voracious appetite for detailed knowledge mark all Fludd's encyclopedic works, and he evidently wrote fast. He assures us that he had completed the macrocosmic volume four or five years before he first heard of the Rosicrucians, that is, by 1612 at the very latest. We can date some of the treatises more precisely with the help of the introduction to the second part of this volume. He says that he prepared the one on arithmetic for Charles, Duc de Guise, and those on geometry, perspective and military science for his brother François. Those on music and the art of memory were written for the Marquis de Orizon. The book on cosmography was dedicated to Fludd's father, to help him in his observations abroad, and the one on geomancy to the Papal Vice-Legate mentioned above. Finally, the astrological and engineering treatises were prepared for Reinaud of Avignon. This dates them all, in substance if not in their final form, before 1604, making a most impressive achievement for a man of thirty.

Fludd set up his medical practice in London, living first in Fenchurch Street and later in Coleman Street. He was successful enough to employ his own apothecary – doubtless a necessity for a Paracelsian physician whose herbal and chemical remedies were not compounded by every pharmacist. His early biographers, misunderstanding his medical ideas, attributed his success merely to his bedside manner: Thomas Fuller wrote that 'seeing conceit is very contributive to the well working of physic, [the patients'] fancy or faith natural was much advanced by his elevated expressions', and Anthony à Wood that 'he spoke to his patients amusing them with I know not what, till by his elevated expressions he operated them into a faith-natural, which consequently contributed to the well working of the physic'. Obviously he was something of a psychic healer. Among his patients he could count John Selden, the eminent lawyer and antiquary, and among his close friends William Harvey, who discovered the circulation of the blood. Once his initial sparring with the College of Physicians was over, his standing improved to the point of his serving frequently as their Censor (examiner).

Much of his medical approach can be deduced from his own treatises, notably the several parts of *Medicina Catholica*. He used several techniques of diagnosis, including the time honoured methods of feeling the patients' pulses and examining their urine, to both of which he gave

a thorough if idiosyncratic philosophical grounding. He diagnosed, too, through his patients' horoscopes and calculated their critical days from planetary transits. But unfortunately he wrote little of treatment: a few recipes and rules of life, and a great many prayers, are all the sufferer will find in his books. One exception is the weapon-salve, an ointment with which one anoints not the wound but the article that caused it. This generated a lively controversy after Fludd published the recipe in *Anatomiae Amphitheatrum*, thereby annoying an obscure parish priest, William Foster, who attacked it with his *Sponge to Wipe Away the Weapon-Salve*. And this was not the only 'magnetic' remedy in Fludd's medicine-bag. The mysterious Scottish doctor William Maxwell was apparently close enough to Fludd to learn some of his darker secrets:

> When I was visiting Dr Robert Fludd last year with my friend Stafford, and we came to discuss these things, Dr Fludd spoke, as was his wont, very sagaciously but also secretively about this art [of magnetic healing]. Among other things he was able to tell me of the wonders of a magnet which I had heard of but never myself tried: it had such power of attraction that when he applied it to his heart it drew him with such force that he could not have held out for long. The Fluddian magnet is nothing other than dessicated human flesh, which certainly possesses the greatest attractive power; it should be taken, if possible, from a body still warm, and from a man who has died a violent death. (Quoted in Peuckert, *Gabalia*, p. 271)

It is hard to visualize the gentle doctor lurking at Tyburn, scalpel in hand, waiting to acquire the material for a new magnet.

Among the other prominent figures of the early seventeenth century with whom Fludd has been associated, strong circumstantial evidence supports the conjectures that he knew Inigo Jones (see Yates, *Theatre of the World*) and Thomas Campion (see Barton). This brought him, through his interest in machinery and music, into the circle of masque-makers who flourished in the early Stuart court. Many of the machines and fountains in his engineering treatise are designed for frivolous or entertaining purposes, like the 'wooden ox that lowed and moved, and a dragon that moved, hissed and spat flames at the ox' which he claims in *Tractatus Apologeticus* to have constructed himself. When in addition he tells us that his mechanical musical instruments were well received by the royal musicians, it seems more than likely that his multifarious talents were called upon by the producers of the masques in designing their stage effects. Was it through this channel or through Sir William Paddy, the Royal Physician, that he gained the ear of the King himself, to whom he dedicated his first major work?

It seems that this, the first part of the *History of the Macrocosm*, created something of a stir on its appearance in 1617. James had accepted the fulsome dedication, which addressed him with the Hermetic epithet *Ter maximus* ('thrice greatest'), but some of those surrounding the paranoid king may have whispered rumours of witchcraft when they saw the work with its mysterious illustrations. Fludd was summoned by James to reply to his calumniators, and said in his reply to Foster that he 'received from that time forward many gracious favours of him, and found him my just and kingly patron all the days of his life'. (James died in 1625.) Two manuscripts addressed to the King between 1617 and 1620, entitled *Declaratio Brevis* and *A Philosophicall Key*, also show Fludd in a defensive position, supporting his views with letters from sympathetic foreign scholars.

The Rose and the Cross
'The Rose gives the bees honey.' This explicitly Rosicrucian symbol was first used at the head of Joachim Frizius's Summum Bonum, *then adopted for Fludd's* Clavis. *A rose with seven circles of seven petals each alludes, in all probability, to secret doctrines of septenary emanation such as were later to be publicized in the theosophical works of H. P. Blavatsky. The Rose surmounts the thorny cross, the whole resembling the sign of Venus in which the solar circle triumphs over the cross of matter. We may interpret the motto as saying that 'spiritual knowledge gives solace to souls', of whom bees are a venerable symbol. The spiders' webs (also with sevenfold divisions) strung on a grape arbour in the background, and the wingless insect on the rose (a spider?) may represent negative, lunar forces, as opposed to the positive, solar one of the bees, both of which are reconciled by the philosophic rose. SB*, t.p.; *CP*, t.p. (see Bibliography)

Fludd first entered print, however, not with his long-hatched *History* but with three small books occasioned by the Rosicrucian manifestoes. These anonymous publications, which kindled such emotions of sympathy and antipathy, were the *Fama Fraternitatis* of 1614, the *Confessio Fraternitatis R. C.* of 1615, and the *Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosenkreuz* of 1616. The *Fama* and *Confessio* purported to come from the Brothers of the Rosy Cross, a secret society which announced an imminent reformation of the whole world and invited prospective members to make themselves known. The *Chemical Wedding* is a fairy-tale describing the experiences of Christian Rosenkreuz, the legendary founder of the Brotherhood, couched in alchemical symbolism.

Coming at a time when Catholics and Protestants were constantly at each other's throats, the idea of a religious reformation and reconciliation was welcomed by many, but rejected by the Catholics, of whose Church the manifestoes were harshly critical. In 1615 and 1616 Andreas Libavius issued works denigrating the Rosicrucians' doctrines as expressed in the *Fama* and *Confessio*, especially those of macro-microcosmic harmony, magic, Cabbala, and their use of the Hermetic texts. This was a criticism by implication of the very foundations of the massive work which Fludd already had in hand, and naturally he felt urged to defend the Rosicrucians. This he did in his *Apologia Compendiaria* of 1616, also taking the opportunity to ask the Brotherhood to receive him as one of their number. Next year, in 1617, he issued the *Tractatus Apologeticus*, an enlarged version of his *Apologia*, which sets out in miniature the philosophy and intentions of his major works, and the *Tractatus Theologo-Philosophicus*, a theological discussion of life, death and resurrection, also dedicated to the Brotherhood.

The enigmas surrounding the Rosicrucian manifestoes have attracted the efforts of many scholars, and still they are not altogether solved. The *Fama* and *Confessio* probably came from a circle of scholars in Tubingen which surrounded Johann Valentin Andreae, the Protestant utopist who later admitted to having written the *Chemical Wedding* in about 1604, while in his teens. Philosophical sources for the manifestoes are traceable in the earlier mysticism of Joachim de Flore, Thomas à Kempis, Tauler, Ruysbroek, Paracelsus, and John Dee. Andreae's circle supposedly sent out their works as a pleasant fiction, with the serious purpose of pointing a way out of the agonizing religious controversies of the day. The violent reaction to their *jeu d'esprit* scared them, so that Andreae disowned the affair, calling it a silly jest, and turned his efforts to the foundation of 'Christian Unions'. So apparently the secret society of Rosicrucians had never really existed, whatever bodies were founded subsequently that bore the name.

Thus far the scholars have disentangled the skein of Rosicrucian personalities, books and events in the first three decades of the seventeenth century, and according to them we cannot properly call Fludd, or anyone else, a Rosicrucian. The fact remains, however, that there is a certain type of philosophy which combines the practical examination of nature with a spiritual view of the universe as an intelligent hierarchy of beings; which draws its wisdom from all possible sources, and which sees the proper end of man as the direct knowledge of God. This kind of belief underlies the manifestoes; it is presupposed in Fludd's works and in those of the alchemists; it reappears in the more esoteric aspects of Freemasonry and becomes the basis for Theosophy. It is a philosophic child of Neoplatonism, and a close relative of the Eastern religions. It forms, in short, a branch of the 'Perennial Philosophy': the primordial wisdom of mankind whose traces are found everywhere but in the

modern West and its dependencies. As it surfaced in the Europe of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it has been called 'Rosicrucianism', and there are worse labels for it. Hence we may certainly say that Fludd's philosophy is Rosicrucian in spirit, even if he never belonged to the Brotherhood if there was a Brotherhood.

Of course it is always possible that the manifestoes achieved precisely what they purported to do. No one has gone down in history as saying that they were contacted by the Rosicrucians and enrolled in the Brotherhood; but if the aims and activities of the Brothers were deliberately kept secret, it may be that they were only interested in those people who could be trusted to reveal absolutely nothing. If that were the case, we should never know what was really going on. We could only surmise that behind the known Rosicrucian philosophers like Maier and Fludd there may have been an even more esoteric group, with purposes and methods of its own; and we must certainly admit that the whole world has been re-formed, for better or worse, since their time.

Fludd's biography from 1617 onwards is scarcely more than his bibliography. The next few years saw the appearance of his *History*, at the rate of one fat tome a year, from the presses of Johann Theodore de Bry in the Palatinate region of Germany. Frances Yates in *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, has pieced together the fascinating story of De Bry's work in Oppenheim and Frankfurt and its connection with the short reign of Frederick, Elector Palatine, and his wife Elizabeth, daughter of James I. The huge works of Fludd and the alchemical emblem books of Michael Maier, beautifully illustrated with engravings by De Bry and his Swiss son-in-law Matthieu Merian, take on a new meaning when placed in their political setting. The hopes of all those whose outlook could be described as 'Rosicrucian' were pinned on Frederick: hopes that he could initiate the reform of which the *Fama* and *Confessio* spoke, and heal the religious rifts that were, alas, soon to split Central Europe apart with the Thirty Years' War.

To the publisher whose press formed one of the main propaganda weapons of the reforming movement, Fludd's *History of the Macrocosm and Microcosm*, by now probably nearing completion, must have seemed like a bible of the Rosicrucian philosophy, and no time was wasted in getting it into print. To Fludd, the De Bry firm's efficiency and experience must have come as a godsend, for he says in his answer to Foster that 'our home-borne Printers demanded of me five hundred pounds to print the first volume, and to find the cuts in copper; but, beyond the seas, it was printed at no cost of mine, and that as I would wish. And I had 16 copies sent me over, with 40 pounds in gold, as an unexpected gratuitie for it.' (p. 21) This sounds like royal patronage indeed. Volume I and the first part of Volume II were duly completed and published in rapid succession in 1617–20. But the scale of the work then began to exceed all reasonable proportions as Fludd proceeded to divide and subdivide it in a way too complicated to describe in words, but easily understood from a table (p. 93). By the time *Philosophia Sacra* appeared in 1626, being Portion IV of Section I of Tractate II of Volume II, the master plan was beyond repair, and Fludd abandoned it, only to launch a new one three years later.

His second major scheme, somewhat less ambitious, was the *Medicina Catholica*, a universal medical textbook in two volumes (see table, p. 93). Its parts came out from 1629 to 1631, completing the first of two promised volumes. Then that, too, was left unfinished, and Fludd wrote no more extensive works until the *Philosophia Moysaica*, a fairly succinct summation of his philosophy, appearing posthumously in 1638.

His other books are best understood as incidental to his two great compendia, prompted for the most part by an almost pathological sensitivity to criticism. I have already mentioned the defensive positions of his early Rosicrucian works, and of the manuscript treatises *Declaratio Brevis* and *A Philosophicall Key*. His other controversial writings, with their prompters, are as follows:

1619 Johannes Kepler criticizes Fludd's ideas of world harmony in his *Harmonices mundi*.
1621 Fludd answers Kepler in *Veritatis Proscenium*.
1621/2 Kepler answers with his *Prodromus dissertationum cosmographicum*.
1623 Fludd answers Kepler again in *Monochordum Mundi*, issued as part of *Anatomiae Amphitheatrum*.
Marin Mersenne attacks Fludd and the Hermetic philosophy in *Quaestiones celeberrimae in Genesim*.
Patrick Scot disparages alchemy in *The Tillage of Light*.
1624? Fludd answers Scot in a manuscript entitled *Truth's Golden Harrow*.
1628 Lanovius (François de La Noue) condemns Fludd in *Judicium de Roberto Fluddo*, published 1630.
1629 Fludd answers Mersenne in *Sophiae Cum Moria Certamen*.
Joachim Frizius answers Mersenne in *Summum Bonum*.
1630 Pierre Gassendi supports Mersenne's views in *Epistolica exercitatio*.
1631 William Foster attacks the weapon-salve in *Hoplocrisma-spongus*.
Fludd answers Foster in *Doctor Fludd's Answer unto M. Foster*.
1633 Fludd answers Mersenne, Gassendi and Lanovius in *Clavis Philosophiae*.

Most of these are slight works, especially when compared with major productions like *De Naturae Simia* (798 pp.) or *Integrum Morborum Mysterium* (532 pp.). They were printed in folio format, apparently in order to match Fludd's other works, with which they are sometimes bound.

Fludd died at his home in Coleman Street on 8 September 1637, aged sixty-three, and was buried in Bearsted Church. The handsome monument designed by him and erected by his nephew Thomas may still be seen there, although it was moved from the chancel to the vestry by a disapproving vicar towards the end of the nineteenth century. The name of Robert Fludd soon passed as a mere catchword for arcane and incomprehensible philosophy, and indeed his books are not easy to read. His greatest inspirations lie not so much in his words as in the illustrations which he designed to accompany them. Several factors had conspired to prepare the ground for this approach, in which graphic material played such a prominent part. First there was the immense popularity of emblem books, in which pictorial symbols were combined with mottoes and poems to make an ethical or philosophical point, or just for the sake of a conceit. Innumerable emblem books followed on the prototype, Alciati's *Emblemata* (1531), and continued until well on in the seventeenth century. The idea that a picture could show what words could not tell also lay behind the beautifully illustrated alchemical texts which appeared in great numbers in the fifty years around 1600. When woodcuts gave way to copper engravings as the favourite means of printing such pictures, the quality of illustration improved markedly: a

change for which Theodore de Bry, father of Fludd's publisher Johann Theodore, was largely responsible through his massive illustrated books describing America and other recent discoveries. Johann Theodore de Bry himself engraved the first part of Fludd's *History of the Macrocosm*, but the subsequent parts were probably done by Matthieu Merian, who signed the sympathetic portrait of Fludd in *Philosophia Sacra* (our frontispiece) and the title-page of *De Naturae Simia* (plate 95), the most copiously illustrated of all his treatises.

Fludd's gift for summarizing lengthy explanations in diagrammatic form makes it possible to understand much of his philosophy from his engravings alone, but I have annotated them in order to make them comprehensible to those who are unfamiliar with Latin or with Rosicrucian doctrines. The task of tracing all the sources and descendants of his philosophy would demand a much larger work than this, but it is appropriate here to give a brief summary of what he believed and why his work is valuable to people of the twentieth century.

At the head of Fludd's cosmos is one Absolute God, whom he usually represents by the Hebrew Tetragrammaton YHVH, a word that is never pronounced, just as the Absolute can never be described. This supreme, impersonal principle is beyond the distinctions of good and evil. But although it is a perfect unity, it has a dual power: it can either remain in itself, contained in a state of potentiality, or it can act. The Cabbalists call both these powers by the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, distinguishing them as the 'Light Aleph' and the 'Dark Aleph'. Fludd says that God's dark side seems like an abyss of chaos, the parent of all the evils and discord in the world. It is the source of Satan and the demons who trouble the world and fight perpetually against the angels of light. But since God's unity includes it, we must accept it as an aspect of him and hence ultimately good. God's active state, on the other hand, is obviously good, for it gives the whole universe being and sustains it with all its creatures. Fludd expresses the problem thus in his *Mosaicall Philosophy*:

> Touching the explication of this most profound *Sphyngian Riddle* or abstruse question, namely Why God in his secret sense or mentall intent did raise up and ordain out of the informed matter or Ideally delineated in himself, these two contrarieties, to cause thereby that all things in the world, should be put into a mutuall dissonance, or fight and conflict with one another, so that there is found nothing which participateth of goodness, which hath not his contrary; that is to say, which doth not communicate with badness (in so much that God himself is not without an adversary) verily it is too occult a Caball to be explained by mortall capacity, being that it may well be esteemed the profoundest secret of all the divine mysteries ... neither verily doth it become us of our selves to enquire why God made this or that, or thus or after this fashion. But it behoveth the zealous to refer all this unto the time when the secrets shall be discovered, which will come to pass, when the seventh Seal shall be opened: for then that high mystery, which is the finall cause, why and for what end God's Providence will by these two opposits reveal it self, and clean extinguish all enmity out of the world, shall be discovered.... So that as two contrarieties or discords, proceeded from one Unity or unison, namely Light and Darkness from one Divine Essence; So also these two dissonant branches or confusion of Unities, will at the last be reduced or return again into one harmonious Unity, in which there will be found no dissonancy.... (p. 144)

Fludd was very interested in the process of creation, on all levels, and anxious to find the common ground of the creation myths in the two books he most respected: the Bible and the *Corpus Hermeticum*. He explains the creation of the universe as the result of a ray of God's active light, sent out into the void and diminishing gradually as it went farther from him. Around it the darkness coalesced in the form of matter. The stronger the ray, the less matter could exist in its presence. But in the outer reaches of God's illumination, the darkness gradually prevailed over light, exceeding and finally extinguishing it. The various compounds of spirit and matter became worlds and regions of worlds, of which there are three main divisions: first, the empyrean world, or Heaven, where light exceeds darkness, the latter taking the form of exceedingly rarefied matter; second, the ethereal world, equally compounded of light and darkness into a substance we call ether; third, the elemental world, where darkness predominates over light, producing the traditional four states of matter: fiery, gaseous, liquid and solid.

Far from being lifeless, material spaces, all these worlds are thronged with beings: the empyrean with angels, the ethereal with stars, planets and demons, the elemental with men, animals, plants and minerals. All these creatures partake of God's light in measure according to their place on the hierarchy. But there is one level in particular which, though not at the top of the hierarchy, is nevertheless particularly favoured by God. This is the Sun, which is placed at the crucial midpoint of the chain of being, where spirit and matter are in perfect equity and balance. God has made the Sun his tabernacle, and from this secondary residence his active power radiates anew to all the lower realms. At the beginning of his *History of the Macrocosm* Fludd describes the world and its divisions:

> Martianus [Capella] has a threefold interpretation of the word 'world'. (1) As an *archetype* whose substance is incorporeal, invisible, intellectual and sempiternal; after whose model and divine image the beauty and form of the real world are constructed (as Boethius says): and this world remains permanently in the divine mind. (2) As a *non-celestial* body, i.e. the greater world that is bounded and contained by the concavity of the Primum Mobile: and this world is, by the will of God, eternal. (3) As *man*, who is called the lesser world, and is said to be perpetual in form but corruptible in body. We differ little from Martianus's opinion in treating the world as duplex: the *Macrocosm* and the *Microcosm*. The first is to be distinguished from man, the Microcosm, in that it designates the entire space of prime matter as a world, a Cosmos, or a Macrocosm: for the spiritual light, or the spirit of God, encircles both waters in its embrace. This portion of the abyss is composed of a circle of manifold lights and darknesses, divided into three regions according to their degrees of purity and impurity. The highest is the region of the world where the igneous spirit is prepared, and the primary substance of light contained, extending inwards from the sphere of the Trinity as far as the sphere of the stars. The substance of this region of the world is so subtle and pure, on account of its form, that it is altogether imperceptible to our senses. Hence the Philosophers call it intellectual, and in its highest stage spiritual. The middle region is adorned by stars, both fixed and moving, and occupies the concavity between the spheres of the Primum Mobile and that of the moon. Thence proceeds the manifest region, the world-mass, in two principal parts: the higher one incorporeal, spiritual, most pure and subtle, and the other cor-

> poreal. This corporeal region is again divided into two parts: the middle one is subtle, tenuous and incorruptible, and the lower is the sublunary or elemental region, impure, gross and reeking of corruption. These the ancient Philosophers call the regions of the Macrocosm, and the Scriptures call the Heavens. But they call the highest one the Empyrean or fiery heaven, for it is filled with spiritual fire or the substance of light. And it was into that third heaven, which he called Paradise, that Saint Paul was taken in the spirit. The scriptures generally call the middle region the ethereal or 'lucid' heaven, or simply 'heaven'. (*UCH* I, a, pp. 45–6)

God's powers, says Fludd, are borne into these three worlds by his ministers. The angels are the servants of his light aspect, and the devils of his darkness: two parallel hierarchies which strive perpetually one against the other. They are not exactly equal, however, for the devils were beaten down from the empyrean heaven by the Archangel Michael and his hosts before the lower worlds were ever created, and Michael then took up his abode in the Sun.

Fludd's theogony and angelology are complicated and intertwined in such a way that some very remarkable conclusions emerge. His most important concepts are those of Nature, the Anima Mundi (World Soul), the Cabbalists' Metatron, the Archangel Michael, the Messiah, and God the Son. Nature is the feminine, maternal principle, of whom Fludd writes in the early *Tractatus Theologo-Philosophicus*:

> This Nature is the noblest daughter of the Creator, obedient to the maker of the Earthly Paradise and of herself, and to the holy Spirit of wisdom; so imbued is she with his Word and with supercelestial Nectar, that she is surrounded with the perpetual splendour of eternal Life and protected with the sword of blazing light against the invasions of the impious. She reveals her essence and virtue to none but the sons of God, to whom it is given to know the 'Word that shineth in the darkness and by whom all things were made'. This noble and most pure Virgin is decked with such divine light, that some have wondered whether this splendid Nature, this Psyche, minister of life to all creatures, is herself God, or whether God himself is she, since the airy virtue of the admirable Father and Son, or the holy Spirit of intelligence, has placed its tabernacle in her. Happy is he who shall taste of her limpid waters, for he will be exalted with the splendour of the Word and the rays of the Spirit's teaching. . . . This immaculate Nymph desires assiduously the presence, society and assistance of her Deiform spouse, that she may lead her work to still greater perfection. . . . Thus this most fair sister, immaculate dove and friend, speaks to her beloved from the depths of her desire: 'stay me with flowers, comfort me with apples, for I am sick with love' (Song of Solomon, 2, 5). Therefore the Philosopher in his sacred sermon also says 'Out of the light a Word was made and descended on Nature, warming her' (*Pimander*, 1, 5). Similarly the Spirit of the Lord, which is the igneous love having the virtue of the Father and the Word, was borne over the waters and gave them its fiery vigour. So this burning love, a flashing Spirit of wisdom, is that true and supercelestial desire, projecting its igneous seeds into the matrix of the universal waters . . . that is, into the womb of Physis, whose chosen daughter is the immaculate Psyche and bride of the bridegroom. (pp. 36–7)

A feminine aspect of divinity is an ingredient of most religions, and in Catholic Christianity this is supplied by the Virgin Mary. Protestants,

to their loss, have rejected the deification of the Virgin Mother, but they do not thereby annul the psychological and spiritual need for her. An exclusively male god does not warm the emotions of many people, and the way of divine love, which in Hinduism is called 'bhakti', is more often directed to an all-loving female figure. Fludd's eloquent praise of Nature shows that she is such a figure to him. He describes her in metaphysical terms as God's first creation and also his spouse. This idea, so alien to conventional theology, is simply a way of saying that the Absolute One must make a Second before a universe can be produced. These profound principles have been studied and described more systematically in the East than in the modern West, and Fludd's account takes on new clarity when associated with the Hindu duality of Purusha and Prakriti. Nature in her highest aspect is Prakriti, the cosmic substance which is formless and void until the cosmic thought of Purusha enters and inseminates it. From that union, and not from either principle alone, a world can be born: for at the supreme level of the self-existent, absolute Brahma, the One without a Second, there is no Purusha, no Prakriti, and no world.

Fludd seems in the above quotation to be speaking of a lower level of the primordial duality, where the manifested Logos or Word finds in Virgin Nature its field of activity. She comprises the potential creative forces that will go to make a universe, once they are 'known' by the Logos. In order for a human being to know her, he must unify his splintered perceptions and experience the pure presentation of knowledge as a whole, thus transcending the world of Maya which is born from her.

In later works Fludd speaks less of Nature and more of the World Soul. This is the same thing: the creative forces of light, will, intellect, and so on, which sustain any cosmic entity. He describes thus the origin of the World Soul: the Logos gives off an emanation of light, which is the 'Eternal Spirit of Wisdom'. This creative principle [Purusha] infuses the humid chaos [Prakriti], turning it from a potential state to an active one, so that it becomes the substratum for the world. From the world's point of view, this divine light is its very soul; in the words of the *Mosaicall Philosophy*, 'the soul of the world, or *Mens divina in mundo* [the divine Mind in the world], simply taken, is the divine mentall emanation absolutely in it self, being distinguished from the created spirit' (p. 149). In the same chapter Fludd draws a parallel from the individual soul:

> That *Anima* is nothing else, but that which doth animate or vivifie a body or spirit: why then should not the catholick divine Spirit which filleth all, and operateth all, and in all, be tearmed the fountain of the world's life; by which it liveth, moveth, and hath its being, and consequently the essentiall life, and Centrall or mental soul of the world, moving the created humid spirit thereof . . . (p. 150)

Fludd recognized that the Jewish Cabbala described exactly the same principle as Metatron, which he translates as the 'gift of God'. This principle,

> . . . whom they make the catholick intellectual Agent, is nothing else but that universall Spirit of Wisdome which God sent out of his own mouth, as the greatest gift and token of his benignity unto each world, and the members thereof: to reduce them from deformity, and non-existence, into act and formall being. . . . And this therefore was tearmed rightly in the eies of wise men *Mitattron* or *Donum Dei catho-*

licum, which reduceth the universall Nothing into a universall Something. (pp. 151–2)

That Fludd considered this principle to be none other than the second person of the Christian Trinity emerges from statements in his answer to Kepler, printed with *Anatomiae Amphitheatrum*. Here he actually says that the Light Aleph is the Son, or Wisdom, or Light, or the Word; 'And the Platonists accept this "Wisdom" of the Hebrews, and "Messiah" of the Christians, and "Mittatron" of the Cabbalists, and "Word" of the Prophets and Apostles as the true Soul of the World, whom they say filled harmonically all the intervals of the world in threes, squared and cubed . . .' (pp. 302–3).

The reference here is to the description of the world's creation in Plato's *Timaeus* where, following Pythagorean number theory, Plato shows how the universe is organized mathematically and harmonically. Modern physicists would have to agree in principle, having discovered that matter is nothing but quasi-mathematical entities in a state of vibration. But Fludd's Catholic critics objected to his syncretistic mind, which could see the essential truth in any doctrine, whether Greek, Chaldaean, Hebrew or Christian. Marin Mersenne, his most virulent opponent, said that nothing could be more impious than Fludd's doctrine, which he summarized thus:

> Compounded from God and this ethereal Spirit is the *Anima Mundi*. The purest part of this Soul is the Angelic nature and the Empyrean heaven, which is understood to be mixed into all things. The Demons are part of the same essence, but joined to evil material. All souls, whether of men or of brutes, are none other than particles of this same Soul. This Soul is also the Angel Michael or *Misattron*. What is more, the same Soul is the true Messiah, Saviour, Christ, *corner stone* and *universal rock*, on which the Church and all salvation are founded. (Mersenne's *Lettres*, II, p. 441)

What outraged Mersenne was the idea that Christ should be reduced to parity with the World Soul, or, worse, a mere angel. But although in the seventeenth century it was dangerous to say as much, Fludd seems to have known intuitively what esoteric doctrines have taught in every culture: that there are great beings who watch over the planetary bodies, and who on occasion descend as Messiahs, Buddhas, Avatars and Christs. These beings, exalted as they are, are obviously not the same as the Absolute Principle of the whole universe.

Fludd himself explains that these principles are not all on the same level of being. They are, rather, different manifestations of a single principle in different worlds. In *Philosophia Moysaica* he also writes:

> The more secret Theologians and those most expert in true Cabbala say that just as Mind has domination in the human Soul, thus does Mettatron in the celestial world, where he rules from the Sun, and the Soul of the Messiah in the Angelic world, and Adonai in the Archetypal [world]. And to the degree to which the active intellect of Mind is the light of the soul, even so the light of that same Mettatron or World's Soul is Sadai, and the light of the Messiah's soul is Elchai, which signifies the living God, and the light of Adonai is Ensoph, signifying the infinity of Divinity. The world's soul is therefore Mettatron, whose light is the Soul of the Messiah or of the Tetragrammaton's virtue, in which is the light of the living God, in which is the light of Ensoph, beyond which there is no progression. (p. 304)

This may be expressed diagrammatically:

En Soph *the Infinite*	*is the light of*	Adonai *the Lord*	*who rules in the*	Archetypal world
Elchai *the living God*	,,	Soul of the Messiah *YHVH's Virtue*	,,	Angelic world
Sadai *all-powerful*	,,	Metatron *Anima Mundi*	,,	Celestial world
Mind	,,	Human Soul	*and rules there*	

Space does not permit a fuller discussion of this subject. Readers who wish to pursue it in its cabbalistic aspect would do well to consult the definitions of these Hebrew names in Leo Schaya's *The Universal Meaning of the Kabbalah* (1971), where the spellings differ slightly: *El hai* for *Elchai*, *Shaddai* for *Sadai*.

Another of Fludd's deepest concerns was with the idea of harmony between microcosm and macrocosm. According to this, man is a miniature universe and the universe is a great being; therefore if one understands the lesser cosmos, one will comprehend the greater. This is the true meaning of the Creator's words in Genesis, 'Let us make man in our own image', and of the Hermetic axiom, 'That which is above is like unto that which is below.' Modern science has disproved this venerable notion of correspondence to its own satisfaction, through the simple expedient of ignoring every level of being but one: the material. But Fludd would have been the first to protest that the material bodies of men and planets alike are their least important vehicles. What really correspond with the macrocosmic entities are man's subtle bodies, and it will be the task of astrology in years to come to identify, on a philosophical as well as a mundane level, the exact correspondences and their meanings.

Harmony implies relationships, and nowhere are quantitative relationships so keenly felt as when they are manifested in music. Here quantity becomes quality, and arithmetic is experienced as feeling; the ratio 2:3 flowers into the unmistakable sound of a perfect fifth, and so on. Our modern experience with digital computers shows that more and more of our knowledge can be expressed as relationships between simple numbers. As an inheritor of the Pythagorean-Platonic tradition, Fludd also appreciated this, but expressed it in the life-enhancing language of musical harmony. The chords and intervals which he heard between the levels of the universe may not be scientifically demonstrable or even accurate, but they testify to his faith in an orderly world, in which nothing is related by chance and all is imbued with a harmony which we will one day understand and hear for ourselves. His contemporary, Shakespeare, wrote that 'Such harmony is in immortal souls', knowing that the discords of Earth are resolved when our centre of consciousness rises to a higher level.

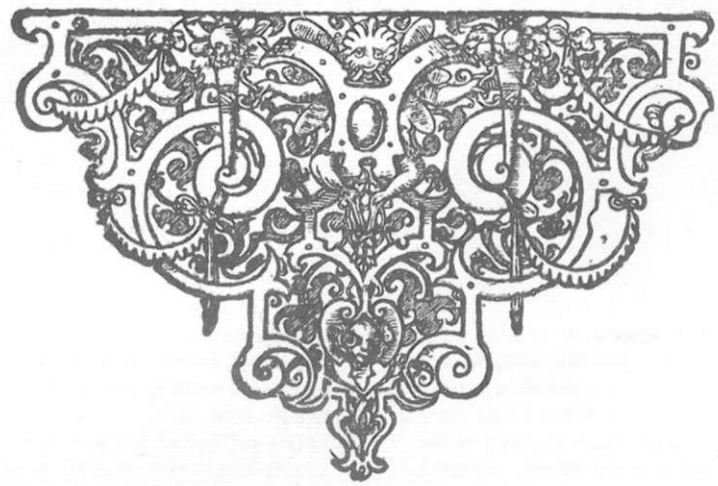
I have dwelt on these few areas of Fludd's thought to the exclusion of others because they illustrate his utter independence from sectarian Christian theology, his readiness to recognize wisdom wherever he saw it, and his firm grasp of the theory of multiple states of being. All three features set him apart from the dominant philosophical and theological concerns of his own day and of the centuries that followed. Yet these are precisely the things that have always separated esoteric thinkers from the simplistic and exclusive doctrines of exoteric religion. The first and

second features are natural for those who recognize that God and his wisdom are not the preserve of any one sect or creed; but this requires a view of humanity and God that transcends one's immediate milieu: even more of a rarity in the seventeenth century than it is today. The third feature is allied to the others, for it involves a realization of the relativity of all standpoints: what is valid on one level may have to be sacrificed on a higher one. This is illustrated most impressively by Fludd's synthesis of both good and evil in the Absolute.

The levels of being form the principal subject of so many of his plates that they must have been Fludd's major concern. The fact that he illustrates them with reference to a geocentric universe is irrelevant: the Ptolemaic system is not true physically, but symbolically it is still entirely valid. From our position as embodied human beings on a physical earth, the universe does seem to turn around us, and we each feel and behave as if we were the centre of it. Any expansion of consciousness is an ascent through the 'spheres' or spiritual states which the planets symbolize, and an escape from the 'earth' of our physical being and shackling ego. The writings of all traditions lend their support to this idea of the soul's ascent, which Fludd saw as the ultimate goal of man, as well as to the existence of unseen higher worlds compounded either of finer states of matter (etheric, astral, etc.) or simply of different states of mind. Fludd used the former metaphor, and this has brought upon him the incongruous label of 'materialist' from those to whom matter and mind are an irreconcilable duality.

Robert Fludd is a link in the chain of Christian esotericism which includes figures as disparate as Origen, Hildegard, Eckhart, Ficino, Boehme, Emerson and Steiner; and he seems to have received his arcane knowledge not only from other writers but from the same source as all true theosophists before and since. Such people are often at variance with the established Churches, to whose authority they offer the challenge of a personal revelation. Cutting through the crystallizations of dogma, they approach the spiritual world directly, returning with a new vision of its inexhaustible riches. It was Fludd's virtue that he could present his vital teachings unmarred by his own psychology, and thus his work has always been prized as an inspired vehicle for universal truth.

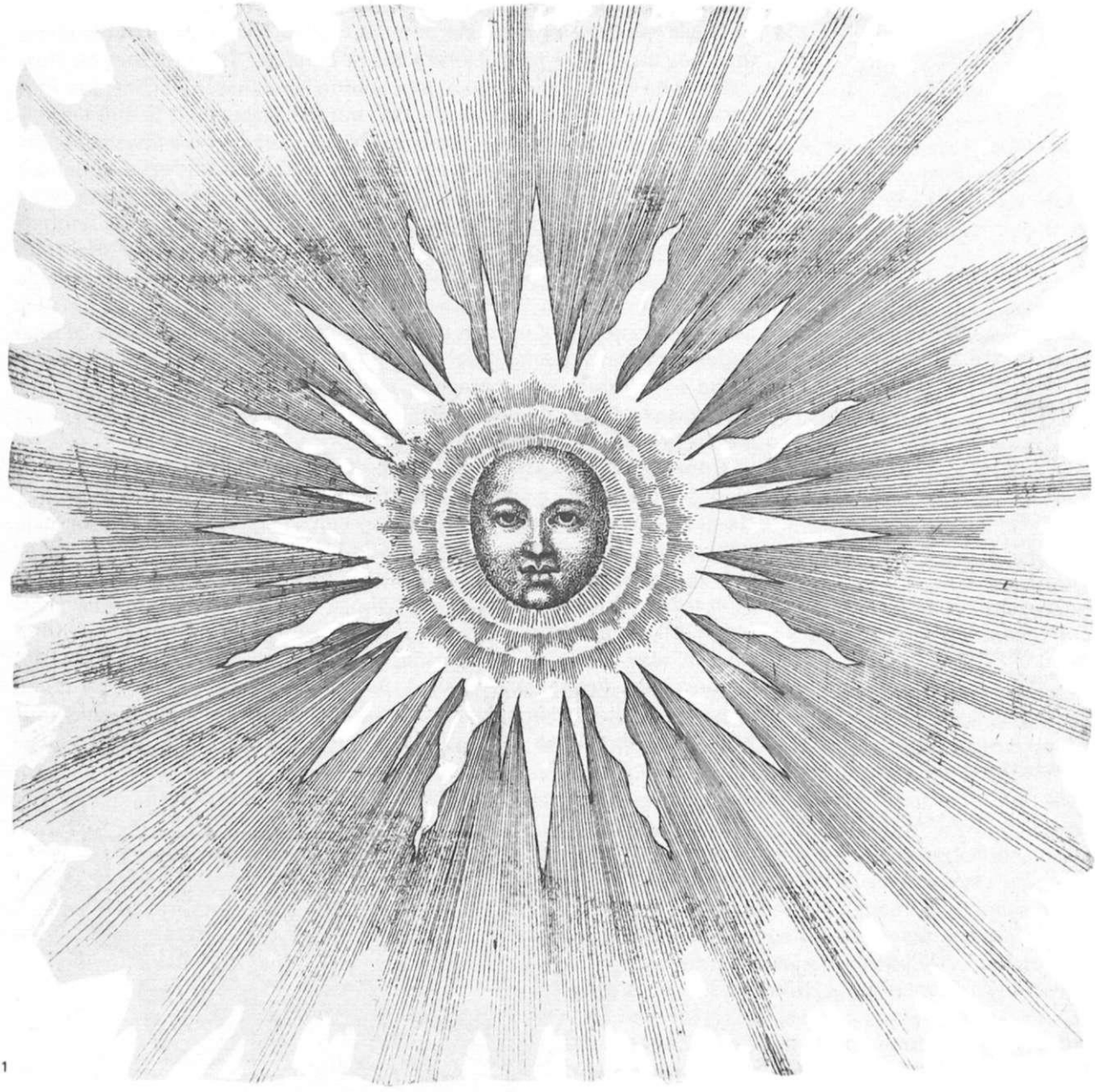
'Shakespearian' tailpiece, found in Anatomiae Amphitheatrum (pp. 51, 218, 250, 285), *and almost identical to that used repeatedly in the first folio edition of Shakespeare's works, published in London the same year, 1623. Manly P. Hall and others have remarked on the occurrence of similar or identical decorations in the King James Bible (1611) and in early seventeenth-century publications of Bacon, Shakespeare, Raleigh, Spenser, and others associated with underground spiritual movements. Whether Fludd was connected with any of these is a question for specialists in this controversial field.*



I The Macrocosm

The creation of the universe and the metaphysical principles that govern it

Passages in the commentaries to the plates which are in quotation marks are either Fludd's own words or else paraphrases of them. Page references are to the same book from which the plate is taken, unless otherwise indicated. For key to the abbreviated titles (UCH, etc.), see Bibliography



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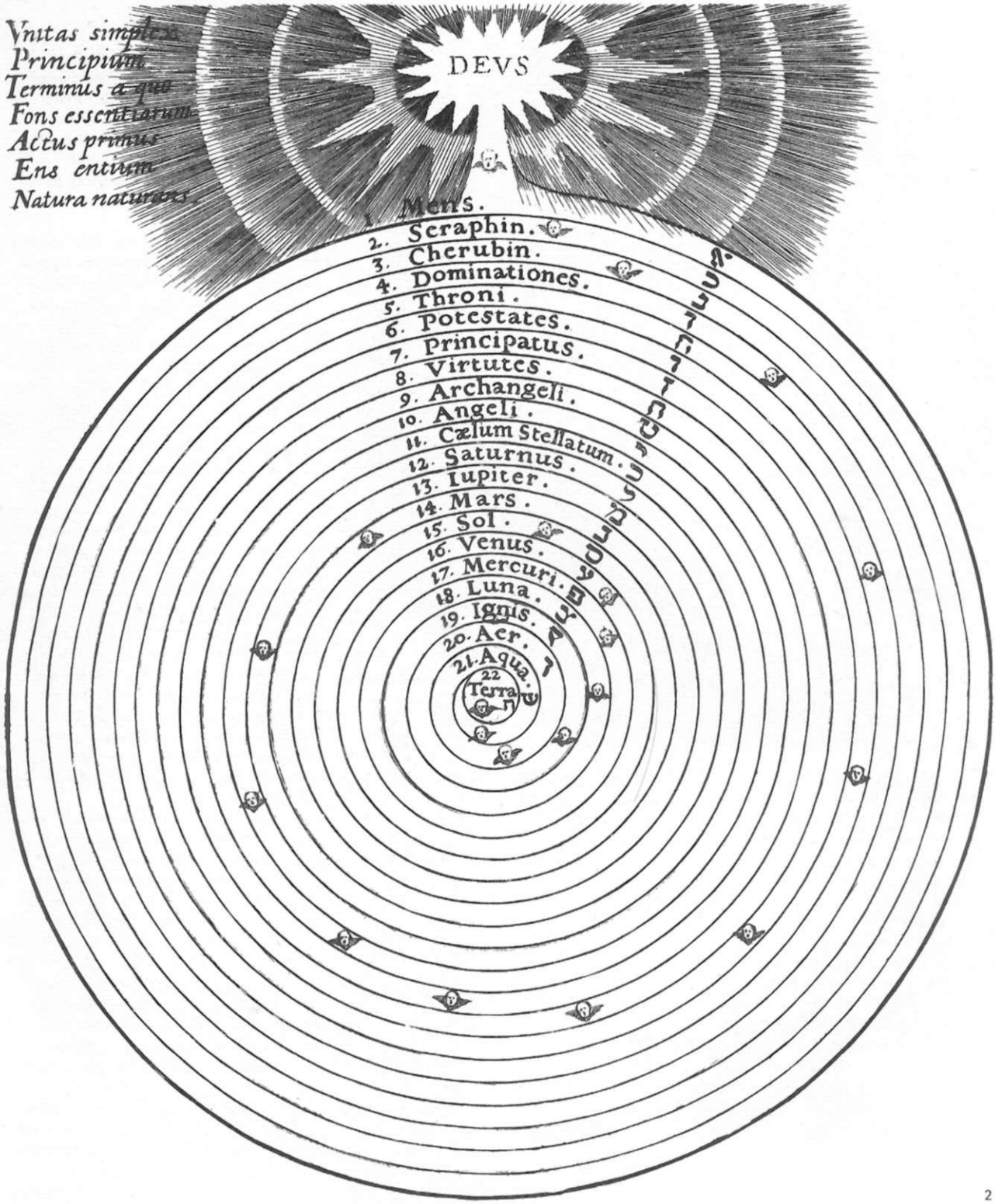
1 *The Solar Logos*
The Sun is the brightest object visible to mortal sight, and a universal symbol of the Supreme Deity. While Fludd did not accept the Copernican doctrine of the Sun as centre of the material universe, like Ficino he did accord it absolute primacy in the planetary order, as the midpoint of the chain of being stretching from Heaven to Earth. The Sun in the sky, like the heart in the human body, is God's most immediate manifestation on its particular level (see plate 39).
UCH I, a, p. 19

2 *The Ptolemaic Universe I*
From the infinite light of God *(Deus)*, a spiral descends to the uttermost depths of matter. The Absolute creates by limiting its own infinity, in an act described by the caption: 'The simplex unity; the beginning; the starting point; source of essences; the first act; the Being of beings; Nature producing nature.'

First comes Cosmic or World Mind *(Mens)*, open on the one hand to the Absolute: on the other entering the constricting vortex that is creation. The



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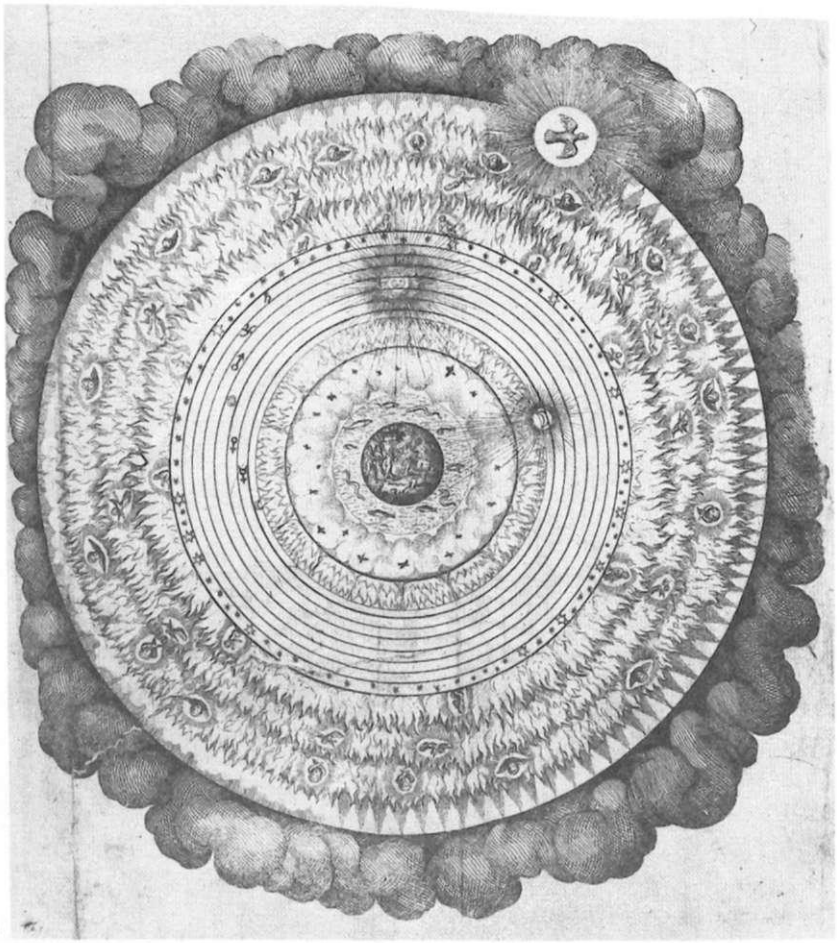
first of the Hebrew letters, *Aleph*, marks this beginning of beginnings, from which the other 21 hypostases emanate in a threefold scheme.

The turns of the spiral marked 2–10 are the nine orders of angels: Seraphim, Cherubim, Dominations, Thrones, Powers, Principalities, Virtues, Archangels and Angels. These inhabit incorporeal, metaphysical realms. With 11, the heaven of the fixed stars, we reach the sphere of the zodiac which encloses the seven Chaldean planets (12–18): Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury and Moon. The third division is the sublunary region where all is compounded of the four elements (19–22): fire, air, water and earth. The archetypes or intelligences that preside over each of the twenty-two spheres are signified both by the Hebrew letters and by the winged heads.
UCH II, a, p. 219



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3 *The Ptolemaic Universe II*
While the previous vision represented the cosmos as spiralling down from God, here it is shown created as an instantaneous whole. The Spirit of God, in the form of a dove, carves the universe out of the clouds of nothingness. The three divisions are more clearly enunciated here. The ninefold celestial hierarchy is divided into only three circles (probably corresponding to the Orphic-Platonic division of the Intelligible Gods, Intelligible-Intellectuals, and Intellectual Gods). The fixed stars and the seven planets follow, of which Sun and Moon shed their light upon the sublunary world. First of the elements is fire; then come air and water, appropriately stocked with birds and fishes; then earth – and here it seems to be our terrestrial globe itself at the dawn of creation. Adam and Eve are visible in the Garden of Eden, already conversing with the serpent.
UCH I, a, p. 9

4 *The Ptolemaic Universe III*
'The Mirror of the Whole of Nature and the Image of Art'. This most comprehensive of all of Fludd's cosmic schemata follows the previous one in its general layout. The sublunary world is drawn in great detail. Fire and air have their circles, but water and earth are depicted as a realistic landscape on which stands Nature (see below). Under the aegis of these elements, as it were, are the three realms of Nature:

Animal (containing pictures of dolphin, snake, lion, man, woman, eagle, snail and fish)
Vegetable (trees, grapes, wheat, flowers and roots)
Mineral (talc, antimony, lead, gold, silver, copper, orpiment and sal ammoniac, each ruled by the appropriate planet)

The connections between the planetary and elementary worlds are shown by dotted lines; notice, too, that man faces the Sun and woman the Moon. The presence of three suns may be a reference to the Orphic-Platonic doctrine of the Threefold Sun, for divulging which the Emperor Julian met his death in AD 364.

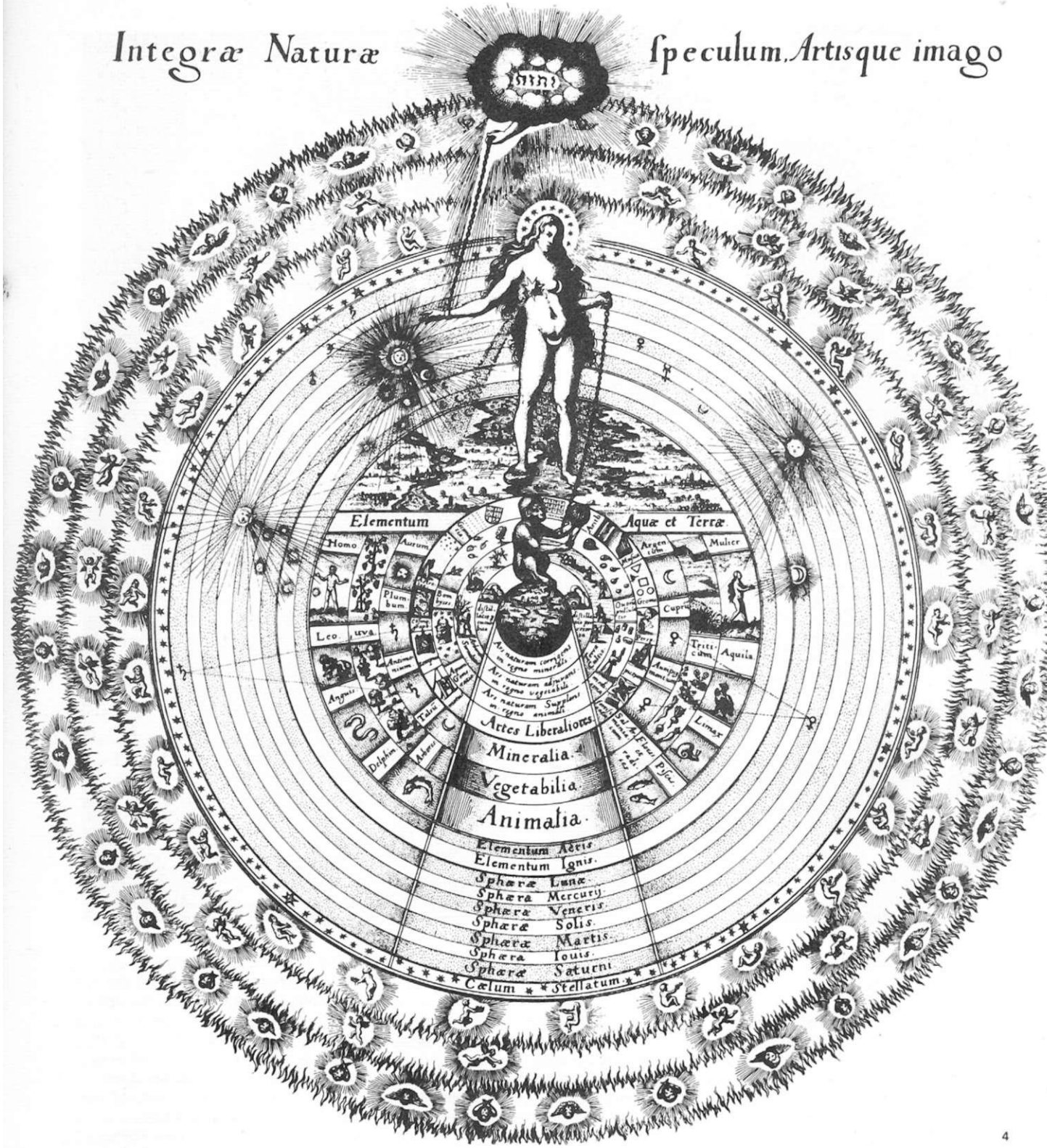
Fludd's description of this plate centres on the figure of Nature, depicted as a beautiful virgin. 'She is not a goddess, but the proximate minister of God, at whose behest she governs the subcelestial worlds. In the picture she is joined to God by a chain [the *catena aurea* of Homer, which descends through all the hierarchy of existence]. She is the Soul of the World *(anima mundi)*, or the Invisible Fire of Heraclitus and Zoroaster. It is she who turns the sphere of the stars and disposes the planetary influences to the elemental realms, nourishing all creatures from her bosom.

'On her breast is the true Sun; on her belly the Moon. Her heart gives light to the stars and planets, whose influence, infused in her womb by the mercurial spirit (called by the philosophers the Spirit of the Moon), is sent down to the very centre of the Earth. Her right foot stands on earth, her left in water, signifying the conjunction of sulphur and mercury without which nothing can be created.' (pp. 7–8)

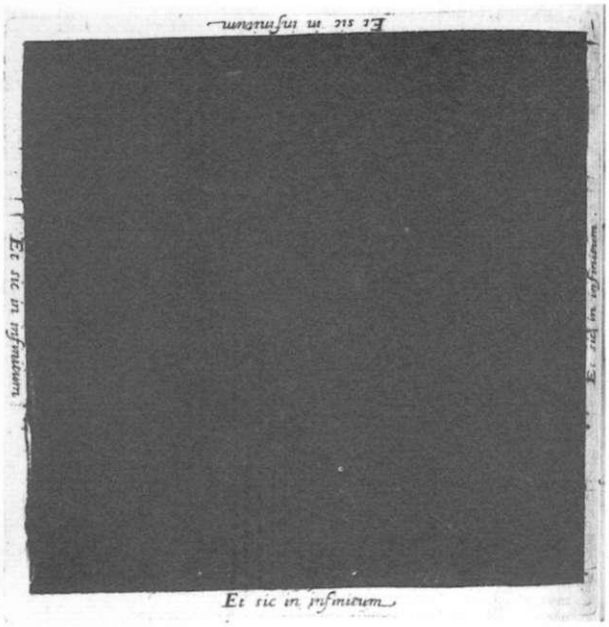
Thus Fludd describes her in cryptic, alchemical language. In Hindu terminology, she is God's 'Shakti', his feminine creative power. His conjunction with her produces the universe, and similar conjunctions of lesser gods with their consorts generate each descending level of existence. Fludd, as a monotheist, would not use this imagery; but he implies the same principles by the symbols of conjunction in Nature's womb between stellar influences and the mercurial spirit, and at her feet between sulphur and mercury. Creation on every level requires a tension between opposites, and the symbols for this are manifold.

Nature, says Fludd, has a helper who, imitating her, produces things similar to hers. This Ape of Nature we call Art, who has arisen from human ingenuity. In the picture he forms the terminus of the chain of being, bearing the same relation to Nature as she to God. We might say, with the Koran, that man is God's vicegerent upon Earth, where he is entrusted with the task of looking after this corner of the universe. The arts, which in Fludd's day included what we call sciences, are man's means of making the Earth a happy and beautiful place – if he uses them rightly.

The circles of the arts are as follows:
Liberal Arts (engineering, time-keeping, cosmography, astronomy, geomancy, arithmetic, music, geometry, perspective-drawing, painting and fortification)
Art supplanting Nature in the animal realm (apiculture, silkworms, egg-hatching, medicine)
Art assisting Nature in the vegetable realm (tree-grafting, cultivation of the soil)
Art correcting Nature in the mineral realm (distillation with alembic and retort)
UCH I, a, pp. 4–5


Integræ Naturæ speculum, Artisque imago
Elementum Aquæ et Terræ
Homo
Aurum
Plumbum
Argentum
Mulier
Cuprum
Leo
Uva
Triticum
Aquila
Anguis
Limax
Delphin
Piscis
Artes Liberaliores
Mineralia
Vegetabilia
Animalia
Elementum Aëris
Elementum Ignis
Sphæræ Lunæ
Sphæra Mercurij
Sphæræ Veneris
Sphæræ Solis
Sphæræ Martis
Sphæra Iouis
Sphæræ Saturni
Cælum Stellatum

4



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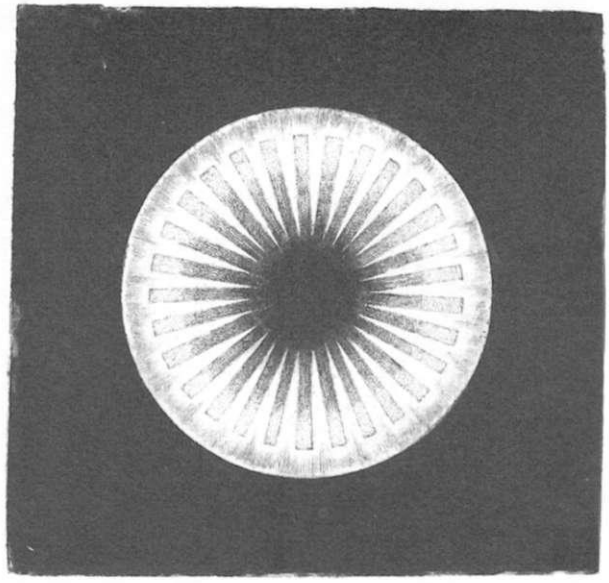

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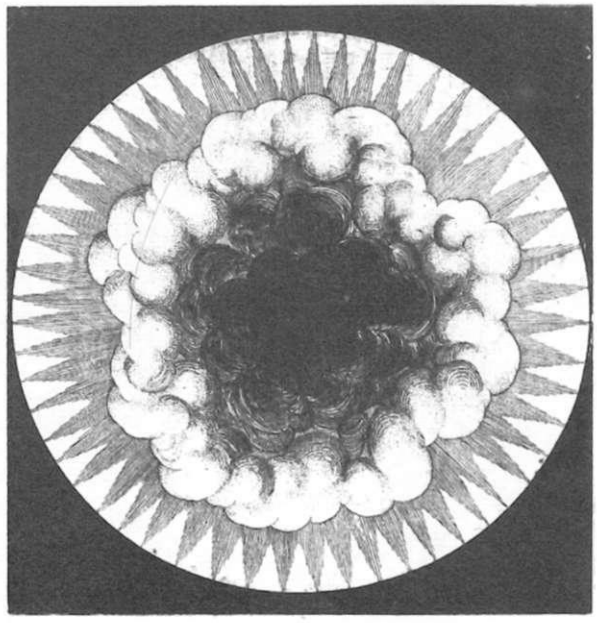


7

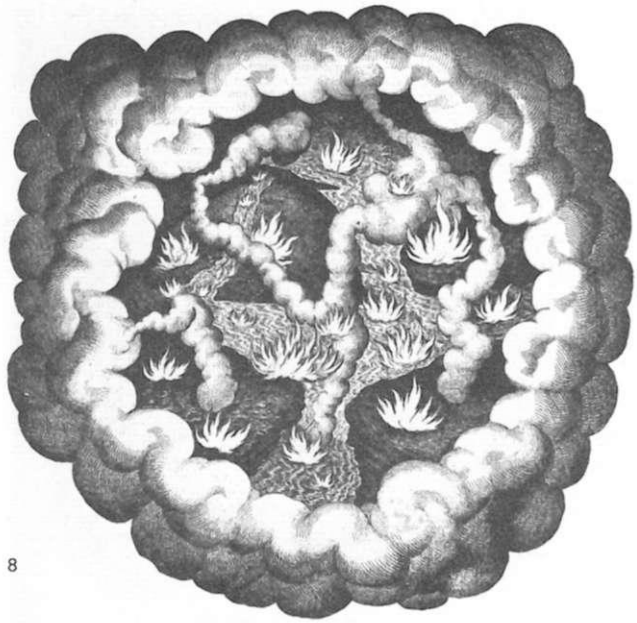
5 *The Great Darkness*
'And thus, to infinity.'

'What was there before creation? Some first state of unformed matter (*materia prima*), without dimension or quantity, neither small nor large, without properties or inclinations, neither moving nor still. Paracelsus calls it the Great Mystery *(Mysterium Magnum)* which he says is uncreated; others claim it as God's first creation.' Fludd leaves us to decide between them, and depicts it as the blackest of clouds, the darkest abyss, extending from infinity to infinity. (pp. 23–4)
UCH I, a, p. 26

6 *The Appearance of Light*
'Moses, Plato and Hermes all agree in calling the first act of creation one of light. This light, neither uncreated nor created, is the intelligence of the angels, the vivifying virtue of the heavens, the rational soul in man, and the life-force of the lower realms. It diminishes gradually on this descending scale, the perfection of things being in proportion to its presence.' (pp. 27–9)

Here is the first appearance of light in the darkness. As it sends forth its virtue from the centre, the 'watery spirits' begin to separate into those nearer and those farther from it. (p. 30)
UCH I, a, p. 29

7 *The Division of the Waters*
'The prime matter, fecundated by the divine light, divides into two. The part furthest removed from the light [the dark cloud in the middle of the picture] remains in a state of passivity, while in the surrounding part dwells the active fire of love. These are the lower and the upper waters. The light cloud in between is a mysterious state, neither spiritual nor corporeal. It is called variously the Earth-spirit, the Spirit of Mercury, the Ether and the Quintessence. It has the capacity to penetrate and alter bodies, and thus acts as the vehicle of the soul's descent into matter.' (pp. 35–6)
UCH I, a, p. 37



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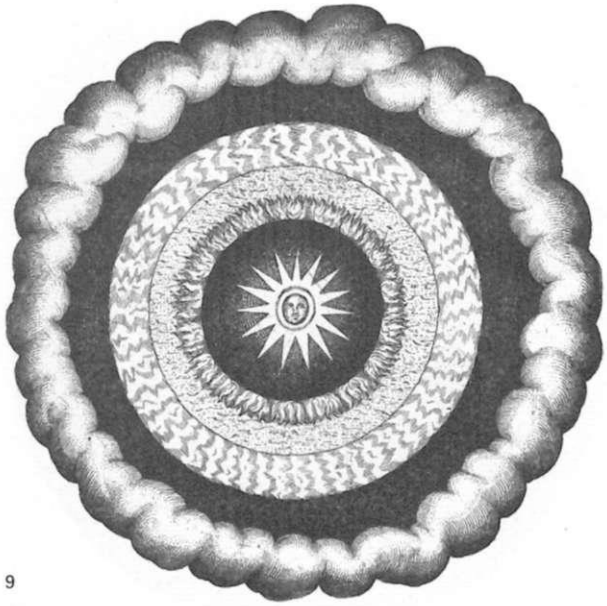

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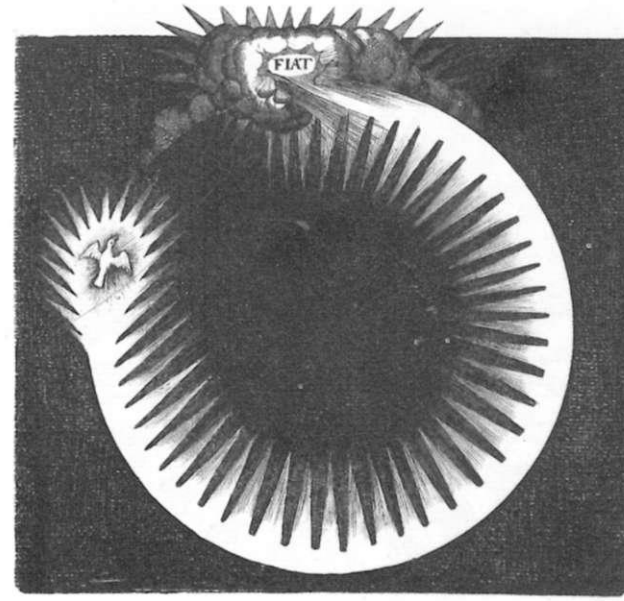


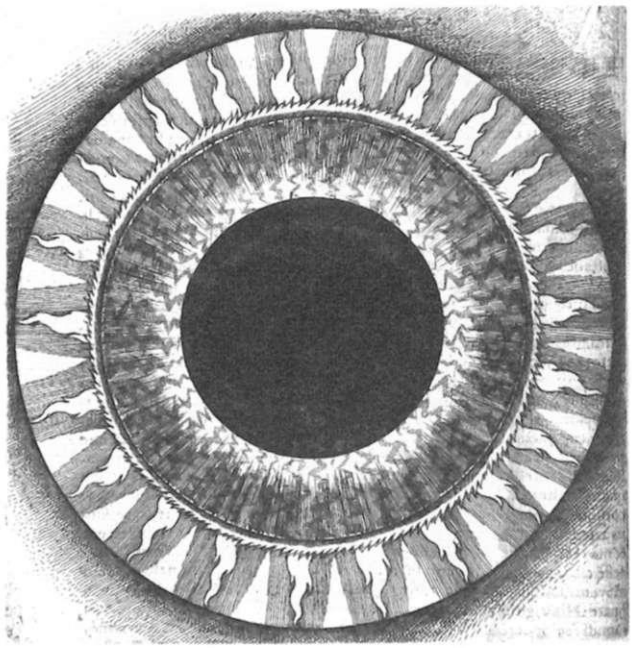
10

8 *The Chaos of the Elements*
The lower waters have now been stirred into a confused and 'undigested' mass, in which the four elements fight against each other: hot against cold, wet against dry. Manly P. Hall has pointed out (*Man*, pp. 48–9) the resemblance of this figure to the human intestines. Fludd himself makes the bowels in man equivalent to the elemental realm in the universe (see plate 91).
UCH I, a, p. 41

9 *The Central Sun*
Resolving the chaos of the previous plate, the elements arrange themselves into concentric circles of fire, air, water and earth, while in the centre appears the Sun. Fludd derived this image from an alchemical experiment which he witnessed performed by a friend, and describes in detail the battle of the elements which was reproduced in the vessel. At the end, he says, they extracted from the centre of the mass a 'solar substance', a precious gem 'like Lucifer fallen from heaven'. (p. 42)
UCH I, a, p. 43; *AA*, p. 23

10 *'Let there be Light'*
A second series of illustrations recapitulates the creation of the three realms: angelic (empyrean), celestial (ethereal) and elemental. Following closely the book of Genesis, Fludd describes them as the products of the first three days of creation. Each 'day' was defined by a circuit of the Spirit of God, proceeding from the primordial word FIAT ('let it be'), as shown in this plate.

On the first day, with the words FIAT LUX ('let there be light'), the highest heaven appeared. This is the light-filled empyrean, perceptible not to mortal eyes but only to the intellect. Its base is the crystalline sphere, described by St John the Divine as 'a sea of glass, mingled with fire' (Revelation 15.2). On the second day the Spirit made its second revolution (described in Genesis 1. 6–8) and the celestial firmament appeared, dividing the upper waters (the empyrean) from the lower ones, which on the third day would become the elemental realm.
UCH I, a, p. 49; *PS*, p. 157



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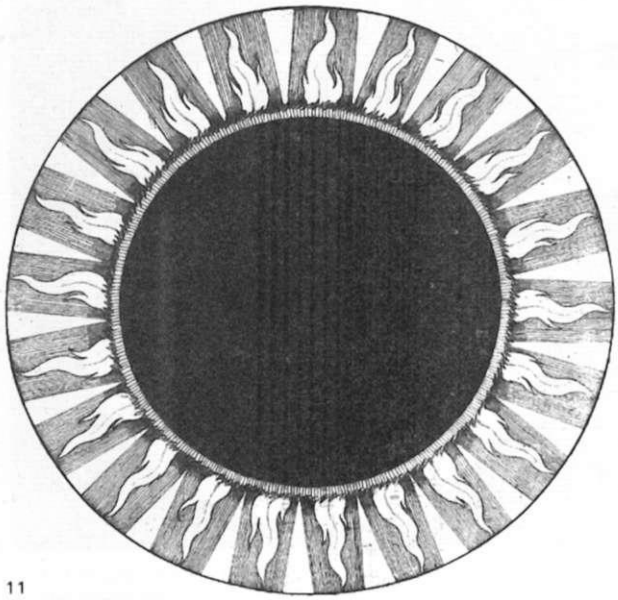

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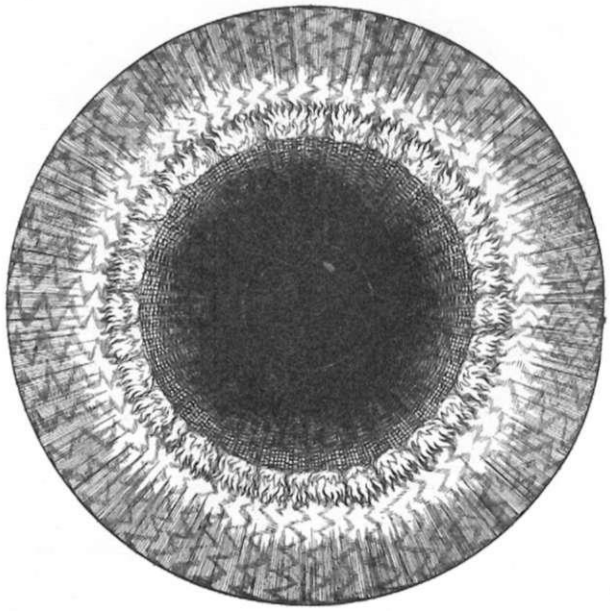
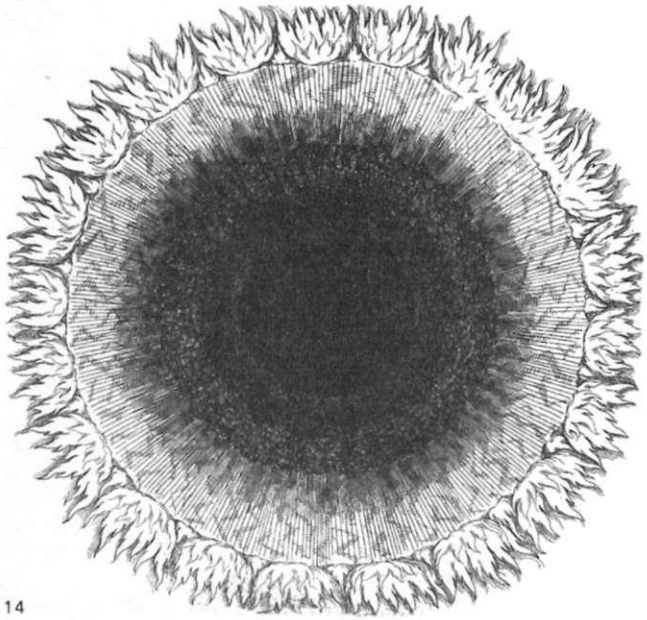


13

11 *The Empyrean Sphere*
'The appearance of the first created light.' The revolutions of the Spirit carved out spheres of light from the primeval darkness. This plate shows the void that was yet to become the lower realms, surrounded by the empyrean after the first day of creation. 'The uncreated light of the Spirit is reflected in the empyrean sphere as in a mirror, and these reflections are in turn the first manifestation of *created* light. Without this light no creation or creature could exist for a moment.' (p. 55) We might say, in other words, that nothing can exist if it is not held, illuminated, in the mind of God.
UCH I, a, p. 55; *PS*, p. 159

12 *The Ethereal Sphere*
'The second day witnessed the creation of the ethereal sphere, the one which contains the fixed stars and wandering planets. It is constituted of ether, a substance free from the decay which affects the four lower elements. This is also known as the Quintessence and as *spiritus*. The ethereal sphere is the region of equality, in which the formal and material qualities are held in balance. Above, in the empyrean, form predominates and matter is totally absent. Below, in the elemental sphere, matter is supreme.' (pp. 57–8) Thus begins the primal duality of form and matter.
UCH I, a, p. 58

13 *The Elemental Sphere I: Fire*
'The finest and most volatile of the four material elements is fire, and it naturally rises to the outermost region of the elemental sphere. Although closely related by position and quality to the ethereal substance of the celestial sphere, this is not the "invisible fire" of the philosophers by which they say all things were made. It is simply the hot, dry fire by which all things are eventually led to putrefaction.' (pp. 62–3)
UCH I, a, p. 63



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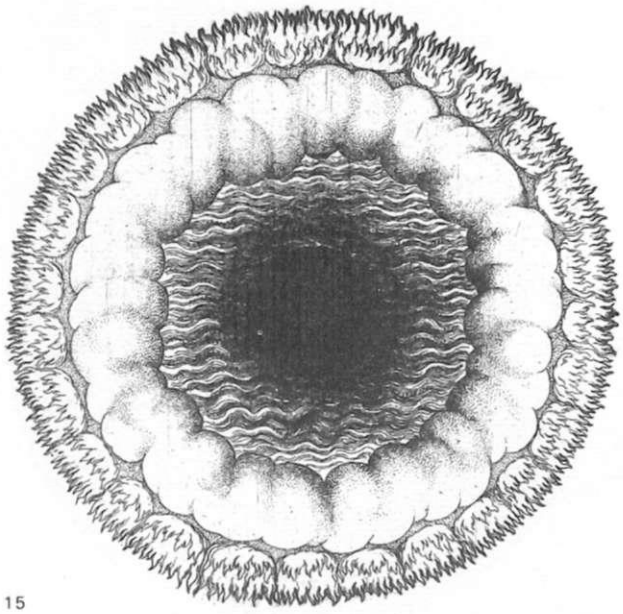

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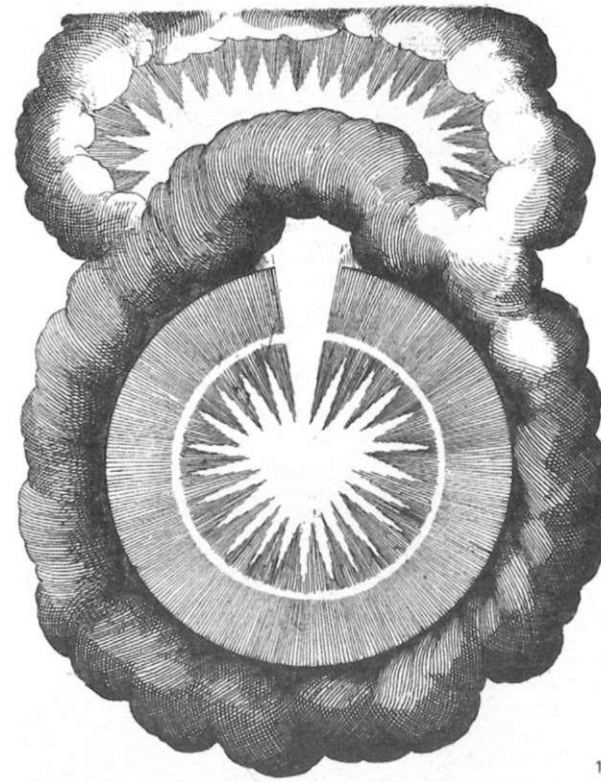
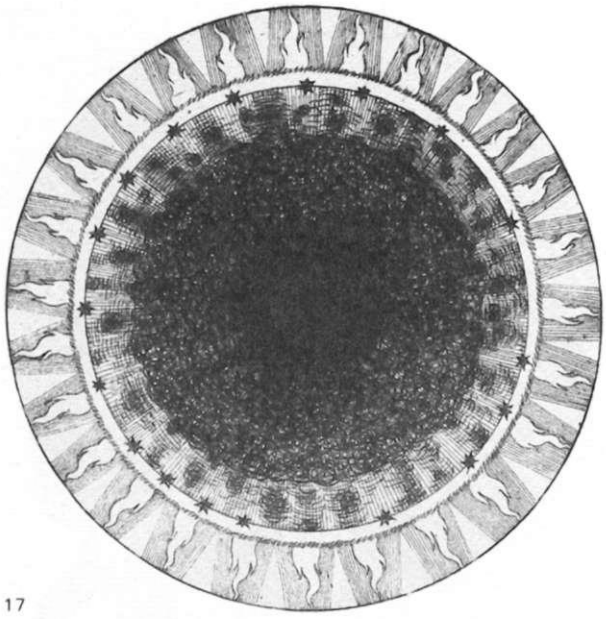


16

14 *The Elemental Sphere II: Earth*
The qualities of earth are cold and dry, and as the darkest and heaviest element it sinks, as it were, to the very centre of the universe. This plate shows it condensed into a dark ball in the middle of the fire-circle. No wonder that the Earth is such a vale of misery, says Fludd, since it is formed from the very dregs of creation and contains the Devil himself, enemy to God and man. 'But you, O celestial creatures, inhabitants of the sweetest Paradise, thrice blessed and more beyond human telling: you are freed by the ineffable power of light from the miseries and chains that shackle us!' (p. 65)
UCH I, a, p. 66

15 *The Elemental Sphere III: Air and Water*
In between the fire and earth spheres is a zone compounded of earth's coldness mixed with fire's heat, 'like the coitus of male with female' (p. 66). Three parts of igneous heat and one of terrestrial coldness make up the element of air: the reverse proportions give water. Humidity is not so much an archetypal quality in its own right as an incidental state of matter: not 'productive' but 'distinguishing' between the two extremes. (pp. 67–8)
UCH I, a, p. 69

16 *The Creation of the Primum Mobile*
'When the darkness had been dismissed to the region of the Earth, God made the Primum Mobile which gives movement and life to all the inferior spheres. It is the bearer of his wisdom and will, which are effected here below by the angels. For want of words to describe how God's wisdom acts in the Primum Mobile, and how it filled the whole world before the creation of the Sun, we depict it thus with the pen.' (pp. 159–60) Here is proof, if proof were needed, that Fludd himself drew his diagrams, at least in rough. Words fail him, so he sketches his vision (for a vision it must have been) of the protocosmic light entering the dark womb of the universe.
PS, p. 160



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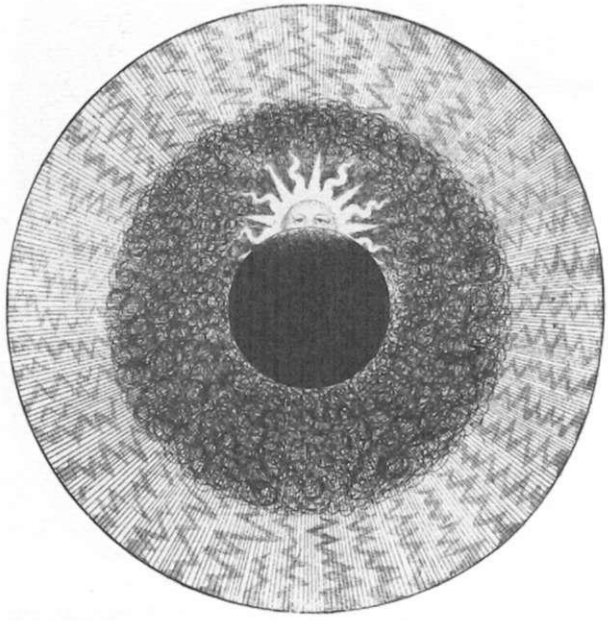

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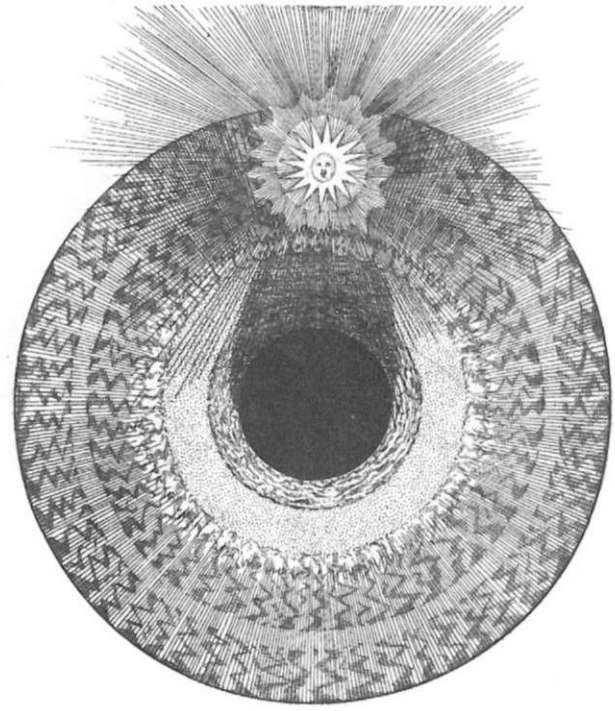


19

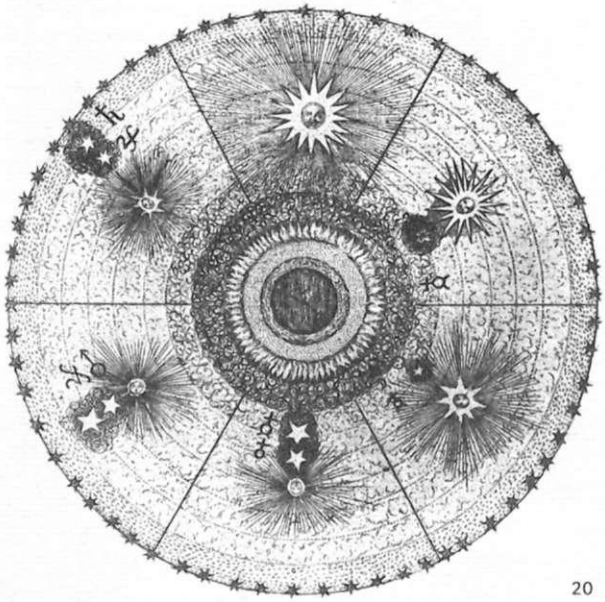
17 *The Creation of the Stars*
The fixed stars appear on the outside edge of the celestial sphere. Fludd thinks that they were probably created on the second day of creation, but that they were not visible until the Sun was created. They do not reflect the Sun's light, but rather assimilate it and give it off later (pp. 125, 128). We can see parallel phenomena on Earth in the phosphorescence of putrefying wood and certain fish, as also in alchemy. Here he gives a tantalizing glimpse into his own alchemical laboratory:

'I myself once extracted the spiritual humour from some most noble body, and observed its marvellous transmutation into Sol [gold?]. I remember at the end seeing that spirit ascend violently by its own sun-given heat, with its newly acquired tincture, to the top of the alembic, and there glow like the brightest of rubies without any elemental fire present.' (p. 126)

He accounts in an interesting way for the different degrees of brightness in the fixed stars. 'We know that the empyrean light is invisible to us unless filtered through matter. Therefore the brightest stars will be the densest, most material ones, since they can best make that light visible to the lower worlds.' (p. 130)
UCH I, a, p. 131

18 *The Creation of the Sun I*
'The perturbations attendant on creation had caused some of the celestial light to be trapped in the cold mass of the central Earth. Obeying the law of gravity, this celestial substance began to rise towards its rightful place in the heavens, and it was thus that our Sun was formed.' (pp. 134–5)

The Sun is seen rising from the Earth on the fourth day of creation, the day after the creation of the vegetable kingdom, according to Genesis. Fludd draws the parallel between the emergence of the Sun and the upward growth of plants, both impelled by their indwelling *spiritus*. But it is above all



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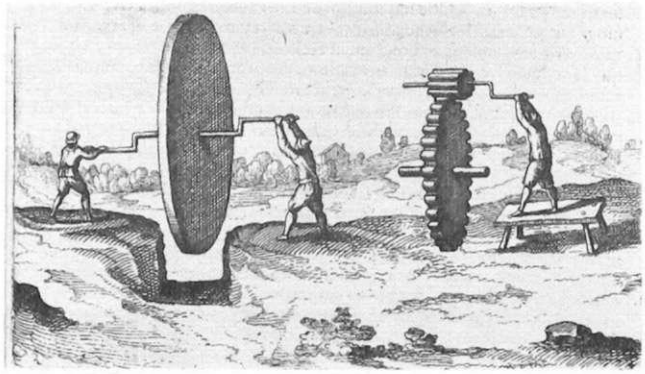


21

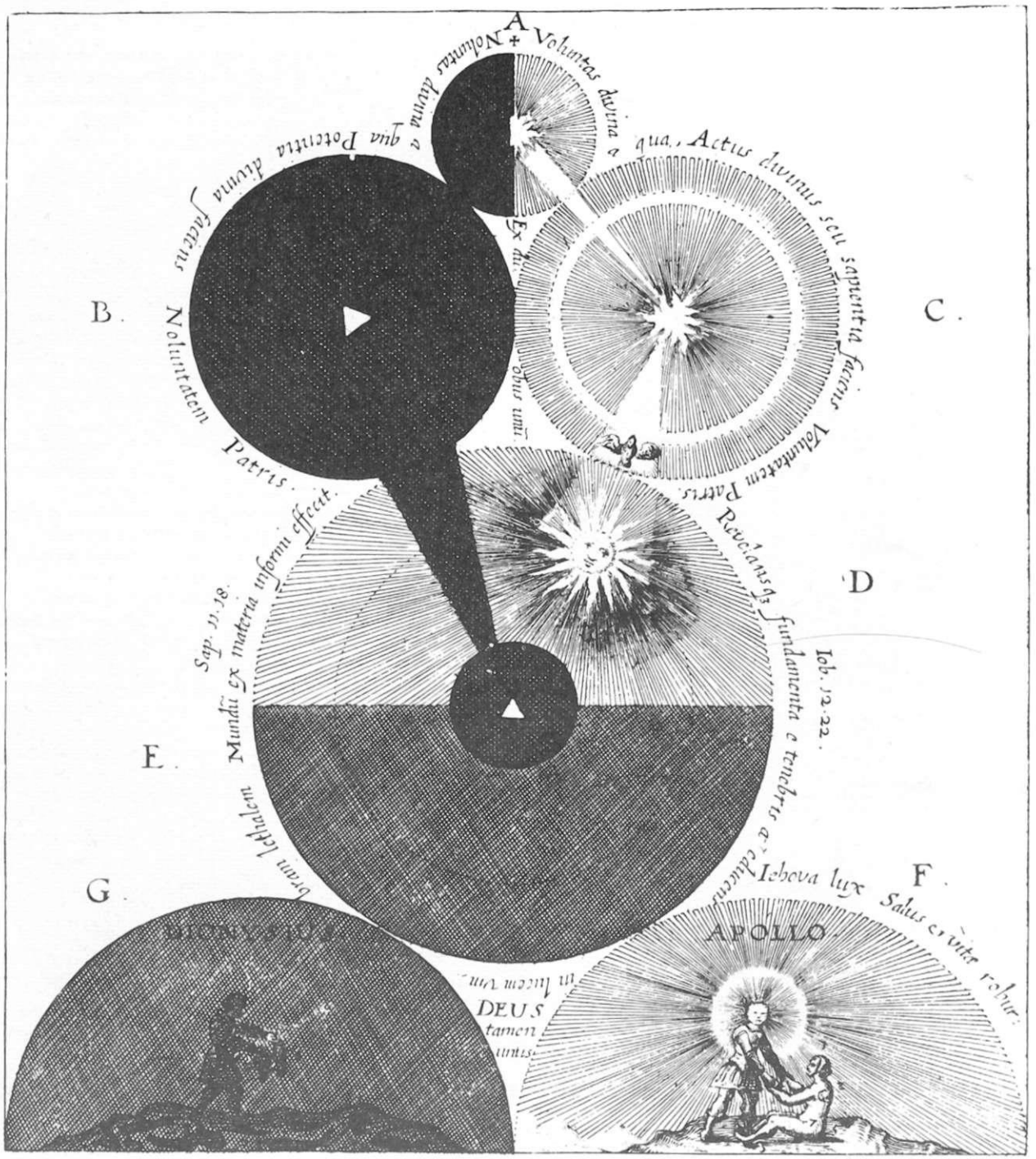
the Sun's power that kindles these latent rising forces in plants, and indeed enlivens the whole creation. Fludd explains later (p. 175) that before the Sun's creation the souls of the plants were encouraged by the planets (but see also plate 20). Evidently he is thinking of the 'days' of creation as longer periods of time. Anthroposophists will note the anticipation here of Rudolf Steiner who in *Cosmic Memory* describes the extrusion of the Sun from the Earth.
UCH I, a, p. 138

19 *The Creation of the Sun II*
'One might expect the Sun to have risen far beyond its present location to rejoin the original source of its substance in the empyrean heaven. But its "spiritual material" is actually too dense for the light-filled heavens, too rarefied for the Earth: hence it remains in the middle.' (p. 137) Fludd's intuitive realization of the Sun's supremacy is here at variance with his materialistic cosmogenesis. According to the latter, that which is higher is, de facto, more spiritual, nearer to God, and more filled with light. The Sun, being in the middle of the ethereal sphere, is therefore more spiritual than the inner planets and the Earth, but more material than the outer ones and the fixed stars. Fludd compensates by stressing its central situation, and makes of it a kind of secondary residence for God. Here the zigzag shaded circles represent the planetary spheres surrounding the Earth.
UCH I, a, p. 136

20 *The Creation of the Planets*
'The planets all arose from the action of the Sun's rays, streaming in both directions. The descending solar rays met ascending vaporous material, and at the point where they were equal a battle ensued. And just as the meeting of two opposite winds produces a cloud, so the globe of Mercury condensed at this midpoint, imbued with the opposing tendencies that manifest as its direct and retrograde motions. Venus was similarly formed at the midpoint between Mercury and the Sun; the Moon at the midpoint between Mercury and the lower boundary of the ethereal sphere. The outer planets were formed analogically, Jupiter forming at the midpoint between the Sun and the fixed stars, and Mars and Saturn filling the gaps.' (pp. 143–5)

'Since the Sun is the source of heat for the entire ethereal realm, planets will be colder as they are further away from it. Saturn and the Moon are therefore the coldest planets, but they differ in that Saturn shares the dry coldness of the crystalline heaven, while the Moon has the wet coldness of the lowest ethereal vapours. These qualities are consistent with the effects of the planets in astrology.' (pp. 146–7)
UCH I, a, p. 145

21 *A Refutation of Copernicus*
'If the Earth were not the centre of the universe, but a revolving body circling the Sun, as some ancient and modern philosophers maintain (notably Copernicus and William Gilbert), there would be no possibility of life upon it: violent winds would sweep everything to the ground. Besides, it would be remarkable if the Earth alone were to move steadily upon its axis, while all the other planets varied in latitude. Finally, as the Earth is the largest and densest of all bodies it stands to reason that it would be at the centre of the more rarified ones, and less apt to move than any of the others. The source of all power and movement is at the periphery of the universe, not in the centre – for as our picture shows, a wheel is much more easily turned from its circumference than from its hub!' (pp. 153–7)
UCH I, a, p. 155



22

22 *The Primeval Duality*
This is one of the most important plates for the understanding of Fludd's metaphysics. 'There is one God, one Supreme Being, one Essence, one Divine Mind, *vel volens, vel nolens*—both willing and nilling. [This is the upper circle.] These are like a man's dual faculties of affirmation and negation: and just as both can be good, so God is good whether he wills or nills, for in God there is no evil. Thus Hermes, in the *Pimander*: "The monad generates a monad [volunty] and reflects its ardour in itself [nolunty]."

'In the dark circle all is in the primal state of chaos, before the creation of the world. God is in the middle, in his essence and light, but he does not send it out. *Pimander* calls this "an infinite shadow in the abyss"; it is the Dark Aleph of the Cabbala. This divine property manifests as darkness, silence, death, disease, etc., as can be seen by its connection to the central circle, that of the world. And if we could visit the centre of the Earth, we would doubtless find there the corner-stone of light *(lapis lucidum angularis)*. God's other property gives the world its life, light, form and harmony. It is the Word of God, the spiritual Christ filling all, and the incorruptible Spirit in all things.

'According to the Ancients, there is an archetypal Sun through which all is adorned with beauty and harmony. They attribute the mystery of the visible, created Sun to this divine Sun, Apollo, who carries life, grace and health in his right hand but in his left a bow and arrows as a sign of his severity. Similar to him is Bacchus or Dionysus, by whom creatures are torn in pieces. But he is the same being, known by day as Apollo and at night as Dionysus, the

Prince of Darkness [see the lower hemispheres]. As Dionysus tears man into his seven pieces by night, so Apollo restores him by day to his sevenfold constitution. They are both none other than the one God, who works all in all.' (pp. 5–8)

The legends around the circles read, from the top downwards: 'Divine volunty, from which comes the divine act or wisdom, doing the will of the Father and revealing the foundations from the darkness and bringing to light the lethal shadow, creates the world of formless matter' (paraphrases of Job 12.22, Wisdom 11.17). 'Divine nolunty, from which comes divine potency, doing the Father's nolunty.' In the middle: 'One from two', 'God, still one', and on the right, 'Jehova: light, health, and the life-force.'

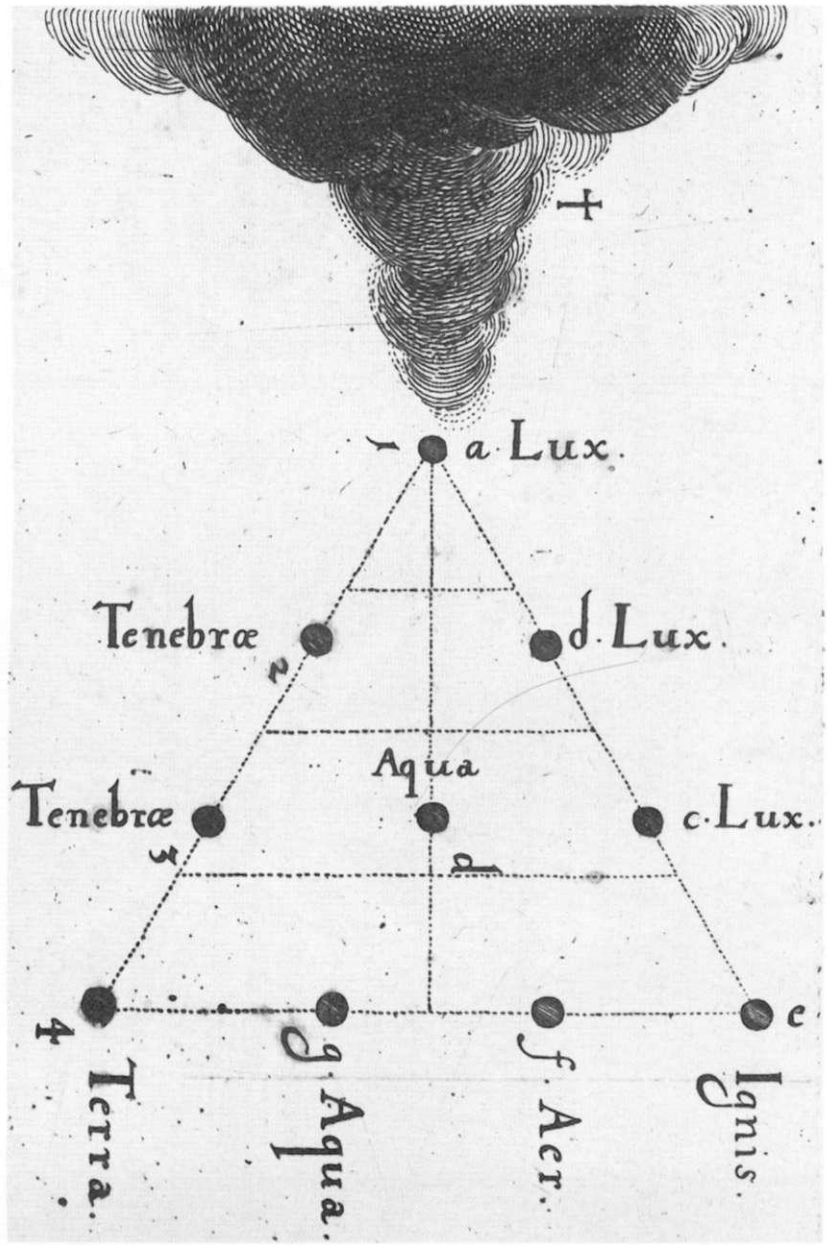
MC I, a, p. 4; II, a, p. 32; *PM*, t.p.

23

23 *The Fall of Icarus*
Renaissance initials often show some mythological or biblical figure whose name begins with the appropriate letter. Here Icarus, having flown too near the Sun on the wings made by his father Daedalus, plunges to earth. But there is another level of meaning here. Since the subject of the book which opens with this initial is the Fall and Redemption of mankind, we may interpret the winged figure also as Satan, thrust down from Heaven.

According to the Ancients, Fludd explains in Chapter II of *Tractatus Theologo-Philosophicus*, the first essence was Demogorgon, the uncreated. The second was Eternity (equivalent to Nature), and the third Chaos, who gave birth to Litigium, or Strife. Seeing the damage done by them, Demogorgon flung down Chaos and Strife to the dark, cold centre of the Earth. Nature then gave birth to another son, Pan, who dwells between the light powers and the dark and regulates the harmony of the spheres with the sevenfold pipes of his syrinx. In the Orphic cosmogony, from which this tale is confusedly derived, Pan is far more than the woodland deity of common legend. He is the same as Phanes Protogonus, the father of Saturn and hence the ancestor of all classical gods. Fludd did not delve deeply into this complex theology. It sufficed him to imagine that the Ancients had anticipated the role of Christ, sent down by his Father to combat Satan in the hearts of men. It is ironic that the classical Pan was to become the very model and image of the Devil.

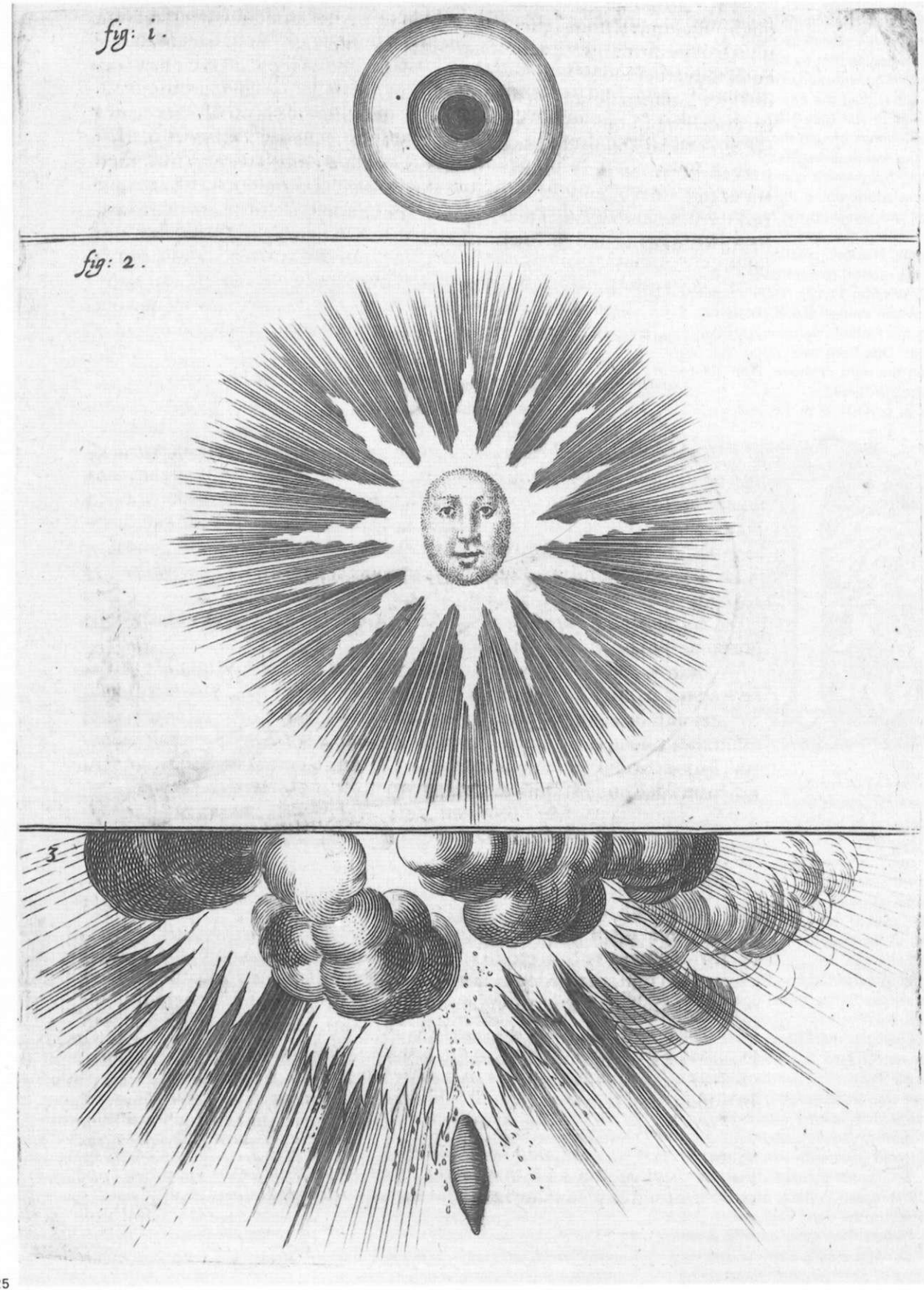
TTP, p. 3; *UCH* II, a, 2, p. 4



24

24 *The Pythagorean Tetrad*
Another model of creation is the mathematical one whose source is the Pythagorean number-philosophy handed down in Plato's *Timaeus*. The Monad generates the Dyad, and the Triad and Tetrad follow, the arithmetical progression continuing indefinitely. In the plate the absolute darkness precedes the Monad, the first created light. The Dyad is the polarity of light and darkness, with which the Humid Spirit makes a third. The polarization of the four elements concludes the foundation of the world, bringing the number of principles up to ten. Fludd borrowed this mathematical philosophy from Francesco Giorgio, whose *De Harmonia Mundi* (1525) also supplied him with his ideas of musical proportion as a universal schema.

PS, p. 33

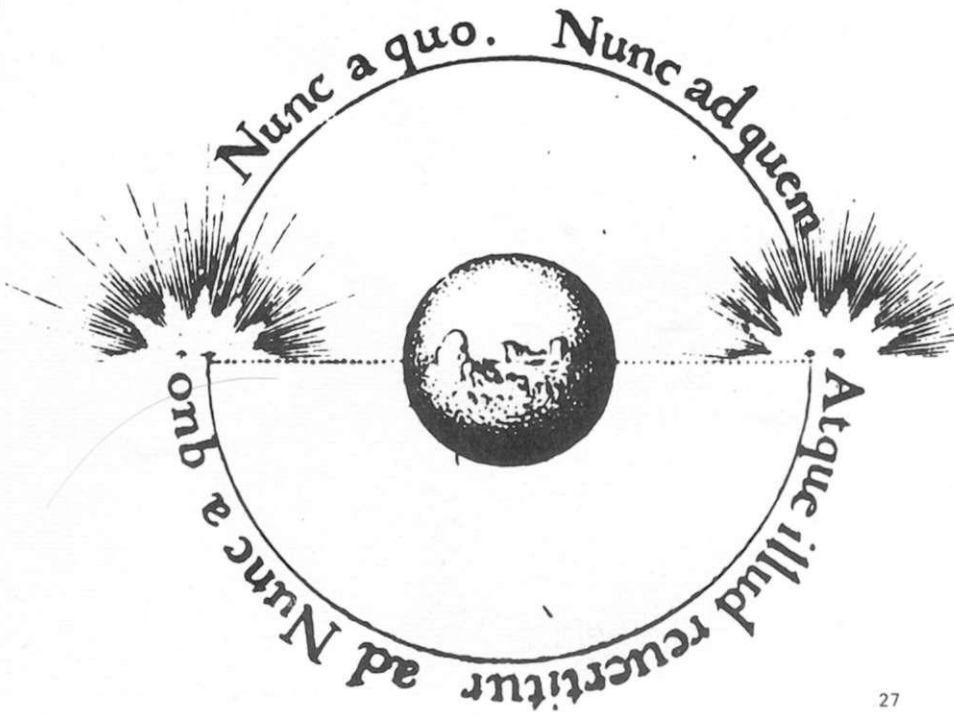


25

25 *The Trinity and the Generation of the Four Elements*
In a section on sacred numbers, Fludd says that 'Unity is the starting point, and Duality is the first-born of Unity, the mean between Unity and Trinity. From the Dyad proceeds the Third, the Holy Spirit, which is one in essence with the Father and the Son, and in turn binds them together.' (pp. 25–6) He thinks of the third number as healing the rift of the primeval duality.

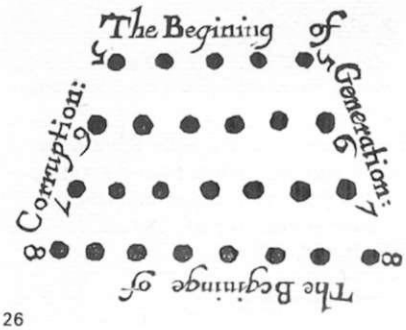
The top figure depicts the Trinity in the form of an eye: the white represents the Father, the iris the Son, and the pupil the Spirit. The middle figure relates the Trinity to the Sun, whose characteristics of light and heat refer to the Son and Spirit, while the orb itself represents the Father. The third figure shows the 'eruption of a cloud', in which God the Father appears as a consuming fire. The Son, being the divine Word, is likened to the sound of thunder, and the Spirit to the lightning-flash.

This very curious plate might be interpreted, aside from Fludd's own exegesis, as a downward sequence depicting the polarization of the four elements or states of matter from the undifferentiated One, by intervention of the solar power. The lower figure certainly seems to contain fire, air, drops of water, and faecal earth.
UCH II, a, 1, p. 27



27

The root of Generation which is from the 4. Elements or the catholick Element four-foldly altered.



26

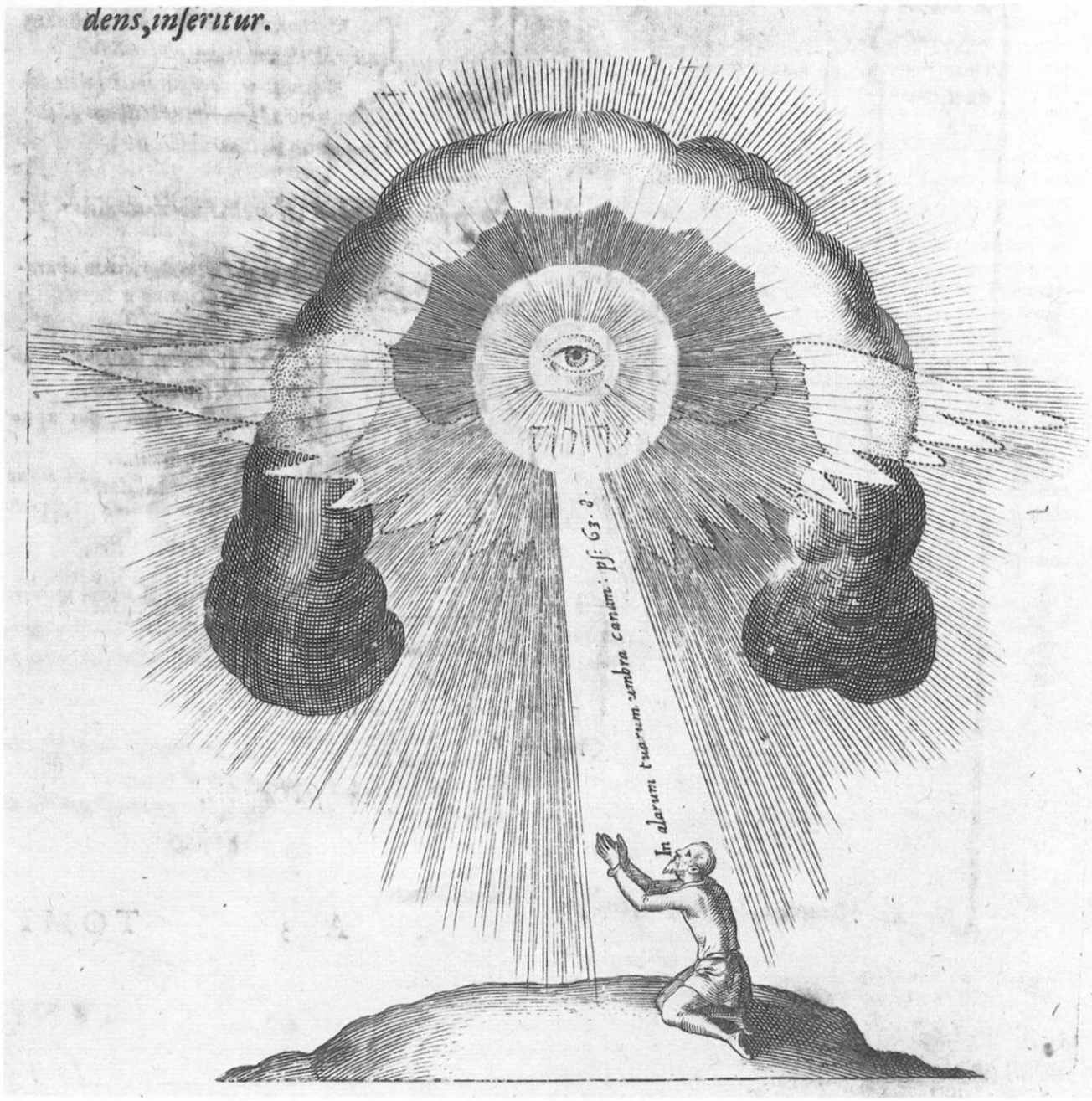
26 *Generation and Corruption*
The world is formed of a 'simple square': the four primal elements whose emanation was shown in the two previous plates. Generation and its inseparable counterpart, corruption, are products of the subsequent unfoldment of the arithmetical series. In the case of man, his beginning is from sperm, 'a watery or fluid Substance, but little altered: and as in the water the whole Fabrick of the world, and seeds of all things was complicitly conteined, and yet nothing did appear externally but water. So in the seed or Sperm . . . the whole man, namely the bones, flesh, blood, sinews, and such like, are complicitly conteined, and will by degrees appear out explicitly.' (p. 78) See the commentary on *Planetary Man* (plate 88) for another association of generation with the number 5.

The first cubic number 8 represents 'an exact rotation of the foure ventous forms into one mixtion', i.e. the mixture of the four separate subtle elements into a three-dimensional compound: the body. Corruption follows as a natural consequence, as night follows day, 'until it returns to the point of the simple Spermatick Element from whence it began, and there it beginneth a new Generation in another form: For the all-acting nature is never idle'.
MP, p. 78

27 *Growth, Decay and Rebirth*
The Sun's rotation is a symbol of the process: it rises in the morning as the primal point of light, the *terminus a quo*. It travels across the sky to the *terminus ad quem* and disappears. Yet its journey is continued out of sight, and it rises again from the same point to create another day. The idea is more fully developed in the last three cabbalistic figures (plates 37–9). If Fludd had not been so inescapably a man of his time and its Judaeo-Christian dogma, he might have been led to see the reflection of this cosmic event in human life, as the principle of reincarnation.
UCH II, a, 1, p. 23

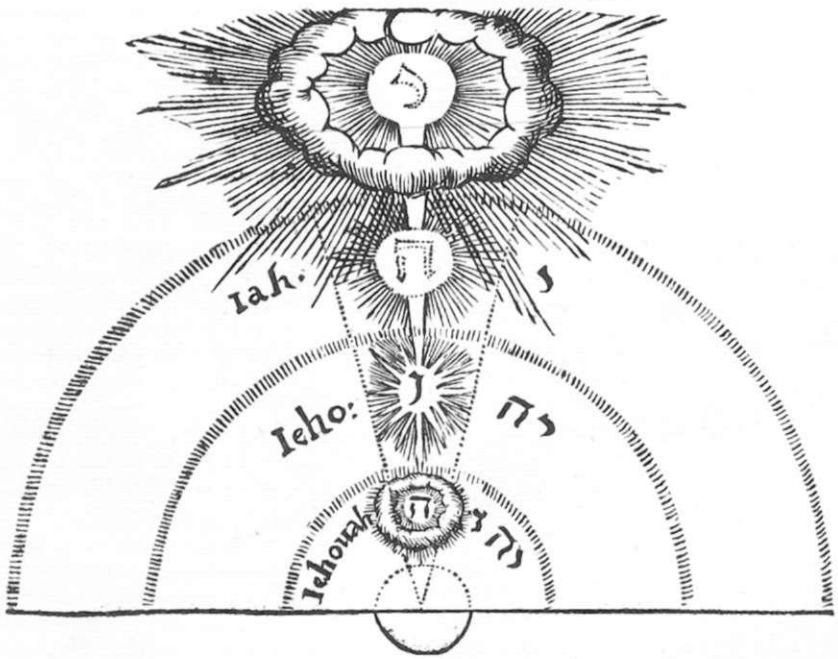
II Cabbala

The principles governing both the universe and its microcosmic image, man, expressed in the terms of Hebrew esotericism



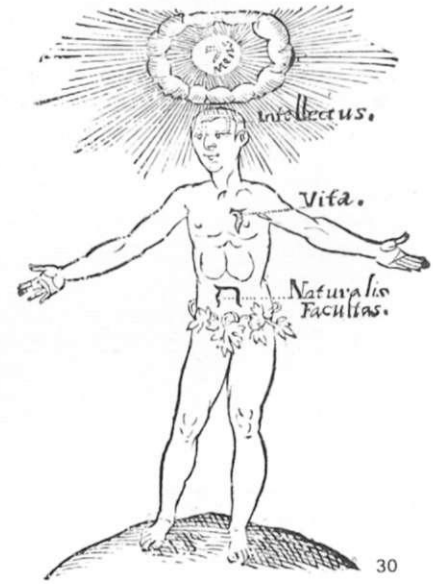
28

28 *'Under Thy Wings, Jehovah'*
King David kneels before the Most High, saying 'Under the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice' (Psalm 63. 7). The motif recalls the Rosicrucian manifesto of 1614 (the *Fama*) which concluded with the similar words 'sub umbra alarum tuarum JEHOVA'. The clouds have parted to allow David direct vision of the Tetragrammaton, the unpronounceable word to which Jews allude as *Adonai* (the Lord) or simply *ha Shem* (the Word). Fludd generally uses these Hebrew letters to represent God in his diagrams. For a Christian Cabbalist they are easily accommodated to Trinitarian doctrine: the three different letters י *Yod*, ה *He*, *Vau*, are interpreted as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The presence of two letters *He* is explained in this context by the Holy Spirit both joining and proceeding from the Father and the Son; for another rationale, see the commentary to plate 29.
UCH II, b, f. A3'



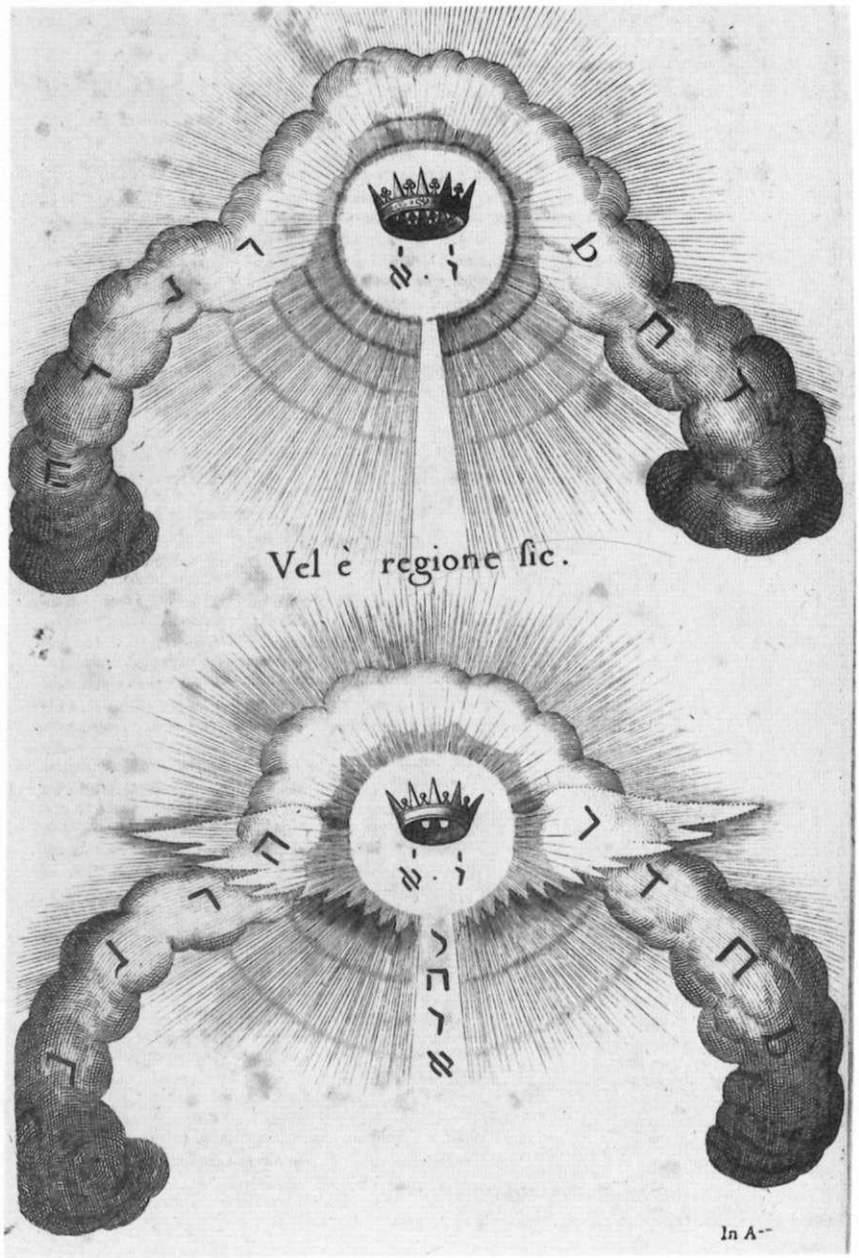
29

29 *The Tetragrammaton in the Macrocosm*
'Hermes says that the world is an image of God, and Moses that man, too, is made after God's example. Hence all Cabbalists refer these lower realms to the archetypal one. This plate shows how the ineffable Name is imprinted on the universe: above and beyond all is *Yod*, the letter from which all proceeds and which conceals in itself the whole Name. From it emanates the empyrean world, symbolized by *He*. The Psalmist says that God places his tabernacle in the Sun, and this we may interpret as follows: God forms around the Sun the ethereal world *(Vau)* dividing the empyrean from the lower *He*, the elemental world.' (pp. 5–6) The plate also shows how God's full name unfolds stage by stage: I, IH, IHV, IHVH. Although Fludd does not mention it, these are also the four worlds of the Cabbalists: *Atziluth*, the 'pure world', *Briah*, the world of creation, *Yetzirah*, the world of formation, and *Assiah*, the material world.
UCH II, b, p. 6



30

30 *The Tetragrammaton in the Microcosm*
As man's faculties correspond to the regions of the universe, so they, too, can be seen as a manifestation of the divine Name. *Yod* is the higher mind not contained by the physical body – hence above the man's head, just as in the previous plate *Yod* is above the manifested universe. *He*, *Vau* and the lower *He* are respectively intellect, life and the natural faculty. This is better understood in the light of plates 49–56.
UCH II, b, p. 8



31

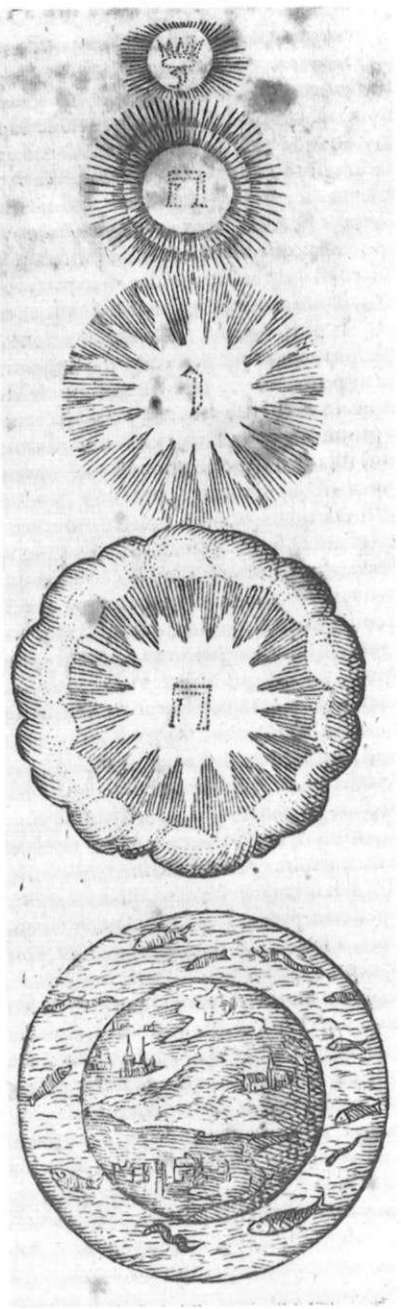
31 *The Mystery of the Number 5*
The engraver's lack of clarity in Hebrew lettering is aggravated here by one of Fludd's most confusing verbal explanations. The plate seems to represent the descent of God's Spirit into manifestation, and the ascent of the soul through the hierarchies of being to God, expressed in cabbalistic numerology. The crown is *Kether*, the first principle of Cabbala, which can be signified by either the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, א *Aleph*, or the primal letter י *Yod*. On the upper figure, the left-hand letters should be the alphabetical progression from *Aleph*: ב *Beth*, ג *Gimel*, ד *Daleth*, ה *He*. These have the numerical values 1 to 5, and they align thus with the cosmic hierarchy:

א 1	God, angels
ב 2	God, angels
ג 3	God, angels
ד 4	Fixed stars, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars
ה 5	Sun
6	Venus, Mercury, Moon
7	Elemental region
8	Elemental region
9	Elemental region

The Sun, in fifth place, is also equivalent to the second or lower *He* of the Tetragrammaton: it is God's particular tabernacle in the centre of the universe.

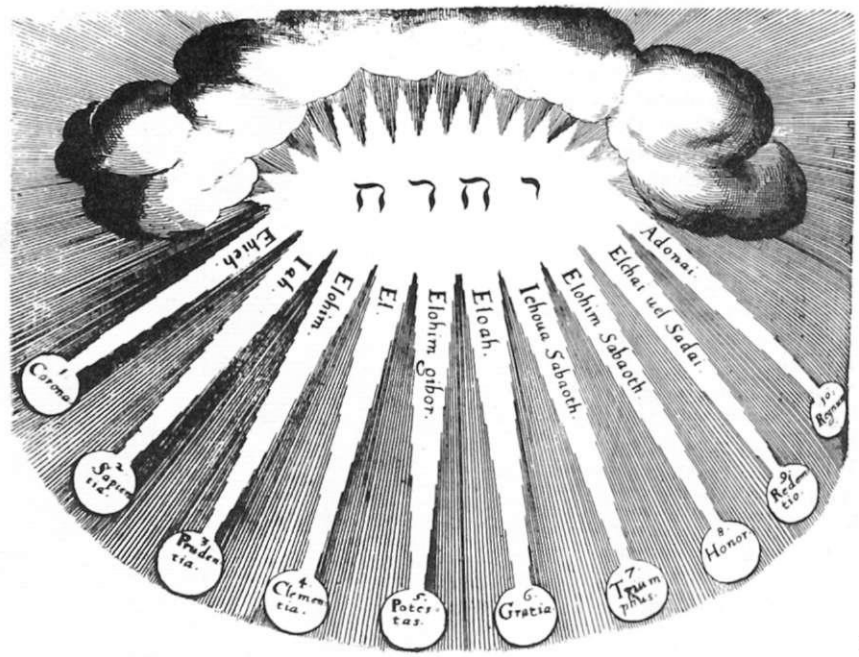
On the right, the series goes from י *Yod* to מ *Mem*, ח *Heth*, ד *Daleth*, ר *Resh*. Whereas *Aleph* is the 'Dark Aleph', symbol of the ultimate void before creation, *Yod* is the 'Light Aleph', God as Creator. *Mem* and *Heth* are the 'remainder of the darkness, from which creation is made', *Daleth* is the 'gate through which wisdom enters the world', and *Resh* is the 'life produced in the world by that wisdom'. (p. 44)

In the lower figure are the protecting wings of God regarded as the goal of mortals. The letters on either side are reversed, and the centre column reads *Yod, He, Vau, Aleph*: the two 'formal' letters embracing the two 'material'. This is an approximation of 'JEHOVAH' (see plate 28).
UCH II, b, p. 42



32

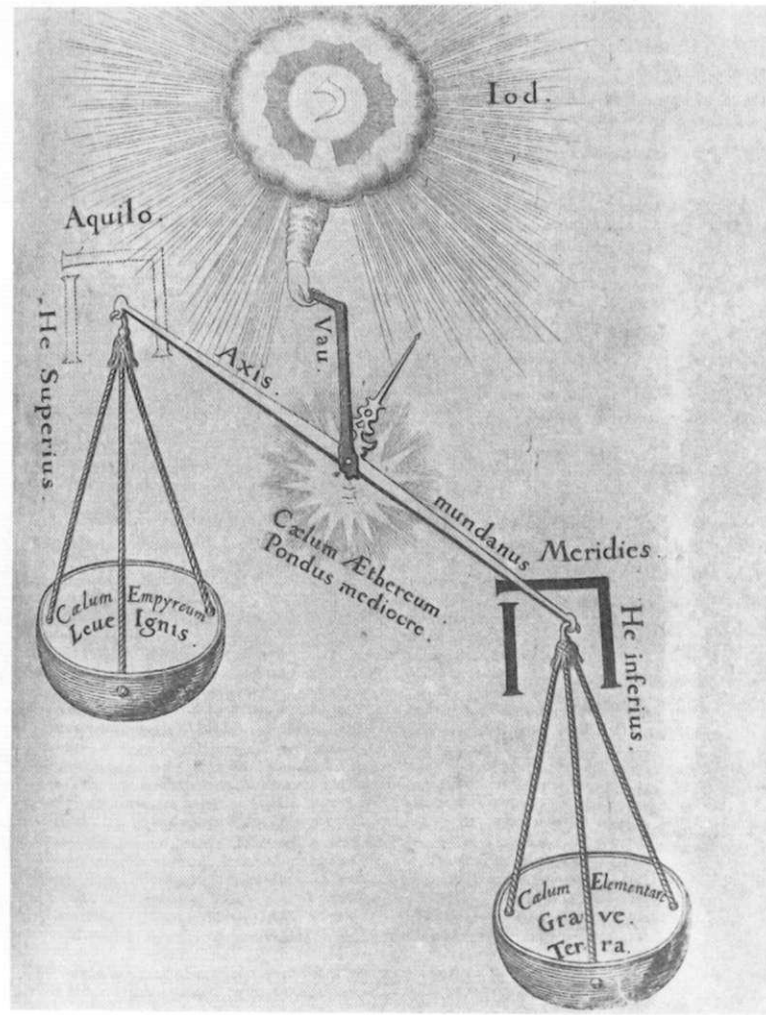
32 *God's Omnipresence*
The previous plates would seem to leave the Earth devoid of God's emanations. Fludd's diagrams often show it as a dense sphere in the centre, excluded from his celestial schemes. This plate shows the four letters of the Tetragrammaton related, as before, to God and the three worlds. The copious quotations which Fludd gives concerning the bottom sphere (the material Earth) give a new slant: 'The Spirit of the Lord filleth the world' (Wisdom 1.7), 'God is everywhere in heaven, in hell, in the uttermost parts of the sea, in night, in darkness' (paraphrase from Psalm 139), 'Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and in the earth beneath: there is none else' (Deut. 4.39).
UCH II, b, p. 74



33

33 *The Emanation of the Sephiroth*
God, though he is One in himself, is perceived in many ways and called by many names. These names correspond to some of his inexhaustible attributes. Ten names in particular give the key to one possible symbol of the universal scheme by which the worlds are made: the tenfold emanations known in Cabbala as the Sephiroth. Here the names of God are given in Hebrew, which is untranslatable for the simple reason that the English language lacks an adequate metaphysical vocabulary. The names manifest as the ten Sephiroth, called by the conventional but misleading names of (1) Crown, (2) Wisdom, (3) Prudence, (4) Mercy, (5) Power, (6) Grace, (7) Triumph, (8) Honour, (9) Redemption, and (10) Kingdom. For Fludd this is another illustration of the mutiplication of God's aspects, and their descent into the created world.
PS, p. 170

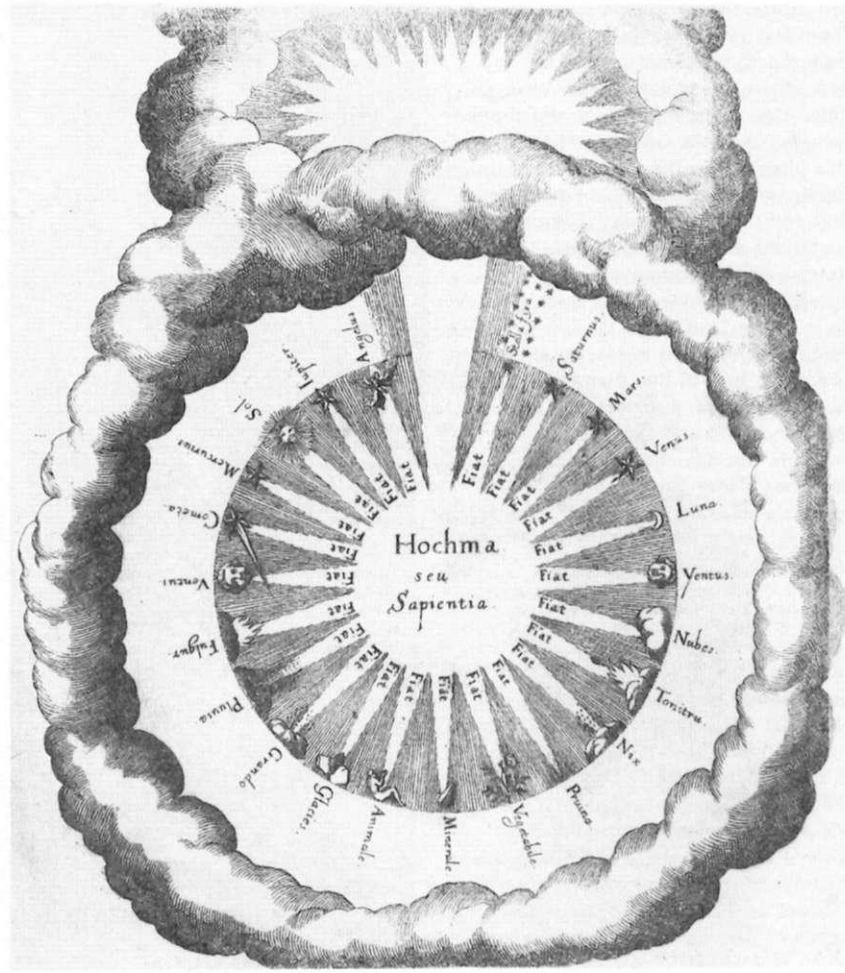
34



34 *The Weighing of the Worlds*
Another arrangement of the Tetragrammaton shows *Yod* as the Supreme Deity holding a pair of scales. The fulcrum is the Sun, in the middle of the ethereal world: the point of balance in the exact centre of the universe, joined directly to God (see plate 60). The left-hand balance rises, for it represents the empyrean heaven, made of 'light fire'; the right-hand one falls, being the 'heavy earth' of the elemental realm.
UCH II, b, p. 11

35 *Wisdom's Creations*
The second of the Sephiroth, *Hokhmah*, is usually translated as 'Wisdom'. It issues from the ineffable Crown (*Kether*) replete with the ideas of the universe which it radiates like a sun. Although these ideas have to pass through the remaining eight Sephiroth before they can actually manifest as created beings, Fludd shows them coming directly from *Hokhmah* and filling the universe. The plate can be regarded as a cabbalistic commentary on plate 16.

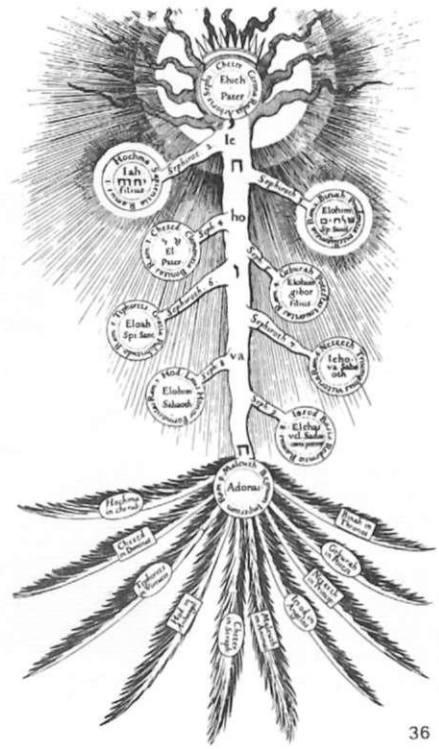
The creations of Wisdom are (clockwise from the top) the fixed stars, Saturn, Mars, Venus, Moon, wind, clouds, thunder, snow, frost, vegetables, minerals, animals, ice, hail, rain, lightning, wind again, comets, Mercury, Sun, Jupiter, and angels. Note that the winds are on the horizontal diameter, in conformity with Fludd's view of them as mediators between the ethereal and elemental worlds.
PS, p. 174



35

36 *The Sephirothic Tree*
Fludd's idiosyncratic interpretation of the traditional Sephirothic tree places the ten emanations on either side of a central trunk bearing the Tetragrammaton. The four letters correspond to the traditional disposition of the Sephiroth according to the four worlds (see plate 30): *Atziluth* contains one, *Briah* the next two, *Yetzirah* six and *Assiah* the last. But the middle pillar should also include *Tifereth* and *Yesod*.

Each Sephira is given its Hebrew name, its Latin translation, the corresponding name of God, and in some cases a Trinitarian interpretation. Most interesting, for Fludd, is the emanation from *Malkuth*, whence sprout ten branches in turn bearing the names of the Sephiroth. These are coupled with the traditional Christian names for the nine orders of angels (Cherubim, Dominations, Virtues, Archangels, Seraphim, Angels, Principalities, Powers, Thrones), and 'Soul', corresponding to a second *Malkuth*. Thus the supreme tree of God's names is reflected in the angelic hierarchy, supporting the theory of universal correspondence.
UCH II, b, p. 181



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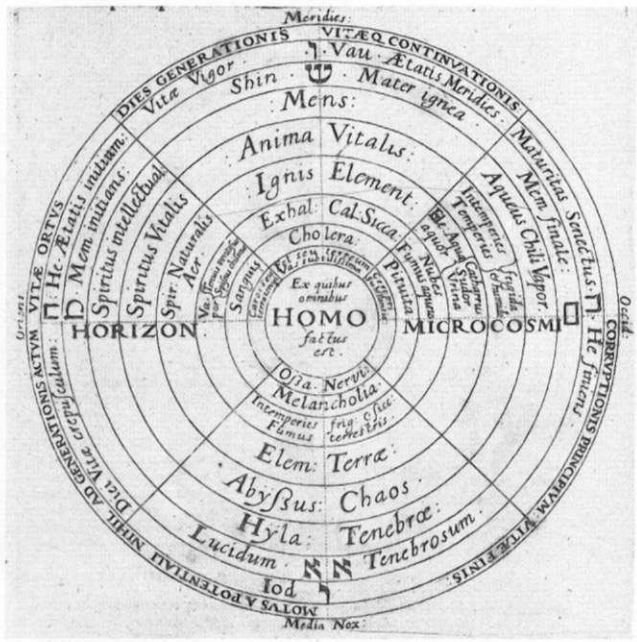

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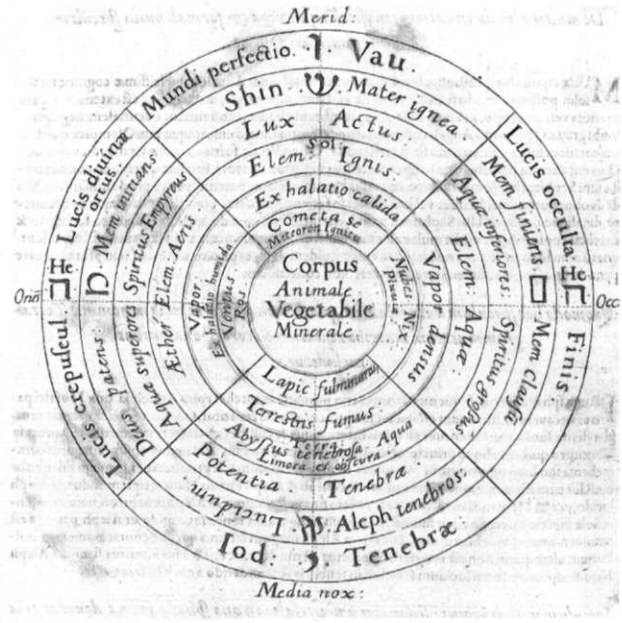
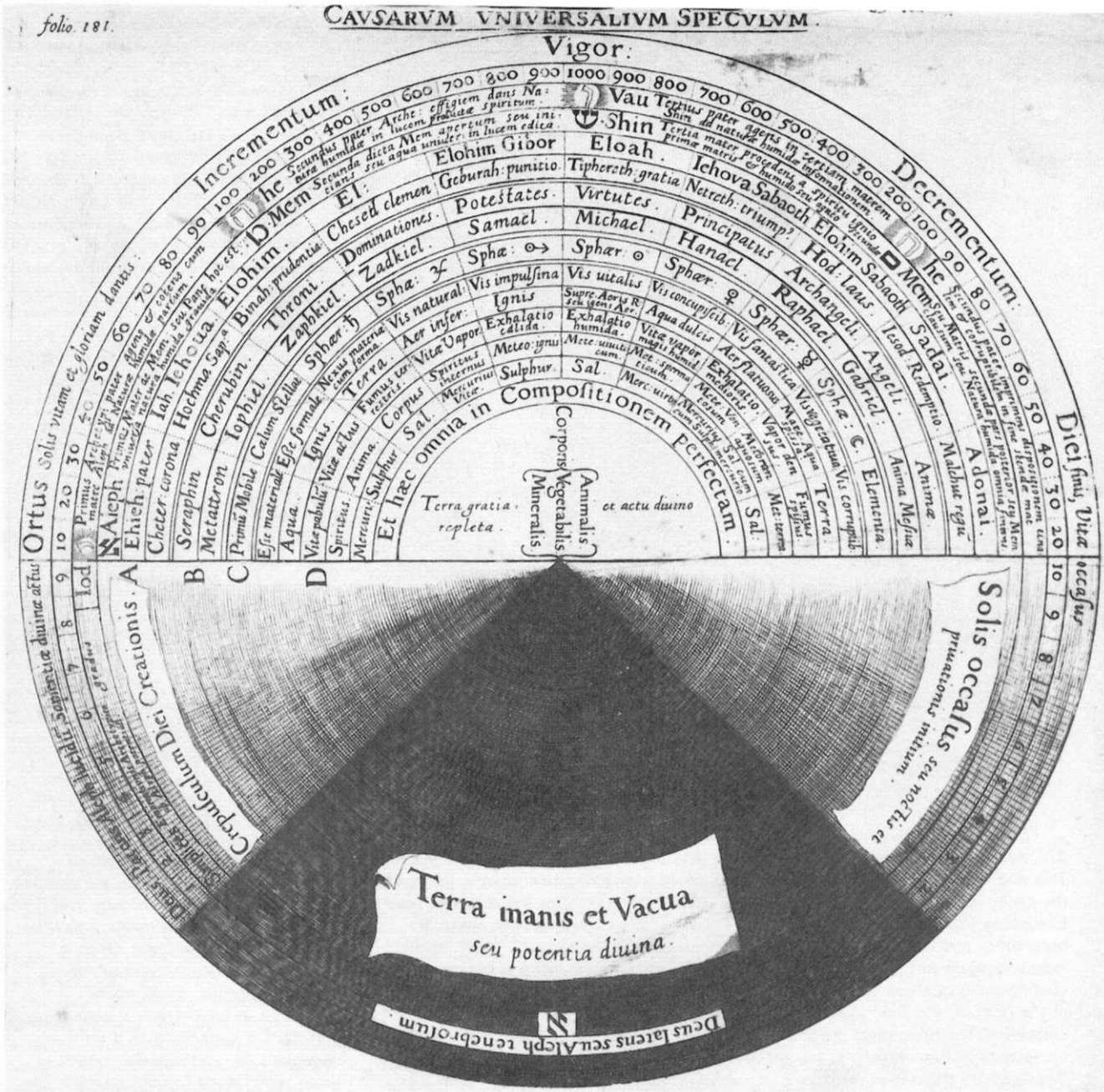


38

37 *Man's Constitution*
This and the next two plates derive from the cyclic idea expressed in plate 27. Everything begins in the darkness of potentiality and emerges into light, returning again to the darkness. The starting point of these circles is always at the bottom, and their progress is clockwise. The outer rings are the archetypes of the whole; the first reads: 'Motion from the nothingness of potentiality to the act of generation, the origin of life; the daytime of generation and the continuation of life; the beginning of corruption; the end of life.' The next two circles show these archetypes as expressed by the Cabbalists in Hebrew letters. *Yod* is the Absolute Father, shrouded in incomprehensible darkness, which manifests through the Son and Spirit. The two Alephs, light and dark, are his positive and negative aspects (see plate 22). '*Aleph* signifies the darkness from which the uncreated light arises. It corresponds to *Yod*, the virtue of the Tetragrammaton. *Mem* is the symbol of the created waters, which are divided by the Spirit, *Shin*, into gross and subtle by the interposition of the firmament. Thus in the Tetragrammaton *Vau* divides the two *He*'s. *Aleph*, *Mem* and *Shin* are called the three Mother Letters, since they receive like wax the imprint of the three male letters *Yod*, *He* and *Vau*.' The inner circles reflect these processes as they are manifested in the microcosm, through psychic elements, subtle and material substances, weather conditions, humours, and organs, 'from all of which man is made'.
UCH II, b, p. 198

38 *The World's Constitution*
The same principles govern the creation and history of the macrocosm. The third ring begins with potentiality, which by the influence of the Light Aleph becomes the upper waters or the empyrean heaven, made of the substance of light which is perfect activity. Corresponding to it on the negative side are the lower waters of gross spirit, allied to the darkness. The next rings treat of the states of matter, vaporous and gaseous substances, meteorological phenomena; and in the centre condenses the animal, vegetable, or mineral body. It is hard to separate time, space, causality and correspondence in this idealistic scheme.
UCH II, b, 199



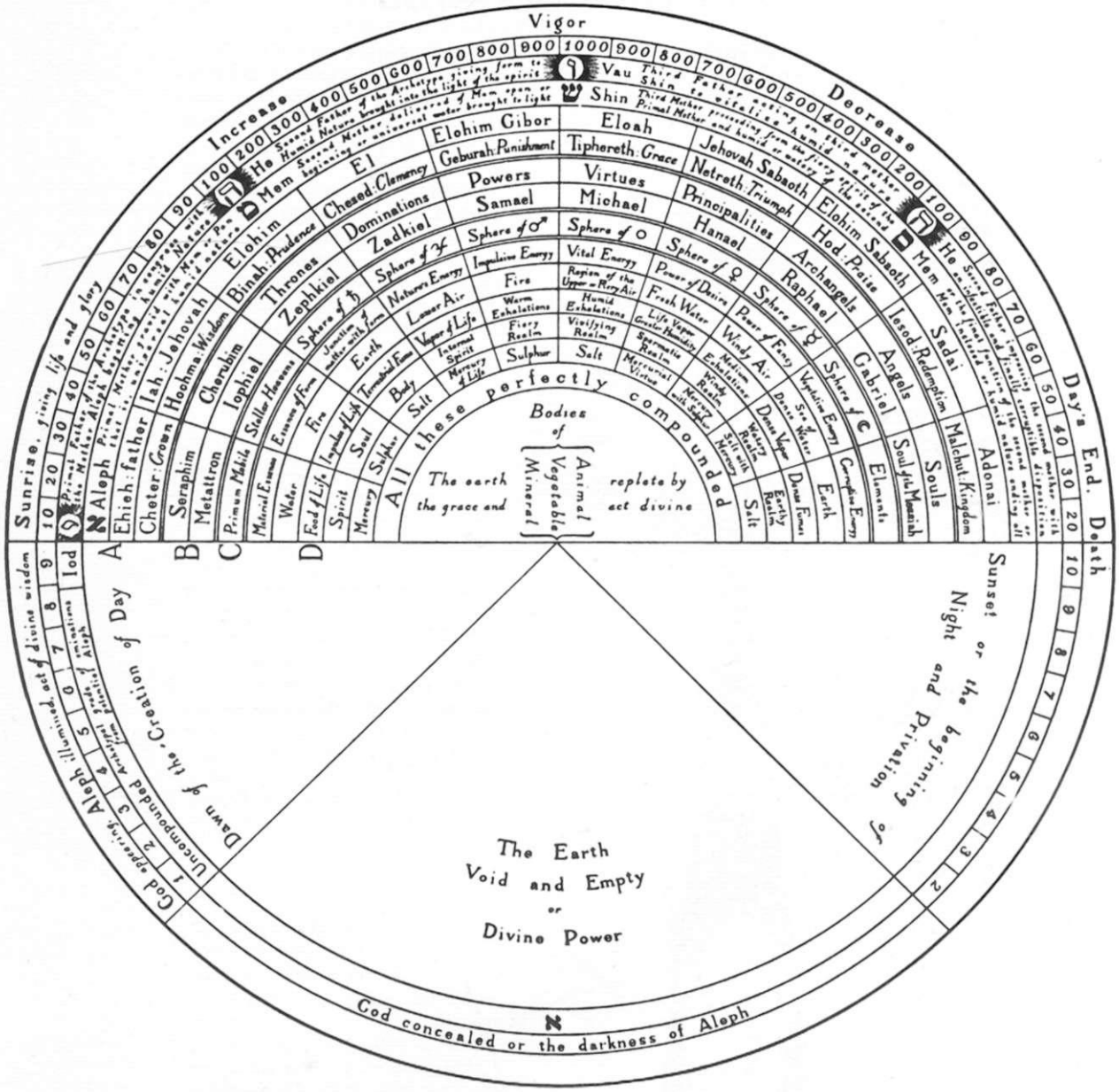
39

39 *Universal Causation*
This plate is a summation of the two preceding ones, enhanced by the names of God, Sephiroth, and Angels as found in the Great Meteorological Chart (plate 81). Its layout resembles that of Giulio Camillo's 'memory theatre' (see Yates, *Theatre of the World*) and suggests that it is intended as a pattern to be memorized. Whatever issue may be taken over its details, it illustrates very aptly the doctrines of emanation, correspondence, and cyclicity.

The theory of emanation explains that higher principles do not create lower beings out of nothing: they emanate them as manifestations of themselves on inferior planes of existence. Thus, to take one 'chain' as an illustration, *Vau*, the archetypal Son or Word, emanates *Shin*, the Spirit that manifests as *Eloah*, the personal God. He emanates Grace: the beauty of the universe which is built by the angels called Virtues. Corresponding to this principle in our little solar system is the Archangel Michael, whose physical body is the Sun. That Sun gives us our vital force, etc. (the lower circles are rather debatable).

The doctrine of correspondence states that every level of the hierarchy of being, from the mineral world up to the very archetypes themselves, is a reflection of the one above. This is a necessary corollary to the theory of emanation, for from each archetype is suspended a chain of being that descends to the very bottom of manifestation. So Michael, in the company of the archangels, is like the Sun in the company of the planets, or the heart in the human body, or gold among metals. The whole of magic, black and white, is based upon this

Plan of Universal Causes



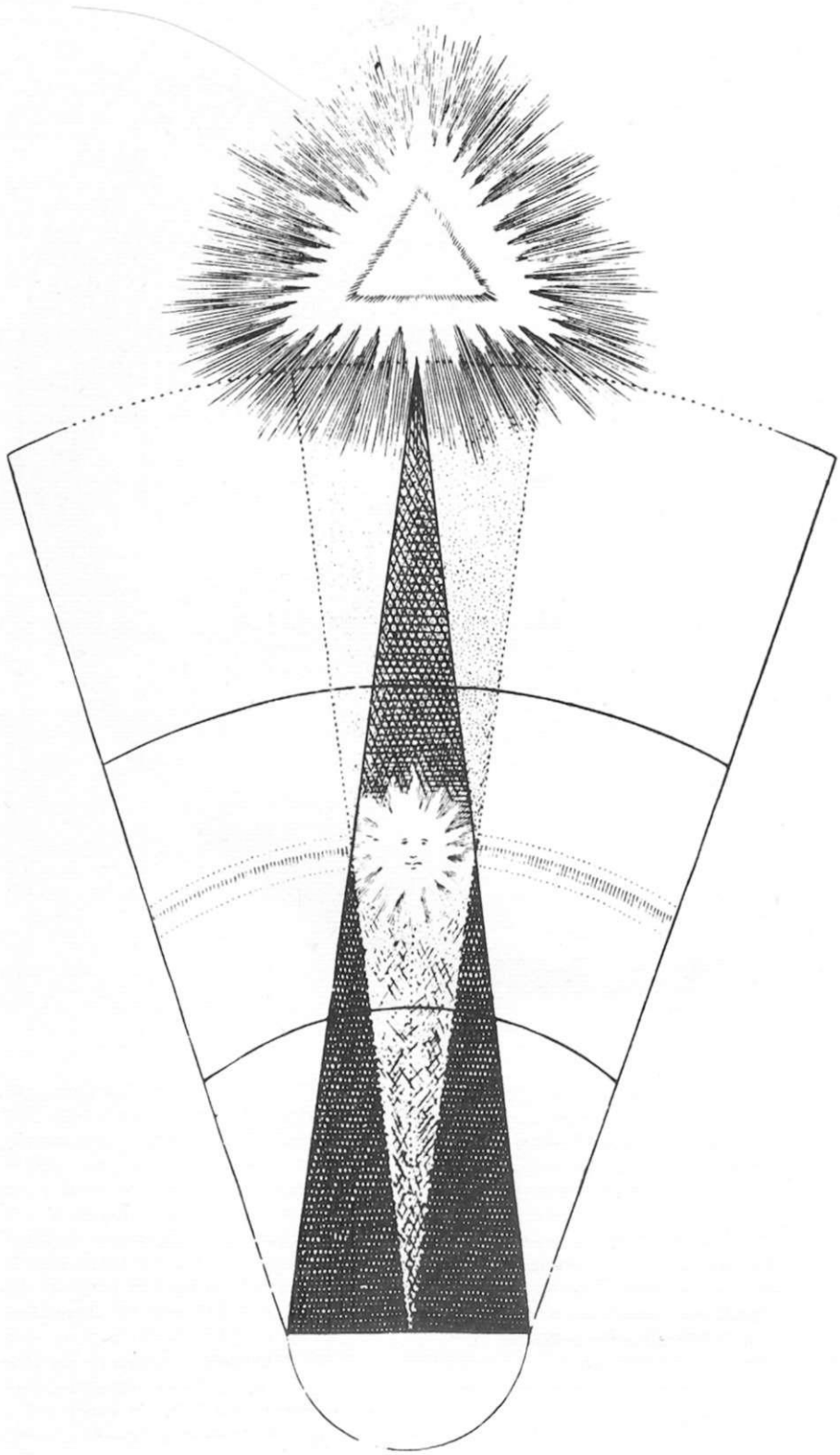
doctrine, for it assumes that actions taken on one level will have repercussions in the corresponding ones. In making ritual objects of gold, for example, one is facilitating the descent of the solar forces into the cup, ring, sceptre, etc., and thereby imbuing the user with them.

The principle of cyclicity is the 'Myth of the Eternal Return': the idea that time is not a straight line, running pointlessly from infinity to infinity, but a system of cycles within cycles, wheels within wheels, each unrolling in imitation of its superiors, from the spirals of electrons up to the birth and death of galaxies and beyond. On a human scale the cycles are experienced in day and night, the return of the seasons, the individual's periodic descent into incarnation, and the turning of the ages of world history, whether one considers the astrological ages (Piscean, Aquarian, etc.) or the cycle of the four ages of the Hindus and Greeks. All of this adds up to a very profound world view, confirming Fludd's position in the ranks of true esoteric philosophers.

MC II, a, p. 181

III Pyramids and Monochords

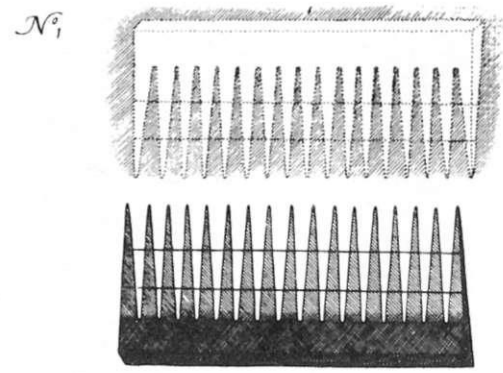
A pair of intersecting triangles or pyramids represents the cosmic duality of light and darkness as these interpenetrate one another. The monochord, a one-stringed instrument used in musical pedagogy since Antiquity, symbolizes the chain of being: the 'scale' of levels of existence that runs from the Earth to God



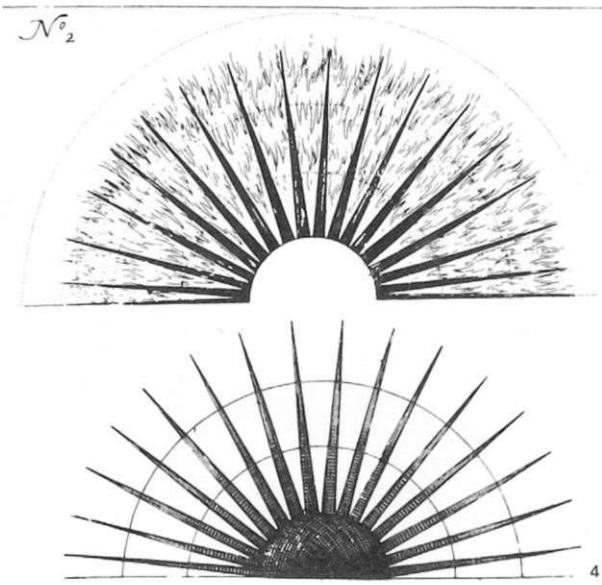
40

40 *The Dark and Light Pyramids*
'The heights of the empyrean realm are pure light, virtually free from all material qualities. Correspondingly, the lowest depths of the elemental realm are heavy, dense, and opaque to an extreme degree. The regions in between partake of both qualities in varying proportions.' (pp. 79–80)

Here is a sector of the Ptolemaic universe (see plates 2–4) showing the interpenetration of material and spiritual qualities in the form of dark and light pyramids. In the middle of the ethereal realm stands the Sun, at the point where the emanations of matter and light are in perfect balance.
PS, p. 212



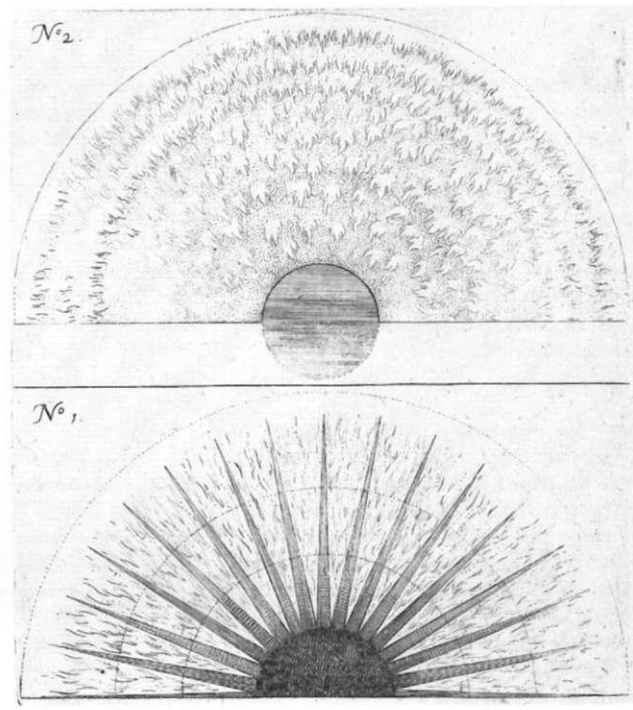
41 *Dark and Light Combs*
'We can also represent these dark and light pyramids as two combs: a light one representing the downward-pointing spiritual forces, and a dark one for the material world (see No. 1). As an adaptation of these combs, we present the two hemispheres of No. 2, the upper one corresponding to the male, generative nature, and the other to the female, receptive to the seed of light. This material hemisphere is like wax which can be formed by the seal of spirit.'
UCH II, a, 2, p. 188

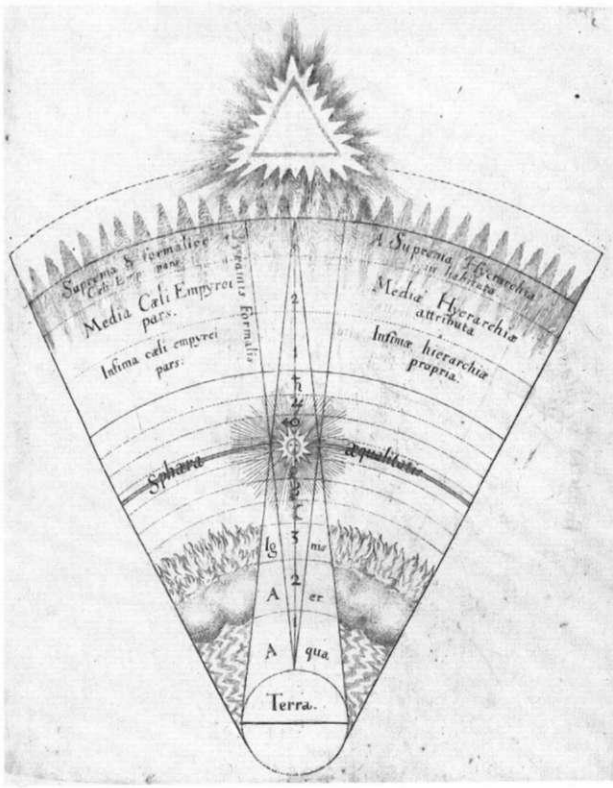


41

42 *The Hemispheres United*
'We must now imagine the dark and light hemispheres united, so that no empty space remains between their interstices (No. 1). The actual result of this mixture is to be seen in No. 2, where the spiritual fire diminishes gradually as it approaches the Earth. Thus, gentle reader, we have tried to give an exposition of our doctrine concerning the material and formal pyramids, which is the true key and gateway to philosophy, and to every science. And since few attain the mysteries of the heavens' constitution, for want of knowing this doctrine of the pyramids, we have set it out succinctly here, that lovers of this science may reach their goal.'
UCH II, a, 2, p. 190

42





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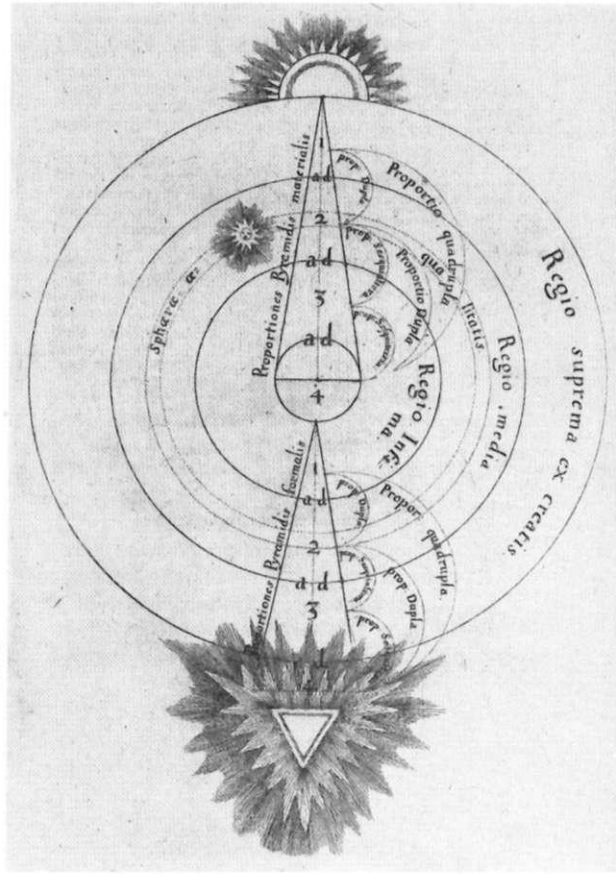


44

43 *The Pyramids of Form and Matter*
A more elaborate version of plate 40, this fills in the divisions of each realm. The empyrean divides into three, assigned to the highest, middle, and lowest members of the angelic hierarchy; the ethereal into the circles of the seven planets; the elemental into four. The descending pyramid stops short of Earth, the ascending one before the supercelestial realm of God.
UCH I, a, p. 89

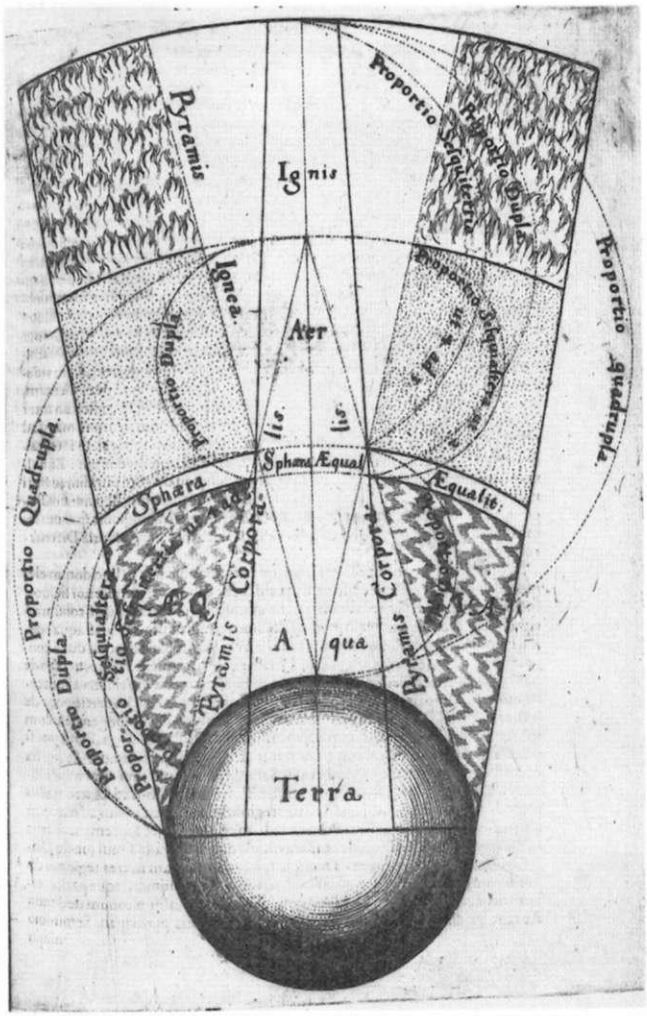
44 *The Proportions of the Pyramids*
The pyramids of matter and form are here separated and placed on the complete circle of the universe, in order to show their internal proportions. The Earth contains four parts of matter, none of form; the rest of the elemental realm three material, one formal; the ethereal realm two of each; the empyrean only one material, three formal; God is all form, free from matter.

These proportions lead directly to the Music of the Spheres. Taking the material pyramid as an example, we find the proportion 1 : 4 between its extremes in Heaven and Earth (*Proportio quadrupla*). Strings of lengths 1*x* and 4*x* produce notes two octaves apart. The other proportions follow analogically: *Proportio dupla*=1 : 2 and 2 : 4 (octaves); *Proportio sesquialtera*=2 : 3 (fifth); *Proportio sesquitertia*=3 : 4 (fourth).
UCH I, a, p. 84

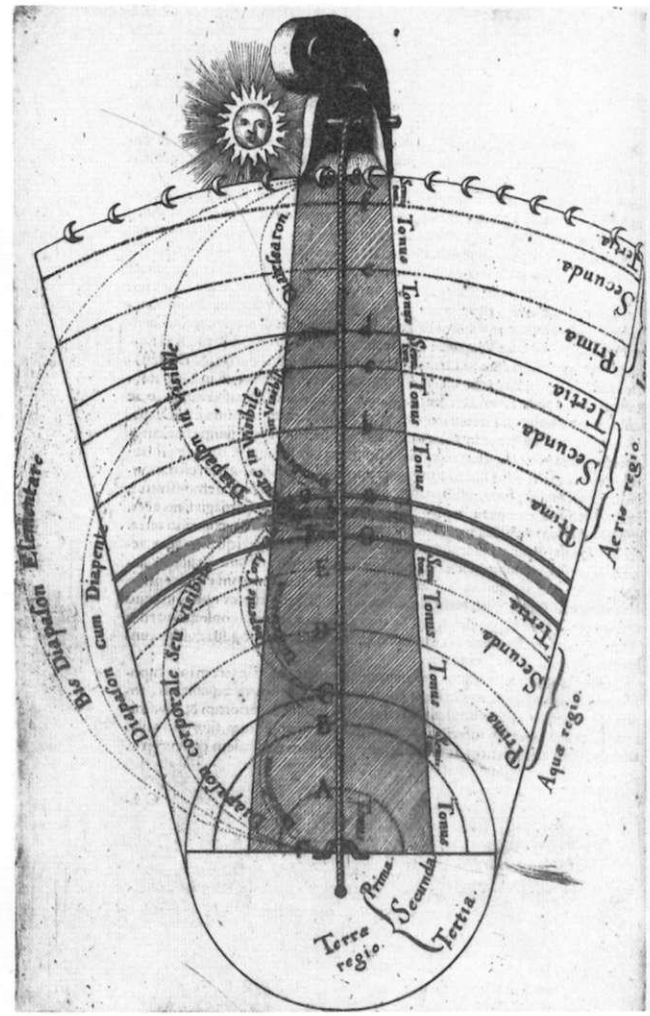
45 *The Divine Monochord*
This is a conflation of the two preceding plates. The three realms with their divisions are set out along a monochord. To the immediate left of the string Fludd specifies the members of each realm (giving to the empyrean hierarchy the Greek names of *Epiphaniae*=apparitions, *Epiphonomiae*=voices, and *Ephiomae*=acclamations). To each is assigned a note of the scale, from low G for the Earth (the Greek letter *Gamma*) up through two octaves to gg for the highest division of the empyrean. Applying the proportions of the last diagram, we find that they work perfectly: e.g. the *Proportio dupla* (2 : 1) from the Earth to the Sun becomes the octave interval from *Gamma* to G. On the right are the Greek names of the musical intervals corresponding to each proportion: *Disdiapason*=double octave=4 : 1; *Diapason*=octave=2 : 1; *Diapente*=fifth=3 : 2; *Diatessaron*=fourth=4 : 3.

There is an error in the 'Diapente materialis': it should join the Sun's G to the C of fire, as should the corresponding *proportio sesquialtera*. And in order for the tones and semitones to be correct (to the right of the string), we have to imagine the Fs as sharp.
UCH I, a, p. 90

Proportio quadrupla
Proportio dupla
Proportio Sesquitertia
Proportio Sesquialtera
Proportio tripla
Proportio dupla
Proportio Sesquitertia
Proportio Sesquialtera
Epiphonomia regio:
Epiphaniae Sedis pars
Epithoma locus
Diatessaron formalis
Diapason formalis
Diapente formalis
Diapente materialis
Diapason materialis
Diatessaron materialis
Diapason cum diapente
Disdiapason
Ignis
Aer
Aqua
Terra



46



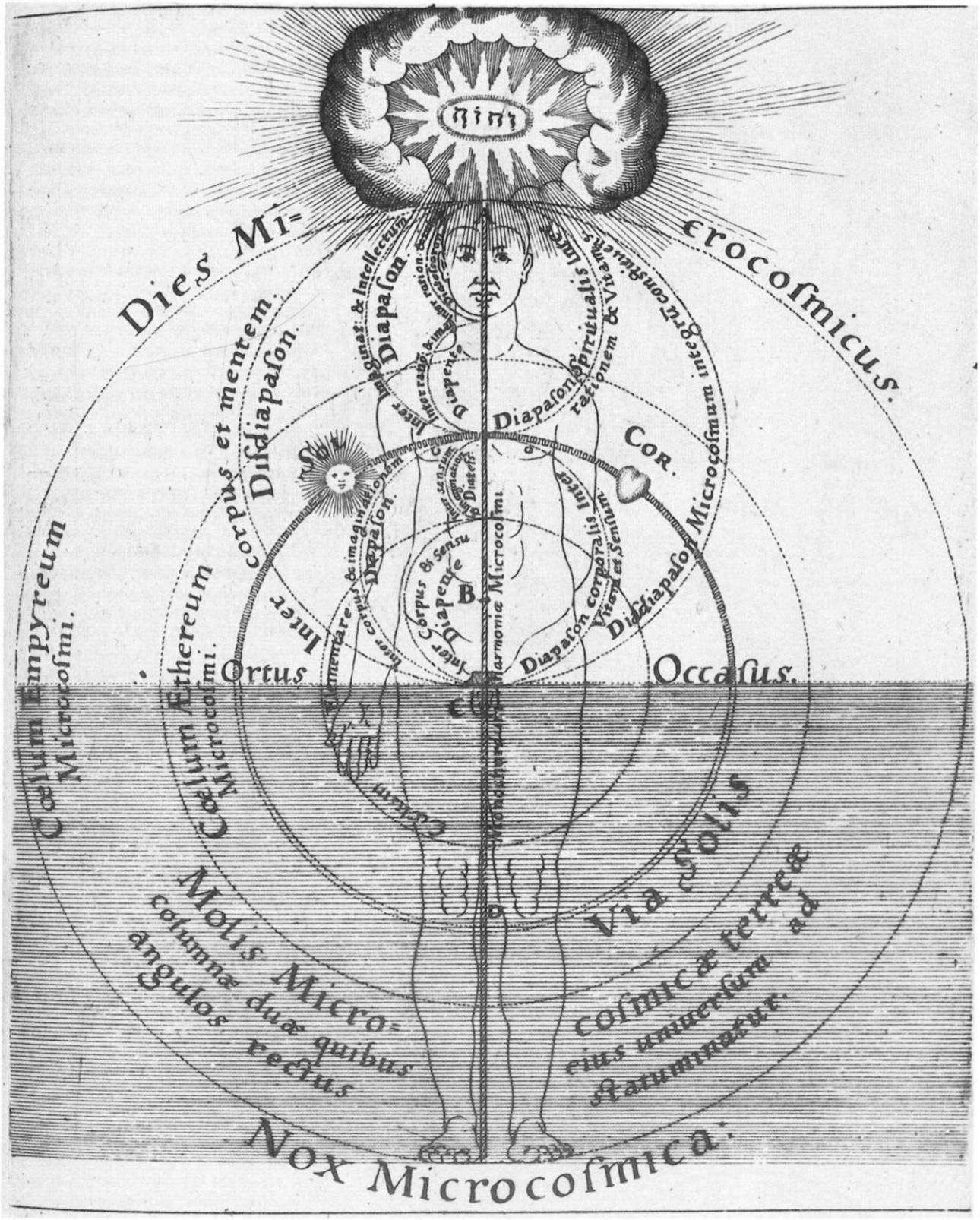
47

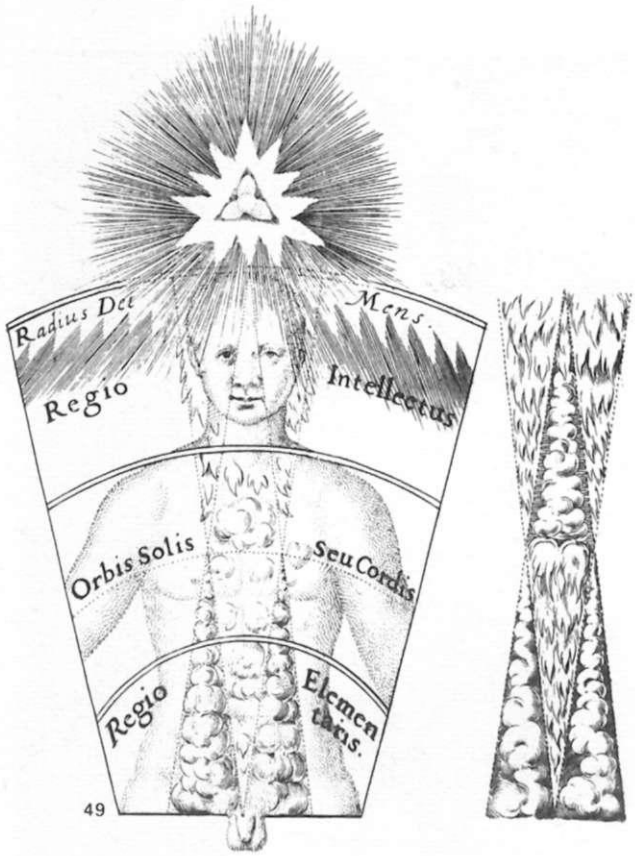
46 *The Elemental Pyramids*
'As above, so below.' The elemental realm itself is a microcosm of the whole. In place of form and matter, it has as its extremes fire and earth, the respective bases of the fiery and corporeal pyramids. There is no fire present in earth, no earth in fire, while water and air are produced from mixtures in varying proportions. Between water and air is a humid zone, a 'sphere of equality' corresponding to the Sun in the macrocosm. In order to make the proportions work, we should imagine the figures 1, 2, 3, 4 inscribed in each pyramid, as in plate 44.
UCH I, a, p. 97

47 *The Elemental Monochord*
Pursuing the analogy of the elemental realm with the whole cosmos, Fludd assigns to it the full two-octave span of the divine monochord. Each element is divided into three regions, the highest of each being assigned a semitone on account of its closeness in quality to the next element. (Here again some accidentals are missing.) The proportions show the sympathies and antipathies of the elements. Perhaps more significant than this rather laboured system is the presence of the Sun at the monochord's peg, in the same position as the hand of God in plate 45. Does this imply that as the Creator is to the universe, so is the Sun to the sublunary realm? Occult doctrine would certainly agree.
UCH I; a, p. 100

48 *'The Diapason closing full in Man'*
'The body is formed of food, hence of the four elements. This inert matter is vivified by the soul, which is of another order of existence altogether. The wonderful harmony of these two extremes is brought about by the *Spiritus Mundi*, the limpid spirit, represented here by a string. It extends from God to the Earth, and participates in both extremes. On it are marked the stages of the soul's descent into the body, and its re-ascent after death.' (pp. 274–5)

The three worlds are shown as concentric circles, marked on the left 'Empyrean Heaven of the Microcosm', 'Ethereal Heaven of the Microcosm', and 'Elemental Heaven'. They correspond respectively to man's head, chest and belly, or on the mental plane to intellect, imagination and sense. One might also identify them with the vital (etheric) and astral bodies, enclosed in the 'auric egg'. Each has a light and a dark hemisphere, the latter described here as a 'mass of microcosmic earth: two columns by which the universe is supported at right angles'.
UCH II, a, 1, p. 275

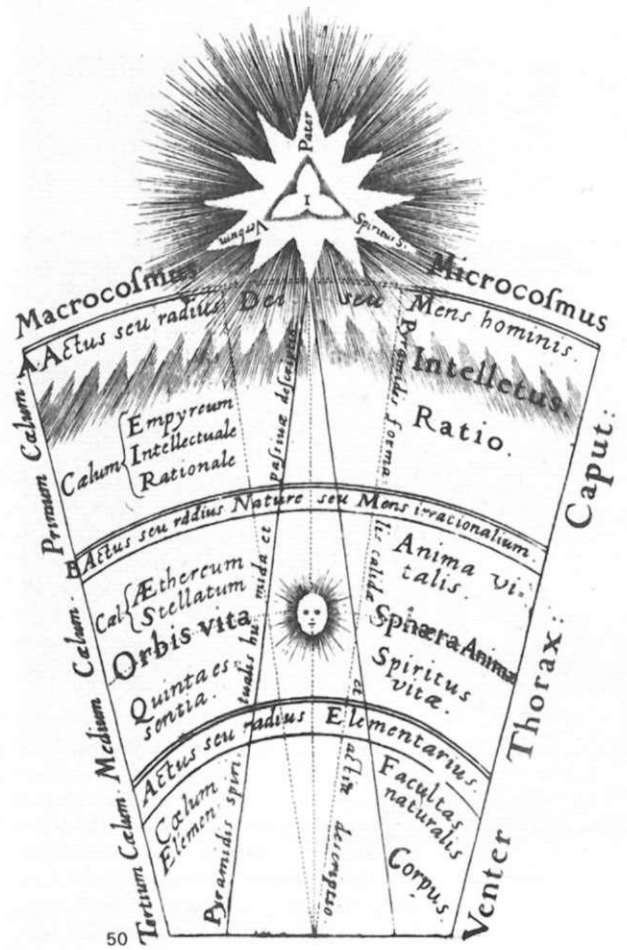

Dies Microcosmicus.
Diapason.
Diapason.
Diapason



49

49 *Man's Fundamental Duality*
A simple diagram shows how in man the divine fire diminishes as it proceeds downwards, while the intoxicating vapours of sensuality prevail. Man's loftiest faculty, the higher mind *(Mens)* receives the direct rays from God. Below are the regions of intellect, the point of balance at the heart, and the elemental realm of the appetites whose base and nadir, for Fludd, is sexuality.
UCH II, a, 1, p. 83

50 *The Pyramids Uniting Man and Cosmos*
Like a gloss on the preceding plate, this one explains the correlations of macrocosm and microcosm. On the left are the three 'heavens', or levels of cosmic existence: the Act of God and the empyrean heaven; the Act of Nature, the ethereal heaven and the Quintessence; the elemental act and the elemental heaven. These 'acts' refer to the descending, active pyramid of formation. On the right are man's three cavities: head, thorax and abdomen. These are the physical correlates of: (1) the higher mind, intellect and reason; (2) the lower mind and the vital spirits; (3) the instincts and the body.
UCH II, a, 1, p. 82



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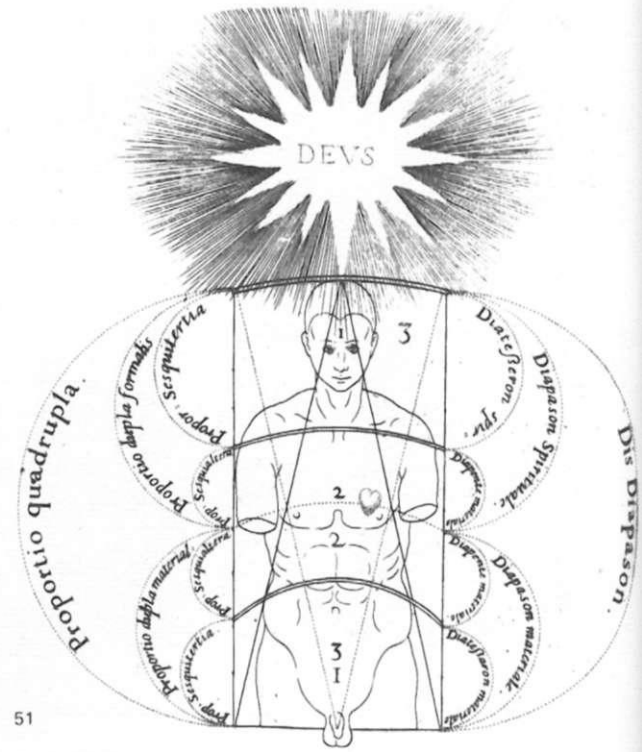
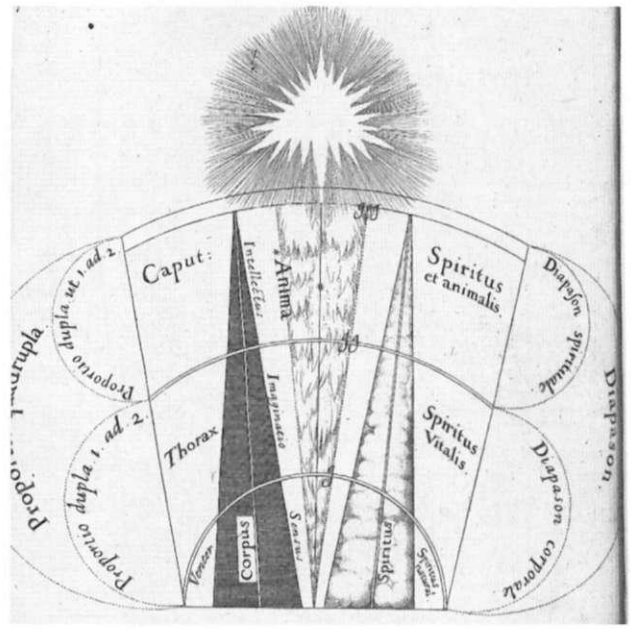


51

51 *The Proportions of Man's Regions*
This applies the system of plate 44 to the microcosm. The figure resembles those in Albrecht Dürer's book on human proportions, from which Fludd had borrowed several drawings for his previous treatise. Man's members are divided harmonically into the 'material octave' below the heart and the 'spiritual octave' above it. (The region of the higher thorax is mis-labelled: it should be *diapente spirituale*.) On the left are the mathematical proportions of the resultant tones.
UCH II, a, 1, p. 242



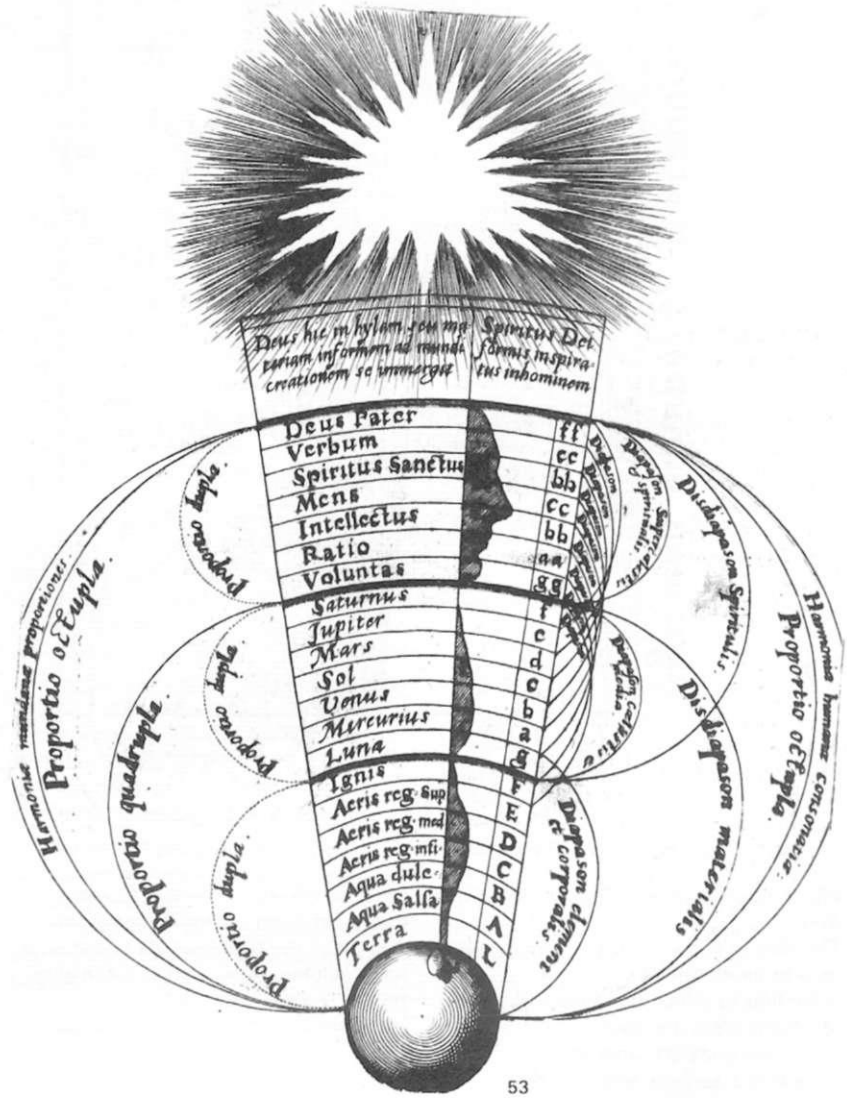
52

52 *Pyramids of Body, Soul and Spiritus*
Contrary to the previous plate, this one aligns the head and thorax alone with the spiritual and corporeal octaves, excluding the abdomen from the harmonic scheme. More interestingly, there are now three pyramids, showing the degrees of body, soul, and *spiritus*. Ficino's and Fludd's *spiritus* (not to be confused with the immortal Spirit) is a corporeal vapour, formed in the blood, which vivifies the brain and links the body with the soul. It is coextensive with the body, hence its pyramid has the same size and shape as the corporeal one. In the yogic tradition, with which more people are familiar today, we find it as 'prana' or vital breath, formed from ether.
UCH II, a, 1, p. 248

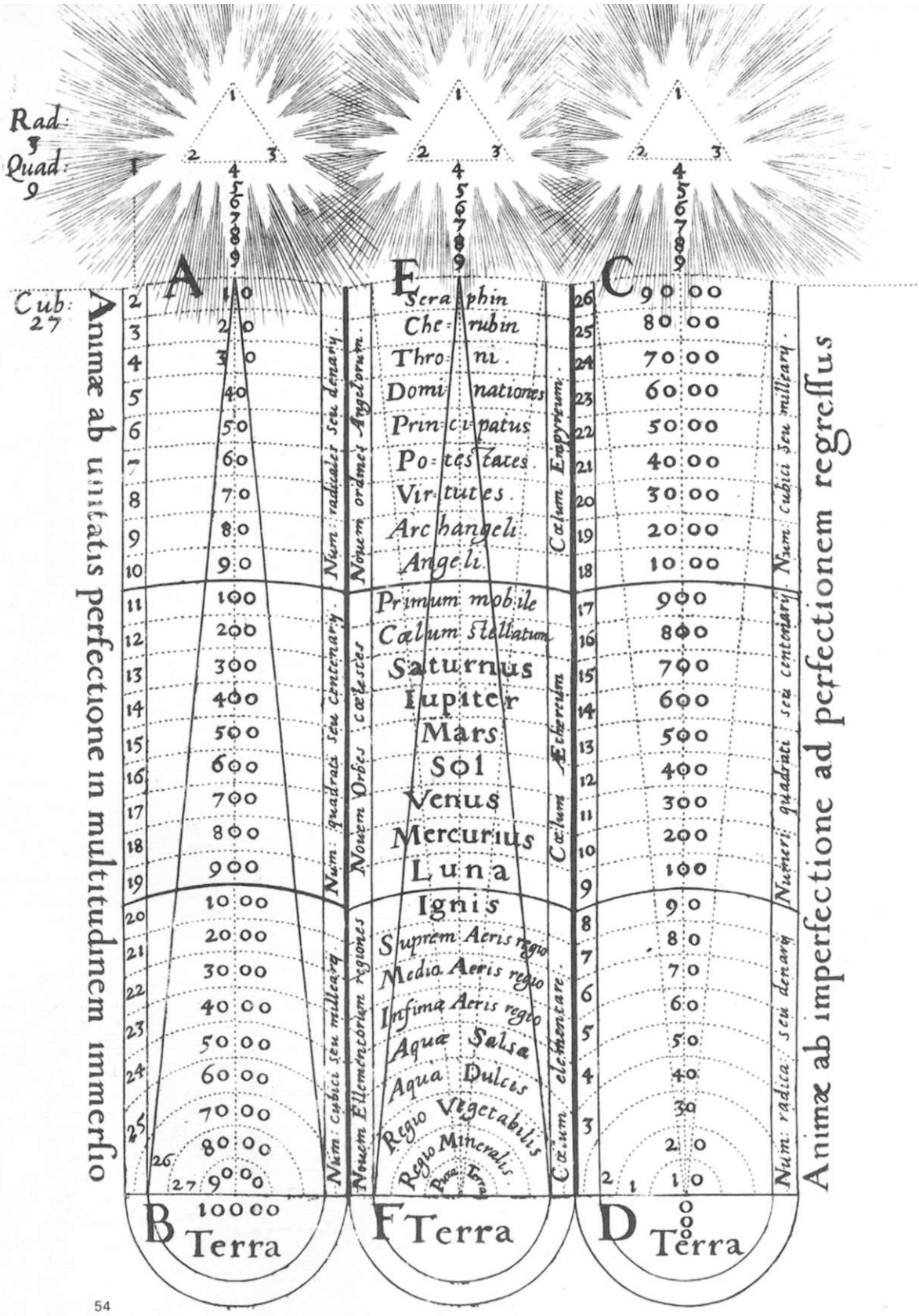
53 *The Macrocosm as Universal Man*
The full three octaves of man's regions are set out here: the 'supercelestial and spiritual', the 'celestial and middle', and the 'elemental and corporeal'. The notes run up the gamut from the bottom G of the bass clef to the top F of the treble. Each is correlated with a level of the macrocosm:

God the Father	Saturn	Fire
Word	Jupiter	Upper air
Holy Spirit	Mars	Middle air
Mind	Sun	Lower air
Intellect	Venus	Fresh water
Reason	Mercury	Salt water
Will	Moon	Earth

The legend above reads 'God thus immerses himself in *hyle* or unformed material for the creation of the world. God's forming spirit is drawn into man.'
UCH II, a, 1, p. 254



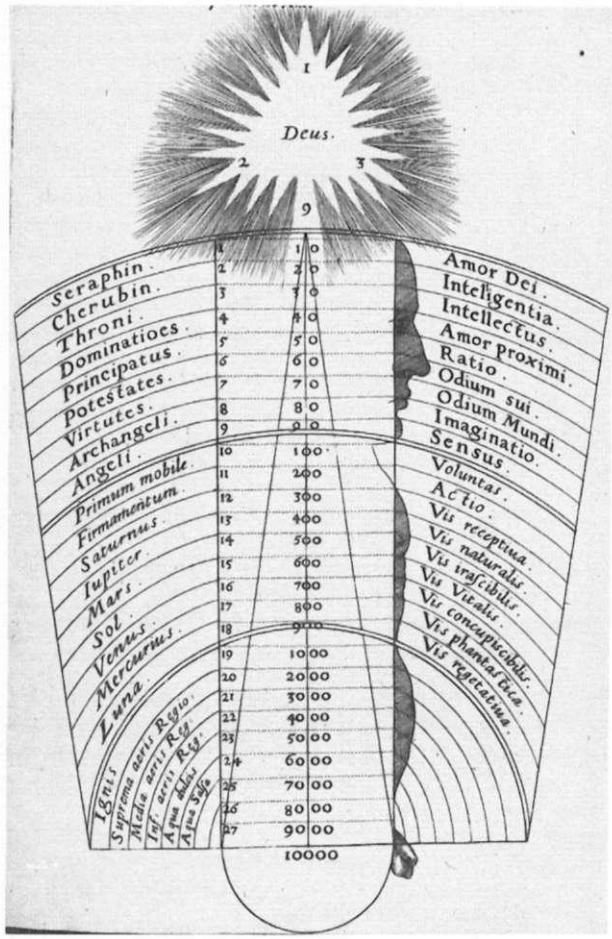
53



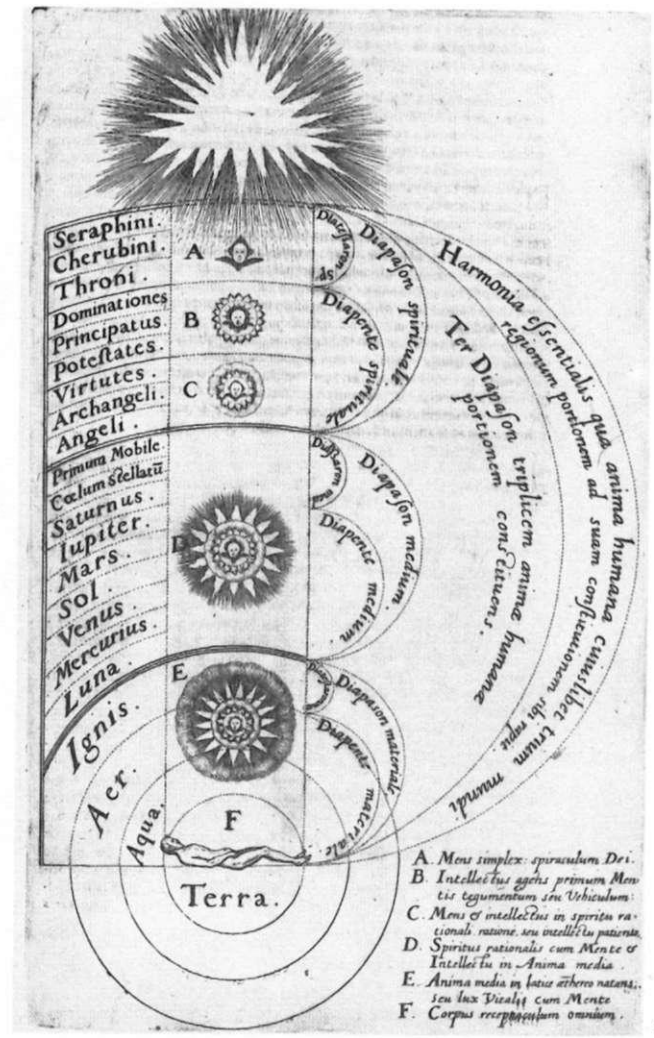
54

54 *The Descent and Re-ascent of the Soul*
The idea of three 'octaves' is transposed here to an arithmetical scheme, according to which the three realms of the macrocosm are given radical, square, and cubic numbers. Just as a line generates a surface, and a surface a solid, so creation proceeds downwards in the left-hand pyramid. And in the same way the soul ascends in the right-hand column, increasing in spirituality until it reaches perfection.

Whereas the last plate divided each region into seven, this one uses ninefold subdivisions. To correspond with the nine orders of angels, Fludd added the primum mobile and the heaven of fixed stars above the planets, and inserted the vegetable and mineral realms between water and earth, making nine subdivisions in the ethereal and elemental worlds.
UCH II, a, 1, p. 45; *PS*, p. 214



55



56

55 *Man's Higher Faculties*
The twenty-seven levels of the macrocosm and the corporeal pyramid are familiar from the previous plate. On the right are man's faculties as they correspond to the middle and upper regions:

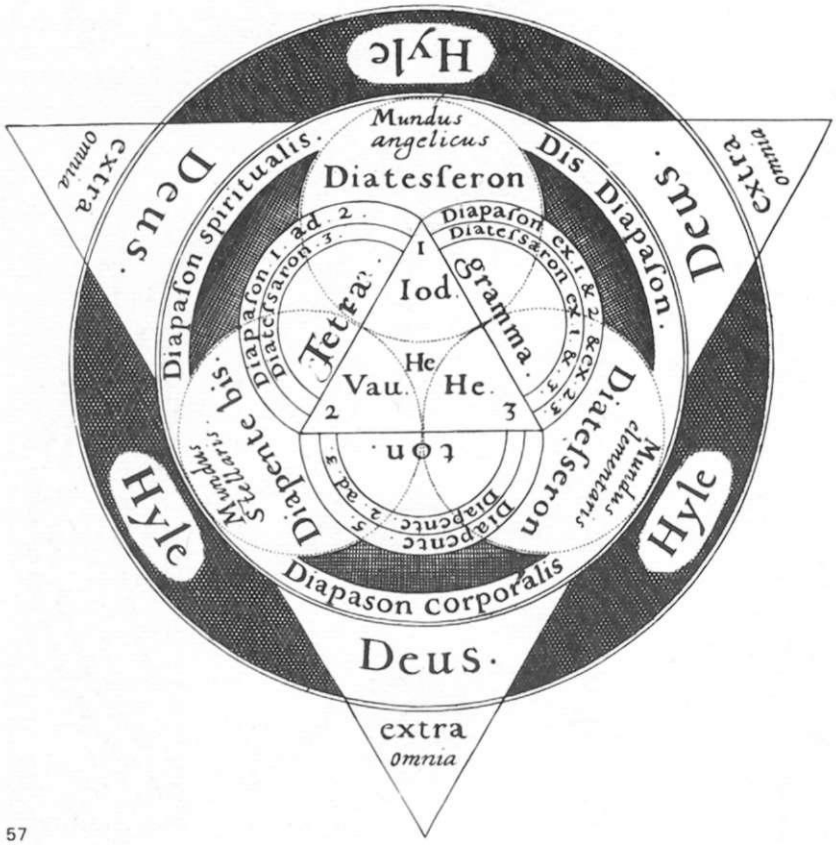
Love of God: Will
Intelligence: Action
Intellect: Receptive nature
Love of others: Natural force
Reason: Irascible nature
Aversion to oneself: Vital nature
Aversion to the world: Desire nature
Imagination: Fantasizing nature
Sense: Vegetative nature

This maps out the moral evolution of man from the state of a vegetable through the development of will, and from self-absorbed thought to the love and knowledge of God.
UCH II, a, 1, p. 259

56 *The Seven Chakras*
The right-hand arc reads: 'The essential harmony by which the human soul draws into its own constitution any portion of the regions of the three worlds.' This is a fundamental statement of the macrocosm-microcosm doctrine. It means that man can operate on any of the levels of being, from the terrestrial to the seraphic. He does this through his subtle organism, whose members Fludd describes as follows:

A Pure Mind: the aperture to God
B The Active Intellect: the first sheath or vehicle of Mind
C The Rational Spirit, containing Mind and Intellect and open to Reason or Intellect
D The Middle Soul, containing the Rational Spirit, Mind and Intellect
E The Vital Light in the Mind, or the Middle Soul swimming in ethereal fluid
F The Body, receptacle of all things

Although this terminology is not easily reconciled with the Hindu system of the seven chakras – the energy-centres of the subtle body – some such vision may have inspired the illustration, with its five 'lotuses' and the 'thousand-petalled' blaze of God's light. The engraver has even approached the traditional number of petals on the upper chakras: two wings, for the two-petalled ajna (third eye) chakra; nineteen and thirteen petals for the visuddha (throat) and anahata (heart) chakras (which should have sixteen and twelve, respectively). Below that, the resemblance ceases.
UCH II, a, 1, p. 93



57

57 *Threefold Manifestation*
The light triangle of the Trinity represents God, who remains 'beyond all things', entering the black hole of matter. As a result, three worlds arise: the angelic (empyrean), stellar (ethereal), and elemental. The intervals are comprehensible in the light of plate 56: there is an octave between adjacent worlds, and a double octave between the empyrean and elemental. In the centre is the Tetragrammaton, with the 'pre-cosmic' numbers 1–3 (see plates 24–5). These in turn are joined by arcs showing their harmonic relations.
UCH II, a, 1, p. 62

58 *The Great Monochord*
Fludd's syncretic cosmology is summarized here in its fullest form. Four all-embracing statements stand at the top:

The monad generates a monad and reflects its ardour in itself.
The One is all things and all things are the One.
GOD is all that there is; from him all things proceed and to him all things must return.
The infinite dimension of the Tetragrammaton: in and between all things.

At the left-hand end, where the tuning-peg governs the whole monochord, is Alpha in a triangle, symbol of God as beginning: 'The central principle or Dark Aleph.' To this corresponds, on the right, the Omega, symbol of God as 'end and circumference'. Towards the upper corners are parallel statements: 'God is the beginning, and the beginning is the end'; 'God is the end, and the end is the beginning'. Another symbol of this reciprocity is the Tetragrammaton, spelled out in palindromic form: *Iod, He, Vau, He, Iod.* The scrolls read as follows:

God (alpha), or the Lesser Aleph of the uncreated darkness, or potency, reveals itself for the world's creation by changing to light, or act.
God (omega), or the Greater Aleph, emerging from dark earth or the created darkness, reveals itself to men for the world's salvation.

Several systems are contained in the chart, and they do not always align with each other. On the monochord itself are the notes of the diatonic scale for three octaves from C to c^3, and thereafter the octaves alone up to c^6. This is musically correct, as are the proportions of string-length and the intervals marked on the lower arcs. Between c^6 and the bridge at the Omega end, there is theoretically an indefinite series of higher octaves. Similarly, the numerals in the lowest column, which give the proportions of string-length for each scale-tone in the lowest possible whole integers, could be continued up to infinity if space allowed. The intervals are named in the adjacent column.

The column between Alpha and Omega contains the familiar circles of the Ptolemaic universe: three divisions of the angelic hierarchy, the heaven of fixed stars, the seven planets and the four elements. These correspond with the musical notes only as far as the Sun at the midpoint: they belong to another standpoint which is finite rather than indefinite, spatial rather than temporal. To this belong also the ninefold divisions described directly above:

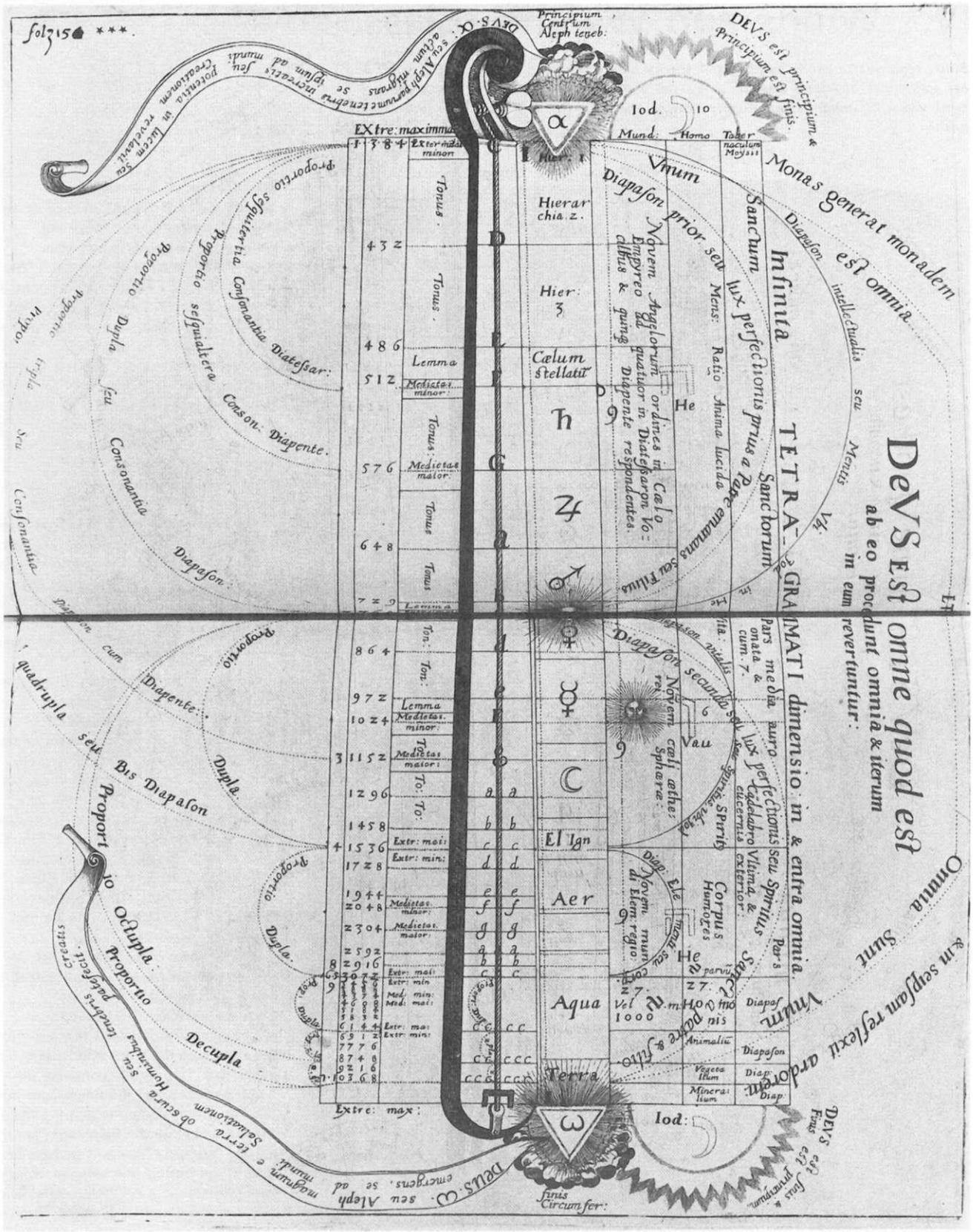
Nine orders of Angels in the Empyrean Heaven, corresponding to the four notes of the diatessaron [4th] *and five of the diapente* [5th].
Nine spheres of the Ethereal Heaven.
Nine regions of the Elemental World.

Plate 54 shows the members of these regions when divided ninefold. They are glossed on the unbroken arcs and in the next row up with their correspondences in man:

The octave of Intellect or Mind, where Iod *is in* He; *Mind, Reason, the lucid soul.*
The octave of life or spiritus *where* Iod [. . ?]; *Life,* Spiritus.
The elemental or corporeal octave; Body, humours; lesser Aleph.

Below these is the 'Least Aleph', with the animal, vegetable and mineral creations, each an octave in its own right.

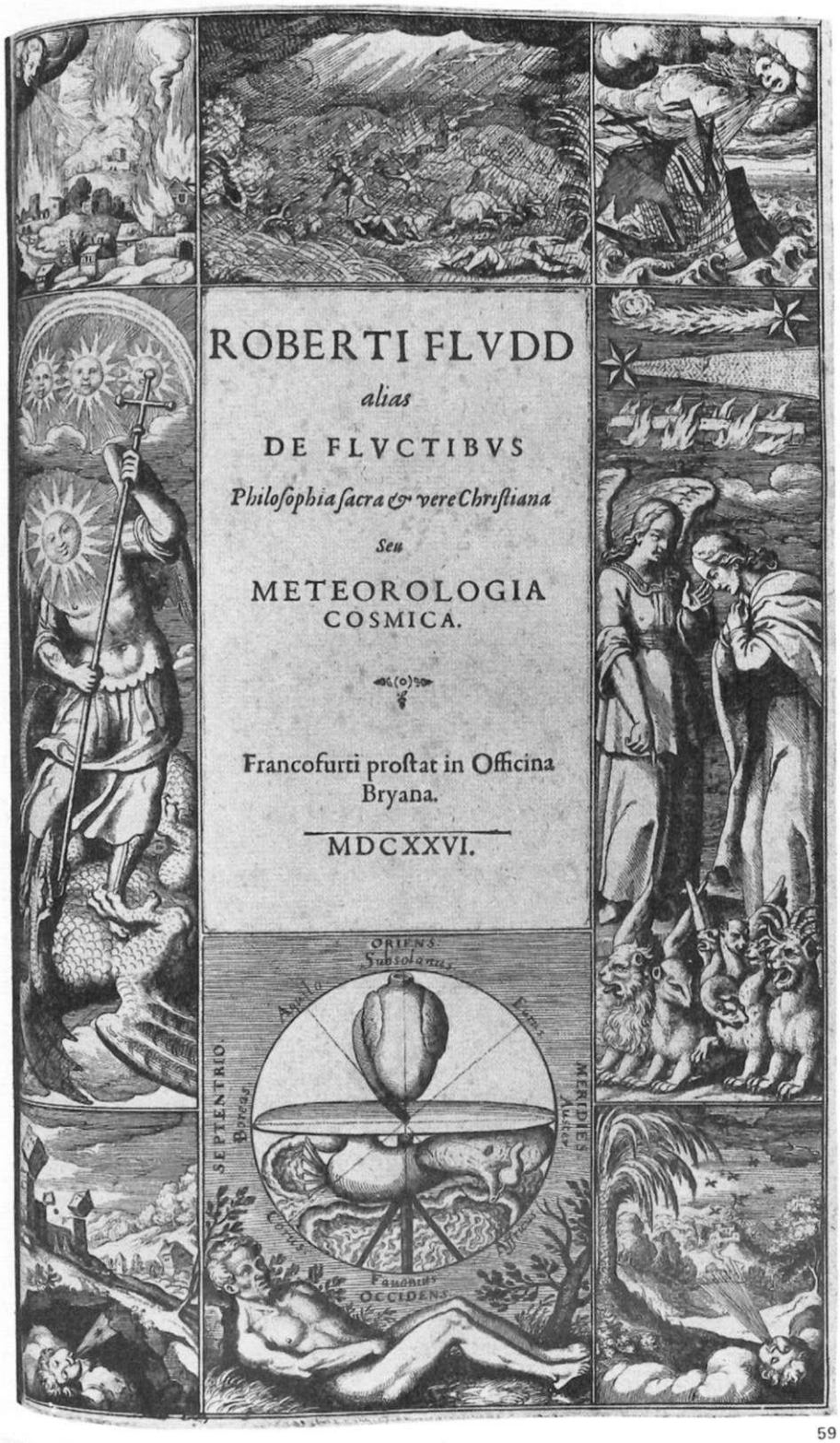
The upper row refers to the parts of the Tabernacle of Moses, also divided into three: the Holy of Holies; the middle part decked with gold and with seven candlesticks; the last, exterior part. The seven candlesticks of the *Menorah,* which overtly represent the seven Chaldean planets grouped around the Sun, may be the reason for the second sun engraved here in the middle of the appropriate region.
AA, pp. 314–15


DEUS EST OMNE QUOD EST
ab eo procedunt omnia & iterum in eum revertuntur:
Omnia sunt unum & in seipsum rejexit ardorem.
Monas generat monadem
est omnia.
Infinita TETRAGRAMMATI dimensio: in & extra omnia.
Sanctum lux perfectionis prius a Deo emanans seu Filius
Sanctorum lux perfectionis seu Spiritus Sanctus
Principium Centrum Aleph teneb:
Principium Finis Circumfer:
Hierarchia z.
Hier: 3
Cælum Stellatu
Aer
Aqua
Terra
Iod.
Mund:
Homo
Tabernaculum Moysis
Extre: maximma
Extre: max:
Lemma
Tonus
Diapason prior seu Mens: Ratio Anima lucida
Diapason secundus seu Filius
Novem Angelorum ordines in Cælo Empyreo ad quatuor in Diatessaron Vocibus & quinq; Diapente respondentes.
Novem cœli aetherea Sphæra:
Novem mundi Elementa seu corporeæ Sphæra:
Novem Spiritus vitales
Corpus Humores
Animalia
Vegetabilia
Mineralia
Proportio sesquitertia Consonantia Diatessar:
Proportio sesquialtera Coson: Diapente.
Proportio Dupla seu Consonantia Diapason:
Proportio Dupla Diapente.
Proportio Dupla.
Proportio Octupla.
Proportio Decupla
Proportio quadrupla seu Bis Diapason
Diapason cum Diapente.
Diapason vitalis
Diapason secundus
Diapason
Diapason intellectualis seu Mentis
Diap: Ele
Diap:
Vau
Deus Finis est Principium & Finis.
Deus Finis est Principium & Finis.
Deus Alph magnum e terra ob scura seu Humanus contrahens perfect. creatus emergens se ad mundi Salutationem
Deus Alph magnum tenebra incrucis seu potestas in lucem revelavit seu actum magnus se ipsum ad mundi Creationem

58

IV Winds and Weather-glasses

Fludd regards the winds as all-important for medicine, since they carry the good and evil influences of angels and demons. The weather-glass (a primitive thermometer) symbolizes the metaphysical duality of light and dark, hot and cold, as it affects human health

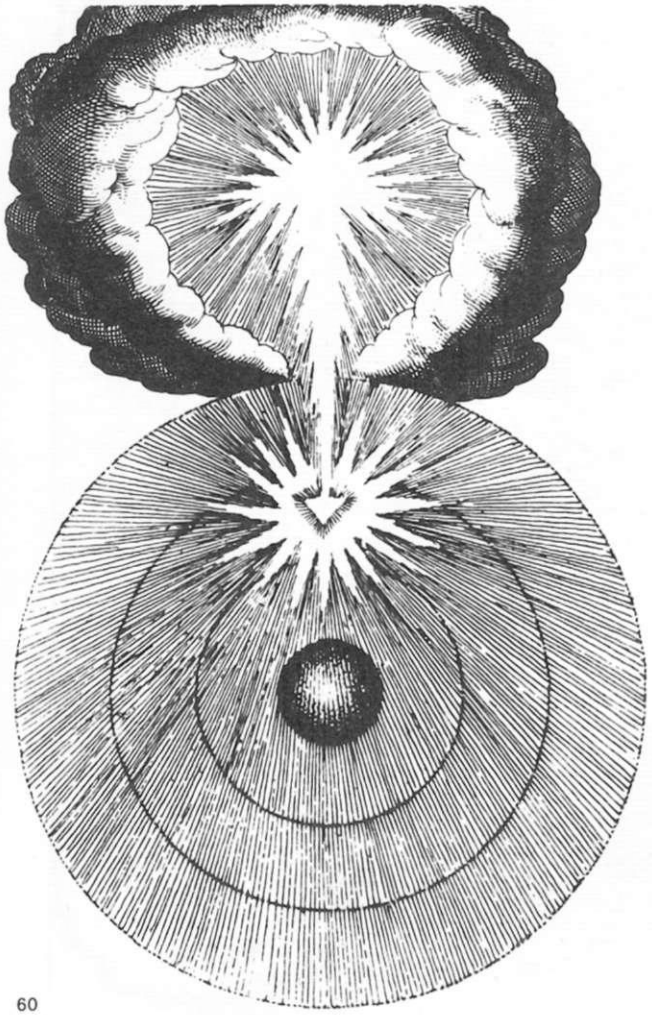


59

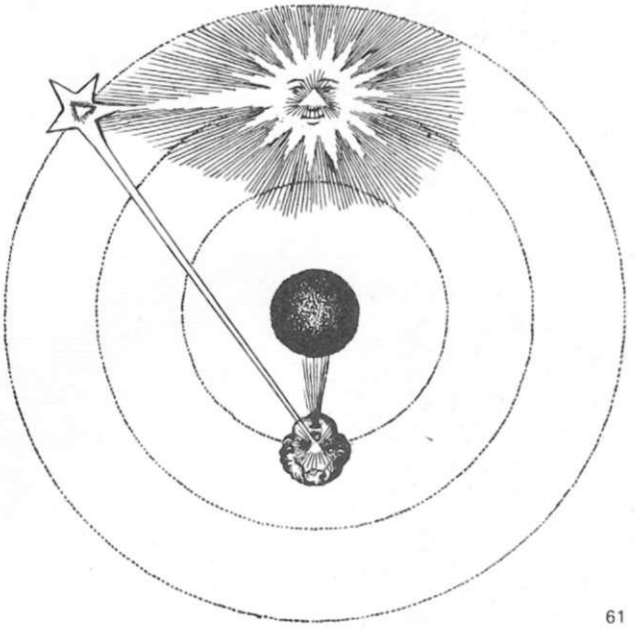
59 *Cosmic Meteorology*
Fludd applies the word 'meteor' to any heavenly phenomenon, from the weather to the planets and stars themselves. In this book entitled 'The Holy and Truly Christian Philosophy' he surveys them all, refuting Aristotelian notions and relating the macrocosmic events to man. The title-page, though it is never explained in the book, seems to summarize the contents. A chart on page 128 provides the key to the scenes in the four corners and the upper centre: they represent the results of 'macrocosmic meteors', which can be either pacific (lower right) or tempestuous. The latter are of four kinds, caused by wind, wind and water, wind and earth, and all three together. Examples of them are respectively rains of fire (upper left), tempests at sea (upper right), earthquakes (lower left), and the combination of wind, thunder, lightning, and rains of water and stones (upper centre).

More elevated 'meteors' appear above the flanking pictures of Michael subduing the dragon and Gabriel interpreting to Daniel his dream of the four beasts. Michael, being the solar angel of the East, has the Sun for his head, and above him are three suns beneath a rainbow. Very similar pictures appeared both before and after Fludd's time to illustrate the (then) common phenomenon of *parelius* or multiple images of the Sun. Above Daniel are comets of various shapes, to be met with later (plate 81).

At the bottom of the plate lies the microcosmic man, his viscera spread out above him to show their correspondences with heavenly phenomena. The circle is marked with the names of the eight winds, with East at the top. The organs comprise the heart, separated by the diaphragm from the lower hemisphere which it joins via the aorta; below the diaphragm are the spleen, stomach, liver and gall-bladder, and at the bottom the seminal vesicles. Naturally this is a symbolic, schematic diagram, designed to illustrate Fludd's theories of 'meteorological anatomy', in particular the influences of the winds on health. Fludd knew very well how the viscera really look (see plate 90).
PS, t.p.

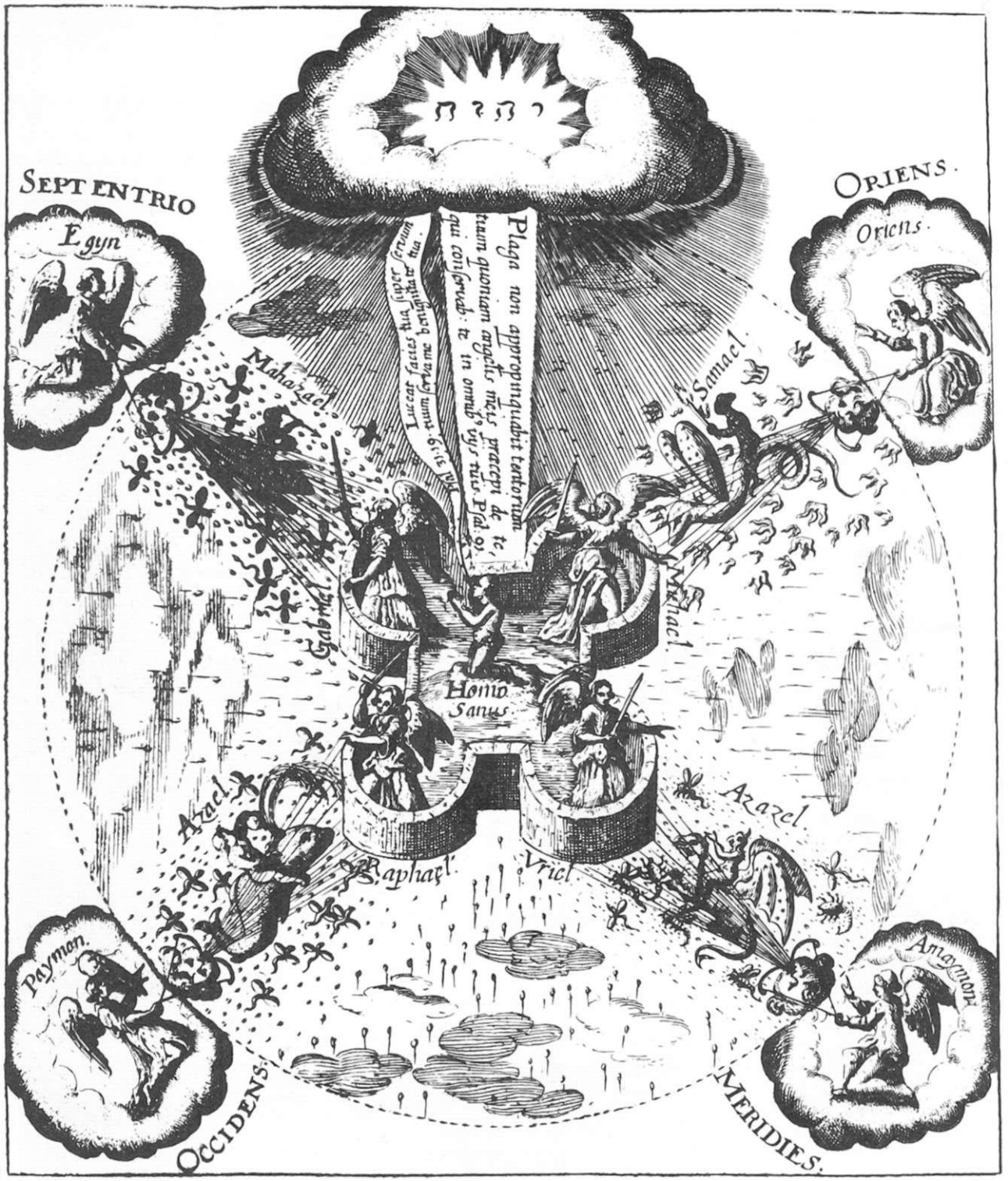


60



61

60, 61 *The Origin of the Winds*
The winds are proximate agents of God's will on Earth, deriving their power from him. These two plates show the chain of being by which this occurs. From the cloudy tabernacle of God himself, a light descends into the dark circle which represents the triple worlds (empyrean, ethereal, elemental) surrounding the Earth. The divine light settles in the Sun, in the middle of the ethereal (or planetary) world, whence it radiates throughout creation. In plate 61 we see the Sun sending out one of its rays to the outermost planetary sphere, that of Saturn, 'inhabiting and animating' that planet and endowing it with power of its own. Saturn's ray, in turn, penetrates to the elemental world where it vivifies the appropriate wind, Boreas. The North Wind, finally, pours its influences upon the Earth, causing the meteorological and medical phenomena to which Fludd devotes so much space in his *Medicina Catholica*.
PS, p. 190, 189

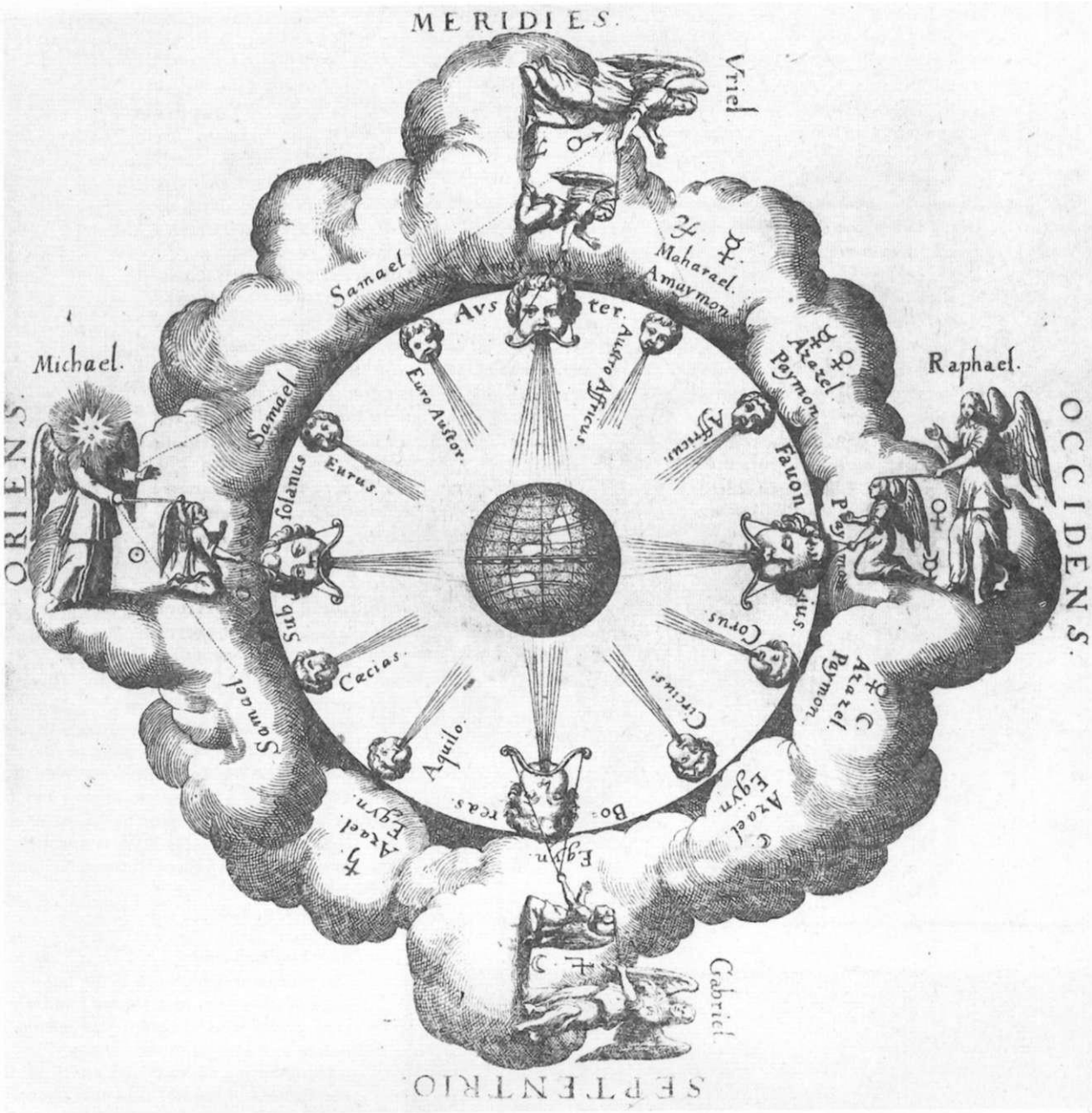


62

62 *The Fortress of Health*
'The Sound Man' *(Homo Sanus)* prays to God: 'Show thy servant the light of thy countenance, and save me for thy mercy's sake' (Psalm 31.16), and God replies: 'No plague shall come nigh thy dwelling; for I will give my angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways' (Psalm 91.10–11).

From North, South, East and West the evil angels unleash noxious plagues, carried by the four winds. They are combatted by the four Archangels who guard the fortress. It has been remarked that the winged insects which surround each demon on his steed may be the first illustration of the idea of germs as the carriers of disease. Fludd, however, thinks of the contagion as purely aerial, and mentions that his friend and printer William Fitzer, fleeing from the plague in Cologne, saw it descending on the city like a reddish cloud (p. 338).

Explaining the reason for the existence of devils, death and disease, Fludd says that it was through God's dark side (see plate 22) that they entered the world. 'They are not under Divine Justice, but come from Injustice, which is a figment of the Divine Darkness. Health is from God alone, given by his Angels whose ruler is Jesus Christ, the first emanation before creation and the mediator between God and his creatures. God's will is carried out by both good and evil Angels, but we, as creatures of the Light, can only be saved and remain healthy by prayer to God.' (ff.):( ):(1'–5')
MC I, a, f.):( ):(2; II, a, p. 338

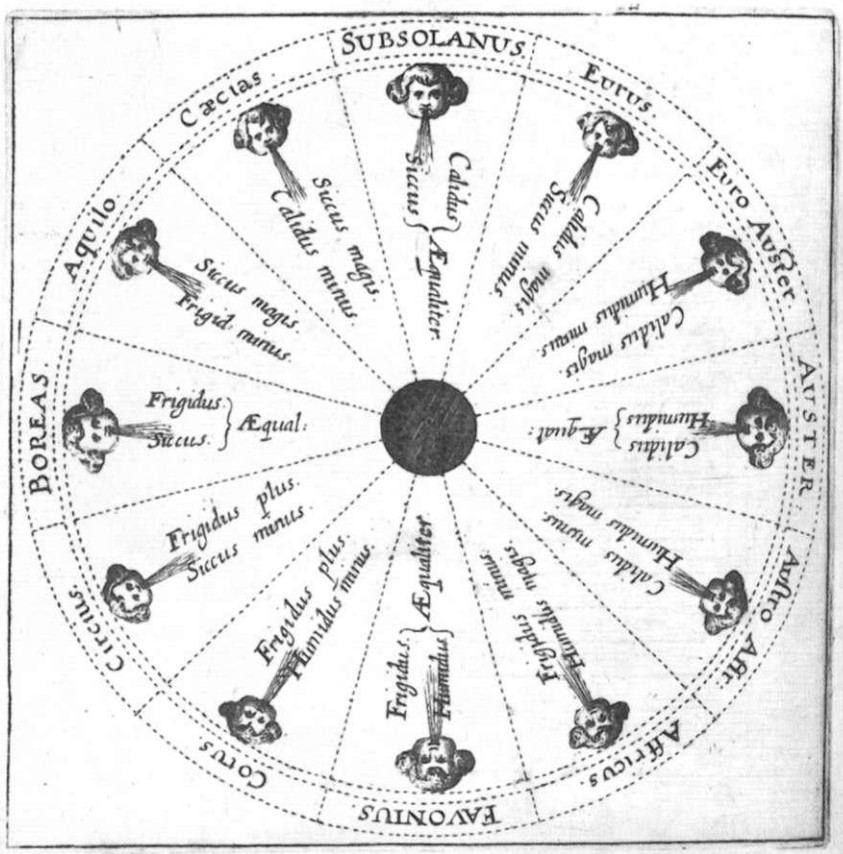


63

	Archangel	*Demon*	*Element*	*Angel*	*Demon*
East *(Oriens)*	Michael	Oriens	Fire	Seraph	Samael
South *(Meridies)*	Uriel	Amaymon	Air	Cherub	Azazel
West *(Occidens)*	Raphael	Paymon	Water	Tharsis	Azael
North *(Septentrio)*	Gabriel	Egyn	Earth	Ariel	Mahazael

63 *The Four Archangels and the Twelve Winds*
The Four Great Beings who stand 'at the round earth's imagin'd corners' delegate their power to the spirits of the winds dwelling in the sphere of air surrounding the Earth, whom we would call demons. Each one is under the influence of one or more planets, and associated with one of the cardinal points and a certain element.

* The names of the winds are given in the inner circle, and their qualities may be deduced from their guiding spirits. Austro Affricus, for instance, in the south-west, is ruled by the demons of Earth and of the South, and affected by Mercury and Jupiter. The exact qualities, effects, and astrological factors are the subjects of some hundreds of pages in *Medicina Catholica* and *Philosophia Sacra*.
MC I, a, p. 113; II, a, t.p.; *PS*, p. 267



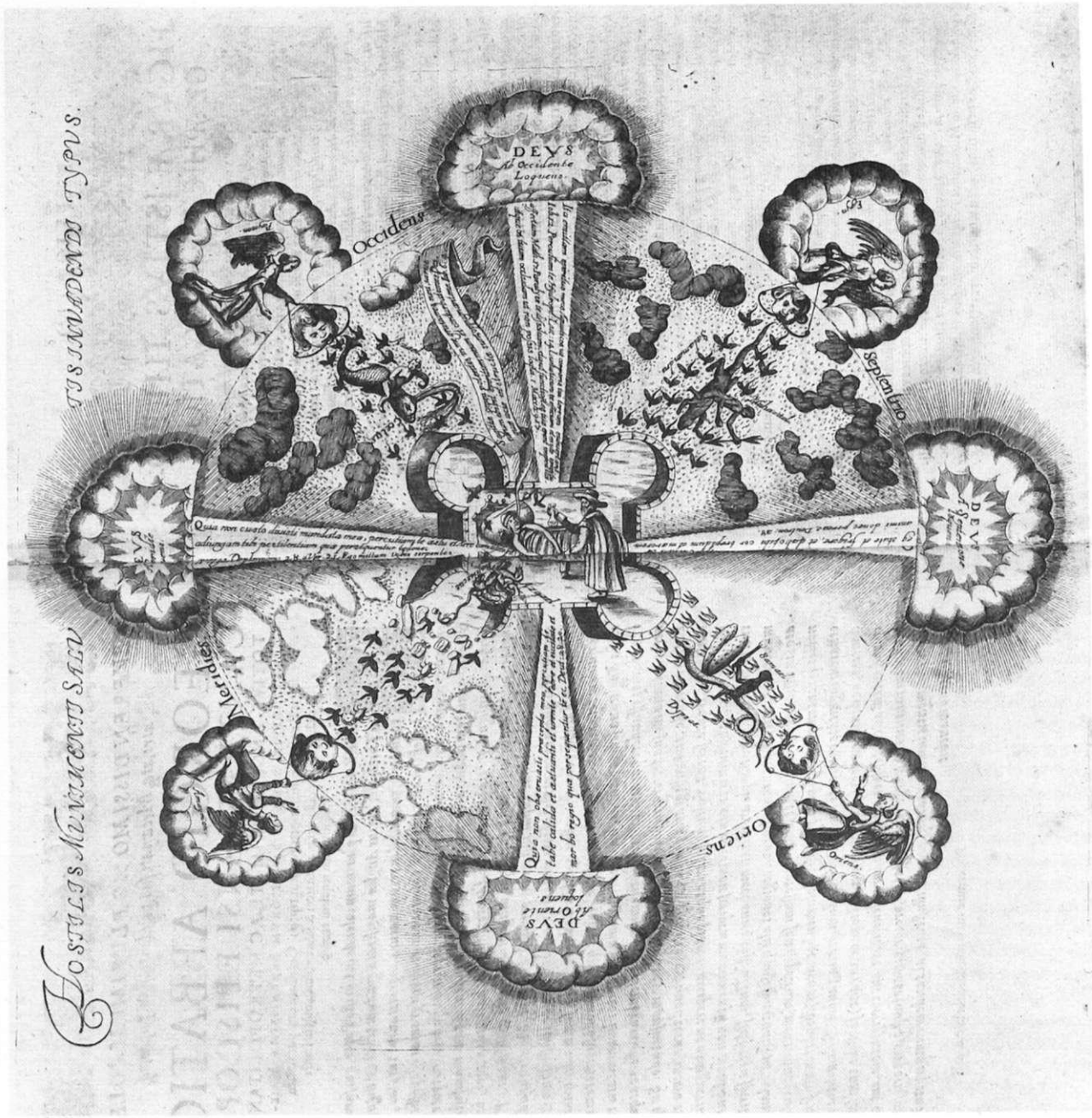
64

64 *The Qualities of the Winds*
The twelve winds are shown with their Aristotelian qualities of hot and cold, wet and dry. Thus Boreas, the North Wind, is equally cold and dry; Subsolanus, the East Wind, hot and dry; and Aquilo and Caecias represent stages in between. In numerous tables Fludd shows the correspondences of winds, elements and humours, and the effects of their equal and unequal combinations. This, with astrology, is the foundation of his *Medicina Catholica*, based upon the assumption that behind each wind is a malevolent demon intent on sending disease to mankind. Another lengthy section of the book is devoted to prayers for warding off these noxious influences.
MC I, a, p. 125

65

65 *The Sick Bed*
The treatise of which this is the title-page is advertised to 'describe in a new way, scarcely heard before, the general nature of diseases, or the various reasons for the invasion and attack of the Fortress of Health' (see next plate), and to 'demonstrate a universal chart of healings and sicknesses, including ways of diagnosing and foretelling the effects of the weather, lucidly explained and plainly set out'.

In the seventeenth century the weather impinged on people far more violently than it does in these days of central heating, air-conditioning and comfortable travel. A doctor had to take it into account and, if possible, predict it. Fludd regarded it as a link in the chain of being, joining the human body to the planetary and stellar influences that in turn reflect the will of angels, demons, and ultimately of God. Hence his complicated association of medicine with meteorology, astrology, and prayer.
MC I, b, t.p.



66

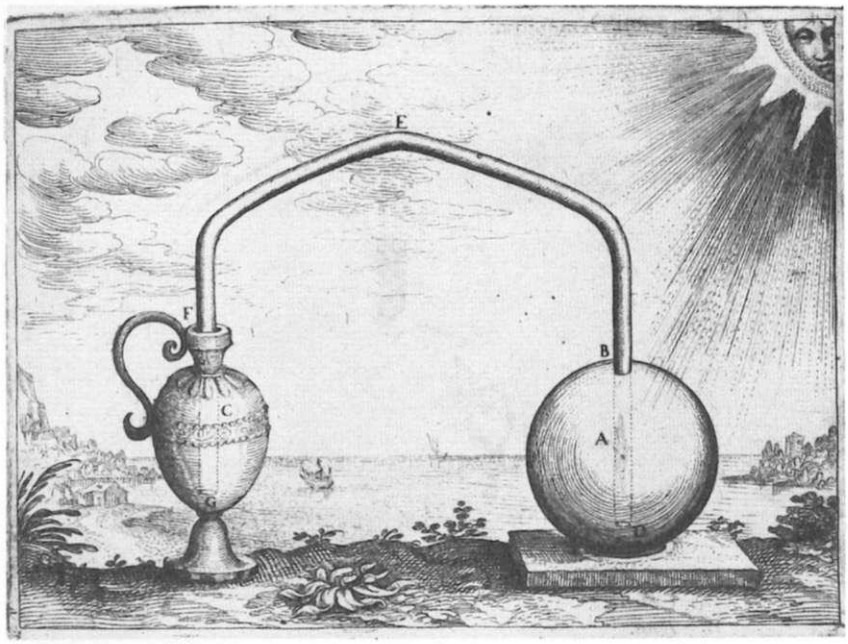
66 *Enemies Invading the Fortress of Health*

The preceding plate showed the sick man in his outward aspect: here is his true situation, beset by the demons of the four winds, who represent God's irascible properties. Azazel, mounted on a basilisk, has already broken through the fortress to afflict the patient with the diseases associated with the South Wind (see plate 71). The sufferer exclaims: 'The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me' (Job 6.4).

God himself is present at the cardinal points, and issues his stern dicta from every direction:

North: 'Because thou hast not hearkened unto my voice, I will afflict thee with ... cold and will give thee a fearful heart and a sadness of soul until thou perish' (adapted from Deut. 28).
South: 'Because thou hast not kept my commandments, I will afflict thee in summer with corrupt air, and give thee the pestilence to pursue thee until thou perish' (adapted from Deut. 28). 'I will send serpents among you, which will not be charmed. (Jerem. 8.17)
East: 'Because thou hast not observed my precepts, I will afflict thee with hot and seething ... and fever ...' [illegible]
West: 'I will afflict thee with dropsy' (Luke 14). 'I will make thee lunatic, and affected with a heavy spirit' (Matthew 17). 'I will dissolve thee with palsy, so that thy enterprises are hindered and thy mouth stopped, that thou canst not speak' (I Macc. 9.55).

One wonders what help the physician can be in the face of this divine wrath (or negative karma). Presumably he can try to rebuild the battered fortress, and encourage prayer and the amendment of life when the punishment is passed.
MC II, a, f.):(3–4



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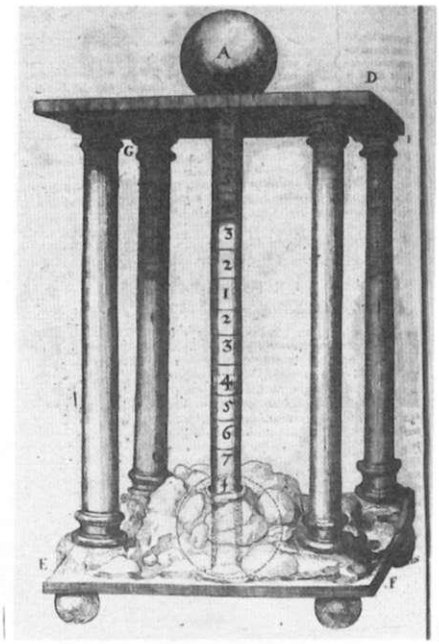

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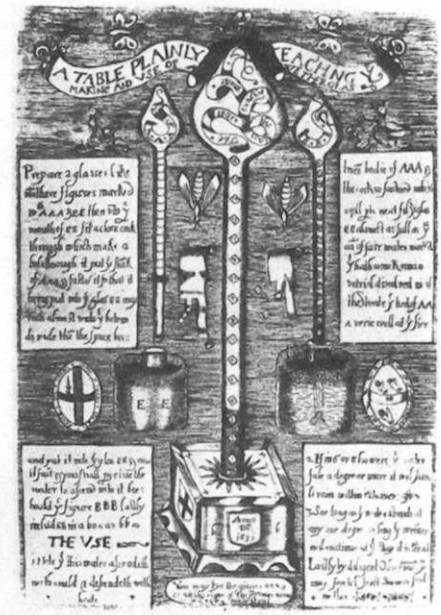

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67 *An Old Experiment*
Fludd says in *Integrum Morborum Mysterium* (p. 9) that he saw this instrument illustrated in a manuscript at least seven hundred years old—an estimate which in *Philosophia Moysaica* he modified to five hundred. Actually the manuscript is still extant, if, as Sherwood Taylor suggests, it is the twelfth- or thirteenth-century copy of Philo of Byzantium's treatise *De Ingeniis Spiritualibus* now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (MS. Digby 40). This manuscript belonged to Thomas Allen, a contemporary of Fludd at Oxford, and later passed to the alchemical physician, Sir Kenelm Digby, who presented it to the Bodleian. The relevant page is reproduced in Taylor's article (see Bibliography): it similarly shows an open and a closed vessel joined by an inverted U-shaped tube, with the Sun nearby.

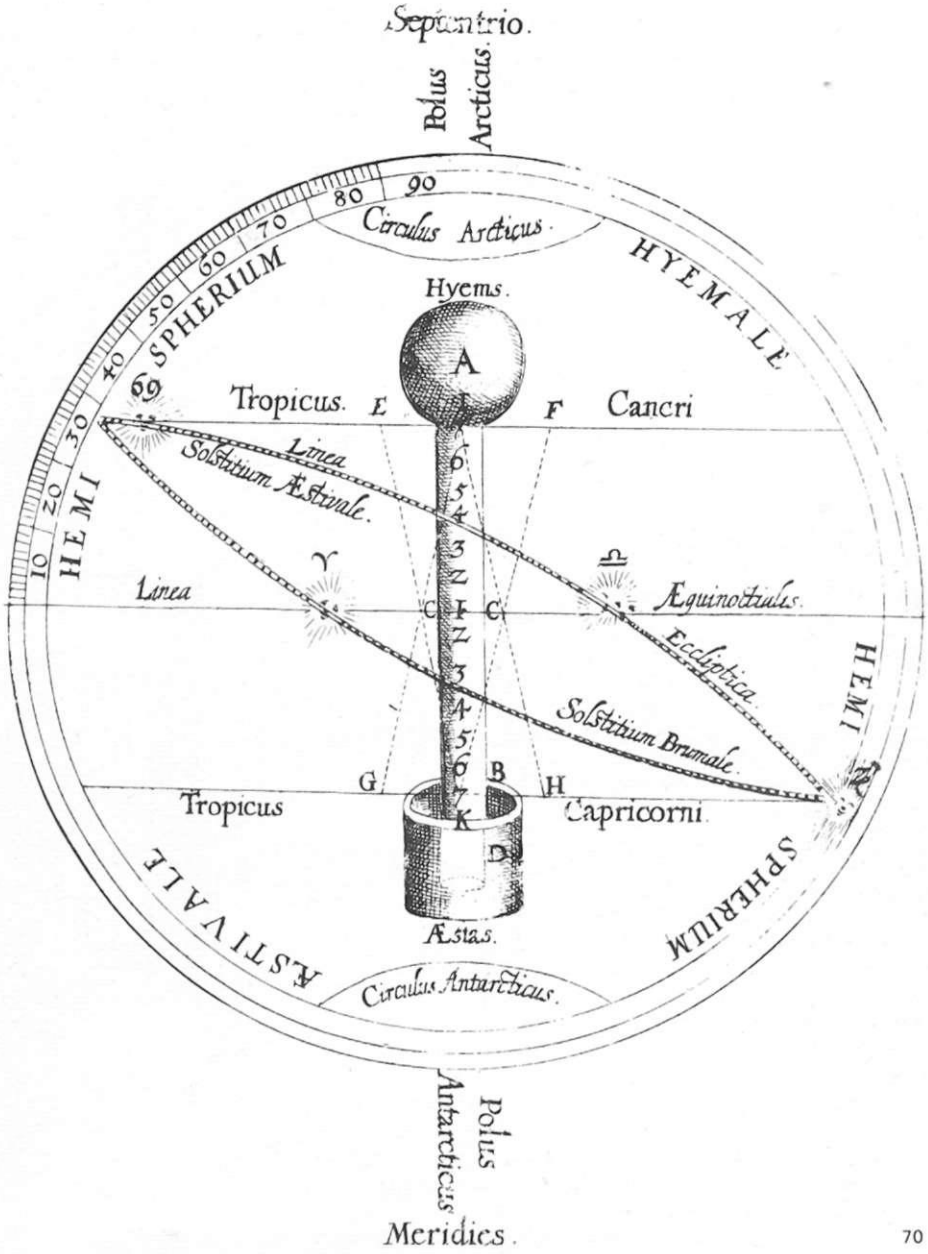
The principle is that the heat of the Sun, or its absence, will make the air in the sealed bulb 'A' expand or contract, and hence make the water level in the tube, derived from the open ewer, fall or rise. Fludd was very fond of this experiment and its picture, and reproduced it in several works, here listed in chronological order.
UCH I, a, p. 31; *ibid.* p. 204; *PS*, p. 283; *ibid.*, p. 299; *MC* II, a, p. 459

68 *Fludd's Own Weather-glass*
'You see it depicted here just as you would find it in my house' (p. 8). The weather-glass, a combination of thermometer and barometer, is made by inverting a heated bulbed tube in a receptacle of water, as in the preceding plate. Here the receptacle is disguised, 'to make it more wonderful and entertaining', beneath artificial rocks, and the tube made of glass and held by an elegant wooden framework. As the tube cools and the air in the bulb contracts, the water is sucked up into view. Changes in the external temperature will then cause it to rise and fall. This simple experiment was to supersede the monochord as Fludd's favourite symbol for the demonstration of his philosophy.

By calibrating the tube (here from −7 to +7) one can quantify the outside temperature: '+7 is reached, perhaps, only when the Thames is frozen so that men and animals can safely cross it. The region 1 to 7 is called the Winter Hemisphere, 1 to −7 the Summer one, when the warmed air pushes the water level down. If a sudden drop occurs, say of two or three degrees in four or five hours, it will certainly rain in twelve hours' time. How wrong are the disciples of Aristotle, who believe that the rise of the water is due to attraction from the heat of the bulb, analogically to their belief that the Sun pulls the water-vapour up: they do not understand the expansion and contraction of the air as a factor of heat. Heat and expansion are manifestations of God's own Light: cold and contraction of his Darkness.' (pp. 10–13)
MC II, a, p. 8

69 *Advertisement for a Weather-glass*
This is not from one of Fludd's books: it is a printed broadside dated the same year as his treatise on the weather-glass. It is interesting to find that someone was attempting to capitalize on Fludd's invention, with or without his consent. The directions are so close to his own that there can be no question of another source. The texts in the panels read:

Prepare 2 glasses like unto these figures marked with AAA and EE then unto the mouth of EE fit a close cork through which make a hole. Through it put the shank of AAA and fasten it so that it being put into the glass EE may rech almost unto the botom. Divide then the space between bodie of AAA and the cork so fastned into 16 eqall parts. Next fil the glas EE almost as full as you can of fair water warmed that hath some Roman vitriol dissolved in it. Then heat the hed of AAA verie well at the fier and

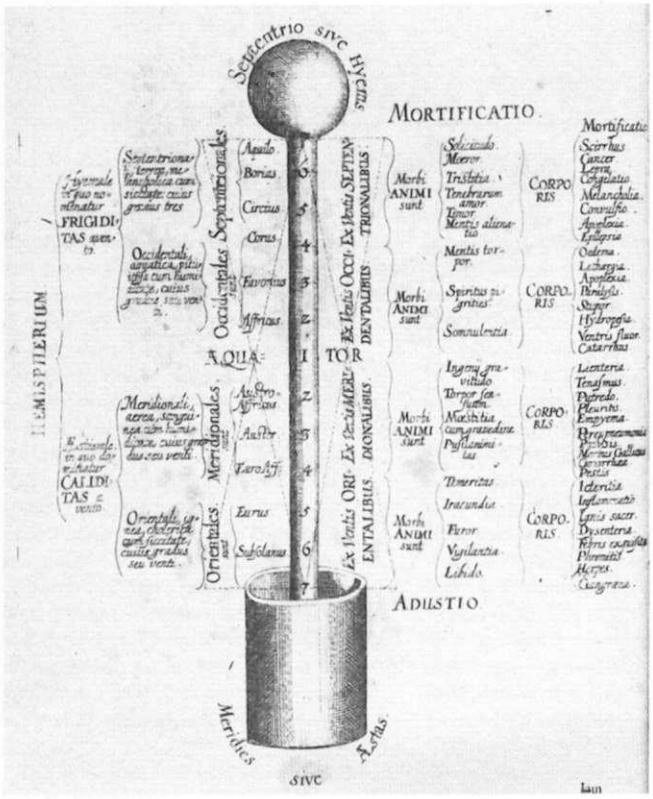


70

put it into the glas EE and wax it fast and you shall perceive the water to ascend into it, behould the figure BBB. Lastly include EE in a box as bb.

'THE USE. 1. Note that this water ascendeth with could and descendeth with heate. 2. If in 6 or 8 howers the water fale a degre or more it wil sureli rain within 12 hower after. 3. Soe long as the water stands at any one degre, so long the wether wil continue at that stay it is then at. Lastly by diligent Observacion you may foretell frost, snow or foul wether. You may bye the glasses AAA and EE att the signe of the Princes arms in . . . Hale Street. Anno Domini 1631.'
Printed broadside, London, 1631

70 *The Weather-glass as Symbol of the Earth*
The 'hemispheres' mentioned in plate 68 have here become literal ones, as the weather-glass is stretched from pole to pole of the Earth's sphere. The bulb, which the water-level approaches in cold weather, is at the wintry North Pole: the water reservoir, to which it falls when the enclosed air expands, at the South Pole, supposedly the very seat of summer. The midpoint is the equator, intersected by the solar circle of the Ecliptic at the spring and autumn equinoxes (Aries and Libra). Thus the archetypal qualities of contraction and expansion are manifested in the physical world. Another of Fludd's favourite symbols, that of the intersecting pyramids of form (=expansion) and matter (=contraction), is present in the triangles GHI, EFK.
MC II, a, p. 28



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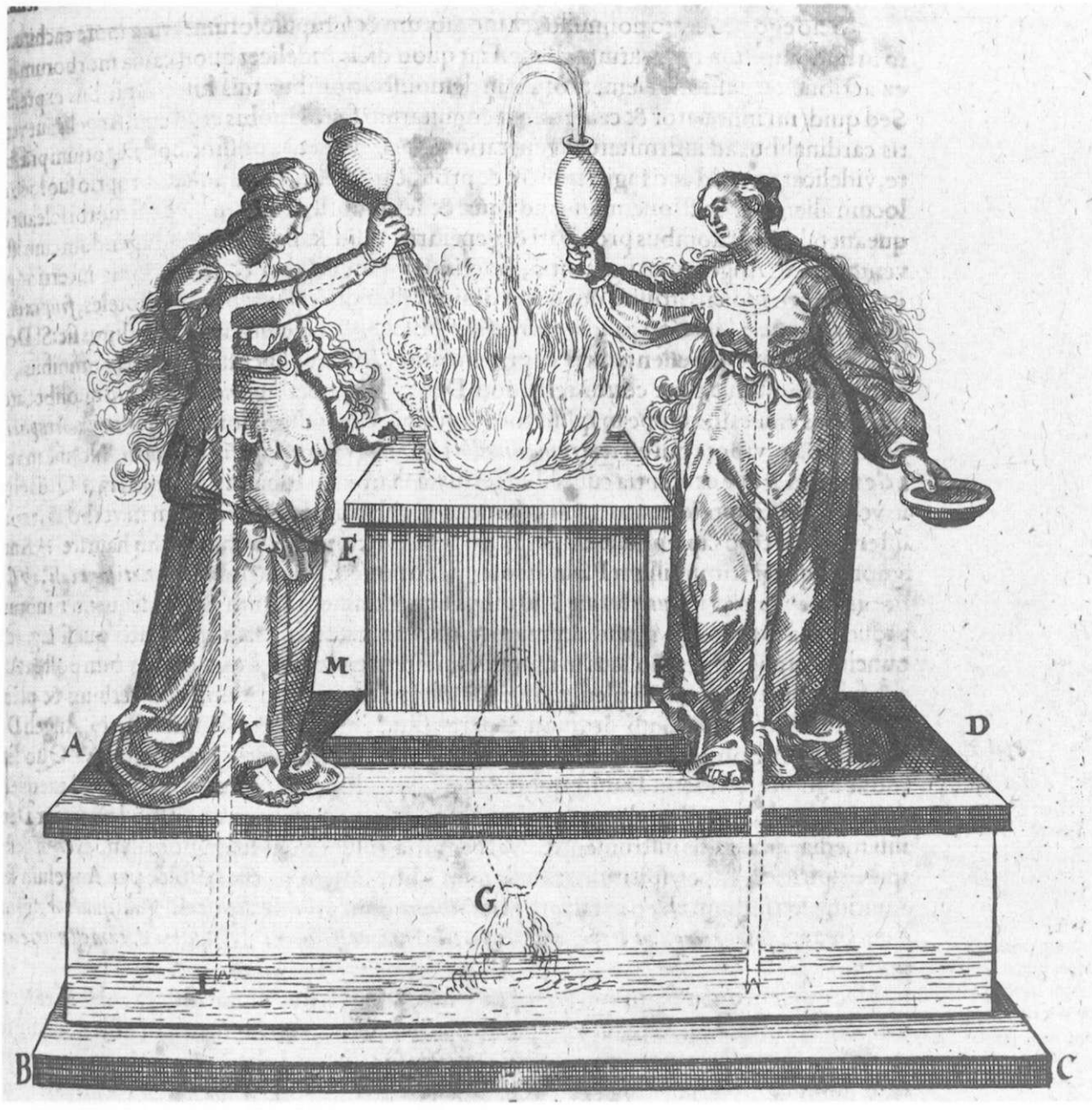
72

71 *The Weather-glass as Medical Symbol*
Beginning from the left, we read that there are two hemispheres: the cold wintry one and the hot summery one. The North is cold and dry, earthy and melancholic, with three degrees represented by the North Winds Aquilo, Boreas and Circius. The West is cold and wet, watery and phlegmatic, also with its three winds. Crossing the equator we find the warm and wet South, whose humour is sanguine, and the warm, dry, choleric West.

Each of these has its characteristic diseases, borne on the winds (see plate 62). They range from the extremes of mortification in the North to those of inflammation in the South. First the mental ailments, reading downwards: care, grief, sorrow, love of darkness, fear, losing one's mind; mental torpor, sluggishness, sleepiness; heavy constitution, torpor of the senses, melancholy with catarrh, timidity; boldness, irascibility, fury, insomnia, lust. Lastly the diseases of the body: scorching, cancer, leprosy, hardening, melancholy, convulsion, apoplexy, epilepsy; edema, lethargy, apoplexy, paralysis, stupour, dropsy, loose bowels, catarrh; disease of the spleen, tenesmus, decay, pleurisy, empyema, pneumonia, tuberculosis, syphilis ('the French disease'), gonorrhea, plague; itching, inflammation, erysipelas, dysentery, painful fever, phrenitis, herpes and gangrene.
MC II, a, p. 88

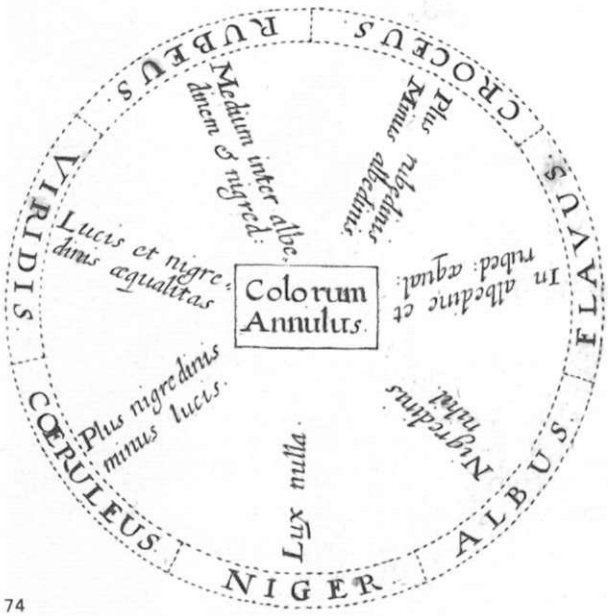
72 *The Origin of Catarrh*
'Here we see water converted by the fire's heat into a vapour, which ascends from the pot and meets the lid, whose lower temperature makes it condense into drops. It is even so with the human body: the watery phlegm originates in the southerly region of the intestines, and in disease is heated by the fire of the liver; it rises to the colder region of the head, where again it coalesces in



73

warm droplets. These are the cause of colds, catarrh and coryza, and from this phlegm in the head one suffers their side-effects of headaches, impaired hearing and vertigo.' (p. 424)
MC II, a, p. 424; *ibid.*, p. 432; *ibid.*, p. 446

73 *The Origin of Tuberculosis*
This is a design for an ingenious fountain, taken from Hero of Alexandria and adapted as a medical allegory. 'When a fire is lit upon the altar, its heat causes the air inside the reservoir to expand. This in turn forces the water out by its only available routes: up the tubes concealed in the figures, and out of their vases, thus quenching the fire. This fountain demonstrates what happens in tuberculosis: the air contained in the thorax becomes overheated and expands. Some of it escapes through the hidden channels of the veins and arteries, emerging in the viscera as phlegm. At night this rises to the head and, condensing there, falls back into the lungs, making the patient cough. This could lead to many other conclusions: I merely commend it to the consideration of doctors as an entirely new theory.' (p. 466)
MC II, a, p. 465



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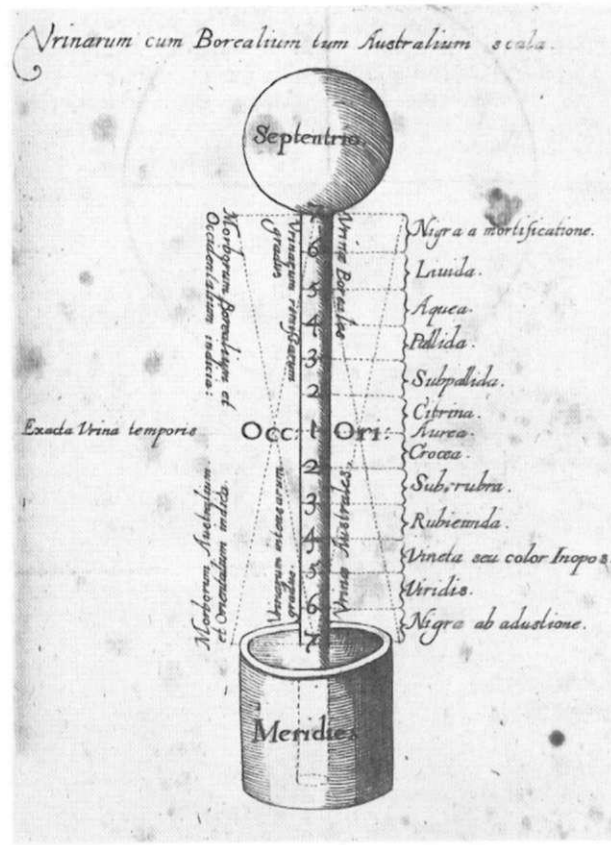


75

74 *A Colour Wheel*
'Neither cold, nor heat, nor colour, nor taste, nor odour are (as the old Philosophers thought) accidents; but essences placed primordially in creatures by the Creator' (p. 147). Colour derives from the elements: fire is naturally orange or red, air yellow, water white, earth black. The colours of things are a factor of their elemental constitution, and of the degree of primordial light and darkness within them. On the colour wheel are seven colours: red (*rubeus*), orange *(croceus)*, yellow *(flavus)*, white *(albus)*, black *(niger)*, blue *(ceruleus)* and green *(viridis)*. Black and white are extremes of darkness and light, and red is the mean between them. Orange and yellow are stages between red and white; green and blue between red and black. 'But the ultimate cause of colour is the natural or radical sulphur, which is present in all things and causes rotation of the elements and mutation of forms. The radical sulphur has its root and origin in the Light which first differentiated itself out of the primal mass. Fire is the closest element to it, and most nearly approaches its colour.' (p. 149)

The theory of colours as consisting of varying degrees of light and shade was carried much further by Goethe and his follower Rudolf Steiner. Goethe's 'colour wheel' differs from Fludd's only in his placing of green between blue and yellow.
MC I, a, p. 154

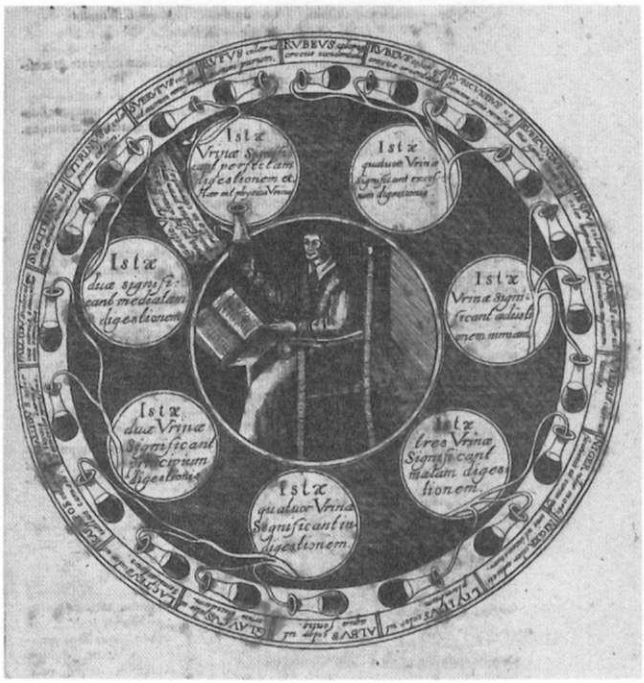
75 *The Colours of Urine*
The weather-glass, which calibrates the region between the two terrestrial poles or cosmic extremes, is here adapted to the science of uroscopy, or diagnosis through examination of urine. The colours of urine correspond to those of the previous plate. They can apparently range from a 'putrefied black' in the north to a 'boiled black' in the south, passing in between through blue-black, aqua, pale grey, white, yellow, golden (in the middle), orange, red, wine-coloured and green. No wonder that most of them indicate disease! The actual disorder to be expected can be read off from the great medical weather-glass in plate 71 or deduced from plate 77.
MC II, b, p. 271

76 *The Physician examines a Specimen*
This is part of the title-page of a treatise on 'Physiological Urinomancy, or diagnosis through the careful inspection of urine, in five books: in which the mystery, essence, species, causes and meanings of urine are discussed in a new way, different from the common teachings and scarcely known before.' Fludd devotes nearly two hundred pages to diagnosis through urine. In assessing the patient's state through its colour and consistency he was acting in accordance with his fundamental belief in the metaphysical dualism which manifests on Earth as the twin poles of light and dark, rarefield and condensed. Plate 74 showed how he traced every colour to this duality, and the next plate relates these colours to the weather-glass.
MC II, b, p. 255

76

77 *The Circle of Urinary Colours*
With the exception of the physician pictured in the centre, this plate is an exact copy from a fifteenth-century manuscript now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (Ms. Savile 39, f. 7'). It shows a more complete range of colours than plate 75, each marked with a urine flask. Their indications are as follows, beginning at the top:

Reds, ranging from crocus-colour to that of intense fire, signify excesses in the digestion.
Colours resembling those of liver, white beans, or cabbage stalks indicate overheating.
Black and leaden colours show bad digestion.
The colours of spring water, light filtering through horn, milk, or camel hair show indigestion.
Pallid colours like cooked fat indicate the beginnings of digestion.
Cider colours show medium digestion.
Golden colours alone are the sign of a perfect digestion. [The Golden Mean?]
MC II, a, p. 343



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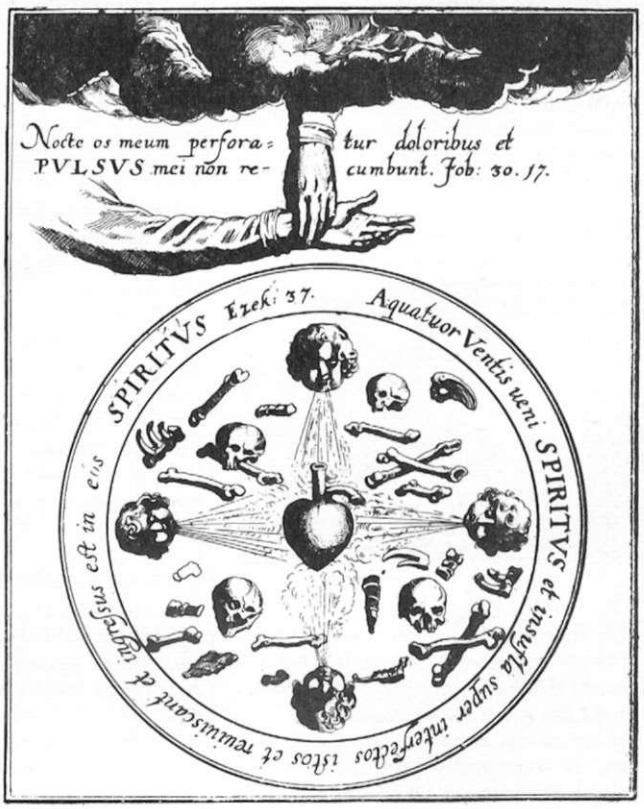
78 *The Pulse*
'The Pulse, or the new and secret history of the pulses, drawn from sacred sources yet compared with the sayings and authority of the ethnic physicians. "My bones are pierced in me in the night season; and my pulse takes no rest" (Job 30.17). "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live" (Ezekiel 37.9).'

Fludd's interest in the blood was more metaphysical than anatomical, though he was certainly familiar with the evidence of dissection. With the other Paracelsians, he believed that man is nourished by subtle as well as physical food, and that this is also carried by the blood. It comes in the first place from the Sun, and is taken up by the four winds as the Sun revolves round the quarters of the Earth. The winds, in turn, carry this aerial spirit into the heart, which is the 'sun' of the physical body, and through it this collection of 'dead bones' is vivified. Obviously we have here a description of what the Hindus call 'prana', the etheric life force. Given this super-physical function of the blood and the heart, it is natural that Fludd should regard the pulse as an indicator of general health, and it is to diagnosis through the pulse's strength and speed that this book is devoted.
MC I, b, t.p.



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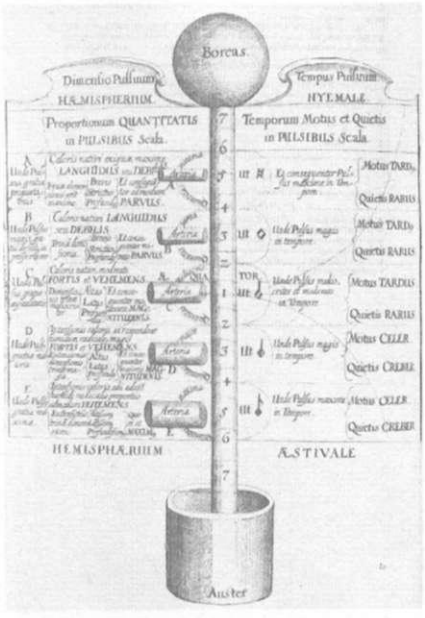


79

79 *The System of the Universal Pulse*
Again the weather-glass serves as a symbol of the extremes of manifestation. Here they are those specifically of pulse activity, ranging on the right from slow to fast beats and from infrequent to frequent rests. Musical notes are used to designate the tempo. On the left are arteries of different sizes, favouring progressively stronger blood-flow, hence a stronger pulse. These are correlated with the scale that runs from the cold, constricting North Pole to the warm, expansive South, through the point of equality and perfect balance, where the best health is to be found.
MC I, b, p. 78

80

80 *Flying a Kite*
This charming illustration is designed to show how the higher elements have a natural tendency upwards. Preceding it, Fludd has given the example of a lighted candle standing upright in a bowl of water with a glass retort placed over it. The water is raised into the retort, he says, by the 'occult faculty' of fire. Here he seems close to the Aristotelian notion of the attractive property of fire which he later rejected in favour of the truer principles of expansion and contraction (see commentary to plate 68). That air also has a natural upward motion is proved here by the common experiment of flying a kite. (Of course a kite can be flown in a sideways breeze, just as sailing ships can tack against the wind: but this would complicate matters and is not considered.) Fludd goes on to say that the upward tendency of the 'vivific spirit' makes living creatures weigh less than dead ones. 'This is more the case with humans than with animals, showing that man contains a higher proportion of vital light than they. Take a man who weighs 200 lbs when alive: his corpse may weigh 240 lbs. The difference of −60 pounds' weight of vital spirit would be enough to lift his [vital?] body to the sphere of the Sun!' (pp. 138–41) Perhaps Fludd had done more kite-flying than corpse-weighing.
UCH II, a, 1, p. 139

81 *The Great Meteorological Chart*
Every heavenly phenomenon that can affect or afflict mankind is shown in this remarkable chart. At the top is God, symbolized by the Tetragrammaton. 'Since no image can represent, nor any human mind comprehend him in his infinity, the Cabbalists and secret theologians use also the word *Ensoph*, which signifies Infinitude' (p. 142). Flanking God are ten compartments which are the emanations from his ten Hebrew names. Each name or aspect of God 'gushes forth' through the channel of one of the ten Sephiroth, giving life and essence to one of the angelic orders who in turn directs a circle of the ethereal world. The correspondences are shown in the table opposite.

God's special relationship with the Sun is indicated in the upper centre where the angel Michael, the guardian of *Tifereth*, descends. One of Fludd's favourite quotations, 'He hath placed his tabernacle in the Sun' (Psalm 19.4), is written close by.

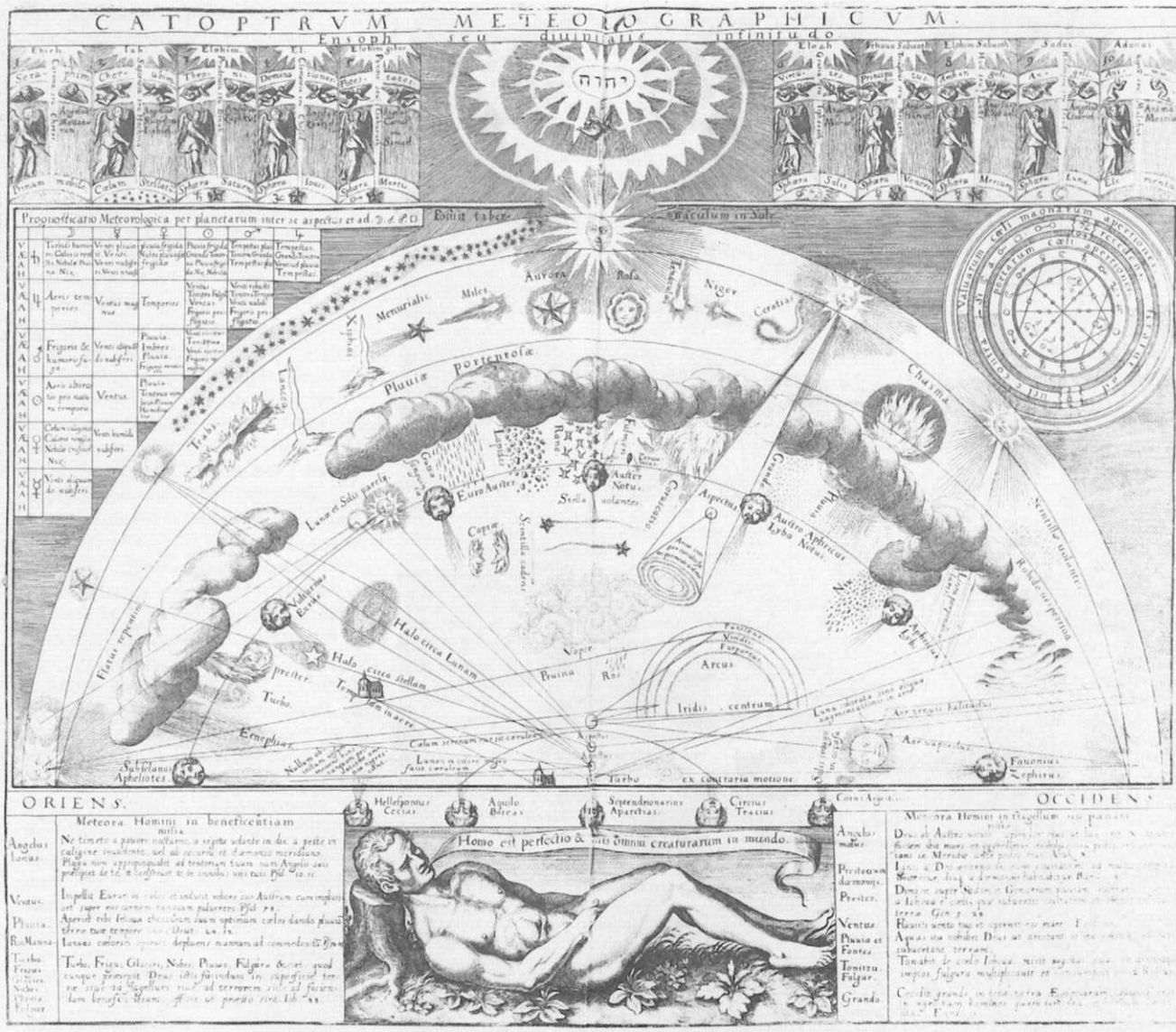
The large semicircle contains all the meteorological phenomena, which Fludd categorizes (p. 145–6) as (1) those which exist and are seen, (2) those which exist but are not seen, and (3) those which do not exist but are seen. In the first category are the various types of comets depicted in the outside crescent:

Trabs: [a blazing beam]
Lancea: a long, spear-like comet
Xiphias: a shorter one, like a pointed sword
Mercurialis: a small bluish comet with a long thin tail
Miles: a red comet
Aurora: looks like a star, but excels all in brightness and splendour
Rosa: a large, round comet, with a human face
Tenaculum: stands on a fiery base
Niger: a dark comet with a short tail
Ceratias: has the shape of a flame or horn
Chasma and *Scintillae volante* } brief appearances of flames and flying sparks

Other things both seen and to be believed are the clouds in the next circle, and the things which fall out of them: 'sudden winds', giving forth invisible hurricanes and whirlwinds, as well as fiery exhalations; 'monstrous showers' of blood, stones, frogs, thunderbolts, hail, ordinary rain and snow. Penetrating the fissures in the clouds, the Sun's rays cause 'perpendicular lines', and when reflected off clouds in the evening they produce the illusion of a red sky.

Below the clouds, the twelve winds blow. In the lowest region we find the real phenomena of 'goats', falling and shooting-stars, and lightning flashes. Here, too, are formed the vapours that give off hail and dew. The unreal phenomena are haloes around Sun, Moon and stars, mirages such as temples in the sky, rainbows, colorations of the moon and magnification of the setting Sun by vaporous air. The blueness of the sky is explained (lower left) by the combination of light with blackness.

The chart on the left shows the influences of planetary aspects on the weather, according to the four seasons (V=spring, AE=summer, A=autumn, H=winter). Conjunctions, oppositions and squares are treated alike for purposes of prognostication. On the right is another circle of planetary aspects, from which one can predict the 'opening of the great gates of heaven in the upper sphere. This occurs when the Moon is passing out of conjunction, square, or opposition with Sun, Jupiter, or Mars, and directly transits Saturn, Mercury, or Venus—or vice versa. Then, in the opinion of all astrologers, there will be abundant rains and consequently great floods are to be expected. The inner circle shows the aspects which cause the opening of the lesser doors of



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heaven, with consequent rainfall. This is a secret which the astrologers seldom divulge, but it will be found very useful.' (p. 275)

The legend proceeding from the mouth of the recumbent man reads: 'Man is the perfection and end of all creatures in the world.' He seems to represent Adam before the Fall. On the left is a list of 'meteors sent for man's benefit': good angels, wind, rain, dew, manna [thought to be derived from dew], storm, cold, ice, clouds, rain and lightning. On the right are the 'meteors sent for man's chastisement or punishment': bad angels, fiery whirlwinds (with and without demons), wind, rain, springs, thunder, lightning and hail. All these are supported with biblical quotations of which the sources are given.

PS, p. 170–1

Name of God	*Sephira*	*Order of Angels*	*Chief Angel*	*Ethereal Circle*
1 Ehieh	Kether	Seraphim	Metatron	Primum Mobile
2 Iah	Hokhmah	Cherubim	Ruziel	Fixed Stars
3 Elohim	Binah	Thrones	Zabkiel	Saturn
4 El	Hesed	Dominations	Zadkiel	Jupiter
5 Elohim gibor	Geburah	Powers	Samael	Mars
6 Eloah	Tifereth	Virtues	Michael	Sun
7 Jehovah Sabaoth	Netsah	Principalities	Anael	Venus
8 Elohim Sabaoth	Hod	Archangels	Raphael	Mercury
9 Sadai	Yesod	Angels	Gabriel	Moon
10 Adonai	Malkuth	Souls	Soul of the Messiah	Elements

V Man, the Microcosm

The human being regarded as a universe in miniature: his constitution and connection with the macrocosm

82

82 *Macrocosm and Microcosm*
The familiar title-page of *Utriusque Cosmi . . . Historia* summarizes the correspondence of the ethereal and elemental realms with man. The outer circle represents the Ptolemaic universe, from the fixed stars through the planets, with four further, unmarked circles denoting the elements (see plates 2–4). To this macrocosm corresponds the microcosm of man. The signs of the zodiac, equivalent to the fixed stars, rule his members from head (Aries) to feet (Pisces). After the planetary circles come the elements, to which correspond the four humours of Galenic medicine: fire=yellow bile (*cholera*), air=blood (*sanguis*), water=phlegm (*pituita*) and earth=black bile (*melancholia*).

At the head of each world preside another Sun and Moon. We may recall their traditional presence in medieval paintings of the Crucifixion, representing the polar opposites between which the Divine Man is sacrificed for the world. In man they are Spirit and Soul, the King and Queen whose marriage is the goal of alchemy.

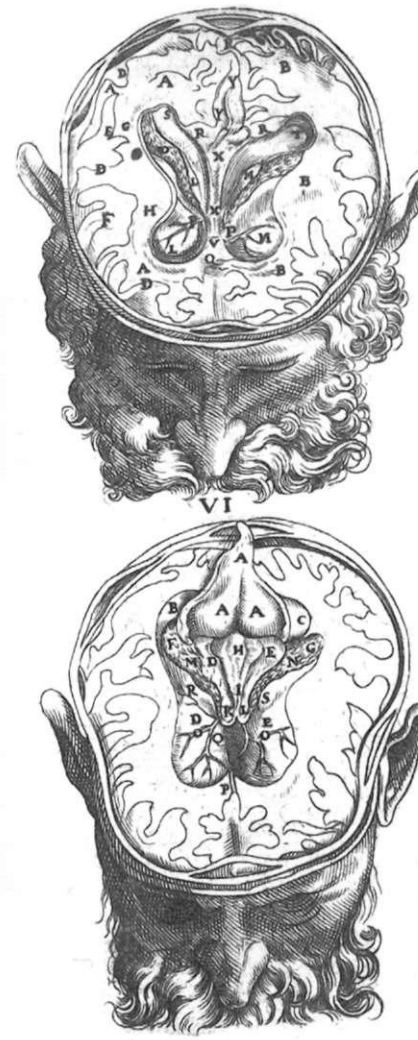
Above and beyond the realm of opposites, all-encompassing Time turns both macrocosm and microcosm. He has his usual attributes of wings, hour-glass (with an escapement on the top: sometimes there is an actual clock there) and goat's feet. Since Father Time is the same as Kronos or Saturn they may refer to the constellation of Capricorn, which Saturn rules and which sees in the new year. Naturally this 'Saturn' is a manifestation of a higher order than the planetary one. In the Orphic theology the cognate name *Chronos* is actually given to the Supreme Principle itself.
UCH I, a, t.p.

83 *Man's Higher Vehicles*
A more exalted view of man relates him also to the world above the zodiac. With his 'supernatural' faculties of Reason *(Ratio)*, Intellect and Mind *(Mens)*, he soars through the triple world of the angelic hierarchies and contacts God himself. These higher faculties are, of course, outside the physical and etheric bodies, whose domain stops at the circle which the man touches. Beyond that, he is on the way to becoming 'Universal Man' and eventually a God in his own right.
UCH II, a, 1, t.p.

83

84

85 *The Physical Brain*
The physical location of the pair of lateral ventricles, corresponding in the previous plate to Sense and Imagination, is shown by the letters 'D, E'. Like most of the illustrations to Fludd's work on corporeal anatomy, these are borrowed directly from an edition of Andreas Vesalius's epoch-making work, *De Humani Corporis Fabrica*. These correspond to Book VII, plates 5–6, in the original edition of 1543.
AA, p. 163



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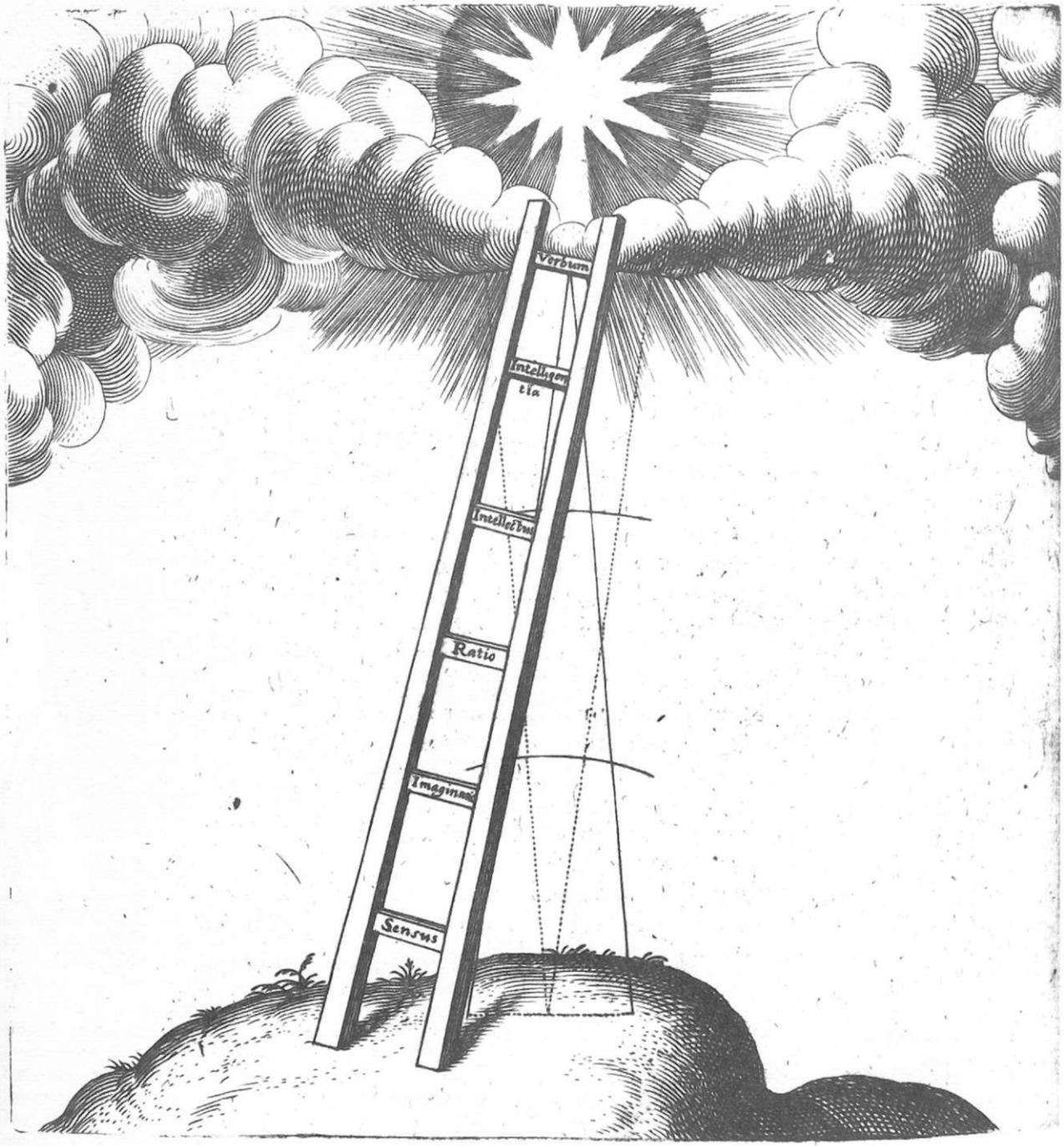
84 *The Spiritual Brain*
The three higher faculties of Reason, Intellect and Mind are associated with the upper ventricle of the brain, hence with the pituitary gland. Just as the thousand-petalled lotus at the top of the yogi's head opens up to the consciousness of the divine, so the intellectual world of God and the angelic hierarchy finds here its entry to the soul.

The soul is also informed by the sensible world, whose five elements of light, subtle and gross air, water and earth correspond to the five senses (as the dotted lines show). Comparable to it in every respect is the imagined world which enters directly into the two lateral ventricles, here shown in the front of the brain. One might align these with the principles of Hindu Sankhya philosophy: five *mahabhutas* (sensible elements) arising from five *tanmatras* (subtle potentialities of the senses), and five *jnanendriyas* (organs of sense knowledge). Sankhya also has three higher principles, *Manas, Ahamkara* and *Buddhi*, corresponding to an extent with Fludd's reason, intellect and mind.

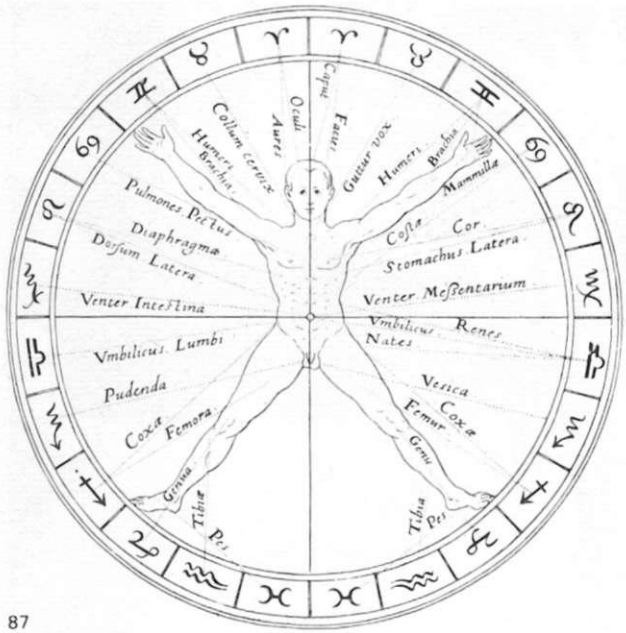
In the rear of the head is the seat of memory and motion, placed in the two halves of the fourth ventricle. The whole concept was not original with Fludd, but can be seen in cruder illustrations to the works of Albertus Magnus, Gregor Reisch and others (see Manly Hall, *Man*).
UCH II, a, 1, p. 217



86

86 *Jacob's Ladder*
'How amazing it is that things so disparate as the vile body and the immortal spirit should be joined together in man! No less miraculous it is, that God himself should have contracted into corporeality; and that man should be so made that he can participate in eternal beatitude. What joy there is in this world comes alone from the presence of the spirit in the corruptible body. How much greater, then, must be the bliss of Heaven, where the Rational Spirit enjoys God's proximate presence! To attain this, it is necessary to turn away from exterior things and turn inwards; indeed, to penetrate through one's very centre.' (p. 273) Fludd hints here at his own experience in meditation.

The ladder of perfection shows the steps that must be taken to mount from Earth to Heaven: from the world of the senses to the inner world of Imagination; thence through Reason, or disciplined thought, to Intellect, the inner organ of knowledge; to Intelligence, or the object of direct inner knowledge, and finally to the Word itself, which opens the supercelestial realm.
UCH II, a, 1, p. 272



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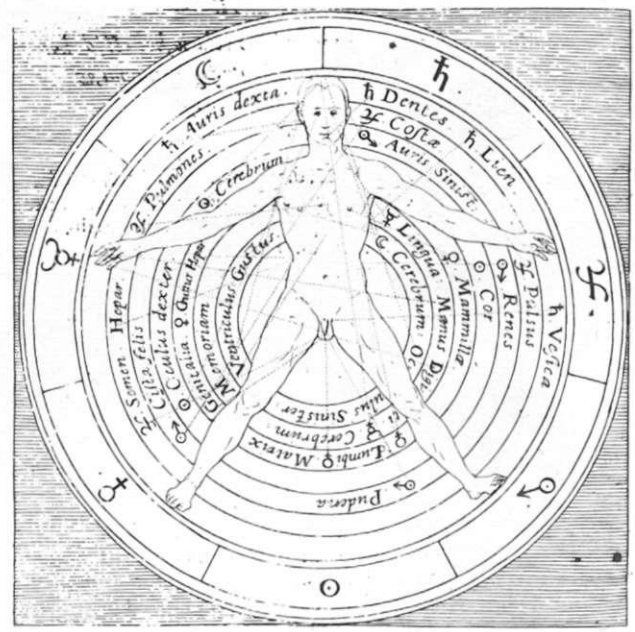


88

87 *Zodiacal Man*
The rulerships of the signs of the zodiac over the parts of the body are shown in more detail here, a double zodiac being used for illustrative convenience. From head to toe and from left to right they are as follows:

Aries: ears, eyes, head, face
Taurus: neck, nape of the neck, throat, voice
Gemini: shoulder, arms
Cancer: lungs, chest, ribs, breasts
Leo: diaphragm, back, sides, stomach, heart
Virgo: belly, intestines, mesentery
Libra: navel, loins, buttocks, kidneys
Scorpio: pudenda, bladder
Sagittarius: hips, thighs
Capricorn: knees
Aquarius: shins
Pisces: feet

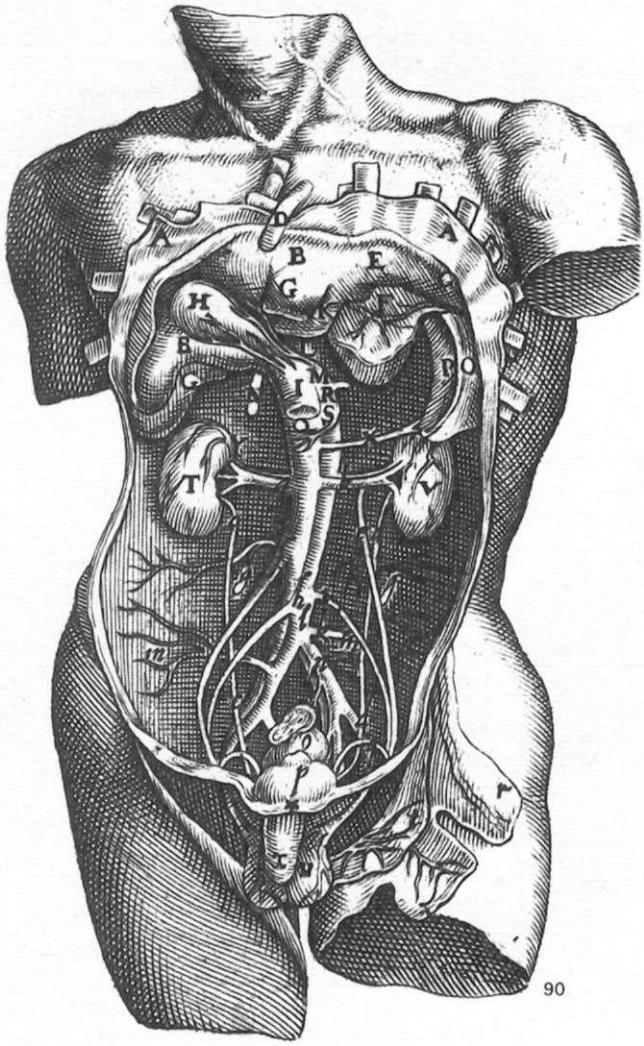
UCH II, a, 1, p. 113

88 *Planetary Man*
The seven circles of the planets also have their rulerships over the body, though authorities differ on the details:
Saturn: right ear, teeth, spleen, bladder
Jupiter: lungs, ribs, pulse, semen, liver
Mars: left ear, kidneys, pudenda, gall bladder
Sun: brain, heart, right eye
Venus: breasts, loins, womb, genitals, throat, liver
Mercury: tongue, hands, fingers, brain, memory
Moon: brain, left eye, belly, taste

This figure, like that of plate 82, touches the circle at five equidistant points and is centred on the genitals. The previous one, on the other hand, formed a cross centred on the navel. Five is supposed to be the number of man as he is on Earth, which he enters through the generative process. Other intentions apart, such pentagonal figures essentially represent the microcosmic human being, whereas the cross-shaped ones represent the macrocosmic man, 'crucified' on the four directions of space. The latter is centred not on the genitals but on the navel, the abode of the Will through which, as Demiurge, he brings the universe into being and, as Avatar, redeems it.
UCH II, a, 1, p. 112

89 *The Parts of the Body and their Rulerships*
A more complete table of rulerships includes both the zodiacal and the planetary influences on the human body. From this chart one can read off the part that is likely to be affected by any possible planet-sign combination. Saturn in Aries affects the chest, Venus in Pisces the shins, and so on. The chart is part of a grand scheme of astrological diagnosis which purports to give not only the probable diseases to be expected from every planetary aspect, but also a system for detecting the critical days when the course of a disease can be reversed.
MC II, b, p. 183

89



90

90 *The Torso Dissected*
Again we show that Fludd was perfectly familiar with the physical constitution of man, even if he probably learnt it more from reading Vesalius than through actual dissection. The body is for him, as for all mystics, the lowest member of the whole human being: a mere vehicle for the Soul and Spirit, and the seat of temptation and sin. Yet at the same time, this despised object is fearfully and wonderfully made so as to reflect God's cosmos in its every particular, and from this point of view it deserves our awe and admiration. One of Christian civilization's major problems arises from this dichotomy, and Fludd could not surmount it.
AA, p. 113

91 *Threefold Man*
Just as Fludd's diagrams of the Ptolemaic universe show the light of God shining above the three realms, so this shows the three realms as they manifest in man, under God. The sunburst above his head may recall the thousand-petalled lotus of yoga, the *Sahasrara Chakra* whose opening marks the transcendence of the conditioned realms, empyrean, ethereal and elemental alike.

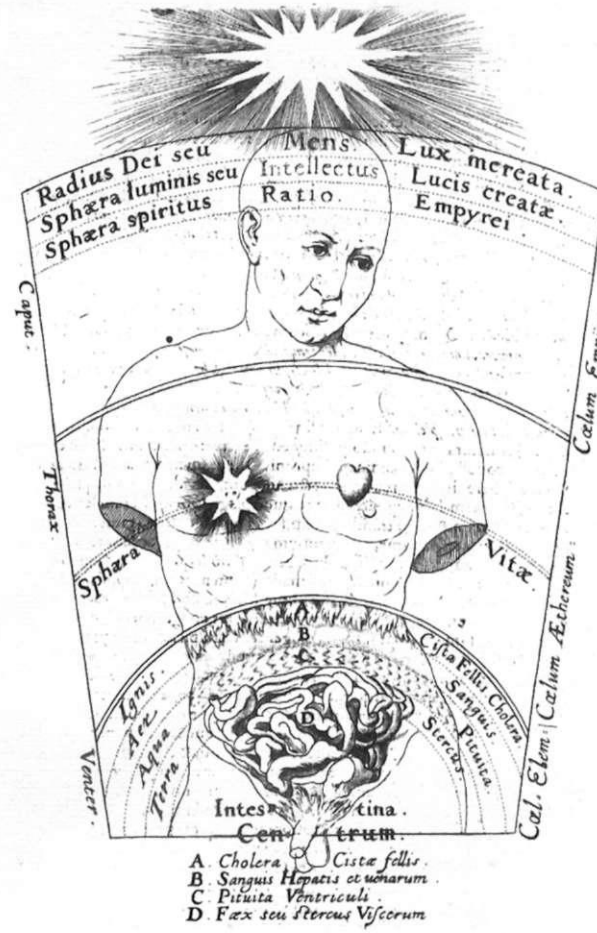
To the highest heaven corresponds the head, with its three functions:

The Deific Ray or Mind: Uncreated Light
The Sphere of Light or Intellect: Created Light
The Sphere of *Spiritus*: Reason: the Empyrean

The planetary spheres or ethereal heaven correspond to the thorax, in whose centre rules the heart, equivalent to the Sun in the 'sphere of life'. The elemental spheres of fire, air, water and earth are marked both on the diagram and beneath:

A Choler (gall bladder)
B Blood (liver and veins)
C Phlegm (belly)
D Faeces or dung (viscera)

If we need a clarification of what the ancients meant by 'black bile', the melancholic humour, here it is. At the centre are the genitals, corresponding to the centre of the Earth (see plate 88).
UCH II, a, 1, p. 105



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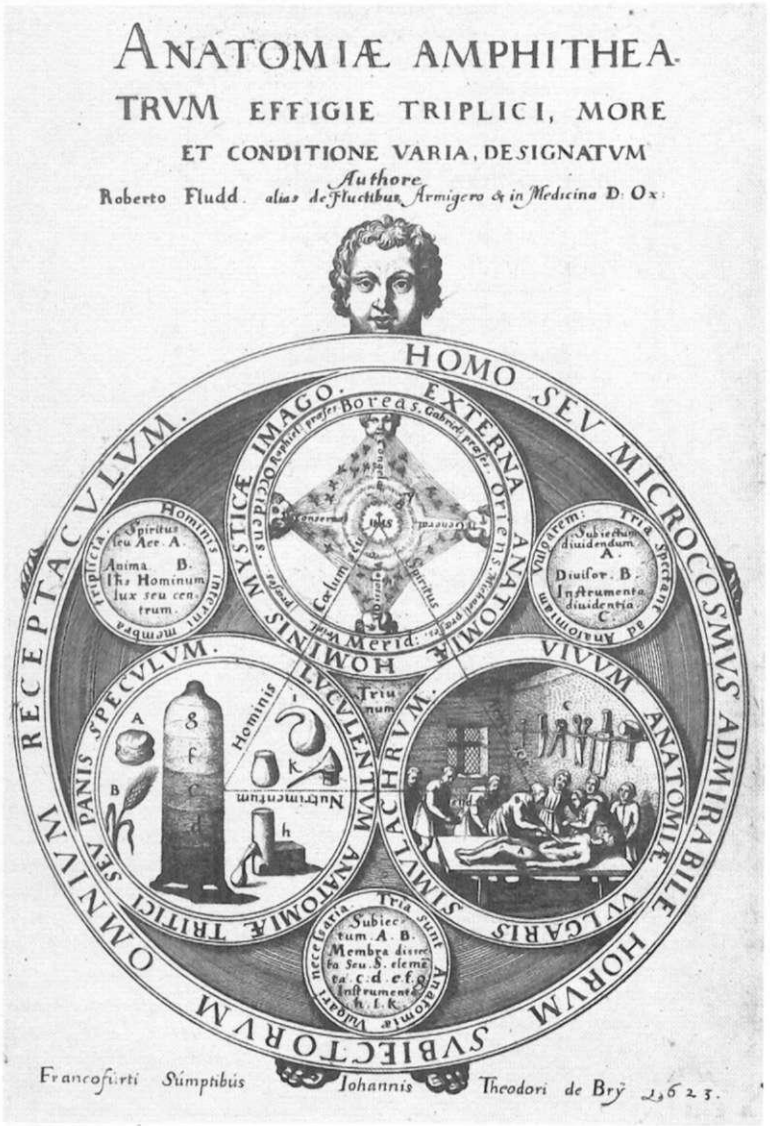

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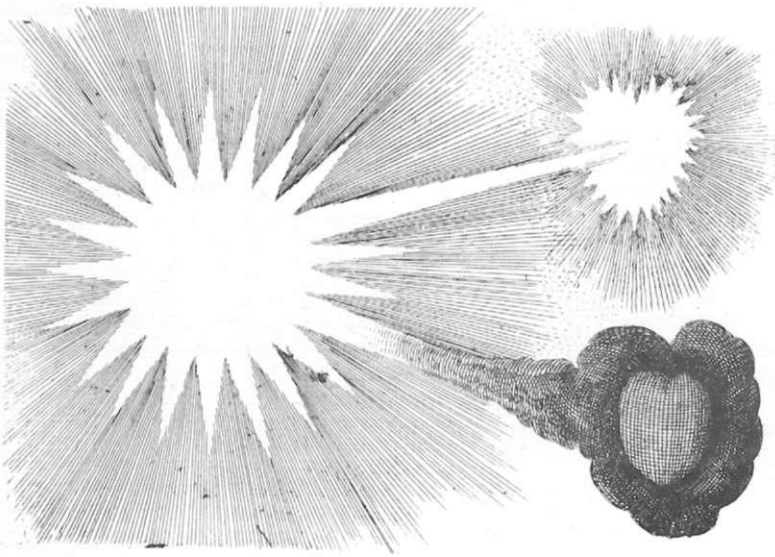


93

92 *Soul, Body and Bread*
Like most of Fludd's title-pages, this epitomizes the main themes of the book. The *Theatre of Anatomy* discusses the anatomy of wheat and of man's physical and subtle bodies. Here the Universal Man holds a circle inscribed 'Man, or the Microcosm: the admirable receptacle of all these subjects.' Within are three large circles:

I (above) 'The external image of man's mystic anatomy'

The sacred monogram IHS (Jesus) is at the heart of the four winds, presided over by the Archangels Gabriel (N), Michael (E), Uriel (S) and Raphael (W). To them are ascribed the respective properties of congealing, generating, dissolving and conserving. The small circle to the left explains that the *spiritus* or air (A) and the soul (B) surround IHS, 'the light or centre of men'. These are the 'triple members of internal man'. Further on the winds, see plates 60–64.

II (left) 'The bright mirror of the anatomy of wheat or bread'

Wheat, the pre-eminent 'food of man'. was the subject of an alchemical experiment by which Fludd set great store. He devotes the first lengthy section of this book to an account of how he extracted the quintessence of wheat, along with the many macrocosmic conclusions he drew from this process. The small circle reads: 'Three things are necessary to make anatomy accessible.' They are the subject – here bread (A) and wheat (B); the dissected members, or the elements of the subject – here the five elements into which he divided wheat (E-G); the instruments – alembic and retort (I,K).

III (right) 'The living effigy of common anatomy'

A scene of dissection is explained in a parallel way: 'Three watch over common anatomy.' They are the subject of dissection (A), the dissector (B) and his instruments (C).

The three large circles are joined by a triangle along whose sides are written the words: 'Heaven or spiritus', 'Earth or body', 'the food of man'. C. H. Josten has pointed out that the three apexes join the monogram IHS with the level in the bottle equivalent to air and the ear of the surgeon. He suggests that it is 'probably meant to convey the idea that the Word of God (as nourishing to man as wheat and bread) is manifested to him by sound propagating itself through the medium of air'. (Josten, 'Robert Fludd's "Philosophicall Key"', p. 23)
AA, t.p.

94

93 *Divine and Human Will*
'God acts out of will: not, as the Peripatetics say, out of necessity. Nothing is done in Heaven or Earth which does not derive its motion from the divine will. Only the dark mass of matter receives ill the acts of the divine mind, and "the darkness comprehendeth it not". We could compare this to the action of the Sun, which shines indifferently upon the whole Earth, but whose rays are variously received according to the nature of bodies. The Sun can make plants grow, yet it can also shrivel them. Similarly, the intellectual and invisible Sun is one in its act but various in its effects.' (p. 164)

The plate shows the Sun's rays, or God's, meeting light and dark objects. The upper one in turn gives off light: the lower swallows up the ray in its own darkness. Both resemble hearts, perhaps alluding to the esoteric doctrine that the highest soul in man is associated with the subtle heart-centre. This source of the divine within man can be radiant or latent, depending on his level of consciousness.
PS, p. 165

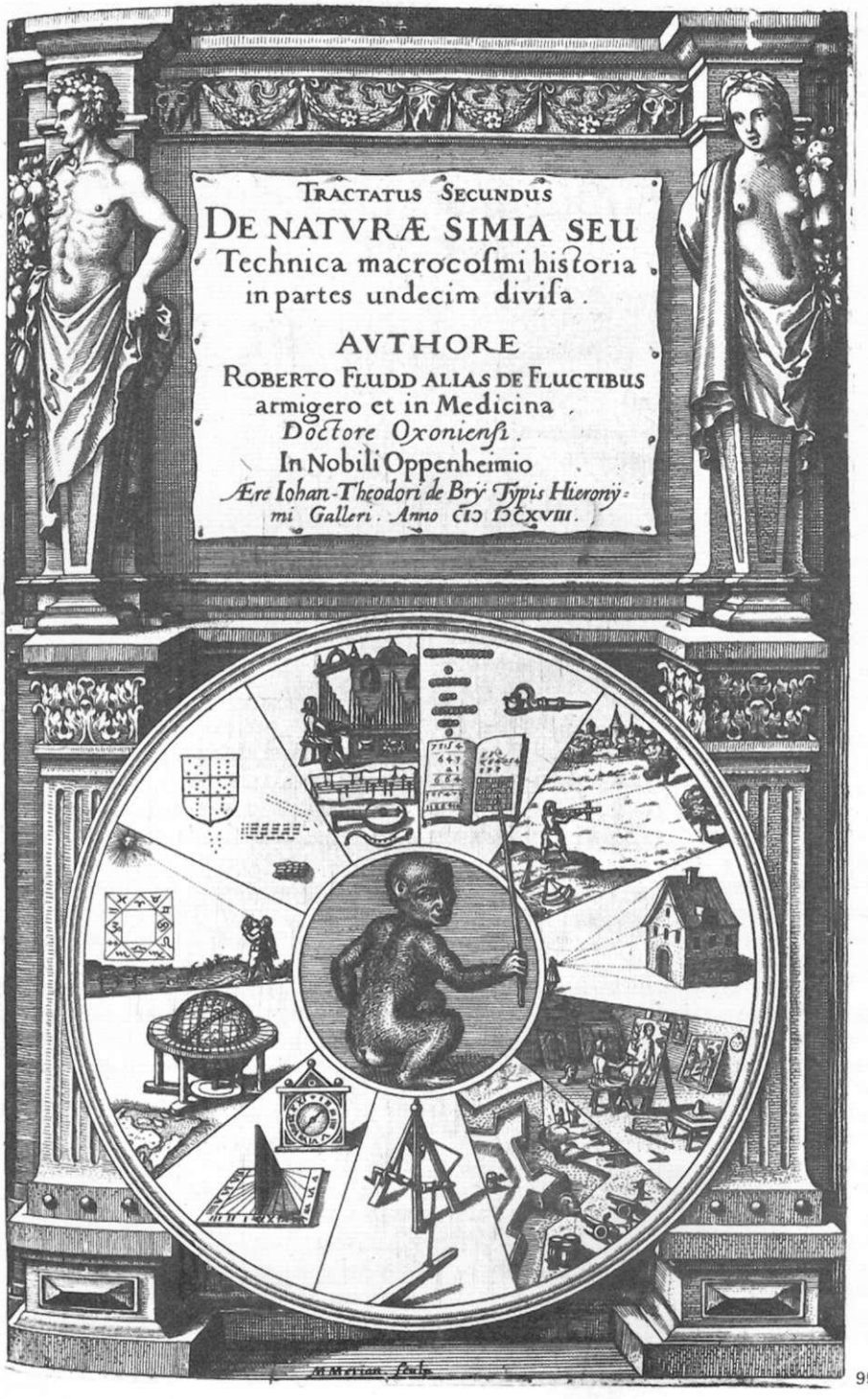
94 *The Fall of Man*
'Theological-philosophical treatise in three books: 1. on Life; 2. on Death; 3. on Resurrection. In which are included some fragments of ancient wisdom witnessing to Adam's misfortune: derived and compiled in the light of Holy Writ and from the limpid fount of the wiser Philosophers, dedicated to those called the Brothers of the Rose Cross by Rudolfo Otreb [anagram of Roberto Floud], a Briton, in the year "Christ, life to the world". At the Oppenheim press of Hieronymus Gallerus, at the expense of Johann Theodore de Bry.'

The year is concealed in a chronogram, solved by adding the capitals of ChrIstVs MVnDo VIta: CIVMVDVI=1617. The title-page shows four scenes commonly found in Christian iconography: God creating Eve from Adam's side; Adam and Eve with the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge; the pair expelled from the Garden of Eden by the flaming sword and placed under Death's dominion; the Resurrection of the Dead. Further symbols appear in the decorations: at the top of each column are fruits, representing the passions and desires to which our first parents succumbed; at the bottom are symbols of the death which came to mankind as a result of the Fall.

The major part of the *Tractatus Theologo-Philosophicus* is a statement of the traditional Christian doctrines concerning man's Fall and Redemption, amplified by many quotations from the *Corpus Hermeticum*. Fludd offers this, his second work, to the mysterious Rosicrucians, joining them in expectation of an imminent renewal of Heaven and Earth.
TTP, t.p.

VI The Ape of Nature

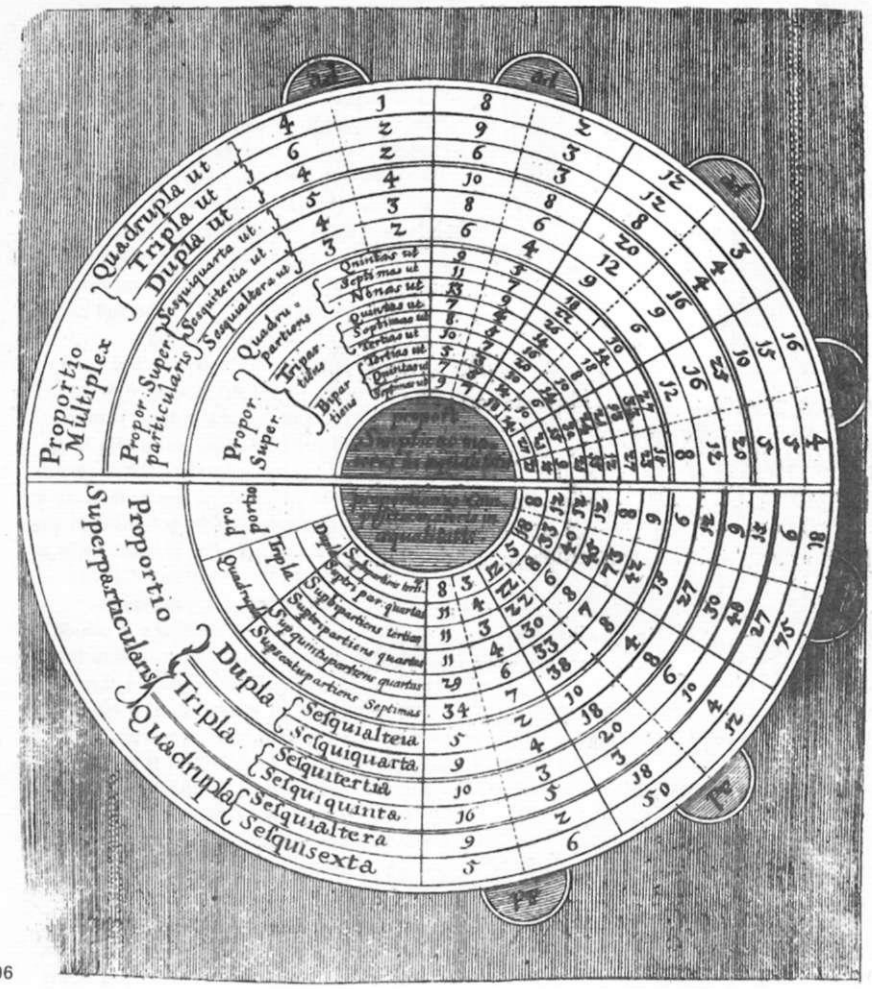
Man's accomplishments in the arts and sciences, imitating and complementing those of Nature



95

95 *The Ape of Nature*
The title-page of the second treatise of the *History of the Macrocosm* represents the Arts by which Man imitates and continues Nature's work on Earth (see plate 3). The Ape squats in the centre, pointing like a schoolmaster to an arithmetic book, and reminding us that all the arts are based on number. The other arts, proceeding clockwise, are geometry (applied in surveying), perspective, painting, military science, engineering, time-keeping, cosmography, astrology, geomancy and music. With the exception of music, which follows arithmetic, this is the order in which the subjects are expounded in the treatise.

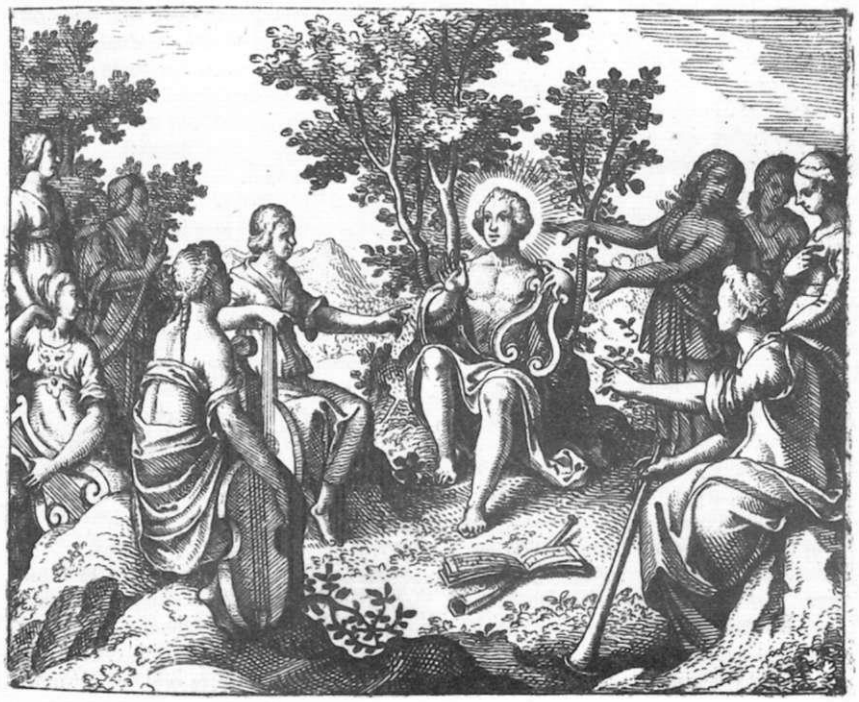
The image of the ape had borne many different connotations before Fludd used it in the title of his book *De Naturae Simia* (see Bibliography, under Janson). He was probably aware that it was a symbol of Thoth, the legendary inventor of writing and other useful arts. The associations Thoth-Hermes-Mercurius point to a deeper purpose in this book: the arts of man are indeed guides to his soul, capable of transforming and preparing it for higher contemplations.
UCH, I, b, t.p.



96

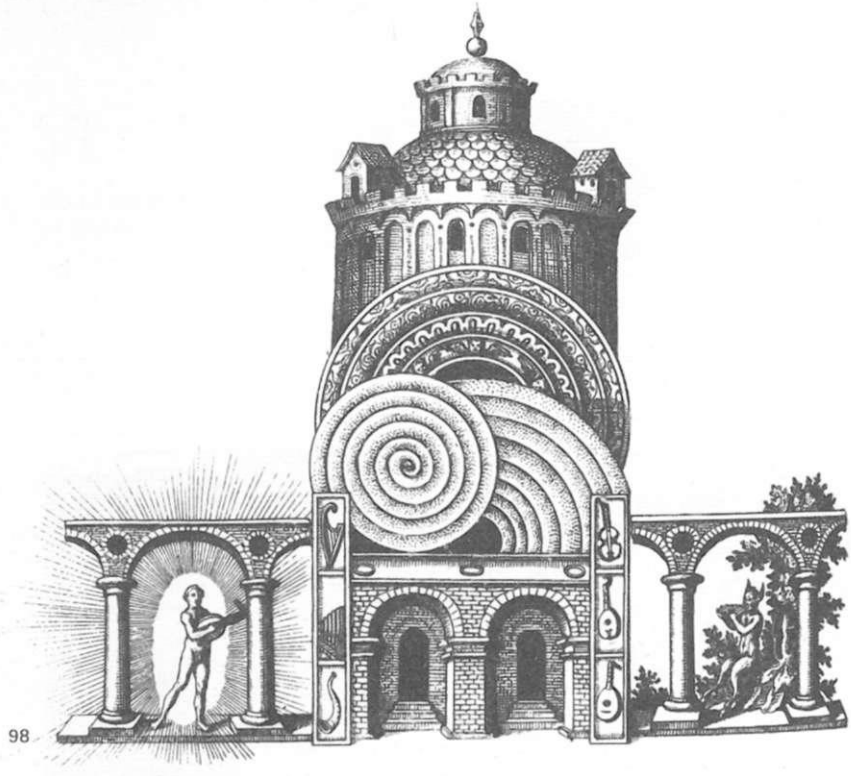
96 *The Mirror of Proportions*
Proportions, whether between the parts of the human body or those of the cosmos, were an important consideration for Greek, medieval and Renaissance philosophers alike. The most detailed working out of them took place in musical theory, where the proportions between strings of various lengths or tensions were translated into audible intervals. Later, with the invention of precise rhythmical notation, they were also realized in metrical relationships.

The 'Mirror of Proportions' (*Proportionum Speculum*) is an example of the many circular charts in this book. It gives the Latin terms for all manner of proportions and the corresponding numerical ratios (as they are called today). The number 5 at the very bottom should be 25, and there are several other misprints.
UCH I, b, p. 13



97

97 *Apollo and the Muses*
This emblem heads Fludd's treatise on music. It is a common enough scene, best known from Raphael's version in the Vatican. The god Apollo sits under a laurel tree on Parnassus with his head enveloped in a solar nimbus. In his hand is a seven-stringed lyre, indicating that as Sun God he is leader of the choir of planets. He is a personification of the regulating, harmonizing forces in the universe, and as such is aptly associated with music, in which these forces are made audible. Around him are the nine Muses, some holding musical instruments: lyre, cornetto, bass viol, lute, cornetto (on the ground) and straight trumpet. The Muses traditionally preside over the Arts, dispensing inspiration to mortals. They are *femmes inspiratrices:* images of the Anima; or the levels of the soul from which true artistic creation arises.
UCH I, b, p. 159



98

98 *The Round Tower*
In the commentary on this enlarged detail of the Temple, the subject of the next plate, Fludd defines sound as made by the striking of air with the consequent vibrations which propagate in spirals and circles (p. 168). These are fancifully drawn above the two doors which represent the ears, sole entrances of sound. Might it be too fanciful to see the spiral also as a reference to the cochlea of the inner ear? Unfortunately Fludd's *Anatomiae Amphitheatrum*, which has very detailed dissection drawings of the human eye, barely mentions the apparatus of hearing, so we do not know the extent of his knowledge.

The doors are flanked by panels containing (left) harp, organ, cornetto, (right) viol, cittern and lute. On the left is Apollo with a lute, on the right Marsyas with pan-pipes. In the engraving of the complete temple, the place of the latter is taken by a curious profile mask. The legend of the musical contest between Apollo and the satyr Marsyas, which ended with the flaying of the loser, was philosophically interpreted to represent the painful liberation from one's earthly body (the satyr's skin) in order to hear Apollo's lyre, i.e. experience the celestial worlds (see Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, pp. 171–6).

> But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
> Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.
>
> (*The Merchant of Venice* V, i)

Perhaps the 'harmony in immortal souls' is indicated by the decorated circles that surmount the edifice, one of them full of 'young-ey'd cherubins'. *UCH* I, b, p. 168

99 *The Temple of Music*
This extraordinary structure, obviously influenced by Renaissance theatrical architecture, was probably conceived as a mnemonic device for the rules of music. Proceeding along the bottom we find first a lute, an instrument which Fludd honours with the following encomium:

> 'No other invention, ancient or modern, is more seemly for consorts nor more desirable for symphonies, nor more admirable to the ears of listeners. Time destroys not the sweetness of its sounds, neither do fickle inventions seduce men's affections from it, however rare, unusual, or more easily learnt these may be.' (p. 226)

Next is the famous scene of Pythagoras entering the forge in which he noticed the consonant pitches produced by four hammers. Examining the hammers, he found their weights in the proportion 12, 9, 8 and 6, giving the intervals of fourth, fifth and octave.

The massive foundation obscuring the remainder of the arcade is in the form of a staff with a bass clef. The lowest note is G, the bottom of the gamut, and as the notes proceed up the scale so their values get smaller, from *maximus* to *semifusa* (the latter equal to our quaver or eighth-note). This is the basis which the rest of the temple amplifies.

In the second storey we find first a column-monochord with the notes of the gamut marked off for two octaves, two higher octaves being indicated only by Gs. Skipping the chart, we come to another gamut between the first two Tuscan columns, running up from F to a'': the normal limits of most music in Fludd's day. The next three spaces explain the three species of hexachords, the six-note 'scales' of medieval music whose lowest note, 'ut', could fall on an F, C or G. These were called respectively the soft, natural and hard hexachords. In the engraving the soft hexachord is surmounted by a round tower and round organ pipes, the hard hexachord by square ones. These reflect the different versions of the note B as it falls in the respective hexachords: in the soft one it sounds B-flat, written with a round *b* that became the familiar flat sign; in the hard one it sounds B-natural, written with a square *b* which survives in our natural sign. These two accidentals may be seen in the top of the ground-floor arcading. The natural hexachord runs for six notes up from C, hence avoids B altogether. It being the highest of the three, Fludd likens it to the highest element, fire, and gives it the highest tower, pointed like a flame.

We consider next the clock above Apollo. Aptly surmounted by Father Time, the upper dial shows 12 hours, the lower one the different note-values. The two outer circles contain the notes and their relationships: 1 maxima (Fludd calls it *larga*) equals 2 longs, 4 breves, 8 semibreves, 16 minims, 32 semiminims, 64 fusae, 128 semifusae. (The last note should have two flags on its tail.) To each of these are added their appropriate rests. For some reason each is also accompanied by a note of the next value down, but this system fails when the fusa is reached.

The area above Pythagoras is divided diagonally. On the left is the Platonic *lambda*, described in the *Timaeus*. There are two errors, rectified in the text (p. 204): 16 should be 12, and 24 should be 27. The ramifications of this 'net' are vast, but here it serves simply to show the proportions of note-values to each other. In medieval and Renaissance notation a breve could contain either 4, 6, or 9 minims, depending on the time-signature. The possibilities for longer notes were correspondingly greater.

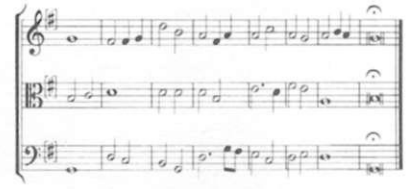
The 'chess-board' is an aid to composition, constructed rather like the charts which show the mileage between cities: it shows the distances between the notes of the scale. But it only gives consonances. Suppose one has written

99

a low A and wants to write a middle C against it. The chart shows that all is well: the interval is a tenth. Try a B, however, and one meets a blank: the interval is a discord.

The 'clerestory' on the level of the three towers is a similar device, enabling one to check at a glance the notes respectively an octave, sixth, third and fifth from any given note. The windows for the sixths and thirds are smaller, these being only imperfect consonances as opposed to the perfect octave and fifth.

Finally, in the alcove beneath the twin portals representing ears, a Muse stands pointing at a phrase in three parts, the triumphant result of these compositional aids (right).
UCH I, b, p. 160–1



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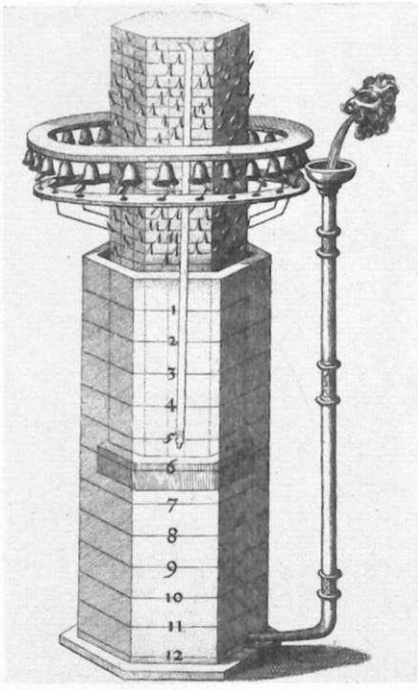
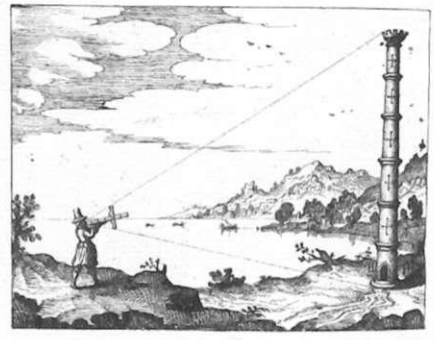


100

100 *A Musical Clock*
One of Fludd's own inventions, this is the culmination of his book on Time and its measurement. The hexagonal barrel is filled with water which runs out from a tap (not shown) in the course of twelve hours. Floating in the water is a wooden column fitted with a pointer that indicates the hours as it descends. This column also carries spikes which set off a carillon to strike each hour. At noon one refills the barrel, the float rises to the top again, and the process repeats.
UCH I, b, p. 525



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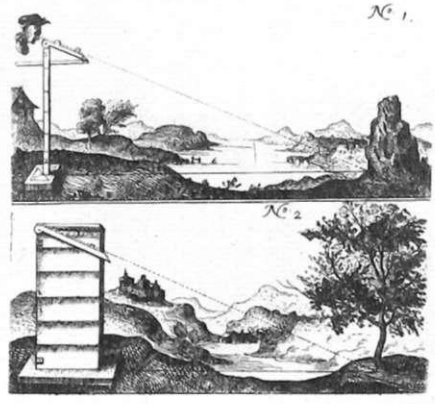


102

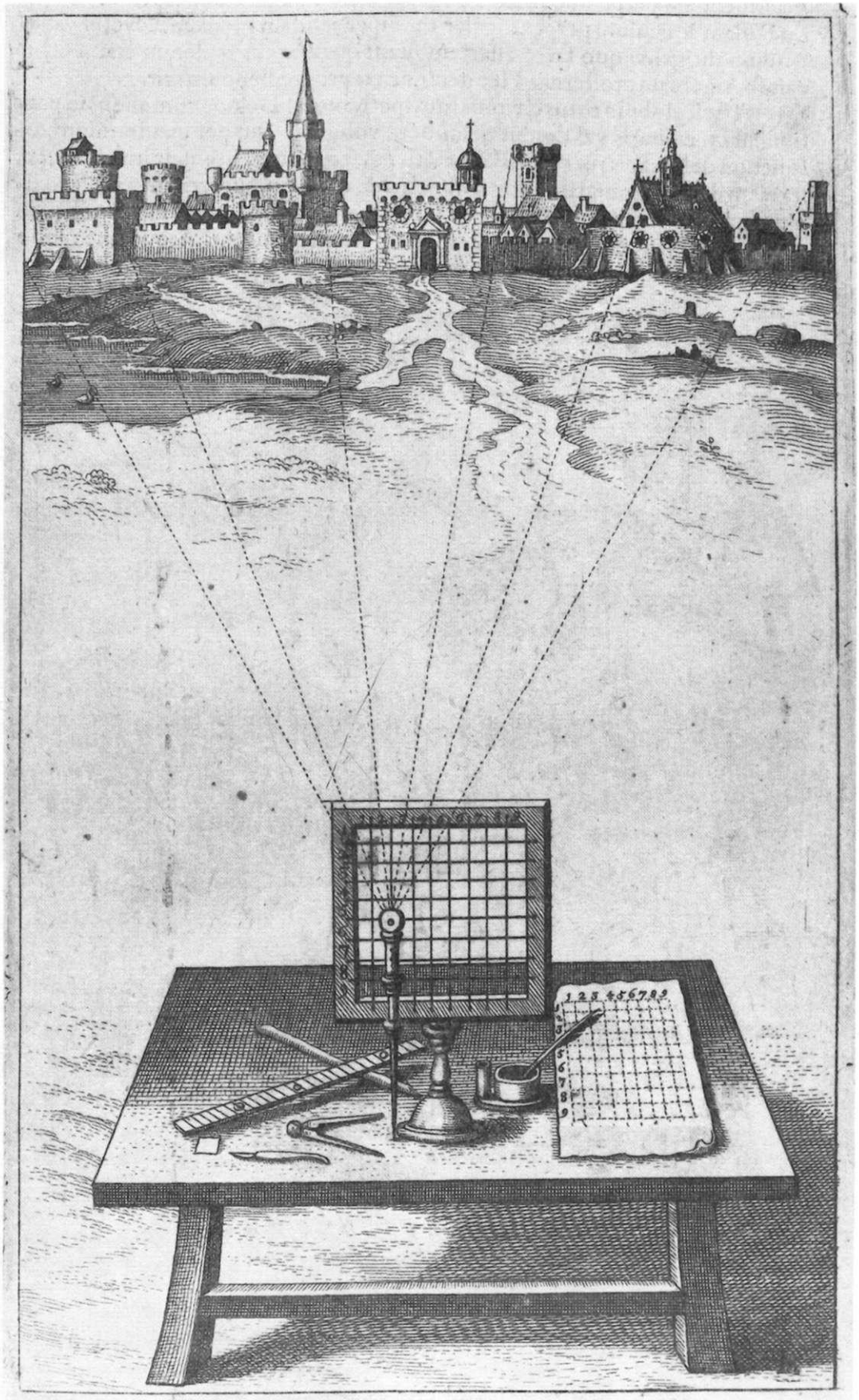
101 *Surveying I*
A man determines the height of a tower by means of a surveying instrument, already old in Fludd's day, called a 'Jacob's staff'. One has to know one's horizontal distance from the object being measured, and then calculate by means of similar triangles formed by the calibrated rod and sliding cursor.

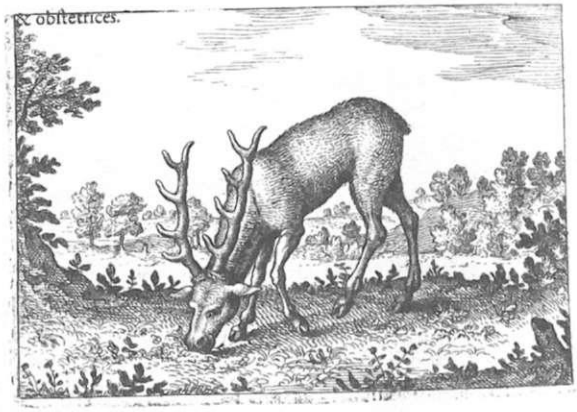
The landscapes throughout this chapter have a strong resemblance to those in Michael Maier's alchemical emblem-book *Atlanta Fugiens* and Lambsprinck's *De Lapide Philosophico Libellus*, both ascribed to Matthieu Merian, who also signs the title-page of the present book. Two other examples may be seen in Frances Yates' *Theatre of the World*, plate 5.
UCH I, b, p. 282

102 *Surveying II*
Two surveying instruments of Fludd's own invention also work on the principle of similar triangles, but have the great advantage of not needing a known horizontal distance. The upper device forms a small triangle with the cursor and swivelling pointer, similar to that formed by the horizontal distance and the entire height of the rod.

Fludd may also have known the use of trigonometry in surveying. One of the illustrations reproduced by Yates (see previous commentary) seems to imply the use of tangents, but he does not discuss them.
UCH I, b, p. 284

103 *An Aid to Painters*
A frame divided by wires into a grid of equal squares is fixed on a table, and the drawing paper is correspondingly divided. Looking at the scene through the eyepiece, one transcribes it square by square on to the paper. Like several of the illustrations in this book, this recalls some of the buildings of Heidelberg where Frederick and Elizabeth enjoyed their brief reign. (See Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*.)
UCH I, b, p. 307





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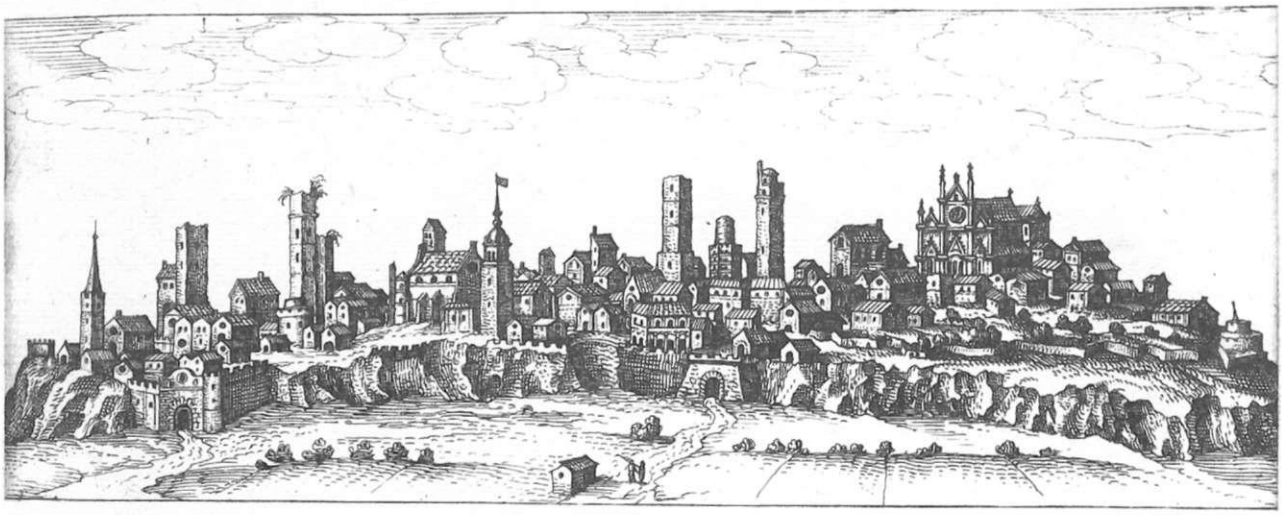

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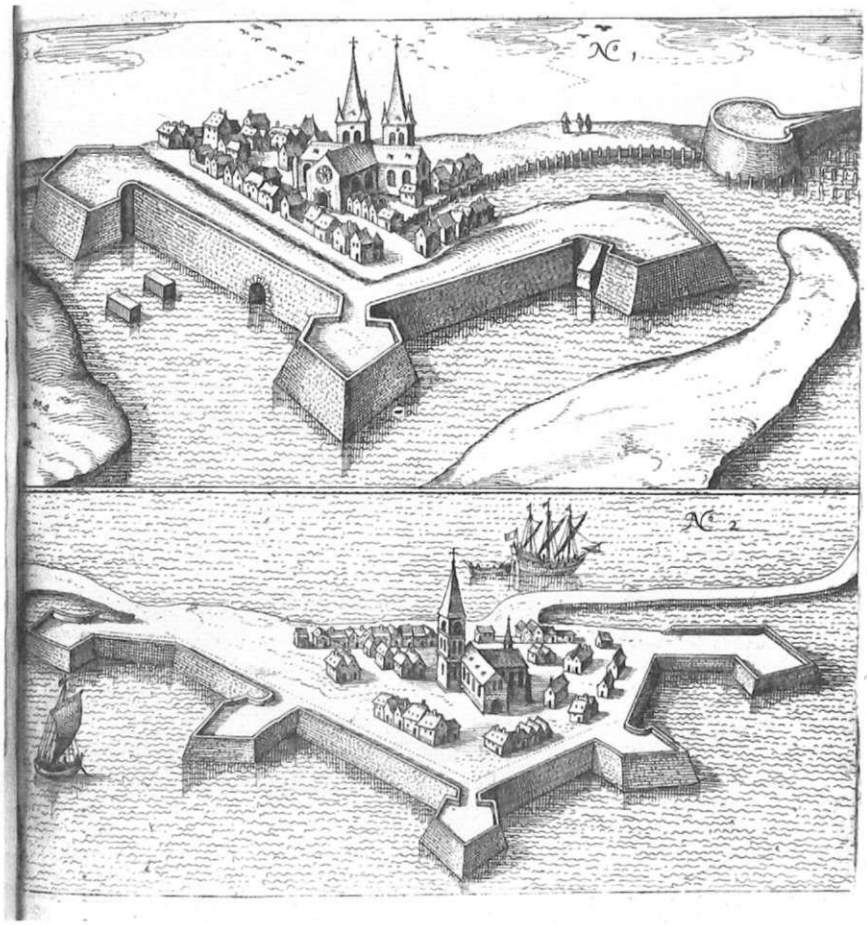

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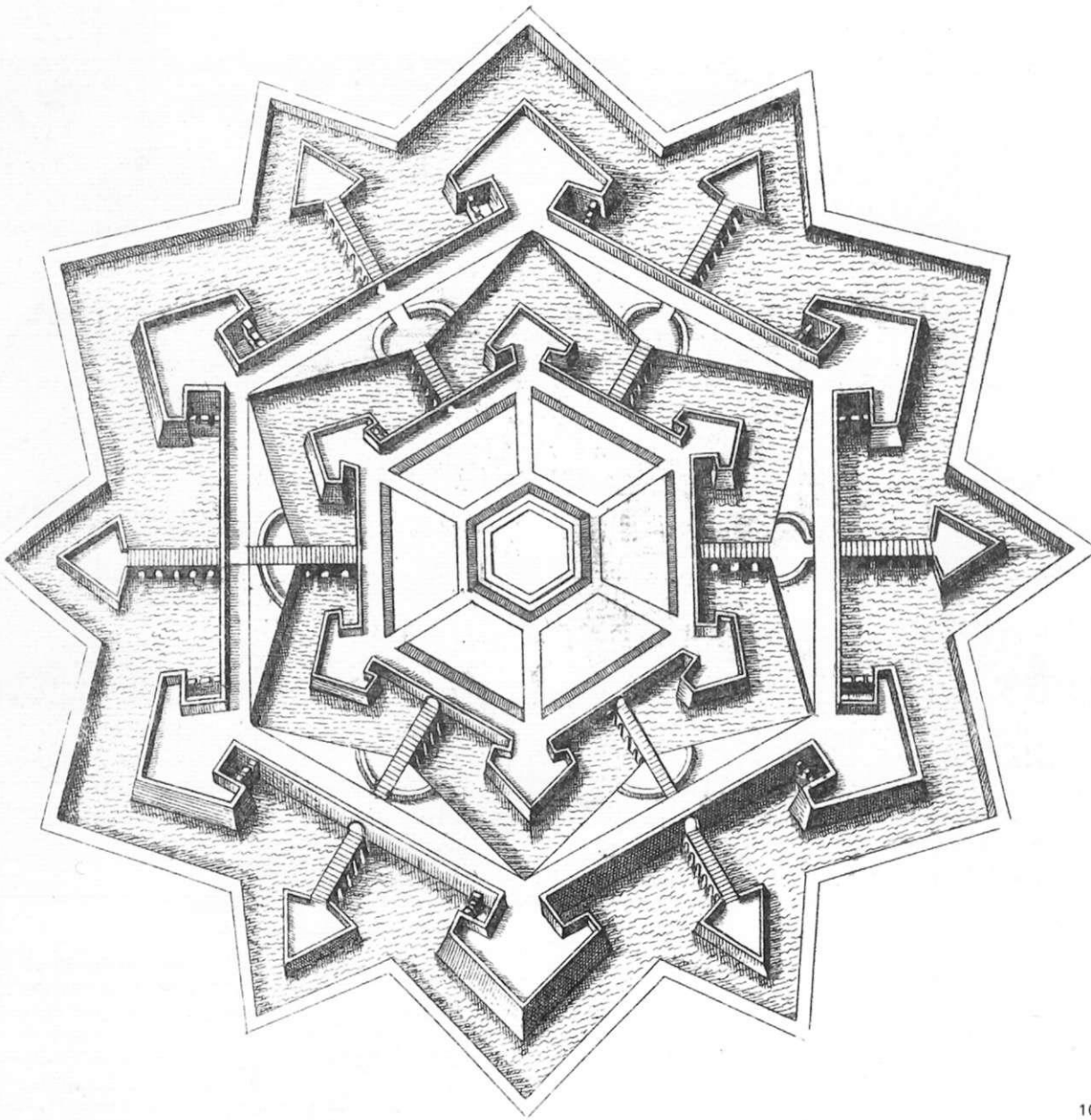


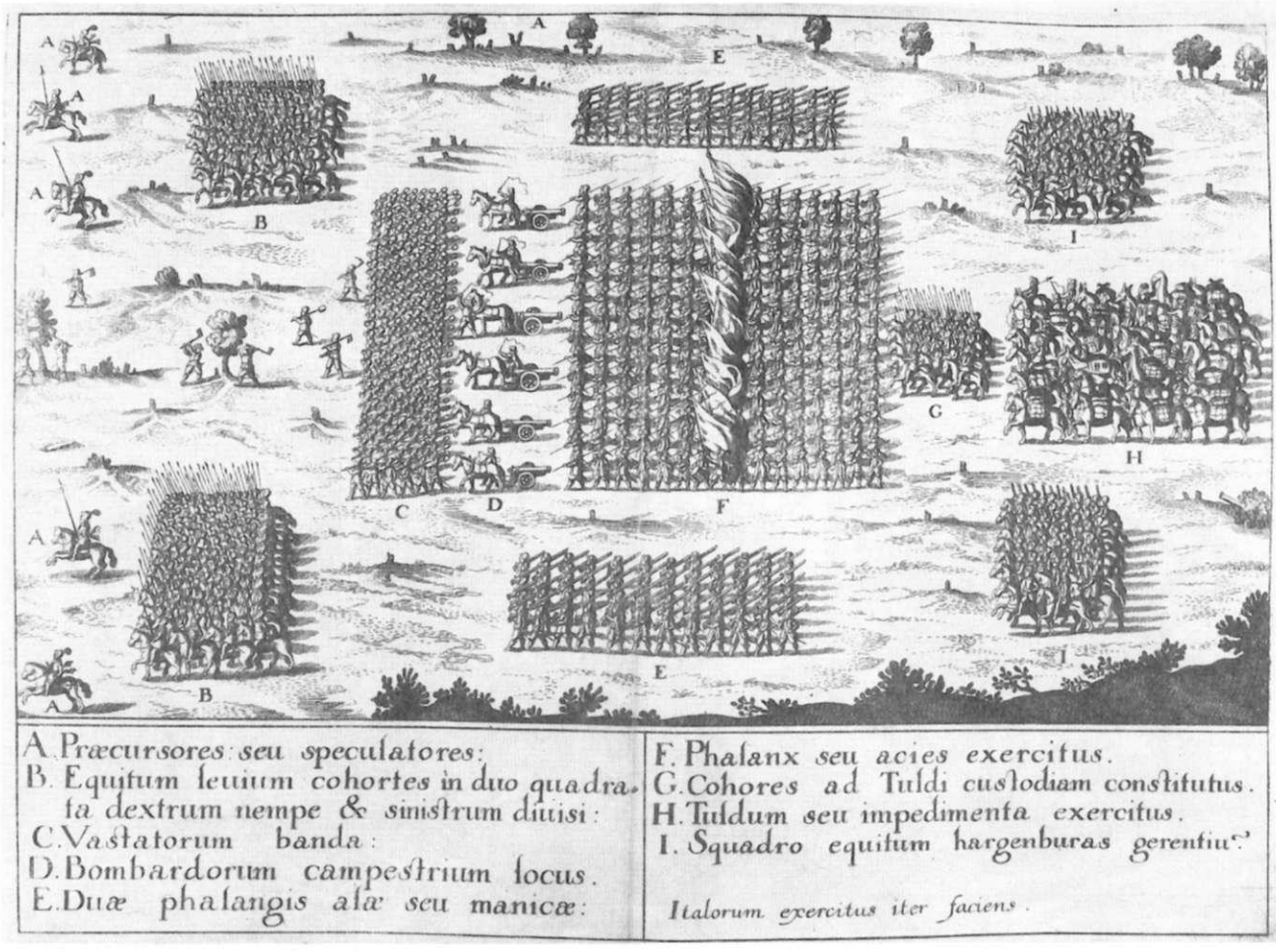
107

104 *Advice to the Aspiring Artist*
After explaining the geometrical bases of the human form, which help one to depict it accurately, Fludd faces the problem of how to draw irregular objects such as animals which do not lend themselves to treatment by use of the grid. 'Sketch it in black or red pencil or charcoal, and lay it aside until the next day. Then, each day, see what parts of it need improvement and amend them bit by bit. In this way one can work on as many as forty drawings simultaneously, and gradually increase one's skill. Imagination and memory are the two nurses and midwives of this art.' (p. 338) The elegant engraving of a deer presumably shows what one may hope to achieve through diligent practice.
UCH I, b, p. 338

105 *Orvieto*
In the section on military science, this Tuscan town is shown as an example of natural fortification. Fludd shows bird's-eye views of the fortifications of many other European cities, and mentions even Tunis, Aden and Mexico. His main interest is in the arrangement of re-entrant bastions. Perhaps this fascination began in Fludd's youth, when his father was posted at Berwick-on-Tweed, a town famous for its Italianate bastions.
UCH I, b, p. 345

106 *The Bastions of Bommena and Crimpen*
'There is a fortification in Holland called Bommena, surrounded by water and equipped with four bastions. It is shown in the first picture. The town of Crimpen, well fortified, was besieged and assaulted in 1576 by the Prince of Orange. We show it with its five bastions and defences in the second plate.' (p. 384)
UCH I, b, p. 385

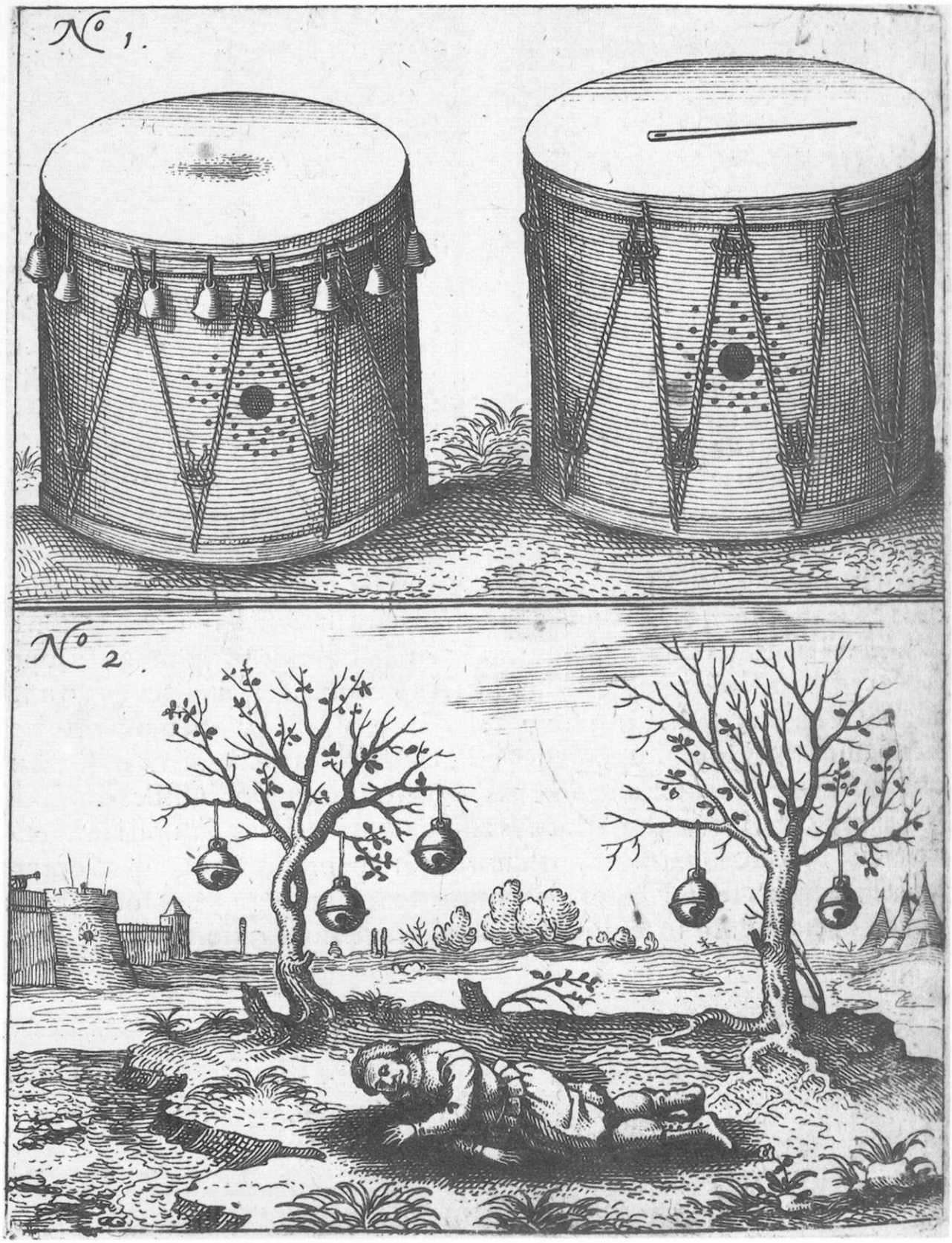
107 *The Perfect Fortification*
No doubt the perfection of this 'ideal' fortification, reputedly invented by a German, is due in part to its mandala-like symmetry. With its twelve points, it might be mistaken for a giant zodiac. Certainly it could repel most efforts to take it by storm, but it does not appear as well supplied against a lengthy siege.
UCH I, b, p. 390



108

108 *The Italian Army on the March*
'A: Scouts. B: Troops of light cavalry divided into squares on left and right. C: Corps of engineers. D: Artillery. E: Two wings of the phalanx. F: Phalanx or main part of the army. G: Guards of the baggage. H: Baggage train. I: Squadron of mounted arquebusiers.' Fludd's treatise on military science, one of his most extensive, also devotes large folding plates to the disposition of the Spanish and Imperial armies.
UCH I, b, p. 409

109 *Detecting Enemy Movements*
'Those under siege who suspect their enemies of tunnelling under the walls should place drums above the most suspect points, with needles on their heads or bells hung around them. The slightest vibration underground will cause them to sound. Some also hang bells on posts or in trees for this purpose.' (p. 417)
UCH I, b, p. 418



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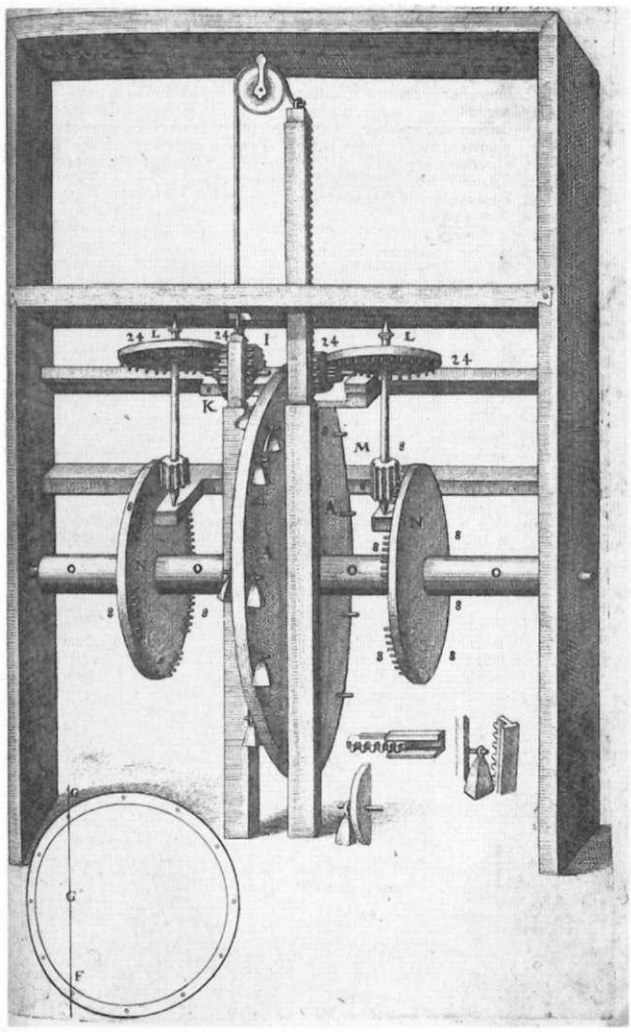

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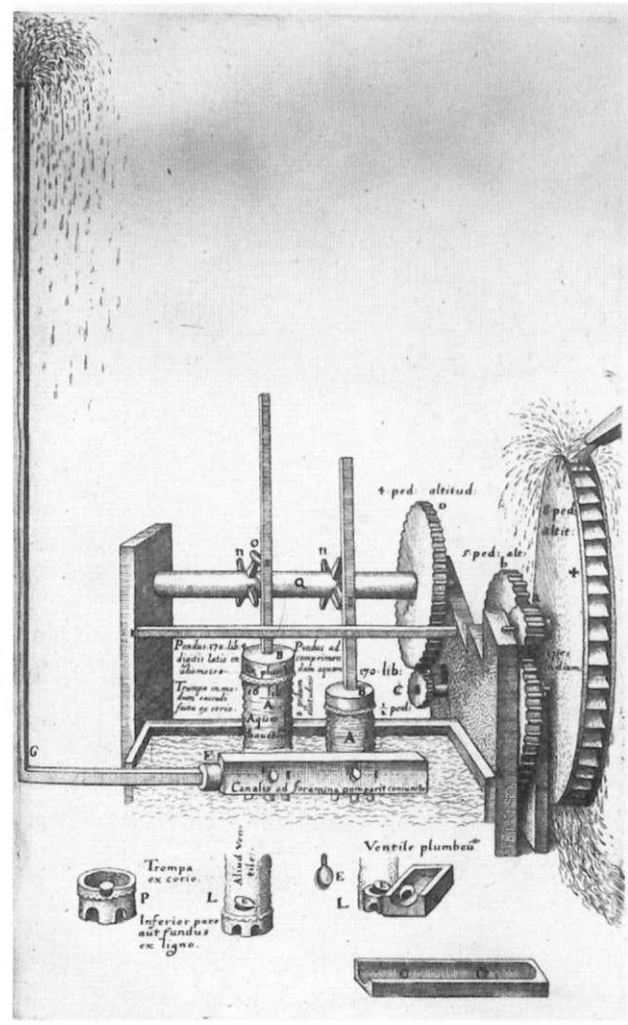
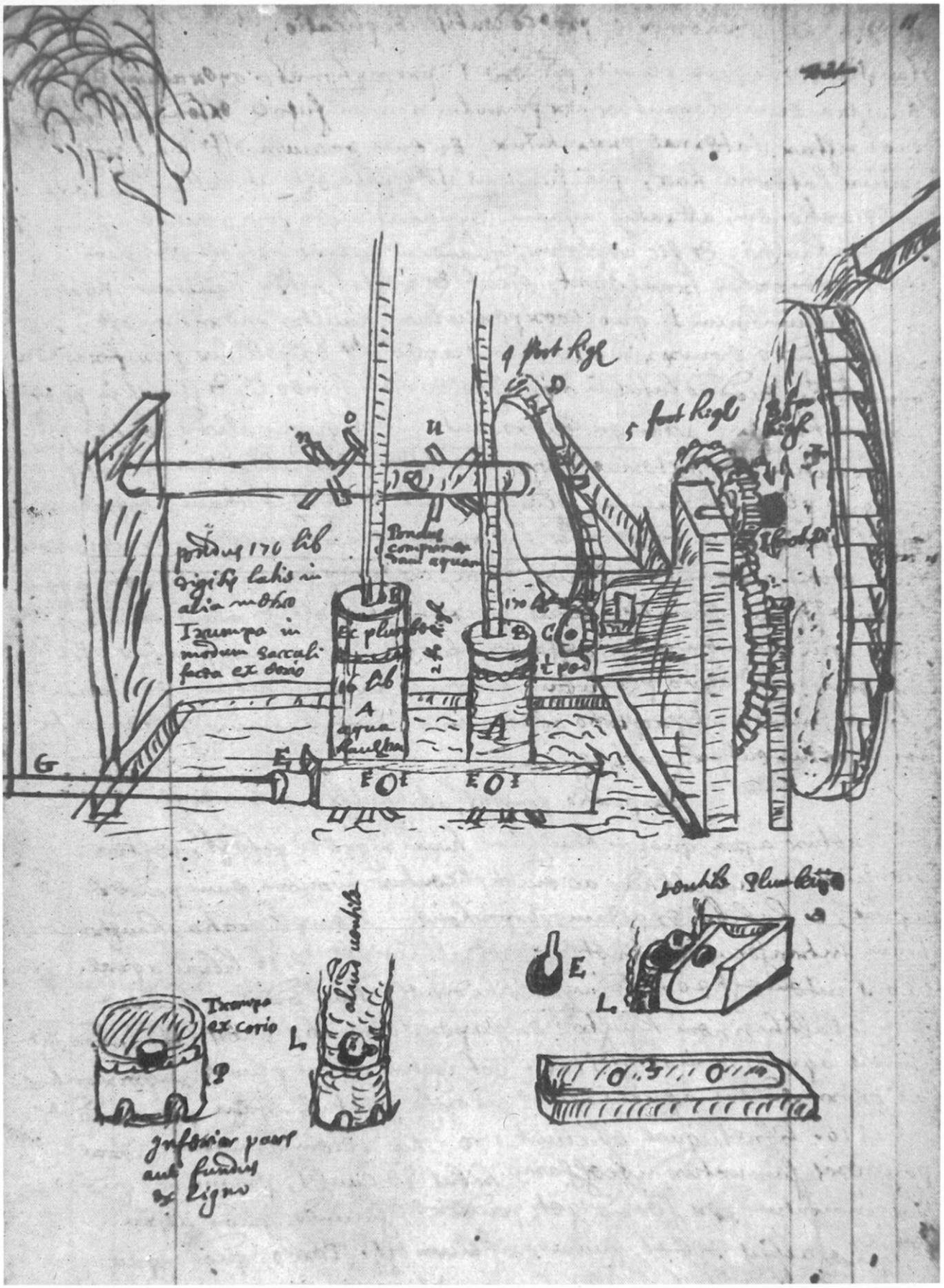


111

110 *A Perpetual Motion Machine*
Fludd shows this as an ingenious but fallacious Swiss invention. The idea was that as each weight reached the bottom of the wheel it was whipped up by the comb-like pistons, then (somehow) rehung on the top of the wheel. The inventor thought that the weights remaining on the wheel could easily raise a single weight in this way and that motion would therefore be perpetual. Fludd points out that he cannot expect that single weight to be lifted so far by the much shorter motion of its fellows. He does not seem to have believed in the possibility of perpetual physical motion.
UCH I, b, p. 457

111 *A Water Pump*
'When I was in Rome, one Gruterus, a Swiss by birth and my master in this art, made this machine for Cardinal Sextus Giorgio whom he served as engineer. It caused the water from a tiny spring, bubbling up at the foot of a mound in his garden, to ascend to the top. I cannot praise enough his artifice and ingenuity, which from so mean a spring raised water to a height with such ease.' (p. 460) This Gruterus is not Janus Gruter, the famous scholar and Palatine Librarian, who was born in Antwerp and whom Fludd may also have known.

Unlike some of the machines Fludd illustrates, this one is obviously taken from life and depicted accurately and convincingly. The sketch of it is from a manuscript of part of the treatise, now in the British Library (MS. Sloane 870). If it is in Fludd's hand, as seems likely, it gives a good idea of the state in which his designs reached the engraver.
UCH I, b, p. 461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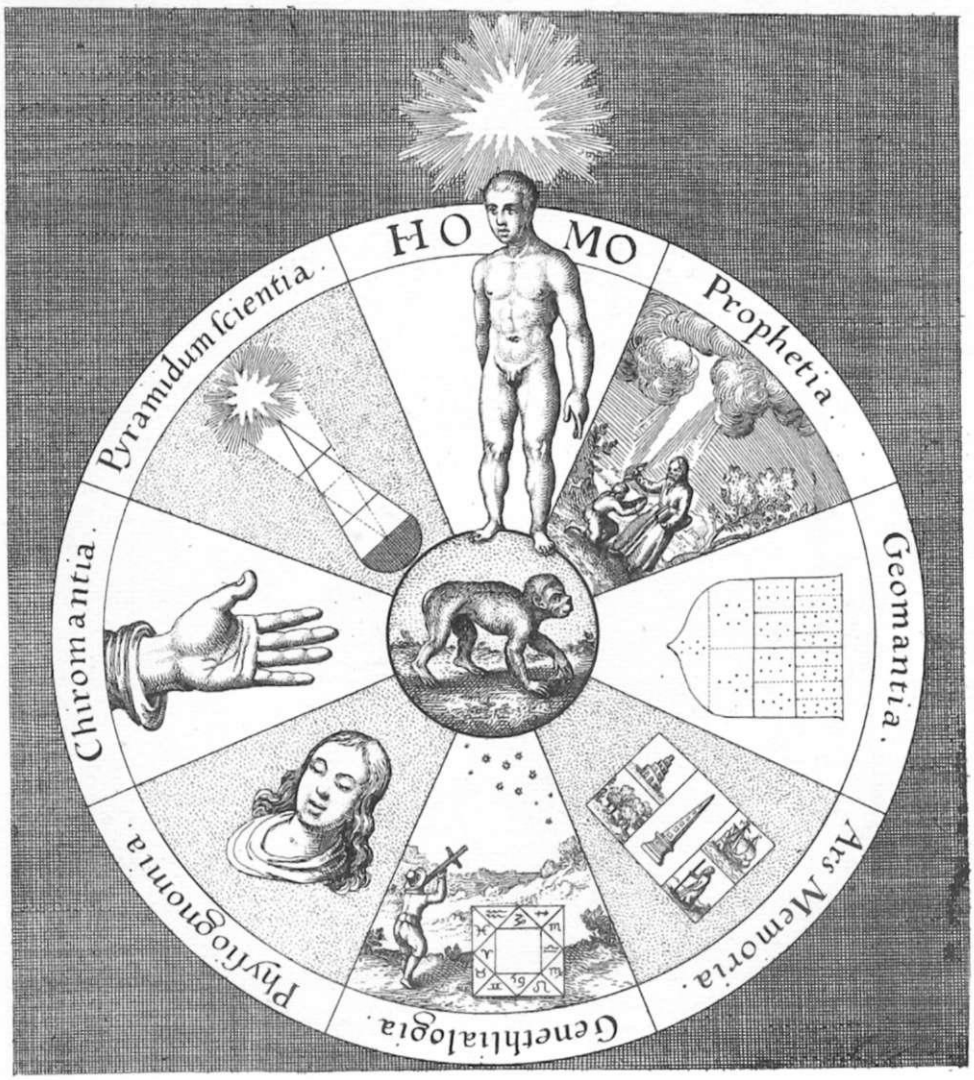
VII The Microcosmic Arts

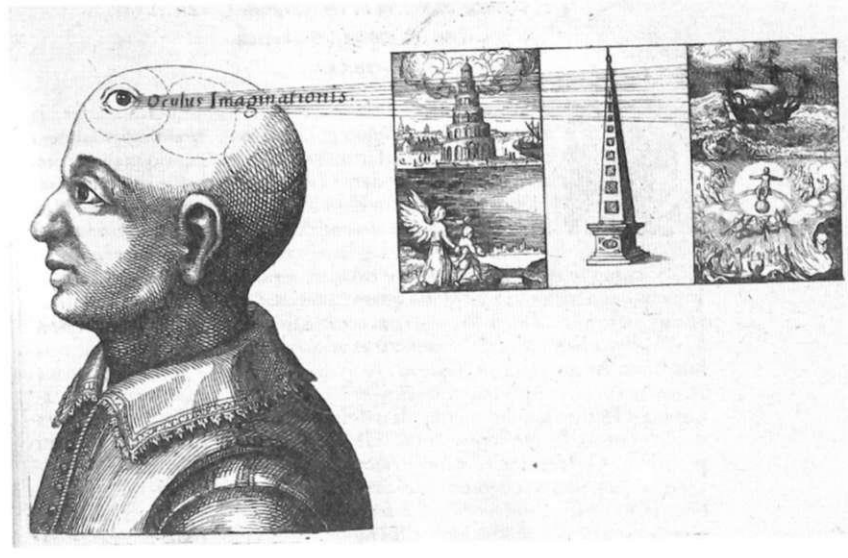
Man's sciences as they relate to self-knowledge, both psychological and psychic

TOMI SECVNDI
TRACTATUS PRIMI,
SECTIO SECUNDA,
De technica Microcosmi historia,
in
Portiones VII. divisa.
AUTHORE
ROBERTO FLUD aliàs de FLUCTIBUS
Armigero & in Medicina Doctore Oxoniensi.



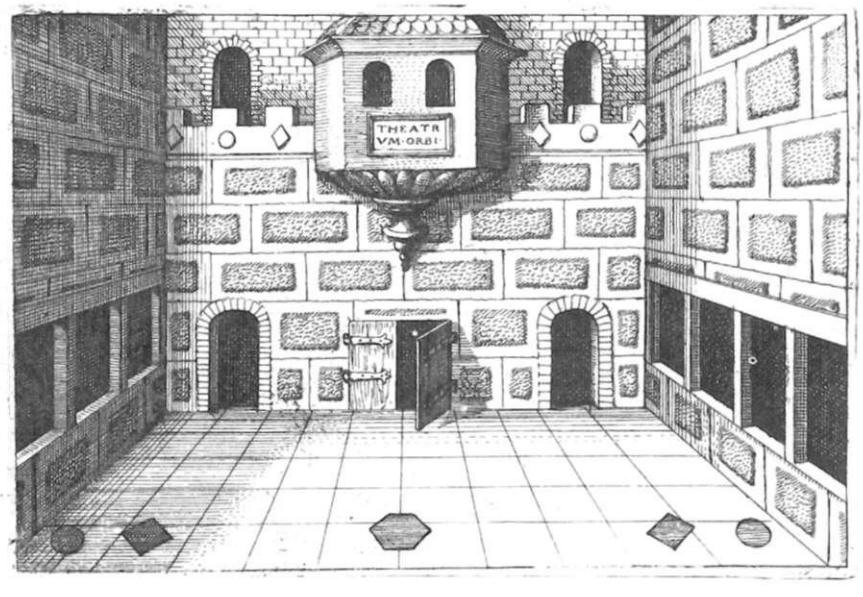
112

112 *The Microcosmic Arts*
Whereas the book from which the previous plates are taken (*UCH* I, b) treated man's activities in the outside world, this one deals with the sciences which man has devised concerning himself. Again he is shown reaching from the Divine triangle down to the Ape, which represents his own efforts to imitate God's work. His achievements towards self-understanding and self-development are prophecy, geomancy, the art of memory, the interpretation of natal horoscopes, physiognomy, palmistry, and the 'science of pyramids'. The latter is Fludd's own invention, and the point at which man is explained in macrocosmic terms.
UCH II, a, 2, t.p.



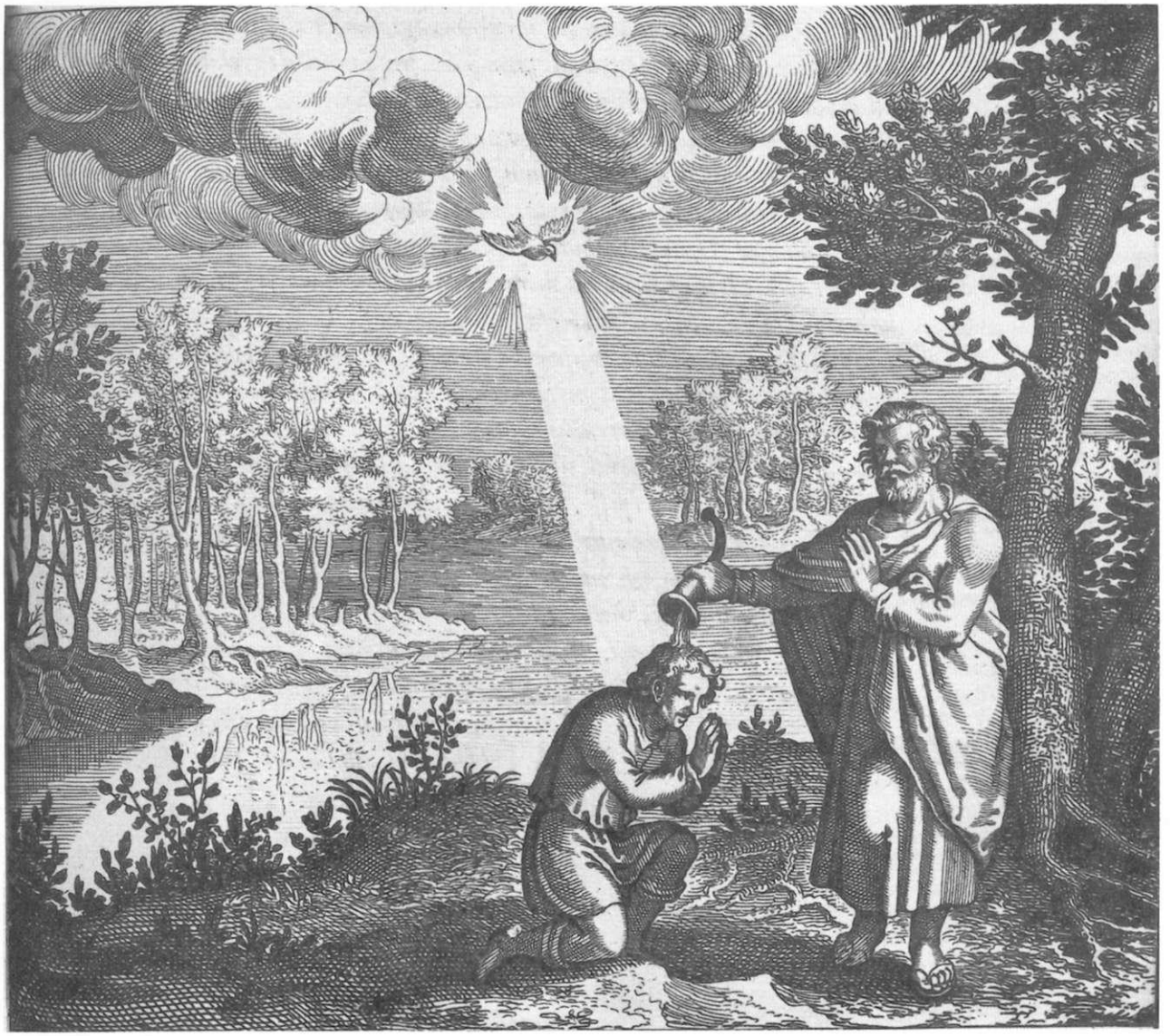
113

113 *The Art of Memory*
The memory can be enormously enhanced by transmuting concepts into visual and spatial images: herein lies the secret of the *Ars Memorativa* of Antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Unlike Frances Yates, who wrote the standard historical study of the subject, I have practised this art and found it dramatically successful. Here the three ventricles are shown again, but the things to be memorized are brought from the obscurity of the back of the head and exposed to the eye of imagination. The images are the Tower of Babel, Tobias and the Angel, an obelisk, a storm at sea and the Last Judgement. I have found no satisfactory explanation for these particular scenes.
UCH II, a, 2, p. 47



114

114 *The Theatre of the World*
One begins the art of memory by forming an ordered collection of 'memory places' in the mind's eye, in which one can then put images of the things to be remembered. A theatre is recommended as a suitable locale, containing as it does many available places such as the doors, windows, columns, and the spaces between them. This plate achieved fame when Richard Bernheimer and Frances Yates suggested that it might be an actual drawing of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre.
UCH II, a, 2, p. 55



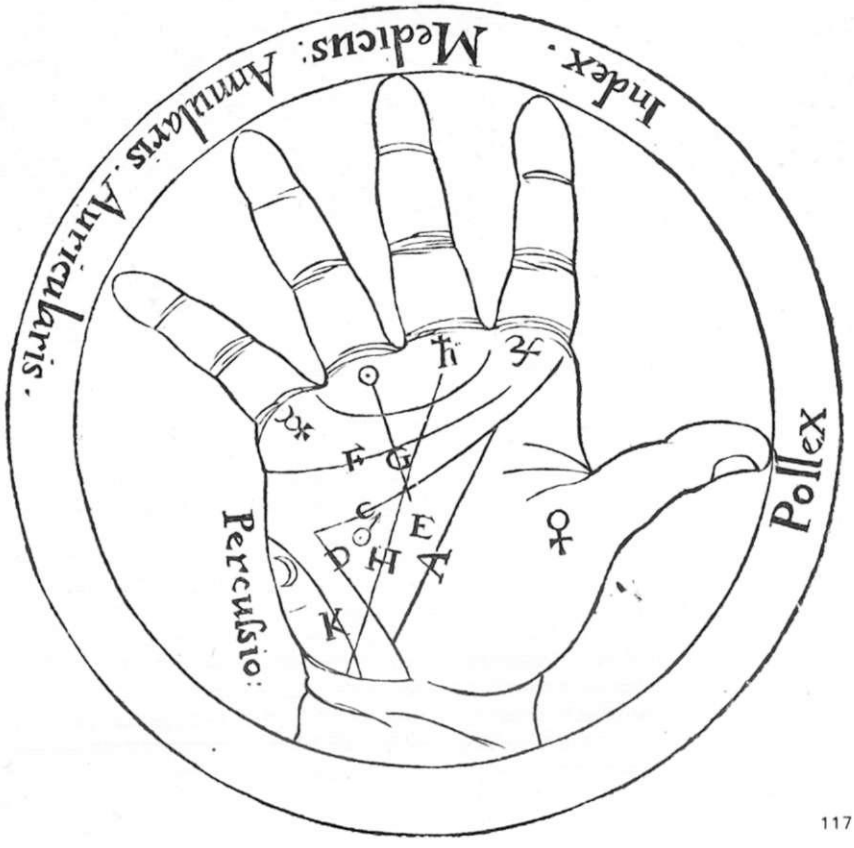
115

115 *Prophecy*
'The gift of prophecy can come directly from God, or else indirectly, through the ministration of demons. Examples are to be found in many biblical figures, and also in those of Antiquity, such as Mercurius Trismegistus, Plato, Orpheus, the Sibylline and Chaldaean Oracles, Apollonius of Tyana, Cassandra, and Merlin. In our own day we have Nostradamus. Just as the Sun shines perpetually on all men, so God incessantly offers his pearls of wisdom, and those who receive them become prophets. But the evil demons can also give knowledge, inasmuch as they had it before their fall.' (pp. 8–11) J. B. Craven (see Bibliography) suggests that this scene represents Elijah anointing Elisha with a horn of oil, and the Spirit in the shape of a dove issuing from above; or perhaps Samuel anointing David. Either would represent the influx of divine grace which makes a true prophet.
UCH II, a, 2, p. 3

116 *Physiognomy*
The science of physiognomy studies the 'middle soul' of men as revealed in their bodies. Here are some typical observations from Fludd's treatise on the subject: *large and fleshy feet* indicate foolishness in love, adultery and love of injustice; *very hairy arms* indicate insanity, or rusticity; *a nose that nearly reaches the mouth* denotes a worthy and magnanimous man; *baldness* (see frontispiece) is a sign of subtlety and astuteness. Presumably this couple illustrates the eugenic ideal, indicating good memory and longevity by their large ears, and prudence by their prominent upper lips.
UCH II, a, 2, p. 117

117 *Chiromancy*
Lifted wholesale from Cornelius Agrippa, this chiromantic hand shows the traditional lines and mounds of the planets. Marin Mersenne, in his attack on Fludd, was particularly averse to this science, and invited his opponent to interpret the markings of a palm which he illustrated. Fludd is not known to have responded to the challenge, though he believed that palmistry could reveal not only character, but even a person's virginity or otherwise, and the sex of an unborn child.
UCH II, a, 2, p. 143

116


Pollex
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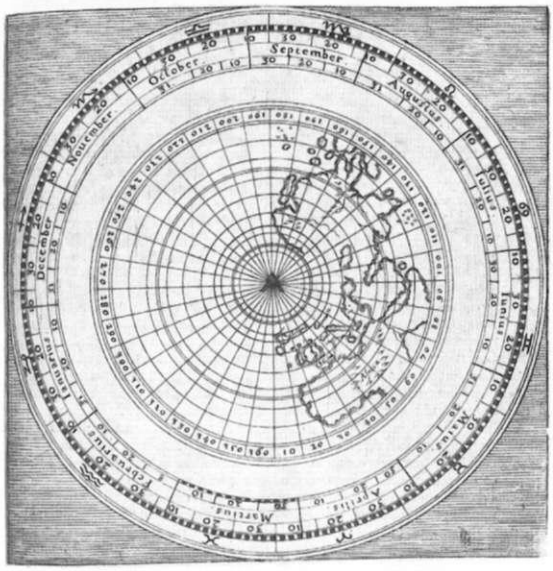
117



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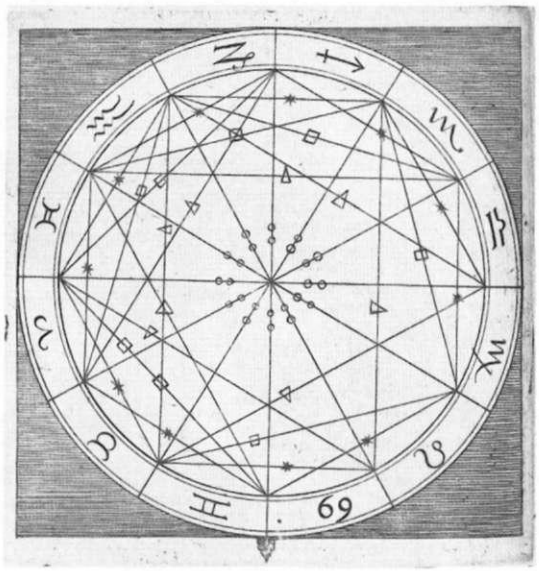

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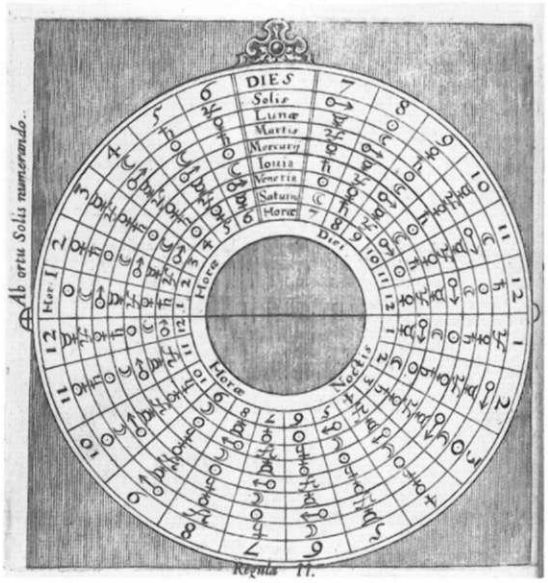

120

121

118 *Part of a Planisphere*
For once, Fludd's illustrator fails to do his text justice, making it almost impossible to visualize the complete planisphere of which this and two other components are shown. The instrument, when assembled, can give times of solar and lunar risings and settings, phases of the moon, and positions of the planets and fixed stars. Fludd refers us to the world maps of Petrus Plancius (London edition, 1595) for more accurate details.
UCH I, b, p. 545

119 *Zodiacal Aspects*
This shows the astrological aspects of each zodiacal sign to the rest: oppositions, squares, trines and sextiles. Not all of them have been drawn in. Fludd says that the most efficacious of all aspects is the conjunction between planets, and lists the other aspects in descending order of strength, as above.
UCH I, b, p. 633

120 *A Table of Planetary Influences*
'Each hour of the day is ruled by a certain planet, and this differs on each day of the week. The chart lists the days (Solis=Sunday, Lunae=Monday, etc.) and the hours of the day (above the horizon) and night (below it). The first hour of the day begins at dawn and the first hour of the night at sunset—whatever the time of year. So one cannot rely on the clock for guidance: one must divide the day and the night, whatever their lengths, into twelve equal parts each. Thus in summer, for instance, the daytime "hours" will be far longer than those of the night.' (pp. 638–9) These divisions of the day became important in Fludd's *Medicina Catholica*, where they have an influence on the critical points of diseases.
UCH I, b, p. 638

121 *An Astrologer at Work*
In this beautiful engraving an astrologer draws up a horoscope with the tools of his trade: a globe, dividers, spectacles, books of tables, and—here differing from his modern counterpart—direct observation of the skies, in which all the heavenly bodies are obligingly shining. Johannes Fabricius suggests a deeper meaning, noticing that the 'alchemist-as-astrologer' is pointing to the sign of Pisces. 'In this sign the old philosopher beholds the splendour of the last *coniunctio solis et lunae* bursting to illuminate the heavens at the end of his opus.' (*Alchemy*, p. 190.)
UCH II, a, 2, p. 71

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  - Tractate II, 1618 (*UCH* I, b) *Arts and Sciences*
- Volume II *The Microcosm*
  - Tractate I
    - Section I, 1619 (*UCH* II, a, 1) *Spiritual Psychology*
    - Section II, 1620? (*UCH* II, a, 2) *Psychological Sciences*
  - Tractate II
    - Section I
      - Portions I, II, 1621 (*UCH* II, b) *Theosophy and Cabbala*
      - Portion III, 1623 (*AA*) *Anatomy*
      - Portion IV, 1626 (*PS*) *Meteorology and Cosmology*
    - Section II [*never appeared*]
  - Tractate III [*never appeared*]

PLAN OF FLUDD'S *Medicina Catholica*

- Volume I
  - Tractate I
    - Section I, 1629 (*MC* I, a) *Causes of disease: winds and demons*
    - Section II, 1631? (*MC* I, b) *The pulse*
  - Tractate II
    - Section I, 1631 (*MC* II, a) *Causes of disease: contraction and rarefaction*
    - Section II, 1631 (*MC* II, b) *Diagnosis by astrology and uroscopy*
- Volume II [*never appeared*]

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[*TTP*] *Tractatus Theologo-Philosophicus, In Libros tres distributus; Quorum I. de Vita, II. de Morte, III. de Resurrectione....* Oppenheim, Johann Theodore de Bry, 1617.

[*UCH* I, a] *Utriusque Cosmi Maioris scilicet et Minoris Metaphysica, Physica Atque Technica Historia In duo Volumina secundum Cosmi differentiam divisa.... Tomus Primus De Macrocosmi Historia.* Oppenheim, Johann Theodore de Bry, 1617.

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[*UCH* II, b] *Tomi Secundi Tractatus Secundus: De Praeternaturali Utriusque Mundi Historia. In sectiones tres divisa....* Frankfurt, Johann Theodore de Bry, 1621.

[*VP*] *Veritatis Proscenium: in quo Aulaeum Erroris Tragicum Dimovetur, Siparium ignorantiae scenicum complicatur, ipsaque veritas a suo ministro in publicum producitur, Seu Demonstratio Quaedam Analytica....* Frankfurt, Johann Theodore de Bry, 1621

[*AA*] *Anatomiae Amphitheatrum Effigie Triplici, More Et Conditione Varia Designatum.* Frankfurt, Johann Theodore de Bry, 1623. Includes *Monochordum Mundi* as pp. 287–331, dated 9 December 1621

[*PS*] *Philosophia sacra et vere Christiana Seu Meteorologia Cosmica.* Frankfurt, Officina Bryana, 1626.

[*SM*] *Sophiae Cum Moria Certamen, In quo, Lapis Lydius A Falso Structore, Fr Marino Mersenno, Monacho Reprobatus, celeberrima Voluminis sui Babylonici (in Genesin) figmenta accurate examinat.* [Frankfurt], 1629.

[*SB*] *Summum Bonum, Quod est Verum Magiae, Cabalae, Alchymiae Verae, Fratrum Roseae Crucis verorum Subjectum.... Per Ioachimum Frizium.* [Frankfurt], 1629
All writers on Fludd have assumed that some motive best known to himself prompted him to publish this work under a pseudonym. It appeared in the same year as *Sophiae Cum Moria Certamen*, and, like that work, is an attack on Mersenne. The printer's address to the reader states: 'Because this treatise on the Highest Good appears to lay bare the extraordinary calumnies of Brother Marin Mersenne ... I have thought it worth while to bind it with the Response to the same of the illustrious Robert Fludd.' I see no reason not to attribute it to the Joachim Frizius named as author on the title page, presuming him to be a friend or supporter of Fludd who submitted this defence to the anonymous printer.

[*MC* I, a] *Medicina Catholica, Seu Mysticum Artis Medicandi Sacrarium, In Tomos divisum duos. In Quibus Metaphysica Et Physica Tam Sanitatis tuendae, quam morborum propulsandorum ratio pertractatur.* Frankfurt, William Fitzer, 1629.

[*MC* I, b] *Pulsus Seu Nova Et Arcana Pulsuum Historia, E Sacro Fonte Radicaliter Extracta, Nec Non Medicorum Ethnicorum Dietis et authoritate comprobata. Hoc Est, Portionis Tertiae Pars Tertia, De Pulsuum Scientia.* N.p., n.d. [? Frankfurt, ?1630]. Completed 19 October 1629.

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[*MC* II, b] *καθολικον Medicorum κατοπτρον: In quo, Quasi Speculo Politissimo Morbi praesentes more demonstrativo clarissime indicantur, et futuri ratione prognostica aperte cernuntur, atque prospicuntur. Sive Tomi Primi, Tractatus Secundi, Sectio Secunda* [Frankfurt], 1631. Completed 17 December 1629.

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[*CP*] *Clavis Philosophiae Et Alchymiae Fluddanae, Sive Roberti Fluddi Armigeri, Et Medicinae Doctoris, Ad Epistolicam Petri Gassendi Theologi Exercitationem Responsum.* Frankfurt, William Fitzer, 1633.

[*PM*] *Philosophia Moysaica. In qua Sapientia et scientia creationis et creaturarum sacra vereque Christiana (ut pote cuius basis sive Fundamentum est unicus ille Lapis Angularis Iesus Christus) ad amussim et enucleate explicatur.* Gouda, Peter Rammazen, 1638.

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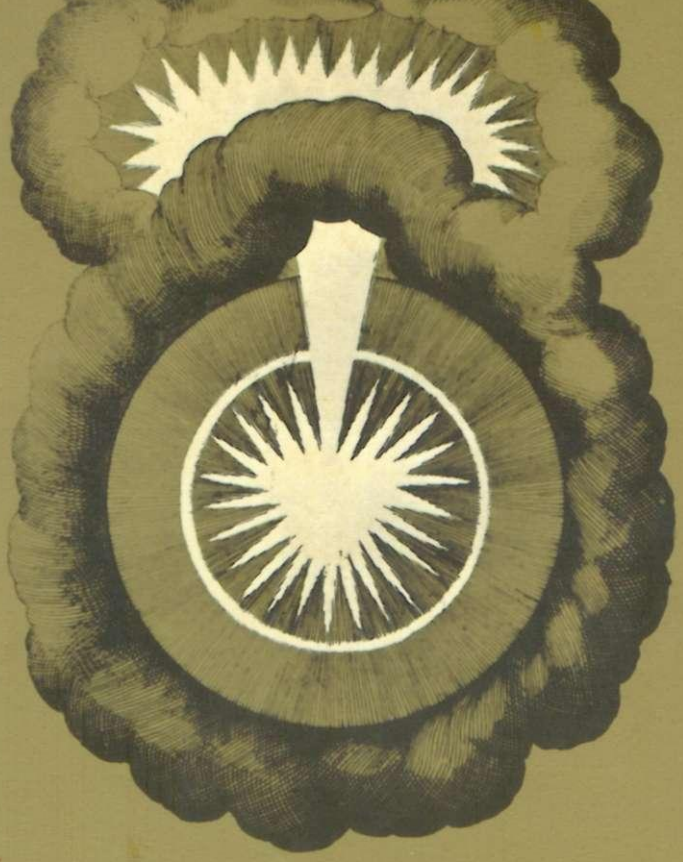

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