

STUDY GUIDE

for Marie-Louise von Franz's

Interpretation of

Aurora Consurgens:

A Document Attributed to Thomas Aquinas

on the Problem of Opposites in Alchemy

A Companion Work to C.G. Jung's

Mysterium Coniunctionis

Aurora Consurgens illustrates feminine divine Wisdom manifesting in individual emotional experience. Von Franz's rich commentary explores the nature of healing, destiny and love.

compiled by J. Gary Sparks

I am the flower of the field
and the lily of the valleys,
I am the mother of fair love
and of knowledge
and of holy hope.

Wisdom, *Aurora Consurgens*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION A	Outline of the interpretation	1
	Opening comments	1
	The first five chapters	2
	The seven parables	5
SECTION B	Summary of the interpretation	18
	Opening comments	18
	The first five chapters	18
	The seven parables	19
SECTION C	Wisdom	26
	Wisdom in the Hebrew Bible	26
	Wisdom and the Hebrew Bible	29
	Sophia in Gnosticism	30
	Edinger on Wisdom	31
SECTION D	<i>Number and Time</i>	34
SECTION E	The psychoid archetype	38
	Charles R. Card	38
	Liliane Frey-Rohn	41
SECTION F	Dorn's third degree of conjunction	45
SECTION G	Who's who in <i>Aurora Consurgens</i>	46
	A brief history of alchemy	46
	Names and works	47
	Alchemy web sites	52
SECTION H	"The Song of Songs"	53
	Summary of Edinger's interpretation	53
	Traditional interpretation	57
SECTION I	Main images in <i>Aurora Consurgens</i>	58

SECTION A

OUTLINE OF THE INTERPRETATION

OPENING COMMENTS

THOMAS AQUINAS

We will briefly look at part IV of *Aurora Consurgens*, pp. 407-431.

THE TEXT

"Whereas the first five chapters revolve round a central concept, Wisdom as the spirit or soul of alchemy, in the attempt to enrich it with more and more new images, the seven parables that follow portray in dynamic images a progressive process that is intended to illustrate the course of the alchemical opus." 215

SOME DREAMS OF WISDOM

I'll discuss some dreams of Wisdom

EDITING THE TEXT

We'll look at how von Franz discovered and edited the text.

LAYOUT OF THE BOOK AND THIS STUDY GUIDE

We'll take a moment to become familiar with the layout of the book and how to use this study guide..

NOTATION CONVENTION

We will explore von Franz's interpretation of *Aurora Consurgens* with great care, at points going through her work sentence by sentence. We will generally first read out loud each part of the *Aurora Consurgens* text von Franz is interpreting. In the outline which follows I have listed the text quotes as she has cited them. Each quotation begins with: See text. Occasionally we'll just skim the quotation, not really dwelling on it, and in that case the entry begins with: Skim text. So the first thing when reading this book is to concentrate on each part of the text that will be interpreted/commented on and digest it a bit.

There is so much symbolic material in this work that one's head can quite easily end up spinning. To organize what we'll be examining in order for the rational mind to be able to digest (and remember) what we're reading, I've divided her remarks up into two basic types. First there are her discussions of the major images in the text, and in the outline I have noted as **Image** her

interpretive points for each text segment. Secondly she approaches some ideas in the text as a *commentary*, reflecting on the passage more than drawing a meaning out of it in the sense of interpreting an image. These parts of her book I have noted as: *Commentary*. It may help you to be aware, when reading her analysis, whether you are trying to digest the meaning of a symbolic image or whether you are reading more of a generalized commentary which is about or has sprung from a given passage.

From time to time she gives good summaries of what she has been saying and these I have marked in the outline as: *SUMMARY*. I have just listed the beginning and final words of the passage in this first section A, the outline of the interpretation. In section B, the summary of the interpretation, I have typed the entire summary passage in full that I have just indicated in this first section A. I found having the summaries all in one section helped me keep my understanding clear; I could go back and review the summaries up to where I was reading and this was a help in keeping the thread of her ideas clearly in my mind.

At the beginning of each chapter I listed the main overall image/theme of the chapter with: ***MAIN IMAGE(S)/THEME***.

From time to time I'll note points as: **IMPORTANT!**

FORWARD TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

SUMMARY: "The secret [of alchemy] has to do with ... be visualized concretely." ix

THE FIRST FIVE CHAPTERS

CHAPTER I

HERE BEGINNETH THE TREATISE ENTITLED *AURORA CONSURGENS*

1. *Commentary*: she amplifies and interprets Wisdom. 155-157 See also section C, p. 26.

See text: "All good things ... " 157

2. **Images: south, south wind** 157-159

See text: "Who is wise ... " 160

3. *Commentary*: repressed by prevailing collective views 160

4. *Commentary*: guide 160

See text: "And Senior saith ... " 160f.

6. **Image: stone is cheap and precious** 162 For "Who's who in *Aurora Consurgens*" see section G, p. 46.

See text: "Length of days ... " 162

7. **Images: tree, light, food** 162-164

See text: "This doth Senior ... " 164

8. **Images: firestone, fire** 164-170

9. Commentary: luminosity of the unconscious, starry sky, etc. 170-172 See section E, p. 38.

Skim text: "Blessed is the ... " 173

See text: "As Senior saith... " 173

10. Commentary: change potential into actual, versus Islam, synchronicity 173-178

11. Commentary: desire and spirit 179-182

See text: "And Solomon: My ... " 182

12. **Image: incest** 182

See text: "For to meditate ... " 182

13. Commentary: bring to perfection, matter 182-191

14. Commentary: inner experience of numinous 186/192-194

SUMMARY: "[Wisdom is] ... the lumen naturale ... extraction (conscious realization)."

CHAPTER II WHAT WISDOM IS

SUMMARY: "The second chapter ... tone is perceptible:" 195

Skim text: "If therefore ... " 195

Skim text: "What the science ... " 197

Skim text: "Wherefore I bring ... " 197

Skim text: "For she is ... " 198

Skim text: "Senior likewise saith ... " 199

1. Commentary: this chapter is a further description of Wisdom. 195-199
2. Commentary: note the elated mood. 195, 197, 199

CHAPTER III OF THEM WHO KNOW NOT AND DENY THIS SCIENCE

Skim text: "This glorious science ... " 200

Skim text: "For the wise ... " 201

1. Commentary: this chapter criticizes fools. 200-202
2. Commentary: note the elated mood. 200, 202

SUMMARY: "Summing up the ... grips with the experience." 202

CHAPTER IV OF THE NAME AND TITLE OF THIS BOOK

See text: "Now the title ... " 203

1. **Images: colors** 203

See text: "Thirdly, because at ... " 203

2. **Images: dawn, east** 203-207

See text: "and so our dawn ... " 207

3. **Image: night** 207-208
4. Commentary: note the mood. 207f.

CHAPTER V OF THE PROVOCATION OF THE FOOLISH

SUMMARY: "By identifying Aurora ... danger of inflation." 209

1. Commentary: ecclesiastical framework and inflation. 209

See text: "Doth not Wisdom ... " 209

2. **Images: moonlight, light hidden in all things** 209f.

3. I'll review Gnosticism here. See section C, p. 30.

See text: "This is Wisdom ... " 210

4. **Images: bride, (twelve) stars** 210-213

5. Commentary: note Apocalypse reference 211-215

6. Commentary: alchemy and Christianity 213f.

7. Commentary: the two parts of von Franz's book 215-216, see also above, "Opening Comments"

8. Note: "each of the seven parables describes the whole opus in miniature". 215 We'll return to this point on page 308.

THE SEVEN PARABLES

CHAPTER VI, THE FIRST PARABLE: OF THE BLACK EARTH WHEREIN THE SEVEN PLANETS TOOK ROOT

MAIN IMAGE: black cloud

See text: "Beholding from afar ... " 217

See text: "... because the waters ... " 220

1. **Image: black cloud** 217-219, 220-222

2. Commentary: note the mood.

3. Commentary: wisdom and science 219

4. **Image: water** 223

See text: "then before me ..." 222

5. **Image: Ethiopian** 222

See text: "For this cause ... " 223

See text: "He that shall ... " 224

6. Commentary: distress, sunk in matter 223-224

7. Commentary: too much fire 224

8. **Image: garment** 224-227

See text: "... and shall not" 227

9. **Images: couch, seats** 227

10. **Images: dove, bitterness** 228f.

See text: "he for whose ..." 229

11. **Image/Commentary: renewal of king and Wisdom** 229f. I'll discuss Jung's understanding of the psychology of kingship.

12. **Commentary: Wisdom and Yahweh** 230

13. **Image: emptying** 230f.

14. **Image: melting (dissolving)** 231

See text: "to him indeed ..." 231

15. **Commentary: intuitive anticipation of union** 231

16. **Image: father-son** 231-233

See text: "But if he ..." 233

17. **Images: enemy, cold** 233

18. **Commentary: walk in my ways** 234f.

19. **Commentary: disintegration, integration** 235

See text: "... and he shall ..." 236

20. **Commentary: participation of consciousness** 236

See text: "Therefore were the ..." 237

21. **Commentary: reference to "Ancient of Days"** 237

See text: "And the signs ..." 238

See text: "Such shall be ..." 239

SUMMARY: "The relation between ... that brings redemption." 238f.

22. Commentary: regression 238-240

See text: "But he that ... " 240

23. **Image: white** 240

SUMMARY: "On closer examination ... manifest, masculine deity." 242

SUMMARY: "Summing up, we ... the next parable." 243

24. Commentary: regression reconsidered 240-243

**CHAPTER VII, THE SECOND PARABLE:
OF THE FLOOD OF WATERS AND OF DEATH,
WHICH THE WOMAN BOTH BROUGHT IN AND PUT TO FLIGHT**

MAIN IMAGE: flood

SUMMARY: "As will be seen ... directly in the text." 244

1. Commentary: the *nigredo* 244

See text: "When the multitude ... " 244

SUMMARY: "Here the nigredo ... invasion of the sea." 244

2. **Image: flood** 244

See text: "... and the arrows." 245

3. **Image: destruction, murder** 245f., 247

See text: "...and my presses ... " 247

4. **Image: death and impregnation** 247, 249

5. **Image: ten** 247f.

6. Commentary: totality 248

SUMMARY: "Looking back, we ... but fertilizing factors." 249

See text: "and after Herod ... " 249

7. **Image: destruction** (another take on) 249f.

8. **Image: sun** 250

See text: "then the future ... " 251

See text: "that death which ... " 251f.

9. Commentary: regression again 250-252

10. **Image: lost (coins and sheep)** 253

11. **Image: ten** 253-256

See text: "It is meet .. " 256

See text: "He that hath ... " 256

12. Commentary: regression again 256

13. **Image: "Eve and Mary"** 256f., 258, 259f.

14. **Image: water** 258f.

**CHAPTER VIII, THE THIRD PARABLE:
OF THE GATE OF BRASS AND BAR OF IRON
OF THE BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY**

MAIN IMAGES: prison/captive, gathering, washing

SUMMARY: "In the course ... a psychic factor." 261

See text: "He who brake ... " 261

1. **Image: prison** 261f.

See text: "shall also move ... " 262

2. **Image: candle** 262-264

See text: "and feed my ... " 264

3. **Image: honey** 264f.

See text: "For they shall ... " 265

4. **Image: gather** 265f.

5. **Image: water** see item #14

See text: "that there may ... " 266

6. Commentary: self crystalizes out 266f.

See text: "For this generation ... " 267

7. **Image: captivity** (repeat) 268, 269-271

8. **Image: we** (repeat) 268f.

See text: "because the daughters ... " 269

9. **Image: captivity** (repeat) 269f.

See text: "In that day ... " 270

10. **Image: one** 269, 274

11. **Image: captive** (repeat) 271

12. Commentary: God's role 272f.

See text: "then every one ... " 273

13. **Image: gathering** (repeat) 273f.

14. **Image: water** (repeat) 275f.

See text: "He that hath ... " 276

15. Commentary: "living development of the individual" 276

**CHAPTER IX, THE FOURTH PARABLE:
OF THE PHILOSOPHIC FAITH,
WHICH CONSISTETH IN THE NUMBER THREE**

MAIN THEME: Holy Spirit, a shift to the Christian standpoint

See text: "Whosoever shall do ... " 277

1. Commentary: shift to trinitarian thinking 277f.

2. Commentary: note the mood. 278, 300, 311

See text: "and his only ... " 278

3. Commentary: "measure, number, and weight" 279

4. Commentary: shift to the Christian standpoint 280

5. Commentary: Holy Spirit 280, 282, 283

6. Commentary: spirit 284

7. Commentary: Jung's interpretation of Father, Son, Holy Spirit 284f.

8. Commentary: *Aurora Consurgens* and the Holy Spirit 285, 286

See text: "For the Father ... " 286

9. Commentary: Holy Spirit and Wisdom 286f.

See text: "To the Holy Spirit ... " 287

10. Commentary: qualities of the Holy Spirit - *coagulatio* and *sublimatio* 287

See text: "In water by ... " 287

See text: "Whence when water ..." 288

11. **Image/commentary: water**, qualities of the Holy Spirit - washes 287, dissolves 288

See text: "And when he ... " 288

12. Commentary: qualities of the Holy Spirit - nourishes 290

See text: "But when he ... " 290

See text: "Of the first ... " 290

13. Commentary: qualities of the Holy Spirit - quickens 290

SUMMARY: "Looking back over ... not yet possible." 293f.

SUMMARY: "Turning back to ... the Holy Spirit." 296

14. Commentary: IMPORTANT! Compare the text now with the original revelation: 293f., 295, 296f.

See text: "Wherefore the aforesaid ... " 297

15. Commentary: work *on* the earth 297, 300

SUMMARY: "We could briefly ... worked with." 300

16. Commentary: wisdom —> *carries* darkness —> Holy Spirit —> *Wisdom is* darkness; note the shift in standpoint 300

Skim texts 300-303

SUMMARY: "The author here ... the light part." 303

17. Commentary: again note the shift in standpoint 301-304

Skim texts 304

18. Commentary: some change has occurred 304-306

See text: "And in the ... " 306

19. **Image: salt** 307

Skim texts 307-311

SUMMARY: "The wearisome shuttling ... operations of the Spirit." 308 (refer to chapter V, question 8)

20. Commentary: again note the shift in standpoint 307-311 especially "The earthly darkness is not included ... " 311

See text: "And to Naaman ... " 311

See text: "He that hath ... " 313

21. **Image: washing** 311-313

SUMMARY: "An understanding of ... his inner stability." 313

22. Commentary: the difficulty of the process 313

23. We'll come to this in the next chapter, question 8 (327) but note here, also, how what the alchemists call the *unio mentalis* underlies the last several parables.

**CHAPTER X, THE FIFTH PARABLE:
OF THE TREASURE HOUSE
WHICH WISDOM BUILT UPON A ROCK**

MAIN IMAGES/THEMES: *unio mentalis -
house/city, fixatio, coniunctio, God-image, rock, (blood)*

SUMMARY: "The fifth parable ... upon a Rock" 314

See text: "Wisdom hath built ... " 314

1. Commentary: the discussion of the four stages of transformation of the self 314-317

SUMMARY: "[T]he wearisome operations ... the God-image itself." 317

2. Commentary: fixation, stability, "confront the anima in person" 317 IMPORTANT! (also take up on 338)

3. **Image: house** 317 (note: fixation = *fixatio* = *coagulatio* 318, 355)

See text: "Oh how blessed ... " 317

4. **Image: city** 317f.

5. Commentary: more on fixation/*fixatio* 318f.

See text: "O how great ... " 319

See text: "so that face ... " 319

6. **Image: conjunction of sun and moon, God-image** 319-323 IMPORTANT! (also taken up on 338)

See text: "for it is ... "

7. **Images: rock, goat's blood, flowing water/fountain** 323-327

8. Commentary: on pages, 323-327, note particularly the creation of the "spiritually stable personality," 324, and the theme of the *unio mentalis*, 327.

9. I will discuss the three stages of the *coniunctio* as Jung discusses them in *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, part VI, and as Edinger discusses them in *The Mysterium Lectures*, pp. 275-306. **This will be a thread we follow from now to the end of the book. See chapter XI, question 9; chapter XII, questions 4, 7 for the *unio mentalis* united with the body (= *unio corporalis*). See chapter XII, question 22 for the *unus mundus*. See also section F, p. 45.**

10. Commentary: note the theme of lacking closer contact with the original experience 327
IMPORTANT! (also taken up on 338)

Skim text: "Yet alas, but ... " 327

Skim text: "For they who ... " 328

See text: "But the beauty ... " 331

11. **Images: house and city** 331

12. **Image: fourteen** 331f.

See texts 332-337

13. Commentary: the fourteen fountains 333-336, 337

Skim text: "He that hath ... " 337

SUMMARY: In conclusion we ... vision gave him. 338

**CHAPTER XI, THE SIXTH PARABLE:
OF HEAVEN AND EARTH
AND THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE ELEMENTS**

MAIN THEME: unio mentalis united with the body (= unio corporalis [366])

SUMMARY: "The whole parable ... man is founded." 339f.

1. Commentary: "*unus mundus*" 339f. but see pages 349, 353, 361, 399, also pages 348, 354f., for another description of this chapter.

See text: "He that is ... " 340

2. Commentary: "he that cometh from heaven" 341

SUMMARY: "The unsolved problem ... by classical philosophy ... " 341

3. **Image: earth** 341f.

See text: "as the Prophet ... " 342

4. **Image: earth** (repeat) 342

See text: "as the holy ... " 342f.

5. **Image: earth** (repeat) 343, 344

6. Commentary: Christ image 343f.

7. **Image: ash** 344f.

See text: "It is the ... " 345

See text: "and when the ... " 345f.

See text: "and therefore the ... " 348

8. **Images: earth and circulatory process** 346f., 348

SUMMARY: "The preceding passages ... tell its glory." 348

See text: "The deep is ... " 348

See text: "because in the ... " 349

9. **Images/commentary: circulatory process** (repeat), **birds**, and reunion with the body 348f.

SUMMARY: "This stage represents ... of the unio mentalis ...)." 349

See text: "This earth, I ... " 350

SUMMARY: "Seen in the ... of the self." 351

10. **Image: cauda pavonis** 350-52

See text: "and it is ... " 352

See text: "for all things ... " 353

SUMMARY: The author's idea ... the dark powers" 353

12. **Images: nigredo, albedo, rubedo** 352

13. **Images/commentary: animals**, "one last outbreak" 352f.

14. Commentary: "'for all things serve thee!'" 353

See text: "as in the ... " 354

See text: "Therefore in the ... " 354

15. Commentary: germination of a new world 354

16. **Image: rod** 354f.

See text: "Then the rivers ... " 355

See text: "Where thy sin ... " 356

17. Commentary: "his own inner rebirth and transformation," the redeemer 355f.
IMPORTANT!

SUMMARY: "This part of ... 'corruption' of unconsciousness." 356

See text: "For the first ... " 356f.

See text: "As Senior saith ... " 357

18. Commentary: first and second Adam 357-360

SUMMARY: This shows plainly ... his Christian faith." 359

See text: "He that hath ... " 360

SUMMARY: "The second Adam ... received into immortality." 361

19. Commentary: "has now become possible" 361

CHAPTER XII, THE SEVENTH PARABLE: OF THE CONFABULATION OF THE LOVER WITH THE BELOVED

MAIN THEMES: **unio mentalis united with the body (= unio corporalis), unus mundus**

1. Look at the first two paragraphs for the use of the Song of Songs in the *Aurora Consurgens* text. 362f. See also section H, p. 53.

She speaks

See text: "Be turned to ... " 363

See text: "for there was ... " 364

2. **Image: darkness** 363f.

He speaks

3. Commentary: note shift in point of view 364

See text: "seeking in the ... " 365

See text: "Hearken therefore O ... " 365

4. Commentary/**Image:** *unio corporalis*, **dove** 364-370

See text: "For thou art ... " 370

5. **Image: ear** 370f.

See text: "for thou shalt ... " 371

See text: "and shalt clothe ... " 374f.

6. **Image: crown** 371

7. **Image: purple garment** 372-376

She speaks

See text: "'Hear all ye ... " 376

8. Commentary/**Image: description of Wisdom, lily** 376f.

See text: "As the fruitful ... "

9. **Image : vine** 377f.

See text: "I am the ... " 378

10. **Images: bed, union** 378f.

See text: "I am all ... " 379

11. **Images: wounding, window, hair** 379

12. Commentary: union 379 IMPORTANT!

Skim text: "I am the ... " 379

See text: "I am the ... " 380

13. Commentary: cross-fertilization 380

See text: "I am exalted ... " 380

14. **Images/commentary: crown, tree, incest** 380f.

See text: "I am the ... " 382

15. Commentary: destructive side of emotions 382

See text: "I am the ... " 383

16. Images: sceptre, key, salt 383

Skim text: "I am that ... " 383

See text: "wherefore have all ... " 383f.

See text: "For from the ... " 385

17. Commentary: cross-fertilization (repeat), *multiplicatio* 384-386

See text: "I give and ... " 386

18. Commentary: mediatrix 386f.

See text: "I am the ... " 387

19. Commentary: "She is God." 387f. IMPORTANT!

He speaks

See text: "O beloved, yea ... " 388

20. Commentary: effect of the union 388-390

See text: "Come forth, daughters ... " 390

21. Commentary: youth 390f.

See text: "Come my beloved ... " 391

See text: "let us therefore ... " 391

See text: "He that hath ... " 398

22. Commentary: *unus mundus*

SUMMARY: "These concluding words ... space-time continuum." 399

SUMMARY: "In conclusion, we ... with the bridegroom." 403