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TEMPERED BY MEMORY: SPENSER AND THE NUMBERS OF THE SELF

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Евгения Панчева. СМЕКЧЕНИ ОТ ПАМЕТТА: СПЕНСЪР И ЧИСЛАТА НА АЗА

Статията разглежда Канто IX от Втора книга на Едмънд-Спенсървата поема *Кралицата на феите* (1590). Анализът предлага прочит на енигматичната Станса 22 в контекста на елизабетинските нумерологични, иконографски и алхимични идеи. В такава перспектива геометричните фигури и цифрите, вписани в Спенсървата архитектура на човешкото, се оказват символно обвързани със Спенсъровото конструиране на умереността, мислена като фин баланс между статичното удържане на аза в неговите рамки и екстатичното трансцендиране на самия себе си.

Ключови думи: Едмънд Спенсър, *Кралицата на Феите*, Втора книга, Канто IX, Станса 22, азът, стазис, екстаз, умереност, памет

Evgenia Pancheva. TEMPERED BY MEMORY: SPENSER AND THE NUMBERS OF THE SELF

The paper discusses Canto IX of Book II of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590). It offers a reading of its enigmatic Stanza 22 through of current Elizabethan numerological, iconographic, and alchemical notions. In such contexts, the geometrical shapes and the numbers underlying the Spenserian architectonic of the human emerge as related to the virtue of temper-

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ance, imagined as a fine balance between the self's static self-containment and its ec-static self transcendence.

Key words: Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, Book Two, Canto IX, Stanza 22, Self, Stasis, Ecstasy, Temperance, Memory

First published in 1590, when Shakespeare was 26, Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* consistently allegorises the inner space of self. Oscillating between the literal narrative of chivalric romance and the various planes of moral, religious, and political allegory, it explicitly posits itself the objective "to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline"². For this purpose, the poem undertakes an anatomy, or, in conformity with the pictorial conventions of the early modern anatomical guidebooks (Sawday 1995), rather a vivisection, of the self's *spiritual* body. Through the mechanisms of shifting allegory, Spenser's text not only holds up monumental models of selfhood, but also, in a painful *psychomachia*, rendered as epic quest, reproduces the dynamic making of self.

Book II of *The Faerie Queene* focuses on Sir Guyon, the Knight of Temperance, whose quest for the eponymous virtue ends in the Bower of Bliss. A site of sensual gratification, the Bower is eventually destroyed by Spenser's Stoic-Protestant hero.

Described by Alistair Fowler as the core canto of Book II, Canto IX offers "an extended allegory of human nature" (Fowler 1964: 9–10). To Jonathan Sawday³, this canto localises human nature at the juncture "where the body and the self conspired to produce a social identity" (Sawday 1995: 162).

Indeed, at first sight, Canto IX seems to unambiguously postulate the rootedness of the self in the body. In the context of Book II's narrative, it implies the necessity for the self's withdrawal, after spiritual tribulation, into its corporeal reality. Parallels with Book I are also revealing: like the House of Celia (the celestial one), the house of Alma-Anima (both soul and nourisher) is a place for the temperate self's recuperation before its final combat with Acrasia, the lawless one.

Canto IX begins with praise of the body as the product of the combined artistry of divine design and a human care of the self:

Of all Gods workes, which do this world adorne,
There is no one more faire and excellent,
Then is mans body both for powre and forme,
Whiles it is kept in sober gouernment... (IX.1.1–4)

² A Letter of The Authors Expounding His Whole Intention [...] to the Right noble, and Valorous, Sir Walter Raleigh knight. Edmund Spenser. *The Faerie Queene*. London: Penguin, 1987, p. 15.

³ All quotations are from the 1987 Penguin edition of *The Faerie Queene*.

If abandoned to the passions, this wonderful piece of divine architecture might deteriorate into the subhuman:

But none then it, more fowle and indecent,
Distempred through misrule and passions bace:
It growes a Monster, and incontinent
Doth loose his dignitie and natiue grace... (IX.1.5–8)

From the outset, Canto IX's construction of the body exemplifies the characteristic early modern anxiety about its orifices:

In order to live, bodies must be porous, must have openings to let in nutritive material and expel waste, yet these openings become the source of enormous anxiety. The moral job of the upright self is to police these necessary thresholds between the outside world and the inner self (Schoenfeldt 1999: 50).

In Spenser, Guyon and his companion have difficulties entering the castle, whose doors are closed tightly with the fall of evening:

They found the gates fast barred long ere night,
And euery loup fast lockt, as fearing foes despight (10.8–9).

Instead of getting a hospitable welcome, Temperance is sent away for reasons of the castle's, and his own, safety, since penetrating the House of Alma might unleash alien invasion:

Fly fly, good knights, (said he) fly fast away
If that your liues ye loue, as meete ye should;
Fly fast, and saue your selues from neare decay,
Here may ye not haue entraunce, though we would:
We would and would againe, if that we could;
ut thousand enemies about vs raue,
And with long siege vs in this castle hould:
Seuen yeares this wize they vs besieged haue,
And many good knights slaine, that haue vs sought to saue (12).

Proffering a regime of the healthy alternation of open and closed, the canto also suggests a possibility for deviating from it. A loud call from Temperance might soften Alma's heart and the gate might eventually be opened:

... the Squire gan nigher to approch;
And wind his horne vnder the castle wall,
That with the noise it shooke, as it would fall:

Eftsoones forth looked from the highest spire
The watch, and lowd vnto the knights did call,
To weete, what they so rudely did require.
Who gently answered, They entrance did desire (11.3–9).

Now when report of that their perilous paine,
And combrous conflict, which they did sustaine,
Came to the Ladies eare, which there did dwell,
She forth issewed with a goodly traine
Of Squires and Ladies equipaged well,
And entertained them right fairely, as befell (17.4–9).

Yet another hypostasis of Elizabeth I, the poem's Faerie Queene, Alma is a "virgin bright", "full of grace and goodly modestee" (18.1.8). Like Anima in traditional iconography, she is dressed "in robe of lilly white" (19.1), decorated with pearl, the symbol of chastity worn by Elizabeth. Alma's head is crowned with "a garland of sweet Rosiere" (19.9), a Marian echo which reasserts the idea of her purity.

In contrast, Alma's castle, the human body, is made "of thing like to that *AEgyptian* slime,/ Whereof king *Nine* whilome built *Babell* towre" (21.5–6). The reference to Babel articulates a simultaneous transience and aspiration to divinity:

But o great pittie, that no lenger time
So goodly workemanship should not endure:
Soone it must turne to earth; no earthly thing is sure (21.7–9).

By Spenser's time the architectural metaphor was a long-standing topos. According to John 2:19–21, Christ refers to his body as a temple:

Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body (*Holy Bible*, King James Version 1984: 622).

A shaping influence on the Italian Renaissance, Vitruvius' *De architectura* (1st C. BCE) postulates that the perfect temple should mirror the proportions of the perfectly constructed human body:

For the human body is so designed by nature that the face, from the chin to the top of the forehead and the lowest roots of the hair, is a tenth part of the whole height; the open hand from the wrist to the tip of the middle finger is just the same; the head from the chin to the crown is an eighth, and with the neck and shoulder from the top of the breast to the lowest roots of the hair is a

sixth; from the middle of the breast to the summit of the crown is a fourth. If we take the height of the face itself, the distance from the bottom of the chin to the under side of the nostrils is one third of it; the nose from the under side of the nostrils to a line between the eyebrows is the same; from there to the lowest roots of the hair is also a third, comprising the forehead. The length of the foot is one sixth of the height of the body; of the forearm, one fourth; and the breadth of the breast is also one fourth. The other members, too, have their own symmetrical proportions, and it was by employing them that the famous painters and sculptors of antiquity attained to great and endless renown.

Similarly, in the members of a temple there ought to be the greatest harmony in the symmetrical relations of the different parts to the general magnitude of the whole. (3.1.2, “On Symmetry in Temples and in the Human Body”) (Vitruvius 1914, at: http://www.archive.org/stream/vitruviustentenboo00warrgoog/vitruvius_tenboo00warrgoog_djvu.txt).

Literalising the architectural metaphor, Canto IX’s enigmatic Stanza 22 describes the proportions and shapes underlying the design of the House of Alma: the circle, the triangle, and the quadrate of seven and nine.

The frame thereof seemd **partly circulare,**
And part triangulare, o’ worke diuine;
Those two the first and last proportions are,
The one imperfect, mortall, foeminine;
Th’other immortal, perfect, masculine,
And **twixt them both a quadrate was the base,**
Proportioned equally **by seuen and nine;**
Nine was the circle set in heauens place,
All which compacted **made a goodly Diapase.**

Quite tangibly, the symbolism of circles, triangles, and “quadrates” is quite traditional for Gothic cathedral facades, and was therefore part of the visual environment of early modern poets.

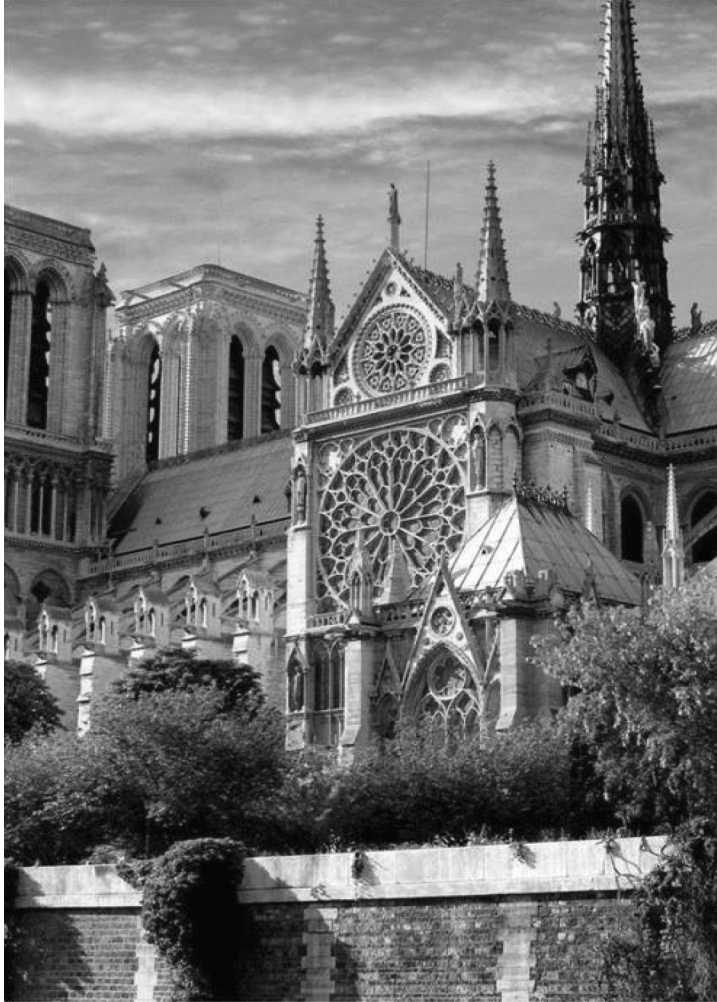


Fig. 1. “Partly Circulare, And Part Triangulare”: Notre Dame de Paris

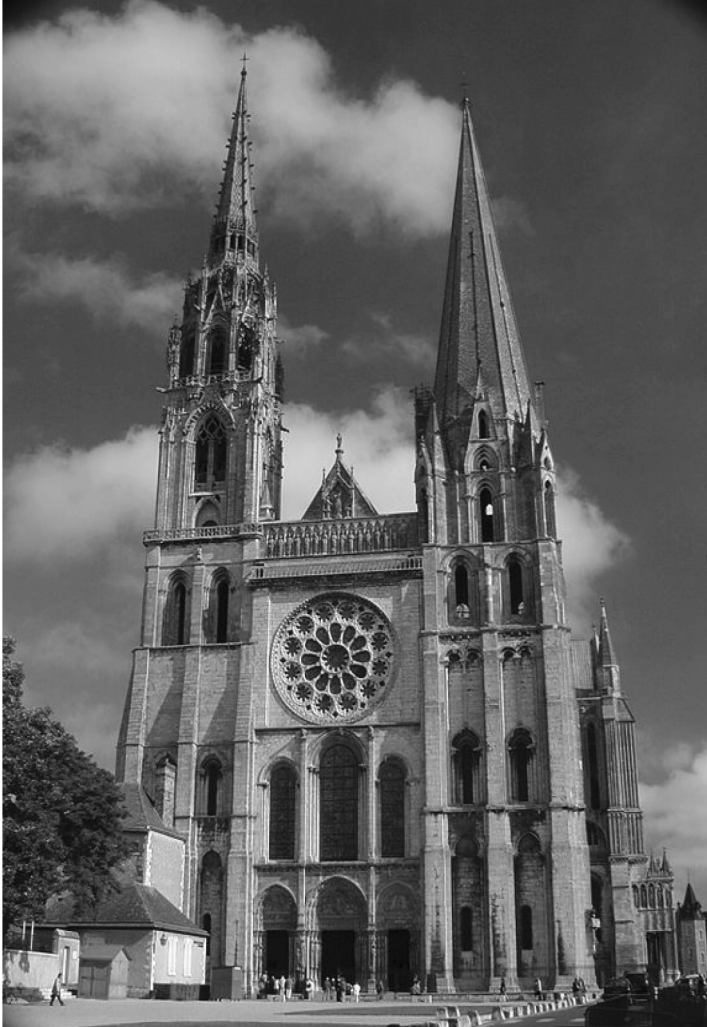


Fig. 2. “Partly Circulare, And Part Triangulare”: Chartres Cathedral

According to *De Architectura*, 3.1.3, the Vitruvian man can be inscribed within a circle, as well as a square:

Then again, in the human body the central point is naturally the navel. For if a man be placed flat on his back, with his hands and feet extended, and a pair of compasses centred at his navel, the fingers and toes of his two hands and feet will touch the circumference of a circle described therefrom. And just as the human body yields a circular outline, so too a square figure may be found from it. For if we measure the distance from the soles of the feet to the top of the head,

and then apply that measure to the outstretched arms, the breadth will be found to be the same as the height, as in the case of plane surfaces which are perfectly square (Vitruvius 1914).

Erwin Panofsky's *Meaning in the Visual Arts* traces the tradition of associating the human shape with geometry and proportion.

According to the Byzantine Mount Athos canon of iconography, there is a nine-to-seven proportion inscribed within the human body, the nine face-lengths comprising the whole of it versus the seven lengths of the torso and the legs. [This canon] plays an important role down to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Panofsky 1983: 85).

In the 1230s, Villard de Honnecourt's drawings inscribed the human figure into a vertically elongated pentagram (Panofsky 1983: 114–115).

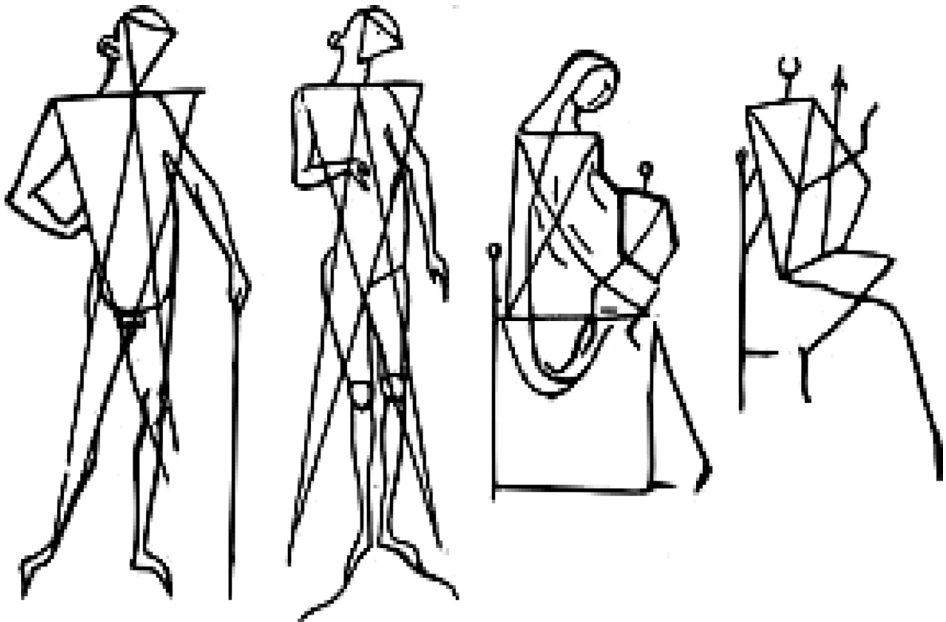


Fig. 5.

fig. 5.

fig. 6.

fig. 7.

Fig. 3. Villard de Honnecourt's drawings of the human figure (13th C.)

Henry Cornelius Agrippa's *De occulta phiolosophia* (1533) also uses "the pentagram schema", inscribing the body within a circle.

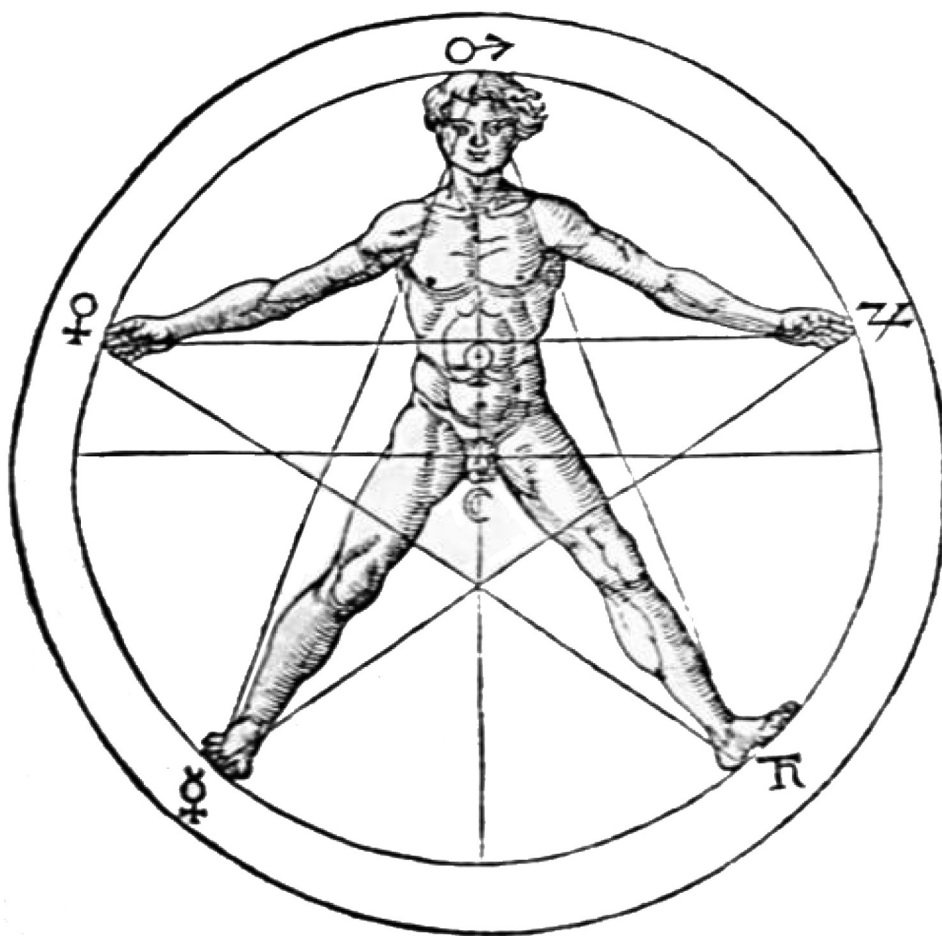


Fig. 4. Agrippa's Pentagram, *De occulta phiolosophia* (1533)

The 1513 pen-and-ink drawing in Leonardo's *Notebooks* illustrates his translation, in reverse writing, of the passage.

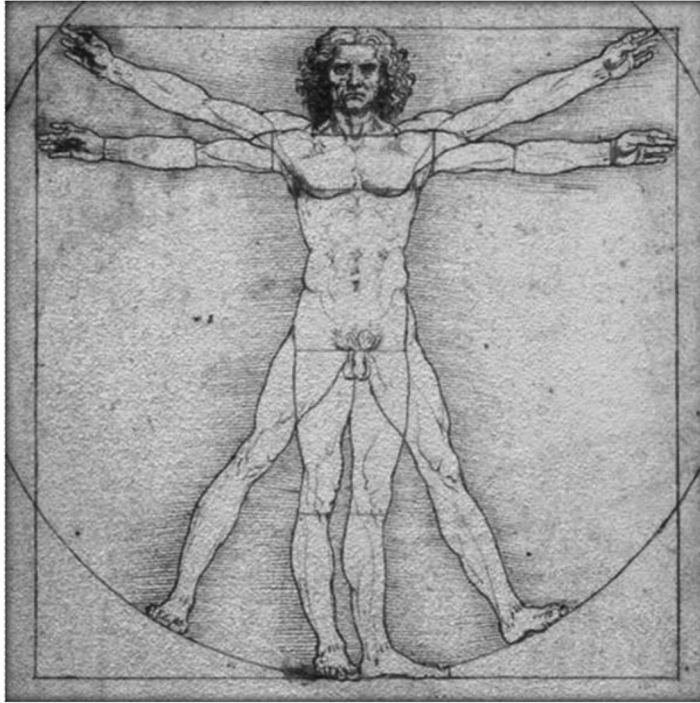
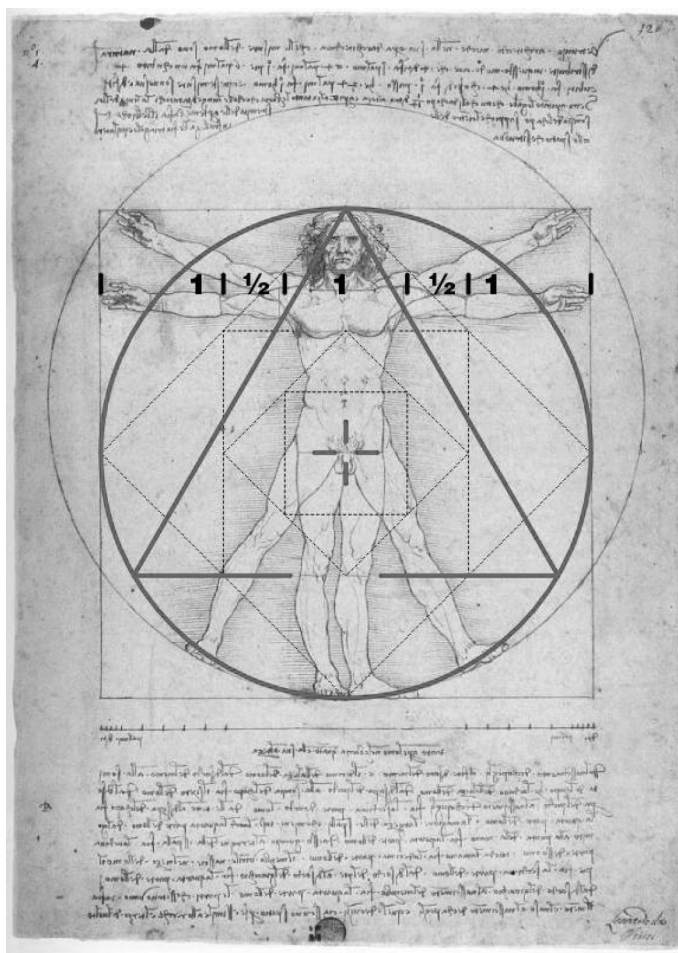


Fig. 5. Leonardo da Vinci, Vitruvian Man

The visible square within the visible square, the invisible circle which can be inscribed within it, and the invisible triangle which can be inscribed within the invisible circle seem to form the alchemical “Seal of Hermes”.



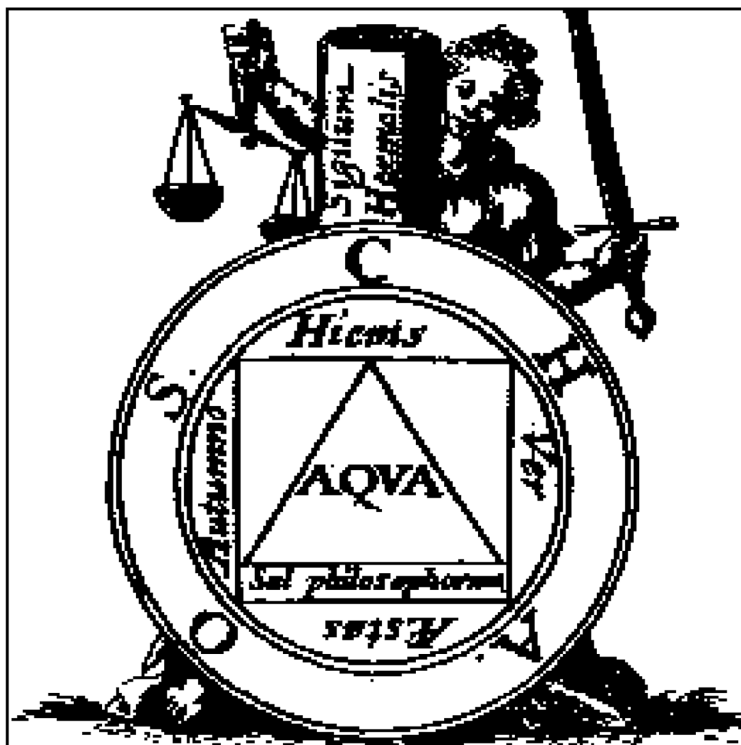


Fig. 6. The Seal of Hermes

In his *Monas Hieroglyphica* (1564), John Dee⁴ makes mention of “my London Seal of Hermes” (French 1987: 65). In alchemical parlance, putting the Seal of Hermes on a flask meant twisting its neck with flame and thus sealing it hermetically. The Seal appears as an alchemical emblem in Basilus Valentinus’ *Duodecim Claves philosophicae*. Valentinus’s Seventh Key represents a woman with scales and a sword behind a flask labelled “the Seal of Hermes”. The vessel is pictured as two concentric circles, with a square inscribed within the smaller one, and a triangle inscribed within the square. The larger circle reads “Chaos”, the four segments of the smaller circle contain the names of the four seasons, the square is the “Salt of the Philosophers”, and the triangle stands for “Water” (Valentinus 1599.).

The text of the “Key” outlines the importance of *the balanced condition* of the elements for “the operations of earthly nature”. Its key word is moderation. Thus, when describing the role of “natural heat” in the preservation of man’s life, Valentinus insists that it should be tempered:

⁴ The leading Elizabethan mathematician and astronomer, Elizabeth I’s astrologer.

A moderate degree of natural heat protects against the cold; an excess of it destroys life. It is not necessary that the substance of the Sun should touch the earth. The Sun can heat the earth by shedding thereon its rays, which are intensified by reflection. This intermediate agency is quite sufficient to do the work of the Sun, and to mature everything by coction. The rays of the Sun are tempered with the air by passing through it so as to operate by the medium of the air, as the air operates through the medium of the fire (Valentinus 1599).

The four elements, the “Key” suggests, should work in cooperation, mediating and modulating each other’s effect:

Earth without water can produce nothing, nor can water quicken anything into growth without earth; and as earth and water are mutually indispensable in the production of fruit, so fire cannot operate without air, or air without fire. For fire has no life without air; and without fire air possesses neither heat nor dryness (Valentinus 1599).

Maintaining “the moderate course” for a while, the alchemist is then to preserve its effects “in a closely shut chamber”, “for the heavenly city is about to be besieged by earthly foes”. Balance during the operations of earthly nature – balance in the body, as well as in the alchemist’s flask – is, however, to be transcended in the final act of transformation. In man’s case, too, it is to be performed in the final act of purgation by fire, which will turn the earthly body into an angelic one. The alchemical procedure is paralleled by a process of cultivating “the life of the soul”:

For you must know that the worms and reptiles dwell in the cold and humid earth, while man has his proper habitation upon the face of the earth; the bodies of angels, on the other hand, not being alloyed with sin or impurity, are injured by no extreme either of heat or cold. When man shall have been glorified, his body will become like the angelic body in this respect. If we carefully cultivate the life of our souls, we shall be sons and heirs of God, and shall be able to do that which now seems impossible. But this can be effected only by the drying up of all water, and the purging of heaven and earth and all men with fire (Valentinus 1599).

Likewise, the 21st emblem of Michael Maier’s *Atalanta Fugiens* (1617) (Maier) depicts a philosopher with a pair of compasses, measuring a circle enclosing a triangle, which, in its turn, encloses a square with another circle within it. Inside this innermost circle, there is a nude pair. The emblem bears the epigraph “*Fac ex mare et femina circulum, inde quadrangulum, nunc triangulum, fac circulum et habebis lapidem Philosophorum*” (“Make of man and woman a circle; thence a square; thence a triangle, form a circle, and you will have the philosopher’s stone”).

In so far as the philosopher's stone is an anagogic symbol of regeneration and immortality, Maier's emblem throws a meaningful light on the androgynous (man- *and*- woman) human constructed by Canto IX.

Reading Leonardo's Vitruvian man and Spenser's IX, 22 against such alchemical texts would render the perfect human body as a hermetically sealed container, in which the four elements are kept in balance till the moment of the body's final purgation into the angelic state. It could add an eschatological perspective to the Galenic theory scholars like Schoenfeldt have read into Book II of *The Faerie Queene*.

Beyond the iconographic proportions of the Mount Athos canon, the numerical symbolism of "seven and nine" is even more cryptic. It could obliquely suggest the golden ratio, expressed by Phi (ϕ) = (1.618..., $1+6=7$, $1+8=9$), which is believed to be central to Leonardo's work.

The mystical meanings of seven are numerous. To the Pythagorean imagination, it is the perfect number, the "parthenos", the uncreated and un-creating "virgin" that no number can produce. As the anonymous *Secret of Numbers* (London, 1624) puts it,

it neither begets, nor is begotten, according to the saying of Philo. [] This is its first divinity or perfection. Secondly, it is a harmonical number, and the well and fountain of that fair and lovely Sigamma, because it includeth in itself all manner of harmony. Thirdly, it is a theological number consisting of perfection (Mackey et al. 2003: 931).

With all the ambiguity of a Jungian archetype, **seven** could also have sinister meanings. To Hugh of St. Victor (c.1096–1141), it is the number of worldly life, while eight stands for things eternal⁵. In the morality play of *Wisdom* (c.1460), "seven ys a numbyr of dyscorde and imperfgyhtnes" (l. 697) (Furnivall, Hamelius 1896).

Seven could be the number of corporeality: it could refer to the seven orifices in the human head. The meaning of seven, however, could also be quite spiritual. It is a recurrent number in Biblical symbolism: the seven seals, seven thunders, seven plagues, seven spirits of God, and the seven horns and the seven eyes of the Lamb in Revelation. As composed of three and four, its meaning reaches the anagogic. According to Augustine, as three is the first number wholly odd, and four wholly even, and these two make seven, it is the number of the Holy Ghost.

Thomas Aquinas speaks of the Seven Gifts of God, actually the effects of the Holy Spirit upon the soul: wisdom, understanding, knowledge, piety, fortitude, counsel, and fear of God (New Catholic Encyclopedia 2003: 47–49). The duality of seven, its simultaneous spirituality and corporeality, is inherent in its being

⁵ *De Arca Noe Morali* (1125–1130). *Selected Spiritual Writings* 120–121.

comprised of three, the triangle, or the Pythagorean intellectual monad, and the Quarternary, the four elements of the body.

As for nine, Dante's *La Vita Nuova*, XXIX, imagines it to be the perfect number of heaven, and therefore the very epitome of Beatrice:

I say that, following Arabic usage, her most noble spirit departed from us in the first hour (*6am*) of the ninth day of the month (*the nineteenth*): and following Syrian usage she departed from us in the ninth month of the year (*June*), because their first month is *First Tixryn* which is October to us: and following our usage she departed from us in that year of our era, that is of the years of Our Lord, in which the perfect number (*ten*) had been completed nine times in the century in which she lived in this world, and she was a Christian of the thirteenth century (1290). As to why this number was so closely tied to her, this might provide a reason: since, following Ptolemy and following Christian truth, there are nine revolving heavens, and following common astrological opinion these heavens must affect what is beneath them according to their aspects together, this number was closely linked to her in order to show that at her birth all the nine revolving heavens were in perfect accord.

Related to the nine spheres of heaven, nine is also the perfect number because it constantly (re)creates itself:

This is one reason: but thinking more subtly, and following infallible truth, this number was she, herself: I say it symbolically, and I will explain it so. The number three is the root of nine, because, without any other number, of itself it creates nine, as can be clearly seen in that three times three is nine.

Therefore if three is of itself the only maker of nine, and the only maker from itself of miracles is threefold, that is the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, who are three and one, that lady was accompanied by this number nine to reveal that she was a nine, that is a miracle, of which the root, that is of the miracle, is solely the miraculous Trinity.

Perhaps a more subtle person could find in it a more subtle reason: but this is the one that I see, and that pleases me most (<http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Italian/TheNewLifeIII.htm>, Web 29.11.2013).

If seven is a "*maiden*", nine, a self-mirroring three times three, and a numerical symbol of the perfect circle, the Orphic symbol of the soul (360° , $3+6+0=9$), always *reproduces* itself. Multiplied by any other number, it results in a number the sum of whose digits will always equal nine ($9 \times 4 = 36$, $3+6=9$).

In such terms, along with other possibilities, "seven and nine" could refer to the simultaneous *static* self-encapsulation (the "virgin" seven) and *ec-static* self-replication (the everbreeding nine) of the human body. Synaesthetically, the "compaction" of seven ($8-1$) and nine ($8+1$) makes "a goodly Diapase". Mean-

ing “octave”, “diapase” suggests Ogdoadic and harmonic completion.⁶ Meaning “organ stop”, it evokes both the Pythagorean idea of the soul as harmony and a mechanistic view of the body as a passive instrument through which “wind”, equated with *pneuma*, or soul, is passed.

The “compaction” of the spiritual – and heavenly – circle and the corporeal quadrate, on the other hand, bespeaks the achieved Pythagorean liberation of the soul via the recognition of humans’ inherent duality. All in all, unravelling the number, proportion and shape that underlie the corporeal, Stanza 22 seems to be aiming at its intellectualization.

The oxymoron of the intellectualized corporeal might be used with reference to the entire canto. Guyon’s journey down the digestive tract will eventually conclude in a trip up to the mind. Moreover, there is a strange hall-of-mirrors effect about this allegedly most corporeal canto of *The Faerie Queene*. Entering the Body to meet the Soul, Guyon is also entering *his* body to meet *his* soul. Examining the material carrier and shell of (his) selfhood from within, the Knight of Temperance performs a kind of en-stasy.⁷ Like Elizabethan households with their special rooms where a mirror was placed to enhance religious contemplation, the Spenserian Castle of Alma provides a space for self-analysis, performed as a self-dissecting implosion. Like the Abulafian Cabalist⁸, what Guyon sees in front of him is his own double.

Guyon and Arthur’s journey down the digestive tract starts at the well-guarded mouth, controlling the exchange between a hermetically conceived body and its environment:

Doubly disparted, it did locke and close,
That when it locked, none might thorough pas,
And when it opened, no man might it close,
Still open to their friends, and closed to their foes (23.6–9).

As the last line suggests, though unmanageable by the Other, the door of the House of Alma is still selectively porous: the companions of temperance can easily step in, while entrance is denied to its enemies. Thus, Guyon is conceived as not only *belonging* to the place he is labouring to enter, but actually *in control* of the access to its “automatic doors”, allegedly monitored by the Self within. Dis-

⁶ Compare Leone Battista Alberti: “[I am] convinced of the truth of Pythagoras’ saying, that Nature is sure to act consistently [...]. I conclude that the same numbers by means of which the agreement of sounds affect our ears with delight are the very same which please our eyes and our minds” (Alberti 1956: 196–197).

⁷ The term was coined in 1969 by Mircea Eliade to describe a mystical state of standing inside, rather than outside oneself (ecstasy), or the equivalent of samadhi (समाधि).

⁸ Abulafia, A. *Sefer ha-Yashar* (1279). Cf. Idel, M. 1987.

tinctions between inner and outer, self and other, are again blurred in Spenser's panpsychic universe.

On close inspection, that the House of Alma already *is* the House of Temperance, even before Temperance ever enters it, becomes obvious from the order and surveillance reigning within. The Porter/Tongue takes good care that "nor wight, nor word mote pass out of the gate,/ But in good order, and with dew regard" (25.3–4); armed in "glistening steele", the "twise sixteen warders", the teeth, are ready to do obeisance when appropriate (26.3–7); further down the digestive tract, the sober steward Diet, rod in hand, manages the "ministering" of viands (27), while Appetite the Marshall orders the guests (28).

Michael C. Schoenfeldt (Schoenfeldt 1999) discusses at length the centrality of the incessantly active kitchen/stomach to Spenser's construction of the body. Indeed, stanzas 29–31 seem to provide the centre to Schoenfeldt's Galenic reading of the canto. At this point, Spenser's poem also seems to appropriate a Vitruvian geometry: as shown above, *De Architectura*, 3.1.3, too, imagines the navel to be the centre of the body's map.

It was a vault built for great dispenche,
With many raunges reard along the wall;
And one great chimney, whose long tonnell thence,
The smoke forth threw. And in the midst of all
There placed was a caudron wide and tall,
Vpon a mighty furnace, burning whot,
More whot, then *Aetn'*, or flaming *Mongiball*:
For day and night it brent, ne ceased not,
So long as any thing it in the caudron got (29).

This centrality is restated by the fact that the function of the Spenserian lungs is to cool the stomach:

But to delay the heat, least by mischaunce
It might breake out, and set the whole on fire,
There added was by goodly ordinaunce,
An huge great paire of bellowes, which did styre
Continually, and cooling breath inspyre (30.1–5).

In contrast to medieval notions of the bodily interior, the Spenserian stomach is governed by perfect order:

About the Caudron many Cookes accoyld,
With hookes and ladles, as need did require;
The whiles the viandes in the vessell boyld
They did about their businesse sweat, and sorely toyld.

The maister Cooke was cald *Concoction*,
 A carefull man, and full of comely guise:
 The kitchin Clerke, that hight *Digestion*,
 Did order all th' Achates in seemely wise,
 And set them forth, as well he could deuise.
 The rest had seuerall offices assind,
 Some to remoue the scum, as it did rise;
 Others to beare the same away did mind;
 And others it to vse according to his kind (30.6 –31.9).

Thus, like the mouth, the stomach is not just a container or a machine. It is informed by a multiple allegorical presence, Concoction, Digestion, as well as numerous cooks, all lending a degree of soul even to that most obviously physical level of self.

As the spatial centre of the body, the stomach branches out into a transportation system disposing of the waste. Part of it goes to “another great round vessell”, from where it is carried away by “a conduit-pipe” (32.3–4), and the rest of the “noyous substance” is taken to Port Esquiline, the back-gate, where it is “throwne away priuily” (32.5–9).

Meaningfully, although Temperance and Magnificence get a glimpse of Port Esquiline, they are not discharged with the Castle’s faeces. They are retained in Alma’s body, instead, to be taken back to its upper, or rather anterior, parts. There, they first step into a parlour where ladies are being courted by their paramours, while Cupid is playing “his wanton sports” among them (34.6–7). Thus, according to the Spenserian mapping of the body, there is a direct traffic between the stomach and the heart, the seat of the emotions (35), which all obey Alma the soul (36), just as the stomach obeys its master cooks.

In the parlour of the heart, Guyon and Arthur meet their female doubles. Arthur is mated with *Prays-desire*, or “desire of glory and fame” (38.7, 39), while Guyon’s mirror image is the lady *Shamefastnesse*, or modesty:

Why wonder yee
 Faire Sir at that, which ye so much embrace?
 She is the fountaine of your modestee;
 You shamefast are, but *Shamefastnesse* it selfe is shee (43.6–9).

From the heart’s parlour, there is a *direct* passage to the castle’s “stately Turret”, the head (44.8). Climbing up the ten (anatomically seven) “alabaster steps” of the cervical vertebrae (44.9), the voyagers within the body’s, and their own bodies’, interior reach “the heavenly towre” of the head, “that God hath built for his owne blessed bowre” (47.5). If the Spenserian stomach is the meeting place of interiority and the external world, the space where what is literally taken in is as-

simulated in the alchemy of concoction, the head is the locus of the human encounter with the otherworldly, or of an interiorized ec-stasy. Importantly, the major figures epitomising this encounter are defined in terms of their dealings with time:

The first of them could things to come foresee:
The next could of things present best aduize;
The third things past could keepe in memoree,
So that no time, nor reason could arize,
But that the same could one of these comprize (49.1–5).

Comprising the contents of the mind, anticipation of the future (imagination), dealing with the present (judgement) and remembrance of the past (memory) maintain its sameness in time, as well as, by implication, the sameness of the human self. In the figure of Phantastes, the internal ec-stasy of reason is temporalised as fore-sight, or prejudice, in the hermeneutic sense of pre-judgement:

For thy the first did in the forepart sit,
That nought mote hinder his quicke preiudize:
He had a sharpe foresight, and working wit,
That neuer idle was, ne once could rest a whit (49.6–9).

The value Spenser attaches to foresight, however, is hardly very high, for its ec-stasies can easily be dismissed as “idle fantasies”. Phantases’ chamber is full of painted

Infinite shapes of things dispersed thin;
Some such as in the world were neuer yit,
Ne can deuized be of mortall wit;
Some daily seene, and knowen by their names,
Such as in idle fantasies doe flit:
Infernall Hags, *Centaurs*, feendes, *Hippodames*,
Apes, Lions, Ægles, Owles, fooles, louers, children, Dames. (50.3–9),

as well as “flyes,”

Which buzzed all about, and made such sound,
That they encombred all mens eares and eyes,
Like many swarmes of Bees assembled round,
After their hiues with honny do abound: (51.1–5)

Given its deficit of reality, imagination is easily dismissed:

All those were idle thoughts and fantasies,
Deuices, dreames, opinions vnsound,

Shewes, visions, sooth-sayes, and prophesies;
And all that fained is, as leasings, tales, and lies (51.6–9).

Thus, if Shakespeare's lunatic is "of imagination all compact"⁹, Spenser's Imagination closely resembles a lunatic:

Emongst them all sate he, which wonned there,
That hight *Phantastes* by his nature trew;
A man of yeares yet fresh, as mote appere,
Of swarth complexion, and of crabbed hew,
That him full of melancholy did shew;
Bent hollow beetle browes, sharpe staring eyes,
That mad or foolish seemd: one by his vew
Mote deeme him borne with ill disposed skyes,
When oblique *Saturne* sate in the house of agonies (52.1-9).

In the Spenserian gradation of the faculties, judgement is allotted a higher position than imagination. Judgement's chamber contains the iconic storage of "All artes, all science, all Philosophy,/ And all that in the world was aye thought wittily" (53.8–9). A "wondrous sage" of "goodly reason, and graue personage", he so impresses Temperance and Magnificence that they wish to become his disciples (54.5–9). There is, however, the even more precious chamber of Memory to visit yet.

To Plato, memory is the connection between the soul's former residence in the world of ideas and its present embodied state. In this sense, memory is the only channel im-mediate-ly available to the human quest for ec-static self-transcendence, as well as self-identity. The Platonic antidote to amnesia is recollection, or *anamnesia*, whose function is to bring to the fore aspects of knowledge "genetically" inscribed in the mind. According to Plato's *Phedo*, all knowledge is already contained in the mind. His *Meno* (81a–e) speaks of the *eidola*, or little images, through which recollection is accomplished. Suggestively, in a dialogue where virtue is tropically related to the figure of the round, and common nature is described "as figure which contains straight as well as round, and is no more one than the other", reminiscence of things forgotten is demonstrated with the help of shapes: in it, Socrates asks an uneducated slave-boy maieutic questions about the mathematical duplication of a square (Gulley 1962: 8).

In the 1590s, the Platonic centrality of memory must have been reinforced by Giordano Bruno's preoccupation with the art of mnemonics. As Frances A. Yates has demonstrated, Bruno was following the Hermetic principle of memory as the major faculty of the mind and a vehicle for self-improvement. According to Her-

⁹ *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, V.i. Shakespeare 1971.

meticism, expanding memory would result in the expansion of the power of the mind (Yates 1966).

De Umbris Idearum (“On the Shadows of Ideas”, 1582), Bruno’s first work on mnemonics, describes the art of memory in terms of five concentric rings divided into 150 rays, each subdivided in 5 cells. The outer rings contain numbers, letters, and the names of inventors; the inner ones carry words referring to agent, action, enseignes, attributes (*adstans*) and circumstance (Quiviger). In Frances Yates’ reconstruction, the system works by magic, via “images of the stars, closer to reality than the images of things of the sublunar world, transmitter of the astral forces, the ‘shadows’ intermediary between the ideal world above the stars and the objects and events in the lower world” (Yates 1966: 223).

The Spenserian version of Bruno’s *Hortus memoriae*, however, is a ruinous old back chamber, and its human embodiments are Eumnestes, “an old old man, halfe blind,/ And all decrepit in his feeble corse” (55.5–6), and his valet Anamnestes. Going against the grain of Canto IX’s overall healthy corporeality, the passage on Memory is the exact opposite to that on the House of Pride in Book I. It builds upon the contrast between ruinous physicality and a vibrantly vital inner essence:

Yet liuely vigour rested in his mind,
And recompent him with a better score:
Weake body well is chang’d for minds redoubled forse (55.7–9).

The Spenserian stomach is the locus of corporeal self-transcendence in the form of a physical absorption of the external. Spenser’s Memory, on the other hand, is the Platonic-Spenserian way of the self’s *intellectual* self-transcendence, achieved by means of the spatial storage of Time.

Eumnestes, or Memory, is a “man of *infinite* remembrance” (56.1). Yet, with him, the ec-stasy of infinity needs the prosthetics of the library and the archive, the “immortal” spatial equivalents of “infinite” time:

And things foregone through many ages held,
Which he recorded still, as they did pas,
Ne suffred them to perish through long eld,
As all things else, the which this world doth weld,
But laid them vp in his *immortall scrine*,
Where they for euer incorrupted dweld (56.2–7).

In so far as it is built-in into the tower of Alma’s castle, Memory’s library is actually a possession of the mind and a measure of its infinite resources. A Hermetic version of the Marlovian “infinite riches in a little room”, such *internal-*

ized prosthetics becomes a measure of the infinite resources of the human mind, capable of containing all time:

The yeares of *Nestor* nothing were to his,
Ne yet *Mathusalem*, though longest liu'd;
For he remembred both their infancies:
Ne wonder then, if that he were depriu'd
Of natue strength now, that he them suruiu'd.
His chamber all was hangd about with rolles,
And old records from auncient times deriu'd,
Some made in books, some in long parchme[n]t scrollles,
That were all worme-eaten, and full of canker holes (57).

The infinity of the eternal knowledge stored in Eumnestes' chamber is matched by his "endlesse exercise" (59.2). Memory is thus rendered as a never-ending process, *an event* rather than an accomplished fact. At this point, Temperance and Magnificence's contribution to it takes the form of turning the leaves of, or actualizing, narratives of the British and fairy past (59.5–60.5). Thus, meaningfully, joining in Alma's self-transcendence through memory, Guyon and Arthur land themselves in the world of becoming rather than absolute being. In Book II, the concluding eschatological vision of the Heavenly Jerusalem of Book I is matched by human sequentiality, where Temperance turns out to properly belong.

Measured by numbers and squared by shapes, the Spenserian human is ultimately conceived as fashioned in a process of storage, the storage of time in memory's space. This is also an act of self-cognition, as well as, paradoxically, self-transcendence. Through joining in collective histories, memory turns out to be the final destination, as well as starting point, of the virtue of Temperance, imagined as the *via regia* between deficiency and excess.

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