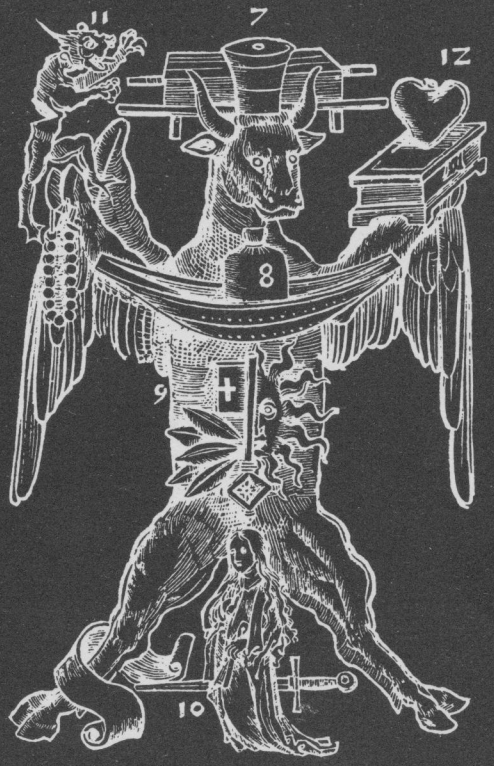


A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF MAGIC AND THE SUPERNATURAL













A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF

MAGIC AND THE SUPERNATURAL

BY MAURICE BESSY

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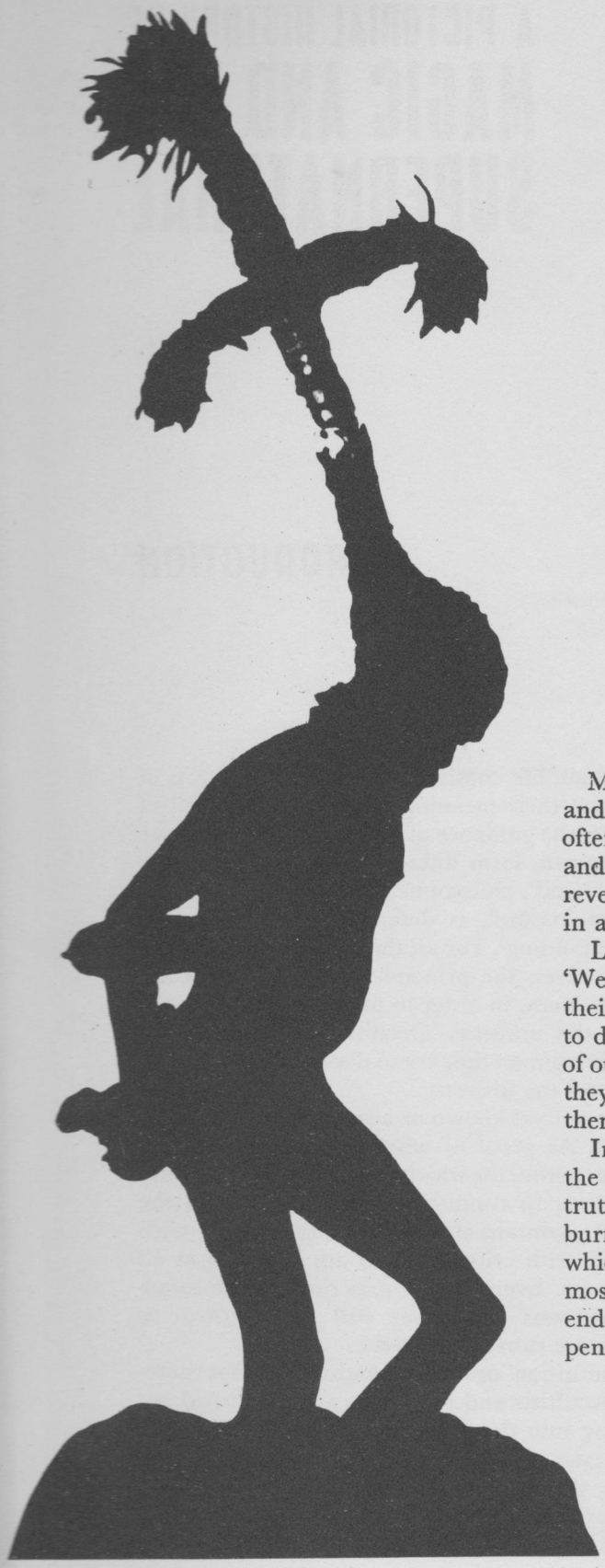
A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF MAGIC AND THE SUPERNATURAL

INTRODUCTION

For every thinking man life consists of knowing the secrets of nature, understanding their meaning and raising the veil of Isis. Those who under the guidance of different influences have deciphered the unknown, form links in a chain. The power that churchmen call 'God', philosophers 'laws', moralists 'precepts' and scientists 'nature', is described by occultists as 'intuition' or 'understanding'. For all those who search for the answer within themselves, the principle is always the same: study the microcosm, man, in order to understand the secrets of the macrocosm, the universe. Occultists proceed in the same way: by examining man they try to discover, by analogy, the laws which control the universe.

Everything that is not yet known or accepted is regarded as occult or concealed. As proof of what it postulates official science admits only experiments which can be made repeatedly to an unlimited extent, in conditions which are always the same. The scientists maintain that everything touched with magic does not fit in with criteria which are identical at all times and in all places. Even if their experiments are sometimes based on erroneous facts, they still regard them as 'positive', until they are proved otherwise.

Knowledge and 'intuition' or 'understanding' are not therefore synonymous. Occultists and magicians are concerned not only with penetrating into the unknown, but with producing evidence of it. However, after centuries of effort, about which we know very little, the alchemists reached a decisive stage, passing from the oratory to the laboratory, and bringing initiation close to inspiration.



Making allowances for their jargon which is full of symbolism and describes out of date methods, their premonitions were often astonishing. The methods set out in the atomic theories and the experiments with parthogenesis were not exactly revealed by the alchemists but at least they were anticipated in an astonishing way.

Laplace, who had no liking for magicians, admitted that 'We are so far from understanding the agents of nature and their various means of action that it would be unphilosophical to deny these phenomena simply because in the present state of our knowledge they cannot be explained; the more difficult they are to admit, the more carefully we should examine them.'

In this book we have set out cautiously and in good faith the most important trails that have been blazed in a search for truth that has often been paid for severely by ordeals and burning at the stake. The juxtaposition of graphic elements which have survived from the different schools of magic in the most widely opposed civilisations throws new light on the endeavours and achievements of those who have tried to penetrate to the other side of the mirror.



1

1. In the midst of these animals is a hunter-magician, disguised as an animal. A copy, made by the Abbé Breuil, of a drawing in the cave of the Trois Frères (Saint-Giroud, France).

2. According to Plotinus, magic is based on the harmony of celestial bodies and acts through the attraction which the



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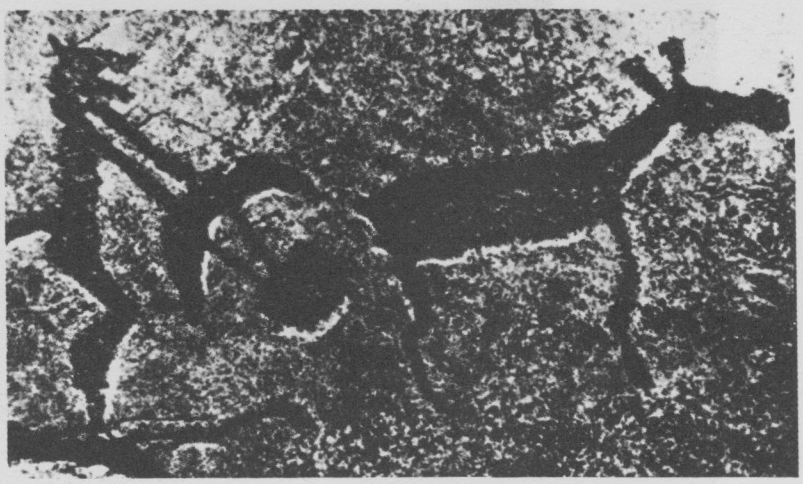

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3. Everywhere during prehistoric times, magic had principally utilitarian aims, which were usually concerned with hunting or fishing. This magician figure (3), from a cave in the vicinity of Lake Onega in Russia, repeats the universal theme: subdue and conquer nature — or die at her hand.

MAGIC AT THE DAWN OF MANKIND

universal forces exert upon each other. From prehistoric times, the magician has exemplified this notion. By disguising himself as an animal, the magician in the cave of the Trois Frères (Saint-Giroud, Ariège, France) felt sure of partaking of the strength of the beast whose skin he wore. In this way he was able to assist his tribe in overcoming the hostile, threatening animal more easily.

4. Cave paintings from South Africa: men of 'great height', magicians decked out with animals' heads. Another detail in this prehistoric fresco shows men bleeding from the nose from the vigour of the dance. Height (which is synonymous with strength), animals, dancing; these are the archetypal expressions of the desire to dominate environment.

5. This painting, drawn in the age of the cave-man (from the cave of Cabrarets, Lot, France) allows us to see more deeply into the ways of thought prevailing at the dawn of history: horses are trapped in a net, under the magic ascendancy of the hand. Some millennia later the theme of the hand (strength and dexterity) returns amongst civilised races.

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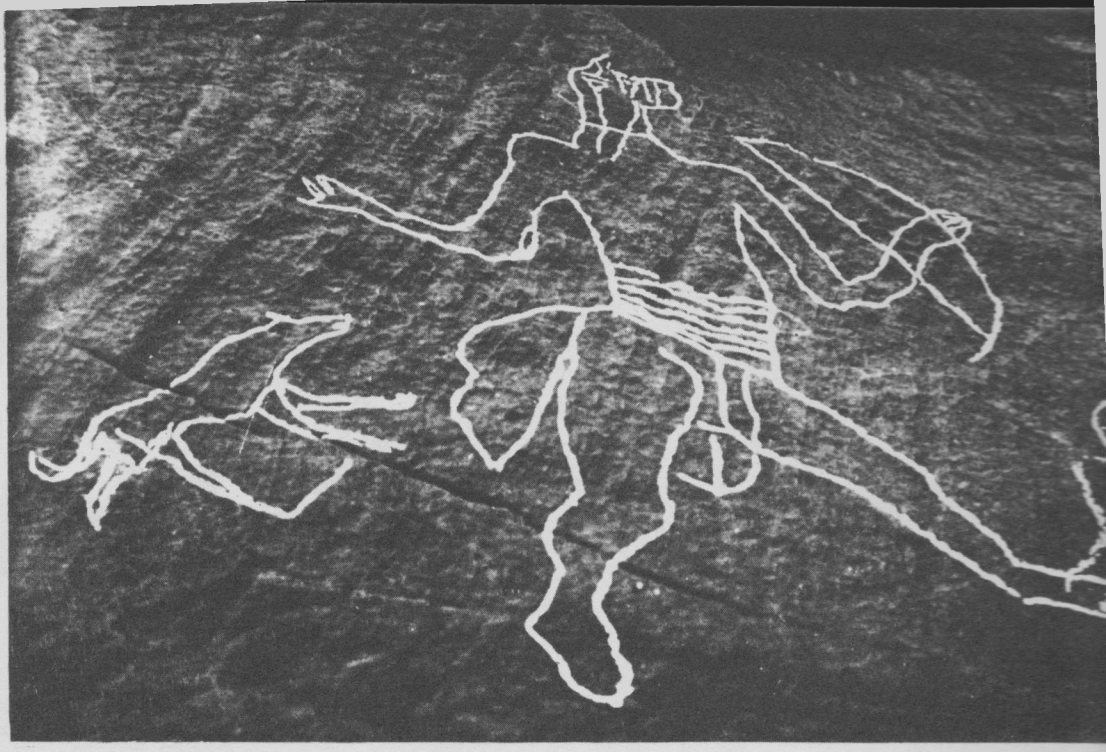
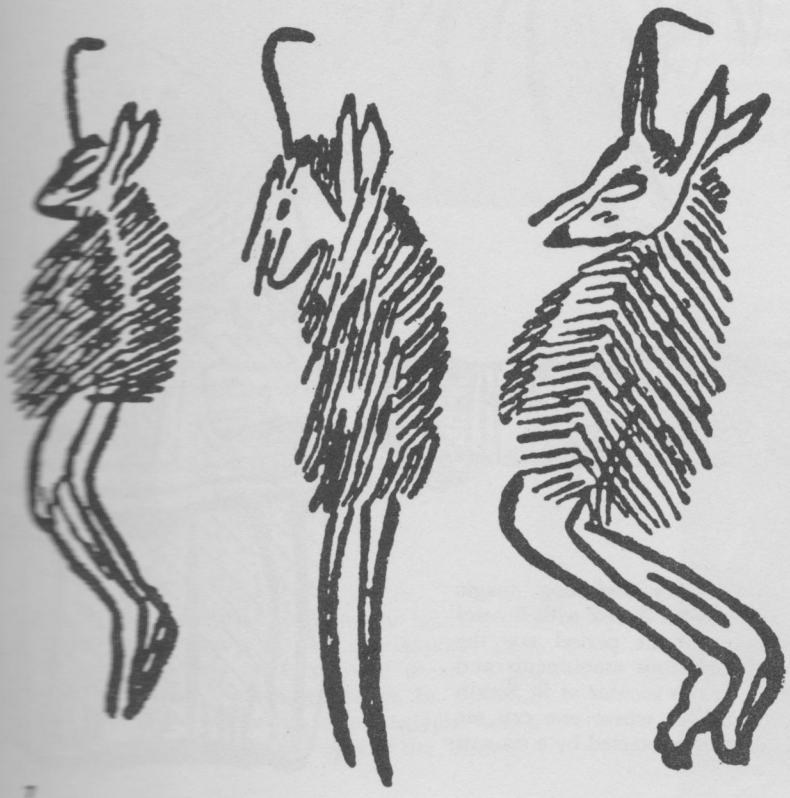
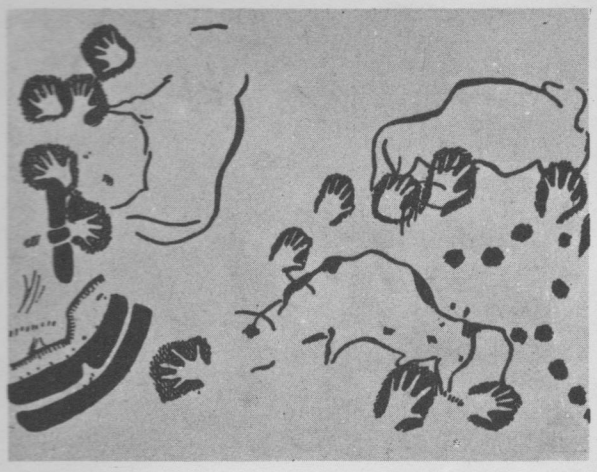


6. An engraving on black from the Sahara (Tassili, Oued Djaret). It shows a hunter with an ogre-like head, followed by his dog. It is significant that the caves in which magical paintings have been found seem to have been sanctuaries, the extreme difficulty of access to them makes it impossible to think that they were shelters or dwellings.

DOMINION OVER THE EARTH



7. Gold engraving from the Mege shelter, near to Teyjat (Dordogne, France). It shows young men, dressed in animal skins, taking part in a magical dance which mimics the animals. This would have an immediately practical aim: to imitate animals in order to approach them more easily; and a secondary magical aim: to assimilate their qualities and so match their strength.



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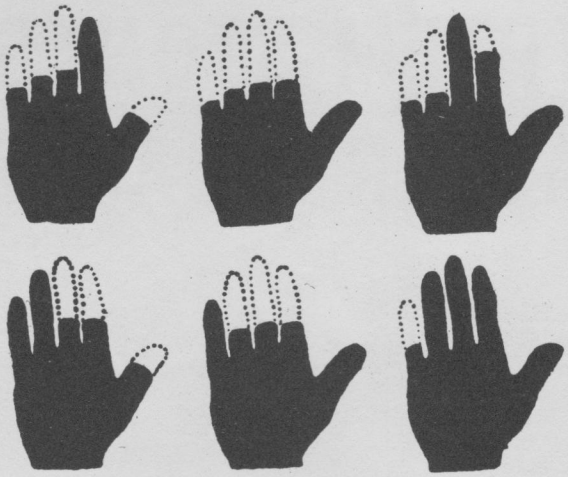

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8. The theme of the hand reappears, as though in a dream, on the wall of a cave at Castillo, in Spain. The hand symbolises the magical domination of the animal which Man desires to hunt or to domesticate. The particular interest of these imprints (which must have been made by squirting liquid paint round a hand which had been pressed against the wall) is a numerical one: out of 17 impressions, 13 are of the left hand and 4 of the right. This proportion is constant everywhere else.

9. This diagram (after H. Durville) provokes some conjecture about the mutilations which must have been suffered by the two hundred hands in this cave at Gargas. However, such an interpretation is probably mistaken. The imprints were perhaps made merely by bending back the fingers on the hands. In either case, the imprints would have a magical significance. In a number of the cruder civilisations, the hand can be found drawn in a similar fashion to ward off the evil eye or as a sign of propitiatory sacrifice.



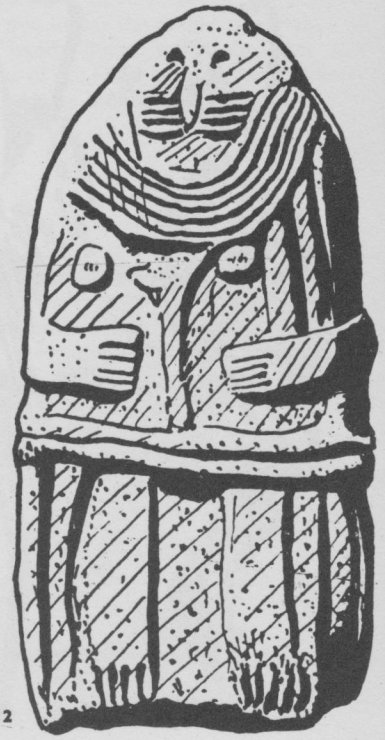
10

10. A magical collar of the Aurignacian period, made from the teeth of slain animals. With this sort of ornament, a woman sought to increase her power, not merely adding to her feminine charms but also drawing into herself the qualities of the sacrificial animals.



11

11. 'Baton of authority' from prehistoric times. The magic wand no doubt descended from these batons which were ornamented with inscriptions or drawings, designed to put the persons or animals represented under the magician's power.



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12. From the very beginning, magic seems to have been linked with funeral rites. The megalithic period saw the erection of numerous monuments and stelae, such as this menhir at St Servin (Aveyron, France) where one can see a female divinity protected by a six-row collar.

THE TOTEM STONES OF EASTER ISLAND

13



13. The menhirs of the Morbihan district of Brittany lead one immediately to think of the huge statues of Easter Island. Numbering 593, they were, in the nineteenth century, three times as numerous as the inhabitants of the island. Carved from volcanic lava, and standing ten to fifty feet high, these enormous figures used to mark the location of sanctuaries or tombs. But scarcely anything is known about the culture of this Polynesian island.

15



15. The nature of the beliefs of the Easter Islanders remains a mystery although tablets covered with hieroglyphs were discovered at the feet of the statues. (These were burned by missionaries.) This figure, of more recent date, represents the spirit of a dead man. Undoubtedly it is an expression of funeral magic.

14



14. It is possible to ponder indefinitely on the beliefs of this vanished society in Orongo when one contemplates these fourteen on a rock looking out across the ocean, which recall the cave paintings of other continents. In this case they take the form of 'totem stones' or 'petroglyphs' which used to serve as a setting for the choosing of the 'birdman' at the New Year.

MAGICAL FOODS

16



16. The rites, particularly those of hunting or fishing, which were practised in the earliest cultural periods, developed into agrarian rites as soon as the people settled on the land. This corn god from Peru belongs to this era of agrarian religions with a magical character.

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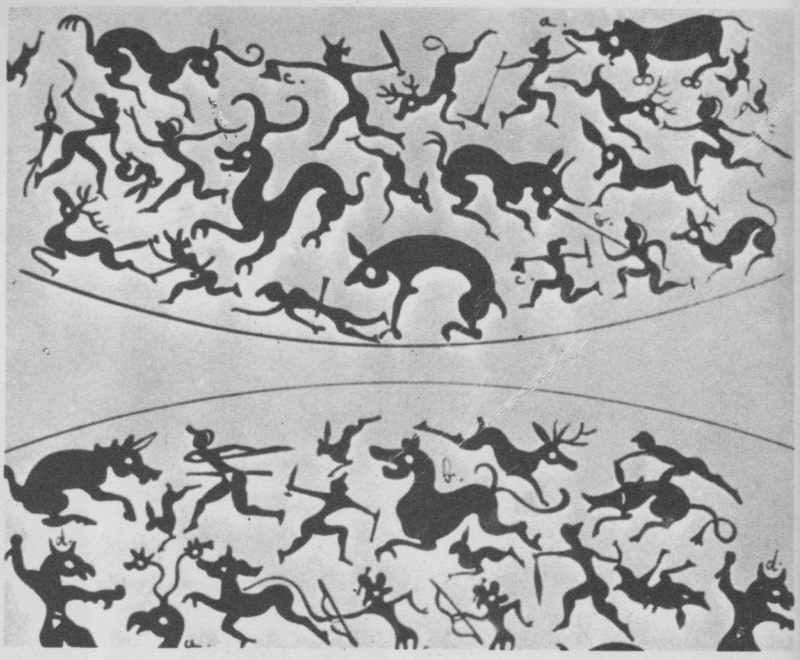

17. The traces of hunting magic persisted into the very hearts of strongly agrarian societies, such as the Chinese. These scenes, inlaid on a bronze wine jar (fifth to third century B.C.) recall the paintings of the prehistoric period — the more strange, since China had a most advanced society.

18–19. Rain is a theme which appears naturally in the midst of agrarian societies, both as a magical rite and as a religious invocation. Rainmakers practised widely in China and in all places where agriculture was the principle resource. Ancient Mexico possessed a rain-god named Tlaloc (18). Rainmakers can be found even on the threshold of the modern world, as is shown by this carving (19) by Ulrich Molitor.

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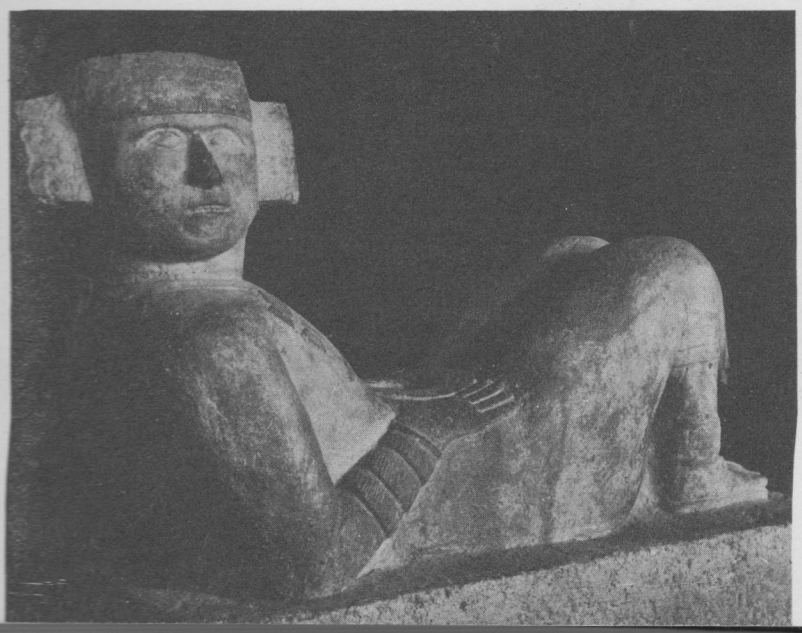



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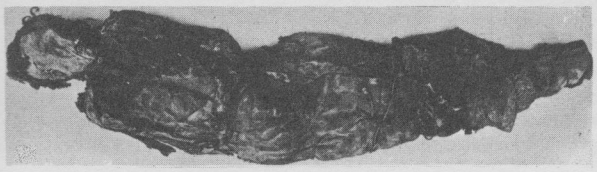
21

THE PRESENCE OF DEATH

20 to 23. Over and above the rites of hunting, fishing, protection and fertility, it is always the theme of death which, in all cultures, dominates religion as much as magic. To appease the spirits of the dead, to protect one's self from them, to propitiate them, to ensure them a peaceful afterlife — everywhere these were the prime concerns of Man at the dawn of history. These mummified remains of Inca women from the valley of Chillan, Peru, bear witness to this fact. The first (20) is stripped of her seven traditional garments, the second (21) is richly dressed.
A similar rite probably led to the preservation of this *guancho* woman from the Canary Islands (22), just as it guided the hand of the Aztec sculptor in Mexico when he carved this magnificent skull in rock crystal (23).



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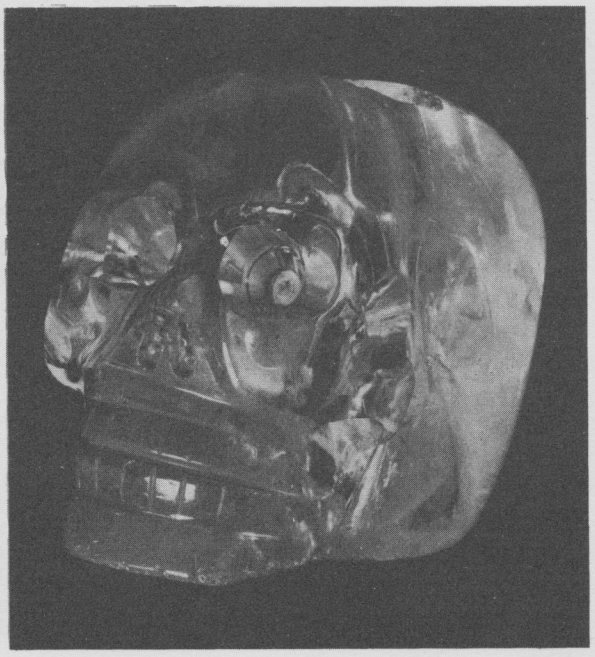

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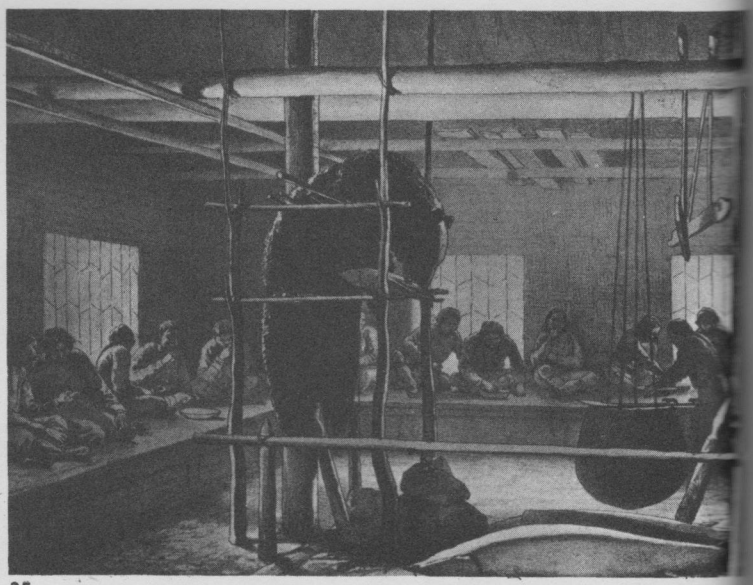
24. The study of primitive tribes of our own time gives a better understanding of what inspired religion and magic in prehistoric days. This hunting fetish from Liberia pictures the animal which is to be overcome, the qualities of which are to be assimilated.



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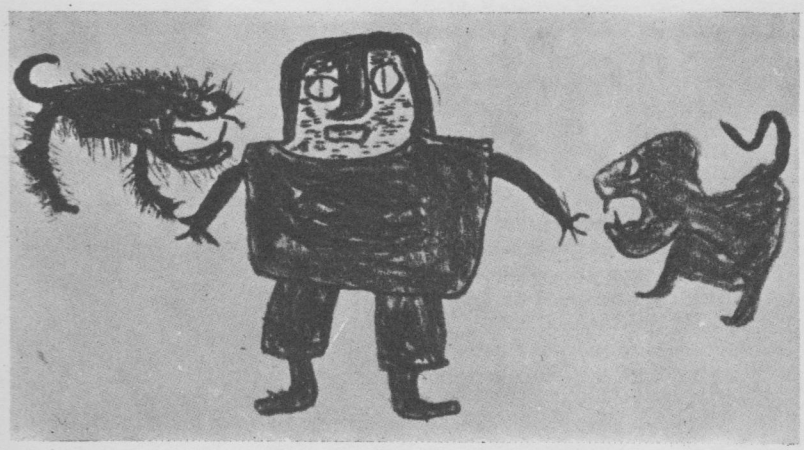
25. In eastern Siberia among the Ghiliak tribes, hunting the bear leads to ritual feasts. In these, after the bear has been captured alive, he is chained, then is led from *yurt* to *yurt*, mocked and illtreated by the natives.

26. Even today, amongst the Iglukik Eskimos, drawings can be found which are inspired by hunting magic and which give evidence of primeval beliefs. In this picture the beneficent spirit is beset by two fierce but amenable spirits. According to Freud, neuroses in dreams often take on the appearance of savage beasts.



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27



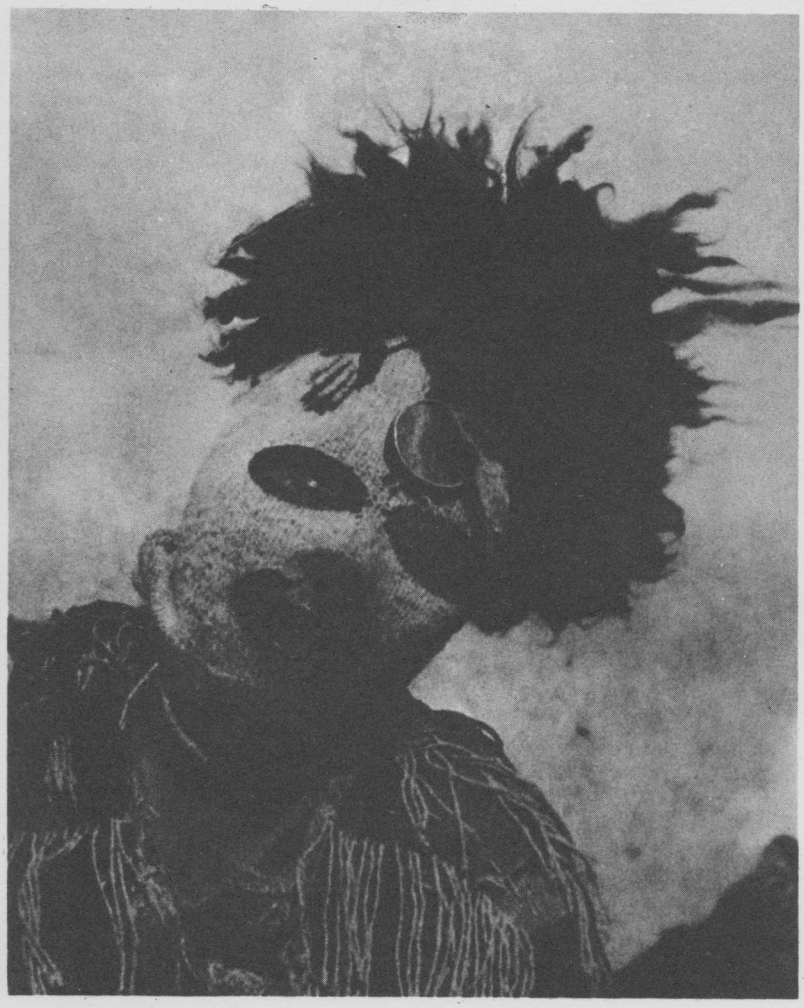
27. This second Iglukik drawing depicts mountain ghosts. One, a female demon, goes off in search of game from the mother of sea animals. Enclosed in a pack of ice, which melts in summer, she falls and loses consciousness on the mountain, being unable to recover until a dog has licked her heart.

DANCES AND MASKS



28

28. Masks and dances of today strangely recall attitudes and features of cave paintings, with virtually identical significances in both cases. The tiger-skin doublet worn by the men in this photograph (from Bolivia) is interesting. It is all that remains of ancient hunting rites.



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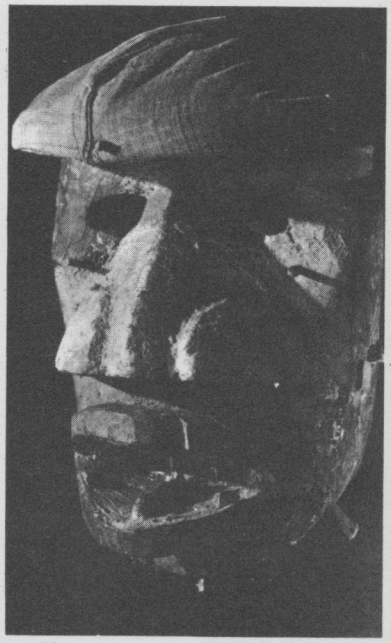
29. The 'Kusillu' or 'Monkey Dance' combines mask and dance — as often happens. In different cultures, the monkey has had very varied symbolic meanings. Distinct from Western fashion, the East makes the monkey into a personification of wisdom.



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30. The monkey theme is taken up again in this dancing mask from the Ivory Coast. It is called 'Iredu' or 'monkey ears'. Live animals of all kinds are presented as an offering to the mask and are then consumed by the unmasked dancers. By eating these foods the dancers partake of the attributes of power with which the monkey is endowed.

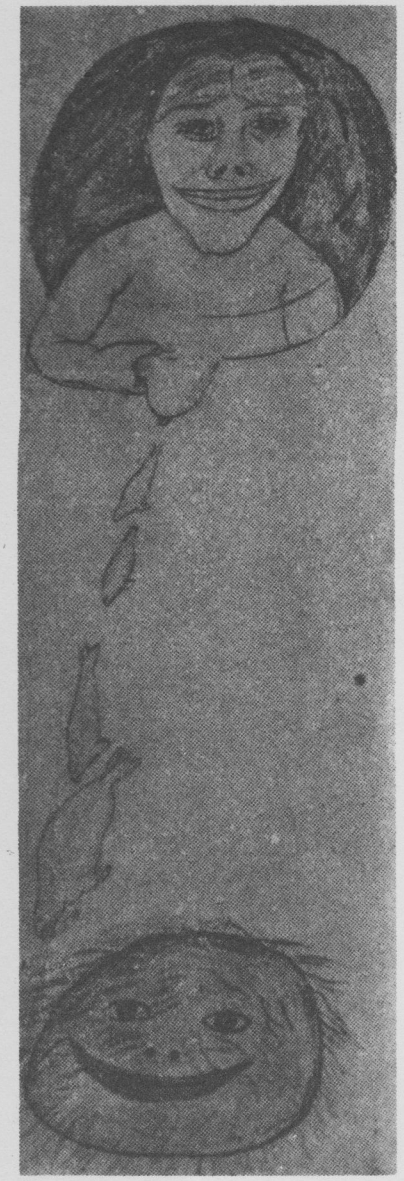


31



SORCERERS'
DANCE
IN AUSTRALIA

THE SHAMAN



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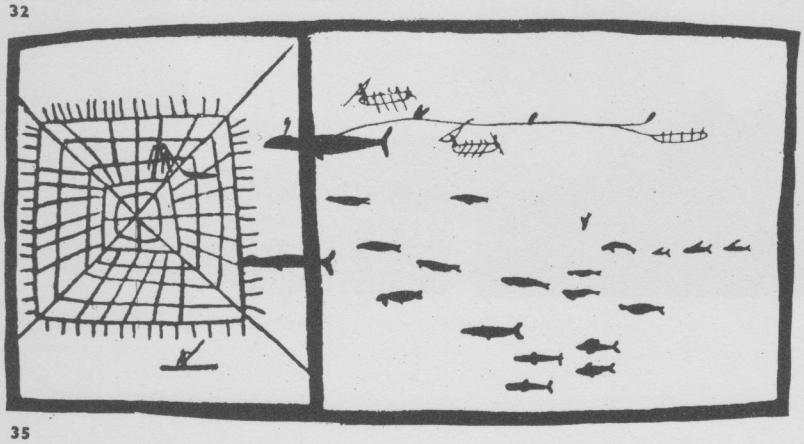
33



34

32. Almost all the peoples of the Arctic and near-Arctic regions practise the religions called shamanism. The 'shaman' is both priest and magician. The beliefs and practices which make up shamanism illustrate clearly the interweaving of religion and magic in human societies at every stage of their evolution. On the left: 'Pynry-Wayrgyn', the woman who lives in the moon (32) from whose bosom fish and sea-creatures fall.

33 and **34.** The drawings above derive from the same cultural areas: (a) a spirit which gives rise to nervous maladies; (b) the spirit of epilepsy; (c) the latter transforming itself under the gaze of the shaman. The attribution of nervous diseases to 'spirits' is particularly interesting from the point of view of modern psychology and the role reserved to the shaman is in some ways mirrored by that of the psychoanalyst, called in, in the same way, to purge the sick of 'spirits' (complexes) which torture him.



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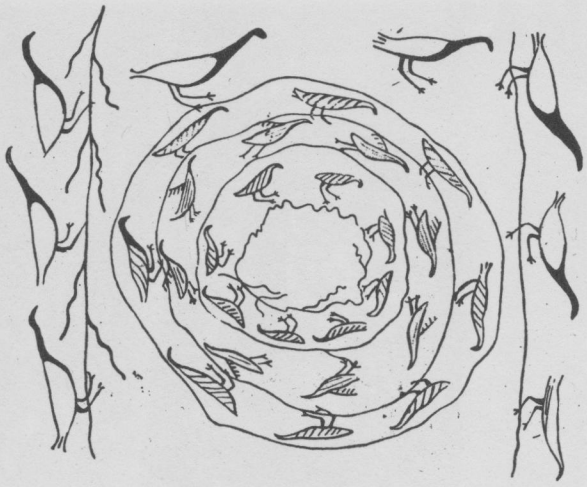
35. This magical scene (35), drawn on a plank, also comes from the Chuckchee tribes: sea-creatures are swimming towards the net which is awaiting them. The fishermen's boats can also be seen. Students of symbolism will detect the considerable significance in the phallic character of the fish, in the imagery of the net (a maternal symbol) and in the general movement towards the left (a symbol of the unconscious and death, according to modern psychology and psychoanalysis).



36



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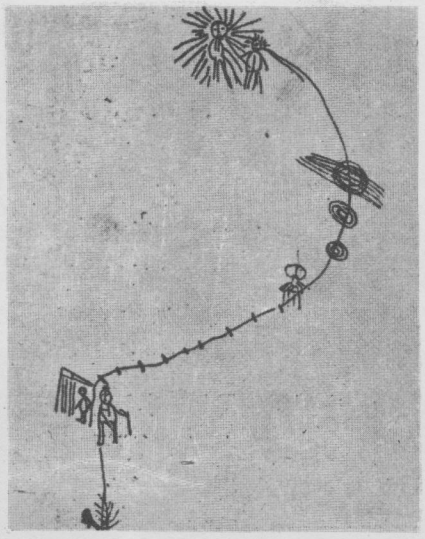
36. A shaman from eastern Siberia descends towards 'Any-Kole', the spirit of the sea, who is surrounded by marine animals. The fishing scene, an event of everyday life, depicts an initiation which is everywhere conceived as a plunge into the unconscious, a descent into hell.

37. The assistant spirits of the Tunguska shaman. The circle is a universal theme, symbol of existence, enclosed within itself. Concentric circles are also to be found in the 'mandalas' of the Hindus and Tibetans, in the zodiacal plans of the pre-Columbian Indians and of the Middle Ages, and in cathedral rose-windows.



38



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38. The Chuckchee shaman goes up to 'Vanygyn', the king of the upper world. It is noteworthy that while the female spirit is found in the lower regions, in the depths of the sea (36), the male spirit exists on high, under a sort of Gothic arch. The 'Trinity' is masculine, the 'Quaternity' adds the female principle to it.

39. In this illustration, according to Gurkin, a shaman from Altaï in the Soviet Union describes his visit to heaven. This spiritual geography could be the source of a considerable commentary. It is significant that the shaman ends by uniting or identifying himself with the sun, which 'depth psychology' sees as being the symbol, at one and the same time, of the father and of consciousness.

40. A shaman from Tunguska (Western Siberia), clothed in the insignia of his succession. Shamans are usually chosen by reason of their abnormal psychological make-up, and their vocation is often indicated by the extremely unusual dreams to which they are prone. Frequently homosexual and subject to nervous disorders, they exercise their priesthood in the midst of a people who look upon their blemishes as the cracks through which the unseen powers manifest themselves.



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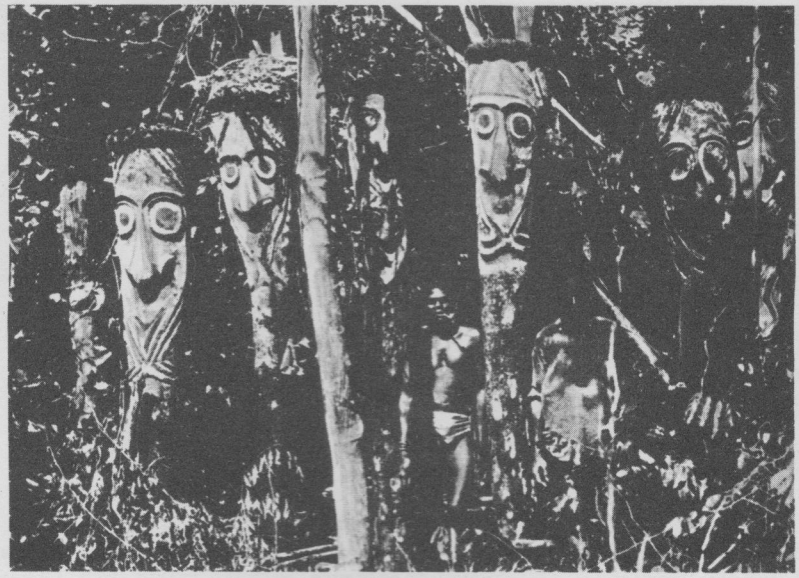

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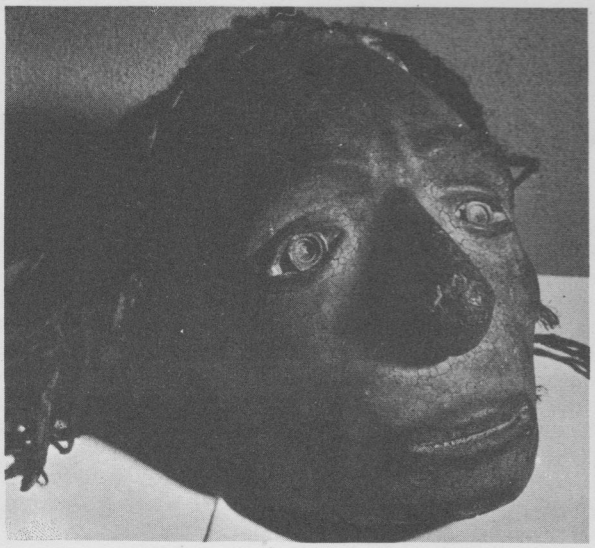
41. The conception of death finds its essence primarily in the memory of ancestors. Funeral magic tends to counter fear, remorse, and especially the fruitless love borne for the departed. Terrifying or benevolent, ancestors (such as this 'Korwai' from Melanesia) are thus ceaselessly present amongst the living.

42. Ancestors are sometimes figures carved in the trunks of trees which grow in the depths of the forests of the New Hebrides. Compared with this terrifying spectacle, the cult of the ancestor as it is practised amongst the Chinese Confucians appears as an appeasing and almost rational festival of remembrance and of family observance.

LIVING ANCESTORS

43. These bizarre figures do not exist solely in the forest; their presence is also desired in the home. Thus the natives of the region of the Sepik river in New Guinea until quite recently used to make skulls in earthenware, which they then covered with the skin of an ancestor whose virtues they wished to preserve for themselves and their descendants.

44. There are other geographical regions, very far from New Guinea, where magical properties are attributed to sculpted heads: at Cross river, for example, in the Cameroons, the soul of a dead chief is supposed to reside imprisoned in this wooden head which has been covered with human flesh. It is only a short step from this idea to that of taking over the soul itself.



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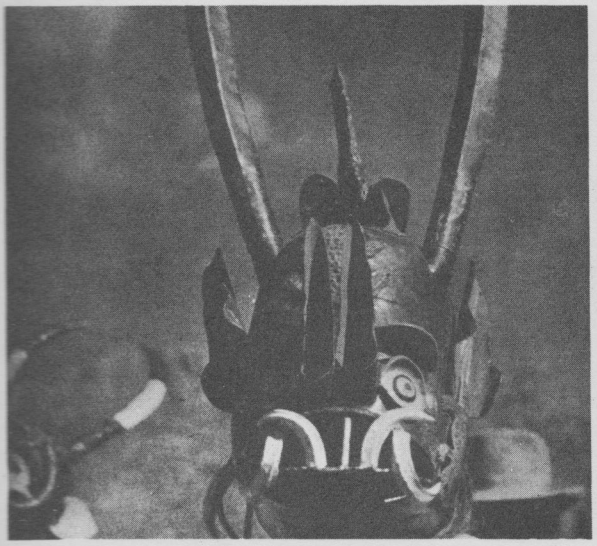

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46

45. From the superimposed images of ferocious beasts (the hunted? — or the hunters?) and of ancestors, the imagination of prehistoric man builds up a composite image of a devil with long pointed horns, to add its individual inner terrors to the whole picture.

46. A snake stands up like a coxcomb on the head of this long-eared devil (from Bolivia). From the Bible to the Egyptian 'uraeus', the snake has everywhere been a symbol of elemental male strength, of a sexuality both destructive and constructive. The crown of the head possesses a particular significance: the Hindus believed that the flame of enlightenment rose from it.

TO INSPIRE FEAR

47. It is understandable that the imagination which inspired so many terrors ended by giving rise to works of art. This Eskimo mask (from Cape Vancouver in Alaska) possesses a singularly uncommon beauty, apart from its magical significance. Its feathers correspond to the five fingers of the hand. Negro art, rediscovered by Picasso and Apollinaire, springs from this impulse.

48. I scare you, you scare me, I scare me, we scare ourselves. This game, if it is a game, is not only a product of prehistoric man. In contemporary festivals masks of fear can often be found, perhaps taking on an air of comic consternation like this carnival mask worn in our own day by peasants of Le Valais (Lotschental, Switzerland).



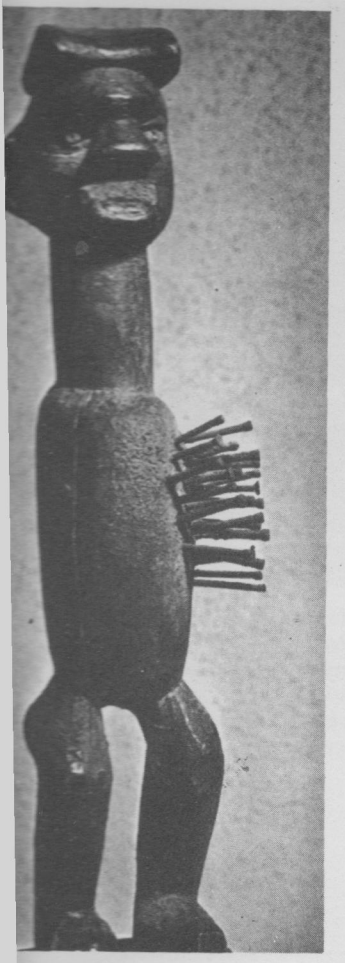
47



48

WORKING SPELLS

Inspiring fear and frightening oneself have never been enough to satisfy mankind. Working evil is vastly preferable. From earliest times, magic appeared to be a more economical means of destroying an enemy than combat. The role which was assigned to hands and magic wands in the rituals of hunting has already been demonstrated. Now we come to the casting of spells, a universal impulse which is directed against men as well as animals.



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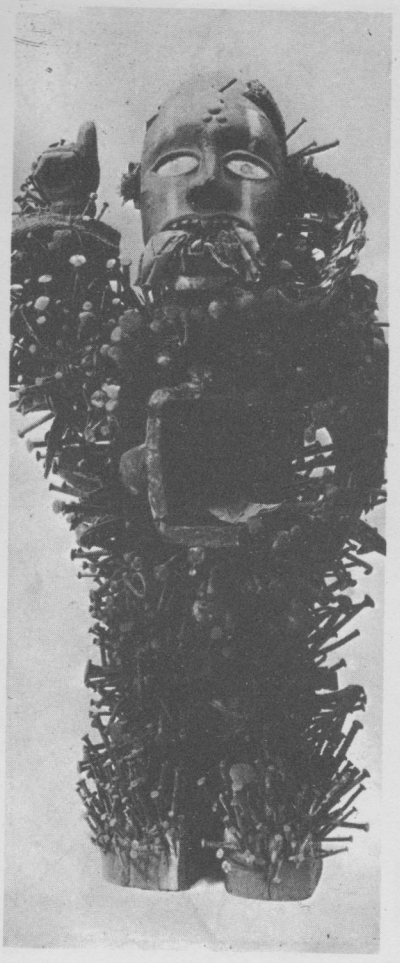

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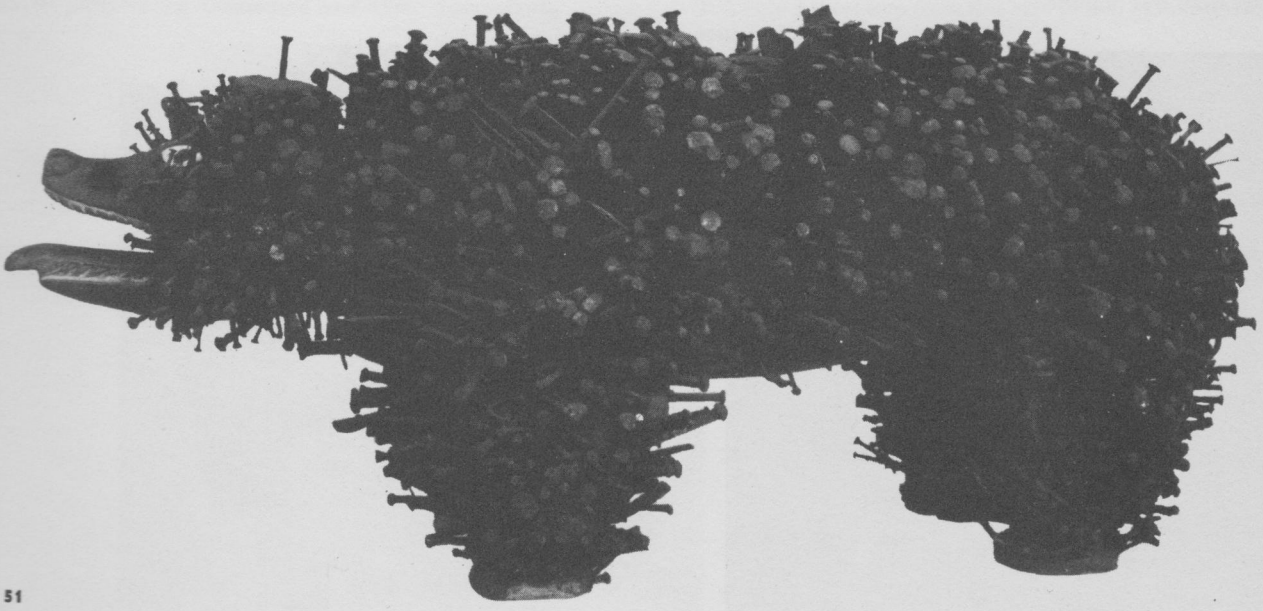
49. Take an image of the adversary, insert a few pins and the game is won, the enemy is neatly disposed of. The Congolese technique, illustrated here, makes use of nails.

50. Other examples show a superabundance or a refinement of effort. In the case of this magic statuette from Bavili in the Middle Congo, nails are used not only to threaten the heart but also to pierce the soul itself.

51. It may certainly be doubted whether this poor beast whose image is so racked with nails could menace a man for much longer.



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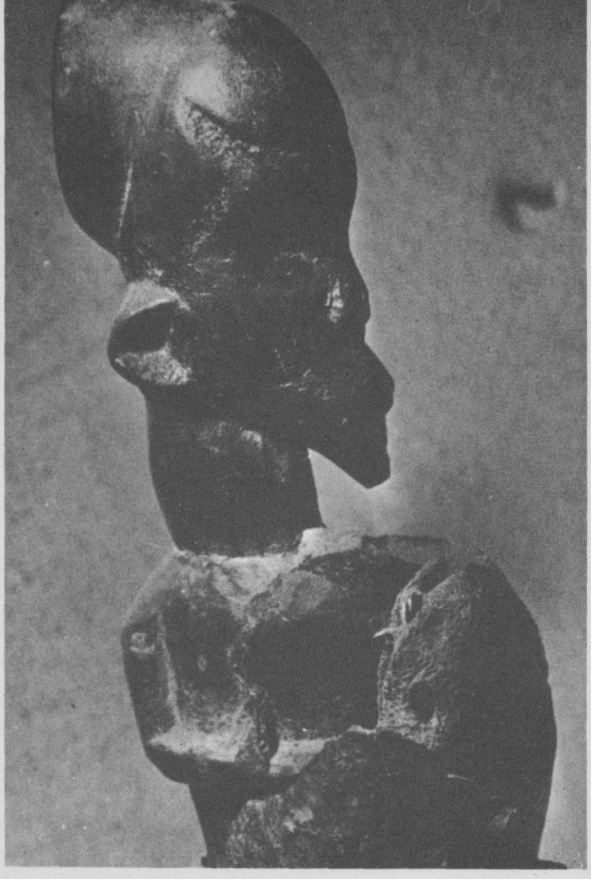

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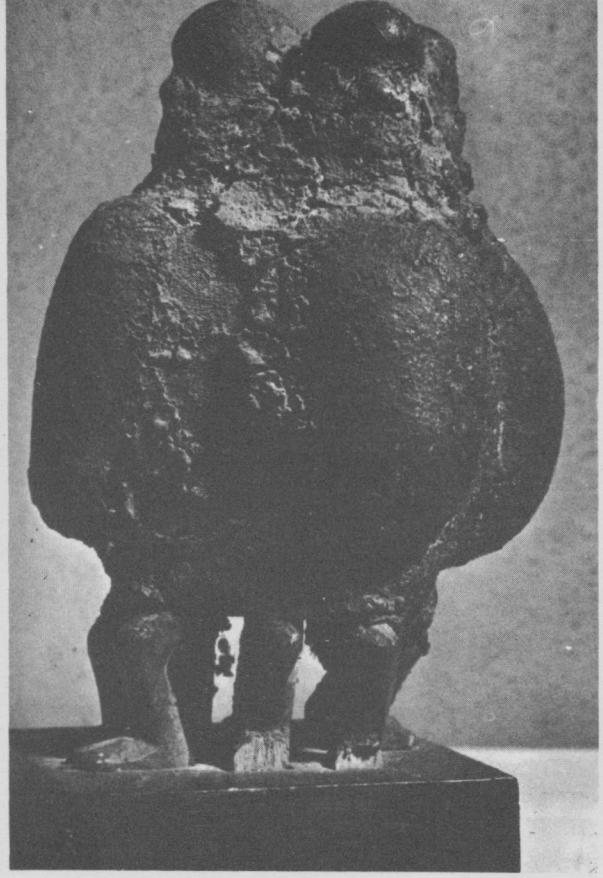


53

52. The intentions of this Congolese magician are even more sinister. He has placed a powerful magical charm, made of a viper's head and other assuredly noxious ingredients, into the thoracic cavity of the one he wishes to harm.

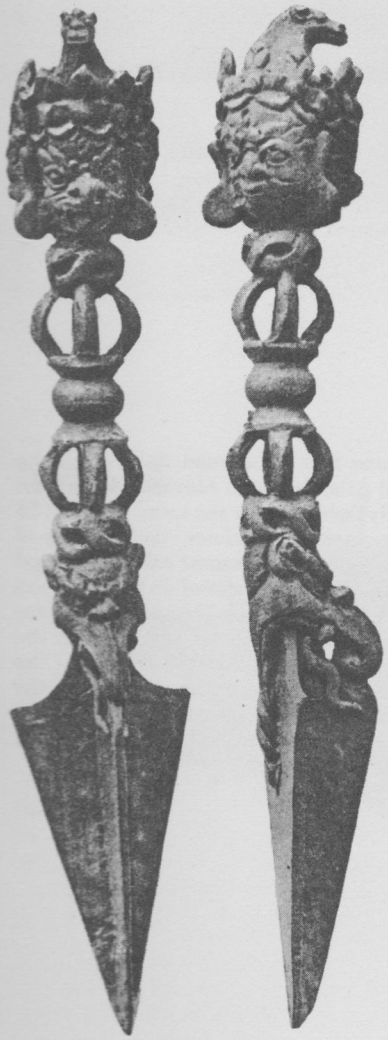
53. In this group of four reliquary statuettes, also from the Congo, the refinement of the spell-binding technique goes much further: the thoracic cavity and the abdomen of each of the figures were fashioned to be loaded with a magical charm.



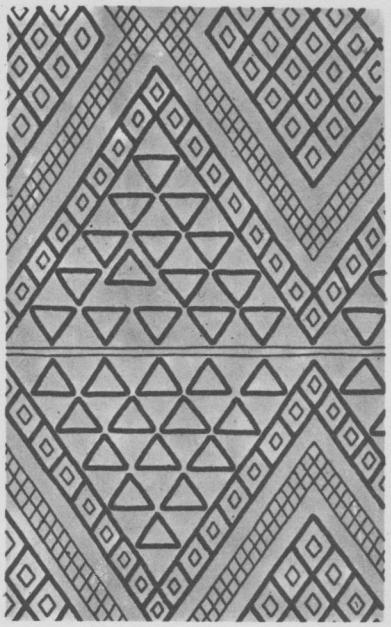
54. These fine cedarwood dolls, from the Central Atlas region of Morocco, have been carefully fashioned for the same purpose. In Europe, in civilised times, the working of spells has given rise to some celebrated legal cases. In 1315, Enguerrand de Marigny was hanged at Montfaucon (Haut-Loire, France) for casting a spell on Louis X. In the middle of the sixteenth century, the 'Leaguers' who were trying to establish the house of Guise on the throne of France, cast a spell on Henry III of France and killed him in effigy.

MAGICAL WEAPONS

55. Sorcerers and magicians did not think only of how to inspire fear or to wreak evil. They wished also to protect themselves, to gather powers to themselves, to assure their own good fortune, to guarantee their luck. So alongside real weapons, there are also magical arms, capable of wounding evil spirits. The magician used them to protect himself against the spite of demons. These Tibetan daggers serve this purpose.



55



57

56. A dagger does not always have to be real to be efficacious. The magical thought which it represents is all that is needed. That is precisely the significance of this 'talisman' from Asia Minor in which the 'evil eye' is pierced by three flint knives. The talisman, which reappears in every century and in every land, is thus described as a 'seal, figure, character or image of an active sign'.

57. In the world of Islam, where the representation of living beings was forbidden, the design of carpets had, originally, a magical function. In Persia, the weave always contained some fault to ward off the evil eye. In this fragment of carpet from Qairwan, a single triangle can be seen reversed among the 720 which the carpet contains. (The point directed upwards is the sign of fire; the point directed downwards the sign of rain).



56



58

GRIS-GRIS

58–59. The African 'gris-gris' are protective amulets whose name has been extended to the magicians who wear them. Talismans are 'active' charms while the amulets are passive. A great eighteenth century doctor, Van Helmont, the discoverer of the gastric juices, affirmed that a live toad carried in a box of horn was a specific against the plague. Others believe in the efficacy of the number 13 . . . .



59





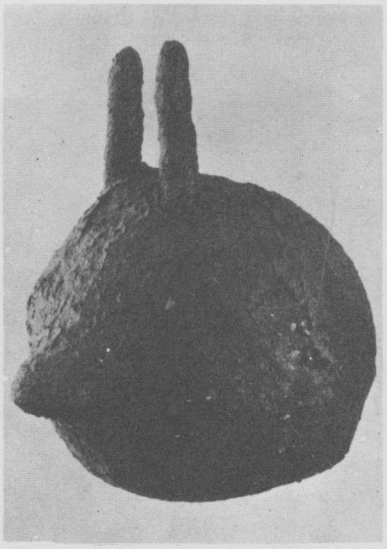
61



60. The fertility rites which were practised by primitive agrarian societies are still to be found amongst many contemporary peoples. This Angolese doll is the 'Bumba' of the waters and will assure prosperity to its owner.

61. This astonishing forged-iron statuette, which comes from Fedhala in Morocco, recalls the cliff drawings of Southern Algeria. No doubt it is also an illustration of fertility rites; its subject is a man in an attitude of obeisance but who also appears to be urinating.

62. Magical objects are also frequently religious ones. Such is this agrarian god from the Ivory Coast, called 'Mbotumbo', to whom offerings are made through the year, particularly of eggs which are placed in the cup held between the hands. This is a divinity which seems to extend its services to an individual rather than to society as a whole.

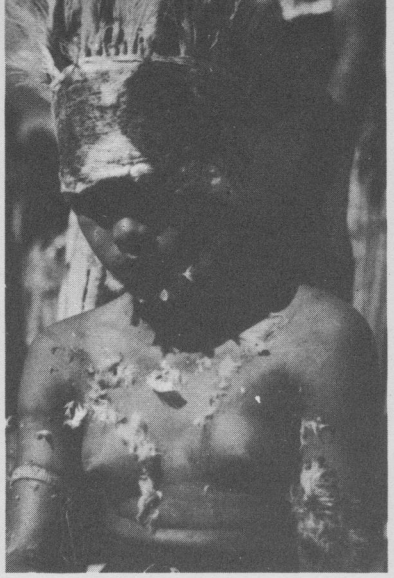


63

63. Of more generous scope is this gourd in the shape of a bird which comes from the Sudan. It is placed in the granary to protect the harvest. It is covered with dried blood and decorated with coba horns. This is one of the most widely distributed ritual objects among the followers of the Nama cult.



64



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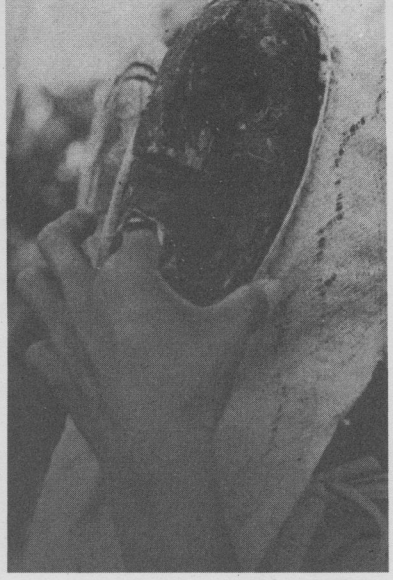


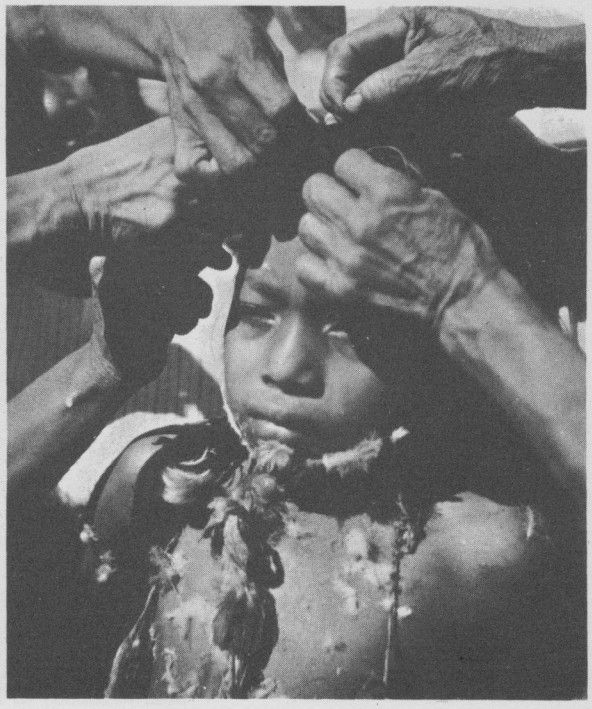
66

SEXUAL INITIATION

64 to **68.** Amongst a great number of peoples the rituals of sexual initiation take on both a social and a magical character. The photographs on this page were taken in the Amazonian regions of Brazil and show the phases in a ceremony of sexual initiation for young girls of the Takuna Indians. In Brazil the ceremony is called 'Moça Nova' while in Colombia and Peru its name is 'Pelazon'. The ritual is carried out when the young girl shows the first signs of puberty. For nearly six months, she is shut up in a dark hut. Only her mother and grandmother are allowed to come near her. Then at the end of her seclusion, on a night of full moon, the ceremony begins in earnest, and goes on for three days and nights. The girl is then the centre of dances which are accompanied with obscene gestures and she is, at last, brought into the presence of a symbolic phallus.



67

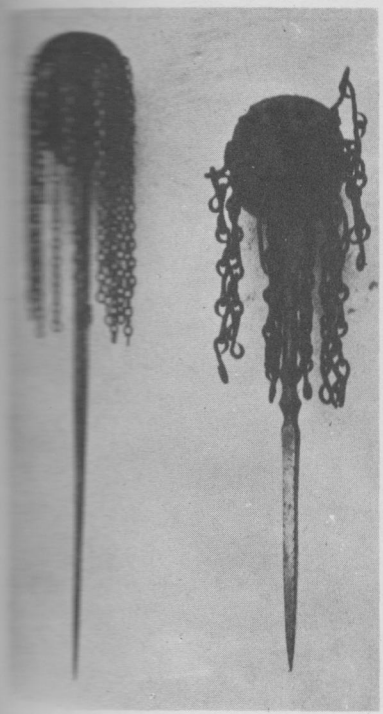


68



69

PLEASURE IN PAIN



69. This illustration, by George Catlin, is a faithful rendering of an initiation ceremony for adolescent males among the Sioux Indians, and resembles nothing so much as a scene of mass mutilation. With variations these harsh ritual tortures have been practised even among advanced peoples such as the Tibetans. The initiatory mutilations were performed under the direction of the witch doctor, out of women's sight.



71

70. These contemporary instruments of mutilation, 'Zarbies', are, sad to say, used in Albania today by the Helveti dervishes.

71. Although religious by conviction, these dervishes do not hesitate to resort to magic. Their dances have the purpose of inducing highly questionable ecstasies.



72

73. To triumph over suffering is, everywhere, an unfailing token of assured success, which enhances the prestige of all who submit without flinching to the test. Walking on fire without being burned, like this magician of the Peramanibo tribe (Dutch Guiana) has always been considered a proof of magical powers, although the fact that the practitioner is unscathed can be explained today.



73

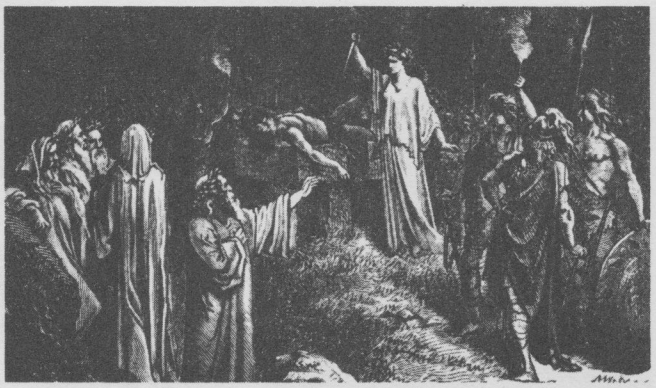


74

72. In magic the use of suffering is universal. Flagellation with a manifestly sado-masochistic character is to be found in all ages all over the world. These men dancing with whips come from Bolivia.

74. The Hindu fakir, Kuda Bux, undertakes one of these spectacular experiments in New York. He walks over the bed of hot coals with a happy smile.

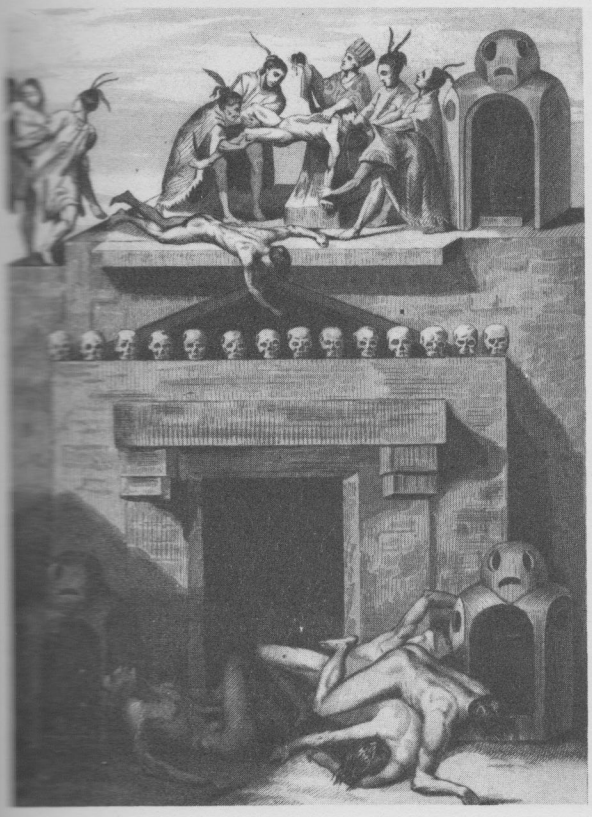
RITUAL MURDERS



76

75. The Indians of pre-Columbian Mexico practised human sacrifice on the altar of Centcotl, the corn goddess.

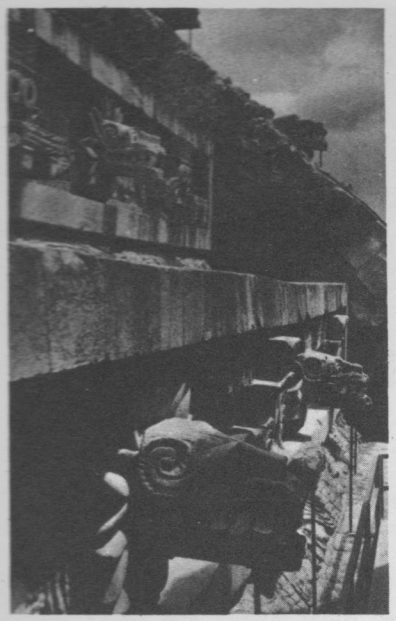
76. The Druids also practised ritual murder and its representation in the hands of romantic artists approximates to the Mexican sacrifices.



75

With primitive people and in early civilisations, magic often took on the character of a hope or a desire to assimilate the qualities of another; or sometimes to put upon a scapegoat the mistakes and difficulties of the community. This tendency found its supreme expression in ritual murder.

BLOOD AND SACRIFICE



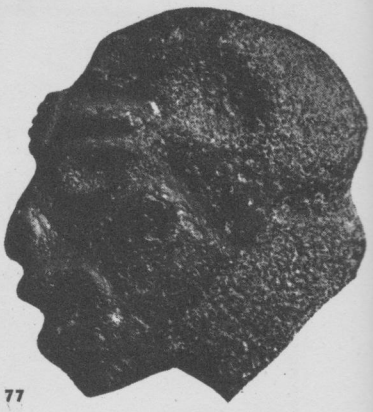
79

79. The Teotihuacan was one of the temples where the Aztec priests carried out their human sacrifices. A great many sculptures have been discovered representing the 'Plumed Serpent' (the significance of which is close to that of the Dragon of the Far East). A snake studded with pearls and precious stones coils itself about the statue of Huitzilopochtli.



80

80. This image of the human heart which the priests have torn from their victim can also be seen at Teotihuacan.



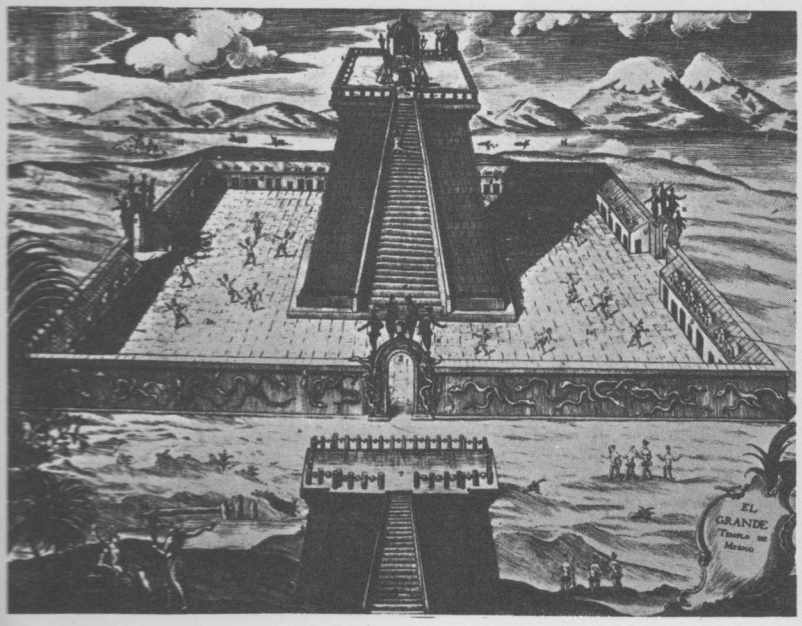
77

77. Ritual stone axe, of the type brandished over the heads of Cortez's 'civilising' soldiery by the Aztec people and priests. It was, however, really a cult object, skilfully carved, and not an everyday weapon.



78

78. Bas-relief on a stele showing a Maya priest holding in his hand an obsidian sacrificial knife. The victims were despatched on a bloodstone block with an obsidian knife or axe. The temple walls were stained with blood.



81

81. The Grand Temple of Mexico, from a contemporary Spanish engraving. The followers of Cortez related how, after having come down the interminable staircase, they went into a huge building of brick and timber construction situated on a mound. There they found the skulls of the victims, carefully piled one on top of the other until they reached the ceiling. One soldier claimed to have counted 136,000 of them.



82

The Mexican civilisation of pre-Conquest times was not alone in practising human sacrifice. Carthage also was notorious for its 'Molochs' — mass incinerations of children — a practice derived, so it seems, from the Hebrews. Moloch is a corruption of the name Molech, a king of the Hebrews and one of the gods of the Ammonites. They sacrificed their children to him to obtain good harvests.



83

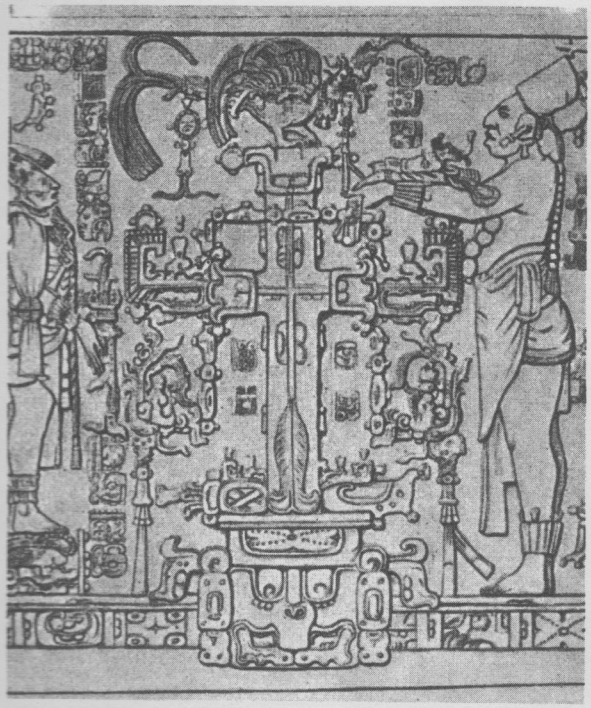
This cannibal feast was drawn by a German who, in the sixteenth century, took part in the first explorations of Brazil. There is no extant explanation of the significance of this type of ritual. Strangely, the only participants here are women and children.



84

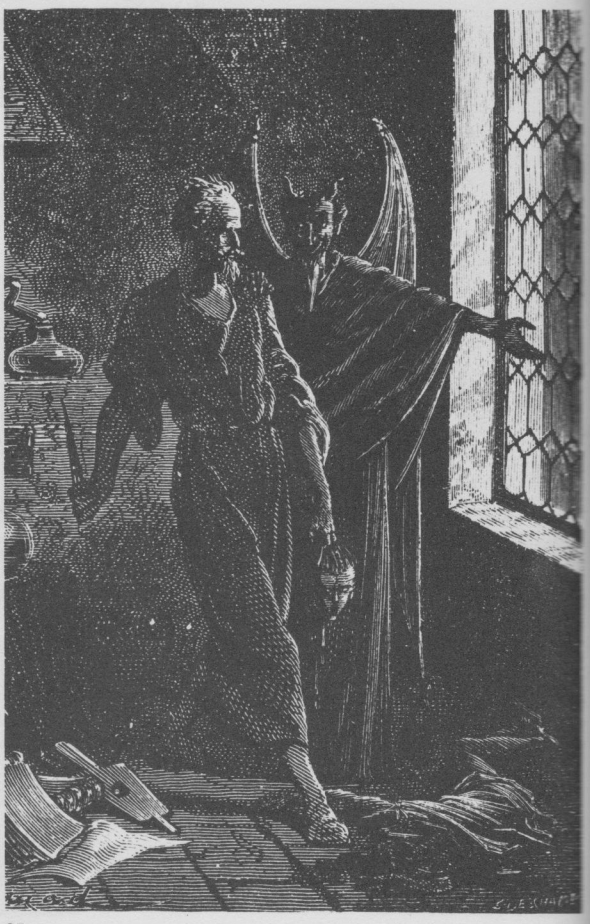
84. The magical idea behind ritual murder is a reflection of the belief in the necessity of assimilating those forces which, having left the dead, will come to inhabit the body of the executant. It is probable that the story of the massacre of the Innocents, which the gospel recounts, derives from ancient Hebrew practices of ritual murder: all the children are killed so that one amongst them, the future Messiah, will take upon himself all their vigour and their virtues.

85. The connection between magical ritual murder and sexual sadism can be clearly established. The adventures of Gilles de Laval, Baron de Retz (1404—1440) deserve close study. Gilles, being possessed of a demon, sacrificed innumerable children. The best-known version of this true story is Perrault's 'Bluebeard', in which the author seems to have understood and interpreted the underlying sexuality of the affair.



86

86. The image of the cross is found wherever the magical idea of human sacrifice appears. The Spaniards were greatly surprised to find in Mexico this cross on which a priest is offering a child for burning.



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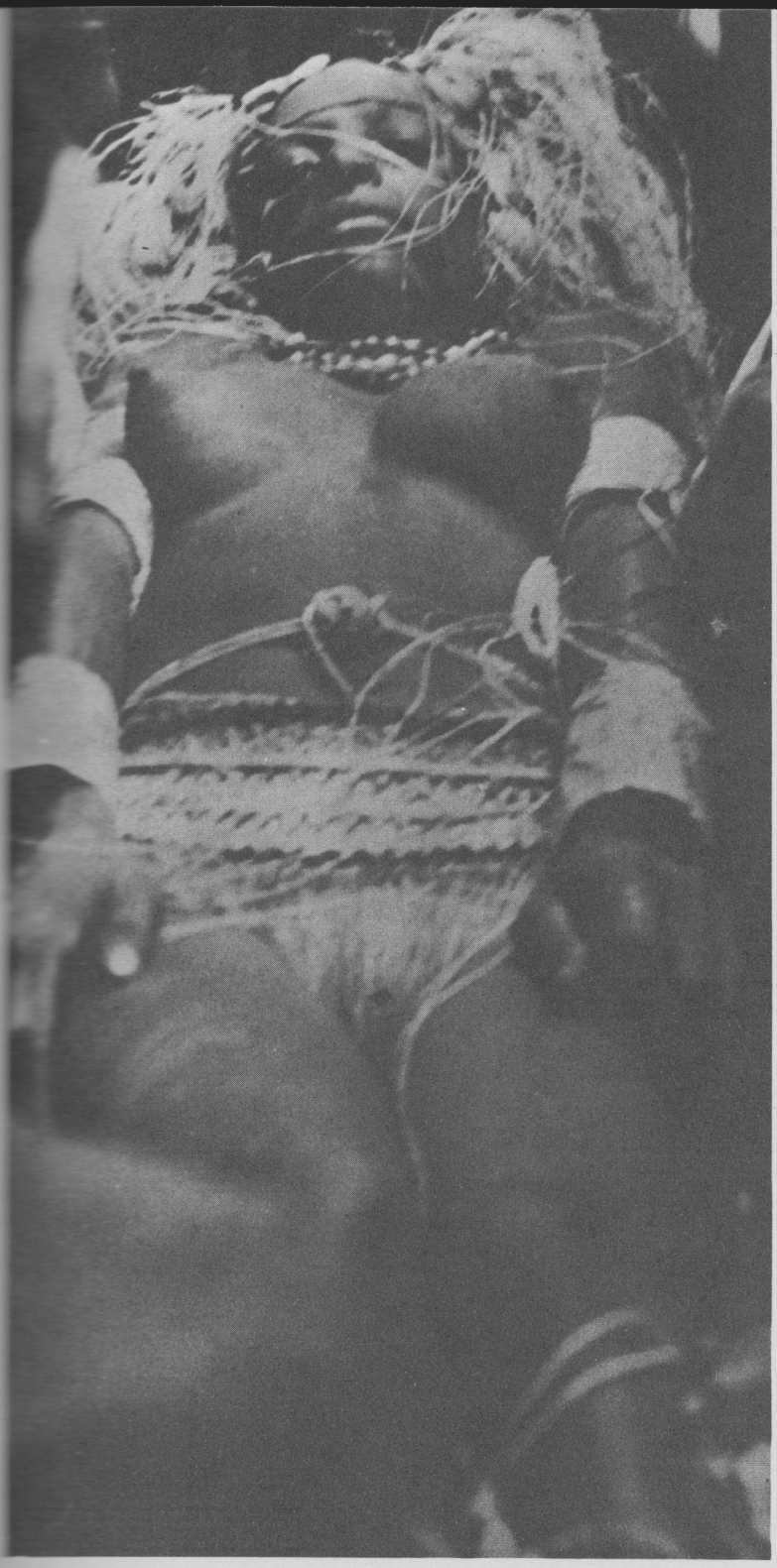
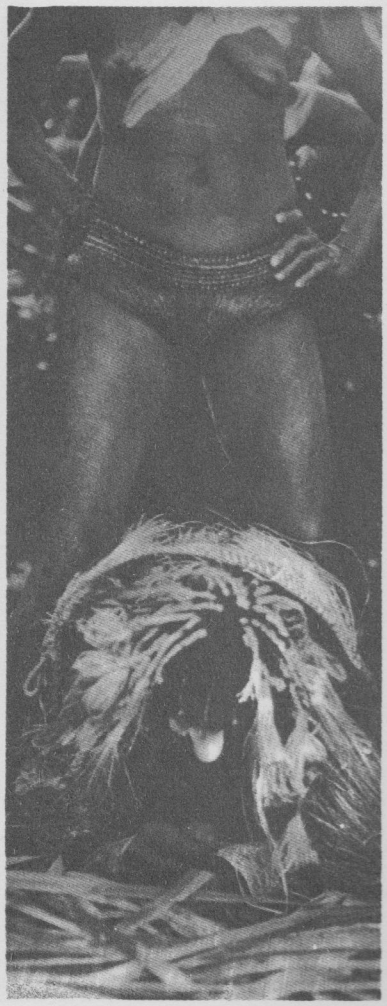


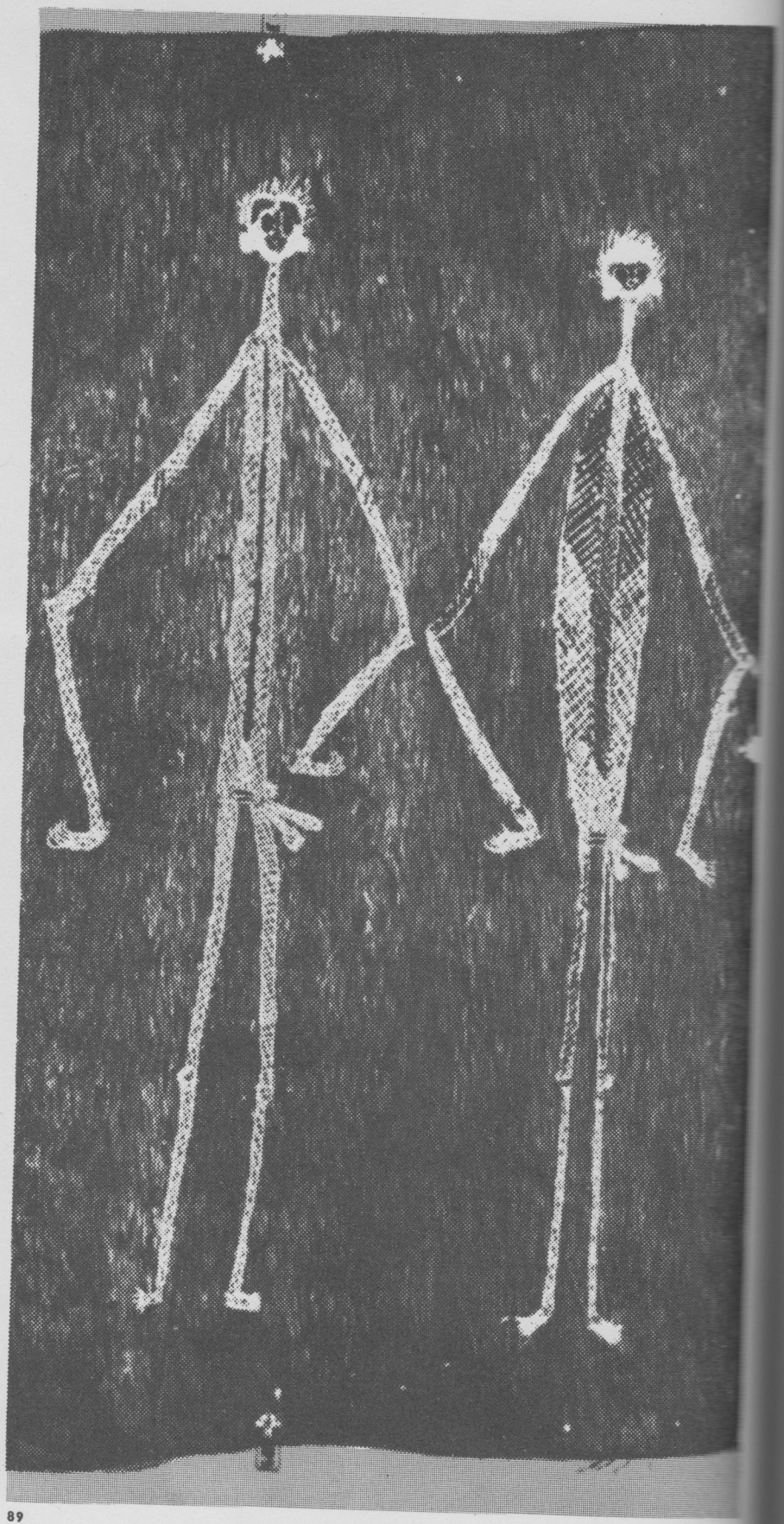
87

REBIRTH



88

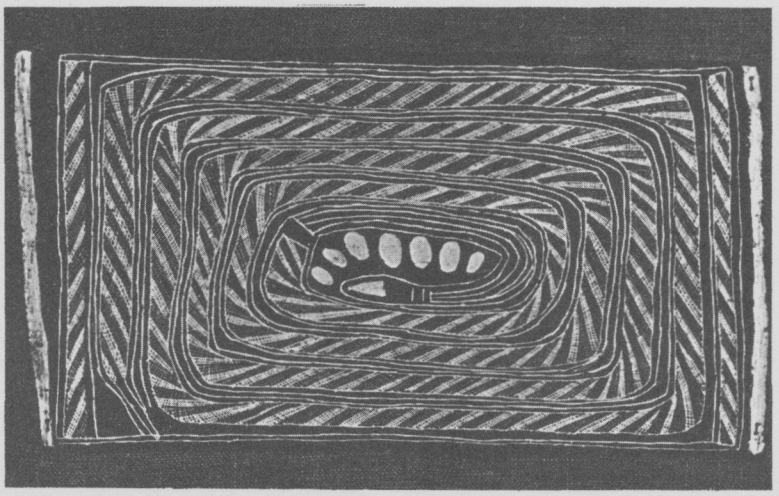
87–88. Magical rites are not merely utilitarian, vicious or depraved. Some are of great beauty and look forward to an advanced spirituality. This example shows a contemporary primitive tribe where the custom is that a warrior who returns from the battle, defiled by hatred and the blood of combat, may not take his part in the life of the community without first being purified — his 'rebirth'. The ritual rebirth of the warrior, which takes place in the Men's House (usually forbidden to women) is the only occasion when they may enter it. It is significant that the presence of women in this place is designed to bring about the return of peace.



89

89. The majority of these 'spirits', such as this couple called 'Mimi', are of the Great Ancestors who are held to be immortal and who can transform themselves into rocks, whales, crocodiles or snakes.

ARNHEM LAND

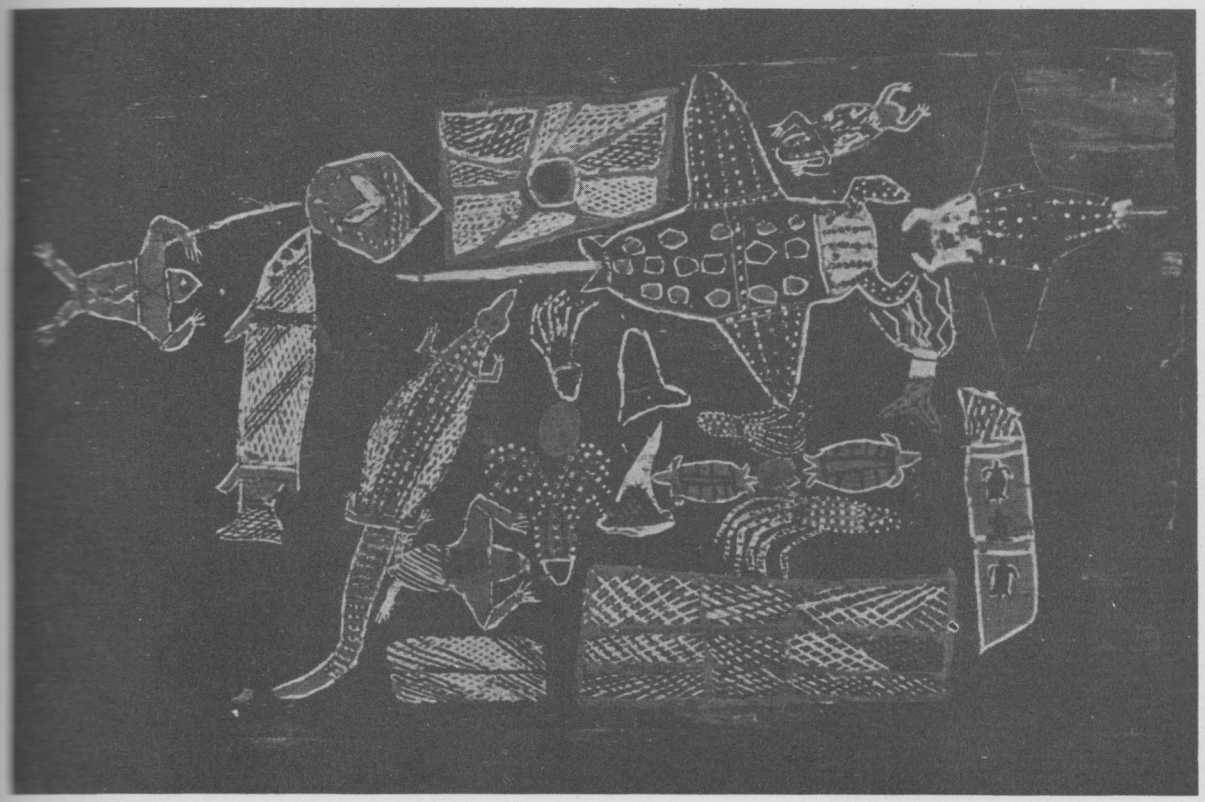


90

90. It is interesting here, in the 'Yulanggul Python' to pick up once again the time-honoured theme of the serpent, repeated by an artist living today in the Antipodes.

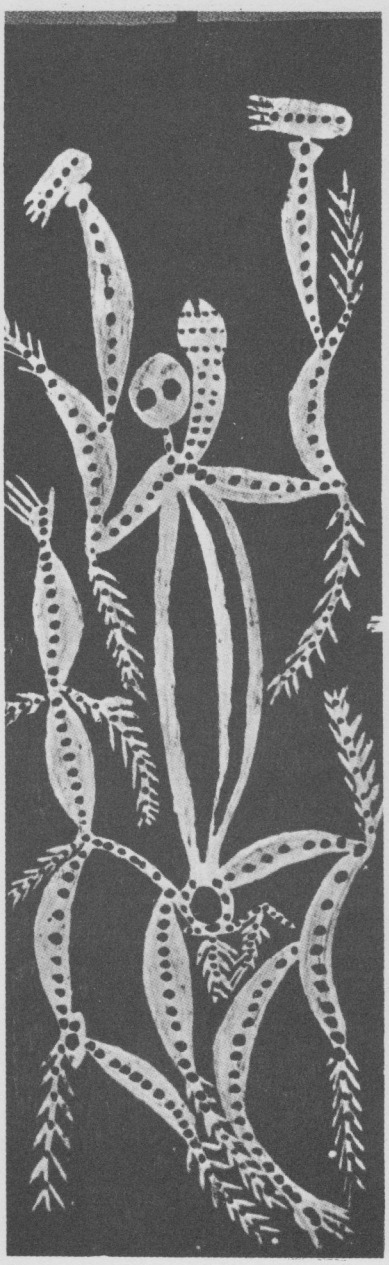
It is interesting to discover, right in the middle of the twentieth century, examples of beliefs which, in the form of magical works of part, take one back to the palaeolithic period. These stylised drawings come from Arnhem Land in Australia, where the aborigines still live by hunting, fishing and fruitgathering. Their paintings, mostly magical and sacred, are made on the bark of trees. These decorate the huts which are occupied during the rainy season and feature 'spirits' from the land of Geimbo.

91. Because the spirits of the ancestors are reputed to send wind and clouds, empty canoes, coconuts or tree-trunks, borne on the sea from the islands where they live, a fishing scene is always sacred to them.

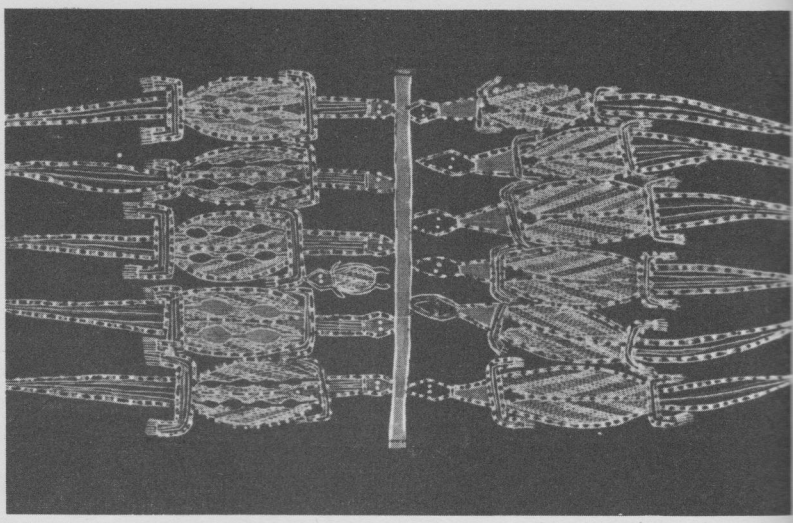


91

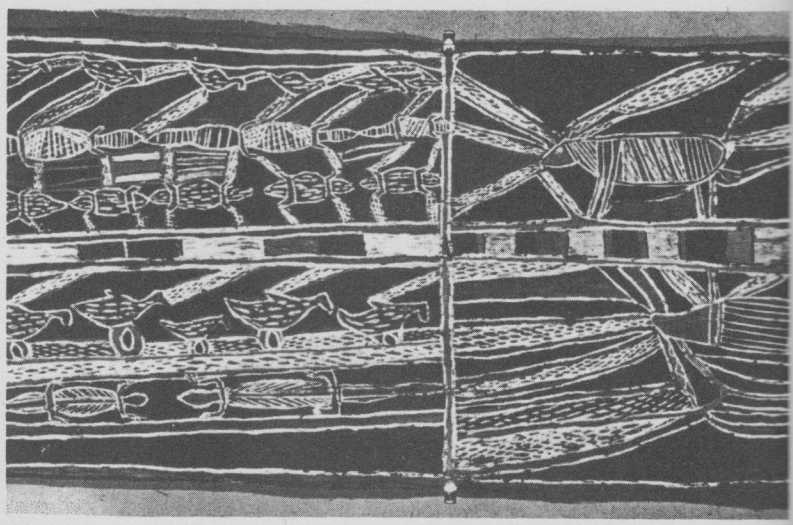
92 to **95.** The paintings on tree-bark from Arnhem Land are the works of contemporary artists who follow the oldest traditions. Here (92) is a figure of a male magician, a totemistic drawing (93), the interpretation of a dream world (94) and lastly, 'the totem place' showing a woman with a 'burning bush' (95).



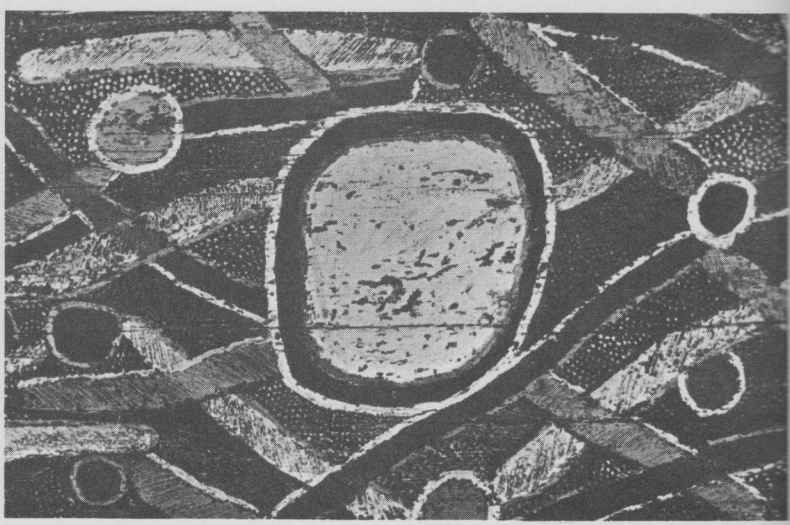
92



93



94



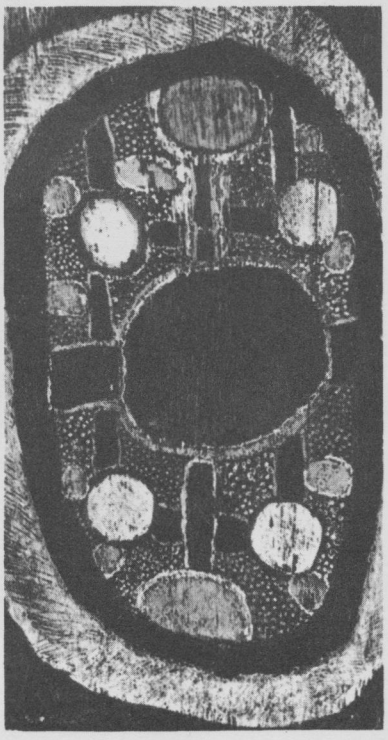
95



96

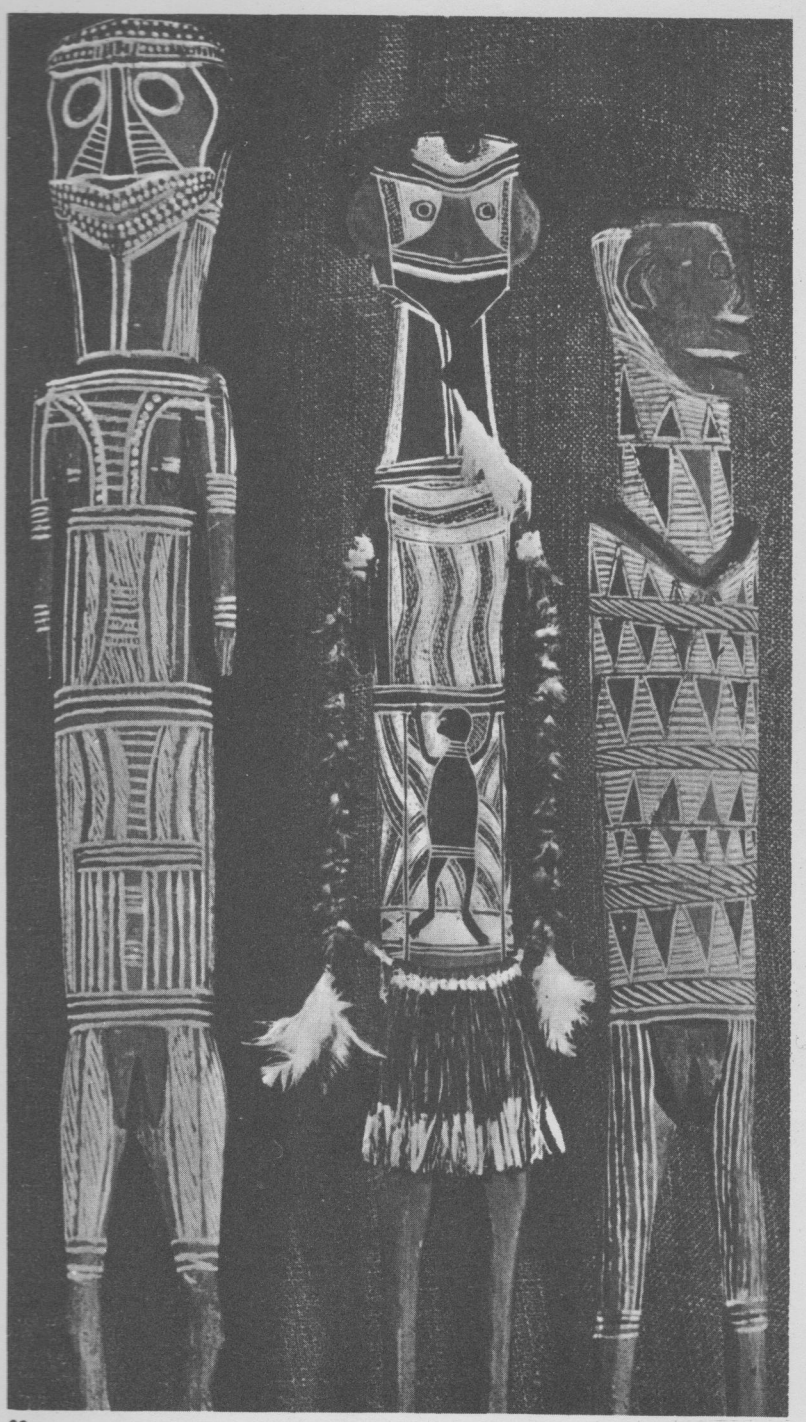


97



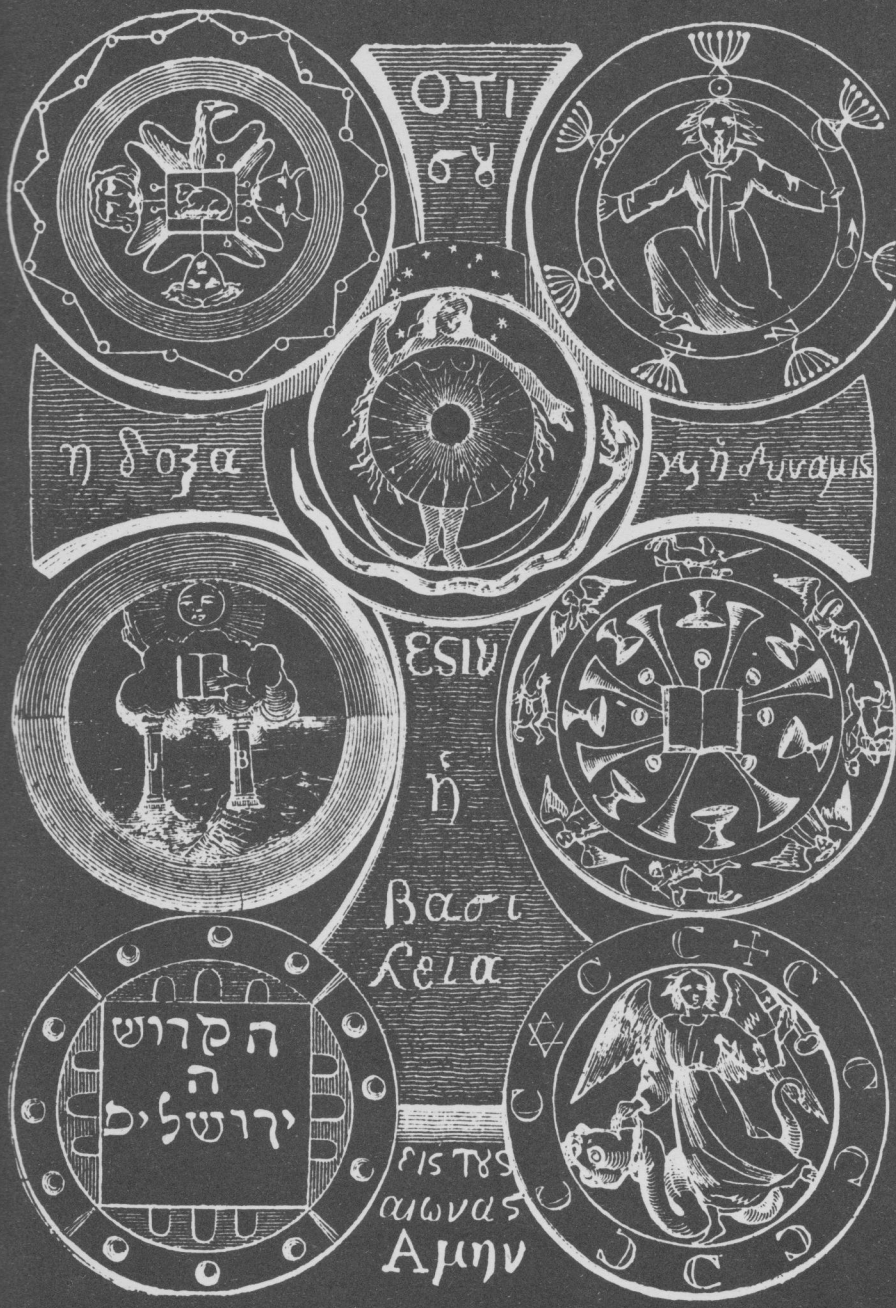
98

96 to **98.** The 'Mimi' spirits live on a rocky plateau, always hidden from view since they are so timorous. Their extremely sensitive hearing reveals a stranger's presence immediately. Then they disappear into a crack in the rock which they open by breathing on it (96). A local artist has made drawings of dreams such as these shown in 97 (from Murmura) and of the totem place (98).

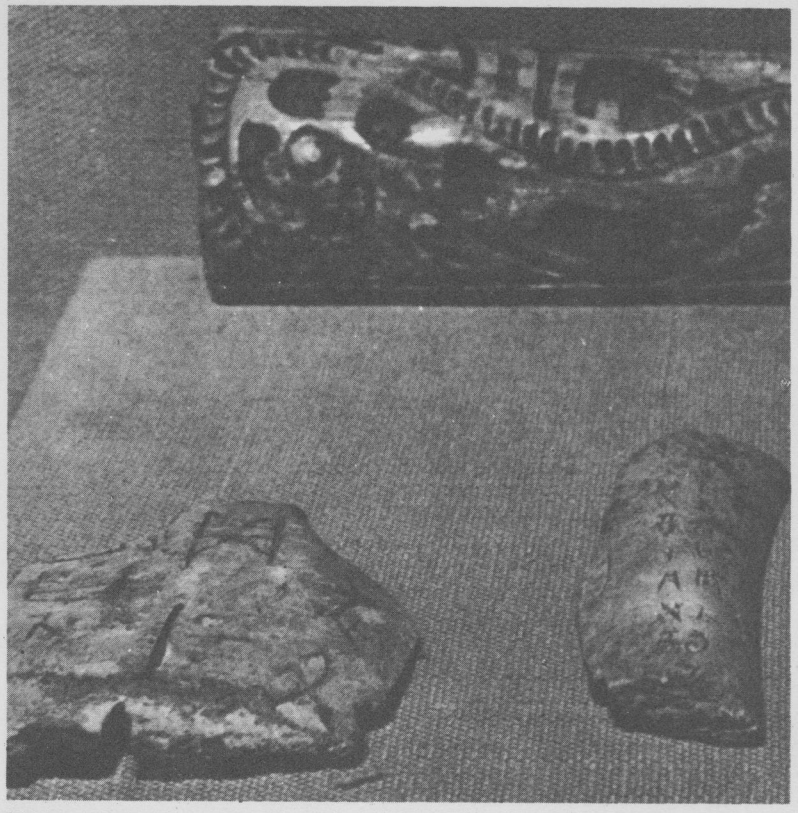


99

99. The symbolic and frequently abstract character, of the Arnhem paintings, and their affiliations with the productions of certain contemporary art movements, assist in the better understanding of the eternal process which leads to a magical vision of the world. The inhabitants of the paleolithic period are not very distant from us; these three ancestral spirits prove it.



100. The Seven Seals of St John (apocalyptic key).



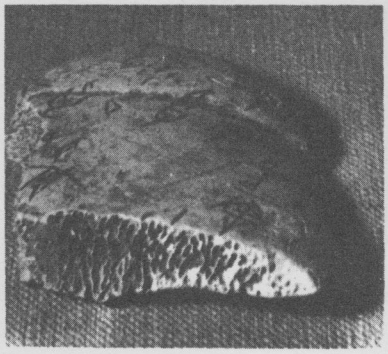
101

INITIATION INTO THE UNKNOWN

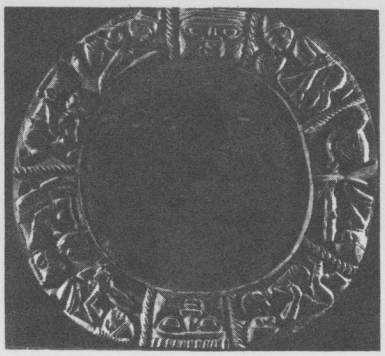
From the very earliest times, man has made great efforts to divine the future, using for the purpose a host of 'signs', a multitude of 'keys'.

101–102. The very oldest evidence on this subject has come down to us from China, engraved on stone or on bone, such as the examples pictured here, which go back to the fourteenth century B.C. The future was sought in the flight of birds, the entrails of fowl, in smoke, in dice, in rings and in molten lead. Some made their divinations from a number of points marked at random on the ground (geomancy); or perhaps from letters traced round the circumference of a circle in the centre of which the magician spun round until he collapsed (gyromancy).

103–104. The dish is part of the 'Fa' ritual, a divinatory practice from Dahomey which is of a remarkably erotic nature. The handbell (104) made of ivory, is also a sacred implement for the fortune-tellers of this country.



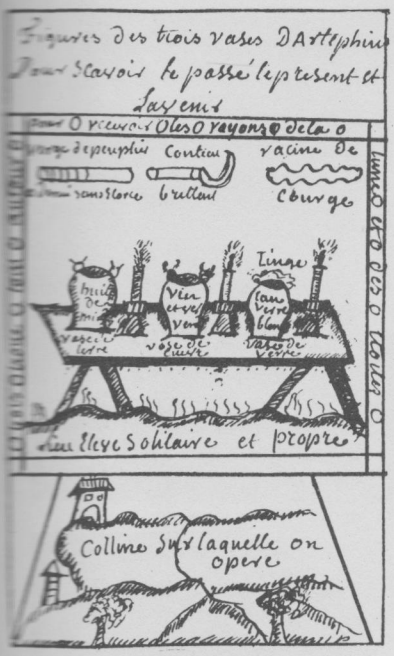
102



103

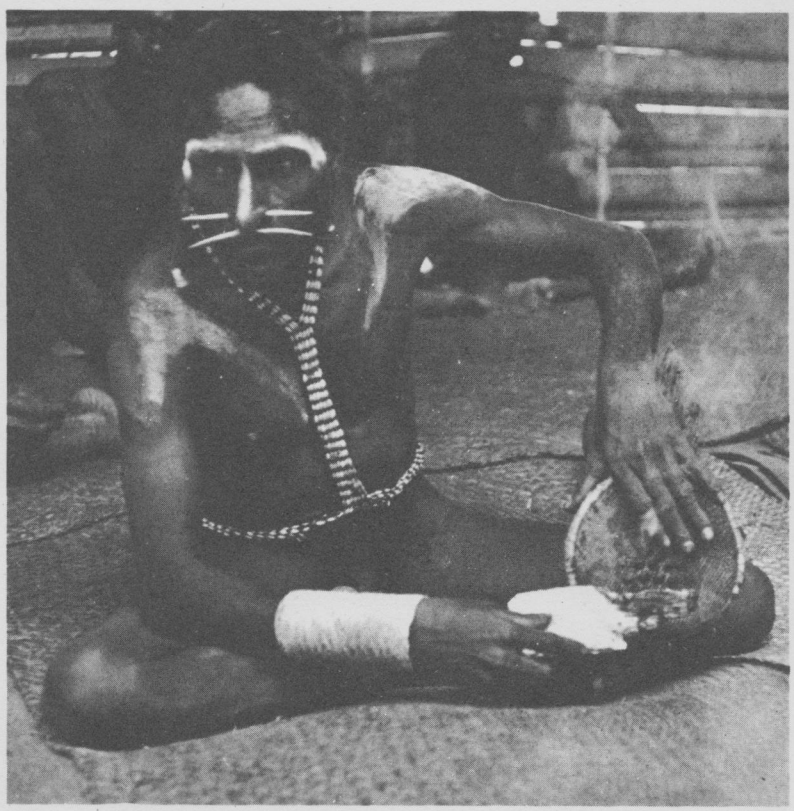


104



105

105. Western magical texts use a language which, beyond any doubt, is parallel to the mutterings of the primitives. This picture, from a seventeenth century manuscript, gives the formula of the 'three vessels' (earth, copper, glass) which enables us, apparently, to know the past, the present and the future, with the aid of tools such as the poplar wand.

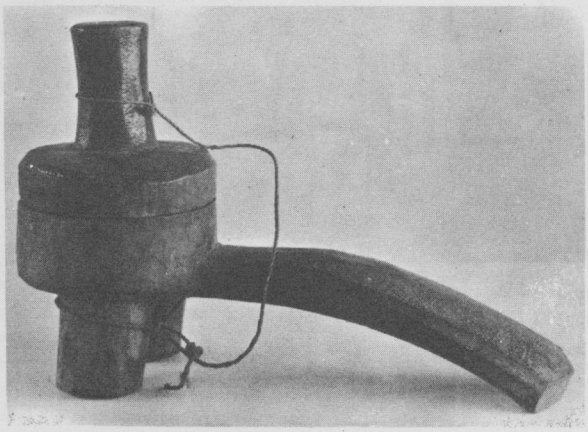


107

107. The author of a film entitled 'The Sky and the Mud' has reported the use in New Guinea of divinatory bead-frames, a practice which is also common in North America.

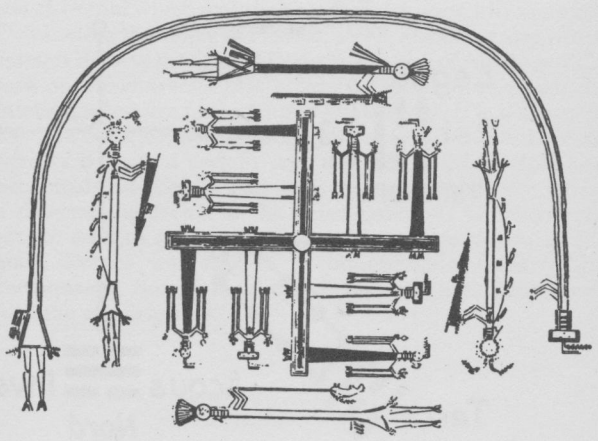
FORETELLING THE FUTURE

106. This wooden instrument, used by sorcerers in central Africa, indicates the ambiguous way in which this kind of prophecy is linked to sexuality.



106

108. In North America, the Navaho Indians draw fortune-telling pictures on the sand, magical puzzle-pictures. Everything soon becomes an omen to be read. In this way were born: aeromancy (divination from the air), alectromancy (from the cock), alectryomancy and alphitomancy (divination from grains of wheat) and also alveromancy (divination from barley). The amniotic membrane, which occasionally envelops the head of the newborn, led to amniomancy. There were also axinomancy (axe and hatchet), clidomancy (key), cromniomancy (onion) and daphnomancy (laurel); besides others.

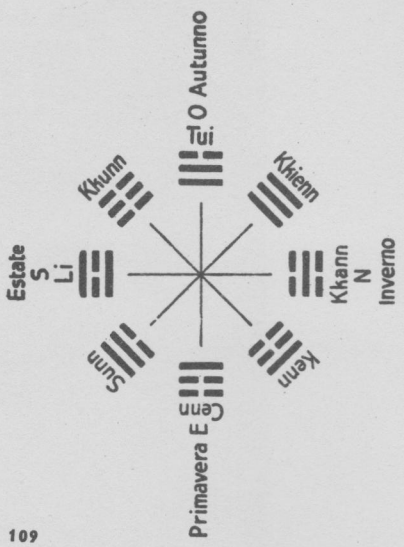


108

DIVINATION

The oldest and most authentic evidence of 'Historical Divination' has come down from China.

109 to **111.** The eight 'trigrams' on which the Chinese technique of divination is founded, make up the basis of the 'I-Ching'. As they combine together, the eight basic trigrams form sixty-four hexagrams or 'Kuas', themselves composed into six 'tendencies'. The sixty-four Kuas are supposed to express the complete range of psychological, social and cosmic situations in which Man might find himself. A sacred text, divided into six parts, corresponds to each Kua: each of the parts is related to one of the six 'tendencies'. It is possible to obtain in this way the description of 11,520 different 'situations'. The interrogation of the 'I-Ching' is made by means of divinatory rings.



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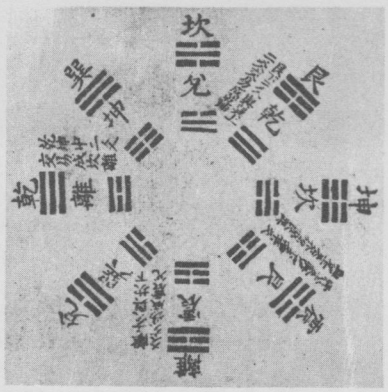

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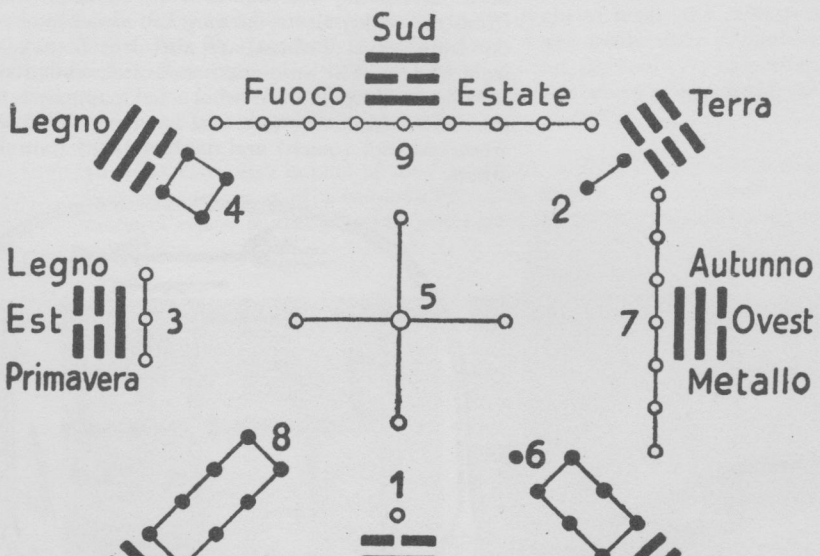

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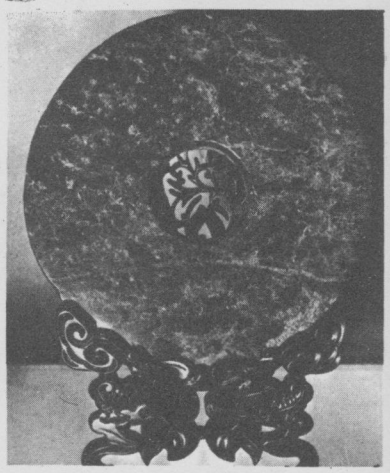
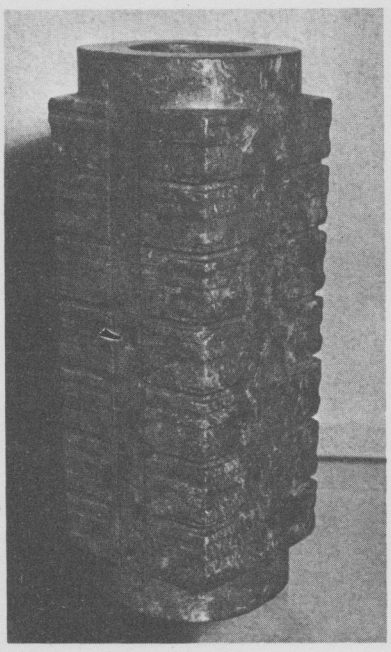
112



113

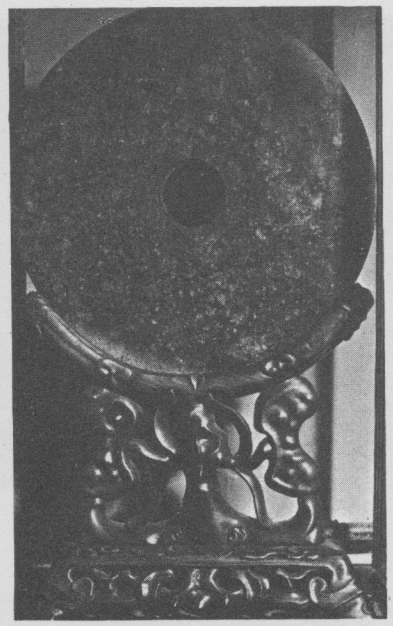
112. The 'Ting' tripod was employed for magical evocation and it corresponds to hexagram number 50 of the 'I-Ching' or the 'Book of Changes'. This is the oldest known book on the subject of divination.

113–114. The Chinese represented symbolically the two fundamental forces (Yin and Yang) which are at the base of all divination. Pi, the symbol of the sky, is represented by the discs shown here, which date from the Han dynasty, the third century B.C. Pi corresponds to hexagram No. 1 of the 'I-Ching', which also stands for the Father, the Prince, the Dragon, the South, Summer and the male procreative force. The Chinese attributed the 'I-Ching' to one of their mythical sovereigns, Fu-Hi, who happened to notice its mysterious outlines on the back of a dragon which came out of the Yellow River. The event took place three millennia before our era. There are texts extant which have been dated in the dynasty of Hia (2,705 to 1,766 B.C.).



115

115. 'Tsong', the earth symbol, corresponded to hexagram No. 2 which also stands for the Mother, the Cow, the North, Winter, the Female Principle and Acquiescence. The cross-section can be seen to be both round and square, so conforming to the Freudian symbolism of feminity which is found again in the Arab Mother-sign.



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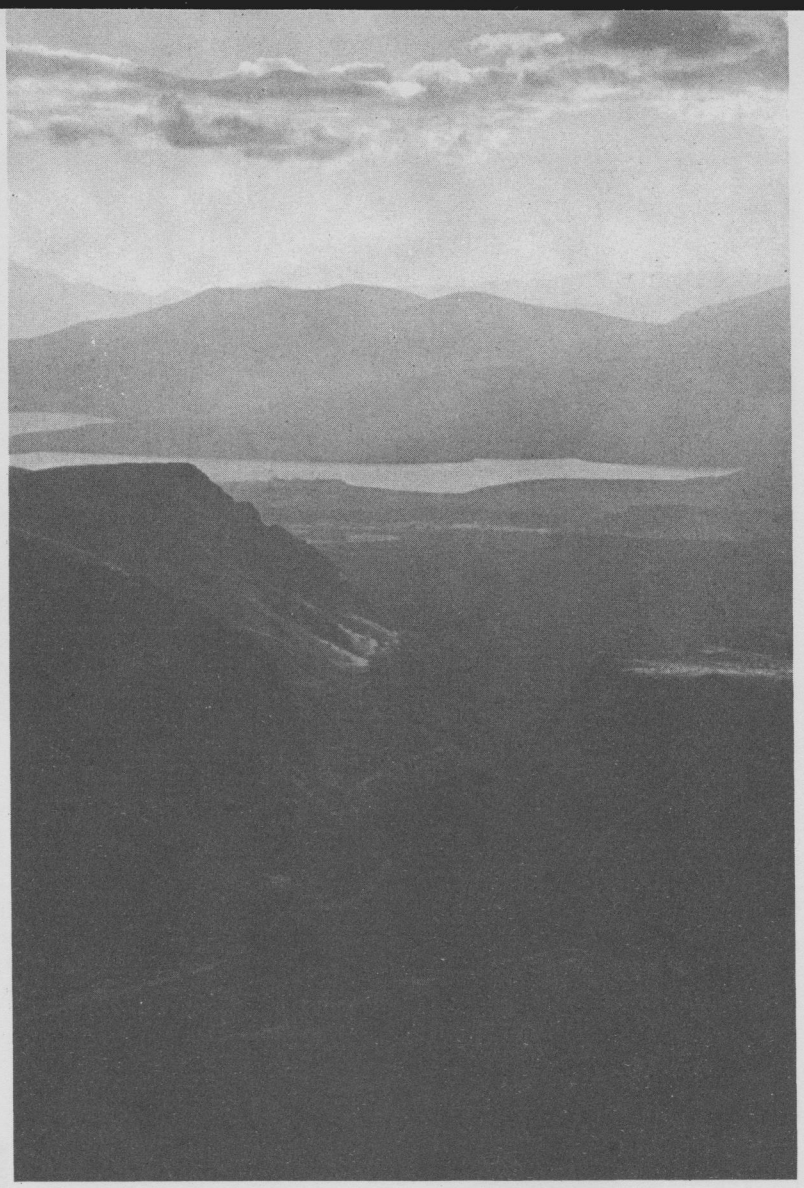
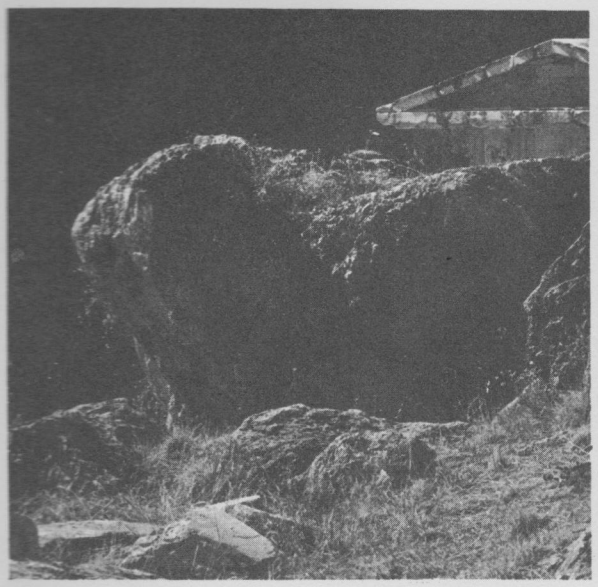


116

ORACLES

116. Just as China had in the 'I–Ching' an oracular voice which was both individual and collective, the Greeks possessed Delphi which was the centre of the pre-Christian west. Dominating the valley of Pleistos, above an olive-grove which extends right to the Gulf of Corinth, the city of Apollo rapidly took on the character of a religious capital and indeed, the intellectual centre of the entire Greek world. If it is accepted that the historical period proper did not begin until the sixth century B.C., it is certain that the influence of Delphi had been made manifest at least eight centuries previously. It was a determining factor in the development of Greek colonisation. As if to confirm its renown as a place chosen by the gods, Delphi was subject to innumerable catastrophes: earthquakes, floods, rock avalanches and fires. Holy wars laid the city waste.



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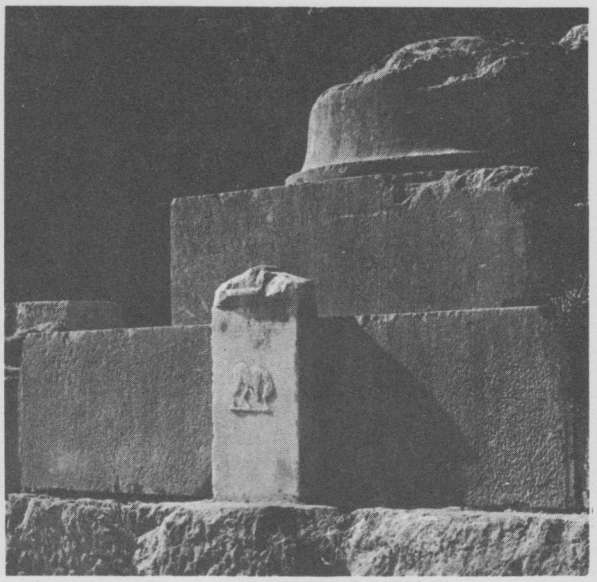


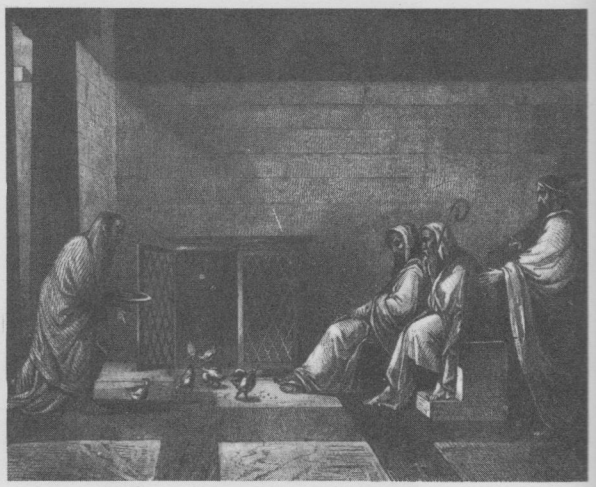
118

117. This rock was the most venerated place in the entire Delphic sanctuary. It was on this island of wilderness in a sea of urban growth that the Sibyl, who derived, it is said, from Asia Minor, gave her oracles. Before even Apollo had taken possession of the site, the rock had been used by a feminine cult over which the python watched. Near the rock was the cave in which the god killed the python. The original 'Spring' and the 'Enclosure' also overhung the majestic rock.

118. Along the 'Sacred Way', all the Greek cities, as far as Marseilles, raised up 'Treasures', monuments of which each was more sumptuous than the last, to thank Apollo for his oracles. Here is the tripedal stylobate of the huge golden 'Victory', erected by Gelo, tyrant of Syracuse, after his victory at Himera over the Carthaginians (480 B.C.). The stele standing in the foreground commemorates the civil equality with the Delphians which had been obtained by an Arkadian from Kleitor.



119



120

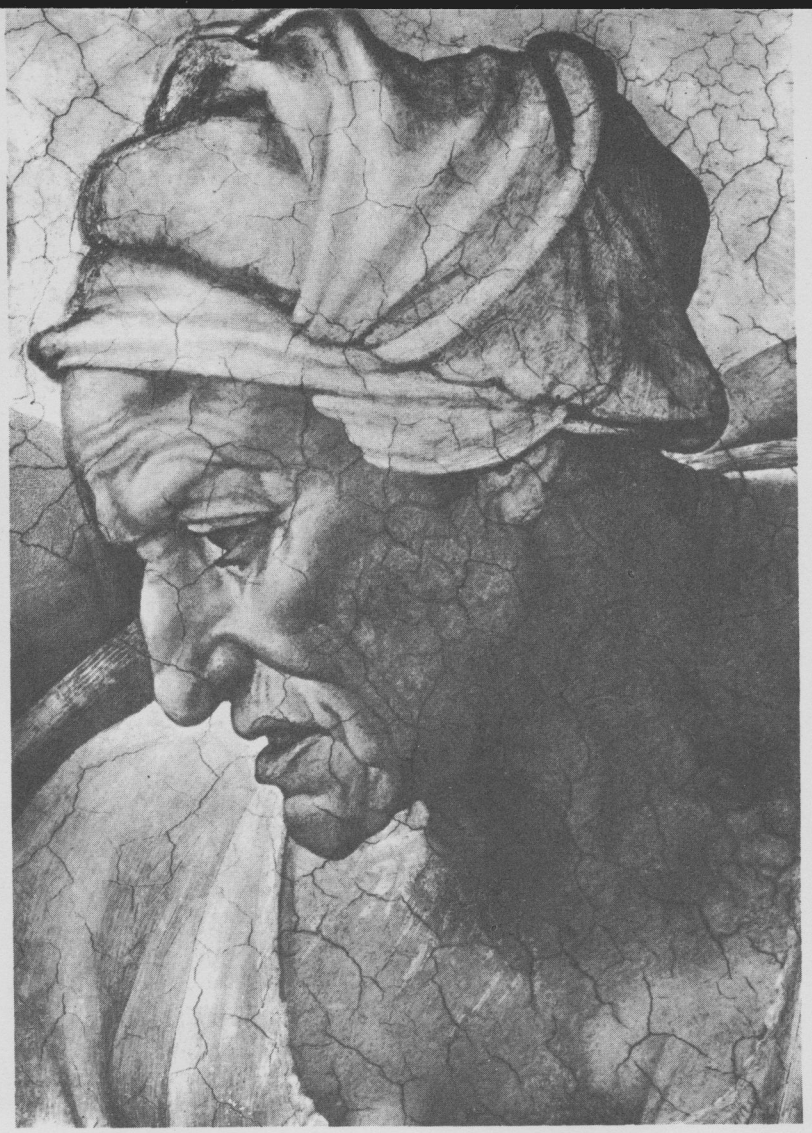
119. The Sibyl gave her oracles on an appointed day. Sitting on the tripod, after having purified herself and chewed some laurel leaves, she entered into a trance under the influence of an 'inspirational inhalation', the nature of which is now not known. 'Prophets' gathered up her responses and redelivered them in the form of paradoxes or riddles which the exegetes then had to interpret.

120. In Rome, divination was the business of the augurs and soothsayers, who employed observations of the flight of birds, of heavenly occurrences and of the way in which chickens fed. There was a college of augurs under the direction of a 'magister collegiae'. The Gauls also had augurs which they consulted on prescribed occasions.



121

121. The general conception of the priestesses of Delphi has always been more or less fantastic. In reality they were chosen from the oldest and poorest inhabitants of Delphi, then submitted to an austere, near-monastic life. Those who consulted them were obliged to pay a tax which varied according to nationality.



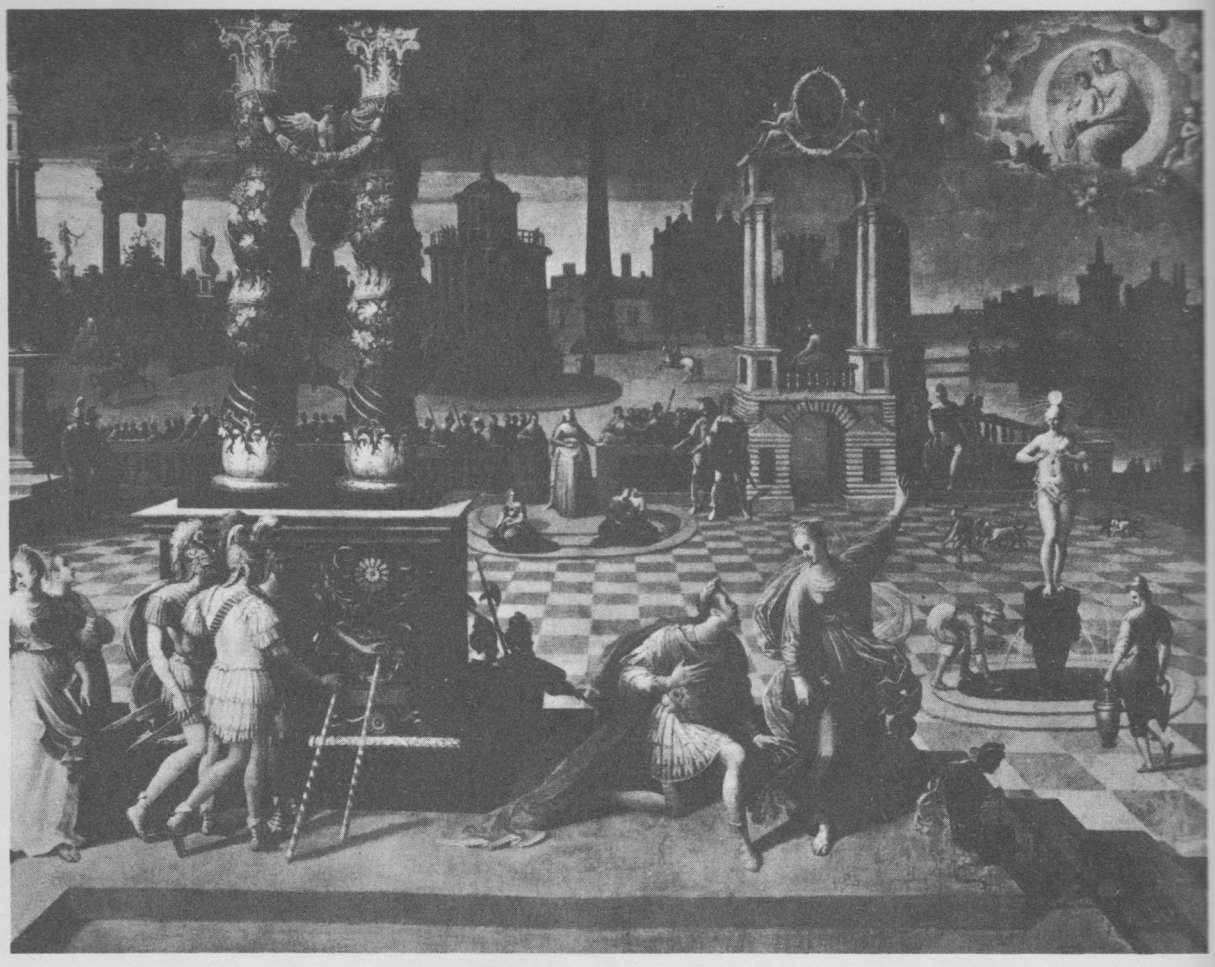
122

122. According to legend, the Sibyl of Cumae (here painted by Michaelangelo) bequeathed to Tarquin the oracular books which were kept in the Capitol and which were consulted by the Senate when circumstances were pressing. Since Apollo had allowed the Sibyl to number the years of her life by the grains of sand she could hold in her hand, she lived to such an advanced age that, at the end, ravaged and powerless, nothing was left to her but her voice. The Christians attributed to the Sibyl a prophecy about the birth of Christ contained in the 'Dies Irae'.



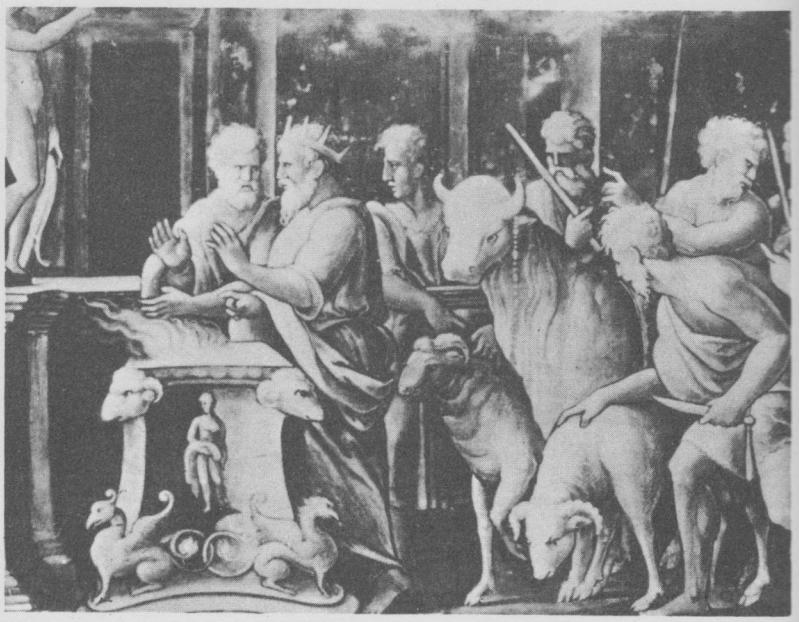
123

123. This black amphora painting is an allusion to the defeat of the python who protects the primeval female cults of Delphi. Incited by Hera, the python pursued Leto who was pregnant with Apollo, but Leto on the isle of Delos gave birth to the infant who later killed the monster and installed at Delphi the Sun cult of the male principle.



124

124. Greeks and Romans had several Sibyls who were often confused. Besides the Delphic, the best known, the Greeks had a Sibyl at Dodona in Samos. Sibyls were also found in Libya, and in Eritrea. In classical times, their prophecies were transmitted by word of mouth. Rather than deny their power, Christianity preferred to make the Sibyls into the prophets of its own message. This picture confers on the Sibyl of the Tiber the attributes which are usually given to the Cumaean Sibyl.



125

125. The arts multiplied the stories and legends which surrounded the oracles. The Middle Ages and the Renaissance gave them full attention. In this enamel from Limousin in Charente, the father of Psyche is consulting the oracle of Apollo.

126. In *The Divine Comedy*, Virgil arrives in Hell by crossing nine circles (Purgatory has nine stages and Paradise nine spheres). The number three and its multiple nine play a major part in Dante's work. Dante makes of Virgil, what the first Christians made of the Sibyls: a pagan prophet of the Saviour.

127. In the land of Israel divination was the function of prophets claiming to be directly inspired by God. They constituted a sort of spiritual magistracy parallel to the civilian magistracy. Moses, who founded the Hebrew nation, had received in Egypt an upbringing which initiated him into the magical disciplines of that country. Here Moses is shown striking the rock.

128. In Gaul, for a long time before the establishment of Christianity, the demi-goddesses exercised their gifts of prophecy by the examination of entrails and by the observation of bleeding in human victims. The tradition has it that one Sibyl, the priestess of Isis, predicted to Vercingetorix his approaching defeat at the hands of Caesar.



126



127



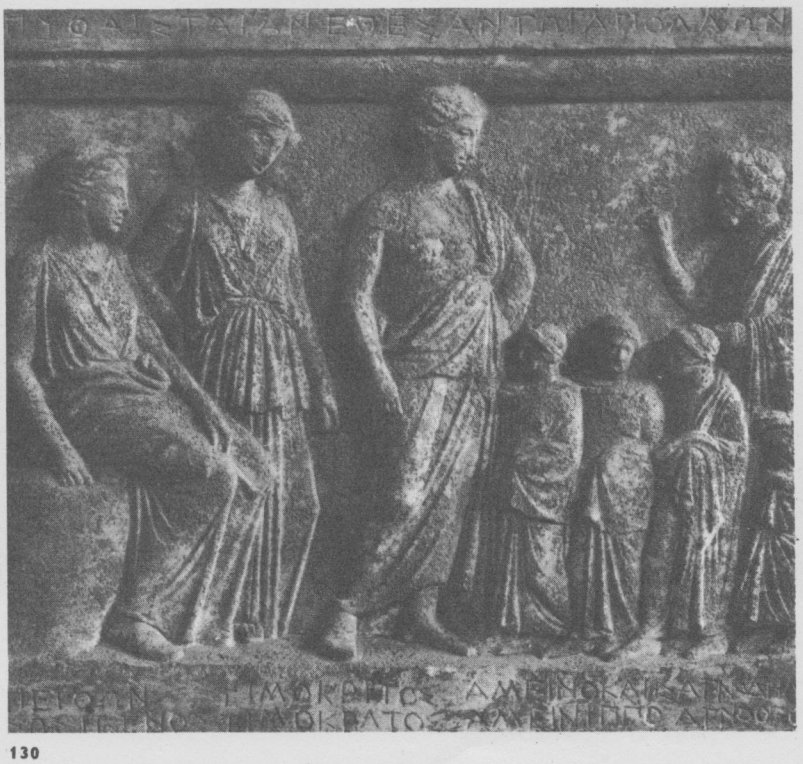
128

129. In China, as time went on, divination became the province predominantly of the Taoist monks. The Confucian influence, which was more traditionalist, held the 'Book of Changes' to be a mere collection of popular wisdom and nothing more. The disciples of Lao-Tze (shown here, near the alchemical furnace of the Kuas of the 'I-Ching', about to take the tablets of immortality) loaded it with cabbalistic speculations.

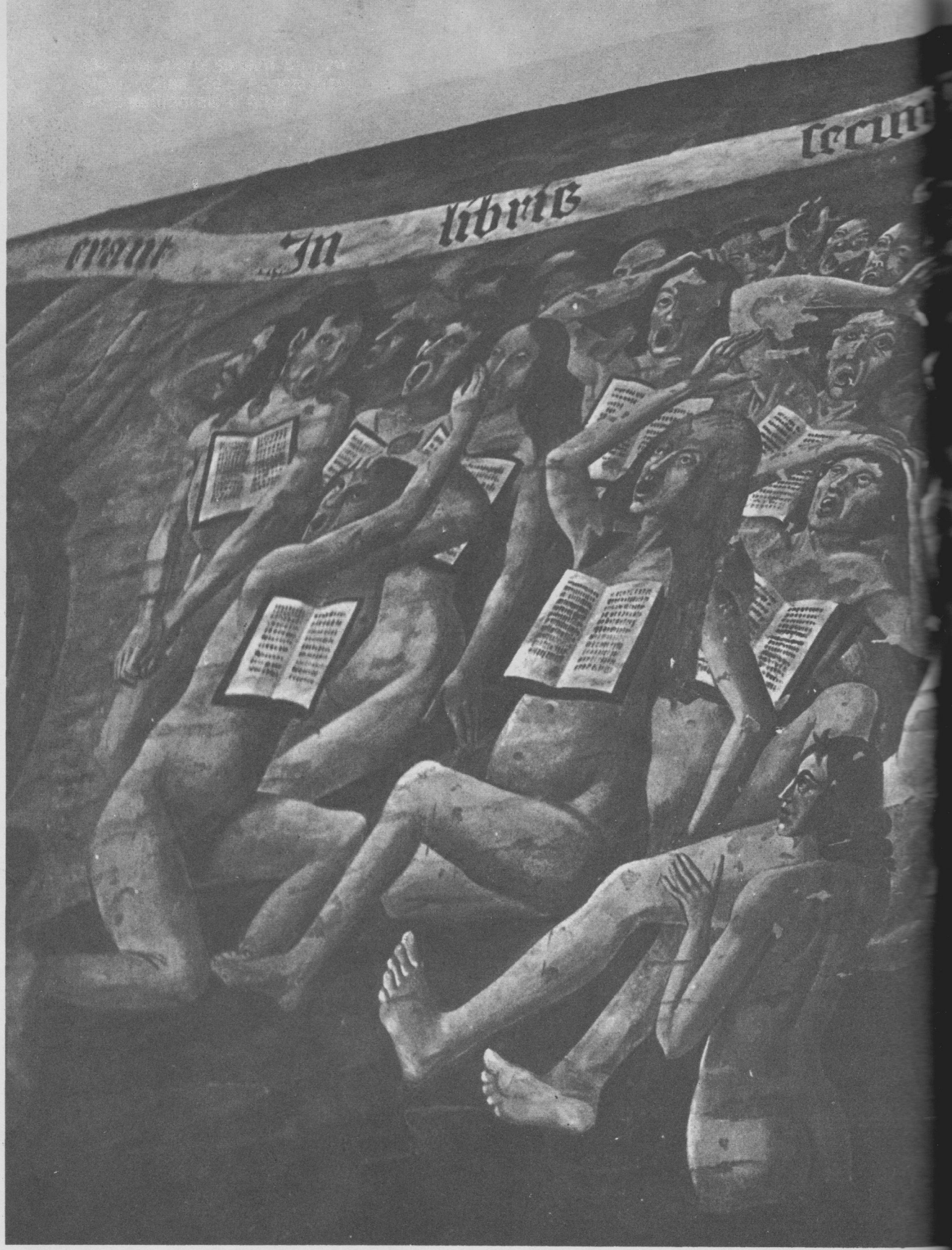
130. Again, in Rome, during the fourth century, very young people came to consult the oracle of Apollo repeatedly, to discover the guiding lines of their lives. The answers were so ambiguous that it was easy, after the event, to explain any occurrence in such a way as to bear out the truth of the oracle.

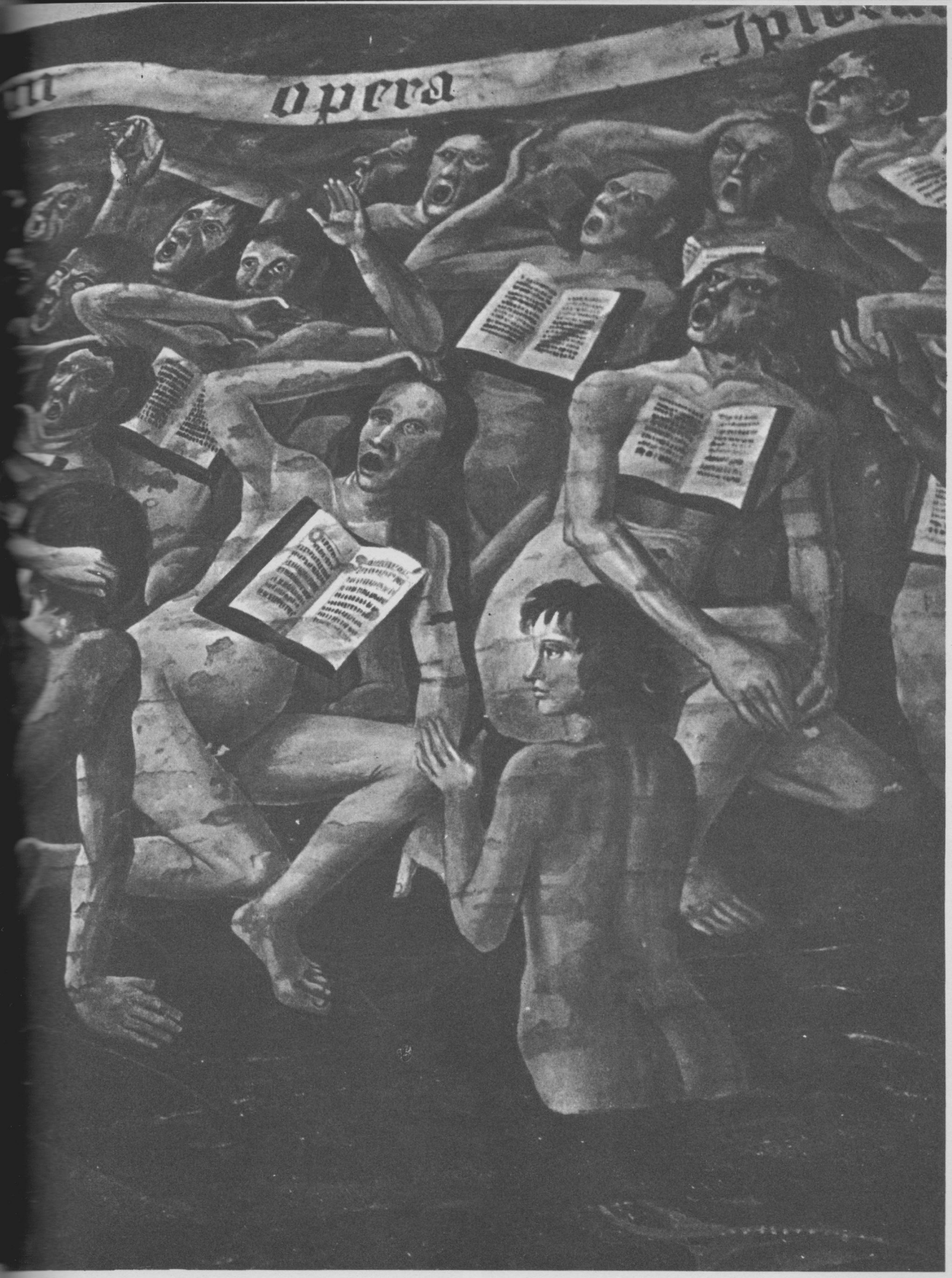


129



130

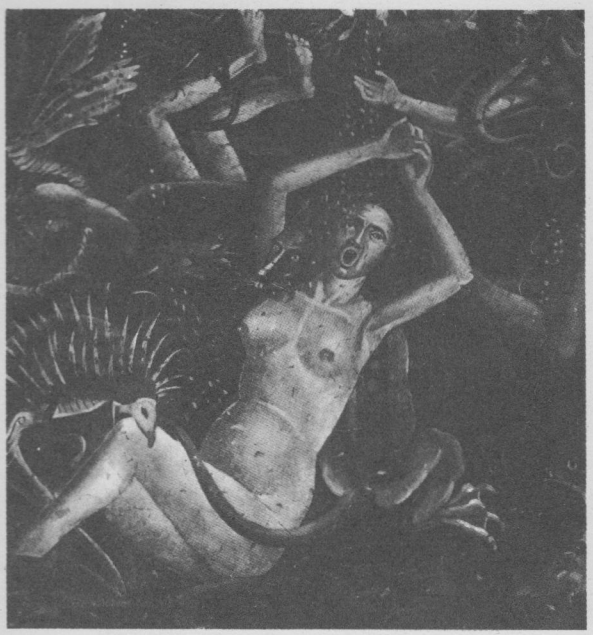




131

131. The dead arising from the tomb. (A detail from the Apocalypse in the Cathedral of Albi.)

BEYOND DEATH



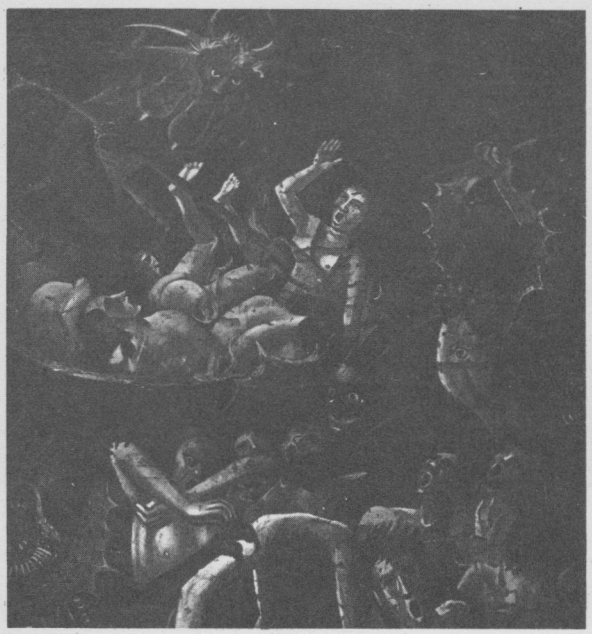
132



133

132 to **135.** The Catholic Church put up a barrier against the practice of official prophecy, such as existed in the land of Israel, and forbade the arts of divination. However, the Christian era has been dominated by the Apocalypse (Revelations), a prophetic book attributed to St John, which foretells the dramatic end of the Christian universe to be succeeded by a New Heaven and a New Earth. During the twenty centuries of Christianity, the Apocalypse gave rise to innumerable mystical interpretations, always obscure and often frenzied; and to works of art which were an outlet for fantasy and the eschatological imagination and sadism of the medieval painter.

The mural paintings of the Cathedral of Albi, which date from the fifteenth century, show successively: the resurrection of the dead (on the preceding page), the cursing of the lustful of either sex (132), the damning of gluttons (133), and various other torments (134, 135) which the medieval imagination was pleased, in its charity, to specify for the human race.



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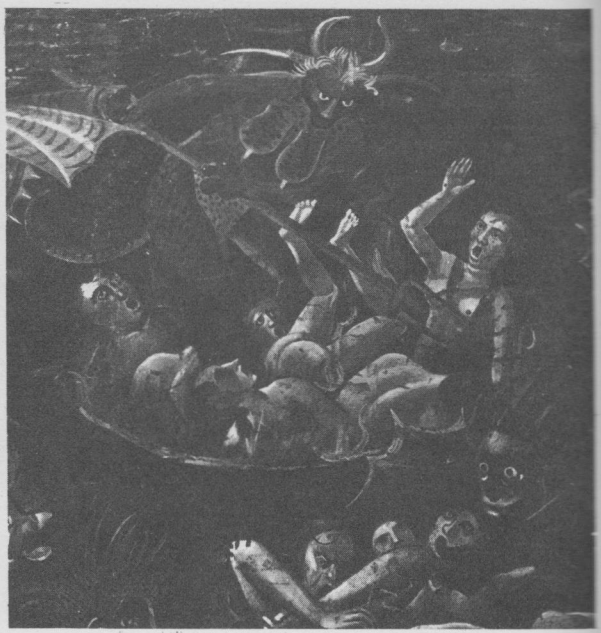
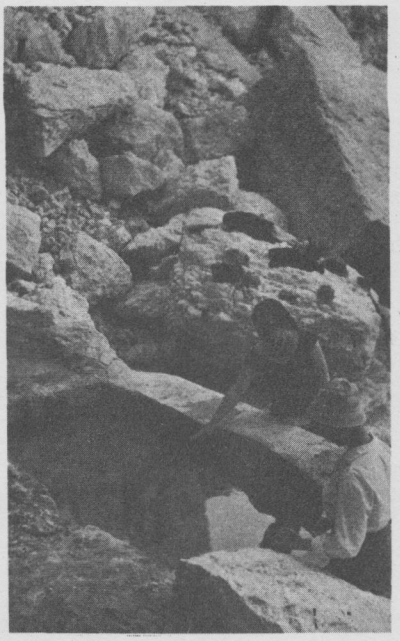


135



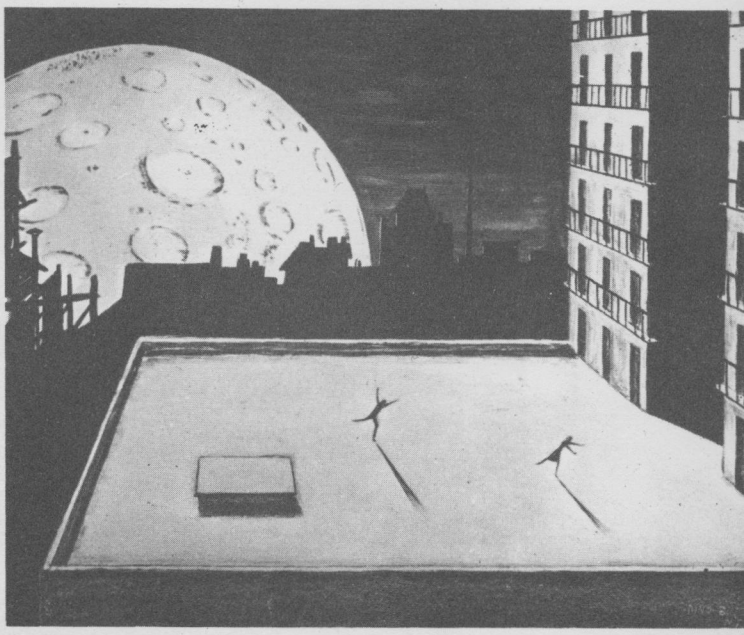
136

136. In Patmos, to which he had been exiled by Domitian, St John received the revelation of the Apocalypse, the pages of which God made him devour (Dürer's engraving, 136). But the Apocalypse of St John is only the most celebrated work, and the only accepted by the Catholic Church, of a whole series of Apocalypses which, from the end of the Jewish world, belonged to a very fashionable literary genre.



138

138. Today, in Horeb, tourists quench their thirsts at the living spring which Moses caused to spurt from the rock when he rapped it with his long, flexible wand, a symbol of power and a forerunner of the magic wand of our conjurers. The miracle took place in the twenty-third century B.C. and this rare water continues to well out in Israel.

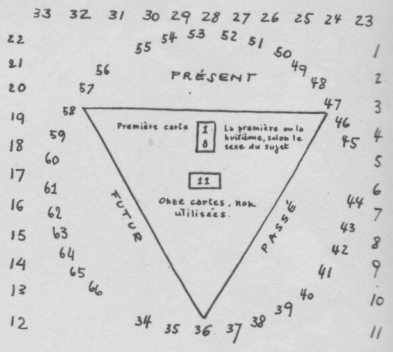


137

137. The agony of the world's end, inherited from the Apocalypse and belonging to the psychology of western Christendom, has come into its own again in the works of many artists of the present day, as in this canvas by Dino Buzzati. Atomic experiments and flying saucers give backing to this new mythology.

One of the most popular methods of fortune-telling is 'cartomancy'. Legend has it that card games were invented to amuse Charles VI during his madness. There is no foundation for this. Cartomancy caused a tremendous stir in the court of Louis XVI as well as under the Empire. Innumerable methods of interpretation exist. Indeed, cards are never more than a pretext for awakening the intuition of the seer.

139. The illustration shows the plan of the disposition of the Tarot cards for 'The Big Game'. The origins of the Tarot remain a mystery and there is nothing to support the assertion that gipsies brought them from Egypt at the end of the Middle Ages. It was the 'clavicle of Solomon', the 'universal key' of the cabbala and of the Bible, enabling the riddle of the Sphinx itself to be deciphered.

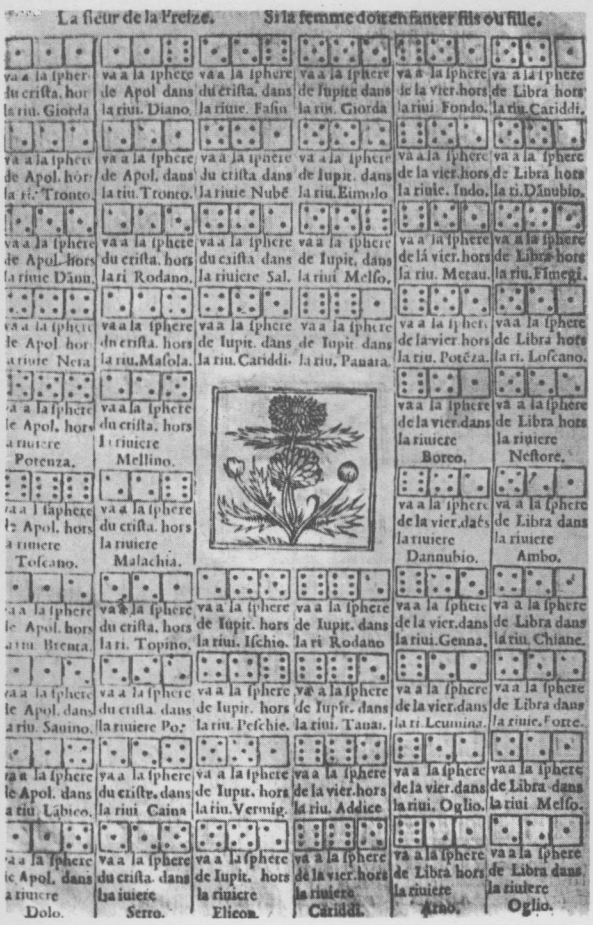


139

CARTOMANCY AND CHIROMANCY

140. Dice were used for divination, in the same way as cards. The illustration: a man, in the usual anxious state of imminent fatherhood, asks the dice to tell him 'whether his wife will give birth to a son or a daughter.' (Maître Laurens l'Esprit: 'Le Passe-Temps de la Fortune des dez', 1534.)

141. This illustration shows the unusual purpose to which playing cards were put in Naples in 1580. It was during the reign of Charles VII that a painter devised the French system of playing-cards. The Queen of Clubs is Marie of Anjou, the Queen of Diamonds is Agnes Sorel, the Queen of Spades Joan of Arc and the Queen of Hearts Elisabeth of Bavaria.



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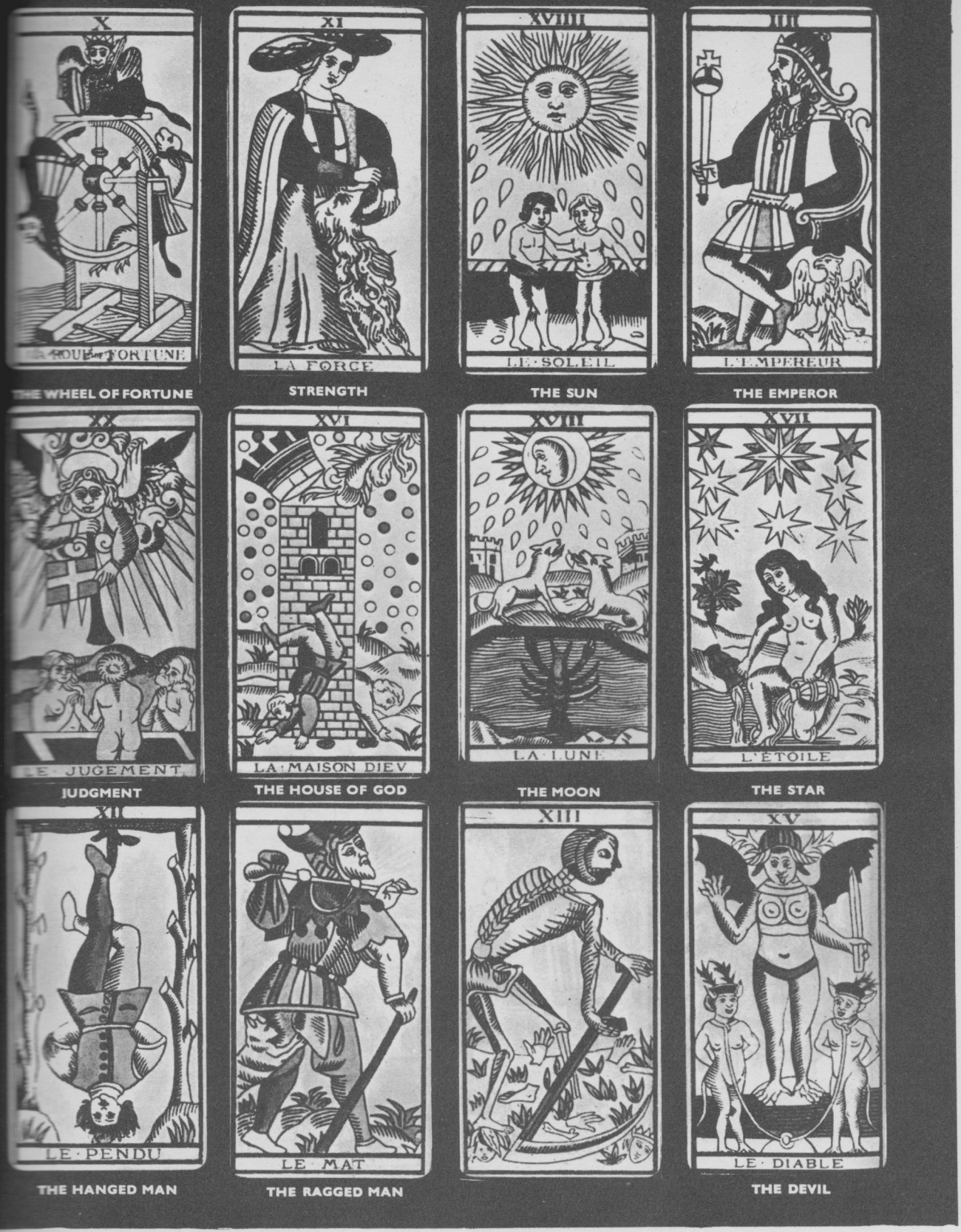
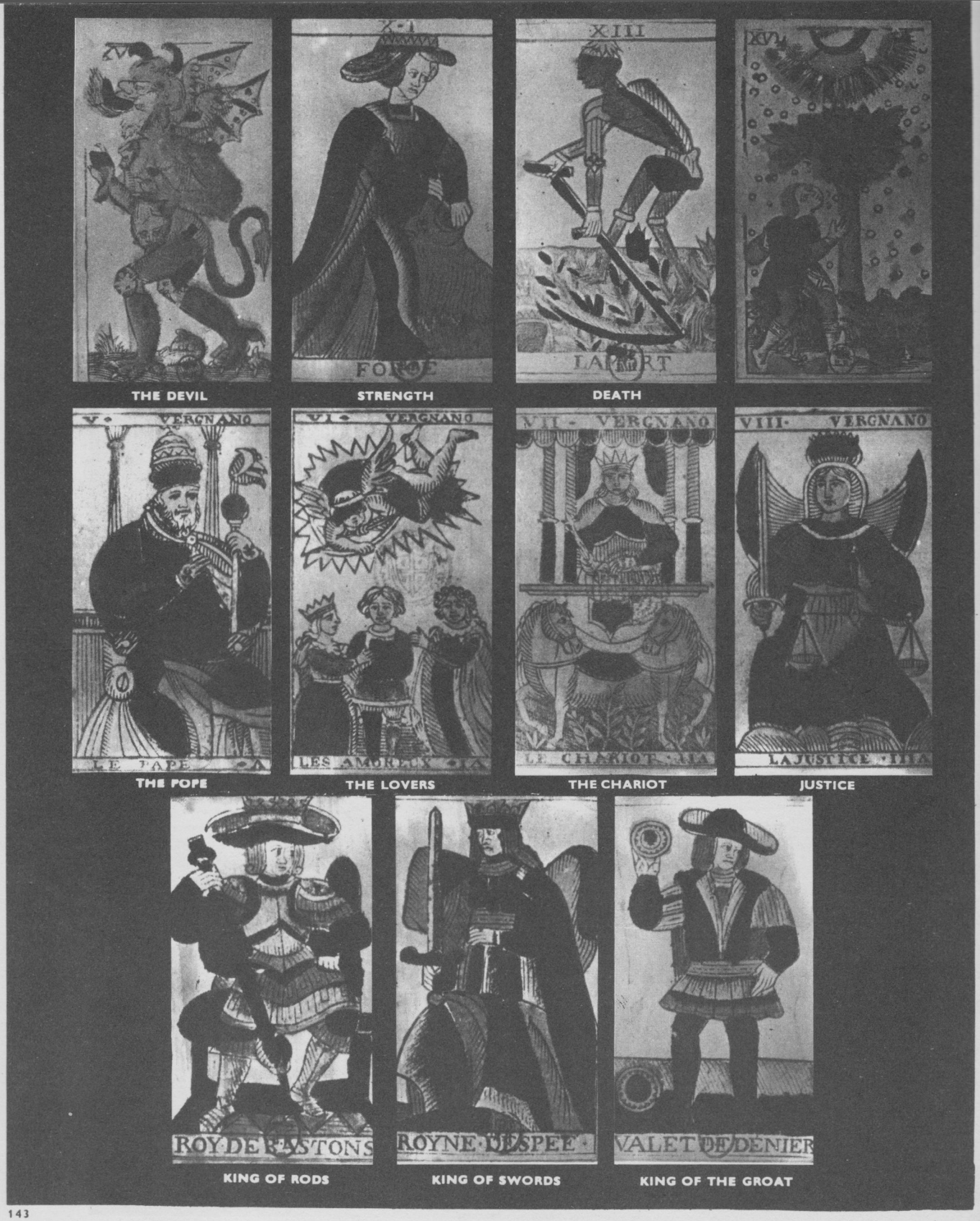
141



142

142. Many sets of Tarot exists. The Tarot of Marseilles was reprinted in the eighteenth century by a master card-maker from some very old wood blocks. There are the Parisian Tarot, the German Tarot, the Tarot of Etteilla and so forth. The game consists of twenty-two major Personae (Mountebank, Pope, Star, etc) and minor Personae (King, Queen, Knight, Knave etc.).



143

143. Among the innumerable Tarots which have been consulted by men, here in the centre are the four branches of the Tarot of Vergnano (sixteenth century): The Pope, the Lovers, the Chariot, Justice. Top line: four cards from the Tarot of Noblet (seventeenth century): The Devil, Strength, Death and the Star. Bottom line: The King of Bastons, the Queen of the Sword and the Valet of the Mite, from the Tarot of Vievil (eighteenth century). Each card has two meanings, one figurative, one real.



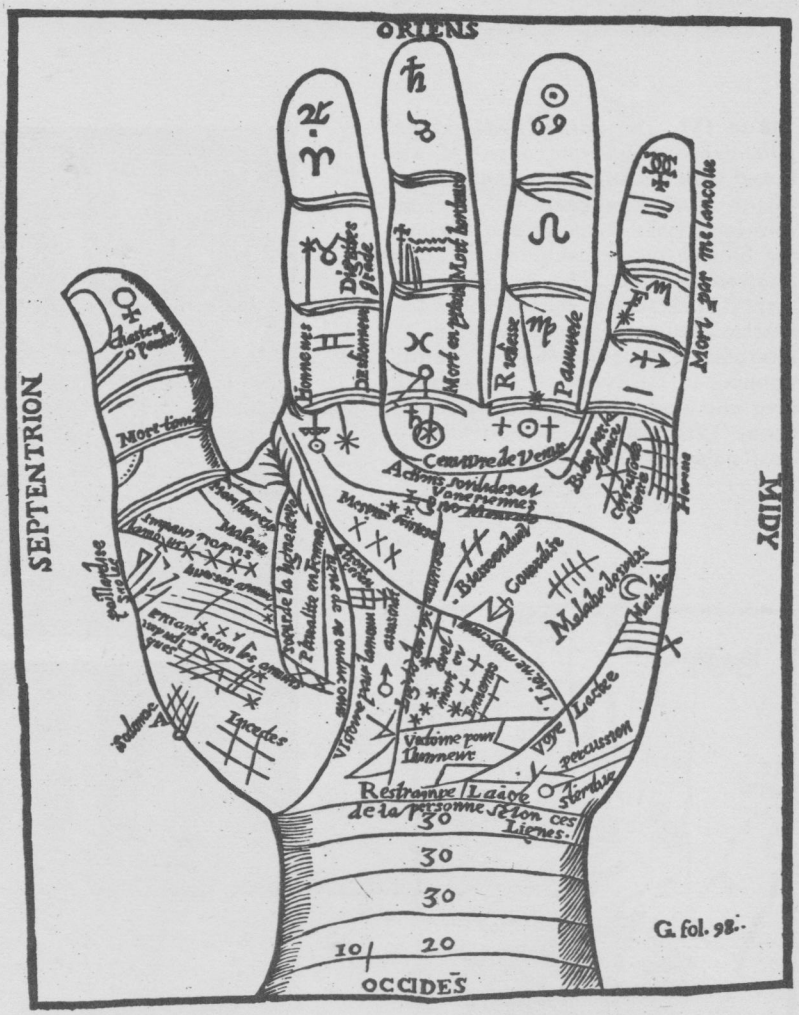
144

144. A contemporary occultist, Papus by name, drew up a treatise entitled 'The Tarot of the Gipsies', the illustrations of which show evidence of the inferior taste of the period. 'The Star', shown here, whose corresponding number is 17, symbolises nothing less than hope, the influence of heaven, eloquence and life.



145

145. Under the Empire, cartomancy became very fashionable. One seer, Mlle Lenormand (1772—1843), became quite celebrated. At Malmaison, near Paris, she made cards for the Empress Joséphine and published a book about them, 'Memoirs Historical and Secret', which throws considerable light on the period.



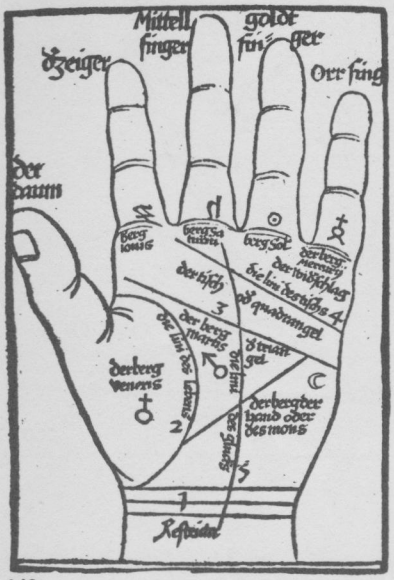
146

146–147. Besides cartomancy, 'chiromancy' also claims to divine the future this time by the study of the hand. Having been practised by the nations of classical antiquity, chiromancy was quickly developed by the gipsies into a tribal speciality for themselves. Interpretations were often corroborated by the predictions of astrology (146). By the seventeenth century the 'general scheme' of the hand was duly established (147).
Since the character is expressed through movement, it was natural that the hand, the most supple organ, came to be considered as capable of expressing the character of the individual.



147

148 to **152.** The future, as far as the potentialities of life were concerned, was linked with the left hand (148), just as 'depth psychology' deals with the unconscious, which contains and discloses the future, the eternal question. These illustrations from 'The Art of Chiromancy' (1545) show: the closed hand — avarice (149); the double sun line — instability (150); the line of Saturn stopping in the centre — the prudent man who increases his fortune from day to day (151); a double line of Mercury — small gains and, sometimes, exile (152).



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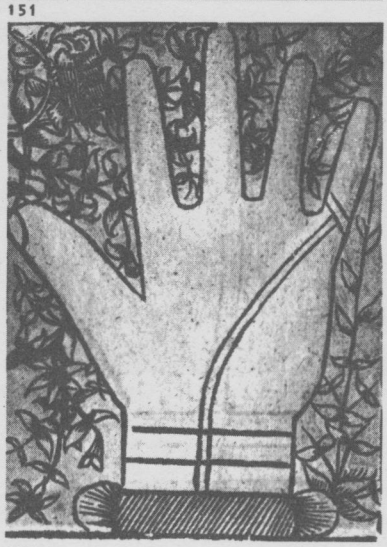
149


150


151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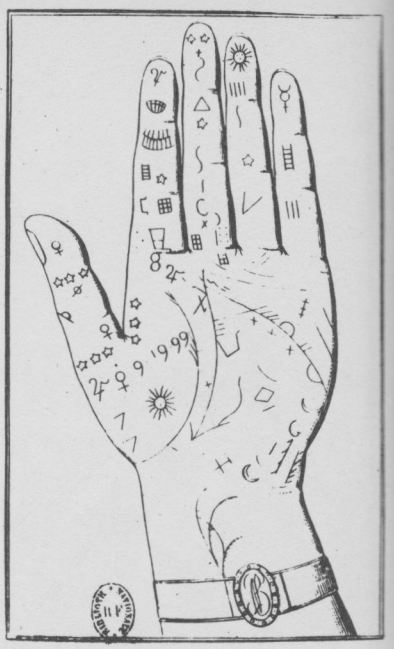
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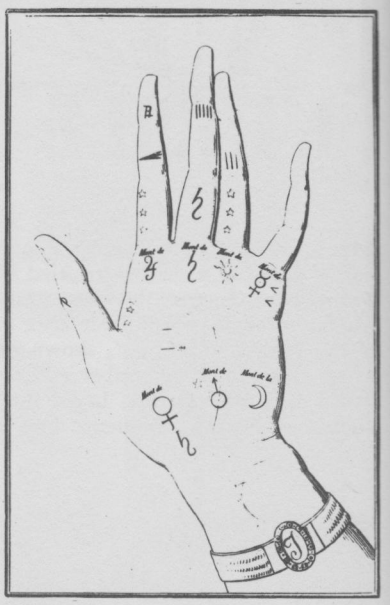
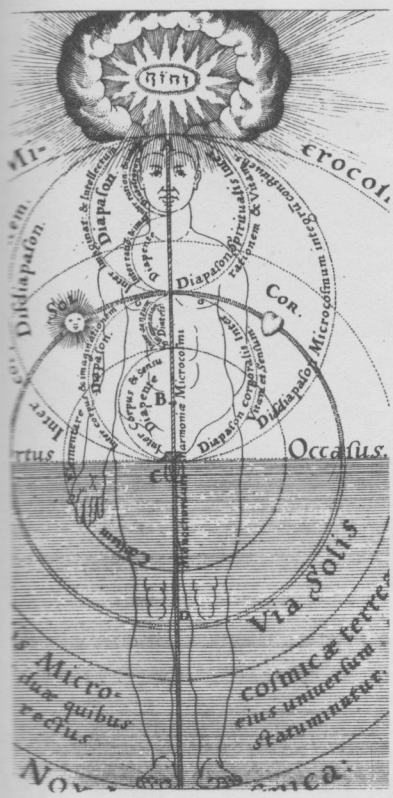

154

153–154. The left hands of Napoleon (153) and Joséphine (154) as they were described by Mlle Lenormand. Chiromancy is based on the cabbala and its laws have been slowly established by innumerable close observations. It has given rise to chirognomy, the more serious art of describing the character by the study of the hand.

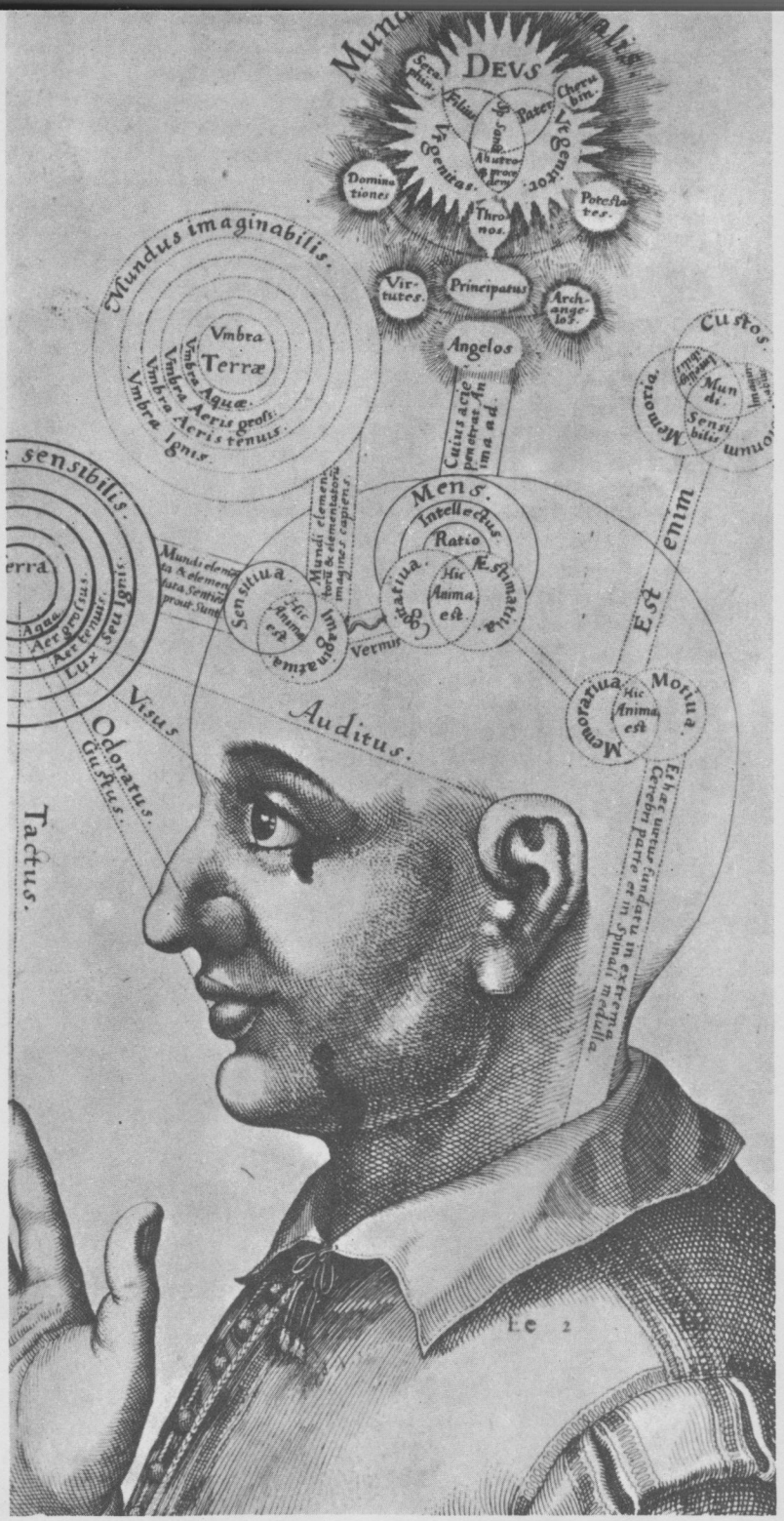
PHYSIOGNOMY

The idea of a connection between the body and the universe, between the physical form and destiny, originally the foundation of chiromancy, gave rise to 'physiognomy'.



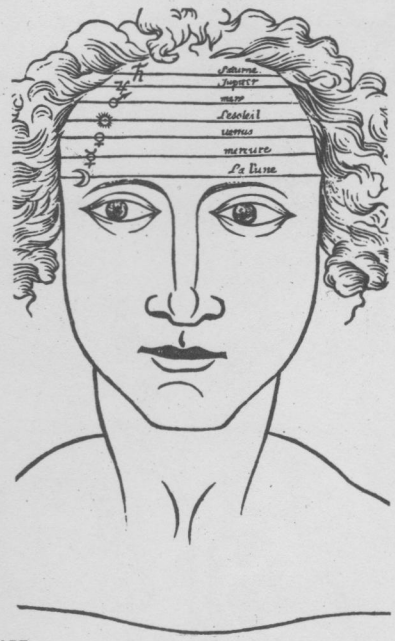
155

155. As early as 1619, Robert Fludd demonstrated the interconnection between what he called the microcosm (Man) and the macrocosm (the universe).



156

156. In the well-known diagram printed here, Fludd has attempted to symbolise the 'mystery of the human head', the manner in which 'the celestial world enters into the cranium'. He foreshadowed phrenology which, two centuries later, was to enjoy a great vogue with Lavater.
The face is divided into three 'worlds'. The forehead is the 'divine world'. The nose and eyes, forming a triangle with the forehead and mouth, make the 'physical world'; while the material world is formed from an inverted triangle based on the jaw and the chin.

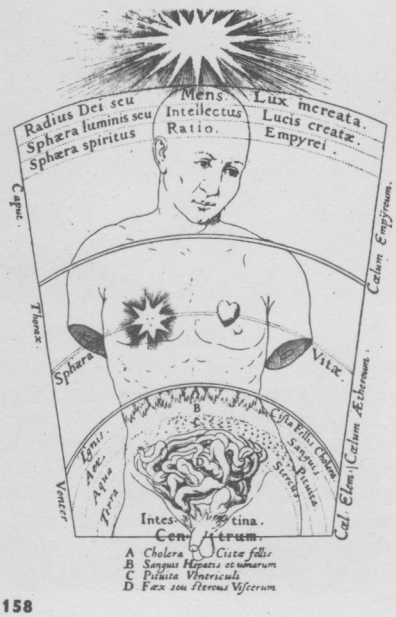


157

157. Jérôme Cardan, among others, tried to establish astrological correspondences for the forehead and the face, as well as for the hand.

158. Robert Fludd tried to work out the astrological 'signs' of the face, then of the whole body.

159. Some practitioners even went so far as to try to delineate the future and the character of a person by the very smallest details of beauty.



158



159

160–167. The most successful ideas had for their point of departure the shape of the face and the body. In 'Physiognomia', Barthélemy Coclès anticipated modern morphology and the science of temperaments as they were developed by Lavater, Paul Carton, Nicolas Pende, Kretschmer and many others. Lavater defined physiognomy as 'the knowledge and realisation of the link between the exterior and the interior, the visible surface to the invisibility which it covers'. In opposition to 'pathognomy', physiognomy sets out to learn the perceptible signs of our powers and of our natural disposition. 'Pathognomy' is concerned with 'the signs of our feeling'. For all their naiveté, these engravings by Coclès express an admirable intent. They show, in order: a man and a woman endowed with an excellent constitution (160); the eyes of a man who is wanton, fickle and lustful (161); the eyelids of a proud and conceited man (162); the eyes of a peaceable man, one of loyalty and great intelligence (163); a man and a woman with a hot constitution (164); the noses of vain and lying people (165); the eyes of an astute man and of a simple man (166); and the noses of inquisitive and vain individuals (167).



160



164



161



165



162



166



163



167

The celestial world intrigued mankind from the dawn of civilisation and observations of the stars were taken to be evidence for divination. This type of investigation was universal, from pre-Conquest America to the Far East, including the European peninsula.

ASTROLOGY

168. The connection between astronomical investigation and the astrological quest can be found everywhere (on the right, a picture of an Aztec cosmic circle; in the centre the 'fifth sun').

170. In the middle of the eighteenth century, the 'spiritual pilgrim' was a type of explorer from another world and there were some scholars who considered that the stars were similar to the forces which are in the human heart. A rabbi named Bachaï drew down on himself the condemnation of the Christian world for placing the Son of God under the influence of the stars and working out his horoscope.

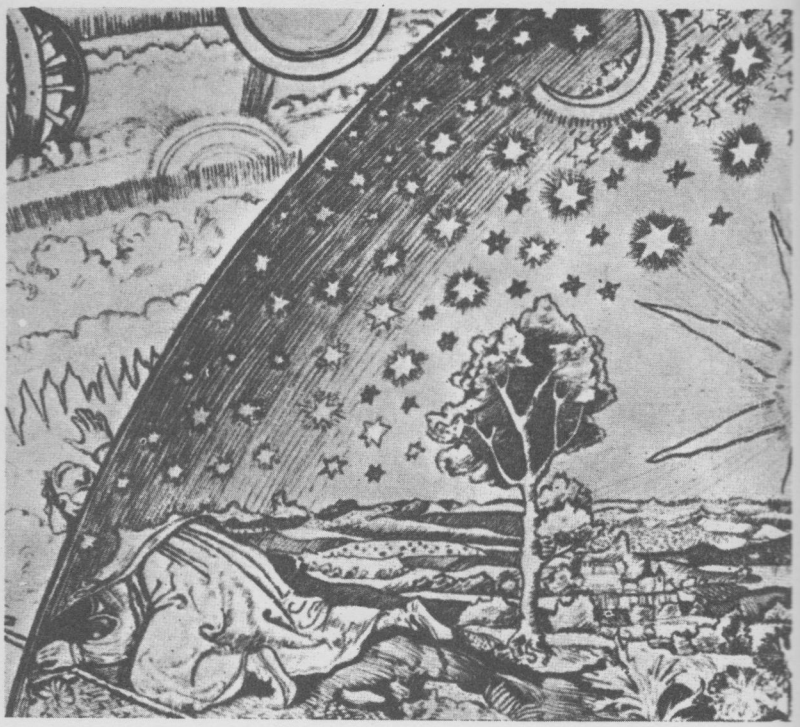
169. In Persia Zoroaster founded an idealist religion, which strongly influenced Christianity and favoured astrology. The Magi, in the biblical sense of the term, were its priests.



168



169



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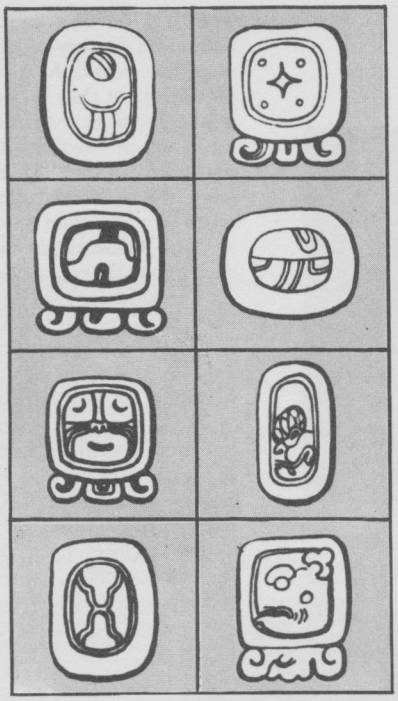

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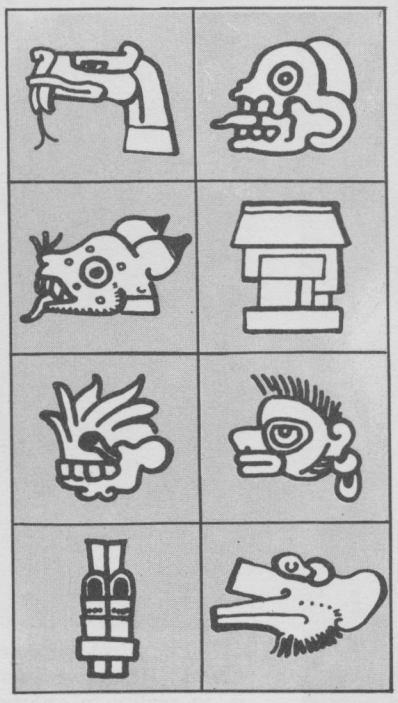


172

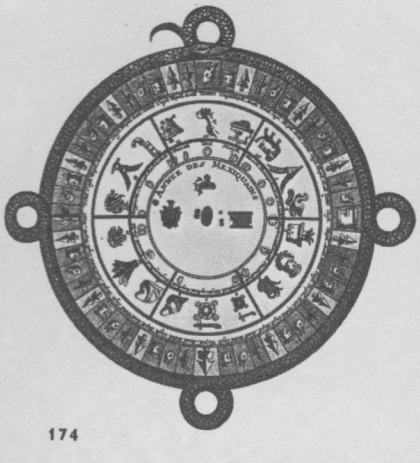
171–172. The Maya calendars (shown above) and those of the Aztecs (below) attribute divinatory qualities to various spans of time: the 'signs' could be discovered even in the most abstruse of mathematical constructions.



173

173. The idea of attributing a particular meaning to each day of the week or of the year is very ancient. The 'Tibetan Wheel of the World' indicates clearly that in the background of man's cosmic vision there was always the conception of a magical connection between human time and the great universal cycles in which it takes place.

The cyclic idea is to be found in all occult systems. An epoch of two thousand years corresponds to each sign of the zodiac but the imagination has also conceived cycles of several million years. In these cycles occurred the mythical Golden Age, Iron Age, Bronze Age, etc. Thus we ourselves today are at the end of one era of two thousand years, the Fish Age (which is also the Christian Age) and on the threshold of a new era, the Aquarian Age.



174



175

174 to **176.** The images depicting the times and destiny of Man are similar all over the world. And this parallelism is of interest in that it bears witness to the existence of a common psychological make-up in civilisations which had no point of contact. It is perfectly clear from the Tibetan picture (173), from these two Mexican calendars (174, 175) and the Renaissance calendar (176) that they have all been produced from a common inspiration. In those dreams which have been the subject of psychoanalysis, in most of the cosmic symbols of alchemy and, as we shall see later, in the rose-windows of cathedrals, in the Hindu 'mandalas', in the magic circle of primitive peoples, in all these can be traced this one temporal image, the image of destiny as a wheel. C.G. Jung saw in it the symbol of the 'Self', of the 'totality' which encloses both the conscious and the unconscious, the individual and society.

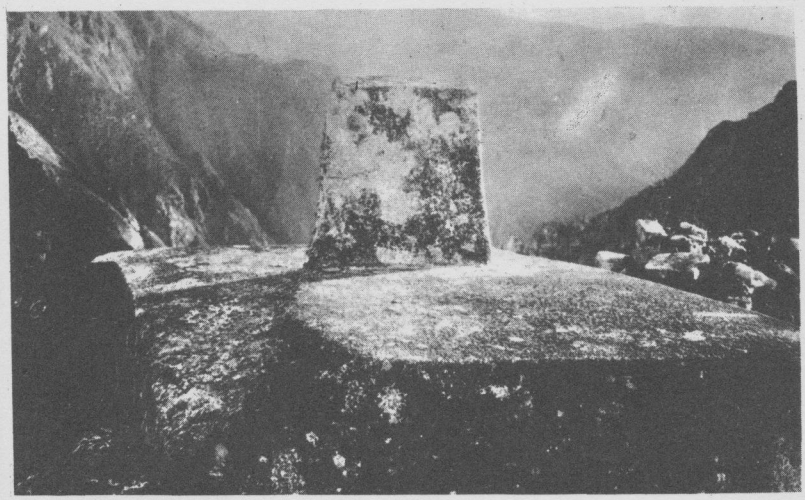


177



176

177. The astrologer described by Robert Fludd ('History of Two Worlds', 1617), is, in reality, a universal but timeless personage, known to all civilisations almost always in the same guise, who gives reassuring predictions to people worried about their future.



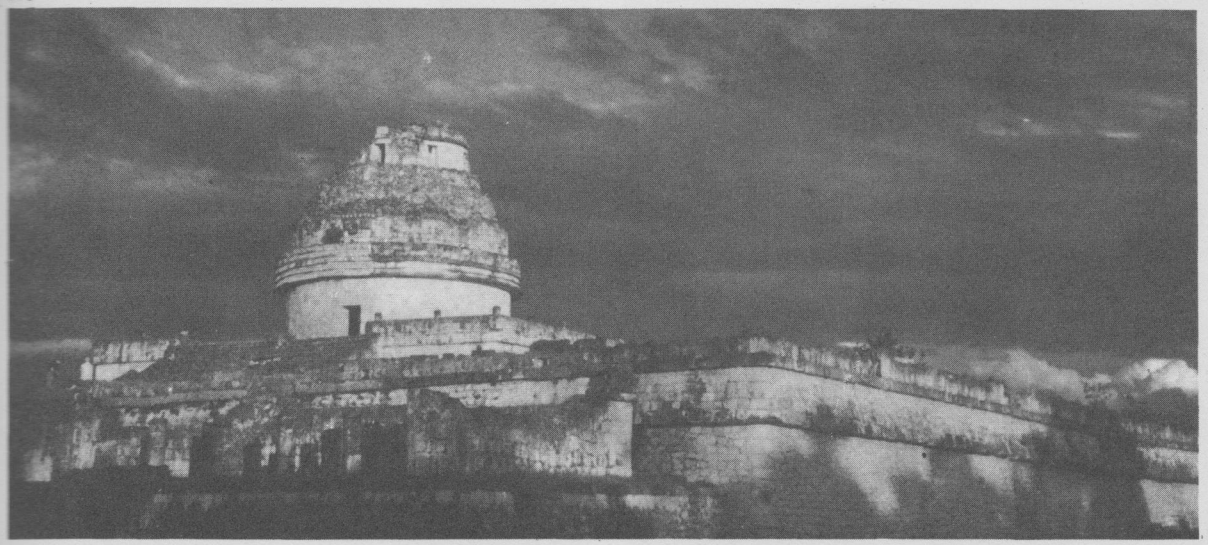
178

178–179. At Machu Pichu in the Southern Andes of Peru was the last citadel of Inca resistance. Here, after the Spaniards had conquered the empire, they discovered the 'sun observatory' where astronomical studies had kept their religious and divinatory character. Less advanced than the Aztecs or the Mayas, the Incas set up oracles and studied rainbows, earthquakes, bird flight, even the dung of llamas, discovering in them a wide range of different omens.

APPROACH TO THE SUN



179



180

180. In the observatory called 'caracol', at Chichen-Itza in Yucatan, Mexico, a visitor's thoughts can turn easily to the long years of expectation through which the pre-Conquest civilisations must have lived while awaiting the fulfilment of those predictions which, finally, led to their collapse. The Mayas used a sacred year of 260 days, one solar year of 365 days and a Venusian year of 584 days, this being, to the nearest decimal, exactly what Western science established after long calculations.

ASTROLOGERS

181 to **183.** Astrology was established in Europe through the Arabs who had conquered Spain. Many engravings from the close of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance celebrated the Arab astrologers (182) who had made direct observations even before they had equipped themselves with optical instruments which were reasonably accurate (sextants, quadrants). European astrologers came to know of them through such books as the 'Apotelesmatica' of Manethon, a Greek poem attributed to a priest in the temple of Heliopolis in Egypt (in the third century B.C.), the 'Tetrabilos' and the 'Parpos' of Ptolemy (the Alexandrian philosopher who lived about 130 B.C.), the 'Astronomica' of Manilius, a contemporary of Augustus, the 'Liber Matheseus' of Julius Maternus Mirmicus (fourth century). As for the Arab treatises themselves, the best known were those of Alchabitius, Albumazor and Hali; and from the time of the Renaissance there were the 'Speculum Astrologiae' and 'The Gallic Astrology' (Morin, The Hague, 1661).



181



182



183



184



185

NOSTRADAMUS

184 to **186.** One of the most famous personages in astrology was Nostradamus. Properly called Michel de Notre Dame, he was born in 1503 at St Rémy-de-Provence. A doctor of medicine by profession, he achieved fame in the second half of the sixteenth century by his prophecies, published in quatrains under the title of 'The Centuries'. Summoned to court by Catherine de Medici, he predicted the accident which cut short the life of the unhappy king. After his death in 1566 at Salon, rumour claimed that he would continue to prophesy during the succeeding centuries, since he had been entombed, living, in a vault.



186

187–188. The astrologers of the sixteenth century were still not using the telescope. However, they had the use of a wide range of instruments for measurement and observation: quadrants, sextants and alidades, to which they added later the Galilean telescope (1610), and then Gregory's telescope, a highly developed instrument for the time. Astrologers were not mere charlatans. They worked hard and long at complicated calculations to establish their horoscopes. As scientific astronomy advanced, matters became easier and, from the seventeenth century, astrologers used the 'Rodolphine Tables' which gave them the state of the heavens, for each year, day by day, through the course of each twenty-four hours. The modern astrologer has no longer any need to consult the stars himself. But the astrologer of times past was forced to be an astronomer.



187



188



189



190

189–190. Considered, in the sixteenth century, to be 'Men of the Art', even 'Men of Science', astrologers were distinguished by their sober dress. For evidence one has merely to look at the portraits of Morin de Villefranche (189), astrologer to Anne of Austria; and of Ogier Ferrier (190), astrologer to Catherine de Medici. There was nothing about them to attract attention or to indicate their calling to the passer-by. They never wore the pointed cap and long robe with which popular books on occultism endow them.

191–192. If astrological divination was concerned always in seeking to establish the relationship between the celestial signs and the structure of the body (191), its foundation is, in the first instance, in the twelve signs of the zodiac which the Chaldeans invented (192) and which are given undeserved attention in today's popular press.

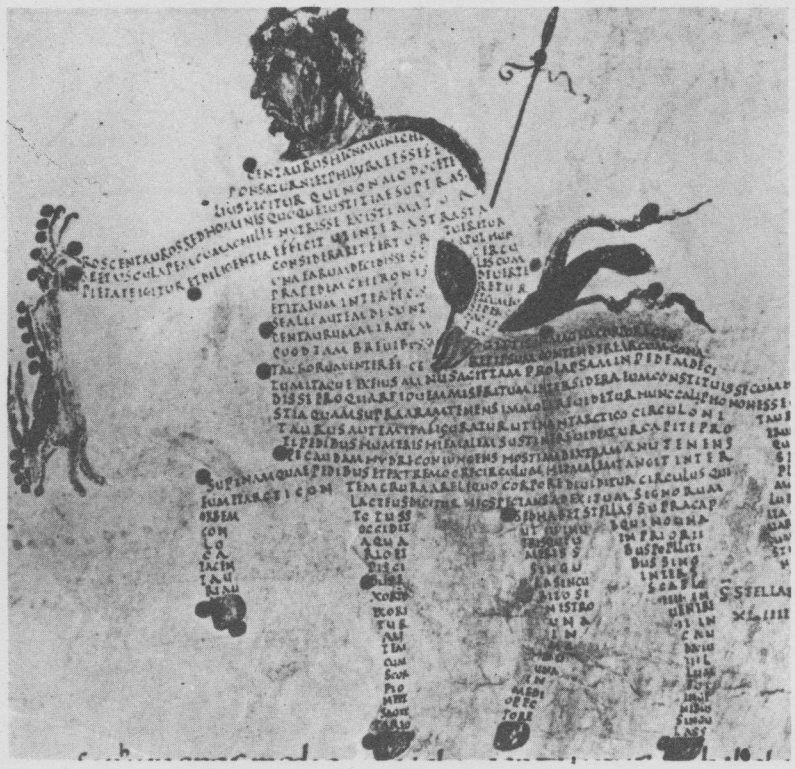


191



192

ZODIACS



193

193. Each sign of the zodiac (which covers a particular part of the year) is supposed to influence the psychology and the destiny of persons, and the shape of events which occur during this sign. Thus it is asserted that towns, nations and the world itself come under the influence of the planets. By the sixteenth century, German astrologers had established the existence of an influence by the sign of the Ram on Frankfurt, the Bull on Wurzburg and Sagittarius on Stuttgart.
Contemporary astrologers use 'correspondences' of this kind in order to arrive at their conjectures about the international political scene.



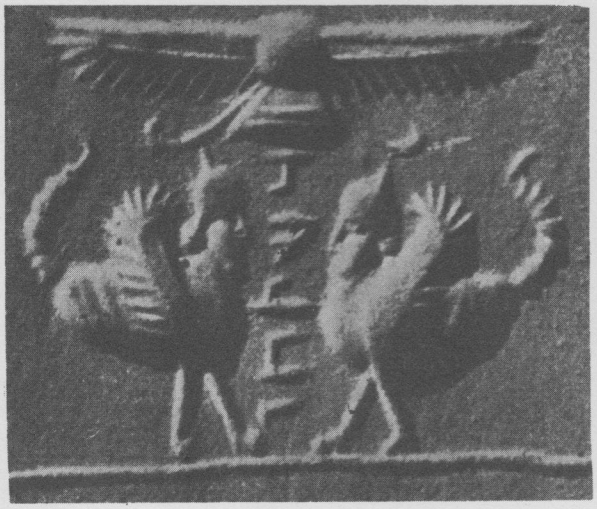
194

194. The signs of the zodiac formed the basis of innumerable paintings and drawings. The theme of Sagittarius appears in this fresco from Pompeii where Centaurs can be seen at the court of Pirithous.



195

195. Scorpio, in which astrologers saw an indication of fermentation, decomposition and death, would predispose those influenced by it to indiscipline, revolt, sexuality and anguish.



196

196. Here is a beautiful representation of the Scorpion on a cylinder of cornelian, found in Persia in which two scorpion-men with wings find themselves face-to-face under a sun disc, also winged.



197

197. Taurus, the Bull, indicates 'verdure and floral plenty' and predisposes its subjects to 'form roots, solidity, fecundity, and acquisitiveness'. It is the sign of economy, of avarice, above all the sign of the 'peasant' virtues.

198. The signs of the zodiac are not, in themselves, enough to enable the astrologer to establish his Map of the Heavens. He must calculate the position of the planets on the instant of the birth of the person or of the event for which he is making the horoscope. This illustration, taken from the 'Petit Albert', which represents astrological talismans for the seven days of the week, makes no mention of Uranus, Neptune or Pluto, planets which were not known at that time.



198

199 to **201.** These three old engravings show how each planet was associated with a certain psychological attitude, with a distinct sort of occurrence. Hence the sun was always associated with life, warmth, etc., whilst the moon was linked with material things, fecundity, imagination, the unconscious, dreams, instinct, and Mars with brute force, aggressive and sadistic impulses, the desire for conquest and passion.



199 SUN

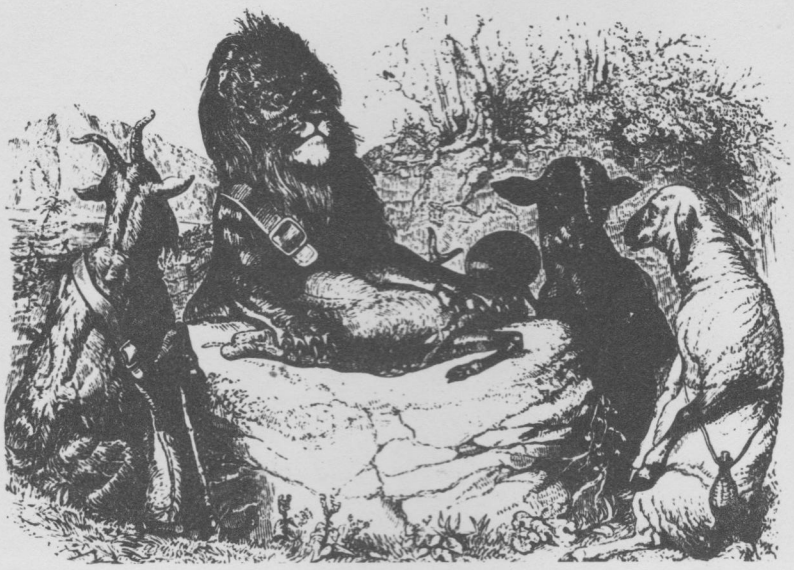


200 MOON



201 MARS

202 to **206.** The Lion symbolised maturity, individualism, will, strength, authority and plenty. But poets and artists could also see him in humorous manner, such as when Grandville visualised the celebrated fable of La Fontaine.
Jupiter (203) symbolises expansiveness, affirmation and breadth of view; Saturn (205) inhibition, concentration, abstraction and spoliation; Mercury (206) relationships, exchanges, adaptation and movement; Venus (204) attraction, love, beauty, pleasure and the arts.



202



203 JUPITER



204 VENUS

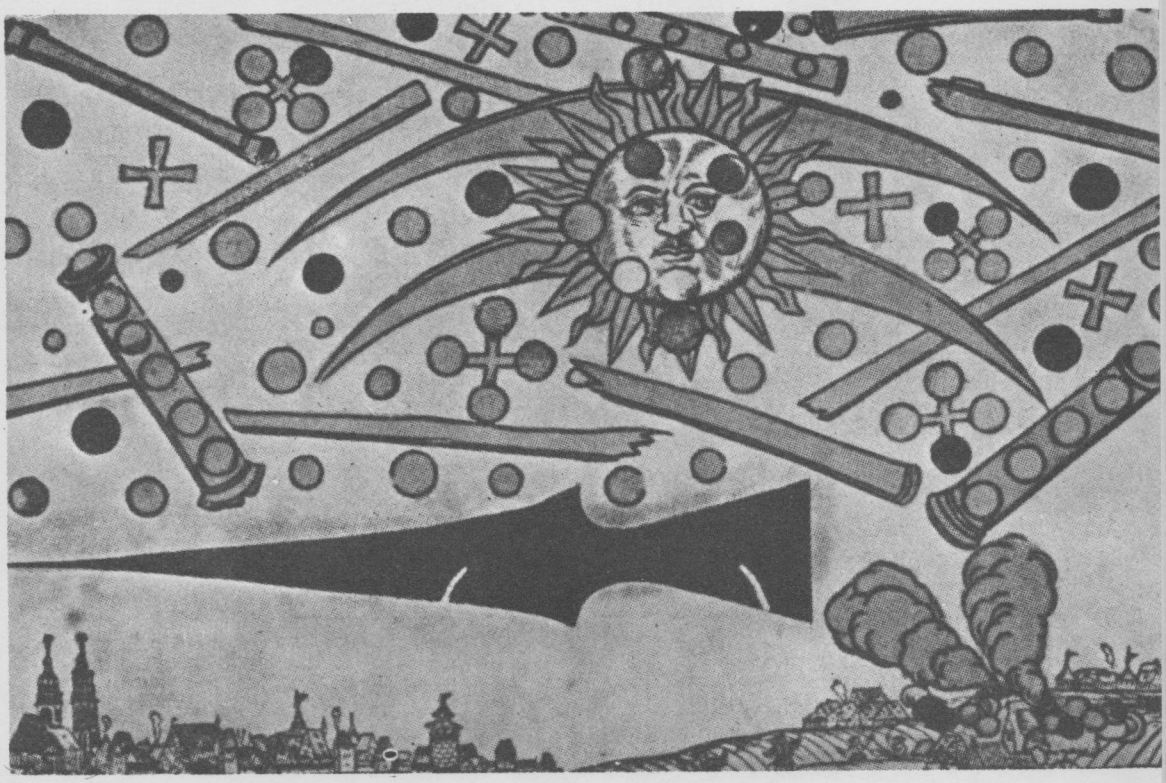


205 SATURN



206 MERCURY

SIGNS IN THE SKY



207

207 to **209.** Astrologers attached a great importance to the appearance of comets, meteors, 'celestial signs' of which many, no doubt, were merely visions. Long before there was any talk of flying saucers, the ancient chronicles made great play with stories of unknown celestial objects. Thus, the 'Gazette of Nuremberg' reported that a terrifying vision (207) of 'red, blue, and black bowls or crosses the colour of blood' and of 'huge tubes' appeared at sunrise on 14th April, 1561. 'The Gazette of Bâle' reported that on 7th April, 1566, watchers saw huge black balls travelling at enormous speeds towards the sun to engage it in combat. Mass hallucinations, no doubt. Frequently, popular credulity has seen parallel warnings in simple arrangements of clouds, such as this photograph of 'a miracle in the skies of Korea' (209).



208



209



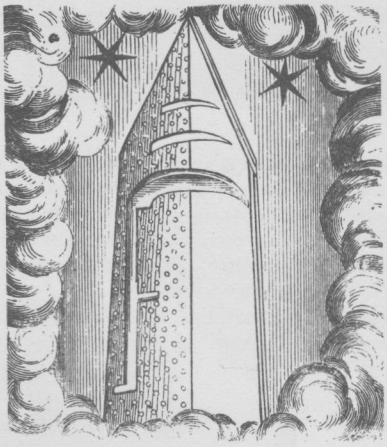
210



211

ASTRAL VISIONS

210 to **216.** The number of visions or celestial prodigies which the chronicles narrate is considerable. A fleet in the sky in 1140 (210); three suns in 1492 (211); a comet in 1480 (212); a rainstorm of crosses in 1503 (213); a rain of blood in Lisbon in 1551 (214); a vision of an army in the sky in the sixteenth century (215); and a rain of fish (216). Supernatural rainshowers were always considered to be of evil influence and were harbingers of great disasters.



212



213



214



215



216



217

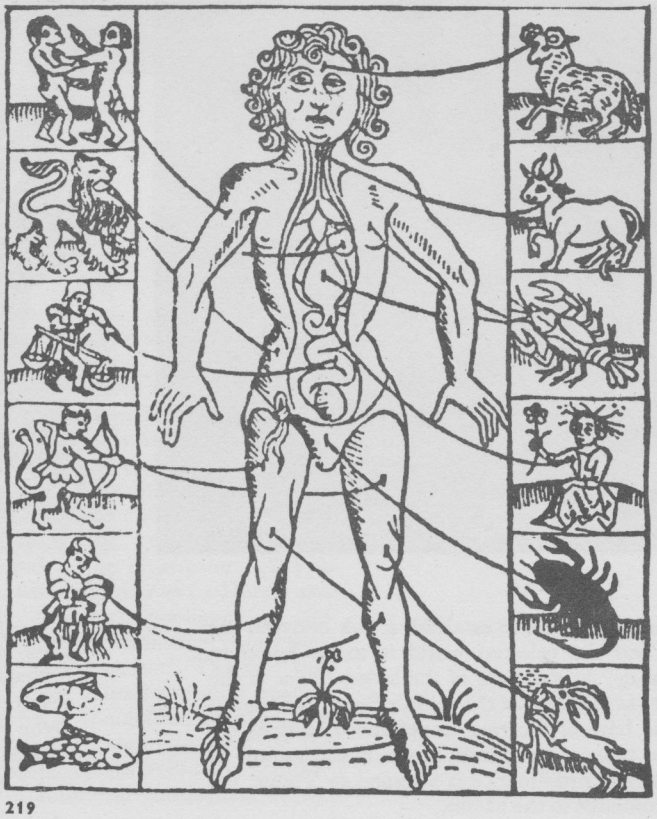


218

217. Astrology always had medical pretensions and celebrated doctors used it for therapeutic ends. The medical school of Salerno, which was famous in the Middle Ages, thought that the different parts of the body were influenced by the signs of the zodiac.

218–219. These two illustrations show clearly the position of the sign of the zodiac in its connection with the human body. The first (218), taken from a French incunabulum dated 1499; the second (219) from a German incunabulum of 1484. Both attributed the head to the Ram, the neck and shoulders to Taurus, the arms to Gemini, the heart to Leo, the chest and stomach to Cancer, the belly to Virgo, the intestines to Libra, the reproductive organs to Scorpio, the thighs to Sagittarius, the knees to Capricorn, the legs to Aquarius and the feet to Pisces.

CELESTIAL MEDICINE



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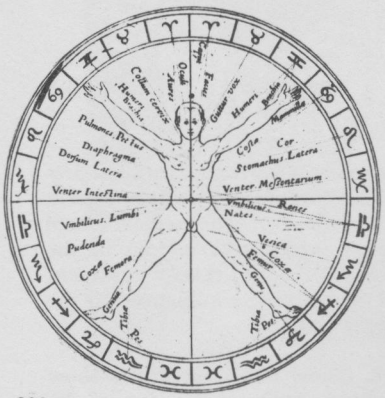

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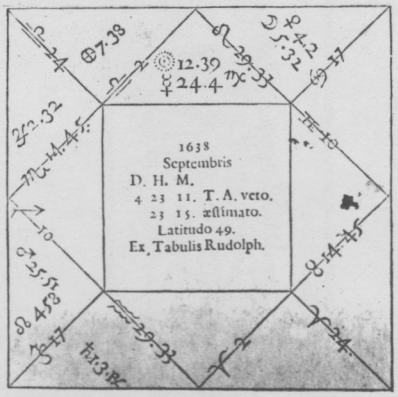

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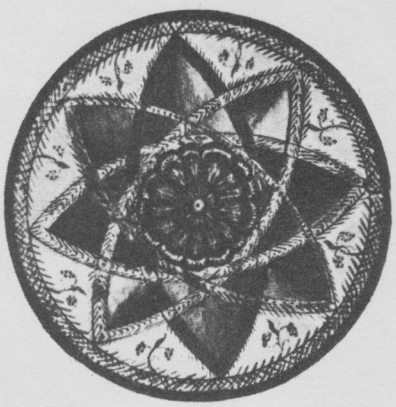


222

220. A mirror of the world — 'microcosm of the macrocosm'. Man, as conceived in astrology, reflects the rhythms and structure of the universe in the same way as the universe mirrors the rhythms and the structure of Man himself. Everything is part of everything . . .

221. These are the analogies and connections which go to make up the horoscope (or the 'theme of the predestined individual') which describes the complete geography of the Heavens at the moment of birth. Here is the horoscope of Louis XIV drawn by Morin de Villefranche.

222. Astrology in essence employs a system of symbols similar to that of alchemy and of all magical and occult disciplines. This 'octagonal flower' is the symbol of the Ego, that is to say, the totality of a man complete with all his activities.



223

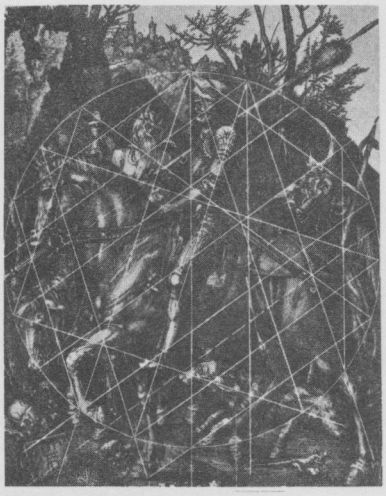


224

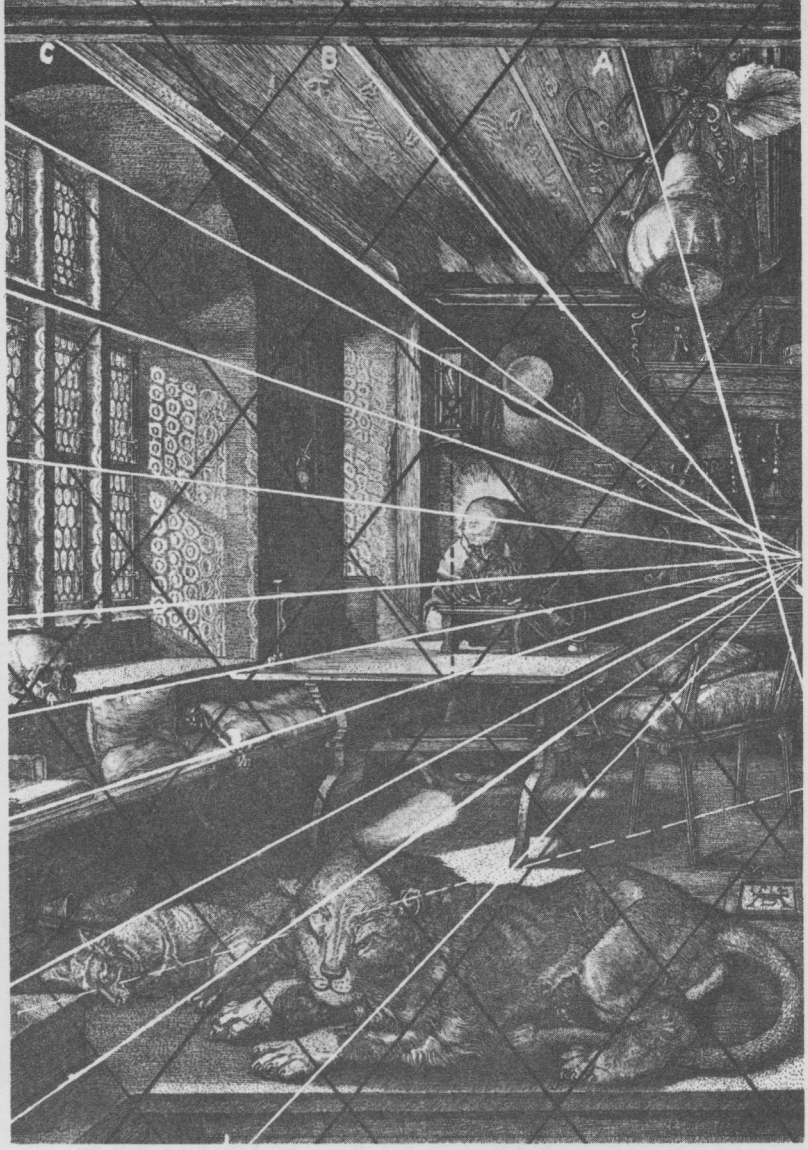
223–224. This naive attempt to establish a link between the corporal world and the celestial world is to be found in popular chiromancy. At the base of the index finger is the mount of Jupiter; at the base of the middle finger the mount of Saturn; at the base of the ring finger the mount of the Sun; and at the base of the small finger is the mount of Mercury. The thenar prominence is assigned to Venus, the hypothenar prominence to the Moon.

It must be noted that the art of seeking to discern the character and foresee the future by the examination of the influence of the planets on the linear formation of the hand is scarcely ever practised today. Astrological chiromancy has given way to 'physical' chiromancy. This no longer calls on calculation and only makes use of the lines of the hand in order to give a simple support to divination.

THE GOLDEN NUMBER



226



225



227

225 to **227.** In all 'magical' systems, numbers play an essential part. The idea that numbers are a definite symbolism for the most profound human realities seems to have found confirmation in the work of modern psychologists. They have established that dreams make use of numbers in order to express situations and emotional states. All western numerologies refer in one way or another to Pythagoras (227) who is said to have inherited the 'science of numbers' from the Egyptians. These were the true originators of the 'Golden Number', which some have held to be a sort of universal module. The 'Golden Number' has no occult significance. Its value is: 0.618. It is expressed geometrically in a rectangle the proportions of which constitute the 'golden section'. Deriving from mathematical functions which do not come within the scope of this book, the 'Golden Number' corresponds to a 'module' (the conventional unity employed by modern architects) of pictorial and architectural works renowned for their great harmony, to the 'module' of a great number of septated seashells and also to the 'mean index of the spiral according to which branches grow on a tree-trunk'. The illustrations (225 to 226) are from engravings by Dürer, and illustrate the correspondence of the figures 'with the geometrical projections of the Golden Number'. The fact that works of great value have subscribed to the dictates of the golden number does not permit the conclusion that its use automatically brings about the achievement of an immortal masterpiece.



228

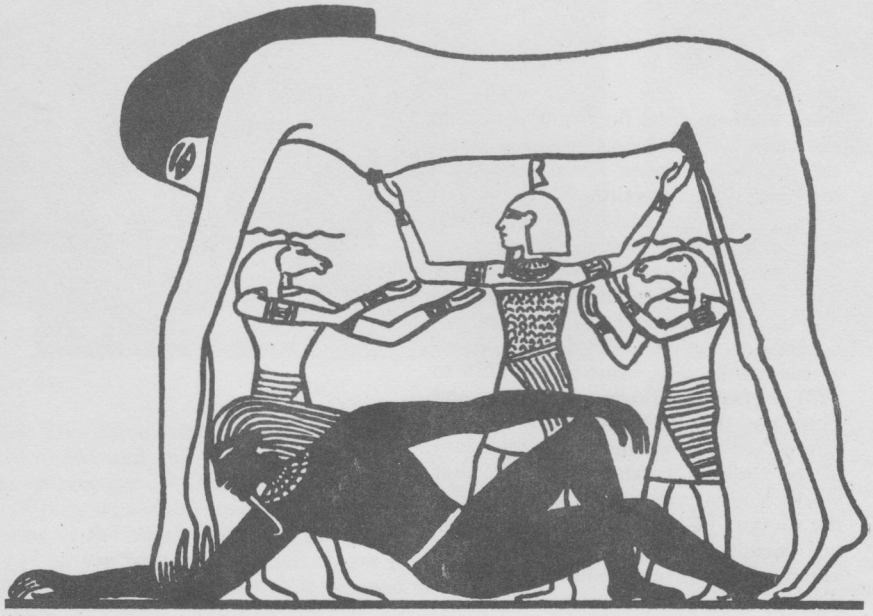


229

228. The principal Egyptian mysteries were those of Osiris. (The illustration shows Osiris and the four sons of Horus, from 'The Book of the Dead'). The major sources of information which have been deciphered are 'The Book of the Dead' and 'The Hidden Book of the Dwelling'. The Egyptian mysteries set out to teach to initiates the truths about the creation of the world, particularly in matters of life and death.

MAGIC IN THE AGE OF THE PYRAMIDS

From ancient times, Egypt has been the cradle of magic and its mysteries. They formed an integral and inseparable part of Egyptian religion, and magicians and prophets had official functions in the court.

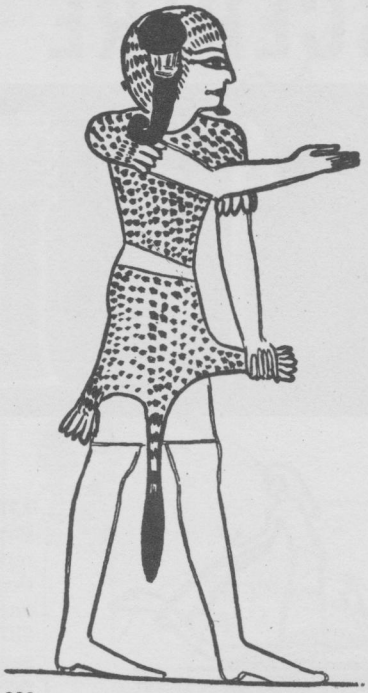


230

229–230. The Egyptians represented their cosmological and moral ideas in the form of symbols, which included an overt eroticism. Here is Amon-Ra (229), the Egyptian spirit of the four elements, and Shu who, aided by the spirits of the wind, is separating Nut and Geb.



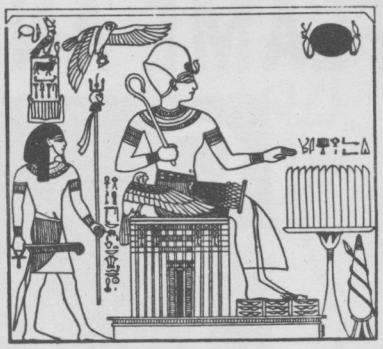
231



232

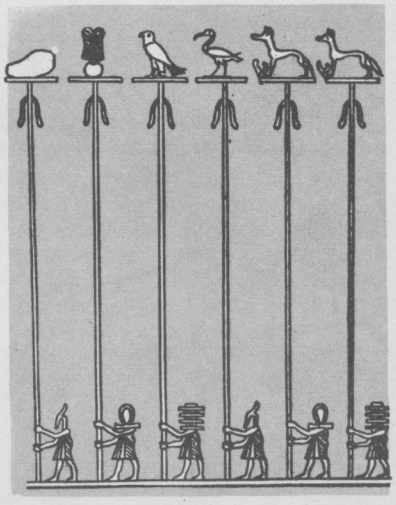
231. One of the most frequent themes in the bas-reliefs is the idea of the double or the 'Ka'. This symbolises in various ways the unconscious forces. Here is a pharaoh followed by his adolescent 'Ka'. The arms which are extended upwards on the head carry a royal banner surmounted by the sacred sparrowhawk.

232. A papyrus of Ani represents a priest of Osiris dressed in a panther's skin. This has always had a magical significance, as much in Egypt as in Africa and India. It is based on the notion of assimilating the forces of the panther, but it also signifies an entry into a superior life.



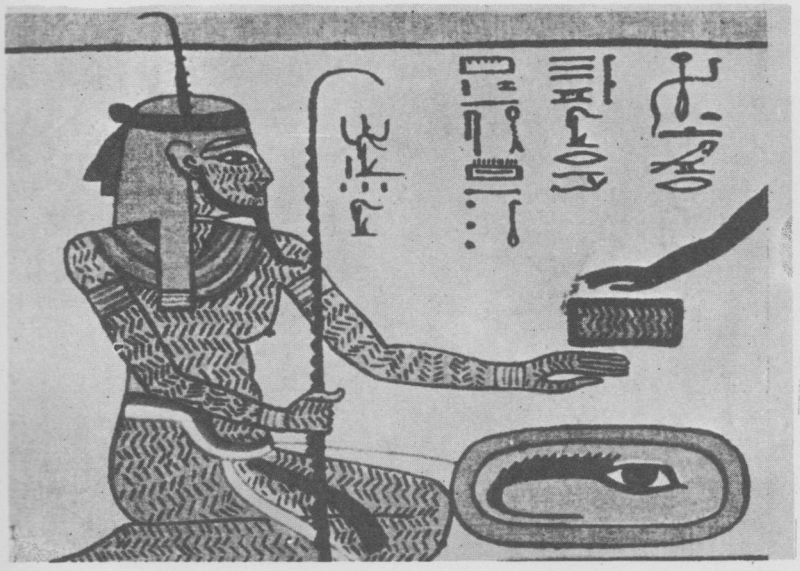
233

233. The pharaoh Seti I, accompanied by his 'Ka', before the offertory table. In the picture can be seen the two essential symbols of magic and initiation in Egypt: the serpent (the 'uraeus') and the scarab.



234

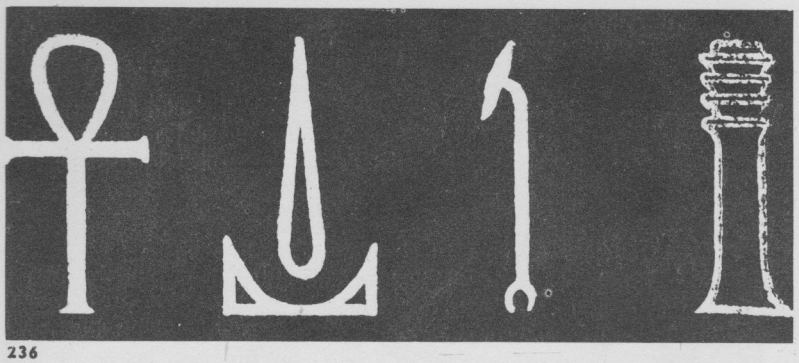
234. In this illustration the heads of the emblem carriers have been replaced by the three components of the magical hexagram: Health, Vigour, Life. (From the temple of Seti I, Abydos.)



235

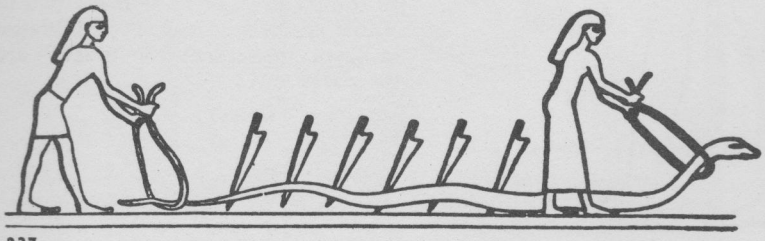
235. A papyrus showing 'The Spirit of the Eternal Waters' protecting the eye of Râ. The symbol of the eye was often used in association with the symbol of the ansate cross. An ancient text said that 'the Sun God illuminated the world by the renewal of his eye'.

FLAME AND SCEPTRE



236

236. Here are four magical signs: the Ankh (the ansate cross in which can be seen a human being), the eye of the loop being the head; or it may be the vaginal orifice penetrated by a vertical line representing the phallus; or, most probably, it symbolises a dam which holds back the waters of the Nile (the maternal river). The other signs are: Ouza (flame), Ouser (sceptre) and Dad (health).

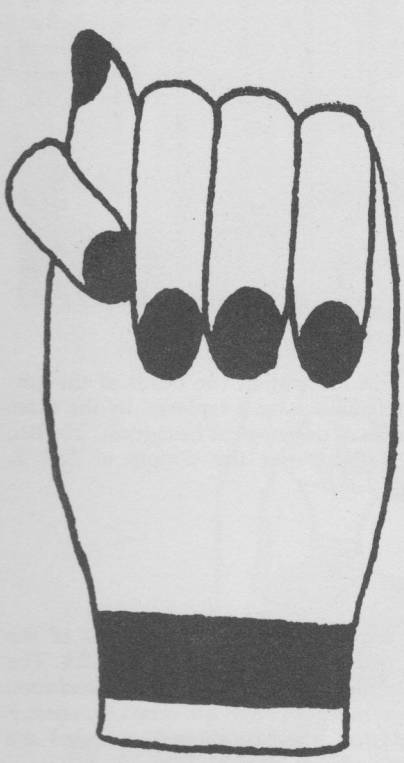


237

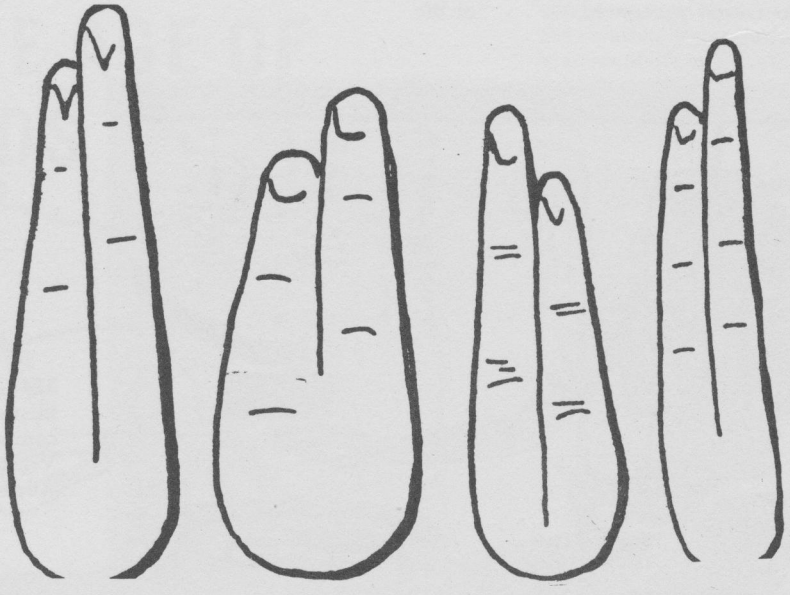


238

237–238. If the 'uraeus' represents the serpent in its creative role, the same reptile is often considered as the incarnation of the spirit of evil, against which one must defend one's self. Illustrations 237 and 238 show 'the magical defence against the maleficent actions of the serpent'; on the sarcophagus of the Taho priests knives cut into the body of the Adversary; on the sarcophagus of Rameses VI, the goddess Isis and the god Samson arrest the efforts of this evil creature which recurs constantly in Egyptian imagery.



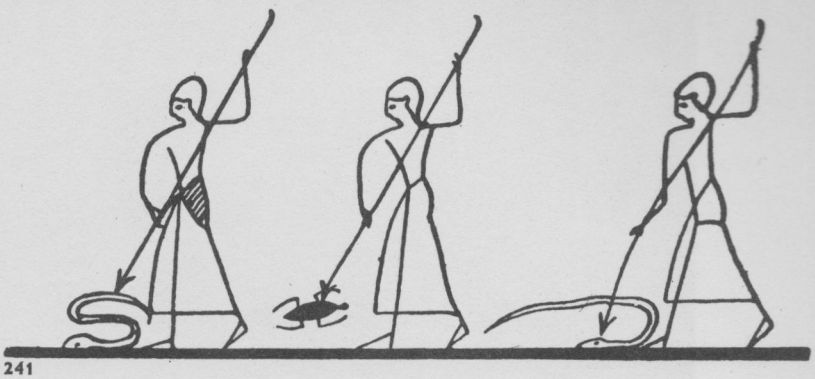
239



240

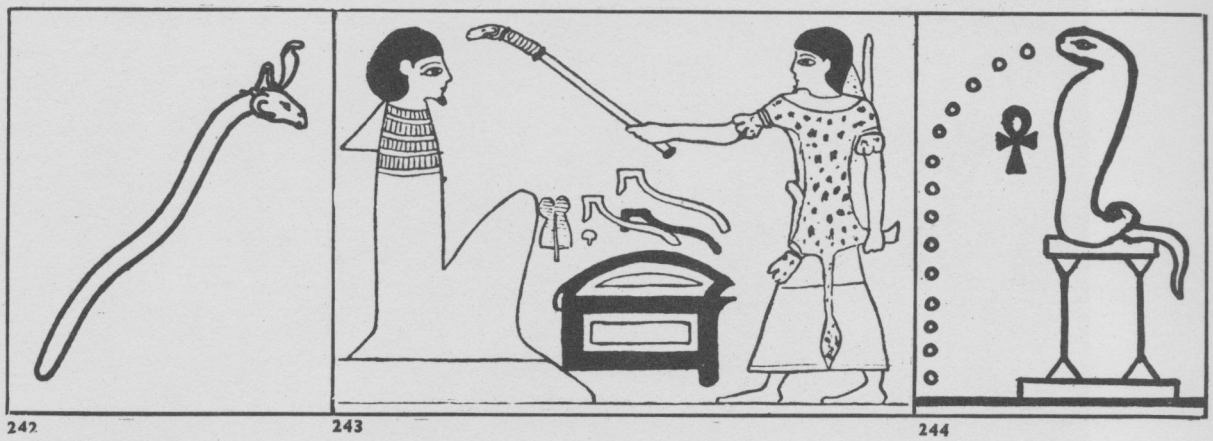
239–240. Amulets with a magical significance, composed of two fingers or of a hand with folded fingers. The symbol is found again in the 'Mudras' of Chinese tradition, in India and even in the benediction gesture of Christ, now practised by Catholic priests. The thumb, symbolising the phallus, is inserted into the other fingers as a sign of the creative act.

241. Magic attributes power to sharp points. Here the spear is used by the initiate against the serpent and the beetle.



241

242. The head surmounted by the uraeus. This double serpent makes manifest 'the great magician' who became a sceptre in the hands of the initiated desiring to protect himself against the forces of destruction and to make available their creative energies.

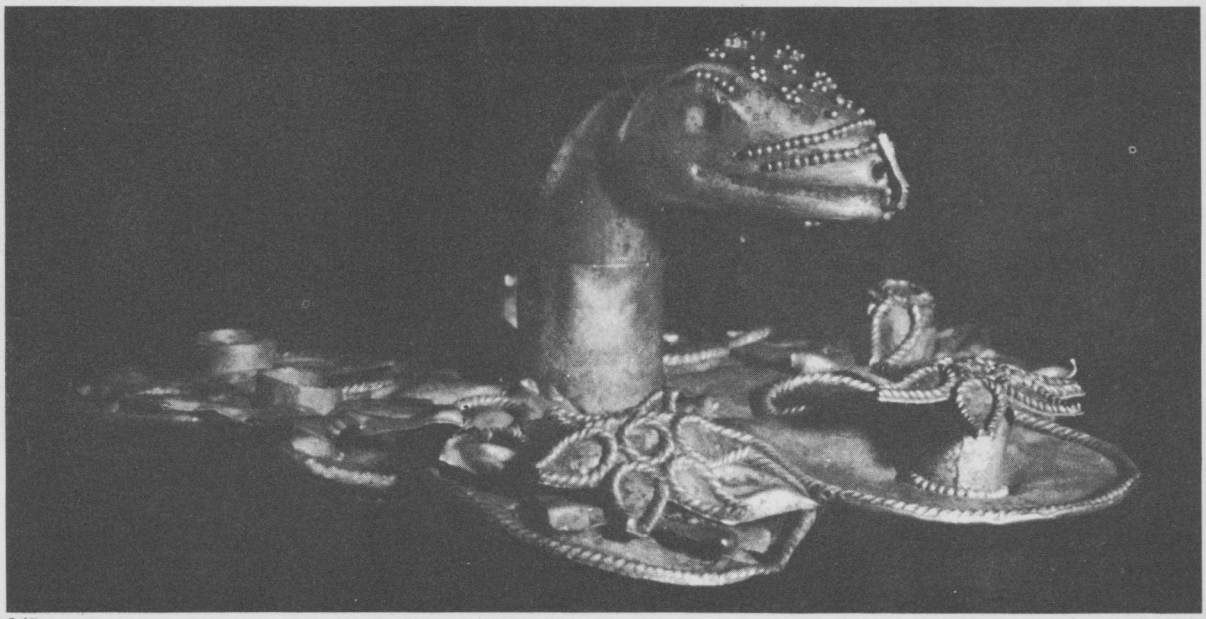


242 243 244

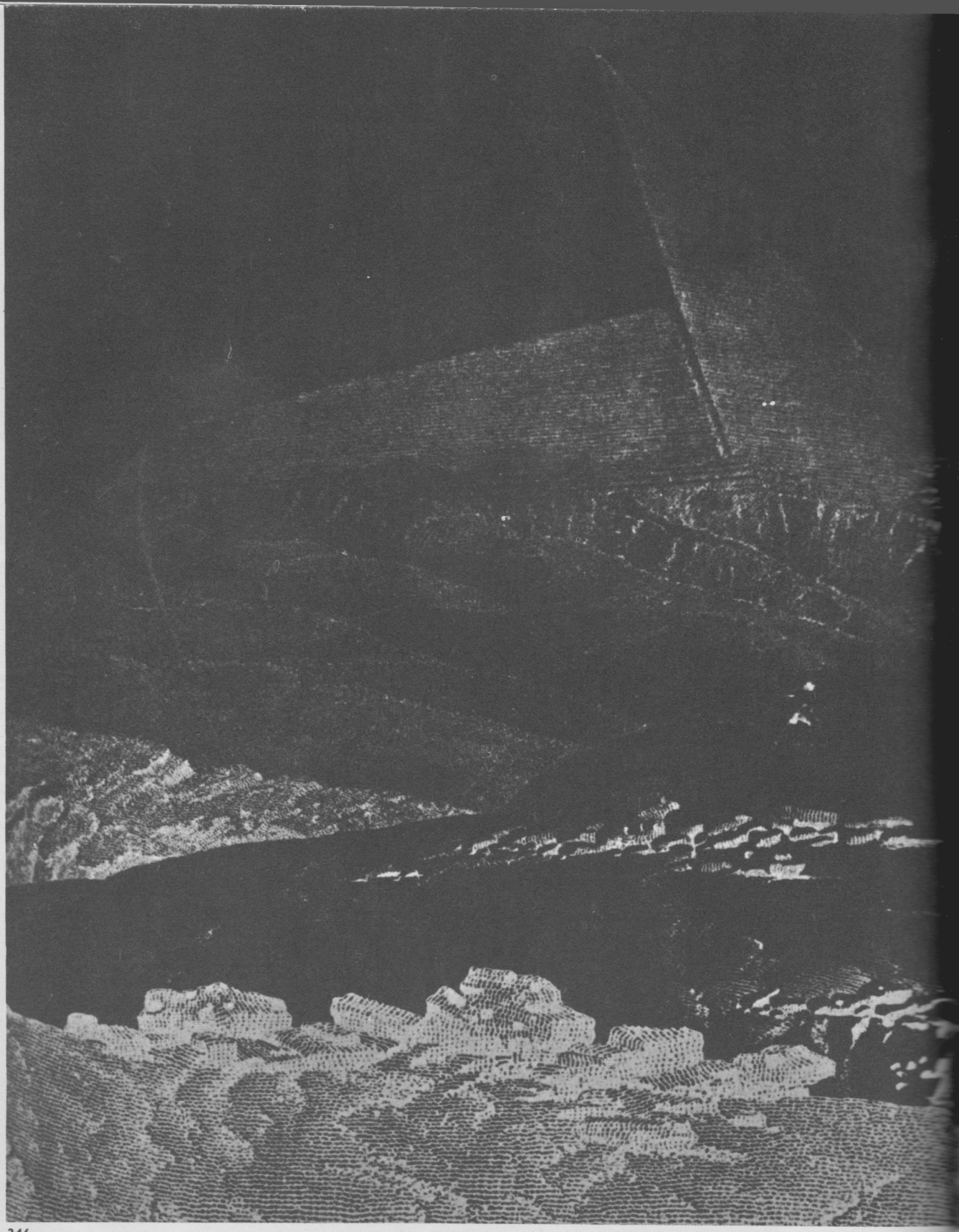
243. A grandpriest of Osiris dressed in panther skin presents 'the great magician' to the forehead of the adherent of the cult.

244. Spitting a burning venom, the uraeus defends the dead against evil spirits in the course of the journey beyond the tomb.

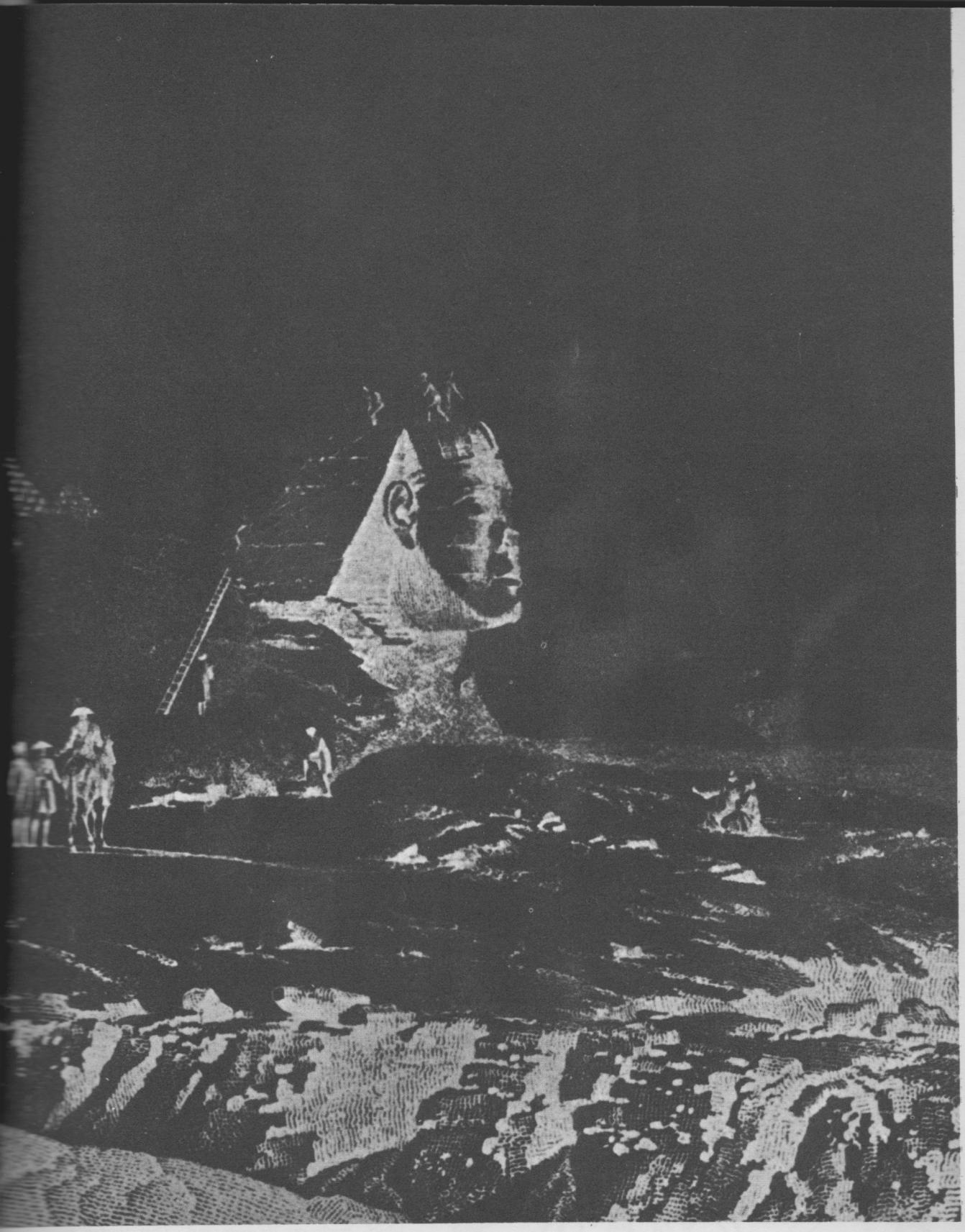
245. A very beautiful jewel of unknown origin (it belongs to the Gallery of Antiquities to which it was bequeathed by the Duc de Luynes) which symbolises clearly the 'ambiguous and eternal strength' of the serpent, which is sometimes the image of Evil, sometimes the symbol of Plenty.



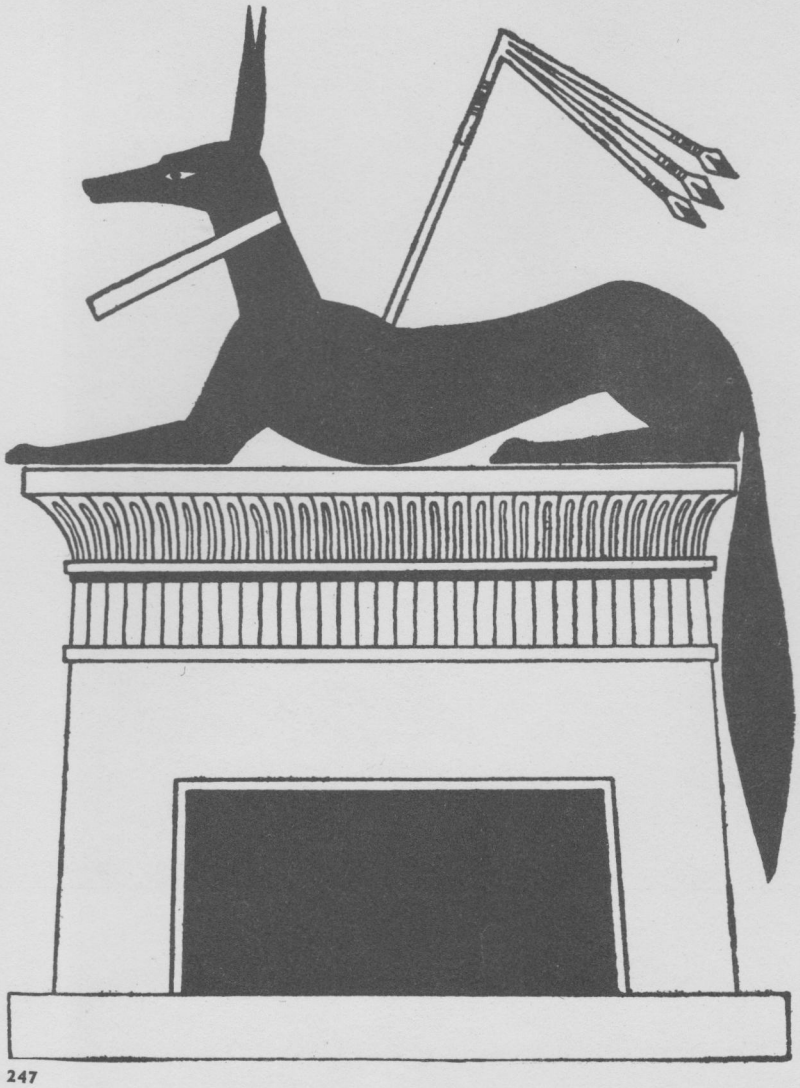
245



246



246. The mystery which is Egypt did not enter into the Western mind until the French expedition of Napoleon. This drawing by the architect Balzac (from 'The Description of Egypt') shows a visit to the necropolis of Gizeh by members of the expedition.



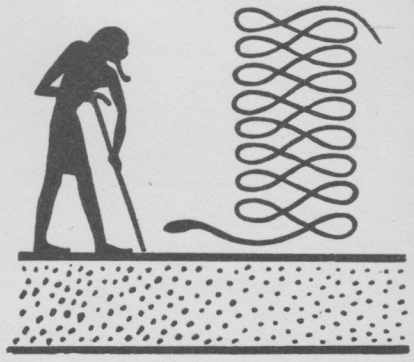
247

247. The Egyptian initiation mystery raised the god Anubis, which was represented as a jackal, to the rank of 'Superior of Mysteries'.



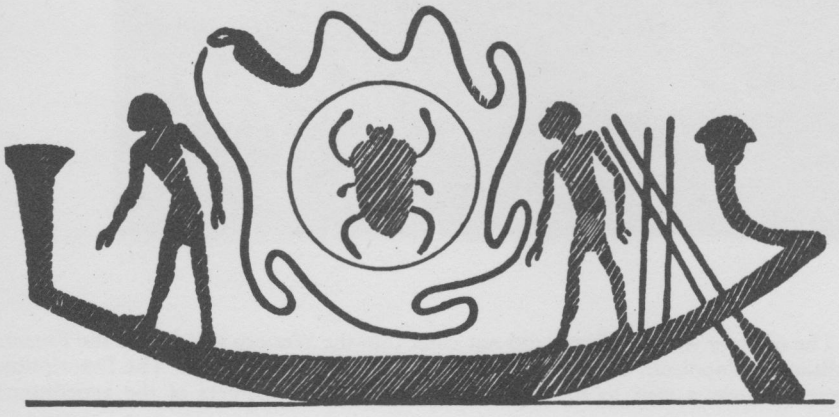
248

248. Anubis, the ever-watchful guardian, is seen here on the sarcophagus of Seti I, having put in fetters two enemies who might have hindered the passage of the dead king's spirit.



249

249. A high initiate in Egypt is shown (above) in the presence of the serpent of a colossal size, which he is holding in subjection with the 'wand of command'.



250

250. A sun vessel from the sarcophagus of Seti I. Shown here is the 'uroboros', the serpent which feeds on its own tail. This theme is found all over the world and symbolises the perpetual self-renewal of nature. The scarab, which represents the Sun God, is placed on mummified bodies near to the heart. It was intended to help the dead in the course of their journey beyond the tomb.



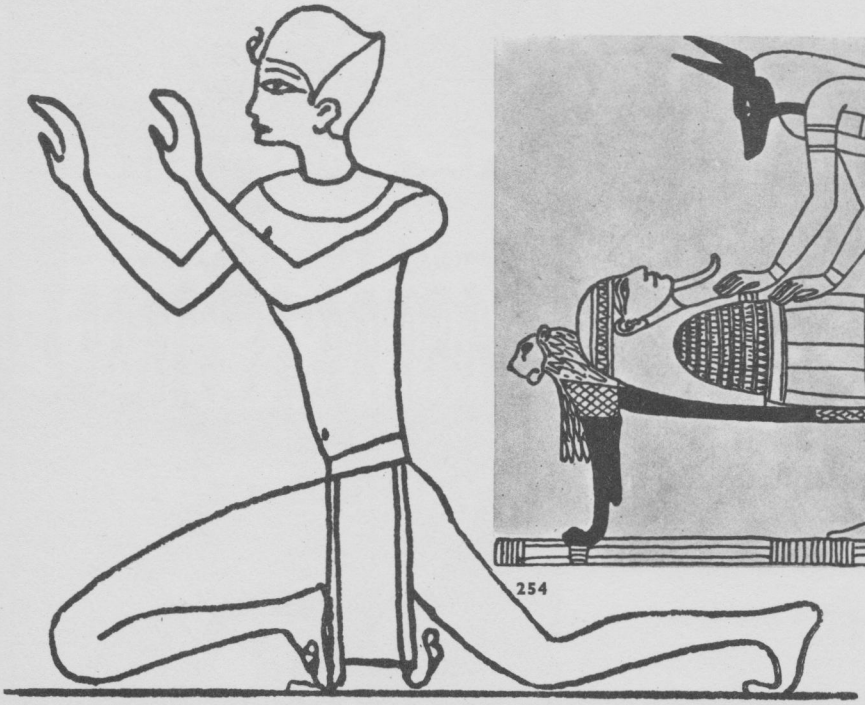
251



252

251. Two initiates of Osiris raising the flame of life. Note the similarity of this gesture to that of the 'Ka', as well as its correspondence to the gesture of Moses, who learned from Egypt how to raise the arms in order to attract the celestial forces, so enabling him to emerge victorious from the battle with the Amalekites.

252. Another initiate setting up a rising and falling current of life by means of the ansate crosses. This opposition of natural movement is found in the Greek myths of the Cabiri, Dioscuri and among the Dadophores of Mithras (one holds a torch aloft while the other holds it down).



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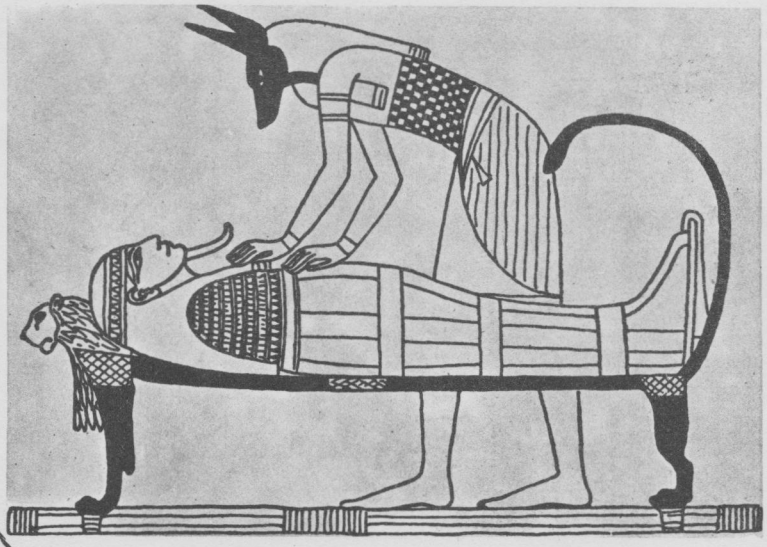


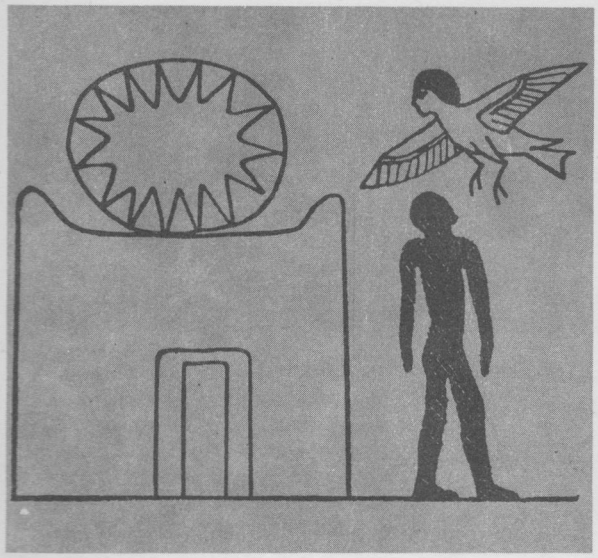
254

253–254. Egyptian magic made use of attracting fluids as much for medical as for spiritual ends. The initiate of Osiris directs the protective forces to an unidentified goal (253) while in 254, Anubis puts the fluid of vigour on to a dead man over his solar plexus to enable him to revive. This is the 'rite of resuscitation' which would be followed by the rite of 'the opening of the mouth'. The life-breath henceforth lives in the mummy and the body may be reanimated as a result.



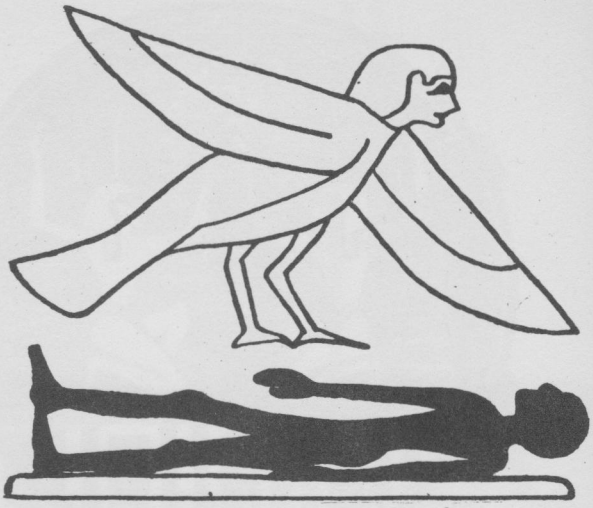
255 256

255–256. The dark shadow, represented by a simple black umbrella-shape known as the 'Khabit' is one of the figurations of the double or 'Ka', and signifies sexual energy. The dead man had to recover this energy in the course of his funeral rites so that he could undertake his journey beyond the tomb. It is not difficult to see the connection between the black shadow and the shadowy region which is the subject of the modern psychology of Jung.

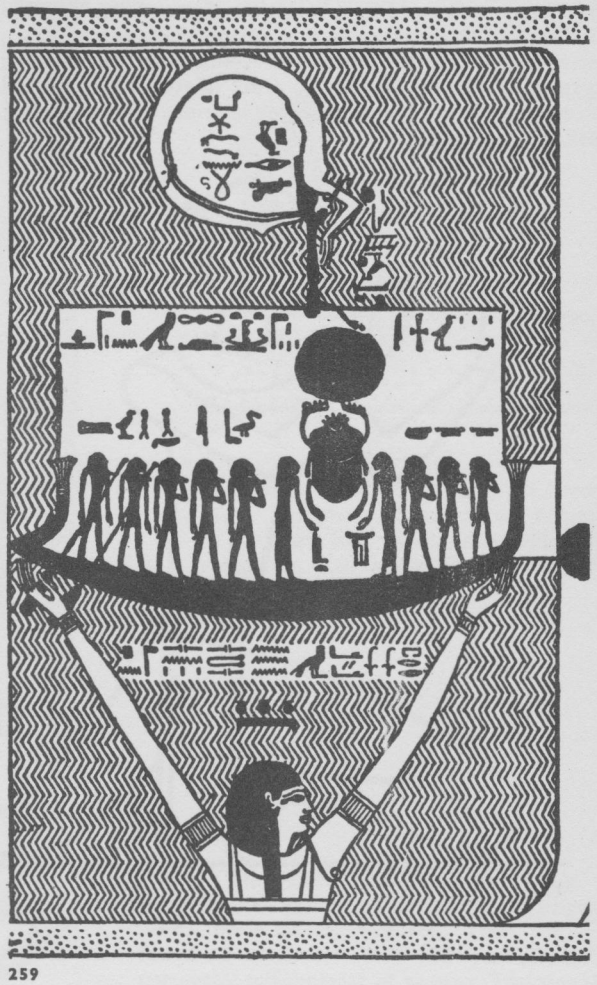


257

257–258. It is the Shadow which welcomes the soul to the threshold of the funeral chapel and it is by reshaping it into the form of the hypogeum that the personality of the dead one is remade.

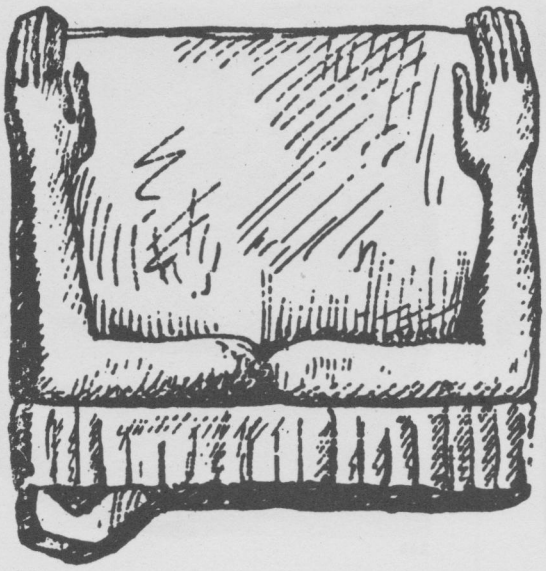


258



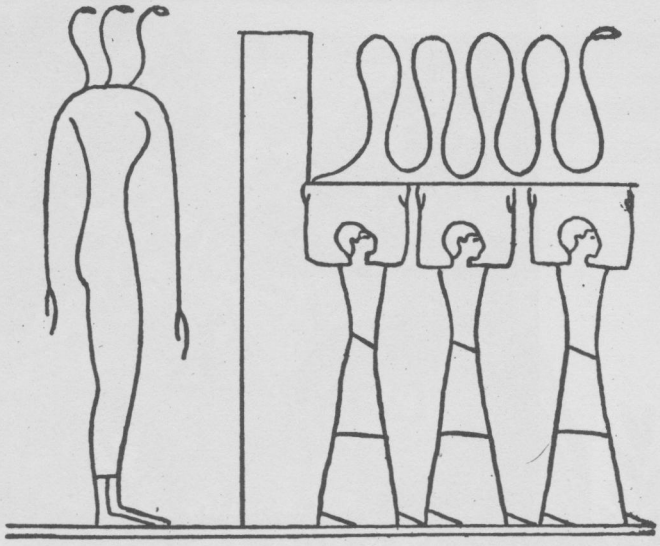
259

259. Rebirth cannot come about until after this reintegration takes place. In this illustration, under the aspect of a scarab raising the morning sun, Nut, the goddess of the Sky, raises aloft the divine ship.



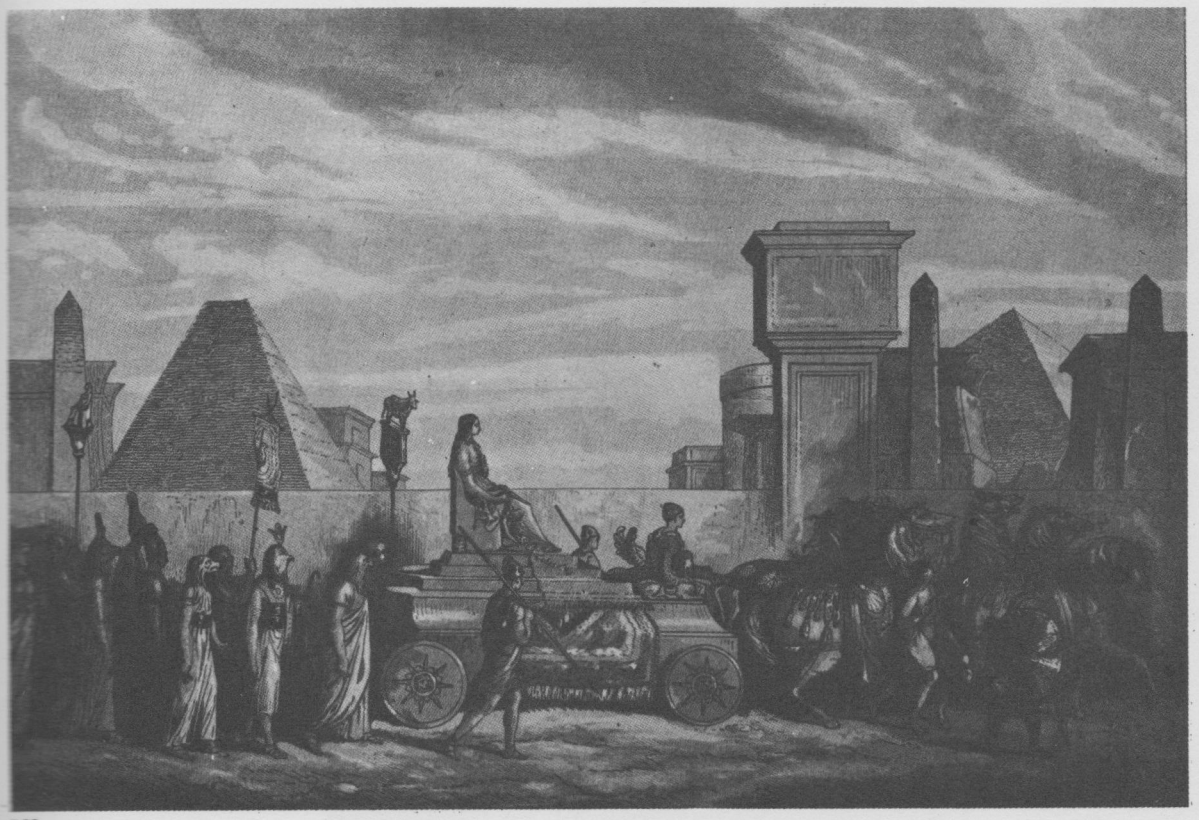
260

260. The gesture of 'Ka' (or the Double or Shade) is reduced in this illustration to the shape of a protective amulet.



261

261. Three initiates are performing the same gesture in an endeavour to take possession of the cosmic force of the serpent. 'I am master of spells,' proclaims the formula, 'strength is mine. I impart strength.'



262

262. The respect in which initiates were held was such that it equalled and even surpassed worldly success. Moreover, it found expression through triumphal processions (262). Pagan antiquity and the biblical world did not oppose spiritual accomplishments and social success. Amongst the Egyptians, poverty was regarded as a disease.



263



265

THE MYSTERIES OF ELEUSIS

263. The initiation of Eleusis was a royal one. It was essentially part of the exercise of royal power but it is possible to think that the 'king' was also the symbol of the self, of personal self-mastery, to which every initiate must accede. That is why the guardianship of herds of animals was one of the preliminary exercises for every kind of Eleusinian initiation.

264. Just as the king had to master his subjects (the herds) so the initiate had to quell all inhuman passions.

265. In the same way he must know how to subdue the sea, symbol of genesis, for which reason he learned to pilot a ship (symbol of the transport of souls into the beyond).



264



266

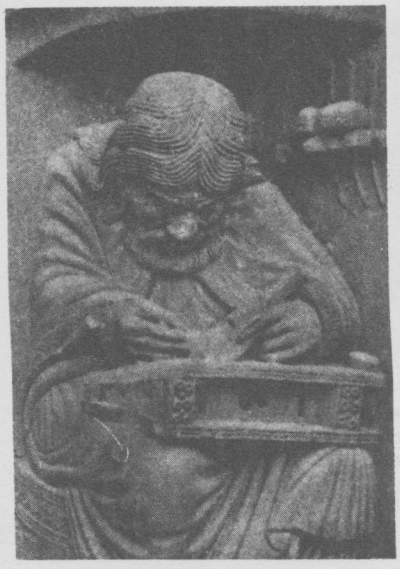
266. The Greeks believed Hermes Trismegistus to be the initiator of occult philosophy, of magic. In fact, this was really a composite personage, half Hermes, half the Egyptian god Thoth. His 'Emerald Table', which alchemists and occultists claimed in later years to be the basis of their thinking, is known from an inscription on an emerald plaque found in the hands of a mummy from the pyramid of Gizeh. According to some statements, Hermes would reign for 3,226 years . . .



267

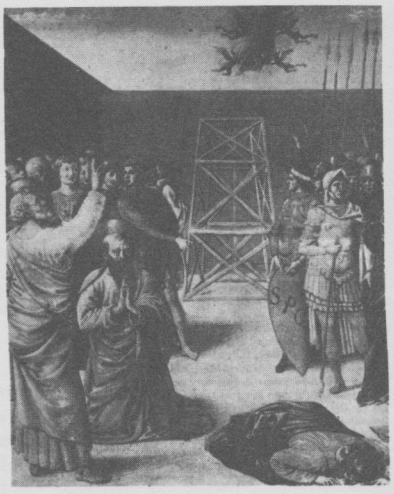
267. Apollonius of Tyana was one of the most celebrated magicians of ancient Greece. He was said to be the son of the sea god Proteus. After having visited Egypt and India in the first century A.D., he knew how to predict the future, cure the sick and raise the dead.

268. Pythagoras owed his glory to the fact of his 'having brought from Egypt the universal science', even more than to his skill as a mathematician.



268

269. Simon the Magician, a gnostic of the first century, was alleged to have raised himself into the sky of Rome, much as Jesus had done in Judaea.



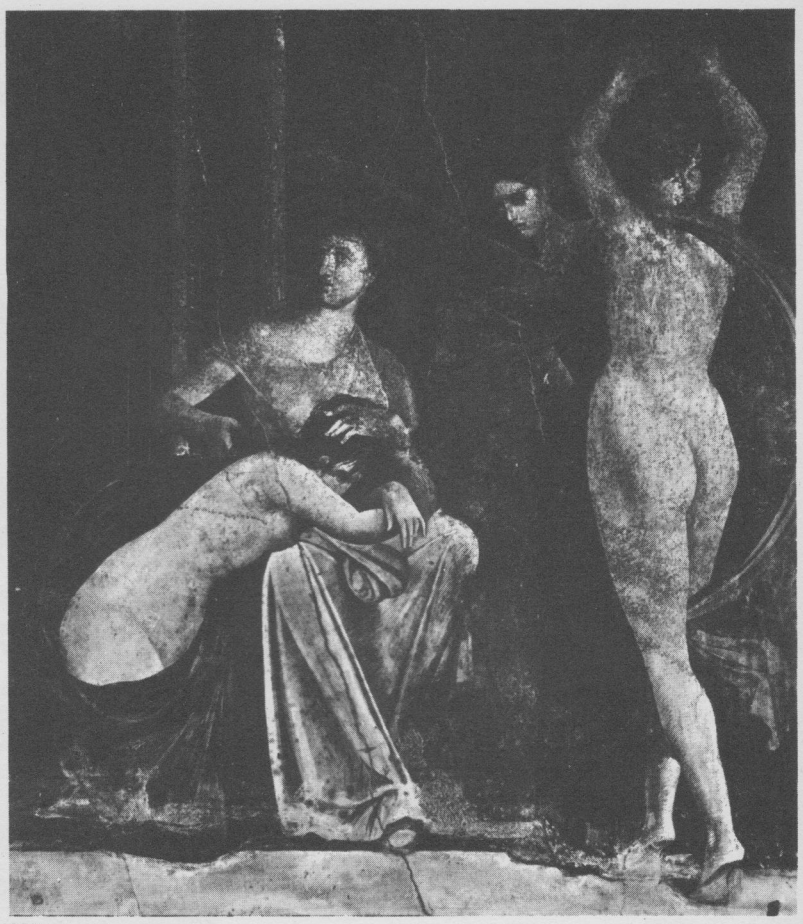
269

270. Dionysos, god of wine and vegetation (who in Rome took the name of Bacchus) was also master of mysteries. The 'villa of the mysteries of Pompeii' has a series of wall paintings which show the various stages of initiation into the Dionysian rite.



271

271–272. The mysteries of Mithras came from Persia where, from the depths of history, the Zorastrian religion had instituted a dualism of Good and Evil, of Light and Shade which the Middle Ages brought to its zenith. The primordial Mithraic rite, the sacrifice of the bull, symbolised the reduction of the animal principle in man.



270

MYTHS OF THE FLESH



272

273. In most ancient mysteries, initiation included erotic aspects made manifest in a great symbolical veneration of the phallus. Still, today, in India, the Tantra initiation devotes its major part to sexuality. The 'lingam' is venerated there in the same degree as the phallus elsewhere.

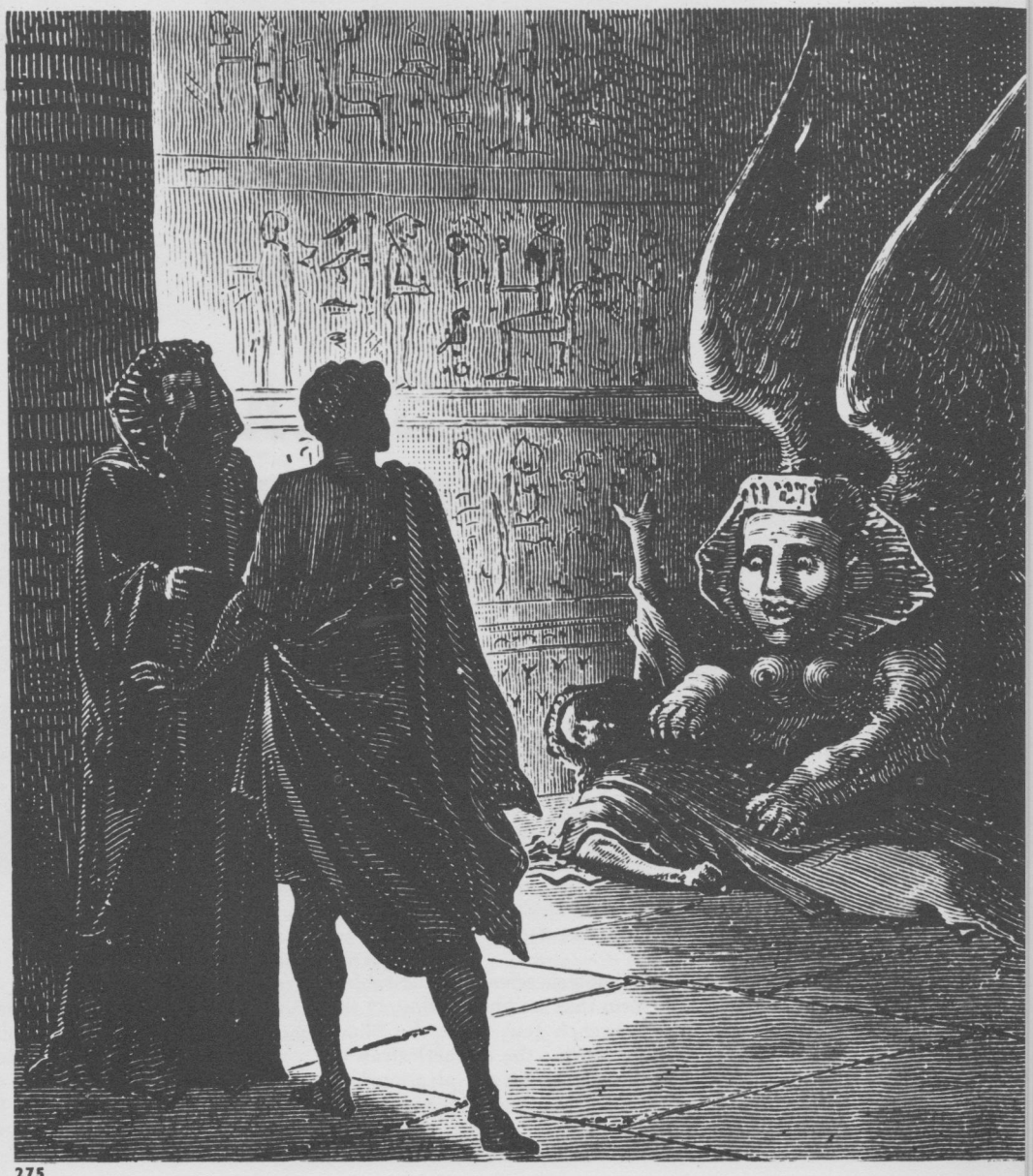


273



274

THE HUMOUR OF INITIATION



275

274–275. One should have reservations about the manner in which occultists of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth have represented ancient initiation ceremonies. The bad taste and involuntary humour which are shown in many of their works are evidence of their ignorance in the matter. Above: 'the first test of the initiate'. Below: 'Punishment of the perjurer'. Romanticism offers nothing but excess when the work is by other than true artists. The occultists of this period give the impression of taking refuge in fantasy to hide their inability to create real works of art, to build genuine scientific constructions. Although they showed greater naïveté, the classical period and the Middle Ages were more true.

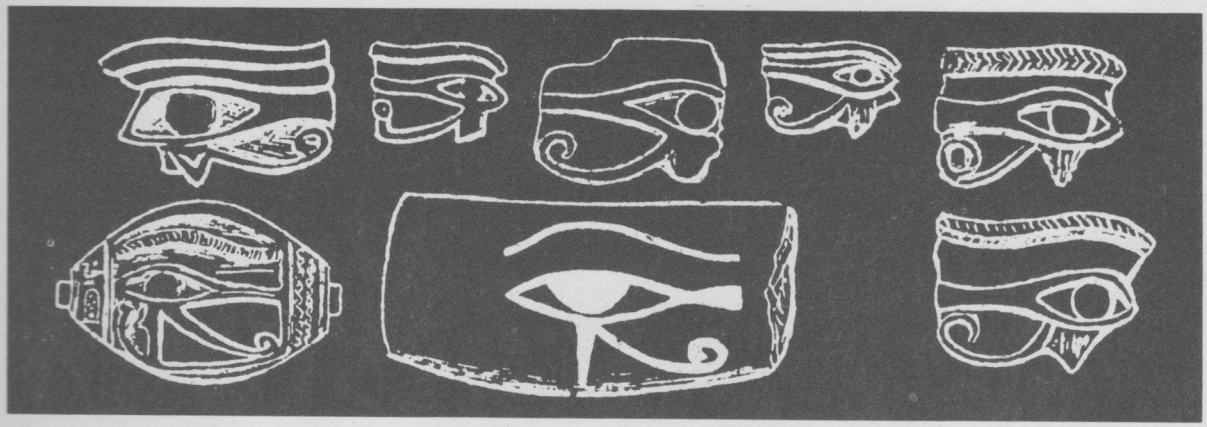


276



277

THE CABBALA

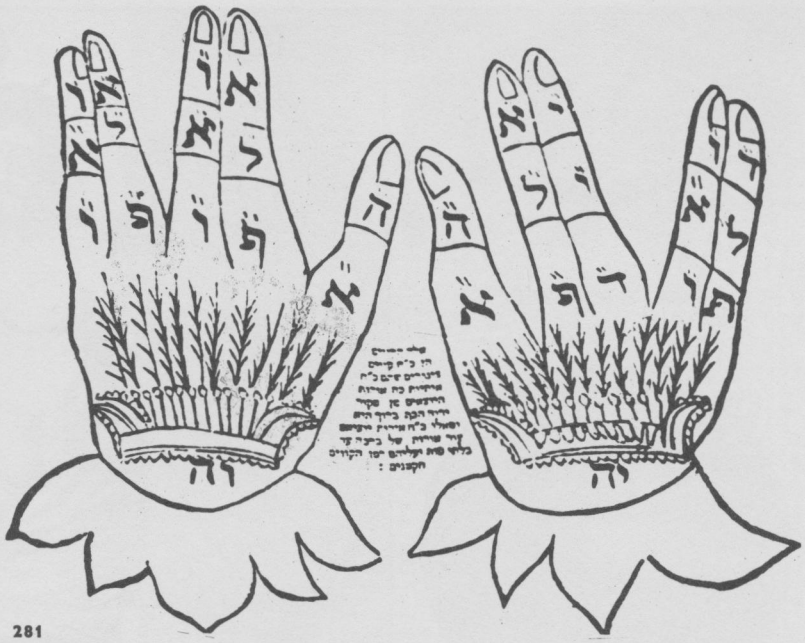


278

276 to **278.** The Cabbala, the esoteric science of the rabbis, appeared in Europe in the form that we know today, in the thirteenth century. It was a French Jew, Isaac the Blind, who revealed its fundamental works: the Sepherlezirah or 'Book of Creation', and 'Zohar' or 'Book of Splendour', in which could be found innumerable neo-Platonic and Pythagorian influences. 'Cabbala' signifies 'reception' of wisdom. The middle ages made Christians as cut off from classical antiquity as were the Jews, restricted to their ghettoes. During the Renaissance they attempted to rediscover the twin sources of their culture. They set themselves to create a 'Christian cabbala' (276). Thus one comes across symbolical representations of the unity of the Christian, Jewish and Muslim religions (277). Illustration 278 shows amulets against the Evil Eye, found in Palestine.



279



281

279 to **280.** An eighteenth century silver amulet box, carrying biblical texts, which has been partly gilded (279). An amulet box in gold filigree (280). Between the two golden leaves, a formula has been traced on parchment. On one of the sides is the motto: Chaddaï. The cabbala claims to bring in a system of mystical correspondences, by virtue of which the initiate can know both God and the universe.

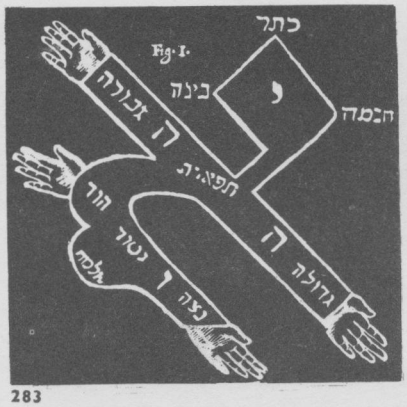
281. The 'Sephirot' (manifestations of God during the Creation): the cabbalists alleged that God is contained in 'Adam Kadmon', the primeval man and the human form foreshadows everything that is on earth and in Heaven. By extrapolation they built a permanent system of correspondences between the different parts of the body (and in particular the hands) and the planetary signs, translated into the 'letters' and the 'numbers' of this tradition.



280



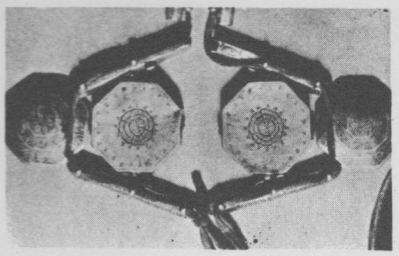
282



283

282. The cabbalistic seal of Agrippa corresponds to one method, named after the 'Notariku', which allows consideration of each word as an abbreviation, every letter of the word becoming the initial of another word. In the talisman of Agrippa is found the word 'Araita' which is composed of the initials of all the Hebrew words of one sacred phrase.

283. The ideogram which represents the Hebrew letter Aleph gives some idea of the way in which cabbalistic speculations were tied to the alphabet. The Hebrew alphabet consists of twenty-two letters with three 'mother' letters: Aleph (shown here), Mem and Schin.



284

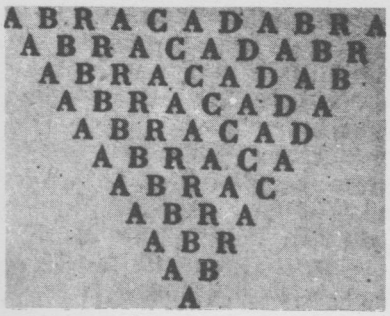
284. A silver amulet from the nineteenth century, found in Palestine.



285

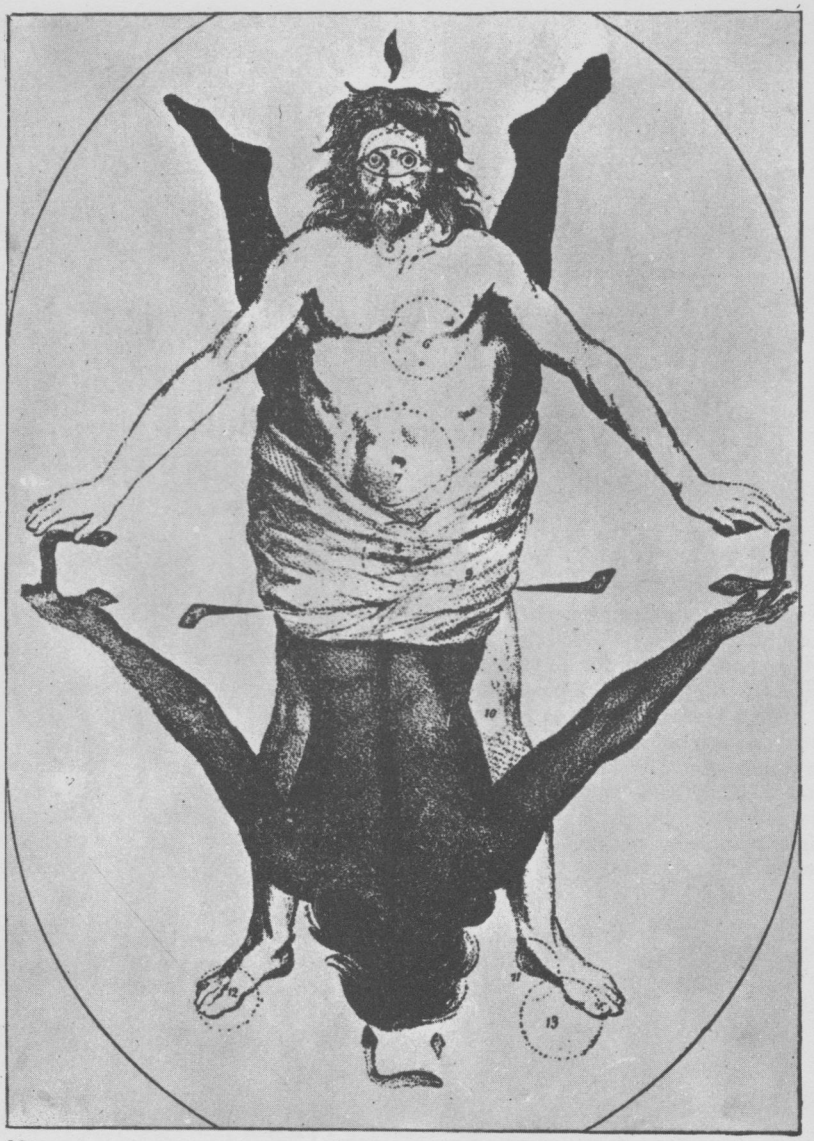
285. A cabbalistic allegory in which a mixture of Jewish and Christian ideas can be seen.

286. 'Abracadabra' is one of the alphabetical and numerical experiments which the Cabbala undertook. 'Abracadabra' is, to those who believe in it, a highly efficacious charm, particularly against intestinal maladies and the fever. It was inscribed on a parchment or on a metal plaque and was worn at the neck like a scapular.



286

287. A 'perspectivist' representation of 'Sephirot' (the god incarnate); traditionally ascribed to Cordovero in 'Pardes Rimmonim', Cracow, 1592.



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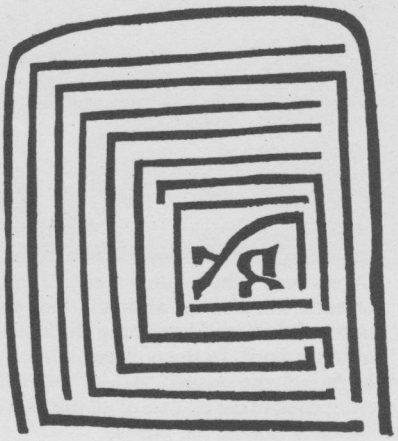


287

288. The great cabbalistic symbol of Zohar, according to modern occultists. The Cabbala saw Man's existence on three levels: the body, the soul and the spirit, each one being the reflection of and the key to the others. The lowest level of human existence, called 'Nephehs', is conscious of the physical world, feeds on its forces and leaves to it its creations. The middle level, 'Ronach', looks out to the astral world. The highest level, 'Neshamah', looks on to the divine world.

The illustrations shown opposite, which are taken from 'The Popular Spirit among the Jews of South Morocco', by Pierre Flamand, are concerned with talismans.

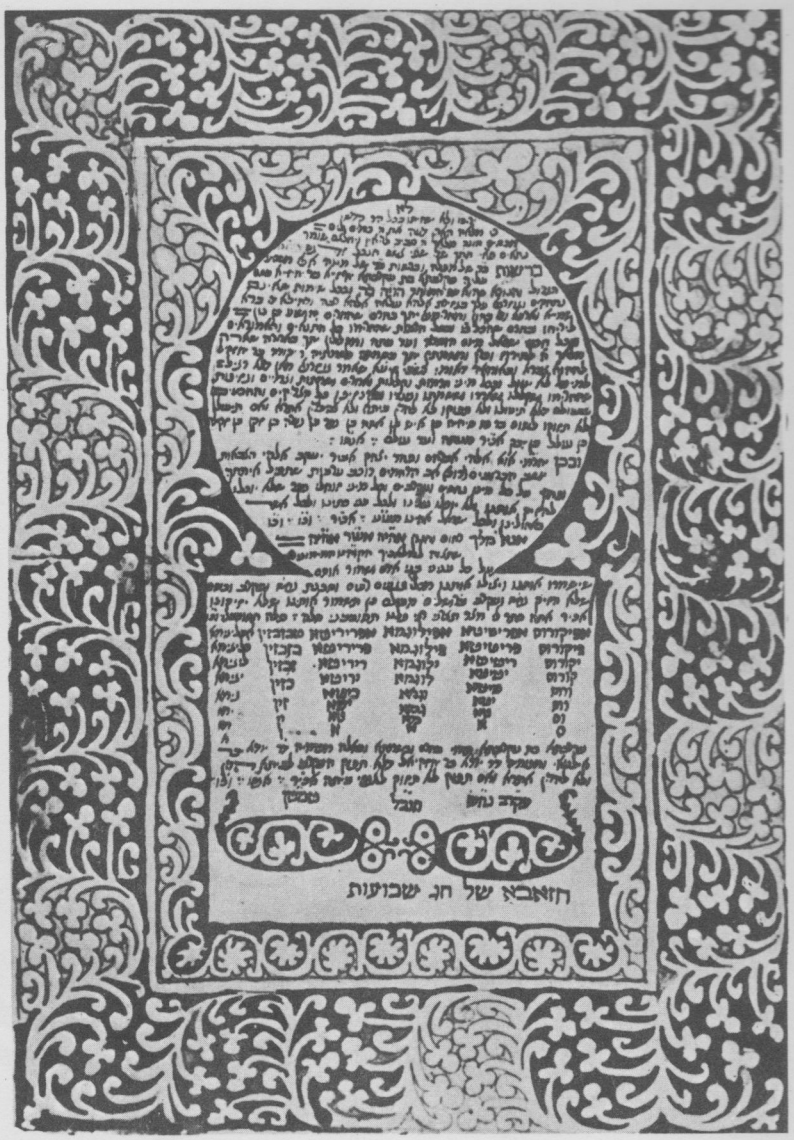


289

289. The 'Chaddaï' of the ritual laying-on of hands, which is placed on the doors of houses.

290. A text fixed to the bedhead of the nursing mother and her newborn. The hand is a protection against the Evil Eye.

291. A protective talisman for the newborn against illness and the Evil Eye.



291



290

292. Talisman for the birth of the eldest son. To each letter of the Hebrew alphabet, there is a corresponding 'number', a symbol in space, a symbol in time and a corporeal symbol. 'Aleph', for example, corresponds to the number 1, the sign of Fire, the Heavens, Summer and the Head. The seven planets correspond to the seven double letters of this alphabet, as also do the seven days of the week and the seven orifices of the head. The twelve simple letters, the signs of the zodiac, the months of the year and the organs of the body correspond to each other.



292

GNOSIS AND THE GNOSTICS



293

'Gnosis', which signifies 'knowledge', flourished in the ancient world in the first centuries A.D., in Alexandria. Gnostic sects were very numerous and were characterised by a sort of syncretism of religious and magical beliefs from Egypt, Greece, from the Hebrews and the first Christians. It was, in short, a reflection of the political and military unification which comes into being amongst all civilised communities. The gnostics constructed a theory of cosmic cycles (the 'aeons') and gave an important function to the 'female principle' in the genesis of the universe as well as in the attainment of spirituality. They also believed in the power of numbers and words.

293 to **298.** Gnostic beliefs have left behind a quantity of artistic evidence, amongst which are cameos, jewels and intaglio work of great beauty. The illustrations show: cameos of Abraxas, the oldest of the Syrian gods; and Serapis and Agathodemon in one person, in the act of adoration before the master of the universe.



294



296



297



295



298



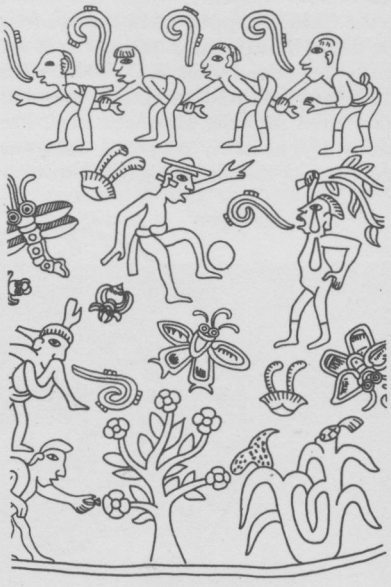
299. All civilisations show traces of initiation ceremonies and of magical teachings which have been founded on the law of correspondence of symbols and on the belief in the power of numbers or words. In this Chinese painting, two initiates receive a visit from the celestial dragon.

299



300

300. The connection between the Word, the Spirit and Initiation is clearly symbolised in this bronze statue from the temple of Nara in Japan. An old deified philosopher whose spirit is departing from the mouth like a breath.

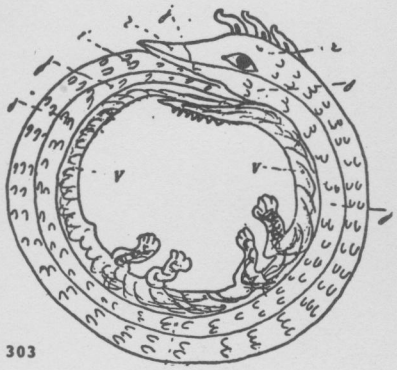


301

301. A fresco from a Mexican temple at Teotihuacan: symbolic language freely depicts the earthly Paradise of pre-Columbian civilisation.



302



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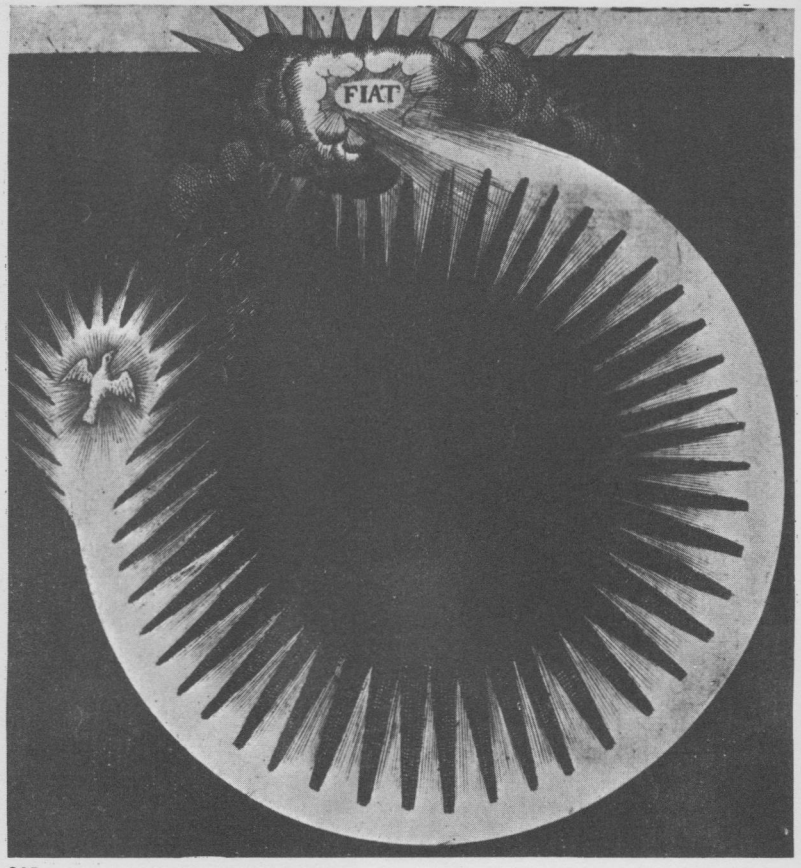


305

ALCHEMY AND ALCHEMISTS

302 to **305.** Alchemy, which was known to the Chinese, appeared in Europe from the fall of the Roman Empire, but it was really developed after A.D. 1000, when the Arabs initiated the lands they had conquered into the Hermetic arts. Pre-eminently, alchemy proposed the transmutation of metals into gold. However, certain symbols which it employed belong more to a 'gnosis of matter', hedged about with prudence. It was necessary to avoid the thunderbolts reserved by the Church for its heretics. Medieval alchemists took up again and transformed the theme of the serpent Uroboros which has already been encountered in Egypt. Here (302) we see it as represented by the classical Greek alchemists, then (303) in a medieval drawing where the serpent transforms itself into a salamander, then (304) the serpent in a drawing from Benin and lastly (305) the serpent in a drawing which imagines the creation of the world.

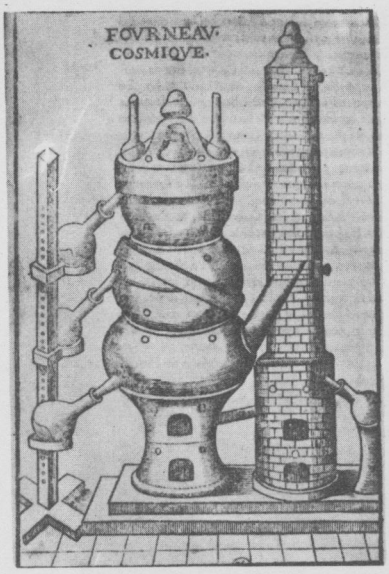


304



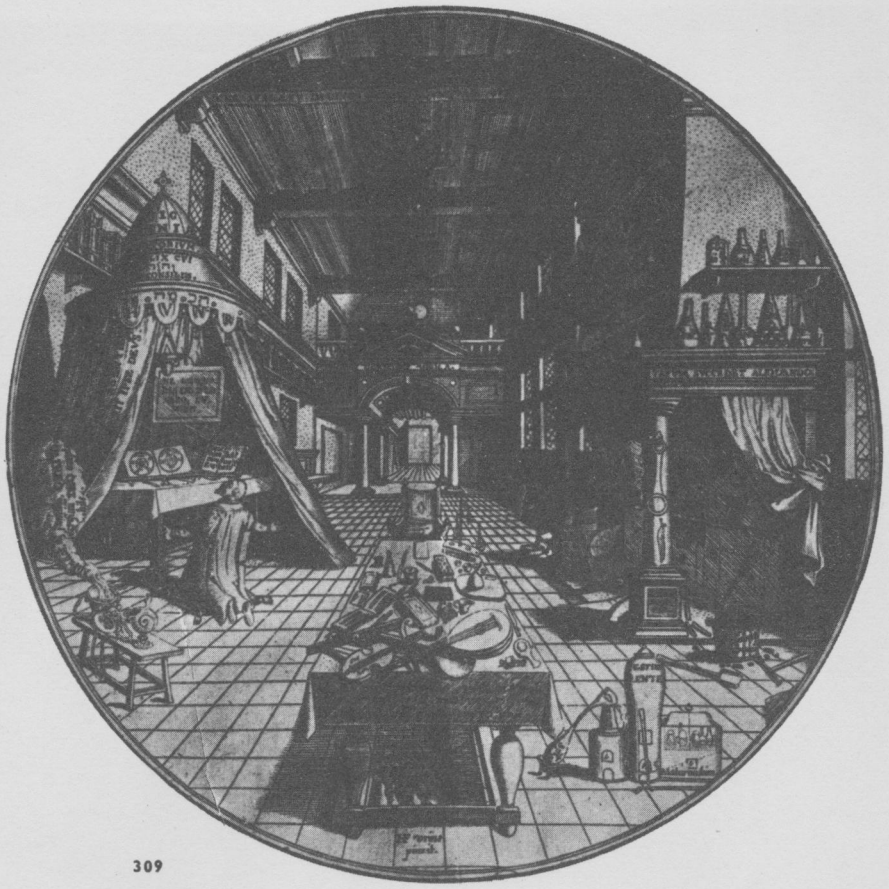
306

306. A pair of alchemists in front of the furnace used in the 'Black Art'.



307

307. The 'cosmic' furnace where the union of the three principles, sulphur, salt and mercury, was to take place. The furnace itself symbolises the conjunction of the male and female principles, which would give rise to the 'philosopher's stone'. The lower receptable, where heat is produced, is male, the horned section on top is female.



309

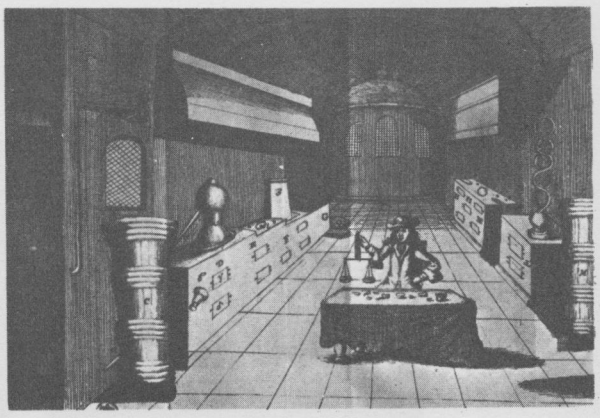
309. An alchemist kneeling before a tabernacle which recalls the Hebrews' desert tent. Its legend is brief: 'Speak not of God without illumination'.



308

308. Golden Lane, the 'Street of the Alchemists', in Prague, which was a famous centre of alchemy, black magic and the occult sciences in the sixteenth century. The infamous Doctor Faust, who gave rise to so many legends, lived there, as also did Paracelsus, Cornelius Agrippa and the monk Tritheim. Prague was also renowned for its Cabbalists.

310. The alchemical dispensary at Utrecht is the den of a magician who has lost occult inspiration and has given himself over completely to material researches — which indeed foreshadow latterday chemistry itself. These 'chemists' were, however, scorned by the alchemists who treated them as puffed-up charlatans — '*souffleurs*'.



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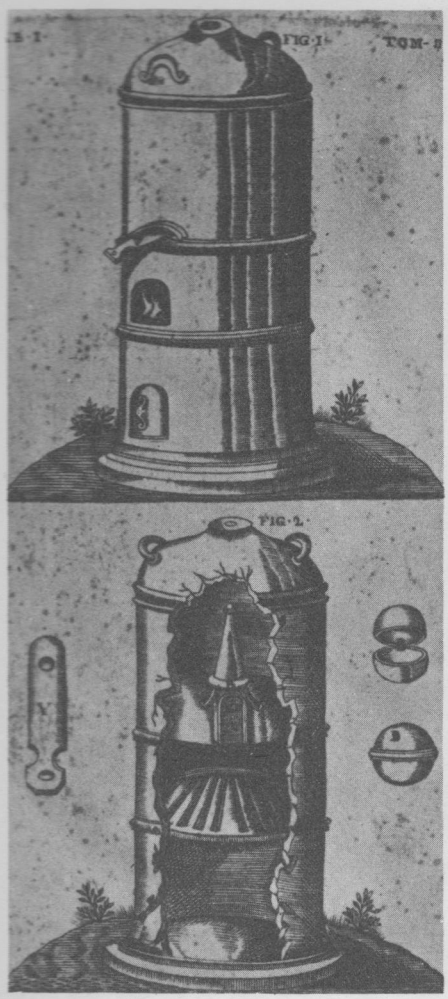

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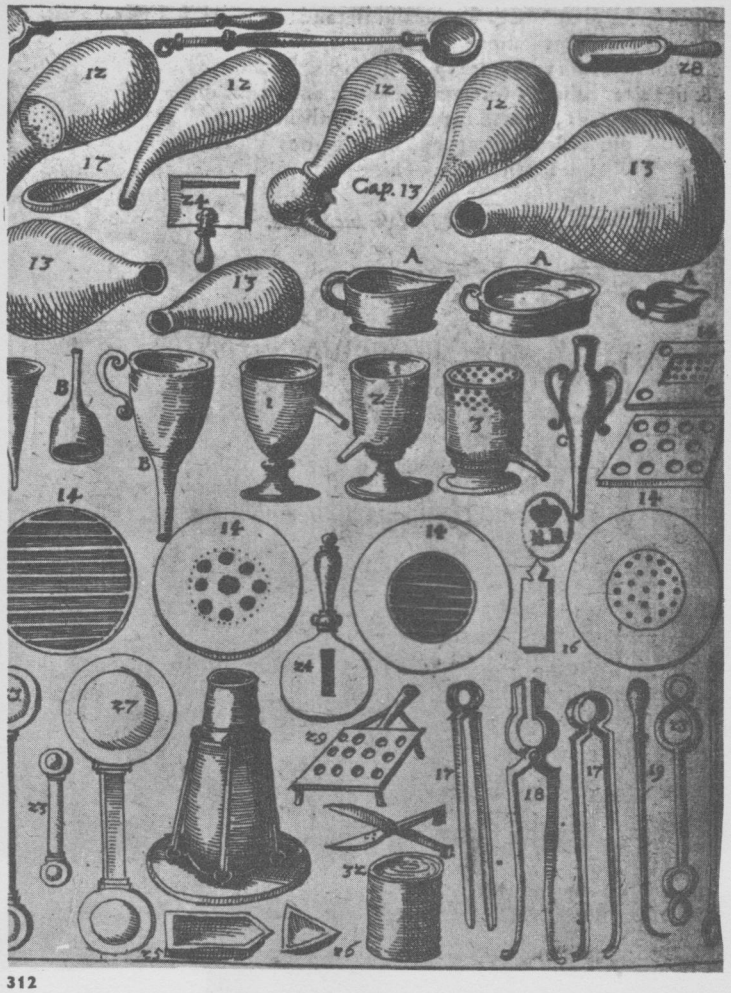
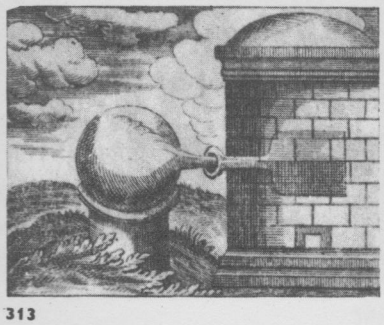


312

311. Two representations, one in elevation, one cutaway, of the 'philosophical furnace', named Athanor. This contained the 'Aludel' (also called the 'vase' or the 'philosophers' egg') where the 'work' itself would be brought to fruition, making 'the powder of projection' or the 'philosophers' stone'.

312. The *souffleurs*, who were occupied in the pursuit of gold rather than of wisdom, imagined a multitude of complicated and extravagant apparatus which very often gave rise to mockery and caricature. Mylius, in his 'Basilica Philosophica', shows a fine shop-catalogue of them.



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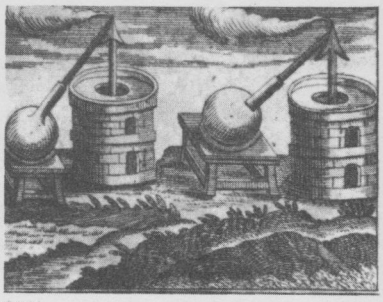

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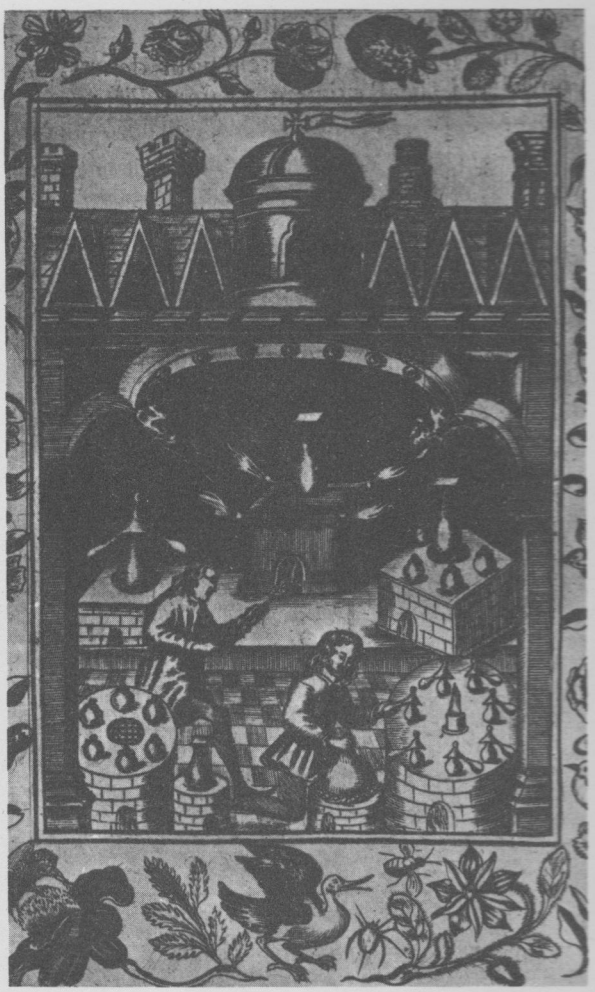
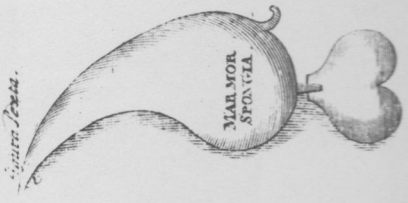


320

313–318. These engravings show the constant mingling of material objects and spiritualistic ideas which characterise alchemical drawings. The transmutation of metals, if ever it had been accomplished by any alchemist, would undoubtedly have been accompanied by a genuine spiritual transmutation of the individual who engaged in these practices. This, moreover, was what distinguished the genuine 'initiates' from the low-grade *souffleurs* who were inspired only by material appetite, quite understandable in those times of great squalor and great riches.

319–321. The 'Study of Physics' by Annibal Barlet (Paris, 1653) mentions instruments which would have been derided by the true alchemist. Above: an authentic alchemist's laboratory. The precise moment for beginning their works is announced to the practitioners of the Black Arts by 'Heaven'.



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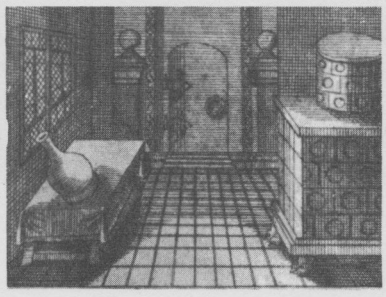

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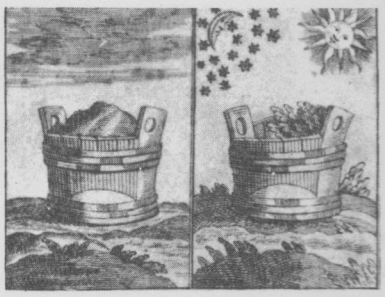
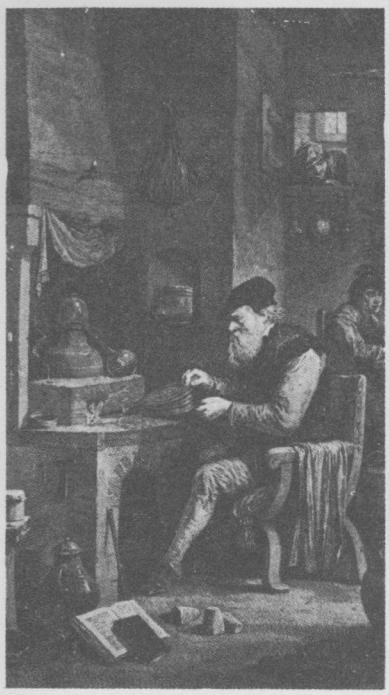


318

322. Taken from the 'Mutus Liber' by Manget, these illustrations depict a pair of alchemists setting about the preliminary operations of the 'Great Work'. These preparations had to take place under a favourable state of the heavens, according to whether the operation was for the division, separation or conjunction of the elements; and the preparations lasted for a long time. The total duration of the whole routine lasted twelve months. (Other writers have spoken of fifteen months, or even from three to twelve years,) Any payment that might accrue was derisory in amount.



323



322

323 to **324.** It is easy to imagine to what degree alchemists, both serious and charlatan, excited the curiosity of the ignorant. Artists, by nature indiscreet, did not hesitate to look even more closely into their activities. The Alchemist in Teniers' picture is spied on by an intruder in the dormer window. The same artist displays his mockery at the expense of the *souffleurs* in his print 'The Pleasure of Fools', going so far as to show in front of a furnace of the Black Art, a monkey drawing up the magic flame with the aid of a bellows.



324



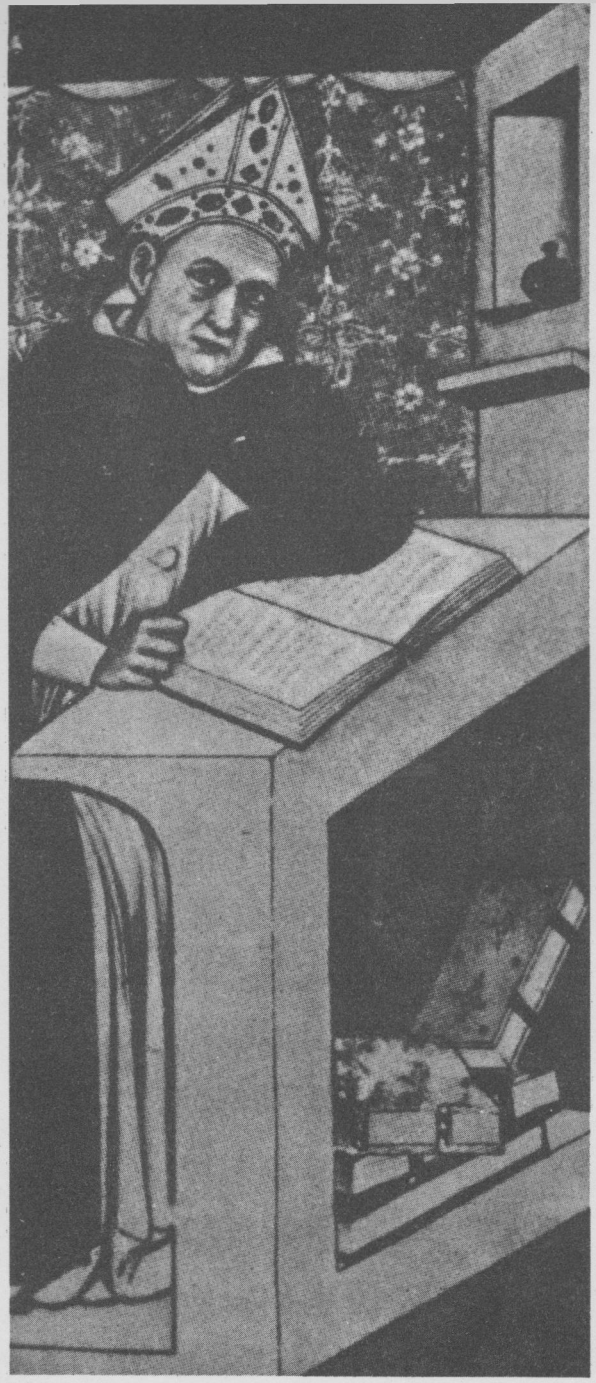
325

325. This illustration of another 'chemist' was engraved by Le Bas, after Teniers. It is to be doubted whether the soup pot, which serves him as his only utensil, is likely to bring a 'Great Work' to fruition.



326

326. Equally tart in tone is this print by Breughel the Elder which lays bare the unbelievable chaos reigning in a *souffleurs* laboratory: lamentations from the wife faced with an empty purse, children searching in vain for food in the neglected cupboards. Finally, the unfortunate alchemist departs with his family to seek refuge in an alms house. (The term 'souffleur' derives from the bellows — *soufflet* — which they used to keep the fire going, and not from *soufflerie*, meaning trickery.)



327



328



329

327. Albertus Magnus (1193—1280), philosopher and doctor of the Church, was also perhaps a magician and undoubtedly an alchemist. His writings bear witness to a genuine scientific curiosity which was quite novel at the time. The treatise 'On Alchemy' has been attributed to him and it has been alleged that he passed his art on to St Thomas Aquinas.

328. Roger Bacon, the Franciscan monk (1214—1294), was the first to attach a great importance to the experimental method on which he wished to base 'natural magic', astrology and alchemy. Although he condemned 'black magic' he was nevertheless accused of demonism.

329. Henry Cornelius Agrippa of Nettersheim (1486—1555) had a life which was full of incident. Cast into a debtor's prison, he later taught throughout Europe and late in life published 'Occult Philosophy'. His influence on western occultism was enormous. He repudiated his theses in 'On the Vanity of the Arts and the Sciences'.



330

330. Nicolas Flamel (1330—1418) was accredited scribe to the University of Paris and claimed to have found the secret of transmutation. He died fabulously rich, unlike the majority of alchemists who got nothing but ruin and despair from their researches.

331. Jacques Coeur (1395—1456), who is shown here leaving his house to give thanks for the accomplishment of his great work, was a rich merchant of Bourges who became treasurer to Charles VII. He died in exile in Chios after all his goods had been confiscated.

332. Paracelsus (1493—1541) made himself famous as much by his motto ('Be not another if you can be yourself') as by his empirical researches, which revolutionised medicine in his time and enabled him to make some 'miraculous' cures. He believed alchemy to be the 'art of Man'.



331

333. Jacob Boehme (1575—1624) was one of the most profound of German mystics. He professed above all that 'there is no difference between eternal life, the re-integration and the discovery of the philosophers' stone'; and that 'everything derives from eternity and everything must return to it'.

334. Athanasius Kirchner (1602—1680), a German Jesuit and a writer in many subjects, is celebrated for the invention of the magic lantern. He was perhaps the first to decipher the Egyptian hieroglyphs. His writings on the occult science seem to have strongly influenced the alchemists of the period.



332



333

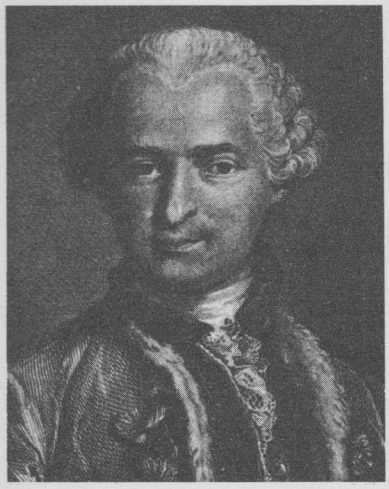


334



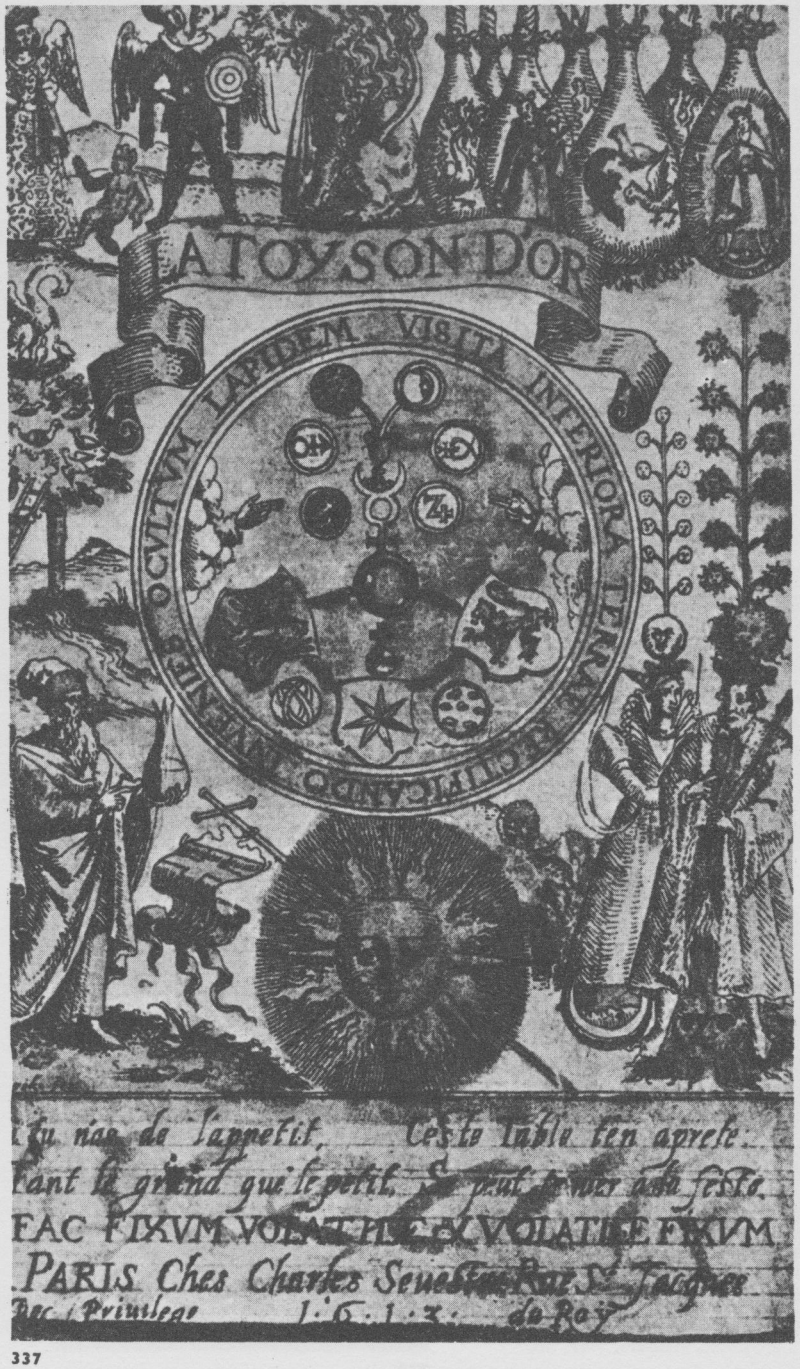
335

335. The Count of Saint-Germain, of whom neither date nor place of birth is known, claimed to have discovered the elixir of life, to have lived for 2,000 years, to have talked with the Queen of Sheba and to have participated in gossip in the court of Babylon. One thing is certain: he was in the service of Frederick the Great, and was also involved in politics at the time of Louis XV and Louis XVI.



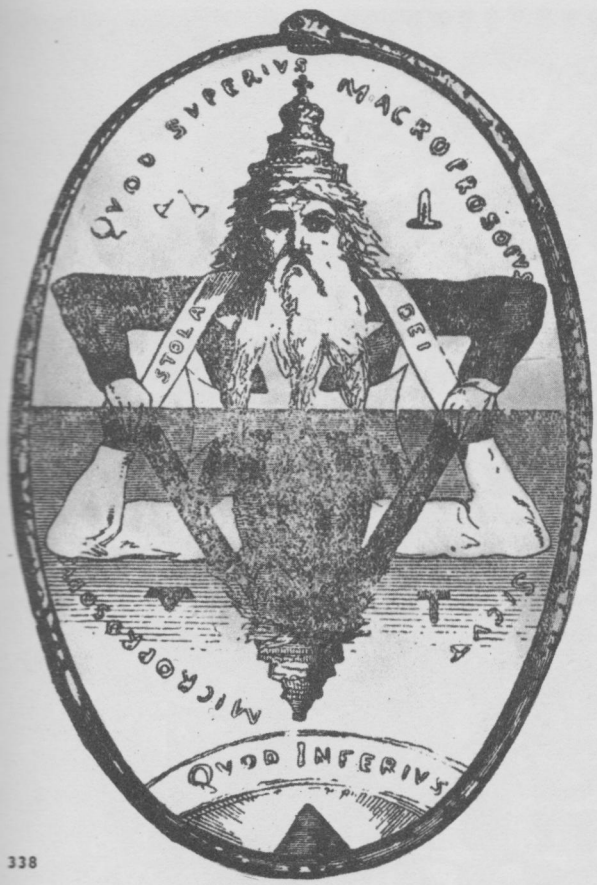
336

336. Cagliostro (Giuseppe Balsamo, 1743 to 1795) achieved notoriety in Paris for making, by alchemy, a diamond which he offered to the Cardinal de Rohan. A magician, spiritualist and above all, a charlatan, he was involved in 'The Affair of the Queen's Necklace'. He was imprisoned in the Bastille, condemned to death by the Inquisition, his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment.



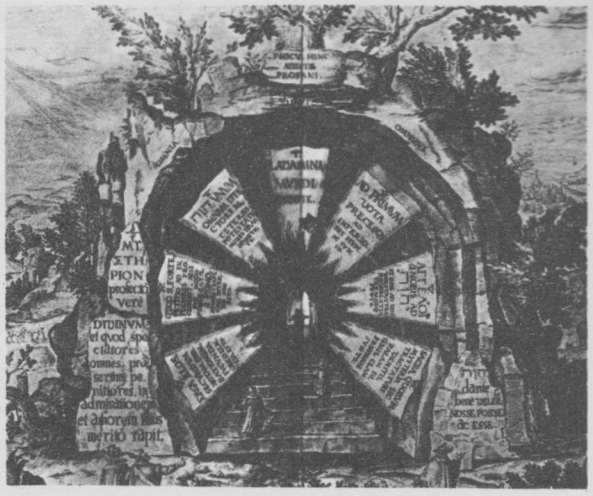
337

337. The alchemists' beliefs were fed by the myths of antiquity, especially that of the Golden Fleece, in which they were convinced they would find the secret of the Great Work (shown here, together with the assembly of the principal symbols of alchemy). The image of their own inner journeying was, in a manner, reflected by that of those pioneering spirits, the Argonauts, the audacious navigators who went questing in Colchis for the Golden Fleece of classical mythology.



338

338. The true alchemists had a vision of the world which made them humble and set them apart. Besides the Egyptian and Greek influences, transmitted by the Arabs, there is no doubt that they followed the teachings of the Cabbala of the Jews, as is shown by this engraving which represents the Grand Symbol of Solomon.



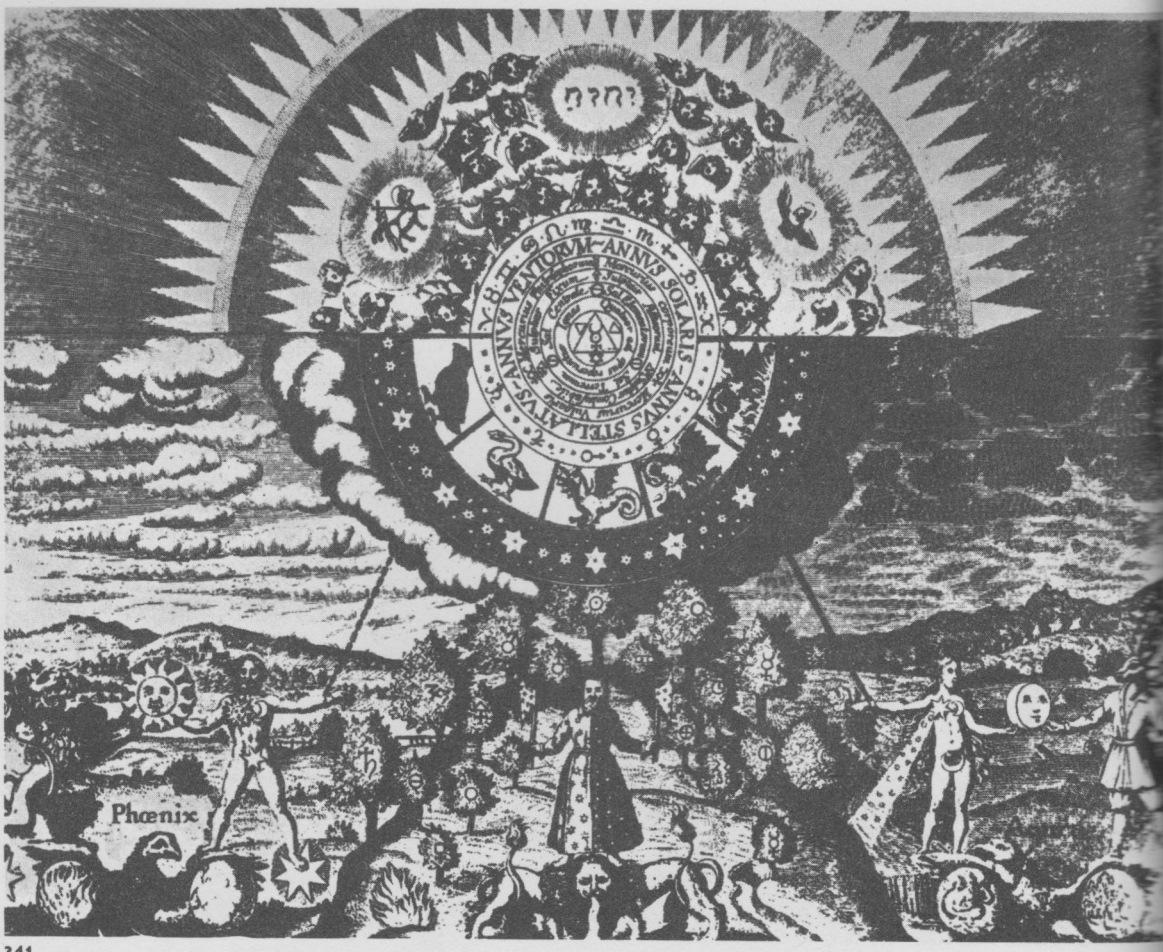
339

339. Initiation is shown here as being an entry into a sanctuary in which there are seven steps to be climbed. These steps are also the 'seven stages of perfection'. According to Khunrath (1609), this entry could be achieved 'Christian-cabbalistically, divino-magically, and even physico-chemically'. One of the inscriptions states that 'Everything is in Everything' whilst another proclaims 'Get ye hence, profane ones!'



340

340. In Robert Fludd's work 'Utriusque Cosmi-Historica', Man, the microcosm, could see himself as being centred in the circles of his own heaven and surrounded by the circles of the planets and of the other elemental circles. Elsewhere, the celestial spheres (Angels, Archangels, Virtues) replaced the planetary cycles.



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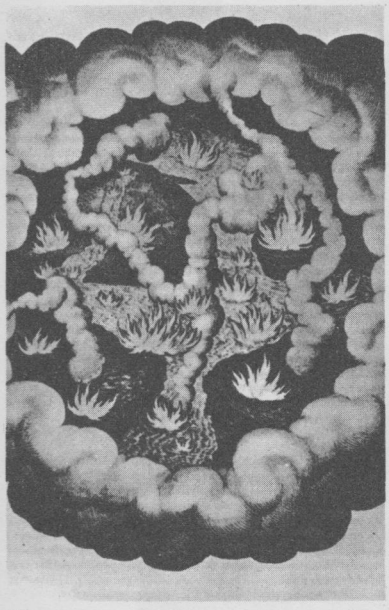


342

341. The 'plan of the Hermetic world' brings together the complete vision of the alchemists' world. Here is visible, beyond the divine world (the upper part) and the material world (the lower part), the 'Central Circle' which is, exactly, the circle of the Great Work 'half on high and half below'. The formula declares: 'What reveals the heavens can be found on earth'.

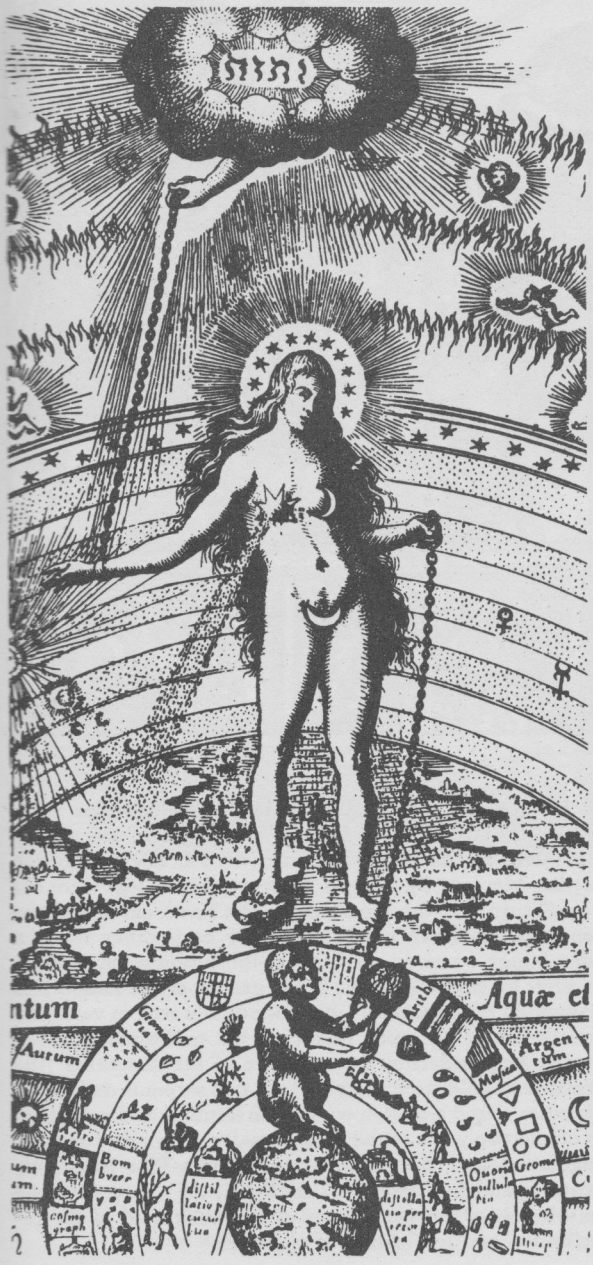


343

342. 'There is no such thing as inorganic substance. All material elements are endowed with life and, having participated in Chaos can uniformly change themselves into each other. Hence the possibility for lead to be transformed into gold, or for the sinful soul to change into its opposite . . .'

343. The seven degrees of the initiation into alchemy.

344. According to the alchemists, the world is not completely separate from its Creator, since it possesses a 'living soul', the 'Anima mundi', which is linked to Him 'in the same manner as a woman to a man'. This 'spirit of the world' is a remnant of the ancient notion of the Mother Goddess and the cult of Isis in Egypt.



344



345

345. A table setting out the explanation of the conventional 'characters' generally employed by alchemists and *souffleurs* alike, ranging from Steel *(Acier)* to Vitriols of many hues.

346. An illustration typical of the image which the magicians (for whom science could not fail to obey the 'serpent') made of themselves in their art. Eroticism was by no means absent.



346

ELEMENTS AND ESSENCES



347

347. Seven figures in the upper part of the illustration show successively: 1. Mercury holding a caduceus and facing Saturn who is armed with a scythe (the mortification of the everyday Mercury by the god Mercury, whose legs were cut off by Saturn); 2. the mountain of the seven caves and the seven serpents. Here monsters devour each other while a golden bough waves in the breeze (the sublimation of Mercury after his mortification); 3. the garden of the Hesperides ornamented by a fountain which blind men seek in vain (the regeneration of Mercury following his sublimation); 4. a crowned king ordering the massacre of the innocents (the extraction of gold from mercury); 5. two serpents devouring each other round a golden wand (the solution and volatilisation of the two parts of the same metal); 6. crucified serpent (coagulation and fixation); 7. desert with four fountains, four rivers and four serpents (multiplication). Below can be seen symbols of the completion of the work, and of the reconciliation and unification of opposites.

348. The frontispiece of *Gloria Mundi* describing 'The Seven Metals', the 'Four Elements', the 'Operations' and the 'Colours of the Work'. The 'Quaternary' comprised Fire, Air, Water and Earth while the 'Ternary' consisted of Sulphur, Mercury and Salt. The doubtful nature of the alchemists' researches is obvious from the works that have come down to us while their material operations seem to have dissimulated or at least accompanied a process of spiritual initiation.

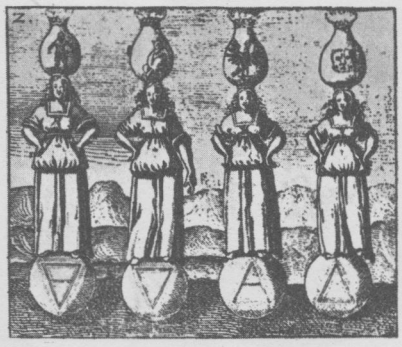


348

349. An illustration taken from 'Margarita Preciosa': gold is symbolised by the figure of the King, before whom the six other metals, indicated by six children, kneel in humility. And the children will certainly be devoured by the King.

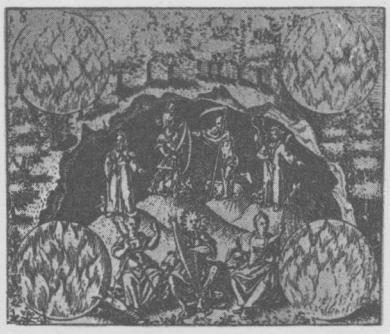


349



350

350–351. These figures, taken from Jamsthaler's 'Viatorium Spagyrium', symbolise (350) the four elements, and (351) the seven metals, personified by Apollo, Diana, Jupiter, Saturn, Mercury, Mars and Venus, who are shown here in a subterranean cave.



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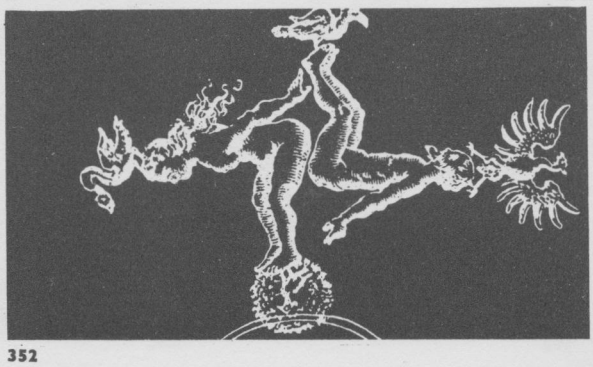


352

352. Symbol of the 'ninth key' by Basile Valentin, representing the principle of fixation and volatilisation. Valentin was responsible for the statement: 'Evil should become the same thing as Good.'

353. This sealed vase, 'the philosophers' egg' (in which the Great Work takes place), is filled with the raw material producing the 'seven metals'. On other occasions the vase symbolises the uterus, for within it the 'child' of the philosophers takes shape.

354. Engraving from one of the Indian Tantrist works showing the union of water and fire. This is the 'marriage of opposites', the ideal of the alchemists and the occultists.

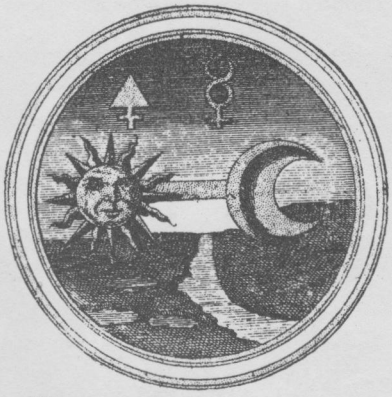
355. The symbols of sulphur and mercury used by the philosophers, extracted from gold and silver. According to the theories of the alchemists in fact each metal carried within itself its own ferment, which had to be extracted. Royal gold became gold ferment and royal silver became silver ferment. Gold and silver are represented once again by the Sun and the Moon, the male and female.



353

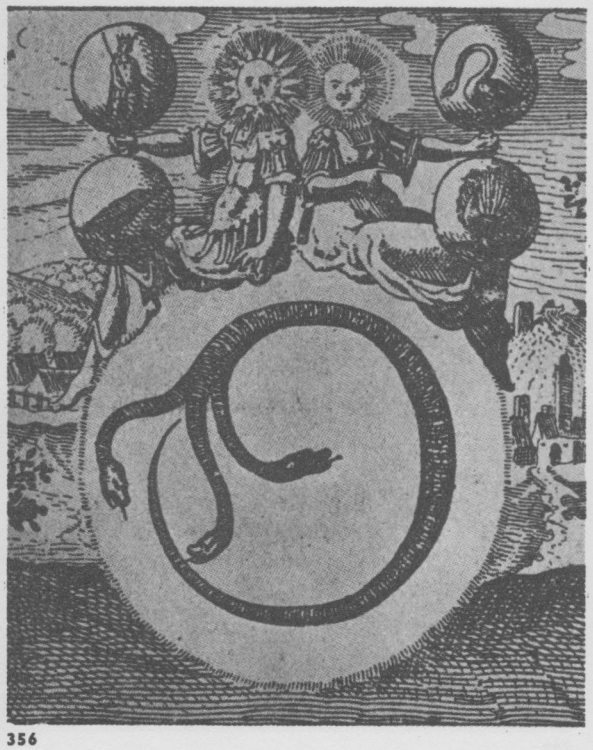


354



355

356. The union of the King and the Queen, of the Sun and the Moon, of Gold and Silver, over the philosophers' vase, in which cosmic matter is symbolised by a three-headed serpent. From gold, which was also called 'secret sulphur', sulphur was extracted. From silver, which was also called 'secret mercury', mercury was extracted.

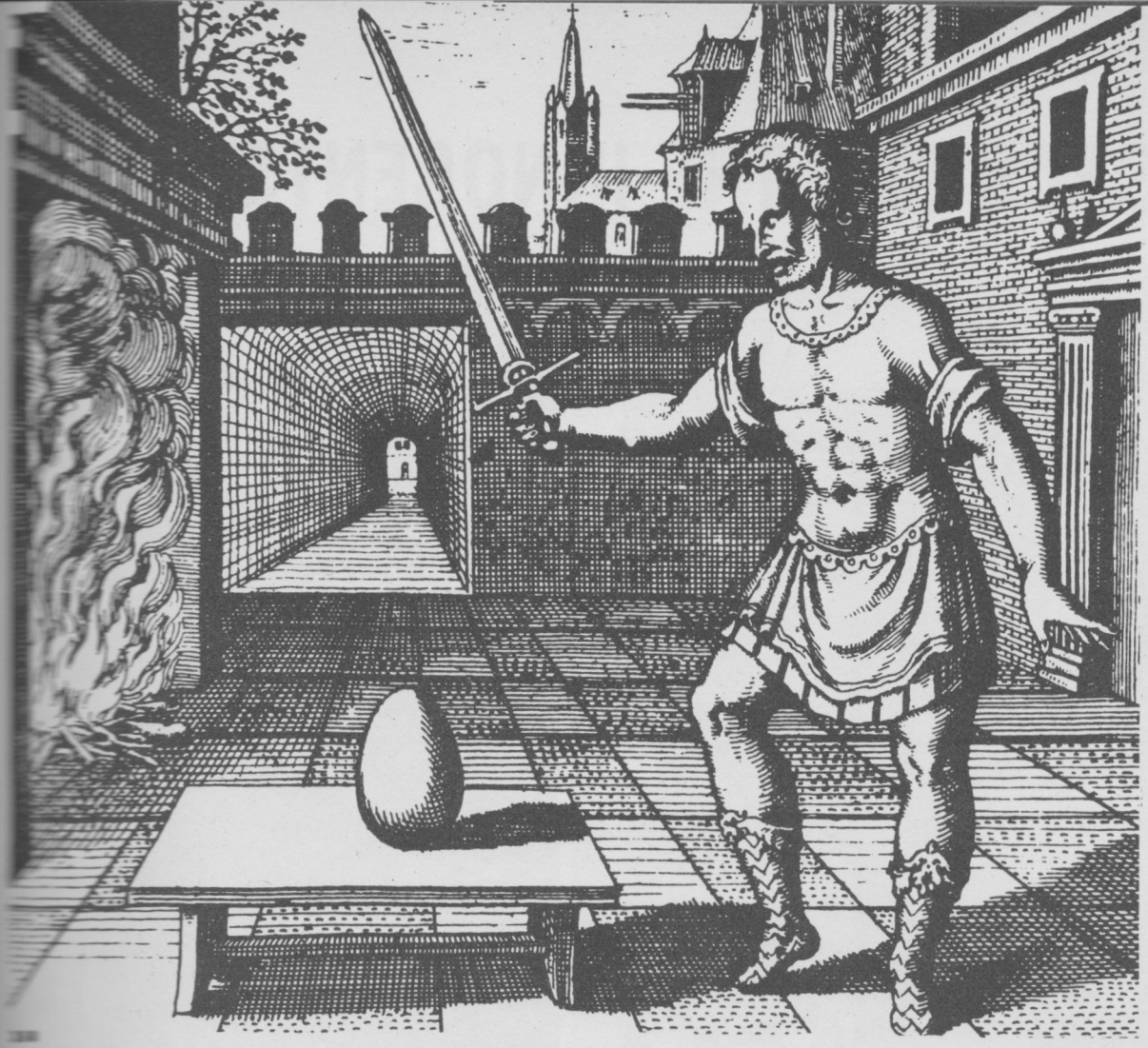


356



357

357. The alchemists believed that the philosophers' stone also had curative and tonic properties and represented it as a fertilising liquid: 'drinkable gold', or elixir of life, which made plants grow, develop and bear fruit in a few hours (Arnaud de Villeneuve).





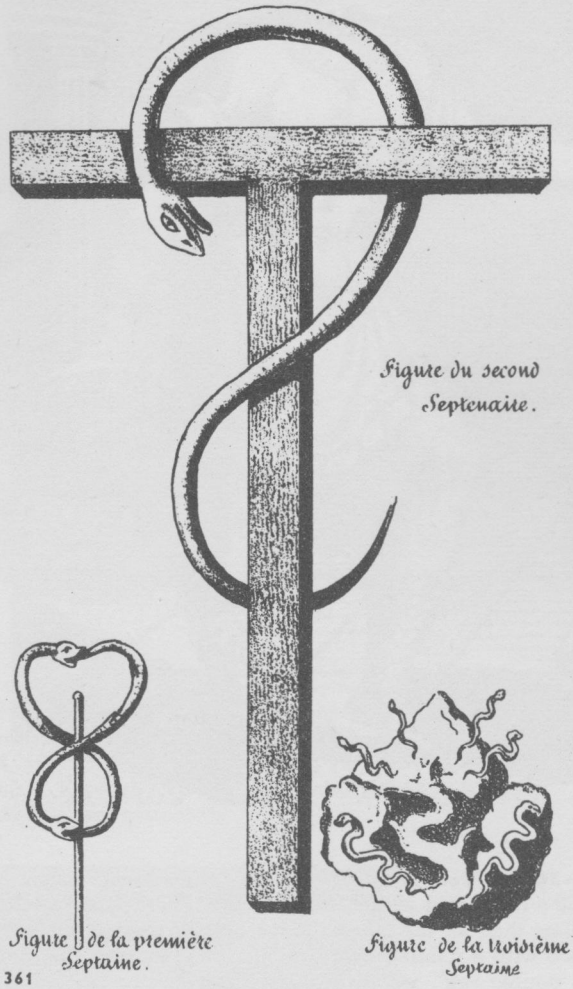
359



360

358-360. Three variations of the 'philosophers' egg'. Michel Majer (1568—1622) said about one of these: 'There exists a bird that is more sublime than all the others. Think only of seeking out its egg and cut it in two with a flaming sword' (358). The theme of the bird is present in the 'double egg', which is taken from Northon's 'Crede Mihi' (359), while in 360, based on a drawing by Basile Valentin, the classical theme of the dragon and serpents can be recognised.

MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS



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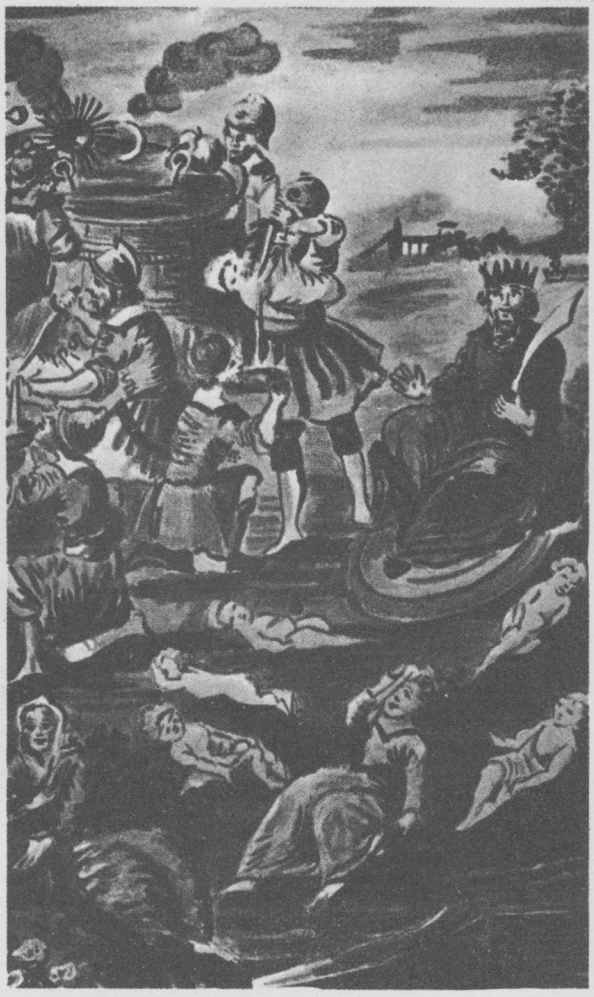


363



362

361–362. The position of the serpent on the cross (which symbolises both maternity and the union of the feminine and masculine) had a significance in alchemy which is not clearly understood. The Hebrews paid homage to the serpent on account of its curative power. The crucified serpent (362) is typical of Jewish symbolism: this is the 'bronze serpent' mentioned by Moses.

363–364. Primordial strength (also symbolised by the serpent) had to be crucified (or massacred) before the 'Great Work' could come into being. The alchemists regarded the innocents slaughtered by Herod as 'metallic germs which it was necessary to dissolve'.

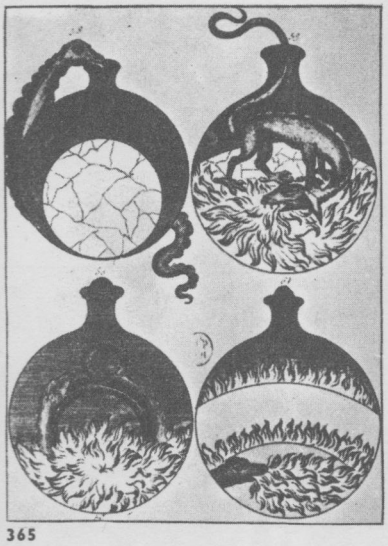


364

WATER AND FIRE

365. Mercury's serpent destroys itself through water and fire: the unconscious power which is in both mankind and the world, contained within the 'philosophers' egg' as it was originally within the womb, destroys itself by passion 'in order to be reborn at a higher level'.

366. There is always fire below the hermetically sealed vase, within which can be seen the customary symbols of the 'conjunction of opposites'. This is the ancestral myth of purification.



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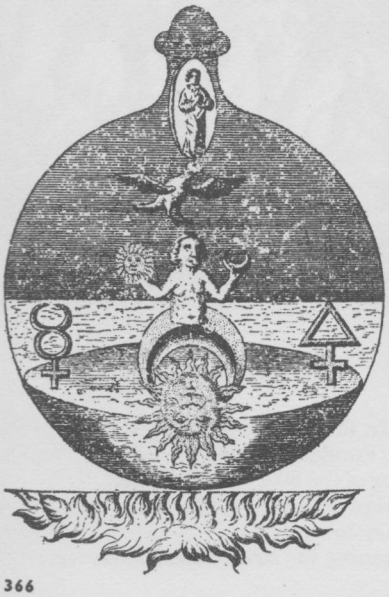


366



367

367. Here is the theme of the 'king'. He is shown sleeping, about to be resuscitated, latent beneath the symbol of the serpent. He is soon to manifest himself. He is represented here in the guise of Paris, watched over by Hermes (playing the part of awakener of the soul), who will allow him to choose from the Three Graces the one who will reveal his own personality to him.



368

368. The theme of the 'father' (which is that of gold, in the transmutation of metals) makes a magnificent appearance in the 'Long Journey' or 'peregrinatio' of the Alchemists.



369

369. In the Christian tradition the Son submits humbly to the Father (and to the Mother, symbolised by the Cross), but during the initiation rites of the alchemists the 'Father' or 'King' must be put to death. The wolf (primordial matter) licks the dead King who will then come to life again.

THE LONG JOURNEY ON THE ARM OF DEATH



370



371

370. The green Lion devouring the Sun ('Rosarium Philosopharum', Frankfurt, 1550) would permit a great number of psychoanalytical interpretations. Both the Lion and the Sun are in fact symbols of creative virility; at the same time the Sun expresses the conscious spirit of masculinity and the Lion expresses Nature.

371. In the 'Viridarium Chymicum' by Stolcius de Stolcenberg (Frankfurt, 1624) can be found again the theme of the 'killing of the king' (or the father). This killing (placed under the 'sign of mortification') is no more than the necessary journey towards the renewal of life (this can be translated as meaning the sublimation of matter).

372. To the alchemists the 'killing of the king' had a very precise meaning: the 'king', as primordial matter, devoured the 'son'. Before the power incarnate in the son could be saved it had to be integrated with that of the father. The expression of this theme by the alchemists is a variant of the Christian principle whereby the Son sacrifices himself before becoming one with the Father.

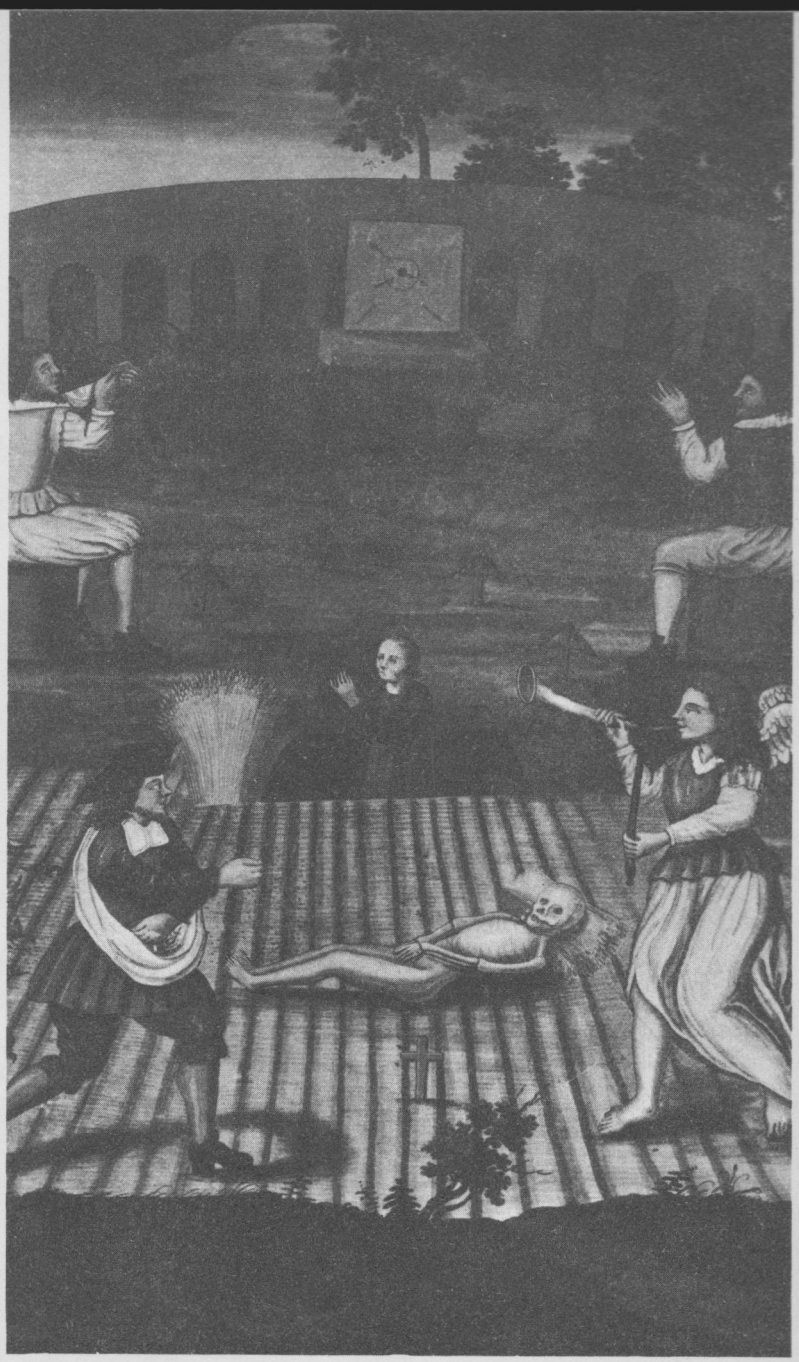


372



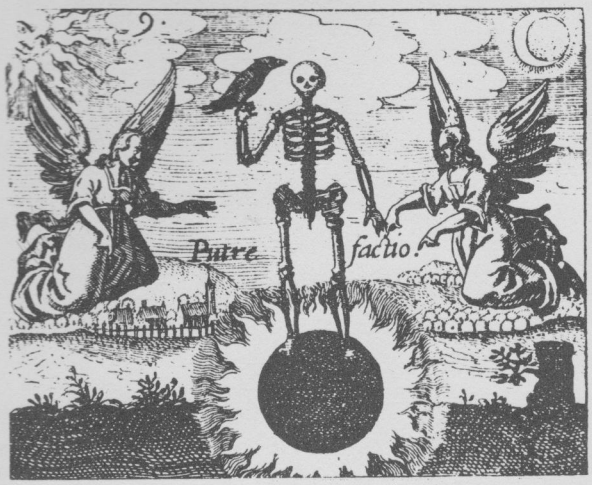
373

373. In the eighteenth century 'Wisdom of the Ancients' the king, who is ill, accepts the fact that the 'children of the planets' remove his crowns from his heart. The children represent the subconscious and the fire is the symbol of purification.



374

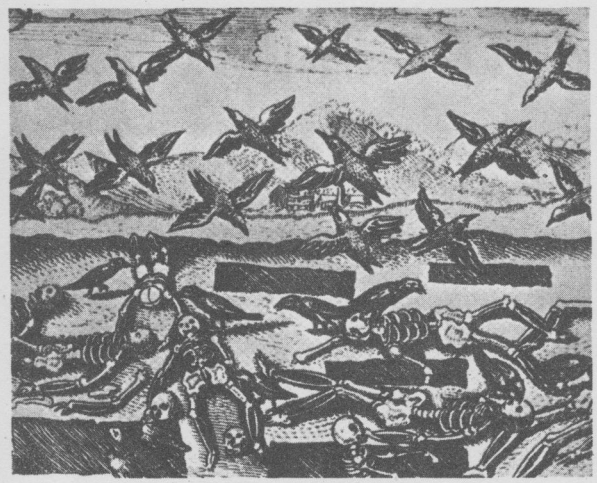
374. This illustration from 'The Eighth Key' by Basile Valentin (seventeenth century painting on silk from André Breton's collection) already shows a resurrection theme which appeared later in various other forms in the overall procedures of alchemy. Note the multiplicity of symbols: the target surmounted by the key, at which two archers are taking aim; the man sowing the seed and the sprouting corn . . .



375

375. 'Putrefactio' was one of the first stages of initiation into alchemy. For it is written 'When blackness appears, then you must rejoice!' Mylius, in his 'Philosophia Reformata' shows blackness (or 'nigredo') rising from the Circle (or 'sol niger').

376. Naturally the raven forms part of the background to the 'putrefactio'.



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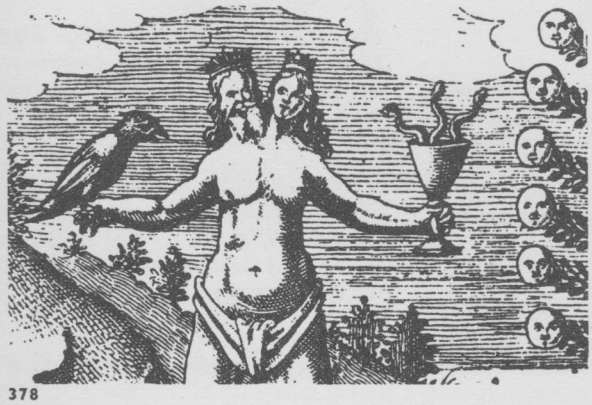


378

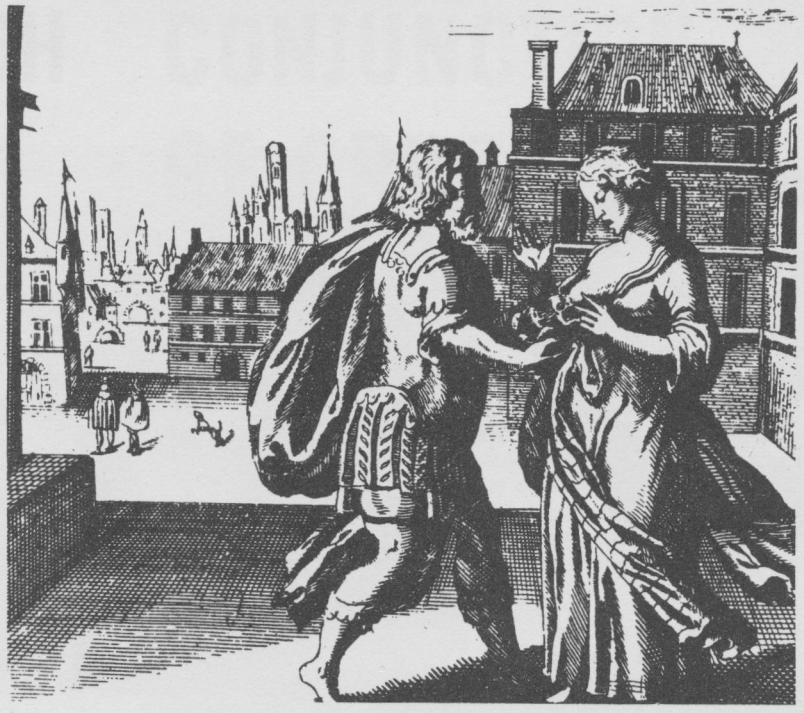
378. Within the colour black (that is to say within the subconscious), there takes place a certain union of sulphur and mercury (of the male and female). This is not the free union of two autonomous principles, but the dangerous 'participation' of two principles merging together. We should describe this today as the union of two beings within the projections of themselves.

377. The alchemists' dragon Nagari recalls the serpent Uroboros and 'primordial strength' which have already been mentioned. He uttered astonishing words: 'I rise from death, I kill death, and death kills me. I resuscitate the bodies I have created and, alive in death, I destroy myself. Although I carry poison in my head the antidote can be found in my tail, which I bite with rage. Whoever bites me must first bite himself; otherwise, if I bite him, death will bite him first in the head. Biting is the remedy against bites'.



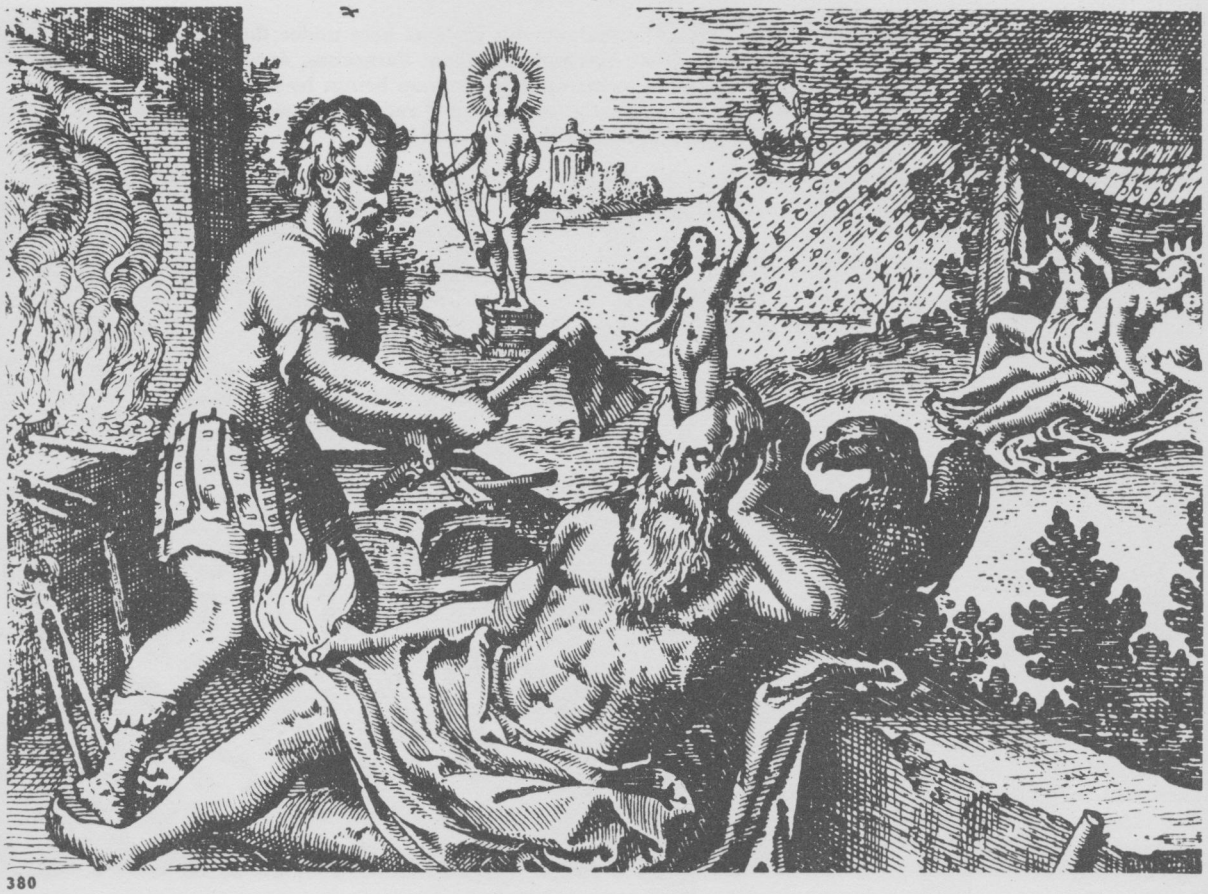
377

379. This strange picture suggests the union of the feminine and masculine principles, but the story of Eve offering the apple to Adam in the Garden of Eden is reversed. The woman must offer her breast to the toad held out to her by the man, the toad symbolising the most basic forces of mankind.



379

380. The shower of gold is caused by Vulcan as he splits open Jupiter's head, from which rises Pallas Athene. In this picture however Vulcan symbolises the initiate or 'the fallen part of man' who must kill the father (Jupiter), in order to liberate his own soul (Pallas Athene). In India the 'flame of illumination' blazes from the top of the head. It is the appearance of this feminine part of man, or 'anima', that causes the shower of gold (signifying spiritual wealth) and makes possible the conjunction of opposites, that is the union of male and female.



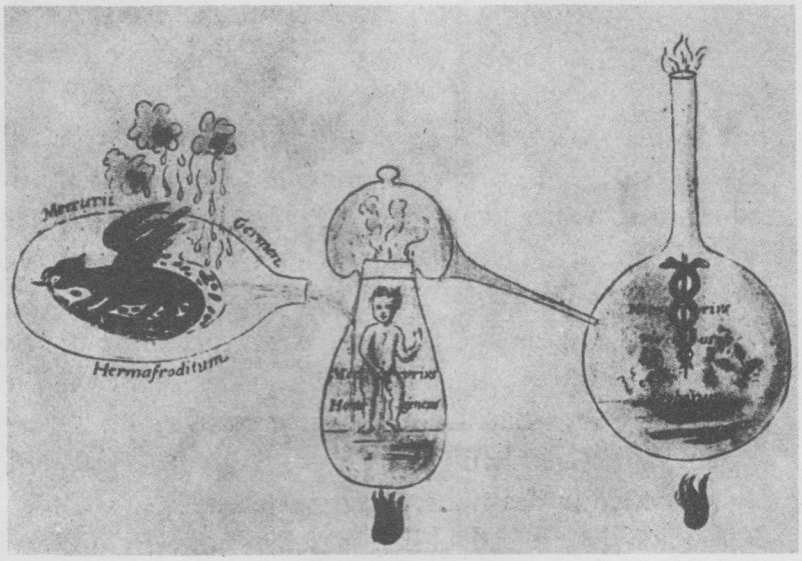
380

HOMUNCULUS



381

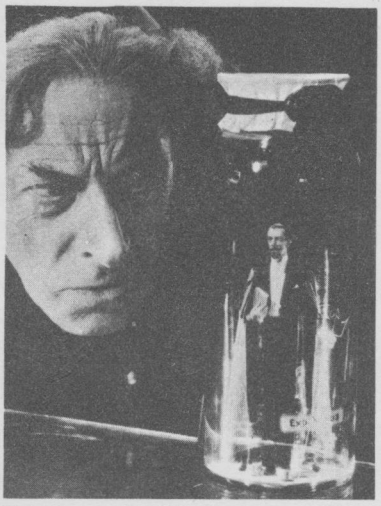
381. Mercury (inside the philosophers' vase which we have already seen at the origin of the alchemical process) reappears here as a child of the mind or 'homunculus'. The homunculus theme was borrowed by the alchemists from the Cabbalists, who were said to possess the power to create artificial human beings (Golem). German impressionism produced a masterpiece on this theme: 'Alraune' (the Mandragora).



383

383. The homunculus, who according to the theories of the alchemists, had to be conceived without sexual intercourse (we have seen that Paracelsus stated this to be possible), sometimes looks like the statue of the 'Manneken Pis'. This is not the first time that we have encountered the theme of fecundity illustrated by a person urinating.

384. The homunculus appears here under the composite aspect of Mercury and the son of the Sun and the Moon. Paracelsus, as we have said, believed firmly that it was possible to manufacture human beings by artificial means. Aurobindo believed in the possibility of a 'supramental' race which would reproduce itself without sexual intercourse, through the 'power of love'.



382

382. The homunculus myth has remained alive and the cinema has not been afraid of using it, as can be seen from this still from James Whale's film 'The Bride of Frankenstein'. The theme of the 'alchemists' vase' recurs again.



384



385

385. This very fine 'preliminary illustration of the birth of the homunculus' comes from an 18th century work: a separation is taking place, although in a provisional way, between mind (symbolised by the dove) and matter (composed of four elements).



386

386. This film still again expresses the idea of the homunculus rising from the alchemists' vase. Homunculus appears here as an anthropomorphic mandragora, the significance of which will be explained further on.

CONJUNCTION OF OPOSITES

387. The results of the alchemists' researches (which aimed to achieve the 'union of opposites') are indicated in the most unexpected way in this print (Abraham the Jew), which shows the symbiosis of 'temporal power' and 'spiritual power'. The singularity of this print (like that of the illustration 388) lies in the fact that two male figures are united in one single being, while it is more usual, in the representation of the androgyne, for the masculine and feminine principles to be shown linked together.

387

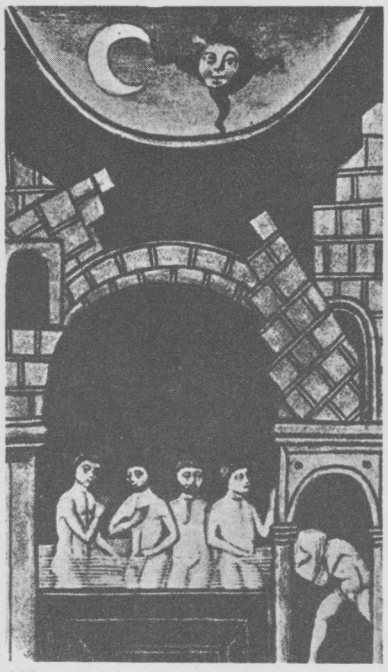




388

388. According to the alchemists the conjunction of opposites was only possible on one condition: 'that which was hidden should become manifest'. This is illustrated in this picture by Abraham Eleazaris (Leipzig, 1760).

389. According to the alchemists every conjunction of the masculine and feminine principles (symbolised here by the Sun and the Moon) had some innovating influence (the bath).

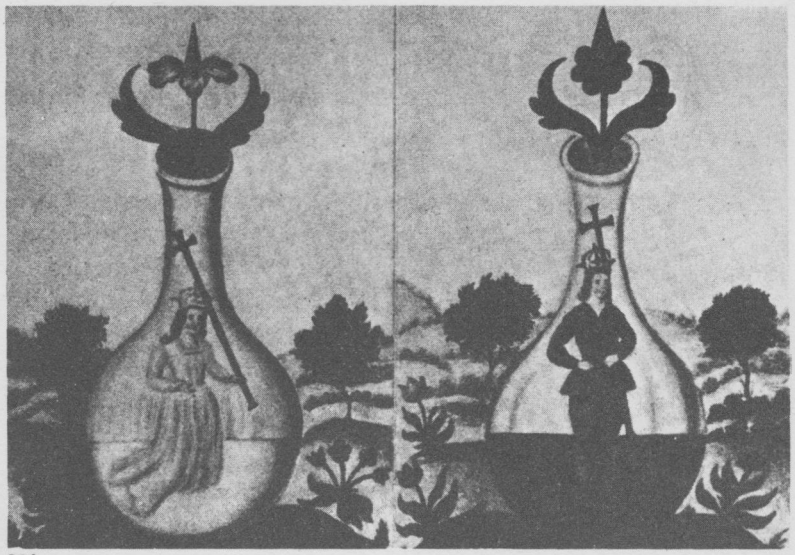


389



390

390. In every 'conjunction' visualised by the alchemists can be found the mingling of widely opposed persons, things or ideas, such as the king and the queen, sulphur and mercury, gold and silver ('The Pentacle of the 6th Key' by B. Valentin). Contrary to an 'illusory' union (shown in our illustration 378), the union in this case must occur between two fully evolved principles, 'conscious of themselves, which unite without mingling with each other'.



391

WHITE ROSE AND RED ROSE

391. The 'conjunction' imagined by the alchemists often took forms of great delicacy, like those of the red rose and the white rose, both of which are variants on the theme of the 'king' and the 'queen'. It is well known that during the twentieth century C.G. Jung rediscovered the symbols of the red rose and the white rose in the heraldic devices of the U.S.S.R. and the United States. One can only rejoice at such a 'conjunction', even if it is merely symbolic, of the Kremlin and the White House.

HERMAPHRODITES AND ANDROGYNES

394. The famous 'conjunction of opposites' was not symbolised only by the union of the sun and the moon or by the male and female principles; it was also illustrated by the 'androgyne', the unique being which united the masculine and feminine principles within itself.
The androgyne (or the hermaphrodite) symbolically watches over the beginning and end of every process concerned with magic and initiation.



392

392. The alchemists were strongly impregnated with eroticism but were rarely inclined to give an important place to carnal love-making; however, from time to time they agreed to regard coïtus as a manifestation of the 'union of opposites', as is the case in this illustration reproduced from the 'Rosarium Philosopharum' (Frankfurt, 1550, of Gnostic inspiration).

393. True 'birth' takes place in the 'hermetically sealed vase', the 'conjunction of opposites' in the water. Psychoanalysts would say it took place in the unconscious.

393





394

395. 'The hermaphrodite, like a dead man in the darkness, needs Fire', ran one of the phrases of the alchemists: primitive nature needs purification before it can reach consciousness and light . . .



395

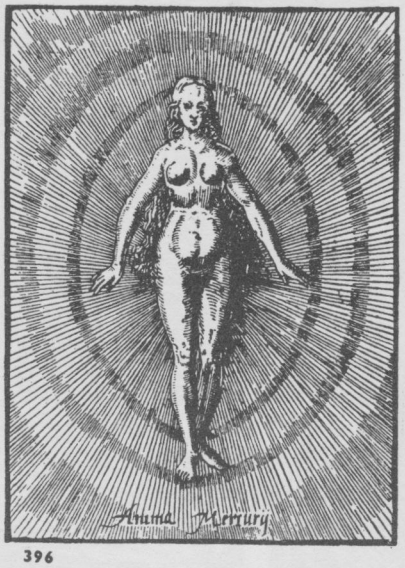
396–397. The hermaphrodite is also a 'cosmic figure'. Mercury, in his capacity of 'Anima Mundi', is an androgyne. (17th century prints.) All civilisations have, at one period of their existence, given pictorial expression to the theme of the androgyne. It is always the symbol of the beginning or the completion of an evolutionary cycle. For every race imbued with the magic arts the androgyne illustrates the state before the separation of the sexes and that following their union; for the alchemists the androgyne expressed the decomposition and combination of the elements.

398. In this illustration the anonymous artist has attempted (with success) to symbolise the 'hermetic androgyne', who expresses, all on his own, the philosophers' stone, the union of black and white and of male and female.

399. The same theme is expressed by this illustration taken from the 'Azote des philosophes': here 'conjunction' triumphs over the dragon, the symbol of primordial matter.



398



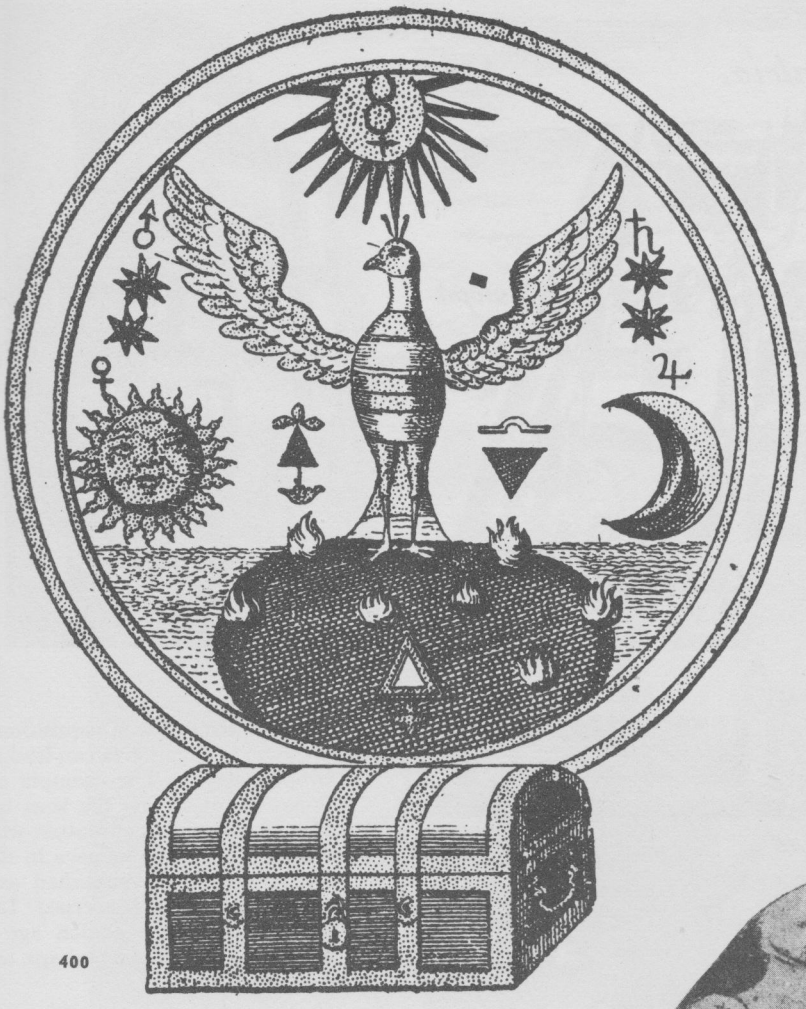
396



397



399



400

400. It is impossible to imagine a more striking symbol of the 'great work' than this 'Thrésor des Thrésors des Alchimistes' by Paracelsus. The Phoenix (symbol of rebirth) stands upright on the 'nigredo', from which pour flames fanned by opposites: the sun and the moon.



401

401. In the 'synthesis of alchemical operations', the 'conjunction is the union of body, soul and mind, carried out in the presence of the toad and dragons (symbolic of primordial forces).



402

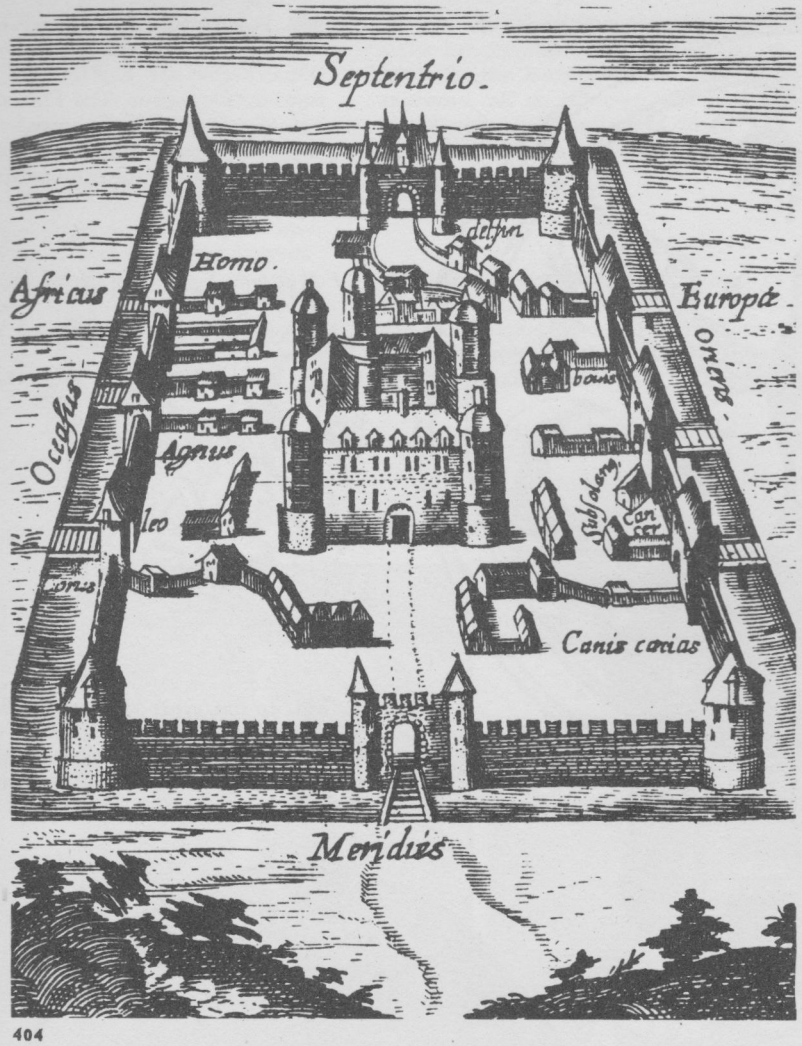


403

402. The fulfilment symbolised by the androgyne is also expressed by the 'rose'. In all traditions of magic, as in dreams also, the rose symbolises the achievement of the self, and the blossoming of the personality.

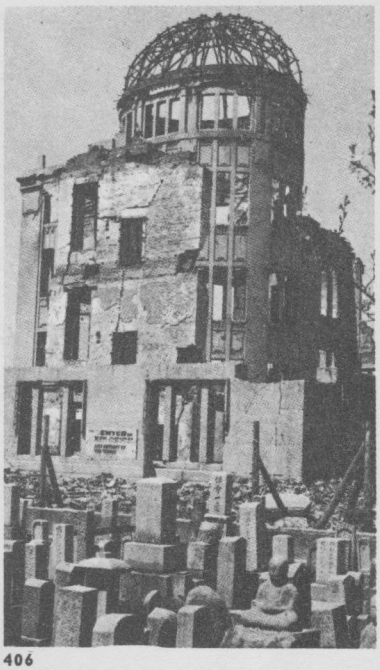
THE CHILD AND THE CITY

403. Finer than the other symbols of 'totality' and the creative powers in the processes of alchemy, the Child in this illustration assumes the appearance of the Hindu pictures known as 'mandalas'.



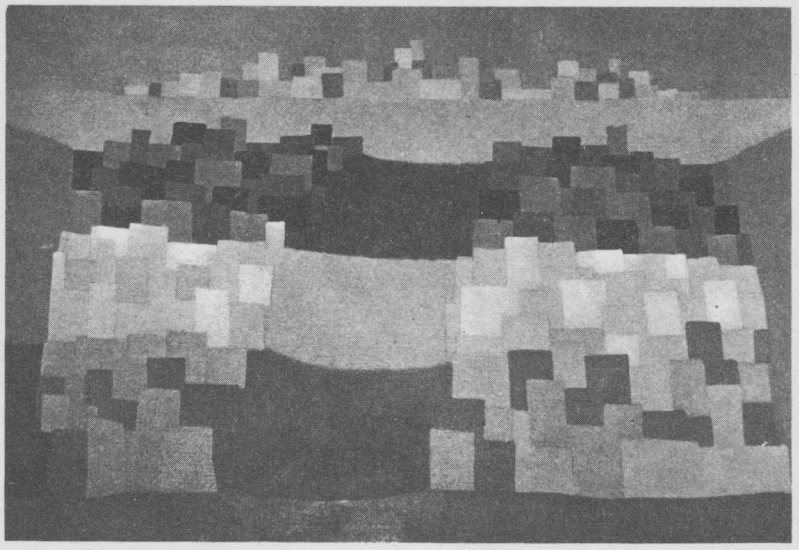
404

404. In addition to the 'Androgyne', the 'Rose' or the 'Child', the 'City' can also appear as the symbol of fulfilment in the processes of alchemy. The centre of the world is first and foremost the centre of man. In the Apocalypse itself the final image of all human evolution consists of the descent to earth of the holy city of Jerusalem. Certain contemporary psychologists believe that it is possible to establish symbolic connections between the city and the maternal bosom.



406

406. The wrong use of acquisitions which are good in themselves can lead to catastrophic results. The example of Hiroshima is not among the least horrible. The transmutation of matter, which the alchemists tried to achieve in the past, has now been accomplished as far as nuclear science is concerned. It allows us to glimpse the golden age of the alchemists — and also perhaps, the Apocalypse.



405

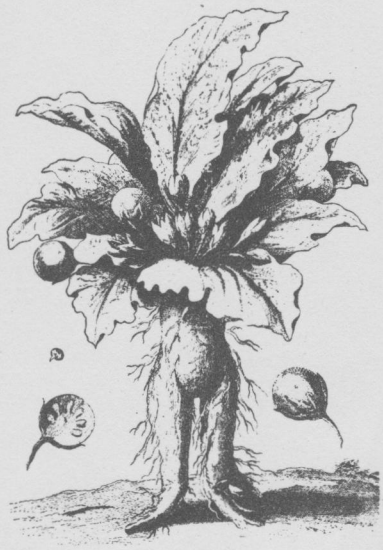
405. The theme of the city, as a symbol of the self, is eternal. This painting, by Vera Pagana, is entitled 'The Sun-dazzled Citadel'.

407. Mummified Mandragora (Durville Collection).



407

408–410. Mandragoras were used by the alchemists as symbols of fecundity, either as androgynes which reproduced themselves on their own, or else as a male or female species. It is undoubtedly true that the plant is singularly reminiscent of a human being. It was said to possess narcotic and aphrodisiac properties. During the Middle Ages it was believed that the mandragora grew from the sperm of men who had been hanged, that it foretold the future, opened locks and produced gold.



410

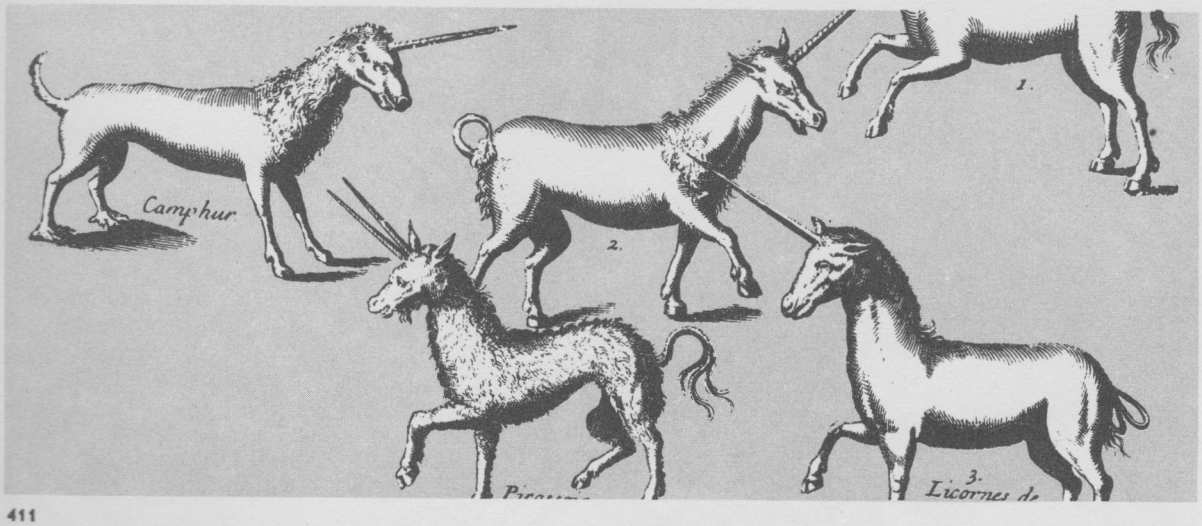


408



409

411. The unicorn was also a symbol frequently used by the alchemists, and it represented Mercury and the Lion. It was intermingled with the Eagle and the Dragon, and, during the Middle Ages, was regarded as the sign of the Holy Spirit. The unicorn represented divine power, in both its negative and destructive aspects as well as in its creative manifestations.



411

THE SYMBOLISM OF DREAMS



412



413

412. The decoration on this pinhead represents Gilgamesh overcoming lions.

413. The Babylonian epic of Gilgamesh, the most ancient known to us, includes the first series of dreams, with their interpretation, that has been handed down to us by history. The dreams are those of Gilgamesh, or of Enkid his friend, and they tell the story of the hero's adventures in search of the herb that brings immortality. The dreams are interpreted by his mother. 'Oh my mother,' says Gilgamesh, 'I had a dream last night; someone resembling a champion of the god of heaven fell upon me: I tried to carry him, but he was too heavy for me. Then I embraced him as one embraces a wife, I lifted him up and put him down at your feet.'



414



415

414–415. Even before the Jews went to Egypt they practised the art of interpreting dreams, which was forbidden by the Bible. One exception to this was the dreams of Pharaoh, which were interpreted by Joseph (414) with the obvious aim of arousing nationalist feelings among his people. Yet there is no lack of dreams during Biblical times, such as the poetic dream of Jacob (415), shown here as it was visualised by Rembrandt.



416

416. A fine head of Hypnos from the Louvre in Paris. Standing by his twin brother Thanatos (death), Hypnos (sleep) transports the body of Sarpedon to the foot of Zeus' throne. Apollo and the muses love Hypnos.

417. The legend of Buddha contains mentions of dreams similar to those which occur in the Bible. The queen Maya tells her soothsayers that in a dream she has seen her son coming down from her breast in the form of a white elephant. The Brahmins regard this dream as announcing the birth of the most wise and blessed Buddha.

418. During the Middle Ages the art of interpreting dreams was condemned in Western Europe and the Church regarded it as a 'satanic art'. Contemporary art, and more especially the surrealists, brought dreams back to their place of honour, which was confirmed by Freudian psychoanalysis, although this occasionally led to abuses. The illustration shows Odilon Redon's picture 'The Dream'.



417



418



419

419. One disciple of Freud wrote: 'Dreams tell you not what will happen, but what you will do.' The surrealists contributed, more or less consciously, to the spread of psychoanalytic ideas. (A picture by Max Ernst.)

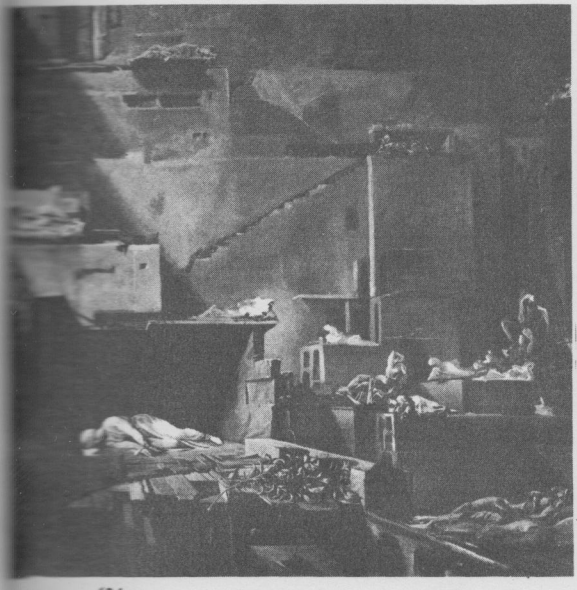


420

420. This 'dream' by Henri Michaux praises the art of interpreting them; it includes a number of symbols and themes from Egyptian magic and funeral rites, such as the presence of the serpent, and the appearance of the child of light over the sleeping man.

421. This picture 'Rome Asleep' by Fabrizio Clerici probably admits of two interpretations. One is no doubt concerned with the painter's life, and without knowing the events to which it refers it is not possible to explain its meaning; the other aspect of the picture expresses the collective theme of decomposition and abandonment.

422. Dreams may be concerned with incidents in the life of the dreamer and his aspirations but very often also they express symbols arising from the depths of the collective unconscious. From this point of view they often constitute a whole world of myths dealing with the general human situation. This illustration reproduces 'Dreams of the false Hogarths' by André Masson.



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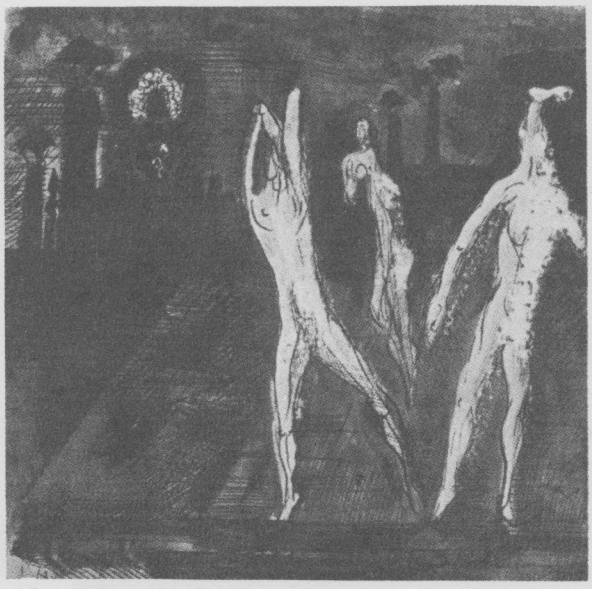


422

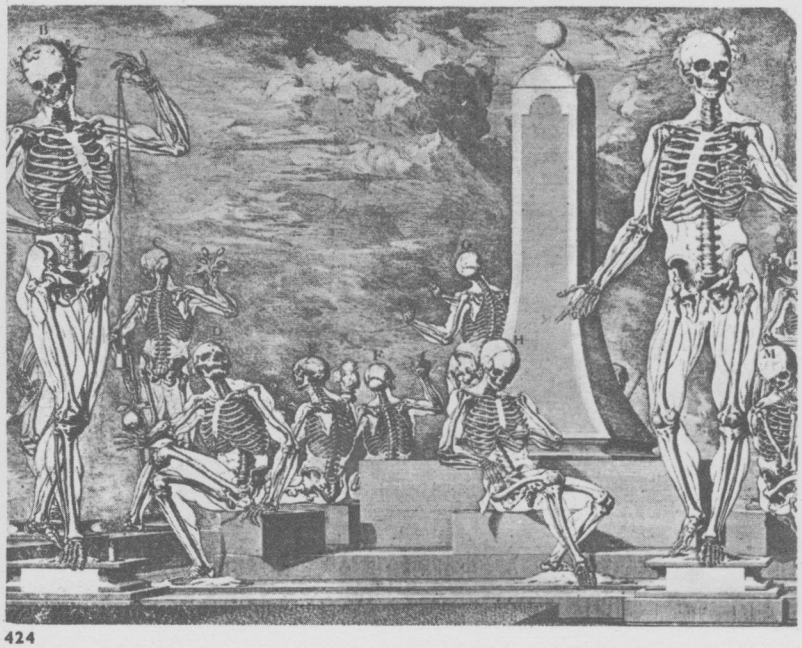
WAKING DREAMS

423. At all periods men have tried not only to interpret visions but to induce them. But how can one distinguish visions from hallucinations, since dreams themselves sometimes lead to the borderline of madness? The illustration is a drawing made by an invalid who, in a trance-like state, represented himself in a state of adoration in front of a bureaucratic God.



423

424. Contemporary psychologists have so far made few studies of visions, except from a purely medical point of view, but some of them believe that true visions can be seen by perfectly normal healthy people and that they can be distinguished from hallucinations because individual analysis cannot succeed in interpreting them. (Reason and Madness.)



424



425

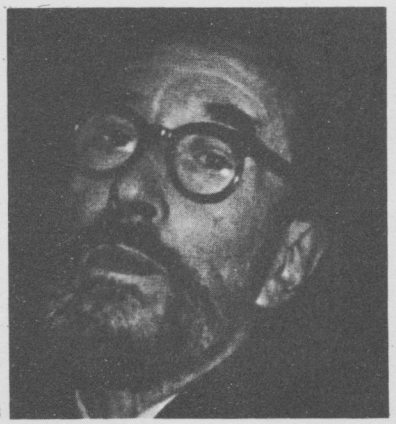


426



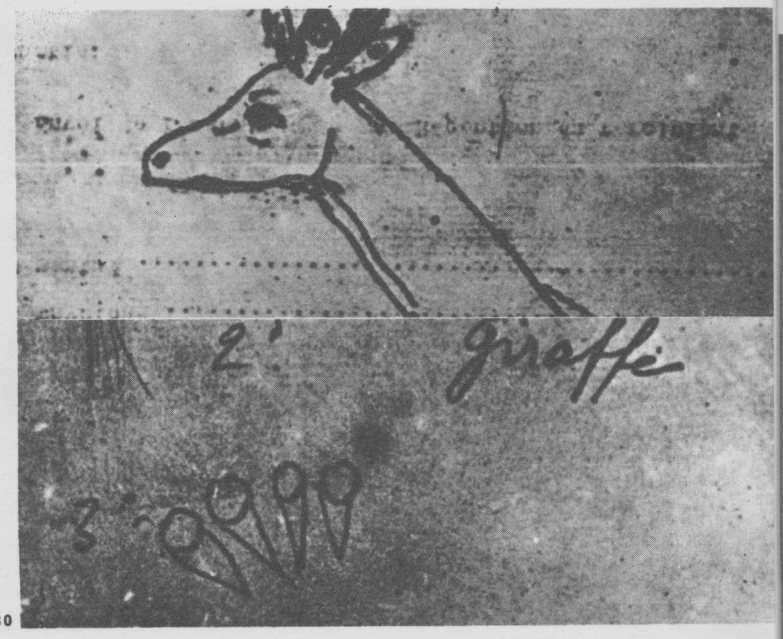
427

425 - 427. In these 'Visions of Saint-Amand' symbolic themes recur — the serpent, the fire, the tomb, the eye and the hand — similar to those we have already encountered in the chapters dealing with primitive peoples.



428

428. The psychologist René Warcollier has experimented with telepathy in a systematic manner with the aim of determining whether the unconscious depth or content of the individual does not overflow from the container.



430

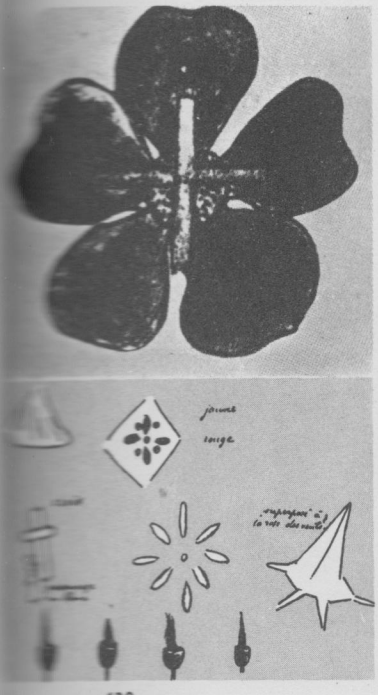
430. These two drawings are the proof of a coincidence as strange as it was certain: the person sending the message had transmitted the image of a giraffe, while the person 'receiving' it has noted not the image of the giraffe but the idea of it.

TELEPATHIC COMMUNICATION

429. It is extremely rare for an image or a thought transmitted from one person to be understood with total clarity by another. This is why the images of a flower and a cross transmitted from one person have been understood as disconnected images by the person who 'received' them.

'The subconscious,' says René Warcollier, 'can be considered as frequently containing the precise telepathic message, rather as an undeveloped negative contains the photograph. Then, as soon as it is developed through the person who receives it, that is to say when it enters the conscious mind, the message is distorted through a mechanism analogous to illusion.' These distortions are due to the complexes affecting the subject.

431. The 'transmission' of this checked dress is remarkably clear. The distortions revealed by these sets of images are due to the fact that the telepathic image has been 'confused' by the receiver himself.



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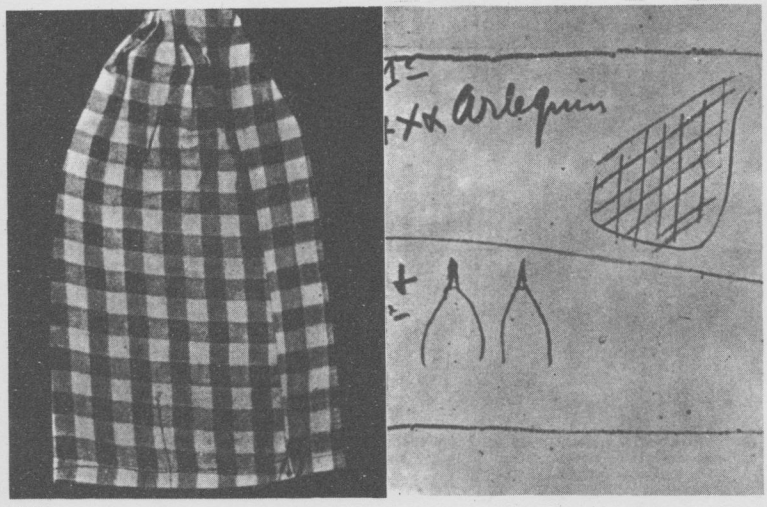

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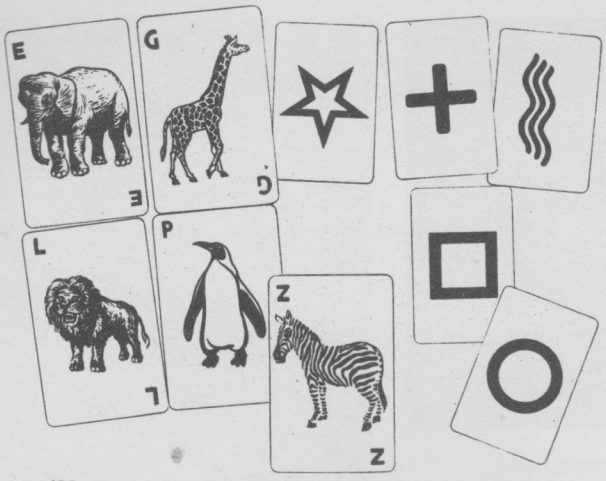


432 433

432–433. As a complement to the qualitative experiments made by René Warcollier, Professor Rhine has carried out quantitative experiments. Cards were placed before one of the 'subjects', and arranged in a way that was not very clear; another 'subject' was asked to put them back in order. The results of thousands of attempts proved that the proportion of successes could not be attributed to chance.

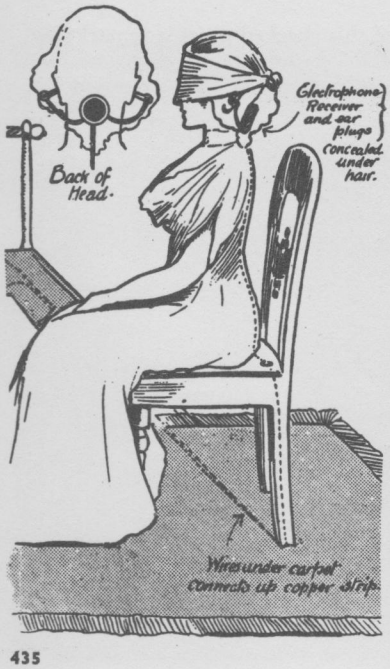


434

434. The most famous 'prophecy' by Cazotte in 1788: he announced the death of Condorcet and that of many other leading figures of the Revolution. Cazotte belonged to the sect of the Martinists and died on the scaffold himself, after having foretold the circumstances.

435–436. The reality of telepathy does not prove that all prophecies are well-founded, and does not lend authenticity to all the innumerable telepathic experiments. Frauds, abuses and fakes are very common in this field. Illusionists, conjurors and other charlatans know all the tricks of telepathic fraud. A well-placed accomplice, codes of gestures and even microphones play their part in the systems used by telepathic tricksters.

437. Compared to the illusionists a good fortune-teller, who uses tea leaves or coffee-grounds, is almost honest. She often works in good faith and is not aware herself of the part played in her conduct by observation of her clients' appearances, their clothes and their attitudes.



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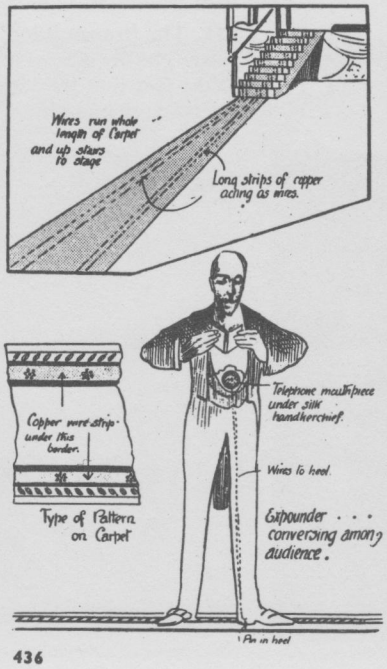

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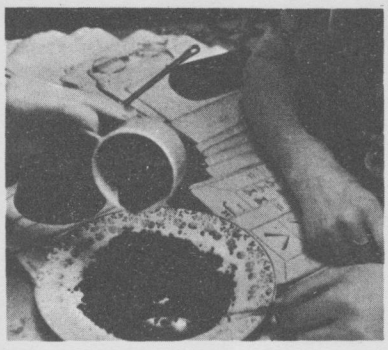


437

FAKIRS

438. The exploits of the fakirs in India are based on a similar blend of fraud and genuine capacity. It should be understood however that fakirs merely imitate the yogi, who possess a knowledge that is infinitely more real and an authentic spirituality.



438

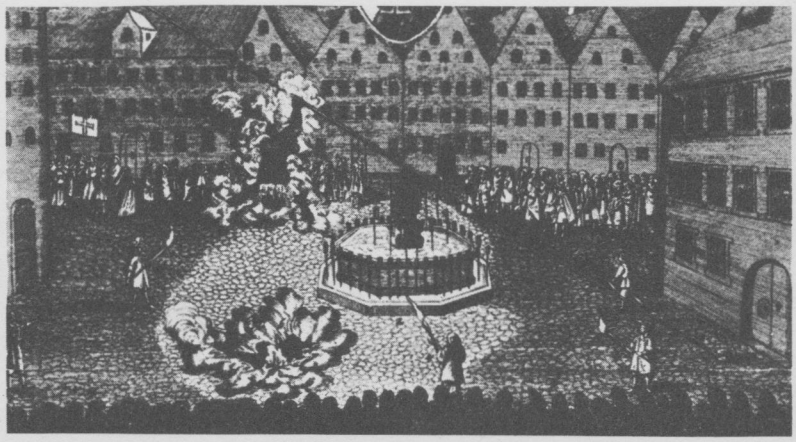


440



439

439. In China the rope-trick was a very highly appreciated 'turn' performed by jugglers. The analogy which some people have tried to establish between the bamboo cane and the rope is so tenuous that even the most willing or naive believers in marvels remain sceptical.



441

440. One of the most disturbing 'dodges' of the fakirs: the rope trick. The magic rope coils up from the ground like a snake and a boy climbs up it without any means of support. Certain people maintain that the rope trick comes closer to a phenomenon of hallucination. This is alleged to be a photograph of it.

441. Karl Bernardin, a doctor at Regensburg, wanted to attract clients through his so-called magic powers. He said therefore that he was capable of sliding along a cable across the public square, his body surrounded by flames. The miracle did not take place, he did not reach the end of the journey and died from burns.

442–443. The practices of the fakirs are followed in most countries as the phenomena of popular magic. The point always consists of attracting attention through an attitude



442

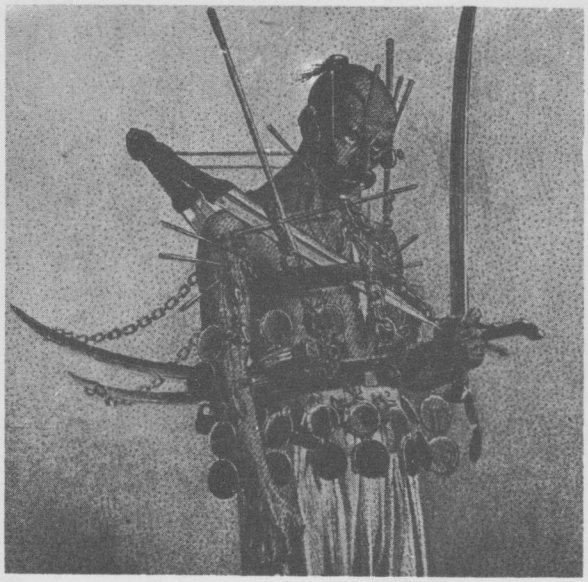
of remarkable resistance to pain or privation. The false fakir of the Middle Ages was hardly any different from the fakir of the Caucasus. Both of them tried to prove their insensitivity to suffering. The Caucasian fakirs however seemed to show greater refinements in their masochism.



444

444. The magic carpet which flew through the air was an indispensable accessory in the marvels of the east and is mentioned hundreds of times in the 'Thousand and One Nights'. No experimental proof has ever been attempted.

445. The Egyptian fakir Fahra Bey can remain lying on a bed of spikes, but this is only interesting in so far as it opens up new horizons concerning the limits of human sensitivity. One is quite ready to admire this kind of achievement but there are surely easier ways of earning one's living.



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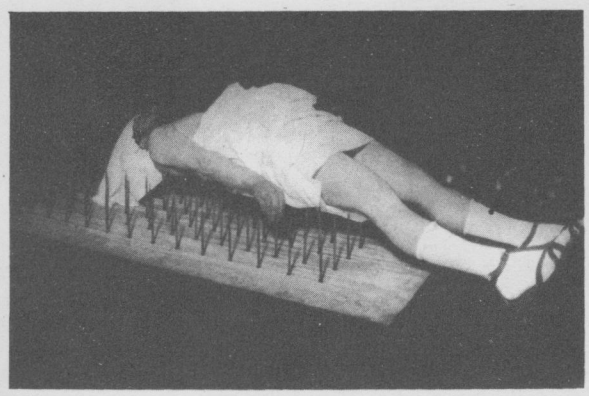
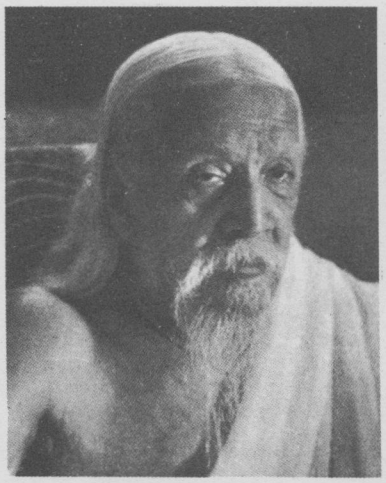


445

HATHA YOGA

446. Sri Aurobindo, who died in 1951, was considered as the spiritual master of India. He took part in the Hindu nationalist movement, and after he had been imprisoned by the British he retired to Pondicherry to devote himself entirely to yoga. He has been credited with many cures, visions and paranormal experiences. For forty years he remained cloistered within his 'Ashram' in Pondicherry where he lived among 700 persons of both sexes.



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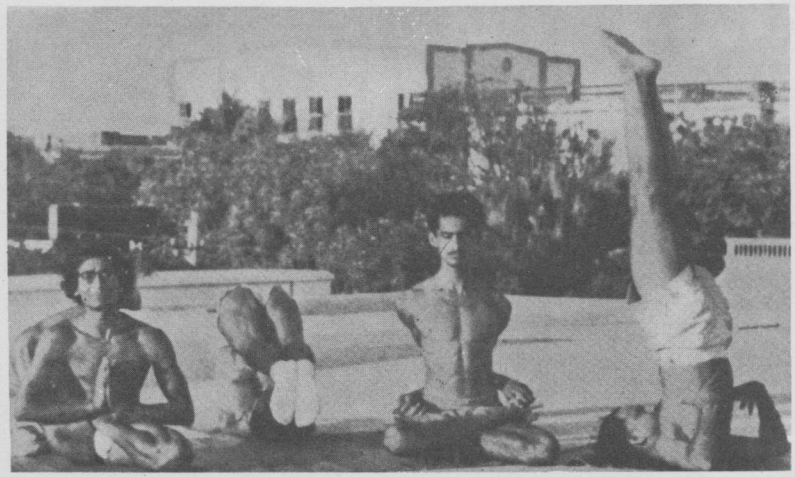
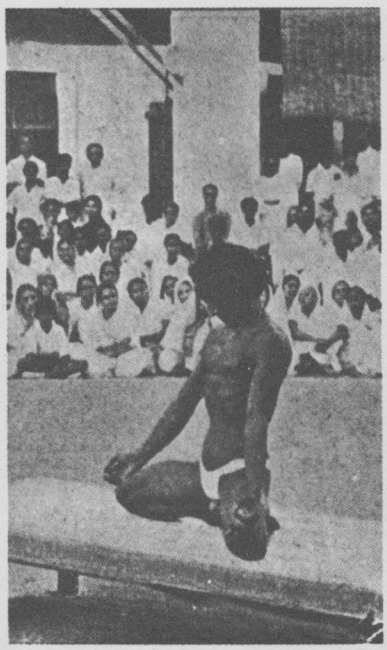


447

447–448. Hatha Yoga comprises a certain number of postures or 'asanas', which are supposed to make it possible to influence certain nerve centres or 'chakras', thanks to which new spiritual perspectives are supposed to be opened up. The 'asanas' seen in these pictures are performed for both physical and mental reasons.

449. The attitude of this Hindu fakir, who is suspended by the feet over a fire, is more moving because it is less artificial. Observe the resemblance to the XIIth urcana of the Tarot (the Hanged Man).

450. Swami Seewanano, who is shown here swallowing a poisonous snake, has no connection with the real yogis who are worshipped in India. He is just an ordinary fakir.



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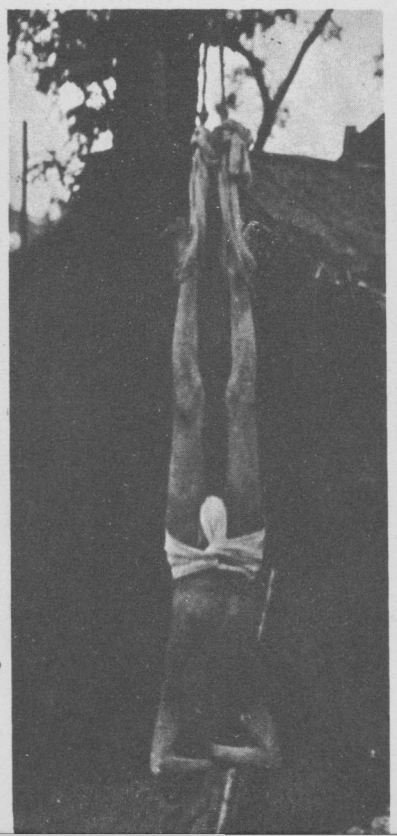

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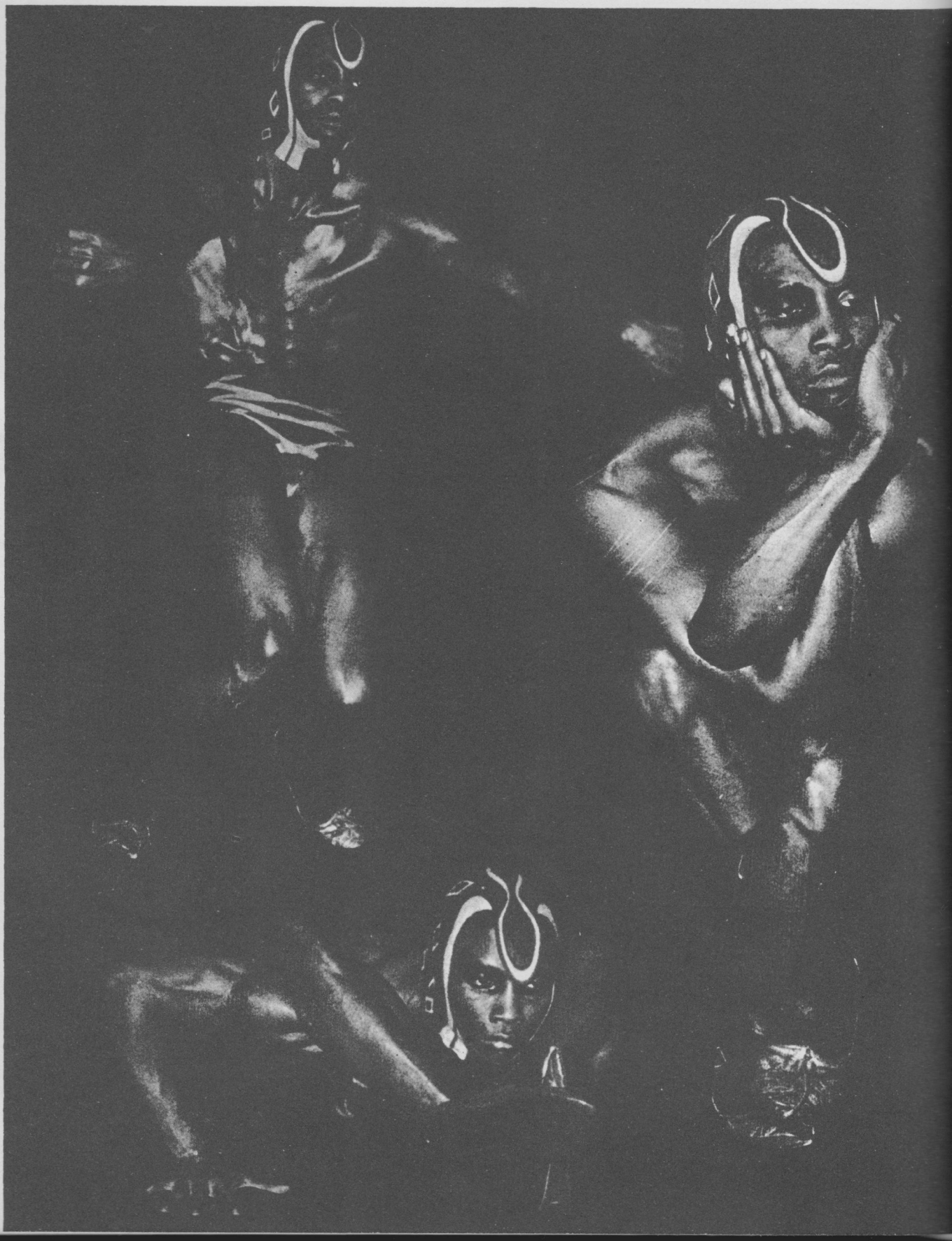
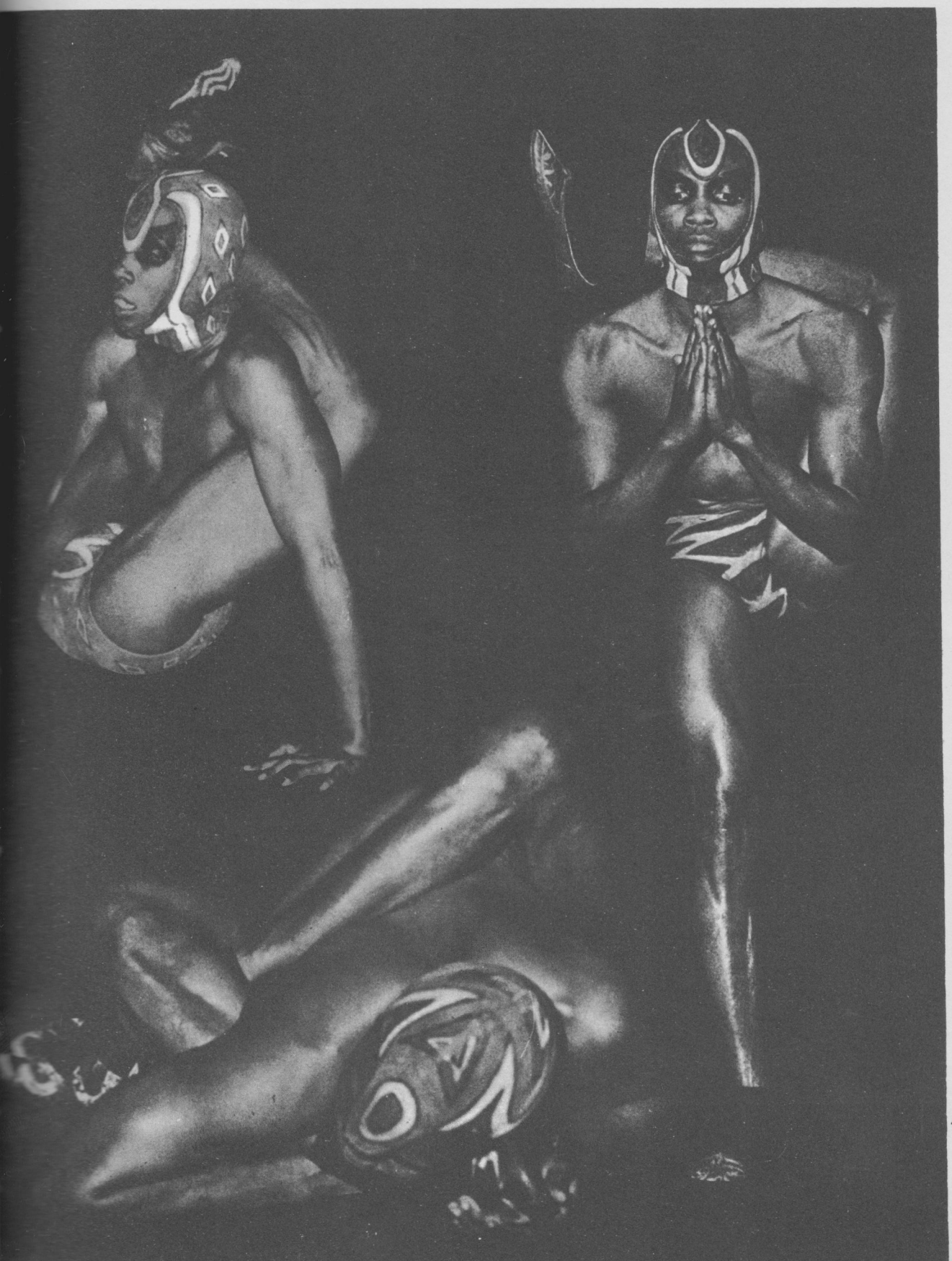


451. The type of yoga which has been popularised in the West is Hatha Yoga, which has often been reduced to a new type of gymnastics, lacking any spiritual basis.



451

TIBET, HIGH PLACE OF MYSTERY



452

452. Before Tibet became communist, every inhabitant, from the most lowly to the most mystical, regarded his religion as the opportunity for putting himself in touch with the invisible and satisfying his taste for the marvellous. In Tibet death is represented in a way which is simultaneously dynamic, realistic and fantastic.



454

454. Although the people in Tibet believe in extremely material forms of reincarnation (made easier in fact by the Ritual of the Dead), Buddhist influences tend to show gods and demons, heavens and hells as illusions of the soul.



453

453. The religion of Tibet has incorporated the primitive forms of magic, including dances and masks, giving them an increasingly spiritual significance as initiation is completed. This illustration shows the monks from a lama monastery at Jehol wearing their masks for dancing.



455

455–457. Tibetan symbolism is usually dramatic and likes to use the artifices of horror, as can be seen in these three illustrations. To the Tibetan mentality however the representation of what is horrible is also a way of protecting oneself from horror. To the lamas their terrible divinities, their masks, ossuaries and offering of rancid butter are all means of seeking protection. 'Greetings to Padma Sambhava! I here intend to destroy the wicked with the help of invisible forces.'



458

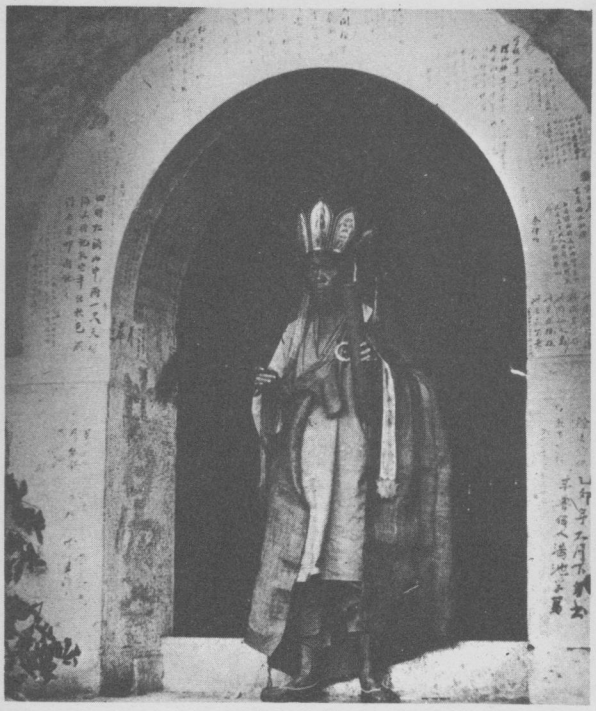
458. 'Oh noble man,' says the Book of the Dead, 'fear nothing, for both the threatening gods and the peaceable gods are no more than the creations of your own mind.'



456



457



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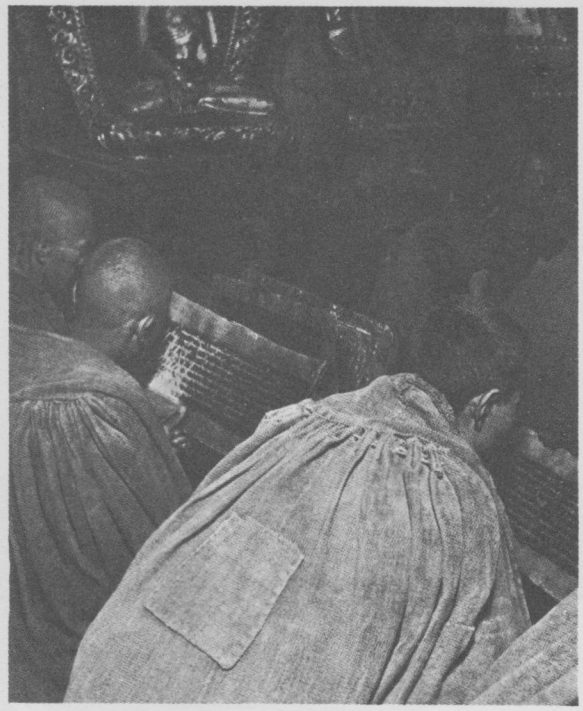


460

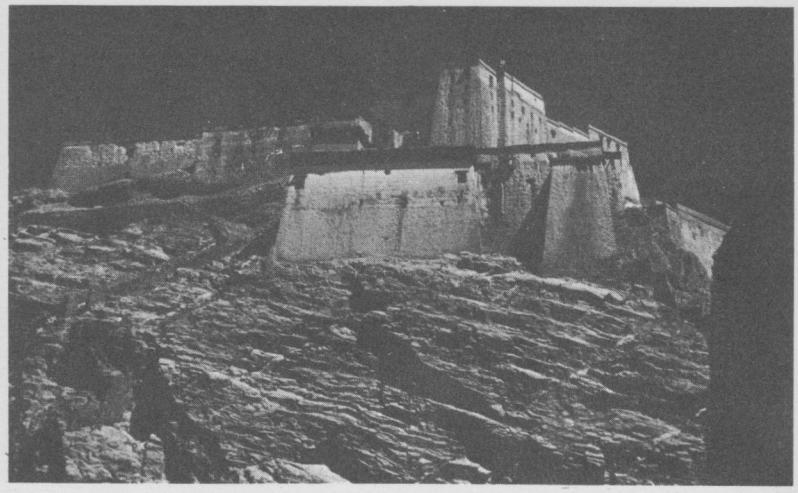
459. In Tibet the magician recluse in festive costume, holding the insignia of his rank in his hand, is not rare. Those who have been initiated into the magic arts in Tibet are reputed to possess supernatural powers, notably the power to hypnotise others, to implant suggestions and to cause death by indirect means.

460. As we have already said, there is no difference between religion and magic in Tibet, and the monks themselves are initiated into the disciplines of the magic arts. The illustration shows some of them deciphering old magic texts in the monastic school. It is alleged that some people have tried to establish connections between magicians in Tibet and certain trends in the German National Socialist movement. When the Russians entered Berlin in 1945 they are said to have found among the corpses a thousand 'volunteers for death' who were wearing German uniforms but had no badges of rank or papers; they were Himalayans.

461. The illustration below shows the hieratic child-god, the Dalai Lama. It is difficult to know which to admire more, his beauty, which is that of all children of mysterious Asia, or his inspired expression.



461



462



463

462-463. The monastery, clinging to steep rocks, is both a fortress and a cloister, and dominates the countryside (462). Within its shadow are faces (463) from another world.



464



465

464. In the west, at the end of the 19th century, theosophy was proposed to achieve a synthesis between eastern and western thought. Mme H.P. Blavatsky, who founded the Theosophical Society in the United States, became famous through a little book entitled 'Isis Unveiled', which she presented as the 'Key to the Mysteries of Science and Theology'.

465. In 1907 Mrs Annie Besant succeeded Madame Blavatsky at the head of the Theosophical movement. In accordance with the theosophical doctrine which believes that a series of 'great instructors' appear in the world whenever they are needed, Annie Besant believed that she had discovered the 'great instructor' in a young Hindu, Krishnamurti.



466

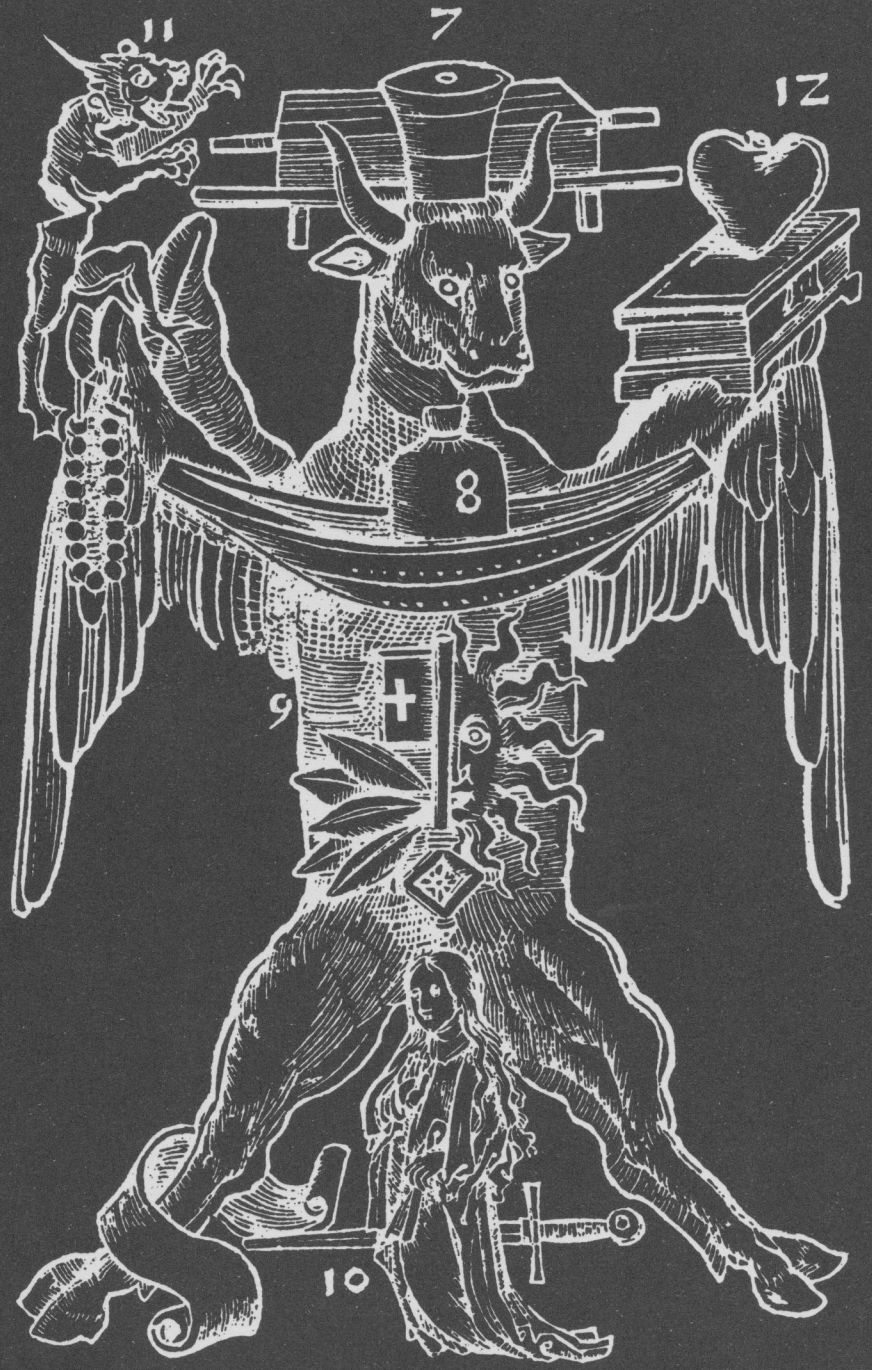


467

466. In 1932 Krishnamurti, who continues to give lectures on the spiritual life all over the world, broke with his protector and wrote: 'The tendency to endow with special interest institutions in which men become mere machines in the service of an idea, is fatal. Anyone who accepts this state of affairs loses his integrity as a result and the love of man is destroyed'.

467. Rudolph Steiner, who had formerly been a theosophist, founded the 'anthroposophical movement'. He believed in reincarnation and in 1908 published a book entitled 'Initiation', or 'How to acquire knowledge of higher worlds'. It was notably in his second book, 'Occult Science', that he conceived the 'role of Christ in human development' in an unorthodox way.

468. A leading contemporary psychologist has interpreted the grimacing faces that we have inherited from the 16th century as an attempt by the alchemists to effect a kind of reconciliation between the 'revealed truth' of initiatory practices and the acquisition of knowledge which sprang from nature. It was a question in fact of wishing to reduce, as far as possible, by means of fantastic figures (the expression of a destructive genius), the influence that was being exerted on men's minds by the rationalist (and constructive) ideas of the positive schools of thought that were coming into being.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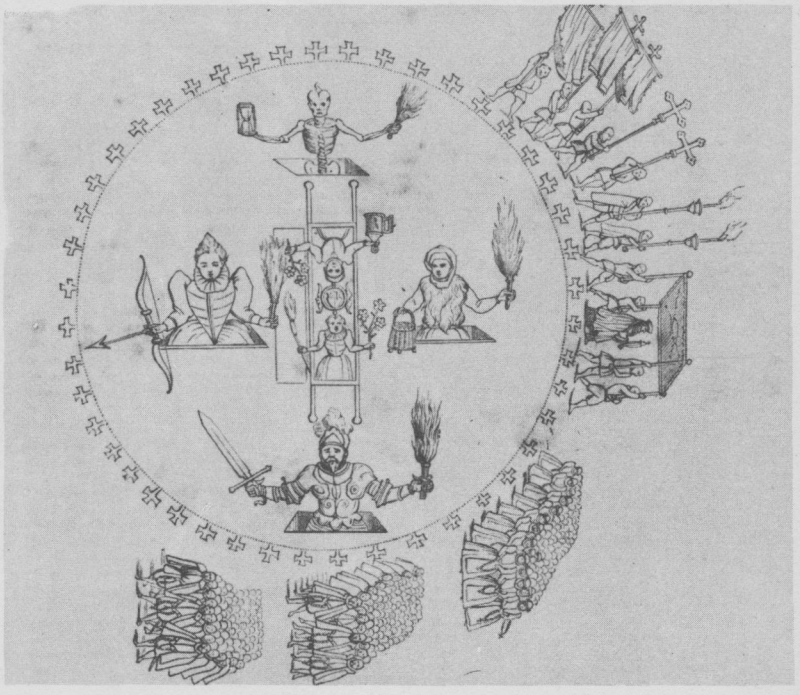
469. To establish contact with the mysterious forces which rule the world, to come to terms with them, to obtain their co-operation or complicity, such is the objective of all those who devote themselves to magic and to whom, rightly or wrongly, people attribute supernatural powers and a special gift of receptivity to everything marvellous.



469

THE DEVIL INCARNATE

470. It is obvious that the Medieval sorcerer who traced magic circles to stop short the advance of the hostile army and the Indian rain-maker had the same point of view and used the same methods. Both of them were anxious to conquer, since they could not convince; they wanted to dominate, to terrify or mobilise the occult forces in order to acquire fame or profit and to rise to the highest level of a hierarchy which imposed its own laws on mankind.



470



471

471. Magicians, particularly those in the West, like to call up the devil, especially where they are concerned with 'black' magic or sorcery. Those who practise 'black' magic like to believe that the earthly form assumed willingly by the devil is that of the goat. For this reason there are endless Medieval 'black books' which allege that it is only necessary to smear one's face with the blood of a goat (boiled with vinegar and crushed broken glass) in order to see devastatingly horrible visions. Nowadays we are inclined to think that those 'horrible visions' — reminiscent of the 'panic terrors' of the ancient world — were first and foremost the expression of sexual anguish, aggravated by the rigorous prohibition of sexual expression by the society of the time. Our illustration shows a contemporary European sorcerer.

DEMONS OF ALL SORTS



472

472. Oriental demons were not necessarily bad or responsible for evil deeds. Whether they were good or evil they were first and foremost superhuman beings, in the same style as the spirits or 'genies' of ancient Greece. The demon Pazuzu (Babylonian bronze statuette) was no more than a 'western wind' who was invoked as a fertilising breeze and 'father of the winds'.



473

473. The head of an 'assura' (of late 12th century Khmer origin, from Cambodia). The 'Song of the Lord' (an Indian work belonging to the 6th century B.C.) describes 'assuras' as beings of 'demoniacal character' closer to the proud Titans than to the race that was to give birth to the devil of the Christian religion.



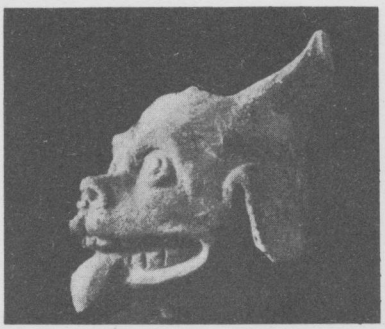
474



475

474–475. For many civilisations demons are nothing more than the souls of criminals, of new-born babies, or women who died in childbirth or even of men who died in duels, that is to say of anyone who died a death disapproved of by the prejudiced moral outlook of certain societies and periods. There is a barely visible transition from the man condemned by human laws to the damned man in the world after death, and from him to the demon, while in the end all three are merged together. As a result one theme recurs, with few variations, over every continent. In this way the 'damned man' (474) from the cathedral of Autun in France, whose head is being torn off by unknown hands, resembles the demon from central Asia (475) who is tearing his own head off. The significance of the two 'damned souls' is more or less the same: they are losing their heads, in the real as well as in the figurative sense.

476



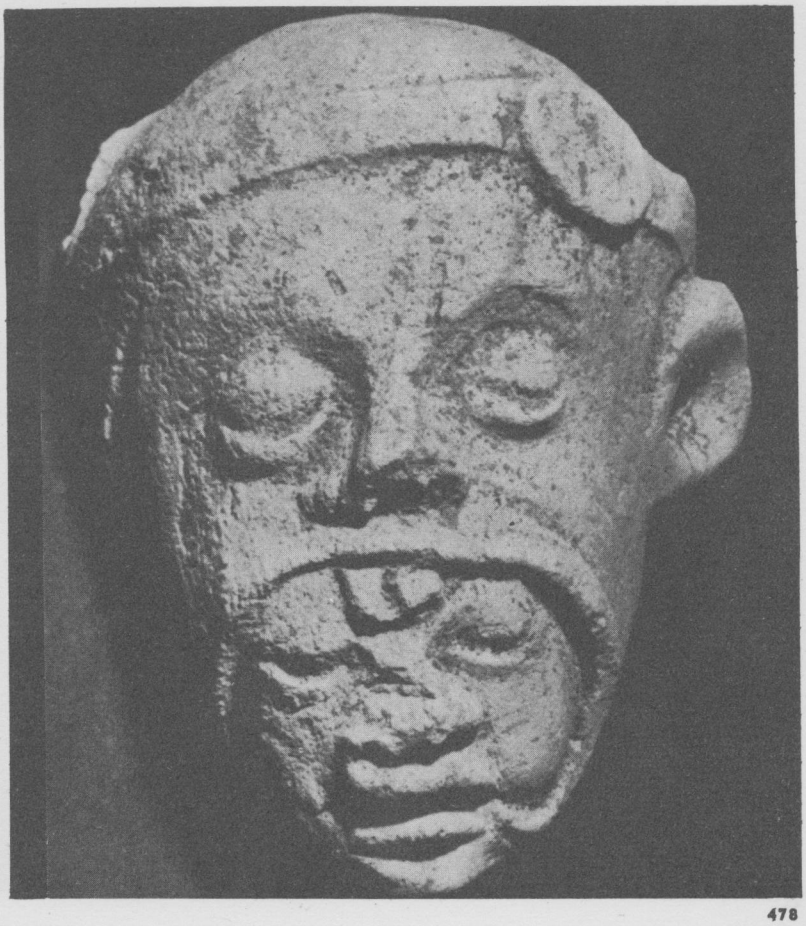
476. Demons, whether they are 'assuras' or dogs, represent beings incompatible with any particular time, period or social group; for this reason they remain unadapted to them and separate. This is because the demons are too disturbed and elemental to understand the laws of the city and to adopt them, or else they refuse to understand them. A dog can be good, faithful and understanding, but a man-dog can only be a demon.

477



477. This is true also of this fragment from a demoniacal mask originating in Afghanistan . . .

478. It is also of this admirable composition — a demon swallowing another demon. Naturally the artists have not exerted themselves in a attempt to transpose the reality that surrounded them: these faces are those of their contemporaries, their neighbours and friends.



478

479–480. Two fragments of embossed brick representing the meeting between Confucious and Lao-Tze, who were responsible, in various ways, for the religious structure of ancient China. These two streams of thought do not personalise the principle of Evil in the shape of some Satan or other, but are more concerned with taking the problem on to the ethical and social level, where there is hope of reconciliation between opposites.



479

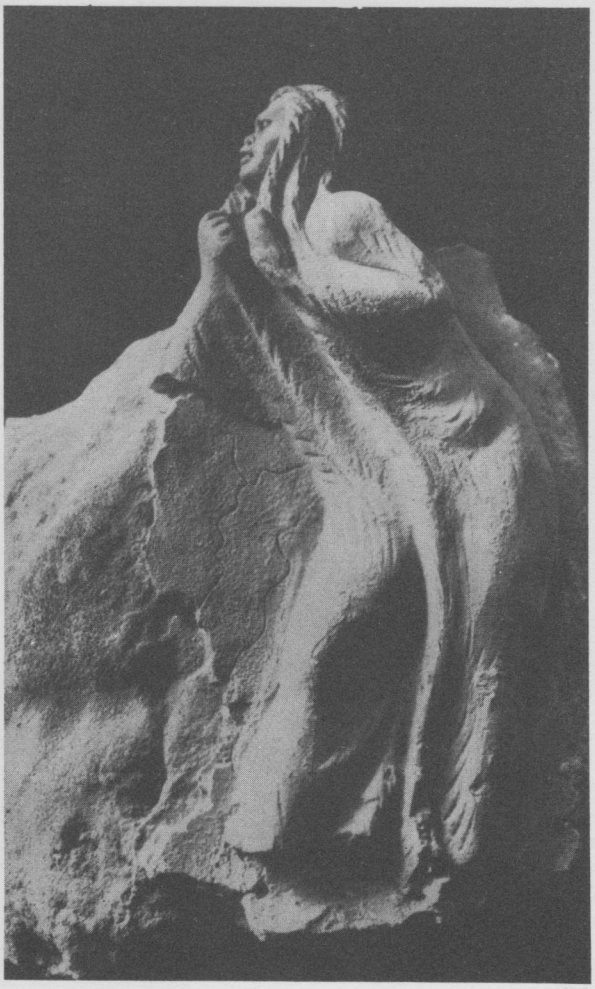


480

481–482. This demon biting his nails (from Afghanistan, dating from the 4th century A.D.), as well as this other one, wearing a fur coat, together with the demons with dogs, heads and the demons who devour each other, are sensational representations of the projections (as the psychoanalysts say) made in the 'other world' by artists of all the attitudes that they found roundabout them and which they regarded as incompatible or incongruous. In this connection the image of the demon is very close to the 'divine Rogue', the god of the Winnebago Indians.



481



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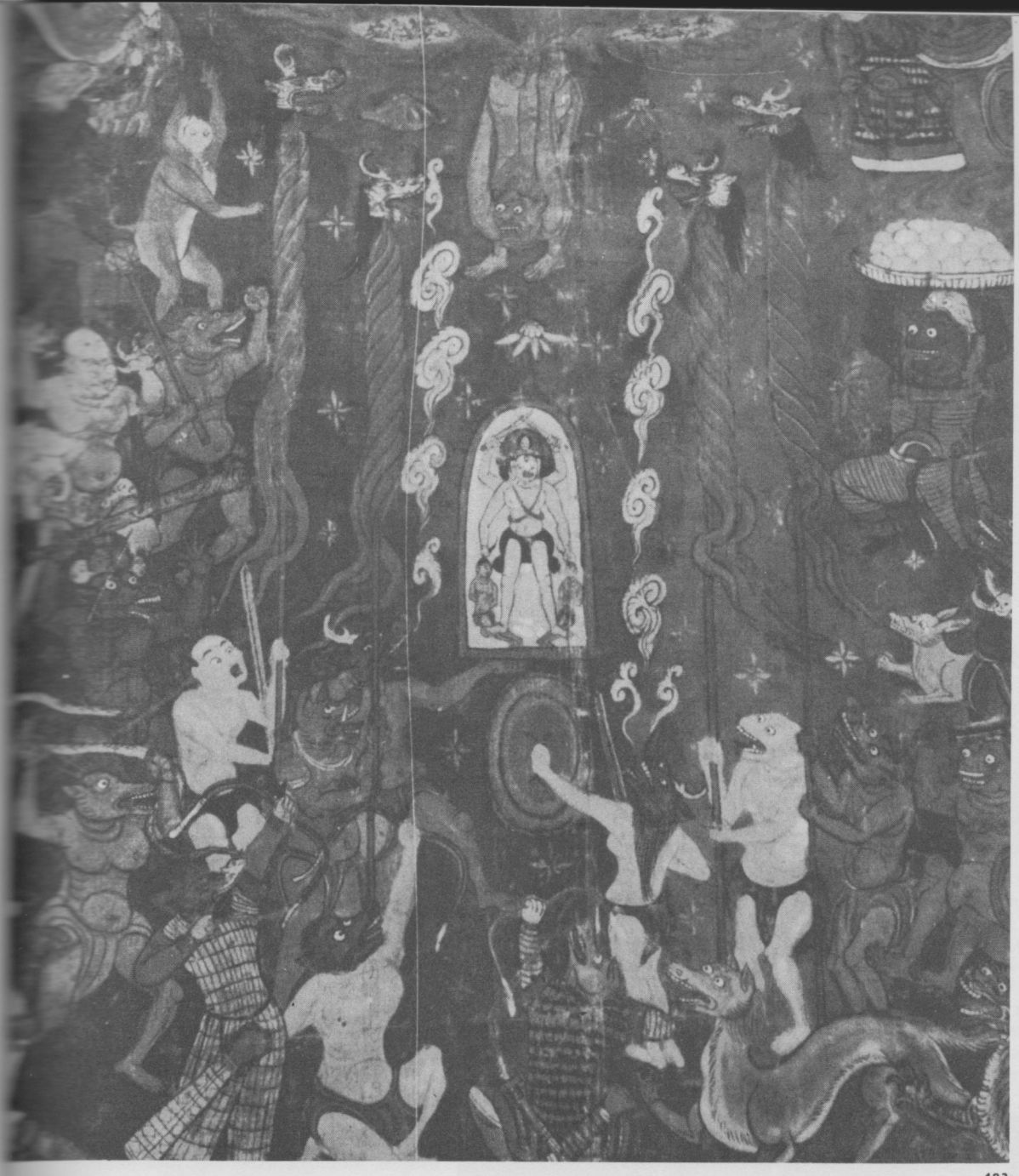
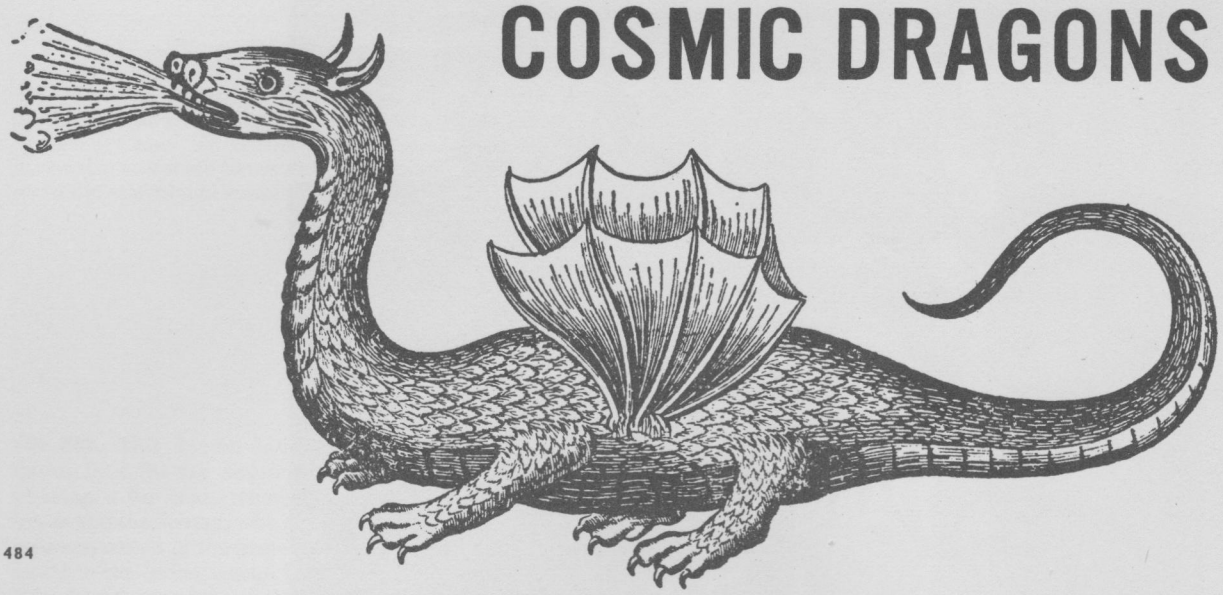


483

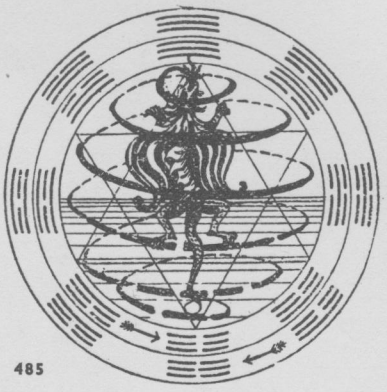
483. Detail (above) from the fine Buddhist painting known as the Temptation and Attack of Mara, which is strikingly reminiscent of certain drawings and pictures of the Middle Ages. Buddhism, which is from some points of view an atheistic religion, knows neither God nor Devil in the western sense of these terms. Mara, who is 'temptation', is more representative of inferior states of consciousness: an image of the state of nature before it had reached the illumination that Buddha is supposed to have reached. As with the Gnostics, the devil of Christianity was certainly inspired by the myth of the multiform and evil Dragon.

COSMIC DRAGONS



484

484. This 'Dragon from the subterranean world' illustrates reasonably well the ambivalence, if not the ambiguity, which can be glimpsed through the Christian idea of the dragon-demon: he embodied the unconscious energies of the subterranean world and yet his existence was denied, although everyone said that it was essential to strike him down.



485

485. For the early Chinese also the dragon ruled over the abyss. However, instead of being struck down by an archangel, he mounted in six successive stages to the summit of heaven. At first he remained hidden and inactive in the abyss, and then appeared progressively higher in the rice-fields and mounted into the sky.

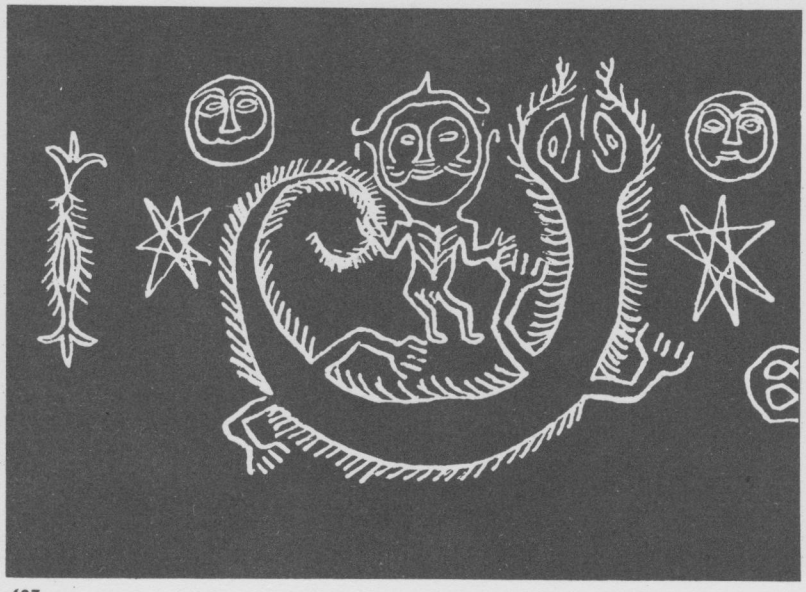


486

486. A Sassanid dragon which seems close to the Urobos imagery so dear to the Egyptians.

487. This Batak dragon, taken from a sorcerer's belt, seems to possess the same ambivalent attributes as the Chinese dragon, although it belongs to a more primitive level.

488. It is only in Judaeo-Christian pictorial representation that the dragon becomes 'incompatible' and is cleft in twain.



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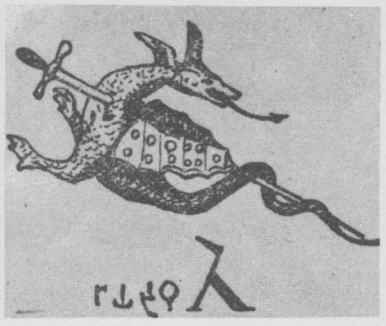

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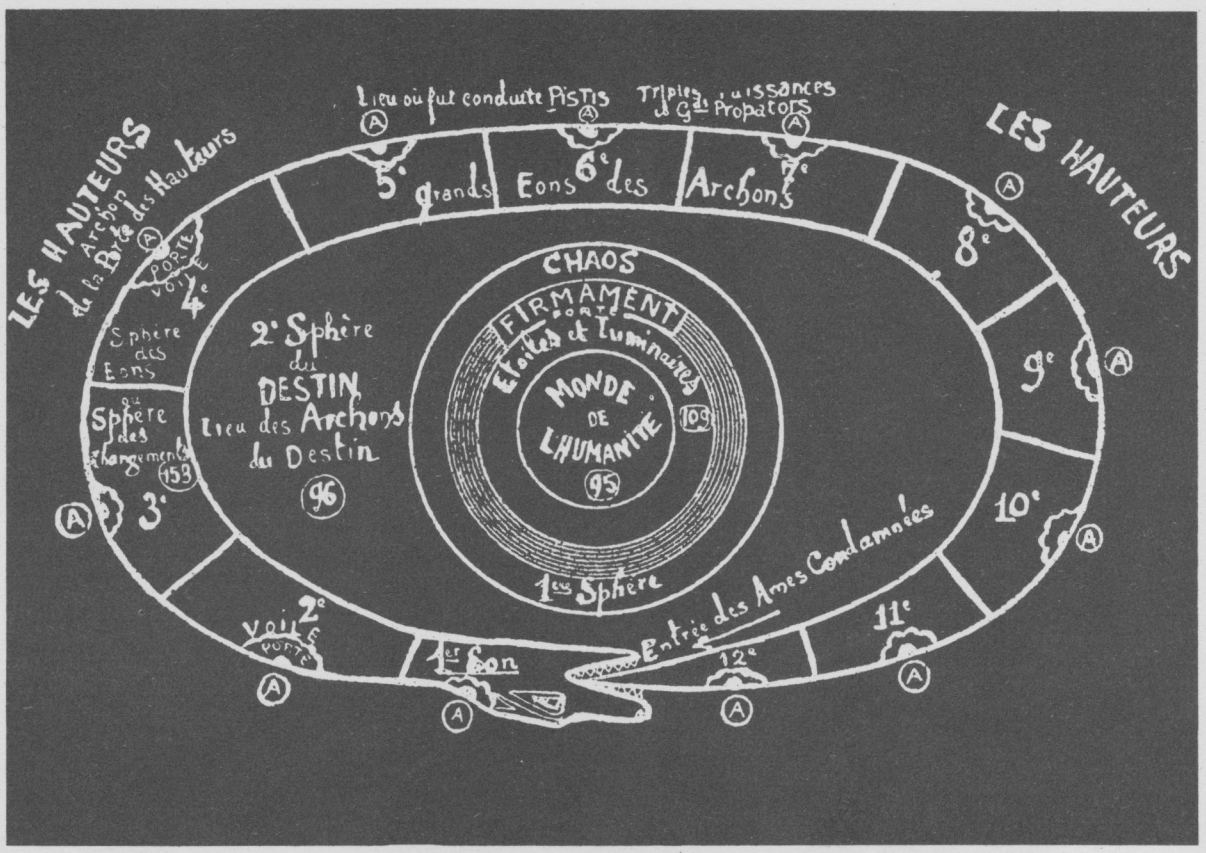
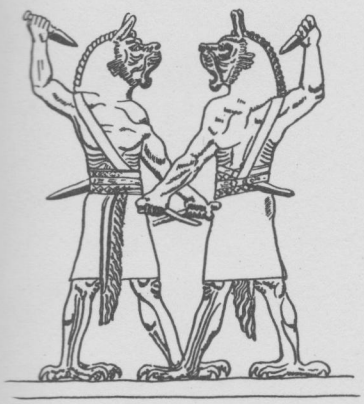


489

489. The Gnostics never adopted the dualist point of view which prevailed during the Christian Middle Ages. For them the dragon remained the symbol of a transcendant cosmic force. In a similar way to the serpent which eats its own tail it symbolised a perpetual renewal, in the course of which the 'incompatible' souls (who were as a result, condemned by their times), could begin their existence all over again in better 'aeons'.



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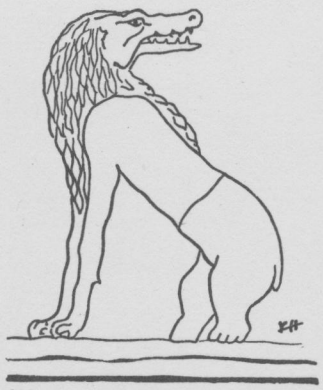
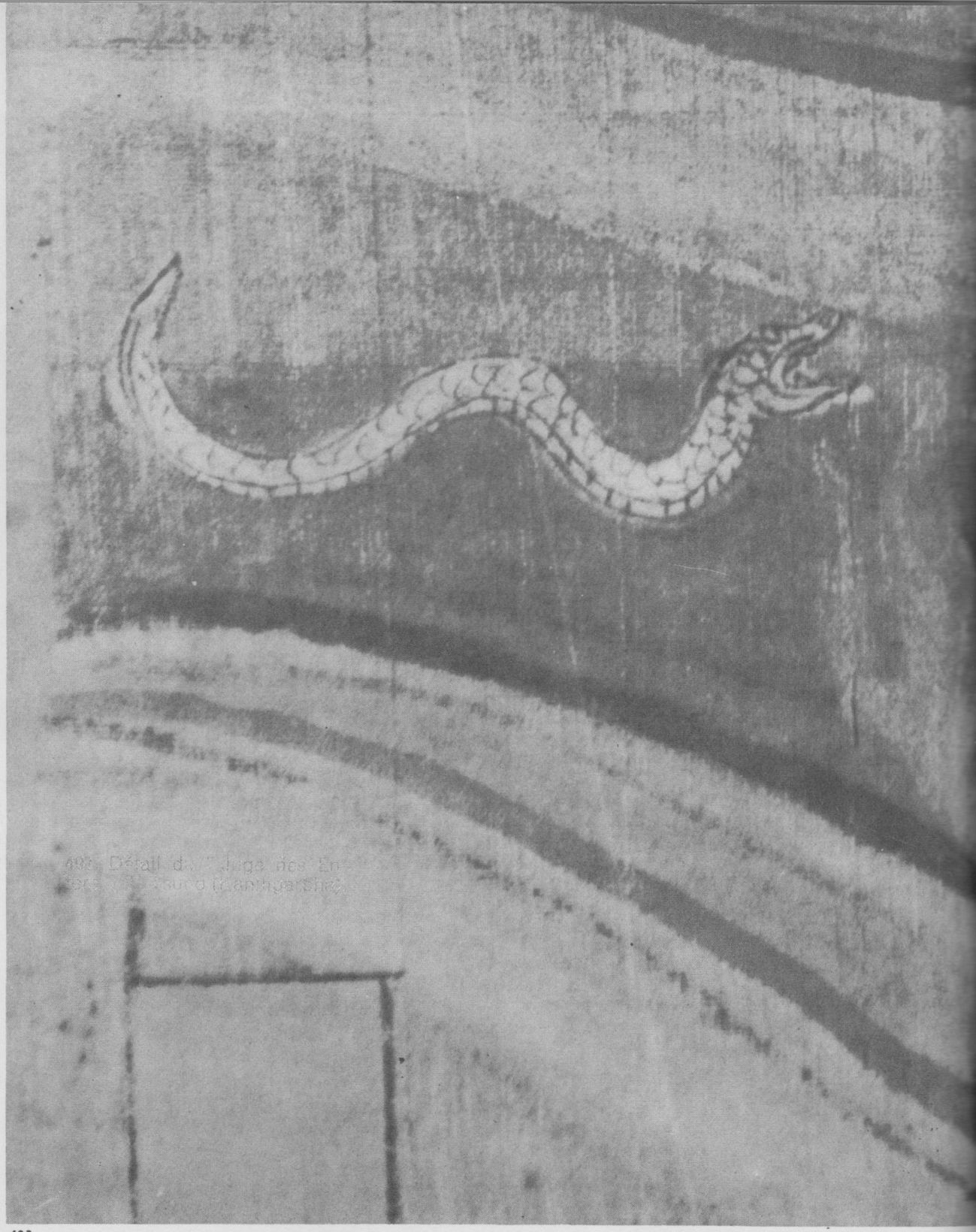


492

490. Both from Nineveh and Egypt pictures come to light whose close relationship to the dragon-demon of Christianity is easy to establish. Armed with daggers and sticks, these negative genies already have the horns and cloven feet of the Medieval period. The animal heads are a supplementary element of 'incompatibility', linked with irrational forces.

491–492. Amaït is a kind of Egyptian pre-dragon which was also called 'the Eater' or 'the Devourer', guarding the threshold (which only the initiate could cross) to the invisible.



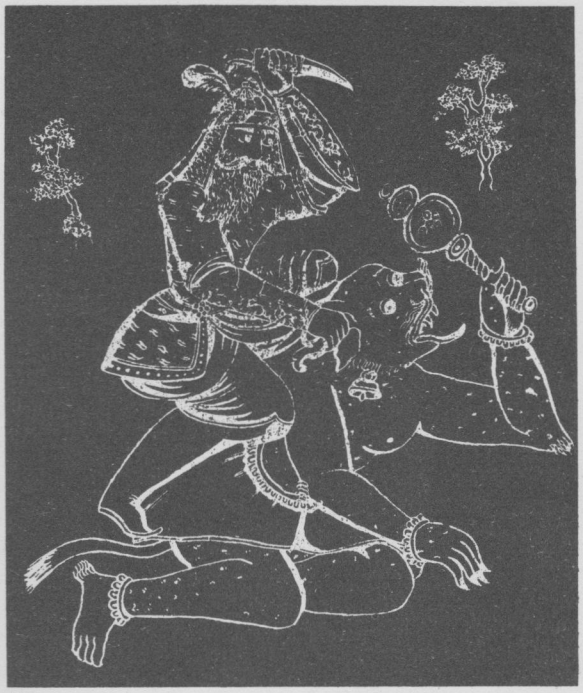
493



493. Detail from the 'Judge of Hell',
Ti-Tsung (Kahitigarbha).

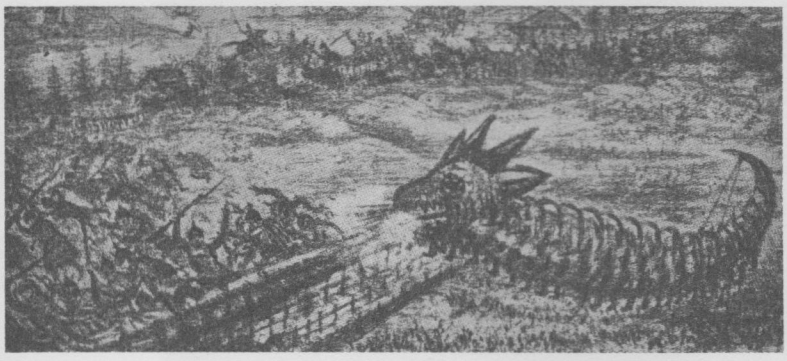


494



495

494–495. If the Chinese dragon (494) was principally the possessor or guardian of beneficent virtues, the dragon of Graeco-Roman antiquity was not entirely without good qualities either. For this reason Pliny mentions a dragon which carried a legendary stone, named Draconite or Draconita in its head. The dragon theme is often in fact connected with that of treasure. The Persian tradition, however, which was profoundly dualist in nature, reveals images which are already suggestive of Saint Michael striking down the Dragon. On the subject of Rustum's victory (495) over the handsome white dragon with the well-kept long nails, psychoanalysts could find much to say.



496



497

496. The ambivalent nature of the dragon persists in numerous western legends: in these too it is not only a question of vanquishing the monster but of appropriating part of his strength, generally by pulling hairs out of his tail. The Tarasque of Provence is said to have been one of these legendary beasts, and Saint Martha finally overcame it.

497. The dragon from the great pagoda of Rangoon is a replica of the 'guardian of the threshold' of Buddhism. We have already seen in Tibet to what extent the 'terrifying' can be comforting. Once more in this case the dragon stands guard over the treasures, but it must be conquered (to the extent to which the treasures are coveted), for the dragon is also their protector.



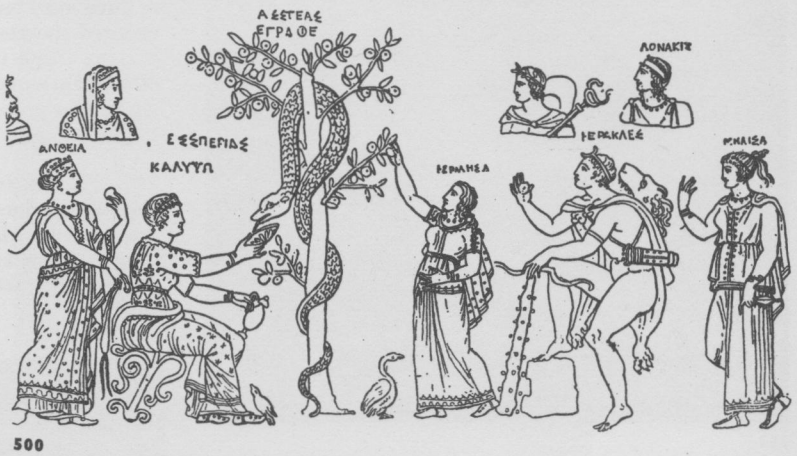
498

498. The Romans regarded the dragon first of all as a symbol of strength, power and combativeness. This is why they used it as a military ensign. The dragon symbol used by the Roman cohorts was also unexpectedly perpetuated in famous regiments of Europe.



499

499 Cadmus, here seen killing the dragon by the fountain of Dirce, is a semi-mythical hero of Pheonician origin. He is said to have killed a dragon in Boeotia which had devoured his companions. In this way Cadmus, personifying the civilising influence of the Orientals on the Hellenes, killed a primitive force which corresponded to the traditional image of the devil in Christianity.

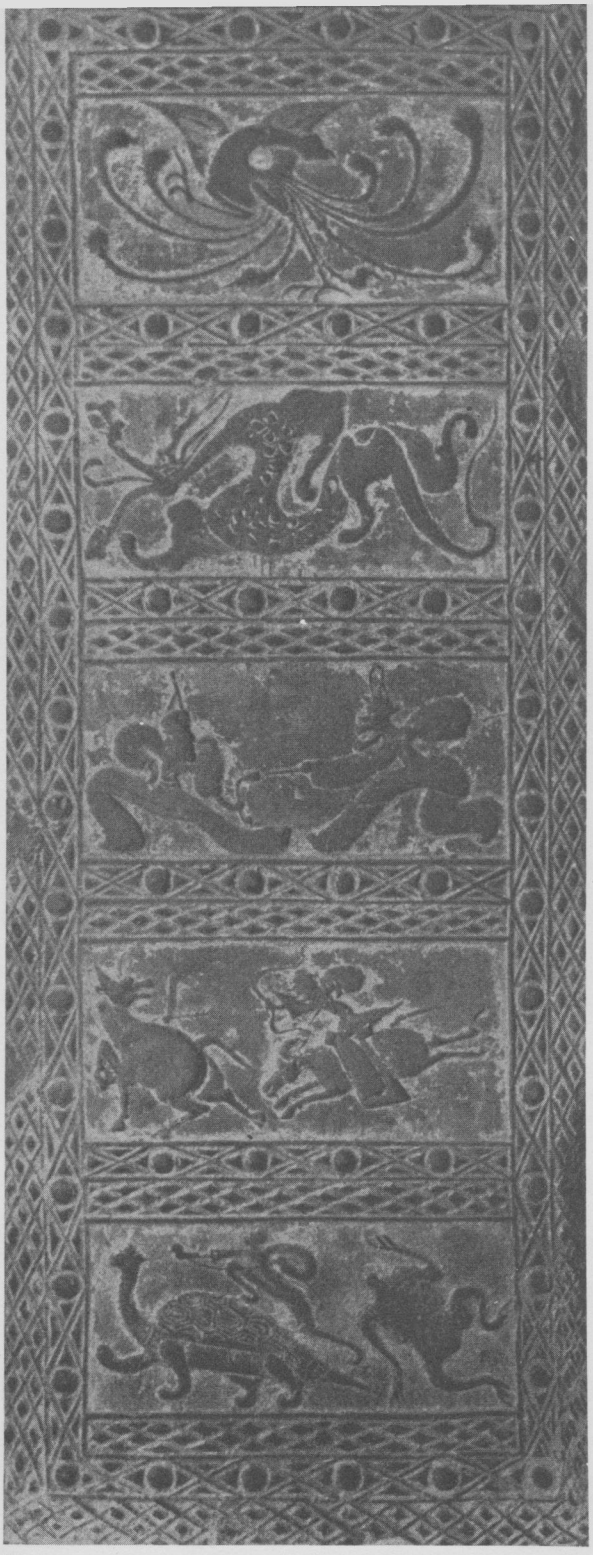


500

500–501. The dragon killed by Herakles is the guardian of the golden apples in the Garden of the Hesperides, who were the three daughters of Atlas. One can perceive the sexual significance of the golden apples protected by the dragon.

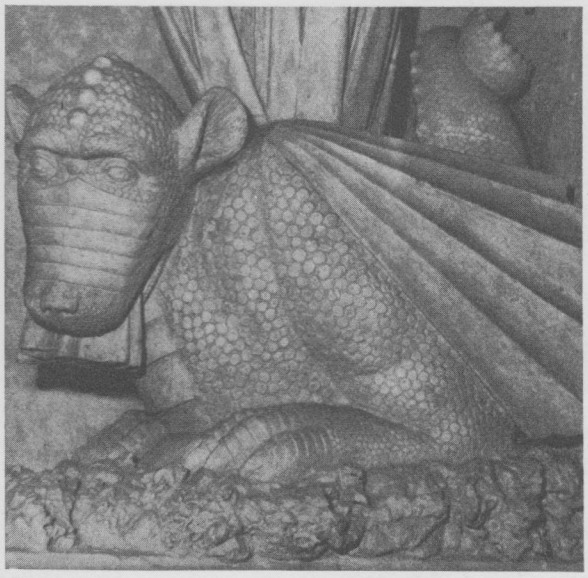


501



502

502. The Green Dragon of the East, the fertile beast of the Four Winds, dominates the Red Bird of the South, the Black Warrior of the North, the Tortoise and the Serpent: a spring-time, earth-bound power, expressing fecundity, which here assumes a joyful air.



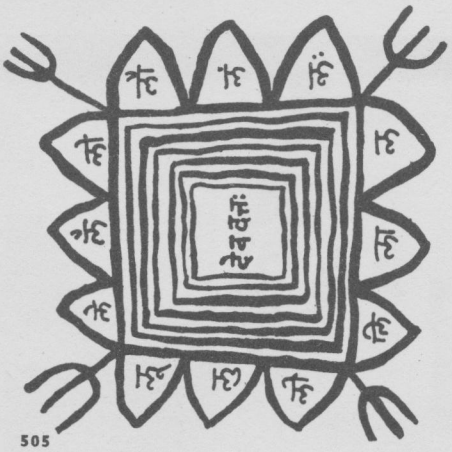
503

503. Here is the Tarasque, a legendary animal which is said to have lived on the banks of the river Rhône in France and ravaged the countryside, before it was overcome by Saint Martha (from the cathedral of Aix-en-Provence). The fate of the Tarasque is significant of the attitude of the West, which was preoccupied with striking down the dragon.

504. Themes involving monsters still inspire artists today (our illustrations show a tapestry by Marc Saint-Saëns). The theme of the Minotaur is closely connected with that of the dragon: here again it is a question of powerful, primitive forces which are inhuman and unadapted to the rest of the world.



504



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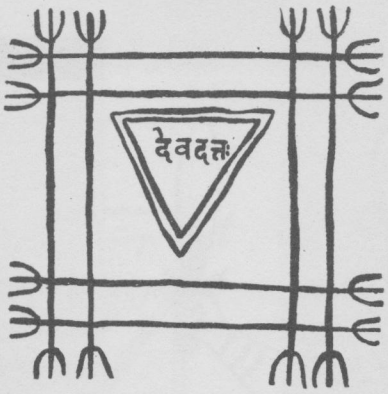

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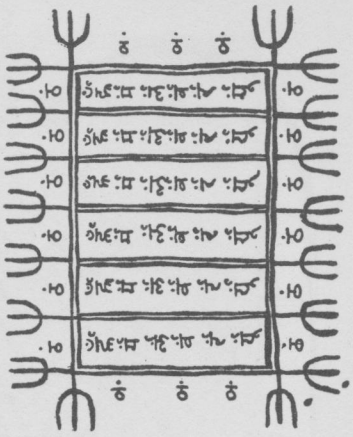


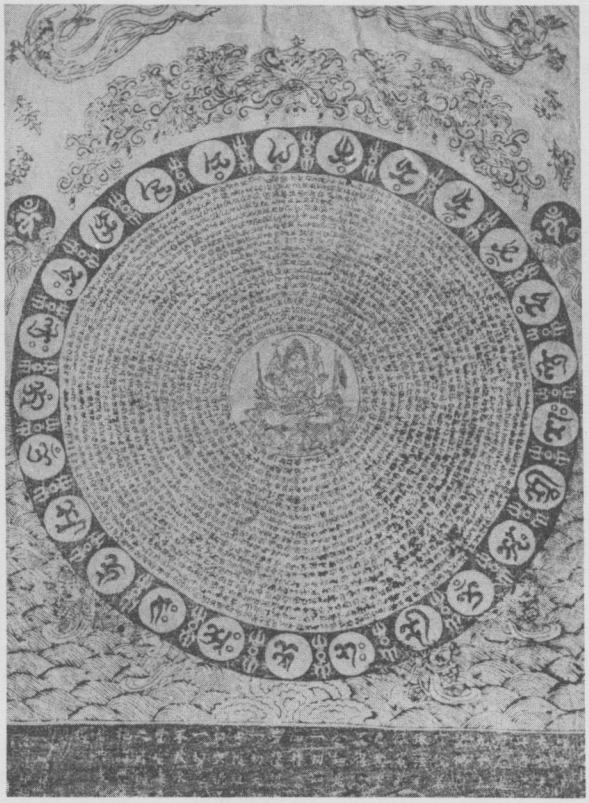
507

505 to **507.** An entire system of defence was developed almost spontaneously against the dragon and the spirit of evil. Primitive races, Hindus, Tibetans and even people close to ourselves in time and space made talismans and positive or negative pentacles which corresponded every time to the great complexes of the human race, to the great fears and desires of mankind. 'Yandras' from Hindu ritual, in turn 'protective' (505), 'controller of birth' (506) and 'enemy of speech' (507).

508–509. Belief in the power of magic formulae, such as talismans, has survived in more highly developed societies. This was true of the great universalist religions which quite naturally included this belief in their 'vision of the world', while at the same time using to their own advantage the power of this custom on people's minds. Examples can immediately be found in certain phrases used in the Catholic baptism ceremony or in rites of Holy Week. Above: talisman (508) and Chinese formula of magic invocation (509). In both happiness is a gift.



508



509



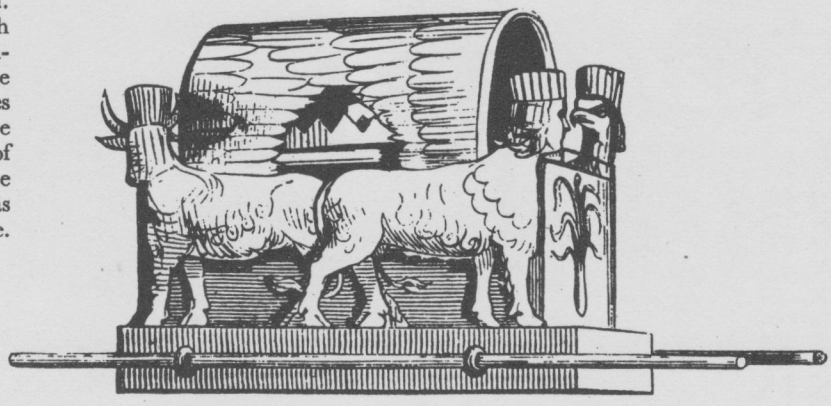
510



511

510. The great Indian pentacle is supposed to act as a 'transmitter of fluid'. As with all pentacles its effectiveness is measured by the magical and emotional value of the words and images used. The 'breast-plate' worn by the high priest of Israel was no more than a pentacle which nobody dared to name. The Jewish scriptures also mention pentacles of divination and protection which were called Teraphim, in addition to rolls of parchment or Phylacteries, which were rolled round the right arm every day as protection before prayers were made.

511. If magical objects of all times and places were destined to provide protection against evil spirits, there were also people endowed with the same power (Chinese exorcist, carried out in terra cotta).



512

512. The Ark of the Covenant also possessed a magical structure and function.



513



514

513. Fantastic, human-headed beast watching over tombs to ward off evil spirits. The homeopathy of magic: the use of horror to ward off horror.

514. In China magical mirrors were used to foretell the future but also to exercise will-power. It is instructive to note that they were carved from substances which were bad conductors of electricity.

515. Solomon stabs Asmodeus, the prince of the demons, the tempter of Eve, here disguised as a serpent. But this did not put an end to their legendary encounters.

515





517

517. The 'Lokapala', guardian-king of Northern Turkestan. Through his function of builder of the world he rises beyond the role of individual magic protection and becomes part of a cosmological vision.



516

516. Asparo, the flying spirit, brings us back to a more serene world, close to the Christian world of angels.

THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS



518



519

Since the representation of demons is the expression of incompatibility between a human being (or an image) and his times the gods of one age become the devils of the next. Christianity recognises, for practical reasons, the power of the pagan gods and in the end describes it as demoniac.

518. Pan himself, in order to show how far he has been assimilated with the devil, is represented with horns and the hindquarters of a goat.



520

519. In the Bible itself Satan was not originally the absolute antithesis or adversary of God, for he had the right to enter Paradise. He merely made himself the being who executed the more unplesant deeds of God. In this way he was sent to try the patience of Job.

520–521. Men returned to the idea of devouring monsters, that is to say to the idea of original forces, which, since they had been unable or unwilling to evolve with time, had become dangerous, 'adverse' and likely to destroy humanity.



521



523

522. The goat who belonged to the witches' sabbath (who seems to have been the idol Baphomet worshipped by the Knights Templar) was deeply venerated in Egypt where he was the symbol and principal of the fecundity of nature. Among the Greeks he was regarded as the Mount of Venus. The prudish tradition of Judaeo-Christianity turned him into a beast who was sacred and accursed at the same time.

523–524. This devil from the tomb of Haymon, Count of Corbeil (523), illustrates yet again the tendency to merge in one single image demons and rams (or goats). On this capital (Autun) the devil is not content with tempting Jesus, he is teaching him a lesson (524). Note the Saviour's expression of anxious reserve.



522



524



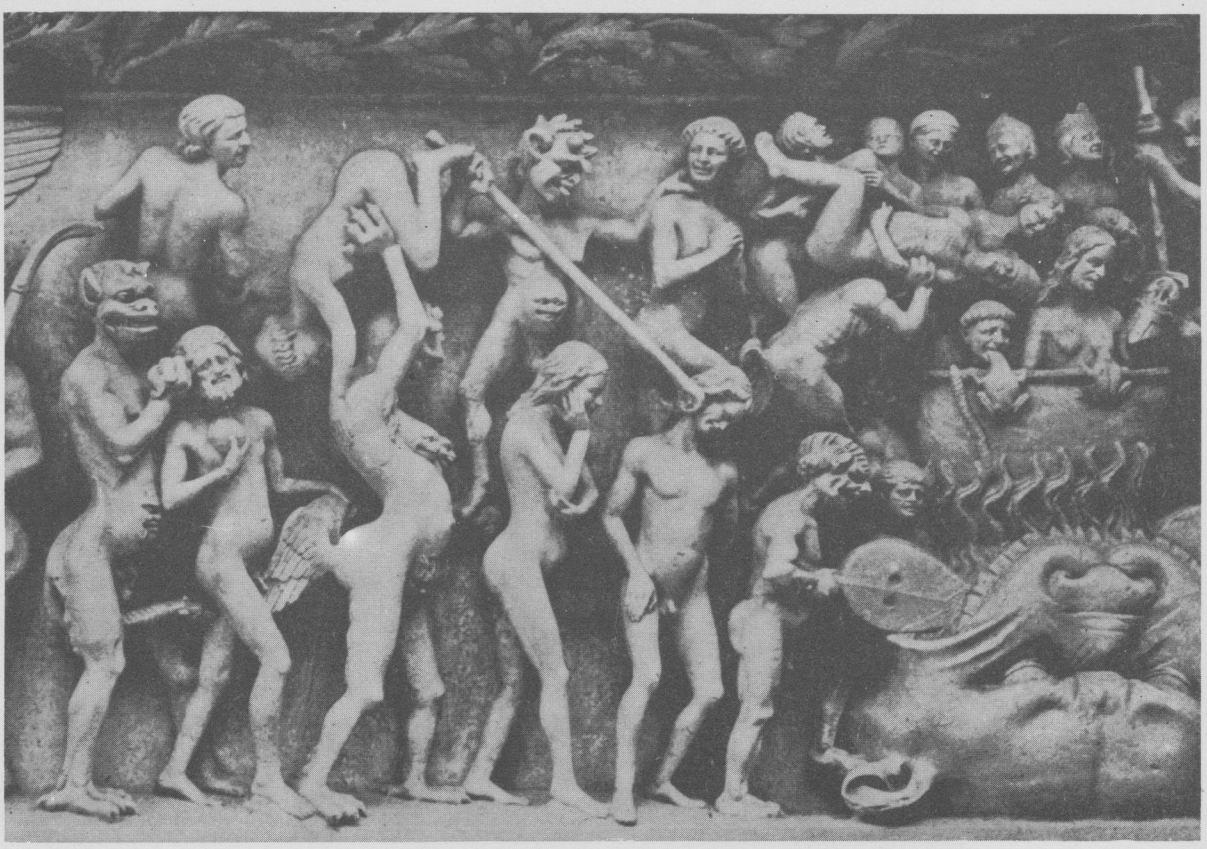
525



526

525. In this picture the demon, who is taking possession of the soul of Judas Iscariot, has a human face instead of a posterior. In Christian iconography it is not unusual to encounter a parallelism between the devil and sexuality and also between the devil and the anus. Luther took this even further: 'I am the turd that is ready and the world is the wide open anus.'

526 and **528.** While demons torment Breughel's magician, who is condemned to destruction (526), the 'Virgin with the Club' (528) assumes a significance that is familiar in Christian iconography. For here the man and the woman who are tempted by the demon are like children at the feet of the Madonna, who, with a skilfully applied blow from her club, will deliver them from their adversary. The Madonna is first of all the Mother: elsewhere, as we have seen, the devil decided to fight with the Father, and both of them with sexual and cosmic forces. The defeat of the devil in medieval iconography is not so much the victory of the Son but particularly that of the Mother.



527

527. It seems obvious that in this picture the demoniac theme expresses a form of sexual obsession: the stomach of one of the demons on the left has assumed a human form; 'the man with the apple' is caressing the winged posterior of one of his colleagues whose chest is ornamented with gargoyles and who is holding a woman (or a monk) at arm's length. (This detail from the relief of The Last Judgment comes from the main door of the cathedral of Bourges.)

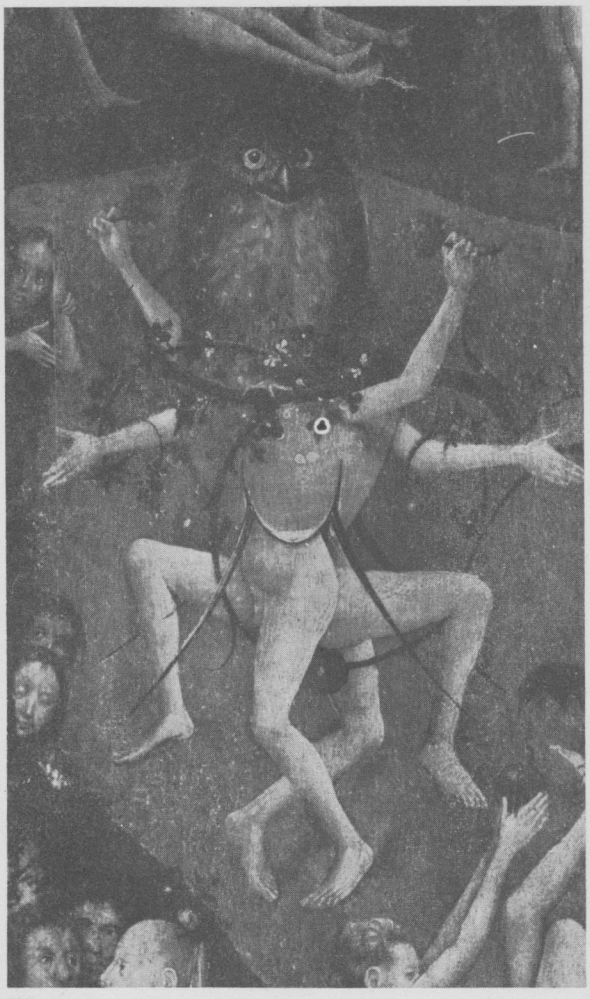
529. This picture shows a nocturnal witches' sabbath with the devil looking on; he is represented as a great Pan and his cervical torch is lighting up the scene. People in convulsions are dancing wildly, witches are riding goats or broomsticks, while children are being cut into pieces before being cooked for human consumption. This demoniac delirium is merely the shadowy survival of bacchanalian and saturnalian revels.



528



529

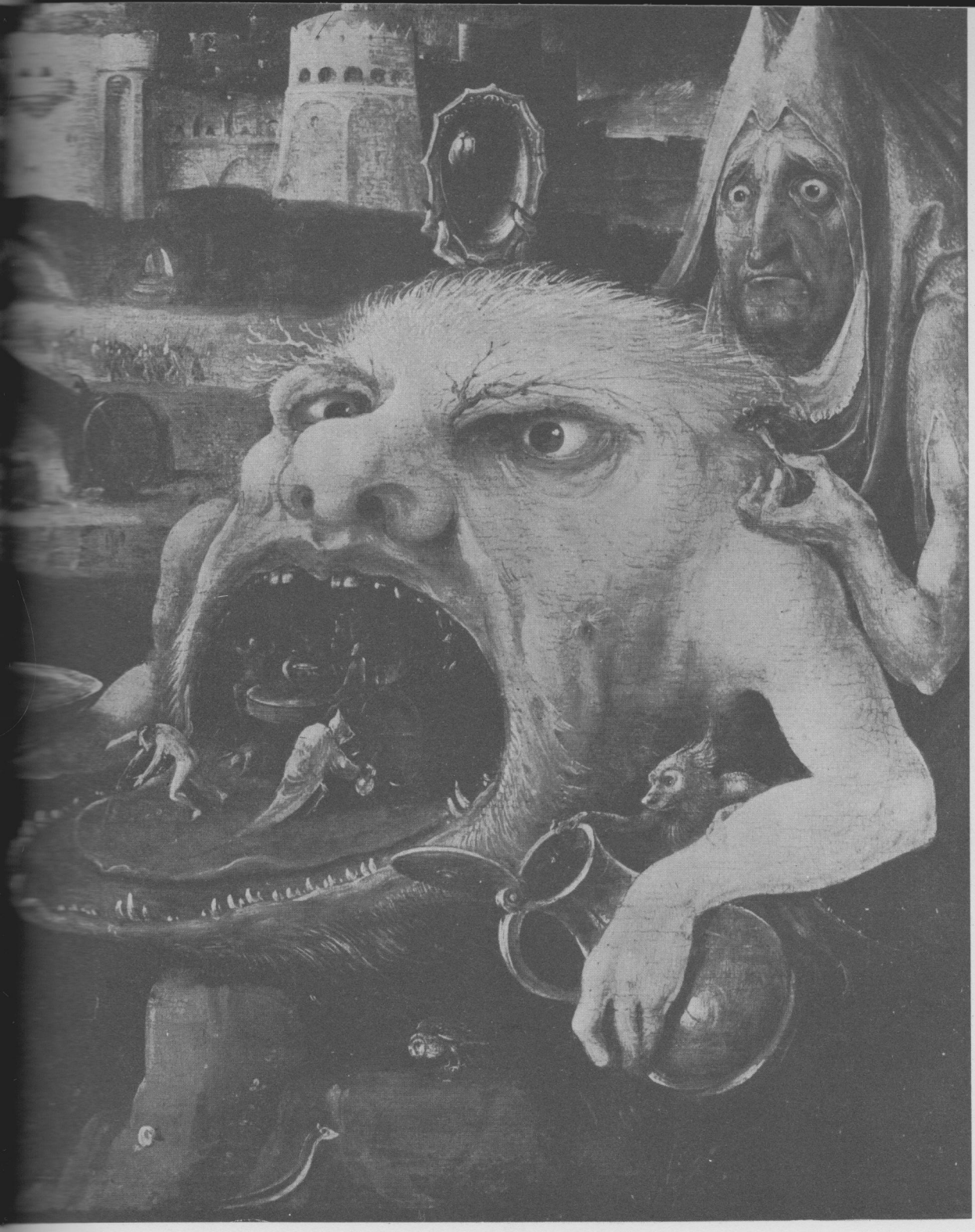


530



531

530. The Flemish painter Hieronymus Bosch had the merit, at the moment when medieval beliefs were beginning to fade, of reconstituting for us the world of phantasmagoric delirium which had been the world of the Middle Ages. Everything which medieval Christianity had placed in the category of incompatibility suddenly becomes alive in tortuous, monstrous shapes and figures. 'The Heretic Owl' is an image of the devil with other overtones. Its sexual implications are striking. The four arms and four legs express the 'dance of life', an echo of that which is danced in India by Shiwa. Although it was admirable in itself this dance was all the same regarded as heresy at the time. This is why an owl, which was sacred to Minerva in the past and only evil when it screeched, can be seen dominating the dancing figures. During the 16th century the time had not yet come for expressing certain things.



531. The 'Vision of Tondal', also by Bosch, evokes a universe subjected to the terrible and closely connected influences of the Father and Mother.



532

532. This detail from the 'Temptation of St Anthony' (H. Bosch) illustrates in dramatic style the way in which nature is identified with the devil (who has been repudiated by the ascete in the desert). Monsters and women, who are beneath contempt, are left on one side while virility (incarnated by an armed warrior) and the most humble instinctive forces, those which are the most stealthily familiar (in the form of wretched little dogs), assail the Saint during the temptation. In fact the temptation presents the Saint with the image of himself (his double) and that of his deeds: the halt and the lame (who have mutilated their true nature) symbolise the duplication.



533

533–534. The 'Pact with the Devil' (H. Bosch) illustrates without any doubt the sexual delirium of a world which gives way to rationalism only with difficulty. Hermogenes the Magician (534) orders the demons to take hold of



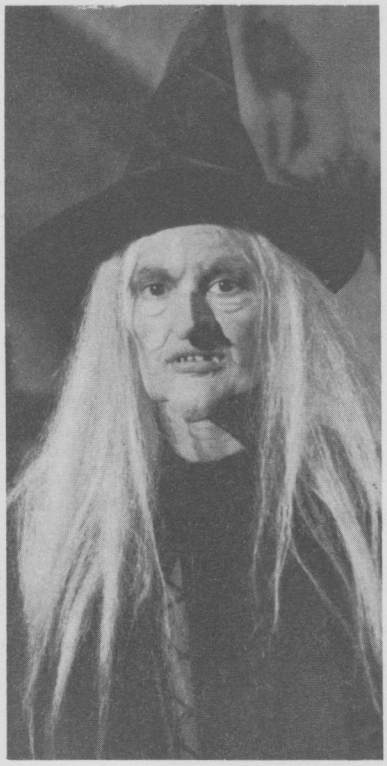
534

St James the Greater, who is effectively protected by the Angel of God. This picture again represents a world torn apart between tendencies which are apparently irreconcilable.

WITCHES' SABBATHS AND SATURNALIA

535–536. Since they are less easily satisfied than sorcerers and therefore demand greater compensations, witches become more important (535 shows a witch from a film). The representation of naked witches riding broomsticks goes back to the pre-Columbian period (536 shows the goddess Tlazolteolf on her way to the sabbath).

537. A sorcerer as they were popularly imagined.



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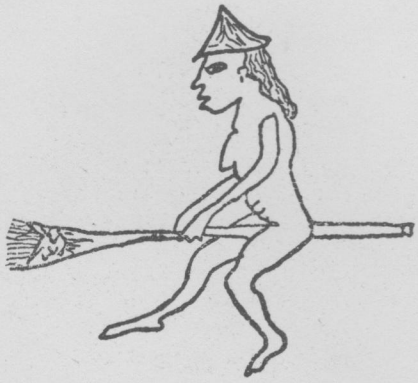


536



537

538. At the time when the medieval cathedrals were being built every pretty woman was in danger of seeing the devil appear in her looking-glass but in this picture it is rather surprising to see that the temptation is being exerted from behind rather than from the front. This was no doubt a joke in bad taste on the part of the Evil One.

539. Fortunately when they returned from the sabbath witches were capable of changing their shape in order to foil the curiosity of indiscreet onlookers and also that of the police. This did not prevent thousands of them from being discovered and handed over to the secular arm, which, at the request of the Inquisition, ordered them to be burnt alive.



538



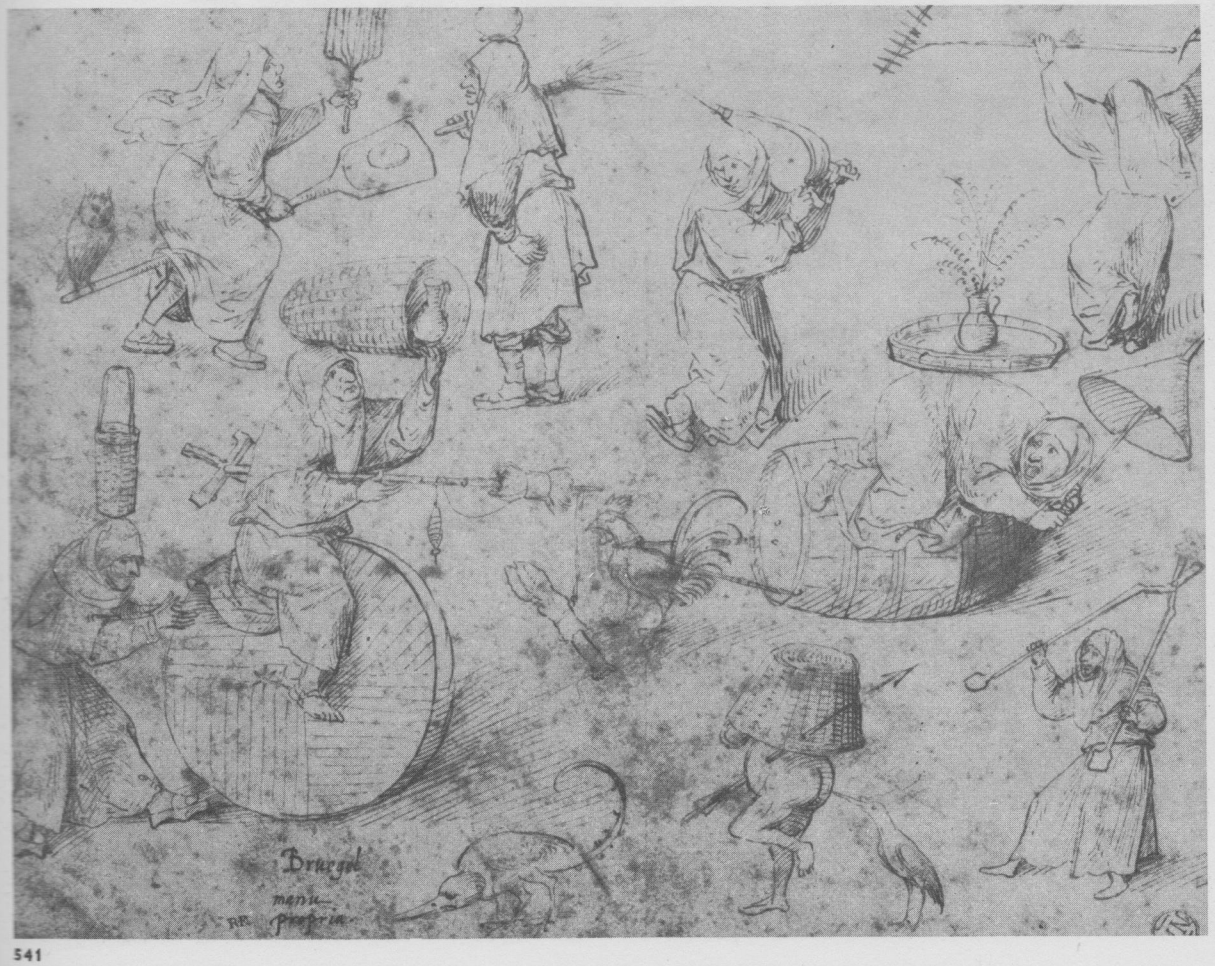
539



540

540. A witches' sabbath: the devil is seated on his throne with a 'queen of the sabbath', who wears a crown, and a witch of lesser rank seated on either side. A child is being offered up to Satan, who apparently enjoyed eating them, a fact which takes us back to the theme of the Father and the massacre of the Innocents. There is nothing very surprising about this: before they accused demons and sorcerers of devouring children the early Christians had been accused of the same thing by the pagans. There is dancing and music, which in themselves were regarded as evil at this period, and riding on broomsticks. Some of the demons have ambiguous female breasts.

541. These witches by Breughel seem to show, in a very indecent way, all the signs of being unsatisfied: it is time that some handsome devil came along to calm them down.



541

THE WITCHES' SABBATH



. . . they come riding goats



. . . they trample the Cross underfoot . . .



. . . they are made to be baptised again in the name of the devil



. . . they give their clothes to the devil . . .



. . . then they kiss the devil's private parts behind . . .



. . . and they dance in circles back to back . . .

542

542. The deeds of witches are only known to us through the confessions that they made while being tortured. This picture shows a priest's impressions of the various scenes which he imagined to take place during a witches' sabbath. Notice that the sorcerers and sorceresses present were well dressed and appeared to belong to high society.



543



544

543–544. The first engraving shows an 'invasion of succubi and incubi' (543); the second shows Paracelsus fighting against ghosts (544). The theme of ghosts, succubi and incubi is close to that of demons. The succubi were 'feminine entities' who came to tempt men and merge with them during sleep. Incubi, on the other hand, disturbed women by means of erotic dreams.



545

545. This famous engraving by Adrianus Hubertus illustrates once more the paraphernalia of witches and their repressed sexuality.



546



547

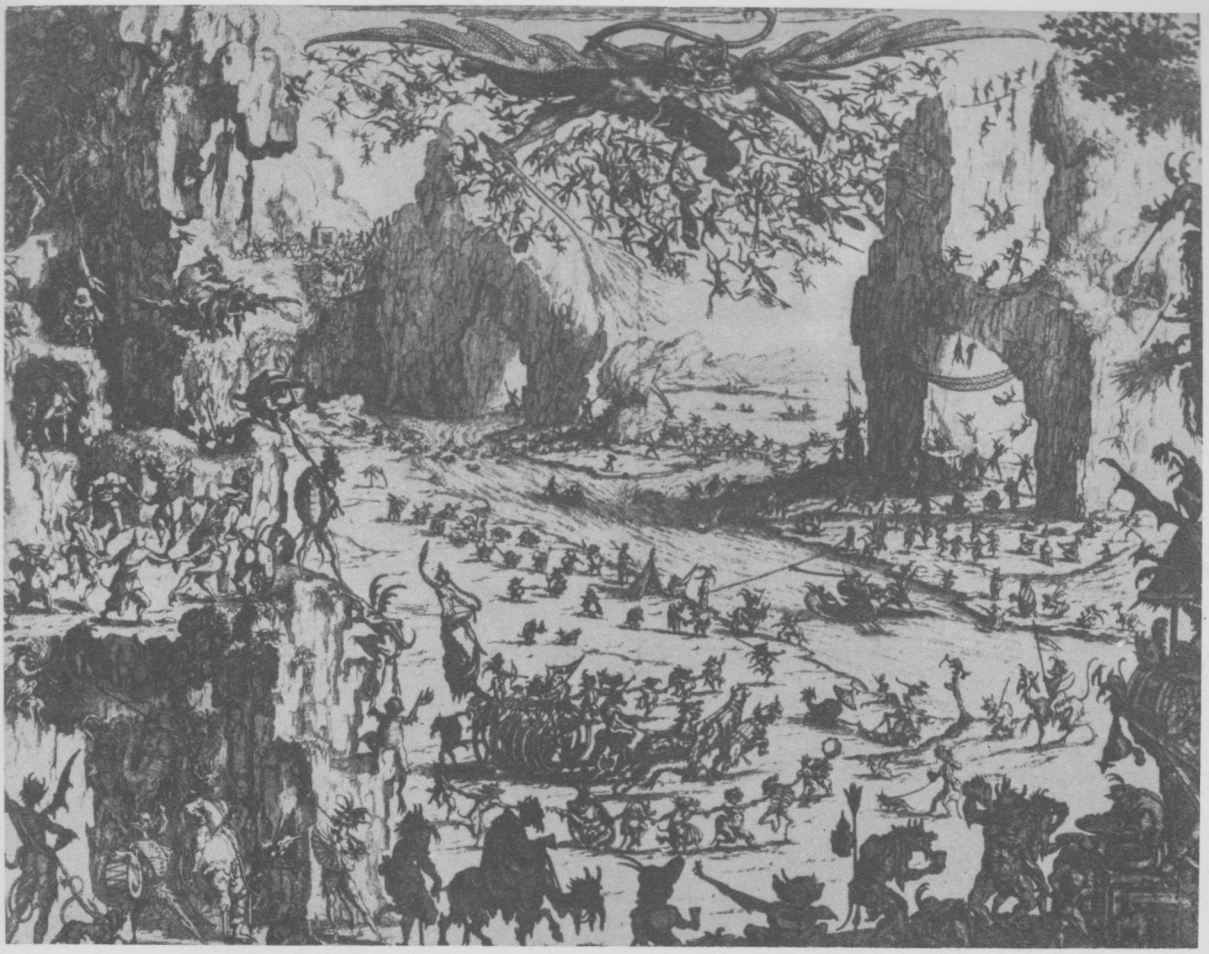
546. It is only the genius of a few great artists which can make tolerable to us the sadistic and demoniac delirium which came to a head at the end of the Middle Ages. A collective release of this kind is no doubt unique in history and no other art supplies so much evidence of it. 'Hell' by D. Bouts shows a lack of imagination when compared with the scenes of delirium painted by Hieronymous Bosch.

547. Jacques Callot (early 17th century) cannot succeed in giving an impression of horror or delirium in spite of his excellent technique and the strangeness of the innumerable figures in his 'Temptation of St Anthony'. This is a near-scientific constitution of demoniac themes but it gives no impression whatsoever of panic or horror.



548

548. When modern painters attempt representations of horror which do not correspond in any way with the content of the collective unconscious they are often even less imaginative. This 'Story of Terror' by M.G. Lewis (1801) has a burlesque atmosphere which is too artificial to awake any other feeling except that of curiosity.



549

549. The 'Temptation' by Mathias Grunewald, painted on the altar-piece of Isenheim Cathedral, is powerful in a different way, giving an impression of tortured delirium.

550. Below is a drawing by Jules Bois entitled 'The Banquet of Satan and his Faithful Followers' illustrating a traditional scene from sorcerers' revels.



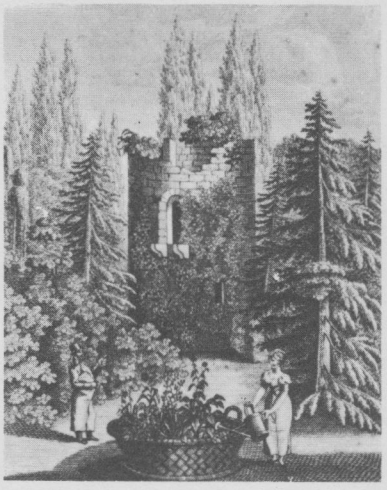
550



551

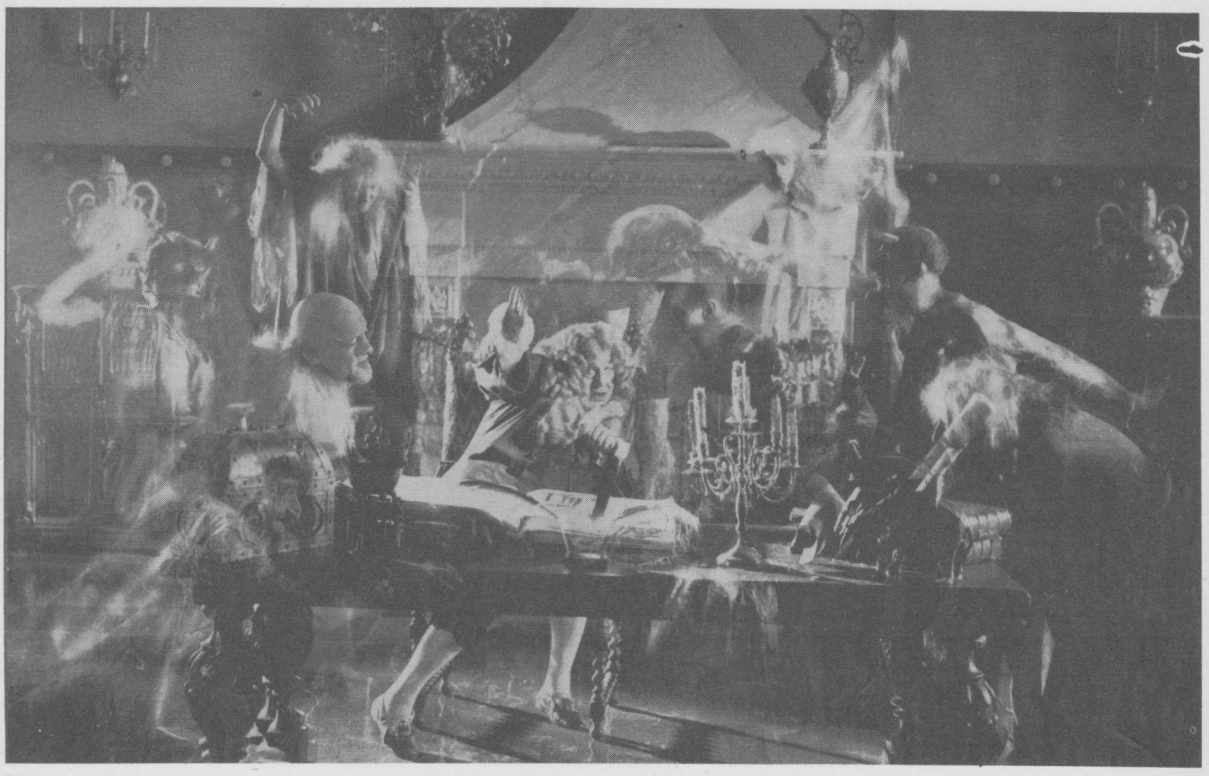
551. In medieval iconography witches and sorcerers often ride together on a goat and at the same time witches are carried away by devils. In these cases the Prince of Darkness rides a black horse and it gallops towards the left, the direction which is regarded as sinister (the etymological derivation is sinistrum, meaning left). The illustration is based on the engraving by Olaus Magnus (Rome 1555).

552. Witches often met together in order to invoke the devil. This usually happened in places likely to frighten the simple-minded such as ruined houses, abandoned castles or generally isolated places. This is true of the 'Witches' Tower' at Lindheim painted by Georg Conrad Horst (Frankfurt, 1818).



552

553. On many occasions the cinema, which enjoys portraying the supernatural, has used the Count of Cagliostro; in this picture he is very frightened by the phantoms which in fact had been raised up at his request. He was condemned to death but was then pardoned and imprisoned in the Château de Léon, where he is said to have become insane. One day, four years later, his gaolers found him unconscious.



553



554

554. St James the Greater faces a magician and a pack of demons.

555. At the Saint's command the demons tear the magician to pieces. Breughel the Elder certainly intended to depict a scene of exorcism here, but from an artistic point of view the interest of this painting lies in the powerful opposition which the painter has succeeded in showing between the human spiritualised world (the Saint) and the universe full of disorder and delirium which belongs to the demons. The dissociation of the 'tendencies' which struggle for control of the human soul has never been so well expressed anywhere else.



555

556. In the Middle Ages most people believed that anyone who had made a pact with the devil had no hope of escaping from it during his lifetime: the devil would not fail to come and demand payment of the 'debt'. The picture shows 'The Rider from the Tower' (Augsburg, 1498): at the agreed hour the devil comes to take away the child that has been 'sold' to him.



556



557

557. Sorcerers who attended sabbaths took part in real acrobatic dances which made up the essential part of these ceremonies; they would have found it very difficult to accomplish such physical feats in their normal state. Where did this extra energy come from? From a state of trance, like that which had existed earlier in antiquity when dances with magic power took place, and then in the exhibitionist dances of pre-Columbian times. The same thing occurs nowadays with the Voodoo dancers who are capable of making convulsive movements for hours on end, to rhythms which would give anyone who was not in their 'second state' a heart attack. The same thing is probably true to some extent of rock 'n' roll dancers.



558

558. This picture by Hans Baldung (1514) shows three witches. All at once, under the influence of some unknown spell, perhaps, the shrivelled old witches suddenly become strikingly young and beautiful.

559. 'The Rider from the Tower' shows a more familiar devil, and one who in any case takes part in everyday life. After that the engraver deserts his solemn or terrifying style and becomes humorous, showing how the Evil One is content with provoking a group of women to commit a minor sin: frivolous chatter during Mass. Was this very wicked?



559



560

560. The Abbé Bordelon created this elegant sorcerer who reigns over the 'Histoire des Imaginations Extravagantes de Monsier Ouple' (Amsterdam, 1710). This little unself-conscious demon, who seems a cheerful confederate, was the very symbol of madness.

561. This fuliginous painting of the 'Little Magician' with half-closed eyes is by Georges Rouault.



561



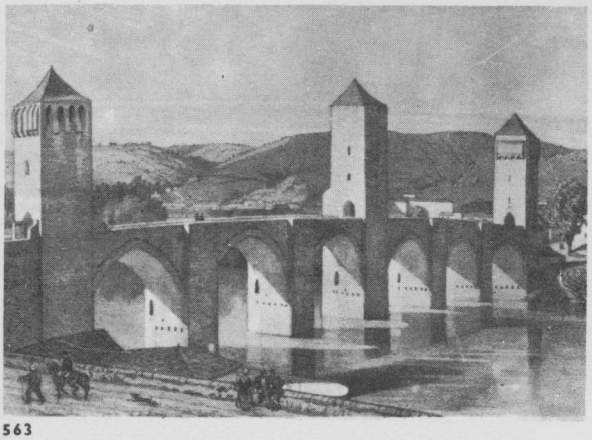
562

562. It was said during the Middle Ages that demons liked nothing so much as to come into houses during the night to do the housework and look after the children during the absence of the owners or while they were asleep. Sometimes they even carried out the jobs destined for the workmen, who were ready to become masters, or they would even help the men who built the cathedrals. They were always there to help out the architects who were lacking in imagination and they excelled in wrought iron work and forging.



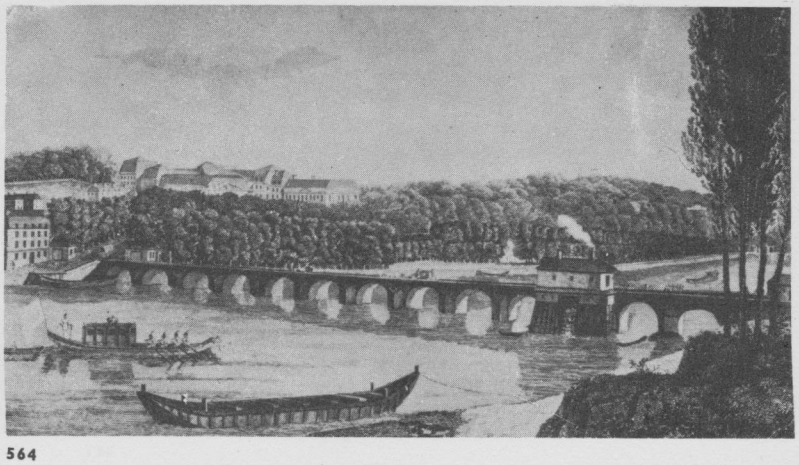
565

565. This 19th century popular print represents a bishop by the name of Saint Cado offering a cat to the devil as a means of thanking him for the building of a bridge. The reward is modest, even ridiculous, but ordinary people like to let the devil whistle for his money: popular morality insists that we should have the right to destroy 'outlaws'.



563

563–564. It was also said that devils particularly enjoyed taking part in the building of bridges. Psychologists of today will not fail to note that in the scientific interpretation of dreams the symbolic significance of the bridge theme is that of surmounting a difficulty. The picture above (563) shows the Valentré Bridge at Cahors which, according to legend, was the work of the devil. The Bridge of Saint-Cloud (564) near Paris is also supposed to owe its existence to Satan.



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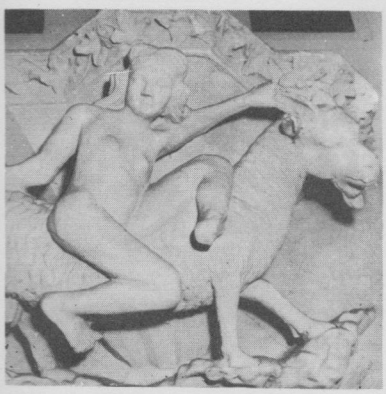


566

566. When the fires and festivals of the Middle Ages died down the image of the devil and his witches gradually evolved. After being horrible repulsive monsters they now became extremely handsome people, which was one way of explaining their power of seduction.

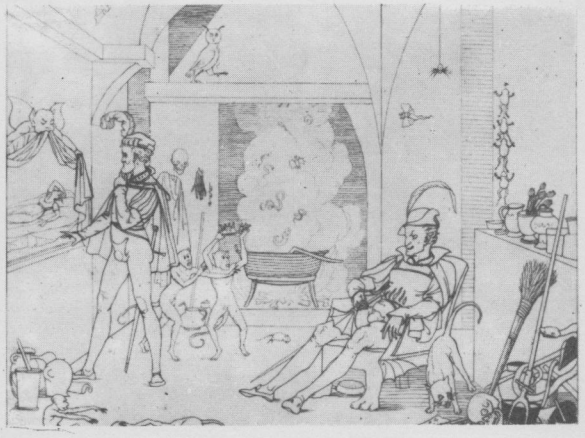


567

567. The Renaissance saw the appearance of delightful female demons equipped with horns which did not make them less attractive. Further, they did not seem in any way disconcerted at finding themselves right in the midst of an assembly consecrated to St Anthony and St Paul the Hermit.



568



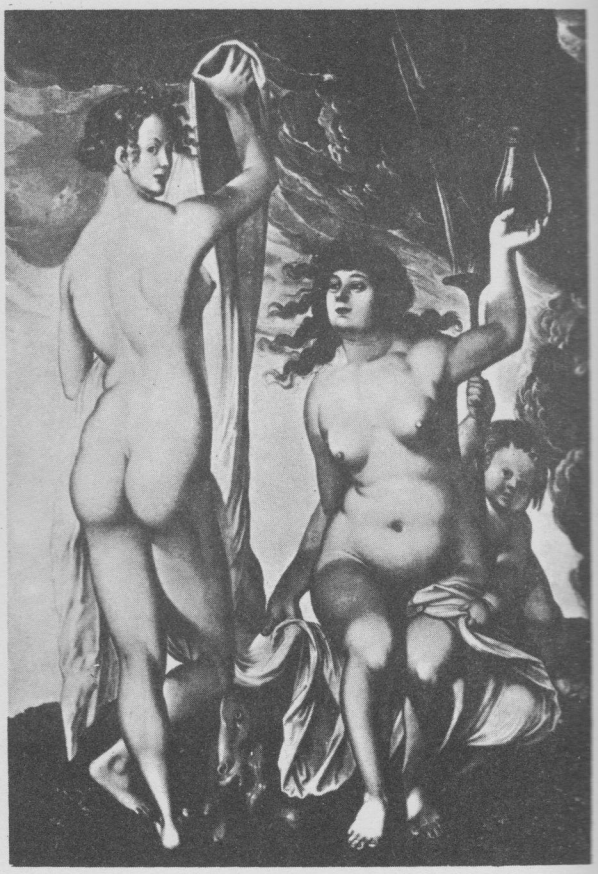
569

568–569. Mephistopheles, who appears at the invocation of Faust, is an extremely seductive, elegant person with good manners (568). The cloven hoof (569) beneath his feet is a final concession to the changed method of depicting him, for before the devil can bestow youth and beauty on Faust he must first possess it himself.



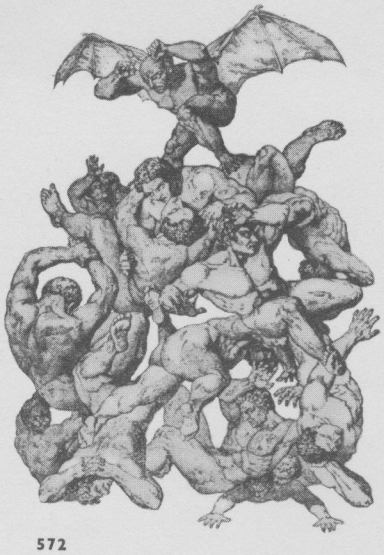
570

570. Queverdo's painting of a witch getting ready to join the sabbath is merely a pretext for painting a fine nude. The broomstick, the cat and the toad are still there but only to supply background; the same is true of the old witch whose job it is to cover the body of the diabolical woman with unguents.



571

571. These two witches painted by Baldung no longer give any hint of the shrewlike witches of the past: they display attractive curves in the style of Rubens.



572

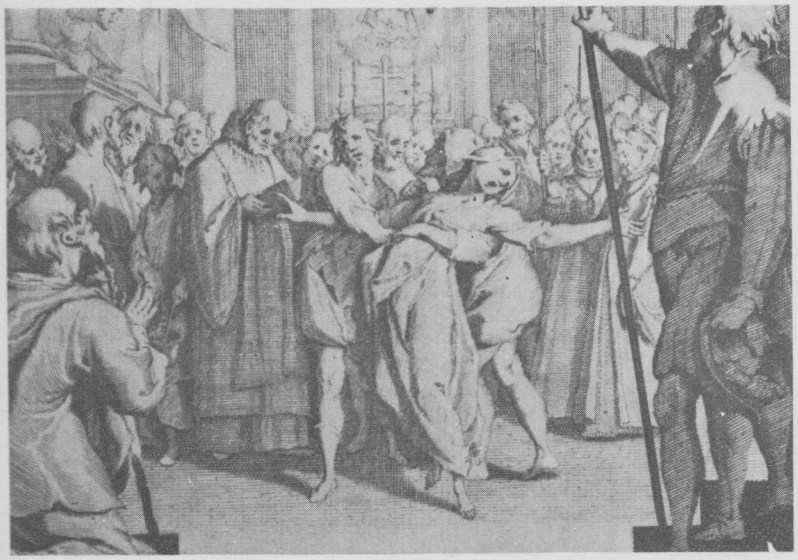
572. Romanticism brought with it a new image, that of the rebel angels forming a link between demons, Titans and Promethean beings rather than anything else. They also supplied an excuse for engravers to embellish their plates with fine tortured shapes.



573

573. This engraving by John Martin showing Satan flying over the river of Hell resolutely turns its back on medieval iconography. It evokes rather the words which Milton put into Satan's mouth:

'A mind not to be changed by place or time.
The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.'



574

574. There were many cases of 'possession' during the Middle Ages and up to the time of the French Revolution. Since it was thought that demons destroyed the willpower of the possessed person ecclesiastical courts ruled that the latter had no responsibility for his actions, but they condemned him nonetheless for having had truck with the Evil One. The illustration shows a scene of exorcism in a church. The possessed woman makes wildly contorted gestures. Her captors do their duty and the priest prays.



575

575. A possessed woman going through an acute crisis of 'demoniac rage' with contorted swaying movements and foaming at the mouth; according to the good theologians these were the incontestable signs that 'one of God's creatures was possessed by the demon of impurity'.

577. During a Protestant sermon a member of the faithful falls over backwards, because the demon within him cannot tolerate the Word of God. Today we should tend to regard this as a symptom of epilepsy or an indication of some neuropathological disorder.



576



577

576. This engraving by Abraham Palingh ('T Afgerukt Mom-Aansight der Teoveryl', Amsterdam, 1725) shows a witch, whose case has been referred to the municipal authorities, going through a crisis of 'possession'. The 'guilty' woman, overcome by convulsions, has pulled a chair down with her. In spite of what one might believe similar scenes still take place today.

578 to **581.** These engravings selected from the work by Palingh already mentioned show, firstly, attempts to make a possessed man sit still, secondly, another one who is trying to jump out of the window, thirdly, a man who is begging his family not to denounce him to the ecclesiastical court, and, fourthly, a scene of convulsions. Priests and nuns themselves were not safe from 'possession'. The scandal which occurred among the Ursuline nuns at Loudun in 1634 was talked about for a long time.



578



579



582

582–583. The tragic incident among these nuns in Loudun (less tragic than it might seem, for suppressed sexuality played a large part in it) gave the Polish director Kawalerowic the subject for his film 'Mother Joan of the Angels', from which we reproduce here two scenes of exorcism. Father Surin, one of the actors in the drama, admitted naively that one day the demons cast 'a spell through which the Mother



580



581



583

Prioress became different from what she normally was for eight days and her face shone with rare beauty'. Then 'another day the demon assumed my appearance, entered the parlour and, speaking in a soft voice which had some resemblance to mine, attempted to lead the same Mother Prioress into temptation'. The Ursuline nuns, like stricken birds, exorcised the evil . . .

WITCH HUNTS



584

584. In their application of the Law of Moses 'Ye shall not suffer sorcerers to live' the people of the West attacked them with cruel persecutions. Of all the tortures to which they were subjected the whip was the most harmless. It was not unusual for the strokes to be administered by children, no doubt because in this way they could be taught to play the executioner.



585

585. The most refined form of torture was the famous system of interrogation. According to Philippe van Limborch the Inquisition (our illustration shows one of the Inquisition's torture chambers) aimed at 'domination without intellect over the intellectual world'. The witch hunt carried out by the Inquisition is an indelible period of shame in European history. In France capital punishment for the exercise of witchcraft was abolished by Louis XV.



586

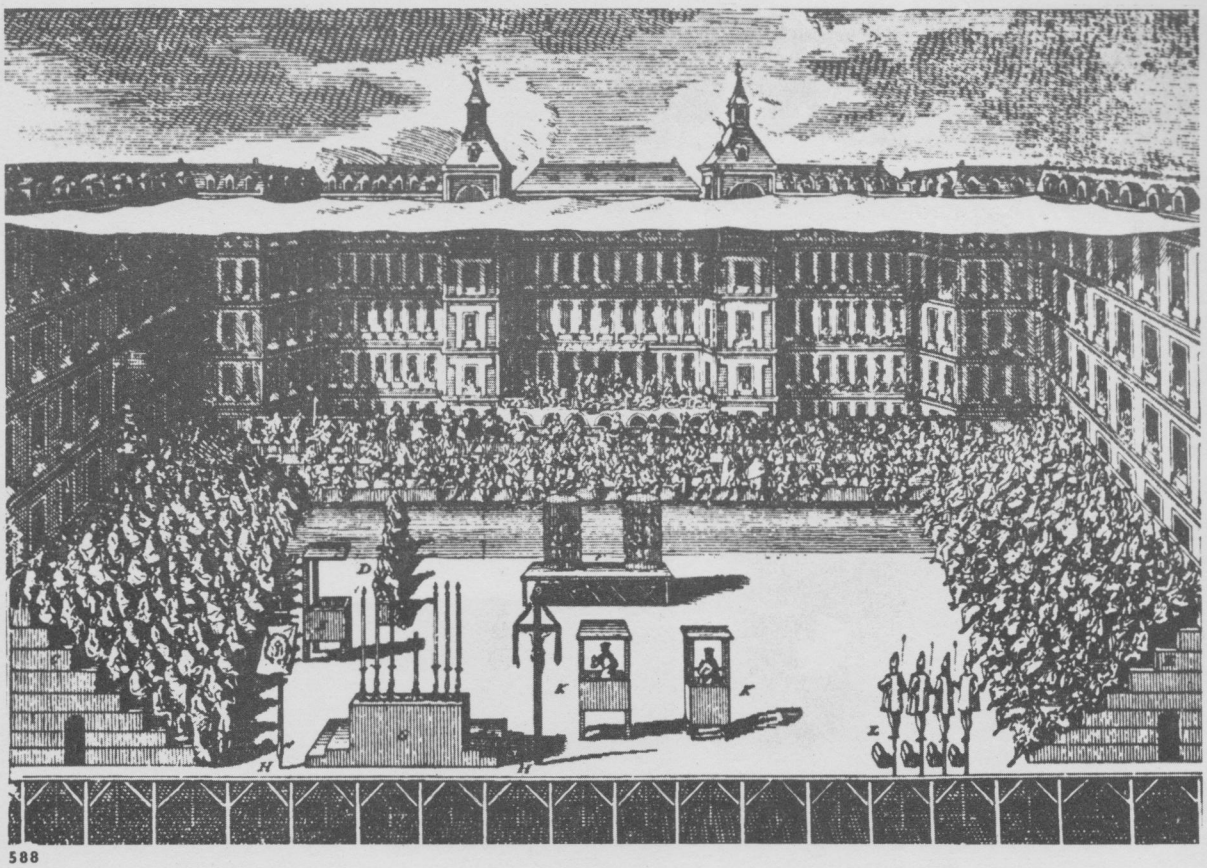
586. Witches being hanged in England, where this form of punishment was rarer than being burnt at the stake. The Duke of Mar declared in 1608 to the Privy Council 'Although they continued in their denials until the end they were nonetheless burnt alive, and their sufferings were so horrible that many of them died in despair, apostasy and blasphemy'. They were exhibited beforehand in cylindrical cages.



587

587. The execution at Amsterdam in 1571 of the witch Anne Hendriks. In order to reduce expenses the condemned woman was bound to a ladder and two executioners pushed it over on to a blazing fire. In the background can be seen the judge with his hands on his hips; his arrogance, complacency, cruelty and stupidity make him a perfect symbol of persecution. The Inquisition was the most cruel tribunal for the crime of unconventional belief.

588. In Spain the verdicts of trials were usually given in the market place. The King, the nobles and the officers of the Inquisition occupied private boxes which were set up for this purpose, and from them they could see the scaffolds and the condemned people.



588



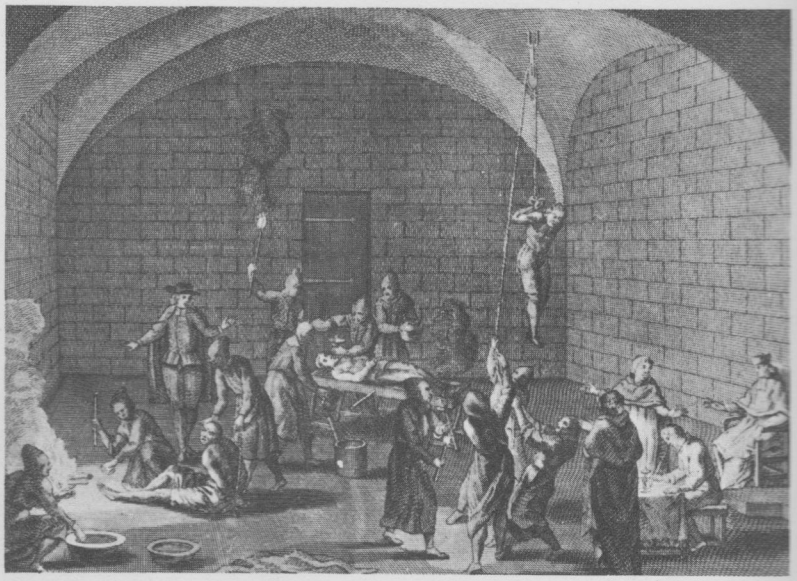
589



590

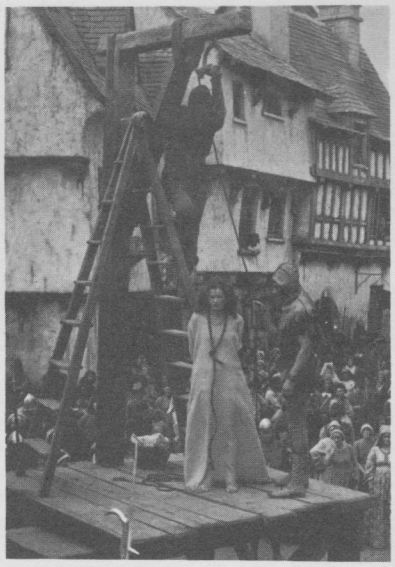
589–590. In Spain, too, and in Italy also persons accused of witchcraft had to wear before their final torture a special costume, consisting of a dalmatic and a mitre called a 'carocha'. These prints by Bernard Picard, dating from the 17th century show (right) a woman condemned to be burnt at the stake wearing a dalmatic which announces her end (her head is surrounded with flames and devils can be seen stoking the fires of Hell); then (on the left) a girl who has avoided burning at the stake through making a last-minute confession. The cross on her dalmatic shows that the witch has returned to the bosom of the Church.

591. One is surprised to find the mention in a report made by a court of the Inquisition that one of the witches who had been executed dared to show her disdain until the end: 'The Bayonne executioner tried to obtain from her the kiss of forgiveness but she refused emphatically to give it'. The picture shows 'Various methods of putting the Question to the Holy Office.'



591

592. Esmeralda the Gipsy in the Hunchback of Notre Dame escaped death through a very old French law which allowed any condemned person to go free if the rope should break before the hanging was complete.



592



593

593. The total number of victims of the 'witch hunt' reached several tens of millions. Between 1575 and 1700 at least a million people were inculpated, either wrongly or rightly, of witchcraft. The last trial of this nature in France was that of the Jesuit Girard in 1731.



594

594. In Spain, where as many as a hundred witches were burnt in a single day, the executions always took place with great ceremonial. This 'spectacle' occasioned a fantastic display of luxury and the wives of the executioners would wear silk dresses as they sat in their carriages and gave themselves airs.

595. Fortunately irony and the critical spirit soon gained the upper hand and people began to laugh at the infantile, amusing side of witchcraft. From the beginning of the Middle Ages there had always been, in addition to the fanatics who were always blind, some lucid minds who often reduced the exaggerated figure of the devil to the very human dimensions of some stupid lover being beaten over the head by a determined woman.



595

596. Nowadays nobody would take seriously this demon describing his powers to a poor man who looks thoroughly frightened: 'As a demon I preside over the loves of mortals. You will die on the day that your daughter gets married.'



596



597

597. This is how the psychoanalyst with his expert eye would interpret this picture: the man lying awake feels a guilty love for his daughter; his subconscious (the devil) therefore shows him a vision of her marriage as a warning of his own death.

RED DRAGON AND BLACK MASSES

LE VÉRITABLE

DRAGON ROUGE

OU IL EST TRAITÉ

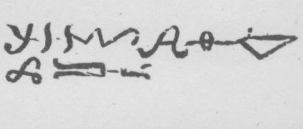
DE L'ART DE COMMANDER LES ESPRITS INFERNAUX, AERIENS ET TERRESTRES, FAIRE APPARAITRE LES MORTS, LIRE DANS LES ASTRES, DÉCOUVRIR LES TRÉSORS, SOURCES, MINIÈRES, &, &, &.

PLUS

LA POULE NOIRE

ÉDITION AUGMENTÉE DES SECRETS DE LA PEINE CLÉOPATRE, SECRETS POUR SE RENDRE INVISIBLE, SECRETS D'ARTÉPHIUS, ETC., ETC., ETC.

Avec la marque D'ASTAROTH



SUR L'ÉDITION DE

MDXXI (1521)

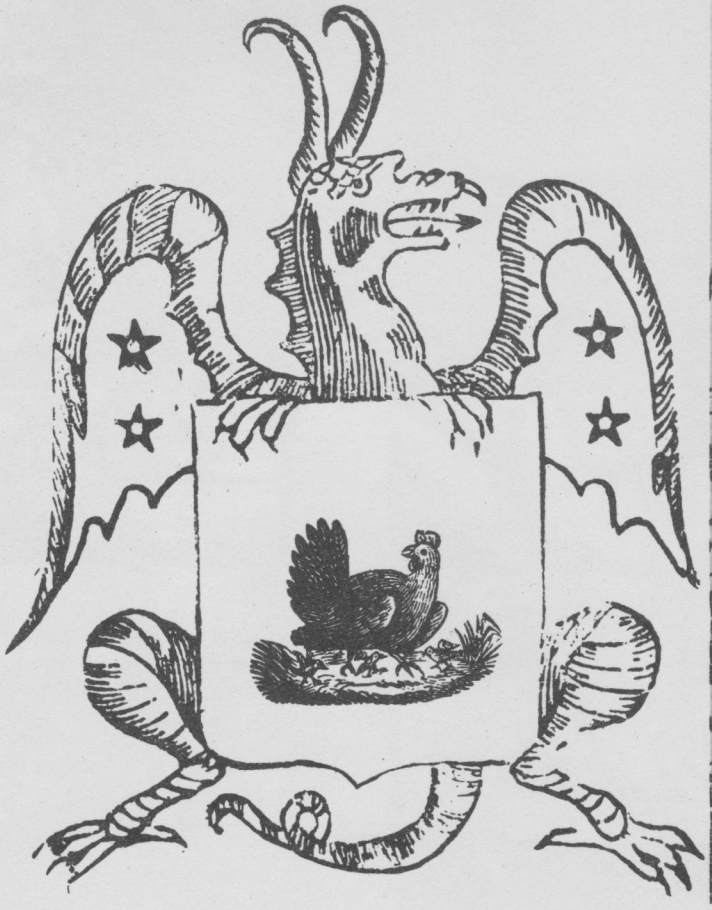
598

598–599. The 'Red Dragon' was, together with 'The Secret of Secrets' (otherwise known as 'The Clavicle of Solomon' or 'The Veritable Black Book') the bible of practitioners of black magic in the Christian West. The second of these two works was in fact the combination of two ancient books, one of which was attributed to King Solomon, who was reputed to be a magician.

600–601. According to 'The Black Hen' (another key book of magic) it was sufficient to take to a crossroads a black hen which had never laid eggs and at the stroke of midnight to cut it in two, murmuring 'Eloïm, Essaïm, frigativi et appellavi' and then to turn to the East and, with a branch of cypress in your hand to utter the 'great call' for the devil to appear and give the magician any reward he wanted.



599



600



601



602

602. A ghoul devouring the heart of a young bride. Nowadays we are not much inclined to believe in spectres feeding on human blood and we are more likely to regard this vision as the dream of some repressed pervert who is engaged in avenging in a hateful fashion the 'treachery' of a partner.



603

603. The 'Sorcerer of the Mountain' on his deathbed hands over his secrets and his stock of magic formulae.

604. The magician plunges the end of a flexible tube into the head of a woman thus causing the fluid of possession to rise up into her brain (a symbolic substitute for the seminal fluid; the whole operation moreover is a naive travesty of coitus).



604

605. This composition by Hadol (1874) belongs to the height of romanticism: the 'black man', the mysterious 'great hunter' can be seen running at the head of his diabolical packs of hounds.



605



606



607

606–607. One thing is certain: demonologists and magicians had acquired knowledge which for their times was astonishing. They had even succeeded in making a census of Hell. The author of the 'Cabinet of the King of France' (1581) is quite definite on this subject: 72 infernal princes and 7,405,920 demons peopled the empire of the Shades. According to other writers, who were also categoric, there existed 6 legions of demons and 66 cohorts, each consisting of 666 companies, while each company included 6,666 individuals. In this way the population of Hell would reach the handsome figure of 1,758,064,176, which was regarded by some people as less than the actual total.

608. Tartini, the Italian virtuoso violinist of the 17th century, was said to have heard the devil in person during a dream. In order to make him appreciate the services he could render the demon played a melody on the musician's violin; when Tartini awoke he could not get the air out of his head and wrote it down; it can be heard under the title of 'The Devil's Trill'.



608



609

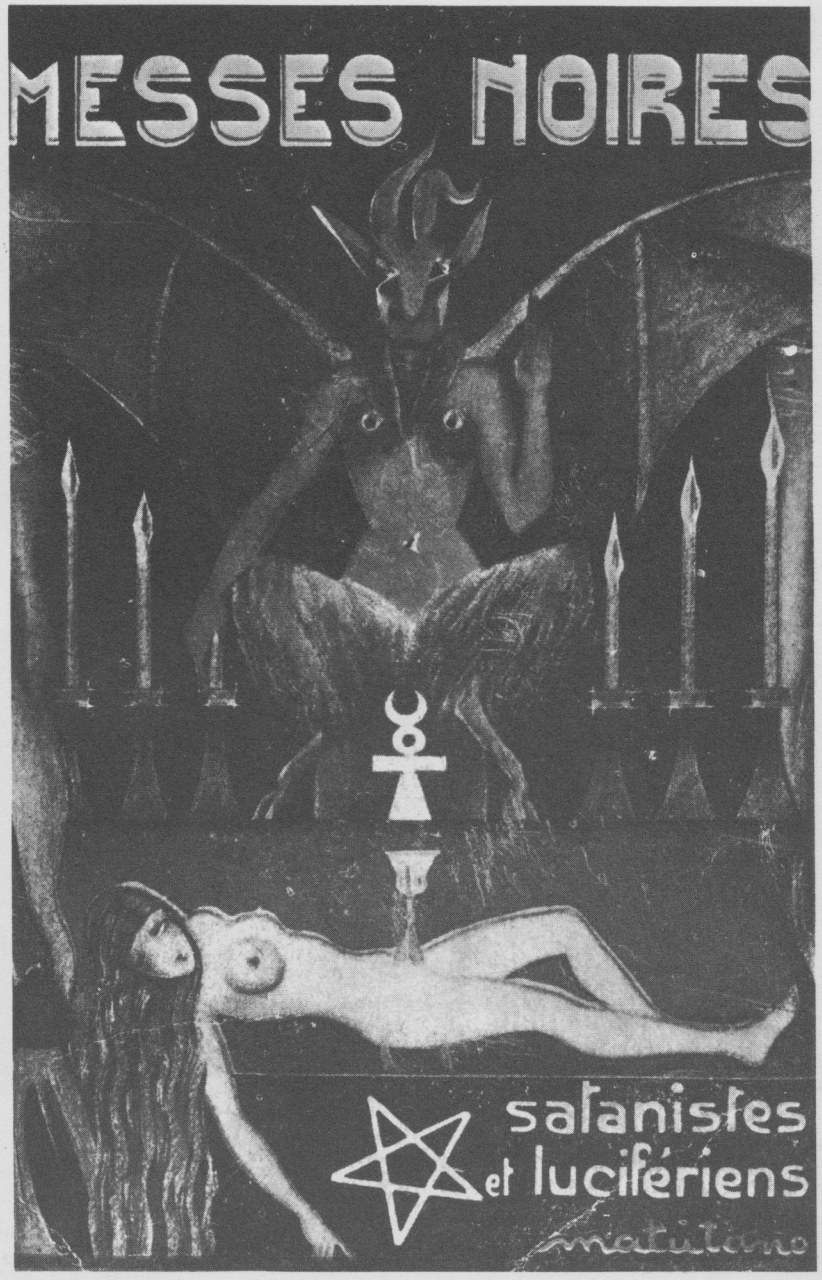
609. A gathering of hobgoblins, presided over by Beelzebub himself, armed with a trident and sitting opposite to Rhotomago, are awaiting their orders. By looking closely at those who are present at this infernal congress one can discover (inadvertently perhaps) a certain number of the artist's personal enemies (19th century engraving).

610. The 'Admirable Secrets of the Great Albert': a work which was wrongly attributed to Albert the Great since it is known that he was interested in magic and alchemy. The first volume deals mainly with the influence of the stars on the conception of children and with the way of determining the sex of newborn babies in advance.



610

611. Black masses have definitely been inherited from the masses celebrated in honour of the devil during the witches' sabbaths of the Middle Ages, which themselves were derived from the ancient gnostic masses. (It is possible that the Office of the Vain Observation that was possibly practised by the Knights Templar was an imitation of these latter). Beelzebub was the lord of these black masses with their sombre sacraments.



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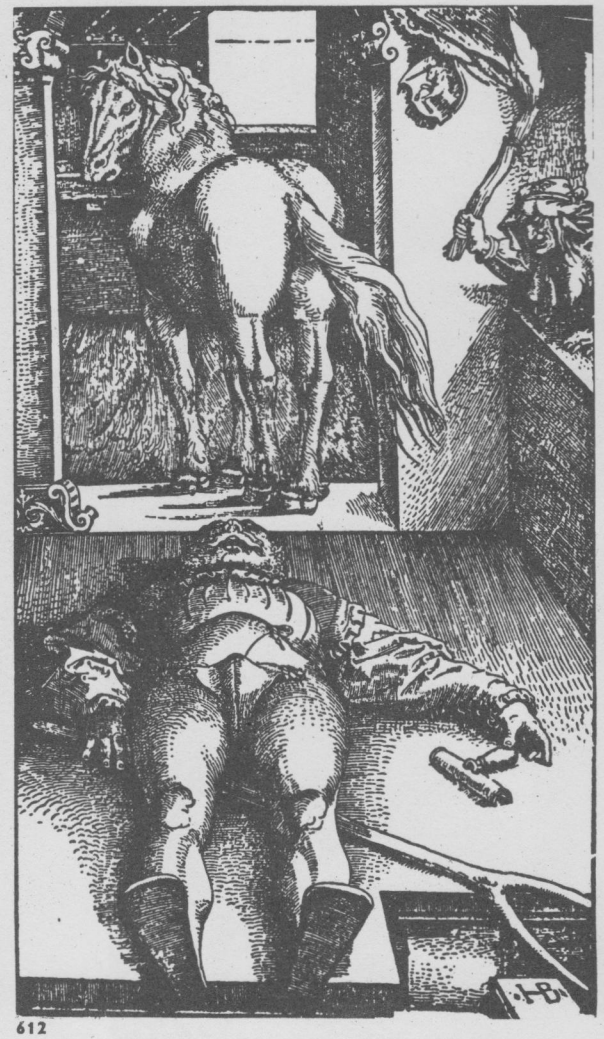


612



613

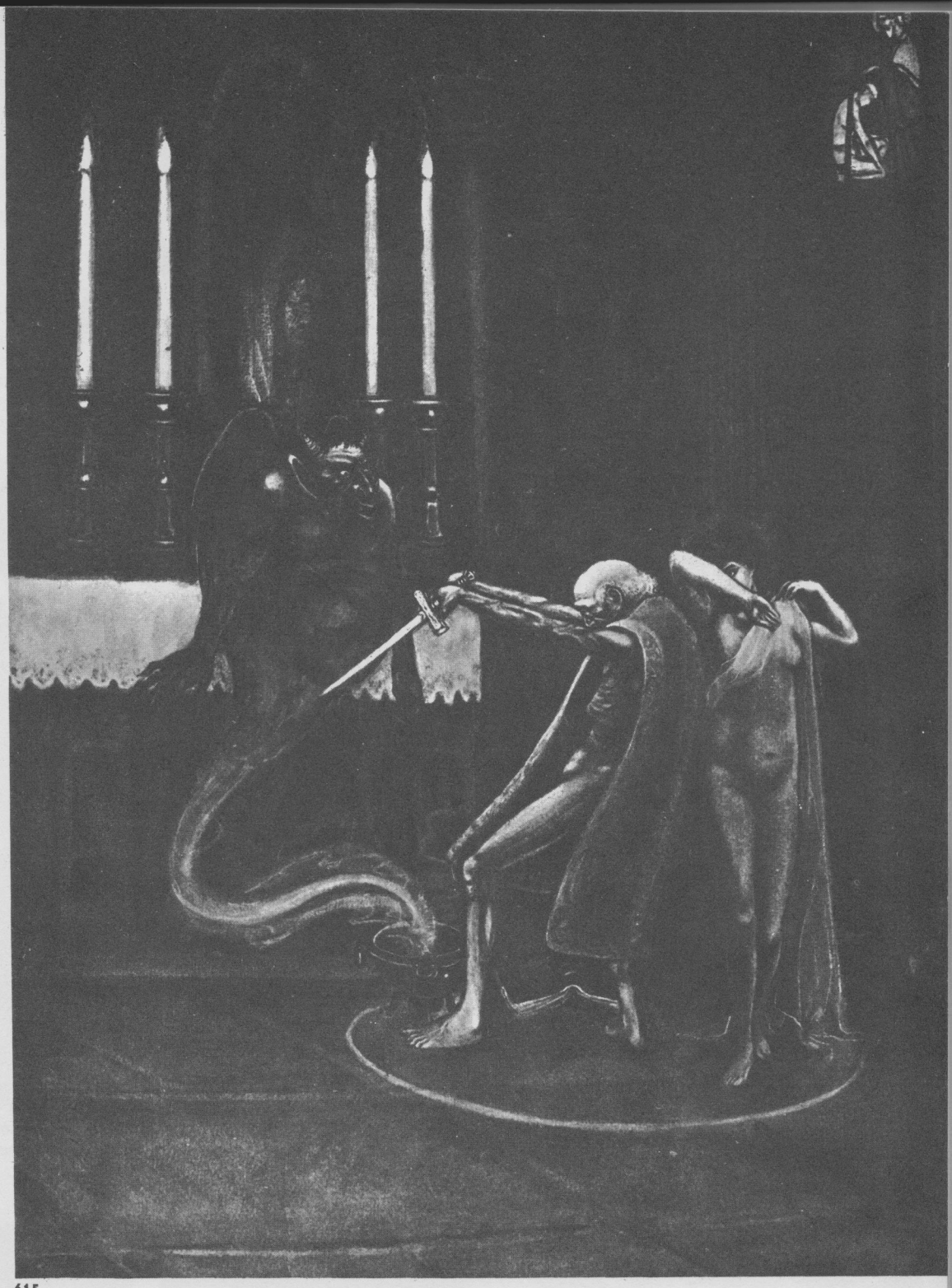


614

612. 'The Bewitched Groom', a wood engraving by Hans Baldung Grün.

613. Members of the nobility were not absent from the black masses of the 17th century. Obscurantism apart, this was a form of 'dolce vita' that well-born people could not deny themselves. During the poisoning affair which disturbed France between 1679 and 1682 more than 400 people were implicated, 36 of them being burnt alive and many others condemned to various types of punishment for having taken part in ceremonies of this type. The illustration shows the Abbé Guibourg killing a child over the body of Madame Montespan so that she could retain the favours of the King.

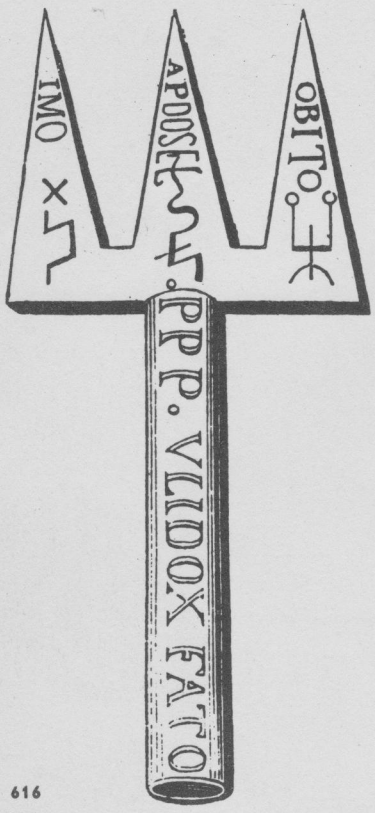
614. A black mass restaged for an English film.



615

615. Originally black masses were said in the open air, using the back of a naked woman as an altar. Then when they became indoor entertainments a woman's stomach was used instead.
With all due respect to those who believe that progress has swept away practices of this type black masses still exist today. They are performed by Christians who are a prey to sexual obsession and seek compensation in the inverted worship of Satan. Frustrated by the fact that religion condemns the sins of the flesh they abandon themselves to excesses which are quite incapable of exorcising their anguish. In his novel 'Là-Bas' J. K. Huysmans has described a black mass held in a chapel in Vaugirard in front of an obscene Christ with a priest who is naked beneath his chasuble and surrounded by an assembly of hysterical women.

616. The trident used by Paracelsus to overcome impotence. In the 'Seven Books of the Magic Archidox' one can read the following advice on this subject: 'Has the practice of magic, fruit of wickedness and the art of perverted men, destroyed your virility? A horsehoe picked up in the street will suffice to make you a three-pronged fork on Saturn's day at Saturn's hour'.



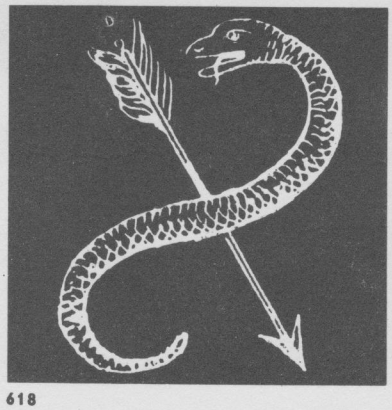
616



617

617. Magicians employ a whole panoply of instruments: a lamp, a wand, a sword, a billhook and many others. The serpent Uroboros can be seen encircling a cup, which is of 'female type', while the triangle is 'masculine'.

618–619. According to 'The Ritual of Egyptian Masonry' the seal of the Count of Cagliostro symbolises 'renewal through a wound'; but when Cagliostro was questioned by a Catholic tribunal he gave a very Christian explanation of this and saved his life.



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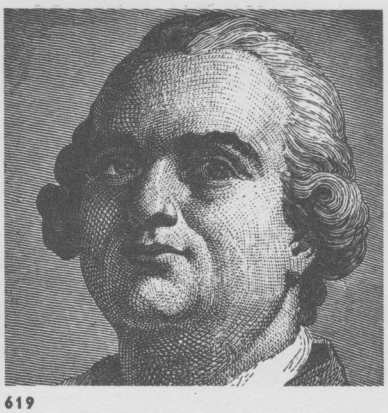


619

621. Hermetic magic (to be seen in our picture on the right) was not regarded as black magic. It was thought that as soon as the magician submitted his will to the sole celestial powers (acting thus in the one direction of good) he raised himself to the rank of Magus, which was forbidden to the majority of people.

620. Two pages from the 'Book of Spirits' devoted to an invocation by Cassiel, 'chief of the spirits'. This is a magical invocation which claimed it was white magic and ran as follows: 'I conjure you, Cassiel, by all the names of the Great Creator, that you listen to my words now, and you must obey them. Do you not know that you are wasting your strength before your Creator and ours? Think of what you are refusing and therefore only swear in future by him who has created everything with one word and to whom all creatures are subject.'



620



621

622–623. The twofold character of magic becomes evident in these two seals which are both based on the black book of Honorius. The first is the occult seal of the 'great work' which is related to many engravings in alchemy; the second is the occult seal of black magic. Note in both of them the opposed position of the triangles and the position of the moon (in the centre of the black magic seal).



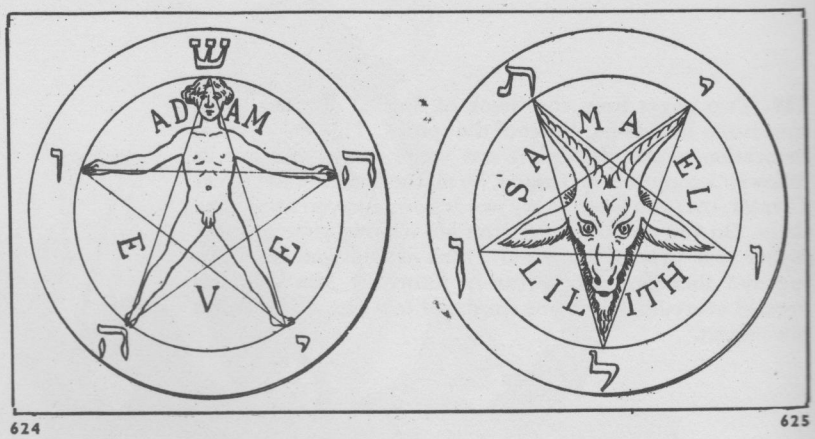
622



623

THE SATANIC SCIENCES

624-625. Pentagrams are the result of obscure numerological speculations. The five-pointed star, for example, seems to be characteristic of the Christian era, while the cross is the symbol (amongst others) of the figure five: four arms and the centre. By a strange coincidence, the Holy Spirit, the United States, the U.S.S.R. and Islam use the fivepointed star as their emblem. (The opposition of good and evil is indicated through the inverted triangles).



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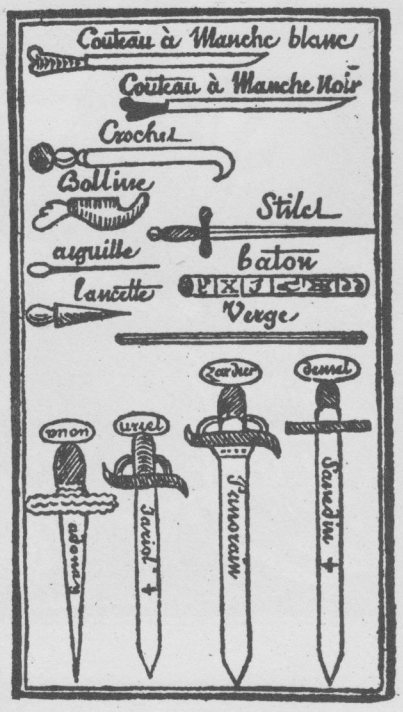
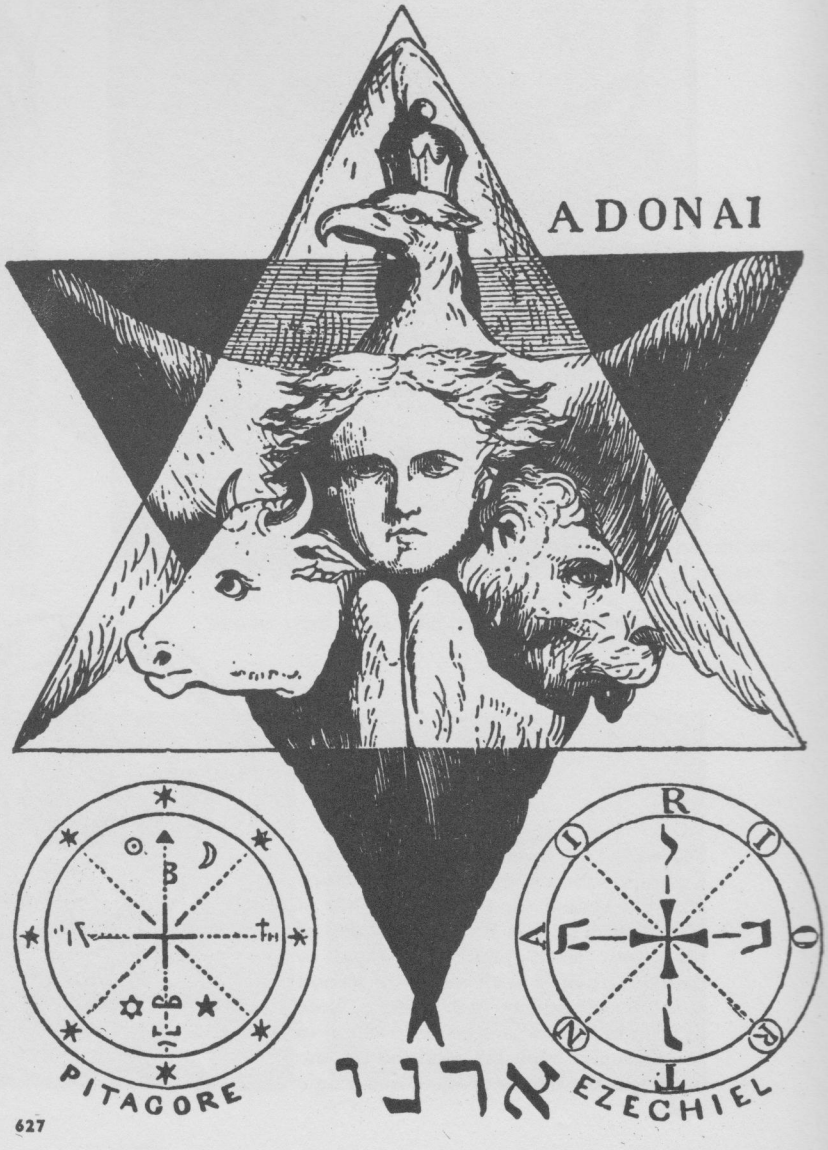


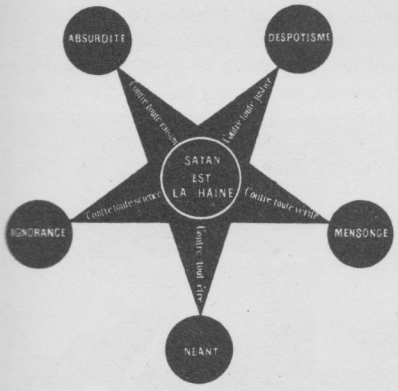
626

626. Alone among all these instruments of 'the offensive and defensive magic of Solomon' the sword could only be brandished after 'consecration'.



627

627. A hexagram placed over the so-called Ezekiel and Pythagoras pentacles constitutes Solomon's seal: the intersection of the white and black triangles forms, according to tradition, the geometric transcription of the image of the world according to the Jews. This ideogram based on the number 6 was thought to express perfection.

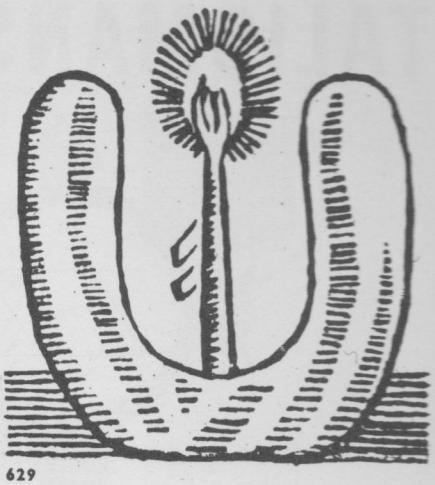


LA MAUVAISE ÉTOILE

628

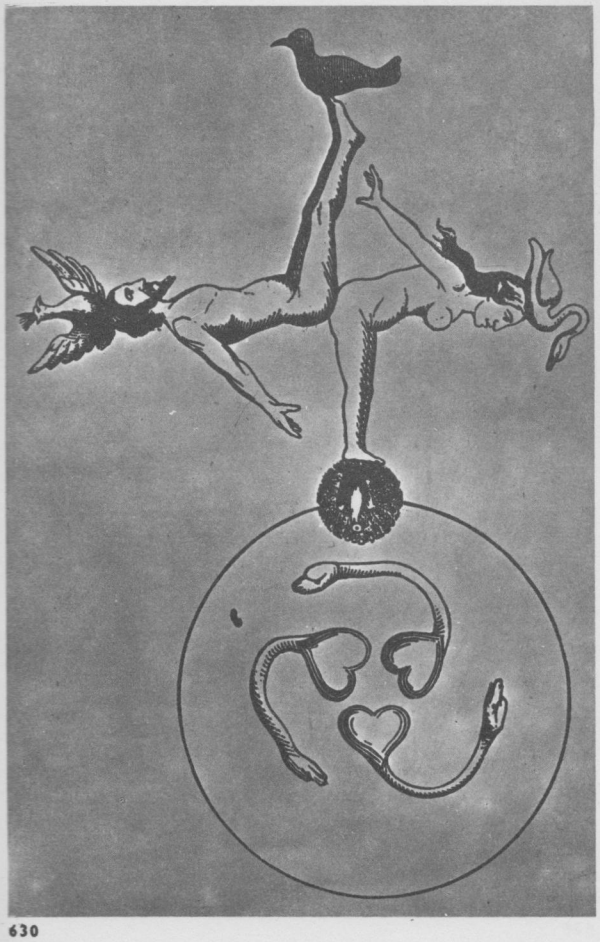
628. Seen from another angle a pentagram which is known to us. Modern occultists believe this to be the image of the 'unlucky star', opposite to the 'lucky star'.

629. The 'marvellous candle' is an extract from the 'Little Albert'. Its origin can be found in the black candles that witches took to their sabbaths; they were, it was said, infallible while searching for treasure. They were called, therefore, the 'hands of fame'.



629

630. The pentacle from the 'Ninth Key' by B. Valentin. It represents 'the union of the red man and the white woman, of the stable and volatile, of sulphur and mercury' from the viewpoint of alchemy. Nothing is more wearisome in the long run than this succession of sexual allusions which nobody wants to admit, but which betray their authors.



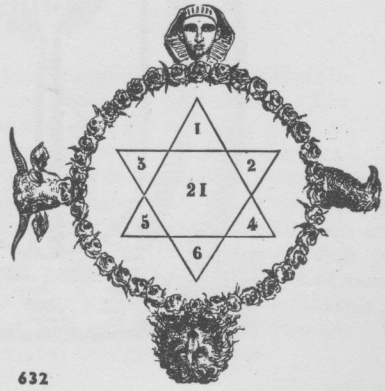
630



631

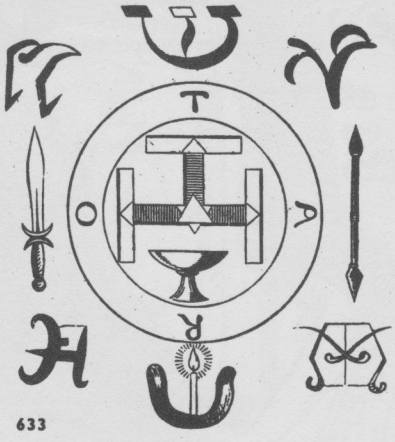
631. The gesture of benediction is changed into malediction when one looks at the 'double' or shadow. This is the unsophisticated opposition of black and white which is here demonstrated more or less like a caricature. The artist responsible for this drawing (who has taken the trouble to add the Chinese circle of opposites) has obviously understood nothing of the symbolism of the 'yin' and the 'yang'.

TALISMANS



632

632. In 'The Crown of the Magi' the well known hexagram occurs again along with the four traditional figures: the eagle, the bull, the lion and the sphinx. But real magic crowns were made with wax and wool closely bound together. They were placed on the heads of those whom one wished to protect.

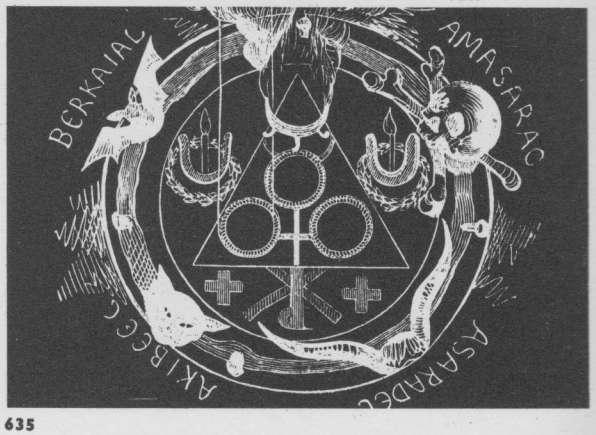


633



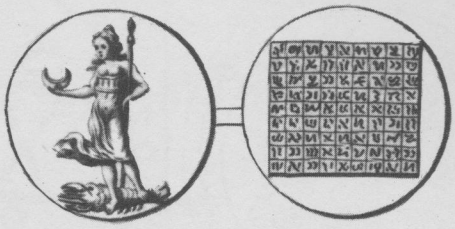
634

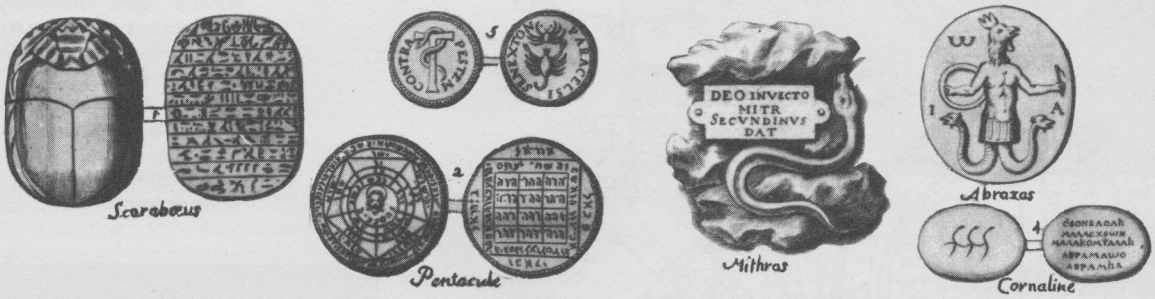
633 to **635.** The circle theme links together these engravings (and 'The Crown of the Magi' based on the 'Ritual of High Magic' by Eliphas Levi). Wherever it appears the magic circle is a protective girdle against evil spirits. In the practice of magic no invocation should be made outside the circle, which can be completely drawn out or merely indicated by using a wand. Once he was surrounded by the circle the magician had nothing to fear from any spirits who, if they had pursued him into it, would have found themselves at his mercy. Modern psychology also regards the circle as very important, seeing in it a symbol of the fulfilment of the human soul, i.e. the union of the conscious and subconscious. It appears in dreams as the symbol of the ego in conflict with complexes.



635

636 to **642.** The word 'talisman' comes from the Arabic word 'Tilsam' and signifies an object capable of ensuring the protection of the person wearing it or even of passing on to him powers which he did not possess at birth. Talismans have been known since very ancient times, appearing sometimes as carved jewels, tablets of inlaid wood, dried grasses, gums or fragments of parchment covered with inscriptions. In the Western world the great period of talismans was the time when the Cabbala exercised its influence over this part of the world. Something of their variety can be judged from this reproduction of a page from 'True Talismans, Pentacles and Circles', an 18th century book in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal. Every eventuality is provided for.





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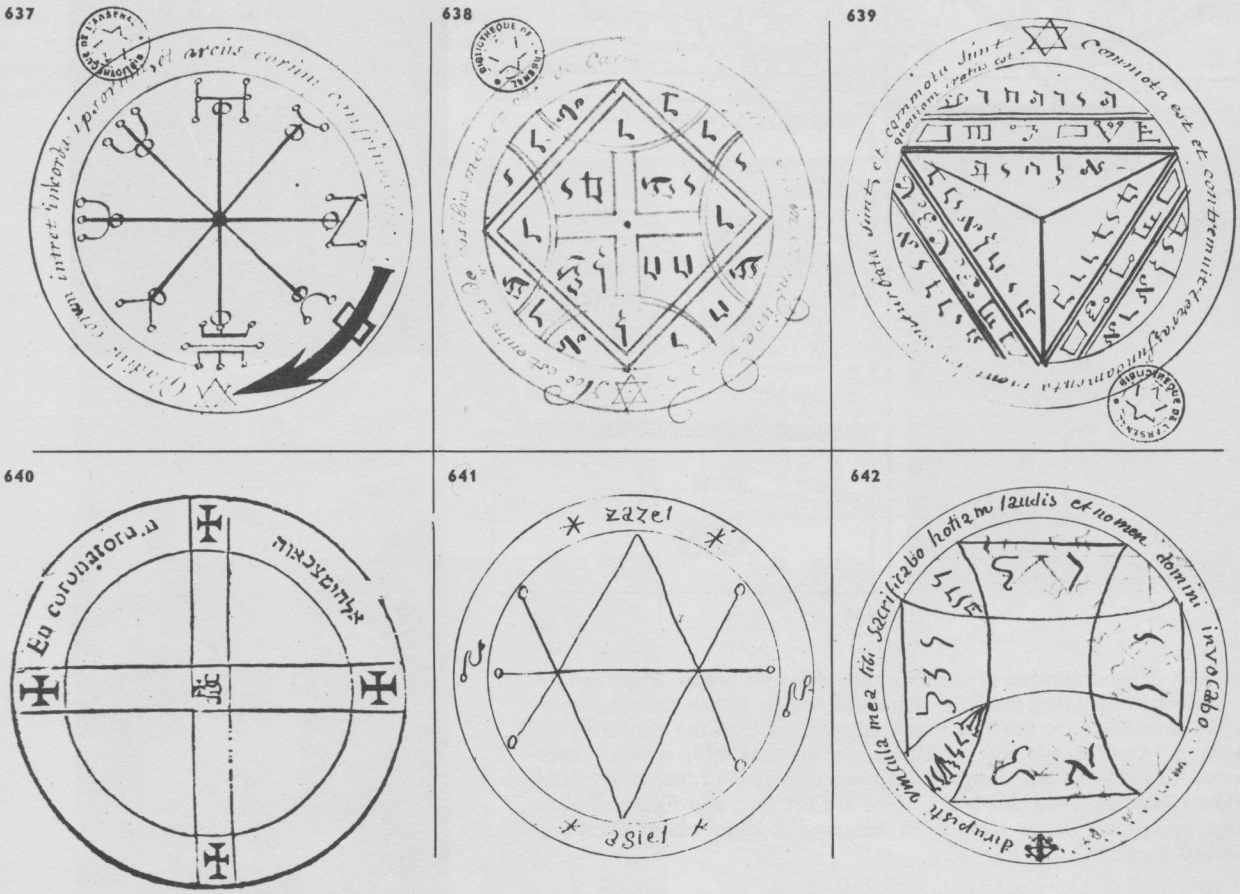

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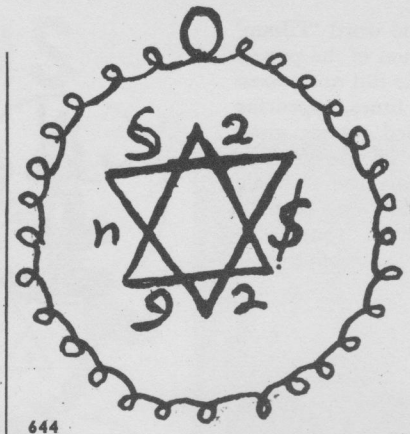

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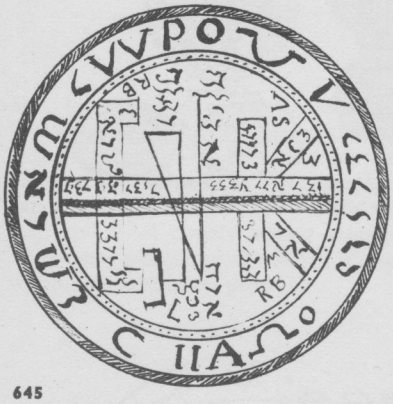

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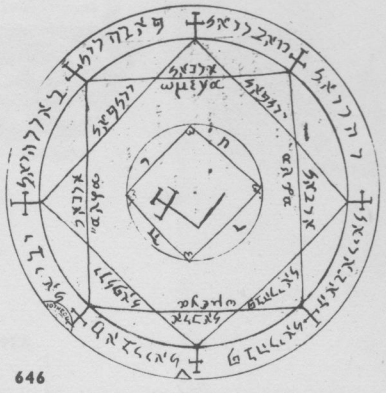

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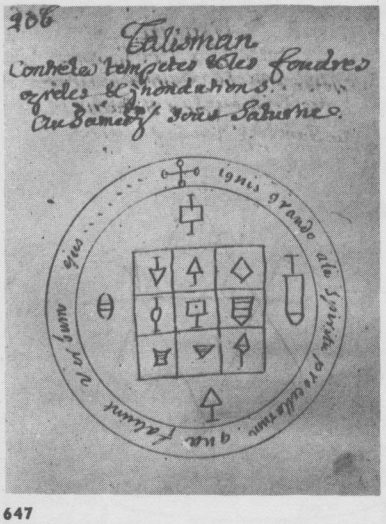

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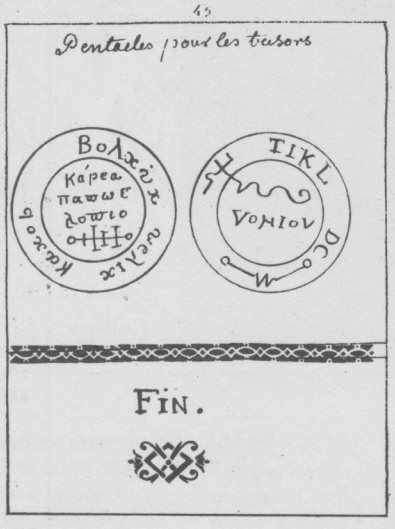
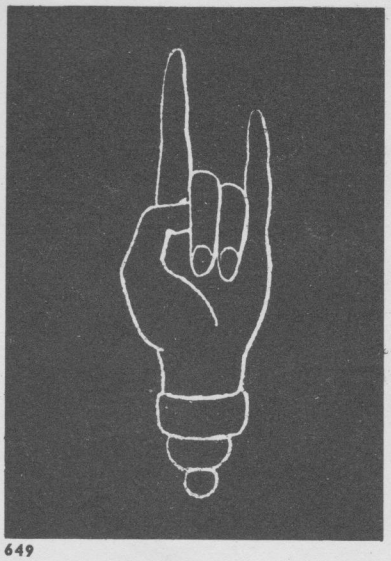


648

643 to **648.** A good number of talismans are of Jewish origin. The illustration number 644 is taken from the 'Chaddai' which Jewish children wear from the time they are thirteen years old and undergo the ceremony of BarMitzva. Another, shown in illustration number 643, which comes from the 'Clavicles of Solomon', is supposed to represent 'the face of the All Powerful' defined in this way: 'Here are the face and figure of Him through whom all things have been achieved and to whom everyone owes obedience'.

649–650. The 'horned hand' was a sign of recognition between the initiated. The index finger and the little finger were raised while the other fingers were turned down, recalling in a strange way certain heads of devils drawn in the Middle Ages. However, if occultists of more recent times are to be believed it is enough to hold up a 'horned hand' to the light to make the devil helpless. In his play 'Le Diable Amoureux' Cazotte brings on to the stage at one moment two men, both initiates, who recognise each other by making the sign of the 'horned hand' (650).



649

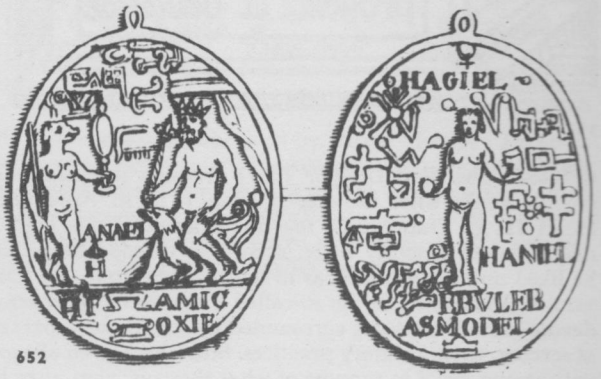


650



651

651 to **656.** These illustrations show a further array of talismans. The first of these, taken from the 'Little Albert', is destined to ensure the good fortune of whoever wears it; the others (including both sides of Catherine de Médici's talisman) are reproduced from the 'Discours Merveilleux de la Vie, Actions et Départements de Catherine de Médici' by Henri Estienne (1575) and bestow grace, seduction and munificence. Some occultists assert with some semblance of logic that all talismans are useless because they were based on calculations starting from the principle of geocentricism; but the sun does not go round the earth, the contrary is the case. It could, however, be stated in reply that the efficacy of talismans depended only upon the faith of those wearing them and not on any question of scientific exactitude. This is still true nowadays and doctors know it, since completely harmless medicine can achieve marvellous results, thanks to the infatuated attitude of the patient.



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653



654



655



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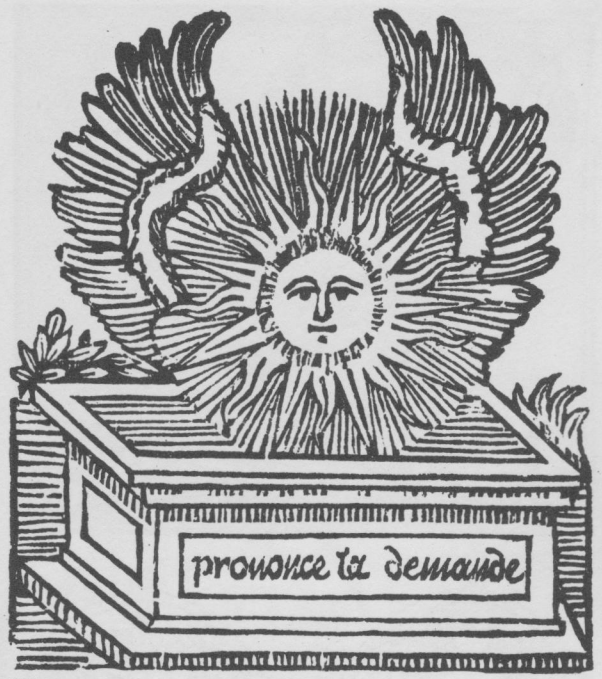


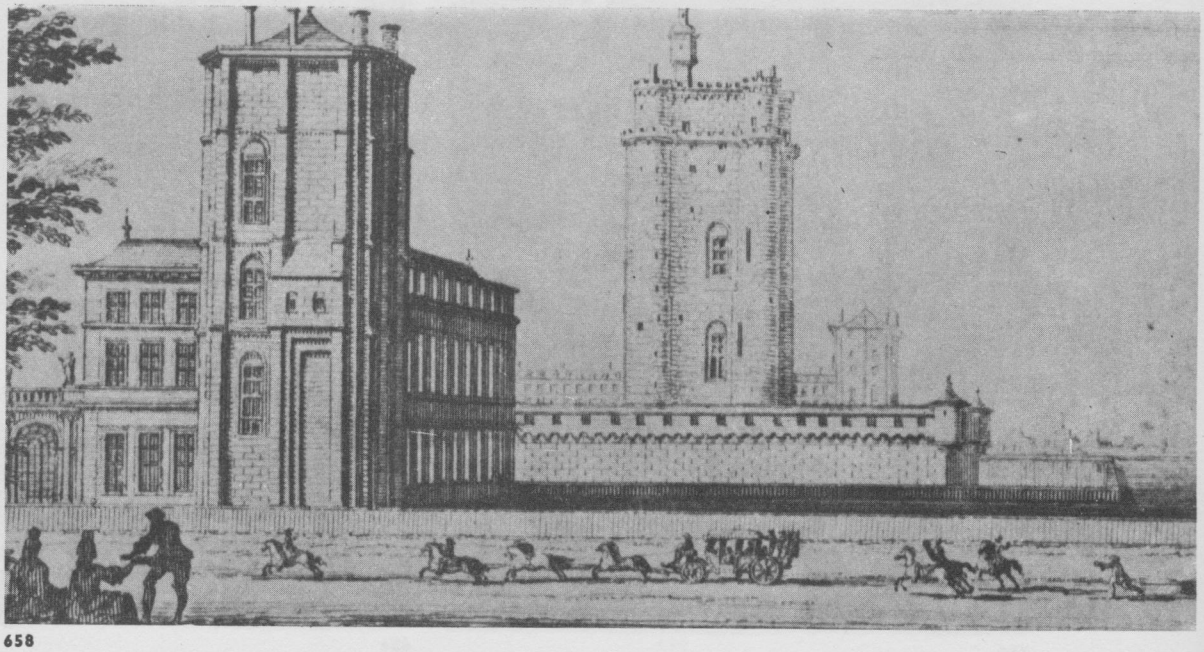
657



659

657–658. The 'Red Dragon' (657) promises to exercise his powers merely when the user asks him to do so. Apparently Henri III of France took the transmission of this kind of magic power seriously since, according to good historians, he liked nothing so much as to shut himself up in the Château de Vincennes, in the so-called Paris tower, in order to devote himself in secret, surrounded by the whole apparatus of sorcery, to incantatory practices. Some have even alleged, with strong proof in support of what they say, that after his death the skin of a newborn child was discovered in the said tower. The French Court distinguished itself often by sticking pins into the hearts of dolls made in the image of their enemies and also by the use of poison, etc.

659. The illustration above shows a sorcerer removing a precious stone from the head of a toad. This is a symbol of the power with which the initiated were endowed and also an image of the eternal quest for 'gold buried below filth and horror'.



658



660

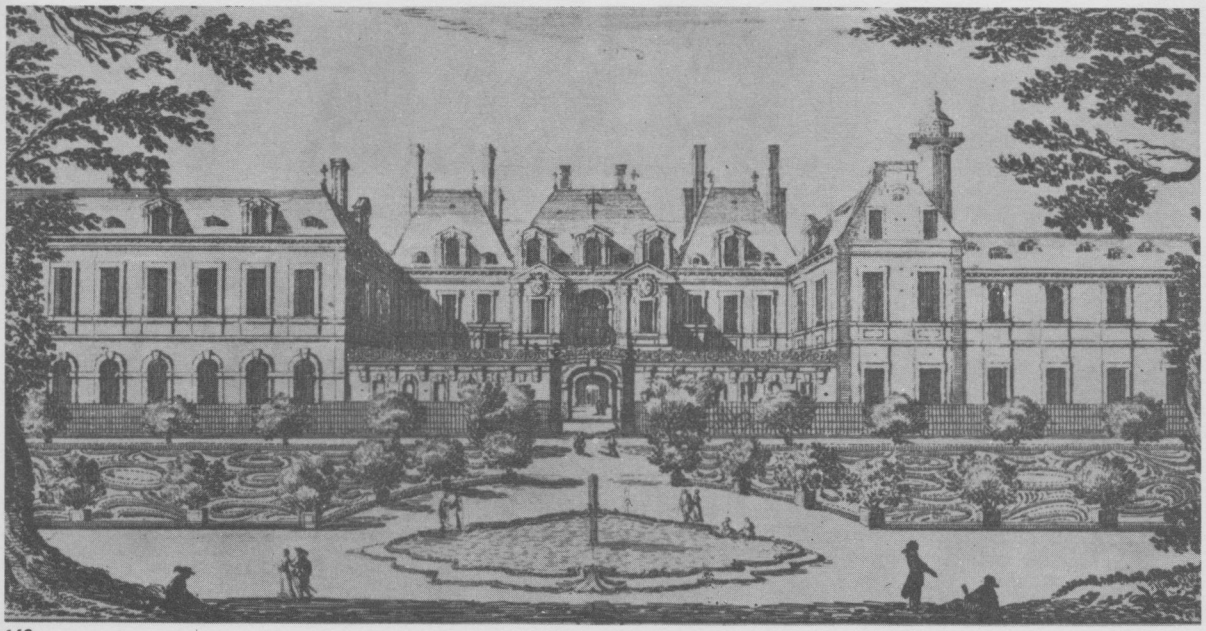
660. A harpy devouring a man. According to ancient mythology harpies were winged monsters with the faces of women, the bodies of vultures and clawlike nails, but medieval iconography made them into personifications of death. After that, by extension, harpies became women who devoured men in the conjugal sense.



661

661. This engraving conceived by Ulrich Molitor ('De laniis et phitonicis mulieribus', Constance, 1489) shows a witch attacking a peasant by shooting at him a hazel wand which has been bewitched. The unfortunate man's foot will swell up and he will have to be cured by a spell. In this way her purse will be filled and his wallet emptied.

662. This illustration shows the Hôtel de Soissons where Catherine de Médici enjoyed indulging in magic. For this reason she caused Nostradamus to be brought to Paris, then made certain that Ruggieri would serve her and caused the mathematician Reignier to build an astrological column which can still be seen in Paris near Les Halles.



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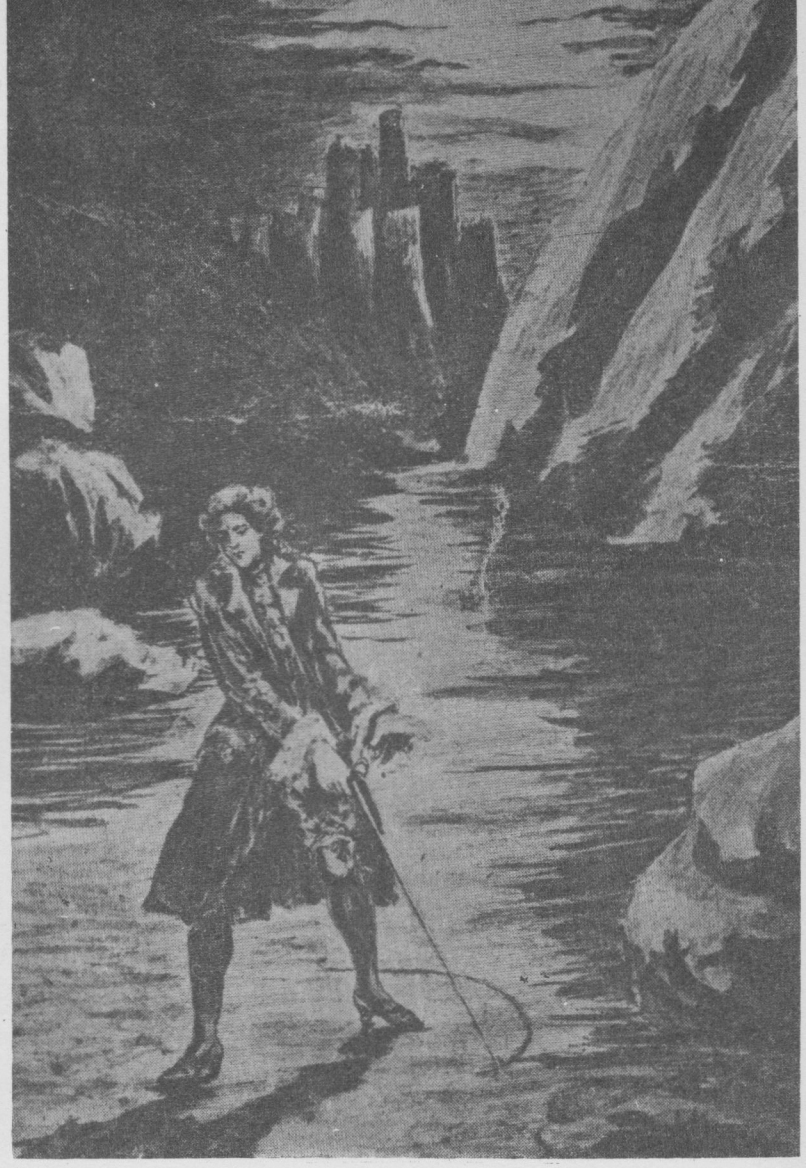


665



664

663. The 'fig gesture' was made by magicians in order to charm away a spell. It was regarded as annoying by those to whom it was addressed, for apparently its origin was in an order given by Barbarossa to the people of Milan to remove with their teeth a fig which had become lodged in the anus of his mule.

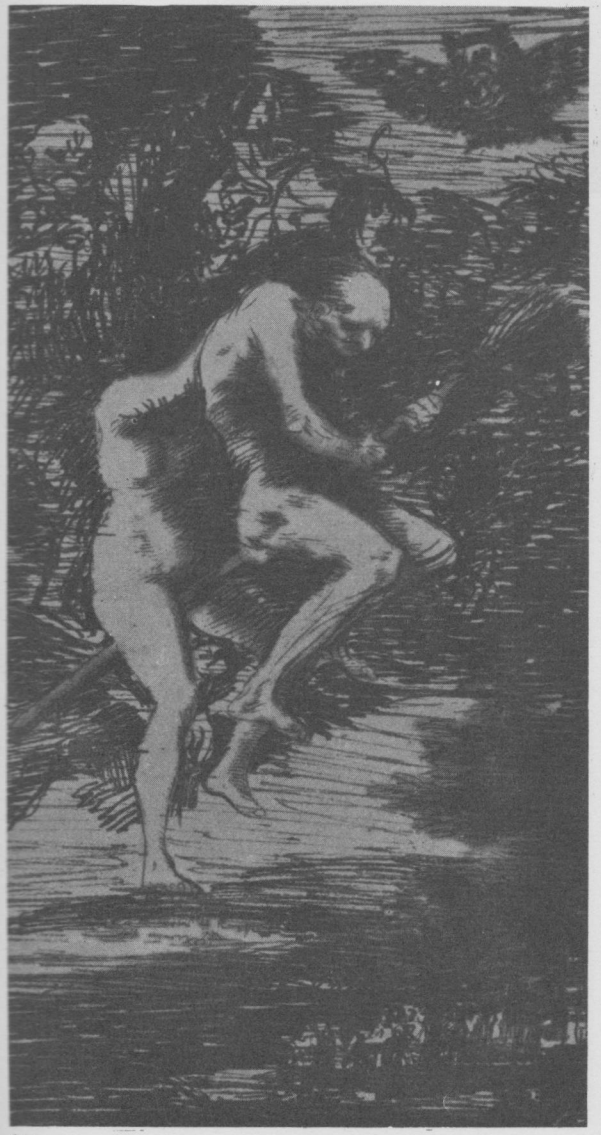
664. Amongst the romantics, who were deeply attached to anything theatrical, rationalism was accompanied by spectacles of this nature: fine gentlemen in splendid clothes going off into a deserted place in order to draw the 'magic circle' of olden times.

665. The period of 'enlightenment' and then the first decades of the 19th century saw an increase in the influence of magic. The élite were dissatisfied in spite of the revelations of rationalism and they were also cut off from Christianity. Therefore their only recourse was to the old type of approach and the 'truth' of occultism. A long time was still to pass before scientific study could transcend its discoveries and arrive at a universe of mysteries which were even deeper and more formidable.

666 to **668.** Myths remain deeply ingrained in the collective unconscious. Artists often use them in order to bring back forgotten figures. Goya wanted to bring on to his canvases the phantasms which filled the hearts of men. In these pictures showing witches preparing decoctions and philtres (in the Prado, Madrid), a Walpurgis night cavalcade on broomsticks, and finally the execution of a witch, all the darkness of the past comes to life again beneath the great painter's inspired brush.



666



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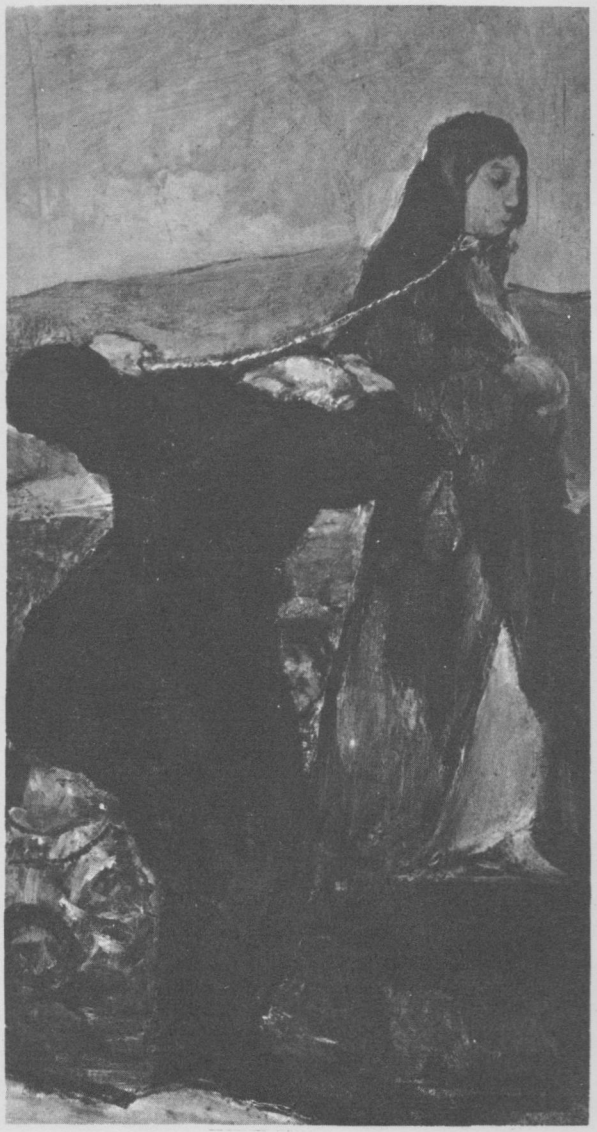


668



669

MARDI GRAS



670

669 to **672.** Sorcerers have disappeared forever, at least that is what we should like to think and hope. For the enlightened classes of society this is no doubt true. Sexual frustration, which is fertile ground from many points of view for occultism, no longer worries people, thanks to psychoanalysis. Magicians are now anachronisms who belong only to folklore and become carnival figures. These pictures show a Shrove Tuesday celebration in the Black Forest. These happy people, who look like sorcerers by their fire, are wearing masks, which are striking to say the least, and are handed down from generation to generation. This may represent the ancient fear felt by the sorcerers of showing their faces. Carnival masks preserve their anonymity. Illustration 670 shows witches at the Constance Carnival stoking a fire.



671

673. A painting by Yasse Tabuchi: 'The Appearance of the Shadow.' Perhaps the purpose of modern tachism is to express the original cosmic disorder which produced the image of the devil, the archetype of 'eternal disorder'.



673

674. In this work by the contemporary artist César Baldicini (Musées des Arts Modernes, Paris) the devil possesses neither the caricature-like appearance bestowed on him by the Middle Ages nor the ambiguous appearance which early Christianity gave him: he is merely a vegetable growth, anarchic and wild.



672

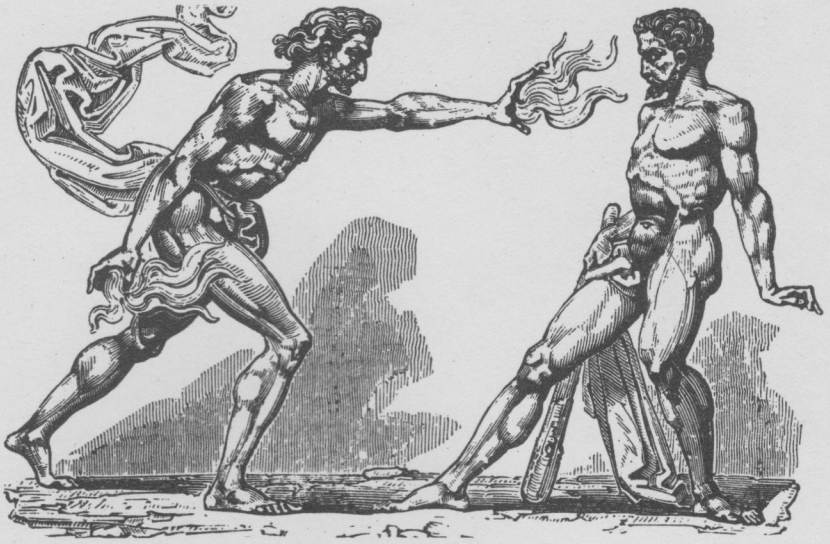


674

MAGNETISM



675



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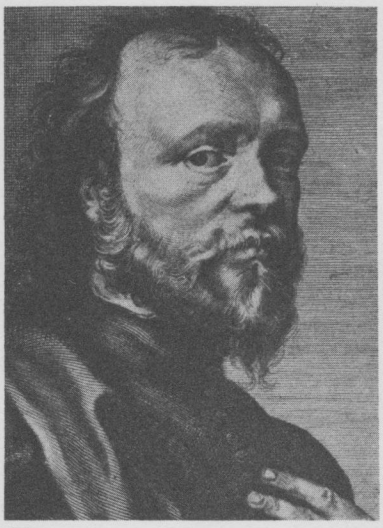


676

675–676. Although he was preceded by English occultists (including Dr Kénelmus seen in illustration 676), Mesmer was the true precursor of 'magnetism' in the sense of an independent occultist discipline. Mesmer, who was born in Germany, first made experiments with the curative power of magnets and then applied himself to proving that what he called 'animal magnetism' was well founded. He became famous in Paris through many strange cures that he effected. He was financed by rich flatterers and installed himself in luxury.

677. Magnetisers of all periods have believed that the human hand is par excellence the instrument by which cures can be achieved. Even in an old papyrus from Thebes it is stated 'Lay your hand on the invalid to calm his pain and ask the pain to stop'. According to Pliny the 'ophiogenes', who lived in the Hellespont, had the gift of curing snake-bites merely by touching them. According to legend certain kings of France possessed similar gifts. Illustration 677 shows Saint Louis curing a sick man and murmuring these words: 'The King touches thee, God cures thee'.

678. Henri Durville has defined magnetism as being 'the reciprocal action exercised by one body on another'. The origin of the term is in the name of the town Magnesia in Asia Minor, where the Greeks are said to have discovered 'the magnetic stone'. The idea of animal magnetism, therefore, is close to the properties possessed under precise conditions by metals. Everything is not exempt from truth in Mesmer's doctrine, according to which the magnetised subject falls into a trance and thereby reveals the seat of the illness and the means of curing it.



677



679



681

681. Puységur treated his patients at his property at Busancy in France. Illustration 681, taken from his Memoirs, shows the tree which he had substituted for Mesmer's tub, for, he said 'The tree possessed a feeling of vitality which was increased by his touches and communicated itself to the patients'. The latter sat under the tree attached to the branches by ropes and waited for the curative emanations.

682. Improvements, if not true cures, were found to exist. They were the effect of auto-suggestion, since there was no fluid: the patients carried their medicine within themselves.

679–680. For the cures which he prescribed to his 'patients' Mesmer employed a tin tub full of water which was 'charged with sulphuric forces'. A cover stopped the water evaporating while the 'sulphuric forces' passed on to bottles placed at the bottom of the bath. The patients and Mesmer believed that the 'sulphuric currents' possessed therapeutic powers.



680



682



683



684



685

683–685. In spite of the encouragement he had received from the French Court Mesmer found no support from the Académie des Sciences in Paris and less still from the Royal Society in London. The Berlin Academy stated clearly that they regarded Mesmer as insane. Satirists seized on such a promising subject. 'Our faculties are in touch with each other,' the magnetiser in one caricature says to the donkey whom he is treating. And among the remedies of the 'magnetic pharmacy' can be seen 'saturated pig's trotters' and 'a magnetised calf's head'. The magnetiser with the head of an ass cures patients according to the principle 'simius semper simius'.



686



687

686. An experiment was carried out in Copenhagen in 1850 by doctors who had obtained permission for a prisoner condemned to be broken on the wheel to die in another way. His eyes were bound, he was led into the room where the doctors were to carry out their operation and small incisions were made in the arms and legs of the condemned man by lancets. At the same time four water taps were opened in such a way that the patient, convinced that his veins had been cut and that his blood was pouring out into a basin, had a heart attack and died of fear. This demonstration was regarded as conclusive.

687. In France a certain Mirville attempted to demonstrate that if a person had received a 'mental order' not to move all efforts to make him do so would fail.



688



689

688. The doctors Bourru and Burot undertook to prove 'the action of substances at a distance'. If what they said was true they could, without any preparation, 'plunge an individual into a state of intoxication', merely by producing a bottle of alcohol and then they would wake him up by exhibiting the traditional phial of ammonia.

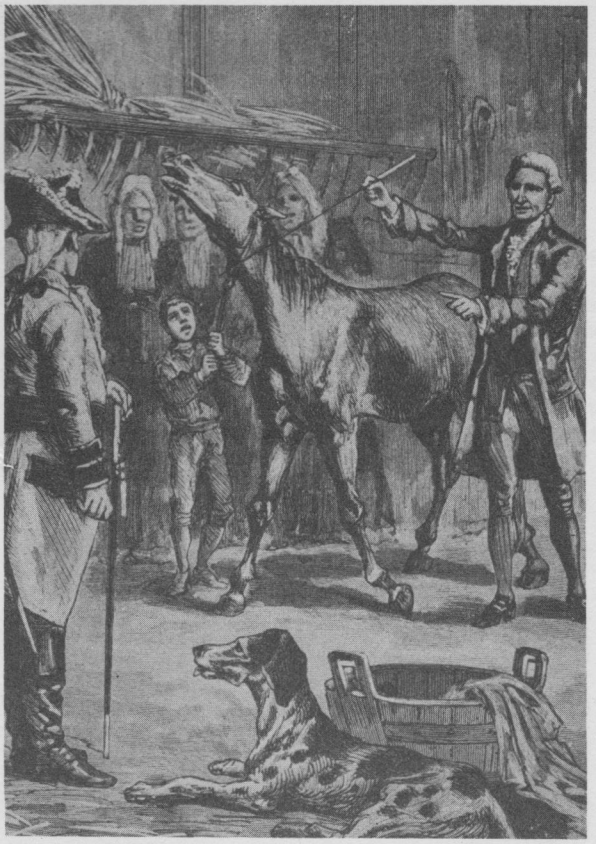
689. The Abbé Faria, a curious personage, had acquired a wide reputation for making people think that water tasted of wine, long before Bernheim, Janet and Charcot had proved scientifically that suggestion could be a fact during states both of hypnosis or waking, and that it was posssible to induce somnambulism.



690

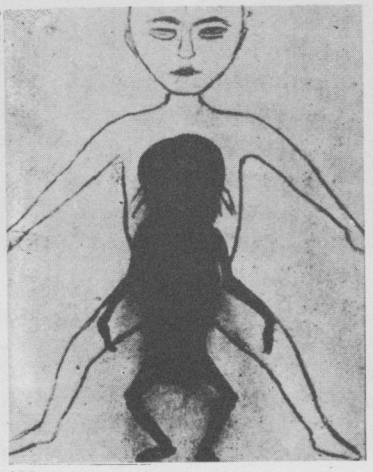
690. There were also magnetisers who alleged that they could exert their powers over inanimate objects. During the 19th century the magnetiser Ricard even claimed that he was capable of directing clouds. It is true that they darkened the clear sky over Montpellier.

691. On August 9th, 1784, a horse was magnetised without being touched, in the courtyard of the veterinary school of Lyons: the animal kicked out convulsively and then coughed for a long time.



691

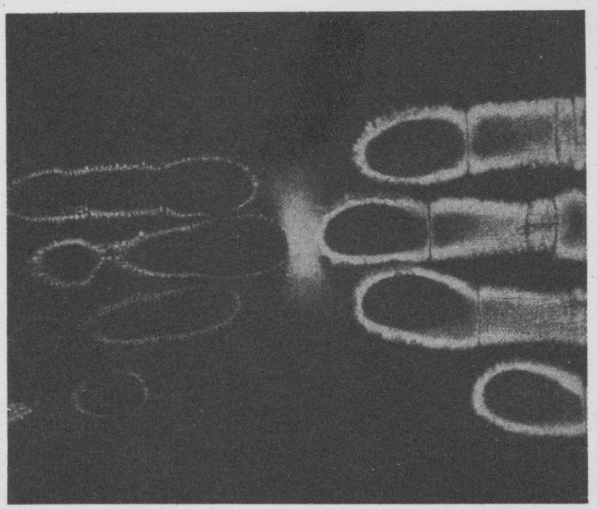
692–693. Magnetic mummification has also been carried out: a female foetus was mummified by 'passes' executed by Jean Puharré in 1934. It weighed 13 ounces at the beginning and after the experiment, which lasted 45 hours, it weighed no more than 2 ounces. The drawing 692 shows how far the foetus shrank after a few hours of 'magnetisation'. No putrefaction took place during the experiment. Illustration 693 shows the equipment of one of the earliest magnetisers.



692



693



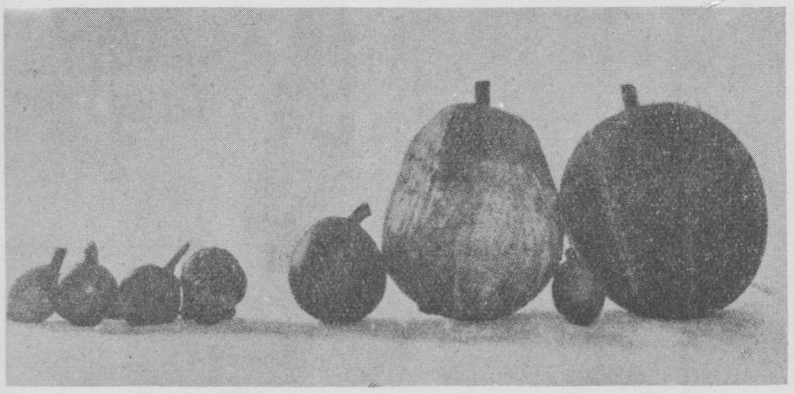
694



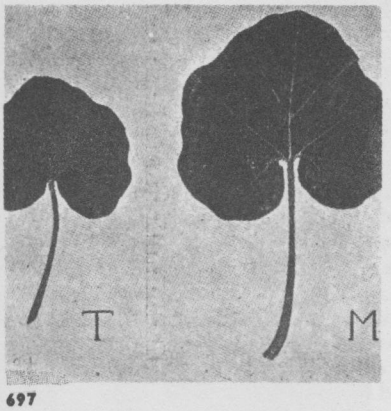
695

694 to **697.** According to the magnetisers the human body is comparable to a magnetised electric transmitter, its opposite poles shining with different colours. This picture shows the emanations from two 'opposed' hands (those of a man and a woman) attracting each other (694). Illustration 695 shows the hands of two women which repulse each other.

696–697 show the result of a 'magnetisation' carried out for 174 days on the fruits and flowers of marrows which as a result were perfectly preserved for an indefinite period; this, at least, is what the experimenter, Dr Berthelot of Lausanne, has claimed.



696

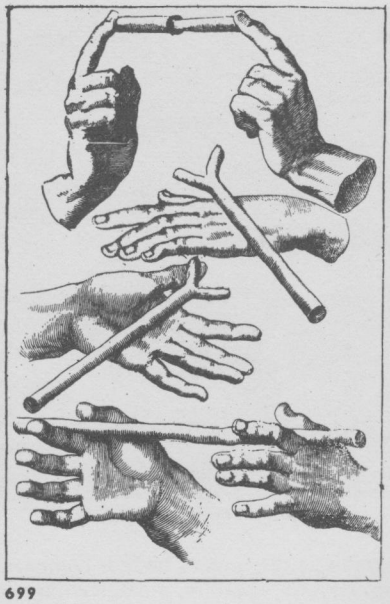


697

698. A mummified hand photographed for us in the house of Henri Durville, Director of the Practical School of Magnetism in Paris. This hand, which was cut off at the wrist, belonged to a man who had committed suicide. It remained three weeks in the morgue before being removed, in a state approaching putrefaction, for the purpose of mummification. The operation lasted two months. At the beginning on January 29th, 1913 it weighed 14 ounces, on March 25th, 1913, it weighed no more than 10 ounces. In 1940 it weighed 8 ounces and today it weighs much less.



698



699

699. Rhabdomancy, the art of water divining, is close to magnetism because it aims at revealing riches by means of a fluid or the use of twigs. Water-divining gave rise to radiesthesia.



700

THE MAGIC OF WATER DIVINING

700 to **703.** During the 16th century divining rods were currently used in German mines in order to discover the whereabouts of coal seams. Further back in time the rod possessed not so much a physical utility as a symbolic function, as is the case in this engraving (706) relating to alchemy. Strictly speaking only a forked hazel twig should be used, but the type of wood soon became unimportant. Since the material, shape and other attributes of the rod played only a minor rôle the theologians P. Ménestrier, Lebrun and Malebranche concluded that this could only be an instrument of the devil. The divining-rod is abused nowadays by imposters exploiting public credulity and is not calculated to increase the said magicians' credit.



701

704. During all ages men have tried to find means of communicating with the dead and the world beyond. Necromancy, the art of evoking the dead, is universal and goes back to earliest antiquity. Only the initiated had any success with it. In the biblical world the most famous evocation through necromancy is the story of Saul who, through the intermediary of a pythoness, conjured up the shade of Samuel, who foretold that the King would soon die.



702

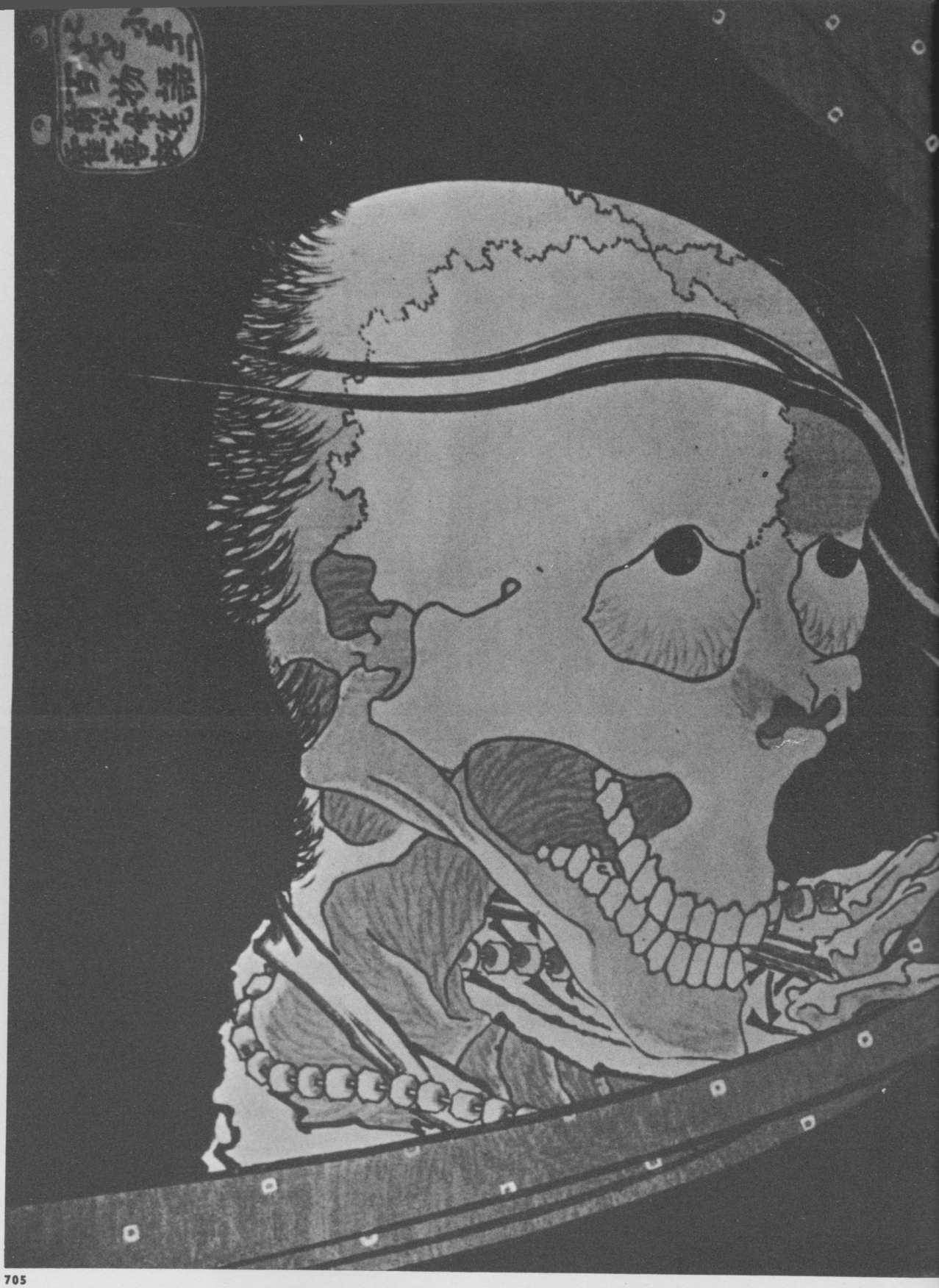


703



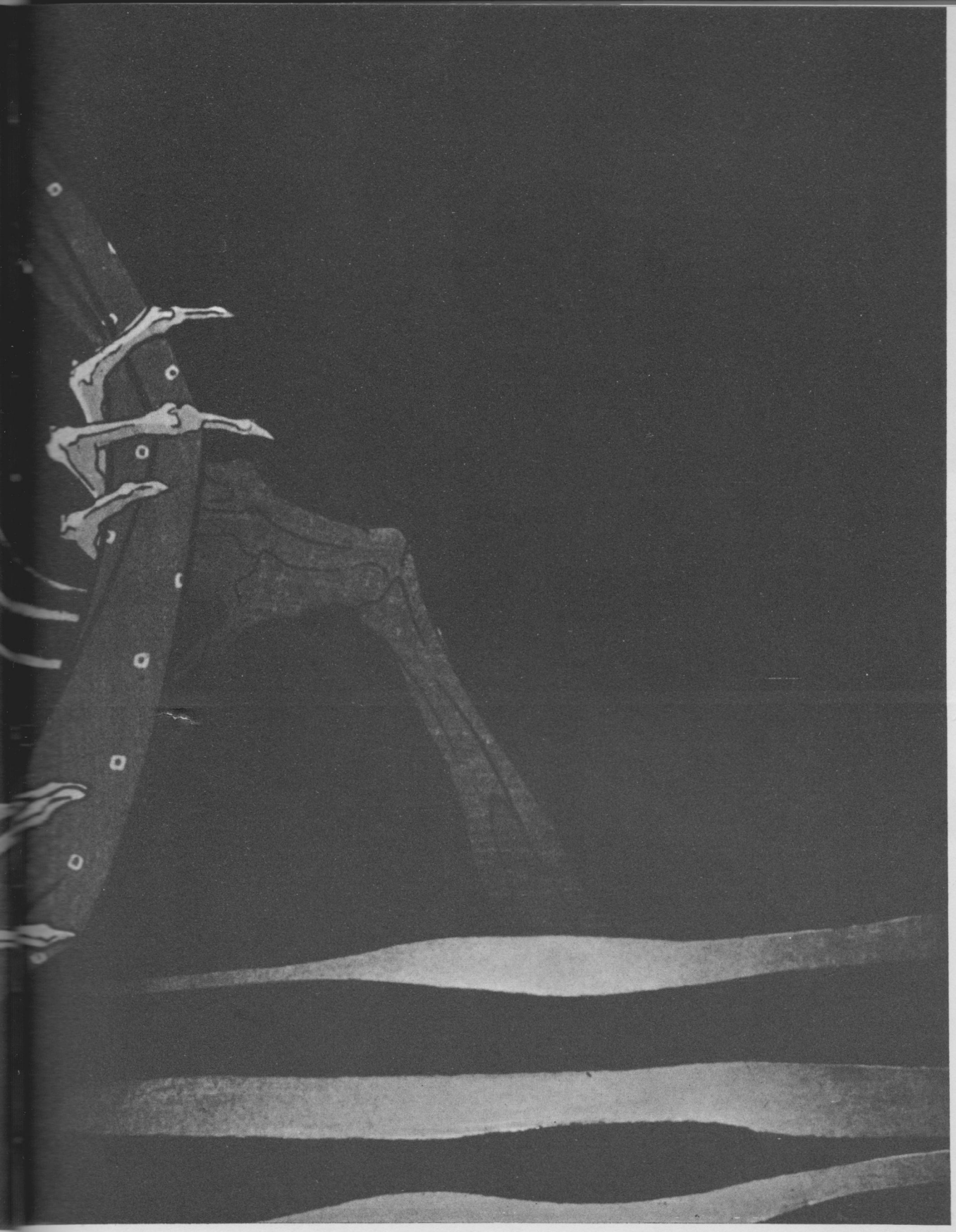
704

NECROMANCY



705

705. Japanese art is rich in appearances by spectres (the recent films of Mizoguchi have shown striking examples of this).



This illustration is an engraving of 1830 by Hokusai; it is the skeleton of Kohada appearing to his murderer.



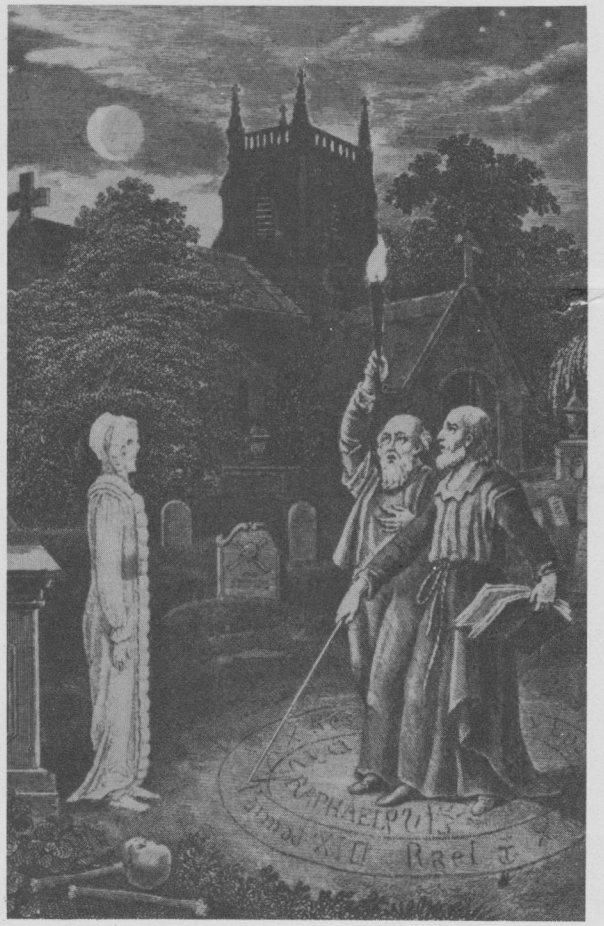
706

706. At a crossroads three young huntsmen meet three ghosts who say to them: 'We were once handsome, young and rich like you. But power, honours and riches are nothing. When death comes only good deeds count' ('Le Dit des Trois Morts et des Trois Vifs,' from the Church of Ennezat Puy-de-Dôme, France).



707

707. 'Communication with the other world is easy;' all that is needed is a bell made from an alloy of lead, tin, iron, copper, quicksilver, silver and gold. Write on it Adonai, Jesus, Tetrogrammaton; and then for seven days place it in the middle of a ditch in a cemetery. (From 'De mirabilibus naturae arcanis', 1730.)



708

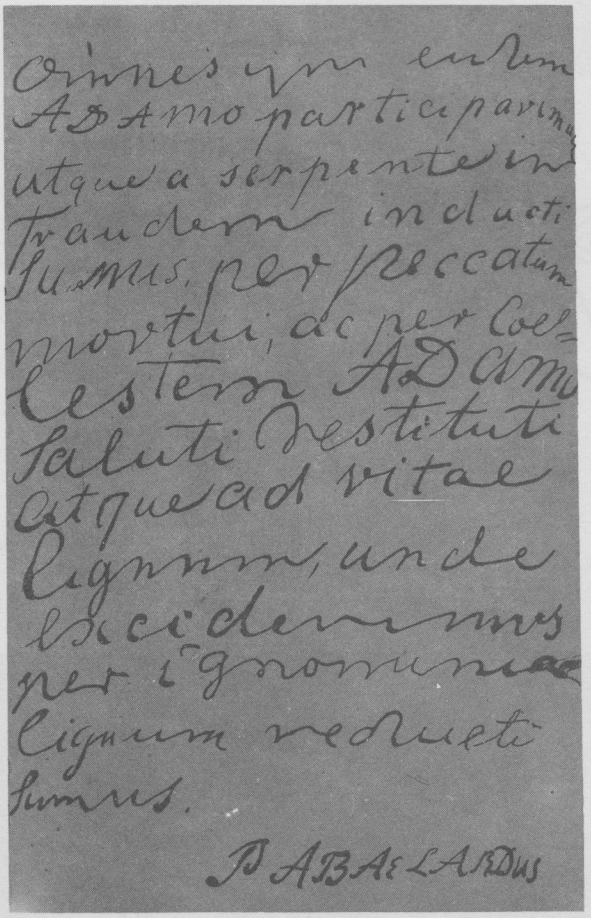
708. This engraving taken from 'L'Histoire pittoresque des sorciers' (Paris, 1846) shows the English magician Dr John Dee, astrologer to Queen Elizabeth; alchemist, mathematician and geographer, who together with his friend Kelly is said to have evoked in 1582 as many famous dead people as he wanted to. It can be seen that he respected the traditional instructions given in the black books.

709. At the beginning of the 19th century charlatans in all the countries of Europe promised their public the 'apparition of the most famous of the dead'.



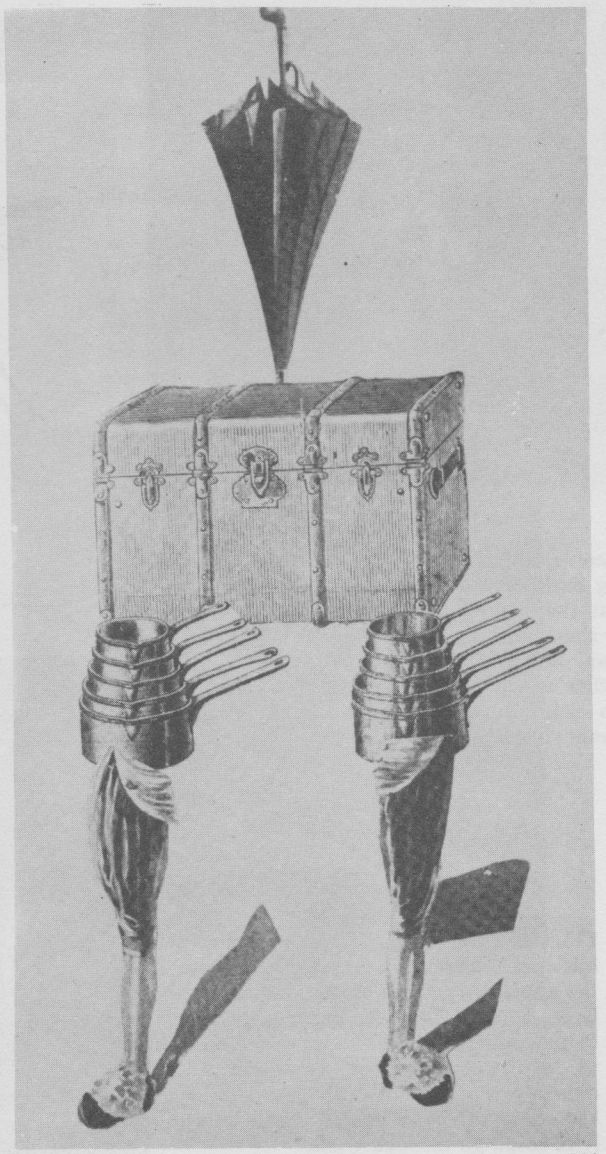
709

710. For a fairly long time the dead limited themselves to uttering more or less confused oracles, but as education became obligatory and the number of illiterate people diminished they finally dictated their messages clearly to the very people who questioned them. The text reproduced below is signed by Abelard himself and is in Latin.



710

711. The surrealists led by their master André Breton, a specialist in 'automatic writing', lent themselves not long ago to necromantic evocations which they expressed in their half-esoteric, half-mystifying language. The 'exquisite corpse' shown here comes out of its trunk and gets ready to drum on two piles of five (a magic number!) saucepans.

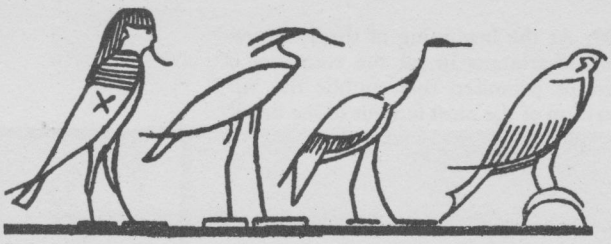


711



712

712. Dead people, spirits and evil spirits enjoy coming back to earth when asked to do so but they also know how to change their shape at will. The illustration shows how in China those who inhabit the other world are capable of turning into animals for the wicked pleasure of annoying the living.



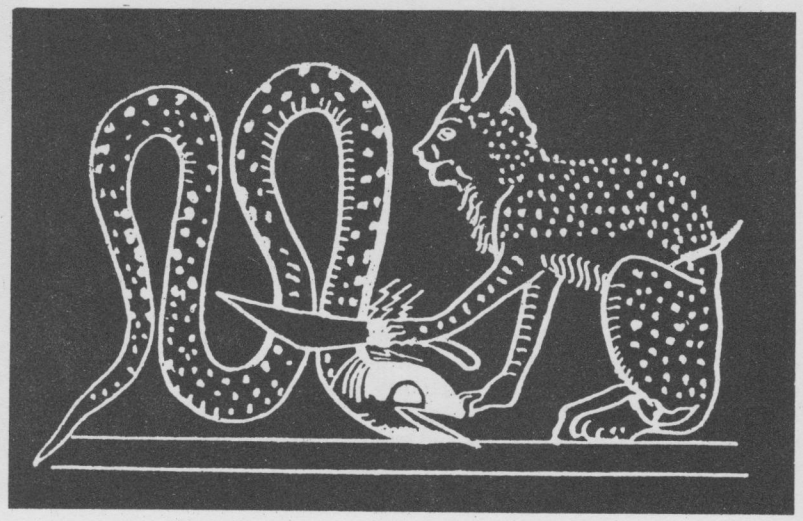
714

714. In the shadow of the Pyramids the initiate passed through successive metamorphoses. This illustration shows the hawk, the phoenix, the shenti bird and the swallow (from 'The Hidden Book of the House').

715. A 'Bennu' (Bird of the Intelligence) takes the shape of the initiate's body. The hawk symbolised the search for fulfilment and the phoenix symbolised perpetual renewal. One sacred text says 'I come in as a hawk (my soul is seeking itself) and I go out entirely as a phoenix'.



715



713

713. In Egypt, which is the land of initiations, these initiates are often given the appearances of animals, such as this lynx (from the Hunefer Papyrus in the British Museum) who supplies a body to 'one who possesses lofty science' crushing the spirit of evil. (Note that, according to some ancient myths, the lynx could go through walls.)



716



717

716–717. It seems certain that, from that time on, beliefs involving metamorphoses had a meaning principally concerned with initiation (such as the expression of psychological states through which the initiate passes). The Greek legend concerning the rejuvenation of Jason through Medea, which is connected with the Golden Fleece (716), or the story of Circe and the companions of Ulysses (717) should certainly be interpreted in the same way.

718. Circe the enchantress turned Ulysses and his companions into swine. As a symbol of evil feminity she sat enthroned among doubtful sirens and harpies (The Odyssey).

719. It was said that the ring of Gyges possessed the power of making the wearer invisible. Gyges, a young and handsome shepherd, is said to have snatched the ring from the finger of a giant whom he had found dead. Afterwards he went to the court of King Candaulus and assassinated him.



719



718

METAMORPHOSIS



720



721

720 to **727.** The theme of metamorphosis, whereby human beings turn into animals, has always been popular. The cinema has used it on several occasions with varying degrees of success. Vampires and were-wolves have had most success with the public. A fine story of metamorphosis took place among the sorcerers of Kernon in 1566; a group of 'magi' had acquired the habit of meeting in an old abandoned château nearby, but the village people decided to drive them out. The good peasants went to the spot at about midnight but they were attacked by wild cats which killed a good number of them and wounded others. The cats were none other than the sorcerers who had changed their shapes, and they had even left traces behind in the heat of battle. This was noticed next day, when they appeared in their normal guise, showing signs of ill-treatment. Other stories of metamorphosis have gone round the world, and some of them, like Shakespeare's 'Midsummer Night's Dream', have been delightful. Vampires and were-wolves appear in many of them. According to one contemporary occultist the difference between them is due to the following causes: the were-wolf is a sorcerer whose 'astral body' roams about freely without any hindrance, while the magician is asleep; the vampire is merely a dead sorcerer who 'vegetates' in his tomb. It should be noted that vampires survive after the



722



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725

death of the party concerned and slow down the disintegration of his body. Vampires are attached to the corpse by invisible links and, as astral entities, take the liberty of circulating in the world of the living, where they sometimes become lewd and attack women passing by.

During the Middle Ages not everyone was in agreement about the capacity of sorcerers to change themselves into animals. Some people believed that the 'men of the art' possessed a two-sided skin, human on one side and wolf-like on the other, the metamorphosis consisting only in turning the said skin from one side to the other. Others, who were more discerning, believed that only a state of trance made the sorcerer capable of 'playing the wolf' and of being taken for one. According to history, in 1610 the judge Lancre paid a visit to a were-wolf imprisoned in Bordeaux. He was drawn and thin and according to the judge he had very strong teeth and thick, hard, black nails. He walked on all fours and bounded along 'as nimbly as a hound'.

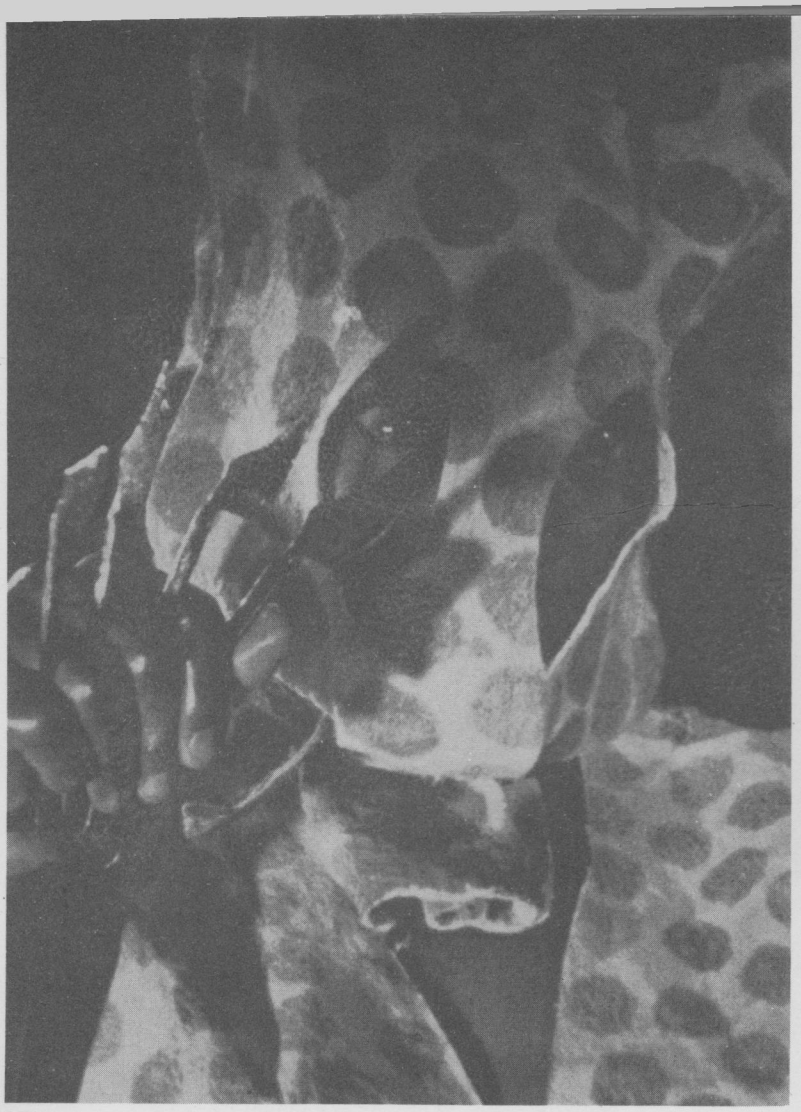
When he began to make admissions, the were-wolf confided to the judge that without any doubt the flesh of young girls was far more pleasing to the palate than that of boys, even if they were very young too.



726



727

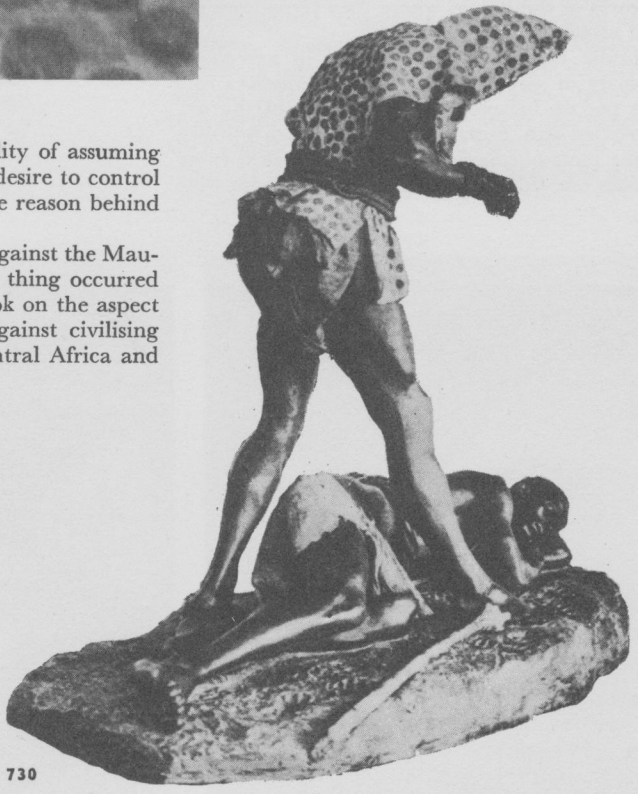


728



729

728 to **730.** Metamorphosis, or more simply the possibility of assuming the skin of an animal, is not always inseparable from the desire to control a group of people by means of terror; this is precisely the reason behind many secret societies which are rife today.
The repressive action taken by Britain a few years ago against the Mau-Mau rebels brought facts of this kind to light; the same thing occurred in the Belgian Congo and other parts of Africa; men took on the aspect of formidable animals in order to defend themselves against civilising influences. The illustrations show panther-men from Central Africa and Lion-men (729, very isolated cases) in New Guinea.



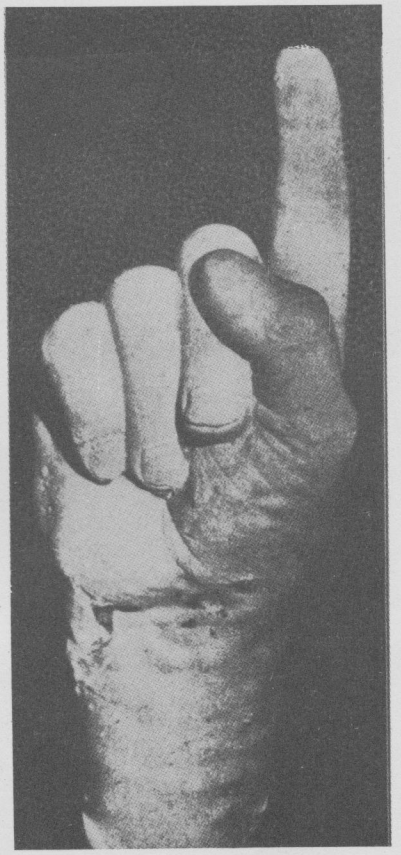
730

SPIRITUALISTS AND MEDIUMS



731

731. Spiritualism has inherited something both from the ancient rites of magic and from personal magnetism. Today authentic investigators take an interest in the contact between the dead and the living. This photograph was taken in 1907 in the zoological gardens at Basle.



732

732. The 'fluid' is a 'force'. It can therefore only leave its imprint in materials such as wax, earth or clay made to receive it. The illustrations shows the moulding of the hand of a spirit which had appeared with the aid of the medium Franck Kluski in Warsaw.



733

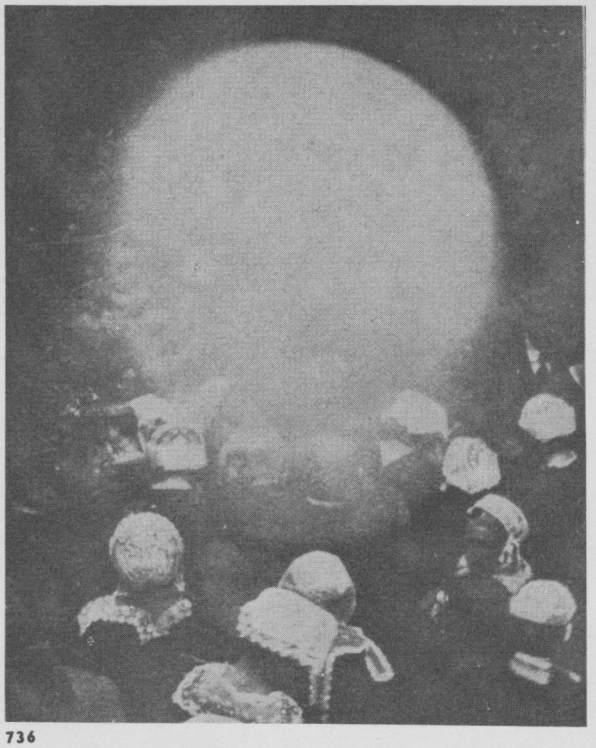


734

733–734. Spiritualists, after being hunted out and challenged, have done everything to achieve the outstanding proof of their theory: 'materialisation', the concrete trace of the spirit's 'passage on earth', which could be caught by the camera.



735



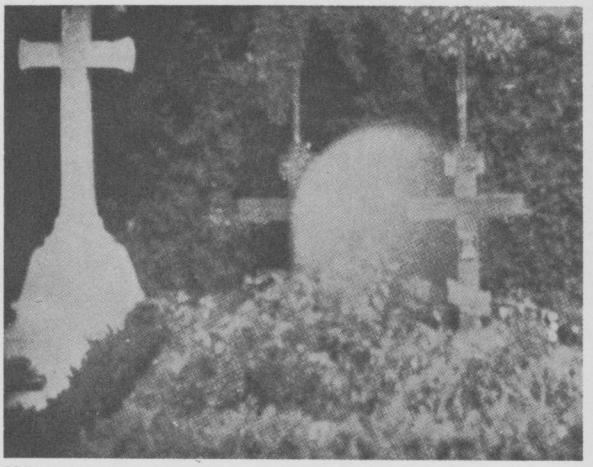
736

735. A 'materialisation' which took place in Nice in 1933. The 'medium', Mme Gal, stated that these 'entities' were relatives for whom she had charge. Pictures of this kind should not be taken too seriously (in 1875 a clever forgerer produced a great number of them), but this particular case seems to deserve a certain amount of credit.

736. A photograph taken in 1933 during the ceremonies of a Breton 'pardon'. It is simultaneously an evocation of 'flying saucers' and of the famous 'suns of Fatima', which people say have definitely been photographed. Occultists refer to this kind of collective phenomena as 'eggregori'.



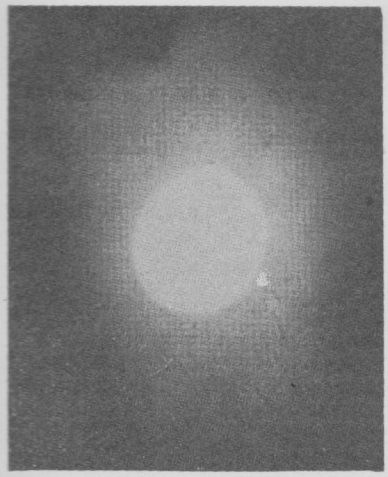
737



738

737. Spiritualists consider this 'transcendent' photograph an overwhelming proof of those things which sceptics contest most strongly. In fact retouching of the negative, or trick lighting effects, can produce pictures of this sort.

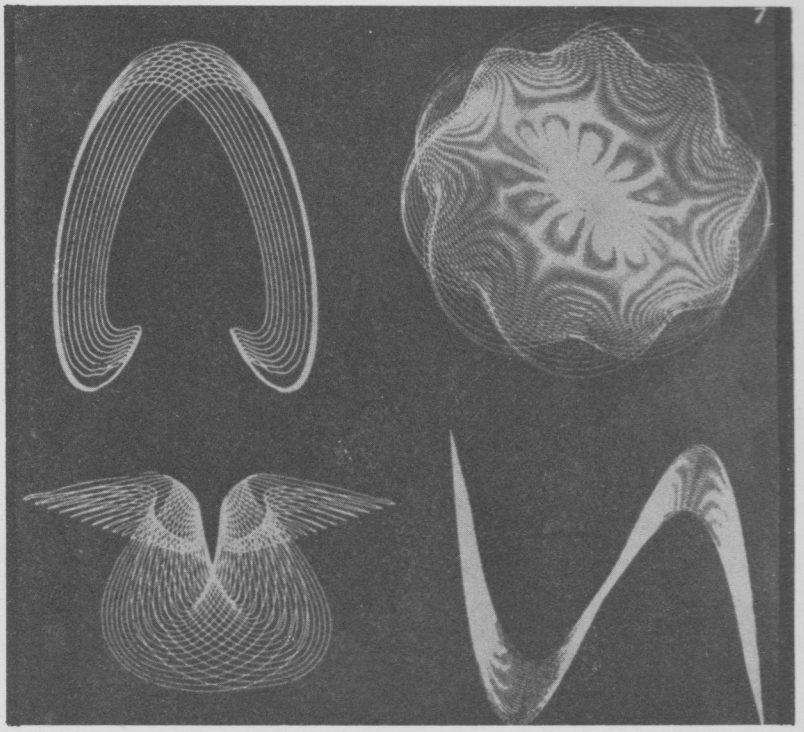
738. A photograph taken in 1935 by the Comtesse de B. in the cemetery of Bois-de-Vaux, Lausanne. The effect is striking, but is it really a manifestation of the world beyond? It is more likely to be a hoax.



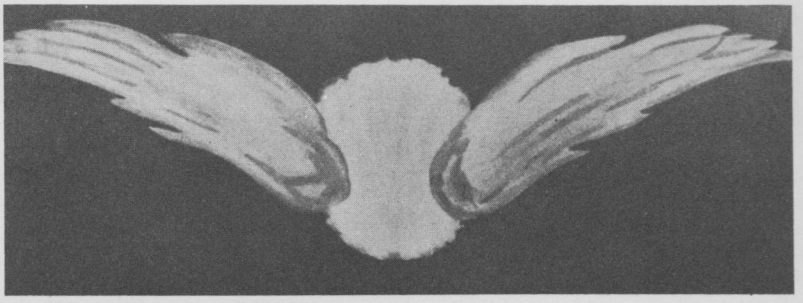
739

739. According to the spiritualists 'thoughts are material phenomena charged with psychic virtualities'. Dr Ochocowitz, formerly a teacher at the University of Lemberg, asserts that thanks to his medium, Mlle Stanislawa Tomczyk, he has obtained a certain number of 'photographs of thoughts'. In order to achieve this, the medium stared at the moon for a long time and then a few days later placed her hand about 15 inches away from the lens, in darkness. This resulted in photographs of this type.

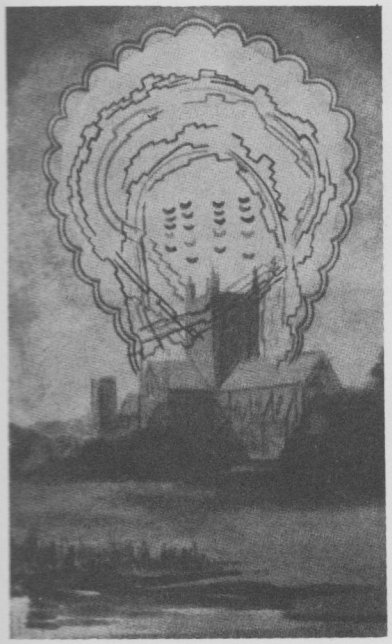
740–741. In one of their works Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater say: 'Every thought gives rise to vibrations which then act on the matter of the mental body'. In this way there is a 'quality of thought' (determining colour), a 'nature' (determining form), and a 'precision' (determining the clarity of outlines). Chladni obtained a 'form' of this type (740), then 'a mother's prayer' (741).



740

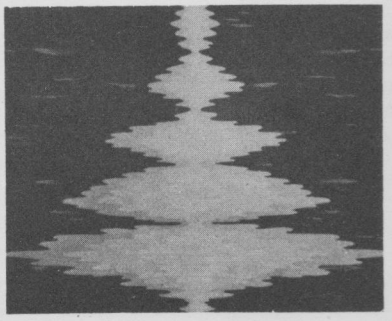


741



742

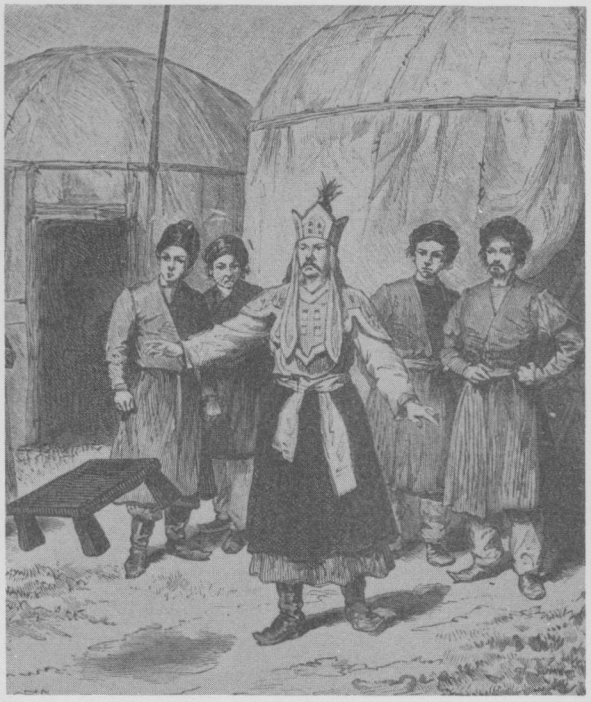
742. An 'eggregore' produced by listening to one of Mendelssohn's 'Songs without Words' played on a church organ. Lists of the colours of thought have been drawn up by spiritualists.



743

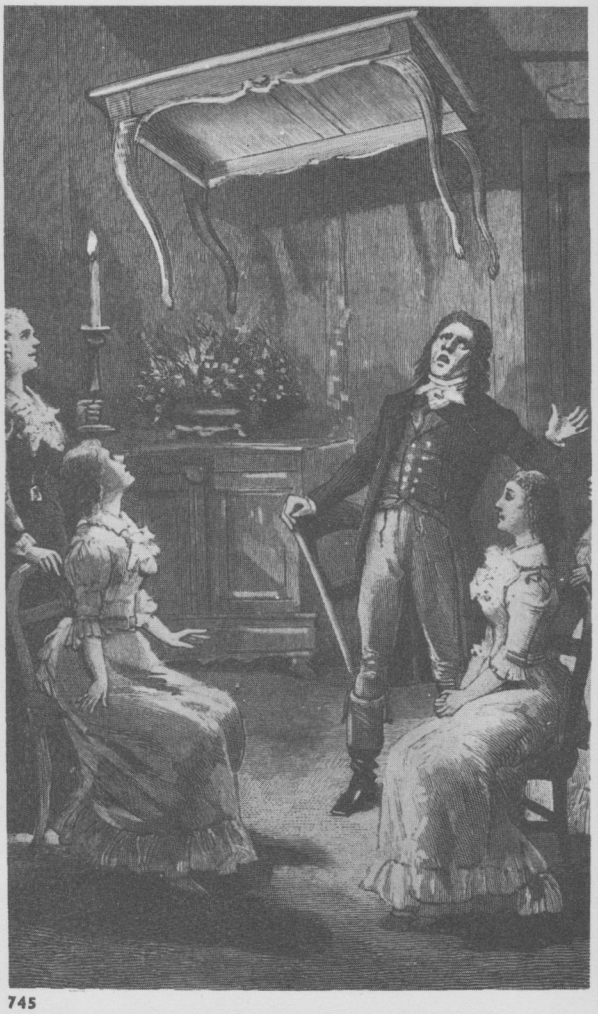
743. These 'shapes of thought' show a strange resemblance to the 'sound tracks' of films.

TABLE-TURNING



744

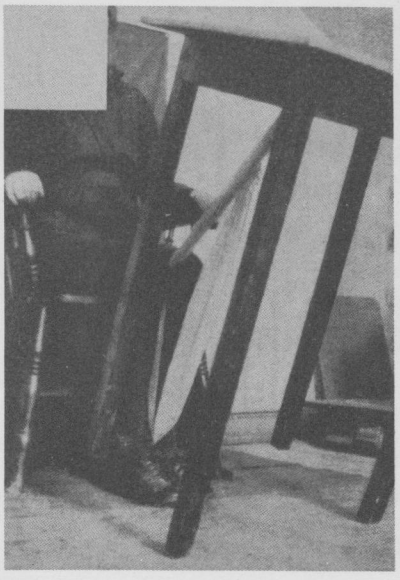
744. 'Table-turning' enjoys great popularity, although this phenomen is usually confused with 'flying tables'. The latter were known to the Mongols before they invaded Europe while the Tibetan lamas, who still use them today, regard them as infallible in searching out thieves: the tables 'fly' and the lamas follow them as water-diviners follow their rods. Levitation and shadowing . . .



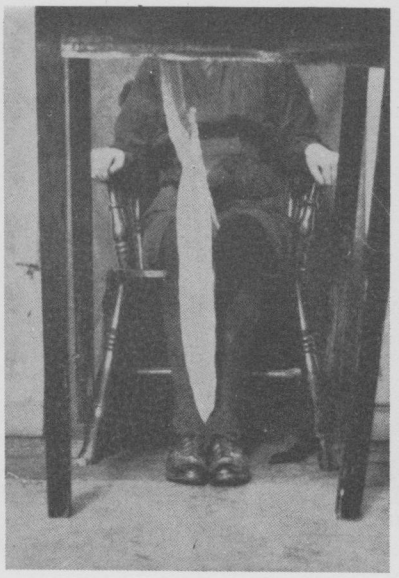
745

745. The first demonstrations of tables which 'turned and flew' is said to have taken place in 1847 in Hydesville, U.S.A. It was started by a Methodist family named Fox.

746–747. Here is a 'psychic lever', consisting, according to its designer, 'of a bundle of very fine threads issuing from the medium's body'. The way in which these 'transparent and invisible' threads act was then explained by Crawford quite seriously as follows: 'The threads are projected into space and attach themselves to the inner surface of the table; a force then runs along their axis transforming the collection of threads into a rigid bar . . .'



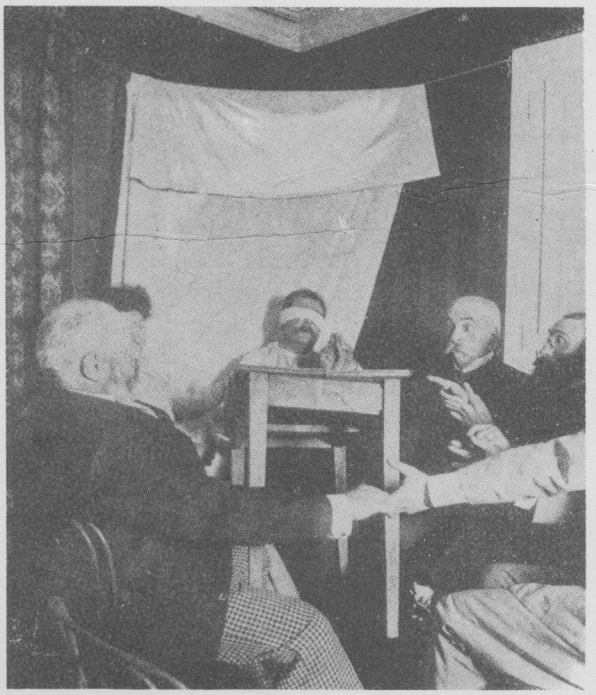
746



747



748



749

748. Photograph taken in the drawing-room of Camille Flammarion on November 12th, 1898. One leg of the table (in the foregound on the left), is 7 inches above the ground; another leg (on the right) is 5 inches above the ground, while the two back legs are respectively 3 and 5½ inches above the ground. An assistant is covering the medium's eyes by means of a cushion.

749. Another photograph taken at Camille Flammarion's house during a levitation session. This method of 'questioning the spirits' is very much favoured by spiritualists.

750. There are other methods of communicating with the dead, as for instance 'the chain'; the spiritualists sit in a circle, clasping the tips of each others' fingers, and make the table talk by 'warming' it. The table then leans slightly from one side to the other, then goes back into place. One of its legs taps against the floor. One tap stands for 'A', two for 'B', and three for 'C'. The spirit spells out the message, with much patience, in the language of those present.

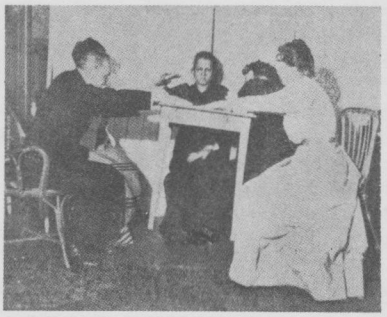


750



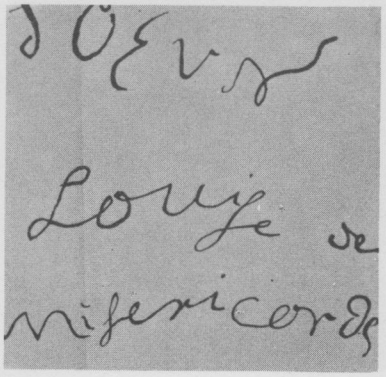
751

751–752. Two other photographs taken in Camille Flammarion's house. The medium in charge is Eusapio Paladino. She was born in the Abruzzi in 1854 and was much talked about when she said that she was inhabited by the roaming spirit of a certain man named King.

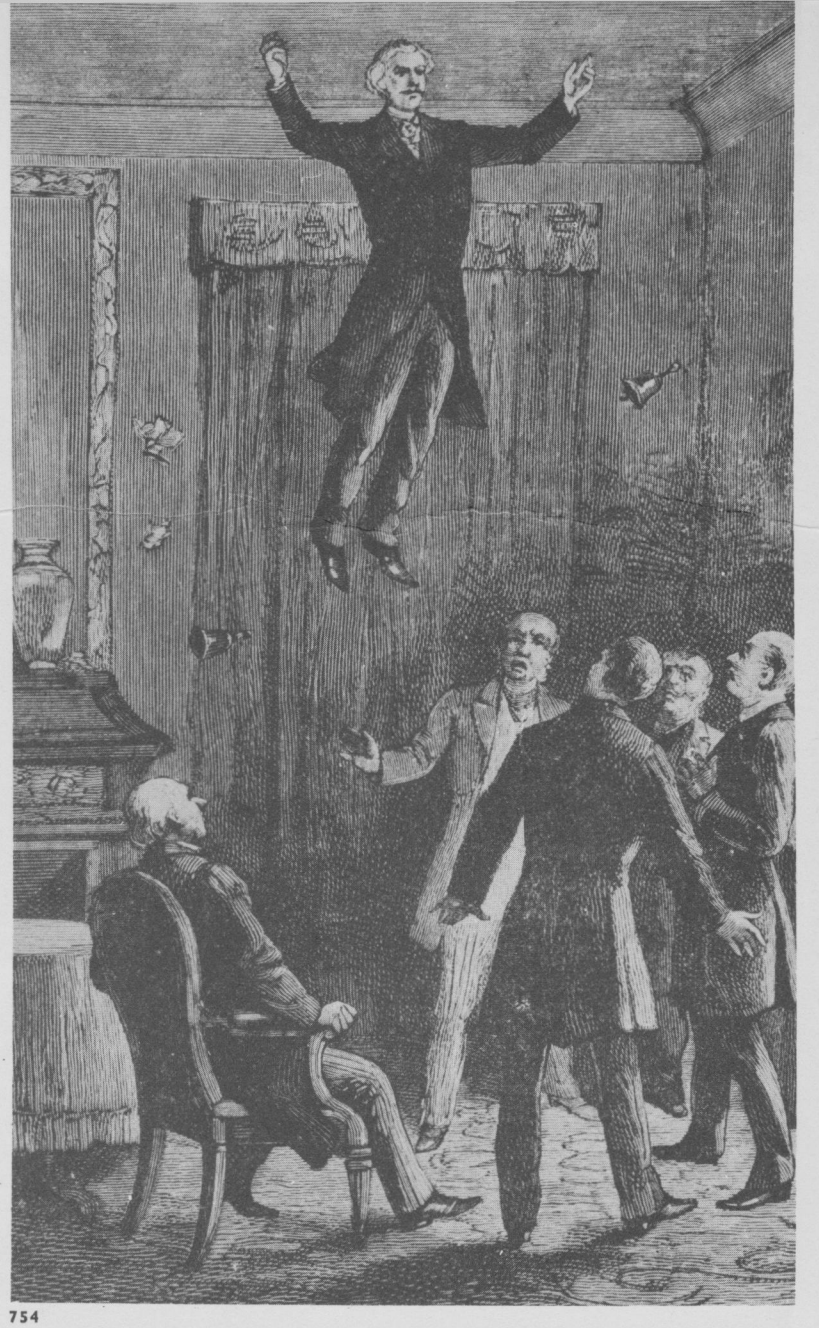


752

753. Written 'documents' obtained thanks to table-turning can no more be taken as proof of communication with spirits than the letters 'received' by 'possessed' people in the past proved that they had been sent by the devil. It is perhaps a question of 'automatic writing'.

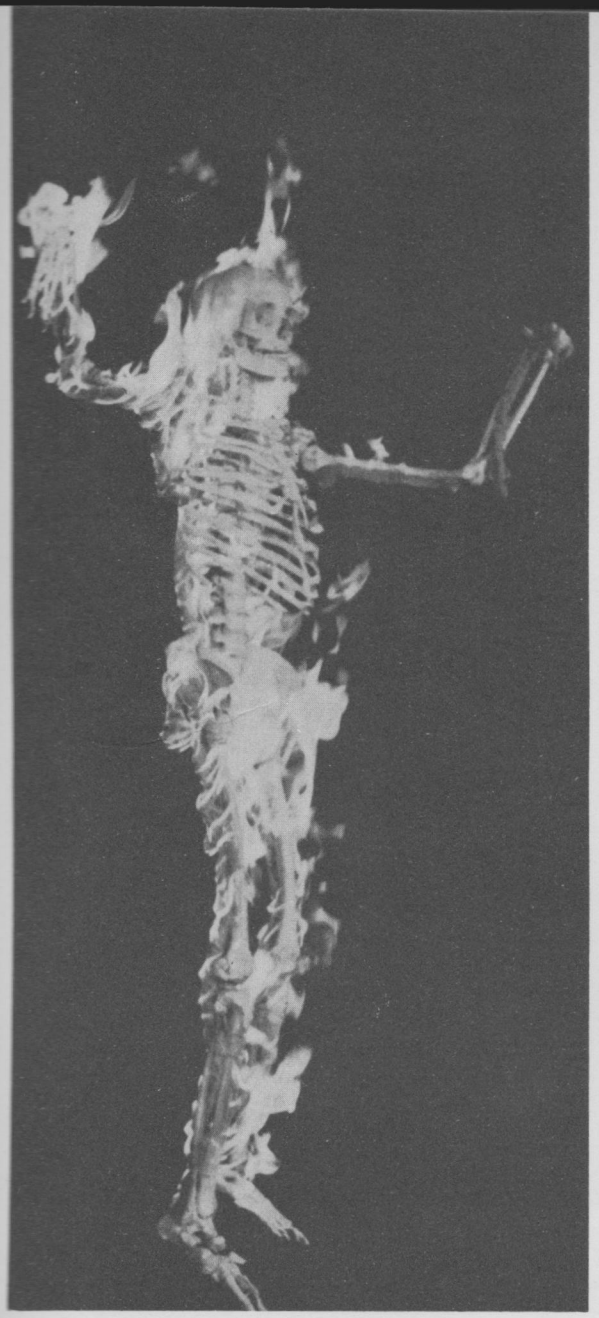


753



754

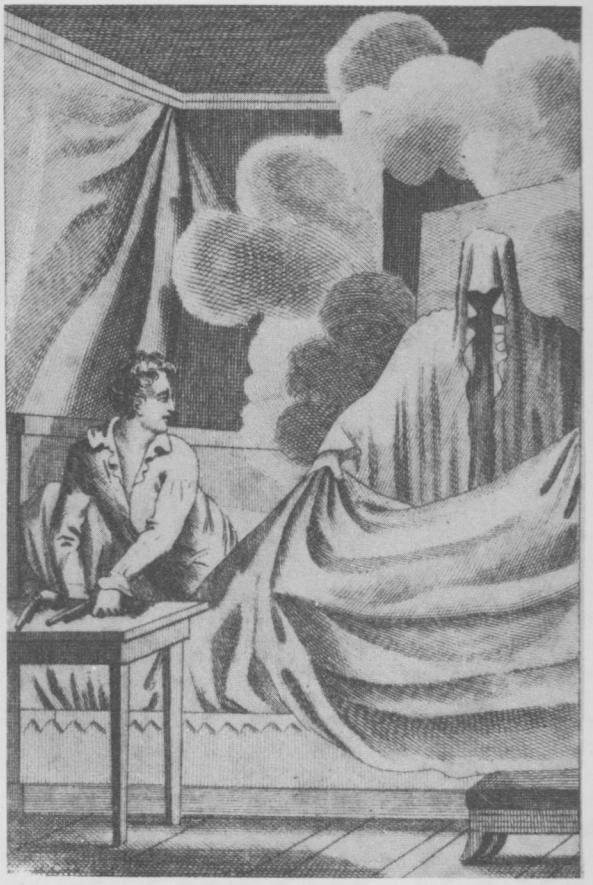
754. 'Human levitation', which is mentioned in certain 'lives of the saints' or among the yogis, has never received scientific confirmation either. A certain Mr Crookes, a member of the Royal Society in London, claimed that he had been present four times (between February 16th and the end of May 1869) at seances of levitation involving his medium Douglas Home, who is shown in our illustration. However, Crookes' colleagues in the Royal Society refused to sign the 'report' he drew up.



755

755. Even people who are not spiritualists can enjoy a good ghost story.

756. In France spiritualism flourished most strongly during the reign of Louis XIV. (A contemporary print.)



756



757

757. This old man was drawn by the virulent pen of Francisco Goya; as he wanders through a line of ghosts he alone seems more significant than the whole of spiritualist literature. We are entitled to think so, for there is some strange compulsion which leads ghosts to appear to those who are soon to die. An old man is merely a being who has survived the passing of love and the disappearance of many people. For this reason, when we are very old, we all suddenly find ourselves in the midst of a depopulated world, haunted only by the spectres of those we loved in the past.



758



759

758–759. This picture was described by the person responsible for it as 'Photograph of the ghost of a magnetic subject which has been divided in two'. (H. Durville.) Experiences of this kind seem, if not more true, at least more moving than the representations of ghosts in the cinema (759).

GHOSTS GALORE



760

760–761. According to William Crookes, who, along with Harrison, took a photograph of her, Katie King was the 'materialisation of the spirit of a fifteen-year old medium, Florence Cook'. William Crookes told everyone who was willing to listen that the young Florence Cook had barely entered his study before she lay down on the floor, her head resting on a cushion. While this was going on Katie King gradually assumed the 'spiritual form' of the sleeping medium who, under the action of the light, groaned feebly and moved her limbs with difficulty.



761



762



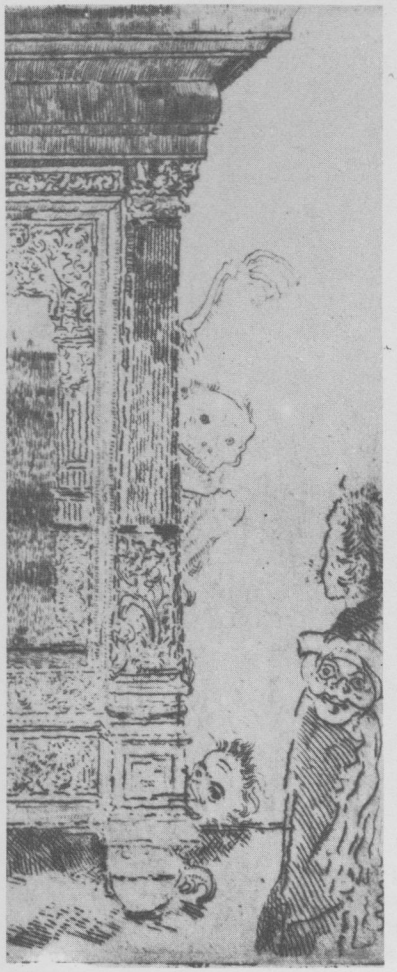
763



764

762–763. Ghosts have appeared at all periods of time, without any exception, and in all places (762). At least one of them was noteworthy for the reason that it brought not a fateful message, but one that was very different: this was the ghost of the 'shining child' (763). It belongs to the Irish tradition and the principal actor in the story was Viscount Castlereagh. The 'shining child' appeared to him while he was passing through the galleries of a castle owned by one of his friends; the child told him that he would have an outstanding career and promised that he would reappear at each important stage of his life. He kept his word and returned punctually.

764. A drawing made by a medium in a state of trance which represents the different reincarnations in store for a new-born child.



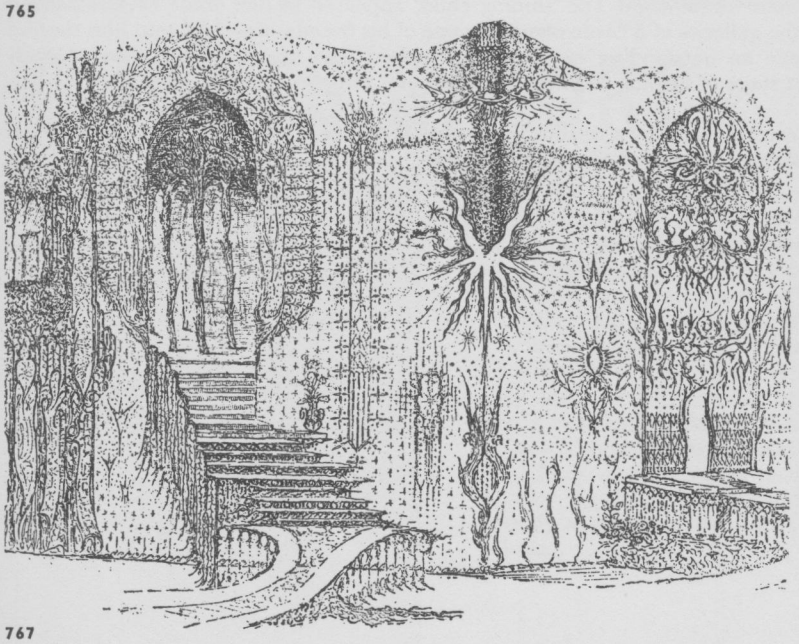
765



766

765. Let us follow ghosts through the drawings of James Ensor where, instead of making furniture creak in a ridiculous way in peaceful homes, they carry out huge jokes. (Whatever their beliefs the English know how to laugh at them in the most delightful way, as in the case of Oscar Wilde.)

766–767. The incautious Victorian Sardou has placed his 'poor spirits' in a very curious place. The medium that he has imagined has flown away towards Jupiter. On the terrible planet he found first the house of Zoroaster (for Monsieur Sardou knew his Nietzsche by heart), and then strange personages swinging on a swing fixed to the clouds.



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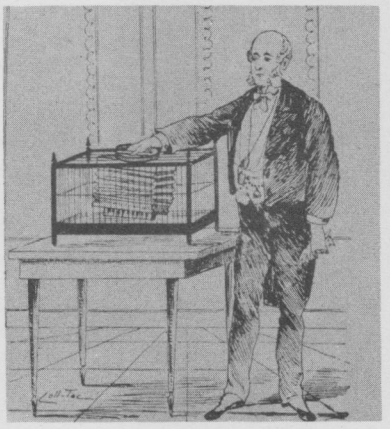
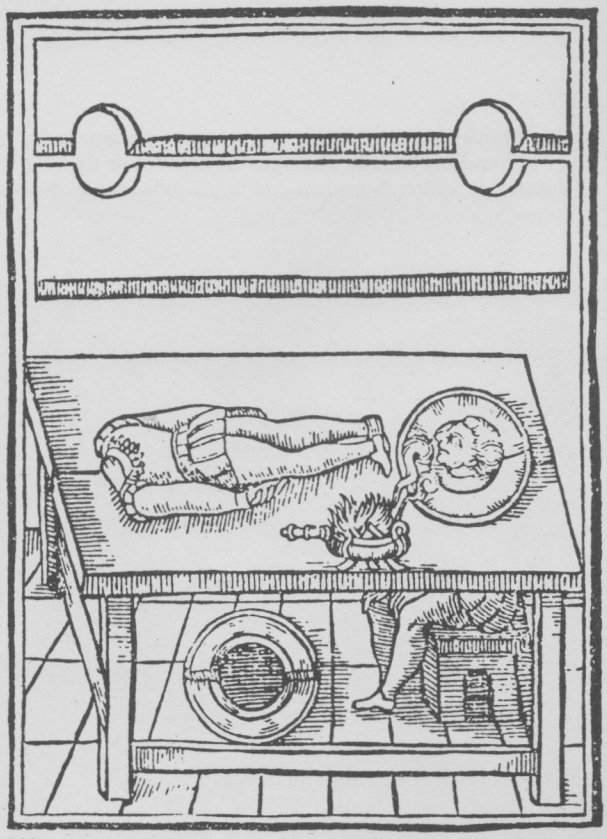


768

768. Illusionists swarm everywhere and work together as thick as thieves to swindle us. We cannot say if they produce real ghosts or work genuine miracles.

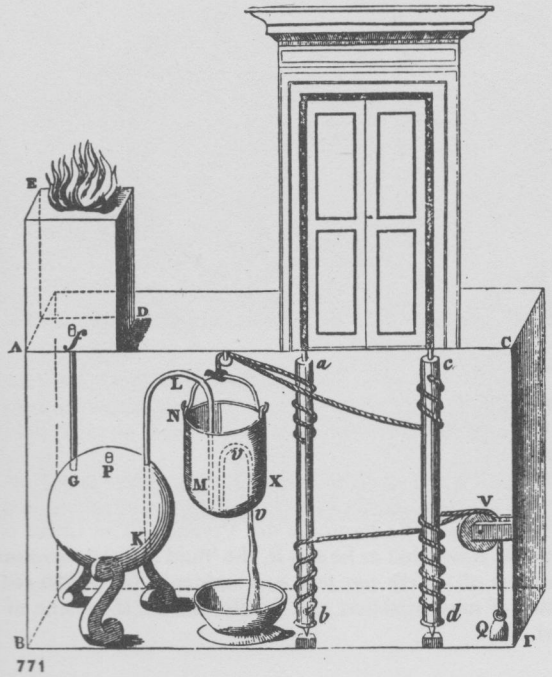


769



770

769 to **772.** From this point of view, as from many others, the Ancients were not absolutely honest: incense, which was supposed to fall from the hands of the gods, was in fact produced by warm air under pressure; a siphon containing water imitated the so-called celestial sound of the trumpets announcing the opening of the temple-doors; any fire lighted on the altar made them move on their hinges.



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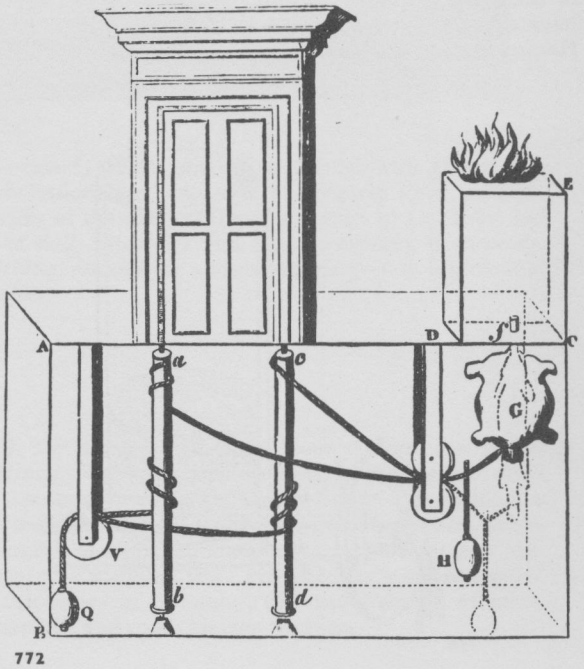

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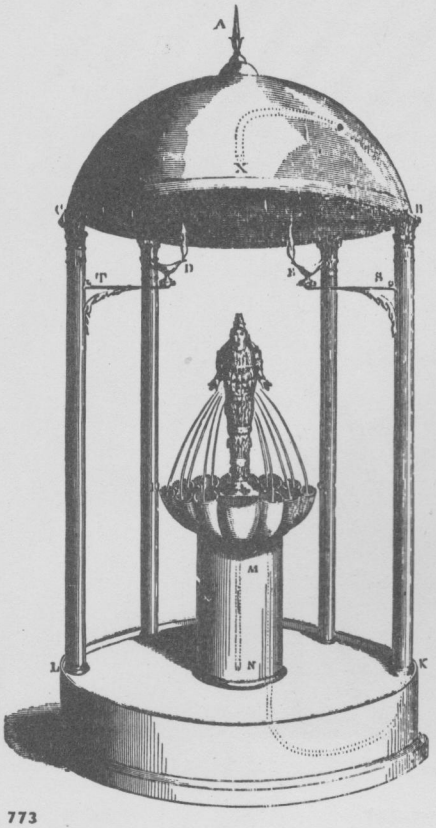
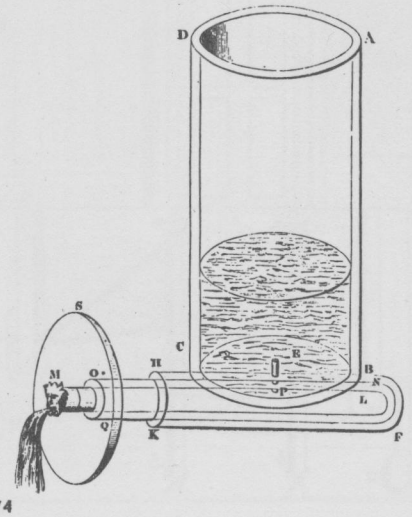


773

773–774. Magic statue (773) from which milk pours out (when the altar is lit up) and (774) a 'lustral' water-wheel, both examples of fairground magic. Fraud, trickery and hoaxes are the three aspects of the black art. And why should we have scruples when the Divine Rogue, Hermes himself, was such an expert.

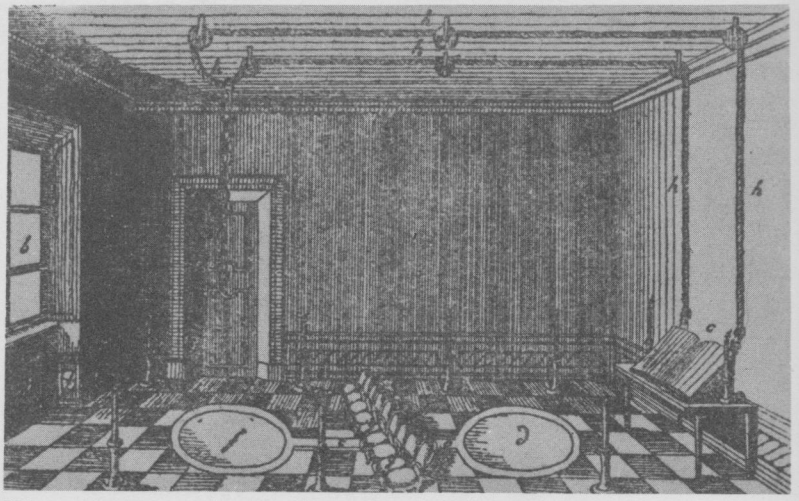


774

775. Manfredus the sorcerer was a water-diviner and a past-master in the art of handling liquids who was idolised in his day. This XVIIth century engraving, which shows him holding a gala seance, hangs in the 'Germanisches Museum' in Nuremberg.



775



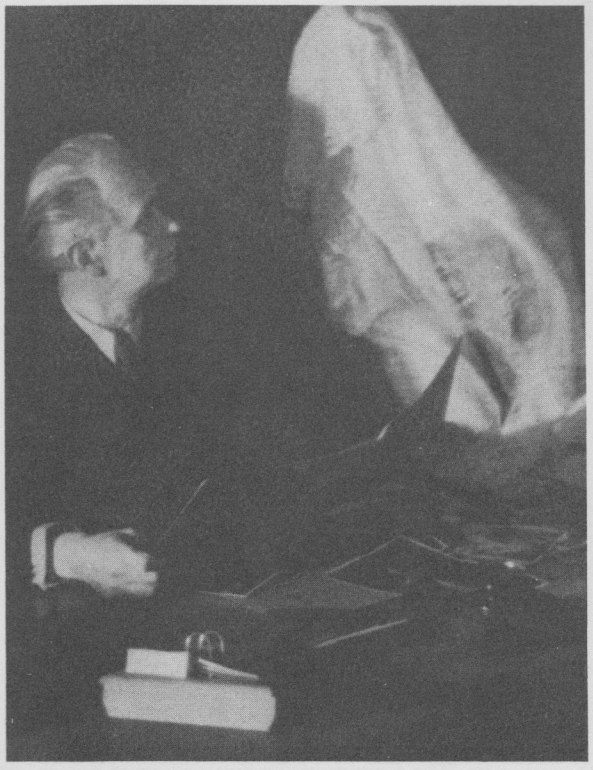
776

776. This picture taken from a doctorate work written by a certain Professor Ph. Frank (1783) shows 'a hall for conjuring up spirits'. In the 18th century the mechanical sciences were already helping ghosts to appear.

According to a so-called 'scientific' theory ghosts could be a 'projection' of our subconscious on the backcloth of darkness, resembling the Egyptian 'Ka'. In his book 'Le Fantôme des Vivants' (The Ghost of the Living), H. Durville states that as he sees it, the 'fluid masses' surrounding a subject to a radius of nearly ten feet can suddenly be condensed beneath the influence of magnetisation and finally assume the shape of what we call a ghost.



777



778



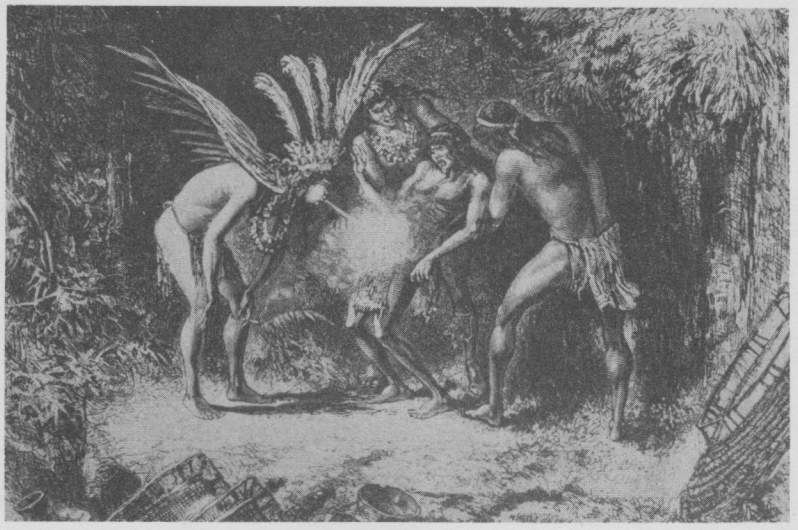
779

777. So-called 'white' magic, conducted with astute but frank professionalism, expresses in concrete form perhaps the dreams of the magicians and sorcerers of all times: by means of skill, virtuosity and a little mystery it succeeds in surprising, astonishing and sometimes even in frightening the public.

778–779. Do pictures like these prove the authenticity of spiritualism? They have been discussed in the past and they will be discussed for a long time in the future. Do spiritualists possess 'scientific' honesty? The idea makes one smile. These two pictures, showing an ectoplasmic apparition and the ectoplasm of a medium, were produced by a learned spiritualist dispensary in Germany; the reader should examine them carefully and reach his own decision.

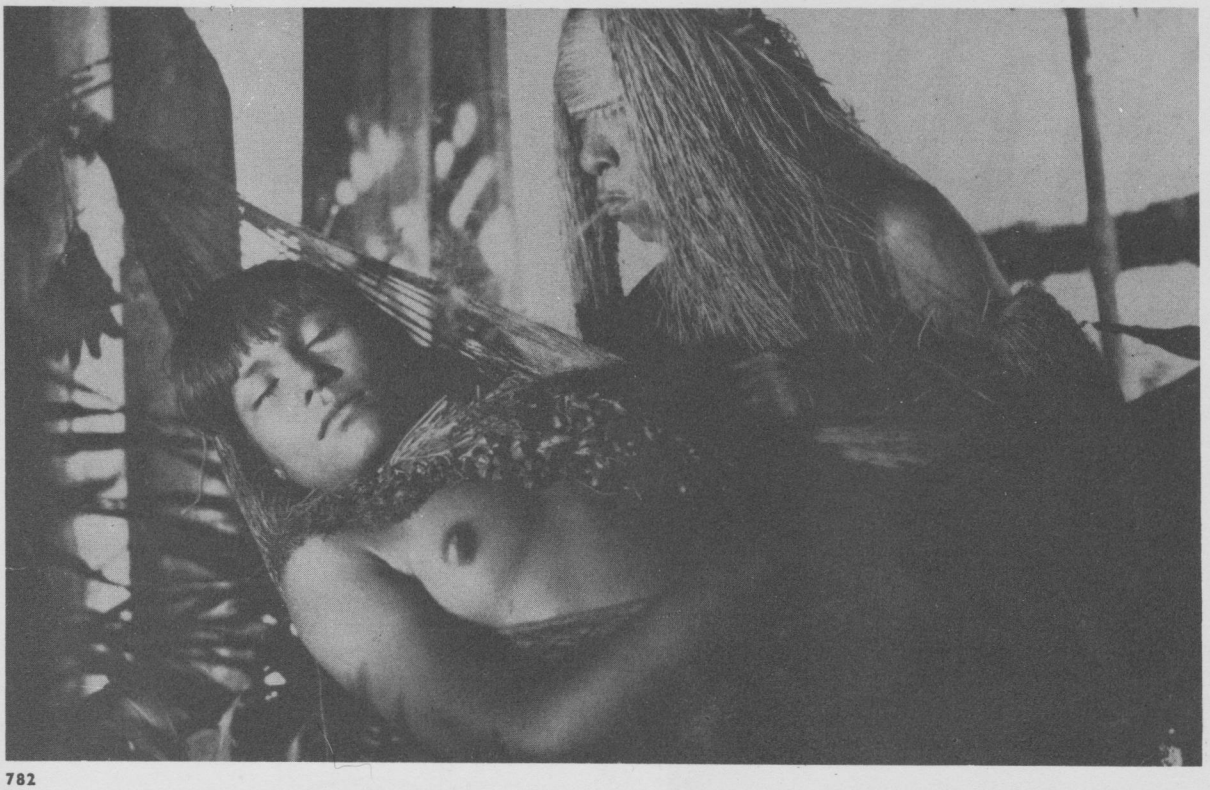


780



781

FUMES FROM THE OTHER WORLD



782

780–781. Drugs, like exorcisms and frenzied dances, are a key to the other world: haschish, opium, cocaine, peyotl, mescalin, marijuana, heroin or ordinary tobacco have all been used in turn, in every country and at every period, for inducing 'artificial paradises' or states of ecstasy. (780) bud and flower of the red narcotic poppy, producing opium; (781) the fumigation with tobacco smoke as a medical treatment (based on a drawing by Crévaux).

782. A sorcerer blows puffs of marijuana smoke into the face of a promised bride as she reclines drowsily, in order to 'awaken her to life and happiness' (from the documentary film 'The Empire of the Sun'). A good deal of marijuana is consumed today by the American 'beatniks', and their leader, the young writer Kerouac, has even said that the true reason why they take the drug is in order to find God.



783

783. The world of Islam has always used drugs as a means of opening the gates of a very earthly paradise. The Arabs' favourite was haschish, which gave rise to the sect of the 'hashishin' (from which we get our word 'assassin'). The founder of the sect was the astonishing character known as 'the Old Man of the Mountain', a friend of Omar Khayam. It was divided into 'degrees', like free-masonry. The high grade initiates passed on to each other the saying: 'Nothing is true, everything is permitted.' (783) 'A Believer's Dream', by Achille Zo (Brussels Museum).



784

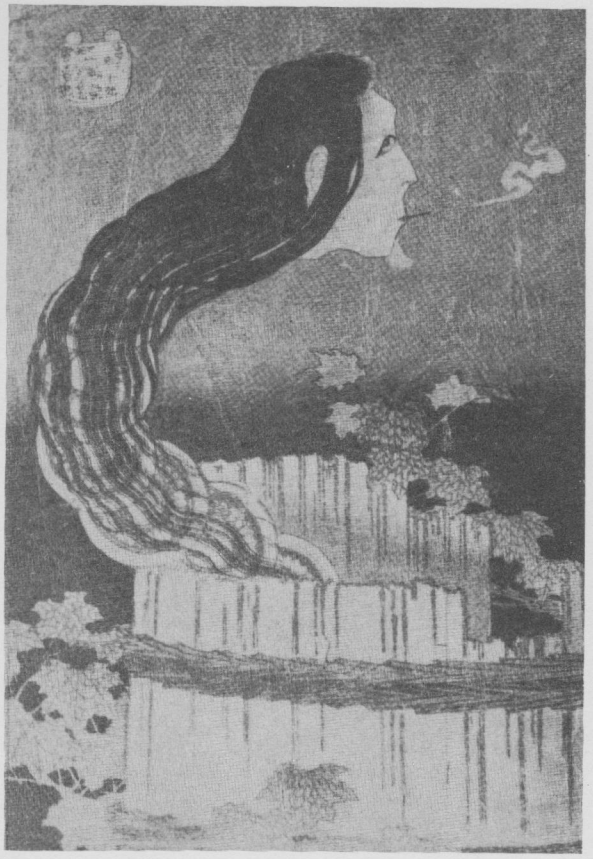
784. Peyotl is a cactus cultivated especially in the State of San Luis Potosi in Mexico. It is chewed like a quid of tobacco and produces visual hallucinations which were not beneath the notice of the Aztec priests.



785

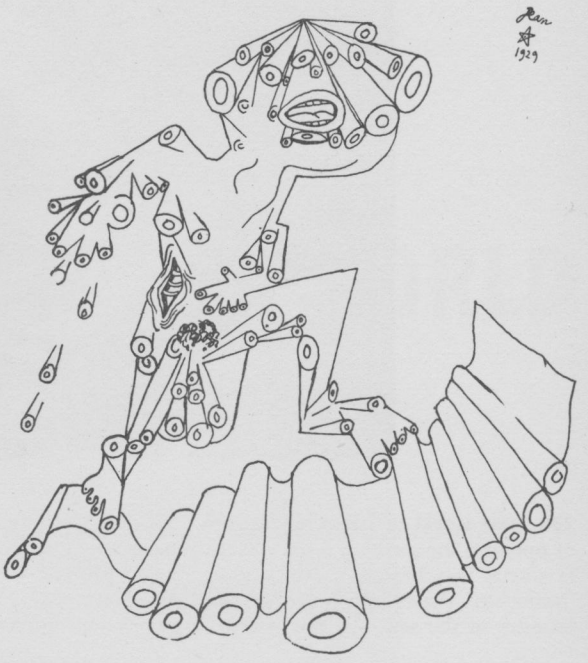
785. 'The Haschish-smoker', by Bernard.

786. 'Opium vision' (Japanese print).



786

787 to **789.** Several contemporary artists and philosophers have had recourse to drugs as a means of exploring the mind through states of ecstasy. We can mention René Daumai, who has described his surprising voluntary experiment, which led him to the edge of the abyss, in 'La Mort Analogue' (Analagous Death), Jean Cocteau (788), Aldous Huxley (789) and Henri Michaux (mescalin).



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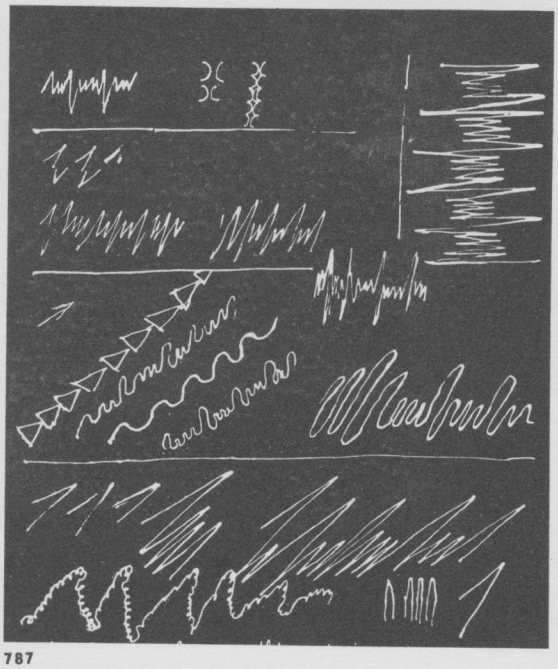

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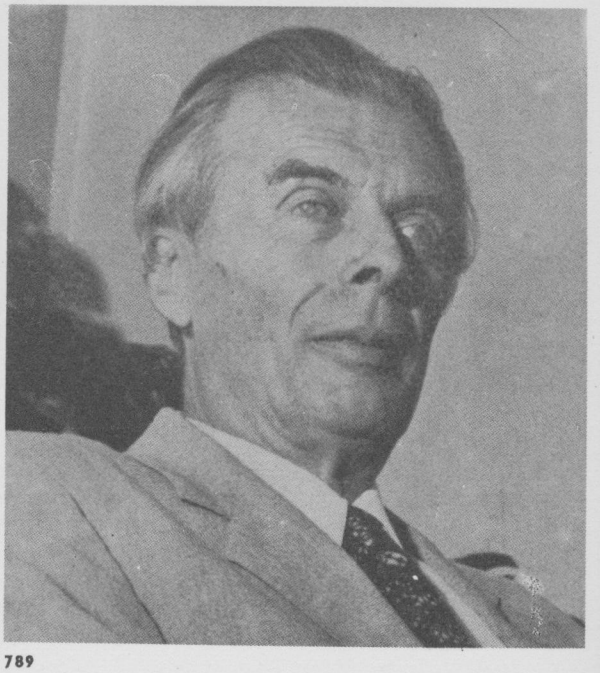

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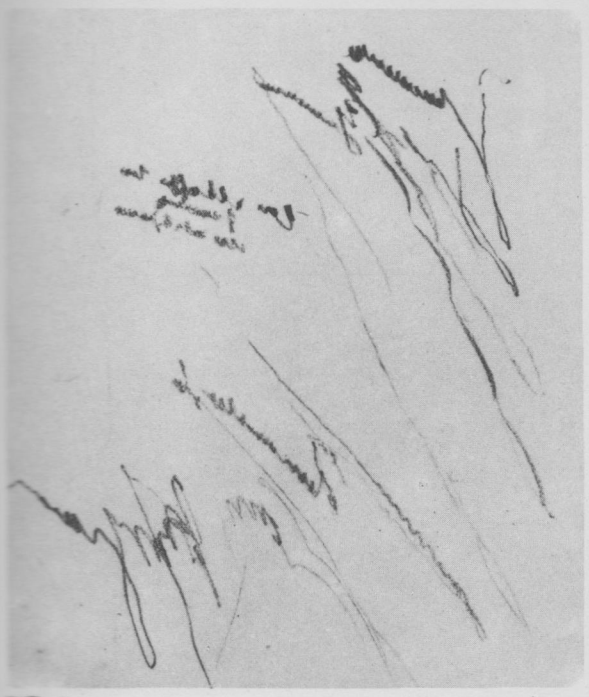

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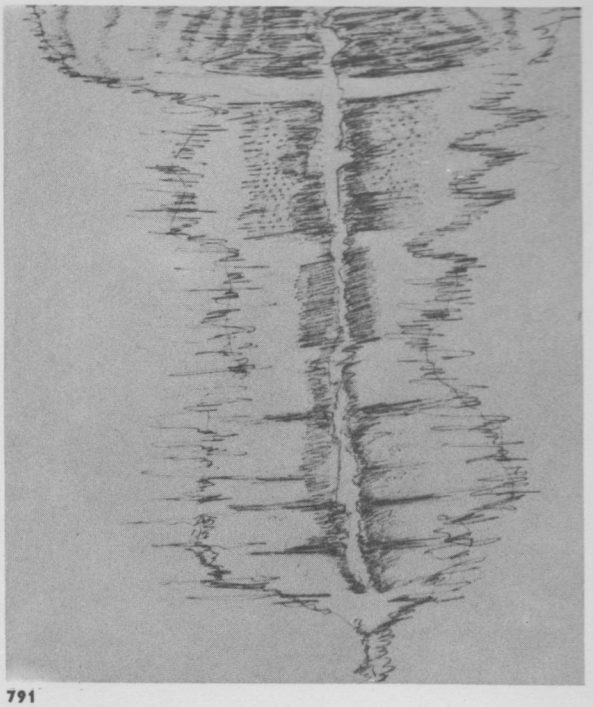

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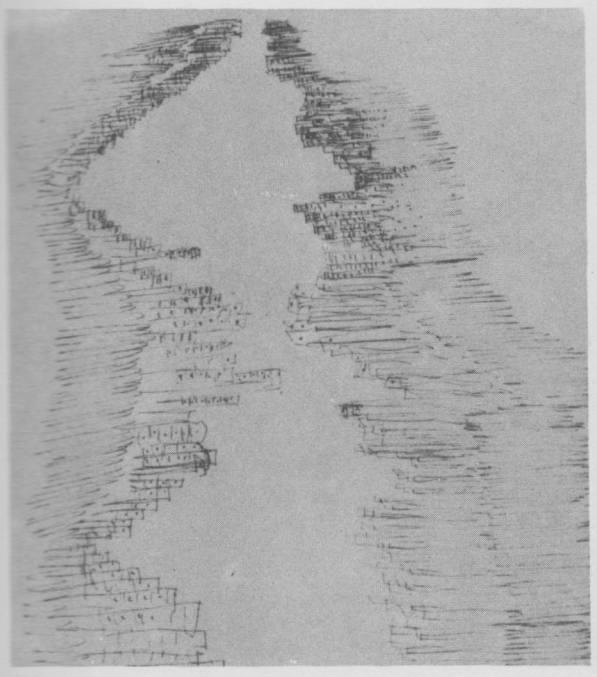
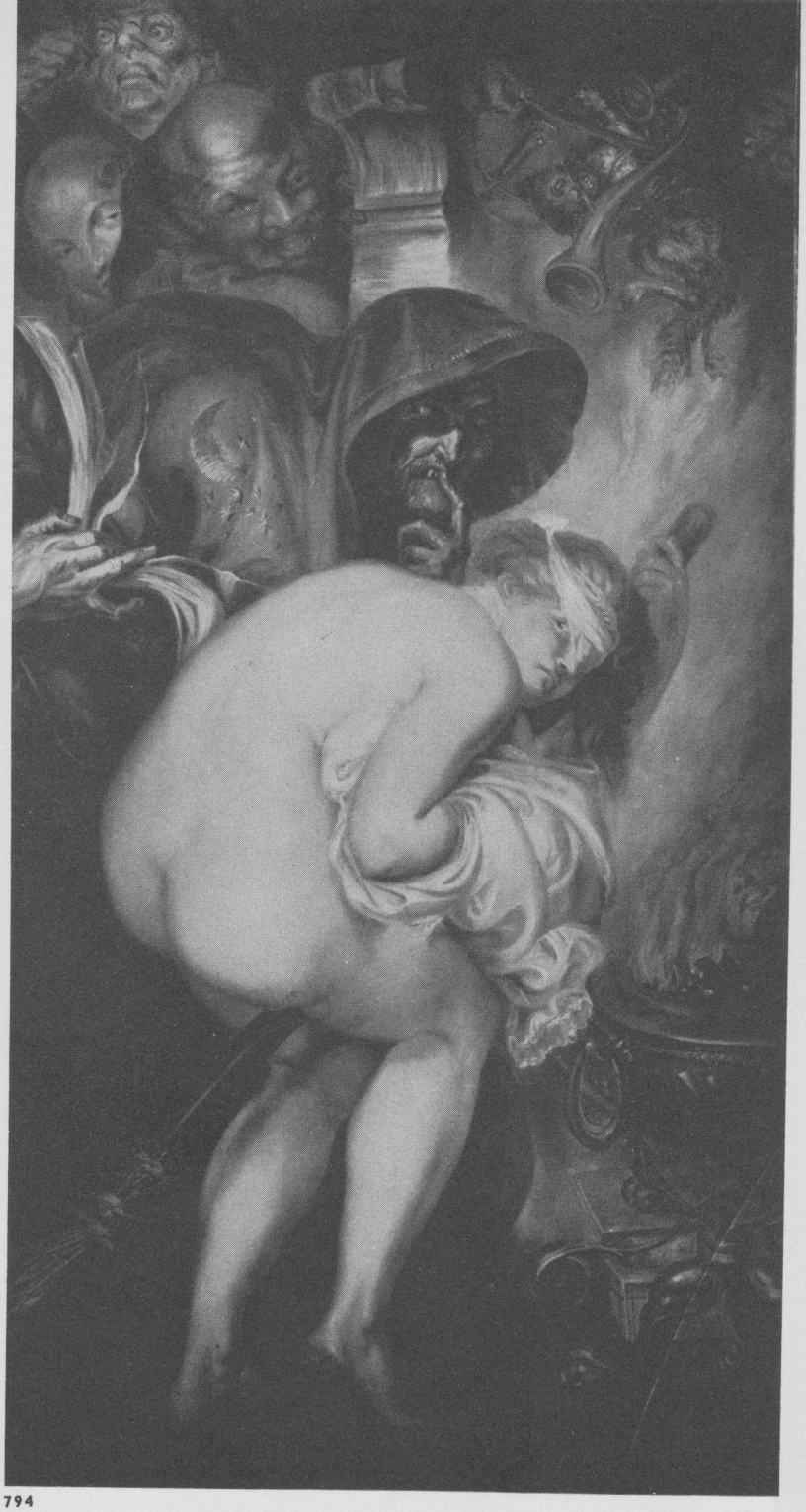


792



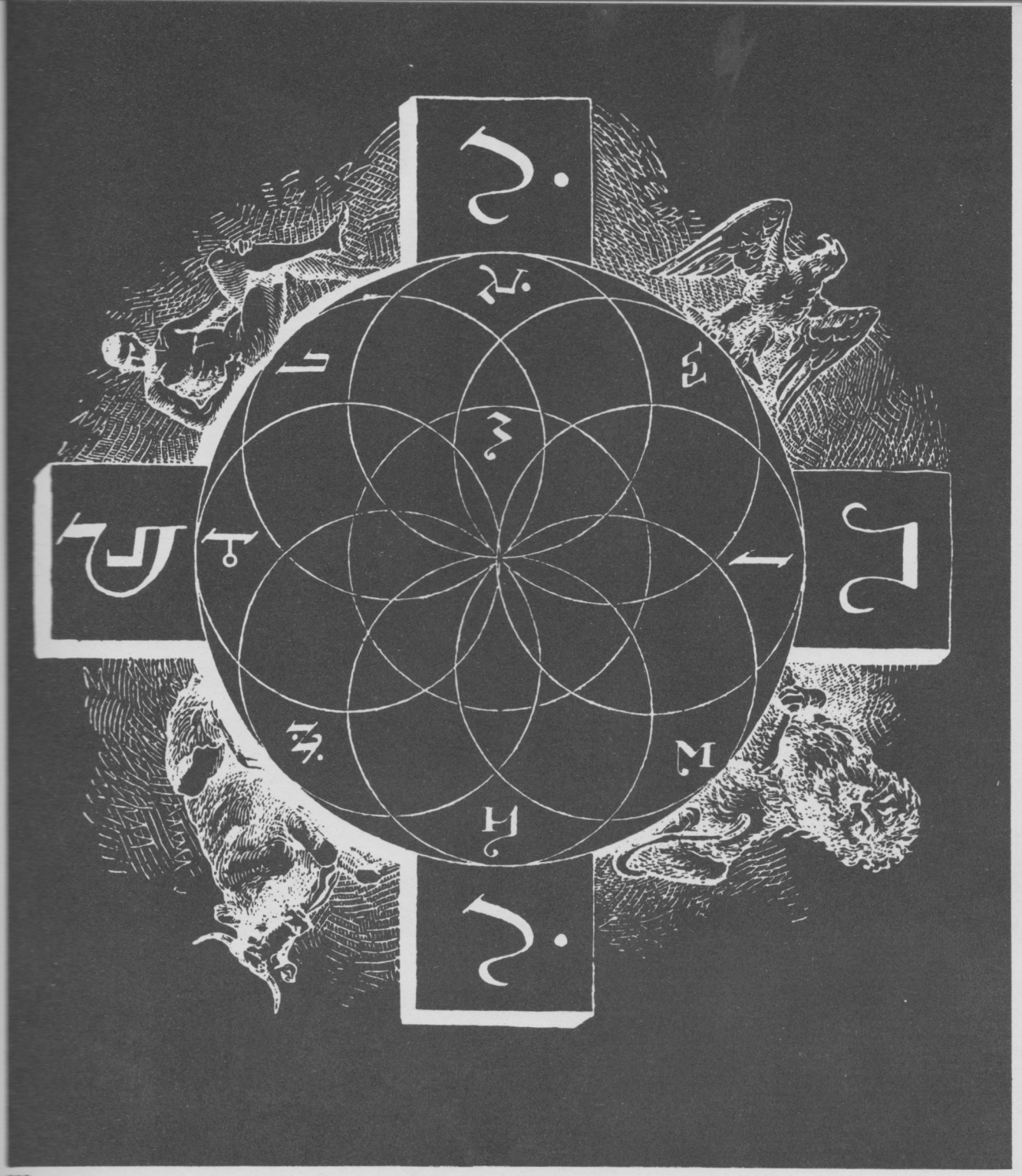
793

790 to **793.** All four drawings on this page were made by Henri Michaux in a very advanced state of intoxication. There would be no point in trying to comment on them, that is, from the psychoanalytical point of view. It should be noted that a breakdown in handwriting corresponds with a profound disintegration of the self. Michaux seems to be aware of this, and the drawing 791 expresses this state of affairs. Michaux remains very reserved on the question of the 'sea of happiness' to which drugs can lead. 'We are bored', he says, 'by the whole question of drugs and paradise. It would be better if drugs could give us a little knowledge. We do not spend a century in paradise'.



794

794. 'The Sorceress' by Antoine Wiertz.



795

THE CONSPIRATORS OF THE OCCULT

795. A cross, a circle and a rose are all that is needed to explain the world. Secret societies cultivate this symbolism, which, after all, has some fascination. Yet when it comes to understanding the significance of these images, we remain puzzled, and if by chance we succeed in deciphering them, we realise that hardly anything has been explained.

INITIATION INTO NOTHINGNESS



796

796. Sorcerers, magicians and initiates have all loved mystery and have always grouped themselves into fraternities and organisations which later became secret societies given over to the practice of magic and the rites of initiation. Among certain races occult societies consisting of men only (who preside over the initiation rites for the boys) possess a 'Men's House' which is strictly forbidden to women. The picture above shows one of these 'Houses' in New Guinea.



797

797. A native of the New Hebrides, standing in front of the 'Men's House' in his village, and wearing his initiation mask.



798



799

800. A senior initiate belonging to a secret society in the New Hebrides, or 'old Meleun'. His head is covered with spiders' webs and his arms ornamented with pigs' teeth, the sign of his rank. The spiders' webs cover his chest and his abdomen down to his private parts. This does not prevent him from having several wives by whom, as a good initiate, he has many children.

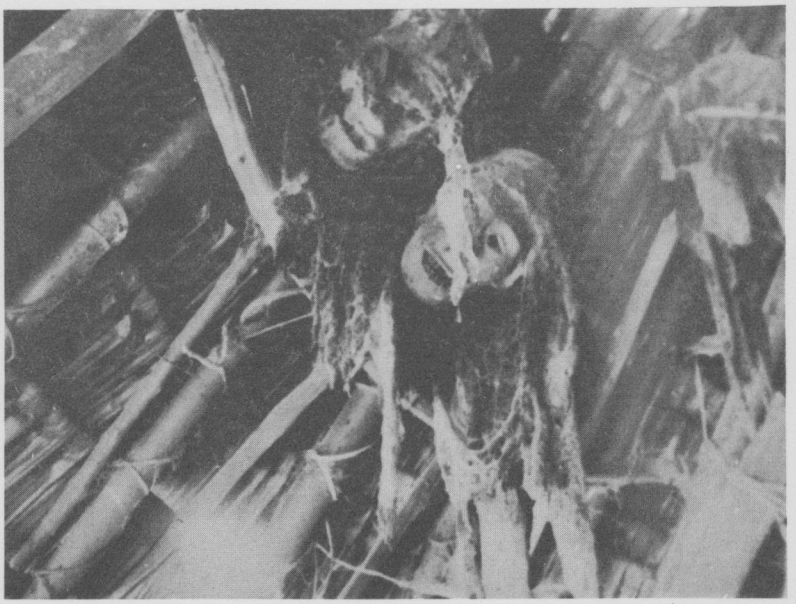


800

798. Wooden statue from the Ivory Coast. The young initiates brandish it and then use it as a club with which to beat the ground during the great 'poro' ceremonies.

799. P'pongwe mask from the Gaboon, belonging to a secret society for women. Little is known about occult groups restricted to women, or about the objects they worship.

801. Initiation rites for boys are often associated with the worship of the dead and of ancestors. This picture shows a 'Men's House' in a village of the New Hebrides with the famous skulls modelled in relief which are supposed to preserve the magical powers of the ancestors, to the advantage of the tribe.

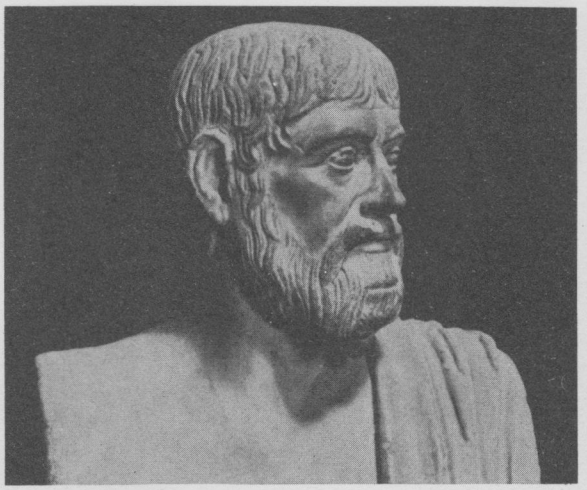


801



802

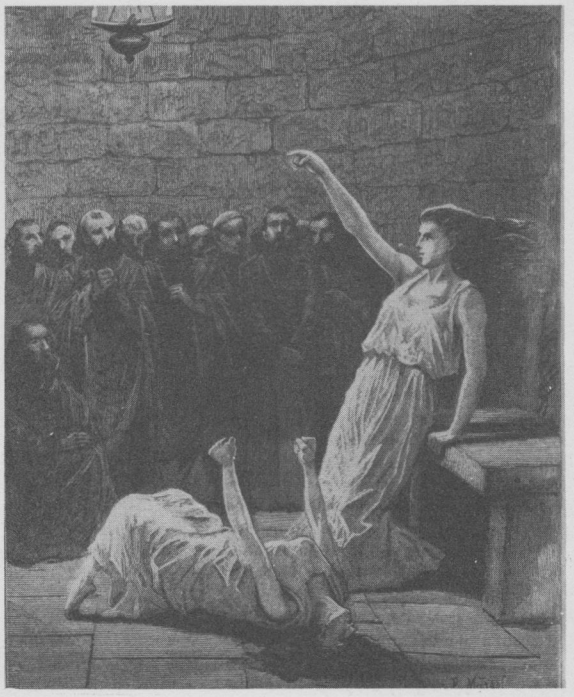
802. The Emperor Julian, whom the Christians referred to as 'the Apostate', because he had abjured their faith and restored the pagan religion, had been initiated in a ruined temple near Ephesus, long before anyone could have suspected that he would become Emperor. He brought back the mystic rites, and practised the magic arts and astrology.



803

803. Julian the Apostate died fighting, without having appointed his successor. Before he died he is supposed to have pronounced these words: 'Why weep for a soul that is ready to join the spirits of the stars?' After his death his adversaries spread the worst possible stories about him.

804. The Gnostics were organised in sects. Certain writers have maintained that they should be regarded as the precursors of freemasonry. Priscilla, the 'possessed' Prophetess of one of these sects, 'would fall down in a frenzy' and 'the members, who surrounded her in admiration and respect, would rejoice in the manifestations of the spirit'.



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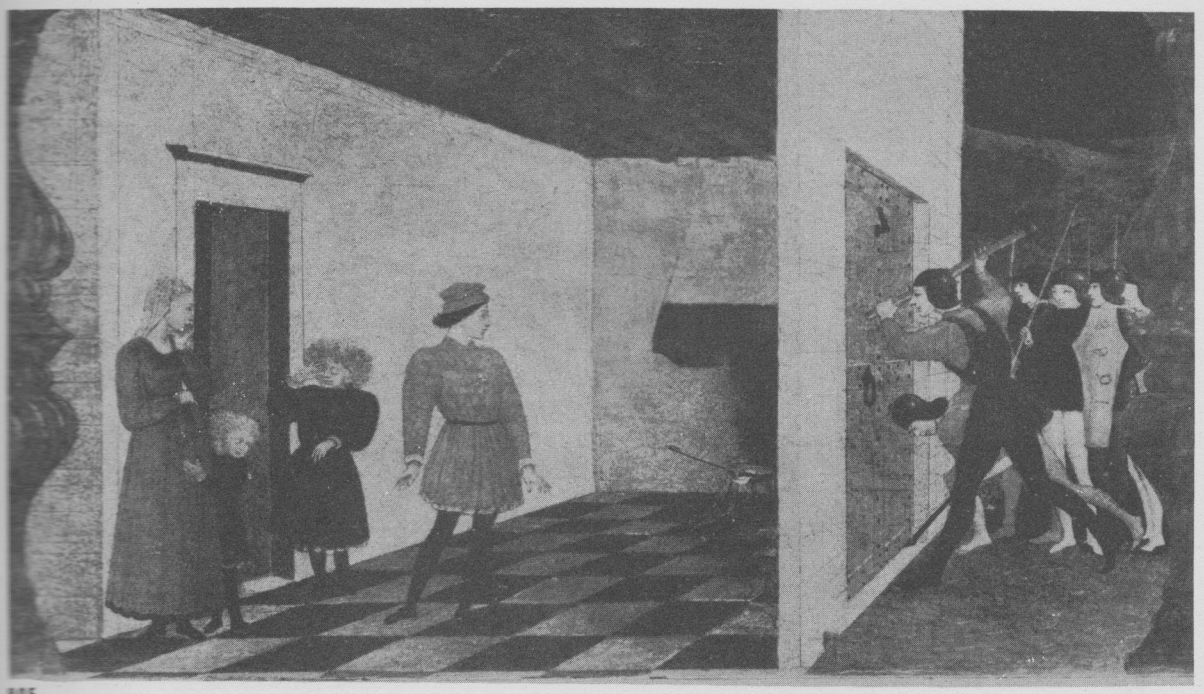


805

805. The 'Luciferians' of the Middle Ages have also been regarded as among the precursors of secret societies. We are told that they carried out the profanation of the host. The arrest of a profaner of this type filled right-thinking people with delight.



806



807

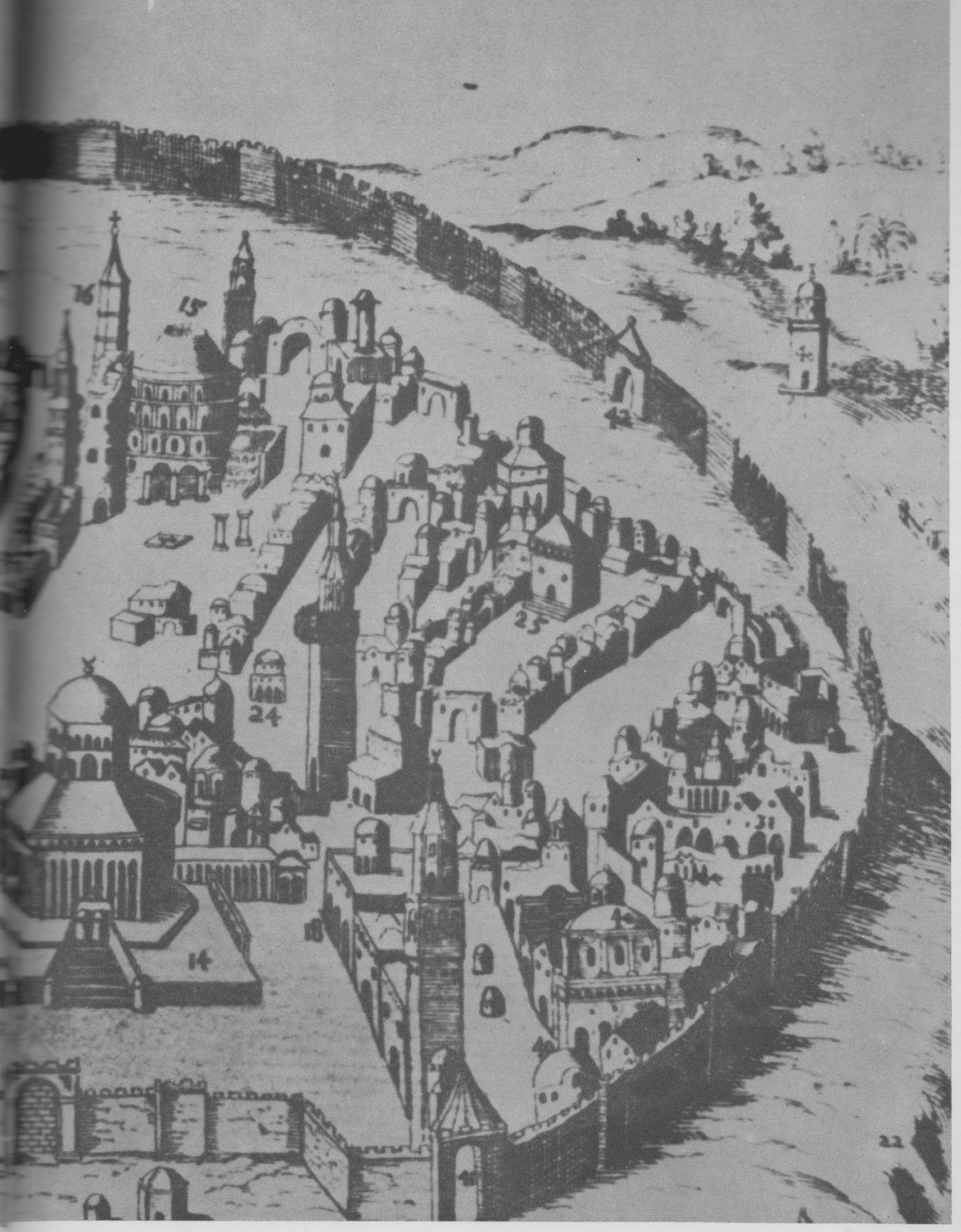
806. For 'in front of the idol of Satan these wretched men would thrust their daggers through the holy sacrament that one of them had received the day before in the neighbouring parish'.

807. The 'Old Man of the Mountain' (XI century) had organised the Haschishin (Assassins) at the time of the Crusades. The members of this sect, while intoxicated with haschish, would commit the most violent crimes or acts of daring, merely when their leader, Hassan Sabbah, ordered them to do so, without any particular reason.

808. At the time of the Crusades the great military orders of the West had their centres in Jerusalem. It was there that contact was made with certain currents in Arabic thought which later inspired the Templars. The 'House of the Temple' (marked number 14 in the illustration) had been built in Jerusalem by King Baudouin on the very spot where, according to popular belief, the Temple of Solomon had stood in Biblical times.



808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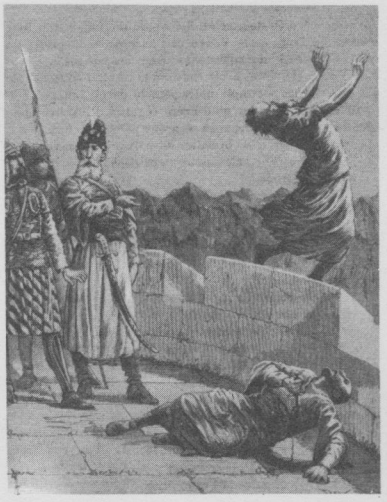
809. In front of the envoy from Melek-Shah, 'the Old Man of the Mountain' orders one of his 'fedavi' to plunge a dagger into his own heart and then orders another one to leap off the top of the tower. The two fanatics, drugged with haschish, obey at once.



809

810. The Illuminati used to hang their victims from trees. A dagger had been planted previously in the trunk of the tree-gibbet. The sect of the Illuminati was founded in 1776 by Weisshaupt, professor of canonical law at Ingolstadt, and often earned fame through its acts of violence.



810



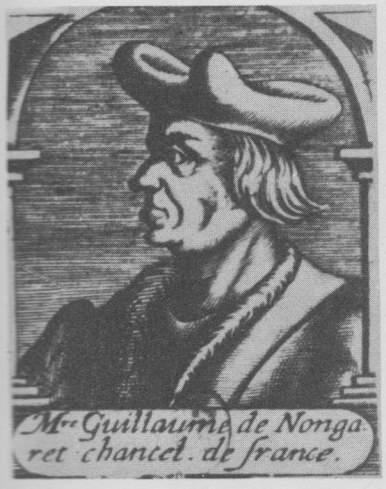
811



812

811–812. The Order of the Temple, which for a long time was regarded as the most important occult organisation of the Christian West, was founded in 1118 by Hughes de Payns and eight other French knights, who were companions of Godefroy de Bouillon. Originally the duty of the Order was to ensure the defence of Christ's tomb, and it included four classes.

813–814. Guillaume de Nogaret, chancellor to Philippe le Bel, was one of the leading figures in the trial brought against the Templars. When the trial took place, at the beginning of the 14th century, the Order consisted of fifteen thousand five hundred knights, a vast number of squires and a host of lay brethren, who were all responsible to the Grand Master, Jacques de Molay. The Order also possessed more than ten thousand manors and several fortresses, including that of the Temple in Paris (814). The treasure owned by the Order amounted to one hundred and fifty thousand golden florins, without counting silver and precious vases.
The worship of Baphomet, whether it was real or presumed, was the first item in the charges put forward in Philippe le Bel's accusation against the Order.



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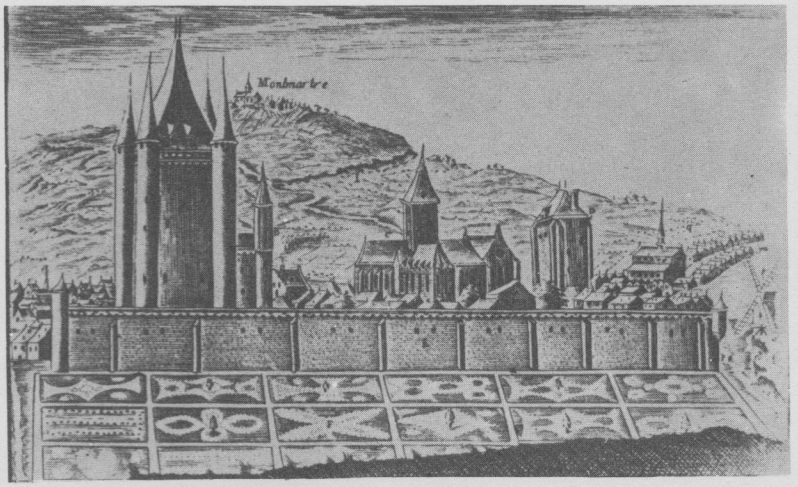
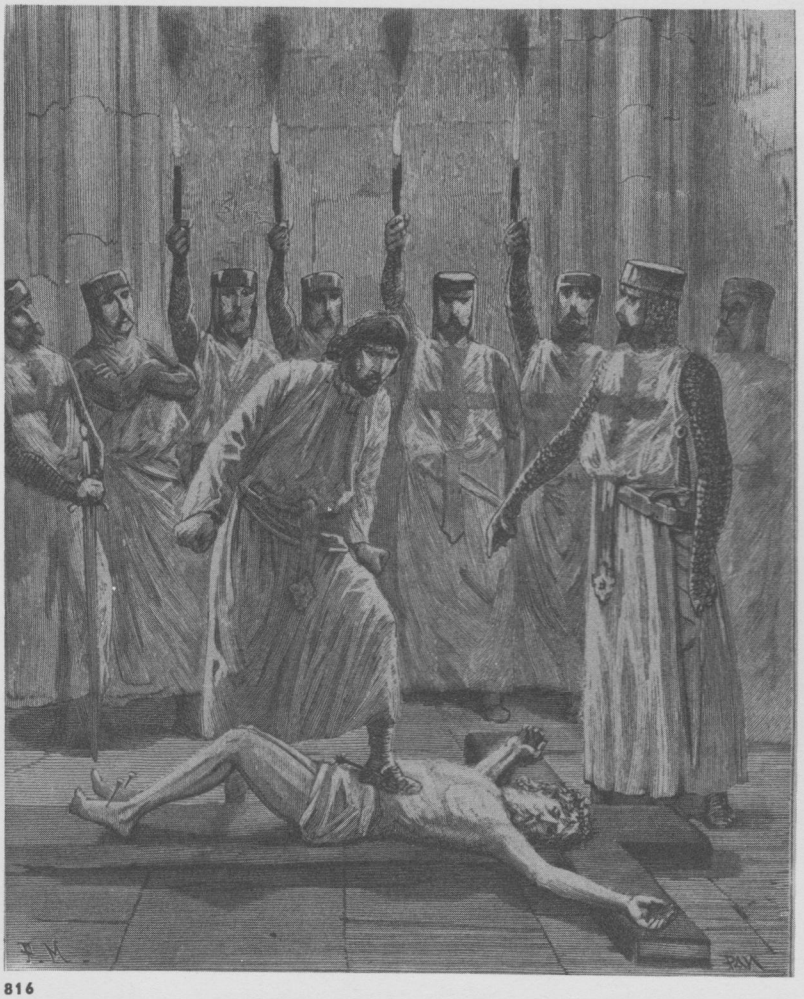


814

815. Graffiti said to have been made by the Knights Templar on the walls of the Château de Chinon. They include clearly recognisable symbols common to the Cabbala and to Alchemy which must have appeared suspect to the detractors of the Templars. It was after their stay in the Holy Land, where occult influences, of Arabic and Jewish origin, probably affected their ideology, that the Templars adopted the secret society practices which were harshly ascribed to them during their unfortunately famous trial.


815

TRAMPLING THE CROSS UNDERFOOT



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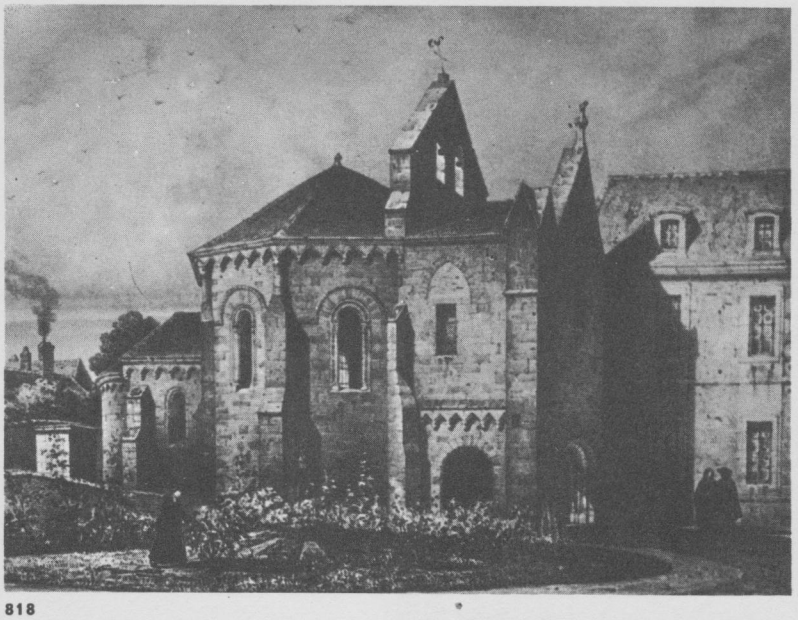


818

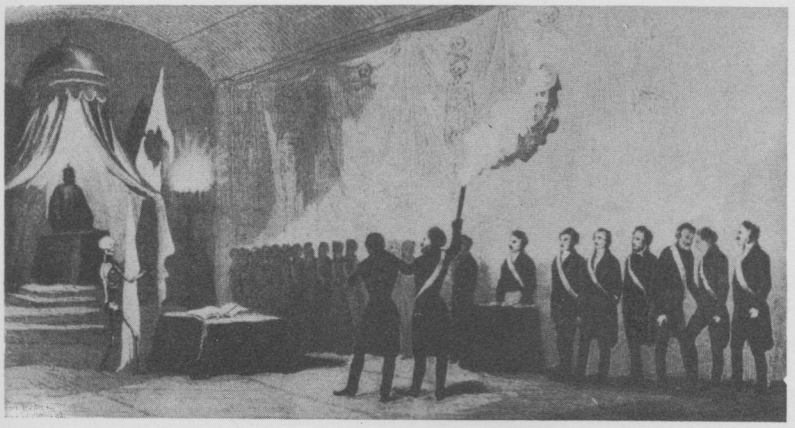


817

816. 'Whenever a Templar was received into the Order he denied Christ; he was forced to spit on a crucifix and often even to trample it underfoot' (Michelet). Other historians believed that the purpose of this initiatory rite was to harden the Templars for war: this was the toughest endurance test to which the infidels could have submitted them in the event of their being taken prisoner.

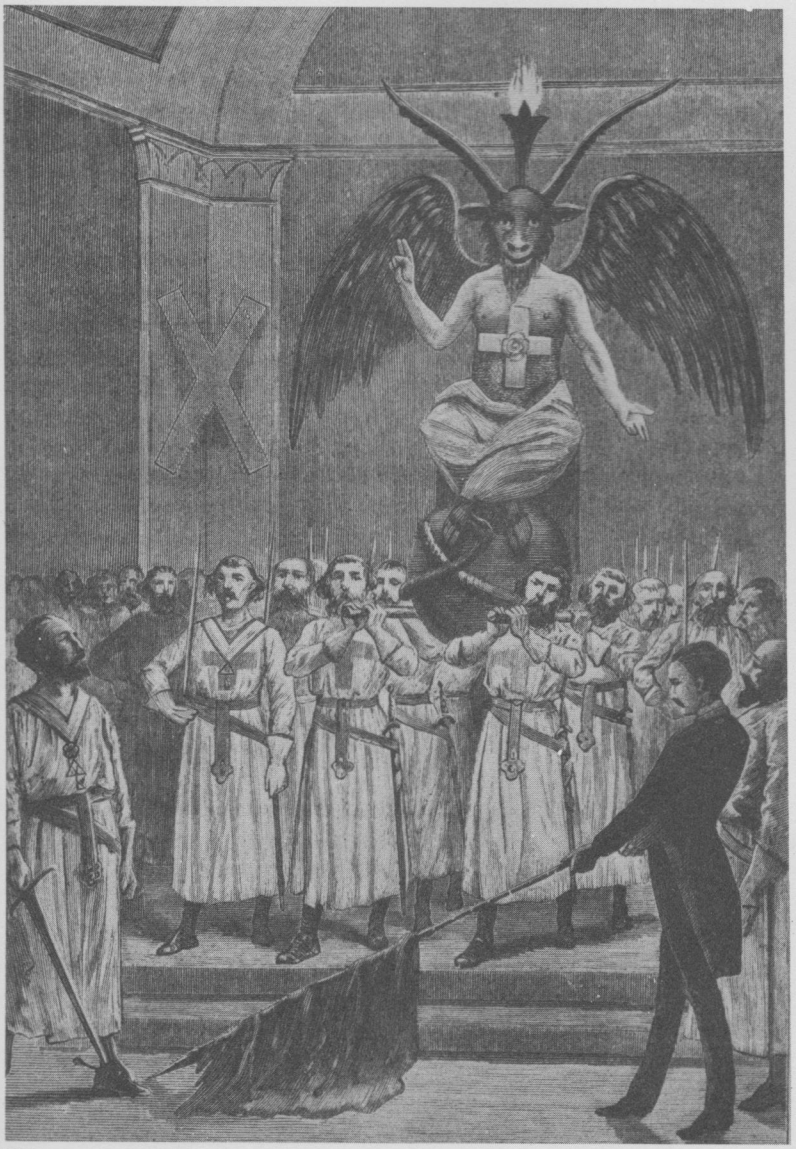
817. According to oral tradition this devil in the church of Saint-Merri is supposed to be the idol Baphomet worshipped by the Templars, but there is no material proof to lend any weight to this tradition. This period owes its fame to the cruelty of the preliminary investigation and the ruthlessness of the trial of the Knights.

818. The Chapel of the Knights Templar at Laon, in Aisne, France, where, according to the accusations made against the Knights, incredible orgies are supposed to have taken place. It has also been said that when Jacques de Molay died he condemned the king and the Pope to appear before the Court of God within a year. The fact has not been proved, but it is nonetheless true that Philippe le Bel and Pope Clement V died during the same year.



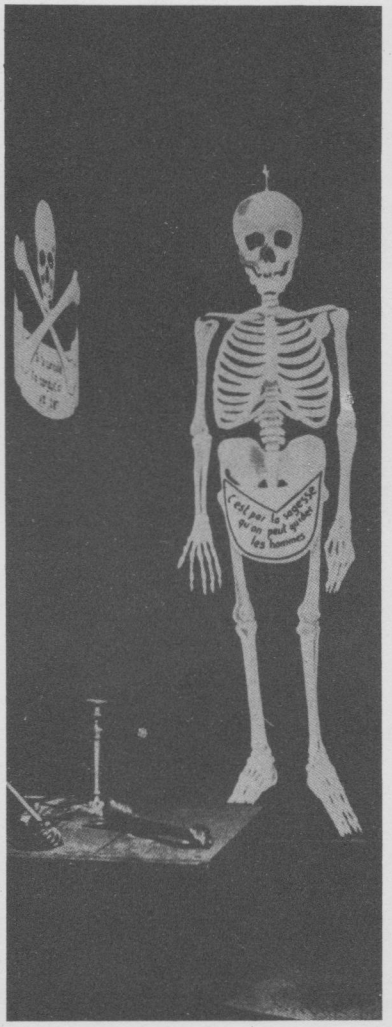
819

819. The 'secrecy' observed by Freemasonry has given rise to the wildest assumptions about the 'ritual' involved. This illustration showing the reception of a mason into the 33rd degree of the hierarchy is perhaps fairly close to reality.



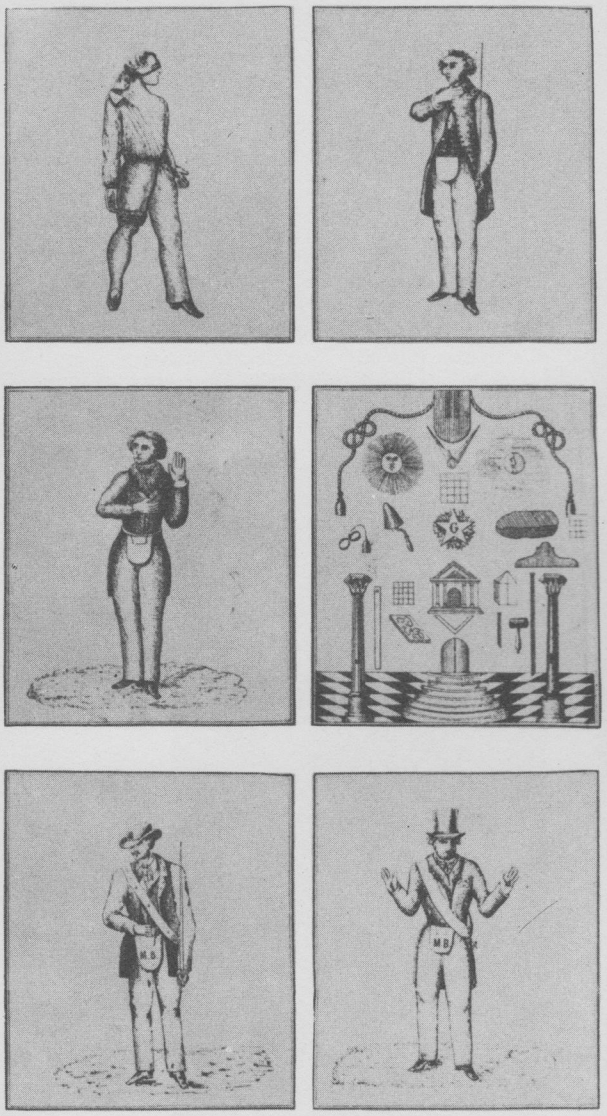
820

820. This portrayal of the initiation of a mason into the 18th degree, a Scottish ceremony, is not likely to dismiss our doubts.



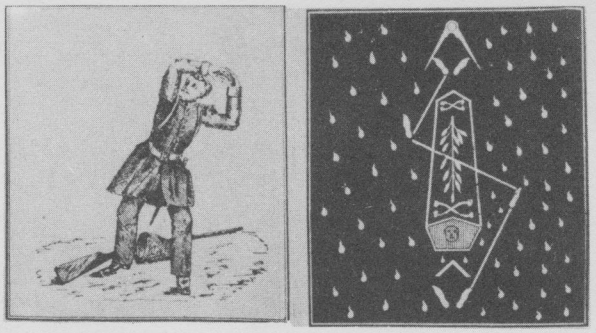
821

821. The 'meditation room' where a candidate for Freemasonry is left alone before being conducted to the 'Lodge' in order to be initiated into the first degree. Just before he 'receives the light' the candidate, who is regarded as being still 'profane', must draw up his philosophical and moral testament.



822

822. From left to right and from top to bottom: the outsider; the apprentice receiving the outsider; the apprentice waiting for orders; the symbolical attributes of the temple; the master; the master making a ceremonial gesture.



823

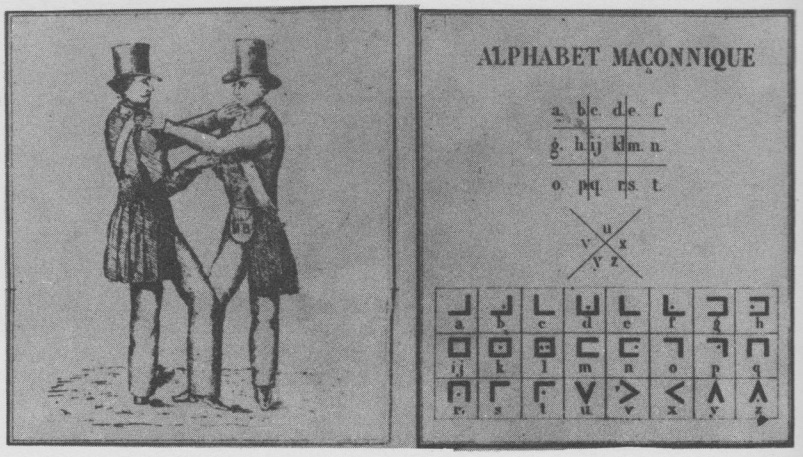
823. The Masonic 'sign of distress' and funereal emblems.

824. It is said that a certain Captain MacKinsty, when he was just about to be scalped by the Iroquois Indians during the American war of Independence, owed his life to a Red Indian chief, who was a mason like himself.



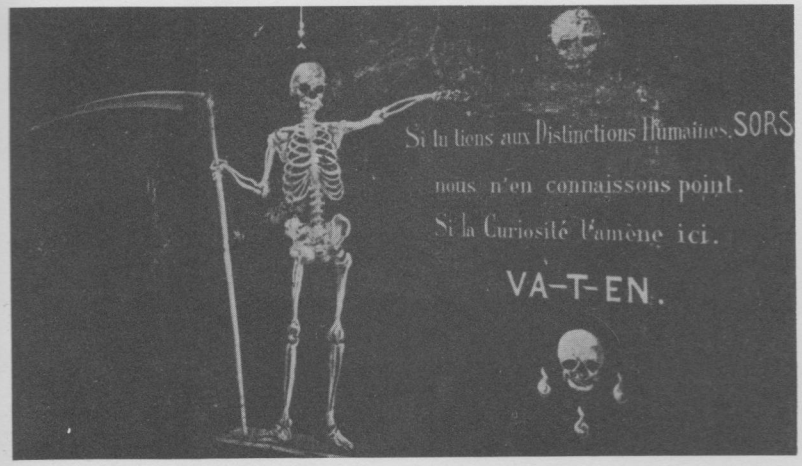
824

825. Two 'masters' greeting each other according to the ritual and a Masonic alphabet of the 19th century. The signs, emblems, tests, grips, sacred words, passwords etc are innumerable, according to the type of 'submission'. The symbolism, rites and emblems of the lodges have hardly changed at all since Freemasonry was instituted.



825

826–827. The decoration of a meditation room in a Masonic Lodge in Orleans. Lady Aldworth, the first Masonic 'sister' in England. Freemasonry, which was based on the legend of Hiram, the architect of Solomon's Temple, became widespread in France at the period of the Corporations in the VIIIth century. Apparently most of the Gothic temples were built by freemasons. Their motto was 'One for all, all for one'.



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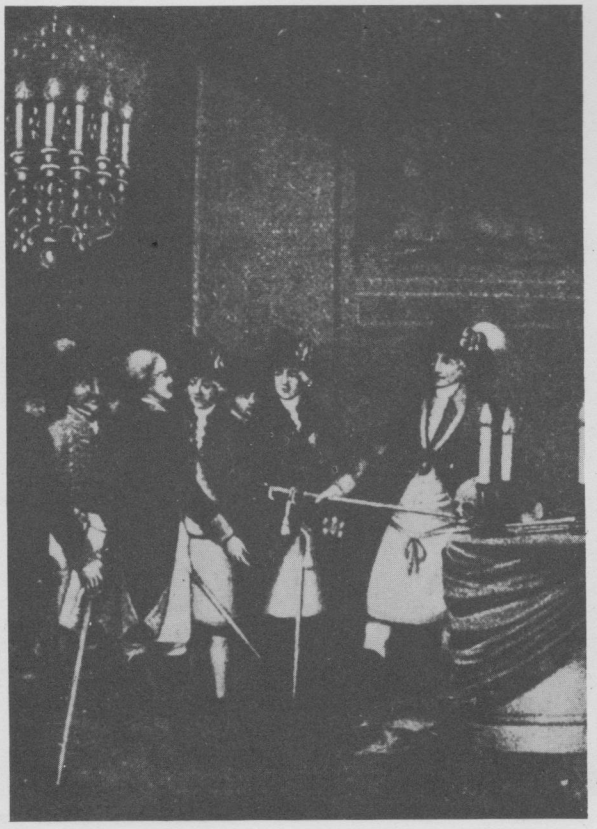


828



829

828–829. Frederick the Great as a simple mason, and George Washington wearing the robes and regalia of a 'master'. Although they have retained the traditions and ceremonies of the past, the national and international lodges have become societies more or less philanthropic in character, and their members take part in highly academic discussions on contemporary social, moral and philosophical problems.

DEMIURGIC APPRENTICES



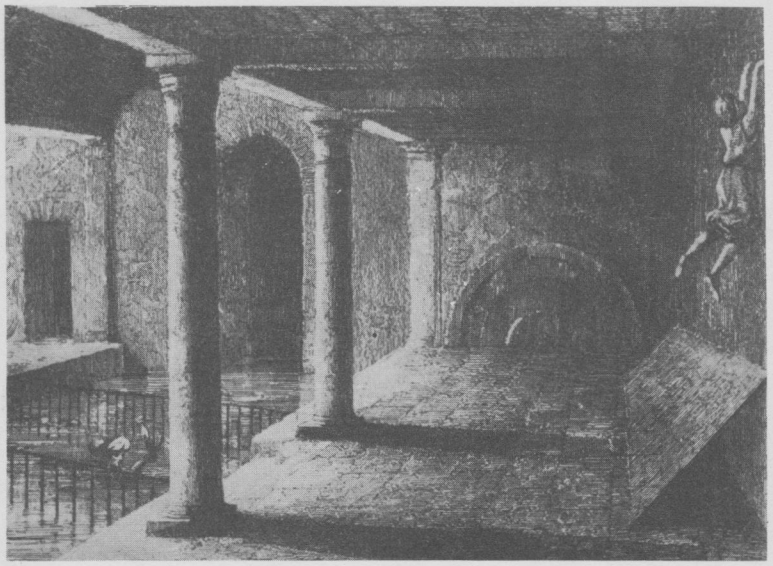
830



831

830. The initiation to the grade of apprentice includes three 'symbolic' journeys. The initiate must carry them out with his eyes blindfolded, his right calf and his left shoulder bared. The apprentice 'saw the light' in the presence of all his brothers brandishing swords.

831. After the apprentice has attended his lodge assiduously for at least a year he describes his impressions of masonry. He is then initiated to the grade of 'fellow craft' by means of a ceremony of which the details vary from one lodge to another; this ceremony, which takes place in front of the 'Flaming Star', is one of the least important in Freemasonry.



832

832. The most unlikely legends circulate about initiations, which are said to include ordeals of a particularly difficult and often dangerous nature. There is no proof that this picture of a so-called 'Egyptian' initiation rite is authentic.

834. Before the Second World War Masonic ceremonies used to take place in public in various western countries. Many Freemasons protested against this breaking of the 'secrecy' which is one of the essential rules of the order. Many ceremonies of this kind, even when homage is paid to the 'Great Architect of the Universe', seem somewhat worthless.

833. Initiation to the rank of 'Master Mason', the highest grade for the Freemason who does not wish to rise to some commanding post within the Order.



833

835. Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, described as the Unknown Philosopher (1743—1803), belonged to the Illuminist school of thought led by the Swede Swedenborg. He modified certain masonic rites and created 'Martinism', which found a large audience among the aristocracy of Russia.



835



834



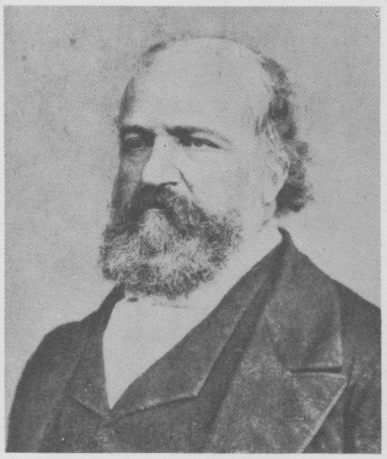
836

836. Fabre d'Olivet (1768—1825) brought one period of occultism and secret societies to an end. In his book 'The Restitution of the Hebrew Tongue' he attempted, with guidance from his wife, who was clairvoyant, to revive the religion of Pythagoras. He also wrote a 'Catechism of Cabbalistic Principles'.

837. Eliphas Lévi, an unfrocked priest whose real name was Alphonse Louis Constant, claims that he received from the 'spirits' a magic book, pentacles and other things. He was interested in alchemy and the Cabbala. His books included 'Dogma and Ritual of High Magic', 'The Key to the Great Mysteries' etc.

838. Stanislas de Guaita, the friend of Maurice Barrès, took part in all the occultist enterprises of the late 19th century. He was the author of an essay on the accursed science, 'On the threshold of Mystery', and of 'The Serpent of Genesis', he resurrected the 'Rosicrucians' and conceived a somewhat naive philosophy based on the utility of Evil: thanks to the law of opposites, Evil plays its part in the manifestation of and finally in the triumph of Good.

839. Sar Peladan took the title with which he preceded his name from the kings of Assyria. He then caused a scission in the Rosicrucian Society in Paris. He was a grand master and supreme hierarch of the Third Order of the Catholic Rosicrucians, and, along with Elémir Bourges and the Comte de la Rochefoucauld, he founded the very fashionable 'Rosicrucian salons'.



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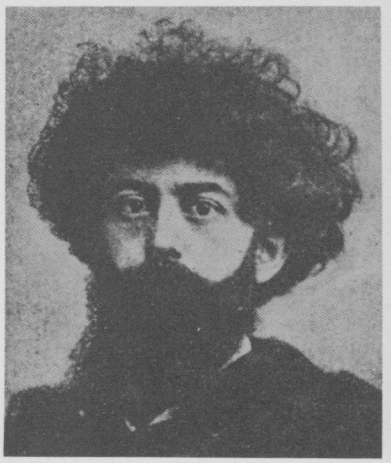
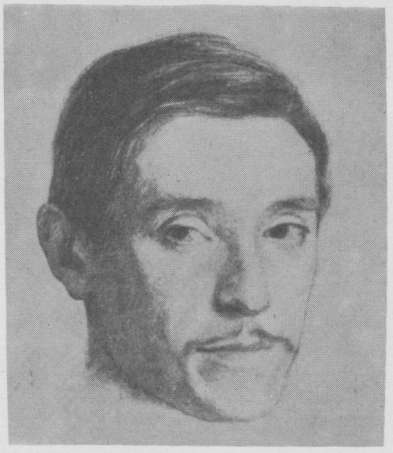
838



839



840



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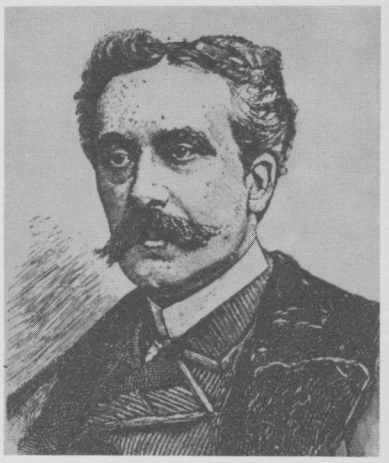
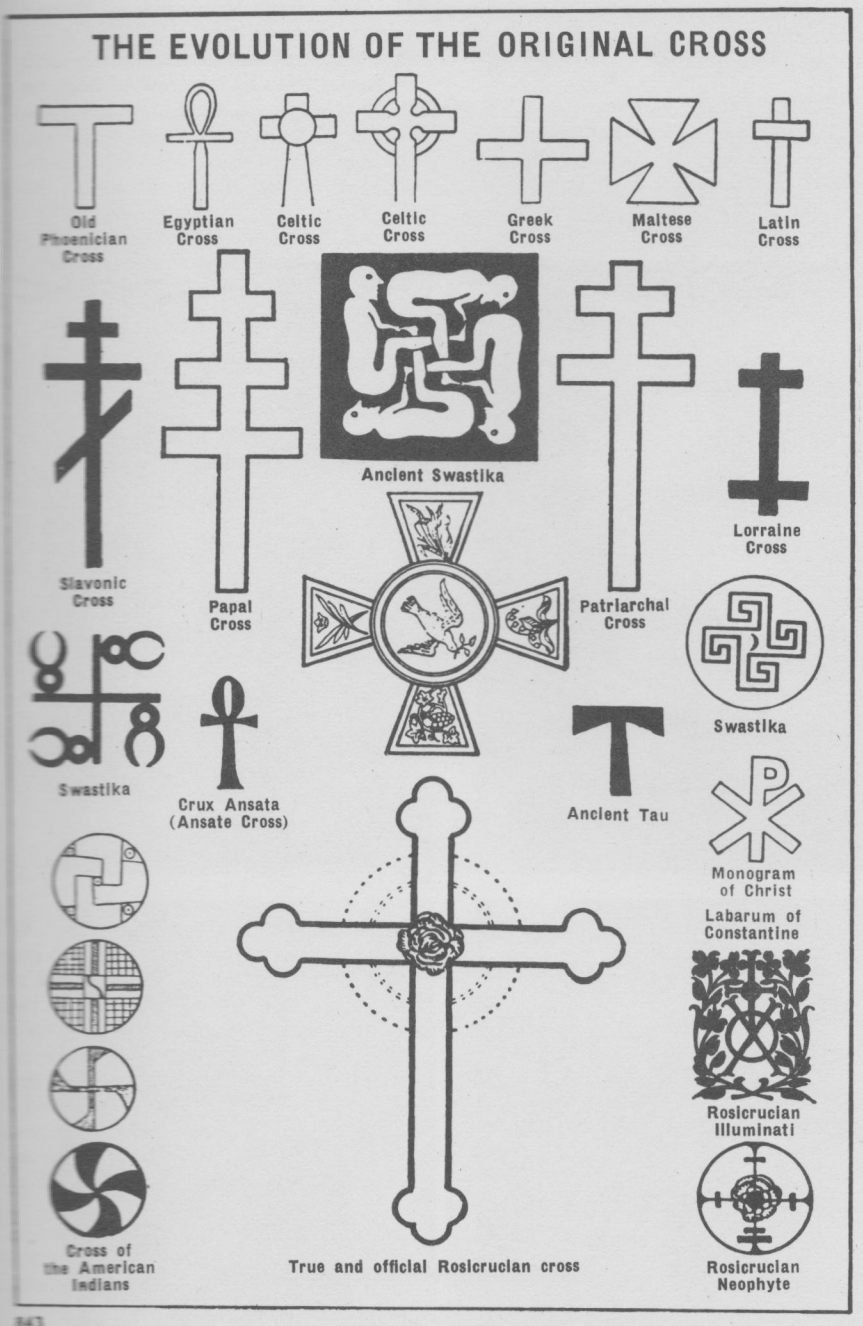


842

840. Gérard Encausse, known as Papus, founded 'Isis', a group which issued theosophical propaganda. He wrote a 'Methodical Treaty of Occult Sciences', 'The Tarot of the Gipsies', The Knowledge of the Magi', 'The Cabbala', and a 'Treatise on Practical Magic'. He possessed the gifts of a healer and wanted to be a magus, an astrologer and an alchemist all at once. During the First World War he is said to have predicted the German attack at Verdun and its failure.

841. Yvon le Loup, known as Sédir (anagram of 'désir'), a 'doctor' of cabbalistic method, an occultist and mystic, said that he had 'examined all esoteric arts and explored every crypt, but none of the certainties I finally grasped seemed to be the one true Certainty'. At the end of his life he began to study the Gospels.

842. At the period when Madame Blavatsky and Annie Besant were astonishing the world with their writings on esoteric subjects, Saint Yves d'Alveydre occupied himself in establishing a connection between letters, colours and the planets.



843

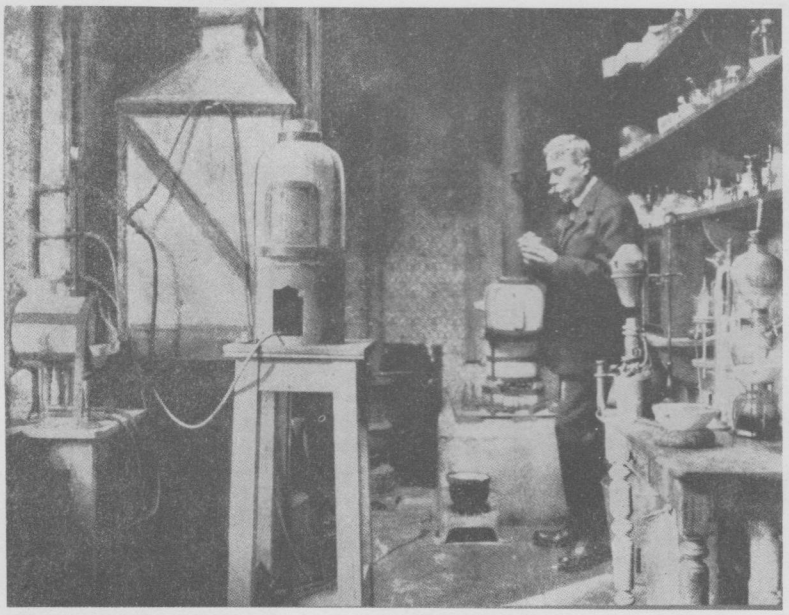
843. The Rosicrucian Order, which had been widely developed during the 18th century, had been reconstituted in the United States in 1907. The Danish astrologer Max Heindel stated that he had been visited in Berlin by 'unincarnate invisible superior spirits' or 'elder brothers', who informed him of their intension to return to earth whenever the Rosicrucians had a mission to fulfill. On the same occasion Heindel received — or so he said — the necessary instructions for giving a new foundation to the old secret society. For this reason he founded, south of Los Angeles, a 'Rosicrucian Temple', which was completed in 1920 and has been much frequented since.



844

844. The name 'Rosicrucian' comes from that of the founder of the movement, Christian Rosenkreutz, who is said to have died in 1484 after becoming an initiate in the Holy Land. Since then the Rosicrucians have endowed themselves with an outstanding ancestor: Raymond VI, Count of Toulouse, who was a Rosicrucian before the Order was invented, for he lived nearly two hundred years before the aforementioned Rosenkreutz.

845. A picture of Jolivet-Castelot taken in his laboratory. He analysed the 'accursed sciences' in a book before becoming president of the French Society of Alchemy. He is said to have produced gold by a process of transmutation. He was a high dignitary of the French Rosicrucian Society and helped to bring alchemy back into fashion.



845



846

846. Mrs May Banks-Stacey, co-foundress and first 'Grand Master of the Rosicrucian Order' was a descendant of Cromwell and the French family of d'Arcy. She was said to possess the manuscripts of the first American Rosicrucians of Philadelphia, dating from the 17th century.

847. The English magician Alesteir Crowley, who was born in 1875, belonged to the Order of the Golden Dawn, which was Rosicrucian in inspiration; later he founded his own secret society, the 'Astrum Argentinum'. He was opposed to large-scale meetings and believed in self-initiation based on unknown 'superiors'.



847



848

848. Crowley, standing in front of the altar, has put on the ritual robe and placed the crown of the serpent 'uraeus' on his head. He brandishes the magic wand and has arranged all his apparatus on the altar: the cup, the sword, the ceremonial bell etc.



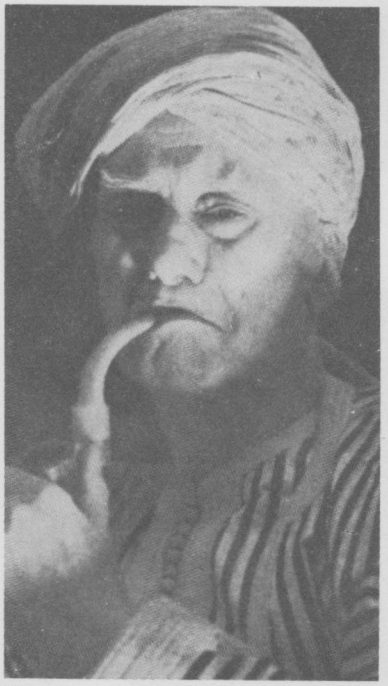
849

849 to **851.** Crowley asserted that from ancient times the prophets had foreseen the fall of the Christian 'Eon' and that they had said so in the Apocalypse of St John, which described the prophet of the new Eon in the manner of a negative: he would be an apocalyptic Beast provided with seven heads and ten horns. To himself and to his adepts he was that same Beast. Moreover he signed his letters or his writings 'The Beast'.

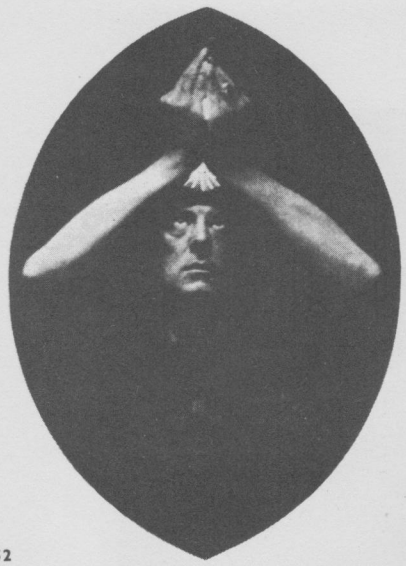
He taught that 'existence was pure joy, that sorrows are only passing, artificial clouds'. Our pictures show Crowley, dressed as 'Master Therion', addressing the sun at dawn (849); Corley's hands carrying out a 'mudra' or yoga seal (850); and Crowley smoking his pipe filled with tobacco that had been soaked in rum (851).



850



851



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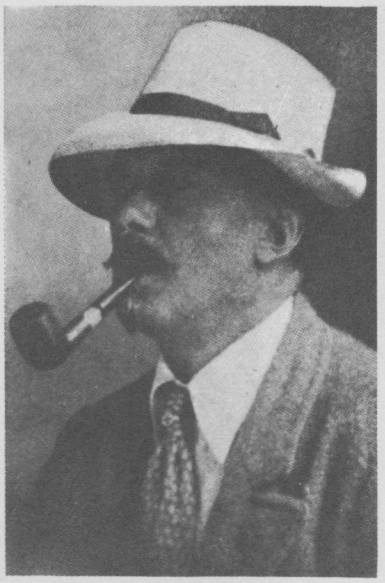


854



855

852 to **855.** Crowley believed that the discovery of true will-power coincided with the 'Great Work'. The 'supreme achievement' of which he dreamed could only be obtained through the destruction of the Self and through ceasing to discern opposites. But this is only made possible by crossing the 'Abyss'. After that the magician must accept many metamorphoses: the illustrations show Crowley as the 'Guardian of the Flame' (852), as 'Prince Chioa Khan' (853), as an 'English gentleman' (854), and as the 'Holy and Supreme Baphomet' (855).

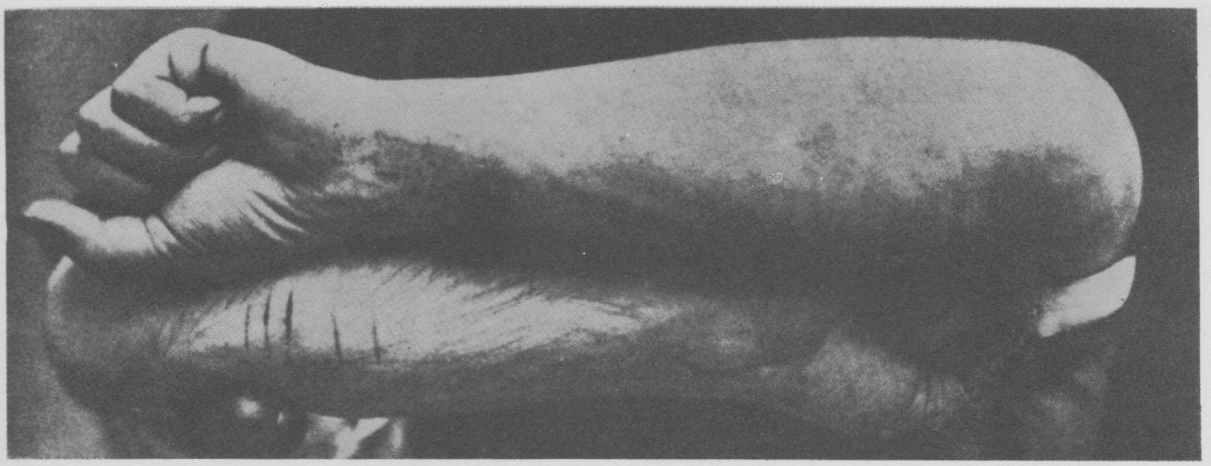


856

856. In about 1920 Crowley founded in Sicily an 'Abbaye de Thélème'. His disciples could come there to receive instruction from him and participate in the 'sacred orgy' which was the basis of his teaching. According to Crowley, both the master and his disciples had to practise in this 'Collegium ad Spiritum Sanctum' a form of sexual magic based on 'celestial hierogamy'. A great deal of opium, cocaine and haschish was consumed in the process.



853



857

857–858. The gashed arms of one of the magician's disciples: Crowley urged his followers, each time that they pronounced the hateful word 'I', to gash their arms with a razor, so that they would not forget that there can be no supreme 'achievement' as long as the slightest traces of the Self remain. The magico-sexual activities of Crowley (which led to the hospitalisation of several of his 'concubines' and the mysterious death of a child) brought this escapade to an end.



858



859

859. While at the Abbey Crowley painted several pictures, including some which were carried out in a state of trance. The American film director Kenneth Anger has photographed various of them, including this pen and ink sketch.



860

SPIRITS AND THE SIMPLE-MINDED

860. Secret societies have not disappeared from the world of today, and on the contrary they are continually on the increase. In most cases these associations are rather absurd. The picture above shows the 'German Order of the Knights of the Holy Grail', which was reconstituted in 1947.

861. 'Christ's Witnesses' can be more easily excused because they are simple-minded and too easily inclined to accept any explanation whatever of the forces that control the universe; but they too should be criticised when they go in for absurd practices which come near violence. In this picture they can be seen in a cemetery at Toulon, France, taking part in a somewhat ridiculous ritual following a tragic event.



861

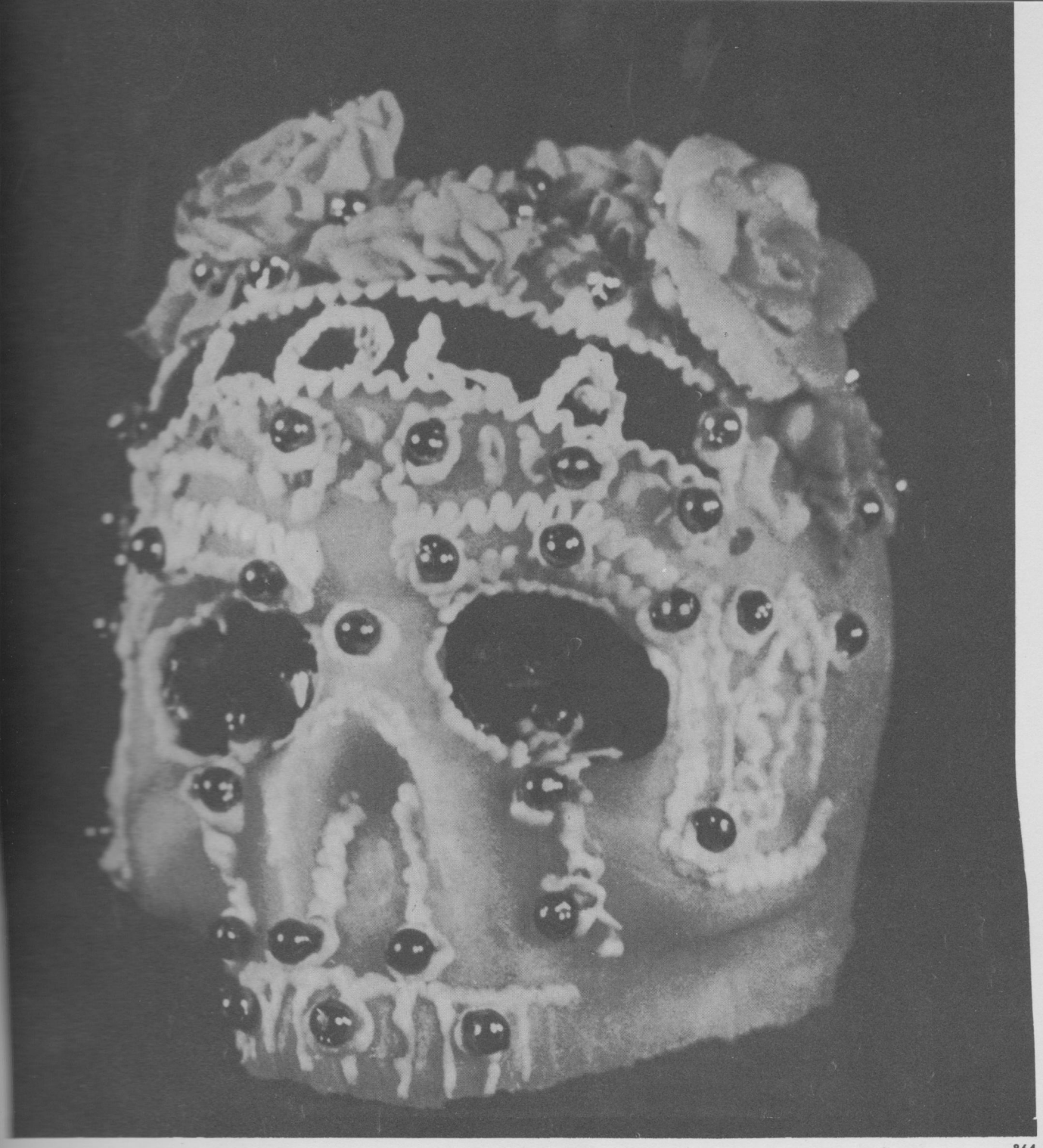


862

862. The Ku-Klux-Klan, which was founded in the United States after the Civil War of 1860 to 1865 in order to combat the influence of the coloured population, cannot strictly speaking be classed with esoteric groups which are concerned with the spiritual self-realisation of their members. The members of this so-called secret society would be no more than a joke if they did not indulge in lynchings, trials and executions; they are in fact a striking illustration of the primitivism that survives in the very heart of a civilisation that has reached a high degree of technical achievement. The photographs show: members of the Ku-Klux-Klan meeting in front of a genuine 'fiery cross' (862); and other members receiving their instruction before going on a punitive expedition (863).



863

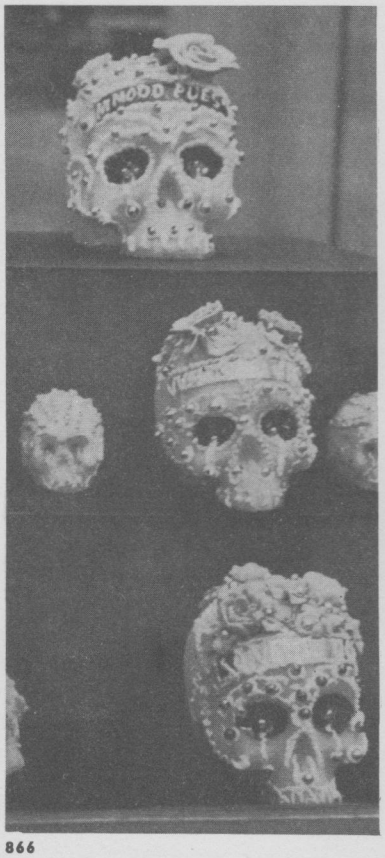


864

MAGIC IN THE SPACE AGE

864. Skull made of sugar, with multi-coloured ornaments, sold in Mexico on the day of the Feast of the Dead (November 2nd).

MACABRE FIESTA IN MEXICO



866

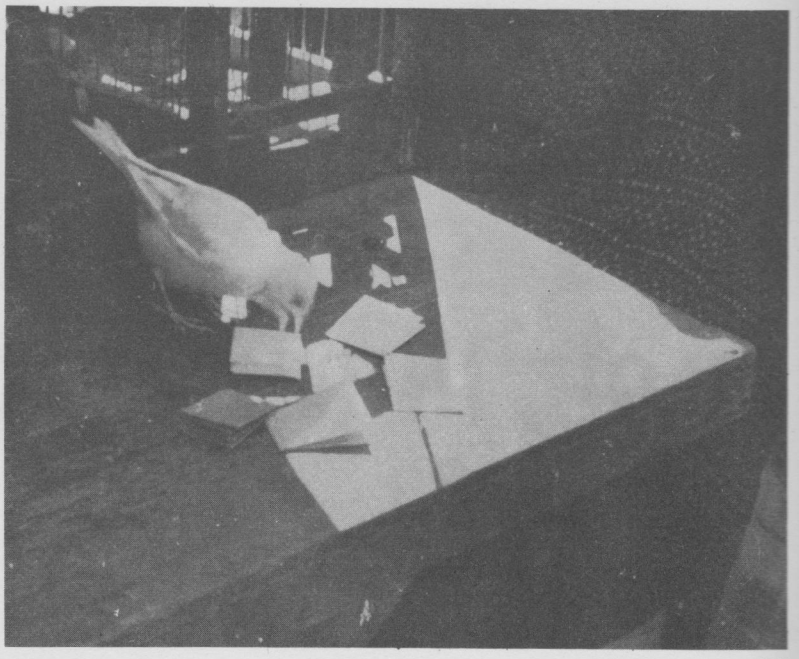


865

865. The funeral wake takes place on the flower-covered tombs, among burning tapers, flares and fireworks. Men, women and children celebrate in the company of those who are no longer alive, but their eternal presence, not their memory, is always venerated.

866. The Feast of the Dead is celebrated in Mexico with gaiety and good humour. It is the custom to give children skulls made of sugar decorated with flower motifs. The name of the young recipient is piped on the forehead with sugar.

867. In Oaxaca young lovers pay great attention to the blue or pink notes (according to sex) which the prophet bird pulls out of his box.



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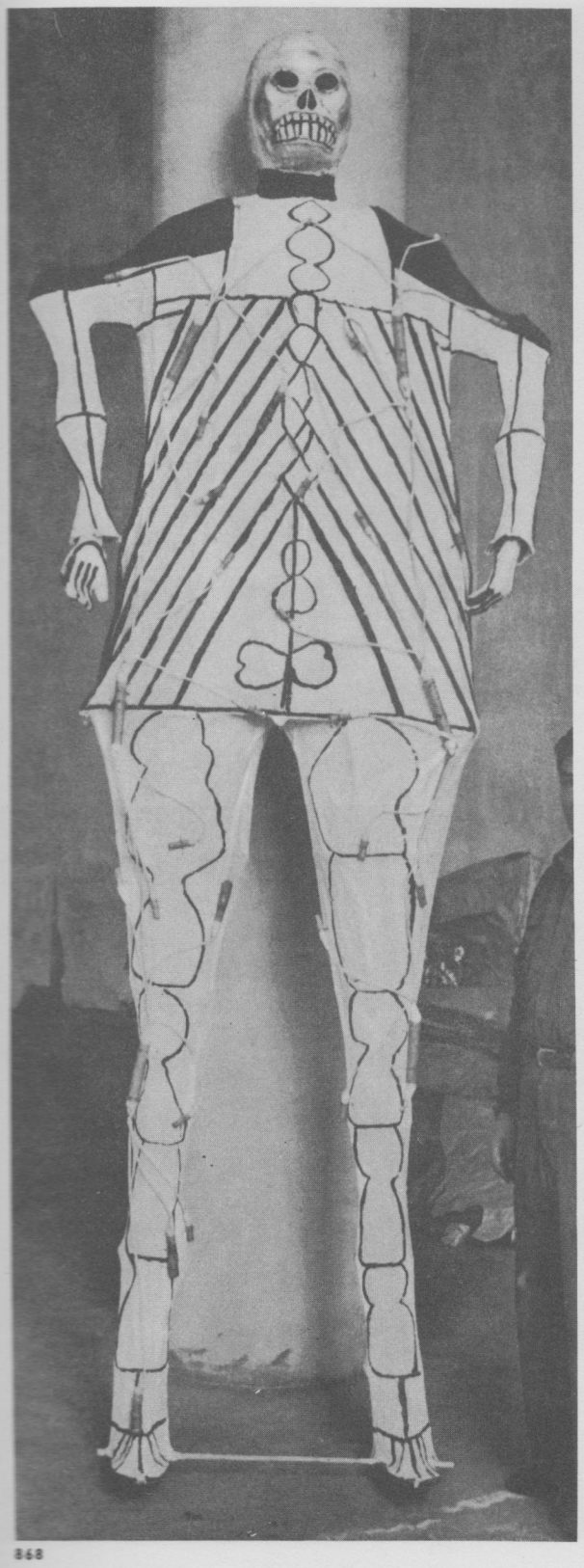


868



869

868–869. Models in fancy dress or paper dolls, intended for those who have become engaged to be married, can usually be seen at this ceremony. The Mexicans, who are deeply Catholic, intend to maintain contact with those who have died and to enjoy their company. Life on earth is only transitory and there is no doubt concerning survival. Death, for various obscure reasons, is a means of delivery, and preparations should be made for it in a cheerful way.

IDOLS IN PORTUGAL



870

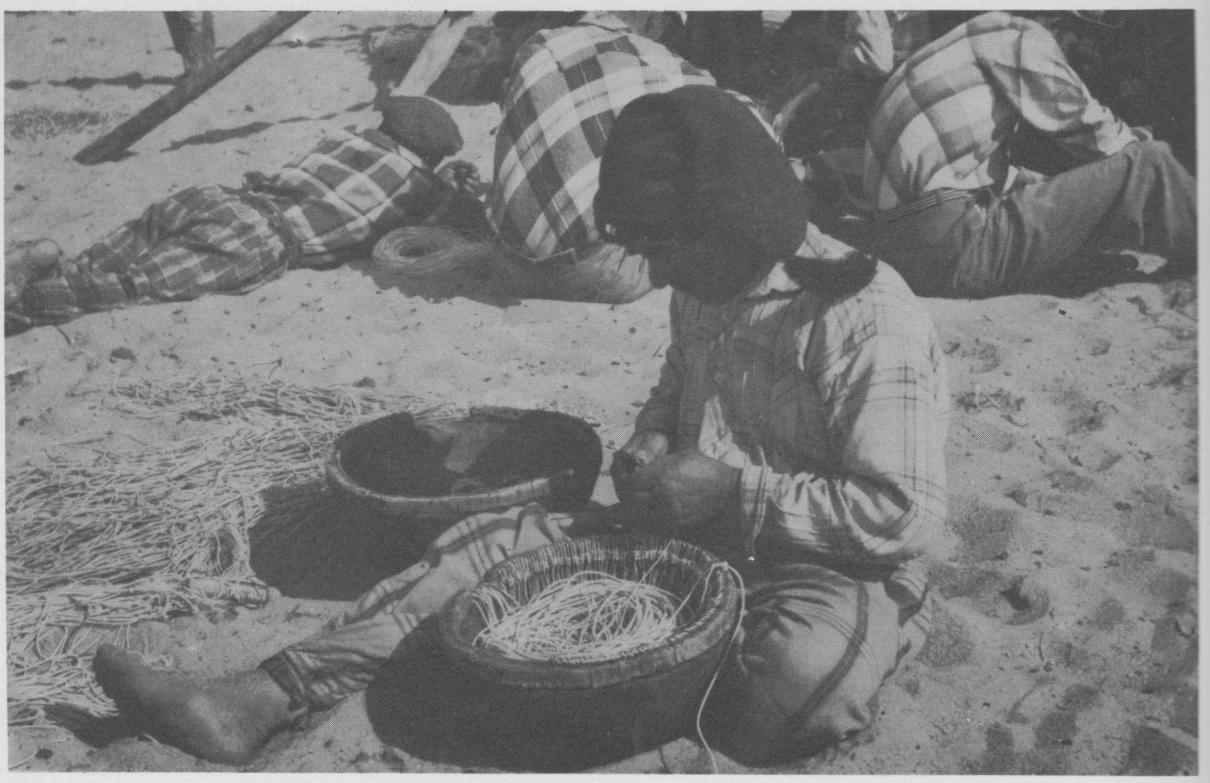


871

870. The eye painted on the prow of these boats could be the eye of God, who sees everything from on high and guides the fishermen on their way; but it is more certain to be a form of exorcism to ward off the 'evil eye'. King Solomon's cross is also painted on the boats.

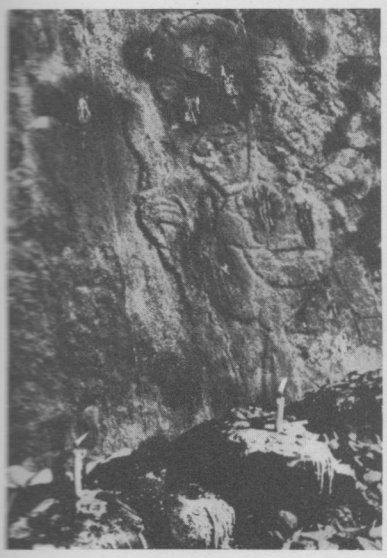
871. Most houses in Portugal, even the blocks of flats in the new districts, carry strips of metal which are turned upwards, their purpose being to ward off bad luck. The same protective strips can be seen on the sides of boats.

872. The fishermen of Nazaré in Brazil wear clothes which have no pockets in them. The fishermen believe that the devil could get into the pockets and then sink their boat while they were out at sea. Cigarettes, fishing-hooks and things of this kind are kept in the hem of their woollen bonnets, known as *barrette*.



872

. . . AND IN GUATEMALA



873



874

873. In Guatemala, at San Francisco El Canal, an isolated place in the bush, three ancient Maya idols are still worshipped by the natives. Tapers are lit, pellets of incense are wrapped in maize leaves: these are the external signs of a very secret cult that is reserved for cases of serious illness.

874. The most important of these idols, which was discovered by J. Villaret, is a colossal head with an aquiline nose and crowned with a diadem. The two others consist more simply of engraved steles, and all three of them lie at the feet of a circle of pyramids.

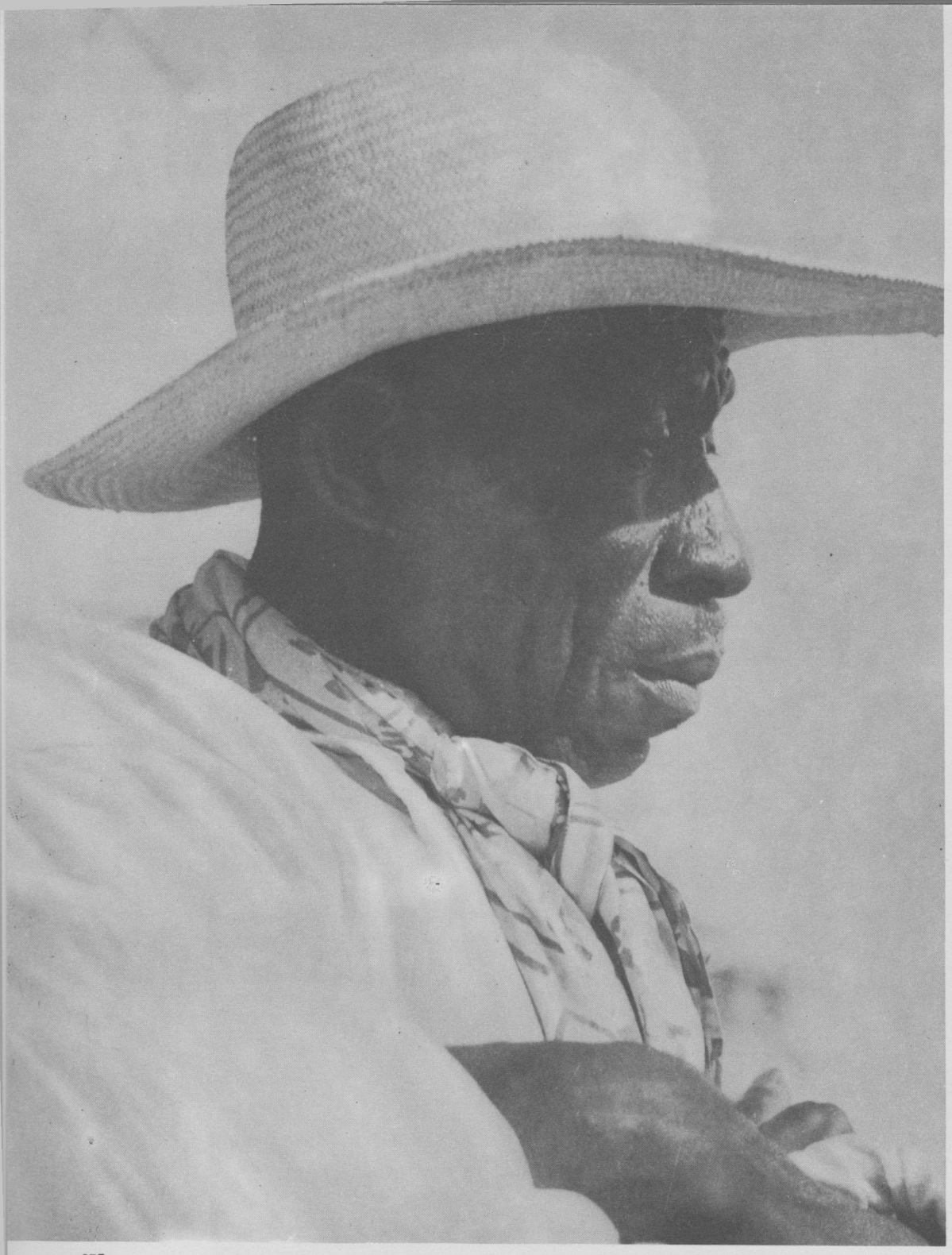


875

875–876. This picture was also taken in Guatemala, at Chichicastenango. The natives are celebrating a pagan cult both outside and inside a Catholic church which is handed over to them by the priests on precise dates. Pellets of incense are burnt on the steps on the way to the choir. There, tapers are lit on the flagstones, in accordance with carefully respected rites. There is no information about the origin of the cult.



876



877

VOODOO, TOM-TOMS, MYSTERY, INTOXICATION

The cult of Voodoo is the last chance for the ethnologists of the twentieth century to observe directly the process of initiation into magic. Today Voodoo is the secret and national religion of the Republic of Haiti, but it is also practised in Brazil; it was imported in the past by black slaves who had been sent like human cattle from Guinea and Dahomey. According to tradition it came into being in the 'city of the camps', a mythological city related to the 'celestial city' of religions involving sun-worship. Voodoo, which is fought and harried by the Catholic church, has remained an obscure cult, and the essential ceremonies can only be witnessed by the initiates. Its priests are called 'Hun'gan' and its priestesses 'Mam'bo'. The term 'voodoo' consists of 'voo', meaning introspection, and 'doo', meaning the unknown. The cult therefore implies a journey into the depths of the unknown in search of mystery.



878

877. This man been initiated into the so-called 'rites of possession'. Voodoo is characterised by two principal rites: the 'radas' and the 'petro'. The former seems to be mainly an initiation rite, regarded as homage to the 'loa' or 'holy Congos', who are the real gods of the cult. The 'rada' is the 'royal rite of the sun' and 'bears the name of the snake' which personifies the supreme divinity known as 'Dangbe'. 'Petro' is the dispenser of magic powers.

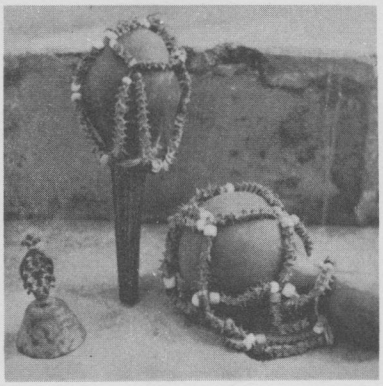
878–879. Voodoo rites make use of many objects pertaining to worship, including drums, 'assons' and bells, which play an important part. The wood and skin used in the drums are primarily symbolic of resurrection. Both priests and followers roll wildly on the drums in order to renew their strength, for the drumskins, 'invigorated' by the sun, possess the power of 'revitalising' the faithful worshippers who touch them.



879

880. The 'asson' used in Voodoo rites is an ordinary gourd which has been pierced and fitted with a handle. It is the basic attribute of the priests and priestesses who officiate in the cult and preside over its mysteries. It will be noticed that its shape suggests both male and female. The asson is supposed to command the forces of the East, 'the occult powers of the ancestor-stars', while the bell controls the magic powers of the West, or stars of the future.

881. The 'ogan' is the 'chromatic master' of the 'ritual orchestra'. It is the leader of the 'magic circle' and the 'ceremonial proceedings'. The iron shaft acts as a clapper and the rhythms obtained from the ogan can be heard clearly above those of the drums. The ogan is always played by a woman.



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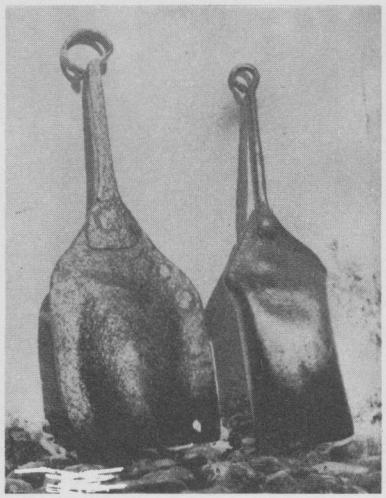

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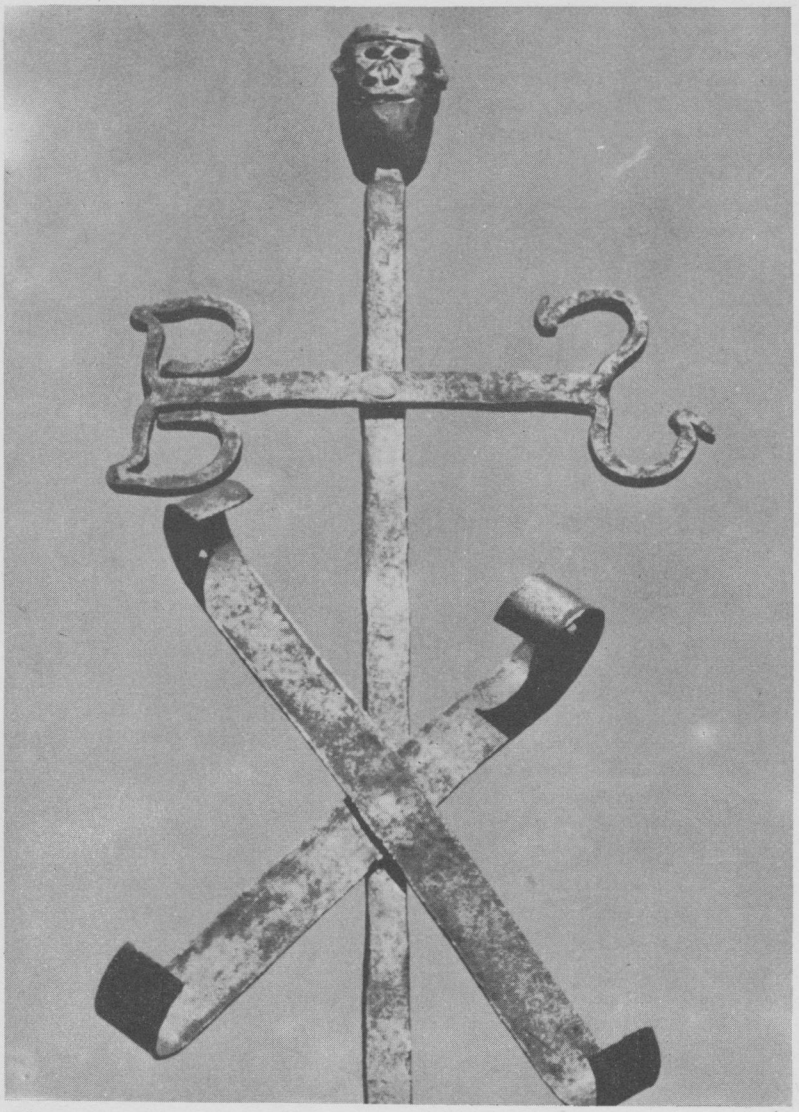
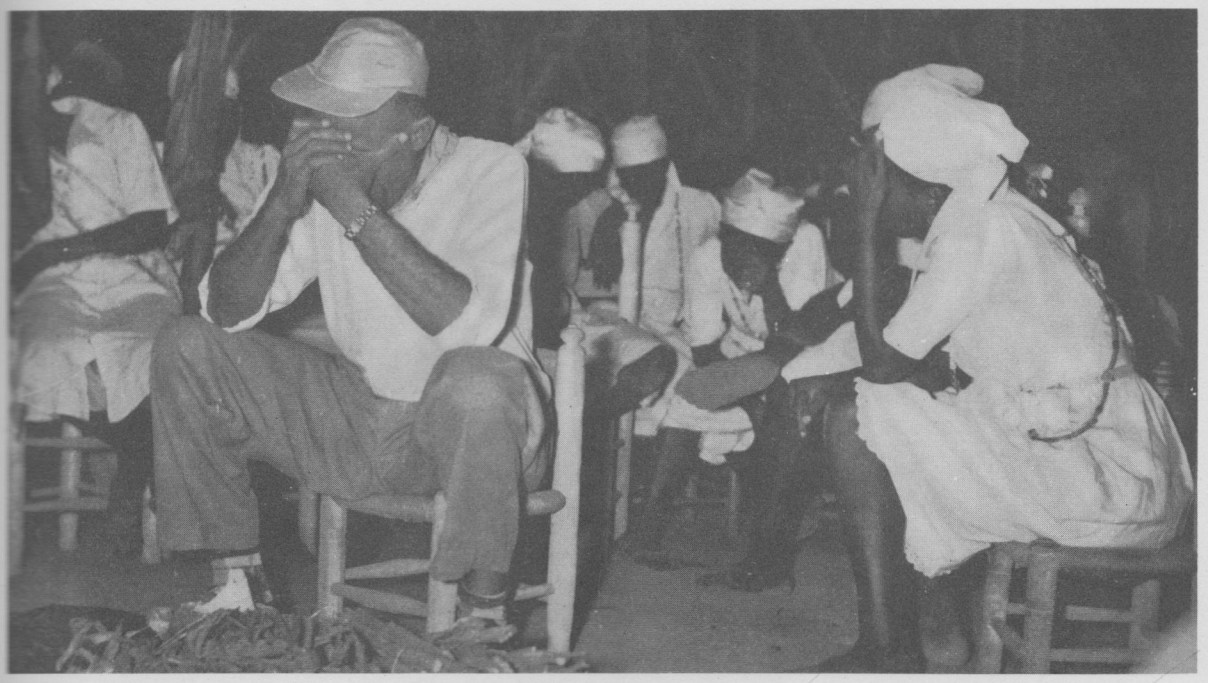


882

882. The Baron Samedi cross plays a part in the Voodoo funeral rites. The necromantic ceremonial of Voodoo is different from that of any other cult, and the most famous ritual is that involving the 'zombies'. According to the Voodoo initiates these are living corpses taken out of their graves and brought back to life by the sorcerers; according to profane observers however they are wretched creatures who are made to look as though they are dead, then dug out of their graves and plunged into a state of idiocy by means of some drug. The Baron Samedi is the Master of the Cemeteries and he is invoked during black magic ceremonies.

Like the snake in Egypt, the giant Voodoo serpent possesses all the secrets of 'the magic language magnified by sacred music'. Everything in the kingdom, including civil power and administration, is organised and controlled by this sacred serpent. According to tradition it came down from the starry heights and lodged in the Voodoo temple. It can also lodge in the head of any individual and drive him into a 'loa' state of frenzy. This serpent is a faithful replica of the 'uraeus' of the Egyptian 'pschent', and possesses the same 'royal' virtues.



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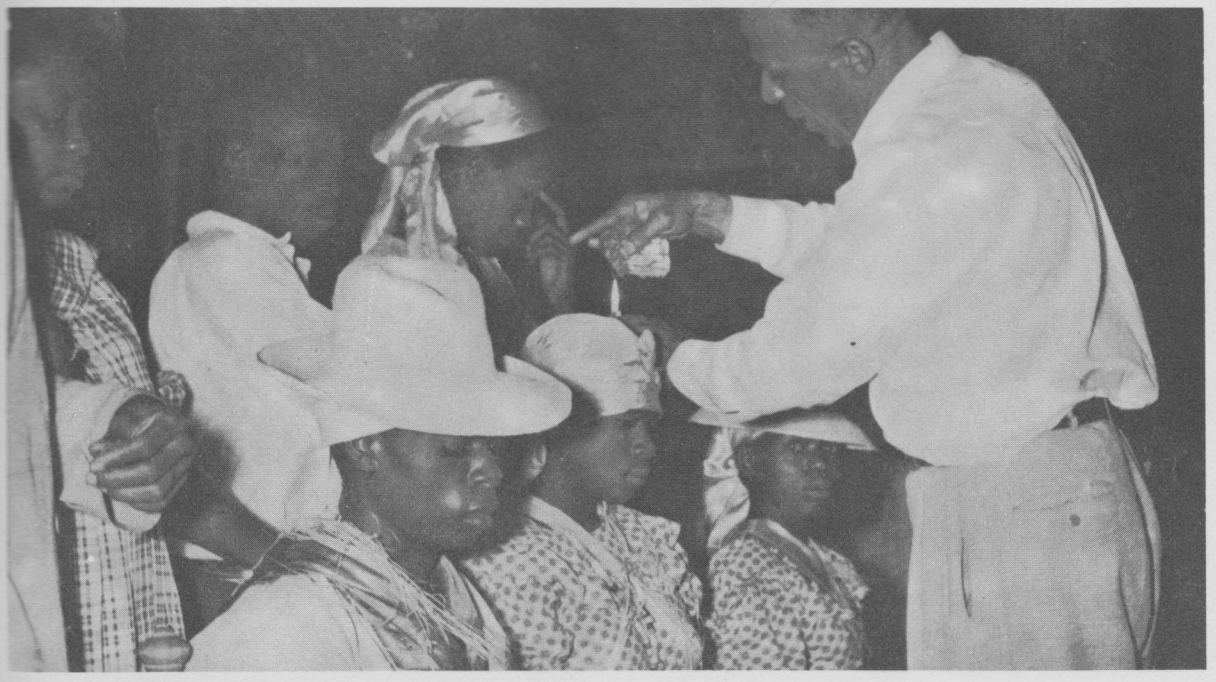
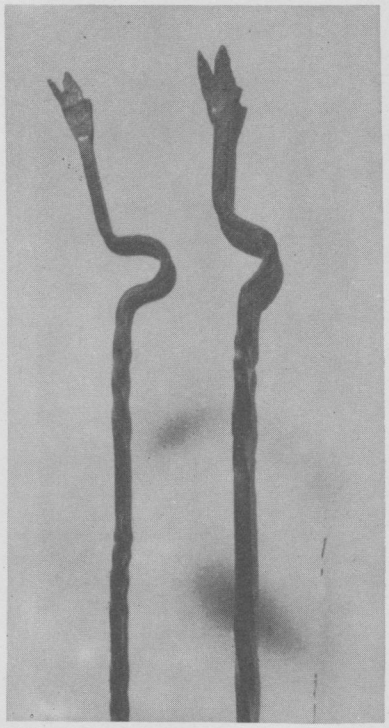


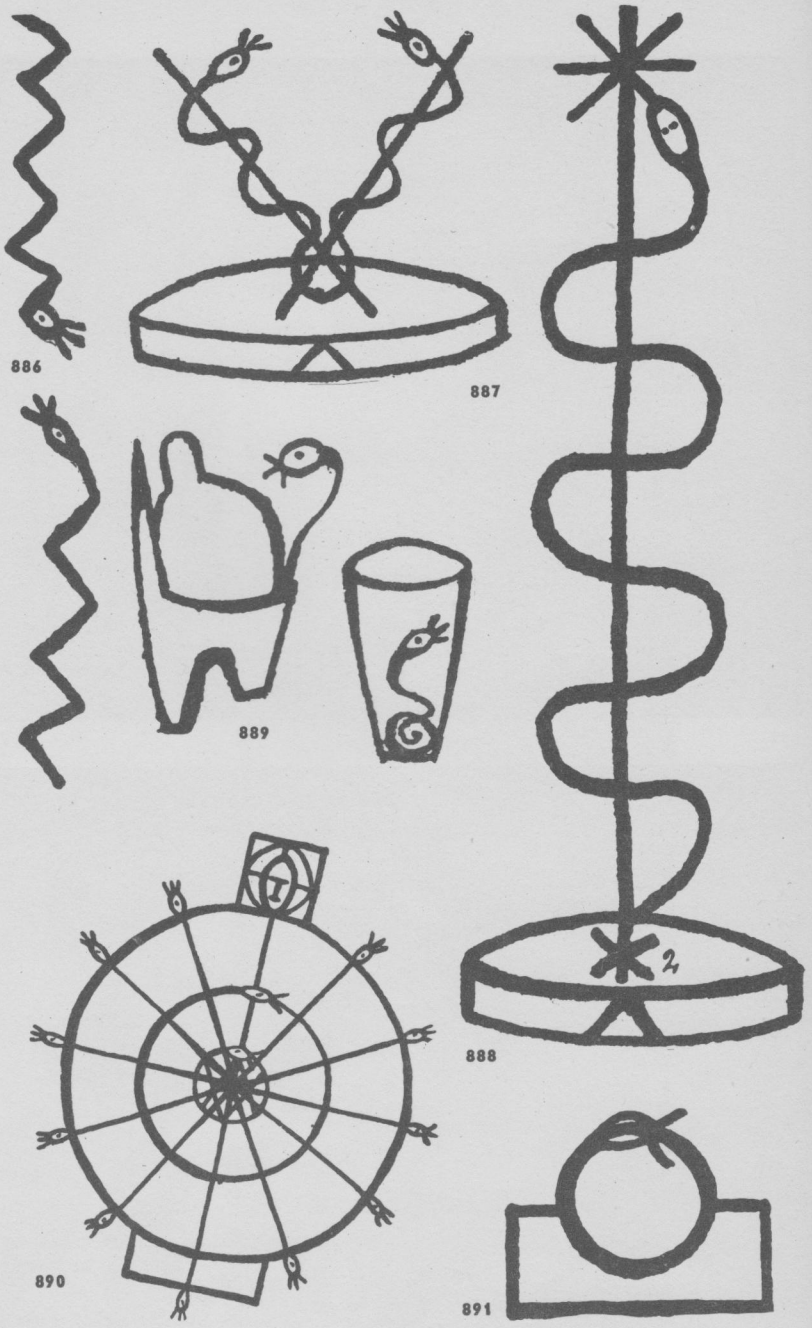
884

883–884. Praying at an initiation ceremony. Not everyone can become an initiate: in the first place a very detailed knowledge of the cult is required, and then, during a preliminary ceremony, the candidate takes an oath, by which he promises to venerate 'the powers of the mysteries of Guinea', those of the 'hungans' and their representatives. Then follows the laying-on of hands by the priest, during which the candidate becomes 'hunsi-bosal', meaning 'a child full of wisdom'. Before he can rise to the grade of 'hunsikanzo' or initiate he must be baptised. The candidates wear ceremonial scarves and hats. The 'hungan' stands with his left hand (in which he holds a candle) on the left side of the recipient.

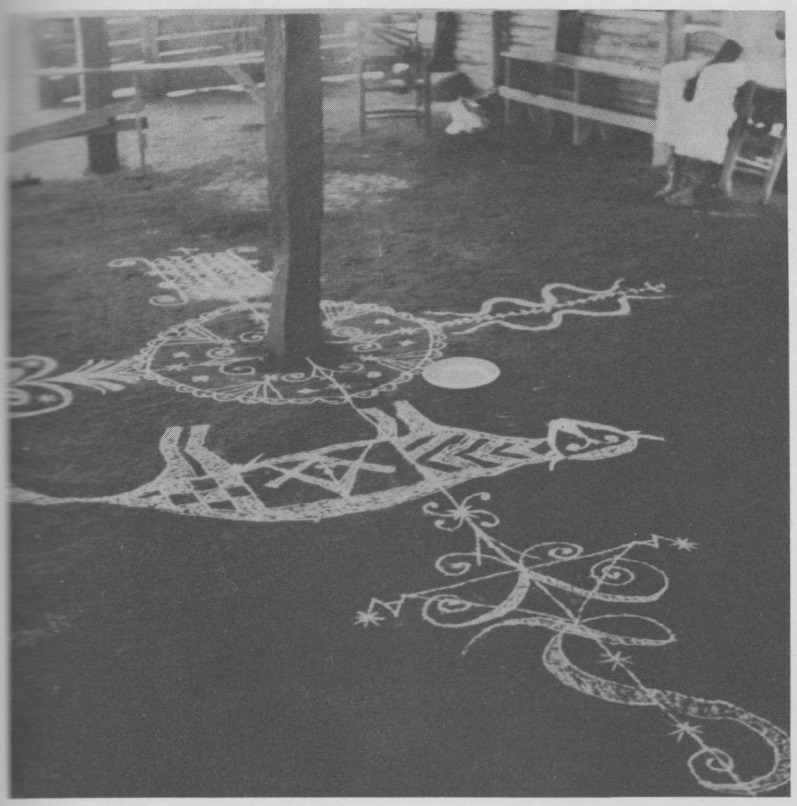


885

885. Wrought iron serpents used in the 'Damballah' and 'Aida wedo' rites.



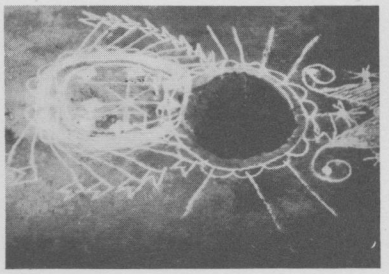
886 to **891.** Descending (886) and ascending serpents, which symbolise respectively incarnate thought and the ascent of the mind. When they are coiled in 'V' shapes round magic wands (symbolising, in their turn, the phallus and the uterus), they represent the mingling of the male and female principles (887). When a single serpent is coiled round a rod surmounted by a star it represents the seven stages of initiation (888). The 'Govi' (889) is the sacred serpent, plunged in the ceremonial receptacle, which is filled with water — regarded as the fundamental element in the world of Voodoo magic. The 'Damballah' (890), which is the symbol of the universe, also makes use of the serpent theme. For the Voodoo initiate it stands for 'the geometric perfection of the mysteries' and 'the expression of Beatitude', which latter must be regarded as the final end of man's thinking nature. The Voodoo serpent is reminiscent of the Egyptian snake and the snake which consumes its own tail, and the 'Damballah' strengthens this analogy: it is again the universal theme of the circle (the self turned inwards upon itself, or fulfilment), found in the Hindu and Tibetan 'mandalas' and then in the rose-windows of Christian cathedrals. The post which stands in the centre of the Voodoo temple (892) is the sign of the 'rising sun', a distant echo of the 'sun on the horizon' found in Egypt. The symbols and the aspirations they express are identical.



892

892. Centre post, fixed in the very middle of a place of worship, the 'humfo'. In all negro parts of Africa this central column, around which ceremonies take place, can be found in huts and cabins. Magic echoes down the years. Vèvè signs marked out on the ground by initiates using flour, coloured powders, chalk or broad strokes of paint, draw and condense magic powers round a group of people or a family: they act as swords and bucklers against the agressions of evil.

893. A 'vèvè' drawn round the pit in which a sacrifice is to be made.



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894



895

895. A tree resting-place and 'macoutte-à-L'egha'. Big serpents decide to live here, they are fed carefully and at the height of the celebrations they crawl out towards the faithful.

894. As a rule ritual ceremonies produce incantatory singing and dancing which reach an unbearable degree of intensity. Braziers smoke at the four corners of the temple, men and women leap up and down in ecstasy, the vessels containing the sacrifices burst open, the sacrifices are buried, the faithful trample on the soil, roll on the ground, the drums beat unceasingly and the dancing goes on without a break all night.



896



897

896. 'Rada' drums hanging from a peristyle roof over a tribe that practises Voodoo.

897. The interior of a Voodoo 'humfo' or temple. The altar, known as the 'pè', is decorated with ceremonial flags, hermetic drawings, earthenware pots and coloured lithographs representing Catholic saints, whom Voodoo has assimilated, identifying them with some of their gods. A basin full of water, near the altar, awaits the sacred serpent. Containers made of earthenware or good pottery, duly fitted with lids, contain the souls of the initiates. There are offerings on the tables. On the left-hand wall is a painting of the boat called Agwe. It belongs to Erzulie, who is simultaneously the Virgin of the Voodoo cult, a figure similar to Venus, the incarnation of the Moon, the 'Mistress of the water', and lastly, the symbol of the heart.



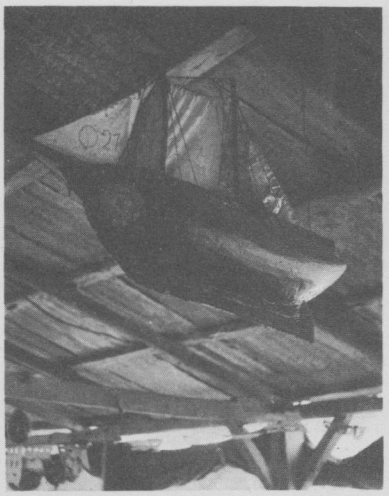
898

898. Animals, usually poultry, are sacrificed during the Voodoo ceremonies. The 'hungan' officiates in the courtyard of the 'humfo'. The choir, preceded by a 'hunsi' (priestess), carry the sacrificial turkey by its claws and rub it against the body of each dancer in turn, in order to establish 'contact'.



899

899. 'Hunsi' priestesses preparing to carry out a sacrifice in the shade of a tree-resting-place. The ceremonial vessel will play its part in the rite.



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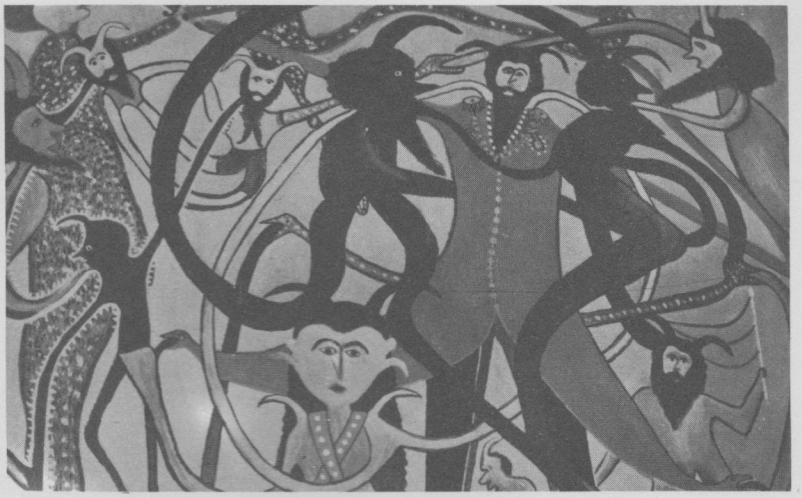
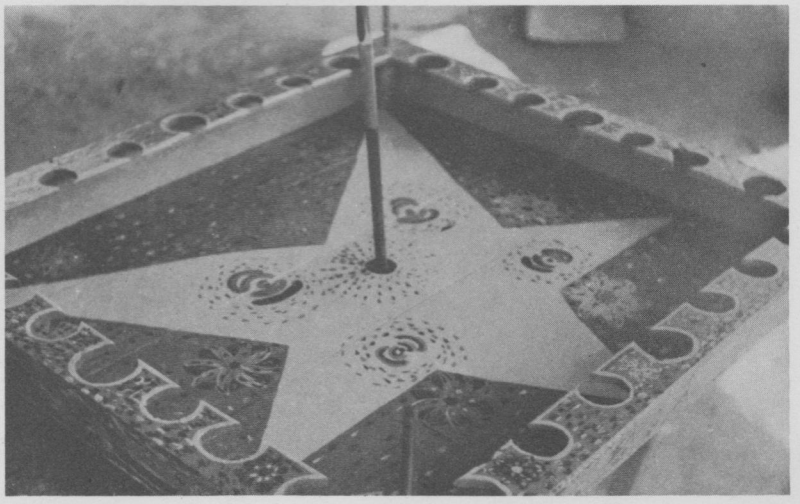


901

900. Erzulie's boat, hanging up in a 'humfo', takes part in a strange rite involving the sea, which is the very essence of the Voodoo liturgy. The initiate must go to 'Ifé' or the 'city of the camps': this represents Paradise lost and the end of the journey symbolised by initiation into Voodoo.

901. A voodoo painting of Prefect Duffant: the devil.



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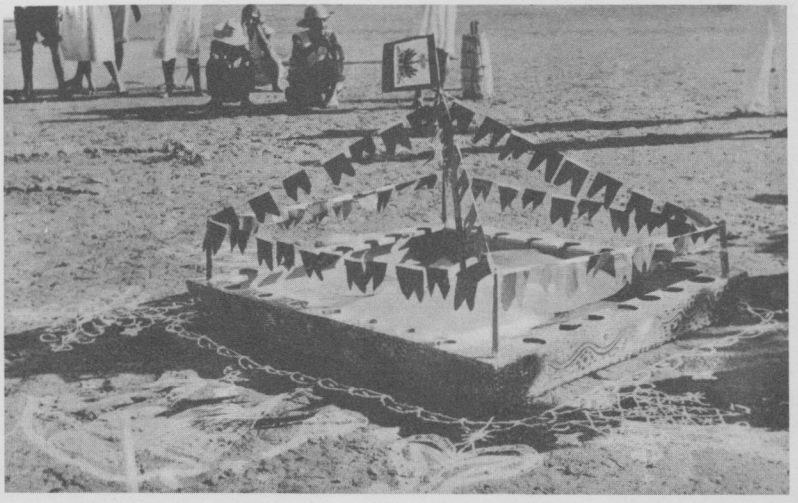
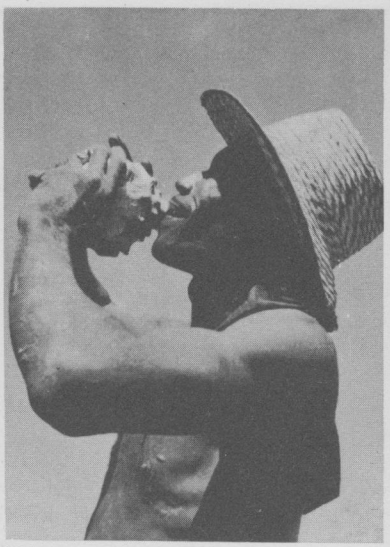


903

902–903. The initiate must cross the sea to reach Ifé, where he will receive powers and bring them back, also by sea. (The theme of crossing the water is found in the history of distant countries, such as Babylon, China and India.) The boat Agwé (902), before it is loaded and when it sets sail (903) between the 'vèvès', will be guided by Erzulie. (Initiates on the way to Ifé can even stop an engine that is running.) Beforehand, the priests and priestessess will have watched over the boat all night in the temple. Agwé sets sail and reaches the open sea to the sound of drums and bugles, prayers to Erzulie and to Agwé-R-O-lo, her husband. Erzulie, who is the symbol of ceremonial water, dispenses love, beauty, and helath, but also jealousy, vengeance and discord. As 'Queen of Heaven and Earth' Erzulie has one beautiful face and one ugly one: this being so, she likes alcohol made from red pepper, and rum with gunpowder, while her heart is pierced with a sword.



904

904. The departure for Ifé. A 'hungan' blows on the 'lambi' (a marine shell).



905

905. Agwé's boat is taken on board another boat and makes for the open sea.

906–907. According to tradition a sheep 'as white as snow' must be sacrificed during the rite of crossing the waters, which is carried out on behalf of Erzulie. During the intensely feverish vigil of the night before the departure the sheep has been pampered in a religious manner and prepared for the sacrifice. Now the moment has come, and it is taken on board. It will be killed out at sea.



906



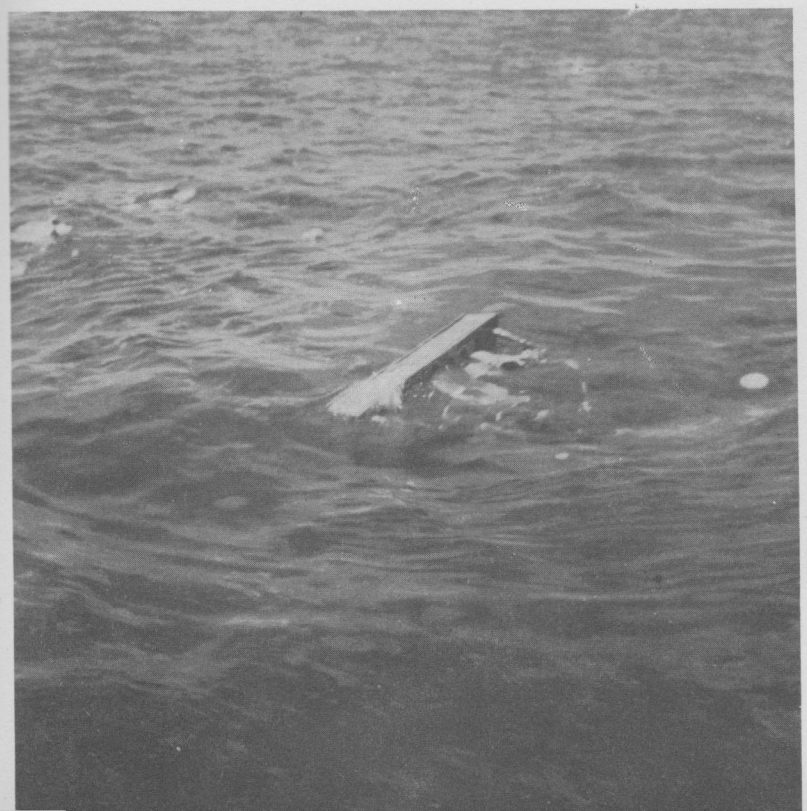
907

908–910. The sheep will not enter the water alone, it will be joined by the sacred ship, laden with offerings, a brace of white pigeons and a pair of white hens. During the whole trip the priestesses wave the unhappy creatures in the air and never stop for one moment. At Ifé, (or Ilé, a word



908

which may be a corruption of 'îlets', meaning little islands) the sacrifice is finally carried out, as the sound of the drums becomes hypnotic, the 'hunsi' utter delirious cries and the frenzied behaviour of the faithful turns into an orgy.



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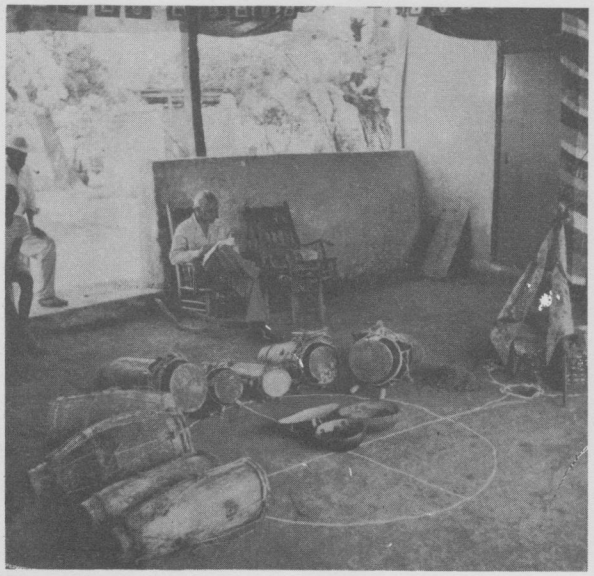
909



911

911. The priestess stands during the voyage, leaning against the single mast in the prow of the boat; as she offers the sacrifice to the waves she waves the ritual oar in a symbolic manner. As they set foot on land, the companions will once more celebrate, with songs and dances, the return of power into the hands of the initiates. Flags are part of the celebration, for Voodoo is both a religion and a nationalist gathering. The 'journey of the drums' profits both the individual and the whole of society. It is also a pilgrimage to the ancient negro kings, who possessed rare powers, which have now passed into the hands of the President of Haïti. And yet the State, under the influence of the Catholics, persecuted the Voodoo cult for a long time, and only recognised it in 1945.

912–913. The drums, which play such an important part in Voodoo, often make the journey to Ifé, in order to renew their magic powers. When they arrive there the drums are placed on leaves from banana-trees, a candle is lighted on their skins and they are given food and liqueurs. The sacrificial hens share this feast before they are killed. Then the drums are covered with white sheets and funeral chants are sung.



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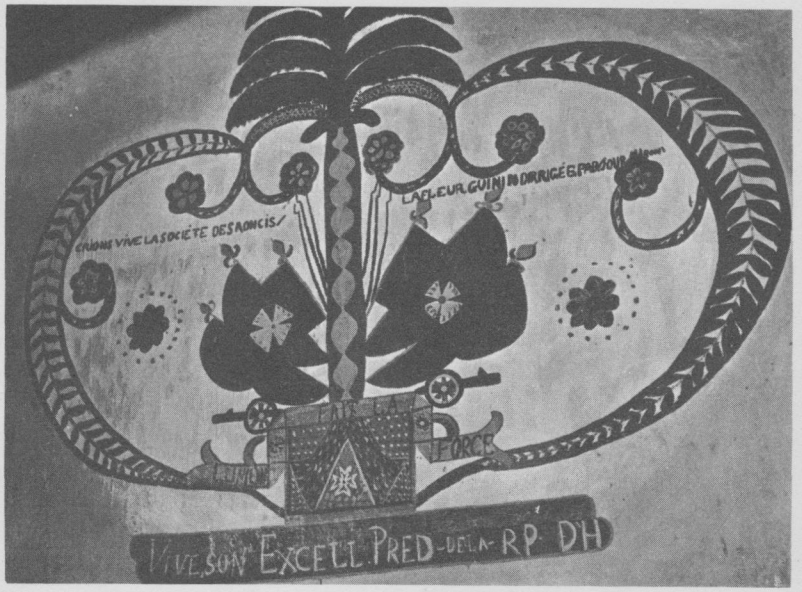
913

914. On one of the walls in a 'humfort', near the altar, can be seen the extremely 'cabbalistic' arms of the Republic of Haïti.

915. A Voodoo initiate embracing the spot on the flag-pole that 'the sacred serpent can reach'.



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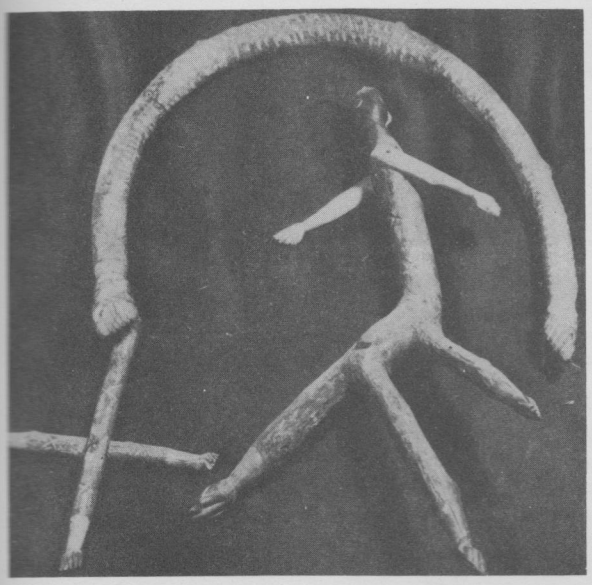

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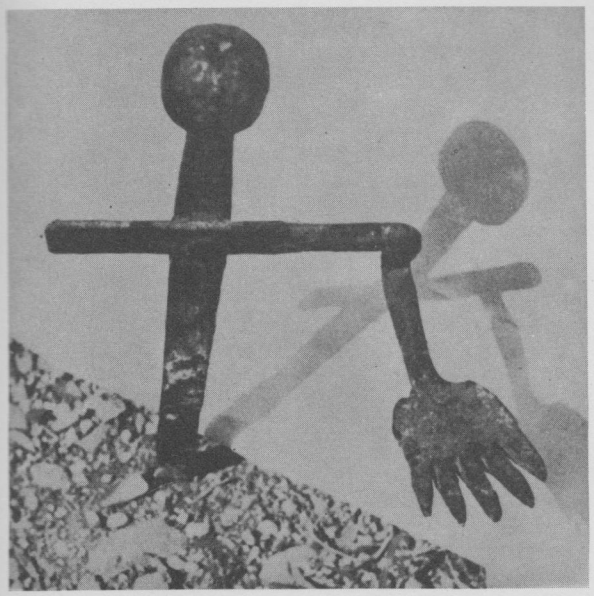
916. Wrought iron 'asson' from Haïti, used as a magical support for leading the sacrifices into the 'astral regions'.



917



918

917–918. Objects from the Voodoo-like rites practised in Brazil, where some of the magic from Dahomey has also penetrated.
The magic cult — or should one say religion? — of Voodoo is only practised in Haïti. In Brazil groups known as 'Candomblès' perform similar rites which have been strongly influenced by Indian traditions and also by Catholicism. One thing is certain: the African origins are obvious, the myths, rites, priests and sanctuaries are identical and the manifestations of the cult are equally orgiastic in nature. This Amazonian Voodoo is celebrated under the aegis of St Anthony and St Patrick, and co-exists along with Catholicism, which has never tried to suppress it. It is distinguished by one characteristic feature: during ceremonies in which the dances reach a state of paroxysm those taking part indulge in a series of gestures based on the theme of copulation and then contract marriages either for good for the duration of the celebrations. On February 2nd a boat leaves for Africa, bearing offerings which the goddess of the sea swallows up.

JUNG AND THE KEY TO DREAMS



919

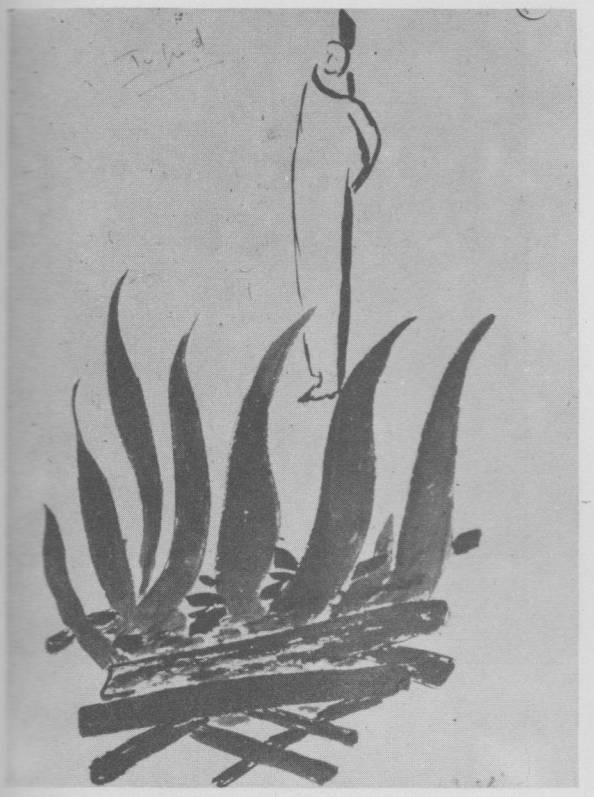
919. Today superstition and poverty help to keep alive the least authentic (but most profitable) aspects of magic. However, certain fundamental themes from the old methods of initiation have been put to good use by the greatest modern psychologists. Freud restored to dreams the dignity which cheap interpreters had destroyed and used them as an instrument of psychoanalysis; next Jung drew up a vast chart of the myths of mankind which had spread all over the world, reverberating through time and space. The instincts of man, which it is unnecessary to list in detail, comprise a valuable store of images which come from the depths of time and have as much influence on the destiny of each individual as his own acts.

The fifteen pictures which follow have been kindly given to us by Mme Ania Teillard, who has written valuable books such as 'Handwriting and the Mind', 'The Symbolism of Dreams' and 'The Unknown Dimension'. Mme Teillard, who is a psychotherapist in the Jungian tradition, made one of her woman patients execute these fifteen water-colours, each of which illustrates a dream she had at the most crucial stages of her treatment. Reproduction in black and white can of course give only an incomplete impression of the subtle changes taking place in the patient's vision and revealed both by the image and by the colours used. However, this series of drawings has great interest, for each picture shows the progress made towards enlightenment by a woman of today who is totally unaware of primitive initiation rites but has spontaneously reconstituted a universe of symbols, archetypes and myths which readers will have seen described throughout this book.

920. When the treatment began the patient who made these drawings was on the verge of suicide. Her first dream, therefore, as expressed in the drawing, shows a person preparing to be burnt at the stake. The colours — dark red and black, symbols of passion and destruction — also reveal total despair. There are seven (a sacred number) tongues of flame. Fire is the symbol of purification, initiation, and the principle of the transmutation of lead into gold by the methods of alchemy (see preceding chapters, illustrations 365, 366 and 395).

921. The tree (representing the unconscious) to which the person in the first dream was attached suddenly changes here into a living tree. A man and a woman rise from the same trunk: this already shows evolution in the direction of life and duality, but the two people are severely hampered and imprisoned within the dull, vegetable kingdom. Their hands (they may be lovers) for the time being are only leafy branches and therefore they cannot embrace (see illustration 409).

922. The man and the woman have finally freed themselves from the original tree: they are now two separate trees with human heads but they are not yet human beings. They have roots, and are therefore not free: they are monsters, half-human, half-vegetable (see illustrations 408—411).



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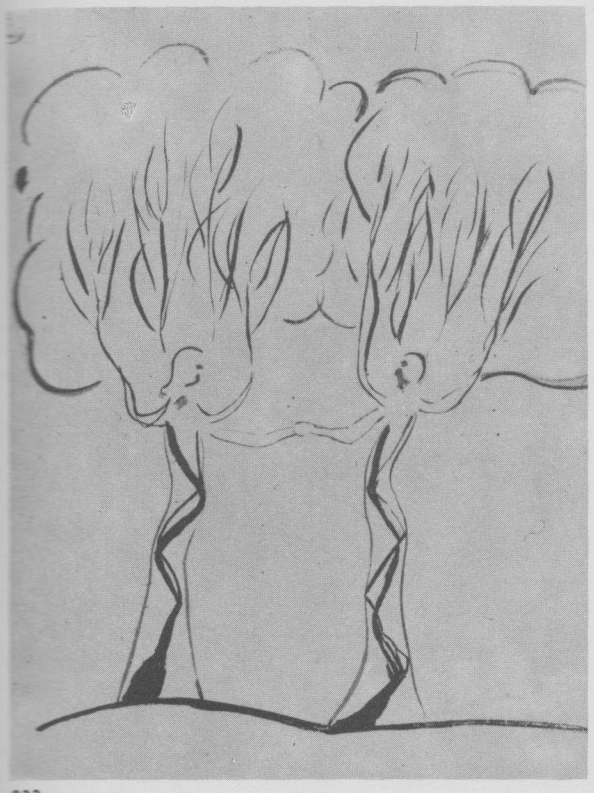

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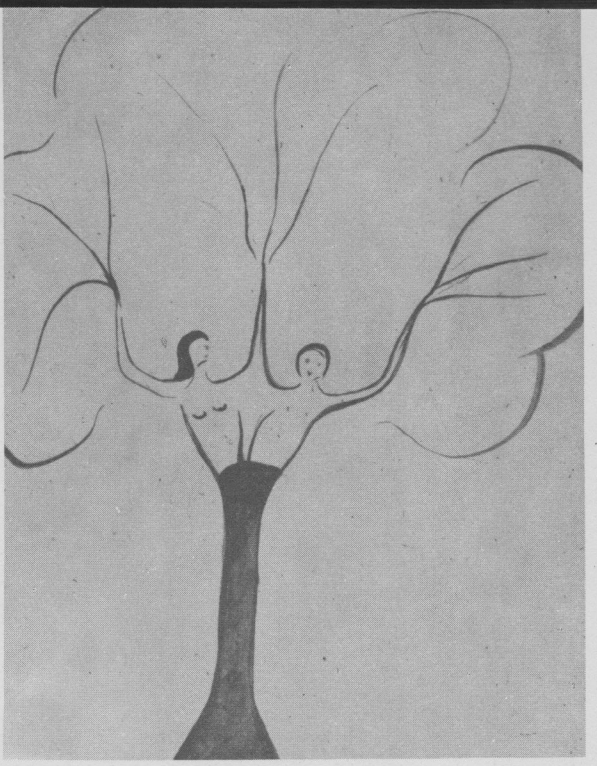

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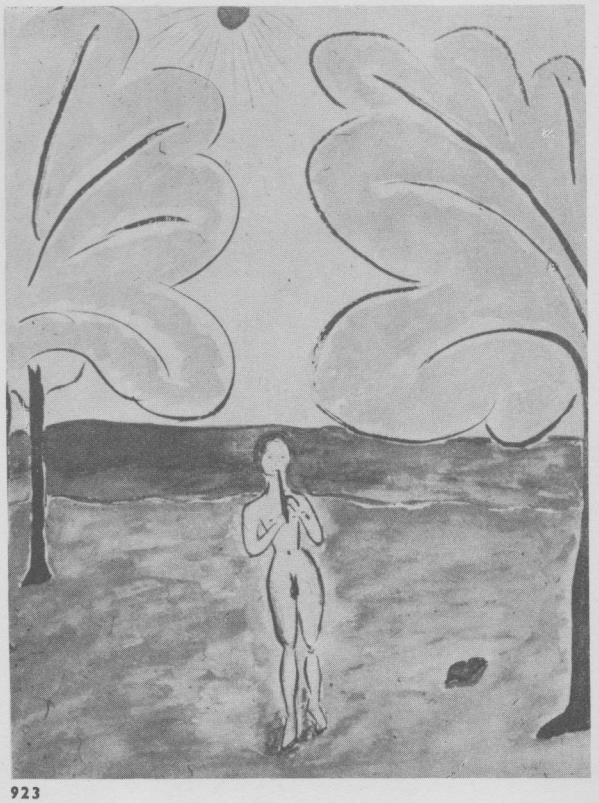
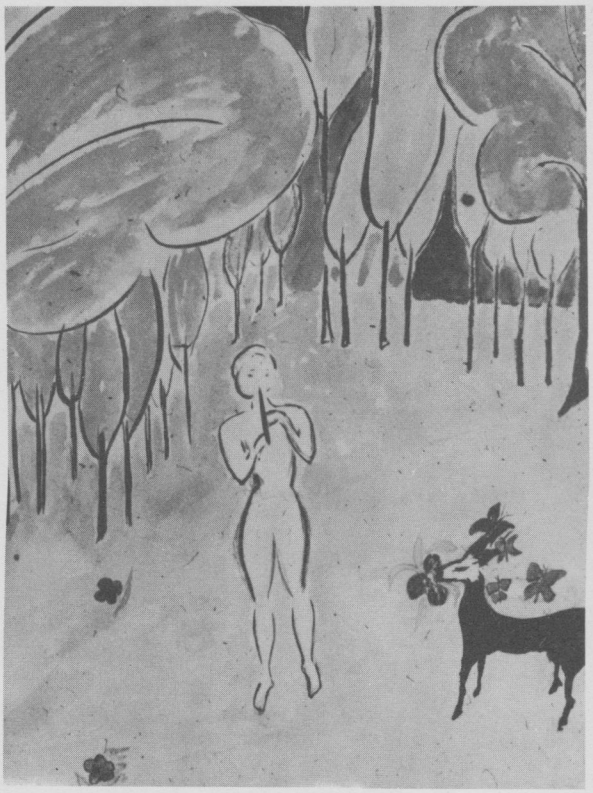


923

923. The monsters who were half-way between human beings and trees have disappeared. They have been replaced by a hermaphrodite: at this stage in her treatment the patient perceives through the darkness of her mind the opposing masculine and feminine tendencies which dispute the possession of her being. The hermaphrodite is playing a flute, like Pan, who is half-goat. In the distance is the seal symbol of the unconscious; above is the sun, symbol of life and understanding; on the grass lies a spiral shell, symbol of initiation. The stage is set, the drama of the cure is beginning. The trees have lost their importance.



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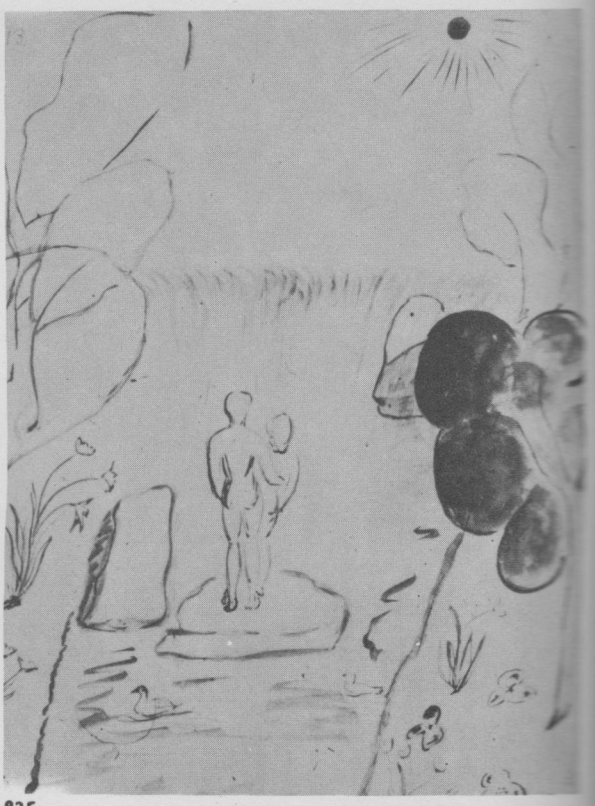

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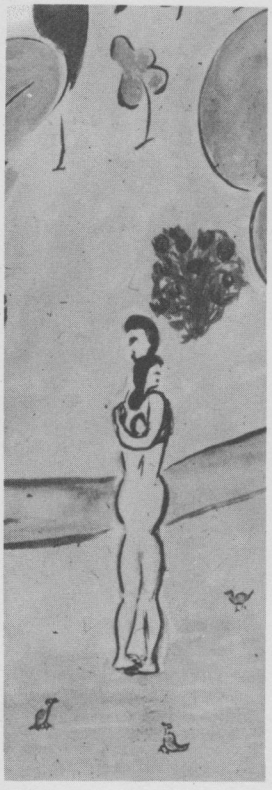

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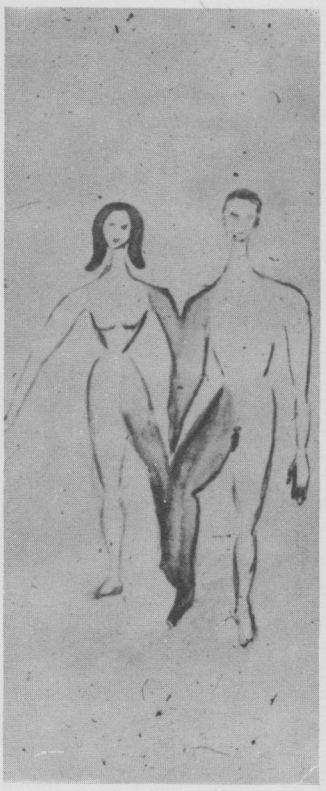

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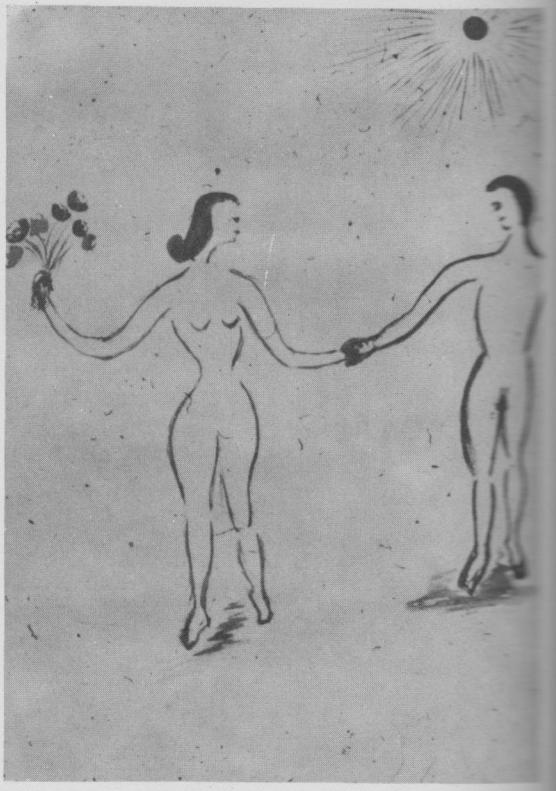

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929



930

924. The trees have turned into a forest, representing the unconscious and distress; the hermaphrodite has assumed the appearance of a woman, which shows evolution towards differentation. A hind is bringing her red flowers.

925. A man and a woman are standing on an island in a lake, with their arms round each other. In the same way as when the two people were represented by a tree the lovers are merged here in one person. There is nothing anomalous about the man's body, but the woman's is only half indicated. This is because she does not possess an independent personality, she operates an unconscious projection on her partner, whom she has made into her idol. This attitude leads to innumerable conflicts between marriage partners and implies a grave danger of depersonalisation (see illustrations 388 and 389).

926. Now the man has lost his personality too and the couple have become a kind of monster with two heads and two feet. This is the sign of a union just as impossible as Plato's 'spherical man'. The two beings cannot be separated without destroying them (see illustration 379).

927. The man and the woman try to detach themselves from each other, but their legs remain joined together. The couple still continue to form an equally monstrous entity. However, a change is on the way, resulting from a crisis of consciousness concerning the truth of love.

928. The solution of the drama seems evident now: the man and the woman have freed themselves from the hindrance that prevented them from being themselves. Now they are a real couple, for they are sufficiently faraway from each other to look each other in the face. They are two complete beings and therefore capable of loving each other. The woman therefore offers a bunch of flowers, as a symbol of the gift that she is making of herself (see illustrations 391 and 392).

929. However, a couple consisting of a man and a woman do not constitute an end in themselves, they are only a means. This is why the woman continues to evolve: she enters a cave, then climbs a staircase in order to remove the stone (or the egg) which is hidden there. This is the symbol of the Self, the jewel that is difficult to attain, the philosophers' stone sought by the alchemists. The cave, which is the symbol of the maternal bosom, gives hope of a new birth, a second flowering.

930. As the young woman climbs the steps to the sanctuary, in front of a tripod, her back is pierced by a sword which expresses the double ordeal of consciousness: she certainly enriches the man but she causes him to lose the paradise of the unconscious. As a result the man only finds himself after a long series of disillusionments, sacrifices and hardships.



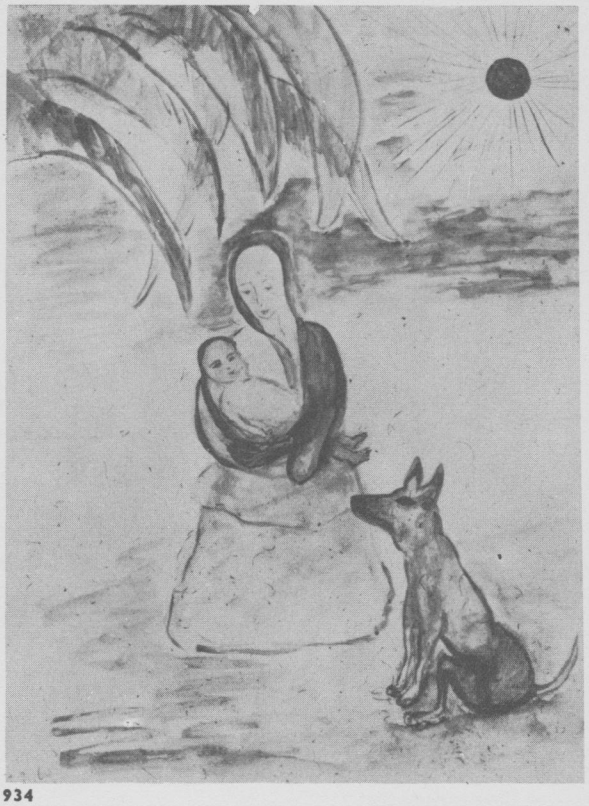
931



932



933



934

931. In the depths of the cave there was nothing except interrogation, consisting of anxiety and uncertainty. The man whom she loves brings the patient the glittering jewel she desired. What does this dream mean? That the young woman's personality could only be revealed to her through love, which in this way assumes its full significance.

932. Suddenly the lover turns into a mandarin, a lama or a Buddha. In the hollow of his hand he holds a 'pearl', the archetypal image of the soul, of peace and beatitude.

933. With her own hands the young woman removes from the flames a tray carrying a cup of tea, a bottle and a box of tea (tea has always been the patient's favourite drink). In the first dream the flames had been dangerous, but now they are no longer destructive, they give out heat solely for the patient's pleasure. What can one say about the positive subjection of a negative principle? That in future there is reason to hope for a progressive improvement, for there is every evidence of a well-balanced cooperation between the subconscious and the conscious.

934. We have reached the end of the journey. The young woman has become a mother. She has discovered femininity, the true significance of her life. She is carrying a child in her arms, and a child is the eternal symbol of new life, fecundity, the aim of creation and the end of all evolution. The detail is worth considering, for all the elements that made up the preceding dreams can be found again here, but in their natural order: the sun shines in a clear sky. The tree, which is now placed on one side in isolation, has become a subsidiary part of the objective decor. A dog has appeared for the first time. At the beginning he represents the guardian and the

TREE-WOMEN, DELIGHTFUL FORBIDDEN FRUIT

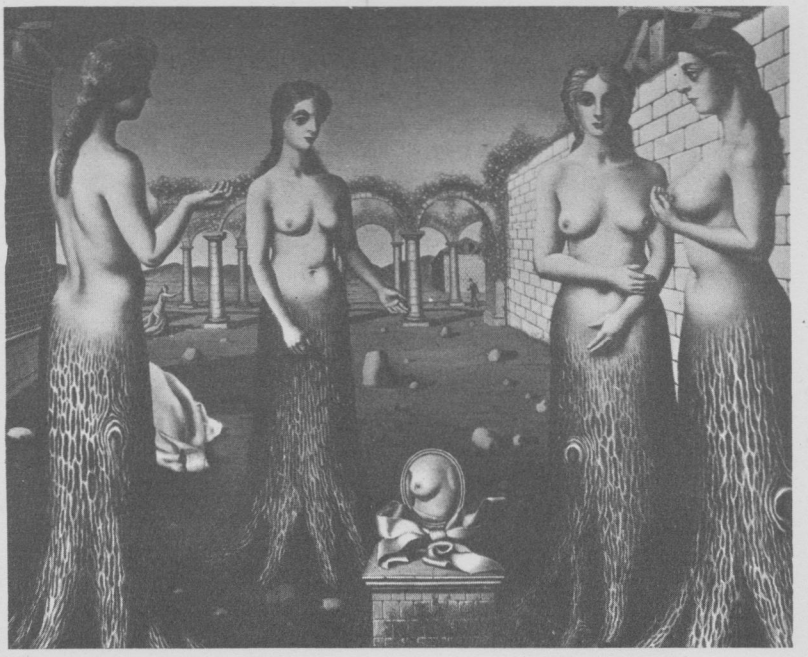


935. In the 'Dream of Polyphilus' the seven young girls who are progressively detaching themselves from the vegetable kingdom, in spite of the powerful roots which hold them back, express the emancipation of the mind as it gradually attains liberty and humanity. This 'dream' is the work of Francesco Colonna, who lived from 1433—1527. There is a certain kinship between this 'dream' and the symbolic dreams interpreted by Ania Teillard to the great advantage of her patient. Four centuries later the Belgian painter Paul Delvaux tackled a similar theme in his 'Tree-Women'. Surrealism plunged gaily into the depths of the unconscious and was better equipped than any other movement to encounter on its way certain symbols, which have recurred since time immemorial, illustrating how magicians interpret dreams.



...nector; later he is the symbol of instinctive forces, which ...been dominated, brought under control and integrated ... a psyche which has recovered its full equilibrium (see ...rations 393 and 403).

...series of dreams is valuable because it shows us, step by ... the progress of a sick mind towards the light; the ...ams are also important because of the number of symbols ...include, the same ones that we have already encountered ...nearly all systems of initiation. In other words they have ...ply used the spontaneous products of the human mind.



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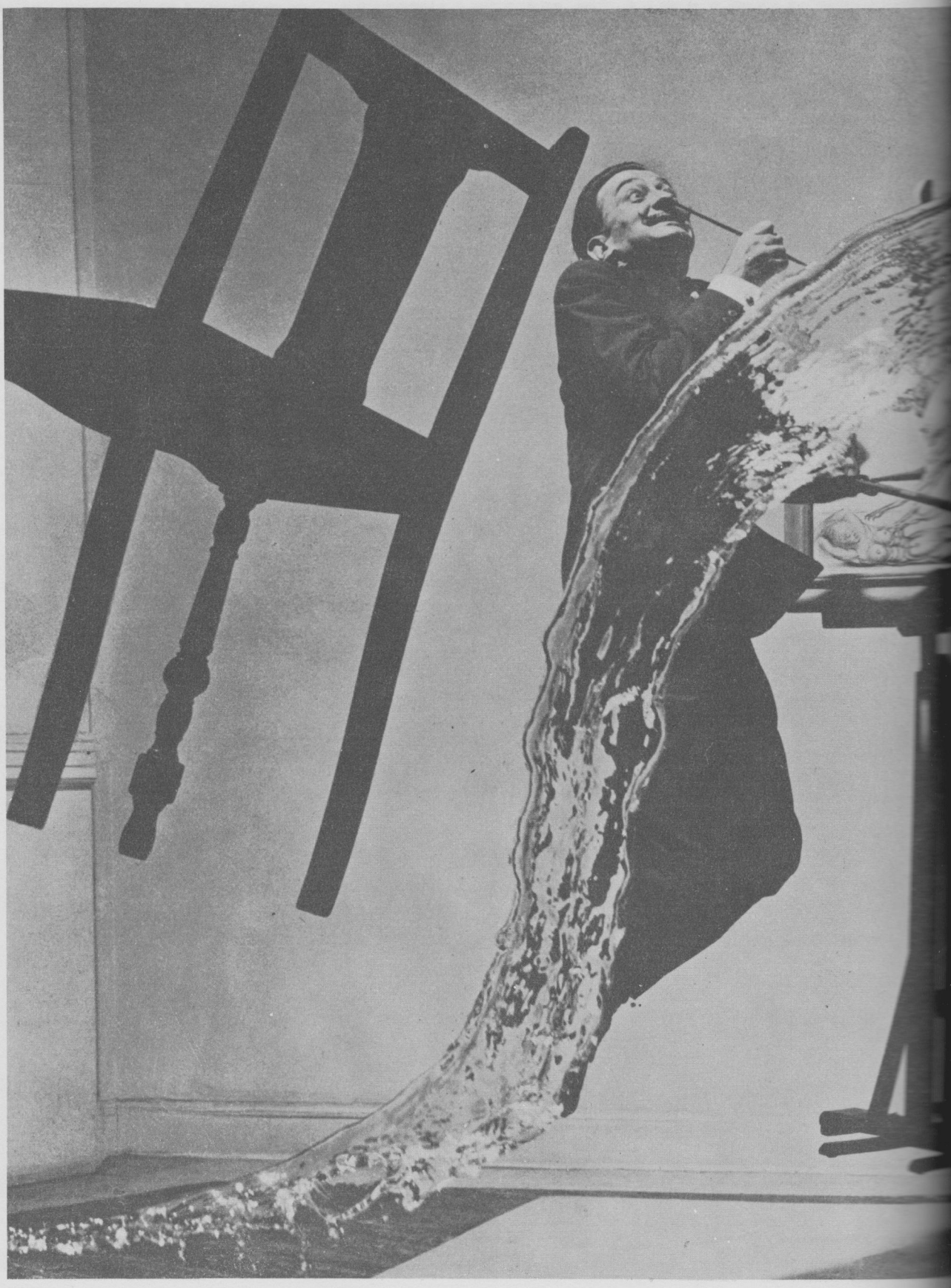


936



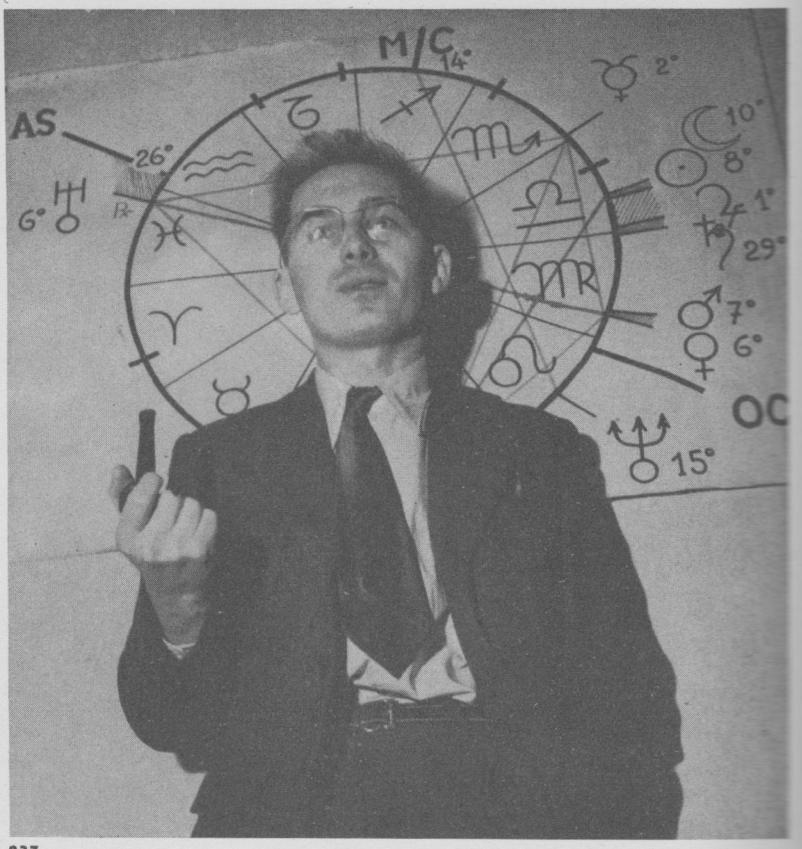
936. The involuntary discoveries made by photography and the way it surprises even itself by the decomposition of movement lead to pictures which although they would have been quite ordinary elsewhere, seem to have been caused by magic. This extraordinary photograph by Philippe Halsman, showing Salvador Dali at work, has not the slightest connection with the world of everyday life.

HOROSCOPES AND TEA LEAVES

The world is full of fortune-tellers. In France, for example, the annual expenditure on scientific research amounts to barely one tenth of the money paid by the so-called logical French people to clairvoyants, readers of cards and other kinds of fortune-tellers. These 'magi' obviously include a high proportion of charlatans, but it must be admitted that they possess an intuitive and profitable knowledge of mass-psychology.

937. André Barbault, a 'specialist in world astrology', in front of a chart showing the position of the planets from 1940 to 1945 (Jupiter, Saturn and Uranus were in conjunction during the first years of the last war).

938. In the age of astronauts astrology has more success than ever with the public. Great men, famous actors and ordinary people study their horoscope every day.



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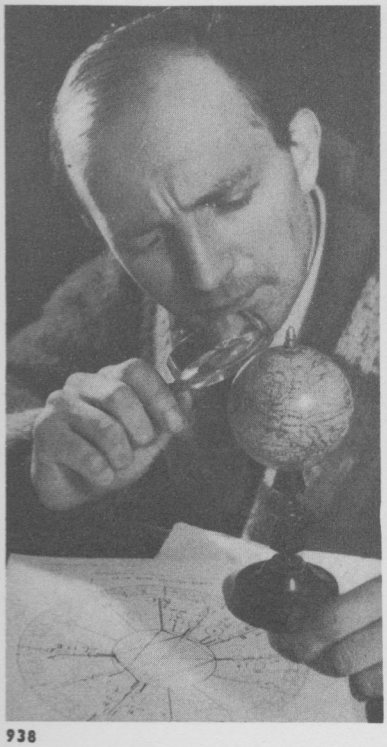


938



939



940

939. There are some less commonplace methods of foretelling the future, such as that which consists of burning some document on a white plate and then 'reading' the marks left by the smoke on the porcelain. This is called 'pyroscopy'.

940. Luce Vidi is a 'specialist' in 'interpreting' ink-blots made on a sheet of folded paper. A study of the shapes of the ink-blots 'reveals' the character of the person who made them.



941

941–942. Most people, however, remain faithful to fortune-telling through playing-cards and the Tarot cards. In France there are more than 50,000 women who do this professionally. Their clients come from all classes of society. By their careful attention to detail (those who tell fortunes by this method keep detailed records) clairvoyants often show an astounding shrewdness.



942



943

943. Lithomancy — a pedantic name for something of no great interest in itself — is a method of divination by means of pebbles; as they are dropped on the table they form 'magic' figures which are then 'interpreted' by the 'clairvoyant'.



944

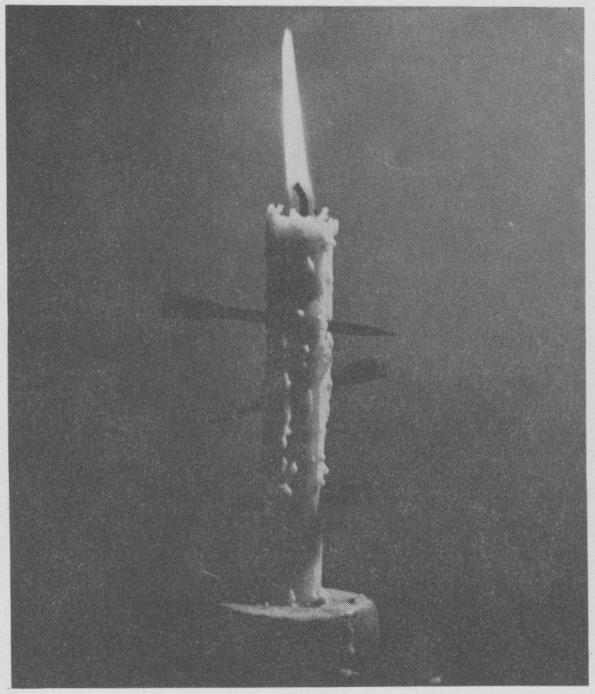
944. Molybdomancy is even more spectacular: it consists of interpreting portents visible in small ingots of lead or tin which are melted then poured into a vessel half-full of water; the shapes they assume are reminiscent of non-figurative sculpture.



945

945. The crystal ball is essential to the clairvoyant, who interprets the way in which the light is refracted through it. By gazing at a crystal ball for a long time it is possible to reach a state of near-hypnosis which increases the credulousness of the client.

MAGIC AMONG THE MIDDLE CLASSES



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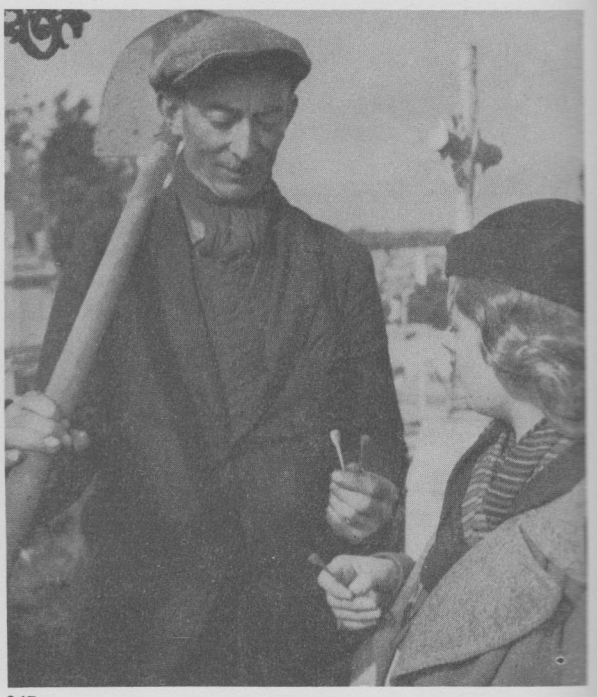


947

946–947. It is quite normal for people to be 'bewitched' nowadays, and they often become patients in psychiatric clinics. There are plenty of credulous people about who will buy from grave-diggers nails which they say have been removed from coffins. An enemy can be despatched by piercing his photograph with a nail or by driving the nail through a candle, which represents the flame of his life.

948. The countryside remains the favourite place for magi and sorcerers. Very often the newspapers are only too ready to oblige by publishing propaganda free of charge . . .

949. At Châlus (Haute Vienne).
A goat wearing a wedding-dress may mean more witchcraft
'Limoges, 24th April ('France-soir' reports) 'A goat wearing a wedding-dress and leading nocturnal processions at Châlus (Haute-Vienne), has alarmed certain peasants in the district, and they have begun to mention witchcraft.



948

A Châlus (Haute-Vienne)

Un bouc en robe de mariée fait croire à une nouvelle affaire de sorcellerie

LIMOGES, 24 avril (dépêche « France-soir »). — Un bouc vêtu d'une robe de mariée, menant des processions nocturnes, à Châlus (Haute-Vienne), inquiète certains paysans de la région qui commencent à parler de sorcellerie.

Le responsable de ces cortèges insolites serait un guérisseur du nom de Bernard, habitant près de Saint-Auvent, qui soigne le bétail grâce à des passes mystérieuses et des invocations « diaboliques », auxquelles participeraient, outre le bouc en robe nuptiale, des femmes imitant le cri de la chouette ou l'aboiement du chien.

949



950



951

'The person responsible for these unusual processions is thought to be a healer by the name of Bernard, living near Saint-Auvent, who cures cattle with mysterious passes and 'diabolical' invocations; in addition to the goat in bridal robes it is said that women imitating the cries of owls or the barking of dogs take part in these sessions.'

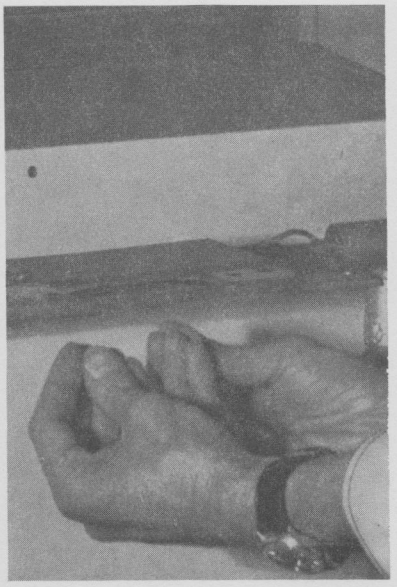
950-951. There are innumerable bone-setters, using methods of diagnosis and treatment which vary from the laying on of hands to the pendulum. This healer, who uses magnetic methods, is very famous and seems to have obtained some astonishing results . . . or are they due to the 'fluid' that is said to emanate from these 'magicians'? Mme F . . . works with her finger-tips and with ultra-lucid clairvoyance.

952. This picture shows a radiosthesist who works simply through holding the patient's hand. According to what he says his pendulum reveals the source of trouble on the 'chart of the body'.

953. Although the exact nature of the 'fluid' that emanates from everyone is not yet known, instruments have already been invented which are apparently capable of 'measuring' the intensity of these 'emanations'.



952



953



954

MESSAGES FROM THE DEAD

954. The French section of the Spiritualist Union holds weekly meetings which follow a strict programme. To start with, incense is burnt in a discreet manner, then the chairman declares the séance open, while the medium goes into a near-instantaneous trance.



955

955. A little experiment in order to get started: the medium's chair seems to be pulled irresistibly along by some hand operating in the dark.

956. The medium, as her name indicates, causes the 'spirits' which have intervened through her mediation to move a small table. (Authentic experts assert that there is enough 'electricity' in everyone to carry out this experiment successfully.)

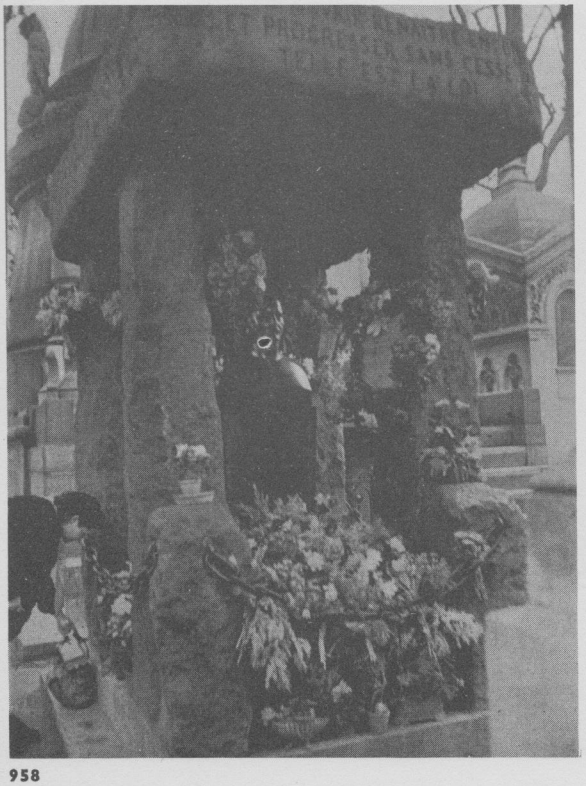


956

957. Then two other mediums enter into 'contact' with the spirits, to whom they transmit messages.



957



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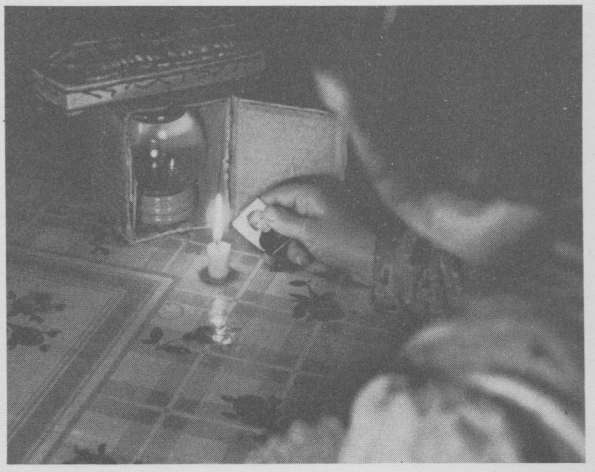


959

958. The many faithful admirers of the late Allan Kardec, the spiritualist, whose wishes have been fulfilled, reverently put flowers on his grave in the Père Lachaise cemetery. It is a tradition that people stroke his bust in a familiar way, touching the back of the neck.

959. A crystal ball, a lighted candle, a photograph of the young girl who died: these are all that is required for the clairvoyant to establish contact between the dead girl and her mother and to pass on messages.

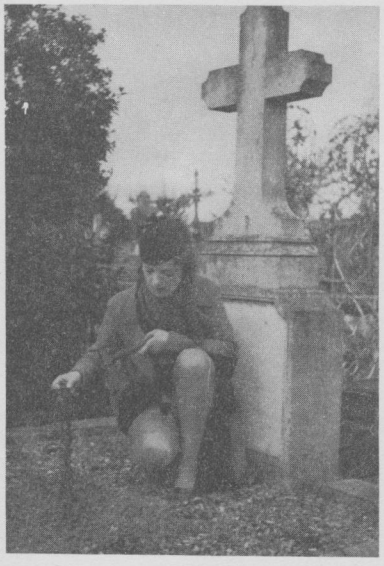
COMMON LAW SORCERERS



960



961



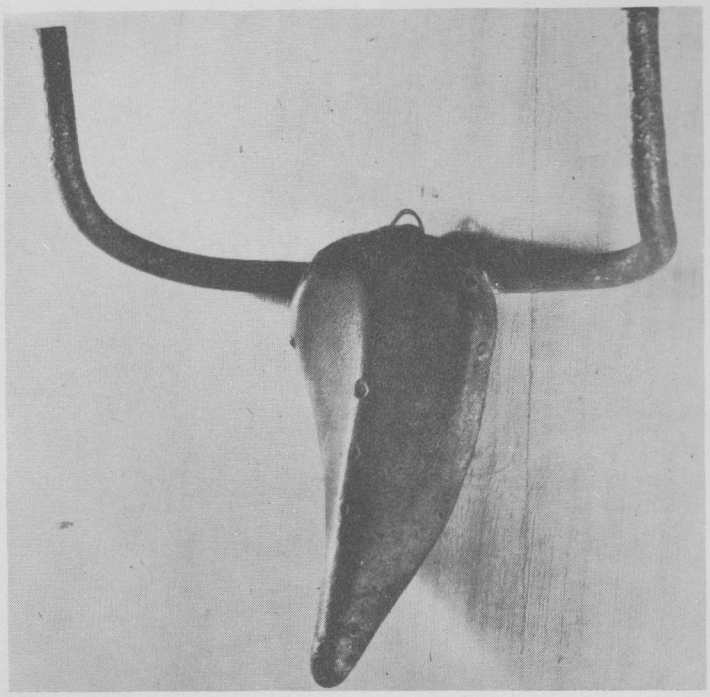
962



963

960–962. It is hard to know which is the most to blame: the ignorance of the 'believers' or the cheap tricks of the charlatans who exploit human suffering and regard any method as sound provided it makes them a profit. These pictures show a magic circle in a clearing, the sacrifice of the heart of a sheep which has been ceremonially killed, and the burial of a chain in a cemetery.

963. Among the hordes of fortune-tellers there are some who, in order to produce good omens for an imminent and necessarily happy marriage, make use of symbols taken from extremely ancient rites and arrange them according to their own imagination.
Hard though it may be to believe many people still take part in 'black masses', far more than we ever hear about. Most of these people have been unlucky in love, and include those of all ages who lack sexual satisfaction.

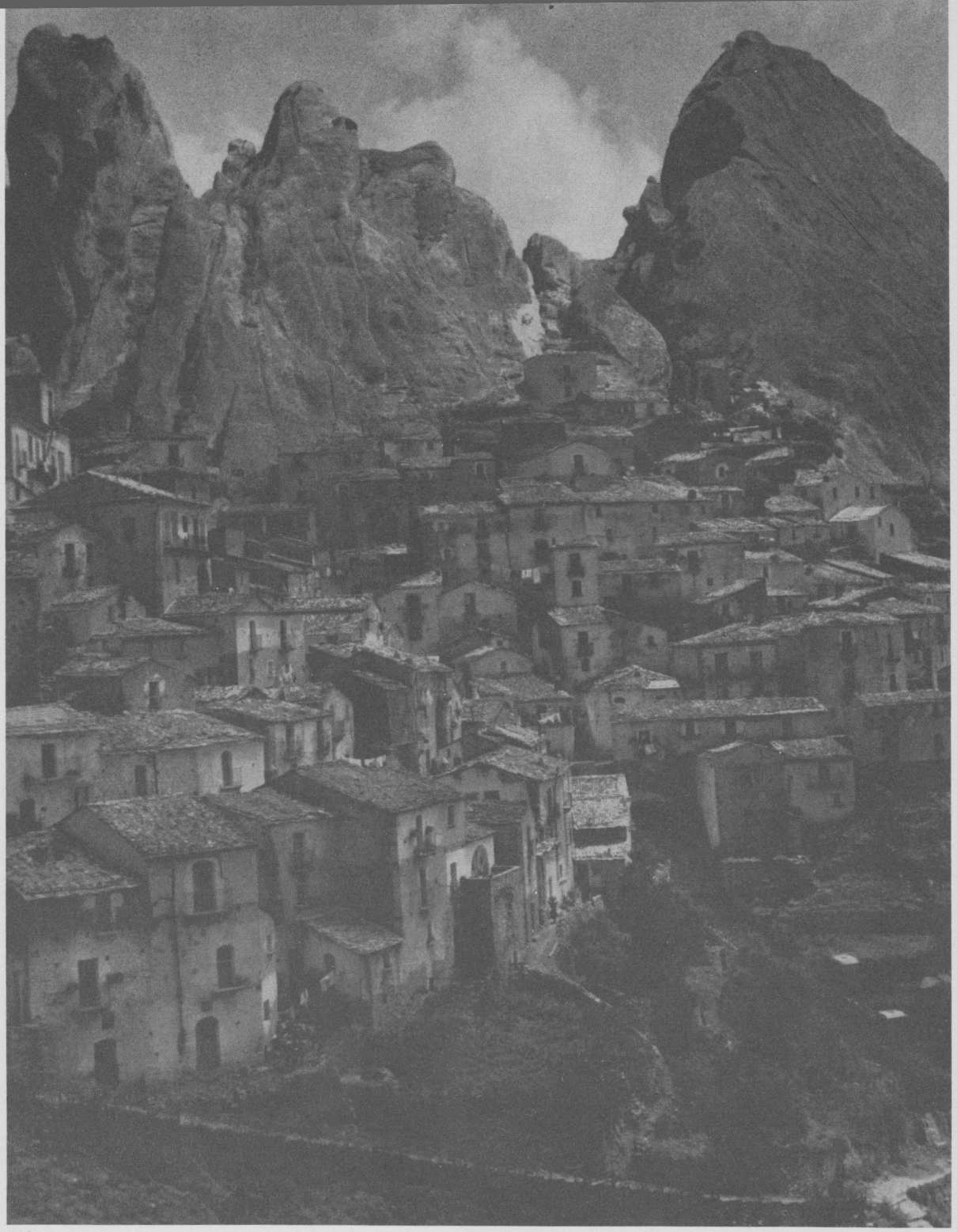


965

964–965. Fortunately there is often a humourous side to all this. Picasso's bucrane is not so much magic as ridiculously demoniacal, while this poster advertising a 'magus' and his medium is involuntarily comical.



964



966

966. A general view of Castelmezzano, which is regarded by all the initiates as the capital, not of the country, but of all the magi and faithful supporters of magic in the south of Italy.

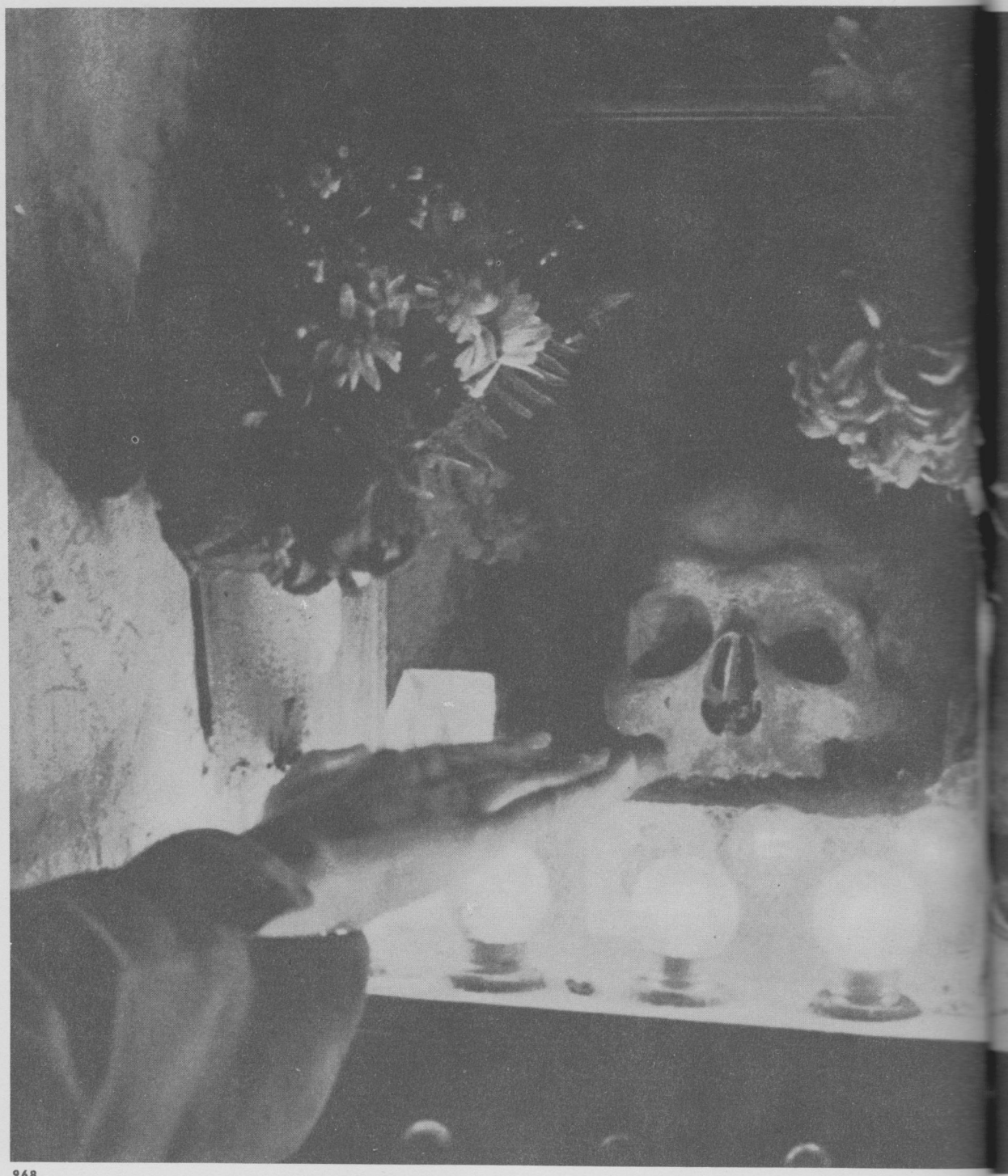
SINISTER PRACTICES IN BRIGHT SUNSHINE

Our age is definitely the century of contradictions. Italy lies in the Mediterranean, the geometrical centre of a world that produced rationalist thought, and yet whole areas of this country pay homage to obscure, or rather obscurantist aspects of magic. The south, from Naples to Sicily, is the most deeply affected. How should we explain the widespread degree to which magic is practised in this part of the country? Ernesto de Martino states that it is due to the fact that the Mediterranean basin was the meeting-place of the ancient 'black art' and what is usually called the cult of reason. Another explanation, which can be more easily verified from the facts, comes to mind: this is one of the most poverty-stricken areas of Europe and it is possible that it has the same yearning for the supernatural as all other under-developed countries, since the natural order of things has so far brought only misfortune and confusion. Whatever the reason may be, there is no other example in the world (with the exception of the mass-hysterical ecstasies produced by certain religious manifestations in the United States) of civilised people practising exorcism, incantation and magic spells to such a fanatical extent. Carefully established statistics have proved that in certain villages or small towns 90% of the adult population believe implicitly in sorcery and take part in all kinds of rites. At the same time they are fervent and sincere Catholics.



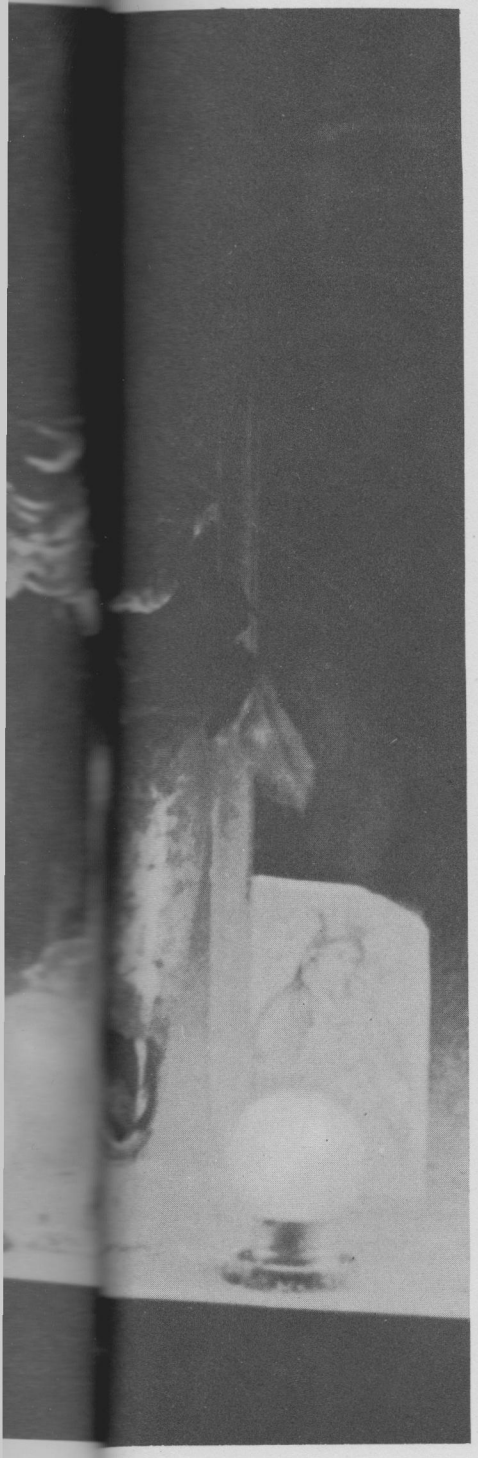
967

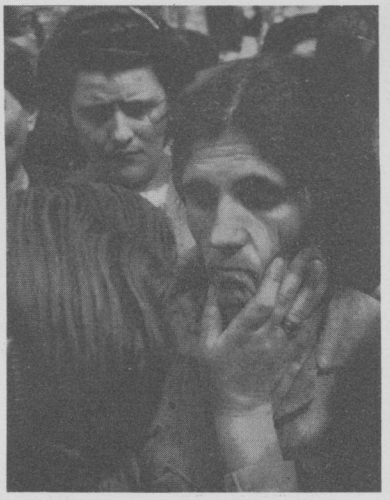
967. A statue of Christ with ex-voto offerings of a not very Catholic type. This photograph was taken in a church in Naples.



968

968. This skull would be more appropriately exhibited in a museum than on the altar of a Catholic chapel in southern Italy. It is the object of ardent veneration by those who frequent this holy place.





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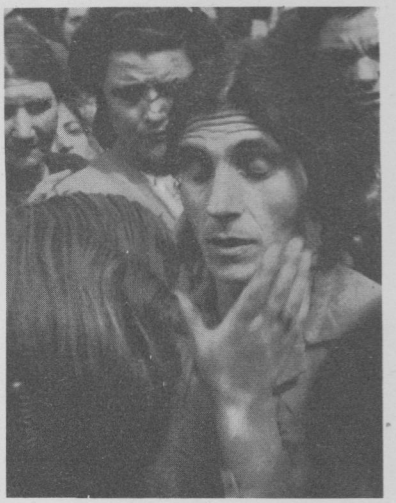

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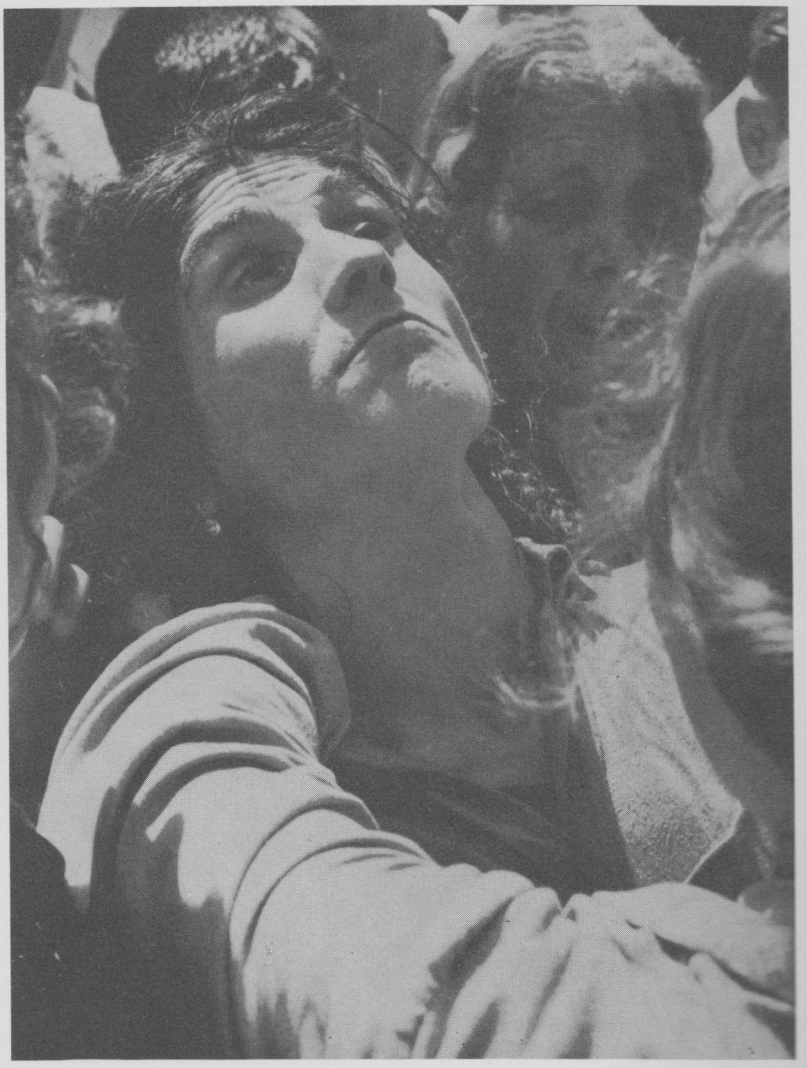


971

969–971. An incident during the feast-day of Saint Bruno, in the village of the same name situated in Calabria: without any warning a woman says she is 'possessed', and behaves as though she is. An attempt at exorcism is made: she is made to kiss the effigy of the saint, but without result. Everyone is then firmly convinced that the woman is really possessed by a tenacious spirit.



972

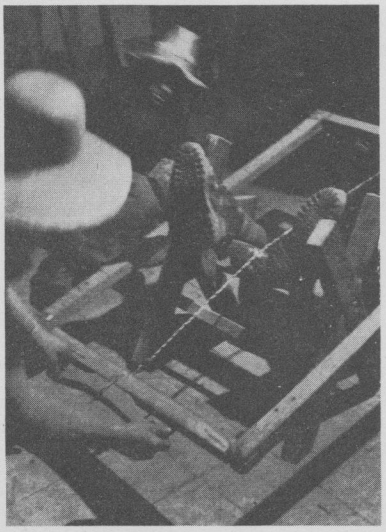
972. The 'old woman', who is played by an old woman of the district, wears a stiff mask made from tree-bark: this is the symbol of nature and dying vegetation.

AN OLD WOMAN IS SAWN INTO PLANKS

The performance of this unusually strange magical rite, known as the 'Sega vecchia', or 'sawing through the old woman', was recorded near Perugia, in Umbria, Italy.



974



973

973–974. According to the traditonal ceremony, a group of wood-cutters meet her on the road, take her for an old oak-tree and immediately chop her to pieces with their axes. Then, using the gestures of their everyday work, they saw her into planks.



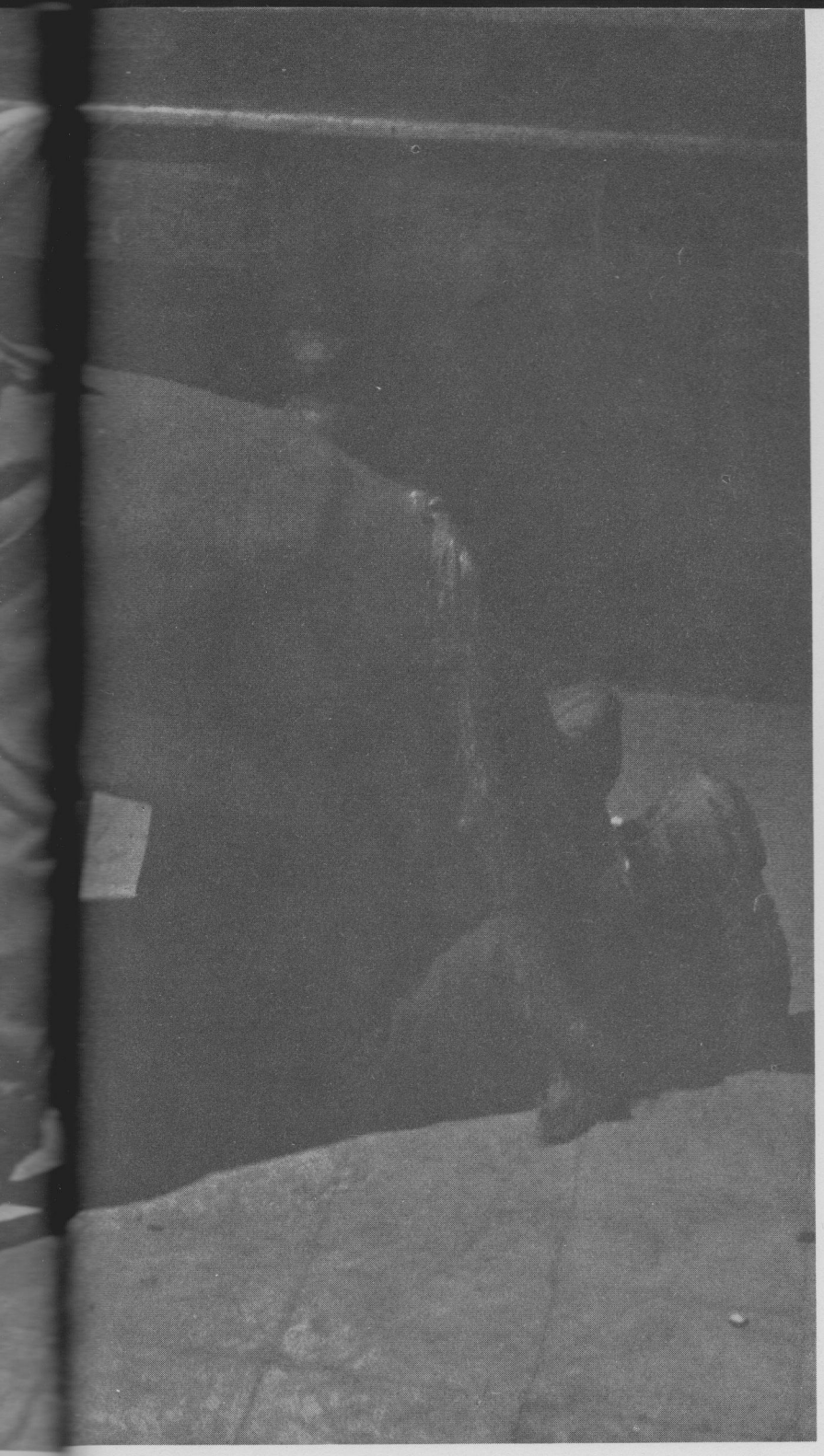
975

975. Only then, according to the rite, do they realise their mistake: they were not sawing up a dead oak tree but a living old woman. Now comes the most dramatic moment. One of the actors in the mime-drama, the 'spoilsport', as he is called in the rite, the one who is said to represent the spirit of death, dances until he is out of breath and tries to bring the old woman back to life by every possible means: then the 'spoilsport' goes through a mimed version of sexual intercourse with her.



976

976. Other people intervene in different ways, but without success: the old woman obstinately refuses to come back to life. So the doctor is called, and he arrives riding on a donkey. The donkey, as well as the practitioner, is played by a man taking part in the rite: he wears a wooden mask, a false tail and wooden shoes.



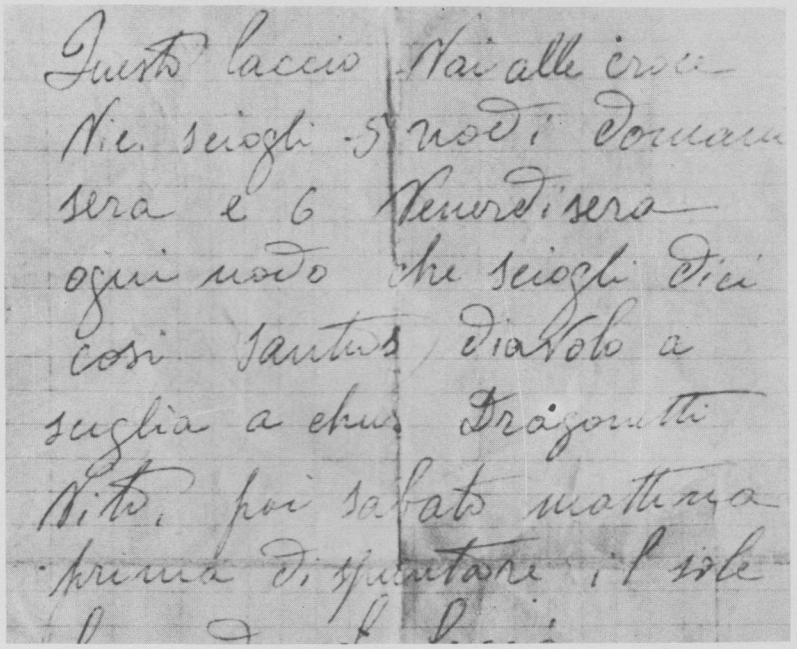


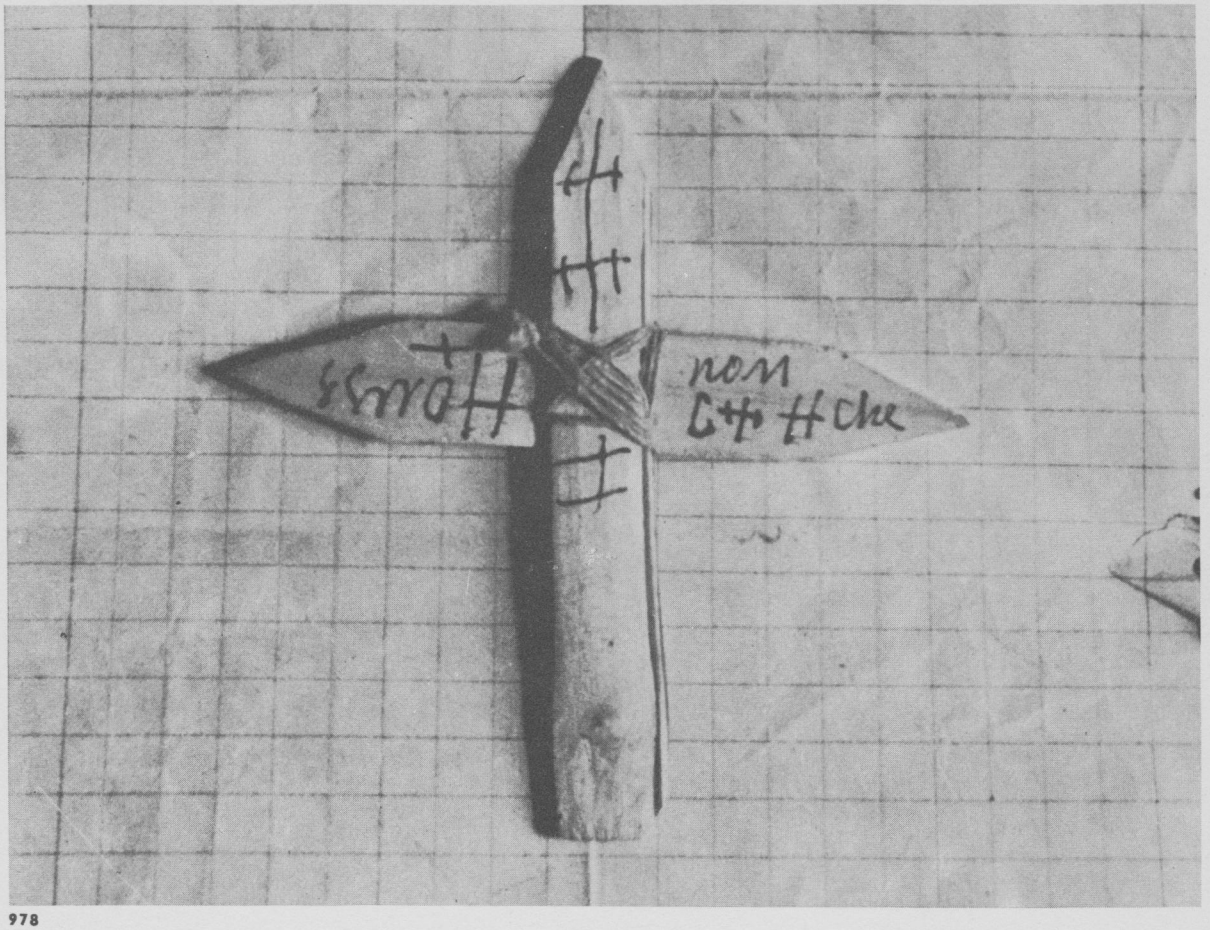
977

977. The doctor wears spectacles and a white smock. Curiously enough the wood-cutters resort to a doctor and not to a sorcerer. This is perhaps because doctors nowadays are looked upon with favour, like the magi were in the past. So much for magic in the twentieth century!

LOVE-PHILTRES AND HOW TO CHARM AWAY SPELLS WITH STRING

978. A girl in the village has become ill through a 'spell'. The 'maciara' or 'witch' hastens to see her and prescribes suitable treatment. She even writes out a kind of prescription on squared paper: 'Take this piece of string which has eleven knots in it and go tomorrow to the big cross in the cemetery, untie five of the knots on Thursday evening and the other six on Friday evening. As you untie each knot you must say, Jump, Devil, remove this spell. Then, on Saturday, before sunrise, you must burn the string'. Two little pieces of wood are attached to the prescription, placed in the shape of a cross. The cure is completed by a decoction of mallows, chamomile, barley and dried figs.





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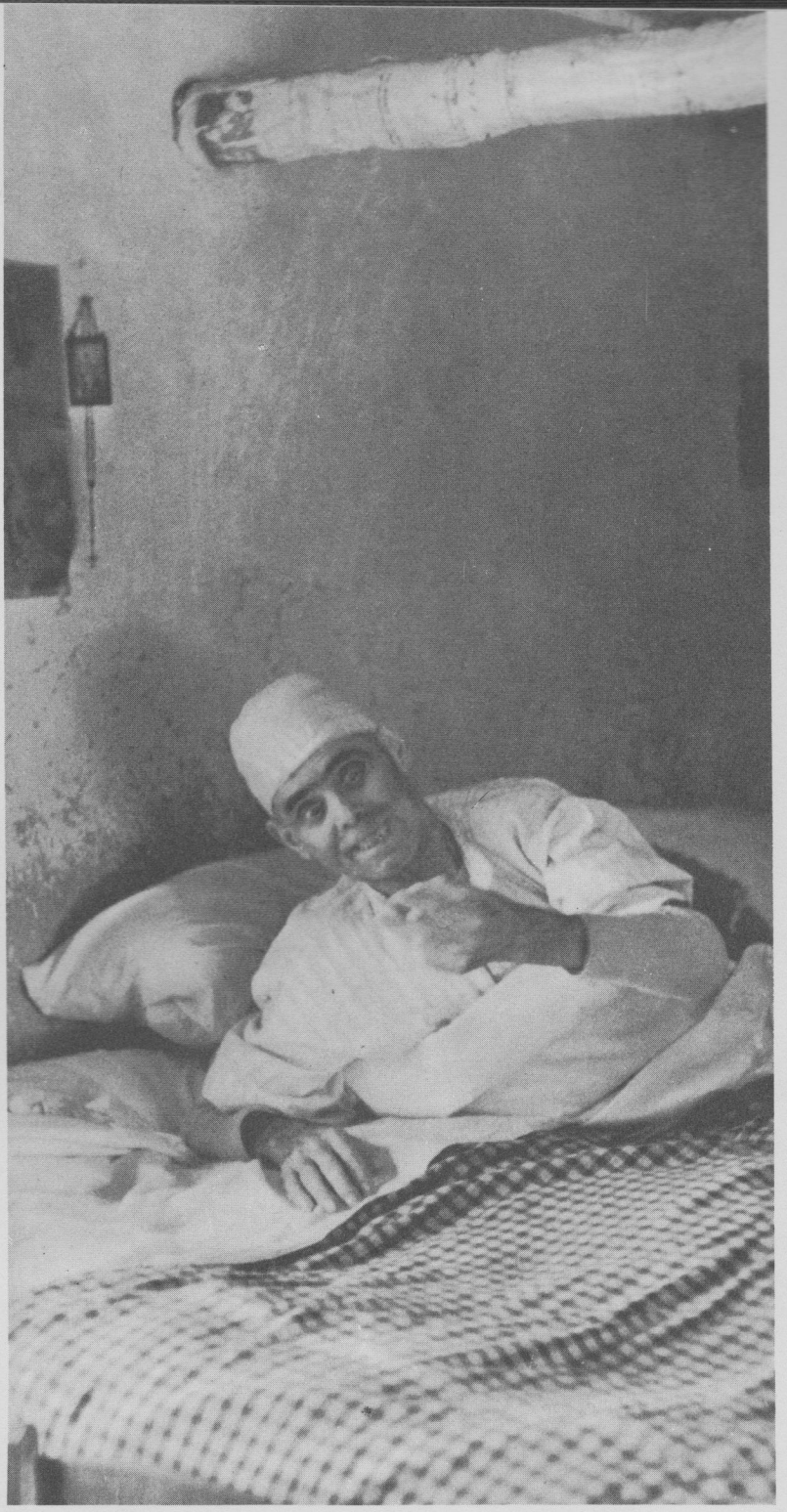
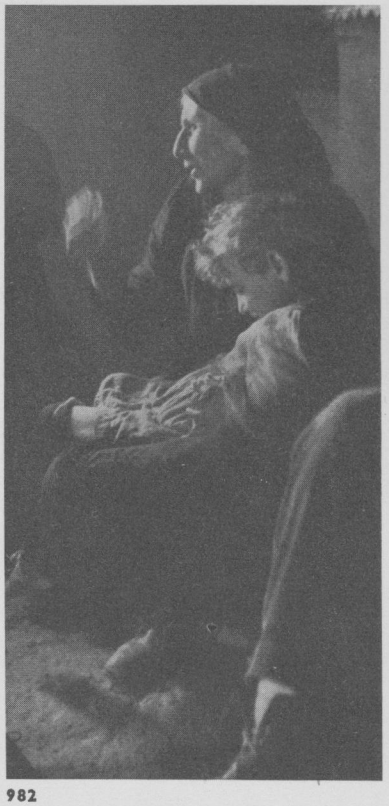


980

979. A 'maciara' or sorceress of Castelmezzano performing her functions as official prophetess.

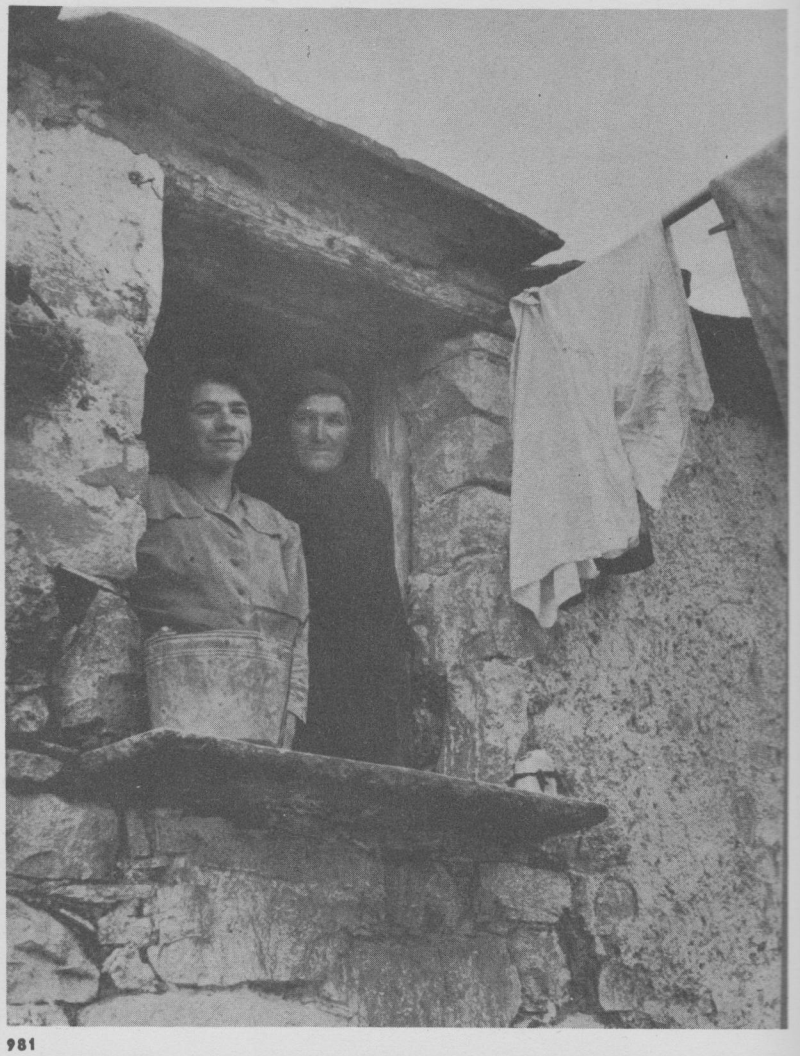
980. The old man lying on this wretched bed was very famous in his district, where he was known as 'uncle Joseph'. He was nobody's uncle and his name was not Joseph, but his faithful followers 'knew' that if they mentioned the sorcerer's real name they would draw down the worst possible calamities on their heads. Uncle Joseph's fame had crossed the ocean, and Italians who had emigrated to the United States would ask his advice by letter until the day when he died of cancer, shortly after this photograph was taken.

981. A young girl, watched over by her mother, stands languidly at the window. She has taken a love-philtre brewed by a witch on behalf of a local boy. It consisted of a caramel crushed in human sperm. The mother had noticed the state of her daughter's health while she was sleeping. Now they must wait until a friendly witch loosens the spell. For while it lasts the girl will be incapable of resisting any man who comes near to her, even if he has no intention of raping her.



982

982. This unfortunate child is the victim of a serious congenital illness which affects his ability to walk; he is undergoing treatment by a witch who is casting a spell to remove the enchantment from which he is suffering.



981

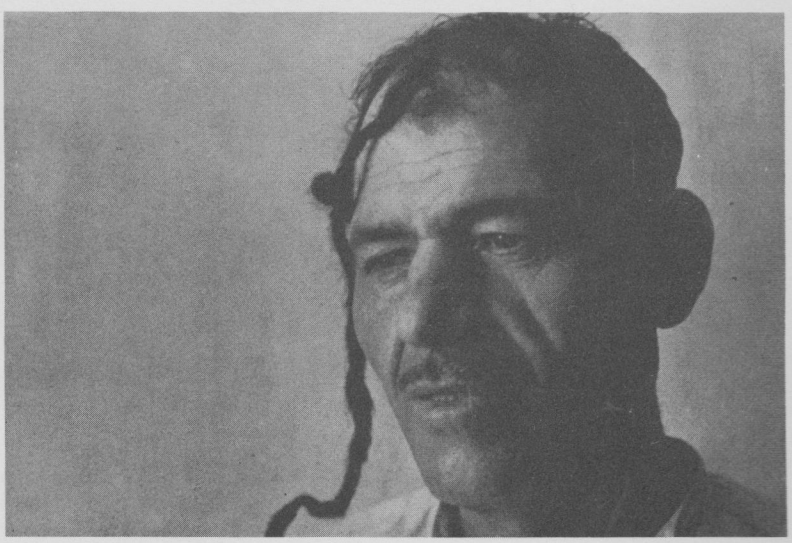
983. An indication of the publicity used by practitioners of 'itinerant magic'. In Italy there are many clairvoyants who give 'consultations' in luxury hotels, surrounded by their secretarial staff.



983



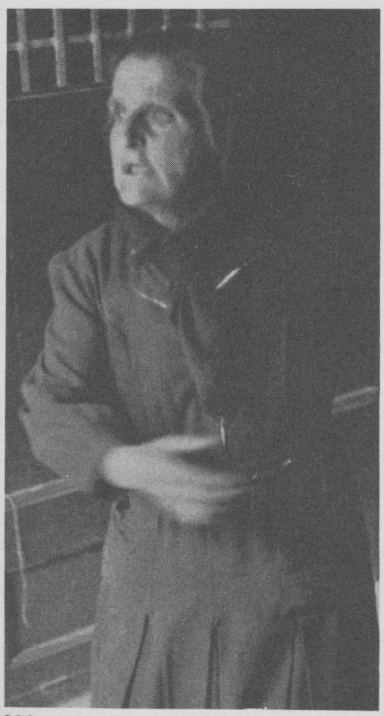
984. This man is convinced that an enemy has cast a spell over him; he is in a dazed, verminous, near-imbecile state and has not left his filthy pallet bed for nearly twenty years. The small town of Albano in Lucania has 5,000 inhabitants and many of the houses are hovels. When they were asked if they believed in the magic powers of sorcerers and the effectiveness of their operations, they replied unanimously in the affirmative.



985. This peasant in Licata, Sicily, has found nothing better to do than to grow this unusual plait of hair in order to ward off the evil eye.

TARANTULAS IN APULIA

986. At Galantina in Apulia there are people under a spell following bites from the tarantula spider. One of them dances in the chapel of St Paul, on the saint's day, and sings in front of the altar, begging to be cured, until she is exhausted.



986



987

987. Another woman, under a spell of the same kind, jumps about even on the cornice of the altar.



988

988. A man and a woman, suffering from the 'tarantula' spell, have collapsed in exhaustion in front of the altar. Relatives have slipped pillows under their heads. A little later, when the man has regained strength enough to leave the chapel, he will say to anyone who likes to listen — and everyone will believe him — 'I had gone to work in France. One day, as I was sleeping on the ground, I felt something bite me. I woke up, I found the tarantula, I killed it, but it had already bitten me: I had been poisoned'.

989. 'Yes, I saw the demon', insists this woman from Camarata. And ever since then she has given a mimed version of the 'encounter'.



989

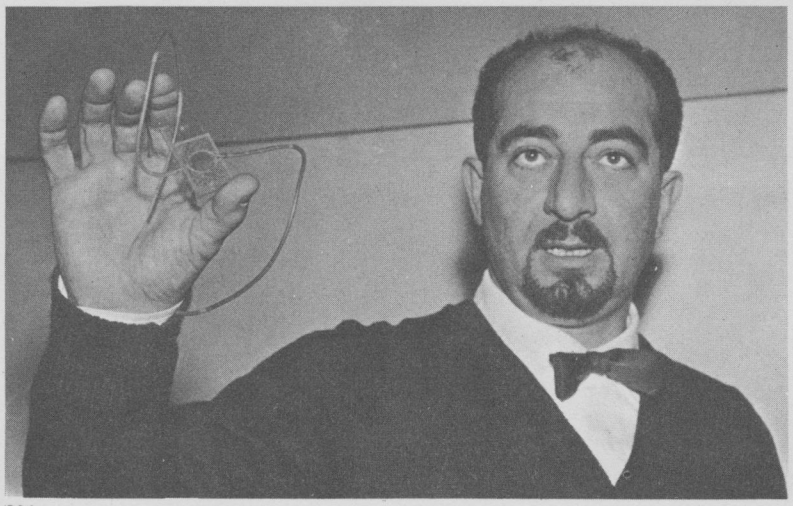
SCIENCE TAKES OVER FROM MAGIC

990. Jean Rostand is a strong supporter of parthenogenesis or the possibility of producing children without a father; this theory was opposed for a long time but has now opened up a new area of research. Rostand has now retired but quietly goes on with his experiments on animals, such as toads and frogs, and it is feasible to hope that the day is not far distant when it will be possible to influence people during the period of gestation.



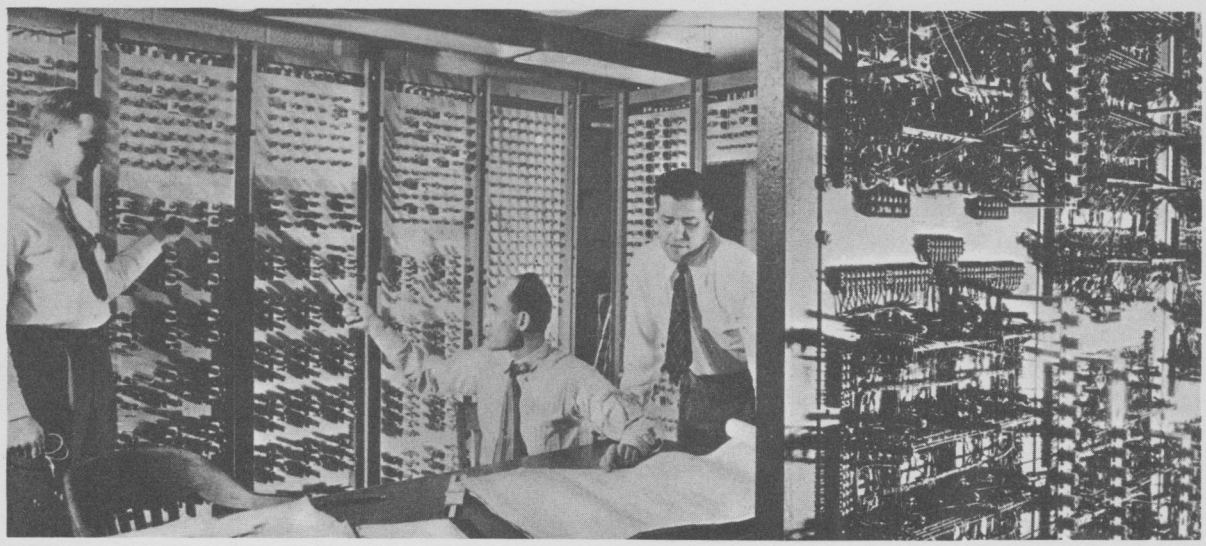
990

991. Professor Petrucci of Italy claims that he has produced an artificial embryo, using artificial methods, and that it is possible for it to develop. This experiment, which was voluntarily interruped on the twenty-ninth day, could be added to the dreams of the alchemists about the 'homunculus'.



991

992. The development of electronic machines, including the famous 'memory machines', allows us to anticipate the creation of others which are capable of carrying out certain essential processes of the human brain. This calculating machine already does this to some extent for it does the work of a mathematician and makes no mastakes. Science, the substitute for insight, is now producing an infinite number of miracles.



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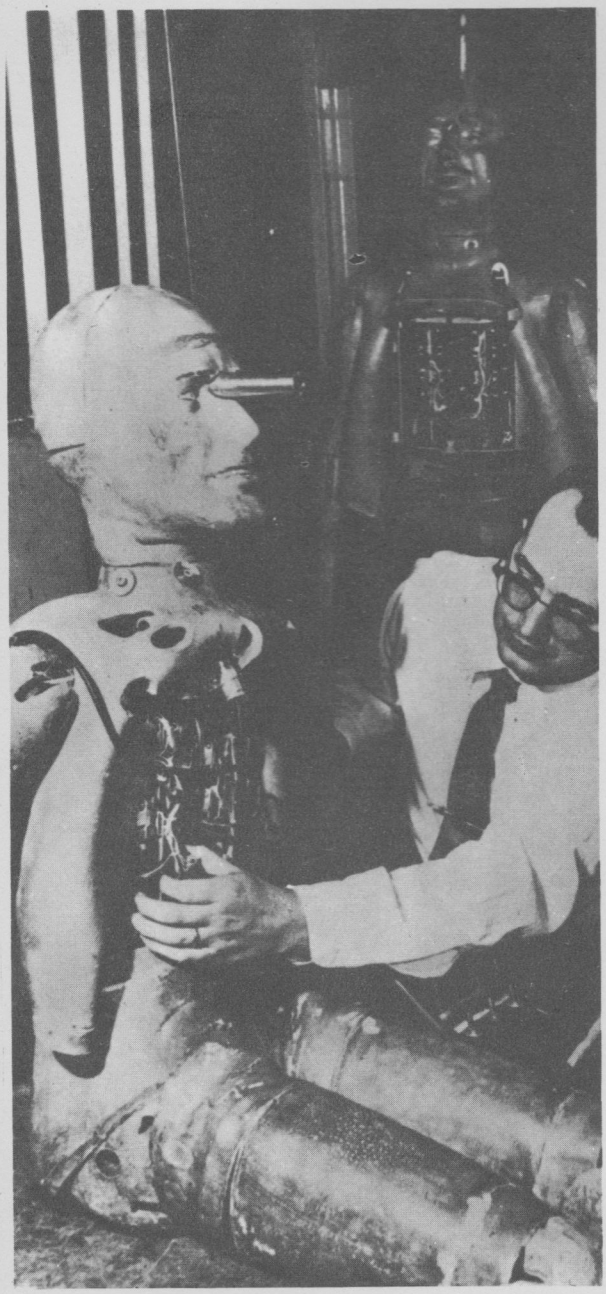

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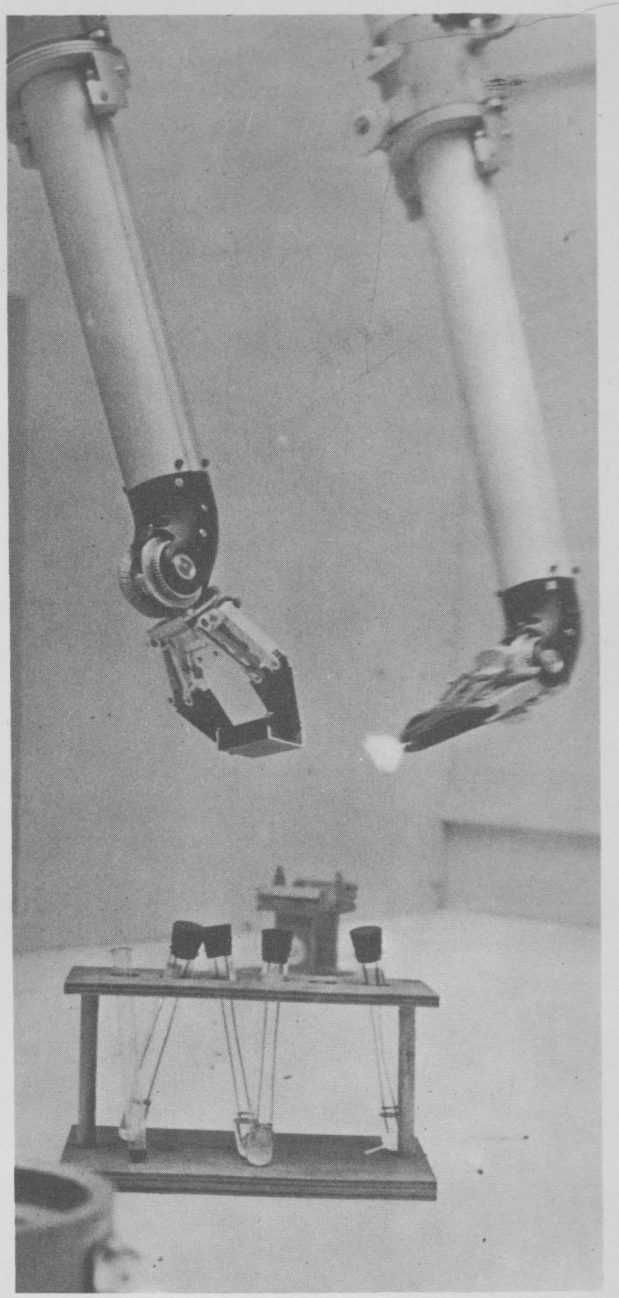

994

993. We now have the robot, the modern version of the 'golem', the artificial slave which haunted the dreams of the Cabbalists. Technicians have already perfected 'robot-pilots' with rubber skin, with the shape, weight and general appearance of human beings. Their brains consist of wires and printed circuits. In atomic research laboratories the robot-hand is used regularly today; it is driven by a telecommunications system and is capable of carrying out separate movements as in this photograph, where it is shown taking out a match and striking it. In our grandfathers' time efforts of this kind would have been regarded as diabolical, and shortly before that those reponsible would have been burnt at the stake. Three thousand years of blindness have passed away. Now the future is coming, like a ghost which has lost its mystery.

FROM NOW ON, THE SIGNS ARE NO LONGER IN THE SKY

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MAGIC AND THE SUPERNATURAL

SPRING BOOKS