

Baro Urbigerus

# Aphorismi Urbigerani

*The Complete 1690 Volume  
Original English and Modern English Reading  
With Annotations and Diotimos Study Features*

Diotimos Editions

2026

The complete historical volume with Circulatum Minus, the frontispiece and full postscript, a modern English reading, fresh Latin translations, annotations and Diotimos study features.

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## About This Edition

This edition presents the complete printed 1690 *Aphorismi Urbigerani* represented by the Getty Research Institute copy: the engraved frontispiece and its inscriptions, the historical title and licence, the dedication, all one hundred and one principal aphorisms, the separately titled *Circulatum Minus* with its address and thirty-one aphorisms, and the entire concluding postscript explaining the figure. Both printed closing words are retained. The selected publication occupies ninety-six scanned surfaces, including five original blanks; those blanks are accounted for in the source inventory without being turned into invented passages.

The governing text is English. The dedication says that its author is then in England, is not native to that kingdom, and has chosen to publish in English. The new reading modernises that English and translates the Latin inscriptions, mottos, titles, and expressions afresh. Baro Urbigerus remains the authorial name printed in the volume. The edition does not infer an earlier Latin original from the Latin short title.

The original wording accompanies the modern reading in the parallel edition. The English-only EPUB provides the same complete modern reading, annotations, and study features, with the historical frontispiece and translated inscriptions. Stable passage references connect the aphorisms and postscript with interpretive essays, a historical glossary, contextual lexicon entries, relations across the work, an emblem guide, reading routes, study questions, and the subject index. These supporting features are editorial contributions; their interpretations can be checked against the linked historical passages.

# Introduction

Aphorismi Urbigerani promises a complete art in a small compass. Its sentences repeatedly tell the reader what a subject is, how it should behave, and what a failure would signify. The author appeals to his own practice, distinguishes true from pretended adepts, and presents the rules as protections against wasted labour. Yet the promised clarity depends upon knowing how the same words change their reference. Gold can be common or philosophical; mercury can name a familiar body or a prepared principle; water can be celestial or superfluous. Reading the rules requires attention to those distinctions.

The principal sequence describes three ways of preparing the grand elixir. The first begins from the undetermined subject; the second brings Dragon and Serpent together; the third introduces the prepared mercury into a relation with common gold. The earlier ways share operations, so they are deliberately taught together. The companion work then describes a lesser elixir specified for the vegetable kingdom. Its powers and limitations belong to that specification. The closing postscript returns to the opening engraving and explains how its figures represent the three ways.

The writing joins material claims with accounts of generation, death, conjunction, and regeneration. It speaks about vessels, residues, proportions, heat, and the persistence of a preparation while also describing virgins, dragons, parents, and children. The postscript explicitly places biblical faith and the hope of immortality within the same emblem. A reading can follow these relationships without assigning a modern chemical identity to every unnamed subject or reducing every operation to a private psychological event. The edition preserves the author's account before offering reflective applications of its images.

The strongest questions concern the claims themselves. What distinguishes a true transformation from a reversible appearance? How can the reader judge the author's asserted experience? Which signs are treated as decisive, and what does the author say lies beyond a preparation's power? The supporting features follow these questions across both works. Their aim is to make the complete volume more intelligible while leaving its ambitions, limitations, and difficult language available for examination.

## Publication and Transmission

The English publication names Baro Urbigerus on both title pages and gives the imprint London, Henry Faithorne, 1690. The principal title promises one hundred and one aphorisms and announces the additional vegetable elixir. The companion has its own title page within the continuously paged volume. Its postscript explains the image placed at the front, so neither the companion nor that explanation is incidental material added by this edition.

The Getty copy supplies the governing page images. Its publication sequence begins with the plate leaf, followed by eight preliminary surfaces and the main sequence through the printed page 86. The five original blanks include the unused face of the plate leaf, the intervening pages 52–54, and the reverse of the companion title. Covers, later ownership and acquisition marks, duplicate captures, and calibration targets belong to the digitised object's surrounding record rather than the printed work. The inventory distinguishes them from the publication's own surfaces.

The Text Creation Partnership transcription A25684 supplies a structured reading witness made from a British Library reproduction. It is used alongside the Getty images, with discrepancies checked against the selected copy. The native plate supplies four inscription gaps in that transcription. Other clear transcription errors in words and the companion imprint have been corrected from the page images, while genuine printed irregularities remain in the historical wording. Catalogue collations and electronic page references do not always agree; the edition's passage locators identify the selected native sequence and printed pages.

The dedication's account of travel and languages explains the author's stated reason for English publication. It does not establish a secure legal identity, birthplace, or demonstrated success of the operations. The book's claims of knowledge and experience are presented in their own voice. Library attribution of the plate signed W. F. is credited to William Faithorne; the initials are not expanded inside the historical inscription as though a full signature were engraved there.

## Text and Translation Policy

The parallel edition retains the historical spelling and wording while normalising long s and typographic forms of U and joining words divided only by printed line endings. Each complete aphorism remains a distinct unit with its Roman heading. Page references record where the unit occurs; a page turn does not divide an argument into an invented aphorism. The English-only EPUB retains the complete modern reading and the same stable passage targets. The historical wording can be consulted in the companion parallel edition.

The modern reading updates spelling, punctuation, and sentence construction without shortening the historical argument. Numerical qualifications, proportions, directions, warnings, and assertions remain part of that reading. The author's we and our are retained. Statements about discovery, transmutation, health, or the efficacy of a preparation remain the author's claims; annotations explain their vocabulary and place in the argument without adding modern procedures or independent proof of the promised results.

Latin technical names are translated where their meaning can be rendered directly and explained where they continue to name a specific historical preparation. *Circulatum* is rendered as a circulated preparation in the reading text, with the Latin term retained in the source, notes, and glossary. Simple and double mercury translate mercury simplex and mercury duplex. The original Latin mottos remain visible in the engraving, and their fresh English renderings are provided with the frontispiece; the postscript's own explanation follows at its original place near the end.

The new chapter groupings and all study headings are editorial. They do not replace any original heading or aphorism. The full engraving is reproduced from the native scan, with its lettering transcribed and translated separately so that the reader can inspect both image and language. A reading inferred from an imperfect original is identified locally; an electronic transcription error is distinguished from a genuine printed irregularity. Reflective possibilities in the lexicon are modern editorial applications, not additional historical definitions.

## The Historical Frontispiece



The engraved frontispiece of the 1690 volume, signed W. F.

Getty Research Institute copy, digitised by Internet Archive. Library catalogues attribute the plate to William Faithorne.

# The Historical Preliminary Matter

## The Frontispiece Inscriptions

AU-FRONTISPIECE 1690, plate verso

Latin Virtus unita Fortior

Nil sine vobis

Per Nos omnia

Pulchritudine tuâ captus sum.

Ulteriùs te vinciam.

Per te vivam

Regeneratio tua in mea Potentia

WF fe:

Modern English United strength is stronger.

Nothing without you.

Through us, all things.

I am captivated by your beauty.

I shall bind you further.

Through you I shall live.

Your regeneration is in my power.

W. F. made this.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>. The mottos are translated in the order of the transcription, rather than as a continuous speech. Vobis and nos are plural: “you” in the second motto addresses more than one, and “us” in the third is likewise plural. The author’s own explanation of the speakers and their relationships is preserved in the complete postscript.

<sup>2</sup>. The native engraving reads vinciam, “I shall bind,” from vincire; the electronic transcription’s vincium is corrected from the image. Per te vivam means “through you I shall live.” The native plate also supplies omnia and mea in positions marked unreadable in the transcription. The image remains available beside this reading.

<sup>3</sup>. Fe: abbreviates fecit, “made [this].” The initials W. F. are attributed to William Faithorne in the Getty and Wellcome catalogue descriptions. The signature is translated without expanding the initials as if the full name were engraved.

## The Historical Title and Licence

AU-TITLE 1690, prelim 01

**English** Aphorismi Urbigerani, Or Certain RULES, Clearly demonstrating the Three Infallible Ways of Preparing the GRAND ELIXIR OR Circulatum majus OF THE Philosophers, Discovering The Secret of Secrets, AND Detecting the Errors of Vulgar Chymists in their OPERATIONS:

Contain'd in One Hundred and One Aphorisms: To which are added, the Three Ways of Preparing the Vegetable Elixir or Circulatum minus: All deduc'd from Never-Erring EXPERIENCE

By BARO URBIGERUS, A Servant of God in the Kingdom of Nature.

Experto Crede.

LONDON, Printed for Henry Faithorne, at the Rose in St. Paul's Church-yard, 1690.

**Modern English** Urbigerus's Aphorisms; or, Certain Rules Clearly Demonstrating the Three Infallible Ways of Preparing the Grand Elixir, or Greater Circulated Preparation of the Philosophers, Revealing the Secret of Secrets and Exposing the Errors of Common Chymists in Their Operations.

Contained in One Hundred and One Aphorisms; to Which Are Added the Three Ways of Preparing the Vegetable Elixir, or Lesser Circulated Preparation. All Derived from Infallible Experience.

By Baro Urbigerus, a Servant of God in the Kingdom of Nature.

Trust one who has experience.

London: printed for Henry Faithorne, at the Rose in St Paul's Churchyard, 1690.<sup>4,5</sup>

AU-LICENSE 1690, prelim 02

**English** Licensed, Jan. 13. 1689/90. Rob. Midgley.

**Modern English** Licensed, 13 January 1689/90. Robert Midgley.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>. The printed book is English despite its Latin short title. Aphorismi Urbigerani means Urbigerus's Aphorisms. Circulatum majus and circulatum minus literally name the greater and lesser circulated preparation; these technical names recur in the edition's glossary. The author's claimed infallibility is part of the historical title.

<sup>5</sup>. Experto crede addresses the reader: trust one who has experience. Its appeal is to a person's tested knowledge. The motto appears again at the close of the companion aphorisms; the dedication explains how the author claims to have acquired that knowledge.

<sup>6</sup>. The double year 1689/90 records a January date under the older English year beginning in March alongside the year beginning in January. Both years are retained. Rob. is the printed abbreviation of Robert; this is a licensing notice, not an additional dedication.

## The Dedication

AU-DED-HEADING 1690, prelim 03

**English** TO OUR DEAR DISCIPLES, Honor'd COADEPTS, AND ALL WELL-WISHERS TO OUR Hermetic Art.

**Modern English** To Our Dear Disciples, Honoured Fellow Adepts, and All Well-Wishers of Our Hermetic Art<sup>7</sup>

AU-DED-001 1690, prelim 03; prelim 04; prelim 05; prelim 06

**English** Finding you, dear Sons, who have thrô our means attain'd to the true knowledge of our first Matter, worthy to receive our farther Instructions in the remainder of the Process, to extirpate all such Ambiguities, as you may have conceiv'd in our Absence, to facilitate your Labors, and to precaution you in the bringing your Work to its highest Perfection, We here, according to your desire, expose to you, and for your sakes, to the Public, all the most infallible Rules, necessary for preventing of Errors in this great Undertaking. And thô you, ever-honor'd Coadeps, could never yet so far prevail on your selves, as to come to a Resolution of presenting the World with the full Practice of this our Art, join'd to the Theory, we are nevertheless most certain, that we shall not receive any Reprimand from you for bringing to light these our Rules, which we have so penn'd, that even those, who know not our Person, will not only soon perceive, that all, we have written, is the real Truth, clearly exhibiting both the Theory and Practice of the whole Hermetic Art, but also conclude, that these Operations must of necessity have very often pass'd thrô our own hands, from our giving such positive Rules, and infallible Instructions, elucidating all the most obscure and intricate Enigms of the Philosophers, and warning them of all the Accidents, that may happen in the working of our Subject: We are, we say, confident, you neither will, nor can blame us for this: since you will easily discern, that our Design is purely to instruct our Disciples, and prevent all the Well-wishers to this most noble Art from being impos'd upon, and cheated, by any false pretended Adept: to the end that those, who shall from the Divine Benignity, by the help of these our Aphorisms, or otherwise, have receiv'd the blessed knowledge of our first Matter, which is the very same in all our three ways of producing the grand Elixir, may thrô these our certain Rules obtain the accomplishment of their Desires.

**Modern English** Dear sons, since you have attained true knowledge of our first matter through us, we find you worthy of further instruction in the remainder of the process. To remove any uncertainties you may have formed in our absence, ease your labours, and forewarn you as you bring your work to its highest perfection, we here set out, at your request and for your sake, both to you and to the public, all the most infallible rules needed to prevent errors in this great undertaking. And although you, ever-honoured fellow adepts, have never yet been able to resolve to present the world with the full practice of our art together with its theory, we are nevertheless quite certain that you will not reprimand us for publishing these rules. We have written them so that even those who do not know us personally will soon perceive that everything we have written is the real truth, clearly displaying both the

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<sup>7</sup>. Coadeps are fellow adepts, placed beside the disciples and other well-wishers. The address distinguishes readers said already to know first matter from a wider public receiving the rules.

theory and the practice of the whole Hermetic art. They will also conclude that these operations must often have passed through our own hands, because we give such definite rules and infallible instructions, explain the philosophers' most obscure and intricate enigmas, and warn of every accident that may occur in working upon our subject. We are confident, we say, that you neither will nor can blame us for this. You will readily see that our purpose is simply to instruct our disciples and prevent well-wishers of this most noble art from being deceived and cheated by anyone falsely claiming to be an adept. Thus those who, through divine goodness, with the help of these aphorisms or otherwise, have received the blessed knowledge of our first matter—which is the very same in all three of our ways of producing the grand elixir—may attain the fulfilment of their desires through these certain rules.<sup>8</sup>

AU-DED-002 1690, prelim 06; prelim 07; prelim 08

**English** Having in our Travels fortun'd to meet with some Persons of true Principles in Philosophy and Religion, we could not but embrace them, and instruct them towards its farther Perfection, which cannot be attain'd without the true knowledge of our Celestial Art, by which comprehending all the Mystery of Mysteries, we learn also how to serve God in Faith and Truth. And since we have no Obligation to any living Soul for the knowledge, we possess, having attain'd it all by the only Blessing of Almighty God on our Industry and Expences: being therefore at more liberty than those, who receive such a Favor from us, or some other Adept, 'tis our Determination, whenever we meet with Persons so qualified, always to do the same. Wherefore being at present in England, thō we are no Native of this Kingdom, we think it necessary to set forth these our Aphorisms in the English Tongue, not in the least doubting, but that the Knowing, minding only the Sense, will easily pardon any Impropriety, they may find in our Expressions: and when Providence shall carry us into any other Country, we, having attain'd to some competent knowledge of most European Languages, shall again take care to publish them in the Speech of the Place, where we shall be, that we may the sooner obtain the effect of our Desires, which aim at nothing, but the undeceiving of the World by setting down certain and evident Marks, distinguishing the Worthy from the Unworthy, and at the bringing of Men to leave their unnecessary Forms, by instructing them in the true way of Serving God, being the only means to render them happy both in this World, and the next.

**Modern English** In our travels we happened to meet people with true principles in philosophy and religion. We could not help embracing them and instructing them towards its further perfection, which cannot be attained without true knowledge of our celestial art. Through that art we comprehend the mystery of mysteries and also learn to serve God in faith and truth. Since we owe our knowledge to no living soul, having attained it entirely through Almighty God's blessing upon our industry and expense, we are freer than those who receive such a favour from us or another adept. We have therefore resolved always to do the same

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<sup>8</sup>. The author insists that all three ways share the same first matter. The published rules nevertheless presuppose that some readers have already received its knowledge; publication and restricted initiation coexist within the address. The title's promises should be read together with that condition.

whenever we meet people so qualified. Being now in England, although we are not native to this kingdom, we think it necessary to publish our aphorisms in English. We do not doubt that knowledgeable readers, attending only to the meaning, will readily pardon any impropriety they find in our expressions. When Providence carries us to another country, since we have acquired a competent knowledge of most European languages, we shall again take care to publish them in the language of the place where we are. We may thus sooner accomplish our desires, which aim only to undeceive the world by setting down certain, evident marks distinguishing the worthy from the unworthy, and to bring people to abandon their unnecessary forms by instructing them in the true way of serving God, the only means of making them happy both in this world and the next.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>. This passage says that the author is presently in England but not native to the kingdom, and has chosen to publish in English. It supports the governing language of this edition without establishing the writer's nationality or a name behind Baro Urbigerus. The claims of travel, linguistic knowledge, and independent discovery remain the author's own account.

# Aphorisms on the Grand Elixir

## I–XIII: First Matter and the Philosophical Subject

AU-MAJ-HEADING 1690, p. 1

**English** Aphorismi Urbigerani, Or Certain Rules, clearly demonstrating the Three Infallible Ways of preparing the Grand Elixir of the Philosophers.

**Modern English** Urbigerus's Aphorisms; or, Certain Rules Clearly Demonstrating the Three Infallible Ways of Preparing the Philosophers' Grand Elixir

AU-MAJ-001 1690, p. 1

**English** I. THE Hermetic Science consists only in the right knowledg of the first Matter of the Philosophers, which is in the Mineral Kingdom, not yet determin'd by Nature.

**Modern English** I. Hermetic science consists solely in the correct knowledge of the philosophers' first matter, which belongs to the mineral kingdom and has not yet been determined by Nature.<sup>10</sup>

AU-MAJ-002 1690, p. 1; p. 2

**English** II. An undetermin'd Matter being the beginning of all Metals and Minerals, it follows, that, assoon as any one shall be so happy, as to know and conceive it, he shall easily comprehend also their Natures, Qualities, and Properties.

**Modern English** II. Since an undetermined matter is the beginning of all metals and minerals, it follows that anyone fortunate enough to know and conceive it will also readily comprehend their natures, qualities, and properties.

AU-MAJ-003 1690, p. 2

**English** III. Althô some Persons, possess'd with foolish Notions, dream, that the first Matter is to be found only in some particular places, at such and such times of the year, and by the Virtue of a Magical Magnet; yet we are most certain (according to our Divine Master Hermes) that, all these Suppositions being false, it is to be found every where, at all times, and only by our Science.

**Modern English** III. Although some people, possessed by foolish notions, imagine that first matter can be found only in particular places, at particular seasons, and through the power of a magical magnet, we are most certain, in agreement with our divine master Hermes, that all these suppositions are false. It can be found everywhere, at all times, and only through our science.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>. Determined means specified into a particular natural kind, rather than merely found or identified. First matter here belongs to the mineral kingdom but is said not yet to have become a finished metal or mineral. The distinction governs the exclusions in aphorism VIII.

<sup>11</sup>. The text rejects restrictions of season and place while retaining a requirement for knowledge. "Everywhere" therefore does not mean that every substance is first matter. The appeal to Hermes claims an authoritative agreement; it does not identify a particular Hermetic passage.

AU-MAJ-004 1690, p. 2

**English** IV. The Hermetic Art consists in the true Manipulation of our undetermin'd Subject, which before it can be brought to the highest degree of Perfection, must of necessity undergo all our Chymical Operations.

**Modern English** IV. Hermetic art consists in the correct handling of our undetermined subject. Before it can be brought to the highest degree of perfection, it must necessarily undergo all our chymical operations.<sup>12</sup>

AU-MAJ-005 1690, p. 3

**English** V. Our Chymical Operations are these, Amalgamation, Sublimation, Dissolution, Filtration, Cohobation, Distillation, Separation, Reverberation, Imbibition, and Digestion.

**Modern English** V. Our chymical operations are amalgamation, sublimation, dissolution, filtration, cohobation, distillation, separation, reverberation, imbibition, and digestion.<sup>13</sup>

AU-MAJ-006 1690, p. 3

**English** VI. When we call all these Operations ours, they are not all to be understood according to the common Operations of the Sophisters of Metals, whose Industry consists only in disguising of Subjects from their Form, and their Nature; but ours are really to transfigure our Subject, yet conserving its Nature, Quality, and Property.

**Modern English** VI. When we call these operations ours, they are not all to be understood as the ordinary operations of the sophists of metals, whose industry consists only in disguising subjects in their form and nature. Ours truly transfigure our subject while preserving its nature, quality, and property.<sup>14</sup>

AU-MAJ-007 1690, p. 3; p. 4

**English** VII. This our Subject, after its having pass'd thro' all those artificial Operations, which always imitate Nature, is call'd the Philosophers Stone, or the fifth Essence of Metals, being compounded of the Essence of their four Elements.

**Modern English** VII. After our subject has passed through all these artificial operations, which always imitate Nature, it is called the Philosophers' Stone, or the fifth essence of metals, because it is compounded from the essence of their four elements.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>. The opening distinguishes science as knowledge from art as working upon a subject. The following list names operations within that distinction; aphorism VI then qualifies the sense in which they are "ours."

<sup>13</sup>. These are historical chymical terms. Cohobation repeats distillation after the distillate has been returned; reverberation involves the action of reflected heat; imbibition is the soaking or feeding of a substance; digestion is sustained maturation under appropriate conditions. Such glosses explain the vocabulary without identifying the unnamed subject.

<sup>14</sup>. Sophisters of metals are practitioners accused of deceptive or superficial work. "Artificial" in the following aphorism means achieved by art, rather than counterfeit. The author's own distinction is transformation with the preservation of a subject's nature, quality, and property.

<sup>15</sup>. Fifth essence translates the idea also called quintessence: an essence derived from the four elements within this natural philosophy. The elements are historical explanatory constituents, not the elements of a modern periodic table.

AU-MAJ-008 1690, p. 4

**English** VIII. The Metals and Minerals, which Nature has already determin'd, altho they should be retrogradated into running Mercury, Water, and Vapor; yet can they by no means be taken for the first Matter of the Philosophers.

**Modern English** VIII. Metals and minerals already determined by Nature can by no means be taken for the philosophers' first matter, even if they are brought back into flowing mercury, water, and vapour.<sup>16</sup>

AU-MAJ-009 1690, p. 4

**English** IX. Our true and real Matter is only a Vapor, impregnated with the Metalic Seed, yet undetermin'd, created by God Almighty, generated by the Concurrence and Influence of the Astrums, contain'd in the Bowels of the Earth, as the Matrix of all created things.

**Modern English** IX. Our true and real matter is simply a vapour impregnated with metallic seed, as yet undetermined. It is created by Almighty God, generated through the concurrence and influence of the stars, and contained in the earth's depths as the womb of all created things.<sup>17</sup>

AU-MAJ-010 1690, p. 4; p. 5

**English** X. This our Matter is call'd undetermin'd, because, being a Medium between a Metal and a Mineral, and being neither of them, it has in it power to produce both, according to the Subject, it meets withal.

**Modern English** X. We call this matter undetermined because it stands between a metal and a mineral and is neither of them. It has the power to produce either, according to the subject it encounters.

AU-MAJ-011 1690, p. 5

**English** XI. Such a Metalic Vapor, congeal'd and nourish'd in the Bowels of the Earth, is call'd the undetermin'd, and when it enchants the Serpent with the Beauty of its internal and additional Fire, the determin'd Green-Dragon of the Philosophers; and without the true knowledg and right Manipulation of it nothing can be done in our Art.

**Modern English** XI. Such a metallic vapour, congealed and nourished in the earth's depths, is called the philosophers' undetermined Green Dragon; and when it charms the Serpent with the beauty of its internal and additional fire, it is called their determined Green Dragon. Without true knowledge and correct handling of it, nothing can be done in our art.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>. To retrograde is to bring something back towards an earlier state. The exclusion is deliberate: returning a finished metal to mercury, water, or vapour does not, in this account, make it the original undetermined matter.

<sup>17</sup>. Astrums is rendered as stars. The vapour's generation is attributed to celestial influence and to the earth as matrix or womb. These are positive claims of the author's natural philosophy, alongside the generative imagery; the edition does not assign an unprinted modern chemical formula to the vapour.

<sup>18</sup>. The sentence distinguishes the Dragon's undetermined and determined states through its relation to the Serpent and additional fire. Later references to a determined Dragon must be followed at their particular stage. The postscript again describes the Dragon yielding its undetermined being in the second way.

AU-MAJ-012 1690, p. 5; p. 6

**English XII.** This Green Dragon is the natural Gold of the Philosophers, exceedingly different from the vulgar, which is corporeal and dead, being come to the period of its Perfection according to Nature, and therefore incapable of generating, unless it be first generated it self by our Mercurial Water; but ours is spiritual, and living, having the generative Faculty in it self, and in its own Nature, and having receiv'd the Masculine Quality from the Creator of all things.

**Modern English XII.** This Green Dragon is the philosophers' natural gold, exceedingly different from common gold. Common gold is bodily and dead, having reached the end of its perfection according to Nature, and is therefore incapable of generating unless it is first itself generated by our mercurial water. Ours, however, is spiritual and living. It possesses the generative faculty in itself and in its own nature, having received the masculine quality from the Creator of all things.<sup>19</sup>

AU-MAJ-013 1690, p. 6

**English XIII.** Our Gold is call'd Natural, because it is not to be made by Art, and since it is known to none, but the true Disciples of Hermes, who understand how to separate it from its original Lump, 'tis call'd also Philosophical; and if God had not been so gracious, as to create this first Chaos to our hand, all our Skill and Art in the Construction of the great Elixir would be in vain.

**Modern English XIII.** Our gold is called natural because art cannot make it. Since it is known only to the true disciples of Hermes, who understand how to separate it from its original mass, it is also called philosophical. Had God not graciously created this first chaos ready for us, all our skill and art in constructing the great elixir would be in vain.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> The author expressly distinguishes natural or philosophical gold from common gold. "Spiritual," "living," and "masculine" qualify its claimed generative activity here. They do not license replacing every occurrence of gold in the book with either an ordinary metal or an exclusively psychological meaning.

<sup>20</sup> Chaos names an available primordial compound or beginning within the work, not simple disorder. Art is said to depend upon a natural material already created; the adept's skill cannot supply that initial creation.

## XIV–XXVII: The First and Second Ways

AU-MAJ-014 1690, p. 6; p. 7

**English** XIV. Out of this our Gold, or undetermin'd Green-Dragon, without the addition of any other created thing whatsoever, we know how thrô our Universal Menstruum to extract all our Elements, or Principles, necessary for the performance of our great Work: Which is our first way of preparing the Grand Elixir: and since this our first Chaos is to be had without any Expence, as costing only the trouble of digging it out of the Mines, This is not unfitly call'd the only way of the Poor.

**Modern English** XIV. From this gold of ours, or undetermined Green Dragon, without adding any other created thing whatsoever, we know how to extract, through our universal menstruum, all the elements or principles needed to perform our great work. This is our first way of preparing the grand elixir. Since this first chaos may be obtained without expense, costing only the trouble of digging it from the mines, this is appropriately called the sole way of the poor.<sup>21</sup>

AU-MAJ-015 1690, p. 7

**English** XV. The Operations in this our first way being in a manner the same with those of our second, which is, when we join our determin'd Dragon with our Serpent, we shall (to avoid Repetitions) in the subsequent Aphorisms give Instructions for them both together.

**Modern English** XV. The operations in our first way are much the same as those in our second, in which we join our determined Dragon to our Serpent. To avoid repetition, the following aphorisms will therefore instruct both together.<sup>22</sup>

AU-MAJ-016 1690, p. 7; p. 8

**English** XVI. Our Serpent, which is also contained in the Bowels of the Earth, being of all created things whatsoever the nearest subject of a Feminine Nature to our Dragon, thrô their Copulation such an astral and metallic Seed, containing our Elements, is also to be brought forth, as can, thô with somewhat more of Expence and Time, perform the whole Mystery of Hermes.

**Modern English** XVI. Our Serpent is also contained in the earth's depths. Of all created things, it is the subject of a feminine nature nearest to our Dragon. Through their union, an astral and metallic seed containing our elements can likewise be brought forth. Although it requires somewhat more expense and time, this seed can perform the whole mystery of Hermes.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>. Menstruum is the historical name of a dissolving medium or solvent. The universal menstruum is said here to extract all necessary principles from the one matter. The first way is called the poor person's way because of its claimed material cost; this does not remove its requirement for knowledge or labour.

<sup>22</sup>. The first and second ways are taught together because the operations are said to resemble one another. They should not therefore be counted as missing separate recipes. The second introduces a conjunction of Dragon and Serpent; the postscript returns to this distinction.

<sup>23</sup>. The original calls the conjunction copulation and describes a feminine subject, an astral seed, and a metallic seed. The modern "union" retains that reproductive relationship; it does not turn the passage into an unrelated account of interpersonal relationships.

AU-MAJ-017 1690, p. 8

**English XVII.** Since our Serpent is of all created things the nearest subject of Feminine Nature to our Dragon, she is after her Copulation to be taken for the Basis of our Philosophical Work: for out of her Bowels, without the help of any other Metal or Mineral, we must draw our Principles or Elements, necessary to our Work, being retrogradated by the Universal Menstruum.

**Modern English XVII.** Since our Serpent is, of all created things, the subject of a feminine nature nearest to our Dragon, she must after their union be taken as the basis of our philosophical work. From her depths, without the aid of any other metal or mineral, we must draw the principles or elements needed for our work, through retrogradation by the universal menstruum.<sup>24</sup>

AU-MAJ-018 1690, p. 8

**English XVIII.** This Feminine Subject cannot be retrogradated, unless to free her from her Impurities, and Heterogeneous Qualities, she is first actuated by her Homogeneous ones, that she may be in a better Capacity to receive the spiritual Love of our Green Dragon.

**Modern English XVIII.** This feminine subject cannot be brought back unless she is first activated by her homogeneous qualities to free her from impurities and heterogeneous qualities, so that she may be better able to receive the spiritual love of our Green Dragon.<sup>25</sup>

AU-MAJ-019 1690, p. 9

**English XIX.** After our Serpent has been bound with her Chain, penetrated with the Blood of our Green-Dragon, and driven nine, or ten times thro' the combustible Fire into the elementary Air, if you do not find her to be exceeding furious, and extremely penetrating, 'tis a sign, that you do not hit our Subject, the notion of the Homogenea, or their Proportion.

**Modern English XIX.** After our Serpent has been bound with her chain, penetrated with the blood of our Green Dragon, and driven nine or ten times through combustible fire into elementary air, she should be exceedingly fierce and penetrating. If you do not find her so, it is a sign that you have mistaken our subject, the meaning of the homogeneous things, or their proportion.<sup>26</sup>

AU-MAJ-020 1690, p. 9

**English XX.** If this furious Serpent, after it has been dissolv'd by the Universal Menstruum, filtrated, evaporated, and congeal'd nine or ten times, does not come over in a Cloud, and turn into our Virgin Milk, or Metalic argentin Water, not

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<sup>24</sup>. The final phrase "being retrogradated" is loosely attached in the original. The modern reading preserves retrogradation by the universal menstruum without deciding that the extracted principles alone are its object. The next aphorism explicitly speaks of retrogradating the feminine subject.

<sup>25</sup>. Homogeneous qualities belong to the same kind or nature; heterogeneous qualities are of another kind. Actuation makes the subject active or effective. The pronouns and personification continue the Serpent's feminine role from the preceding aphorisms.

<sup>26</sup>. Homogenea is rendered as the homogeneous things. The three possible errors concern the subject, the understanding of those things, and their proportion. Both the count "nine or ten" and the movement through fire into elementary air are retained as printed.

corrosive at all, and yet insensibly, and invisibly devouring every thing, that comes near it, 'tis plainly to be seen, that you err in the Notion of our Universal Menstruum.

**Modern English** XX. After this fierce Serpent has been dissolved by the universal menstruum, filtered, evaporated, and congealed nine or ten times, she should pass over in a cloud and turn into our virgin's milk, or metallic silvery water. It is not corrosive at all, yet insensibly and invisibly devours everything that approaches it. If this does not happen, it is plain that you have mistaken the meaning of our universal menstruum.<sup>27</sup>

AU-MAJ-021 1690, p. 10

**English** XXI. The Serpent, of which I now speak, is our true Water of the Clouds, or the real Eagle and Mercury of the Philosophers, greatly different from the Vulgar, which is corporeal, gross, dead, and full of Heterogeneous Qualities, and a Subject, fallen from its Sphere, like unripe Fruit from the Tree; but ours is spiritual, transparent, living, residing in its own Sphere, like a King on his Throne.

**Modern English** XXI. The Serpent of which I now speak is our true water of the clouds, or the real eagle and mercury of the philosophers. It differs greatly from common mercury, which is bodily, gross, dead, and full of heterogeneous qualities: a subject fallen from its sphere like unripe fruit from a tree. Ours is spiritual, transparent, living, and resident in its own sphere like a king upon his throne.<sup>28</sup>

AU-MAJ-022 1690, p. 10

**English** XXII. Tho' the vulgar Mercury is such an unripe Fruit, corporeal, and dead; yet if you know how to amalgamate it with our Dragon, and to retrograde it with the Universal Menstruum, you may assure your self, that out of this also you shall be able to prepare a Sophic Mercury, with which you shall certainly produce the great Elixir, discover the Secret of Secrets, unlock the most difficult Locks, and command all the Treasures in the World.

**Modern English** XXII. Although common mercury is such an unripe fruit, bodily and dead, if you know how to amalgamate it with our Dragon and bring it back with the universal menstruum, you may be assured that you can also prepare from it a philosophic mercury. With this you will certainly produce the great elixir, discover the secret of secrets, unlock the most difficult locks, and command all the treasures in the world.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>. Argentin means silvery. Virgin's milk, metallic silvery water, and the Serpent are linked descriptions of a subject at this stage. The assertion that it is noncorrosive yet devours whatever approaches it is retained as the author's claim; it is not resolved by assigning it a modern solvent identity.

<sup>28</sup>. Common mercury and philosophers' mercury are explicitly contrasted. "Sphere" belongs to the cosmological and generative imagery of proper place, ripeness, and kingship. The comparison does not itself name a different ordinary chemical substance.

<sup>29</sup>. Sophic means philosophic or belonging to the wise. The exclusion of ordinary mercury as first matter in VIII is not cancelled: XXII describes a preparation involving common mercury and the Dragon. The possibility claimed for a prepared product differs from the status of an untreated starting material.

AU-MAJ-023 1690, p. 11

**English** XXIII. Our Mercury is called the Mercury of the Philosophers, because it is a Subject, which is not to be found ready prepar'd to our hand: for it must of necessity be made by our Philosophical Preparations, out of the first Chaos, and altho it is Artificial, yet is it naturally prepar'd, Nature, which is imitated in the Preparation of it, contributing likewise thereunto.

**Modern English** XXIII. Our mercury is called the philosophers' mercury because it is a subject that cannot be found ready prepared for us. It must necessarily be made from the first chaos by our philosophical preparations. Although artificial, it is naturally prepared, for Nature, which is imitated in its preparation, also contributes to it.<sup>30</sup>

AU-MAJ-024 1690, p. 11; p. 12

**English** XXIV. Since our Subject cannot be call'd the fiery Serpent of the Philosophers, nor have the power of overcoming any created thing, before it has receiv'd such Virtue and Quality from our Green-Dragon, and the Universal Menstruum, by which it self is first overcome, devour'd, and bury'd in their Bowels, out of which being born again, 'tis made capable of the same, it follows, that such a Virtue of killing and vivifying is natural to our Dragon and the Universal Menstruum.

**Modern English** XXIV. Our subject cannot be called the philosophers' fiery Serpent, or possess the power to overcome any created thing, until it has received that virtue and quality from our Green Dragon and the universal menstruum. These first overcome, devour, and bury the subject in their depths; born from them again, it becomes capable of doing the same. It follows that the power of killing and bringing to life is natural to our Dragon and the universal menstruum.<sup>31</sup>

AU-MAJ-025 1690, p. 12

**English** XXV. The Universal Menstruum of the Philosophers is that Celestial one, without which nothing can live nor subsist in this World: 'Tis also that noble Champion, which delivers the uncorrupted Virgin, Andromeda, who was with a strong Chain fastned to the Rock in the power of the Dragon, of whose spiritual Love having admitted, for fear of being eternally ruin'd and devour'd by him (which could not have been avoided, if this noble Champion had not come to her assistance) She is to be deliver'd of a Child, which will be the Wonder of Wonders, and Prodigy of Nature.

**Modern English** XXV. The philosophers' universal menstruum is that celestial one without which nothing in this world can live or subsist. It is also the noble champion who delivers the uncorrupted virgin Andromeda, fastened by a strong chain to a rock in the Dragon's power. Having admitted his spiritual love for fear of being eternally ruined and devoured by him—a fate she could not have avoided had this noble

<sup>30</sup>. Nature and art cooperate in the author's explanation. Calling the mercury artificial does not make it a mere disguise; VI had expressly distinguished such a disguise from the change the author claims for his own operations.

<sup>31</sup>. Devouring, burial, birth, killing, and vivification describe a succession of powers and states. The postscript places the same language in an emblem that also bears religious meanings. The sequence should therefore remain available both as the text's material claim and as its symbolic pattern.

champion not come to her aid—she is to give birth to a child who will be the wonder of wonders and prodigy of Nature.<sup>32</sup>

AU-MAJ-026 1690, p. 12; p. 13

**English** XXVI. If our Virgin in her Confinement, before she is set at liberty, does not manifest her extreme Beauty with all her internal, divers, delicate natural Colors, wonderfully charming, and very pleasant to the Eye, it signifies, that she has not sufficiently enjoy'd the spiritual Company of the Dragon.

**Modern English** XXVI. Before our Virgin is set free, she should display her extreme beauty in her confinement, with all her internal, varied, delicate natural colours, wonderfully charming and most pleasing to the eye. If she does not, it signifies that she has not sufficiently enjoyed the Dragon's spiritual company.<sup>33</sup>

AU-MAJ-027 1690, p. 13

**English** XXVII. If the Universal Menstruum has not totally deliver'd the Virgin from the Claws of the Dragon, it is a sign, either that she was not sufficiently free from her Heterogeneous Qualities, or that she had not receiv'd from the external Heat a sufficient penetrating Quality, or that the Universal Menstruum was too weak to perform its Undertaking.

**Modern English** XXVII. If the universal menstruum has not entirely delivered the Virgin from the Dragon's claws, it is a sign either that she was not sufficiently free of her heterogeneous qualities, that she had not received a sufficiently penetrating quality from the external heat, or that the universal menstruum was too weak to accomplish its undertaking.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>. Andromeda supplies the name and predicament of the captive virgin. In this adaptation the Dragon's spiritual love, the champion's deliverance, and the birth of the child form one account. The modern reading preserves the original's shifting personal pronouns rather than supplying an unprinted identification of every agent.

<sup>33</sup>. The changing colours function as signs by which the author judges a stage of the work. Here the colour display belongs to the Virgin before release. Later aphorisms distinguish essential colours from passing, accidental ones.

<sup>34</sup>. The sentence gives three different explanations for a failure of deliverance: remaining heterogeneous qualities, insufficient penetration from external heat, or weakness of the menstruum. Keeping these alternatives distinct matters to the author's account of error.

## XXVIII–XLIII: Water, Fire and Preparation

AU-MAJ-028 1690, p. 13; p. 14

**English** XXVIII. To know, whether the Amalgamation, Sublimation, Dissolution, Filtration, Coagulation, and Distillation have been Natural and Philosophical, the whole Body of the Serpent must come over spiritual and transparent, leaving only some few and very light Feces at the bottom, which can by no Art be reduc'd either into a running Mercury, or any other kind of metallic Substance.

**Modern English** XXVIII. To know whether the amalgamation, sublimation, dissolution, filtration, coagulation, and distillation have been natural and philosophical, the Serpent's whole body must pass over spiritual and transparent. It should leave only a few very light residues at the bottom, which no art can reduce either to flowing mercury or to any other kind of metallic substance.<sup>35</sup>

AU-MAJ-029 1690, p. 14

**English** XXIX. After all these above-mention'd Operations, and the Separation, if our Serpent, being amalgamated with any Metal, pure or impure, cannot suffer the Fusion, it will be in vain for you to go any farther with it: for you may assure your self, that you do not walk in the true Paths of the Hermetic Art.

**Modern English** XXIX. After all these operations and the separation, if our Serpent, amalgamated with any pure or impure metal, cannot endure fusion, it will be useless to proceed further. You may be assured that you are not following the true paths of Hermetic art.<sup>36</sup>

AU-MAJ-030 1690, p. 14

**English** XXX. Our Philosophical Distillations consist only in the right Separation of our Spiritual and Mercurial Water from all its poisonous oily Substance, which is of no use at all in our Art, and from the Caput Mortuum, which is left behind after the first Distillation.

**Modern English** XXX. Our philosophical distillations consist solely in correctly separating our spiritual mercurial water from all its poisonous oily substance, which is entirely useless in our art, and from the dead head left after the first distillation.<sup>37</sup>

AU-MAJ-031 1690, p. 14; p. 15

**English** XXXI. If after the first Distillation an exceedingly corrosive and extremely penetrating red Oil does not ascend (which as soon as it begins to appear in the Neck of the Retort, the Receiver must be changed) it signifies, that the Distillation has not been rightly perform'd, and by Consequence, that the internal Fire of our

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<sup>35</sup>. Feces means residual matter or dregs in this chymical context. The text insists that the residue cannot be brought back to mercury or another metallic substance; this is a criterion the author claims, rather than an editorial chemical identification.

<sup>36</sup>. To suffer fusion means to endure melting. This aphorism makes the capacity of a prepared conjunction to survive that condition a test of the path being followed.

<sup>37</sup>. Caput mortuum literally means dead head and names a residue left after distillation. The following aphorisms distinguish this residue, a red oil, and the mercurial water. Those distinctions should be retained even when the author later describes an unintended mixture of them.

metallic vaporous Water, being burnt up, and corroded by its poisonous Vapor, and the outward Fire, is still mixt with it, and with the Caput Mortuum.

**Modern English** XXXI. After the first distillation, an exceedingly corrosive and penetrating red oil should ascend; the receiver must be changed as soon as it begins to appear in the retort's neck. If it does not ascend, the distillation has not been correctly performed. Consequently, the internal fire of our metallic vaporous water, burnt up and corroded by its poisonous vapour and the outward fire, remains mixed with the water and the dead head.<sup>38</sup>

AU-MAJ-032 1690, p. 15

**English** XXXII. In case you should commit so great an Error in the performance of this first Distillation, althô it will never be in your power to prepare the Mercury Duplex of the Philosophers, unless you should begin the whole Work again from the very Beginning; yet, if you have any farther Skill in our Art, you may easily prepare our Mercury simplex, with which you will effect great and miraculous things.

**Modern English** XXXII. If you commit so great an error in performing this first distillation, you will never be able to prepare the philosophers' double mercury unless you begin the whole work again from the very beginning. Nevertheless, if you have further skill in our art, you may readily prepare our simple mercury, with which you will accomplish great and miraculous things.<sup>39</sup>

AU-MAJ-033 1690, p. 15; p. 16

**English** XXXIII. This blood red Oil with its only Fumes penetrates every Part and Atom of all Metals and Minerals, and principally of Gold, out of which Dissolution one may easily extract the right Tincture or Essence with highly rectify'd Spirit of Wine, and bring it over the Alembic with it: which is indeed a great Medicine for humane Bodies.

**Modern English** XXXIII. This blood-red oil penetrates every part and atom of all metals and minerals, especially gold, by its fumes alone. From that dissolution one may readily extract the true tincture or essence with highly rectified spirit of wine and bring it over through the alembic with that spirit. This is indeed a great medicine for human bodies.<sup>40</sup>

AU-MAJ-034 1690, p. 16

**English** XXXIV. A deep blood-red Tincture of excellent Virtue is to be extracted also out of the above-mention'd Caput Mortuum, accidentally and unfortunately intermixt with the internal Sulphur of our Mercurial Water, and with the red Oil,

<sup>38</sup>. The source calls for the receiver to be changed when the red oil appears. "It" at the end is understood as the mercurial water with which the burnt internal fire remains mixed. The electronic transcription's "aseend" is corrected to the printed "ascend" from the native page.

<sup>39</sup>. Mercury duplex and mercury simplex are rendered as double mercury and simple mercury. These are names of different preparations or states within the author's scheme. Losing the first aim is said still to allow the second, provided further knowledge is possessed.

<sup>40</sup>. Spirit of wine is the historical name of an alcoholic spirit; rectification denotes repeated purification by distillation. The alembic is a distilling apparatus. The medicinal assertion belongs to the author's text and is preserved without an editorial claim that the preparation has been clinically demonstrated.

with highly rectify'd Spirit of Wine: with which after it has been evaporated to a Powder, imbib'd, and Philosophically digested, you may assure your self of having the Medicine of Medicines, next to the great Elixir, by which you may imperceptibly and quickly cure all sorts of Distempers, to the great Admiration of all Galenists, and to the Astonishment of all Vulgar Chymists.

**Modern English** XXXIV. A deep blood-red tincture of excellent virtue may also be extracted with highly rectified spirit of wine from the dead head mentioned above, accidentally and unfortunately mixed with the internal sulphur of our mercurial water and the red oil. After it has been evaporated to a powder, imbibed with that spirit, and philosophically digested, you may be assured that you possess the medicine of medicines, next to the great elixir. With it you may imperceptibly and rapidly cure every kind of disorder, to the great admiration of all Galenists and the astonishment of all common chymists.<sup>41</sup>

AU-MAJ-035 1690, p. 17

**English** XXXV. The most part of the Philosophers, whilst their Intention was to go farther to the noblest Perfection of our Celestial Art, either employ'd this red Oil, brought to a Potability, for internal Medicines, or to external Diseases without any farther Preparation of it, till they had obtain'd the great Elixir.

**Modern English** XXXV. Most philosophers, while intending to advance to the noblest perfection of our celestial art, either used this red oil, made drinkable, for internal medicines or applied it to external diseases without further preparation until they had obtained the great elixir.<sup>42</sup>

AU-MAJ-036 1690, p. 17

**English** XXXVI. If the Caput Mortuum has not the Magnetic Quality in attracting the Spiritus Mundi into it self from the Astrums, it is a sign, that at the end of the Distillation of the red Oil the outward fire was so violent, as quite to burn up the Magnet, which is contain'd in the first Feces of our Mercurial Water.

**Modern English** XXXVI. If the dead head lacks the magnetic quality of attracting the spirit of the world into itself from the stars, it is a sign that the outward fire at the end of the red oil's distillation was so violent that it entirely burnt up the magnet contained in the first residues of our mercurial water.<sup>43</sup>

AU-MAJ-037 1690, p. 17; p. 18

**English** XXXVII. After the first Distillation, if the least Part of the Virgin Mercurial Water can by any Art whatsoever be brought to running Mercury, or any other kind

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<sup>41</sup>. Galenists names adherents of a medical tradition associated with Galen. The author imagines their astonishment before a chymical medicine. His claims of comprehensive and rapid cures are historical assertions; the note explains the polemical comparison rather than extending it into modern medical advice.

<sup>42</sup>. Potability means fitness to be drunk. The original distinguishes making the oil potable for internal use from applying it externally without further preparation. This is an account of the practice the author attributes to philosophers, not a newly supplied dosage or preparation.

<sup>43</sup>. Spiritus mundi means spirit of the world. The magnetic image describes a claimed attraction from the stars; the author locates that magnet in the residue. This use must be compared with III and XLII, where particular claims about magical magnets are rejected.

of a Metallic Substance, it is an evident sign, that either the Subject, or its Preparation and Reduction into Water, has not been real, natural, or Philosophical.

**Modern English** XXXVII. If, after the first distillation, any part of the virgin mercurial water can by any art whatsoever be brought into flowing mercury or another kind of metallic substance, it is an evident sign that either the subject or its preparation and reduction to water was not real, natural, or philosophical.<sup>44</sup>

AU-MAJ-038 1690, p. 18

**English** XXXVIII. The above-mention'd Spiritus Mundi, althô of no use at all in this our great Work, is yet a great Menstruum in extracting of Tinctures out of Metals, Minerals, Animals, and Vegetables, and in performing great things in the Art, volatilizing all fixt Bodies, and principally Gold.

**Modern English** XXXVIII. Although the spirit of the world mentioned above is entirely useless in this great work of ours, it is nevertheless a great menstruum for extracting tinctures from metals, minerals, animals, and vegetables, and for accomplishing great things in the art, making all fixed bodies volatile, especially gold.<sup>45</sup>

AU-MAJ-039 1690, p. 18; p. 19

**English** XXXIX. A great many Pretenders to the true Hermetic Knowledge prepare Menstruums, to dissolve common Mercury, and to turn it into Water several manner of ways, and by several additions of Salts, Sulphurs, Metals, and Minerals; but, since all those Preparations are sophistical, any one, expert in our Art, will be able to reduce it to its running Quality again.

**Modern English** XXXIX. Many who claim true Hermetic knowledge prepare menstruums to dissolve common mercury and turn it into water in various ways, by adding salts, sulphurs, metals, and minerals. But since all these preparations are sophistical, anyone experienced in our art will be able to restore it to its flowing condition.<sup>46</sup>

AU-MAJ-040 1690, p. 19

**English** XL. The Quality of our Mercurial Water being to volatilize all fixt Bodies, and to fix all those, that are volatil, fixing it self with those, that are fixt, according to the Proportion of it, dissolving its own Body, it unites inseparably with it, conserving always its own Qualities and Properties, and receives no Augmentation from any other created thing, but only from its crude Body.

**Modern English** XL. The quality of our mercurial water is to make every fixed body volatile and fix every volatile body. In proportion to its amount, it fixes itself with those that are fixed. Dissolving its own body,

<sup>44</sup>. The test repeats the exclusion in XXVIII: the prepared water must not yield ordinary flowing mercury or another metallic substance. "Water" and "mercury" are therefore governed by the distinctions the author makes in the passage, rather than treated as interchangeable common names.

<sup>45</sup>. The assertion that the world spirit is useless here is limited to this great work; the same sentence assigns it other chymical uses. The kingdoms of animals, minerals, and vegetables are categories of the historical account.

<sup>46</sup>. Sophistical is the author's judgement of a preparation whose apparent alteration he considers reversible. The possibility of returning mercury to its flowing state is used as a distinction between the rejected preparations and his own claimed transformation.

it unites inseparably with that body, always preserving its own qualities and properties. It receives no increase from any other created thing, but only from its crude body.<sup>47</sup>

AU-MAJ-041 1690, p. 19

**English** XLI. Our Mercurial Water has such a sympathy with the Astrums, that, if it is not kept very close, and Hermetically seal'd, it will in a very short time, like a wing'd Serpent, fly away in a wonderful manner to its own Sphere, carrying along with it all the Elements and Principles of Metals, and not leaving so much as one single drop, or the least remainder, behind.

**Modern English** XLI. Our mercurial water has such an affinity with the stars that, unless kept very closely enclosed and hermetically sealed, it will in a very short time fly away wonderfully to its own sphere like a winged serpent. It carries all the elements and principles of metals with it, leaving neither a single drop nor the least residue behind.<sup>48</sup>

AU-MAJ-042 1690, p. 20

**English** XLII. Several Pretenders to the Magical Science prepare Magical Magnets, to draw from the Air, and (as they pretend) from the Astrums such Menstruums, as they think necessary for the Production of the Great Elixir; but their Magnets being compounded of several determinate things, altho their Menstruums are great Dissolvents, yet we do on assured knowledg affirm, that they can never perform any real Experiment in our Art.

**Modern English** XLII. Many who claim magical science prepare magical magnets to draw from the air—and, as they pretend, from the stars—the menstruums they consider necessary to produce the great elixir. But their magnets are compounded from various determined things. Although their menstruums are powerful solvents, we affirm from certain knowledge that they can never perform any real experiment in our art.<sup>49</sup>

AU-MAJ-043 1690, p. 20; p. 21

**English** XLIII. Some are of Opinion, that, unless the Operator is Master in the Magical Science, and fundamentally understands all its Experiments, he will never be able by any other Art whatsoever to bring forth any such things, as can produce the Universal Elixir. Now, altho we do not deny, that the Magical Knowledge is requir'd to attain to the highest degree of Perfection in all Sciences, yet we are most certain, that it is not at all necessary to the Formation of the Grand Elixir upon Animals, Metals, Precious Stones, and Vegetables.

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<sup>47</sup>. Fixed and volatile are relational chymical terms concerning persistence or movement under the conditions of the work. The reciprocal claims are preserved: making fixed bodies volatile, fixing volatile bodies, and fixing itself with fixed bodies. The only stated source of increase is its own crude body.

<sup>48</sup>. Sympathy is rendered as affinity. The winged serpent makes departure visible as an emblem, while the sentence also explicitly concerns enclosure and loss of material. Reading the image need not erase that practical claim.

<sup>49</sup>. The rejection concerns magnets compounded from already determined things. Even powerful dissolving action is said to fall short of the art's intended result. This qualification narrows the earlier rejection of magical-magnet claims without furnishing a modern recipe for the accepted subject.

**Modern English** XLIII. Some hold that unless an operator is a master of magical science and thoroughly understands all its experiments, no other art will enable him to bring forth anything capable of producing the universal elixir. Although we do not deny that magical knowledge is required to attain the highest degree of perfection in all sciences, we are most certain that it is entirely unnecessary for forming the grand elixir upon animals, metals, precious stones, and vegetables.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> The text distinguishes the highest perfection in all sciences from the formation of the grand elixir. It retains magical knowledge as relevant to the former while denying that it is necessary to the latter. Animals, metals, stones, and plants remain the stated scope of the claim.

## XLIV–LXIII: Creation, Separation and the Third Way

AU-MAJ-044 1690, p. 21

**English** XLIV. Our Virgin Milk, or Metallic Water, being brought to a perfect Spirituality, and excellent Diaphanity, is call'd the true Chaos of the Philosophers: for out of that alone, without any addition of any created, or artificially prepar'd thing, we are to prepare and separate all the Elements, which are requir'd to the Formation of our Philosophical Microcosm.

**Modern English** XLIV. Our virgin's milk, or metallic water, when brought to perfect spirituality and excellent transparency, is called the philosophers' true chaos. From this alone, without adding any created or artificially prepared thing, we must prepare and separate all the elements required to form our philosophical microcosm.<sup>51</sup>

AU-MAJ-045 1690, p. 21; p. 22

**English** XLV. To understand aright, how out of this our Chaos we are to form our Philosophical Microcosm, we must first of necessity rightly comprehend the great Mystery and Proceeding in the Creation of the Macrocosm: it being extremely necessary to imitate and use the very same Method in the Creation of our little one, that the Creator of all things has us'd in the Formation of the great one.

**Modern English** XLV. To understand correctly how we are to form our philosophical microcosm from this chaos, we must first correctly comprehend the great mystery and course of the macrocosm's creation. In creating our little world, it is absolutely necessary to imitate and use the very same method that the Creator of all things used to form the great world.<sup>52</sup>

AU-MAJ-046 1690, p. 22

**English** XLVI. When our Chaos or Celestial Water has purify'd it self from its own gross and palpable Body, it is call'd the Heaven of the Philosophers, and the palpable Body the Earth, which is void, empty, and dark: And if our Divine Spirit, which is carry'd upon the Face of the Waters, did not bring forth out of the palpable Body that pretious Metalic Seed, we should never be able by any Art whatsoever to go on any farther with the perfect Creation of our Microcosm according to our Intent.

**Modern English** XLVI. When our chaos, or celestial water, has purified itself of its own gross and tangible body, it is called the philosophers' heaven. The tangible body is called the earth, which is void, empty, and dark. Unless our divine spirit, carried upon the face of the waters, brought that precious metallic seed forth from the tangible body, no art whatsoever would enable us to advance further in the perfect creation of our microcosm according to our intention.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>. Diaphanity means transparency. "Spirituality" belongs to the author's description of the prepared water and should be read with that visible quality. The microcosm is the little world to be formed from the chaos; its relation to the great world is developed in the next aphorism.

<sup>52</sup>. Macrocosm means great world and microcosm little world. The relationship asserted is methodological: the operator must imitate the Creator's manner of formation. The text does not present a modern physical explanation of cosmic origins.

AU-MAJ-047 1690, p. 22; p. 23

**English** XLVII. This Heaven of the Philosophers, after it has separated it self from the Earth, containing our Philosophical Seed, and the Magnet of our Salt of Nature, and from the superfluous Waters, is call'd the Mercury simplex of the wise man: for whosoever attains it, at the same time attains also the Knowledge and Power of retrogradating Metals, Minerals, &c. so as to reduce them to their first Being, to perfect imperfect Bodies, and to vivifie dead ones, conserving always its own Property and Quality to it self, and to produce the Great Elixir according to the usual way of the Philosophers.

**Modern English** XLVII. After this philosophers' heaven has separated itself from the earth containing our philosophical seed and the magnet of our salt of Nature, and from the superfluous waters, it is called the wise man's simple mercury. Whoever attains it also attains the knowledge and power to bring metals, minerals, and so forth back to their first being, perfect imperfect bodies, bring dead ones to life, and produce the great elixir according to the philosophers' usual way. Throughout, the mercury preserves its own property and quality.<sup>54</sup>

AU-MAJ-048 1690, p. 23

**English** XLVIII. After we have separated the Water from the Waters, by which I mean the Mercurial Celestial Water from the superfluous Water, which is the Flegm; by the Blessing of God and the Infusion of our holy Spirit, we do not in the least doubt, but we shall be able to bring forth out of our Earth such Fruits and Subjects, with which we shall certainly perform the whole Creation, carrying our Work to the highest Degree of Perfection.

**Modern English** XLVIII. After we have separated the water from the waters—by which I mean the mercurial celestial water from the superfluous water, or phlegm—we do not in the least doubt that, through God's blessing and the infusion of our holy spirit, we shall be able to bring forth from our earth the fruits and subjects with which to perform the whole creation, carrying our work to its highest degree of perfection.<sup>55</sup>

AU-MAJ-049 1690, p. 23; p. 24

**English** XLIX. Our Mercurial Water being of the same Brightness with the Heavens, and our palpable gross Body, which did separate it self from our Celestial Water, having the same Properties and Quality with the Earth, none, but Ignorants, will deny them to be the right Heaven and true Earth of the Philosophers.

**Modern English** XLIX. Since our mercurial water has the same brightness as the heavens, and the gross, tangible body separated from our celestial water has the same properties and quality as the earth, only the

<sup>53</sup>. The passage adapts the language of Genesis 1:2: a dark, empty earth and the spirit upon the waters. It assigns these scriptural images to differentiated constituents and actions within the work. The claims of creation and separation remain part of the historical argument.

<sup>54</sup>. The earth contains the philosophical seed and the magnet of the salt of Nature; the heaven is separated from it and from superfluous waters. The note makes the syntax explicit without equating this salt with a named modern compound. Simple mercury is the name assigned after those separations.

<sup>55</sup>. Phlegm here names superfluous watery matter rather than a cough or symptom. The separation of waters again draws on the language of creation. The author speaks of "our holy spirit" and divine blessing within that account; the new reading keeps both expressions.

ignorant will deny that they are the philosophers' true heaven and true earth.

AU-MAJ-050 1690, p. 24

**English** L. If, after the Separation of the Spirit from the superfluous Waters, the World, in which it is contain'd, does not appear mighty clear, and full of light, and of the same brightness with our Celestial Water, it is a sign, that the Separation is not fully perform'd, the Spirit being still intermixt with the Waters.

**Modern English** L. After the spirit has been separated from the superfluous waters, the world containing it should appear exceedingly clear, full of light, and as bright as our celestial water. If it does not, it is a sign that the separation is incomplete and the spirit remains mixed with the waters.<sup>56</sup>

AU-MAJ-051 1690, p. 24; p. 25

**English** LI. If in the space of nine or ten Weeks, or two Philosophical Months at longest, our Mercurial Water has not done separating it self from all its own Earth, containing the Metallic Seed, it is an evident sign, that you have either err'd in the working of it, or that its Digestion, having been too violent, has confounded and burnt up the principal Subject of the Creation.

**Modern English** LI. If, within nine or ten weeks, or two philosophical months at the longest, our mercurial water has not finished separating itself from all its own earth, which contains the metallic seed, this is clear evidence either that you have erred in working it, or that its digestion has been too violent and has confused and burned up the principal subject of creation.<sup>57</sup>

AU-MAJ-052 1690, p. 25

**English** LII. This Philosophic Earth, containing our principal Subject, after it has been separated from all the Waters, is very gently to be dry'd by some external Heat, to free it from its extraneous Humidity, that it may be in a proper Capacity to receive the Celestial Moisture of our Argentin Water, to which it unites its most noble Fruits, with which our Philosophical Microcosm is generated, nourish'd, and saturated.

**Modern English** LII. This philosophical earth, containing our principal subject, must, after it has been separated from all the waters, be dried very gently by some external heat, to free it from its foreign moisture. It may then be properly prepared to receive the celestial moisture of our silvery water, to which it unites its most noble fruits. By these our philosophical microcosm is generated, nourished and saturated.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>. The world containing the spirit can refer to the bounded world of the work. The observed clarity is a criterion of completed separation in the author's account. The text itself supplies no new measuring instrument or quantitative threshold.

<sup>57</sup>. Philosophical month. The author gives both ordinary weeks and a "philosophical" measure, without defining a universally convertible calendar. The modern reading preserves both rather than substituting a modern laboratory duration.

<sup>58</sup>. Argentine water. "Argentin" means silvery or silver-like. This description is retained as a quality of the author's water, not an identification of it as a modern silver solution.

AU-MAJ-053 1690, p. 25; p. 26

**English** LIII. If the Earth, after it has been reverberated, humected with our Celestial Moisture, does not presently enrich our Air with the divine expected Fruits, you must certainly believe, that in the drying of it the external Heat has been so violent, as to burn up the internal Heat and Nature of the Earth, and consequently spoil your Undertaking as to the performance of the whole Mystery of the Creation, according to the noblest, richest, shortest, most natural, and secretest ways of the Philosophers.

**Modern English** LIII. If the earth, after it has been reverberated and moistened with our celestial moisture, does not immediately enrich our air with the divine fruits we expect, you must certainly conclude that, in drying it, the external heat has been so violent as to burn up the internal heat and nature of the earth. Consequently, it has spoiled your undertaking: the performance of the whole mystery of creation according to the philosophers' noblest, richest, shortest, most natural and most secret ways.<sup>59</sup>

AU-MAJ-054 1690, p. 26

**English** LIV. In case the Earth should be totally destroy'd by the violent external Heat, altho it is most certain, you cannot carry on our noble Creation any farther with it; yet if you know how to amalgamate our Mercury simplex with your common Gold, which is dissolved, vivify'd, and renew'd by it, you may be sure of effecting the Great Elixir, altho neither so quick, so natural, nor so rich, as you might have done without it. And this is our third way.

**Modern English** LIV. If the earth should be entirely destroyed by violent external heat, it is most certain that you cannot carry our noble creation any further with it. Yet, if you know how to amalgamate our simple mercury with your common gold, which it dissolves, brings to life and renews, you may be sure of making the great elixir—though neither so quickly, so naturally nor so richly as you might have done without it. This is our third way.<sup>60</sup>

AU-MAJ-055 1690, p. 26; p. 27

**English** LV. The Amalgamation of our Mercury simplex with common Gold consists only in the right Proportion, and in the indissoluble Union of both, which is done without any external Heat in a very short time, without which exact Proportion and right Union nothing of any Moment is to be expected from their Marriage.

**Modern English** LV. The amalgamation of our simple mercury with common gold consists solely in their right proportion and their indissoluble union. This is accomplished without any external heat, in a very short time. Without that exact proportion and right union, nothing of consequence can be expected from their marriage.

<sup>59</sup>. Reverberated earth. Reverberation names treatment by reflected or surrounding furnace heat. "Our air," "fruits" and "creation" belong to the author's linked account of the vessel as a small world; their symbolic use does not erase the accompanying claims about matter and heating.

<sup>60</sup>. Simple mercury and the third way. Mercury simplex is rendered "simple mercury"; the author distinguishes it from common mercury elsewhere. This aphorism explicitly identifies the route involving common gold as the third way. No modern reagent is silently substituted for the historical name.

AU-MAJ-056 1690, p. 27

**English** LVI. Know then, that this right Proportion is ten parts of our Mercury simplex to one of your finest common Gold in filings, which is dissolved in it, like Ice in common Water, after an imperceptible manner, and as soon as the Dissolution is over, the Coagulation and Putrefaction presently follow, which effects if you find not, 'tis a sign, that the Mercury exceeds its due Proportion. Now when your Gold has been thus well amalgamated, united, putrify'd, and inseparably digested with our Mercury simplex, you will then have only our Philosophical Sulphur, in which time one might easily have perform'd the whole Work, working without common Gold.

**Modern English** LVI. Know, then, that this right proportion is ten parts of our simple mercury to one part of your finest common gold in filings. The gold dissolves in it imperceptibly, like ice in common water. As soon as dissolution is complete, coagulation and putrefaction immediately follow. If you do not find these effects, it is a sign that the mercury exceeds its due proportion. Now, when your gold has thus been thoroughly amalgamated, united, putrefied and inseparably digested with our simple mercury, you will have only our philosophical sulphur. In that time one might easily have completed the whole work without using common gold.<sup>61</sup>

AU-MAJ-057 1690, p. 28

**English** LVII. Althô our Mercury simplex is exceedingly spiritual and volatil, yet since it is the right Agent, digesting the Seed or Essence of all Metals and Minerals, it will, thô undigested, naturally adhere to any of them, althô corporeal, that shall come near it, and will never leave it, unless it be forc'd away by the Test, thô kept in a great Fusion for many hours.

**Modern English** LVII. Although our simple mercury is exceedingly spiritual and volatile, it is the proper agent for digesting the seed or essence of all metals and minerals. Therefore, even while undigested, it will naturally adhere to any of them that comes near it, although that metal or mineral is corporeal. It will never leave it unless driven away by the assay, even if kept in strong fusion for many hours.<sup>62</sup>

AU-MAJ-058 1690, p. 28

**English** LVIII. This Mercury simplex, which before its retrogradation was of a Feminine Nature, and before it left all its own Earth, was Hermaphroditic, being powerful in both Sexes, is now become of a Feminine Quality again, and althô it has lost the Masculine visible Fire, yet it has conserv'd its own, which is invisible to us, and with which it performs visible Operations in digesting of imperfect Metals, after its Determination with any of them.

**Modern English** LVIII. This simple mercury, which before its retrogradation was feminine in nature, and before it left all its own earth was

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<sup>61</sup>. Proportion and sequence. The historical ratio and sequence are retained. The paragraph also limits the achievement: at this point the author says that only philosophical sulphur has been obtained, and contrasts this route's pace with working without common gold.

<sup>62</sup>. The test. "Test" here can name the assay or testing vessel, not merely an abstract experiment. The context concerns whether a substance departs during intense heating. The modern "assay" leaves the precise apparatus unspecified.

hermaphroditic, possessing power in both sexes, has now become feminine in quality again. Although it has lost the visible masculine fire, it has preserved its own fire, which is invisible to us. With this it performs visible operations in digesting imperfect metals, after being determined by any of them.<sup>63</sup>

AU-MAJ-059 1690, p. 29

**English** LIX. If this our Mercury (the Proportion rightly observ'd) should be amalgamated with any imperfect Metal, being first determin'd with a fixt one, it will regenerate and perfect the same, not losing the least Particle of its Virtue or Quantity: Which Metal after the digestion of a Philosophical Month will (as most Philosophers teach) be able to resist all manner of Tryals, and will be far better than any Natural one.

**Modern English** LIX. If this mercury of ours, with the proportion rightly observed, should be amalgamated with any imperfect metal, after first being determined by a fixed one, it will regenerate and perfect that metal without losing the least particle of its own virtue or quantity. After the digestion of a philosophical month, that metal will, as most philosophers teach, be able to withstand every kind of trial, and will be far better than any natural metal.

AU-MAJ-060 1690, p. 29

**English** LX. The Determination of our Mercury simplex with any of the fixt Bodies is to be done by dissolving a small quantity of Filings of red or white according to the Color and Quality of the Metal, that you desire to meliorate, and if you do not err in the Separation and Union of the Subjects, you may assure your self of obtaining your desire after a Philosophical Digestion.

**Modern English** LX. The determination of our simple mercury by any fixed body is accomplished by dissolving a small quantity of red or white filings, according to the colour and quality of the metal you wish to improve. If you do not err in separating and uniting the subjects, you may assure yourself that you will obtain your desire after a philosophical digestion.<sup>64</sup>

AU-MAJ-061 1690, p. 30

**English** LXI. To examine aright, whether the Mercury simplex is rightly prepar'd, or come to its Perfection, one only Drop, put upon a red-hot Plate of Copper, must whiten it through and through, and must not part with it, altho brought into a great Fusion: Which, if you find, it does not, it will be a plain Demonstration, that either your Mercury is not well prepared, or that it has not yet done separating it self from its own Earth.

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<sup>63</sup>. Changes of sex. Feminine, hermaphroditic and masculine designate changing capacities and relations within the author's account. The same paragraph insists that invisible fire produces visible operations. These are historical explanatory terms, not claims about human sex or gender.

<sup>64</sup>. Red and white. The text does not spell out a complete modern identification for these filings. In its colour scheme red and white associate with gold and silver, but the reading preserves the actual degree of specificity rather than inserting an unstated reagent.

**Modern English** LXI. To test properly whether simple mercury has been rightly prepared, or has reached its perfection, a single drop placed on a red-hot copper plate must whiten it through and through, and must not part from it even when brought into strong fusion. If you find that it does not do this, it will plainly demonstrate either that your mercury is not well prepared, or that it has not yet finished separating itself from its own earth.

AU-MAJ-062 1690, p. 30

**English** LXII. If your Mercury simplex, put upon its own dry'd Earth, does not presently unite with the Essence of Metals, appearing deeper than any Blood, and shining brighter than any Fire, which is a mark of the Reception of its own internal Fire, and that the Eagle has suckt the Blood of our Red-Lion, it is an evident sign, that you have err'd in the Manipulation of the Earth.

**Modern English** LXII. If your simple mercury, placed on its own dried earth, does not immediately unite with the essence of metals, appearing deeper in colour than any blood and shining brighter than any fire—a mark that it has received its own internal fire, and that the eagle has sucked the blood of our red lion—it is clear evidence that you have erred in handling the earth.<sup>65</sup>

AU-MAJ-063 1690, p. 31

**English** LXIII. This Mercury, thus impregnated with its Essence, or Sulphur of Metals, is call'd the Mercury duplex of the Philosophers, which is of a far greater Quality, and Virtue than the simplex, with whose Imbibitions in the Salt of Nature, after its being saturated with the simplex, the whole Mystery of the Creation of the Philosophical Microcosm is maintain'd and perfected.

**Modern English** LXIII. This mercury, thus impregnated with its essence or sulphur of metals, is called the philosophers' double mercury. It is of far greater quality and virtue than the simple mercury. By its imbibitions into the salt of nature, after that salt has been saturated with the simple mercury, the whole mystery of the creation of the philosophical microcosm is maintained and perfected.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Eagle and red lion. The author joins an asserted visible change to an emblem: the eagle drinks the red lion's blood. Read with the following aphorisms, the image concerns mercury receiving metallic sulphur or internal fire. This is a contextual relation, not an independent modern chemical identification.

<sup>66</sup> Double mercury. Mercury duplex is "double mercury." It denotes mercury impregnated with the metallic essence or sulphur described here. It should not be read automatically as the name of a modern mercury compound.

## LXIV–LXXIX: Principles and the Herculean Works

AU-MAJ-064 1690, p. 31; p. 32

**English** LXIV. To know, whether your Mercury duplex is Philosophically prepar'd, and sufficiently impregnated with its own internal Natural Fire, put one single Drop of it upon a red-hot Plate of fine Silver: and if the Silver is not by this Drop penetrated through and through with a deep-red Tincture, enduring the greatest fire of Fusion, it will signifie, that you either fail in the Preparation of it, or that you have not given it time enough to receive a full Saturation out of its own Earth.

**Modern English** LXIV. To know whether your double mercury is philosophically prepared and sufficiently impregnated with its own internal natural fire, place a single drop of it on a red-hot plate of fine silver. If that drop does not penetrate the silver through and through with a deep-red tincture that withstands the greatest heat of fusion, it will signify either that you have failed in preparing it, or that you have not allowed it enough time to receive full saturation from its own earth.

AU-MAJ-065 1690, p. 32

**English** LXV. This deep-red Tincture, extracted out of our Philosophical Earth, is call'd our Sulphur, our undigested, essentificated Gold, our internal elementary Fire, and our Red-Lion: for without its Help and Concurrence our Philosophical World cannot be nourish'd, digested, or accomplish'd, being the right Ground, and true Essence of the whole work of our Creation.

**Modern English** LXV. This deep-red tincture, extracted from our philosophical earth, is called our sulphur, our undigested gold reduced to essence, our internal elemental fire, and our red lion. Without its help and cooperation, our philosophical world cannot be nourished, digested or completed: it is the proper ground and true essence of the whole work of our creation.<sup>67</sup>

AU-MAJ-066 1690, p. 32

**English** LXVI. When the Earth has lost its Soul, the remainder of it is the true Magnet, attracting the Salt of Nature from the combustible Fire after a violent Calcination for several hours: which Salt, after its Purification and Clarification, is call'd the clarify'd Earth or Salt of the Philosophers, which, uniting it self with our single and double Mercury, after their Digestion, is call'd by our Master Hermes the Universal Spirit earthify'd.

**Modern English** LXVI. When the earth has lost its soul, what remains of it is the true magnet, attracting the salt of nature from the combustible fire after a violent calcination lasting several hours. After its purification and clarification, this salt is called the clarified earth or salt of the philosophers. When it unites with our single and double mercury, after their digestion, it is called by our master Hermes the universal spirit made earth.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>. Gold reduced to essence. "Essentificated" is rendered "reduced to essence." The multiple names are the author's own coordinated descriptions of one tincture: sulphur, gold, internal fire and red lion.

AU-MAJ-067 1690, p. 33

**English** LXVII. The Extraction, Purification, and Clarification of our Earth or Salt of Nature is to be perform'd by our Mercury simplex: which, being put upon the reverberated Earth, will presently draw it to it self, and unite it self with it, yet separable by gentle Distillation, after which the clarify'd Salt of the Philosophers is at hand.

**Modern English** LXVII. The extraction, purification and clarification of our earth, or salt of nature, must be performed by our simple mercury. Placed on the reverberated earth, it will immediately draw that earth to itself and unite with it, yet it can be separated by gentle distillation. After this, the clarified salt of the philosophers is at hand.

AU-MAJ-068 1690, p. 33

**English** LXVIII. Althô we use our Mercury simplex in the Extraction of its own Soul out of its Body, and for the Clarification of the later; yet, since it is a philosophical and perpetual Menstruum, it loses nothing of its connatural Prerogatives, nor does in the least diminish in Quantity, being our true Alkahest, as Paracelsus is pleas'd to call it.

**Modern English** LXVIII. Although we use our simple mercury to extract its own soul from its body, and to clarify the latter, it is a philosophical and perpetual menstruum. Therefore it loses none of its natural privileges, nor does it diminish in quantity in the least, being our true alkahest, as Paracelsus is pleased to call it.<sup>68</sup>

AU-MAJ-069 1690, p. 33; p. 34

**English** LXIX. Those three Principles, or Elements of our Chaos, perfectly separated from their Impurities, and brought to their highest Perfection, are rightly call'd the three Herculean Works: for after the Preparation of them all the Labor, Trouble, and Danger will be past.

**Modern English** LXIX. Those three principles, or elements of our chaos, perfectly separated from their impurities and brought to their highest perfection, are rightly called the three Herculean works. After their preparation, all labour, trouble and danger will be past.

AU-MAJ-070 1690, p. 34

**English** LXX. Some foolish Operators pretend, that our Great Elixir is to be prepar'd in a very easie manner, and without any trouble at all, to whom we will with our Master Hermes briefly answer, That such Impostors neither know our Matter, nor the right Preparation of it. Yet we do not deny, but any Healthy Person, of what Age soever he may be, may undergo all our Herculean Labors, necessary to the Performance of it.

**Modern English** LXX. Some foolish operators claim that our great elixir is to be prepared very easily and without any trouble at all. With our master

<sup>68</sup>. Earth made spiritual; spirit made earth. "Earthify'd" means made earthly or embodied as earth. The magnet is defined through an asserted attraction in this process. Neither the word magnet nor the attribution to Hermes establishes a modern substance or a verified ancient quotation.

<sup>69</sup>. Alkahest. The author identifies his perpetual menstruum with the alkahest and invokes Paracelsus. This edition records that attribution without treating it as proof of authorship, a precise historical quotation, or the existence of a universal solvent.

Hermes we shall briefly answer them: such impostors know neither our matter nor its right preparation. Yet we do not deny that any healthy person, of whatever age, may undergo all the Herculean labours necessary to accomplish it.

AU-MAJ-071 1690, p. 34; p. 35

**English** LXXI. These our Operations are therefore call'd Herculean in respect to the rest of the Work, which is exceeding easie, and without the least Trouble or Danger, being for that reason call'd Childrens Play, because a Child or a Woman, that has any Sense, may easily work it, and bring it to the highest Perfection, according to the Saying of all true Philosophers.

**Modern English** LXXI. These operations of ours are therefore called Herculean in comparison with the rest of the work, which is exceedingly easy and without the least trouble or danger. For this reason it is called children's play, because a child or a woman with any sense may easily work it and bring it to its highest perfection, according to the saying of all true philosophers.<sup>70</sup>

AU-MAJ-072 1690, p. 35

**English** LXXII. Althô all those above-mention'd Operations are, according to the common Opinion of the Philosophers, esteem'd difficult, and dangerous; yet we can upon our Conscience assure you, that we have our self alone without the help of any Creature living prepar'd them all on a common Kitchin Fire, as is very well known to several Coadepts, our Friends, who could not but admire and approve of our Industry.

**Modern English** LXXII. Although all the operations mentioned above are, in the common opinion of the philosophers, considered difficult and dangerous, we can assure you on our conscience that we ourselves, alone and without the help of any living creature, have prepared them all on a common kitchen fire. Several coadepts, our friends, know this very well, and could not but admire and approve our industry.<sup>71</sup>

AU-MAJ-073 1690, p. 35; p. 36

**English** LXXIII. No true Adept or perfect Artist can deny, but that the whole Work of the Great Elixir may from the very beginning to the end be perform'd on one only Furnace, in one only sort of Vessel, and by one only Person alone, at a very small Charge.

**Modern English** LXXIII. No true adept or accomplished artist can deny that the whole work of the great elixir, from its very beginning to its end, may be performed on a single furnace, in a single kind of vessel, by one person alone, at very little expense.

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<sup>70</sup>. Children and women. The comparison relies on the period's dismissive assumptions about the intellectual or technical capacities of women and children. It is preserved because it marks the author's contrast between laborious preparation and supposedly easy completion.

<sup>71</sup>. Experience as testimony. The kitchen fire and unnamed coadepts are offered as evidence by the speaker. No independently documented trial or identity is supplied here. The reading retains the personal claim and its appeal to witnesses.

AU-MAJ-074 1690, p. 36

**English** LXXIV. Some Impostors would persuade the Vulgar, that Gold, Silver, and many other Ingredients are requir'd to the making of the Grand Elixir according to our noblest ways: which the Doctrines of all the Philosophers, and our own infallible Rules clearly shew to be false: for 'tis most certain, that we neither use any of their Ingredients, nor yet any Silver, or Gold, (unless, as we have mention'd, in our third way) till we come to the Fermentation of our Elixirs.

**Modern English** LXXIV. Some impostors would persuade ordinary people that gold, silver and many other ingredients are required to make the grand elixir according to our noblest ways. The doctrines of all the philosophers and our own infallible rules clearly show this to be false. It is most certain that we use none of their ingredients, nor any silver or gold, except, as we have mentioned, in our third way, until we reach the fermentation of our elixirs.

AU-MAJ-075 1690, p. 36; p. 37

**English** LXXV. We do with all true Philosophers assure you, that all things, necessary for our Philosophical Work, besides the Fewel, Vessels, and some few Instruments, belonging to the Furnace, are to be purchas'd for less than the Expence of one single Guinea, and that every where, and at all times of the year.

**Modern English** LXXV. With all true philosophers, we assure you that everything necessary for our philosophical work, apart from fuel, vessels and a few instruments belonging to the furnace, may be purchased for less than a single guinea, everywhere and at every season of the year.<sup>72</sup>

AU-MAJ-076 1690, p. 37

**English** LXXVI. Since neither Gold nor Silver is to be us'd at all in the Formation and Cibation of our Philosophical Work, it follows, that the old and common saying of some Authors, viz. That without working with Gold 'tis an impossible thing to make Gold, proves to be only a false Notion of Men, who understood not our Art.

**Modern English** LXXVI. Since neither gold nor silver is to be used at all in forming and feeding our philosophical work, it follows that the old, common saying of some authors—that it is impossible to make gold without working with gold—is merely a false notion held by people who did not understand our art.<sup>73</sup>

AU-MAJ-077 1690, p. 37

**English** LXXVII. When our Herculean Works are brought to Perfection, which is, when our three Principles, or Elements are prepar'd, purify'd and perfected, unless the Philosophical and unseparable Union of them is exactly perform'd, the Great Mystery of our Creation is not to be expected.

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<sup>72</sup>. A guinea. A guinea is the historical coin named by the author. No present-day purchasing-power equivalent is imposed. The comparison excludes fuel, vessels and furnace instruments, and should be read with that stated exception.

<sup>73</sup>. Cibation. Cibation means feeding or supplying nourishment. In the following aphorisms the vocabulary of infancy and hunger accompanies repeated additions to the matter; it is both an organising image and part of the author's material account.

**Modern English** LXXVII. When our Herculean works have been perfected—that is, when our three principles or elements have been prepared, purified and perfected—the great mystery of our creation is still not to be expected unless their philosophical and inseparable union is exactly accomplished.

AU-MAJ-078 1690, p. 38

**English** LXXVIII. Our Principles or Elements being brought to a perfect and unseparable Union and Digestion, it is call'd the Triple Mercury of the Philosophers, which being finish'd, the whole Creation and Formation of our work is crown'd.

**Modern English** LXXVIII. Our principles or elements, brought to a perfect and inseparable union and digestion, are called the philosophers' triple mercury. When this is finished, the whole creation and formation of our work is crowned.<sup>74</sup>

AU-MAJ-079 1690, p. 38

**English** LXXIX. All our Work of the Creation from its very Beginning to its perfect End may, on our certain knowledg, be perfected in less than nine Months by any skilful and careful Artist, that follows our Rules, unless some Accident should happen in the Preparation of our Herculean Works: which to prevent, we wrought them our self in an earthen Vessel, which we count far better and surer than any Glass, and which is most agreeable to the Practice of the most ancient Philosophers.

**Modern English** LXXIX. To our certain knowledge, the whole work of creation, from its very beginning to its perfect end, may be completed in less than nine months by any skilful and careful artist who follows our rules, unless some accident occurs in preparing our Herculean works. To prevent this, we worked them ourselves in an earthen vessel, which we consider far better and more reliable than any glass vessel, and which agrees most closely with the practice of the most ancient philosophers.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>. Triple mercury. The term names the inseparable union of the prepared principles, following the earlier distinctions between simple and double mercury. "Triple" is preserved as a relation within this system, not recast as a modern formula.

<sup>75</sup>. Vessel choice. The author expressly favours an earthen vessel for the preliminary Herculean works. The later specification of a glass vessel concerns another stage. Keeping those stages distinct avoids making the two passages contradict each other by editorial compression.

## LXXX–CI: Nourishment, Perfection and Fermentation

AU-MAJ-080 1690, p. 39

**English** LXXX. Before you come to the Union of your Elements, your clarify'd Earth is before all things to be digested in a moderate and continual Heat of Ashes, to free it from any unnatural Moisture, that it might have attracted after its Purification, to be in a fit Capacity to receive your Mercury simplex, by which it is to be nourish'd in its Infancy.

**Modern English** LXXX. Before you reach the union of your elements, your clarified earth must first of all be digested in a moderate and continuous heat of ashes, to free it from any unnatural moisture it may have attracted after purification. It will then be fit to receive your simple mercury, by which it must be nourished in its infancy.

AU-MAJ-081 1690, p. 39

**English** LXXXI. If your clarify'd Earth, after it has been digested the space of a whole Month, does not appear exceeding dry, subtil, and frangible, it will signifie, that you have fail'd in the Purification or Clarification of it, or that the external Moisture, it had attracted, is not yet parted from it.

**Modern English** LXXXI. If your clarified earth, after being digested for a whole month, does not appear exceedingly dry, fine and brittle, it will signify either that you have failed in purifying or clarifying it, or that the external moisture it attracted has not yet parted from it.

AU-MAJ-082 1690, p. 40

**English** LXXXII. Take great Care, that you do not begin your Imbibitions of your Earth, before you find it to be very well purify'd, clarify'd, dry'd, and brought to be very subtil, and extremely frangible: for it would be a great Detriment as well to your Work, as to your Mercury; and, altho it should not spoil your Work, yet it would be to you a great loss of Time.

**Modern English** LXXXII. Take great care not to begin the imbibitions of your earth before you find it thoroughly purified, clarified, dried, made very fine and rendered extremely brittle. Otherwise you would greatly harm both your work and your mercury. Even if it did not spoil your work, it would cause you a great loss of time.

AU-MAJ-083 1690, p. 40; p. 41

**English** LXXXIII. After our clarify'd Earth has been brought to a perfect Purity, Dryness, and Frangibility, it is to be imbib'd with the eighth part of our Mercury simplex, or Virgins Milk, which will in a very short time be soak'd into it, as into a Sponge, which shews the hungry State of our Infant, and then the Fire is to be continu'd, till the Infant is hungry again.

**Modern English** LXXXIII. After our clarified earth has been brought to perfect purity, dryness and brittleness, it must be imbibed with an eighth part of our simple mercury, or virgin's milk. This will soak into it

in a very short time, as into a sponge, showing the hungry state of our infant. The fire must then be continued until the infant is hungry again.<sup>76</sup>

AU-MAJ-084 1690, p. 41

**English** LXXXIV. If in the space of two or three days, or four, at the farthest, the Infant does not shew it self to be extreme hungry by becoming very dry and frangible again, it will be an evident sign, that you have overcome it by your excessive feeding of it.

**Modern English** LXXXIV. If, within two or three days, or four at the furthest, the infant does not show itself extremely hungry by becoming very dry and brittle again, it will be clear evidence that you have overwhelmed it by excessive feeding.

AU-MAJ-085 1690, p. 41; p. 42

**English** LXXXV. Great care is to be taken also in the feeding of the noble Infant: for if you do not well observe all our infallible Rules, you will never be able to bring it to a perfect Maturity: for in the Notion and Proportion of our Imbibitions, and the Management of them, the prosperous and unfailable End of our Work is to be expected.

**Modern English** LXXXV. Great care must also be taken in feeding the noble infant. Unless you observe all our infallible rules carefully, you will never be able to bring it to perfect maturity. The prosperous and unfailing end of our work is to be expected from the understanding and proportion of our imbibitions, and from their management.<sup>77</sup>

AU-MAJ-086 1690, p. 42

**English** LXXXVI. 'Tis always to be observ'd, that the Fire be very moderate, as long as you are making your Imbibitions, for fear of forcing any part of your Mercury to leave the Earth: for as a moderate Heat makes the Union between the Soul and the Body, and perfects all the Work: so on the contrary a too violent Heat disunites and destroys all.

**Modern English** LXXXVI. Always observe that the fire is very moderate while you make your imbibitions, for fear of forcing any part of your mercury to leave the earth. A moderate heat brings about the union between soul and body and perfects the whole work; on the contrary, too violent a heat separates and destroys everything.

AU-MAJ-087 1690, p. 42; p. 43

**English** LXXXVII. The Infant being dry, the Imbibition is to be repeated again, and this Method is to be us'd, until the Matter has receiv'd its weight of the Mercury: at which time if you do not find it to flow like Wax, and be whiter then any Snow, and very fixt, you must proceed with your Imbibitions, until you perceive the same.

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<sup>76</sup>. Virgin's milk and the infant. The text identifies virgin's milk with its simple mercury. The infant is the matter being nourished. These explanatory links arise from the passage itself; no psychological equivalence is asserted by the edition.

<sup>77</sup>. Notion. "Notion" here is read as the understanding or conception of the imbibitions. The sentence makes knowledge, proportion and management jointly responsible for the expected result.

**Modern English** LXXXVII. When the infant is dry, the imbibition must be repeated. This method must be used until the matter has received its own weight of mercury. If at that time you do not find it flowing like wax, whiter than any snow and very fixed, you must continue your imbibitions until you perceive these signs.

AU-MAJ-088 1690, p. 43

**English** LXXXVIII. The Imbibitions are not to be made any oftner, than once every three or four days, in which time you will find your Matter, having soak'd up all your Mercury, to be in great want of Food, which must be supply'd, until it be saturated: the Mark of which will be, when it flows like Wax again.

**Modern English** LXXXVIII. The imbibitions must not be made more often than once every three or four days. Within that time you will find that your matter, having soaked up all your mercury, greatly needs food. This must be supplied until it is saturated. The sign of this will be that it flows like wax again.

AU-MAJ-089 1690, p. 43; p. 44

**English** LXXXIX. Your Matter being brought to a perfect Fluxibility, uncomparable Whiteness, and unalterable Fixedness, know then, that you have perfected the white Elixir, which, being fermented with fine Silver in Filings, will be in a Capacity to transmute all inferior Metals into the finest Silver in the World.

**Modern English** LXXXIX. When your matter has been brought to perfect fusibility, incomparable whiteness and unalterable fixity, know that you have perfected the white elixir. When fermented with fine silver in filings, it will be capable of transmuting all inferior metals into the finest silver in the world.<sup>78</sup>

AU-MAJ-090 1690, p. 44

**English** XC. Before the white Elixir is fermented with common Silver, you may multiply it, as well in Virtue, as in Quantity, by the Continuation of Imbibitions with the Mercury simplex, by which it may by Degrees be brought ad Infinitum in its Virtue.

**Modern English** XC. Before the white elixir is fermented with common silver, you may multiply it both in virtue and in quantity by continuing imbibitions with simple mercury. By this means its virtue may gradually be increased without limit.<sup>79</sup>

AU-MAJ-091 1690, p. 44; p. 45

**English** XCI. The white Elixir being brought to its Degree of Maturity, desiring to go on to its highest Degree of Perfection, instead of fermenting it with Silver, it must be cibated with its own Flesh and Blood, which is the double Mercury, by which being nourish'd, multiply'd in Quality and Quantity, and digested, the whole Work is accomplish'd.

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<sup>78</sup>. Fixity and fusibility. The author treats flow under heat and resistance to loss as compatible perfected qualities. "Fluxibility" is rendered "fusibility"; "fixedness" becomes "fixity." The claimed transmutation remains the author's claim.

<sup>79</sup>. Without limit. The Latin ad infinitum is rendered "without limit." It qualifies the claimed increase in virtue, while the preceding sentence separately mentions quantity.

**Modern English** XCI. When the white elixir has reached its degree of maturity, if you wish to proceed to its highest degree of perfection, instead of fermenting it with silver it must be fed with its own flesh and blood, which is the double mercury. Nourished, multiplied in quality and quantity, and digested by this, the whole work is accomplished.<sup>80</sup>

AU-MAJ-092 1690, p. 45

**English** XCII. As soon as the first Imbibition is made, you will see a great Alteration in your Vessel: for there will be nothing seen but a Cloud, filling the whole space of the Vessel, the fixt being in controversie with the Volatil, and the Volatil with the fixt. The Volatil is Conqueror at the beginning, but at last by its own internal Fire, conjoin'd with the external, both are united, and fixt inseparably together.

**Modern English** XCII. As soon as the first imbibition is made, you will see a great alteration in your vessel. Nothing will be visible but a cloud filling its whole space, the fixed being in conflict with the volatile, and the volatile with the fixed. At first the volatile is the conqueror; at last, through its own internal fire joined with the external fire, both are united and fixed inseparably together.

AU-MAJ-093 1690, p. 46

**English** XCIII. It is to be observed, that the Glass Vessel, which must be oval, with a Neck half a foot long, and very strong, be of a fit bigness, and of such Capacity, that your Matter, when it is put into the Vessel, may take up only the third part of it, leaving the other two vacant: for, if it should be too big, it would be a great hinderance in performing the Work, and if too little, it would break into a thousand pieces.

**Modern English** XCIII. Observe that the glass vessel, which must be oval, with a neck half a foot long, and very strong, is of suitable size and capacity. When your matter is placed in it, it must occupy only a third, leaving the other two thirds empty. If the vessel is too large, it will greatly hinder the work; if too small, it will break into a thousand pieces.<sup>81</sup>

AU-MAJ-094 1690, p. 46; p. 47

**English** XCIV. After you have cibated the noble Elixir with your double Mercury, before it can come to its perfect Fixedness, it must of necessity wander thro' all the States and Colors of Nature, by which we are to judg its Being and Temperament.

**Modern English** XCIV. After you have fed the noble elixir with your double mercury, before it can attain perfect fixity it must necessarily pass through all the states and colours of nature. By these we must judge its condition and temperament.

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<sup>80</sup>. Flesh and blood. The text itself identifies the elixir's own flesh and blood as double mercury. That local explanation should be kept before later spiritual interpretations, while leaving room for the author's religious analogies in the postscript.

<sup>81</sup>. Historical dimensions. The original dimensions, capacity and warning of breakage are retained without conversion or expansion. They describe the author's historical vessel and stage of work.

AU-MAJ-095 1690, p. 47

**English** XCV. The constant and essential Colors, that appear in the Digestion of the Matter, and before it comes to a Perfection, are three, viz. Black, which signifies the Putrefaction and Conjunction of the Elements; White, which demonstrates its Purification; and Red, which denotes its Maturation. The rest of the Colors, that appear and disappear in the Progress of the Work, are only accidental, and unconstant.

**Modern English** XCV. The constant and essential colours that appear during the digestion of the matter, before it reaches perfection, are three: black, which signifies the putrefaction and conjunction of the elements; white, which demonstrates its purification; and red, which denotes its maturation. The other colours, which appear and disappear as the work progresses, are merely incidental and inconstant.<sup>82</sup>

AU-MAJ-096 1690, p. 47; p. 48

**English** XCVI. By every Cibation of its own Flesh and Blood, Regeneration of its Colors, and Digestion, the Infant will grow stronger and stronger, that at last being fully saturated and digested, it is call'd the Great Elixir of the Philosophers, with which you will be able to perform, Wonders in all the Regions, as well Animal, as Mineral, and Vegetable.

**Modern English** XCVI. With every feeding of its own flesh and blood, regeneration of its colours, and digestion, the infant will grow stronger and stronger. At last, when fully saturated and digested, it is called the philosophers' great elixir. With it you will be able to perform wonders in all the kingdoms: animal, mineral and vegetable alike.

AU-MAJ-097 1690, p. 48

**English** XCVII. When your Elixir is brought to a Fluxibility, and a perfect Fixedness, if you desire to make a Medicine upon Metals, you must determinate or ferment it with common Gold in Filings, in which Determination it will vitrify, and then you will have an incomparable Medicine, capable to transmute all imperfect Metals into the purest Gold, according to the Doctrine of all the Philosophers, thō our self never design'd any thing, but an universal Remedy for the Cure of all curable Diseases, incident to Human Bodies, as is well known to our Friends, who have enjoy'd the Benefit of these our Labors.

**Modern English** XCVII. When your elixir has been brought to fusibility and perfect fixity, if you wish to make a medicine for metals, you must determine or ferment it with common gold in filings. In this determination it will vitrify. You will then have an incomparable medicine, capable of transmuting all imperfect metals into the purest gold, according to the doctrine of all the philosophers. Yet we ourselves never intended anything but a universal remedy for the cure of all curable diseases affecting human bodies, as is well known to our friends who have enjoyed the benefit of these labours of ours.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup>. Essential and incidental colours. Only black, white and red are called constant and essential here. The other transient colours are explicitly classed as incidental. The distinction is the author's criterion for interpreting the work, not a modern analytical test.

<sup>83</sup>. Medicine and the speaker's intention. This paragraph distinguishes a medicine for metals from the universal remedy the author says he chiefly sought for human bodies. "All curable"

AU-MAJ-098 1690, p. 49

**English** XCVIII. It is to be observ'd in the Fermentation, that the Elixir exceed not the Ferment in Quantity, otherwise the Sponsal Ligament of it cannot be actually perform'd, and when the Ferment is predominant over the Elixir, all will be presently turn'd into dust.

**Modern English** XCVIII. Observe in fermentation that the elixir does not exceed the ferment in quantity; otherwise its marriage bond cannot actually be accomplished. When the ferment predominates over the elixir, everything will immediately turn to dust.<sup>84</sup>

AU-MAJ-099 1690, p. 49

**English** XCIX. The best Method of Fermentation is to take one part of the Elixir, and put it into the midst of ten parts of Gold in Filings, cast thrô Antimony, to free it from all its Impurities, and to keep it in a circulary Fire for the space of six Hours, so increasing the Fire by Degrees, that the two last hours it be in a good Fusion, and when cold, you will find all your Matter exceeding frangible, and of the Color of the Granate-Stone.

**Modern English** XCIX. The best method of fermentation is to take one part of the elixir and place it in the midst of ten parts of gold in filings, cast through antimony to free it from all its impurities, and to keep it in a surrounding fire for six hours. Increase the fire by degrees so that it is in good fusion for the last two hours. When it is cold, you will find all your matter exceedingly brittle and the colour of garnet.<sup>85</sup>

AU-MAJ-100 1690, p. 50

**English** C. Common Mercury, amalgamated with Lead, is counted the most proper subject for making Projection, which being in Fusion, your fermented Matter being divided into three parts, one part of it roll'd, in Wax, is to be flung upon the Amalgam: then presently cover the Crucible, and continue the Fire, until you hear the Noise of the Separation and Union: then the second and third part, as before, and being kept for two hours in a continual Fire of Fusion, let it cool by it self.

**Modern English** C. Common mercury amalgamated with lead is considered the most suitable subject for making projection. When this is in fusion, divide your fermented matter into three parts and throw one part of it, rolled in wax, onto the amalgam. Immediately cover the crucible and continue the fire until you hear the sound of separation and union. Then add the second and third parts as before. After it has been kept for two hours in a continuous fire of fusion, let it cool by itself.<sup>86</sup>

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is retained; the text does not say every disease without qualification. These efficacy claims are historical assertions.

<sup>84</sup>. A textual tension in fermentation. The next aphorism recommends one part elixir to ten parts gold. This aphorism nevertheless warns that predominance of the ferment turns everything to dust. The apparent tension is preserved rather than resolved by changing either historical statement. "Sponsal ligament" is rendered "marriage bond."

<sup>85</sup>. Circular fire and garnet. "Circulary" is understood as surrounding, rather than the modern mathematical term circular. "Granate-stone" denotes garnet. The antimony reference is retained in its historical refining context, without expanding the passage into a modern procedure.

AU-MAJ-101 1690, p. 50; p. 51

**English** CI. Whoever shall presume to prepare the Great Elixir according to our most Secret Ways without following and observing all these our infallible Rules, will certainly find himself mightily mistaken at last, having after a great deal of Trouble, Charges, and Pains, reap'd nothing but Discontent; and on the contrary they, that shall walk in our true and infallible Paths, shall with very little Trouble and Expences attain to their desired End, which we cordially wish to all those, who are sincere wellwishers to the Hermetic Philosophy.

**Modern English** CI. Whoever presumes to prepare the great elixir according to our most secret ways without following and observing all these infallible rules of ours will certainly find himself greatly mistaken in the end. After much trouble, expense and pain, he will have reaped nothing but discontent. On the contrary, those who walk in our true and infallible paths will attain their desired end with very little trouble or expense. We heartily wish this to all sincere well-wishers to Hermetic philosophy.

AU-MAJ-FINIS 1690, p. 51

**Latin** FINIS.

**Modern English** THE END.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup>. Projection. Projection is the historical act of applying the prepared medicine to a molten metal or amalgam. "Common mercury" is explicitly named here and remains distinct from the author's simple, double and triple mercuries.

<sup>87</sup>. Finis. The Latin closing word means "the end." It closes the principal sequence; it does not end the complete publication, which continues with the vegetable elixir and postscript.

# The Philosophical Elixir of Vegetables

## The Companion Title and Address

AU-MIN-TITLE 1690, p. 55

**English** Circulatum minus Urbigeranum, OR THE PHILOSOPHICAL ELIXIR OF VEGETABLES, WITH The Three certain Ways of Preparing it, fully and clearly set forth in One and Thirty APHORISMS

By Baro Urbigerus A Servant of God in the Kingdom of Nature.

Experto Crede.

LONDON, Printed for Henry Faithorne, at the Rose in St. Paul's Church-yard, 1690.

**Modern English** Urbigerus's Lesser Circulated Preparation, or The Philosophical Elixir of Vegetables, with the Three Certain Ways of Preparing It, Fully and Clearly Set Forth in Thirty-One Aphorisms.

By Baro Urbigerus, a servant of God in the kingdom of nature.

Trust one who has experience.

London: printed for Henry Faithorne, at the Rose in St Paul's Churchyard, 1690.<sup>88</sup>

AU-MIN-PREF-HEADING 1690, p. 57

**English** TO ALL TRUE LOVERS OF THE HERMETIC PHILOSOPHY.

**Modern English** To All True Lovers of Hermetic Philosophy

AU-MIN-PREF-001 1690, p. 57; p. 58; p. 59; p. 60

**English** Having in our Precedent Aphorisms clearly deliver'd such infallible Rules and Instructions, as are necessary for producing our Grand Elixir, or Circulatum majus, the only real Secret of the true Adepts, commanding in all the Kingdoms of Nature, which will, we question not, be no less pleasing to all other lovers of Sciences, than to our Disciples; and being farther inclin'd fully to inform them, how to preserve themselves and others in perfect Health by obviating any Distemper, that may otherwise overcome them, before they can attain to the Accomplishment of their Desires: We have thought it convenient to impart likewise to them our three several ways of making our Vegetable Elixir, or Circulatum minus, which may be prepar'd, and brought to its utmost Perfection in the space of a Philosophical Month by any skilful Artist, who shall comprehend and follow our certain Directions, laid down in these our subsequent Aphorisms, where the whole Work is so evidently demonstrated, that none, who is ever so little vers'd in Chymistry, can be liable to mistake. Nor do we any way doubt, but all those, who shall with a sincere and upright Intention peruse these our plainly-written Aphorisms, will find themselves

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<sup>88</sup> The companion title. Circulatum minus Urbigeranum is rendered "Urbigerus's lesser circulated preparation." The supplied noun preparation makes the Latin substantivised participle readable in English; aphorism II explains the technical name. Experto crede means "trust one who has experience"; the motto makes the speaker's asserted practical experience an argument for confidence. The separate title belongs to the same 1690 publication and retains its imprint.

oblig'd to bless Almighty God for his infinite Mercy in having inspir'd us to open their Eyes, that they may see, what is requisite for their present Health, and future Happiness, both which we heartily wish to every one, who, as becomes a true Philosopher, unfeignedly loves God and his Neighbor.

**Modern English** In our preceding aphorisms we have clearly delivered the infallible rules and instructions necessary for producing our grand elixir, or greater circulated preparation: the only real secret of true adepts, commanding in all the kingdoms of nature. We do not doubt that this will be no less pleasing to all other lovers of the sciences than to our disciples. Being further inclined to inform them fully how to preserve themselves and others in perfect health, by preventing any illness that might otherwise overcome them before they can fulfil their desires, we have thought it fitting also to share our three different ways of making our vegetable elixir, or lesser circulated preparation. This may be prepared and brought to its utmost perfection within a philosophical month by any skilful artist who understands and follows our certain directions, laid down in these ensuing aphorisms. The whole work is so plainly demonstrated here that no one with even a little knowledge of chemistry can be liable to mistake. Nor do we doubt in any way that all who read these plainly written aphorisms with sincere and upright intention will find themselves obliged to bless Almighty God for his infinite mercy in inspiring us to open their eyes. They may thus see what is needed for their present health and future happiness. We heartily wish both to everyone who, as befits a true philosopher, sincerely loves God and his neighbour.<sup>89</sup>

AU-MIN-HEADING 1690, p. 61

**English** Circulatum minus Urbigeranum, OR THE PHILOSOPHICAL ELIXIR OF VEGETABLES, WITH The Three certain Ways of Preparing it.

**Modern English** Urbigerus's Lesser Circulated Preparation, or The Philosophical Elixir of Vegetables, with the Three Certain Ways of Preparing It

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<sup>89</sup>. Health and happiness. The preface joins a promise of present health to future happiness and love of God and neighbour. Its statement that readers cannot mistake is the author's assertion of clarity, not an editorial guarantee. The whole four-page address is retained here as one continuous unit.

## I–X: The Lesser Elixir and Its Three Ways

AU-MIN-001 1690, p. 61; p. 62

**English** I. OUR Circulatum minus is only a speciflicated Elixir, belonging to the Vegetable Kingdom, by which without any Fire, or farther Preparation of the Vegetables, we can in a Moment extract their true Essence, containing their Virtue, Quality, and Property: which is a great Chymical Curiosity, performing Wonders in the Practice of Physick, and in demonstrating some Works of Nature.

**Modern English** I. Our lesser circulated preparation is only an elixir specified for the vegetable kingdom. Without any fire or further preparation of the plants, we can by it extract in a moment their true essence, containing their virtue, quality and property. This is a great chemical curiosity, performing wonders in the practice of medicine and in demonstrating some works of nature.<sup>90</sup>

AU-MIN-002 1690, p. 62

**English** II. We call it Circulatum, because, thō never so often us'd in any Extraction, or Chymical Experiment whatever, it loses nothing of its Quality, or Property: which is a Prerogative, pertaining to the Universal Elixir, call'd also the Circulatum majus, because it commands in all the three Kingdoms of Nature; whilst this, being restrain'd to one only Kingdom, is for that reason stil'd Minus.

**Modern English** II. We call it a circulated preparation because, however often it is used in an extraction or any chemical experiment, it loses none of its quality or property. This is a privilege belonging to the universal elixir, also called the greater circulated preparation because it commands in all three kingdoms of nature. This one, being restricted to a single kingdom, is for that reason called lesser.<sup>91</sup>

AU-MIN-003 1690, p. 63

**English** III. Out of Dianas undetermin'd Tears, when Apollo has appear'd, after the Separation of the three Elements, Determination, Digestion, and glorious Resurrection, we can, without the Addition of any other created thing, prepare this our determin'd Elixir: Which is the first, noblest, and secretest way of the Philosophers.

**Modern English** III. From Diana's undetermined tears, when Apollo has appeared, after the separation of the three elements, determination, digestion and glorious resurrection, we can prepare this determined elixir of ours without adding any other created thing. This is the philosophers' first, noblest and most secret way.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup>. Specified elixir. "Speciflicated" means determined or restricted to a particular kind or kingdom. The lesser elixir is introduced through this limitation; it is not simply the universal elixir described with a different name.

<sup>91</sup>. Greater and lesser. Circulatum majus is rendered "greater circulated preparation," and circulatum minus "lesser circulated preparation." Circulatum literally describes something circulated; preparation supplies the implied substance in readable English. The author's explanation concerns continued efficacy in repeated use and the difference between one kingdom and all three. The Latin lemmata remain here for recognition.

AU-MIN-004 1690, p. 63; p. 64

**English** IV. The Determination of our Dianas Tears consists only in their perfect and indissoluble Union with the fixt Vegetable Earth, philosophically prepar'd, purify'd, and spiritualiz'd: for the love of which they are forc'd to leave their first universal undetermin'd Property, and be cloath'd with a determin'd particular one, which is requir'd to this our Circulatum minus.

**Modern English** IV. The determination of our Diana's tears consists solely in their perfect and indissoluble union with fixed vegetable earth, philosophically prepared, purified and spiritualised. For love of this earth, they are forced to leave their first universal, undetermined property and clothe themselves in a determined, particular one, which is required for our lesser circulated preparation.

AU-MIN-005 1690, p. 64

**English** V. Our second way of preparing this our Vegetable Elixir is by a right Manipulation of a Plant of the noblest Degree, standing by it self, or supported by others: after the Preparation of which, and its Putrefaction, Reduction into an Oil, Separation of the three Principles, with their Purification, Union, and Spiritualization, the whole is to be turn'd into a spiritual ever-living Fountain, renewing every Plant, that shall be plung'd in it.

**Modern English** V. Our second way of preparing this vegetable elixir is by rightly handling a plant of the noblest degree, standing by itself or supported by others. After its preparation and putrefaction, reduction to an oil, separation of the three principles, and their purification, union and spiritualisation, the whole must be turned into a spiritual, ever-living fountain that renews every plant plunged into it.<sup>92</sup>

AU-MIN-006 1690, p. 65

**English** VI. The third and common way is only a Conjunction of a fixt Vegetable Salt with its own volatil sulphureous Spirit, both to be found ready prepar'd by any vulgar Chymist, and since in their Preparation the purest Sulphur, containing the Soul, has suffer'd some Detriment by their not being philosophically manipulated, they cannot be inseparably join'd without a sulphureous Medium, by which the Soul being strengthened, the Body and Spirit are also thro' it made capable of a perfect Union.

**Modern English** VI. The third and common way is simply a conjunction of a fixed vegetable salt with its own volatile sulphurous spirit, both of which may be found ready prepared by any ordinary chemist. In their preparation, the purest sulphur, containing the soul, has suffered some harm because they have not been handled philosophically. Therefore they cannot be inseparably joined without a sulphurous medium. Through this the soul is strengthened, and the body and spirit are also made capable of a perfect union.

<sup>92</sup>. Diana and Apollo. Diana's tears and Apollo are the author's divine names within the work. The postscript links lunar Diana and solar Apollo to stages and conjunctions. The edition retains these names rather than replacing them with conjectural modern chemicals.

<sup>93</sup>. The unnamed plant. The author does not name the plant. "Standing by itself, or supported by others" may invite a botanical identification, but the passage alone does not settle one. No particular species is inserted into the reading.

AU-MIN-007 1690, p. 65; p. 66

**English VII.** The proper Medium, requisite for the indissoluble Union of these two Subjects, is only a sulphureous and bituminous Matter, issuing out of a Plant, living or dead, which is to be found in several parts of the World, and is known to all manner of Men, (the Copavian we find to be the best, and after that the Italian,) by which, after it has been separated from its feculent parts thro' our Universal Menstruum, all the Pores and Atoms of the fixt Vegetable Salt, which is extremely fortified by it, being dilated, it is made capable of receiving its own Spirit, and uniting it self with it.

**Modern English VII.** The proper medium required for the indissoluble union of these two subjects is simply a sulphurous and bituminous matter issuing from a plant, living or dead. It is found in several parts of the world and is known to people of all kinds. We find the Copavian the best, and after it the Italian. After this matter has been separated from its foul parts through our universal menstruum, it dilates all the pores and atoms of the fixed vegetable salt, which it greatly strengthens. The salt is thus made capable of receiving its own spirit and uniting with it.<sup>94</sup>

AU-MIN-008 1690, p. 66; p. 67

**English VIII.** To fortify the Sulphur, and open the Pores of the Salt, no other Method is to be us'd, but to imbibe the same with the bituminous Matter in a moderate digestive Heat, as if one would hatch Chickens, and as the Salt grows dry, the Imbibitions are to be repeated, until you find it so fully saturated, that it refuses to imbibe any more of the Matter.

**Modern English VIII.** To strengthen the sulphur and open the pores of the salt, no other method is to be used than to imbibe the salt with the bituminous matter in a moderate digestive heat, as if one were hatching chickens. As the salt grows dry, the imbibitions must be repeated until you find it so fully saturated that it refuses to imbibe any more of the matter.<sup>95</sup>

AU-MIN-009 1690, p. 67

**English IX.** In the Course of Imbibitions the whole Mass is at least nine or ten times a day to be stirr'd with a Spatula, or some other Instrument of dry Wood, by which reiterated Motion, the bituminous Matter receives a better ingress into the Body, and perfects its Operation the sooner.

**Modern English IX.** During the imbibitions, the whole mass must be stirred at least nine or ten times a day with a spatula or another instrument of dry wood. Through this repeated movement, the bituminous matter gains better entry into the body and completes its operation sooner.

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<sup>94</sup>. Copavian and Italian. "Copavian" is retained from the historical wording; it has often invited identification with a balsam such as copaiba. This edition does not silently amend the place or product name, or convert the less specific "Italian" into a named modern substance. The passage describes a plant-derived sulphurous and bituminous material.

<sup>95</sup>. Hatching chickens. The comparison conveys the author's requested degree of digestive warmth without providing a numerical temperature. A modern thermostat setting would add information absent from the historical text.

AU-MIN-010 1690, p. 67; p. 68

**English** X. Great Care is to be taken, that in the performance of the Imbibitions, no kind of Soil or Dust fall into your Matter, for the prevention of which your Vessel may be kept cover'd with a Paper, prickt full of holes, or any other suitable Covering, and that nothing come near it, which has its own internal Sulphur: for the Pores of the Salt being very much dilated and open'd, it may easily determine it self to any other Subject, and so spoil your Undertaking.

**Modern English** X. Take great care that no kind of soil or dust falls into your matter while the imbibitions are being performed. To prevent this, your vessel may be kept covered with paper pricked full of holes, or another suitable covering. Nothing possessing its own internal sulphur should come near it: the pores of the salt have been greatly enlarged and opened, so it may easily determine itself towards another subject and spoil your undertaking.

## XI–XXI: Union and the Vegetable Essence

AU-MIN-011 1690, p. 68

**English** XI. If in three, or four Weeks time at farthest, your fixt Vegetable Salt does not manifest its full Saturation, 'twill certainly be in vain for you to go any farther with it: for you may assure your self, that you either err in the Notion of the Salt or of the real sulphureous Medium, or in the Management of the Imbibitions.

**Modern English** XI. If, within three weeks or four at the most, your fixed vegetable salt does not show its full saturation, it will certainly be useless to proceed any further with it. You may be sure that you have erred either in your understanding of the salt or of the real sulphurous medium, or in managing the imbibitions.

AU-MIN-012 1690, p. 69

**English** XII. When your Imbibitions are fully perform'd, your Salt will then be in a convenient readiness to receive its own Spirit, by which it is made volatil, spiritual, transparent, and wonderfully penetrating, entring of a sudden into the Pores and Particles of every Vegetable, and separating in a moment their true Essence or Elements.

**Modern English** XII. When your imbibitions are fully accomplished, your salt will be conveniently ready to receive its own spirit. By this it is made volatile, spiritual, transparent and wonderfully penetrating, entering suddenly into the pores and particles of every plant and separating in a moment its true essence or elements.<sup>96</sup>

AU-MIN-013 1690, p. 69; p. 70

**English** XIII. Althô the Salt is fully prepar'd for the Reception of its own Spirit, yet unless you well observe the right Proportion of them (which is, that the volatil always predominate over the fixt) you will never be able to make any perfect Union between these two Subjects, contrary in Quality, thô not in Nature.

**Modern English** XIII. Although the salt is fully prepared to receive its own spirit, unless you carefully observe their right proportion—that the volatile should always predominate over the fixed—you will never be able to make a perfect union between these two subjects, which are contrary in quality, though not in nature.

AU-MIN-014 1690, p. 70

**English** XIV. Before you begin your Destillations and Cohobations, after the Addition of the Vegetable Spirit to its own Salt, a Putrefaction of eight or ten days is to precede, during which time, the sulphureous Spirit, strengthened by the bituminous Matter, and finding its Salt fit for Conjunction with it, has the power to enter into its Pores, to facilitate its Volatilization, and Union.

**Modern English** XIV. Before beginning your distillations and cohobations, after adding the vegetable spirit to its own salt, a putrefaction of eight

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<sup>96</sup>. Spiritualisation. The passage explains its spiritual terms through asserted changes: volatility, transparency, penetration and separation of plant principles. Spiritualisation here cannot be reduced without remainder either to immateriality or to a single modern chemical operation.

or ten days must take place. During this time the sulphurous spirit, strengthened by the bituminous matter and finding its salt fit for conjunction, has the power to enter its pores, making its volatilisation and union easier.<sup>97</sup>

AU-MIN-015 1690, p. 70; p. 71

**English** XV. If after six or seven Destillations and Cohobations of the destill'd upon the Remainder, you do not find your Spirit to be extremely sharp, and the Remainder in the bottom altogether insipid, it will be an evident Sign, that you fail in the true knowledge of the Vegetable Spirit, which, being exceeding volatil, has in its Nature power to volatilize its own Body, and unite it self inseparably with it, finding it capable of its Reception.

**Modern English** XV. If, after six or seven distillations and cohobations of the distillate upon the remainder, you do not find your spirit extremely sharp and the remainder at the bottom altogether tasteless, this will clearly show that you have failed in true knowledge of the vegetable spirit. Being exceedingly volatile, this spirit naturally has the power to volatilise its own body and unite inseparably with it, when it finds that body capable of receiving it.<sup>98</sup>

AU-MIN-016 1690, p. 71; p. 72

**English** XVI. It is to be observ'd, that in the Progress of your Destillations the sulphureous Medium do not in the least ascend: for as it is a real Medium, concurring to unite the Body with the Spirit, before the Spiritualization of the Body, and without the Concurrence of which no perfect Union of these two Subjects is to be expected; so on the contrary in the Progress of the Work its Concurrence would be highly disadvantageous to to them both, and totally subvert your Operation.

**Modern English** XVI. Observe that, as your distillations proceed, the sulphurous medium does not ascend at all. As a real medium, it helps unite the body with the spirit before the body's spiritualisation, and without its cooperation no perfect union of these two subjects can be expected. On the contrary, as the work proceeds, its cooperation would be highly disadvantageous to both and would entirely overturn your operation.<sup>99</sup>

AU-MIN-017 1690, p. 72

**English** XVII. The ascending of the sulphureous Medium, when the Spirit begins to carry over its own Body, to unite it self inseparably with it, evidently and certainly signifies, that you do not regulate your Fire, as you should, and that, instead of giving a gentle vaporous Heat to facilitate the Union, you give a violent one to destroy it.

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<sup>97</sup>. Cohobation. Cohobation is repeated distillation after returning the distillate to the remainder. The following aphorism states that return explicitly. The original times and repetitions are preserved as historical text.

<sup>98</sup>. Sharp and tasteless. These are the author's historical descriptions of the separated fractions. The reading neither supplies a modern chemical identity nor turns them into new testing advice.

<sup>99</sup>. The medium's changing role. The author first requires the medium for union, then says its ascent at a later stage would spoil the operation. The change in stage matters: it is not corrected into a permanent presence or permanent absence.

**Modern English** XVII. If the sulphurous medium ascends when the spirit begins to carry over its own body in order to unite inseparably with it, this clearly and certainly signifies that you are not regulating your fire as you should. Instead of providing a gentle vaporous heat to facilitate the union, you are providing a violent heat to destroy it.

AU-MIN-018 1690, p. 73

**English** XVIII. When your Salt is brought to its perfect Spiritualization, and real Union with its own volatil Spirit, then you will have in your power your Circulatum minus, or Vegetable Elixir, and Menstruum, with which you will be able to perform wonders in the Vegetable Kingdom, separating in a moment not only their Principles or Elements, but also at one and the same Operation the Pure from the Impure.

**Modern English** XVIII. When your salt has been brought to perfect spiritualisation and real union with its own volatile spirit, you will have in your possession your lesser circulated preparation, or vegetable elixir and menstruum. With this you will be able to perform wonders in the vegetable kingdom, separating in a moment not only the plants' principles or elements, but also, in one and the same operation, the pure from the impure.

AU-MIN-019 1690, p. 73; p. 74

**English** XIX. If into this your Vegetable Elixir you put any green Vegetable, shred in pieces, it will in less than half a quarter of an hour without any external Heat putrify, and precipitate it self into the bottom quite dead, (which is nothing but the cursed Excremental Earth) and on the Top will swim a yellow Oil, containing the Salt and Sulphur, and the Elixir will be of the Color of the Plant, comprehending its Vegetable Spirit: which if it does not, 'tis a sign, that your Operations have not been Philosophical.

**Modern English** XIX. If you put any green plant, shredded into pieces, into this vegetable elixir, in less than half a quarter of an hour, without any external heat, it will putrefy and fall to the bottom quite dead. This is nothing but the accursed excremental earth. A yellow oil containing the salt and sulphur will float on top, and the elixir, containing the plant's vegetable spirit, will take on its colour. If it does not, this is a sign that your operations have not been philosophical.<sup>100</sup>

AU-MIN-020 1690, p. 74; p. 75

**English** XX. One only drop of this yellowish Oil, given in Distempers according to the Virtue and Quality, attributed to the Plant, every Morning and Evening in a Glass of Wine, or any other convenient Vehicle, will infallibly and insensibly cure those Distempers, and corroborate the vital Spirits, if constantly taken to purify the Blood in sickly and infectious Times.

**Modern English** XX. A single drop of this yellowish oil, given every morning and evening in a glass of wine or another suitable vehicle for illnesses corresponding to the virtue and quality attributed to the plant, will

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<sup>100</sup>. Excremental earth. The harsh phrase marks the residue the author excludes from the prized essence. It is retained alongside the distinctions among oil, spirit, salt and sulphur. The historical interval "half a quarter of an hour" is preserved without a modern timing gloss.

infallibly and imperceptibly cure those illnesses and strengthen the vital spirits, if constantly taken to purify the blood in sickly and infectious times.<sup>101</sup>

AU-MIN-021 1690, p. 75

**English** XXI. If you put Coral into this Menstruum, you will see an admirable Experiment: for althô its Pores are compacter, than in any other Vegetable; yet it will on a sudden transmit its internal Spirit into the Menstruum, and sending its Soul and Body, like a blood-red Oil to the Top, will at last fall to the Bottom like a grayish Excrement.

**Modern English** XXI. If you put coral into this menstruum, you will see a remarkable experiment. Although its pores are more compact than those of any other vegetable, it will suddenly transmit its internal spirit into the menstruum. Sending its soul and body to the top like a blood-red oil, it will at last fall to the bottom like a greyish excrement.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>101</sup>. A historical therapeutic assertion. The dose, vehicle, claimed cure and repeated use belong to the historical speaker's medical assertions. The edition preserves them as text and does not independently establish their efficacy or recommend the preparation as treatment.

<sup>102</sup>. Coral among vegetables. The text places coral in the vegetable comparison. Modern zoological classification is different, but replacing the term would erase an element of the historical system. The asserted division into spirit, soul, body and residue also remains the author's account.

## XXII–XXXI: Powers, Limits and Further Regeneration

AU-MIN-022 1690, p. 75; p. 76

**English** XXII. If Myrrh, Aloes, and Saffron, of each an equal Quantity, are put into this Menstruum, the truest Elixir Proprietatis (as Paracelsus terms it) which is a most excellent Cordial, and almost of as great Efficacy and Virtue, as the Universal Elixir it self, in curing all curable Distempers, will presently swim on the Top, and its Caput Mortuum will separate it self into the Bottom.

**Modern English** XXII. If equal quantities of myrrh, aloes and saffron are placed in this menstruum, the truest elixir of properties, as Paracelsus calls it, will immediately float on top, while its dead residue separates at the bottom. This is a most excellent cordial, almost as efficacious and powerful as the universal elixir itself in curing all curable illnesses.<sup>103</sup>

AU-MIN-023 1690, p. 76

**English** XXIII. This Vegetable Menstruum dissolves not only all sorts of Gums, or any other kind of Substance in the Vegetable Kingdom, but also all sorts of Oils and Balsams, coming out of Trees, separating their true Essence, by which you may perform wonderful things both upon living Bodies, and dead ones, the last of which it preserves for ever without opening or any farther Preparation of them.

**Modern English** XXIII. This vegetable menstruum dissolves not only all kinds of gums and every other kind of substance in the vegetable kingdom, but also all kinds of oils and balsams coming from trees, separating their true essence. With this you may perform wonderful things on both living and dead bodies. It preserves the latter for ever, without opening them or any further preparation.

AU-MIN-024 1690, p. 77

**English** XXIV. Tho this Menstruum is only specificated upon Vegetables, it will nevertheless in a moment draw the Tincture out of Metals and Minerals; but it will not separate all their Principles, not being the appropriated Menstruum for such Operations; and tho such Sulphurs are highly balsamic for the Lungs and Spleen, yet since our Elixir Proprietatis far exceeds those praeternatural Preparations, we only give this as a curious Chymical Experiment.

**Modern English** XXIV. Although this menstruum is specified only for vegetables, it will nevertheless draw the tincture from metals and minerals in a moment. It will not, however, separate all their principles, because it is not the menstruum suited to such operations. Although these sulphurs are highly balsamic for the lungs and spleen, our elixir of properties far surpasses those unnatural preparations. We give this only as a curious chemical experiment.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>103</sup>. Elixir proprietatis and caput mortuum. Elixir proprietatis is rendered “elixir of properties”; the attribution is to Paracelsus in this passage. Caput mortuum, literally “dead head,” denotes the dead residue. A cordial is a strengthening medicine in this historical vocabulary, not merely a modern drink.

<sup>104</sup>. Limits of the vegetable solvent. The author distinguishes drawing a tincture from metals from separating all their principles. He also calls the resulting preparations “praeternatural,” rendered “unnatural” in relation to his own account of what is properly natural.

AU-MIN-025 1690, p. 77; p. 78

**English XXV.** Since this Vegetable Menstruum is eternal, you must observe, that you lose nothing of its Quantity or Quality in separating of it from the Oil, and Spirit of the Vegetable, which is done by a gentle Destillation in Balneo vaporoso, the Vessel being very well luted and dry'd before. The Menstruum, coming over with the Flegm of the Vegetable, from which it is by a Destillation in Balneo to be separated for farther uses, leaves the Oil at the Bottom, united with its own Spirit, which will easily go over in any common Heat, not leaving any thing behind it: which is a Mark of its Spiritualization, Purification, and Regeneration, that it has receiv'd from the Menstruum.

**Modern English XXV.** Since this vegetable menstruum is eternal, observe that you lose none of its quantity or quality when separating it from the oil and spirit of the plant. This is done by gentle distillation in a vapour bath, the vessel having first been very well luted and dried. The menstruum comes over with the plant's phlegm, from which it must be separated by distillation in a bath for further use. It leaves the oil at the bottom, united with its own spirit. This will easily pass over in any ordinary heat, leaving nothing behind: a sign of the spiritualisation, purification and regeneration it has received from the menstruum.<sup>105</sup>

AU-MIN-026 1690, p. 78; p. 79

**English XXVI.** Out of this Oil or Essence of your Vegetable so prepar'd, or by any other Philosophical way, (as we have mention'd in our second Manner of making this our Elixir) if you know how to putrify it naturally without any Fire, and to separate all our Principles out of it, purifying and uniting them inseparably together, being all made spiritual and transparent, you will then have out of this second Regeneration the greatest Arcanum in the World, as upon Vegetables, so also upon Minerals and Metals, except Gold and Silver.

**Modern English XXVI.** From this oil or essence of your plant, prepared in this way or by any other philosophical way—as we mentioned in our second manner of making this elixir—if you know how to putrefy it naturally without any fire, separate all our principles from it, purify them and unite them inseparably together, all being made spiritual and transparent, you will then obtain from this second regeneration the greatest secret in the world, acting on minerals and metals as well as on vegetables, except for gold and silver.<sup>106</sup>

AU-MIN-027 1690, p. 79; p. 80

**English XXVII.** If this regenerated Essence be determin'd with our first Matter, it will then be in a Capacity radically to dissolve all sorts of Metals or Minerals, and principally Gold, which is imperceptibly dissolv'd in it, like Ice in common Water, and can never be separated common Gold again, neither by Destillation, nor Digestion: out of which, after a Philosophical Digestion, Separation of the three Principles, with their Purification, Union, Digestion, and third Regeneration, you

<sup>105</sup>. Baths and luting. Balneum vaporosum is a vapour bath; balneum is a bath. Luting is sealing a vessel or its joints with a suitable compound. "Phlegm" denotes the watery fraction in this vocabulary. No unstated bath temperature, sealing material or apparatus is supplied.

<sup>106</sup>. Regeneration and its exception. The second regeneration is credited with power over vegetables, minerals and metals, but the exception for gold and silver is explicit. The next aphorism adds a further determination before gold is included.

may prepare the great Medicin of Medicins, of equal Virtue and Quality with the Grand Elixir upon human Bodies, and with our Mercury simplex, upon Metals or Minerals.

**Modern English XXVII.** If this regenerated essence is determined by our first matter, it will then be capable of radically dissolving all kinds of metals and minerals, principally gold. Gold dissolves in it imperceptibly, like ice in common water, and can never again be separated as common gold, either by distillation or by digestion. From this, after a philosophical digestion, separation of the three principles, their purification, union, digestion and third regeneration, you may prepare the great medicine of medicines. It is equal in virtue and quality to the grand elixir in its action on human bodies, and to our simple mercury in its action on metals or minerals.

AU-MIN-028 1690, p. 80; p. 81

**English XXVIII.** The determinating this regenerated Menstruum with our first Matter is to be perform'd by its Amalgamation with it, in which the Vegetable Menstruum, drawing out of it all its Qualities and Properties, and uniting them with its own, is made capable of the same Virtue and Property, as our Mercury simplex, in dissolving and volatilizing every created thing, that shall come near it.

**Modern English XXVIII.** The determination of this regenerated menstruum by our first matter must be performed by amalgamating it with that matter. The vegetable menstruum draws all the qualities and properties out of that matter and unites them with its own. It is thus made capable of the same virtue and property as our simple mercury: dissolving and volatilising every created thing that comes near it.

AU-MIN-029 1690, p. 81; p. 82

**English XXIX.** Some are of Opinion, that both the Elixirs may be produc'd out of several determin'd things, as Human Excrements, May dew, (which they call also their Menstruum from above, or Water from the Clouds) &c. as also that the Grand Elixir may be prepar'd out of this, or any other Vegetable regenerated Menstruum; but since we know, that such Menstruums, which they call their Philosophical Mercury, althô they may dissolve and volatilize Metals, yet cannot meliorate any of them, this Dissolution and Volatilization being neither natural nor Philosophical, we therefore with good Reason judge all those Opinions to be only false Suppositions and ill-grounded and imaginary Notions.

**Modern English XXIX.** Some believe that both elixirs may be produced from various determined things, such as human excrements, May dew—which they also call their menstruum from above, or water from the clouds—and so forth. They also believe that the grand elixir may be prepared from this or any other regenerated vegetable menstruum. But we know that such menstruums, which they call their philosophical mercury, may dissolve and volatilise metals yet cannot improve any of them. This dissolution and volatilisation is neither natural nor

philosophical. We therefore rightly judge all those opinions to be only false suppositions and ill-grounded, imaginary notions.<sup>107</sup>

AU-MIN-030 1690, p. 82; p. 83

**English** XXX. We with our Divine Master Hermes absolutely affirm, that, Almighty God having, after he had created all things, commanded every one of them to procreate out of its own kind, our Elixirs are not to be produc'd by any of those sophistical ways, as we have fully made appear in these and our precedent Aphorisms, in which we have given ample Instructions for the preparing the Universal Elixir out of our undetermin'd Matter, and the speciflicated one out of the Root of Vegetables.

**Modern English** XXX. With our divine master Hermes, we affirm absolutely that Almighty God, after creating all things, commanded each of them to reproduce after its own kind. Our elixirs cannot therefore be produced by any of those deceptive ways, as we have fully shown in these and our preceding aphorisms. In them we have given ample instructions for preparing the universal elixir from our undetermined matter, and the specified elixir from the root of vegetables.<sup>108</sup>

AU-MIN-031 1690, p. 83

**English** XXXI. Out of the true Affection and Charity, we have for all Lovers of Arts, we advise every one, who shall desire to prepare either of these our Elixirs, only to follow our Infallible Rules, being the Compendium of the whole Practice and Theory according to all true Philosophers, and not to mind any other: for some having deliver'd things by Hearsay, others from Reading, and very few from their own Practice, they may easily be impos'd upon and deluded by any Pseudochymist or pretended Adept.

**Modern English** XXXI. Out of our true affection and charity for all lovers of the arts, we advise everyone who wishes to prepare either of our elixirs to follow only these infallible rules of ours, which are a compendium of the whole practice and theory according to all true philosophers, and to heed no others. Some have delivered things by hearsay, others from reading, and very few from their own practice; they may therefore easily be imposed upon and deceived by any false chemist or pretended adept.<sup>109</sup>

AU-MIN-MOTTO 1690, p. 83

**Latin** Experto Crede.

**Modern English** Trust one who has experience.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>107</sup>. Dissolving is not perfecting. The author grants certain rival menstrooms a power to dissolve and volatilise metals while denying that they can improve them. His objection is therefore not simply that no dissolution occurs, but that it lacks the natural and philosophical character his account requires.

<sup>108</sup>. After its own kind. The appeal echoes the creation language of Genesis. It establishes the author's theological criterion for appropriate generation; the attribution to Hermes does not make the biblical wording an independently verified Hermetic quotation.

<sup>109</sup>. Hearsay, reading and practice. The concluding warning ranks forms of knowledge and makes claimed personal practice the strongest authority. A reader may assess that rhetoric without accepting the author's self-description as independently demonstrated.

<sup>110</sup>. The repeated motto. Experto crede repeats the volume's appeal to experience. The maxim is translated here rather than silently dropped because it also appears on a title page.

# The Author's Explanation of the Figure

## The Complete Postscript

AU-POST-HEADING 1690, p. 84

**English** A POSTSCRIPT, CONTAINING An Explanation of the Figure, prefixt to the Aphorismi Urbigerani.

**Modern English** A Postscript Containing an Explanation of the Figure Prefixed to Urbigerus's Aphorisms

AU-POST-001 1690, p. 84; p. 85

**English** HAVING in our One Hundred and One Aphorisms so perspicuously laid open all the Difficulties, and so amply taught the compleat Theory and Practice of the whole Hermetic Mystery, that any ingenious Lover of Chymistry will not only be enabled to understand the most abstruse writings of the Philosophers, but also to effect any real Experiment, which is to be expected in the Progress of our Celestial Art; and yet being apt to believe, that such, as are not our Disciples, may perhaps meet with some of the Philosophical Figures, the meaning of which they may not so easily comprehend, we have judg'd it highly expedient, in the Front of this our little Book to place this our Figure, by which, being a perfect Compendium of all the Philosophical Emblems, the rest may be without any great difficulty understood. Now since this our Figure, mystically representing all our Subjects and Operations, cannot but admit of many and various Interpretations, all which if we should here set down, our Aphorisms (where they are already deliver'd, and of which this would then be a Repetition,) would be altogether useless and insignificant: we therefore at first esteem'd it very superfluous to give any farther Illustration of it. But our desire being to do all the good, we can, to the Publick, we have on second Thoughts resolv'd with our wonted Brevity to deliver the following Explanation for the better Comprehension both of it and our Aphorisms.

**Modern English** In our one hundred and one aphorisms we have laid open all the difficulties so clearly, and taught the complete theory and practice of the whole Hermetic mystery so fully, that any ingenious lover of chemistry will be enabled not only to understand the philosophers' most obscure writings, but also to accomplish any real experiment to be expected in the progress of our celestial art. Yet we are inclined to believe that those who are not our disciples may perhaps encounter some philosophical figures whose meaning they cannot so easily comprehend. We therefore judged it highly fitting to place our figure at the front of this little book. Since it is a perfect compendium of all the philosophical emblems, the others may be understood through it without great difficulty. Now, this figure mystically represents all our subjects and operations, and necessarily admits of many and various interpretations. If we set them all down here, our aphorisms, in which they have already been delivered and which this would merely repeat, would become entirely useless and insignificant. We therefore first considered any further illustration of the figure quite superfluous. But, wishing to do all the good we can for the public, on second thoughts we

have resolved to give the following explanation with our customary brevity, so that both the figure and our aphorisms may be better understood.<sup>111</sup>

AU-POST-002 1690, p. 85; p. 86

**English** The Tree is a Supporter of the Motto, *Virtus unita fortior*: which, being to be read from the side of the Serpent, representing by the Half-Moon on its Head the Planet, under whose Influence it is born, is to be referr'd to it according to its particular Motto, which signifies, that, if you take it alone, it can do little or nothing in our Art, as wanting the Assistance of others. By the Green Dragon is to be understood our first undetermin'd Matter, comprehending all our Principles, (as is demonstrated by the Half-Moon on its Head, the Sun in its Body, and the Cross on its Tail,) and denoting by its Motto, that it can perform the whole work without being join'd with any other created or artificially prepar'd thing: which is our first way. But this our Dragon, when copulating with our Serpent, is forc'd to comply with her, degrading it self from its undetermin'd Being for the production of our second way. Apollo with the Sun on his head, and Diana with the Half-Moon, embracing each other, shew our third way, and the Continuation of our first and second. The River, into which they descend, signifies the State, they must be reduc'd into, before they can be in a Capacity of being born again, and before in any of our three ways they can be brought to a perfect Spiritualization and Union. Apollo and Diana, coming out of the River in one wonderful Body, Diana having obtain'd all, represent our Herculean works, ready finish'd, and the beginning of their Conjunction, and by their going to set their foot on firm ground, where she is to sow the noble Fruits for the Procreation, is to be understood the Continuation of their Conjunction, till they are fully united and perfected. In this Scheme also, as well as in our Aphorisms, are mystically exhibited all the principal Points of Faith and Religion, compris'd in the Volumes of the Old and New Testament: whence it manifestly appears, that the Contemplation of Nature truly leads to the Comprehension of those heavenly Verities, by which alone we can expect to arrive at the Enjoyment of that blessed Immortality, to which, as to the true and ultimate End of our Creation, all our Endeavors are to be directed.

**Modern English** The tree supports the motto "United strength is stronger." This must be read from the side of the serpent, which represents, by the crescent on its head, the planet under whose influence it is born. The motto must be referred to the serpent in accordance with its own particular motto, which signifies that, taken alone, it can do little or nothing in our art because it lacks the assistance of others. By the green dragon is to be understood our first undetermined matter, containing all our principles, as shown by the crescent on its head, the sun in its body and the cross on its tail. Its motto denotes that it can perform the whole work without being joined to any other created or artificially prepared thing: this is our first way. But when our dragon couples with our serpent, it is forced to comply with her, lowering itself from its undetermined being to produce our second way. Apollo, with the sun on his head, and Diana, with the crescent, embracing each other, show our third way and the continuation of our first and second. The river

<sup>111</sup>. Many interpretations. The author explicitly says the figure admits many interpretations and represents all his subjects and operations. His explanation that follows is part of the historical text; additional spiritual or psychological readings in the supporting features are editorial interpretations, not recovered lost clauses.

into which they descend signifies the state to which they must be reduced before they can be born again, and before they can be brought to perfect spiritualisation and union in any of our three ways. Apollo and Diana coming out of the river in one wonderful body, Diana having obtained everything, represent our Herculean works already finished and the beginning of their conjunction. Their movement to set foot on firm ground, where she is to sow the noble fruits for procreation, signifies the continuation of their conjunction until they are fully united and perfected. In this scheme, as in our aphorisms, all the principal points of faith and religion contained in the Old and New Testaments are also mystically exhibited. From this it plainly appears that the contemplation of nature truly leads to an understanding of those heavenly truths through which alone we may expect to attain the enjoyment of that blessed immortality. Towards this, as the true and ultimate end of our creation, all our endeavours must be directed.<sup>112,113,114</sup>

AU-POST-FINIS 1690, p. 86

Latin FINIS.

Modern English THE END.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>112</sup>. United strength. *Virtus unita fortior* means “united strength is stronger.” *Virtus* can also convey power, efficacy or virtue. The other plate mottoes and their English renderings are preserved with the frontispiece legends; this postscript explains their relation to the serpent and dragon rather than repeating them verbatim.

<sup>113</sup>. Material and religious meanings. The final paragraph itself links the three ways, the preparation and conjunction of subjects, and the points of biblical faith. A reading attentive to the text should preserve that simultaneous material and religious scope rather than declaring either layer the sole meaning.

<sup>114</sup>. Diana having obtained all. The unusual phrase is retained. The author does not here itemise everything Diana has obtained or identify an independent biographical person. The words belong to the explanation of the combined body emerging from the river.

<sup>115</sup>. The end of the publication. This final *finis* follows the full explanation of the frontispiece. It marks the end of the printed work selected for this edition, including the companion treatise and postscript.

## Interpretive Essays

These six essays are editorial readings of the complete 1690 publication. They distinguish the author's claims from the edition's analysis and use linked passages so that material, symbolic, religious and ethical meanings can be assessed in context.

### Experience, Authority and the Promise of Clarity

The two sequences end with a demand for confidence in rules grounded in experience. Yet the form of the claim matters. Urbigerus speaks as an experienced practitioner to disciples, fellow adepts and strangers; the reader does not receive an independently documented series of trials. The claim to have worked alone on a kitchen fire, supported by unnamed friends, makes practical experience the warrant for a speaking voice. Its concreteness distinguishes that voice from hearsay, but it does not remove the distance between testimony and demonstration. The closing Latin motto asks the reader to trust an experienced person. The question remains how that experience becomes available to another reader. See the kitchen fire and the final ranking of testimony.

The answer offered by the aphoristic form is a sequence of distinctions and signs. A reader is repeatedly told what a failure would signify: an unsuitable subject, a wrong proportion, insufficient separation or excessive heat. Such statements organise uncertainty by making an event interpretable within the proposed system. They also make the system resistant to a simple adverse verdict, because a failed outcome can be assigned to an error in execution. A careful reading should preserve both functions. Error criteria are part of the practical intelligence the author claims to convey; their presence alone does not demonstrate that the desired result has occurred. See a failed separation and a failed saturation.

The author's rejection of rivals is correspondingly selective. He does not always deny that their solvents dissolve or volatilise metals. He denies that these effects amount to the natural improvement required by Hermetic art. A visible change therefore cannot serve as sufficient evidence merely because it is impressive. It must have the right origin, character and consequence. The resulting polemic helps define the art by exclusions, but the exclusions also depend on accepting the distinction between genuine and merely disguised transformation. This is one reason the repeated possessive "our" matters so much: the familiar operation name is claimed for a special practice. See operations called ours and dissolution without improvement.

The promise of clarity is also moral. The companion preface associates upright intention with opened eyes, love of neighbour and future happiness. Knowledge appears as a charitable gift whose proper reception depends on the reader's character. This does not convert the entire book into an allegory of inward virtue, since the same preface promises preservation of bodily health. Rather, technical success, ethical disposition and divine generosity are made mutually reinforcing. The edition's task is to keep those claims audible without endorsing their guarantees. The critical reader can ask what counts as evidence, what belongs to the author's self-presentation, and where the intended recipient is being shaped as well as instructed. See the address to true lovers and the closing promise.

### Undetermined Matter and the Three Ways

The opening definition locates Hermetic science in knowledge of a first matter that belongs to the mineral kingdom yet has not been determined by nature. This is not a neutral invitation to select any mineral. The text distinguishes a capacity for different outcomes from a substance already brought to a particular metallic condition. It then denies that reversing an ordinary metal into mercury, water or vapour automatically restores the first matter. Origin and capacity remain decisive even when outward appearances converge. "Undetermined" therefore marks a philosophical status within the author's theory, not a modern statement that a sample has an unknown composition. See the opening definition, what reversal cannot establish and the intermediate subject.

The first way is described as drawing the necessary principles from the undetermined green dragon without adding another created thing. Its title as the way of the poor belongs to an argument about the availability of the initial chaos. The second way joins dragon and serpent, and then makes the feminine subject the basis from which principles are drawn. These are related routes, and the author expressly chooses to describe their operations together to avoid repetition. A continuous sequence of aphorisms should consequently not be mistaken for three wholly separate manuals placed end to end. Some instructions are shared, and their relation must be recovered from the statements that name each way. See the first way, the shared exposition and the second way's basis.

The third way becomes explicit when the author considers what remains possible after the earth has been spoiled by excessive heat. It employs simple mercury with common gold, and is judged slower and less rich than the preferred creation. This position complicates the later denial that gold and silver are needed: that denial itself preserves an exception for the third way and another for final fermentation. Removing the exceptions would manufacture a much simpler doctrine

than the printed one. The three ways are a hierarchy of related possibilities, not interchangeable expressions for an unspecified change. Their comparative value depends on which subject is used and at what point a metal enters the account. See the explicit third way and the stated exceptions.

Determination reappears in the vegetable work, where a universal property is restricted through union with vegetable earth. This is not presented as a mere failure of universality: it creates the specialised lesser elixir. Later regenerations introduce further changes in claimed reach, and another determination is required before gold can be radically dissolved. The reader should therefore track the term as an action that changes scope, rather than assign it one fixed value of good or bad. The same concept can describe limitation, appropriation and a transition towards new capacities. What matters is the relation specified in each passage. See the particular property, the second regeneration and the further determination.

### Mercury, Metaphor and Material Claims

The book uses mercury in several registers and repeatedly warns against confusing them. Common mercury can appear as a known material, while the philosophers' mercury is said to require a special preparation. Simple, double and triple mercury name further distinctions inside the argument. A translation that replaced every occurrence with the modern element would erase those warnings; a translation that turned every occurrence into a purely mental condition would equally erase the operations and asserted effects attached to the terms. The difficult task is to preserve the network of relations before deciding whether any particular historical designation can be identified more narrowly. See the contrast with common mercury, a prepared subject and common mercury explicitly named.

Simple mercury is described as a heaven separated from earth and superfluous water. Double mercury is impregnated with metallic essence or sulphur. Triple mercury follows the inseparable union of prepared principles. These definitions do not produce a modern chemical formula, but neither are they empty decorative names. They locate a subject at different points in an account of separation, reception and union. Their temporal order also matters: a quality claimed at a later stage must not be silently attributed to an earlier one. The imagery of sex in the simple mercury's history makes the relations generative, while its invisible fire is still said to perform visible operations. See simple mercury, changing capacities, double mercury and triple mercury.

The eagle and red lion offer an unusually clear example of the text interpreting an emblem through its own adjacent prose. The eagle's

drinking is associated with mercury receiving an essence that appears deeper than blood and brighter than fire. The next paragraphs call this essence sulphur, tincture, gold and internal fire. These coordinated names permit a contextual explanation without requiring the editor to solve the whole work. An emblem is not simply an obstacle to plain speech: it draws a visible event, a generative relation and a theory of agency into one memorable scene. Its meanings are constrained by this context even when they remain more than one. See the eagle drinking and the names of the tincture.

The author's own distinction between "our" operations and ordinary operations provides a useful restraint. He asserts that his practice transfigures a subject while conserving its nature, quality and property. Whether a modern reader finds that claim coherent is a further question. The first obligation is to hear the distinction rather than replace it with a familiar recipe or an inward allegory. Subsequent spiritual reflection can explore why conservation through change might matter to a reader's life, provided it is identified as reflection. The historical account remains an account of nature, embodied operations and sacred significance whose boundaries are contested within the book itself. See transfiguration and conservation and the concluding material and religious explanation.

### Measures, Signs and the Discipline of Attention

The aphorisms alternate between promised simplicity and exacting attention. Their later work is called children's play, yet its opening labours are Herculean. This contrast does not divide the book into a literal half and a symbolic half. It divides kinds or stages of effort as the author understands them. Heat can nourish or destroy; readiness can be indicated by dryness, clarity or a capacity to receive; a seemingly small failure can invalidate later labour. The resulting drama is one of discrimination. The practitioner is asked to know what has actually occurred before moving forward, rather than infer completion from a desired timetable alone. See Herculean preparation, children's play and readiness before imbibition.

Time is nevertheless important. The work employs ordinary weeks and days alongside the philosophical month, as well as the claim that the complete creation may be finished within nine months. The text does not supply a general rule converting every philosophical duration into an ordinary one. Equating them everywhere would give the edition an apparent precision the witness does not possess. The pairing of durations can still be read as evidence that the author expects sequence, development and observable delay to matter. It is possible to explore a symbolic resonance in gestation without deleting the stated periods or treating them as proof that the author meant only inward time. See two measures of separation and the complete creation's duration.

Colour is given a more explicit hierarchy. Black, white and red are called constant and essential, while other appearances are incidental and unstable. This establishes a rule for sorting signs within the author's account. The preceding cloud and conflict between fixed and volatile likewise connect a visible appearance to a proposed event of union. A historical reader might recognise a cosmological or religious drama in these descriptions; an editor should still record which meanings the text itself attaches to which signs. The designation "essential" here belongs to that interpretive system. It is not a claim that colour alone supplies a modern scientific identification. See the conflict in the vessel and the three essential colours.

Attention also has a critical function for the present reader. The fermentation warning and the ratio that follows sit in an apparent tension, which the edition leaves visible. The preferences for earthen and glass vessels occur at different stages, which the edition likewise keeps distinct. These two cases require different responses: one deserves an acknowledged unresolved difficulty, the other a refusal to compress stages into contradiction. A usable edition helps readers make such discriminations by retaining particulars and supplying references. Clarity is achieved through faithful distinctions and stated uncertainty, not by rewriting the historical work until every assertion agrees with an editorial reconstruction. See the warning, the following proportion, earthen preparation and the later glass vessel.

### The Lesser Elixir and the Limits of Power

The vegetable companion opens by defining a limitation. Its *circulatum* is specified for one kingdom, while the greater elixir is said to command in three. The lesser title therefore indicates restricted scope, not simply an inferior quantity or a weak dilution of a universal medicine. At the same time, the name *circulatum* promises continuity of quality through repeated use. The two distinctions must be kept separate: how widely a power acts, and whether that power is depleted by acting. The author's definition makes this a book about the identity of an agent as much as its celebrated effects. See the specified elixir and the reason for the two names.

Three routes are again proposed, but their materials and emphases do not simply repeat the principal sequence. Diana's undetermined tears are determined through vegetable earth; an unnamed noble plant yields an ever-living fountain; ordinary preparations require a sulphurous medium because something has been harmed in their making. The third route makes relation especially important: body and spirit do not unite merely because the correct labels are present. The soul must be strengthened and their capacity for conjunction restored. This is a theory of mediation embedded in a material practice. It can support later philosophical reflection on repair, but the unnamed plant and

ambiguously named material should not be supplied with confident modern identities merely to make that reflection easier. See the first route, the unnamed plant and the need for a medium.

The companion's limits become most informative when it reaches metals. It allows the lesser menstruum to draw a tincture while denying it the ability to separate all metallic principles. A further regeneration is credited with wider powers, yet gold and silver are expressly excepted; another determination then introduces gold. This is an articulated account of successive capacities. Reading only the most expansive sentence would miss the restrictions that make the sequence intelligible. Similarly, dissolving and volatilising a metal is not, for this author, the same as improving it. The difference between action and the right kind of action is a persistent criterion across both treatises. See tincture and principles, the exception, the extended capacity and the criticism of rival solvents.

The medical claims carry a related ethical burden. The preface speaks of preserving neighbours in health, and the aphorisms promise cures, strengthened vital spirits and preservation of dead bodies. A complete edition must retain those promises with their qualifications and historical voice. It should also distinguish explaining a claim from establishing its efficacy. The author's charity is part of the self-understanding of the work, not external verification of every remedy. Modern readers can ask how care, confidence and authority interact here: who is trusted, how success is recognised, and what obligations follow from a promise made to another person's body. See the charitable purpose, the therapeutic promise and the asserted preservation.

### The Emblem, Creation and the End of the Work

The frontispiece is not an optional ornament to a book otherwise complete without images. The postscript calls it a compendium of philosophical emblems and says it represents the subjects and operations of the art. It also explicitly allows many interpretations. That admission is important evidence for the work's symbolic character, but it is not a licence to attach any meaning without textual support. The author follows it with a particular explanation designed to help readers understand both the plate and the aphorisms. An edition should therefore preserve the picture, its legends and the explanation, while giving later commentary a visible editorial voice. See the declared purpose of the figure and the author's explanation.

The explained image contains differences as well as union. The serpent needs assistance, whereas the undetermined green dragon can complete the work without another created thing. Their coupling introduces a change of status and a different way. Apollo and Diana then indicate

another relation and the continuation of the earlier routes. The picture thus condenses a branching account into simultaneous space. This helps explain why reading it as one simple sequence can be misleading: figures can represent routes, stages and relations that overlap. The aphorisms supply temporal and conceptual distinctions that a single engraving cannot show by position alone. See the unaided first way, the joint exposition and serpent, dragon and embracing figures.

The river gives the image a grammar of transformation. Descent precedes rebirth; emergence in one body precedes completed conjunction on firm ground. The same work elsewhere requires an understanding of macrocosmic creation in order to form the philosophical microcosm. This link makes scriptural language more than a decorative comparison added after the operations. Separation, spirit over waters, earth and generation become terms through which nature is understood. Yet the relation remains an argument made by the author. A present reader may examine how compelling that analogy is without either erasing its sacred force or accepting it as demonstrated cosmology. See imitating creation, heaven, earth and spirit and descent and emergence.

The final claim establishes the ultimate end as blessed immortality. The author says the scheme exhibits principal points of Old and New Testament faith and that contemplation of nature leads towards heavenly truths. This conclusion authorises a religious reading from within the text. It does not say the substances, failures and bodily medicines were never meant materially. A more faithful interpretation allows the book to join material transformation, theological meaning and moral aspiration without forcing their complete modern reconciliation. Readers may find in the image a further inward meditation on receptivity, loss and restored union. Such a meditation can be fruitful precisely when it declares its own standpoint and returns to the historical explanation rather than claiming to replace it. See the professed bodily aim and the stated ultimate end.

## Historical Glossary

These thirty-five entries explain how terms work in this volume. They preserve distinctions among the author's subjects and stages, and avoid assigning modern chemical identities where the historical text does not establish them.

### Adept

A person credited with accomplished knowledge of the Hermetic art. Urbigerus addresses coadepts and contrasts true adepts with pretenders, but the designation is part of his account of authority. It does not by itself independently verify a successful operation or identify a documented historical individual. See main 73, vegetable 31.

### Agent

That which acts upon another subject. Simple mercury is described as the agent digesting the seed or essence of metals and minerals. Its agency is defined by claimed relations and effects in the work, not automatically by a modern elemental identity. See main 57, main 62.

### Alkahest

The name invoked for a perpetual menstruum that supposedly retains its powers and quantity. Urbigerus associates the term with Paracelsus and applies it to his simple mercury. The attribution and asserted universality belong to the historical author; neither establishes a modern solvent or a verified quotation. See main 68, vegetable 25.

### Amalgamation

An operation of joining substances, with ordinary mercury and metals explicitly appearing in some passages. Urbigerus also applies it to his special subjects. The word alone therefore does not tell the reader that every described amalgamation is the same ordinary material process. See main 55, main 100.

### Andromeda

The mythic virgin bound to a rock, used in an account of rescue, dragon, champion and a marvellous child. The passage assigns these figures roles within the Hermetic work. It invites interpretation through its local relations without supplying a complete modern identification of each material. See main 25, main 27.

## Apollo and Diana

Solar and lunar figures whose embrace, descent into a river and emergence in one body are interpreted in the postscript. Diana also appears through her tears in the vegetable work. They are recurring names for relations and stages; their meaning should be followed through each context. See vegetable 3, the postscript.

## Astrums

The stars or astral powers invoked as influences upon generation, attraction and the sphere to which a volatile subject belongs. Urbigerus distinguishes his own subject from magnets assembled by rivals to draw substances from the air or stars. Astral language thus does not make every proposed attraction acceptable within his theory. See main 9, main 42.

## Caput mortuum

Latin for “dead head”: the residue remaining after an operation. In this work the residue can retain a magnetic quality or contain a prized tincture, so “dead” must not be taken to mean universally worthless. Its significance depends on the operation and on what has remained within it. See main 34, main 36.

## Chaos

An initial or comprehensive condition containing principles not yet separated into the required order. The work speaks both of a first chaos given by God and of prepared mercurial water as philosophical chaos. The term can therefore describe related states rather than one unchanging modern substance. See main 13, main 44.

## Cibation

Feeding or supplying nourishment to the matter. The reading renders it as feeding while preserving the infant, flesh and blood imagery through which the author describes development. The same passages also speak of additions, saturation and digestion; the figurative vocabulary accompanies a material claim. See main 76, main 91.

## Circulatum

The technical name given to an elixir said to retain its quality through repeated use. The greater circulatum is credited with power in all three kingdoms; the lesser is specified for vegetables. The title’s Latin terms mark a distinction in scope, not simply two quantities of the same medicine. See vegetable 1, vegetable 2.

## Coadept

A fellow adept or companion in the art. The author invokes such friends as witnesses to his labour. The term shows how expertise is socially authorised within the text, but the unnamed witnesses are not thereby available for independent examination or securely identified by the edition. See main 72, main 73.

## Cohobation

Repeated distillation with the distillate returned to the remaining material. The vegetable sequence explicitly refers to cohobations of what has distilled upon the remainder. This glossary explains the historical operation name; it supplies no additional equipment, conditions or modern procedural refinements. See vegetable 14, vegetable 15.

## Conjunction

Joining subjects so that the desired union becomes lasting or inseparable. In the plate it is represented by embrace, shared embodiment and the movement onto firm ground. The book distinguishes a beginning of conjunction from its completed perfection, so a first meeting is not itself the whole achievement. See main 77, the postscript.

## Determination

The acquisition or assignment of a particular condition or scope. First matter is called undetermined; vegetable earth gives Diana's tears a restricted property; a further determination extends the action of a regenerated essence. The concept's value changes with the relationship and stage described. See main 10, vegetable 4, vegetable 27.

## Digestion

A sustained maturation or working through of the matter, often linked to heat and duration. The author uses the term across the preparation and nourishment of his subjects. It should not be reduced everywhere either to bodily digestion or to a single modern physical operation. See main 51, main 80.

## Earth

A gross or fixed bodily principle contrasted with celestial water or heaven, and later purified and prepared to receive nourishment. The word can name a role in the philosophical microcosm. It does not always mean ordinary garden soil, and its local condition must be tracked. See main 46, main 81.

## Elements and principles

Constituent powers or parts of the author's subject. The text invokes four elements when defining the fifth essence and three principles in its later separations and reunions. Those two frameworks should be retained in their contexts rather than flattened into a modern list of chemical elements. See main 7, main 69.

## Elixir

The perfected preparation credited with medicinal or transformative power. The book differentiates white, great, universal and specified vegetable elixirs, as well as stages of fermentation. Each designation carries claims about maturity and scope; the label alone does not establish efficacy. See main 89, main 96, vegetable 1.

## Essence

The concentrated or essential nature said to contain a subject's virtue, quality and property. It can be associated with metallic sulphur or with an extracted plant oil. These uses connect identity and efficacy without making "essence" a stable synonym for one modern purified chemical. See main 63, vegetable 1.

## Fermentation

A determination or union associated with adding common silver or gold at a later stage. The author links it with a marriage bond and a medicine directed towards metals. Its historical meaning here should not be automatically replaced with the modern microbiological sense of fermentation. See main 89, main 97, main 98.

## Fixed and volatile

Contrasted tendencies to remain under heat or to pass over and depart. Their conflict and final union organise several descriptions of the vessel. Urbigerus claims that his mercury can fix the volatile and volatilise the fixed; the terms are relational qualities within that account. See main 40, main 92, vegetable 13.

## Green dragon

An emblematic name for the author's mineral subject. The opening sequence distinguishes undetermined and determined conditions; the postscript gives the dragon lunar, solar and cross signs and explains its power in relation to the serpent. A complete account must preserve those changes and relations. See main 11, main 14, the postscript.

## Hermes

The ancient authority invoked as master of the art. Urbigerus repeatedly attributes doctrines to Hermes without supplying modern bibliographical citations for every statement. The edition preserves those attributions as part of his historical argument while avoiding the claim that each is an independently verified ancient quotation. See main 3, main 70, vegetable 30.

## Herculean works

The difficult preparations by which the three principles are separated, purified and perfected. The author contrasts them with the supposedly easy remainder called children's play. The emblem's emergence from the river is also explained through these labours; the designation therefore works across prose and image. See main 69, main 71, the postscript.

## Imbibition

Soaking or feeding one subject with another, repeated according to the author's indications of dryness, absorption and saturation. The word is especially prominent in the infant imagery and the vegetable salt's preparation. Its definition does not settle the disputed identity of the substances involved. See main 83, vegetable 8.

## Magnet

An attracting subject or capacity. Urbigerus distinguishes a true magnet surviving in the prepared residue from rival artificial magnets he rejects. The term should be read through the specified attraction and stage, rather than assumed to mean an ordinary lodestone or a modern electromagnetic device. See main 36, main 42, main 66.

## Menstruum

A solvent or working medium in the historical chymical vocabulary. The universal and vegetable menstrooms are credited with different powers, and not every dissolution counts as philosophical improvement. The edition retains the term when translating it simply as solvent would obscure those distinctions. See main 25, vegetable 24, vegetable 29.

## Mercury

A name with several stated senses: common mercury and the philosophers' specially prepared simple, double and triple mercuries. The latter are distinguished by separation, impregnation and union. No single modern identity is imposed on every occurrence; explicit mentions of common mercury remain clear. See main 47, main 63, main 78, main 100.

## Microcosm

The little world formed through the philosophical work, understood by analogy with the creation of the great world or macrocosm. Heaven, earth, waters and generative spirit provide its vocabulary. The analogy carries cosmological and theological claims, rather than being merely an editorial comparison. See main 45, main 46.

## Regeneration and retrogradation

Regeneration is renewed birth or capacity; retrogradation is a return towards an earlier condition. The work does not treat every reversal of an ordinary metal as a return to first matter. Repeated regenerations in the vegetable sequence are also credited with successive, differentiated powers. See main 8, main 58, vegetable 26, vegetable 27.

## Reverberation

Treatment by furnace heat reflected or acting around the material. The earth is described as reverberated before later moistening and extraction. The term names a historical operation, while its exact execution in the author's special practice cannot be inferred solely from the ordinary word. See main 53, main 67.

## Salt

A principle associated with the prepared earth or bodily foundation, and a fixed vegetable subject in the companion. The author follows it through purification, reception and union with spirit. "Salt" is not silently converted into common table salt or another uniquely specified modern compound. See main 66, vegetable 6, vegetable 12.

## Sulphur

A principle linked with soul, metallic essence, internal fire and tincture. The work's multiple names are relational explanations rather than a licence to substitute ordinary sulphur everywhere. In the vegetable sequence a sulphurous medium strengthens the soul and enables a union of body and spirit. See main 65, vegetable 6, vegetable 7.

## Virgin's milk

A name for the author's mercurial or silvery water, later explicitly associated with simple mercury feeding the infant. The image links whiteness, nourishment and a prepared subject. It is not a reference to literal milk, and its interpretation should follow the text's own local identifications. See main 20, main 44, main 83.

## Diotimos Contextual Lexicon

These twenty-four entries begin with one complete sentence from the modern reading and two literal forms from the historical wording. Historical context explains the passage's local work. Reflective possibility marks a present editorial application, distinct from a claim about the original author's exclusive intention. Passage links preserve access to the complete argument.

### First Matter: Capacity Before Completion

Passage: "Hermetic science consists solely in the correct knowledge of the philosophers' first matter, which belongs to the mineral kingdom and has not yet been determined by Nature." Read the complete passage.

Source forms: first Matter; Mineral Kingdom.

Historical context: The initial definition makes knowledge of the subject the beginning of the art. Its place in the mineral kingdom is affirmed, while determination is withheld. The following exclusions prevent that openness from meaning simply any substance whatever. The author is defining a capacity within his philosophy of nature, not reporting that he lacks a name for an ordinary specimen. Read the opening alongside the later distinction between finished metals and a subject capable of more than one outcome.

Reflective possibility: A present reader might distinguish a capacity from its first achieved form. A skill, relationship or inquiry can acquire a definite expression without exhausting everything it could become. That comparison does not identify Urbigerus's matter with the human mind. It offers a question suggested by his distinction: which forms make a possibility available, and which are prematurely treated as its final limit?

Read with the related interpretive essay and the next contextual entry.

## Availability and Recognition

Passage: "It can be found everywhere, at all times, and only through our science." Read the complete passage.

Source forms: every where; our Science.

Historical context: The author denies restrictions of place, season and magical attraction. Yet he retains a strong condition: the matter is found only through the relevant science. Physical availability and knowledgeable recognition are therefore different claims. The appeal to Hermes supports the assertion from within a tradition of authority; it does not independently locate the subject for the present reader. This tension between an accessible world and a restricted art runs through the promise of plainly written rules.

Reflective possibility: Something can be close at hand while remaining difficult to recognise. Familiar experience becomes intelligible through learned distinctions, patient observation and an ability to ask useful questions. The reflective task is not to assume that everything nearby conceals a secret. It is to notice how a way of attending can reveal what habitual categories have passed over, and to remain willing to test that new recognition.

Read with the related interpretive essay and the next contextual entry.

## Transformation and Continuity

Passage: "Ours truly transfigure our subject while preserving its nature, quality, and property." Read the complete passage.

Source forms: transfigure; conserving.

Historical context: This sentence states the author's difference between his art and the practices he dismisses as disguises. Genuine change is said to conserve nature, quality and property. The conjunction is deliberate, although its success is asserted rather than demonstrated by the sentence. The possessive ours also warns that familiar operation names may carry special meanings in this account. A modern reading should preserve this criterion before deciding how convincingly any later passage fulfils it.

Reflective possibility: Change need not be judged only by visible novelty. A reader can ask whether a transformation strengthens the capacities through which a person or practice remains recognisable. The analogy leaves room for real alteration and for criticism: claims to preserve an essence can conceal either resistance to necessary change or a superficial change of appearance. Continuity becomes a question to examine, rather than a reassuring label.

Read with the related interpretive essay and the next contextual entry.

## Art as an Imitation of Nature

Passage: "After our subject has passed through all these artificial operations, which always imitate Nature, it is called the Philosophers' Stone, or the fifth essence of metals, because it is compounded from the essence of their four elements." Read the complete passage.

Source forms: imitate Nature; fifth Essence.

Historical context: Artifice here means an intentional preparation, not automatically a falsification. The operations are said to imitate nature, and their completed subject is described through a fifth essence compounded from four elemental essences. These are historical explanatory categories. Replacing the elements with modern chemical elements would change the claim. The important relation in this sentence is between deliberate work, natural generation and a completion that gathers constituent powers into another condition.

Reflective possibility: One reflective use of imitation is to distinguish collaboration with a process from imposing a desired appearance. Teaching, cultivation and artistic practice all involve choosing conditions while responding to an activity with its own tendencies. This comparison offers no universal natural rule for human conduct. It asks what the practitioner must understand about the process being guided before claiming to have perfected it.

Read with the related interpretive essay and the next contextual entry.

## Possibility and Encounter

Passage: "It has the power to produce either, according to the subject it encounters." Read the complete passage.

Source forms: power to produce both; Subject.

Historical context: Undetermined matter is explained through a capacity to produce differing outcomes according to what it encounters. It is neither metal nor mineral in the particular distinction made here, although the opening places it in the mineral kingdom more broadly. The terminology should be read locally rather than forced into a single modern classification. The subject's power is relational: its outcome is not described in isolation from the other subject.

Reflective possibility: A capacity may become visible only through an encounter. A question changes with its object, and an ability may develop differently under different demands. This does not mean that identity has no constraints. The passage can instead prompt attention to the conditions through which a possibility becomes actual, and to the responsibility involved in choosing those conditions rather than treating every outcome as inevitable.

Read with the related interpretive essay and the next contextual entry.

## Living Gold and Common Gold

Passage: "This Green Dragon is the philosophers' natural gold, exceedingly different from common gold." Read the complete passage.

Source forms: natural Gold; vulgar.

Historical context: The author explicitly distinguishes the Dragon's philosophical gold from common gold. Common gold is then called dead because its natural perfection has reached a terminus, whereas the other subject is credited with generative power. Living and dead thus name a place in the author's account of generation, not simply whether something is an organism. The distinction also prevents every later occurrence of gold from being assigned the same referent.

Reflective possibility: Perfection can be imagined as finished achievement or as an active power to generate further life. Those ideals need not coincide. A reader might ask whether a valued accomplishment has become a possession to defend or a capacity through which something new can arise. This is an editorial meditation on the passage's generative contrast, not a claim that its two kinds of gold are only psychological states.

Read with the related interpretive essay and the next contextual entry.

## The Way of the Poor

Passage: "Since this first chaos may be obtained without expense, costing only the trouble of digging it from the mines, this is appropriately called the sole way of the poor." Read the complete passage.

Source forms: without any Expenditure; Poor.

Historical context: The first way is assigned a low material cost because its initial chaos is said to be available for the labour of mining. The same aphorism requires knowledge of extraction through the universal menstruum. Poverty of expense therefore does not mean absence of work or specialised understanding. Later claims about fuel, vessels and instruments further qualify the economy of the undertaking. The title belongs to an argument about access to a specific route.

Reflective possibility: A useful distinction can be drawn between what costs money and what demands attention, labour or knowledge. Expensive equipment does not necessarily supply understanding, while a modest beginning can still require sustained work. The reflective question is how resources support an undertaking and what they cannot replace. The historical author's assurance of cheapness remains his own claim, rather than a guarantee for the reader.

Read with the related interpretive essay and the next contextual entry.

## Homogeneous and Heterogeneous

Passage: "This feminine subject cannot be brought back unless she is first activated by her homogeneous qualities to free her from impurities and heterogeneous qualities, so that she may be better able to receive the spiritual love of our Green Dragon." Read the complete passage.

Source forms: Heterogeneous; Homogeneous.

Historical context: The sentence gives activation by homogeneous qualities a role in freeing the feminine subject from impurities and heterogeneous qualities. Its purpose is to make her capable of a specified conjunction. Similarity and difference are consequently judged in relation to an intended process; the terms do not establish a general moral opposition between sameness and otherness. The female subject and Dragon retain their particular roles within the second way.

Reflective possibility: Preparation sometimes requires distinguishing what belongs to a practice from what obstructs its purpose. That judgement should remain open to correction: an unfamiliar influence may enrich an activity rather than contaminate it. The passage can prompt a careful account of compatibility, asking which qualities support a particular relation and why. It supplies no warrant for treating human difference itself as impurity.

Read with the related interpretive essay and the next contextual entry.

## Prepared and Natural

Passage: "Although artificial, it is naturally prepared, for Nature, which is imitated in its preparation, also contributes to it." Read the complete passage.

Source forms: Artificial; naturally prepar'd.

Historical context: The author calls his mercury artificial because it must be made by philosophical preparations, then calls it naturally prepared because nature contributes to those preparations. The two descriptions answer different questions: whether the subject is found ready to hand, and how its making is understood. The statement does not erase labour. It represents successful art as an activity in which natural powers participate rather than as an independent replacement for them.

Reflective possibility: Intentional practice can be formative without being wholly self-sufficient. Learning a language or shaping a work depends on capacities, materials and responses that cannot simply be commanded. A reader may reflect on the difference between taking responsibility for an intervention and claiming sole authorship of everything it enables. The comparison keeps deliberate work visible while acknowledging that its conditions extend beyond the worker.

Read with the related interpretive essay and the next contextual entry.

## Several Causes of Failure

Passage: "If the universal menstruum has not entirely delivered the Virgin from the Dragon's claws, it is a sign either that she was not sufficiently free of her heterogeneous qualities, that she had not received a sufficiently penetrating quality from the external heat, or that the universal menstruum was too weak to accomplish its undertaking." Read the complete passage.

Source forms: Heterogeneous Qualities; too weak.

Historical context: A single failed rescue has three proposed explanations: the subject's condition, the quality received from heat, or the weakness of the menstruum. This is a local diagnostic framework, expressed through the Virgin and Dragon narrative. Its alternatives make failure interpretable within the author's system, but the sentence does not independently prove which cause occurred. The reader should distinguish a proposed explanation from evidence sufficient to choose among explanations.

Reflective possibility: Disappointment often encourages a search for one convenient cause. The passage offers a different reflective habit: examine preparation, circumstances and the means used before assigning blame. Such a list should remain revisable rather than become a device that protects every expectation from criticism. A useful diagnosis explains what evidence would distinguish the alternatives and allows the possibility that the original account itself needs correction.

Read with the related interpretive essay and the next contextual entry.

## Union Without Erasure

Passage: "Dissolving its own body, it unites inseparably with that body, always preserving its own qualities and properties." Read the complete passage.

Source forms: unites inseparably; own Qualities.

Historical context: The mercurial water is credited with opposite actions upon fixed and volatile subjects. In its union with its own body it is also said to conserve its qualities and properties. That claim is part of the book's recurring account of change with continuity. Its scope is specific: the next sentence restricts the source of increase to the crude body. The passage should not be turned into an unrestricted promise that any combination preserves everything.

Reflective possibility: One can ask what a durable union must preserve in order to remain fruitful. Collaboration may require alteration without the simple disappearance of each contributor's capacities. This is a possible application of the relation described, not a historical definition of mercurial water. It also invites scrutiny of attractive words such as inseparable: permanence by itself does not establish that a relation supports the lives or work joined within it.

Read with the related interpretive essay and the next contextual entry.

### The Little World and the Great World

Passage: "In creating our little world, it is absolutely necessary to imitate and use the very same method that the Creator of all things used to form the great world." Read the complete passage.

Source forms: Microcosm; Macrocosm.

Historical context: The philosophical work is described as the formation of a microcosm whose method must imitate the Creator's formation of the macrocosm. The next aphorism develops this through heaven, earth, waters and a moving spirit. The analogy is therefore a stated principle of the author's cosmology and faith. It should not be presented as an editorial metaphor added to an otherwise unrelated technical account, nor as an independently established model of cosmic origins.

Reflective possibility: A small undertaking can disclose the assumptions through which someone understands a larger order. A reader might examine what a practice implicitly treats as creation, nourishment, order or completion. The reflective benefit lies in making those assumptions discussable. It does not require accepting that every local process reproduces the universe, or that a preferred cosmology can substitute for attending to the particulars of the work.

Read with the related interpretive essay and the next contextual entry.

### Right Proportion and Real Union

Passage: "Without that exact proportion and right union, nothing of consequence can be expected from their marriage." Read the complete passage.

Source forms: right Proportion; Marriage.

Historical context: The third way connects simple mercury and common gold through proportion and an indissoluble union. Neither the presence of the named subjects nor the image of marriage is sufficient by itself. A subsequent aphorism supplies a proportion within that historical account. Here the interest lies in the conjunction of quantitative relation and claimed permanence: the author makes both necessary to expect an effective result from the union.

Reflective possibility: Having the right ingredients in a shared endeavour does not ensure that they can work together. Time, attention and responsibility may need proportion as well as sincere intention. The comparison can prompt an assessment of how contributions meet and what sustains their relation. It should not turn the historical marriage into a formula for human relationships; the reflective question remains open to differences among the people and purposes involved.

Read with the related interpretive essay and the next contextual entry.

### Labour Before Play

Passage: "After their preparation, all labour, trouble and danger will be past." Read the complete passage.

Source forms: Herculean Works; Labor.

Historical context: The three principles earn their Herculean name through separation, purification and perfection. The ease promised afterwards depends upon that preparation. Later aphorisms call the remainder children's play, while the author's claim to have worked alone on a kitchen fire presents his own competence. These are assertions about stages of labour, not a reason to delete the difficulties or assume that the whole enterprise is effortless.

Reflective possibility: Ease can be the result of earlier work that is no longer visible. A fluent performance or a clear explanation may depend upon long preparation. Reflecting on that relation can temper both impatience with beginners and romantic attachment to difficulty. The aim need not be to make labour disappear from memory, but to understand which labour enables a freer activity and which has become unnecessary repetition.

Read with the related interpretive essay and the next contextual entry.

## Prepared Parts and a Completed Whole

Passage: “When our Herculean works have been perfected—that is, when our three principles or elements have been prepared, purified and perfected—the great mystery of our creation is still not to be expected unless their philosophical and inseparable union is exactly accomplished.” Read the complete passage.

Source forms: three Principles; inseparable Union.

Historical context: The author makes an explicit distinction between perfected principles and the completed creation. The former are necessary but insufficient; their exact philosophical union is still required. The next aphorism gives that union the name triple mercury. Reading these passages together prevents the preparation of separate parts from being mistaken for the end of the whole work. The distinction also informs the postscript’s account of emergence from the river.

Reflective possibility: An inventory of excellent parts does not by itself constitute a living practice or a coherent work. Integration requires relations through which each part can act with the others. The passage can encourage attention to that additional task without denying the value of preparation. It also asks whether the desired whole has been defined clearly enough for someone to recognise a genuine relation rather than mere proximity.

Read with the related interpretive essay and the next contextual entry.

## Excessive Feeding

Passage: “If, within two or three days, or four at the furthest, the infant does not show itself extremely hungry by becoming very dry and brittle again, it will be clear evidence that you have overwhelmed it by excessive feeding.” Read the complete passage.

Source forms: Infant; excessive feeding.

Historical context: The infant’s renewed dryness and brittleness are treated as signs of hunger. Their absence within the stated interval is interpreted as evidence of overfeeding. Nourishment is therefore not represented as a simple increase without limit. The historical durations and physical signs remain part of the claim. The following rules connect successful feeding with proportion and management, so the infant image accompanies a particular material account.

Reflective possibility: More assistance can sometimes overwhelm the activity it is meant to support. Study, care and creative work may require intervals in which what has been received can be assimilated. This application should not be converted into advice about literal infant care or illness. It offers a question about responsiveness: what signs show that an undertaking can receive more, and when does an intention to help become an inability to pause?

Read with the related interpretive essay and the next contextual entry.

### Heat That Joins and Heat That Separates

Passage: “A moderate heat brings about the union between soul and body and perfects the whole work; on the contrary, too violent a heat separates and destroys everything.” Read the complete passage.

Source forms: moderate Heat; Soul and the Body.

Historical context: Heat has opposed effects according to its intensity and the stage of imbibition. The author explains the desired relation through soul and body, while also naming mercury, earth and the possibility of departure. The sentence thus joins material and generative language. It should be read beside the earlier warnings about damaged earth and the later vegetable warning about violent heat, rather than assigned one purely symbolic or purely modern physical meaning.

Reflective possibility: Intensity is not always a measure of commitment. A demand that helps a process develop can, when increased without discrimination, break the relation that made development possible. The passage can prompt reflection on appropriate pressure in learning or work. That reflection remains a comparison: it does not establish a universal rule that moderation is sufficient, or that conflict and force can always be avoided.

Read with the related interpretive essay and the next contextual entry.

### Essential Colours and Passing Appearances

Passage: “The other colours, which appear and disappear as the work progresses, are merely incidental and inconstant.” Read the complete passage.

Source forms: essential Colors; accidental.

Historical context: The preceding sentence assigns black, white and red to putrefaction and conjunction, purification, and maturation. Other colours are then called incidental and unstable. This is a hierarchy of signs within the author’s explanation of the matter’s digestion. Colour is not offered as a universal modern identification of a chemical, and the rule belongs to this stage of the work. Its usefulness depends upon the distinction between a recognised phase and a transient appearance.

Reflective possibility: Not every vivid event deserves the same interpretive weight. A reader might ask which signs indicate a durable change in a practice and which merely attract attention. The comparison also requires humility: a preferred scheme can lead someone to disregard inconvenient evidence as incidental. The reflective task is to explain why a sign matters and remain ready to revise the distinction when experience does not support it.

Read with the related interpretive essay and the next contextual entry.

### A Specified Field of Power

Passage: "Our lesser circulated preparation is only an elixir specified for the vegetable kingdom." Read the complete passage.

Source forms: specificated Elixir; Vegetable Kingdom.

Historical context: The lesser preparation is introduced through a restriction to the vegetable kingdom. The next aphorism explains that lesser refers to scope while circulated refers to continued efficacy through repeated use. These are separate claims. A narrower range does not mean that the author describes it as merely weak or exhausted after one action. The later passages on metals further distinguish the ability to draw a tincture from the power to separate every principle.

Reflective possibility: A bounded competence can be valuable without claiming universal authority. Naming its field makes both its use and its limits clearer. The passage offers a reflective contrast between the range of an activity and the quality with which it is performed. A present reader can ask what a skill is suited to, what lies beyond its evidence, and whether prestige is encouraging an unjustified extension of its claims.

Read with the related interpretive essay and the next contextual entry.

### The Work of a Medium

Passage: "The proper medium required for the indissoluble union of these two subjects is simply a sulphurous and bituminous matter issuing from a plant, living or dead." Read the complete passage.

Source forms: proper Medium; indissoluble Union.

Historical context: The sulphurous and bituminous matter is introduced because the preceding aphorism says that ordinary preparation has damaged the soul's capacity to enable union. The medium strengthens the subject and makes reception possible. Its role is relational, and subsequent passages distinguish its necessary early contribution from its harmful ascent later. The edition preserves the historical designations without supplying an unproved modern identity for the named material.

Reflective possibility: Two things may require a shared medium before they can meet productively. A language, institution or practice of attention can make an encounter possible without becoming its final subject. The analogy becomes more useful when the medium's limits are recognised. One can ask what it enables, how it changes the participants, and whether it remains appropriate once the relation it helped establish has developed.

Read with the related interpretive essay and the next contextual entry.

### An Action and Its Limits

Passage: "It will not, however, separate all their principles, because it is not the menstruum suited to such operations." Read the complete passage.

Source forms: Tincture; all their Principles.

Historical context: The menstruum is credited with extracting a tincture from metals and minerals, yet denied the ability to separate all their principles. Its action outside its specified kingdom therefore does not confer unrestricted power. The author also ranks the resulting preparations below his elixir of properties. These qualifications belong to the same passage as the expansive claims and should be retained when its scope is discussed.

Reflective possibility: A successful effect can tempt someone to infer a much larger competence. The passage can prompt the more exact question of what an action has actually shown. That approach need not depreciate a partial achievement. It locates the achievement among what remains unestablished, making further inquiry possible without letting one result stand as proof of every hoped-for consequence.

Read with the related interpretive essay and the next contextual entry.

### Hearsay, Reading and Practice

Passage: "Some have delivered things by hearsay, others from reading, and very few from their own practice; they may therefore easily be imposed upon and deceived by any false chemist or pretended adept." Read the complete passage.

Source forms: Hearsay; own Practice.

Historical context: The final aphorism distinguishes sources of testimony and warns against false chemists. It simultaneously asks readers to follow this author's rules alone. The appeal to practice therefore deserves attention both as a criterion of knowledge and as a claim to exclusive authority. The book names unnamed fellow adepts elsewhere, but it does not provide the independent documentation needed to make every assertion of experience directly examinable.

Reflective possibility: Knowledge changes as it passes through report, reading and first-hand work. A reader can ask which kind of contact supports a particular statement and what that contact leaves uncertain. Experience itself is not immune to error, while careful reading can preserve evidence that an individual lacks. The reflective aim is to make the grounds of confidence explicit rather than replace one unquestioned authority with another.

Read with the related interpretive essay and the next contextual entry.

### Many Interpretations, Particular Evidence

Passage: "Now, this figure mystically represents all our subjects and operations, and necessarily admits of many and various interpretations." Read the complete passage.

Source forms: Subjects and Operations; many and various Interpretations.

Historical context: The postscript explicitly permits multiple interpretations of its image, but identifies the image as representing the work's subjects and operations. It then gives a specific explanation of the Dragon, Serpent, river and combined figure. Multiplicity and constraint therefore coexist. The explanation also says that the aphorisms already contain what the emblem expresses, making comparison between picture and prose essential to an account of its meaning.

Reflective possibility: An image can sustain more than one illuminating reading without making every reading equally supported. A present reader may distinguish what the work expressly says, what its relationships plausibly suggest, and what a personal response contributes. Such distinctions do not diminish symbolic richness. They make it possible to share an interpretation, assess its evidence and recognise where another reader might reasonably understand the image differently.

Read with the related interpretive essay and the next contextual entry.

## The End of Contemplation

Passage: "Towards this, as the true and ultimate end of our creation, all our endeavours must be directed." Read the complete passage.

Source forms: blessed Immortality; ultimate End.

Historical context: The concluding direction refers back to blessed immortality and to heavenly truths disclosed through contemplation of nature. It places the earlier material ambitions within the author's stated religious end. It does not retract the claims about metals, medicine or embodied operations. The conclusion should therefore be allowed to transform the reader's view of their purpose while remaining part of the same historical account of creation and faith.

Reflective possibility: A practice can be reconsidered by asking what its achievements are ultimately for. The answer may change which successes appear sufficient and which responsibilities remain. This is a possible reflective use of the ending, not a replacement for its specifically biblical hope. The historical conclusion asks readers to direct their endeavours beyond immediate effects; a modern response can acknowledge that claim while openly stating its own standpoint.

Read with the related interpretive essay and the next contextual entry.

## Relations Within the Work

### First Matter and a Finished Substance

The first aphorism calls the subject undetermined; VIII excludes finished metals even when returned to mercury, water, or vapour. XXII nevertheless allows a prepared philosophic mercury involving common mercury. The distinction concerns the condition and preparation of a subject, so those statements should be compared before being declared interchangeable. Read the initial definition, the exclusion and the qualified possibility.

### Art and the Preservation of Nature

The author distinguishes his operations from disguises, calls the result artificial, and also says that nature contributes to its preparation. Transformation and preservation therefore belong together within his claim. Compare transfiguring a subject, operations imitating nature and the prepared mercury.

### The Three Ways and the One Beginning

The dedication makes the first matter common to all three ways. XIV calls the first way the way of the poor, while XV explains why the first and second are taught together. The postscript assigns the ways to the Dragon, the Dragon with the Serpent, and Apollo with Diana. The arrangement is an argument about related beginnings and conditions, not three disconnected lists. Read the dedication, the first way, the shared teaching and the author's figure explanation.

### Prepared Parts and Their Conjunction

Separating principles from impurities does not by itself complete the work. The author calls their preparation Herculean and then insists upon their exact, inseparable union. The distinction between an inventory of parts and a completed conjunction also governs the lesser elixir. Compare the three labours, the further requirement and the vegetable union.

### Changing Colours and Claims of Completion

The Virgin's colours are a sign of a stage in the principal work; the later rule distinguishes three essential colours from passing appearances. In the lesser work, colour enters a different account of the separation of a plant's principles. The same visible word therefore needs its own local condition. Read the Virgin's appearance, the essential colours and the vegetable example.

### Medicine and the Extent of a Preparation

The grand elixir is presented as a remedy as well as a means of metallic change, while the lesser preparation is expressly specified for the vegetable kingdom. Its ability to draw a tincture from another kingdom does not, the author says, give it every power over that subject. Compare the stated medicinal intention, vegetable specification, a limitation and the account of further determination.

### Knowledge of Nature and the End of Creation

The dedication joins the art to service of God; the postscript makes the emblem express the principal points of biblical faith and directs endeavour towards immortality. These statements give the work an explicit religious scope alongside its material claims. Read the author's account of teaching and the concluding explanation.

## Guide to the Emblem and Its Mottos

The engraving is part of the historical work. These four editorial guides return its motifs and inscriptions to the author's own explanation before inviting further interpretation.

### The Plate and Its Inscriptions

Begin with the whole engraving and the transcribed mottos. Read each banner as a local utterance before combining the phrases into an interpretation. The plurals in nothing without you and through us matter to the relationships. The signature belongs to the plate's production rather than to one of its speaking figures.

### The Dragon and the Serpent

The postscript identifies the Dragon with first undetermined matter and the Serpent with a subject requiring assistance. The lunar, solar, and cross signs are part of that explanation. Compare the image with the Dragon's states, the first way and the Serpent's conjunction. An editorial interpretation should first account for these stated correspondences.

### Apollo and Diana in the River

Apollo and Diana are shown together below the tree and as a combined figure on the right. The author reads descent into the river as a reduction needed before rebirth and emergence as the finished Herculean works and the beginning of conjunction. Read the complete explanation, then compare prepared principles and their necessary union. The text explains the passage between states; it does not supply an independent biography of the figures.

### Several Interpretations and Their Limits

The author expressly says that his figure admits many interpretations and represents his subjects and operations. He also places the teachings of faith within it. This supports more than one level of reading, while the specific explanation still gives each interpretation something to answer to. Compare the reason for explaining the figure, the material and religious account and the interpretive essay.

## Reading Routes

Each route selects a question and a sequence of passages. The complete historical text remains the point of return; these connections supplement a continuous reading.

### Read the Complete Volume

Begin with the frontispiece, its inscriptions, the title, the licence and the dedication. Follow the principal sequence through CI and its closing word. Continue with the companion title and address, all thirty-one aphorisms, the repeated motto and the entire postscript through the final closing word.

### Definitions and Exclusions

Read first matter, finished metals, undetermined capacity, the two mercuries and a reversible preparation. Then read rejected vegetable explanations. Ask what each exclusion rules out and what it still leaves unnamed. Continue with the essay on determination.

### Art and Natural Generation

Follow transformation with preservation, a prepared but natural mercury, the little and great worlds, creation's language and generation according to kind. Distinguish a comparison with nature from an independently demonstrated result. Compare mercury and material claims.

### How a Rule Claims to Test a Work

Read three possible causes of failure, clarity after separation, a claimed test of simple mercury, excessive feeding and essential and passing colours. Ask which conditions the author names and what evidence the book itself makes available to a reader. Continue with measure and attention.

### The Lesser Work and Its Boundaries

Start with vegetable specification, then compare a mediating substance, the completed union, a limit upon its action and further determination. The medicinal promises remain historical claims. Read the essay on the lesser elixir alongside the complete passages.

### Read the Ending Back into the Image

Read the author's statement about interpretation and his full explanation, then return to the engraving and each translated motto. Compare the result with the dedication's account of faith and teaching and the essay on the end of the work.

## Questions for Study

### The Appeal to Experience

What does the repeated appeal to experience establish within the book, and what would still need independent evidence? Compare the title motto, the claim of practice and the warning about hearsay.

### Knowing an Undetermined Matter

How can a matter be present and describable while not yet determined? Read the definition, the vapour and its capacity. What work is done by the difference between a thing's availability and its recognition?

### Transformation and Continuity

Which features must remain for the author to call an operation a true transfiguration rather than a disguise? Compare the governing distinction, art and nature and a union preserving qualities.

### One Beginning and Three Ways

What is shared among the three ways, and what changes between them? Read the common first matter, the first way, the combined instructions and the image explanation.

### A Figure and Its Subject

How do the Serpent, Dragon, Virgin, and infant organise the relations among subjects? Which passages also make explicit claims about material states? Compare virgin's milk, death and rebirth and the postscript.

### Diagnosing a Failure

Why does the author give more than one explanation for a failed stage? Read the three alternatives and incomplete separation. How does that plurality affect the reader's judgement of a claimed rule?

### Preparing and Joining

Why are the Herculean preparations insufficient without conjunction? Compare the three completed labours, the further requirement and the lesser union.

### The Extent of a Power

How can a preparation act upon a subject yet lack the power claimed for another preparation? Compare the vegetable kingdom and the tincture and the principles. What would be lost by treating every successful action as proof of universal power?

### Several Interpretations

What authorises more than one interpretation of the engraving, and what constrains those interpretations? Read the explicit claim and the detailed account. Distinguish an interpretation supplied by the author from a reflective application supplied by an editor.

### The End of the Work

The ending directs endeavour towards immortality. How does that stated end relate to the preceding promises of transmutation and healing? Compare the medicinal intention, health and happiness and the final explanation.

## Sources and Editorial Credits

### The Governing Getty Copy

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### Catalogue Identification

The Getty copy is described in the linked Open Library record as English, 1690, with eight preliminary pages, a sequence ending at 86, and one plate leaf. The record notes the separately titled companion and the intervening blanks. The Wellcome catalogue also identifies the English 1690 publication and credits the W. F. frontispiece to William Faithorne. Differences in catalogue collation are resolved here through the selected native copy's inventory.

[https://openlibrary.org/books/OL24932408M/Aphorismi\\_Urbigerani\\_or\\_Certain\\_rules\\_clearly\\_demonstrating\\_the\\_three\\_infallible\\_ways\\_of\\_preparing\\_t](https://openlibrary.org/books/OL24932408M/Aphorismi_Urbigerani_or_Certain_rules_clearly_demonstrating_the_three_infallible_ways_of_preparing_t)

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## The Engraving and Its Inscriptions

The full historical plate is reproduced from native leaf 006 of the Getty scan, retaining the engraved signature and all banners. The Latin inscriptions are collated against that image and freshly translated. The complete authorial explanation remains in the postscript, distinct from the modern emblem guide and reflective interpretations.

<https://archive.org/details/aphorismiurbiger00urbi/page/n5/mode/1up>

## The Diotimos Reading and Study Features

The modern English reading, fresh Latin translations, annotations, editorial divisions, essays, glossary, contextual lexicon, relations, emblem guide, reading routes, questions, and index were prepared for this Diotimos edition. The historical text and engraving date from 1690 and are in the public domain. The Text Creation Partnership transcription is credited under its CC0 terms; the native image is credited to the Getty Research Institute and Internet Archive.

The parallel and English-only files derive from the same reviewed historical units and modern reading. The latter retains the historical plate, translated inscriptions, all annotations, and the study features. It provides stable passage references for comparison with the original wording in the companion parallel edition.

## Subject Index

These entries link to substantive historical passages and their modern readings. The principal and vegetable sequences are distinguished by their passage references. The frontispiece and postscript are indexed with the complete publication.

### Adepts and Coadeps

friends invoked as witnesses; true practice and pretended adepts.

### Alkahest

the perpetual menstruum and the attribution to Paracelsus.

### Amalgamation

proportion and inseparable union; the common-gold route; the amalgam used for projection.

### Andromeda

virgin, dragon and delivering champion; signs of an incomplete deliverance.

### Animal Kingdom

a medicine for human bodies; the claimed reach of the great elixir.

### Apollo and Diana

Diana's tears and Apollo's appearance; embrace, descent and combined body.

### Art and Nature

transfiguration and conservation; an artificial subject naturally prepared.

### Astrums

generation and astral influence; sympathy and the subject's sphere; rival magnets rejected.

### Balsams and Oils

tree oils and balsams; metallic sulphurs and the vegetable elixir.

### Body, Soul and Spirit

earth after the loss of its soul; the sulphurous medium and restored union; the example of coral.

### Caput Mortuum

the residue after first distillation; a tincture retained in the residue; magnetic capacity; the dead residue of the elixir of properties.

### Chaos

the first chaos as a divine gift; prepared water as philosophical chaos.

### Charity and the Reader

teaching disciples and exposing impostors; health, happiness and love of neighbour; the stated charitable motive.

### Children's Play and the Infant

the easy remainder of the work; hunger and nourishment; growth to the great elixir.

### Cibation and Imbibition

feeding the work; continued reception of mercury; the matter's own flesh and blood; saturation of the vegetable salt.

### Circulatum, Greater and Lesser

continued efficacy and different kingdoms; restriction to a particular property.

### Cohobation

the list of operations; putrefaction before repeated distillation; returning the distillate upon the remainder.

### Colours

the virgin's diverse colours; black, white and red distinguished from incidental colours.

### Conjunction and Marriage

the marriage of mercury and common gold; union after the Herculean works; the marriage bond in fermentation; the beginning and completion of conjunction.

## Coral

coral included in the vegetable comparison.

## Creation

imitating the creation of the great world; heaven, earth and the spirit over waters; generation after its own kind.

## Determination

an undetermined intermediate subject; determination by a fixed body; a particular vegetable property; further determination and gold.

## Digestion

failed digestion and excessive violence; the claimed duration of the whole work; preparing the clarified earth.

## Distillation

separation of water, oil and residue; the first distillation and its warning sign; separating the menstruum for further use.

## Earth

the gross body as earth; drying and receiving celestial moisture; earth, magnet and salt; the clarified earth's readiness.

## Elements and Principles

four elements and the fifth essence; three prepared principles; separating the pure from the impure.

## Elixir of Properties

the named ingredients and attribution to Paracelsus; comparison with metallic preparations.

## Elixirs and Their Scope

animal, mineral and vegetable reach; the specified vegetable elixir; powers and explicit exceptions.

## Emblem and Frontispiece

the complete original legends; a compendium admitting many interpretations; the author's explanation of the figure.

### Error and Failure

alternative reasons for failed deliverance; failed separation; excessive feeding; failed saturation.

### Expense

the way of the poor; the price claim and its exclusions; the promised contrast between success and disappointment.

### Experience and Testimony

the inference from exact rules to personal experience; the claimed kitchen-fire practice; hearsay, reading and practice.

### Faith and Religion

service to God and happiness in both worlds; biblical truths, contemplation and immortality.

### Fermentation

the white elixir and silver; determination for metals; the warning concerning proportions; the following method.

### First Matter

the initial definition; why reversed metals are not first matter; vapour and metallic seed; the first way.

### Fixed and Volatile

reciprocal powers of the mercurial water; conflict and inseparable union; different qualities and the right proportion.

### Furnace and Vessels

one furnace, one vessel kind and one person; earthen vessel for the earlier labours; the later glass vessel; luting and baths.

### Gold, Common and Philosophical

living philosophical gold and common gold; common gold in the third way; exceptions to the exclusion of gold; final determination for metals.

### Green Dragon

undetermined and determined conditions; the unaided first way; lunar, solar and cross signs.

## Health and Medicine

the medicine of medicines; the author's professed bodily aim; preserving present health; the historical therapeutic promise.

## Heat and Fire

destruction by violent external heat; moderate heat and union; the medium's ascent as a sign of excessive heat.

## Herculean Works

preparation of the three principles; contrast with children's play; their completion in the emblem.

## Hermes

the appeal to a divine master; the universal spirit made earth; generation according to kind.

## Immortality

the stated ultimate end of creation.

## Language and Publication

the choice of English and projected other languages; the separately titled companion.

## Magnetic Attraction

the residue's capacity; the rival magical magnets; the true magnet after loss of soul.

## Menstruum

the universal menstruum as champion; its asserted perpetual character; limits of the vegetable menstruum; dissolving distinguished from improving.

## Mercury, Common

contrast with the philosophers' mercury; a proposed preparation from common mercury; the projection amalgam.

## Mercury, Double

impregnation with metallic essence; the claimed test; the elixir's own flesh and blood.

### Mercury, Simple

the separated heaven; the third way; its changing sexual capacities; its claimed perpetual nature.

### Mercury, Triple

the completed union of principles.

### Microcosm and Macrocosm

the required analogy of creation; waters, spirit and fruits; the philosophical little world maintained.

### Mottoes

the plate's Latin legends; the repeated appeal to experience; the motto on the tree explained.

### Paracelsus

the alkahest attribution; the elixir of properties attribution.

### Philosophical Month

ordinary weeks and philosophical months; the promised maturation of metal; the promised duration of the lesser work.

### Phlegm

the superfluous water; the plant's watery fraction.

### Plant of the Noblest Degree

the unnamed plant in the second vegetable way.

### Projection

the historical application to an amalgam.

### Proportion

the requirement for the common-gold marriage; the stated relation; the fermentation warning; volatile and fixed in the vegetable work.

### Putrefaction

coagulation and putrefaction after dissolution; the stage preceding distillation; the claimed rapid plant separation.

## Regeneration and Resurrection

glorious resurrection; the second regeneration; the third regeneration; descent and rebirth.

## Retrogradation

the limits of reversing ordinary metals; reduction to first being; the mercury's changed condition.

## Reverberation

the earth before moistening; the earth before extraction.

## Salt

salt of nature and clarified earth; fixed vegetable salt; reception of its own spirit.

## Serpent

the feminine subject nearest the dragon; water, eagle and mercury; its need for assistance.

## Silver

the claimed deep-red tincture test; fermentation of the white elixir; multiplication before fermentation.

## Spirit of the World

astral attraction into the residue; a menstruum distinguished from the great work.

## Spirit of Wine

extraction of a metallic tincture; extraction from the residue.

## Sulphur and Internal Fire

metallic essence in double mercury; the coordinated names of the red tincture; sulphur containing the soul; the sulphurous medium.

## Three Ways

the first way; instructions for first and second together; the explicit third way; their representation in the plate.

### Tincture

tincture extracted from gold; the deep-red essence; tincture without separation of all principles.

### Vegetable Work: Three Ways

Diana's tears; the unnamed noble plant; salt, spirit and a medium; the second way revisited.

### Virgin and Virgin's Milk

the silvery metallic water; the bound virgin; the prepared chaos; simple mercury nourishing the infant.

### White Elixir

its signs and silver fermentation; multiplication before fermentation; the choice to proceed further.