

THE TEXTS

5 I must make clear at once that the following observations on the visions of Zosimos of Panopolis, an important alchemist and Gnostic of the third century A.D., are not intended as a final explanation of this extraordinarily difficult material. My psychological contribution is no more than an attempt to shed a little light on it and to answer some of the questions raised by the visions.

6 The first vision occurs at the beginning of "The Treatise of Zosimos the Divine concerning the Art."¹ Zosimos introduces the treatise with some general remarks on the processes of nature and, in particular, on the "composition of the waters" (θέσις ὑδάτων) and various other operations, and closes with the words: ". . . and upon this simple system of many colours is based the manifold and infinitely varied investigation of all things." Thereupon the text begins:²

(III, i, 2.) And as I spoke thus I fell asleep, and I saw a sacrificer³ standing before me, high up on an altar, which was in the shape of a bowl. There were fifteen steps leading up to the altar. And the priest stood there, and I heard a voice from above saying to me: "I have performed the act of descending the fifteen steps into the darkness, and of ascending the steps into the light. And he who renews me is the sacrificer, by casting away the grossness of the body;

¹ "Ζωσιμου τοῦ θείου περὶ ἀρετῆς." 'Αρετή here should not be translated as "virtue" or "power" ("vertu" in Berthelot) but as "the Art," corresponding to the Latin *ars nostra*. The treatise has nothing whatever to do with virtue.

² Berthelot, *Collection des anciens alchimistes grecs*, with translations into French by C. E. Ruelle. [The present translation is by A. S. B. Glover from the Greek text in Berthelot, with reference also to Ruelle's French and Jung's German. The section numeration is Berthelot's.—EDITORS.]

³ The *ιεροουργός* is the sacrificial priest who performs the ceremonies. The *ιερεὺς* is rather the *ιεροφάντης*, the prophet and revealer of the mysteries. No difference is made between them in the text.

and by compelling necessity I am sanctified as a priest and now stand in perfection as a spirit." And on hearing the voice of him who stood upon the altar, I inquired of him who he was. And he answered me in a fine voice, saying: "I am Ion,⁴ the priest of the inner sanctuaries, and I submit myself to an unendurable torment.⁵ For there came one in haste at early morning, who overpowered me, and pierced me through with the sword, and dismembered me in accordance with the rule of harmony.⁶ And he drew off the skin of my head with the sword, which he wielded with strength, and mingled the bones with the pieces of flesh, and caused them to be burned upon the fire of the art, till I perceived by the transformation of the body that I had become spirit. And that is my unendurable torment." And even as he spoke thus, and I held him by force to converse with me, his eyes became as blood. And he spewed forth all his own flesh. And I saw how he changed into the opposite of himself, into a mutilated anthroparion,⁷ and he tore his flesh with his own teeth, and sank into himself.

(III, i, 3.) Full of fear I awoke from sleep, and I thought to myself: "Is not this the composition of the waters?" And I was assured that I had well understood, and again I fell asleep. I saw the same bowl-shaped altar and, on the upper part, boiling water, and a numberless multitude of people in it. And there was no one near the altar whom I could question. Then I went up to the altar to see this sight. And I perceived an anthroparion, a barber⁸ grown grey

⁴ Ion occurs in the Sabaeen tradition as Jônân ben Merqûlius (son of Mercury), the ancestor of the Ionians (el-Jônânîûn). [Cf. Eutychius, *Annales*, in Migne, P.G., vol. 111, col. 922.] The Sabaeans consider him the founder of their religion. Cf. Chwolsohn, *Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus*, I, pp. 205, 796, and II, p. 509. Hermes, too, was considered a founder (I, p. 521).

⁵ Κόλασις, literally 'punishment.' Here it means the torment which the prima materia has to undergo in order to be transformed. This procedure is called *mortificatio*. [For an example, see the *mortificatio* of the "Ethiopian" in *Psychology and Alchemy*, par. 484. Also infra, "The Philosophical Tree," ch. 17.—EDITORS.]

⁶ Διασπάσας κατά σύστασιν ἁρμονίας. Berthelot has "démembrant, suivant les règles de la combinaison." It refers to the division into four bodies, natures, or elements. Cf. Berthelot, *Alch. grecs*, II, iii, 11 and *Chimie au moyen âge*, III, p. 92. Also "Visio Arislei," *Artis auriferae*, I, p. 151, and "Exercitationes in Turbam IX," *ibid.*, p. 170.

⁷ εἶδον αὐτὸν ὡς τοῦναντιον ἀνθρωπάριον κολοβόν. If I am not mistaken, the concept of the *homunculus* appears here for the first time in alchemical literature.

⁸ I read ξυρουργός instead of the meaningless ξηρουργός in the text. Cf. III, v, 1, where the barber does in fact appear as an anthroparion. (Or should it be taken adjectivally: ξυρουργόν ἀνθρωπάριον?) The anthroparion is grey because, as we shall see, he represents the lead.

with age, who said to me: "What are you looking at?" I replied that I was astonished to see the seething of the water, and the men burning and yet alive. He answered me thus: "The sight that you see is the entrance, and the exit, and the transformation." I asked him: "What transformation?" and he answered: "This is the place of the operation called embalming. Those who seek to obtain the art⁹ enter here, and become spirits by escaping from the body." Then I said to him: "And you, are you a spirit?" And he answered: "Yes, a spirit and a guardian of spirits." As we spoke, while the boiling continued and the people uttered distressful cries, I saw a brazen man holding a leaden tablet in his hand. And he spoke with a loud voice, looking upon the tablet: "I command all those who are undergoing the punishment to be calm, to take each of them a leaden tablet, to write with their own hand, and to keep their eyes upraised in the air and their mouths open, until their uvula swell."¹⁰ The deed followed the word, and the master of the house said to me: "You have beheld, you have stretched your neck upward and have seen what is done." I replied that I had seen, and he continued: "This brazen man whom you see is the priest who sacrifices and is sacrificed, and spews forth his own flesh. Power is given him over this water and over the people who are punished."¹¹

(III, v, 1.) At last I was overcome with the desire to mount the seven steps and to see the seven punishments, and, as was suitable,

⁹ Or "moral perfection."

¹⁰ Evidently a particularly convulsive opening of the mouth is meant, coupled with a violent contraction of the pharynx. This contraction was a kind of retching movement for bringing up the inner contents. These had to be written down on the tablets. They were inspirations coming from above that were caught, as it were, by the upraised eyes. The procedure might be compared with the technique of active imagination.

¹¹ [In the Swiss edition (*Von den Wurzeln des Bewusstseins*, pp. 141-45) this section, though numbered III, i, 3 only, continues into III, i, 4, 5, and 6 without a break, the whole being run together as a single section. III, i, 5 then reappears at the end of the sequence of visions (par. 87), but in variant form, as a "résumé," and the reasons for its placement there are explained in the commentary (pars. 93, 111, 121). As no explanation is given for its duplication under III, i, 3, and the variations are in the main merely stylistic, we have omitted it at this point and reconstituted III, i, 4-6 at the end of the sequence. The wording of Jung's interpolation at par. 87 has been altered to account for this change. The sections are presented in the order III, i, 5, III, i, 4, III, i, 6 on the assumption that III, i, 4 is not meant to form a part of the "résumé" proper, but, as stated in the Eranos version of "Transformation Symbolism in the Mass," is rather "Zosimos' own commentary on his visions" and "a general philosophical conclusion" (*The Mysteries*, pp. 311f.).—EDITORS.]

in a single day; so I went back in order to complete the ascent. Passing it several times, I at length came upon the path. But as I was about to ascend, I lost my way again; greatly discouraged, and not seeing in which direction I should go, I fell asleep. And while I was sleeping, I saw an anthroparion, a barber clad in a robe of royal purple, who stood outside the place of punishments. He said to me: "Man, what are you doing?" and I replied: "I have stopped here because, having turned aside from the road, I have lost my way." And he said: "Follow me." And I turned and followed him. When we came near to the place of punishments, I saw my guide, this little barber, enter that place, and his whole body was consumed by the fire.

(III, v, 2.) On seeing this, I stepped aside, trembling with fear; then I awoke, and said within myself: "What means this vision?" And again I clarified my understanding, and knew that this barber was the brazen man, clad in a purple garment. And I said to myself: "I have well understood, this is the brazen man. It is needful that first he must enter the place of punishments."

(III, v, 3.) Again my soul desired to mount the third step also. And again I followed the road alone, and when I was near the place of punishments, I again went astray, not knowing my way, and I stopped in despair. And again, as it seemed, I saw an old man whitened by years, who had become wholly white, with a blinding whiteness. His name was Agathodaimon. Turning himself about, the old man with white hair gazed upon me for a full hour. And I urged him: "Show me the right way." He did not come towards me, but hastened on his way. But I, running hither and thither, at length came to the altar. And when I stood at the top of the altar, I saw the white-haired old man enter the place of punishments. O ye demiurges of celestial nature! Immediately he was transformed by the flame into a pillar of fire. What a terrible story, my brethren! For, on account of the violence of the punishment, his eyes filled with blood. I spoke to him, and asked: "Why are you stretched out there?" But he could barely open his mouth, and groaned: "I am the leaden man, and I submit myself to an unendurable torment." Thereupon, seized with great fear, I awoke and sought within myself the reason for what I had seen. And again I considered and said to myself: "I have well understood, for it means that the lead is to be rejected, and in truth the vision refers to the composition of the liquids."

(III, v^{bis}.) Again I beheld the divine and holy bowl-shaped altar, and I saw a priest clothed in a white robe reaching to his feet, who was celebrating these terrible mysteries, and I said: "Who is this?" And the answer came: "This is the priest of the inner sanctuaries. It is he who changes the bodies into blood, makes the eyes clairvoyant, and raises the dead." Then, falling again to earth, I again fell asleep. And as I was ascending the fourth step, I saw, to the east, one approaching, holding a sword in his hand. And another [came] behind him, bringing one adorned round about with signs, clad in white and comely to see, who was named the Meridian of the Sun.¹² And as they drew near to the place of punishments, he who held the sword in his hand [said]: "Cut off his head, immolate his body, and cut his flesh into pieces, that it may first be boiled according to the method,¹³ and then delivered to the place of punishments." Thereupon I awoke and said: "I have well understood, this concerns the liquids in the art of the metals." And he who bore the sword in his hand said again: "You have completed the descent of the seven steps." And the other answered, as he caused the waters to gush forth from all the moist places: "The procedure is completed."

(III, vi, 1.) And I saw an altar which was in the shape of a bowl, and a fiery spirit stood upon the altar, and tended the fire for the seething and the boiling and the burning of the men who rose up from it. And I inquired about the people who stood there, and I said: "I see with astonishment the seething and the boiling of the water, and the men burning and yet alive!" And he answered me, saying: "This boiling that you see is the place of the operation

¹² Καὶ ἄλλος ὀπίσω αὐτοῦ φέρων περιηκονισμένον τινὰ λευκοφόρον καὶ ὡραῖον τὴν δψιν, οὗ τὸ ὄνομα ἑκαλεῖτο μεσουράνισμα ἡλίου. Berthelot: "Un autre, derrière lui, portait un objet circulaire, d'une blancheur éclatante, et très beau à voir appelé Méridien du Cinnabre." It is not clear why μεσουράνισμα ἡλίου is translated as "meridian of the cinnabar," thus making it a chemical analogy. περιηκονισμένον τινὰ must refer to a person and not to a thing. Dr. M.-L. von Franz has drawn my attention to the following parallels in Apuleius. He calls the *stola olympiaca* with which the initiate was clad a "precious scarf with sacred animals worked in colour on every part of it; for instance, Indian serpents and Hyperborean griffins." "I . . . wore a white palm-tree chaplet with its leaves sticking out all round like rays of light." The initiate was shown to the people "as when a statue is unveiled, dressed like the sun." The sun, which he now was, he had seen the previous night, after his figurative death. "At midnight I saw the sun shining as if it were noon." (*The Golden Ass*, trans. Graves, p. 286.)

¹³ Literally, ὀργανικῶς.

called embalming. Those who seek to obtain the art enter here, and they cast their bodies from them and become spirits. The practice [of the art] is explained by this procedure; for whatever casts off the grossness of the body becomes spirit."

- 87 The Zosimos texts are in a disordered state. At III, i, 5 there is a misplaced but obviously authentic résumé or amplification of the visions, and at III, i, 4 a philosophical interpretation of them. Zosimos calls this whole passage an "introduction to the discourse that is to follow" (III, i, 6).

(III, i, 5.) In short, my friend, build a temple from a single stone, like to white lead, to alabaster, to Proconnesian marble,¹⁴ with neither end nor beginning in its construction.¹⁵ Let it have within it a spring of the purest water, sparkling like the sun. Note carefully on what side is the entrance to the temple, and take a sword in your hand; then seek the entrance, for narrow is the place where the opening is. A dragon lies at the entrance, guarding the temple. Lay hold upon him; immolate him first; strip him of his skin, and taking his flesh with the bones, separate the limbs; then, laying [the flesh of] the limbs¹⁶ together with the bones at the entrance of the temple, make a step of them, mount thereon, and enter, and you will find what you seek.¹⁷ The priest, that brazen man, whom you see seated in the spring and composing the substance, [look on] him not as the brazen man, for he has changed the colour of his nature and has become the silver man; and if you will, you will soon have him [as] the golden man.

(III, i, 4.) And after I had seen this apparition, I awoke, and I said to myself: "What is the cause of this vision? Is not that boiling white and yellow water the divine water?" And I found that I had well understood. And I said: "Beautiful it is to speak and beautiful to hear, beautiful to give and beautiful to receive, beautiful to be poor and beautiful to be rich. How does nature teach giving and receiving? The brazen man gives and the hydrolith receives; the metal gives and the plant receives; the stars give and the flowers receive; the heavens give and the earth receives; the thunder-claps give forth darting fire. And all things are woven together and all things are undone again; all things are mingled together and all

¹⁴ The island of Prokonnesos was the site of the famous Greek marble quarry, now called Marmara (Turkey).

¹⁵ That is, circular.

¹⁶ The Greek has only μέλος. I follow the reading of codex Gr. 2252 (Paris).

¹⁷ The *res quaesita* or *quaerenda* is a standing expression in Latin alchemy.

things combine; and all things unite and all things separate; all things are moistened and all things are dried; and all things flourish and all things fade in the bowl of the altar. For each thing comes to pass with method and in fixed measure and by exact¹⁸ weighing of the four elements. The weaving together of all things and the undoing of all things and the whole fabric of things cannot come to pass without method. The method is a natural one, preserving due order in its inhaling and its exhaling; it brings increase and it brings decrease. And to sum up: through the harmonies of separating and combining, and if nothing of the method be neglected, all things bring forth nature. For nature applied to nature transforms nature. Such is the order of natural law throughout the whole cosmos, and thus all things hang together."

(III, i, 6.) This introduction is the key which shall open to you the flowers of the discourse that is to follow, namely, the investigation of the arts, of wisdom, of reason and understanding, the efficacious methods and revelations which throw light upon the secret words.

¹⁸ Οβγγιασμός.

II

COMMENTARY

1. GENERAL REMARKS ON THE INTERPRETATION

88 Although it looks as if this were a series of visions following one after the other, the frequent repetitions and striking similarities suggest rather that it was essentially a single vision which is presented as a set of variations on the themes it contains. Psychologically at least, there is no ground for supposing that it is an allegorical invention. Its salient features seem to indicate that for Zosimos it was a highly significant experience which he wished to communicate to others. Although alchemical literature contains a number of allegories which without doubt are merely didactic fables and are not based on direct experience,¹ the vision of Zosimos may well have been an actual happening. This seems to be borne out by the manner in which Zosimos himself interprets it as a confirmation of his own preoccupation: "Is not this the composition of the waters?" Such an interpretation seems—to us at any rate—to leave out of account the most impressive images in the vision, and to reduce a far more significant complex of facts to an all too simple common denominator. If the vision were an allegory, the most conspicuous images would also be the ones that have the greatest significance. But it is characteristic of any subjective dream interpretation that it is satisfied with pointing out superficial relationships which take no account of the essentials. Another thing to be considered is that the alchemists themselves testify to the occurrence of dreams and visions during the opus.² I am inclined to think that the vision or visions of Zosimos were experiences of this kind,

¹ For example, the "Visio Arislei" (*Art. aurif.*, I, pp. 146ff.) and the visions in the "Book of Krates" (Berthelot, *Chimie au moyen âge*, III, pp. 44–75).

² Cf. *Psychology and Alchemy*, pars. 347ff.

which took place during the work and revealed the nature of the psychic processes in the background.³ In these visions all those contents emerge which the alchemists unconsciously projected into the chemical process and which were then perceived there, as though they were qualities of matter. The extent to which this projection was fostered by the conscious attitude is shown by the somewhat overhasty interpretation given by Zosimos himself.

89 Even though his interpretation strikes us at first as somewhat forced, indeed as far-fetched and arbitrary, we should nevertheless not forget that while the conception of the "waters" is a strange one to us, for Zosimos and for the alchemists in general it had a significance we would never suspect. It is also possible that the mention of the "water" opened out perspectives in which the ideas of dismemberment, killing, torture, and transformation all had their place. For, beginning with the treatises of Democritus and Komarios, which are assigned to the first century A.D., alchemy, until well into the eighteenth century, was very largely concerned with the miraculous water, the *aqua divina* or *permanens*, which was extracted from the lapis, or prima materia, through the torment of the fire. The water was the *humidum radicale* (radical moisture), which stood for the *anima media natura* or *anima mundi* imprisoned in matter,⁴ the

³ The opus extended over a period with no fixed limits. During this time the artifex had to devote himself "religiously" to the process of transformation. Since the process was subjective as well as objective, it is not surprising that it included dream-experiences. G. Battista Nazari (*Della tramutazione metallica sogni tre*, 1599) actually represented the opus in the form of (allegorical) dreams. "The philosophic water is sometimes manifested to thee in sleep," says the "Parabola" of Sendivogius (*Bibliotheca chemica*, II, p. 475). We cannot suppose that the author had any knowledge of the visions of Zosimos; the reference is probably to the "Visio Arislei," as suggested by the following (p. 475 b): "Solum fructum arboris Solaris vidi in somniis Saturnum Mercurio nostro imponere" (I saw in dreams the sole fruit of the tree of the sun impose Saturn on our Mercurius). Cf. the end of the "Visio Arislei": "Vidimus te magistrum in somniis. Petimus ut nobis subsidium Horfolto discipulo tuo offeras, qui nutrimenti auctor est" (We saw thee, the master, in dreams. We besought that thou wouldst offer us for our help thy disciple Horfoltus, who is the author of nourishment).—Codex Q. 584 (Berlin), fol. 21v. Ruska, ed., *Turba Philosophorum*, pp. 327f. The beginning of the "Visio" shows how the fruit of "that immortal tree" may be gathered.

⁴ In our text (III, v. 3) it is the Agathodaimon itself that suffers transformation.

soul of the stone or metal, also called the *anima aquina*. This anima was set free not only by means of the "cooking," but also by the sword dividing the "egg," or by the *separatio*, or by dissolution into the four "roots" or elements.⁵ The *separatio* was often represented as the dismemberment of a human body.⁶ Of the *aqua permanens* it was said that it dissolved the bodies into the four elements. Altogether, the divine water possessed the power of transformation. It transformed the *nigredo* into the *albedo* through the miraculous "washing" (*ablutio*); it animated inert matter, made the dead to rise again,⁷ and therefore possessed the virtue of the baptismal water in the ecclesiastical rite.⁸ Just as, in the *benedictio fontis*, the priest makes the sign of the cross over the water and so divides it into four parts,⁹ so the mercurial serpent, symbolizing the *aqua permanens*, undergoes dismemberment, another parallel to the division of the body.¹⁰

⁹⁰ I shall not elaborate any further this web of interconnected meanings in which alchemy is so rich. What I have said may suffice to show that the idea of the "water" and the operations connected with it could easily open out to the alchemist a vista in which practically all the themes of the vision fall into place. From the standpoint of Zosimos' conscious psychology, there-

⁵ Division into four elements after the *mortificatio* occurs in "Exercitationes in Turbam IC" (*Art. aurif.*, I, p. 170), also in "Aenigma" VI (*ibid.*, p. 151). For division of the egg into four, see the Book of El-Habib (Berthelot, *Moyen âge*, III, p. 92). The division into four was known as *τετραμερεῖν τὴν φιλοσοφίαν* (Berthelot, *Alch. grecs*, III, xlv, 5).

⁶ For example, in Trismosin, *Splendor solis* (*Aureum vellus*, p. 27). The same in *Splendor Solis* (London, 1920, repr.), Pl. X, and Lacinius, *Pretiosa margarita novella* (Venice, 1546), fol. *** xii.

⁷ "It is the water that kills and vivifies" (*Rosarium philosophorum*, in *Art. aurif.*, II, p. 214).

⁸ Just as baptism is a pre-Christian rite, according to the testimony of the gospels, so, too, the divine water is of pagan and pre-Christian origin. The Praefatio of the Benedictio Fontis on Easter Eve says: "May this water, prepared for the rebirth of men, be rendered fruitful by the secret inpouring of his divine power; may a heavenly offering, conceived in holiness and reborn into a new creation, come forth from the stainless womb of this divine font; and may all, however distinguished by age in time or sex in body, be brought forth into one infancy by the motherhood of grace" (*The Missal in Latin and English*, p. 429).

⁹ "The priest divides the water crosswise with his hand" (*ibid.*).

¹⁰ Cf. *Psychology and Alchemy*, pars. 334, 530.

fore, his interpretation seems rather less forced and arbitrary. A Latin proverb says: *canis panem somniat, piscator pisces* (the dog dreams of bread, the fisherman of fish). The alchemist, too, dreams in his own specific language. This enjoins upon us the greatest circumspection, all the more so as that language is exceedingly obscure. In order to understand it, we have to learn the psychological secrets of alchemy. It is probably true what the old Masters said, that only he who knows the secret of the stone understands their words.¹¹ It has long been asserted that this secret is sheer nonsense, and not worth the trouble of investigating seriously. But this frivolous attitude ill befits the psychologist, for any "nonsense" that fascinated men's minds for close on two thousand years—among them some of the greatest, e.g., Newton and Goethe¹²—must have something about it which it would be useful for the psychologist to know. Moreover, the symbolism of alchemy has a great deal to do with the structure of the unconscious, as I have shown in my book *Psychology and Alchemy*. These things are not just rare curiosities, and anyone who wishes to understand the symbolism of dreams cannot close his eyes to the fact that the dreams of modern men and women often contain the very images and metaphors that we find in the medieval treatises.¹³ And since an understanding of the biological compensation produced by dreams is of importance in the treatment of neurosis as well as in the development of consciousness, a knowledge of these facts has also a practical value which should not be underestimated.

¹¹ Cf. "Hortulanus super Epistolum Hermetis" in *Rosarium, Art. aurif.*, II, p. 270. *Aurora Consurgens* (ed. von Franz), pp. 39-41: "For she [this science] is clear to them that have understanding . . . she seemeth easy to them that have knowledge of her." Maier, *Symbola aureae mensae*, p. 146: ". . . that they should not understand his words, save those who are judged worthy of this very great magistry."

¹² Cf. Gray, *Goethe the Alchemist*.

¹³ It has often been objected that symbols of this sort do not occur in dreams at all. Naturally they do not occur in all dreams or in just any dreams, but only in special ones. The differences between dreams are as great as those between individuals. A particular constellation of the unconscious is needed to produce such dreams, i.e., archetypal dreams containing mythological motifs. (Examples in *Psychology and Alchemy*, Part II.) But they cannot be recognized without a knowledge of mythology, which not all psychologists possess.

2. THE SACRIFICIAL ACT

⁹¹ The central image in our dream-vision shows us a kind of sacrificial act undertaken for the purpose of alchemical transformation. It is characteristic of this rite that the priest is at once the sacrificer and the sacrificed. This important idea reached Zosimos in the form of the teachings of the "Hebrews" (i.e., Christians).¹ Christ was a god who sacrificed himself. An essential part of the sacrificial act is dismemberment. Zosimos must have been familiar with this motif from the Dionysian mystery-tradition. There, too, the god is the victim, who was torn to pieces by the Titans and thrown into a cooking pot,² but whose heart was saved at the last moment by Hera. Our text shows that the bowl-shaped altar was a cooking vessel in which a multitude of people were boiled and burned. As we know from the legend and from a fragment of Euripides,³ an outburst of bestial greed and the tearing of living animals with the teeth were part of the Dionysian orgy.⁴ Dionysius was actually called *ὁ ἀμέριστος καὶ μεμερισμένος νοῦς* (the undivided and divided spirit).⁵

⁹² Zosimos must also have been familiar with the flaying motif. A well-known parallel of the dying and resurgent god Attis⁶ is the flayed and hanged Marsyas. Also, legend attributes death by flaying to the religious teacher Mani, who was a near-contemporary of Zosimos.⁷ The subsequent stuffing of the skin with straw is a reminder of the Attic fertility and rebirth ceremonies. Every year in Athens an ox was slaughtered and skinned, and its pelt

¹ Provided, of course, that the passages in question are not interpolations by copyists, who were mostly monks.

² Preller, *Griechische Mythologie*, I, p. 437.

³ Fragment 472 N², "The Cretans." Cited in Dieterich, *Mithrasliturgie*, p. 105.

⁴ Cf. "Transformation Symbolism in the Mass," pp. 231f. For dismemberment, transformation, and recomposition in a case of schizophrenia, see Spielrein, "Ueber den psychologischen Inhalt eines Falles von Schizophrenie," pp. 358ff. Dismemberment is a practically universal motif of primitive shamanistic psychology. It forms the main experience in the initiation of a shaman. Cf. Eliade, *Shamanism*, pp. 53ff.

⁵ Firmicus Maternus, *Liber de errore profanarum religionum* (ed. Halm), ch. 7, p. 89.

⁶ Attis has close affinities with Christ. According to tradition, the birthplace at Bethlehem was once an Attis sanctuary. This tradition has been confirmed by recent excavations.

⁷ Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, Part IV: *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, pp. 242ff.

stuffed with straw. The stuffed dummy was then fastened to a plough, obviously for the purpose of restoring the fertility of the land.⁸ Similar flaying ceremonies are reported of the Aztecs, Scythians, Chinese, and Patagonians.⁹

⁹³ In the vision, the skinning is confined to the head. It is a scalping as distinct from the total *ἀποδερμάτωσις* (skinning) described in III, i, 5. It is one of the actions which distinguish the original vision from the description of the process given in this résumé. Just as cutting out and eating the heart or brain of an enemy is supposed to endow one with his vital powers or virtues, so scalping is a *pars pro toto* incorporation of the life principle or soul.¹⁰ Flaying is a transformation symbol which I have discussed at greater length in my essay "Transformation Symbolism in the Mass." Here I need only mention the special motif of torture or punishment (*κόλασις*), which is particularly evident in the description of the dismemberment and scalping. For this there is a remarkable parallel in the Akhmim manuscript of the Apocalypse of Elijah, published by Georg Steindorff.¹¹ In the vision it is said of the leaden homunculus that "his eyes filled with blood" as a result of the torture. The Apocalypse of Elijah says of those who are cast "into eternal punishment": "their eyes are mixed with blood";¹² and of the saints who were persecuted by the Anti-Messiah: "he will draw off their skins from their heads."¹³

⁹⁴ These parallels suggest that the *κόλασις* is not just a punishment but the torment of hell. Although *κόλασις* would have to be translated as *poena*, this word nowhere occurs in the Vulgate, for in all the places where the torments of hell are mentioned the word used is *cruciare* or *cruciatu*, as in Revelation 14 : 10, "tormented with fire and brimstone," or Revelation 9 : 5, "the torment of a scorpion." The corresponding Greek word is *βασανίζειν* or *βασανισμός*, 'torture'. For the alchemists it had a

⁸ Ibid., p. 249.

⁹ Ibid., p. 246.

¹⁰ Among the Thompson and Shuswap Indians in British Columbia the scalp signifies a helpful guardian spirit. Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy*, III, pp. 417, 427.

¹¹ *Die Apokalypse des Elias*.

¹² Ibid., p. 43, 5, line 1.

¹³ P. 95, 36, line 8.

double meaning: *βασανίζειν* also meant 'testing on the touchstone' (*βάσανος*). The *lapis Lydius* (touchstone) was used as a synonym for the *lapis philosophorum*. The genuineness or incorruptibility of the stone is proved by the torment of fire and cannot be attained without it. This *leitmotiv* runs all through alchemy.

⁹⁵ In our text the skinning refers especially to the head, as though signifying an extraction of the soul (if the primitive equation *skin = soul* is still valid here). The head plays a considerable role in alchemy, and has done so since ancient times. Thus Zosimos names his philosophers the "sons of the Golden Head." I have dealt with this theme elsewhere,¹⁴ and need not go into it again now. For Zosimos and the later alchemists the head had the meaning of the "omega element" or "round element" (*στοιχείον στρογγύλον*), a synonym for the arcane or transformative substance.¹⁵ The decapitation in section III, v^{bis} therefore signifies the obtaining of the arcane substance. According to the text, the figure following behind the sacrificer is named the "Meridian of the Sun," and his head is to be cut off. This striking off of the golden head is also found in the manuscripts of *Splendor solis* as well as in the Rorschach printing of 1598. The sacrifice in the vision is of an initiate who has undergone the experience of the *solificatio*. In alchemy, sun is synonymous with gold. Gold, as Michael Maier says, is the "circulatory work of the sun," "shining clay moulded into the most beauteous substance, wherein the solar rays are gathered together and shine forth."¹⁶ Mylius says that the "water comes from the rays of the sun and moon."¹⁷ According to the "Aurelia occulta," the sun's rays are gathered together in the quicksilver.¹⁸ Dorn derives all metals from the "invisible rays" of heaven,¹⁹ whose spherical shape is a prototype of the Hermetic vessel. In view of all this, we shall hardly go wrong in supposing that the initiate named the "Meridian of the Sun" himself represents the arcane substance. We shall come back to this idea later.

¹⁴ "Transformation Symbolism in the Mass," pp. 240ff.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ *De circulo physico quadrato*, pp. 15f.

¹⁷ *Philosophia reformata*, p. 313.

¹⁸ *Theatrum chemicum*, IV (1659), p. 496.

¹⁹ "Speculativa philosophia," *ibid.*, I (1659), p. 247.

⁹⁶ Let us turn now to other details of the vision. The most striking feature is the "bowl-shaped altar." It is unquestionably related to the *krater* of Poimandres. This was the vessel which the demiurge sent down to earth filled with Nous, so that those who were striving for higher consciousness could baptize themselves in it. It is mentioned in that important passage where Zosimos tells his friend and *soror mystica*, Theosebeia: "Hasten down to the shepherd and bathe yourself in the *krater*; and hasten up to your own kind (*γένος*)."²⁰ She had to go down to the place of death and rebirth, and then up to her "own kind," i.e., the twice-born, or, in the language of the gospels, the kingdom of heaven.

⁹⁷ The *krater* is obviously a wonder-working vessel, a font or piscina, in which the immersion takes place and transformation into a spiritual being is effected. It is the *vas Hermetis* of later alchemy. I do not think there can be any doubt that the *krater* of Zosimos is closely related to the vessel of Poimandres in the *Corpus Hermeticum*.²¹ The Hermetic vessel, too, is a uterus of spiritual renewal or rebirth. This idea corresponds exactly to the text of the *benedictio fontis*, which I quoted earlier in a footnote.²² In "Isis to Horus,"²³ the angel brings Isis a small vessel filled with translucent or "shining" water. Considering the alchemical nature of the treatise, we could take this water as the divine water of the art,²⁴ since after the *prima materia* this is the real arcanum. The water, or water of the Nile, had a special significance in ancient Egypt: it was Osiris, the dismembered god *par excellence*.²⁵ A text from Edfu says: "I bring you the vessels with the god's limbs [i.e., the Nile] that you may drink of them; I refresh your heart that you may be satisfied."²⁶ The god's limbs were the fourteen parts into which Osiris was

²⁰ Berthelot, *Alch. grecs*, III, li, 8.

²¹ Scott, *Hermetica*, I, Book IV, and Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 8ff.

²² See *supra*, par. 89, n. 8.

²³ Berthelot, *Alch. grecs*, I, xiii, 1f.

²⁴ The arcanum is here symbolized by the sowing of the grain and the begetting of man, lion, and dog. In chemical usage it refers to the fixation of quicksilver (*ibid.*, I, xiii, 6-9). Quicksilver was one of the older symbols for the divine water on account of its silvery-white sheen. In *Rosarium* it is called "aqua clarissima" (*Art. aurif.*, II, p. 213).

²⁵ Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, II, pp. 122ff.

²⁶ Jacobsohn, *Die dogmatische Stellung des Königs in der Theologie der alten Aegypter*, p. 50.

divided. There are numerous references to the hidden, divine nature of the arcane substance in the alchemical texts.²⁷ According to this ancient tradition, the water possessed the power of resuscitation; for it was Osiris, who rose from the dead. In the "Dictionary of Goldmaking,"²⁸ Osiris is the name for lead and sulphur, both of which are synonyms for the arcane substance. Thus lead, which was the principal name for the arcane substance for a long time, is called "the sealed tomb of Osiris, containing all the limbs of the god."²⁹ According to legend, Set (Typhon) covered the coffin of Osiris with lead. Petasios tells us that the "sphere of the fire is restrained and enclosed by lead." Olympiodorus, who quotes this saying, remarks that Petasios added by way of explanation: "The lead is the water which issues from the masculine element."³⁰ But the masculine element, he said, is the "sphere of fire."

⁹⁸ This train of thought indicates that the spirit which is a water, or the water which is a spirit, is essentially a paradox, a pair of opposites like water and fire. In the *aqua nostra* of the alchemists, the concepts of water, fire, and spirit coalesce as they do in religious usage.³¹

⁹⁹ Besides the motif of water, the story that forms the setting of the Isis treatise also contains the motif of violation. The text says:³²

Isis the Prophetess to her son Horus: My child, you should go forth to battle against the faithless Typhon for the sake of your father's kingdom, while I retire to Hormanuthi, Egypt's [city] of the sacred art, where I sojourned for a while. According to the circumstances of the time and the necessary consequences of the movement of the

²⁷ Cf. the identification of the Agathodaimon with the transformative substance, supra, III, v, 3.

²⁸ Berthelot, *Alch. grecs*, I, ii.

²⁹ *Ἰσις ἐστὶν ἡ ταφή ἐσφιγμένη, κρύπτουσα πάντα τὰ Ὀσίριδος μέλη*: Treatise of Olympiodorus of Alexandria (ibid., II, iv, 42). Here Osiris is the "principle of all moisture" in agreement with Plutarch. This refers to the relatively low melting point of lead.

³⁰ Ibid., II, iv, 43.

³¹ Cf. the hymn of St. Romanus on the theophany: "... him who was seen of old in the midst of three children as dew in the fire, now a fire flickering and shining in the Jordan, himself the light inaccessible" (Pitra, *Analecta sacra*, I, 21).

³² Berthelot, *Alch. grecs*, I, xiii, 1-4.

spheres,³³ it came to pass that a certain one among the angels, dwelling in the first firmament, watched me from above and wished to have intercourse with me. Quickly he determined to bring this about. I did not yield, as I wished to inquire into the preparation of the gold and silver. But when I demanded it of him, he told me he was not permitted to speak of it, on account of the supreme importance of the mysteries; but on the following day an angel, Amnael, greater than he, would come, and he could give me the solution of the problem. He also spoke of the sign of this angel—he bore it on his head and would show me a small, unpitched vessel filled with a translucent water. He would tell me the truth. On the following day, as the sun was crossing the midpoint of its course, Amnael appeared, who was greater than the first angel, and, seized with the same desire, he did not hesitate, but hastened to where I was. But I was no less determined to inquire into the matter.³⁴

¹⁰⁰ She did not yield to him, and the angel revealed the secret, which she might pass only to her son Horus. Then follow a number of recipes which are of no interest here.

¹⁰¹ The angel, as a winged or spiritual being, represents, like Mercurius, the volatile substance, the pneuma, the ἀσώματον (disembodied). Spirit in alchemy almost invariably has a relation to water or to the radical moisture, a fact that may be explained simply by the empirical nature of the oldest form of "chemistry," namely the art of cooking. The steam arising from boiling water conveys the first vivid impression of "metasomatosi," the transformation of the corporeal into the incorporeal, into spirit or pneuma. The relation of spirit to water resides in the fact that the spirit is hidden in the water, like a fish. In the "Allegoriae super librum Turbae"³⁵ this fish is described as "round" and endowed with "a wonder-working virtue." As is evident from the text,³⁶ it represents the arcane substance. From the alchemical transformation, the text says, is produced a collyrium (eyewash)

³³ Instead of *φειρικῆς* in the text.

³⁴ The secrets of the art.

³⁵ *Art. aurif.*, I, pp. 141f.

³⁶ "There is in the sea a round fish, lacking bones and scales [?], and it has in itself a fatness, a wonder-working virtue, which if it be cooked on a slow fire until its fatness and moisture have wholly disappeared, and then be thoroughly cleansed, is steeped in sea water until it begins to shine. . . ." This is a description of the transformation process. [Cf. *Aion*, pars. 195ff.]

which will enable the philosopher to see the secrets better.³⁷ The "round fish" seems to be a relative of the "round white stone" mentioned in the *Turba*.³⁸ Of this it is said: "It has within itself the three colours and the four natures and is born of a living thing." The "round" thing or element is a well-known concept in alchemy. In the *Turba* we encounter the *rotundum*: "For the sake of posterity I call attention to the *rotundum*, which changes the metal into four."³⁹ As is clear from the context, the *rotundum* is identical with the *aqua permanens*. We meet the same train of thought in Zosimos. He says of the round or omega element: "It consists of two parts. It belongs to the seventh zone, that of Kronos,⁴⁰ in the language of the corporeal (*κατὰ τὴν ἐνσωματωμένην*); but in the language of the incorporeal it is something different, that may not be revealed. Only Nikotheos knows it, and he is not to be found."⁴¹ In the language of the corporeal it is named Okeanos, the origin and seed, so they say, of all the gods."⁴² Hence the *rotundum* is outwardly water, but inwardly the arcanum. For the Peratics, Kronos was a "power having the colour of water,"⁴³ "for the water, they say, is destruction."

¹⁰² Water and spirit are often identical. Thus Hermolaus Barbarus⁴⁴ says: "There is also a heavenly or divine water of the alchemists, which was known both to Democritus and to Hermes Trismegistus. Sometimes they call it the divine water, and sometimes the Scythian juice, sometimes pneuma, that is spirit, of the nature of aether, and the quintessence of things."⁴⁵ Ruland calls the water the "spiritual power, a spirit of heavenly nature."⁴⁶ Christopher Steeb gives an interesting explanation of the origin of this idea: "The brooding of the Holy Spirit
³⁷ . . . whose anointed eyes could easily look upon the secrets of the philosophers."

³⁸ Codex Vadiensis 390 (St. Gall), 15th cent. (mentioned by Ruska, *Turba*, p. 93). Concerning the fish, see *Aion*, ch. X.

³⁹ Sermo XLI.

⁴⁰ That is, Saturn, who was regarded as the dark "counter-sun." Mercurius is the child of Saturn, and also of the sun and moon.

⁴¹ Cf. *Psychology and Alchemy*, par. 456, §6.

⁴² Berthelot, *Alch. grecs*, III, xix, 1.

⁴³ Δύναμις γὰρ φησὶν ὑδατόχρους, ἥτινα δύναμις, φησὶ, τοῦτοστι τὸν κρόνον. Hippolytus, *Elenchos*, V, 16, 2 (trans. Legge, *Philosophumena*, I, p. 154).

⁴⁴ 1454-1493. Cardinal archbishop of Aquileia, and a great humanist.

⁴⁵ *Corollarium in Dioscoridem*. Cited in Maier, *Symb. aur. mens.*, p. 174.

⁴⁶ *Lexicon alchemiae*, pp. 46f.

upon the waters above the firmament brought forth a power which permeates all things in the most subtle way, warms them, and, in conjunction with the light, generates in the mineral kingdom of the lower world the mercurial serpent, in the plant kingdom the blessed greenness, and in the animal kingdom the formative power; so that the supracelestial spirit of the waters, united with the light, may fitly be called the soul of the world."⁴⁷ Steeb goes on to say that when the celestial waters were animated by the spirit, they immediately fell into a circular motion, from which arose the perfect spherical form of the *anima mundi*. The *rotundum* is therefore a bit of the world soul, and this may well have been the secret that was guarded by Zosimos. All these ideas refer expressly to Plato's *Timaeus*. In the *Turba*, Parmenides praises the water as follows: "O ye celestial natures, who at a sign from God multiply the natures of the truth! O mighty nature, who conquers the natures and causes the natures to rejoice and be glad!⁴⁸ For she it is in particular, whom God has endowed with a power which the fire does not possess. . . . She is herself the truth, all ye seekers of wisdom, for, liquefied with her substances, she brings about the highest of works."⁴⁹

¹⁰³ Socrates in the *Turba* says much the same: "O how this nature changes body into spirit! . . . She is the sharpest vinegar, which causes gold to become pure spirit."⁵⁰ "Vinegar" is synonymous with "water," as the text shows, and also with the "red spirit."⁵¹ The *Turba* says of the latter: "From the compound that is transformed into red spirit arises the principle of the world," which again means the world soul.⁵² *Aurora consurgens*

⁴⁷ *Coelum Sephiroticum*, p. 33.

⁴⁸ An allusion to the axiom of pseudo-Democritus.

⁴⁹ Ruska, p. 190.

⁵⁰ P. 197.

⁵¹ Pp. 200f. *Aqua nostra* is "fire, because it burns all things and reduces them to powder; quicksilver is vinegar" (Quotation from Calid in *Rosarium*, p. 218). "Our water is mightier than fire. . . . And fire in respect thereto is like water in respect to common fire. Therefore the philosophers say: Burn our metal in the mightiest fire" (*ibid.*, p. 250). Hence the "water" is a kind of superfire, an *ignis coelestis*.

⁵² Contrary to Ruska (*Turba*, p. 201, n. 3), I adhere to the reading in the MSS. because it is simply a synonym for the moist soul of the prima materia, the radical moisture. Another synonym for the water is "spiritual blood" (*ibid.*, p. 129), which Ruska rightly collates with *πυρρόν αἷμα* (fire-coloured blood) in the Greek

says: "Send forth thy Spirit, that is water . . . and thou wilt renew the face of the earth." And again: "The rain of the Holy Spirit melteth. He shall send out his word . . . his wind shall blow and the waters shall run."⁵³ Arnaldus de Villanova (1235-1313) says in his "Flos Florum": "They have called water spirit, and it is in truth spirit."⁵⁴ The *Rosarium philosophorum* says categorically: "Water is spirit."⁵⁵ In the treatise of Komarios (1st cent. A.D.), the water is described as an elixir of life which wakens the dead sleeping in Hades to a new spring-time.⁵⁶ Apollonius says in the *Turba*:⁵⁷ "But then, ye sons of the doctrine, that thing needs the fire, until the spirit of that body is transformed and left to stand through the nights, and turns to dust like a man in his grave. After this has happened, God will give it back its soul and its spirit, and, the infirmity being removed, that thing will be stronger and better after its destruction, even as a man becomes stronger and younger after the resurrection than he was in the world." The water acts upon the substances as God acts upon the body. It is coequal with God and is itself of divine nature.

¹⁰⁴ As we have seen, the spiritual nature of the water comes from the "brooding" of the Holy Spirit upon the chaos (Genesis 1:3). There is a similar view in the *Corpus Hermeticum*: "There was darkness in the deep and water without form; and there was a subtle breath, intelligent, which permeated the things in Chaos with divine power."⁵⁸ This view is supported in the first place by the New Testament motif of baptism by "water and spirit," and in the second place by the rite of the *benedictio fontis*, which is performed on Easter Eve.⁵⁹ But the

sources. The equation fire = spirit is common in alchemy. Thus, as Ruska himself remarks (p. 271), Mercurius (a frequent synonym for the *aqua permanens*, cf. Ruland's *Lexicon*) is called *φάρμακον πυρρον* (fiery medicine).

⁵³ Cf. *Aurora Consurgens* (ed. von Franz), pp. 85, 91.

⁵⁴ *Art. aurif.*, II, p. 482. ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, II, p. 239.

⁵⁶ Berthelot, *Alch. grecs*, IV, xx, 8: "Make known to us how the blessed waters come down from above to awaken the dead, who lie round about in the midst of Hades, chained in the darkness; how the elixir of life comes to them and awakens them, rousing them out of their sleep. . . ."

⁵⁷ P. 139. ⁵⁸ Scott, *Hermetica*, I, p. 147.

⁵⁹ Praefatio: "May the power of the Holy Ghost descend into this brimming font, and may it make the whole substance of the water fruitful in regenerative power" (*Missal*, p. 431).

idea of the wonder-working water derived originally from Hellenistic nature philosophy, probably with an admixture of Egyptian influences, and not from Christian or biblical sources. Because of its mystical power, the water animates and fertilizes but also kills.

¹⁰⁵ In the divine water, whose dyophysite nature (*τὸ στοιχεῖον τὸ διμερές*)⁶⁰ is constantly emphasized, two principles balance one another, active and passive, masculine and feminine, which constitute the essence of creative power in the eternal cycle of birth and death.⁶¹ This cycle was represented in ancient alchemy by the symbol of the uroboros, the dragon that bites its own tail.⁶² Self-devouring is the same as self-destruction,⁶³ but the union of the dragon's tail and mouth was also thought of as self-fertilization. Hence the texts say: "The dragon slays itself, weds itself, impregnates itself."⁶⁴

⁶⁰ It shares this quality with Mercurius duplex.

⁶¹ "In the floods of life, in the storm of work,
In ebb and flow,
In warp and weft,
Cradle and grave,
An eternal sea,
A changing patchwork,
A glowing life,
At the whirring loom of Time I weave
The living clothes of the Deity."

Thus the Earth Spirit, the *spiritus mercurialis*, to Faust. (Trans. by MacNeice, p. 23.)

⁶² In Egypt the darkness of the soul was represented as a crocodile (Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, I, p. 286).

⁶³ In the Book of Ostones (Berthelot, *Chimie au moyen âge*, III, p. 120) there is a description of a monster with wings of a vulture, an elephant's head, and a dragon's tail. These parts mutually devour one another.

⁶⁴ Of the quicksilver (*aqua vitae*, *perennis*) it is said: "This is the serpent which rejoices in itself, impregnates itself, and brings itself forth in a single day; it slays all things with its venom, and will become fire from the fire (*et ab igne ignis fuerit*)." ("Tractatulus Avicennae," *Art. aurif.*, I, p. 406.) "The dragon is born in the *nigredo* and feeds upon its Mercurius and slays itself" (*Rosarium*, *ibid.*, II, p. 230). "The living Mercurius is called the scorpion, that is, venom; for it slays itself and brings itself back to life" (*ibid.*, pp. 271f.). The oft-cited saying, "The dragon dieth not save with its brother and sister," is explained by Maier (*Symb. aur. mens.*, p. 466) as follows: "For whenever the heavenly sun and moon meet in conjunction, this must take place in the head and tail of the dragon; in this comes about the conjunction and uniting of sun and moon, when an eclipse takes place."

106 This ancient alchemical idea reappears dramatically in the vision of Zosimos, much as it might in a real dream. In III, i, 2 the priest Ion submits himself to an "unendurable torment." The "sacrificer" performs the act of sacrifice by piercing Ion through with a sword. Ion thus foreshadows that dazzling white-clad figure named the "Meridian of the Sun" (III, v^{bis}), who is decapitated, and whom we have connected with the *solificatio* of the initiate in the Isis mysteries. This figure corresponds to the kingly mystagogue or psychopomp who appears in a vision reported in a late medieval alchemical text, the "Declaratio et Explicatio Adolphi," which forms part of the "Aurelia occulta."⁶⁵ So far as one can judge, the vision has no connection whatever with the Zosimos text, and I also doubt very much whether one should attribute to it the character of a mere parable. It contains certain features that are not traditional but are entirely original, and for this reason it seems likely that it was a genuine dream-experience. At all events, I know from my professional experience that similar dream-visions occur today among people who have no knowledge of alchemical symbolism. The vision is concerned with a shining male figure wearing a crown of stars. His robe is of white linen, dotted with many-coloured flowers, those of green predominating. He assuages the anxious doubts of the adept, saying: "Adolphus, follow me. I shall show thee what is prepared for thee, so that thou canst pass out of the darkness into the light." This figure, therefore, is a true Hermes Psychopompos and initiator, who directs the spiritual *transitus* of the adept. This is confirmed in the course of the latter's adventures, when he receives a book showing a "parabolic figure" of the Old Adam. We may take this as indicating that the psychopomp is the second Adam, a parallel figure to Christ. There is no talk of sacrifice, but, if our conjecture is right, this thought would be warranted by the appearance of the second Adam. Generally speaking, the figure of the king is associated with the motif of the *mortificatio*.

107 Thus in our text the personification of the sun or gold is to be sacrificed,⁶⁶ and his head, which was crowned with the aure-

⁶⁵ *Theatr. chem.*, IV (1659), pp. 509ff.

⁶⁶ The killing (*mortificatio*) of the king occurs in later alchemy (cf. *Psychology and Alchemy*, Fig. 173). The king's crown makes him a kind of sun. The motif belongs to the wider context of the sacrifice of the god, which developed not

ole of the sun, struck off, for this contains, or is, the arcanum.⁶⁷ Here we have an indication of the psychic nature of the arcanum, for the head of a man signifies above all the seat of consciousness.⁶⁸ Again, in the vision of Isis, the angel who bears the secret is connected with the meridian of the sun, for the text says that he appeared as "the sun was crossing the midpoint of its course." The angel bears the mysterious elixir on his head and, by his relationship to the meridian, makes it clear that he is a kind of solar genius or messenger of the sun who brings "illumination," that is, an enhancement and expansion of consciousness. His indecorous behaviour may be explained by the fact that angels have always enjoyed a dubious reputation as far as their morals are concerned. It is still the rule for women to cover their hair in church. Until well into the nineteenth century, especially in Protestant regions, they had to wear a special hood⁶⁹ when they went to church on Sundays. This was not because of the men in the congregation, but because of the possible presence of angels, who might be thrown into raptures at the sight of a feminine coiffure. Their susceptibility in these matters goes back to Genesis 6 : 2, where the "sons of God" displayed a particular penchant for the "daughters of men," and bridled their enthusiasm as little as did the two angels in the Isis treatise. This treatise is assigned to the first century A.D. Its views reflect the Judaeo-Hellenistic angelology⁷⁰ of Egypt, and it might easily have been known to Zosimos the Egyptian.

108 Such opinions about angels fit in admirably with masculine

only in the West but also in the East, and particularly in ancient Mexico. There the personifier of Tezcatlipoca ("fiery mirror") was sacrificed at the festival of Toxcatl (Spence, *The Gods of Mexico*, pp. 97ff.). The same thing happened in the cult of Uitzilopochtli, the sun-god (ibid., p. 73), who also figured in the eucharistic rite of the *teoqualo*, "god-eating" (cf. "Transformation Symbolism in the Mass," pp. 223f.).

⁶⁷ The solar nature of the victim is confirmed by the tradition that the man destined to be beheaded by the priests of Harran had to have fair hair and blue eyes (ibid., p. 240).

⁶⁸ Cf. my remarks on the Harranite head mystery and the legendary head oracle of Pope Sylvester II (ibid., pp. 240f.).

⁶⁹ Its form can still be seen in the deacon's hood.

⁷⁰ According to Rabbinic tradition the angels (including Satan) were created on the second day of Creation (the day of the moon). They were immediately divided on the question of creating man. Therefore God created Adam in secret, to avoid incurring the displeasure of the angels.

as well as with feminine psychology. If angels are anything at all, they are personified transmitters of unconscious contents that are seeking expression. But if the conscious mind is not ready to assimilate these contents, their energy flows off into the affective and instinctual sphere. This produces outbursts of affect, irritation, bad moods, and sexual excitement, as a result of which consciousness gets thoroughly disoriented. If this condition becomes chronic, a dissociation develops, described by Freud as repression, with all its well-known consequences. It is, therefore, of the greatest therapeutic importance to acquaint oneself with the contents that underlie the dissociation.

¹⁰⁹ Just as the angel Amnael brings the arcane substance with him, so the "Meridian of the Sun" is himself a representation of it. In alchemical literature, the procedure of transfixing or cutting up with the sword takes the special form of dividing the philosophical egg. It, too, is divided with the sword, i.e., broken down into the four natures or elements. As an arcanum, the egg is a synonym for the water.⁷¹ It is also a synonym for the dragon (mercurial serpent)⁷² and hence for the water in the special sense of the microcosm or monad. Since water and egg are synonymous, the division of the egg with the sword is also applied to the water. "Take the vessel, cut it through with the sword, take its soul . . . thus is this water of ours our vessel."⁷³ The vessel likewise is a synonym for the egg, hence the recipe: "Pour into a round glass vessel, shaped like a phial or egg."⁷⁴ The egg is a copy of the World-Egg, the egg-white corresponding to the "waters above the firmament," the "shining liquor," and the yolk to the physical world.⁷⁵ The egg contains the four elements.⁷⁶

⁷¹ "They compared the water to an egg, because it surrounds everything that is within it, and has in itself all that is necessary" ("Consilium coniugii," *Ars chemica*, p. 140). "Having all that is necessary" is one of the attributes of God.

⁷² Maier, *Symb. aur. mens.*, p. 466. Cf. Senior, *De chemia*, p. 108: "The dragon is the divine water."

⁷³ *Mus. herm.*, p. 785.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁷⁵ Steeb, *Coelum Sephiroticum*, p. 33.

⁷⁶ *Turba*, Sermo IV, p. 112. Cf. also the "nomenclature of the egg" in Berthelot, *Alch. grecs*, I, iv, and Olympiodorus on the egg, the tetrasomia, and the spherical phial (II, iv, 44). Concerning the identity of uroboros and egg, and the division into four, see the Book of El-Habib (Berthelot, *Moyen âge*, III, pp. 92, 104). There is a picture of the egg being divided with the sword in Emblem VIII of

¹¹⁰ The dividing sword seems to have a special significance in addition to those we have noted. The "Consilium coniugii" says that the marriage pair, sun and moon, "must both be slain by their own sword, imbibing immortal souls until the most hidden interior [i.e., the previous] soul is extinguished."⁷⁷ In a poem of 1620, Mercurius complains that he is "sore tormented with a fiery sword."⁷⁸ According to the alchemists, Mercurius is the old serpent who already in paradise possessed "knowledge," since he was closely related to the devil. It is the fiery sword brandished by the angel at the gates of paradise that torments him,⁷⁹ and yet he himself is this sword. There is a picture in the "Speculum veritatis"⁸⁰ of Mercurius killing the king and the snake with the sword—"gladio proprio se ipsum interficiens." Saturn, too, is shown pierced by a sword.⁸¹ The sword is well suited to Mercurius as a variant of the *telum passionis*, Cupid's arrow.⁸² Dorn, in his "Speculativa philosophia,"⁸³ gives a long and interesting interpretation of the sword: it is the "sword of God's wrath," which, in the form of Christ the Logos, was hung upon the tree of life. Thus the wrath of God was changed to love, and "the water of Grace now bathes the whole world." Here again, as in Zosimos, the water is connected with the sacrificial act. Since the Logos, the Word of God, is "sharper than any two-edged sword" (Hebrews 4:12), the words

Maier's *Scrutinium chymicum* (p. 22), with the inscription: "Take the egg and pierce it with a fiery sword." Emblem XXV shows the killing of the dragon. Killing with the sword is also shown in Lamspringk's Symbol II (*Musaeum hermeticum*, p. 345), titled "Putrefactio." Killing and division into four go together. "Mortificatio (scl. Lapidis) separatio elementorum" ("Exercit. in Turb. IX"). Cf. the dramatic fights with the dragon in the visions of Krates (Berthelot, *Moyen âge*, III, pp. 73ff.).

⁷⁷ *Ars chemica*, p. 259.

⁷⁸ *Verus Hermes*, p. 16. [Cf. infra, par. 276.]

⁷⁹ This motif also occurs in the Adam parable in "Aurelia occulta" (*Theatr. chem.*, IV, 1659, pp. 511f.), which describes how the angel had to deal Adam several bloody wounds with his sword because he refused to move out of Paradise. Adam is the arcane substance, whose "extraction from the garden" of Eve is finally accomplished by means of blood magic.

⁸⁰ Codex Vat. Lat. 7286 (17th cent.). Fig. 150 in *Psychology and Alchemy*.

⁸¹ Codex Vossianus 29 (Leiden), fol. 73.

⁸² Ripley's "Cantilena," verse 17. [Cf. *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, p. 285.—EDITORS.]

⁸³ *Theatr. chem.*, I (1659), p. 254. Cf. "Transformation Symbolism in the Mass," pp. 234f. [Also cf. infra, pars. 447f.]

of the Consecration in the Mass were interpreted as the sacrificial knife with which the offering is slain.⁸⁴ One finds in Christian symbolism the same "circular" Gnostic thinking as in alchemy. In both the sacrificer is the sacrificed, and the sword that kills is the same as that which is killed.

¹¹¹ In Zosimos this circular thinking appears in the sacrificial priest's identity with his victim and in the remarkable idea that the homunculus into whom Ion is changed devours himself.⁸⁵ He spews forth his own flesh and rends himself with his own teeth. The homunculus therefore stands for the uroboros, which devours itself and gives birth to itself (as though spewing itself forth). Since the homunculus represents the transformation of Ion, it follows that Ion, the uroboros, and the sacrificer are essentially the same. They are three different aspects of the same principle. This equation is confirmed by the symbolism of that part of the text which I have called the "résumé" and have placed at the end of the visions. The sacrificed is indeed the uroboros serpent, whose circular form is suggested by the shape of the temple, which has "neither beginning nor end in its construction." Dismembering the victim corresponds to the idea of dividing the chaos into four elements or the baptismal water into four parts. The purpose of the operation is to create the beginnings of order in the *massa confusa*, as is suggested in III, i, 2: "in accordance with the rule of harmony." The psychological parallel to this is the reduction to order, through reflection, of apparently chaotic fragments of the unconscious which have broken through into consciousness. Without knowing anything of alchemy or its operations, I worked out many years ago a psychological typology based on the four functions of consciousness as the ordering principles of psychic processes in general. Unconsciously, I was making use of the same archetype which had led Schopenhauer to give his "principle of sufficient reason" a fourfold root.⁸⁶

¹¹² The temple built of a "single stone" is an obvious paraphrase of the lapis. The "spring of purest water" in the temple is a fountain of life, and this is a hint that the production of the

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 215.

⁸⁵ The parallel to this is the old view that Christ drank his own blood (ibid., p. 211).

⁸⁶ Cf. my "A Psychological Approach to the Dogma of the Trinity," p. 167.

round wholeness, the stone, is a guarantee of vitality. Similarly, the light that shines within it can be understood as the illumination which wholeness brings.⁸⁷ Enlightenment is an increase of consciousness. The temple of Zosimos appears in later alchemy as the *domus thesaurorum* or *gazophylacium* (treasure-house).⁸⁸

¹¹³ Although the shining white "monolith" undoubtedly stands for the stone, it clearly signifies at the same time the Hermetic vessel. The *Rosarium* says: "One is the stone, one the medicine, one the vessel, one the procedure, and one the disposition."⁸⁹ The scholia to the "Tractatus aureus Hermetis" put it even more plainly: "Let all be one in one circle or vessel."⁹⁰ Michael Maier ascribes to Maria the Jewess ("sister of Moses") the view that the whole secret of the art lay in knowledge of the Hermetic vessel. It was divine, and had been hidden from man by the wisdom of the Lord.⁹¹ *Aurora consurgens* II ⁹² says that the natural vessel is the *aqua permanens* and the "vinegar of the philosophers," which obviously means that it is the arcane substance itself. We should understand the "Practica Mariae" ⁹³ in this sense when it says that the Hermetic vessel is "the measure of your fire" and that it had been "hidden by the Stoics";⁹⁴ it is the "toxic body" which transforms Mercurius and is therefore the water of the philosophers.⁹⁵ As the arcane substance the vessel is not only water but also fire, as the "Allegoriae sapientum" makes clear: "Thus our stone, that is the flask of fire, is created from fire."⁹⁶ We can therefore understand why Mylius⁹⁷ calls the vessel the "root and principle of our art." Laurentius

⁸⁷ The shining of the vessel is often mentioned, as in "Allegoriae super librum Turbae" (*Art. aurif.*, I, p. 143): "... until you see the vessel gleam and shine like a jacinth."

⁸⁸ *Ars chemica*, p. 9.

⁸⁹ 1550 edn., fol. A III.

⁹⁰ *Bibl. chem.*, I, p. 442.

⁹¹ *Symb. aur. mens.*, p. 63.

⁹² *Art. aurif.*, I, p. 203.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 323.

⁹⁴ The "Stoics" are also mentioned in "Liber quattorum," *Theatr. chem.*, V (1660), p. 128.

⁹⁵ Hoghelande, "De difficult. alch.," *Theatr. chem.*, I (1659), p. 177.

⁹⁶ *Theatr. chem.*, V (1660), p. 60.

⁹⁷ *Phil. ref.*, p. 32.

Ventura⁹⁸ calls it "Luna," the *foemina alba* and mother of the stone. The vessel that is "not dissolved by water and not melted by fire" is, according to the "Liber quartorum,"⁹⁹ "like the work of God in the vessel of the divine seed (*germinis divi*), for it has received the clay, moulded it, and mixed it with water and fire." This is an allusion to the creation of man, but on the other hand it seems to refer to the creation of souls, since immediately afterwards the text speaks of the production of souls from the "seeds of heaven." In order to catch the soul God created the *vas cerebri*, the cranium. Here the symbolism of the vessel coincides with that of the head, which I have discussed in my "Transformation Symbolism in the Mass."¹⁰⁰

¹¹⁴ The prima materia, as the radical moisture, has to do with the soul because the latter is also moist by nature¹⁰¹ and is sometimes symbolized by dew.¹⁰² In this way the symbol of the vessel gets transferred to the soul. There is an excellent example of this in Caesarius of Heisterbach:¹⁰³ the soul is a spiritual substance of spherical nature, like the globe of the moon, or like a glass vessel that is "furnished before and behind with eyes" and "sees the whole universe." This recalls the many-eyed dragon of alchemy and the snake vision of Ignatius Loyola.¹⁰⁴ In this connection the remark of Mylius¹⁰⁵ that the vessel causes "the whole firmament to rotate in its course" is of special interest because, as I have shown, the symbolism of the starry heaven coincides with the motif of polyophtalmia.¹⁰⁶

¹¹⁵ After all this we should be able to understand Dorn's view that the vessel must be made "by a kind of squaring of the circle."¹⁰⁷ It is essentially a psychic operation, the creation of an

⁹⁸ *Theatr. chem.*, II (1659), p. 246.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, V (1660), p. 132.

¹⁰⁰ Pp. 239ff.

¹⁰¹ The moisture is "retentive of souls" ("Lib. quart.", *Theatr. chem.*, V, 1660, p. 132).

¹⁰² Cf. the descent of the soul in my "Psychology of the Transference," pars. 483 and 497.

¹⁰³ *Dialogus miraculorum*, Dist. IV, ch. xxxix (Eng. edn., p. 42).

¹⁰⁴ Cf. my "On the Nature of the Psyche," p. 198.

¹⁰⁵ *Phil. ref.*, p. 33.

¹⁰⁶ "On the Nature of the Psyche," pp. 198f.

¹⁰⁷ *Theatr. chem.*, I (1659), pp. 506f.: "Our vessel . . . should be made according to true geometrical proportion and measure, and by a kind of squaring of the circle."

inner readiness to accept the archetype of the self in whatever subjective form it appears. Dorn calls the vessel the *vas pellicanicum*, and says that with its help the quinta essentia can be extracted from the prima materia.¹⁰⁸ The anonymous author of the scholia to the "Tractatus aureus Hermetis" says: "This vessel is the true philosophical Pelican, and there is none other to be sought for in all the world."¹⁰⁹ It is the lapis itself and at the same time contains it; that is to say, the self is its own container. This formulation is borne out by the frequent comparison of the lapis to the egg or to the dragon which devours itself and gives birth to itself.

¹¹⁶ The thought and language of alchemy lean heavily on mysticism: in the Epistle of Barnabas¹¹⁰ Christ's body is called the "vessel of the spirit." Christ himself is the pelican who plucks out his breast feathers for his young.¹¹¹ According to the teachings of Herakleon, the dying man should address the demiurgic powers thus: "I am a vessel more precious than the feminine being who made you. Whereas your mother knew not her own roots, I know of myself, and I know whence I have come, and I call upon the imperishable wisdom which is in the Father."¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 442.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, IV (1659), p. 698. [Cf. *infra*, Fig. B7.]

¹¹⁰ Lake, *Apostolic Fathers*, I, p. 383.

¹¹¹ Honorius of Autun, *Speculum de myst. eccl.* (Migne, P.L., vol. 172, col. 936). Christ's tearing of the breast, the wound in his side, and his martyr's death are parallels of the alchemical *mortificatio*, dismemberment, flaying, etc., and pertain like these to the birth and revelation of the inner man. Cf. the report in Hippolytus (*Elenchos*, V, 9, 1-6) of the Phrygian system. The Phrygians taught that the Father of all things was called Amygdalos (almond-tree), was pre-existent, and bore in himself the "perfect fruit pulsating and stirring in the depths." He "tore his breast and gave birth to his invisible, nameless and unnameable child." That was the "Invisible One, through whom all things were made, and without whom nothing was made" (an allusion to John 1:3). He was "Syriktes, the piper," i.e., the wind (pneuma). He was "thousand-eyed, not to be comprehended," the Word (*ῥῆμα*) of God, the Word of annunciation and great power." He was "hidden in the dwelling where the roots of all things are established." He was the "Kingdom of Heaven, the grain of mustard-seed, the indivisible point . . . which none know save the spiritual alone." (Cf. Legge trans., *Philosophumena*, I, pp. 140f.)

¹¹² Herakleon taught that the Ground of the world was a Primordial Man named Bythos (depths of the sea), who was neither male nor female. From this being was produced the inner man, his counterpart, who "came down from the Pleroma on high."

and is the Mother of your mother, which has no mother, but also has no male companion." ¹¹³

¹¹⁷ In the abstruse symbolism of alchemy we hear a distant echo of this kind of thinking, which, without hope of further development, was doomed to destruction under the censorship of the Church. But we also find in it a groping towards the future, a premonition of the time when the projection would be taken back into man, from whom it had arisen in the first place. It is interesting to see the strangely clumsy ways in which this tendency seeks to express itself in the phantasmagoria of alchemical symbolism. The following instructions are given in Johannes de Rupescissa: "Cause a vessel to be made in the fashion of a Cherub, which is the face of God, and let it have six wings, like to six arms folding back upon themselves; and above, a round head. . . ." ¹¹⁴ From this it appears that although the ideal distilling vessel should resemble some monstrous kind of deity, it nevertheless had an approximately human shape. Rupescissa calls the quintessence the "ciel humain" and says it is "comme le ciel et les étoiles." The Book of El-Habib ¹¹⁵ says: "Man's head likewise resembles a condensing apparatus." Speaking of the four keys for unlocking the treasure-house, the "Consilium coniugii" ¹¹⁶ explains that one of them is "the ascent of the water through the neck to the head of the vessel, that is like a living man." There is a similar idea in the "Liber quatorum": "The vessel . . . must be round in shape, that the artifex may be the transformer of the firmament and the brain-pan, just as the thing which we need is a simple thing." ¹¹⁷ These ideas go back to the head symbolism in Zosimos, but at the same time they are an intimation that the transformation takes place in the head and is a psychic process. This realization was not something that

¹¹³ Epiphanius, *Panarium* (ed. Holl), II, pp. 46f.

¹¹⁴ *La Vertu et propriété de la quinte essence*, p. 26.

¹¹⁵ Berthelot, *Moyen âge*, III, p. 80.

¹¹⁶ *Ars chemica*, p. 110.

¹¹⁷ *Theatr. chem.*, V (1660), p. 134. The *res simplex* refers, ultimately, to God. It is "insensible." The soul is simple, and the "opus is not perfected unless the matter is turned into the simple" (p. 116). "The understanding is the simple soul," and "knows also what is higher than it, and the One God surrounds it, whose nature it cannot comprehend" (p. 129). "That from which things have their being is the invisible and immoveable God, by whose will the understanding is created" (p. 129).

was clumsily disguised afterwards; the laborious way in which it was formulated proves how obstinately it was projected into matter. Psychological knowledge through withdrawal of projections seems to have been an extremely difficult affair from the very beginning.

¹¹⁸ The dragon, or serpent, represents the initial state of unconsciousness, for this animal loves, as the alchemists say, to dwell "in caverns and dark places." Unconsciousness has to be sacrificed; only then can one find the entrance into the head, and the way to conscious knowledge and understanding. Once again the universal struggle of the hero with the dragon is enacted, and each time at its victorious conclusion the sun rises: consciousness dawns, and it is perceived that the transformation process is taking place inside the temple, that is, in the head. It is in truth the inner man, presented here as a homunculus, who passes through the stages that transform the copper into silver and the silver into gold, and who thus undergoes a gradual enhancement of value.

¹¹⁹ It sounds very strange to modern ears that the inner man and his spiritual growth should be symbolized by metals. But the historical facts cannot be doubted, nor is the idea peculiar to alchemy. It is said, for instance, that after Zarathustra had received the drink of omniscience from Ahuramazda, he beheld in a dream a tree with four branches of gold, silver, steel, and mixed iron. ¹¹⁸ This tree corresponds to the metallic tree of alchemy, the *arbor philosophica*, which, if it has any meaning at all, symbolizes spiritual growth and the highest illumination. Cold, inert metal certainly seems to be the direct opposite of spirit—but what if the spirit is as dead and as heavy as lead? A dream might then easily tell us to look for it in lead or quicksilver! It seems that nature is out to prod man's consciousness towards greater expansion and greater clarity, and for this reason continually exploits his greed for metals, especially the precious ones, and makes him seek them out and investigate their properties. While so engaged it may perhaps dawn on him that not only veins of ore are to be found in the mines, but also kobolds and little metal men, and that there may be hidden in lead either a deadly demon or the dove of the Holy Ghost. ¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Reitzenstein and Schaeder, *Studien zum antiken Synkretismus aus Iran und Griechenland*, p. 45. ¹¹⁹ [Cf. *Psychology and Alchemy*, par. 443.]

It is evident that some alchemists passed through this process of realization to the point where only a thin wall separated them from psychological self-awareness. Christian Rosencreutz is still this side of the dividing line, but with *Faust* Goethe came out on the other side and was able to describe the psychological problem which arises when the inner man, or greater personality that before had lain hidden in the homunculus, emerges into the light of consciousness and confronts the erstwhile ego, the animal man. More than once Faust had inklings of the metallic coldness of Mephistopheles, who had first circled round him in the shape of a dog (uroboros motif). Faust used him as a familiar spirit and finally got rid of him by means of the motif of the cheated devil; but all the same he claimed the credit for the fame Mephistopheles brought him as well as for the power to work magic. Goethe's solution of the problem was still medieval, but it nevertheless reflected a psychic attitude that could get on without the protection of the Church. That was not the case with Rosencreutz: he was wise enough to stay outside the magic circle, living as he did within the confines of tradition. Goethe was more modern and therefore more incautious. He never really understood how dreadful was the Walpurgisnacht of the mind against which Christian dogma offered protection, even though his own masterpiece spread out this underworld before his eyes in two versions. But then, an extraordinary number of things can happen to a poet without having serious consequences. These appeared with a vengeance only a hundred years later. The psychology of the unconscious has to reckon with long periods of time like this, for it is concerned less with the ephemeral personality than with age-old processes, compared with which the individual is no more than the passing blossom and fruit of the rhizome underground.

3. THE PERSONIFICATIONS

121 What I have taken as a résumé, namely the piece we have been discussing, Zosimos calls a *προοίμιον*, an introduction.¹ It is therefore not a dream-vision; Zosimos is speaking here in the conscious language of his art, and expresses himself in terms that are obviously familiar to his reader. The dragon, its sacrifice

¹ [Supra, par. 87 (III, i, 6).]

and dismemberment, the temple built of a single stone, the miracle of goldmaking, the transmutation of the anthroparia, are all current conceptions in the alchemy of his day. That is why this piece seems to us a conscious allegory, contrasting with the authentic visions, which treat the theme of transmutation in an unorthodox and original way, just as a dream might do. The abstract spirits of the metals are pictured here as suffering human beings; the whole process becomes like a mystic initiation and has been very considerably psychologized. But Zosimos' consciousness is still so much under the spell of the projection that he can see in the vision nothing more than the "composition of the waters." One sees how in those days consciousness turned away from the mystic process and fastened its attention upon the material one, and how the projection drew the mind towards the physical. For the physical world had not yet been discovered. Had Zosimos recognized the projection, he would have fallen back into the fog of mystic speculation, and the development of the scientific spirit would have been delayed for an even longer time. For us, matters are different. It is just the mystic content of his visions that is of special importance for us, because we are familiar enough with the chemical processes which Zosimos was out to investigate. We are therefore in a position to separate them from the projection and to recognize the psychic element they contain. The résumé also offers us a standard of comparison which enables us to discern the difference between its style of exposition and that of the visions. This difference supports our assumption that the visions are more like a dream than an allegory, though there is little possibility of our reconstructing the dream from the defective text that has come down to us.

122 The representation of the "alchemystical" process by persons needs a little explanation. The personification of lifeless things is a remnant of primitive and archaic psychology. It is caused by unconscious identity,² or what Lévy-Bruhl called *participation mystique*. The unconscious identity, in turn, is caused by the projection of unconscious contents into an object, so that these contents then become accessible to consciousness as qualities apparently belonging to the object. Any object that is at all interesting provokes a considerable number of projections. The difference between primitive and modern psychology in this

² Cf. *Psychological Types*, Def. 25.

respect is in the first place qualitative, and in the second place one of degree. Consciousness develops in civilized man by the acquisition of knowledge and by the withdrawal of projections. These are recognized as psychic contents and are reintegrated with the psyche. The alchemists concretized or personified practically all their most important ideas—the four elements, the vessel, the stone, the prima materia, the tincture, etc. The idea of man as a microcosm, representing in all his parts the earth or the universe,³ is a remnant of an original psychic identity which reflected a twilight state of consciousness. An alchemical text⁴ expresses this as follows:

Man is to be esteemed a little world, and in all respects he is to be compared to a world. The bones under his skin are likened to mountains, for by them is the body strengthened; even as the earth is by rocks, and the flesh is taken for earth, and the great blood vessels for great rivers, and the little ones for small streams that pour into the great rivers. The bladder is the sea, wherein the great as well as the small streams congregate. The hair is compared to sprouting herbs, the nails on the hands and feet, and whatever else may be discovered inside and outside a man, all according to its kind is compared to the world.

- ¹²³ Alchemical projections are only a special instance of the mode of thinking typified by the idea of the microcosm. Here is another example of personification:⁵

Now mark further Best Beloved / how you should do / you should go to the house / there you will find two doors / that are shut / you should stand a while before them / until one comes / and opens the door / and goes out to you / that will be a Yellow Man / and is not pretty to look upon / but you should not fear him / because he is unshapely / but he is sweet of word / and will ask you / my dear what seekest thou here / when truly I have long seen no man / so near this house / then you should answer him / I have come here and seek the Lapidem Philosophorum / the same Yellow Man will answer you and speak thus / my dear friend since you now have

³ Cf. the medieval *melothesia*. [For a definition, see "Psychology and Religion," p. 67, n. 5.—EDITORS.]

⁴ "Gloria mundi," *Mus. herm.*, p. 270.

⁵ "Ein Philosophisches Werck und Gespräch, von dem Gelben und Rotten Mann Reverendissimi Domini Melchioris Cardinalis et Episcopi Brixienensis," reprinted in *Aureum vellus*, pp. 177f. After the Red Man he finds the Black Raven, and from this comes the White Dove.

come so far / I will show you further / you should go into the house / until you come to a running fountain / and then go on a little while / and there will come to you a Red Man / he is Fiery Red and has Red eyes / you should not fear him on account of his ugliness / for he is gentle of word / and he also will ask you / my dear friend / what is your desire here / when to me you are a strange guest / and you should answer him / I seek the Lapidem Philosophorum. . . .

- ¹²⁴ Personifications of metals are especially common in the folktales of imps and goblins, who were often seen in the mines.⁶ We meet the metal men several times in Zosimos,⁷ also a brazen eagle.⁸ The "white man" appears in Latin alchemy: "Accipe illum album hominem de vase." He is the product of the conjunction of the bridegroom and bride,⁹ and belongs to the same context of thought as the oft-cited "white woman" and "red slave," who are synonymous with Beya and Gabricus in the "Visio Arislei." These two figures seem to have been taken over by Chaucer:¹⁰

The statue of Mars upon a carte stood,
Armed, and looked grym as he were wood;
And over his heed ther shynen two figures
Of sterres, that been cleped in scriptures,
That oon Puella, that oother Rubeus.

- ¹²⁵ Nothing would have been easier than to equate the love story of Mars and Venus with that of Gabricus and Beya (who were also personified as dog and bitch), and it is likely that astrological influences also played a part. Thanks to his unconscious identity with it, man and cosmos interact. The following passage, of the utmost importance for the psychology of alchemy, should be understood in this sense: "And as man is composed of the four elements, so also is the stone, and so it is [dug] out of man, and you are its ore, namely by working; and from you it is extracted, namely by division; and in you it remains inseparably,

⁶ Cf. the interesting examples in Agricola, *De animantibus subterraneis*, and Kircher, *Mundus subterraneus*, lib. VIII, cap. IV.

⁷ *Alch. greccs*, III, xxxv.

⁸ *Ibid.*, III, xxix, 18f.

⁹ "Aenigma" VI, in *Art. aurif.*, I, p. 151.

¹⁰ *The Canterbury Tales* (ed. Robinson), p. 43 (The Knight's Tale, 2041-45).

namely through the science."¹¹ Not only do things appear personified as human beings, but the macrocosm personifies itself as a man too. "The whole of nature converges in man as in a centre, and one participates in the other, and man has not unjustly concluded that the material of the philosophical stone may be found everywhere."¹² The "Consilium coniugii"¹³ says: "Four are the natures which compose the philosophical man." "The elements of the stone are four, which, when well proportioned to one another, constitute the philosophical man, that is, the perfect human elixir." "They say that the stone is a man, because one cannot attain to it¹⁴ save by reason and human knowledge." The above statement "you are its ore" has a parallel in the treatise of Komarios:¹⁵ "In thee [Cleopatra] is hidden the whole terrible and marvellous secret." The same is said of the "bodies" (σώματα, i.e., 'substances'): "In them the whole secret is concealed."¹⁶

4. THE STONE SYMBOLISM

¹²⁶ Zosimos contrasts the body (σάρξ in the sense of 'flesh') with the spiritual man (πνευματικός).¹ The distinguishing mark of the spiritual man is that he seeks self-knowledge and knowledge of God.² The earthly, fleshly man is called Thoth or Adam. He bears within him the spiritual man, whose name is light (φῶς). This first man, Thoth-Adam, is symbolized by the four elements. The spiritual and the fleshly man are also named Prometheus and Epimetheus. But "in allegorical language" they "are but one man, namely soul and body." The spiritual man was seduced into putting on the body, and was bound to it by "Pandora,

¹¹ "Rosinus ad Sarrat.," *Art. aurif.*, I, p. 311.

¹² "Orthelii epilogus," *Theatr. chem.*, VI (1661), p. 438.

¹³ *Ars chemica*, pp. 247, 253, 254.

¹⁴ The text has "ad Deum" (instead of "ad eum"), which is meaningless. Statements like "our body is our Stone" ("Authoris ignoti opusculum," *Art. aurif.*, I, p. 392) are doubtful, because "corpus nostrum" can just as well mean the arcane substance.

¹⁵ *Alch. grecs*, IV, xx, 8.

¹⁶ IV, xx, 16.

¹ III, xlix, 4.

² The importance of self-knowledge is stressed in the alchemical texts. Cf. *Aion*, pp. 162ff.

whom the Hebrews call Eve."³ She played the part, therefore, of the anima, who functions as the link between body and spirit, just as Shakti or Maya entangles man's consciousness with the world. In the "Book of Krates" the spiritual man says: "Are you capable of knowing your soul completely? If you knew it as you should, and if you knew what could make it better, you would be capable of knowing that the names which the philosophers gave it of old are not its true names."⁴ This last sentence is a standing phrase which is applied to the names of the lapis. The lapis signifies the inner man, the ἄνθρωπος πνευματικός, the *natura abscondita* which the alchemists sought to set free. In this sense the *Aurora consurgens* says that through baptism by fire "man, who before was dead, is made a living soul."⁵

¹²⁷ The attributes of the stone—incorruptibility, permanence, divinity, triunity, etc.—are so insistently emphasized that one cannot help taking it as the *deus absconditus* in matter. This is probably the basis of the lapis-Christ parallel, which occurs as early as Zosimos⁶ (unless the passage in question is a later interpolation). Inasmuch as Christ put on a "human body capable of suffering" and clothed himself in matter, he forms a parallel to the lapis, the corporeality of which is constantly stressed. Its ubiquity corresponds to the omnipresence of Christ. Its "cheapness," however, goes against the doctrinal view. The divinity of Christ has nothing to do with man, but the healing stone is "extracted" from man, and every man is its potential carrier and creator. It is not difficult to see what kind of conscious situation the lapis philosophy compensates: far from *signifying* Christ, the lapis *complements* the common conception of the Christ figure at that time.⁷ What unconscious nature was ultimately aiming at when she produced the image of the lapis can be seen most clearly in the notion that it originated in matter and in man, that it was to be found everywhere, and that its fabrication lay at least potentially within man's reach. These qualities all reveal what were felt to be the defects in the Christ image at that time: an air too rarefied for human needs, too great a remoteness, a

³ For a translation of the entire text, see *Psychology and Alchemy*, par. 456.

⁴ Berthelot, *Moyen âge*, III, p. 50.

⁵ Cf. *Aurora Consurgens* (ed. M.-L. von Franz), p. 87.

⁶ *Alch. grecs*, III, xlix, 4.

⁷ Cf. *infra*, "The Spirit Mercurius," pars. 289ff.

place left vacant in the human heart. Men felt the absence of the "inner" Christ who belonged to every man. Christ's spirituality was too high and man's naturalness was too low. In the image of Mercurius and the lapis the "flesh" glorified itself in its own way; it would not transform itself into spirit but, on the contrary, "fixed" the spirit in stone, and endowed the stone with all the attributes of the three Persons. The lapis may therefore be understood as a symbol of the inner Christ, of God in man. I use the expression "symbol" on purpose, for though the lapis is a parallel of Christ, it is not meant to replace him. On the contrary, in the course of the centuries the alchemists tended more and more to regard the lapis as the culmination of Christ's work of redemption. This was an attempt to assimilate the Christ figure into the philosophy of the "science of God." In the sixteenth century Khunrath formulated for the first time the "theological" position of the lapis: it was the *filius macrocosmi* as opposed to the "son of man," who was the *filius microcosmi*. This image of the "Son of the Great World" tells us from what source it was derived: it came not from the conscious mind of the individual man, but from those border regions of the psyche that open out into the mystery of cosmic matter. Correctly recognizing the spiritual one-sidedness of the Christ image, theological speculation had begun very early to concern itself with Christ's body, that is, with his materiality, and had temporarily solved the problem with the hypothesis of the resurrected body. But because this was only a provisional and therefore not an entirely satisfactory answer, the problem logically presented itself again in the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, leading first to the dogma of the Immaculate Conception and finally to that of the Assumption. Though this only postpones the real answer, the way to it is nevertheless prepared. The assumption and coronation of Mary, as depicted in the medieval illustrations, add a fourth, feminine principle to the masculine Trinity. The result is a quaternity, which forms a real and not merely postulated symbol of totality. The totality of the Trinity is a mere postulate, for outside it stands the autonomous and eternal adversary with his choirs of fallen angels and the denizens of hell. Natural symbols of totality such as occur in our dreams and visions, and in the East take the form of mandalas, are quaternities or multiples of four, or else squared circles.

The accentuation of matter is above all evident in the choice of the *stone* as a God-image. We meet this symbol in the very earliest Greek alchemy, but there are good reasons for thinking that the stone symbol is very much older than its alchemical usage. The stone as the birthplace of the gods (e.g., the birth of Mithras from a stone) is attested by primitive legends of stone-births which go back to ideas that are even more ancient—for instance, the view of the Australian aborigines that children's souls live in a special stone called the "child-stone." They can be made to migrate into a uterus by rubbing the "child-stone" with a *churinga*. *Churingas* may be boulders, or oblong stones artificially shaped and decorated, or oblong, flattened pieces of wood ornamented in the same way. They are used as cult instruments. The Australians and the Melanesians maintain that *churingas* come from the totem ancestor, that they are relics of his body or of his activity, and are full of *arunquitha* or mana. They are united with the ancestor's soul and with the spirits of all those who afterwards possess them. They are taboo, are buried in caches or hidden in clefts in the rocks. In order to "charge" them, they are buried among the graves so that they can soak up the mana of the dead. They promote the growth of field-produce, increase the fertility of men and animals, heal wounds, and cure sicknesses of the body and the soul. Thus, when a man's vitals are all knotted up with emotion, the Australian aborigines give him a blow in the abdomen with a stone *churinga*.⁸ The *churingas* used for ceremonial purposes are daubed with red ochre, anointed with fat, bedded or wrapped in leaves, and copiously spat on (spittle = mana).⁹

These ideas of magic stones are found not only in Australia and Melanesia but also in India and Burma, and in Europe itself. For example, the madness of Orestes was cured by a stone in Laconia.¹⁰ Zeus found respite from the sorrows of love by sitting on a stone in Leukadia. In India, a young man will tread upon a stone in order to obtain firmness of character, and a bride will do the same to ensure her own faithfulness. According

⁸ Spencer and Gillen, *The Northern Tribes of Central Australia*, pp. 257ff.

⁹ Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, XI, p. 874b, and Frazer, *Magic Art*, I, pp. 160ff. Similar ochre-painted stones can still be seen in India today, for instance in the Kalighat at Calcutta.

¹⁰ Pausanias, *Descriptio Graeciae* (ed. Spiro), I, p. 300.

to Saxo Grammaticus, the electors of the king stood on stones in order to give their vote permanence.¹¹ The green stone of Arran was used both for healing and for taking oaths on.¹² A cache of "soul stones," similar to *churingas*, was found in a cave on the river Birs near Basel, and during recent excavations of the pole-dwellings on the little lake at Burgaesch, in Canton Solothurn, a group of boulders was discovered wrapped in the bark of birch trees. This very ancient conception of the magical power of stones led on a higher level of culture to the similar importance attached to gems, to which all kinds of magical and medicinal properties were attributed. The gems that are the most famous in history are even supposed to have been responsible for the tragedies that befell their owners.

¹³⁰ A myth of the Navaho Indians of Arizona gives a particularly graphic account of the primitive fantasies that cluster round the stone.¹³ In the days of the great darkness,¹⁴ the ancestors of the hero saw the Sky Father descending and the Earth Mother rising up to meet him. They united, and on the top of the mountain where the union took place the ancestors found a little figure made of turquoise.¹⁵ This turned into (or in another version gave birth to) Estsanatlehi, "the woman who rejuvenates or transforms herself." She was the mother of the twin gods who slew the primordial monsters, and was called the mother or grandmother of the gods (*yéi*). Estsanatlehi is the most important figure in the matriarchal pantheon of the Navaho. Not only is she the "woman who transforms herself," but she also has two shapes, for her twin sister, Yolkaestsan, is endowed with similar powers. Estsanatlehi is immortal, for though she grows into a withered old woman she rises up again as a young girl—a true Dea Natura. From different parts of her body four daughters were born to her, and a fifth from her spirit. The sun came from the turquoise beads hidden in her right breast, and from white shell beads in her left breast the moon. She issues reborn by roll-

¹¹ So did the archons in Athens when taking their oath.

¹² Frazer, *Magic Art*, I, p. 161.

¹³ Schevill, *Beautiful on the Earth*, pp. 24ff. and 38ff.

¹⁴ For the Australian aborigines, this would be the primeval *alcheringa* time, which means both the world of the ancestors and the world of dreams.

¹⁵ Cf. the treatise of Komarios (Berthelot, *Alch. grees*, IV, xx, 2): "Go up into the highest cave on the thick-wooded mountain, and behold there a stone on the mountain top. And take from the stone the male. . . ."

ing a piece of skin from under her left breast. She lives in the west, on an island in the sea. Her lover is the wild and cruel Sun Bearer, who has another wife; but he has to stay at home with her only when it rains. The turquoise goddess is so sacred that no image may be made of her, and even the gods may not look on her face. When her twin sons asked her who their father was, she gave them a wrong answer, evidently to protect them from the dangerous fate of the hero.

This matriarchal goddess is obviously an anima figure who at the same time symbolizes the self. Hence her stone-nature, her immortality, her four daughters born from the body, plus one from the spirit, her duality as sun and moon, her role as paramour, and her ability to change her shape.¹⁶ The self of a man living in a matriarchal society is still immersed in his unconscious femininity, as can be observed even today in all cases of masculine mother-complexes. But the turquoise goddess also exemplifies the psychology of the matriarchal woman, who, as an anima figure, attracts the mother-complexes of all the men in her vicinity and robs them of their independence, just as Omphale held Herakles in thrall, or Circe reduced her captives to a state of bestial unconsciousness—not to mention Benoit's Atlantida, who made a collection of her mummified lovers. All this happens because the anima contains the secret of the precious stone, for, as Nietzsche says, "all joy wants eternity." Thus the legendary Ostanos, speaking of the secret of the "philosophy," says to his pupil Cleopatra: "In you is hidden the whole terrible and marvellous secret. . . . Make known to us how the highest descends to the lowest, and how the lowest ascends to the highest, and how the midmost draws near to the highest, and is made one with it." ¹⁷ This "midmost" is the stone, the mediator which unites the opposites. Such sayings have no meaning unless they are understood in a profoundly psychological sense.

¹³² Widespread as is the motif of the stone-birth (cf. the creation myth of Deucalion and Pyrrha), the American cycle of legends seems to lay special emphasis on the motif of the stone-body, or animated stone.¹⁸ We meet this motif in the Iroquois tale of the twin brothers. Begotten in a miraculous manner in

¹⁶ Cf. Rider Haggard's *She*.

¹⁷ *Alch. grees*, IV, xx, 8.

¹⁸ I am indebted to Dr. M.-L. von Franz for this material.

the body of a virgin, a pair of twins were born, one of whom came forth in the normal way, while the other sought an abnormal exit and emerged from the armpit, thereby killing his mother. This twin had a body made of flint. He was wicked and cruel, unlike his normally born brother.¹⁹ In the Sioux version the mother was a tortoise. Among the Wichita, the saviour was the great star in the south, and he performed his work of salvation on earth as the "flint man." His son was called the "young flint." After completing their work, both of them went back into the sky.²⁰ In this myth, just as in medieval alchemy, the saviour coincides with the stone, the star, the "son," who is "super omnia lumina." The culture hero of the Natchez Indians came down to earth from the sun, and shone with unendurable brightness. His glance was death-dealing. In order to mitigate this, and to prevent his body from corrupting in the earth, he changed himself into a stone statue, from which the priestly chieftains of the Natchez were descended.²¹ Among the Taos Pueblos, a virgin was made pregnant by beautiful stones and bore a hero son,²² who, owing to Spanish influence, assumed the aspect of the Christ child.²³ The stone plays a similar role in the Aztec cycle of legends. For instance, the mother of Quetzalcoatl was made pregnant by a precious green stone.²⁴ He himself had the cognomen "priest of the precious stone" and wore a mask made of turquoise.²⁵ The precious green stone was an animating principle and was placed in the mouth of the dead.²⁶ Man's original home was the "bowl of precious stone."²⁷ The motif of transformation into stone, or petrification, is common in the Peruvian and Colombian legends and is probably connected with a megalithic stone-cult,²⁸ and perhaps also with the palaeolithic cult of *churinga*-like soul-stones. The parallels here would be the menhirs of megalithic culture, which reached as far as the

¹⁹ Krickeberg, *Indianermärchen aus Nordamerika*, pp. 92ff.

²⁰ Van Deursen, *Der Heilbringer*, p. 227.

²¹ Ibid., p. 238.

²² Cf. the fertility significance of the *churingas*.

²³ Van Deursen, p. 286.

²⁴ Krickeberg, *Märchen der Azteken, Inka, Maya und Muiska*, p. 36.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 65.

²⁶ P. 330.

²⁷ P. 317.

²⁸ P. 382.

Pacific archipelago. The civilization of the Nile valley, which originated in megalithic times, turned its divine kings into stone statues for the express purpose of making the king's *ka* everlasting. In shamanism, much importance is attached to crystals, which play the part of ministering spirits.²⁹ They come from the crystal throne of the supreme being or from the vault of the sky. They show what is going on in the world and what is happening to the souls of the sick, and they also give man the power to fly.³⁰

³³ The connection of the lapis with immortality is attested from very early times. Ostanos (possibly 4th cent. B.C.) speaks of "the Nile stone that has a spirit."³¹ The lapis is the panacea, the universal medicine, the alexipharmic, the tincture that transmutes base metals into gold and gravel into precious stones. It brings riches, power, and health; it cures melancholy and, as the *vivus lapis philosophicus*, is a symbol of the saviour, the Anthropos, and immortality. Its incorruptibility is also shown in the ancient idea that the body of a saint becomes stone. Thus the Apocalypse of Elijah says of those who escape persecution by the Anti-Messiah:³² "The Lord shall take unto him their spirit and their souls, their flesh shall be made stone, no wild beast shall devour them till the last day of the great judgment." In a Basuto legend reported by Frobenius,³³ the hero is left stranded by his pursuers on the bank of a river. He changes himself into a stone, and his pursuers throw him across to the other side. This is the motif of the *transitus*: the "other side" is the same as eternity.

5. THE WATER SYMBOLISM

³⁴ Psychological research has shown that the historical or ethnological symbols are identical with those spontaneously produced by the unconscious, and that the lapis represents the idea of a transcendent totality which coincides with what analytical psychology calls the self. From this point of view we can understand without difficulty the apparently absurd statement of the

²⁹ Eliade, *Shamanism*, p. 52.

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 363f.

³¹ *Alch. grecs*, III, vi, 5, 12ff.

³² Steindorff, *Apokalypse des Elias*, 36, 17-37, 1, p. 97.

³³ *Das Zeitalter des Sonnengottes*, p. 106.

alchemists that the lapis consists of body, soul, and spirit, is a living being, a homunculus or "homo." It symbolizes man, or rather, the inner man, and the paradoxical statements about it are really descriptions and definitions of this inner man. Upon this connotation of the lapis is based its parallelism with Christ. Behind the countless ecclesiastical and alchemical metaphors may be found the language of Hellenistic syncretism, which was originally common to both. Passages like the following one from Priscillian, a Gnostic-Manichaean heretic of the fourth century, must have been extremely suggestive for the alchemists: "One-horned is God, Christ a rock to us, Jesus a cornerstone, Christ the man of men"¹—unless the matter was the other way round, and metaphors taken from natural philosophy found their way into the language of the Church via the Gospel of St. John.

¹³⁵ The principle that is personified in the visions of Zosimos is the wonder-working water, which is both water and spirit, and kills and vivifies. If Zosimos, waking from his dream, immediately thinks of the "composition of the waters," this is the obvious conclusion from the alchemical point of view. Since the long-sought water, as we have shown,² represents a cycle of birth and death, every process that consists of death and rebirth is naturally a symbol of the divine water.

¹³⁶ It is conceivable that we have in Zosimos a parallel with the Nicodemus dialogue in John 3. At the time when John's gospel was written, the idea of the divine water was familiar to every alchemist. When Jesus said: "Except a man be born of water and of the spirit . . .," an alchemist of that time would at once have understood what he meant. Jesus marvelled at the ignorance of Nicodemus and asked him: "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?" He obviously took it for granted that a teacher (διδάσκαλος) would know the secret of water and spirit, that is, of death and rebirth. Whereupon he went on to utter a saying which is echoed many times in the alchemical treatises: "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." Not that the alchemists actually cited this passage, but they thought in a similar way. They talk as if they had touched the arcanum or gift of the Holy Spirit with their own hands,

¹ Tractatus I, Corp. Script. Eccl. Lat., XVIII, p. 24.

² See supra, par. 105.

and seen the workings of the divine water with their own eyes.³ Even though these statements come from a later period, the spirit of alchemy remained more or less the same from the earliest times to the late Middle Ages.

³⁷ The concluding words of the Nicodemus dialogue, concerning "earthly and heavenly things," had likewise been the common property of alchemy ever since Democritus had written of the "physika and mystika," also called "somata and asomata," "corporalia and spiritualia."⁴ These words of Jesus are immediately followed by the motif of the ascent to heaven and descent to earth.⁵ In alchemy this would be the ascent of the soul from the mortified body and its descent in the form of reanimating dew.⁶ And when, in the next verse, Jesus speaks of the serpent lifted up in the wilderness and equates it with his own self-sacrifice, a "Master" would be bound to think of the uroboros,

³ ". . . which I have seen with my own eyes and touched with my hands" (*Rosarium*, in *Art. aurif.*, II, p. 205).

⁴ It must be remembered, however, that John uses other terms than those found in the alchemy of the time: *τὰ ἐπίγεια* and *τὰ ἐπουράνια* (*terrena* and *coelestia* in the Vulgate).

⁵ The source for this is Hermes Trismegistus in the "Tabula smaragdina": "It ascends from earth to heaven and descends again to earth. . . . The wind hath borne it in his belly." This text was always interpreted as referring to the stone (cf. Hortulanus, "Commentariolum," *Ars chemica*). But the stone comes from the "water." A perfect alchemical parallel to the Christian mystery is the following passage from the "Consilium coniug." (*ibid.*, p. 128): "And if I ascend naked into heaven, then will I come clothed to earth and perfect all minerals. And if we are baptized in the fountain of gold and silver, and the spirit of our body ascends to heaven with the father and the son, and descends again, our souls will revive, and my animal body will remain white." The anonymous author of "Liber de arte chymica" (*Art. aurif.*, I, pp. 612f.) speaks in the same way: "It is certain that the earth cannot ascend, except first the heaven descend, for the earth is said to be raised up to heaven, when, dissolved in its own spirit, it is at last united therewith. I will satisfy thee with this parable: The Son of God descending into the Virgin, and there clothed with flesh, is born as man, who having shown us the way of truth for our salvation, suffered and died for us, and after his resurrection returned into heaven, where the earth, that is mankind, is exalted above all the circles of the world, and is placed in the intellectual heaven of the most holy Trinity. In like manner, when I die, my soul, helped by the grace and the merits of Christ, will return to the fount of life whence it descended. The body returns to earth, and at the last judgment of the world the soul, descending from heaven, will carry it with her, purified, to glory."

⁶ The motif of ascent and descent is based partly on the motion of water as a natural phenomenon (clouds, rain, etc.).

which slays itself and brings itself to life again. This is followed by the motif of "everlasting life" and the panacea (belief in Christ). Indeed, the whole purpose of the opus was to produce the incorruptible body, "the thing that dieth not," the invisible, spiritual stone, or *lapis aethereus*. In the verse, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son . . .," Jesus identifies himself with the healing snake of Moses; for the Monogenes is synonymous with the Nous, and this with the serpent-saviour or Agathodaimon. The serpent is also a synonym for the divine water. The dialogue may be compared with Jesus' words to the woman of Samaria in John 4: 14: ". . . a well of water springing up into everlasting life."⁷ Significantly enough, the conversation by the well forms the context for the teaching that "God is Spirit" (John 4: 24).⁸

¹³⁸ In spite of the not always unintentional obscurity of alchemical language, it is not difficult to see that the divine water or its symbol, the uroboros, means nothing other than the *deus absconditus*, the god hidden in matter, the divine Nous that came down to Physis and was lost in her embrace.⁹ This mystery of the "god become physical" underlies not only classical alchemy but also many other spiritual manifestations of Hellenistic syncretism.¹⁰

⁷ Justin Martyr says: "As a fount of living water from God . . . this Christ gushed forth" (cited in Preuschen, *Antilegomena*, p. 129). Gaudentius (*Sermo XIX*) compares Christ's humanity to water (Migne, *P.L.*, vol. 20, col. 983). Eucherius of Lyons (*Liber formularum spiritalis intelligentiae*) says that Christ "carried up to heaven the flesh he assumed for us" (*ibid.*, vol. 50, col. 734). This idea coincides with the saying in the "Tab. smarag." that the arcanum "ascends from earth to heaven, and descends again to earth, and receives the power of Above and Below."

⁸ "Spirit" in alchemy means anything volatile, all evaporable substances, oxides, etc., but also, as a projected psychic content, a *corpus mysticum* in the sense of a "subtle body." (Cf. Mead, *The Doctrine of the Subtle Body in Western Tradition*.) It is in this sense that the definition of the lapis as a *spiritus humidus et aereus* should be understood. There are also indications that spirit was understood as "mind," which could be refined by "sublimation."

⁹ Cf. the fate of the "man of light" in Zosimos (*Psychology and Alchemy*, par. 456).

¹⁰ In the oldest sources this mystery is expressed in symbolical terms. But from the 13th cent. on there are more and more texts which reveal the mystical side of the arcanum. One of the best examples is the German treatise *Der Wasserstein der Weysen*, "A Chymical Tract, wherein the Way is Shown, the Materia Named, and the Process Described."

6. THE ORIGIN OF THE VISION

¹³⁹ Since alchemy is concerned with a mystery both physical and spiritual, it need come as no surprise that the "composition of the waters" was revealed to Zosimos in a dream. His sleep was the sleep of incubation, his dream "a dream sent by God." The divine water was the alpha and omega of the process, desperately sought for by the alchemists as the goal of their desire. The dream therefore came as a dramatic explanation of the nature of this water. The dramatization sets forth in powerful imagery the violent and agonizing process of transformation which is itself both the producer and the product of the water, and indeed constitutes its very essence. The drama shows how the divine process of change manifests itself to our human understanding and how man experiences it—as punishment, torment,¹ death, and transfiguration. The dreamer describes how a man would act and what he would have to suffer if he were drawn into the cycle of the death and rebirth of the gods, and what effect the *deus absconditus* would have if a mortal man should succeed by his "art" in setting free the "guardian of spirits" from his dark dwelling. There are indications in the literature that this is not without its dangers.²

¹⁴⁰ The mystical side of alchemy, as distinct from its historical aspect, is essentially a psychological problem. To all appearances, it is a concretization, in projected and symbolic form, of the process of individuation. Even today this process produces

¹ The element of torture, so conspicuous in Zosimos, is not uncommon in alchemical literature. "Slay the mother, cutting off her hands and feet" (*"Aenigma"* VI, *Art. aurif.*, I, p. 151). Cf. *Turba*, *Sermones XVIII, XLVII, LXIX*. "Take a man, shave him, and drag him over a stone . . . until his body dies." "Take a cock, pluck it alive, then put its head in a glass vessel" (*"Alleg. sup. lib. Turb."* *Art. aurif.*, I, pp. 139ff.). In medieval alchemy the torturing of the materia was an allegory of Christ's passion (cf. *Der Wasserstein der Weysen*, p. 97).

² "The foundation of this art, for whose sake many have perished" (*Turba*, *Sermo XV*). Zosimos mentions Antimimos, the demon of error (*Alch. grees*, III, xlix, 9). Olympiodorus quotes the saying of Petasios that lead (*prima materia*) was so "shameless and bedevilled" that it drove the adepts mad (*ibid.*, II, iv, 43). The devil caused impatience, doubt, and despair during the work (*Mus. herm.*, p. 461). Hoghelande describes how the devil deceived him and his friend with delusions (*"De difficult. alchem."* *Theatr. chem.*, I, 1659, pp. 152ff.). The dangers that threatened the alchemists were obviously psychic. Cf. *infra*, pars. 429ff.

symbols that have the closest connections with alchemy. On this point I must refer the reader to my earlier works, where I have discussed the question from a psychological angle and illustrated it with practical examples.

- ¹⁴¹ The causes that set such a process in motion may be certain pathological states (for the most part schizophrenic) which produce very similar symbols. But the best and clearest material comes from persons of sound mind who, driven by some kind of spiritual distress, or for religious, philosophical, or psychological reasons, devote particular attention to their unconscious. In the period extending from the Middle Ages back to Roman times, a natural emphasis was laid on the inner man, and since psychological criticism became possible only with the rise of science, the inner factors were able to reach consciousness in the form of projections much more easily than they can today. The following text³ may serve to illustrate the medieval point of view:

For as Christ says in Luke 11: The light of the body is the eye, but if your eye is evil or becomes so, then your body is full of darkness and the light within you becomes darkness. Moreover, in the seventeenth chapter he says also: Behold, the kingdom of God is within you—from which it is clearly seen that knowledge of the light in man must emerge in the first place from within and cannot be placed there from without, and many passages in the Bible bear witness to this, namely, that the external object (as it is usually called), or the sign written to help us in our weakness, is in Matthew 24 merely a testimony of the inner light of grace planted in and imparted to us by God. So, too, the spoken word is to be heeded and considered only as an indication, an aid and a guide to this. To take an example: a white and a black board are placed in front of you and you are asked which is black and which is white. If the knowledge of the two different colours were not previously within you, you would never be able to answer from these mere mute objects or boards the question put to you, since this knowledge does not come from the boards themselves (for they are mute and inanimate), but originates in and flows forth from your innate faculties which you exercise daily. The objects (as stated earlier) indeed stimulate the senses and cause them to apprehend, but in no way do they give knowledge. This must come from within, from the apprehender, and the knowledge of such colours must emerge in

³ *Der Wasserstein der Weysen*, pp. 73ff. [For this translation I am indebted to Dr. R. T. Llewellyn.—TRANSLATOR.]

an act of apprehension. Similarly, when someone asks you for a material and external fire or light from a flint (in which the fire or light is hidden) you cannot put this hidden and secret light into the stone, but rather you must arouse, awaken, and draw forth the hidden fire from the stone and reveal it by means of the requisite steel striker which must be necessarily at hand. And this fire must be caught and vigorously fanned up in good tinder well prepared for this purpose, if it is not to be extinguished and disappear again. Then, afterwards, you will obtain a truly radiant light, shining like fire, and as long as it is tended and preserved, you will be able to create, work, and do with it as you please. And, likewise hidden in man, there exists such a heavenly and divine light which, as previously stated, cannot be placed in man from without, but must emerge from within.

For not in vain and without reason has God bestowed on and given to man in the highest part of his body two eyes and ears in order to indicate that man has to learn and heed within himself a twofold seeing and hearing, an inward and an outward, so that he may judge spiritual things with the inward part and allot spiritual things to the spiritual (I Corinthians 2), but also give to the outward its portion.

- ¹⁴² For Zosimos and those of like mind the divine water was a *corpus mysticum*.⁴ A personalistic psychology will naturally ask: how did Zosimos come to be looking for a *corpus mysticum*? The answer would point to the historical conditions: it was a problem of the times. But in so far as the *corpus mysticum* was conceived by the alchemists to be a gift of the Holy Spirit, it can be understood in a quite general sense as a visible gift of grace conferring redemption. Man's longing for redemption is universal and can therefore have an ulterior, personalistic motive only in exceptional cases, when it is not a genuine phenomenon but an abnormal misuse of it. Hysterical self-deceivers, and ordinary ones too, have at all times understood the art of misusing everything so as to avoid the demands and duties of life, and above all to shirk the duty of confronting themselves. They pretend to be seekers after God in order not to have to face the truth that they are ordinary egoists. In such cases it is well worth asking: Why are you seeking the divine water?

- ¹⁴³ We have no reason to suppose that all the alchemists were

⁴ This term occurs in alchemy, e.g.: "Congeal [the quicksilver] with its mystic body" ("*Consilium coniug.*," *Theatr. chem.*, I, 1659, p. 137).

self-deceivers of this sort. The deeper we penetrate into the obscurities of their thinking, the more we must admit their right to style themselves "philosophers." Throughout the ages, alchemy was one of the great human quests for the unattainable. So, at least, we would describe it if we gave rein to our rationalistic prejudices. But the religious experience of grace is an irrational phenomenon, and cannot be discussed any more than can the "beautiful" or the "good." Since that is so, no serious quest is without hope. It is something instinctive, that cannot be reduced to a personal aetiology any more than can intelligence or musicality or any other inborn propensity. I am therefore of the opinion that our analysis and interpretation have done justice to the vision of Zosimos if we have succeeded in understanding its essential components in the light of how men thought then, and in elucidating the meaning and purpose of its *mise en scène*. When Kékulé had his dream of the dancing pairs and deduced from it the structure of the benzol ring, he accomplished something that Zosimos strove for in vain. His "composition of the waters" did not fall into as neat a pattern as did the carbon and hydrogen atoms of the benzol ring. Alchemy projected an inner, psychic experience into chemical substances that seemed to hold out mysterious possibilities but nevertheless proved refractory to the intentions of the alchemist.

Although chemistry has nothing to learn from the vision of Zosimos, it is a mine of discovery for modern psychology, which would come to a sorry pass if it could not turn to these testimonies of psychic experience from ancient times. Its statements would then be without support, like novelties that cannot be compared with anything, and whose value it is almost impossible to assess. But such documents give the investigator an Archimedean point outside his own narrow field of work, and therewith an invaluable opportunity to find his bearings in the seeming chaos of individual events.