

An Esoteric Note On The Somnium Scipionis Of Cicero

The Somnium Scipionis Of Cicero {1} is regarded by the Order of Nine Angles (O9A, ONA) as a primary source of the Western (Greco-Roman) pagan tradition which the O9A, with its septenary system, represents in this day and age.

From an esoteric point of view, one of the most notable passages in the Somnium Scipionis is that describing a system of "nine orbs" which connect the whole cosmic order, with Cicero toward the end mentioning that

"Now, the noblest concerns and exertions are the well-being of the community with a psyche exercised by these moving more swiftly toward its dwelling." {2}

Given the philosophical discussion which precedes this "moving more swiftly toward its dwelling" - its restful abode - this suggests something similar to the hermetic anados with its journey upwards through the seven spheres.

In his commentary on section 17 of the Pymander (Poemandres) tractate - which describes how the seven spheres came into being - Myatt {3} draws a parallel with Cicero's nine orbs, quoting Cicero's text and providing his own translation:

Novem tibi orbibus vel potius globis conexa sunt omnia, quorum unus est caelestis, extimus, qui reliquos omnes complectitur, summus ipse deus arcens et continens ceteros; in quo sunt infixi illi, qui volvuntur, stellarum cursus sempiterni. Cui subiecti sunt septem, qui versantur retro contrario motu atque caelum. Ex quibus summum globum possidet illa, quam in terris Saturniam nominant.

Nine orbs - more correctly, spheres - connect the whole cosmic order, of which one - beyond the others but enfolding them - is where the uppermost deity dwells, enclosing and containing all. There - embedded - are the constant stars with their sempiternal movement, while below are seven spheres whose cyclicity is different, and one of which is the sphere given the name on Earth of Saturn.

In respect of the Hermetic ogdoadic physis, ὀγδοαδικὴν φύσιν, Myatt connects these "nine orbs" to the septenary system writing in his commentary on section 26 of the Pymander tractate that there are

"seven plus two fundamental cosmic emanations [...] the seven of the hebdomad, plus the one of the 'ogdoadic physis' mentioned here, plus the one (also mentioned here) of what is beyond even this 'ogdoadic physis'.

[As the Poemandres] text describes, there are seven realms or spheres - a seven-fold path to immortality, accessible to living mortals - and then two types of existence (not spheres) beyond these, accessible only after the mortal has journeyed along that path and then, having 'offered up' certain things along the way (their mortal ethos), 'handed over their body to its death'.

Ontologically, therefore, the seven might somewhat simplistically be described as partaking of what is 'causal' (of what is mortal) and the two types of existence beyond the seven as partaking of - as being - 'acausal' (of what is immortal). Thus, Pœmandres goes on to say, the former mortal - now immortal - moves on (from this first type of 'acausal existence') to become these forces (beyond the ogdoadic physis) to thus finally 'unite with theos': αὐτοὶ εἰς δυνάμεις ἑαυτοῦ τοὺς παραδιδόασιν καὶ δυνάμεις γενόμενοι ἐν θεῷ γίνονται."

The Nine Angles And The Code Of Kindred Honour

In terms of the ontology and the Occult philosophy of the O9A the "nine orbs" are the "nine angles" - the nine combinations of the three fundamental alchemical substances {4} - which represent (via such Dark Arts as The Star Game) - the nexion between causal and acausal that we human beings are, with the seven spheres - represented by the seven classical planets - the septenary Tree of Wyrð, surrounded as the Tree of Wyrð is by the 'ogdoadic physis' and then by the formless acausal itself: the acausal existence, described in the Pymander tractate as "the theos", which awaits those mortals who via their anados have found Lapis Philosophicus and thus progressed to the last stage of the Seven Fold Way, that of Immortal.

In terms of Cicero's statement that "the noblest concerns and exertions are the well-being of the community", Myatt - in his *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* {5} - draws attention to a somewhat neglected aspect of Greco-Roman paganism and quotes from the Corpus Hermeticum:

εἰ δύνασαι νοῆσαι τὸν θεόν, νοήσεις τὸ καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθόν [...] ἔαν περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ ζητῆις, καὶ περὶ τοῦ καλοῦ ζητεῖς μία γάρ ἐστιν εἰς αὐτὸ ἀποφέρουσα ὁδός, ἢ μετὰ γνώσεως εὐσέβεια. Tractate VI, 5

If you are able to apprehend theos you can apprehend the beautiful and the noble [...] Thus a quest for theos is a quest for the beautiful, and there is only one path there: an awareness of the numinous combined with knowledge.

He goes on to write that

"as stressed by Cicero in many of his writings, and as indicated by the quotation from tractate XIII of the Corpus Hermeticum - "the sixth influence invoked for us, against Coveter, is community" - an aspect of the paganus, Greco-Roman, apprehension of the numinous, of καλὸς κἀγαθός, is an awareness and acceptance of one's civic duties and responsibilities undertaken not because of any personal benefit (omni utilitate) that may result or be expected, and not because an omnipotent deity has, via some written texts, commanded it and will punish a refusal, but because it is the noble, the honourable - the gentlemanly, the lady-like, the human - thing to do."

Which ancient pagan concept - or rather tradition - of concern for and duty to one's community, the O9A continue, manifest as it is in their Code of Kindred Honour with its emphasis on one's own O9A nexion being one's community: a modern extended family, tribe, or clan.

De Vita Coelitus Comparanda

A succinct expression of the ancient Hermetic weltanschauung, as well as of what Cicero expressed in the Somnium Scipionis, occurs in the heading of chapter twenty-six of *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda* by Marsilii Ficini and which book was published in 1489 CE.

The chapter heading is:

"Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona."

Which translates as "How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned."

The translation is by Myatt, from his commentary on section 2 of tractate IV of the Corpus Hermeticum. {3} As Myatt writes regarding his translation of part of that section:

a cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings. κόσμον δὲ θείου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον. That is, human beings re-present, presence, the 'divine body' and are, of themselves, a reflection of the cosmic order itself. This, and the preceding line, express a fundamental part of ancient and Renaissance hermeticism: human beings as a microcosm of the cosmic order and the divine.

For Ficini philosophically re-expressed a phrase - quod est inferius est sicut quod est superius (what is above is as what is below) - from the Hermetic Tabula Smaragdina, and - both in respect of Ficini's philosophical statement and the topic of the O9A and the Somnium Scipionis - a section of the text *ONA Esoteric Notes XLVII*, published in 2016 ev, is worth quoting in full, with the comments

in square brackets [] part of that O9A text:

"As Ficini goes on to explain - Est igitur non solum corporeus, sed vitae insuper et intelligentiae particeps. Quamobrem praeter corpus hoc mundi sensibus familiariter manifestum latet in eo spiritus corpus quoddam excedens caduci sensus capacitatem - the world (mundus) and by extension we ourselves as part of the world are not only material (corporeal) but also imbued with the vitae [Life; Being; ψυχή] and the intelligentiae [apprehension] of that which is above; and that beyond obvious outer appearances there is a hidden, an inner, animating [spiritus] aspect which our 'lower', more mundane, senses are unaware of.

All of which, based as it is on the writings of earlier authors such as Iamblichus, is a rather succinct summary of one of the fundamental principles of the weltanschauung that underlies ancient esoteric arts such as alchemy, astrology, and magick. That - as Ficini explained in earlier chapters, such as in chapter sixteen in respect of images/objects/talismans - the animating forces of the cosmos, as symbolized by the seven classical planets and the twelve classical heavenly constellations, not only affect us but can be consciously presenced, drawn down in a beneficial way, into objects and into ourselves.

That the Order of Nine Angles has the same underlying ancient weltanschauung is obvious if the above is restated using the modern terminology of the O9A.

Thus, (a) how when what is causal is touched by what is acausal [when a nexion is opened], the acausal is presenced within the causal thus producing changes in the causal; (b) the septenary Tree of Wyrð - with its planetary, stellar, and other esoteric correspondences as outlined in text such as Naos - since it is imbued with the acausal [is a nexion] is a beneficial presencing of those acausal energies that non-initiates are unaware of or disdain.

This ancient - essentially Greco-Roman - weltanschauung formed an essential part of the European Renaissance, as the life and writings of people such as Marsilii Ficini attest. Thus one might well suggest that the Order of Nine Angles embodies - at least in part - the spirit that animated that European Renaissance. An embodiment in the O9A manifest in their elitist and cultured ethos; a cultured ethos which neglected O9A texts such as (i) Culling As Art, (ii) The De-Evolutionary Nature of Might is Right, and (iii) The Gentleman's and Noble Ladies Brief Guide to The Dark Arts, explain." {6}

In other words, the cultured ethos which the O9A manifests - when, that is, the

O9A is esoterically and philosophically understood beyond its exoteric polemics, beyond the causal forms used, and beyond its Labyrinthos Mythologicus {7} - is the same ethos as is found in the philosophical writings of Cicero, in the texts of the Corpus Hermeticum, and in ancient and renaissance hermetic writings. It is the culture of reason, of a personal learning through practical, scholarly, and esoteric means; means which form the basis of the O9A Seven Fold Way, of its decades-long esoteric anados.

Which is why Anton Long wrote:

"One of the main reasons for the existence of esoteric groups such as the Order of Nine Angles is to be a living hereditary repository of a certain type of knowledge - kunnleik - and to personally, directly, encourage some individuals to acquire the culture, the habit, of learning - practical, scholarly, esoteric - and thus enable them to move in the traditional esoteric manner toward the goal of discovering and thence acquiring wisdom; and which wisdom is a balanced personal judgement and a particular knowledge of a pagan, Occult, kind to do with livings beings, human nature, Nature and 'the heavens'. This involves possessing/developing certain esoteric faculties/skills; acquiring an honest knowing of one's self, one's character; possessing an Aeonie understanding; and thus discovering Reality beyond, and sans, all causal abstractions.

Being a living hereditary repository of a certain type of knowledge, esoteric and otherwise - that is, being akin to an ancestral, communal, pathei-mathos - the O9A grows and slowly develops as more knowledge and understanding are obtained, as more individuals undergo pathei-mathos, and as newer Dark Arts are developed. But the Occult essence - the ethos, the internal alchemy of individual change during the life of the individual, the individual discovery of lapis philosophicus, the Adeptus way, the Aeonie perspective - remains." {8}

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Note: This text is a companion to my recent essay *Some Notes On The Picatrix*.

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{1} The Latin text is, as of August 2018 ev, available at <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/cicero/repub6.shtml>

While several accessible English translations exist they tend to translate particular Latin words by English words which - as Myatt noted in the Preface

to his *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates* - may impose modern meanings on the text.

For example, the caelum of Cicero is translated not as referring to what is celestial, nor to use Myatt's striking term - in his translation of chapters 1-5 of the Gospel of John, qv. <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/gospel-according-to-john/> - expressed by Empyrean, but instead as "heaven" which English word brings with it much non-pagan, post-Roman, iconography and theology.

Similarly, and to present another example, "et ut mundum ex quadam parte mortalem ipse deus aeternus, sic fragile corpus animus sempiternus movet" is interpreted with deus as "God" and animus as "soul" thus imposing a non-pagan theological meaning and iconography on the text, whereas Deity and Psyche (ψυχή) are more appropriate, more redolent of Greco-Roman paganism.

{2} Sunt autem optimae curae de salute patriae; quibus agitatus et exercitatus animus velocius in hanc sedem et domum suam pervolabit.

{3} David Myatt, *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates. Translation and Commentary*. 2017. ISBN 978-1976452369

{4} qv. the O9A text *Alchemical And Hermetic Antecedents Of The Seven Fold Way*, available from <https://omega9alpha.wordpress.com/ἀρρενόθηλος/>

{5} David Myatt, *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*, 2017. ISBN 978-1982010935

{6} The text is, as of August 2018 ev, available at <https://omega9alpha.wordpress.com/2016/03/26/o9a-esoteric-notes-xxvii/>

{7} In respect of Labyrinthos Mythologicus, qv. <https://omega9alpha.wordpress.com/labyrinthos-mythologicus/>

{8} Anton Long. *Knowledge, the Internet, and the O9A*. 122 yfayen.

cc R. Parker & O9A
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