

Johannes Kepler

On the Soul of the Earth

IN the following passages [Kepler in *Harmonices Mundi*] confidently asserts that the earth has a soul. For he says

“That the globe of the earth is a body such as is that of some animal; and that what its own soul is to an animal, that the sublunary nature which he investigates will be to the earth.”¹

He adds,

“That he sees for the most part every thing which proceeding from the body of an animal testifies that there is a soul in it, proceeds also from the body of the earth. For as the animated body produces in the superficies of the skin hairs, thus also the earth produces [on its surface] plants and trees; and as in the former lice are generated, so in the latter the worms called erucæ, grasshoppers, and various insects and marine monsters are produced. As the animated body likewise produces tears, mucus, and the recement of the ears, and sometimes gum from the pustules of the face, thus also the earth produces amber and bitumen. As the bladder too produces urine, thus likewise mountains pour forth rivers. And as the body produces excrement of a sulphureous odour, and crepitus which may also be inflamed, so the earth produces sulphur, subterranean fires, thunder, and lightning. And as in the veins of an animal blood is generated, and together with it sweat which is ejected out of the body, so in the veins of the earth, metals, and fossils, and a rainy vapour are generated.”²

And in cap. 7 p. 102, after having shown that there is in the earth the sense of touching, that it respire, and is subject in certain parts to languors, and internal vicissitudes of the viscera, and that subterranean heat proceeds from the soul of the earth, he adds,

¹ “Denique terræ globus tale corpus erit, quale est alicujus animalis: quodque animali est sua anima, hoc erit telluri hæc, quam quærimus, natura sublunaris.”

² “Videbam pleraque omnia, quæ ex corpore animantis provenientia, testantur animam in illo inesse, provenire etiam ex telluris corpore. Ut enim corpus in cutis superficie pilos, sic terra plantas arboresque profert; inque iis ibi pediculi, hic erucæ, cicadæ, variaque insecta et monstra marina nascuntur; et ut corpus lachrymas, blennam, auriumque recrementa, est ubi et gummi et faciei pustulis, sic tellus electrum, bitumen: utque vesica urinam, sic montes flumina fundunt; et ut corpus excrementum sulphurei odoris, crepitusque, qui etiam inflammari possunt, sic terra sulphur, ignes subterraneos, tonitrua, fulgura: utque in venis animantis generatur sanguis, et eum eo sudor, extra corpus ejectus; sic in venis terræ, metalia et fossilia, vaporque pluvius.”



“That a certain image of the zodiac is resplendent in this soul, and therefore of the whole firmament, and is the bond of the sympathy of things celestial and terrestrial.”^{3, 4}



Johannes Kepler (c 1610) artist unknown

³ “Relucet igitur in anima telluris imago quaedam circuli zodiaci sensibilis, totinsque adce firmamenti, vinculum sympathiae rerum caelestium et terrestrium.”

⁴ Taylor T. (Tr. & Annot.). *Proclus' Theology of Plato*. (Vol. VIII of The Thomas Taylor Series) Frome: The Prometheus Trust, 1995; [Taylor's Introduction to *The Theology of Plato*, pp. 11-12.]

