

The Labyrinth Poem

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The labyrinth, the mythical structure conceived by Daedalus, has been a persistent motif throughout the history of Mediterranean culture. We find it both in visual art of all kinds as well as in literature, and also in the fascinating no-man's-land between these two. In the area of word-image interaction there exists a whole collection of texts that were given the name of "poetical labyrinths". The origin of labyrinthine poems goes back to the Rome of Augustus Caesar; the visual pattern of these pieces seems to indicate the pattern of a magical dance, perhaps the ancient Greek dance of the Grue. The idea of the labyrinth reconstructed in the dance was that of a fortress or city. The labyrinth poem in medieval times seems also to encompass the idea of the city, of the heavenly Jerusalem. Medieval poetical labyrinths have definite religious connotations, as is also evident in the later works in this genre, influenced by the Jewish Kabbala. This hermeneutic is still valid for the baroque in the case of a number of works, yet more and more labyrinth poems appear in a secularized, ornamental context. This article traces the most significant of these lines of development of this form and its function.

*[The minotaur] was closed in the labyrinth:
Who entered it, could not leave.*

Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* III, 15, 8, 6

To Shrii Probhal Rainjan Sarkar

Entrance

There are many reasons why an author may hesitate to start writing: the reason in my case is the intricacy and the horizons of the road whose entanglements run through almost the entire expanse of the Mediterranean. To be able to speak about poetic labyrinths one must first enter the ambiguous conceptual space of the labyrinth, a symbol older than historical memory. It has attracted people's attention in specific periods in the history of culture, last during the European baroque. It has also found favor with the contemporary intellect, to which numerous studies and a few experts give evidence.¹

Although the function of the symbol in culture and art has been dealt with in a number of studies, little has been written about poetic labyrinths, the enigmatic form of visual literature whose beginnings fade out of sight in antiquity. A few well-known (and, undoubtedly, other less known) examples testify that

it was continued in the Middle Ages, to reach full bloom in the baroque. The only examples that we know of the tentative interpretation of the meaning and origin of labyrinth poems comes from Ana Hatherly; her works, though wholly dedicated to seventeenth and eighteenth century Portuguese literature, are a source of a great deal of important information.² Her choice of sources and comparative material, and her excellent analysis of the cabalistic-hermetic context of the works of this type, are particularly valuable.

The term "labyrinth poem" was probably coined as late as the seventeenth century among other terms distinguishing the basic *poesis artificiosa* that is usually included among other epigrammatic poetries in baroque poetics. The *labyrinthus poeticus, cubicus, metricus, retrogradus* or *cubus*, as this form of poetry is called, is related to other types of visual literature (such as the *caligramme, carmen quadratum, or carmen cancellatum*) together with which it appears in poetics and on the pages of Baroque works.

There are two basic variations: the letter labyrinth and the word labyrinth.³ Examples of the former originate in Greco-Roman antiquity, and there are two basic types of these which will be referred to as: A — the labyrinth with a center (rectangular, cruciform, rhomboid, or in the shape of other figures), where the first letter of the written text is placed in the center and is the first to be read (Figure 1); and B — the "progressive labyrinth" (my term) in the shape of a rectangle, where the first line constitutes the text proper, and the next lines result from shifting the first one to the left or right (Figure 2). The shift always embraces one character with a letter vanishing at one edge and it or another added at the opposite edge. A progressive labyrinth is complete when the last line is the exact inversion of the first line. I have proposed the term progressive labyrinth to avoid the ambiguity that the *poema cubico* proposed by Ana Hatherly may cause.⁴ In European baroque poetics labyrinth poems were called, alternatively, *carmen labyrinthum* or *carmen cubicum* which did not take into account the above-mentioned differences in construction. Poets acted along similar lines. The term "cubus" was also used with respect to texts where the successive words of the first line are repeated as the first words of the next lines:⁵

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a  b  c  . . .  n
b
c
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n

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A variation of the progressive labyrinth is the spiral-shaped one (Figure 3). There the recurring rhythm of the letters is circular, as a result of which the texts acquire a centric emphasis as is also the case with labyrinths with a true center.

There are different typographic variations of labyrinths with their centers connected, with the arrangement of letters or the color of their ink bringing out the geometric character of the text so that, for instance, the figure of a

cross may be inscribed within. They are all centrally constructed which is often emphasized as a semantic value alongside of the context of sentences. The poetic quality of such works depends primarily on the borderline of meaning, on the formal construction of the text, and the visual shape of the whole.

Word labyrinths were poetic constructions which first appeared in European culture rather late, namely in the baroque. These sometimes repeat the forms of letter labyrinths, in which cases the words of the poems are inscribed within pre-prepared graphic matrices such as chessboard or grid systems. In a number of texts visual play is not at first evident but becomes clear when the method of reading has been discovered. I am not going to deal with the word labyrinth in detail because of its derivative character in comparison with letter labyrinths as regards chronology, origin, and the idea of text as such.⁶

So far nothing has been written in the literature on the Greco-Roman beginnings of the poetic labyrinth. These deserve a good deal of attention which, however, cannot be given before establishing a brief definition of the labyrinth and its basic hermeneutics. The area around the labyrinth construction often tells us more about the meaning of labyrinth texts than do the texts themselves.

Let us cross the threshold of the labyrinth. At the very outset we come across dozens of definitions and realize the deceptive abyss of the construction. Much depends on the mentality of the author of the definition — whether he is

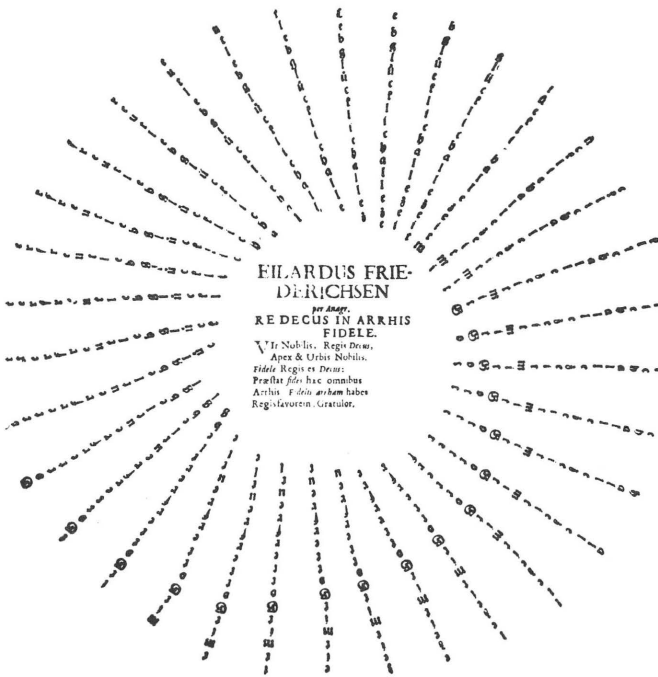


Figure 3. A spiral-shaped labyrinth by Johann Casparus Zetsching, intended as a present for a noble of the Polish king's court on the occasion of the New Year, 1666. From the PAN Library (Gdańsk).

a historian, a saint, an architect, a psychologist, or perhaps a knight. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* says that "in a building [a labyrinth is] a system of chambers and intricate passages, which render egress difficult." The *Wielka Encyklopedia Powszechna* (Great Common Encyclopedia) calls the labyrinth "a system of paths of a varying degree of intricacy, only one of which leads to the goal . . ." To us who have absorbed centuries of human culture a definition like this may be rich in meaning: aboard a jet plane we discover that the whole globe is a network of intricate paths along which points keep moving in different, apparently disconnected directions. While in a labyrinth we are tempted to enquire not just about the author but also about the purpose for which he has constructed his unfathomable, deceptive building.

Thus the labyrinth is both a physical and a symbolic construction. Both were important to the ancients, and the former helped express the latter. According to some researchers labyrinth motifs first occur in European rock engravings of the second millenium BC; from there they spread to the East through the Caucasus to India and Indonesia and still farther. In this connection the peculiar popularity of the labyrinth image in megalithic civilizations on the Atlantic Coast, in the Mediterranean, on the shores of the Indian Ocean, and the Pacific is stressed. Without stopping to discuss the intricacies of migrations and borrowings we may proceed assuming, after Erich Neumann, that the labyrinth is an archetypal global symbol which played an important role in early social formations.⁸ We may only surmise as to the nature of these rites — here the ethnologists' opinion is decisive.

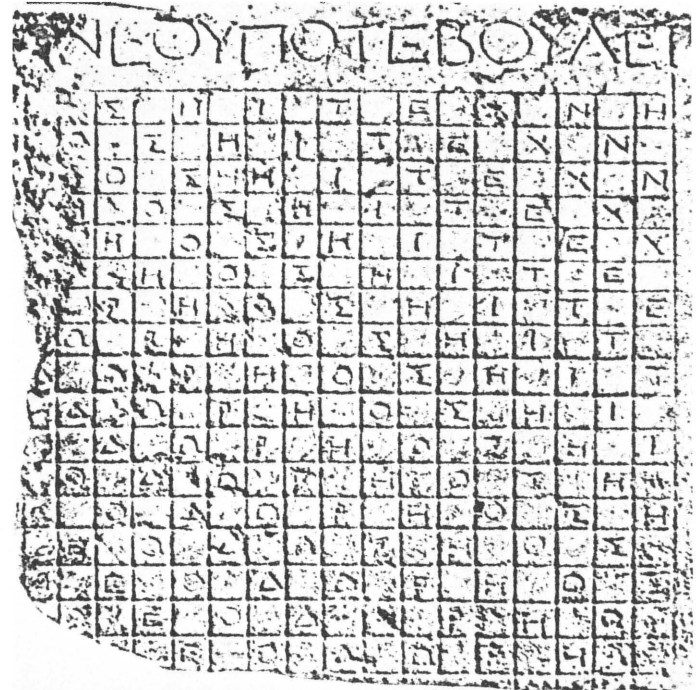
Labyrinths may be natural — a grotto, a system of caves — or man-made. The shape of the former has been determined by nature; the latter are formed by the human mind. There are certainly more plans for these buildings — which may be rectangular, circular, or egg-shaped — than for actual labyrinths. We should not forget that the labyrinth, whose threshold we have not yet crossed, could run through a castle, a system of fortifications, a palace, a temple, or catacombs. Surviving architectural solutions include the walls of Mycenae, the Acropolis at Rimini, the Daulatabad fortress in India. Even today an old Prussian fortress at Kłodzko in Silesia is popularly called a labyrinth.

Some derive the idea of a labyrinth from the gloom of a cave, which reaffirms the chthonian character of the symbol and its link with the earth and with the bull.⁹ If, on the other hand, we subject the labyrinth form to drastic simplification, we obtain a spiral or a system of spirals which, presented in a more geometric form, gives the Greek *meander*. Both genetic qualities appear important: one brings us to Minoan Crete or to Memphis where the sacred bull Apis was worshipped under the name of Usar-Hape, later turned into the Hellenistic Serapis of the Egyptians and Greeks. The spiral, in turn, in almost every cosmological system stands for the infinite, eternally manifested space and the dynamic, cosmic link between micro-order and macro-order. The spiral, like the swastika represents the idea of motion inherent in cosmic dialectic, and the resulting forces, centripetal and centrifugal. From among natural spiral forms, that of a shell is the most obvious to consider: the Greek poet Theodoridas wrote in his epigrams of *einalios labyrinthos*, while

Figure 4. The Phaistos Disk from Crete with a spiral, hieroglyphic inscription in a yet undeciphered language. First half of the second millenium BC.



Figure 5. The labyrinth inscription on the verso of Tabula Iliaca 3.C. "Veronensis I," with the words "Theodors he [i] tekne," from Sadurska. See note 14.



Hesychius defined the labyrinth as a "shell-shaped place."¹⁰ Spiral labyrinths are fairly frequent on the coins of Knossos; many scholars, beginning with Archimedes, have investigated the link between the spiral and the labyrinth in the context of agriculture and plowing, dance, the sacred circle, or the mandala. To all these manifestations and interpretations we may refer the paradigm of the road and wanderer, mystery, dance, and the goal.¹¹

We know a number of texts where the process of putting down characters depends on the run of the spiral. Here, again, motion is the basic factor which is brought out by the construction of the texts. The best-known of these include a set of circular inscriptions called "devil traps" (spells written spirally towards the center where the "demon" is trapped in the end) and numerous poetic labyrinths. Mention should also be made here of the Phaistos disc (Figure 4) which is covered with a spiral of characters in an undeciphered pictographic script.

To elucidate the mystery of the labyrinth hints have been sought for centuries in the etymology of the word. Some derive it from the Greek *labrys*, the double-headed axe which performed a cult function at Knossos and in the earlier cultures of Mesopotamia.¹² The consequences of this theory are important: according to it the palace at Knossos has been identified as a building to which to refer the imprisoned Minotaur's mythical labyrinth. Other theories derive labyrinth from *labra*, originally a cave. Yet others trace it to *laos*, referring to the people and to Zeus's thunder. Yet the decipherment of Minoan Linear B by Michael Ventris defied the earlier hypotheses: the word *da-pu-ri-to-jo* on the tablets interpreted by him was to signify labyrinth and the neighboring *po-ti-ni-ja*, Potnia — the chthonian deity. Santarcangelli, who summarized these views, says in conclusion¹³ that "the origin of the term is still rather vague." He suggests yet another interpretation. He points out that the latter of the suffixes *inthos* and *inda* occurs "solely in the names of children's games and means to have a game, to play," and he asserts that the etymon of *labyrinthos* is "playing upon a mine or cave."

The word "game" has been uttered which means that we have come close to the first known examples of letter labyrinths. They come from the time of Augustus and are linked with the Trojan cycle, particularly the *Iliou Persis* and the *Iliad*. The six carved stone tablets illustrating various episodes from these works have letter labyrinths in Greek on the reverse. All these tablets belong to a set of relics described with the joint name of *Tabulae Iliacae* (Trojan tablets). The six of interest to us come from Rome or its environs and date from between 50 B.C. and 50 A.D. Anna Sadurska, author of a monograph on the *Tabulae Iliacae*, has numbered them as "2.NY" (in New York), "3.C." (Veronensis I (Figure 5)), "4.N." (Bouclier d'Achille), "5.O." (frag. Bouclier d'Achille), "7.Ti." (Thierry) and "15.Ber." (Dressel).¹⁴ The complete reading of the texts in the labyrinth diagrams is:

- 5.O.: [Aspis] Achilleios Teodoreos he t[ecne]
- 4.N.: Aspis Achilleos Teodoreos kat Homerom
- 2.NY.: Ilias Homerou Teodoreos he i tekne
- 3.C.: Teodoreos he i tekne

5.Ti.: [Ilios P]ersis

15.Ber: . . .κ̄ton synthes[is]

Because of the poor state of preservation of the tablets, it is difficult to establish the type of construction of letter labyrinth containing these sentences. Apparently tablets 2 and 3 represent progressive labyrinths, and 5 and 15 labyrinths with a center. Moreover, on tablets 4 and 15 letters are written without spaces while in tablets 2, 3, and 5 there are empty spaces between the letters. Four of the tablets contain the Greek name Theodoros (in the genitive) which is usually interpreted as the name of the owner of the workshop which produced the tablets.

The tablets are decorated with reliefs illustrating various books of the *Iliad*, *Ilios Persis*, and the Trojan Cycle. Sadurska gives a detailed iconographic description in her work. I shall only mention the most frequent images that are directly linked with the proposed interpretation of the labyrinth inscriptions. These are: Troy and its walls (2.NY.; 3.c.; 7.Ti) and the scenes featuring Achilles, notably ones related to his famous shield. 4.N. "Bouclier d'Achille" and 5.O. frag. "Bouclier d'Achille" carry an exact illustration of an excerpt from Book XVIII of the *Iliad*, 11. 480-608, the description of the shield made by Hephaestus, the divine master-smith. Achilles' shield also occurs on tablets 2.NY., 3.C., and 7.Ti, and on other Trojan tablets. Likewise, the letter labyrinths (in the literature on the Trojan tablets these are usually called "diagrams" or "magic squares") on the reverses of the two representations of Achilles' shield contain the sentence: "Theodoros made Achilles' shield" and "Achilles' shield by Theodoros according to Homer" which brings us to Book XVIII with its beautiful description of divine skills. In the middle of the shield Hephaestus showed the earth, sky, and sea; the sun, the moon, and the constellations — the whole cosmos. The five layers around the center represent, in turn: (1) two cities, a city of peace (wedding and litigation scenes) and of war (ambush, fight, and chase); (2) the earth and three seasons (plowing, harvesting, and vintage); (3) pastoral scenes (a bull attacked by a lion, and a quiet flock of sheep); (4) a dancing pageant; and (5) the ocean surrounding the earth.

In this remarkable symbolic representation, the fourth layer is of particular interest to us. These are Homer's words:¹⁵

Next to these he cut a dancing place
All full of turnings, that was like the admirable maze
for faire-hair'd Ariadne made by cunning Daedalus;
And in it youths and virgins danc't, all young and beautiful,
And glewed in another's palmes. Weeds that the wind did tesse,
The virgines wore, the youths, woven cotes that cast a faint dimme glosse,
like that of oyle. Fresh garlands too the virgines' temples crowned;
The youths gilt swords wore at their thighs, with silver bawdricks bound.
Sometimes all wound close in a ring, to which as fast as they spunne
As any wheele a Turner makes, being tried how it will runne
while he is set; and out againe, as full of speed, they wound,
Not one left fast or breaking hands. A multitude stood round,

Delighted with their nimble sport: to end which, two began
[Midst all] a song, and, turning, sung the sport's conclusion.

Ariadne's dance is the dance of the *geranos*, the crane, described in many ancient sources and in ethnographic studies. In the *Life of Theseus* Plutarch describes this dance performed by the hero and the young people he has freed on their way back to Athens. We read about "the dance consisting of certain measured turnings and returnings imitative of the windings and twisting of the labyrinth." Dicaearchus says that dancing went on around the Ceratonian altar that consisted of horns taken from the left side of bulls and heifers. He writes that "the dance is called among the Delians 'the crane.'" ¹⁶ When Theseus danced it in Knossos, men were said to dance with women for the first time ever. The tradition of the dance is confirmed in Roman times by Pollux who describes a train of dancers holding one another's hands and imitating labyrinthine turns.¹⁷ The meaning of the name of the dance, *geranos* (the crane) is not clear. The Polish ethnologist Stefan Czarnowski has indicated the role of cranes in divination and navigation.¹⁸ Thus, the crane could be the guide to the labyrinth or center of a fortress.

There are several versions of the myth of Theseus, the Minotaur, and the labyrinth; in principle the labyrinth already had a mythical significance to the Greeks. The best-known version says that Theseus came to Crete to free the Athenian youths from the terrible Minotaur, half man and half bull, the offspring of Pasi-phaë (the wife of the Cretan king, Minos) by a bull sacrificed to Poseidon. The monster was to be fed on human flesh, youths and maidens sent as a tribute from Athens once every nine years.¹⁹

The myth is commented upon in various ways. Straightforward interpretation is difficult because of the wealth of meanings and their universal symbolism. Here the labyrinth is really an intricate network of paths. Basically the myth speaks about conquering the building and the mysterious power it contains (the monstrous bull). In Homer the bull is harbingered by the dancers in the middle of the pageant whom we know from representations of tauromachy in Minoan culture. Later the structure of the myth acquired a very clear, unambiguous hermeneutic (salvation), but even in the Greek times it hinted at "life seen as a road" and the "mystery of initiation."²⁰

Ariadne's thread that we are now handling — which might have been unravelled from the dancers' rope, tying up the Trojan tablets with the dance on Achilles' shield — prompts other questions, namely about the relation between the dance, the letter labyrinths, and the meaning of the tablets. A number of hints direct us to the Fortified City, Homer's "Troy with imperial towers." Later tradition and a number of historical sources describing contemporary "Trojan" dances and games, confirm the image of a magic dancing pageant entering an architecturally intricate building or a fortified city, which iconography of the labyrinth is known from quite a few ancient mosaics. Czarnowski stresses that the *geranos* dance and the *ludi troiani* are identical, and he asserts that these were originally Aegean dances which later spread throughout the Mediterranean and farther, to Scandinavia and Finland.²¹ In Germany, the *Trojantanz*, a dance consisting of entering a labyrinth-fortress combined

with sexual initiation, was danced even in the eighteenth century. Ethnologists describe the many rites of this type where the participating young men (often armed) and girls enter a marked-out area (a labyrinth, a spiral) in a dancing pageant, then pair off and leave.

A painting in the Etruscan *oinochoe* from Tragliatella (ca. 600 BC) representing horsemen, a labyrinth with the inscription *TRUIA* in its center and two couples in amorous embrace, is an important source for us here. Painted on the equestrians' shields are birds, perhaps cranes. The word "Truia" undoubtedly signifies "Troy," the symbol of a fortified city in antiquity and later in the Middle Ages.²² In his extremely interesting studies on the significance of the 6th Book of Vergil's *Aeneid*, W. F. Jackson Knight stresses the link between dances and the magic of city walls, fortifications, the rite of founding a city, and also, funeral rites.²³ We must not forget that the "imperial towers of Troy" fell only as a result of a stratagem, the famous Trojan horse, which the citizens of Troy themselves brought inside their city within a dancing pageant, crashing a city wall. Dancing in circles was believed to have magic power; it implied either marking out an area or an action aimed at the opposite, depending perhaps upon the direction of revolution. The link between dancing, the Trojan games, and the idea of the fortress and besieging the city, on the one hand, and our Trojan tablets, on the other, is confirmed by the diagram on 7.Ti. containing the words *Iliou Persis* (the conquering of Troy). Most of the scenes present in the reliefs decorating the tablets are also depictions of besieged cities, among other images.²⁴

We know from other sources that in Roman times Trojan dances were very popular. Vergil writes about it in Book V of the *Aeneid* where he describes the funeral rites in honor of Aeneas' father, Anchises. The Trojans, who have left their city that was destroyed by the war, hold the ceremony in Sicily a year after Anchises' death. When the games are over, Aeneas orders the youth of Troy to take part in a horse race. Led by Julius, the son of Aeneas, a group of boys on horseback begins to race in a big circle.²⁵

They gallop apart in pairs, and open their files three and three in deploying bands, and, again at the call, wheel about and bear down with levelled arms. Next they enter on other charges and other retreats in opposite spaces, and interlink circle with circle, and wage the armed phantom of battle. And now they discover their backs in flight, now turn their lances to the charge, now plight peace and gallop side by side. As once of old, they say, the labyrinth in high Crete had a tangled path between blind walls, and a thousand ways of doubling treachery, where marks to follow broke off in the maze unmastered and irretraceable: even in such a chase do the children of Troy entangle their footsteps and weave the game of flights and battle; like dolphins who, swimming through the wet seas, cut Carpathian or Libyan . . .

This manner of riding, these games Ascanius first revived, when he girt Alba the Long about the walls, and taught their celebration to the old Latins in the fashion of his own boyhood with the youth of Troy about him. The Albans taught it [to] their children; on from them mighty Rome received it and kept the ancestral observance; and now the boys are called Troy, and the Trooping Trojans.

Vergil wrote these words in Augustus's times, which are also the time of origin of the Trojan tablets and our letter labyrinths. These were popular writings in the Empire. Suetonius mentions them frequently in his *Lives*, and so do other authors.²⁶ Many Caesars of the Julian-Claudian Dynasty organized Trojan or Pyrrhic dances, and Nero and Tiberius even took part in them as young men. At that time the link with labyrinth symbolism was evident: during the dances held by Nero, two *tableaux vivants* were shown: of a bull covering a heifer, and of the fall of Icarus.

Therefore, the Trojan tablets, together with their labyrinths, are linked with the Trojan games and have a reference to the ancient magic rites of besieging a fortress, a labyrinth city. Essential elements of the rite included a symbol of the labyrinth represented in dancing, the horse (this being a horse race), and the circular, spiral nature of the dance, which consisted of intersecting circles. The layout of the inscription in the letter labyrinths has a reference to dancing, and the inscriptions may be read in intersecting circles. The "dancing" inscriptions in the diagram refer to the conquering of the city (*Iliou persis*) and Achilles' shield. The magic and mimetic qualities of the inscription correspond to the magic of the dance and the magic of the shield. The meaning of the shield is not quite clear: it represents a whole symbolic system, probably with an established inner order. Yet the siege scenes and the dancing circle certainly refer to the siege of Troy by the Achaeans. It would hardly be conceivable that Hepheastus wasted his divine effort and Homer his genius for drawing ornaments.

In the deeper symbolic layer the *Lusus Troiae* could have had a more metaphysical meaning. The fact that Aeneas organized the young Trojans to celebrate the anniversary of his father's death suggests a link between the labyrinth, the dance, and the lower world, of which we spoke before. Jackson Knight dedicated a good deal of space to the labyrinth symbol in Vergil's *Aeneid* Book VI, describing Aeneas on his way to Apollo's temple at Cumae. On the temple gate, along with other symbols, there is an image of Daedalus' building. Next, the hero visits Sibyl's oracle and the prophet escorts him to the entrance of Hades, where Aeneas descends, and where, after many perilous adventures, he meets his father. Anchises discloses the secret of the after-life and reincarnation to Aeneas. Knight interprets the whole mystery as a description of the process of initiation.²⁷

Indeed, the labyrinth may be seen as a symbol of the most profound initiation. In *Phaedon* Plato speaks about the winding route to be pursued after death.²⁸ In Christian culture the paradigm of life, death, and salvation provides numerous examples of "psychic iconography." In any case, at least from the time of Galenus (second century AD), the Trojan dance was considered sacred in Rome.²⁹ In the *Trojan Women* Seneca speaks about the purifying dance: *solemne . . . troici lusus sacrum . . .*,³⁰ and Plutarch mentions the *hiera hippodromia*, the sacred horse race.³¹ The words *Hiereia hierai* on the Trojan tablet 4.N. placed under the diagram with a letter labyrinth may be a reference to this.³²

The most important of the unsettled questions is the name Theodorus,

which occurs on four tablets decorated with letter labyrinths and on one devoid of a labyrinth (1.A. Tabula Iliaca Capitolina).³³ Theodorus has been identified with a painter of this name who allegedly illustrated the Trojan cycle and who is mentioned by Pliny. According to another hypothesis he is the author of the *Troica*, hence also of the inscriptions on the sculptured tablets. Sadurska, the author of a monograph on them, suggests a third solution: Theodorus is the name of the sculptor, the maker of the tablets, and a temporary workshop owner. The word *tekne*, following his name, appears in this connection.³⁴ Yet the stylistic differences among the bas-reliefs on the tablets testify against the hypothesis that Theodorus was the author/sculptor. Let me put forward a different hypothesis:

In Books XXXIV and XXXVI of his *Natural History* Pliny mentions Theodorus, "creator of the labyrinth on the island of Samos." Allegedly designed by the Samian artists Zmilis, Rhoecus, and Theodorus, the labyrinth in question was probably the Heraeum on Samos. Pliny adds that "Theodorus cast himself in bronze and the likeness was startling, which, combined with remarkably precise execution, greatly added to his fame . . ." He is also said to have invented the protractor, the level, the chisel, and the key.³⁵

We may further ask about the reading of the mutilated diagram on tablet 15.Ber and the mysterious letter "I" preceding the word *tekne* on tablets 2.NY. and 3.C. In the former case we have only the surviving letters *kton sythes*, which Sadurska proposes to interpret as *anakton synthesis* (or "synthesia").³⁶ This may refer to the word *anaktonia*, to lead horses. But the meaning of the letter "I" remains ambiguous. Sadurska has interpreted the words placed under the letter labyrinth on tablet 2.NY, *grama meson katageitai*, with reference to this letter. I suggest that it is, rather, an indication of the non-surviving central point of the labyrinth, whose existence is undoubtedly hinted at by the construction of the text.

We have gone a long way into our labyrinth. Trojan dances were continued in Rome up to the fifth century as is indicated by the fragment of Claudius Claudianus' work "De VI. Cons. Honorii" (originating in the time of Arcadius and Honorius' consulate) where dancing groups "form circles more intricate than the run of the River Meander and the labyrinth of Gortynia."³⁷ At that time, the empire of Christian culture was in the process of construction, and it is now time for us to move from the Wall of Troy to the Walls of Jerusalem and Jericho.

Center

At the threshold of the Middle Ages we come close to the central point of the labyrinth, which was precisely defined in that period. We know only a few contemporary letter labyrinths, although the symbolism of the labyrinth went through another full bloom in the Middle Ages, especially in the twelfth to fourteenth centuries. With the passage of time, probably more letter labyrinths from this time will be revealed.

Christianity very soon picked up the ancient labyrinth, which is no accident considering the symbolic potentials inherent in the sign. Christian understand-

ing of life as a road, as spiritual transformation, and the monotheistic idea of the Center (*Civitas Dei* and Paradise), these forms and concepts have been encompassed graphically by the sign of the labyrinth almost from its outset. The constructional centralism of the sign appears particularly important, and the sign of the cross is immanent in labyrinths with a center.

The center of such labyrinths, placed on the floor of medieval churches and cathedrals, was called "Heaven" or "Jerusalem," and the labyrinths themselves were called "Jerusalem Way" or "Daedale," "Domus Daedali," or "Meander," which is a clear indication that the traditional symbolism was deliberately continued.

The best-known medieval letter labyrinth is the cruciform poem by Venantius Fortunatus (ca. 540-601) (Figure 6); in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the poem circulated in central Europe under the name "St. Thomas' Cross."³⁸ In the center the word *crux* (cross) radiates in four directions (arms), and it develops into the sequence *Crux Domini Mecum*, *Crux est quam semper adoro*, *Curx mihi refugium*, and *Crux mihi certa salus*. The shape of the poem does not only bring out its message — which happens also in the majority of later, baroque visual poems — but it helps one read new meanings. The semantic composition of this work is a true intermedium (cf. Dick Higgins), and the poem "transcends the text." The word "Crux" is an indication of the center, which can only be approached through this word, from whatever direction. The directions of the words inscribed along the arms are also important: adoration links up the bottom with the center, and salvation rises towards the "above."

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SVLASASALVS
LASATASAL
SATRTAS
TRERT
RE CER
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CIHIC
M      IH IHI      M
VI     HIMIH     CV
IGV    IMXMI     MEC
GVFERIHIMXVXMDOMINIME
VFERIHIMXVRVXDOMINIM
FERIHIMXVRCRVXDOMINI
VFERIHIMXVRVXDOMINIM
GVFERIHIEXVXEDOMINIME
IGV    SE XES     MEC
VI     TSEST     CV
M      QTSTQ      M
      VQTQV
      AVQVA
      MAVAM
      SMAMS
      ESMSE
      MESEM
      PMPMP
      EPMPE
      AREPERA
      ODARERADO
      ORODARADORO

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Figure 6. The cruciform labyrinth poem by Venantius Fortunatus (540-601). From Dick Higgins, *George Herbert's Pattern Poems: in Their Tradition* (West Glover, VT: Unpublished Editions, 1977) pl. 14.

A I S E L C E C L E S I A
 I S E L C E A E C L E S I
 S E L C E A T A E C L E S
 E L C E A T C T A E C L E
 L C E A T C N C T A E C L
 C E A T C N A N C T A E C
 E A T C N A S A N C T A E
 C E A T C N A N C T A E C
 L C E A T C N C T A E C L
 E L C E A T C T A E C L E
 S E L C E A T A E C L E S
 I S E L C E A E C L E S I
 A I S E L C E C L E S I A

Figure 7. A *carmen quadrum* by Publilius Optatianus Porfyrius (fl. 325), a construction similar to that of letter labyrinths. From Ernst, "Zahl und Mass . . ." See note 45.

Figure 8. The "Sancta Ecclesia" labyrinth from El-Asnan (formerly Orléansville).

S	A	N	C	T	E	T	V	I	V	A	T	I	S	C	A	E	S	A	R	M	I	S	E	R	E	R	E	S	E	R	E	N	V	S			
A	V	G	V	S	T	E	O	M	N	I	P	O	T	E	N	S	A	L	M	O	M	O	R	T	A	L	I	A	C	V	N	C	T	A			
N	V	M	I	N	E	L	A	E	T	I	F	I	C	A	N	S	A	N	O	B	I	S	A	D	G	A	V	D	I	A	N	O	M	E	N		
C	O	N	S	T	A	N	T	I	N	E	T	V	M	F	E	C	T	V	N	D	I	C	A	R	M	I	N	I	S	E	X	H	O	C			
E	D	V	C	E	D	E	T	M	V	S	A	S	N	A	M	E	D	T	R	I	S	T	I	S	C	V	R	A	R	E	C	V	S	A	T		
T	E	G	R	E	G	I	O	S	A	C	T	V	S	I	A	M	S	E	D	E	N	T	C	R	I	M	I	N	A	P	A	R	C	A	T		
T	V	N	C	M	E	L	I	V	S	D	O	M	I	N	V	M	T	E	V	O	X	S	E	C	V	R	A	S	O	N	A	B	I	T	E		
V	I	R	T	V	T	V	M	R	E	C	T	O	R	P	O	T	V	I	T	V	I	X	P	A	N	D	I	C	E	R	E	V	E	R	V	I	
V	I	X	M	I	H	I	C	A	L	L	I	O	P	E	P	A	V	I	T	A	N	T	I	C	A	L	T	I	M	D	I	C	E	R	E	V	
A	T	D	N	V	I	T	A	V	S	I	A	P	R	E	C	E	M	V	A	T	I	S	Q	V	E	E	D	I	C	E	R	E	F	A	T	A	
T	R	I	S	T	I	A	S	I	G	N	A	T	O	P	A	R	A	T	E	S	V	T	L	I	M	I	T	E	C	L	A	V	D	A	T	I	
I	V	R	E	P	A	R	I	C	A	R	M	E	N	M	E	D	I	S	V	T	C	O	N	A	I	N	O	M	I	S	O	N	A	I	N	O	M
S	I	T	N	O	T	A	P	R	I	M	A	S	V	I	E	T	S	I	T	P	A	R	S	E	F	X	T	I	M	A	T	A	L	I	S	C	
C	E	V	M	E	D	I	A	E	P	R	I	M	I	S	O	C	C	V	R	R	E	N	S	A	P	T	I	V	S	I	S	T	I	S	C		
A	E	D	I	A	T	E	R	V	M	I	N	E	S	E	T	A	E	R	S	Q	V	A	E	D	I	V	I	D	I	T	O	R	S	A	F		
E	M	E	D	I	O	C	A	L	V	T	E	S	S	E	Q	V	E	A	T	V	E	R	S	V	Q	V	E	R	E	F	E	R	B	E	R		
S	A	N	C	T	E	T	V	I	V	A	T	I	S	C	A	E	S	A	R	M	I	S	E	R	E	R	E	S	E	R	E	N	V	S	A		
A	L	M	E	S	A	L	V	S	O	R	B	I	S	R	O	M	A	E	D	E	C	V	S	I	N	C	L	I	T	E	F	A	M	A	R		
R	E	M	E	L	I	O	R	P	I	E	T	A	T	E	P	A	R	E	N	S	A	D	M	A	R	T	I	A	V	I	C	T	O	A	R		
M	I	T	I	O	R	A	D	V	E	N	I	A	M	P	E	R	M	V	L	C	E	N	S	A	P	E	R	A	L	E	G	V	I	A	R		
I	S	P	E	S	D	A	T	A	P	L	E	N	A	B	O	N	I	S	E	T	F	E	L	I	X	C	O	P	I	A	R	E	B	V	S	E	
E	X	I	M	I	V	M	C	O	L	V	M	E	N	V	E	T	E	R	Y	M	V	I	R	T	C	V	L	T	E	F	I	D	E	Q	V	E	
R	O	M	A	E	M	A	G	N	E	P	A	R	E	N	S	A	R	E	M	I	S	C	I	V	I	L	I	B	V	S	V	L	T	O	R	E	
R	E	B	V	S	M	I	S	A	S	A	L	V	S	P	E	R	E	I	M	E	N	S	C	L	A	R	A	V	P	E	R	N	E	R	E		
R	E	B	E	L	L	I	S	E	C	V	R	A	Q	V	I	E	R	T	E	P	A	X	O	P	T	O	M	N	I	A	P	E	R	T	E		
S	O	L	I	S	I	V	R	A	S	V	I	S	F	I	D	I	S	S	I	M	A	D	E	X	T	O	R	A	M	A	R	I	T	A	R		
E	S	O	C	I	A	L	E	I	V	G	V	M	P	R	A	S	E	B	E	T	C	O	N	S	O	R	T	I	A	V	I	T	A	R	E		
R	E	S	P	I	C	E	M	E	F	A	L	S	O	D	E	C	R	E	I	M	I	N	E	M	A	X	I	M	E	R	E	C	T	O	R	E	
N	V	N	L	I	S	A	F	F	L	I	C	T	V	M	T	O	E	N	A	N	A	M	C	E	T	E	R	A	C	A	V	S	A	N	E		
V	I	N	C	E	P	I	A	E	T	S	O	L	I	T	O	S	V	I	A	V	E	N	E	R	A	B	I	L	E	N	V	M	E	N	V		
S	A	N	C	T	E	T	V	I	V	A	T	I	S	C	A	E	S	A	R	M	I	S	E	R	E	R	E	S	E	R	E	N	V	S	A		

Two other texts of interest come from tenth-century Spanish illuminated codices. One is a variation of a progressive letter labyrinth; the process of reading should start from the central letter in the first line, *Florentinus indignum memorare*. We know nothing of this Florentinus whom the text commemorates. He was perhaps the copyist of a commentary on the Book of Job by Gregory the Great which contained the labyrinth.³⁹ The other labyrinth, one of six visual poems by Vigilán, a monk from San Martín de Albelda in Rioja, also performs a commemorative function. The poems come from a manuscript attributed to the year 974, which was fifty years after the founding of the monastery.⁴⁰ Compared to the five Latin *carmina quadrata* with complex *versus intexti*, Vigilán's letter labyrinth has a rather simple construction. Starting from the center we read the sentence *ob honorem Sancti Martini*. The text commemorates the patron saint of the monastery, which is reminiscent of the placing of effigies of bishops or architects in the center of cathedral labyrinths (e.g., Chartres, Reims, Saint-Omer) indicating the protective role of the sign.⁴¹ Incidentally, the small number of surviving medieval letter labyrinths (of the extant ones, three are below) is rather striking, considering their solemn message. A similarity between them and the *carmina figurata* (square visual poems, mentioned above), a number of which have survived since the Middle Ages, is evident. The *carmina figurata* also have a labyrinthine nature due to the several layers of meaning perceived while reading the autonomous sentences (those inscribed inside of the text proper, the *versus intexti*). Caruso and Polara give a precise description of poems of this type in their *Iuvenilia Loeti*:⁴²

The technique of the *versus intexti* [consisted of the following]: not only was the number of the letters in each line of verse fixed and immutable, but some letters were obligatory. Composition proceeded like this: the page was usually divided into 1225 small squares (35 × 35); a figure was traced by means of words whose large patterned letters fill up the squares. Around and through these lines the verses were written in smaller letters, beginning in this way to fill up the entire page, and at this point one passes finally to the composition of the actual, real lines of verse, filling the remaining empty holes with letters that form words that give meaning to the whole text.

This, typically "mosaic" writing technique is somewhat reminiscent of letter labyrinths (Figure 7). It was invented by Publilius Optatianus Porphyrius (fl. 325 AD), a poet who lived at the time of Constantine the Great and who was the author of a panegyric in honor of the emperor made up of such poems.⁴³ The emperor's letter of gratitude for the poet's skillful gift has survived.⁴⁴ We may surmise that Optatianus, who wrote his work in exile to obtain the emperor's pardon, did not conceive his literary concept out of nothing, but based it on existing inscriptions with a well-defined, non-routine purpose such as, for instance, the similar labyrinths in the church at Orléansville, of which more in a moment. Otherwise he would not have dared to present his poems to the divine emperor who, in turn, would not have accepted them as enthusiastically as he did. In effect, Optatianus was nominated consul, and Constantine spoke of his composition in highly laudatory terms pointing out the *chrismon* they contained. The origin and the later popularity of the *carmina quadrata* during

the Carolingian Renaissance should probably be considered in relation to labyrinth poems.⁴⁵ Another letter labyrinth, likewise a panegyric and dedicated to the Empress of Byzantium (Eudocia Macrenbolitissa, 1021-1096, wife to Romanus IV) has also survived.⁴⁶

The most interesting letter labyrinths, confirming in a way our interpretation of the texts on the Trojan tablets, are the earliest examples of medieval work of this sort (Figure 8). Both come from the San Reparatus Church at El-Asnan in Algeria (formerly Castellum Tingitanum and later, in French, Orléansville), founded about 328 AD.⁴⁷ The chancel of the church contains two texts similar to Vigilán's poem. One includes *Marinus sacerdos* and commemorates a priest's name, which may also have a protective role. The other letter labyrinth occurs on the axis of the north door to the basilica and was placed inside a graphic representation of a much larger labyrinth (diameter about three meters). Beginning with the center of this labyrinthine text we read *Sancta Ecclesia*; yet in order to reach the center one has first to get through the square labyrinth surrounding the former labyrinth. A winding thread invites us to enter. The entrances to the labyrinths are situated along the axis of the entrance to the basilica. The whole construction has been interpreted as a symbolic commemoration of theological disputes directed against the schism of the Donatists. It seems that a labyrinth within a labyrinth represents rather the idea of the interpenetration of two worlds: *Civitas Dei* (city of God, i.e., the church) and *Civitas Mundi* (city of the world) as outlined by St. Augustine in *De Civitate Dei*.⁴⁸

The most important function of labyrinths occurring on church floors is brought out by the later tradition developed in connection with similar constructions in medieval churches at Auxerre, Arras, Sens, Bayeux, Amiens, and others.⁴⁹ In Poland a labyrinth of this type occurred on the floor of the Włocławek Cathedral (fourteenth century). The symbolism of labyrinths placed upon the floors of medieval churches is basically similar to that ascribed to them at present: the labyrinth symbolized life, a path full of obstacles and suffering. The center symbolized Jerusalem the heavenly and it was frequently called after this biblical city, or Heaven. The figures might have been instrumental in now-forgotten rites, most probably symbolizing a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. They had the character of mysteries and illustrated the point of wandering amidst obstacles and sorrows towards the ultimate communion with Christ in the City of God. A number of documents evidence the presence of dance in labyrinth mysteries. A document of 1412 describes "Easter dances" in the Auxerre Cathedral, in which novices participated together with the monks from the monastery there. The novices brought a ball which was so big that it could not be held in one hand. It was passed on to the specially dressed "decanus" who chanted Easter litanies and performed a ceremonial dance; others danced in a circle around the Daedalus, i.e., the labyrinth. Then the dean handed the ball to all the dancers in turn, and the sound of the organ accompanied the movement of the dancers. After the dance and singing the participants sat down to breakfast. In 1538 the French Parliament banned "games" in church labyrinths, allegedly because the cries of the playing children and the whole noise offended the sacred character of the place.⁵⁰

Thus we see the same elements of the labyrinth myth in medieval scenery: a labyrinth drawing, dance, and mystery. Labyrinths in cathedrals still have something pagan in them: they are often called “Daedalus,” accompanied by references to the Greek myth of Theseus, Ariadne, and the Minotaur, and almost none of the labyrinths contain the sign of the cross or other Christian symbols. The inscription opposite the entrance to the labyrinth in the Lucca Cathedral reads:

HIC QUEM CRETICUS EDIT
DEDALUS EST LABERINTHUS
DE QUO NULLUS VADERE
QUIVET QUI FUIT INTUS
NI THESEUS GRATIS ARIANAE
STAMINE JUTUS.⁵¹

“This is the labyrinth that was built by Daedalus the Creatan. Nobody who was inside could go out of it, except for Theseus with the help of Ariadne’s thread.”

There are grounds for believing that the Christian imagination has absorbed the main personae of the Greek drama: Theseus, who symbolizes the mortal wanderer; Ariadne, the immortal soul and the divine element in general; and the Minotaur, the impure force. The concept of the city brings an important change. Although the Biblical story of Jericho⁵² evokes associations with the Greek ritual of the “magic walls,” the later Christian hermeneutics of the labyrinth understood the City as an idea, as heavenly Jerusalem, Paradise, the goal of believers pursuing the intricate ways of life and carrying the burden of the cross. Hence the Center is distinguished as a place of spiritual fulfillment and purification which, perhaps, has taken the place of the former initiation. This is also why the baptismal font is placed in the center of the labyrinth.⁵³ Hence also, the architectural archetype of the Holy of Holies, the distinct, strictly defined place. The next period of fascination with the labyrinth, the baroque, established this exegesis.

This is not the occasion to elaborate on the different motifs inherent in the vast subject-edifice. We have finally reached the Center, the *Civitas Dei*, the place of alchemical transformations represented graphically. From here one could follow the crane in its flight, or track relics of dances in England, Scotland, Scandinavia, Germany, Pomerania, or search atlases for the Troys scattered over the continent, or trace relics of mysterious labyrinth buildings. Yet to be able to say a little more about the letter labyrinths of the baroque, a period to which we owe most surviving examples (including the term “poetic labyrinth”), we should concentrate for a while upon the magic squares and the cabalistic tradition which largely affected the popularity of this form of literature in the seventeenth century.

Magic Square

This term is as enigmatic as its description; in fact, the word “magic” is abused in all cases when the operation of the given form or sign is above the commentator’s rational comprehension, although in a different cultural context it could be explained in a “rational” way. Yet this is what happens to signs

and symbols. Magic squares, both numerical and those made up of letters, occur primarily in the sphere of influence on gnosticism, hermetic knowledge, and the Cabbala. Among the best known examples is the famous square SATOR, with no directly apparent link with the origin of letter labyrinths except for its formal similarities.⁵⁴ Squares originating in the culture of the Hebrew language, many of which are in fact letter labyrinths, are different.

We are not going to go far into any of the labyrinthine entanglements marked “hermeticism” or “cabbala.” There is a vast literature on the subject, and Ana Hatherly has discussed the link between these areas of cognition and visual texts with accuracy.⁵⁵ We should concentrate on what is directly related to the history of our labyrinths which was to reach full bloom in the baroque when elements of the Cabbala of language played a considerable role in European culture.

Both numerical squares and Hebrew letter labyrinths express the essential qualities of Jewish mysticism. Their construction (and concept) indicates the process of emanation of the hidden, transcendental *En Soph*, the emanation of One into Many, reversible in its character (Figure 9). Hebrew labyrinths also express the monotheistic nature of Jewish religion and are based on certain qualities of the language, hence also of the human mind. The Hebrew alphabet — whose letters have a dual value, semantic and numerical — plays a peculiar role in it. The mystical interpretation of the Cabbala enriched them with symbolic and hidden meanings. Here the process of emanation went as far as the language, script, and numerical system, understood as a stage of the process (just as it was by the Pythagoreans), an intermediary between the Creator and the Creation. The twenty-two letters of the alphabet constituted a form of manifested world, a form of things through which God directs all existence. “In the beginning was the word” (John 1,1); “And God said, Let there be light; and there was light” (Genesis 1,3). Hence the idea of the Holy Script and holy scriptures in general, of which we read in the closing words of the Bible, “Should anyone take away from the words in this book of prophecy, God will take away

Figure 9. The “magical square” of the silver (the moon), a Hebrew cabbalistic device, “Kâmê’a.” From Budge. See note 57.

37	78	29	70	21	62	13	54	5
6	38	79	30	71	22	63	14	46
47	7	39	80	31	72	23	55	15
16	48	8	40	81	32	64	24	56
57	17	49	9	41	73	33	65	25
26	58	18	50	1	42	14	34	66
67	27	59	10	51	2	43	75	35
36	68	19	60	11	52	3	44	76
77	28	69	20	61	12	53	4	45

לז	עה	כט	ע	כא	סב	יג	נד	ה
ו	לה	קט	ל	עא	כב	סג	יד	מו
מז	ז	לט	פ	לא	קכ	בג	נה	יה
יו	מה	ה	מ	פא	לכ	סד	כד	נו
נז	יז	מט	ט	מא	עג	לג	סה	כה
כו	נה	יה	נ	א	מב	עד	לד	סו
סז	כו	נט	י	נא	ב	מג	עה	לה
לו	סה	יט	ס	יא	נב	ג	מד	עו
טז	בח	סט	כ	סא	יב	נג	ד	מה

from him his share in the tree of life and the Holy City, described in the book” (Revelation 22, 19).

The mysticism of the script and language in the Cabbala rested on the conviction that the duration of things, which come from the all-emanaing Creator, may be controlled by controlling their form, implying letters and words. They were considered a form of reality, while thinking usually carries us away from being. Hence cabbalistic practices such as Abraham Abulafia’s *Tzeruf* and others — like the *Gematria*, *Temura*, and *Notarikon*⁵⁶ — consisted of the contemplating mystic’s transformative operations during which thoughts, disintegrated into literal forms of substance, were later transformed into the Name, which is reminiscent of the Eastern mantric techniques of Yoga and Tantra. Despite the primitive interpretations by some scholars and researchers on religion, the essence of these endeavors did not lie in magical manipulations on words identified with things but in introvert work performed on the mind understood as a part of the Great Whole, an effort aimed to being about the final union between micro- and macro-order (*Devekut*), freeing the mind from its individual traits and removing all obstacles.

Numerical squares symbolized the Cosmos of order to whose manifestations, such as planets, they referred.⁵⁷ Hebrew letter manuscripts, on the other hand, which often included mathematical semantics, referred to the One and to the principle of his operation. Words written in the squares of the “labyrinth” on Samaritan amulets (Figure 10) say “Lord, Great God,” “Elohim” (read from the central letter of the labyrinth), “YHVH our God is YHVH One” (*Shama Israel, Adonai Elohim Adonai Ahat*, Deuteronomy 6,4).⁵⁸ The name in later baroque compositions. Moses Gaster and later Wallis-Budge indicate the apotropaic character of these inscriptions placed on various types of amulet. Of interest to us in the process that these inscriptions illustrate is the idea expressed by the layout of the text. The invocation *Der Herr Behüte Dich!* (May the Lord protect you!) means more when it radiates in all directions than the same sentence written in a linear way. The same thing applies to the triangular labyrinth of letters containing the word *Wattishk’a* (referring to all-consuming fire from the Lord, Numbers 11, 1-2) (Figure 11). The triangular formulae *Abracadabra* (the Abraxas) (Figure 12) and *Shebriri* have the same character.⁵⁹

Light

Light, which is the closest thing to the mystical understanding of the Creator and any access to Him, plays an important role here. Light, as we shall soon see, largely affected the popularity of the letter labyrinth in the Baroque, and it performed an important function in the symbolism of graphic art and painting in that period, and certainly also in philosophy. These functions of light in the spiritual culture of human beings can hardly be overestimated; its role in Jewish mysticism is stressed in many fragments of the *Zohar*.⁶⁰ A letter labyrinth in the *Cabbala Denudata*, Knorr von Rosenroth’s translation of the *Zohar* (which had two or three editions and was well-known, at least in Central Europe) says: ‘E uno centro mittit sua lumina Zohar.’⁶¹

Let us follow light, because it brings us to the modern era. In so doing we



Left above
Figure 10. A letter labyrinth with the title of God, "Elohîm," that can be read starting from the center. From Budge. See note 57.

Above
Figure 11. The word "wattishk'a," meaning "and [fire] dwindled," denoting the fire of God, is reproduced visually in a triangular-shaped progressive labyrinth. From Budge. See note 57.



Left
Figure 12. The famous magical formula, "Abracadabra," known as "the abraxas." Tradition ascribes it to Serenus Samonicus, the physician of the Emperor Caracalla (ruled 211-7), but it is more likely that it is derived from "abbâda ke dâabrâ,"

Chaldean words meaning "perish like the word." This magic formula was used against fever. From Budge. See note 59.

should not forget that Cabbalistic thinking — which in many points concurs with Pythagorean, gnostic, and neo-Platonic philosophy — had a great influence on such modern-era scholars and erudites as Johann Reuchlin, Erasmus, Pico della Mirandola, Marsiglio Ficino, Aegidius von Viterbo, Knorr von Rosenroth, Giulio Camillo, Robert Fludd, and Athanasius Kircher. Our letter labyrinths occurred in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries most frequently where the influence of Jewish culture was the greatest, namely, in the Iberian Peninsula and in Central Europe, in Germany and Poland (Figure 13).

Francisco Patrizzi (1529-97), an advocate of Plato from whom he took over the ideas of the hierarchic character of existence and emanation, was the foremost representative of the metaphysics of light in the Renaissance.⁶² According to Patrizzi, the world is animated by divine, eternal light; God uses light to instill life and to add beauty to the Creation. Patrizzi's concept was basically a continuation of the earlier ideas worked out by Grosseteste (1168-1253) and Ibn-Gabirol (1021-58).

This way of *representation* is illustrated in a number of baroque paintings, composition where the all-radiating eye of Providence or other symbolic representations of radiantly, miraculously manifested divinity, are centrally situated. Very often, the Tetragrammaton, YHWH, was placed in the source of light, which echoes the Cabbalistic traditions. We observe a similar graphic relationship between the characters of script and the principle of the radiation of light in many centrally-composed letter labyrinths, many of which had religious significance in both the Middle Ages and the baroque (Figure 14). This is best illustrated by spiral labyrinth poems where the text originates from the void, indefinite center. They bring to mind some Cabbalistic Hebrew works such as "The Original Torah as the Cloak of God" by Solomon ben Hayim Eliashu, or "Composition around the Unutterable Name" by Moses Cordovero.

The Baroque

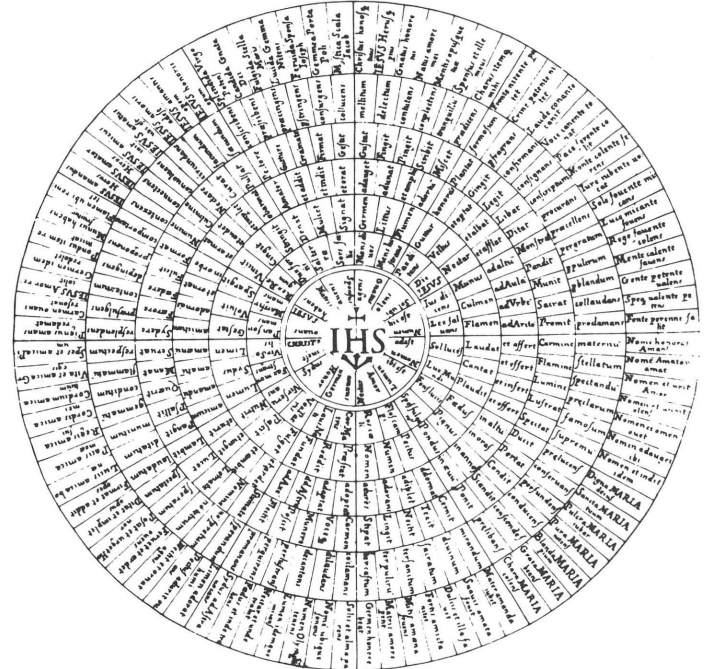
The baroque was a period of genuine development in labyrinth forms and meanings, hence the great variety of letter labyrinths in different contexts. Religious meanings linked with mystery and *sacrum* are prevalent, and so are labyrinths with a center, although we may observe a marked secularization of the symbols. Decidedly magic texts, such as the prayer to the Archangel Michael for longevity (Figure 15), also occur.⁶³ They all convey a chaotic image of the baroque world of meanings, and two versions of the Christian precept. One of these raises hope for the gradual unveiling of the mystery for the slow interpretation of the signs of the labyrinth world understood as the Book of Nature. The prevailing order is somehow justified by the existence of the Book and its Creator, which is probably in accordance with the views of those satisfied by the status quo. The Jesuit Juan Eusebio Nuremberg, a commentator on Optatian's (Optatianus Porphyrius') Latin *carmina quadrata*, describes them as a world presented "in a thousand of labyrinthine ways born in Divine harmony," a mysterious multilayered system.⁶³ This echoes St. Paul's longing when he wrote "Now we see only puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we shall see face to face. My knowledge is now partial; then it will be whole, like God's knowledge of me" (*I Corinthians* 13,12).

After the Middle Ages, this understanding of the world in terms of the Book — so characteristic of cultures based on the Bible, with their volumes of commentaries accumulating ad infinitum — came with all its power into the baroque. Certainly, the image of the world seen as the Book, which implies that the prevailing order has been sanctified by the Creator, is the most satisfactory to the stratum that accepts this order and its religious, cultural and social implica-

Figure 13. "A poem for the Sephiroth as a wheel of light," by Naftali Bacharach (seventeenth century). The ten Sephiroth were the spheres or emanations from *En Soph* (the Primal Cause). From Budge. See note 57.



Figure 14. A circular permutation poem, in the center of which we find the name of Jesus with all the other words coming out of it. From Caramuel. See note 75.



tions. In any case, the myth of the Book comprised the entire world of the letter and literature at the time. The Biblical-Cabbalistic method of reasoning accounted for the prominent position of labyrinth poems in Baroque poetics; the words *Gott ist mein Trost* (God is my comfort) or *Sanctis Gloria Christus* (Christ by Blessed Glory) etc. lead to the heart of the labyrinth, like Ariadne's thread, or the whole labyrinth is built of words like *Helig* (Swedish for "Holy"), *De Dios soy amado* (I am loved by God), etc.⁶⁴ Calligraphic labyrinths were called *labyrinte spirituelle*.⁶⁵ Some baroque poetics stressed this particular quality of the poetic labyrinth, e.g., Mitrofan Dovahlevski's work of the eighteenth century, where this form is called *vidtsentrovii virsz* (lit. "center poem").⁶⁶

Jan Amos Komensky (1592-1670), a Moravian philosopher and "heretic," gives a different image of the world in his wise book *Labirint světla a ray srdce* (translated into English as "The labyrinth of the world and the paradise of the heart").⁶⁷ Although the book points out that there is only one right way, it discards the surrounding world as a deceptive, false spectre of chaos. The labyrinth of the world based on deceit and depravity, on ill-matched words and things, is given the form of a city. After many vicissitudes the wandering pilgrim in search of the truth reaches the center, which he discovers to be the seat of the worst evil! Only then, having seen real depravity, does the pilgrim find the door leading to the real world, the world of the truth. "Retrace your steps from where you come to the house of your heart, and close the door behind yourself" concludes the author. In the midst of this evil, Christ's Word is disclosed to the pilgrim, and a flame is kindled in his heart. Once he has seen it, the wanderer is transfigured and returns to the world. This road is described in a letter labyrinth (Figure 16) by the abbot of the Czestochowa Monastery, the Paulite Andrzej Gołdonowski (1596-1660).⁶⁸ The words *A Paulo Pluto decedit victis arena* evidence the saint's victory over the worldly temptations embodied by Satan-Pluto.

It is fascinating that, despite the change in coloring and meaning with the passage of time, elements of the myth have remained unchanged: a symbolic building, a city, a road, a dance, the center, and the power of darkness (the chthonic Pluto). Here again we deal with a metatactical transformation despite the surviving relics of the labyrinth rites (letter labyrinths are most frequent in panegyrics composed on the occasion of weddings and funerals). Wedding labyrinths refer to the union of a couple (a variation of "love knots"), or the words of the labyrinth are often placed within the shape of a heart.

Formally, labyrinths written on the occasion of funerals probably underline the principle of transience, of passing from one condition to another. We know a number of inscriptions of this type originating in Europe and even in South America.⁶⁹ Letter labyrinths also occur on tombstones, e.g., the tombstone of Prince Silo of Asturias, the founder of the San Salvador Church (eighth century) at Oviedo, *Silo princeps fecit*.⁷⁰ Another context of the baroque letter labyrinth is related to the square shape of the inscriptions. The square form of the "cubus," as the labyrinth verse was often called in the baroque, conveyed the idea of permanence, solemnity, and uprightness. Beside the letter

labyrinth of ca. 1600 by Albert Szenci Molnár (1574-1633) that is dedicated to Johann Heidfeld, *Talis quadra boni sit tibi forma viri*, is the comment:⁷¹

Heidfeldi ecce quadratum, vel, si vis, do tibi cubum,
es quid significat, iam tua Musa tenet,
Cer veteris virum bonum quadratum dixerunt,
vel, cur virum constantem cubo comparunt.

“To Heidfeld is this square, or if you please, I’m offering you a cube. Its meaning your Muse holds already. The Old Ones have been calling a good man the square, and comparing a staid man to the cube.”

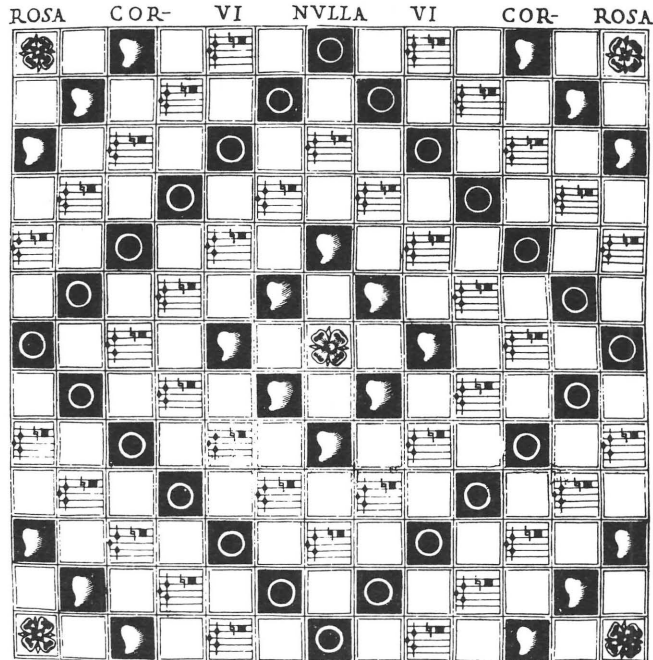
The author further suggests certain works of Aristotle as the sources of such references: the *Nichomachean Ethics* I and the *Rhetoric* III. Simonides was to say: “Difficile est nasci virum bene bonum, qui manibus, pedibus et mente sit tetragonae constans, et sui semper similis in rebus secundis et adversis.” [“It’s difficult to find a really good man who in his hands, feet, and mind would be as steady as a square, and similar to it both in times fortunate and adverse.”]

The emergence of a new model of reasoning, the Cartesian paradigm, is related to the popularity of the letter labyrinth in the baroque and its metatactical shift in the set of its meanings. The analytical way of thinking took the world into pieces like a machine; these, in accordance with the *pars pro toto* principle, were to determine the properties of the whole. The new understanding of the world underlined its construction, its mechanics, although for Descartes what had set the machine in motion was still the Unchangeable. This undoubtedly prompted the imagination to produce letter labyrinths, though some were used for purely ornamental purposes and had no sacred function at all.

In language this model of reasoning comes close to echoes of Cabbalistic thought. The formal influence of the Cabbala is evident in many baroque works, notably those containing elements of the “mathematics of language”; chronostica, anagrams, cabbalistic verse, etc.

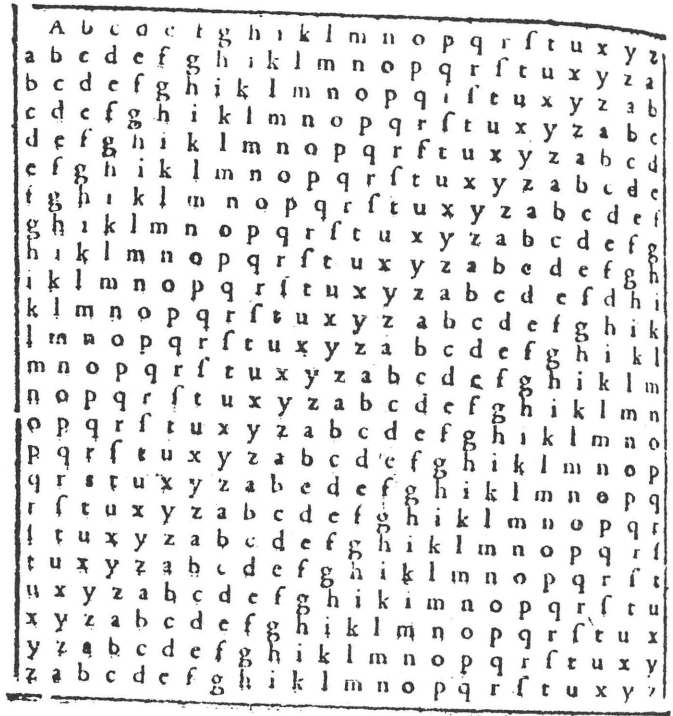
Baroque works on poetics often visualize the superficiality of influence which did not go beyond linguistic juggling. Textual mechanical manipulation took the place of Cabbalistic mystical permutation. As Dick Higgins writes, “metaphors of hidden truths became ones of aesthetic truths.”⁷² Baroque poetics give precise recipes how to write such works (Figure 17). Instruction may also be found in studies dedicated to “natural magic.”⁷³ The baroque emblematic imagination was quickened by the hidden and the mysterious so that it gradually lost sight of the actual meanings referring first and foremost to the inner world. The clergy has a more serious attitude towards these problems. The Jesuits, with Athanasius Kircher in the lead,⁷⁴ dedicated the most attention to the metaphysics of language and symbol. Chronostic inscriptions that we may find even today on the walls of sacred buildings and their furnishings, as well as in books, testify to the strong belief in the supernatural power of the script taken from the Book (chronostica were often Biblical verses in which letters signifying roman numerals added up to the desired date). Though rid of their inner essence, the “experiments” continued to relate to the circles of initiation, to which numerous examples by clerics bear evidence. One of the

Figure 17. A letter labyrinth by Andreas Sutor [Schuster], from *Der Hundert Ausgige Blinde Argos . . .* (Augsburg: Rieger, 1740), 770. This letter composition, being asemantic, may be understood either as an imitation of cabbalistic diagrams or as an instruction on how to compose labyrinth poems.



ILLVSTRISSIMO D-D. EMANVELI DEL YERRO. EQVITI MILITARIS ORDINIS
 de Alicantara, nec non D. Sebastiano, et D. Augustino eiusdem Fratribus
*Quis uereri Panes carui ymbulo intulerenti Damentem, qui tentationibus cor humane nudat: hoc p-ecipue in S. Benedicte
 verificatur: nam in Subiacenti uulge Deo uasate sub cornu epote aggressus Dament, generosissime uasus est. Vt huius Per-
 thentia uisera celebem memoria Benedicte Re facit: spinas intate et illibate dilaudemus, Rosa uidelicet nulle Damentis aflu-
 de uisera, erro Reu: et decoratit hoc Pragma. Metrametrico labore et iuuam, deducimusq. Vt in III. Dominabentibus Benedicte
 uulge benedict*
*Et optat uisera. Vt in III. Dicit
 hancim: fons. Reuere. Julia. Iacobus.*

Figure 18. A rebus labyrinth without words from Caramuel. See note 75.



most notable is the *Primus calamus ob oculos ponens metametricam quae variis . . . multiformes labyrinthos exornat* (1663, known as the *Metametrica* for a shortened title) by the Cistercian monk Juan Caramuel de Lobkowitz (1606-82), which includes numerous examples of word labyrinths (Figure 18).⁷⁵ Yet many examples of labyrinth poems have a completely secular character, and are greetings to important persons, rulers, etc.

Many baroque letter labyrinths give an image of the world of intricate meanings that was worked out back in the Middle Ages, referring to the Center affecting the whole of creation. This interpenetration of the *Civitas Dei* and the *Civitas Mundi* added meaning to the road, which resulted in a kind of cultural balance. We even find such a labyrinth construction in Dante's *Divine Comedy*. The labyrinth symbol was beginning to lose its sacred character in the sixteenth century. Santarchangelli observes that, up to the baroque, it was impossible to lose one's bearings in a labyrinth building; the path, however winding, always led to the goal.⁷⁶ Later, blundering and erring became possible. At this point Santarchangelli indicates the modern traits in this concept of the symbol.

Once we have lost sight of our point of reference, we are more acutely aware of our bewilderment. No longer enjoying the blessed sense of contact with the

Figure 19. Seiichi Niikuni, "River/Sand Bank," from Bob Cobbing and Peter Mayer, *Concerning Concrete Poetry* (London: Writers' Forum, 1978), 34.

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z y x w v u t s r q p o n m n o p q r s t u v w x y z
y x w v u t s r q p o n m l m n o p q r s t u v w x y
x w v u t s r q p o n m l k l m n o p q r s t u v w x
w v u t s r q p o n m l k j k l m n o p q r s t u v w
v u t s r q p o n m l k j i j k l m n o p q r s t u v
u t s r q p o n m l k j i h i j k l m n o p q r s t u
t s r q p o n m l k j i h g h i j k l m n o p q r s t
s r q p o n m l k j i h g f g h i j k l m n o p q r s
r q p o n m l k j i h g f e f g h i j k l m n o p q r
q p o n m l k j i h g f e d e f g h i j k l m n o p q
p o n m l k j i h g f e d c d e f g h i j k l m n o p
o n m l k j i h g f e d c b c d e f g h i j k l m n o
n m l k j i h g f e d c b a b c d e f g h i j k l m
m l k j i h g f e d c b a b c d e f g h i j k l m
n m l k j i h g f e d c b a b c d e f g h i j k l m
o n m l k j i h g f e d c b c d e f g h i j k l m n o
p o n m l k j i h g f e d c d e f g h i j k l m n o p
q p o n m l k j i h g f e d e f g h i j k l m n o p q
r q p o n m l k j i h g f e f g h i j k l m n o p q r
s r q p o n m l k j i h g f g h i j k l m n o p q r s
t s r q p o n m l k j i h g h i j k l m n o p q r s t
u t s r q p o n m l k j i h i j k l m n o p q r s t u
v u t s r q p o n m l k j i j k l m n o p q r s t u v
w v u t s r q p o n m l k j k l m n o p q r s t u v w
x w v u t s r q p o n m l k l m n o p q r s t u v w x
y x w v u t s r q p o n m l m n o p q r s t u v w x y
z y x w v u t s r q p o n m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

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Guide along the way, having let go of our thread of Ariadne, we are increasingly aware of the building rising around us, and are more trustful of its material and complex construction than of the underlying, hard-to-conceive ideas. The Cartesian mind disintegrated the great machinery of the universe in its unending divisions; our vision of the Way has become blurred, and our choice has become less deliberate in the growing chaos of information. Culture is, likewise, losing its sharp contours and dead words, ornamental symbols and meanings devoid of knowledge accumulate (we see this in some "post-Modernist" works — Figure 19).

Yet visual labyrinth construction did not vanish altogether with the baroque. We see it today in some works by concrete poets (Emmett Williams and Claus Bremer, for instance). Yet here, understanding is achieved along different lines, which is a different story anyway.

1. W. H. Mathews, *Mazes and labyrinths: a general account of their history and development* (London: 1922). Paolo Santarcangelli, *Il libro dei labirinti* (Firenze: Valechi Editore, 1967). Hermann Kern, *Labirinti* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1981). Gustav-Renè Hocke, *Die Welt als Labyrinth* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1959).

2. Ana Hatherly, "Labirintos portugueses dos seculos XVII e XVIII," *Coloquio artes* 45 (1980) 20-9, Ana Hatherly, *A Experiência do prodígio. Bases teoreticas e anthologia de textos-visuais portugueses dos seculos XVII e XVIII* (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional- Casa da Moeda, 1983). A whole chapter is devoted to the poetical labyrinth in Dick Higgins, "Pattern poetry: guide to an unknown literature" (unpublished). I would like to thank the author for allowing me to study this manuscript.

3. The terms "labirinto de letras" and "labirinto de versos" were introduced in Hatherly (1980) 26-7.

4. Hatherly (1980) 26-7.

5. Teresa Michałowski, *Staropolska teoria genologiczna* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1974) 162.

6. For more on this subject see Hatherly (1983) and Higgins.

7. *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Chicago, London, Toronto: Benton, 1960), v. 13, p. 560; *Wielka Encyklopedia Powszechna PWN* (Warszawa: PWN, 1965), v. 6, p. 234.

8. Santarcangelli 149-63.

9. Santarcangelli 99-103.

10. Santarcangelli 118.

11. Mircea Eliade, *Images et symboles: essais sur le symbolisme magico-religieux* (Paris: 1952). Marcel Brion, "Hoffmanthal et l'expérience du labyrinthe," *Cahiers du sud* (1955) 333. Santarcangelli 26, 170-4.

12. "Labyrinthos" was supposedly derived from "labrainto," the Carian word for "labrys."

13. Santarcangelli 61-5.

14. Anna Sadurska, *Les tables iliaques* (Warszawa: PWN, 1964). This monograph collects 19 "tabulae" with their detailed iconographic and philological descriptions.

15. George Chapman, tr., *The Iliad*, ed. A. Nicholl (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957) 387-11. 536-49.

16. Plutarch. *Vitae paralelae. Theseus* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1914) 21.

17. Pollux, *Iulii Pollucis Onomasticon*, ed. G. Dindorfius (Leipzig: Kiehn, 1824), v. 2, p. 755; v. 4, p. 101.

18. Stefan Czarnowski, "L'arbre d'eus, le taureau aux trois grues et le culte de voies fluviales en Gaule," *Revue celtique* 42 (1905) 44-8.

19. Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1955) 336-49. The myth tells us that Daedalus, who has made the labyrinth for Ariadne, has been following the structures of Egyptian labyrinths. I prefer not to take the Egyptian tradition into account in this study; there is one example of a "crossword" structure known in Egyptian paleography, but it does not seem to have any direct relation with our Greco-Roman labyrinths. See H. M. Steward, "A crossword hymn to Mut," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 57 (1971) 87-104, pl. XXV-XXVII, for which information I am indebted to Dick Higgins. Generally only European material has been taken into consideration in this article, for reasons of space and consistence of the text. However, there are examples of labyrinthine construction in Eastern literatures, e.g. viz. Friedrich Rückert, *Grammatik, Poetik und Rhetorik der Perser* (1874; Osnabrück: Otto Zeller, 1966) 161 and Kalanath Jha, *Figurative poetry in Sanskrit literature* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975) 195-6.

20. Santarcangelli 151, 169-70, 177-8.

21. Czarnowski 45-7.

22. Santarcangelli 65-70. There are also numerous representations of the labyrinth as a city on the ancient mosaics. See Wiktor A. Daszewski, "La mosaïque de Thésée," *Etudes sur les mosaïques avec représentations du labyrinthe, de Thésée et du Minotaure* (Warszawa: PWN, 1977) 60-2, pl. 12, 14, 15, 18, 20, 25, 31, 32, 40, 41, 46, 47, 48 and 51.

23. W. F. J. Knight, "Maze symbolism and the Trojan game," *Antiquity* 6 (1932) 445-58; and W. F. J. Knight, *Cumean gates: Vergil's epic and anthropology* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1967). See also Richard Willis, "Das Labyrinth in Tanz und Spiel," *Neue Jahrbücher für Wissenschaft und Jugendbildung* 5 (1929) 707-20.

24. Sadurska 26-52.

25. Vergil, *Vergil's works* (New York: Random House, 1934) 96. The last verse of this sequence (11. 580-602) in the original Latin: "Troiaque nunc, pueri Troianum dicitur agmen . . ."

26. Suetonius, *Duodecim Caesaris*, ed. C. B. Hase (Paris: J. Didet, 1828) 62, 63, 158, 165. Plutarch, "Cato Minor," in *The Lives of the noble Grecians and Romans* (New York: Random House, n.d.) 49. Tacitus, *Annales* (many editions) XI, 11, 4.

27. Knight (1967) 166-9.

28. Plato, *Phaedon* 108 A-C.

29. Santarcangelli 232-3.

30. Seneca, "Troïades," in *Tragoediae*, ed. R. Peiper and G. Richter (Leipzig: Teubner, 1867) 238 1. 778.

31. Plutarch, "Cato Minor," in *Vitae Paralelae*, ed. K. Ziegler (Leipzig: Teubner, 1931) 49.

32. Sadurska 45.

33. Sadurska 29, which contains the following words: "[Tekén ten] Teodoreon mahe taxin Homeron ofra deis teken metron echés sofias."

34. Sadurska 45.

35. Pliny, *Historiae Naturalis*, ed. J. Harduin (Paris: Lemaire, 1827) VII.57.7., XXXIV.83., XXXVI.85.90.

36. Sadurska, 9-10.

37. Claudian, *Carmina* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1879), v. 2, p. 57.

38. Venantius Fortunatus, *Opera* in J. P. Migne, ed., *Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina*, v. 88, 1841, pp. 95-6. An example of the 18th century imitations can be found

in Lenz, Kriss and Rettenbeck, *Bilder und Zeichen Religiösen Volkssymboles* (München: Georg D. W. Callwey, 1963) 133.

39. Gregory the Great, in *Job*. Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, Cod. 80, fol. 3f. We are grateful to Ulrich Ernst of Wuppertal for information concerning this text.

40. José Romera Castillo, "Poesía figurativa medieval. Vigilán, monje Hispano-Latino del siglo X, precursor de la poesía concreto-visual," *1616* 3 (1980) 138-56. Manuel Díaz y Díaz, "Vigilán y Sarracino: sobre composiciones figurativas en la Rioja del siglo X," *Lateinische Dichtungen des x. und xi. Jahrhunderts. Festgabe für Walter Bulst* (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1979) 60-92. Vigilán's piece is contained in the "Codex Vigilano (Escorial.d.I.2)" at fol. 19v.

41. Santarcangelli 247.

42. Quoted in Charles Doria, "Visual writing forms in antiquity: the versi intexti," *Visual literary criticism*, ed. Richard Kostelanetz (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979) 64.

43. Optatian, *Publilii Optianiani Porfyrii carmina*, ed. G. Polara (2 v. Torino: Paravia, 1973).

44. Doria 65-7.

45. There is an increasing popularity of the *carmina quadrata* form from the 7th to 11th centuries. Most eminent authors, including Winifried (St. Boniface), Hrabanus Maurus, Alcuin, Abelard, Eugenius Vulgaris, Josephus Scottus, etc., composed at least one. For more on medieval visual poetry, see Doria; at least one. For more on medieval visual poetry, see Doria; Ulrich Ernst, "Zahl und Mass in der Figurengedichten der Antike und des Frühmittelalters," *Miscellanea Medievalia* 16 n. 2 (1984) 310-32; and Luciano Caruso, *La poesia figurata nell'alto medioevo* (Napoli: Libreria Scientifica Editrice, 1971).

46. Viktor Gardthausen, *Griechische Paleographie* (2 v., Leipzig: Verlag von Veit, 1913), 2 v., 66; and Higgins, chap. 2, sec. 1b.

47. Daszewski 102-3, pl. 57.

48. St. Augustine, *De civitate dei* (many editions) XIX.17, XIV-28.

49. Dom. Fernand Cabrol and Dom. Henri Leclercq, *Dictionnaire d'archéologie Chrétienne et de liturgie* (15 v., Paris: Libraire Letourey et Ané, 1907-51) v. 8 (1927) 973-82. See also E. Soyez, *Les labyrinthes d'églises* (Amiens: 1896).

50. Santarcangelli 280-1 of the Polish edition, *Ksiega labiryntu* (Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1982).

51. Santarcangelli 259.

52. For six days Joshua and his priests and warriors went around the walls of Jericho, one round each day. On the seventh day they circled it seven times, and with the sounds of trumpet, horn, and war cries, the walls of Jericho collapsed. There are numerous medieval examples showing the city of Jericho as a labyrinth. See Kern 166-82.

53. Santarcangelli 198-202.

54. The SATOR bibliography is very extensive. The most exhaustive commentary on the text is by Heinz Hofmann, "Sator-quadrat," *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft. Neue Bearbeitung begonnen von Georg Wissowa* (München: A Druckermüller Verlag, 1978) Supplementband 15, 478-565.

55. Hatherly (1983) 18-65.

56. For more on "tzeruf," see Perle Epstein, *Kabbalah, the way of the Jewish mystic* (New York: 1978) 73-106; and Abraham ben Samuel Abulafia, *The path of the names*, tr. David Meltzer (Berkeley: Tree, 1976). See also any of the basic books on the cabbala by Gershon G. Sholem.

57. E. A. Wallis-Budge, *Amulets and superstitions* (1930; New York: Dover Publication, 1978) 394-7.

58. Budge 271, 234.
59. Budge 220-4, 235. "And the people called unto Moses, and Moses prayed to God and the fire abated," Numbers 11, 12. The formula *shebriri* was used to heal diseases of the eye. The patient would pronounce the formula and the sickness would diminish together with the text. The triangular shape of the inscription, *wattishk'a*, also indicated this "disappearing" quality. Similarly, *abracadabra* was used as a healing formula, Budge states, and mentions that Erich Bischoff interpreted it as meaning *Abbada ke dabra*, Chaldean for "perish like the word."
60. Zohar. *The book of splendor*, ed. Gershon G. Sholem (London: Rider and Company, 1977) 29-30.
61. Johann Knorr von Rosenroth, *Cabbala denudata* . . . *Liber Sohar* (2 v., Frankfurt: J. D. Zunner, typis B. C. Wustii, 1684).
62. B. Brückmann, *An introduction to Francisco Patrizzi's "Nova de universum philosophia"* (New York: 1941).
63. *Képversek*, ed. Géza Aczél (Budapest: Kozmosz, 1984) 59.
64. The first of these labyrinths is by Jon or Jan Hus, and appears in David Lindquist, *Studier i den svenska andaktslitteraturen under stormaktstiden* (Uppsala: Svenska kyrkans diakronistyrelses bokförlag, 1939) 90. The second is Francisco de Castro, *Christiana reformation assi del pecador* (Sevilla: Juab Cabeças, 1680).
65. Johann Christian Maennling, *Der europäische Helicon* (Alten Stettin: G. Dahlen, 1704) 130-1.
66. Mitrofan Dovhalevsky, *Poetika* (Kiev: Naukova Dumka, 1973) 290-5.
67. Jan Amos Komenský, *Labyrint světa a ray srdce* (Lezro: publisher unknown, 1631), translated into German as *Das Labyrinth der Welt* . . . (1668; Dresden: Reclam, 1984) and into English as *The labyrinth of the world and the paradise of the heart* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1901).
68. Andrzej Gołdonowski, *Poema historicum de S. Paulo* . . . *Primo Eremita* (Kraków: Piatkowski, 1628) H2V.
69. Christian Wagenknecht, "Konkrete Poesie," *Der Germanistentag 1968. Vorträge und Berichte*, ed. Borck and Henss (Heidelberg: Karl Winter, 1970) 112. José Durand, *Gaceta de Lima de 1762 a 1765* (Lima: Oficina de Asuntos Culturales, 1982) appendix.
70. The Silo plaque dates from the eighth century. Different sources have located it in different places, but it is at Pravia where it commemorates Prince Silo's building of the Church of Santianes; the plaque is described and documented in José Menéndez Pidal, "La basilica de Santianes de Pravia (Oviedo)." *Actas del simposio para el estudio de los códices del 'Comentario al apocalipsis' de Beato de Liebana* (Madrid, 1980) 1, 280-1.
71. Johannes Heidfeld, *Sphinx theologico-philosophica* (Herbornia: excudebat Christ. Corvinus, 1612) 114-6.
72. Dick Higgins, *Horizons: the poetics and theory of the intermedia* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984) 33.
73. See, for example, Caspar Schott, *locoserium naturae et artis, sive magia naturalis* (Amsterdam: 1666) 237, chapter "Dato quovis vocabulo, aut vocabulis, anagramma facere."
74. Athanasius Kircher, *Oedipus Aegyptiacus* (Roma: Mascardi, 1652), also his *Turris Babel* (Amsterdam: ex officina Janssonio-Waesbergiana, 1679) and *Arca Noe* (Amsterdam: apud J. Janssonium a Wasbergae, 1695).
75. Juan Caramuel de Lobkowitz, *Primus calamus ob oculos ponens metametricam quae variis* . . . *multiformes labyrinthos exornat* (Roma: Fabius Falconius, 1663).
76. Santardangelli 358-9.