

MARIAN KURDZIAŁEK

MEDIAEVAL DOCTRINES ON MAN  
AS IMAGE OF THE WORLD\*

According to the testimony of the Evangelist, Christ told the Apostles: “Praedicate Evangelium omni creaturae.”<sup>1</sup> Saint Paul wrote in his Epistle to the Romans: “Nam expectatio creaturae revelationem filiorum Dei expectat [...] Scimus enim quod omnis creatura ingemiscit et parturit usque adhuc.”<sup>2</sup> Some theologians and exegetes, both of ancient and mediaeval times, interpreted the description “omnis creatura” as referring to man. As a result they came to the conclusion that in his essence man is not only the image and likeness of God, but also of the whole creation, and even that in his nature, man unites all that was created by God.

The vision of man that emerges on the basis of the formulation “omnis creatura” must have seemed to those theologians and exegetes who proclaimed it as all the more probable, since it was in agreement, as far as its sense was concerned, with the relations of the Book of Genesis, from which it appears that God crowned his works by the creation of man, that he brought him into a world which was already prepared, that he entrusted to man dominion “over the fishes of the sea and the birds of the air and over

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Rev. Prof. MARIAN KURDZIAŁEK (August 12, 1920 – January 3, 1997)—late professor at the Catholic University of Lublin, consummate researcher of ancient and medieval philosophy.

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<sup>1</sup> Mk 16:15.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 8:19.22.

the beasts and over the whole earth and over every reptile which crawls on the earth.”<sup>3</sup> Now, such a great elevation of man by God was all the more understandable when it was shown that the value of the human phenomenon is not only based in the fact that the soul of man was created to the image and likeness of the Holy Trinity, but that his body as well is the fullest and most perfect of the bodies which God has created, that the body also justifies man dominating, kingly position and role in the world.

This emphasis on man’s value with respect to the matter and structure of his body had enormous significance for ancient and medieval Christian anthropology. It served to counterbalance recurrent spiritual tendencies that among certain authors and in certain periods took on the form of blatantly Manichean doctrines.<sup>4</sup> This emphasis was of still greater import for a better theological and philosophical grounding of the two fundamental mysteries of the history of salvation, i.e. the mystery of the Incarnation and the salvific passion of Christ. The theologians and exegetes who took up and developed this anthropological motif, came to the conclusion that man’s body in itself constitutes the equivalent of the whole universe, the entire cosmos. In the light of this and other similar conclusions, the Incarnation, birth, childhood and death of God became less shocking, less absurd for the human intellect.

The fact that medieval authors connected their meditations on man as an image of the world, as a microcosm, with the above cited words of Saint Paul, or also with other sayings of Holy Scripture which emphasize man’s unique value, bear witness to the fact that it was on precisely this strictly theological end that they had set their sights. On the other hand, the fact that

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<sup>3</sup> Gen. 1:26.

<sup>4</sup> Godfried of Saint Victor mentioned one of the reasons why he wrote his work under the title *Microcosmos*: “Adversus opinionem quorundam hominum quasdam scripturas de vilitate humani corporis legentium nec intelligentium. Quia, dum hominem vermem, folium, fenum, stipulam siccam vel umbram nominari et secundum quid talia dicta sint non intelligunt, dignitati eius detrahunt nec rem reputabilem penitus astruunt.” One of the authors of the time who diminished the dignity of man was Adam of Saint Victor: “Inter vana, nihil vanius est homine, [...] Post hominem vermis, post vermis fit cinis, heu! heu!” Cf. Léon Gautier, *Œuvres poétiques d’Adam de Saint Victor* (Paris: A. Picard et fils, 1894), 230 f., cited after Philippe Delhay, “Le sens littéral et le sens allégorique du Microcosmos de Goeffroy de Saint-Victor,” *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 16 (1949): 156. Cf. also: “Hugonis Archiepiscopi Rothomagensis *Tractatus in Hexameron*” (ed. F. Lecomte), *Archives d’histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen-âge* 25 (1958): 268 (—this periodical will be henceforth cited as *Archives*—) where the author (Hugo de Amiens, archbishop of Rouen from 1130 to 1164) commented on the words of the Book of Genesis “De pulvere vel del limo terrae” writing: “Consideratis quibuslibet corporum partibus nichil invenis terra inferius, nichil pulvere vel luto vilius.”

this problem was taken up with particular intensity in the early medieval period (Isidore of Seville, Bede, John Eriugena), and also in the twelfth century (Honorius Augustodunensis, Hildegard of Bingen, Godfried of Saint Victor, Bernard Silvestris, Alanus of Lille), can be explained by the intensity of conflicts within the church during precisely those times, conflicts brought about by recurrences of the ancient German, particularly Visigoth, Arianism.<sup>5</sup>

The content of the formulation “homo est omnis creatura” was expounded on the basis of the ancient doctrines of the microcosm, and above all on the basis of the Platonic of the world, and on the neo-Platonic conception of man as a being who within himself unites the material and sensible world with the spiritual world. To properly understand and appraise these doctrines we must first examine the general outlines of the Platonic and the neo-Platonic visions of man.

#### THE PRINCIPLE LINES OF THE PLATONIC AND NEO-PLATONIC DOCTRINE OF MAN AS AN IMAGE OF THE WORLD

Plato, just as Pythagoras, understood “cosmos” as the order which results from the unification, according to the principles of proportion and harmony, of that which is heterogeneous. Probably under the influence of Cratylus, the disciple of Heraclitus, Plato thought that the most harmonious are those harmonies in which “tones” which are contrary to one another are brought together. “There is no more important proportion and disproportion,” he wrote in the *Timaeus*,<sup>6</sup> “than that between the soul and the body.” Both of these had been united by the Demiurge with the help of mathematical proportions; in so doing he had to resort to violence. In this manner the soul of the world came into being, which, seen in itself, realizes the fullest and most perfect harmony, and hence is in the greatest degree a “cosmos.” Among all the souls that give life to various bodies, the most faithful copy of the world soul is the human soul; for this reason it is precisely to the greatest extent a “microcosm.”

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<sup>5</sup> This Problem was taken up by Josef Andreas Jungmann in his lecture entitled *Der religiöse und geistige Umbruch um das 12. Jahrhundert*, which was read during the symposia “Görres-Gesellschaft” (Innsbruck 1970). Prof. Jungmann distinguished two phases of these conflicts: the early medieval phase and the twelfth century. In the twelfth century: “Kindheits- und Leidensgeschichte Jesu treten in Kunst und Volksfrömmigkeit in den Vordergrund. Die Erklärung wird gesucht in einer späten Nachwirkung des Abwehrkampfes gegen den germanischen (vor allem westgotischen) Arianismus, genauer: in einer zweiten Phase solcher Nachwirkungen.” This quote is from a summary of the lecture supplied by the lecturer.

<sup>6</sup> *Timaeus*, 87D, cf. also 31C–32D; 35C–36A.

The soul of the world is not only in itself a cosmos, but it is also the principle of the motion which realizes the “cosmos”: in the world that can be grasped by the senses (κόσμος αἰσθητός). The Demiurge spread out the substance of the world soul to the likeness of the letter X (“chi”), and thus made of it a guarantee of the spherical shape of the universe, the most perfect of geometrical solids which can be constructed on the basis of equilateral triangles.<sup>7</sup> He made it also a guarantee of the motion of the heavens, thus the most perfect, ever identical spherical motion. If we consider the above functions of the world soul, it turns out that its closest “relative” is the human soul. The following analogies and similarities testify to this: man’s vertical posture not only sets him apart from among the other living beings, but also shows that his entire nature was directed to the sky, to the region which is par excellence rational and divine, to the true fatherland of his soul (οὐράνιον φυτόν), which is at the same time that region of the activity which is most proper to the world soul; man’s figure most closely reminds one of the letter X; the shape of man’s head suggests the cranium of the sky and, like the sphere of heaven, the most perfect kind of matter fills the human skull. Nothing, however, witnesses more eloquently to man’s family ties with heaven than the reflective character of human intellectual knowledge and his modes of reasoning: these constitute the human, microcosmic counterpart of the perfect and ever identical motions of the divine heavenly bodies.<sup>8</sup>

The world-soul is, however, not only the principle and guarantee of the spherical shape of the world and the principle and guarantee of the circular, rational motions of the sky, but it also makes the world into a “living being which possesses reason, just like a blessed divine being.”<sup>9</sup> The same results are brought about in man’s body by the human soul. The world is thus a “cosmos,” for it possesses the most perfect of the principles of motion. In the same respect, man is, more than the other living beings, a “microcosm.” Plato illustrated the above aspect of his doctrine with comparisons and analogies, which seem to be an echo of ancient popular myths and images. The Orphics, Pythagoreans and stoics interpreted them differently.<sup>10</sup> They be-

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, 47E–56C.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, 90A: οὐράνιον φυτόν; 28B: there Plato calls heaven ὄρατος θεός; 92B: there Plato calls the world which can be grasped by the senses θεός. Plato speaks of the perfection of the motions of heaven in 34A and in the *Nomoi*, 898A.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, 30B.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Walther Kranz, *Kosmos*, Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte, t. 2, part 1 (Bonn: Bouvier, 1955), 17 ff. and 53. Cf. also: Hildebrecht Hommel, “Microkosmos,” *Rheinisches Museum* 92 (1943): 66 ff. The Platonic conception of “microcosm” was most fully elaborated by Anders Olerud, *L’idée*

lieved that the world was some kind of gigantic tree, a beast, a man (macro-anthropos), or an anthropomorphically conceived Universal God.

In the light of the above vision of the world as an organism, Plato developed his theory of the perfect state. The perfect state should be composed of three states: of the ruling stratum (sages, philosophers), of the military state, and of the stratum of craftsmen and farmers. The analogies and similarities between this conception of the social and political structure of the ideal state and the three spheres of the universe, as well as the three functions of the human soul, are very obvious. The first of these strata would reflect the sphere of astronomical phenomena, which sphere is characterized by reason, as well as the guiding role of the rational soul, which is located in man's head; the second social layer would reflect the "tempestuous" sphere of meteorological events, as well as the role of the affective soul, which is located in the heart; the third social stratum would mirror the region of vegetative phenomena, which phenomena are associated with the natural activity of "mother Earth," as well as with the creativity or productivity of its inhabitants; this last stratum would correspond to the functions of the appetitive soul, which is located in the loins. The relations between the socio-political strata should reflect the balanced harmony of the spheres and forces of the universe, and the harmony of the "parts" and functions of the human soul, both in itself, and in reference to the body which is vivified by it. In other words, these relations should be based upon justice. It follows from the above remarks that this doctrine of Plato made it possible to describe a thus constituted state both as a "cosmos" and as a "microcosm." This state was patterned after both the nature and powers of the world or cosmos, and the structure and powers of the human soul, of the microcosm which, in respect to his structure and activity, is the entire man.

From what has been said on the chief themes of the Platonic doctrine on man as an image of the world one can infer that according to Plato, the human soul would be a microcosm  $\kappa\alpha\tau' \ \epsilon\acute{\xi}\omicron\chi\acute{\eta}\nu$ , since the human soul constitutes, as does the world soul, a harmony of the most extreme and polarized components of being and their functions. This theme we will call the *psychological theme*. It was the starting point for statements that the soul is everything. The human body would also be a microcosm  $\kappa\alpha\tau' \ \epsilon\acute{\xi}\omicron\chi\acute{\eta}\nu$ , and

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*de macrocosmos et de microcosmos dans le Timée de Platon, Etude de mythologie comparée* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells Boktryckeri Ab, 1951). Cf. also Marian Kurdziałek, "Koncepcje człowieka jako mikrokosmosu" [The conception of man as a microcosm], in *O Bogu i o człowieku* [On God and on man], t. 2 (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo SS. Loretanek-Benedyktynek, 1969), 109 ff.

not only because it is constructed on the same elements as is the world, but above all because its structure mirrors most exactly the perfect geometric figures and proportions of the world. This theme we will call the *cosmological theme*. It is from it that there emerge such later conceptions of man as “homo quadratus,” “homo circularis.” Man, conceived as a being composed of body and soul, as a living being, possessing reason to the likeness of a divine being, as the being who most fully mirrors the organism of the world, its powers and motions, would be a microcosm κατ’ ἐξοχήν. This theme we will call the *dynamic-organological theme*. Among later thinkers it would give rise to discussions on the question: “An mundus sit animal.” A state whose pattern would reflect the world’s and man’s psycho-physical structure would also be a microcosm. In this concept “psyche” could be emphasized, or “physis,” or else the “nomoi” to which this structure is subject. This theme we will call the *socio-political theme*. It was the source for later attempts to conceive of humanity, society, the state, and the Church in terms of the cosmos and microcosm, as well as attempts to define natural justice.

Plotinus deduced these forms of reality distinguished by Plato from that which is absolutely singular and absolutely one (τὸ ἕν). In positing this Primal One beyond the world of ideas, he shifted the horizon of the Platonic vision of being toward the spiritual. Polarization was also a co-factor in this spiritualization. At the opposite pole from the world of things was no longer, as with Plato, the κόσμος νοητός, but the Primal One, which possessed all the features of a divine and theologically understood Absolute. It was from it that there first arose νοῦς, the κόσμος νοητός, which in turn emanated from itself the soul of the world, and this emanated the νοῦς of particular people. That which was less perfect emerged from that which was more perfect, and also, in an indirect manner, from the most perfect. In the light of a thus conceived, spiritualistic, dynamic and gradualistic theory of being, Plotinus saw in the human phenomenon above all the soul, and in the soul above all the interior soul (ψυχή), also called by him the soul in itself, the higher soul, the true man, the true soul. The exterior soul which emanated from it, the inferior soul (φύσις), creates and organizes the human body, which Plotinus calls “a beast” (θηρίον δὲ ζῶωθὲν τὸ σῶμα).<sup>11</sup> The higher soul abides chiefly

<sup>11</sup> *Enneades*, I, 7, 10. Cf. the translation of Adam Krokiewicz (Warszawa: PWN 1959), vol. 1, I, 50 and 53. Cf. also the translator’s “Introduction,” LXV.

[English translator’s note: the Greek phrase as it stands is from: <http://remacle.org/bloodwolf/philosophes/plotin/enneade1.htm>—it is the closest match to be found to the phrase in the original Polish text].

in the divine intellect ( $\nu\omicron\tilde{\nu}\zeta$ ) of which the lower soul, the perceptive and discursively thinking soul, may or may not know. The individual human soul constitutes, according to Plotinus, a miniaturized copy of the world soul. Hence it may be inferred that the soul of the world is related to the individual human soul as the “cosmos” is to the “microcosmos.” This assertion seems to be fitting, especially in reference to the lower part of the soul of the world and the lower part of the individual human soul, which create and animate the “animals” proper to them. The higher soul, both of the world soul and the individual human soul, exists and function in complete independence from the the body, which is animated by the lower soul. The higher soul is for the lower one something of a protective daemon.<sup>12</sup> The individual human soul, considered with respect to its higher part, would merit the name “ $\mu\iota\kappa\rho\delta\zeta\ \theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ ” more than the name “microcosmos.”

It follows from the above remarks that Plotinus in his doctrine on man as an image of the world took up and developed chiefly the Platonic thread which we defined by the name “dynamic-organological.” In keeping with his own theory of being, Plotinus gave it a sense which one could call cosmogenetic. Namely, he stated that individual souls are the principles of the “microcosmos” in the bodies created and animated by them. Each soul, of course, does this according to its own nature ( $\phi\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\iota\varsigma$ ), according to its own powers. Human  $\phi\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\iota\varsigma$  has this advantage over the  $\phi\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\iota\varsigma$  of plants and animals, that discursive thought is proper to it. For this reason the microcosm created by it is a microcosm  $\kappa\alpha\tau'\ \epsilon\acute{\xi}\omicron\chi\acute{\eta}\nu$ .

In the light of what has been said, we can clearly see the outline of the conclusion that the  $\phi\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\iota\varsigma$  is virtually a microcosm and that, together with the body it creates a microcosm. Yet the higher part of the individual human soul ( $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$ ) is completely directed and open to the divine  $\nu\omicron\tilde{\nu}\zeta$ , that is to the  $\kappa\acute{o}\sigma\mu\omicron\varsigma\ \nu\omicron\eta\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ . Hence it follows that, according to Plotinus, the human soul operates and strives in two opposite directions: “upwards”—towards that which is spiritual and divine, and “downwards”—towards that which is sensible and material, and thus illusory and of nothingness.<sup>13</sup> This fact con-

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, III, V, 4 (Krokiewicz, vol. I, 338).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, II, 1,3; VI, VII, 5, cf. also: IV, VIII, 5, (Krokiewicz, vol. II, 195 ff.), where Plotinus gives particular emphasis to what we have called the “cosmological thread.” Among other things, he writes there: “Thus then the soul, though it is a divine entity and has its fatherland above, enters the body and, though it is a second divinity, it comes here of its own will which is so inclined, and by its own power, and for the sake of ordering that which is after it. And if it flies so much the faster back, it does not sustain any injury: it has gained knowledge about what is evil and has come to know the nature of malice, it has made manifest its own powers and

stitutes a motif of the eternal drama entitled “Man.” Both “parts” of the soul are united by Eros-love for the Good, whose refulgence is the Beautiful.<sup>14</sup> Plotinus, examining Plato’s hypothesis on the “Connector” (ζυναγωγάον) which in the human soul unites the spiritual with the material in the human soul, passed over the opinion of this “Master” that this connector could consist in numbers and proportions (“the cosmological motif”). He was, however, in support of the second of the possibilities formulated by Plato: this connector can and should be the love for the Good, the love that is innate to everything that exists.

Ancient commentators on the Plotinian and Platonic theory of being (the neo-Platonists) looked at this love chiefly from a religious-theological point of view. The distance between the Absolute and matter, between the soul and the body, as seen in these parameters, must have seemed to them to have been much greater and much deeper than followed from the description of the “Masters.” In order to fill this breach and properly tone it down, they distinguished, gradated and ordered the hypostases into an hierarchy. With this, at the same time they laid special emphasis on their role as connectors, as links of the “golden chain of beings.”<sup>15</sup> The world and man, as they are seen in the theory of being cultivated in this way, became connectors  $\kappa\alpha\tau’\ \epsilon\acute{\xi}\omicron\chi\acute{\eta}\nu$ . In them there met and united all the forms of  $\varphi\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\iota\varsigma$  and  $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$ , and all the kinds of matter, including the ether. In the neo-Platonic anthropology, the ether played an important role. It was conceived as a certain kind of spiritual matter, as the matter of heaven, with which the soul clothed itself

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has revealed works and activities which, if it had rested in the incorporeal milieu, would have lain fallow, since for the ages of ages they would not have come to act, and the soul itself would not have known of its own resources if these had not been made manifest. Now it is only in each particular case that an activity shows its power, which power would have remained completely in hiding and would have been, as it were, irredeemably lost and non-existent, never to enter real existence. Truly, only now, thanks to the wonderful variety of the external world, everyone humbly admires the excellent internal world precisely because he has performed such miracles.”

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, III, 4 (Krokiewicz, vol. I, 339): “Thus this Eros leads every soul to the nature of the good, and if it belongs to the “superior” soul, then it will be a god who connects for the ages with the Good, and if it belongs to a “mixed” soul then it will be a daemon.”

<sup>15</sup> The conception of the “golden chain of beings” comes from Homer’s *Iliad* (VIII,26)

“when I shall have fixed the golden chain to the summit of Olympus,

At the top I will hang this great set of things.”

This conception was exploited by ancient philosophers in various ways. Cf. Emil Wolff, *Die goldene Kette* (Hamburg: Hansischer Gildenverlag, 1947); Ludwig Edelstein, “The golden chain of Homer,” in *Studies in Intellectual History dedicated to Arthur O. Lovejoy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1953), 48–66; P. L  veque, *Aurea catena Homeri* (Paris: Les Belles lettres, 1959).



before uniting with a body composed of the elements of the meteorological region. After the soul's incarnation, the thus conceived ether mediated between the soul and its terrestrial dwelling. When, however, this dwelling undergoes deterioration, then this "quinta essentia" carries the soul up towards its heavenly fatherland. In neo-Platonic anthropology, the ether thus performed a twofold function: that of bearer, that is, of a vehicle (τὸ ὄχημα), by the help of which the soul makes its way "up" and "down," and the role of the mediating body, the immediate surroundings (τὸ περιβλημα) of the soul.<sup>16</sup>

In the light of the above doctrines there took shape the following doctrine of man as an image of the world, as a microcosm: the human soul, together with its ethereal and luminous body, constitutes the genus of the "internal man" ("homo caelestis"), of a microcosm κατ' ἐξοχήν, since the ether as the most perfect of the elements unites in itself the natures of the elements of the meteorological region; the body created out of these elements would be merely an external manifestation, a terrestrial annex ("homo mundanus"), a microcosm which could be comprehended with the senses.<sup>17</sup> The conviction

<sup>16</sup> Proclus was a particularly zealous spokesman for this view. Cf. Karl Praechter, *Die Philosophie des Altertums* (Basel and Stuttgart: Schwabe & Co., 1957), 629 (Uebberwegs Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie); Pierre Moreaux, *Quinta Essentia*, in *Paulys Real-Enzyklopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft* (1963). Plato postulated the existence of a medium between the soul and the body in the *Timaeus* (33C–34A), and so did Plotinus in the *Enneads* (III,V,6) (Krokiewicz, vol. I, 342): "One must presuppose some intellectual matter, so that that which took part in it could by its power attain to our corporeal matter."

<sup>17</sup> Theories of this kind were commonly the consequence of the general conviction that heaven intermediates between God and "the earth," the earth being conceived in these instances as the "sphere of meteorological phenomena." Marcus Aurelius, in the framework of the stoic doctrine of the pneumos, made use of the Aristotelian conception of the ether. Thanks to this he was able to distinguish that which is spiritual-divine from that which is material, from the four elements, which, according to him, are completely subordinated to this fifth spiritual-divine substance. This does not only pertain to the world, but to man as well. "Your spiritual part and your entire igneous part, are rooted in you to such an extent that although by nature they have the inclination to rise upwards, yet as they are are subject to the order of the universe, they hold here to the corporeal mass. Your entire earthly and aqueous part, although tending downward, rises and stands in a posture not in keeping with its nature. Likewise the elements are obediently subject to the whole, and of necessity they remain where they have been put, until hence there appears some sign for disintegration." *Meditations*, XI, 20. Polish translation by M. Reiter (Warszawa: PWN, 1958), 139. On Christian ground the questions of the "spiritual matter" and "the immaterial body" have been discussed in connection with the nature of angels and of the human body after the resurrection. Thus, for example, Tertullian contrasted the "adflatus Dei" in man, and the "spiritus materialis" in angels (*Contra Marcion*, II, 8, ed. E. Kroymann, 345, 9); other Christian authors, referring to the words of St. Paul (I Cor. 15:44; 2 Cor. 5:1; Phil. 3:21) described the glorified body of man as "corpus spiritale." In the middle ages the conception of "spiritual matter" was associated with the Aristotelian theory of hylemorphism. As a result cer-

nursed by the pagan and Christian neo-Platonists, that in the human phenomenon there appear both all the powers of the soul (divine—"intelligentia," human—"ratio," animal—"sensus," vegetable—"vita"), and all kinds of elements and bodies, resulted in man's being set in opposition to them as a "magnum miraculum [...] animal adorandum atque honorandum [...] feliciore loco medietatis positus,"<sup>18</sup> "omnium officina," "omnium conclusio," "medietas atque adunatio,"<sup>19</sup> "nexus," "nodus," "vinculum," "catena," "clausula," "horizon."

THE MEDIAEVAL REPERCUSSIONS  
OF THE PLATONIC AND NEO-PLATONIC DOCTRINE ON MAN  
AS AN IMAGE OF THE WORLD

Medieval authors came into contact with the above characterized motifs of ancient anthropology through the works of early Christian writers.<sup>20</sup> Particularly strong in the influence they bore were Claudius Mamertus,<sup>21</sup> Gregory the Great,<sup>22</sup> Maximilian the Confessor,<sup>23</sup> John of Damascus,<sup>24</sup> and Nemesius Emesianus.<sup>25</sup> In the twelfth century these editions of "the Fathers" began to

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tain authors (Avicbron, Gilbertus Anglicus, Alexander of Hales, St. Bonaventure) demonstrated that the human soul is composed of "spiritual matter" and substantial form. This "matter" was conceived either in a very neo-Platonic manner, or in terms of the Aristotelian doctrine of the ether. This kind of complexity was not thought to be in contradiction with the souls particularity: "Anima autem in se simplex est, sed est composita ex materia et forma." *Compendium medicinae Gilberti Anglici tam morborum universalium quam particularium nondum medicis sed et chirurgicis utilissimum*, Lugduni 1510, f. 243 v.

<sup>18</sup> *Asclepius*, 6, ed. Arthur Darby Nock and André-Jean Festugière (Paris: Les Belles lettres, 1960), 301, verse 18.

<sup>19</sup> These are the descriptions of John Scot Eriugena. We will analyze them in the final part of this article.

<sup>20</sup> cf. Nemesius Emesianus, *Περὶ φύσεως ἀνθρώπου*, PG 40, 512. Cf. also: Karl Immanuel Burkhard, *Gregorii Nysseni (Nemesii Emesiani) Περὶ φύσεως ἀνθρώπου liber a Burgundio in latinum translatus* (Vienna: Rollinger & Moessmer, 1891), 15 and 17.

<sup>21</sup> *De statu animae*, I, published by Engelbrecht, CSEL, vol. 11, 71.

<sup>22</sup> *Homilia 29 in Evangelium*, n. 2, PL 76, 1214A.

<sup>23</sup> *Ambigua*, II, 12, PG 94, 925. John Eriugena was the translator and the one who wrote glosses on this text.

<sup>24</sup> *De fide orthodoxa*, II, 12, PG 94, 925. The first Latin translation of this work was by Burgundius of Pisa (12<sup>th</sup> century).

<sup>25</sup> Cf. footnote 20. The first Latin translation of this work was by Alfanus, the Archbishop of Salerno (1058–1085), and then by Burgundius of Pisa. In the middle ages this work enjoyed enormous respect. Cf. Guillaume de Conches, *Glosae super Platonem*, ed. Edouard Juneau (Paris:

be reinterpreted in the light of the Arabian literature known at the time. The *Timaeus* of Plato in translation and with the commentary of Chalcidius, the commentary of Macrobius to Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*, and the *Asclepius*, which in the middle ages was called *Hermes Trismegistos* advanced to the foreground. The works of Arabian authors contributed to a rational grounding of the conception of man-microcosm from a medical-natural point of view, for which there was also the support of the anti-symbolic tendencies which were characteristic of the intellectual life of the epoch.<sup>26</sup>

It follows from the above remarks that information on the above mentioned chief motifs of the Platonic and neo-Platonic doctrine on man was drawn in the middle ages principally from intermediate sources. This information was transmitted by these sources in a fragmentary manner, often in isolation from their proper metaphysical and systemic context, and together with certain interpretations assumed from a specific position, whether theological or philosophical, or, as the case may be medical-natural. In other words, the authors of these indirect sources did not as a rule investigate or develop the content of the philosophical-cosmological motifs in the light of the Platonic and neo-Platonic systemic presuppositions natural to them; rather they made use of this content in rationally justifying and illustrating their own views, which basically did not originate only from Platonic and from Plotinian sources, but also from other philosophical sources alien to Plato and Plotinus, from theological or medical-natural sources. Nor did the medieval writers proceed in any other manner. They made use of fragments of Platonic and neo-Platonic microcosmic motifs in order to explain the meaning of such biblical formulations as, e.g. "homo = omnis creatura," and in order to present a rational justification for the value of the human body, chiefly so that all the sayings of the Sacred Scriptures in which the great

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Vrin, 1965), 141, footnote a. John of Salisbury wrote of this work with respect (*Metalogicon*, IV, 20, ed. C. Webb, 187): "Qui vero naturam animae diligentius investigare voluerint, non modo Platonis, Aristotelis, Ciceronis, et veterum philosophorum scripta revolvant, sed Patrum qui veritatem fidelius expresserunt [...] Quod si quis not potest evolvere, vel Prenophisicon legat, librum de anima copiosissime disputantem." The *Prenophisicon* obviously means the *De natura hominis* of Nemesius. A fragment of the text of this work concerning man as microcosm may be found, together with a Polish translation, in *Historia filozofii chrześcijańskiej* [The History of Christian Philosophy] by Philotheus Böhner and Étienne Gilson, translated by Stanisław Stomma (Warszawa: "PAX," 1962), 127 f.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Heinrich Schipperges, *Einflüsse arabischer Medizin auf die Mikrokosmosliteratur des 12. Jahrhunderts*, in: *Antike und Oriente im Mittelalter*, *Miscellanea Mediaevalia*, n. 1 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1962), 129–153.

dignity of man, a dignity almost equal to that of the angels, was emphasized could become more understandable and convincing.<sup>27</sup>

Not all writers of the middle ages made appeal in their theological-philosophical-anthropological meditations to these motifs. This applies primarily to the Christian Aristotelians, who conceived of man as one substance, composed of form (the soul) and matter (the body). Now the very fact that together with the body the soul constitutes man's substance was sufficient, in their opinion, to provide a rational justification for the value of the human body. It must have seemed to them not only unnecessary, but also inconceivable to make appeal in this matter to microcosmic doctrines, and for the following reasons: the microcosmic doctrines sprang from views according to which man was two substances harmonized with each other: however, these served to raise the value of the human body to the end of diminishing the abyss between it and the soul; in reality, however, the followers of these doctrines, in differentiating the soul and treating it as autonomous, emphasized the dualism of the body and soul to a still greater degree. Moreover, Aristotelian Christians brought up Aristotle's critical remarks in regard to the Platonic theory of the microcosm,<sup>28</sup> and his view that the perfect, divine substance of heaven—ether, cannot in any case be found in the bodies of the sublunary sphere, nor likewise in the human body.<sup>29</sup> Man, and specifically his body, thus cannot be a faithful and full reflection of the entire cosmos. If nevertheless man is called a "microcosm," this is only a common metaphor.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> E.g. Ps. 8, v. 5: "Quid est homo, quod memor es eius? Aut filius hominis, quoniam visitas eum? Minuisti eum paulo ab angelis; gloria et honore coronasti eum et constituisti eum super opera manuum tuarum."

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Aristoteles, *Physica*, VIII 2 (252b 20–253a) and St. Thomae Aquinatis *In octo libros Physicorum Aristotelis expositio*, VIII, lectio IV, ed. P.M. Maggiolo (Taurini: Marietti, 1954), 519, n. 999: "habet enim animal et maxime homo, similitudinem quandam cum mundo: unde dicitur a quibusdam quod homo sit parvus mundus. Et sic si in parvo mundo incipit motus cum prius non fuerit, videtur quod etiam in magno mundo idem possit contingere. Et si hoc contingit in mundo, potest etiam contingere in toto infinito, quod quidam posuerunt extra mundum: si tamen sit aliquod infinitum quod possit quiescere et moveri." In the last sentence St. Thomas is repeating Aristotle's allusion to the views of the Pythagoreans, according to whom the world is spherical, surrounded on every side by necessity, but at the same time living and rational; it draws its breath from infinity. Cf. Hermann Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1954), t. I, 59B Ia; 58 B30.

<sup>29</sup> The nature of the ether is determined by circular motion, beyond this it has no properties nor is it subject to generation and corruption.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Albertus Magnus, *In Physicam Aristotelis*, VIII, tr. 1, c. 9, text. 17, (ed. Borgnet, vol. 3, 540): "minor mundus [...] rhetorice et per similitudinem loquendo."

Yet not only Aristotelians, but also many Christian Platonists were reluctant to refer to the microcosmic characteristics of the human phenomenon. This is the case chiefly chiefly with all those who (under the influence of Boethius) thought that theology, which they thought of as the “intima pars philosophiae,” should be cultivated in a speculative manner, without making reference to analogy and images taken from the world,<sup>31</sup> and that in interpretations of the Sacred Scriptures an allegorical and moralistic exposition should be avoided.<sup>32</sup> In the light of presuppositions of this kind it would be hard to see in the expression “omnis creatura” any other meaning than the allegorical-metaphysical one, yet in microcosmic analyses of the expression there is nothing more than an illustration in images of theological-anthropological theses which could be obtained by way of purely theoretical cognition. The rightness of such an evaluation could also be supported by the following facts: it was known that Plato, and others held in esteem in the twelfth century in philosophy, shrouded “profundissimam philosophiam integumentis verborum”<sup>33</sup> (shrouded “the most profound philosophy under the cloaks of words”); those who made reference to Platonic microcosmic motifs were chiefly the proponents of a symbolic interpretation of the world and of man, visionaries such as Hildegard of Bingen, and poets, such as Bernard Silvestris, Alanus de Lille, those convinced of the superiority of an “integumental” (concealment-based) mode of philosophizing, one based on prophetic inspiration, over the mode applied in the schools, textbooks and treatises<sup>34</sup>, those among medieval authors who made use of microcosmic motifs, who suggested that the term “microcosmus” refers to man in view of his manifold likeness (“similitudo”) to the world,<sup>35</sup> that in man there is found

<sup>31</sup> Cf. *Der Kommentator des Clarenbaldus von Arras zu Boethius De trinitate*, ed. Wilhelm Jansen, *Breslauer Studien zur historischen Theologie*, n. 8 (Breslau 1926), 30, v.2, 2ff.; cf. also: Marian Kurdzialek, “Theologiae philosophantes,” *Roczniki Filozoficzne* [Annals of Philosophy] 17 (1969), 1: 9. While it is true that the statements of the proponents of this manner of cultivating theology concern this discipline, nonetheless they can be extended also to anthropology.

<sup>32</sup> “Magistri Theoderici *Tractatus De septem diebus et sex operum distinctionibus*,” ed. N. Haring, *Archives* 22 (1955): 184: “Postea vero ad sensum litterae historicae exponendum veniam, ut et allegoricam et moralem lectionem, quas sancti expositores aperte executi sunt, ex toto praetermittam.”

<sup>33</sup> Guillaume de Conches, *Glosae super Platonem*, 211; cf. also: Edouard Jeaneau, “L’usage de la notion d’integumentum à travers les gloses de de Guillaume de Conches,” *Archives* 24 (1957): 35–100.

<sup>34</sup> Views of this sort were inspired by both Macrobius and Lactantius. The latter, for example, wrote in *De falsa religione*, XI, PL 6, 176: “Nihil igitur a poetis in totum fictum est: aliquid fortasse traductum et abliqua figuratione obscuratum, quo veritas involuta tegetur.”

<sup>35</sup> Cf. e.g. Alain de Lille, *Distinctiones dictionum theologiarum*, PL 210, 755 A: “Homo qui habet similitudinem cum omni creatura, esse cum lapidibus, vivere cum herbis, sentire cum

“per figuram” all that is in the world,<sup>36</sup> that “similitudo” is sufficient to rationally ground the kingly role of man in the world and his function of representative of the world before God.<sup>37</sup>

#### REPERCUSSIONS OF THE PLATONIC-PYTHAGOREAN COSMOLOGICAL MOTIF

Of the various motifs of the Platonic doctrine on man as an image of the world, as a microcosm, it was the cosmological motif that found the strongest echo among medieval authors. This motif had particularly strong support both in the Sacred Scriptures and in the views of late antiquity on the essence of scientific knowledge and in the hitherto widespread descriptions of the structure and configurations of the world. There were very many biblical formulations which suggested that God, in creating the world, ordered everything according to number, measure and weight,<sup>38</sup> that at that time he gave the earth its round shape, and set it on four hinges and girded the depths with a circle.<sup>39</sup> The early Christian writers, among them St. Augustine,<sup>40</sup> Boethius,<sup>41</sup> Cassiodorus,<sup>42</sup> and Isidore of Seville,<sup>43</sup> connected the

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brutis, ratiocinari cum angelis.” Likewise in *Sermo de Spiritu Sancto*, PL 210, 222 D; *Ars fidei*, II, 13, PL 210, 607. In *De planctu naturae*, PL 210, 433, he wrote: “Ego [Natura] sum illa quae ad exemplarem mundanae machinae similitudinem hominis exemplavi naturam, ut in eo velut in speculo, ipsius mundi scripta natura appareat.” His thoughts were repeated by Raul of Langchamps (Radulphus de Longo Campo) in his commentary to the *Anticlaudianae*, where he writes: “Homo vero dicitur mundus multiplici similitudine, quam habet ad majorem mundum.” Cf. also: Rudolf Allers, “Microcosmus from Anaximander to Paracelsus,” *Traditio* 2 (1944): 345.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. e.g. Martinus, *Moralitates in Cantica*, PL 203, 500 A: “Intuere o homo, temetipsum et, te considerato, invenies te per figuram totum mundum, ut audacius loquar, si bene vixeris, ipsum Creatorem tuum” (cited after Robert Javelet, *Image et Ressemblance au douzième siècle de saint Anselme à Alain de Lille*, Diss. (Strasbourg: Université de Strasbourg, publ. by Letouzey & Ané, 1967), vol. 1, 231).

<sup>37</sup> Many medieval authors thought that the directive and kingly role of man in the world, of which the Sacred Scriptures speak, is sufficiently corroborated by the fact of man’s vertical posture. For this reason the following passage of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* was often referred to (1,84, cited after Javelet, *Image et Ressemblance*, 233):

„Pronaque cum spectent animantia coetera terram,  
Os homine sublime dedit coelumque videre  
Jussit et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus.”

<sup>38</sup> Sapientia 11:21: “Omnia in mensura et numero et pondere disposuisti;” Syr. 1:9: “Ille creavit illam [sapientiam] in Spiritu sancto et vidit et dinumeravit et mensus est.” Also one finds cited Mt. 6:27; 10:30.

<sup>39</sup> Prov. 7:26 ff.

<sup>40</sup> *De ordine*, II, 16, 44; 15. cf. also: *De Genesi ad litteram*, IV, 3, 7, PL 37; *De libero arbitrio*, II, 30–32, 42, PL 32.

above statements with Platonic-Pythagorean doctrines and as a result came to the conclusion that the key to knowledge both of the natures of particular things and of the structure of the entire universe is number. At the same time they thought that number in itself (“*quantitas numerabilis secundum se*”) is the concern of arithmetic; number as the measure of that which is extended, immobile and endowed with shape is the concern of geometry; number as the measure of that which is extended, endowed with shape and in constant motion is the concern of geometry; number as the principle and measure of the harmony (proportion) of different parts and components or of different kinds of parts and components is the concern of music.<sup>44</sup> Both Greek authors, with the Pythagoreans and Plato at the head, and Latin authors—St. Augustine, Martian Capellus, Priscian, Boethius and Cassiodorus<sup>45</sup>—spoke of the close interrelation of these four disciplines. The problem of deciding which of these is most significant was resolved by early medieval authors with them deciding either in favor of (a) arithmetic or geometry, or (b) astronomy or music. As a result, depending on the position taken in this matter, there were some authors who interpreted the images of the world as these were known to them more in the spirit of arithmetic (“*numera vincla*”), or of geometry, astronomy or music (“*musica vincla*”).<sup>46</sup> In the early medieval period, especially from the time of the appearance of the works of Isidore of Seville, the role and function of symbol came to be more and more ascribed to numbers, especially to the numbers mentioned in the Bible, since it was supposed that precisely those numbers constitute the most perfect key to

<sup>41</sup> *De institutione arithmetica*, ed. Godofredus Friedlein (Lipsiae: B. G. Teubner, 1867), 7, 21–10, 7.

<sup>42</sup> *De artibus ac disciplinis liberalium artium*, PL 70, 1204.

<sup>43</sup> *Etymologiae*, III, 16, PL 82, 163. An interpretation of the relevant positions of Augustine, Boethius, Cassiodorus and Isidore of Seville was presented by Hans Martin Klinkenberg, *Der Verfall des Quadriviums im frühen Mittelalter*, in *Artes Liberales von der antiken Bildung zur Wissenschaft des Mittelalters* (Leiden and Köln: E.J. Brill, 1959), 7 ff.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Klinkenberg, *Der Verfall des Quadriviums*, 11.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Mikołaj Lohr, “Zagadnienia arytmetyki w pismach Kasjodora” [The problematics of arithmetic in the writings of Cassiodorus], *Studia Warmińskie* [Warmia Studies] 6 (1969): 493.

<sup>46</sup> According to Boethius, *De musica*, I, 2, PL 63, 1171 A: “[...] non potest dubitari quin nostrae animae et corporis status eisdem quodammodo proportionibus videatur esse compositus, quibus harmonicas modulationes posterior disputatio coniungi copularique monstrabit” (cited after Klinkenberg, *Der Verfall des Quadriviums*, 4). The term “*artifices numeri et musica vincla*” was employed by Bernardus Silvestris, *De mundi universitate*, ed. Carl Sigmund Barach and Johann Wrobel (Innsbruck: Wagner, 1876), 7, v. 22. Bernardus however did not develop the conception contained therein of the world and of man.

a knowledge of God's created works.<sup>47</sup> The symbolization of arithmetic pulled in its train the symbolization of the remaining disciplines, and thus the symbolization of the geometrical, astronomical and musical view on the world and man. At the same time there was a change of direction in interpretation: hitherto passages of the Sacred Scriptures referring to arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music were seen through the prism of the Platonic-Pythagorean content which filled out the framework of the "quadrivium," now this content began to be seen through the lenses of the relevant passages of the Sacred Scriptures. As a result it was interpreted in the same manner as was the Bible: allegorically and moralistically. The problem of whether or not the doctrines of "Pythagoras" were in agreement or disagreement with the biblical doctrines was resolved when it was stated that "Pythagoras" drew his knowledge from the Sacred Scriptures or owed it to an exceptional divine inspiration.<sup>48</sup> Thus the Christian, having both the text from which "Pythagoras" found out about the mathematical structure of the world, and the statements of the holy and inspired Fathers on this topic on this topic, need not feel excessively embarrassed by what "Pythagoras" and the ancient philosophers said. It was well known, however, that in the Bible there is mention not only of the rotundity of the earth, that is, the world,<sup>49</sup> but that Bible allows one to suppose that it may just as well have the form of a square. To this effect there are passages which suggest that God set the earth—the world—firmly upon four corners, that he gave the first man the name A(natole), D(ysis), A(rctus), M(esebria) with reference to the four corners of the world,<sup>50</sup> from which also the four kinds of winds blow. Furthermore, the "forma quadrata mundi" better corresponds to the form of the Cross and to the Greek letter X, which is at the same time the first letter of the word Χριστός, and the sign of the Holy Cross.<sup>51</sup> This is also more in agreement

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, III, 4, PL 82, 155: "Ratio numeri contemnenda non est; in multis enim sanctarum scripturarum locis quantum mysterium habeant elucet. Non enim frustra in laudibus Dei dictum est: Omnia in mensura et numero et pondere fecisti."

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Cassiodorus, *De artibus ac disciplinis liberalium artium*, PL 70, 1204: "[...] quam disciplinam [arithmeticam] Pythagoras sic laudasse probatur, ut omnia sub numero et mensura a Deo creata fuisse memorat [...] credo trahens hoc initium, ut multi philosophorum fecerunt, ab illa sententia prophetali, quae dicit omnia Deum mensura, numero et pondere disposuisse."

<sup>49</sup> Prov. 8; Ps. 23:1; 32:8; 49:12; 88:12; 89:2; 92:1. In the last psalm mentioned, the Author distinguishes "terra" and "orbis": "Priusquam montes fierent aut formeretur terra et orbis."

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Otto Karl Werckmeister, "Die Bedeutung der 'Chi' — Initialseite im Book of Kells," in: Victor Heinrich Elbern, *Das erste Jahrtausend*, Textband II (Düsseldorf: L. Schwann, 1964), 695 ff.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Victor Heinrich Elbern, "Species crucis — forma quadrata mundi. Die Kreuzigungsdarstellung am fränkischen Kasten von Werden," *Westfalen. Hefte für Geschichte, Kunst und Volks-*



with the figure of man, who is, after all, a microcosm, and thus a faithful replica of the universe. Adam was a microcosm in the strict sense of the word, since he was created from dust which God had drawn from the four corners of the world.<sup>52</sup> According to Cassiodorus, the discrepancy between the Biblical accounts in which the earth is spoken of as circular and those which speak of it being rectangular are only apparently in disagreement; the holy authors when they write of the “orbis terrae” have in mind the horizon, that is, they are simply stating that people who gaze at the limits of the earth always see a circle.<sup>53</sup> It was likely this conception which the twelfth-century artist wished to express in his diagram of the microcosm and the macrocosm which adorns a codex now in the possession of the “Staatsbibliothek” in Munich (Clm. 13 002). In the middle of the square the artist placed a naked man with his arms extended in a cross (“homo-microcosmos” as “homo-quadratus”). The artist surrounded the man’s head with a circle.<sup>54</sup> Other diagrams of the same type present either a square intertwined with a circle, as for example the famous miniature from the codex stored in the “Staatsbibliothek” in Munich (Clm. 2 655, f. 105 v),<sup>55</sup> or else a square inscribed within a circle.<sup>56</sup> One may also come across diagrams that present a man inscribed within a circle (“homo-microcosmos” as “homo-circularis”).<sup>57</sup> These minia-

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*kunde* 44 (1966): 175–185. Cf. also: idem, “Die Stele von Moselkern und die Ikonographie des frühen Mittelalters,” *Bonner Jahrbücher* 155–156 (1955–1956): 184–214. In connection with those interpretations of Werckmeister and Elbner which are of interest to us on the topic of the signification of “Chi” in early medieval symbolism, it is noteworthy that Theodoricus of Chartres connected the first words of the book of Genesis with the first words of the Gospel of St. Matthew: “Titulus libris talis est: Incipit Genesis i.e. liber de rerum generatione sive creatione, a primordiis suis sic nominatus sicut Evangelium Matthaei a prima parte sua «Liber generationis Jesu Christi» nominatur.” Cf. note 32.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Günter Bandmann, “Zur Deutung des Mainzer Kopfes mit der Binde,” *Zeitschrift für Kunstwissenschaft* 10 (1956): 162.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Werckmeister, “Die Bedeutung der ‚Chi‘,” 695: “Cassiodor löst in seinem Psalmenkommentar das Problem, wie die Erde, gemäss der Bibel, vier Enden haben und zugleich kreisrund sein könne, mit einer rein spekulativen geometrischen Demonstration: Formam terrae ideo scriptura orbem vocat, eo quod respicientibus extremitatem eius circulus semper appareat, quem circulum Graeci ὀπίζοντα vocant. Quatuor autem cardinibus eam formari dicit, quia quatuor cardines, quatuor angulos quadrati significant, qui intra praedictum terrae circulum continetur.”

<sup>54</sup> A description of this miniature was presented by Herbert von Einem, “Der Mainzer Kopf mit der Binde. Zur Deutung der Gewölbefigur des Westlettners,” *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Forschung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, Geisteswissenschaften* 37 (1956): 24 f.

<sup>55</sup> A description and photograph of this miniature was presented by Marie-Thérèse d’Alverny, “Le cosmos symbolique du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle,” *Archives* 20 (1953): 79, note 32.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. von Einem, “Der Mainzer Kopf mit der Binde,” 25.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, 26.

tures bear witness to the enormous interest which authors and artists of the twelfth century had in the problem of man-microcosm. At the same time they prove that the traditional schemata and models of the structure of the world and of man based upon the Bible were at the time subject to a far-reaching geometricalization. They illustrate that the square was gradually supplanted by the sphere. This happened chiefly under the influence of the Platonic philosophy of nature. The traditional, allegorical and symbolic forms and motifs with which these schemata and models were full were also subject to a significant philosophical-theological deepening and differentiation. The works of John Eriugena, who brought forth the speculative, refined symbolism of Pseudo-Dionysius and Maximus the Confessor against the naive and moralistic symbolism of the authors of the early middle ages, contributed to this. In his meditations on the topic of "man-microcosm" he made obvious reference to the motifs typical of Christian neo-Platonism. He did not, however, pass over in silence Platonic-Pythagorean philosophy. Indeed, he demonstrated that the unity of the world and of man is based on a harmony similar to the harmony created by various sounds which are far from one another.<sup>58</sup>

A particularly zealous spokesman and continuator of Eriugena's views was Honorius Augustodunensis. Just like the author of *De divisione naturae*, he took up in greater depth the problem of human nature in connection with the biblical formulation "omnis creatura," the meaning of which he examined in reference to the texts on the Incarnation and the Redemption, and the renewal of everything in the heavens and on the earth at the end of the world.<sup>59</sup> Honorius, continuing the meditations of his predecessor, also referred to his thought on the harmony of the universe. He compared the cosmos to a giant zither containing various strings which serve to produce many and various tones. The extreme sounds of this giant zither are the spirit and the body; within the limits they describe there are various oppositions: angel and devil, heaven and hell, fire and water, air and earth, sweet and

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<sup>58</sup> *De divisione naturae*, II, 4, PL. 122, 530: "[...] [homo] officina omnium iure appellatur; in ea siquidem omnia conferunt, quae a Deo condita sunt unamque harmoniam ex diversis naturis veluti quibusdam distantibus somis composuit." Cf. Jacques Handschen, "Die Musikanschauung des Johannes Scotus (Erigena)," *Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift der Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 5 (1927): 316, 322. Cf. also: Leo Spitzer, "Classical and Christian Ideas of World Harmony. Prolegomena to an Interpretation of the Word 'Stimmung,'" Part. 1, *Traditio* 2 (1944): 443–445.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. D'Alverny, "Le cosmos symbolique," 55 ff.

sour, soft and hard.<sup>60</sup> In the human phenomenon he distinguished especially between the “outer man” (“homo exterior”) and the “inner man” (“homo interior”), which was, after all, in keeping with the Christian Pauline tradition. The interior man is a microcosm, and this is on account of the elements from which he is composed: he has his body from the earth, from water he has his blood, his breath from the air, his warmth from fire.<sup>61</sup> The above assertion is not in keeping with other assertions from which it follows that the both the whole man, i.e. the being composed of soul and body, and the human soul by itself, are a microcosm. Honorius mentions that the number “seven,” which rules over the spheres of the world and the tones of music, is also reflected in the psycho-physical structure of man, the structure which unites the four elements and the three powers of the soul: vegetabilis, sensibilis, rationalis.<sup>62</sup> Man’s head is round, just like the circle of the sky; in it there shine two lights, the analogue of the two lights in the heavens; it is adorned with seven openings, just as the heavens are adorned with seven harmonies<sup>63</sup>. Yet it is not only similarities of a musical-astronomical type which bear witness to the close relation of the world and man, but, according to Honorius, also analogies of a meteorological-biological-zoological type. The chest, in which the breath and the cough are located, corresponds to the air in which the winds and the thunderbolts arise. The stomach bears within itself liquid substances as does the sea: “in quo confluunt omnia ut in mare flumina.” Just as the earth pulls all things to itself, so the legs bear the weight of the body. Through his bones man participates in the hardness of

<sup>60</sup> Cf. *Liber XII quaestionum*, 2, PL 172, 1197 B-D. Likewise Quintillian, *Institutiones*, I, 10, 12: “Cum Pythagoras et eum secuti acceptam sine dubio antiquitus opinionem vulgaverint, mundum ipsum ratione esse compositum postea sit lyra imitata, nec illa modo contenti dissimilium concordia quam vocant ἀρμονίαν, sonum quoque his motibus dederunt.” Cf. Spitzer, “Classical and Christian,” 442.

<sup>61</sup> *Elucidarium* I, 11, PL 172, 1116: “Unde corporalis? De quatuor elementis, unde et microcosmus, idest minor mundus dicitur; habet namque ex terra carnem, ex aqua sanguinem, ex aere flatum, ex igne calorem.” The view that only the human body mirrors the worlds was almost universal in the middle ages. Cf. e.g. Isaac de Stella, *Sermo*, II, PL 194, 1695 C: “Foris pecus es ad imaginem mundi: unde minor mundus dicitur homo; intus homo ad imaginem Dei, unde potes deificari.”

<sup>62</sup> *De imagine mundi*, I, 82, PL 172, 140 C: “[...] sicut enim hic mundus septem tonis et nostra musica septem vocibus disiungitur, sic compago nostri corporis septem mundis coniungitur, dum corpus quatuor elementis, anima tribus viribus copulatur [...] unde et homo microcosmus i.e. minor mundus dicitur cum sic consono numero caelesti musicae par cognoscitur.” Cited after Allers, “Microcosmos from Anaximander to Paracelsus,” 377. Cf. also: Joseph Anton Enders, *Honorius Augustodunensis. Beitrag zur Geschichte des geistigen Lebens* (Kempton und München: J. Kösel, 1906), 108; D’Alverny, “Le cosmos symbolique,” 54, n. 2; Kranz, *Kosmos*, part 2, 163.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. *De imagine mundi*, I, 82, PL 172, 140 C.

the earth, through his nails he shares in the robustness of wood, through his hair in the beauty of grass; with the beasts man has the community of the senses. He has his face from the heavenly fire, from the "aer superior" he has his hearing, from the "aer inferior" his sense of smell, from the water his sense of taste, from the earth his sense of touch.<sup>64</sup> On the other hand, in his treatise *Scala major coeli*, Honorius suggests that as such the soul contains in itself both heaven and earth, the spiritual and the corporeal.<sup>65</sup>

In the above statements of Honorius there appear the three chief tendencies of medieval microcosmism: (1) the tendency to think of the human body as a microcosm with regard to its "chemical" composition, i.e. with regard to the elements from which it is built, and also with regard to its biological-zoological structure, i.e. the function of the lower soul ("anima"); (2) next, the tendency to think of the higher soul ("spiritus") as a microcosm, since in it all that has been created is mirrored in a spiritual manner;<sup>66</sup> (3) finally, the tendency to think of the entire man as a microcosm, since in his psycho-physical structure there can be seen certain analogies and similarities to the structure of the universe. Honorius based this last conception on the Platonic cosmological motif in the version in which it was transmitted to him by the early middle ages, thus according to the "quadrivium," and so the importance of the particular disciplines can be thus accented in reference to the views of Honorius: music, astronomy, geometry. This musical-astronomical-geometrical model of the structure of the world-macrocosm and of man-microcosm was interpreted by him, as by the thinkers of the early medieval period, allegorically and symbolically; he stated that the key to knowledge of the essence of the world and man is the number "seven."

The vision of the world and of man presented by Honorius could be illustrated both with the help of the square and of the circle. The square would correspond to the region of meteorological phenomena (the four elements, the four sides of the world, the four chief winds), to the four elements of the human body, its four basic properties (the hardness of stone, the robustness of wood, the beauty of grass, the community of sensory receptive passions with the animals) and to the figure of the human body from the feet to the shoulders, and to the chief functions of the human body. The circle would correspond to the sphere of astronomical phenomena and to the figure and the equipment of the human head. Thus one may suppose that the minia-

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<sup>64</sup> Cf. *Elucidarium*, already cited.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. *Scala coeli major*, 8, PL 172, 1233 D. cf. also: Enders, *Honorius Augustodunensis*.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. note 36.

turist of the above mentioned München codex (CIm 13 002), when he painted his version of Honorius' vision of man-microcosm, the vision contained in the *Elucidarium*, inscribed the human form in a square, but surrounded his head with a circle. The circle in this diagram may designate the horizon or the kinship which the human head has with the sphere of the heavens.

The vision of the world and man presented by Honorius presupposed that the world is a cosmos, and that man is a microcosm, since the world and man most fully realize a harmony of the musical-astronomical-geometrical type. Hildegard of Bingen, looking at the same image of the world as Honorius, an image chiefly borrowed from Pliny and the early medieval encyclopedists, saw in it and in the concrete things that composed it chiefly a harmony of figures, of shapes and of colours. She regarded the circle as the most perfect of figures, and the sphere as the most perfect of geometrical solids. With regard to them, the world is the image of God.<sup>67</sup> Man is designated by the most perfect of shapes: his figure can be inscribed in a circle.<sup>68</sup> The rotundity of his head indicates the spherical shape of the firmament, and the equality of measure ("recta et aequalis mensura") which characterizes it demonstrates the equality of the measure of the firmament. Hildegard states that everything points to the fact that God formed man according to the firmament, and strengthened his powers (virtues) with the powers of the elements.<sup>69</sup> Upon what is the similarity of man with heaven and with earth based? In what way is this similarity manifest? These were Hildegard's questions in the *Scivias*. Now, the circle of the human head, in which there are found penetrating vision ("perspicuitas"), vivifying breath ("spiraculum") and rationality ("ratio-

<sup>67</sup> *Sanctae Hildegardis Liber divinorum operum simplicis hominis*, I, 2, 1, PL 197, 755 D: "Et [Deus] sicut circulus ea quae intra ipsum latent, comprehendit et superexcellit, quia ipsam in potentia sua nullus dividere, nec superare, nec ad finem perducere potuit." Cf. the excellent illustrations of this work: *Hildegard von Bingen, Welt und Mensch. Das Buch "De operatione Dei"*, aus dem Genter Kodex übersetzt und erläutert von Heinrich Schipperges (Salzburg: O. Müller 1965).

<sup>68</sup> *Ibidem*, 752 A. "In medio quoque rotae istius imago hominis apparebat, cuius vertex superius et plantae subterius ad praefatum circulum, velut fortis et albi lucidique aeris pertingebant. A dextro autem latere summitas digitorum dexteræ manus eius a sinistro quoque summitas digitorum sinistrae manus ad ipsum circulum hinc et hinc in rotunditate designatum porrecta erat, quoniam imago brahia sua sic extenderat."

<sup>69</sup> *Ibidem*, IV, 16, 814 D: "Sed et in rotunditate capitis hominis rotunditas firmamenti ostenditur, et in recta aequalitate mensura eiusdem capitis, recta et aequalis mensura firmamenti demonstratur, quia idem caput rectam mensuram ubique habet, ut etiam firmamentum aequali mensura constitutum est, quatenus ex omni parte rectum circulum habere possit, et ne ulla pars eius partem alteram injusto modo excedat. Deus enim hominem secundum firmamentum plasmavit, et fortitudinem illius cum viribus elementorum confortavit."

nalitas”)—these correspond to the firmament and to the three lights of the heavens: man also has a “spirit” (“spiritum”) which desires through the particular senses and which is in constant motion—as the wind has birds; he has also the “humoris receptaculum,” in which there can be found moisture, germination, birth (“parturitio”)—as on earth there can be seen living beings, fruit-bearing beings, and animals. “O homo” cries Hildegard, “tu totus es in omni creatura et oblivisceris Creatoris tui; et subjecta tibi creatura obedit ei [...] et tu praecepta illius transgrederis.”<sup>70</sup> Man is not only reflected in every creature, but furthermore God has impressed (“signavit”) in him all creatures according to the proper measure.<sup>71</sup>

In the vision of the world-macrocosm and of man-microcosm presented by Hildegard, the circle and the triangle played a fundamental role. From the egg shape of the universe in the *Scivias*, she passed to the round shape in the *Liber divinorum operum*.<sup>72</sup> This fact testifies that in her times the Platonic-Pythagorean model of the structure of the world and man displaced the model elaborated by the early Christian encyclopedists: as it turns out, this was the case not only in philosophical-theological visions of the cosmos and the microcosm, but in the most mystical visions of the same. The Square gave way to the triangle. In this fact one may also perceive the marks of the age in which Hildegard lived; at that time, people were writing many excellent commentaries to the *De Trinitate* of Augustine and Boethius.<sup>73</sup> Thus it is not strange that the number “three” became the key to a knowledge of the world and of man. Hildegard found it in the heavens, which traditionally had been regarded as the most perfect image of God, as in the region of meteorological phenomena and in the region of the biological-zoological phenomena

<sup>70</sup> *Sanctae Hildegardis Scivias sive visionum ac revelationum libri tres*, II, 1, PL 197 144 A 2: “Unde etiam homo similitudinem caeli et terrae in se continet. Quomodo? Ipse habet circulum in quo apparet perspicuitas, spiraculum et rationalitas, velut in caelo notantur luminaria; habet spiritum per omnem sensum et motum celeriter meantem, ut aer volatilia; etiam humoris receptaculum in quo notatur humiditas, apparet germinatio et parturitio, sicut in terra virentia, fructificantia et animalia.” Re. “habet spiritum,” cf. Guillaume de Conches, *Glosae super Platonem* and Vergilius, *Ecloga*, I, 20–21.

<sup>71</sup> *Liber divinorum operum* (already cited) I, 2, 744 A 2: “Et omnes creaturae secundum mensuram in ipso homine signavit.” Cf. Nemesius, *Περί φύσεως ἀνθρώπου*, 532: “τοῦ φέροντος ἐν τῇ καθ’ ἑαυτὸν φύσει τῆς πάσης κτίσεως τὴν εἰκόνα, διὰ καὶ καὶ μικρὸς κόσμος εἴρηται.”

<sup>72</sup> Both these images of the world were united by Honorius Augustodunensis, *De imagine mundi*, I, 1, PL 172, 121: “Huius figura est in modum pilae rotunda. Sed instar ovi elementis distincta.”

<sup>73</sup> Commentaries to the *De Trinitate* of Boethius were written chiefly in Chartres, whereas commentaries to the *De Trinitate* of Saint Augustine arose chiefly in the abbey of St. Victor.

associated with the earth. She put special emphasis upon the principle of measurable equality (“recta et aequalis mensura,” “aequalis mensura,” “secundum mensuram”). This fact may also testify to rational proportion and harmony as the basis of the “cosmos”. The formulations which she used in this were of Augustinian provenance.<sup>74</sup>

The tendencies in Hildegard's writing to ascribe the leading role in the structure and our knowledge of the world-macrocosm and of man-microcosm to circles and numbers came to light in all their fullness in the doctrines of Alan de Lille. He regarded the sphere as the most perfect of shapes. The sphere is the image of eternity, and thus of God. For this reason as well God may be described as: “sphaera intelligibilis, cuius centrum ubique, circumferentia nusquam”<sup>75</sup>. The unity of the world and the unity of the concrete things which composed it is based on number, which in this respect may also be called: “nodus, amor, ratio, foedus, concordia, limes.” Numerical agreement joins everything with itself:

Singula componit, mundum regit, ordinat orbem,  
Astra movens, elementa ligans animasque maritans  
Corporibus, terras celis, celeste caduco;  
Quomodo nascenti mundo rebusque creandis  
Principium. finis, exemplar, forma, sigillum  
Hic erat, ad cuius formam deitatis ydea  
Impressit rebus formas mundoque figuras.<sup>76</sup>

The highest manifestation of numerical agreement is harmony of the musical type. It is the reason why the world is a “cosmos,” and man a “microcosm”:

Corporis humani partes mundumque minorem  
Ordinat et specie mundi melioris honorat,  
Ut sic pigmeus fraterculus esse gigantum

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<sup>74</sup> Cf. e.g. Augustinus, *De musica*, VI, 10, 28; 12, 38. The aesthetic views of Hildegard have been presented by Edgar de Bruyne, *Etudes d'esthétique médiévale*, vol. 2 (Brugge: De Tempel, 1946), pl. 351 ff. Cf. also Hans Liebeschütz, *Das allegorische Weltbild der Hl. Hildegard von Bingen* (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1930).

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Étienne Gilson, *Historia filozofii chrześcijańskiej w wiekach średnich*, transl. S. Zalewski [Polish translation of *The History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*] (Warszawa: Publishing Institute “PAX,” 1966), 174. Cf. also: Kranz, *Kosmos*, 135. The spherical shape of the human head testifies to the head's being an image of God: Guillaume de Conches, *Glosae super Platonem*, 207: “Forma enim spherica quae est humani capitis in hoc est similis divinitati quod caret principio et fine: ratio, vero in hoc quod Deus jure est rationalis.” Cf. also: Chalcidius, *Timaeus*, 228, ed. J. H. Waszink (Londonii: In aedibus Instituti Warbugiani, Leidae: J. Brill, 1962), 244, v. 5.

<sup>76</sup> *Anticlaudianus*, III, R. Bussuat (Paris: Vrin, 1955), 97 ff.

Majorisque minor mereatur ymagine pingi;  
 Que partes anime sociat, que federat illam  
 Carni confirmatque fidem, que musica voces  
 Dividit et numeris variat discrimina vocum.<sup>77</sup>

Among creatures man is a “microcosm” to the greatest degree, since he most fully reflects the harmony of the elements and spheres.

#### REPERCUSSIONS OF THE PLATONIC PSYCHOLOGICAL MOTIF

From the verses of Alan cited above it follows that harmony of the mathematical-musical type unites and harmonizes man’s body with his soul, but also the parts of the human soul among themselves. The human soul would thus be the fullest harmony among all souls, i.e. a being which most fully realizes the principle of “cosmos”; thus it could be called a “microcosm” from precisely this purely formal point of view. If one would look at it from a “material” point of view, i.e. from the point of view of content, as that which unites in itself vegetative, sensitive and rational functions, the soul would also merit the name “microcosm.” Yet Alan did not describe it in this manner. He assumed that the soul is the image of God, and thus is the image of the Sphere: if then one is looking for analogies and similarities between the world and the soul, these can be found only in the motions of the heavens. The first of these motions, the motion of the firmament, takes place from the east through the west and back to the east. The second motion, the motion of the planets, runs in the opposite direction; from the west to the east and back to the west. The first is the image of the motion of the reason (“ratio”); it begins from the contemplation of God and of divine things (“Orientalia”), and turns to visible things (“Occidentalia”) and back to divine things. The motions of the senses, which correspond to the motion of the planets, runs opposite to the regular motion of the reason; in the final analysis, however, the reason pulls the senses after itself and compels them to serve it.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>77</sup> *Ibidem*, 101, vv. 419–425.

<sup>78</sup> *Distinctiones dictionum theologicarum*, PL 210, 866A – 867A. cf. also Guillaume de Conches, *Glosae super Platonem*, 254; Jeaneau, “L’usage de la notion d’integumentum,” 77; Delhaye, “Le sens littéral et le sens allégorique du Mirocosmos,” 158.



Alan's view that the human soul is the image of God, and indirectly also of the heavens, was not foreign to Hildegard of Bingen. She stated that the human soul has the form of a fiery circle and that it rules the whole body, just as the firmament of the heavens rules and unites all that is under it and covers that which is over it.<sup>79</sup> The view that the soul is the image of the heavens could have its ultimate source in the Platonic doctrine of the creation and structure of the soul of the world: the heavens are the most faithful reflection of the world-soul.<sup>80</sup> According to William of Conches, Plato expounded this doctrine "more suo deserviens integumento."<sup>81</sup> It could be interpreted as a doctrine about the soul in general, in particular however as a doctrine of the immortal human soul created by God. Now from the statements of Plato it could be inferred that God created the world "ad exemplum animae" and that the similarity between the soul and the world is perfect.<sup>82</sup> Hence however inferences could be drawn which were in agreement in their meaning with the doctrine of St. Augustine: i.e. that the human soul is reflected in the world, or, the world is reflected in the human soul, the soul is thus "omnium similitudo,"<sup>83</sup> that if he looks into himself he can find there "per figuram totum mundum,"<sup>84</sup> and even that "anima est ad similitudinem corporis."<sup>85</sup>

Hugo of St. Victor interpreted this doctrine of Plato in yet another way. According to him, the philosophers supported the thesis: "Anima ex cunctis naturae partibus est compacta." The *Timaeus*, in which Plato wrote that the "entelecheia" constitutes a mixture of divisible and indivisible nature, that is, it possesses the entirety of nature, attests to this. Not only, however, does

<sup>79</sup> Cf. *Heiligen Hildegard von Bingen Wisse die Wege "Scivias"*, ed. Maura Böckeler (Berlin: Sankt Augustinus Verlag, 1928), 78, 458.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Calcidius, *Timaeus*, 95, 148, v. 9: "Erit ergo animae aplanis ratio, planetes ut iracundia et cupiditas ceterique huius modi motis quorum concentu fit totius mundi vita modificata." Cf. also: Guillaume de Conches, *Glosae super Platonem*, 167, 169.

<sup>81</sup> Guillaume de Conches, *Glosae super Platonem*, 167.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibidem*, 176.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. Isaac de Stella, *De anima*, PL 194, 1886 A. "[Anima] omnium in se similitudinem gerit. Unde et a philosopho definita est omnium similitudo."

<sup>84</sup> Cf. note 36.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Javelet, *Image et Ressemblance*, t. I, 233 and t. II, 204 (505). The author notes that certain statements of the Fathers of the Church on this topic were the result of Manichean doctrines. L. Thorndike confirms the correctness of this view: "The five gods or luminous bodies are represented as good forces who imprisoned five kinds of demons; but the devil had his revenge by imprisoning luminous forces in man, who he made a microcosm of the universe." Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, t. I (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947), 382.

it concentrate in itself the whole of nature, but it also recreates it, for by the understanding (“intelligentia”) it knows the invisible causes of things, while the senses supply it with visible forms. The “Pythagoreans” said that the “similar is known by the similar”. Consequently it had to be accepted that “we know earth by earth, ether by ether, water by water, air by air.” Yet according to Hugo this is not necessary, since all that is in the soul is in it “virtualiter et potentialiter.”<sup>86</sup>

It was certainly under the influence of the above mentioned psychological views and the tendencies implicit in them that Godfried of St. Victor came to the conclusion that the term “microcosm” may be employed by both the philosopher and the theologian. The former will describe either the singular man (“microcosmus singularis”) by this term, or the whole human race (“microcosmus generalis”), whereas the latter will use this term to describe either particular souls that participate in the world of grace (“microcosmus particularis”), or the congregation of souls around Christ (“microcosmus generalis”). In the strict sense (“secundum literam”) this term refers only to the singular man, primarily to his soul and secondarily to his body.<sup>87</sup> The soul (“interior homo,” “spiritus humanus”) was endowed by God the Creator with natural gifts: posse, scire, velle. God the Redeemer imparted to it the gifts of grace: scire, velle, posse.<sup>88</sup> The philosopher is concerned with the former, the theologian with the latter.<sup>89</sup> To the four elements of the megacosm and to the four liquids (humors, saps) of the human body there correspond the four

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<sup>86</sup> Cf. Javelet, *Image et Ressemblance*, t. I, 231. Cf. also: Guillaume de Conches, *Glosae super Platonem*, 150. In connection with the passage from Aristotle’s *De anima*, III, 8, 431b 21: “ἡ ψυχὴ τὰ ὄντα πως ἔσται πάντα,” St. Thomas also took up this problem: “Ostendit quod alio modo est omnia, quam satiqui ponerent; et dicit, quod si anima est omnia, necesse est quod sit, vel ipsae res scibiles et sensibiles, sicut Empedocles posuit quod terra terram cognoscimus, et aqua aquam, et sic de aliis; aut sit species ipsorum. Non autem anima est ipsae res, sicut illi posuerunt, quia lapis non est anima, sed species lapidis [...] Et similiter anima data est homini loco omnium formarum, ut sit homo quodammodo totum ens, inquantum secundum animam est quodammodo omnia, prout eius anima est receptiva omnium formarum.” S. Thomae Aquinatis *In De anima*, III, 13, ed. Angelo M. Pirotta (Taurini: Marietti, 1936), 257. Cf. also: Allers, “Microcosmus from Anaximander to Paracelsus,” 384 ff.; Kranz, *Kosmos*, 57.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Delhaye, “Le sens littéral et le sens allégorique du Microcosmus.”

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Philippe Delhaye, *Godefroy de Saint-Victor, Microcosmus*, I: *Texte*, II: *Etude théologique* (Lille: Facultés catholiques, 1951) 40, 60 ff; II, 82, 94 ff; III, 227, 248. See also by the same author, “Nature et grâce chez Godefroy de Saint-Victor,” *Revue de Moyen Age Latin* (Strasbourg) 3 (1947): 225–44.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Delhaye, *Godefroy de Saint-Victor, Microcosmus*, 45: “sciendum igitur quod neque philosophus neque theologus hominem forinsecus inspexerunt dum eum vel mundi vel microcosmi nomine appelaverunt, mentis potius oculos ad spiritum qui intus erat defixerunt.”

fundamental qualities of the soul-microcosm: the imagination, the senses, the reason and the understanding. The conservation of equilibrium, proportion and harmony between the elements of the universe and the components of the organism determines their “cosmos,” and also the health of the human body. It is the same with regard to the “interior man,” i.e. with the microcosm in the strict sense of the word. The loss of equilibrium between the basic qualities of the interior man leads to disorder and illness in the human soul. The purpose of the “medicine of the soul” is to heal pathological wounds and changes and order the “interior man” in such a way that he become a microcosm in yet another sense of the word: a microcosm, i.e. a dwelling of God.<sup>90</sup>

Theologians in their investigation of the human soul applied the concept of the “microcosm” not only to the soul’s natural and supernatural interior decoration, endowment, but also employed it as a synonym if harmony and moral order. Thus according to Wolber, “in minori mundo” the four cardinal virtues of prudence, justice temperance and fortitude correspond to the four elements and the four sides correspond to “majoris mundi.”<sup>91</sup> These “parts,” as he calls

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<sup>90</sup> Delhaye, “Le sens littéral et le sens allégorique du Mirocosmos,” 155: “Ecce te mundo secundum philosophum configuravimus in naturalibus, ecce te mundo secundum theologum protulimus in gratuitis dum te microcosmum, id est habitaculum Dei aeternum, demonstravimus. Nec solum te secundum te, sed et secundum habitaculum corporis mediante te [...] ita ut non solum tu sed et totus homo sit microcosmus, id est aeternum regnum Dei.” Marie-Dominique Chenu, *La théologie au douzième siècle* (Paris: Vrin, 1966), 41, noted the tendencies in the psychology of the twelfth century to look at the soul in terms of the microcosm, as one of the manifestations of the naturalism and rationalism of the time. This view was opposed by Robert Javelet, *Image et Ressemblance*, t. II, 201. The “anatomization” and “physiologization” of the human soul may have originated chiefly in the belief that the world, and especially the sphere, is also an image of God. The Platonism of the time, which drew not only upon the *Timaeus*, but also upon the *Asclepius*, whose author emphasized that man is, beside the world, a second image of God—“non ignarus se etiam secundum esse imaginem dei, cuius sunt imagines duae mundus et homo”—contributed to this belief. In the following verses he distinguished between the higher and lower “elements” in man: “unde efficitur ut, quoniam et ipsius una compago, parte, qua ex anima et sensu, spiritu atque ratione divinus est, velut ex elementis superioribus, inscendere posse videatur in caelum, parte vero mundana, quae constat ex igne [et terra], aqua et aere resistat in terra.” cf. *Asclepius*, 10, p. 308, ff. Cf. also: Ernst Stadter, *Die Seele als “minor mundus” und als “regnum”*. *Ein Betrag für Psychologie der mittleren Franziskanerschule*, in *Universalismus und Particularismus im Mittelalter*, *Miscellanea Mediaevalia* 5 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1968), 56–72.

<sup>91</sup> *In Cantica* IV, PL 195, 1263 A: “Et quia ipse minor mundus dictus ad instar majoris mundi quatuor constat elementis, quatuor quoque mensuratur partibus, quibus continetur totus si ad Dei similitudinem conservandam fuerit institutus, videlicet prudentia, justitia, temperantia, fortitudine. His quatuor partibus a centro mentis hoc est charitatis, aequa distantia porrectis, quidquid virtutis in anima potest esse, quasi circum et circumferendo tangis et concludis” (cited after Javelet, *Image et Ressemblance*, t. II, 153, 131).

them, are at the same distant from their center, the “intellect, that is, love.” After all, every activity of the soul, as this author observes, may best be conceived and described by making appeal to circles and circular motions.<sup>92</sup>

The miniature from the above mentioned Munich Codex (Cm. 2 655, f. 105 v.)<sup>93</sup>, which is interesting from the point of view of the history of art and of medieval ideology, may be an iconographic illustration of the psychological-theological-moral interpretation of the world-megacosm and of man-microcosm. While it is true that it concerns the views presented in the *De natura rerum* of Thomas of Cantimpré and wasn't made until the year 1295, it nonetheless faithfully recreates the content of the doctrines in question of the twelfth century.<sup>94</sup> The composition is made of circles and squares. The circles designate the world and man; the squares form a diagram of the four elements, the four winds and the four cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude and continence. The square of the elements is intertwined with the circle of the universe, into which the miniaturist inscribed the form of Christ-Logos, or perhaps Christ-Redeemer. The inscription on the circle perhaps testifies that man is a microcosm chiefly in view of the powers of his soul, but also in view of the elements of his body:

Vivus ab eterno fuit in Sermone superno  
 Archetypus et sensilis iste secundus  
 Est homo terrigena microcosmus ymagine plena  
 Vi quadrua mentia et corporeis elementis.

#### THE REPERCUSSIONS OF THE PLATONIC DYAMIC-ORGANOLOGICAL MOTIF

The theory that the world is a living being possessing reason after the pattern of a divine being, and that man is the image of such a world, came to medieval thinkers both in the version of the Platonic *Timaeus*, and of stoic (Virgil, Seneca<sup>95</sup>), neo-Platonic (Chalcidius, *Asclepius*), and neo-Pythagorean sources (Macrobius). In these sources this theory appeared as a more or

<sup>92</sup> Wolberon may have drawn this thought from St. Augustine. Cf. Augustinus, *De quantitate animae*, I, 27. Cf. also: Kranz, *Kosmos*, t. II, 134.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. D'Alverny, “Le cosmos symbolique,” 47.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibidem*, 79.

<sup>95</sup> *Epistolae morales*, 65, 24: “quam in hoc mundo locum Deus obtinet, hunc in homine animus; quod est illic materia, id in nobis corpus est”; 95, 32: “membri sumus corporis magni.”

less pantheistic doctrine.<sup>96</sup> The early Christian writers, among them Lactantius, struggled against this way of thinking about the presence of God in the world.<sup>97</sup> Nonetheless both they and many theologians of the twelfth century saw in particular formulations, especially in Virgil's *Aeneid*<sup>98</sup> and the *Georgica*,<sup>99</sup> a certain kinship of ideas with the statements of the Sacred Scriptures on the role and function of the Word of God and of the Holy Spirit in relation to the world and to man.<sup>100</sup> Associations of this sort must have seemed all the better grounded to them since there was something corresponding to them in the Sacred Scriptures. The fact that St. Paul in his famous address in the Areopagus cited the *Phainomena* of Aratos, treating at the same time Aratus' statement as a pagan poet's presentiment of Christian truth, suggested that grains of this truth could also be found in the works of other great ancient poets and philosophers.<sup>101</sup> In keeping with this conviction Abelard, Theodoric of Chartres, William of Conches and Bernard Silvestris saw in Plato's doctrine on the soul of the world and in the statements of Virgil,

<sup>96</sup> The world was understood as an "epiphany" of Jupiter: "Iuppiter est quodcumque vides, quodcumque moveris"—Lucanus, IX, 580; "yovis omnia plena"—Virgilius, *Bucolica*, III, 60. Cf. Pierre Courcelle, "Les Pères de l'Eglise devant les enfers virgiliens," *Archives* 22 (1955): 38.

<sup>97</sup> *Institutiones divinae*, VII, 3, 4–5: "Deus est divina et aeterna mens, a corpore soluta et libera; cuius vim maiestatemque quoniam intelligere non poterant, miscuerunt eum mundo, id est operi suo. Unde est illud Virgilianum: Totamque infusa per artus mens agitat molem et magno se corpore miscet."

<sup>98</sup> VI, 724:

„Principio caelum ac terras camposque liquentis  
Lucentemque globum lunae Titaniaque astra  
Spiritus intus alit totamque infusa per artus  
Mens agitat molem et magno se corpore miscet.”

<sup>99</sup> IV, 221:

„[...] deum namque ire per omnis  
terrasque tractatusque maris caelumque profundum  
hinc pecudes, armenta, viros, genus omne ferarum  
quemque sibi tenuis nascentem accersere vitas.”

<sup>100</sup> John Eriugena, Theodoric of Chartres, Abelard, William of Conches and other authors of the period made reference to the above cited strophes. More detailed information can be found in Courcelle, "Les Pères de l'Eglise devant les enfers virgiliens," 43–45. Cf. also: Guillaume de Conches, *Glosae super Platonem*, 145 ff. The passage from Theodoric of Chartres seems to be typical: "Plato vero in Timaeo eundem spiritum "mundi animam" vocat. Virgilius vero de illo spiritu ita dicit: Principio maria ac terras caelumque profundum // lucentemque globum lunae tytaniaque astra // spiritus intus alit. Hebraei vero ita de spiritu operatore loquantur: Moyses quidem ita Et spiritus Domini ferebatur super aquas; David vero sic: Verbo Domini caeli firmati sunt, etc. Salomon quoque de spiritu sic dicit: Spiritus Domini replevit orbem terrarum. Christiani vero illud idem «Spiritus sanctum» appellant."

<sup>101</sup> Acts 17:28.

Seneca, Chalcidius, “Hermes Trismegistos” and Macrobius on the role and functions of “mens” and “spiritus” in the world many analogies and similarities with the Christian doctrine of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. Bernard Silvestris and William of Conches were the most heavily engaged in exploring this theme.

According to Bernard, the world is a “great animal” which knows and senses.<sup>102</sup> Thus the world has a soul, which the author of *De mundi universitate* calls, after Cicero, an “Endelechia.”<sup>103</sup> Both in its essence and in its cognitive functions it is closely tied in kinship to heaven.<sup>104</sup> Its nature, however, cannot be more strictly defined: “Quis enim tuto diffinivit essentiam quae consonantiis, quae se numeris moveret?”<sup>105</sup> From what Bernard says about “endelechia,” it clearly follows that he attempted to bring together into one the Platonic conception of the soul of the world and the stoic conception of the “pneuma” which is divine and animates all things. He thought that both the one and the other contained “sub integumentis verborum” the same truth about the Holy Spirit or the deepest philosophical sense of this truth. William of Conches has a similar view on the Platonic doctrine of the world-soul. According to him, God wanted the world to become a rational animal, but it could not be rational without a soul and thus God “thought up” the soul: “«excogitavit»,” notes William, “et non «creavit» secundum quod anima dicitur Spiritus Sanctus. Non enim a Deo factus

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<sup>102</sup> Bernardus Silvestris, *De mundi universitate*, 31, v. 68: “Mundus quidem est animal, verum sine anima substantiam non invenias animalis [...] In magno vero animali cognitio viget, viget et sensus causarum praecedentium fomitibus enutritis. Ex mente enim coelum, de coelo sidera, de sideribus mundus.” The words “ex mente enim caelum” may be an echo of the words of Psalm 135, 6: “qui fecit caelum in intellectu.”

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes*, I, 10, 22 [the translator here must resort to translating the Polish translation here cited—trans. by Józef Śmigaj, in *Pisma Filozoficzne* [Philosophical Writings], t. III (Warszawa: PWN, 1961), 494]: “Aristotle, who greatly exceeds all others with his intellect and reliability, having presented the four known types of elements from which everything takes its origin, states that there exists a fifth element from which thought arises. He is of the opinion that though, foresight, learning, teaching, remembering, finding something and many other activities, as well as the fact that we love and hate, desire and fire, become happy and sad, and the like, that all this does not have its place in the four kinds of elements. He adds here a fifth without a name, and in accordance with this he call the soul itself by the new name ENDELECHEIA, which designates, as it were, a ceaseless and eternal motion.” Cf. Bernardus Silvestris, *De mundi universitate*, 13, v. 168; 14, v. 195.

<sup>104</sup> Bernardus Silvestris, *De mundi universitate*, 14, v. 205. “Cum caelo, cum sideribus endelechiae vis et germanitas invenitur, unde plena totaque nec decisa potentiis ad confortanda caelestia superna regione consistit, verum in inferioribus virtus eius degenerat.”

<sup>105</sup> *Ibidem*, 14, v. 175.

est nec creatus nec genitus sed procedens est Spiritus Sanctus.”<sup>106</sup> The doctrines of God’s presence in the world proclaimed by Bernard Silvestris, William of Conches and also Abelard, Theodoric of Chartres, and Clarenbal of Arras were among the most radical. The problem with which they were concerned was one of the most central problems of theology and philosophy in the twelfth century.<sup>107</sup> Although the solutions proposed by the majority of the authors of the time were not in agreement with the conclusions of Bernard or William, yet together with them they contributed to the rise of a new, more optimistic vision of the world. Henceforth the cosmos is more and more often spoken of as the true habitation of God and the field of his immediate activity.

Man, seen in the perspective of the world thus conceived, was presented either as the most faithful copy of this “great, intelligent animal,” or as a reflection of the world—the field of activity for God and nature, and thus as a “third creator,” or again as a replica of the world—the habitation of God, and thus himself as a “true habitation of God.” The first of these approaches allowed for the treatment of the world as a “great Man” (“*mag-nus Homo*,” “*Makroanthropos*”), and of man as a “condensed world” (“*bre-vis mundus*”).<sup>108</sup> This approach thus offered a foundation for seeing the counterparts of the human organism in the organism of the universe, and of the “organs” of the universe in the organs of man. According to Bernard Silvestris, man is a “*minor mundus*” because he is the joint result of the careful work of *Urania*, *Physis* and *Natura*. The first composed the soul from “*Endechelia*” and from the powers; the second prepared the body from the properly separated matter; the third joined the soul with the body.<sup>109</sup> In other words, the three chief regions of the universe and their powers are reflected in man. *Physis* is responsible for the anatomical-physiological structure of the human organism, for its adaptation to the needs of the soul. *Physis* forms and mixes the particular organs so that the body may as exactly as possible exemplify the system and functions of the components of the universe. Thus

<sup>106</sup> *Glosae super Platonem*, 148.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. Tullio Gregory, *Anima mundi: La filosofia di Guglielmo di Conches e la scuola di Chartres* (Florence: Sansoni, 1955), 80 ff.

<sup>108</sup> The word of Seneca “*membri sumus corporis magni*” found an echo in Arnold of Bonneval, *De operibus sex dierum*, prol. PL 189, 1515: “*Quasi magni corporis membra, rerum naturas, distinguens propria loca et nomina, congruas mensuras et officia [Deus] assignavit*” (cited after Chenu, *La théologie au douzième siècle*, 24)—the “great Man” cf. Elbern, “*Species crucis — forma quadrata mundi*,” 182; von Einem, “*Der Mainzer Kopf mit der Binde*,” 27 f.

<sup>109</sup> Bernardus Silvestris, *De mundi universitate*, 56, vv. 1–10.

Physis will never err when it operates “in minori mundi homine,” if it is going to faithfully imitate that exemplar which the “major mundus” is for it.<sup>110</sup> Man, as he is the image of God and the image of the heavens with regard to his soul, and the faithful copy of nature with regard to his body, mirrors God and nature in their dynamics, in their creativity: “Ille, id est Creator, est actor maximus quia magnus actor est homo, major natura, maximus Creator.”<sup>111</sup> The conviction, based on the Holy Scriptures, that God is present in man, that man is the “temple of the living God,”<sup>112</sup> “the temple of the Holy Spirit,” coincided in the twelfth century both with the attempts to formulate a doctrine on the Holy Spirit in terms of the Platonic doctrine on the soul of the world, and with the attempts to christianize the Platonic vision of the cosmos, conceived as a projection of God’s thought (“ideas,” “forms”), of God’s goodness, of God’s love and beauty. As a result the terms “habitation of God” and “temple of the Holy Spirit” were used not only in reference to man, but also to the world. This thought was translated into the language of the theory of the megacosm and the microcosm: the world is the habitation of God and in this sense as well it is a megacosm; man is, or should be, a habitation of God and is also in the sense, or should come, a true microcosm.<sup>113</sup>

#### THE REPERCUSSIONS OF THE PLATONIC SOCIAL-POLITICAL MOTIF

William of Conches, Bernard Silvestris, John of Salisbury,<sup>114</sup> Alan de Lille,<sup>115</sup> and Raul of Longchamp thought that on the basis of the texts of Chalcidius<sup>116</sup>, Saint Augustine and Plutarch, the socio-political system of the “earthly state” should reflect the “state of God” which is the world-megacosm, and the “state of God” which is man-microcosm. William of Conches writes that God and the angels are the spirits who command, foresee and act in the world; the angels are also mediators between man, the

<sup>110</sup> *Ibidem*, 64, v. 95: “In minori mundo homine Physis intelligit non errandum, si majoris mundi similitudinem sibi sumpserit in exemplum.”

<sup>111</sup> Guillaume de Conches, *Glosae super Platonem*, 112.

<sup>112</sup> 2 Cor 6:16; 1 Cor 6:19.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. Kranz, *Kosmos*, 104 f.

<sup>114</sup> *Policratus*, V, 2–4; VI, 1–35, PL 199, 540 and 589.

<sup>115</sup> *De planctu naturae*, PL 210, 44 A–D.

<sup>116</sup> *Timaeus*, 231–235. Cf. also: Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, VIII, 14, PL 41,238. The views which we described as the “Platonic social-political motif” Allers called “Holistic Microcosmism.” Cf. Allers, “Microcosmos from Anaximander to Paracelsus,” 367.



object of divine providence, and God.<sup>117</sup> The system of God's state is by the will of God mirrored in the psycho-physical structure of man. Having considered this, Plato and Socrates came to the conclusion that the tasks and functions which the head, the seat of solicitous and provident wisdom, has in the human organism should be taken up by the senate in the republic. Beneath the head one finds the hands ready for action, and the heart, the seat of fortitude and courage; in the republic this state of affairs would be reflected by soldiers, tenacious in difficulties and brave in the defense of the republic. Below the heart there are the kidneys, the seat of lust; in the republic their reflection is the state of craftsmen. Finally there are the feet, which are the counterpart of the two most passive elements of the megacosm, water and earth; in the republic their status and functions are reflected by the peasant class; farmers, gardeners, shepherds, hunters, and thus people living beyond the walls and in the suburbs.<sup>118</sup>

Bernard Silvestris gave his own interpretation of the Platonic sociopolitical motif a more cosmological sense. According to him one may distinguish in the universe three chief members: the highest being the heavens, the lowest the earth, and in the middle the air. The Godhead gives commands and disposes things from heaven; the powers ("potestates") who have their home in the air and ether carry out His will.<sup>119</sup> It is not otherwise with them: the soul, which is

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<sup>117</sup> *Glosae super Platonem*, 308, Appendix A, 15. "Socrates in ordinatione sue rei pu[blice] imitatur divinam dispositionem tam in microcosmo quam in megachosmo, id est minori vel majori mundo. Sicut enim Creator in mundo, qui eius civitas est, voluit esse ordines, ita Socrates in sua civitate disponens. In mundo eim quidam sunt spiritus imperantes vel providentes ut Creator et angeli divine menti semper assistentes [...] vel elementa superiora ut ignis et aer que ita agunt in inferiora, quia calorem et humorem quod nihil ab eis sunt patientia. Sunt etiam in mundo quidam spiritus, secundum quosdam, tantum patientes, vel ipsi homines Alii hic legunt de elementis inferioribus, scilicet terra et aqua, que a superioribus tantum sunt patientia."

<sup>118</sup> Guillaume de Conches, *Glosae super Macrobius* [Com. I, I, 1], Cod. Bernen. 266, fol. 1(rb)-1(va). "Plato voluit in re publica esse quosdam imperantes et providentes in senatum, quosdam pugnantes ut milites, quosdam servientes ut plebem. Et est Plato et Socrates in ordine rei publice divinam imitatus dispositionem que est in humano corpore talis: caput alcioem locum optinet et quasi dominium supra cetera membra, in quo est sedes sapientie propter tres cellulas, de quibus alibi. Quemadmodum igitur sapientia est in capite et in reliquis membris providet, ita senatores in alciori loco existentes, id est in arce civitatis, inferioribus provident et eorum motus et acciones dispensant. Sub capite sunt manus que sunt prone ad agendum, et cor in quo est sedes animositatis. Ita sub illis de senatorio ordine sunt milites qui ad laboris tolerantiam proni sunt et ad rei publice defensionem animosi. Sub corde sunt renes in quibus humana viget concupiscentia. Ita sub militibus sunt cupedenarii, sutores, pelliparii et ceteri artifices. Ad ultimum sunt pedes: sic extra muros in suburbio sunt agricole ad colenda rura." Cited after Guillaume de Conches, *Glosae super Platonem*, 75. b.

<sup>119</sup> Bernardus Silvestris, *De mundi universitate*, 64, v. 97: "In illo subtili mundani corporis apparatu caelum fastigio supereminet altiore. Aer, terra: terra de infimo, aer de mido circum-

located in the head (“arx,” “totius corporis capitolium”), gives orders; the executor of its orders is the power (“vigor”) which is located in the chest; the lower parts, i.e. the bottom half of the human body, are the ruled.<sup>120</sup>

#### THE REPERCUSSIONS OF THE TYPICALLY NEO-PLATONIC MOTIF

“homo medietas atque adunatio”

This motif found its way to medieval thinkers through the works of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, Maximus of Chrysopolis, the *De natura hominis* of Nemesius of Emesa,<sup>121</sup> the *Liber de causis*<sup>122</sup> and the *Asclepius*. John Scotus Eriugena was the first one to refer to these. In his opinion, man was created as the image of God, so that in him all creatures (“omnes creaturae”), both those endowed with intellect and those endowed with senses, and thus different and polarized extremes, might constitute an indivisible unity and man might be the center (“medietas”) and union (“adunatio”) of all creatures. This interpretation was corroborated, according to Eriugena, by the passages in the Sacred Scriptures where man is described by the term “omnis creatura.”<sup>123</sup> Furthermore, this interpretation is attested to by the fact mentioned in Genesis that God brought man into a world which was already prepared; in this way he emphasized that man is, as it were, a compendium of all things (“omnium conclusio”).<sup>124</sup> He also calls man the “creaturarum

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sistunt. De caelo deitas imperat et disponit, exequantur iussionem, quae in aere vel aethere mansitant potestates.”

<sup>120</sup> *Ibidem*, v. 102. “Non secus et in homine cautum est, inperaret anima in capite, exequeretur vigor eius constitutus in pectore, regerentur partes infimae pube tenus et infra collocatae. Physis igitur, sollers ut erat artifex, cerebrum animae, cor vitae, epar appetentiae futurum destinat fundamentum.”

<sup>121</sup> Cf. notes 20 and 25.

<sup>122</sup> It was believed that this work was known to Gilbert de la Porrée. cf. Alexandre Clerval, *Les écoles de Chartres au moyen âge* (Paris: s.n., 1895), 168 f. Today it is thought that Alan de Lille was the first author who drew upon this work. cf. Gilson, *Historia filozofii* [History of Philosophy], 173.

<sup>123</sup> *De divisione naturae*, II, 9, PL 122, 536. “Homo ad imaginem Dei factus est, ut omnis creatura et intelligibilis et sensibilis, ex quibus veluti diversis extremitatibus compositus unum inseparabile fieret, et ut esset medietas atque adunatio omnium creaturarum. Non enim ulla creatura est, quae in homine intelligi non possit; unde etiam in Sacris Scripturis omnis creatura nominari solet. In Evangelio siquidem scriptum est: Praedicate Evangelium omni creaturae; item in Apostolo: Omnis creatura congemiscit et dolet usque adhuc.”

<sup>124</sup> *Ibidem*, IV, 10, PL 122, 782. “Post mundi visibilis ornatus narrationem, introducitur homo velut omnium conclusio, ut intelligeretur quod omnia quae ante ipsum condita narrantur, in ipso universaliter comprehenduntur.”

omnium officina”: man has understanding like the angels, reasoning like a man, sensation like a beast, possesses life like a plant, and is composed of body and soul: thus in him nothing which is in creatures is lacking.<sup>125</sup> These various and contrary natures in man constitute one harmonious whole, similar to that created by various contrary sounds.<sup>126</sup> “Quoniam Christus quattuor humanae naturae partes accepit et in seipso adunavit, universam creaturam, hoc est intellectualem et sensibilem, assumpsisse et in seipso adunasse manifestum est. Etenim in homine quem totum accepit, universa creatura condita est”<sup>127</sup>.

The terms “medietas atque adunatio,” “omnium officina,” “omnium conclusio” were taken over by Eriugena from Maximus the Confessor (Maximus of Chrysopolis).<sup>128</sup> “Medietas,” “in medio,” “medius”—these terms were taken in the middle ages either in the sense of the neo-Platonic theory of being, thus in the sense of a central link in the “golden chain of beings,” or else in the sense of the biblical formulation on man’s central position in the visible world, this position being the consequence of the world’s being created on account of man and for man.<sup>129</sup> According to the first of these approaches, man constituted an exceptionally important link (“nodus,” “nexus,” “vinculum,” “copula”) and point of contact (“horizon,” “confinium,” “limes,” “umbilicus”) for spiritual and corporeal beings, eternity and time,

<sup>125</sup> *Ibidem*, IV, 37, PL 122, 733: “Non inmerito dicitur homo creaturarum omnium officina quoniam in ipso universalis creatura continetur. Intelligit quidem ut angelus, ratiocinatur ut homo sentit ut animal irrationale, vivit ut germen, corpore subsistit, nullius creaturae expers.”

<sup>126</sup> Cf. note 58.

<sup>127</sup> *De divisione naturae*, II, 13, PL 122, 541 C-D.

<sup>128</sup> Cf. Maximus the Confessor, *Ambigua*, II, 37, n. 508–515, PG 91, 1304 ff. D’Alverny described this passage as “un des plus belles pages des *Ambigua*, où il montre l’homme rassemblant en lui toute la nature et la ramenant vers sa Cause première semble avoir inspiré en bonne partie l’anthropologie du *De Divisione Naturae*.” Maximus there calls man “veluti quaedam cunctorum continuatissima officina omnibusque per omnem differentiam extremitatibus per se ipsum naturaliter medietatem faciens [...] omnem habens profecto naturaliter extremorum medietatibus omnium per ipsam ad extrema omnia copulativam propriarum partium proprietatem adunationis virtutem, per quam ipse secundum causam segregatorum generationis complendus modus futurus est divinae visionis [...] homo velut coniunctio quaedam naturalis universaliter per proprias partes medietatem faciens extremitatibus, et in unum ducens in seipso multo secundum naturam a se invicem distantia spatio ut ad Deum utpote causalem omnia unitate congregante.” Cited after D’Alverny, “Le cosmos symbolique,” 51 ff. Cf. also: Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1965), 140 ff.

<sup>129</sup> The doctrine that the world was created in view of and for man was not alien to the ancient philosophers, especially the stoics. Cf. Cicero, *De natura deorum*, II, 53, 133; 61, 154; cf. also Pliny’s *Natural History*, VII, 1: “The first place rightly belongs to man on whose account nature seems to have created all other things.”

heaven and earth. The above position finds especially strong reflection in the writing of Bernard Silvestris, who called man “*medietas aureae catenae*,” “*superioris, inferiorisque mundi umbilicus*”<sup>130</sup>; of man he writes:

Mentem de caelo, corpus trahet ex elementis,  
Ut terras habitet corpore, mente polum.<sup>131</sup>

St. Thomas Aquinas, who shared Aristotle’s critical attitude toward those who conceived of man as a “microcosm” in the literal sense, as a being essentially identical to the “macrocosm,” called man “*quasi horizon et confinium spiritualis et corporalis naturae, ut medium inter utrasque, utrasque bonitatis participet et corporalis et spiritualis; unde et «omnis creaturae» nomine homo intelligitur. Marc. ult. 15, ubi dicitur: «Praedicate Evangelium omni creaturae»; ut beatus Gregorius exponit.*”<sup>132</sup> Nicholas of Cusa and Marsilio Ficino presented man in a similar manner, basing themselves chiefly upon the ideas of Pseudo-Dionysius and Maximus the Confessor, but also the *Asclepius* and the *Liber de causis*.<sup>133</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, on the other hand, understood “*medietas*,” “*medium*” and “*medius*” in the sense of the central position occupied by man in the universe. She put man in the center of the concentric and dazzlingly colorful circles of the cosmos which she had seen: *homo velut in medio earum sedens ipsis divina dispositione praesidet.*”<sup>134</sup> Her vision of the human phenomenon was most likely inspired by the passages in Genesis on the creation of man, and the words of St. Paul which refer to these: “*Qui est imago Dei invisibilis, primogenitus omnis creaturae.*”<sup>135</sup> According to Hildegard, man occupies the central position in the universe because he is the image of God and the most perfect of the creatures which inhabit the world. William of Conches explained the central position of man in the universe on the basis of the formulation: “*omnis*

<sup>130</sup> *De mundi universitate*, VII, 47, v. 1–3.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibidem*, X, 55, v. 15.

<sup>132</sup> *In III Sententiarum*, prologus.

<sup>133</sup> Cf. Stefan Swieżawski, “Z antropologii filozoficznej XV wieku” [On the philosophical anthropology of the XV century], *Studia Mediewistyczne* [Medieval Studies] 9 (1968): 240. This basically neo-Platonic approach to man’s position in relation to reality constituted, as it were, the “*materiam communem*” of Christian anthropology. It was not alien to St. Augustine. “*sed inter pecora et angelos [...] medius homo [...] infra angelis sed supra pecoribus.*” Cf. Allers, “Microcosmus from Anaximander to Paracelsus,” 361. It was popularized by Nemesis of Emesa: “*velut medius est intellectualis et sensibilis substantiae.*” Cf. Burkhard, *Gregorii Nysseni (Nemesii Emesiani) Περί φύσεως ἀνθρώπου*, 15.

<sup>134</sup> *Sanctae Hildegardis “Scivias”*, I, 3, 408 A.

<sup>135</sup> Col 1:15.

creatura.” In his view, man was thus described in the Sacred Scriptures because each thing is either a man or has been created on man’s account; man thus occupies, as it were, the central position among creatures: “quasi aequaliter medius, id est communis, medium locum, id est terram quae in medio est occupavit.”<sup>136</sup> William also understood man as a “medium” in the ontological sense. He demonstrated, on the basis of the *Timaeus*, that the creation of man, and especially of the human soul, was necessary for the perfection of God’s works: since there exist various rational beings who do not possess senses, such as the angels, and sensitive beings destitute of reason, such as the beasts, there should be between them some middle member (“quoddam medium”), a being at the same time rational and sensitive, man.<sup>137</sup>

The above citations on that which mediates, connects and unites testify to the fact that many medieval thinkers supported the neo-Platonic conception of “medietas,” while they narrowed the Platonic understanding of “medium,” and thus of “number,” “proportion” and “harmony” to the visible world. Neo-Platonism presented the human phenomenon as a “medium κατ’ ἐξοχήν,” as a certain counterpart to Hesiod’s Eros, or the Orphic Phanes.

According to Maximus the Confessor and Eriugena the expressions “medietas atque adunatio,” “omnium conclusio,” and especially “omnium officina” are equivalent to the expression “omnis creatura.” The term “medietas” thus concerns only one of the aspects of this biblical formulation. According to Eriugena, man is the “omnium officina” because he has understanding like an angel, he reasons as a man, he senses like a beast, and like a plant possesses life. Human nature is thus composed of four parts. The view that an analysis of human nature reveals its four “strata” was proclaimed by Gregory the Great. The difference between Gregory’s concept and Eriugena’s concept would be that Gregory did not regard “ratiocinari” as something distinct from “intelligere.” Consequently he mentioned the following four members of human nature: “esse,” “vivere,” “sentire,” and “intelligere.”<sup>138</sup> Similarly

<sup>136</sup> Guillaume de Conches, *In Boetii De consolatione philosophiae*, ed. Joseph-Marie Parent, in *La doctrine de la création dans l’école de Chartres* (Paris and Ottawa: Vrin, 1938), 128: “Unde est quod homo in divina pagina vocatur omnis creatura, quia videlicet res omnis vel est homo vel propter hominem creata, et ita omnia sola voluntate vel bonitate divina et non indigentia propter hominem sunt facta. Idcirco cum omnis creatura propter hominem esset facta, quasi equaliter medius, id est communis, medium locum, id est terram que in medio est occupavit.”

<sup>137</sup> Guillaume de Conches, *Glosae super Platonem*, 126, 223: “Exigit autem ut quemadmodum sunt quedam rationalia sine sensu ut angeli, quedam sensibilia sine ratione ut bruta animalia, sit quoddam medium quod et rationale sit et sensibile ut homo.”

<sup>138</sup> *Homiliae in Evangelium*, 29, PL 76, 1214: “Omnis creaturae aliquid habet homo. Habet namque commune esse cum lapidibus, vivere cum arboribus, sentire cum animalibus, intelligere

St. Thomas Aquinas listed “ratio,” “vires sensitivas,” “vires naturales,” “ipsum corpus.”<sup>139</sup> Given the extent and propagation of the doctrine on the “quattuor humanae naturae partes” it is difficult not to suppose that the medieval miniaturists inscribed the form of man (Adam, Christ) into the square because the square symbolized the four “parts” of human nature, which Christ assumed and united in Himself. Could the “square” thus understood be at the same time a diagram of man-microcosm?

According to Gregory, Eriugena, Thomas, and also other authors of the middle ages, human nature constitutes an “adunatio,” a “conclusio,” “officina” and “confluxus” of corporeal and spiritual natures. On account of the spiritual man cannot be identified with the visible world nor does he merely and exclusively mirror it. He is something greater than a microcosm. What is he? The response of the “Hermes Trismegistos,” that “magnum miraculum est homo, animal adorandum atque honorandum, hoc enim in naturam dei transit, quasi ipse sit deus,” must have seemed excessively pantheistic to the overwhelming majority of medieval authors.<sup>140</sup> Nicholas of Cusa did not share this opinion. Thus he did not hesitate to call man: “humanus Deus, microcosmus aut humanus mundus.”<sup>141</sup>

The doctrine of the four parts of human nature was in its essence a neo-Platonic doctrine. In its framework one could thus speak of man as being a microcosm in the “cosmogenetic” sense, as we have called it. This, however, would mean that both the world-soul and individual human soul create for themselves their own “cosmos,” namely, they organize, order and harmonize their “animal,” their own “habitation.”

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cum angelis. Si ergo commune habet aliquid cum omni creatura homo, iuxta aliquid omnis creatura est homo. Omni ergo creaturae praedicatur evangelium cum soli homini praedicatur, quia ille videlicet dicitur propter quem in terra cuncta creata sunt et a quo omnia per quamdam similitudinem aliena non sunt.” Gregory’s description of human nature became a sort of “doctrinae communis” for mediaeval anthropology. Cf. Allers, “Microcosmos from Anaximander to Paracelsus,” 345 f. Cf. note 35.

<sup>139</sup> *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 96, a. 2: “Respondeo dicendum quod in homine quodammodo sunt omnia; et ideo secundum modum quo dominatur his quae in seipso sunt, secundum hunc modum competit ei dominari aliis. Est autem in homine quattuor considerare, scilicet rationem, secundum quam convenit cum angelis; vires sensitivas, secundum quas convenit cum animalibus; vires naturales, secundum quas convenit cum plantis; et ipsum corpus, secundum quod convenit cum rebus inanimatis.”

<sup>140</sup> Cf. note 18. Cf. also the publisher’s remarks (A.D. Nock) in the “Introduction” on the attitude of medieval authors toward the *Asclepius*, 267–275.

<sup>141</sup> *De conjecturis*, II, 14.

As a rule Christian thinkers rejected the Platonic and neo-Platonic doctrine of the world-soul. According to them the transcendent God was the efficient, formal and final cause of the world, and thus of its “cosmos.” On the other hand, the idea that the human soul is the principle of the “cosmos” in its “animal,” in its “habitation,” was regarded as correct by them. Did not God create the human soul to His own image and likeness? Thus the soul reflects Him also in his cosmogenetic activity. This must have been a very widespread and popular view, since it even reached the pages of the widely read medical textbook *Compendium medicinae* by Gilbert Anglicus. Gilbert wrote that the human soul in many respects resembles its Creator. Just as the Creator, the soul enjoys the privilege of singularity. Just as God comprehends everything simultaneously, so the soul in the same way comprehends many things. Finally, just as He is the efficient cause of everything that takes place in the Macrocosm, so the soul is the efficient and final cause of numerous activities in its “microcosm.”<sup>142</sup> The thought that the human soul is the principle of the “cosmos” in its “animal” was also taken up by St. Thomas Aquinas. He referred to it in the course of his consideration of the “four parts of human nature.” He started from the proposition: “in homine quodammodo sunt omnia.” In his opinion this proposition contains the following meaning: “only according to the manner in which man is lord of all that is in him does it befall him to be lord over other things.”<sup>143</sup> It may be inferred from these words that the soul is the efficient cause of the “cosmos” in its own human world. The soul’s cosmogenetic role would consist in the unification and harmonization of all that is in man and which beyond man is found dispersed. The process of integration which takes place in man, the process of the hominization of the natures that compose the human phenomenon, reached its apogee the moment human nature became united with God through the mystery of the Incarnation.<sup>144</sup>

The views of Saint Thomas presented above constitute a merely secondary Dionysian-neo-Platonic current in his basically Aristotelian philosophical-

<sup>142</sup> *Compendium medicinae Gilberti Anglici*, f. 244v, col. 1.

<sup>143</sup> Cf. note 139.

<sup>144</sup> *In III Sententiarum*, prologus: “et ideo quando humana natura per Incarnationis mysterium Deo conjuncta est, omnia flumina naturalium bonitatum ad suum principium reflexa redierunt, ut possit dici quod legitur Jos. 4, 18 «Reversae sunt aquae in alveum suum, et iterum fluere caeperunt.»” Peter Tischleder interpreted St. Thomas’s anthropology in the spirit of and in terms of microcosmic doctrine. *Der Mensch in der Auffassung des hl. Thomas von Aquin*, in *Das Bild vom Menschen. Beiträge zur theologischen und philosophischen Anthropologie*, Festschrift: Fritz Tillmann, ed. Theodor Steinbüchel und Theodor Müncker (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1934), 53 ff.

theological anthropology. It was only with diffidence and with constantly renewed reservations that he referred to the traditional microcosmic motifs. He would state that between man and the world one may observe only “a certain similarity,” that this is “a merely partial similarity.”<sup>145</sup> The reticence of Thomas appears to have originated not only from the above mentioned sources, but also from the different ways in which Plato and Aristotle took the term “cosmos”. By “cosmos” Plato understood chiefly the “order,” “proportion” and “harmony” of the world of ideas, of which the world of things is an imperfect manifestation. From Aristotle, who rejected the Platonic conception of the ideal world, the term “cosmos” began to designate the material world, or more properly speaking, the world of meteorological phenomena. In the middle ages these two senses were not properly distinguished. Consequently the formal aspect of “cosmos” was confused with its material-content aspect. The resultant confusions and *non sequiturs* were reflected also in the microcosmic theories of the period.

Nicholas of Cusa was a philosopher who based his vision of man on the neo-Platonic cosmogenetic motif. Perhaps it was under the influence of the Aristotelian conception of man that he understood not merely the human soul, but the whole of man “cosmogenetically.” This was, to be sure, in keeping with his fundamental methodological directive: “no part can be understood if the whole is not understood, for the whole implies the parts.”<sup>146</sup> Whatever is in man—and everything is in him for he is, after all, “omnis creatura”—is in him in a human manner. The world of the spirit is in him - thus man is God, but not in the absolute sense for he is man: “Humanus est igitur Deus.” Man is also the world, but he is not merely a compendium of everything (“mundus contractus”), for he is man: “Est igitur homo microsomos aut humanus quidem mundus.”<sup>147</sup> Man hominizes all that is in

<sup>145</sup> Cf. note 28. Cf. also: *In II Sententiarum*, d. 1, q. 2, a. 3: “In homine est quaedam similitudo ordinis universi, unde et minor mundus dicitur quia omnes naturae quasi in homine confluunt.” *Quodlibeta*, IV, a. 3: “quod homo assimilatur maiori mundo quantum ad aliquid [...] non tamen ad omnia assimilatur universo.”

<sup>146</sup> Cf. Bogdan Suchodolski, *Narodziny nowożytnej filozofii człowieka* [The beginning of the modern philosophy of man] (Warszawa: PWN 1963), 149. “The ‘geneology’ of this formulation goes back to Anaxagoras: πάντα ἐν παντί; quodlibet in quo libet.” Cf. Nicolaus Cusanus, *De docta ignorantia*, II, 5, ed. Ernst Hoffmann and Raymond Klibansky (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1932), 76 (4).

<sup>147</sup> *De conjecturis* II, 14; *De docta ignorantia*, III, 3, 126: “Humana vero natura est illa, quae est supra omnia Dei opera elevata et paulo minus angelis minorata, intellectualem et sensibilem natural complicans ac universa se constringens, ut microcosmus aut parvus mundus a veteribus rationabiliter vocitetur.”



him. In perfecting himself he perfects by the same token the world. The fullness of humanity was realized in Christ. Christ as God is a man, and Christ as a man is God. From the epistle of St. Paul to the Romans it follows that the whole of creation, not only man, looked with expectation toward the Incarnation of Christ. In him “*omnis creatura*” attains the fullness of perfection.<sup>148</sup> Thus nothing, neither heaven nor earth, is alien to man. In uniting and harmonizing all that is in him, he finds in himself the principles of mathematics, astronomy and music. He finds and creates a “*cosmos*.”

The anthropological views of Nicholas of Cusa constitute, as it were, a “*medietas*,” “*horizon*” and “*confinium*” of the mediaeval microcosmic motifs with their renaissance counterparts. They are a hymn to the glory of man voiced by a Christian philosopher at the end of the middle ages, a hymn like the hymn (“*ἀνθρώπου ἐγκώμιον*”) proclaimed at the end of antiquity by another Christian philosopher and theologian, Nemesius of Emesa.<sup>149</sup>

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“*Imago rex*”—this formulation was employed by William of Saint-Thierry to underline man’s regal position in the visible world, a position to which man was predestined by the fact that he is “*quaedam animata imago electa*” of the King of all things.<sup>150</sup>

The above formulation lends itself excellently to the characterization of medieval anthropological investigations. They concern the “*image*,” first the image and likeness of God in the human soul, then the image and likeness of the world in man. This latter problem was debated in the light of Platonic cosmology and the neo-Platonic theory of being, especially in the light of Platonic and neo-Platonic microcosmic motifs. In this framework man was conceived as a “*third world*”<sup>151</sup>; the consanguinity of the head of man with

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<sup>148</sup> *De docta ignorantia*, III, 2. Cf. Ernst Cassirer, *Individuum und Kosmos in der Philosophie der Renaissance* (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1927), 42.

<sup>149</sup> Cf. Böhner, Gilson, *Historia filozofii* [History of Philosophy].

<sup>150</sup> *De natura corporis et animae*, II, PL 180, 717 B. “*Dicitur secundum humanam consuetudinem imago rex; sic humana natura quoniam ad imperium aliorum constituta est, per similitudinem ad universitatis regem veluti quaedam animata imago electa est.*” Cited after Javelet, *Image et Ressemblance*, t. 1, 247).

<sup>151</sup> Cf. Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De rerum proprietatibus*, VIII, 1, Frankfurt 1601 (photomechanical edition: Frankfurt a.M. 1964), 368: “*Tertio dicitur homo minor mundus, quia totius mundi imaginem in se representat. Est itaque primus mundus aeternus in divina mente aeternaliter permanens. Secundus mundus perpetuus est, divina voluntate esse perpetuum et originem ex illo contrahens. Tertius secundum quid est caducus omnium similitudinem in se gerens.*”

the sphere of heaven was especially emphasized; man's body was thought to be a microcosm, since it is composed of the same elements as the macrocosm. The formal-teleological aspect was emphasized along side the material-content aspect: the same "cosmos" as in the universe, is reflected in man as a whole, in his soul and body, and in his activities. The description of man in the Sacred Scriptures by the term "omnis creatura" made it possible for medieval theologians and philosophers to interpret the human phenomenon in the spirit and in terms of the neo-Platonic theory of being. Seen in this perspective, man was presented no longer as merely a "microcosm," as an "image" of the world which can be grasped by the senses and of the world which can be grasped by the intellect, but as the "link," the "connector," the "horizon" of both these worlds, as the "unification," the "vessel" and the "coupler" of the spiritual and physical world.

*Translated from Polish  
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**Information about Translator:** HUGH McDONALD, MA—address for correspondence—e-mail: [hyoomik@gmail.com](mailto:hyoomik@gmail.com)