

Michael Sendivogius

A New Light of Alchemy

With the Dialogue of Mercury and the Treatise of Sulphur

Diotimos Editions

2026

A fresh translation from the early Latin texts with original preliminaries annotations and study apparatus

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Edition Statement

This Diotimos edition brings together Michael Sendivogius's twelve treatises on the philosophers' stone, their Epilogue, Philosophical Enigma and Parable, the Dialogue of Mercury, the Alchemist and Nature, and the Treatise of Sulphur. Each is newly translated from an early Latin printing. The Latin is printed above the English in aligned passages, with source locators and annotations. The author's prefatory address and a commendatory poem by Johann Heinrich Alsted are supplied from the 1611 Frankfurt printing. The 1607 Dialogue includes its title and its anonymous friend's address to the reader; the 1616 Sulphur includes its title, mottos, author's preface and conclusion.

John French's 1650 English address To the Reader appears as a historical appendix, with its original wording and a separately labelled modernisation. It records the English reception of this corpus and the larger compilation in which French placed it. French's nine-book translation of the work attributed to Paracelsus, *Of the Nature of Things*, and the Dorn-derived dictionary are separate works. Their contents are not silently absorbed into Sendivogius's text.

The new translation and editorial apparatus were prepared with AI assistance for Diotimos Editions in 2026. Historical source texts are in the public domain. The introduction, essays, glossary, contextual lexicon, reading routes and discussion guide are modern editorial contributions; their interpretations are distinguished from the translated authors' claims.

Introduction

A Work in Several Literary Forms

A New Light of Alchemy asks what a practitioner must understand before beginning work. Its first answer is nature: her places, her powers, her ways of generation, and the limits within which human art can help her. The twelve treatises build an argument from natural production to metallic seed and then to the possibility of an artificial tincture. Their short compass can disguise the number of distinctions they require. A substance's visible body is not simply its seed; an operation bearing a familiar name is not necessarily appropriate to every material; the ability to manipulate metals does not by itself confer the knowledge claimed by a philosopher.

The accompanying works change the mode of instruction. The Epilogue revisits the practice and the obligations of the reader. The Enigma addresses the children of truth while refusing to surrender every secret to an indiscriminate audience. The Parable makes its teaching an encounter in a garden, with water, solar fruit, Saturn and Neptune. The Dialogue then stages a comic failure of reading. Its alchemist collects recipes and credentials, mistreats Mercury, misunderstands dreams and demands direct answers from figures who speak through relations and riddles. Sulphur enlarges the account of elemental generation and the principles underlying bodies. These literary forms belong to the teaching; a reader loses something by treating every image as a detachable recipe.

The author is conventionally known in Latin as Michael Sendivogius, the Polish Michał Sędziwój. The early works often conceal or play upon the author's name. Their anonymity is itself discussed in the prefatory material. This edition follows the corpus attributed to Sendivogius in the selected witnesses and modern specialist bibliography; it does not turn every speaker in a dialogue, every first-person narrator, or an anonymous commendatory address into a direct biographical statement by him. The letters of Divi Leschi Genus Amo and Angelus doce mihi ius can each be rearranged as Michael Sendivogius under the convention that treats u and v as interchangeable. The 1607 title's Divi Leschi Genus Amat has different letters and is retained as printed; these wordplays help explain the anonymous presentation without by themselves proving authorship.

Publication and the Selected Witnesses

The twelve-treatise work first appeared in 1604. The title A New Light of Alchemy follows the familiar later naming of the corpus. The Latin actually governing these twelve treatises here is the 1606 printing embedded in Martin Ruland's *Lapidis philosophici vera conficiendi ratio*, preserved by the Herzog August Bibliothek. It contains the Epilogue, Enigma and Parable as well as the twelve chapters. Their

presence in 1606 establishes that they were not additions invented by the English translator in 1650.

The Dialogue was published separately in 1607. The selected Cologne printing has a title naming the friend Coroades and an address in which another speaker asks readers not to investigate the author's identity. The 1611 Frankfurt printing supplies the author's preface and Alsted's dated commendatory epigram. These are clearly located as 1611 witnesses: their inclusion does not assert that every feature first appeared in that year.

The Treatise of Sulphur appeared in 1616. Two surviving digitised copies supply a complete text here. The Munich copy governs the opening and most of the body; the Rome copy supplies the ending where needed. Physical sequence and printed page labels are recorded separately when the numbering is irregular. John French's 1650 translation is a later comparison witness and the source of the historical English appendix. These choices make an edition from identifiable early Latin texts; they do not purport to reproduce an inaccessible 1604 copy leaf for leaf.

Chronology of the work and selected witnesses

Year	Text or event	Role in this edition
1604	First publication of the twelve-treatise work	Publication chronology; the selected core witness here is 1606.
1606	Twelve chapters and their concluding texts	Ruland compilation governing the core, including the Job excerpt.
1607	Dialogue and original preliminaries	Selected Cologne title, friend's address and dialogue.
1611	Author's preface and Alsted epigram	Selected Frankfurt preliminaries; this is their witness date.
1616	Treatise of Sulphur	Munich and Rome copies supply the complete selected text.
1650	John French's address to the reader	Historical English appendix and later comparison witness.

Sources: Prinke on publication history and the selected witnesses in the bibliography.

The dates distinguish first publication where stated from the particular copies used here. They do not date the first appearance of every prefatory sentence.

Nature and the Practitioner

The opening treats nature as one, coherent and invisible in herself, though visible in her effects. Nature has a divine origin and operates within a divinely given order. The practitioner studies the places and bodies in which she acts, then supplies suitable conditions. The demand

to follow nature therefore joins an account of generation to a rule of conduct: one must learn what a thing can do and what kind of thing can act upon it.

The sequence is frequently expressed through generation. Elements supply powers; the earth's centre gathers and transforms; vapour ascends; the character of a place affects what is produced there. Male and female, womb and seed, maturity and nourishment recur because the text imagines metallic production through these relations. They should be followed closely within each argument. The author sometimes shifts the scale from a metal to a plant, from a vessel to the earth, or from human generation to divine analogy. A comparison can illuminate an operation without making the compared bodies interchangeable.

The final part of the Dialogue makes the danger of substitution comic and severe. The alchemist says that he sows seed in its earth; Mercury replies that he has merely been sown in dung. A correct sentence has been repeated while its application has failed. Nature's intervention concerns judgment, timing and the appropriateness of operations as much as any named ingredient. The book asks readers to test the relation between their interpretation and the thing upon which they work.

How to Read This Edition

Begin with the author's preface, then read the twelve treatises in order at least once. The Epilogue returns to earlier distinctions and should be read with them in view. Read the Parable beside the practical chapters rather than in isolation. The Dialogue is especially useful after that first circuit: its unsuccessful reader exposes habits of interpretation that the serious treatises ask the student to avoid.

Sulphur has its own preface and internal course through earth, water, air, fire, the three principles and sulphur. Its figures of instruction and its promises of further works should be read within that separate composition. The contextual lexicon provides passages and connected explanations, while the short glossary offers quicker orientation. The subject index and reading routes give further ways back into the actual text.

Stable passage identifiers accompany the aligned source and translation. They remain the same in PDF, Word, Markdown and EPUB, allowing discussion of a passage without depending on the page count of a particular device. The English is complete within the selected corpus; the editorial apparatus does not substitute summaries for the translated primary text.

Note on the Text and Translation

The Governing Texts

For the twelve treatises and their conclusions the copytext is the 1606 Ruland compilation, printed pages 86–165, Herzog August Bibliothek 385.2.1 Quod., digitisation images 00500–00579. The compilation's incidental heading calls this a second treatise. Second describes its position among works in that collection, not a second treatise within Sendivogius's numbered sequence. That heading is retained and explained at the opening.

The author's preface and Alsted epigram use the 1611 Frankfurt printing, British Library copy digitised as Google Books XJVmAAAACAAJ, printed pages 3–8. The Dialogue uses the 1607 Cologne printing, Austrian National Library copy digitised as wVWVAAAACAAJ. Its scan identifiers PA1, PA3–PA4 and PA5–PA28 distinguish the title, address and dialogue; these identifiers also locate leaves whose printed pagination is irregular. Source locators never silently infer an absent printed number from a modern scan number.

Sulphur uses the 1616 Cologne printing in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek copy bsb10191243, with the ending supplied from the Rome copy digitised as 6_qSMmO2Kh4C. The source record distinguishes physical body sequence, printed page label and digital image. The composite supplies the complete authorial preface and body; it does not turn incomplete scans into evidence that the historical work itself ended early.

Source Presentation and English

The Latin is a readable, normalised transcription rather than a photographic facsimile. Long s becomes s; ligatures are expanded; u and v, and i and j, are regularised. Roman numerals are regularised where their value is clear; for example, printed IIX is rendered VIII. Printer line divisions, catchwords, running heads and signatures are omitted from the reading text. Abbreviations are expanded when their meaning is secure, and punctuation and paragraph divisions are lightly clarified. Uncertain readings, consequential variants and interpretive emendations are disclosed in notes. The aim is to preserve words and arguments while allowing the two languages to be read together.

The English translation was made from the Latin, not by updating John French's English. French is consulted as a historical comparison where useful. The 1614 Latin transcription available through the EMLAP research corpus assisted the decipherment of the 1606 core, but the 1606 scans govern. Differences encountered between those witnesses are

recorded locally. This edition does not claim an exhaustive collation of every early printing or a reconstruction of the entire textual tradition.

Nature remains personified where the text gives her action and speech. Chymistry and chymical usually render chymia and related forms; alchemy and alchemist render alchymia and alchymista. The familiar English title is retained. Seed and sperm follow the Latin's distinctions where those distinctions are expressed; the words do not always have a single rigid technical relation throughout the corpus. Technical names such as Archaeus and Iliadum are explained rather than replaced by an unverified modern equivalent.

Sol, Luna and the other planetary names remain visible when the author's wording depends on their imagery. Where a passage plainly identifies a named metal, the English may use gold or silver; local notes and the lexicon make the relation clear. Nitre, sulphur, Mercury, salt, spirit and water must still be understood in their particular arguments. The book does not provide one universal modern substance for every historical use of those words.

English additions inside an explanatory note are editorial. A note describing a possible reading does not give that reading the authority of the printed Latin. Biblical passages are newly rendered from the Latin actually quoted here; the closing excerpt headed Job 28 is the excerpt the witness prints, not a claim to reproduce an entire modern chapter. Medical statements and promises of metallic transformation belong to the historical works. Their inclusion records the texts' claims and does not establish present-day efficacy.

References and Supporting Material

Printed source pages and digitisation identifiers accompany the primary passages. An annotation explains a word or local difficulty; the contextual lexicon develops a term through several passages. These serve different purposes. The expanded dictionary already issued as a separate Diotimos volume remains a historical reference work in its own right; this book's glossary and lexicon are new guides to this particular Sendivogian corpus.

John French's appendix presents historical English above a modernisation. Its language labels identify that difference explicitly. References in his address to a second treatise and a dictionary describe the contents of the 1650 compilation. The appendix's notes explain them so that they are not mistaken for the arrangement of this new volume.

Original Preliminaries

Preface by the Author to the Reader

Praefatio ad Lectorem

NL-PREF-001 Frankfurt 1611, British Library copy via Google Books · 1611 pp 3 · scans Google PA3 · <https://books.google.com/books?id=XJVMAAAACAAJ&pg=PA3>

Latin Praefatio ad Lectorem. Omnibus Chymicae Artis Inquisitoribus, genuinis videlicet Hermetis filiis, Autor salutem et benedictionem a Deo precatur.

English Preface to the Reader. To all investigators of the chymical art, the true children of Hermes, the author wishes health and prays for God's blessing.

NL-PREF-002 Frankfurt 1611, British Library copy via Google Books · 1611 pp 3–4 · scans Google PA3, Google PA4 · <https://books.google.com/books?id=XJVMAAAACAAJ&pg=PA3> · <https://books.google.com/books?id=XJVMAAAACAAJ&pg=PA4>

Latin Cum mecum perpenderem, candide Lector, multos adulterinos libros, falsaque ut vocant Archymistarum recepta, impostorum fraude et avaritia composita, in quibus ne scintilla quidem veritatis elucet, inter naturalium occultarumque Artium Indagatores versari, quibus et quamplurimi decepti sunt, et adhuc decipiuntur, nihil me utilius facturum existimavi quam si Talentum a Patre Luminum mihi concreditum, cum filiis et haeredibus scientiae commune haberem, ut et posterum animadverterent, non solum prioribus saeculis, verum etiam hoc nostro, singularem illam Dei benedictionem Philosophicam, quibusdam hominibus non fuisse denegatam.

English Honest reader, I considered how many counterfeit books and false so-called alchemists' recipes circulate among investigators of natural and hidden arts. Composed through impostors' fraud and greed, they show not even a spark of truth; very many people have been deceived by them and are still being deceived. I thought I could do nothing more useful than share the talent entrusted to me by the Father of Lights with the children and heirs of this knowledge. Posterity would then recognise that this singular philosophical blessing of God has not been denied to certain people in our own age, as well as in earlier centuries.¹

NL-PREF-003 Frankfurt 1611, British Library copy via Google Books · 1611 pp 4 · scans Google PA4 · <https://books.google.com/books?id=XJVMAAAACAAJ&pg=PA4>

Latin Nomen meum certis de causis publicare non consultum visum est, dum non mihi laudem quaero, sed Philosophiae amatoribus prodesset studeo: ideo vanam gloriae cupiditatem relinquo illis, qui malunt videri quam esse. Quae hic in veritatis Philosophicae indubitata attestatio scribo, paucis comprehensa, a manuali experientia mihi ab Altissimo concessa deprompta sunt, ut ii, qui in hac laudatissima scientia prima et realia posuerunt fundamenta, hac cohortatione pulcherrimarum rerum exercitationem non deserant, et sic a scelerata Fumivendulorum turba, cui dulce est decipere, tuti sint.

¹. The Father of Lights recalls James 1:17. Talent also evokes the entrusted money of Matthew 25:14–30; the author presents knowledge as a gift that carries obligations. Archymistarum is the form printed in this 1611 witness; the 1614 aid reads Alchymistarum.

English For certain reasons I have not thought it advisable to publish my name. I seek to help lovers of philosophy, rather than to win praise for myself; I leave the empty desire for glory to those who prefer seeming to being. What I write here, briefly set out as an assured testimony to philosophical truth, comes from practical experience granted to me by the Most High. May this encouragement keep those who have laid the first real foundations in this highly praised knowledge from abandoning their practice of such excellent things, and protect them from the wicked crowd of smoke sellers who delight in deception.²

NL-PREF-004 Frankfurt 1611, British Library copy via Google Books · 1611 pp 4-5 · scans Google PA4, Google PA5 · <https://books.google.com/books?id=XJVMAAAACAAJ&pg=PA4> · <https://books.google.com/books?id=XJVMAAAACAAJ&pg=PA5>

Latin Non sunt somnia, ut ignarum vulgus loquitur, nec inania otiosorum hominum commenta, ut stulti et insipientes, qui artem rident. Veritas est ipsissima Philosophica, quam ut veritatis amator, in veritatis Chymicae immerito proclamatae subsidium et confirmationem, occultare aut silentio involvere non debui nec potui: quamvis hisce malignis temporibus, ubi virtus et vitium aequiparantur, propter saeculi indignitatem, hominumque ingratitude et infidelitatem, ne quid de Philosophorum maledictionibus loquar, in publicum prodire maximopere pertimescat. Possem adducere Chymicae huius veritatis testes, autores videlicet gravissimos, iuxta unanimem venerandae Antiquitatis in tot diversis nationibus consensum: at, quae experimento oculari videntur, probatione non indigent.

English These are no dreams, as the ignorant crowd says, nor the idle inventions of men with nothing to do, as the foolish and senseless people who laugh at the art maintain. This is philosophical truth itself. As a lover of truth, I neither ought nor was able to conceal it or wrap it in silence, when it could defend and confirm chymical truth so unjustly denounced. Yet it greatly fears appearing in public in these malicious times, when virtue and vice are valued alike, because of the age's unworthiness and people's ingratitude and faithlessness—to say nothing of the philosophers' curses. I could bring forward witnesses to this chymical truth: authors of the greatest authority, in accordance with venerable antiquity's unanimous agreement across so many nations. But things seen through experience with one's own eyes need no proof.

NL-PREF-005 Frankfurt 1611, British Library copy via Google Books · 1611 pp 5-6 · scans Google PA5, Google PA6 · <https://books.google.com/books?id=XJVMAAAACAAJ&pg=PA5> · <https://books.google.com/books?id=XJVMAAAACAAJ&pg=PA6>

Latin Viderunt illam sine veste Dianam hisce elapsis annis, sciens loquor, multi et supremae et infimae sortis homines. Et licet reperiantur quidam maleferiati, qui aut ex invidia, aut malitia, aut metu detectionis imposturarum suarum clamitent auro suam animam posse extrahi, et pomposa ac vana ostentationis delusione alieno reddi corpori, non sine temporis, laborum ac sumptuum iactura et detrimento: sciant pro certo Hermetis filii eiusmodi animarum, ut loquuntur, sive ab auro sive a Luna, quacunq[ue] viam vulgari Alchymistica, extractionem meram esse persuasionem, quod quidem a multis non creditur, sed tandem per experientiam unicam et solam veritatis Magistram cum damno verificatur. Econtra qui via Philosophica hoc sine fraude et fuco praestare possit, ut vel minimum Metallum, sive cum lucro, sive sine lucro, realiter colore Solis vel Lunae, in omnibus examinibus requisitis permanente, tingat: illum iure affirmare possum habere fores

². Manualis experientia is experience acquired through practical work. Fumivenduli, literally sellers of smoke, is a polemical name for people who sell empty promises.

naturae apertas ad ulteriora et altiora arcana investiganda et cum Dei benedictione acquirenda.

English In recent years many people of both the highest and lowest rank have seen Diana without her clothing—I speak from knowledge. Some mischief makers, through envy, malice, or fear that their frauds will be exposed, loudly claim that gold’s soul can be extracted and transferred to another body, with a pompous and empty display of deception, at considerable cost in time, labour and money. Let the children of Hermes know for certain that extracting such “souls,” as they call them, from either gold or silver by any ordinary alchemical route is mere persuasion. Many do not believe this, but experience, the one and only teacher of truth, eventually establishes it at their expense. On the other hand, if someone can truly tinge even the smallest quantity of metal with the colour of gold or silver by the philosophical way, without fraud or pretence, and the colour endures every required assay, whether the operation yields a profit or not, I can rightly affirm that nature’s doors stand open to that person for investigating further and higher secrets and acquiring them with God’s blessing.³

NL-PREF-006 Frankfurt 1611, British Library copy via Google Books · 1611 pp 6 · scans Google PA6 · <https://books.google.com/books?id=XJVmAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA6>

Latin Porro praesentes hos Tractatus, mea experientia conscriptos, scientiae filiis offero, ut dum omni cogitatione motuque animi in naturae occultis operationibus inquirendis versentur, inde rerum veritatem ipsamque naturam perspiciant et cognoscant: in qua re sola totius sanctissimae artis Philosophicae perfectio consistit, modo via Regia, quam natura in omnibus operationibus praescribit, progrediantur. Ideo hic candidum Lectorem admonitum velim, ut scripta mea non tam ex verborum cortice quam e naturae viribus intelligat, ne postea tempus, laborem et sumptum frustra expensum depleat.

English I therefore offer these treatises, written from my own experience, to the children of this knowledge. As they devote every thought and movement of mind to investigating nature’s hidden operations, may they discern and know from them the truth of things and nature herself. In this alone lies the perfection of the entire most sacred philosophical art, provided that they advance along the royal road nature prescribes in all her operations. I would therefore caution the honest reader to understand my writings through nature’s powers more than through the outer bark of words, so that there may be no later lament over time, labour and money spent in vain.

NL-PREF-007 Frankfurt 1611, British Library copy via Google Books · 1611 pp 6-7 · scans Google PA6, Google PA7 · <https://books.google.com/books?id=XJVmAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA6> · <https://books.google.com/books?id=XJVmAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA7>

Latin Consideret Sophorum hanc esse scientiam, non imperitorum: et longe alium esse Philosophorum sensum, quam ut eum percipiant vel Thrasones gloriosi, vel literati irrisores, aut contra conscientiam vitiosi, qui dum virtutibus emergere non possunt, sceleribus et honestorum virorum calumniis id moliuntur, vel imperiti

³. Diana, Sol and Luna belong to the text’s figurative vocabulary. Sol and Luna here designate gold and silver in an explicit discussion of metallic tincture and assay. The image of unclothed Diana is left as an image; this preface does not establish a single modern chemical identity for her. The 1611 phrase *quacunque viam vulgari Alchymistica* is grammatically irregular; it is understood as by any ordinary alchemical way, without inventing a different process.

circumforanei, qui suis dealbationibus et rubefactionibus, cum indignissima laudatissimae scientiae Chymicae diffamazione, universum fere mundum deceperunt. Huius farinae homines sanctissima illa scientia nunquam in penetralia sua intromittet. Dei enim donum est. Siquidem ad eam non nisi sola Dei intellectum illuminantis gratia, per patientem et religiosam humilitatem perveniri possit, aut per ocularem experti Praeceptoris demonstrationem: quapropter a Deo alienos merito a secretis suis procul abigit.

English Let the reader consider that this is the knowledge of the wise, not of the unskilled. The philosophers' meaning is quite beyond the grasp of boastful braggarts, learned scoffers, or people who offend against their conscience and, unable to rise through virtue, try to do so through crimes and slanders against honourable men. It is equally beyond unskilled itinerant charlatans who have deceived almost the entire world with their whitenings and reddenings, bringing disgraceful disrepute upon the highly praised knowledge of chymistry. This most sacred knowledge will never admit people of that stamp to its inner chambers, for it is God's gift. It can be reached only through the grace of God who enlightens the understanding, through patient and religious humility, or through a demonstration seen with one's own eyes from an experienced teacher. It therefore rightly drives those estranged from God far from its secrets.⁴

NL-PREF-008 Frankfurt 1611, British Library copy via Google Books · 1611 pp 7 · scans Google PA7 · <https://books.google.com/books?id=XJVMAAAaCAAJ&pg=PA7>

Latin Quod reliquum est, filios artis unice rogo, ut meum bene de ipsis merendi studium animo grato accipiant, et cum occultum fecerint manifestum, atque Dei nutu, constanti labore in optatum portum Philosophicum appulerint, Philosophico more omnes indignos ab hac arte excludant, amorisque erga proximum egenum in timore Dei, postposita vana ostentatione, memores, Optimo ter Maximo pro speciali hoc munere, sine abusu, in tacito et pie gaudenti sinu sempiternas gratitudinis laudes decantent. Simplicitas veritatis sigillum.

English Finally, I earnestly ask the children of the art to receive gratefully my desire to serve them well. When they have made the hidden manifest and, by God's will and steadfast labour, reached the philosophical harbour they desire, let them follow the philosophers' custom and exclude all the unworthy from this art. Let them remember love for their neighbour in need, in the fear of God, and put aside empty display. Without abusing this special gift, let them sing everlasting thanks to the supremely good and thrice greatest God, silently and with devout joy in their hearts. Simplicity is the seal of truth.

⁴. Thrasones evokes the conventional figure of Thraso, the boastful soldier in Terence's *Eunuchus*. Whitenings and reddenings are criticised here as deceptive treatments; the passage does not condemn every use of colour change elsewhere in the work.

Commendatory Epigram by Alsted of 1611

Epigramma

NL-EPIGRAM-001 Frankfurt 1611, British Library copy via Google Books · 1611 pp 8 · scans Google PA8 · <https://books.google.com/books?id=XJVmAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA8>

Latin Epigramma in vere aureos de Lapide Philosophorum tractatus Anonymi Leschi.

Sunt multi, lapidis nostri queis fabrica sordet;
Hi sordent merito, maxime Lesche, tibi.
Maxime Lesche placet tibi triga: Deus, natura, Ars.
Triga tibi haec placeat, maxime Lesche, diu.
Perge mari uxorem coniungere, solvere iunctos
Perge. Deus foveat coepta secunda diu!
Perge malos chymicos convellere, perge docere:
Ut ne dilapident omnia pro lapide.

English Epigram on the truly golden treatises on the philosophers' stone by the anonymous Lesches.

There are many who despise the making of our stone;
Rightly, great Lesches, they are contemptible to you.
Great Lesches, you delight in a threefold team: God, nature, art.
May this team long delight you, great Lesches.
Continue to join wife to husband, continue to separate the joined.
May God long favour your fortunate undertakings!
Continue to confound bad chymists; continue to teach,
So they do not squander everything for the stone.⁵

NL-EPIGRAM-002 Frankfurt 1611, British Library copy via Google Books · 1611 pp 8 · scans Google PA8 · <https://books.google.com/books?id=XJVmAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA8>

Latin Iohan-Henricus Alstedius, Professor Philosophus s. Francofurti ad Moenum, anno 1611, feriis Paschalibus.

English Johann Heinrich Alsted, professor of philosophy, wrote this at Frankfurt am Main during the Easter holidays of 1611.

⁵. This commendatory poem belongs to the 1611 Frankfurt printing, not to the 1606 copytext of the treatises. Its author is Johann Heinrich Alsted, named beneath it. Lesches echoes the anonymous author's anagrammatic designation; it is retained without inventing a separate historical author.

Twelve Treatises and Concluding Texts

Treatise I Nature What It Is and What Its Investigators Should Be

Caput I. De natura quidnam ea sit, et quales eius debeant esse scrutatores?

NL-WITNESS-HEADING Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 86 · scans HAB 00500 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00500.jpg>

Latin Tractatus alter, de lapide Philosophico anonymi cuiusdam, lapidis Philosophi possessoris.

English A second treatise on the philosophical stone, by a certain anonymous possessor of the philosophers' stone.⁶

NL-C01-P001 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 86–87 · scans HAB 00500, HAB 00501 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00500.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00501.jpg>

Latin Multi sapientes doctissimique viri, ante complura saecula, imo Hermete teste, ante diluvium, multa scripserunt de conficiendo lapide Philosophorum, et tot nobis reliquerunt scripta, ut nisi natura indies operaretur credibilia nobis, vix iam aliquis verum existimaret, esse naturam, quia superioribus saeculis non tot inventores rerum fuerunt: nec etiam antecessores nostri aliud quicquam considerarunt, praeter naturam ipsam et naturae possibilitatem: et quamvis illi in simplici tantum naturae via manserint, ea tamen invenerunt, quae nos nunc in tot rebus versantes, vix nostris ingeniis potuissemus imaginari: hoc fit, quia nobis natura et generatio rerum in orbe iam vilis simplexque videtur: et ideo ingenia nostra, non ad res cognitae, sed ad talia, quae non, vel vix fieri possunt, intendimus: quapropter ita etiam nobis succedit, facilius excogitare res subtiles, et quas ipsi Philosophi nescirent, imaginari possumus, quam ad verum naturae cursum et Philosophorum sensum pervenire: et sic natura hominum comparata est, ut ea quae scit negligat, alia semper quaerat, multo magis ingenia humana, quibus natura subdita est: exempli gratia, vides quemlibet artificem, cum iam ad summam artificii sui perfectionem pervenerit, alia quaerit, aut eo abutitur, aut plane desinit.

English Many wise and highly learned men wrote extensively about making the philosophers' stone many centuries ago—indeed, according to Hermes, before the Flood. They left us so many writings that, unless nature daily performed things we could believe in, hardly anyone would now think that nature truly existed. Earlier ages did not have so many inventors of things; our predecessors considered nothing beyond nature herself and what nature could do. Although they kept simply to nature's path, they discovered things that we, occupied with so many pursuits, could scarcely have imagined by our own ingenuity. This happens because nature and the generation of things in the world now seem commonplace and simple to us. We therefore direct our minds toward things that cannot, or can scarcely, be done, instead of toward things already known. The result is that we find it easier to devise

⁶. Second refers to its position in the 1606 Ruland collection; it is not the number of a Sendivogian treatise in this edition.

subtleties and imagine things that the philosophers themselves would not have known than to reach nature's true course and the philosophers' meaning. Human nature is so constituted that it neglects what it knows and always seeks something else; this applies still more to human ingenuity, to which nature is subject. For example, you see that when any craftsman has reached the highest perfection of his craft, he seeks something else, misuses his craft, or stops altogether.

NL-C01-P002 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 87–89 · scans HAB 00501, HAB 00502, HAB 00503 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00501.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00502.jpg> ·
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Latin Ita etiam generosa natura semper agit, usque in ipsum Iliadum, hoc est, terminum ultimum, postea cessat: nam indita est naturae promissio quaedam ab initio, ut per cursum integrum possit ad meliora venire, et requiem habere plenariam, ad quam omni conatu tendit, et gaudet suo fine, non aliter, ut formica senio, cui in senectute natura creat alas: ita nimirum et nostra ingenia, eo usque progressa sunt, praesertim in arte Philosophica seu lapidis praxi, ut iam fere in ipsum Iliadum pervenerimus. Nam ars chymiae eiusmodi subtilitates nunc invenit, ut vix maiores possint reperiri, et eatenus differt a veterum Philosophorum arte, prout faber horologiorum, a simplici fabro ferrario: et licet ambo tractent ferrum, nihilominus neuter sciret alterius labores, quamvis ambo sint in sua arte magistri. Si hodie revivisceret ipse Philosophorum pater Hermes, et subtilis ingenii Geber cum profundissimo Raymundo Lullio, non pro Philosophis, sed potius pro discipulis a nostris chymistis haberentur: nescirent tot hodie usitatas distillationes, et tot circulationes tot calcinationes aliaque innumera artistarum opera, quae ex illorum scriptis huius saeculi homines invenerunt, et excogitarunt. Unicum tantum nobis deest, ut id sciamus, quod ipsi fecerunt, lapidem videlicet Philosophorum seu tincturam Physicam: nos dum illam quaerimus, alia invenimus, et nisi ita usitata esset procreatio humana, et natura in eo suum ius teneret, iam vix non devieremus.

English Noble nature likewise works continually until she reaches the Iliadum itself, that is, the final limit; then she rests. From the beginning a certain promise was implanted in nature: by completing her course she could attain better things and enjoy complete rest. She strives toward this with all her powers and rejoices in her end, like an ageing ant, for which nature creates wings in old age. Our own ingenuity has certainly advanced so far, especially in the philosophical art or practice of the stone, that we have now almost reached the Iliadum itself. The art of chymistry has discovered subtleties so great that scarcely greater ones can be found. It differs from the art of the ancient philosophers as a clockmaker differs from an ordinary blacksmith. Although both work with iron, neither would know the other's tasks, even though each is a master of his own art. If Hermes himself, the father of philosophers, returned to life today, together with the subtle-minded Geber and the most profound Raymond Lull, our chymists would regard them as pupils rather than philosophers. They would not know the many distillations now in use, the many circulations and calcinations, and the innumerable other operations of practitioners that people of this age have discovered and devised from their writings. We lack only one thing: knowing what they actually made—the philosophers' stone, or

physical tincture. While searching for it, we discover other things. Had human procreation not become so familiar, and did nature not maintain her own jurisdiction in it, we would by now scarcely fail to go astray even there.⁷

NL-C01-P003 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 89–91 · scans HAB 00503, HAB 00504, HAB 00505 · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00503.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00504.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00505.jpg>

Latin Sed ut revertar ad propositum: promisi in hoc primo capite naturam explicare, ne nos a simplici via vera, vana deflectat imaginatio. Naturam igitur dico, unam, veram, simplicem, integram in suo esse, quam Deus ante saecula fecit, et spiritum ei inclusit: scito autem naturae terminum esse Deum, qui et naturae principium est, siquidem nullum finitur initium, nisi in eo, in quo incipit. Dixi unicam esse tantum, per quam Deus omnia facit, non quod Deus sine illa operari nesciret (siquidem ipse naturam fecit et omnipotens est) sed ita sibi placuit, et fecit. Res omnes ex illa natura unica proveniunt, nec est in orbe aliquid extra naturam: et quamvis aliquando abortus fiat, hoc non est naturae, sed vel artificis vel loci vitium. Natura haec divisa est in loca quatuor, in quibus haec omnia operatur, quae apparent, et in umbra sunt, siquidem res potius in umbra sunt, quam ut vere appareant: mutatur in mare et foemina, et Mercurio assimilatur, quia se iungit variis locis, et secundum terrae loca bona vel mala, res producit, licet non sint loca mala in terra, prout nobis videtur: qualitates autem sunt tantum quatuor, et hae omnibus insunt rebus, neque concordant, semper una excedit aliam: natura autem non est visibilis licet visibiliter agat, nam est spiritus volatilis, qui in corporibus suum agit officium, locum et sedem suam habet in voluntate divina, nobis hoc loco, ad nil aliud ipsa prodest, nisi ut eius loca sciamus, quae sint ipsi convenientiora et propinquiora, hoc est, ut sciamus coniungere rem rei, secundum naturam, ne misceatur lignum homini, aut bos vel animal metallo, sed quodlibet agat in suum simile, et tunc etiam natura suum praestabit officium. Locus naturae non est alius, quam ut supra dictum, in velle Dei.

English To return to the subject: I promised in this first chapter to explain nature, so that empty imagination might not divert us from the simple, true path. I therefore say that nature is one, true, simple, and whole in her being. God made her before the ages and enclosed a spirit within her. Know, however, that nature's end is God, who is also nature's beginning: no beginning comes to its end anywhere except where it begins. I have said that there is only one nature, through which God makes all things. This does not mean that God could not work without her—he himself made nature and is almighty—but that he was pleased to do so, and did so. All things proceed from this one nature, and nothing in the world lies outside nature. Although a failed birth sometimes occurs, the fault belongs to the practitioner or the place, rather than to nature. Nature is divided into four regions, in which she performs all these things that appear and are in shadow; indeed, things are more in shadow than truly manifest. She changes in male and female and resembles Mercury, because she joins herself to various

⁷. Iliadum is retained as the author's technical name for a final boundary; the Latin itself supplies the explanation terminum ultimum. It is not an allusion supplied by the English translator.

places and produces things according to the earth's good or bad locations—although there are no bad locations in the earth in the way we imagine. There are only four qualities, present in all things. They do not agree: one always exceeds another. Nature herself is invisible, although she acts visibly, for she is a volatile spirit that performs its office in bodies. Her place and seat are in the divine will. For our present purpose, understanding her serves only to acquaint us with the places most suitable and nearest to her: that is, to teach us to join one thing to another according to nature. We should not mix wood with a human being, or an ox or another animal with a metal. Each thing should act upon its own like; then nature too will perform her office. Nature's place, as already said, is nowhere other than in God's willing.

NL-C01-P004 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 91–92 · scans HAB 00505, HAB 00506 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00505.jpg> ·
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Latin Scrutatores naturae tales esse debent, qualis est ipsa natura, veraces, simplices, patientes, constantes, etc. et quod maximum, pii, Deum timentes, proximo non nocentes: postea diligenter considerent, num propositum suum cum natura concordet, an sit possibile, ab exemplis discant apparentibus, ex quibus videlicet rebus quid fiat, quomodo et in quali vase natura operetur: nam si tu simpliciter vis aliquid facere, sicuti ipsa facit natura, sequere naturam: sin vero praestantius quid moliris, quam natura, id animadvertite in quo et per quid melioratur, et semper in suo id fiet simili: exempli gratia, si cupis metallum (quae est nostra intentio) ulterius quam natura fecit, in virtute promovere, naturam accipere oportet metallicam, et hoc in mare et foemina, alias nil efficies. Si enim intendis ex herbis creare metallum, laborabis in vanum, sicuti etiam ex cane vel bestia lignum non produces.

English Investigators of nature should resemble nature herself: truthful, simple, patient, steadfast, and so on; above all, devout, fearing God and doing no harm to their neighbour. They should then carefully consider whether their purpose agrees with nature and whether it is possible. Let them learn from visible examples what is made from which things, how nature works, and in what kind of vessel. If you simply want to make something as nature herself makes it, follow nature. But if you undertake something more excellent than nature, observe in what and through what it is improved; this will always take place in its own like. For example, if you wish to advance a metal in its power beyond what nature has done—which is our intention—you must take a metallic nature, in both male and female. Otherwise you will accomplish nothing. If you intend to create a metal from herbs, your labour will be vain, just as you will not produce wood from a dog or another beast.

Treatise II The Operation of Nature in Our Subject and Seed

Caput II. De operatione naturae in nostro proposito et spermate.

NL-C02-P001 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 92–93 · scans HAB 00506, HAB 00507 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00506.jpg> ·
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Latin Naturam iam dixi esse veram, unicam, ubique apparentem, continuam, quae cognoscitur ex rebus productis, lignis videlicet, herbis, etc. Dixi etiam scrutatorem naturae esse oportere veracem, simplicem, patientem, constantem, unicae saltem rei animum applicantem, etc. Nunc de naturae actu incipiendum: sicuti natura in Dei velle est, et Deus creavit illam, vel imposuit omni imaginationi, ita natura fecit sibi semen, hoc est velle suum in elementis: illa est quidem una, et tamen res profert diversas, sed nil operatur sine spermate, quicquid sperma vult operatur natura, nam est instar artificis alicuius instrumentum. Sperma igitur uniuscuiusque rei melius et utilius est artifici, quam natura ipsa: nam e natura sine spermate efficies tantum, quantum sine igne, auro vel argento aurifaber, aut sine grano et semine agricola. Habito spermate, natura praesto aderit, sive ad malum sive ad bonum. Operatur illa in spermate, ut Deus in libero hominis arbitrio, et hoc est magnum miraculum, quod natura obedit spermati, non coacta, sed propria sponte, sicuti et Deus omnia concedit, quae homo vult, non coactus, sed ex proprio velle: ideo homini liberum dedit arbitrium, sive ad malum, sive bonum. Sperma igitur est elixir cuiusque rei, vel quinta essentia seu perfectissima rei decoctio et digestio, vel sulphuris balsamum, quod idem est, quod humidum radicale in metallis: magnus quidem hic de hoc spermate posset institui sermo, sed nos tantum ad propositum in arte chymica tendimus.

English I have already said that nature is true, one, everywhere manifest, and continuous, and that she is known through the things she produces—wood, herbs, and so forth. I have also said that an investigator of nature must be truthful, simple, patient, steadfast, and devoted in mind to a single thing, and so on. We must now begin with nature's activity. Just as nature is in God's willing, and God created her, or imposed her upon every act of imagination, so nature made herself a seed: that is, she established her willing in the elements. She is one, yet brings forth diverse things; but she does nothing without seed. Nature performs whatever the seed wills, for she is like an instrument in a craftsman's hands. The seed of each thing is therefore better and more useful to the practitioner than nature herself. With nature but without seed, you will accomplish as much as a goldsmith without fire, gold, or silver, or a farmer without grain and seed. Once the seed is obtained, nature will be ready to assist, whether for evil or for good. She works in the seed as God works in human free will. It is a great wonder that nature obeys the seed, freely rather than under compulsion, just as God grants all that a human being wills, without compulsion and from his own willing. He therefore gave humanity free choice, whether for evil or for good. Seed is thus the elixir of each thing, or its quintessence: its most perfect decoction and digestion, or balsam of sulphur, which is the same

as the radical moisture in metals. Much could be said here about this seed, but we are concerned only with our purpose in the chymical art.

NL-C02-P002 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 93–94 · scans HAB 00507, HAB 00508 · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00507.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00508.jpg>

Latin Quatuor elementa generant sperma, voluntate Dei et imaginatione naturae: quemadmodum enim viri sperma habet centrum, seu vas sui seminis in renibus: ita quatuor elementa motu indesinenti (quodlibet secundum suam qualitatem) proiciunt sperma in terrae centrum, ubi digeritur et per modum emittitur foras: centrum vero terrae est quidam locus vacuus, ubi nil quiescere potest: in excentrum (ut ita loquar) seu centri marginem et circumferentiam quatuor elementa suas proiciunt qualitates, sicuti vir suum emittit semen in uterum mulieris, in quo nil manet de semine, sed postquam debitam matrix accepit portionem, ceterum eiicit foras; similiter in centro terrae accidit, ut vis magnetica partis alicuius loci rem ad se attrahat, convenientem sibi ad pariendum aliquid, ceterum eiicitur foras, in lapides et alia excrementa: nam omnes res ex eo fonte habent originem, nec quicquam in toto mundo nascitur, nisi per hunc fontem.

English The four elements generate seed through God's will and nature's imagination. Just as a man's seed has its centre, or seminal vessel, in the kidneys, so the four elements, in ceaseless motion and each according to its quality, cast seed into the earth's centre. There it is digested and sent outward in due manner. The earth's centre is an empty place where nothing can remain at rest. Into the excentre, so to speak—the edge and circumference of the centre—the four elements cast their qualities, as a man discharges his seed into a woman's womb. None of the seed remains there except the due portion received by the womb; the remainder is expelled. Something similar occurs at the earth's centre: the magnetic power of some part of a place attracts to itself what is suitable for bringing something forth, while the remainder is expelled into stones and other waste products. All things originate from this spring, and nothing in the whole world is born except through this spring.⁸

NL-C02-P003 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 94–95 · scans HAB 00508, HAB 00509 · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00508.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00509.jpg>

Latin Exempli gratia, habeatur in aliqua mensa plana vasculum aquae, quod locetur in mensae medium, et circum circa ponantur res variae, et colores varii, item sal etc. quodque separatim: effundatur postea aqua in medium, videbis illam aquam hinc inde diffuere, et dum rivulus unus attingit colorem rubeum, rubefiet ab illo, si ad salem, salis saporem mutuabitur, et sic de ceteris. Aqua enim loca non mutat, sed locorum diversitas mutat aquam. Simili modo e centro terrae semen vel sperma a quatuor elementis in centrum proiectum ad varia loca transit, et secundum loci naturam naturatur res, si pervenit ad locum terrae et aquae purum, fit res pura. Semen et sperma omnium rerum est unicum, et tamen varias res generat, uti e sequenti apparet exemplo: viri semen est semen nobile, et saltem ad generationem hominis est creatum: nihilominus, si vir abutatur eo, quod est in eius libero arbitrio, nascitur abortus.

⁸. The 1606 printing reads *per modum* here, rendered “in due manner”; the 1614 aid reads *per motum*, “through motion.” This translation follows 1606.

English For example, place a small vessel of water in the middle of a flat table. Arrange various things around it—different colours, salt, and so forth, each separately. Then pour the water out in the middle. You will see it run in different directions. When one little stream reaches a red colour, it becomes red; if it reaches salt, it takes on the taste of salt, and likewise with the other things. The water does not change the places: the diversity of the places changes the water. In the same way, seed cast by the four elements into the earth's centre passes outward from there to various places. A thing acquires its nature according to the nature of its place; if the seed reaches a pure place of earth and water, a pure thing results. The seed of all things is one, yet it generates diverse things, as the following example shows. A man's seed is noble seed, created solely for the generation of a human being. Nevertheless, if a man misuses it—which lies within his free choice—a failed birth results.

NL-C02-P004 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 95–97 · scans HAB 00509, HAB 00510, HAB 00511 · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00509.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00510.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00511.jpg>

Latin Nam, si contra gravissimas Dei inhibitiones vir iniret vaccam, aut aliam bestiam, facile conciperet bestia viri semen, quia natura non est nisi una, et tunc non nasceretur homo, sed bestia et abortus, siquidem locum non invenit semen sibi competentem: tali inhumana et detestanda commixtione virorum cum bestiis variae bestiae producerentur hominibus similes. Ita enim fit, si sperma intrat centrum, nascitur quod inde nasci debebat, sed cum iam in locum venit et concipit, non amplius mutat formam: verum dum adhuc in centro sperma est, aequae facile ex illo spermate produci potest arbor, quam metallum, tam cito herba quam lapis, et unus pretiosior altero, secundum puritatem vel impuritatem loci: sed quomodo elementa sperma generent, nunc nobis dicendum est, et hoc modo fit; elementa sunt quatuor, duo sunt gravia, et duo sunt levia, duo sicca, duo humida: sed unum maxime siccum, et alterum maxime humidum, sunt masculina et foeminina, etc. Horum quodlibet per se est promptissimum ad producendum res sibi similes in sphaera sua, et ita voluit Altissimus: haec quatuor non quiescunt, sed semper invicem agunt, et quodlibet per se emittit suum subtile, ac in centro conveniunt. In centro vero est archaeus, naturae servus, qui ea spermata miscendo eiicit foras. Quomodo autem id fiat in epilogo horum duodecim capitum copiosius videre est.

English For if, against God's most solemn prohibitions, a man coupled with a cow or another animal, the animal would readily conceive from the man's seed, since nature is only one. What was born would then be an animal and a failed birth, rather than a human being, because the seed had not found a place suitable for itself. From such an inhuman and detestable mingling of men with animals, various animals resembling human beings would be produced. This is how it happens: when seed enters the centre, what ought to be born from it is born. Once it has reached a place and conception has occurred, it no longer changes its form. While seed is still in the centre, however, a tree can be produced from it as easily as a metal, a herb as readily as a stone, and one stone more precious than another, according to the place's purity or impurity. We must now say how the elements generate seed. It happens as follows. There are four elements: two heavy and two light, two dry

and two moist; but one is supremely dry and another supremely moist. They are male and female, and so on. Each is of itself most ready to produce things like itself within its own sphere; so the Most High willed. These four never rest but continually act upon one another. Each emits its own subtle portion, and they meet in the centre. In the centre is the Archaeus, nature's servant, who mixes these seeds and casts them outward. How this happens can be seen more fully in the epilogue to these twelve chapters.^{9,10}

⁹. The proposed human-animal conception belongs to the author's historical theory of generation; it is not biologically valid. The passage is retained as part of the complete text.

¹⁰. The 1606 reading includes *vel impuritatem*, "or impurity," after *puritatem*. That phrase is absent from the 1614 corpus transcription aid.

Treatise III The True First Matter of Metals

Caput III. De vera prima metallorum materia.

NL-C03-P001 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 97–98 · scans HAB 00511, HAB 00512 · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00511.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00512.jpg>

Latin Prima metallorum materia duplex est, sed una sine altera metallum non creat: prima et principalis est humidum aeris caliditate mixtum, hanc Philosophi Mercurium nominarunt, qui radiis solis et lunae gubernatur in mari Philosophico: secunda est terrae caliditas sicca, quam vocarunt sulphur: sed quia omnes veri Philosophi hanc maxime occultaverunt, nos paulo lucidius illam explicabimus, pondus praesertim, quo ignorato, omnia destruuntur: inde fit ut multi ex re bona producant abortus: sunt enim, qui totum corpus pro materia seu semine vel spermate sumunt, alii frustum, et hi omnes a recto declinant tramite. Exempli gratia, si quis viri pedem, et mulieris acciperet manum, et vellet ex hac commixtione creare hominem, non esset possibile. Est enim in quolibet corpore centrum, et locus vel seminis seu spermatis punctum, et semper 8200 pars, etiam in ipso grano tritici: et hoc aliter esse non potest: nam non totum granum vel corpus vertitur in semen, sed tantum est in corpore scintilla aliqua necessaria, quae a suo corpore custoditur, ab omni excessivo calore et frigore, etc.

English The first matter of metals is twofold, but neither part creates a metal without the other. The first and principal part is the moisture of air mixed with heat. The philosophers called this Mercury; in the philosophical sea it is governed by the rays of the sun and moon. The second is the earth's dry heat, which they called sulphur. Since all true philosophers have concealed this so thoroughly, we shall explain it somewhat more clearly, especially its weight: when that is unknown, everything is ruined. This is why many produce failed births from a good thing. Some take an entire body as the matter, seed, or sperm; others take a fragment. All these depart from the right path. For example, if someone took a man's foot and a woman's hand and wished to create a human being from this mixture, it would be impossible. In every body there is a centre and a place, or seminal point, always one part in 8,200, even in a grain of wheat itself. It cannot be otherwise: the whole grain or body is not turned into seed. Rather, in the body there is only a certain necessary spark, protected by its own body from every excessive heat and cold, and so on.¹¹

NL-C03-P002 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 98–99 · scans HAB 00512, HAB 00513 · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00512.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00513.jpg>

Latin Si habes aures et sensus, hic animadvertite et securus eris, non tantum ab illis qui locum spermatis ignorant, totumque granum in semen reducere nituntur, verum etiam ab his omnibus, qui in solutione metallorum versantur vana, et metalla per totum solvere volunt, ut postea ex illorum commixtione mutua novum creent metallum. At hi, si naturae processum considerarent, viderent rem se habere longe aliter: nam nullum metallum est tam purum, quod non habeat et suas impuritates,

¹¹. The 1606 printing gives 8200 as the numerical proportion. This edition retains that figure rather than silently adjusting the author's claim.

unum tamen altero pauciores vel plures: sed, tu amice lector primum observabis naturae punctum, ut supra dictum, et satis habes: sed hanc tibi habeto cautelam, ne in metallis vulgi illud quaeras. In quibus non est: nam haec metalla, praesertim aurum vulgi mortua sunt, sed nostra sunt viva, spiritum habentia, quae omnino sumenda: scito enim metallorum vitam esse ignem, dum adhuc in suis mineris sunt, et mortem etiam ignem, fusionis videlicet.

English If you have ears and understanding, pay attention here, and you will be safe both from those who do not know the place of seed and try to turn the entire grain into seed, and from all those engaged in vain dissolution of metals. They want to dissolve metals completely and then create a new metal from their mutual mixture. If they considered nature's process, however, they would see that the matter is quite otherwise. No metal is so pure that it has no impurities, although one has fewer or more than another. But you, reader and friend, should first observe nature's point, as said above, and you have enough. Take this precaution, however: do not seek it in common metals. It is not in them. These metals, especially common gold, are dead; ours are living and possess spirit, and these must certainly be taken. Know that fire is the life of metals while they are still in their ores; fire is also their death, namely the fire of melting.

NL-C03-P003 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 99–100 · scans HAB 00513, HAB 00514 ·
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Latin Prima vero metallorum materia est humiditas quaedam mixta aere calido, et est in forma aquae pinguis adhaerentis unicuique rei purae vel impurae, in uno loco tamen abundantius quam in altero, quod fit quia terra est in uno loco magis aperta et porosa, vim attractivam habens, quam in altero: provenit aliquando per se in lucem induta veste aliqua, praesertim in locis ubi non habet adhaerere alicui, cognoscitur ita, quia res omnis ex tribus principiis est composita, in materia vero metallorum unica tantum sine coniunctione, excepta veste, vel eius umbra scilicet sulphure, etc.

English The first matter of metals is a certain moisture mixed with warm air. It has the form of a fatty water adhering to every pure or impure thing, more abundantly in one place than another, because in one place the earth is more open and porous and has greater attractive power than in another. Sometimes it comes to light by itself, clothed in a certain garment, especially in places where it has nothing to adhere to. It is recognised in this way: every thing is composed of three principles, but in the matter of metals there is only one, uncombined, apart from its garment or shadow—namely sulphur, and so forth.

Treatise IV How Metals Are Generated in the Interior of the Earth

Caput IV. Quomodo metalla in terrae visceribus generantur?

NL-C04-P001 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 100–102 · scans HAB 00514, HAB 00515, HAB 00516 · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00514.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00515.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00516.jpg>

Latin Producentur metalla hoc modo, postquam quatuor elementa virtutes suas proiciunt in terrae centrum, Archaeus distillando sublimat calore motus perpetui in terrae superficiem: est enim terra porosa et ventus stillando per poros terrae resolvitur in aquam, ex qua res nascuntur omnes: sciant ergo doctrinae filii, sperma metallorum diversum non esse, a spermate rerum omnium, scilicet vaporem humidum: ideo frustra quaerunt artistae metallorum reductionem in materiam primam, quae tantum vapor est: Philosophi non talem intellexerunt materiam primam, sed tantum materiam secundam, sicuti Bernhardus Trevisanus optime disputat, quamvis non ita lucide, quia de quatuor elementis loquitur, nihilominus id dicere voluit et solummodo cum filiis locutus est. Ego vero, ut clarius theoricam detegerem, omnes hic praecavere et monere volui, ut tot solutiones, tot circulationes, tot calcinationes ac reiterationes sinerent, nam frustra id quaeritur in re dura, cum per se mollis ubique sit, non prima sed secunda tantum quaeratur materia, talis nimirum, quae simul ac concepta est, in aliam mutari formam non potest. At si quaeras, quomodo metallum in talem reducat materiam, sequor in eo Philosophorum intentionem: hoc tantum prae ceteris volo, ut filii artis intelligant, sensum scriptorum, non syllabas, et ubi natura desinat, in metallicis videlicet coram oculis nostris perfectis corporibus, ibi arti esse incipiendum.

English Metals are produced as follows. After the four elements cast their powers into the earth's centre, the Archaeus, by distilling, sublimes them toward the earth's surface through the heat of perpetual motion. The earth is porous, and wind, passing dropwise through its pores, is resolved into water, from which all things are born. Let the children of learning therefore know that the seed of metals differs in no way from the seed of all things: it is a moist vapour. Practitioners consequently seek in vain to reduce metals to the first matter, which is only vapour. The philosophers did not mean such a first matter; they meant only the second matter. Bernard of Treviso argues this excellently, although not very clearly, because he speaks about the four elements. Nevertheless, that was his meaning, and he spoke only to the children of the art. To disclose the theory more clearly, I wished here to warn and admonish everyone to abandon so many dissolutions, circulations, calcinations, and repetitions. It is vain to seek this in a hard thing when it is in itself soft everywhere. Seek the second matter only, rather than the first: something that, once conceived, can no longer be changed into another form. If you ask how a metal is reduced to such a matter, I follow the philosophers' intention in this. Above all, I want the children of the art to understand the meaning of the writings, rather than their syllables. Art must begin where nature ends: namely, in metallic bodies perfected before our eyes.

NL-C04-P002 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 102–103 · scans HAB 00516, HAB 00517 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00516.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00517.jpg>

Latin Sed ut ad propositum revertar, (siquidem hic non est intentio nostra de solo lapide) agamus nunc de materia metallorum: paulo ante dixi, res omnes nasci ex aere liquido vel vapore, quem elementa perpetuo motu in viscera terrae stillant, hunc postquam naturae Archaeus accepit, per poros sublimat, et unicuique loco sua sagacitate tribuit (sicuti in praecedentibus retulimus) et sic locorum varietate res etiam proveniunt et nascuntur variae. Sunt qui opinentur, Saturnum habere aliud semen: aurum quoque aliud: et sic consequenter metalla reliqua, sed vana sunt ista: unicum tantum est semen, idem in Saturno, quod in auro invenitur, idem in Luna, quod in Marte, etc. Sed locus terrae diversus fuit, si me recte intelligis: quamvis in Luna natura citius, quam in Sole desierit, et sic de aliis: quando enim ex terrae centro sublimatur vapor, ille transit per loca vel sicca vel calida: si igitur transit vapor per loca calida et pura, ubi pinguedo sulphuris parietibus adhaeret, vapor ille, quem Philosophi Mercurium Philosophorum dixerunt, accommodat se et iungitur illi pinguedini, quam postea secum sublimat, et tunc fit unctuositas, relicto nomine vaporis, accipit nomen pinguedinis, quae postea veniens sublimando ad loca alia, quae iam vapor antecedens purgavit, ubi est terra subtilis, pura, et humida, implet poros eius, et iungitur illi, et sic fit Sol: si vero pinguedo illa venit ad loca impura frigida, fit Saturnus: si vero talis terra pura sit et mixta sulphuri, fit Venus, et cetera.

English To return to our subject—since our concern here is not with the stone alone—let us now discuss the matter of metals. A little earlier I said that all things are born from liquid air, or vapour, which the elements distil into the earth’s interior by perpetual motion. Once nature’s Archaeus receives it, he sublimates it through the pores and distributes it to each place with his own discernment, as we related above. Through the diversity of places, diverse things thus arise and are born. Some imagine that Saturn has one seed, gold another, and likewise the remaining metals; but these ideas are empty. There is only one seed: the same in Saturn as in gold, and the same in Luna as in Mars, and so on. The place in the earth was different, if you understand me rightly, although nature stopped earlier in Luna than in Sol, and likewise in the others. When vapour is sublimed from the earth’s centre, it passes through places that are dry or hot. If it passes through hot, pure places where the fatness of sulphur adheres to the walls, that vapour—which the philosophers called the Mercury of the philosophers—adapts and joins itself to the fatness, which it then sublimates along with itself. It then becomes an unctuous substance: it abandons the name of vapour and takes the name of fatness. As this later sublimates into other places already purified by the preceding vapour, where there is subtle, pure, moist earth, it fills the earth’s pores and joins itself to it; thus Sol is made. If that fatness reaches impure, cold places, Saturn is made. If such earth is pure and mixed with sulphur, Venus is made, and so forth.

NL-C04-P003 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 103–104 · scans HAB 00517, HAB 00518 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00517.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00518.jpg>

Latin Quo enim magis depuratus locus est, eo pulchriora reddit metalla: nam sciendum est, quod ille vapor continue egreditur, ex centro ad superficiem, eundo purgat loca: inde fit quod hodie reperiantur minerae in locis, ubi ante mille annos nullae fuerunt: nam progressu suo semper subtiliat crudum, impurum, parum successive secum trahens: et haec est reiteratio et circulatio naturae: tam diu sublimatur, res novas producendo, donec locus depuratur optime: et quo magis depuratur, eo etiam nobiliores res producit. Hyeme vero, cum aer frigidus terram constringit, congelatur etiam ille unctuosus vapor, qui postea redeunte vere, una cum terra et aqua miscetur, et fit magnesia trahens ad se sibi similem Mercurium aeris, qui dat vitam omnibus rebus, per radios solis, lunae, et stellarum, et sic gramen, flores, et similia profert: natura enim ne momentum temporis otiiatur: metalla vero sic procreantur, longa destillatione purgatur terra, postea accessu pinguedinis ea generantur: alio modo non proveniunt, sicuti quorundam Philosophorum scripta sinistre interpretantium, vana opinio est.

English The more thoroughly purified the place, the finer the metals it yields. Know that this vapour continually moves out from the centre to the surface, purifying places as it goes. This is why ores are now found in places where none existed a thousand years ago: in its advance, the vapour continually refines what is crude and impure, drawing a little along with itself in succession. This is nature's repetition and circulation. It continues to sublime, producing new things, until the place is thoroughly purified; and the more it is purified, the nobler the things it produces. In winter, when cold air binds the earth, that unctuous vapour also congeals. When spring returns, it mixes with earth and water and becomes a magnesia, drawing to itself the like Mercury of the air. Through the rays of sun, moon, and stars, this Mercury gives life to all things, and so brings forth grass, flowers, and the like. Nature is never idle even for a moment. Metals are generated in this way: long distillation purifies the earth, and they are then generated by the arrival of the fatness. They do not arise in another way, as some vainly imagine through a mistaken interpretation of the philosophers' writings.

Treatise V The Generation of Stones of Every Kind

Caput V. De generatione lapidum omnis generis.

NL-C05-P001 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 105–106 · scans HAB 00519, HAB 00520 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00519.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00520.jpg>

Latin Lapidis materia est eadem, quae et aliarum rerum, et secundum locorum puritatem hoc modo nascuntur. Quando quatuor elementa suum vaporem stillant in terrae centrum, et Archaeus naturae eundem eiicit et sublimat, hic, dum transit per loca porosque terrae, trahit secum omnem terrae impuritatem usque in superficiem, quem postea congelat aer, nam quod aer creat purus, aer congelat crudus, quia aer in aerem habet ingressum, et se iungunt invicem, nam natura natura laetatur, et sic fiunt petrae et montes lapidei, secundum magnos et parvos poros: et quo maiores terrae pori, eo etiam melius purgatur locus: dum enim per tale respiraculum maior caliditas, et aquae maior quantitas transit, eo citius depuratur terra, et sic postea in eiusmodi locis commodius metalla nascuntur; sicuti et ipsa testatur experientia, ut aurum non alibi, nisi in montibus quaeratur et reperiatur, quod in planitie, nisi raro, fieri nequit: nam saepissime talia loca humida sunt, non vapore sed aqua elementalī, quae ad se trahit vaporem illum, et ita sese amplectuntur, ut non facile separentur, postea sol caeli digerens illam, facit argillam pinguem, qua figuli utuntur: in locis vero, ubi est arena grossa, et vapor non habet secum pinguedinem, vel sulphur, herbas et gramen in pratis creat.

English The matter of stone is the same as that of other things. Stones are born as follows, according to the purity of their places. When the four elements distil their vapour into the earth's centre and nature's Archaeus expels and sublimes it, the vapour passes through the earth's places and pores, drawing all the earth's impurity along with it to the surface. Air then congeals it: what pure air creates, crude air congeals. Air can enter air, and the two join each other, for nature delights in nature. Rocks and stony mountains are thus formed according to the large and small pores. The larger the earth's pores, the better the place is purified. More heat and a greater quantity of water pass through such a vent, and the earth is purified more quickly. Metals subsequently arise more readily in places of this kind. Experience itself testifies to this: gold is sought and found only in mountains, something that occurs only rarely in plains. Such places are very often moist, not with vapour but with elemental water, which attracts that vapour. They embrace each other so closely that they are not easily separated. The sun in the sky then digests it, making the fatty clay used by potters. In places with coarse sand, however, where the vapour carries no fatness or sulphur, it creates herbs and grass in the meadows.

NL-C05-P002 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 106–107 · scans HAB 00520, HAB 00521 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00520.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00521.jpg>

Latin Sunt et alii lapides pretiosi, ut Adamas, Rubinus, Smaragdus, et reliquae gemmae generantur omnes hoc modo: quando vapor naturae per se sublimatur, sine accessu pinguedinis sulphuris, et venit ad locum aquae purae salis, fiunt Adamantes, et hoc in locis frigidissimis, ad quae non potest pervenire pinguedo illa, quia pinguedo non permetteret ista. Sciendum enim est, quod spiritus aquae facillime sublimatur calore facili, sed oleum seu pinguedo, non nisi magno elevatur calore, et in loca calida: etiamsi enim ex centro progrediatur, levi congelatur frigore

et sic subsistit: vapor vero ad loca debita ascendit, et congelatur in aqua pura in lapides granulatim.

English There are also precious stones, such as diamond, ruby, emerald, and the other gems. They are all generated in this way: when nature's vapour sublims by itself, without the addition of sulphurous fatness, and reaches a place of pure salt-water, diamonds are formed. This occurs in very cold places that the fatness cannot reach, since the fatness would not permit such things. Know that the spirit of water sublims very readily with gentle heat; oil or fatness, however, is raised only by great heat and into hot places. Even if it moves out from the centre, slight cold congeals it, and it stops there. The vapour ascends to the appropriate places and congeals, grain by grain, into stones in pure water.

NL-C05-P003 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 107–108 · scans HAB 00521, HAB 00522 · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00521.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00522.jpg>

Latin Quomodo vero in gemmis calores fiant, sciendum est, illud ratione sulphuris in hunc modum fieri: si sulphuris pinguedo congelatur motu illo perpetuo, postea spiritus aquae transeundo digerit, et purificat illud vi salis, donec colore digesto rubeo vel albo coloretur, qui color tendens ad meliora cum illo spiritu quia subtiliatus est, tot reiterationibus destillatis elevatur cum spiritu, spiritus postea habet potentiam intrandi res imperfectas, et sic introducit colorem, qui postea iungitur illi aquae tunc partim congelatae, et sic implet poros eius, et fixatur cum ea fixatione inseparabili. Congelatur enim omnis aqua calore, si est sine spiritu, congelatur frigore, si habet spiritus: sed qui scit congelare aquam calido, et spiritum cum ea iungere, certe rem inveniet millesies pretiosiore auro, et omni re. Efficiat igitur, ut separetur spiritus ab aqua ut putrescat, et appareat granum, postea reiectis faecibus reducat spiritum ex alto in aquam, et faciat coniungere simul: illa enim coniunctio generabit ramum dissimilem forma parentibus.

English As for how colours arise in gems, know that this happens through sulphur as follows. If the fatness of sulphur is congealed by that perpetual motion, the passing spirit of water afterwards digests and purifies it through the power of salt, until, when the colour has been digested, it is coloured red or white. Advancing toward a better state, this colour has been refined by that spirit through so many repeated distillations that it is raised along with the spirit. The spirit then has the power to enter imperfect things, and thus introduces the colour. This subsequently joins the water, now partly congealed, fills its pores, and is fixed with it in an inseparable fixation. For all water is congealed by heat if it lacks spirit, and by cold if it possesses spirits. Whoever knows how to congeal water with heat and join spirit to it will certainly discover something a thousand times more precious than gold or anything else. Let him therefore bring about a separation of spirit from water, so that it putrefies and the grain appears. Afterwards, when the dregs have been discarded, let him bring the spirit back from above into the water and cause them to join together. That conjunction will generate a branch unlike its parents in form.¹²

¹² The 1606 text prints *calores*, “heats,” in the opening question. The following discussion concerns colour throughout; the translation understands *colores*, “colours,” as an apparent printing error. The Latin above retains *calores*.

Treatise VI The Second Matter and the Putrefaction of Things

Caput VI. De secunda materia et putrefactione rerum.

NL-C06-P001 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 108–110 · scans HAB 00522, HAB 00523, HAB 00524 · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00522.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00523.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00524.jpg>

Latin Diximus de prima materia rerum, et quomodo nascuntur res ex natura sive semine, hoc est quomodo natura ab elementis accipit materiam, ex qua generat semen: nunc vero de semine et rebus generatis ex semine sermonem instituemus. Omnis res habens semen, multiplicatur in eo, sed absque naturae auxilio non fit: semen enim nihil aliud est, quam aer congelatus in aliquo corpore, seu vapor humidus, et nisi hic resolvatur calido etiam vapore nullius est usus. Sciant ergo investigatores artis, quid semen sit, ne quaerant rem, quae non est, et sciant illud esse triplex, quod ex quatuor elementis productum est: primum est minerale, de quo hoc loco sermo est: alterum vegetabile: tertium animale. Minerale semen a Philosophis cognoscitur: vegetabile commune ac vulgare est, ut videmus in fructibus: animale ex imaginatione cognoscitur: vegetabile nobis ostendit, quomodo natura creat illud ex quatuor elementis; sciendum enim est, quod hyems est putrefactionis causa. Siquidem spiritus vitales in arboribus congelat, et quando hi calore solis (in quo est vis magnetica omnis humiditatis attractiva) resolvuntur, tunc calor naturae per motum excitatus, pellit ad circumferentiam vaporem aquae subtilem, qui poros arboris aperit et guttas stillare facit, semper purum ab impuro separando: praecedit tamen interdum purum impurum; purum dat et congelatur in flores, impurum abit in folia, grossum et spissum in corticem, arboris cortex manet fixus, folia cadunt frigore vel calore quando obstruuntur pori eius, flores congelantur in tali colore, qualis est ipsi calor, et adfert fructum vel semen, veluti pomum, in quo sperma est, ex quo non nascitur arbor, sed in illo spermate est semen vel granum intrinsece, ex quo etiam absque spermate nascitur arbor: nam multiplicatio fit non in spermate, sed in semine: sic oculariter videmus naturam creare ex quatuor elementis semen, ne nos in hoc frustra occuparemur: nam quod creatum est, creatore non indiget: hoc exempli loco, lectorem admonuisse sufficiat, sed ad propositum minerale redeo.

English We have spoken of the first matter of things and how things are born from nature or seed: that is, how nature receives from the elements the matter from which she generates seed. We shall now discuss seed and the things generated from it. Everything that possesses seed is multiplied in it, but this does not occur without nature's assistance. Seed is nothing but air congealed in a body, or moist vapour; unless it is dissolved by warm vapour as well, it is of no use. Let investigators of the art therefore know what seed is, lest they seek a thing that does not exist. Let them know that what is produced from the four elements is threefold: first mineral, which is our subject here; second vegetable; and third animal. Mineral seed is known to the philosophers. Vegetable seed is common and familiar, as we see in fruits. Animal seed is known through imagination. Vegetable seed shows us how nature creates it from the four elements. Know that winter causes putrefaction, since it congeals the vital spirits in trees. When these are dissolved by the sun's heat—which has a magnetic power attracting all moisture—nature's

heat, aroused by motion, drives a subtle watery vapour toward the circumference. This opens the tree's pores and makes drops distil, continually separating the pure from the impure. Sometimes, however, the pure precedes the impure. The pure portion issues forth and congeals into flowers; the impure goes into leaves, and the coarse and thick into bark. The tree's bark remains fixed; the leaves fall through cold or heat when their pores are blocked. Flowers congeal in a colour corresponding to their heat and yield fruit or seed, such as an apple containing sperm. A tree is not born from this sperm as such: within it lies the seed or grain, from which a tree is born even without the sperm. Multiplication takes place in the seed, not in the sperm. Thus we see with our own eyes how nature creates seed from the four elements, so that we need not occupy ourselves vainly in doing this: what has already been created needs no creator. Let this example suffice to instruct the reader; I return to the mineral subject.^{13,14,15}

NL-C06-P002 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 110–111 · scans HAB 00524, HAB 00525 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00524.jpg> ·
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Latin Semen minerale vel metallorum creat natura in visceribus terrae, propterea non creditur tale semen esse in rerum natura, quia invisibile est: at non est mirum, quod ignari dubitent, siquidem id, quod prae oculis est, non percipitur ab illis, multo minus istud, quod invisibiliter absconditum est: sed verissimum est, quod superius non est, nisi ut istud quod est inferius et vice versa: id quod nascitur supra nascitur ex eodem fonte, sicuti illud quod infra in terrae visceribus: et quam praerogativam vegetabilia prae metallis habent, ut Deus illis semen inderet, et haec immerito excluderet? Nonne eiusdem dignitatis metalla apud Deum, cuius et arbores? Hoc pro certo statuatur, nihil sine semine crescere, ubi enim nullum est semen, res est mortua: necesse est ergo, ut vel quatuor elementa creent semen metallorum, vel ea producant sine semine: si absque semine producuntur, tunc perfecta fieri non possunt, siquidem res omnis sine semine imperfecta est, ratione compositi: qui huic indubitatae veritati fidem non adhibet, non est dignus, ut naturae secreta scrutetur, nil enim in orbe nascitur, quod semine destituatur. Semen metallorum vere et realiter ipsa est inditum. Generatio autem eius ita fit.

English Nature creates mineral or metallic seed in the earth's interior. Because it is invisible, people do not believe such seed exists in nature. It is hardly surprising that the ignorant doubt it: they do not perceive even what is before their eyes, much less what lies invisibly concealed. Yet it is most true that what is above is only like what is below, and conversely. What is born above comes from the same spring as what is below in the earth's interior. What privilege do plants possess over metals that God should implant seed in them while unjustly excluding

¹³ The 1606 opening reads *sive semine*, “or seed.” The 1614 aid reads *sine semine*, “without seed.” The ensuing explanation distinguishes the creation of seed from reproduction through existing seed; this edition nevertheless retains the 1606 wording.

¹⁴ Here the author distinguishes *semen*, the effective seed or grain, from *sperma*, its encompassing seminal matter. Earlier passages often use the words together. The translation preserves the distinction where the argument explicitly makes it.

¹⁵ The clause *purum dat et congelatur* is syntactically rough in 1606. “The pure portion issues forth and congeals” gives the apparent sense without adding a new operation.

metals? Are metals not of the same dignity before God as trees? Let this be established as certain: nothing grows without seed. Where there is no seed, the thing is dead. Either the four elements create the seed of metals, therefore, or they produce metals without seed. If metals are produced without seed, they cannot be made perfect, since every thing without seed is imperfect in respect of its composition. Whoever does not believe this indubitable truth is unworthy to investigate nature's secrets, for nothing is born in the world that lacks seed. The seed of metals has truly and really been implanted in them. Its generation occurs as follows.

NL-C06-P003 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 112–113 · scans HAB 00526, HAB 00527 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00526.jpg> ·
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Latin Quatuor elementa in prima operatione naturae stillant per Archaeum naturae, in terrae centrum vaporem aquae ponderosum, qui est metallorum semen, et dicitur Mercurius propter eius fluxibilitatem, et uniuscuiusque rei coniunctionem, non propter essentiam assimilatur sulphuri, propter internum calorem, et post congelationem est humidum radicale. Et quamvis corpus metallorum ex Mercurio sit procreatum, quod de Mercurio Philosophorum intelligi debet, tamen hi non sunt audiendi, qui putant Mercurium vulgi semen esse metallorum, et ita corpus loco seminis accipiunt, non considerantes, quod et dictus vulgi Mercurius, suum in se habeat semen. Errores omnium horum e sequenti patebunt exemplo: manifestum est, quod homines habeant semen, in quo multiplicantur: hominis corpus Mercurius est, sed semen occultum est in corpore et ratione corporis quantitas in pondere exigua: qui igitur hominem generare vult, non Mercurius, qui corpus est, sed semen vapor aquae congelatus accipiat: sic in regeneratione metallorum sinistre proceditur a vulgaribus chymicis: corpora metallica solvunt, sive Mercurium, sive aurum, sive Saturnum, sive Lunam, et corrodunt illa aquis fortibus, et aliis rebus heterogeneis, ad veram artem non requisitis, postea coniungunt, et simul coquant, nescientes quod ex corpore humano dissecto non generatur homo, quia corruptio corporis et seminis destructio hoc pacto praecessit.

English In nature's first operation, the four elements, through nature's Archaeus, distil a heavy watery vapour into the earth's centre. This is the seed of metals. It is called Mercury because of its fluidity and its conjunction with every thing, rather than because of its essence. It resembles sulphur through its inward heat, and after congealing it is the radical moisture. Although the body of metals is generated from Mercury—which must be understood as the Mercury of the philosophers—we should not listen to those who think common mercury is the seed of metals. They take the body in place of the seed, overlooking that the common mercury itself contains its own seed. The errors of all these people will become apparent from the following example. Clearly human beings possess seed, through which they multiply. The human body is Mercury, but the seed is concealed within the body, and its quantity by weight is small in relation to the body. Whoever wishes to generate a human being should therefore take the seed, a congealed watery vapour, rather than the Mercury that is the body. Common chymists likewise proceed wrongly in the regeneration of metals. They dissolve metallic bodies, whether mercury, gold, Saturn,

or Luna, corrode them with strong waters and other heterogeneous things unnecessary to the true art, then join them and cook them together. They do not know that a human being is not generated from a dissected human body, because the corruption of the body and destruction of its seed have already occurred in this procedure.¹⁶

NL-C06-P004 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 113–114 · scans HAB 00527, HAB 00528 · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00527.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00528.jpg>

Latin Unaquaeque res in mare et foemina multiplicatur, ut in tractatu de duplici materia mentionem feci: divisio sexus nil creat vel producit, sed debita illius coniunctio profert novam formam: semina vel spermata ergo non corpora sunt accipienda. Resp. ergo marem vivum, et foeminam vivam, hos coniunge simul ut inter se imaginentur, sperma ad procreandum suae naturae fructum. Primam enim materiam nemo mortalium credat se facere posse: prima materia hominis terra est, et nemo hominum ex illa hominem creare potest, solus Deus hoc scit: at e materia secunda, quae iam creata est, si in locum debitum posita fuerit, facile natura operante generabitur id, cuius formae semen est: artifex hic nil facit, nisi ut sciat subtile a spisso separare, et in vas imponere debitum: nam hoc considerandum est, prout res incipitur, ita finitur: ex uno fiunt duo: ex duobus unum et non ulterius.

English Each thing multiplies in male and female, as I mentioned in the treatise on the twofold matter. Separation of the sexes creates or produces nothing; their proper conjunction brings forth a new form. It is seeds or seminal matters, therefore, that must be taken, rather than bodies. Take, then, a living male and a living female. Join them together so that between themselves they imagine a seed for bringing forth the fruit of their own nature. Let no mortal believe that he can make the first matter. The first matter of a human being is earth, and no human being can create another from it: God alone knows how. But from the second matter, already created, if it is placed in the proper location, nature's operation will easily generate the thing whose form the seed possesses. Here the practitioner does nothing except know how to separate the subtle from the thick and put it into the proper vessel. Consider this: as a thing begins, so it ends. From one come two; from two, one; and no further.¹⁷

NL-C06-P005 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 114–115 · scans HAB 00528, HAB 00529 · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00528.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00529.jpg>

Latin Unus est Deus, ex hoc uno Deo filius est natus: unus dedit duo, duo unum dederunt Spiritum Sanctum ab utroque procedentem, sic factus est mundus, et sic erit finis eius. Considera priora quatuor puncta exactissime: habes in illis Patrem, Patrem et Filium, ultimo Spiritum Sanctum, habes quatuor elementa, habes quatuor luminaria, duo coelestia, duo centralia, nil amplius est, fuit, et erit, quam in hac figura patet: si deberem omnia mysteria hinc elicienda consignare, magnum oriretur

¹⁶. The 1606 text includes et simul coquunt, “and cook them together,” after coniungunt; this clause is absent from the 1614 transcription aid.

¹⁷. The 1606 printing has the abbreviation “Resp.” The imperative “Take” follows the apparent sense of the ensuing instruction; no certain expansion is imposed on the Latin. The phrase imaginentur is retained as “imagine,” in the author’s account of formative activity; it is not replaced by a modern biological mechanism.

volumen: redeo ad propositum, et tibi dico verum, fili mi, non creatur ex uno unum, quia hoc solius Dei est proprium, sufficiat te posse ex duobus creare unum tibi utile: scias ergo sperma multiplicativum esse materiam secundam, et non primam. Prima enim materia rerum non videtur, occulta est in natura vel in elementis, secunda vero interdum filiis doctrinae apparet.

English God is one; from this one God the Son was born. One gave two, and two gave one: the Holy Spirit proceeding from both. Thus the world was made, and thus will be its end. Consider the preceding four points with the greatest care. In them you have the Father, the Father and Son, and lastly the Holy Spirit. You have the four elements, and the four lights—two heavenly and two central. Nothing more exists, existed, or will exist than is disclosed in this figure. If I were to record all the mysteries that can be drawn from it, a large volume would result. I return to the subject and tell you truly, my son: one thing is not created from one thing, for that belongs to God alone. Be content that you can create from two one thing useful to you. Know, then, that the multiplying seed is the second matter, rather than the first. The first matter of things is not seen; it is hidden in nature or in the elements. The second, however, sometimes appears to the children of learning.¹⁸

¹⁸ Spiritum Sanctum expands the printed S.S. The wording Patrem, Patrem et Filium is retained as printed in 1606. The “figure” and “four points” refer to the preceding numerical formulation in this witness; no separate graphic is printed here.

Treatise VII The Power of the Second Matter

Caput VII. De virtute secundae materiae.

NL-C07-P001 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 115–116 · scans HAB 00529, HAB 00530 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00529.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00530.jpg>

Latin Sed ut facilius possis comprehendere qualis sit haec secunda materia, virtutes ex quibus illam cognoscas, describam tibi: ac primum scias, quod natura in tria regna divisa est: duo sunt regna, quorum quodlibet per se stare potest, etsi alia duo non essent: est regnum minerale, vegetabile et animale: minerale per se subsistere potest, etsi nullus hominum in mundo esset, nec arbor vel herba: vegetabile itidem etiamsi nullum metallum nec animal esset per se stare potest, haec duo sunt ex uno per unum creata: tertium vero ex dictis duobus vitam habet, sine quibus esse non posset, et est nobilius ac praestantius, quam duo praedicta, sicuti etiam postremum est inter illa, et dominatur eis, quia semper in tertio virtus finitur, et in secundo multiplicatur. Viden in vegetabili regno: prima materia est herba vel arbor, quam tu creare nescis, natura solummodo hoc facit: in hoc regno secunda materia est semen, quod tu vides, in hoc multiplicatur herba vel arbor. In regno animali prima materia est bestia vel homo, quem tu creare nescis, sed secundam materiam, vel sperma tu nosti, in quo multiplicatur homo. In regno minerali metallum tu creare nescis, et si gloriaris vanus es et mendax, natura hoc fecit et quamvis haberes primam materiam secundum Philosophos, illud sal centrale tamen sine auro multiplicare impossibile tibi foret: semen autem metallorum, filii tantum doctrinae noverunt.

English To help you grasp more easily what this second matter is like, I shall describe the powers by which you will recognise it. First know that nature is divided into three kingdoms. Two are kingdoms each of which can stand by itself even if the other two did not exist. The kingdoms are mineral, vegetable, and animal. The mineral can subsist by itself even if there were no human being, tree, or herb in the world. The vegetable likewise can stand by itself even if there were no metal or animal. These two were created from one through one. The third lives from those two and could not exist without them. It is nobler and more excellent than the first two; it is also the last among them and rules them, for power always reaches its end in the third and is multiplied in the second. Look at the vegetable kingdom. The first matter is a herb or tree, which you do not know how to create; nature alone does this. In this kingdom the second matter is the seed that you see, in which the herb or tree multiplies. In the animal kingdom, the first matter is a beast or human being, which you do not know how to create; but you know the second matter, or sperm, in which humanity multiplies. In the mineral kingdom you do not know how to create a metal. If you boast that you do, you are vain and a liar: nature has done this. Even if you possessed the first matter according to the philosophers, it would still be impossible for you to multiply that central salt without gold. Only the children of learning know the seed of metals.

NL-C07-P002 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 116–118 · scans HAB 00530, HAB 00531, HAB 00532 · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00530.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00531.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00532.jpg>

Latin In vegetabilibus semina apparent extra, renes digestionis eius est aer calidus: in animalibus semen apparet intus et extra, renes digestionis eius sunt renes viri: aqua in mineralibus semen est in centro cordis eorum et vitae: renes digestionis eius est ignis. Vegetabilis seminis receptaculum est terra: animalis seminis receptaculum est matrix foeminae. Aquae mineralis seminis receptaculum est aer: et ea sunt seminum receptacula, quae sunt congelationis corporum: ea est digestio quae solutio: ea putrefactio quae destructio. Virtus autem cuiusque seminis est, unicuique rei in suo regno se coniungere, quia subtile est, et nihil aliud quam aer, qui pinguedine in aqua congelatur: cognoscitur ita, quia non miscet se extra suum regnum naturaliter alicui rei, non solvitur sed congelatur, quia solutione non indiget, sed congelatione: necesse est ergo, ut pori corporum aperiantur, ut emittatur sperma, in cuius centro semen iacet, quod aer est, illud quando in matricem venit debitam, congelatur et congelat, quod reperit, purum vel impurum puro mixtum.

English In plants, seeds appear outside; the kidneys of their digestion are warm air. In animals, seed appears within and without; the kidneys of its digestion are the man's kidneys. In minerals, water is the seed at the centre of their heart and life; the kidneys of its digestion are fire. The receptacle of vegetable seed is earth. The receptacle of animal seed is the female's womb. The receptacle of the watery mineral seed is air. These are the receptacles of seeds, which serve the congealing of bodies. Digestion is dissolution; putrefaction is destruction. The power of every seed is to join itself to each thing within its own kingdom, because it is subtle and nothing but air, congealed in water through fatness. It is recognised in this way: it does not naturally mix itself with anything outside its kingdom. It is congealed rather than dissolved, because it needs congealing, not dissolution. The pores of bodies must therefore be opened so that sperm may be emitted. At its centre lies the seed, which is air. When this reaches the proper womb, it congeals and congeals whatever it finds, whether pure or impure mixed with pure.^{19,20}

NL-C07-P003 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 118 · scans HAB 00532 · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00532.jpg>

Latin Quamdiu in corpore semen est, vivit corpus, quando totum consumitur, corpus moritur, omnia autem corpora post emissionem seminis debilitantur: experientia etiam testatur, homines Veneri nimium indulgentes debiliores fieri, ut et arbores nimios fructus ferentes, fieri postea steriles. Semen igitur, ut iam multoties repetitum est, res est invisibilis, sed sperma est visibile, et fere est anima vivens, non invenitur in rebus mortuis: elicitur dupliciter, suaviter et cum violentia, sed quia hic de virtute eius saltem sermo est, dico quod nil sine semine nascatur, virtute seminis fiunt omnia, et sciant artis filii in arboribus amputatis frustra semen quaeri, quod solummodo in viridibus reperitur.

¹⁹. “Kidneys” follows renes literally. The word supplies a generative and digestive analogy across all three kingdoms; it is not a claim that plants or minerals have anatomical kidneys.

²⁰. The compact clauses on receptacles, congealing, digestion and putrefaction have irregular grammar in 1606. The translation preserves their stated equivalences rather than reconstructing a different technical sequence.

English As long as seed is in the body, the body lives. When all of it is consumed, the body dies. All bodies are weakened after emitting seed. Experience also testifies that people who indulge excessively in Venus become weaker, and that trees bearing too much fruit afterwards become barren. Seed, then, as has already been repeated many times, is invisible, while sperm is visible; it is almost a living soul and is not found in dead things. It is drawn out in two ways, gently and violently. Since we are speaking here only of its power, I say that nothing is born without seed: all things are made through the power of seed. Let the children of the art know that seed is sought in vain in felled trees; it is found only in living, green ones.

Treatise VIII Art and How Nature Works in Seed through Art

Caput VIII. De arte et quomodo per artem operatur natura in semine.

NL-C08-P001 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 118–119 · scans HAB 00532, HAB 00533 · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00532.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00533.jpg>

Latin Omne semen per se nullius momenti est, si non ponatur, vel ab arte, vel a natura in matricem debitam, et licet semen per se nobilius sit omni creatura, tamen matrix eius est vita, quae facit putrescere sperma vel granum, et puri puncti congelationem causatur, insuper calore corporis sui illud nutrit et crescere facit: et hoc fit in omnibus supradictis tribus naturae regnis: et fit naturaliter, per menses, annos et tempora. Sagax vero ars illa est, quae in regno minerali et vegetabili aliquid abbreviare potest, sed non in animali: in minerali solummodo perficit hoc, quod natura non potest, propter aerem crudum, qui sua violentia implevit poros corporis cuiusque: non in visceribus, sed in superficie terrae, ut antea in praecedentibus capitulis dixi.

English Every seed is of no consequence by itself unless art or nature places it in the proper womb. Although seed in itself is nobler than every created thing, its womb is nevertheless its life. The womb makes the sperm or grain putrefy and causes the pure point to congeal; it also nourishes it with the heat of its own body and makes it grow. This happens in all three kingdoms of nature mentioned above, naturally over months, years, and seasons. Discerning art is that which can shorten something in the mineral and vegetable kingdoms, though not in the animal. Only in the mineral kingdom does it complete what nature cannot, because of the crude air that violently fills the pores of each body—not within the earth’s interior, but at its surface, as I said earlier in the preceding chapters.

NL-C08-P002 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 119–120 · scans HAB 00533, HAB 00534 · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00533.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00534.jpg>

Latin Sed ut facilius intelligatur hoc, adhuc adiungere volui, quod elementa certanter inter se proiciunt in centrum terrae, quasi in renes semen suum: centrum vero per motum emittit illud in matricem, matrices vero sunt innumerabiles, quot loca tot matrices, una purior altera, et sic in infinitum fere. Scias ergo, quod pura matrix, purum dabit foetum in suo simili: exempli gratia, in animalibus sunt matrices hominum, vaccarum, equorum, canum, etc. Sic in minerali et vegetabili sunt metalla, lapides, salia: nam salia in hisce duobus regnis sunt considerata, et loca eorum, secundum magis vel minus.

English To make this more readily understood, I wished to add that the elements contend with one another as they cast their seed into the earth’s centre, as though into kidneys. Through motion the centre emits it into a womb. Wombs are innumerable: as many places, so many wombs, one purer than another, and so on almost without limit. Know, therefore, that a pure womb will yield pure offspring in its own like. For example, among animals there are the wombs of humans, cows, horses, dogs, and so forth. Likewise, in the mineral and vegetable kingdoms there are metals, stones, and salts. Salts and their places must be considered in these two kingdoms, according to their greater or lesser degree.

Treatise IX Mixing Metals or Drawing Out Metallic Seed

Caput IX. De commixtione metallorum vel de eliciendo semine metallico.

NL-C09-P001 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 120–121 · scans HAB 00534, HAB 00535 · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00534.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00535.jpg>

Latin Diximus de natura, de arte, de corpore et de spermate ac semine: iam ad praxin descendamus, quomodo videlicet metalla commisceri debeant, et qualis eorum sit inter se correspondentia: scias ergo mulierem non discrepare a viro, ex eodem semine, et in una matrice ambo nascuntur, nihil defuit praeter digestionem, et ut matrix purior est in sanguine et sale: sic Luna ex eodem semine cum Sole et eadem matrice: sed matrix magis habuit de aqua, quam de sanguine digesto, secundum tempus lunae coelestis. Ut vero eo facilius tibi imaginari possis, quomodo metalla coeant, ut emittant et recipiant semen, intueri coelum et planetarum sphaeras: vides quod Saturnus supremus sit, cui succedit Iupiter, huic Mars, postea Sol, quem sequitur Venus, hanc Mercurius, ultimo loco Luna statuitur: considera iam, quod planetarum virtutes non ascendant, sed descendant: dedit hoc et ipsa experientia, quod ex Venere non fit Mars, sed ex Marte fit Venus, utpote una sphaera inferior, sic etiam Iupiter facile transmutatur in Mercurium, quia Iupiter secundus a firmamento, et Mercurius secundus a terra: Saturnus primus a coelo, Luna prima a terra. Sol miscet se omnibus, sed nunquam per inferiores melioratur.

English We have spoken of nature, art, body, sperm, and seed. Let us now descend to practice: how metals should be mixed, and what correspondence they have with one another. Know, then, that a woman does not differ from a man: both are born from the same seed and in one womb. Nothing was lacking except digestion and the womb's greater purity in blood and salt. Likewise, Luna comes from the same seed and the same womb as Sol, but the womb had more water than digested blood, according to the season of the heavenly moon. To imagine more easily how metals come together to emit and receive seed, look at the heavens and the planetary spheres. You see Saturn highest, followed by Jupiter, then Mars, then Sol, followed by Venus, then Mercury, with Luna placed last. Consider now that the powers of the planets descend rather than ascend. Experience itself has shown that Mars is not made from Venus, but Venus is made from Mars, being one sphere lower. Jupiter likewise readily transmutes into Mercury, since Jupiter is second from the firmament and Mercury second from the earth. Saturn is first from heaven, and Luna first from earth. Sol mixes with all, but is never improved by the lower ones.²¹

NL-C09-P002 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 121–123 · scans HAB 00535, HAB 00536, HAB 00537 · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00535.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00536.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00537.jpg>

Latin Non autem te lateat, magnam esse correspondentiam inter Saturnum et Lunam, quorum in medio Sol constitutus est, sicuti inter Iovem et Mercurium, in quorum medio Sol etiam consistit: eodem plane modo inter Martem et Venerem,

²¹ The analogy of female generation with incomplete digestion reflects the author's inherited account of sex difference. It is retained as historical argument rather than adopted as an explanation of human biology.

qui duo Solem etiam habent intermedium. Noverunt chymistae ferrum in cuprum seu Venerem sine Sole mutare: noverunt etiam e Iove facere Mercurium: sunt et aliqui, qui e Saturno conficiunt Lunam: sed si scirent his mutationibus Solis administrare naturam, certe rem omni thesauro invenirent pretiosiore: propterea dico, non ignorandum esse, quae metalla invicem sint coniungenda, et quorum natura naturae correspondeat: propterea unum datur metallum, quod habet potentiam alia consumendi: est enim fere ut aqua eorum, et fere mater: unica tantum res, humidum radicale, Solis videlicet et Lunae resistit ei, et melioratur per illud: sed ut detegam, chalybs vocatur, si undecies coit aurum cum eo, emittit suum semen, et debilitatur fere ad mortem usque, concipit calybs, et generat filium patre clariorem, postea cum semen iam nati imponitur in suam matricem, purgat illam et facit millesies aptiorem ad pariendum optimos fructus. Est et alius chalybs, qui assimilatur huic, per se a natura creatus, qui scit ex radiis solis mirabili vi et virtute elicere illud, quod tot homines quaesierunt et operis nostri principium est magnum.

English Do not overlook the great correspondence between Saturn and Luna, with Sol placed between them; likewise between Jupiter and Mercury, with Sol also in the middle; and in precisely the same way between Mars and Venus, which also have Sol between them. Chymists know how to change iron into copper, or Venus, without Sol. They also know how to make Mercury from Jupiter, and some make Luna from Saturn. If they knew how to apply the nature of Sol in these changes, they would certainly discover something more precious than every treasure. I therefore say that one must know which metals are to be joined to one another and whose nature corresponds to which nature. There is consequently one metal endowed with the power to consume the others: it is almost their water, and almost their mother. Only one thing resists it and is improved through it: the radical moisture, namely that of Sol and Luna. To disclose it, it is called chalybs. If gold couples with it eleven times, it emits its seed and is weakened almost to death. The chalybs conceives and generates a son more splendid than the father. Afterwards, when the newborn's seed is placed in its own womb, it purifies that womb and makes it a thousand times fitter to bear the finest fruits. There is another chalybs, resembling this one and created by nature herself. By a wondrous force and power, it knows how to draw from the sun's rays what so many people have sought; it is the great beginning of our work.^{22,23}

²². Chalybs ordinarily means steel, but the author uses it here as the name of an enigmatic operative substance and then distinguishes another chalybs. The term is retained rather than assigned a modern chemical identity. The single 1606 spelling calybs is retained in the Latin.

²³. The 1606 ending includes magnum, "great," describing the beginning of the work; this word is absent from the 1614 transcription aid.

Treatise X The Generation beyond Nature of the Son of Sol

Caput X. De generatione supranaturali filii Solis.

NL-C10-P001 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 123–125 · scans HAB 00537, HAB 00538, HAB 00539
 · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00537.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00538.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00539.jpg>

Latin Tractavimus de rebus, quas natura creat, et quas Deus creavit, ut scrutatores artis eo facilius possibilitatem naturae intellerent, sed ne diutius differam, modum ac artem conficiendi lapidis Philosophorum aggredior. Lapis Philosophorum seu tinctura, nil aliud est, quam aurum in supremum gradum digestum: nam aurum vulgi est sicut herba sine semine, quando maturescit producit semen: sic aurum quando maturescit dat semen seu tincturam. Sed quaeret aliquis, quare aurum vel aliud metallum non producat semen? Ratio redditur talis, quia non potest esse maturum, propter aeris cruditatem, non habet sufficientem calorem, et contingit in quibusdam locis, ut reperiatur aurum purum: quod natura voluit perficere, sed impedita fuit ab aere crudo, exempli gratia, videmus, quod pomorum Arantiorum arbores hic quidem crescant instar aliarum arborum. In Italia et alibi, ubi est illarum solum nativum, dant et ferunt fructus, quia sufficientem habent calorem, in his vero frigidioribus locis minime: ubi enim maturescere deberent, desinunt, quia frigore opprimuntur: et sic nunquam a natura in hisce locis habentur earum fructus, licet aliquando iuvetur natura suaviter et cum ingenio, tunc ars iam perficit, quod natura non potuisset. Idem plane in metallis accidit. Aurum potest dare fructum et semen, in quo se multiplicat industria sagacis artificis, qui scit naturam promovere: sed si absque natura id velit tentare, errabit: nam non solum in hac arte, sed et in omni re, nihil possumus, quam naturam iuvare, et hoc non alio medio, quam igne seu calore.

English We have discussed the things nature creates and those God created, so that investigators of the art might understand more readily what nature can do. To delay no longer, I turn to the method and art of making the philosophers' stone. The philosophers' stone, or tincture, is nothing other than gold digested to the highest degree. Common gold is like a herb without seed: when it ripens, it produces seed. Likewise, when gold ripens, it gives seed or tincture. Someone will ask why gold or another metal does not produce seed. The reason is this: it cannot become ripe because of the air's crudity; it lacks sufficient heat. In some places pure gold is found that nature wished to perfect, but crude air prevented her. For example, we see orange trees growing here like other trees. In Italy and elsewhere in their native soil, they bear fruit because they have sufficient heat; in these colder places they do not. Where they ought to ripen, they stop, overwhelmed by cold, and so their fruit is never obtained from nature in these places. Yet if nature is sometimes assisted gently and skilfully, art then completes what nature could not. Precisely the same happens in metals. Gold can give fruit and seed, in which it multiplies through the industry of a discerning practitioner who knows how to advance nature. If he attempts it without nature, he will go astray. Not only in this art but in every

matter, we can do nothing beyond assisting nature, and by no means other than fire or heat.²⁴

NL-C10-P002 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 125–126 · scans HAB 00539, HAB 00540 · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00539.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00540.jpg>

Latin Sed cum hoc fieri non possit, siquidem in congelato corpore metallico non appareant spiritus, oportet ut prius solvatur corpus, et pori eius aperiantur, quo natura operari possit: qualis autem illa debeat esse solutio, hic lectorem admonitum velim, duplicem esse solutionem, licet multae sunt aliae solutiones, at inutiles: una tantum est vera naturalis: secunda est violenta, sub qua aliae comprehenduntur omnes: naturalis eiusmodi est, ut pori corporis aperiantur in aqua nostra, quo digestum emittatur semen, et matrici suae imponatur: aqua vero nostra aqua est coelestis, non madafaciens manus, non vulgi sed fere pluvialis: corpus est aurum, quod semen dat. Luna nostra est, (non argentum vulgi) quae recipit semen auri: regitur postea igne nostro continuo, per menses septem, et interdum decem, donec aqua nostra consumat tres, et relinquat unum, et hoc in duplo: postea nutritur lacte terrae, vel pinguedine eius, quae nascitur in uberibus terrae et regitur vel conservatur a putrefactione, sale naturae: et sic generatur ille infans secundae generationis. Nunc a theorica ad praxin accedamus.

English But this cannot happen while the spirits remain unmanifest in the congealed metallic body. The body must first be dissolved and its pores opened so that nature can work. As for what this dissolution should be, I wish to warn the reader here that dissolution is twofold. Although there are many other dissolutions, they are useless. Only one is truly natural; the second is violent, and all the others fall under it. Natural dissolution opens the body's pores in our water, so that the digested seed is emitted and placed in its own womb. Our water is heavenly water that does not wet the hands, no common water, but almost rain-water. The body is gold, which gives seed. Ours is Luna—not common silver—which receives gold's seed. It is then governed by our continuous fire for seven months, sometimes ten, until our water consumes three and leaves one, and this in a double proportion. It is then nourished with the earth's milk, or its fatness, born in the earth's breasts, and governed or preserved from putrefaction by nature's salt. Thus that infant of the second generation is generated. Let us now proceed from theory to practice.²⁵

²⁴. The 1606 text says orange trees grow hic, "here." The 1614 transcription aid specifies in Polonia, "in Poland." The translation follows the 1606 deictic wording rather than supplying Poland in the translated body.

²⁵. The 1606 page reads fere pluvialis, rendered "almost rain-water"; the 1614 transcription aid reads vere pluvialis, "truly rain-water." This edition retains the selected 1606 reading. "Heavenly water" and "does not wet the hands" remain the author's enigmatic terms.

Treatise XI Practice and Making the Stone or Tincture by Art

Caput XI. De praxi et confectione lapidis seu tincturae per artem.

NL-C11-P001 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 126–127 · scans HAB 00540, HAB 00541 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00540.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00541.jpg>

Latin Per tot capita sparsa est oratio de rebus per exempla, ut eo facilius intelligatur praxis, quae fieri debet naturam imitando in hunc modum. Recipe terrae nostrae per XI gradus XI grana, auri nostri, et non vulgaris granum I, Lunae nostrae non vulgaris grana II, sed hoc admonitus sis ne accipias aurum et argentum vulgi, nam haec sunt mortua, accipe nostra, quae sunt viva, postea pone in ignem nostrum, et fiet inde liquor siccus, primum resolvetur terra in aquam, quae Mercurius Philosophorum dicitur, et illa aqua resolvit illa corpora Solis et Lunae, et consumit ea, ut non remaneat nisi pars decima cum una parte, et hoc erit humidum radicale metallicum: postea recipe aquam salis nitri de terra nostra, in qua est rivulus et unda viva, si ad genuam foderis foveam: accipe igitur ex illa aquam sed claram accipe, huic impone illud humidum radicale, et impone igne putrefactionis et generationis, non tale, ut in prima operatione fecisti, rege omnia magno cum ingenio, donec colores appareant, instar caudae pavonis, rege digerendo, nec te taedeat, donec cessent colores, et unus per totum appareat color viridis, et sic de ceteris; et quando videbis in fundo cineris bruni coloris, et aquam fere rubram, aperito vas, madefacito pennam, inunge ferrum aliquod, si tinget habeto in promptu aquam, de qua postea erit sermo, et infunde tantum eius aquae, quantum aeris intravit crudi, iterum coquito priori igne, donec iterum tingit.

English Throughout so many chapters the discussion of things has been spread among examples, so that the practice may be understood more easily. It should be performed by imitating nature as follows. Take eleven grains of our earth through eleven degrees, one grain of our gold, not common gold, and two grains of our Luna, not common Luna. Be warned not to take common gold and silver, for they are dead. Take ours, which are living. Then put them in our fire, and from them a dry liquid will be made. First the earth will be dissolved into water, called the Mercury of the philosophers. That water dissolves the bodies of Sol and Luna and consumes them, until nothing remains but a tenth part with one part. This will be the metallic radical moisture. Afterwards take water of nitrous salt from our earth, in which there is a little stream and living water if you dig a pit to the knee. Take water from it, then, but take it clear. Put that radical moisture into it, and place it in the fire of putrefaction and generation, of a different kind from what you used in the first operation. Govern everything with great skill until colours appear like a peacock's tail. Continue to govern by digestion without weariness, until the colours cease and one green colour appears throughout, and likewise with the others. When you see brown ash at the bottom and water that is almost red, open the vessel, moisten a feather, and anoint a piece of iron. If it tinges, have ready the water that

will be discussed later, and pour in as much of it as the crude air that entered. Cook again with the former fire until it tinges again.^{26,27}

NL-C11-P002 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 128–129 · scans HAB 00542, HAB 00543 · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00542.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00543.jpg>

Latin Hucusque pervenit mea experientia, non plus possum, non plus inveni. Aqua vero illa debet esse menstruum mundi ex sphaera Lunae, toties rectificatum, quod possit calcinare Solem. Hic tibi omnia volui detegere, et si sensum meum interdum non syllabam intelliges, cuncta revelavi, praesertim in opere primo et secundo. De igne vero adhuc dicendum restat. Primus ignis seu primae operationis est ignis unius gradus continuus, qui materiam circumdat: secundus est ignis naturalis, qui materiam digerit et figit. Dico tibi veritatem, quod patefeci ignis regimen, si naturam intelligis. De vase adhuc restat loquendum: vas naturae esse debet, et sufficiunt duo: primi operis vas rotundum fieri debet: in secundo vero paulo minus vitrum instar violae et ovi. Sed per omnia scito, naturae ignem esse unicum, quicquid operatur diversum, locorum distantia efficit. Vas item naturae unicum, sed nos propter abbreviationem binis utimur: materia una, sed ex duabus substantiis. Si igitur animum intendis ad res creandas, considera primum res creatas: has utpote observantes oculis tuis, si non potes assequi, multo minus res creandas, quas producere cupis, scito enim te nihil creare posse, quod solius Dei proprium est, sed res occultas in umbra latentis facere apparentes, et umbram ab illis tollere, hoc Philosopho intelligenti a Deo per naturam concessum est: considera obscuro simplicem nubes aquam: ecquis unquam crederet, illam in se continere omnia, quae mundus habet, lapides duos, salia, aerem, terram, ignem, cum tamen simplex per se appareat aqua: quid dicam de terra, quae in se continet aquam, ignem, salia, aerem, et per se nuda terra videtur. O mirabilem naturam! quae novit ex aqua in terra fructus producere mirabiles, et ex aere illis suppeditare vitam.

English My experience has reached this far; I can do no more and have discovered no more. That water must be the world's menstruum from the sphere of Luna, rectified so many times that it can calcine Sol. Here I wished to disclose everything to you. If you understand my meaning, rather than occasionally fixing upon a syllable, I have revealed everything, especially in the first and second works. Something remains to be said about fire. The first fire, that of the first operation, is a continuous fire of one degree surrounding the matter. The second is natural fire, which digests and fixes the matter. I tell you the truth: if you understand nature, I have disclosed the government of the fire. We must still speak about the vessel. It must be nature's vessel, and two suffice. The vessel for the first work should be round; in the second work the glass should be a little smaller, in the shape of a vial and an egg. Above all, know that nature has only one fire; differences of place cause the diversity of its operations. Nature likewise has only one vessel, but we use two to shorten the work. The matter is one, but composed of two substances. If you direct your mind toward creating things, first consider things already created. If you cannot understand

²⁶. Recipe expands the printed prescription sign. The quantities and "eleven degrees" are translated as printed; they are not recalculated or converted to a modern practical procedure.

²⁷. Ad genuam is retained in the Latin; "to the knee" gives its apparent depth-reference. The phrasing is irregular, and no place-name is supplied.

these, present before your eyes, much less can you understand things yet to be created that you wish to produce. Know that you cannot create anything: that belongs to God alone. But God, through nature, has granted the understanding philosopher the ability to make hidden things lying in shadow appear, and to remove their shadow. Consider, I beg you, the simple water of a cloud. Who would ever believe that it contains everything the world possesses—hard stones, salts, air, earth, and fire—although it appears in itself to be simple water? What shall I say of earth, containing water, fire, salts, and air, yet appearing in itself as bare earth? O wondrous nature, knowing how to produce marvellous fruits from water in earth and supply them with life from air!

NL-C11-P003 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 130–131 · scans HAB 00544, HAB 00545 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00544.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00545.jpg>

Latin Haec omnia fiunt et vulgarium hominum oculi ista non vident, sed oculi intellectus et imaginationis percipiunt, visu vero, verissimo: oculi enim sapientum naturam vident aliter, quam oculi communes. Exempli gratia, oculi vulgi vident Solem esse calidum: oculi vero Philosophorum e contra vident Solem potius esse frigidum, sed motus eius calidos: actus enim et effectus eius per distantiam locorum deprehenduntur: ignis naturae unus et idem cum ipso est; sicuti enim Sol inter sphaeras planetarum centrum est, et ex hoc centro coeli deorsum calorem motu suo spargit: sic in centro terrae Sol terrae est, qui motu suo perpetuo calorem vel radios sursum ad terrae superficiem pellit: is calor intrinsecus multo efficacior est hoc igne elementalī, sed temperatur terrena aqua, quae de die in diem poros terrae penetrat illamque refrigerat: sic Solem coelestem et eius calorem temperat aer, qui de die in diem circumvolat orbem, et nisi hoc esset, calore tali res omnes consumerentur nec quicquam nasceretur. Sicuti autem ignis ille invisibilis, seu calor centralis omnia consumeret, si non intercederet aqua: sic solis calor omnia destrueret, sine intermediente aere.

English All these things happen, yet ordinary people's eyes do not see them. The eyes of understanding and imagination perceive them, however, with true—most true—vision. The eyes of the wise see nature differently from common eyes. For example, common eyes see the sun as hot. The philosophers' eyes, on the contrary, see the sun itself as cold, but its motions as hot. Its activities and effects are apprehended through distances of place. Nature's fire is one and the same with it. Just as the sun is the centre among the planetary spheres and scatters heat downward by its motion from that centre of heaven, so at the earth's centre there is the earth's sun. Through perpetual motion it drives heat or rays upward toward the earth's surface. This inward heat is much more effective than our elemental fire, but it is tempered by earthly water, which penetrates the earth's pores daily and cools it. Air likewise tempers the heavenly sun and its heat, circling the globe day after day. Without this, such heat would consume all things, and nothing would be born. Just as that invisible fire, or central heat, would consume everything without the intervention of water, so the sun's heat would destroy everything without the mediation of air.

NL-C11-P004 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 131–132 · scans HAB 00545, HAB 00546 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00545.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00546.jpg>

Latin Sed quomodo haec elementa inter se agant, brevibus dicam: in centro terrae est Sol centralis, qui motu suo vel sui firmamenti dat calorem magnum, qui extendit se usque ad terrae superficiem. Ille calor causatur aerem, hunc in modum: aeris matrix aqua est, quae parit filios suae naturae, sed dissimiles et multo subtiliores: nam ubi aquae introitus est denegatus, aer intrat, quando postea ille calor centralis, qui perpetuus est, agit, facit destillare aquam et calefacere, et sic illa aqua vi caloris vertitur in aerem, atque hoc pacto erumpit ad superficiem terrae, quia se includi non patitur ubi postea refrigit, resolvitur in aquam in oppositis locis: interim etiam fit, ut non solum aer, verum etiam aqua exeat, sicuti apparet, dum nigrae nubes violentia in aerem attolluntur: cuius rei tibi sit hoc exemplum domesticum, facies in olla fervere aquam, videbis igne lento, lentos vapores et ventos: igne vehementiori apparebunt nebulae crassiores: eodem plane modo calor operatur centralis, subtilem aquam in aerem elevat, quod spissum est ex sale vel pinguedine distribuit terrae, unde res variae nascuntur: residuum saxa et petrae fiunt.

English I shall briefly explain how these elements act upon one another. At the earth's centre is a central sun, whose own motion, or that of its firmament, produces great heat extending to the earth's surface. This heat causes air as follows. Water is air's womb; it bears children of its own nature, yet unlike itself and much more subtle. Where water is denied entrance, air enters. When that perpetual central heat then acts, it causes water to distil and become warm. By the power of heat the water is turned into air, and in this way bursts out toward the earth's surface, because it will not endure confinement. When it cools, it is resolved into water in opposite places. Sometimes water as well as air comes out, as is evident when black clouds are violently raised into the air. Take this household example: set water to boil in a pot. With a gentle fire you will see gentle vapours and winds; with a stronger fire, thicker clouds appear. The central heat works in precisely the same way. It raises subtle water into air and distributes to the earth what is thick from salt or fatness, from which diverse things are born. The remainder becomes rocks and stones.²⁸

NL-C11-P005 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 132–134 · scans HAB 00546, HAB 00547, HAB 00548 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00546.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00547.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00548.jpg>

Latin Posset aliquis obiicere, si ita se res haberet, tunc continue id fieri deberet, cum tamen saepe nullus sentiat ventus: respondeo si non violenter in vas distillatorium infunditur aqua, non fit ventus, nam parum aquae parvum excitat ventum: vides non semper fieri tonitrua, etiamsi pluvia sit et ventus, sed tantum, quando vi aeris aqua turbida fertur ad sphaeram ignis, nam ignis non patitur aquam: habes ante oculos exemplum, dum in calidam fornacem effundis aquam frigidam, unde tonitrua excitantur: sed quare non uniformiter aqua intret in illa loca et cavitates, ratio est: quod multa sunt eiusmodi vasa et loca, pellit interdum una concavitas ventos et aquam a se ad aliquot dies et menses, donec iterum fiat aquae repercussio, ut videmus in mari, cuius fluctus aliquando multa milliaria agitantur,

²⁸. The 1606 household example includes igne lento, lentos vapores et ventos, “with a gentle fire, gentle vapours and winds.” This phrase is absent from the 1614 transcription aid.

antequam repercussionem, ut regrediantur, offendant. Sed ad rem nostram. Dico ignem vel calorem esse causam motus aeris, et vitam omnium rerum, et terra est horum omnium nutrix vel receptaculum: sed si non esset aqua, quae refrigerat terram et aerem nostrum, tunc terra exsiccaretur, propter has duas rationes, nimirum ob motus centralis et solis coelestis calorem: nihilominus contingit hoc in aliquibus locis, quando pori terrae obstruuntur, et humidum penetrare non possit, tunc per correspondentiam solis coelestis et centralis, quia vim habent inter se magneticam, accenditur terra a sole, sicque etiam aliquando cadet gravis orbita mundi.

English Someone might object that if this were so, it ought to happen continuously, although often no wind is felt. I answer that if water is not poured violently into a distilling vessel, no wind is produced; a little water raises only a little wind. You see that thunder does not always occur even when there is rain and wind, but only when air's force carries turbid water into the sphere of fire, for fire does not tolerate water. An example is before your eyes when you pour cold water into a hot furnace and thunderous noises arise. The reason water does not enter those places and cavities uniformly is that there are many such vessels and places. One cavity sometimes drives winds and water away from itself for days and months, until the water rebounds again. We see the same in the sea: its waves are sometimes driven many miles before they meet a rebound that makes them return. But to our subject: I say that fire or heat causes the air's motion and is the life of all things; earth is their universal nurse or receptacle. Without water to cool earth and our air, the earth would dry out for these two reasons: the heat of central motion and that of the heavenly sun. This nevertheless happens in some places when the earth's pores are blocked and moisture cannot penetrate. Then, through the correspondence of the heavenly and central suns, which have a magnetic power between them, the earth is kindled by the sun. In this way too, one day the heavy round of the world will fall.

NL-C11-P006 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 134 · scans HAB 00548 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00548.jpg>

Latin Fac igitur, ut operatio talis in terra nostra sit, ut calor centralis aquam possit mutare in aerem, ut in planitiem mundi egrediatur, et residuum, ut dixi, per poros terrae spargat, et tunc in opposito aer vertetur in aquam multo subtiliorem, quam fuit prima, et hoc sic fiet. Si seni nostro aurum et argentum deglutire dabis, ut ipse consumat illa, et tandem ille etiam moriturus comburatur, et cineres eius spargantur in aquam, coquito ea, donec satis est, et habes medicinam curandi lepram. Hoc saltem animadverte, ne frigidum pro calido, vel calidum pro frigido accipias. Naturas naturis misce, si aliquid est, quod contrarium naturae (siquidem una tibi est necessaria) separa illud, ut natura naturae similis sit, hoc fac igne non manu, et scito si non sequeris naturam, vana esse omnia, et sic tibi dixi per Sanctum Deum quod pater filio debet. Qui habet aures, audiat, et qui sensus habet, animum advertat.

English Bring about such an operation in our earth that the central heat can turn water into air, letting it emerge into the world's plain and scatter the residue through the earth's pores, as I said. Then, on the

opposite side, the air will turn into water much more subtle than the first. It will happen in this way. Give our old man gold and silver to swallow, so that he consumes them. Finally, as he too is to die, let him be burned and his ashes scattered into water. Cook these until enough has been done, and you have a medicine for curing leprosy. Observe at least this: do not take the cold for the hot, or the hot for the cold. Mix natures with natures. If anything is contrary to nature—and you need one nature—separate it, so that nature may resemble nature. Do this with fire, not by hand. Know that unless you follow nature, everything is vain. Thus, by holy God, I have told you what a father owes his son. Whoever has ears, let him hear; whoever has understanding, let him attend.²⁹

²⁹ The claimed cure of leprosy is translated as the author's assertion. Leprosy also serves alchemical language for metallic imperfection; the statement is not evidence of medical efficacy or an instruction for present-day treatment.

Treatise XII The Stone and Its Power

Caput XII. De lapide et eius virtute.

NL-C12-P001 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 135–136 · scans HAB 00549, HAB 00550 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00549.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00550.jpg>

Latin In praecedentibus sufficienter dictum fuit, de productione rerum naturalium, de elementis, et de materia prima et materia secunda, de corporibus et seminibus, de usu et virtute eorum: conscripsi etiam praxin conficiendi lapidem Philosophorum: de eius vero virtute tantum, quantum mihi natura concessit et experientia patefecit, nunc revelabo. Sed ut prius adhuc summam et brevibus verbis comprehendam omnium horum capitum argumentum, ut Deum timens lector, mentem meam assequatur et sensum meum, ita se res habet. De veritate artis, si quis dubitat, legat copiosa Philosophorum antiquissimorum ratione et experientia verificata scripta, quibus ut fide dignis in sua arte fides non deneganda est: qui vero illis fidem non adhibet, tunc contra principia negantem non esse disputandum novimus: surdi enim et muti loqui non possunt. Dixi artem esse veram. Quam enim praeogativam in hoc mundo res omnes habent prae metallis? Cur haec sola per denegationem seminis immerito a summi creatoris universali multiplicationis benedictione excludemus, quam sacrae litterae affirmant, omnibus rebus creatis statim a condito mundo inditam et impertitam fuisse. Si vero semen habent, quis tam fatuus est, qui non credat, in suo semine illa posse multiplicari? In natura sua ars chymiae vera est, vera etiam natura, sed raro verus artifex: una natura, ars una, sed multi artifices.

English The preceding chapters have said enough about the production of natural things, the elements, first and second matter, bodies and seeds, and their use and power. I have also written down the practice of making the philosophers' stone. I shall now disclose as much about its power as nature has granted me and experience has revealed. First, however, let me briefly gather the argument of all these chapters, so that the God-fearing reader may grasp my thought and meaning. The matter is this. If anyone doubts the truth of the art, let him read the abundant writings of the most ancient philosophers, verified by reason and experience. As trustworthy witnesses, they should not be denied belief in their own art. If someone will not believe them, we know there is no disputing with a person who denies the principles: the deaf and mute cannot speak. I said that the art is true. What privilege do all other things in this world possess over metals? Why should we unjustly exclude metals alone, by denying them seed, from the supreme Creator's universal blessing of multiplication, which Scripture declares was implanted and bestowed upon all created things from the world's foundation? If metals possess seed, who is so foolish as not to believe that they can multiply in their own seed? In its own nature the art of chymistry is true, and nature too is true; but a true practitioner is rare. Nature is one, the art one, but practitioners are many.³⁰

³⁰ The 1606 chapter opening expressly includes "first matter and second matter," and later repeats *Dixi artem esse veram*, "I said that the art is true." These words are absent from the corresponding 1614 transcription aid.

NL-C12-P002 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 136–137 · scans HAB 00550, HAB 00551 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00550.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00551.jpg>

Latin Quod autem natura creat res ex elementis, generat eas per velle Dei, ex materia prima, quam solus Deus scit, natura creat res, illasque multiplicat ex secunda materia, quam Philosophi sciunt. Nil fit in mundo, sine velle Dei, et naturae. Elementum enim quodlibet in sua sphaera est, sed unum absque altero esse non potest, unum ex alio vivit, et tamen coniuncta non conveniunt: sed aqua est omnium elementorum dignior, quia mater est omnium rerum: hanc supernatat spiritus ignis, causante igne aqua fit materia prima, certatione videlicet ignis cum aqua, et sic generantur venti vel vapores apti, ut congelentur cum terra vel per aerem crudum, qui ab initio separatus fuit ab illo, et hoc fit sine cessatione motu perpetuo, quia ignis sive calor non excitatur aliter nisi motu, quod facile videre est apud fabrum ferrarium, lima ferrum comminuentem, quod eatenus motu vehementiori incalescit, ac si igne incanduisset: motus ergo causat calorem, calor movet aquam, motus aquae causat aerem omnium viventium vitam: crescunt igitur res hunc in modum, ut supra dixi, ex aqua videlicet, nam ex illius vapore subtiliori, res subtiles leves proveniunt: ex oleo vero eiusdem, graves et maioris pretii: ex sale autem res prioribus longe pulchriores.

English When nature creates things from the elements, she generates them through God's will from the first matter, which God alone knows. Nature creates things and multiplies them from the second matter, which the philosophers know. Nothing happens in the world without the willing of God and nature. Each element is in its own sphere, yet one cannot exist without another. One lives from another, although when joined they do not agree. Water is the most worthy of all the elements, because it is the mother of all things. The spirit of fire floats above it. Through fire's agency, water becomes the first matter—through the contest, that is, of fire with water. Winds or vapours are thus generated, fit to be congealed with earth or through crude air, which was separated from it at the beginning. This happens ceaselessly by perpetual motion, because fire or heat is aroused only by motion. This is readily seen in a blacksmith reducing iron with a file: with vigorous motion the iron grows as hot as though it had glowed in a fire. Motion therefore causes heat; heat moves water; water's motion causes air, the life of all living things. Things consequently grow in this way, as I said above, from water. Subtle, light things arise from its subtler vapour; heavy and more precious things from its oil; and things far more beautiful than the former from its salt.

NL-C12-P003 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 137–138 · scans HAB 00551, HAB 00552 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00551.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00552.jpg>

Latin Quia autem natura interdum impeditur, ne res adeo duras producere possit, siquidem vapor, pinguedo, sal maculatur et miscet se terrae locis, propterea docuit nos experientia purum ab impuro separare: ideo si velis, ut natura melioretur in actu, solve corpus quodvis, et illud quod naturae accessit heterogeneum, separa, purga, coniunge pura puris, cocta coctis, cruda crudis, secundum naturae pondus non materiae: nam scito, quod sal nitri centrale non accipit plus de terra, nisi quantum opus habet, sive sit pura vel impura. Aquae vero pinguedo aliter se habet,

nam nunquam habetur pura, ars purgat illam per duplicem calorem, et denuo coniungit illam.

English Nature is sometimes prevented from producing things so hard, since vapour, fatness, and salt are stained and mix with the earth's places. Experience has therefore taught us to separate the pure from the impure. If you wish nature to be improved in action, dissolve whichever body you choose, separate and purify the heterogeneous thing that has acceded to nature, and join pure with pure, cooked with cooked, and raw with raw, according to nature's weight rather than that of matter. Know that central nitrous salt takes no more earth than it needs, whether the earth is pure or impure. The fatness of water behaves differently: it is never obtained pure. Art purifies it through a twofold heat and joins it again.³¹

³¹. The 1606 transition beginning *Quia autem natura interdum impeditur* and ending *purum ab impuro separare* is absent from the 1614 transcription aid. It is included here from the selected 1606 witness.

Epilogue or Conclusion of These Twelve Chapters

Epilogus seu conclusio horum duodecim capitum.

NL-EPI-P001 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 138–140 · scans HAB 00552, HAB 00553, HAB 00554
 · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00552.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00553.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00554.jpg>

Latin Conscripsi, amice lector, praecedentia duodecim capita in gratiam filiorum artis, ut antequam manus adhiberent operi, naturae operationem haberent cognitam, quomodo videlicet illa operando res producat, ne sine clavibus portam ingrederentur, et cribro aquam haurirent. Frustra enim laborat ille, qui sine cognitione naturae manus ad labores porrigit in hac sancta et verissima scientia: in nocturnis versatur tenebris, cui sol non lucet: in densa umbra est, cui de nocte non apparet Luna. Habet natura lumen proprium, quod nostris oculis non est pervium: umbra naturae oculis nostris corpus est, sed si quem lumen naturae irradiat, illi confestim nebula de oculis tollitur, et sine impedimento potest conspiciere punctum magnetis nostri, correspondentis utrique centro radiorum, solis videlicet et terrae: eo usque enim naturae lumen penetrat et interna patefacit: cuius rei tale tibi sit exemplum: induatur veste uniformi adolescens duodecim annorum et puella eiusdem aetatis. Si iuxta se locentur, nemo cognoscet, quis masculus, quae foemella sit, oculi enim nostri penetrare non possunt, ideo decipit nos noster visus et falsa pro veris accipit; sed cum vestibus sublatis denudantur, ut ita appareant quales natura eos formavit, facile uterque suo dignoscitur sexu: simili plane modo noster intellectus facit umbrae naturae umbram: nam corpus nudum in homine est seminis naturae umbra: sicuti igitur vestimentis tegitur corpus humanum, sic etiam tegitur corpore natura humana, quam sibi Deus reservavit legendam et detegendam.

English Reader and friend, I wrote the preceding twelve chapters for the children of the art, so that before putting their hands to the work they might know nature's operation: how she produces things by working. They should not enter the gate without keys or draw water with a sieve. Whoever sets his hands to labour in this holy and most true science without knowing nature labours in vain. A person for whom the sun does not shine moves in nocturnal darkness; one to whom the moon does not appear at night is in dense shadow. Nature has a light of her own, inaccessible to our eyes. What is nature's shadow appears to our eyes as body. But when nature's light shines upon someone, the mist is immediately removed from his eyes, and without hindrance he can see the point of our magnet, corresponding to both centres of rays, namely the sun and earth. Nature's light penetrates that far and discloses inward things. Take this example. Dress a twelve-year-old boy and a girl of the same age alike and place them beside one another: no one will recognise which is male and which female. Our eyes cannot penetrate, so our sight deceives us and takes false things for true. When their garments are removed and they appear as nature formed them, each is readily distinguished by sex. In precisely the same way, our understanding makes a shadow of nature's shadow. The naked human body is the shadow of nature's seed. Just as clothing covers the human body, the body covers human nature, whose covering and uncovering God has reserved to himself.

NL-EPI-P002 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 140–141 · scans HAB 00554, HAB 00555 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00554.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00555.jpg>

Latin Possem hic prolixè et Philosophice disserere de hominis dignitate, creatione eius, et generatione, sed cum eiusmodi non sint huius loci, silentio praetereunda sunt: de vita eius solummodo paucis agam. Creatus homo de terra, ex aere vivit: est enim in aere occultus vitae cibus, quem nos rorem de nocte, de die aquam vocamus rarefactam, cuius spiritus invisibilis congelatus melior est, quam terra universa. O sancta et admirabilis natura, quae filios doctrinae errare non permittis, sicuti in vita humana indies demonstras. Porro in hisce duodecim capitibus tot rationes naturales in medium attuli, ut eo facilius cupiens et Deum timens lector, intelligere possit ea omnia, quae oculis meis Deo benedicente vidi, manibus feci propriis, sine ulla sophisticationis fraude: sine lumine enim et cognitione naturae impossibile est, hanc assequi artem, nisi singulari revelatione divina alicui contingat, vel per secretam amici demonstrationem. Res est vilis et pretiosissima, quam aliquoties descriptam, nunc denuo repeto.

English I could discuss at length and philosophically the dignity of humanity, its creation and generation. Since such matters do not belong here, however, they must be passed over in silence. I shall speak briefly only about human life. Created from earth, a human being lives from air. Hidden in air is the food of life, which we call dew at night and rarefied water by day. Its invisible spirit, when congealed, is better than the whole earth. O holy and admirable nature, you do not allow the children of learning to go astray, as you show daily in human life! In these twelve chapters I have brought forward so many natural reasons that an eager, God-fearing reader may more easily understand everything I have seen with my own eyes, by God's blessing, and performed with my own hands, without any fraudulent sophisticating. Without nature's light and knowledge, it is impossible to attain this art, unless someone receives it through a special divine revelation or a friend's secret demonstration. The thing is both commonplace and most precious. Having described it several times, I repeat it now.

NL-EPI-P003 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 141–142 · scans HAB 00555, HAB 00556 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00555.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00556.jpg>

Latin Recipe aeris partes X, auri vivi vel Lunae vivae partem I, haec omnia impone vasis duob.: coque aerem hunc in primis ut sit aqua, et postea non aqua, si hoc ignoras, et aerem coquere nescis, sine omni dubio errabis, siquidem haec est veterum Philosophorum materia, id enim accipere debes, quod est, sed non videtur donec artificii placeat: est aqua roris nostri ex qua extrahitur sal petrae Philosophorum, quo omnes res crescunt et nutriuntur; matrix eius est centrum Solis vel Lunae tam coelestis quam terrestres: et ut apertius dicam, magnes est noster, quem in praecedentibus chalybem esse dixi: aer generat magnetem: magnes vero generat vel facit apparere aerem nostrum: sancte tibi veritatem hic manifestavi, roga Deum, ut coepta tua secundet; et sic hoc loco habebis verissimam explicationem Hermetis asseverantis, patrem eius esse Solem, matrem vero Lunam, et quod ventus portaverit illum in ventre suo: nimirum sal alkali, quod Philosophi sal armoniacum et vegetabile nominarunt, occultatum in ventre magnesia: operatio eius talis est, ut solvas congelatum aerem, in quo solves auri decimam partem, hoc sigilla et igne nostro labora, donec aer vertatur in pulveres, et apparebunt, habito mundi sale, colores varii.

English Take ten parts of air and one part of living gold or living Luna. Put all these into two vessels. First cook this air so that it becomes water, and afterwards not water. If you do not know this and do not know how to cook air, you will undoubtedly go astray, for this is the matter of the ancient philosophers. You must take what exists but is not seen until the practitioner pleases. It is the water of our dew, from which is extracted the philosophers' salt of stone, through which all things grow and are nourished. Its womb is the centre of Sol or Luna, heavenly as well as earthly. To speak more plainly, it is our magnet, which I called chalybs above. Air generates the magnet; the magnet generates or makes our air appear. Here I have solemnly made the truth manifest to you: ask God to prosper your undertaking. Here too you have the truest explanation of Hermes' assertion that its father is Sol, its mother Luna, and that the wind carried it in its belly: namely the alkali salt, which the philosophers called armoniac and vegetable salt, concealed in the belly of magnesia. Its operation is this: dissolve the congealed air; in it dissolve a tenth part of gold. Seal this and work with our fire until the air turns into powders. When the salt of the world has been obtained, various colours will appear.^{32,33}

NL-EPI-P004 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 142–144 · scans HAB 00556, HAB 00557, HAB 00558
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<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00557.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00558.jpg>

Latin Descripsissem integrum processum in hisce capitulis, sed quia ille una cum multiplicatione in Lullii et aliorum verorum Philosophorum libris sufficienter continetur, propterea satis mihi fuit, tantum de materia prima et secunda tractare, quod candide factum est, nec arbitraris ullum mortalium me luculentius illud praestitisse, siquidem id non e multis libris, sed ex mearum manuum labore et propria experientia feci. Si igitur vel non intelligis, vel non credis veritati, noli meum librum, sed te ipsum accusare, et crede Deum tibi hoc secretum nolle revelare: hunc igitur precibus fatiga, et multoties reiteratis lectionibus hunc libellum evolve, praesertim horum duodecim capitum epilogum, considerando semper naturae possibilitatem et elementorum actiones, et quodnam sit in illis praecipuum, et praesertim in rarefactione aquae vel aeris: ita enim creati sunt coeli et totus mundus, hoc tibi sicut pater filio significare volui: ne mireris, quod tot capita scripserim, non mea causa factum est, cum libris non egeam, sed ut multos, qui in vanis rebus laborant, monerem, ne frustra sumptus exponerent: potuissent quidem omnia paucissimis comprehendi lineis, imo verbis: sed per rationes et exempla volui te ad naturae cognitionem deducere, ut ante omnia scires, quid quaerere deberes, an primam vel secundam materiam. Haberes etiam patefactam naturam, eiusque lumen et umbram: noli moveri, quod aliquando contradictoria in meis capitibus more Philosophorum usitato, tibi occurrant: opus habes illis, si intelliges: non reperitur rosa sine spinis.

³². The 1606 witness has a compressed or worn abbreviation, read here as duob. and understood as duobus, "two." The 1614 transcription aid instead gives vasi tuo, "your vessel." The abbreviation is retained in the Latin; its expansion guides the English.

³³. The statement about father, mother and wind recalls the Emerald Tablet. It belongs to the Latin author's explanation here; the translation does not substitute a different version of the Tablet.

English I would have described the entire process in these chapters, but it is already sufficiently contained, together with multiplication, in the books of Lull and other true philosophers. I was therefore content to discuss only first and second matter, and have done so candidly. Do not suppose any mortal has accomplished this more clearly than I, for I did it from the labour of my own hands and my own experience, rather than from many books. If you do not understand or do not believe the truth, accuse yourself rather than my book, and believe that God does not wish to reveal this secret to you. Implore him persistently, then, and work through this little book with many repeated readings, especially the epilogue to these twelve chapters. Always consider nature's possibilities, the elements' actions, what is foremost in them, and especially the rarefaction of water or air. Thus were the heavens and the whole world created. I wished to point this out to you as a father to a son. Do not wonder that I have written so many chapters. It was not for my own sake, since I have no need of books, but to warn the many who labour on empty things not to spend their resources in vain. Everything could indeed have been contained in very few lines, or even words. But through reasons and examples I wished to lead you to knowledge of nature, so that before anything else you would know what you should seek: first matter or second. Nature too would be disclosed to you, with her light and shadow. Do not be disturbed if, according to the philosophers' customary manner, contradictions sometimes meet you in my chapters. You need them, if you understand. No rose is found without thorns.

NL-EPI-P005 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 144–145 · scans HAB 00558, HAB 00559 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00558.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00559.jpg>

Latin *Perpende diligenter, quod supra dixi, quomodo videlicet quatuor elementa stillent in centrum terrae humidum radicale, et quomodo Sol terrenus centralis motu suo producat et sublimet illud ad terrae superficiem. Dixi etiam Solem coelestem habere correspondentiam cum Sole centrali: nam Sol coelestis et Luna peculiarem habent vim et virtutem stillandi per radios suos in terram, calor enim calori, sal sali facile iungitur: et sicuti Sol centralis habet suum mare et aquam crudam perceptibilem, sic Sol coelestis habet etiam suum mare et aquam subtilem et imperceptibilem: in superficie terrae radii radiis iunguntur, et producant flores et omnia: propterea quando pluvia fit, accipit ex aere illam vim vitae, et coniungit illam cum sale nitro terrae, (quia sal nitri terrae est instar calcinati tartari, sua siccitate aerem ad se trahens, qui aer in eo resolvitur in aquam: talem vim attrahendi habet ille sal nitri terrae, qui etiam aer fuit, et est coniunctus pinguedini terrae) et quo radii solares copiosius tunc feriunt, eo maior salis nitri quantitas fit, et per consequens maior frumenti copia crescit, et hoc de die in diem fit. Tantum de correspondentia rerum inter se et efficacia Solis et Lunae et stellarum innuere volui ignorantibus: nam scientes non indigent hac instructione. Versatur subiectum nostrum toti mundo ob oculos et non cognoscitur.*

English Weigh carefully what I said above: how the four elements distil radical moisture into the earth's centre, and how the central earthly sun, by its motion, produces and sublimes it to the earth's surface. I also said

that the heavenly sun corresponds to the central sun. The heavenly sun and moon have a special force and power of distilling into the earth through their rays, for heat readily joins heat and salt joins salt. Just as the central sun has its sea and crude, perceptible water, so the heavenly sun has its own sea and subtle, imperceptible water. At the earth's surface, rays join rays and produce flowers and everything else. When rain occurs, therefore, it receives that power of life from the air and joins it to the earth's nitrous salt. The earth's nitrous salt is like calcined tartar, attracting air to itself through its dryness; in it, that air is resolved into water. Such attractive power belongs to the earth's nitrous salt, which was itself air and is joined to the earth's fatness. The more abundantly the solar rays then strike, the greater the quantity of nitrous salt produced and, consequently, the greater the crop of grain that grows. This happens day after day. I wished only to hint to the uninstructed at the correspondence of things with one another and the efficacy of sun, moon, and stars. Those who know need no such instruction. Our subject lies before the eyes of the whole world and is not recognised.

NL-EPI-P006 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 145–146 · scans HAB 00559, HAB 00560 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00559.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00560.jpg>

Latin O coelum nostrum: o aqua nostra: o Mercurius noster: o sal nitri nostrum in mari mundi versans: o vegetabile nostrum: o sulphur nostrum fixum et volatile: o caput mortuum, seu faeces maris nostri: aqua manus non mædæfaciens, sine qua nemo mortalium vivere potest, et sine qua nihil nascitur et generatur in toto orbe. Et hæc sunt aviculæ Hermetis epitheta, quæ nunquam quiescit, vilissima est, nemo ea carere potest: et sic habes rem omni mundo pretiosiore detectam, quam plane dico, nil aliud esse quam aquam nostram ponticam, quæ in Sole et Luna congelatur, et extrahitur e Sole et Luna chalybe nostro artificio Philosophico miris modis, per prudentem artis filium.

English O our heaven! O our water! O our Mercury! O our nitrous salt moving in the world's sea! O our vegetable thing! O our fixed and volatile sulphur! O dead head, or dregs of our sea! Water that does not wet the hands, without which no mortal can live and without which nothing is born or generated anywhere in the world! These are the names of Hermes' little bird, which never rests. It is most commonplace, and no one can do without it. Thus you have disclosed something more precious than the whole world. I say plainly that it is nothing other than our pontic water, congealed in Sol and Luna and extracted from Sol and Luna by our chalybs through philosophical skill in marvellous ways, by a prudent child of the art.³⁴

³⁴ Pontic renders pontica without assigning the water a modern composition. The word evokes sea-water or a sea-like quality in the work's terminology; the passage identifies it through enigmas rather than through a reproducible chemical description.

NL-EPI-P007 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 146–148 · scans HAB 00560, HAB 00561, HAB 00562 · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00560.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00561.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00562.jpg>

Latin Consilium meum non erat propter rationes in praefatione commemoratas hunc librum publicare, attamen vicit me de liberalibus et Philosophicis ingeniis promerendi cupiditas, ut iis qui me norunt, animum ostenderem bonum, simul illis, qui artem callent, manifestarem, me illis parem esse et socium, eorumque notitiam appetere. Non dubito, multos bonae conscientiae et voluntatis homines, illud donum Dei clanculum possidere: hi meo admoniti exemplo et meis periculis cautiores et providentiores facti, Harpocratis sibi commendatum habeant silentium: quotiescunque enim me magnatibus detegere volui, semper aut in damnum aut periculum mihi cessit. Hoc scripto me adeptis filiis Hermetis patefacio, et ignorantes ac errantes instruo ac in viam veram deduco. Credant scientiae haeredes, se nunquam habituros meliorem viam, cui insistant, quam quae ipsis hic demonstrata est: omnia enim aperte dixi: extractionem saltem nostri salis armoniaci vel Mercurii Philosophici, ex aqua nostra pontica, eiusque tantum usum non ita aperte revelavi, quia a magistro naturae non habui ulteriorem loquendi licentiam: et hoc solus Deus revelare debet, qui novit hominum corda et animos: quem si diligenter oraveris, per reiteratam huius libri lectionem, poterit tibi intellectum tuum aperire.

English For the reasons mentioned in the preface, I had not intended to publish this book. Yet the desire to serve liberal and philosophical minds overcame me: I wished to show goodwill to those who know me, and at the same time to make clear to those versed in the art that I am their equal and companion and desire their acquaintance. I do not doubt that many people of good conscience and will secretly possess this gift of God. Warned by my example and made more cautious and provident by my dangers, let them value the silence of Harpocrates. Whenever I wished to disclose myself to the great, it always brought me loss or danger. Through this writing I reveal myself to the adept children of Hermes, instruct the ignorant and erring, and lead them onto the true path. Let the heirs of knowledge believe that they will never have a better path to follow than the one shown here, for I have said everything openly. Only the extraction of our armoniac salt, or philosophical Mercury, from our pontic water, and its use, have I not revealed so openly, because I had no further permission to speak from the master of nature. God alone must reveal this, for he knows human hearts and minds. If you pray earnestly to him, he can open your understanding through repeated reading of this book.³⁵

NL-EPI-P008 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 148–149 · scans HAB 00562, HAB 00563 · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00562.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00563.jpg>

Latin Vas, ut supra dictum, unicum est, a principio usque ad finem, vel ad summum duo sufficiunt vasa: ignis etiam continuus in utroque opere quo nomine legant errantes caput X et XI. Si in tertia materia operatus fueris nil efficies: hanc tractant hi, qui extra hoc unicum sal nostrum, quod Mercurius est, laborant in herbis, animalibus, lapidibus et mineris excepto Sole et Luna nostra, quae obducta est sphaera Saturni. Et qui optatum desiderat finem, sciat conversionem elementorum,

³⁵. Harpocrates is invoked as a figure of silence. The reference serves the author's account of secrecy and personal danger.

et levia facere ponderosa, et spiritus facere non spiritus, tunc non laborabit in re extranea: ignis est regimen quicquid fit, ut sufficienter in praecedentibus et hic conclusionis loco satis dictum est. Vale lector benevole, et hisce per experientiam meam verificatis laboribus, diu ad nominis divini gloriam, animae tuae salutem, proximique commodum perfruere.

English As said above, the vessel is one from beginning to end, or at most two vessels suffice. The fire too is continuous in both works; on this point, let those who err read Chapters X and XI. If you work in the third matter, you will accomplish nothing. Those handle it who work outside this one salt of ours, which is Mercury, in herbs, animals, stones, and ores—with the exception of Sol and our Luna, which is covered by Saturn's sphere. Whoever desires the wished-for end should know the conversion of the elements, how to make light things heavy and spirits into non-spirits. Then he will not labour upon a foreign thing. Fire governs whatever is done, as has been sufficiently said above and here in conclusion. Farewell, kindly reader. Long enjoy these labours, verified by my experience, for the glory of the divine name, the salvation of your soul, and your neighbour's benefit.

A Philosophical Enigma to the Children of Truth by the Same Author

Eiusdem auctoris ad filios veritatis Aenigma Philosophicum.

NL-AEN-P001 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 149–151 · scans HAB 00563, HAB 00564, HAB 00565 · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00563.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00564.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00565.jpg>

Latin *Iam vobis filii scientiae, e scaturigine universalis fontis detexi omnia, ut nil sit amplius residuum. Nam in praecedentibus meis capitibus naturam per exempla sufficienter explicui: theoreticam et praxin, quantum fas fuit, manifestavi. Sed ne quis de Laconismo conqueri possit, quod aliquid omiserim, totam artem aenigmatice adhuc vobis describam, ut videatis, quo usque Dei ductu pervenerim: infiniti sunt libri, de hac arte tractantes, vix in ullo reperietis veritatem eatenus vobis patefactam, quod ob causam praestare volui, quia cum multis Philosophorum scripta se bene intelligere putantibus, sermonem contuli, sed deprehendi illos eadem scripta longe subtilius explicare, quam natura, quae simplex est, requirebat: imo omnia mea dicta veridica, ipsis semper alta sapientibus videbantur vilia et incredibilia: aliquoties accidit, ut quibusdam de verbo ad verbum artem insinuarem, sed nequaquam assequi potuerunt, non credentes aquam in mari nostro esse, et tamen Philosophi videri volebant: cum ergo verba mea oretenus dicta non potuerunt intelligere, non timeo (ut alii Philosophi timuerunt) ut quis tam facile concipere possit, donum est Dei dico. Verum quidem est, si in studio chymico requireretur subtilis ingenii perspicacitas, et res eiusmodi esset, ut ab oculis vulgi posset conspici, satis apta vidi illorum ingenia ad indaganda talia: sed vobis dico, ut sitis simplices, et non nimium prudentes, donec arcanum inveneritis, quo habito, necessario aderit prudentia, tunc vobis non deerit, libros infinitos scribendi facultas, quod longe facilius erit illi, qui in centro est et rem videt, quam huic, qui in circumferentia ambulat, et nil praeter auditum habet.*

English Children of knowledge, I have now disclosed everything to you from the welling of the universal spring, so that nothing remains. In my preceding chapters I sufficiently explained nature through examples, and made theory and practice manifest as far as was permitted. Yet so that no one may complain that I have omitted something through excessive brevity, I shall also describe the whole art to you enigmatically, so you may see how far I have advanced under God's guidance. Countless books treat this art, but in hardly any will you find the truth disclosed so fully. I wished to do this because I have conversed with many who thought they understood the philosophers' writings well, and found that they explained those writings much more subtly than nature, who is simple, required. Indeed, all my truthful statements seemed commonplace and incredible to people always thinking lofty thoughts. Several times I explained the art word by word to some of them, yet they could not grasp it. They did not believe that there was water in our sea, although they wished to appear as philosophers. Since they could not understand my spoken words, I do not fear, as other philosophers feared, that someone will grasp the matter so easily. It is God's gift, I say. Certainly, if subtle intellectual penetration were required in chymical study, and if the matter could be seen by common

eyes, I have found their minds well suited to investigating such things. But I tell you: be simple, and not too clever, until you discover the secret. Once you possess it, discernment will necessarily be present. Then you will have no lack of ability to write countless books. This will be far easier for someone who is at the centre and sees the thing than for someone walking at the circumference with nothing but hearsay.

NL-AEN-P002 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 151–152 · scans HAB 00565, HAB 00566 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00565.jpg> ·
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Latin *Omnium rerum materiam secundam lucidissime descriptam habetis, sed hanc vobis commendo cautelam, quod si ad arcanum hoc pervenire volueritis, scitote, quod in primis Deus orandus, postea proximus amandus sit: denique nolite vobis res adeo subtiles imaginari, de quibus natura nil scit, sed manete, manete inquam in via naturae simplici, quia in simplicitate rem citius palpare, quam eandem in subtilitate videre poteritis: nolite in lectione meorum scriptorum semper inhaerere syllabis, sed legendo utique considerate naturam et eiusdem possibilitatem. Antequam vero ad opus vos accingatis, imaginamini diligenter quid quaeratis, et quis sit intentionis vestrae scopus ac finis: nam multo melius est cerebro et imaginatione prius discere, quam manu et sumptibus. Et hoc vobis dico, quod opus est rem quaerere aliquam, quae occulta est, ex qua fit (miro modo) talis humiditas quae aurum sine violentia seu strepitu solvit: imo ita suaviter et naturaliter, sicuti glacies aquae calidae beneficio liquescit: si hoc invenistis habetis rem, ex qua aurum a natura productum est. Et quamvis omnia metalla et res omnes ex illa ortum habeant, nil tamen ita amicatur ei, sicut aurum, nam aliis rebus adhaeret impuritas, auro autem nulla, propterea instar matris est ipsi.*

English You have the second matter of all things most clearly described. But I commend this caution to you: if you wish to attain this secret, know that first you must pray to God, and then love your neighbour. Finally, do not imagine things so subtle that nature knows nothing of them. Remain—remain, I say—on nature’s simple path. In simplicity you will be able to touch the thing sooner than you could see it in subtlety. In reading my writings, do not always cling to syllables; while reading, consider nature and what she can do. Before you gird yourselves for the work, carefully imagine what you seek and the aim and end of your intention. It is much better to learn first through thought and imagination than through hands and expense. I tell you this: you must seek a certain hidden thing from which, in a marvellous way, a moisture is made that dissolves gold without violence or noise—indeed as gently and naturally as ice melts with the help of warm water. If you have discovered this, you possess the thing from which gold was produced by nature. Although all metals and all things originate from it, nothing befriends it as gold does. Impurity adheres to other things, but none to gold; it is therefore like a mother to gold.

NL-AEN-P003 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 152–153 · scans HAB 00566, HAB 00567 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00566.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00567.jpg>

Latin *Et sic finaliter concludo, si hisce meis scriptis et admonitionibus cauti esse non vultis, habetote me, bene de vobis mereri cupientem, excusatum, feci fideliter, quantum licuit, sicut bonae conscientiae virum decet: si quaeritis quis, Cosmopolita*

sum: si me nostis, et boni ac honesti viri esse desideratis, tacebitis: si me non nostis, nolite de me inquirere, nulli mortalium enim, quamdiu vixero, plus a me revelabitur, quam hoc publico scripto factum est: credite mihi si non essem eiusmodi status ac conditionis homo, sicut sum, nil mihi solitaria vita foret iucundius, vel cum Diogene sub dolio delitescere: video enim omnia quae sunt, vanitatem esse, fraudem et avaritiam invaluisse, ubi omnia venalia sunt, et iniquitatem virtutem superasse. Futurae vitae meliora prae oculis video, hisce gaudeo: iam non miror ut antea feci, cur Philosophi habita tali medicina non curarunt abbreviare dies suos, quia omni Philosopho ita est prae oculis vita sequens, sicut in speculo apparet tibi tua propria facies: quod si tibi Deus dabit optatum finem, postea credes mihi, nec te revelabis mundo.

English I therefore conclude at last: if you refuse to take care through these writings and admonitions of mine, excuse me, for I desire your benefit. I have faithfully done as much as was permitted, as befits a man of good conscience. If you ask who I am, I am a Cosmopolite. If you know me and wish to be good and honourable men, you will keep silent. If you do not know me, do not inquire about me. As long as I live, I shall reveal to no mortal more than I have done in this public writing. Believe me: were I not a man of the status and condition that I am, nothing would be more pleasant to me than a solitary life, or hiding beneath a tub with Diogenes. I see that all existing things are vanity, that fraud and avarice have prevailed where everything is for sale, and that iniquity has overcome virtue. I see the better things of the life to come before my eyes and rejoice in them. I no longer wonder, as I once did, why the philosophers, possessing such a medicine, were unconcerned about shortening their days. The life to come lies before every philosopher's eyes as your own face appears to you in a mirror. If God grants you the desired end, you will then believe me and will not reveal yourself to the world.^{36,37}

³⁶. Cosmopolite preserves Cosmopolita, literally a citizen of the world, used here as the author's self-designation. It is not replaced by a biographical name within the translated speech.

³⁷. The 1606 witness reads *abbreviare dies suos*, literally "to shorten their days." The wording is contextually difficult. The translation retains it without emending it to "prolong their lives" and leaves the force of *non curarunt* ("were unconcerned") open.

Parable or Philosophical Enigma Added as a Crowning Supplement

Sequitur parabola seu aenigma Philosophicum, coronidis et superadditamenti loco adiunctum.

NL-PAR-P001 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 153–155 · scans HAB 00567, HAB 00568, HAB 00569 · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00567.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00568.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00569.jpg>

Latin Evenit aliquando, cum per tot annos vitae meae navigarem a polo arctico ad polum antarcticum, ut singulari Dei nutu eiicerer ad littus magni cuiusdam maris: et licet maris illius mundi aditus et proprietates optime cognitae et perspectae haberem, nihilominus inscius fui, an etiam in illis oris generaretur pisciculus ille Echeneis, quem tot magnae et parvae conditionis homines hactenus tam sollicitè quaesierunt. Dum autem in littore Melosynas hinc inde natantes cum Nymphis conspicio, fessus etiam a praecedentibus laboribus, et cogitationibus variis gravatus, ab aquarum murmure somno corripior: et dum suaviter obdormisco, occurrit mihi in somnis visio mirabilis: video e mari nostro venerandae canitiei senem Neptunum cum tridente egredientem, qui me post amicam salutationem in insulam deducit amoenissimam. Haec insula pulcherrima versus austrum sita erat, ac rebus omnibus ad hominis necessitatem, et ad eiusdem delicias spectantes refertissima: Virgilii campus Elysium vix cum illa potuisset comparari. Totum insulae littus, undique virentibus myrtis, cupressis ac rore marino cinctum erat. Prata virentia variegatis floribus tecta, iucundissimo aspectu, suavissime redolebant. Colles vineis, oleis et cedris miro modo decorati erant. Nemora arantiorum et limoniorum arboribus referta: viae publicae laurorum ac granatorum arboribus singulari artificio intertextis, utrinque consitae, gratissimam peregrinantibus praebebant umbram. Ut paucis dicam, quicquid in toto mundo est, ibidem videbatur: inter ambulandum monstrabantur mihi a dicto Neptuno sub aliqua rupe latentes duae illius insulae minerae auri et chalybis.

English Once, during the many years of my life spent sailing from the Arctic to the Antarctic pole, it happened by God's special direction that I was cast upon the shore of a certain great sea. Although I knew and understood very well the approaches and properties of that sea of the world, I did not know whether the little fish Echeneis was also generated on those shores—the fish that so many people of high and low condition have sought so anxiously until now. While on the shore I watched Melusines swimming here and there with nymphs, I was weary from my earlier labours and burdened by many thoughts. The murmur of the waters carried me into sleep. As I slept sweetly, a marvellous vision met me in a dream. I saw old Neptune, with venerable white hair and a trident, coming out of our sea. After a friendly greeting, he led me to a most delightful island. This beautiful island lay toward the south and was richly supplied with everything needed for human life and pleasure. Virgil's Elysian field could scarcely have compared with it. The whole shore was surrounded on every side by green myrtles, cypresses, and rosemary. Green meadows covered in many-coloured flowers, most pleasing to see, gave off the sweetest scent. The hills were wonderfully adorned with vines, olive trees, and

cedars. The groves were full of orange and lemon trees. The public ways, planted on both sides with laurel and pomegranate trees interwoven with singular art, offered travellers most welcome shade. To speak briefly, whatever exists in the whole world could be seen there. As we walked, Neptune showed me two ores of the island hidden beneath a rock: gold and chalybs.³⁸

NL-PAR-P002 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 155–157 · scans HAB 00569, HAB 00570, HAB 00571 · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00569.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00570.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00571.jpg>

Latin Non longe illinc deducor ad pratum, in quo peculiaris hortus variis et spectatu dignissimis arboribus plantatus erat: inter complures arbores autem ostendit mihi septem arbores nominibus insignitas, ac inter has duas praecipuas, aliis eminentiores observavi, quarum una ferebat fructum instar solis lucidissimi et fulgentissimi, et folia eius erant instar auri: altera vero producebat albissimos liliis candidiores fructus, et folia eius erant sicuti argentum vivum. Vocabantur autem hae arbores a Neptuno una solaris arbor et altera lunaris. Et quamvis in hac insula omnia ad nutum essent, unicum tamen ipsi deerat, aqua non habebatur, nisi magna cum difficultate: erant quidam multi, qui partim tentabant illuc aquam fontis per canales deducere, partim etiam ex variis rebus eliciebant, sed frustraneus erat attentatus labor, quia illic locorum nullo poterat haberi medio: et si habebatur, inutilis tamen fuit et venenosa, nisi e radiis solis vel Lunae quod pauci praestare potuerunt, et qui in hoc perficiendo, nunquam ultra decem partes potuit attrahere. Erat enim eiusmodi aqua mirabilis, et crede mihi, quod oculis meis viderim et palpari aquae illius niveum candorem, et dum illam aquam contemplerar valde miratus sum: interim fatigatus illa consideratione, evanuit coram oculis meis Neptunus, et apparet mihi vir magnus, cuius fronti nomen Saturni erat insculptum.

English Not far from there I was led to a meadow containing a special garden planted with many kinds of trees most worthy of contemplation. Among the many trees he showed me seven distinguished by names. Among these I observed two chief trees, taller than the others. One bore fruit like the most luminous, shining sun, and its leaves were like gold. The other produced very white fruit, whiter than lilies, and its leaves were like quicksilver. Neptune called one the solar tree and the other the lunar tree. Although everything on the island was available at a wish, one thing was lacking: water could be obtained only with great difficulty. Many people tried either to conduct spring-water there through channels or to draw it out of various things. Their efforts were vain, for it could be obtained there by no means. If obtained, it was nevertheless useless and poisonous unless drawn from the rays of sun or moon, which few could accomplish; and whoever accomplished this could never attract more than ten parts. The water was marvellous. Believe me: I have seen with my own eyes and touched its snowy whiteness. I was greatly astonished as I contemplated it. Meanwhile, as I tired from this contemplation, Neptune vanished before my eyes, and

³⁸ Echeneis is the ship-holding fish of ancient natural history and later emblematic writing. Melosynae are water-associated female beings, rendered Melusines. The dream presents these figures as part of its allegorical landscape.

a great man appeared whose forehead bore the engraved name of Saturn.^{39,40}

NL-PAR-P003 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 157–158 · scans HAB 00571, HAB 00572 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00571.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00572.jpg>

Latin Hic accepto vase hauriebat aquae partes decem, et statim de fructu arboris solaris accepit, et imposuit, et vidi fructum arboris consumi, et resolvi instar glaciei in aqua calida: quaesivi ex illo, Domine, video rem mirabilem, aquam esse fere ex nihilo, video fructus arboris in illa, adeo suavi calore consumi, ad quid ista? At ille mihi gratiose respondit: fili mi verum est, quod res haec est mirabilis, sed ne mireris, ita enim oportet esse: nam haec aqua est aqua vitae, habens potentiam fructus arboris huius ita meliorare, ut postea non plantatione seu insitione sed solo suo odore faciat sibi ceteras sex arbores uniformes. Insuper haec aqua est huic fructui instar foeminae, in re nulla possunt arboris huius fructus putrefieri, nisi in hac aqua: et licet fructus per se sit mirabilis, et res pretiosa, attamen si in hac aqua putrescit, gignit ex hac putrefactione Salamandram in igne perseverantem, cuius sanguis omni thesauro pretiosior est: habent facultatem sex arbores, quas hic vides, fertiles reddere, illarumque fructus melle dulciores proferre. At ego petii, Domine, quomodo fit illud? Dixi tibi, inquit, arboris solaris fructus esse vivos, dulces: at ubi nunc unus saltem ex illo saturatur, quando in hac aqua coquitur, possunt postea mille ex eo saturari.

English Taking a vessel, he drew ten parts of water, then immediately took some fruit from the solar tree and put it in. I saw the fruit being consumed and dissolved like ice in warm water. I asked him, “Sir, I see a marvellous thing: water made almost from nothing, and the tree’s fruit being consumed in it with such gentle heat. What is this for?” He answered graciously, “My son, it is true that this is marvellous, but do not wonder: it must be so. This is the water of life, possessing the power to improve the fruit of this tree so greatly that afterwards, by its scent alone, without planting or grafting, it makes the other six trees like itself. Furthermore, this water is like a female to this fruit. The fruit of this tree cannot putrefy in anything except this water. Although the fruit in itself is marvellous and precious, if it putrefies in this water it generates from that putrefaction a salamander enduring in fire. Its blood is more precious than every treasure, having the power to make the six trees you see here fruitful and to bring forth their fruit sweeter than honey.” I asked, “Sir, how does this happen?” “I told you,” he said, “that the solar tree’s fruits are living and sweet. Where now only one person is satisfied from it, after it is cooked in this water a thousand can be satisfied from it.”

³⁹. The 1606 text reads *argentum vivum*, “quicksilver,” for the lunar tree’s leaves; the 1614 transcription aid has *argentum finum*, “fine silver.” The translation follows 1606. *Lunae* spells out the printed crescent sign in the description of rays.

⁴⁰. The 1606 clause *et qui in hoc perficiendo* is grammatically incomplete. The English supplies only the implied accomplishment needed to connect it with the statement about ten parts; no additional event is introduced.

NL-PAR-P004 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 158–160 · scans HAB 00572, HAB 00573, HAB 00574
 · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00572.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00573.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00574.jpg>

Latin Quaesivi porro, Domine: coquitur ne igne forti, et quamdiu? At ille, aqua ista habet intrinsecum ignem, et si iuvatur calore continuo, comburit tres partes corporis sui cum hoc corpore fructus, et non remanebit, nisi pars minutissima, quae vix imaginari potest, sed in summa virtute coquitur sagaci ingenio magistri, septem mensibus primo, postea decem: sed interea apparent res variae, et semper in die quinquagesimo plus vel minus. Adhuc interrogavi: Domine, nonne potest etiam in aliis aquis coqui hic fructus, vel additur ne illi aliquid? Respondit: non est nisi haec una aqua, quae utilis est in hac regione vel insula: nulla etiam alia aqua potest penetrare poros huius pomi, nisi haec, et scito arborem solarem etiam ex hac aqua ortam, quae ex radiis Solis vel Lunae vi magnetis extracta est: propterea inter se magnam habent concordantiam: sed si aliquid peregrini ipsi adderetur, non posset id praestare, quod facit per se: relinquenda igitur per se, nihilque ei addatur nisi hoc pomum. Post decoctionem enim est fructus immortalis vitam habens et sanguinem, quia sanguis omnes arbores steriles facit portare fructus eiusdem naturae cum pomum.

English I asked further, “Sir, is it cooked with a strong fire, and for how long?” He replied, “This water has an inward fire. Assisted by continuous heat, it burns three parts of its own body together with this body of the fruit. Only a very minute part remains, scarcely imaginable, but of the highest power. It is cooked through the master’s discerning ingenuity for seven months at first, then ten. Meanwhile diverse things appear, and always at about the fiftieth day.” I asked again, “Sir, can this fruit also be cooked in other waters, or is anything added to it?” He answered, “There is only this one water useful in this region or island. No other water can penetrate this fruit’s pores. Know that the solar tree itself arose from this water, extracted from the rays of Sol or Luna by the magnet’s power. They therefore have a great concord with one another. If anything foreign were added to it, it could not accomplish what it does by itself. Leave it by itself, then, and add nothing except this fruit. After decoction it is an immortal fruit, possessing life and blood, for its blood makes all barren trees bear fruit of the same nature as this fruit.”

NL-PAR-P005 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 160–161 · scans HAB 00574, HAB 00575 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00574.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00575.jpg>

Latin Rogavi ulterius: Domine, hauritur ne aqua haec alio modo vel habetur ne ubique? Et ille: in omni loco est, et nemo sine ea vivere potest, hauritur miris modis, sed ista est optima, quae extrahitur vi chalybis nostri, qui invenitur in ventre Arietis. Dixi, ad quid utilis? Respondit: ante debitam coctionem est summum venenum, sed post coctionem convenientem summa est medicina, et dat viginti novem grana sanguinis, quodlibet autem granum DCCCLXIV suppedabit tibi fructus arboris solaris. Quaesivi: nonne ulterius meliorari potest? Teste scriptura Philosophica, ait, primum ad decem, postea ad centum, deinde ad mille, et decem millia, etc. potest exaltari. Instabam: Domine mi, noverunt ne multi istam aquam, et habet ne nomen proprium? Ille clamabat palam, dicens: pauci noverunt, sed omnes viderunt, et vident et amant: habet nomina sed multa et varia: at nomen proprium eius est aqua maris nostri, aqua vitae non madefaciens manus.

English I asked further, "Sir, is this water drawn in another way, and is it found everywhere?" He said, "It is in every place, and no one can live without it. It is drawn in marvellous ways, but the best is that extracted by the power of our chalybs, found in the belly of Aries." I asked, "What is it useful for?" He answered, "Before proper cooking it is the greatest poison; after suitable cooking it is the greatest medicine. It gives twenty-nine grains of blood, each grain of which will supply you with 864 fruits of the solar tree." I asked, "Can it be improved further?" "According to philosophical writing," he said, "it can be exalted first to ten, then to a hundred, then to a thousand and ten thousand, and so on." I pressed him: "My lord, do many know this water, and does it have a proper name?" He cried openly, "Few know it, but all have seen it, see it, and love it. It has names, many and various, but its proper name is the water of our sea: the water of life that does not wet the hands."⁴¹

NL-PAR-P006 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 161–162 · scans HAB 00575, HAB 00576 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00575.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00576.jpg>

Latin Petii adhuc: utuntur ne ea alii ad alias res? Utitur ea, ait, omnis creatura sed invisibiliter. Nascitur ne in ea aliquid, interrogavi: at ille: ex ea fiunt res omnes in mundo et in ea vivunt, sed in ea proprie nihil est, sed est res, quae se miscet omni rei. Quaesivi: est ne sine hoc arboris fructu utilis? Ad hoc dixit, in hoc opere nequaquam. Siquidem non nisi in solo hoc arboris solaris fructu melioratur. Incepi adhuc rogare, Domine, quaeso nomina mihi illam tam manifesto nomine, ut nullum possim amplius habere dubium: at ille sublata voce ita clamavit, ut me e somno excitaret, ideo non amplius poteram quaerere, nec ille ulterius respondere voluit, nec ego tibi plura dicere possum. Contentus esto hisce et crede, quod non est possibile lucidius loqui: nam si haec non percipis, nunquam aliorum Philosophorum libros assequeris.

English I asked again, "Do others use it for other things?" "Every creature uses it," he said, "but invisibly." "Is anything born in it?" I asked. He replied, "All things in the world are made from it and live in it; yet properly speaking there is nothing in it. Rather, it is a thing that mixes itself with every thing." I asked, "Is it useful without this tree's fruit?" He said, "Not in this work, since it is improved only in this fruit of the solar tree." I began to ask again, "Sir, please name it to me by so clear a name that I can have no further doubt." But he raised his voice and shouted so loudly that he woke me from sleep. I could ask no more, and he would answer no further; nor can I tell you more. Be content with this, and believe that it is impossible to speak more clearly. If you do not grasp these things, you will never understand the books of other philosophers.

⁴¹ Aries, the Ram, is retained as the source names it; the text does not resolve whether the phrase indicates a material, a sign, a season, or an overlapping correspondence. The Roman number DCCCLXIV is rendered 864.

NL-PAR-P007 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 162–163 · scans HAB 00576, HAB 00577 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00576.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00577.jpg>

Latin Post Saturni insperatum ac subitaneum discessum, novus me sopor invasit, et denuo mihi forma visibili apparet Neptunus: praesertim in hortis Hesperidum congratulatur felicitatem, monstrando mihi speculum, in quo totam naturam detectam vidi: post varios ultro citroque commutatos sermones gratias ipsi pro exhibitis beneficiis ago, quod suo videlicet ductu, non solum hunc amoenissimum hortum ingressus fuerim, verum etiam in optatissimum Saturni colloquium venerim: sed quia propter improvisum Saturni discessum difficultates aliquae quaerendae et investigandae adhuc restarent, rogavi enixe, ut hac exoptata occasione mihi scrupulum eximeret. His autem verbis illum compello. Domine, legi libros Philosophorum affirmantium generationem omnem fieri per marem et foeminam, et tamen solum fructum arboris solaris vidi in somniis Saturnum Mercurio nostro imponere, credo etiam tibi ut Domino maris huius, quod ista bene scias, responde meae quaestioni quaeso?

English After Saturn's unexpected and sudden departure, a new sleep overcame me, and Neptune again appeared visibly to me. He congratulated me especially upon my good fortune in the gardens of the Hesperides, showing me a mirror in which I saw all nature uncovered. After various exchanges of conversation, I thanked him for his kindness: through his guidance I had not only entered this delightful garden but also obtained the much-desired conversation with Saturn. Yet because Saturn's unforeseen departure left some difficulties still to be questioned and investigated, I begged Neptune earnestly to remove my doubt on this welcome occasion. I addressed him in these words: "Sir, I have read the philosophers' books affirming that every generation takes place through male and female. Yet in my dream I saw Saturn put only the fruit of the solar tree into our Mercury. I also trust that, as lord of this sea, you know these things well. Please answer my question."

NL-PAR-P008 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 163–164 · scans HAB 00577, HAB 00578 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00577.jpg> ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00578.jpg>

Latin At ille, verum est fili, omnis generatio fit in mari et foemina: sed propter distinctionem trium naturae regnorum, alio modo nascitur animal quadrupes, alio modo vermis. Licet enim vermes habeant oculos, visum, auditum et reliquos sensus, tamen per putrefactionem producuntur, et eorum locus vel terra, in qua putrefiunt, foemina est: ita in opere Philosophico mater est huius rei, repetita toties illa aqua tua, et quicquid ex ea nascitur, more vermium per putrefactionem nascitur: ideo Philosophi Phoenicem et Salamandram vocarunt. Si enim e duorum corporum conceptione fieret, esset res morti obnoxia: at quia se tantum revivificat, destructo corpore priori, emicat aliud incorruptibile: siquidem mors rerum nihil aliud est, quam separatio unius ab altero: et in hac Phoenice ita fit, quod se vita a corpore corruptibili per se separat. Insuper quaesivi: Domine mi, sunt ne diversae res rerum vel compositio in hoc opere? At ille: unica res est, cui non miscetur aliquid aliud, praeterquam aqua Philosophica tibi in somno aliquoties manifestata, quae in decuplo esse debet ad unam corporis partem: et firmiter ac indubitate credas fili, quae per somnia in hac insula pro more regionis, tibi a me et a Saturno fuerunt patefacta, nullo modo esse somnia sed purissimam veritatem, quam experientia unica rerum magistra tibi Dei assistentia detegere poterit.

English He replied, "It is true, my son: all generation takes place in male and female. But because of the distinction between nature's three kingdoms, a four-footed animal is born in one way and a worm in another. Although worms possess eyes, sight, hearing, and the other senses, they are produced through putrefaction. Their place, or the earth in which they putrefy, is the female. Likewise, in the philosophical work the mother of this thing is that water of yours mentioned so often. Whatever is born from it is born through putrefaction, in the manner of worms. The philosophers therefore called it phoenix and salamander. If it came from the conception of two bodies, it would be liable to death. But because it merely revivifies itself, once the former body is destroyed another, incorruptible body shines forth. The death of things is nothing other than the separation of one from another. In this phoenix, life thus separates itself by itself from the corruptible body." I asked further, "My lord, are there different things, or a composition of things, in this work?" He replied, "There is one thing, with which nothing else is mixed except the philosophical water several times revealed to you in sleep. It should be tenfold in relation to one part of the body. Believe firmly and without doubt, my son, that what Saturn and I disclosed to you through dreams on this island, according to the country's custom, is in no way dreams but the purest truth. Experience, the sole teacher of things, will be able to disclose it to you with God's assistance."^{42,43}

NL-PAR-P009 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 164–165 · scans HAB 00578, HAB 00579 · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00578.jpg> · <https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00579.jpg>

Latin Uterius quaerentem sine responso post valedictionem discedens, me a somno excitatum in desideratam Eutopiae regionem sistit. Et ita tibi etiam amice lector, satis hactenus a me dictum sufficiat. Vale.

English After bidding farewell, he departed without answering my further questions. Roused from sleep, I found myself set in the desired region of Eutopia. And so, reader and friend, let what I have said thus far suffice for you too. Farewell.⁴⁴

⁴² The production of worms through putrefaction belongs to the historical theory of spontaneous generation. The dialogue uses that theory to explain its alchemical analogy.

⁴³ The 1606 printing reads *distinctionem* and *vocarunt*, "distinction" and "called"; the 1614 transcription aid has *distractioem* and *crearunt*. The English follows the 1606 readings.

⁴⁴ The 1606 witness prints *Eutopiae*, "of Eutopia," rather than the *Europae*, "of Europe," found in the 1614 transcription aid. The translation preserves the 1606 place-name.

Job 28

Hiobi 28.

NL-JOB-P001 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 165 · scans HAB 00579 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00579.jpg>

Latin Habet argentum venarum suarum principia, et auro locus est, in quo conflatur.
Ferrum de terra tollitur, et lapis solutus calore in aes vertitur.

English Silver has the sources of its veins, and gold has a place in which it is smelted. Iron is taken from the earth, and stone dissolved by heat is turned into copper.⁴⁵

NL-JOB-P002 Herzog August Bibliothek 1606 · 1606 pp 165 · scans HAB 00579 ·
<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00579.jpg>

Latin Finis.

English End.

⁴⁵. The closing quotation is translated directly from the Latin wording printed in 1606 and headed Job 28. It corresponds to Job 28:1–2; no modern Bible translation is substituted.

Dialogue

The 1607 Dialogue Title

Dialogus Mercurii, Alchymistae et Naturae

NL-DIITILE-001 1607, Google scan PA1 (image locators) · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA1>

Latin Dialogus Mercurii, Alchymistae et Naturae. Scriptus in gratiam amici Coroades. Auctore eo, qui Divi Leschi Genus Amat. Coloniae, imprimebat Servatius Erffens. Anno M.DC.VII.

English Dialogue of Mercury, the Alchemist and Nature. Written for the sake of the friend Coroades. By the author who “loves the lineage of divine Lesches.” Cologne, printed by Servatius Erffens, 1607.⁴⁶

⁴⁶. The 1607 title prints Divi Leschi Genus Amat. The better-known anonymous designation Divi Leschi Genus Amo is an anagram associated with Michael Sendivogius; this edition does not silently replace the 1607 title’s final word. Coroades is preserved as printed. The following address is spoken by a friend of the author, not presented as the author’s own preface.

An Address by a Friend to the Reader

Lectori benevolo

NL-DREADER-001 1607, Google scan PA3, PA4 (image locators) · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA3> · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA4>

Latin Lectori benevolo. Quisquis sit tractatuli huius Auctor, amice Lector, quaerere desine: quod autem eum conscripserit, hanc habeto causam. Ego quoque quis sim, quod scias non opus. Scias autem certo certissime Auctorem opusculi huius lapidem Philosophorum perfectissime tenere, fecisse, habere. Cum autem mutua et sincera nos prosequamur benevolentia, petii, ut in amoris mei signum, quod titulus testatur ipse, tria principia prima discuteret, Mercurium nempe, Sulphur et Sal, et si in iis communibus, aut aliis lapis Philosophorum quaeri debeat indicaret, idque verbis faceret simplicissimis et stylo tenuissimo. Postquam autem hoc tractatulo raptim conscripto mihi annuisset, certo mihi persuasi fore ut eo in lucem edito, etsi minus gratum id Auctori futurum verear, omnis enim ambitio ab illo procul est, optime mihi velint verae Philosophiae amatores, minus enim iacturae, sumptuum et damnorum ab impostoribus, temporis, bonae famae et honoris, illo lecto et bene considerato, passuros non dubito. Quod si mundum probum, profanum enim vulgus Alchymistarum odi et arceo, pro hoc meo benevolo animo gratum sensero, enitar ut et reliqua duo principia, et alia plura ab eodem Auctore sequantur. Interim hoc frui et vale.

English To the Well-disposed Reader. Whoever the author of this little treatise may be, dear reader, stop asking. Here is the reason he wrote it. You have no need to know who I am either. But know with complete certainty that the author of this little work understands the philosophers' stone perfectly, has made it, and possesses it. Because we regard each other with sincere affection, I asked him, as a token of his friendship for me—as the title itself testifies—to discuss the three first principles, Mercury, Sulphur and Salt. He was to indicate whether the philosophers' stone should be sought in their common forms or in other ones, and do so in the simplest words and plainest style. He agreed, quickly writing this little treatise. I then persuaded myself that lovers of true philosophy would be grateful to me for publishing it, although I fear that the author may be less pleased, since every kind of ambition is far from him. After reading and considering it well, they will, I have no doubt, suffer less waste of money and time, and less damage to reputation and honour at impostors' hands. If I find the honest world grateful for my goodwill—I hate and exclude the profane crowd of alchemists—I shall endeavour to have the same author follow this with the other two principles and many further things. Meanwhile, enjoy this work and farewell.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ This address already promises further treatment of the other two principles. It is evidence for the programme expressed in 1607, not proof that every promised work survives or that later texts fulfil it in precisely this form.

Dialogue of Mercury the Alchemist and Nature

Dialogus Mercurii, Alchymistae et Naturae

NL-DIALOGUE-001 1607, Google scan PA5, PA6 (image locators) · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVWAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA5> · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVWAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA6>

Latin In illo tempore convenerunt Chymistae et consilium fecerunt, quomodo lapidem Philosophorum facere ac praeparare deberent, et sic per vota quilibet suam opinionem ut diceret constituerunt. Et concursus ille fuit sub dio in prato quodam die serena quadam. Et multi concordarunt Mercurium esse illius primam materiam, alii Sulphur, alii alia. Sed de Mercurio maxima illorum fuit opinio, praesertim ex dictis Philosophorum, quoniam illi pro vera materia prima habent, et etiam pro prima materia Metallorum: clamant enim Philosophi: Noster Mercurius etc. Et cum ita inter se certarent laboribus variis, quilibet enim illorum expectabat cum desiderio et laetitia conclusionem, surrexit interim tempestas maxima cum procellis, nimbis et vento inaudito, qui illam congregationem dispersit in varias provincias, quemlibet seorsim sine conclusione. Quilibet tamen illorum impressit sibi qualis debebat esse illius disputationis finis. Coepit igitur quilibet labores suos sicut prius, unus in hac, alter in alia re quaerentes lapidem Philosophorum, et hoc fit huc usque sine cessatione. Unus vero illorum memor disputationis, quod necessario in Mercurio quaerendus sit Lapis Philosophorum, dixit ad se: Etiamsi non est facta conclusio, tamen in Mercurio laborabo, faciamque ego conclusionem facto lapide benedicto. Erat enim homo qui semper secum solebat loqui, sicut solent Alchymistae. Coepit igitur legere Libros Philosophorum, et incidit in Librum Alani, qui de Mercurio tractat, et hic factus est ille Alchymista Philosophus, sed sine conclusione.

English At that time the chymists gathered and held a council about how they should make and prepare the philosophers' stone. They voted that each person should state his opinion. Their gathering took place outdoors, in a meadow, on a clear day. Many agreed that Mercury was the stone's first matter; some named Sulphur, and others something else. The majority favoured Mercury, especially because of the philosophers' sayings: the philosophers regard it as the true first matter, and also as the first matter of metals. They cry out, "Our Mercury," and so forth. While they were disputing their various operations, each eagerly and happily awaiting the conclusion, a tremendous storm arose, with squalls, rain clouds and an unheard-of wind. It scattered the assembly into different provinces, each man separately, without a conclusion. Nevertheless, each impressed upon his own mind what the debate's conclusion ought to have been. Each therefore resumed his work as before, one seeking the philosophers' stone in one thing and another in something else. This continues unceasingly to the present day.

One of them remembered the discussion: the philosophers' stone must necessarily be sought in Mercury. He said to himself, "Although no conclusion was reached, I shall work on Mercury and reach the conclusion myself by making the blessed stone." He was a man who habitually talked to himself, as alchemists do. He began reading the

philosophers' books and came upon Alan's book, which treats of Mercury. At this point the alchemist became a philosopher—but still without a conclusion.⁴⁸

NL-DIALOGUE-002 1607, Google scan PA6, PA7, PA8 (image locators) · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAACAAJ&pg=PA6> · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAACAAJ&pg=PA7> · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAACAAJ&pg=PA8>

Latin Et accepto Mercurio coepit laborare, posuit illum in vitrum et dedit ignem. Mercurius sicut solet evaporavit. Alchymista miser nesciens naturam uxorem suam verberavit dicens: Nemo huc venire potuit praeter te, tu mihi accepisti Mercurium ex vitro. Uxor flendo se excusat dicitque tacite marito: Facies tu merdam ex his. Accepit Alchymista Mercurium denuo et iterum imposuit vasi, et ne uxor acciperet custodiebat illud. Sed Mercurius suo modo iterum evaporavit. Alchymista recordatus quod materiam primam lapidis Philosophorum volatilem esse oporteat gavisus est valde, sibi omnino persuadens non se iam posse falli habita hac materia, coepit iam audacter Mercurium tractare, didicit postea illum sublimare, calcinare miris modis, iam salibus, iam sulphure, iam metallis, iam mineris, iam sanguine, iam crinibus, iam aquis fortibus, iam herbis, urina, aceto, sed nihil potuit invenire ad propositum suum, nihil in orbe intactum reliquit cum quo non tractasset bonum Mercurium. Et cum omnino nihil proficere posset, incidit in hoc dictum: Quod in sterquilinio invenitur. Coepit Mercurium cum stercoribus variis tractare, simul et seorsim. Et cum ita fatigatus fuisset et plenus cogitationum obdormivit.

English He took Mercury and began work, putting it in glass and applying fire. As usual, Mercury evaporated. The wretched alchemist, ignorant of nature, beat his wife, saying, "No one could have come here except you. You took my Mercury out of the glass." His wife defended herself in tears and said quietly to her husband, "You will make shit out of this." The alchemist took more Mercury, put it in the vessel again, and guarded it so that his wife could not take it. But Mercury evaporated again in its usual way. Remembering that the first matter of the philosophers' stone ought to be volatile, the alchemist rejoiced greatly. Now that he had this matter, he fully persuaded himself he could not go wrong. He boldly began treating Mercury, then learned to sublime and calcine it in extraordinary ways: with salts, sulphur, metals, ores, blood, hair, strong waters, herbs, urine and vinegar. He could discover nothing that served his purpose. He left nothing in the world untouched with which he had not treated good Mercury. When he could make no progress at all, he came across the saying that it is found in the dunghill. He began treating Mercury with various kinds of dung, together and separately. Exhausted and full of thoughts, he fell asleep.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ The contrast between the self-styled philosopher and the unsuccessful alchemist drives the satire. Alan is named without a securely identifying work-title in this passage; the translation preserves that limit rather than supplying an unverified attribution.

⁴⁹ The Latin uses the blunt merdam in the wife's reply; the translation preserves the satire's coarse register. Strong waters translates aquae fortes, historical acid preparations. The narrative reports an abusive character's conduct; his violence is part of the portrait of failed understanding.

NL-DIALOGUE-003 1607, Google scan PA8, PA9 (image locators) · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA8> · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA9>

Latin Et in somnis apparuit illi visio: venit ad illum vir senex qui salutavit illum et dixit: Amice, quid contristaris? Ille respondit: Libenter vellem facere Lapidem Philosophorum. Tunc ille: Amice, ex quibus vis facere Lapidem Philosophorum? Alchymista: Ex Mercurio, Domine. Senex: Ex quali autem Mercurio? Alch.: Non est nisi unus Mercurius. Sen.: Verum est unum esse Mercurium, sed variatum variis locis: una pars purior altera. Alch.: O Domine, ego illum scio purgare optime, aceto et sale, nitro et vitriolo. Sen.: Dico tibi, haec purgatio non est vera, nec Mercurius sic verus est: alium enim Mercurium habent viri sapientes, aliamque eius purgationem. Et sic evanuit. Excitatus e somno Alchymista cogitabat qualis esset illa visio, cogitabat qualis esse deberet ille Mercurius Philosophorum: nihil potuit excogitare aliud quam hunc suum Mercurium vulgi. Sed tamen desiderabat ut cum illo sene longius loqui potuisset, laboravit tamen assidue, iam et in stercore animantium et puerorum, postea et in suo proprio stercore laborare coepit. Et quolibet die in locum ubi visionem vidit ibat, ut senem illum iterum alloqui posset. Interdum simulabat somnum, clausis oculis iacebat expectando senem. Sed cum venire nollet, putabat illum timere neque credere quod dormiret, iurabat ergo dicens: Mi Domine senex, noli timere, certe ego dormio, respice oculos si non credis.

English A vision appeared in his sleep. An old man approached, greeted him, and said, "Friend, why are you sad?"

He replied, "I would very much like to make the philosophers' stone."

Old Man: Friend, from what do you intend to make it?

Alchemist: From Mercury, sir.

Old Man: But from what kind of Mercury?

Alchemist: There is only one Mercury.

Old Man: It is true that Mercury is one, but it varies in different places. One portion is purer than another.

Alchemist: Sir, I know very well how to purify it, with vinegar and salt, nitre and vitriol.

Old Man: I tell you, this purification is not the true one, nor is Mercury true in that condition. Wise men have another Mercury and another way of purifying it.

With that he vanished. Waking from sleep, the alchemist pondered the vision and what this Mercury of the philosophers must be. He could imagine nothing beyond his own common Mercury. Nevertheless, he wished he could have spoken longer with the old man. He kept working, now with animal and children's dung, and afterwards even with his own. Every day he went to the place where he had seen the vision, hoping to speak to the old man again. Sometimes he pretended to sleep and lay with closed eyes, waiting. When the old man would not come, he supposed he was afraid and did not believe he was asleep. He

therefore swore, “My dear old gentleman, do not be afraid. I am certainly asleep. Look at my eyes if you do not believe me.”

NL-DIALOGUE-004 1607, Google scan PA9, PA10 (image locators) · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAACAAJ&pg=PA9> · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAACAAJ&pg=PA10>

Latin Et miser ille Alchymista, post tot labores et consumptionem bonorum suorum, iam et in delirium cadebat, semper de illo sene cogitando. Et ex illa fortissima imaginatione apparuit illi phantasma per somnum in forma illius senis et dixit illi: Noli desperare, amice: Mercurius tuus bonus est et materia tua, sed si tibi non vult obedire, coniures illum, ne sit volatilis. Tamen et serpentes solent coniurari, quare et non Mercurius? Et sic discedere voluit senex. At Alchymista ab illo petiit dicens: Domine, expecta. Et prae clamore excitatus est miser, tamen non sine magna consolatione. Accepit postea vas plenum Mercurio et coepit illum miris modis coniurare, sicut illum docuit somnium. Et recordatus est verborum senis quod dixerit: Serpentes coniurantur. Et Mercurius pingitur cum serpentibus, cogitavit: Certe sic debet coniurari sicut serpens. Et accepto vase cum Mercurio coepit dicere: Vx vx, ostas etc. Et ubi debuit esse nomen serpentis, Mercurii posuit dicens: Et tu Mercuri nequissima bestia etc. Ad quae verba Mercurius coepit ridere et loqui ad Alchymistam dicens: Quid vis quod me turbas, mi Domine Lachrymista?

English After so much work and the exhaustion of his property, the miserable alchemist was slipping into delirium, always thinking of the old man. From this intense imagination a phantom appeared in his sleep in the old man’s form and said, “Do not despair, friend. Your Mercury and your matter are good. But if it will not obey you, conjure it so that it cannot fly away. After all, serpents are commonly conjured; why not Mercury?” The old man was about to depart. The alchemist begged, “Sir, wait!” His shout woke him, but he was greatly comforted. He took a vessel full of Mercury and began conjuring it in extraordinary ways, as his dream had taught him. He remembered the old man’s words, “Serpents are conjured,” and thought, “Mercury is depicted with serpents: certainly it must be conjured like a serpent.” Taking up the vessel of Mercury, he began saying, “Vx vx, ostas,” and so forth. Wherever the serpent’s name should have occurred, he substituted Mercury’s: “And you, Mercury, most wicked beast,” and so on. At these words Mercury began to laugh and spoke to the alchemist: “What do you want, troubling me, my lord Lachrymist?”⁵⁰

NL-DIALOGUE-005 1607, Google scan PA10, PA11, PA12 (image locators) · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAACAAJ&pg=PA10> · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAACAAJ&pg=PA11> · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAACAAJ&pg=PA12>

Latin Alch.: Oho, iam me vocas Dominum quando tibi vivum tango: iam tibi inveni fraenum, expecta parum, mox meam cantilenam canes. Et coepit ad illum strenue loqui quasi cum ira: Tunc es ille Mercurius Philosophorum? Merc., quasi timere respondit: Ego sum, mi Domine, Mercurius. Alch.: Quare ergo mihi obedire noluisti? Nec te fixare potui? Merc.: O magnifice Domine, rogo, parce mihi misero: nescivi enim quod sis tantus Philosophus. Alch.: Nonne hoc sentiebas ex meis laboribus, cum ita Philosophice tecum procedebam? Merc.: Ita est, mi Domine

⁵⁰. Lachrymista is a joke blending the alchemist’s name with Latin lachryma, a tear. The conjuring syllables are reproduced as fragments of the character’s speech; the source itself abbreviates the performance with etc. The serpent imagery supplies the character’s mistaken inference from pictures to procedure.

magnifice, attamen occultare me volui, sed video miser quod me occultare non possum coram Domino meo magnifico. Alch.: Iam ergo nosti Philosophum? Merc.: Maxime, mi Domine, video dominationem vestram magnificam Philosophum esse excellentissimum. Alch., laetus in corde suo dicit: Certe ego iam inveni quod quaesivi. Iterum ad Mercurium dicit voce terribili: Nu eia, iam ergo esto obediens, alias non bene tecum erit. Merc.: Libenter, mi Domine, si tantum possim: nam iam debilis valde sum. Alch.: Quid, iam te excusas? Merc.: Non, mi Domine, sed languesco. Alch.: Quid tibi nocet? Merc.: Alchymista mihi nocet. Alch.: Quid, tu adhuc me rides? Merc.: O Domine, non: de Alchymista loquor, tu autem Philosophus es. Alch.: O bene, bene, ita est. Sed quid fecit tibi Alchymista? Merc.: O mi Domine, multa mala fecit mihi, nam commiscuit me miserum rebus mihi contrariis, unde non possum pervenire ad vires meas et sum fere mortuus: cruciatus enim sum usque ad mortem fere.

English Alchemist: Aha! Now you call me lord, when I touch you on the quick. I have found a bridle for you. Wait a little: soon you will sing my tune.

He began addressing Mercury forcefully, as though in anger.

Alchemist: Are you that Mercury of the philosophers?

Mercury, pretending fear: I am Mercury, my lord.

Alchemist: Then why would you not obey me? Why could I not fix you?

Mercury: Most magnificent lord, please spare a wretch like me! I did not know you were so great a philosopher.

Alchemist: Did you not realise it from my operations, when I treated you so philosophically?

Mercury: Indeed, my magnificent lord. Nevertheless, I wanted to hide myself. But I see, miserable creature that I am, that I cannot hide from my magnificent lord.

Alchemist: So now you recognise a philosopher?

Mercury: Certainly, my lord. I see that Your Magnificence is a most excellent philosopher.

Delighted in his heart, the alchemist said, "I have certainly found what I was looking for." Then he addressed Mercury again in a terrible voice.

Alchemist: Come now! Be obedient, or it will go badly with you.

Mercury: Gladly, my lord, if only I can, for I am now very weak.

Alchemist: What? Making excuses already?

Mercury: No, my lord; I am exhausted.

Alchemist: What is harming you?

Mercury: The alchemist is harming me.

Alchemist: What? Are you still laughing at me?

Mercury: No, my lord! I am speaking of the alchemist. You are a philosopher.

Alchemist: Good, good, that is right. But what has the alchemist done to you?

Mercury: My lord, he has done me many injuries. He mixed my wretched self with things contrary to me, so that I cannot attain my strength and am almost dead. He has tortured me nearly to death.

NL-DIALOGUE-006 1607, Google scan PA12, PA13 (image locators) · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAcAAJ&pg=PA12> · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAcAAJ&pg=PA13>

Latin Alch.: O dignus es istis, quia es inobediens. Merc.: Nunquam inobediens fui alicui Philosopho, sed ex natura mihi est ridere stultos. Alch.: Et de me quid sentis? Merc.: O Domine, tu es vir magnus, Philosophus maximus, tua magnitudine excellis Hermetem. Alch.: Certe ita est, ego sum vir doctus, sed me nolo laudare ipse, sed et uxor mea dixit mihi quod ego sim valde doctus Philosophus, illa hoc cognovit in me. Merc.: Credo facile: nam tales oportet esse Philosophos, qui prae nimia prudentia et labore insaniant. Alch.: Age, dicas mihi ergo quid faciam tecum? Quomodo ex te faciam Lapidem Philosophicum? Merc.: O mi Domine Philosophpe, ego nescio. Tu es Philosophus, ego servus Philosophorum, quod illi ex me facere volunt faciant, ego illis in quantum possum obedio. Alch.: Tu mihi dicere debes quomodo tecum procedere debeo, et si ex te facere possum Lapidem Philosophicum. Merc.: Si scis facies, si vero nescis nihil facies: a me nihil addisces si prius nescis, mi Domine Philosophpe. Alch.: Tu mecum ita loqueris sicut cum aliquo simplici homine, fortasse ignoras quod ego apud magnos Principes laboravi et apud illos Philosophus fui. Merc.: Facile credo, mi Domine, nam ista optime scio, adhuc sordeo ex huius laboris mixtura. Alch.: Dic ergo mihi: tu es Mercurius Philosophorum? Merc.: Ego sum Mercurius: si autem sum Philosophorum te scire oportet. Alch.: Dic mihi solummodo si tu es verus Mercurius vel si est alius? Merc.: Ego sum Mercurius, sed est et alius. Et sic evanuit.

English Alchemist: You deserve it for being disobedient.

Mercury: I have never disobeyed any philosopher. But it is my nature to laugh at fools.

Alchemist: And what do you think of me?

Mercury: My lord, you are a great man, the greatest philosopher. In greatness you surpass Hermes.

Alchemist: Certainly! I am a learned man, although I do not wish to praise myself. My wife also told me that I am a very learned philosopher. She recognised it in me.

Mercury: I readily believe it. Philosophers must indeed be of that kind, going mad through excessive wisdom and labour.

Alchemist: Come, tell me what to do with you. How shall I make the philosophers' stone from you?

Mercury: My lord philosopher, I do not know. You are the philosopher; I am the philosophers' servant. Let them make of me whatever they wish. I obey as far as I can.

Alchemist: You must tell me how I should proceed with you and whether I can make the philosophers' stone from you.

Mercury: If you know, you will do it; if you do not know, you will do nothing. You will learn nothing from me unless you already know, my lord philosopher.

Alchemist: You speak to me as though I were some simple fellow. Perhaps you do not know that I have worked for great princes and been their philosopher.

Mercury: I readily believe it, my lord. I know all that very well: I am still filthy from the mixture used in that work.

Alchemist: Tell me, then: are you the philosophers' Mercury?

Mercury: I am Mercury. Whether I am the philosophers' Mercury is something you must know.

Alchemist: Just tell me whether you are the true Mercury, or whether there is another.

Mercury: I am Mercury, but there is another as well.

With that he vanished.

NL-DIALOGUE-007 1607, Google scan PA13, PA14 (image locators) · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAACAAJ&pg=PA13> · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAACAAJ&pg=PA14>

Latin Alchymista clamat et loquitur, sed nemo respondet illi. Et cogitans inter se dicit: Vere ego sum vir optimus, mecum locutus est Mercurius, certe me amat. Et incepit iterum laborare diligenter, coepit Mercurium sublimare, distillare, calcinare, turbisare, praecipitare, solvere miris modis et aquis variis, sed ut prius frustra conatus est, inaniter consumit sumptus et tempus. Quapropter tandem incipit maledicere Mercurio et Naturam blasphemare quod creaverit illum. Natura vero cum audit ista vocavit Mercurium ad se et dixit illi: Quid tu fecisti huic? Quid mihi maledicit propter te et blasphemat me? Cur non praestas quod debes? Sed Mercurius modeste se excusat. At Natura iubet ut sit obediens filiis doctrinae quaerentibus se. Mercurius promisit se id praestitutum aitque: Mater Natura, sed stultis quis satisfaciet? Natura subridens discessit: Mercurius vero iratus Alchymistae etiam ad suum locum vadit.

English The alchemist shouted and spoke, but no one answered. He thought to himself, "I really am an excellent man. Mercury has spoken to me: he certainly loves me." He began working diligently again, subliming, distilling, calcining, turbiting, precipitating and dissolving Mercury in extraordinary ways and with various waters. But, as before, he attempted it in vain, uselessly spending money and time. Eventually he began cursing Mercury and blaspheming Nature for having created him. When Nature heard this, she summoned Mercury and said, "What have you done to this man? Why does he curse and blaspheme me on your account? Why do you not perform your duty?" Mercury modestly excused himself. Nature ordered him to obey the children of learning who sought her. Mercury promised to do so and said, "Mother Nature, but who can satisfy fools?" Nature departed with a smile. Mercury, angry with the alchemist, also returned to his own place.⁵¹

NL-DIALOGUE-008 1607, Google scan PA14, PA15, PA16 (image locators) · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAACAAJ&pg=PA14> · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAACAAJ&pg=PA15> · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAACAAJ&pg=PA16>

Latin Post aliquot dies incidit in mentem Alchymistae quod in laboribus suis aliquid omiserit, iterum ad Mercurium recurrit et illum cum stercore porcino commiscere constituit. Sed Mercurius iratus quod illum sinistre coram Natura Matre accusaverat ad Alchymistam ait: Quid tu stulte ex me habere vis? Cur me accusasti? Alch.: Tunc es ille quem ego desideravi videre? Merc.: Ego sum, sed nemo me caecus videre potest. Alch.: Ego non sum caecus. Merc.: Maxime caecus es, nam teipsum non vides, quomodo ergo me videre debes? Alch.: O iam superbus es, ego tecum modeste loquor et tu ita me contemnis: nescis fortasse quod ego apud multos Principes laboraverim et apud illos Philosophus fuerim. Merc.: Ad Principum aulas stulti concurrunt, illic enim honorantur et prae caeteris bene habent. Fuisti tu etiam apud aulas? Alch.: O tu es Diabolus et non bonus Mercurius, si tu ita vis loqui cum Philosophis: nam et prius ita me seduxisti. Merc.: Nostine tu Philosophos? Alch.: Ego ipse sum Philosophus. Merc.: Ecce nobis Philosophus, subridens dicit, et coepit cum illo ulterius loqui dicens: Mi Philosophus, dic ergo mihi quid quaeris et quid vis habere? Facere quid cupis? Alch.: Lapidem Philosophorum. Merc.: Ex qua igitur materia vis illum facere? Alch.: Ex Mercurio nostro. Merc.: O mi Philosophus, tunc ego discedam quia non sum vester.

English A few days later the alchemist thought he had omitted something in his operations. He returned to Mercury and decided to mix him with pig dung. Mercury was angry that the alchemist had falsely accused him before Mother Nature.

Mercury: Fool, what do you want from me? Why did you accuse me?

Alchemist: Are you the one I have wanted to see?

Mercury: I am, but no blind man can see me.

Alchemist: I am not blind.

⁵¹ Turbisare names the making of a historical turbit preparation. The translation retains the operation's historical name rather than assigning one modern compound to every preparation called turbit.

Mercury: You are completely blind. You cannot see yourself: how, then, should you see me?

Alchemist: Now you are proud! I speak to you politely, and you treat me with such contempt. Perhaps you do not know that I have worked for many princes and been their philosopher.

Mercury: Fools flock to princes' courts. They are honoured there and fare better than everyone else. Have you been at court too?

Alchemist: You are the devil, not good Mercury, if that is how you want to speak to philosophers. You misled me like this before.

Mercury: Do you know any philosophers?

Alchemist: I am a philosopher myself.

Mercury, smiling: Behold our philosopher! Tell me, my philosopher, what are you seeking? What do you want to obtain? What do you wish to make?

Alchemist: The philosophers' stone.

Mercury: From what matter do you wish to make it?

Alchemist: From our Mercury.

Mercury: My philosopher, in that case I shall leave, because I am not yours.

NL-DIALOGUE-009 1607, Google scan PA16, PA17, PA18 (image locators) · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVWAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA16> · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVWAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA17> · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVWAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA18>

Latin Alch.: O tu es non nisi Diabolus et vis me seducere. Merc.: Certe, mi Philosophe, tu mihi es Diabolus, non ego tibi: nam tu pessime me tractasti more diabolico. Alch.: O quid audio? Certe hic est Diabolus: nam ego omnia secundum Philosophorum scripta facio et scio optime laborare. Merc.: Optime scis: nam et magis facis quam scis et legis: Philosophi enim dixerunt naturam naturis miscendam et extra naturam nihil iubent; tu vero iam me cum omnibus fere rebus sordidissimis et stercoribus misces. Alch.: Ego nihil facio extra naturam, sed semino semen in terram suam, sicut Philosophi dixerunt. Merc.: Seminas me in stercus et tempore messis ego evanesco, tu vero stercus metere soles. Alch.: Tamen sic Philosophi scripserunt quod in sterquilinio materia illorum quaeri debeat. Merc.: Verum est quod illi scripserunt, et tu ad syllabam intelligis et non eorum sensum et mentem. Alch.: Nunc video quod tu es Mercurius fortassis, sed non vis obedire mihi. Et coepit illum iterum coniurare dicens: Vx vx. Sed Mercurius ridens respondit: Nihil proficies. Mein lieber Fuchs. Alch.: Non frustra de te dicunt quod mirabilis es et inconstans ac volatilis. Merc.: Tu me dicis esse inconstantem: hoc tibi sic solvo. Constans ego sum constanti artifice, fixus fixo animo: sed tu et tui similes inconstantes sunt, vagantes ex una re in aliam, ex una materia in alteram. Alch.: Dic ergo mihi si tu es ille Mercurius de quo Philosophi scripserunt, quem cum sulphure et sale omnium rerum principium dixerunt, an vero alius quaerendus? Merc.: Certe fructus ab arbore non procul cadit, sed ego meam gloriam non quaero: sum idem

qui fui, sed anni mei diversi sunt. Ab initio iuvenis fui tam diu quam diu fui solus. Sed iam senior sum, sed idem qui fui ante.

English Alchemist: You are nothing but the devil, and you mean to mislead me.

Mercury: Certainly, my philosopher, you are a devil to me, rather than I to you. You have treated me abominably, in a devilish fashion.

Alchemist: What am I hearing? He is certainly the devil. I do everything according to the philosophers' writings and know very well how to work.

Mercury: Very well indeed! You do even more than you know or read. The philosophers said that nature must be mixed with natures and commanded nothing outside nature. But you mix me with almost every filthy thing and kind of dung.

Alchemist: I do nothing outside nature. I sow the seed in its own earth, as the philosophers said.

Mercury: You sow me in dung. At harvest time I disappear, and dung is what you harvest.

Alchemist: Nevertheless, the philosophers wrote that their matter must be sought in the dunghill.

Mercury: What they wrote is true. You understand their syllables, rather than their meaning and intention.

Alchemist: I see now that perhaps you are Mercury, but you refuse to obey me.

He began conjuring Mercury again: "Vx vx." Mercury answered with a laugh, "You will achieve nothing, my dear fox."

Alchemist: People have good reason to call you strange, inconstant and volatile.

Mercury: You call me inconstant. Here is my answer. I am constant to a constant practitioner, fixed to a steadfast mind. You and your kind are inconstant, wandering from one thing to another, from one matter to another.

Alchemist: Tell me whether you are the Mercury of whom the philosophers wrote, whom they called the principle of all things together with Sulphur and Salt, or whether another must be sought.

Mercury: The fruit certainly does not fall far from the tree. But I do not seek my own glory. I am the same as I was, although my years differ. At

the beginning I was young as long as I was alone. Now I am older, but the same as before.⁵²

NL-DIALOGUE-010 1607, Google scan PA18, PA19, PA20 (image locators) ·

<https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA18> · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA19> · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA20>

Latin Alch.: Iam mihi places quod mihi dicas quod iam senior sis: ego enim semper talem quaesivi qui sit maturior et fixior, ut eo facilius cum illo convenire possim. Merc.: Frustra me visitas senem, qui me non nosti in iuventute. Alch.: Nonne ego te novi qui te semper miris modis tractavi, ut tu ipse dixisti, et adhuc non desinam donec perficiam Lapidem Philosophorum. Merc.: O me miserum, quid sim facturus? Qui fortasse iterum cum stercoribus miscebor, iam crucior denuo. O me miserum, rogo te, o Domine Philosopho, noli me tantum porcino stercore miscere: nam alias iam peribo, foetore enim hoc cogor meam mutare formam. Et quid vis ut amplius faciam? Nonne satis crucior a te? Nonne obedio tibi? Nonne misceo me rebus quibus tu vis? Nonne sum sublimis? Nonne praecipitatus? Nonne Thurbi? Nonne Amalgama? Nonne Masca? Quid iam magis a me cupis? Meum corpus iam ita flagellatum est, iam sputatum, ut et lapis mei possit misereri: ex me habes lac, ex me carnem, ex me sanguinem, ex me butyrum, ex me oleum, ex me aquam, et quod unquam metallorum aut minerarum id praestare possit quod ego solus? Et non est misericordia mecum. O me miserum. Alch.: Oho, non nocet tibi, tu es nequam, licet te quovis modo invertas, tu non mutas te, nisi formam tibi fingis, iterum semper redis in primam speciem tuam. Merc.: Ego facio sicut tu vis: si vis ut sim corpus, corpus sum; si vis ut sim pulvis, pulvis sum. Nescio quomodo me magis humiliare debeam quam cum pulvis et umbra fio.

English Alchemist: Now I like you, since you tell me you are older. I have always looked for someone more mature and more fixed, so that I can deal with him more easily.

Mercury: You visit me in old age to no purpose, since you did not know me in youth.

Alchemist: Do I not know you? I have always treated you in extraordinary ways, as you said yourself, and I shall not stop until I complete the philosophers' stone.

Mercury: Wretched creature that I am! What shall I do? Perhaps I shall be mixed with dung again. Already I am being tortured anew. Poor me! I beg you, lord philosopher, only do not mix me with pig dung, or I shall perish. Its stench forces me to change my form. What more do you want me to do? Have you not tortured me enough? Do I not obey you? Do I not mix myself with whatever things you choose? Am I not sublimed? Precipitated? Thurbi? Amalgam? Masca? What more do you want from me? My body is so scourged and spat upon that even a stone could pity me. From me you have milk, flesh, blood, butter, oil and water. What metal or ore could ever perform what I alone can do? Yet there is no mercy for me. Poor me!

⁵² Mein lieber Fuchs is a brief German taunt within the Latin dialogue, translated literally as my dear fox. The alternation of constancy in the practitioner and fixity in the material makes the technical word fixus carry an ethical comparison as well.

Alchemist: It does you no harm. You are a rogue. However you turn yourself about, you do not change: you merely devise a form for yourself and always return to your first appearance.

Mercury: I do as you wish. If you want me to be a body, I am a body; if you want me to be powder, I am powder. I do not know how to humble myself further than by becoming dust and shadow.⁵³

NL-DIALOGUE-011 1607, Google scan PA20, PA21, PA22 (image locators) ·

<https://books.google.com/books?id=wVWVWAAAACAAJ&pg=PA20> · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVWVWAAAACAAJ&pg=PA21> · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVWVWAAAACAAJ&pg=PA22>

Latin Alch.: Dic ergo mihi quis tu es in centro tuo? Et non te plus cruciabo. Merc.: Iam cogor tecum ex fundamento loqui. Si vis potes me intelligere, formam meam vides, de hac tibi non est opus. Sed quod de centro meo interrogas, centrum meum est cor omnium fixissimum, immortale et penetrans, in illo est requies Domini mei, ego vero ipse sum via et cursor peregrinus et domesticus, fidelissimus sum omnibus meis sociis, non relinquo comitantes me, cum illis maneo, cum illis pereor. Sum corpus immortale: morior quidem cum occidior, sed ad iudicium coram sagace iudice resurgo. Alch.: Ergo tu es Lapis Philosophorum? Merc.: Mater mea talis est, ex illa nascitur artificialiter unum aliquid, frater vero meus qui in arce habitat in velle suo habet quod Philosophus vult. Alch.: Esne tu senex? Merc.: Mater mea genuit me, sed ego senior sum matre. Alch.: Quis Diabolus te potest intelligere? Cum mihi ad propositum non respondeas, semper parabolas dicis. Dic mihi si tu es fontina de qua Bernardus Comes Trevisanus scripsit? Merc.: Fontina non sum, sed aqua sum, fontina me circumdedit. Alch.: Solvitur ne aurum in te cum aqua sis? Merc.: Quicquid mecum est amo sicut amicum, et quicquid mecum nascitur huic nutrimentum do, et quicquid nudum est alis meis tego. Alch.: Video ego quod tecum non est loqui, ego alia quaero, tu alia dicis. Si non vis bene respondere, certe iam tecum eo ad labores. Merc.: O Domine rogo te, esto mihi misericors, iam libenter dicam quod scio. Alch.: Dic ergo mihi si tu times ignem? Merc.: Ego ipse ignis sum. Alch.: Et quare igitur ab igne fugis? Merc.: Spiritus meus cum spiritu ignis amat se, et quo potest comitatur unus alterum. Alch.: Et quorsum soles ire quando cum igne ascendis? Merc.: Scito, omnis peregrinus semper in patriam suam tendit, et quando illuc unde egressus est venit requiescit, et semper redit sapientior quam exit. Alch.: Reverteris ne iterum aliquando? Merc.: Revertor, sed in alia forma.

English Alchemist: Tell me who you are in your centre, and I shall torture you no further.

Mercury: Now I am forced to speak to you from the foundation. You can understand me if you wish. You see my form; you have no need of an account of that. But you ask about my centre. My centre is a heart, the most fixed of all, immortal and penetrating. In it my master rests. I myself am a path and a runner, both traveller and stay-at-home. I am utterly faithful to all my companions. I do not abandon those who accompany me; I remain with them and perish with them. I am an immortal body. I die, certainly, when I am killed, but I rise again for judgment before a discerning judge.

⁵³. Thurbi and Masca are retained as the 1607 witness prints them; Amalgama is rendered amalgam. The list concerns historical preparations and forms of Mercury. It does not provide a secure basis for assigning a modern composition to every item. Dust and shadow also has a literary resonance beyond the description of a powder.

Alchemist: Then you are the philosophers' stone?

Mercury: My mother is such. From her a certain single thing is born through art. My brother, who lives in the citadel, has in his will what the philosopher desires.

Alchemist: Are you old?

Mercury: My mother bore me, but I am older than my mother.

Alchemist: What devil could understand you? You never answer my question; you always speak in parables. Tell me whether you are the fountain Count Bernard of Treviso wrote about.

Mercury: I am not the fountain, but I am water. The fountain has surrounded me.

Alchemist: Since you are water, is gold dissolved in you?

Mercury: Whatever is with me I love as a friend. Whatever is born with me I nourish. Whatever is naked I cover with my wings.

Alchemist: I see there is no talking to you. I ask about one thing and you speak about another. If you will not answer properly, I shall certainly take you back to work.

Mercury: My lord, please have mercy on me. Now I shall gladly tell you what I know.

Alchemist: Tell me, then: do you fear fire?

Mercury: I myself am fire.

Alchemist: Then why do you flee from fire?

Mercury: My spirit and the spirit of fire love each other. Wherever possible, one accompanies the other.

Alchemist: Where do you usually go when you ascend with fire?

Mercury: Know that every traveller always makes for his homeland. When he reaches the place from which he set out, he rests, and he always returns wiser than when he left.

Alchemist: Do you ever return again?

Mercury: I return, but in another form.⁵⁴

⁵⁴. Mercury answers through relations: centre and outward form, traveller and home, mother and brother. The translator preserves these riddles rather than replacing their figures with a modern substance. The mention of judgment may also invite an essay reading; the Latin leaves the figurative language in place.

NL-DIALOGUE-012 1607, Google scan PA22, PA23 (image locators) · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA22> · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA23>

Latin Alch.: Non intelligo quid hoc est, neque de igne quidquam. Merc.: Si quis ignem cordis mei novit, vidit ignem, calorem debitum, cibum meum esse, et quo diutius ignem spiritus cordis mei comedit pinguior erit, cuius mors postea vita omnium rerum est quaecunque in hoc regno sunt ubi ego sum. Alch.: Esne tu magnus? Merc.: Habes me in exemplum: ex mille guttulis unus ero, ex uno multa millia guttarum do, et sicut corpus meum est in oculis tuis. Si mecum ludere scis potes me dividere in tantum in quantum vis, iterum unus ero: quid igitur spiritus, cor meum, intrinsece, qui semper ex minutissima parte multa millia profert? Alch.: Et quomodo igitur tecum facere oportet ut ita sis? Merc.: Ignis sum intus, ignis est mihi cibus, vita vero ignis aer est, sine aere ignis extinguitur: ignis praevallet aeri, propterea non quiesco, nec me crudus potest constringere aer. Adde aerem aeri, ut sint ambo unum et teneant pondus, cum igne calido coniunge, temporibus da ad custodiendum. Alch.: Quid postea erit? Merc.: Subtrahetur superfluum, residuum combures igne, in aquam pones, coques postea, coctum aegrotis in medicinam dabis. Alch.: Nihil mihi dicis ad meas quaestiones. Video ego quod tu me tantum parabolis vis ludere. Uxor, affer stercus porcinum, ego istum Mercurium novis modis tractabo, donec mihi dicat quomodo Lapis Philosophicus sit faciendus ex illo.

English Alchemist: I do not understand what that means, nor anything about fire.

Mercury: Anyone who knows the fire of my heart has seen that fire—the proper degree of heat—is my food. The longer the spirit of my heart eats fire, the fatter it grows; its death afterwards is the life of all things in this kingdom where I am.

Alchemist: Are you great?

Mercury: You have me as an example. Out of a thousand droplets I become one; out of one I yield many thousands of drops, just as you see my body before your eyes. If you know how to play with me, you can divide me as much as you wish, and I shall become one again. What, then, of the spirit within—my heart—which always brings forth many thousands from the smallest portion?

Alchemist: How should you be treated to become like that?

Mercury: Within I am fire, and fire is my food. Air is the life of fire: without air, fire goes out. Fire prevails over air; that is why I do not rest, nor can raw air restrain me. Add air to air, so that both become one and maintain the weight. Unite it with warm fire and entrust it to the seasons for keeping.

Alchemist: What will happen afterwards?

Mercury: What is superfluous will be removed. You will burn the residue with fire, put it in water, then cook it; when cooked, you will give it to the sick as medicine.

Alchemist: You tell me nothing in answer to my questions. I see that you only want to play tricks on me with parables. Wife, bring pig dung. I shall treat this Mercury in new ways until he tells me how the philosophers' stone is to be made from him.⁵⁵

NL-DIALOGUE-013 1607, Google scan PA23, PA24, PA25 (image locators) · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAACAAJ&pg=PA23> · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAACAAJ&pg=PA24> · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAACAAJ&pg=PA25>

Latin Mercurius auditis hisce incipit lamentari super Alchymista, vaditque ad matrem Naturam, accusat ingratum laborantem. Natura filio Mercurio credit qui verax est, ira commota ad Alchymistam venit et illum vocat: Heus tu, ubi es? Alch.: Quis est qui me vocat? Natura: Quid tu stulte cum filio meo agis? Cur illi facis tantam iniuriam? Cur illum crucias qui tibi omne bonum facere vult, si tantum intelligere velles? Alch.: Quis Diabolus me increpat, tantum virum et Philosophum? Nat.: O stulte, plenum superbia stercus Philosophorum, novi ego Philosophos et omnes Sapientes quos amo, nam et illi me amant et omnia mihi faciunt ad placitum, et quo ego non possum illi me iuvant. Vos autem Alchymistae, ex quorum ordine tu quoque unus es, absque meo scitu et consensu, imo omnia contraria mihi facitis, propterea vobis etiam contrarium evenit: putatis quod bene filios meos tractetis, sed nihil perficitis: et si recte considerare velitis, non vos illos tractatis, sed illi vos tractant: nam vos nihil ex illis facere potestis neque scitis, illi vero ex vobis quando volunt faciunt stultos. Alch.: Non est verum, ego etiam sum Philosophus et scio laborare bene, fui ego apud Principes non unum et fui apud illos Philosophus, quod et uxor mea scit: etiam iam nunc habeo librum manu scriptum qui erat aliquot centum annis in muro quodam occultus, iam certo sciam facere Lapidem Philosophorum, et etiam hisce diebus revelatum est mihi per somnium. O ego soleo vera somnia habere: uxor, tu scis. Nat.: Facies sicut fecerunt alii tui collegae, qui in principio omnia sciunt et scire se putant, in fine vero nihil.

English Hearing this, Mercury began complaining about the alchemist. He went to Mother Nature and accused the ungrateful worker. Nature believed her truthful son Mercury. Angered, she came to the alchemist and called, "Hey, you! Where are you?"

Alchemist: Who is calling me?

Nature: Fool, what are you doing to my son? Why do you injure him so badly? Why do you torture someone who wishes to do you every good, if only you would understand?

Alchemist: What devil is rebuking a man and philosopher as great as I am?

Nature: Fool! You philosophers' dung, full of pride! I know the philosophers and all the wise people I love. They love me too and do everything to please me; where I cannot act, they help me. But you alchemists, whose number includes you, act without my knowledge and consent—indeed, everything you do is contrary to me. That is why

⁵⁵. The 1607 text itself glosses *ignem* with *calorem debitum*, the appropriate heat. *Temporibus*, literally times or seasons, is retained as seasons; no unprinted numerical duration or temperature is supplied. The ensuing medicinal claim belongs to the historical dialogue, which does not specify a safe modern preparation or dose.

your results also turn out contrary to your intentions. You think you treat my children well, yet accomplish nothing. If you would consider it properly, you are not working upon them: they are working upon you. You neither know how nor are able to make anything from them. They, whenever they wish, make fools of you.

Alchemist: That is untrue. I too am a philosopher and know very well how to work. I have served more than one prince and been their philosopher; my wife knows it too. Even now I possess a manuscript book that lay hidden in a wall for several hundred years. Now I shall certainly know how to make the philosophers' stone. It was also revealed to me in a dream these last few days. I habitually have true dreams—wife, you know that.

Nature: You will do as your colleagues have done. At the beginning they know everything—or think they do. At the end they know nothing.⁵⁶

NL-DIALOGUE-014 1607, Google scan PA25, PA26, PA27 (image locators) · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA25> · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA26> · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA27>

Latin Alch.: Tamen alii ex te, si tu es vera Natura, solent facere. Nat.: Verum est, sed solummodo hi qui me noverunt, qui pauci sunt. Qui me vero novit non cruciat filios meos neque me impedit, sed mihi facit ad placitum et augmentat bona mea et filiorum meorum corpora sanat. Alch.: Tamen et ego sic facio. Nat.: Tu mihi contraria omnia facis et contra meam voluntatem cum filiis meis procedis: ubi deberes revivificare tu occidis, ubi figere tu sublimas, ubi calcinare tu distillas, praesertim hunc mihi obedientissimum filium Mercurium quem tot corrosivis aquis, tot venenosis rebus crucias. Alch.: Tunc ego sic procedam cum illo suaviter per digestionem solummodo. Natura: Bene est si scis, sin minus non illi sed tibi nocebis ipse et sumptibus tuis: nam idem est illi, ita cum stercore se miscet sicuti cum auro, gemma semper bona est et stercus illum non minuit, etiamsi in illud proicietur, quando lavatur eadem est gemma quae fuit antea. Alch.: Sed ego libenter scirem facere Lapidem Philosophicum. Natura: Ergo non sic filium meum tractato: scito enim quod ego multos filios et filias habeo, et adsum praesto quaerentibus me si sunt me digni. Alch.: Dic ergo mihi quis est iste Mercurius? Natura: Scito quod est mihi unus tantum talis filius, unus ex septem est et primus est, quoque omnia est, qui unus tantum erat: nihil est et numerus eius integer est. In illo sunt quatuor Elementa, qui tamen non est Elementum: spiritus est qui tamen corpus habet: vir est et tamen vices foeminae agit: puer est et viri arma gerit: animal est et tamen ales avis habet. Venenum est et tamen lepram curat: vita est et tamen omnia occidit: Rex est, alter tamen possidet eius regnum: fugit cum igne et tamen ex illo paratur ignis: aqua est et non madefacit: terra est et tamen seminatur: aer est et vivit aqua.

English Alchemist: Nevertheless, other people do make it from you—if you are true Nature.

⁵⁶. The 1607 scan's page identifiers PA24 and PA25 carry irregular printed page numbers; the edition's locators use the scan identifiers for these leaves. The satire attacks claims of authority from courts, secret manuscripts and dreams when they are detached from an understanding of nature.

Nature: That is true, but only those who know me, and they are few. Someone who truly knows me does not torture my children or hinder me. He acts to please me, increases my goods and heals my children's bodies.

Alchemist: That is what I do too.

Nature: Everything you do is contrary to me. You treat my children against my will. Where you should revive, you kill; where you should fix, you sublime; where you should calcine, you distil. Above all you torture Mercury, this most obedient son of mine, with so many corrosive waters and poisonous things.

Alchemist: Then I shall treat him gently, by digestion alone.

Nature: Good—if you know how. If not, you will harm yourself and your finances, rather than him. It is all the same to him: he mixes with dung as with gold. A gem is always good. Dung does not diminish it, even if it is thrown into dung; when washed, it is the same gem as before.

Alchemist: But I would very much like to know how to make the philosophers' stone.

Nature: Then do not treat my son in that way. Know that I have many sons and daughters and stand ready for those who seek me, if they are worthy of me.

Alchemist: Tell me, then, who this Mercury is.

Nature: Know that I have only one such son. He is one of seven and is the first; he also is all things, who was only one. He is nothing, and his number is whole. In him are the four elements, yet he is no element. He is a spirit, yet has a body. He is male, yet performs the female's role. He is a boy and bears a man's arms. He is an animal, yet has a bird's wings. He is poison, yet cures leprosy. He is life, yet kills all things. He is a king, yet another possesses his kingdom. He flees with fire, yet fire is prepared from him. He is water and does not wet. He is earth and yet is sown. He is air and lives by water.⁵⁷

NL-DIALOGUE-015 1607, Google scan PA27, PA28 (image locators) · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAACAAJ&pg=PA27> · <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVVWAAAACAAJ&pg=PA28>

Latin Alch.: *Iam video ego quod nihil scio, sed non audeo dicere: nam perderem bonam existimationem et vicinus meus non impenderet amplius in me si sciret quod ego nihil sciam: ego tamen dicam quod scio certe, alias nemo vel panem mihi*

⁵⁷ The phrase printed *ales avis* is irregular in this context and is understood as *alae avis*, a bird's wings; the visible Latin wording is retained. In 1607 Nature says that the spirit has a body (*corpus habet*), whereas the 1614 transcription aid reads that it is a body. The present translation follows 1607 and preserves every member of the riddle without reducing it to a formula.

daret: multi enim illorum sperant a me multa bona. Natura: Etsi in longum pertrahes, quid postea erit? Interim et vicini quilibet repetent suos sumptus a te. Alch.: Alam spe omnes quousque potero. Natura: Et tandem quid ultimo? Alch.: Tentabo tacite varios labores, si succedet solvam: sin minus ibo in aliam provinciam et hoc idem agam. Natura: Et postea quid erit? Alch.: Ha, ha, ha, sunt multae provinciae, multi quoque avari, quibus magnam copiam promittam auri, idque brevissimo tempore, et sic dies diem sequetur, interim aut Rex, aut Asinus morietur, aut ego. Natura: Laqueus, merito, tales Philosophos manet: apage te et finem tibi et tali tuae Philosophiae mala cruce quam ocysissime impone: hoc enim unico consilio nec mihi nec proximo nec tibi ipsi fraudi eris. Finis.

English Alchemist: I see now that I know nothing. But I dare not say so: I would lose my good reputation, and my neighbour would no longer spend money on me if he knew I knew nothing. I shall nevertheless say that I know for certain, or no one would give me even bread. Many of them expect great benefits from me.

Nature: Even if you drag things out, what will happen afterwards? Meanwhile, all your neighbours will demand their expenses back from you.

Alchemist: I shall feed them all with hope as long as I can.

Nature: And what will happen at the very end?

Alchemist: I shall quietly try various operations. If I succeed, I shall pay. If not, I shall go to another province and do the same thing.

Nature: And what then?

Alchemist: Ha, ha, ha! There are many provinces and many greedy people. I shall promise them a great abundance of gold in a very short time. One day will follow another; meanwhile, either the king will die, or the ass, or I.

Nature: A noose rightly awaits philosophers like that. Away with you! Put a swift end to yourself and that philosophy of yours on an accursed cross. Only by this counsel will you cease to deceive me, your neighbour and yourself.

The End.⁵⁸

⁵⁸. The conclusion deliberately abandons the alchemist's pretence to knowledge: he admits that continued promises secure his livelihood. Nature's final language is a harsh satirical curse invoking hanging or execution. It is preserved as the character's speech, rather than turned into editorial advice.

Treatise of Sulphur

The 1616 Sulphur Title

Tractatus de sulphure, altero naturae principio

SUL-TITLE-001 1616, title page; BSB canvas 1 ·

https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00001/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin TRACTATUS DE SULPHURE, ALTERO NATURAE PRINCIPIO, AB
AUTHORE EO, QUI ET PRIMUM CONSCRIPSIT PRINCIPIUM.

Non nobis Domine non nobis, sed nomini tuo da gloriam.

ANGELUS DOCE MIHI IUS.

Ut possim diiudicare inter verum et falsum.

[In emblemate: RERUM VIGILANTIA CUSTOS.]

COLONIAE, Apud Ioannem Crithium sub signo galli. ANNO M. D. CXVI.

English A Treatise on Sulphur, the Other Principle of Nature

By the author who also wrote about the first principle.

Not to us, Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory.

Angel, teach me what is right.

That I may distinguish between truth and falsehood.

Printer's device: Vigilance, guardian of things.

Cologne: at the press of Johann Crithius, at the sign of the cock, 1616.⁵⁹

⁵⁹. The Latin title identifies the author indirectly as the writer on the first principle. Angelus doce mihi ius (Angel, teach me what is right) is retained as an anonymous signature; the following line states its purpose. The short vigilance motto is lettered within Crithius's printer's device. The illustration itself is not reproduced.

Preface by the Author to the Treatise on Sulphur

Auctoris praefatio ad lectorem

SUL-PREFACE-001 1616, unnumbered author preface, page 1; BSB canvas 3; 1616, unnumbered author preface, page 2; BSB canvas 4 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00003/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00004/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin AUCTORIS PRAEFATIO AD LECTOREM.

Cum mihi non liceat, Lector benevole, apertius quam alii veteres Philosophi scripserunt, scribere: fortasse scriptis meis non eris contentus. Praesertim cum tot Philosophorum libros alios prae manibus habeas; sed crede, nec mihi etiam libros conscribere opus est, quia ex illis nec commodum, nec vanam ostentationem quaero, ideo nec quis sum, vulgare cupio. Ea quae tuae utilitati iam in publicum tradidi, magis quam satis esse mihi videbatur, reliqua ad Harmoniam, ubi de rebus naturalibus copiose proposui, releganda destinavi: attamen hortatu amicorum, et hunc tractatum de Sulphure conscribere debui, in quo an ad priora addere aliquid opus est, nescio, imo neque hic etiam, si tibi tot Philosophorum scripta non satisfaciunt, satisfaciet. Et maxime si tibi quotidiana operatio naturae non satis exempli est, nulla exempla iuvabunt: nam si ista quomodo natura operatur maturo iudicio considerares, non opus haberes tot Philosophorum volumina, quoniam meo iudicio melius est ab ipso magistro Natura, quam a discipulis discere. Satis in praefatione libelli 12 Tractatum, tum et primo tractatu ibidem habes, quod in arte ista tot et tanti libri reperiuntur, ut iam inquirentes magis impediant, quam iuvent, et ita esse videtur, quoniam scripta Philosophorum ex tam parva schedula Hermetis, in tam magnum labyrinthum maxime erroneum excreverunt, et in dies ad Eclipsim declinat. Et hoc non nisi ab invidis scientibus factum esse credo, cum ignorans nescit quid addi vel subtrahi debeat, nisi forte auctoris manus non bene legi possit. Si in aliqua scientia multum iuvat aut nocet, si unum verbum deest, vel superat, illud maxime in ista.

English The Author's Preface to the Reader

Kind reader, since I am not permitted to write more openly than the ancient philosophers, perhaps my writings will not satisfy you, especially when you have so many other philosophical books at hand. Yet believe me: I have no need to write books. I seek neither profit nor empty display from them, and therefore have no wish to publish my identity. I have already made public, for your benefit, more than seemed sufficient to me. I intended to reserve the rest for my Harmony, where I have set out natural matters at greater length. Nevertheless, at my friends' urging I have had to write this treatise on sulphur. I do not know whether anything needed to be added to my earlier work. Indeed, if so many philosophers' writings fail to satisfy you, this one will not satisfy you either. Above all, if nature's daily operation does not provide you with sufficient examples, no examples will help. If you considered maturely how nature operates, you would not need so many volumes of philosophy; for in my judgment it is better to learn from the teacher, Nature herself, than from her pupils. In the preface to my little book of Twelve Treatises, and also in its first treatise, you have enough about the many great books found in this art: they now hinder seekers

more than they help. It seems so, because the philosophers' writings have grown from Hermes' tiny tablet into so great and misleading a labyrinth, and decline daily towards an eclipse. I believe this was done only by knowledgeable but envious people. An ignorant person does not know what should be added or removed, unless perhaps an author's handwriting cannot be read properly. If the absence or addition of a single word greatly helps or harms any science, it does so above all in this one.⁶⁰

SUL-PREFACE-002 1616, unnumbered author preface, page 2; BSB canvas 4; 1616, unnumbered author preface, page 3; BSB canvas 5; 1616, unnumbered author preface, page 4; BSB canvas 6 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00004/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00005/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00006/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Ad exemplum: scriptum est in loco uno: postea has aquas simul misceas; alter addidit non: parum quidem addidit, et nihilominus totum caput contrarium fecit. Studiosus tamen diligens sciat apem etiam ex venenosis herbis mel colligere; si enim ad possibilitatem naturae lectionem dirigit, facile Sophismata separabit, et tamen legere non desinat, quia liber librum aperit. Sed ego ita intellexi, quod libri Geberi Philosophi, et quis scit si non et aliorum Autorum, beneficis maximis incantati sunt, ita, ut nullo modo possint nec debeant intelligi, nisi millesima lectione, et hoc ab ingenioso Lectore? Fatui plane ab illorum lectione excluduntur. Sunt quidem multi qui illum, sicuti et alios Autores interpretantur, sed video explicationem esse difficiliorem textu. Meum consilium est ut in textu maneas, et quicquid legis, omnia ad possibilitatem naturae applices, et quid sit natura in primis perquiras. Omnes quidem scribunt, quod res est vilis, facilis, communis, et verum quidem est, sed adiungendum fuit, Scientibus. Sciens et inter stercora illam cognoscit, et ignorans etiam in auro illam esse non credit; et hi omnes qui eiusmodi libros obscuros composuerunt, si artem nescirent sed ex eiusmodi libris, qui quidem verissimi sunt, artem quaerere deberent, illam difficilius invenirent, quam moderni inquisitores inveniunt. Ego mea scripta laudare nolo; ille iudicabit, qui illa ad possibilitatem et cursum naturae applicabit; et si ex meis scriptis, consiliis et exemplis, operationem naturae, et ministros eius, Spiritus vitales aerem constringentes, tum et subiecti primam materiam cognoscere non poterit, vix ex Raimundo Lullo intelliget: difficile enim est credere, Spiritus habere tantam potentiam in ventre venti.

English For example, one passage reads: Afterwards mix these waters together. Someone else added not. He added little, yet reversed the whole chapter. Still, let the diligent student remember that the bee gathers honey even from poisonous plants. If he directs his reading by what nature can accomplish, he will readily separate out the sophistries. Yet he should not stop reading, because one book opens another. I have understood, however, that the books of the philosopher Geber—and who knows whether those of other authors too—have been bewitched with the greatest enchantments, so that they cannot and should not be understood until the thousandth reading, and then only by an intelligent reader. Fools are altogether excluded from reading them. Many people interpret him, as they do other authors, but I find the explanation harder than the text. My advice is to stay with the text, to

⁶⁰ The Harmony is a work promised by the author. Its repeated mention does not establish that a complete work answering every promise survives. The author's refusal to name himself belongs to the original preface.

apply everything you read to what nature can accomplish, and first of all to investigate what nature is. Everyone writes that the thing is cheap, easy and common. This is indeed true, but they ought to have added: for those who know. A knowledgeable person recognises it even among dung; an ignorant one does not believe it is present even in gold. All those who composed obscure books of this kind, if they did not know the art but had to seek it in such books—which are indeed entirely true—would discover it with greater difficulty than present-day seekers do.

I do not wish to praise my writings. Whoever applies them to nature's possibilities and course will judge them. If someone cannot learn from my writings, counsels and examples to recognise nature's operation, her servants, the vital spirits that bind the air, and the first matter of the subject, he will scarcely understand it from Raymond Lull; for it is hard to believe that spirits have such power in the belly of the wind.^{61,62}

SUL-PREFACE-003 1616, unnumbered author preface, page 4; BSB canvas 6 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00006/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Hanc sylvam et ego transire coactus sum, et illam quoque multiplicare iuvi, tali tamen modo, quod meae plantae veris filiis artis, et huius sanctae Scientiae studiosis, per sylvam hanc transire volentibus, in signa et quasi lumen ac duces esse debeant; sunt enim meae plantae quasi spiritus corporales. Iam enim saecula praeterierunt, ubi confidentia amicorum floruit; et haec scientia oretenus dabatur, iam non nisi a solius Altissimi Dei inspiratione acquiritur; ideo non desperet diligens ac Deum timens inquisitor. Si illam quaeret, inveniet, quoniam facilius a Deo quam ab homine impetratur: ille enim est immensae misericordiae Deus qui nescit fidentem deserere, apud illum non est respectus personarum; cor contritum et humiliatum non despiciet, qui et mei, eius Creaturarum indignissimi, misertus est, cuius potentiam, bonitatem, inexplicabilem misericordiam, quam mihi ostendere dignatus est, explanare non sum sufficiens. At si non alias grates dare possum, calamo saltem non desinam temporibus porrigere ista.

English I too was forced to pass through this forest, and even helped to make it thicker. Yet I did so in such a way that my plants should serve the true children of the art, and students of this sacred science who wish to cross this forest, as signs, as a light and as guides. For my plants are like embodied spirits.

The ages have passed in which trust among friends flourished and this science was handed on by word of mouth. Now it is acquired only through the inspiration of the Most High God. Therefore let the diligent, God-fearing seeker not despair. If he seeks it, he will find it, for it is more readily obtained from God than from a human being. He is a God of immeasurable mercy who does not forsake those who trust him. With him there is no partiality; he will not despise a contrite and

⁶¹. Hermes' tiny tablet evokes the Emerald Tablet. The example about adding not makes textual transmission itself part of the work's teaching: a single small intervention can reverse a procedure.

⁶². The belly of the wind echoes the Emerald Tablet. Embodied spirits renders spiritus corporales; it is the author's paradox for writings that can guide a reader through the forest of books.

humbled heart. He has also had mercy on me, the most unworthy of his creatures. I cannot adequately express the power, goodness and inexpressible mercy he has deigned to show me. But if I can give no other thanks, I will at least never cease to set these things before the ages with my pen.

SUL-PREFACE-004 1616, unnumbered author preface, page 4; BSB canvas 6; 1616, unnumbered author preface, page 5; BSB canvas 7 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00006/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00007/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Sis ergo bono animo, Lector candide, et tibi quoque hanc gratiam non denegabit, si in illo spem integram posueris, illum adorabis et invocabis, ille tibi aperiet naturae ianuam, ibi videbis quomodo natura simplicissime operatur. Scias pro certo, quod natura simplicissima est, nec delectatur nisi in simplicitate; et crede mihi quicquid in natura nobilius est, eo etiam et facilius, ac simplicius; quoniam omnis veritas simplex est.

English Take courage, honest reader. He will not refuse you this grace either, if you place your entire hope in him, worship him and call upon him. He will open nature's door to you. There you will see how simply nature works. Know for certain that nature is utterly simple and delights only in simplicity. Believe me: whatever is nobler in nature is also easier and simpler, since all truth is simple.

SUL-PREFACE-005 1616, unnumbered author preface, page 5; BSB canvas 7; 1616, unnumbered author preface, page 6; BSB canvas 8 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00007/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00008/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Deus altissimus conditor rerum, nihil difficile posuit in natura, si igitur vis esse imitator naturae, tibi suadeo ut in simplici via maneas naturae, et omnia bona invenies. Quod si vero tibi nec mea scripta, nec consilium placet, ad alios Autores ito. Propterea ego non magna volumina scribo, ut in illa non multum expendas, citoque perlegere possis; ut tibi sit ad alios Autores recurrendi tempus, et quaerere non desinas, pulsanti enim aperietur. Iam etiam illa tempora adveniunt, in quibus arcana multa naturae revelabuntur. Iam illa Monarchia quarta Borealis incipere habet. Iam tempora appropinquant, mater scientiarum veniet, maiora elucidabuntur, quam in his tribus praeteritis Monarchiis factum est, quoniam hanc Monarchiam, ut veteres divinarunt, plantabit Deus per unum ex Principibus, omnibus virtutibus ditatum, quem fortasse nobis iam tempora produxerunt. Habemus enim in hac parte boreali Principem Sapientissimum ac bellicosissimum, quem nullus Monarcharum victoriis superat, humanitate ac pietate nullus excellit. In hac Monarchia Boreali, Deus omnium conditor rerum, maiora arcana sine dubio in natura elucidabit, quam illis temporibus, ubi aut Paganorum, aut Tyrannorum Principum sedes fuit. Sed has Monarchias Philosophi non secundum potentiores, sed secundum Cardines mundi numerant. In primis Orientalem, postea Meridionalem; iam vero Occidentalem habent, et ultimam Septentrionalem in hac parte Boreali expectant, de quibus in Harmonia dabitur.

English The Most High God, maker of all things, has placed nothing difficult in nature. If you wish to imitate nature, I advise you to remain on her simple path, and you will find every good thing.

If neither my writings nor my advice please you, go to other authors. That is why I do not write large volumes: you need not spend much on

them and can read them quickly, leaving you time to consult other authors. Do not cease seeking, for to the one who knocks it will be opened. The times are now approaching in which many of nature's secrets will be revealed. The fourth, northern monarchy is now to begin. The times draw near; the mother of sciences will come. Greater things will be brought to light than in the three preceding monarchies. For God will establish this monarchy, as the ancients foretold, through one of the princes, endowed with every virtue, whom perhaps our own times have already brought forth. Here in the north we have a prince of the greatest wisdom and martial prowess. No monarch surpasses him in victories, and none excels him in humanity and piety. In this northern monarchy, God, the maker of all things, will undoubtedly reveal greater secrets in nature than in the times when the seats of power belonged either to pagans or to tyrannical princes. But philosophers reckon these monarchies by the quarters of the world, rather than by the mightiest rulers: first the eastern, then the southern; now they have the western, and they await the last, northern one in this boreal region. These matters will be treated in the Harmony.⁶³

SUL-PREFACE-006 1616, unnumbered author preface, page 6; BSB canvas 8; 1616, unnumbered author preface, page 7; BSB canvas 9 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00008/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00009/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin In hac Septentrionali attractiva polari Monarchia, ut Psalmista ait: Misericordia et veritas obviabunt sibi, pax et iustitia osculabuntur; Veritas de terra orietur, et iustitia de caelo prospiciet. Unum ovile, et unus pastor. Scientiae multae sine invidia, quod ego cum desiderio expecto. Tu quoque, Candide Lector, Deum invoca, time, ama, meaque scripta diligenter lege, et tibi certe divinare bona. Quod si Deo favente, natura operante, cuius imitator sis, ad portum desideratum huius Monarchiae appuleris, tunc videbis et iudicabis omnia me tibi bona et vera dixisse.

Vale.

English In this northern, attractive, polar monarchy, as the Psalmist says: Mercy and truth will meet; peace and justice will kiss. Truth will spring from the earth, and justice will look down from heaven. There will be one fold and one shepherd. There will be many sciences, without envy: this I eagerly await. You too, honest reader, call upon God, fear him, love him, and read my writings diligently, and confidently foretell good things for yourself. If, with God's favour and nature's operation—be her imitator—you reach the desired harbour of this monarchy, you will then see and judge that everything I have told you is good and true.

Farewell.

⁶³. The northern monarchy is a programme of renewal organised by the four quarters of the world. The prince is not named here; this edition does not supply an identification as though it were stated in the text. The biblical sequence combines Psalm 85:10–11 in modern numbering (84:11–12 in the Vulgate) with John 10:16.

On Sulphur the Second of the Principles

DE SULPHURE. SECUNDO PRINCIPIORUM.

SUL-SULPHUR-OPENING-001 1616, body sequence page 1; BSB canvas 10; 1616, body sequence page 2; BSB canvas 11 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00010/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00011/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin DE SULPHURE. SECUNDO PRINCIPIORUM.

Sulphur non est postremum inter Principia, quoniam illud est pars Metalli, imo pars principalis Lapidis Philosophorum, et multi Sapientes varia et verissima de Sulphure reliquerunt. Imo ipse HEBER Libri Summae Perfectionis capite 28 dicit: Per Deum Altissimum ipsum illuminat omne corpus, quoniam est lumen a lumine, et tinctura. Nos autem antequam de illo simus tractaturi, visum est nobis, Primo originem principiorum describere, praesertim cum Sulphur pro principali Principiorum antiquitus habitum est. Unde autem Principia oriuntur, pauci hucusque ostenderunt, et difficile est iudicare de aliquo Principiorum, sicut et de quavis alia re, cuius origo et generatio ignoratur: quid enim de colore caecus? Quod igitur antecessores nostri omiserunt, id nos in hoc Tractatu adimplere proposuimus.

Sunt autem Principia rerum, praesertim Metallorum, secundum antiquos Philosophos, Duo: Sulphur et Mercurius. Secundum Neotericos vero, tria: Sal, Sulphur, et Mercurius. Origo autem horum Principiorum sunt quatuor Elementa, de quorum etiam origine nobis imprimis incipiendum est. Sciant ergo studiosi huius sanctae Scientiae, quatuor Elementa esse: et quodlibet horum quatuor, habet in suo centro aliud Elementum, a quo elementatur, et haec sunt quatuor Statua Mundi, ex Chao in Creatione Mundi, a Divina Sapientia separata, quae hanc machinam Mundi per suum actum contrarium, in aequalitate et proportionem tenent, ac virtutum caelestium inclinatione omnes res infra et super terram producant, de quibus suo loco; hic ad propositum primo de propinquiori Elemento Terra.

English On Sulphur, the Second of the Principles

Sulphur holds no low place among the principles. It is a part of metal, indeed a principal part of the philosophers' stone. Many wise men have left various and entirely true accounts of sulphur. Geber himself says in chapter 28 of the Summa of Perfection: By the Most High God, it illuminates every body, for it is light from light, and tincture.

Before treating it, however, I have thought it best first to describe the origin of the principles, especially since sulphur has from antiquity been considered the chief of them. Few have yet shown where the principles arise. It is hard to judge any principle, as it is any other thing, if its origin and generation are unknown. What can a blind man say about colour? I have therefore proposed to supply in this treatise what my predecessors omitted.

According to the ancient philosophers, the principles of things, especially metals, are two: sulphur and mercury. According to the more recent writers, however, they are three: salt, sulphur and mercury. These principles originate in the four elements, and we must begin by considering their origin too. Let students of this sacred science therefore know that there are four elements. Each has in its centre another

element by which it is elemented. These are the world's four supports, separated from chaos by divine wisdom at the creation of the world. Through their contrary action they keep this fabric of the world in balance and proportion. Under the direction of heavenly powers they produce everything below and above the earth. These matters will be discussed in their place. Here, to our purpose, we begin with the element nearest us: earth.^{64,65}

⁶⁴. The author cites Heber (Geber), *Summa perfectionis*, chapter 28, as an authority for sulphur as light and tincture. This is a citation made by the historical author, rather than an independently verified modern chemical statement.

⁶⁵. The source distinguishes an element from the element within its centre by which it is elemented. These are terms of the author's natural philosophy. The four supports translates the unusual printed quatuor Statua Mundi; it is not a claim about four modern chemical elements.

On the Element of Earth

DE ELEMENTO TERRAE.

SUL-EARTH-001 1616, body sequence page 2; BSB canvas 11; 1616, body sequence page 3; BSB canvas 12; 1616, body sequence page 4; BSB canvas 13 ·
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Latin DE ELEMENTO TERRAE.

Terra est Elementum satis dignum in sua qualitate et dignitate. In hoc Elemento alia tria, et praecipue Ignis requiescunt. Est Elementum praestantissimum ad celandum et manifestandum ea, quae sibi concredita sunt: grossum est et porosum, grave respectu suae parvitat, sed leve respectu suae naturae: est etiam Centrum Mundi, tum et aliorum Elementorum. Per eius Centrum transit Axis Mundi utriusque Poli. Est porosum, ut diximus, sicut spongia, quae nihil ex se profert. Sed quicquid alia tria in illud stillant et proiciunt, omnia recipit, servanda servat, manifestanda manifestat: nihil, ut diximus, ex se profert, sed est receptaculum aliorum, et est in quo omne productum manet, ac per calorem motivum in illo putrefit, ac per eundem, separato puro ab impuro, multiplicatur: quod grave est, in illo occultatur; et leve pellit calor in eius superficiem. Est omnis seminis et commistionis nutrix et matrix: nihil quidem aliud praestare potest, quam tueri semen et compositum ad maturitatem usque. Est frigidum, siccum, temperatur aqua: extra est visibile fixum, intus vero invisibile et volatile. Virgo est ex Creatione, distillationis, Mundi relictum caput mortuum, quod aliquando voluntate divina calcinandum erit, post extractionem sui humid, ut ex illo nova Chrystallina creari possit Terra. Divisum est etiam hoc Elementum in partem puram et impuram. Pura utitur aqua ad res producendas, impura vero in suo globo manet. Est hoc Elementum occultatio et domicilium omnis thesauri. In Centro eius est Ignis Gehennalis, continens hanc machinam Mundi in suo esse, et hoc per expressionem aquae in aera, et accenditur Ignis ille per primum Mobile, atque per influentias stellarum causatur et accenditur: huic obviat calor solaris aere temperatus, ad maturandum et attrahendum ea, quae iam concepta sunt in suo Centro.

English On the Element of Earth

Earth is an element worthy of consideration in its quality and dignity. In this element the other three, and especially fire, rest. It is an excellent element for concealing and revealing what has been entrusted to it. It is gross and porous, heavy in relation to its smallness but light in relation to its nature. It is also the centre of the world and of the other elements. The world's axis, joining both poles, passes through its centre. As I have said, it is porous, like a sponge, and produces nothing of itself. It receives whatever the other three distil and cast into it, preserves what should be preserved, and reveals what should be revealed. It produces nothing of itself, but receives the others. Every product remains in it and putrefies there through moving heat. Through that same heat, once the pure is separated from the impure, it multiplies. What is heavy is hidden within it; heat drives what is light to its surface.

Earth nurses and serves as the womb of every seed and mixture. It can do nothing further than guard the seed and compound until maturity. It

is cold and dry, tempered by water: outwardly visible and fixed, inwardly invisible and volatile. It is a virgin, left over from the creation—the distillation—of the world, a *caput mortuum*, or dead residue, which must one day, by God's will, be calcined after its moisture has been extracted, so that a new crystalline earth can be made from it. This element is divided into a pure and an impure part. The pure part uses water to produce things; the impure remains within its globe. This element conceals and houses every treasure. At its centre is a fire of infernal heat that maintains this fabric of the world in existence by forcing water into the air. This fire is kindled by the first moving sphere, and caused and kindled by the influences of the stars. Solar heat, tempered by air, meets it to ripen and draw forth what has already been conceived in its centre.⁶⁶

SUL-EARTH-002 1616, body sequence page 4; BSB canvas 13; 1616, body sequence page 5 (printed 4); BSB canvas 14 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00013/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00014/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Propterea Terra participat cum Igne, et est eius intrinsecum, nec purificatur nisi Igne: et sic quodlibet Elementum suo intrinseco purificatur. Intrinsecum autem Terrae seu Centrum, est summa puritas, mixta Igne, ubi nihil quiescere potest: est enim quasi locus vacuus, in quem alia Elementa suos actus proiciunt, ut in Libello 12 Tractatum dictum est: et haec de Elemento Terrae, quam Spongiam esse diximus et aliorum receptaculum, quod ad nostrum propositum sufficit.

English Earth therefore shares in fire, which is its inward nature, and it is purified only by fire. In the same way every element is purified by its own inward nature. The inward part or centre of earth is the greatest purity mixed with fire, where nothing can rest. It is like an empty place into which the other elements cast their actions, as was said in the little book of Twelve Treatises. That is enough for our purpose about the element earth, which I have called a sponge and the receptacle of the others.

⁶⁶. *Caput mortuum* literally means dead head; in chymical writing it commonly names a residue. The first moving sphere renders *primum Mobile*, the cosmological first mover of the heavens. *Gehennalis* carries the imagery of Gehenna; the description is the author's physical cosmology.

On the Element of Water

DE ELEMENTO AQUAE.

SUL-WATER-001 1616, body sequence page 5 (printed 4); BSB canvas 14; 1616, body sequence page 6 (printed 5); BSB canvas 15 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00014/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00015/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin DE ELEMENTO AQUAE.

Aqua est Elementum gravissimum, plenum unctuarii phlegmatis, et est Elementum dignius in sua qualitate, extra volatile, intus vero fixum, frigidum et humidum est, temperatur aere: est sperma Mundi, in quo semen omnium rerum conservatur: est custos seminis cuiuslibet rei. Sciendum tamen est, quod aliud est semen, et aliud Sperma. Spermatum receptaculum Terra est: seminis vero receptaculum Aqua. Quicquid in aquam stillat aer causante igne, hoc aqua porrigit terrae. Caret interdum Sperma sufficienti semine, ex defectu caloris digerentis illud: Sperma enim semper est in copia, expectans semen, quod ex imaginatione ignis, per aeris motum portat in matricem: et interdum, deficiente semine, intrat sperma; sed exit iterum absque fructu: de quibus aliquando in tertio Principiorum, SALIS Tractatu latius. Accidit saepissime in Natura quod Sperma cum sufficienti semine matricem intrat; sed matrix indisposita, repleta peccantibus sulphuribus, aut phlegmatibus, non concipit, nec fit hoc quod debuit. In hoc Elemento etiam nihil proprie est, nisi ut in Spermate esse solet: delectatur maxime motu proprio, qui fit per aerem, et est miscibile rebus, propter superficiale corpus volatile. Est, ut diximus, receptaculum universalis seminis: facile in illo terra purificatur, et resolvitur: et aer in illo congelatur, ac coniungitur illi.

English On the Element of Water

Water is the heaviest element, full of unctuous phlegm, and an element of considerable worth in its quality. Outwardly volatile, inwardly fixed, it is cold and moist and is tempered by air. It is the sperm of the world, in which the seed of all things is preserved, and it guards each thing's seed. Yet you must know that seed is one thing and sperm another. Earth receives sperm; water receives seed. Whatever air, through fire's agency, distils into water, water passes to earth. Sometimes sperm lacks sufficient seed because the heat that digests it is deficient. Sperm is always abundant, awaiting the seed which, formed by fire's imagining, it carries through the motion of air into the womb. Sometimes, when seed is lacking, sperm enters but comes out again without fruit. I shall discuss this more fully another time in a treatise on salt, the third of the principles. It very often happens in nature that sperm enters the womb with sufficient seed, but the womb is ill disposed, filled with faulty sulphurs or phlegms. It does not conceive, and what should have happened does not occur. In this element there is properly nothing except what is ordinarily present in sperm. It chiefly delights in its own motion, which comes through air, and mixes with things because of its outwardly volatile body. As I have said, it receives the universal seed.

Earth is readily purified and dissolved in it, and air is congealed in it and joined to it.^{67,68}

SUL-WATER-002 1616, body sequence page 6 (printed 5); BSB canvas 15; 1616, body sequence page 7; BSB canvas 16 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00015/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00016/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin In profundo, menstruum Mundi est, quod aer penetrando, virtute caloris trahit secum vaporem calidum, qui causat generationem naturalem, earum rerum, quibus terra impraegnata est, sicut matrix; et quando matrix debitam proportionem seminis accepit, sit quid sit, iam progreditur, naturaque operatur sine intermissione usque ad finem; residuum vero humidum, seu Sperma, cadit ad latus, et agente calore in terram putrefit illud, ad latus reiectum, et ex illo postea generantur res aliae, interdum variae bestiolae ac vermiculi. Posset quidem sagacis ingenii artifex in hoc Elemento, sicut ex spermate, varia videre Naturae miracula: sed opus esset illud Sperma accipere, in quo est iam imaginatum semen astrale, certi ponderis: quia Natura facit et producit, ex prima putrefactione res puras; sed ex secunda putrefactione multo puriores, ac multo digniores, et nobiliores, ut habes exemplum in ligno vegetabili: ubi in prima compositione Natura facit lignum, quando autem illud post maturitatem corrumpitur, putrefit, et generantur ex illo vermes, et aliae bestiolae vitam et visum habentes: Manifestum autem est, quod sensibile semper dignius est vegetabili; nam ad sensibilibus organa multo subtilior ac purior materia requiritur.

English In the depths it is the menstruum of the world. When air penetrates it, air draws a warm vapour along with it through the power of heat. This causes the natural generation of the things with which earth, like a womb, has been impregnated. Once the womb has received the proper proportion of seed, whatever it may be, the process advances. Nature works without interruption to the end. The remaining moisture or sperm falls to the side, where heat putrefies it in the earth, and other things are subsequently generated from what was cast aside, sometimes various little animals and worms. An ingenious artist could indeed see many of nature's wonders in this element as in sperm. But he would need to take sperm in which astral seed of a definite weight had already been imagined. For nature makes and produces pure things from the first putrefaction; from the second she produces things much purer, worthier and nobler. You have an example in vegetable wood. In its first composition nature makes wood. When, after maturity, it decays and putrefies, worms and other little animals with life and sight are generated from it. Clearly, what has sensation is always worthier than what merely vegetates, since a much subtler and purer matter is required for organs of sensation.⁶⁹

⁶⁷. Semen is translated seed and sperma sperm throughout this argument, because the author explicitly distinguishes them. Sperm carries seed into a womb; these words apply analogically to the whole natural world, rather than solely to human reproduction. Menstruum is retained as a historical term. Here the world's menstruum is a receiving and generative liquid as well as a dissolving medium; reducing the term to solvent alone would obscure the reproductive analogy.

⁶⁸. The treatise on salt is promised, not supplied in this volume. References to it have been preserved without inserting a later or conjectural replacement.

⁶⁹. The derivation of worms from decaying wood is the author's account of natural generation. The sensory life of the animal is ranked above vegetative life within that account.

SUL-WATER-003 1616, body sequence page 7; BSB canvas 16; 1616, body sequence page 8; BSB canvas 17 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00016/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00017/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Sed ad propositum. Hoc Elementum esse menstruum Mundi, et trifarium divisum dicimus; nempe purum, purius, ac purissimum. Ex eius purissima substantia caeli creati sunt, purius etiam in aera resolutum est, purum aut simplex et grossum in sua sphaera remansit et ordinatione Divina, Natura operante, custodit omnem rem subtilem. Unum globum cum Terra efficit: habet etiam suum centrum in corde maris: unam axim polarem cum Terra habet, per quam omnes cursus et fontes aquarum exeunt, quae postea in magna flumina excrescunt. Per eiusmodi egressiones aquarum Terra conservatur a combustione, et cum hac humectatione deportatur semen universale per poros universae terrae, quod motus et calor faciunt.

English But to return to our subject: I say this element is the menstruum of the world, divided threefold into pure, purer and purest. The heavens were created from its purest substance. The purer part was dissolved into air, while the pure, or simple and gross, remained in its own sphere. By divine ordinance, with nature working, it guards everything subtle. It makes one globe with earth and has its own centre in the heart of the sea. It shares earth's polar axis, through which all streams and springs issue, later growing into great rivers. By such outflows earth is protected against burning, and through this moistening the universal seed is carried through the pores of the whole earth. Motion and heat bring this about.

SUL-WATER-004 1616, body sequence page 8; BSB canvas 17; 1616, body sequence page 9; BSB canvas 18 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00017/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00018/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Manifestum autem est, quod omnes cursus aquarum, in cor maris revertuntur, sed quo postea perveniunt, non omnibus constat: sunt enim aliqui, qui credunt omnia flumina, aquas, et scaturigines, quae cursum suum in mare habent, ex astris generari, qui cum aliam rationem, cur illis mare non excrescit, nesciunt, dicunt in corde maris has aquas consumi. Sed hoc in Natura locum non habet, sicut de pluviis ostendimus. Astra quidem causant, sed non generant; cum nihil generatur, nisi in suo simili eiusdem speciei: astra vero sunt ex igne et aere, quomodo igitur generabunt aquas? Et si hoc ita esset, quod quaedam stellae aquas generarent, tunc necessario et aliae terram generassent, tum et aliae alia Elementa: quoniam haec machina Mundi quatuor Elementis ita detinetur, ut unum aliud minima etiam particula non excedat, sed in aequilibrio virtutibus certant; alias si unum aliud excederet, ruina sequeretur. At tamen maneat, qui vult, in sua opinione; nobis ita in lumine Naturae datum est, quod istis quatuor Elementis eorum aequalitate a summo Creatore proportionata, haec machina Mundi conservatur, et unum aliud in sua operatione non excedit.

English It is evident that all streams return to the heart of the sea, but not everyone understands where they then go. Some believe that all rivers, waters and springs that flow into the sea are generated by the stars. Because they know no other reason why the sea does not grow larger, they say these waters are consumed in its heart. But this has no place in nature, as I have shown concerning rain. The stars indeed cause, but do not generate: nothing is generated except in its like, of the same species. The stars are composed of fire and air; how then will they generate

waters? If certain stars did generate waters, others would necessarily have generated earth, and others the other elements. For the four elements hold this fabric of the world together in such a way that none exceeds another by even the smallest particle. Their powers contend in balance. If one exceeded another, destruction would follow. Whoever wishes may retain his opinion. In nature's light it has been given to us to understand that this fabric of the world is preserved by these four elements, their balance proportioned by the supreme Creator, and that none exceeds another in its operation.⁷⁰

SUL-WATER-005 1616, body sequence page 9; BSB canvas 18; 1616, body sequence page 10; BSB canvas 19 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00018/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00019/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Sed aquae super fundamentis terrae, tanquam in dolio aliquo ab aeris motu continentur, et versus Poli Arctici ab eo constringuntur, quia non datur vacuum in mundo; hac de causa est in centro terrae ignis gehennalis caliditatis, quem Archeus naturae gubernat. Nam cum in principio Creationis mundi Deus Optimus Maximus ex illo confuso Chao in primis quintam essentiam Elementorum exaltavit, et facta est plus ultra, postea ignis purissimam substantiam ad locandam sanctissimam Maiestatem suam super omnia elevavit, ac in suis terminis posuit et firmavit. In centro Chai voluntate immensae sapientiae divinae, accensus est ignis ille qui postea illas aquas purissimas distillavit. Sed quia iam ignis ille purissimus, firmamentum cum throno Dei altissimi obtinuit, aquae sub illo manserunt, ac in caelos sub illo igne condensatae sunt, et ut fortius firmarentur, ignis iam grossior priore distillavit, causante semper illo igne centrali, qui in Sphaeram ignis sub aquis remansit, et sic aquae inter duos ignes in caelos congelatae et compressae sunt;

English The waters rest upon earth's foundations as in a vessel, contained by the motion of air and pressed by it towards the Arctic pole, for there is no vacuum in the world. For this reason a fire of infernal heat exists at earth's centre, governed by nature's Archeus. At the beginning of the world's creation, God the best and greatest first raised the quintessence of the elements from that confused chaos, and it passed beyond. Afterwards he lifted the purest substance of fire above everything, to establish his most holy majesty there, and set and fixed it within its bounds. At the centre of chaos, by the will of immeasurable divine wisdom, that fire was kindled which afterwards distilled those purest waters. But since the purest fire had now occupied the firmament with the throne of the Most High God, the waters remained beneath it and were condensed into heavens below that fire. To make them firmer, a fire grosser than the former then emerged by distillation—always through the agency of the central fire—and remained in the sphere of fire beneath the waters. Thus the waters were congealed and compressed into heavens between two fires.⁷¹

⁷⁰. Archeus names an organising, governing agency of nature. The statement that there is no vacuum and the polar circulation described below belong to this historical model.

⁷¹. The Latin distillavit and its following relative clause are compressed. The translation takes distillavit intransitively: a grosser fire issues by distillation and remains in the fiery sphere below the heavenly waters; the central fire continues the operation. The distinction of fiery locations guides the reading rather than an unmarked change to the Latin verb.

SUL-WATER-006 1616, body sequence page 10; BSB canvas 19; 1616, body sequence page 11; BSB canvas 20 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00019/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00020/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin sed ignis ille Centralis non cessavit, sed distillando ulterius, aquas etiam alias nimis puriores, in aerem resolvit, qui etiam sub Sphaera ignis, in Sphaeram propriam remansit, et ab ignis Elemento tanquam a fortissimo fundamento circumdatur; et sicut aquae caelorum non possunt transgredi ignem illum supercaelestem, ita ignis elementi non potest transgredi aquas caelorum, nec etiam aer potest transgredi et exaltari super ignis elementum: aqua vero cum terra in unum globum remansit, quoniam non habet locum in aere, excepta illa parte quod ignis in aerem resolvit propter fortificationem quotidianam huius machinae mundi. Si enim fuisset vacuum in aere, tunc aquae omnes distillassent, et in aerem resolverentur: sed quia iam aeris Sphaera plena est, quae semper ex aquis per continuum calorem centralem distillando adimpletur, ita quod caeterae aquae ab aeris compressione circa terram volvuntur, et cum terra mundi centrum tenent.

English The central fire did not cease. Continuing its distillation, it dissolved other exceedingly pure waters into air, which also remained in its own sphere beneath the sphere of fire, surrounded by the element of fire as by the strongest foundation. As the waters of the heavens cannot pass beyond the supercelestial fire, so the elemental fire cannot pass beyond the waters of the heavens. Nor can air pass and rise above the element of fire. Water and earth remained in a single globe, because water has no place in air except for the portion fire dissolves into air for the daily strengthening of this fabric of the world. Had there been a vacuum in air, all waters would have distilled and dissolved into it. But the sphere of air is already full, continually replenished by waters distilled through central heat. Thus the remaining waters are rolled around earth by air's compression and, together with earth, occupy the world's centre.

SUL-WATER-007 1616, body sequence page 11; BSB canvas 20; 1616, body sequence page 12; BSB canvas 21 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00020/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00021/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Et haec operatio fit de die in diem, et sic etiam hic mundus de die in diem fortificatur, et incorruptus mansurus est naturaliter, excepta Altissimi conditoris absoluta voluntate, quia ille ignis centralis non cessabit motu universali, et influentia caelestium virtutum accendi, ac aquas calefacere, nec aquae cessabunt resolvi in aerem, nec aer cessabit comprimere residuum aquarum cum terra, ac ita in centro continere, ut non possint moveri ex suo centro, et sic naturaliter hic mundus a summa sapientia divina factus est et continetur, et sic ad exemplum huius omnia in mundo naturaliter fieri necesse est. Hanc creationem huius machinae mundi, voluimus tibi elucidare propterea, ut scias quod quatuor elementa habent sympathiam naturalem cum superioribus, quia ex uno chao eadem sunt: sed a superioribus gubernantur sicut a dignioribus, inde et in hunc locum sublunarem haec obedientia devenit. Sed scias ista omnia a Philosopho naturaliter inventa esse, ut suo loco declarabitur.

English This operation takes place day after day, and the world is thereby strengthened daily. It will naturally remain uncorrupted except by the absolute will of the Most High Creator. Universal motion and the influence of heavenly powers will not cease to kindle that central fire and heat the waters; the waters will not cease to dissolve into air; nor

will air cease to compress the remaining waters with earth and keep them at the centre, so that they cannot be moved from it. Thus this world is naturally made and maintained by the highest divine wisdom, and everything within it must naturally happen after its example. I have wished to explain this creation of the world's fabric so that you may know that the four elements have a natural sympathy with the higher things, because both come from one chaos. But the higher things govern them as the worthier, and from there this obedience descends into the sublunary region. Know that a philosopher discovered all these things naturally, as will be explained in its place.

SUL-WATER-008 1616, body sequence page 12; BSB canvas 21; 1616, body sequence page 13; BSB canvas 22
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Latin Nunc ad propositum de aquarum cursibus fluxuque et refluxu maris, quomodo per axem polarem ab uno polo ad alium feruntur. Duo sunt Poli, unus Arcticus in parte superiori Septentrionali, alter vero Antarcticus sub terra in parte meridionali. Polus Arcticus habet vim magneticam attrahendi. Polus vero Antarcticus habet vim magneticam expellendi, quod nobis natura in magnete exemplum ostendit. Trahit igitur polus Arcticus aquas per axem, quae cum intraverunt, iterum per Poli Antartici axem erumpunt: et quia aer non permittit inaequalitatem, coguntur iterum ad Polum Arcticum centrum suum reverti, et ita continue cursum suum observare. In quo cursu a Polo Arctico ad Polum Antarcticum per medium seu axem mundi per poros terrae diffunduntur, et hoc secundum maius et minus scaturigines oriuntur, et postea in flumina excrescent congregientes, ac iterum illuc unde egressae sunt, revertuntur, et hoc motu universali incessabiliter fit. Has aquas aliqui, ut diximus, ignorantes motum universalem et polorum operationes, in corde maris consumi, sed ab astris generari dicunt, quae nihil materiale producunt nec generant, nisi quod virtutes imprimunt et spirituales influentias, quae tamen non dant pondus.

English Now to our subject: the courses of waters and the sea's ebb and flow, and how waters are carried along the polar axis from one pole to the other. There are two poles: the Arctic in the upper, northern region, and the Antarctic beneath earth in the southern region. The Arctic pole has the magnetic power of attraction; the Antarctic has the magnetic power of expulsion. Nature shows us an example in the magnet. The Arctic pole therefore draws waters through the axis. Having entered, they break out again through the Antarctic pole's axis. Since air does not permit inequality, they are compelled to return once more to the Arctic pole, their centre, and so maintain their continual course. In this passage from Arctic to Antarctic, through the world's middle or axis, they spread through earth's pores. Springs arise in greater or lesser quantities, meet, grow into rivers, and return once more to their starting place. This occurs ceaselessly through universal motion. As I have said, some people, ignorant of universal motion and the poles' operation, say these waters are consumed in the heart of the sea but generated by the stars. Yet stars produce or generate nothing material. They only impress powers and spiritual influences, which add no weight.

SUL-WATER-009 1616, body sequence page 13; BSB canvas 22; 1616, body sequence page 14; BSB canvas 23 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00022/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00023/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Aquae igitur non generantur, sed ex Centro maris per poros terrae in universum mundum egredi scito; ex istis fundamentis naturalibus Philosophi invenerunt varia instrumenta ac ductus aquarum et fontanas, cum scitur naturaliter aquas non altius ascendi posse, nisi ut egrediuntur; et nisi ita essent in natura, ars nequaquam potuisset, quia ars imitatur naturam, et quod in natura non est, per artem non succedit; aqua, ut diximus, non altius ascendit, nisi ut assumitur. Exemplum habes illud instrumentum, quo vinum ex dolio evocatur. Conclusive igitur scias, non ex astris scaturigines generari, et omnes exitus aquarum, sed ex Centro maris quo iterum recurrunt, ac sic motum continuum observant. Si enim hoc non esset, nihil omnino neque in terra neque super terram generaretur, imo ruina mundi sequeretur.

English Know, then, that waters are not generated but issue from the sea's centre through earth's pores into the whole world. From these natural foundations philosophers discovered various instruments, watercourses and fountains. It is naturally known that waters cannot rise higher than their point of departure. If this were not so in nature, art could by no means accomplish it, for art imitates nature, and what is absent from nature does not succeed through art. As I have said, water rises no higher than the level at which it is taken up. An example is the instrument used to draw wine from a cask. In conclusion, know that springs and all outflows of water are not generated by the stars, but come from the sea's centre, to which they return, thus maintaining a continuous motion. Without this, nothing at all would be generated in or upon earth; indeed, the world's destruction would follow.

SUL-WATER-010 1616, body sequence page 14; BSB canvas 23; 1616, body sequence page 15; BSB canvas 24 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00023/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00024/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Verum ne obiiciatur quod in mari omnes aquae salsae sunt et aquae scaturiginum dulces, rationem esse scito, quod aqua illa per poros terrae distillatur et multa milliaria per angusta loca ac per arenas transiens amissa salsedine dulcoratur, ad cuius exemplum Cisternae inventae sunt. Sunt etiam in aliquibus locis pori et meatus maiores largiores, per quos salsa aqua erumpit, unde postea salis fodinae, salis fontanae habentur, ut Hallae in Germania. In aliquibus etiam locis calido constringuntur et sal in arenis relinquitur, aqua vero in alios poros sudat, ut in Polonia Wieliciae et Bochniae. Sic etiam cum aquae per loca calida sulphurea continuo ardentia transeunt, incalescunt, unde Thermae oriuntur; sunt enim in visceribus terrae loca in quibus natura mineram sulphuream distillat, separatque, ubi ab igne centrali illa accenditur. Per haec loca ardentia aqua currens secundum propinquitatem et remotionem magis minusve incalescit, et sic in superficiem terrae erumpit, ac sulphuris saporem retinet, sicut omne iusculum a sua decoctione carnum. Eodem modo fit cum aqua per loca mineralia, sive cuprea, sive aluminosa transiens, eorum saporem acquirit.

English To the objection that all seawater is salty while spring water is fresh, know the reason: the water is distilled through earth's pores. Passing many miles through narrow places and sands, it loses its saltiness and becomes sweet. Cisterns were invented after this example. In some places there are also larger, wider pores and passages through

which salty water breaks out, giving rise to salt workings and brine springs, as at Halle in Germany. Elsewhere waters are compressed by heat and leave salt in the sands, while water sweats into other pores, as at Wieliczka and Bochnia in Poland. Likewise, waters become hot when they pass through sulphurous places that are continually burning; hence hot springs arise. In earth's depths there are places where nature distils and separates sulphurous ore, which is kindled there by the central fire. Water flowing through these burning places is heated more or less according to its nearness or distance. It then breaks out upon earth's surface, retaining a taste of sulphur, just as every broth retains the taste of the meat cooked in it. The same occurs when water passes through mineral places, whether copper-bearing or aluminous, and acquires their taste.⁷²

SUL-WATER-011 1616, body sequence page 15; BSB canvas 24; 1616, body sequence page 16; BSB canvas 25
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Latin Talis igitur est distillator conditor omnium rerum, in cuius manu hoc distillatorium est, ad cuius exemplum distillationes omnes a Philosophis inventae sunt, quod ipsemet altissimus Deus ac misericors, absque dubio hominibus inspiravit: qui poterit, quando erit sancta eius voluntas, aut ignem centalem extinguere, aut vas frangere, et erit omnium finis. Sed cum eius bonitas in melius tendit, exaltabit aliquando sanctissimam Maiestatem suam, et ignem illum omnium purissimum, qui aquis caelorum in firmamentum est, altius extollet dabitque gradum fortiolem igni Centrali, ut et omnes aquae in aera eleventur, et calcinabuntur terra; ut ita ignis, consumpto omni impuro, reddet subtiles, circulatas in aere aquas, purificatae terrae, atque sic multo nobiliorem mundum, si alias licet philosophari, efficiet.

English Such a distiller is the maker of all things, who holds this still in his hand. Philosophers invented all distillations after its example, undoubtedly inspired by the Most High and merciful God himself. Whenever it is his holy will, he can either extinguish the central fire or break the vessel, and everything will end. But since his goodness tends towards better things, one day he will exalt his most holy majesty, raise higher that purest fire which gives firmness to the waters of the heavens, and grant the central fire a stronger degree, so that all waters rise into air and earth is calcined. Thus, after consuming everything impure, fire will return the subtle waters circulated in air to the purified earth, and so make a much nobler world—if one may philosophise about such matters.

SUL-WATER-012 1616, body sequence page 16; BSB canvas 25; 1616, body sequence page 17; BSB canvas 26
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Latin Sciant ergo omnes huius artis inquisitores, quod terra et aqua unum globum habent, et omnia simul faciunt, quia sunt Elementa tangibilia, in quibus alia duo occulta operantur. Ignis conservat terram ne submergatur, vel dissolvatur; aer

⁷² The Polish places are Wieliczka and Bochnia, rendered in their recognisable modern forms from the historical Latin place-names. Their salt deposits serve the argument about water losing salt underground.

conservat ignem, ne extinguatur; aqua conservat terram ne comburatur. Haec ad propositum nostrum visum est nobis utile describere, ut studiosi sciant in quibus fundamenta Elementorum consistent, et quomodo Philosophi eorum actus contrarios observaverunt, ignem cum terra, aerem cum aqua copulantes, licet quando aliquid nobile voluerunt, ignem in aqua decoxerunt, animadvertentes quod sanguis unius altero purior, sicut et lacryma purior est urina. Sufficiat igitur tibi quod diximus: Elementum aquae sperma ac menstruum mundi esse, tum et receptaculum seminis.

English Let all seekers of this art therefore know that earth and water have one globe and do everything together. They are tangible elements, in which the other two work unseen. Fire preserves earth from being submerged or dissolved; air preserves fire from extinction; water preserves earth from burning. I have thought it useful to describe these matters for our purpose, so that students may know the foundations of the elements and how philosophers observed their contrary actions, joining fire with earth and air with water. Yet when they wished to obtain something noble, they boiled fire in water, observing that one blood is purer than another, just as a tear is purer than urine. Let what I have said suffice: the element water is the sperm and menstruum of the world, and the receptacle of seed.

On the Element of Air

DE ELEMENTO AERIS.

SUL-AIR-001 1616, body sequence page 17; BSB canvas 26; 1616, body sequence page 18; BSB canvas 27; 1616, body sequence page 19; BSB canvas 28 ·
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Latin DE ELEMENTO AERIS.

Aer est elementum integrum dignissimum in sua qualitate, extra leve et invisibile, intus vero grave, visibile et fixum. Est calidum et humidum, temperatur igne, est dignius terra et aqua. Volatile quid est, sed fixatur: et quando fixum est, penetrabile reddit omne corpus. Ex eius purissima substantia creati sunt Spiritus vitales animalium; minus purum in aeris propriam Sphaeram elevatum est; residuum vero pars eius grossior remansit in aqua, quae cum aqua circulatur sicut ignis cum terra, quia amici sunt. Dignissimum est, ut diximus, et illud est verus locus seminis omnium rerum. In illo ita semen imaginatur sicut in viro, quod postea motu circulativo proicitur in sperma suum. Habet hoc Elementum formam integritatis, ad distribuendum semen in matrices per sperma et menstruum mundi: in illo etiam est Spiritus vitalis omnis creaturae, per omnia viventis, penetrantis et constringentis semen aliis Elementis sicuti vir uxoribus. Ille nutrit ea, ille impraegnat, ille conservat ea; et docet hoc Indies experientia, quod hoc Elemento non solum Mineralia, animalia vel vegetabilia, verum etiam alia Elementa vivunt. Videmus enim omnes aquas putrefieri, ac sordescere, si non habent recentem aerem: Ignis quoque extinguitur, si illi admittitur aer. Inde sciunt Alchymistae ignem per aerem distribuere in gradus, et secundum mensuram aeris registra sua ordinant. Terrae quoque pori conservantur aere. In summa tota structura mundi aere conservatur, etiam in animalibus. Homo necatur cui admittitur aer, et caetera. In orbe nihil cresceret, si non esset vis aeris penetrantis et alterantis, attrahentisque secum nutrimentum multiplicativum. In hoc Elemento est imaginatum semen virtute ignis, quod constringit menstruum mundi, illa vi occulta, ut in arboribus et herbis, cum per poros terrae ac spiritualis caloris exit sperma cum semine, et virtus aeris in proportionem constringit illud, et congelat guttatim, et sic de die in diem, de gutta in guttam, crescendo arbores magnae eriguntur, sicut in libro 12 Tractatum tractatum est.

English On the Element of Air

Air is an integral element, most worthy in its quality, outwardly light and invisible, inwardly heavy, visible and fixed. It is hot and moist, tempered by fire, and worthier than earth and water. It is volatile, yet can be fixed. Once fixed, it renders every body penetrable. The vital spirits of animals were created from its purest substance. Its less pure part was raised into air's own sphere, while the remainder, its grosser part, remained in water and circulates with it as fire does with earth, for they are friends. As I have said, it is most worthy and is the true place of the seed of all things. Seed is imagined in it as in a male and afterwards, through circulating motion, is cast into its own sperm. This element possesses its integral form for distributing seed into wombs through the sperm and menstruum of the world. In it too is the vital spirit of every creature, living through all things, penetrating them and binding seed

to the other elements as a husband to wives. It nourishes, impregnates and preserves them. Daily experience teaches that not only minerals, animals and plants, but the other elements too, live through it. We see all waters putrefy and grow foul if they lack fresh air. Fire too goes out if air is taken from it. Hence alchemists know how to distinguish degrees of fire by air and arrange their furnace vents according to the quantity of air. Earth's pores are also preserved by air. In sum, the whole world's structure, including animals, is preserved by it. A human being deprived of air is killed, and so forth. Nothing would grow in the world without air's power to penetrate, alter and draw along multiplying nourishment. In this element seed is imagined by fire's power, and through its hidden force it binds the menstruum of the world. In trees and plants, for example, sperm with seed comes out through earth's pores and spiritual heat; air's power binds it in proportion and congeals it drop by drop. Thus great trees rise, growing day after day, drop after drop, as was explained in the book of Twelve Treatises.

SUL-AIR-002 1616, body sequence page 19; BSB canvas 28; 1616, body sequence page 20; BSB canvas 29 ·
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Latin In hoc Elemento sunt omnes res integrae, per imaginationem ignis, et est plenum virtutis divinae. In illo namque inclusus est Spiritus Altissimi, qui ante creationem ferebatur supra aquas, teste sacra Scriptura, et volavit super pennas ventorum. Si igitur ita est sicuti est, quod Spiritus Domini in illo ferebatur, quid dubitas, quod de virtute sua divina in illo reliquit? Nam hic Monarcha solet ornare habitacula sua, ornavit enim hoc Elementum Spiritu vitali omnis creaturae. In illo namque est semen omnium rerum dispersarum, cui a creatione statim vis illa magnetica, ut supra diximus, a summo opifice inclusa est, quam si non haberet, non posset attrahere quicquam de nutrimento, sed sic semen in sua parva quantitate relinqueretur, nec cresceret nec multiplicaretur; sed sicut lapis magnetis trahit ad se ferrum durum, ad exemplum poli Arctici trahentis ad se aquas ut in Elemento Aquae scripsimus, sic aer per magnetem vegetabilem, quod in semine est, trahit ad se nutrimentum menstrui mundi, id est aquae. Ista omnia fiunt aere, cum ille est dux aquarum, eiusque vis inclusa est occulta in omni semine ad attrahendum humidum radicale, et haec virtus est, ut supra diximus, in omni semine semper pars illa 280, ut in tractatu 12 Tractatum tibi ostendimus.

English In this element all things are whole through fire's imagination, and it is full of divine power. Enclosed within it is the Spirit of the Most High, who, as sacred Scripture testifies, moved over the waters before creation and flew upon the wings of the winds. If, as is indeed the case, the Lord's Spirit was borne in it, why doubt that he left some of his divine power there? For this monarch is accustomed to adorn his dwelling places. He adorned this element with every creature's vital spirit. In it lies the dispersed seed of all things, into which the supreme maker enclosed that magnetic force, mentioned above, immediately at creation. Without that force it could draw no nourishment. It would remain in its small quantity, neither growing nor multiplying. But as the lodestone draws hard iron to itself, after the example of the Arctic pole

drawing waters as I described under water, so air, through the vegetable magnet in seed, draws to itself the nourishment of the world's menstruum, that is, water. All this is done by air, the guide of waters. Its power is secretly enclosed in every seed to draw radical moisture. As I have said, this power in every seed is always that two-hundred-and-eightieth part which I showed you in the Twelve Treatises.⁷³

SUL-AIR-003 1616, body sequence page 20; BSB canvas 29; 1616, body sequence page 21; BSB canvas 30 ·
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Latin Si igitur aliquis vellet esse bonus plantator arborum, animadvertendum est illi, ut cuspidem attractivum versus partem Septentrionalem vergat, sic nunquam frustrabitur labore. Quoniam sicut Polus Arcticus aquas, ita punctum verticale semen trahunt ad se, et quilibet cuspis attractivus correspondet illis, et habes exemplum in omni ligno cuius cuspis attractivus naturaliter ad punctum verticale tendit, et trahitur ab illo. Nam fiat lignum quodcunque aequaliter elaboratum, si vis scire quis cuspis est superior, pone illud in aquam, ac submergatur, extra tamen suam longitudinem, videbis semper cuspidem illum prius ex aquis emergere, quam eius oppositam partem, nescit enim natura errare in suo officio. De quibus latius in Harmonia de vi magnetica, quamvis de magnete facile is poterit, cui natura metallorum cognita est, tractabitur; hic nos dixisse sufficiat, Elementum hoc esse dignissimum in quo est semen et spiritus vitalis seu domicilium animae omnis creaturae.

English If someone wishes to be a good planter of trees, he must take care to turn the attractive tip towards the north. In this way his labour will never be disappointed. For as the Arctic pole draws waters, so the point above draws seed to itself, and every attractive tip corresponds to them. You have an example in every piece of wood, whose attractive tip naturally tends towards the point above and is drawn by it. If a piece of wood has been worked evenly and you wish to know which is its upper tip, place it in water and submerge it beyond its length. You will always see that tip emerge from the water before its opposite end. Nature cannot err in her duty. This will be discussed more fully in the Harmony, on magnetic force—although someone who knows the nature of metals will readily be able to speak about the magnet. Here let it suffice that I have called this element most worthy: it contains the seed and vital spirit, or dwelling of the soul, of every creature.

⁷³ The 1616 text gives *pars illa* 280, “that two-hundred-and-eightieth part,” and refers back to the Twelve Treatises. The selected 1606 witness of Treatise III, printed p. 98, instead gives 8200 for the seminal point’s proportion. Both readings are preserved in this edition; the discrepancy is not silently harmonised or converted into a modern concentration or measure.

On the Element of Fire

DE ELEMENTO IGNIS.

SUL-FIRE-001 1616, body sequence page 21; BSB canvas 30; 1616, body sequence page 22; BSB canvas 31 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00030/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00031/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin DE ELEMENTO IGNIS.

Ignis est elementum purissimum et omnium dignissimum plenum adhaerentis unctuosae corrosivitatibus, penetrantis, digerentis, corrodentis maximi adhaerentis, extra visibile, intus vero invisibile, fixissimum, est calidum et siccum, et temperatur terra. Eius omnium purissima substantia et essentia, cum Throno Divinae Maiestatis, in creatione primum elevata est, quando aquae caelorum firmatae sunt, ut in Elemento aquae diximus; ex minus purissima eius substantia Angeli creati sunt; ex minus puriori cum purissimo aere mixta, luminaria et stellae creatae sunt; minus purum adhuc in Sphaeram ad concludendum et sublevandum caelos erectum est; impura vero et unctuosa in centrum terrae, ad continuandum motus operationem a summo Creatore sapientissimo relictā et inclusa est, quam nos gehennam vocamus. Omnes hi ignes divisi quidem sunt, sed habent ad invicem sympathiam naturalem.

English On the Element of Fire

Fire is the purest and worthiest of all elements, full of adhering, unctuous corrosiveness: penetrating, digesting, corroding and strongly adhering. Outwardly visible, inwardly invisible, it is most fixed. It is hot and dry, tempered by earth. Its purest substance and essence was raised first at creation, together with the throne of divine majesty, when the waters of the heavens were made firm, as I said under water. Angels were created from its less pure substance. From the still less pure, mixed with the purest air, the lights and stars were created. A less pure portion again was raised into a sphere to enclose and uphold the heavens. Its impure, unctuous part was left and enclosed at earth's centre by the supremely wise Creator to continue the operation of motion. We call this part gehenna. All these fires are indeed divided, yet have a natural sympathy with one another.

SUL-FIRE-002 1616, body sequence page 22; BSB canvas 31; 1616, body sequence page 23; BSB canvas 32 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00031/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00032/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Hoc elementum est omnium quietissimum ac simile curri: cum trahitur currit, cum non trahitur stat quiete. Inest etiam omnibus rebus imperceptibiliter. In illo sunt rationes vitales et intellectus, quae distribuuntur in prima infusione vitae humanae, et hae dicuntur anima rationalis, qua sola homo a caeteris animalibus differt, et Deo assimilatur. Haec anima est ex illo purissimo igne elementalī, in spiritum vitalem divinitus infusa, propter quam homo post creationem omnium rerum in particularem mundum seu microcosmum creatus est. In hoc subiecto omnium rerum Creator Deus, sedem et Maiestatem suam posuit, sicut in purissimo et quietissimo subiecto, quod a sola voluntate ac immensa sapientia divina gubernatur. Propterea abhorret Deus omnem impuritatem: nihil sordidum, compositum, maculatum appropinquare potest Deo. Ideo nullus mortalium Deum videre nec accedere naturaliter potest: nam ignis ille qui est in circumferentia

divinitatis, in quo deportatur sedes et Maiestas Altissimi, est ita extensus, ut nullus oculus illum penetrare possit, quoniam ignis non patitur accedere compositum: ignis enim omnis compositi mors est et separatio.

English This element is the most still of all. It resembles a cart: when drawn it runs; when not drawn it stands quietly. It is also present imperceptibly in all things. In it are the vital powers of reason and understanding, distributed at the first infusion of human life. These are called the rational soul, by which alone the human being differs from other animals and resembles God. This soul comes from that purest elemental fire and is divinely infused into the vital spirit. Because of it, after the creation of all things, the human being was created as a particular world or microcosm. In this subject God, the creator of all things, placed his seat and majesty, as in the purest and most tranquil subject, governed solely by divine will and immeasurable wisdom. God therefore abhors all impurity. Nothing filthy, compounded or stained can approach him. Thus no mortal can naturally see or approach God. For the fire surrounding divinity, in which the seat and majesty of the Most High are borne, extends so far that no eye can penetrate it. Fire does not permit a compound to approach, since fire is the death and separation of every compound.

SUL-FIRE-003 1616, body sequence page 23; BSB canvas 32; 1616, body sequence page 24; BSB canvas 33 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00032/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00033/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Quietissimum subiectum illud esse diximus, quoniam est, alias sequeretur, quod et cogitare absurdum est, Deum quiescere non posse; est enim quietissimi silentii, plus quam mens humana imaginare potest. Habes exemplum in silice in quo ignis est, et tamen non sentitur, nec apparet, donec motu excitatur et accenditur in illo ut appareat; ita ignis ille in quo locata est sanctissima Maiestas Creatoris nostri, non movetur nisi propria voluntate Altissimi excitetur, et sic deportatur quo est sancta Voluntas eius. Fit enim voluntate supremi conditoris motus vehementissimus et terribilis. Habes exemplum, quando aliquis Monarcha huius mundi in sua pompa sedet, qualis circa illum quies, quale silentium? Et etiamsi ex suis aulicis aliquis movetur, motus tantum unius et alterius particularis est, qui non consideratur. Sed quando Dominus ipse movetur, fit rumor et motus universalis, tum omnis assistentia movetur cum illo. Quid igitur quando supremus ille Monarcha Rex Regum ac Conditor omnium rerum, ad cuius exemplum principes mundi constituuntur in terris, movet auctoritatem, qualis motus, qualis tremor, quando circa illum movetur tota assistentia caelestis exercitus?

English I have called this the most tranquil subject, because it is. Otherwise it would follow—an absurd thought even to entertain—that God could not rest. It possesses a stillness of silence beyond what the human mind can imagine. You have an example in flint: fire is present in it, yet is neither felt nor seen until motion stirs and kindles it into visibility. Likewise the fire in which our Creator's most holy majesty is placed does not move unless stirred by the Most High's own will. It is thereby borne wherever his holy will directs. At the supreme Creator's will, its motion becomes exceedingly violent and terrible.

Consider a monarch of this world seated in state. What quiet surrounds him, what silence! Even if one of his courtiers moves, it is merely the particular movement of one or another person and is disregarded. But when the lord himself moves, a general stir and movement arises: his whole company moves with him. What then happens when that supreme monarch, king of kings and maker of all things—after whose example earthly princes are appointed—sets his authority in motion? What movement, what trembling, when the entire attendant heavenly host moves about him!

SUL-FIRE-004 1616, body sequence page 24; BSB canvas 33; 1616, body sequence page 25; BSB canvas 34; 1616, body sequence page 26; BSB canvas 35; 1616, body sequence page 27; BSB canvas 36 ·
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Latin Sed quaeret aliquis quomodo ista scimus, cum caelestia ab humano intellectu abscondita sunt. Quibus respondemus, omnibus Philosophis ista manifesta esse, imo ipsa incomprehensibilis sapientia illis inspiravit omnia ad exemplum naturae creata esse, et ex illis arcanis naturam retractum habere ac operari, nihilque fieri in terris, nisi ad exemplum caelestis monarchiae, quod ex Angelorum variis officiis habetur. Sic etiam non nascitur nec generatur quicquam, nisi naturaliter. Omnes humanae inventiones, imo et artificia, quae aut sunt aut erunt, non nisi ex fundamentis naturae proveniunt. Voluit Altissimus Creator omnia naturalia homini manifestare, propterea et ipsa Caelestia naturaliter facta nobis ostendit; ex quibus ut eo melius eius absoluta ac incomprehensibilis potentia et sapientia cognosceretur, quae omnia Philosophi in lumine naturae sicut in speculo videre habent, propterea hanc scientiam non auri vel argenti cupiditate, sed cognitione non solum omnium rerum Naturalium, sed et ipsius Creatoris potentia magni aestimarunt, et de his quam parcellissime et non nisi figurative loqui voluerunt, ne mysteria divina per quae natura elucidatur, indignis patefiant, quod tu si teipsum scire noveris, et non es durae cervicis, facile comprehendere possis, qui ad similitudinem maioris mundi, imo ad ipsius Dei imaginem creatus es. Habes in tuo corpore Anatomiam totius mundi, habes in firmamentum quintam essentiam quatuor Elementorum, ex Chao spermatum in matricem extractam, et in cutem, plus ultra, constrictam, habes purissimam sanguinem loco ignis, in quo sedes animae, vice Regis, spiritu vitali locata est; habes cor loco terrae, ubi ignis centralis continuo operatur, et hanc machinam Microcosmi in suo esse continet. Habes polum Arcticum, os; habes alvum antarcticum, et omnia membra caelestibus correspondent, de quibus in Harmonia nostra aliquando latius relinquemus, in Capitulo de Astronomia, ubi scripsimus quomodo Astronomia ars facilis naturalis, quomodo aspectus planetarum et stellarum causant, et quare ex aspectibus de pluviis et aliis eventibus prognosticatur, quod hic longum esset recensere, et omnia ista sunt sibi concatenata, et naturaliter fiunt. Deitatem tantum aliqua adimplere, quod veteres omiserunt, diligenti studioso huius arcani, voluimus, ut illi tanto clarius incomprehensibilis potentia Altissimi Dei ad Cor perveniat, et ille illum eo ardentius amet et adoret.

English But someone will ask how we know these things, since heavenly matters are hidden from human understanding. I answer that they are manifest to all philosophers. Indeed, incomprehensible wisdom itself inspired them to recognise that all things were created after nature's example, that nature draws her pattern from these mysteries and works accordingly, and that nothing happens on earth except after the

example of the heavenly monarchy. This is evident from the angels' various offices. In the same way, nothing is born or generated except naturally. All human discoveries, indeed all arts that exist or will exist, arise only from nature's foundations.

The Most High Creator wished to make all natural things manifest to humanity. He therefore showed us that heavenly things themselves were made naturally, so that through them his absolute and incomprehensible power and wisdom might be better known. Philosophers may see all this in nature's light as in a mirror. They therefore valued this science highly for knowledge, both of all natural things and of the Creator's own power, rather than from greed for gold or silver. They wished to speak of these things sparingly and only figuratively, lest divine mysteries, through which nature is illuminated, be revealed to the unworthy. You may readily understand this if you have learned to know yourself and are not stubborn, for you were created in the likeness of the greater world, indeed in the image of God himself. In your body you have the anatomy of the whole world. As a firmament you have the quintessence of the four elements, drawn from the chaos of sperm into the womb and bound into skin, its further boundary. You have the purest blood in place of fire, in which the soul's seat, as viceroy, is established in the vital spirit. You have the heart in place of earth, where the central fire continually works and maintains this fabric of the microcosm in existence. You have the mouth as Arctic pole and the belly as Antarctic. Every member corresponds to heavenly things.

I shall leave a fuller account of this in my *Harmony*, in the chapter on astronomy. There I have written how astronomy is an easy, natural art; how the aspects of planets and stars cause effects; and why rain and other events are predicted from aspects. It would take too long to recount it here. All these things are linked together there and come about naturally. Concerning divinity, I have wished only to supply the diligent student of this secret with some things the ancients omitted, so that the Most High God's incomprehensible power may reach his heart more clearly and he may love and worship him more fervently.^{74,75}

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Latin Sciat ergo inquisitor huius sanctae Scientiae quod anima in homine mundo minori, Microcosmo, Dei Creatoris sui locum tenens, seu vice Rex est, quae in

⁷⁴ The human body is read as a microcosm: skin or boundary, blood, heart, mouth and belly correspond to the greater world's structures. The parenthetical plus ultra is compressed; its sense is a further boundary, not a geographical motto newly inserted by the editor.

⁷⁵ The printed transition *Deitatem tantum aliqua adimplere* is grammatically compressed. The translation takes it as a transition to supplying a few things concerning divinity which earlier writers omitted. *Mens* and *anima* are kept distinct as mind and soul in the following argument.

spiritu vitali in sanguine purissimo locata est. Illa gubernat mentem, mens vero corpus; quando anima aliquid concipit, mens omnia scit, et mentem omnia membra intelligunt, et parent menti ac expectant cum desiderio adimplere voluntatem. Corpus enim nihil scit: quicquid in corpore fortitudinis sive motus est, mens facit ista, corpus tantum est menti sicut instrumenta alicuius artificis. Anima autem qua homo a caeteris animalibus differt, illa operatur in corpore, sed maiorem operationem habet extra corpus, quoniam absolute extra corpus dominatur, et his differt ab animalibus, quae tantum mentem et non animam deitatis habent.

English Let the seeker of this sacred science therefore know that in the human being, the lesser world or microcosm, the soul holds the place of its creator God: it is his viceroy, placed in the vital spirit in the purest blood. It governs the mind, and the mind governs the body. When the soul conceives something, the mind knows it all. All members understand and obey the mind and eagerly await the fulfilment of its will. The body knows nothing. Whatever strength or movement is in the body is effected by the mind. To the mind the body is merely like an artist's instruments. The soul, however, by which the human being differs from other animals, works within the body but has a greater operation outside it, since outside the body it rules absolutely. In this it differs from animals, which have only mind and not a soul of divinity.

SUL-FIRE-006 1616, body sequence page 28; BSB canvas 37; 1616, body sequence page 29; BSB canvas 38 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00037/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00038/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Sic quoque Deus et conditor rerum dominus et Deus noster operatur in hunc mundum ea, quae ad mundi necessaria pertinent, et in his includitur mundo, unde Deum ubique esse credendum. Excluditur autem illa sua immensa sapientia extra corpus mundi qua operatur extra illum, et alia multo altiora imaginatur quam corpus mundi concipere potest, et ista sunt contra, id est extra naturam, solius Dei secreta, sicut est exemplum in anima, quae extra corpus multa profundissima imaginatur et hisce assimilatur Deo, quibus extra suum mundum operatur extra naturam, licet et ista sunt adhuc sicut candela accensa erga meridianam lucem, quoniam anima imaginatur sed non exequitur nisi in mente, Deus vero omnia eodem momento quo imaginatur efficit; sicut anima imaginatur esse Romae vel alibi quidquid sit in ictu oculi, sed mente tantum, Deus vero talia essentialiter facit, qui omnipotens est. Non est ergo Deus inclusus mundo, nisi ut anima corpori, separatam habet suam absolutam potestatem, sic etiam anima cuiuscunque corporis est, absolutam habet et separatam potentiam alia facere quam corpus concipere potest, maximam ergo habet potestatem in corpus si vult, alias frustra esset nostra Philosophia. Ex his igitur discere cognoscere Deum, et scies quibus differt Creator a Creatis. Tu ipse maiora concipere poteris, cum iam a nobis portam apertam habes.

English So too God, the maker of things, our lord and God, works within this world those things required for the world's necessities. In these he is contained within the world, whence we must believe God to be everywhere. Yet in his immeasurable wisdom he also stands outside the world's body. Through that wisdom he operates beyond it and imagines other things far higher than the world's body can conceive. These are contrary to, or outside, nature, secrets of God alone.

The soul offers an example: outside the body it imagines many most profound things. In these it resembles God, working beyond its own world and outside nature. Yet even this is like a lit candle compared with noon light, since the soul imagines but accomplishes only in the mind, whereas God effects everything in the very moment he imagines it. Thus the soul imagines itself at Rome or elsewhere in the blink of an eye, but only in mind. God, who is almighty, does such things in actual being. God is therefore enclosed in the world only as soul is in body; he has his own separate and absolute power. Likewise the soul of any body has an absolute, separate power to do other things than the body can conceive. It therefore has the greatest power over the body if it wills; otherwise our philosophy would be vain. From this learn to know God, and you will understand how the Creator differs from created things. You yourself can conceive greater things, now that I have opened the door to you.

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Latin Sed ne nobis hic tractatus excrescat, ad propositum accedamus. Diximus supra, Ignis Elementum quietissimum esse, quod motu excitatur, quam excitationem noverunt viri sapientes. Omnem generationem et eiusdem corruptionem Philosopho necesse est scire, cui non solum Creatio caeli manifesta est, sed etiam omnium rerum compositio et commixtio. Sed licet omnia sciunt, non tamen omnia possunt. Scimus quidem compositionem hominis in omnibus qualitatibus, animam tamen infundere non possumus, quoniam hoc mysterium est solius Dei, et eiusmodi infinitis misteriis superat omnia, cum ista sunt extra naturam, ista non sunt adhuc in dispositione naturae: natura non prius operatur, nisi quando illi materia porrigitur. Prima materia a Creatore, secunda a Philosopho. In operatione vero Philosophi natura habet excitare ignem, qui a Creatore occulte in centrum cuiuslibet rei inclusus est; talis ignis excitatio fit per velle naturae, aliquando per velle sagacis artificis naturam disponentis; naturaliter enim omnes impuritates et pollutiones rerum purgantur igne. Omne compositum solvitur igne: sicut aqua lavat et purgat omnes res imperfectas quae non sunt fixae; sic ignis purgat omnes res fixas et per ignem perficiuntur. Sicut aqua omne solutum coniungit, ita ignis omne coniunctum separat, et quod suae naturae et proprietatis est, optime purgat et augmentat, non quidem in quantitate sed in virtute agit hoc Elementum miris modis occulte in alia Elementa ac in omnes res; sicut enim anima est ex illo purissimo, ita vegetabilis est ex Elementalī quod a natura gubernatur.

English But lest this treatise grow too long, let us return to our purpose. I said above that the element fire is most still and is stirred by motion. Wise men have known this awakening. A philosopher must know every generation and its corruption. Not only the creation of heaven but the composition and mixture of all things is manifest to him. Yet although philosophers know all things, they cannot do all things. We indeed know the composition of a human being in all its qualities, but cannot infuse a soul. That mystery belongs to God alone. Through infinitely many such mysteries he surpasses everything, since these things are outside nature and do not yet lie within nature's disposition. Nature does not begin to work until matter is supplied to her: first matter by

the Creator, second matter by the philosopher. In the philosopher's operation, nature must awaken the fire which the Creator secretly enclosed in the centre of each thing. Such awakening occurs through nature's will, or sometimes through the will of an ingenious artist who disposes nature. For all impurities and defilements of things are naturally purged by fire. Every compound is dissolved by fire. As water washes and purges all imperfect, unfixed things, so fire purges all fixed things, which are perfected through it. As water joins everything dissolved, so fire separates everything joined. It best purges and augments what belongs to its own nature and property, not in quantity but in power.

This element works secretly in wonderful ways upon the other elements and upon all things. As the soul comes from its purest portion, so the vegetative power comes from the elemental fire governed by nature.

SUL-FIRE-008 1616, body sequence page 30; BSB canvas 39; 1616, body sequence page 31; BSB canvas 40 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00039/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00040/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Agit hoc Elementum in Centrum cuiuslibet rei, hoc modo: natura dat motum, motus excitat aerem, aer ignem, ignis vero separat, purgat, digerit, colorat, et maturescere facit omne semen, maturumque expellit per sperma in loca et matrices, loca pura vel impura, calida magis aut minus, sicca vel humida et secundum dispositionem matricis, seu loci variae res producuntur in terra, cuius etiam in libello 12 Tractatum de matricibus mentio facta est, quot loca tot matrices esse. Ita conditor omnium rerum Altissimus Deus omnes res constituit et ordinavit, quod una contrariatur alteri, et tamen ut mors unius sit vita alterius: quod unum producit alterum consumit, et aliud ex hoc et quiddam nobilius naturaliter producitur, ac hisce conservatur aequalitas Elementorum et sic compositi.

English This element acts at the centre of each thing as follows: nature gives motion; motion stirs air; air stirs fire. Fire separates, purges, digests, colours and ripens every seed. Once ripe, it drives the seed through sperm into places and wombs: places pure or impure, hotter or less hot, dry or moist. Various things are produced in earth according to the disposition of the womb or place. I also mentioned wombs in the book of Twelve Treatises: there are as many wombs as places. The Most High God, maker of all things, established and ordered everything so that one thing opposes another, yet the death of one is the life of another. What one produces, another consumes, and from this something else, naturally nobler, is produced. Thus the balance of the elements, and therefore of the compound, is preserved.

SUL-FIRE-009 1616, body sequence page 31; BSB canvas 40; 1616, body sequence page 32; BSB canvas 41 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00040/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00041/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Omnium rerum praesertim viventium separatio mors naturalis est, propterea naturaliter hominem mori oportet; quia cum homo ex quatuor Elementis est compositus, subest separationi, cum omne compositum separatur naturaliter. Sed haec separatio humanae compositionis, in die Iudicii tantum fieri debuit, nam in paradiso homo immortalis erat, quod omnes Theologi, et ipsa Sacra scriptura

testatur; rationem tamen sufficientem immortalitatis nullus Philosophus hucusque ostendit, quam huius scientiae sanctae inquisitori scire convenit, ut videre possit, quomodo ista omnia naturaliter fiunt, et facillime intelligi possunt. Verum et verissimum est, omne compositum huius mundi corruptioni subesse ac separari posse, quae separatio in regno animali mors appellatur; homo autem cum etiam ex quatuor Elementis compositus et creatus est, quomodo immortalis esse poterat? Hoc naturaliter fieri credere difficile est, imo supra naturale aliquid hucusque habetur. Deus tamen Philosophis viris bonis ante complura saecula hoc naturaliter esse inspiravit, quod tu a nobis sic accipe.

English The separation of all things, especially living things, is natural death. A human being must therefore die naturally. Being composed of four elements, the human being is subject to separation, since every compound is naturally separated. Yet this separation of the human composition should have happened only on the day of judgment, for in paradise the human being was immortal, as all theologians and sacred Scripture itself testify. No philosopher, however, has yet shown a sufficient reason for that immortality. The seeker of this sacred science should know it, so as to see how all these things happen naturally and can be understood very easily. It is true, utterly true, that every compound of this world is subject to corruption and can be separated. In the animal kingdom this separation is called death. Since the human being too was composed and created from four elements, how could he have been immortal? It is hard to believe this could occur naturally; indeed, it has hitherto been considered supernatural. Yet many ages ago God inspired good philosophers to understand that it was natural. Receive this account from me.

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Latin Paradisus erat et est locus talis a summo conditore rerum ex veris Elementis non Elementatis sed purissimis temperatis, in summa perfectione anatisatis creatus, et omnia quaecunque in Paradiso sunt, ex iisdem Elementis creata et incorrupta esse; ibi etiam homo creatus est, ex iisdem incorruptis Elementis, iusta aequalitate anatisatis constitutus, ut nullo modo corrumpi potuerat, ideo immortalitati consecratus fuit, quoniam paradisum hunc pro hominibus dumtaxat Deus sine dubio creavit, de quo nos et ubi sit in Harmonia copiose. Sed cum postea peccato inobedientiae mandatum Altissimi Conditoris transgrederetur, in hunc mundum corruptibilem Elementatum, quem tantum pro bestiis creaverat Deus, homo ad bestias expulsus est, qui cum sine nutrimento vivere non poterat, ex Elementis Elementatis corruptis nutrimentum sumere necesse fuit, quo nutrimento inficiebantur illa Elementa pura creationis suae, et ita lente in corruptionem declinavit, donec una qualitas altera superavit, et ruina totius compositi, infirmitas, ac ultimo separatio et mors advenit. Postea adhuc magis corruptioni et morti proximiores fuerunt illi, qui iam in elementis corruptis ex semine corrupto et non in paradiso procreati sunt, quoniam semen ex corruptis nutritivis productum durabile esse non potest, et quo diutius ab expulsionem paradisi, eo corruptioni propinquius homines accedunt, inde et vita brevior, et deveniet hucusque, quod et procreatio propter abbreviationem vitae cessabit. Sunt tamen aliqua loca ubi aerem benigniorem, et sidera propitiora habent, ibi non ita cito natura corrumpuntur, quia

et homines naturalius vivunt. Nostrates vero temere gula et inordinata vita ad corruptionem festinant. Docet hoc experientia, quod ex infirmorum parentum semine nati non durant.

English Paradise was and is a place created by the supreme maker of things from true elements: not elemented elements, but the purest, tempered and balanced in the highest perfection. Everything in paradise was created from those same elements and is incorruptible. There too the human being was created and constituted from the same incorruptible elements, balanced in just equality so that he could in no way be corrupted. He was therefore consecrated to immortality. God undoubtedly created paradise solely for human beings; I shall discuss this and its location at length in the Harmony.

But afterwards, through the sin of disobedience, he transgressed the Most High Creator's command. He was expelled among beasts into this corruptible, elemented world, which God had created only for beasts. Since he could not live without nourishment, he necessarily took it from corrupt, elemented elements. That nourishment infected the pure elements of his creation. Thus he slowly declined into corruption until one quality exceeded another, and the ruin of the whole compound came: infirmity, and finally separation and death. Those subsequently begotten in corrupted elements, from corrupted seed and outside paradise, were still nearer corruption and death, for seed produced from corrupt nourishment cannot endure. The longer since the expulsion from paradise, the nearer human beings approach corruption. Hence life grows shorter, and matters will come to the point where procreation too ceases because life has become so brief. Yet some places have gentler air and more favourable stars. There people do not naturally decay so quickly, because they also live more naturally. Our own people, by contrast, recklessly hasten towards corruption through gluttony and disorderly living. Experience teaches that those born from sick parents' seed do not endure.⁷⁶

SUL-FIRE-011 1616, body sequence page 34; BSB canvas 43; 1616, body sequence page 35; BSB canvas 44 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00043/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00044/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Sed si homo in paradiso mansisset, in loco illius naturae convenienti, ubi Elementa incorrupta omnia virgo sunt, in aeternum immortalis esset; certum enim est, quando elementa pura in aequalitate virtutibus coniuncta sunt, subiectum hoc incorruptum esse, et talis debet esse lapis Philosophorum. Tali creationi humanae a veteribus illis Philosophis assimilatus est, sed moderni Philosophi omnia ad literam intelligentes, ad huius saeculi generationem corruptam intendunt.

English Had the human being remained in paradise, in a place suited to his nature, where all elements are incorrupt and virgin, he would have been immortal for ever. It is certain that when pure elements are joined

⁷⁶ Elemented elements contrasts with the pure elements of paradise. Anatisatis describes an equal or proportionately balanced composition. The account is a historical explanation of mortality, rather than an account of present biological knowledge.

in equality of powers, their subject is incorruptible. Such must be the philosophers' stone. The ancient philosophers likened it to that human creation. Modern philosophers, however, taking everything literally, direct their attention towards this age's corrupt generation.

SUL-FIRE-012 1616, body sequence page 35; BSB canvas 44 ·

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Latin Haec immortalitas principalis fuit causa, quod Philosophi hunc lapidem quaerere ingeniati sunt, sciverunt enim hominem ex talibus Elementis integris creatum esse. Meditati sunt igitur de Creatione ista, quam cum naturalem esse cognoverunt, coeperunt scrutari an talia elementa incorrupta possunt haberi, aut si illa in aliquo subiecto coniungi et infundi possent, quibus ipse Altissimus Conditor rerum inspiravit compositionem talium elementorum in auro esse, quoniam in animalibus fieri est impossibile, cum ex elementis corruptis vitam sustentare debent; in vegetabilibus etiam non est, quia inaequalitas Elementorum in illis inventa est;

English This immortality was the principal reason why philosophers devised their search for the stone. They knew that the human being had been created from such whole elements. They therefore meditated upon that creation. Once they recognised it as natural, they began to investigate whether such incorrupt elements could be obtained, or joined and infused into some subject. The Most High Creator of things inspired them to perceive that a composition of such elements exists in gold. In animals it is impossible, since they must maintain life from corrupt elements. Nor does it exist in plants, where an inequality of elements is found.

SUL-FIRE-013 1616, body sequence page 35; BSB canvas 44; 1616, body sequence page 36; BSB canvas 45 ·

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Latin et cum omnia creata ad multiplicationem inclinata sunt, proposuerunt Philosophi in hoc regno minerali hanc naturae possibilitatem experiri, qua inventa, alia innumerabilia arcana naturae inesse viderunt, de quibus ut de secretis divinis parcissime reliquerunt. Sic igitur habes quomodo elementa corrupta in subiecto cadunt et separantur, quando unum aliud superat, quia tunc fit per primam separationem putrefactio, et per putrefactionem puri ab impuro separatio, et si tunc fit coniunctio nova, tunc virtute ignis acquirit formam multo nobiliorem prima. Nam in suo primo statu corruptio fuit ex grosso admixto quod non nisi per putrefactionem purgatur et melioratur, et hoc fieri non potest, nisi coniunctis viribus quatuor elementorum, quae sunt in omni composito.

English Since all created things incline towards multiplication, philosophers proposed to test this possibility of nature in the mineral kingdom. Having discovered it, they saw that innumerable other secrets of nature were contained in it. They left very little in writing about these, as about divine mysteries. Thus you see how corrupt elements fall apart within a subject and are separated when one overcomes another. Through the first separation putrefaction occurs, and through putrefaction the pure is separated from the impure. If a new conjunction then takes place, the subject acquires through fire's power a form much nobler than its first. For in its first state, corruption arose from the gross material mixed with it, which is purified and improved only through

putrefaction. This cannot happen unless the powers of the four elements present in every compound are joined.

SUL-FIRE-014 1616, body sequence page 36; BSB canvas 45; 1616, body sequence page 37; BSB canvas 46 ·
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Latin Cum enim compositum cadere debet, per elementum aquae cadit, et dum ita confuse iacent, ignis qui est potentialiter in quolibet aliorum, utpote in terra, in aere, convenient simul, et coniuncta manu vincunt postea aquam, quam digerunt, coquunt et ultimo congelant, ac tali modo natura naturae auxiliatur. Si enim ignis centralis occultus, qui in vita captus erat, vincit, agit in id quod sibi propinquius ac purius est, sicut et ipsum purissimum est, et coniungitur cum illo: ita vincit contrarium separatque purum ab impuro, et generatur nova forma, si adhuc adiuvatur priore multo praestantior, interdum sagacis artificis ingenio fiunt res immortales, maxime in regno minerali; sic omnia solo igne, et ignis regimine fiunt et perducuntur in esse, si me intellexisti.

English When a compound must fall apart, it does so through the element water. While the elements lie confused in this way, the fire potentially present in each of the others, such as earth and air, comes together. Joining forces, they then overcome water, digesting, cooking and finally congealing it. In this way nature aids nature. If the hidden central fire, captive during life, gains the upper hand, it acts upon what is nearer to it and purer, since it is itself most pure, and joins with it. Thus it overcomes its contrary, separates pure from impure, and a new form is generated, much more excellent than before if further assisted. Sometimes, through an ingenious artist's skill, immortal things are made, especially in the mineral kingdom. Thus everything is done and brought into being by fire alone and the government of fire—if you have understood me.

SUL-FIRE-015 1616, body sequence page 37; BSB canvas 46 ·
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Latin Hic igitur habes Elementorum originem, et naturas eorum ac operationes quam brevissime descriptas, quod ad nostrum propositum hoc loco sufficit. Nam alias si quodlibet Elementum describeretur ut est, magnum volumen oriretur nostro proposito non necessarium. Ista omnia, ut diximus, ad Harmoniam remittimus, ubi Deo favente si nobis vita superstes erit, de naturalibus copiosius relinquemus.

English Here then you have the origin of the elements and their natures and operations described as briefly as possible. That suffices for our present purpose. If each element were described as it is, a great volume would result, unnecessary to our purpose. As I have said, I reserve all this for the Harmony, where, God willing, if life remains to me, I shall leave a fuller account of natural matters.

On the Three Principles of All Things

DE TRIBUS PRINCIPIIS OMNIUM RERUM.

SUL-PRINCIPLES-001 1616, body sequence page 37; BSB canvas 46 ·
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Latin DE TRIBUS PRINCIPIIS OMNIUM RERUM.

Descriptis hisce quatuor Elementis, ad tria principia rerum descendamus, quomodo autem illa producuntur ex quatuor Elementis sic accipe.

English On the Three Principles of All Things

Having described these four elements, let us descend to the three principles of things. Understand how they are produced from the four elements as follows.

SUL-PRINCIPLES-002 1616, body sequence page 37; BSB canvas 46; 1616, body sequence page 38; BSB canvas 47; 1616, body sequence page 39; BSB canvas 48 ·
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Latin Postquam natura ab Altissimo Creatore omnium rerum Privilegium feudi super hanc Monarchiam mundi acceperit, coepit loca et provincias unicuique secundum dignitatem distribuere, et in primis quatuor Elementa principes mundi esse constituit, et ut adimpleretur voluntas Altissimi, in cuius velle natura posita est, ut unum in aliud incessabiliter ageret, ordinavit. Coepit itaque agere ignis in aerem, et produxit Sulphur. Aer quoque coepit agere in aquam, et produxit sal. Aqua etiam coepit agere in terram et produxit Mercurium. Terra autem cum non habuit in quo ageret, non produxit quicquam, sed productum remansit in illa; propterea tria tantum principia evenerunt, et terra facta est nutrix et matrix aliorum. Tria, ut diximus, Principia producta sunt, quod veteres Philosophi non ita stricte considerarunt, qui duos tantum actus Elementorum descripserunt; vel si etiam volentes obticuerunt, quis illos iudicabit, cum illi scripta sua filiis suis tantum dedicarunt, et sulphur cum Mercurio, quod et nobis sufficiat, materiam metallorum, imo et lapidis Philosophorum esse nominarunt. Quicumque igitur vult esse verus indagator huius sanctae Scientiae, necesse est ut sciat accidentia, et ipsum accidens noscat, ut discat ad quod subiectum seu Elementum accedere proponit, ut per media sese ad id accomodet, si alias quaternarium numerum adimplere desiderat. Sicut enim haec tria Principia ex quatuor producta sunt, sic oportet per diminutionem, ut etiam haec tria producant duo, masculum et foeminam: duo vero producant unum incorruptibile, in quo erunt illa quatuor aequaliter sincera ad summum depurata, digesta, et sic respondebit quadrangulus quadrangulo.

English After Nature received from the Most High Creator of all things the grant of a fief over this monarchy of the world, she began to distribute places and provinces to each according to its dignity. First she established the four elements as princes of the world. To fulfil the Most High's will, in whose willing nature is placed, she ordained that one should act ceaselessly upon another. Fire therefore began to act upon air and produced sulphur. Air likewise began to act upon water and produced salt. Water too began to act upon earth and produced mercury. Earth, having nothing upon which to act, produced nothing.

The product remained in it, and therefore only three principles resulted. Earth became the nurse and womb of the others.

As I have said, three principles were produced. Ancient philosophers did not consider this so closely, describing only two actions of the elements. Or, if they deliberately remained silent, who will judge them? They dedicated their writings only to their sons and named sulphur and mercury—which should suffice for us too—as the matter of metals, indeed of the philosophers' stone. Whoever therefore wishes to be a true investigator of this sacred science must know the accidents and recognise the accident itself, so as to learn which subject or element he intends to approach and to adapt himself to it through intermediaries, if he wishes to complete the number four. As these three principles were produced from four, so by diminution these three must also produce two, male and female. The two must produce one incorruptible thing in which those four will be equally whole, supremely purified and digested. Thus square will answer to square.^{77,78}

SUL-PRINCIPLES-003 1616, body sequence page 39; BSB canvas 48; 1616, body sequence page 40; BSB canvas 49 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00048/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00049/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Et haec est illa quinta essentia omni artificii multum necessaria, a multis contrariis separata, et sic habes in his tribus principiis in quacunque compositione naturali corpus, spiritum et animam occultam, quae tria si separata et bene purgata ut diximus coniunxeris, sine dubio imitando naturam purissimum fructum dabunt. Quoniam etiamsi anima ex nobilissimo loco assumpta est, illuc tamen quo tendit non potest pervenire nisi per spiritum, qui est locus et domicilium animae, quam si vis reducere in locum debitum, opus est ut sit lavata ab omni peccato, locus quoque sit purificatus, ut in illo anima possit glorificari et non amplius separari. Iam ergo habes trium Principiorum originem ex quibus tuum est imitando naturam Mercurium Philosophorum et eorum primam materiam producere, et ista principia rerum, maxime metallorum ad tuum propositum deducere, cum sine istis principiis impossibile est tibi aliquid perficere per artem, cum et natura ipsa sine ipsis nihil facit nec producit. Haec tria sunt in omnibus rebus, et sine illis in orbe nihil est, nec naturaliter erit.

English This is that quintessence, greatly needed by every artist, separated from many contraries. Thus in any natural composition you have body, spirit and a hidden soul in these three principles. If you separate these three, purify them well and join them as I have said, they will undoubtedly give the purest fruit through imitation of nature. Although the soul is taken from the noblest place, it cannot reach its goal except through spirit, which is the soul's place and dwelling. If you wish to bring it to its proper place, it must be washed clean of every sin, and the

⁷⁷. Nature's grant of a fief translates Privilegium feudi. The feudal and political analogy is part of the author's explanation of delegated power under God. The order of production is explicitly fire upon air, sulphur; air upon water, salt; water upon earth, mercury.

⁷⁸. Accidents are properties or circumstances attaching to a subject, rather than chance mishaps alone. The reduction four–three–two–one is an account of composition and purification; it is not ordinary numerical subtraction of chemical ingredients.

place must also be purified, so that the soul may be glorified there and no longer separated.

Now you have the origin of the three principles. From them it is your task, by imitating nature, to produce the philosophers' mercury and their first matter, and to bring these principles of things, especially metals, to your intended end. Without them it is impossible to perfect anything by art, since nature herself does or produces nothing without them. These three are in all things; without them nothing exists or will naturally exist in the world.

SUL-PRINCIPLES-004 1616, body sequence page 40; BSB canvas 49; 1616, body sequence page 41; BSB canvas 50 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00049/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00050/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Sed quoniam supra scripsimus quod veteres Philosophi duo tantum principia nominarunt, ne inquisitor aberret, sciendum est, quod licet illi sulphur et Mercurium descripserunt, sine sale tamen nequaquam ad hoc opus accedere potuerunt, cum illud est clavis et principium huius sacrae scientiae: illud est quod aperit portas iustitiae, illud est quod claves habet ad carceres infernales, ubi sulphur ligatum iacet, sicut aliquando latius dabuntur ista in tractatu tertio principiorum, de Sale. Nunc ad propositum, quod haec tria Principia omnino sunt necessaria, quia illa sunt materia propinqua. Duplex enim est materia metallorum. Proxima, Remota. Proxima est Sulphur et Mercurius; Remota sunt quatuor Elementa ex quibus solius Dei est res creare. Relinque ergo Elementa quoniam ex illis nihil facies, nec poteris, nisi haec tria Principia producere, cum et natura ex illis nihil aliud producit. Si igitur ex Elementis nihil aliud quam ista tria Principia producere potes, ad quid tibi iste vanus labor, id quaerere vel facere velle quod iam a natura generatum est? Nonne melius est ire tria milliaria quam quatuor?

English But since I wrote above that the ancient philosophers named only two principles, let the seeker understand this lest he go astray: although they described sulphur and mercury, they could never undertake this work without salt. Salt is the key and beginning of this sacred science. It opens the gates of justice and holds the keys to the infernal prisons where sulphur lies bound. These matters will be explained more fully another time in the treatise on salt, the third of the principles.

To our subject: these three principles are altogether necessary because they are the proximate matter. There are two kinds of matter of metals, proximate and remote. The proximate is sulphur and mercury; the remote is the four elements, from which it belongs to God alone to create things. Leave the elements, then. From them you will do nothing, nor can you do anything except produce these three principles, since nature too produces nothing else from them. If you can produce only these three principles from the elements, why undertake the vain labour of seeking or wishing to make what nature has already generated? Is it not better to travel three miles than four?

SUL-PRINCIPLES-005 1616, body sequence page 41; BSB canvas 50; 1616, body sequence page 42; BSB canvas 51 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00050/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00051/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Sufficiat ergo tibi tria principia habere, ex quibus natura in terra et super terram omnia producit, quae tria in omni re integre invenies. Ex horum debita separatione et coniunctione, natura producit tam metalla quam lapides in regno minerali; in regno vero vegetabili, arbores, herbas et omnia; in regno etiam animal, corpus, spiritum et animam, quod maxime operi Philosophorum adaequatur. Corpus est terra, Spiritus est aqua, Anima est ignis seu sulphur auri. Quantitate corporis auget Spiritus, virtute vero auget ignis. Sed quia magis est de Spiritu in pondere quam de igne, exaltatur Spiritus et opprimit ignem, trahitque ad se: et sic quilibet eorum crescunt in virtutem, et terra quae est intermedium illorum crescit in pondere. Omnis igitur indagator artis concludat in suo animo quod quaerit ex his tribus, et huic in auxilium succurrat, ut possit vincere suum Contrarium; postea addat ad pondus naturae suum pondus, ut adimpleatur defectus naturae per artem, et ita vincet suum contrarium. Diximus in Elemento terrae, terram nihil aliud esse quam receptaculum aliorum, id est subiectum in quo ista duo ignis et aqua certant, mediante aere; si praedominatur aqua, producit res temporales et corruptibiles; si autem ignis vincit, producit res perpetuas et incorruptibiles. Considera igitur quod tibi sit necessarium.

English Be content, therefore, to possess the three principles from which nature produces everything in and upon earth. You will find these three whole in every thing. By their proper separation and conjunction, nature produces metals and stones in the mineral kingdom; trees, herbs and everything in the vegetable kingdom; and body, spirit and soul in the animal kingdom. This corresponds especially closely to the philosophers' work. Body is earth; spirit is water; soul is fire or the sulphur of gold. Spirit increases the body in quantity, while fire increases it in power. But since spirit exceeds fire in weight, spirit is raised up, overcomes fire and draws it to itself. Thus each grows in power, while earth, the intermediary between them, grows in weight.

Let every investigator of the art therefore determine in his mind which of these three he seeks. Let him come to its aid so that it may overcome its contrary. Afterwards let him add his own weight to nature's weight, supplying nature's deficiency through art. Thus he will overcome his contrary. Under earth I said that earth is merely the receptacle of the others: the subject in which these two, fire and water, contend through air's mediation. If water predominates, it produces temporary, corruptible things; if fire conquers, it produces perpetual, incorruptible things. Consider, then, what you need.

SUL-PRINCIPLES-006 1616, body sequence page 42; BSB canvas 51; 1616, body sequence page 43; BSB canvas 52; 1616, body sequence page 44; BSB canvas 53 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00051/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00052/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00053/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Scias praeterea quod ignis et aqua sunt in omni re, sed neque ignis neque aqua faciunt aliquid, quoniam illa inter se tantum certant et pugnant de velocitate, et de virtute, et hoc non per se, sed per excitationem caloris extrinseci qui motu caelestium virtutum in centro terrae accenditur, sine quo ista duo nihil facerent unquam, starent uterque illorum quodlibet in suo termino et pondere. Sed natura

postquam coniunxit ista duo in proportione, tunc calore extrinseco excitat illa, et sic incipiunt inter se pugnare, et quodlibet illorum vocat suum simile in adiutorium, sicque ascendunt et crescunt, quousque terra cum illis amplius ascendere non potest; interim illa duo in eiusmodi retentione terrae subtiliantur: nam in illo subiecto terrae ignis et aqua ascendunt incessabiliter, et per poros reservatos quos aer praeparat agunt, et ex illa eorum subtiliatione flores et fructus sequuntur, in quibus amici fiunt, ut in arboribus videre est; quo enim melius subtiliantur et purificantur ascendendo, eo praestantiores producant fructus, praesertim si aequaliter virtutibus coniunctis finiunt.

English Know further that fire and water are in every thing, yet neither fire nor water accomplishes anything by itself. They merely contend with one another in speed and power, and even this not of themselves but through the stimulus of external heat, kindled at earth's centre by the motion of heavenly powers. Without this, those two would never do anything; each would remain within its own boundary and weight. But once nature has joined them in proportion, she stirs them through external heat. They begin to fight with one another, and each calls its like to its aid. Thus they rise and grow until earth can ascend no farther with them.

Meanwhile these two are subtilised as earth holds them. In that earthly subject fire and water rise ceaselessly and act through the passages kept open and prepared by air. Flowers and fruits follow from their subtilisation; in these they become friends, as can be seen in trees. The better they are subtilised and purified in ascending, the more excellent the fruits they produce, especially if they finish with their powers equally joined.

SUL-PRINCIPLES-007 1616, body sequence page 44; BSB canvas 53; 1616, body sequence page 45; BSB canvas 54 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00053/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00054/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Purgatis ergo rebus, fac ut ignis et aqua amici fiant, quod in terra sua, quae cum illis ascenderat facile facient, et tunc id brevius perficies quam natura, si bene secundum pondus naturae coniunxeris; non sicut prius fuit, sed sicut natura requirit, et tibi opus est. Quoniam natura in omni compositione magis apponit de aliis quam de igne. Minima pars ignis semper est, sed natura secundum placitum addit ignem extrinsecum, ad excitandum illum internum secundum maius vel minus per multum aut parum temporis, et secundum hoc si ignis superat aut superatur perfectae aut imperfectae res fiunt, sic in mineralibus quam in vegetabilibus. Non intrat quidem ignis extrinsecus in profundum compositionis essentialiter, sed tantum virtute; quoniam ignis intrinsecus materialis sufficit sibi si tantum nutrimentum habet, et ignis extrinsecus est illi nutrimentum, et quasi ligna respectu ignis Elementalitis, et secundum tale nutrimentum crescit et multiplicatur. Cavendum tamen est, ne ille nimius ignis extrinsecus adveniat, quoniam si quis multum et extra posse comedit, suffocatur: parvum ignem magna flamma devorat. Ignis extrinsecus debet esse multiplicativus, nutriens, non devorans, ita enim res perficiuntur. Decoctio ergo in omnibus rebus est perfectio, ita natura addit virtutem ad pondus et perficit. Verum quia difficile est ad compositum addere, cum hoc longissimum laborem requirit, consulimus itaque, ut de superfluo amoveas tantum quantum opus est, vel natura requirit. Remotis superfluitatibus misce, ostendet postea natura quod quaesivisti. Tu quoque cognosces, si natura bene aut male coniunxit elementa, cum in coniunctione elementa omnia consistunt.

English When things have been purified, therefore, make fire and water friends. They will readily become so in their own earth, which ascended with them. You will then perfect the work sooner than nature, if you have joined them well according to nature's weight: not as they were before, but as nature requires and you need. In every composition nature puts in more of the other things than of fire. Fire's portion is always the smallest. But nature adds external fire as she pleases to stir the internal fire, more or less, for a long or short time. According to whether fire overcomes or is overcome, perfect or imperfect things result, in minerals as in plants.

External fire does not enter the depths of the composition in actual substance, but only in power. The internal material fire is sufficient for itself, provided it has nourishment. External fire is its nourishment, like wood in relation to elemental fire, and it grows and multiplies according to that nourishment. Take care, however, lest too much external fire arrive. Someone who eats too much, beyond his capacity, is choked. A great flame devours a small fire. External fire should multiply and nourish, rather than devour; in this way things are perfected. Cooking, then, is perfection in all things. In this way nature adds power to weight and perfects it.

But because it is difficult to add to a compound, requiring very prolonged labour, I advise you to remove as much superfluity as is needed, or as nature requires. After removing the superfluities, mix the remainder. Nature will then show what you sought. You too will recognise whether nature joined the elements well or badly, for everything consists in their conjunction.

SUL-PRINCIPLES-008 1616, body sequence page 45; BSB canvas 54; 1616, body sequence page 46; BSB canvas 55; 1616, body sequence page 47; BSB canvas 56 .

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Latin Sed multi laborantes stramen pro tritico seminant, aliqui utrumque, multi vero id proiciunt quod Philosophi amant, aliqui incipiunt et desinunt, quod ex illorum inconstantia evenit; artem difficilem, laborem facilem quaerunt, optima reiicientes pessima seminant: sed sicut haec scientia in praefatione occultatur, sic et materia in principio proicitur. Nos autem dicimus artem hanc nihil aliud esse, quam virtutes Elementorum aequaliter commixtas, calidi, sicci, frigidi, humidi, aequalitas naturalis, coniunctio masculi et foeminae, quem eadem foemina genuit, id est coniunctio ignis et humidi radicalis metallorum. Considerando quod Mercurius Philosophorum habet in se sulphur suum proprium bonum secundum minus et maius depuratum et decoctum a natura, ex Mercurio omnia perficere poteris; sed si scies addere ad pondus naturae tuum pondus, duplicare Mercurium, et triplicare sulphur, citius terminabitur in bonum, postea in melius, usque in Optimum, quamvis unum tantum apparens est sulphur, et duo Mercurii, sed unius radicis, non crudi nec nimis cocti, purgati tamen et soluti, si me intellexisti. Materiam quidem Mercurii Philosophorum et materiam sulphuris eorundem describere non est opus; nemo mortalium potuit, nec in posterum poterit apertius et clarius illam describere, quam ab antiquis Philosophis descripta et nominata est, nisi alias

anathema artis esse velit. Est enim ita communiter nominata, ut etiam non aestimetur; ideo inquisitores ad alias subtilitates se convertunt, quam in naturae simplicitate manerent. Non dicimus tamen Mercurium Philosophorum commune quid esse et aperte nominari, sed de materia, ex qua Philosophi sulphur suum et Mercurium creant, quoniam Mercurius Philosophorum non habetur per se super terram, sed ex sulphure et Mercurio coniunctis educitur arte. Non prodit in lucem, nudus enim est, sed a natura miris modis involutus est.

English Many workers sow straw instead of wheat; some sow both. Many throw away what philosophers love; some begin and abandon the work, through their inconstancy. They seek a difficult art but easy labour. Rejecting the best, they sow the worst. Yet as this science is hidden in the preface, so its matter is thrown away at the beginning. I say this art is nothing but the powers of the elements mixed equally: a natural equality of hot, dry, cold and moist; the conjunction of male and female, that male whom the same female bore; that is, the conjunction of fire and the radical moisture of metals.

Considering that the philosophers' mercury contains its own proper good sulphur, purified and cooked by nature to a greater or lesser degree, you can perfect everything from mercury. But if you know how to add your weight to nature's, to double mercury and triple sulphur, the work will reach a good end sooner, then a better one, up to the best. There is, however, only one apparent sulphur and two mercuries, of one root, neither raw nor overcooked, yet purified and dissolved—if you have understood me. There is no need to describe the matter of the philosophers' mercury and their sulphur. No mortal has been able, nor will anyone hereafter be able, to describe it more openly and clearly than the ancient philosophers have described and named it, unless he wishes to become accursed in the art. It is named so commonly that it is not even valued. Seekers therefore turn towards other subtleties instead of remaining in nature's simplicity. I am not saying that the philosophers' mercury is something common and openly named. I mean the matter from which philosophers create their sulphur and mercury. The philosophers' mercury is not found by itself upon earth; it is drawn forth by art from sulphur and mercury joined together. It does not come naked into the light: nature wraps it in wonderful ways.⁷⁹

SUL-PRINCIPLES-009 1616, body sequence page 47; BSB canvas 56; 1616, body sequence page 48; BSB canvas 57; 1616, body sequence page 49; BSB canvas 58 .

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Latin Conclusive dicimus repetendo sulphur et Mercurium esse mineram nostri argenti vivi, coniuncta tamen, quod argentum vivum habet posse metalla solvere, occidere, et vivificare, quam potestatem accepit a sulphure acetoso suae propriae naturae.

⁷⁹ The source distinguishes one apparent sulphur and two mercuries of one root. It supplies no numerical modern recipe in this passage. The weight of nature and the artist's added weight belong to its theory of proportion.

Sed ut adhuc melius concipere possis, audi quae differentia est inter nostrum argentum vivum et Mercurium vulgi. Mercurius vulgi non solvit aurum nec argentum ut ab illis non separetur, argentum vero vivum nostrum solvit aurum et argentum et non separatur ab illis in aeternum, sicut aqua mixta aquae. Mercurius vulgi habet sulphur combustibile malum quod denigratur, nostrum argentum vivum habet in se sulphur incombustibile, fixum, bonum, albissimum et rubeum. Mercurius vulgi est frigidus, humidus: Mercurius noster est calidus, humidus. Mercurius vulgi corpora denigrat et inficit: Argentum vivum nostrum corpora dealbat usque ad crystallinam serenitatem. Mercurius vulgi vertitur per praecipitationem in pulverem citrinum, sulphur malum: Argentum vivum nostrum mediante calore vertitur in sulphur candidissimum, bonum fixum et fluxibile. Mercurius vulgi quo magis decoquitur, eo magis fluxibilis: argentum vivum nostrum quo magis decoquitur, eo magis inspissatur. Ex his igitur circumstantiis considerare poteris, quomodo differunt inter se Mercurius vulgi ab argento vivo Philosophorum. Si adhuc non intelligis, noli expectare, nullus mortalium dabit clariora sicut hic diximus, sed de virtutibus. Talis virtutis est argentum vivum nostrum, quod et per se sufficit, et tibi et sibi absque omni additione rei extraneae, sola decoctione naturali solvitur et congelatur: sed Philosophi propter abbreviationem addunt illi sulphur suum bene digestum et maturum, et sic operantur. Potuissemus quidem citare scripta Philosophorum sermonem nostrum confirmantia; sed quoniam clariora eorum scriptis scripsimus, non indigent comprobatione; is intelliget, qui in aliorum scriptis versatus est.

English In conclusion, I repeat that sulphur and mercury, joined together, are the ore of our quicksilver. This quicksilver has the power to dissolve metals, kill them and restore them to life. It received that power from the sour sulphur of its own nature.

To help you understand still better, hear the difference between our quicksilver and common mercury. Common mercury does not dissolve gold or silver so as never to be separated from them. Our quicksilver, however, dissolves gold and silver and is never separated from them, like water mixed with water. Common mercury contains a bad, combustible sulphur that blackens. Our quicksilver contains an incombustible, fixed, good sulphur, very white and red. Common mercury is cold and moist; our mercury is hot and moist. Common mercury blackens and stains bodies; our quicksilver whitens them to crystalline clarity. Common mercury is turned by precipitation into a yellow powder, a bad sulphur; our quicksilver is turned through heat into a very white, good, fixed and fusible sulphur. The more common mercury is cooked, the more fusible it becomes; the more our quicksilver is cooked, the more it thickens.

From these circumstances you can consider how common mercury differs from the philosophers' quicksilver. If you still do not understand, do not expect more: no mortal will give clearer explanations than those I have given here—but concerning powers. Our quicksilver has such power that by itself it suffices for both you and itself. Without the addition of any foreign thing, it is dissolved and congealed by natural cooking alone. To shorten the work, however, philosophers add their own well-digested, ripe sulphur to it, and work in this way. I could

have cited philosophers' writings to confirm my account. But since I have written more clearly than they did, it needs no corroboration. Whoever is familiar with their writings will understand.⁸⁰

SUL-PRINCIPLES-010 1616, body sequence page 49; BSB canvas 58; 1616, body sequence page 50; BSB canvas 59; 1616, body sequence page 51; BSB canvas 60 ·

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Latin Si igitur nostrum consilium vis sequi, consulimus ut antequam ad hanc artem accedas, in primis discas compescere linguam et naturam minerarum et metallorum inquiras, tum et vegetabilium, quoniam in omni subiecto Mercurium nostrum inuenies, et ab omnibus rebus Mercurius Philosophorum extrahi potest, licet in uno subiecto propinquius quam in alio. Scito etiam pro certo, quod haec scientia non in fortuna neque casuali inventionem, sed in reali scientia locata est, et non est nisi haec unica materia in mundo per quam et ex qua praeparatur lapis Philosophorum. Est quidem in omnibus rebus, sed in extractione eius vita desisteret: sine cognitione tamen rerum naturalium praesertim in regno minerali, similis eris caeco qui usu ambulat. Talis quidem artem non nisi casualiter quaerit, et etiamsi sicut multoties accidit casu ab aliquo materia tractatur argenti vivi nostri, tunc ubi incipere debet, opus suum finit, et sic sicut casu inuenitur, casu amittitur, quia nescit super quid suam intentionem fundare debet. Ideo haec scientia est donum Dei Altissimi, et nisi Deus per ingenium bonum vel per amicum alicui revelaverit, difficile cognoscitur: nam non omnes Gebri, non omnes Lullii esse possumus. Et licet Lullius vir subtilis ingenii fuit, tamen nisi ab Arnolde artem accepisset, certe similis fuisset aliis qui illam cum difficultate inquirunt, siquidem et Arnoldus ab amico accepisse confitetur, facile enim scribere cui ipsa natura dictat. Est Proverbium: facile est addere inventis. Omnis ars et scientia magistro facilis, sed incipienti discipulo non sic, et ad hanc scientiam inquirendam tempus requiritur longum, copia vasorum et expensa magna, et quotidianus labor, cum immensa meditatione, quamvis scienti omnia levius.

English If you wish to follow my advice, I counsel you, before approaching this art, first to learn to restrain your tongue and investigate the nature of ores and metals, and of plants too. In every subject you will find our mercury, and the philosophers' mercury can be extracted from all things, although it is nearer at hand in one subject than another. Know for certain too that this science rests upon real knowledge, not luck or accidental discovery. There is only this one matter in the world through which and from which the philosophers' stone is prepared. It is indeed in all things, but a lifetime would fail in extracting it. Without knowledge of natural things, especially in the mineral kingdom, you will resemble a blind man who walks by habit. Such a person seeks the art only by chance. Even if, as often happens, someone chances to handle the matter of our quicksilver, he finishes his work where he should begin. As it is found by chance, so it is lost by chance, because he does not know upon what he should base his intention.

⁸⁰ The contrasts concern common mercury and the author's philosophical quicksilver. Their assigned powers must not be read as a modern identification or safe handling procedure. Fluxibilis is rendered fusible, while inspissatur means thickens.

This science is therefore the gift of the Most High God. Unless God reveals it to someone through a good understanding or through a friend, it is difficult to know. We cannot all be Gebers or Lulls. Although Lull was a man of subtle understanding, if he had not received the art from Arnold, he would surely have resembled others who seek it with difficulty. Arnold too confesses that he received it from a friend. It is easy to write when nature herself dictates. There is a proverb: It is easy to add to discoveries. Every art and science is easy for a master, but not for a beginning pupil. To investigate this science requires much time, many vessels, great expense, daily labour and immeasurable meditation, although everything is easier for one who knows.^{81,82}

SUL-PRINCIPLES-011 1616, body sequence page 51; BSB canvas 60; 1616, body sequence page 52; BSB canvas 61; 1616, body sequence page 53; BSB canvas 62 ·

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Latin Conclusive dicimus hanc artem solius Altissimi Dei donum esse, qua cognita orandus est, ut etiam ad artem hanc benedictionem suam dare dignetur, quoniam sine benedictione divina omnino inutilis est, quod nos ipsi experti sumus, cum propter scientiam aliquot gravissima pericula passi, plus infortunii ac incommodi quam utilitatis inde habuimus; sed credimus mundum tempus advenisse, cum raro sapiunt Phryges. Iudicia Domini abyssus multa, attamen divinam providentiam in eiusmodi nostris infortuniis admiratus sum. Semper enim Altissimi conditoris nostri protectionem praesto habuimus, ut nullus inimicus potuerit nos opprimere; custos fuit semper Angelus Domini Arcae huius, in quam Altissimus conditor rerum tantum thesaurum inclusit, quem et usque tuetur. Audivimus namque inimicos nostros in laqueum quem nobis paraverunt, incidere. Qui in nostram vitam irruerunt, vita privati sunt; qui vero bona nostra invaserunt, bona sua, nonnulli et regna, amiserunt. Praeterea illorum qui nostro honori detraxerunt multos infames periisse scimus. Tantam custodiam ab omnium rerum Creatore semper habuimus, qui nos statim ex utero matris nostrae sub umbram alarum suarum suscepit, spiritumque intelligentiae rerum naturalium infudit, cui sit laus et gloria per infinita saecula saeculorum. Tanta beneficia ab Altissimo Deo Creatore nostro accepimus, quod non solum calamo verum et mente comprehendere sit impossibile. Vix unquam mortalium alicui maiora, imo saltem talia contulit Deus. Utinam tantum animi, tantum Spiritus et eloquentiae intelligentiaeque haberemus, ut debitas gratias illi agere possemus, scimus enim talia non meruisse. Hoc unicum credimus esse, quod in illo solo semper speravimus, speramus et sperabimus. Scimus enim non esse inter mortales, qui nos adjuvare possit, nisi hic solus Deus et Creator noster, quia vanum est confidere in principibus, quoniam homines sunt, ut ait Psalmista. Omnes hi a Deo Spiritum vitae habent, quo ablato, pulverem omnia esse;

⁸¹. Two source readings are emended here. The print has *regno numerabili*, the countable kingdom; *minerali*, mineral kingdom, is required by context and is also supplied in the consulted copy's handwritten correction. The print also has *si ab Arnoldo*, if he had received from Arnold, where *nisi ab Arnoldo*, unless he had received, is needed for the contrast. This conjecture is supported by John French's 1650 rendering, consulted only after the independent Latin translation. The Lull–Arnold story is the historical author's attribution, not a verified biography of Ramon Llull.

⁸². The clause printed as *credimus mundum tempus advenisse* is awkward; the translation conveys the arrival of a time while leaving its precise force open. The following *raro sapiunt Phryges* literally says the Phrygians seldom grow wise. It recalls the familiar proverb *sero sapiunt Phryges*, the Phrygians grow wise too late; the text has not been silently changed to the familiar wording.

sed sperare in Domino Deo, a quo sicut a fonte bonitatis omnia bona abundantissime fluunt, tutum et securum est.

English In conclusion, I say this art is the gift of the Most High God alone. Once it is known, he must be asked to grant his blessing to it too, for without divine blessing it is altogether useless. I have experienced this myself. Having suffered several very grave dangers because of this knowledge, I have received more misfortune and harm than advantage from it. Yet I believe the time has come, since the Phrygians seldom grow wise. The Lord's judgments are a deep abyss. Nevertheless, in these misfortunes I have marvelled at divine providence. We have always had the protection of our Most High Creator at hand, so that no enemy could crush us. The Lord's angel has always guarded this ark, in which the Most High Creator of things enclosed so great a treasure, and which he still protects. For we have heard that our enemies fell into the snare they had prepared for us. Those who attacked our life were deprived of life. Those who invaded our possessions lost their own possessions, some even their kingdoms. Moreover, we know that many who defamed our honour perished in disgrace. We have always had such protection from the maker of all things. Immediately from our mother's womb he received us beneath the shadow of his wings and infused a spirit of understanding of natural things. To him be praise and glory through endless ages of ages.

I have received such benefits from the Most High God, our Creator, that they cannot be comprehended in writing, or even in thought. God has scarcely ever bestowed greater things—or even their like—on any mortal. Would that I had enough courage, spirit, eloquence and understanding to give him due thanks! I know that I have not deserved such things. I believe this alone accounts for it: I have always hoped in him alone, I hope in him now, and I shall continue to hope. I know there is no mortal who can help me, but only this God and Creator of ours. For it is vain to trust in princes, since they are human, as the Psalmist says. All have the spirit of life from God; take it away and everything is dust. But it is safe and secure to hope in the Lord God, from whom, as from a fountain of goodness, every good flows most abundantly.

SUL-PRINCIPLES-012 1616, body sequence page 53; BSB canvas 62 ·

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Latin Tu igitur quicumque cupis ad hanc sanctam Scientiam accedere, pone in primis spem integram in Deo Creatore tuo, illumque precibus fatiga, et crede firmiter te ab illo non derelinquendum; quoniam si Deus cor tuum candidum, et spem integram in se positam cognoverit, facile dabit medium, per hanc sive per aliam viam adiuvabit te, ut voto potiaris. Initium sapientiae timor Domini. Ora, sed nihilominus et labora, Deus quidem dat intellectum, sed tu illo scias uti: nam sicut sunt dona Dei, intellectus bonus et occasio bona, ita est poena peccati, quando omittitur occasio bona.

English You, therefore, whoever desires to approach this sacred science, first place your entire hope in God your Creator. Weary him with

prayers and firmly believe he will not forsake you. If God recognises that your heart is honest and your whole hope is placed in him, he will readily give you the means. Through this way or another he will help you attain your desire. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Pray, but nevertheless work too. God indeed gives understanding, but you must know how to use it. As good understanding and good opportunity are God's gifts, so the neglect of a good opportunity is a punishment for sin.

SUL-PRINCIPLES-013 1616, body sequence page 53; BSB canvas 62; 1616, body sequence page 54; BSB canvas 63; 1616, body sequence page 55; BSB canvas 64 ·

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Latin Sed ut ad propositum redeamus, dicimus argentum vivum materiam primam istius operis esse, et vere nihil aliud; quidquid additur illi, oritur ex illo. Diximus aliquoties quod ex tribus Principiis fiunt et generantur omnes res mundi, sed nos aliqua ab accidentibus purgamus, purgata iterum coniungimus, additis addendis deficientia adimplemus, et imitando naturam ad finem summae perfectionis decoquimus, quod natura propter accidens perficere non potuit, et iam finivit ubi ars incipere debet. Propterea si cupis naturam imitari, in his illam imitare in quibus illa operatur; nec te moveat quod scripta nostra contraria sibi videantur in aliquibus locis; ita enim opus est ne ars proderetur. Tu autem elige ea quae cum natura conveniunt; accipe rosas, relinque spinas. Si intendis metallum facere, metallum sit tuum fundamentum, quia non generatur ex cane nisi canis, ex metallo metallum. Nam scito pro certo, si non accipies ex metallo humidum radicale optime separatum, nihil facies unquam. Sine grano tritici, frustra colis terram; unica res, unica ars, unica operatio. Si igitur metallum vis producere, metallo fermentabis; si vero arborem, arboris semen sit tibi fermentum. Unica, ut diximus, est operatio, extra quam non est alia quae vera sit. Errant itaque omnes qui dicunt aliquod particulare extra hanc unicam viam et naturalem materiam verum esse, etenim non habetur ramus nisi ex trunco arboris. Impossibile est et fatuum ramum prius quam arborem producere velle; facilius est ipsum lapidem conficere, quam particulare aliquid etiam simplicissimum, quod sit utile et in examinatione cum naturali persisteret.

English To return to our subject, I say quicksilver is the first matter of this work, and truly nothing else. Whatever is added to it arises from it. I have said several times that all things in the world are made and generated from three principles. We, however, cleanse certain things of their accidents, join them again when cleansed, add what must be added to supply deficiencies, and, imitating nature, cook them to the utmost perfection. Nature could not perfect this because of an accident, and stopped where art should begin. If you desire to imitate nature, then, imitate her in those things in which she works. Do not be disturbed if our writings seem to contradict themselves in some places. This is necessary lest the art be betrayed. Choose what agrees with nature; take the roses and leave the thorns.

If you intend to make metal, let metal be your foundation. Nothing is generated from a dog but a dog; from metal, metal. Know for certain: unless you take radical moisture well separated from metal, you will

never accomplish anything. Without a grain of wheat, you till earth in vain. One thing, one art, one operation. If you wish to produce metal, ferment with metal; if a tree, let tree-seed be your ferment. As I have said, there is one operation, outside which no other is true. Everyone therefore errs who says that a particular work is true outside this one way and natural matter. A branch is obtained only from a tree's trunk. It is impossible and foolish to wish to produce a branch before a tree. It is easier to make the stone itself than even the simplest particular product that is useful and withstands testing alongside a natural one.

SUL-PRINCIPLES-014 1616, body sequence page 55; BSB canvas 64; 1616, body sequence page 56; BSB canvas 65 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00064/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00065/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Sunt tamen multi qui gloriantur se posse facere lunam fixam, sed melius facerent ut plumbum vel stannum fixarent, cum meo iudicio idem labor est, quia ista non resistunt examini ignis, donec in sua natura sunt; luna autem in sua natura satis fixa est, nec opus habet fixatione Sophistica. At cum quot capita tot sensus, nos relinquimus cuilibet suam opinionem; qui non vult sequi nostrum consilium et naturam imitari, maneat in suo errore. Bene quidem particularia fieri possunt habita arbore, cuius surculi variis arboribus inseri possunt, sicut habita una aqua variae sortis carnes decoqui possunt in ea, et secundum carnum diversitatem iusculum saporem habebit; sed hoc ex eodem fundamento.

English Many boast that they can make fixed silver. They would do better to fix lead or tin, since in my judgment the labour is the same. While those remain in their own nature, they do not withstand the test of fire; silver, however, is fixed enough in its own nature and needs no sophisticated fixation. But as there are as many opinions as heads, I leave everyone his own. Whoever will not follow my advice and imitate nature may remain in his error.

Particular works can indeed be made once the tree is possessed. Its shoots can be grafted into different trees. Likewise, with one water different sorts of meat can be cooked, and the broth will take its flavour from the different meats. Yet it all proceeds from the same foundation.⁸³

SUL-PRINCIPLES-015 1616, body sequence page 56; BSB canvas 65; 1616, body sequence page 57 (printed 47); BSB canvas 66 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00065/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00066/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Concludimus itaque non esse nisi unam naturam, tam in metallis quam in aliis rebus, sed diversam eius operationem, unam etiam universalem materiam secundum Hermetem: sic ab hac una re omnes res natae fiunt. Multi tamen sunt artifices, quorum quilibet sequitur suum cerebrum; quaerunt novam naturam, novam materiam, propterea etiam inveniunt novum recensque nihil, quia non ad possibilitatem naturae sed ad syllabas scripta Philosophorum interpretantur. Sed hi omnes sunt ex illis comitiis, de quibus in Dialogo Mercurii quod Alchimista scriptum est, qui sine conclusione domum redeunt; non solum absque medio, verum et sine principio finem quaerunt, et hoc inde fit quod non ex fundamentis vel lectione librorum Philosophorum, sed ex auditu et receptis circuforaneis artem assequi

⁸³ Luna, literally the moon, names silver here. Particular works are contrasted with the general stone or complete foundation of the art. The author's argument is that a branch presupposes a tree.

conantur; licet iam libri Philosophorum ab invidis fortasse desolati sunt, in multis locis addunt vel supprimunt; postea cum illis non succedit, ad Sophisticationes convertuntur, et tentant mira opera vana, dealbando, rubificando, lunam fixando, animam auri extrahendo, quod in Praefatione libelli 12 Tractatum hoc fieri posse satis negatum est. Non quidem negamus, imo omnino esse necessarium dicimus, animam metallicam extrahi debere, sed non ad Sophisticam operationem, sed ad opus Philosophorum; qua extracta et purgata, iterum corpori suo reddi debet, ut fiat resurrectio vera corporis glorificati. Nunquam hoc nostrum propositum fuit, sine grano tritici triticum multiplicare posse, sed ut illa anima extracta aliquod aliud metallum Sophistico modo tingere possit, falsissimum esse scias, omnesque qui de hoc gloriantur falsarios esse; sed ista in tertio principio de Sale copiosius, cum hic non est locus extendere calamus.

English I therefore conclude that there is only one nature in metals as in other things, though her operation varies. There is also one universal matter, according to Hermes: thus all things are born from this one thing. Yet many artists each follow their own fancy. They seek a new nature and a new matter, and therefore discover a new and freshly made nothing. They interpret philosophers by written syllables rather than by nature's possibilities.

All these belong to the assembly described in the Dialogue of Mercury with the Alchemist, who return home without a conclusion. They seek an end not merely without a middle but without a beginning. This happens because they try to attain the art from hearsay and quacks' recipes, rather than from foundations or reading philosophers' books—although envious people have perhaps already laid waste those books, adding or suppressing material in many places. Afterwards, when they do not succeed, they turn to sophistications and attempt marvellous but vain works: whitening, reddening, fixing silver and extracting gold's soul. The possibility of doing this was sufficiently denied in the preface to the little book of Twelve Treatises. I do not deny—indeed, I say it is altogether necessary—that the metallic soul must be extracted. But it must be for the philosophers' work, rather than a sophistical operation. Once extracted and purified, it must be returned to its own body, so that a true resurrection of the glorified body occurs. It has never been my contention that wheat can be multiplied without a grain of wheat. But know it to be utterly false that the extracted soul can tinge some other metal by a sophistical method; everyone who boasts of this is a falsifier. These things will be treated more fully under salt, the third principle. Here there is no place to write at length.

On Sulphur

DE SULPHURE.

SUL-SULPHUR-001 1616, body sequence page 57 (printed 47); BSB canvas 66; 1616, body sequence page 58; BSB canvas 67 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00066/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00067/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin DE SULPHURE.

Inter tria Principia Sulphur merito Philosophi primo loco posuerunt, sicut dignissimum Principium, in cuius praeparatione tota scientia latet. Triplex enim sulphur est, et inter alia eligendum: Sulphur tingens, seu colorans: Sulphur congelans Mercurium: Tertium est essenziale maturans. De quo quidem serio tractare debuimus; sed quia per Dialogum unum Principiorum edidimus, ita et alia finire cogimur, ne alicui illorum iniuriam inferre videamur. Sulphur maturius est caeteris Principiis et Mercurius non coagulatur nisi sulphure: ergo totalis nostra operatio in hac arte non est nisi ut sciamus ex metallis sulphur elicere, quo in visceribus terrae argentum vivum nostrum in aurum et argentum congelatur: quod quidem sulphur in hoc Opere loco masculi, ideo dignius habetur; Mercurius vero loco foeminae. Ex horum duorum composito et actu generantur Mercurii Philosophorum.

English On Sulphur

Among the three principles, philosophers have rightly placed sulphur first, as the worthiest principle, in whose preparation the whole science lies hidden. For sulphur is threefold, and a choice must be made among its kinds: sulphur that tinges or colours; sulphur that congeals mercury; and third, essential sulphur that matures. I ought indeed to have treated this seriously. But since I published one of the principles through a dialogue, I am compelled to finish the others in the same way, lest I seem to wrong any of them.

Sulphur is more mature than the other principles, and mercury is coagulated only by sulphur. Thus our whole operation in this art is simply to know how to draw from metals the sulphur by which our quicksilver is congealed into gold and silver in earth's depths. In this work sulphur takes the male's place and is therefore considered worthier; mercury takes the female's place. From the compound and action of these two the philosophers' mercuries are generated.⁸⁴

SUL-SULPHUR-002 1616, body sequence page 58; BSB canvas 67; 1616, body sequence page 59; BSB canvas 68; 1616, body sequence page 60; BSB canvas 69 ·

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Latin Descripsimus in Dialogo Mercurii cum Alchimista congregationem illam Alchimistarum, ubi consultabant ex qua materia et quomodo faciendus sit Lapis Philosophicus. Scriptum est etiam quomodo tempestatis infortunio sine Conclusionem fere in universum Orbem dispersi sunt. Surrexit enim tempestas valida

⁸⁴ Three sulphurs are named: colouring, congealing mercury, and essential maturing sulphur. The shift into dialogue deliberately recalls the earlier Dialogue of Mercury, the Alchemist and Nature, included in this edition.

ventusque maximus, qui illos huc illuc dispersit, et aliquorum capita ita perflavit, ut ad hoc usque tempus sese nondum recolligere possunt, unde in illorum cerebris variae sortis muscae generantur. Erant autem inter illos variarum nationum ac conditionum homines, inter quos fuit etiam hic Alchimista, de quo in hoc Tractatu sermonem instituimus: erat alias vir bonus, sed sine Conclusionem ex numero horum, qui casualiter Lapidem Philosophorum invenire proponunt: et erat socius illius Philosophi qui cum Mercurio certabat. Hic vero dicebat, si mihi ita accidisset cum Mercurio loqui, paucis verbis illum expiscatus fuisset; stultus iste alter, inquit, nescivit cum illo procedere. Mihi quidem nunquam Mercurius placuit, nec credo in illo aliquid boni esse: at Sulphur mihi probatur, quia in illis Comitibus optime de illo disputavimus, si non illa tempestas nos disturbasset, primam materiam id esse conclusissemus: quoniam in meo capite non solent esse res leves, caput meum plenum est profundarum imaginationum.

English In the Dialogue of Mercury with the Alchemist I described that gathering of alchemists where they discussed from what matter, and how, the philosophers' stone should be made. I also wrote how, through the misfortune of a storm, they were scattered without a conclusion almost throughout the whole world. A violent storm and a very great wind arose, scattering them here and there. It blew so thoroughly through some of their heads that to this day they have not recovered themselves. Hence flies of various sorts are generated in their brains.

Among them were people of different nations and conditions, including the alchemist who is the subject of this treatise. He was otherwise a good man, but without a conclusion, one of those who propose to find the philosophers' stone by chance. He was a companion of the philosopher who disputed with Mercury. This man said: If I had happened to speak with Mercury, I would have fished him out with a few words. That other fool did not know how to deal with him. For my part, I have never liked mercury, and I do not believe there is anything good in it. But sulphur pleases me. At the assembly we discussed it excellently. Had the storm not disturbed us, we would have concluded that it is first matter. For light things do not usually occupy my head; my head is full of profound imaginings.

SUL-SULPHUR-003 1616, body sequence page 60; BSB canvas 69 ·

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Latin Sicque confirmatus instituit in sulphure laborare. Incepit itaque illud distillare, sublimare, calcinare, frixare, oleum per campanam ex illo facere, tum per se, tum cum crystallis, corticibus ovorum, et alios multos labores in illo expertus est; cumque potum temporis et sumptuum consumpsisset, et nihil ad propositum invenire potuit, tristis fuit miser, multas noctes duxit insomnes; exhibat etiam saepenumero extra urbem ad speculandum, ut eo commodius aliquid certi in suo labore excogitare posset.

English Thus confirmed, he resolved to work upon sulphur. He began to distil, sublime, calcine and roast it; to make oil from it beneath a bell; to work it alone, with crystals and with eggshells. He tried many other labours upon it too. After spending much time and money without

finding anything to his purpose, the wretched man grew sad. He passed many sleepless nights and often went outside the city to contemplate, so that he might more conveniently think out something certain about his work.

SUL-SULPHUR-004 1616, body sequence page 60; BSB canvas 69; 1616, body sequence page 61; BSB canvas 70; 1616, body sequence page 62; BSB canvas 71 .

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Latin Accidit autem quadam vice, cum ita fere in extasi speculando deambulare, pervenit ad quoddam nemus viridissimum, omniumque rerum refertissimum: in quo erant omnium minerarum et metallorum fodinae, omniumque animalium et avium genera, omnium arborum, herbarum et fructuum copia. Ibi etiam erant varii aquaeductus, quoniam illis in locis aqua non habebatur nisi quae per varia instrumenta et canales trahebatur, et hoc per varios artifices ex variis locis: praecipua fuit illa, clariorque caeteris, quae a radiis Lunae trahebatur; et haec non nisi pro Nympha nemoris illius procurabatur. Ibi etiam pascebantur tauri et arietes, et pastores erant duo iuvenes, quos Alchimista interrogans: Cuius, inquit, est haec sylva? Cui responderunt: Est nemus et hortus nostrae Nymphae Veneris. Alchimista huc illuc inambulabat. Placuit illi quidem locus, sed ille tamen semper de suo sulphure cogitabat, atque ita ambulando fessus, miser consedit ad latus canalis, sub quadam arbore, et coepit miserrime lamentari, deplorando tempus et sumptus in suo labore frustra impensos. Non erat alias deceptoriae facultatis, sed sibi ipsi nocivus. Aitque: Quid est hoc, omnes dicunt rem esse communem, vilem, facilem, et ego sum vir doctus, et hunc miserum lapidem non possum excogitare? Sicque lamentando coepit maledicere sulphuri, quod in illo tot sumptus, tot labores frustra consumperit; et sulphur fuit etiam in illo nemore, sed inscio Alchimista. Interim dum ita lamentaretur, audivit vocem quasi alicuius senis: Amice cur ita lamentaris, cur maledicis sulphuri? Alchimista circumspexit ubique neminemque videns perterrefactus est. Vox autem illa iterum ait: Amice cur ita contristaris?

English One time, while walking and reflecting almost in an ecstasy, he came to a very green grove, abundantly supplied with everything. It contained mines of every ore and metal, every kind of animal and bird, and plentiful trees, herbs and fruits. There were various aqueducts too, since those places had no water except what was drawn through different instruments and channels by various artists from different locations. The chief water, clearer than the others, was drawn from the moon's rays and procured solely for the grove's nymph. Bulls and rams grazed there too. Their herdsmen were two youths. The alchemist asked them: Whose forest is this? They replied: It is the grove and garden of our nymph Venus.

The alchemist wandered about. He liked the place, yet kept thinking about his sulphur. Tired from walking, the wretched man sat beneath a tree beside a channel and began to lament most miserably, mourning the time and money vainly spent upon his work. He was not otherwise a cheat, but harmed himself. What is this? he said. Everyone says the thing is common, cheap and easy. I am a learned man, yet cannot work out this wretched stone! As he lamented he began to curse sulphur, upon which he had fruitlessly spent so much money and labour.

Sulphur was also in that grove, though the alchemist did not know it. While he lamented, he heard what seemed an old man's voice: Friend, why do you lament so? Why do you curse sulphur? The alchemist looked everywhere and, seeing no one, was frightened. The voice said again: Friend, why are you so distressed?⁸⁵

SUL-SULPHUR-005 1616, body sequence page 62; BSB canvas 71; 1616, body sequence page 63; BSB canvas 72 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00071/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00072/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Alchimista resumpto animo, Domine, inquit, Esuriens semper de pane, ita ego semper de Lapide Philosophorum cogito.

Vox: Et quare maledicis sulphuri?

Alchimista: Domine credidi illud esse primam materiam Lapidis Philosophorum; ideo in illo laborando per aliquot annos multa consumpsi, et non potui istum Lapidem invenire.

Vox: Amice ego quidem sulphur novi verum et principale subiectum Lapidis Philosophorum, sed te non nosco, neque de tuo labore et proposito quicquam scio. Iniuste maledicis sulphuri: quia illud est in durissimis carceribus, non potest unicuique adesse; quandoquidem hic ligatis pedibus, in tenebrosissimo carcere positum est, nec egreditur, nisi quo illud deportant custodes eius.

Alchimista: Et quare est incarceratum?

Vox: Quia omnibus Alchimistis obediens esse voluit, et facere quicquid ipsi volebant, contra voluntatem matris suae, quae illi interdixerat, ut solummodo iis qui illam noverunt obediret; propterea tradidit illud in carceres, et iussit ligare pedes eius custodesque constituit illi, ut sine illorum scitu et voluntate nusquam ire possit.

English Alchemist: Sir, as a hungry person always thinks of bread, so I always think of the philosophers' stone.

Voice: And why do you curse sulphur?

Alchemist: Sir, I believed it was the first matter of the philosophers' stone. I therefore spent much over several years working upon it, but could not find this stone.

Voice: Friend, I indeed know sulphur, the true and principal subject of the philosophers' stone. But I do not know you, or anything about your labour and intention. You curse sulphur unjustly. It is in the harshest imprisonment and cannot attend to everyone. Its feet are bound here in the darkest prison, and it does not leave except where its guards carry it.

Alchemist: Why is it imprisoned?

Voice: Because it wished to obey all alchemists and do whatever they wanted, against its mother's will. She had forbidden it to obey anyone

⁸⁵ Venus, bulls and rams locate the story in a symbolic landscape. The text itself does not reduce every figure to a single named modern substance. The alchemist is described as harmful to himself, rather than as a deliberate swindler.

except those who knew her. She therefore committed it to prison, ordered its feet bound and appointed guards over it, so that it could go nowhere without their knowledge and consent.

SUL-SULPHUR-006 1616, body sequence page 63; BSB canvas 72; 1616, body sequence page 64; BSB canvas 73 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00072/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00073/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Alchimista: O miser, propterea et mihi non potuit succurrere: certe mater eius facit illi magnam iniuriam: et quando dimittetur ex istis carceribus?

Vox: Amice, Sulphur Philosophorum non potest hinc exire, nisi longissimo tempore, et cum gravissimo labore.

Alchimista: Domine, et qui sunt custodes eius, qui illum custodiunt?

Vox: Amice, custodes eius sunt eiusdem generis, sed tyranni.

Alchimista: Domine, et tu quis es, et quomodo vocaris?

Vox: Ego sum Iudex et Praefectus carcerum, et nomen mihi Saturnus.

Alchimista: Ergo in tuis carceribus Sulphur detinetur?

Vox: In meis quidem carceribus Sulphur detinetur, sed habet alios custodes.

Alchimista: Et quid facit in carceribus?

Vox: Laborat quicquid eius custodes volunt.

Alchimista: Et quid scit laborare?

Vox: Illud est mille artifex, et est cor omnium rerum: scit emendare metalla, mineras corrigit, animalia intellectu docet; scit facere omnia genera florum in herbis et arboribus, atque illis omnibus praeest; corrumpit aerem, quem iterum emendat; est omnium odorum in Mundo artifex, omniumque colorum pictor.

English Alchemist: Poor thing! That is why it could not help me either. Its mother certainly does it a great injustice. When will it be released from these prisons?

Voice: Friend, the philosophers' sulphur cannot leave here except after a very long time and with very great labour.

Alchemist: Sir, who are the guards that keep it?

Voice: Friend, its guards are of the same kind, but tyrants.

Alchemist: Sir, who are you, and what is your name?

Voice: I am judge and governor of the prisons. My name is Saturn.

Alchemist: So sulphur is held in your prisons?

Voice: Sulphur is indeed held in my prisons, but it has other guards.

Alchemist: What does it do in prison?

Voice: It performs whatever work its guards wish.

Alchemist: What work does it know?

Voice: It is a master of a thousand arts and the heart of all things. It knows how to improve metals and correct ores. It teaches animals understanding. It knows how to make every kind of flower in plants and trees and rules over them all. It corrupts air and restores it again. It makes every scent in the world and paints every colour.

SUL-SULPHUR-007 1616, body sequence page 64; BSB canvas 73; 1616, body sequence page 65; BSB canvas 74 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00073/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00074/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Alchimista: Ex qua materia facit flores?

Vox: Custodes dant materiam et vasa, Sulphur vero digerit, et secundum digestionis varietatem et pondus varios flores et odores facit.

Alchimista: Domine, estne senex?

Vox: Amice, scito quod Sulphur est virtus omnium rerum, et est secundus natu, sed senior omnibus: fortis et dignior, sed puer obediens.

Alchimista: Domine, quomodo cognoscitur?

Vox: Miris modis, sed optime per rationem vitalem in animalibus, per colorem in metallis, per odorem in vegetabilibus: sine illo mater eius nihil operatur.

Alchimista: Estne solus haeres, vel si habet fratres?

Vox: Amice unicum tantum eiusmodi filium mater eius habet, fratres eius alii sunt malis associati; sororem habet, quam amat, et ab illa amatur vicissim, nam illi est sicut mater.

Alchimista: Domine, uniformisne est ubique?

Vox: Quoad naturam eius uniformis, sed in carceribus mutatur: cor eius tamen semper purum est, sed vestimenta eius maculata sunt.

Alchimista: Domine, fuitne etiam aliquando liber?

Vox: Maxime fuit, praesertim illis temporibus, quando fuerunt illi viri sapientes, quibus cum matre eius magna amicitia intercedebat.

English Alchemist: From what matter does it make flowers?

Voice: The guards supply matter and vessels. Sulphur digests, making different flowers and scents according to the varying digestion and weight.

Alchemist: Sir, is it old?

Voice: Friend, know that sulphur is the power of all things. It is second-born, yet older than all: strong and worthier, yet an obedient child.

Alchemist: Sir, how is it recognised?

Voice: In wonderful ways, but best through the vital faculty in animals, through colour in metals and through scent in plants. Without it, its mother does nothing.

Alchemist: Is it the sole heir, or does it have brothers?

Voice: Friend, its mother has only one son of this kind. Its other brothers are associated with evils. It has a sister whom it loves and who loves it in return, for she is like a mother to it.

Alchemist: Sir, is it uniform everywhere?

Voice: In nature it is uniform, but it is changed in prison. Its heart is always pure, though its clothes are stained.

Alchemist: Sir, was it ever free?

Voice: Certainly, and especially in the times of those wise men who enjoyed great friendship with its mother.

SUL-SULPHUR-008 1616, body sequence page 65; BSB canvas 74; 1616, body sequence page 66; BSB canvas 75 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00074/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00075/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Alchimista: Et qui fuerunt illi?

Vox: Innumerabiles fuerunt. Fuit Hermes, qui cum matre eius unum erat: post ipsum fuerunt multi Reges ac Principes, nec non multi alii sapientes, utpote hisce saeculis Aristoteles, Avicenna, et caetera, qui illud liberarunt: hi enim eius ligaturas dissolvere sciverunt.

Alchimista: Domine, quid eis dedit pro deliberatione?

Vox: Dedit illis tria Regna: nam quando illud aliquis dissolvit et liberat, tunc illud custodes suos, qui modo in suo Regno gubernant, vincit, et ligatos huic qui illud liberat in subditos tradit, ac eorum Regna in possessionem dat. Sed quod maius est, in Regno eius est speculum in quo totus Mundus videtur: quicumque in hoc speculum inspicit, tres partes sapientiae totius Mundi in illo videre et addiscere potest: atque ita sapientissimus in hisce tribus Regnis evadet, quales Aristoteles et Avicenna fuerunt et alii multi, qui, sicut et caeteri antecessores, in hoc speculo viderunt, quomodo et Mundus creatus est: ex illo didicerunt caelestium virtutum influentias in inferiora, et quomodo Natura per pondus ignis res componit: tum etiam motum Solis et Lunae, praesertim vero motum illum universalem, quo mater eius gubernatur: ex illo gradus caliditatis, frigiditatis, humiditatis et siccitatis, virtutesque herbarum ac omnium rerum cognoverunt; unde optimi Medici facti sunt. Et certe nisi Medicus talis sit, ut sciat cur haec herba talis vel talis, cur in hoc gradu calida, cur sicca, cur humida sit, non ex libris Galeni aut Avicennae, sed ex fonte Naturae, unde et illi ista habuerunt, fundamentalis Medicus esse non potest. Ista omnia diligenter illi considerarunt, et scripta sua successoribus reliquerunt, ut homines ad altiora studia allicerent, et discerent Sulphur liberare, atque sua vincula dissolvere: sed homines huius saeculi scripta illorum iam pro finali fundamento habent, et ulterius non quaerunt; sufficitque illis quod sciant dicere, sic Aristoteles, sic Galenus scripserunt.

English Alchemist: Who were they?

Voice: They were innumerable. There was Hermes, who was one with its mother. After him there were many kings and princes, and many other wise men, such as Aristotle and Avicenna in these ages, who freed it. They knew how to loosen its bonds.

Alchemist: Sir, what did it give them for its liberation?

Voice: It gave them three kingdoms. When someone unbinds and frees it, it overcomes its guards, who now rule in its kingdom. It binds them and hands them as subjects to its liberator, giving him possession of their kingdoms. Greater still, in its kingdom is a mirror in which the whole world is seen. Whoever looks into it can see and learn the three parts of the wisdom of the whole world, and so becomes most wise in these three kingdoms. Such were Aristotle, Avicenna and many others. Like their predecessors, they saw in this mirror how the world was created. From it they learned the influences of heavenly powers upon lower things and how nature composes things through fire's weight. They learned the motions of sun and moon, and above all that universal motion by which its mother is governed. From it they knew the degrees of heat, cold, moisture and dryness, and the powers of plants and all things. Hence they became excellent physicians.

Certainly, unless a physician is such a person that he knows why this plant is of this or that kind, why it is hot to this degree, dry or moist—not from Galen's or Avicenna's books, but from nature's fountain, where they too obtained this knowledge—he cannot be a physician grounded in first principles. They considered all these things diligently and left their writings to successors to draw people towards higher studies, so that they might learn to free sulphur and loosen its bonds. But people of this age now take those writings as the ultimate foundation and seek no further. It is enough for them to say: Aristotle wrote this; Galen wrote that.⁸⁶

SUL-SULPHUR-009 1616, body sequence page 66; BSB canvas 75; 1616, body sequence page 67; BSB canvas 76 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00075/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00076/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Alchimista: Et quid dicis, mi Domine, potestne herba absque Herbario cognosci?

Vox: Veteres illi Philosophi ex ipsomet Naturae fonte sua recepta conscripserunt.

Alchimista: Quomodo, mi Domine?

Vox: Scito, quod omnes res in terra et super terram ex tribus Principiis generantur et producuntur: aliquando duobus, quibus tamen tertium adhaeret: qui igitur novit tria Principia, et pondus illorum, ut illa Natura coniungit, facile ex decoctione gradum ignis in subiecto, an bene aut male vel mediocriter coctum, idque secundum maius vel minus, intelligere poterit: nam cuncta vegetabilia ab his, qui tria Principia noverunt, cognoscuntur.

Alchimista: Et hoc quomodo?

Vox: Ex visu, ex gustu, et odore; in his tribus sensibus concluduntur etiam tria Principia rerum, et gradus eorum decoctionis.

⁸⁶ The three kingdoms and three parts of the wisdom of the whole world echo the treatise's mineral, vegetable and animal classification and Hermetic claims of universal knowledge. Aristotle and Avicenna appear here as figures in the author's lineage of sages.

English Alchemist: What are you saying, sir? Can a plant be known without a herbal?

Voice: Those ancient philosophers wrote their prescriptions from nature's very fountain.

Alchemist: How, sir?

Voice: Know that all things in and upon earth are generated and produced from three principles, sometimes from two, to which the third nevertheless adheres. Whoever knows the three principles and their weights as nature joins them can readily understand from the cooking the degree of fire in a subject: whether it has been cooked well, badly or moderately, and to a greater or lesser extent. All plants are known by those who know the three principles.

Alchemist: How is that?

Voice: By sight, taste and smell. In these three senses are also contained the three principles of things and their degrees of cooking.

SUL-SULPHUR-010 1616, body sequence page 67; BSB canvas 76; 1616, body sequence page 68; BSB canvas 77 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00076/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00077/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Alchimista: Domine, dicunt quod Sulphur est Medicina.

Vox: Imo et ipse Medicus est, et qui illum ex carceribus liberant, illis pro gratitudine et sanguinem suum in medicinam dat.

Alchimista: Domine, habita universali Medicina, quam diu homo potest se conservare a morte?

Vox: Usque ad terminum mortis: caute tamen haec Medicina sumenda est: multi enim viri sapientes hac Medicina ante terminum interierunt.

Alchimista: Et quid dicis, mi Domine, estne venenum?

Vox: Nonne audivisti quod magna flamma ignis consumit parvam? Multi erant Philosophi, qui ex aliorum doctrina artem habuerunt, qui non ita profunde virtutem Medicinae scrutarunt; imo quo Medicina erat potentior, subtilior, eo sanior illis videbatur, et unum granum eius multa millia metalli transmeat, multo magis corpus humanum.

Alchimista: Domine, quomodo ergo uti debet?

Vox: Medicina uti debuerunt, quae calorem naturalem confortando nutriret, non superaret.

Alchimista: Domine, ego scio facere istam Medicinam.

Vox: Beatus es, si scis. Sanguis enim Sulphuris est illa intrinseca virtus et siccitas, convertens et congelans argentum vivum in aurum, tum etiam omnia metalla et corpora humana ad sanitatem.

English Alchemist: Sir, they say sulphur is a medicine.

Voice: Indeed, it is a physician too. To those who free it from prison, it gives its own blood as medicine in gratitude.

Alchemist: Sir, once someone possesses the universal medicine, how long can he preserve himself from death?

Voice: Until death's appointed limit. Yet this medicine must be taken cautiously: many wise men have died through it before their time.

Alchemist: What do you say, sir? Is it poison?

Voice: Have you not heard that a great flame consumes a small one? Many philosophers obtained the art through others' teaching without investigating the medicine's power so deeply. Indeed, the stronger and subtler it was, the more wholesome it seemed to them. Yet one grain passes through many thousands of parts of metal, much more readily through the human body.

Alchemist: Sir, how then should it be used?

Voice: They should have used a medicine that nourished natural heat by strengthening it, rather than overwhelming it.

Alchemist: Sir, I know how to make that medicine.

Voice: You are fortunate if you know. For sulphur's blood is that inner power and dryness which converts and congeals quicksilver into gold, and also brings all metals and human bodies to health.⁸⁷

SUL-SULPHUR-011 1616, body sequence page 68; BSB canvas 77; 1616, body sequence page 69; BSB canvas 78 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00077/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00078/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Alchimista: Domine, ego scio facere oleum Sulphuris, quod cum calcinatis crystallis praeparatur: scio et aliud per campanam sublimare.

Vox: Certe tu etiam es Philosophus ex illis Comititiis: nam optime mea dicta interpretaris, sic, ni fallor, et omnium Philosophorum.

Alchimista: Domine, nonne est hoc oleum sanguis Sulphuris?

Vox: O amice, sanguis Sulphuris non datur nisi his, qui illud sciunt ex carceribus liberare.

Alchimista: Domine, scitne etiam Sulphur aliquid in metallis?

Vox: Dixi tibi, quod omnia scit, et in metallis multo melius quam alibi; sed custodes eius sciunt, ibi facile liberari possit, propterea ibi in durissimis carceribus detentum custodiunt, ita ut et respirare non potest; timent enim, ne ad palatium Regis perveniat.

Alchimista: Domine, in omnibusne metallis ita incarcerationum est?

⁸⁷ These claims about a universal medicine and sulphur's blood are presented as historical dialogue. The warning that a more powerful medicine may kill is integral to the original. It does not supply a usable clinical dose or modern treatment recommendation.

Vox: In omnibus, sed non uniformiter: in aliquibus non ita stricte.

Alchimista: Domine, et quare in metallis ita tyrannico more?

Vox: Quia tunc non amplius timeret illos, quando ad palatium suum Regale pervenerit: iam enim potest videri, iam libere ex fenestris prospicit; quoniam illic est in proprio Regno, licet nondum ita ut desiderat.

English Alchemist: Sir, I know how to make oil of sulphur prepared with calcined crystals. I also know how to sublime another kind beneath a bell.

Voice: Certainly, you too are one of the philosophers from that assembly! You interpret my words excellently, and, unless I am mistaken, all the philosophers' words likewise.

Alchemist: Sir, is this oil not sulphur's blood?

Voice: Friend, sulphur's blood is given only to those who know how to free it from prison.

Alchemist: Sir, does sulphur know anything about metals too?

Voice: I told you it knows everything, and much better in metals than elsewhere. Its guards know it can readily be freed there. They therefore keep it confined in the harshest prisons, so that it cannot even breathe. They fear it may reach the king's palace.

Alchemist: Sir, is it imprisoned in this way in all metals?

Voice: In all, but not uniformly. In some it is not so tightly confined.

Alchemist: Sir, why this tyranny in metals?

Voice: Because once it reached its royal palace it would no longer fear them. There it can already be seen, already looks freely from the windows. For it is there in its own kingdom, though not yet as it desires.

SUL-SULPHUR-012 1616, body sequence page 69; BSB canvas 78; 1616, body sequence page 70; BSB canvas 79 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00078/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00079/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Alchimista: Domine, et quid comedit?

Vox: Cibus eius ventus est: cum liber est coctus, sed in carceribus cogitur comedere crudum.

Alchimista: Domine, possintne istae inimicitiae inter illud et custodes eius reconciliari?

Vox: Imo, si quis esset tam prudens.

Alchimista: Quare cum illis de pace non tractat?

Vox: Illud non potest per seipsum: quia statim ira et furore excandescit.

Alchimista: Faciat hoc per aliquem commissarium.

Vox: Felicissimus hominum certe esset, et aeterna memoria dignus, qui inter illos sciret pacem facere; sed hoc non nisi vir sapientissimus, qui cum matre eius conveniret, et cointelligentiam habeat: nam si amici essent, unus alterum non impediret, sed coniunctis viribus facerent res immortales. Certe qui illos reconciliaret, esset vir aeternitati consecrandus.

English Alchemist: Sir, what does it eat?

Voice: Its food is wind: cooked when it is free, but in prison it is forced to eat it raw.

Alchemist: Sir, can these hostilities between it and its guards be reconciled?

Voice: Certainly, if someone were wise enough.

Alchemist: Why does it not negotiate peace with them?

Voice: It cannot do so by itself, for it immediately flares up in anger and fury.

Alchemist: Let it act through a commissioner.

Voice: Whoever knew how to make peace between them would certainly be the happiest of people, worthy of eternal remembrance. But only a most wise man could do it, one who agrees with its mother and shares an understanding with her. If they were friends, one would not hinder the other; joining forces, they would make immortal things. Certainly, whoever reconciled them would deserve to be consecrated to eternity.⁸⁸

SUL-SULPHUR-013 1616, body sequence page 70; BSB canvas 79; 1616, body sequence page 71; BSB canvas 80 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00079/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00080/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Alchimista: Domine, Ego componam istas lites inter illos, et liberabo illud: sum alias vir adeo doctus, sapiens, adhaec etiam sum bonus practicus praesertim ubi ad tractandum venit.

Vox: Amice, video quidem quod satis magnus, et cum magno capite sis, sed nescio num tu ista facere possis.

Alchimista: Domine, fortassis tu ignoras, quid sciunt Alchymistae: quoad tractatus semper illi sunt victores, et certe ego non sum postremus, modo inimici eius mecum tractare velint: si tractabunt, esto securus, quod causa cadet. Domine, crede mihi, Alchymistae sciunt tractare. Si tantum mecum tractare velint, Sulphur confestim liberabitur.

Vox: Placet mihi ingenium, audio quod probatus sis.

⁸⁸ Tractare can mean handle, treat, negotiate or work upon. The alchemist's boast about negotiation also mocks confidence that verbal skill or bargaining can replace knowledge of nature.

English Alchemist: Sir, I shall settle their disputes and free it. I am otherwise a very learned and wise man, and also a good practitioner, especially when it comes to negotiation.

Voice: Friend, I can indeed see that you are quite large and have a large head, but I do not know whether you can do these things.

Alchemist: Sir, perhaps you do not know what alchemists can do. When it comes to negotiations they are always victorious, and I am certainly not the least among them. If only its enemies will negotiate with me! If they do, rest assured the case will collapse. Believe me, sir, alchemists know how to negotiate. If only they will negotiate with me, sulphur will immediately be freed.

Voice: I like your ingenuity. I hear that you are a proven man.

SUL-SULPHUR-014 1616, body sequence page 71; BSB canvas 80; 1616, body sequence page 72; BSB canvas 81 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00080/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00081/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Alchimista: Domine, dic adhuc mihi, si hoc est verum Sulphur Philosophorum.

Vox: Hoc quidem est Sulphur, sed si Philosophorum est, tuum est scire. Satis ego tibi de Sulphure dixi.

Alchimista: Domine si etiam eius carceres inveniam, an eum liberare potero?

Vox: Si scies, optime poteris; facilius est enim illud liberare quam invenire.

Alchimista: Domine rogo dic adhuc mihi, si illud invenero, faciamne ex illo lapidem Philosophorum?

Vox: O amice non est meum divinare, tu ipse videto: attamen si matrem eius noveris, illam secutus fueris, sulphure soluto lapis in promptu erit.

Alchimista: Domine in quo subiecto est hoc sulphur?

Vox: Scito pro certo quod hoc sulphur est magnae virtutis: minera eius sunt omnes res mundi, est enim in metallis, herbis, arboribus, animalibus, lapidibus, minerais.

English Alchemist: Sir, tell me further whether this is the true philosophers' sulphur.

Voice: It is indeed sulphur. Whether it is the philosophers' is for you to know. I have told you enough about sulphur.

Alchemist: Sir, if I find its prisons, can I free it?

Voice: If you know how, you certainly can. It is easier to free it than to find it.

Alchemist: Sir, please tell me this too: if I find it, shall I make the philosophers' stone from it?

Voice: Friend, foretelling is not my business. See to it yourself. Yet if you know its mother and follow her, once sulphur is dissolved the stone will be at hand.

Alchemist: Sir, in what subject is this sulphur?

Voice: Know for certain that this sulphur has great power. Its ore is everything in the world, for it is in metals, plants, trees, animals, stones and ores.

SUL-SULPHUR-015 1616, body sequence page 72; BSB canvas 81 ·

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Latin Alchimista: Et quis diabolus inter tot res et subiecta illum latentem invenire potest? Dic tu mihi materiam, ex qua illum Philosophi accipiunt.

Vox: Amice nimis prope accedis, attamen ut tibi satisfaciam, scito sulphur ubique esse, sed habet quaedam palatia ubi solet Philosophis audientiam dare; sed Philosophi illud in mari suo natans et cum Vulcano ludens adorant, quando illud vilissimo vestitu incognitum Philosophi accedunt.

Alchimista: Domine in mari illud quaerere non est meum, cum hic propinquius est absconditum.

Vox: Dixi tibi quod custodes eius illud in carceribus tenebrosissimis posuerunt, ne illud videre possis, est enim in uno solo subiecto; sed si illud domi non invenisti, vix in sylvis invenies. Ne autem desperes in inquirendo illo, tibi sacrosancte dico, illud in auro et argento esse perfectissimum, sed in argento vivo facillimum.

Alchimista: Domine libenti animo facerem lapidem Philosophorum.

Vox: Rem bonam desideras, sulphur quoque libenter dissolveretur.

English Alchemist: What devil can find it hidden among so many things and subjects? Tell me the matter from which philosophers take it.

Voice: Friend, you come too close. Yet to satisfy you, know that sulphur is everywhere, but has certain palaces where it is accustomed to grant philosophers an audience. Philosophers adore it swimming in its sea and playing with Vulcan, when philosophers approach it, unrecognised in its poorest clothing.

Alchemist: Sir, it is not for me to seek it in the sea when it is hidden nearer here.

Voice: I told you its guards placed it in the darkest prisons so you could not see it. For it is in one subject alone. But if you have not found it at home, you will scarcely find it in the woods. Lest you despair in seeking it, I solemnly tell you: it is most perfect in gold and silver, but easiest in quicksilver.

Alchemist: Sir, I would gladly make the philosophers' stone.

Voice: You desire a good thing. Sulphur too would gladly be dissolved.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ The accusative incognitum agrees with illud, sulphur: philosophers approach sulphur unrecognised in its poor clothing. The sea, Vulcan and costume remain figures in the text; no modern chemical identification is substituted.

SUL-SULPHUR-016 1616, body sequence page 72; BSB canvas 81; 1616, body sequence page 73; BSB canvas 82; 1616, body sequence page 74; BSB canvas 83 ·
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Latin Et sic Saturnus discessit. Alchimista vero fessum gravis sopor invasit, et apparuit illi visio talis. Vidit in illo nemore fontem aquae plenum, circa quem deambulabant Sal cum sulphure inter se altercando, donec ultimo coeperunt pugnare, et intulit sal sulphuri vulnus incurabile, ex quo vulnere loco sanguinis aqua quasi lac candidissimum effluxit, ac in magnum flumen crevit. Tunc ex illo nemore egressa est Diana virgo pulcherrima, quae coepit lavari in flumine illo; quam dum transiens Princeps quidam vir fortissimus, et maior suis servitoribus, videret, coepit admirari eius pulchritudinem, quodque esset naturae sibi similis, et eius amore captus est: quod cum illa videret, vicissim eius amore exarsit; quamobrem quasi in animi deliquium cadens, coepit mergi; quod videns Princeps ille, mandavit suis servitoribus ut illam adiuvent: sed omnes timuerunt accedere ad flumen. Ad quos Princeps ille, quare, inquit, non adiuvatis Dianam virginem? Cui responderunt, Domine hoc flumen est quidem parvum quasi exsiccatum, sed periculosissimum. Quadam vice absque tuo scitu volumus hoc tranare, et vix a periculo aeternae mortis evasimus; scimus etiam quod et alii nostri antecessores hic perierunt. Tunc Princeps ille deposito suo pallio grosso, ita ut erat armatus in flumen prosiluit, ut opem ferret Dianae pulcherrimae, porrexitque illi manum, quae volens se salvare, ipsum etiam Principem ad se traxit, atque ambo submersi sunt. Paulo post animae illorum ex flumine illo exiverunt, volitantes supra flumen, aiuntque, optime nobiscum actum est, aliter enim ab hisce corporibus liberari non potuissemus, quae polluta et maculata erant.

English With this Saturn departed. A heavy sleep came upon the weary alchemist, and this vision appeared to him. He saw a spring full of water in that grove. Salt and sulphur walked around it disputing, until at last they began to fight. Salt gave sulphur an incurable wound. Instead of blood, a water like the whitest milk flowed from the wound and grew into a great river.

Then Diana, a most beautiful virgin, came out of the grove and began to bathe in that river. A certain prince passing by, a very strong man and greater than his servants, saw her. He marvelled at her beauty and that she possessed a nature like his own, and fell in love with her. When she saw this, she too burned with love for him. Falling as if into a swoon, she began to sink. The prince saw it and ordered his servants to help her, but all feared to approach the river. Why do you not help the virgin Diana? he asked them. They answered: Sir, this river is indeed small, almost dry, but exceedingly dangerous. Once, without your knowledge, we wanted to swim across it and barely escaped the danger of everlasting death. We also know that other predecessors of ours perished here. Then the prince put off his heavy cloak and leapt into the river just as he was, armed, to help the beautiful Diana. He reached out his hand. Wishing to save herself, she drew the prince towards her too, and both were submerged.

Shortly afterwards their souls came out of the river and flew above it. They said: It has gone very well for us. We could not otherwise have been freed from these bodies, which were polluted and stained.⁹⁰

SUL-SULPHUR-017 1616, body sequence page 74; BSB canvas 83 ·

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Latin Alchimista interrogans ait: Revertimini aliquando in illa corpora?

Animae: Non in tam polluta, sed quando purgabuntur et hoc flumen exsiccabitur per calorem solis, et provincia haec saepius per aerem examinata fuerit.

Alchimista: Interim quid facietis?

Animae: Hic supra flumen volitabimus donec istae nebulae et tempestates cessent.

English Alchemist: Will you ever return to those bodies?

Souls: Not while they are so polluted. But we shall when they are purified, this river has been dried by the sun's heat, and this region has often been tested through air.

Alchemist: What will you do meanwhile?

Souls: We shall fly above the river until these mists and storms cease.

SUL-SULPHUR-018 1616, body sequence page 74; BSB canvas 83; 1616, body sequence page 75; BSB canvas

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Latin Interim Alchymista in magis optatum somnium de suo sulphure incidit, et ecce apparent illi et venerunt in illum locum multi Alchymistae quaesitum etiam sulphur: quod cum apud illum fontem a sale occisum cadaver invenerunt, illud inter se diviserunt: quod Alchymista videns, etiam partem accepit, et sic quilibet illorum domum reversi sunt, coeperuntque in illo sulphure laborare, et hucusque non cessant; huic vero Alchymistae Saturnus occurrit et ait: Amice, quomodo se res habet?

Alchymista: O Domine multa mirabilia vidi, vix uxor mea credet ista; iam etiam inveni sulphur, rogo te mi Domine adiuva me, faciamus istum lapidem.

Saturnus: Libenter mi amice. Praepara ergo argentum vivum et sulphur et vitrum huc da.

Alchymista: Domine noli habere negotium cum Mercurio, quia est nequam, delusit socium meum et alios multos.

Saturnus: Absque argento vivo in cuius regno sulphur iam Rex est, Philosophi nihil fecerunt, nec ego aliter scio.

Alchymista: Domine faciamus ex solo sulphure.

Saturnus: Bene mi amice, sed ita succedet sicut iubes.

English Meanwhile the alchemist fell into a more welcome dream about his sulphur. Behold, many alchemists appeared to him and came to that place, also seeking sulphur. Finding its corpse beside the spring, killed

⁹⁰ Diana's bath and the prince's attempted rescue are allegorical episodes within a dream. The milk-white stream, drowning and released souls belong to the text's imagery of dissolution and purification.

by salt, they divided it among themselves. Seeing this, the alchemist too took a portion. Each returned home and began working upon that sulphur, and they have not ceased to this day. Saturn met our alchemist and said: Friend, how do matters stand?

Alchemist: Sir, I have seen many wonders. My wife will scarcely believe them. I have now also found sulphur. Please help me, sir; let us make this stone.

Saturn: Gladly, my friend. Prepare quicksilver and sulphur, then, and bring a glass vessel here.

Alchemist: Sir, have nothing to do with mercury. It is a rogue: it deceived my companion and many others.

Saturn: Without quicksilver, in whose kingdom sulphur is now king, philosophers have accomplished nothing, and I know no other way.

Alchemist: Sir, let us make it from sulphur alone.

Saturn: Very well, my friend, but it will turn out as you command.

SUL-SULPHUR-019 1616, body sequence page 75; BSB canvas 84; 1616, body sequence page 76; BSB canvas 85 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00084/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00085/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Acceperunt itaque sulphur illud quod Alchymista invenit, et fecerunt sicut voluit Alchymista, coeperuntque laborare miris modis illud sulphur, tractare in fornaculis mirabilibus, quas plures Alchymista habuit: sed semper in fine ex quolibet labore evenerunt illis candelulae, quas vetulae ad accendendum ignem vulgo vendunt. De novo incepterunt, et sulphur sublimarunt, calcinarunt, sicut Alchymistae placuit; sed utcunque fecerunt, illis semper in fine ut prius evenit: nam quicquid ex illo sulphure Alchymista voluit, semper candelula fuit, et ait ad Saturnum, vere Domine, video quod iuxta meam phantasiam non vult succedere, rogo te fac tu solus sicut scis.

English They therefore took the sulphur the alchemist had found and did as he wished. They began to work it in wonderful ways, treating it in marvellous little furnaces, of which the alchemist had many. But at the end of every labour they always obtained the little sulphur matches that old women commonly sell for lighting fires. They began again, subliming and calcining sulphur as the alchemist pleased. Whatever they did, the result was always the same. Whatever the alchemist wanted from that sulphur, it was always a little match. He said to Saturn: Truly, sir, I see it will not succeed according to my fancy. Please work alone as you know how.⁹¹

⁹¹. Candelulae are little sulphur lights or matches for kindling a fire, rather than modern friction matches. Saturn's urine, the two quicksivers and the guard remain the dream's own names; this edition does not replace them with a conjectural laboratory recipe.

SUL-SULPHUR-020 1616, body sequence page 76; BSB canvas 85; 1616, body sequence page 77; BSB canvas 86; 1616, body sequence page 78; BSB canvas 87 ·
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Latin Tunc Saturnus ait, vide ergo et discce. Accepit itaque duo argenta viva diversae substantiae, sed unius radices, quae Saturnus lavit urina sua, et vocavit illa sulphura de sulphuribus, et commiscuit fixum cum volatili; facta compositione in vas debitum posuit, et ne sulphur aufugeret, custodem supposuit, et sic postea in balneum ignis lentissimi, ut materia requirebat, posuit, et omnia optime fecit. Fecerunt itaque lapidem Philosophicum, quia ex debita materia, non nisi debitum opus evenit. Alchymista gavisus valde, accepit lapidem cum vitro, colorem eius qui erat tanquam sanguis combustus considerans admirabatur, et prae nimia laetitia coepit saltare, in quo saltu elapsus est illi e manibus vitrum in terram et fractum est, sicque Saturnus evanuit. Alchymista quoque e somnis expergefactus, nihil praeter illas candelulas quas fecerat ex sulphure, in manibus invenit, lapis vero avolavit, et hucusque volat, unde volatilis dicitur, et sic miser ille Alchymista nihil aliud didicit ex illa visione, quam candelulas sulphureas facere; qui postea relicto lapide coepit esse Medicus, inquirendo lapidem Philosophicum, lapidem renum acquisivit. Ultimo duxit vitam ut solent eiusmodi Alchymistae, plerumque fiunt medici aut smegmatitae, quod omnibus eveniet, qui sine fundamento ex auditu aut receptis casualiter per dialecticam ad artem accedunt. Aliqui postea cum illis non succedit, dicunt: viri sapientes sumus, gramen crescere audimus, si ars vera esset nos prae caeteris habuissemus, et sic pudore vestiti, ne habeantur pro indignis, sicuti sunt, imo et durae cervicis, contra artem cuculant. Tales haec scientia odit, ac illis semper in fine principium ostendit.

English Saturn said: Watch, then, and learn. He took two quicksilvers of different substance but one root, washed them in his own urine and called them sulphurs of sulphurs. He mixed the fixed with the volatile. Once the composition was made, he placed it in the proper vessel and set a guard beneath it to prevent sulphur escaping. He then placed it in a bath of the gentlest fire, as the matter required, and did everything very well. They therefore made the philosophers' stone, since from proper matter only a proper work results. The alchemist was greatly delighted and took the stone with its glass vessel. Considering its colour, like burned blood, he marvelled and began to dance from excessive joy. As he danced, the vessel slipped from his hands to the ground and broke. Saturn vanished. The alchemist too woke from sleep and found nothing in his hands except the little matches he had made from sulphur. The stone had flown away and is still flying; hence it is called volatile.

Thus the wretched alchemist learned nothing from that vision except to make sulphur matches. Afterwards he abandoned the stone and became a physician. In seeking the philosophers' stone, he acquired a kidney stone. Finally he led the life such alchemists usually lead: most become physicians or soap-makers. This will happen to everyone who approaches the art without a foundation, from hearsay or recipes, by chance and dialectic. Afterwards some, when they fail, say: We are wise men; we hear the grass grow. If the art were true, we would have attained it before anyone else. Thus clothed in shame, lest they be

considered unworthy—as indeed they are, and stubborn too— they cry out against the art. This science hates such people and always shows them the beginning at the end.⁹²

SUL-SULPHUR-021 1616, body sequence page 78; BSB canvas 87; 1616, body sequence page 79; BSB canvas 88 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00087/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00088/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Nos autem indignis hanc artem nihil esse concedimus, virtutis amatoribus vero et veris indagatoribus filiisque doctrinae summopere illam commendamus, veramque esse et omnino verissimam affirmamus, quam aliquoties coram viris eo spectaculo dignis, magnae et infimae conditionis hominibus re ipsa comprobavimus. Non tamen nostris manibus haec medicina fuit facta sed ab amico talia accepimus, verissima tamen, ad quam indagandam satis inquisitores informavimus; quibus si scripta nostra non placent, aliorum Autorum leviora legant, hac tamen cum cautela, ut quicquid legerint semper ad possibilitatem naturae conferant, nec tentent aliquid contra naturam, nec credant etiamsi esset scriptum in libris Philosophorum, quod ignis non urit, quia hoc est contra naturam: sed si scribitur ignem exsiccandi, calefaciendi vim habere, hoc cum naturaliter fit, credendum est; natura enim semper cum sano intellectu convenit, et in natura nihil difficile, omnisque veritas simplex est. Tum etiam discat cognoscere, quae res in natura sunt sibi propinquiores, quod per scripta nostra facilius quam per alia fieri existimamus, cum satis scripsisse putamus, donec aliquis alius veniat qui totam receptam, sicut ex lacte conficere caseum conscribat, quod nobis non licet.

English I concede that this art is nothing for the unworthy. To lovers of virtue, true investigators and children of learning, however, I most earnestly commend it. I affirm it is true, altogether true. Several times I have demonstrated it in actual practice before people worthy of that spectacle, of both high and low condition. Yet this medicine was not made with my own hands. I received such things from a friend, entirely genuine nevertheless. I have sufficiently instructed seekers how to investigate it. If my writings do not please them, let them read other authors' easier works, with this caution: whatever they read, let them always compare it with nature's possibilities. Let them attempt nothing contrary to nature, nor believe, even if written in philosophers' books, that fire does not burn, for that is contrary to nature. But if it is written that fire has the power to dry and heat, this should be believed because it happens naturally. Nature always agrees with sound understanding, and nothing in nature is difficult; all truth is simple. Let the seeker also learn to recognise which things in nature are nearer to one another. I think this can be learned more easily through my writings than through others. I believe I have written enough, until someone else comes to write the entire recipe, like making cheese from milk. That I am not permitted to do.⁹³

⁹². The joke substitutes lapis renum, kidney stone, for lapis Philosophicus, philosophers' stone. Smegmatitae is rendered soap-makers. Hearing grass grow is another boast of impossible keenness.

⁹³. The author distinguishes demonstrating the medicine from making it: he says here that the medicine used was received from a friend. That qualification is retained alongside the earlier claims of knowledge and protection.

SUL-SULPHUR-022 1616, body sequence page 79; BSB canvas 88; 1616, body sequence page 80; BSB canvas 89 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00088/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00089/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Sed ne omnia in incipientes vertamus, vobis quoque qui iam has transiistis aerumnas aliquid dicemus. Vidistisne regionem illam ubi vir suam sibi perduxit uxorem, quorum nuptiae in domo naturae celebratae sunt? Intellexistis quomodo hoc sulphur vobiscum vulgus vidit? Si igitur vultis ut vestram Philosophiam vetulae exercent, monstrate horum sulphurum dealbationem. Vulgo dicite: venite et videte, iam enim divisa est aqua et sulphur exivit: redibit candidum, et congelabit aquas. Comburite ergo sulphur a sulphure incombustibili, et lavate, dealbate, rubificate, donec sulphur fiat Mercurius, ac Mercurius fiat sulphur, quod postea anima auri ornabit. Nam si non sublimabitis sulphur a sulphure, et Mercurium a Mercurio nondum aquam invenistis, quae ex sulphure et Mercurio quinta essentia creatur et distillatur: non ascendet qui non descendit. Quidquid in hac arte est notabile in praeparatione, amittitur a multis, sulphure enim acuitur Mercurius noster, alias non prodesset. Princeps sine populo miser: hic Alchymista sine sulphure et Mercurio. Si me intellexistis dixi. Alchymista postea domum reversus, lapidem amissum deplorabat, et maxime condolebat, quod Saturnum non interrogaverit, quale Sal hoc fuerit, cum tot varia genera salium reperiantur; caetera uxori dixit.

English But lest I direct everything towards beginners, I shall also say something to you who have already passed through these troubles. Have you seen that region where the husband brought his wife to himself, whose wedding was celebrated in nature's house? Have you understood how the common people saw this sulphur with you? If you wish old women to practise your philosophy, show the whitening of these sulphurs. Tell the common people: Come and see; the water is now divided and sulphur has come out. It will return white and congeal the waters. Burn away sulphur, therefore, from incombustible sulphur; wash, whiten and redden until sulphur becomes mercury and mercury becomes sulphur, which you will afterwards adorn with gold's soul. For unless you sublime sulphur from sulphur, and mercury from mercury, you have not yet found the water which is created and distilled as a quintessence from sulphur and mercury. He who has not descended will not ascend. Many people lose what is noteworthy in this art at the preparation stage. Our mercury is sharpened with sulphur; otherwise it would be useless. A prince without a people is wretched; so is the alchemist here without sulphur and mercury. If you have understood me, I have spoken.

Afterwards the alchemist returned home and mourned the lost stone. Above all he grieved that he had not asked Saturn what salt this was, since so many different kinds of salts are found. He told the rest to his wife.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ Burn away sulphur from incombustible sulphur reads a sulphure as separation, parallel to the following command to sublime sulphur from sulphur and mercury from mercury. It does not identify the named sulphurs with modern chemical reagents.

Conclusion

CONCLUSIO.

SUL-CONCLUSION-001 1616, body sequence page 81; BSB canvas 90 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00090/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin CONCLUSIO.

Omnis inquisitor huius artis debet in primis maturo iudicio quatuor elementorum creationem, operationem et virtutes cum suis actibus examinare; si enim horum originem et naturam ignorat, ad cognitionem principiorum non perveniet, nec materiam veram lapidis cognoscet, multo minus finem bonum assequetur; quoniam omnis finis supra sui principium terminatur. Qui bene scit quid incipit, bene sciet quod finiet. Origo enim elementorum est chaos, ex quo Deus conditor rerum creavit et separavit elementa, quod solius Dei est. Ex elementis vero natura producit principia rerum, et hoc per velle Dei solius naturae est. Ex principiis postea natura mineras producit et omnia, ex quibus etiam artifex imitando naturam multa mirabilia potest, quoniam natura ex his principiis quae sunt Sal, Sulphur et Mercurius, mineras ac metalla et omnia genera rerum producit; et non producit simpliciter ex elementis metallum, sed per principia quae sunt medium inter elementa et metalla. Ergo si natura ista non facit, multo minus ars poterit; et non solum in hoc exemplo, verum in omni processu naturali dispositio media observanda est. Propterea hic in hoc tractatu et elementa ipsa, et illorum actus et operationem, tum et principiorum originem satis copiose descripsimus, quod hucusque nullus Philosophus clariora dedit, ut inquisitor bonus facilius considerare possit, in quo gradu lapis a metallis, et metalla ab elementis distant.

English Conclusion

Every seeker of this art should first examine with mature judgment the creation, operation and powers of the four elements, together with their actions. If he is ignorant of their origin and nature, he will not reach knowledge of the principles or recognise the stone's true matter, much less attain a good end. Every end comes to rest upon its own beginning. Whoever knows well what he begins will know well what he will finish.

The elements originate in chaos. From it God, the maker of things, created and separated the elements: this belongs to God alone. From the elements nature produces the principles of things: by God's will this belongs to nature alone. From the principles nature then produces ores and everything else. From these an artist too can do many wonderful things by imitating nature. For from the principles—salt, sulphur and mercury—nature produces ores, metals and every kind of thing. She does not produce metal simply from elements, but through the principles, intermediaries between elements and metals. If nature does not do it, much less can art. Not only in this example but in every natural process the intermediate disposition must be observed.

Therefore in this treatise I have described sufficiently fully the elements themselves, their actions and operation, and the origin of the principles—no philosopher has yet given a clearer account—so that a good seeker

may more readily consider how far the stone stands from metals, and metals from elements.

SUL-CONCLUSION-002 1616, body sequence page 81; BSB canvas 90; 1616, body sequence page 82; BSB canvas 91 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00090/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00091/full/full/0/default.jpg

Latin Non propterea tamen tractatum hunc conscripsimus ut antiquos Philosophos redarguere velimus, sed potius eorum scripta confirmaremus, et aliqua quae omiserunt adimpleremus; cum et Philosophi homines sunt, non omnia ita ad amussim possunt, nec unus de omnibus sufficienter potest. Aliquos etiam miracula a via lineari naturae seduxerunt, ut in Alberto Magno viro et Philosopho sagacissimo accidisse legimus, qui scripsit temporibus suis grana aurea inter dentes demortui in sepulcro inventa esse. Huius miraculi rationem certam non potuit investigare, sed hoc vi minerali in homine adiudicavit, et super hanc opinionem cecidit illi confirmatio dicti Morienis, et haec materia Rex a te extrahitur.

English Yet I did not write this treatise to refute the ancient philosophers, but rather to confirm their writings and supply certain things they omitted. Philosophers too are human: they cannot do everything with such exactness, nor can one person treat everything sufficiently. Wonders have also led some away from nature's straight path. We read that this happened to Albert the Great, a man and philosopher of the greatest insight. He wrote that in his time grains of gold were found between a dead man's teeth in a tomb. Unable to discover a certain reason for this wonder, he attributed it to a mineral power in the human being. His opinion seemed confirmed by Morienus's saying: And this matter, O king, is extracted from you.⁹⁵

SUL-CONCLUSION-003 1616, body sequence page 82; BSB canvas 91; 1616, printed p. 83; Rome digitisation PDF p. 102 · https://api.digitale-sammlungen.de/iiif/image/v2/bsb10191243_00091/full/full/0/default.jpg · https://archive.org/download/bub_gb_6_qSMmO2Kh4C/bub_gb_6_qSMmO2Kh4C.pdf#page=102

Latin Sed hoc erroneum est, nam et Morienes Philosophice ista intelligere voluit. Virtus enim mineralis in suo regno locata est, sicut et animalis in suo regno, ut in libello 12 Tractatum ista regna distinximus et in tria regna divisimus, quia quodlibet horum absque ingressu extraneo in semetipso stat et multiplicatur. Verum quidem est in regno animali esse et Mercurium sicut materiam, et sulphur sicut virtutem; sed animale non minerale. Vis sulphuris animalis si non fuisset in homine, non congelaret sanguinem Mercurius in carnem et ossa: sic etiam si non esset vis sulphuris vegetabilis in regno vegetabili, non congelaret aquam, seu Mercurium vegetabilem in herbas et arbores. Sic quoque in regno minerali intelligendum est. Non differunt quidem hi tres Mercurii in virtute, nec illa tria sulphura, quia quodlibet sulphur habet vim naturalem Mercurium suum coagulare; et quilibet Mercurius habet vim a proprio sulphure coagulare; sed non ab extraneo.

English But this is mistaken. Morienus intended his words to be understood philosophically. Mineral power is situated in its own kingdom, as animal power is in its own, as I distinguished these kingdoms in the little book of Twelve Treatises and divided them into

⁹⁵ The source's reference to libello 13 Tractatum is normalised here to Twelve Treatises: the work repeatedly identifies its own twelve-part collection, and there is no thirteenth treatise in the identified collection. Albert the Great and Morienus are authorities invoked and interpreted by the author. The report of gold in a corpse's teeth is treated as a reported wonder.

three. Each stands and multiplies within itself without anything foreign entering. It is indeed true that mercury exists in the animal kingdom as matter, and sulphur as power, but animal, not mineral. Without the power of animal sulphur in the human being, mercury would not congeal blood into flesh and bones. Likewise, without the power of vegetable sulphur in the vegetable kingdom, water or vegetable mercury would not be congealed into plants and trees. The mineral kingdom should be understood similarly. These three mercuries do not differ in power, nor do the three sulphurs. Each sulphur has the natural power to coagulate its own mercury, and each mercury has the power to be coagulated by its own sulphur, but not by a foreign one.⁹⁶

SUL-CONCLUSION-004 1616, printed p. 83; Rome digitisation PDF p. 102 ·

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Latin Cur autem aurum inter dentes demortui inventum vel generatum est, haec est ratio, quod in vita demortui per aliquem Medicum Mercurius in corpus illud infirmum introductus est, vel per unctionem, vel per turbit, vel per alium modum, ut moris et usus est, et natura Mercurii est ad os patientis ascendere, et per vulnera oris cum phlegmate evacuari. Si igitur in eiusmodi cura infirmus obiit, is Mercurius non habens egressum, in ore intra dentes remansit, et factum est caviticulum illud in vas naturale Mercurii, sic per longum tempus occlusus, sulphure proprio in aurum coagulatus est calore naturali putrefactionis a phlegmate corrosivo Corporis humani purificatus; sed si ibi Mercurius mineralis introductus non esset, nunquam aurum produceretur.

English The reason gold was found or generated between the dead man's teeth is this. During his life some physician introduced mercury into that sick body, whether by anointing, turbit or another method, as is customary practice. It is mercury's nature to rise towards the patient's mouth and be evacuated with phlegm through sores in the mouth. If the patient died during such treatment, the mercury, having no outlet, remained in the mouth between the teeth. That cavity thus became a natural vessel for mercury. Shut in for a long time, it was coagulated into gold by its own sulphur, through the natural heat of putrefaction, purified by the human body's corrosive phlegm. But if mineral mercury had not been introduced, gold would never have been produced.

SUL-CONCLUSION-005 1616, printed p. 83; Rome digitisation PDF p. 102; 1616, printed p. 84; Rome digitisation PDF p. 103 ·

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Latin Et hoc est exemplum verissimum, quod natura in visceribus terrae ex solo Mercurio producit aurum et argentum ac alia metalla secundum dispositionem loci vel matricis. Quoniam Mercurius habet in se suum proprium sulphur quo coagulatur in aurum nisi impediatur ab accidente, vel non habeat calorem requirentem, vel locum occlusum. Non ergo vis sulphuris animalis congelat Mercurium in aurum sed in carnem: si enim talis virtus in homine esset, in omnibus hoc eveniret corporibus, quod non est. Talia multa miracula et accidentia eveniunt,

⁹⁶. The account of mercury treatment and gold formation is a historical causal story, not a medically or chemically verified explanation. Turbit is retained as turbit, a historical preparation-name. This passage does not instruct the present reader to use mercury medicinally.

quae non bene considerata a Scriptoribus, errores lectoribus inferunt; Inquisitor tamen bonus omnia ad possibilitatem naturae applicare debet; si cum natura non conveniunt, omittenda sunt; differentia enim est inter aurum et aquam, sed minor inter aquam et Mercurium, minima inter aurum et Mercurium: nam domus auri Mercurius est, et domus Mercurii est aqua; sulphur autem est coagulum Mercurii, quod quidem sulphur difficilime praeparatur, sed difficilius investigatur, quoniam in sulphure Philosophorum totum hoc arcanum latet, quod etiam in penetralibus Mercurii continetur, de cuius praeparatione, sine qua inutile est, dabimus aliquando in tertio principiorum de sale, cum hic virtutem et originem praevidiam sulphuris tractamus.

English This is a most genuine example of how nature in earth's depths produces gold, silver and other metals from mercury alone, according to the disposition of the place or womb. Mercury contains its own sulphur, through which it is coagulated into gold unless hindered by an accident, lacking the requisite heat or lacking an enclosed place. Thus the power of animal sulphur congeals mercury into flesh, rather than gold. If such a power existed in the human being, this would happen in all bodies, which it does not. Many such wonders and accidents occur. When writers do not consider them properly, they bring errors upon readers. A good seeker, however, must apply everything to nature's possibilities. If things do not agree with nature, they must be set aside. There is a difference between gold and water, but a smaller one between water and mercury, and the smallest between gold and mercury. For mercury is gold's house, and water is mercury's house. Sulphur, however, is mercury's coagulant. This sulphur is prepared with difficulty, and investigated with still greater difficulty, because the whole secret lies hidden in the philosophers' sulphur, which is also contained within mercury's innermost parts. I shall one day give an account of its preparation—without which it is useless—under salt, the third of the principles. Here I have treated sulphur's power and its origin first.⁹⁷

SUL-CONCLUSION-006 1616, printed p. 84; Rome digitisation PDF p. 103 ·

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Latin Sufficiat diligenti studioso originem Principiorum hic accepisse, cum incognito principio finis saepe dubius, de quibus nos in hoc tractatu non aenigmatice, sed clariori sermone quo potuimus et nobis licet inquisitorem allocuti sumus: per quem si alicui Deus mentem illuminabit, sciet quid successor suis antecessoribus debeat, cum haec scientia semper per eiusmodi ingenia acquiritur, quam nos post eiusmodi claram ostensionem in sinum Dei Altissimi Creatoris ac Domini nostri reponimus, et nos ipsos una cum bonis Lectoribus in gratiam et immensam misericordiam commendamus. Cui sit laus et gloria per infinita saecula saeculorum.

FINIS.

English Let it suffice for the diligent student to have learned here the origin of the principles, for when the beginning is unknown, the end is often doubtful. Concerning these matters I have addressed the seeker in

⁹⁷ The final distinction among water, mercury and gold and the promised treatment of salt close the original 1616 text. The Roman copy supplies the final leaf absent from the consulted BSB copy; the text through FINIS is included.

this treatise without riddles, in speech as clear as I could use and am permitted to use. If through it God illuminates anyone's mind, that person will know what a successor owes his predecessors, since this science is always acquired through understanding of this kind. After so clear a demonstration I place it back in the bosom of God Most High, our Creator and Lord. Together with good readers, I commend myself to his grace and immeasurable mercy. To him be praise and glory through endless ages of ages.

The End.

Historical English Appendix

John French to the Reader 1650

To the Reader

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Historical English of 1650 Judicious Reader,

There is abundance of knowledge, yet but little truth known. The generality of our knowledg is but as Castles in the aire, or groundlesse fancies. I know but two ways that are ordained for the getting of wisdom, viz. the book of God, and of Nature; and these also, but as they are read with reason. Many look upon the former as a thing below them, upon the latter as a ground of Atheisme, and therefore neglect both. It is my judgement, that as to search the Scriptures is most necessary, so without reason it is impossible. Faith without reason is but implicite.

Modernised English Discerning reader,

There is an abundance of knowledge, yet little truth is known. Most of our knowledge is like castles in the air or unfounded fancies. I know only two ways appointed for acquiring wisdom: the book of God and the book of Nature—and even these only when read with reason. Many regard the former as beneath them and the latter as a foundation for atheism, and therefore neglect both. In my judgment, searching the Scriptures is most necessary, but impossible without reason. Faith without reason is merely implicit faith.⁹⁸

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Historical English of 1650 If I cannot understand by reason how every thing is, yet I will see some reason that a thing is so, before I beleeeve it to be so. I will ground my beleevig of the Scripture upon reason, I will improve my reason by Philosophy. How shall we convince gain-sayers of the truth of the Scriptures, but by principles of Reason? When God made Man after his own image, How was that? But by making him a rational creature? Men therefore that lay aside Reason in the reading of sacred mysteries, do but un-man themselves, and become further involved in a Labyrinth of errors. Hence it is that their Religion is degenerated into irrational notions.

Modernised English If I cannot understand through reason how everything is, I shall at least see some reason that a thing is so before I believe it. I shall ground my belief in Scripture upon reason and improve my reason through philosophy. How can we convince opponents of Scripture's truth except through principles of reason? When God made humanity in his own image, how did he do it except by making human beings

⁹⁸. French's printed Scriptures is retained in the historical English and corrected to Scriptures in the modernisation. Implicit faith here concerns assent accepted without the independent exercise of reason he demands.

rational creatures? People who set reason aside when reading sacred mysteries strip themselves of their humanity and become further entangled in a labyrinth of errors. This is how their religion degenerates into irrational notions.

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Historical English of 1650 Now to say, that pure Philosophy is true Divinity, will haply bee a paradox, yet if any one should affirm it, he would not be heterodox. When Job had been a long time justifying himselfe against God, which I conceive was by reason of his ignorance of God, and himselfe; God undertakes to convince him of his errour by the principles of Nature, and to bring him to the knowledge of both: as you may see at large, Job 38. Can any deny that Hermes, Plato, Aristotle (though pure Naturalists) were not most deep Divines? Doe not all grant that the two first cha. of Gen. are true Divinity? I dare also affirm that they are the most deep and the truest Philosophy. Yea, they are the ground, and sum of all Divinity, and Philosophy: and if rightly understood, will teach thee more knowledge of God, and thy selfe, then all the books in the world besides.

Modernised English To say that pure philosophy is true divinity may seem a paradox; yet anyone who affirmed it would not be unorthodox. When Job had long been justifying himself against God—which I take to have resulted from his ignorance of both God and himself—God undertook to convince him of his error through nature’s principles and bring him to knowledge of both. You can see this at length in Job 38. Can anyone deny that Hermes, Plato and Aristotle, though natural philosophers, were profound theologians? Does everyone not grant that the first two chapters of Genesis are true divinity? I also dare affirm that they are the deepest and truest philosophy. Indeed, they are the foundation and sum of all divinity and philosophy. Rightly understood, they will teach you more about God and yourself than all the other books in the world.⁹⁹

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Historical English of 1650 Now for the better understanding of them, make use of most profound Sandivogius the author of the first of the ensuing Treatises, as the best Expositor of them: in that treatise of his thou shalt see the mystery of the Deity, & Nature unfolded, even to admiration: as to see what that light, and fire is which is the throne of Gods Majesty. How he is in the heaven most gloriously, & in the creatures providentially. How he is the life of that universall Spirit which is diffused through the whole world. What that Spirit of his is that moved upon the Waters. What those Waters are which are above the Firmament, and which are under the Firmament. What that Sperm and Seed was which God put into all creatures by which they should be multiplied. The true manner of Mans Creation, and his

⁹⁹. The original rhetorical question contains were not. The modernisation gives the affirmative sense demanded by French’s surrounding argument that natural philosophy and divinity agree. Job 38 and Genesis 1–2 are French’s own scriptural points of reference.

degenerating into Mortality. The true nature of the Garden of Eden, or Paradise. Also the reason why Gold, which had a Seed put into it, as well as other creatures, whereby it should be multiplyed, doth not multiply. What the obstruction is, and how it may be removed, that so it may be digested into the highest purity, and become the true Elixir, or Philosophers stone; the possibility whereof is so plainly illustrated in this book of Sandivogius, that let any judicious man read it over without all partiality and prejudice, but three or four times, and he shall nolens volens be convinced of the truth of it, and not only of this, but of many other mysteries as incredible as this. So that if any one should ask me, What one book did most conduce to the knowledge of God and the Creature, and the mysteries thereof; I should speake contrary to my judgment, if I should not, next to the sacred Writ, say Sandivogius. All this I speak for thy encouragement, that thou shouldst lay aside other frivolous bookes, and buy this, and read it over, & thou wilt (I question not) thank mee for my advice.

Modernised English For a better understanding of them, turn to the most profound Sendivogius, author of the first of the following treatises, as their best expositor. In his treatise you will see the mystery of deity and Nature unfolded to the point of wonder: what that light and fire are which form the throne of God's majesty; how he is most glorious in heaven and providentially present in creatures; how he is the life of the universal spirit diffused throughout the world; what his spirit is that moved upon the waters; what the waters above and below the firmament are; what sperm and seed God placed in all creatures for their multiplication; the true manner of humanity's creation and decline into mortality; and the true nature of the garden of Eden, or paradise. You will also see why gold does not multiply, although it too received a seed for multiplication like other creatures; what obstructs it; and how that obstruction may be removed so that gold may be digested into the highest purity and become the true elixir, or philosophers' stone. Its possibility is illustrated so plainly in Sendivogius's book that any discerning person who reads it three or four times, without partiality or prejudice, will be convinced of its truth, willingly or unwillingly—and of many other mysteries equally incredible. If anyone asked me which single book most contributed to knowledge of God, the creature and their mysteries, I would speak against my own judgment if, next to sacred Scripture, I did not name Sendivogius. I say all this to encourage you to put aside other frivolous books, buy this one and read it through. I have no doubt that you will thank me for the advice.¹⁰⁰

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Historical English of 1650 And as this booke doth in generall, so the second of these Treatises doth in particular illustrate the possibility of Nature, and the mysteries thereof, as also the nature and manner of the Generation, Growth, Conservation, Life, Death, Renewing, Transmutations, Separations, and Signatures of all naturall things, in the explication of which many rare experiments and excellent mysteries are discovered and found out.

¹⁰⁰ These claims about Genesis, transmutation and the book's persuasive power are John French's 1650 commendation. They are not new statements added to Sendivogius's Latin text by this edition.

Modernised English As this book illustrates nature's possibilities and mysteries in general, the second of these treatises does so in particular. It also explains the nature and manner of the generation, growth, preservation, life, death, renewal, transmutations, separations and signatures of all natural things. In explaining them, it discloses many rare experiments and excellent mysteries.¹⁰¹

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Historical English of 1650 To these is added a Chymical Dictionary, explaining hard places, and words met withall in obscure Authors. But this, and the other I speak more sparingly in the commendations of, because if read they will speak more for them selves then I can speak for them: only I was willing for the English nations sake, whose spirits are much drawn forth after knowledge, to translate them into the English tongue. I did not doe it to multiply books, (for there are too many books already; and the multitude of them is the greatest cause of our ignorance, and in them is a great vanity) but to let thee see the light of Nature, by which thou maist judg of truths, and the better conceive of the God of Nature, of whom all naturall things are full, and whose goings forth in the way of Nature are most wonderfull, even to the conviction of the greatest Atheists.

Modernised English A Chymical Dictionary is added to these, explaining difficult passages and words encountered in obscure authors. I am more restrained in praising it and the other work, because reading them will speak more on their behalf than I can. I wished to translate them into English for the English nation, whose minds are so drawn to knowledge. I did not do it to multiply books—there are already too many, and their multitude is the greatest cause of our ignorance, with much vanity in them—but to let you see the light of Nature. By that light you may judge truths and better conceive of the God of Nature, of whom all natural things are full, and whose activities in nature are so wonderful that they can convince the greatest atheists.

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Historical English of 1650 Courteous Reader, thou must excuse me for not affecting elegancies in these Translations, for if I were skilled in them, yet the matter of the books would not bear them. If I have sometimes used uncouth words, it was because the sense, to which I kept me close, would not properly bear any other, or at least better came not at the present into my mind. If any Errata's have passed through the slips of my pen, or the Printers mistake, be thou candid, and mend them. If thou shalt not approve of what I have done, convince mee of my error by doing better; for thereby thou shalt oblige the lovers of truth, and amongst the rest, thy friend

J. F.

¹⁰¹. The second treatise here means the separate nine-book *Of the Nature of Things* attributed to Paracelsus in the 1650 compilation. It does not mean the *Treatise of Sulphur* in this Diotimos volume. The dictionary is also a separately titled work, based on Gerhard Dorn. Neither is included in the Sendivogian Latin corpus translated here.

Modernised English Courteous reader, excuse me for not seeking elegance in these translations. Even if I were skilled in it, the books' subject would not permit it. If I have sometimes used unfamiliar words, it was because the meaning, to which I kept close, could not properly bear another—or at least no better word came to mind at the time. If errors have slipped through my pen or the printer's work, be generous and correct them. If you do not approve of what I have done, show me my error by doing better. In doing so you will oblige the lovers of truth and, among them, your friend,

J. F.

Keyword Essays

Nature as Teacher and Agent

The instruction to follow nature is a demand for a certain kind of attention. In the first treatise, nature is invisible as a principle but known through visible production. An investigator must therefore look at what happens, where it happens, and what kind of material bears it. A craftsman cannot improve a thing simply by multiplying operations. The proposed improvement must be continuous with the capacities attributed to that thing.

This explains why the author gives moral qualifications to the investigator. Truthfulness and patience are conditions for an inquiry that does not force a desired answer upon its subject. The Dialogue dramatises the opposite disposition. Its alchemist treats every disappointment as evidence against his wife, Mercury, Nature or an insufficiently powerful procedure. He can announce that he follows nature while doing what she says is contrary to her.

Nature's personification gives the material a voice with which to dispute the practitioner's account. This is an interpretive device within the work. Mercury's mock obedience exposes the gap between the alchemist's title and his judgment; Nature's speech distinguishes assistance from injury. Reading these voices beside the serious treatises helps explain why the text's pedagogical claims cannot be reduced to a list of substances. Read Treatise I on nature, the investigator's conduct and Nature's rebuke.

Seed and the Difference between Body and Power

The author's account of multiplication depends upon distinguishing a visible body from what can generate another body. A whole tree and its seed are related, but they do not perform the same function in propagation. The comparison is transferred to metals: consuming or mixing an entire metallic body is not automatically the same as finding the generative principle assigned to it. The text's language of a centre, womb, digestion and maturity organises that difference.

The terms *semen* and *sperma* move within this account. In places they stand close together; in other places the author explicitly distinguishes what is produced from the condition or medium in which it operates. A translation that always substitutes one convenient word would hide a distinction exactly where the argument asks readers to attend to it. Equally, a glossary should not impose a perfectly consistent hierarchy upon passages that do not state one.

The important question is what role a term has in a given sentence. Is it a beginning produced by the elements, a concentrated power within a

body, the matter placed in a womb, or the source of multiplication? Following those roles clarifies the movement from the general account of nature to the practical claims. Compare Treatise II, Treatise VI and Treatise VIII.

Experience and the Authority of the Book

The prefatory material repeatedly invokes experience. The author presents the treatises as something drawn from practical work; he sets the sight of successful effects against empty persuasion. The claim has a precise literary function: it authorises a brief work that criticises the abundance of other books. It is still a claim made by the historical author. Printing it in a new translation does not independently verify every event or outcome asserted.

The Dialogue complicates that authority from within. Its alchemist has read books, performed many operations and worked for princes. He can even claim an ancient manuscript recovered from a wall. None of these credentials establishes that he knows what he is doing. A secret book can become another object of misplaced confidence if its words are applied without judgment.

The work therefore asks for a circuit between reading, observation and interpretation. This circuit also explains its refusal to make every statement transparent to every reader. The author claims that a suitably grounded student can recognise what a stranger misses. That account of qualified readership is central to the book's self-presentation, though it also makes public testing of its claims more difficult. Read the preface on experience, the first dream and the manuscript claim.

Mercury and the Comedy of Reading

The Dialogue's Mercury is a material, a technical term and a speaking character. He accepts every flattering title the alchemist offers and then exposes what those titles conceal. The alchemist repeatedly asks whether this is the philosophers' Mercury. The answer distinguishes possessing a substance from knowing its place in a philosophical operation. Mercury's willingness to mix with many things gives the ignorant worker ample opportunity to mistake activity for progress.

The joke about constancy is especially instructive. The alchemist accuses Mercury of being inconstant and volatile. Mercury answers by pairing a constant practitioner with a fixed mind. A word describing material behaviour has become a comparison with the reader's habit of moving from one matter or recipe to another. This does not erase its operative meaning; it allows the same word to test the person applying it.

The satire grows harsher when self-deception becomes deliberate deception. By the ending the alchemist admits that he knows nothing,

but continues promising gold to secure support. Nature's final curse closes a moral judgment as well as a comic scene. The money, the neighbour and the threatened flight to another province are part of the argument. Read constancy and the German fox joke and the admission of fraud.

Light Theology and Natural Analogy

The corpus places nature within divine creation. Its accounts of light, fire and generation therefore carry theological implications, and the author sometimes uses Christian relations as analogies for the production of natural things. These passages should be translated with their theological content intact. At the same time, the presence of an analogy does not mean that every material process is being asserted as a literal account of divine life.

French's reader's address greatly enlarges this interpretive frame for the English audience of 1650. He praises Sendivogius as an expositor of Genesis, speaks of reason in reading Scripture and urges the reader to place this book next to sacred writing. His voice is valuable evidence of reception. It belongs beside the Latin corpus under his own name, where readers can assess how far his commendation follows, expands or redirects its claims.

The comparison helps separate three kinds of statement: what the Latin author says, how a later translator recommends him, and what a modern editor proposes as interpretation. The source text, historical appendix and present essays retain those different locations. Compare the generation analogy in Treatise VI, the closing Job excerpt and French's address.

Secrecy Charity and the Qualified Reader

The book presents knowledge as a gift with obligations. Its author refuses personal glory and asks successful readers to remember their neighbour in need. The children of the art are expected to practise gratitude and avoid empty display. This language gives secrecy an ethical justification: unrestricted circulation might place a powerful gift in unworthy hands.

That justification should be read together with the exclusion it authorises. The author decides who belongs among true students, while the Dialogue gives the impostor an extraordinarily articulate portrait. Humility is demanded even as access is restricted. The tension matters because a reader who assumes every difficulty proves personal unworthiness may become vulnerable to precisely the smoke sellers the preface condemns.

The closing excerpt from Job names silver's veins, gold's place of smelting, iron from the earth and stone transformed by heat into copper. Its placement gives the metallic discussion a scriptural closing frame. The witness quotes the two mining verses Job 28:1–2, rather than the chapter's later question about wisdom or its final moral answer. Read the preface's appeal to charity, the Enigma's address to its readers and the printed Job excerpt.

Short Glossary

These brief explanations orient a first reading. The contextual lexicon gives fuller accounts and passages. No entry establishes one modern chemical identity for every occurrence of a historical word.

Archaeus

The agent or formative activity that gathers, distils and distributes natural powers in the author's account of generation.

Art

Skilled human work conducted with an understanding of natural capacities; the term does not mean fine art in the present sense.

Body

A formed material subject, distinguished in several arguments from the seed or power through which it can generate.

Calcination

An operation intended to reduce a material to a calx or powderlike residue, often through heat. The text disputes whether calcination belongs in the preparation being attempted.

Centre

A generative interior or concentration of power. The earth's centre and a material's centre are related through the text's analogies.

Chalybs

Steel, used as a technical and figurative name in the discussion of metallic seed and attraction; follow the local wording before identifying a specific preparation.

Chymistry

The historical art and inquiry named by chymia and related forms in this translation.

Coagulation

A coming together or congealing into a formed body; often paired with dissolution or a prior volatile condition.

Corrosive water

A historical dissolving liquid described by its corrosive action. The phrase does not identify a single composition everywhere.

Digestion

A process of preparation or maturation under suitable conditions, often involving sustained heat; also used in analogies of generation and nourishment.

Element

Earth, water, air or fire within the author's natural philosophy; each has relations and powers beyond a modern everyday label.

Elixir

The concentrated or perfected power discussed in relation to the stone and its effects.

First matter

A beginning relative to the argument in hand. The text distinguishes matters and warns against claiming possession of the first matter known to God alone.

Fixed and volatile

Opposed but related states or powers: remaining or enduring, and moving or flying. Their meanings also support the Dialogue's comparison with the practitioner's mind.

Iliadum

A final boundary or limit, explicitly glossed by the opening treatise; the unusual name is retained.

Luna

The Moon; often silver in a metallic context. The figurative name and the material use must be distinguished locally.

Magnet

A name involving attraction in the text's discussion of metallic relations; its role cannot always be settled by substituting a common lodestone.

Matrix

A womb or receptive place in which seed can operate and mature.

Menstruum

A receptive or dissolving medium, used within the work's generative language; it should not be reduced to one universal solvent.

Mercury

A planetary name, a material name and a principle. The distinction between common Mercury and the philosophers' Mercury is a repeated problem of the corpus.

Multiplication

Increase or propagation of power and product according to the text's theory of seed; more than simply adding bulk.

Nature

The one divinely created natural order and its active power, personified when the text presents her as working or speaking.

Nitre

A historical salt-name within accounts of air, water, the earth's centre and generation. The relevant passage governs the sense.

Putrefaction

A transformative breaking down associated with the emergence or preparation of further life or power in the argument.

Radical moisture

A moisture fundamental to the life or generative capacity of a body; radical here means rooted or foundational.

Salt

One of the three principles, with roles involving embodiment, fixation and mixture; also a name borne by particular historical substances.

Saturn

The planet or its personification, lead in certain metallic contexts, and the named instructor in the Parable.

Second matter

A matter accessible within the author's account of natural production and human art, distinguished from the first beginning.

Seed and sperm

English forms used to follow semen and sperma where the Latin makes or tests a distinction; the relation is explained locally.

Sol

The Sun; often gold in a metallic context. The central sun and the sun of the heavens have their own roles in the cosmological account.

Spirit

A mobile, formative or penetrating power that can act in bodies; some passages distinguish spirit from body while others stress their conjunction.

Sulphur

A principle central to the separate 1616 treatise, also a named material; the word's natural, metallic and operative uses require local attention.

Tincture

A colouring and transformative power claimed to affect a subject enduringly. The preface distinguishes such a result from deceptive appearance.

Vessel

The place or container in which an operation occurs, sometimes discussed through comparison with nature's own places.

Vitriol

A historical name in the alchemist's list of preparations; the Dialogue's mention does not make every use of vitriol philosophically appropriate.

Contextual Lexicon

This is a new editorial lexicon of this corpus. Its explanations are followed by an exact passage from the new translation, source forms and linked places to read. It is distinct from the separate historical Dorn and French dictionary. Reading a term across several passages is often more useful than assigning it one unqualified equivalent.

Air

Air participates in generation, nourishment and movement. The core calls the first and principal matter of metals the moisture of air mixed with heat; elsewhere water becomes air through the action of central heat. Those descriptions locate air in a sequence of relations rather than treating the word as a label whose ordinary meaning settles the argument. Air may be an element, a condition surrounding bodies, or a stage in the movement of vapour.

The author's comparison with water heated in a household pot makes one aspect of this process visible. Sulphur gives air its own extended treatment and connects it to attraction and the nourishment of seed. Read these accounts together while preserving their different emphases. The phrase crude air has a particular place in explanations of obstruction or premature congealing; it is not interchangeable with every favourable account of air as life or medium.

Passage NL-C11-P004: "Water is air's womb; it bears children of its own nature, yet unlike itself and much more subtle."

Source forms: aer; aere; aer crudus.

Places to read: NL-C11-P004.

See also: Water, Fire, Seed and sperm.

Archaeus

The Archaeus performs formative work within nature. In the account of metallic generation, the elements cast their powers into the earth's centre and the Archaeus distils and sublimates them towards the surface. The word names an agency in that explanation, where central heat, pores and vapour also have specific roles. It should be read through the work attributed to it.

The author uses a vocabulary shared with other early modern chymical writings, but that relationship does not supply one identical definition for every author. In this corpus the immediate passage establishes the operative sense. A reader gains more by asking what is gathered, moved and distributed than by substituting an abstract modern force.

The term also helps connect the large-scale account of the earth with the practitioner's smaller-scale acts of preparation.

Passage NL-C04-P001: "After the four elements cast their powers into the earth's centre, the Archaeus, by distilling, sublimates them toward the earth's surface through the heat of perpetual motion."

Source forms: Archaeus.

Places to read: NL-C04-P001.

See also: Centre, Nature, Spirit.

Art

Art is skilled human activity directed towards a result. Its relation to nature gives it both a possibility and a limit. A practitioner can place seed in a suitable womb, supply conditions and, in the mineral argument, complete something that nature has left unfinished. The claim depends on knowing the subject and its relations; the mere repetition of operations is not sufficient.

Treatise VIII distinguishes kingdoms and assigns art different capacities within them. The Dialogue turns the same distinction into a criticism of professional display: the alchemist has operations, patrons and books, yet lacks judgment. Art therefore includes an understanding of when an operation assists the subject. It is not simply a synonym for laboratory manipulation, and it need not mean a work of fine art in the modern sense.

Passage NL-C08-P001: "Every seed is of no consequence by itself unless art or nature places it in the proper womb."

Source forms: ars; artificium; artifex.

Places to read: NL-C08-P001.

See also: Nature, Digestion, Seed and sperm.

Body and Seed

The visible body and its capacity to generate are connected without being interchangeable. Treatise III criticises those who take the whole body, or an arbitrary part of it, as seed. The comparison with a man's foot and a woman's hand makes the distinction deliberately concrete: putting body parts together does not reproduce the relation through which a person is generated.

The body protects and nourishes what the author calls a small necessary spark. This helps explain why a metal's weight or outward appearance does not by itself identify the generative point sought by art. It also explains why the repeated language of extraction requires close reading. The text's distinctions concern what the operation is supposed

to obtain, not a general invitation to destroy any body in search of an invisible essence.

Passage NL-C03-P001: "It cannot be otherwise: the whole grain or body is not turned into seed."

Source forms: corpus; semen; sperma.

Places to read: NL-C03-P001.

See also: Seed and sperm, First and second matter, Radical moisture.

Centre

A centre is the place through which powers are concentrated and generation is explained. The earth's centre receives what the elements cast into it; the surrounding or excentral region receives and distributes according to the author's analogy with conception. A material can also have a centre, as Mercury's speech describes a heart distinct from outward form.

These uses are related but should not be flattened into a single geometrical point. The account asks about reception, movement and formative power. In the earth, the centre is described as a place where nothing can remain at rest; in Mercury's riddle the central heart is supremely fixed. Their different predicates matter. They show why a contextual definition must follow the local subject instead of carrying every attribute from one passage into another.

Passage NL-C02-P002: "The earth's centre is an empty place where nothing can remain at rest."

Source forms: centrum; excentrum; cor.

Places to read: NL-C02-P002.

See also: Archaeus, Mercury, Seed and sperm.

Chalybs

Chalybs is the Latin word for steel, retained as a technical name because its use in Treatise IX requires more than that ordinary gloss. The account describes a relation in which gold emits seed and a more excellent son is generated. It then introduces another chalybs, resembling the first and created by nature, with a power of drawing from the sun's rays. The second use should not silently erase the first.

The passage gives actions and relations through which the term is to be pursued. It does not warrant replacing both named chalybes with one unqualified modern ingredient. The Epilogue returns to chalybs as an instrument of extraction from Sol and Luna. That recurrence makes it a useful finding word, while the local differences remain visible. Read it

alongside the corpus's discussions of seed, attraction and the work of the practitioner.

Passage NL-C09-P002: "There is another chalybs, resembling this one and created by nature herself."

Source forms: chalybs.

Places to read: NL-C09-P002.

See also: Magnet, Seed and sperm, Sol and Luna.

Digestion

Digestion is a transformation or maturation under conditions suited to the subject. The text uses the term within its analogies of womb, nourishment and growth. Heat is involved, but identifying digestion with undifferentiated heating would lose the questions of duration, vessel, material and readiness that the argument repeatedly raises.

In Treatise VIII the womb causes a grain or sperm to putrefy, congeals the pure point and nourishes its growth. In the Dialogue, the alchemist responds to Nature's rebuke by proposing gentle digestion alone. Nature answers conditionally: it is good if he knows how. This condition prevents a simple moral contrast between violent and gentle treatment from becoming an adequate practical definition. A correct general name still needs a correct application.

Passage NL-C08-P001: "The womb makes the sperm or grain putrefy and causes the pure point to congeal; it also nourishes it with the heat of its own body and makes it grow."

Source forms: digestio; digerere; decoctio.

Places to read: NL-C08-P001.

See also: Art, Seed and sperm, Vessel and matrix.

Elements

Earth, water, air and fire are the four elements within the author's theory of natural production. They cast powers or seed, act upon each other and supply conditions for the birth of bodies. Their qualities and movements are important to the explanation. A common modern sense of earth as soil or water as a familiar liquid is therefore only a beginning for reading a particular sentence.

Sulphur examines each element at greater length before turning to the three principles. This arrangement distinguishes elements from principles, even when the discussion connects them closely. The core likewise describes seed as generated through the elements and asks what happens at the earth's centre. The distinction is useful for

following the sequence of the book: four elements are not merely another list of the three principles.

Passage NL-C02-P002: "The four elements generate seed through God's will and nature's imagination."

Source forms: elementa; terra; aqua; aer; ignis.

Places to read: NL-C02-P002.

See also: Nature, Seed and sperm, Sulphur.

Fire

Fire is an element, a source of heat and a principle of activity in several arguments. The central sun explains heat within the earth; water and air are described in relation to that heat and its movement. Mercury also says that he is fire and that fire is his food. These statements are connected by the author's figures but remain different uses of the word.

The Dialogue expressly glosses one fire as the proper heat. That supplied gloss is important: the reader need not invent it, yet should not extend it automatically to every occurrence. The practical chapters and Sulphur discuss the regulation and effects of heat within their own subjects. The lexicon therefore points back to the passage's agent, material and action instead of assigning one temperature or apparatus to the entire corpus.

Passage NL-C11-P004: "At the earth's centre is a central sun, whose own motion, or that of its firmament, produces great heat extending to the earth's surface."

Source forms: ignis; calor; calor centralis.

Places to read: NL-C11-P004.

See also: Air, Water, Digestion.

First and Second Matter

First and second matter are relative beginnings within the author's account of creation and work. Treatise XII distinguishes the first matter known to God alone from the second matter through which nature creates and multiplies and which philosophers know. Earlier passages also speak of the first matter of metals. The reader must retain the qualification and scale attached to each statement.

The practical importance of the distinction appears when the author tells readers to seek the second matter rather than attempt to return metals to a universal beginning. A translation that uses first matter as one fixed ingredient everywhere would make the argument seem easier while changing it. The text itself sometimes pauses to explain what it

means by a matter, and those local explanations should take priority over a glossary's shortest formula.

Passage NL-C12-P002: "When nature creates things from the elements, she generates them through God's will from the first matter, which God alone knows."

Source forms: *materia prima*; *materia secunda*.

Places to read: NL-C12-P002.

See also: Body and seed, Nature, Seed and sperm.

Fixed and Volatile

Fixed and volatile describe related conditions or powers of remaining and moving. Mercury can flee under fire, return in a changed form, be spoken of through a stable centre and still be the subject of operations called fixation. Each predicate belongs to its particular account; the word fixed does not automatically mean the whole subject has become inert.

The Dialogue places the material pair beside the investigator's disposition. Mercury says he is constant to a constant practitioner and fixed to a fixed mind; the alchemist is the one who wanders from one matter to another. The comparison depends upon the technical meaning and adds an ethical test. It invites a reader to ask whether apparent material inconstancy has become a pretext for the operator's own lack of judgment.

Passage NL-DIALOGUE-009: "I am constant to a constant practitioner, fixed to a steadfast mind."

Source forms: *fixus*; *volatilis*; *constans*.

Places to read: NL-DIALOGUE-009.

See also: Mercury, Art, Spirit.

Iliadum

Iliadum names a final boundary or utmost term in the opening treatise. The Latin immediately supplies *terminum ultimum* as an explanation. The unusual word is retained because it is part of the argument's vocabulary and because silently substituting an unrelated familiar term would make the author's comparison harder to trace.

Nature works towards her term and rests; human ingenuity is then compared with an art that has accumulated innumerable subtleties while lacking the one result attributed to the ancient philosophers. The comparison questions whether increasing technical complication is the same as reaching the desired end. Iliadum should be read in that movement of the opening argument. The dictionary's similarly shaped

Iliaster entries belong to a separate historical text and do not cancel this work's own explicit gloss.

Passage NL-C01-P002: "Noble nature likewise works continually until she reaches the Iliadum itself, that is, the final limit; then she rests."

Source forms: Iliadum; terminus ultimus.

Places to read: NL-C01-P002.

See also: Nature, Art, First and second matter.

Magnet

The language of a magnet emphasises attraction. In the account of conception at the earth's centre, the magnetic power of a place draws what is suitable for generation while the remainder is expelled. Elsewhere a chalybs is said to draw from the sun's rays. The common feature is a relation between an attractive power and what it receives.

Sulphur supplies further comparisons involving the lodestone, waters, seed and nourishment. An explicit comparison with a lodestone does not by itself prove that every philosophical magnet is a piece of ordinary lodestone. Conversely, calling the passage figurative should not remove its concern with material action. A useful reading asks what attracts, what is attracted, by what likeness or need, and where the resulting product is said to grow.

Passage NL-C02-P002: "Something similar occurs at the earth's centre: the magnetic power of some part of a place attracts to itself what is suitable for bringing something forth, while the remainder is expelled into stones and other waste products."

Source forms: magnes; vis magnetica; attrahere.

Places to read: NL-C02-P002.

See also: Chalybs, Centre, Seed and sperm.

Mercury

Mercury has several related roles: a named material, a principle in the account of metals, a planetary name and the Dialogue's speaking figure. The author repeatedly distinguishes common Mercury from what philosophers mean by their Mercury. The repeated possessive *our* is part of that problem of interpretation, not an automatic identification of a substance.

The Dialogue allows Mercury to submit, mock, disappear and describe his centre through a sequence of riddles. The alchemist wants a single affirmative answer that will justify continuing the same procedure. Mercury instead demands that he know the relations by which a philosophical subject is recognised. The proper distinction cannot be

secured merely by finding an impressive name in a book. Compare the core's elemental account with the comic exchanges before treating any one sentence as a complete definition.

Passage NL-C03-P001: "The philosophers called this Mercury; in the philosophical sea it is governed by the rays of the sun and moon."

Source forms: Mercurius; Mercurius noster; Mercurius Philosophorum.

Places to read: NL-C03-P001.

See also: Sulphur, Fixed and volatile, Centre.

Nature

Nature is the divinely created order and active power through which the author explains production. She is said to be one, true, simple and whole, invisible in herself while acting visibly in bodies. Her place is in the divine will. These claims set the framework for the work rather than supplying the name of one ingredient.

The demand to follow nature concerns appropriate relations: like acts upon like, seed needs a suitable place, and an operation must correspond to its subject. Nature's speeches in the Dialogue test the alchemist's claim that he already knows those relations. A reader should keep both the general philosophical statement and the particular rebukes in view. Personification makes the argument speak; it does not authorise a modern editor to attribute every individual metaphor to an identical physical process.

Passage NL-C01-P003: "I therefore say that nature is one, true, simple, and whole in her being."

Source forms: natura; velle Dei.

Places to read: NL-C01-P003.

See also: Art, Elements, Seed and sperm.

Nitre

Nitre belongs to the historical vocabulary of salt, air, moisture and generation in the corpus. Its meaning must be sought through what the passage attributes to it. The Epilogue's address to our nitrous salt is part of a series of names for a restless and indispensable subject. That series is itself offered as a way of recognising relations across the work.

It would be premature to give every occurrence a single modern formula and then read the book as though the author had supplied that formula. The same caution applies to removing the material claim by declaring the word merely symbolic. The useful middle task is to establish the particular subject, its source, its motion and its role in the

argument. The lexicon preserves the historical name so those questions remain visible.

Passage NL-EPI-P006: "O our nitrous salt moving in the world's sea!"

Source forms: nitrum; sal nitri; sal nitrosum.

Places to read: NL-EPI-P006.

See also: Salt, Air, Water.

Radical Moisture

Radical moisture is moisture understood as fundamental to a body's life, power or generation. Radical carries the sense of root. The term is not satisfied by pointing to visible wetness on a surface. In the metallic account, it is associated with what survives or is improved in a relation that consumes other material.

The text also discusses the nourishment of seed and the movement of moisture through elemental powers. These contexts explain why the expression can join life, reception and operative change. A reader should ask whose radical moisture is meant and what the action preserves or transforms. The contrast with an external body does not make it an immaterial abstraction; it identifies the role the author assigns to a more fundamental capacity within the subject.

Passage NL-C09-P002: "Only one thing resists it and is improved through it: the radical moisture, namely that of Sol and Luna."

Source forms: humidum radicale.

Places to read: NL-C09-P002.

See also: Seed and sperm, Body and seed, Water.

Salt

Salt is one of the three principles alongside Sulphur and Mercury, and a word used of particular named preparations. Those two levels of use should remain distinguishable. The text can connect salt to the formation and beauty of bodies while also employing ordinary or qualified salt-names in descriptions of operations.

The discussion of the three principles in Sulphur should be read after its four elemental chapters. The arrangement explains why the author can relate the lists without equating them. Local qualifiers—our, nitrous, fixed, or another description—may be decisive. The title's promise of a principle and the prefaces' hopes for further works are also historical statements about the writing programme; they do not license a modern editor to invent a missing treatise on salt.

Passage NL-C12-P002: "Subtle, light things arise from its subtler vapour; heavy and more precious things from its oil; and things far more beautiful than the former from its salt."

Source forms: sal; sal nitri.

Places to read: NL-C12-P002.

See also: Sulphur, Mercury, Nitre.

Seed and Sperm

Seed and sperm express the corpus's account of generative power. The Latin uses semen and sperma in closely connected ways, sometimes setting them beside one another and sometimes distinguishing a seed from its body, vehicle or place of development. Their force must be established locally. The translation retains a distinction when the author makes one, without pretending that every occurrence fits a single modern biological classification.

The argument repeatedly asks why the whole body is not the seed, how a small generative point can be protected within it, and what kind of womb permits multiplication. Such questions link the accounts of metals, plants and animals while preserving the limits the author assigns to the kingdoms. The numbers printed in the chosen 1606 core and 1616 Sulphur are not silently harmonised; the relation of the texts must be assessed from the readings actually preserved.

Passage NL-C02-P001: "Seed is thus the elixir of each thing, or its quintessence: its most perfect decoction and digestion, or balsam of sulphur, which is the same as the radical moisture in metals."

Source forms: semen; sperma; punctum seminis.

Places to read: NL-C02-P001.

See also: Body and seed, Vessel and matrix, Digestion.

Sol and Luna

Sol and Luna are the Sun and Moon, also used as gold and silver in metallic discourse. The work draws upon both senses. Treatise IX asks the reader to consider the order and relations of the planetary spheres, then discusses correspondences between named metals. The Parable gives solar and lunar imagery a further literary setting.

Translation must therefore attend to the sentence rather than replace every occurrence by the same pair of metal-names. The title Son of Sol keeps an important figure visible; a direct account of assaying a golden or silver tincture can use the material names where the context is explicit. Neither choice settles every other occurrence. Read the source names beside the operations and relationships being described.

Passage NL-C09-P001: “Likewise, Luna comes from the same seed and the same womb as Sol, but the womb had more water than digested blood, according to the season of the heavenly moon.”

Source forms: Sol; Luna; filius Solis.

Places to read: NL-C09-P001.

See also: Chalybs, Fire, Mercury.

Spirit

Spirit names a power that may be mobile, penetrating, formative or active within bodies. Nature herself is described through a volatile spirit in the opening treatise. Mercury’s speech then speaks of the relation between his spirit and the spirit of fire. These predicates should guide the reading before a modern reader decides what kind of entity the word must denote.

The final riddle calls Mercury a spirit that nevertheless has a body in the 1607 witness. The conjunction matters: body and spirit need not be exclusive alternatives in this vocabulary. The 1614 aid has a different verb at this point, and the note records that difference. This is a useful example of how a small reading can shape a large interpretation; the chosen early text must remain visible.

Passage NL-DIALOGUE-014: “He is a spirit, yet has a body.”

Source forms: spiritus; spiritus ignis.

Places to read: NL-DIALOGUE-014.

See also: Nature, Fire, Mercury.

Sulphur

Sulphur is central to the separate 1616 treatise and to the core’s account of metals. Treatise III associates it with the earth’s dry heat, set beside the airy moisture named Mercury. The word also bears material and operational senses in other contexts. Its role as a principle cannot be established by an ordinary substance-name alone.

Sulphur’s own treatise approaches the subject through the four elements and the three principles, making the order of exposition significant. Its literary teaching should be read together with that natural-philosophical account. The book’s title calls sulphur the other principle of nature and refers back to an earlier treatment; it does not prove that every promise of a further treatise was fulfilled in the surviving corpus.

Passage NL-C03-P001: “The second is the earth’s dry heat, which they called sulphur.”

Source forms: sulphur.

Places to read: NL-C03-P001.

See also: Mercury, Salt, Elements.

Vessel and Matrix

A vessel is where an operation takes place; a matrix is a receptive womb or place of formation. The terms can concern an actual container, a natural location or a comparison between them. The first treatise asks readers to learn from the kind of vessel in which nature operates, rather than choose an apparatus independently of the subject.

The womb's role in keeping, nourishing and maturing seed explains the relation. The Epilogue's statement about one or at most two vessels is therefore a particular claim within the work, not a universal permission to merge every named natural place and glass vessel into a single object. The local note discloses the reading where an abbreviated number requires care.

Passage NL-C08-P001: "Although seed in itself is nobler than every created thing, its womb is nevertheless its life."

Source forms: vas; matrix.

Places to read: NL-C08-P001.

See also: Seed and sperm, Digestion, Art.

Water

Water is described as mother, medium, source and a participant in the production of air. The core calls it the mother of all things and places the spirit of fire above it. Other passages speak of a water that does not wet, a philosophical water, or the water of a garden's spring. The qualifier and action are essential parts of the meaning.

The Parable makes the problem of recognition explicit by giving instruction through a water whose properties cannot simply be assumed from its name. Sulphur's elemental treatment supplies a broader account of water's place among the elements and in generation. The recurrence of the word invites comparison, but does not prove that every passage names exactly the same prepared liquid.

Passage NL-C12-P002: "Water is the most worthy of all the elements, because it is the mother of all things."

Source forms: aqua; aqua pontica; aqua Philosophica.

Places to read: NL-C12-P002.

See also: Air, Fire, Radical moisture.

Relations within the Text

The Sequence of Generation

The core’s recurring sequence begins with the powers of the elements, their reception at the earth’s centre, and the production and movement of vapour. Place and receptivity then affect what is formed. This is a reading map of the author’s argument, not a modern geological model. Follow the centre and its surroundings, the Archaeus and metallic vapour and the generation of stones.

The comparison with human generation supplies a vocabulary of seed, womb and protected development. It does not make every body a suitable womb for every seed. The text expressly assigns limits to the three kingdoms. Compare like acting upon like and the different capacities of art.

Planetary Correspondences

Treatise IX gives a sequence of planetary spheres and then identifies three pairs with Sol between them. The following table records the pairings actually stated in that passage. It does not add a modern scheme of planetary influence or a separate table of chemical identities.

Pairs named with Sol between them

Outer partner	Between	Inner partner
Saturn	Sol	Luna
Jupiter	Sol	Mercury
Mars	Sol	Venus

Source: Treatise IX second passage.

The text’s preceding passage lists the spheres in their order. Metallic correspondences should be followed through its own wording.

Numbers and the Witnesses

The chosen 1606 core prints one part in 8,200 when locating a seminal point in a body. The 1616 Sulphur speaks of a two-hundred-and-eightieth part while referring back to the Twelve Treatises. Both readings are retained and noted. Their discrepancy should not be removed by silently changing a number in order to make the corpus appear consistent. Read the 1606 passage and the account of air in Sulphur.

Numbers elsewhere also belong to particular comparisons or operations. The Parable's ten parts of water and its counted solar fruit should first be read in that scene. A numerical resemblance by itself is not evidence that two separately named subjects are identical. The local source note is the place to establish a reading before interpreting its significance.

The Garden and the Speaking Material

The Parable and Dialogue teach through encounters. The garden makes the narrator watch, ask and receive explanations; Mercury's speech makes a material answer back to an overconfident worker. In both, asking a question is not the same as understanding the answer. Compare the Parable with the Dialogue.

Solar fruit, water, old age and rebirth recur across the corpus, but a shared image does not erase the immediate story or speaker. Saturn as instructor in the Parable is a different literary role from Saturn as a planetary term in Treatise IX. The lexicon's source forms and linked passages allow comparison while preserving that difference.

Biblical Language and Later Reception

The author's preface invokes gifts entrusted by God and closes by joining knowledge to gratitude and care for the neighbour. Treatise VI uses Christian generation as an analogy, while the closing Job excerpt speaks of mining and smelting metals. French's 1650 address then recommends the whole endeavour as a way to understand God, nature and Genesis. These related passages speak in different historical voices.

Read the entrusted talent, the theological analogy, the Job excerpt and French's historical address. The comparison helps locate an interpretation instead of attributing every later explanation to the earlier Latin author.

Reading Routes

A First Circuit

Read the author's preface, then Treatise I through Treatise XII in sequence. Continue through the Epilogue, the Enigma and the Parable. Read the Dialogue after that first circuit, then the preface to Sulphur and its elemental chapters. Return to the glossary when a repeated name seems to change its role.

Following Seed through the Corpus

Begin with Treatise II and Treatise III. Compare the matter and the place of generation in Treatise VI with the womb and the capacities of art in Treatise VIII. Then read air and attraction in Sulphur and the three principles. Note when seed is a concentrated power, when it is placed in a medium, and when the text makes an explicit verbal distinction.

Following Mercury as Name and Speaker

Start with the core's twofold metallic matter. Read the friend's 1607 address and the whole Dialogue. Compare the material's repeated obedience with the alchemist's repeated failure. Return through the Epilogue's series of names to Sulphur on the three principles.

Reading the Book and Its Reception

Read the author's preface beside French's 1650 address. Compare what each says about books, reason, experience, concealment and benefit to readers. Then read the alchemist's final admission. The change from an author's claim of service to a character's admission of fraud makes a useful test of how the corpus distinguishes knowledge from its performance.

Discussion Guide

Knowing Nature

What does the opening claim that nature is invisible yet acts visibly permit an investigator to know? How does the author move from observed effects to a rule for practice? Compare nature's definition with the investigator's conduct.

The Small Generative Point

Why does the distinction between the whole body and the seed matter to the proposed work? Which examples make the distinction easier to follow, and where do they raise further questions? Read Treatise III and Treatise VIII.

The Limits of Art

What can art shorten, improve or complete in each natural kingdom according to Treatise VIII? Why is the restriction to particular kingdoms important? Try restating the claim without omitting its qualifications. Read the complete treatise.

Words and Their Application

Mercury says that the alchemist understands syllables rather than meaning. What does the alchemist actually do with a correct quotation? Does the serious core make a comparable warning? Read the dunghill exchange beside the advice to readers of the philosophers.

Dreams and Authority

The Parable uses a dreamlike narrative, while the Dialogue mocks the alchemist's dreams and his insistence that they reveal truth. What distinguishes those presentations? How far can a reader infer the narrator's reliability from the literary form alone? Compare the Parable with the first dream, the second dream and the manuscript and dream claims.

The Voice of Mercury

At what points does Mercury flatter, teach, evade or accuse? Which of the alchemist's questions assume the answer he wants? Choose one exchange and distinguish what Mercury says from what the alchemist concludes. Read the first mock submission and the central riddle.

Disagreement between Texts

How should a new edition present the two numerical readings 8,200 and 280? What evidence would be required before changing either? Does a stated cross-reference prove that every detail in the two witnesses must agree? Begin with the source comparison.

Experience and Demonstration

What kind of evidence does the author claim, and what can the reader of the book actually inspect? How do the preface, practical chapters and comic failures distribute authority differently? Compare the preface's appeal to sight with the ending of the Dialogue.

Benefit and Exclusion

How does the author join secrecy to charity? Who is admitted to the children of the art, and who is excluded? What responsibilities are assigned to a successful practitioner? Read the closing appeal of the preface and the Enigma.

Reading French as a Later Voice

Which of French's recommendations describe the Latin corpus, and which are his own expansive claims about Scripture and reason? How does the commercial request to buy and read the book sit beside his criticism of the multiplication of books? Read his complete address.

Selected Annotated Bibliography

The 1606 Latin Core

Michael Sendivogius, anonymous *Tractatus alter de lapide philosophico*, in Martin Ruland, *Lapidis philosophici vera conficiendi ratio*, 1606, printed pages 86–165. Herzog August Bibliothek, 385.2.1 Quod. This is the governing witness for the twelve chapters, Epilogue, Enigma, Parable and concluding Job excerpt. Its title page and complete sequence were checked; the text's location within another compilation is preserved in the source note. Title image:

<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00415.jpg> First text image:

<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00500.jpg> Final image:

<https://diglib.hab.de/drucke/385-2-1-quod/00579.jpg>

The 1607 Dialogue

Dialogus Mercurii, Alchymistae et Naturae, scriptus in gratiam amici Coroades. Cologne: Servatius Erffens, 1607. Austrian National Library copy digitised by Google Books, wVWAAAAcAAJ. Governing witness for the complete dialogue and its original title and friend's address. Modern scan identifiers are used where the printed numbering is irregular. <https://books.google.com/books?id=wVWAAAAcAAJ>

The 1611 Preface and Epigram

De lapide philosophorum tractatus duodecim. Frankfurt, 1611. British Library copy digitised by Google Books, XJVMAAAAcAAJ, printed pages 3–8. Supplies the author's preface and Johann Heinrich Alsted's commendatory epigram, with its Easter 1611 subscription. The date identifies this witness, not a demonstrated first appearance of every prefatory sentence. <https://books.google.com/books?id=XJVMAAAAcAAJ>

Sulphur in the Munich Copy

Tractatus de sulphure, altero naturae principio. Cologne: Johann Crithius at the sign of the cock, 1616. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Path.544#Beibd.4, digital identifier bsb10191243. Governing copy for the title, author's preface and the first 82 physical body pages. Original printed page labels and sequence are distinguished in the edition's provenance.

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Sulphur in the Rome Copy

Tractatus de sulphure, altero naturae principio, 1616. Rome copy digitised by Google Books, 6_qSMmO2Kh4C, also available through

Internet Archive. Supplies the final body pages 83–84 where the Munich digitisation ends earlier. Its independent defects are not imported as gaps in the composite reading text. https://books.google.com/books?id=6_qSMmO2Kh4C
https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_6_qSMmO2Kh4C

French and the 1650 English Compilation

A New Light of Alchymie. London: printed by Richard Cotes for Thomas Williams, 1650. English translation by J.F.M.D., John French. Getty Research Institute copy, Internet Archive
 newlightofalchym00sedz. Governing witness for French's unnumbered To the Reader, facsimile PDF pages 17–22, and a historical comparison for the Latin corpus. The volume also contains separately titled Paracelsian books and a dictionary based on Dorn.
<https://archive.org/details/newlightofalchym00sedz> Catalogue:
<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/nxy235ys>

The English Transcription Aid

Project Gutenberg, ebook 61112, A New Light of Alchymie. Useful electronic transcription of French's 1650 compilation. Used as an aid and checked against the facsimile for the historical English appendix. Its modern contents arrangement, transcriber's notes and packaging are not treated as original 1650 matter. No modern English translation from this source serves as the basis of the fresh Latin translation.
<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/61112>

The EMLAP Research Corpus

EMLAP, Early Modern Latin Alchemical Prints. Georgiana Hedesan and collaborators, data curation; Vojtěch Kaše and collaborators, machine-readable processing. The 1614 Sendivogius transcription and metadata assisted the reading of the 1606 core. The source scans, not the later aid's differing readings, govern this edition. The research data are offered under CC BY-SA 4.0; this assistance is acknowledged separately from the public-domain historical words. https://github.com/CCS-ZCU/EMLAP_ETL

Publication History and Attribution

Rafał T. Prinke, New light on Michael Sendivogius's writings: The treatises written in Prague and maybe in Olomouc, in Latin Alchemical Literature of Czech Provenance, Olomouc, 2015, pages 131–147. Specialist research used for the publication chronology and the relationship of the core, Dialogue and Sulphur. Its bibliographical conclusions are distinguished from this edition's own page-level verification of the selected witnesses. <https://www.renesancni->

texty.upol.cz/soubory/publikace/Latin_Alchemical_Literature_of_Czech_Provenance.pdf

The Separate Historical Dictionary

A Chymicall Dictionary, London 1650, based on Gerhard Dorn's *Dictionarium Theophrasti Paracelsi* and translated or adapted in John French's compilation. Useful for comparison with period vocabulary, while remaining a different work with context-dependent definitions. Its 706 definition paragraphs are the basis of the separate expanded *Diotimos* dictionary. The present volume's lexicon is newly written around Sendivogius's passages. Dictionary title in the same Getty facsimile:

<https://archive.org/download/newlightofalchym00sedz/newlightofalchym00sedz.pdf#page=327>

Source and Editorial Credits

The historical texts are credited to Michael Sendivogius, with Johann Heinrich Alsted identified as the author of the 1611 commendatory epigram. The 1607 friend's address remains anonymous. John French is credited separately for the 1650 English address. Printer's devices, ornaments, library marks, flyleaves and blank versos are not reproduced as textual chapters. The wording of mottos associated with the selected titles is translated where included in those source records.

Digitised witnesses were supplied by the Herzog August Bibliothek, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, the British Library and Austrian National Library copies available through Google Books, the Rome digitisation, and the Getty Research Institute copy available through Internet Archive. Project Gutenberg and the EMLAP corpus are acknowledged as transcription and research aids in the bibliography. The historical source pages were checked independently of those aids wherever they govern the reading text.

The Latin and English passages have been accounted for through source inventories and aligned reading records. Notes disclose consequential textual difficulties rather than hiding them in a modern paraphrase. The new translation and supporting material were prepared with AI assistance for Diotimos Editions. Editorial interpretations belong to this edition, and do not carry the authority of an additional historical witness.

The edition brings the early Sendivogian corpus together for reading and study. Its witness selection and normalisation are stated in the note on the text. It makes no claim to be a facsimile, an exhaustive critical apparatus to every printing, or an unmediated transcript of the 1604 first publication.

Subject Index

This selected index leads to stable passages and sections across all four formats. The same term may have several senses; follow the linked passage before combining them.

A

Air. elemental chapter, central heat and water, lexicon.

Alchemist as character. complete Dialogue, admission of ignorance and fraud.

Alsted Johann Heinrich. commendatory epigram.

Anonymity. author's name, friend's address, concluding address.

Archaeus. metallic generation, lexicon.

Art. nature and seed, essay, lexicon.

B

Body and seed. seminal point, lexicon.

Books and authority. hidden manuscript, French on books, essay.

C

Centre. earth's centre, Mercury's heart, lexicon.

Chalybs. two chalybes, extraction, lexicon.

Charity. neighbour in need, essay.

Coroades. 1607 title.

D

Digestion. womb and maturation, conditional advice, lexicon.

Dreams. first dream, second dream, Parable.

E

Earth. elemental chapter, metals in the earth.

Elements. generation of seed, relation to principles, lexicon.

Experience. author's claim, essay.

F

Fire. elemental chapter, food and proper heat, lexicon.

First and second matter. what art seeks, different beginnings, lexicon.

Fixed and volatile. constancy, lexicon.

Fox joke. German taunt.

Fraud. promises and money, essay.

French John. historical appendix, later reception.

G

Garden. trees and contemplation, reading the figures.

Gold. metallic correspondences, Son of Sol, Sol and Luna.

I

Iliadum. final boundary, lexicon.

J

Job. closing excerpt, French on Job 38.

K

Kingdoms of nature. second matter, limits of art.

L

Language and literalism. meaning and syllables, reading the dunghill.

M

Magnet. attractive place, nourishment of seed, lexicon.

Matrix. the proper womb, vessel and matrix.

Mercury. speaking figure, metallic principle, lexicon.

N

Nature. opening account, Nature's speech, lexicon.

Neptune. Parable.

Nitre. nitrous salt, lexicon.

Numbers. 8200 and 280, water and fruit.

P

Planetary correspondences. Treatise IX, paired names.

Principles. Sulphur chapter, twofold metallic matter.

Putrefaction. second matter, womb and seed.

R

Radical moisture. metallic relation, lexicon.

S

Salt. three principles, lexicon.

Saturn. planetary pairing, instructor in the Parable.

Scripture. theological analogy, mining and smelting, reason and Scripture.

Seed and sperm. seed and generation, body and seminal point, lexicon.

Sol and Luna. correspondences, series of names, lexicon.

Spirit. nature's activity, spirit with body, lexicon.

Sulphur. separate treatment, lexicon.

V

Vessel. nature's vessel, one or at most two, lexicon.

W

Water. elemental chapter, mother of things, lexicon.

Wife in the satire. violence and reply, claimed authority.

Wisdom. knowledge and conduct in the preface, judgment and conduct.