

HEINRICH CORNELIUS AGRIPPA

Dreams, the Soul and the Imagination

THE OCCULT PHILOSOPHY · NOTEBOOK 6

The power of passion and imagination

BOOK I · CHAPTERS 58-68

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Dreams, the Soul and the Imagination

HEINRICH CORNELIUS AGRIPPA · THREE BOOKS OF OCCULT
PHILOSOPHY · BOOK I, CHAPTERS 58–68

Every chapter — four parts

IN AGRIPPA'S WORDS

*the complete chapter, from the Latin
edition of 1533*

IN PLAIN WORDS

what Agrippa actually claims

TERMS

the chapter's concepts explained

HISTORICAL NOTE

*where the idea comes from and what
modern science says*

A historical text, not a manual. This book does not replace medical advice.

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FOREWORD

In the fifth notebook Agrippa read signs in the outer world — in colours, birds and thunder. Now he turns to the inner world: **can a dream foretell the future? Can fear or joy change the body? Can a strong imagination act upon another person?**

This is the **sixth notebook** in the series "Agrippa · The Occult Philosophy". It contains **Book I, chapters 58–68**: the reviving of the seemingly dead, long sleep and fasting, **dreams** and ecstasy, the power of melancholy, the senses and the mind of man, **the passions of the soul** and the power of **imagination** over one's own body and the bodies of others.

How to read it. Every chapter has four parts. *In Agrippa's words* — the complete chapter, translated from the Latin edition of 1533. *In plain words* — what Agrippa actually claims. *Terms* — the concepts of the chapter; all of them are gathered in the glossary at the end. *Historical note* — where the idea comes from and what modern science says. This is a book of history, not a manual or medical advice.

In the series "Agrippa · The Occult Philosophy":

1. Magic and the Four Elements — Book I, chapters 1–12
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5. Light, Fascination and Divination — chapters 49–57
6. Dreams, the Soul and the Imagination — chapters 58–68
7. The Power of Words and Letters — chapters 69–74

CHAPTER LVIII

OF THE REVIVING OF THE DEAD, OF LONG SLEEP, AND OF FASTING WITHOUT FOOD

IN AGRIPPA'S WORDS

The Arabian philosophers agree that **some men are able to rise above the powers of the body and above the powers of the senses**, and, having overcome them, to receive into themselves the divine liveliness from the perfection of the heavens and the Intelligences.

Since the souls of men are all eternal, and all spirits obey perfect souls, the magicians think that **perfect men, by the powers of their soul, are able to bring back other, lower souls, already in some measure separated, into their dying bodies, and to breathe them into them anew**, no otherwise than a slain weasel is called back to life by the breath and voice of its parents, and lions by blowing revive their cubs that are born lifeless.

And since, as they say, every like thing applied to its like produces the nature of like things, they think that certain herbs and magical compounds help not a little in this reviving, such as, they report, are made from the ashes of the phoenix and the cast-off skins of snakes.

This would indeed seem fabulous and even impossible to most people, were it not confirmed by the credibility of history.

For we read that very many who were drowned in water, others thrown into fire and laid upon the pyre, others slain in war, others deprived of life in other

ways, **came back to life even after many days**, as Pliny testifies of Aviola the consular, L. Lamia, Caelius Tubero, Corfidius, Gabienus and very many others.

Very many were also called back to life by magicians and physicians, as the histories report of Aesculapius.

We read also that a certain **Glaucus** died, whom, against the hopes of all, while the physicians were hurrying about, they say was brought back to life by an herb called dragonwort. Others say that he came back to life by tasting honeyed herbs, **from which arose the proverb: "Glaucus, having drunk honey, rose again."**

Apuleius also relates a rite of such a calling-back performed by the Egyptian prophet **Zatchlas**. The prophet, being so entreated, lays a certain herb on the mouth of the body and another on its breast; then, turning towards the east, he prays in silence to the rising sun, and by this reverent scene he draws the faces of those present eagerly to so great a wonder: **already the breast rises and swells, already the whole vein beats, already the body fills with breath, and the corpse rises up, and the young man speaks.**

If this is to be true, **then it must be that dying souls sometimes lie hidden in their bodies, overwhelmed by stronger ecstasies and set free from every bodily action**, so that life, feeling and motion forsake the whole body, and yet the man is not yet dead, but lies lifeless and as if dead, even for a long time.

And this has very often been found: in times of plague many who were carried to burial as dead came back to life in their graves. Many times, as we read, this has also happened to women suffering from suffocation of the womb.

And **Rabbi Moses** relates from a book of Galen that in a certain man a suffocation lasted six days, and he neither ate nor drank, and his arteries became hard.

And he says in the same book that a man may suffer a repletion in which the pulse of the whole body vanishes and the heart does not move, and he lies as if dead. And he says that from a fall from a high place, or from a great shout, or

from staying long under water, there arises a swoon that lasts forty-eight hours, and the man lies as if dead, and greenish pustules rise upon his face.

And in the same book he tells of **one who buried a dead man seventy-two hours before his death and killed him, because he buried him alive**. And he gives there the signs by which it may be known that such men are alive, although they lie like the dead, and that they will certainly die unless they are helped by bloodletting or other treatments.

And this is the way in which we understand magicians and physicians to raise the dead.

But that a man can last long in an ecstasy like death is to be judged no otherwise than of **dormice, crocodiles and very many snakes**, which sleep through the whole winter in this way and breathe so faintly in their sleep that they can scarcely be roused even with fire. **And I myself have often seen a dissected dormouse remain motionless as if dead until it was boiled, and only then did the dissected limbs, dipped in the water, show life.**

Likewise, although it is hard to believe, we nevertheless read in approved historians that some men have slept in a long sleep for very many years on end, and in the meantime, until they awoke, did not grow a whit older.

Pliny himself testifies of a certain boy who, tired from the heat and the journey, he relates, slept in a cave for **fifty-seven years**.

We read also that **Epimenides of Knossos** slept in a cave for fifty-seven years. From this arose the proverb: "**To sleep longer than Epimenides.**"

M. Damascenus relates that in his time in Germany a weary peasant slept in a haystack all through the autumn and the following winter without stirring, until in summer, when the hay had gradually been eaten up, he was awakened as one half dead and wholly out of himself.

The ecclesiastical histories confirm this opinion by the **Seven Sleepers**, who, they report, slept for one hundred and ninety years.

In Norway there is a cave under an overhanging shore where, as Paul the Deacon and Methodius the martyr write, **seven men lay asleep for a long time without any corruption**; and the peoples who have come in to touch them have often been driven back at once.

Among the philosophers **Xenocrates**, a man of no small name, held this long sleep to be a certain natural punishment, allotted from eternity to some souls according to their deserts.

M. Damascenus himself proves it possible by many reasons, and wholly natural, and does not think it absurd, since it is given to some other animals that they can sleep for many months without food and drink, without excretion, without wasting away and corruption. **This can happen to a man too**, whether from some magic potion, or from a sleep-inducing disease, or from a certain fearful stupor, or from similar causes, for many days, months or years.

And physicians tell of antidotes of which, if a man eats the smallest particle, he can thereby endure a long fast, just as **Elijah**, fed by an angel with a certain food, went and fasted forty days in the strength of that food.

And **Giovanni Boccaccio** relates that in his time there was a man in Venice who every year kept a fast of forty days without any food at all. And, what is more wonderful still, at the same time in Lower Germany there was a woman who **for thirty years had taken no nourishment**, which might well seem incredible, were the matter not confirmed by a recent case and the wonder of our age in brother **Nicholas of Saxony**, a Swiss by nation, who, as is testified, lived in the wilderness for twenty-two years without any nourishment, until he departed this life.