

Proem by Marsilio Ficino the Florentine
of his Book "On Life"
To the Magnanimous Lorenzo de' Medici
Preserver of his Country

The poets sing that Bacchus, the supreme prelate of priests,¹ was born twice—signifying perhaps either that one who is going to be a priest should be reborn at the moment of his initiation or else that when one is at length a perfected priest, his mind, deeply drunken with God, seems now to have been reborn. Or perhaps, in a less exalted sense, they mean that wine (the seed of Bacchus) is born once on the vine (Semele) when the clusters are ripe beneath Phoebus, and born again after the thunderbolt of the vintage as pure wine in its proper vessel (the thigh of Jupiter).² But our task is not at present to speak of sacred mysteries, when we are presently about to bring help to the sick by natural means. Nor ought we to proceed in a style that expresses gravity—after just beginning somehow or other with Father Liber—but rather in a style that is free [pun on "Liber"] and jocose. And rightly I say "somehow or other," for perhaps a more prudent author might have begun a work of medicine under the auspices of Phoebus the first of doctors rather than under those of Bacchus. But what if there might be a sign not without meaning in my mouth just now happening to utter "Bacchus"? For he perhaps heals more salubriously with his nourishing wine and his carefree jollity than that Phoebus with his herbs and songs.

But whichever interpretation you accept, Bacchus, that leader of priests, is said to have had, as it were, two mothers. Melchisedech, moreover, that highest of priests, had scarcely one mother, scarcely one father.³ I, the least of priests, had two fathers—Ficino the doctor and Cosimo de' Medici.⁴ From the former I was born, from the latter reborn. The former commended me to Galen as both a doctor and a Platonist;⁵ the latter consecrated me to the divine Plato⁶ And both the one and the other alike dedicated Marsilio to a doctor—Galen, doctor of the body, Plato, doctor of the soul. Therefore, for a long time now I have practiced the medicine salutary to souls under Plato: after translating all his books, I straightway composed eighteen books concerning the immortality of souls and eternal happiness, so to the best of my ability repaying my Medici father.⁷ Thinking I ought next to repay my medical father, I have

composed a book *On Caring for the Health of Learned People*. In addition, after this, learned people desired not only to be healthy for a while, but also, being in good health, to live a long time. And so I then gave them a book *On a Long Life*. But they distrusted terrestrial medicines and remedies in a matter of such importance; and so I added⁸ a book *On Obtaining a Life Both Healthy and Long from Heaven*, so that from the very living body of the world, a more vigorous life might be propagated as if from a vine into our own body, which is in a way a part of the world's body.

But I beg you, good-natured Lorenzo, to pardon these books of medicine, if while trying to be a doctor, I am, somehow or other, willy-nilly a poet, and often not a good one. For one and the same Phoebus is the discoverer of medicine and the master of poesy, and he gives us of his life not only by herbs but through the lute and music. And even Venus herself according to astrologers gives birth equally to the musician and the doctor.⁹ But up to now, while I take assiduous care of the life of learned people and citizens of similar occupations, I neglect the welfare of my own books, so long as I allow them to be disjoined from each other. Accordingly, recognizing my duty to them for the first time, I am joining them in one body. Since their limbs have now been compacted into one form, let life be present forthwith. This work of natural science, this my body, so to speak, cannot receive any life but mine; but such life depends entirely on my soul. This soul, however, lives now this long time with you, Lorenzo, my patron, especially in that part of your spacious palace wherein together with Plato [meaning his translation] my work *On the Immortality of Souls* is kept, long since dedicated to your name. But that soul¹⁰ of mine, even if it leads its life with you as in a blessed homeland, nevertheless, as the theologians say, it is still "unquiet" until it receives this work of natural science as its body.¹¹ Accept, therefore, O excellent Lorenzo, after those books on the soul these also on the body, and favor these with the same inspiration with which you long ago propitiously favored the others. For so also this body under your spirit¹² will live through having its own soul; and our soul in turn, being now together with this its body, will be at rest in your house.

General Proem

1. Ficino makes Bacchus a priest of "sacris mysteriis" (line 7) because, in line with Plato's *Phaedrus* 265a, he always makes him, or his Greek counterpart Dionysus, the god of the divine frenzy known as *sacratolium*. See Letter to Peregrino Agli, Dec. 1457, ad fin., citing Plato, *Phaedrus* 265a, *Op.*, p. 615. Letters, translated by members of the Language Department of the School of Economic Science, London, vols. 1-3 (London, 1975-1981), 1: 47-48; *Comm. Symp.*, 7.14 (*Op.*, p. 1361), ed. Marcel, p. 258; and Chastel, *Marsile Ficini et lart* (Geneva, 1954), p. 130.
2. Ovid, *Met.* 3.317, "his geniti Bacchi"; 4.12, "binatrem"; Manilius, *Astronomica* 2.2. Epithets of this sort are often applied to Bacchus; for other examples, see Michael J. B. Allen, *The Platonism of Marsilio Ficino* (Berkeley, 1984), p. 31, n. 75. The "vindemiae fulmen" below corresponds to the fatal splendor of Jupiter's revealed godhead which killed Semelē.
3. Melchisedech had no recorded parents; the author of Hebrews dwells on this laena so as to make him a type of Christ, 7:1-4, citing Gen. 14:18; see also Ps. 110:4; Heb. 5:6,10; 6:20; 7:1-17.
4. Word-play on "medicus" and "Medici"; for a similar word-play, see Letter of 11 November 1490 to Bartolomeo Scala, Kristeller, *SF*, 1.60. He was ordained (*pace* Corsi's *Vita*) in 1473, Della Torre, pp. 594-95. "Ficinum medicum" is Diotifeci Ficino of Figline in Val d'Arno, personal physician, or so Ficino always claimed, to Cosimo de' Medici. Originally called Diotifeci d'Agnolo di Giusto, he took the name "Ficino" only after being summoned to Florence by Cosimo, probably even after Marsilio's birth, Marcel, *MF*, pp. 124-25. See "The Author in the Work." Cosimo was of course the grandfather of Lorenzo and the founder of the ruling dynasty.
5. See Phillip De Lacy, "Galen's Platonism," *American Journal of Philology* 93 (1972): 27-39.
6. In 1462, Cosimo had commissioned the young Marsilio to translate the works of Plato, Kristeller, *Phil MF*, p. 16.
7. The translation of Plato was finished around 1468 (see Kristeller, *Phil MF*, p. 17) but not published until 1484. The next item to be mentioned, "decem atque octo de animorum immortalitate libros et aeterna felicitate," Ficino's major original work, better known as the *Theologia Platonica* after Proclus's book of the same title, was written 1469-1474, though not published until 1482; see Kristeller, *Phil MF*, pp. 17-18.

8. Ficino here gives the false impression that Book 2 was composed second whereas it was composed last, after Book 3 (see above, "Editorial Introduction," ad init.).

9. While all of the authorities consulted agree that musicians are born under Venus, none of them, not even Ficino himself elsewhere, straightforwardly attributes doctors to Venus; see Letter to Antonio Canigiani similarly justifying his dual profession of music and medicine, *Letters*, 1: 141-44 (*Op.*, p. 650, 4). Ptolemy says that Venus produces druggists; Venus and Mercury, physicians who employ drugs in their treatments, *Tetrabiblos*, 4.4 (Venice, 1494). Thus Venus gives birth to doctors only under certain conditions, not "equally." For the possible presence of such a combination in Ficino's own horoscope, which would explain his overstatement here, see "The Author in the Work."

10. In Books 1 and 2, Ficino seems to use *anima* and *animus* interchangeably; here—for one and the same entity—he so uses "animus iste meus" with "ex mea . . . anima" above it and "per suam . . . animam" below it. "A clear distinction between *animus* and *anima* is not always observed, though the ancients attempted to draw one," writes James Tatum, adducing examples of the confusion even in Cicero, "The Tales in Apuleius's *Metamorphoses*," *TAPA* 100 (1969): 509, n. 54. See above, Introduction, "Principles of Translation."

11. Cf. Augustine *De Genesi ad litteram* 12.35 entitled "Resurrectio corporum ad perfectam beatitudinem animae cur sit necessaria," *PL* 34: 483. The union of body and soul referred to in this metaphor is primarily that of the final Christian resurrection, as in the quotation from Augustine—even though "Cuius artubus in unam formam iam compactis, vita profinus adsit" sounds like the stages of gestation. As fornam iam compactis, vita profinus adsit" sounds like the stages of gestation. As for a compliment to Lorenzo, Ficino equates his home with Paradise. In this life, of course, for Ficino as for any good Platonist, it is precisely the body which disquiets the soul; see for example, *Theologia Platonica*, 14.7, ed. Marcel (hereafter referred to simply as ed.) 2: 273 (*Op.*, p. 317).

12. An extended pun on words for "breathe" (*afflari*, *aspirare*, and *spiritus*) and on the function—celebrated in *De vita*—of the medical spirit to link body and soul.

Proem to Book 1

1. A play on *probo* begins here. Both dedicatees were members of Ficino's Academy; both were associated with Lorenzo. Ficino had submitted to them, among others, his translation of Plato for correction, as his "Praefatio ad lectorem" of that work acknowledges, ed. Kristeller, *SF*, 2: 105; see also *SF*, 1: 111-12, and *Letters*, 1: 224, 233, and 2: 114. Giorgio Antonio Vespucci was the uncle and teacher of that Amerigo for whom America is named; see E. H. Gombrich, *Symbolic Images*, p. 43 and p. 81, n. 47; Della Torre, pp. 772-74.

2. *Mr.* 11:28; John 14:6.

1.1

1. Jupiter, the major benefic or "greater Fortune," is missing here, though included in similar lists, e.g., 3.24, *Op.*, p. 568. Saturn, by convention the worst planet of all, is omitted here but introduced as early as 1.4, *Op.*, p. 496, and included, last and defensively, in the list in 3.24. One of the contributions of *De vita* is to establish Saturn as another planet not only characteristic of scholars but beneficial to them; see "Traditional Material and Innovations," hereafter "Traditions," and "The Author in the Work." The mention of the planets at this early point proves that Book 3 or something like it was part of Ficino's plan from the outset.

2. Since no individual can select his own natural father, either a second and spiritual father of the sort mentioned in Gen. Proem must be uppermost in Ficino's mind, or else "nostra diligentia" here must mean that of humankind at large.

3. Education is of course a central concern of the *Republic*. As for the father, while Plato's ideal commonwealth places no trust whatever in the natural parents of potential *securants* (transferring all infant guardians to the collective wardship of the State, *Rep.* 457-65), Socrates himself in the same work praises one individual historical father—Ariston, father of two of his interlocutors Adeimantus and Glaucon, and probably also of Plato himself, *Rep.* 367e. More to Ficino's purpose, *Laws* 5: 729 and 6: 781a specify duties of fathers in training sons.

4. A comprehensive discussion of education, including the parents' role, forms the apparently truncated conclusion of Aristotle's *Politics* 7.13-8.7 (1331b-1342b). The duties of fathers and teachers toward children are also mentioned in 1.12-13 (1299a-1260b), et passim.

5. The father is central, being in fact the addressee, throughout the first essay in the *Moralia* (1A-14C), the *De liberis educandi*, now considered to be of doubtful authenticity but in the Renaissance constitutive of educational theory, first through Guarino's translation of 1411 and then through Vittorino's "first great school of the Renaissance," J. E. Sandys, *A History of Classical Scholarship*, vol. 2 (1908). Reprint. New York, 1958), p. 53; William Harrison Woodward, *Studies in Education . . . 1400-1600* (Cambridge, 1924), p. 7.

6. *Institutes* 2.2.3: 8; 9; indeed, the entire *Institutes* centers on education. Although the father is less prominent than the teacher, being mentioned as the employer of the teacher (2), the Proem to 6 records Quintilian's past concern for his own son's mental growth, now rendered vain by death. The complete text of Quintilian's *Institutes* had been discovered by Poggio in 1416 and had likewise influenced humanist education, Woodward, op. cit., p. 8.

7. This is not to deny that scholars have been cursorily mentioned as patients in medical treatises before; Plutarch, for example, has much to say about the health of scholars in his "De sanitate tuenda," in *Moralia* 122B-137E. Still closer to Ficino, Antonio Guaineri of Pavia (fl. 1412-1448), in his *Practica* (Venice, 1517), Tr. 15.2, lists among the causes of melancholy "asiduitas studii," fol. 23, col. a; and Constantinus Africanus likewise "nimia cogitatio," etc., *Della melancholia*, ed. and trans. M. T. Malato and U. De Martini (Rome, 1959), p. 54 (Latin) and 1.3, p. 89 (Italian); see also KP&S, p. 82, and "The Author in the Work."

8. A pun on Minerva as "minuens nervos" begins here, and see below, 2.3, ad fin.

Alcibiades and Proclus explains it. And Pythagoras, considering this, rightly called the good itself and the perfection of things by the name of "timeliness."⁹ Thus the first principle of all things is measure, according to Pythagoras and Plato, that it might distribute divers places and times to divers bodies and actions.¹⁰ In consequence, just as a given thing is fortunately born and coalesces and is preserved not elsewhere than here nor at any other time but just then, so also such or such a material action, motion, or event does not obtain full or perfect efficacy except when the celestial harmony conduces to it from all sides. This harmony is thought to have such great power that it oftentimes bestows a wonderful power not only on the works of farmers and on artificial things composed by doctors from herbs and spices, but even on images which are made out of metals and stones by astrologers.

But images now require a chapter of their own. As much, however, as pertains to the election of hours for actions and works is completely confirmed by Prolemy where he says in the *Centiloquium*, "He who elects what is better, he seems to be no different from him who has it by nature."¹¹ In these words, he seems to confirm the power both of the celestials and of our free will and election. Also Albertus Magnus says in his *Speculum*, "Freedom of will is not repressed by the election of an excellent hour; rather, to scorn to elect an hour for the beginnings of great enterprises is not freedom but reckless choice."¹²

*On the Power Acquired from the Heavens Both in Images,
according to the Ancients, and in Medicines.*

Chap. XIII

Ptolemy says in the *Centiloquium* that images of things here below are subject to the celestial images; and that the ancient wise men used to manufacture certain images when the planets were entering similar faces of the heavens, the faces being as it were exemplars of things below.¹ Haly confirms this, saying in his commentary on this text that a useful image of a serpent can be formed when the Moon enters the celestial Serpent or aspects it favorably. Similarly an effective image of a scorpion can be formed when the Moon enters the sign Scorpio and this sign is occupying one of the four cardines. This he says was done in Egypt in his time, and he was present; in this case a figure was imprinted in frankincense from a signet of a scorpion made under these conditions from the stone bezoar; it was given in a drink to a person whom a real scorpion had stung, and right away he was cured.² Hahamed the physician affirms that this was effectively performed, and Serapion confirms

it.³ Besides, Haly tells of a wise man who in a similar endeavor made images which moved; we read that this was also effected somehow by Archites.⁴ Trismegistus says the Egyptians also used to make such images of specific cosmic materials and used to insert into them at the right time the souls of demons and the soul of his ancestor Mercury. Likewise the souls of a certain Phoebeus and of Isis and Osiris thus descended into statues to help people or even to harm them.⁵

That myth is similar to this one: that Prometheus stole life and celestial light by means of a clay figure.⁶ Yes, and the magicians who were disciples of Zoroaster, when they wanted to summon a spirit [rare use of *spiritus* in normal sense] from Hecate, would use a golden ball on which characters of heavenly bodies were engraved and in which also a sapphire had been inserted: they would whirl it around in a strap made of bull's hide while they chanted.⁷ But the incantations I gladly omit; for even Psellus the Platonist disapproves of incantations and makes fun of them.⁸ The Hebrews, from having been brought up in Egypt, learned how to construct the golden calf, as their own astrologers think, in order to capture the favor of Venus and the Moon against the influence of Scorpio and Mars, which was inimical to the Jews. Porphyry also in his *Letter to Anthea* testifies that images are efficacious; and he adds that by certain vapors arising from fumigations proper to them, aerial daemons would instantly be insinuated into them.⁹ Iamblichus confirms that in materials which are naturally akin to the things above and have been both collected from their various places and compounded at the right time and in the proper manner, you can receive forces and effects which are not only celestial, but even daemonic and divine.¹⁰ Proclus and Synesius absolutely agree.¹¹

Certainly those wonderful therapies which doctors trained in astrology are able to perform through medicines composed of many things — i.e., powders, liquids, unguents, electuaries — seem to have in themselves a more probable and obvious explanation than do images: first, because powders, liquids, unguents, and electuaries, made at the right time, receive celestial influences more easily and quickly than the harder materials from which images usually are made; second, because once impregnated with celestial influences, they are either taken internally and converted into our very selves, or at least when applied externally they stick closer and finally penetrate; third, because images are constructed of only one or a very few materials, but medicines can be made of as many as you like. For instance, if a hundred gifts of the Sun or Jupiter were scattered throughout a hundred plants, animals, etc., and you discovered them and would be able to compound them and work them up into one form, in this you would actually seem already to possess completely the Sun or Jupiter. Certainly you know that the lower nature cannot hold all the forces of the higher nature in one subject; and, therefore, that these forces are dispersed in our world through many natures; and that they can be collected more easily through

medical procedures and the like than through images.

Similarly, images made of wood have little force. For wood is both perhaps too hard to take on celestial influence easily and less tenacious, if it does receive it, in retaining it; and it soon loses almost any vigor of cosmic life at all and is easily transmuted into another quality after it is rooted out of the bowels of its mother earth. But gems and metals, although they seem too hard for accepting a celestial influence, nevertheless retain it longer if they receive it, as Iamblichus confirms.¹² That is to say, by their hardness they also retain the vestiges and gifts of the life of the world, which they had once possessed while embedded in the earth, for a very long time after being rooted out. On this score, at least, they are judged to be apt materials for capturing and holding celestial things. Also it is probable, as I said in the preceding book,¹³ that things so beautiful cannot be fused under the earth without a consummate effort of the heavens, and that the power impressed in them once and for all from that effort remains. For the heavens have labored an immense length of time in concocting and assembling these things. But since you cannot easily compound several things of this kind, you are forced to inquire diligently what metal among others is most powerful in the order of any given star, what stone is highest in that order, so that at least in some one thing, supreme in its entire genus and order, you may, insofar as possible, comprehend the rest, and that you may borrow in a receptacle of this kind celestial things that are in sympathy with it; as, for example, in the Solar order, below a Phoebean man, the hawk or the cock holds the highest place among the animals; among the plants, balsam or laurel; among metals, gold; among stones, carbuncle or pantaura;¹⁴ among elements, hot air (for fire itself is agreed to belong to Mars). But our advice to increase the influence of the Sun, of Jupiter, or of Venus [3.5 ff.], we understand as a general rule, not, however, for that patient in whose horoscope one of these planets appeared as a Signifier of death.

*The Orders of Things Depending on the Stars, as of Solar Things,
and So Forth; and How Our Spirit May Be Made Solar.*

Chap. XIV

I have said elsewhere that down from every single star (to speak Platonically) there hangs its own series of things down to the lowest.¹ Under the very Heart of the Scorpion, after daemons and men of its kind, and the scorpion, the animal, we can place also the aster, whose name means "stellar" similar in shape to a star shining at night, which doctors tell us has the quality of the

rose and possesses a wonderful force against diseases of the genitals.² Under the celestial Serpent or the entire constellation of the Serpent-bearer, they place Saturn and sometimes Jupiter, afterwards daemons who often take on serpent's form, in addition men of this kind, serpents (the animals), the snake-weed [or snake's grass], the stone dracoonite which originates in the head of a dragon, and the stone commonly named serpentine, and besides, those which I will adduce in what follows. Under the Solar star, that is Sirius, they set the Sun first of all, and then Phoebean daemons, which sometimes have encountered people under the form of lions or cocks, as Proclus testifies,³ then similar men and Solar beasts, Phoebean plants then, similarly metals and gems and vapor and hot air. By a similar system they think a chain of beings descends by levels from any star of the firmament through any planet under its dominion. If, therefore, as I said, you combine at the right time all the Solar things through any level of that order, i.e., men of Solar nature or something belonging to such a man, likewise animals, plants, metals, gems, and whatever pertains to these, you will drink in unconditionally the power of the Sun and to some extent the natural power of the Solar daemons. Consider that I have said similar things about the others.

Solar are those people of the sorts that I specified before [3.1 ad fin.], also those who are born when Leo is ascending and the Sun either is in it or aspects it, and similarly those who are born under Aries. Blood let from the left arms of healthy people is also Solar. Also Phoebean are the crocodile, the hawk, the lion, the cock, the swan, and the raven. It is for no other reason that the lion fears the cock but that in the Phoebean order he is superior to the lion. For the same reason, says Proclus, the Apollonian daemon who often appeared under the shape of a lion disappeared as soon as a cock was put in his way.⁴ In these animals, the heart is especially Solar. I think that the seal too is subject to the Heart of the celestial Lion⁵ and that it is for this very reason that he who girds his leather against his bare skin with a buckle made of its bone, is relieved of pains in the kidneys. For against such pain astrologers are accustomed to use the influences of this star. Perhaps for the same reason, its pelt is said to keep us safe from lightning. Among plants, the palm is Phoebean and most of all the laurel, by virtue of which it repels poisonous things and lightning. The ash-tree also by a similar faculty repels poisonous things far away. That the lotus is Phoebean, is testified by the roundness both of its leaves and of its fruit and by the unfolding of its leaves in the day and their folding back up at night.⁶ That the peony is Phoebean, is indicated not only by its power but even by its name ["Paeonius" is an epithet of Phoebus]. To the Sun belong flowers and herbs which close up when the Sun is absent, unfold as soon as he returns, and continually turn towards the Sun; gold, too, and "lapissyllis," which imitates the Sun by its golden rays; likewise the stone which is called "eye of the Sun," having the shape of a pupil which radiates light; also

the carbuncle which shines at night, or the pantaura which contains in itself the powers of all stones as gold does of metals, and the Sun of stars.⁷ Many things, then, are indicated for us in the above lists, from which, provided you can manage it, you will be able to compound electuaries or unguents when the Sun is dignified for fostering either internally or externally the heart, the stomach, and the head, that the spirit may thence become Solar; I mean with that blood I mentioned and the hearts of those animals, and with the leaves and fruits of the aforesaid trees, likewise with flowers and herbs and gold-leaves and also powders of gems; to these, you should also add saffron, balsam, sweet calamus, frankincense, musk, amber, aloe-wood, ginger, mastic, spikenard, cinnamon, doricum, rind of citron, zedoary, nutmeg, mace, cloves, with yellow honey or with the oil of balsam, of mastic, of laurel, of spikenard. From all these things, I say, or at least from many of them, you should compound something while the Sun is dignified. Begin to use it, too, under his domination, whilst you also put on Solar clothes and live in, look at, smell, imagine, think about, and desire Solar things. Likewise you should imitate both the dignity and the gifts of the Sun in your life. You should pass your time among Solar men and plants; you should touch laurel continually.

But it would be safer for your health if you would mix with the Solar, things that are Jovial and at the same time Veneral — Veneral moisture especially, such as the water and juice of roses and violets, because it moderates the Solar heat. But medicines of this kind I have already partly compounded, partly recounted as compounded by others, partly [taken from others but] also modified by blending, in the first book, *On Caring for Learned People*, and then in the book *On a Long Life*. Likewise, I have specified in the book *Against the Plague* which herbs have from the Sun and Jupiter a wonderful power against the plague and poison, among which the "Perforata" is called "Daemon-router."⁸ It is thought to remove harmful vapors of evil daemons by a power none other than that of the celestial Graces. And if there is any other power among herbs or a gem such as coral, the same thing seems to produce it. Assuredly the lunar herb recounted by Mercurius with bluish, round leaves, which shoots forth one leaf per day when the Moon is waxing and drops one when she is waning,⁹ promises lunar years to him who uses it. But now let us return to images and make a second beginning.

*On the Power Which, according to the Ancients,
Both Images and Medicines Possess;
and on the Factors Which Make Medicines
Far More Powerful Than Images.*

Chap. XV

If you have acquired the gems which we listed as Phoebean a little while ago, there will be no need to imprint images on them. Accordingly, hang them set in gold from your neck on threads of yellow silk, when the Sun is in Aries or Leo and is ascending or else occupies the mid-heaven and aspects the Moon. But Proclus recounts that in their series the gems of the Moon are much more powerful. The first of these is selenite, which imitates the Moon not only in shape but even in motion, for it turns with the Moon. If by chance you should find one of these and suspend it from your neck set in silver by a silver thread when the Moon is entering Cancer or Taurus and occupies the cardines appropriate for her, from this you will eventually render your spirit Lunar, while the Lunar gem, being heated by your flesh, continually inserts its power into your spirit. But he lists another gem, helioselinon by name, which has on it by nature the image of the Sun and Moon in conjunction.¹ If therefore anyone applies it, set in gold-plated silver, by threads of similar material when the Moon comes together in the same minute with the Sun while she is in her house or in his and occupies her cardines, he will gain a spirit that is both Solar and Lunar, or at least such as the Moon becomes when she is conjoined to the Sun by their being centered on the same celestial longitude. When this happens, you see Phoebe the sister of Phoebus gathering up his scattered gifts just as Isis gathered the members of Osiris.

But O that somewhere we might easily find a Solar or Lunar stone so overpowering in its order, as we have in the lodestone and iron in the order of the Northern Pole-star! True, they do report that Apollonius of Tyana found among the Indians a Solar stone, pantaura by name, shining like fire, originating four paces under the earth, in which so much spirit inheres, that the earth swells and often bursts where it is conceived; and it attracts other gems to itself just as a lodestone does iron. But the latter Herculean stone, since it is at hand, more strongly snatches our attention yet again to itself.² In the lookouts of sailors, to tell them where the Pole is, we see that a balanced needle influenced on its end by a lodestone points towards the Bear; this happens because the lodestone draws it in that direction, since the power of the Bear prevails in this stone; and from there it is transferred into the iron and pulls both toward the Bear. Moreover this sort of power both was infused from the beginning

and also grows continually by the rays of the Bear. Perhaps amber behaves in this way towards the other Pole even as it does towards straw.³

But tell me, while we are on this subject, why does the lodestone everywhere draw iron? — not because they are similar, otherwise lodestones would draw lodestones much more readily and iron, iron. Not because lodestones are superior in the order of bodies; on the contrary, metal is superior to gem. Why then? Both are comprised in the order depending on the Bear, but the lodestone holds the superior rank in the very property of the Bear; iron, however, the inferior. The superior draws what is inferior in the same chain of beings and turns it towards itself, or else otherwise agitates it in some way or other, or influences it by a power infused beforehand. The inferior in turn by the same infusion is turned towards the superior or otherwise agitated or deeply influenced. Thus in the series of the Sun the inferior person admires the superior; in the Jovial order he honors him; in that of Mars, he fears him; in the Venereal, the inferior is swept away with the ardor of love for the superior and abandons himself; in the Mercurial, he always learns of, or is persuaded by, him; in the Lunar he is frequently set in motion by him; in the Saturnine, put to rest.

As soon as I had explored these things thus far, while I was still a youth, I greatly rejoiced, and I planned to engrave a lodestone as best I could with the figure of the celestial Bear when the Moon was in one of her better aspects with it and then to suspend it from my neck with an iron thread. Then at last, I was hoping, I would share in the power of that constellation. But when I had explored further, I found in the end that the influence of that constellation is very Saturnine and Martial. I learned from the Platonists that evil demons are mostly Northern, which even the Hebrew Astronomers confess, placing harmful Martial daemons in the North, propitious and Jovial ones in the South.⁴ I learned from the theologians and Iamblichus that makers of images are often possessed by evil daemons and deceived.⁵ I personally have seen a gem at Florence imported from India, where it was dug out of the head of a dragon, round in the shape of a coin, inscribed by nature with very many points in a row like stars, which when doused with vinegar moved a little in a straight line, then at a slant, and soon began going around, until the vapor of the vinegar dispersed.⁶ For my part, I thought a gem of this kind had the power of the celestial Dragon and almost its picture [in the points]; that it received also its motion, whenever through the spirit of vinegar or strong wine it was rendered more responsive to that Dragon or the heavens. Whoever wore this, therefore, and often doused it with vinegar would perhaps borrow some of the power of that Dragon which with his two coils enfolds on one side the Great Bear and on the other, the Little. There is also near Scorpio the Serpentarius [= Ophiucus], as it were a man girded with a serpent, holding the head of the serpent with his right hand, his tail with his left, with knees somewhat bent,

his head bent back a bit. I have read, in fact, that the Magi counseled the Persian king that he should engrave this image on the stone haematis, and set it in a golden ring, but in such a way that between the gem and the gold they would insert the root of the snake-weed. For when wearing this ring you would be safe from poison and poisonous diseases, provided, of course, you make it when the Moon aspects Serpentarius. Pietro d'Abano has confirmed this image.⁷ But I think that if that ring has such power, it is not so much through the figure as through the materials of this kind, composed by this method and at this time, that it claims for itself things from the heavens.

Remember that gems originating in animals, provided they are not sick from them, as in the dragon, the cock, the swallow, etc., are just as effective as those originating in the earth, and they refer to the same stars to which these animals pertain. Hence the cock-stone drawn from the gizzard of an old cock, operates with Solar power; Dioscorides says he often found that through this gem one could fight and not be conquered if he carried it in his mouth.⁸ He also says the red swallow-stone dug out of the swallow, cures a melancholic and renders him lovable and capable.⁹ It has this from Jupiter through the aforesaid connections, namely, that everywhere beneath the Moon stellar things exist. That Platonic saying is strongly confirmed, that the fabric of the universe is so connected with itself, that not only are there celestial things in earth in an earthly condition; and terrestrial things in turn in the heavens in celestial dignity; but also in the secret life of the world and in the Mind, Queen of the world, there are celestial things in both a vital and an intellectual property and dignity.¹⁰ Through this, moreover, many people confirm that magic doctrine that by means of lower things which are in accord with higher ones, people can in due season somehow draw to themselves celestial things, and that we can even through the celestials reconcile the super-celestials to us or perhaps wholly insinuate them into us — but this last matter I leave to them.

It seems sufficiently probable, however, as we said, that the former can be done by a certain art of collecting together rightly and at the right time many things in one. It seems probable, in the first place, for the reasons which we have assigned above; and in the second place, because many things of this kind — when they are collected by someone who is both a doctor and an astrologer, pounded up, mixed, and cooked under a certain star, while they gradually take on by the very reason of the concoction and by fermentation a new form — acquire this form by a certain celestial fomentation, the rays then acting within; and, finally, because the form is therefore celestial. But a metal or gem when it is engraved in a moment [as opposed to the lengthy processes described above] does not seem to receive a new quality, only a new shape; that motion does not proceed by those due degrees of arrangement which natural change and generation characteristically observe. Moreover, since the celestial nature usually proceeds as if by the rule of the lower nature at a natural

pace and so approaches its goal step-by-step, many justly doubt whether images of this kind have any celestial power. I also often doubt it, and, were it not that all antiquity and all astrologers think they have a wonderful power, I would deny it. Of course I would not deny it categorically, for I am of the opinion, unless someone should persuade me otherwise, that especially by reason of the material selected they have at least some power towards good health, even though I think much more of it resides in drugs and unguents compounded with the favor of the stars. But what I meant when I said "by reason of the material selected," I will declare in the chapters that follow.

I will then briefly adduce what can be alleged from the opinion of magicians and astrologers in favor of images in order to interpret Plotinus—provided I will have warned you here at the outset that you must not think I approve the use of images, only recount it [see also "Ad Lectorem" and Apologia]. For as for me, I use medicines tempered in accordance with the heavens, not images, and I daily counsel others to do so. But as for you, if you [now meaning in particular his critics] concede that God has engrained wonderful powers in things beneath the Moon, concede more wonderful ones to the celestial things. Moreover, if you judge it is lawful for a man to use lower things for good health, judge it is also lawful to use higher things, and even so to temper lower things according to the norm of higher things by the art of medicine as they have been tempered by God from the beginning.

*On the Power of the Heavens. On the Powers of the Rays
from Which Images Are Thought To Obtain Their Force.*

Chap. XVI

Assuredly, as all astronomers confess, the immense size, power, and motion of celestial things brings it about that all the rays of all the stars penetrate in a moment the mass of the earth (which is as a point in relation to the sky) and with consummate ease straight to the center. In the center, as the Pythagoreans and Platonists would have it, the rays are the strongest, both because they touch the center perpendicularly on all sides and because they are all collected in a confined space. By the rays' intensity, the material of the earth there—being dry and far from any moisture—is immediately kindled and once kindled, is vaporized and dispersed through channels in all directions and blows out both flames and sulfur. But they think that this fire is very dark and, as it were, a sort of flame without light, just as in the heavens light is without flame, whereas the fire between the celestial and the infernal combines light

and heat. They believe the fire that breathes out of the center to be Vesta's, since indeed they thought Vesta was the life and patron deity of the earth. And therefore the ancients used to construct the temple of Vesta in the middle of the cities and place a perpetual fire in the middle of it.¹

But lest we wander too far afield, let us now conclude that if the rays of the stars quickly penetrate the whole earth, it cannot easily be denied that they quickly penetrate metal and precious stone when they are engraved with images, and imprint in them wonderful gifts, or at least gifts of some kind, since indeed they generate supremely precious things in the womb of the earth. But who would deny that rays penetrate through these things? For indeed air and its quality and sound—a less powerful thing—passes right away through solid things and influences them with a quality of its own. Now if hardness stood in the way of penetrating rays, light would pass through air much more quickly than through water, water much more swiftly than glass, and glass much more swiftly than crystal. But since in the same moment it strikes through everything, solid as much as liquid, clearly it is established that hardness offers no resistance whatever to rays. And in this regard, they say, it is undeniable that metals take on rays and influences of the celestials, and even that they conserve them for the time destined for them then by heaven—conserve, I say, a power created by the contact of converging rays. What if, moreover, a harder material by this very fact that it seems to resist a more powerful cause, opposes itself to more impacts? Thus a sword cuts wood under a fleece and the fleece is not cut. Thus that ray which is lightning sometimes melts the metal in a piece of leather while leaving the leather unharmed.

But since celestial nature is incomparably more excellent than this our fire, it should not be supposed that the function of the celestial ray is only such work as we sensibly perceive a ray of fire doing—namely, to illuminate, warm, dry, penetrate, rarely, melt, which are well known to our senses—but that it has much more and more wonderful powers and effects. Otherwise, inferior matter and transitory senses would be completely equated with the divinity of the heavens. But who does not know that the occult virtues of things, which are called "specific virtues" by natural philosophers, are made not by the elemental nature, but by the celestial? And so the rays can (as they say) imprint in images forces occult and wonderful beyond those we know, just as they introduce them into all things. For they are not inanimate like the rays of a lamp, but living and perceiving, since they shine forth through the eyes of a living body [see Apologia below and 3.11, ad int. and note ad loc.], and they bring with them marvelous gifts from the imaginations and minds of the celestials, also a very intense force from their strong mental disposition and from the very rapid motion of their bodies; and they act in particular and to the greatest extent on the spirit, which is most similar to the celestial rays. They act besides on even the hardest bodies, for all these things are very weak before the heavens.

There are also in various stars various forces; and they differ among themselves in just this respect of their rays. Besides, from the impacts of the rays falling in one way and another, diverse powers arise. Finally, diverse powers come into being in the combinations of rays with each other of one sort or another, here and there, effected at this time or that; they arise right away much more and faster than in such and such mixtures of elements and elemental qualities, much faster even than in tones and rhythms in music combining in this way or in that. If you would diligently consider these things, perhaps you will not doubt, they will say, but that instantly with an emission of rays forces are imprinted in images, and divers forces from a different emission.

But is it so quick as all that? I pass over fascinations achieved by a sudden glance and very passionate loves instantly kindled by rays from the eyes, which also are fascinations of a sort, as I prove in the book *De amore*.² Nor will I mention how quickly an inflamed eye afflicts whoever looks at it and how a menstruous woman affects a mirror by looking in it.³ Isn't it said that certain families among the Illyrians and Triballi, when they were angry, killed people by looking at them and that certain women in Scythia did this habitually?⁴ And down-lookers and the serpents called reguli kill people by shooting rays from their eyes.⁵ Also the marine torpedo-fish numbs instantly the hand that touches it even at a distance with a rod. In addition, the little fish echinus is said to stop a great ship, and only with a touch. Furthermore, by a bite, even if invisible, the phalangium-spiders in Puglia suddenly transmute the spirit and mind into a stupor.⁶ What can a mad dog accomplish even without an apparent bite? What the broom? What the wild strawberry tree?⁷ Doesn't their lightest touch excite poison and madness? In the light of all this, are you going to deny that the celestials with the rays of their eyes with which they both look at us and touch us, achieve wonders in an instant? But now a pregnant woman instantly by touch stamps a bodily part of the person who is about to be born with a mark of something she desires [alludes to a birthmark resembling a strawberry, a fruit pregnant women are said to crave]. Are you then going to doubt nevertheless that rays touching in this way or that accomplish diverse things?—since even you yourself, when in collecting the herb hellebore you pull the leaf either downwards or upwards, by this sudden touch are the cause determining whether the hellebore evacuates the humors downwards or upwards. From the beginning of any thing that is to be generated, do not celestial influences bestow wonderful gifts in the concoction of the matter and in its final coming together, not so much during a period of time as in an instant? Do not innumerable frogs and similar animals often, when the face of the heavens favors it, leap forth out of the sand in a moment? Such is the power of the heavens in well-disposed material, such the swiftness. Finally, if fire has this property, that it can do in the briefest time ever what other things do in a long time chiefly because it is most similar to the heavens, who would

doubt that the heavens can accomplish great things almost in a moment, even in unprepared material, such as a larger fire generally does? In the light of all this, why do you doubt, they say, that the heavens act in practically the same way during the construction of an image?

I suppose you will say, just as I too used to do, that here the natural steps of change are absent. Certainly this lack diminishes the celestial gift, but it seems not to take it away completely. For natural philosophers do not intend the image to be made of just any metal or stone, but of a certain one in which the celestial nature has initiated some time ago the power for what is desired and already almost perfected it, as it does the flame in the sulfur. It then finally perfects this power when this material is violently agitated by art under a similar celestial influence and begins to get warm from the agitation. And so art arouses inchoate power there, and when it has reduced it to a figure similar each to its own celestial figure, then forthwith it exposes it there to its own Idea [see 3.1]; when the material is thus exposed, the heavens perfect it by that power with which they had also begun it, tending as it were the flame to the sulfur. Just so a somewhat weak power to snatch up straws, given to amber by the heavens, after it has been strengthened by friction and heating suddenly snatches them up. Serapion writes that a similar power is given to the stone albugedi, similar to a jacinth; but that it will not attract the straws until it has been rubbed over hair.⁸

So likewise, that Jovial stone bezoar (which means "liberating from death") which we have described in our book *Against the Plague*, initially got from Jupiter its power against poison, but a power not strong enough to be communicable to other materials.⁹ But as soon as under the influence of the celestial Scorpion it receives the figure of that one above, it is said to obtain forthwith a perfect force against scorpions which it can communicate to mastic or to frankincense. The same rule holds also in the case of jacinth, topaz, emerald, and the rest, that the making of figures has no efficacy except in cases where it is similar in material and effect to some star from which the maker wants to receive this effect; and, in addition, where the material itself is already from the beginning of almost such a quality as you desire to render it through the figure. Hence they counsel you to use no materials for images but those which you know to possess already almost that very force which you desire. And so they order you to scrutinize most diligently the forces of gems and metals, and in the meantime to call to mind the following: that among gems, the carbuncle sparkles in darkness and pantaura particularly belongs to the Sun, the sapphire to Jupiter, the emerald to Venus, Mercury, and the Moon; in addition, that metals, aside from gold and silver, have scarcely any power for images. It will be a safer rule in these matters if you refer pure gold to the Sun and Jupiter—to the Sun on account of its color, to Jupiter on account of its temperate makeup, for nothing is more temperate than Jupiter and gold. Refer

pure silver to the Moon, but gold mixed with silver to Jupiter together with Venus. Besides this, the image will be more efficacious if the elemental power in its material agrees with the specific power naturally inherent in the same material, and this, in addition, with the other specific power to be seized from the heavens through the figure. Finally, they say that the lower figures and forms conform to the celestial ones; from this you will learn, so they say, that Perseus [the constellation] when he has cut off Medusa's head usually portends a beheading in store for some people, and so forth; and they do not doubt that the Moon and the other planets under certain signs move certain parts of our bodies.

What Power Is in Figures — Those in the Sky and Those beneath the Sky.

Chap. XVII

To keep you from distrusting figures too much, astrologers will order you to remember that in this elemental region beneath the Moon, a quality that is likewise elemental can do a great deal in a transmutation that is directed toward some end that is itself elemental. (Elemental qualities are, of course, heat, cold, moisture, and dryness.) Qualities, however, which are less elemental or material, such as lights (that is, colors), similarly also numbers and figures, are perhaps less powerful for such ends; but to obtain celestial gifts (as they think) they are very powerful. For in the heavens, lights, numbers, and figures are practically the most powerful of all, especially if, as many Peripatetics believe, there is no matter up there. For thus figures, numbers, and rays, since there they are sustained by no other material, seem practically to constitute what things are made of ["quasi substantiales"].¹ And since, in the order of being, mathematical forms precede physical ones, being more simple and less defective, then deservedly they claim the most dignity in the primary — that is, the celestial — levels of the cosmos, so that consequently as much comes about from number, figure, and light as from some elemental property.² Of this dignity there is evidence even here beneath the Moon. For the extremely material qualities are common to most species of things; and if you change these qualities somewhat, the species are not everywhere altered. But the figures and numbers of natural parts possess a property peculiar to a given species and inseparably linked to it; they have been appointed in the heavens along with the species. Indeed, they have the greatest affinity with the Ideas in Mind, the Queen of the world. And since figures themselves and numbers are species of a sort, represented in Mind by their own Ideas,³ they indisputably get their

distinctive forces from up there. And therefore not only are natural species delimited by particular figures, but also natural motions, generations, and mutations are delimited by particular numbers.

What shall I say about light? For it is the action, or, if you will, the image, of the Intellect.⁴ And colors are particular lights. On which account (so astrologers say), you should not rashly deny their statement that lights — that is, colors, figures, and numbers — can do a great deal towards preparing our materials for celestial things.⁵

You are not unaware that harmonious music through its numbers and proportions has a wonderful power to calm, move, and influence our spirit, mind, and body. Well, proportions constituted out of numbers are almost figures of a sort, made, as it were, out of points and lines, but in motion. And similarly celestial figures by their own motion dispose themselves for acting; for by their harmonious rays and motions penetrating everything, they daily influence our spirit secretly just as overpowering music generally does openly. Besides, you know how easily a mourning figure moves pity in many people, and how much a figure of a lovable person instantly affects and moves the eyes, imagination, spirit, and humors; no less living and efficacious is a celestial figure.

In a city, does not the countenance of a prince, if mild and cheerful, cheer everybody up, but if fierce or sad, instantly terrify them? What then do you think the countenances of the celestials, the lords of all earthly things, are able to effect in comparison to these? I think that inasmuch as even people unwilling to beget offspring often imprint on children to be born long afterwards not only the sort of countenances they then wear but even the sort of countenances they are merely imagining, in the same way the celestial countenances rapidly impart to materials their characteristics. If sometimes the characteristics seem to lie hidden there a long time, eventually in their season they emerge.

The countenances of the sky are the celestial figures. You may call "faces" those figures there which are more stable than the others; but "countenances" those up there which change more. You may also call the aspects composed by the daily motion of the stars in relation to each other, "countenances" and likewise "figures"; for aspects are called hexagons, pentagons, and tetragons.

"So be it," someone will say, "let celestial figures be as powerful in operation as you like, but what does this have to do with the figures of images made artificially?" Astrologers do not especially argue, they will respond, that our figures are the most powerful agents in themselves, but that they are the best prepared for catching the actions and forces of the celestial figures, insolar as they are made at the right time when the celestial ones are dominant and are made to conform exactly to them. For that figure perfects this figure. When one lute sounds, does not another echo it? It only does so if it has a similar figure, and is placed opposite, and the strings in it are similarly placed and tuned. What do you think causes lute to respond instantly to lute, but their

placement and the fact that they share a like figure? The figure of a mirror—smooth, concave, shining, and shaped like the heavens—receives because of this in particular such a great gift from the heavens, that it gathers to itself most abundantly the rays of Phoebus and instantly burns a very solid thing which is located opposite its center.⁷ Therefore you should not doubt, they say, that the material for making an image, if it is in other respects entirely consonant with the heavens, once it has received by art a figure similar to the heavens, both conceives in itself the celestial gift and gives it again to someone who is in the vicinity or wearing it. The same rule holds not only for figure but also for transparent, so-called diaphanous constitution. It is by its own nature something ineffectual and passive. Yet since a transparent constitution is in the heavens the proper receptacle of light, so wherever under the heavens it either exists naturally or is obtained by some means, the celestial light then available is instantly acquired, and also may be stored up,⁸ in cases where there is along with this light either fiery heat as in flame, or where there is something airy or watery and at the same time glutinous, as in lanterns, lamps, carbuncles, and perhaps, in a way, in camphor. Ponder for yourself what consequence for images follows from that fact.

What Sorts of Figures of the Celestials the Ancients Engraved in Images; and concerning the Use of Images.

Chap. XVIII

Someone will ask, what figures of the heavens do astrologers usually engrave as images? For there are in the heavens forms which are very conspicuous to the eye, and some which really are just as they have been depicted by many people, as Aries, Taurus, and similar zodiacal figures, and there are those outside the zodiac which we can see. Besides these, up there very many forms exist which are not so much visible as imaginable—those perceived, or at least thought up, by the Indians, Egyptians, and Chaldeans as dwelling throughout all the faces of the signs,¹ for example: in the first face of Virgo, a beautiful girl, seated, holding two ears of grain in her hand and nursing a child. And the rest, as Albumasar and some others describe.² Then there are the particular written characters of the signs and planets as delineated by the Egyptians. They want all these, therefore, to be engraved on images. For example, if anyone looks for a special benefit from Mercury, he ought to locate him in Virgo, or at least locate the Moon there in an aspect with Mercury, and then make an image out of tin or silver; he should put on it the whole

sign of Virgo and its character and the character of Mercury. And if you are going to use the first face of Virgo, add also the figure which we said has been observed in the first face, and similarly with the rest.

The recent authorities on images have accepted as the general form for these a round shape in imitation of the heavens.³ The more ancient authorities, however, as we have read in certain Arabic miscellany, used to prefer above all other figures that of a cross, for the following reason. Bodies act through their power as soon as it has diffused to a plane. But this primary plane [prior to the sphere mentioned above, which represents a further diffusion from point to line to plane to solid] is marked out by a cross, since above all a cross, like a plane, possesses length and breadth. This figure of the cross is primary; also, of all the figures, it is rectilinear in the highest degree, and it has four right angles.⁴ Now it is through the perpendicularity of rays and of the Angles that the effects of the celestials most strongly appear; for the stars are much more potent at the time when they occupy the four Angles, or rather cardines, of the sky: that of the East, that of the West, and the mid-heaven on either side. When so positioned, they cast their rays one upon another in such a way as to form a cross. The cross, therefore, said the ancients, is a figure which is made by the strength of the stars and serves as a receptacle of their strength; it therefore possesses the greatest power among images and receives the forces and spirits of the planets.⁵

This opinion was either introduced or principally confirmed by the Egyptians, among whose characters a prominent one was the cross, which signified in their usage the future life; and they would engrave this figure on the breast of Serapis.⁶ But I think as follows: What the Egyptians before Christ thought about the excellence of the cross was not so much a testimony of the gifts of the stars as a prophecy of the power that it was going to receive from Christ. Astrologers who came right after Christ, seeing that wonderful things were done by Christians through the cross, but not knowing or not wanting to ascribe such great things to Jesus, ascribed them to the heavens; though they ought to have considered that through the cross itself without the name of Jesus no miracles at all were performed. That a cruciform figure is appropriate to images because it resembles the strength of the planets and all stars, is perhaps probable; but this is not a sufficient reason for it to have such tremendous power. But in concert with the other things which are necessary it is perhaps able to do something towards bodily health.

But let us go back to recounting the opinions of others as we began. To obtain long life, the ancients used to make an image of Saturn from the stone Fevrizech, that is, sapphire, in the hour of Saturn, when he was ascending and fortunately placed. The form was this: an old man sitting on a rather high throne or on a dragon, his head covered with a dark linen cloth, raising his hands above his head, holding in his hand a sickle or some fish, and clothed

in a dusky robe.⁷ For a long and happy life, they made an image of Jupiter in clear or white stone. It was a man crowned, sitting on an eagle or a dragon, wearing a yellow robe, made in the hour of Jupiter when he was fortunately ascending in his exaltation.⁸ Against timidity, in the hour of Mars, when the first face of Scorpio was rising, they fabricated images: Mars armed and crowned.⁹ For curing diseases they fashioned an image of the Sun in gold, in his hour, when the first face of Leo was ascending with him: a king on a throne in a yellow garment and a raven and the form of the Sun.¹⁰ For gaiety and strength of body, a young Venus holding apples and flowers in her hand, dressed in yellow and white, made in the hour of Venus, when the first face of Libra, or of Pisces, or of Taurus, was ascending with her.¹¹ They made the image of Mercury for intelligence and memory when the first face of Gemini was ascending. Likewise against fevers Mercury was engraved: a man holding a javelin in the hour of Mercury when Mercury was rising. They used to carve this image in marble; then they would impress it in some substance or other to be swallowed by those who were sick. They said it cured every kind of fever.¹² For growth, they made an image of the Moon when the first face of Cancer was rising.¹³ The form of Mercury: a man sitting on a throne in a crested cap, with eagle's feet, holding a cock or fire with his left hand, winged, sometimes on a peacock, holding a reed with his right hand, in a multicolored garment.¹⁴ The Moon: a beautiful girl with horns on her head, on a dragon or a bull, having serpents above her head and under her feet.¹⁵ For curing the stone, for pains in the genitals, and for drying up blood, they made an image in the hour of Saturn, when the third face of Aquarius was rising with him.¹⁶ Likewise they would imprint a lion in gold, rolling under his feet a stone in the form of the Sun, in the hour of the Sun, when the first degree of the second face of Leo was rising. They thought this was good for expelling diseases.¹⁷ They made a similar one for kidney diseases when the Sun had attained the mid-heaven in the Heart of the Lion—an image approved by Pietro d'Abano and confirmed by experience, but with this condition, that Jupiter or Venus should aspect the mid-heaven; and that the noxious planets should be cadent and in unfortunate positions.¹⁸ I have heard from Mengo the famous physician that an image of this kind, fashioned when Jupiter was in precise conjunction with the Sun, delivered Giovanni Mariani, the foremost mathematician of our time, from his former fear of thunder.¹⁹

Besides this, to confirm health and to keep from being bewitched, they fashioned an image of silver in the hour of Venus, when the Moon had attained a cardine of heaven and was in a fortunate aspect with Venus, provided that the lord of the sixth place looked at Venus or Jupiter from a trine or opposite aspect; and that Mercury too was not unfortunate. They would do this in the last hour of the Sun's day, in such a way that the lord of the hour occupied the tenth place. Pietro d'Abano says that a doctor can cure the sick by

an image, provided that he fashions it at a time when the cardines of the Ascendant, the mid-heaven, and the Descendant are fortunate, and likewise the lord of the Ascendant and the second place; but let the sixth place and its lord be unfortunate. Pietro also says that health will be more lasting and life longer than was initially appointed, if after you investigate the person's nativity you make an image in which these fortunate things are inscribed: the signifier of that life, likewise the givers of the life, both the signs and their lords, especially the ascendant sign and its lord; likewise the mid-heaven; the location of the Sun; the Part of Fortune; the lord of [the place of] the conjunction or syzygy [of the Sun and Moon, see Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, 3.2] which occurred before the birth. Moreover, pick a time when the evil and unfortunate planets are cadent. No astrologer doubts, Pietro concludes, that such things contribute to a long life.²⁰

It would be prolix to say what faces the ancients observed within every sign and what positions of the Moon they held to be necessary for the fashioning of images. For they made images against disease and hatred and for a prosperous journey when the Moon was positioned anywhere from the seventeenth degree of Virgo to its end.²¹ They made images against disease, discord, and captivity when she was positioned from the beginning of Capricorn to its twelfth degree.²² When she was positioned from the twelfth degree of Capricorn to its twenty-fifth degree, they made images against lassitude and prison.²³ In the position from the fourth degree of Pisces to its seventeenth degree, they made images for curing diseases, for profits, for companionship, for increasing the harvest.²⁴ And in other positions they very often used to contrive other images in their vain curiosity. I enumerate only the ones which savor not so much of magic as of medicine. For even the medicine I suspect to be mostly vain.

But I think such positions of the Moon should be chosen for the sake of other more legitimate preparations of medicine; and also when she is in Aries, the sixth degree, and in the same sign, the nineteenth degree and twenty-sixth minute; likewise in Gemini the tenth degree and fifty-first minute; in Cancer the nineteenth degree and twenty-sixth minute; in Libra the sixth degree and thirty-fourth minute; in Capricorn the nineteenth degree and twenty-sixth minute; in Aquarius the second degree and seventeenth minute; in the same, the fifteenth degree and eighth minute. In addition, you should keep in mind Halý's maxim: Whatever the sign, for so long as the Sun is in it, the sign is made active, it dominates the rest, its effects come to pass more readily than others, so that you should direct the Moon towards it in order to receive from it a gift proper to medicine.²⁵ Towards it, I say, meaning towards the sign and the face and especially the degree, so that if you want good things from Jupiter, you should erect the Moon, either moving directly towards or united with his signs, faces, and degrees, so long as the Sun is enhancing one of these places where the Jovial property is strong. And the same goes for the rest.

It would be unduly curious and perhaps harmful to recite what images they fashioned and how, for the mutual meeting of minds or their alienation, for bringing felicity or inflicting calamity, either to some individual, or to a household, or to a city.²⁶ I do not affirm that such things can be done. Astrologers, however, think such things can be done, and they teach the method, but I dare not tell it. Porphyry in the book where he sketches the life of his master Plotinus confirms that such can be done. And he recounts that Olympius, an Egyptian magician and astrologer, attempted such a thing against Plotinus at Rome, seeking to planet-strike Plotinus through images or things of this kind. But because of the exalted soul of Plotinus, the attempt recoiled upon its author.²⁷ Also Albertus Magnus, professor both of theology and of magic, says in his *Speculum*, a work where he claims to be distinguishing what is permitted from what is forbidden, that images rightly constituted by astrologers acquire power and effect from a celestial figure.²⁸ And thereupon he narrates their marvelous effects as promised by Thebit Benhorad and Ptolemy²⁹ and the rest of the astrologers. And he describes images to bring calamity and prosperity to someone, which I deliberately pass over. At the same time, he confirms that they can have an effect, although he also, as a responsible man, condemns the abuse of the art and, as an orthodox theologian, detests the prayers and fumigations which certain impious people have offered to daemons when they are making images. Nevertheless, he does not disapprove of figures, letters, and sayings impressed upon images for the precise purpose of receiving some gift from a celestial figure, which Pietro d'Abano has confirmed can be obtained through images. Moreover, Pietro also affirms that some region or other was destroyed by that image which Thebit says was fashioned by Phedix the astrologer.³⁰

Thomas Aquinas, our leader in theology, is more fearful of these practices and attributes less to images. For he thinks only so much power is acquired from the heavens through figures as conduces to those effects which the heavens ordinarily bring about through herbs and other natural things—and then that it harmonizes with the heavens not so much because a given figure is in that material as because it is composed of a given material and already set in such and such a species of artificial objects. This he says in the third book of the *Summa Contra Gentiles* where he derides characters and letters added to the figures, but figures not so much, unless they are added for the purpose of signs to daemons.³¹ Also in his book *On Fate* he says the constellations give the order of existence and duration, not only to natural things but also to artificial; and that therefore images are fashioned under certain constellations. But if anything wonderful happens to us through them outside the accustomed effects of nature, he rejects it as the work of daemons out to seduce people.³² This is clear in the book *Contra Gentiles*,³³ but especially clear in his letter *On the Occult Works of Nature*, where he seems to give little credit even to the images them-

selves, however they are made;³⁴ and insofar as he requires it, I give them no credit at all. Even the Platonists attribute certain wonderful effects of images to the deception of daemons. For Iamblichus too says that those who place their trust in images alone, caring less about the highest religion and holiness, and who hope for divine gifts from them, are very often deceived in this matter by evil daemons encountering them under the pretense of being good divinities.³⁵ Iamblichus does not deny, however, that certain natural goods come to pass from images constructed according to a legitimate astrological plan.³⁶

I think, therefore, that it would be safer to trust oneself to medicines than to images; and that the things we said cause celestial power in images can have their efficacy rather in medicines than in figures. For it is probable that, if images, have any power, they do not so much acquire it just at the moment of receiving a figure as possess it through a material naturally so disposed; but if an image eventually acquired something when it was engraved, it obtained it not so much through the figure as through the heating produced by hammering. This hammering and heating, if it happens under a harmony similar to that celestial harmony [cf. 3.2, p. 534] which had once infused power into the material, activates this power and strengthens it as blowing strengthens a flame and makes manifest what was latent before, as the heat of a fire brings to visibility letters previously hidden which were written with the juice of an onion, and as letters written in vinegar, emerge and stick out as if they were sculptured. Yes, and just as the touch of the broom or the wild strawberry excites a dormant madness, thus perhaps hammering and heating alone brings out the power latent in the material, if it is done at the right time. It is a good idea to use the right celestial time in making up medicines. And if anyone should want to deal with metal or stones, it is better only to strike them and heat them rather than to engrave them. For besides the fact that I suspect the figures to be useless, we ought not rashly to allow even the shadow of idolatry. Likewise we ought not rashly to use stars, even salutary ones, to expel diseases that are like themselves. For they often augment the diseases, just as harmful stars sometimes mitigate diseases that are unlike themselves, as Ptolemy and Haly clearly teach.³⁷

How to Construct a Figure of the Universe.

Chap. XIX

But why, then, should we neglect a universal image, an image of the very universe itself? Through it, they seem to hope for a benefit from the universe. The adherent of these things, if he can do it, should sculpt an ar-

chelypal form of the whole world, if he pleases, in bronze; he should imprint this subsequently at the right time in a thin gilded plate of silver.² But when exactly should he imprint it? When the Sun has reached the first minute of Aries. For astrologers customarily tell the fortune of the world—at least, what is going to happen in that year—from this moment, since it is the return of its birthday. He should therefore imprint this figure of the whole world on the very birthday of the world. But don't you see how beautifully the argument that the world was born at a particular time will help us in this discussion? For it is born in any and every year. In the horoscope of a person, don't astrologers measure first in what sign, in what degree, in what minute was the Sun? And then they lay the foundation of the whole figure. And in any year thereafter, as soon as the Sun enters the same minute, they think that the man is, as it were, reborn; and thence they prophesy his year's fortune. Therefore, just as in man it does no good to do this unless he is, so to speak, reborn, and he cannot be, as it were, reborn unless he had been born at some particular time, so it can be conjectured that the world, too, was born at some time, namely, when the Sun entered the first minute of Aries, because a particular Lot of the world being reborn, so to speak, is revolved through the same position in every year.³ At this time, therefore, he should construct the figure of the world.

But he should be careful not to sculpt or imprint a figure on the Sabbath, the day of Saturn [Saturday]. For on this day it is held that God, the maker of the world, rested from the work which He had begun on the ideal day of the Sun. For by so much as the Sun is accommodated to generation, Saturn is unsuited to it. God had completed the work on the day of Venus [Friday], who signifies the perfect beauty of the work. But there is no need to say more about the reasons of the construction of the world, for recently our friend Giovanni Pico della Mirandola has divinely expressed the divine mysteries of Moses touching the genesis of the world.⁴ Accordingly, to return to what we began, the adherent of these things likewise should first sculpt his world not in the day or hour of Saturn, but rather in the day or hour of the Sun. He should engrave it, moreover, on the birthday of the year, especially if then Jupiter and Diana [read "Venus"], the benefices, are present.

But they would like him to insert not only lines but colors into the work. There are, indeed, three colors of the world, at once universal and peculiar: green, gold, and sapphire-blue, dedicated to the three heavenly Graces [as in 3.5]. Green is the color of Venus and also of the Moon—moist for moist complexities, quite proper for newborns, accommodated also to mothers. Nobody questions but that gold is the color of the Sun, and besides not alien to Jupiter and Venus. Finally, sapphire-blue we especially dedicate to Jupiter, to whom also the sapphire itself is said to be consecrated. For this reason too, on account of its Jovial power, the lapis lazuli, richly endowed with this color, pos-

sesses according to doctors the prerogative of curing black bile, which comes from Saturn. Lapis lazuli comes into being along with gold and is decorated with golden marks; thus it is the companion of gold as Jupiter is of the Sun. The Armenian stone has a similar power, possessing a color somewhat similar to the above along with green [i.e., blue-green].⁵ They therefore judge it useful to look at these particular colors above all, in order to capture the gifts of the celestial graces and, in the model of the world which you are making, to insert the blue color of the world in the spheres [doubtless represented by rings, since he could hardly be thinking of concentric, completely closed spheres].

They think it worthwhile to add to the spheres, for a true imitation of the heavens, golden stars, and to clothe Vesta herself or Ceres, that is, the earth, with a green garment. The adherent of those things should either carry about with him a model of this kind or should place it opposite him and gaze at it. But it will be useful to look at a sphere equipped with its own motions; Archimedes once constructed one and a Florentine friend of ours named Lorenzo did so just recently.⁶ Nor should one simply look at it but reflect upon it in the mind. In like manner, in the very depth of his house, he should construct a chamber, vaulted and marked with these figures and colors, and he should spend most of his waking hours there and also sleep. And when he has emerged from his house, he will not note with so much attention the spectacle of individual things as the figure of the universe and its colors. But I leave this to those who make images. You, however, will fashion a better image within yourself when you know that nothing is more orderly than the heavens and that nothing can be thought of that is more temperate than Jupiter: you should hope at last to attain benefits from the heavens and from Jupiter if you have rendered yourself very orderly and temperate in your thoughts, emotions, and mode of life.

But after we have chanced to mention celestial temperateness, it would perhaps be a good time to recall that there is indeed no excess of an elemental quality in the heavens (to speak like the Peripatetics); otherwise, either being composite in this way, it would in so many ages by now have disintegrated, or else, being simple, it would in so great size, power, and motion at any rate have destroyed the other qualities. But in fact, as a most moderate thing, it governs all and mixes different things into one. Besides, both by this its very temperateness and also by the excellence of its form, it has merited life from the Divine. For we see composite things acquire life only then, when a perfect commixture of qualities seems to have broken up the initial contrariety, as in plants. Next, we see in animals a more perfect life, insofar as their complexion is farther from contrariety than it is in plants. In human beings, again, by the same principle, we see a life still more perfect and already somewhat celestial. For the human complexion indeed already approximates celestial temperateness, especially in its spirit which (in addition to its subtlety of substance

3. For a discussion of the occult properties of the stone bezoar (the modern Latin form of an Arabic-Persian word), see Thomdike 2: 909–10 citing Pietro d'Abano, and 4: 224–25, citing Antonio Guaineri.
4. Galen was the first to mention the efficacy of the peony amulet to cure epilepsy, *De simplicium medicamentorum temperamentis et facultatibus* 6.3.10 (Kahn 11: 838–61); his account was widely repeated.
5. Although "illusio" and its verb do not mean "delusion" in classical Latin, this meaning is well attested in ecclesiastical Latin, where it is a standard word for nocturnal emission; see Du Gange, s.v. "Illudo." For a description of some of the delusions induced by black bile, see Ficino, *Comm. Synth.*, 7.3, ed. Marcel, p. 245 (*Op.*, p. 1357).
6. On myrobalans, see 1.11, n. 1, and especially, in this connection, 2.9 and n. 1.
7. Serapion the Younger (2nd c.), *Liber aggregatus in medicinis simplicibus*, chap. 398, pp. 156.4–157.1–2. Professor Copenhagen informs us that Latin *hyacinthus* could mean any number of gem-stones, such as sapphire, aquamarine, or zircon. Elsewhere, Ficino uses the word to denote the flower, see Index of *Materia Medica*.
8. Also mentioned in "Apologia," 49–50. On the eagle-stone, see Pliny, *HN* 36.39.149–51; said to help eagles in bringing forth their eggs, 30.44.130; cf. *Picatrix* 4.8(7), translation, p. 404.13 ff. For Rhazes and Serapion confirming its efficacy, see Rhazes, *Continens* 37.2.27 (Venice, 1509), p. 63, cited by Serapion, *Liber aggregatus in medicinis simplicibus*, chap. 402, p. 157.1–2. Lucina, the goddess of childbirth, is usually identified with Juno or Diana.
9. Ps.-Plato, *Alcibiades I*, 104c–d. Pythagoras in Iamblichus, *De vita Pythagorica* 30.182; and cf. Aristotle, *Metaph.* 985b23–30 and 1078b23. Socrates and the Pythagoreans are cited by Proclus, *In Alc. I*, 120–21, ed. L. G. Westerink (Amsterdam, 1934), pp. 54–55.
10. Plato, *Rep.* 8.546a. Pythagoras in Iamblichus, *De vita Pythagorica* 30.180–83. Both citations are also made by Proclus, *In Alc. I*, 121, p. 55.
11. *Centiloquium*, Aphorism 2.
12. *Speculum astronomiae*, chap. 15, p. 45.2–5 (= Borgnet 10: 648b). See also Thomdike 2: 692–717 for a discussion of the *Speculum* and the question of authorship.

3.13

1. Ps.-Ptolemy, *Centiloquium*, Aphorism 9.
2. Ps.-Alī ibn Ridwān (on this work and its real author, see 2.20, n. 3; for data on the supposed author, see 2.18, n. 11), *Commentary* on Ps.-Ptolemy, *Centiloquium* 9 (Venice, 1484), sig. 8v. Cf. also *Picatrix*, 2.1 (1–2), translation, p. 56 = ed., p. 55. D. Pingree informs us that the story was widely known.
3. Serapion the Younger, *Liber aggregatus in medicinis simplicibus*, chap. 396, p. 156.1–2, cites the physician Hahamed. Ficino also prescribed this image and credited it to Serapion and Hahamed in *Consiglio contro la pestilenza*, in the Latin translation, *Contra pestem*, chap. 24 (*Op.*, p. 605).
4. Ps.-Alī ibn Ridwān, *Comm. Centiloquium* 9, sig. 8v. For Archytas of Tarentum, a Pythagorean of the fourth century B. C., see Aulus Gellius 10.12.9.10; also

- cited in Ficino, *Theol. Plat.* 13.3, ed. 2: 223 (*Op.*, p. 295). The mechanical flying dove manufactured by Archytas was an example of a wondrous machine whose operations were associated with those of natural magic, see F. Yates, *Giordano Bruno*, pp. 147–49.
5. *Asclepius* 37 in *Corpus Hermeticum*, ed. A. D. Nock and A.-J. Festugière (Paris, 1945), 2: 347–49. This is Ficino's first explicit reference to the major statue-animating passage from the *Asclepius*, a translation of which can be found in "Magick." Others are 3.20, p. 561, and 3.26, p. 571.
6. The analogy of figurate talismans to the Prometheus myth is repeated in *Comm. Plat.*, "In Cap. 13 et 14 [sic]," *Op.*, p. 1738, just one page after the place where *De vita* originally appeared as "In Cap. 11." For Prometheus the creator who fashioned man out of clay which he animated with fire from heaven, see Raymond Trousson, *Le thème de Prométhée dans la littérature européenne* (Geneva, 1964), 1: 47–48.
7. This description of a tyrx or magical top is taken from Psellus, *Expositio Orac. Chald.*, 1133a5–8, in Des Places ed., p. 170; see above 3.1, n. 6. Copenhaver notes it belongs not to natural magic but to theurgy, "Iamblichus," forthcoming.
8. See above note and Psellus, *De daemonebus* 4–7, *PG* 122: 880–81, in Ficino's translation, *Op.*, 1941. Copenhaver notes that Psellus calls the entire operation simply, "Iamblichus," forthcoming.
9. Porphyry, *Letter to Anebo* 24 and 29; and Iamblichus, *De mysteriis* 3.23–29; in Ficino's epitome, *Op.*, p. 1894. Since Porphyry's *Letter to Anebo* was not edited until the seventeenth century, Ficino may have known it only through the quotations in Iamblichus's reply; this is the only explicit mention of it in *De vita*; see also 3.23, n. 6.
10. Cf. Iamblichus, *De mysteriis* 5.12 and 23, in Ficino's epitome, *Op.*, p. 1899.
11. Proclus, *De sacrificio et magia*, trans. Ficino, *Op.*, pp. 1928–29; see also Proclus, *ET*, Prop. 145. Synesius, *De insomniis*, 132B1–D13 (*PG* 66: 1285a–b), section 3 in Ficino's translation, *Op.*, p. 1969. The above passages from Proclus continue to be echoed throughout the next paragraph in the dominant idea that magic is the conflation of forces which in nature are widely separated.
12. Iamblichus, *De mysteriis*, in Ficino's epitome, *Op.*, p. 1887. The passage should exist also in the original *De mysteriis* 3.14–15, but the relevant sentence should exist only in Ficino. To this sentence, Compagni sees a similarity in the Paris MS of the Latin *Picatrix*, 4.4, discussing the force of talismans made out of stone ("Picatrix latinus," pp. 260–61, n. 3).
13. *De vita* 2.14, ad fin.
14. For the stone "pantaurā" or "pantarde," see below, 3.14.41, 3.15.21 and n. 2, 3.16.112.

3.14

1. The closest he has come to this so far in the *De vita* is "From these well-ordered forms all those lower forms depend," 3.1.56–57, *Op.*, p. 532; perhaps he means in his translation of Proclus, *De sacrificio et magia*, in Ficino's translation, *Op.*,

- pp. 1928–29, which provides the philosophical framework for all but the last paragraph of this chapter.
2. "Asterion" is perhaps the adjectival form for "aster"; see Pliny, *HN* 27.19.36 for the aster which has little heads on top with rays like stars and is good for problems of the groin. For the Cor Scorpionis or Antares, see above, 3.8 and n. 14.
3. Proclus, *De sacrificio*, in Ficino's translation *Op.*, p. 1929.
4. *Ibid.*
5. For the Cor Leonis, see above 3.8 and n. 8.
6. Ficino's description of the lotus is taken from Proclus, *De sacrificio*, in Ficino's translation, *Op.*, p. 1928 (and see Pliny *HN* 13.32.108); that of the palm and the laurel from p. 1929.
7. Ficino's description of the stone "elitis" or "helitis" and the stone "Solis oculus" is taken from Proclus, *De sacrificio*, in Ficino's translation, *Op.*, p. 1928. For the stone "pantaura" or "pantarbe" see below, 3.15 and n. 2.
8. "Perforata" or "fuga daemon," better known as "hypericum," St. John's wort. It is mentioned in *Consiglio contro la pestianza*, the Latin translation, chap. 6 (*Op.*, p. 584).
9. Ficino seems to have had in mind not the *Asclepius* nor the *Hermetica* he translated but some medieval treatise attributed to Mercurius (Hermes) Trismegistus, as in 3.8, ad init. See Roger Bacon, *De retardatione*, chap. 6, p. 56.11–15, who also describes the herb according to Hermes; the herb is described with reference to the Emperor Alexander the Great in Ps.-Albertus Magnus, *De virtutibus herbarum, lapidum et animalium quorundam libellus*, ed. Michael Best and Frank H. Brighman (Oxford, 1973), p. 19; the translators suggest that the herb may be chickweed (*stalaria media*). For the question of the latter work's authorship, see Thörnlike 2: 233–34.

3.15

1. Proclus, *De sacrificio*, trans. Ficino, *Op.*, p. 1928.
2. Philostratus, *VA*, 3.46, speaking of the wondrous powers of the stone "pantarbe," which among its other properties can act as a magnet. "The latter Herculean stone" means the magnet or lodestone; it "rapit nos ad se contemplanturum" as it "rapit" iron.
3. The magnetized needle is obviously a primitive compass. The statement about the compass parallels Ficino's own marginalia to *De sacrificio* in MS Vallcellianus F 20, fol. 139r as transcribed by Copenhaver, "Hermes Trismegistus, Proclus," forthcoming. Ficino's word for amber here is "succinum." Since in a pharmaceutical context, he uses "ambra" (see Index of Marcia Medica), he may not have realized they are essentially the same substance. Textual variants to totally unrelated words in pharmaceutical chapters 1.12.16 and 1.20.11 say "karabe id est succinum."
4. Cf. Psellus, *De demonibus* 6, *PG* 122:880c–d; see also Porphyry, *De abstinentia* 2.36–43 and Proclus, *In Tim.* 1.77. Jer. 1:14; Is. 14:13. There is a fuller citation of the direction from which daemons emanate in Ficino, *Theol. Plat.* 10.2, ed. 2: 56 (*Op.*, p. 223).

5. Aquinas, *SCG* 106–7. Iamblichus, *De mysteriis* 2.10, 3.13, in Ficino's epitome, *Op.*, pp. 1881, 1886. See below, 3.18.157–60 and nn. 31–36.
6. This statement parallels Ficino's own marginalia to *De sacrificio* in MS Vallcellianus F 20, fol. 139r as transcribed by Copenhaver, as above.
7. Pietro d'Abano, *De venenis* (Venice, 1521), chap. 4, p. 249.2–3. See also Gen-tile da Foligno, *Contra pestilentium* (Salamanca, c. 1515), sig. b2v.
8. Dioscorides, *Liber virtutum simplicium medicinarum*, chap. 360, p. 68.1–2; Pliny, *HN* 37.54.144.
9. *Liber virtutum*, chap. 359, p. 68.1; and see Pliny, *HN* 37.54.155.
10. This Platonic saying is taken from Proclus, *De sacrificio*, in Ficino's translation, *Op.*, p. 1928, which in turn forms the basis of the next two sentences; see also Proclus, *ET*, Prop. 145, *In Tim.* 1.444–45, and Ficino, *Theol. Plat.* 10.2, ed. 2: 58 (*Op.*, p. 224).

3.16

1. Although the fire Ficino speaks of is inside the earth, his imagery in this paragraph seems to owe something to the Pythagorean doctrine of the central fire in the cosmos around which the planets revolved, see Aristotle, *De caelo* 293a18 ff. This central fire was called the hearth of the universe or Hestia (the Roman Vesta), see Plato, *Tim.* 40b–c, *Phaedrus* 247a, and Plutarch, *Numa* 11, who mentions the perpetual fire in the temple of Vesta, as well as the Pythagoreans and Plato; also Chalcidius, *In Tim.* 122 and Proclus, *In Tim.* 3.133 ff.; see also D. R. Dicks, *Early Greek Astronomy to Aristotle* (Ithaca, N. Y., 1970), pp. 65–66, 114–15; and W. Burkert, *Love and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, pp. 231–33, 337–42, and Allen, *Platonism*, p. 141. The description of "ignem infernum" as "incendium quoddam luminis experts" would seem to be the source of the fire that gives "no light, but darkness visible" in Milton's Hell, *Paradise Lost* 1.62–64; for other analogues, see John Carey and Alastair Fowler, eds., John Milton, *Complete Poems* (London, 1968), Fowler's note ad loc.
2. Ficino, *Comm. Symp.* 7.4, *Op.*, p. 1358.
3. Pliny, *HN* 28.23.82, mentions that the glance of a menstruous woman tarnishes a mirror. See also Aristotle, *De insomniis* 459b23–460a32.
4. Pliny, *HN* 7.2.16–17; also cited in Ficino, *Theol. Plat.* 13.4, ed. 2: 234 (*Op.*, p. 300).
5. On the catoblepas, apparently a beast like a gnu, see Pliny, *HN* 8.32.77, and on the "regulus" or "basiscus," 8.33.78; both mentioned by Ficino, *Theol. Plat.* 13.4, ed. 2: 234 (*Op.*, p. 300). On serpents fascinating people as an analogy explaining how magicians influence the stars, see *Emn.* 4.4.40. On fascination in Ficino, see also 3.21, n. 16.
6. For the torpedo-fish, see Pliny, *HN* 32.2.7; for the echinus, or rather "echeneis," 9.41.79–80 and 32.1.1–6; and for the phalangium-spider, 29.27.86.
7. The "scopa" and "arbutus" are problematic; I am grateful to Prof. Copenhaver for the tentative translations. For answers to these rhetorical questions about them, see 3.18 ad fin.

8. Serapion, *Liber aggregatus in medicinis simplicibus*, chap. 399, p. 157.1.
9. *Consiglio contro la pestilenza*, chap. 6, in *Op.*, p. 583, and chap. 24, pp. 604–5.

3.17

1. “Up there” must mean in the ontological levels higher than the visible heavens, since Ficino has just entertained the notion that the stars are fire of some sort, i.e., matter. Aristotle fits this description insofar as he says there is no weight in the visible heavens, but he does maintain there is matter (quintessence or aether, *De caelo* 269b18–270a12). It is the supercelestial heavens which Aristotle believed to possess no matter, i.e., nothing which occupies space, only light, *De caelo* 279a. A realm which fits this description appears in Ficino’s own statement (though he is no Peripatetic) that the “animate world” as such has nothing corporeal, only color and shape, *Comm. Phaedrus*, chap. 11, *Op.*, p. 1372, ed. Allen, *Phaedran Chariters*, text, pp. 124–25, and see Allen’s summary of the four Neoplatonic levels of being, “Headnote,” pp. 66–69, especially p. 67. This “animate world,” while separable in theory from matter, the next lower level, is in fact always found in a body, however tenuous; among its possible bodies are the visible heavens, the stars and planets; they represent the bodies of the celestial souls. See also Apuleius (though he is no Peripatetic either), *De Platone et eius dogmate* in his *Opuscula philosophica*, ed. Jean Beaujeu (Paris, 1973), 1.9, section 199.

2. Ficino’s defensive tone betrays the fact that in this chapter he is using statements by Plotinus and Al-Kindi to refute in advance Aquinas’s negative views on figurative talismans, *SCG* 105, ad fin. — views which Ficino will cite in the next chapter and which are negative insofar as Aquinas denies any natural force to figure as such. Space permits only an assemblage of Plotinian passages which parallel, and Aquinian passages which contrast with, *De vita* 3.17. For ease of comparison, in this chapter I will quote the passages, first in English, then in the original. Line numbers are those of the original Greek in Henry-Schwyzler and the Loeb; but since the question is what Ficino made of Plotinus, I will quote not the original Greek but Ficino’s Latin translation of it from the *editio princeps*, Florence, 1492, modernizing orthography and punctuation and correcting the chapter numbers (most of the relevant chapter numbers are five less than they ought to be, e.g., for 29 read 34, etc., a confusion compounded by the fact that the commentary precedes rather than follows the lemma). Garin (“Le telezioni,” p. 29–437) affirmed the indebtedness of Ficino’s doctrine of the intrinsic efficacy of shape to Plotinus, specifying *Enn.* 4.4.40, and meaning no doubt lines 14–15, which read, in Ficino’s translation, “Besides [magicians] use figures having specific powers,” “Praeterea figuris utuntur vires certas habentibus,” see also Ficino’s commentary thereon, reprinted in *Op.*, p. 1748. *De vita* 3.17 in general parallels *Enn.* 4.4.35; there Plotinus asks “How then do these forces dispose themselves? . . . What is the difference between one triangle and another? How does the one dispose itself and act towards the other, and why, and how far does it go?” “Quo igitur modo haec vires se habent? . . . quidnam differentiae habeat triangulus ad triangulum comparatus, quidve hic habeat agere ad illum et secundum quid hoc agat, et quousque?” *Enn.* 4.4.35.1–4;

see also 4.4.34–9–33, and Ficino’s commentary thereon, reprinted in *Op.*, p. 1746. Plotinus answers this question in direct contrast to Aquinas (true, Plotinus is talking for the moment about the powers of celestial figures on us rather than of our figures on the stars as he does in 4.4.40.14–15 — and as Aquinas does all along — but he uses human postures as an analogy to them, implying that the principle is transferable to human agents): “. . . so that figures themselves also have force. For according to this or that disposition, different consequences follow,” “adeo ut ipse quoque figurae vim habeant. Nam secundum ipsum, quod ita vel ita se habeat, aliter agit, aliterve agitur.” *Enn.* 4.4.35.44–46. And he ends his chapter (35) with the points with which Ficino begins this chapter; the association of these powers with those of color and their distinction from elemental powers of heat and cold, *Enn.* 4.4.35.64–66.

Aquinas’s statements in *SCG* 3 are opposable to these statements in that with regard to efficacy, he speaks of figure in the abstract; he draws no distinction here between celestial and terrestrial figures (though he does elsewhere affirm that constellations influence natural objects and that they cause in particular the occult qualities as distinct from the elemental ones, by way of the substantial forms, Copenhagen; “Scholastic Philosophy,” esp. pp. 535–46). Contrast this entire chapter, then, with Aquinas’s statement:

Natural matter is not in any way disposed toward form by figures. So the bodies on which these figures are put have the same readiness to receive the celestial influence as any other bodies of the same species. . . . Per figuras non disponitur aliquo modo materia naturalis ad formam. . . . Corpora igitur in quibus sunt impressae huiusmodi figurae, sunt eisdem habitatis ad recipiendam influentiam caelestem cum aliis corporibus eiusdem speciei. . . .

SCG 105, Leonine ed. 331a.12–16; Bourke sec. 10, 3.2.96

Contrast with Ficino’s first paragraph in particular, Aquinas’s statement:

In the practices of this art they use certain symbols and specially shaped figures. Now, shape is the principle of neither action nor passion; if it were, mathematical bodies would be active and passive. Hence it is not possible to dispose matter by special figures so that it will be receptive to a natural effect. So, the magicians do not use figures as dispositions. . . .

In observationibus huius artis utuntur quibusdam caracteribus et figuris determinatis. Figura autem nullius actionis principium est neque passionis: alias, mathematica corpora essent activa et passiva. Non ergo potest per figuras determinatas disponi materia ad aliquem effectum naturalem suscipiendum. Non ergo utuntur magi figuris aliquibus quasi dispositionibus. . . .

SCG 105, Leonine ed. 330b.18–25, Bourke sec. 7, 3.2.95–96

Bourke suggests, 3.2: 89, n.1, that Al-Kindi's *Theoria artium magicarum* (now better known as *De radiis*), which Ficino will cite in 3.21, forms the background of the relevant chapters (104–5), of SCG; and Ficino got the ideas which he tacitly opposes to Aquinas partly from Al-Kindi, *De radiis*, ed. M.-T. d'Averry and F. Hudry, *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge* 41 (1974), chap. 8, p. 252; so that both sides are arguing about the same sort of magic.

3. See Plotinus: "For [star] figures are each made according to a reason and to specific numbers." "Praeterea figuraciones omnes secundum rationem fieri, certisque singulas numeris," *Enn.* 4.4.35.12–14.

4. See *Comm. Phaedr.* chap. 11, ed. Allen *Phaedran Characteres*, pp. 124–25, on the intelligible world as characterized by unparticipated light.

5. Plotinus: "For what would be the sense in admitting that colors have force and activity and yet denying the same power to figures?" "Qua enim ratione fatemur colores habere vim atque facere, figuras vero non conficimur?" *Enn.* 4.4.35.59–61.

6. The analogies in these two paragraphs of the influence of celestial figures to the sympathetic effects produced in people by music and by facial expressions come at least ultimately from Plotinus; see for example, "For there is an attractive force inherent in charms and songs, and in a particular sound and posture [lit. *figura*] of the operator himself; for these things have a wonderful power of attraction, as do plaintive words and accents and sad postures." "Insta enim traducendi vis est carminibus cantibusque, et certo cuidam sono figurataque ipsis agentis: nam talia quaedam mirabiliter attrahunt, sicut flebiles quaedam voces et accentus miserabilesque figurae. Trahitur vero anima, sed quo pacto? neque enim electo, neque ratio, sed irrationalis anima musicam demulcetur," *Enn.* 4.4.40.20–24; "... since indeed the fact that figures in themselves also have powers can be seen here below. For why are some figures terrifying to those who see them though those who are terrified have had no experience of evil from them before?" "... quandoquidem et figuras secundum se vires habere in rebus quoque nostris licet aspicere. Cur enim aliae figurae cernentibus sunt terribiles, ubi etiam nihil passi antea fuerint, qui terreni?" *Enn.* 4.4.35.49–53; see also Ficino's *Comm. Plot.*, *Op.*, p. 1746 on 4.4.35 ad fin.

7. The analogy of two lutes or lyres (*λύρῆς*) to explain how our magical figures gather the influence of the stars, comes from *Enn.* 4.4.41.6–8, although Plotinus here speaks of magical analogies in general, including shape, without specifying man-made figures. The analogy of a mirror is elaborated from Plotinus' brief comparison of a statue or other man-made receptacle for the World-soul to a mirror, *Enn.* 4.3.11.6–8. This example confirms that Plotinus does envision figure as operating upwards toward the heavens as well as downwards.

8. The description of diaphanous objects (corresponding to Plotinus's *ὁ διαφανὴς*, translated by Ficino as *perspicuum corpus*) as passive, but particularly receptive to light and hence to other celestial influences, resembles *Enn.* 4.5.42–49. It may also derive ultimately from Aristotle's *De anima* 418b4–13; see Copenhaver, "Scholastic Philosophy," p. 529.

3.18

1. Albumasar, *Introductorium*, see also Arabic ed. with German translation, Boll, *Sphaera* (Leipzig, 1903), pp. 491–93; what follows is a digest of 6.1–2 combined with its repetition (with no acknowledgment except to the Indians) in *Picatrix*, 2.2, translation pp. 59 ff. Yates comments on this and ensuing pages, pp. 70–1. Plessner says the source for many of the prescriptions which follow is unknown. Although the summary of them given by Gundel, *Dekane und Dekantenbilder*, Studien der Bibliothek Warburg no. 19 (Göttingen and Hamburg, 1936), pp. 280–81, contains misreadings, it rightly assesses Ficino's qualified acceptance of them, and the background information is helpful.

2. Albumasar, cf. *Introductorium*, 6.2; Boll, *Sphaera*, p. 513. This is the only decan-figure cited, i.e., one that denotes a "face", because of its figure, this face is also invoked by Ficino in *De stella Magorum*, *Op.*, p. 491, as the probable location of the comet which was the star of Bethlehem. Ficino must have felt authorized to include it because according to Albertus Magnus, whom he later cites, it contains an explicit reference to Christ's virgin birth, *Speculum astronomiae*, chap. 12, pp. 36–37 = Borgnet ed. 10.644b–645a. Garin says that Albumasar's remarkable statement was echoed also by Abraham ibn Ezra, Roger Bacon, and Pierre d'Ailly, "Introduction," Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Disputationes adversus astrologiam divinatoriam* (Florence, 1946), 1:12.

3. Ficino will outline the "formam ad coeli similitudinem . . . rotundam" in 3.19. One "recent authority" who advocates such an image is Al-Kindi, who says in *De radiis*, chap. 8, "De imaginibus," "Imago autem animalis, quia [aliter, quae] est simulacrum animalis quod habet centrum et unitatem regitivam ad equalitatem propius accedentem, sicut mundus, habilior est ad recipiendam virtutem. . . . Hec enim maiorem portant in se et radiis suis similitudinem cum mundo — qui est perfecte equalitatis," p. 253, see also chap. 9, p. 255, recommending round creatures for sacrifices on the same grounds. Minor differences are that Al-Kindi believes images emit as well as attract rays, and that Ficino ignores the living creature and focuses on the geometrical shape. Al-Kindi will be cited by Ficino in 3.21.

4. On the geometrical appropriateness of straight-lined talismans for capturing rays, and the general concept of a progression from point to line to "superficies" to "corpus," see *Picatrix* 2.7, translation, pp. 101–3 = ed., pp. 96–97.

5. *Picatrix* 3.5 (5), translation, pp. 193–96 = ed., pp. 183–86. In view of this unique and sometimes almost verbatim similarity, we agree with Compagni (pp. 260–61, n. 3) and Plessner, ad loc., that "Das *Aratum collegium* . . . könnte also *Picatrix* sein, den Ficino begrifflicher Weise nicht zu erwählen wagt." Even here, however, Ficino omits from *Picatrix* both the subdivision of the spirit into seven according to the planets and special features such as the hollowiness of the cross, its two feet, and the extra images upon which it is normally set. The alternative "formam ad coeli similitudinem . . . rotundam" is not in *Picatrix*.

6. Not in *Picatrix* 3.5 (5). See Rufinus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.29, *PL* 21:537. Ficino and Rufinus are referring to the *ankh*, the Egyptian symbol of life, a figure like a cross and indeed called an "ansate cross," *crux ansata*, or "handed cross," having a loop instead of an upper vertical arm. See also André Chastel, "Il 'signum crucis"

- del Ficino," in *Marsilio Ficino e il ritorno di Platone*, ed. Giancarlo Garfagnini (Florence, 1986), pp. 216-19.
7. Unless otherwise noted, the *Picatrix* citations which follow will be from 2.10 (15). *Picatrix*, translation, p. 127.24 ff. = ed., p. 120. Plessner corrects Ficino's gloss: a Fevryzech is not a sapphire but a turquoise.
8. This image seems to be composed of elements from *Picatrix*, translation, p. 118.13 ff. = ed., p. 111; p. 128.26 ff. = ed., p. 121; and p. 129.14 ff. = ed., p. 122.
9. *Picatrix*, translation, p. 118.18-23.
10. *Picatrix*, translation, p. 115.14 ff., with elements from p. 119.8 ff.
11. Although Plessner can find no source for this image in his ed. of the original *Picatrix*, Yates, p. 71, claims to find one in the less authentic though better-known Latin version, 2.10, Sloane MS 1305, fol. 45, whose purpose is political, not medical. Libra and Taurus are the houses of Venus, Pisces her exaltation.
12. See also n. 11. In this and the next three sentences, Ficino's attention conflatedly jumps back and forth between Mercury and the Moon. The image of the Moon is described in one place in *Picatrix*, its purpose and astrological hour somewhat (indeed, in this case, ten pages) later, see nn. 11 and 13; and so it is in *De vita*. For this image of Mercury, see *Picatrix*, p. 116.12 ff.; Plessner says the staff in the right hand of this image is probably in reality the same object as the reed in the right hand of the other Mercury below. In the Sala dei Mesi of the Palazzo Schifanoia, completed well before 1489—see Eberhard Ruhmer, *Franzesco del Cosca* (Munich, 1959), p. 73—the decan image for the first face of Gemini is likewise a man holding a staff or "reia," though other details differ, pls. 18 and 43. See also Marco Bertozzi, *La tirinnia degli astri: Aby Warburg e l'astrologia di Palazzo Schifanoia* (Bologna, 1985). As for the other decan-figures in these frescoes, contrary to Yates's implication, p. 57, and to Plessner's note, p. 240, n. to p. 146.26 ff., none of the images Ficino describes, whether or not borrowed from *Picatrix*, resemble them strongly enough to establish Ficino's indebtedness to them.
13. An unspecified image of the Moon is prescribed in *Picatrix*, translation, p. 126.15 ff., for the purpose not of *auguramentum* but of driving out scorpions.
14. This second image of Mercury, including his reed, is derived principally from *Picatrix*, pp. 123-24; see also p. 116.12-28 = ed., p. 109, "wo vier verschiedene Merkurbilder angegebe sind, aus deren jedem etwas in unserm Text vorkommt," Plessner, ad loc., p. 241.
15. This image is specified for the Moon in *Picatrix*, translation, pp. 116.30-117.5.
16. Plessner finds no source for this prescription; but since the astrological hour is practically the same, presumably the image is that of Saturn described at n. 5, above (for which there is a source), here turned to a new application.
17. A highly creative conflation of various Sun-images owing something to *Picatrix*, pp. 115.14 ff., 119.8 ff., and 120.10 ff., in Pingree's edition, 2.12.39 and 44, after which (in some MSS, see his Appendix 21) Pietro d'Abano is likewise cited for this image (with the lion gazing at stones placed before him, which is the closest available analogue to him rolling one under his feet) and precise astrological hour. Lions in gold were common on astrological images; see Thorndike, 4: 122-27, citing at second hand Ficino's supposed model for Book 2, Arnald of Villanova, and an ecclesiastical condemnation thereof; 576; 578; 580 ff.

18. *Conciliator*, Diff. 10; fol. 16P: "Et ego quidem fui expertus figuram leonis impressum in auro, sole existente in medio celi cum corde leonis love aut Venere aspiciente: ac malis infortunatis et cadentibus dolorem remum afferre," also cited with further significant detail in some MSS of *Picatrix*, see preceding n.
19. Mengo Bianchelli da Faenza, "a distinguished physician," was present at a dinner given in June, 1489, at Lorenzo's house, with Ficino, Pico, Poliziano, and others, Della Torre, p. 813. It may have been at this time that he told Ficino the story of Giovanni Marliani's cure. Marliani was a famous lecturer on medicine at Pavia, Thorndike, 4: 207-8; his cure was later recounted by Girolamo Torella, Thorndike, 4: 577-78.
20. *Conciliator*, Diff. 113, fol. 158M-O. No source has been found for the talisman preceding this one.
21. The talismans of the mansions of the Moon. Mansion 14, *Picatrix* 1.4 (15), p. 18.32-19.7 = ed., p. 19.
22. Mansion 22, *Picatrix* 1.4 (23), p. 20.21 ff. = ed., pp. 21-22.
23. Mansion 23, *Picatrix* 1.4 (24), p. 20.28 ff. = ed., p. 22.
24. Mansion 27, *Picatrix* 1.4 (28), p. 21.19 ff. As Ficino professes, he has indeed selected those positions possessing medical significance and avoided those which interfere with fire will and which are destructive. The mansions of the Moon are also found in the next author Ficino cites, Albohazen Haly filius Abenragel, *De iudiciis astrorum*, Part 7, chap. 101; but they are purely elective, no talismans are mentioned (see "Traditions"), and even the fostered activities are only vaguely similar, thus confirming Ficino's indebtedness to *Picatrix* here.
25. *De iudiciis astrorum* 1.4: "In naturis planetarum," "De Sole," sig. A3v.
26. For destruction of a city, alienation of minds, and other transitive, malicious, and sometimes psychological effects, see for example Mansion 4, *Picatrix* 1.4 (5), p. 16.23-30 = ed., p. 16.
27. Porphyry, *Life*, Section 10, Ficino's translation, *Op.*, p. 1541. As to whether Olympius used images, Porphyry does not say.
28. Albertus, full title, *Liber dictus Speculum astronomium Alberti Magni de tibus titis et illicitis*, which we have been calling *Speculum astronomiae*, chaps. 11, p. 32.103-39 = Borgnet 10: 642a-b) and 16, p. 47.1-21 = Borgnet 10: 649b-650a). All the material down to "Pietro d'Abano" comes directly from Albertus.
29. For Thebit's patronymic "Benthorad" Ficino meant to say Ben Korah and he should have said Ibn Qurra, 834-901, who wrote in Baghdad (on whom see also above, 3.8 and n. 17), *De imaginibus* 5-10, 21, and 36, in Francis J. Carmody, *The Astronomical Works of Thabit b. Qurra* (Berkeley, 1960), pp. 181-84 and 186. Ps.-Ptolemy, *De imaginibus super facies signorum*, translation Gundel, *Dekane*, pp. 394-401, meaning the entire work. An edition of the Latin version of this work is in preparation by D. Pingree, who informs us that it exists in some 22 MSS and that out of these, three Latin MSS are presently in Florence. On the work, see Lynn Thorndike, "Traditional Medieval Tracts" (see above, 3.8, n. 1), pp. 256-59.
30. Pietro, *Conciliator*, Diff. 113, fol. 158M-N: "... ut rechar Thabit de Fedice qui imaginem construxit regionem destruentem"; see Thebit, *De imaginibus*, 14, in *Astronomical Works*, p. 182. The astrologer Pheidix, possibly Felix, has not been identified.

31. Aquinas, *SCG* 3.104-7. The very grudging exculpation of figures is chap. 105, ad fin.; on its importance for Ficino's magic, see Copenhaver, "Scholastic Philosophy," pp. 533-34; for Aquinas' basically negative attitude towards figures, see notes to *De vita* 3.17.
32. 4 ad fin., ed. Freté and Maré, 27: 462; the arguments against Aquinas' authorship, which include the untypicality of the very endorsement of astrology Ficino quotes, are given by Thorndike, 2: 614-15. For a more typical statement, see also the genuine *De oculis operibus naturae*, ed. cit., 24: 504b, and on the work in general, Joseph McAllister, ed. (Washington, D. C., 1939) Catholic University of America Philosophical Studies, 42. Copenhaver warns that McAllister's discussion omits the very part of the work Ficino cites here.
33. *SCG* 104, section 6.
34. *De oculis operibus naturae*, p. 507.
35. Iamblichus, *De mysteriis* 2.10, in Ficino's epitome, *Op.*, p. 1881; 4.7, *Op.*, p. 1891; see also above, 3.15 and n. 5.
36. *De mysteriis* 3.28-30, *Op.*, p. 1891.
37. Ps.-Prolemy, *Cantiloquium*, Aphorism 10. Ps.-Alī ibn Ridwān, *Comm. Cantiloquium*, ad loc.

3.19

1. Ficino's model of the universe recalls that transparent sphere through which one should view "first the Sun and the other stars together, then the sea, the earth, and all living beings" suggested by Plotinus as an "experiment," *Enn.*, 5.8.9, with a roughly similar though not identical psychological aim.
2. The metals in this sentence are problematic. *Aer* is ambiguous; elsewhere I have translated it in its newer meaning "brass," because it is qualified as its brass by "yellow" or "red"; here, however, its use as a stamp on other metals requires hardness and indicates bronze. *Argentī lamina . . . aurata*, cf. 3.15.12, *Op.*, p. 551, *argento . . . deaurato*.
3. The precise meaning of this sentence is a bit unclear; its general aim is to refute the pagan notion that the world is eternal. The horoscope of the world is the Thema Mundi or conjectured position of every planet at the beginning of the world. For another version of the widespread notion of the Thema Mundi or birth-day of the world, see Firmicus Maternus, *Mathesis*, eds. W. Kroll, F. Skutsch, and K. Ziegler (1897, repr. Stuttgart, 1968), 3.1. For an example of telling the fortune of the world for a given year on its birthday, an example of general astrology, see Ficino, *Consiglio contro la pestilenza*, *Op.*, p. 578: even old men were subject to this plague because "Saturn retrograde was lord of the year." I translate "sors" as "Lot" in the sense Manilius gives it in *Astronomia* 3.75-159, as a part of a scheme analogous to the "places" of the dodecatropos, each of which governs an activity of human life, see Goold, ed., Introduction, pp. lxii-lxviii, and *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, s. v. "athlum."
4. A pun on "genesis" and the biblical book of Genesis. Ficino means Pico's *Hep-laphus*, 1489, a commentary on Genesis, ed. E. Garin (Florence, 1942). Nothing

- particular in this paragraph is borrowed from the *Hephlaphus*. On the contrary, in his *Disputationes adversus astrologiam divinatoriam* 2.5, 1: 132-34, Pico was to rebuke Roger Bacon for precisely this astrological explanation for resting on the Sabbath (see Garin, ed., n. 2 ad loc.) on the grounds that it reduced a divine mystery to an astrological motive.
5. For the Armenian stone, see above, 1.20 and note 2.
6. Vesta is the God of the earth in the Neoplatonic alignment of the Twelve Great Gods with the twelve spheres. Archimedes, see Cicero, *Disp. Tusc.* 1.25.63 and *Rhp.* 1.21-22, also mentioned by Ficino, *Theol. Plat.* 4.1, ed. 1: 157-58 (*Op.*, pp. 157-58) and 13.3, ed. 2:223 (*Op.*, p. 226). For Lorenzo della Volpata, see Chastiel, pp. 95-97, nn. 15-17, echoed by Yates, p. 75, n. 1, with important qualifications; also, Prof. Chastiel now believes, as he kindly informs me, that the clock in the Museo Civico of Florence is not necessarily the precise object to which Ficino here refers, but at least it exemplifies the type of object. All three images—the ceiling-painting, the clock, and the mental image—are artistic embodiments of the Platonic notion that the heavens are a redemptive subject of study because, being free from corruption, they retain the pristine "archetypal" form they received from the hand of the Creator executing his "Idea"; see "Habitus." Ben Jonson's *Haddington Masque*, 265 ff., calls for a large planetarium as a stage-prop. Spondanus in his edition of Homer (1584), alludes in a note at *Iliad* 18, pp. 340-41, to one described by Cardano in his *De subtilibus machinis*. On the connection of such wondrous machines with talismanic magic, see Yates, pp. 147-49.
7. Plato, *Rhp.* 1.335d. The two possibilities in the preceding sentence are both affirmed by Ficino in *Comm. Tim.* chap. 24, *Op.*, pp. 1448-49.
8. Abraham ibn Ezra (ca. 1089-1167), *Liber rationum*, translated into Latin by Pietro d'Abano, in *Abrahe Avenantis Judei astrologi peritissimi in re iudiciali opera* (Venice, 1507), p. 38. See also his *Introduitorium in iudicia astrorum quod dicitur principium sapientie*, chap. 4, pp. 18v-19; and *Tractatus in tredem maniribus planetarum*, p. 88. Ficino also cites this opinion of Abraham on Saturn in his *Argumentum* to Plotinus's *Enn.* 2.3.6, *Op.*, p. 1617. For a discussion of Pietro d'Abano and his translation of Abraham, see Raphael Levy, *The Astrological Works of Abraham ibn Ezra* (Baltimore, 1927), pp. 32-46.

3.20

1. For Medea and her herbs, see Ovid, *Met.* 7.159-349; referred to also in Roger Bacon, *De retardatione*, chap. 3, p. 41; see also above, 2.17, n. 2. Medea made a statue of Artemis-Hekate with herbs in it; and she promised to make an old man young again, what Ficino does not notice here, though he does in 2.17, is that both measures were mere pretense, see Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca* 4.51, trans. C. H. Oldfather, Loeb (Cambridge, Mass., 1933) 2: 504-7. In this reference the Magi have not been identified; they could be the reputed authors of the *Chaldean Oracles*, ascribed to the Magi; perhaps frag. no. 128, quoted in 3.22 (see our n. 8) translating *αἰγία πέστρον*, "corpus caducum" not as "weak body," as I have done there, but as "body which is passing away," i.e., "aging."

and temperateness of qualities whereby it agrees with the heavens) also has acquired celestial light. This spirit, moreover, when it is like this in the highest degree, is especially celestial and has acquired celestial life above the rest from the Divine; and so long as it renders itself and keeps itself like this in all its diet and regimen, to that extent it gains the singular gifts of the celestials.

But when we say that in the heavens there is not any excess of an elemental quality, we understand either, 1) that no such quality exists there, but rather temperate virtues that bring qualities into being, or 2) that if qualities somehow similar to those here below exist there, then we understand that they have a sort of airy tempering. And when we call some things up there cold or dry, we are taking it according to the Platonic explanation, i. e., that a thing may be called cold which is the cause of least heat, and dry which produces for us least moisture. ⁷ Thus Abraham the astrologer says that Saturn leaves our body somewhat dry and cold because it brings our body less heat and moisture. ⁸ For the same reason, the meat of cattle and of hares, which is in itself hot and moist, is to us cold and dry. From this induction, learn two corollaries: First, if bodies after further tempering live more, then the heavens, being as temperate as possible, live as much as possible — or rather, conversely, because the heavens are most exactly tempered and possess in themselves the most absolute life, it can be conjectured that insofar as other things approximate that temperance and life, so far they will be endowed with a more excellent degree of life. Second, life is a form perfect in itself, perfecting the body and giving it the principle of motion, the inward principle of a motion, I repeat, that both acts internally and is deployed externally through every part. If therefore all this itself constitutes life, consider him mentally deficient who does not know that such a form [as life] exists in the heavens — in the most perfect body that revolves always with perfect motion and gives life to all, and more and more life by degrees to those things which either have naturally become like it or which daily expose themselves more readily to its influences.

*What Great Power Images Are Thought To Have
over Spirit, and Spirit over Images.
And concerning the Emotional State of the User and Operator.*

Chap. XX

We have verified that if anyone uses heliobore according to medical rules and is strong enough to tolerate it, then, by the resulting purgation and by its occult property, he changes somehow the quality of his spirit, the

*An Apologia Dealing with Medicine,
Astrology, the Life of the World, and the Magi
Who Greeted the Christ Child at His Birth.*

Marsilio Ficino of Florence sends greetings again and again to his most beloved brothers in the pursuit of truth, the three Pieros: Nero, Guicciardini, and Soderini.¹ But perhaps I should more properly have said the tripartite Piero than the three Pieros. For just as when there is but one palm, the many fingers in the palm do not make many hands there, so, friends, your three bodies do not seem to prevent one will from making one Piero. Christ, that architect of the heavenly homeland, created a rock so great that this one rock was able to provide a foundation for the vast edifice of his church. I also have met, by some divine luck, with rocks so great that three are now sufficient for even this lofty edifice of mine. Now, friends, now, if you do not know it, it seems you need that citadel of Pallas, so that we may keep far from us the savage attack of impious giants.² For this reason, I have decided to fortify the life of my three children/books who are of service to everyone's life first with your citadel constructed upon three rocks.³

You know, I think, that I have written a book, *On Life*, divided into three little books. The first book will be entitled *On a Healthy Life*, the second, *On a Long Life*, and the third, *On Life from the Heavens*. The title will act as a pleasant bait, then, and will attract as many as possible to taste of it; but in such a great number, a good many will be ignorant, as I think, and not a few malicious to boot. Someone therefore will say: Marsilio is a priest, isn't he? Indeed he is. What business then do priests have with medicine or, again, with astrology? Another will say: What does a Christian have to do with magic or images? And someone else, unworthy of life, will begrudge life to the heavens. Finally, all who feel this way will be quite ungrateful for my service toward them; and they will not be ashamed to be cruel in the face of my charity, with which I looked to the life and prosperity of all citizens to the best of my ability. That labor of yours will, then, be a common one, but in order that the load may be somewhat lighter—for there are three of you against three enemies—fight an apportioned battle. You will not refute invective with invective, for I know your nature; but you are so charming that you will overcome the bitterness of another's gall with the wondrous sweetness of your honey.

Reply first of all, whitest Nero, to the first, that the most ancient priests of long ago were doctors as well as astronomers, as indeed the histories of the Chaldeans, the Persians, and the Egyptians testify. Moreover, to no one more than to the pious priest did the duties of extraordinary charity pertain, which indeed shine forth as much as possible in the greatest service of all. The most outstanding duty without a doubt, most necessary and especially desired by all, is to see to it that men have a sound mind in a sound body.⁴ This we can accomplish only if we join medicine with the priesthood. But since medicine is quite often useless and often harmful without the help of the heavens—a thing which both Hippocrates and Galen admit and I have experienced—astronomy certainly pertains to this priestly charity no less than does medicine.⁵ The sacred Scriptures command us to honor such a doctor (as I think), “since for your need the Most High created him.” And Christ, the giver of life, who commanded his disciples to “cure the sick” in the whole world,⁶ will also enjoin priests to heal at least with herbs and stones, if they are unable to cure with words as those men did before. But if those things are not sufficient, he will command them to compound them with a seasonable breath of heaven and apply them to sick people. For with the same breath of heaven by which he incites animals everywhere, each to his own medicine, even so does he provide most abundantly for the life of all. Under the divine stimulus of such heavenly inspiration, snakes cure themselves with fennel,⁷ swallows cure their eyes with chelidonia,⁸ and eagles, when they have a hard time giving birth, have discovered by divine inspiration the eagle-stone with which they successfully bring forth their eggs right away.⁹ Therefore God Himself, who through the heavens impels all animals to his medicines, certainly permits priests to drive out diseases, not, I say, for gain but out of charity, with medicines which are strengthened by the heavens. In addition to these arguments, you will then add even more, if it is expedient, through the keenness of your mind.

After this, you too rise, O mighty Guicciardini, and reply to intellectual busybodies that Marsilio is not approving magic and images but recounting them in the course of an interpretation of Plotinus. And my writings make this quite clear, if they are read impartially. Nor do I affirm here a single word about profane magic which depends upon the worship of daemons, but I mention natural magic, which, by natural things, seeks to obtain the services of the celestials for the prosperous health of our bodies. This power, it seems, must be granted to minds which use it legitimately, as medicine and agriculture are justly granted, and all the more so as that activity which joins heavenly things to earthly is more perfect. From this workshop, the Magi, the first of all, adored the new-born Christ. Why then are you so dreadfully afraid of the name of Magus, a name pleasing to the Gospel, which signifies not an enchanter and a sorcerer, but a wise priest? For what does that Magus, the first adorer of Christ, profess? If you wish to hear: on the analogy of a farmer, he is a cultiva-

tor of the world. Nor does he on that account worship the world, just as a farmer does not worship the earth; but just as a farmer for the sake of human sustenance tempers his field to the air, so that wise man, that priest, for the sake of human welfare tempers the lower parts of the world to the upper parts; and just like hen's eggs, so he fittingly subjects earthly things to heaven that they may be fostered. God himself always brings this about and by doing, teaches and urges us to do it in order that the lowest things may be produced, moved, and ruled by the higher.

Lastly, there are two kinds of magic. The first is practiced by those who unite themselves to daemons by a specific religious rite, and, relying on their help, often contrive portents. This, however, was thoroughly rejected when the Prince of this World was cast out.¹⁰ But the other kind of magic is practiced by those who seasonably subject natural materials to natural causes to be formed in a wondrous way. Of this profession there are also two types: the first is inquisitive, the second, necessary. The former does indeed feign useless portents for ostentation: as when the Magi of Persia produced a bird similar to a blackbird with a serpent's tail out of sage which had putrefied under manure, while the Sun and Moon occupied the same degree in the second face of Leo; they reduced the bird to ashes and poured it into a lamp, whereupon the house seemed as a result to be full of serpents.¹¹ This type, however, must be avoided as vain and harmful to health. Nevertheless the necessary type which joins medicine with astrology must be kept. If anyone obstinately insists further, however, gratify him, Guicciardini, to the extent that the man (if one wholly undeserving of such a benefit is a man) may never read these things of ours, nor understand, remember, or make use of them. There are many points besides which your own genius will be able to bring forward to oppose ungrateful ignorance.

Now, what are you to do, our vigorous Soderini? Will you tolerate it that there will be some men or other, superstitious and blind, who see life plain in even the lowest animals and the meanest plants, but do not see life in the heavens or the world? Now if those little men grant life to the smallest particles of the world, what folly! what envy! neither to know that the Whole, in which "we live and move and have our being," is itself alive, nor to wish this to be so. Aratus, indeed, sings this, showing clearly that Jupiter is the life which is common to the body of the world. Most fittingly! I seem now to have lit some-how upon those words of Aratus. I remember Luke the evangelist, I remember Paul the apostle gladly using these words; those wise men do not fear the life of the world which they imply.¹² But some superstitious man will object that it is not easily shown from these words that Paul agrees that the world has a soul, but only that the world is subject to God and that we live in this God. Well, so be it. Let us not say that there is a soul in the world, since that is unacceptable. Let soul be a profane name. Will it not be permitted to say

that at least there is some sort of life?—a life which God himself, the maker of the world, so fortunately, perfectly, and gently breathes into this work of his, since he is not stingy towards the meanest of living things and daily through the heavens most bountifully bestows life on as many as possible of those things which it contains. Tell me, I pray, surely you see that oxen and asses are living; O ox, O ass,¹³ who beget living things from themselves by a touch. If, moreover, these things were to generate living things from themselves by a look, would you not judge all the more that these things are living, if only you yourself have any judgment, if you have any life? Heaven, the husband of earth, does not touch the earth, as is the common opinion. It does not have intercourse with its wife; but by the rays of its stars alone as if with the rays of its eyes, it illuminates her on all sides; it fertilizes her by its illumination and procreates living things. If, therefore, it bestows life even by its glance, does heaven have no life proper to itself? And the fact that it gave life and a vivifying look to the sparrow is a thing far lower than this. After having brought forward these points, if you should fail in the end to persuade the superstitious man, dismiss him as half-dead, or rather as not even living.

Then, my dear Piero del Nero, in order that we may plead our case with more defenders, bring in that Amphion of ours: Cristoforo Landino, orator as well as poet.¹⁴ That Amphion of ours will quickly soften the stony hearts of our enemies with his wondrous sweetness. And you, Guicciardini, dearest godfather [of my books/children], go now, go quickly and summon Poliziano, our Hercules.¹⁵ In those days, when Hercules was about to engage in a rather dangerous struggle, he used to call out "Tolaus!"¹⁶ Do you now similarly call out "Hercules?" For you know how many barbarous monsters now devastating Latium Poliziano our Hercules has attacked, destroyed, and killed; how zealously he conquers everywhere, how securely he defends. This man, therefore, will immediately beat with his club and consume in flames even a hundred heads of the Hydra threatening our books/children.¹⁷ Up, then, my dearest Soderini, rise and greet Pico, our Phoebus. I often call him my Phoebus and he in turn calls me Dionysius and Liber, for we are brothers.¹⁸ Tell my Phoebus that the poisonous Python even now is rising from the swamp against us.¹⁹ Let him stretch his bow, beg him, I beseech you. Let him shoot his arrows without delay. He will immediately bend his bow, I know whereof I speak, and with a single slaughter will once and for all destroy all the poison.

Farewell now fortunately, my most loving brothers, worthy not only of fortunate health but of good fortune itself. Take care of the health and good fortune of my children/books now coming forth into the light.

September 15, 1489

at Careggi

place, just in the same *Ennead* (4). There are really two god-making, or better, starkly animating, passages in *Asclepius*, 24a and 37-38, also cited above in 3.13, p. 348, and 3.20, p. 561; see "Magic," where the later and longer passage is quoted and translated in its entirety. Ficino's interweaving of these will be traced hereafter by parenthetical refs. in text. As for the topic discussed below, what rank of divinity was employed, Plotinus asserts with uncharacteristic boldness that the World-soul herself was captured; Hermes says terrestrial daemons: 37 (cf. 24 and Ficino's airy daemons — who are at least of the same rank, elementals — not celestial gods), 38. For a similar preference for the lower ranks, see *De vita* 3.1, p. 631; 3.22, p. 565.

9. Synestus, *De insomniis*, 133A6-C2 (= PG 66: 1285c-d), section 4 in Ficino's translation, *Op.*, p. 1969.

10. The unavailability of an accurate text led Yates, p. 67, and Walker, p. 42, to think that the magic here described was "illicit"; see textual note. An alternative translation of *magicum illicitum* would be "magical charm."

11. Lamblichus, *De mysteriis* 6.7, in Ficino's epitome, *Op.*, p. 1901. Ficino misrepresents Lamblichus here in that Lamblichus is not condemning the Egyptians as compared to the Chaldeans on grounds of their worship of daemons but of their use of threats addressed to the higher gods. Again, Ficino does not use the word *gradus* ("steps"); but at least the notion is present in daemons being ἐν τάξει ("in series") with the gods at 6.6:247.11-6.7:248.2, cf. Ficino's translation: "Ordo dorum immobilis permanet in eisdem [sc. daemonibus, though in the Greek the antecedent is the mysteries guarded by the daemons]. . . hanc enim ob causam mundi partes in ordine permanent, quod beneficio potestas Osiridis syncro permanet," p. 1901; cf. 246.19; the notion occurs more explicitly in Ficino's *Comm. Plat.*, "In librum de amore," chap. 5, "De daemonibus" *Op.*, p. 1715, where daemons are "mediators" to those planetary/gods which are Ficino's prime concern here.

12. The astrologer Samuel (also cited above, 3.22) has not been identified. "David Bil the astrologer" may be a scribal error for "David Bilia the astrologer."

13. Aquinas, *SCG* 3.104-6; see also 3.18, above, and D. P. Walker on this passage, p. 42.

14. The predicate could be translated as "cannot be a chance coincidence," but that would make no sense in context, since the distinction between chance and non-chance is inapplicable to the motions of the heavens; my translation, on the other hand, voices what would be a logical reaction to the aforementioned "dispositio siderum," namely, that it is too complicated for all its conditions to be met at one time.

15. Porphyry, *Letter to Antheo* 25; see Ficino's epitome of Lamblichus, *De mysteriis* 3.30, *Op.*, p. 1891. Lamblichus, *De mysteriis* 3.1 and 3.4-5, and in Ficino's epitome, *Op.*, pp. 1883-84. For information on Porphyry's *Letter*, see 3.13, n. 9.

16. *Enn.*, 4.3.11. Ficino imported the reference to the Magus manipulating sub-stages from *Enn.*, 4.4.40. He apparently added the specific substances himself.

17. Lamblichus, *De mysteriis* 5.1-26, in Ficino's epitome, *Op.*, pp. 1894-1900, talks about sacrifices, but does not say about them what Ficino does.

Apologia

1. Piero del Nero (d. 1512), Della Torre pp. 623, 728; Piero Guicciardini, Della Torre, pp. 623, 727-28; Piero Soderini (1492-1522), Della Torre, pp. 623, 726-27. In the opening of his "Apologia," Ficino plays with the meaning of the name "Piero" or "Peter" which in Latin (*petra*) means "rock," cf. Matt. 16:18. When he later addresses Nero as *candidissime* ("whitest") he is punning on the Italian meaning of Nero as "black."

2. According to one legend, the Greek goddess Athena received the title Pallas because she killed a giant of that name, see Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 1.37. On Ficino's figurative use of the "arx Palladis," see *De vita* 1.2, n. 3. A pun on the etymology of "arx" from "arceo" begins here.

3. Here and below, passim, there is word-play on *libri* and *liberi*, "books" and "children," for a similar conceit, see *Op.*, p. 916.2. See Plato, *Phaedrus* 275a, where writing, invented by the Egyptian god Theuth, is said to be his offspring, and 277e-278b, where Socrates says that not written discourses but only discourses on the instruction of justice, honor, and goodness, which are written in the souls of the listeners, can be considered a person's legitimate children.

4. See Juvenal 10.356: "mens sana in corpore sano." The expression became proverbial.

5. "Astronomy" is used in this sentence as a synonym for "astrology." Hippocrates, *De aere* (Littre 9: 234-36). Galen, *Quod optimus medicus sit quoque philosophus* (Kühn 1: 53); *De diebus decretoriis* on astrology, see chap. 3.1-7 (Kühn 9:901-15); cf. Galen, *De Hippocratis et Platonis placitis* 9.8 (Kühn 5:789-91). Cf. above, 3.10 and n. 5. See also Thornndike's discussion of Galen and astrology, 1:178-80. For the dependence of Ficino's own medical practice on astrology, see "Ad lectorem," p. 530.

6. Ecclus. 38:1; see also 38:7, 12, 15. Luke 9:1; Matt. 10:1. Cf. Ficino's *Letters* 1:127-28, *Op.*, p. 645.

7. Pliny, *HN* 8.41.99.

8. Pliny, *HN* 25.50.89; Dioscorides, chap. 359, cited above in 3.15.78-79.

9. Pliny, *HN* 36.39.149-51, it helps eagles to bring forth their eggs, 30.44.130. Also cited above in 3.12.56-58, see n. 8 ad loc.

10. Jn. 12:31.

11. Recipes for making animals by magic are found in *Picatrix* 4.9 (19-20), translation, pp. 418-19 = ed. 411-12; and see above, 3.26 and n. 7.

12. Aratus of Soli in Cilicia, third c. B.C. The first eighteen lines of his *Phaenomena* are an ode to Zeus. For Jove as the *animus* and *spiritus mundi*, see also Ficino, *Letters* 1:47, *Op.*, p. 614. In his speech to the Athenians, Acts 17:28, Paul does indeed quote from line 5 of Aratus's *Phaenomena*, "For we are also His [God's] offspring." Luke the Evangelist is the author of Acts; see also his Gospel, 20:36 "children of God." The words directly quoted by Ficino, "for in Him we live and move and exist," are also in Acts 17:28, but they are generally ascribed not to Aratus but to Epimenides of Crete, sixth c. B.C. See *The Beginnings of Christianity, Part 1: The Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 5, eds. Kirsopp Lake and Henry J. Cadbury (London, 1933), pp. 246-51.

13. As it happens, the ox and the ass are melancholic animals; see William of Conches, *Philosophia mundi*, in *PL* 172: 55.
14. Cristoforo Landino (1424–1504), a member of Ficino's Academy, see Della Torre, p. 623, et passim.
15. Angelo Poliziano (1454–1494), see Della Torre, pp. 623, 657–58, et passim.
16. Iolaus was the nephew and faithful companion of Hercules to whom Hercules called out for help in his battle with the Hydra, see Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 2.5.2.
17. One of Hercules' labors was the killing of the Hydra of Lerna. The Hydra had many heads which, when cut off, grew back. Iolaus cauterized the several necks with a firebrand to prevent the heads from growing back. See Apollodorus, 2.5.2.
18. Pico della Mirandola, see Della Torre, p. 623, et passim.
19. According to legend, the god Apollo killed the dragon Python at Delphi, see Homeric Hymn no. 2, "To Pythian Apollo," 300 f.

Quod necessaria sit

1. See Della Torre, esp. pp. 623–24, 732. Ficino is playing on the similarity of the names of "Canigiani (*Canisiani*)," "Canacci" (*Canacini*), and "Corsini" (*Corsini*) to the Latin words for dog (*canis*) and runner (*cursor*). Plato does not distinguish the legitimate from the illegitimate dogs.
2. Plato, *Rep.* 2.376a–b.
3. See Della Torre, esp. pp. 623, 812.
4. A reference to the legend of St. George in which he slays a dragon.
5. *Iliad* 23.97–104; *Od.* 11.206–8; *Aen.* 2.792–94; 6.700–702; Dante, *Purgatorio* 2.79–81; "expanded" alludes to the belief that one way in which a spirit can be told from a mortal is by its greater size, *Aen.* 2.772–73.
6. Pythagoras's precept to avoid excess. See the *Golden Verses of Pythagoras*, 18–21; Ficino's translation of *Aurea verba*, *Op.*, p. 1979; Diogenes Laertius 8: 9 and 23. This was essentially the motto inscribed around the walls of the Academy at Careggi, which concluded: "Avoid excess and troubles; be joyful in the present"—see Ficino's *Letters*, 1: 39–40 (*Op.*, p. 609, 2); see also the *Silet Sententiae of Sextus the Pythagorean*, "To neglect things of the smallest consequence, is not the least thing in human life," in Lamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras*, trans. Thomas Taylor (London, 1818), p. 268.
7. This second letter, especially the last two paragraphs, is so personal and allusive that its relevance is difficult to divine. On the literal level, Ficino is exploring the paradox that "care" to avoid illness can itself bring on illness and shorten the life it seeks to save. On this level he is arguing, as in Gen. Proem ad int. and 3.25 ad fin., against hygienic scrupulosity (as is indicated by his echoing words and ideas from 1.2, which advocates scrupulosity) and thus downgrading *De vita* "Less as a priest than as a doctor," however, indicates that he is also arguing against religious scrupulosity and hence against the detractors of *De vita*. He may want the detractors to read it as the former; his friends, as the latter.
8. Kristeller convincingly argues that Corsini's erroneous phrase gave rise to the traditional title of the book, *De vita triphici*; see "Editorial Introduction," n. 1; for another and not necessarily competing explanation of it, see Plessner, p. 260, n. 1.

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