

HEINRICH CORNELIUS AGRIPPA

The Sacred Numbers

THE OCCULT PHILOSOPHY · BOOK II · NOTEBOOK 2

The seven, the ten and the twelve



BOOK II · CHAPTERS 10-15

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The Sacred Numbers

HEINRICH CORNELIUS AGRIPPA · THREE BOOKS OF OCCULT
PHILOSOPHY · BOOK II, CHAPTERS 10–15

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 concepts explained

HISTORICAL NOTE

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

A historical text, not a manual.

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FOREWORD

In the first notebook Agrippa went through the numbers from one to six. Now come the ones his century called **the sacred numbers** — and the first of them, the seven, has been given the longest chapter in the whole book.

This is the **second notebook** in the series "Agrippa · The Occult Philosophy · Book II". It contains **Book II, chapters 10–15**: the seven in the heavens, in the week, in the course of the Moon and in a human life; the eight as the number of rebirth; the nine with its nine orders of angels and nine Muses; the ten that returns into the one, with the ten divine names of the kabbalah; the eleven, the number of transgression; the twelve in **two scales**, kabbalistic and Orphic; and finally the numbers above twelve.

How to read it. Every chapter has 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 concepts, all gathered in the glossary. *Historical note* — where the idea comes from and what modern science says.

In the series "Agrippa · The Occult Philosophy · Book II":

1. The Power of Numbers — Book II, chapters 1–9
2. The Sacred Numbers — chapters 10–15
3. Marks and the Tables of the Planets — chapters 16–22
4. Harmony and the Measure of Man — chapters 23–28
5. Observations of the Heavens — chapters 29–37
6. Images, Talismans and Characters — chapters 38–52
7. The Soul of the World — chapters 53–60

CHAPTER I

OF THE NUMBER OF SEVEN AND ITS SCALE

IN AGRIPPA'S WORDS

The number of seven has various and manifold power, for it consists of one and six, or of two and five, or of three and four; and it has a unity as it were the conjoiner of a double ternary. Whence, if we consider its several members and the joining of them together, we shall without doubt confess it to be most full of all majesty — both by the knitting together of its parts, and severally in its own fullness.

It is called the very bearer of man's life, which it perfects not so much out of its own parts as by its right of the whole: for it comprehends body and soul. For the body consists of four elements and is endowed with four qualities; but the ternary respects the soul by reason of its threefold power — **the rational, the irascible and the concupiscible**.

The number of seven, therefore, because it consists of three and four, **joins the soul to the body**. And the power of this number pertains also to the begetting of men, and causes that man is conceived, formed, brought forth, nourished, lives, and altogether subsists.

THE AGE OF MAN BY SEVENS

When the generative seed is received into the womb of the woman, if it remain there seven hours without flowing forth, it is certain that it has cleaved to life. Then in the first seven days it is contracted and made fit to receive the shape of a man.

Thereafter it brings forth mature children, which are called **seven-months children** — namely those that are born in the seventh month.

After the birth **the seventh hour determines whether the infant shall live:** for if beyond this number it has endured the breath of the air, it is judged to be born for life.

- After **seven days** it casts off the remnant of the navel
- After **twice seven** its sight begins to move toward the light
- **In the third seven** it already freely turns its eyes and its whole face
- After **seven months** the teeth come forth
- After **the second seven of months** it sits without fear of falling
- After **the third** its sound breaks forth into words
- After **the fourth** it stands firmly and walks
- After **the fifth seven of months** it begins to resist the nurse's milk
- After **seven years** the first teeth fall out, and others are born, fitter for hard meat, and the perfection of speech is accomplished
- After **the second seven of years** boys wax ripe, and begetting begins
- **In the third seven of years** a man grows in length, puts forth the flower and the down, and becomes mighty and strong in begetting
- Until **the fourth seven** a man grows in breadth, and the increase of his stature is finished
- **In the fifth** all the increase of strength and of vigour is perfected
- **The sixth** seven of years preserves that strength which has been gathered
- **In the seventh** seven wisdom is perfected and man is made complete

But when he comes to ten sevens, where the seven is carried through the full number, then he has the common end of living — as the Prophet says: *The days of our years in themselves are threescore years and ten.*

The highest measure also of the growing of man's body is **seven feet**.

THE SEVEN IN THE BODY, IN THE HEAVENS AND IN THE MOON

Seven are the degrees in the body which fill up the measurement of its height from the depth to the surface: **the marrow, the bone, the nerve, the vein, the artery, the flesh, the skin.**

Seven are those which the Greeks call the black members: **the tongue, the heart, the lungs, the liver, the spleen and the two kidneys**. Seven are the principal parts of the body: **the head, the breast, the hands, the feet and the privy members**.

It consists also of spirit and of nourishment: for **without the drawing of breath life is not held longer than seven hours**; and those who are doomed to die of hunger live not beyond the seventh day. The veins also and the arteries, as the physicians deliver, are moved by the number of seven. And judgements in diseases are made upon the seventh days, which the physicians call **critical**, that is, days of judgement.

Of seven parts God makes the soul, as the divine Plato witnesses in the *Timaeus*. And the soul receives the body through the seven. Every difference of voices proceeds to the seventh degree, after which is the same revolution.

And in celestial things the power of the seven is most mighty: for since the four corners of the heaven are diametrically opposed one to another, they make a most full and most powerful aspect, which subsists by the very number of seven — for it is made out of the seventh sign **and makes a cross, of all figures the most powerful**.

And let this not remain unknown: **the seven has great communion with the cross**.

Seven, moreover, are the circles in the heaven according to the length of the axis; seven about the north pole are the stars of the Bears, the greater and the lesser. So also seven are those which are called **the Pleiades**. Seven also are the planets, according to which likewise seven days make the week.

And the Moon, the seventh of the planets and the nearest to us, observes this number above the rest, and this number divides its motion and its light. For in twenty-eight days it runs about the whole circle of the zodiac — and this number of days the seven, with its seven members, from one to seven, by adding together the foregoing, finishes and fills up, and makes four sevens of days.

And with the like sevens of days it divides its light, changing by an everlasting law:

- **In the first seven** it increases to the half of a divided circle
- **In the second** it fills the whole circle with light
- **In the third**, waning again, it is contracted into a divided circle
- **After the fourth** it is renewed with the last diminishing of its light

And by these same sevens it disposes the increases and the ebbings of the sea.

It is agreeable also to **Saturn**, which, ascending from the lowest, is the seventh of the planets and which signifies rest. To it is ascribed the seventh day, which points to the seventh millenary, wherein — as John witnesses — the dragon being taken, the devil, the author of evils, mortals shall rest, leading a peaceable life.

THE NUMBER OF VIRGINITY AND OF THE OATH

Moreover, **the Pythagoreans call the seven the number of virginity**; for it is the first that is neither begotten nor begets. For it cannot be divided into two equal parts, so that it arises not from a repeated number; neither does it, being doubled, bring forth of itself any number that falls within the bounds of the ten, which is accounted the first bound of numbers. **And therefore they made the seven sacred to Pallas.**

It has also in religion the most powerful marks of veneration, and it is called **the number of an oath**: whence among the Hebrews to swear is said as it were to affirm by seven. So Abraham, when he made a covenant with Abimelech, set seven ewe lambs for a testimony.

It is called also **the number of blessedness and of rest** — whence that: *O thrice and four times blessed*, namely in soul and in body.

On the seventh day also the Creator rested from his work, wherefore this day is called with Moses **the sabbath**, that is, the day of rest. Whence on the seventh day Christ rested in the sepulchre.

It is, moreover, most fit for **purification**. Whence Apuleius writes that he straightway gave himself to the work of purification by a bathing in the sea, and