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*
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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


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.

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

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


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

    
    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.


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**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


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

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

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

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


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

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

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


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


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


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

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


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


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


See text: "But when he ... " 290
See text: "Of the first ... " 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


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


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


See texts 332-337


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


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

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

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

18. Commentary: first and second Adam 357-360

**SUMMARY:** This shows plainly ... his Christian faith.” 359

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

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 ... "


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 exalted ... " 380

13. Commentary: cross-fertilization 380

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


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


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