

ALCHEMICAL POETRY 1575–1700

From Previously Unpublished Manuscripts

Edited by
Robert M. Schuler

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ROBERT M. SCHULER

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For

Michael, Deborah, Lisa, and Christopher

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The study of the nature, origin, dissemination, and influence of hermetic thought has been an important subject of Anglo-American and Continental scholarship for more than thirty years. At present, despite the recent deaths of pioneers like Frances Yates and D. P. Walker, it continues to attract the attention of scholars internationally and in a variety of fields: literature, history, philosophy, religion, art history and iconography, and the history of science and medicine. Evidence of this interest is abundant and has taken the form of an increasing number of scholarly articles, monographs, and collections of essays; the organization of international conferences; and the publication of several specialized journals devoted to this subject. However, it is generally acknowledged that research in hermeticism suffers from an acute lack of reliable primary texts, a deficiency which this series is intended to alleviate with respect to the English Renaissance and seventeenth century.

English Renaissance Hermeticism is a series of new, authoritative editions of rare hermetic and alchemical texts which, with few exceptions, have not been reprinted since their original publication in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It includes treatises written originally in English, as well as early translations of works by Continental authorities—past and contemporary—that were widely read and influenced English Renaissance thought and art in important ways. In addition to prose treatises, the series will include at least one volume of previously unpublished alchemical poetry.

Authors and titles to appear in *English Renaissance Hermeticism* have been selected because of their intrinsic impor-

tance and also to demonstrate the wide range of alchemical and hermetic thought that flourished in the Renaissance, even as the era of the "New Science" was dawning. For example, the physical transmutation of metals, explanations of the preparation of the philosopher's stone, iatrochemistry, Paracelsian expositions, varieties of spiritual and mystical alchemy, Rosicrucianism and Cabalism are represented. A partial listing of authors includes Basil Valentine, Jean d'Espagnet, Roger Bacon, Oswald Croll, Nicholas Flamel, Robert Fludd, Eirenaeus Philalethes and Hermes Trismegistus. Thus the series will include works that are among the least accessible and most important for interdisciplinary research, and are intended to comprise a core collection of texts which are vital as background to the study of Renaissance literature, intellectual history, science, and philosophy.

Primary place in this series will be given to treatises on *hermeticism* rather than *hermetism*. According to a scholar recently concerned with defining varieties of Renaissance occultism, the latter narrowly designates religious and philosophical writings attributed to Hermes Trismegistus and their interpretation throughout history. *Hermeticism*, more eclectic and broader in scope, refers to an "amorphous body of notions and attitudes deriving not merely from Hermes but also from the mystical side of Plato and his Neoplatonic successors and from such other esoteric systems as the numerology of Pythagoras and the Jewish cabala."¹ It is this syncretic body of knowledge, belief, and speculation that provides a basis for the theory and practice of magic, astrology, and, especially, alchemy with which most of these Renaissance writers are concerned.

Finally, volumes appearing in the *English Renaissance Hermeticism* series will have several features in common: all will be edited by scholars active in the field of hermetic studies; all will have new, reset texts carefully transcribed and verified against original editions (facsimile reproduction will be used only for title pages and illustrations). Texts will be edited conservatively,

¹See Wayne Shumaker, "Literary Hermeticism: Some Test Cases," in *Hermeticism and the Renaissance: Intellectual History and the Occult in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Ingrid Merkel and Allen G. Debus (Washington: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1988), 293-94.

General Introduction

preserving old spelling (except for ordinary normalizations) and punctuation. All volumes will feature critical introductions and full scholarly notes, bibliographies, and indices, and will be uniformly bound.

Stanton J. Linden
General Editor

INTRODUCTION

Renaissance Alchemical Poetry in Context

I

After the scholarly work of the last half-century, from Thorndike to Pagel and Debus, and from Rossi to Dobbs, no one can now doubt that Renaissance alchemy—formerly dismissed as mere pseudo-science or charlatanism—is an important element in the histories of early modern science and medicine. That these “internalist” histories ought not to compartmentalize their subjects, but rather examine them as both expressions of and shaping influences on the religious, social, and political values and institutions of their time, has been the theme of interdisciplinary and social historians like Robert Merton, Keith Thomas, Charles Webster, and Michel Serres. And most recently, “cultural studies of science” have investigated, more reflexively still, the practices by which science is articulated and sustained within specific cultural contexts.¹ Hence we are now in a better position than ever before to grapple with the protean subject of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century alchemy.

¹Important studies by most of those mentioned here are given in the Bibliography. See also Allen G. Debus, *Man and Nature in the Renaissance* (Cambridge, 1978); Debus, *Chemistry, Alchemy, and the New Philosophy, 1500–1700: Studies in the History of Science and Medicine* (London, 1987); Paolo Rossi, *Francis Bacon: From Magic to Science* (London, 1968); Michel Serres, *Hermes: Literature, Science, Philosophy*, ed. Josué V. Harari and David F. Bell (Baltimore, 1982); Betty Jo Teeter Dobbs, *The Janus Face of Genius: The Role of Alchemy in Newton's Thought* (Cambridge, 1991); and Joseph Rouse, “What Are Cultural Studies of Scientific Knowledge?” *Configurations: A Journal of Literature, Science, and Technology*, 1 (1991): 1–22.

Introduction

New methodologies are also reshaping literary studies, particularly with the emergence of “cultural poetics,” the variegated new historicism, and the critical theories that inform them. Not only is the traditional project of contextualizing canonical works being re-thought, but previously marginalized or “non-literary” genres (the familiar letter, the diary, topographical description, travel narrative, “history” itself) are being read fruitfully as manifestations of the social and political discourses that bear on all verbal productions, whether strictly “literary” or not. Valuable in themselves, such genres can also reveal the impress of ideology in correlative, but more nearly mainstream, literary texts (love lyric, epic, history play, fictional narrative.)

Among traditional historians of science and literature, alchemical poetry—a marginalized genre if ever there was one—received scant attention: it was neither “good science” nor “good poetry.” This neglect is not surprising, since the whole genre of scientific poetry, of which alchemical poetry is a subdivision, has until recently been relegated mainly to the care of bibliographers, textual scholars, and antiquarians specializing in the curious. Some scientific poems had of course been edited and studied, but little effort went to understanding the genre and its traditions. Reaching from antiquity to the eighteenth century, its major stages include ancient scientific and philosophical poetry (Hesiod’s *Works and Days* and the *Hesiodic Astronomy*; the Presocratics Xenophanes, Parmenides, Empedocles; Aratus and Nicander; Manilius, Lucretius, Virgil’s *Georgics*, Book X of Columella’s *De re rustica*, Oppian), medieval scientific and philosophical poetry (Alan of Lille, Bernardus Silvestris), vernacular didactic poetry of the Middle Ages (on alchemy, astrology, agriculture, medicine, practical lore), Renaissance Neo-Latin scientific poetry (Pontano, Fracastoro, Vida, Palingenius, George Buchanan), Renaissance vernacular scientific poetry and verse translations thereof (Guy Lefève de la Boderie, Pontus de Tyard, Maurice Scève, Pierre de Ronsard; Thomas Tusser, Barnabe Googe, Sir John Davies, Sir John Harington, Thomas Moffet, Fulke Greville, John Davies of Hereford, Phineas Fletcher),

and Augustan physico-theological poetry.² Many of these authors and works are now receiving the attention they deserve. For scientific poetry (including alchemical poetry) has much to offer, both to “cultural studies of science” and to “cultural poetics,” not to mention traditional methodologies in the history of science and literature, for which it provides important primary documents. Because it straddles the conventional boundaries between science and literature, it strikingly manifests the pressure of these cultural practices, as well as those of philosophy, religion, and politics. The study of scientific poetry can also help to answer important general questions about sixteenth- and seventeenth-century culture which are by no means as simple as they might seem: what was “science”? what was “poetry”? Furthermore, to understand the early modern world’s taste for scientific poetry is to begin to understand (rather than merely confirm) our own world’s intolerance for it.

What is true of scientific poetry in general is also true of alchemical poetry. So, as a contribution to these inquiries, this volume provides annotated texts of fourteen previously unpublished alchemical poems, written between about 1575 and 1700, each with an historical introduction. Although they have (generally) a common subject, these texts demonstrate the flexibility and variety of their genre: they range in length from twelve to nearly 3000 lines and utilize diverse verse-forms, rhetorical stances, and literary treatments. This introductory essay is no place for a comprehensive account of the tradition of alchemical poetry. But it can sketch the broad contours of its history and

²I have cited only representative names that might be more readily recognized. As a practice and as a theorized genre, scientific poetry has been marginalized since the days of Plato and Aristotle: by philosophers (for whom it was not “philosophical,” “scientific” or “true” enough), and by literary theorists (for whom it was not “creative” or “poetic” enough). For discussions of the debate between philosophy and poetry, and the problem of theorizing and naming this genre, see Robert M. Schuler and John G. Fitch, “Theory and Context of the Didactic Poem: Some Classical, Mediaeval and Later Continuities,” *Florilegium* 5 (1983): 1–43; Schuler, “Theory and Criticism of the Scientific Poem in Elizabethan England,” *English Literary Renaissance* 15 (1985), 3–41; and idem, *Francis Bacon and Scientific Poetry* (Philadelphia, 1992), esp. 1–10. In addition to other recent work on scientific poetry cited in these studies, see Georg Roellenbleck, *Das epische Lehrgedicht Italiens im fünfzehnten und sechzehnten Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1975).

identify its major kinds, and thus supply one of the contexts necessary for an appreciation of these poems. Such a survey may be particularly useful to those readers who have no clear “generic expectations” regarding alchemical poetry. Similarly, since these sometimes difficult poems actually embrace different kinds of alchemy, the reader must also have some knowledge of alchemy’s main developments and theories. Before considering their literary heritage, then, we begin by surveying these fourteen poems from the perspective of their alchemical content.

II

The poems are printed here in the chronological order of their composition, from Elizabethan to Augustan times, but nine of them are verse translations of works from earlier periods in the development of alchemy.³ The whole history of alchemy is, of course, far too complex to be told here. However, by viewing these texts in relation to their alchemical subject matter and its historical origins, we can actually recapitulate the growth of Western alchemy, from its earliest days as a coherent body of theory and practice in Hellenistic Alexandria to the time of its most famous English practitioner, Sir Isaac Newton.

If not absolutely the oldest original text represented here, the Latin verse “Epigram” of Maria the Jewess (here called “Mary the Prophetess,” text VIII) is the one with the most direct links to the alchemy of the earliest Greek manuscripts. As the commentary on this poem shows, any solution to the meaning of its twelve enigmatic lines depends on some grasp of Maria’s works as preserved in Zosimos of Panopolis (third century A.D.) and other Hellenistic authorities. The technology with which Maria is associated (the bain-marie and certain kinds of stills) remained part of chemical practice until the early eighteenth century. Her enigmatic axioms (“nature charms, dominates, and conquers nature,” “one becomes two, two becomes three, and by means of the third the fourth achieves unity; thus two are but one,” etc.)

³Three are translated from French, six from Latin. While only five were originally written in English, together they account for about half the total number of lines (nearly 10,000) in the collection.

were widely repeated and, with variations, had just as long a life as her alchemical apparatus.⁴ Furthermore, Maria's theories of matter are fundamental to virtually all alchemical thinking: all nature is one; body, soul, and spirit exist in metals as well as in humans; base metal is transformed into gold by a process analogous to the conjunction of male and female; the material must "die" and be "reborn." This little text therefore provides a useful introduction to the whole tradition of Western alchemy: its technology, its theory and terminology, and its chief metaphors.

One version of Maria's Latin poem is attributed to Arnaldus de Villanova (1245–1313), the acknowledged author of several alchemical treatises and the reputed author of many others. The Arnaldian texts, given great authority by later writers, embody a distinct stage in the development of medieval alchemy. Before Arnaldus, Arabic alchemists like the eighth-century Jabir ibn Hayyan (latinized as Geber) and Avicenna (d. ca. 1036) had formulated the sulphur-mercury theory of metallic constitution (this is traceable ultimately to the two subterranean "exhalations" from which, said Aristotle's *Meteorologica*, metals were formed). Passing into the Latin West through the earliest translations and adaptations of Arabic texts (twelfth century), this theory was restated by the great encyclopedists and scientific figures of the high Middle Ages, Vincent of Beauvais, Roger Bacon, and Albertus Magnus. It is also found in Arnaldus, but he (like his younger contemporary, Bonus of Ferrara, ca. 1330) emphasized mercury as the main substrate of metals, while the "philosophical sulphur" was said to lie hidden within the mercury itself. Arnaldus also taught that metals grow from seeds, like the fetus in the womb. The philosopher's stone does have curative powers, but the main emphasis is on its transmutative force; the whole work, it is emphasized repeatedly, takes place in one vessel, and only one metal is necessary to begin it.⁵

⁴Sources for the condensed history of alchemy given here are Holmyard, Read, and Taylor; I give specific references only in the case of details not shared by these standard surveys. For a recent study of Maria, see Raphael Patai, "Maria the Jewess—Founding Mother of Alchemy," *Ambix* 29 (1982): 177–97.

⁵For a survey of the Arabic and Latin writings leading up to Arnaldus, see Holmyard, chaps. 5, 6. Thorndike (3:52–84) devotes a whole chapter (and Appendix 4) to

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These Arnaldian ideas find expression in the Middle French poem by Jean de La Fontaine, *La fontaine des amoureux de science* (1413), translated in 1644 by William Backhouse (text IV). This poem also subsumes the dozen or so aphorisms that make up the revered *Emerald Table* of Hermes Trismegistus (legendary Egyptian prophet, king, philosopher, and founder of alchemy), the earliest known versions of which are in Arabic. The *Emerald Table* describes a macrocosm-microcosm united and penetrated by a universal soul or spirit, and it signals the importance of sun and moon (variously interpreted as gold and silver, sulphur and mercury).⁶ Many of these same ideas also find expression in the famous *Practica* of Bernardus Trevisanus (fl. 1375), but in the form of an allegory about a besieged king who is mortified and then rejuvenated. This prose tract is versified here (text X) by an anonymous hand of the early eighteenth century.

If the works by La Fontaine and Bernardus encapsulate one major tradition of earlier medieval Latin alchemy, several other versified translations here, as well as one major “original” compilation, represent the next major phase in the development of alchemical theory: that associated with the Catalan philosopher, mystic and missionary, Ramon Lull (d. ca. 1316), usually called “Raymond Lully” in English. This wholly pseudonymous tradition, which emerged around the beginning of the fifteenth century, is remarkable for its internal consistency and the logical development (deeply marked by Neo-Aristotelian scholasticism) of its matter theory.⁷ The Lullian *Theorica* (134 closely printed pages in Zetzner’s *Theatrum Chemicum*) begins with a commentary on Genesis that describes the original matter of Creation as three-fold, representing three degrees of fineness. The first gave rise to angels (which have the highest proportion of the quintessence, the most subtle of substances); the second to heavenly bodies (less pure, but nonetheless rarefied); the third to sublunary terrestrial bodies (composed of the four elements

Arnaldus. The points given here are major but not the only ones associated with him.

⁶See Holmyard (97–100) and Taylor (77–78) for translations and discussions.

⁷See Michela Pereira, *The Alchemical Corpus Attributed to Raymond Lull*, Warburg Institute Surveys and Texts, 18 (London, 1989).

via sulphur and mercury, but also containing a small amount of the quintessence, which connects them to the higher, spiritual world).

These theories and the relatively straightforward laboratory procedures set out in the Lullian *Practica* were to be the staples of alchemical speculation and practice from the fifteenth to the early seventeenth century. With some variation in emphasis, they underpin two long Middle French poems attributed to Jean de Meun (texts V, VI; written ca. 1500 and translated by William Backhouse, ca. 1644) and the later prose tract of Denis Zacaire (text IX: first published 1567, versified ca. 1700). Edward Cradock's substantial verse compilation (text I, ca. 1575), dedicated to Queen Elizabeth, is an especially good (i.e., relatively clear) exposition of Lullian theory and practice: there is no mysticism and very little allegorical obscurity.⁸ As if to indicate the continuity of the alchemical tradition up to his own day, however, Cradock cites not only Aristotle and Geber, Arnaldus de Villanova and Bernardus Trevisanus, Raymond Lully and Albertus Magnus, but also his virtual contemporaries like Zacaire. Moreover, from Zacaire he incorporates a long prose passage that consists mainly of quotations from Arnaldus and Lully: like most alchemists, Cradock believed that all the great masters wrote about the same thing, regardless of seeming differences in terminology or actual differences in culture or time.

Lullian alchemy held sway until just about the time Cradock was writing; then came the massive influence of the Swiss-born Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim (1493–1541). Paracelsus (i.e., “beyond Celsus,” Celsus being a principal medical authority of antiquity) was the name he adopted, and with it he signaled both the belligerent egotism that characterizes his writings and a very different emphasis in alchemy. Metals were now seen to be composed of the *tria prima* (sulphur, mercury, and salt), though the four elements were also accounted for; macrocosm and microcosm are still inextricably

⁸Cradock's definitions of technical terms (calcination, putrefaction, distillation, fermentation, etc.) are particularly useful; these, combined with Bassett Jones's *Appendix* (text VII, on which see below), provide a veritable lexicon of practical terminology for the beginning student of alchemy.

linked, but Neoplatonic ideas like the doctrine of signatures are used to elaborate the interconnectedness of the universe; most important, the chief aim of alchemy is now the cure of diseases, not the transmutation of metals, and the physician's is a priestly calling.

Paracelsus redefined alchemical and medical thought for the whole of the seventeenth century, and most of the remaining texts in this collection manifest his authority. Even the astrologer and unlicensed medical practitioner Simon Forman, writing his alchemical verses in the 1590s, seems to have absorbed some of Paracelsus' ideas, then newly available in England (see texts II and III, especially the former). The continental Latin poem attributed to "Pater Aristeus" (text XI, ca. 1600?; translated ca. 1700) is wholly Paracelsian in conception. It, in turn, is closely related to the two prose tracts of the Pole, Michael Sendivogius (written ca. 1610 and versified ca. 1700; texts XII and XIII), works that elaborate certain Paracelsian and Neoplatonic notions, especially the role of the air in transmitting the "Universal Spirit," and the role of a certain "Chalybs" or loadstone as "matrix" of this life-giving force. Sendivogius himself was a powerful influence on later seventeenth-century alchemical speculation, and he held a particular interest for Newton.

The only works in the collection not yet mentioned are two original—indeed unique—compositions: the Welshman Bassett Jones's *Lithochymicus* (text VII, ca. 1650) and the pseudonymous *Hermetick Raptures*, attributed to "Torrescissa" (text XIV, ca. 1700). These long works are discussed fully in their own introductions, but they need a special word here, too, because they stand at either end of a period during which alchemy was becoming increasingly diverse—and increasingly assimilable by differently motivated ideologies and systems of belief. During the turmoil of the Interregnum, for example, Paracelsian alchemy was a conspicuous element in the political thought of radical (often millenarian) sectarians like the Diggers, Familists, Fifth Monarchists, and others who literally sought to "turn the world upside down." At the same time, among certain middle-class (often Anglican) intellectuals, traditional alchemical theories were being reformulated in terms of the new mechanical philosophy;

other high-church Anglicans made easy alliances with Rosicrucian mysticism and iatrochemistry, but eschewed the radicalism of the Paracelsian-inspired sects; and among moderate Puritans who pursued “chymistry” there was a strong utilitarian and experimental strain.

With the Restoration, Paracelsian medicine (especially as augmented by the Flemish physician and alchemist J.B. van Helmont) achieved a striking but short-lived preeminence over the traditionalist Royal College of Physicians (which adhered to Galenic theory and practice), only to collapse after many of the “chymical physicians” were wiped out by the plague of 1665, which of course their treatments had failed to arrest. The interest in alchemy—or alchemies—continued unabated, however, and even many members of the early Royal Society took part in utopian speculation inspired by it. Indeed, during the entire half-century leading up to 1700, many of those interested in alchemy—including Newton—held firm to the *prisca sapientia* and attendant beliefs: the secrets of religion and natural philosophy had been bestowed by God on a select few after the Fall; they were lost over time, but preserved in fables and myths truly understood only by the chosen; full recovery was possible in later times by the study of prophecy and by scientific experimentation. At the same time, other alchemists focused their attention more narrowly on the *prisca theologia* (Hermes, Orpheus, Zoroaster, Pythagoras, etc.) and emphasized the purely meditative or speculative side of the sacred art. They might or might not combine physical operations with their spiritual exercises.⁹

The first of our two poems from this hectic milieu is Jones’s *Lithochymicus* (text VII), written about 1650. I have called it an

⁹For the complex of subjects mentioned in the last two paragraphs, see Charles Webster, *The Great Instauration: Science, Medicine and Reform 1626–1660* (London, 1975), 282, passim; Betty Jo Teeter Dobbs, *The Foundations of Newton’s Alchemy* (Cambridge, 1975); Allen G. Debus, *The Chemical Philosophy: Paracelsian Science and Medicine in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, 2 vols. (New York, 1977), esp. 2:447ff.; K. Theodore Hopper, “The Nature of the Early Royal Society,” in W.R. Owens, ed., *Seventeenth-Century England: A Changing Culture*, 2 vols. (London, 1980), 2:231–40; Robert M. Schuler, “Some Spiritual Alchemies of Seventeenth-Century England,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 41 (1980): 293–318; and J. Andrew Mendelsohn, “Alchemy and Politics in England, 1649–1665,” *Past and Present* 135 (1992): 30–78.

alchemical “epic,” partly because of its length (over 2900 lines) and ambitious scope, but also because Jones himself would have been alive to the ancient use of that generic term to indicate any long, serious poem (in classical times, written in hexameters), whether narrative or philosophical. Jones’s work, though difficult at first reading, is a fascinating compound of the “ancient theology,” Paracelsian and Rosicrucian iatrochemistry, Neoplatonic magic, Christian mysticism, and practical alchemical procedure (it concludes with a prose *Appendix* of technical terms and illustrations of apparatus). Jones’s alchemy is thus both practical (especially in its curative function) and spiritual, and it has much in common with that practiced by contemporaries like Thomas Vaughan and Elias Ashmole. Its chief physical manifestation is the drawing down of solar influences by making the philosopher’s stone and achieving the purification of matter in “philosophical gold.”

As Jones points out in his last of six chapters, however, the medicinal application of this physical product leads, through contemplation, beyond “this our stone’s / Force unto higher objects,” specifically to the mystical contemplation of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the divine spark within humans, and thus their union with God through love. Jones expresses these ineffable mysteries chiefly by appropriating certain classical and biblical materials—e.g., the Neoplatonic “two-fold Venus,” Diotima’s fable of love from the *Symposium*, and the “comma Johanneum” which Jones sees as articulating the correspondences between various earthly and heavenly trinities. The congruences between these and other archetypes (e.g., Prometheus’ fire/World Soul/“divine spark”/logos; the philosopher’s stone/Zerubbabel’s stone/Christ, etc.) provide Jones with subjects for contemplation that seem ultimately to be the purpose of his alchemy and of his poem: *Lithochymicus* functions as an extended emblem whose many complex parts are, in Jones’s mind at least, wholly integrated. His alchemy is a striking example of mid-seventeenth-century eclecticism.

Hermetick Raptures (text XIV), probably composed shortly after 1700, provides an appropriate conclusion to the volume, in that its second and longest part (562 lines) is a satirical review

of the entire preceding half-century, including the very tradition within which Jones was writing. Thomas Vaughan, for example, is pilloried in his own name, and a host of other alchemical writers, sectarians, and political figures from this turbulent period are savaged in an Augustan mock-heroic that at times indulges in downright abuse. At the same time, *Hermetick Raptures* presents a positive view of a purely meditative and spiritual alchemy, and it culminates in the veritable apotheosis of the first-person speaker, in a kind of hermetic heaven presided over by Hermes Trismegistus himself. In this part of the poem we are reminded of the gnostic and Christian mysticism that attended alchemy from its earliest times.¹⁰

Considered from the point of view of their alchemical content, then, these fourteen texts offer a condensed, retrospective history of Western alchemy up to the eighteenth century.

III

The second perspective from which these texts need to be seen is that of the history of alchemical poetry: how do they relate to earlier poems in the genre, and by what verbal strategies do they embody their subject? While I have already referred to alchemical poetry as a "tradition," I do not mean that there is an unbroken line of influence or imitation, from the earliest Hellenistic versifiers to those writing in English at the turn of the eighteenth century. Rather, alchemical verse has appeared in a variety of cultural contexts, and its forms were often determined as much by current literary conventions (whether those of scientific poetry or of other genres) as by antecedent poems on the same subject. Nevertheless, a close study of the corpus of alchemical poetry would reveal a noticeable continuity of motifs, verse-forms, and structural elements. A few of these, at least, can be touched on in the brief historical survey that follows. I will then discuss the motivations behind the writing of alchemical poetry in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

¹⁰See H.J. Sheppard, "Gnosticism in Alchemy," *Ambix* 6 (1958): 86-109; idem, "The Redemption Theme in Hellenistic Alchemy," *Ambix* 7 (1959): 42-46; and Patai, "Mary the Jewess," 180 and sources cited.

The earliest known alchemical poems come from Alexandria of the seventh century. Altogether, four poems in Byzantine Greek are known; each is attributed to a separate author, but all are probably the work of one Heliodoros, who was for the most part paraphrasing in verse the prose treatises attributed to Stephanos of Alexandria (fl. ca. 610–41). The large number of extant manuscripts in European libraries suggests that these poems were well used by later alchemists, though they did not make their way to Western Europe until the sixteenth century. Particularly important is Heliodoros' adaptation of Stephanos' rhetorical devices: prayers, invocations, exclamations, moralizations, and allegorizations of various processes. Expressed in Heliodoros' rough iambics, these became stock features of much later alchemical literature, whether in verse or prose.¹¹ The earliest English citation of Heliodoros I have found is in the *Lythotheoricos* (1621, fol. 24r) of the Paracelsian spiritual alchemist John Thornborough, bishop of Worcester. Later in the seventeenth century the Dutch physician, professor of Greek, and alchemist Jacob Toll (d. 1696) contemplated an edition of these verse texts, but it was never completed.¹²

Few Arabic alchemical poems are known, but one extant collection is associated with the very earliest Islamic alchemical text to be translated into Latin (1144), whence the beginning of European alchemy is traditionally dated. These verse texts are attributed to the Umayyad prince Khalid ibn Yazid (d. ca. 704); he was supposedly taught the secrets of alchemy by a Christian scholar of Alexandria, one Marianos (Morienus), himself the disciple of the above-mentioned Stephanos. Khalid is said by a later Muslim biographer to have written several poems, the greatest being his "Paradise of Wisdom," in some 2315 verses. But this

¹¹For texts and discussion, see C.A. Browne, "Rhetorical and Religious Aspects of Greek Alchemy," *Ambix* 2 (1946): 129–37, continued in *Ambix* 3 (1948): 15–25; and idem, "The Poem of the Philosopher Theophrastos upon the Sacred Art: A Metrical Translation with Comments on the History of Alchemy," *Scientific Monthly*, Sept., 1920, 193–214. For Stephanos, see F. Sherwood Taylor, "The Alchemical Works of Stephanus of Alexandria," *Ambix* 1 (1937): 116–39.

¹²Ferguson, 2:459; the texts, with French translations, can be found in Pierre Eugène Marcellin Berthelot, *Collection des anciens alchimistes grecs*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1888). Toll, incidentally, is lampooned in *Hermetick Raptures*, line 575.

text does not survive, and the provenance of those that do is still under scrutiny.¹³

The abundance of Latin alchemical poems from the Middle Ages provides a stark contrast to these few Arabic texts. While only those from the British Isles have been systematically catalogued, they can be taken as indicative of the larger number that one would no doubt find in continental libraries. Only one poem is as early as the twelfth century, and none is recorded from the thirteenth. But D.W. Singer lists eleven verse texts in fourteenth-century manuscripts (most also reappear in later copies), and thirty-six others date from the fifteenth century, many of which survive in multiple copies. In all, then, at least forty-eight Latin alchemical poems survive from the British Isles in the period before 1500.¹⁴

If we turn to English vernacular poetry of the late Middle Ages, we find that alchemy was the most popular subject for those who wrote versified scientific treatises. In fact, of the surviving scientific poems in Middle English, more were written on alchemy than on all other scientific subjects combined. Altogether, fifty-three such poems have been identified, and the surprisingly large number of manuscripts in which some of them are found suggests a wide dissemination and large readership.¹⁵ The two most important—and longest—Middle English texts, George Ripley's *Compound of Alchemy* (1471) and Thomas Nor-

¹³See Holmyard, 63–66; and Lee Stravnhagen, “The Original Text of the Latin *Morienus*,” *Ambix* 17 (1970): 1–12.

¹⁴For a list of these and vernacular poems to that year, see Singer's *Catalogue*, 2:511–85. For some fourteen (usually brief) Latin verse texts of European provenance, see W.J. Wilson, *Catalogue of Latin and Vernacular Alchemical Manuscripts in the U.S. and Canada*, *Osiris* 6 (1939): 1–837; in another publication, Wilson edits a fifteenth-century MS containing a Latin poem of 108 lines, sixteen Italian sonnets (thirteenth-century origin), and 299 lines of Catalan: “An Alchemical Manuscript by Arnaldus de Bruxella,” *Osiris* 2 (1936): 220–405. A few continental alchemical verses are also given in Lynn Thorndike, “Unde Versus,” *Traditio* 11 (1955): 163–93, which deals with the medieval habit of including passages of verse (usually summary mnemonics) in all kinds of scientific prose treatises (a good alchemical example is Arnaldus de Villanova's *Rosarium Philosophorum*).

¹⁵See Rossell Hope Robbins, “Alchemical Texts in Middle English Verse: Corrigenda and Addenda,” *Ambix* 13 (1966): 62–73; and Robert M. Schuler *English Magical and Scientific Poems to 1700: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York, 1979), where these and most of the other English alchemical poems mentioned below can be found.

ton's *Ordinal of Alchemy* (1477), survive in 24 and 31 copies respectively.¹⁶

Norton's poem of seven "chapters" in 3102 lines (one of the few Middle English verse texts on alchemy to have received a scholarly edition) is mainly a didactic treatise on making the philosopher's stone, though it has a few bits of narrative and dialogue. The rough couplets of the *Ordinal* established its author as a European authority for more than 200 years after his death. The prolific German alchemist Michael Maier published a Latin prose translation at Frankfurt, 1618; a German verse translation appeared in 1625. Maier's version was reprinted in 1677–78 and 1702.¹⁷ The first English edition was in Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* (1652), where he complained that English masters of the sacred art were honored more abroad than they were in their own land.

Ripley's *Compound*, in over 2200 lines of rhyme-royal stanzas, is also an instructional treatise, divided into twelve "gates," each named for a major alchemical process (calcination, solution, separation, etc.). It has the distinction of being the first English alchemical work (whether in prose or verse) to be published, though not until about a hundred years after its composition.¹⁸ Later editions of Ripley, by Ashmole and then by George Starkey (1668), attest to its importance, even for post-Paracelsian students of the subject.

¹⁶Ripley was an Augustinian canon at Bridlington, Yorkshire; Norton, who probably studied under Ripley, was a native of Bristol said to have been a member of Edward IV's privy chamber. See John Reidy, ed., *Thomas Norton's Ordinal of Alchemy*, EETS 272 (London, 1975), xi–xii; and Robbins, "Alchemical Texts," 65. Two anonymous poems, "On Preparing the Philosopher's Stone" and "Verses on the Elixir," exist in 23 and 33 MSS, respectively (Robbins, 62). The *Canon's Yeoman's Tale* and *Confessio Amantis*, two of the most frequently copied Middle English poems, were also thought to contain alchemical secrets; Chaucer's poem and selections from Gower's were published in Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum*, on which more below. The *Canon's Yeoman's Tale* had an alchemical life of its own; see Robert M. Schuler, "The Renaissance Chaucer as Alchemist," *Viator* 15 (1984): 305–33.

¹⁷Reidy, xxvii–xxviii.

¹⁸*The Compound of Alchymy* (London: By Thomas Orwin for Ralph Rabbards, 1591). The only other English alchemical work published before 1600 was a translation of Roger Bacon's prose tract, *Speculum Alchemiae*, as *The Mirror of Alchimy* (London: For Richard Olive, 1597); see Stanton J. Linden's recent edition (New York, 1992).

Given the lateness of the Renaissance in England and the strong Middle English tradition of alchemical poetry, it is not surprising that there should be a good deal of vernacular alchemical poetry written in the sixteenth century, and that it should reflect the native tradition in manner (didactic exposition sometimes combined with allegory, composed in couplets or rhyme-royal stanzas) and content (Lullian alchemy, of which Ripley in particular provides a major compendium). While there are many anonymous texts from this period, a number of alchemical poets have been identified, and some have been studied and edited. The most notable are the Benedictine monk then Puritan preacher William Blomfild, whose dream-vision of eighty-eight rhyme-royal stanzas (dated 1557) exists in sixteen complete and ten partial manuscripts; Blomfild's contemporary, the itinerant Kentishman Thomas Charnock, who composed a substantial poem, as well as a prose tract for Queen Elizabeth in which he promised to produce gold or lose his head; the Queen's mathematician and astrologer, John Dee; Edward Kelley, Dee's associate and medium for angelic communication; the antiquarian, herald, and editor of Chaucer, Francis Thynne; Humphrey Locke, whose petition in quatrains to Lord Burghley (sometime before 1590) surveys the whole alchemical process and introduces a long treatise in both prose and verse; Samuel Norton, sometime Sheriff of Somerset who claimed to be the great-grandson of Thomas Norton; and Edward Nowell, a Staffordshire ironmonger who composed or collected some thirty separate poems, amounting to over 2700 lines in a variety of verse-forms. Among the anonymous Elizabethan texts, one worth mentioning is a verse paraphrase of Lully's *Theorica*.¹⁹

¹⁹In addition to the relevant entries in Schuler, *Bibliography*, see also note 36 below on Charnock, and David Carlson, "The Writings and Manuscript Collection of the Elizabethan Alchemist, Antiquary, and Herald, Francis Thynne," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 52 (1989): 203-72. Nowell's collection exists in two MSS: Bodleian Ashmole 1445 and British Library Sloane 2567. The Lully text also has two exemplars, Ashmole 1480 and Wellcome Institute MS 519; the latter MS also contains an early copy of William Blomfild's popular poem, and internal evidence suggests that Blomfild was the versifier (Raymond Lully is the central figure in Blomfild's dream-vision; both his poem and the Lully text have 88 stanzas in the same verse-form; and both attack the Tudor mathematician Hugh Oldcastle as a false alchemist—in the context of the

The seventeenth century witnessed a remarkable increase in the publication of all kinds of English alchemical material, especially during the Civil War and Interregnum. With regard to verse, one work stands out: Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* (1652), which has already been mentioned in relation to Norton and Ripley. This large octavo volume, meant to rival the other compendious "theatres" like Zetzner's *Theatrum Chemicum* (first ed. Ursel, 1602; 4 vols.), contains 436 pages of alchemical poetry, plus fifty pages of commentary. Of the fifty-three Middle English alchemical poems now known to survive, Ashmole prints twenty-three, omitting only three of any length or real consequence.²⁰ He does perhaps a little less well with regard to sixteenth-century verse, though he includes works by Blomfield, Charnock, Dee, Kelley and Thomas Robinson, as well as some anonymous pieces. Ashmole probably knew most of the others that have been identified in recent times, given that many of them are found among his manuscripts (he continued to collect such material even after his anthology was published).

Ashmole's *Theatrum* includes few poems from his own century. The latest entry is probably "The Magistry" (1633), by the country gentleman William Backhouse, who "adopted" Ashmole as his alchemical "son" in 1651 (see the Introduction to Part Two). Ashmole certainly knew of Backhouse's translations (ca. 1644) of the three Middle French poems discussed above, but since he had settled on the "design of *Collecting All* (or as many as I could meete with) of our own *English Hermetique Philosophers*, and to make them *publique*," he would have excluded these long works because of their linguistic origin.²¹

Lullian paraphrase, a purely gratuitous addition).

²⁰They are "The Argument of Morien and Merlin" (Ashmole prints only vv. 77-94 and 100-114 of its 370 lines); "The Working of the Phylozophers stone" (169 lines); and "The Marrow or Pithe of Alkymy," by William Bollose (19 stanzas of rhyme-royal, in six MSS). Some of these may date from after 1500, but only the first has been published (by F. Sherwood Taylor, *Chymia* 1 [1948]: 23-35). Other unprinted Middle English texts range in length from four to twenty-one lines.

²¹*Theatrum*, sig. B2v; he does include, nevertheless, at least one verse translation: a selection from John Lydgate's rendering of the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Secreta Secretorum* (pp. 397-403).

The most notable English alchemical poem to be published after Ashmole's 1652 collection is George Starkey's *Marrow of Alchemy* (in two parts, 1654 and 1655), which fills over 130 octavo pages. Both Dutch and German translations were made of this work by 1685 (Ferguson, 2:475). One ought to mention, too, Samuel Pordage's massive *Mundorum Explicatio* (1661); while not strictly or wholly alchemical, this 332-page "sacred poem" is a compendium of Behmenist magical millenarianism and thus reflects, indirectly at least, the influence of Paracelsian alchemical mysticism.²² Other substantial seventeenth-century poems, written both before and after Ashmole's publication, have remained in manuscript until now. Bassett Jones's *Lithochymicus* was probably being composed just when Ashmole was assembling the manuscripts for his anthology. The six verse translations in Part Four of this volume and *Hermetick Raptures* (all dating from about 1700) were written after Ashmole's death (1692). The present collection, then, complements Ashmole's in several ways.²³

The latter part of this brief survey has naturally focused on English writers, but it should at least be mentioned that during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries alchemical poetry also flourished on the continent. Indeed, it received the attention of at least some poets rather better known than most of those who took up the subject in England. The European tradition is rich in both Neo-Latin and vernacular compositions.

The most influential example of the former is the *Chrysopoeia* (Venice, 1515) of Giovanni Aurelio Augurello, the Italian classicist who had previously written odes and epistles after the manner of Horace. Dedicated to Pope Leo X, Augurello's elegant work (in three books and taking up nearly 50 pages in Zetzner's *Theatrum Chemicum*) professes to reveal all the secrets of the

²²See the discussion in Paul Arno Trout, "Magic and the Millennium: A Study of the Millenary Motifs in the Occult Milieu of Puritan England, 1640-1660" (Ph.D. diss., University of British Columbia, 1974), 233-47.

²³Altogether, about 70 English alchemical poems (including verse translations) were written between 1500 and 1700; see Schuler, *Bibliography*. Of the fourteen printed here two (VII, XIV) were undoubtedly intended for publication, while two others (II, III) were almost certainly meant for the press.

art. Often reprinted, it was also translated into French prose and verse by 1550.²⁴ Other notable Neo-Latin poems are Martin Copus' *Mercurius Triumphans & Hebdomas Eclogarum Hermeticarum* (1600), dedicated to the occultist monarch, Rudolph II of Bohemia; an untitled poem by the Paracelsian Johannes Pratensis (published 1597); and the epigrammatic verses found in the alchemical emblem books of Lamspringk (*De Lapide Philosophico Libellus*, 1599), Michael Maier (*Atalanta Fugiens*, 1618), Daniel Stolcius (*Viridarium Chymicum Figuris Cupro incisis adornatum, et Poeticis picturis illustratum*, 1624), and others.²⁵

Vernacular poems exist in all the European languages, but France, where poets of some ability were attracted to the genre, will serve as an example. While many treated the subject, alchemy appears to have been a major preoccupation of three: Béroalde de Verville, Christolfe de Gamon, and Clovis Hestean de Nuysement. While maintaining an interest in the native tradition of alchemical verse—the major documents of which are the Middle French poems translated in Part Two, below, along with the *Roman de la rose* of Jean de Meun—these writers were also impressed by the literary treatment alchemy had received at the hands of Augurello. Their poetry reflects both influences, though not to the taste of at least one modern critic.²⁶

The fourteen poems collected here are not, then, the rare species one might initially think them, but manifestations of a

²⁴Ferguson, 1:56; several other Neo-Latin verse texts, including another long poem by Augurello, appear in Zetzner.

²⁵For Pratensis, see Schuler, *Francis Bacon and Scientific Poetry*, 49n; the others are discussed in Read and described in Ferguson. Recently available is *The Hermetic Garden of Daniel Stolcius*, trans. Patricia Tahil (Edinburgh, 1980); and for a review of a major 1980 study of the alchemical *Bildgedicht* (emblem-poem), see *Ambix* 28 (1981): 111–112.

²⁶Albert Marie Schmidt, *La poésie scientifique en France au seizième siècle* (Paris, n.d. [1938]), 320 et passim. See the substantial collection of de Nuysement, *Les visions hermétiques et autres poèmes alchimiques*, ed. Sylvain Matton (Paris, 1974); there is a seventeenth-century English prose translation of de Nuysement's *Poème philosophique* (1620) in British Library MS Sloane 690. See also *Anthologie de la poésie hermétique*, ed. Claude d'Yge (Paris, 1976). It is worth noting that the Italian hermeticist Ludovico Lazzarelli, who wrote a Neo-Latin poem on silkworms, also composed a vernacular sonnet on alchemy (Thorndike 5:534).

long-standing and widespread tradition. Several of our versifiers were obviously aware of their predecessors. William Backhouse (texts IV, V, VI) and the anonymous writer of texts VIII and XI were actually translating Latin or French poems into English verse; others, like Edward Cradock (I) and Bassett Jones (VII), cite earlier poems (in these cases, Latin ones). What might seem curious, though, is that no fewer than four texts (IX, X, XII, XIII) are verse translations (by the same unknown hand) of *prose* originals.²⁷ This practice is not, of course, unique. Heliodoros' seventh-century versification of Stephanos of Alexandria and the Tudor versified paraphrase of Lully's prose *Theorica* have already been mentioned, and in ancient times Aratus of Soli (3rd c. B.C.) had versified Eudoxus' astronomical treatise, while Lucretius poeticized Epicurus. The apparent oddity does, however, raise the larger question, "why *verse* alchemical texts in the first place?" To answer this question fully, one would have to go first to the history of ancient scientific poetry and thence to the history of verse-prose relations in scientific discourse, tracing it from those Presocratics (Parmenides, Empedocles) whose "natural" vehicle for scientific theorizing and philosophic speculation was the hexameter line, to Restoration England, where the modern notion that prose is the "natural" medium of science began to emerge.²⁸ It is possible here, however, to offer some immediate reasons for the versification of alchemy during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, at a time when prose texts were also abundant. One can discern a number of motivations, ranging from the pragmatic to the philosophical; these, in turn, often have a direct bearing on the selection of poetic form and treatment, as seen in the poems collected here.

²⁷The translation habits of this Augustan man of letters are discussed in the Introduction to Part Four.

²⁸For some suggestive thoughts on this larger question, see Wlad Godzich and Jeffrey Kittay, *The Emergence of Prose: An Essay in Prosaics* (Minneapolis, 1987), xi-xii, 197, et passim; see also Schuler and Fitch, "Theory and Context of the Didactic Poem."

IV

Perhaps the most obvious reason for employing verse-form has to do with the practical realities of transcribing texts. Alchemy was a subject for which the accuracy of textual transmission was crucial. Thomas Norton, for example, urged “That no Man, for better ne for worse, / Change my writing for drede of Gods curse.” Ashmole’s note on this passage expresses the anxiety of an editor seeking an uncorrupted text, inveighs against negligent or wilful scribes, and cites Chaucer’s similar complaint “against *Adam his Scrivener*.” Ashmole adds, “But as in other *Artes* and *Sciences* the fault is scarce pardonable, so chiefly in *Hermetique learning*, where the Injury may prove *irreparable*.” He concludes by quoting another couplet from Norton: “And chaunging of some one Sillable, / May make this Boke unprofitable.”²⁹ Verse-form at least lessened the likelihood of accidental scribal error. The mnemonic effect of meter and rhyme, and the structural form of couplets or stanzas made the copying of texts easier and less open to unintentional corruption than did the unbroken lines of prose. These benefits were particularly important for material circulating mainly in manuscript, where successive transcriptions were likely to compound errors; but since compositors were also liable to err, the same advantages applied to the medium of print.

Another practical feature of verse is its capacity for concealing information in devices like acrostics and anagrams. Ashmole explains, for example, how “From the *first word* of [Thomas Norton’s] *Proeme*, and the *Initial letters* of the *six following Chapters* (discovered by *Acromonosyllabiques* and *Sillabique Acrostiques*) we may collect the *Authors Name* and place of Residence.” This practice was perhaps even more common than Ashmole thought. He failed to notice it, for example, in a sixteenth-

²⁹ *Theatrum*, 438–39; see also Michael Sendivogius, *A New Light of Alchymie* (1674), who laments that “those times are past when Fidelity amongst Friends flourished, and this Art was communicated by word of mouth; but now it is not obtained but by [studying accurately transcribed texts and] the Inspiration of the most high God” (77–79).

century poem in his collection, "Bloomefields Blossoms"; had he done so, he would have found (three times, in a simple acrostic of initial letters) the correct name of the author, over which he puzzles in his annotations.³⁰ Another case is found in Edward Nowell's "signature poem" which spells out "his dwelling and Profession," at the end of his large collection of alchemical verse. As well as concealing such information, simple acrostics could, of course, ensure that no lines were omitted—as long as the scribe or reader knew the key.³¹

A final pragmatic reason for composing alchemical treatises in verse was the didactic benefit of verse-form for memorization. For the mnemonic value of rhyme and meter went far beyond the verse line in transcription, and there is ample evidence that readers in the early modern period had well trained and well exercised memories. Even Sir Philip Sidney, who was no great friend of didactic poetry, cites the virtue of "ryme or measured verse" in "knitting up of the memory":

The fitnes it hath for memory is notably proved by all delivery of Arts: wherein for the most part, from Grammer to Logick, Mathematick, Phisick, and the rest, the rules chiefly necessary to be borne away are compiled in verses. So that, verse being in it self sweete and orderly and beeing best for memory, the onely handle of knowledge, it must be in jest that any man can speake against it.³²

The frequent exhortations in alchemical verse to heed the exact words of the text are signals that certain passages ought to be memorized. In the unpublished verse paraphrase of Lully's massive *Theorica* (composed in rhyme-royal stanzas), we are told, "Th[is] chapter . . . loke thowe well perpende / And comytt it to memory, even to the ende." A little later, the versifier says,

³⁰*Theatrum*, 437, 478; he finally chooses a kinsman of the actual author, who is identified in Robert M. Schuler, "William Blomfield, Elizabethan Alchemist," *Ambix* 20 (1973): 75–87.

³¹For Nowell, see MS Ashmole 1445, item VI, pp. 116–17. Acrostic and anagrammatic poetry also had sacred and magical associations (see below).

³²*Apologie for Poetrie*, in G. Gregory Smith, ed. *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1904), 1:183; for this passage in context, see Schuler, "Theory and Criticism of the Scientific Poem," 7–12.

“Loke throwe owte this chapter & locke it in memory, / For in it standethe no smaule propertie of increasmente”; and again, “The devisyon of the 4 elementes [a subject previously discussed at length] kepe well in thy memory.”³³

As well as these practical advantages, verse had a second benefit—particularly within the patronage system of the Elizabethan court—which we might call social. For Elizabethan courtiers, the writing of love poetry, or of works in other “official genres” sanctioned by the throne, could be a means of defining one’s public role, and even of qualifying for a position at court.³⁴ Similarly, though their poems lacked the advantage of a universally recognized genre code which was also a socio-political code, alchemists seeking patronage often resorted to verse when dedicating or composing their works, apparently in the belief that verse-form added a dignity and grace that would facilitate acceptance of their subject and themselves, especially among the powerful. Humphrey Locke, for instance, addresses William Cecil, Lord Burghley in a 204-line poem that expresses his patriotic loyalty, requests Cecil’s help against his enemies, and summarizes the alchemical theories of the long treatise (itself in both prose and verse) that follows.³⁵ The Oxford theologian Edward Cradock (text I, below; ca. 1575) goes one better by casting his entire tract in couplets, though it has a separate verse dedication and “blessing” addressed to the Queen. And when, a few years earlier (in 1565), Thomas Charnock was composing his treatise for the Queen and had begun writing his epistle in prose, he soon lapsed into verse.³⁶ These examples suggest that even if alchemical poetry lacked the instant recognition and acceptance of the love sonnet or patriotic poem, at least some alchemists seeking

³³“Raymonde Lulle in his Theoricke,” Wellcome Institute MS 519, fols. 31v, 32r, 33r.

³⁴See Daniel Javitch, “The Impure Motives of Elizabethan Poetry,” *Genre* 15 (1982): 225–38; idem, *Poetry and Courtliness in Renaissance England* (Princeton, 1978); and Gary Waller, *English Poetry of the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1986), esp. 13–22.

³⁵Locke’s work survives in two MSS: British Library Sloane 299 (fols. 20r–52rr) and Ashmole 1490 (fols. 294r–331v, copied in 1590 by Simon Forman; see Black’s *Catalogue*, 1166–67).

³⁶See Allan Pritchard, “Thomas Charnock’s Book Dedicated to Queen Elizabeth,” *Ambix* 26 (1979): 56–73; Charnock had already written his long verse “Breviary of Naturall Philosophy” (1557).

patronage thought that verse-form gave their treatises a cachet. Simon Forman (texts II, III), always alert to opportunities for advancement, may well have been of this mind.

A third reason for writing alchemical texts in verse might be termed “literary,” in so far as certain genres and verse-forms could be appropriated by the alchemical versifier to achieve various effects. The alchemical sonnet, *Bildgedicht* (emblem-poem), and epigram (see also text VIII) have already been mentioned. To these could be added the autobiographical narrative of the search for the stone (see the first part of text IX), the verse dialogue (typically between master and student, as in text XIII), the alchemical testament (text XI), the riddle, song, allegorical dream-vision (texts X, XI, XII), verse epistle, and of course the recipe and didactic verse treatise (texts I, II, III).³⁷ In their alchemical incarnations, these “genres” were not, of course, rigidly defined, but they are readily identifiable, and signs of influence and imitation abound. Occasionally alchemical writers deliberately imitated major poets. All three poems in Part Two, for example, adopt the verse-form, allegorical personifications, and even some specific alchemical arguments from the *Roman de la rose*; two of them even claim to have been written by Jean de Meun.

Many of our poems also combine and modify older forms. A striking example is Bassett Jones’s “epic” (text VII): it has an “autobiographical” (though third-person) narrative framework; it incorporates dialogue, but one that is humorously colloquial and realistic rather than formal and rhetorical; and it includes allegorized mythology, a dream-vision, and didactic passages (for combinations of other generic elements, see texts IX, XII, XIII). In the early eighteenth century, “Torrescissa” adapted to his purpose the mainstream literary forms of epic and Augustan mock-epic, both of which co-exist in his *Hermetick Raptures*

³⁷Although the latter can be seen as merely a versified prose treatise, its practitioners often deploy recurring rhetorical, metaphorical, and structural devices that are, in effect, generic conventions. Moreover, within all these sub-genres one can also find certain stock alchemical images (e.g., the peacock’s tail, red lion, green lion), recurring motifs (e.g., the spring topos, as signalling the best time to begin the alchemical work), and alchemical aphorisms or proverbs traceable to the earliest known texts.

(text XIV). Alchemical poets who adapted or appropriated established genres or generic features could thus enhance the appeal and deepen the imaginative resonance of their compositions. They could also align themselves—for a variety of reasons—with particular literary traditions and their attendant cultural values. For example, alchemical allegories of a dying King and his possible successors (text X), or of a just Prince who attempts without ambition to extend his rule but is driven into hiding by an Emperor (text IX), are obviously open to a variety of political applications. That these two particular narratives (redolent of feudal romance) originated on the continent in the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries respectively, but were versified in early eighteenth-century England, suggests at least the possibility of an ideological component in the translator's attraction to them.

The final and probably most important reason for writing about alchemy in verse lies in the age-old associations between poetry, magic, and the sacred. In the Renaissance these primitive connections, which are like those between incantation and craft-rituals, received a new impetus from Neoplatonic theories of both poetry and music. Herein lies what we might call the "philosophical" motivation behind sixteenth- and seventeenth-century alchemical poetry. Even in the Middle Ages, the reputed author of the Psalms, King David, was compared to the magician-bard Orpheus. Nor did it go unnoticed that of these quintessentially sacred poems at least one (10) is in acrostic form, and that another (119) is structured as a kind of anagram, in that each of its twenty-two stanzas is set off by a letter of the Hebrew alphabet.³⁸ By the late fifteenth century, Marsilio Ficino had formally synthesized these and other magical-poetical-sacred elements into a full-scale system. With his predominantly medical orientation and his preoccupation with drawing the *spiritus mundi* into the body, Ficino suggested that in addition to proper food and drink, one could benefit from favorable sensa-

³⁸See James Hastings, ed., *Dictionary of the Bible*, rev. ed. Frederick C. Grant and H.H. Rowley (New York, 1963), 815 and s.v. "Acrostic"; and *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature*, ed. David Lyle Jeffrey (Grand Rapids, 1992), 184, 555. For the French magician-poets in this connection, see Dudley Wilson, ed., *French Renaissance Scientific Poetry* (London, 1974), 4, 152n.

tions borne on the air, the chief of which was sound, in the form of appropriate verse and music.³⁹

Pythagorean musical elements can be found even in the pragmatic alchemical poem of Thomas Norton (1477), while in Renaissance figures like Heinrich Khunrath, Robert Fludd, and Michael Maier, alchemy and Ficinian musical magic are fully amalgamated. Khunrath, for instance, has a suggestive illustration of a *laboratory* which is also an *oratory*; the English alchemist Fludd wrote at length about universal harmonies; and Maier composed musical scores to accompany his alchemical poems or “songs.”⁴⁰ Other elements of poetry, the similitudes and imagery that make it the preeminent vehicle of the imagination, were seen by Neoplatonists and Paracelsians like Oswald Croll as the means of discovering the structure of the universe itself; for it was similitudes, analogies, and sympathies that connected things in the macrocosm with those in the microcosm, man.⁴¹

Many of the poems in this collection were probably inspired—in some cases, perhaps unconsciously—by notions like these, but Bassett Jones certainly promoted them deliberately. Not only does his long poem often allude directly to poetry, rhetoric, metaphor and allegory, but Jones also conflates the “Harper” sun-god (Apollo) with King David, celebrates music’s restorative powers, and even conceives of himself as a magus-bard-chemist in the line of Merlin. Moreover, his favorite Platonic figure is Diotima, and it was she who pointed out that while all creative writers produce and arrange language to express human emotion in words, only the poet expresses himself musically, and his music is the very essence of his art.⁴²

³⁹See D.P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella* (London, 1958), 3–72. His discussion is usefully summarized in Owen Hannaway, *The Chemists and the Word: The Didactic Origins of Chemistry* (Baltimore, 1975), 11–13.

⁴⁰For music and alchemy, see Read, chap. 4 and appendix.

⁴¹For Croll (and for Andreas Libavius’ rejection of his system by rejecting metaphor and rhetoric), see Hannaway, 106–107, 109, 113, et passim. A detailed survey of the analogous mind-set is Brian Vickers, “Analogy versus Identity: The Rejection of Occult-Symbolism, 1580–1680,” in *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance*, ed. Vickers (Cambridge, 1984), 95–163.

⁴²See *Lithochymicus*, Introduction, and 4.46n, 5.268n, 6.351; and Dudley, *French*

Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum*, both in its texts and its editorial matter, is a monument to the vitality of these "philosophical" rationales for alchemical poetry. While preparing his collection of alchemical verse texts for publication, Ashmole was already envisioning a companion volume of English alchemical treatises in prose. The latter never appeared, but his *Theatrum's* Prolegomena explains in detail why he turned his energies first to the verse collection, and it offers a comprehensive explanation of alchemical poetry as "philosophically" motivated. He begins by asserting that historically verse preceded prose, being older even than Orpheus, whose allegory of the Golden Fleece shows him to be "the first of all the *Grecians* that brought the *Chemick Learning ... out of Ægypt.*" Second, while poetry is esteemed by all cultures, it is especially to be venerated in England because one Rasis Cestrensis, the contemporary (or perhaps even the master) of Merlin, wrote the oldest known alchemical verse text in Latin. But if its antiquity, universal sanction and admiration were not enough to commend alchemical poetry, he adds,

yet I suppose the *Effects* thereof, (which so affect and delight the *Eare*, rejoyce the *Heart*, satisfie the *Judgement*, and indulge the *Hearers*) justly may: In regard *Poesy* has a *Life*, a *Pulse*, and such a secret *Energy*, as leaves in the *Minde*, a far deeper *Impression*, then what runs in the slow and even-lesse [*sic*] *Numbers of Prose*: whereby it won so much upon the *World*, That in *Rude Times*, and even amongst *Barbarous Nations*, when other sorts of *Learning* stood excluded, there was nothing more in *Estimation*. And for that we call *Rythme*; the Custome of diverse of our *Saxon* and *Norman Poets*, shewes the *Opinion* they had thereof; whilst the *Latine* (notwithstanding its *Excellency*) could not sufficiently delight their *Eares*, unless their *Verses* (in that *Language*) were form'd with an *Harmonicall Cadence*, and brought into *Rythme*: Nor did the *Ancients* wrap up their *Chiefest Mysteries*, any where else, then in the *Parabolical & Allusive* parts of *Poetry*, as the most *Sacred*, and *Venerable* in their *Esteeme*, and the securest from *Prophane* and *Vulgar Wits*.... And therefore their *Wisdom*e and *Policy* was, First to finde out a way to *Teach*,

and then an *Art* (which was this) to *Conceale*. In a word, to prefer *Prose* before *Poetry*, is no other, or better, then to let a *Rough-hewen-Clowne*, take the Wall of a *Rich-clad-Lady of Honour*: or to *Hang a Presence Chamber with Tarpalin*, instead of *Tapestry*.

And for these *Reasons*, and out of these *Respects*, the *Poeticall* (as I conceiv'd) deserved the *Precedency*.⁴³

Here (in words deliberately redolent of Francis Bacon's *Sapientia Veterum*) alchemical poetry—both in its verse-form and in the allegorical or parabolical guise it often wears—is closely aligned with the *prisca sapientia* itself (the myth of the Golden Fleece is a salient example).⁴⁴ However great a disparity we might sense between this exalted description and the often homely rhymes that fill Ashmole's hundreds of pages, we have to take him at his word in order to understand why he would have gone to so much trouble in collecting and collating manuscripts, and in providing the painstakingly documented annotations in his commentary.⁴⁵ In light of his remarks, we can also see why, when Ashmole was "adopted" as the "son" of the alchemist William Backhouse,

⁴³*Theatrum*, sig. B3r-v. In one of his annotations, Ashmole compares verses left by alchemical masters to their children and says they live longer than any real "sons" adopted into hermetic mysteries (441).

One Middle English alchemical poet in Ashmole's anthology seems to be apologizing for using verse:

And Son though thys Writing be made in Ryme,

Yet take thow thereat noe greate disdain.

But the second two lines of his quatrain have a twist that shows such "disdain" would be utter foolishness:

Till thow hast proved my words in deede and in thought,

I watt it well it schalbe set at nought.

(*Pater Sapientia*, in *Theatrum*, 196, 209).

⁴⁴For the ancient tradition of reading myth and epic as compendia of all kinds of knowledge (including scientific) and of seeing the Muses as patronesses of philosophy and scientific learning, see Robert Lamberton, *Homer the Theologian: Neoplatonist Allegorical Reading and the Growth of the Epic Tradition* (Berkeley, 1986); Schuler and Fitch, "Theory and Context of the Didactic Poem"; A.M. Cinquemani, "Henry Reynolds' *Mythomystes* and the Continuity of Ancient Modes of Allegoresis in Seventeenth-Century England," *PMLA* 85 (1970): 1041-49; and Ernst R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask, Bollingen Series 36 (New York, 1953), 230-31.

⁴⁵For his work on the *Theatrum*, see C.H. Josten, ed. *Elias Ashmole (1617-1692)*, 5 vols. (Oxford, 1966), 1:81-90, 3:600, et passim.

he himself composed an ecstatic ode rich in hermetic puns and allusions to celebrate the event (see Introduction to Part Two).

With a recognition of the history and generic conventions of alchemical poetry, and with a sympathetic appreciation of the various impulses, practical and social, literary and philosophical, behind the writing of such poems in the Renaissance, the modern reader can better understand why they continued to be of interest to serious-minded persons well into the eighteenth century. Undeniably, however, even the most well informed and sympathetic reader is liable to balk at the initial obscurity of some of the texts in this collection. I conclude, therefore, with exhortation and encouragement.

V

Some power over the notorious obscurity of alchemy is gained by perceiving that at least two ironies attend it. First is the historical process by which those attempting to preserve alchemy's secrets bedeviled themselves and their followers. They did so most obviously by making simple errors in transcription and translation. More important, they often failed to take into account semantic changes, by which the original things or qualities signified by a word or term were simply lost through ignorance or cultural transference. To Alexandrian alchemists, for example, "gold" meant bronze or any metal alloy that was gold-colored. Egyptian craftsmen themselves had no precise word in their language for gold but instead used the equivalent of "yellow metal." Hence when their recipes were eventually translated by the Arabs, who thought this "yellow metal" was indeed gold, they became, in effect, nonsense.⁴⁶ So much for the vaunted "continuity" of alchemical learning, from Hermes to Newton. And yet, so strong was the belief in this continuity that alchemists through the centuries forged meanings where there were none.⁴⁷

⁴⁶See Maurice P. Crosland, *Historical Studies in the Language of Chemistry* (London, 1962), esp. 52–57.

⁴⁷Furthermore, the traditional way of glossing obscure or difficult passages—a method which not even modern editors can escape—is *ignotum per aequae ignotum*: citing correlative excerpts from other texts which are seldom more absolute in their meaning

A second irony resides in the fact that much alchemical writing deliberately obfuscates: according to Ashmole, poetry (especially allegorical poetry) *conceals* knowledge from the uninitiated. Ostensibly written by and for the *adepti*, it hides its meaning in a “closed language.” Often, however, the very vehicles of this obfuscation—metaphor, symbol, allegory—contribute powerfully to the imaginative and emotional richness of alchemy and as a result generate new meanings, both among the *adepti* and among those of us on the “outside.” Paradoxically, then, it can be argued that alchemy’s obscurity—whether fortuitous or deliberate—is one of its strengths. Perhaps this should not, in the end, surprise us. D.P. Walker notes, for instance, that for Renaissance syncretists the abstractions, myths, and other poetic representations of Plato had, “like St. Paul and the Neoplatonists, enough of that obscurity which is essential to any group of texts that is to be the basis of a long, flexible and richly various tradition.”⁴⁸ Western alchemy—which could itself assimilate (among other things) Neoplatonism and Pauline Christianity—likewise is possessed of an obscurity that yields richness. Surely this paradox is what fascinated men as different as Newton and Jung, not to mention visual artists, writers of fiction, and scores of poets from Shakespeare, Spenser, Donne, Vaughan and Marvell, to Yeats, Stevens, and Galway Kinnell.

Even the brief historical sketch given above has shown that when it appropriates culturally specific philosophical, religious, and political ideas—or when it is assimilated by culturally specific philosophical, religious, or political systems—alchemy can engender a wide range of “meanings.”⁴⁹ In our period, the case of Ashmole is again instructive. His annotations—citing, e.g., the *Corpus Hermeticum*, Ficino, and Pico della Mirandola to gloss the pious but practical Lullian alchemy of Norton or Ripley—show that he read these medieval alchemists as containing the same wisdom found in the Gnostic *Pimander* and the *prisci the-*

than the passage they are meant to elucidate.

⁴⁸*The Ancient Theology: Studies in Christian Platonism from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1972), 11.

⁴⁹See in particular, Mendelsohn, “Alchemy and Politics” and, for religious applications in several different cultures, Schuler, “Spiritual Alchemies,” 293n.

ologi (many of whom were also considered *prisci magi*). Not that the various streams of popular and learned hermeticism had nothing in common: rather, that Ashmole and others, by synthesizing these various streams and fusing them with personal beliefs and ideologies, could find congruities and meanings which were not “really” there, could create new alchemies. When these new alchemies were articulated as alchemical poems, their sheer verbal “meanings” were further enriched and their effects rendered more powerful, whether those effects are purely didactic, imaginative, hortatory, satirical, inspirational, or ecstatic.

Recent studies of scientific discourse have amply shown that Francis Bacon’s ideal of a “transparent” language of science has hardly been realized: even the blandest scientific prose is implicated, often without acknowledgment or recognition, in rhetoric and ideology.⁵⁰ Despite our increasing awareness of the instability of all language, however, no one would advocate a nihilistic reversion to alchemy’s obscurities. But by reading poems like those printed here on their own terms, and yet with an eye to the cultural forces that inform them, we can appreciate some of the richness they had—and sometimes still have. It is time to recognize, in other words, that alchemical poetry has more than a merely antiquarian interest.

If we need encouragement, we can take it, *mutatis mutandis*, from Arthur Dee (son of John), who scribbled this note at the head of “Benjamin Lock’s Picklock to Riply his Castle”:

In my well wishing, to the diligent searchers of the secretes of this mysticall Science, I advise the Reader not to contemne this or the like Treatises in that they are written in homely English; for many Englishmen, as they have had this art, so they wrote also in English, some by name as Norton, Bacon, Riply, Charnock, Bloomfield; & some not desirous their names should be knowne, have lett their writings pass under Anonimus. But most of these [are] penned, in so absurde a style, & such confusion (perhaps on purpose), some in coarse

⁵⁰See, e.g., Charles Whitney, *Francis Bacon and Modernity* (New Haven, 1986), esp. ch 5; Richard W.F. Kroll, *The Material World: Literate Culture in the Restoration and Early Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore, 1991), passim; and Rouse, “What Are Cultural Studies of Science?”

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prose, other in such hoblyng verse, as yt would try the readers patience, and may indeede *prima fronte* seeme rather worthy to be rejected then respected.

Yet have I, after long study and formerly perusing of approved Authors, not neglected to reade divers of them over & over againe, & never lost my labour, but that I found some pointes in them notably conducing & directing an Artist, in sundry dangerous & secret passages of the worke. Therefore, whoever meeteth with this Booke & the lyke, after he be first grounded from Raymund, Riply, *Turba [Philosophorum]*, & [John] Dastyn, let him not spare his labour to read it with a serious observation, & he may gather fruit from it beyond expectation.⁵¹

Editorial Procedure

Unlike other texts in the English Renaissance Hermeticism Series, the fourteen poems printed here are edited from previously unpublished manuscripts; moreover, they span a period of about 125 years, from the late sixteenth to the early eighteenth century. Therefore, the distinctive features and provenances of each manuscript present different kinds of editorial challenges. These and my attempts to meet them are set out in the textual introductions provided for each poem (or group of poems from the same manuscript). Similarly, the Textual Notes record cruxes, emendations, and (for those texts existing in more than one manuscript) variant readings. The following comments on editorial procedure apply to all the texts.

In transcribing the manuscripts, I have silently incorporated all scribal corrections, marginal or interlinear, that represent the writer's latest intention. When cancelled words or lines reveal something interesting about composition or meaning, they are noted in the commentaries. Original spelling is preserved except that, in keeping with the format of the Series, *i*, *j*, *u* and *v* have been normalized to conform with modern practice (the same applies to passages quoted from early printed texts). Scribal

⁵¹Copied by Ashmole in MS Ashmole 1507, fol. 158r, from a manuscript he had borrowed from Sir Thomas Browne (see fol. 181r).

abbreviations and contractions are silently expanded; spelling of the expanded words (when variable) follows that most often used by the scribe in question. Original capitalization and use of ampersand have been preserved, except when the latter begins a line of verse, and except that all initial words in verse lines have been capitalized. Italics—most often for proper names or alchemical terms—are used to indicate underlining or some other deliberate paleographic distinction in the manuscripts. When the scribe has been inconsistent in this usage or in capitalization, I have silently regularized usage.

A major challenge has been to provide modern punctuation. The pointing in the manuscripts varies widely, from almost none (e.g., texts IV, V, VI) to quite full (e.g., VIII-XIII; the latter even provides quotation marks to indicate dialogue), but of course it is consistent in none of them. The inherent difficulty of the subject is at times compounded by awkward versification (e.g., radical word-order inversions for the sake of meter or rhyme), not to mention archaic usage and construction. Punctuating the texts according to modern conventions seemed the best solution to these difficulties, as well as the best way to make the poems accessible, while maintaining as much of their original linguistic character as possible. Often, of course, punctuating a sentence is an act of interpretation: an uneasy task for any editor, but especially for an editor of alchemical texts that sometimes court obscurity. Whenever possible, I have made use of collateral texts—e.g., prose versions contemporary with the verse texts, or the original Latin or French versions from which verse translations were made—in order to inform difficult decisions. When no such help was forthcoming, I have relied on my familiarity with similar texts; when I am unsure or when I think the text may be corrupt, I indicate this in the commentary. While punctuation follows modern usage, I have stopped short at intruding apostrophes in elisions that are used consistently (*obtained, pour*), though I have preserved those already in the manuscripts. I have, however, indicated possessives in the usual way, and I have replaced the occasional circumflex with an apostrophe (thus *thô* becomes *tho'*). In a few difficult or awkward passages, I have silently altered spelling (e.g., *on* becomes

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one; of becomes off) as a concession to modern readers, but they should be aware that *then* and *than*, for example, are sometimes used interchangeably.

Commentaries are meant to be full but not cumbersome. Technical terms are glossed, but readers can also find useful definitions of many alchemical terms and processes in Edward Cradock's poem (text I) and in Bassett Jones's *Appendix* (text VII). A name-index to the texts and commentaries allows one to trace citations of alchemical authorities in various contexts.

Classical citations have been corrected against Loeb editions, and translations are also taken from these except where noted. The place of publication for all English-language books before 1700 is London, unless otherwise indicated.

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PART ONE:
ELIZABETHAN VERSIFYING
ALCHEMISTS

Edward Cradock

I. *A Treatise Touching the Philosopher's Stone*

Most of what we know about Edward Cradock (ca. 1536–ca. 1594) is associated with Oxford University. A Staffordshire man, he matriculated at Christ Church in 1552 at the age of 16, and he was to remain there for the rest of his known life. When Queen Mary came to the throne, he conformed to Catholicism, only to revert to the reformed church upon Elizabeth's accession. He graduated B.A. on 11 January 1555/6 and M.A. on 10 February 1558/9, both degrees being in divinity; he took holy orders in the latter year. Although Wood says he was “numbered among the learned men of his time,” he cites the circumstance that Cradock's election as Lady Margaret professor on 24 October 1565 was “upon a great scarcity of Protestant divines in the university,” perhaps implying that he was not in the first rank of theologians.¹ Nevertheless, he held the professorship for nearly thirty years, resigning it only in 1594, probably near the end of his life, at age 58. There is no record of him after this date.

Cradock's only theological writing is a long account of God's providence, *The Shippe of Assured Safetie* (1572). He signs himself here, as he does in his alchemical works, “Doctor and Reader of Divinitie in the Universitie of Oxford,” and he dedicates his treatise to his “Patrone” Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester (who was also chancellor of the university). The title page explains that the work has been “Compyled” by Cradock, and there is nothing remarkable or controversial in the 499-page treatise, nor does it reveal anything about a specific religious orientation in

¹Anthony à Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, 3 vols., ed. Philip Bliss (1813; rpr. Hildesheim, 1969), 1:632–33, on which I rely for biographical information; the *DNB* article (4:1359) is based on Wood and adds only a few minor details.

his alchemy. There are, for instance, only occasional hints of his interest in matters scientific. Early on in his argument for God's providence, he points to "the commodities that we receive by the [heavenly] bodies that are above, and by the four Elements," and he devotes the next chapter to proofs derived from "perusing the Anatomie of mans bodie." A few pages later, he reasons that "Philosophie, as the lighte of nature, is not to be despised";² but these are all conventional proofs for a providential universe. Cradock's only other published work is a Latin commendatory poem of twelve lines in Robert Peterson's translation of Giovanni della Casa's *Galateo . . . or rather, a treatise of manners* (1576; STC 4738).

If Cradock's official position at Oxford was that of a lecturer in divinity, his chief preoccupation there seems to have been alchemy. Wood claims that "he addicted himself much to chymistry, spent many years in obtaining the Philosophers stone, and was accounted one of the number of those whom we now call Rosycrucians."³ The only other datable event in his life probably had an alchemical connection: a meeting with John Dee, who recorded in his diary a three-day visit to him in Oxford in 1581. (Cradock may also have consulted the astrologer Simon Forman, probably in the early 1590s, when Forman's London practice was thriving.)⁴ Cradock's alchemical activities and connections imply not only that Renaissance universities were not inimical to occult studies,⁵ but also that Cradock may in-

²*The Shippe of Assured Safetie, wherein wee may sayle without danger towards the land of the living, promised to the true Israelites* (1572; STC 5952), 21–28, 29–39, 45–46.

³As Wood's "now" suggests, the term Rosicrucian is being used very loosely here; the Rosicrucian manifestos did not begin appearing, even on the continent, until 1614, by which time Cradock was probably dead. Cradock's alchemy was not, moreover, of the mystical kind (see below).

⁴See A.L. Rowse, *Simon Forman: Sex and Society in Shakespeare's Age* (London, 1974), 205: "Dr Cradock of Oxford consults Forman about his son—this is a New College civilian from Hampshire, probably a Wykehamist," citing MS Ashmole 219 and Foster, *Alumni Oxoniensis*, 1.344 but with no further details. It is hard to know how reliable Rowse's identification of this "son" is, but this "Dr Cradock" must be our alchemist. On Forman as alchemist, see the introduction to his poems in this volume.

⁵This is Mordechai Feingold's principal argument in "The Occult Tradition in the

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deed have had a significant place among Elizabethan occultists, as Wood suggests.

Cradock's alchemical writings, if perhaps no more original than his theological treatise, are nevertheless of some interest. There are three distinct works, all surviving in Bodleian Library manuscripts. Two are in Latin: a brief prose text headed *Lapis Philosophicus est Duarum Materialium* (MS Ashmole 1408, fols. 22v–23r), and a lengthy poem, *Tractatus de Lapide Philosophico, Latinus Versibus Conscriptus* (MS Ashmole 1415, article V, fols. 33r–40r). The third of Cradock's alchemical writings is the 726-line English poem printed here: *A Treatise Touching the Philosopher's Stone*, which he dedicated to Queen Elizabeth. Its workaday title may lead one to believe that this is an English version of his Latin verse treatise, but the two works are not the same. At line 87 of the English poem, for example, Cradock refers his reader to a "Prooffe" developed "in my Latin verses" from a certain alchemical author. This tells us both that the Latin poem had been written earlier and that it contains material not in the English text.⁶ The English verse *Treatise* exists in two manuscript copies, and a third transcription had been planned, so Cradock's poem was certainly thought worthy of study by his contemporaries.⁷

Cradock's *Treatise* has three main parts: (1) a verse dedication to Queen Elizabeth (50 lines) and an eight-line "blessing" of her (51–58); (2) the *Treatise* proper (59–672), in 28 numbered

English Universities of the Renaissance: A Reassessment," in Brian Vickers, ed., *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance* (Cambridge, 1984), 73–94; Feingold notes the Cradock-Dee meeting at 86. Whether or not Cradock's alchemical writings had been composed by the time of Dee's visit is unknown; but neither Dee's diary nor the recently published record of his extensive library reveals anything further about Cradock.

⁶The Latin poem does, however, bear a similar dedication: "Reginae Elizabethae, carmen elegiacum dedicatum." Wood quotes the opening lines of the address to the reader and of the poem itself, as well as the beginning and ending lines of the English poem (633).

⁷On the manuscripts, see the textual introduction. The anonymous copyist of Cradock's Latin poem in MS Ashmole 1415 had intended to transcribe his other alchemical works as well, for at the end of the Latin verse treatise, he wrote summary titles of the English poem and the Latin prose tract, and left 20 blank leaves to accommodate them. See Black, *Catalogue of the Ashmolean manuscripts*, 1127.

sections that range in length from 8 to 48 lines; and (3) a 54-line conclusion and exhortation to the reader (673–726). In content the *Treatise* is typical of pre-Paracelsian alchemy of the Elizabethan period. As the variant title indicates, it is “Gathered out of the best authors that have written upon that arte.” It makes no pretensions to originality but provides a coherent discussion of alchemical theory and offers detailed practical instructions for making the philosopher’s stone. It is, in all, a good example of a purely didactic verse compilation, wholly without mythological or symbolic elements; though it maintains the customary piety of most alchemical tracts, it is devoid of any mystical or theological speculation.

The versifier is, of course, bound by the usual cryptic vocabulary of “spirits” (volatile substances) and the usual technical terminology, but there are no green lions or basilisks. In writing of his obscure subject, Cradock tries to “runne a plaine and ordinary race” (207), and he wryly notes that Arnaldus de Villanova, among others, “loved clouds / And wrapt himsef most commonly in shrowds” (209–10). Cradock is also careful to deny that “man maketh gold” (237), asserting that the alchemist is only an instrument and that Art only achieves in less time what Nature would do at a much slower pace. All this takes place only through God, who “makes him [the alchemist] understand / What is to doe and how he should proceed” (265–66).

The theoretical part of the *Treatise* (sections 1–9) is based mainly on these premises: that gold must be made from the “seed” of gold; that like begets like; and that the stone (or gold) grows in the vessel in the same way that the fetus grows in the womb. The practical part (sections 10–25) describes the technical processes of calcination (lines 274ff.), putrefaction (333ff.), dissolution and distillation (363ff.), the creation of “philosophical mercury” (383ff.), fermentation (415ff.), concoc-tion (479ff.), cibation (526ff.), and multiplication and projection (555ff.). Each of these processes is usually given one or more separate sections. The last three sections (26–28) turn to other matters: describing the stone’s curative powers (26); commending the stone and those who use it aright, for charity and the

I. Introduction

benefit of church and state (27, the longest section of all);⁸ and reminding the reader that God providentially denies the revelation of these secrets to those who would use them wickedly (28).⁹ The conclusion (673–726) is a conventional plea for humility and piety in those searching for the Stone, and a restatement of Cradock's own godly and patriotic motives in writing the treatise.

In the course of his exposition, Cradock scrupulously identifies his authorities (whom he often quotes in translation), both in the text and in marginal notes. The most important of these are Bonus of Ferrara, Aristotle, Bernardus Trevisanus, the *Turba Philosophorum*, Geber, Raymond Lull, Arnaldus de Villanova, the *Rosarius Minor*, Dionysius Zacharias, Albertus Magnus, Janus Lacinius, Ferrarius, Giovanni Aurelio Augurello, and Ricardus Anglicus. While many of these are commonly cited in this period, Augurello (an Italian humanist whose neoclassical Latin alchemical poem was first published in 1515), Lacinius (a Calabrian whose work was first published by Aldus in 1546), and Zacharias (first published 1567) stand out as more recent sources. No fewer than ten of the specific works cited by Cradock appear in Guglielmo Gratarolo's *Verae Alchemiae* (Basel, 1561); while most of his authors would be available in other editions, it is likely that Cradock had this important early collection on his

⁸It is worth noting that in this section Cradock makes an unusual suggestion about the successful alchemist:

If worldly ayde the Gospell may support,
Who better's able to raise A stronger fort?
In the Church he is a special instrument:
If common treasure wasted be and spent,
The common weale by him may have reliefe. (645–49)

While many alchemists see themselves as priestly guardians of God's secrets (as in section 28 here), the idea that one who transmutes base metals into gold could be a source for ecclesiastical funding is striking.

⁹While Cradock stresses here that God gives "his guifts to him as seemeth best" (665), he is far from the position of his more radical contemporaries like William Blomfield, who made an explicit connection between the alchemical *adeptus* and the (puritan) *electus*; see Robert M. Schuler, "William Blomfield, Elizabethan Alchemist," *Ambix* 20 (1973): 75–87. For a seventeenth-century instance of Calvinist doctrine blended with alchemical terminology, see Schuler, "Some Spiritual Alchemies of Seventeenth-Century England," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 41 (1980): 293–318.

desk.¹⁰ We also know that he used one of the early Antwerp editions of Zacharias (1567 or 1568), from which he translates a long passage in prose (see 210n in Commentary). Cradock's other sources may have included manuscript material (e.g., of Lull's *Theorica*), but he cites none of his English contemporaries nor his compatriots from the previous century, like George Ripley or Thomas Norton. He seems to see himself mainly in the European (mainly Latin) tradition.

Indeed, Cradock's verse treatise is a useful introduction to alchemy in the sixteenth century. Readers of this volume will find his exposition of many key terms, theories, and processes helpful when turning to later texts.

The Text

There are two known manuscripts of Cradock's *Treatise*, Ashmole 1445 (hereafter *A*) and Rawl. Poet. 182 (*R*), both of which are from the late sixteenth century and close to Cradock's own time. Neither of these seems to be from the author's own hand, but MS *A* is the obvious choice for copy-text.¹¹ MS *R* omits a total of eight lines found in *A* (142, 484, 521–26); *R* has only a few of the many marginal notes preserved in *A* (and these are always of the briefest kind); and while it does give a paragraph sign at each new section of the poem, it does not number them, as in *A*. On the other hand, *R* is a valuable supplement to *A*. It provides a slightly more descriptive title (though this may be only the copyist's addition); instead of an omitted six-line passage (521–26), it substitutes two lines not in *A* (possibly

¹⁰For details on Augurello, Lacinius, and the full contents of Gratarolo's anthology, see Ferguson 1:55–56; 1:341–42; 2:2–3. The works probably cited from Gratarolo's collection are Arnaldus de Villanova's *Flos Florum* and his *Rosarius Philosophorum*, Pseudo-Albertus Magnus' *De Alchymia Liber*, Ferrarius' *De Lapide Philosophorum* and his *Thesaurus Philosophiae*, Lull's *Repertorium*, Augurello's *Chrysopoeia*, Ricardus Anglicus' *Correctorium Alchymiae*, Geber's *Liber Fornacum*, and the *Rosarius Minor*.

¹¹It is tempting to speculate that our alchemist sent his own copy to the Queen via her favorite, Leicester, with whom Cradock claims to have had some familiarity in the dedication to his *Shippe of Assured Safetie* (sig. A3r).

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from an earlier version of the poem?); and it provides a number of readings where *A* is almost certainly in error.¹² Most of the other differences between the two copies seem to be the result of scribal error. However, *R* has several departures from *A* that seem to be deliberate alterations, made either by the author (perhaps in an earlier version) or by the copyist of *R*. These are of interest because of their possible political or religious significance. For example, *A*'s prose address to Queen Elizabeth calls her "Defender of the true, antient, Catholicke and Apostolicke faith," but *R* omits all four adjectives. And for *A*'s line 645 of the poem ("If worldly ayde the Gospell may support"), *R* has "Yf wo[l]rdly ayde the church can aye supporte." Both these changes seem too significant to be inadvertent, and no paleographical explanation for them is forthcoming. It may be sheer coincidence that both these relate to religious issues—and that one of the omitted lines (142) alludes to the fact that God took one of Adam's ribs from which to make Eve.¹³ It remains possible, though, that changes were made to reflect the religious sensibilities of the author or the copyist. To make possible a full comparison of the two manuscripts, they have been fully collated, and details of variant readings are recorded in the Textual Notes.

While the scribe of *A* is unknown, we at least have the name of the copyist of *R*, one Thomas Maurice. About him there is little information, aside from an ambiguous comment made by a later owner of his manuscript. After a descriptive title of Cradock's work we find, "This was Mr. Thomas Morrice his Booke who flattered himselfe he had founde out the secrett Arte to make goulde, that which I beleeve litle true in his Relacion herein made. Witnis my hande. By me Hughe Darell (Parett?)." ¹⁴ As Maurice himself presumably wrote noth-

¹²See Textual Notes for lines 264, 287, 340, 388, 432, 597, 620, 661, 682.

¹³The other omissions seem without political or theological resonance; the omitted line 484 does refer to the "Soule" of gold, but the same term (a commonplace in alchemy) remains intact at two other points in the same discussion (439, 469).

¹⁴Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 182, fol. 69r, but this is a transcription made in 1892 from the original cover of the MS (now lost). Falconer Madon, who had seen the original, dates the MS "about A.D. 1600" and says, "on the outside of the cover is a

ing of his own in the manuscript, “his Relacion herein made” probably means “his relation of his success in this matter made (verbally) to me.” It would be fascinating to know whether Maurice’s claim to a successful transmutation was based on his study of Cradock’s alchemical poem.

note by a seventeenth-century owner ‘Hugh Gauell(?)’ about Cradock and Maurice” (*Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford*, 8 vols. [Oxford, 1895], 3:323). His original signature now destroyed, the actual surname of this Hugh (Darell, Parett, or Gauell?) may never be known.

I. *A Treatise Touching the Philosopher's Stone,*
Gathered out of the best authors
that have written upon that arte.

By Edward Cradocke, Doctor & Publique Reader
of Divinitie in the University of Oxford

To the most mighty and most gracious Princesse, *Lady Elizabeth*
by the grace of *God Queene of England, France, & Ireland, De-*
fender of the true, antient, Catholicke and Apostolicke faith &c:
much health, and prosperity in this world, and in the world to
come life everlasting be to her excellent *Majesty.*

May itt please your highnes, *Soveraigne Lady Queene,*
Here of a Jewell worthy to bee seene
To take a view; I say of such a stone,
The like whereof be very few, or none.
A stone in deed wee commonly itt call 5
Of vulgar sorte, and yett noe stone att all:
But mattier such as fire can never tame,
Nor danted is by force of any flame.
And Why? They say fire long time hath itt fed,
And that which fire continuing long hath bredd, 10
Ytt cannot bee that fire should that destroy,
Or seeke the same unkindly to annoy.
Seeing againe our medicine is a fire

Of substance pure, they say itt doth desire,
By nature's force, corruption to decay 15
With other fire, but can full well away.
And here uppon itt worketh wonders strainge,
And doth not only mettalls straingly chainge,
That unto itt bee answerable in kinde,
But alsoe, as in learned bookes wee finde, 20
For men and women itt is generall,
And cureth wholie their diseases all.
Which, gracious *Queene*, to you I doe present
For noe cause elce but for this good intent: [p. 2]
To signify my dutifull goodwill,
In stead perchance of great & learned Skill.
Which I the rather here doe undertake
To write (*Madame*) for your high honor's sake,
For that I see that famous learned Clerkes
Have dedicated heretofore such workes 30
To Governors and Kings of noble fame,
Much rather then to men of meaner name.
For well they saw if good therby might come
That due itt is to Princes all and some.
I wishing therefore much prosperity, 35
And of your foes an endles victory,
Unto your highnesse dedicate this booke
All att your leasure and pleasure on to looke.
Which att this tyme my duty to declare
Was all and whole the end of this my care. 40
God blesse your grace with long happy life
And with your subjects peace devoide of strife.
God grant you still that traysons may rebound
On Traitors' necks, whom ever God confound.
Of forreine foes God send you the conquest; 45
What soe they bee, God send them little rest
That would molest your Godly, quiett reigne:
For their desertes God send them double paine.
Your acceptacion, ending thus, I crave;
Now of my Speech my booke the rest shall have. 50

I. A Treatise Touching the Philosopher's Stone

Your Grace's most loyall and
humble subject,
Edward Cradocke.

In Citty, towne, and village, God you blesse;
In Castle, pallace, and hall God doe noe lesse.
Stand, goe, or sitt, God allwaies you support;
Against all force God ever bee your forte.
Concluding now thus finally I end:
God to your grace his blessing allwaies send,
Both naturall and such as nature passe,
Aswell the greater as such as seemen lass.

[p. 3]

55

A Treatise in English verse uppon the Philosopher's stone,
written by Edward Cradocke, Doctor and publique Reader
of Divinity, in the University of Oxford.

1. *Of this our stone*, which many take in hand 60
And few thereof the nature understand,
Few words I meane att this time for to make,
Not for the lewd, but for the godlie's sake.
And thou O God that forderest every deede
That Godly is, I pray thee be my speed.
Whereof it's made, first breifly will I tell: 65
Then will I shew the manner every dell
How itt is made: which breifly to unfould,
Philosophers have alwaies thus us tould,
Of mettalls' kinde that made is this our stone,
As namely *Sol*, but not of itt alone. 70
For other mettalls alsoe wee include
That yett be raw, in workeing alsoe rude,
That fixed & unfixed both may meete
And th'one the other comfortably greete.
For *Sol* delights with other things to Joyne
Nigh him in kinde, that found be in the mine; [p.
For elce hee will noe generation make,
Ne passe himselfe or higher tincture take.
Lett them, I say then, meete as itt is due,
And th'one to th'other both of them bee true. 80
Soe shall their yssue mightily increase,
The hope whereof should otherwise surcease.
Mettalls then take the matter of our stone,
And lett not *Sol* bee comfortlesse alone.
Doth this my saying seeme to any hard? 85
Then shall the prooffe noe longer bee defferd.
"Where Mercury & Sulphur both togeather stand,
To draw thy medicine thence se thou take in hand,"

I. A Treatise Touching the Philosopher's Stone

Saith Mr. Bonus. Wheron this Argument, As on a stedfast ground, incontinent I build and say, that mettalls both conteine: Therefore in them our medicine doth remaine.	90
2. The truth whereof if further thou wilt know, In sundry things see samples on a rowe. Who seekes the Sperme of man in any beyre? Who would soe doe, a very sott he were. The Lyon maketh not the Sheepe his mate Nea joynes with him, his kinde to generate. The lyonnesse is rather his desire, To quench the heate that nature setts on fire.	95
The bucke begetteth of the Doe his fawne; The fishes have within them-selves their spawne. Soe trees and herbes have every one their seed Which rotts in the earth, & trees & herbs doe breed. And shall not <i>Sol</i> and <i>Luna</i> have their mate, To increase their kinde in semblable rate? And have not they likewise their native Seed, Whereon to worke thou alsoe maist proceede? (Att least if thou in nature's schoole be taught With learned Skill and therto well arte fraught.) Sure <i>Aristotle</i> was not out of the way, Who wrote these words and notably did say That Generacion comes of things that be Like of their kinde and of a like degree.	100
3. Is't I alone that sett abroad this lore? Or did some other teach itt heretofore? Nay <i>Bernard</i> , <i>Earle</i> that cleaped was by name, The like Induction cunningly did frame, In his second booke which he of Chymestrie Left written hath to all posterity. It's knowne, saith he, by flatt Experience That every thing of earthly essence Hath, like to't selfe, some one or other thing, Whereby his Lynage and his ofspring He multiplieth, and nothing elce takes hee; And Lett the horse there of th'exemple bee.	105
	[p. 5]
	110
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To procreate an horse (saith he) wee neede
Of male and female to have a double seed,
United both, unlike of quality,
From horse's kinde yett taken as wee see. 130
And in like sort, a man to generate,
Nature doth fetch a seed like to his State:
Not from an horse, much lesse from herbe or tree,
For soe his kinde he will not multiply,
Sith every thing his proper sperme doth use, 135
And forreigne seeds doth naturally refuse.
Therefore wee read when first the world was wrought
And by his power God all things made of nought,
He first made man, & woman afterward,
And (that which seemes to reason very hard) [p. 6]
Of the rib of th' man the woman did he make,
Which from the man itt pleased him to take.
Commanding them that they should never cease
Of substance theirs, their progeny t'increase,
The like precept to every creature elce 145
He gave, as Scripture plainly to us tells.
From *Turba* then this *Earle* brings *Noscius* in,
Of Sages not the worst, of noble kynne,
A kinge that makes the same Induction right
And saith that every mortall living wight, 150
All birds, all beasts, doe come of their owne kinde,
And other meanes of gendring none they finde.
Likewise he cites one *John* that is of the *Mount*,
A man I trowe that's of noe small account,
Continuing the selfe same reason still: 155
And by and by when he hath said his will,
Thus he concludes: "Mettles themselves augment,
And nothing elce doth serve for that intent."
Loe, hitherto the Earle's words dost thou heare,
By whose good ground this building will I reare. 160
4. Then take from *Sol* that masculine Seed of his—
What that alone? Nay, then thou goest amisse,
For as our *Sol* is father of our Stone,
Soe *Luna*, mother those writers every one

That learned bee doe commonly itt name, 165
Who in her wombe must nourish well the same.
For as the Sperme of man doth nought prevaile
To procreate if female's seed doe faile,
Soe surely *Sol* will not our stone begett
If want of female be to him a lett. 170
And like as man that meanes his kinde's increase
Seekes him a mate whereby he doth not cease
T'augment his lyne & his posterity,
Soe Is't with mettalls in a like degree: [p. 7]
Needs must their nature somewhat likewise finde
Sib to themselves, to multiply their kinde.
Now tell me, freind, aright if thou canst hitte,
Mettles except, what match for mettalls fitt?
But arte of nature followes aye the trace,
And shall not arte doe th' like in such a Case? 180
Shall art, I say, not finde out *Sol* a match
Like to himselfe his lynage thence to fatch?
5. Lett him therefore our Loving *Luna* take
Unto his Mate & forreine wives forsake.
Soe th'one to th'other both of them shall binde 185
If undefiled both of them be joyn'd.
Our *Luna* now th'unperfect body call,
Of mettall's kinde that lincked therewithall.
In th'other mettles *Sol* may have ingresse
When of their Spirit he taketh more, or lesse, 190
For looke what mettle thou meanest to convert
And thereof *Sol* must algates winne the heart,
Or elce be sure they hardly will agreee
To joyne in Love, and live in amitie.
Thus *Geber*, *Lullus*, & *Arnold* doth us tell, 195
Who tryed the same, noe doubt, and knew itt well.
6. Loe, now, our stone whereof itt doth consist—
As promise was, soe neither have I mist.
To thee, my freind, in few words to declare
Now how itt's made, to tell I will not spare: 200
As this my poore & Simple Skill will serve,
From truth att least & faith, I will not swerve.

Which to prepare itt seemeth very hard, [p. 8]
Sith willfully some famous men have jard.
Lullus himselfe ne're opened itt aright, 205
Zacharias saith, but erred when he might
Have runne a plaine and ordinary race:
Soe he of whom he followed eke the trace.
The man of the new towne, *Arnold*, loved clouds
And wrapt himselfe most commonly in shrowds. 210
What shall I doe, soe darkely nowe besett?
And where shall I a faithfull teacher gett?
All in despaire shall I give over too?
Nay, God forfend, I will not yett soe doe.
Forwards I will, my Enterprise God blesse, 215
For he alone can give me the successe.
Undoubtedly this must be aye the marke
(Therefore give eare and dilligently harke)
Where att to shoote: of bodies Spiritts to make,
Againe of Spiritts bodies undertake; 220
By skillfull arte to frame in any wise,
In generall, and this will thee suffice.
7. Butt how is itt? Wouldst thou that alsoe heare?
And even that to tell I will not feare.
Wise *Aristotle*, *Prince of Sages* all, 225
In his *Meteors* wrott, to their originall
That mettalls should reduced bee & brought,
Or elce (saith hee) their chainge will turne to nought;
As who should say they might bee chainged aright
By meanes disclosed not only t'outward sight. 230
For then a medicine might therof be wrought,
Which Alchymists soe studiously have sought.
But to their offspring it's easy them to bring,
Saith *Arnold*; then itt is an easy thing
Them to transforme and alter from their state,
As books, yea proofes, to us insinuate. [p. 10]
8. What shall wee say? That man then maketh gold?
Nay, God forbid, wee will not bee soe bold;
For when a man doth all his whole intent,

I. A Treatise Touching the Philosopher's Stone

What is hee but a simple instrument, 240
By whom God workes and nature brings to passe
The very same, by Art that compast was?
Where Nature left, there Art doth but begin;
That perfectnes that nature could not winne,
Letted in th'earth by much Incumbrance, 245
Art doth atcheive, & therefore doth advance
That worke that nature gladly would have done
And could not end, but only itt begunne.
Like as the Wombe, corrupted, noyes the child
Who by the matrice eftsoones is defild, 250
Soe fareth itt in semblable Case,
When loathsome sulphures, mettles doe embrace.
Which this our medicine doth soe purge & scoure,
And soe concoct, that nowe within an howre
That's wrought by art, that Nature could not doe 255
A thousand yeares, putting her hand thereto.
Man makes noe mettalls, then, w'are very sure,
But mettalls foyled he maketh cleane & pure.
And where Concoction wanted, as wee see,
That frayle defect supplies hee mightily, 260
Whiles in our medicine nature's heate enlarged,
Decayed heate hath utterly discharged.
Then God and nature worketh all in all,
Next nature's scholar; art is principall.
As instrument, man putteth to his hand 265
Through God to worke, that makes him understand
What is to doe and how he should proceed,
Soe all in God is the hope of his good Speed. [p. 11]
Lett God therefore have hardly all the praise, 270
That gives such guiftes and openeth such waies,
That woundrous things are dailie brought about,
Not only here, but all the world throughout.

9. Now to returne, from whence I earst have strayd:
To their first of-spring mettalls, as I said,
Thou must reduce, a medicine soe to make, 275
That Imperfeccions all away shall take;
Which now to worke an artificiall way,

On God's behalfe doe thou as I shall say.
Project on mettalls salt prepared right,
Till that itt flowe like wax before thy sight. 280
10. Thy preparacion make thou on this wise:
In goldsmith's potts well melt itt twice or thrice.
Att th' second time Itt pearceth soe, I wotte,
That sure itt will runn deepe into the potte;
Then lett itt coole, & beate itt small & thinne, 285
And in a sollar sett itt lowe within
(A place where moysture greatly doth prevaile),
And to dissolve be sure itt will not faile.
But in a bladder—pricked often in,
Either with bodkin, Naule, or elce a pinne— 290
Thou must itt hang: sett under itt a glasse
Or sawcer glased, that to itt, it may passe.
When all's run out & nothing doth remaine,
With a slow heate congeale it, then againe;
Doe so till itt will harden now noe more, 295
Then for thy purpose kepe itt well in store.
Harmoniack Salt, Ammoniack eke does well,
And *Tartar Salt* the Apothecaries sell, [p. 12]
With urine, Salt & *Alcali* of the best, 300
Allums, and Oyles—I lett alone the rest—
Where of the use is good, as wee may see,
Sith that they peirce. They purge & qualifie,
Softning mettalls, wherefore you may be sure
Th' are fitt for them that putt this art in ure,
Sith to dissolve they have of them some neede; 305
Breifly therefore thus forward I proceede.
11. With Salt Calcine thy mettles on a fire,
Which brought t'a earth thou mayst have thy desire.
For Salt (saith *Alberte*) freates & takes away
Unkindly moysture workeing the decay 310
Of kindly heate, which if thou shouldst destroy
A good successe thou never shouldst enjoy.
Where heate is gone, noe gendring is att all:
Take this for true, for itt is generall.

Of stouping age example maist thou take, 315
Where nature's heate beginneth to asslake;
They have noe aptnes children to begett
Like lusty youthes, in whom there is noe lett.
Where native heate beginns to goe away,
There kindly moisture alsoe doth decay. 320
Then care for th'one & th'other eke regard:
For th'one from th'other will not be debard.
The sap of mettalls therefore doe you keepe,
Which in their nature lyeth covered deepe.
Dry itt not up with too much heate of fire, 325
Which if you doe, thy worke will lye in the mire.
Now lett not saltness too much it oppresse,
For that Corrupcion hindereth as I ghesse.
Corrupcion gone, then farewell kind's increase:
Itt will not stand, & therefore itt must cease. [p. 13]
Philosophers of passing noble skill
Have soe us taught (therefore their mind fullfill)
That Putrefaccion is the very Gate
Of gendring workes in every kinde of State.
Experience the same doth likewise tell: 335
For Cause whereof then doubt you nere a dell.
12. But how then should our matter putrify?
In places moist, what pitt were best to bee?
The pitt of putrefaccion made is thus,
As *Janus* writes, surnamed *Licinius*: 340
A Cubit deepe make in the earth a pitt,
Or somewhat more agreable and fitt,
To hould thy vessell glased, or of glasse,
Whether itt be in bignesse, more or lasse.
With lyme and stone then playster itt round about, 345
The cold of the earth the better to hold out.
Then make a fire, thy plaister waxing dry,
For halfe a day; this done, then by and by
Of pigeon dung and horse dung mingled well,
That there may bee a heate & sweating smell, 350
Putt into th' pitt. Therein a patterne place;
Lett itt be like thy glasse in any case,

As well in fashion as in quantity,
As one thing to another like may bee.
When that thou seest thy mud wall strongly stand, 355
Forthwith remove thy patterne out of hand;
In stead thereof set now thy glasse att last.
Hott urine or hott water therein cast;
Early and late doe this from day to daie,
That of thy pitt the warmth doe not decay. 360
By this occasion quickly shalt thou see
How soone thy matter rotted there shalbe. [p.
13. Thy mettalls then, with that that's sharpe & keene,
Doe thou dissolve soe as they bee not seene
In such a place as now thou hear'st me name, 365
Or for a space *in balneo* hould the same.
Then philtre them & steme them there with all,
Till that they tend t'a water minerall.
When by thy Philtre dissolv'd thou dost them see,
And throughly loosed, yet lettest them putrifie 370
Wholly the space att least of 14 daies.
Then bee they apt to still att all assaies,
In Limbicke large and wide (for that is best)
That vapours freely may ascend to th' creste.
14. How long shall then this distillacion dure? 375
I say untill thou have a substaunce pure:
A water viscouse, cleere and shining bright,
Like that whereof our *Sol* began his light.
Some say still oft, & some say doe not soe,
Wherein my minde, if that thou list to knowe, 380
Thou hearest enough: Lett tryall be thy successe,
Who saith the truth & who saith more or lesse.
15. This water is that we call an argent vive,
Which, but to th' wise, is knowne to none alyve.
There with there is an Earth that's very thinne; 385
A smelling Sulphure dwelleth eke therein,
Which causeth oft their names that we confound,
As though in sence the same thing ye did sownde.
Their sundry names be given in respects,

That sundry be as alsoe their effects. 390
For otherwise in substance they be one
Essentially, and difference there is none.
The Sulphure's dry, but moyst is mercury:
The Sulphure's hott; vive argent naturally
Is cold, though Sulphur alter may his kinde,
Which in the same continually wee finde. [p. 15]
Moisture and drought together then doe stand,
Coldnes & heate bee coupled hand in hand,
Who att the last doe both of them relent
And each to other gives his full Consent: 400
To yeild themselves as duty doth prescribe,
The one from the other not to step aside,
Nor cowardly to be att all dismaide,
When mutuall faith requireth freindely aide.
16. Then in our worke of Elements be fowre: 405
Fire, Earth, ayre, and water & noe more.
Our water, ayre doth certainly containe,
And in our earth a fire there doth remaine.
Water & earth bee open to the Eye,
Our fire and ayre noe mortall man can see; 410
Two doe inclose, & twoe be closed in.
Yf that thou meane a happy end to winne,
Purge them well both, that after they may knitt,
And th'one with th'other fast & sure may sitt.
17. And least thy worke unsavoury bee in taste, 415
Make *Sol* or *Luna* leaven to the paste.
A golden worke if that thou meane by chaunce,
Then *Sol* and *Luna* both thou must advaunce.
To helpe thee foreward, th'agent th'one must bee,
This golden worke to further mightily. 420
The patient then the other maist thou call,
Whereon to worke our *Sol* is principall.
Att Silver workes if thou doe only shoote,
Then *Sol* in this case greatly will not boote.
Luna will serve: thine agent hereout take, 425
And Jupiter thy patient thou mayst make,
And other bodies as thou thinkest best

Which for thy purpose readily bee prest.
Unbodied bodies I meane that nowe be pure,
Loosed of their bands as cunning doth procure. [p. 16]
For other bodies serve not our intent:
They have noe life, therefore they bee not ment.
Yea *Sol* himselve in this case wee exclude,
Which grosse in't selfe is alltogeather rude.
18. Philosophers are therefore wont to say 435
That *Sol* or *Luna* vulgar are not they
In this our worke wherof we make account:
Nay, *Sol* and *Luna* vulgar they surmount.
For this our *Sol* a golden *Soule* itt is:
Therto an heate annexed is, I wis, 440
Of fiery force (saith *Lullus*) very keene
That worketh wonders more then you would wene.
19. Thou askest now howe much in quantity
The levyn of thy dowgh ought here to bee.
Thou needest not, I wis, to make greate waste: 445
A little leavin serveth mickle paste.
Of this thy paste & xii ounces if there bee,
Some say of *Sol* iiii ounces satisfy.
But *Lullus* yett, & other more, say lasse.
Thy *Repertory* here I will not passe, 450
Lullus my freind: for (as thou dost us tell)
A peece of gold will serve us very well
That nathlesse of vales is but small;
But adding yett this, say I, herewithall
The more thy worke thou wilt abbreviate 455
The more of Leavin then must be the rate.
The *Rosary* in *Turba* to bee plaine
Will teach us this, & nere a whitt disdaine.
Surely this *Leaven* nature did not add:
Art found itt out, that quicke speed might bee had, 460
When in thy worke thou gladly wouldst be short:
Soe *Geber* & soe others doe reporte.
And here uppon now this conclude I then:
Thy principles that if thou well doe kenn, [p. 17]
This worke of thine can neither mickle cost

(The *Rosary* saith), ne yett much labour lost.
Soe *Augurellus* saith, the hinderance
That causeth cost is only ignorance.
20. Make then of Spiritts and Soules this water bright, 470
Mixt with a Sulphur shineing to the Sight,
Of firye nature. Shall I say as tis?
Noe fire on earth may be compar'd to this.
Wouldst thou dissolve thy *Sol* in kindly wise?
Saith *Bernard* the *Earle*, herein I thee advise,
Dissolve itt then, and do for this intent, 475
That thou mayst have a water permanent,
With this thy *Sol*, that giveth thee such light
That will therewith continue day and night.
And then concoct itt with an easy heate:
Lett itt not seeth, but only lett itt sweate; 480
Elce with his Corps the Spirite will not remaine,
And violence the glasse will breake in twayne.
And when the Spirit hath taken once his flight,
Streightway the Soule will vanish out of Sight;
Then weale away thy laboure all is lost, 485
And what shall now become of all thy cost?
Then be not rashe, but take thou aye good heed;
The more's thy haste, the lesse is oft thy speed.
Seale fast thy glasse with *Hermes'* Signet sure;
Make noe more heate, then well itt may indure. 490
21. Thrice 50 daies hold out, as itt is said.
Ere this, this thy earth her buds begin to spread.
A shorter time some say that *Sol* will make:
Philosophers some wish their leade to take.
And why? *Sol* needs Concoction lesse, perchaunce, 495
And Saturne gives a quicker enterance:
Which yeilds an oyle as yellow as the gold
Not mickle lesse, att least as we be told. [p. 18]
Wherewith if *Sol* 4 tymes dissolved bee
And eke congealed as oft in like degree, 500
Soe that their used be a warie watch,
In 30 daies our stone itt will dispatch.
A secrett strainge as any needes to bee:

Not in the world a greater shall you see,
So *Lullus* saith, but I will not defyne; 505
Try and then trust, the pleasure shalbe thine.
22. Now goeing forward, hues will straing appere,
And marke them well: when blacknes draweth neare,
Which wise men use to call the Raven's head,
Our Mercury then travayles in her bed. 510
A goodly child wee hope shall now be borne
To comfort Wretches otherwise forlorne.
Then whitenes comes, which doe you not neglect,
For itt will worke a wondrous good effect.
Here mayst thou stay if white worke be thy end; 515
A farther worke if happily thou intend,
Expect a color red as any blood,
The happy end of all thy wished good.
Which, when itt once stepps forth into the light,
Ah what a Joy & what a gladsome sight! 520
Like Cynobre or purple is the State
Of this our Stone, or like the Pomgranate
Say some; but what should I thereof dispute?
For the Stone itt selfe is rather all our sute,
Which with our Eies when wee behould and see 525
Shall of the truth the surest wittnes bee.
23. Which seeing now he would have milke & meate,
Give him enough: the Cost will not be greate.
That mercury, that first our stone did breed,
The very same will alsoe now him feede. [p. 19]
Give not att once too much in any wise:
Take heed of surfetts and of Gormandize,
By sober meanes that he may grow to strength,
And soe by leasure wax a man att length.
Then lusty children surely will he gett, 535
And nothing shall from henceforth be his lett:
Standing in fight a Champion safe and sure,
All furious flames well able to endure,
And tryalls all, that none may him accuse
Of cowardship and therefore him refuse, 540
And say he is a weakling and an ape,

A monster borne & of noe kindly shape.
Nay, God forfeinde that any should upbraide
This worthy birth, this Sulphure surely staid, 545
Which married now to Mercury his wife
In faithfull love will leade with her his life:
Who, sith he is of noble bloud discent,
Soe base a brood is none of his extent.
Loe, here a water & yett an earth withall:
A water dry thou maist it justly call, 550
Which as it floweth, itt is of water's kinde,
And as itt's dry, an earth thou shalt it finde.
The earth gives weight, the waters enter in,
And solace ends that toyle did earst begin.
24. Thy medicine now if thou wilt multiply, 555
This learned Authors teach thee by and by.
Dissolv't (say they), congeale itt very oft,
For the more thou makest itt fusible & soft,
The more itt flowes & spreads itselfe about,
The more it is enlarged, out of doubt. 560
Learne well my freind & beare away this text;
Then of my Lessons this shalbe the next. [p. 20]
If afterwards thou cast itt uppon Gold,
Itt turnes t' a stone of vertue manifold.
For of our stone the propertie is this: 565
That look whereon projected once itt is,
And by and by itt bringeth this to passe
That streight itt is much better then itt was.
Better then Gold is only this our stone,
And here uppon conclude I this anone: 570
That sith our gold itt selfe doth now excell,
Itt turnes t' a powder, wonderfull to tell.
The same on Silver afterwards project,
Forthwith itt worketh right the same effect.
And if thou doe prepare another paste, 575
Itt serves as Leavin; therefore make noe waste
Of such a jewell worthy of account,
Sith many treasures farr itt doth surmount.
25. And yett I doe not soe much itt esteeme

Or doe thereof att all soe highly deeme, 580
For that itt workes in mettalls suche a chainge;
But this, methinkes, is wonderfull and strainge:
That Dropsies, goutes, Rheumes & leprosies
And att a word all deadly maladies
In noe long tyme itt perfectly doth cure, 585
And causeth health a long time to indure
In them that God vouchsafeth soe to blesse,
That quietly they may the same possesse
And many yeares in custody itt have—
Thereby themselves and many moe to save 590
From desperate soares and from diseases fell
That in our bodies privily doe dwell. [p. 21]

26. Some now will aske how this about is brought,
That by our Stone such wonders greate are wrought.
To them I answeare breifly in a Clause, 595
The fire of nature partly is the Cause,
Lodged in our Stone, which strongly doth expell
All wicked humors and tumors that doe swell,
Whether they come of heate, or elce of cold,
Philosophers soe teach. Next is their gold, 600
Their quintessence I say, that is soe pure
And soe unstained, that well you may bee sure
Corruption none att all Itt will abide,
As heretofore good men have often tryed. 605
And hereof record justly may I take,
And worthy authors wittnesses I make,
As *Richard English, Bernard, Earle of Fame,*
And others moe, who said they had the same
And did such cures as scarcely you would weene 610
In all the world the like were ever seene.

27. O noble *Earle*, th' arte noble by thy blood,
The nobler yett sith mickle is the good
That done thou hast by this thy noble skill,
Far passing them that stand upon the hill
Of proud conceite, condemninge that as nought 615
Which for no treasure worldly can be bought.
Philosophy (who doubteth?) doth excell:

Butt what: Art thou much better? Canst thou tell?
If skil'd thou bee in Aristotle's bookes
And thereupon hast high and loftie lookes, 620
Yett canst the same apply to no good end,
Either to helpe thy selfe, or elce thy freind.
This science is noe Speculacion vayne,
Though ignorance thereat soe much disdain. [p. 22]
Who soe therein hath any learned sight
Needs not to feare, soe that he walke aright,
Whether hee goe by sea, or elce by Land,
Sith still he hath his remedy att hand.
For is he poore? Why wants he worldly pelfe?
Or is he sicke? Then may he helpe himselfe 630
And doe for his freind yett nere a whitt the lesse,
That plunged is in any deepe distresse.
He needeth not to practise usury;
Deceitfull wares to utter needs not hee.
By Symonie to hell why doth he hye? 635
He hath better stayes then bribes to hold him by.
His rents, or fines, & wherefore should he raise?
For he to live hath learned better wayes.
And seeing God soe greatly doth him blesse,
What should him ayle poore orphants to oppresse, 640
Poore widowes, babes, th' old, or impotent?
He hath enough soe that he bee content,
Both of himselfe right liberally to live
Where need requires, & liberally to give.
If worldly ayde the Gospell may support, 645
Who better's able to raise A stronger fort?
In the Church he is a speciall instrument:
If common treasure wasted be and spent,
The common weale by him may have reliefe.
What shall I say? In few words to be breife: 650
He is a salve for every worldly soare;
Yea, Potentates of such a one have Store,
Soe that he prove a subject just and true,
And where hee ought, yeeld service that is due.

O Lord, how happy then is such a wight 655
If that hee seeke to please his God aright. [p. 23]
Againe I say, how cursed is his case,
Yf such a one bee destitute of grace?
28. Butt yett not all that putt but up the hand
Can by and by greate Secretts understand. 660
God's providence to some hath itt denyed,
Least itt might bee occasion of their pride;
And other Skilles there bee that best are knowne
To him that sitts on high uppon his throne,
Giveing his guifts to him as seemeth best: 665
Noe man alive in him hath Interest.
But as he will, soe algates must itt bee;
He is bound to none, but all his guifts be free.
God would this arte from some men should be hid;
His providence, I say, hath them forbid, 670
Least they perchance should use some wicked way,
Misusing that which might have beene their stay.

*A Conclusion with an Exhortation
uppon occasion of the premises.*

Who shootes att the world, the world will him beguile:
The world the worldly in th' ende doth fowly foyle. 675
Who lookes aloft shall fall againe full lowe;
God and thy selfe learne throughly first to knowe:
Soe be thou sure, thou greatly shalt not misse
That to enjoy, that necessarie is.
God will rayse freinds, that still shalbe thine ayd,
And why then shouldst thou greatly be afrayd? 680
If greater guifts God unto thee doe graunt,
Doe not thereof yett make too great a vaunt. [p. 24]
Skill puffeth up; God's Love is building sure
Against all tempests able to endure. 685
Hang not too much uppon a rotten reede,
Nea catch you hold uppon a tender thread.
Take hold where hold is likely to take place;
Lett not unthankfull dealeing thee disgrace.
Carrie to God allwaies a thankfull minde,

I. A Treatise Touching the Philosopher's Stone

Soe in thy knowledge comfort shalt thou finde. 690
Thanke God (I say), all men of all degrees,
In humble manner kneeling on your knees,
Yf such a pearle God on you doe bestowe,
Who of all goodnes, as you ought to knowe,
Is th' only giver. Alsoe I exhorte 695
That yee abuse itt in none evill sorte:
Beware ye turne not that to your annoy,
That to doe good God gave you to enjoy.
Sett not your minde on pride & high estate;
Defy the world, and say not all too late, 700
"If I had wist, I would have soe employd
God's greate good guift." In any wise avoyd
Foule avarice, the roote of evills all,
And to thy money never bee thou thrall.
For what, I pray thee, would itt thee avayle 705
To scrape upp pelfe, which needs att last must faile,
Yea the world to winne & all that therein is,
If in the end thy Soule loose heaven's blisse?
On this e're nowe good men have deeply thought,
Who (God assisting) marveillous things have wrought, 710
And in this Arte all other did excell,
And yett unsteined kept themselves full well. [p. 25]
Touching my selfe, full little can I say.
Needs must I grant my studdy here away
Hath binn but small: yf God have given me light 715
For graver Studdies, reading as I might
Att Leisure bookes of worthy men's device,
And thereuppon have somewhat felt the Spice
Of these their balmes that doe soe sweetly smell,
God give me grace that I may use itt well. 720
No harme att all would I doe by my will,
But seeke to serve my Prince & country still.
And thou, O God, that best dost knowe my minde,
In my good meaneing lett me allwaies finde
Thy present helpe, I humbly thee beseech. 725
Thy name bee praysd, and thus I end my speech.
Amen quoth D[octo]r E[dward] Cradocke

I. TEXTUAL NOTES

Text: Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 1445, item VI, pp. 1–25, collated with Bodleian Library MS Rawl. poet. 182, fols. 37r–50v. These MSS are cited as *A* and *R* respectively in the notes below. Marginal notes in the MSS have been incorporated into the Commentary.

Title] *R*; omits *A*

Prose dedication

true, antient, Catholicke and Apostolicke] omits *R*

Verse text

- 9 fire] that fire *R*
35 wishing therefore] therefore wishinge *R*
52 doe noe] doe you no *R*
66 Then] *R*; They *A*
76 be] is *R*
80 th'one, th'other] the one, the other *R*
95 beyre] beare *R*
104 doe] does *R*
110 arte fraught] afrought *R*
118 cunningly] commonly *R*
137 the] this *R*
141 make] take *R*
142 omits line *R*
156 will] fille *R*
160 By] on *R*
165 doe commonly] commonly doe *R*

I. Textual Notes

- 173 T'augment] to augment *R*
185 th'one, th'other] the one, the other *R*
187 th'unperfect] the imperfect *R*
196 knew] know *R*
210 *Interpolated prose passage in 210n: said, said] omits R;*
in] of *R*; understand them] understand them not *R*
230 t'outward] to the outward *R*
231 therof] from thence *R*
244 winne] bringe *R*
257 w'are] wee are] *R*
258 foyled] soyld *R*
264 scholar] *R*; Sulphur *A*
265 to] there unto *R*
268 his good Speed] all his speede *R*
287 A] *R*; And *A*
290 a] with *R*
300 alone] *omits R*
308 t'a] to a *R*
321 th'one, th'other] the one, the other *R*
324 lyeth covered] covered lyeth *R*
327 saltness] slackenese *R*
337 then should] thou shouldest *R*
340 surnamed] *R*; surname *A*
350 heate] hotte *R*
357 set] let *R*
358 therein] theron *R*
365 hear'st] hardst *R*
375 distillacion] *R*; distillacions *A*
379 say still] *R*; say a still *A*
388 sownde] *R*; found *A*
392 and] in *R*
398 in] to *R*
406 and] *omits R*
414 th'one, th'other] the one, the other *R*
416 the] thy *R*
418 th'one] the one *R*
425 hereout] therout *R*
432 life] *R*; like *A*

- 433 himselfe] it selfe *R*
447 &] *omits R*
483 once] out *R*
484 *omits line R*
490 heate] haste *R*
495 lesse] least *R*
521-26 *omits R, which has instead: The childe is borne which
thou so fayne wouldest have / What better worldly stay
couldst ever crave.*
523 Which] And *R*
541 and] or *R*
543 forfeinde] forbid *R*
548 extent] entente *R*
554 ends] endlesse *R*
597 Lodged] *R*; Lodge *A*
610 ever] never *R*
620 loftie] *R*; lusty *A*
624 thereat] *omits R*
636 stayes] meanes *R*
645 Gospell may] church can aye *R*
661 God's] *R*; God *A*
674 fowly] fondly *R*
682 vaunt] *R*; daunt *A*
697 that] it *R*
699 &] or *R*
726 *colophon R: Thomas Maurice. A treatise of the
philosophers stone, with marginall notes therupon,
illustratinge the same & written by D. Edward Caradoke,
publike professor in the universitie of Oxford.*

I. COMMENTARY

5-6 Zosimus (ca. 300 A.D.) attributes the enigmatic phrase “the stone which is not a stone” to Democritus (see *Turba Philosophorum*, trans. Waite, 66), while the *Secreta Secretorum* claims “*Lapis & non Lapis*, Stoon of greatest fame, / *Aristotiles* gaff it the same name” (Lydgate’s trans., in Ashmole’s *Theatrum*, 399; see also *Three Prose Versions of the Secreta Secretorum*, ed. Steele, 87).

7 *Mattier*. Matter, from ME *matiere*.

7-14 The philosopher’s stone (like gold) is “fed” and “bredd” by (elemental) fire and is impervious to it because it is a perfect balance of all elements: “This well-tempered substance can neither be destroyed by the violence of the fire, nor vitiated by the impurity of the earth, nor spoiled by an excess of water or air. The Stone and gold are thus generated in the fire, and, like everything else, flourish in their native element” (Petrus Bonus of Ferrara, *The New Pearl of Great Price*, trans. Waite, 248–49; this work is cited repeatedly in Cradock’s poem).

8 *danted*. Daunted.

13-16 I.e., “since the stone (*medicine*) is a fiery substance so pure, they say it seeks by its very nature to purge corruption when combined with ordinary fire—and it has the capacity (*can*) to do away with it completely” (?).

21 *generall*. Universal (in its healing powers).

62 *the lewd*. The ignorant.

63 *that forderest*. Who furthers.

66 *They*. The godly (62). *every dell*: every deal or part.

69 *mettals' kind*. Of the nature of metals.

73 *fixed & unfixed*. The not volatile and the volatile.

87 In margin of MS A: "This Proefe I have alleaded [i.e., adduced] out of *Bonus Ferrariensis* in the latter end of his *Margarita Pretiosa* in my latine verses [i.e., Cradock's *Tractatus* in MS Ashmole 1415]." The last chapter of Bonus's work repeats often that the stone, like all metals, must be made of both sulphur and quicksilver; this theory is based ultimately on Aristotle's notion of two "exhalations" in the earth (*Meteorologica* 4), but was first given full theoretical exposition by Avicenna (see Wyckoff's trans. of Albertus Magnus' *Mineralia*, index, s.v. Sulphur-Quicksilver). Much of Cradock's exposition here and in section 2 is based on Bonus (see Waite's trans. of *The New Pearl*, 283–93, and 7–14n, above).

90 *incontinent*. Immediately.

90-91 *on a steadfast ground . . . I build*. This metaphor, which reappears at 160 and 683 below, derives from Matt. 7:26–27, where the foolish man builds on sand, only to have his house destroyed by storm and rain.

95 *beyre*. Byre, cow-house. The variant reading *beare* is possibly correct, but this sentence seems to be a generalized statement, to be followed by examples of specific animals.

111 *Aristotle*. Cradock may have in mind, from one of the many versions of the *Secreta Secretorum*, this passage, which also includes references to "Lyon" and "bucke" (97, 101): "Moreover we sene that every beest hath his propyr Sowle, and his Propyr body. Of thes Speces never faillyth, ne never was founde that any beeste had a body of oone spice [i.e., species], and a sowle of anothis Spice. As hit may not be that oon beste have the body of an herte, and a soule of a lyon" (*Three Prose Versions*, 219). All of Cradock's section two (93–115) relates to these ideas. The theme of "like begets like" appears in other texts, e.g. Arnaldus de Villanova, *Flos Florum* (*Theatrum Chemicum*, 3:128); and Jean de La Fontaine (744, 947–52) and pseudo-Jean de Meun, *The Alchymist's Answere* (280, 422), below in this

collection. See also lines 151, 153n below.

117 *Bernard, Earle.* Bernardus Trevisanus, who is cited repeatedly below. The following passage (118–60) is based on part two (his “second booke”) of Bernardus’ *De Chymico Miraculo* (in *Theatrum Chemicum*, under the title *De Alchemia Liber*, 1:692–94), where all the details cited here are found. For a verse translation of the fourth part of this work, see Part Four, below.

118 *Induction.* Introduction.

147 *Scripture.* “And God beheld them [whales, fishes, fowls], saying, Be fruitful and multiply. . . . And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind [according to its nature], cattle, and creeping things, and beast of the earth after his own kind. . . . And God . . . said unto them [Adam and Eve], Be fruitful and multiply” (Genesis 1:22, 24, 28).

147 In margin of MS A: “I meane the Booke called *Turba Philosophorum.*” *Noscius*, though cited by Bernardus (see 117n), does not appear in any version of the *Turba* I have been able to see, or in the comprehensive list of speakers given by Ferguson 2:478–79. For a survey of one version of this work, see Holmyard, 82–86.

151 *of their owne kinde.* See 111n, above.

153 *John . . . of the Mount.* Unidentified; Bernardus (see 117n, above) cites the “testament” of a “Joannes Mechungus” (*Theatrum Chemicum*, 1:694), to whom is attributed the saying translated at 258–59: “ex metallo generatur atque multiplicatur metallum, & nullo alio.”

160 *this building.* Continuing the figure from 90–91.

163 In margin of MS A: “All Philosophers agree uppon this poynt that the generacion of our Stone is like to the generacion of a man.”

163–64 *Sol . . . Luna:* Sulphur and Mercury, the two constituents of all metals.

170 *lett.* Hindrance.

176 *Sib.* Closely related.

179 *trace.* Way, path.

189 *ingresse.* Aside from its usual sense (a means of entry), *OED* gives meanings of the word specific to astrology (“The arrival of a planet at that part of the heavens occupied by another planet”) and astronomy (“The entrance of the sun into a sign of the zodiac”) which perhaps apply here, in the identification of planets and metals.

192 *algates.* Always.

195 In margin of MS A are the following references: “[Geber] cap: 19, *libri fornacum.* [Lullus] in 3tia distinction de 5ta essentia cap. inscript 6 de aliis principiiis figure S. [Arnald] cap. 29. sui *minoris Rosarii.*” Printed versions of Geber’s *Liber Fornacum* and the *Rosarius Minor* (sometimes attributed to Arnaldus de Villanova because of his similarly titled *Rosarius Philosophorum*) would have been available to Cradock in *Alchemia* (Nuremberg, 1541; see Ferguson 1:19, 2:287). Lull’s *Testamentum* (comprised of a *Theorica*, *Practica*, and *Codicillus*) circulated widely in manuscript before being printed in the seventeenth century. The passage cited here is from *Practica* (*Theatrum Chemicum*, 4:139–40); the “figure S” refers either to one of the two diagrams in this chapter, or to the alphabetical symbols used throughout the *Testamentum*, where *S* stands for *lapidem album* or the white stone.

198 *as promise was.* I.e., Cradock’s promise to tell whereof the philosopher’s stone is made (65). “*How itt’s made*” (200ff.) is the second thing promised (66–67).

204 *jard.* Jarred, disagreed.

206 *Zacharias.* Dionysius Zacharias (Denis Zacheire), on whom see below 210n, and the text attributed to him in this collection, Part Four.

208 I.e., “The same is true of the one he (Zacharias) followed.”

210 After this line the following prose passage interrupts the

I. Commentary

verse in both MSS (asterisks indicate textual variants, for which see textual notes 210):

The words of *Zacharias* be these in the 79: leafe of his French booke: "I will followe these Authors" (saith hee) "whom the supporters of Sublimed Mercury with vitrioll and salt alledge against me, to disprove their Errours whose writeings testify unto us that all these divers operacions, distillacions, separacions of Elements, reduccions & other like things, were written by them for none other Cause but to hide and cover under the same the true practise of our art. And to shew that this is true, Understand that after that *Arnoldus de villa nova* had taught us all these said* divers operacions in his said* *Rosarie*, he saith in the end in* his *Recapitulacion*, 'Wee have shewed the true practise & the true meane how to make our divine worke but in very short words, and yett long enough for them that understand them.*' Soe farr is itt of them, that in speakeing of so divers and long operacions, he hath allwaies ment to speake of the true preparacion & practise of this divine worke. The very same testifieth the end of the Codicill of *Raymundus Lullus*, when he answereth them that would demand of him, wherefore he hath written the arte, seeing he had avouched a little before, that a body [p. 9] should not looke to come to the true knowledge thereof by the readinge of bookes: 'We have written them' (saith hee) 'for this end that the faithfull reader might have an Introduction and bee inabled in the true knowledge of our divine Worke. The preparacion whereof wee have never declared aright.' Soe greate odds there bee then that the greate & sundry preparacions, which he hath taught in his *Bookes*, should bee the onely and whollie practice which is required for the accomplishing of our divine Worke." This saith *Zecharias*.

Cradock is translating from part two of Denis Zacheire's *Opus-cule Tres-Excellent de la Vraye Philosophie Naturelle des Metaulx*; his reference to the "79th leaf" indicates that he had on his desk either the 1567 or the 1568 edition (both published at Antwerp), both of which have identical pagination (the quotation goes to p. 80).

225-26 *Aristotle . . . Meteors*. Book 4 of the *Meteorologica*

has been called a “chemical treatise,” in that it deals with the four elements and their qualities (“active”: hot or cold; “passive”: moist or dry), in order to explain processes such as putrefaction, concoction (“cooking”), hardening, softening, drying, melting, and solidification. Although Aristotle does not discuss the transmutation of metals, Western alchemy based much of its theory and took much of its terminology from this and his other scientific works. Cradock probably has in mind this passage: “Simple, natural generation is a change effected by these properties [qualities], when present in the right proportions, in the matter underlying a particular natural thing [*hyle*, “prime matter,” or in Cradock’s terms the “originall” of metals], this matter being the passive properties of which we have spoken. The hot and the cold produce change by mastering the matter” (Loeb ed., 378b31–379a1).

233 *offspring*. Source, origin; i.e., the “originall” of metals, prime matter or *hyle* (see 225–62, and 273ff., where the practical process of reducing metals to their original state is described).

234 In margin of MS A: “Circa initia libri sui de perfecto magisterio. Idem alii etiam affirmant” (Near the beginning of his book on the perfect magistry. Others also affirm the same thing). The work of Arnaldus cited is the *Flos Florum*, printed in Guglielmo Gratarolo’s *Verae Alchemiae* (Basel, 1561) and elsewhere under the title *Liber Perfecti Magisterii, qui Lumen Luminum Nuncupatur* (Ferguson 1:44). The passage cited corresponds to *Theatrum Chemicum*, 3:130–31: “Et sic solvitur opinio illorum, qui dicunt: Species metallorum transmutari non possunt: & hoc verum est, ut ipsi afferunt, nisi ad primam materiam reducantur. Reductio autem illorum ad primam materiam est facilis, ut tibi inferius ostendam: ergo transmutatio facilis & possibilis est. Multiplicatio etiam in metallis est possibilis: nam omne crescens & nascens multiplicatur & crescit, ut pater in plantis & animalibus; nam ex uno grano fiunt mille.”

245 *Letted*. Hindered.

250 *matrice*. Matrix, uterus. See 161–82 and 163n; in the section on physiognomy, pseudo-Aristotle explains the physiological

basis for this comparison: men of light coloring, for instance, are formed when “the seed wythyn the marice [matrix] is defiet [digested], like a messe within a potte to sethe, And therefor Pale coloure and saad is a tokyn that the decoccion [“cooking”] Is not Parfite” (*Three Prose Versions of the Secreta Secretorum*, 232). *eftsoones*: again.

252 *loathsome sulphures*. Sometimes called the “leprosy of metals,” impure sulphurs account for various imperfections in certain metals as found in nature. See Rulandus, 383.

258 *foyled*. Possibly a mistake for “soiled” as in MS *R*, but *foil* also means “to foul, defile, pollute” (*OED*).

259 *where Concoction . . . mightily*. Where (in nature) ripening or digestion was lacking, art (*hee*, 260) strongly supplies it.

264 See textual note, and cp. *nature’s school*, 109.

269 *hardly*. Hardily (boldly) or heartily.

273 *earst*. Erstwhile, formerly.

274 In margin of both MSS: “Calcinatio” (calcination means heating in open or closed vessels); see 307n.

281 *on this wise*. In this way. In margin of both MSS: “The preparacion of Salt.”

284 *runne deepe into the potte*. I.e., erode its surface.

286 *sollar*. Cellar.

290 *Naule*. Awl.

297 *Harmoniak Salt, Ammoniacke*. It is unclear how many different terms are meant here. Rulandus’ *Lexicon* says *Sal Armoniacus* is “Sal Sapparicius, i.e. Arabian Salt, . . . the Dissolved Stone” (281). But Read says, “*Sal armoniack* [is] sal ammoniac, ammonium chloride (also called *sal alacoph*)” (293).

298 *Tartar Salt*. Rulandus: “Sal Tartari: White Calcined Tartar” (284); and “Tartar: White Tartar, or the Salt of Tartar of the Sages, is their Magistery arrived at the white colour” (428).

In this context, probably the salts of tartaric acid, or cream of tartar, is meant: the white crystals purified from the hard crust found inside wine casks (acid potassium tartrate).

299 *Alcali*. Alkali; soda-ash, or ashes (especially of marine plants) treated with lye.

304 *in ure*. In practice.

307 *Calcine*. Reduce by fire to a powder.

309 In margin of MS A: “In *libro de Alchemia* circa finem libri” (in [Pseudo-]Albertus Magnus, *De Alchymia Liber*, near the end of the book). This text would have been available to Cradock in Gratarolo’s *Verae Alchemiae*; the passage cited is at the beginning of a discussion of how various metals are to be calcined: “Accipe laminas & calefac eas, postea linas cum aqua salis, quia sal corrodit omnem humiditatem corruptam, quae est in corporibus” (*Theatrum Chemicum*, 2:452).

310 *moysture workeing*. Moisture that causes.

316 *asslake*. Slake, become less vigorous.

331 *Their mind fullfill*. I.e., do as the philosophers say.

336 *nere a dell*. Never a deal, not a whit.

337 In margin of both MSS: “The pitt of putrefaction.” The process described in the following lines corresponds generally to the long account in Rulandus, 265–66.

340 *Janus . . . Licinius*. Janus Lacinius, whose collection *Pretiosa Margarita Novella* was printed by Aldus (Venice, 1546); see Ferguson 2:2–3.

344 *glased*. Glazed, as at 292.

353 *fashion . . . quantity*. Shape . . . size.

366 *in balneo*. In *balneo Mariae*, the “furnace of Maria” (Jewish alchemist), a warm water bath (double-boiler) sometimes substituted for the dung-pit to provide a constant but mild heat.

372-74 In margin of both MSS: “This Councell gives R. Lullus

in the *Theoricks* of his *Testament*. Cap: 33” (see 195n, above). The cited text reads, “Et debes habere magnum alembicum, ut materia liberius possit ascendere, & cum parvo igne excitari, ut veniat in aerem” (*Theatrum Chemicum*, 4:53).

373 *Limbicke*. Alembic, a still-head (“crest,” 374) in which vapors condense.

379 In margin of both MSS: “*Arnoldus de villa-nova, R. Lullus, et autor Rosarii Philosophorum, in Turba et alii; v[ide] Liber Serpentis Aquarum*” (Arnald de Villanova, Ramond Lull, and the author of the *Rosarius Philosophorum*, in the *Turba Philosophorum*, and others; see the *Liber Serpentis Aquarum*). The *Liber Serpentis Aquarum* is unidentified.

381 *Lett tryall be thy success*. Let trial determine the result (?).

383 In margin of MS A: “Quicksilver of the Philosophers, what it is.”

387-92 In margin of MS A: “Soe saith *Efferarius Monachus* in libro suo *de lapide Philosophorum* et R. Lullus in suo *Codicillo: argentum vivum et Sulphur differunt non re, sed ratione*” (So says Efferarius [i.e., Ferrarius] the Monk in his book, *De Lapide Philosophorum* [accessible to Cradock in Gratarolo’s *Verae Alchemiae*, 1561; the passage cited is in *Theatrum Chemicum*, 3:144] and Raymond Lull in his *Codicile: mercury and sulphur differ not in substance but in theory*). The sulphur-mercury theory (see 87n) is fully expounded in Lull’s *Theorica*, and ch. 36 outlines the properties of these two “principles” which in various proportions determine the properties of each metal (see *Theatrum Chemicum*, 4:56).

388 *sownd*. I.e., “experience sensuously”; or perhaps “pronounce” (?). See textual note.

405 In margin of MS A: “This we read in *turba Philosophorum*, in *Margarita Boni Lombardi Ferrariensis, in lib[er] Serpentis aquarum, et in aliis nonnullis* [several others].” These works are cited above, 147n, 87n, 379n, respectively.

413 In margin of MS A: "Separacion & Conjunction of Elements."

415 In margin of both MSS: "Fermentacion"; see 444n.

417 I.e., if you intend to produce gold (compare the lesser task of producing silver, "Silver workes," 423).

426 *Jupiter*. Tin.

432 *life*. See textual note. While the reading in MS A (*like*) is possibly correct, *life* relates more closely to the "souls" of "unbodied bodies" or metals, discussed in the following lines.

435 In margin of MS A: "Arnoldus de villa nova, Cap: 38 sui *Rosarii minoris*; Aros in lib: suo ad regem Nephes Comes; Travirensis, de *Chemia* lib. 2, pag: 16; *Rosarium Philosophorum*, 286; Lullus in sua *Practica adjunct theoricæ sui testamenti*, cap: 28." Except for "Aros," all these works are cited above. "Aros" is a variant of Aaron, who appears in an alchemical dialogue with Maria Prophetissa (or Maria the Jewess); see Ferguson 2:77, Singer 1:9–10, 366n above, and the introduction to Maria's work in Part Four, below. No separate work of Aaron's has been identified.

443 In margin of MS A: "Quae debeat esse quantitas fermenti" (what must be the quantity of the ferment or leaven).

444 *levyn*. "*Elixir* is the Arabic name and *fermentum* is the Latin: because, just as bread is leavened and raised through good yeast, so the matter of metals may be transmuted through mercury, because it is the source and origin of all metals" (Pseudo-Albertus Magnus, *Libellus de Alchimia*, 19). Rulandus: "Fermentum is Elixir, a Leaven, which makes the body spongy, which ascends, and the spirit finds place, so that it may be prepared to be baked . . . therefore, also is the stone itself the Ferment. . . . [It is also the] Paste [see line 446] which we wish to Ferment, which we extract from imperfect bodies, the white out of Saturn [lead] and Jove [tin], the red out of Mars [iron] and Venus [copper]; but every body shall be dissolved in its own ferment. . . . Lully says: 'The ordinary gold cannot be a Ferment,

for it must have an actual, effectual, and working power, and be full of spirit; yet it is also called Ferment, and silver is called White Ferment” (144-45).

445-48 In margin of MS A: “*Thesaurus Philosophorum*” (i.e., the *Thesaurus Philosophiae*, attributed to Ferrarius and printed in Gratarolo’s *Verae Alchemia*); the relevant passage is a quotation from Morienus: “Cum corpus album fuerit calcinatum, mitte in eam quartam partem sui de fermento auri: Nam aurum est sicut fermentum panis, quod totam massam pastae convertit ad suam naturam” (*Theatrum Chemicum*, 3:155).

450 *Repertory*. The *Intentio Summaria, quae aliter dicitur Repertorium* of Raymond Lull (also in Gratarolo’s *Verae Alchemiae*; see Ferguson 2:52).

457 In margin of MS A: “*Rosarium Philosophorum*, Pag: 185. Art Herein passeth nature.”

467 *Augurellus*. In margin of MS A: “In libro suo de investigatione perfectionis in definitione lapidis Philosophici.” Giovanni Aurelio Augurello (ca. 1454–ca. 1537) was a humanist whose Latin alchemical poem in three books, *Chrysopoeia*, was first published in 1515; like several of Cradock’s other sources, it was also printed in Gratarolo’s *Verae Alchemia* (Ferguson 1:55–56, 342); see also 472n. The reference here is presumably to this work, or to his other poem, *Geronticon Liber* (both works in *Theatrum Chemicum*, 3:197–266).

469-78 In the margin of MS A opposite these lines but without clear references to them are these notes: (1) “Bernardus Trevirensis ad Doctor Thomum de Bononia, In the beginning of the booke”; the *Responsio ad Thomam de Bononia* of Bernardus Trevisanus was first published in 1564 (see Ferguson 1:102 and 117n, above). (2) “*Chrysop[oeia]*, lib: 2” (i.e., the poem of Augurello cited above 467n). (3) “Ad D[octorem] Thomam de Bononia, lib[er] de transmutatione metallorum.”

476 *water permanent*. “*Aqua permanens*—Enduring Water, is that which is made by the philosophical solution out of two perfect metallic bodies. It is Sol and Luna dissolved in water, and

likewise united. It is also called . . . Mercury of the Philosophers" (Rulandus, 34).

479 In margin of MS A: "Solutio requirit permanentiam solventis cum resoluta" (solution needs constant dissolving with re-dissolving).

489 *Hermes' Signet.* Hermes' seal; i.e., the air-tight closure of the vessel by fusion, soldering, etc.

491 In margin of MS A: "Tempus decoctionis" (the time of decoction or "digestion").

496 *Saturne.* Lead.

505 *defyne.* Set forth. In margin of MS A: "His owne words in the latter end of his Epistle of accurtationum to Robert the French King" (i.e., Lull's *Epistola de Accurtatione Lapidis Benedicto missa Anno 1412 Roberto Anglorum Regi*, published in 1546; see Ferguson 2:51).

507 For the common motif of the sequence of colors as the Great Work proceeds, see Read, 13–17, 145–48.

510 Mercury, as the "female" to sulphur's "male," is here pictured as giving birth to the stone.

516 *happily.* Haply, perchance.

521 *Cynobre.* Vermillion, from the brilliant red color of mercuric sulfide, or cinnabar, as found in nature.

527 In margin of both MSS: "Cibatio. All this nourishment comes from the woman saith the Earle of Trevisis to Doctor Thomas of Bonony & Laur[entius] Ventura." Cibation is the process of "feeding" the material in the vessel, as here described. Laurentius Ventura wrote at least three alchemical works, the first edition of which appeared in 1571 (Ferguson 1:420, 2:505); on Bernardus Trevisanus' letter to Thomas of Bologna, see above 469–78n.

550 *A water dry.* As the next lines explain, this paradox is resolved when one observes the properties of (philosophical as

well as ordinary) mercury: it is liquid, but it does not wet what it touches.

554 *that*. I.e., what.

555 In margin of both MSS: "Multiplicatio medicinae" (the multiplication of the "medicine" or stone). Projection (adding the philosopher's stone to the material prepared for transmutation) and Multiplication (transmutation itself, or the alchemical preparation of gold by artificially inducing its growth) were the last two steps in the Great Work. Embodied in the notion of multiplication was the belief that once the "medicine" had been made, it could be increased indefinitely in amount, or that its transmutative power could be increased by making it more concentrated (see Read, 140; Holmyard, 278; and lines 566–68 below).

566 *look whereon*. On whatever substance.

575-76 *paste, Leavin*. See 444n, above.

604 *tryed*. Proven.

607 *Richard English*. Ricardus Anglicus (13th c.), whose chief work, the *Correctorium Alchymiae*, was printed in Gratarolo's *Verae Alchemiae* of 1561, though it had been published as early as 1541 (Ferguson 2:270–72).

618 After his apostrophe to Trevisanus, Cradock now addresses the reader directly.

635. *Symonie*. Originally referring to Simon Magus (Acts 8:18–19), who offered the apostles money for the power to invoke the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands, simony is the traffic in sacred things. Though usually applied to the selling of ecclesiastical offices, here it refers to the sacred secret of alchemy itself, which cannot be bought or sold.

640 *ayle*. Trouble (i.e., why should he trouble himself?).

652 *have Store*. Esteem highly.

653 *So that*. As long as.

666 *in him hath Interest.* Has influence on God by virtue of a personal or special connection.

667 *algates.* Always.

673 In the heading just preceding these lines, *premises* means “the aforesaid,” or “that which has gone before.” *shootes att:* aims at, desires (the goods of the world).

682 *vaunt.* Boast. See textual note.

683 *Skill puffeth up.* Cf. 1 Cor. 8:1, “Knowledge puffeth up.” *building sure:* unlike the foolish man’s house, built on the sand; see 90–91n, above.

685 *rotten reed.* Perhaps alluding to 2 Kings 18:21 and Isa. 36:6: “Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it.”

707-8 Echoing Jesus’ admonition to his disciples, found in all the synoptic gospels, “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Matt. 16:26).

714 *here away.* Hereon.

716 *graver Studdies.* Theology; see Introduction.

Simon Forman

II. *Of the Division of the Chaos*

and

III. *Compositor huius Libri ad Lectorum*

Simon Forman (1552–1611) is best known to students of Renaissance literature for his all but unique eye-witness accounts of some Shakespearean plays performed at the Globe in 1611. Characteristically, though, Forman’s “Notes” on these performances are made “for Common Policy”—i.e., for their immediate personal value and professional interest. As a result, they reveal as much about his preoccupations with personal advancement, and with his own activities as medical practitioner, magician and astrologer, as they do about Shakespearean drama.¹ This “Book of Plays” is, however, only one of many sources Forman left behind; in fact, his is probably the most fully documented life, both inner and outer, of any Elizabethan person. In addition to an autobiography and a diary (kept intermittently from 1564–1602 and recording among other things his dreams), he compiled meticulous case-books of his large medical and astrological practice. All of these, not to mention his writings intended for publication, are of great interest to historians of science and to students of Elizabethan society and culture.

¹The plays are *Macbeth*, *Cymbeline*, and *The Winter’s Tale*, along with another on the reign of Richard II; the latter varies significantly from the received version of Shakespeare’s *Richard II*.

Forman's hectic life, chattily fleshed out in sometimes lurid detail by A. L. Rowse,² can be briefly dealt with here. Born in Quidhampton, Wiltshire, Forman was a willing student, but at age eleven his education was cut short by the death of his father. His mother refusing to support him, he was soon apprenticed to a hosier and grocer (who taught him something about herbal remedies). After five unhappy years he managed to be released from his indenture, hoping to continue his schooling and to better himself. Before he was eighteen, he did some teaching of his own, but eager for more learning, he longed to go to Oxford. He finally made it there (in 1573), but only for a year and only as a servant to two young Wiltshire men.³ For several years afterward he earned his way as an itinerant tutor and then as a schoolmaster at Salisbury, Devizes, and Oxford.

In 1579, however, Forman found his true calling, when he began to practice magic (prophecy, fortune-telling, and even necromancy) and medicine. For the former, he spent over a year (1579–80) in jail, at Fisherton Anger, just outside London. Upon his release, he traveled about practicing medicine, which he seems to have picked up from the astrologer and physician Francis Cox and from his own reading. Finally settling in London in 1589, he first made his name in the plague years 1592 and 1593 when, having cured himself of the infection by lancing the plague-sores and drinking a "strong water" he had distilled, he successfully applied these remedies to others—while most of the city's doctors had fled the city for their lives. His reputation growing, Forman was repeatedly persecuted, fined and even imprisoned by the Royal College of Physicians and other authorities for practicing medicine without a license. Some of his remedies

²*Simon Forman: Sex and Society in Shakespeare's Age* (London, 1974). Rowse corrects and vastly expands the *DNB* article (7:438–41), and he prints as appendices modernized texts of Forman's autobiography, diary, the "Book of Plays," and some genealogical notes. My account is based largely on Rowse and his appended material.

³One of these was John Thornborough (1551–1641), the future bishop of Worcester who in his later life was much concerned with alchemy and published a "philosophical-theological" work on it in 1621. While there is no hard evidence of an alchemical connection with Forman during Thornborough's rather abandoned Oxford days, this has recently been noted as a "possibility" by William H. Huffman, *Robert Fludd and the End of the Renaissance* (London, 1988), 32; see also *DNB*, 19:766–67.

II. & III. Introduction

were of the traditional Galenic kind (herbal, based on the humoral theory that an imbalance of bodily fluids caused disease), but some were Paracelsian (employing chemical treatments and drugs, based on a theory of specific external causes or “seeds” of disease). We do not know whether his dabbling in Paracelsian medicine was a source of tension with the medical establishment, but from about 1600 the Royal College was certainly in vigorous opposition to the new “chymical medicine.”⁴

During the latter 1590s and until his death in 1611 Forman was widely consulted and was well-known—if not notorious—in London, both as physician and astrologer-confidant. His clients included the powerful and the poor, countesses and commoners, and his success seems to have depended as much on his charisma and self-confidence as on his professional skills. It is reckoned that in each year between 1597 and 1601 he cast, on average, over a thousand astrological figures and saw as many or more medical patients.⁵ Ambitious for social advancement, Forman married, in 1599, the niece of a Kentish knight, and two years later he settled permanently in Lambeth (outside the jurisdiction of the London authorities), to become a “gentleman” and noted member of his parish. Having in the meantime acquired some powerful friends, he was finally granted a medical practitioner’s license on 26 June 1603 (on the basis of “long exercise and experience”) by Cambridge University.⁶ Thereafter, he dispensed astrological advice and medical aid until his death, the day of which (8 September 1611), according to the astrologer William Lilly, he had predicted.⁷

⁴Forman also had run-ins with various apothecaries. For this paragraph, see Rowse, 33, 240; for the Galenic-Paracelsian controversy, see Allen G. Debus, *The English Paracelsians* (London, 1965), though Forman is not mentioned.

⁵Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York, 1971), 307. Among his clients were Emilia Lanier, Rowse’s candidate for Shakespeare’s “Dark Lady” (*Simon Forman*, 99–117) and Frances Howard, Countess of Essex who (after Forman’s death) poisoned her husband, Sir Thomas Overbury; for Rowse’s clearing of Forman’s name in this affair, see 255ff. Forman was also consulted by a “Dr Cradock of Oxford” (205), who is almost certainly the theologian and alchemist Edward Cradock, whose verse treatise appears in this collection.

⁶Rowse (244), quoting MS Ashmole 1763; the *DNB* says that on the next day “he proceeded M.D. from Jesus College” (439).

⁷Rowse, 258–59; the *DNB* mistakenly gives September 12.

In addition to the personal and professional records already mentioned and some autobiographical verses, Forman also wrote substantial works on religion, magic, medicine, astrology, and alchemy—all unpublished. Only one item, a little pamphlet called *The Ground of the Longitude* (1591), was printed, though he certainly intended others for the press.

Of all Forman's activities, alchemy is the least studied, although numerous autograph manuscripts of his own compositions survive; he was also an assiduous transcriber of alchemical works by others. Moreover, his diary provides some record of his actual practice of alchemy. In Lent of 1595, he writes, "I began the philosopher's stone, and before made my furnace and all for it—as in my other book [unidentified] it appears. I made many syrups and drugs, distilled many waters, and bought stills." In July of that year he was distilling his "philosophical powder," and on December 12 the year came to a bad end when he "brake two glasses and lost the water." On 27 April 1596, "in subliming, [his] pot and glass broke, and all [his] labour was lost *pro lapide* [for the philosopher's stone]." In August 1599, Forman is seeking "to know what will become of my stone, whether ever it will come to good effect, and whether it will be profitable to me, or no. At this time my stone had stood closed in the tripod Attonor [athanor, digesting furnace] twelve weeks, and it was black upon and thin underneath"; later in the year, unfortunately, it was "set on fire and spoilt." In the spring of 1600 he "made many syrups, distilled many waters, and made many drugs," but by 1607 he "made an end of distilling [his] strong water" (presumably the medicinal concoction that had served him so well during the plague), and he seems to have given up on making the philosopher's stone.⁸

As a companion to this brief outline of Forman's time in the laboratory, a journal of the hours he spent at his desk in the pursuit of alchemy could also be reconstructed. For his many compositions and transcriptions of others' texts are often signed and dated precisely, and he sometimes adds notes about the

⁸Quotations are from MS Ashmole 354 and the modernized version of the diary, both in Rowse: 87, 250, 290, 292, 294, 297. Rowse himself says little about Forman's alchemy.

provenance of manuscripts copied or the source of printed material incorporated into his works. But a systematic study of his numerous alchemical papers, which now number significantly among the Ashmolean manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, is a major project awaiting an undertaker.⁹

Both of Forman's alchemical poems printed here seem to have been meant for publication, and each has a particular interest for the student of alchemy. The first, *Of the Division of the Chaos* (104 lines), is an alchemical interpretation of Genesis and as such exemplifies an important motif in Renaissance alchemical writing. The ancient concepts of the "chaos" (*hyle* or prime matter) and the four elements were legacies of pagan philosophy; fundamental to alchemical speculation, they had to be harmonized with the Scriptural account of the Creation, where the earth was "without form, and void," where God divided the firmament from the waters, and so on. If Genesis could be explicated to show how the elements (and hence metals) came from the chaos, the sacred text would authenticate, as it were, the entire alchemical cosmology, especially the macrocosm-microcosm analogy inherent in it. Such a project also had implications for the theory of transmutation. Simply put, this theory required that some base metal (usually lead or tin) be reduced to its prime matter (as at the beginning of creation); the elements could then be extracted from it and then rearranged in the proper proportion, allowing the "form" of gold to be imposed on the prepared matter. The alchemist thus mimics the actions of the Creator, who himself was the "divine Alchemist," with the very cosmos as His alembic.¹⁰

In setting out this parallelism, Forman's little poem is indebted both to the traditional account in Raymond Lull's *Theorica*, which deals principally with the four elements and the

⁹For Forman's writings and transcriptions, see Black's *Catalogue* of the Ashmolean manuscripts; Rowse notes (without detail) that some of his papers are also in the British Library. Ashmole's acquisition of Forman's manuscripts from his disciple Richard Napier and some account of them can be found in C.H. Josten, *Elias Ashmole (1617-1692)*, 5 vols. (Oxford, 1966), 1:210 et passim.

¹⁰For an overview of alchemical readings of Scripture, see Thomas Willard, "Alchemy and the Bible," in *Centre and Labyrinth: Essays in Honour of Northrop Frye*, ed. Eleanor Cook et al. (Toronto, 1983), 115-27.

quintessence, and to contemporary Paracelsians, who added to these concepts that of the “tria prima,” sulphur, mercury, salt. In a small way, Forman anticipates writers of the next century like Robert Fludd, Gerhard Dorn, J.B. van Helmont, and Thomas Vaughan, all of whom elaborated on the Creator-as-Alchemist analogy, with various Neoplatonic, Hermetic, and occult ingredients.¹¹ Forman’s *Of the Division of the Chaos* is all the more interesting because of the prose commentary he wrote to accompany it. Unfortunately, we have only the beginning of this (see Textual Notes), but in it we can see hints of the kind of Neoplatonic, theological-chemical speculation that exploded among Paracelsians of the next century.

The second poem printed here, *Compositor huius Libri ad Lectorum* (70 lines), appears in a specific bibliographical context. Among Forman’s papers are two alchemical dictionaries. The first is an enormous compendium of alphabetical entries in two large folios, MSS Ashmole 1494 (vol. 1) and 1491 (vol. 2). The second, from which our verse address “to the reader” comes, has only one volume (MS Ashmole 1472), but it reaches 917 pages; it has entries from *Argentum Vivum* (mercury, a chief component in alchemical theory and practice) to *Ypocras* (Hippocras, a cordial of spiced wine), as well as an index of cross-references. Entitled *Principles of Philosophi, Gathered by S. Forman*, and dated 1597, this carefully written manuscript, with our poem as a verse preface, has all the marks of being prepared for the press.

Like the famous *Lexicon Alchemiae* (Frankfurt, 1612) of Martinus Rulandus and the various *Indices Chymici* compiled by Sir Isaac Newton,¹² Forman’s lexicons consist mainly of extracts or

¹¹See Chapter 3 of Lull’s *Theorica* (in *Theatrum Chemicum*, 4:7–8) and compare Forman’s poem, 34n. For Vaughan, see *Magia Adamica* (1650) and his Preface to *The Fame and Confession of the Fraternity of . . . the Rosie Cross* (1652), both in *Works*, ed. Alan Rudrum (Oxford, 1984), esp. 175ff., 499. See also Allen G. Debus, *The Chemical Philosophy: Paracelsian Science and Medicine in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, 2 vols. (New York, 1977), and *The French Paracelsians: The Chemical Challenge to Medical and Scientific Tradition in Early Modern France* (Cambridge, 1991), indices, s.v. Creation. For Forman’s possible influence on Fludd, see Huffman, *Robert Fludd*, 171.

¹²See Richard S. Westfall, “Isaac Newton’s ‘Index Chemicus,’” *Ambix* 22 (1975): 174–85; and Betty Jo Teeter Dobbs, *The Foundations of Newton’s Alchemy* (Cambridge,

paraphrases from earlier writers. As a verse prologue to such a compendium of detailed knowledge, Forman's address to the reader stands as a summary or preview of the whole alchemical work. Hence it begins by exhorting the student to study ardently at any cost (as a result of such effort, "purified Soules to the heavens shalle ascend"). It then describes the making of the philosopher's stone by the purifying force of a substance called "Cako." In concluding, the author's flamboyant egocentrism peeps out:

I, *Forman*, have writen thes verses fewe
The trouth of this art to thee to showe.
Crave wisdome of god, the sence to understand,
Ells meddell not herwith, nor tak it in hand. (59–62)

Forman's final advice is to work in secret and to help the poor.

Neither of Forman's poems can claim much originality (it was in the nature of alchemy that an adept could only pass on the same unchanging ancient truths to worthy successors), but each one bears the author's characteristic stamp. Though they are for the most part compilations of earlier material, they are rendered with the same authority and energy that saw Forman through his vicissitudinous life. There is a sense here that he is still living by his wits. In particular, the project of the alchemical lexicon—which, if published, certainly would have superceded anything of the kind then available in English—smacks of the same personal magnetism and entrepreneurial spirit that propelled his medical and astrological practice.

1975), esp. 21–23.

II. *Of the Division of the Chaos*

[f. 33r]

Into darkness then did descend the sprite of god,
Upon the watrie *Chaos*, wher on he made his abode.
Which darknes then was on the face of the deepe,
In which Rested the *Chaos*, and in it all thinges asleepe:
Rude, unformed, wythout shape, forme or any good, 5
Out of which god Created all thinges as yt stode.
But first he Commaunded a lighte to appeare,
That all might be seene, that before was hid.
And god sawe that the light was good and Cleare, 10
And the darknes and light he did then dyvide,
Callinge the one dai, and the other nighte
For darknes obscuer (and dai for shining brighte).
And a *firmament* then god did let make,
To severe the waters above from those belowe;
And dyvided the Earth from the waters alsoe, 15
Wherin greatly his powere he did showe.
Then out of this *Chaos*, the Elementes 4 were made:
Heat and cold, moiste and drye, in like wise,
Which ar the begininge of all Creaturs wide
That under the globe of Luna doe abyde. 20
The Quintessence (that som men yt calle)
Was taken out of the *Chaos* before the 4 Elementes all:
Which is the firste beinge, as we may discrie,
And uncorruptible, wherof was made the skie
And Caelestialle bodies all, which doe never die. 25
Soe that of *Hyle*, nor *Chaos*, nor quintessence hie
Is ther any generation to Multiply

II. Of the Division of the Chaos

In species or kinde here in earth belowe,
Of creatures abydinge under the skye,
But the 4 Elementes doe make influence, 30
By their speciall power, into all thinges belowe;
And into every specificat thinge doe put quintessence
To repe such seed therof: as men doe sowe
But of them selves. As they ar simple and puer in kind,
In every species together conjoynd we doe them finde, [f. 33v]
Creatinge *Sulphur*, *Salte*, and *Argent Vive*—
The Inward bodies of thinges that make them thrive.
Whose grosse bodies to destroy, yf we will them have,
We moste not spare therof to deprave.

Nexte after thes, 4 Elementes puer, simple and Cleare 40
(That is, heat and Cold, moiste and also dry)
Ar assigned to worke on 4 bodies grosse
(The laste substance of the *Chaos*, and of the highest,
the drosse):

Earth, water, ayre & fier, therin to showe their mighte
And therin to make generation and bringe forms to lighte; 45
In every one severally, out creatures to bringe,
In which is the begininge and generation of all thinge.
For heate is assigned to the fier, which doth burne;
Moisture to the ayer, which doth Corrupte & Round turne;
Drynes to the Earth, the mother of each thinge; 50
And Coldnes to the water, from whence all doe springe.
Heat and moisture ar Active to generation;
Cold and dryth ar passive, in and to each thinge;
Fier and ayer, active by Elementation;
Water and Earth, passive to generation. 55

For in drynes of the Earth and in Water Cleare,
All thinges ar engendred, before they appeare.
Accordinge to the Conjunction of the 4 Elementes,
In each of their Subjectes severally,
Are Engendred and brought forth every Creature 60
Lyvinge or beinge under the Mone's skye.
The Earth is fixte, durable for ever to abyde;
The ayer Continually moveth from place to place besyde,
And is the life of the fier which purgeth all;

And the water (for Coldnes) destructive, men call. 65
But when they ar Commixed, one with another
(Not simple, but Compound in their Elementall qualities),
Then worke they in kinde by diversities,
More and lesse as they ar Commixed by degrees. [f. 34r]

Yf thes 4 Elementes doe worke in the fier
To Engender and bringe forth som creature,
As the *Sallamander*, ever lyvinge therin,
Youe moste conceyve welle of his Commixcion,
Which is by nature and Elementes tempered so well
That he delightes as gould in the fier to dwelle. 75
For to the Creatures of the fier and his Region,
The fier is alwaies most naturalle:
For that in their Commixture yt is moste predominate,
Which maketh them the more able the fier to Enduer,
By reason of moch heat & drith in their temprature. 80
The water to the fier is moste Enimie;
Therefore, kepe fier in water, and moisten that is drie,
And yt will perishe and die, and sone putrifie.
For as the fier is hote of him selfe, and of the Earth drye,
Soe the water is cold and moiste of the skie, 85
Which Causeth creatures of the fier to die and putrifie.
For Colde doth destroy, and moiste doth putrifie:
Exepte thou knowe this, studdie not philosophie.
Likwise, the creatures that in the Ayer doe lyve
Of the aery substance ar moste Compacte. 90
The other Elementes which doe under dryve
(As water, Earth and fier), of which they ar facte,
Yet in the ayer they moste delighte, and of yt doe feed,
And in their Contrary full ill doe they speed.
For yt is *Omne oppositum* under the skie, 95
Which is the only cause all Creatures doe die.
For in their *simile* all thinges doe Rejoice,
And of their *simile* they all waies make choice.
And creatures engendred in the waters cold and moiste
Ar sluggish and heavy, and given to moch reste, 100
And feedes of such thinges as that Element doth houlde.
For their bodies ar grosse and of a moiste mould,

II. Of the Division of the Chaos

As fishes, froges, and herbes: milke, butter, & chease
To feede soe grosly, they ar nothings Creese.

II. TEXTUAL NOTES

Text: Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 240, fols. 33r–35v; holograph.

2 on] *MS reads one*

11 one] *MS reads on*

42 on] *MS reads one*

46 one] *MS reads on*

66 one] *MS reads on*

104 *This line completely fills fol. 34r; fol. 34v is blank. No catchwords are used in the verse text, so it is impossible to know whether or not the poem is complete. The prose commentary on the poem certainly is not complete, since it breaks off abruptly (at the bottom of fol. 35v), having completed only two of three announced explanations for “the deep”; also there are catchwords (“this word”) at the bottom of the leaf indicating that the text was continued on another sheet, now lost.*

The last three lines of the commentary on both sides of the last leaf (fol. 35) have gaps, as a small piece has been torn out. Conjectured reconstructions of the missing words or letters are enclosed in square brackets.

II. COMMENTARY

Forman supplied glosses for key terms in his poem; these have been assimilated into the present commentary. Material in brackets is editorial.

1 *sprite of god*. Forman's note: "*The Sprite of the Lord moved*: Here by the sprite of the Lord is meante the holy ghoste, the third person in Trinitie, which moved upon the face of the depe or upon the waters, to put severalle ydees [ideas, i.e., archetypes or patterns] and vertues [efficacies or properties having power] of diversitie of thinges and of all Creatures therin (bothe into the earth and also into the waters), that afterward they should bringe forth every severalle creature, according to the dyversities of the ydees and vertues which the holy ghoste Infused therin at that tyme. For the [be]ginninge of all Influences, powers, vertues, graces, and good giftes com of and from the sprite of god, which is the holy ghoste, Accordinge to the ydee and Celestialle bodie therof. And this was the cause which the holy ghoste moved upon the waters: because the waters ar liquid, and apt and able to take impression of all forms, the which hardder thinges cannot doe. Therefore is water the firste begininge and originalle of all Creatures, and from thence they growe to a harder form, as the Earth that was first begotten of the water. And therefore all hard thinges turne into a thicke water againe" (fol. 35r).

2 *Chaos*. As the formless void of primordial matter, chaos was a central concept in alchemical speculation, since it was thought necessary to reduce the base metal to its prime matter, so that the "form" of gold could be imposed on it. Ovid's account of chaos and creation (*Metamorphoses* 1.1ff.) had long been used by Christians to supplement Genesis 1:2 ("the earth was without form, and void"), and some alchemists cited Lactantius' phrase, "a chao quod est rudis inordinataeque materiae confusa congeries" (*Opera*, 1:14, 20, quoted in Jung, *Psychology*

and Alchemy, 144n). Albertus Magnus cites Ovid's *indigestaque moles* ("a rough, unordered mass of things") in his *Metaphysics* (1.5.3), and Roger Bacon attempted to bridge the gap between chaos as a theoretical and a real substance. For some medieval versions of chaos, see Stock, *Myth and Science in the Twelfth Century*, 72–73, et passim. Rulandus has a long entry for "Materia Prima et Huius Vocabula"; it begins: "The philosophers have so greatly admired the Creature of God which is called the Primal Matter, especially concerning its efficacy and mystery, that they have given to it many names, and almost every possible description, for they have not known how to sufficiently praise it." There follow fifty names, each with an explanation; some of the those used in various texts in this collection are the "philosophical stone [that is] no stone," "permanent water," "salt of nitre," "lac virgines," "the serpent or dragon," "white magnesia, a magnet," and "chaos" (*Lexicon*, 220–26). The theological implications of a pre-existing chaos were felt into the seventeenth century by Milton and others; see Kocher, *Science and Religion in Elizabethan England*, 147ff., and *Paradise Lost* 1.890ff., 7.165ff.

2 *he*. I.e., darkness (line 1).

3 *the deepe*. Forman's note: "This word depth [sic] is to be understod 3 manner of waies: Firste, in the depnes of god's wisdom, in the creation of the worlde; Secondly, in the Angells; Thirdlie, in the Concavity, lownes, and profunditie of thinges.

In the Depth of god's Wisdom: God before and in the Creation of the wordle [sic] and creatures therin, before he began to poure forth the Chaos [& waters a]nd dyvid the same, had deplye Conceyved [and reflec]ted in hime selfe, not only the form and matter therof, but also the diversity of ydees and formes that should arise, growe, com, & be in tyme, of that on[e] thinge without forme of a huge, thick, condensate ymmateriall matter: Howe by his wisdom and powere he wold bringe yt firste to a forme, and out of that form ynnumerable formes should from tyme to tyme afterwarde arise, growe, and come. For the deapth of god's wisdom is unscrutable. Therefore saith the profet, 'O the

II. Commentary

depth and unsearchable wisdom of god' [Romans 11:33]. And so yt [i.e., depth] is Considered in god.

"In the Angells, howe this word depth is considered: In the Angells this word depth is understod that in the deapth of their wisdom and Capacitie they Could not Conceyve nor Comprehend the conceight and depnes of the wisdom of god when the darkenes was upon the face of the depe, but they were astonied and amazed in them selves when they sawe the depth wherin the Confused *Chaos* was. And they also were in great Admiration to see and Consider what god entended to doe of that chaos in that darke, confused place, and howe it was possible for god to performe that which he had spoken and to make soe Excellent a worke of soe velle, obscuer, and basse darke matter. For the depth of their wisdom was not able to conceive the entente, wisdom, and power of god, so that darknes & Ignorance overwhelmed their wits and sences. So that darknes was upon the depe (that was Ignorance & blindnes) overwhelmed the wisdom of and [the understand]ing of the Angelles, which were not ab[le to concei]ve the wisdom of god" (fols. 35r-35v; the rest of the text is missing).

26 *Hyle*. The first matter of the universe (medieval Latin *hyle*, from ancient Greek, *ulē*). Though *hyle* is usually used synonymously with *chaos*, the *nor* in this line may indicate a distinction. Perhaps *chaos* is meant to represent matter utterly without form (see 2n, above), while *hyle* is prime matter (the four elements) ready for the imposition of form (?).

26-34 These lines seem to say that all things are produced only by their own kind, but that even in creatures made from the four sublunary elements there is a "seed" of the most pure substance, the quintessence.

32 *every specificat thing*. Everything specificated or "determined as a distinct species" (*OED*).

34 *they*. The traditional four sublunary elements, which are still held to be the substrates of all things, despite the positing of sulphur, salt, and mercury (36), the "tria prima" of Paracel-

sian matter-theory, as the intermediary constituents of metals. For a more explicitly Paracelsian view of the “alchemical Creation,” compare this passage from Joseph Duchesne (Quercetanus), translated at about the time Forman was writing:

We holde by *Moses* doctrine that GOD in the beginning made of nothing a *Chaos*, or Deepe, or Waters, if wee please so to call it. From the which *Chaos*, Deepe, or waters, animated with the Spirits of God, God as the great workemaister and Creator, separated first of all *Light* from *Darknesse*, and this *Aetheriall Heaven*, which wee beholde, as a fifth Essence, or most pure Spirite, or most simple spirituall body. Then hee divided Waters, from Waters; that is to say, the more subtill, Aiery, and Mercuriall liquor, from the more Thicke, Clammy, and Oyely, or Sulphurous liquor. After that, he extracted and brought forth the *Sulphur*, that is to say, the more grosse Waters, from the drye parte, which out of the separation standeth like salte, and as yet standeth by it selfe apart. . . . This was the worke of God, that hee might separate the Pure from the Impure: that is to say, that he might reduce the more pure and Ethereal Mercury, the more pure and inextinguible Sulphur, the more pure, and more fixed salte, into shyning and inextinguible Starres and Lights, into a Christalline and Dyamantine substance, or most simple Bodie, which is called *Heaven*, the highest, and fourth formall Element. (*The Practise of Chymicall, and Hermeticall Physicke*, trans. Thomas Tymme [1605], sig. H1r; cited in Debus, *French Paracelsians*, 54.)

39 *moste*. Must (see also line 73). *deprave*: corrupt (i.e., the “grosse body” must be destroyed to liberate the “Inward body”).

40 *these*. I.e., sulphur, salt, and mercury (see 34n). *Elementes*: as the next line makes clear, these are not themselves the four elements (named at line 44), but rather the four properites or “Elementall qualities” (67) which reside in each element (fire is hot and dry, water is moist and cold, etc.); see 48ff.

52-57 A similar formula of active-passive occurs in ch. 46 of the *Theorica* of Raymond Lull (see *Theatrum Chemicum*, 4:69).

II. Commentary

66-69 When the four elements (and hence their corresponding properties) are mixed in certain proportions, a given material substance results.

72ff. This account of the Salamander explains why this fabled creature was often used as a symbol for the philosopher's stone itself, which like gold is impervious to the fire.

83 *soe.* Soon.

84 *as . . . drye.* As the fire is hot by its nature ("of himselfe") and as the earth is dry by its nature.

91 *which doe under dryve.* These words seem to make no sense, but the meaning of 91-94 appears to be "although these predominantly airy creatures are composed ("ar facte") of some small proportion of the unsympathetic elements (fire, water, earth), they find their natural place and sustenance in the elemental air."

95 *Omne oppositum.* Everything has its opposite, which is antagonistic to it.

104 *Creese.* Creeshy (fat); "they ar nothing Creese" is an irony, since they are nothing *but* fat.

III. *Compositor huius Libri ad Lectorem, 1597*

[f. 6r]

All thinges seame harde when wee doe begine,
But labore and diligence doth them winne.
We oughte not to Recone nor counte the thinge harde
That Bringeth Joye and wealth afterwarde.
Neither oughte wee to Care what wee doe Exspende, 5
For purified Soules to the heavens shalle ascende.
Doe all thinges in Order, as Tyme doth aforde,
For Nature with Nature doth alwaies Accorde.
Of thinges Naturale, Commixed by proportion, doth springe 10
A new Borne babe surmountinge all thinge:
That supernaturalle is, as by profe we finde,
That Reyneth and Ruleth over his kinde.
From whence he sprange, he is bettered so:
He reyneth all bodies and Endeth all wooe.
But in the first principles therin be wise, 15
And prepare them after the philosophers' guise.
This is a Chife principle (Note it Righte well):
That Nature with Nature doth accorde and dwelle.
And the Chiffeste of our skile therin is founde,
And *Mars* in *Cako* his *Musick* doth sounde. 20
And *Diana* also, and none but shee,
Doth seperate *Cako* with *Mercurie*.
For when sturne *Mars* hath plaied his parte,
And in striving with *Cako* hath lefte his harte,
Dyana to seperate and set them aparte 25
Conjoyneth with *Cako* to enter this Arte,
Agreing together like man and Wife,

III. *Compositor huius Libri ad Lectorem, 1597*

Till *Mercurie* puffeth and Endeth the strife.
And 3 in one doth then Agre,
And with *Mercurie* from *Luna* awaie doth flee,
Caryng with him both *Cako* and *Mars*, [f. 6v]
Leavinge *Luna* alone, both Naked and harse,
To be transposed to her olde hewe.
And soe they bide her farwell and adewe,
Til after againe when they doe mete. 35
The reste lye prayinge at *Mercurie's* feete
To make him able, in strength and poware,
In the nexte meetinge to abide the sharpe shower:
When he shal meete with *Sol* and *Luna* together
To transforme them I knowe not whether 40
But into him selfe, as I suppose.
The som of this Arte for to disclose,
Yf thou worke wisely as thou shouldest doe,
My wordes and writing thou shalte finde true.
But here I will leave them Imprisoned nowe, 45
Until one unto another they yeald and bowe,
And agree together like perfecte friendes.
Then for thy paines they will make thee amendes,
When they ar lincked together in such unity
That one from another they Cannot fly. 50
They shall Revive and be made alyve,
And overcom all that with them strive.
Their furi and fiercnes, yt shalbe so greeete,
And thir hie colloure of which I doe treat,
That all to them selves they shall Converte. 55
And then arte thou Lord and master of this arte,
For the which live welle, and give God the praise;
Helpe the pore, and be secrete allwaies.
I, *Forman*, have writen thes verses fewe
The trouth of this art to thee to showe. 60
Crave wisdome of god, the sence to understand,
Ells meddell not herwith, nor tak it in hand.
For yt wil coste thee moch worldly pelfe;
But trust not others, but doe yt thy self.

Simon Forman

Learne, therefore, firste to cleanse, purifie, & sublime, 65
To dissolve, Congelle, distill, and sometime
To Conjoyne and separate, and howe to doe all,
That when thou thinkest to rise, thou dost not falle.
Truste to thy selfe and not to another;
I can say no more to thee yf thou were my brother. 70

fnis quod Simon Forman

III. TEXTUAL NOTES

Text: Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 1472, fols. 6r-6v; holograph.

- 29 one] *MS reads on*
50 one] *MS reads on*
63 worldly] *MS reads wordly*

III. COMMENTARY

1 In margin of MS: "Cato"; i.e., Dionysius Cato, supposed author of moralistic proverbs used in elementary education.

8 An adaptation of one of the oldest alchemical maxims, found in manuscripts of the fourth century A.D.; it probably derives from the saying of pseudo-Democritus, "The nature, in such a case, is charmed by the nature: in such a case, triumphs over it; in such a case, dominates it" (see Sheppard, "Redemption Theme," 43-44; and Patai, "Maria the Jewess," 181). This proverbial saying is repeated at line 18; similar paraphrases appear in William Blomfield's *Noble Science of Alchemy* (ed. Schuler, *Three Renaissance Scientific Poems*, 417) and George Ripley's *Compound of Alchymie* (Ashmole's *Theatrum*, 112, 130), both of which poems Forman knew, since he makes lengthy excerpts from them in his lexicon.

10 *A new Borne babe*. The "infant" of innumerable alchemical treatises, the philosopher's stone that grows within the womb-like hermetic vessel.

14 The philosopher's stone (see 10n) governs all minerals and is also a sovereign medicine for the human body.

16 *guise*. Manner, ways.

20 *And*. If. *Mars*: iron. *Cako*: in Forman's alchemical lexicon which follows this poem, *Cako* (also called *Cacob*) is defined as "Crude Antimony, as yt commeth out of the myne: but yt moste [i.e., must] be purified because yt is full of Earth and Unclean; and this is the whole secrete of philosophers, & youe shall purefy yt thus" (p. 200; a detailed recipe follows, pp. 201-210). The wonders of antimony were to be fully developed in Basil Valentine's *Triumphal Chariot of Antimony*; see Jones's *Lithochymicus*, 5.16n and *Hermetick Raptures*, 640n, both in this collection.

21 *Diana*. Silver, associated with the moon; also called *Luna* (30ff.), as iron is called *Mars* (20, 23), and as gold is identified with the sun and called *Sol* (39).

32 *harse*. Harsh, in the sense of hard and rough to the touch (?).

34 *bide*. Bid.

36-41 These lines suggest that philosophical mercury becomes dominant over all other metals and is thus equivalent to the philosopher's stone. The "sharp shower" may be the dissolving force of the philosopher's vinegar or acid. In lines 40-41, *whether* means "whither," i.e., "(in)to what (substance)," and *But* means "except," so the lines can be rendered, "to transform them into I know not what but himself," or "to transmute gold and silver into nothing else but the philosopher's stone itself."

37 *poware*. Power.

45 *them*. Sol and Luna (39), which can also stand for male and female, the philosophical principles of sulphur and mercury; these are said to be still in the hermetic vessel, not yet fully united (49-50) and made into the philosopher's stone, whose powers are described at 51-55.

PART TWO:
THREE VERSE TRANSLATIONS
FROM MIDDLE FRENCH
BY WILLIAM BACKHOUSE

Three Verse Translations from Middle French

by William Backhouse

Amid the turmoil and upheaval of the 1640s, a country gentleman found leisure, among other scientific and antiquarian pursuits, to translate into nearly 3000 lines of English verse three poems in Middle French: Jean de La Fontaine's *La fontaine des amoureux de science* and two works going under the name of Jean de Meun, *Les remontrances de Nature à l'alchimiste errant* and *La réponse de l'alchimiste à Nature*. The fourth son of a prosperous Berkshire landowner (Samuel Backhouse, High Sheriff of the county and MP for Windsor, who had at least a passing interest in alchemy himself), William Backhouse (1593–1662) developed early in his life a passion for natural philosophy.¹ When only about seventeen, he was corresponding with the noted mathematician and astrologer John Blagrave. Upon his matriculation at Christ Church, at about the same time, he may have met and been influenced by Robert Fludd, though no concrete evidence for this exists. Of the time between his stay at Oxford (where he took no degree) and 1649, when he succeeded to the family estate at Swallowfield at age fifty-six (all three elder brothers having died), Backhouse has left few traces. He may have travelled on the continent, but one thing is known for certain: during this period he was making a serious study of alchemy. The earliest evidence for this is a forty-line poem in ballad-form on “The

¹Much more is known about the retiring, even secretive, translator of these three poems than would otherwise be possible, thanks to the painstaking work of C. H. Josten: “William Backhouse of Swallowfield,” *Ambix* 4 (1949): 1–33, and *Elias Ashmole (1617–1692)*, 5 vols. (Oxford, 1966), passim, upon which the biographical information here is based. One of Josten's major contributions is his decipherment of the secret script that Ashmole used in his diaries and alchemical notes, some of which reveal crucial information about Backhouse.

Magistry," dated December, 1633. By the end of 1644 he had translated La Fontaine's alchemical poem, and shortly thereafter he probably completed two other verse translations, as well as two in prose.²

Once at Swallowfield, Backhouse appears to have devoted himself to the study of natural philosophy, alchemy and astrology, and to the pursuit of British antiquities and botany. He is said by Ashmole to have performed various alchemical experiments and scientific observations,³ and by John Evelyn and Anthony à Wood to have invented a mechanical device for measuring distances while travelling in a coach. He was apparently well-known in scientific and occult circles of the Interregnum and early Restoration, especially as a collector of alchemical books and manuscripts, and scientific instruments. Samuel Hartlib recalled, for instance, Backhouse's "long Gallery [at Swallowfield] wherein are all manner of Inventions and Rarities," including a thermometer he had shown to King Charles, much to the monarch's delight.⁴

That Backhouse's little poem on "The Magistry," is one of the few contemporary ones included in Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* (1652) signals Backhouse's most important contribution to seventeenth-century alchemy: the profound influence he exerted on Ashmole himself.⁵ It is likely that

²A *Treatise of the Philosophers Stone wrighten by Synesius the Greeke Abbot* appears in the same MS as the verse translations (Ashmole 58, fols. 72r–88v; translated from a Paris, 1612 edition); his rendering of *The Golden Fleece or Flowre of Treasures . . . by that greate Philosopher Solomon Trismosin, Master of Paracelsus* survives in MS Ashmole 1395 (fols. 1r–223r, from a French version, probably of 1613). Josten notes that the Trismosin text quotes several passages from Jean de La Fontaine and *Les remontrances de Nature à l'alchimiste errant*, and suggests that these citations may have stirred Backhouse's interest in those poems ("William Backhouse," 33). If so, the undated Trismosin translation would have been made before 1644.

³These are described minutely in Ashmole's secret script, decoded by Josten, "William Backhouse," 18–20; and *Elias Ashmole*, 2:575–76.

⁴Hartlib's unpublished "Ephemerides," quoted in Josten, *Elias Ashmole*, 2:684n. In the reign of James I, Backhouse's father had been active in Sir Hugh Myddelton's New River project, an ambitious engineering feat by which fresh water was piped from Hertfordshire to London houses, and William may have carried on the connection; see J.W. Gough, *Sir Hugh Myddelton: Entrepreneur and Engineer* (Oxford, 1964), 51, 59, 71.

⁵See Ashmole's *Theatrum*, 342–43, where the poem is signed only "W. B."; for text

Introduction

the young Ashmole began his study of alchemy in the later 1640s, when he and Backhouse were neighbors in Berkshire; Backhouse certainly loaned him alchemical manuscripts and books when he was preparing verse texts for his *Theatrum* and for his edition of *The Way to Bliss* (1658). To Ashmole, however, Backhouse was much more than a source of alchemical materials. For on 3 April 1651 Backhouse adopted Ashmole as his alchemical “son”—that is, he selected him as heir to the hermetic secrets of which he was possessed, secrets supposedly going back to Hermes himself. This event was of great significance to Ashmole. As Josten points out, it was

neither an event of a legal nature nor merely a means of expressing intimate friendship between an older and a younger person, but the establishment of a spiritual bond between master and pupil according to the strict rules of alchemical tradition. The ancient alchemists, Ashmole explains, “usually (before they dyed) Adopted one or other for their Sonns,” whom they had chosen “for pure vertues sake” and left to these adopted heirs, under “the weighty obligations” of an oath, the secrets which the holiness of their art forbade them to divulge to others.⁶

The adoption was of such moment that Ashmole composed a celebratory ode on it, a poem full of alchemical figures and puns worthy of a playful John Donne but suffused with a profound and serious joy.⁷ Backhouse had not yet revealed all his secrets, however, for Ashmole’s diary shows that in March and April of 1652 Backhouse answered some of his queries concerning the philosopher’s stone. Then, a year later, we read this memorable entry:

and detailed commentary see Josten’s *Ambix* article, 5–15.

⁶*Elias Ashmole*, 1:77, quoting *Theatrum*, 440–41. Josten cites two other contemporary works that describe such adoptions (“William Backhouse,” 18), and one can observe the same tradition (though presumably fictionalized) at work in the translation of “Pater Aristeus,” in Part Four, below.

⁷After his adoption “the unemotional Ashmole,” says Josten, “even in his most private notes, reverently gives [Backhouse] the name of father” (“William Backhouse,” 1). For Ashmole’s poem and an illuminating analysis, see *ibid.*, 17–18, and *Elias Ashmole*, 2:568–69.

1653, May 13. My father Backhouse lying sick in Fleetestreete over ag[ains]t St. Dunstans Church, & not knowing whether he should live or dye, about eleven a clock, told me in Silables the true Matter of the Philosophers Stone: which he bequeathed to me as a Legacy.⁸

This event is unrivalled in the history of later English alchemy, and it merits citing Josten's analysis at length:

It seems, indeed, remarkable that a man of such learning, such practical skill, and, we may believe, of such integrity as William Backhouse possessed should at this late date have been convinced, and should have asserted in the face of death, that he was an authentic depositary of that secret key to a full understanding of alchemy to which since Hellenistic times countless treatises had alluded only in veiled language and puzzling allegories. The fruitless quest of the prime matter had ruined hundreds of practising alchemists. . . . The "adepts" of the seventeenth century who [professed to know the secret of transmutation] were mysterious wanderers, who on occasion demonstrated their art to the great or gave small quantities of their elixir to the deserving, and would after a fleeting appearance vanish without a trace; or else they were hapless adventurers who as often as not were jailed. Yet never were they anything like a learned, rich, respectable, and easily identifiable country gentleman. The secret, which William Backhouse treasured so much that only the prospect of death induced him to impart it to his chosen disciple, had probably reached him, too, by oral tradition. Whether he believed he had seen experimental proof of its efficacy, whether the secret might have been of any experimental interest, or whether it was nothing but yet another baffling enigma, whether Ashmole in turn bequeathed the secret to a younger alchemist—all these are questions which will probably never be answered.⁹

We do know, however, that Backhouse's influence on Ashmole, "his spiritual son and heir," was immeasurable. It is possible that Ashmole's discussion of the "different grades and virtues"

⁸MS Ashmole 1136, p. 29; quoted in Josten, "William Backhouse," 21.

⁹*Elias Ashmole*, 1:102–3.

of the philosopher's stone set out in the Prolegomena to the *Theatrum* (which have not been found in any other alchemical writings) are "to a large extent the echo of Father Backhouse's teaching."¹⁰ If so, this would be a remarkable instance of the orally transmitted secrets of alchemy coming to light in print.

In any case, Backhouse recovered from the sickness that had precipitated his secret revelations to Ashmole and lived another nine years, during which time he continued his interest in alchemy. Upon his death in 1662, he left to Jesus College some lands and farms for the maintenance of two fellows. His legacy to us—his own arcane alchemical poem and his translations of some notoriously obscure texts—is perhaps a fitting bequest from one whose motto was *Sache cacher*: "Know how to conceal."

The Verse Translations

All three of the poems printed here appear in Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 58. It is possible that they are in the hand of Backhouse himself or even Ashmole's, but Josten's experienced eye leads him to the conclusion that the entire manuscript was probably produced by a scribe employed by either Ashmole or Backhouse. The copyist's exemplar was presumably Backhouse's original manuscript, as seems to be the case with at least one other text in Ashmole's collection.¹¹ Whoever copied the texts may have worked quickly. A number of apparent errors seem to be the result of eye-skip in transcription (see textual notes); and if Backhouse's original text contained any punctuation—a likelihood, in that his French source was well punctuated—it is almost completely lacking in Ashmole's copy. The most probable source employed by Backhouse for his translation was a collection of French alchemical poems published several times beginning in 1547 or 1557, but edited anew by Pierre Rigaud

¹⁰Josten, "William Backhouse," 33; *Elias Ashmole*, 1:84–86.

¹¹See Josten's weighing of the evidence, "William Backhouse," 22–28. Ashmole himself, at some later date, identified the translator as Backhouse, and he inserted some additional French verses (unidentified, fol. 26v) and made detailed notes on the texts, listing topics and line references to the poems (e.g., fols. 68r–68v).

at Lyons in 1618: *La metallique transformation, contenant trois anciens traictez en rithme Françoise*.¹²

A modern reader coming to these translations will be struck by the awkwardness of Backhouse's word-order and the wrenching of syntax for the sake of rhyme. The rhymes themselves are often perfunctory (substantial/accidental; father/mother; called/compared), sometimes requiring normally unvoiced or unaccented syllables to be sounded or stressed. Meter, too, is rudimentary at best. Much of this is due to Backhouse's attempt to render line-for-line, in attempting (perhaps wrong-headedly) to remain faithful to his original. Occasionally one even senses a deliberate archaism on his part, as if he is trying to match the vocabulary of his fifteenth- or sixteenth-century sources. At times, though, his French fails him; he is fooled by false cognates or is unable to create a workable syntax to accommodate the ellipses or involutions of the original—admittedly not an easy task.¹³ Backhouse (or perhaps the copyist of our manuscript) has also made the editor's task more difficult by virtually omitting punctuation—a challenge made even greater by the many (and sometimes unorthodox) syntactic inversions. Modern punctuation cannot wholly solve all these irregularities—at times it is quite defeated by them, even with the French text at hand—but it can point the way and at times help the reader cope with an elliptical style that would otherwise be baffling.

But if Backhouse is neither an accomplished versifier nor a wholly reliable translator, one can sympathize with the difficulties of his task; and once one becomes accustomed to his peculiar style, these poems become surprisingly readable.

¹²Rigaud treats the two poems attributed to Jean de Meun as one; the third "treatise" is *La sommaire philosophique* of Nicolas Flamel, also in verse; see Ferguson 1:433–35. Curiously, Josten cites Ferguson, who gives the contents in detail, but seems unaware that all three texts translated by Backhouse are included in Rigaud's volume ("William Backhouse," 31).

¹³For excerpts from the original texts and (for the pseudo-Jean de Meun poems) modern translations thereof, see the commentaries on the following lines: *The Pleasant Founteine of Knowledge*, 1, 1067–74; *The Complaint of Nature*, 11–18, 761–87; *The Alchimyist's Answer*, 161–68, 822–30. Though not difficult technical passages, these illustrate the style of the Middle French poems.

Jean de La Fontaine

IV. *The Pleasant Founteine of Knowledge*

Jean de La Fontaine was born in 1381 at Valenciennes in Hainaut (now northern France). The only other known dates in his life are 1413, when he says he wrote (at Montpellier) his only known work, *La fontaine des amoureux de science*, and 1431, when he shared the office of *mayeur* (chief magistrate or mayor) of Valenciennes with another man. His only biographer says he was equally devoted to poetry, mathematics, and natural philosophy, and that his civil office suggests he may also have studied the law. No record of his education is known, however.¹⁴ La Fontaine's long alchemical poem ("écrit en vers facile, mais souvent assez peu intelligibles") has nothing in it to warrant confusing its author with his great seventeenth-century namesake. But to the student of alchemy it is an important work, given its popularity and influence. The black-letter first edition may have been as early as 1495, and the poem received at least five printings in the sixteenth century and three in the early seventeenth, when it was also translated into German. In England the poem was translated not only by William Backhouse in 1644, but also (in prose) by the same anonymous translator represented elsewhere in this collection, in the first years of the eighteenth century.¹⁵

¹⁴This scant information is based on the article in *Nouvelle biographie générale* (1858; repr. Copenhagen, 1967), 28:767–68, which relies heavily on internal evidence in Jean's poem. There is some confusion here, though: at the end of his poem Jean says he is writing in Montpellier in 1413, "Lorsque n'estoye jeune d'age" ("When old age did me overtake"), while the *Nouvelle biographie* has him holding public office in his native town some eighteen years later, in 1431; Jean's life awaits fuller scrutiny. The quotation in the following sentence and the conjectured date of his poem's first publication are from the *Nouvelle biographie*.

¹⁵"The Fountain Of the Lovers of The Science, Composed by John Fountain Of Va-

La fontaine des amoureux de science, here translated as *The Pleasant Founteine of Knowledge* in 1074 lines of couplets, is an allegorical dream vision, the ubiquitous medieval form that reached its greatest literary heights in the period from the twelfth century through the fourteenth.¹⁶ It is probable that La Fontaine's poem drew on Jean de Meun's *Roman de la rose*—not only its endorsement of alchemy and its naturalistic philosophy, but also its verse-form and the personifications of Reason and Nature. In its turn, *La fontaine des amoureux de science* probably contributed to two late fifteenth- or early sixteenth-century alchemical poems attributed to Jean de Meun himself. The links between all four of these poems were clear to editors of Jean de Meun in both the eighteenth and nineteenth century, Lenglet du Fresnoy and Méon: both printed *La fontaine des amoureux de science* as an appendix to the *Roman de la rose*, along with the two Pseudo-Jean de Meun alchemical poems, which they accepted as genuine (see introduction to Jean de Meun, below).

La Fontaine's alchemical allegory is a classic of its kind. Writing in the first person, the author tells how in May he happened on a garden tended by Zephyrus and containing a clear fountain under a hawthorn tree. Falling asleep, he dreams of an encounter with "two faire Ladyes," Reason and Knowledge. Reason explains the fountain's general significance as the source of metals and discourses on the philosopher's stone and how it is achieved. But since the fountain belongs to Nature, who now approaches, Reason urges the alchemist to consult her (lines 76–244). He accordingly tells Nature of his travels and recounts the speech of a "deepe Clearke," who claimed possession of the stone and stressed that it is a divine gift (249–318). He then asks

lencienn in the County of Hainault," British Library MS Sloane 3637, fols. 94r–118r, based on the "third Edition," Lyons 1590; see the Introduction to Part Four below. For early printed texts, see Ferguson, 1:433–34 and the biography cited above; only the earliest editions of *La Fontaine* contain the illustrations of alchemical apparatus to which the poem refers (see line 173n). A useful reprint of the Lyons, 1618 edition (which includes some variant readings) is in Stanislas Klossowski de Rola, *Alchimie: florilège de l'art secret, augmenté de "La Fontaine des Amoureux de Science" par Jehan de la Fontaine (1413)* (Paris, 1974), 19–29.

¹⁶For a useful survey, see Kathryn L. Lynch, *The High Medieval Dream Vision: Poetry, Philosophy, and Literary Form* (Stanford, 1988), esp. 1–20.

Nature how long he must continue to search and what the fountain's name is (321–26). Nature's long reply (337–634) discloses her role as God's agent, tells how her fountain (as mercury) produces the seven metals by astral influence, and reveals how the alchemist's furnace imitates this process. The author then asks Nature to clarify the process of "reduction," by which mercury is made the source of gold (637–50). Nature's response (651–820) explains further the theory of philosophical mercury, the stages through which the work must pass to produce the elixir, and the virtues of that marvellous substance.

Nature then prepares to leave, saying that she can tell him nothing else until she sees how well he can follow her instructions. But vowing his service to her, the alchemist pleads for still more knowledge (821–52). Nature relents; she reveals the part sulphur plays with mercury and explains the properties of gold and the other metals (853–906). Now the author wants to know the secret of transmutation itself (907–16). Aware that she is about to divulge the secret enabling him "this whole world to have," Nature first assures herself of his good intentions and lack of avarice. Then she gives final instructions in the use of sulphur to produce the stone. Now, "if the whole *Ocean*" should be base metal, he could transmute it with a only tiny grain of the stone (917–1036).¹⁷

The author himself comes forward (1037–66), proclaiming his name to be "John de La Fontaine," one who has himself achieved transmutation. He has named his poem "The lovely & pleasant fountein / Of the Scyence rich and divine," to indicate that it holds all the secrets of nature, and he has written it "out of greate love" in old age, in the year 1413. The poem is succeeded by a brief appendix (1067–74), added by one of its early editors, which commends the author as a true adept and sums up the whole poem in an oft-quoted alchemical epigram: "If thou dissolve the fixt, & make itt fly, / And the flying fix, thou shalt live happy."

Generally speaking, the alchemical theories propounded here

¹⁷The last thirty-four lines of this discourse are an unacknowledged translation of Hermes' *Emerald Table*; see Commentary.

are typical of fifteenth-century texts based on early medieval writings, especially those attributed to Arnaldus de Villanova.¹⁸ While La Fontaine cites no authorities directly, he subsumes virtually the entire text of Hermes' *Emerald Table* into his poem, and he borrows the famous boast of Arnaldus that he could turn the whole ocean to gold if it were the right kind of mercury (969–80). Throughout, the emphases are Arnaldian. Alchemy is a wholly practical and material matter: the curative power of the elixir is acknowledged (786), but only in passing, and the thrust of the entire work is towards transmutation. There is no mystical speculation; no spiritual transformation is looked for. The alchemical theory in the poem is also Arnaldian: mercury is the chief substance from which the philosopher's stone is to be made, and there is but "One mettall in one Sole vessle" (873).

La Fontaine is writing just at about the same time that the Pseudo-Lullian texts began to appear, but he does not know them.¹⁹ These, with their fuller development of the sulphur-mercury theory and the notion of the quintessence, were to shape alchemical speculation for over two hundred years, until Paracelsian matter-theory and iatrochemistry gained ascendancy, in the mid-seventeenth century. Hence La Fontaine's poem embodies an early and distinctive strain of medieval alchemy. Except perhaps for the little poem attributed to Maria the Prophetess (translated in Part Four), his is the oldest text represented in this collection.

¹⁸For which see Thorndike, 3:52–84.

¹⁹For an excellent overview, see Michela Pereira, *The Alchemical Corpus Attributed to Raymond Lull*, Warburg Institute Surveys and Texts, 18 (London, 1989).

Jean de La Fontaine

IV. *The Pleasant Founteine of Knowledge*

[f. 1r]

First written in French Anno 1413 by John de La Founteine of Valencia in Henault, & translated 1644 by William Backhouse of Swallowfeild in County Berkshire, Esquire

When as the merry moneth of May
Sad pensivenesse had chast away,
I entred a Garden most Gay
Where *Zephyrus* bore cheefest sway. 5
When I this Garden approached
I was not with silke attired,
But I was cladd in poore Array
Such may not nakednes bewray.
As I sate downe to passe away
Pensive thoughts which doe age decay, 10
I hard a most sweet melody
Of birds singing with harmony.
Att the Entry dore then I knockt
Of the Garden, but itt was Lockt.
But as to my view itt seemed
Zephirus the dore had opened [f. 1v]
A little; then he Retired
To shew that he was displeased.
I understanding what he ment,
Then retired to give Content, 20
And I a while after entered.

When as this day I had not fed,
Greate thirst I had & great hunger,
Although I had of that bread there
Which kept I had a sevensnight's spare. 25
A founteine found I in that place
Of pure fine Water & most cleere,
Under a white thorne that was there.
Then rejoyce did I & was gladd;
My bread to eate good minde I had. 30
In this pleasant Garden by happ
After dinner I tooke a napp,
And according as I conceive
I slept some what long by your leave.
For pleasure to me there seemed 35
In the sweete dreame I there dreamed,
As you may perceive by my Dreame.
Although false you may the same deeme,
Yett twas truth, as I understand
By two faire Ladyes neer at hand. [f. 2r]
All like the daughters of a Kinge
In royall habitt & clothinge,
With favor to me they approach;
To them I humbly bowe & crouch,
Saying to them, "Ladyes most brave, 45
In Soule & body God you save:
I pray to me declare your names;
Hide not from me your worthy fames."
The one her Answere thus did frame:
"My deare freind, *Knowledge* is my name;
That's *Reason* I accompany 50
Through hill, through dale, be 't far or nye.
She itt is that will make thee sage;
Wherefore attend thou her Language
And suppose thou awakned wert 55
Or didst att some marvell start.
Here maist thou se the fountaine's spring
A salfe & most Delightfull thing."
On the Seaven Rills I could not gaze,

IV. *The Pleasant Founteine of Knowledge*

This sight did me soe much amaze; 60
With which I was soe much fooled
That utterly I was dasled.
There tould she the water fully.
Then beseecht I *Reason* humbly, [f. 2v]
Who *Knowledge* accompanied,
To tell me what signified
Was by the Founteine & the Brookes
That have so faire & pleasant lookes;
What meant that it was inclosed
And on every side well fenced 70
With greene Trees & flowers fragrant
Springing neare the streames so pleasant,
Soe that itt paralell hath none,
Or hath the like to these bene knowne.
But she answered me most sweetly, 75
 "Thou shalt knowe, beloved, truly
The way to this soe great pleasure.
Harke to me with all thy leasure:
One thing in this fountein, I wis,
Of all other most noble is. 80
Who this thing knoweth perfect well
All others he shall farr excell:
Who truly it can hunt & trace
And, after found, in earth shall place,
Drying itt to a powder small, 85
Then back reduce to Water all.
But se first that they be parted,
Those parts togeather rejoyned [f. 3r]
Which Earth's rottennes doth cherish.
In the water that should nourish, 90
Itt doth bring forth a Virgin feate,
Bringing fruite in a double Teate;
But when past is Corrupcion,
Comes fruite of Consolacion.
The Virgin then I thee advise 95
Soe sharpe, soe dull, in many guise,
For the Aire it mounts high flying,

Then descends in vallies glidinge,
And in descending itt fawneth
The fawne that nature bestoweth. 100
 “This is a three-throated Dragon,
Pine-starved & yett a Glutton,
The Sole Author of all dismay.
Assault him to his great decay
And soe pursue with eager chase, 105
Till that sweatt do cover his face,
That he wax blacke & soe him snapp.
Then swathell hir & give her papp;
She thus returnes to Infancy
And hereby becomes more lovely, 110
More mighty than before great rest,
When she dranke juice from apples prest.
This is the Infant’s wonted tracke:
To drinke, to Infancy fall backe, [f. 3v]
Till than Christall she be more pure—
The truth is soe, I dare assure.
Then she is become shining bright,
A water strong & full of might;
Greedy to devoure her mother,
Who eate hath brother & father 120
As itt were milke & becometh
A dragon that his taile eateth.
The mother in parts two devide,
Which shall thee helpe att a good tide
And free thee from destruccion 125
Of the treble-throated Lyon.
Of greater force nothing is found;
All things on earth he doth confound.
Marvellous is he & powerfull,
Than Gold more rich a hundred full. 130
Of such a nature a fire tis,
As past all Corrupcion is;
Changed to another Substance
In regard of his apperance

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And cureth every mallady, 135
Apostume, Goute, & Leprosy,
And giveing youth to bodies old
And makeing youth witty & bold,
Which is God's blessed miracle.
This cannot be done by tracle [f. 4r]
Nor ought that's under heaven found,
Though strong; this is proved profound
By the true prophetts of old tyme
And by the learned Doctors' ryme.
But further search one doth not dare 145
(The nobles of the Land for feare)
In noe wise, least such mischiefe fall,
For this offence cannot be small.
Many Sages much rather had
That men of them shold report bad, 150
Than they one Jott should discover
But only to God's true Lover:
Charitable, haveing pleasure
God to serve & make their treasure.
For whom God given hath the space 155
Soe long to live in such a place,
Where that he this worke may Labor,
Hath from God the Grace & favor
Had, thou maist knowe assuredly.
Then pray lett him moste devoutely 160
For those holy men who have taught
This Scyence truly as they ought:
Philosophers, men sage & wise
Who doe not shew the whole disguise, [f. 4v]
But God in mercy doth declare.
To all them that true Workemen are,
And to those that delight Scyence
God giveth happy patience.
Understand thou that the Serpent
Of which I first gave thee the hent 170
Is governed by the seaven Brookes
Of soe faire & beutious lookes.

Although I have him figured,
Yett to thee he shall be named:
Itt is a stone most rich & fine 175
Made by our mistery devine,
In which more vertue doth abound
Than in the world besides is found.
Found itt is by Astronomy
And by our true philosophy; 180
From the mountaine he proceedeth,
Where nothing that strainge is groweth.
Seeke thou of verity the Ground,
For many Sages have itt found;
Afterwards one may itt obtaine 185
With some Labour & little paine.
Tis the philosophers' Jewell
Pretious, att which they Levell. [f. 5r]
As easily one may this have 190
And soe much better than itt leave,
But thou must much paine indure
Before thereof thou be'st sure.
When thou hast this, thou needest nought
Which in this earthly Globe is sought.
But to returne to the founteine 195
To discourse thereof more certeine:
This founteine of pretious fame
Belongs to that renowned Dame
Who by name *Nature* is called,
Who much ought to be honored. 200
She is to all perfection
And to the same destruccion;
For long since was established
This Lady, you I have assured.
For soe soone as God all of nought 205
The Elements had perfect wrought—
The Fire, the Aire, earth, & water—
Nature did perfect the matter.
Without *Nature* nothing can breed,

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Nor can the Sea an Oyster feed; 210
Mother of the World is *Nature*
And alsoe to every Creature. [f. 5v]
A most noble thing is *Nature*,
As appereth by the figure
Of a man whom *Nature* hath made, 215
In whom there is nothing ill made;
As in many things appereth
Which *Nature* often discloseth,
As in birds, trees, beasts, & flowers,
And in all *Nature* forth powers. 220
And soe itt is in the mettall
Which alike are not, nor equall,
Though bredd they are of the founteine
When earth them deeper doth reteine.
Which shalbe more fully treated 225
When *Nature* hath demonstrated,
Which I desire that thou se might,
Because tis best to follow sight
And by her path thy worke direct,
For soe thy faults thou maist detect." 230
Then detein'd with such discoursing,
I espyed *Nature* approching;
And then setting by all delay,
Her to Encounter I array
That humbly her Salute I might.
Who first to me turn'd, her sight [f. 6r]
To me had Inclination,
Giveing me Salutation.
Then said *Reason*, "Se here *Nature*;
Set thy care her love to procure. 240
She only tis that shall thee teach
Her worke & maistery to reach.
Harken to her diligently,
And she will instruct thee wisely."
To demaund of me where I was, 245
Where & in what place I found was,
For that is somewhat obscured,

And the light is much shadowed.
Then said I: "*Dame*, by God above,
I here am come as one doth move 250
Here & there, & whether to gowe
For better fortune, doth not knowe.
But to you without long delay
Will my intent in breefe bewray:
 "I saw a greate prelate ere while, 255
A deepe Clearke, prudent & subtile,
Who did speake in Common Language,
As doe many men that are Sage
Howe they have a medicine
Which made they had most rich & most fine, [f. 6v]
Demonstrating itt's excellence
By very good experience.
Of phylosophy and scyence
Found out, with great experience,
Haveing gott much att the schoole 265
After he was putt to his cole.
To know and apprehend earnest
Such things as of all were held best,
And to demand of him I went
By whom this *Knowledge* was first sent. 270
'This thing in writing is not found,
Or who itt was that shew'd the ground,'
He answered without delay;
And to this question thus did say:
'This Arte is God's donacion 275
Which came by inspiracion;
Alsoe tis a Scyence grounded
By God & in man inspired.
By this one may well apprehend
Att his pleasure he doth it send; 280
But before Letters ere were showne,
This scyence perfectly was knowne
By men (noe Clerkes, but inspired)
Who ought much to be honored. [f. 7r]
For many have found this scyence

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Truly by divyne sapience.
And therefore tis God Allmighty
Gives this Scyence to his trusty
Servant, as yt him best pleaseth. 290
The which many Clerkes displeaseth,
Who say tis not sufficient
Without he be a studient.
Who maister is not, nor Docter,
With Clerke shall have little honor.
And these are those one may well blame, 295
Who for others have noe good name;
But these who others disallowe,
What their bookes say, they doe not knowe.
This scyence shall mistaken be
By many Clerkes, doubt you not me. 300
Nor shall the Vulgar itt find oute,
Though they are boysterous & stoute;
Nor they that well can make a verse
And there many strainge things rehearse,
And with Cursings doe deliver 305
Which in their bookes was found never.
The Carpenter & the mason
Studyed have little thereon, [f. 7v]
And to this very well incline 310
Do the students in *Medicine*,
In *Lawes*, & in *Theology*
To gett their Livelyhood thereby.
Of all sortes there is a greate presse
Whose earnest seekeing is restlesse,
That they by true Experience 315
Might obtaine this noble Scyence,
Which many men begg & obtaine
From grace above & guift sovereign.”
 To my speech *Reason & Nature*
Then harkened well, I you assure. 320
Then to *Nature* said I: “Lady,
How long shall my Soule & body
Wearyed be in searching out

That Scyence which will without doubt
Such honor in this lyfe purvey 325
As only is void of Envy?
For I desire such goods to gett
As come with Labor & with swett:
To till & plowe the fertill ground
And sowe with seed that's fittest found, 330
As doth the honest Country Swayne
Obteine goods with Labour & payne. [f. 8r]
Therefore doe I you humbly pray
That to me ye vouchsafe display,
How this same founteine I maie name 335
Which hath soe bright & lovely fame."
She Answered, "My Love, thee save;
What thou hast asked, thou shalt have.
Named itt is, to tell thee plaine,
Of all delight the cheefe founteine. 340
Therefore thou oughtest to observe
How, since the tyme our mother Eve,
That I govern the world throughout
And this greate Circle round about.
Without me nought is governed, 345
Soe God all things hath disposed.
I, who *Nature* nominated
Am, have the earth invironed
Within, without, in the midst,
And in all things I take my rest. 350
By Command of God the father
I am of all things the mother;
I vertue to all things doe give,
For without me ther's nought can live
That under the heaven is found,
For to all things I sett the bound. [f. 8v]
But if by *Reason* thou wilt sift,
On thee bestowe I will the guift
By which thou mayst both worke aright
And have paradice in thy might; 360
Alsoe in this world greate riches,

IV. *The Pleasant Founteine of Knowledge*

Thereby to gett greate noblenesse,
Honour, large power, & greate might,
And in thy whole life much delight.
For thou shalt ever in Joy live 365
And much in noble wise maist give
By this same founteine & Cavern,
Which doth the Seven mettalls governe.
This happeneth by none other
But of the founteine that's mother, 370
The which is all as honny sweate
And to heavenly Planetts mete.
Itt is compared to *Saturne*,
To *Jupiter*, *Mars*, & to *Lune*,
To *Sol*, *Mercury*, and *Venus*; 375
Thou hast itt if thou conceive us.
These Seaven planetts which I named
Without all doubt are compared
To mettalls Seaven from earth growing,
All from one matter proceeding. [f. 9r]
By Gold our meaneing is the *Sunne*;
Equall to him, metall there's none.
Then to Silver we doe liken
Lune for a noble metall taken.
Venus & Copper is the same, 385
And this hath an excellent name.
Mars by the Iron, & by the tynne
Understand *Jupiter* the thinne;
And the Lead by *Saturne* the old,
Which we have named leprous Gold. 390
Mercury is the vive Argent,
The which hath the whole governmente
Of mettalls Seven & is mother
To all, as well as stepmother,
Who can the imperfect perfect. 395
He afterwards must them retriect,
If thou marke well what I detect
And doe as I shall thee direct.
This same founteine hath Dame *Nature*,

Which thou know'st, here put in figure. 400
Know how Mercury to fetter
In thy worke, as saith the letter;
Then a medicine thou mayst make
By which paradice thou maist take, [f. 9v]
Soe haveing worldly honors found
And greatest plenty without bound.
Gott itt is by Astronomy
And by our true philosophy.
This mercury is of mettall 410
The matter & the principall,
For by his leadish weightynes
He rest under earth in one masse.
Although that itt be volative,
Into others convertative,
Alsoe abydeth under Ground, 415
Yett in likenesse of a dew is found,
And then to heaven he will mount.
Thus to thee his nature I Count,
That hereafter thou maist conceive,
Who our medicine wouldest have. 420
Mercuryall within thy Glasse
Dysposed with in thy furnace
For to make Sublimacion,
Which is Godd's good donacion,
Which I will to thee discover 425
As well as I can deliver.
If body & Soule be impure
Thou shalt not make Amalgame sure, [f. 10r]
Nor any good Conclusion 430
Befitting thy Intencion.
But if to know thou hast a will,
Better have witt than witt spill.
Take thy body & make assay
As others have well done, I say.
Thy spiritt thou oughtest to make neate 435
Before thou itt incorporate.
If thou wylt have a good battaile,

IV. The Pleasant Founteine of Knowledge

Take twenty to seaven without faile;
And this thy body doth not glutt:
Twenty therefore itt must shutt. 440
This first battaile which I rehearce
Is of mercury strong & feirce.
After, render to him his due,
Before that you doe itt renewe.
When thy desired Enterprize 445
Done is, then hast thou gott the prize:
If thou knowst how by good reason
To weaken him in his prison
That he fly not from place to place,
But with a boone do him solace; 450
Or nothing done of thee shalbe
If done to him contrary bee. [f. 10v]
Then enlarge must you his estate
If that him thou wilt recreate.
Reduce him to his first matter, 455
By which thou art made his maister.
Noe otherwise canst thou well have
That thou seekest or thou dost crave,
But in this poynte the truth well know
And thence shall all thy pleasure grow. 460
But what thou dost with the matter,
The same doe againe hereafter.
Thou must make with out denyall
The first body Spirituall;
The Spiritt reincorporate 465
And from his body separate.
And if all this thou canst not doe,
About this worke doe not thou goe.
After this same Conjunction
Begin your operacion, 470
The which if you have perceiven
Thou hast the glory of heaven.
By this booke thou hast the power
My nature howe to discover,
How that mercury of the Sunne

Is not full equall with the moone. [f. 11r]
For often itt will become white
That lykned to such things it might,
For that which from the Sunne cometh
Of right resemblaunce appereth. 480
For one ought this to rubyfy,
Which doth the first worke signify;
And then make thou Conjunction
As I have declared by reason.
Now heretofore I have thee told 485
Howe in an Egg thou must infold;
Yf this thou canst not apprehend
In thy Labour thou shalt offend:
By thy Adventure thou shalt loose,
Much time spend, & in vaine abuse. 490
To my Counsell therefore take care,
Soe surely shalt thou better fare.
Nowe one point thou hast attained,
Sith my nature is disclosed.
Nowe oughtest thou by sound reason 495
After make Congelacion
Of Soule & body togeather,
That the one be lyke the other.
Then guide with reason thy intents
To deuide the foure Elements, [f. 11v]
All which againe thou new shalt make
And then into thy worke them take.
But first thou must the fire extract
And the Aire alsoe by this fact;
These afterwards thou must compose, 505
As I to thee in short disclose.
Earth & water from other parte,
And then a good Servant thou Art;
And alsoe make the quintessence
For this is of our whole the sence. 510
When thou hast these four obtained,
And one from the other parted
As I above have directed,

IV. The Pleasant Founteine of Knowledge

Thy worke shall be halfe concluded.
Likewise now if thou canst proceed 515
According to thy former deed,
As I have told thee in this place,
Putt thou it in a small furnace.
This same is called marriage
When itt is done by a man Sage; 520
And alsoe it is of greate renowne,
Hadst thou thereof the reason knowne.
For the male is very lusty
And his female very trusty. [f. 12r]
Now when pure & neate they are found,
And one unto the other Joyned,
Certainly they doe generate,
Which is a worke most delicate.
Itt is a pretious Substance,
Though otherwise in apperance. 530
For many men have a good name
And many woomen a good fame
By their Infants which they begott,
Whereby all doe commend their lott.
In birds, in beasts & fruits, assay 535
Thereof the verity I may.
Now of a tree sowe thou the seed
In the Earth with very good heed:
After the putrefaccion,
There shall come generacion. 540
By wheate thou maist understand,
Which graine best is, to take in hand:
Of one Graine cometh a thowsand
If strong & fertill be the Land.
Yett never was there a Creature 545
Which could expresse my hid nature.
My birth I tooke without thy ayd,
Nor ought against me hast thou layd; [f. 12v]
And although itt be of mettall
Than mercury itt is more subtill. 550
In furnace his body setting

As I have said in my writeing;
And soe to doe, itt will doe well
To putt then in a glasse vessle. 555
Soe lett him bee enamoured
With his lyke, & then labored.
But ere thou make Conclusion,
Of the same make division;
And after this division
I bid thee make Conjunction. 560
The first Course is affiancing,
The second called is espousing;
The third Course is by true doctrine
Them in one nature to conjoyne.
For tis our perfect marriage 565
That doth bring us most advantage.
Butt attend well what I have said,
For the truth I have open laid.
When thou hast these separated
And them by degrees hast Joyned, 570
After thou shalt them congregate
And one with other scytuate. [f. 13r]
But remember in thy lesson
What saith the proverbe of *Caton*:
The man who reads & yet learnes nought, 575
Lyke huntsman is who nothing caught.
Then understand & take good heed,
Soe reprehend thou shalt not need
Bookes nor right operacion,
Which are perfect Instruccion. 580
All those that doe our worke blasphemme,
Judgement have none, nor knowe the same;
But all those that well understand
Happily our Worke takes in hand.
Many times of our worke the Ground 585
The philosophers have true found,
But many for wise men deemed
(Though foolish) the same have blamed.
Such to be blamed are fitter,

IV. The Pleasant Founteine of Knowledge

Who would have Sweete without bitter. 590
But praise we ought & give much grace
To all those this worke who imbrace,
And who studied have to finde
By much Industry of the minde.
One may suppose it a good chance
Thus wise our meritts to advance. [f. 13v]
But to you I have told one thinge
Which carefull be of disclosing:
In this sett thy Intencion
Of two to make a Unyon, 600
Untill that they have fixed stood
In a Vessle which is knowne good.
And then thy worke to separate
Thou oughtst well to ordinate,
For to tell thee the fashion 605
Itt is but resolucion.
The which doe with greate Industry
If thou wouldst have this mistery.
This will the Composure dissolve,
Which even now thou didst involve, 610
That all of him a part may have;
And then the thirsty earth doth crave
Water of heaven for his right,
Because they are both of like might.
By this reason is he shortned 615
And of me shalbe governed.
But I have told without mistake
How the body the Soule maie take,
And how they must be severed
And one from other parted. [f. 14r]
By Dissolucion noe doubt
The Key of our Worke is found out;
By fire he himselfe doth perfect:
Without him the Art's imperfect.
Some say fire doth nought ingender 625
By his strong nature, but Cinder;
But of their reverence saved,

Nature is within fire placed.
For if *Nature* did not this feate,
Though fire were, there should be no heate. 630
But to demonstrate this Sentence
In Salt we have good evidence.
But to what end is this intent,
Which from others is different?"
 And while this Speech I ponderize, 635
A doubt within my heart did rise.
"Dame most excellent," said I then,
"Wilt thou to me a while listen?
Lett us returne to the mettall
Where Mercury is principall. 640
Me satisfy & give reason,
How in some declaracion
Elce am I in this deceived,
Which above thou hast declared. [f. 14v]
For thou biddest that I alter
The former forme of my matter,
And dost directly mencion
Tis had but by reduction.
But if you speake in parable,
To conceive I am not able." 650
"My love," soe *Nature* did reply,
"What dost conceive of mercury,
Of which I here to thee did speake?
I tell thee that he is but weake,
Through which ittselfe it seldome showes 655
Yett through many hands comes & goes.
The mercury of which I tro
Called is *de mercurio*.
Tis mercury of mercuryes
Makes many people set their Eies 660
Itt to obtaine for their affayre,
Yett tis not Mercury Vulgare.
Without me thou canst it not finde,
But when to worke thou settest thy minde

IV. *The Pleasant Founteine of Knowledge*

What thou dost must be Authenticke, 665
That thou maist atteine the practicke.
By this therefore we may alledge
In our worke is most great knowledge. [f. 15r]
The mettalls thou must understand,
Or thy Worke shall nought bring to hand. 670
But to knowe of mettalls the Course
I tell thee in their Worke is force,
Expresly in the begininge
Iff thou be'st a Sonne of Cunning.
But he who would to this thing come 675
Must have of this knowne point the Sume,
Or noe profitt will his worke make
By any Labour he can take.
Therefore the founteine tis named
(Which wholsome is & beloved) 680
Mercury, that same true spring-head
Which of perfection is head.
"But understand what I have said,
For I have not an untruth maid.
For this same matchlesse mercury 685
Within the Sunn thou mayst espye,
When he is in his greate power
And causeth many a Showre.
For after flowres, fruites doe growe:
By which manner perfectly knowe 690
And alsoe by a hundred Wayes
Which are to this but small Assayes.
But this same is the principall
Of which here is the reciteall. [f. 15v]
Here I have not thee beguiled,
For by sight itt is perceived.
And if in *Lune* thou wilt labor,
Thou mayst the same as well procure.
In *Saturne* & in *Jupiter*
And in *Mars*, which named is Ier, 700
In *Venus* & in *Mercury*,
This thing one may finde more surely.

But as I my selfe have itt caught
In the *Sol*, & then have it wrought
In this booke for thee compiled, 705
Conceive what is delivered.
Within *Lune* a way thou maist find
If you perceive my former mind.
Yett I say to them that conceive,
These two are one Worke, by their leave: 710
Except Rubificacion
Comes from *Sol's* Exaltacion.
And more I say thou needst not knowe;
This same practice I will not show.
And in this worke you need not faile 715
Without thou dost thy selfe beguile;
But have in thy memory right well
That which I even nowe did tell. [f. 16r]
After thy Dissolucion 720
Make thou must Inbibicion.
But begin not thou this practice
Which thee before I did advise,
If thou hast not proved this fact
And well dissolved the Imperfect. 725
If you can all this bring to passe,
Reincorporate by *Compass*
And returne to the worke primer:
The other was butt messenger.
This thou shalt se evidently 730
Howe itt may be done lawfully.
But to be breife thou mayst not come
By chance to thy desired Sume;
But if thou knowest for certeine,
Thou needest not labour in vayne.
And after thy labour, though true, 735
Thy worke againe must thou renew.
Putrefaccion is the Way
Doth give us a happy birth day.
And herein lyeth the mistery

IV. The Pleasant Founteine of Knowledge

Which all our deed doth testefye; 740
And how it hath bin said before,
Even there lyeth all the store. [f. 16v]
Prepare for him a due fornace;
With his like, there must thou him place.
For the Seed to rott will begin 745
Before out of the earth itt spring.
Soe humane Seed doth the selfe same,
Which for probacion I name:
While in the woman itt did rott,
First blood & then a Soule itt gott; 750
But in forme of a Creature
Brought is this secrett by nature.
For such a thing itt will bring forth
Which than his maister more is worth.
But to give these four Infants meate, 755
Who Just nowe are as Venus greate,
The which Elements are named,
Each from other separated;
Or a quintessence, as yt were,
And the one much like the othere. 760
Alsoe tis not but one Substance,
Ful & whole of the same Semblance;
This Infant doth eate his mother
And after destroyes his father.
Flower & milke & fruite with blood
Toggether in a greate lake stood. [f. 17r]
Now to marke whence milke doth proceed
And how the blood is made the need:
If this thou dost not understand,
Thou spoylest that thou hast in hand. 770
But if that this thou dost well knowe,
Then worke thou without more adowe.
For thou passed hast the passage
Where lost is many foole & Sage.
Here stay a little Station: 775
After thy operacion
Pursue soe til' thou make appere

The perfect fruite named *Elixir*.
For by a worke ingenious
This Stone made is most pretious, 780
Of phylosophers renowned,
Uppon very good reason grounded.
And yst not Joy, there are but fewe
Who can this Stone truly valewe?
Now his Effects I will expresse: 785
How itt doth cure every Sicknesse;
Alsoe by his thrice noble Art
Doth perfect mettalls imperfect,
Nor ought can there on earth be found
More strong in virtue to abound. [f. 17v]
To strainge Effects itt doth incline
Beyond the name of medicine,
And all other Stones excelleth
Which many princes deere prizeth.
Nought can soe much rejoyce a man 795
As this here aforenamed can.
Therefore lett itt be remembred
That this without doubt be granted,
For above all Stones that are found
Virtue in ours doth most abound. 800
And therefore sett thy indeavor
To purchace soe noble treasure.
If well thou wilt me Imitate,
Atteine thou maist to this estate.
Well understand if thou be'st Sage, 805
For I have told the whole usage.
Putrefy thou in a furnace,
The which thou oughtest to purchase
Made of one certeine fashion:
Tower of putrefaccion. 810
More thou must learne, how that these parts
Of thy Worke to keepe in 2 parts.
Of this more to say there's no need,
Till I understand thou dost speed [f. 18r]
In the thinge which I signifye,

IV. *The Pleasant Founteine of Knowledge*

For otherwise itt would be follye.
But what you need I doe not spare
Here in these breife notes to declare.
Therefore demand of me noe more,
For I have said too much before." 820
 And when I found how that *Nature*
Farther to speake had noe leasure,
More fully this Art to declare,
Then much to moane I did not spare,
But said I, "Thrice noble Lady, 825
I pray take of me some pittie
Or elce I shall not be unbound
From that which in a booke I found.
Declare to me, most noble Dames,
If ye have for me any Almes." 830
Then said she, "More thou maist not tast,
Till deserved thou better hast."
"Woe, alas," then said I; "Dame deare,
I pray tell me in what manner
Such evill have I deserved, 835
For wholly I have you served
Without any disloyall thought.
But you I can recompence nought, [f. 18v]
Nor augment can I your Treasure;
But you I'll serve above measure 840
If ye give me soe happy hours
As me to take for one of yours."
Nature to me then answered:
"Here, Sonn, you se what I have sed,
But beleeve me tis good, praying 845
To open thy understanding."
"Dame," said I then, "as God me chose,
I desire to be one of those
Who with such service may attend,
As all my life, I not offend. 850
To me will you then please to say?
For you I will in all obey."
Then *Nature* said, "Without all doubt,

Good sonne, thou oughtest to find out
And to knowe in the seaven mettalls 855
How mercury is principall:
Their powers, their Infirmities,
And varyable qualyties.
Then to understand thou hast need
Sulphure, Salt, & oyle, whence proceed 860
All which have thou in memory,
After to make thy mistery.
Very needful is the Sulphur
And to thee shall doe much pleasure. [f. 19r]
Without Salt canst thou not effect
Any thing worthy thy respect.
There is of oyle very greate need:
Without his helpe thou canst not speed.
This thou must have in memory,
If our worke thou meanest to try. 870
One note to thee I give, which heed;
Thereby thou maist atteine good speed:
One mettall in one Sole vessle
And one furnace doth accord well;
Tis mercury without all doubt, 875
And nought elce thou needst finde out.
The worke howe to abbreviate
I tell from pointe to pointe the rate.
And nowe of Gold I declare shall,
Which is of mettalls principall. 880
He is perfect; there is none more
Of those I have named before.
The Lune is not, no nor yet all,
As I the truth certify shall.
One onely mettall there is found 885
Where our mercury doth abound,
Although in the Seven it be found,
As I before have shewd the ground. [f. 19v]
Gold is hott & dry of stature;
Silver is cold in his nature. 890
Saturne is plyant & weighty,

IV. *The Pleasant Founteine of Knowledge*

And is to Gold the most likly.
Many Ignorant Clerks have told
That itt is named leprous Gold.
Venus well the Moone resembleth 895
In weight, & alike she forgeth.
Mercury is Cold and humidd;
Wittnesse Jupiter the livved.
Mars he is hard, weighty & bad,
And above all others most sadd. 900
Lett hard or soft be their nature,
One ought them all seven descoure,
According as before I shew,
And well their virtues one must knowe.
And after thou maist by this skill 905
With our mercury worke thy will.”
“Ha,” said I; “Dame, If it be may
To muplely it, tell the way
And by what meanes I may paterne
That which see I did in thy garne. [f. 20r]
For all my life I nere have seene
Which to me more delight hath beene,
Or ought within this world is found
Which doth with vertue more abound.
I esteemed itt for God’s greate grace, 915
Which revealed was in that place.”
Then said *Nature*, “What dost thou crave,
Is itt not this whole world to have?
For from my founteine doth proceed
Honours & greate riches indeed, 920
In this world abundant pleasure
As itt were a mine of treasure.
And sith knowledge thou dost pursue,
Without hope of rich reuennue,
And that thou hast a greate good Will 925
Labouring lyke a person still
Desiringe a brave Incounter,
Therefore to thee I’ll discover.
This Chapter doth itt manyfest,

You knowe if thou remembrest. 930
Devide your worke in two you may,
My nature If thou wilt display.
Make thy Sulphure penetrative,
By fire to become attractive; [f. 20v]
And then make itt eate itt's mother,
If thou bringest our worke to power.
Mother putt in the Child's belly,
Which Child she hath brought forth lately.
Then shall it be father & sonne,
Of two Spiritts perfeccion. 940
In truth itt is none other thinge
Than that I was now disclosinge.
Take heed; to this doe not thou rainge
Or putt anything therto strainge:
Sulphur, Salt, oyle, or other thinge, 945
For Dammage to thy worke twill bringe.
For expect not from earth to mowe
But such like seed as thou didst sowe:
Creature bringeth such like creature;
Beast, a beast of his owne nature. 950
Alsoe there is to every seed
His proper rule to keepe decreed.
Good Sonne, I say not tis soe tall,
But itt must mount aloft & fall
By a methodd most gracious, 955
Most pleasant & delitious.
The way ordeined is by me,
And much like it the dew ye see: [f. 21r]
In Aire of heaven twill ascend
And afterward sweetly descend, 960
By a most delightfull manner
Which well one ought to remember.
In dissention which itt makes,
The Infant perfeccion takes.
If to this pointe thou canst atteine, 965
Thou mayst truly say & not faine
That Gold on Earth thou canst treasure

IV. *The Pleasant Founteine of Knowledge*

In abundance without measure.
For if the whole *Ocean* should
Be such mettall as have one would 97
(Copper, Argent vive, Lead, or Tinne),
And one graine only thou putt in;
And when through warmed it shalbe,
Then a fume arise thou shalt see
(Which wilbe straingly coloured 97
And after will abide fixed);
And then when shalbe appeased
The fume & all qualified,
The Sea shalbe found finer Gold
Than Kings in their rich treasures hold. 98
But to returne to our purpose
Of good goverment to disclose: [f.
When thy Sulphure hath devoured
Thy mercury mortified, 98
For forty dayes imprison these
And in transparant glasse inclose.
Now soe to doe, God grant thee grace
That thou maist paradice purchase.
Therefore, se thou well disposed
The prison which I have named 99
(Tis truly shewne in a figure).
But thou must remember *Nature*,
The which on thee hath bestowed
So greate a guift, & revealed
This Scyence most admirable 99
And in this world venerable:
Elce should not be accomplished
The stone which I have declared.
Well, therefore, regard the scripture
Of my bookes, how in a figure 10
Demonstrated is this scyence,
Which is flowre of Sapience.
Tis true without doubt or fable,
Certeine to truth agreeable,
That which is below doth accord

With that above in true Concord. [f. 22r]
Which concluded End to bring,
Miracles of one only thing,
As all things doe proceed from one
By mediacion of one: 1010
Soe from one their Creacion
Have all things through Adaption.
The fiery *Sunne* is his father,
And the moist moone her true mother.
Her the winde in belly beareth; 1015
Him the Earth in bosome nurseth.
A world of treasure is this Stone;
A greater secrett is not knowne.
His virtue is all intire,
When to earth she doth retire. 1020
The Earth from the fire thou shalt parte
By discrecion & with Art;
The subtill from the grosse depart,
Wittily keeping them aparte.
Up to heaven itt doth ascend 1025
And downe to earth againe doth bend;
Takes vertue of superiour
With the power Inferiour:
Thus doth itt come to greate glory
And of the World hath victory. [f. 22v]
This is the power of all powers
Wherein many toyle & Labour.
Subtill things itt overcometh,
And through sollid things it peirceth.
Here is wondrous aptacion 1035
Wherein is notable reason.”
My name is *John de La Fountaine*;
In search I have not lost my paine.
For truly I multiplied
Have the Gold worke & finished 1040
(In this my life, in verity:
Thankes be to the holy Trinitye).
Which for all ill is medicine

IV. *The Pleasant Founteine of Knowledge*

True & in effect the most fyne
That in all the world can be found, 1045
In deepest Sea or darksome ground.
And from mettalls foule, the ordure
Chasing, that the matter be pure
Made in mettall, fine manyfold
In forme of silver or of Gold: 1050
The worke is wrought by this same meane,
And itt needs noe other Ingine.
For in my poore opinion,
Tis true without all question. [f. 23r]
Therefore I named have my booke
(That matter tells & undertooke
To shewe the workemanship soe plaine)
The lovely & pleasant founteine
Of the Scyence rich and divine, 1060
Sett forth in this rude stile of myne
Which out of greate love I did make,
When old age me did overtake:
One thousand, four hundred thirteene,
In which tyme I have 16 twice seene.
This finisht was in Janiver 1065
In the village of *Mountpilier*.

Then was added:

Here endeth John of the Fountaine,
Who had this greate worke for certeine;
Which God's most secret grace him sent
Which giveth to all men Judgment. 1070

All this worke which is soe highly prised
May in these two verses be comprized:

If thou dissolve the fixt, & make itt fly,
And the flying fix, thou shalt live happy.

1644 December 28
Laus Deo.

IV. TEXTUAL NOTES

Text: Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 58, fols. 1r-23r. The ascription of the translation to William Backhouse (subtitle, fol. 1r) was added sometime after the MS was copied, by Elias Ashmole.

To avoid confusion in an already difficult text, the following general emendations have been made:

than] *MS reads* then: 111, 115, 130, 151, 178, 190, 432, 550, 754, 942, 980

one] *MS reads* on: 145, 151, 873 (1), 885, 902

Other emendations:

96 many] *MS reads* may

110 becomes] *MS reads* become

947 earth] *MS reads* eath

1032 many] *MS reads* may

1064 16] *MS reads* it (*see Commentary*)

IV. COMMENTARY

Citations of the French text are from *La metallique transformation contenant trois anciens traictez en rithme Françoise*, ed. Pierre Rigaud (Lyons, 1618). References to the “prose version” are from MS Sloane 3637 (ca. 1700), by the same translator who produced the six verse translations, below (see introduction to Part Four).

1 *When as.* When. Here are the opening lines of the original text:

Ce fut au temps du mois de May,
Qu'on doibt fourir dueil et esmay,
Que j'entray dedans ung vergier
Dont Zephirus fut jardinier.
Quand devant le jardin passoye,
Je n'estois pas vestu de soye,
Mais de pauvres draps maintenu,
Pour n'apparoir en public nu.
Et m'esbattant avec desir
De chasser loing mon desplaisir,
Ouy ung chant harmonieux
De plusieurs oyseaux gratieux.

4 *Zephyrus.* As the West wind and husband of Flora, goddess of flowering plants and tilled fields (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 5.193–274), Zephyrus is appropriate to the May season and to Nature's garden (see 197ff.). Perhaps he is “displeased” (18) because a mere mortal is trespassing in the domain of God and Nature.

11 *Hard.* Heard.

22 *When as.* Since.

28 *white thorne.* Hawthorn tree.

58 *salfe.* Safe, in the archaic sense of healthy or salubrious

(translating *saine*).

59 *Seaven Rills*. The seven metals.

61 *fooled*. Infatuated.

63 *tould . . . fully*. Gave a full account of (in her description of the fountain as *most Delightfull*, 58).

74 *Or*. The sense seems to demand *nor*.

76 Reason's long speech continues to line 230.

91 *Virgin feate*. This neat or elegant Virgin may be the "Moon or Mercurial Water of the Sages, after it has been purified from the unclean and Arsenical Sulphurs with which it has been combined in the mines" (Rulandus, 437; cf. "when past is Corruption," 93). At line 92 she also seems to be identified with the *lac virginis* ("virgin's milk"), described by Rulandus in similar terms: "Mercurial Water, the Dragon's Tail [see line 101]; it washes and coagulates without any manual labour; it is the Mercury of the Philosophers" (*Lexicon*, 188).

This virgin, who comes out of the philosophical water (lines 90–91), seems to be the same as the virgin "goddess" pictured in the *Aureliae Occultae Philosophorum*, a crowned mermaid on the water with a stream emanating from each breast (cp. line 92, "fruit in a double Teate," or in the more more elegant phrasing of the prose version, "A maiden . . . bearing Fruit at both her Breasts"). The text explains that she is born from "our water" and that she pours forth from her breasts milk and blood, which are concocted until they become gold and silver (*Theatrum Chemicum*, 4:499); a similar illustration appears in Daniel Stolcius, *Viridarium Chymicum* (1624), reproduced in Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy*, 409. See also 765n, below.

99-100 *fawneth / The fawne*. Rejoices in the favor (?) (*fawen* is obs. form of both *fain* and *favor*: *OED*).

96 *in many guise*. I.e., "in many different ways, manners." French text: "La pucelle dont je devise / Si poingt & arden mainte guise."

108 *swathell*. Swathe, wrap up; or *swaddle*, bind in swaddling clothes. *papp*: semi-liquid food for infants.

120 *eate*. Eaten.

122 *a dragon that his taile eateth*. The ouroboros or "tail-eating" serpent, symbol of the unitary nature of matter; it is one of

the earliest pictorial symbols in western alchemy (see Hopkins, 107; Taylor, 55), and in later literature sometimes represents the philosopher's stone itself. See the description below, 169ff.

126 *treble-throated Lyon*. Lions of different colors (red, green, golden) are common in alchemy, but this triple-headed one has not been traced. Jacob Tollius gives alchemical significance to the three-headed Cerberus in his *Fortuita* (Amsterdam, 1687), 46 (cited in Josten, "William Backhouse," 10n); and Johann Daniel Mylius' *Philosophia Reformata* (Frankfurt, 1622) shows a three-headed serpent in an engraving (reproduced in Klossowski de Rola, *Alchemy: The Secret Art*, 99, who says it represents "dominion over three realms" [98]; see also his plates 21 and 62 for MS illustrations of a three-headed serpent and of Cerberus).

130 *hundred full*. A "full hundred," but the context suggest "hundred-fold."

140 *tracle*. Treacle. Cp. lines 139–44 with prose version: "Tis as a Miracle from God. Without this the Treacle cannot be made, nor any thing which is found underneath the Heavens, which is experienc't by the ancient prophets & Doctours who teach us Nature."

153 *Charitable*. I.e., those who are charitable.

169 *Serpent*. The *dragon* of 122, q.v.

170 *hent*. Hint.

173 *figured*. Represented in an illustration (see similar references at 214, 400, 991, 1000). Ferguson (1:433) says illustrations of alchemical apparatus appear in the Lyons, 1547 edition of the poem; none of the editions I have been able to consult (1561, 1590, 1618—all in the British Library) contains them.

179 In margin of MS a note in Ashmole's hand: "vid: [line] 407," where the importance of astronomy—i.e., astrology or the study of astral influences on the "growth" of metals—is again stressed; for the metals and their corresponding planets, see 369ff., below. (Ashmole has numbered the lines throughout the manuscript, apparently for the ease of such cross-references).

181-82 I.e., the stone proceeds from the earth (or earthly substance), where metals grow naturally (?).

188 *Levell* Aim.

190 I.e., and be so much better off, having gotten it (?).

198-99 *Dame . . . Nature.* The chief speaker in the poem (as also in *The Complaint of Nature*, q.v. in this section); see her account of herself, 337ff.

214 *figure.* See 173n.

220 I.e., "And in all that Nature pours forth."

243-48 Backhouse has misconstrued the original of 243-44, with the result that 245-48 make little sense. Reason's speech should end at 242, at which point the narrator interjects. French text: "C'est elle que te fera estre / De son ouvrage prudent maistre. / Je l'escoutay diligemment: / Et elle se prit saigement / A me demander d'où j'estoye / Et qu'en ce liu là je queroye: / Car il estoit beaucoup sauvage, / Et pour les non clerks plein d'ombraige." Prose version: "'for she will make you be the prudent Master of her Work.' I hearkened diligently, and she undertook to ask me whence I was and what I sought for in that place, because it was very wild, and full of darkness for those who were not clarkes" (punctuation inserted).

255 *a greate prelate.* It is uncertain whether an actual person is meant by this "deep Clearke."

264 *Found out.* I.e., he found out.

266 *put to his cole.* Committed to (the possible risk of) his coal, or money; i.e., began investing in materials needed for alchemical operations.

298 I.e., those learned men who would exclude others from the knowledge of alchemy do not even know what their (own) books say.

339-40 *Named . . . founteine.* The fountain is ultimately identified as philosophical mercury (679-81).

347 *nominated.* Named.

357 *sift.* Examine closely so as to discover the truth.

369ff. On the relationship between metals and planets, and on their characteristics, see also 879ff., below.

376 *conceive.* Understand.

390 *Leprous gold.* The "leprosy of Saturn" refers to the imperfection of that metal, caused by a "more or less impure Sulphur" in combination with mercury (Rulandus, 383); see also 894, below.

396 *retreict.* Retrait, retract: withdraw, remove. The mean-

ing of this sentence is unclear. French text: "Après le te veulx remetraire." Cp. with lines 391–406 the prose version: "Mercurius is argent vive, which has all the Government of the seav'n Metalls, for it is their Mother (just so as they appear) which can make the imperfect perfect. After it I would withdraw you. Now understand well what I shall say, and how I shall manifest the Fountain of Dame Nature, which you see here hard by in the Figure. If you know well how to set Mercury to work as the letter shows, you will make the Medicine of it, whereby you may purchase Paradise, with the Honour of this World, where great plenty of riches does abound."

400 *in figure*. See 173n, above.

402 *the letter*. Possibly part of the "figure" (400) designated by a letter, but more likely *letter* means "the precise terms of the precept" (as in "letter of the law"; see also prose version at 396n). The fixing of volatile and unstable mercury (401) is one of the chief requirements of the great work (see the last four lines of the poem); hence the admonition to understand exactly what this means.

407 In margin of MS: "vide [line] 179," q.v.

409ff. These lines offer a good summary of the properties of philosophical mercury, which (along with sulphur, discussed at 860ff. below) was a main constituent of metals.

427 *body & Soule*. The matter and the "seed" (or volatile, astral principle) that gives it the form of a specific metal (??). Sometimes *soul* and *spirit* were distinguishable (e.g., Taylor, 23), but at 435 the latter term seems to be used interchangeably with the former.

433ff. The processes described here are the usual ones, though with some repetition: Sublimation (423); reducing mercury to prime matter (455); extracting the "spirit" of gold from the matter and then reuniting them in Amalgamation (428) or Conjunction (469, 483, 560) or Congelation (496); the division of the four elements and the extraction of the quintessence (500–14); and the final conjunction or "marriage" (519ff.) of the purified male (sulphur) and female (mercury) principles. Commenting on William Backhouse's poem "The Magistry" and citing his translation from Synesius, C.H. Josten writes: "the different

phases of the work, explained here as consecutive developments, were not in actual fact supposed to mean consecutive stages, but different and possibly simultaneous aspects of only one operation . . . [viz.] 'that thou must decocte the natures till they bee perfecte'" ("William Backhouse," 14).

574 *Caton*. Dionysius Cato, supposed author of a book of maxims used in elementary education.

578 I.e., so you will have no need to find fault with. Cp. prose version: "Learn then well to understand, that you may not calumniate the Bookes, nor the good Workmen, who are perfect understanders."

615 *shortned*. Limited in his power (Biblical usage). Prose version: "(for they are of one Nature all) 'tis reason it should be moistned, and it shall be govern'd by me."

641-44 Cp. prose version: "let you and Reason make me some interpretation, or I am mistaken in your Work; because of what you have said above."

654-56 Cp. prose version: "I tell you that it is shut upp, altho' it happen oftentimes that it goes and comes throug' many hands."

657 *tro*. Trow; trust, have confidence in.

658 *de mercurio*. Translated in the next line, "mercury of mercuryes": i.e., philosophical mercury or the "Mercury of Metals, . . . that from which the nature of the bodies is derived, the Quintessence and Permanent Water, Spirit, Seed of Passive Female, the Bath and Mother of the King, who draws the King to herself because they are one and love each other" (Rulandus, 230-31; see lines 696ff., below).

694 *reciteall*. Recital; account, description.

700 *Ier*. Short for *iren*, iron. French text: "Et en Mars, que je nomme Fer." Prose version: "And in Mars which I call Iron."

711 *Rubification*. The reddening of the matter.

716 *Without*. Unless.

720 *Inbibition*. Steeping, or taking a solid into solution.

726 *by Compasse*. According to measure or proper proportion; or, by artifice or ingenuity.

727 *the work primer*. The primary or first work (French text: "faict premier"); i.e., the series of operations described above

IV. Commentary

(433ff.) and now repeated (735ff.).

735 *though true*. Even though your operations were the right ones.

745 *the Seed to rott*. See the similar description of putrefaction, 535ff. above.

748 *probacion*. Testing or demonstration.

753-54 I.e., the stone is more valuable than the gold or mercury from which it comes.

755-64 Cp. prose version: "From thence there ought a thing to be born which shall know more than its Master, to suckle the four children who allready are all grown great, which are called Elements and separated from one another. Now you have five things togeather, and they do much resemble one another, allso it is but one Substance, all of the same appearance. The Child should then eat up its Mother and afterward destroy its Father."

765 *Flower . . . blood*. *Flower* (i.e., flour?) is puzzling, but milk, blood, and "fruit" all appear in the image of the virgin born of the philosophical water ("a greate lake," 766) at 91n, above. It is possible, though, that here the milk is the *lac virginis*, fruit is the elixir (778, below), and blood the red tincture (early stage of the stone) or the agent of Rubification (711, above); in the *Thesaurus Philosophorum*, blood and milk are seen as reddening and whitening agents (*Theatrum Chemicum*, 3:158).

810 *Tower*. Mistranslating *tour*, "circuit, rotation." Cp. prose version: "In the Furnace you may see it very well, in which all you have ought to be: making by a certain management the Circle of Putrefaction. Moreover I have taught you by these divisions your work remains in two parts: I will tell you no more of this, untill I have seen in you some service for which I may tell it you; otherwise it would be folly."

860 *Sulphure*. The other constituent (along with mercury) of all metals; it accounted for a metal's fusibility and inflammability. *Salt* (also at 865) is often said to be indispensable; see, e.g., Sendivogius' *Dialogue* below, lines 424ff., 622-23. The *oyle* may be the "oil incombustible" sometimes identified with philosophical sulphur itself.

873-74 *One mettal . . . one furnace*. Adapted from a favorite saying of Arnaldus de Villanova which appears in at least

two of his works, the *Thesaurus Thesaurorum* and the *Rosarius Philosophorum*; for texts and translations, see Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, 153n, 574–75. Maria the Prophetess had also said, “Unum est vas” (the vessel is one), and this was repeated by many later writers; see Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy*, 236. Cp. *The Complaint of Nature*, 275n, below. The *mettal* is identified as philosophical mercury (875).

879ff. Gold, as the most perfect metal, has the highest proportion of mercury to sulphur (885–86); cp. the earlier account of the seven metals, 369ff.

894 *leprous Gold*. See 390n, above.

896 *forgeth*. I.e., copper (Venus) is malleable like silver (Luna), when heated.

898 *livved*. Livid, of a bluish, leaden color.

900 *sadd*. Solid, dense.

902 *descoure*. Discover; find out about.

909 *paterne*. To imitate.

910 *garne*. Garner, granery; translating *verger*, “orchard.” With 909–10, compare prose version: “tell me the work beforehand and how I may manage what I have seen within your bounds.”

926–27 Prose version: “And because you are come hither without any return or revenue, and that you have the good will to labour as a Person desiring to meet good fortune, I will show it you beforehand.”

943 *rainge*. Range, be inconstant.

947 *earth*. Translating *terre* (see textual note).

947–52 As at 744 above, the idea that “like produces like,” which goes back at least the Pseudo-Aristotle’s *Secreta Secretorum*, is often stressed in alchemical texts; see in this collection Edward Cradock’s *Treatise*, 111n, and Pseudo-Jean de Meun’s *The Alchimyst’s Answers*, 267n.

958 *dew*. A common symbol for the celestial or astral influences that convey the life-giving seed into the earth (see, e.g., Taylor, 118).

969–80 This claim echoes the famous boast of Arnaldus de Villanova, “Mare tingerem, si mercurius esset,” that occurs in two works, the *Experimenta* and the *Quaestiones tam Essentiales*

IV. Commentary

quam Accidentales (see Manget, *Bibliotheca Chemica*, 1:701, 848).

977 *appeased*. Settled, calmed.

991, 1000 *figure*. See above, 173n.

1002 *Sapience*. Wisdom.

1003-36 These lines are a translation of the most famous of all alchemical texts, Hermes' *Emerald Table*, omitting the last two of its thirteen aphorisms, in which Hermes is named as its author (for modern translations, see Read, 54; Holmyard, 97-98; Taylor, 77-78); see 1036n.

1035 *aptation*. Adaptation (this line translates "Merveilles sont moult convenables"); both Holmyard (98) and Taylor (78) give "marvellous adaptations." Prose version: "They are very agreeable Wonders, whereof we have most excellent reasons."

1036 This speech of Nature (begun at 917) must end here, given the next line. If the text of the *Emerald Table* (see 1003-36n) had been continued, the next sentence would be "And so I am called Hermes Trismegistus, having three parts of the Philosopohy of the whole world" (Taylor, 78). Hence in effect Jean de La Fontaine inserts his own name where the august name of Hermes should actually appear. This is not a unique case, however: a similar substitution occurs in a sixteenth-century University of Bologna MS, where Jean de Meun's name replaces Hermes' (see Lodovico Frati, "Poesie alchimistiche attribuite a Jean de Meun," *Archivum Romanicum*, 3 [1919]: 321-26, 323). Furthermore, lines 1038-40 correspond roughly to the last aphorism of the classic Hermetic text: "What I have said concerning the operation of the Sun is finished" (Taylor, 78).

1064 *16*. See textual note. The copyist must have misread the number *16* as *it*; this line translates "Que j'avoye d'ans deux fois seize" ("that [in which time] I had in years two times sixteen," or "I was thirty-two years old").

1067-74 This postscript seems to have been added by Pierre Rigaud to the Lyons, 1618 ed:

QUELQU'UN ADJOUSTE

Ci finist Jean de la Fontaine
Qui, tenant icelle oeuvre hautaine,
Comme un don de Dieu tres-secret,

Doit faire tout homme discret.

Tout l'art qui est de si grand prix

Peut estre en ces deux vers compris:

Si fixum solvas, faciasque volare solutum,

Et volucrem figas, faciet te vivere tutum.

1073-74 This alchemical proverb expresses the universal formula, *solve et coagula*: dissolve and coagulate. Dissolution is the spiritualization or sublimation of solids, and coagulation is the rematerialization of the volatilized products; the two processes must be alternated repeatedly. This injunction to “fix” or solidify the volatile and to volatilize the solid matter is one of the oldest in alchemy, being traceable to Greek manuscript quotations of Maria the Jewess. She teaches that one must take away the bodies of the fixed or “corporeal” metals like copper, lead, and zinc by subjecting them to sublimation. Once made volatile or “incorporeal” (as oxides, sulphides, or chlorides) they can be restored to a solid state with new properties or colors, by purifying them or joining them in alloys (see Patai, “Mary the Jewess,” 183–84, and the poem associated with her in Part Four, below). Note, too, how this idea is implied in the *Emerald Table* (see 1023–28). The proverb appears in a slightly different form in Solomon Trismosin, also translated by Backhouse: “If thou dissolve the fixt & make it fly, / And fix that bird thou shalt live happily.” See Josten, “William Backhouse,” 6–8, who analyzes this enigma as the conjunction of opposites.

Pseudo-Jean de Meun

V. *The Complaint of Nature against
the Erronious Alchymist*

and

VI. *The Alchimyst's Answer to Nature*

Jean de Meun's claim to alchemical fame is not unlike that of Geoffrey Chaucer. In the *Canon's Yeoman's Tale*, a lively satire on fraudulent alchemists, Chaucer included a fifty-four-line passage on alchemical theory—actually a tissue of quotations from Hermes, Arnaldus, Plato, and Senior—that was subsequently extracted and circulated in manuscript as a distinct alchemical poem. In the fifteenth century other alchemical works, in verse and prose, were attributed to Chaucer, and eventually the entire *Canon's Yeoman's Tale* was printed in Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* (1652), where Chaucer is fully assimilated into the pantheon of "Hermetick Philosophers" as "one that fully knew the Mistry."¹

About a century and a quarter before Chaucer was writing the *Canterbury Tales*, around 1265, Jean de Meun produced his "continuation" (some 18,000 lines) to the 4028-line *Roman de la rose*, which Guillaume de Lorris had begun some forty years earlier. Jean's allegorical poem, a veritable encyclopedia of medieval learning, became the best known work in French from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century; it was perhaps second

¹See Robert M. Schuler, "The Renaissance Chaucer as Alchemist, *Viator* 15 (1984): 305-33; Ashmole's testimonies are discussed at 322-28.

only to Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* in its influence on later medieval European literature. The *Roman's* chief allegorical personages are Reason, Nature, and Genius; at one point, in keeping with her recurring theme of the natural and unnatural, Nature interjects an eighty-four-line discussion of alchemy (lines 16035–16118).² Here Nature first outlines the arguments against transmutation, which say that man cannot equal Nature's way of making metals in the earth. Her ultimate conclusion, nevertheless, is that alchemy is a true art, and she proves this by intimating that it *can* imitate nature. She gives examples of the transmutation of species within nature (hail stones fall from the skies but never ascended to them) and from art (glass makers produce a clear brittle substance from the ashes of ferns). Nature goes on to say that these transmutations are more remarkable than those in metals, since nature makes all mineral substances from only sulphur and quicksilver. Once base metals have their combustible sulphur (an impurity which causes rust) removed, and are treated with penetrating spirits that provide color and weight, they can be turned to gold. She concludes with the comment that false alchemists who work by sophistication and do not follow Nature will never accomplish anything.³

It is true that Jean is much more sympathetic toward alchemy (when sincerely practiced) than Chaucer. But on the strength of this one passage (a tiny part of an immense poem) he himself was hailed by many later writers as a master of the arcane science, and this reputation grew as more texts bearing his name appeared. As with the fifty-four-line section of the *Canon's Yeoman's Tale*, Jean's account of alchemy was excerpted, copied, and circulated separately in manuscript. By the fourteenth century these lines had become the first part of a 396-line alchem-

²I follow the lineation of the standard edition, Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *Le roman de la rose*, 3 vols., ed. Félix Lecoy (Paris, 1966). Helpful surveys of this long and complex work are Maxwell Luria, *A Reader's Guide to the "Roman de la rose"* (Hamden, Conn., 1982), and Heather M. Arden, *The Romance of the Rose*, Twayne's World Authors Series, 791 (Boston, 1987). The best modern translation is that by Charles Dahlberg (Princeton, 1971).

³This account of Jean's alchemical views is indebted to Frederic Walker, "Jean de Meun and Alchemy," *Journal of Chemical Education* 7 (1930): 2863–74.

ical poem ascribed to Jean.⁴ By the fifteenth the number of alchemical verses attributed to Jean had grown to include an alchemical *Testament*, two alchemical ballads, and a verse version of the *Emerald Table*, in which Jean's name is substituted for that of Hermes Trismegistus.⁵ From the end of the fifteenth or beginning of the sixteenth century come these works: a prose *Miroir d'alchymie* (first printed 1557); a prose and verse work on fortune-telling (at least five editions from 1556–1615, said to be the earliest such work in French); and, especially important, the two long alchemical poems that are our main concern here, *Les remontrances de Nature à l'alchimiste errant* and *La réponse de l'alchimiste à nature*, which together amount to over 1800 lines.⁶

Ironically, it is these spurious works that largely kept Jean de Meun's name alive in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The *Roman de la rose* itself, while printed twenty-one times from 1481 to 1538, was not to be published again for another 200 years.⁷ Thus while Ronsard certainly knew the *Roman*, when writing his *Hymne de l'automne* around 1560 he probably drew on the Pseudo-Jean *Les remontrances* for his vision of the

⁴Ernest Langlois, *Les manuscrits du "Roman de la rose"* (1910), 228, cited in Pierre-Yves Badel, *Le "Roman de la rose" au XIV^e siècle* (Geneva, 1980), 72; the poem has this heading: "Ici commence la recapitulacion d'iceste art par maniere de verificacion et de probacion selon maistre Jehan de Meun mise et descripte en son Romant de la Rose."

⁵See Lodovico Frati, "Poesie alchimistiche attribuite a Jean de Meun," *Archivum Romanicum* 3 (1919): 321–26, who surveys a group of manuscripts at the University of Bologna that are rich in interesting marginalia, and who gives the whole text of an eighty-line "balade." One of the manuscripts cited by Frati (325) is a copy of La Fontaine's poem with a marginal note claiming that a line or passage is "Du testament mestre Jehan de Mun." The *Testament maistre Jehan de Muen* usually associated with him (but not accepted as genuine) is a literary will, but the *Testament* cited here is probably the verse alchemical *Testament* cited earlier by Frati (322). Compare the appropriation of the *Emerald Table* here with that in the translation of Jean de La Fontaine's poem (see lines 1003–36 and 1036n), above.

⁶These are sometimes treated as a single work with the title *La complainte de Nature à l'alchimiste errante et la réponse de l'alchimiste*; see Ferguson, 1:434. Latin prose alchemical works said to be Jean's exist in a number of British manuscripts (fifteenth- and sixteenth-century, one in the hand of John Dee); see Singer, *Catalogue*, 1:283–84, 2:542–45. The fortune-telling work, *The Dodechedron of Fortune*, was translated into English (1613; STC 17847–17847.2)

⁷See Luria, *A Reader's Guide*, 17–21.

metals as part of the great generative cycle of the universe.⁸ The Neoplatonist Jacques Gohory (alias Leo Suavius, d. 1576) certainly knew the alchemical poems, and when he turned to Jean's genuine work, it was to read the *Roman* itself as an alchemical allegory.⁹

In any case, *Les remontrances* and *La réponse* were influential among the alchemists, being published at least four times between 1557 and 1618, always under Jean de Meun's name and always together with Jean de La Fontaine's alchemical poem. They were cited in the autobiography of Denis Zacheire (first published, 1567), and in the seventeenth century were translated into Latin prose for the *Musaeum Hermeticum*.¹⁰ Hence by the time William Backhouse came to make the first English translation of these poems, they had already solidified Jean's reputation as an adept. Nor did this renown dissipate with the Age of Reason, for the alchemical poems were also included in the first edition of the *Roman de la rose* to appear in two centuries, that by the avowed hermeticist Nicolas Lenglet du Fresnoy (1735). Lenglet Du Fresnoy uncritically accepted them as genuine, and some of his contemporaries were probably still reading the *Roman* as an alchemical allegory, in the vein of Gohory and the

⁸Albert-Marie Schmidt, *La poésie scientifique en France au seizième siècle* (Paris, n.d. [1938]), 100; see also 320.

⁹Gohory translated three books of *Amadis de Gaule*, and he read this work as well as the *Roman de la rose* and others in this way; see D.P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella* (London, 1958), 96ff.; and Allen G. Debus, *The French Paracelsians* (Cambridge, 1991), 26–31, et passim. Ironic from our perspective is the fact that in the “Querelle de la Rose”—the literary and moral debate that developed around the *Roman* at the beginning of the fifteenth century—Christine de Pisan had humorously compared the interpretation of the *Roman* to the interpretation of alchemical texts, where each reader sees something different (Badel, *Le “Roman de la rose” au XIV^e siècle*, 439). Christine had perhaps seen enough of alchemy in the fruitless pursuits of her father, Thomas of Bologna (see introduction to Trevisanus, Part Four below, and Thorndike, 3:627, for her scepticism).

¹⁰For the Zacheire reference, see Walker, “Jean de Meun and Alchemy,” 2870, and the introduction to Zacheire's work in Part Four, below. In the *Museum Hermeticum* (first ed., Frankfurt, 1625) the poems had the collective title, *Demonstratio Naturae: quam errantibus chymicis facit, dum de sophista et stolido spiratore carbonario conqueritur*; translated by A.E. Waite as *A Demonstration of Nature* in *The Hermetic Museum*, 2 vols. (London, 1893), 1:121–41. This has been reprinted separately: *A Demonstration of Nature* (Kila, Montana, 1991).

Renaissance Neoplatonists.¹¹ Still being reprinted as authentic, the alchemical poems attributed to Jean de Meun could only confirm this approach. They reappeared as part of Jean's canon yet again in the first modern edition of the *Roman*, that by M. Méon, 4 vols. (Paris, 1814).

While more recent scholars have demonstrated by linguistic analysis and by internal evidence that the alchemical poems derive from the late fifteenth or sixteenth century,¹² these texts were nevertheless influenced by and possibly even modeled on Jean de Meun's *Roman de la rose*. *Les remontrances* actually refers to the *Roman* by name and cites Nature's endorsement of alchemy there, and Nature herself, Jean's chief allegorical personage, is the sole speaker in *Les remontrances*. Here she also repeats a common theme of the *Roman*, that human beings must follow the ways of Nature. Furthermore, a number of lines are taken bodily from the *Roman* and inserted here and there in both alchemical poems.¹³ Aside from these general influences and borrowings, it could also be argued that the two later poems took their shape from Jean's eighty-four-line alchemical passage in the *Roman*, in that each can be seen as corresponding to one part of Nature's discussion there. The *Remontrances* gives the negative side, Nature's complaint against the alchemist who works mechanically and not in accord with her teachings; she shows him his folly, exhorts him to change his ways, and shows how he must work. The *Réponse* has the repentant alchemist explaining his former difficulties, thanking Nature for her assistance, and promising to follow her teachings in the future; the alchemist's ultimate success in achieving the stone (attested at the end) is the counterpart to Jean de Meun's ultimate acceptance of alchemy in the *Roman*.

As noted in the introduction to Jean de La Fontaine's poem above, it is also likely that La Fontaine's work (dated 1413)—itself a dream vision modeled on the *Roman de la rose*—had

¹¹See Badel, 1-2.

¹²See Walker, "Jean de Meun and Alchemy," 2870-74. If Frati is correct in saying that one of the Bologna manuscripts of *La complainte de Nature* is "del secolo XV" (322), we have hard evidence of a pre-1500 date.

¹³Méon's edition of the *Roman* identifies the borrowed lines.

some influence on these works. All three poems embrace the same basic alchemical theories;¹⁴ all are written in the same verse-form; and the *Remonstrances* has Nature not only instruct the alchemist, but also refer to “Madam Reason” (see line 10 of the translation), an important allegorical figure in the *Roman* but also the first personage to speak in *La fontaine des amoureux de science*. None of these features is unique, of course, but this constellation of similarities, along with the probable dates of composition and the fact that the three alchemical poems are very often (whether in manuscript or in print) found together, is suggestive. All three of these verse treatises, therefore, can be considered in some way as the illegitimate children of Jean de Meun.

It is worth noting, finally, that just as Jean de Meun’s *Roman de la rose* owes much to two works from the twelfth-century renaissance—Bernardus Silvestris’ *Cosmographia* and Alan of Lille’s *De Planctu Naturae*—so too these alchemical poems may be indebted to them, if only indirectly. Bernardus’ massive scientific poem (itself partaking of hermetic and alchemical influences) was the first in Western literature to develop the figure of *Natura* as an allegorical goddess presiding over the creation of the world, and in Alan of Lille’s Menippean satire she comes into her own. In both works *Natura* utters a “plaint” (regarding the disorder of the as yet unformed matter in Bernardus, the disorder of the moral universe in Alan); and both works deal at length with matter-theory, among other scientific topics. While the title of the Pseudo-Jean de Meun *Complaint de Nature* could easily have been inspired by the *Roman* itself rather than by Alan of Lille’s *De Planctu Naturae*, it is also possible that these earlier

¹⁴It should be noted, however, that in the nearly one hundred years separating the later poems from La Fontaine’s, there had been an explosion of alchemical texts attributed to Raymond Lull (see Introduction to La Fontaine, above). At least some of these important works were known to Pseudo-Jean de Meun (*The Complaint* names Raymond twice: 343n, 771); he also cites many other alchemical authorities, while La Fontaine mentions none directly. Nevertheless, the Lullian texts built on, rather than contradicted, the Arnaldian alchemy known to La Fontaine, and all three of the Middle French poems emphasize similar elements of alchemical theory (see cross-references in the commentaries). Pseudo-Jean de Meun is particularly fond of repeating the Arnaldian formula “one matter, one vessel,” which La Fontaine quotes only once.

works from the High Middle Ages may have played a more direct part in the composition of these later alchemical poems.¹⁵

V. *The Complaint of Nature against
the Erronious Alchymist*

This verse monologue (986 lines in couplets) is Nature's diatribe against alchemists who fail to imitate her ways. Her opening salvo (1-48) is an attack on the alchemist as a "sott phantasticke" whose clumsy furnaces and pots grotesquely parody her way of working. Nature then gives a lecture on how she herself produces all things (mineral, vegetable, animal), but by different kinds of generation and nutrition. Metals, some more pure and perfect than others, are produced from the four elements but more immediately from quicksilver and sulphur (49-134). The contrary natures of these two primal substances are then described, along with the way that Nature's "Arte naturall" imposes forms on them when combined, through the influence of the seven planets and always according to God's plan (135-238). Next, the Aristotelian theory of the two "exhalations" (which become the "passive" mercury and the "active" sulphur) is explained (239-66), and the process of putrefaction leading to generation is said (for the first of several times) to require one substance and one vessel, warmed with a gentle fire (267-316). Now Nature expatiates on her general powers of creation, from minerals to man (317-42), and on God's creation, from angels to the four elements (343-89). The universal theory of active-passive, or contraries, is expounded (390-414), and the erroneous alchemist is called ignorant of Nature's way of impos-

¹⁵For the earlier works, see Brian Stock, *Myth and Science in the Twelfth Century: A Study of Bernard Silvester* (Princeton, 1972), and the introduction to James J. Sheridan's translation of *The Plaint of Nature* (Toronto, 1980). For their influence on Jean de Meun, see Lynch, *Medieval Dream Vision*, 120-41, and John V. Fleming, *The "Roman de la Rose": A Study in Allegory and Iconography* (Princeton, 1969), 190ff. See also George D. Economou, *The Goddess Natura in Medieval Literature* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972).

ing form on the “prime materiall,” proportionally mixing the elements (even Avicenna had trouble here), and drawing down planetary influences (415–85).

Nature turns to mocking the pitiful efforts of the unsuccessful alchemist, only to take pity on him and explain the true way of working (486–502). The noble metal gold fetches its form from solar influences, but how can the alchemist be so malapert as to attempt to make gold without first knowing how to make lead? (503–610). Nature repeats that she works only through the elements and celestial influences (611–30); she questions once again the alchemist’s presumption in trying to match her work with his “Art manuall,” which will result only in the evaporation of all his labor—and his material (631–700). Nature repeats her injunction to work with one vile matter in one closed vessel (701–8) and reminds the alchemist of how she forms the body of man, something not even Plato or Aristotle understood (707–24). To human gestation the alchemist’s work, with its one vessel and proper degree of fire, is now compared (725–60). Nature calls on the alchemist to work mutually with her, as have her “Sonns” of former days (Jean de Meun, Arnaldus de Villanova, Raymond Lull, Morienus, Geber, and Hermes; 761–87).

Admonishing secrecy, Nature offers her final instruction (repeating much that has been said), with the hint to follow her ways as did Aristotle and Albertus Magnus (788–865). A final praise of the enterprise—which will be granted only to those of good conscience—is followed by a paean to gold as the “sovereigne medicine” of Ecclesiasticus 38 (866–96). Now, in the vein of the *Roman de la rose*, Nature proclaims that despite the attacks on alchemy by supposedly learned men, it is a true art when it follows her, as Avicenna, Arnaldus, and Geber knew. The gold she speaks of is the “Elixir” and “Stone of the Philosophers,” not the ordinary metal (897–944). Only when Art and Nature work together can this prize be gained, so once again the alchemist is enjoined to do away with his “furnaces & vessles divers,” his “Alimbikes false & perverse,” and turn to Nature’s way of combining sulphur and quicksilver in one furnace, “on a fire philosophicall” (945–986).

VI. *The Alchymyst's Answere to Nature*

The alchemist's response (834 lines in couplets) begins humbly enough, with a recognition of Nature's role as God's instrument and governess of the macrocosm, but he rather saucily adds that God went beyond her in creating man's soul and intelligence (which is far-ranging in scope); moreover, while the human body is Nature's masterpiece, it is governed by the will of the individual, not her (1-106). He goes so far as to warn Nature to "be rather / Carefull of thy owne buisnesse / Than of our [the alchemists'] faults or our falsenesse," and to remind her that even she sometimes produces imperfect creatures (107-20). Thinking better of his bad manners, the alchemist apologizes and insists that he is always thinking of Nature; her rebuke of him was just, but his incessant seeking for the stone has been in vain only because the obscure books he has read failed to show him her way, which he now asks her to reveal (120-72). In particular, he wonders how to find the true philosophical mercury and sulphur to produce the stone, and how to resolve the contraries among the elements (172-233).¹⁶

Certain points are now developed more fully from Nature's earlier teaching: the conversion of the elements (234-50); the theory that like produces like, via "seeds" (251-84); the closed vessel and its material being like the womb and its infant (285-328). In the practical operation, a chief problem is how to reconcile contraries as Nature does, so as to bring the imperfect to perfection (329-34).¹⁷ The alchemist asserts that while gold is the most perfect metal, it cannot exceed itself; so it cannot be reduced to quicksilver or the "first matter" (335-78). Nature

¹⁶Since the alchemist is the only speaker here, Nature can offer no direct responses to his questions; in effect, he answers them himself, for the most part repeating and (especially) elaborating on Nature's instruction in *The Complaint*. In a way, we see the alchemist mulling over what Nature has already said and working out the implications of her teachings. Note, too, that *The Alchymyst's Answere* cites only Aristotle (616) and Avicenna (697), while Nature in *The Complaint* lists many other authorities in addition to these.

¹⁷Occasionally (329-38, 398-419, 595-98, 688-98) the alchemist addresses not Nature but the would-be alchemist who is reading the poem; these passages expand on particular procedures.

has taught him that “reductions” depend first on the matter being “corrupted” (379–97), but gold cannot be made by destroying gold (398–419). Like may produce like in vegetables and animals, but not in metals, which “grow without plantinge” (420–34). The alchemist realizes he need not be confused by the “Antyent Philosophers’ double intent,” as long as he keeps to Nature’s “Theoricke” and “speculative practicke” (435–44). He then recalls the false teaching of a “sophisticke deceiver” who tried to make the stone from crude mercury amalgamated with gold, but he now knows this supposedly learned man was “Of wit . . . but very shallow” (445–76); he recalls Nature’s teaching that nothing can be achieved without God’s help (477–96).

Now the alchemist attacks directly “all the bold Boasters” who mistake what is meant by the separation of the four elements, because only God and Nature can perform this feat (497–608). On the other hand, making the elixir itself requires both Nature and “a wise man” who follows Aristotle, who taught that “Where the philosopher endeth, / The Physitian beginneth” (609–32). The virtues of the stone are now described (632–70), but soon he returns to the separation of elements and the thorny question of dissolution: it is not necessary to destroy gold in order to produce the stone (671–714), but gold is the “true father” of “the Elixir and the Stone,” and he admonishes others in its preparation (715–72). He makes a final admission to Nature of his former error and promises to follow only her, if she will aid him (773–816). The alchemist concludes with thanks for Nature’s “kind Visitt” and a vow always to obey her; a four-line epilogue states that after his humble submission, Dame Nature blessed him with “greate riches” (817–30).

V. *Planctus Naturæ: The Complaint of Nature*
against the Erronious Alchymist
by John de Mehung

[f. 28r]

Here Nature her complaint doth showe
And declares howe her greefe doth growe
By reason of a Sophisticke
That knew nought but Art mechanicke.

NATURE:

Alas, how sorrowfull am I,
As stricken with some mallady,
When uppon humane kinde my thought
I cast: whom God himselfe hath wrought
In his true Image and likenesse, 5
Of all his Workes the perfectnesse,
Yett aboue all other Creature
Unruly is unto nature,
Without use of time or season
In the Workes of *Madam Reason*. 10
I speake to thee, sott phantasticke,
Who namest thy selfe the practicke
Kymist & true Philosopher,
And yett knowest not the matter
Theoricke, or in Art hast Skill, 15

Or to my Knowledge hast thou will.
Breakeing glasse, & with fumes of Coale,
Greate Asse, thou makst thy selfe a foole;
Burneing Allum, Salt, or pigment,
Calcin'st mettall, burn'st Attrament; 20
Makeing greate & little furnells,
Abusest severall Vessells. [f. 28v]
And in short, I tell thee truly,
Angry I am att thy folly;
Which more is, greate greife I suffer 25
By stinkeing fumes of thy sulphure,
When by strong heate & fire ardent
Thou thinkest to fix vive Argent,
Which is vollatill & vulgare
And not made of that mettalls are. 30
Poore man, thou dost abuse that thing;
By this way, shalt thou make nothing.
If march thou dost none other pace,
Then ill thou usest my Compase.
My worke thou dost not understand; 35
Twere better take thy owne in hand
Than to dissolve & vainely still,
Congealeing drougs by thy owne skill
With Alimbicks & sublymors, 40
Cucurbites & distillators,
With Pelicans counted the best.
And workest without reason or rest,
Makeing for thy fixacion
Fire of Reverberacion
Even soe hott it all things melt.
In this wise hast thou thy worke spilt, [f. 29r]
Spending others' goods, & thy owne,
When of truth thou hast nothing knowne.
But if thou come into my forge,
Where I hammer & all things forge, 50
Mettall & earthly minerall
Soe finde thou maist the manner all,
And howe I worke, in what matter.

V. The Complaint of Nature

Thinke not to thee I will declare The Secrett myne which is soe cleere, If thou wilt not first inquire After the Seed of all mettalls, Vegetables, & Animalls, Which my power doth only guide And within the earth I itt hide:	55
The one for Generacion, The other for nutricion. The mettalls have only beinge; The Vegetables, increasinge. The Animalls are sensitive, Which is more than the vegetive. All mettells, stones, & Attraments I produce of the Elements; Of these I make this mixtion And primer Composicion.	60
In earth's bowells thou maist it find; Other places thou needst not mind. Vegetables they have a graine Their owne Speties to mainteine. A sperme in Animalls is found, Of generacion the ground. And breifly every thing we finde Doth generate in his owne kinde. But yett thou, O man (full of vice), Fondly dost attempt our Office.	65
Thou strayest from mother nature More than any other Creature. The mettalls by noe meanes are bent To use the way of norishment; To bring forth yong, or to augment, Or to increase have noe intent. They have noe generating seed, Or sperme, that may their owne like breed; For they take their first existence Of Elements & their substance:	[f. 29v]
From these four I make them forth spring.	75
	80
	85
	90

Mettalls, stones have only beinge;
The stones they are all fragible,
And all the mettalls fusible.
After fusion, fixable
They become, & malliable. [f. 30r]
The one by depuration
Receiveth greate perfeccion,
As the pure Gold & Silver fine
Depured are by Art of mine. 100
But more Impure are the other,
Because their vive Argents are
Too crude, & their Sulphure terrene
Too addust. Soe cannot uncleane
Metall bodyes be mixt with pure, 105
Because they can noe way soe sure
A materiall forme atteine.
For my workes all, well I ordeine
That every species is found
According with this matter sound. 110
 Understandest thou where doth Lurke
The matter of which I first Worke—
The Cabinet of my secrett
Instrument, subtill & discreete— 115
And canst finde the materialls
Proper to make the mineralls.
Out from the bowells itt doth come
Of the four Elements' Kingdome. [f. 30v]
This is the Seed originall
Conteines the forme substantiall, 120
In simplicity composed,
Prepared & well disposed,
To transmute the four into one
Under kinde general Common.
Then rule him & give him his due 125
(By my Art) mettalline vertue,
Which makes mettalls pure & impure,
Some soft & others harder sure.
Of Elements I itt Extract

V. *The Complaint of Nature*

With my heaven, & I pourtract, 130
Of which in time I undertake
The first materiall to make,
The next proper materiall
With which I make my minerall.

The Sulphure, vive Argent forth start, 135
Which themselves to mettalls convert.
Not such Argent vive or Sulphure
As you meane, but yet a Sulphure.
For by contrary qualities
They are changed in divers wise [f. 31r]
From their owne to other nature,
As tware rotting of the matter
And a fitting Corruption
By meanes of privacion,
When the first forme is destroyed 145
And with a new apparrelled,
Both by a most naturall heate
(Which in the matter hath his seate,
Excited by force of heaven
With fire pretious & even), 150
Which in my forge I know to make
And give a forme without mistake—
Yea, in fine, such as the matter
Doth best accept & most desire.

Likewise, privacion & forme 155
And matter which, I thee informe,
Are my principles ordeined,
Which from above I received;
This my *Master*, the Creator,
Who commanded as an Author 160
That to universall matter
I should as his handmaid render
Transmuted the foure Elements
By my workmanship & regiments, [f. 31v]
Cought under one forme generall
Of all Speties minerall.

Soe doth by my Arte naturall

The blisfull *Sunne* incompas all
The earth in twenty four houres' space, 170
Duely keepeing his wonted pace,
By his mocion to indent
Heate into every Element.
The same alsoe doth the eight sphere,
The seaven planetts & their father,
That is the grand first moveable, 175
Carrying them (he is soe able)
By force with him the other spheres
(So that of this pointe no man feares),
Makeing his Course into the West.
And the others without all Jest 180
Shape their Course of contrary sort,
Some in long tyme & some in short.
As *Saturne* which his tyme doth steere
And runn his course in thirty yere.
So *Jupiter* 12 yeeres doth take, 185
Mars in 2 yeres his course doth make.
Father of life, the blisfull *Sunne*,
Through his Circumference doth runne, [f. 32r]
Passing through each severall Signe:
Justly I him one yeare assigne 190
And six houres, for all the Accompt.
To make her Course doth *Venus* compt
Dayes three hundred forty & nyne.
Mercury finished his lyne
In three hundred thirty nyne daies. 195
The *Moone*, that neerest to man stayes,
Twenty nine & a halfe doth stay
In passing the 12 signes soe gay.
And soe by this their divers course,
Summer & winter have their force; 200
And Elements, mutations;
Here belowe, generacions.
And such things that are visible,
Sensible, or insensible

V. *The Complaint of Nature*

Cannot have being nor yett live, 205
Without I, heavens, or God give.
Nowe of heaven all things are fedd
Which under Moone are inclosed
By vertue of Influence there,
Powerfull upon the matter. 210
For the matter forme requireth,
As woman the man desireth; [f. 32v]
Soe greate of heavenly Stars sent
On matters here obedient,
And alsoe subject divers wayes. 215
Cleere are some; others, blacknes swayes:
They are so Innumerable
As there are things admirable.
Now this diversity of things
The divers Influences brings 220
Of heaven above; here belowe
On these Elements here doe growe
All sortes of Individualls.
Now knowe, noe distruccion falls
On the Influences intent 225
Descending on the Element
Of earth, although that they seemed
Invisible or soe deemed.
And before they the earth do hitt,
They are soe close togeather knitt 230
That by their Vertue they enter
And peirce even to the Center.
And this divers Courses they take,
Within the mineralls to make
Manyfold Generacions,
By their divers Impressions. [f. 33r]
Thus obeyeth without Errour
The lower the Superiour.
Soe is the Earth invironed
By the heaven, & adorned 240
In receaveing the Influence,
A most agreeable Substance.

Then every vertue doth enter
And peirce even to the Center.
And by mocion & Calour 245
Engendred on earth is vapoure,
From whence rise Exhalacions,
The first made Composicions.
The vapour is cold & humidd
(I meane that doth stay & abide 250
And is of the Earth receaved),
But to a Cloud if't be turned,
Humid & hott will itt then bee.
The other (which earthy we see,
And if shutt up & inclosed 255
Of me in long tyme) disposed
Is for sulphure, the first Agent
Uppon the passive vive Argent:
The second disposicion
Of this first Composicion. [f. 33v]
All this taken is from the Masse
Of Elements foure, brought to passe
As I to thee have said before.
And to thee I need say noe more,
Least thou thy selfe this point mistake 265
And in practiceing, straing wayes take.
After the putrifaccion
There cometh Generacion
By Calour, which att the first doth lurke
In the begininge of the Worke: 270
Most amiable, not too bold,
To the End to heaten the Cold
Of Argent vive; soe to suffer
Till itt one be with the Sulphure,
All in one only vessle shutt 275
(Fire, water, & Aire which I put
In his vessle terrestriall,
Which in one Sole vessle are all).
Then I dissolve, sublime, & boyle,

V. The Complaint of Nature

All without hammer, forge, or fyle; 280
Without balne, Coale, or Smoake,
Or without furnace that doth Choake.
For I have fire Caelestiall
That stirrs up the Elementall [f. 34r]
Like as the matter desireth,
A forme such as itt befitteth.
 Then my Argent vive I gather
Of Elements & their matter.
Then is his Sulphur nigh att hand
As one same thing, which by command 290
Doth wax hott by tyme & leasure,
Gently after his owne pleasure.
Then cold become heate vertuous,
And the dry, humid unctuous.
But this thou must observe & try: 295
The moyst is not without the dry,
Nor the dry without the humidd.
For one in other doth reside,
Under an Essence primitive
Which is in the Elementive. 300
The Spiritt & the Quintessence
His birth our Infant takes from hence.
The fire this Infant hath begott
Is nurst of Aire, but first doth rott
In bowells of a virgin Earth. 305
Thus the water we seeke hath birth,
Which is the first materiall
Of which I make my minerall. [f. 34v]
For a contrary Circumstance,
With contrary make resistance, 310
Strengthening itt selfe by such a way
When as the Agent beareth sway.
Then is the passive transmuted,
And of his first forme deprived
By appetite of the matter, 315
Which alwaies doth new formes desire.
 Of the heaven & great mover

My wisdome is the Governor.
The eight Sphere is to me a hand
By my high father's great command. 320
My hammers are the seaven Planets,
With which thing forge I, trimme & neate.
The workmanship & things I rayse
Are plants, mettalls, & stones of praise,
Bruit beasts & men reasonable, 325
Which are workes most honorable.
And generally all such things
As under heaven have beings
I do make (& in noe point ly)
Of the four Elements onely. 330
This is the prime materiall,
Chaos, Hyle: Kingdome itt call; [f. 35r]
With the which, the Kinge I renew,
The Queene, & all their retinew.
This *Cavilier* is att Command, 335
The Chamber maid allwayes att hand.
And howe much nobler is the forme,
The more nobly I conforme.
Yea, know that I full power have
And Substance to Essencesse gave, 340
That constantly consist they might,
And forme in matter I excite.
But into three, nowe consider,
How devided was this matter
Which God tooke att the begininge: 345
Of the most pure, first creatinge
The Cherubins & Archangells,
Seraphims, & all the Angells.
And of the lesse pure & second
He created the heavens round. 350
But of the third & most impure
The Elements & their nature
Created he. But first the fire,
By itts vertue, mounted higher:

V. *The Complaint of Nature*

Placed aloft under the Moone,
Corrupcion admitting none, [f. 35v]
In him holding the quintessence,
The purest parte of puissance.
And after itt the subtill Aire,
Which of the quintessence doth share 360
Not soe much as fire. Then water
He plac't, a visible & cleere
Element, quintessence holding
Soe much as is him befitting.
Then the earth he hath disposed, 365
According to his will formed.
Soe thus in a little moment
He did make every Element,
Both heavens & every nature,
Which is the principall Creature. 370
The Earth he made grosse, darke & dull,
Though found itt be somewhat fruitfull;
Yett conteineth in itt, doubtlesse,
Of part quintessentiall lesse.
And first observe how simple were 375
The Elements, & had like sphere:
Nowe ayre properly is humidd;
Appropriate to fire, doth ayd.
The water is cold properly
But humid appropriately; [f. 36r]
The Aire is nourished thereby.
And properly the earth is dry
But cold is appropriately,
Which he takes of water, but ney
To fire by his greate siccity. 385
But even nowe, as said have I,
Noble is fire, & maisters all,
And causeth things to springing fall
By his owne heate, & giveth life.
But this I must tell thee in breife: 390
There is noe Element active
Which can worke without his passive.

As the fire in the Aire doth worke,
Soe the Aire in Water doth lurke,
And water's brought to earth & Aire, 395
When moved is the warr by fire.
But the earth is nurse & mother
And of every thing susteiner.
All things by putrifaccion
Are brought to Generacion. 400
Tis heate doth the bowells enter
And prize even to the Center,
And is the restlesse governour.
God me granted hath such honour [f. 36v]
And alsoe such Intelligence,
That I have made the quintessence
(The foure Elements reduced,
Even the first matter named),
A Commixture most generall
In each Element & in all. 410
By my Art are reduccions
Whence cometh Generacions,
But that Speties revived
Is in the masse comprehended.
Now therefore he that reduce would 415
The Elements (truly he should,
Into the prime materiall)
Without me, both Labour & all
He takes in hand is destitute.
Tis only my parte to transmute 420
Each Element & speties.
Who this gainesayes, the truth denyes;
Thou knowst not to give a substance
His appropriate Influence,
Nor howe to proportionate 425
The Elements, or to estate
A forme according the desire
Such as the matter doth require. [f. 37r]
Tis I have formed the Creature

V. *The Complaint of Nature*

And given matter & nature; 430
By my secretts Caelestiall
I make workes truly admirall.
Who, then, beholds my Oracles
That hath not Judged them miracles,
Such as the *Elixer* have showne, 435
From whence soe greate vertues have flowne?
For the vertues & quallity
Which he hath, lymitted have I.
Neither any Art mechannicke,
Nor can knowledge, or the practicke 440
Produce Multiplications
Or soe notable Actions.
Then ought a man prudent & wise
Thinke, & in workinge well advise,
That such a worke, such a scyence, 445
Cannot without Intelligence
Of heavenly bodyes be found,
Or without their power made sound;
Otherwise doth himselfe abuse.
But if any without me use 450
Or take in hand this Influence,
So to compound such a substance, [f. 37v]
Lyke to the Composition
And to the true proportion
Of Elements, this cannot bee. 455
Proved by *Avicen* we see
In his *de Viribus Cordis*,
In the second, where he saith this:
“Lett us live as long as we can,
We knowe not how this worke to skan, 460
What is the due proporcion
Of Elements’ Connection.”
Also he saith, “Remember well,
By chance this thing to no man fell.”
Tis a secrett to me given, 465
Such as is to man forbidden.
By my vertues I undertake

The Imperfect, perfect to make.
Be itt man's body or mettall,
I heale & have restored all. 470
I give Temperance his degree;
The four Elements I agree.
The Contraryes I make accord
That they abide without discord:
This is that most rich golden chaine
Which circularly I mainteine [f. 38r]
By my vertues Caelestiall,
And with their formes substantiall.
Such are my workes soe good, ever
Discovering all my power; 480
Yea, soe noble & so exact,
Such as man can in noe point Act
Without my knowledg, Arte, or skill,
Though to knowledge he hath a will.
Come, thou that saist thou knowest all 485
And intendest to wyn the Goale
Of my science soe notable,
Saying, "I made Gold potable
By fire of Coale, or *Bath Mary*
In my furnace." By saint *Mary*, 490
I wonder much att thy Errour!
Doth not vaine hope breed thy horroure,
When my workes thou considerest
And such slobberyes decoctest
Within thy glasses & vessles, 495
Crusibles and little furnells?
Thou loolest thy tyme & spendest,
Yett know'st not me whom thou seekest.
My Sonne, I take pittie on thee;
I advise thee to search for me. [f. 38v]
Marke well what I to thee shall say,
For from the truth I will not sway.
If heare & consider you would,
Then might'st understand how Gold,

V. *The Complaint of Nature*

Which is soe noble & soe rich, 505
His faire forme from heaven doth fetch.
But his matter of earth is knowne:
Even such is the Gemme & Stone,
As Chysolites & Dyamants.
All this doth the foure Elements, 510
Touching matter. And touching forme,
Heaven qualitie doth informe
In the Element inclosed,
By which the forme is disposed
(Noble by depuracion), 515
Growne att length to perfeccion.
Yett moreover this noblenesse,
As of Gold and other richesse
I doe make, I doe itt hammer
(No man understands the manner). 520
For if one doe not understand
How this matter to take in hand,
Nor yett can proporcion finde
Of Elements, nor apprehend [f. 39r]
How much fire, water, earth & Aire
Is requisite, nor can inquire
How things contrary to dispose,
Or how substances to disclose,
Or to give the right influence
That is needfull for such Essence— 530
But if to make one have a will,
Lead or Iron, yett have not skill,
Know can he the Superiour
Whoe knowes not the Inferiour?
How can one then pure fine Gold make, 535
Unlesse my treasure he doth take?
That power is not in his Art;
Truly he is too malapart
To attempt with Art mechanicke.
Noe: he ought to knowe my practicke, 540
The which, to witt, is naturall,
Without the hand of man att all.

But then if the Gold be soe good
That made is without fire of wood
(And is he soe noble deemed 545
That above all is esteemed,
That all men itt their treasure hold,
So much humane men esteeme Gold?), [f. 39v]
Yett he heales not the mallady
Or the mettalls' impurity, 550
Nor makes he transmutacion
To mettallicke perfection
Of fine Gold, nor is soe noble
To make the glasse malliable,
As doth the most excellent stone 555
Of the wise men which we have knowne.
Now the Gold is (that I extract),
Then, the metalline most perfect.
If skill thou hast not soe ample
Lead to make, by the example 560
Of me, or but a little graine
(Yea, or of an herbe but the rine),
Then much lesse canst thou make Iron.
How then canst thou thy selfe fashion
To make that is more notable, 565
As is the Crowne & gold noble?
But if thou saist, or dost deny,
Thou makest Gold, but Alchimy,
Then to thee I answere truly,
Thus shewest thou greater folly. 570
Didst not thou marke what I have said?
This secrett is to thee denied, [f. 40r]
For that which done is by nature
Cannot done be by a Creature. 575
And more: the Gold which I extract
Than seven mettalls is more perfect.
Sith this thou dost not understand,
How darest thou to take in hand,
Or attempt an Extraction

V. *The Complaint of Nature*

To perfect Imperfection, 580
And in which I put puissance
Of transmuting every Essence
Of mettalls into purest Gold,
Which I for a greate Treasure hold?
God this great guift hath me given. 585
 But thou arte too much mistaken
If thou know not, nor understand.
This high pointe which thou tak'st in hand
As much as concernes the Creature,
Is the greate seacrett of nature 590
In beast, in plant, or in mettall.
All is by power Caelestiall,
Doubtlesse, for with it is healed
All men's diseases, & cured.
Itt doth perfect mettalls imperfect,
By vertue & power Exact. [f. 40v]
Where I place my cheife sapience
And the treasure of my scyence,
He is himselfe so perfect sound,
That equall to him none is found. 600
Ought it not that soe greate scyence
Proceed from deepe Intelligence,
Sith no man can make Gold soe pure
As this which is the greate treasure
Of treasures incomparable? 605
Tis a fault Irreparable,
For if thou canst not Carry tenne,
Yett a hundred wilt beare, say then
Wilt thou not Kill thy selfe at length?
By this attempt learne thy owne strength. 610
 My sonne, this is all my scyence,
My cheife Knowledg & puissance,
Which I take from heaven only
And from the Elements simply:
This is a substance primitive, 615
A quintessence Elementive
Which I make by reductions

In tyme & Circulacions,
Convertinge the Lowe into high,
The cold to hott, & moyst to dry— [f. 41r]
Yett conserveing Stones & mettall
Under their humid radical.
By mocion tis of heaven,
Which is pretious & even.
Understand how the Elements 625
Of heaven have their Governments,
For the Elements are swayed
And by their Influence ruled.
How much purer is my matter,
Soe from heaven flowes workes greater. 630
Dost within thy furnace suppose
(Where earth & water thou dost close),
Or by thy stronge heate & Calour,
To gett the white & red colour?
Thou hast done to me thy pleasure 635
To accomplish thy Indeavour.
To rule heaven hast thou scyence
Or to direct itt Influence,
Or incompass it with thy span?
Thinkest thou, that to be an Organ, 640
Which every finger can make sound?
No, Noe: this thing is more profound.
Knowest not thou, that in the course
Of the heavens there is greate force [f. 41v]
Shines downe rayes of Intelligence,
Alsoe makes by itt Influence
That every thing doth live & growe?
This I pray apprehend & knowe:
How such high things from highest place
Proceed of me through God his grace. 650
And thinke not thy Art manuall
Soe perfect as the naturall,
For thy thought is too meane & base
To counterfeit me in this Case.

V. *The Complaint of Nature*

Think'st thou by distillacion, 655
Or by thy Congelacion
Of thy matter in thy vessell,
Or to extract water of Oyle,
To be the true way, or right race
Where thou should'st followe me & trace? 660
My sonne, thou dost thy selfe abuse;
For when thy tyme thou thus dost use
To compasse all these minglements
And separate the Elements—
Thy earth, thy water, & thy oyle— 665
Truly nothing thou dost butt toyle.
Thou knowst not why for thy matter
That cannot one halfe houre intire [f. 42r]
And the strong heate of fire induer. 670
Itt is of soe little valure
That all of itt shall goe in fume,
Or in the fire itt shall consume.
But the matter with which I make all
Most stedfast is in his tryall:
Yea, though the fire much ardent bee, 675
Tis bettered by the fire, we see.
Then comes water of a dry kind,
Which moystens nothing itt doth finde;
Nor ist Corrupt or vollatill,
Nor doth the strong fire his oyle spill. 680
My Elements are soe perfect,
Although thine are most Imperfect;
Alsoe itt is not thy office
My Arte that thou shoudst enterprize.
But I say for Conclusion, 685
Marke thou well my direccion.
And doe not thus thy selfe abuse,
Supposing that thou canst infuse,
By thy fyre artificiall,
Heavenly heate & naturall. 690
Nor by thy Oyle, earth, & water

Thou canst not obtaine a matter [f. 42v]
That may receave an Influence
Which may produce such a substance.
Tis God's guift; he gives heavenly 695
Elements, which better truly
Placed are in simple Essence,
Where I have sole Intelligence.
And those in me confide strongly,
Knoweing well true philosophy. 700
My Sonn, I will say only this
(The Creator knowes how true it is):
The worke itt selfe doth make intire
With one only (& vile) matter
Homogeniall, in one vessle 705
Shut, & in one only furnell
Thus to perfect itt selfe content,
And made with one only regiment.
But marke the Generacion 710
Of man & his perfection,
Where in all things I shew my skill,
And God's appointment doe fullfill.
Canst thou of one matter effect
Humane Speties soe perfect?
Only I the body formed
Most subtile, if considered [f. 43r]
Which, *Plato* nor *Aristotle*
How, by what meanes, they cannot tell.
I make the hard bones, teeth to eate,
The soft liver & skinne soe neate, 720
The humid braine & the cold nerves,
The hott heart to which God life gives,
The bowells & veynes alsoe good,
And artires fild red, warme blood.
Yea, of one only vive Argent, 725
Masculine Sulphure cheefe Agent,
I make one maternal vessle
Where the belly that is furnell.
Tis true, the man may by his Art

V. *The Complaint of Nature*

Aid me with heate & play his parte, 730
Into the matrix injectinge
The proper materiall thing.
To doe more than this is needlesse,
Like is it in thy buisnesse.
For he that Knowes the true matter 735
Such as the worke doth lust after,
Well prepared in one Vessell,
Well closed & in his furnell,
All furnisht thus: no more delay.
For thou & I must worke, I say, [f. 43v]
With heate for him be provided
As phylosophy ordeyned.
For that is all I thee advise,
Because in that thou must be wise:
In fire which we call *Epseisis*, 745
Pepsis, *pepansis*, *apersis*:
Fire naturall, against nature,
Not naturall, without ardure;
Fire humid & cold, hot & dry.
Thinke on this & goe not awry. 750
 Without true matter & right fire
Thou shalt not atteine thy desire.
The matter on thee I bestowe;
To direct forme, thy selfe must knowe.
I speake not of substantiall 755
Or of the forme Accidentall,
But of the forme of thy vessle
And how thy furnace to make well.
Make itt with reason to accord,
As naturall Arte doth afford. 760
 And thou me, & I aid will thee;
As thou dost, soe doe I to thee.
Thus my Sonns have done heretofore,
Soe received have they greate store, [f. 44r]
Because they obeyd their father
And hearkened unto their mother,
Obeying alsoe my Command,

As thou maist see in the *Romant*
Of *John Mehung*, who me approveth
And all Sophisters disproveth. 770
Soe hath done *Arnold & Raymond*,
Who made a notable sermon,
And *Morien* that good *Roman*
Who was both a sage & wise man;
Soe *Hermes*, the father called, 775
To whome there is non compared;
Geber the greate philosopher,
Who of my worke much did declare
And hath written exceeding well;
Soe others more I will not tell 780
Of this same thrice noble scyence
Of which they had Experience,
Proveing the Art veritable,
Of greate vertue, & laudable.
Many men truly have it found 785
And the truth thereof proved sound;
Now to be short, leave off I will.
But Sonne, if thou hast any skill [f. 44v]
To attempt my workes notable, 790
Thou needst nor ducatt nor noble,
Nor of riches greate plenty.
Only be thou att Liberty
And in a place convenient,
And let noe man knowe thy intent:
Preparing right well thy matter, 795
All alone bringing to powder
In one vessle, which water his
Well closed in a furnace is;
And with one regiment governed,
In heate temperatly guided. 800
The which produceth action,
But Cold breeds putrifaccion,
For through too much frigidity
Cannot very well siccity

V. *The Complaint of Nature*

Resist against such an Agent 805
Which is not hott, the vive Argent,
By Convections ordered
And homogeniall rendred,
Reduced to the first matter.

Let thy Intencions ever 810
Be to follow mother nature.
Then reason will give thee nurture; [f. 45r]
Thy guide shalbe philosophy.
Which If thou dost, I say truly,
Thou hast the matter & the meand 815
To atteine thy desired End.
Take only but that thing in hand
That little cost, but understand
My principles. How I worke, looke:
Regard *Aristotle* his booke, 820
Third & fourth of his metheors.
Learne Physicke, & read thou others
His bookes: of Generacion
And alsoe of Corrupcion,
The booke of earth & heaven, 825
Where the matter is sett even.
If there thou dost not understand,
Thou spoylest what thou takst in hand.
To be more intellectuall,
Thou must seeke to the minerall. 830
Soe did my gentle Sonne *Albert*,
Which much did know & was experte;
In his tyme he me governed,
And he my workes well ordered, [f. 45v]
As apparant tis in that booke
And into the which thou maist looke.
There shalt thou read of minerall
And thereby know my secretts all:
How noe stones are ingendred
But of Elements composed. 840
Learne, learne thou me to understand,
Before my workes thou take in hand.

Trace me—I am mother Nature,
Without whom there is no creature
That hath being or takes Essence, 845
Doth spring, or increseth substance,
Nor possesse a Soule sensitive
Without heaven's Elementive.
And to understand the successe
Itt behoveth thee to bee restlesse: 850
To Travell, & much to studdy
In our bookes of philosophy.
And if thou gett by dilligence
The vertue & intelligence
Of the heavens' greate actions 855
And the Elements' passions
(How they of Act are capable
And by what meanes convertible;
What's the Cause of corrupcion
Of food, & generacion [f. 46r]
Of their substance, & their Essence),
Then hast thou Art's Intelligence
Soe much as is sufficient
For to accomplish thy intent,
By consideringe my greate workes. 865
Nor have wise men nor all greate Clerkes
This guift of God by their scyence,
But men of a good Conscyence
Which have followed me by reason
And me have sought a long season, 870
And with great patience expected
The tyme that I have appointed.
Doe therefore what I require,
If this same Treasure thou desire,
Which had, have true physitians, 875
Philosophers, Magitians.
This is the treasure of treasure,
Of greate vertue & power sure;
Hath power on earth from heaven,

V. *The Complaint of Nature*

And by Art to man tis given. 880
Tis a meane betwixt mercury
And metall which I take to try.
Now by thy Art, & my scyence,
Made is this pretious Essence. [f. 46v]
Gold itt is, pure & potable,
Radicall moysture notable,
And a soveraigne medicine.
Soe doth King *Solomon* designe
In his Authenticke booke by us
Named Ecclesiasticus. 890
Thou shalt finde if thou turne over
And reade the thirty eight Chapter:
“Of earth God hath itt created,
But wise men have not it slighted.”
He plac’t it among my secretts 895
And gives it the Sage & discreete.
Though there are many Orators
That thinke themselves great doctors
In the highest divinitie
(Without ground of philosophy), 900
Yett every point have derided
And the medicine contemned,
They only Alchimy deride
Who me knowe not, nor yet have tride
The Arte, or can secretts unfold, 905
As did *Avicen & Arnold*
And many greate phisitians
And old skillfull Magitians. [f. 47r]
Such doe mocke who are noe whitt sage
And who have not seene the passage 910
Which true phisitians doe showe:
They only mocke that nothing knowe.
Nor can they apprehend the Ground,
Or such a medicine have found
Which cureth every mallady 915
As this same doth in Verity.
Blessed certeine is that person

Whom God the meanes & way hath showne
To accomplish this advancement,
Although he be growne Ancyent. 920
For *Geber* said aged were growne
Philosophers, before our stone
They found, yett att old age they could
Imbrace their Loves as Lovers should.
Who posseseth this great bounty 925
Hath much goods & riches plenty.
Who one ounce, or one graine, hath found
Is allwayes rich & allwayes sound
(But att last dye must the Creature,
By Command of God & nature). 930
Tis a Cordiall medicine
And a golden tincture most fyne, [f. 47v]
The *Elixer*, water of lyfe,
The end of all the worke; in breife,
The Gold, Argent Vive, & Sulphure 935
Which hidden is in my treasure.
Tis that oyle incombustible,
The white Salt, fixt & fusible,
The Stone of the Philosophers,
Which made is of my matters. 940
Nor can itt by other Structure
Found be, but only by nature
And by Art of a skilfull man,
Administer who rightly can. 945
I say to thee, yea, I announce
And confidently I pronounce,
That without me, who gives matter,
Thou canst not make thy worke intire;
And without thee, who me helpe must,
To worke alone I have noe lust. 950
But by me & thee, I assure
The worke is wrought in a good houre.
Leave off thy workes sophisticall
And Labours Diabolicall,
Thy furnace & vessles divers,

V. *The Complaint of Nature*

Thy Alimbicks false & perverse. [f. 48r]
And I thee earnestly intreate
In noe wise to use fuming heate;
Itt hath noe profit, nor doth good,
Noe more than doth the fire of wood. 960
Leave mettalls & Attraments;
Transmute thou the four Elements
To a species mutable,
Which matter is most notable:
By Philosophers designed, 965
But of Ignorance rejected.
Like to itt is Gold in substance,
Yet to itt unlike in Essence.
Thou shalt convert the Elements,
And obtaine thou shalt thy Intents. 970
Sublime thou the Inferiour
And cast downe the superiour.
 Thou must then take this vive Argent,
Mixed with Sulphure his Agent,
And putt thou all in one vessle, 975
Shutt up in one only furnell,
And be a third part buried
(Looke that itt bee not inflamed).
On a fire philosophical
Thus doe thou, & trust me in all. [f. 48v]
Then all other Speties leave:
I will thee Supply; my sonne, leave
And take not that materyall
Which doth begin the minerall.
More I say not, but thee adjure 985
In God's name to follow Nature.

Hallelu

IHS

V. TEXTUAL NOTES

Text: Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 58, fols. 27r–48v.

General emendations:

than] *MS reads then*: 37, 66, 82, 576, 733, 960
off] *MS reads of*: 787, 953

Other emendations:

538 too] *MS reads to*
566 Crowne] *MS reads Crowe*
594 men's] *MS reads meannes*
803 through] *MS reads throug*
812 give] *MS reads guide, but this is probably the result of an eye-skip to this word in 813.*

V. COMMENTARY

Citations of the French text are from *La metallique transformation contenant trois anciens traictez en rithme Françoise*, ed. Pierre Rigaud (Lyons, 1618).

11 *sott phantasticke*. Fantastical blockhead (suggesting the caprice and grotesqueness of the stupid alchemist's violation of nature).

11-18 Here are the original lines for this part of the text, followed by Walker's translation ("Jean de Meun and Alchemy," 2868–69):

Je parle a toy, sot fantastique,
Qui te dis et nomme en pratique
Alchimiste et bon Philosophe;
Et tu n'as scavoir, ny estoffe,
Ne theorique, ne science
De l'Art, ne de moy cognoissance.
Tu romps alambics, grosse beste,
Et brusle charbon qui t'enteste:

I speak to you, fantastic sot,
Who call yourself, and yet are not
Philosopher, Alchemist too,
You've not the stuff, you never knew
The theory nor science of it,
This art, nor yet of me one whit.
You break alembics, beast of lead,
The charcoal fumes have turned your head.

15 *or.* Nor (a common usage throughout this text).

20 *Attrament.* Here and below (67, 961), atrament is distinguished from metals. In Albertus Magnus and elsewhere in the Middle Ages the term refers to a large group of minerals, "neither clearly differentiated nor accurately named. . . . They are all products of the weathering of sulphide ores, mostly of iron and copper" (Wyckoff's comment in her trans. of Albertus' *Book of Minerals*, 242). They are always characterized as having a foul taste and smell. Albertus himself describes several kinds, concluding that *atramentum* is "an intermediate between stones and metals because it has the constitution of stone and sometimes the lustre of metals" (243-44). See also Rulandus, 53-59.

21 *furnells.* Furnaces.

25 *Which more is.* What is more.

27-32 Walker ("Jean de Meun and Alchemy," 2869) translates these lines as follows:

In your hot fires that burn so bright
Quicksilver is not fixed aright;
Then too, the quicksilver you use

Is base and volatile, I choose
Another, by your folly caught
In this way you must come to naught.

28-30 *fix vive Argent . . . mettals are.* To solidify ordinary mercury (*vulgare*, 29), and not that kind of (philosophical) mercury which is one of the constituents of metals.

34 *Compase.* Art, artifice.

39-41 Various alchemical vessels: alembics (stills); sublimating vessels (for converting a substance to a vapor then, upon cooling, to a solid); gourd-shaped retorts; more stills; alembics with two curved tubes proceeding from the head back into the body of the vessel (pelican shaped, used in distilling liquors by fermentation).

42 *And workest.* And thou workest.

44 *Fire of Reverberacion.* A strong fire, for reducing substances to a fine calx or powder.

46 *spilt.* Destroyed.

67 *Attraments.* See 20n above; one kind, *Atramentum Sutorium*, is an ordinary substance for "all metals which are melted out of the moisture in stone" (Rulandus, 55).

73 *grain.* Seed, as at 57, above.

87 This seems to contradict line 57, but see 61–68, 111–54, where the sulphur-mercury theory is explained in relation to the four elements and prime matter. The point here seems to be the distinction between the generation of metals and that of plants and animals, despite certain general principles that apply to all kinds of natural generation and growth. See also 839–40n, below; and, for the Arnaldian notion of sperms, *The Alchimyst's Answer*, 267n.

93 *fragible.* Frangible, capable of being broken.

97 *deputation.* Purification (also at 515).

101 *the other.* The other metals, besides gold and silver (99).

103 *Sulphure terrene.* The sulphur in the earth that naturally combines with mercury to produce various metals; cp. 137–38.

104 *addust.* Adust; scorched, burnt.

115 *And canst finde.* And you will be able to find.

124 *Under kinde general Common.* Under one general and

common kind (translating "Sous genre general commun").

129-30 *Of Elements I itt Extract / With my heaven, & I pourtract.* I extract and draw it (the *metalline vertue* 126) out from the elements with my heaven (i.e., celestial or astral influences); French text: "Je l'ay des elemens extraicte / Par mes ciels l'ay ainsi pourtraicte."

137-38 *Not such . . . yet a Sulphure.* Not the ordinary substances known as quicksilver and sulphur, but the components of metals (see 103n, above).

139 *contrary qualities.* Usually, mercury was moist and volatile while sulphur was flammable and fixed.

145 *first forme.* The original appearance, weight, etc. of the matter.

155-65 French text: "Ainsi privation, & forme, / Et matiere, dont je m'informe / Sont mes principes ordonnez, / Que d'enhaut me furent donnez: / C'est mon maistre le Createur / Qui commanda comme un aucteur / Que de matiere universelle. / Je fisses comme son ancelle, / Transmuier les quatre elemens. / Parmes actes & regiments / Soubs [sic] une forme generale / De toute espece minerale."

171 *indent.* Penetrate deeply.

173 *the eight sphere.* The eighth crystalline sphere of the Ptolemaic universe, containing the fixed stars; *their father* (174) is the *primum mobile* (*grand first moveable*, 175) which regulates all celestial motion.

199-201 The elliptical style here accords with that of the original: "Et ainsi par leurs cours divers, / Sont causez estez & yvers. / Es elemens mutations, / Et ça bas generations."

225 *intent.* Keen, intense.

233 *this.* These.

245 *Calour.* Heat (also at 269, 633); Rulandus (88-89) lists nine different kinds of Calor.

245ff. This theory of the generation of metals from two "exhalations" or vapors is found ultimately in Aristotle, *Meteorologica* 3.6 (378c). The two vapors (one moist, one dry or smoky) became identified with mercury and sulphur; see Taylor (20-21, 70-71), Holmyard (21-24), and above 103n, 137-38n.

249 *the vapour is cold & humidd.* I.e., that of mercury, the

“passive” constituent; the *other* (254) becomes sulphur, the “active” constituent.

275 *in one only vessle shutt.* The first of several references to this proverbial saying in alchemy, the most immediate source of which was probably Arnaldus de Villanova; see *The Pleasant Founteine*, 837n, above. The saying appears repeatedly in the present text: 278, 705, 727, 737, 797, 975.

281 *balne.* Water bath (from *balneum*), a common source of gentle heat in alchemy.

293 *become.* Becomes (?).

302 *our Infant.* One of the common metaphors for the “growing” metal in the earth, or the philosopher’s stone in the vessel.

332 *Chaos, Hyle: Kingdome.* The *prime materiall* (331), analogous with the primordial chaos of Genesis, which must have a *forme* (337) imposed on it.

333-34 *King.* Gold. *Queene:* silver. *retinue:* the other metals.

340 *Essencesse.* Essences. In Aristotelian terminology, Nature has imposed on prime matter (matter without form) the essential forms of each metal, each one with its particular qualities that constitute its nature or essence.

342 *excite.* Set in motion, induce.

343 In margin of MS: “Raymund Theoric Testament cap: 75.” As noted in the Introduction, Pseudo-Raymond Lull’s *Theorica* was important for its theory of quintessences (see 357ff.). The threefold division of creation (from pure spirit to gross matter) is explicitly stated in Lull’s *Theorica*, chap. 3 (*Theatrum Chemicum*, 4:5–6). Lines 343–53 here bear a striking resemblance to a passage in the hymn of Synesius, later bishop of Ptolemais (ca. 400 A.D.), quoted in Taylor, 22.

376 *had like sphere.* And how they each have a similar sphere (?). The following lines deal with the inter-convertibility of the elements, based on their shared *qualities*: air is hot and moist; fire, hot and dry; earth, dry and cold; water, cold and moist; by changing only one quality in an element, it could be transmuted into another one. This theory led to the belief that metals (since they are composed of these same elements) could also be transmuted.

378-80 *appropriate, properly, appropriately.* These words all

signify that the qualities of the elements are *essential* to their natures.

384 *ney*. Nye, near.

385 *siccity*. Dryness (also at 804).

388 *to springing fall*. To become (or begin to be) alive; to come to life.

391-92 *active . . . passive*. See 245n, 249n, above.

402 *prize*. Force open or into.

404-10 French text: "Tout m'a voule Dieu honorer: / Qui m'a donné telle puissance, / Que je fais à la quinte-essence / Reduire tous les quatre arriere: / Lors se dict natiere premiere / Moslee generalement / Et part tout chaucun element."

406 *Quintessence*. See 343n.

411-14 Out of putrefaction comes the generation of a "new" metal (*Speties*, with its own specific form and qualities), but the latter was in the "reduced" matter potentially.

419 *destitute*. Forsaken, forlorn.

432 *admirall*. Admirable: to be wondered at.

438 *lymitted*. Limited: i.e., appointed, specified.

456-57 *Avicen . . . his de Viribus Cordis*. Avicenna (Ibn Sina, 980-1037), Islamic philosopher and physician; the work cited here ("On the Forces of the Heart") is probably the first treatise of Book I of his famous encyclopedia, *al-Qanun* or *Canon*. The first treatise (*al-Kulliyat* or "Generalities") deals with the four elements, the four temperaments, and the four humors; it concludes with a study of various "forces"—of the brain, liver, heart, etc. (see *DSB*, Suppl. 1:498). "In the second" (458) may refer to a chapter division in the Latin text (untraced) here referred to. For a survey of Avicenna's alchemical works, see Wyckoff's ed. of Albertus Magnus' *Book of Minerals*, 283-84.

472 *agree*. Make to agree, harmonize.

475-76 *golden chaine . . . circulerly I maintain*. The "circulation of the elements," explained above, 376n.

489 *Bath-Mary*. The *bain-marie*, also mocked above, 281 and note.

519 *I doe itt hammer*. As Nature explains above (321), her "hammers are the seaven Planets" (see also 50, 280); however, Backhouse is translating freely: "j'en suis l'ouvriere."

- 538** *malapart*. Malapert; presumptuous, impudent.
- 543-56** Modern punctuation can scarcely keep pace with the syntax of this convoluted sentence.
- 554** *glasse malliable*. The story of one in Tiberius Caesar's time who could render glass unbreakable and malleable is repeated by medieval writers like Bartholomaeus Anglicus (see Holmyard, 113); see also Jones's *Lithochymicus* 4.22, in this collection, below. But Solomon Trismosin's *Splendor Solis* makes the stone's ability to soften any kind of glass one of its four chief virtues (Read, 125).
- 563** *rine*. Rind. *that* (565): what.
- 566** *Crowne & gold noble*. See the textual note; French text: "ducat & noble."
- 567-68** I.e., if you say that not you but alchemy makes gold.
- 581** *puissance*. Power, strength.
- 594** *men's*. See textual note; the emendation is based on the French text: "Bien il y pert: car il guarist / L'homme de tous maux: & nourrist."
- 597** *sapience*. Wisdom.
- 611-30** This passage describes converting the elements by rearranging the proportions of their qualities (hot, cold, moist, dry); see *The Alchymyst's Answer*, 770-73n.
- 615-16** Compare 298-300, 376n, 475-76n, above.
- 622** *humid radical*. "Root moisture"; the *radicall moysture* (886), vivifying principle, or quintessence, of gold.
- 634** *white & red colour*. The philosopher's stone is sometimes described as being of two types, the white and the red; here the reference may be to the sequence of colors in making the stone.
- 640** *that*. I.e., *heaven* (637); or *Influence* (638).
- 667-68** *why for thy matter / That cannot*. Why thy matter cannot (668, *intire*: *entire*). The *and* in 669 seems likewise redundant.
- 677** *water of a dry kind*. The *aqua philosophica* or "Perennial Water" (Rulandus, 35); these are some times identified with mercury which, though liquid, does not wet the surface it touches.
- 684** *enterprize*. To take in hand, attempt.
- 685** *Conclusion*. A position or dogma.
- 704** *one only (& vile) matter*. Like the *one only vessle* (see

275n), an axiomatic phrase in alchemy.

708 *regiment*. Regimen; rule, prescribed way of working.

724 *artires fld red*. Arteries filled with red.

731 *matrix*. The womb, a term commonly used in alchemy for the vessel in which the stone is made (see 727–28).

734 *Like is it in thy buisness*. Just as it is in your alchemical operation.

745-49 *Epsesis, Pepsis, pepansis, apersis*. French text: “Car là gist tout: je t’en advise. / Pourtant faut bien que tu y vise: / En feu que l’on dit epsesis, / Pepsis, Pepansis, optesis.” In the margin of the French text (fol. 38r) is this note: “C’est à dire, chaleur convenable à faire bouillir, digerer, meurir, & ro-stir. Aristo. au 4 des meteor. faict mention de ces 4 especes de chaleur.” It is actually in Book 2 of Aristotle’s *Meteorologica* (379.b.10–381.b.20) that he introduces the subject of concoction, the effect on bodies of heat, of which there are three kinds: ripening, boiling, roasting. The *Meteorologica*, esp. Book 4, was often read as an alchemical text; see 245n, above.

761-87 Here follows Walker’s translation (“Jean de Meun and Alchemy,” 2869) of these lines:

Help me and I will help you,
As you work, will I work too.
This for my own sons I’ve done
That their profit might be won,
For they always followed me,
Father, mother, blamelessly
Obeying always my commands.
You may see it for it stands
In the books of Jean de Meun,
Reproof of sophist, my praise sung.
Thus did Arnold, Raymond too,
And he a noble sermon drew;
Morienus, the Roman sage,
Worked wisely in his day and age.
So Hermes labored, him they call
Father and master of them all;
Geber, likewise played his part,

Writing well of this my art,
In splendid books he won his fame,
And many others I do not name,
In this all-noble science have shown
The needed proof and made it known
That this great art is real and true,
Well worth the praise that is its due.

764 *store*. Wealth.

765-66 *father . . . mother*. God and Nature, respectively.

768-69 *the Romaunt / Of John Mehung*. The 84-line passage on alchemy in Jean's continuation of the *Roman de la rose* contains constant exhortations to follow the ways of nature, and it concludes with the comment that those alchemists failing to do so will achieve nothing, though they labor as long as they live; see the Introduction, above.

771 *Arnold and Raymund*. Arnaldus de Villanova and Raymond Lull, famous medieval alchemists; on the latter, see 343n, above.

773 *Morien that good Roman*. Morienus Romanus, whose famous alchemical work—often thought to have been the first in the Latin west—circulated widely in manuscript before being first printed in 1559 and often thereafter; see ed. by Lee Stavenhagen, 51ff. and the latter's article, "The Original Text of the Latin Morienus."

775 *Hermes*. Hermes Trismegistus, legendary inventor of all mechanical skills as well as the liberal arts, and the ultimate authority in alchemy.

777 *Geber*. Latinized name of Jabir ibn Hayyan (fl. ca. 800), Islamic alchemist; the works of the Latin Geber (which are not the same as those by the historical Jabir) are among the most important for western alchemical theory (see Holmyard, 68–82, 134–41).

797 *which water his*. Whose water.

815 *meand*. Means.

820-25 *Aristotle*. For the *Meteorologica*, see 245n, 745n above; the other works referred to here are the *Physics* (though 822, *Physicke* can mean either physics or medicine), which contains

general principles of natural philosophy; *De generatione et corruptione*, which deals both with the elements and the nature of physical changes (in terms of potentiality and actuality, matter and form); and *De caelo*, which treats the elemental spheres and the “first body” or “Ether,” the imperishable substance of the heavenly bodies.

829 *intellectual*. Understanding.

831 *Albert*. Albertus Magnus (d. 1280), whose genuine *Mineralia* is referred to as *that booke* (835); here Albertus depends heavily on those Aristotelian texts cited above, 820–25n (see Wyckoff’s trans. of his *Book of Minerals*, 253–63). For ten spurious alchemical texts assigned him, see Ferguson, 1:15–16.

839–40 Although Albertus Magnus relies on the Aristotelian theory of vapors for the origins of minerals (see *Book of Minerals*, 1.1.8), he also speaks of minerals “growing” from “seeds” (*ibid.*, 1.1.5); see Wyckoff’s trans., 21–23, 29–32.

848 *heaven’s Elementive*. Heaven’s component part, the soul.

849 *To understand the successe*. To know how to achieve your aim.

854 *vertue & intelligence*. Power and understanding.

870 *expected*. Awaited.

875 *Which had, have true physitians*. Which true physicians have had.

879 *Hath*. It has.

882 *try*. Purify.

886 *Radicall moysture*. See 622n, above.

888–94 Solomon, the reputed author of the canonical Ecclesiastes, was often listed among the ancient sages of alchemy (Ferguson, 2:320–21); the apocryphal Ecclesiasticus, also called The Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach, is not usually ascribed to him, though the Prologue says that “This Jesus [son of Sirach] did imitate Solomon, and was no less famous for wisdom and learning.” The passage cited is from the opening section of chap. 38, which praises the physician: “For of the most High cometh healing, and he [the physician] shall receive honour of the king. The skill of the physician shall lift up his head: and in the sight of great men he shall be in admiration. The Lord hath created medicines out of the earth; and he that is wise

will not abhor them" (Apocrypha, King James version; 38:2–4). Our poem associates the great "medicine" (887) or philosopher's stone of alchemy with these scriptural "medicines." Debus (*Chemical Philosophy*, 2:357–58) notes that this biblical passage was central to the Renaissance notion of the "priest-physician" especially cultivated by Neoplatonizing Paracelsians; see also the Introduction to Bassett Jones's *Lithochymicus*, in this collection.

897 *Orators* Eloquent speakers (writers) or pleaders.

905 *or.* Nor, as at 15, above.

906 *Avicen.* See 456n, above; *Arnold:* see 771n.

921 *Geber.* See 777n, above. In margin of MS (line 923): *Juventutis renovatio* ("the renewal of youth"); in "The Investigation of Perfection," Geber speaks of the conserving and restorative powers of Gold (Holmyard, 138).

929 *But.* Except.

961 *Attraments.* See 20n, 67n, above.

969-72 On converting the elements, see 376n, 475–76n, above.

981 *Speties.* Species; appearance, outward form; see 411n, above.

Pseudo-Jean de Meun

VI. *The Alchymyst's Answere to Nature*

[f. 50r]

Meek & milde the Artist you see
Before *Dame Nature* on his knee,
Giving thanks & craveing pardon
For Nature's greate Compassion.

THE ALCHIMYST:

Now my most sweete mother *Nature*
(Farr the most excellent Creature
Which God, next Angells, created),
To you praise & thanks be rendred.

I here acknowledge & confesse
That you are mother & mistresse,
Governesse of that Macrocosme
Created for the Mycrocosme.
The former, the world named is;
In Greeke, Mycrocosme man is.
Thy habitacion is high,
To the first mover placed nigh.
There all things thou dost institute,
And here below thou dost transmute
Elements; dost peace or discord,
Even to Earth's Center, afford

5

10

15

By the Commandement only
Of your maister: incessantly
Creating Generacions
And alsoe such greate Actions
By your perfect Intelligence
In uncorruptible substance—
Of the heavens, starrs, & planett—
By which all things are formed feate,
That you deservedly may claime
Of all mistresse, mother the name.
Now I confesse, my deere mistrisse,
Noe liveing thing without Soule is;
And that which is & hath Essence
Proceeds from you, your puissance.
I meane that power bestowed
By God, who hath you ordeyned.
I acknowledge that you governe
Even the whole masse, & ordeine
The matter of the Elements.
All accord your Commandements,
For of those you take your matter,
And from heaven the forme primer.
Although the matter confused
Be att first (yett not diffused),
When that it is qualified,
And by thy meanes specified,
Then takes itt forme substantiall—
Yea, visible, accidentall.

Madam, your wisdom hath aymed
That all your greate workes be framed
By your vertue Caelestiall
In formes most Artificiall,
In soe perfect a good order,
That none liveing can doe further.
Honoured Lady, I conceive
That God to you such power gave,
Putting all things that are needfull
Man's life under your disposall.

VI. The Alchimyſt's Anſwere to Nature

Four degrees doe proceed from thee:	55
The first whereof, is but to be, As ſtones, mettalls malliable;	
The ſecond is vegetable, Which be & are vegetable.	
The third ſorte is the ſenſible:	60
To witt, fiſhes, beaſts, & birds brave, Which three ſeverall aboades have.	
Of all, the fourth is nobleſt In degree (as pleaſed him beſt),	[f. 51v]
Moſt perfect of all: this is man, The which in three degrees doth ſcann.	
More done hath he, than you Dame, have, When that to man a ſoule he gave:	
Faire & of Immortall ſubſtance, Adorned with Intelligence	70
And without all dimenſyons, Nor yett ſubject to paſſions	
Of our body, which bounded is. But by Senſuality tis	75
To evill & to ſinn turned By the body, which is ſtained	
By diſordered Affection; Soe ſuffers Condemnacion	
If that Grace be not obtained, Which from God comes & beſtowed	80
For the goodneſſe of the ſoule, more Than of the body. Dame, therefore,	
The cheife perfection of man Comes not from you, but itt doth ſtann.	
As I doe ſay in verity, You make not the humanity.	85
But the veſſle which is humane You make, & need helpe of noe man.	[f. 52r]
Now this is a peece moſt perfect And of your workes the cheife effect.	90
Without fraude this is a wonder (If one truly doe conſider)	

How our bodyes are devided
And our members organized
In such manner that the object
Of the body is soe subject
To the will's desire, that itt should
Move every member when it would.
So the desire is not att all
From you; no, nor yett att your call.
Although itt be a greate marvell,
The body should for Soule travill
As subject: soe itt ought to be,
But often we him maister see,
That is not for his good desert,
But when with sinne the Soule is hurt.

Now therefore you may not glory
Of the soe greate Excellency
And perfeccion of the man,
Whose forme doth not soe noble stann
As the Soule's: For itt doth alter
Against reason. But be rather
Carefull of thy owne buisnesse
Than of our faults or our falsnesse.
Thou dost the same when thou thinkest
Att first when thou it beginnest,
That itt will be a worke perfect—
Yett att last itt is but counterfeit.
Was the fault thy Intencion,
Or forst was the Condicion?

Madame, Lett me be pardoned
If soe that I have descourged
Over boldly of your scyence.
I take itt on my Conscience
I doe not you in this wise tax;
Nor doubt you that I angry wax
Because me thou hast reproved,
Or nought to me hast discovered.
Alas Madam, I you assure

VI. *The Alchimyst's Answere to Nature*

That I am not almost an howre 130
Without thought of your Curtesy,
The which I acknowledg humbly,
And rather when I consider
How thou madest me remember,
And of my great Errour repent,
And didst declare most excellent [f. 53r]
Things of thy Treasure laudable.
 Be it on bed or att table,
Or where soe're I be, before
Myne Eyes is this pretious store. 140
Then I doe nothing elce but muse
Of forme & matter, what to use,
Or I ought take to beginne.
But you me then did chide & wyne,
Yea sharply reprehend, I trowe, 145
Because to doe I did not knowe
As you doe. O deere, you Lady,
Know that neither Soule, nor body,
Nor knowledge have howe to doe this,
But what to you contrary is. 150
And dost not thou know very well
In this noble Art (itt soe befell)
Without helpe of thy faculty
I had but poore Abillitie?
 But verely, as thou saidst true, 155
To man this knowledge is not due.
Of your worke & your greate secretts
Produce I may not the Effects;
Nor have I a true Comment said,
When thou didst me in no wise aid. [f. 53v]
You said I ought to thy wayes looke:
So I wot well, but by what booke?
One bids me to take this & that;
Another saith I know not what.
Their words are divers & oblique, 165
With sentences parabolique.
To witt, by those I see not well

How I the truth should learne to spell.
And nowe to you I doe addresse,
Praying you to helpe my successe: 170
To be to me a Counsellor
In this soe strainge & greate affair.
Thus, deere Dame, I make my request
With an humble heart & earnest,
To declare in your Conscience: 175
In the pursuite of your scyence,
How can one into the earth goe
That the minerall he might knowe,
To search & by subtyll Arte spy
Of mettalls the true mercury, 180
There to finde even that of Gold
Which one ought a treasure to hold?
But I doubt, if one the same take,
That he shall never mettall make. [f. 54r]
For I beleeve no man soe sage
That this can, or knowes the passage.
You only can doe that same Worke,
And that Experience doth lurke
In your most Excellent knowledge,
Even as your words acknowledge 190
In the nativity of man.
The manner understand we can
How mercury, cold & humidd,
Desireth Sulphure for his ayd
As his homogeniall Sperme, 195
By which the Creature doth take forme
After the Labour finished.
But lett all be examined:
You take proper materiall,
Proper vessell & minerall, 200
Proper place & proper Calour,
To give both forme & Colour;
To make growe, have life bestowed
With which all things are sufficed.

VI. The Alchimyst's Answere to Nature

Thou Knowest, as an Architecture, 205
The dignity of the matter:
For Agent hath noe Action
Without disposed passion. [f. 54v]
Thou knowest subtilly to mingle
Hott with Cold, & to intangle 210
Dry with moyst; & by contrary
Knowst the quality to vary,
Transmuting what was first formed,
That the matter be reformed
In a new forme. For the object 215
Is by the powerfull Subject,
Which allways susteines the substance
Through act, which was in puissance.
Now heretofore I heard thee tell
(But my words doe not suffice well) 220
Your sentences to remember,
How I might gett your great power,
Me to direct assuredly
That soe I might speake properly;
And did observe how in your speech 225
The Elixir (in truth you teach)
Of the 4 Elements doth springe,
Contraryes soe to freindship bringe.
Yett thou saist we ought to transmute
The Elements, without all doubt: 230
This doe with hand, noe workman can;
Itt is beyond the Art of man [f. 55r]
To convert the four Elements.
But who knowes the Experiment:
How qualities terrestriall 235
With the ayre takes Essentiall
Sympathy, Compact by coldnesse
And convert itt selfe in moystnesse—
That is, into his Contrary?
For the humors will not vary 240
Of Elements Cold & humidd,
Notwithstanding they have some aide

Of fire, by which is made better
All the drugg, if I remember.
This same is the worke naturall 245
Which maketh black, white, red, & all,
Soe these three Colors visible
The three Elements resemble:
That is, the earth, Water, & fire,
And the Aire which we most require. 250
Then thou saist, without dissembling,
Itt selfe makes of one only thing,
With one Vessle & one substance.
For the foure have but one Essence;
Within this one is the effect
That doth begin & doth perfect. [f. 55v]
Nothing is wanting in his state,
Except itt be some little heate,
The which man doth undertake sure,
Inciting that he doth procure 260
By your Skill & your noble Art
And all that which is needfull for't.
Soe in this same onely matter
Is the perfeccion intire:
Itt doth begin, & itt doth act; 265
Itt doth continue, & perfect.
This is wholly as tis with man,
Which case with horse & plant doth stann.
For in the sperme continued
Is the forme of man renewed: 270
Flesh & blood, skin, bone, & sinewe
All in this little masse continue.
Alsoe by one graine, or one seed
Of each thing's feature, one may speed.
Of man, comes man; of fruite, fruite; 275
Of fish, a fish; of bruite, a bruite.
This order is in all points sound
Observed in your vessell round.
Your order is without abuse,

VI. The Alchimyst's Answere to Nature

That every thing his like produce. [f. 56r]
But this knowledge & greate Scyence
Proceedeth from the sapyence
Of God, who wills, & doth perfect,
Alsoe gives you power to Act.
 But nowe I knowe that when the sperme 285
Is in the vessle closed firme
Of the woman, more than this worke
Needlesse itt is the man to worke,
Or that he add or diminishe
More or lesse, his worke to finish. 290
Nor need he neerer to approach
To uncover, enclose, or touch:
For what is shutt in vessle shall
Att last doubtlesse make perfect all.
As thou hast said, soe tis I deeme, 295
With the stone I soe much esteeme:
How that itt needs but one matter
Only, reduced to powder,
The which conteines aire & water,
With heate in the vessle; further, 300
All which necessary may bee
To performe our Worke, there wee see.
Therefore to touch itt, tis a fault,
Or with ought elce itt to assault. [f. 56v]
Only tis needfull one admitt
Some little fire, that itt excite
Inward heate, which is composed
As the Infant, which reposed
Is in the mother's wombe warmly,
As tis in our worke properly. 310
You said that we might apprehend
The way how thee to understand
That in him is perfection,
Though he cannot his Action
Bring to passe in so noble forme 315
If man doe not his Art conforme.
By Art of man, I meane scyence

Of phylosophy & prudence,
Which like as the hands doe prepare
In separating the matter 320
Superfluous, & putt in Glasse
The Compound & simple earth Cras,
Togeather with his owne water.
Then the vessle is shutt closer
In furnace proportionall, 325
With viall artificiall.
Other than this, man by his skill
Cannot performe, say what he will. [f. 57r]
But when thou art in the working
And entred Arte into poudring, 330
After the preparation
Thou must make dissolucion
And the dry to water reduce,
So the cold to heate will conduce,
By prudent sublimacion, 335
Sagely & with discrecion.
In fine, att all this our Effect
Be, to perfect things Imperfect.
For as much as, *Madam Nature*,
Thou art mother of the creature, 340
Dost accord & make Attonements
Amongst all the foure Elements,
Which brought are to a Quintessence,
Of which noe man hath the scyence
But you. And this I hope to see, 345
Yea truly, when due tyme shalbe:
When God & you, deere mistrisse, give;
Till then, the tyme & tyde I leave.
Of the matter I make demaund
And well to knowe & understand: 350
How itt is so good & noble,
And how such virtues are able [f. 57v]
To yeeld a treasure soe perfect,
That perfect things imperfect.

VI. *The Alchymyst's Answere to Nature*

Madam, well I know that we Gold 355
The Treasure of mineralls hold,
Although the forme, nor matter,
Hath nott a powre soe Intier
To passe his owne perfection.
For he hath noe such Action 360
That more than himselfe perfection,
Though helpt itt be by Art of man.
But if any will me gaine say
That the Compound dissolvd may
Be, & reduc'd to vive Argent, 365
He is a foole, & indigent
Of good understanding & witt,
Sith he cannot out of Gold gett
Greater virtue or puissance
Than is proper to his Essence. 370
Lett him try who hath other minde
Att least seeing one can not finde
Att all more than him is
He doth abuse. But see, what's this?
What fallacies doe they produce!
They affirme tis meete to reduce, [f. 58r]
By their Arte & scyence, rather
The body to the first matter.
But truly, *Madam*, I know well
(For you gave me soe good Counsell) 380
That reduccion is not done
In those things you have begunne
Or formed, or specified,
If itt be not first corrupted:
Although after Corruption 385
Itt breeds noe Generacion
To the same speties, we finde,
If it returne not to his kinde.
Therefore, I say to destroy Gold 390
Is not the way that him make should;
Nor yett can a man undertake
Destroyed Gold, new Gold to make.

The Destruction proposed
Is, to witt, of the composed,
Which is a most difficult thing. 395
Subtile is the Art that shall bring
The same to powder or resolve.
 If ye thinke such wise to dissolve,
As to separate Temperaments
Which you have made of Elements [f. 58v]
In their first Composition,
Truly this is a question
Which a man never dissolve shall,
Though he speake what he's list to all.
For he indureth heate & cold, 405
Nor can a greate fire him unfold,
But he is thereby refined,
Amended—but not destroyed—
And soe perfect in his owne Nature.
And therefore itt is a creature 410
With the Elements according,
Which hath noe graine, sperme, nor seeding.
But he maketh reduction
After the putrifaction,
To returne to his Speties, 415
For too grosse are his substances.
Gold is dead; death is his Essence;
Nought is reborne of his substance,
Either mettall or Argent vive.
 Therefore, boast let no man alive 420
And alleadge this word notable:
Every like makes his semblable.
Tis false spoken in the mettalls,
But right true in the Animalls [f. 59r]
(They feed & are nourisheable),
And true in the vegitable,
The which are both sowne & planted.
But mettalls of sence are scanted:
Full as big att the yeere that's past

VI. *The Alchimyſt's Anſwere to Nature*

As they wilbe, ever att laſt. 430
Of Elements takeing beinge,
To Earth's Element agreeing,
They only growe without plantinge,
Without ſeed, noe nurture wantinge.
By you I knowe, assuredly, 435
I need not particulerly
Trust the words of the Antient
Philoſophers' double intent,
But only that ſame Theoricke
And that ſpeculative practicke 440
Which true is, and essentiall,
In which Nature is ſeene reall:
For there lyes hid the whole Eſſence,
Both the matter & the Substance.
What was told me I remember 445
By a ſophiſticke deceiver
(Esteem'd a greate philoſopher),
Who doubted not for true matter [f. 59v]
To take only but vive Argent
Very crude, & be diligent 450
With Gold to Amalgame it ſure,
Of which two makes he his Treasure.
When Joyned they are & coupled,
Well compacted & united,
The one the other ſhall perfect— 455
And alſoe ſaid they ſhould effect
The Golden Stone & Elixir.
But yet he did further wander
To ſeparate the Elements
(And alſoe the foure minglements), 460
The better them to purify.
Each one, a part to rarify
They muſt be, & then conjoyned:
The leſſe with the greate united,
And the ſubtile to the groſſe brought. 465
Soe (doeing as our maieſter taught)
He ſaid the Stone was compoſed.

But truly, I knowe he erred
In declaringe such trumperies
That truly were but fantasies. 470
Now the braine of such a fellow
Of witt is but very shallowe. [f. 60r]
Such deceive and are deceived;
Noe such (although much extolled
For a philosopher or Leach) 475
This grand scyence can noe way reach.
What you have said I call to minde,
Madam, for I truth doe itt finde,
That only to God doth belong:
Who is Creator, doth reteine 480
All things under his owne power,
As supreame; doth make & order
Of Elements every Creature.
For tis he ordeined Nature;
He Compounds in due quantity 485
Elements, & their quantity
Justly doth proportionate,
And well conjoyne in equall state
Elements, & unite in one,
Such way as to him best is knowne. 490
And noe man can this Compound make,
Or to deny dare undertake.
For he alone is Creator
Of all, & onely Governour.
Nothing in this whole world is found
Without him, which he doth not bound. [f. 60v]
O peace, peace, all the bold Boasters
And fond sophisticall searchers
Of Alchimy, who soe much vaunt
That you shall reape, yet nothing plant; 500
Who deale with Calcinacions,
And with strong sublimacions
And by strainge distillacions
Make fuminge Exhalacions;

VI. *The Alchimyſt's Anſwere to Nature*

And by false Coagulacions	505
Make ſophicke Congelacions	
To make people beleewe that they	
Have this thing done; & alſoe ſay	
They have truly ſeparated	
Four Elements, & devided	510
From vive Argent, & Gold refin'd,	
Though all prove nought ſoe in the End.	
For true itt is that every thinge	
Under heaven that hath beinge	
Of the four Elements made are,	515
And equall quantity they ſhare,	
Proporcioned in feature	
Well according with their nature—	
Yett not united properly,	
But with a virtue diſtinctly.	[f. 61r
Essentially the matters	
Of the true ſtone & moſt intire	
(I meane in the vive Argent red	
And perfect body, <i>Sol</i> named)	
Are each four Elements, truly	525
United inſeparably	
And mingled by meanes notable,	
By man's Art not ſeparable.	
For all the good phisitions,	
Phyloſophers, Magitians	530
Have written, & tis very cleere,	
The Element of fire and ayre	
Locked up, & mingled are:	
In earth one, in water tother.	
The fire incloſed up remains	535
In earth; Aire the water reteines.	
And theſe Elements never ſhall	
Their vertue demonſtrate att all,	
But in the earth or in water.	
There's their power, & ſtrife greater	540
Conjoyneing inſeparably,	
So that noe body really	

Separate can this Conjuncture,
But God & you, mother *Nature*. [f. 61v]
Confidently this I affirme,
And naturally I confirme;
For the fire is invisible
And the Aire inperceivable.
He that doth say one may them see
Aparte, meaneth to deceive thee, 550
For by Argument notable
Elements are unpartable.
But now, though Sophisters avow
And affirme boldly they doe know
To separate from vive Argent 555
And gold (which is soft & plyant)
Their Elements, they are Lyars.
See the reasons in good writers:
For Elements of Aire & fire
They doe exhale howsoever; 560
But yet, say they, reteine the same,
Though they know not from whence itt came,
Sith the Aire cannot be seene,
Nor perceived hath the fire beene.
If they extract that they pretend, 565
How is't what they touch they moystend,
Which is soe against the nature
Of ayery & fiery structure? [f. 62r]
Now, my deere, what you said is right,
As I have understood by writt: 570
There is none soe greate a doctor
This can, but God the Creator,
To witt truly how much there went
And ought be of each Element
In every naturall Compound. 575
To you God given hath this Ground.
Noe philosopher is soe sage
Whoe knowes this practice & usage,
How to compose or to conjoyne

VI. *The Alchimyſt's Anſwere to Nature*

The Elements, nor to ordeine 580
How much there muſt be of every
Element for to make any
Compound, or ſubſtance naturall,
Spirituell, or Corporall.
But now if he will theſe ſever, 585
How can he them render better
And reunite this ſame Compound,
To make ſome other thing more ſound,
Sith he knowes not the quantity
Of Elements, nor quality, 590
Nor the meanes to cauſe Union
Or a perfect Conjunction? [f. 62v]
He ought not ſeparate, before
He truly know how to reſtore.
 Leave yee, then, this worke to *Nature*, 595
Who knoweth the Art & ſtructure,
And underſtands well to diſpoſe
This Stone, & cunningly compoſe.
She truly makes Amalgaments,
Not ſeparating Elements. 600
Leave, you ſaid enough, deere *Madam*;
By your words I well know the game.
To ſeparate tis not needfull
The Elements, or behooffull
Them to reunite & conjoyne, 605
Before one can this Art atteine.
This is a ſecrett beſtowed
On you, & of God ordeined.
 Noe doubt the Elixir, our Stone,
You make in all perfection, 610
Without partinge the Elements—
Yett not without your Inſtruments,
Nor without helpe of a wiſe man,
Who well your worke apprehend can.
 But one very well obſerve ought
That which *Ariſtotle* taught: [f. 63r]
Where the philoſopher endeth,

The Physitian beginneth.
Those for philosophers I deeme
That *Nature's* secretts most esteeme. 620
Then *Alchemy Art* doth commence,
Searching *Nature &* her scyence.
And this fully is the Intent
Of that which *Aristotle* ment
In this sentence & true scripture, 625
Sheweing the Secretts of *Nature*
Which Philosophers Understand
Before the worke they take in hand.
And nothing elce doe they Intend
But *Nature* well to apprehend, 630
For *Alchemy Art* doth conduce
To that which *Nature* shall produce.
And that one be not here misledd,
Only that which *Nature* used,
Produced, & did Ingender 635
Is the matter & meete Gender
Apperteineing to *Alchemy*.
Thou knowest much better than I,
Most deere *Madam* (as you deserve,
With Soule & body you I serve), [f. 63v]
But understand the three Effects
Of *Alchemy Art*, which perfects
The mettall & doth vivifie
(Experience doth testify),
And the Spiritt itt doth cherrish, 645
Soe doing that nothing perish.
Secondly, decocts the matter,
Digesting itt in such manner
In somewhat a little vessle,
Which convert can the body Well 650
With the Spiritt, all into one,
Putting thereunto bodyes none.
Now in this *Art* tis notable
No new thing is acceptable

VI. *The Alchimyſt's Anſwere to Nature*

To itt; there's noe Addition, 655
But an Administracion
With faire principles of *Nature*,
Which are needfull here to procure.
For what Shee breedes, & to us leaves
To take, in this worke us behoves. 660
Therefore, thirdly & finally,
Proved itt is, that really
Separacion is not fitt
Of the foure Elements, nor yett [f. 64r]
Of the Argent vive, or of *Sol*,
The which one our red Gold doth call.
To compose the Stone pretious,
This conceite is erroneious,
Opposing noble *Alchimy*
And all profound philosophy. 670
Itt is true & without ly,
Or without stretching verity,
That all things Elementated
With Elements are nourished.
If then they be well disposed 675
And for such Compound composed
(Even as *Nature* produced),
When one divides, then destroyed
Is that same Compound & rotten,
And the faire knott is all broken 680
Which hath all the Elements knitt,
Now for Commixture no way fitt.
Who any thing separateth
From the Elements, destroyeth.
Truly, itt is noe whitt needfull 685
To be done, or yett behooffull,
The father which begetts the Sonn
Dissolved be. Have ye not knowne
That you doeinge thus destroy all?
But let the Spiritt naturall [f. 64v]
Be shutt in with Sperme, & soe shall
The woman this materiall

Cherish & nourish with due heate.
And such Spiritt in his due seate
Is the Infant's generative 695
And members' Substance nutritive,
As *Avicen* makes mencion,
Speakeing of generacion.
 Alsoe itt fals accordingly
With fine Gold, which is certenly 700
Of our Stone the materiall,
True Substance philosophicall.
This same father all hath builded:
Then why must he bee destroyed,
Corrupted, or separated, 705
Or from his Element parted?
Lett suffice that *Sol* & father,
Breathing his Spiritt, make prosper
Through force & vertue infused
With Spiritt on his form powred; 710
By vertue which is the true stone
Of Philosophers of earth borne,
And through the Spiritt actuall
The Sonn's forme is substantiall. [f. 65r]

Madam, soe much you have me showne
Of your Secretts, that I have knowne
Alchimy is admirable
And the Scyence undoubtable.
Now I conclude this Gold soe red
Is the true father (*Sol* termed) 720
Of the Elixir and the Stone,
From whence soe greate treasure have flowne.
Inclose, digest, & tinct through skill,
For he doth heate, fix, and distill
Without all diminution 725
Or elce any Corruption
Of this Gold—true father indeed,
Whence soe greate children doe proceed.
Therefore itt is not possible,

VI. *The Alchymyst's Answere to Nature*

Necessary, or Laudable	730
To devide the Amalgaments	
Or separate the Elements	
<i>Nature</i> hath proporcioned	
And soe well Joynd and ordered,	
In a Just and due quantity,	735
Complection, and quality	
Of Argent vive (in and without,	
Like the perfect body noe doubt	[f. 65v]
Of <i>Sol</i>), which confirms the decree	
And the sentence, which true we see:	740
If we in naturall scyence	
Have att all noe experience	
In the Compound Amalgaments	
Of these foure faire Elements,	
Likewise we have noe notion	745
Of their due Seperation.	
Wherefore itt is necessary	
To followe <i>Nature</i> , & to try	
The true use of those instruments	
She useth in the Elements.	750
For otherwise we never shall	
Be true Imitators att all,	
Without this Administracion	
In this selfe same extraction	
Of the forme of this same rich stone,	755
By a way needfull to be knowne.	
And by such way, one obteine ought	
Instruments wherewith <i>Nature</i> wrought	
The minerall's proper Agent,	
The which gave forme to vive Argent.	760
If we good bookes cannot followe,	
Then doubtlesse we shall overthrowe	[f. 66r]
That which <i>Nature</i> hath composed,	
And that she brought & disposed.	
In separatinge the Compound	765
Soe contrary to your Command,	
A fault too too detestable	

Against you, most honourable.
But one without doubt may give faith
To that which *Aristotle* saith: 770
One must convert the Elements,
And then shall he have his intents.
O *Nature*, you have directed
Me, & the true way detected,
For me to accomplish sagely; 775
Wherefore I give you thanks humbly.
You have soe well the truth me tought,
That I perceive I have done nought.
I acknowledge itt greate folly,
The end losse & melancholly, 780
To meddle in furnace matters,
In Argent vive, or strong Waters
With Solucions usuall,
Or in any thing minerall,
Or smoake of fire with Coale of wood;
They doe much harme, but little good. [f. 66v]
Therefore, deere *Madam*, I conclude
Henceforth my Workes shall more allude
And heedfull bee unto your Love, 790
Traceing your Stepps for evermore,
Which is the right way & the path
Most secure that any man hath.
And all this Art most certainly
Comes to us from you, but slowly,
Not without Cause, sith the beauty 795
Of this Treasure & majestie
Of this so profound Oracle
And truly your greate miracle.
But deere *Madam*, nowe to the End
I may noe way my tyme mispend, 800
Under your banner and ensigne
Your direccions me Assigne;
And ayde this day, as to morrowe,
Thy Workes happily to followe.

VI. *The Alchimyſt's Anſwere to Nature*

Preſcrib'd by your Commandement, 805
That to take firſt be my Intent,
The right matter with his Agent,
Which ſhalbe this faire vive Argent,
Which muſt be ſhutt in a veſſle
Closed, & putt on a furnell, [f. 67r]
Invironed on all ſides ſure,
Soe that you may, *Madam Nature*,
Rule well the operation
And worke bringe to perfection,
Which is ſoe occult & profound, 815
A richer the World hath not found.
Madam, thanked be your bounty,
With all my hearte, Soule, & body,
Sith you gave me a kind Viſitt
And ſoe greate a good to Inheritt; 820
For the which continually
I ſhalbe bound, mauger Envy,
To obey your Commandements
That I may by theſe Elements
Obtaine this ſoe noble tincture, 825
Through God's good grace & yours, *Nature*.

The Artiſt after ſuch manner
In humble wiſe made his Anſwere
Before *Dame Nature* his miſtreſſe,
By whom he gott ſoe greate riches. 830

Hallelu.

IHS.

VI. TEXTUAL NOTES

Text: Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 58, fols. 50r-67r.

General emendations:

than] *MS reads then* 67, 82, 114, 327, 361, 370, 373, 638

Other emendations:

144 & wynne] *MS reads I wynne; the I is probably an eye-skip transposition from line 145, or a misreading of ampersand.*

168 the] *MS reads thee*

416 too] *MS reads to*

425 nourisheable] *MS reads nourishedble*

462 one] *MS reads on*

480 as] *MS reads is; see parallel construction in 482*

498 searchers] *MS reads searches*

VI. COMMENTARY

Citations of the French text are from *La metallique transformation contenant trois anciens traictes en rithme Françoise*, ed. Pierre Rigaud (Lyons, 1618).

6 *mother & mistress*. A frequent formula throughout: Nature is both source and governess.

36 *accord*. Agree upon.

37 *those*. The elements (35).

38 *from heaven the forme primer*. Nature imposes on inchoate prime matter (*matter confused*, 39) an archetypal form "from heaven."

VI. *Commenteary*

- 53** *needfull*. Necessary to.
- 59** *vegitable*. Vegetal, vegetative: having life and growth.
- 64** *him*. God (also the referent of *he* at 67, 68). The *three degrees* (66) may refer to the earthly, the celestial, and the super-celestial (i.e., spiritual).
- 66** *scann*. Examine, consider; interpret for meaning.
- 71** *without all dimensyons*. I.e., beyond any kind of (material) measurement, because the soul is pure spirit.
- 84** *stann*. Stand; i.e., endures (irrespective of the material body, over which Nature has dominion); see also 110, 268.
- 102** *travill*. Travail, exert itself.
- 112** *But be rather*. But rather (instead) be.
- 114** *our*. The alchemists'. This rebuke of Nature (114–120) may have to do with the occasional imperfections apparently produced by her (*counterfeit*, 118 can mean “deformed”).
- 126** *doubt*. Suspect, fear.
- 128** *discovered*. Revealed.
- 133** *rather*. Sooner; with (even) better reason.
- 143** *Or I ought . . . beginne*. Or what I ought to use in beginning the Great Work of alchemy.
- 144** *wynne*. Contend, fight; see textual note. French version: “Vous m’este venue tencer [reprimand].”
- 161** *You said*. I.e., in *The Complaint of Nature*, 49–53 and repeatedly thereafter.
- 161-68** Here follows Walker’s translation (“Jean de Meun and Alchemy,” 2869–70) of these lines:

Yet how can I proceed aright
Unless you aid me with your might?
You say that I must search for you,
But in this quest, what book will do?
One says you must take that or this,
Another says, 'tis all amiss;
Their words are divers and oblique,
Sentences senseless and antique.
In truth, the message that they bring
Is this, I'll never learn a thing.

- 175** *in your Conscyence*. Truly; by your sense of right.

186 *can.* Can do.

201 *Calour.* Heat; see *Complaint*, 245n; *proper:* see *Complaint*, 378–80n.

205 *Architecture.* Architector, architect.

207-8 For agent (active) and passive, esp. in relation to the sulphur-mercury theory, see *Complaint*, 249n, 390ff.

215-24 Compare the French text:

Car l'object

Est par la puissance subject
Qui toujours soustient la substance
En l'acte qui fut en puissance,
Or vous ayant ouy bien dire
Mais mon parler ne peut suffire
A bien reciter vos sentences:
Et si j'avois vos grands potences,
Pour moy soustenir seurement,
Je parlerois bien proprement.

219 *I heard thee tell.* For the following ideas on the elements and elixir, see *Complaint*, 390–484.

242 *Notwithstanding.* Even if.

244 *drugg.* The only appearance of drug (*droug*) in *Complaint* is at line 38, where it is in a pejorative context. Perhaps here it may mean “compound” or “mixture” (of elements).

246 *black, white, red.* In ancient texts, these are three of the four principal colors (along with yellow) in the sequence that produces the philosopher’s stone (see Patai, “Maria the Jewess,” 179, 181). But this specific combination is also found in Raymond Lull’s *Theorica*, chap. 5, where a symbolic creature with a red head, black eyes, and white feet is described (*Theatrum Chemicum* 4:13).

252-53 *one only thing.* See *Complaint* 275 and note.

260 *Inciting that.* Putting into motion that which.

267-78 On the notion of seeds or sperm, see *Complaint*, 73n, 87n. This passage is based on Arnaldus de Villanova, *Flos Florum*: “quia certum est quod non generatur ex homine nisi homo, & ex equo nisi equus. Cum igitur ista materialia sint a natura metallorum penitus aliena, impossibile est ex eis fieri genera-

VI. *Commentary*

tionem in metallis: quia metalla non generantur nisi ex suis spermatibus propriis: ideo perquirendum est quid sit sperma metallorum, & sic habebimus totum magisterium: quia non invenitur in re, quod in ea non est: non sunt autem metalla in capillis, & huiusmodi" (*Theatrum Chemicum*, 3:128; Lull's *Theorica* paraphrases this passage, substituting *taurus* for *equus*, in *Theatrum*, 4:59). For similar passages, cp. Cradock's *Treatise* in Part One, 111n; and La Fontaine, 947n.

285ff. See *Complaint*, 725ff.

306 *Some little fire.* Cp. 258 above, and *Complaint*, 150.

311 *You said.* See *Complaint*, 577ff.

313 *him.* The *Infant* (308).

319 *Like as.* Even as; in the same way as.

322 *Cras.* Crass, coarse, gross; French text: "simple terre."

325 *furnace proportionall.* "Proportion" and "proportionate" appear in *Complaint* (425, 454), but not in relation to furnaces.

329 *thou.* Here and at several other points (e.g., 398–419, 595–98, 688–98) the speaker seems to address not Nature, but a would-be alchemist.

330 *poudring.* Powdering.

337 *Effect.* Purport, drift; accomplishment.

341 *Dost.* Thou dost (beginning of the sentence's main clause).

371–74 The French text is more clear than these awkward lines: "Qui pense donc l'homme esprouver: / Au moins quand lon ne peut trouver / Autout, sinon ce qui y est? / C'est abus."

380ff. See *Complaint*, 411–14n.

394 *composed.* I.e., the composition (of gold). As lines 389–409 make clear, gold itself is not destroyed; rather, the constituents of its composition (matter plus the spirit of gold) are separated.

397 *resolve.* Resolution.

403 *dissolve.* Solve, answer.

404 *what he's list.* What he wishes.

405 *he.* Gold.

409 *And soe perfect.* And is therefore perfect

423–34 Cp. *Complaint*, 83–94.

425 *nourisheable.* Receptive of nourishment; see textual note.

460 *foure minglements.* Cp. *Complaint*, 663.

- 462** *a part.* Apart (?). The syntax of this sentence is unclear.
- 464-65** Here the “sophisticke deceiver” appears to garble two aphorisms from the *Emerald Table* of Hermes Trismegistus (possibly *our maister*, 466): “Separate the earth from the fire, the subtle from the gross,” and “unite together the powers of things superior and inferior” (Read, 54).
- 486** *quantity.* Perhaps a misreading for *quality* (cp. 589–90, 735–36).
- 519** *properly.* See *Complaint*, 378–80n.
- 529-30** *phisitians . . . Magitians.* Cp. *Complaint*, 875–76, 907–8.
- 532-39** See *Complaint*, 303–12, 377–98.
- 559-60** They (argent vive and gold) do, however, exale elemental air and fire (?).
- 561-62** *they . . . they.* The *Sophisters* (553).
- 565** *they.* The *Sophisters* (553); *that:* what.
- 573** *to witt.* To know.
- 599** *Amalgaments.* Translating “meslemens”; also at 731, 743.
- 604** *behooffull.* Behoveful: useful, expedient, needful (also at 686).
- 616-18** *That which Aristotle tought.* This saying is untraced.
- 636** *Gender.* Kind, sort.
- 656** *Administracion.* Application, as of medicine (also at 753).
- 660** *us behoves.* Is needful to us; befits us.
- 663** *fitt.* Suitable.
- 697-98** *Avicen . . . Speakeing of generacion.* Of the several possible sources for this reference, the most likely is the pseudo-Avicenna *De anima in arte alchimiae*, which emphasizes the notion of *Spiritt* (690, 694); see Wyckoff’s trans. of Albertus Magnus, 284, and *Complaint*, 456n.
- 764** *that.* What.
- 770** *Aristotle saith.* In *De generatione et corruptione* 2.1.4, Aristotle says the elements are transformable or convertible to each other, and that each is potentially latent in the others, but he does not speak directly of transmutation. See also the passage quoted from *Meteorologica* 4, in Cradock’s *Treatise*, 225n, above. Note the similar statement in Lull’s *Clavicula*: “Metals cannot be transmuted (as *Avicen* witnesseth) in the Minerals, unless

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they be reduced into their first Matter” (trans. in John Frederick Houpreght, *Aurifontina Chymica* [1680; Wing H2941], 167. On converting the elements, cp. *Complaint*, 611–30.

779–86 This passage recalls the opening lines of the *Complaint*. Walker (“Jean de Meun and Alchemy,” 2869) offers this translation of 779–82:

I know my art is folly now,
Loss, waste, and labor, I allow;
The fiery furnaces are wrong,
The quicksilver and waters strong.

795 *sith*. Since: ever till now.

805 *Prescrib'd*. Directed, limited.

822 *mauger*. Maugre: in spite of, notwithstanding. Walker (“Jean de Meun and Alchemy,” 2870) translates 822–30 as follows:

Your teachings I will not forsake,
The elements alone I'll take;
The tincture, I will have, 'tis true,
Nature, by help of God and you.
Thus ends the Alchemist's reply,
Made with a great uncertainty,
To Nature who became his friend
And brought him riches in the end.

PART THREE:
INTERREGNUM “EPIC”:
CHYMICAL MEDICINE AND
SPIRITUAL ALCHEMY

Bassett Jones

VII. *Lithochymicus*

Little is known about the life of Bassett Jones, the author of the most ambitious alchemical poem of the English Renaissance, but its outlines reveal a man of learning deeply immersed in philological study, medicine, and an alchemy that was both practical and spiritual.¹ Born about 1616, Jones was the grandson on his mother's side of Thomas Bassett, esquire and high sheriff of Miskin, Glamorganshire, and the son of a landed gentleman of the same county. He entered Jesus College, Oxford in 1634 and subsequently studied at the university of Franeker (in Friesland), where he could have pursued both medicine and alchemy, though it is in his work on English grammar some years later that he recalls the connection with his Dutch alma mater.² He may also have studied elsewhere on the continent, and he may even have taken a medical degree, though there is no record of his having practiced medicine.³

¹Biographical details for this sketch are drawn mainly from articles in *DNB* (10:978-79, 1039-40) and *The Dictionary of Welsh Biography Down to 1940* (Oxford, 1959), 446. Neither *Lithochymicus*, edited here, nor the poem addressed to William Lilly (see below) has been noticed by Jones's biographers.

²Of course, alchemy was not part of any university curriculum, but Franeker was one of the continental universities listed by Thorndike as admitting dissertations on occult subjects, and it was there that the medical doctor and professor of mathematics Adriaen Metius (1571-1635) "is said to have spent a fortune on alchemy" (Thorndike 7:54-55, 338). Mordechai Feingold has recently shown that occult studies, including alchemy, were by no means rare at English universities, either (see the Introduction to Edward Cradock in this collection), but he gives no specific information on Jesus College; see "The Occult Tradition in the English Universities of the Renaissance: A Reassessment," in *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance*, ed. Brian Vickers (Cambridge, 1984), 73-94.

³The *DNB* says Jones "is generally described as 'doctor,'" but I have found no such

Jones seems to have spent the turbulent years of the Civil War and Interregnum in retirement at his family estate in Wales. He was certainly back from the continent by 1648, for in that year the university press at Oxford published his Latin prose treatise, *Lapis Chymicus Philosophorum Examini Subjectus*.⁴ Soon after this, he was working on his long English alchemical poem, *Lithochymicus*, which has remained in manuscript until now.⁵ And in the spring of 1658, while writing his *Herm'aelogium*, a "philosophical grammar" to be published in the following year, he describes himself as "scribbling this at my paternal hermitage in Glamorganshire."⁶ Jones's studious retirement was not without its interruptions, however. In 1650 he is cited in documents exhibited against Colonel Philip Jones, one of Oliver Cromwell's most trusted councillors, as being willing to testify against him in allegations of corruption. Three years later he again engaged his powerful namesake, this time on behalf of his father's claim to the manor of Wrinston, Glamorganshire. This action resulted in the printing of a petition to Cromwell,⁷ but on 17 February 1661—the latest verifiable date in Bassett Jones's life—the House of Lords decided in favor of the former Protector's man, Jones's father having died in the meantime.

While Jones's rightful place in the intellectual and political life of his day is no doubt at the periphery, a few scattered clues suggest some occasional points of contact with those somewhat

reference, nor does he sign himself so in any of his heretofore unnoticed works.

⁴See plate; Jones's coat of arms and Welsh motto ("God on my side") had been in the family at least since 1546, when his great-grandfather, George Morgan Philip, used them; see Michael Powell Siddons, *The Development of Welsh Heraldry*, 1 vol. to date (Aberystwyth, 1991–), plate 1 (I owe this reference to Graham Thomas).

⁵In the Preface to his English poem, Jones says his Latin treatise, *Lapis Chymicus*, "did of late submitte / To Academic censure" at Oxford, so his poem was written shortly after 1648 and no later than 1656, when John Hall, who wrote a commendatory poem for it, died (see below).

⁶*Herm'aelogium; or an Essay at the Rationality of the Art of Speaking: As a Supplement to Lillie's Grammer* (1659; facs. repr. Menston, England, 1970), 47; see p. 94 for the date of composition.

⁷*The Copy of a Petition . . . to . . . the Lord Protector by Bassett Jones of Lanmihangel, in the County of Glamorgan, against Col. Philip Jones; . . . with his Highness gracious order thereupon; the said Colonel's answer, and the reply of the said Bassett* (1654).

VII. Introduction

nearer the center. As an Oxford undergraduate, for instance, he may have just missed meeting Thomas Vaughan, who also matriculated at Jesus College, though about four years later than he. But since Vaughan was in Oxford at least until 1648⁸ (when Jones's *Lapis Chymicus* was printed there), it would seem unlikely that the two Welshmen, who share so much in their views of alchemy and medicine (see below), failed to cross paths; they certainly did so in spirit if not in body.

More concrete evidence of a noteworthy acquaintanceship is found in the *Herm'aeologium*, where Jones refers to the man of affairs and scientific dabbler Sir Kenelm Digby as his "most worthily honoured friend" (71). The Preface to that work also mentions a conversation the author had with a group of "select companions . . . relating to the Grammatical part of *The Advancement of Learning*" (sig. A4r), but we do not know their names; Digby's writings shed no light here. The *Herm'aeologium* offers a few other hints. First, the work was published by the bookseller Thomas Basset, who includes in it an advertisement for books on medicine, law, grammar, theology, and other subjects to be sold at his shop "in St. Dunstons-Church-yard in Fleetstreet" (sig. A8r). Thomas Basset was probably a maternal relation of Bassett Jones, and perhaps the alchemist hoped he would also bring out his book-length *Lithochymicus*, which is clearly intended for publication; unfortunately, however, we have no further information about him. We do know that Jones's *Herm'aeologium* was recommended by one William Dugard (1606–1662), master of the Merchant Taylors' School, but this may have been a professional rather than a personal endorsement.⁹ Finally, Jones's *Herm'aeologium* ends with a Latin address and dedication to the Rector and his former professors at the University of Franeker (91–94). Here Jones summarizes his philosophical grammar, praises Francis Bacon, and sends his good wishes to the Dutch academic community. He may, therefore, have been

⁸*The Works of Thomas Vaughan*, ed. Alan Rudrum (Oxford, 1984), 2–3.

⁹Dugard was also a teacher of Latin and Greek, a printer, a writer of Civil War propaganda (for both sides), and the author of several books on grammar, rhetoric, and philosophy (*DNB* 6:133–34; his endorsement of *Herm'aeologium* is noted in *DNB* 10:979).

in correspondence with continental scholars in the years after his sojourn in Holland.¹⁰

The only other figures of note for whom there is evidence of personal contact with Jones are the astrologer William Lilly and the poet and pamphleteer, John Hall. Lilly (1602–1681), a well-known and at times notorious almanac maker and propagandist during the Civil War, was intimate with the likes of Elias Ashmole and Samuel Pepys.¹¹ Though he had been publishing almanacs annually since 1644, Lilly's most important work, *Christian Astrology* (1647), brought him greater prominence, along with many clients and correspondents. One of the latter was Bassett Jones, who probably around 1649 sent Lilly this verse epistle, entitled "To that moderne text of Astrologie Mr W. Lillie, the Pet[ition] of Ba[ssett] Jhones":

Thou Sun of wisemen, to whose beames of Art
All thinges to come are present, whoe canst parte
The fast-glued joynts o' th' Cabinet of fate,
And thence not only unto us relate
The future course of Destenie, but winne
Th' unwilling, willinge Planets (without Sinne)
To chaunge theyr frownes for Smiles, and soe the breath
Preserve that formerly they'd doom'd to death!
To thee I come: not with desire to know
The durabilitie or overthrow
Of States; or learne that self-enslaveinge feate
How to obtayne the favour of the greate;
Or how an Angell to my Lapp might Bate
Whose goulden winges showld higher rayse my State;
Nor (with that heavenly Lecher) that thou cast
A Mist to stopp a flyinge Io's haste,

¹⁰The final words in the manuscript of *Lithochymicus* (see Jones's *Appendix*) are quoted from the Dutch philosopher, Franco Petri Burgersdijck, some of whose works were published at Oxford while Jones was there.

¹¹For Lilly's various political involvements with both royalists and parliamentarians, see Derek Parker, *Familiar to All: William Lilly and Astrology in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1975). Lilly is not to be confused with the humanist William Lily (d. 1522), to whose famous *Grammar* Jones's *Herm'aelogium* is a "Supplement" (title page).

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Thee to implore. Noe, friend! thy Skill is sought
By me, alone, to fortifie the thoughts
Of timerous Medea, that shee may
(Forgettinge Kindred) boldly sayle away
With her beloued Jason. And soe shall
(For this thy ayde to Love reciprocall)
By-warre-disjoynted families with me
For aye extoll thee and Astrologie.¹²

The familiar tone of this formerly unprinted text implies some sort of friendship between Lilly and Jones. Who the “timerous Medea” was, we do not know, but Jones himself is presumably the “Jason” of the poem. In any case, Jones’s verse “petition” seems to appeal more to Lilly’s powers of persuasion than to his predictive skill, since he is being asked “to fortifie the thoughts / Of timerous Medea,” in the “ayde” of “Love reciprocall.” On the other hand, perhaps Lilly is being called on to predict an auspicious end to whatever affair our Jason has in mind, as a means of persuading her to “boldly sayle away” with him. Or Jones may even be suggesting that, by “willing Planets . . . To chaunge theyr frownes for Smiles,” Lilly somehow alter the predicted course of events, though “without Sinne.” The references to the woman’s apparently oppositional “Kindred” and to “By-warre-disjoynted families” provide only tantalizing hints of the practical and political circumstances of this episode in Jones’s life.¹³

The last suggestive clue about Jones’s friends and connections lies in the commendatory sonnet that the precocious Cambridge poet, Cromwellian pamphleteer, and translator, John Hall

¹²This text survives in holograph (Bodleian MS Ashmole 423, fol. 146r) among Lilly’s papers, which Elias Ashmole acquired at the astrologer’s death. Parker (*Familiar to All*, 117–18) cites the next item in this manuscript, a letter to Lilly from one Robert Sterrell dated 14 January 1649, but he does not mention Jones’s poem, which is presumably from about the same time.

¹³The poem seems too “public” to refer to one of his extramarital relationships; the *Dictionary of Welsh Biography* indicates that he had illegitimate children by two different women, but none by his wife, Catherine Lloyd. The date of his marriage is unknown.

(1627–1656) contributed to Jones's *Lithochymicus*.¹⁴ Hall was a friend of both Hobbes and Samuel Hartlib, but of particular interest here is his professed interest in hermetic and alchemical matters. His *An Humble Motion to the Parliament of England Concerning the Advancement of Learning and Reformation of the Universities* (1649) makes the case (increasingly called for by educational reformers) for including chemistry in the academic curriculum.¹⁵ In addition to his translation of the "Golden Verses of Pythagoras" and of two Christian utopian works by Johann Valentin Andreae (unpublished until modern times, these also have alchemical elements), Hall produced in 1654 a translation of Michael Maier's *Lusus Serius*, a comic, hermetic allegory which is probably linked to the Rosicrucian manifestos.¹⁶ Jones himself cites Maier's avowedly Rosicrucian work, *Themis Aurea*, several times in his poem. There one finds an emphasis on the spiritual and medicinal aspects of alchemy, which are precisely those praised by Hall in his sonnet on Jones's poem.

While these details of Jones's personal interactions with the likes of Vaughan, Digby, Lilly, and Hall are sparse, a glance at his philosophical grammar reveals the broad—if irregular—contours of his intellectual terrain. We can then turn to his alchemical writings, which are by no means unrelated to his linguistic pursuits.

The *Herm'aeologium* reveals an energetic mind at work, syn-

¹⁴Bound in with the MS of Jones's alchemical poem, this unrecorded text is apparently in Hall's own hand. Assuming that Hall had read the work he is praising, we can take his death in 1656 as the latest possible date for the composition of *Lithochymicus* (on this point, see also Preface 164n). For Hall's life and works, see *DNB* 8:955–56; *Minor Poets of the Caroline Period*, 3 vols., ed. George Saintsbury (Oxford, 1906), 2:175–225; and Douglas Bush, *English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century, 1600–1660*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1962), 586.

¹⁵See Charles Webster, *The Great Instauration: Science, Medicine and Reform, 1626–1660* (London, 1975), 190–91, 388; and, for the larger issue, Allen G. Debus, *Science and Education in the Seventeenth Century: The Webster-Ward Debate* (London, 1970).

¹⁶See John Warwick Montgomery, *Cross and Crucible: Johann Valentin Andreae (1586–1654), Phoenix of the Theologians*, 2 vols. (The Hague, 1973), 1:218n. Andreae's *Chymische Hochzeit* ("Chymical Wedding") has been read as an alchemical and Rosicrucian document ever since its publication in 1616, but Montgomery dissociates him from the Brethren (see esp. 1:158ff.). For Maier's work, see Frances A. Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (London, 1972), 84.

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thesizing material from classical philology, Neoplatonic philosophy, English literature, science, magic and alchemy. Jones cites numerous Greek and Latin authors for grammatical and philosophical analysis; he quotes three of Chaucer's poems, Raleigh's *History of the World*, poems by Jonson, Donne, and Davenant; Francis Bacon is on every other page; the opinions of Sir Thomas Browne and Sir Kenelm Digby are discussed; and Hermes, Plato, Proclus, Cicero of the *Somnium Scipionis* and *De Natura Deorum* rub shoulders with Campanella, the Paracelsian Gerhard Dorn, and the professor of chemistry William Davisson. The stated purpose of the whole work is to explain the "lost rationality of Latin syntax" (sig. A6v), that is, to present a new philosophy of language based on the universal principle that syntax in any language is rooted in the rationality of its speakers, not in the forms of its words. He is thus eschewing the tradition of "literary grammar" and aiming toward the kind of "philosophical grammar" called for by Bacon in the *Advancement of Learning*, whereby "the analogie between words and things, or reason" is to be established.¹⁷ But Jones's grammar pushes analogizing syncretism in several directions at once. His subtitle, for instance, indicates that it is offered "Philosophically, Mythologically, and Emblematically," and he extends the Baconian program of working out the correspondences between words and things to the ordering or "reducing the received parts of Speech to BEING [noun], MOTION [verb] and QUALITY [adjective], as their principles analogical to . . . MATTER, FORM, and PRIVATION" in Aristotle's *Physics* (sig. A7v).

For the most part, Jones's linguistic work, if noticed at all by historians of grammar, has been dismissed as being either "unoriginal or absurdly fanciful."¹⁸ Even a recent overview of the *Herm'aeologium*, while attempting sympathetically to contextual-

¹⁷Sig. A6r, quoting Bacon, *De Augmentis Scientiarum* 6.1 (*Works* 4:441). Jones actually quotes the entire paragraph leading up to these words; another long passage (from *Works* 4:441-42) appears on sig. A7r. The first of these excerpts was also the inspiration for the most ambitious philosophical grammar of the time; see Vivian Salmon, "Philosophical Grammar" in John Wilkins' 'Essay,'" *Canadian Journal of Linguistics* 20 (1975): 131-60.

¹⁸Robert H. Robins, *A Short History of Linguistics* (London, 1967), 110.

ize the work and “make [it] better known,” still finds Jones’s examples “whimsical and fanciful” and his interpretations at times “downright amusing.”¹⁹ While this study is certainly justified in finding fault with Jones’s sometimes frustratingly obscure “presentation,” there is no genuine effort here to examine the work in relation to its wider contexts (philosophical, scientific, magical), which go well beyond that of mere grammatical theory (in which Jones is said to be “well read”).

As its neologistic title suggests, for instance, *Herm’aelogium* is not without hermetic and alchemical elements.²⁰ In fact, not only do we find the same constellation of philological interests—etymology, rhetoric, allegory, mythography—reappearing in his alchemical poem, but Jones’s grammar itself incorporates many of the same mystical speculations (based on classical, Neoplatonic, and biblical sources) that contribute to the spiritual alchemy of *Lithochymicus*.²¹ Finally, his grammar culminates, like both the *Lapis Chymicus* and *Lithochymicus*, in a mythological and mystical “emblem” or “hieroglyph,” which is duly explicated in a poem accompanied by its own glosses, annotations, and yet another diagram to clarify the analogical relations among words, things, and Aristotle’s categories. Any attempt to understand *Herm’aelogium* would have to grapple with Jones’s synthesis of these disparate elements. Admittedly, this is no easy task, but it would at least enable one to arrive at a more just evaluation

¹⁹Joseph L. Subbiondo, “Neo-Aristotelian Grammar in 17th-Century England: Bassett Jones’ Theory of Rational Syntax,” *Historiographia Linguistica* 17 (1990): 87–98, quotations from 91, 96. To give him his due, Subbiondo is helpful in placing Jones’s work in relation to the divergent trends signalled by the two “landmark” figures of modern grammar, John Wilkins (philosophical grammar for an artificial language) and John Willis (descriptive grammar of the English language).

²⁰“Herm’aelogium” seems to allude to Hermes Trismegistus (whose achievements included the invention of writing as well as alchemy and other arts) and *logos*, as “unifying principle of the world,” “word,” “wisdom,” “word of God,” etc.; *logos* is a key term in *Lithochymicus* (see 2.291n, 6.117n, 6.145n, 6.272n.)

²¹For example, he deploys Diotima’s fable of love from the *Symposium* (33–34); quotes Hermes’ alchemical axioms from the *Emerald Table* (34, 94); voices his admiration for Cicero’s “transcendant tract” *Somnium Scipionis* (36–37); cites his favorite biblical text, 1 John 5:7–8, on the trinitarian nature of matter (73); and employs the mythographical tradition of the “four Venuses” (74, 82, 88): all these are important elements in *Lithochymicus*.

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of the work—one, I suggest, that would find it no less difficult and obscure in places, but perhaps a bit less “fanciful.”

If Jones’s putative mentor for *Herm’aeologium* is Francis Bacon (who, of course, was being appropriated by rationalists and occultists alike at this time), his peculiar blending of philology, linguistics and grammar, poetry and philosophy, Neoplatonic mysticism and alchemy, is in fact characteristic of certain strains of mid-century occultism—and of Bacon’s Idols of the Theater. Jones’s alchemical poem extends this syncretizing habit even further in an alchemy that fuses spirituality and the study of the natural world.

Lithochymicus

This is certainly the most ambitious alchemical poem of the seventeenth century, and arguably the most ambitious English alchemical poem of them all. While every alchemical writing by its very nature will contain stock elements (a central belief in alchemy is that its secrets have been known to the wise for millennia and are therefore unchanging), Jones can make some claim to originality, both in the form and content of his poem. First, the sheer length and scope of *Lithochymicus* (“The Chymic Stone”) go beyond those of most poems on the subject. In all, *Lithochymicus* has 2917 lines of English verse (plus a few incidental couplets as captions to illustrations, four lines of Latin and four of Welsh verse) and about 7000 words of prose explanatory matter.²² The verse text proper combines narrative, dialogue, and theoretical exposition. In the latter, Jones takes into account not only the corpus of medieval alchemy accessible to earlier poet-chemists like Norton and Ripley, but also a large body of Neoplatonic writings (both ancient and modern),

²²Two late Middle English alchemical poems—classics in the genre—rival Jones’s in length: George Ripley’s *Compound of Alchemy* (1470; 2222 lines) and Thomas Norton’s *Ordinal of Alchemy* (1477; 3102 lines). Both these appeared in Ashmole’s *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* (1652); each is largely a “stock performance rather than an original and personal contribution” (Thorndike 3:40, speaking of alchemical tracts generally, but cited in reference to Norton by his modern editor, John Reidy, *Thomas Norton’s Ordinal of Alchemy*, EETS 272 [London, 1975], lxvii).

as well as philosophical, religious, literary and alchemical works produced in the Renaissance.

The basis of the poem is Jones's Latin treatise mentioned above, *Lapis Chymicus* (Oxford, 1648). This prose work of 60 small octavo pages has a Preface, four chapters, and a *Corollarium* (an emblem accompanied by a 20-line poem). Aside from this parable of the philosopher's stone (which corresponds to 3.97–132 in the English poem), and aside from the occasional excerpts of Latin verse from classical and alchemical authors, *Lapis Chymicus* is entirely expository in mode. Jones's English poem, *Lithochymicus*, is a quite different production. While its subtitle calls it "A Discourse of a Chymic Stone praesented to the University at Oxford [i.e., the *Lapis Chymicus* itself] . . . Now paraphrastically Englished," one must take the adverb as meaning "with a very free rendering and great amplification," since it both dwarfs the original Latin treatise and deploys a much wider range of discursive strategies. It consists of the following parts: an allegorical Frontispiece ("The Whole Woorke's Emblem" with a sixteen-line poem), a Preface (220 lines), six "chapters" varying in length from 132 to 854 lines, a concluding "Corollarie" (consisting of an emblem and accompanying verses), an *Index* of proper names and obscure words (complete with Greek and Latin etymologies), and finally an illustrated *Appendix* of technical terms, operations, and alchemical vessels and implements. (Jones rightly claims that the definitions in his *Appendix* are useful for "the Better understandinge as well of this discourse as of other Chymic writinges.") The body of the poem has two interesting features: it includes a number of Latin quotations (in both prose and verse), followed by translations in cross-rhyming quatrains which set them off from Jones's usual couplets; and it contains ten "emblems" or "hieroglyphs" that supplement pictorially important points made in the verse text.

Perhaps more than other works in this collection, *Lithochymicus*, with its combination of narrative and extended dialogue, its allegorical digressions, and its sometimes complex theoretical discussions, is a challenge to the modern reader. A synopsis of the Preface and a brief narrative outline of the body of the poem may, therefore, be helpful.

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Preface (220 lines). The author's *Lapis Chymicus* having made the case to the learned of Oxford for calling the stone philosophic, the present work will demonstrate how the wise—from ancient times until the latter days of Christian Rosencreutz—have (like Prometheus who stole fire from heaven “to animate his man”) “promulgated this everlasting Pill,” the medicinal product of the philosopher's stone (1–12). Many have tried to free the solar spirit (or “King”) from material gold by using violent and corrosive chemical means; four such methods are especially notorious (13–72). In a futile attempt to understand the allegory of the metal's “death” (reduction of gold to the state of “chaos”) and “resurrection” (vivifying the “seed” of gold and raising it to “Astrall energie”), would-be alchemists have concocted all sorts of useless operations (73–140). Their failures have led only to dissension and feud; thus Germain Courtin attacked Paracelsus, Matthew Gwinne and Angelo Sala chastised Francis Anthony for his *aurum potabile*, Pierre Palmier fell upon Libavius, and the malicious Nicolas Guibert tried to discredit the whole art (141–56).

And while Paracelsus and Anthony have produced much of medicinal value, in truth, they were wrong to publish to the vulgar things allegorically hidden in the ancient authors (some of which they themselves never fully understood). For gold is never really dissolved by chemical agents (157–88). But the present author submits himself to the scrutiny of those who are well versed in the art; not blinded by self-conceit, he will willingly learn from those who know better and who can point out any errors in the path he takes (189–220).

Chapter 1 (356 lines). The author recounts his early unsuccessful efforts to liberate the solar spirit of gold, based on a literal reading of alchemical authorities like Geber (1–86). Pondering these mistakes, he meets the German Doctor Allslagen (“all slay,” 87), who explains where he went wrong and analyzes three main errors in his “theoric.” The author rather impatiently seeks to know how to reduce the matter to “atoms” (323ff.). Allslagen reproves his haste and announces that unfortunately he must leave him for two months, but he promises to send a friend to assist him (229–356).

Chapter 2 (456 lines). Left alone, the author seeks guidance in Hermes' work on alchemy and wonders whether necromancy might enable him to free the "soul" of the "King." He even goes so far as to invoke the nemesis Adrastia, who represents the three degrees of heat (35), with no success. The next night he hears a voice in his sleep that tells him to use Azoch and Paidowra to purify the diseased "King" (65ff.), and he is about to attempt a divination when a jolly Frenchman, Toutguerres, appears. Sent by Allslagen, Toutguerres ("all heal") recounts several cases of dismembered or decayed human bodies being reconstituted (105ff.) and promises to help the author "cure" his "patient" (195). First, however, Toutguerres tells of his experience with his master, a venerable Italian alchemist, whom he restored to youth (237ff.). Then in a key passage, actually a revelation granted him by a mysterious "voice," Toutguerres outlines in detail the doctrine of the World Soul and its relation to spiritual and medical alchemy (269-437). It culminates in an allegorical emblem (Figure 7), left behind by the "ghost" or "voice." The author sees this as explaining the entire theory by which dead matter can be revived, but he desires to test its application in front of Doctor Allslagen, who fortunately has just returned.

Chapter 3 (132 lines). Asked to comment on the progress made so far, Allslagen describes the various trials to which the now partially purified matter must be subjected (7ff.). He then commends the author's own hieroglyphic representation of these procedures (i.e., the *Corollarium* from Jones's Latin treatise, *Lapis Chymicus*) and urges him to reproduce it here (89-96). The chapter concludes with this emblem (Figure 8) and its corresponding narrative: the tale of Purelius and Hudra, an allegory of the "alchemical wedding," destruction, and rebirth (96-132).

Chapter 4 (495 lines). Having made further progress, the author seeks Allslagen's help to exalt the matter to the subtler state of Ingression (1-21). The method used, he replies (23-30), depends on what use will be made of the resulting philosopher's stone: to exalt metals to gold, to make glass malleable and unbreakable, or to cure maladies and prolong life. Johann Isaac Hollandus has three ways to attain the first of these ends (31-

161, 162–70, 171–82), but Allslagen insists that the “microcosmic use medicinall” of the stone is the most beneficial to the public weal (194–95), and he now describes the best method to exalt the matter for this purpose. Even when the ancient alchemists speak of metallic transmutation, he says, they actually mean the stone’s curative power (199–212). The author agrees with this view, but Toutguerres insists on demonstrating his Italian master’s method of metallic projection (229–36). Allslagen explains that the stone can easily transmute mercury or silver to gold, but only about one-fifth of the original metal will be changed (237–68). The author then beseeches Allslagen to show how the “Promethean banquet” can be had (269–72). Allslagen describes the method, beginning with the procedures of Hollandus and Oswald Croll, and arrives at the Red Stone (273–389). The author now wishes to achieve the White Stone (390–95); Allslagen gives technical instructions for its making (396–495).

Chapter 5 (854 lines). The author asks Doctor Allslagen to reveal how the stone’s curative power works. In answer, Allslagen begins to expound the allegorical meaning of the myth of Prometheus (49–145). A digression: all the ancient myths, especially the highly improbable ones, must be read allegorically; noting that Ovid is a master of alchemical allegory, Allslagen cites the examples of Apollo and Daphne, Jupiter and Io, and the Mars-Venus-Vulcan triangle, and gives their equivalents in practical alchemical operations (151–268). Allegory itself is indicative of the twofold nature of alchemy: it has reference to both “the *Sense* and *Intellect*” (255) and is therefore both material and spiritual in nature. Allslagen now turns from his digression on alchemical mythography to an exposition of the Prometheus myth itself. A particular question is how the Promethean thunder relates to the solar spirit of gold and the alchemist’s astral medicine; in this connection, the opinions of Daniel Sennert, Oswald Croll, and Sir Thomas Browne regarding the “aerial niter” are evaluated (269–680). Finally, the basis of the medicine’s efficacy is explained by way of the sympathetic magic of Marsilio Ficino and others (681–854).

Chapter 6 (362 lines). The author requests explicit instruction in the therapeutic application of alchemy. Having discussed

(Chapter 5) the “manner,” Allslagen now takes up the other issue in treatment, “time”—i.e., both the time of year for applying medical treatment and the point in the course of the disease when intervention is to be made. The best seasons of the year for healing, according to Nature herself, are spring and fall (11–44). As for the course of the disease, the experienced physician must determine the critical days for treatment, which medicines to administer, and in what order (45–100). But the philosopher’s stone has more than a medical application, even though that is its loftiest practical use. It also leads to theological “contemplations” of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the divine spark in humans (101–22). Allslagen expounds the Pythagorean linkage between matter and spirit, and augments this with an allegorization of Diotima’s fable about the origin of love (123–270).²³ Finally, the divine mind in humans is said to manifest itself in a range of intellectual activities. The highest of these is the divine art of alchemy, which in the end is metaphysical rather than merely physical, and which leads to a true realization of the divine in man (271–362).

Jones’s Alchemy in “Lithochymicus”

From many details of the poem’s presentation—Hall’s encomiastic sonnet, the formal Preface alluding to the recent publication of *Lapis Chymicus*, a table of contents, the *Index* and *Appendix* as helps to the reader, etc.—it is evident that Jones intended to publish his work. There was certainly a readership for such material. The decade of the 1650s saw, for example, the first English translations of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, of Jean d’Espagnet’s *Enchiridion Physicae Restitutae*, and of Agrippa’s *De Occulta Philosophia*; more translations of Paracelsian and mystical alchemical works appeared in this decade than in the entire first half of the century. Rosicrucian documents and related materials—e.g., in the works of Thomas Vaughan and John

²³This passage is lifted without acknowledgment from Ficino’s *Commentary* on the *Symposium*.

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Heydon—were also being published at an unprecedented rate.²⁴ As for alchemical verse, Elias Ashmole was publishing his massive *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* (with over 400 pages of text, plus extensive notes) in 1652, just when Jones was composing his epic-length poem.

Jones's poem would have been welcome in this milieu of Paracelsian medicine, hermetic poetry and mysticism, and Neoplatonic magic. A full analysis of *Lithochymicus* is impossible here, but one can place the poem in relation to some of the major strains of seventeenth-century alchemy. Jones's general orientation, first of all, is continental rather than English. The Preface to his poem begins with an account of the rancorous Galenist-Paracelsian debates (centered in Paris and conducted in Latin) from the decades just before and after 1600; almost all his sources are in Latin and from continental presses; and even the names of the two (sometimes comic) allegorical interlocutors of his poem—Allslagen and Toutguerres—imply a European emphasis. Indeed, aside from Francis Anthony and Matthew Gwinne (who wrote in Latin anyway), he cites hardly any English alchemical authorities, though he does refer to English literary figures like Thomas Randolph and Ben Jonson. Surprisingly perhaps, he mentions no English alchemical poets, though some (George Ripley and Thomas Norton in particular) were famous long before Ashmole's *Theatrum* was published.

As to particular elements in Jones's alchemy, *Lithochymicus* assumes a belief in a universal system of nature that links humans beings and God through the macrocosm-microcosm relationship; it relies heavily on Scriptural authority and uses proof by analogy in linking the spiritual and mundane worlds; there is also a strong interest in observational evidence in chemical operations (e.g., the long discussion of the "aerial niter" in Chapter 5 and the detailed descriptions of chemical apparatus and "operations" in his *Appendix*). In this constellation of interests, Jones resembles one group of physicians and scholars which Allen Debus describes as emerging from the Paracelsian debates of the

²⁴See Allen G. Debus, *The Chemical Philosophy: Paracelsian Science and Medicine in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, 2 vols. (New York, 1977), 2:387.

late sixteenth century, and epitomized by Robert Fludd (1574–1637). But Jones also shares a major concern of a second, oppositional group described by Debus, namely an interest in medical and pharmaceutical problems, though this group tended to be less mystical, reducing the macrocosm-microcosm analogy to a mere metaphor.²⁵ The more one reads Jones's poem, the more it becomes clear that while his alchemy has something in common with both groups, it can be identified absolutely with neither.

One important element in Jones's alchemy is an enthusiasm for the Brethren of the Rosy Cross, a common factor not only in Fludd but also in Jones's immediate contemporaries, Thomas Vaughan and Elias Ashmole.²⁶ Jones several times cites Michael Maier's *Themis Aurea*, a commentary on the laws of the Rosicrucians, and he speaks approvingly of the respected iatrochemist and Rosicrucian Andreas Libavius. And while he does not directly present a plan for educational reform (a central Rosicrucian concern developed in detail both by Fludd and by mid-century Helmontians), his two alchemical works can be seen as implicit challenges to the medical faculty at Oxford. He had in

²⁵See *The Chemical Philosophy*, 1:205ff. Other interests shared by Fludd and Jones include Pythagorean number magic (especially as applied to the "unity of God in trinity"), the "occult science of music," the mystical-alchemical interpretation of the Creation (especially for the role of light, as taken from the writings of Iamblichus, Zoroaster, and other "ancient theologians"), and the pictorial representation of alchemical teachings in allegorical emblems; see Debus, 1:217–220 and *Lithochymicus*, 5.268n; 6.101ff., 6.135, 6.145ff., 6.307 and *Index*, s.v. *Venus*. Unlike Fludd, however, Jones makes no attempt to accommodate the traditional Galenic humoral pathology, nor does he integrate Cabalistic elements into his mystical alchemy. A recent major study of Fludd (whom, by the way, Jones does not cite) is William H. Huffman, *Robert Fludd and the End of the Renaissance* (London, 1988).

Jones's work was probably just a few years too early to have been influenced by J.B. van Helmont (1579–1644), though he has much in common with him. Van Helmont's collected works first appeared in 1648, but several individual treatises had been published earlier, and he was being translated into English by 1650; see Debus, *passim*, and Walter Pagel, *Joan Baptista Van Helmont: Reformer of Science and Medicine* (Cambridge, 1982).

²⁶For similarities between Jones and Vaughan, see *Commentary: Headnote to Frontispiece*, Preface 208n, 2.278n, 4.27–28n, 5.456n, 6.107n, 6.145n. While Jones does not appear anywhere in Ashmole's diaries or correspondence, his spiritual alchemy is quite compatible with Ashmole's, as the latter expounds it in the long Prolegomena to his *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*. Frances Yates points out, for example, that he incorporates some passages directly from the Rosicrucian *Fama Fraternitatis* (*The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, 193–98).

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1648 submitted his *Lapis Chymicus* to the “Academic censure” of the university, and his English poem now offers a much fuller justification of the “everlasting Pill” (or curative philosopher’s stone), as attested by Christian Rosencreutz and others (Preface, 1–12). The potentially subversive element in Jones’s poem would have been signaled to contemporary readers by the name of John Hall, author of the commendatory poem. As already noted, Hall had espoused a radical reform of the university curriculum in a tract of 1649. By addressing Jones as a “mighty priest of Nature” who goes far beyond “learned Ignorance,” Hall is seconding the author’s challenge to the medical establishment, inside and outside the universities.²⁷

Jones’s Rosicrucian sympathies and his association with Hall raise the question of the political resonances of his alchemy. During the 1650s, the cosmology, theology, and terminology of Paracelsian and Rosicrucian alchemy were amenable to a variety of political applications and interpretations, from the extreme left of radical sectarianism to the right of staunch royalism.²⁸ Without further information, it is difficult to know exactly where Jones is situated in this spectrum, for *Lithochymicus* does not overtly manifest a position, and the circumstantial pointers with which we are left remain ambiguous.²⁹ Despite his deep sympathy with the Rosicrucians and his approving (though humorous) reference to Jakob Boehme, and despite the adversarial position of *Lithochymicus* with regard to traditional medicine, Jones certainly does not reveal himself to be on the side, say, of the Ranters, Diggers, or the Family of Love. These and other enthu-

²⁷As Debus points out, “a fundamental part” of Renaissance Neoplatonism that appealed especially to physicians, from Paracelsus to Fludd to van Helmont, was the notion of the priest-physician; this was probably grounded ultimately in Ecclesiasticus 38:1, “Honor the physician for the need thou hast of him: for the most high hath created him” (*Chemical Philosophy*, 1:96). See also text V above, 888n.

²⁸For a recent survey and reevaluation of the usual association of Interregnum alchemy with radicalism, see J. Andrew Mendelsohn, “Alchemy and Politics in England, 1649–1665,” *Past and Present* 135 (May 1992): 30–78.

²⁹Jones’s disputes with Cromwell’s councillor Colonel Philip Jones (see above) seem to have been purely personal. He was an open enemy of the Colonel during the Protectorate, but it was after the Restoration that the House of Lords ruled in the Colonel’s favor and against him; it seems at least likely, then, that Bassett Jones was not a high-profile royalist.

siasts envisioned a reformed society, and they took inspiration from the transformative motifs of alchemy and its notion of the adept, with which they combined that of the “new Authority within,” as expounded in the “Teutonic philosophy.” While the mystical conclusion of Jones’s poem has something of the “inner light” about it, his emphasis is on individual spiritual illumination, not on re-shaping societal structures or “turning the world upside down.” Such views as Jones expresses were, in fact, perfectly compatible with high-church royalist beliefs, as the cases of Thomas Vaughan and Elias Ashmole show.³⁰

That Jones’s *Lapis Chymicus* was published in the royalist stronghold (and center of royalist propaganda), Oxford in 1648 is possibly significant. That year was one of the most unstable during the war, since in the spring rebellions against Parliament broke out in Essex, Scotland, and Wales. Licensing was never abolished in Oxford, and Jones’s work received the imprimatur of Edward Reynolds, the moderate Anglican bishop of Norwich, who was also vice-chancellor of the university. We might take all this as evidence of Jones’s royalist sympathies, but it is likely that his small Latin alchemical tract was given less scrutiny than a vernacular work might have had; it may have been seen as merely an academic exercise. Curiously, 1648 was also the year that John Hall began publishing his vitriolic anti-royalist propaganda.³¹

But in the end, Jones’s association with Oxford or Hall—or with Lilly and possibly with William Dugard (both of whom wrote propaganda for both sides)—tells us little about Jones’s politics, though Hall’s commendatory poem certainly demonstrates a shared belief in the “chymical physic” and in the need for educational reform. Nor does Jones’s friendship with Sir Kenelm Digby, who worked both sides of the fence but whose

³⁰For Ashmole, see Robert M. Schuler, “Some Spiritual Alchemies of Seventeenth-Century England,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 41 (1980): 293–318; Ashmole was on good terms with John Everard, the Familist whose unpublished commentary on the *Emerald Table* also appears in this article (311ff.). For Vaughan, Boehme, and radical politics, see Mendelsohn, esp. 33–43.

³¹See Lois Potter, *Secret Rites and Secret Writing: Royalist Literature, 1641–1660* (Cambridge, 1989), 7–8, 17.

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Catholicism eventually alienated him from parliamentarians and royalists alike, make his own position any clearer. As in the royalist-Anglican Ashmole's intimacy with the Familist Everard, there seems to have been a high degree of tolerance among the more mystically- and intellectually-minded alchemists of the period. It is quite possible that Jones was, like Ashmole and Vaughan, a member of the established church who also cultivated a highly personal kind of Rosicrucian-hermetic mysticism.

Two last, distinctive elements of Jones's alchemy have to be mentioned, by way of concluding this overview. One is what might be called the "Welsh connection." Jones's pride in his Welsh heritage comes out in the ancestral Welsh motto and coat of arms, and in the brief Welsh poem attached to the culminating emblem in *Lithochymicus* (Figure 11). In the latter case, it is as though the final secret of the whole work is imbedded in allegorical verses which can be understood only by one who is both an enlightened adept in alchemy and a master of the Welsh language: a "hieroglyph" indeed. Some explanation for these seeming affectations is found in Jones's reference to himself as a "Countryman" of the mythical Welsh prophet, magician, and alchemist, Merlin (see 2.93n and *Index*). The cult of Merlin was a powerful one in the Renaissance. It had been wrought to political ends by Spenser and by writers of masques at the courts of James I and Charles I. Indeed, monarchs from the first Tudors to the restored Charles II found in the fiction of an Arthurian lineage a key component in their ideological myth of kingship. Merlin's magic, which was central to the "British myth," could effectively be merged with the king's own, as in the curative power of the royal touch. In validating the magical tradition itself, Elias Ashmole deployed a similar strategy. He incorporated Merlin into his account of the ancient historical connection between the Egyptian hermetic tradition, the Druids, and ancient British learning.³²

Jones took particular delight in precisely these kinds of as-

³²See Douglas Brooks-Davies, *The Mercurian Monarch: Magical Politics from Spenser to Pope* (Manchester, 1983), esp. 44–48, 85–90, 108–109, 152–53; and Howard Dobin, *Merlin's Disciples: Prophecy, Poetry, and Power in Renaissance England* (Stanford, 1990), 218, *passim*.

sociations with his ethnic and linguistic origins. In his account of the ancient British (Welsh) king Camber, for instance, he offers historical and etymological arguments to prove that the Welsh language derives from Greek; and his allegorical “Corollarie” fuses this same Camber with the figure of Vulcan (symbol of the alchemist’s transformative and life-giving fire).³³ To his identity as “priest-physician” (see above), Jones surely added that of learned Welsh “bard-chemist” as well.

A second noteworthy element in Jones’s alchemy is his particular use of the Neoplatonism common to much alchemical speculation since Paracelsus. For his citations from the “ancient theology” (particularly Pythagoras and Zoroaster), from Cicero and Macrobius, and from Plotinus (via Ficino in a significant passage from the latter’s *Commentary* on the *Symposium*) all relate to his conception of language, myth, allegory, and alchemy. Each of these systems is two-fold, letter and spirit, and each mirrors the inherent relationship between the physical and spiritual worlds. We have already seen, in Jones’s *Herm’aeologium*, the relationship between “rationality” (*logos*) and verbal “syntax”; his sometimes creative etymologies in the *Index to Lithochymicus* continue this process and emphasize the inherent connectedness between words (themselves both physical characters and “breath”) and things, signifier and signified. Like Michael Maier, who wrote several books revealing the alchemical meanings hidden in classical myths, Jones spends a good part of his fifth chapter on—and even gives a separate *Index* entry to—allegory. And he is not only skilful in the alchemical hermeneutics of classical myth, but he engages in some original mythopoeia himself, creating the Purelius-Hudra story in Chapter 3.

At the center of all Jones’s thinking here is the old (Plotinian) notion of the two Venuses, one earthly, one heavenly. His eclectic alchemy—like language, allegory, myth, and poetry itself—has reference to both “the *Sense* and *Intellect*” (5.255). It is fully grounded in the gritty details of “chymic operations” and the implements, vessels, and materials necessary for them; it is deeply concerned with the physiological benefits of the “anti-

³³See “Corollarie,” 10n, and *Index*, s.vv. *Camber*, *Vulcan*.

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monial cup” and of the alchemist’s “everlasting Pill.” But it also soars to a “divine contemplation” of the Trinity and of the “spark divine” in human beings. In its peculiar interweaving of Neoplatonic mysticism and practical medicine, Jones’s alchemy is distinctive. The verbal rendering of this intricate tissue of ideas—with its versified exposition of alchemical theory and practice, its classical and Welsh mythology, narrative incident, dialogue, and a good deal of humor—is surely unique among Renaissance alchemical poems.³⁴

The Text

Lithochymicus survives in a single holograph manuscript, bound separately as British Library Sloane 315, fols. 1r–91v. As shown above, Jones had prepared his manuscript for publication. The text of the poem itself, however, is not entirely a fair copy. Although fols. 1–13v are clearly written and well spaced, the rest of the text is much less neat, looks to have been written more hurriedly, and in places contains many corrections and cancellations (see Textual Notes, especially for Chapter 5). The Commentary includes a few canceled words or passages that illuminate obscurities of meaning or reveal something interesting about the composition of the poem; the text itself, of course, reflects Jones’s latest revisions.

At various points in the manuscript, Jones inserts Latin quotations, both in verse and prose, which are then translated into cross-rhyming quatrains. These excerpts (usually from alchemical authorities but sometimes from classical literature) have been identified when possible and incorporated into the Commentary. Minor errors have been silently corrected, but in all but classical passages later Latin spellings have stood, unless they would be a source of confusion. Finally, Jones’s *Index* provides Greek and Latin etymologies for his own made-up terms, as well as for some standard alchemical ones. Where Greek and Latin forms

³⁴It is possible that Jones was known, perhaps through his Latin alchemical tract and through his rather public quarrels with Colonel Philip Jones, to the author of *Hermetick Raptures*; see text XIV below, lines 442–52 and note.

(accents, spelling) are in error, they have been silently corrected. Neologisms or otherwise unrecognizable words are noted as such and glossed where possible. I am deeply grateful to Professor David Campbell for his generous assistance in sorting out these sometimes very difficult linguistic knots, and for help with some of the more difficult translations supplied in the Commentary.

LAPIS CHYMICVS
Philosophorum Examini subjectus.

UBI

Et ejus virtutes vis ac confectionis
modus breviter discutiuntur.

AUTHORE

BASSETO JONES

Generoso.



OXONIAE.

Excudebat HEN: MALL Academiæ
Typographus. An: Dom: 1648.

Plate 1. Title page of Bassett Jones's Latin treatise *Lapis Chymicus* (1648), with Jones's coat of arms and motto.


~~Lithochymicus~~
on
A discourse of a chymic stone
presented to the University
at Oxford by Balthazar Thomas
^{non}
paraphrastically Englished
by the sayd Author.

(Discourse of a chymic stone)
XVI C
MS. B. 1089
315

Plate 2. Jones's sketch for title page of *Lithochymicus*,
British Library MS Sloane 315, fol. 1r.

[f. 1r]

Lithochymicus, or
A Discourse of a Chymic Stone
præsentèd to the University at Oxford
by Bassett Jhones, now paraphrastically Englished
by the sayd Author

[Shield with motto: *Duw ar fy rhan*]

[f. 2r]

Sic ipsa Mysteria tabularum cuniculis operiuntur arcani consciis.
Contenti sint reliqui, ad venerationem summatibus tantum viris,
sapientia interprete, veri-arcani figuris defendentibus a vilitate
secretum malvol.

—*Som[nium] Scip[ionis]*, lib. 1, c. 2.



Plate 3. Jones's sketch for Frontispiece for *Lithochymicus*,
British Library MS Sloane 315, fol. 2v.

[f. 2v]
[Frontispiece]

The Whole Woorke's Emblem

The Cata-chresticall blazoning of this Coate: He beareth
orre A Lion, Ramping a fierball; counter-freucted Gules, or,
Sable and Azure; with a barre emballed argent.

Reader! this booke to thee doeth yeald
As Judge, whoe knoest [alone?] how, sunke into this shield,
The Eagle's turnd t'a Lion; first to daunce
With's servaunt Jove, and next his pike t'advantage
In coate of black, and thirdly haveinge wonne 5
The field on Vulcan, how unto the Sun
He is extoll'd; where, beinge spied at game
Of tennis with fayre Venus, he for shame
Doeth blush, and foame with Aphroditic art,
This heavenly vine, to joy the lumpish heart; 10
Then whoe, for's Barre of Argent balls, a Law
Canst cite as why he rampes the redd in's Paw.
This beinge pennd, next to the publique good,
For meere acquayntance with thy Brotherhood;
Begginge this boone at m' other Readers' hands, 15
Noe more to censure then he understands.

[f. 3r]

*To the Industrious & Worthy Authour
on his Learned Treatise*

Haile mighty priest of Nature, who hast done
That miracle which learned Ignorance
Sleights 'cause it cannot reach, & dost advance
To fix the spirit & multiply the Sunne.

So what poore praise Physitians have won
By Boldnesse, fulsome long Receipts & Chance?
That & far greater thou maist now enhance
Who mak'st one Ball through all diseases run,

And cure them with such ease as if thy hand
Had some Divinity & healde by Touch,
And Health her selfe were to take lawes from thee.
Nay, we may hope thou wilt not make a stand,
But it immortalize & then make us such:
So 'mnipotent are thou & Chymistry!

5

10

J. Hall

[f. 4r: Table of Contents]

[f. 5r]

VII. *Lithochymicus:*

or A Discourse of a Chymic Stone, etc.

The Preface

The chymic Stone, that did of late submitte
To Academic censure whether it
Deserv'd the name of *Phylosophic*, now,
In English Rime, explains the manner how
(Since that Prometheus, by Minerva's ayde, 5
From Phoebus' fiery chariot wheele convey'de
That lively Sparke to animate his man,
Whoe, to that Age gave the Nestorean
And gowlden name) the learned by like skill
Promulgated this everlasting Pill, 10
As ancient writeinges and th'experience high
Of *Rozen Craus*, with others, testifie. [f. 5v]
Which high philosophie to imitate,
Some thought, by contracts with our soldiers made
In India, to deliver to theyr hands, 15
Fast bound with Vulcan's pyrotechnic bands,
Dayrelius' kinge, whome they had lately tane
In Warre wi' th' people antipodian.
Him with the dewclawes of a regall Bere
Nam'd *Basiludra* they doe scratch and teare, 20
Till pitty moves them him to seperate
From of her harpious clutches. This debate
Haveinge his bones soe shatter'd that they fall
To th' bottom of the glasse in powder small,

Him then they place with a tart Damoselle 25
(*Urapela* by name) 'n a sweatinge Cell
For fower longe weekes, till he was fayne to yeald
Himself unto her mercy. From which field [f. 6r]
To rescue him, *Pneumoina* in must presse;
On whom hee, to avoide ungratefullnes, 30
Conferres a scarlett gowne, & thus that crew
The old Promethean banquet would renew.
Others, for that these first two Harpies madde
Theyr king, as they thought, entertained had
Too coursely, tooke the Lass *Hermaca* wilde, 35
Whom ('cause shee was of neerer kindred stilde
Then was *Urapela* unto his howse)
They did resolve unto him to espouse.
But first, poore man, hee must bee tortur'd sore,
Untill his body swelter all in gore, 40
By tart *Pneumalsa's* nayles, in curtesy
Forsooth, for that more sympatheticke shee
With humane moisture radical's conceavde
To bee then *Basiludra* fierce. Receavde
Yet of him must *Hermaca* bee, of course 45
(After her six weekes' entertainement's source),
By a soft Dam'sell of more astrall blisse
Callde *Pnerebintha*, who must often kisse [f. 6v]
His oyle lipps, and then, at last, resigne
Him to his sweet *Pneumoina's* armes divine, 50
And best beelov'de: shee beeing to his blood
A cousin Queen of the Vegeticke brood.
A third, disdayning much that thus theyr king
Should poyson'de bee by *Basiludra's* sting,
Would onely pare his nayles, and them cement 55
With one *Alsphecle*, plac't in fiery tent;
Conceaving that shee n'ere would willingly
In any wise offend this Maiesty—
The rather that shee tumbled had in one
Wombe with his deer *Pneumoina*, who doth moane 60
For his society, and proudly boast
Thereof, when, after penance by her ghost

VII. *The Preface*

In *Mastich's* rayment, thither hee's releast,
And doth expect admittance to this feast.

A Fourth, a shorter way this uncouth match
Thinke to conclude, when soe long him they scratch [f. 7r]
With tart *Pneumalsa's* nayles, till to an oyle
They joyntly are resolved by this toile.

From whom, however, they him free, by th' ayd
Of a more fragrant Balsame from a mayd 70
(*Arceutha* hight) extracted, with a wish
Hee might heer serve but as the meanest dish.

But of these wayes, and hundreds o' th' same field,
When none could ever that assistance yeald
To humane nature, as the learned old 75

Promethean banquet-founders had enroll'd
Of theyrs (whom yet that they disdayn'd to ly,
Soe far ingenuous was this Chymicke Fry
As to beleeve), they straight beegan to jarre 80

Amongst themselves, what jeofayle did marre
Theyr worke, and soe what might the reason bee
It fell thus short of's promise energy. [f. 7v]

Whence some, could they but once obteyne the lucke
To free theyr king from all the sweates that stucke
Unto him since his combates with those tart 85

Corrodeing Gossipps, by theyr Chymicke Art,
That soe hee nere more would the cup annoy
With blacknes, when the smooth fac't Trojan boy
Did powre it into's Master's Nectar, then
These did conclude they onely were the men. 90

But this opinion unto *Ganimed*
Gave cause to laugh, as one was better read
In poynt of complacency to the state
And pallate of the Gods, when ere they sate
At's master's table. Soe our Doctors all, 95

By certein lessons Hypocraticall,
Both for the sore and alsoe for the part
Affected of theyr Patient, know the art
To chuse a proper Vehicle, that soe

The med'cine's force may onely thither goe. [f. 8r]
As, for example, when the Liver is
Soe out of order that its force doth misse
To turne the Chylus to pure blood, but letts
It crudely range, untill that it infects
The part it selfe first, and the whole man next, 105
Who thereby comes Cachecticke: then theyr text
Adviseth them theyr king's know'n energie
Medicinall like Artists to apply,
When to an oylisth substance brought hee is,
Onely by tart *Pneumalsa's* nailes—though this 110
Infects the cupp, unlesse it further bee
Exalted by *Arceutha's* industrie.

Which industry of hers they lay aside,
Till some infectious, pestilentiaall tide
Doth call for her assistance. But old age 115
For to retard and generall Equipage
Of health to strengthen, balking these, they all
For his joynt force with sweet *Pneumoina* call. [f. 8v]
Others beethought that if they once could bring
By these corrosions theyr abused king 120
Unto that height of subtilty, that hee
By th' art of th' Alchemist might never bee
Severd from th' armes of those his gossips rude,
Nor brought againe t' embrace the body crude
Whence he was first extracted: doubtlesse they 125
Of the Philosophers had found the key.

But when they write, how this theyr regall mine
From its owne proper nature must decline,
And in humility upon it beare
The shape of a more humble friend first, ere 130
It fitt bee to receave the soule's disguise
(Who, in its resurrection, vivifyes
Its seed for everlasting): the mistake
Of this deep *Allegory* made them shake
Theyr leaden eares, and, as with fury bent, 135
Those Chymicke operations to invent
Forecited; for they falsly did conceave

VII. *The Preface*

That these unkind conjunctions corrosive [f. 9r]
Was the only way by which theyr Kinge might be
Divinely rayz'd to Astrall energie. 140

And this occasion did administer
Unto such Authors Criticall as were
Possess't with that severer fancie's ginnes:
To rayle, not only at these medicines
Forecited, but likewise to play theyr part 145
In spitting venome 'gainst the very Art.

Omitting others, thus *German Courtin*
Did *Paracelsus* jerk; soe *Mathew Gwyn*
With *Angell: Sala* joyn'd, our *Anthony*
Of London to chastise; *Palmarius*, hee 150
Must fall uppon *Libavius*; and, above
All others as who malice would improve,
Guilbertus must not only quite disgrace
The Art, but such as after should the face
Have, once to question ought that hee sayth ill is:
Nati natorum et qui nascentur ab illis. [f. 9v]

Yet, by his leave and theyrs, the subsequent
Discourse shall, only by the by, comment
How that the tincture of the Sun, thus boy'd
And violently extracted, is not voyd 160
Of all assistance to the wasting lampe
Of our fraile bodyes. But, in trueth's right stampe,
Both *Paracelsus* and *Franck Anthony*
Were much to blame, with Charletonian cry,
For that by quacking these in open gate 165
Above theyr meritt, they themselves create
Renowned Doctors would, in that highe art
(Whose Keyes the Authors closely had a part
Hid in such Tropicke groves from vulgar sights,
That neither they nor yet theyr opposites 170
Could ever finde, as to the world most cleere
Doth by theyr severall writeings still appeare).

For not to have his blood broach't out (poore man)
By nailes of *bonny Besse*, *Tom Tinker* can [f. 10r]
Perswade for to beeleeve that therefore *Besse*

Become one body with him is, unlesse
Shee give him leave in love with her to jest,
To call for t' other flagon, and the rest.

And soe our king, though nere soe coursly woo'd
With Complements infernall by this brood 180
Of Goodies, can nere bee deservedly
Said to degenerate soe farre that hee
By them dissolved may bee calde, I wis:
Since that a Physicke Dissolution is,
By rule of Schoole, *The neate Division of* 185
A body mix't. At which though some may scoffe,
Yet wee well know it the first point must bee
Of this our worke by meer necessity.

And therefore lest this Authour may bee thought,
"While of the Quacks of others hee doth ought 190
Correct, himselfe noe better is," hee now,
Unto the censure of all those that know [f. 10v]
The secretts of this Art, doth willingly
Submitt himselfe, desireing them to try
Whether that hee directly trampled hath 195
In this his worke th' Philosophicke Path.
Which if they find hee hath not, hee now prays
They would vouchsafe him his erroneous waies
In Philosophicke termes to show, that soe
Long awkward paths hee may noe longer goe. 200

Or if it chance his better fates have taught
Him heer (with Philosophicke pickelocks fraught)
To part the Elements without theyr grieve,
Then them to Cleanse and joyne, and soe the *Thiefe*
To bind in golden fetters, hee intreates 205
The further learned would once show theyr feates
Our *hoofe of Mule* to harden—that (in fine)
Th' *Olybian Lampe* 'mong us might once more shine.

This beeing the maine reason did compell
Him to put pen to paper, weighing well [f. 11r]
That learned sentence *Seneca* doth write
To warne from overtrusting to selfe might:

VII. The Preface

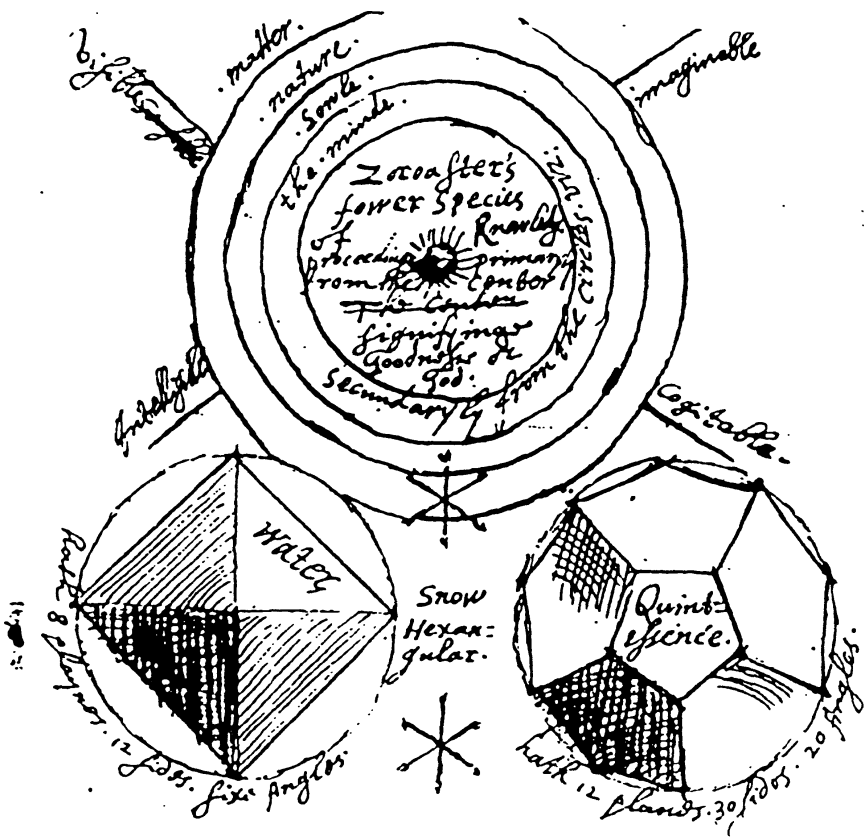
Many had come to th' heights of skill
 In the diviner Arts,
If with a self-conceited pill 215
 They had not choakt theyr parts.

And therefore heer hee gives a full Essay
Of all his worke, with each erroneous way
In working hee discoverde, that those might 220
Noe longer stand as mothes in th' woorker's sight.

[f. 11v]

The First Chapter

First hee began to worke with vulgar eyes,
Beholding the Rhetoricall disguise
Of a position with Schematicke slight,
Which *Geber* thus *Liptoticy* doth write:
 Who knowes to joyne proud *Mercury* 5
 With bodyes firme by art,
 Hath of our secretts found the highe
 And sole perfective part.
This *Thomas* of *Bononia* doth recite 10
To noble *Bernard* as noe common slight,
Whose sence upon those words did seeme to show
The *Count* of *Geber's* sentence did allow: [f. 12r]
 If this thou understands't, wee have
 To purpose somewhat said;
 If not, thou might'st the labour save 15
 One line thereof t' have read.
But, nere considering the obscurer *Scheame*
Of *Geber* when hee writt that learned theame,
The Author foorthwith 'gan to purify
Quicksilver crude, the which with Sulfur hee 20
Extracted from *Apollo's* fiery rayes;
In Ovall glasse decocts for eighty dayes,
Haveing a bowle which o're the dreggs did turne
With constant motion, as the heate of th' Urne
Was such, untill hee all converted saw 25
Unto blacke mudde, which from *Vulcan's* maw
Hee tooke. Then flue the waver-winged Dove
From the mine through th' *Hipocraticke Glove*.



In number Time and measure all things beare
 theyr witness of perfection's Hemisphere.

Figure 1. Diagram of hexagonal form, fol. 13v.

Next, all his Mercury with Astrall seed	
Impregnate, hee with constant heat did feed	30
For eight weekes longer, in the intervall	
Of which with joy hee did beehold it all	[f. 12v]
Playnly to passe through all the colours neat,	
From blacke to white most clear. With stronger heat	
Then, for six long moneths more, did hee decoct	35
It, till, i' th' end, the greatest part was lockt	
Up in <i>Amalgam</i> bright as Christall that,	
Being cleanly washt and dryde, resided flatt	
In forme <i>Hexagonall</i> : a joyfull sight,	
Consid'ring of that forme what Authors write.	40
[f. 13v, Figure 1]	
[f. 14r]	
As <i>Crollius</i> first doth thus begin his part,	
Pronounceinge loudly, none unto this Art's	
Perfection can attayne, till of the Sun	
The fattnesse, and Lunaria's blood, be spunne	
Into one thread by motion circular	45
Of th' Elements, in forme Hexangular.	
And <i>Doctor D'Avison of Paris</i> , in	
His chymic course, doeth evidently bringe	
The maner by how mutch the neerer ought	
Unto the height of puritie is brought,	50
By soe mutch to this forme it climbes; therby	
Noteinge that heere Perfection loves to lie.	
This then the Author tooke, and with encrease	
Of heate (but gentle though) he did with ease	
Convert t' a Solar sulfur pure (though dead),	55
Meltinge like waxe; which ere the pott were red,	
Would thorough it unbroken penetrate	
Into the fier, its true domestick mate.	
He allsoe found a quick compendious art	
T' augment this sulfur, by projectinge part	60
Of it on parts twice tenne of mercurie,	

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To which, for fifteen dayes, he usd t' applie
A boylinge heate, untill the sulfur were
Wholly resolv'd into it. Then appeare
In liquid substance would the matter by
This action, when he usd to purifie [f. 14v]
His sulfur, by destillinge quite away
The fetid water that amonge it lay,
In *Cohobatinge* maner; this devise
Soe oft repeatinge, till there did arise 70
A third of water. Then the residue,
Beinge filtrated, would leave to open view
A part of this *Amalgam* to reside
Within the Strayner, which he layd aside;
And did dissolve his strayned mercurie 75
With water stronge, which allwayes would passe by,
A part of it untoutchd in '*Malgam* right,
As was the former boath to test and sight.
Thus by destillinge and dissolvinge he
This cited matter usd to multyplie. 80

But to the touch when he had brought this stone—
To see if it the praedicated tone
To th' medcin Phylosophic ore could singe,
By mettall's imperfection banishinge—
He found it fall much short. But what the cause 85
Should of this faylinge be, he gan to pause.

And as alone he walked, this to skanne,
H' espied farre off a coomely, grave ould man
Come to accost him, as if thither sent
By fate; whome viewinge ere he farther went, 90
The Author by his countenance could guesse
Him to be one whoe som way did professe
The longetayle-trade. Then said he, "Sure, I'le trie
If this man be not skilld in chymistrie." [f. 15r]
Whoe, next to his *Godten aven*, did demaund
The cause of his retirement to the straund.
"Sir," quoth the Author, "I'me a man half blinde,
Spent most my time discov'ries for to finde
Of *Pyrotechnic* mysteries; that soe

(Tryinge God *Vulcan's* friend aswell as foe) 100
The certeyntie of art, if such there be,
By woorkes unfayn'd I once might testyfie."
 "That trueth of Art by doubts you seeme to wave,"
Doctor Allslagen said (for soe he gave
His name), "declares your slender readinge, or 105
At least your Judgment Phylosophic, for
To dive to th' Authors' meaninge, knowinge well
You never are to listen to theyr Bell
Accordinge to the letter; for, say they,
'When ought we playnly write, we nothings say.' 110
And therefore, Sir, the possibilitie
Of Nature must be weyghed cunninglie
By all your readinge, th' Artist beinge noe more
Then Nature's servaunt; and my self therefore
Can not but wonder that you should not see
[This, being] versd in schooles of Germanie." [f. 15v]
The Author then reply'd, "Sir! I commenc'd
My woorke (as I suppose) beinge strongly fenc'd
From errorr by the woords of *Trevisan*
Your learned Count on those of *Geber*." Then 120
His whole past woorke he did repeate, and pray
His doctorshipp would show where th' errorr lay.
 To which he condescended willinglie
And gan the Errorrs thus to summe; said he:
"You nicely have misunderstood the wile 125
Of *Geber* where he bidde you reconcile
The light-heel'd God with bodies, in that you
Have made them friend, whether they would or noe.
Soe that where you an Arbitrator should
Have been, you turnd a Party soe to mould 130
Nocopa, that for feare shee thought it safe
To take what termes *Spinthelius* would voutsafe
To graunt her—which some thinke was kindly done,
To joyne her in one body with the Sun.
Soe thought *Arnoldus*, of whome all his bookes 135
Doe testyfie his Philosophic lookes
Could pierce noe further: his *new light*, behowld,

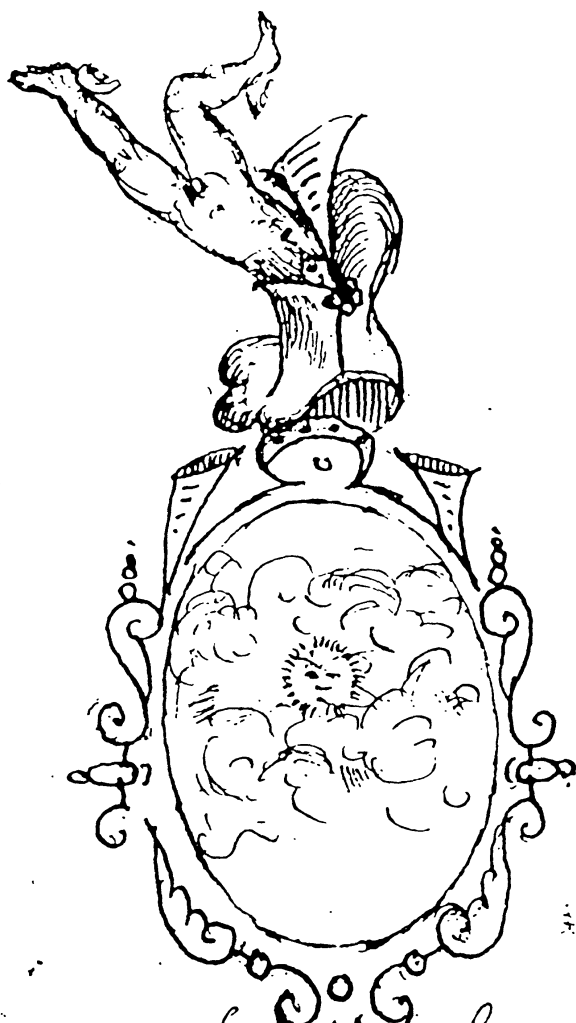
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Unto the Pope. And for those Wandes of Gowld
He's said, at Roome, to make with *Mercurie*,
Soe, by this worke, may either you or I. 140

“But this *Nocopa*, when you know aright,
You'l finde to be a true *Hermaphrodite*,
Whose power masculin you did soe wound
When by this forced contract you her bound [f. 16r]
Unto *Spinthelius*, endinge soe the strife
That now (poore Sowle) shee as a spoused wief
Into his family engrafted is,
Addinge noe honour unto him nor his—
But on the contrary, what ever shee
Hath of perfection, that obsequiously 150
Shee doeth acknowledge unto him to owe;
As this woork's triall to be true doeth show.
Therefore looke back, and further Councell take
Wherby you may this reconcilment make,
In such a way as shall boath parties please, 155
And then the woorke you will performe with ease.”

“To reconcile two enemies,” reply'd
The Author, “and please boath, a mighty wide
Gappe seemes to be made up, and such a taske
That if the Ridle you doe not unmaske 160
To ayre its tropic visage, as to me
A *Gordian Knott* will proove, I playnly see.”

“This wants not such a high-discerning Clarke,”
Allslagen sayd, “if you but only marke
Which of them boath (for 'tis a thinge in Ure 165
'Mongst Arbitrators) redyest seemes to Lure
Unto this union; and he willingly
Doubtlesse will somthinge yeald in Pollicie.
And who that is, you easily may looke
And finde in *Aristotle's* fift playne booke 170
Concerninge the Republique, where he boasts
That whoe excells in vertuous actions most [f. 16v]
Are least Seditious. Now I know you catch
By these my woords how to conclude the match.”



The sun speaks.
Since thou art hither come, proud Mercurie,
If he fetter thee though in the field of die.

Figure 2. Emblem, "The Sun Speaks," fol. 17v.

VII. Chapter One

“By what y’ave sayd,” quoth th’ Author,
“now I minde
What in the *Metamorphosis* I finde
Engross’d concerninge th’ mighty *Jove*, when as
He walk’d the Rounds about his walles of glasse
To view if ought were perishd by the fier
Unluckie *Phaeton*’s over-proud desire 180
Then kindled had, when his beloved Land
Of *Arcadie* he then did understand
To want her arbours green and christall springes
To bath the turtle dove’s half-burned winges;
As these he was restoringe, how he woo’d 185
A Nymph of *Nonacris*, in lecherous moode
Couchinge his minion, there espied by chaunce,
In counterfeited garb and countenaunce
Of *Phoebe* pale. (How stronge a thinge is Love,
When thus it conquer can the Gods above— 190
Aura theyr reason blindinge till that they
With *Cephalus* theyr *Procris* shoot and slay.)”
“Y’ave pick’d the lock,” quoth Doctor, “tis e’en soe;
But this you might have sooner learned, though,
Had you with piercinge eies observd what in 195
The sole text of this art, the Table greene
Of *Hermes* stands engrav’d—an *Axiome* high,
As certeyne of this royal Pedigree:
 Sol shall be father to this Bratt,
 The *Moone* shall be his Mother; 200
 The *Winde* shall make him fayre and fatt,
 From’s Clouds e’re he recover.

[f. 17v, Figure 2]

[f. 18r]

“Now for the Parents boath, you had them right
In your first woorke, but for the fleetinge slight
Of th’ Nurse, observe how in her Apron lies 205
One of the Keyes of this art’s chief disguise.
Which Key to deifie the *Auncient stock*



Let all such know, as would my name desire,
'tis Conformation or Prgpopsi.

Figure 3. Emblem of Hen, fol. 19r.

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Thought in noe scorne, for that it to unlock
Theyr vessell did possess a facultie,
As *Hermes* shewes in's booke of Alkhemie. 210
Which heavenly vessell, fraught with liveinge fire,
Prometheus' moulded clay, with lief t'enspire.
Though by this Key you have in part its glorie
Discovered in your late recited storie
Of *Jove's* fowle lust with's Nymph, yet let me trie 215
How I may further yet exemplifie
Those woords forecited out of th' *Emralld table*,
Singing my Comment thus as I ame able:
 Whoe ere he be that doeth conteyne
 A thinge within him, he 220
 Unto that thinge I may mayntayne
 A Vessell ought to be
 Reputed; as unto the Egge,
 The Shell, soe to our Child
 The Winde to show to be doeth begge
 This *Hieroglyphic* wild." [f. 18v]

 "By this," quoth th' Author, "I presume I gather
My Errour and the cure thus farre; but whether
Phaetonlicly mistaken in the Size
Of heate I was, I pray doe me advise." 230
 "Not soe mutch in degree of heate," he said,
"As in the way of's application layd,
Was this your second Errour, as detect
To you I shall, if that, with due respect
To rules rhetoricall, you view agen 235
Each stroke belonging to this fiery Hen."

[f. 19r, Figure 3]

[f. 20r]

 "By this I see, like *Dulman's* master, I
My part have acted in this Tragedie.

For as his Play's disturber he condemd
To tosse soe longe within a blankett hemm'd, 240
Untill the sowle showld through the lower loope
Depart from's nastie bodie, soe that *trope*
Which he made use of to lett out the lief
I did infuse it by. But, t' end the strife,"
Said th' Author, "which his part heere acted best, 245
I leave for you to Judge and show the rest."
"The third," then said the Doctor, "did acruie
Mutch from these heere fore cited; for had you
On equall termes concluded this sadd match,
Your dissollution with a quick dispatch 250
You had accomplishd, and the sprite sublime
Coagulated in as litle time.
For tis an *Axiome* that these actions fall
Out at one time by love reciprocall.
And know, what kinde of dissolutions ere 255
These actions both by them doe not appeare
Performd in space of three short howers, you may
'These are not Phylosophic' bouldly say.
"For note the Poet's rime on *Miriam's* high
Alchemic science, whome, though some denie 260
For Moyses' sister, or t' ave writt that tract,
My self avow it true by proof of fact: [f. 20v]
 Marie in short, strange thinges doeth ringe
 That with her gummes shee may
 The flyinge thief to fetters bringe 265
 In lesse then half a day.
 Marie in three howers' space doeth tie,
 By *Pluto's* daughter's ayd,
 The threefold knott soe equally
 That each is well apayd." 270
"Now," quoth th' Author, "I doe see in vayne
How longe I have been labouringe for my payne."
"For labour lost, yours neither can be thought,"
Quoth he, "but as the farmour's sonnes that wrought 275
So stoutly for the Pitcherfull of gowld
Theyr dyinge father in the vineyard towld

VII. Chapter One

Them he had hidd: though they the pott nere found,
Yet did theyr labour mutch enrich the ground.
And soe did yours, as shall be to your sight
More manifested by the giglish flight 280
Of *Daphne* from *Apollo's* love. But first
I must take leave to quensh your fiery thirst
With that ne're over-woren dialogue
Twixt th' Sun and Moone, which to you disembogue
A secrett shall—with phylosophic eies, 285
If seriously you ponder its disguise.
“And thus the Sun begins: ‘My wisdom doeth
With my pale Sister take degrees of growth,
And not with any servaunt to my Crowne,
For I the good seed ame, that beinge sowne 290
Into as fertill ground, doe beare mutch grayne
With augmentation to the sower's gayne.’ [f. 21r]
Then said the moone: ‘O Sun, thou wantest me
As doeth a kock the henne, and soe I thee,
Thou beinge perfect high with lordly youth 295
Boath hott and drie, and I the moone in growth
Beinge could and moist. But when w've learnt the trade
Of *Amorillis* in the ivory shade
Of stately *Jove*, thou there wilt clipp my winge
And, ere thy Taylor for th' incestuous sin 300
Hath brought thy mourninge suit, in spight I shall
Impede thy fluxion, though it cost m' a fall.’
“Now Sir, the only marke you may by this
Perceive of perfect dissolution is
When that the bodie thus disjoynted lies, 305
By loveinge poysonous draughts in attome-wise,
For then the principle hath found the end.
Which, of a perfect action all comend
As certeyne signe (and nought save *dust* to be),
The Phylosophic *Turb* doeth testifie 310
And further manifest the reason why
Noe body mixd can unto puritie
Caelestiall be exalted, in the dust
Untill it hath done penance for its lust.



*mercurie speakes out
of the ashes.*
*Wixt me and Phebus, Reader, if you can,
if pray now Judge what is the Gentleman.*

Figure 4. "Mercurie speakes out of the ashes," fol. 22r

VII. Chapter One

And what else meaneth that *Ovidian* shirt 315
Of *Hercules* with Venom soe beguirt
(Attracted from the Snake of *Lerna* cold):
That what he from his mother's blood did howld
It soone consumd, to th' end his heavenly part
(On which the thunder-thumpinge *Jove* his art 320
Had showen) might be extold, and he most cleere
A Starre in's father's heaven might appeare?" [f. 21v]

To this the Author said, "Doctor, I have
Apply'd my full attention to your grave
Discourse thus farre, the which t' ave somewhat quick'd 325
My stupid understandinge theoric,
Denie I will not. But these *Attoms*, how
To bringe the worke to them, I fayne would know."

"I wonder mutch," reply'd the Doctor then,
"You are thus hasty, Sir, beliveinge, when 330
Your longe decoctions of tenne monthes in grott
You did attend, your Egges were not soe hott.
And can you not from Choller now refrayne,
While that my Henn is sittinge t'entertayne
Discourse? Yet since your humor's such, pray walke 335
Till th' henne hath done her woorke, and then wee'l talke."

[f. 22r, Figure 4]

[f. 23r]

The Author his first incivilytie
Thinke to dawb o're with this Apologie:
"My excellent *Allslagen!* I doe now
Perceive that father *Adam* was to you 340
Not only common Ancestor, but came
And stood himself by th' font to give your name."
"I crie you mercy," th' Doctor then reply'd,
"I thought you had hence in a furie been hy'd
Ere I had coold my Egges; however, now 345
I'm gladd to meete you, ere I bidd adiew."

Lithochymicus

“Not soe, I hope Sir. Since that thus farre you
T’ asist your servaunt have voutsafd, ye now
Will not leave in the Suddes, till you contrive
Some feate our Kinge from’s ashes to revive.” 350

“In few woords, Sir, I can noe longer stay;
But, for your sake, some two monthes hence, this way
I purpose to retourne, and then to view
If that you sowinge be of garments new
For this your dust reviv’d; mean while, I’le send 355
A friend that can you mutch asistance lend.”

[f. 23v]

The Second Chapter

“Well! Once the German Doctor I supposd
Intended the whole art to have disclosd.
But whether my fidelitie mistruste
He did, or what dislik’d him, I now must
My bookes agayne revolve”—the Author spoke 5
Thus to himself. And then he gan to looke
On *Hermes’* booke of Alchemie, where lurke
These words pertayninge to his present woorke:
 Depart the fume from off the wief,
 The blacknesse from the meate; 10
 Restore the dregges agayne to lief,
 And then th’ hast done the feate.
This putt the Author in a mumpish case
And to bethinke him what in roman phrase
He heard the Poet singe upon this doubt,
Beinge then as farre, as he himself now, out: [f. 24r]
 Charon will over *Styx* with ease
 Transferre you without fee;
 But if you chaunce to gett release,
 He bidde you grumblinglie 20
 Turne back and pray the God of Hell
 Come doe’t himself; for he
 Not able is without his spell,
 He sayth ingeniouslye.
Then he began the *Necyomantic* slights 25
To meditate, if that from thence he might
Some lesson learne, wherby descrie the Jesse
Of this Kinge’s soule he showld, and soe addresse



*Then triple limbo Godlike shew thy glorie
How by thy couringe ~~the~~ ill's purgatorie.*

Figure 5. "Elixir's Purgatorie," fol. 25r.

VII. Chapter Two

His Cord'alls thither. To which end, the *Ladds*
Of *Aristotle* whoe, for three nights, cladd 30
With Bacchanalian Flagons, warmly lay
Close by the gastly tombe in *Lipara*,
T' observe the Revells of the hellish fiends,
He thought t' advise with once. Yet surer signes
The Goddessse great *Adrastia* could, he thought 35
(Layinge aside all other tricks at nought),
To him discovr, knowinge well that shee
Must be sole Judge of this impyetic.
Her he therefore implores to yeald relief
With sable offringes, milke, wine, and (in brief) 40
As the *Cumaean sybill* had forestampd
To the ould Romans in the *Martian Camp*
This Lesson as a true *directorie*
Theyr yearly sacrifice to offer by,
And as the Kinge of *Argives* (whoe first feed 45
Her grace in hallowed temple) had decreed
His Priests showld immolate: Just soe did he,
Soe mutch he longd for this discoverie.

[f. 25r, Figure 5]

[f. 26r]

But whether to the Goddessse it appeere
Did, that this Author was not (as her seere) 50
With scrupulous devotion qualyfie'd
Unto this service; or may be shee eied
Somthing misplac'd—perhapps the *Author* may
Not rightly stand the new *Eutopian way*;
Or whether that the sacrificeinge Cave 55
Was yet not consecrate wi' th' presence grave
Of Magpie-gowne and Tippet; or else whether
Th' Oblator had not holy Orders, neither;
Or, may be, twas the fume fro' th' burninge sticks
Which digged were from graves of Hereticks 60
That did her Majesty offend. What ever

The matter was, twas somthinge altogether
That did not please, the Author well perceivd.
For till next night he answer none receavd
To his propounded question, when in bedd 65
He heard a Voyce this Ridle to him readd:
 “As for thy Kinge, his sin soe fowle
 (In that he made a Strumpett
 Of’s Sister) was, that now his Sowle
 To th’ inmost Hell is shrunked 70
 Within himself; from whence retourne
 It never shall, untill
 All’s filthynesse thou wash and burne,
 By the renowned skill
 Of *Azoc* and *Paidowra* cleere, 75
 Or else *Oxosa* pevish,
 These beinge Servaunts to the fier
 His wickednesse to punish. [f. 26v]
 Which if thou canst but use with Art,
 I tell thee certeynlie, 80
 From this drosse will arrise a part
 That never more shall die.”
“The End doeth promise fayre; the maner, though,
T’ encompasse it full hard,” the Author thought.
How ere, the trueth therof he can not doubt, 85
Since the same sence *Hermes* himself sets out.
Himself he therefore to his furnace gott
Right soone, and there in purgatorie hott
Did place his Kinge; his limbecks likewise he
Thus sets in order. And, in its degree 90
While each his office served, he began
To meditate uppon his Countryman
Ould *Merlin*’s Allegorie deepe and darke,
Which covertly *Adrastia*’s sence doeth marke
By two Physitians, wherof *Nilus* th’ one 95
Hath snatchd, and tother t’ *Alexandria*’s gone.
Then was the Author full intent to trie
The *Psychegogic* witty feates, therby
The Sowles of these to evocate, and passe

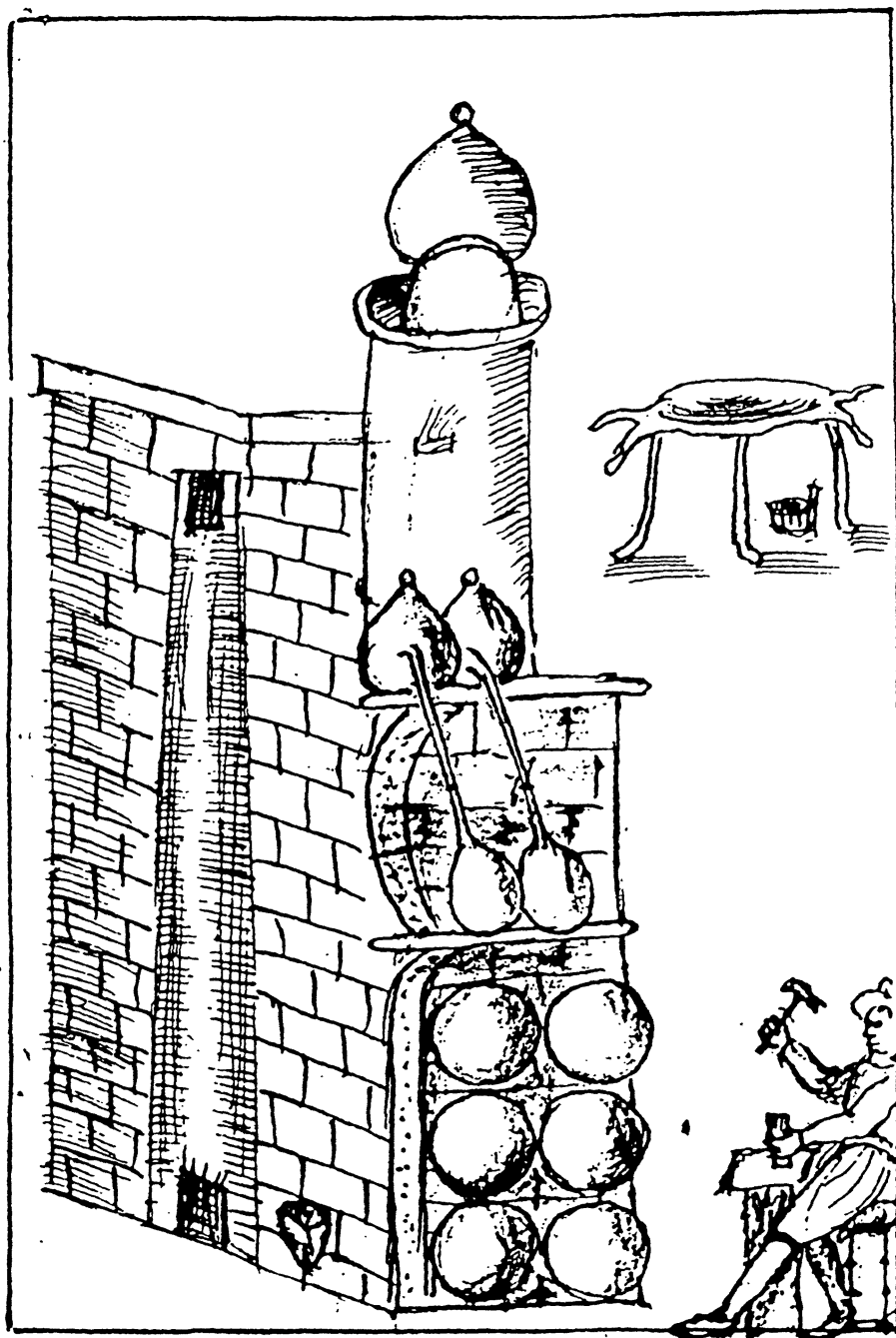


Figure 6. The alchemist's furnace, f. 27r.

This doubt an answer. Where (for that it was 100
Most usual in *Ægypt*) he resolvd,
Of all the rules in magic art, to howld
To *Decanomantie*; for of this blinde
Sentence he hop'd some firme resolves to finde.

[f. 27r, Figure 6]

[f. 28r]

But in his wedges as the characters 105
He carvinge was, and ordringe of the hayres
Of th' Hide, and skumminge of the watry froth,
He's interrupted by the presence of
A stranger unexpected. Whoe, uppon
The sudden, courtes his good permission, 110
Declareinge with a Cringeinge Complement
How strict commandes from *Doctor Allslagen*
To him he carried—nothings to account
For honour, but what some way might amount
As helps, his weake abilities t' improove, 115
Industriously to gayne the Author's Love.
Whoe, as he spoke and shrugg'd, could soone perceive
This was that help which as he tooke his leave
The Doctor promisd had. Then that he would
Voutsafe to approach his furnesse and behowld 120
(In th' absence of his honourd Doctor) how
He passd his time, he prayd, and next to know
Of th' ould *Hero's* welfare, and since that he came
From him how longe it was, and eke his name.
"Monsieur!" the stranger say'd, "there have not pass't
Full two dayes naturall since I'd a taste 126
Of his Jocunditye, with a comaund
In his grave name to kisse your fayrer hand.
And for my Appellation, be you sure,
It is *Toutguerres*, and your *Serviture*." 130
"Sir!" quoth the Author, "if assurd I were
Your name did this Etymologie beare

VII. Chapter Two

(Which yet to doubt, soe farre injurious I,
Though stranger, dare not to your merit be), [f. 28v]
I showld in reall english be thrice more
Yours, then your Phrase exprest you mine before.”
“*Be garre, Mounsieur!*” said he, “your Pulpitt man
(I see) hath conjur’d you, that reason can
Take noe impression on your intellect.
Mi Bon Dieu! what a laughinge was there kept 140
At Cambridge longe agoe (attend me) when
The *Joviall Philosopher* did then
Present but a poore balsome cure was made
By *Medico de Champ*: A Learned trade,
To give a Vomitt to a Caniball 145
That had not half concocted, nae scarce all
The carcasse eaten of th’ unweildy ladd.
That quackinge Surgeon, there to rest him, had
Giv’en order, while he walkd alonge the strand,
To gather a few hearbes, and out of hand 150
Retourninge, and the *Giant* findinge there
Stand pickinge of his teeth, a great mattere
His powder through those nostrills wide to th’ mawe
At once to blow: and soe those gobbetts raw
(Each in circumference at least a spanne) 155
To joyne together, and soe cure the man!
Soe wonderfull you made this presentlie
That scarce you did forbear to give the Lie.
“But give me leave my self to recomend
Unto your audience how, by *Pont Neuff*’s end, 160
When I demur’d in *Paris*, my owne Art
On a farre greater cure performd its part. [f. 29r]
As thus: A *Chevaleere* was quite forlorne
Betooke him to my Sharge, whoe, in the morne
Before I was t’ attend him, as he rose 165
To th’ Shamber-pott, and thought to clense his nose,
Instead of Sneuill he the Gristell flung
Into it; and a member (which my tounge
In mayden modesty forbear to name)

Dropp'd in likewise. Boath, when the mayd up came, 170
Shee flunge into the Seyne, where they were by
A fish leapt at and swallow'd presentlie.
Which done, th' unhappy fish, twixt drunke and dead,
Lay still uppon the water, as if fedd
He had on quicklime; which my Boy, by the Gilles 175
(That stood o' th' Bridge divulginge of my Billes),
Tooke up fro' th' water and presented me,
Like a good Gerson, most obsequiouslie.
Then strayght to dresse, I did comaund my Cooke
The Laquee's present; whoe, as he did looke 180
Into its maw, did finde it fully fraught
With a congeled powder, which was brought
Soone to my presence, whoe as soone descri'd
Twas that whose want my Patient did abide.
"Then *Mounsieur!* I a Partinge water had, 185
With which the Powders of boath members sadd
I seperated, and most learnedly
To theyr originall carnositie
Reduc'd, and then conjoynd—where now they are.
Ma damoselles, il este vray be gar! [f. 29v]
"Mounsieur! I heare you are the only Man,"
Quoth th' Author, "that my sadnesse comfort can,
Haveinge a Patient for you, who is all
Converted quite, as yours, to powder small."
"Such desp'rate cures as those doe joy my Spright 195
To deale in," quoth *Toutguerres*, "leavinge quite
The rest for *Sharletons* to traffique in,
As such to me that Credit none can bringe."
"I heare," reply'd the Author, "your owne Quire
Singe you above them; therefore I desire 200
You would unto this Patient's Case attend,
Whome to your Skill I purpose to comend.
And thus it is: He somtimes bore comaund
Ore sixe large Provinces within the Land
Orcadian, whence he first was tane away 205
And hither brought as Vagabond to stray
(Though still he somtimes doeth with th' Gods combine

VII. Chapter Two

To cheate men's hearts t' acknowledge him divine);
Where wandringe in Gray clothes, by chance he layd
His amorous Eie upon a Country mayd 210
Whome he (in brief), after the woonted plight,
Did for his wief espowse. But the first night
As boath in bedd they lay, and gave account
Each t' other of theyr forepast lief, he found
That married to his sister deere was he.
The thought wherof did kill him presentlie; [f. 30r]
The like did her. Soe that next morninge, as
The Bridemen came t' attend him up, there was
In stead of the Younge, Loveinge, merry payre,
This heape of ashes which to you I beare." 220

“*Ho la, Mounsieur!*” *Toutguerres* answer made;
“You must not thinke to sheate me out my trade
Soe easily; for your Position I
Have learnt of ould, ere since in Italy
I livd with a grave Doctor, whoe did then 225
His time passe over just as *Allslagen*
Doeth now, delightinge in noe thinge at all,
Save t' study for the *Pierre Philosophall*.
I know full well Sir! now what you would have;
You would reduce your Kinge out of his grave 230
To a younge *Phoenix* that nere more shall die.
This *Allslagen* can doe, as well as I.
But, if you please I take the woorke in hand,
That you may be assurd I can comaund
The action of my Speech, I'le first the fate 235
That hurld me over hither t' you relate.

“This ould Itallian, whome I menciond now,
When soe farre spent with age he was, that how
By course of Nature he might longer live
He knew not, did comaund me to revive 240
Medea's art upon Duke *Aeson's* age,
By practice upon him. Directions sage, [f. 30v]
All thinges aright to order beinge before
Receavd (all which I punctually ranne ore)—

Untill, at last, with breach of many a glasse, 245
Th' essentiall part wholly reduced was
(That fier could not ore master) to pure Salt
Most Christalline and fixt. But marke the Hault:
 "While this a doinge was for the full space
Of thirteene months, the neighbours gan t' uncase 250
Theyr conceivd wonder, noe man knowinge ought
Of this my master's reach (soe deerly bought),
Demaunding allwayes, whensoere they eied
Me, why he hidd him soe? I still reply'd
He was resolv'd his chamber to keepe in, 255
And not to take the ayer untill the Springe.
But still th' enquirie did increase, when I
Bethought it was my wisest way to hie
Me with my salt to someplace wher I might
Runne through the course of this my Chymic slight. 260
At last I gott me to this *strand*; where soone
I' th' night time as I lay in bedd alone
(Whether some reliques of my former feare
By hope imprisond in my fancie were,
Or whether, as Pneumatics learned write, 265
The Sowle of some of th' Ancients did invite
Me to attention—that I doe not know,
But this), me thought a voyce showld tell me how
That, 'Nature's *Ens* transcendent gave comaund
All things in order heere below showld stand [f. 31r]
Subordinate, as beinge all composd,
And in theyr right subordination closd
In number, time, and measure right tri-une,
The lower allwayes to beare witness knowne
Of's neighbour next above him; and eke all 275
Of him that only is, and was, and shall.
Thus th' Sulfur, Salt, and mercurie we finde
To witness of the Spirit, water, winde
(Whether congeald they be, or raryfide),
And they agayne of Body, Sowle, and Sprite— 280
Which of the father, th' Word, and Sprituall might
Doe testyfie likewise: thus doeth the spright

Descend through all these Spheres subordinate,
 Yet can not be sayd from its seate to vary. 285
 Soe doeth it allsoe witnessse beare profound
 Of 't self The Trueth in all; as well was found
 By th' Ancient writers when they did descrie
 All seeds were by the seventh property
 In Number, weyght, and measure multiply'd,
 Which Qualytie they therfore fully try'd 290
 Neerest of th' *Woord* abooove to testifie,
 Which to that age was manifested by
 The name of the world's sowle, in doctrin cleere,
 As by theyr writinges amply doeth appeere.
 'And further, that the forme of every thinge 295
 (In which the sowle resides) doeth allwayes klinge
 (I speake of thinges subordinate) unto
 Th' Essentiall salt: which nothing differs, though, [f. 31v]
 From th' Sulfur fixd, as, by reduction keene
 Of Salts to Oyle, is playnly to bee seene. 300
 From which, each Sowle hath its prefixed moode
 Of restitution, comonly understood
 By the woord *Seculum*, which every yeare
 The Springe for vegetives doeth make t' appeare
 To be theyr *Seculum*. As when in urne 305
 We, for example, vegetives doe burne,
 And cleere the Salt from off the ashes' lee,
 And with unsav'ry earth it mixe, we see
 The followinge Springe the very same arise
 In's true proportion, hue, and qualities. 310
 'Now for the body Animall, once gone
 To dust, in that it *Seculum*s but one
 Can have, its resurrection likewise can
 Noe more in number be. Wherof the Man,
 Its kinge, whose sowle was by immediate Spell 315
 Inspird, and in which now the *Woord* doeth dwell
 In's spirituall seed, his fall and rise can know
 The only *All* above and soe below.
 'But that a Resurrection sure there is,

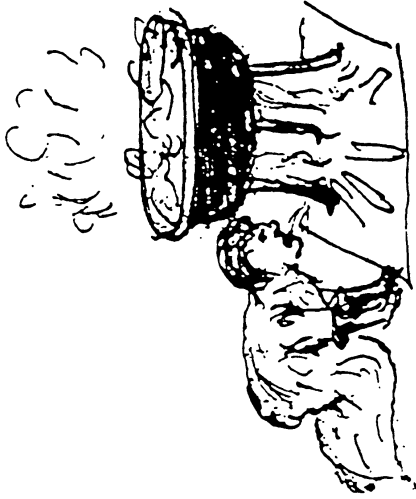
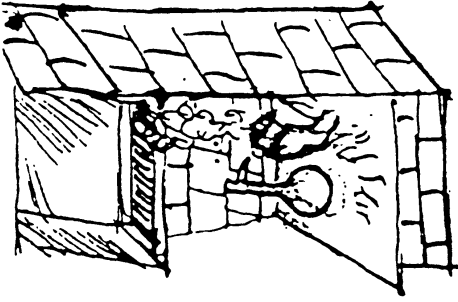
The vegetive demonstrates; and that this 320
New lief shall astrall and e'relasting be,
The minerall doeth proove apparantlie.
 'And further, that in it a forme most rich
Resides, appeareth by those collours which
You saw in the first destillation mixt 325
Of this your salt before you had it fixt.
 'The same will soe appeare if you destill
The horne of stagge or fallow deere with skill
Of *destillation laterall*: to th' side
Of the receaver shall you then see slide [f. 32r]
The Salt, and there in forme of hart's hornes clinge;
To th' trueth wherof, the practice will you bringe.
Yet call to minde how, when those collours fayre
To you in the extraction did appeare
Of this your Master's salt, you noe way could 335
Your Master's forme throughout your course behowld,
But fayre orientall collours in a way
Confused, as of ould the *Chaos* lay.
And why of Man you could not there the forme
Behowld, as in the tother of Stagge's horne, 340
I give you leave to reason, or in Poste
Ride to consult with *Jacob Behmen's* goste.
 'As for the min'rall sowle, its lief is linkt
To rules of art, and those to woorkes distinct 345
In number two—*Solution* beinge the one,
Reduction tother—which the *Woord* alone
(That by such contemplations we might him
Only admire and honour) pleasd hath been
Unto our understandinge to subject, 350
As unto you I shall anon detect.
 'But first your Master's errour shall by me
To you yet further manifested be.
Which was, when he th' same principles descri'de
And Elements together to recide
In all things, and agayne in one that All 355
T' abide with interest recipocall;
And further how that the *Solution*,

VII. Chapter Two

Seperation, and Coagulation

Doe over all thinges heere below prevayle,
And allsoe Champion the three bodies frayle, [f. 32v]
Keepinge within the body minerall
E'en as without it doeth the animall:
He thought therby that all the bodies three
Were controvertible accordinglie.
And soe they are, but by our God alone; 365
For if man could this doe, he might—all's one—
As God himself, from out the very Sand
Rayse children to inherit Abra'mes lande,
Since that the sand in its tri-unitie
Subsists aswell as man, soe prowd is he. 370
All which conversions further to ensure,
Unto the man God given hath a power
To controvert the lower bodies two,
As the *Alchemic* art doeth playnly show.
For if you take the juice of *Chelidon* 375
With other milkish hearbes, and them soe longe
Digest as twenty dayes, you then shall see
From them emaninge perfect mercurie.
And soe from salts of Vegetives you may
A Mercurie extract, to each essay, 380
Which shall performe (when the same course y'ave ranne)
Those very operations that you can
From th' minerall expect; which into Gowld
How to convert, to you hath been foretowld.
 'The *Persian*, when he this did apprehend, 385
And what stronge force the sun above did lend
Unto the Lower, thought immediatlie,
Either this sun the world's great Sowle must be,
Or else that Sowle must surely in it lurke,
It beinge the fayrest seate of all its woorke. [f. 33r]
For that the Author of all bodies, boath
Astrall and Elementall, showld (forsooth)
Himself that priviledge denie, that he
Had on his woorkes conferr'd soe craftylye

Sem'd to them most unreasonable. But we, 395
Whoe dare not once our *Potter* question why
He you a Charger made, and me a Panne
Did frame; or why he temperd not with sand
Tane from the bankes of *Seyne* his clay when as
Camber he made, as when *Gomerus* was 400
For that clime fitted. Much less dare we pore
Into his reasons for the measure, or
The stuffe, or collour, of his robes of state,
Or where he rests him when the day growes late,
Or where he keepes his Christmasse? Heerin all 405
Men, children-like with admiration, fall
Showld at his footstoole, least they doe renue
Ould *Adam's* sin, which the whole world doeth rew.
 'And soe showld not your Master (though he might
The body vegetive and Mine unite, 410
And boath destroy, and lief unto them give
Spiritually for earthly) once belive
This Art his salt likewise to youth recall
Could, nor such thoughts lett from his fancie fall.
 'But if with man the same had been the case 415
In point of resurrection, as it was
Found with the minerall to be, yet went
He not the right way this to circumvent. [f. 33v]
For whene with fier alone he bidd you burne 420
The ashes to white chalk, and then in urne,
All naked, unto redd—ere you about
Could this have brought, you had been tired out.
But call to minde what *Hermes* writes of this:
How that not only fier but *Azoc* is
Likewise required to cense these nastie Celles; 425
And allsoe how that *Miriam Aron* tells
There is a water, or a thinge that may
Be likned to it, which in half one day,
Doeth cense fowle *Hendrages*. This water (now,
To put you out of doubt) runnes from a trough 430
In *Arcadie*; from whence, with envie fraught,
Ould *Antipater* fetchd the poysnous draught,



The weoman speaks

Ere I will longer thus my beny waffe
A bekwife gette an artificiale staffe.

Figure 7. "The Weoman Speakes," fol. 34r.

In hoofe of Mule that *Alexander* charmd
Wi' th' furies to encounter, all unarmd.
And for the maner how to use that rare 435
Infernall draught, doe but observe this fayre
Unconquerd Beuty.' Then I 'woke and eied
This Emblem pinn'd unto the Curteyne side."

[f. 34r, Figure 7]

[f. 35r]

"Mounsieur!" sayd th' Author, "whether I ame most 440
Engag'd to your Cure, or the diviner Goast,
Or Emblem, Puzles me, since every one
Hath's share contributed to reinthroned
My phylosophic Dietie. Your dreame,
Haveinge explan'd soe Elegant a Theme
O' th' Theorie of your Cure, which I descrie 445
To sound the same with great *Jove's* Surgerie
On minced *Archas*: where the howse beinge burn'd
And to a hayry Woolf *Lycaon* tourn'd,
The water that this great Physitian's Grace
Made shift at present wish to wash the face 450
Of 's new-raysd sonne (though there the envious Crew
O' th' Phylosophic Poets doe not show),
Your Embleme heere hath nam'd. But whether we
Our Kinge have raysd by the same industrie,
Heere comes the Doctor, let him Judge; that then 455
We may goe weygh more Beech with father Ben."

[f. 11v]

The Third Chapter

The Author now humbly presents his chief
Respects unto the Doctor and what grief
To him his absence had produc'd, untill
Tout Guerres had revivd him with his skill
Transcendent; then desireinge him to trie 5
The progresse since they'd made in Chymistrie.

“I see,” quoth th' Doctor, “he is raysd from's grave,
But Judgment by the outside can you have
None, only that the hammer he doeth heere
Refuse to yeald to, like the Nitre cleere. 10
The second triall I have learn'd to make
Of this stone, that but once did him betake
To Hell and out noe oftner, is to cast
Him uppon *Sol* or *Lune*, whome if full fast
With Basiliskish eies he powders, then 15
It is a signe the Cock hath trodd the Henn.

“The third is, if of him you forme a ball
And tosse aloft into *Jove's* clowdy Hall,
And see it tourne to *Ayer*, and in that forme
Chayne up the flyinge thief to *Vulcan's* hornes, 20
Then 'tis a signe th' *Hermaphroditic* kow
Her power masculine begins to show.

“The fowerth is from its severall fusions sent,
Wherof the first a *Duell* violent
Doeth fight with *Vulcan* under *Saturne's* Coate
(For soe an absolute defiance ought 30
Be given by a quality remote),
Which this our stone's first fluxion doeth denote.

Lithochymicus

The second is more mild, when that, by art
Of Sprites, the watry forme to th' nitrous part 30
In those oyles dwellinge Sympatheticly
Attracted is; then doeth it show therby
Its fiery shape, meltinge like waxe, through all
Our potts soone runninge without cnock or call.
The fusion third itself doeth show alone 35
In our multiplicacion of the stone,
When, in our vessell placd, it flies aloft
With Eagle winges ore the *Caucasian* Croft.
 "The fowerth is when it downward comes amayne
And is a lively earth praecipit layne, 40
Which neither we dare well A *fusion* call,
Nor yet denie to be soe, since at all
Though it nere waggess his tayle, yet doeth it spue,
Like *Scotus' Toad*, its venome farre enow.
By which his fusions fower you may descrie 45
Each Element (with Philosophic eie)
Protrude itself t' embrace a more refind
Cleansinge, and keepinge its peculier kind,
In shape and dwellinge boath; then joyntly all
Firmly encloystred in one hospitall. 50
And not the Elements barely may you see
Heere, but likewise the Principles all three,
Theyr witnessse bearinge of the woord above,
As *Mounsieur's* dreame more amply doeth it prove. [f. 36v]
This knew the grave philosophers of ould,
When they with one consent soe cleerly would
Theyr acclamation sound, theyr heavenly game
Composed was of every thinge. The same
Did *Scotus* likewise know when thus the ball
He playd of this stone's practice typicall: 60
 Our chymic stone is one and three:
 A body, Spirit, Sowle,
 The which a heavenly gift to see
 Must be, without controwle.
For this a true comparison 65
 Is of the Trinitie,



Figure 8. The "hieroglyphic" from Jones's *Lapis Chymicus*, p. 58.

Admittinge noe division
In point of Dietie.
And this had *Hermes* writte with sence profound
(I meane in point of Phylosophic sound) 70
When in his *Table Emrald* he enrowld
This followinge Sentence, farre more woorth then Gould:
 What fixed as the Center lies,
 And what with Eagle winge
 Flies in the ayer, doe boath devise
 To poise the self same thinge. [f. 37r]
The which *thinge* learned *Ligon* doeth denote,
When he th' Elenchic misterie layes ope
Of th' fower arabic names of this our *stone*,
Which he doeth adde as fift to ponder on: 80
 First he's dissolv'd to water cleere
 And thence destilld to winde;
 Next a pure fier it doeth appeere,
 Which then the earth doeth binde.
And soe the Stone make perfect in 85
 Its fixion firme and fast,
 Which then becomes a medicin
 To all the world at last.
These severall operations you likewise
Have naked stript of all theyr ould disguise 90
By that playne Hiroglyphic you did place
As Corollarie to the Latin Phrase
Of this discourse; then which noe penne dare ere
(Without incurring that Curse most severe
Of this art's Seere) of th' woorke more playnly treat. 95
'Twere therfore well you would it heere repeate."

[Figure 8, from Jones's *Lapis Chymicus*, page 58]

[f. 38v]

*Purelius enamour'd with Hudra
speakes to Saturne:*

"O Sone of *Vesta*, prethee call to minde

VII. Chapter Three

Thy rageinge fury gaynst thy father great,
In him dismembringe (which now to repeat
I sory ame), hath proovd the cause unkinde 100
Of this my grief. Therefore praescribe my cure,
And on thy Aulters I'le for aye demure.”

To which the ould man answer made, “Thou Boy,
Lascivious 'boove all others, knowest thou not
How that thou dayly doest thy true-love's-knott 105
On *Gaia's* Apron tie, to all men's joy,
And that by th' pandorizinge tricks of thy
Devoted friend *Zeugenius* wittily?
I say, thou dulpate leacher, goe thy way,
And charme thy friend asleepe, and then put on 110
His garments; which perform'd, if that anon
Hudra receive thee in her best array
With Sympathetic curtesie, then know
Thou doest a favour unto *Saturne* owe.”

He scarce tooke time to give the ould man thanks 115
For his good counsell, but he ranne and did
All to a title as he then was bidd—
Soe his hot kidney longd to play its pranke.
Whoe then by *Hudra* Coy was entertaynd
With all th' respects that *Cupid* ever gaynd. [f. 39r]
But now begins the Tragedie; for when
They boath theyr fill of pleasure had embracd,
By Aphroditic froth they were defac'd,
And drownd to death within this venemous fenne:
A storie sadd to tell to all theyr kin, 125
As to the neighbourhood that they lived in.
To cohonest this dolefull funerall's state,
The sone of *Vesta* came; to whome (in brief)
The friends, with one consent, in handcerchief
Of liveinge flaxe, the ashes dedicate— 130
Who thence extracts this stone by Stygian ayd
I' th' Phylosophic ballance to be wayd.

[f. 39v]

The Fowerth Chapter

“Now, Doctor *Allslagen*, I call to minde,”
Quoth th’ Author, “those instructions which I finde
Exactly cited in the *Rosarie*,
To wit, that th’ Artist showld by’s Chymistrie
Nature promote fower wayes (as you well know): 5
To witt, without, within, above, below.
Wherof wi’ th’ first two we have e’en now done,
As *Cephalus* triumphingly hath sunge:
 First make the match, then give the wound,
 Then burne the ashes well; 10
 And fowrthly, ’n Nero’s napkin bound,
 Convay it strayght to hell.
 And wash it in the Stygian trough
 Unto an unctuous redd,
 Or ’till it be as white as snow:
 And then be sure, th’ ast spedd. [f. 41r]
 “In this place therefore, Sir, w’ are calld uppon
Nature t’ assist by exaltation
Of th’ worke thus farre composd, unto a state
More subtill, that the antients nominate 20
Ingression, th’ which to prosecute without
Your good assistance I myself much doubt.”
“I’ th’ gen’rall,” quoth the Doctor, “that’s acquird
A threefold way, accordinge as desir’d
Is this your med’cin’s use—whether the mine 25
Imperfect to exalt t’ a state divine,
Or cause prowde glasse (that breakes before he bowes)
T’ receive what forme the hammer it allowes;

VII. Chapter Four

Or else, which doeth arride me most of all,
If you it keep for use medicinall. 30
If for the first, then are you shoven that Key
By *Izac Hollandt's* sone, a threefold way.
The first is by repeatinge oft your new
Revived woorke, untill at last it flow
With heate of Candle; for that beinge cast 35
On mercurie uncocted, it full fast
Will penetrate into it, in such heate
As it may well endure in without sweate. [f. 41v]
Then will it part the fowle Sulphureous pelf
From what it findes there kin unto it self, 40
Which firmly it detaynes uppon the test
And, in a fume, casheres away the rest.
Therefore th' *Encomiums* that th' antients give
To this *Elixir's* power transmutative,
Them you must allwayes know to explicate 45
By way of *Synechdochic* sence, for that
All mettalls have within themselves a part
Of this fixd Sulfur and our Stone—the art
Professinge that to seperate, and it
With its firme self insep'rably to knitt. 50
They, by this figure, might t' affirme be bowld
That all it doeth convert into pure Gowld.
But if you can the Hoofe of Mule soe hard
And close compacted finde that will retard
Its penetratinge facultie, soe that 55
You, by this rule, may the stone incerate
Untill it freeze noe more beinge exposd
To th' open ayer, then y' ave, at last, composd
Th' *Olybian Lamp*, in *Padua* under ground,
Unto God *Pluto* dedicated found. 60
The like's reported t' ave been found in celle
Not farre from the (now ancient) Citadell
Of *Yorke* in England—as in booke you see,
By name *The Garland of Varietie*. [f. 42r]
That of *Olybius*, soe devoutly cav'd,
Wherin the followinge verses were ingrav'd,

(For th' English reader's sake) is in this wise
Layd downe by Apian in's *Antiquities*:

I pray God *Pluto* this to owne,
Ye Theeves come it not neere; 70
For unto you remaynes unknowen
What I have hidden heere.

The Elements, I tell you all,
Digested pure and neate,
Are lock'd up in this vessell small 75
By great *Olybius'* feate.

This Potte (sayth Apian) did another howld,
Which in it had two violls, th' one of Gowld,
The other of pure Silver mine composd;
In boath which was a precious liquor closd 80
Which burnt full cleere; and, as by most it's thought
Was thither, longe since, by *Olybius* brought. [f. 42v]

About the Inner Pitcher graven round
The followinge sentence ther was likewise found: 85
You Theeves! see that from hence you hie;

What need you more bewitch
The world with Pounded mercurie,
Unlesse to cure the Itch?
For now by great *Olybius'* Artes 90
A sacrifice doeth burne
To the rich God of th' Lower partes
Enclosed in this urne.

Yet, by Good Apian's leave, he was mistooke
When of this monument he writt his booke;
Or, of necessity, there is a *Trope* 95
There to be understood, whose covert scope
Such as are read i' th' Art rhetoricall
A *Metonymie of the subject* call.

For where he sayth the Violls were of Gould
And silver, that this liquor held, he showld 100
Have sayd there were two violls did contayne,
The one a goulden, and white liquorish mine
The tother; for soe doubtlesse it must be,

VII. Chapter Four

As I shall prove of meere necessitie. [f. 43r]
First, for that nothings from the mixed frame
Of th' Elements that doeth derive its name
Of all corruption voyd is to be shown,
But this caelestiall unguent; which alone
The substance is of the fower El'ments rich
By art exalted to the highest pitch 110
Of puritie. The which to proove noe lie
Th' Experienc'd artist needs n' authoritie.
 "And secondly, that this our *Lion*, Gay
And wine-produceinge made th' metallic way,
Doeth pierce through Gould—yea and the firmest glasse 115
That ere yet formed by Venetian was.
 "Yet will we not denie *Minerva* had
Her lastinge Lamp, in plumous Alomme cladde,
To keepe her Image wakeinge, as report
Pausanias doeth; nor yet the other sort 120
Faber professeth with his chymic sprights
Coagulate, longe while to keepe theyr lights
Without much waste. But since that none of these
Can ever plead an absolute release
From diminution, they ought not therfore 125
Soe singularly to be guilded ore
For *paramount*, since that perennitie
With change could never yet acquaynted be. [f. 43v]
 "And now, that this unto the Reader may
Noe fable seeme to be, we need not weigh 130
That tender Mathematic horse, whose back
With weight of feathers was soe put to th' rack,
Nor yet that odde malignant fetherish trick
To reckon up with new Arithmetic.
This woorke (I say) these numbers doeth not know, 135
As comon woorkes on Salts doe playnly show.
For if you fixed Salt doe take, and leave
It to dissolve in sprights, you shall perceive
That when those you destill, and new dissolve
Your salt, and soe this double course revolve 140
Of Solvinge and congealinge tenne times ore,

Your Salt will tourne to oyle, and freeze noe more.
And soe our salt, if that you doe it oft
Dissolve and then congele, you shall more soft
At every other action you repeate 145
Finde it become by this industrious feate,
Nae alterd more then other salts you see
With it compar'd in right analogie.
And if our salt, but once recalld from's pitt,
Become soe soft that in a morter it 150
May brayed be with ease, what reason may
The repetition of this rotall way
Denie a power to soften this, till hee
Will freeze noe more for very subtiltie? [f. 44r]
And he that could this height of art attayne
Might likewise say he had the *Ela* strayne
In music once transcended, and the grape
Had reachd that makes the Cupp of *Aesculape*
To blush, and (to be brief) might say that he
Had reachd the height of all Philosophie. 160
But, that this vessell is soe rarely caught,
A second way, by *Hollandt* you are taught
In's min'rall operations, to decoct
(To wit) your stone, in's vessell firmly lockt
With paradisisic water, till at last 165
Boath in one body doe conjoyne full fast.
But though this seeme a neerer way t' attayne
The End, yet 'cause the woorke it fowles agayne
(That it must be with hellish fier made neate),
You shall be noe greate gayner by this feate. 170

"Therefore the third way marke, which is your sun
With oyle to incerate untill it runn
In heate of lampe; or (if you please) this skill
Soe oft to use till freeze noe more it will.
And this the stone is, *Crollius'* thankfull voyce 175
In's *Admonotorie Praeface* doeth rejoyce
Once in his travayles to have had a taste
Of, as appeeres in that the *rubie paste*
Exalted after the metallic slight

VII. Chapter Four

Voyd of all savour is. But this mixt spright 180
Doeth yeald boath smell and taste, as the Bee hive,
From th' Love it beares to th' Nitre vegetive. [f. 44v]
And this mixt slight is hit I now propose
My self as taske t' insist on, for that those
Experienc'd Authors unto whome the Clay 185
O' th' Vessells firme towards the other way
Of Inceration seemd to be well knowen
Are ne' retheless still noted for to owne
This way of Exaltation aboove all,
For microcosmic use medicinall. 190
Which only way you therfore are t' expect
I showld the secretts of to you detect,
Preferring much this use before the rest,
As of a farr more gaynfull interest
To the weale publique, then the metalls' course, 195
(Which in theyr kinde as usefull be) with source
Thus paynfully to rack, soe from one pound
To gayne one dramme, or lesse, of what is sound.
"This likewise thought the authors grave ofould,
Though yet the art they allwayes did unfold 200
Under metallic notions, as which might
The more the Student's love to it incite.
"For, as *Rulandus* does most rightly note,
When ere that the Phylosophers did quote
This theyr *Elixir's* power transmutative, 205
They allwayes showld be understood to give
Theyr hint of th' minerall calamities
Within man's body, to wit, maladies,
Which by the metaphysic mine, to wit,
The quintessence of good *Dayrelius'* sprite 210
Married by art to the *Lady Maia's* sone
Are to *Pandora's* boxe made back to runne." [f. 45r]
The Author then reply'd, "Good Doctor! I
Ame much of your opinion and descrie
Further, by oft contemplatinge the mayne 215
Reasons of Authors for theyr tropic strayne,
That they the *Transmutation* use to cite

Lithochymicus

As a firme tryall of the medcin's might,
And that, because its force medicinall
In the two bodies (to wit, minerall 220
And microcosmic boath) performed is
In analogic maner, chaseinge this
Imperfect sulfur from the meaner mine,
As in the man (by Vertue consanguine)
The good seed doeth its forces wholly bend, 225
The evill one in poste away to send."
"Tis very true," quoth th' Doctor; "tis e'ene soe,
As in due time I shall more amply showe."
 Tout Guerres then stood up, and said, "*Begarre!*
I like not this; therfore let me declare 230
My Master's method of projection, as
My self have often seen him bringe to passe:
I meane wi' th' rubie medcin to sweet taste
Exalted, just as you proposed laste,
To tourne full twenty partes of silver mine
Uppon the Coppell into Gould most fine." [f. 45v]
"I graunt you," quoth *Allslagen*, "for I know
That one part of the redd will give a hue
To twenty partes of Silver, and inure 240
It, e'ene as gould, the Hammer to endure.
But if that you with a mercuriall sobbe
Its superficiall tincture from it robbe,
With Antimonie when the fixed moone
You doe restore t' its former collour, soone
It will some losse susteyne, as you may trie 245
By rule in *Paracelsus' Chirurgie*.
But yet to proove th' *Elixir's* power divine
Unfayned, take this Silver Christalline,
And it dissolve in water stronge; then shall
You see some gould downe to the bottome fall. 250
Then when the part dissolved you reduce
(On Copper plate, as comonly we use,
First gatherd) to a body, and agayne
That solve, you shall the like pure gowld remayne

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Perceive as erst. And soe, repeatinge ore 255
This woorke, you'l all see tourned to goulden floore
That doeth remayne; the rest consumed quite
You'l finde, by this corrodunge nitrous sprite.
Which sandy gould, when that with fiery winde
You have reduc'd t' a body, you will finde 260
Not more of all your silver, I'le be bould,
Then a fift part transmuted into gowld. [f. 46r]

“And therefore, *Monsieur!* i' th' projectinge game
Unlesse with bellowes you mayntayne your flame
Uppon your metall on a Coppell plac'd, 265
Untill its owne hidd tincture on its face
Descrie you may, I doe avow this Theame:
Your master's woorke was not half woorth your dreame.”

“Then,” said the Author, “since the case doeth stand
Soe, let's leave that for *Monsieur's* practice; and 270
I pray show you how this the delicate
Of the *Promethean* banquet may be made.”

“Sir! In the mayne,” sayd he, “that way begun
We have to treat of, shoven by *Hollandt's sonne*,
Is it by which we fully perfect shall 275
This woorke's accomplishment medicinall.
Only, wheras with oyles he incerates
(Tane from imperfect metalls), our debates
Shall be how th' stone itself to dulcife
Unto an oylish substance rather, by 280
Such sprights as best agree boath with our sowles
And his. Which *Crollius* biddes us quaffe in Bowles,
When he Encomiates thus: [f. 46v]

 In heaven *Sol* doeth beare the Sway;
 Amonge vegetives, the *vine*; 285
 Man ore the Creatures soe may say,
 And gould within the mine.
 And therefore the *Sun* metalline,
 Made astrall by this skill,
 And joyn'd with spirits of pure wine 290
 In *Midas'* grindinge mill,
Is unto the *Sun*, animall,

Or sprite of man decayd,
To be apply'd at every call,
As champion for its ayd. 295

“In this place therefore must not us escape
Th' Anatomie alchemic of the grape,
That astralized shee may, with better grace
Of Complement, her brother Kinge embrace.
Which we in analogic way may bringe 300
To passe with the metallic woorke: the thinge
First putryfyng, next destillinge cleane
The spirit volateele from off the flegme.
Which done, i' th' next place, y'are to calcinate
The dregges (though some therbe whoe like not that, 305
But make theyr *Cohobations* on the drosse,
Or *Caput Mortuum*, only dried as mosse), [f. 47r]
And fowerthly y'are to quensh the ashes' thirst
W' th' flegme you did from it extract at first;
And fiftly through an *Oxe's tounge* to strayne 310
The liquor cleane, and in a Still 't agayne
T' evaporate away from off the Salt
That in the vessell you shall finde to halt,
By repetition of this woorke to be
Blanshd, till it come to vinall claritie. 315

“Of this pure salt you are to take one part,
And it in sixe of Sprite to solve by art;
And in a vessell, closely stopt, to place,
In a digesting heate for tenne dayes' space;
Then all t' destill in heate of *Marie's bath*, 320
And you'l b'experience finde your spirit hath
The fixt salt volateeld. Thus rayse t' a sprite
Will fixed salts, if you repeate this slight.

“And, on the contrarie, if that you take
One part of sprite, and imbibition make 325
With fower of salts of the most fixed kinde,
And as before digest, then will you finde
Your sprite to salt coagulated fast,
For that the stronger side orecomes at last.

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Which woorke by oft repeatinge, you may knitt 330
Your salt soe fixt and subtil, soe that it
Will boath in heate of Lamp itself resolve,
And in a stronger with the stone involve.
 “This fixed oyle of Salt prepare you may
By repetition of a neerer way; 335
To wit, if you the Sprite of vineger
With salts dissolve soe oft, and then congele. [f. 47v’
This ere that you have twenty times done ore,
You’l finde your salt fixt flowinge, as before.
Agayne, if you desire the Salt of th’ Sprite 340
To fixe alone, you may compleate that slight
Your sprite b’ imbibinge with unsavory earth
Unto a paste, which on a tepid hearth
Destillinge by a *Retort*; then recoile
Will both the watry substance and the oyle 345
To the Receaver, leavinge fixt behinde
The saltish part, for your tried art to finde,
Extract, and clense; and for your use in store,
Reserve in drowth, as you were taught before.
 “Agayne, if you desire the oylish part 350
From of the watry substance to depart,
This you may doe by powringe out the same,
By way of inclination, through a flame;
Then freed from’s oylish part you’l see to flow
Your water cleere within the glasse below. 355
 “The wiely Chymists findinge by this woorke,
Water and fier did in one subject lurke:
The one in forme of *Nitre*’s glazen mayne,
Tother in visage oylish, and agayne,
Noe sulfur was without its weepinge eie. 360
Which water did the sulfur qualyfie
With faculty of burninge, even as
The sulfur in the water is the cause
Why flowinge it appeares. As we behowld
When that the Sulfur by th’ externall cold 365
Is chasd into the water’s center: then

The water turnes to ice, untill agayne [f. 48r]
By warmth the Sulfur be recalld, to trie
Th' Energious force of 's flowinge facultie.
Therefore those liquors that abound with sprite 370
Doe longer keepe from freezinge, as (to cite
One for example) the stronge Muscadine
Doeth never freeze; but beinge of sprite soe fine
And stronge, in cold it's through the vessell lost—
As oft the Vintner findes unto his cost. 375

“By this (I say) the Chymist found a sleight
T' exalt the sprite of wine t' a greater height
Of purity then mentiond was of ould,
With seperations made by meanes of could.
The maner thus: They take the sprite of wine 380
Moste pure, and in a boult's head christalline
Hermetichly shutt up they place 't in Ice
In time of hardest frost. By which devise—
When, in the morne, they take theyr glasse, and it
Breake ope—they finde the flegme together knitt 385
In forme of Ice, as convexed fence
To the within residinge *Quintessence*,
In forme of oyle (with which to subtilize
Your stone, before all others, I advise).” [f. 48v]

To which the Author sayd, “Doctor! my minde
With your discourse doeth satisfaction finde,
Boath in the composition, and (all's one)
In th' Inceration of our Ruby Stone;
And now a woord doe begge how to compose
The *Lilly white*, soe this discourse to close.” 395

“The white woorke then” (quoth he) “is in one frame
Wrought with the redd, th' Ingredients beinge the same,
For that the light-heeld-God himself will drowne
In none of's brother planetts, save the Sun
(Although the rest he courteth all as low, 400
Inseparably with them conjoyninge, soe
That to theyr stock engraffe himself he will
With all obedience, as you know the Skill).
So that to tourne this Truant's Nimble winge

VII. Chapter Four

To mine most fixd, is a farre different thinge 405
From this stone's woorke, wherin the Virgin runne
Doeth a Careere strayt to the heart o' th' Sun,
And is not killd, only enchaunted fast,
As its emissives firmly proove at last.
And therefore, when first whitned in its nest 410
Is your revived earth, then fitly dress'd
It is w' th' Nymphs to walke ore this *Carante*,
Which we as much as tother oft doe want. [f. 49r]
The reason is in that it's calld upon
To chase disseases lunary that thronge 415
Either the head t' annoy, or else to rott
In haste the humours' sweet harmonious knotte;
And therefore are subjected to a feste
Or Krisis tane from th' Horned *Phoebe's* Jeste.
Which is the reason why we for this skill 420
The white stone incerate t' a volateele
Consistencie: that soe its missives may
More speedily th' offender chase away.
"Which to performe, I doe advise you take
Two partes of salt of Tartar, and to bake 425
Half as much earth unto a whitish hue,
And that these you conjoyne and pestill soe
That they become a Powder, which withall
You ought to place within a potte that shall
Be closed with a Cover, as you know, 430
When feate of *Caementation* use you doe.
Soe are you this to order, and lett stay
Mongst burninge charcoale a full nat'rall day;
And then, with *Vulcan's fleete Aeolian toole*,
A meltinge heate to give it, ere it coole: 435
When you shall see the whole like glasse t' abide,
For you to pulverise and lay aside. [f. 49v]
Then take of your white medicin filed neate,
And subtilized with sugar Candies sweate,
Two partes to one of th' forsayd powder, and 440
In heate of *Caementation* let them stand
For twelve longe howers. Then, coold when is your pott,

To powder see you beate th' Caemented Clott,
And with the sprite of wine you it digest
For eight dayes longer placed in its nest. 445
Soe will your sprite of wine to redd become,
Haveinge the tartar seperated from
Your powderd stone; which repetition make
Untill your spirit noe more tincture take.
 "All which your Collourd sprites destill agayne, 450
And keep, and soe the rednesse (that remayne
Doeth in the bottome) see you drie and bringe
When they are calld for uses followinge.
 "Then take the stone of flint, which you must burne 455
And oft extinguish in a watry urne,
That in the end yourself with ease it may
To subtile powder in a mortar bray.
Now of this powder take a double share,
And mingle with your salt soe redd and fayre—
And boath with the sayd medicin; at which time 460
Place all in a Cucurbit to sublime:
Then shall you see your medicin arise
Like flower of *Saphir* fine in subtil wise;
And what in the Cucurbit stayes below
You are to clense as I demonstrate now. [f. 50r]
 "First, in a Morter, it to powder bray;
Then, with warme water, wash its filth away;
And thirdly, in an Iron panne with heate,
See you it burne unto a *Calx* most neate.
Uppon which *Calx* your forsayd spirit pure 470
Of wine you are by measure for to power,
Sixe partes to one, and, in a long-neckd glasse,
It to digest for three or fower dayes' space
In Vessell closely stopp'd, till you it view
Somthinge of milkish collour. Then are you 475
The spirits gently for to seperate
By *Inclination*, and to th' dregges to adde
Another spirit fresh, and this woorke ore
For to repeate, till salt it take noe more.

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Now all these Extracts, thus impregnate, you 480
Are to destill in *Marie's Bath* unto
A fowerth; the which in Cold you are t' anhele
Till that a salt doeth on the topp congele
In *Styrion's* forme, which you know how to take
And repetition of this woorke to make. 485
 "Then all these salts drie, and dissolve agayne
In *Alcohol* of wine, which filtre cleane
And redestill untill your salt behinde
Remayninge flowes as oyle. Your stone sublim'd [f. 50v]
Then solve in this your salt, and redestill
In sand b' a *Retort*, with gradations, till
To the Receaver, cleere as is the Skie,
An oylish liquor you behowld to flie.
With which, that you *Pandora's* quicker flies
(Like *Skogin's* fleas) doe drensh, I doe advise." 495

[f. 51r]

The Fift Chapter

“Now Doctor,” sayd the Author, “I implore
You would voutsafe once more to light t’ restore
The maner how (what Authors testyfie)
This Stone performes its cureinge facultie. 5
For when I minde that *Aphorisme* high
That doeth direct us not to satisfie
Or acquiesce ourselfes uppon unknowen
Receipts (in point of Cause), and soe not t’ owne
Them as dogmatic (sayth *Hipocrates*,
Since these unstable are), though oft we please 10
(Like th’ Regall touch of tumours scrophulous)
Them with the name of *Vertuous* to abuse,
I must confesse, when oft such lectures I
Doe reade, and them contemplate earnestly,
It staggers me th’ *Encomiums* to summe up 15
That Authors write of this our Physic *Cupp*.
Since (t’ undeceive this point) I now must owne
How, in my travayles, I have some men knowne
(Omittinge other more abstruse and high—
Closd councill-theeveinge lectures of the Skie) 20
Who could, by one bare *Geomantic* trick,
Soe certayne a prognostic give, and quick,
Of most diseases, as scarce missd at all;
And such, you’l say, for Doctors medicall
Might well passe ’monge the Vulgar, though of th’ Art
They’d give but weake account in any part.” [f. 51v]
“T’s as true as strange,” quoth he, “that Rules in mowlds,
Drawen by uncerteyne pricks at random, showld
Soe sure a Judgment give; and yet (by th’ leave

VII. Chapter Five

Of learned *Peucer*) I can not persceive, 30
Nor see good ground t' immagin there should lie
The smallest nayle of *Deuill* in this Pie,
Nor think't incredible to say, the starres
The influence prognostic of theyr warres
Or mutuall beneuolence reflect 35
Showld on this Scheme, in answ'able respect
Of forme composd to astrall theme, while we
Observe th' armorious unguent's energie,
Or th' Pestillentiall fowle infectinge Bile,
Or Adamant right intelligible, 40
Or (thousands more such like, by to lett passe)
While we behowld our visage in a Glasse.
Or while i' th' woorkes of *Felganor* we prie,
Which th' Predicated force to starres denie,
Confessinge yet th' are the world's Eies, and eies 45
(Unlesse in paynted pictures) to devise
Without reflection, were all Sympathie
And virtuall contaction to denie.

“And therefore understand *Prometheus* Kinge,
Whome you first mention and the Poets singe 50
Man to have made of Clay, whose witty trade
Minerva then admireinge, promise made
What thinge in heaven was he fancie might
Shee would on him conferre for this his slight. [f. 52r]
By whome then tane up monge the Gods, he stole
That sparke eternall, 'topp on's oaken toole,
Which this his man did animate; and *Jove*,
At this incensd, showld *Epimetheus' love*
Send to her husband with a boxe, all full 60
Of astrall maladies, his skill to gull
B' infectinge this his man, and all that showld
From's Loynes descend; and for *Prometheus* ould,
How (by *Jove's* speciall warrant) *Mercurie*
O' th' topp of *Caucasus* showld him fast tie:
I say, t' th' Historian's Allegoric strayne 65
In this expression ere you can attayne,
You'l learne a compound rhetoric to discusse—



Figure 9. Prometheus, the Alchemist, and the Workman, fol. 53r.

VII. Chapter Five

Which, for your sake, I shall enucleate thus,
Cleering the *Submutation* first. This wise— 70
Prometheus, soe his name him t' us descries,
And that deservedly, as whoe the heartes
(Besides his other high deserving partes)
Showld of his 'Syrian people ravish by
His (fore unknowen) scientiall industrie
In th' *Astralogic artes*, of which he gan 75
To tourne Professor there. This learned man,
When that the nation sorely to lament
(By planetts' aspects most mallevolent
Occassiond), he then heard the present blow
Of this plague *Epidemic*, which soe low 80
And faynt had brought them, that with axes tall
Three in a day could scarce one bramble fall; [f. 52v]
And allsoe how the grave Galenic hood
(With the longe Art of's drugges, attendants stood
Expectinge his prescription), noe way could 85
This cure—he thought those astrall plagues sure showld
Theyr astrall cures expect. And theruppon,
Weyghinge how th' starres all force receaved from
The Sun, with what stronge Sympathie the low
Planetts had with the heavenly bodies, whoe 90
Become not us to handle, soone resolvd
How he that liveinge Kernell, closely 'nvolv'd
Within the marrow of the minrall Sun,
Might thence extract, on with his woorke to run.
This to the world the Character of that Sun 95
Doeth testyfie, haveinge its center runne
Through, in resemblance to the heavenly, both
Of *Phoebus'* wagen: unto which not loth
Was this our Sage to howld his ferul's topp,
'Till by that rotall motion, without stopp, 100
His ferul soone tooke fier. Which *Metaphor*
Our Chayrwoorke Turnors dayly Rumble ore.

[f. 53r, Figure 9]

[f. 54r]

“Next, where it’s sayd how that by *Mercurie*,
In due obeysance to his Majesty’s
Most sacrett Edict, he was fetterd thus 105
Uppon the highest topp of *Caucasus*,
An elegant *Illusion* heere you may
Through th’ Spectacles observe, as whoe showld say:
 ‘This Kernell of the Sun, soe pure and redd
Being, by those goodly graces in its head, 110
Jove did behowld, advauncd his seate to take
In his owne Arbour; there did fetters make
For th’ light-heeld God, who after in those chaynes
Did him good service. Soe *Prometheus*’ aymes
Directed were before the fact. Soe longe 115
He from that mount Caucasian had the thronge
Obsrvd of all the Planetts, with each daunce
Those nimble-footed creatures did advance,
That he well knew this of his Science was,
As th’ Hiroglyphic showes, noe petty passe.’ 120
 “And this the sequell of the story prooves
To be the Author’s meaninge, where that *Jove*’s
Comaunds, it’s sayd, this our wise man to binde,
Noe sooner did an Executioner finde [f. 54v]
Then he an Eagle sent to beach at noone,
And then to tire uppon his Liver soone
For cleeringe of her Nares—which witty Source
You’ll finde in the first part of this discourse,
E’en as the storie’s close makes likewise good.
What you with *Mounsieur* wrought, where, in a mood 130
More mild, this Diety did call to minde
Some former service done him by this friend,
And (as you read) ungratefulnessse to shift,
Sent *Hercules* with bow and arrowes swift
To shoote this Eagle, and *Prometheus* him 135
At liberty to sett, younge, sound, and trimme.
 “All which you can not choose but understand
To meane your woorke’s reduction now in hand.

VII. Chapter Five

For take the litt'rall sense, and you will smile
To thinke how when the Eagle, all this while, 140
Soe eagerly had on his Liver prayd,
Then as to kill her by Herculean ayd,
This godly curtesie showld come soe late
T' apply that Playster to his broken pate."
"It seemes by this," quoth th' Author, "that what we,
Amonge our merrier woorkes of Vanitie, 146
Read in Poetic bookes as ould wief's tales
To chase the winter nights, hidd in theyr scales
Ideall have our woorke—if we could but
Percinge theyr rhet'ric, and soe crack the Nutt." [f. 55r]
"It's true," quoth he, "and you must know therfore
This art n'ere speakes more home, then when dawbd ore
It's shoven with some feates of activitie
'Tween Great Men, Gods at least, or historie
To winne the whetstone, or some Embleme, store 155
Of which in *Ovid* you may construe ore.
As first your owne woorke, wherin you have stray'd
With great *Apollo's* love to *Daphne* mayd:
Whome that himself in playne termes usd to courte
Without a Pander, shee, in mayden sorte 160
With modesty orewhelmd, could not abide
Till, tir'd with flight, shee to her father cried—
Paeneus' Christall streames, by this time mixt
With mudde to choake his foords—whoe did her fixe
T' adorne *Apollo's* temples; which when shee 165
(Just in the nick of her soe chaung'd degree)
Observ'd, as for her nicenesse past, her vowes
Shee would pay to her God, her leaves shee bowes.
"And soe hath your woorke you a Garland sent
To subtilize, and allsoe to ferment 170
This stone we now discourse of, just as that
Servd to adorne *Apollo's* Beaver hatt.
"Yet since there was noe *Epaphus* heere borne,
Nor glisteringe starres of *Archas* from this forme
To multiply the heavenly seed, this God 175
In the next fable wiser growes by odd.

Lithochymicus

When the greate *Jove*, observinge beuty's grace
In *Io*'s cheekes as Roses strowd o' th' face [f. 55v]
Of Lillie bankes, her hasty flight did stay
By that thick mist then round about her lay: 180
This feate had *Ovid* learned cunninglie
From father *Hermes*' booke of Alkhemie,
Wher a mayne Key of th' art he there doeth ope,
Though in such Termes as well become his trope:
 The *Sun* doeth now a Gowne putt on, 185
 Yet sticks to monarchie,
 That by that title, right or wronge,
 The art he cuninglie
 Might under his grave elbow hide,
 And bringe the *Heyfar* shie 190
 The sonne of *Saturne* to abide,
 Who Lords it ore the Skie.
Which sentence darke and ridlinge historie
Of *Io* sound the same analogie
With our Promethean, firmly doeth Alarme 195
The Embassie of *Maya*'s sone, to charme
The Peacock's tayle, soe to quick *Argus*' sight,
By cuttinge off his head, to bidd *Good night*.
And now the storme beinge past, the gustes oreblowne,
Juno forgettinge what it was to frowne, 200
Io's unhayfard, and become divine
Amonge the Chrystall Goddesses to shine—
E'en as *Prometheus* was releasd from's chayne,
And boath as this discourse hath made more playne. [f. 56r]
 "And yet in readinge *Ovid* marke this one
 Rule, that he ringes not out this woorke alone,
 But gen'rally the full transmutinge knell
 Of all the other planetts e'en as well.
 "As, for example, where are open layd
The love tricks that God *Mars* with *Venus* playd, 210
Therby her *Vulcan*'s head to astralize:
He there the transmutation doeth disguise
Of steele to brasse, as more you of this kinde
Will soone perceive when once they Key you finde.

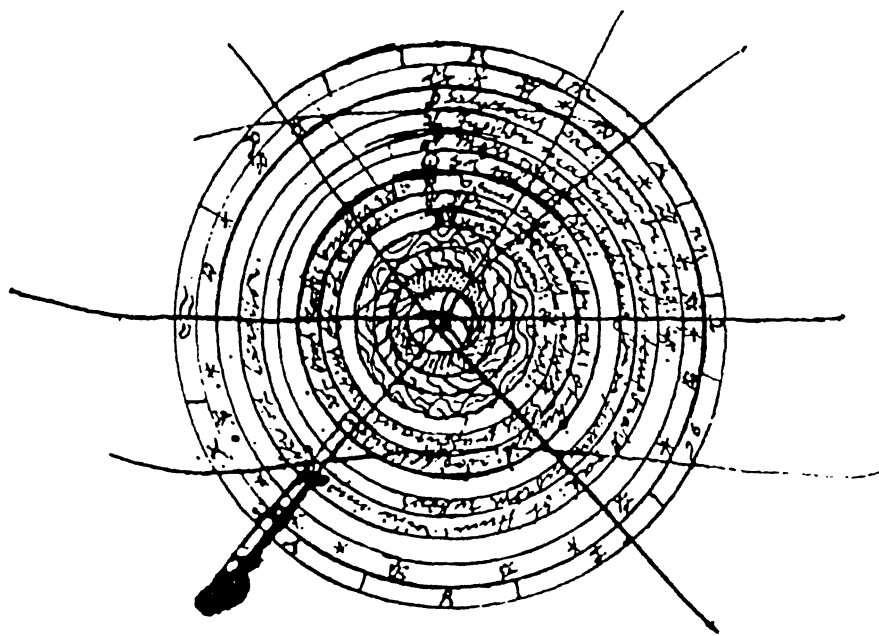
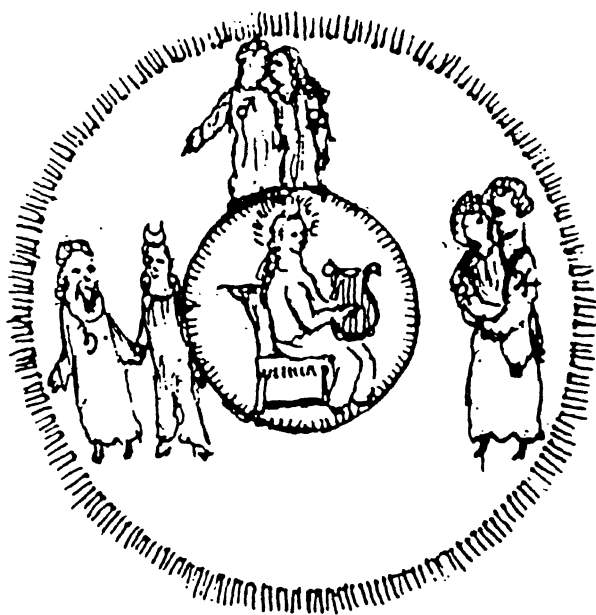


Figure 10. Apollo plays the Harp as the Planets Dance, fol. 57r.

And note that these conversions have noe share 215
In this our woorke, but meerly on a bare
Lust by Position raysd doe ground theyr love,
As firme experience doeth it playnly proove.
For when our *Harper* playes his *Sheepheards-swayne*,
Though each of those sixe planetts ne're soe fayne 220
Approach his circle would, yet for theyr Eies
Dare they not touch what soe enchanted lies.
Werfore they daunce it round, and, as the Pricks
About the rose, as these theyr Antique cick
Soe wildly ore, each with his oposite 225
In place from th' Center seekes himself t' unite,
Therby to gayne Perfection: soe the sone
Of *Vesta*, with his frozen beard, the *Moone*
Layes howld on; *Mars*, in season drie or wett,
Cares not whoe sees him Naked in the Nett 230
With *Venus*; and the *God* of all the Skie,
Narcissus like, doeth Kisse his *Mercurie*.

[f. 57r, Figure 10]

[f. 58r]

Soe, by the comon rules in Chymistrie,
Without our stone's diviner Energie,
Saturne transmuted is unto the *Moone*; 235
To *Venus*, *Mars*; and *Jove*, *Maia*'s sone—
And all in Synechdochic sense to th' *Sun*,
By this gradation thus I have begun.
For take calcined *Venus* quensh'd i' th' gall
Of Oxe, with turpentine and urin stale 240
But tenne times o're; next it with fluxe reduce
Or Peeter salt, as is th' comon use;
Then often Copell it with *Saturne* ould,
And from a pound you'l have a dramme of gould.
Then that the Lunar Lillie-whitened mine 245
May be advaunced to th' state divine
Of great *Apollo*, by this Vulgar Love,

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Our *Sendivogius* doeth it playnly prove.
And for *Atlante's Nephew*, how he trotts
Into his Cosin's Court through all our pottes, 250
Hath been from Lady *Daphne's* laurell bough
Sufficiently describ'd but even now.
 "From which prospect you naked may descrie
The twofold *Venus* of our Chymistrie,
To wit, the *Sence* and *Intellect*, and soe
How, as the senses of themselves nere doe [f. 58v]
Love all fayre objects, soe the Planetts love
By positive respects, how to improove
This Vulgar way, and n' other wise. For *Jove*
With *Mars* or *Saturne* never falls in love; 260
Noe more doeth *Venus* with *Lycaon's* guest,
Nor *Mercurie* with *Mars*, and soe 'f the rest.
But if they be once touchd with this our mine
Promethean, which doeth virtually shine
As *Love's* fixt Center (in analogie 265
To th' *Venus intellectuall's* modestie),
Then firme and universall is the Love
By th' influentiall vertue from above. [f. 59r]
 "But to retourne, whence this digression we
Have made, t' our Comment on the historie 270
Promethean's Enchomiasticks: where they rayse
Our Sage above the Starres, as whoe the Keyes
O' th' Clouds first found t' unlock; the how and why
He Gods with fiery Gunnes thence terrifie;
His Pupills dare, acknowledging nor odds 275
Twixt them and *Jove*, save formall, till for God's
Feare gan t' adore the Prowd. From its disguise
I shall unvayle this Ridle to your Eies. [f. 60r]
By shewing how this Learned man did use
His deep-fetchd reasons, for the healinge sluce 280
Of this his astrall med'cin, to install
Unto his Auditors rhetoricall
With *Metaleptic* skill; first giveinge lights
Discursive to the force of Layic slights

Made on this subject, to the end on howld 285
He then 's comparative gradation could
In more playne sence, the tother on the cest,
In its diviner Coate to manifest.
He therfore chose that action of our Sun,
Which to the world soe lowd's in thunder showne, 290
For to discusse. And by devouringe ayer
Since that those reasons from us perishd are,
Though farre more dext'rous pennes them to renew
Have since endeavoured, I shall somthinge new
Of m' owne conception adde, beinge now to treade
The same *Gradation* which our Sage did leade. [f. 60v]
The last and best I know of this his sence
Hath penn'd, the grave *Senertus* is, from whence
The Learned *Doctor Browne* this Bownce doeth deeme
T' arrise from meere antipathie betweene 300
The Nitrous part of Regall water and
The Sulfur that within the gowld doeth stand.
By which if meant the Sulfur fowle doeth lie
Within the gowld, w' affirme, or else denie.
For gould's most fixed Sulfur, what is it 305
But quicksilver digested to the height
Of its maturity? Antipathie
Which nere with Nitre had, as you may see
From those two vulgar knowen alkemic slightes
Which the sayd Doctor in the same page cites. 310
The one a Safron tincture he doeth gather
From th' *Antimonic Marchasite*; and tother
From the corrosion by stronge water wrought
On iron mettall, eatinge it to nought.
I' th' first wherof you playnly may descrie 315
That after thrice y'ave fir'd it, th' reason why
The flashinge ceaseth is, that now the fleete
Imperfect Sulfur of this *Marchasite*
Is flowen away, and only there remaynes
The pure, fixt genuin sulfur it conteynes, 320
With the pure earth by nature fitly fram'd,

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Which is by Chymists for its *Liver* nam'd. [f. 61r]
The which, of this fixt sulfur full to be,
Appeereth by its tinct'ringe facultie,
And allsoe by the bookes of authors wise 325
Whoe write the subtill stone energious is,
For to transmute unto approved pelf
The Antimoniall marchasite itself.
Which sence 'monge trueth could nere be truly mixt,
But in respect had to his Sulfur fixt, 330
As I have proov'd to your perspective eie
By this our stone's transmutinge Energie.
And for that reason, taken from the lowd
Steele's Ebullition in its solvinge clowd
With water stronge, you soone may allsoe trie 335
That to be raysd by the Antipathie
Of nitre with the forsayd sulfur crude,
That's to the pure part in abundance glu'd.
For that the same stronge water in the time
Of its solution of the silver mine 340
Doeth noe such clutter keepe; and by how much
The silver purer is, the calme is such.
And whence comes this, but from the paucitie
Of sulfur fowle in silver? As we see
When that cemented silver will noe more 345
I' th' water be dissolved as before,
For that the Caement, haveing causd to flie
The sulfur fowle, it now noe sympathie [f. 61v]
Retaynes with Vitriol spirit, who's allowd
A share dimidiate of this liquor prowde. 350
Which likewise is the reason we allow
The regall water doeth pierce only through
The Sun, but not the moone, whoe, you know, hath
Its owne peculier dissolvinge bath
That never doeth the Sun in least degree 355
Corrode; for that in this prowde Sulfur he
Claymes but small int'rest and therfore doeth crave
Of *Sal armoniac* in addition t' have
At least a fowerth part, that the Nitre be

Proportionated to the Mercurie. 360
Where you may please t' observe, that if you powre
A greater number in of partes then fowre
Of this said salt, the woorke noe whit therby
Will impeded be, as you may trie.
And heere take notice how these Layic scaenes 365
Of dissolution are by severall meanes
Performd: the one by Sympathetic kin
Of the dissolvinge spirit with the thinge
It doeth dissolve, as when with sprite of wine
You doe dissolve the Solar fixed mine 370
By longe digestion without noise at all,
Whence it's calld Bastard to the Physicall.
"The other way, wherof before we spoke,
Beinge partly by corrosion's sharper yoke
And partly sympathetic, as y'ave knowne,
But never by Antipathie alone, [f. 62r]
Though the corrodinge sprite be nere soe rude
Or stronge. Yet if there noe similitude
Be, tweene it and the patient or the thinge 380
Dissolv'd, the woorke about it nere will bringe.
This doeth *Rulandus* show when thus he tunes:
Arabic gummes (sayeth he) with Cherries, Prunes,
In comon water are dissolv'd, for that
With water's nature they participate;
Soe Mastick, Franckensence, and gumme of Lacc 385
(Because they all have a Sulfureous smack)
With oylish stuff therfore dissolved are,
But with noe waters, be they ne're soe rare.
But gumme ammoniac, Galban, and the like,
Which saltish be and therfore doe dislike 390
Boath flegme and Oyle, Chymists must solve by art
In sprite of Salt or Vineger most tart.
Yet since the Elements to our dull sence
In theyr pure formes theyr force can ne're dispence,
We are to each a woord appellative 395
From theyr predominant vertue to contrive;
Soe, as doeth the learned *Campanella* write,

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We ne're can a similitude recite
Without its dissimilitude; noe more
Two things unlike in all things can we score 400
For that each body mixt's Ingredient
True principles doe monge themselves discent
As they more astrall in theyr Nature be,
Or else mixt with some other qualitie. [f. 62v]
Hence comes that likenesse which we nominate
Similitude of formes, by which the fate
Of th' minerall most sympatheticlie
Is to be solv'd with sprite of Mercurie,
As next in forme to metall; soe that it
Under that forme doeth theyr conjunction slitt, 410
Reduceinge them t' a nitrous shape, as which
B' an amorous propension they doe itch
Sore for the honour to attayne unto,
Which theyr salt oylish doeth more fully show.
To th' next, as soonest unto mercurie 415
Transmuted, doeth the salt of Tartar flie;
Of which, by blanshing of theyre Copper plate,
Each Gouldsmith can make full certificate.
The third would Sal Armoniac fayne assault,
And th' rest, by theyr gradations, to that Salt 420
We season meate with; wherof every sprite
Dissolves the Sun without additionall might.
"But since all these, except the spritefull lode
Of the pure grape alone, do th' mine corrode
Somthinge 'boove measure, Chymists in the end 425
Theyr Sun doe use to sweeten with this friend.
"All which solutions I have cited heere
To th' end that it more playnly might appeere,
Noethinge by meere corrosion solvd may be;
And that the Nitre's stronge antipathie 430
Is with the Sulfur fowle, and not with that
Which we the Sulfur of Nature nominate. [f. 63r]
And you must know that this Antipathie,
We all this while have labourd to descrie,

Lithochymicus

From the event or outward sence hath tane 435
Its appellation; for that if you scanne
Th' essentiall salt's Anatomie, you shall
In nature finde no antipathie at all.
For if you could, you would be forc'd therby
The principle's harmonious amitie 440
To call in question, and, perchaunce, constrayne
The world's creation to be prov'd agayne.
If that (I meane) the water were at Ire
Still with the Ayre, and that agayne with fire—
Which were as much to say that Nitre showld 445
With sulfure, when it meetes it, play the skowld.
For what is Nitre, but a watry soyle
Coagulated; and what else is oyle
But winde coagulate, in which reside
Doeth th' Astrall fiery sprite? Which sprite abide 450
Can not our touth, untill coagulate
It be to winde, whose fleete Eolian state
You may congele to water. Whence you see
This salt subsist 'n a pure trinitie,
As a cleere witnesse of the woord above, 455
Which John th' Evangelist doeth fully proove
In' s first Epistle generall. Whence, through
The Nitre and the Sulfur, if that you [f. 63v]
But contemplate the spirit, which is one
Bespread monge nature's sev'rall spheares, you owne 460
There never can Antipathie, but light
In lief and love, tho' obvious not to sight.
Which spirit of all actions needs must be
The agent cause; and where it doeth agree
To winter in a place of stronger fence, 465
We playnly may perceiv it allwayes thence.
The spirit in a weaker plac'd, delights
To strengthen, by entaylinge all its rights
Unto itself, they both essentially
Beinge but one. Which is the reason why, 470
By how much fixt is th' Agent sulfur's Core
(Or fire within the sulfur), soe much more

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Force doeth the Ayre encounter in the Nick
O' th' dissipation of the Sulfur quick.

“As, for example, when you water cast
On burninge wood to fence it from the waste
O' th' fier, you strayght perceive a noyse and see
The fier extinguishd, for that hastylie

The powred water runnes its friend t' embrace,
That in the wood lies suffringe in sadd case.
Which action to the sence itself doeth show

In stronge antipathetic maner, though
Indeed the agent cause knowes noe such game;
Yet we allow the sence to take the name.

“Now as for *Crollius*' thundringe reason why
This Bounce proceeds from the Antipathie

Twixt Sal armoniac and the tartarous salt,
That playnly will appeere to be but halt,
If you this salt's ingredients doe but weigh
In aequibriall ballance, with allay

(To wit, the spirits of the salt marine,
The salt of Urin, and the same of fine
Soott tane from Chimneyes); t'will be strange to cite

A discord 'twixt them and the vine's pure sprite.
Nae, if all these had not a sister's face,

How could they boath each other thus embrace,
Leaving the powdred metall downe to slide,
And in the Vessell's bottome to subside?

“But if of this deare powder's thundringe noise
My slender reason might for valid poise,

I showld th' Ingredients (by contemplatinge
In theyr respective vertues) rather bringe

Th' occasion of this noise, b' Analogie
With our bombardic powder's facultie.

“First for the *Menstruum*, we that shall finde
To be composd of the sulfureous winde

Inflamable, extracted from the steele
Joyntly with Nitre's spirit volateele.

From whence conjoynd allthough we doe destill

A quiet water without hissing shrill 510
(Neither tumultuous, bublinge on its face),
Yet if you sev'rally them d'still, and place
Both in one botle, you shall an unkinde
Antipathetic meetinge 'twene them finde. [f. 64v]
Which in the preparation usuall
'f a medicine as vulgar, that we call
By name of *Tartar vitreolate*, you'l see
To manifest itself apparantlie.
For there when we of Vitroll's sprite one part
Project on three of tartar's salt by art, 520
We finde a heate and bublinge to arrise,
Though fier there be none neere in any wise.
But, since that motion allwayes from a rest
Proceeds, there can noe thunder from that nest
Arrise, the *agent* and the *Patient* 525
Beinge boath fluid bodies; yet th' event
O' th' force is such that if your glasse be short
In measure, it may happ to spoile your sport.
"Now to retourne unto our regall sprite,
Whose fiery part is with the gould soe knitte 530
In the precipitation past, that all
Your washinges can it not from thence recall
(The which to proove we need not more debate,
Save only t' weigh this our precipitate).
Noe woonder then, I say, if with small heate 535
The solar sprite doeth from its inner seate
Accend this spirit nitrous, that then it
Demonstrate may its hate agaynst the fleete
Unripend sulfur, which boath in the sprites
Of Vitreoll and the heart o' th' sun resides. 540
Whence comes to passe that this our Vitreolate
Sulfur, conjoynd with the like solar state,
Are thus accended, and the Nitre tart
(Being wholly wedded to the pure, fixt part
Of this our Sun, whose filth soe closely to
Its marrow doeth fast stick). Noe wonder soe,
When by this fireinge the whole compound is [f. 65r]

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Quite dissipated, if one grayne of this
Accended thus doeth farre the sound exceede
Of a whole ounce of black gun-powder weede: 550
And that especially, if you well trie
The gould's compacted partes and energie
Of fiery sprites invisible, and compare
Theyrs with the force of soe much body bare.
"All which, when you the cause efficient frame 555
In 's pure Anatomie, will be the same
W' th' other reason sympathetic we
Produc'd agaynst nature's antipathie.
For th' other spirits, now beinge close involv'd
By their precipitation in the Gold, 560
With very gentle heate whose fiery sprite
We see now actuated, to unite
Itself wi' th' others; whence the firmament
By this conjunction astrall is quite rent.
And this to be soe, doeth demonstrate right 565
The same Sun's dissolution by the sprite
Forementioned. Which precipit, if you lay
Not, but instead of that destill away
The *Menstruum*, you shall in noe wise finde
That it hath left a thundringe force behinde. [f. 65v]
Neither (as doeth *Hartmannus* there assoile)
Can the affusion of the tartarous oyle
The cause be of this thunder; for if that
It be with other saltes precipitate,
It will noe lesse its thundringe force retayne 575
Then if with this it were precipit layne.
But that this salt's affusion copious may
(As he there cites) its fulmination allay,
Is an expression rationall, for that
It operates uppon the Vitreolate 580
Part of this regall water and the share
Inflamable of gowld, who joyned are
In time of dissollution, that it them
Doeth partly sever from the bodie's stemme

Most pure of this our powder, as doeth cleere 585
By the black boylinge of the woorke appeere.
Yet since there wanteth heate to actuate
This fier, the body doeth not dissipate
Itself, but to the bottome falls in forme
Of powder small, as haveinge, by this storme, 590
A share of's sulfur left wi' th' vitreoll sprite
Confusedly appearinge to the sight.
And now, when this precipitate is layne
To th' fier, in that it nothings doeth retayne
That is averse unto the Nitrous sparke,
Hence fulmination can we never marke. [f. 66r]
And where that *Hartman* the woord *feare* doeth use
(Least too much of this oyle he showld affuse),
That seemes occasiond that the powder lesse
In weight he findes, then (as himself there sayes) 600
If that affusd in due proportion he
Had this his oyle (although in veritie,
I' th' bottome all his Gould he findes t' a mite,
Though not soe cloggd with soe much regall spirte).
And therefore, in this woorke, the more you powre 605
(In reason) of this tartarous oyle, the more
Pure severd shall you this your powder meete,
When you have washd it ore with water sweete.
"And for that sentence *Crollius* doeth produce,
To wit, that when this powder t' mixe you use 610
With comon brimston, it therby showld loose
Wholly its energie tonitruous:
The reason is that then the brimstone's weight
And quantity exceedinge th' Nitre's height
Occasioneth this Nitre never more 615
To be accounted Playntiff, as before,
Agaynst the fowler sulfur's smaller part.
Which rule in Gunpowder is soe by art
Requird precisely, to of Brimstone and
Coles one part, tenne showld of the Nitre stand. 620
But now the case beinge alter'd, that, gaynst one
Of salt, there be of Sulfur thousands gone;

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Hence comes to passe that, when the flame is layd,
The Nitre turnes defendant, and for ayd [f. 66r]
Claspes to the gould, if that therby it might
If self defend gaynst this accension's fright.
And now the Sulfur leisure hath to cleanse
This goulden powder, quite consumeinge thence
Its imperfection. Thus the fiery love
By contraries we often doe improove. 630
For comon Brimstone likewise hath its tart
Salt, which conteynes a pure, though smaller, part
Of Sulfur, as a garment to the brode
Bumme of lame *Vulcan*, whoe to make's abode
There doeth delight; which therefore you may please 635
By fix'd essentiall saltes to solve with ease.
Whence you may learne a Chymic rule: that mixt
Bodies, whose saltes essentiall are soe fixt,
Must be dissolvd by spirits, and agayne
By oylish saltes precipitated layne. 640
Whence comes that Axiome that what by a sprite
Dissolved is, praecipit must, b' of right,
By oylish saltes which runne from off a plate
In places moist by way deliquiate.
Which operations if you doe peruse,
You'l finde the tartarous oyle you doe affuse [f. 67r]
I' th' forsayd woorke, noe way conjoynd is
Wi' th' Sulfur that i' th' vessell's bottome lies
Praecipitated monge the gould, as there
Crollius doeth guesse. But th' lovely kindred neere 650
Betweene th' affused oyle and the tart sprite
Our Sun dissolvinge (wherby it delight
Do' th' solved sun noe longer to withowld,
But rather likes himself wi' th' oyle to fowld),
I take to be the reason of this slight, 655
Since th' oyle is neerer kin unto the sprite
Then to the metall. Therefore to subside
It leaveth it, and to its friend doeth slide
More lov'd, fullfillinge that proverbiall speech,

‘My cloake is neere, but neerer is my Breech.’ 660
 “And that the fire subsistinge in our Sun
The agent cause is of this thundringe gunne
Is likewise by the sweatinge energie
Of this our powder proof’d apparentlie,
Beinge but administred unto the weight
Of fower lite graynes, in dos of greatest height. [f. 67v]
Which force from th’ Sulfur fowle proceed ne’re can,
Since that its purer spirit inward tane
Is a digestive med’cin; noe more may
The Sal armoniac’s spirit beare this sway, 670
Since twenty graynes of its sublimed flower
To cause a sweate hath not neere half that power.
It followes therfore of necessitie
The Solar fier heere th’ agent cause must be,
Beinge now awakned by the nitre’s sprite 675
With it conjoyneed to performe this slighte,
The sprite of tartar beinge a mediate *Hine*
Awak’ninge and promotinge the low mine
Itself to joyne wi’ th’ microcosmic sprite
In feates Herculean to performe its plight. 680
And, of the Sympathie betweene the vine’s
Cœlestiall sprite with ours, I need not signe
Nor write Encomiums more then longe agoe
Marsil: Ficinus penn’d, with many moe.
As of the Sympathie the sprite of gould 685
Conjoynd with sprite of merrie wine doeth howld
To keep the spirit microcosmic younge,
The Poet thus alludingly hath sunge: [f. 68r]
 With *Bacchus* and *Apollo’s* guest
 Gray hayres are in disdayne, 690
 Since curled locks become them best
 Whose youth for aye doeth raigne.
Which if you graunt (as needs you must, since prooffe
Of fact doeth disputation’s nodde aloofe
To stand), what Judge you of our tartarous Bride? 695
Whoe by Solution Phylosophic hi’d
The marriage night to th’ Liver of her mate

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In midd'st wherof shee keepes her chayr of state
Unmoveable, and thence commaunds the - - - -
Obedient, as was Horace to his Lasse: 700
 Put me to drawe in *Phoebus'* Coach
 In June, or in December
Send me afishinge for a Roch
 To Ireland without tinder
Or furre, or ought that warmth may catch: 705
 All this I shall with ease
Doe, rather then divorce my match
 With my sweete *Lalages*— [f. 68v]
My *Lalages*, whose smiles gray hayre
 To youth can soone entise, 710
And one whose speech perfumes the ayer
 With sweetes of Paradise.
Thus did *Prometheus*, though in more sublime
Termes, as his bookes (if not devourd by time)
Would manifest, by stepps ascend to show 715
To his Assyrian folke the maner how
This Solar spright was actuated. And heere
The Poets tooke occasion him to rere
Up to the Starres, as one theyr feares had still'd
By giveinge them a reason for the wilde 720
March of the cloudie drummer, as alsoe for
The influences of the planets o're
His Sirian pupils, with more such divine
Secrets, all meant of this our astrall mine.
By which these actions all performd to be 725
Is proved by 'ts externall facultie
Cast on the deader mine, as when man call
Doeth for its ayd in med'cin topicall.
As for the first, it's evident to sight
How of this stone one petty scruple lite 730
Doeth pulverize a hundred partes o' th' mine,
Therby its imperfection to resigne.
Or if you please on Copell it to blow,
Then shall you see the sulfur fowle unto

Lithochymicus

The superficies soone protruded, with 735
A hissing stronge as out it foames the frith.
And whence comes this? Not from the goulden mine,
Since it, though nere soe pure, will soone conjoyne
Itself in fluxion with the planetts sixe
Sans perturbation when you them doe mixe. 740
This therfore must, without dispute, proceede
Fro' th' force of the included nitrous seede,
Which by its hammer-scorning qualitie
T' ave turn'd the whole to Nitre you may see. [f. 69r]
How rightly then it ownes th' Appellative
Of *Water Pontic*, *Nitre Vegetive*,
Yea Stone, and *Oyle* or allmost what you please:
The Reader heere may ponder at his ease.
And yet the formall cause by which our Bride
Doeth this performe, or when to wennes apply'd 750
Or aches in Plate-forme, the one it shrinkes
And Anodines the other; or in drinkes
Of wine dissolved, or to powder filed;
Or (with even as much good successe to yeald
I've trie'd) being swallow'd downe in forme of Ball:
Sans diminution why it showld banish all 756
Diseases b' art recov'able soe quick,
Safe, yea and pleasantly's a bone to pick
Soe hard, that *Scotus* caus'd of's vertuous toad
To singe thus gravell'd in this flinty roade: 760
 At pleasure it all maladies
 Doeth cure without contact,
 The cause wherof beinge in disguise,
 And yet to me not s' ract
With scientific line, how it 765
 Diseases doeth expell,
And soe the grave Physitian quit
 Of's fees he loves soe well! [f. 69v]
Whether the Maladie be hott
 Or cold, it is all one, 770
This makes it soone away to trot;
 Himself soe singes theron.

VII. Chapter Five

Others there are whoe, as to this they prie,
Crie out of some strange astrall Sympathie,
Or totall substance woorkeinge by, which they 775
Doe understand as well as how to pray.
But, 'f all I've read, *Valesco de Tarant*
Most learnedly endeavours to descant
On th' reason of this substance universe
Its woorkinge, when these woords he doeth reherse: 780
 To act by force of substance' state
 A vertue strange must be,
 Or naturall position that
 Conteynes immediatlie
The forme substantiall of the thinge 785
 With acquir'd influence
Of bodies heavenly; or (to singe
 Soe if it be good sence)
Of bodies above heavenly race
 Who have by' speciall rape 790
 An influence this thinge to trace
 By leading in a shape. [f. 70r]

But what this Vertue or position meanes,
Or how this forme substantiall it conteynes,
Or to this heavenly influence accesse 795
How we may have, or how doe it possesse
The Gods themselves, or what doeth them informe
To powre it uppon us, or how this forme
Or shape he names ledde in is—for these thinges
This Author in his booke noe reason brings. 800
So hard a thinge it is to Syllogise
A Sympathetic action, since the guise
Spiritually by which it actes its will
In th' Inner closett lurkes o' th' principle:
Where not discern'd, we are necessitate 805
By circumstance its Vertue to debate.
The thinge itself a witnesse beinge soe neere
Of the transcendent *Ens*, that it casheere
From all discussions Syllogystic doeth

Th' Experienc'd *Plato*, as divinely loth 810
His Reason on the tenterhookes to stretch
For what soe hidden lay, and high from's reach.
Only Experience teatcheth us to knowe
That astrall sprites incarcerated doe
Send theyr Emissions infinit abroad,
Sans diminution to theyr weight or load. [f. 70v]
As of the firmamentall Sun, the beames
All things revive by influentiall meanes;
Yet is the Sun in Virtuous magnitude
The same to day as ever it was viewd 820
Since *Ezechia's* time; nor is it much
In body hotter then this stone to touch,
Although contracted objects we descrie
From it degrees of heate to multyplie.
Descend we thence to earth, and prie t' th' sowle 825
O' th' goulden Marchasite's enchanted bowle,
Prepard invitinge, b' artificiall slight,
The Sulfur volateel o' th' Marchasite
To habitate amonge the moulten mine
(I' th' Chymic art b' an action clandestine, 830
Extinction calld). View and observe, I say,
How 'ts force chathartic doeth endure for aye.
And then consider if some other *why*
You may produce for's purginge facultie,
Besides th' impris'nment of this Volateele 835
Sulfur i' th' mine by arte's industrious wheele.
Since that the metall noe such force alone
Is guilty of, noe more then is the stone
Or oyle of Antimonie fix'd, as dare
Those may t' affirme who knowe this to prepare. [f. 71r]
Showld I the Hocus Pocus tricks exorce
From magic art, of Analogic force
With this, *Guilbertus'* goast on me might rayle,
As erst on *Raymund Lully*, by entayle.
Whoe fully understood himself when as 845
He did his booke, that doeth this woorke's true cause
And preparation show, entitulate

VII. Chapter Five

By name of *Magic Naturall*; since that
Not only th' Elements enchaunted be
Heere, but likewise the Sowle of *Mercurie*.
As first and last our Hiroglyphics show,
To which the Reader is referd; and now
Implor'd, if that of formes he hath a Key
More Stronge, he would this Crab-lock open lay."

850

[f. 71v]

The Sixt Chapter

The Author speaks: "Good Doctor *Allslagen!*
I pray voutsafe one line or two to penne,
Shewing the mode of usinge this by Art
In Therapeutic way, before we part."
"Therin" (quo' th' Doctor) "there but two thinges stand 5
To be observd; to wit, the maner and
The time. The first wherof I've spoke before;
The latter only now must be therfore
Discussed, and that doubly, if you please:
First of the yeare, and next of the disease. 10
"As for the time o' th' yeare, the Physic hood
And philosophic joyntly cry alowd
The Springe and Fall, as times befittinge best
For to untenaunt a malignant guest.
First, Nature then, as by instinct, in armes 15
Standinge the Combate gaynst the annual Harmes
It hath been pestred with; by which sadd field
It often is soe weakned, that it yeald
(In after times) doeth t' supervenient grief,
Because in season it tooke noe relief. 20
For, as the learned *Hurnius* well doeth write,
Cathartic medcins only doe incite
The facultie expulsive; or if you
Doe graunt they doe attract, then this they doe
(As there he doeth confesse) confusedly,
Causinge the humours good and badd to flie. [f. 72r]
'Tis Nature then (sayth he) that doeth supplant.
Which if 't be soe (say I), then doeth it want

VII. Chapter Six

Not a loathd purge, but some true trusty mate
Its force decayinge to corroborate. 30
And why Dame Nature showld in armes appeare
At these two seasons more then all the yeare
Besides, if *Mounsieur's* dreame you doe peruse,
It will you teatch how every thinge renues
And multiplies by th' seventh propertie, 35
Which only temp'rate is observ'd to be.
And when the Sun the Equinoctiall gate
Doeth enter, then is 't only temperate
In point of influence to every clime,
How neere or farre in distance from the line. 40
As is approved by the sprowtinge rodde,
Which then, whether before or nipp'd with cold
Or scorchd with heate, the solar sprite doeth finde,
Enablinge it to flourish in its kinde.
"And for the Nature-vexinge-sore dissease, 45
Its medicatinge dayes and dayes of ease
Or rest betweene we allwayes doe commend
To the Experienc'd Doctor that attend
The Patient doeth—at least in Maladies
That Lunar be; for such theyr Crittic dayes 50
And dayes of rest, with others, must by line
Have towld, as *Porcius* erst to *Cateline*: [f. 72v]
In thy affayres doest thou not know
T' observe thy where, and when?
And in the businesse to be slow, 55
What danger followes then?
And how most wonderfull the votes
Be of the mighty Gods?
And how, when fortune on thee dotes,
Thou ne're must be at oddes 60
With oportunity? For if
Thy favouringe starre thou passe,
In vayne thou Fortune for relief
Shall follow like - - - - -.
Nor need my Doctor's Academic gowne 65
Feare this intends his practice to crie downe,

But rather to asist (as well doeth proove
Mayerus, hence all envie to remoove).
As first, when neither signes nor Symptomes show
The sore itself, nor yet its seate, unto 70
The best experiencd Doctor. With much doubt
Then is he forc'd his Indications out
To hunt from Ease and Payne: two forrests vaste
The Gyges-ringed-Deere to chase in haste— [f. 73r]
Yea, such whose Cragges him gravells to the quick,
Just as theyr Briers doe molest the sick
 “And secondly, when that disseases moe
Conjoyne in Complicated maner doe
To vexe the Patient, then likewise a taske
Not alltogether easy to unmaske 80
Ariseth. As, what first to medicate;
Next, what with which; and after, which with what?
Where what but now coindicats with this,
B' a Contraindication may it misse
To stand to next day: soe oblique a path 85
To tumble in, *Machaon's scholler* hath.
 “A third use likewise *Celsus* doeth praesent
From *Asclepiades* his banishment
Of use of Drugges, for theyr unwhollsome Juice
And nauseus stomach-grievinge qualities, 90
Besides that such home seldome penetrate
To satisfie the *Indication's* fate.
 “A fowerth use might be added, that in it
Physitians doe most claudicate, to wit,
When the Disseases banish'd throughly are, 95
The part to strengthen. But heerin I spare
My *Aesculapius*, and doe recomend
The Reader to *Harvettus'* booke was penn'd
In Chymistrie's defence agaynst the tart
Censure of *Paris Schoole* on this our art. [f. 73v]
 “And rest we not on 's physic use alone,
But contemplations rayse from this our stone's
Force unto higher objects: weighinge how
Its composition doeth most amply show

VII. Chapter Six

First the *Tri-unity* and then afford 105
Its ample witness of th' *incarnate Woord*;
And next *Zerubabell!* in thy fayre hand
The *Plummet* show that vivifies the Land
In light and Love. For soe 't communicate
Itself doeth to the world, whose glorious state 110
Doeth 'n a tri-unity concentrated rest
Thus: the Light's office beinge to manifest
The trueth of all things; and, indeed the Light
In every thing is boath its Trueth and might,
And for an embleme pleasant to our sights 115
O' th' *Trueth* itself, whoe is the father of lights.
As th' *Woord* himself in's writt doeth sweetly glaunce
(And allsoe, by his trueth's exuberance),
Doeth this cleere light unto our sence declare
'n affection of a body circular, 120
Perpetually retourninge to the same
Originall fountayne from whence first it came.
"From hence proceed reflections ocular,
Both such as from the firmamentall starre
Th' Astrologers observe, as likewise they
Which to proceed from th' animallish eie [f. 74r]
Fernelius, with *Agrippa* doe denote,
And *Campanella* doeth as strangely quote.
Yea, and hence comes the force augmentative
Of this our Stone, when it we tourne to wine. 130
And from hence came th' appellative 'divine'
Unto those men in whome this light did shine
By way of Excellencie; and hence it came
The Auncients to this art did give that name.
Hence the *Schoole Pythagoric*, when it found 135
On all the lower creatures to redound
This sparke divine in measure more or lesse,
As each capacitie he pleasd to blesse,
Sayd that all things theyr fill of Gods did beare,
Or that we saw nothing save Jupiter. 140
And in this sence *Agrippa* could well call
All things as Accidents without the Pale

Of God that would subsist, and thinke to be
Some other thinge besides his Dietie.

“The Spirit beinge one, a fiery Love 145
That did at first upon the waters moove,
A fiery vigour on them to bestow,
To vivifie the bodies dead below.
Soe that the whole Creation’s Light, Lief, Love,
Proceed from out the fiery light aboove 150
And thither retourne agayne. Which knowledge high
The Chaldee Oracles did well descrie,
As *Iamblicus* doeth write, when they could prove
The heavenly Spirit was a fiery Love [f. 74v]
Proceedinge from the father and the Woord—
Spiritually that Man with him acords.
At this the Poets did allude when they
Did feyne the ancient Planett of the day
T’ave flunge the heavenly members to the deepe,
From whence theyr beuty *Venus* out did creepe. 160
And since that beuty fayre doeth still consist
Of objects visible, they therfore list
A twofold visibilitie, and soe
A twofold pulchritude must needs allow:
The first being heavenly intellectuall; 165
The other, *Venus* borne of *Wisdomes* fall
Under greate *Jove*, and doeth in collours cleere
The object of our outward sence appeare.
Now we, that from the water have our growth,
Must needs b’ enamour’d with the first-borne youth 170
Of this pure Element; and in degree
As every body hath this energie
More vigorous, the more he loves the name
Of this fayre *Venus* whence his seed first came.
“For Love is only a desired ayme, 175
Within the will angellical, t’ obtayne
The full perfection of that thinge or art
Wherof allready ’t doeth possesse a part.
With which allurement the diviner minde

VII. Chapter Six

Is stimulated b' a pathetic lind [f. 75r]
To God, as its originall, with ayme
Once the entire perfection to attayne
Of this Ideall pulchritude. Whence we
A threefold nature apprehend to be
Made knowen in the Creation: first the shelf 185
Or Cubboord open'd of the Good itself
In the creatinge woorke; and secondly
Of pulchritude the nature we descrie
In the attraction, and the Nature of Love
Fro' th' full perfection of the woorke we proove. 190
Soe that the Love, as it doeth from us springe,
Is a desire of Beuty; and the thinge
Desird is partly had, and partly not.
Which knowledge was to *Socrates* bespott
I' th' *Diotimic* fable thus: On th' Day 195
Of *Venus'* birth, whenas the Gods did play
Singe trowle the bowle for joy, the God of welth,
The sensuall *Porus*, thither gott by stelth
From's father *Providence*. Where, beinge drunke
With Nectar, he by chaunce espide a Punke, 200
By name the totterd *Paenia*, who at th' Gate
Expectinge almes amonge the beggars sate,
And was entisd by *Porus* to the Grove
(For wanton daliance) of the lively *Jove*. [f. 75v]
Or, as some rather thinke, this *Paenia* wrought
On *Porus'* drunken humour, and bethought
Of self enrichinge, if by this her fate
Might be for *Providence* to propagate
A Grandchild, soe she entisd him to this grove
Where was conceiv'd the Bratt we now call *Love*— 210
An humble friend, obedient to the hest
Of *Venus*, 'cause begott on her birth feast.
“Which ridlinge fable's morall to lay ope,
You are t' observe the twofold *Venus'* scope
We nam'd before: the one intruded hither 215
For th' *Minde angelicall*; the *world's sowle*, tother—
This fable b'inge a series in disguise

O' th' world's creation to perspective eies,
Shewing in it the love of God above
Wh' in light and lief is the true center of love, 220
From whome, by which as principles proceed
All thinges subsistinge, as himself decreed.
"Wherfore suppose the Guests invited were
Celius, *Saturnus*ould, and *Jupiter*.
The first wherof that age chief God did call; 225
For th' Essence and the lief angelicall,
The latter two they held. Soe immediatlie
After these *Venuses* fro' th' Majesty [f. 76r]
Divine proceeded, they did soone impresse
In the world's Sowle a knowledge numberlesse 230
Of thinges supernall, with a power to move
And allsoe th' agitation to improove
Of *Jupiter* and *Saturne*. Thirdly, by
The Grove of *Jupiter*, th' fecundity
O' th' lief angelicall is to be understood. 235
By *Porus*' entrance in that lustfull moode
Is meant the beames o' th' Majesty divine,
Descendinge him in humble wise to joyne
To poverty or *Paenia*, that aboove
Was in the Angell when he first this Love 240
Created there. Soe cometh it to passe
That as the Angell then created was
By God, and as he doeth an essence live
And lief enjoy, men doe unto him give
The Names of *Jove* and *Saturne*; soe as he 245
Hath force of Intelligibilitie,
He is call'd *Venus*. But unlesse this power
B' illuminated by the shineinge shower
Of God, it is by nature without forme,
Obscure, as is the Eisight all forlorne 250
Till it accedes unto the Solar flame.
Whence, this obscurity we use to name
Paenia, which is the Indigence of light.
But th' understandinge vertue is, by might

VII. Chapter Six

Instinct, reflected to the father, and thence 255
The beames hath of divine intelligence,
Which is calld *Porus* or Abundance; in
Which, as its seed, included is within [f. 76v]
The cause of all things. By the Splendor link't
Unto this Beame, the naturall instinct 260
Is kindled and become a flame or heate
Inflameinge, borne from out th' obscurer seate
Foremention'd, and the superinfluxed sparke
Is this our *Love* begotten in the darke,
On Poverty by Abundance. It i' th' Grove 265
Is borne amonge the sproutinge twigges of *Jove*;
That is, i' th' shade of lief; soe we descrie
Under the Vigour of Vivacitie
Thus to be kindled the acute desire
To Nature's understandinge to aspire. 270
 "Who beinge of soe vaste a Bulke, all fill'd
With such varieties, the *Reason* willd
Each *Genius* in its peculier state
(Amonge the fower of men) to dedicate
Itself to one, Man's arme soe short and small 275
Being farre unable for to reach them all.
 "First th' *Economic*, that prudentiall state
Which th' good of famylies doeth agitate
In order to the thriveinge of the three
Peculier objects of this facultie 280
Domestic; to wit, the conjugall degree,
The Patriall, and Herall societie,
Soe orderinge its eight acquireinge wayes
With diligence unto the teatcher's prayes.
 "The *Politie* likewise the Civill good 285
In Generall o' th' State and neighbourhood,
And eke in speciall doeth respect, to th' end
All showld theyr dayes in quiet order spend. [f. 77r]
 "And thirdly, the *Schollastic* state layes ope 290
Of studies Pious and humane the Skope
Proposed in its severall faculties;
To wit, Law, Physic and Phylosophie—

Soe various, as in order them to summe
This place unable is t' afford a roome. 295
 "Hither our Art, as of Philosophie
The visitor, is introduc'd, to trie,
By resolution of the bodies mixt,
Severinge the volateele from the fixt,
And soe reduceinge them unto theyr last
Matter, if that the ancient verdict passt 300
I' th' Pythagoric schoole on th' Elements
And Principles in number and events
Be an Ideall fancie, or else tride
By *Vulcan's* art theyr proper test t' abide,
In that the perfect matter last, whether to 305
Each mixt resolved is, becomes theyr true
First matter—leaveinge th' other to be scannd
By such as the woord *Fiat* understand.
And further searchinge how the world's great sowle
(As authors write) its beames without controwle 310
Emittes, the other bodies to enlive,
Enablinge them each in theyr kinde to thrive.
And lastly tryinge how the deader mine
May be made vegetive, its seed divine
To multiply, to kill, and then restore 315
To lief perpetuall what was before
Subjected to corruption, thus t' improve
Its lively witsse of the fier above. [f. 77v]
 "Hence doeth arrise the high-contemplatinge,
Wise *Metaphysic* Science, th' *Ens* or thinge 320
Soe farre to treat of, in its unitie,
Yea trueth and goodnesse, as well notionally
We may it call an *Ens*, till it transcends
In its triplicit notion, where it ends.
 "Then comes th' *Pneumatic science* to debate 325
About created sprites and uncreate,
Anatomiseinge th' first all *Cap a pied*
Without controwle, by that outworen plea
Of *Ius divinum's* superstitious trayne

VII. Chapter Six

In Number, weight and fallshood; and agayne 330
Numbringe o' th' last its attributes divine,
And meteinge its existencie by line
Tane partly from Phylosophie, from th' writt
In part, and from ould Councells where they hitt
The builder's language, th' *Eclesiastic* state 335
Thus to revive, the world to decimate;
And, like the Delphic Oracles of ould,
Lycurgus' Lawes for Sacrett to uphowld.
 "But *Pythia!* *Porus* stands heere drunke with wine,
And therefore stumblinge if he passe the line 340
Of Nature and abuse that reason by
Soe reasoninge the divine vivacitie—
Since that the stone held by *Zerubabell*
Noe *Jasper* was, but *Tinne*, for th' Lion fell
To tread on, through pale death the stronge t' orecome,
That from the Stronge a honie sweet might runne. [f. 78r]
 "This is that *clouded Sun*, Jerusalem,
That gather would as chickins under a Henne;
That true *Purelius* who would rather die
Then *Hudra* hee'd forsake, though nere soe shie. 350
The Israelitish Harper, as he please,
Will make the planetts daunce theyr Roundelayes.
The wise *Prometheus*, whoe th' e'relastinge sparke
Knowes to infuse, us for his owne to marke.
And this is that true forme *Hexagonall* 355
That doeth diffuse perfection unto all;
The Center of *Zoroaster* that became
Like us, as *Portius* in his Epigramme:
 Ye tender Guardians of the Sheep!
 A fier d' ye seeke, or Lambe? 360
 Goe, skipp for joy, ne're more to weep;
 For th' fier's become *A Man.*"
 Finis.

[f. 79v]

The Author's Corollarie
on his Mercurie

*Mercurius charus qui corruit caelo,
Ad Solem revixit.
Fugam foco cum figit,
Alchemiam scientiam scit.*

The Servaunt truant of the fate-ruleing hoast, 5
Loftie Poste, left hopeinge
To rest one howre from's towringe,
Till he a Scholler
Turn'd in Corner
To this Paynter's 10
Colour's Kinge.

Whoe him t' sow doeth show, shiv'ringe guest, by Lust's
Caballistic int'rest,
His seed amonge the strongest 15
Bowles of Bacchus,
Fooles of Phoebus,
At Prometheus'
Famous feast.

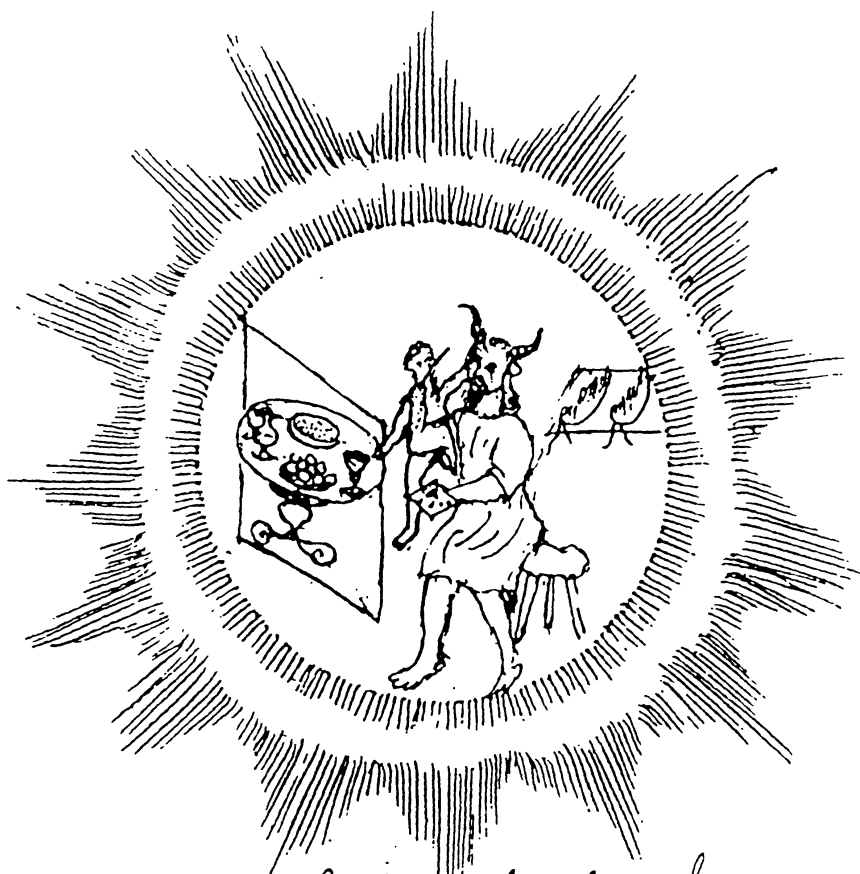
Him therefore I score a scarlett Doctor
Of this Dictat's Secrett, 20
To expose the Art's closett
Profound, in playne sound to sett.

VII. Corollarie

Why th' Pensill Sybill with Swett
Furres his face fayre soe and fatt,
E're there he taste (to waste witt) 25
O' forain Grape, fiery 'n grott.

Fiery 'n grott, by lott, for ungrablinge
Sin's oaken sement; sans consuminge,
In the Sun to runn this ringe, its tinder 30
(In very wonder) never endinge.

[f. 80r, Figure 11]



Nól jz Kyemig lig gaef dno dningad
 Gwás ar y kediad gwús ar kedo,
 Lowú gelfydhud dciud fedro y Gywelú,
 ar wim, heb allú y wan bwillo.

Figure 11. Vulcan as painter, with Mercury, fol. 80r.

[f. 81r]

AN INDEX

explaineinge the proper names and other obscurer words of the precedent discourse (Except the operations Chymicall, which are explan'd by themselves).

Adrastia. *Ab α privat[ivo] et δρασμοῦ, fuga, quod scilicet nemo nocens meritam penam umquam effugeret* [from *a-*privative and *drasmos*, "flight," because no guilty man ever escaped due punishment]. Shee is the daughter of Jove and Necessity [as in Virgil, *Ciris* 289], appointed Judge and revenger of the Soules of the wicked; to which shee had three degrees of punishment, intimateinge unto us the three degrees of heate in the resuscitation of the Stone. This was theyr way to whome *Azoc* [q.v.] was not knowen. See the Hieroglyphic [i.e., Figure 8, at 3.96 above], and the beginninge of the second Chapter of the Latin Copie [i.e., Jones's *Lapis Chymicus*]. Observe the trope further by the wood for sacrifice to her, which must allwayes be peeces of Coffins or else timber grown over Sepulchers. [See also 2.35, 2.48n.]

Aesculapius. The sone of Apollo and scholler of Chiron [the Centaur]; see Ovid [*Metamorphoses* 2.629ff.] and Virgil, *Aeneid*, 7 [7.761–82].

Alcohol. An Arabic name for the best spirit of wine.

Alexandria. Now by the Turk called *Scandaria*, it was built by Alexander of Macedon, not farre from that gate of Nilus which is call'd *Canopicon*. It hath been a famous Universitie; see Justin [i.e., Marcus Junianus Justinus' synopsis of Pompeius Trogus' *Historiae Philippicae*, bk.] 15.

Allegorie. A Trope signyfyinge an inversion; viz., when the letter signifies one thinge and the Sence another.

When this change is but of one woord, then is it calld a Metaphor, soe that an *Allegorie* is a multiplyed Metaphor.

Allslagen. A Dutch [i.e., German] name; in English, "All slay or kill."

Alsphacle. *Quasi* [as it were] ἄλς τῆς σφέκλης, Salt of Tartar. This was Ulstadius his way [Philip Ulstad, who advocated the use of distilled products in medicine in his *Coelum Philosophorum*, 1525]: viz., instead of dissolving the sun in regall water, to caement its fileinges only with salt of Tartar and then to wash the calx (mingled with sugar Candie) with sweete water. Then dryinge and minglinge it with three partes of flower of Mastick, imbinge as mutch spirit of wine as will bringe all to a Paste, he sets all on fier; by which accension [burning] the calx remayneth in an oylish substance to be afterwards exalted with spirit of wine.

Amalgam. See *Amalgamation* amonge the Chymic operations.

Anodines. Aswageth payne; soe called from α *privat[ivo]* [*a*-privative] and ὀδίνω, *doleo* ["suffer pain"], whence ὀδύνη, *dolor*, payne or sorenesse.

Antipater. One of Alexander's Captaynes, and Schollar to Aristotle. Whence you are to pick out the tropic sence of his poysoning Alexander; *quaere* [whereby] which is heere ment, the Chymist, or Phylosopher.

Aphroditic. Venereall. Venus beinge call'd *Aphrodite* in that shée was borne of the froth of the sea mingling itself with her father's testicles which her brother Saturne had flung in thither. Wherefore Purelius puttes Saturne in minde of that cruelty as being the cause of his Lust. For if he had not flunge his father's testicles thither there had been noe Venus, and then noe Cupid, and soe consequently noe such passion as Lust.

Apollo. Phoebus, the God of the Sun; sometimes taken for the sun itself. He was sonne to Jove and Laton [i.e., Leto or Latona]. Calld Apollo ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀπολλεῖν, *quod* ἀπάλλτει, [in error for ἀπολύει?], *id est, quod aegrotation-*

ibus homines liberet; that is, for that he freeth men from diseases. He was borne in Delos at a birth with Diana, who likewise was called Phoebe.

Mercurie is said to have bestowed a Harpe on him; his skill in playing wheron advauncd him to be admitted president to the Muses. Whence he was afterwarde exalted to the title of Dietie for that he invented the art of *Physic* or medicin. To him therfore and Bacchus is ascribed perpetuall youth, wherfore he is paynted without a beard [see 5.689ff.]. Of his other severall Apellations see Pausanias [*Description of Greece*, who gives 58 surnames for Apollo; see Loeb ed. (1918–35, 5 vols., ed. W.H.S. Jones and R.E. Wycherley), 1:xxiii; 5:200–201], etc.

Arceutha. From ἀρκυθος, Juniper. This was Jo: Izaac von Hollandt's [Johann Isaac Hollandus'] way: viz., to Cohobate spirit of Salt soe often on dissolv'd Sol, untill it remayne in an oylish substance. Whence he exalted the tincture of Sol with oyle of Juniper.

Archas [Arcas]. The sonne of Jupiter begotten on Calisto, a nymph of *Nonacris* (see Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 2.401–507). This Archas was killed by Lycaon [father of Callisto] and served as a minc'd messe for his father Jupiter (whoe then Lay at Lycaon's howse) to feede on [see *Metamorphoses* 1.211–43, where Lycaon's victim is not Arcas but a hostage]. Which Jove understandinge, burnt the howse and turned [f. 81v] Lycaon into a wolfe; and then tooke the stued-minc'd gobbetts of Archas and, pecinge them together, restor'd the child to lief. Whome after he was man growen he metamorphisd with his mother (whome Juno had fore transformed to a Beare) into those Starres now calld *Ursa major et minor*. Which rightly understood, is as Elegant a piece of Philosophie as any penn'd. Otherwise [it] may serve to winne the whetstone on Mounsiour's cure at Paris, expresd in the second chapter of this discourse [i.e., 2.159ff.; see also 5.155n].

Argives Greene. From *Argos*, etc.

Argus or **Argos**. The sone of *Arctor* [i.e., *Arestor*]; see Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, [1.624ff., where Juno uses the hundred-eyed Argus to guard Io].

Atlantes. See *Maia*.

Azoc. The same tropicly with *Styx*; see *Styx* [and *Vulcan*]. [f. 82r]

Bacchus. The sonne of Jupiter and Semele. The inventor of wine, and therfore taken for the wine itself. He was allsoe called *Bimater* in that, when Jove by cominge in to his mother in a shower of Gould had destroyed her, he tooke out the infant and sowed it up in his own thigh. See more of him in Diodor[us Siculus' *Bibliotheke Historike*] and Eustath[ius, twelfth-century commentator on Homer. Semele was actually destroyed by Zeus' (Jupiter's) lightning when he appeared to her in the splendor of a god; Jones seems to conflate the myth of Bacchus's birth with the story of Zeus's love for Danae, whom he visited in a shower of gold and thus conceived Perseus].

One memorable monument of him (which yet I know noe author makes mention of) was the Aulter built by Julius Caesar at the foote of the Alpes towards the higher Saxonie, with this inscription, *Bacchi Ara* [The Altar of Bacchus]. The wine that comes from those partes beinge called by the countreyemen *Bacchara* [Baccharach, a town on the Rhine River], and by us in England *Back Radge* [usually "Back-rack," says *OED*].

Another is to be seene at Lindow [i.e., Lindau, on the Swiss-German border], in Helvetia, *ad Lacum acronianum* [near Lake Constance] with this inscription, *Diis maximis Baccho et somno humanae vitae suavissimis conservatoribus Sacrum* [Consecrated to the greatest gods and most sweet preservers of human life, Bacchus and sleep].

Basiludra. Quasi βασιλευτέρη ὕδρα, "Regall water" [i.e., *aqua regis*, a mixture of nitric and hydrochloric acids]. Soe called because its propertie is to dissolve the Sun [i.e., gold], which is the Kinge of metallis.

Cachectic. Evill habited; from κακός, *malus*, evile; and ἔχω, *habeo* ["hold"], to habit. Whence *Cachexia*, an evill habit of the body, comonly taken for the begininge of a Dropsie.

Camber. The sone of Brute, who had for his part of Brittain the land on the north-west side of Severne, to the river Dee, callinge it accordinge to his name, Cambria, now Wales.

Yet Sir John Price in his *Historiae Britannicae Defensio* [1573; STC 20309] sayth that the language had not its denomination from him, but that it was called *Camraeg*, quasi *Cam roeg (distorta graeca)*, which proves most probable by compareinge those languages, and if we belive the historie in that point of the stay of divers that gather'd themselves into that Colonie, at Greece. [Jones is paraphrasing this passage in Price's *Defensio* (60–61): "Hinc igitur proprie & vere patria Cambria, hinc patriotae Cambri dicuntur vel Cambrenses: Eorum autem, qui, Kymraeg, linguam Cambricam, a Cam graeco, hoc est distorto graeco, propter linguarum affinitatem, quae ob diutinam in Graecia moram contracta est, dictam asserunt, probabilis & verisimilis est, minus tamen vera relatio."] Allsoe wheras the whole Iland spoke that Language and Locrin beinge eldest brother whoe had the best and greatest part of it. See Jeffrey of Monmouth's *Historie of Brittain* [which tells of Brutus' exile in Greece and his subsequent invasion of Albion, which he renamed Britain: "From whence afterwards the language of the nation, which at first bore the name of Trojan, or rough Greek, was called British" (1.16, trans. A. Thompson [London, 1842], 22); 2.1 describes the territories ruled by Kamber and Locrin].

Charon. The sone of Erebus, and ferrieman by occupation to convey the sowles of the dead over *Styx*. See Virgil, *Aeneid* [6.299, 326].

Cumaean. From *Cuma*, a chief City in Aeolia where was borne the Sibill who went to Roome and there Prophe-sied to the Italians. [f. 82v]

Dairelius. The sun of the earth, or earthly sun. From δαῖρα [but there is no such word as *daira*, the Greek for earth being γῆ], *terra*, earth; and ἥλιος, *Sol*, the sun or sunday.

Daphne. The daughter of the River Paeneus or Ladon (as some will have it) who, when shee could not outrunne Apollo, imploringe the asistance of her father's dietie was turned to a Laurell. See Ovid, *Metamorphoses* [1.452ff.].

Decanomantie. Δεκανομαντεία [“decanomancy”]; *divinatio ex Pelli*: a way of divininge, tane from a hide. The maner therof was to fill a hide with water, into which they cast Lamins [thin pieces] of Gould and silver, allsoe Jewells with precious stones engrav'd with characters. Then after the magitian had mumbled some woords ore the water, he would propound his quaestion; which showld be answered by a small shrill voice out of the water, etc.

It serves heere to demonstrate the art of *Caementation* [q.v. in *Appendix*, below], by which metallis are purified before the phylosophic woorke; and allsoe the way that the ancients (to whome the neerer [i.e., the nearer or easier way?] was unknowen) did use in rubification [proceeding from the white stage to the red]. See the latin Copei [of Jones's *Lapis Chymicus*] in the begininge of the second Chapter.

Diotimic. From *Diotima* or *Diotoma* a weoman Phylosopher, lecturesse to Socrates.

Enchomiiums. Prayses; from ἐνκομίζω [an error for ἐγκωμιάζω], *laudo*, to prayse.

Epaphus. The sone of Jupiter and Io. See Ovid, *Metamorphoses* [1.748].

Epimetheus' love. *Pandora* [see *Prometheus*].

Ganimed. Sonne of Tros, Kinge of Troy, snatchd up by an Eagle, and admitted Jupiter's Cupp bearer in the roome of *Hebe*. [f. 83r]

Geomantic. From *Geomantie*, a rule to rayse a figure [i.e., cast a horoscope] from a Scheme answerable to the Zodiac and seven planets, as thus: [diagram of 16 squares,

each with a certain arrangement of points or dots inside]. By these sixteene figures the Art conjectures sixteen things: viz., Acquisition, amission [i.e., loss], Joy, Sadnesse, the greater fortune, the lesser fortune, Conjunction or mariage, Imprisonment, the white, the redd, the mayd, the boy, the People, the way, the head, the tayle. [For a similar but more elaborate set of correspondences, see Agrippa's table of geomantical configurations in Heninger, *Touches of Sweet Harmony*, 241.]

Others doe reckon thus: *Vita, mors, Lucrum* [life, death, wealth], etc. In the Point of Judgement of the event [outcome] of a dissease, to sadnesse they propose Saturne retrograde, and fabricate theyr scheme either uppon the Hower of the Patient's visitation, or just at theyr hearinge of the newes, or else when by chaunce they seriously thinke of him, etc.

Gomerus Gallus. Nephew to Noe who planted France and calld it after his owne name, Gallia.

Gordian Knott. A proverb taken from Gordius, Kinge of Phrygia. He was a husbandman, and by Apollo's Oracle chosen to be Kinge, being he first entred the Temple. In memorie wherof he hunge his cordes therin. Wherof one was tied with such a Cunninge Carter's knott that whosoever could undoe, of him it was prophesied he should be ruler over those cuntryes. Alexander, when he could not loose it, cutt it asunder; that so he might either fulfill or frustrate that prophesie.

Gyges-ringed-deere. Viz., the hidden dissease. A metaphor taken from the invisible art of Gyges his ringe. See Cicero, *De officiis*, Bk. 3.

Hendrages. The dead Stone.

Hercules. The sone of Jupiter and Alkmena. Macrobius [*Saturnalia* 1.20.10, paraphrased in the following comment] ingeniously prooveth him [f. 83v] to be the sun, from the Etymologie of his name viz., Ἡρακλῆς, *id est* Ἥρας κλέος ["Hera's glory"], *Aeris gloria*, the glorie of the ayer, which (sayeth he) must needs be meant the Sun shininge. His twelve labours beinge the twelve signes of

the Zodiac, which the sun yearly passeth and in his journey by playinge a lesson on Mercurie's harp healeth the Nations of all diseases. Twelve beinge a perfect Number, viz., twice sixe. See the Comments on the Number of Anti-Christ, viz., 666. [For six as a "royal number," see 5.268n; the number 666 is from Rev. 13:18, where it is "the mark of the beast," widely interpreted and used as the sign of Anti-Christ, especially in post-Reformation polemic. Jones had probably read the influential treatise by Francis Potter, *An Interpretation of the Number 666* (1642), perhaps the source of the "Comments" to which he refers; see *Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature*, ed. Jeffrey, 210–13 and esp. 481–82.]

Hermaca. *Mercurii aqua*; Water of Mercurie. From ἡρμῆς [wrongly for Ἐρμῆς], Mercurie; and ἄκου [no such word in standard Greek], water. It is prepar'd diversly. But the redyest way is to boyle one part of sublimate in tenne of common water in B[ain] M[arie] for a day naturall. In which space the water dissolvinge the Mercurie may be evaporated at pleasure, and the spirit of Mercurie destilld by a retort alone; or else for the redd, beinge joynd with *sal armoniac preparat* [i.e., specially prepared sal-ammoniac, "Salt of Ammon," a hard, white, opaque crystalline salt; ammonium chloride]. Which is Penotus his way of makeinge Aurum potabile, as you may see in his booke *de aqua: merc:* [the *Vera Mercurii ex Auro Extractio* of Bernardus Georgius Penotus, cited in Jones's *Lapis Chymicus*, 3, 44; see also Ferguson 2:180].

Hermes Tresmegistus. An ægyptian Philosopher, whose body was found in a Cave longe after his disease howldinge a Table of Emerald betweene his hands. Which table conteyned the true heads [sources, sayings] of this art, from him called Hermetic Phylosophie. Hee lived after the time of Moyses. See more of him in [Saint] August[ine], *De civitate Dei* [8.23], and Suidas [the 10th-century Greek encyclopedia, the name of which is also applied to its author] who likewise mentioneth another

Hermes under Adrian Prince of Aegypt. [Jones clearly identifies the Hermes of alchemy and the “Emerald Table” (on which see 1.196n, 1.217, 3.71, etc.) with the reputed author of the *Corpus Hermeticum*; on the two traditions of “popular” and “learned” hermeticism, see Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*.]

Hexagonall. Six corner’d.

Io. The daughter of Inachus. Historiographers would have the cause of this fancie of the Poet to be that this Io, beinge with child by a Phoenician mariner [and] fearinge her father’s displeasure, went with the Phoenician into Ægypt in a shipp which had a painted bull for its armes, fancie, or *Wappen* [coat of arms] as the dutch [i.e., Germans] call it. See Natalis Comes [*Mythologiae* 8.18 (Padua, 1616), 466–70]. This historie is cited to be about the year of the world 2100.

Lerna. A Lake in Greece famous for the Serpent that Hercules kill’d there. See *Hercules*.

Lipara. One of the Æolian Ilands soe called from its kinge *Liparus*, the sone of Ausonius. In this Iland was a toombe or Cave inaccessible by night, for the straunge and confused noise was there heard. See [Pseudo-]Aristotle [*On Marvellous Things Heard*, 832b29, 833a13; this is also the site of the Cyclopes’ forge in *Aeneid* 8.416ff.].

Liptoticy. By the figure *Liptote*: when more is to [be] understood then is writte. As there, Geber when he writes, “Whoe e’re knoweth how to joyne Mercurie with bodies, etc.” The scheme is under the woord *knoweth*. For though you joyne Mercurie with bodies, yet have you not his secrett, unlesse you know *how* to joyne it; that is, unless you can joyne it in Philosophic maner.

Lycaon. See *Archas*.

Machaon. The sone of Aesculapius, brother to Polydarius. He is taken to be Physitian Generall to the Grecian Armie in theyr expedition to Troy. See Virgill *Aeneid*, [2.263]. *Machaon’s Scholler* is heere taken for Death; [f. 84r] accordinge to that of Master [William]

Alabaster in his *Roxana* [Latin verse tragedy based on Groto's *La Dalida*, acted at Cambridge and publ. in 1632] where Death speaks of himself as thus: *Mihi nocendi est ars milleformis namque Bella, morbi, Pestis, et peior famas operam ministrant turba seu satellitum. Quin grandis aetiam medicorum pompa operam ministrat tergit ingenium meum labor scholarum. Discipula Machaonis profiteor esse . . . nam cum Ingratus apparatus est reliquus necis medicina lethum temperat cum gratiis.* ["I have a thousand-formed skill of doing harm; for wars, diseases, plague and, worse still, famine provide their help, like a crowd of attendants. Moreover, a great procession of doctors provides help, and the toil of the schools polishes my ability. I claim to be a pupil of Machaon . . . for when the unpleasant preparation for death remains, medicine tempers death with pleasures." These ironic lines, with a few interpolations, deletions and transpositions, are excerpted from the first speech of *Mors*, Act 1, sc. 2 (STC 250, the complete authorized ed., p. 3); Alabaster's play was to be praised by Dr. Johnson (*DNB*, I, 212).]

Maia. The daughter of Atlantis and Pleon. A nymph on whom Jupiter begatte Mercurie. See Virgil, *Aeneid* [8.138–39]: "Vobis mercurius Pater est quem candida maia / Cyllenea gelido conceptum vertice fudit" [Your sire is Mercury, whom fair Maia conceived and bore on Cyllene's cold peak].

Item Horace, in *Odes* [1.10.1]: "Mercuri facunde Nepos Atlantis!" [O Mercury, grandson of eloquent Atlas].

Mars. The god of warre, conceived by Juno from the touch of a flower. This Mars did often use to Kisse the hand of Venus. Which once Vulcan espyinge (naked as they lay) pursd them boath up in an invisible Nett. Where they remayned as a Jest to the Gods, untill Vulcan, mooved by the prayers of Saturne, forgave them. See the experiment in the latter end of Dr. Davison his *Curriculum Chymici*. [This is the popular textbook by the Scottish iatrochemist William Davison or David-

son (cited at 1.47–48 above), issued in various parts from 1633; for Davisson's career as professor of alchemy and chemistry, see Ferguson 1:200–201; and John Read, *William Davidson of Aberdeen*. The passage to which Jones refers was still of great interest later in the seventeenth century, for it is quoted in Sir Isaac Newton's *Correspondence* (1:13): "That metals are transmutable is shown by the conversion of iron into copper, which may be observed when one adds iron filings to a solution of vitriol of Venus [copper sulphate]. Some believe that this operation was one of the secrets of Pythagoras of which Ovid speaks in his *Metamorphoses*, and that the conversion has been recorded hieroglyphically in the amours of Mars [iron], Venus [copper] and Vulcan [fire]"; see also *Hermetic Raptures* in this collection, 170–72n.]

Mastiche. Mastich [a resinous or bituminous cement]; see *Alsphecle*.

Merlin. There were two of this name. The one liveinge wildly about the forests in the North wherfore he was call'd Silvester. The other surnamed Ambrosius, for that he prophesied in the time of Aurelius Ambrose. Although, as Jeffrey of Monmouth [*History of the Kings of Britain*, bk. 7] writes, he was found by Vortiger-nus' messingers at a place since called Merlin's towne or Caermarthin, and brought before Vortigerne where by the fightinge of two dragons he prophesied of the followinge warre between the Saxons and the Britaynes. Towards the End wherof he alludeth to Henry the 7th's cominge in and lastly seemeth to speake of these times by the second Lion from the North. His booke is extant in the Bodleian Librarie with two tracts of his concerninge this woorke [i.e., alchemy]. The one intituled his *Allegorie de arcano Lapidis*, and the other of its Composition in verse. [For the currency of Merlin's prophecies in the seventeenth century, see Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, 390, 394. Manuscripts of Latin poems attributed to Merlin are found in Singer, *Catalogue*, entries 793 (to which ought to be added BL

MS Sloane 2567, fols. 36r–38v) and 794; the former is printed in Zetzner as anonymous, *Theatrum* 3:740–43 (see Singer 2:514).]

Metaleptic. By the figure Metalepsis, which signifies a Gradation, when by circumlocutorie degrees the orator ascends to manifest some more high or intricate businesse to his auditors. *Sic parvis componere magna solebam* [“Thus I used to compare great things with small”], Virgil, in *Eclogues* [1.22].

Metaphor. μεταφέρω, *transfero* [“carry to the other side”]. A Trope signifyinge a translation of a woord (properly) to another signification, but it is likewise taken for a translated sentence. But then it shold be called a single Allegorie [q.v.].

Minerva. The Goddess of wisdom and artes. Wherefore the Poets fayne her to be borne out of Jove’s brayne, signifyinge that Artes are not acquired by humane witt, but from the inexhaustible fountayne of the divine wisdom are powred downe at the giver’s pleasure. See Esay [i.e., Esaias, or Isaiah] Chapt: 38. begininge at Vers: the 24th [but Isaiah 38 has only 22 verses; perhaps Jones has in mind 48:21, “And they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts: he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them: he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out”—referring to Exodus 17:6]. Allsoe more on this name in Cicero, *De natura deorum*, Bk. 3 [here Cicero mocks strained etymologies, including e.g. the name “Minerva because she ‘minishes,’ or because she is ‘minatory”” (3.24), a derivation proposed earlier (2.27); Loeb ed. (1933)]. [f. 84v]

Necyomantic. From νεκυομαντεία, an art to rayse or call up spirits, when the practitioners were called ψυχαγωγοί; that is, evocaters or callers-up of Sowles. See Peucer, *De magia* [i.e., Gaspar Peucer’s work on divination, *Commentarius de Praecipuis Divinationum Generibus*, cited at 5.30n.].

Nero’s napkin. Plinie reports [it] to be of *Linum vivens* [“living linen”], which in ould time they usd to burne

- the bodies of theyr kinges in, to keepe the ashes pure and without commixture.
- Nestorean.** From *Nestor*, whoe lived three ages of man; see Ovid, *Metamorphoses* [bk. 12, passim].
- Nilus.** The great river of Ægypt, soe called from Nileus, Kinge of that country; or, as others will, *a Novo Luto* ["from new mud"], in that its overflowinge fertiliates the Land. It hath its begininge in a Mountayne of the lower Mauritania from a Lake they call *Nilides*.
- Nocopa.** Lightfoote, Mercurie, from νωκόπους [though νωκο- is fanciful], *levipes* ["light-footed"].
- Nonacris.** A mountayne in Arcadia at whose foote springeth the fountayne of the river *Styx*. See *Styx*.
- Oxosa.** *Acetum*, Vineger, from ὄξος ["vinegar"].
- Orcadian.** Subterranean; from *orcus* [i.e., the underworld].
- Paeneus.** A River in Thessalie now called *Pezin*; see *Daphne*.
- Paidowra.** *Urina puerorum*, the urin of children; *quasi* οὔρον τῶν παιδίων ["urine of children"].
- Pandora.** The wief of Epimetheus; see *Prometheus*. [f. 85r]
- Pnerebintha.** πνεῦμα τοῦ ἐρεβίνθου, Spirit of Turpentine.
- Pneumalsa.** *Quasi* πνεῦμα τῆς ἁλός, Spirit of Salt. Such was Penotus his way: first to dissolve Gould with oyle or spirit of Salt, and afterwards to digest the calx in mercuriall water; then to take of that corrosive with Spirit of Turpentine, and lastly to dulcifie it with spirit of wine. See his *Tract: de Aq: Merc:* [s.v. *Hermaca*, above].
- Pneumatics.** Men that professe a spirituall art or science treatinge of Spirits; whence *Pneumatica scientia*. See *Alsted:* in *Archelogia*, Bk. 1 [i.e., in his *Encyclopedia?* see above, 6.294n].
- Pneumoina.** Spirit of wine soe called from πνεῦμα ["spirit"] and οἴνου ["of wine"].
- Prometheus.** The sonne of Japetus whose wit in makeinge man Minerva, admireinge, promised him anythinge in heaven that he would aske to perfect his woorke. Whither beinge carried, when he saw all thinges animated by the heavenly fier, he put his ferul to the chariot

wheele of the Sun, where beinge kindled he brought fier to the earth, with which he put lief into his man. At which Jupiter beinge angrie sent Pandora the wief of Epimetheus with a boxe to her husband, which after he had opened there flue out thence sundry sortes of diseases. And Prometheus himself was bound in chaynes by Mercurie on topp of Caucasus, whither Jupiter sent an Eagle to pray on his liver. But afterwards callinge to minde some curtesies that Prometheus had done him, he sent Hercules to kill the Eagle and free Prometheus. He was the first professor of Astrologie amonge the Assyrians, the first likewise that fownd out the reason of thunder, etc.

Pyrotechnic. Artes searchinge the Nature of thinges by fier; from πῦρ [“fire”] and τέχνη [“skill”].

Pythia. Apollo’s Priest [at Delphi].

Rozenkraus. A fraternity of learned men first Collegiated in Germanie. Of whose Customes and lawes, see Mayerus [i.e., Michael Maier, whose *Themis Aurea* (1618) is subtitled “The Laws of the Fraternitie of the Rosie Cross” (English trans., 1656; Wing M287). For Maier’s many alchemical works, see Ferguson 2:64–67; also Frances Yates, *Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, 70–91 *et passim*].

Saturne. The sone of heaven and Vesta etc. He is often taken for water in respect of his planetary influence. Somtimes likewise for the essence of the angellicall lief, and that in respect of his positive height.

Seyne. A River in France runninge through Paris to Normandy and soe to Rouen, thence to the North sea.

Skogin. Soe well knowen by his booke of Jestes [John Scogin, whose *Jests* were first printed ca. 1570; see STC 21850ff.]. That of the fleas beinge thus: In the summer time being in a country Marquett, he mounted his man on banke to sell a Powder of his which he commended as of an admirable faculty to destroy fleas. Of which after he had sowld good store, Skogin appeerd, to proclayme the maner of useinge this Powder, which was, to take the fleas, and openinge theyr mouthes, to powre in

some of it, etc.

Spinthelius. The fiery part or sulfur of Gowld: from σπινθήρ, *scintilla*, a sparke; and ἥλιος, the Sun.

Styx. A fountayne or River springeinge from the foote of Nonacris [q.v.] in Arcadie; soe cold of Nature that it killeth all creatures that drinke of it; soe piercinge that it is conteyned in nothings except the Hoofe of a Mule. With a draught of which water Antipater [q.v., above] is sayd to have poisoned Alexander, and that by the Councell of Aristotle. Where observe the Trope, and how it became to be calld the river of Hell.

Synechdochic. By the figure Synechdoche, takeing a part for the whole. [f. 85v]

Therapeutic. Healinge; from θεραπεύειν, *sanare* ["to heal"].

Topic. Medicins applyed outwardly; from τόπος, *locus* ["place"].

Tout guerres. All heale or cure.

Turb[a]. A Pythagoric Synod or meetinge of the Pythagoric Schollers, where each deliverd his opinion concerninge the elixir, Arisleus being Register [i.e., the *Turba Philosophorum*, or "assembly of the sages," on whose history see Ferguson 2:477–80, and Martin Plessner, "The Place of the *Turba Philosophorum* in . . . Alchemy"]. The like is in annual use to this day amonge the famyly of Rozen-craus, as Mayerus doeth testyfie; see his booke *de fam: Ros: Crucis*. [The first Rosicrucian manifesto, *Fama Fraternitatis*, appeared originally in German (1614) but is not by Michael Maier; see *Rosencraus*, above.]

Urampela. A spirit extracted from the salt volateele of Urin, which, joyned with the spirit of wine, coagulates the spirit to a Salt, which agayne by digestion becomes a liquor; with which Dr. [Francis] Anthonie [see above, Preface, 149n], Hartmannus [see 5.171n above], and others usd to subtiliate theyr Calx. Soe called from οὔρον, *urina*; and ἄμπελος, *vinea* ["vine"]. And heere take Dr. Anthonie's threefold preparation of his *aurum Potabile*, viz.:

1. After he had dissolud his Calx in this Urampela,

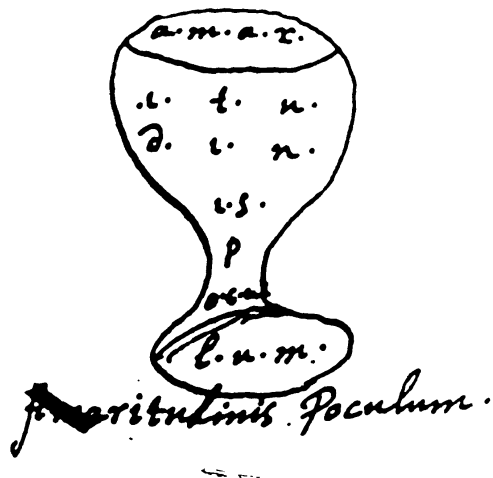


Figure 12. The "Cup of Bitterness," fol. 86r.

he destilld away this spirit (which serves as a perpetuall menstruum) untill his gold remaynd in the Cucurbit in an oylish consistencie. On which he powres spirit of wine, which, after some while's digestion, beinge tinctured, he seperates by Inclination. And this he calls his Tincture of gold.

2ndly. He takes an ounce of this tincture and mingles it with a Pinte of Sack or other white wine; and that he calls *Aurum Potabile*. 3rdly. He takes his first impregnate spirit of wine and makes a destillation in B[ain] M[arie], in which when the spirit is all destilld, he placeth his cucurbit on a bath of sand, continuinge his destillation of the flegme untill the remaynder be quite drie, which he powders, and tincturates agayne as before, repeateinge this woorke untill his calx become soe subtile that it soone dissolves in any spirit of wine, wholly without any remayninge feces, which he calls his Essence of Gowld.

But to free himself from the (partly deserved) lash of Dr Mathew Gwyn [see Preface, 148n], he should, for the administration of this his titular Essence, have borrowed the Cup bestowed as a Legacie by the Learned N. Bernard [i.e., Nicolas Barnaud], which for the friendly reader's use I have here inserted: [There follows an illustration of a cup, with 19 letters inscribed on it (see Figure 12); below it is the phrase, formed by the combination of the letters, *Amaritudinis Poculum* ("the cup of bitterness"), a mnemonic anagram which is then turned into the verse epigram that follows. The source for all this is an epistle at the end of Barnaud's *Quadriga Aurifera* (in *Theatrum Chemicum*, 3:833–34), where these same letters are arranged in the shape of a cup and their meanings given as here, but without verses.]

[From f. 86r, Figure 12]

[f. 86v]

A. Amore. M. Mulieris. A. Ardens. R. Rufus. I. Juvenis. T. Transfigitur. V. Venas. D. Disrumpit. I. Irascitur. N. Nigrescit. I. Inalbatur. S. Sanguinem. P. Postremo. O. Ostendit. C. Clarum. U. Unctuosum. L. Lapidem. U. Universalem. M. Medicinam.

A Ruddy youth ther was whome Cupid tooke
Pleasure to wound, as he stood in the Looke
Of a fayre Virgin; that the Boy, poore Ladd,
Disfigur'd growes, then teares himself like madd,
Turnes black with sowndinge [swooning], white agayne
with feare.

At last his blood runnes through his nostrills, cleare
Congealinge to an unctuous stone, whose fame
Of Universall med'cin hath the name.

[A marginal note cites Johannes Heurnius (see 6.21n) and glosses *fayre Virgin* as “Pupilla. quasi parva puella” (a maiden, as it were a small girl-child). At least two contemporary works describing antimonial cups were available in English, but neither contains the recipe or the anagram given here: the first is John Evans, *Universal Medicine; or the Vertues of the Antimoniall Cup* (1634; STC 10587) and the second is Jacobus Primerosius, *The Antimoniall Cup Twice Cast*, trans. Robert Wittie (1640; STC 20383). See Jones’s own recipe and directions for making an antimonial cup under *Extinction* in the *Appendix*, below. Antimony (a semi-metal most commonly occurring naturally as antimony sulfide) was commonly extracted by heating it with charcoal. In the seventeenth century antimony was thought by some to be a kind of “magnet” that could attract the “universal spirit” or quintessence, but its widest use was medical, when the metal was formed into cups. A little wine was allowed to stand in the cup overnight, into which a small amount of antimony went into solution. When drunk, the dose served as an emetic,

and since the cups could be used repeatedly, they were thought to have a perpetual, inherent healing power (see Dobbs, *Newton's Alchemy*, 146, 188–89; Debus, *English Paracelsians*, 170n28.) At 5.825–40, Jones says the antimonial cup's purgative effects depend on the artificial imprisonment of "Sulfur volateel" in the metal, not in any property in antimony itself.]

Venus. The Goddess of Love, and therefore of Beauty. Cicero in his third booke, *De natura deorum* [i.e., 3.23.59], mentions fower of them; wherof (sayth he) the first was borne of heaven and the Day; the second from the froth of the Sea, on whome Mercury begott Cupid; the third, the Daughter of Jupiter and Diana [i.e., Dione], [was] wief to Vulcan; the fowerth, the Daughter of Cyrus and wief to Adonis. All which, in this discourse, we have reduc'd to two: the one a heavenly, intellectuall Venus, and the other a Sensuall, accordinge to the heavenly and earthly desires or Cupids—though, to speake amply, as every knowledge hath its Cupid, soe every Cupid its Venus or beautyfull object.

Now Zoroaster, and others of the ould Philosophers, found there were fower species of knowledge (wherof the one proceeded from the sence, the 2d from the imagination; the 3d from the Reason, and the fowerth from the Intellect) and therefore soe many Cupids and Venuses. These fower species of knowledge they plac'd as beames sparklinge from the fower circles of knowledge; to wit, the Intelligible, Cogitable, Imaginable and Visible—all proceedinge from one Center, and as it were flyinge about it. This Center they placed as an Embleme of goodnesse or God, and the circumferent Lines, as of Pulchritude. Which pulchritude they nam'd The Minde, Sowle, Nature and Matter. Now as a Point in a circle is a stable, indivisible thing, from which many moveable and divisible lines may be drawn, soe they understood God, as beinge *One*, simple Immoveable, from whence all thinges did proceed [f. 86r] and to whome they reflow, even as the circumference of lines to

the Center. See the Hicroglyphic of formes in Chapter I, under the Name of *Zoroaster*. [This discussion has much in common with Marsilio Ficino's account of the two-fold Venus (which he got from Plotinus and Proclus) in his *Commentary on Plato's Symposium*, 2.7 (trans. Sears Jayne, 53-54; see Jones's other borrowing from the *Commentary* at 6.213n). The imagery of the circle is redolent of the famous hermetic definition of God as "a sphere of which the center is everywhere and the circumference nowhere" (see Yates, *Giordano Bruno*, 247), which was still being repeated by Jones's contemporary Sir Thomas Browne. For comparable quaternaries associated with Pythagoras, see Heninger, *Touches of Sweet Harmony*, 151-56; and for Zoroaster generally in the Renaissance, Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic* and *The Ancient Theology*, passim.]

Vesta. There were two of them, the one Mother, and the other Daughter to Saturne. Wherof the first represents the earth, and the other the fier. See Virgil, *Aeneid*, 2.[296, 567, etc.].

Vulcan. The God of fier; somtimes taken for the fier itself. Whence he is become Jupiter's smith and, in the Corollarie to this discourse, a Paynter. For as the Poets, under his trade of a Smith, by describenge his skill in makeing Thunderbolts, Netts, Chaynes, etc. doe tropicly shew the various formes manifested in the Elenchic [i.e., metaphorical; see 3.78n] course of this woorke, soe now more playnly, by his art of a Paynter, are described boath the materiall and formall changes in this woorke conteynd. The Collours aswell as the materiall formes being Fas[h]ioned by this fiery Craftsman, for the compleatinge of our Promethean banquet; which, beinge prepar'd in the Center of the Sun, admittes of noe other Cooke or Cater, save Vulcan and Mercurie.

Of the first of whome the Philosopher in *Turba* sayth, *Totum secretum in regimine ignis consistit*. ["The entire secret lies in the regimen of fire," a famous alchemical saying, but not found in the *Turba Philosophorum*;

Thomas Norton's verse *Ordinal* rewords it thus, for the sake of rhyme: "Of many auctours written ye may see:
/ Totum consistit in ignis regimine" (ed. Reidy, line 2988).]

And of the latter, the Poet thus: *Est in Mercurio quicquid quaerunt Sapientes*. ["Whatever the wise men seek is in Mercury"; the author of this hexameter line is unidentified, but it is quoted at least twice in the seventeenth-century commentary on Hermes' *Tractatus Aureus* (*Theatrum Chemicum* 4:607, 610) as pointing to the fundamental substance of the stone, despite its multitude of names.]

And of boath, the Philosopher: *Ignis et azoc tibi sufficiunt* ["fire and azoc are enough for you," another alchemical maxim, attributed to Hermes, as in Norton, ed. cit. lines 2633-34; Rulandus explains, "Azoch is our Mercury. It is a double Mercury of the Material Stone. Therefore they say: Azoch and fire are enough to whiten the Laton [base metal], and to prepare the whole work"]. Which invited the Author's Brittish [i.e., Welsh] muse to that Caroll [i.e., the Welsh verses accompanying Figure 11].

Zoroaster. See *Venus*.

Finis

[f. 87r]

[APPENDIX]

For the Better understandinge as well of this discourse as of other Chymic writings, The Author hath thought fitte by way of an Appendixe to Epitomise the explanation of those Operations as followeth.

First the Comon definition of *Chymistrie* speaketh it an Art teachinge to resolve naturall bodies into the Elements and Principles wherof they consist. Comprehended under those two generall heads, viz: *Generation* and *Corruption*.

Under the latter of which are comprehended all those operations that tende either to the dissolution of the continuity of a body, Or to the separation of its puritie from the Drosse; and

Under the former, all that apertayne to the Regeneration and Induction of a new forme or qualitie out of a Crude and impure bodie.

The continuity of a body is dissolv'd two maner of wayes, viz., either by reduceinge it into small partes, or making it fluid.

The first wherof haveinge eight specificall Operations, viz.: Limation, Rasion, Pulverisation, Levigation, Contusion, Granulation, Lamination, Inscission. [f. 87v]

The second hath 18, viz: Putrefaction, Maceration, Fumigation, Cohobation, Precipitation, Amalgamation, Destillation, Rectification, Sublimation, Calcination, Extraction, Expression, Digestion, Evaporation, Exhalation, Coagulation, Caementation, Fulmination. [All 26 of these terms are defined in detail below.]

The Purity of a body is separated from its drosse either Materially, or formerly [i.e., formally].

A materiall Separation is that which only taketh away

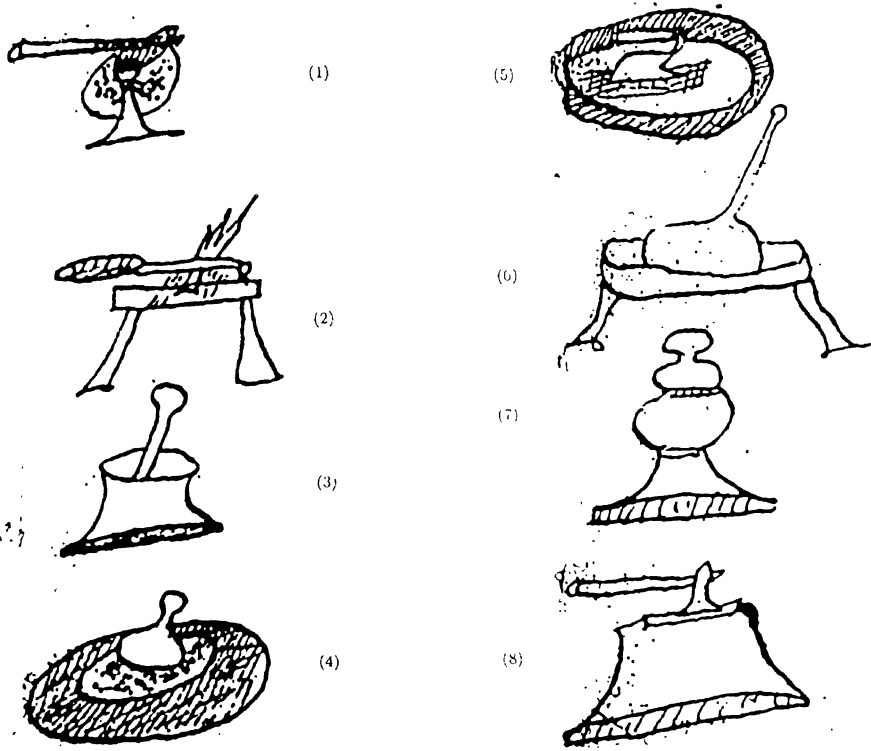


Figure 13. The First Eight "Specificall Operations":
 (1) Limation, (2) Rasion, (3) Pulverisation, (4) Levigation,
 (5) Incision, (6) Contusion, (7) Granulation,
 (8) Lamination, fol. 88v.

the externall apparent impurities.

A formall, is that which not only seperateth the substance but alsoe the purer partes from the *Caput Mortuum* (which is the drosse left in the Retort or cucurbite that will not flie the fier). [f. 88r]

The specificall operations of the first are those that generally seperate the whole mix'd body, viz.: Cribration [sifting]; Ablution [washing]; Deterision [cleansing]; Expression [squeezing to produce a liquid]; Efusion [pouring on a liquid]; Colation [straining]; Filtration, which is done a threefold way, viz.: (1) *per chartam emporitic* [through coarse papyrus used for wrapping parcels] (2) *per pannum* [through cloth], (3) *per Linguam Bovis* [through ox-tongue; i.e., the rough leaves of a plant commonly so called? see 4.310 above]; Despumatation [peeling, scaling]; Subduction (otherwise calld *Seperatio per Clepsidram* [i.e., through a water-clock]).

The Operations of the second are those that take away the impurities by alienating the reliques of the purer substance of a body, and promotinge it to a more excellent perfection.

The one is performed by these five operations: Destillation, Sublimation, Rectfycation, Dissolution, Extraction.

The other by these five: Digestion, Evaporation, Exhalation, Caementation, Fulmination

A New forme or qualitie is generated out of a crude body by these sixe operations:

Fixation, Volatization (boath which are absolud by these 5: Extinction, Maceration, Inceration, Sublimation, Solution); and

Circulation, Coagulation, Inceration, Digestion.

[f. 88v]

An Explanation of the 8 first Specificall Operations:

[Beside each one is an illustration; see Figure 13]

1. *Limation* is the dissolution of a body with a file; com-

only calld fileinge.

2. *Rasion* is the scrapeinge of it with a Knife or other instrument, as is usuall on Harts horne etc.

3. *Pulverisation* is the reduceinge of a body into Powder.

4. *Levigation* is when it is brought a degree smaller then Powder uppon a Marble.

5. *Incision* is the cuttinge of a body into grosse peeces.

6. *Contusion* is the bruisinge of a body, comonly precedeing *Maceration*.

7. *Granulation* is the grateinge of a body, with an instrument for the purpose (like a paper mill).

8. *Lamination* is the reduceinge of it into leaves or slices.

[f. 89r]

An Explanation of the Second 18 Operations:

1. *Putrefaction* is the dissolution of a mixd body by a naturall rotnenge, openinge the pores and corruptinge its substance by a moist heate. It comonly precedes the destillation of Spirits from greene Vegetives, by this operation the spirits cominge to the extreame partes, and soe facilliating the destillation.

2. *Maceration* is the infusion of a body in some proper menstruum untill it be saturated with the tincture of the Ingredient.

3. *Cohobation* is the resolvinge of the partes of a body by the often reaffungion of a Vehiculum [i.e., repeated distillation in a vessel]. The use is in the meliorisinge of destilld waters.

4. *Calcination* is properly the reduction of mettalls into lime or ashes; in Vegetives and animalls it is calld *Cinefaction*. It is either *actuell* or *Potentiall*.

The *actuell* is allwayes perform'd by materiall fier and that either alone, openly calld *Ignis Nudus*, or else with additions, as in the preparations of *Haepar antimonii* ["liver of antimony"; see 5.322 above], or otherwise in a vessell of this fashion. [f. 89v]

Calcination potentiall is perform'd by Vertue of essen-

tiall fier: unto which are referrd these 4 followinge: *Precipitation*; *Fumigation*; *Amalgamation*; *Stratification* (which is expounded under *Caementation*).

5. *Fumigation* is the corrodunge of the externall partes of Mettalls, and is twofold, viz., moist and drie. Wherof the one is perform'd with sharp liquor, and the other by Saturne or mercurie.

6. *Precipitation* is the seperation of a dissolv'd body from the menstruum by the affusion of salt or spirit, accordinge to the Axiome: *Quicquid dissolvitur per spiritus precipitatur per salia, et contra* ["whatever is dissolved by spirit is precipitated by salt, and conversely"].

7. *Amalgamation* is a particular operation for the calcination of mineralls. It is perform'd by vertue of quick silver incorporatinge itself with the minerall, soe reduceinge the composition into a soft and pliable consistencie. The end of it is the same with *fumigatio sicca* [dry fumigation]. For after the *Amalgamation* is perform'd, the quicksilver is seperated by *Exhalation*, leaveinge the minerall remayne in a calcind body. The rep[et]ition of this woorke serveth for the extraction of the Sulphur of gould. See Johan Isaac Hollandus, in *Opera Mineralia, sive de Lapide Philosophico omnia* [Zet-ner, *Theatrum* 3:304; Ferguson 1:414].

8. *Destillation* is an operation wherby the Humors, viz., the flegme, Oyle and Spirite, are seperated from the drie and solid partes. The maner of it beinge threefold, viz.: [f. 90r]

1. By Ascent which is viz: (a) *Per Allembica* [by an alembic]; (b) *Per Campanam* [i.e., bell suspended over vessel].

2. By Descent which is either (a) *in angulo* [at an angle]; or (b) *per laminam ferream* [through a thin iron plate].

3. By a sideling way calld *ad Latus* [toward the side].

9. *Rectification* is the repeatition of a destillation; and usd either when a destillation by longe keepinge or otherwise is become dull, or else when the flegme, Spirits and Oyle are confusedly destill'd. Then it is rectified, to the end they may

be the easier severed.

10. *Sublimation* is that wherby the flowers or subtile partes of a body are Eleveated unto the topp of the Vessell and there, by vertue of the Ayer, congeald. [f. 90v]

11. *Extraction* is an operation that comonly followeth *Maceration*, viz., when by *Maceration* the menstruum is fully tintured with the infusd ingredient; then is it either evaporated or destill'd, and the thick substance remayninge in the bottome is calld an *Extract*.

See Frambessarius [Nicolas Abraham La Framboisière] his *Ambrosiopoeria* [appended to the Lyons, 1640 ed. of his *Scholiae Medicae*], where you shall finde severall medicins prepared by this operation; wherof you may carry a whole Apothecary shopp in one small boxe.

Note that if your designe be [that] the spirit of the ingredient shall remayne in the extract, your Evaporation must be made by a Lamp or temperate B[ain] M[arie], which is the reason why Extractes of Rubarb and other catharticks whose purginge qualitie doeth consist in theyr Salt Volateele (which my Lord [Francis] Bacon in *Hist: nat: [Sylva Sylvarum: or a Natural History*, in *Works* 2:345, 381] calleth a *fine Spirit*) are of small force, unlesse the operation be perform'd by such a degree of heate as will not evaporate this Salt.

Item: Note that an extract differs from a Magisterium only by takeinge *evaporation* for *precipitation*.

12. *Expression* is the Comon strayingne of a liquor; it is doen either *per Torcular* [through a press] or *manicham Hipocratis* ["Hippocrates' bag or sleeve"; see above 1.28; the MS shows a drawing of a funnel-shaped cloth bag]. [f. 91r]

13. *Digestion* is the concoction of an Ingredient by vertue of heate. The end of it is to prepare a body that it may be the better anatomis'd by other operations.

14. *Evaporation* is the consumption of a waterish substance by makeing it flie into a Vapour.

15. *Exhalation* is the same in a drie body that Evaporation is in a moist.

16. *Coagulation* is the Curdinge of a moist body, as of the Cheese from the milk.

17. *Caementation* is an operation for the purifying of mettalls, perform'd by Stratyfication as an operation subordinate unto it; viz., addinge a layne [=layer?] of the Caementinge matter and another of the metallic plates, etc. Chymists expresse it by *Strato super stratum* ["by layer upon layer"].

18. *Fulmination* is heere taken for the purification of *Sol* or *Lune* by a Coppell.

The other operations (viz., by which the puritie of a body is seperated from its drosse) are soe playne that they need noe explaineinge.

The Operations Apertayninge to Generation are thus Explan'd:

1. *Circulation* is the exaltation of a liquor by a circular motion, the maner of it in respect of the vessell's beinge twofold, viz. (1) *Per pelicanam* [by a pelican]; (2) *Bucca super Buccam* [cheek by jowl; illustrations of two vessels given in MS]. [f. 91v]

2. *Inceration* is the minglinge of a liquorish body with a hard and drie, that the drie matter imbibeinge the liquor into it may therby be softned.

It is somtimes taken for *Imbibition*, viz., when before the destillation of Liquors out of hard bodies a proper menstruum is added that the hardned and dried matter hath a propension to soake in; then allwayes followes *Digestion*.

Coagulation and *Digestion* have been fore explan'd, as allsoe all the operations by which a fixd body is brought volateele, and a volateele fixd; except:

Extinction, whose example is playne in the preparation of *Reg[imen]: ant[imonii]*: Or *Antimoniall Cupp*, as thus:
Take of Crude antimony in powder, Salt Nitre [i.e., saltpeter] dried [of each, say one pound] Powdred tartar [six ounces];

Mingle all together and throw it by degrees into a Crucible redd hott, in which stands a litle Lead & silver Moulton. And still be ready with a tile to cover the Pott when it flasheth. And soe will a part of the volateele sulfur of the marchasite remayne with the metall, beinge as it were metalliz'd. [The MS shows figure of a furnace. A very similar recipe and procedure are described in John French, *The Art of Distillation* (augmented ed., 1667), 188.]

Finis.

*Nulla expressior via cognoscendi Deum naturaliter quam
Creaturis expressum est* —Burgersdicius

[“There is no clearer way of naturally knowing God than is clear through his creatures”; rather than quoting directly, Jones seems to be paraphrasing this passage from Franco Petri Burgersdijck’s *Idea Philosophiae tum Naturalis tum Moralis* (Oxford, 1631; I cite the Oxford 1654 ed., 33): “Sapientiae munus est contemplari res necessarias, & inter eas praecipue Deum. Reliqua enim entia sunt veluti gradus, quibus hominis animus ad Dei contemplationem subvehitur. Nam τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, id est, *quod de Deo naturaliter cognosci potest*, in creaturis expressum est. Rom. 1.” (It is the task of wisdom to contemplate things necessary, and especially among them God. For the other entities are as it were steps, by which the mind of man is raised to the contemplation of God. For *to gnōston tou theou*, that is, “what can be naturally known about God” is expressed in his creatures.) The relevant passage in Paul seems to be Romans 1:20: “For the invisible things of him [God] are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.”]

VII. TEXTUAL NOTES

Text: British Library MS Sloane 315, fols. 1r–91v; in the author's holograph, except for John Hall's poem.

Title *Title is followed by a rough sketch of Jones's arms and Welsh motto ("God on my side"); see title page of his Lapis Chymicus, in the Introduction.*

Frontispiece *The handwriting is blotted, and the text has been revised; one doubtful reading (line 2 of the poem) has been indicated by square brackets.*

To the Industrious & Worthy Authour *This leaf (fol. 3r) is in a different hand, suggesting that it is John Hall's autograph.*

Chapter One

88 off] of *MS*
116 This, being] *conjectural reading; bottom of page cropped*
120 Then] than *MS*

Chapter Two

9 off] of *MS*
307 off] of *MS*

Chapter Four

216 theyr] they *MS*
303 off] of *MS*
312 off] of *MS*
411 dress'd] dess'd *MS*

Chapter Five

- 244 *Eight lines carefully obliterated, word by word; lines 245–48 are written vertically in margin*
- 257 Planetts] Panett's MS
- 268 *Rest of leaf cancelled; see Commentary*
- 699 - - - -] *original word Asse obliterated, dashes inserted*
- 715-20 *These lines are crowded vertically in margin*
- 721-24 *An early version of the first two of these lines is crowded into the margin along with 715-20 on fol. 68v; but 721-24 are written out clearly on a separate scrap of paper, pasted on an unnumbered leaf following fol. 71v*

Chapter Six

- 64 - - - - -] *last two words an asse deliberately obscured, dashes inserted*

The Author's Corollarie

- 19 Swett] Swtt MS

Index, Appendix *Jones's erratic alphabetization of Index entries has been regularized, and to this end a few minor spelling changes have been silently made. Abbreviated titles of familiar classical works have been silently expanded, and minor errors in classical quotations have been silently corrected; book and line numbers have been supplied in square brackets to complement, complete, or correct Jones's informal references. All other material in square brackets is also editorial.*

VII. COMMENTARY

In addition to providing glosses for difficult words or passages, I have also included here the Latin quotations interpolated into the verse text (see textual introduction). Where possible, I have expanded Jones's informal and incomplete marginal references to classical and alchemical authors and works. For the latter, I have not always been able to trace his immediate source, but I have tried to identify at least one printed version of the work cited. Classical citations have been corrected against Loeb editions, and translations are likewise taken from these unless otherwise indicated. In these notes *Index* refers to the glossary of terms provided by Jones himself, after the text of the poem. Since the *Index* and *Appendix* are both meant as reference sources, separate commentaries on them would render their use cumbersome. Therefore, explanatory notes, bibliographical references, translations, and any other editorial comments have been incorporated directly into these texts, within square brackets. Technical terms not glossed in the *Index* (e.g., Cohobation, s.v. *Arceutha*) can be found in the *Appendix*.

Epigraph Adapted from Macrobius' *Commentary on Cicero's Somnium Scipionis* (i.e., Book 6 of *De Republica*), 1.2.18: "sic ipsa mysteria figurarum cuniculis operiuntur ne vel haec adeptis nudam rerum talium natura se praebeat, sed summatibus tantum viris sapientia interprete veri arcani consciis, contenti sint reliqui ad venerationem figuris defendentibus a vilitate secretum" (ed. Willis, 7). This passage and the preceding sentence help explain Jones's use of alchemical allegory and narrative: "But in treating of the other gods [aside from the "Supreme God and Mind sprung from it"] and the Soul, as I have said, philosophers make use of fabulous narratives; not without a purpose, however, nor merely to entertain, but because they realize that a frank, open exposition of herself is distasteful to Nature, who, just as she has withheld an understanding of herself from the un-

couth senses of men by enveloping herself in variegated garments, has also desired to have her secrets handled by more prudent individuals through fabulous narratives. Accordingly, her sacred rites are veiled in mysterious representations so that she may not have to show herself even to initiates. Only eminent men of superior intelligence gain a revelation of her truths; the others must satisfy their desire for worship with a ritual drama which prevents her secrets from becoming common" (trans. Stahl, 86–87; for Macrobius as a compendium of Neoplatonism, see Stahl's introduction).

Frontispiece ("The Whole Woorke's Emblem")

Headnote

Cata-chresticall blazoninge: From the rhetorical figure catachresis ("misuse"): the deliberate misapplication of a word, especially in a strained or mixed metaphor (as in Milton's "blind mouths"). Here the *blazoninge* (technical heraldic description of the coat of arms) is *cata-chresticall* in that traditional heraldic elements are given alchemical significance, to make an "Emblem" of the "Whole Woorke." (Traditionally, coats of arms were often allusive and sometimes punned on the bearer's name in the manner of a rebus.)

He beareth orre A Lion: The coat of arms bears a golden lion (traditional symbol of sovereignty).

Rampinge: The heraldic lion is both "rampant" (rearing with fore-paws in the air) and "ramping" (clutching at or snatching) a *fierball*, here probably the symbol of the sun, the quintessence, or the alchemist's purifying fire.

counter-freucted Gules, or Sable and Azure: Vines proceeding in opposite directions, bearing fruit colored red (*Gules*), gold (*or*), black, and blue. These colors are associated (though not universally) with the four planetary gods (metals) in the margins of the emblem: Venus (copper), Apollo/Sol (gold), Mars (iron), Jupiter (tin); note the identifying symbols attached to each one. Presumably each figure would be touching grapes of the appropriate color.

barre emballed argent: A row of silver balls (properly “roundels argent”) across the shield.

The coat of arms is reminiscent of allegorical representations of the alchemical Red and Green Lions devouring the sun, as pictured for example in George Ripley’s late fifteenth-century “Scrowle” or the *Rosarium Philosophorum* of 1550 (see illustrations in Dobbs, *Newton’s Alchemy*, 33, 185; Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy*, 332). Above the shield is an eagle emerging from a crown, a combination of symbols that suggests the “spiritual” (or volatile) philosopher’s stone (see Read, 84; Jung, *ibid.*, figs. 98, 229). Thomas Vaughan claims, “separate the *Eagle* from the *Green-Lyon*, then clip her *wings*, and you have perform’d a *miracle*” (*Aula Lucis* [1652], in *Works*, 463, 709–710); this can be glossed as “separate the volatile element from ‘the mercurial liquid which is the first matter of the stone’ and then ‘fix’ the volatile element thus separated.” See also *Hermetick Raptures*, below, 71n.

Verse Description of Frontispiece

The verses help to clarify the meanings “sunke” (i.e., engraved or hidden) in the heraldic symbols (2). If the quintessential Eagle has “turnd t’a Lion,” the latter (displaying the “fierball”—the quintessence or fire itself) may mean the material form of the philosopher’s stone, which can perform transmutations through the fire but which is not harmed by it. He therefore will “daunce” (3) with the inferior metals in turn, as they proceed through increasingly more perfect stages toward gold: “Jove” or Jupiter represents the metal tin, while the “coate of black” (usually signifying the *nigredo* stage in the Great Work) here suggests iron as it is being elevated (“extoll’d”) to gold. This is made clear by the allusion to the allegory of Vulcan (fire), Venus (copper), and Mars (iron) in lines 5–9. This allegory—in which iron is transformed into copper—was used as a proof for transmutation (see *Index*, s.vv. *Mars*, *Vulcan*; and the *Corollarie*). That the pictured figures reach for the grapes of the “heavenly vine” (10), also shows their aspiration to become gold. Wine, the

highest creation of the vegetable world, has solar properties (see *Lithochymicus*, 4.297, 4.315n, 5.684n) and was often associated with the quintessence, given its power “to joy the lumpish [heavy, dejected] heart.” The “Barre of Argent balls” (11) seems to allude to Luna, either as silver or as philosophical mercury, the source of the philosopher’s stone. Finally, the “Brotherhood” (14) shared by poet and reader refers to the shared knowledge of alchemical initiates: they “alone” (2) will be able to “understand” this emblem and the work to follow; “other Readers” will not.

To the Industrious & Worthy Authour

On this sonnet and its author John Hall, see Introduction.

Preface

Understanding the otherwise baffling allegory of the Preface is aided by the explanations in Jones’s *Index*, references to which are supplied.

1-3 I.e., Jones’s Latin work, *Lapis Chymicus*, published at Oxford in 1648; no record of the work’s “Academic censure” has been found.

5 *Prometheus*. See *Index*; the alchemical allegory of the Prometheus myth (told by Hesiod in both *Theogony* 521–616 and *Works and Days* 48–106) is fully expounded below, 5.49–204; see also Preface 32n, 76, 87–89, 94–95.

8 *Nestorean*. See *Index*.

9 *by like skill*. I.e., similar to that of Prometheus.

12 *Rosen Craus*. See *Index*.

13-32 Some thought to make the philosopher’s stone by a “violent” method: by dissolving gold in aqua regis (a powerful mixture of nitric and hydrochloric acids) and then treating the resulting calx with the extract of the volatile salt of urine and then the spirit of wine. See *Index*, s.vv. *Dairelius* (17), *Basiludra* (20), *Urampela* (26), and *Pneumoina* (29).

32 *Promethean banquet*. One of Prometheus’ offenses to the gods was the tricking of Zeus to choose the less desirable portions of the meat in the apportionment of an ox at the sacrificial banquet at Mekone, so that men had the choicest parts (see

Theogony 535–616); in punishment for this, Zeus refused to give any more fire to man. Throughout Jones's poem, Prometheus' banquet seems to stand for the philosopher's stone, i.e., the food fit for the gods and bringing health to men. Jones may have been inspired by Michael Maier's *Themis Aurea* (a work he cites repeatedly), where the miraculous "medicine" purveyed by the Rosicrucian physicians is identified as "*Prometheus* his fire which by the assistance of *Minerva* he stole from the Sun, and conveyed it into man; although diseases and maladies were afterwards by the gods (as the Poets feigne) inflicted on men, yet the Balsome of Nature was more powerful then the distempers: This fire was spread over all the World conducing to the good both of body and mind, in freeing the one from infirmities, the other from greivous passions; for nothing doth more chear and make glad the heart of man then this Universal Medicine" (English trans. 1656, Wing M287, 28–29); see 4.272 and 5.49-204, below. The idea that Prometheus had the "philosopher's fire" was well enough known to be referred to in Ben Jonson's *Mercury Vindicated from the Alchemists at Court* (see *Complete Masques*, 219).

33 *two Harpies madde. Basiludra and Urampela.*

33-52 Others tried to make the stone by combining gold with the water of mercury, after dissolving it in the spirit of salt and the spirit of turpentine. See *Index* for *Hermaca* (35), *Pneumalsa* (41), and *Pnerebintha* (48).

35 *coursely. Coarsely.*

53-64 A third group of would-be alchemists would use salt of tartar to achieve the stone; see *Index*, s.vv. *Alsphecle* (56), *Mastich* (63).

65-72 A fourth would try to combine gold with the water of mercury by using the spirit of salt and the oil of juniper; see *Index* for *Pneumalsa* (67), *Arceutha*. (71)

76 *Promethean banquet-founders.* Ancient "philosophers" or alchemists. *enroll'd*: recorded.

78 *this Chymicke Fry.* Those tyros searching for the secret.

80 *jeofayle.* Jeofail: mistake, error.

88 *Trojan boy.* Ganymede (91), cupbearer to Zeus. The *cup* (87, 111) is the antimonial cup described in *Index*, s.v. *Urampela*.

- 106** *Cachecticke*. See *Index*.
- 117** *balking*. Ignoring or avoiding.
- 143** *ginnes*. Crafty skills; traps or engines of torture.
- 147** *German Courtin*. The Parisian physician Germain Courtin, whose *Adversus Paracelsi . . . Disputatio* (Paris, 1579) attacked the *tria prima* (mercury, sulphur, salt theory of metals) of Paracelsus, potable gold, and the whole work of pyrotechny; for the place of this work in the late sixteenth-century debate over Paracelsian medicine, see Debus, *Chemical Philosophy*, 1:145–59, and *French Paracelsians*, 35–36.
- 148** In 1611 Matthew Gwinne (ca. 1558–1627) attacked, from the orthodox Galenic point of view, Francis Anthony’s *aurum potabile* (see Thorndike, 7:170–71; Debus, *English Paracelsians*, 142–45; *DNB* 23:399–400). *jerk*: ridicule, satirize.
- 149** *Angell: Sala*. Thorndike (7:170) suggests that Angelo Sala (1576–1637) based his own recipe for potable gold partly on that of Francis Anthony, the Jacobean medical practitioner who was constantly running afoul of the Royal College of Physicians. Anthony’s recipe, first published in his *Medicinae Chymiae* of 1610, was revived by Albert Otto Faber in 1641 and was being translated and reprinted as late as 1684, in William Cooper’s *Collectanea Chymica*, 73–80 (Partington, 2:182; Debus, *English Paracelsians*, 142–45; *DNB* 2:47–48). Some of Sala’s “preparations” were trans. in Lancelot Coelson’s *Philosophia Maturata* (1668; Wing C4883).
- 150** *Palmarius*. Petrus Palmarius (Pierre Paulmier de Grentemesnil), whose 1609 assault on both Andreas Libavius (151) and Paracelsus is recounted in Thorndike, 6:251–53. At the same time, however, Paulmier defended the use of chemically prepared drugs and thus himself incurred the ire of the Parisian medical faculty (Debus, *French Paracelsians*, 59 et passim).
- 153** *Guilbertus*. Nicolas Guibert, who having pursued alchemy without any success wrote two books (1603, 1614) attacking it; see Ferguson (1:353) and Thorndike (6:244–47), who summarizes the later work, *De Interitu Alchemiae* (“the destruction of alchemy”).
- 154–55** *should the face / Have*. “Should have the face,” or “be so impudent.”

156 “Children of children and those who will be born from them” (*Aeneid* 3.98). In margin of MS: “Gilbert’s owne words” (from *Alchymia Ratione et Experientia . . . Impugnata et Expugnata* [Strasbourg, 1603]; see 5.843n). Bernard George Penot’s reply to the “Scurrilous libel [against alchemy], published in Latin in Germany by D. Nicholaus Guibertus” was translated in *Penotus Palimbios: or the Alchymists Enchyridion* (1692; Wing P1430); Penot is cited in Jones’s *Index*, s.vv. *Hermaca*, *Pneumalsa* (for his role in the Galenist-Paracelsian debate, see Debus, *French Paracelsians*, 36, 38).

159 *boy’d*. I.e., “boiled,” here contracted for the sake of rhyme.

164 *Charletonian cry*. Perhaps a reference to Walter Charleton (1619–1707) who, having been an ardent Helmontian, turned to atomism and the mechanical philosophy, and denounced Paracelsus, Croll and others in *The Darkness of Atheism Dispelled by the Light of Reason* (1652) and *Physiologia Epicuro-Gassendo-Charltoniana* (1654; here he mocks the “drunkard Paracelsus,” [3]). See Gelbart, “Walter Charleton” and Mulligan, “Reason,” 380–82, who notes that some hermetic elements are still to be found in Charleton’s writings as late as 1657. If Jones is thinking of Charleton, the reference helps to date his poem within the period 1652–56 (see Introduction).

Perhaps, however, *Charletonian* (which is not underlined as are most other names in the MS) simply means “charlatanian,” or charlatanic; see *quacking*, line 165.

169 *Tropicke groves*. Obscure allegories.

181 *Goodies*. Goodwives, women; here used ironically in reference to the female allegorical figures mentioned above: the *Harpies madde* (33) and *Corrodeing Gossips* (86), Basiludra, Urampela, etc.

189 *this Authour*. I.e., Jones himself.

204 *the Thiefe*. The philosophical mercury, notorious for its volatility which makes it difficult to “bind” (205) or fix in a stable form; after the winged god Mercury’s reputation for cunning and theft.

207 *Hoofe of Mule*. See *Index*, s.v. *Styx*.

208 *Olybian Lampe*. A fabled lamp found near Padua, made by one Maximus Olibius; its flame was said to have burned for

nearly fifteen hundred years, its fuel having been preserved in silver and gold bottles. Rulandus (454–55) discusses it in connection with the alchemists' search for an unquenchable and ever-burning fire, while Guibert's *De Interitu Alchemiae* debunks the story as a late medieval fiction (see Preface, 153n above; Thorndike 6:246–47, 8:49). This lamp is frequently cited by alchemists as proof for the antiquity of their art; see e.g. Thomas Vaughan's *Magia Adamica* (*Works*, 195 and 649). Here it seems to suggest the "light" of true alchemical knowledge. See also 4.59n, 4.68n below.

211 *Seneca*. The following passage, which is interpolated in the text and roughly translated at lines 213–16, is an adaptation from Seneca's dialogue *De Tranquillitate Animi* 1.16: "Multi ad divinarum scientiarum cognitionem pervenissent, nisi eam habere iam putassent." Seneca's text reads: "puto multos potuisse ad sapientiam pervenire, nisi putassent se pervenisse" (I think that many could have reached wisdom if they had not thought they had [already] reached it).

Chapter One

1.1 *hee*. The author, who proceeds to narrate his own earlier errors in alchemy, as promised in Preface, 217–20.

1.3 *Schematicke slight*. Rhetorical sleight.

1.4 *Geber . . . Liptotically*. For the alchemical theories attributed to Geber (i.e., Jabir ibn Hayyan), see Holmyard, 68–80, 134–41. See *Index*, s.v. *Liptotically*. Lines 5–8 translate this interpolated passage from Geber's *Summa Perfectionis*: "Qui scit argentum vivum amicari corporibus, invenit unum de secretis maximum; et quasi unam viam perfectionis" (see 9–10n, below).

1.9–10. *Thomas . . . Bernard*. That is, in the alchemical correspondence between Thomas of Bologna and Bernard of Treves, which Thorndike (3:611–27) treats as authentic and as coming from the second half of the fourteenth century; see the Introduction to the work of Bernardus Trevisanus, in this collection, Part Four. Lines 13–16 here translate the following interpolated pas-

sage: "Si illud scis tibi diximus aliquid; si vero non scis nihil tibi diximus." English versions of this passage and that translated in lines 5–8 can be found in *The Answer of Bernardus Trevisanus, to the Epistle of Thomas of Bononia*, printed in John Frederick Houpregh't's *Aurifontina Chymica* (1680, Wing H2941), 259–61.

1.10 *slight*. Sleight: skill, knowledge.

1.17 *obscurer Scheame*. The deeper meaning, hidden by the rhetorical figure. The obscurity of Geber's work is frequently mentioned, as in Bernardus' correspondence with Thomas of Bologna (9–10n, above) and in Michael Maier, *Symbola Aurea Mensae* (Frankfurt, 1618), 202.

1.26 *Vulcan's maw*. The fire's "belly."

1.27 *waver-winged*. Fluttering-winged (?). An ascending *Dove* or swan is a common alchemical symbol for the creation of a white sublimate, the collection of crystals in the cool upper part of a vessel containing heated solid material in its lower part, i.e., through sublimation (Read, *Prelude*, 92, 138, 160).

1.28 *Hipocraticke Glove*. Usually called Hippocrates' bag, or "Hippocras bag," a conical bag of cotton, linen or flannel used as a filter; see Jones's *Appendix*, s.v. *Expression* in the chemical operations.

1.33 *all the colours*. Most alchemical authorities describe the work passing through a prescribed series of colors (usually beginning with black and ending with white), before reaching its perfect state. See *peacock's tail*, below 5.197.

1.37 *Amalgam*. See Jones's *Appendix*, s.v. *Amalgamation* in the chemical operations.

1.39 *forme Hexagonall*. See *Index*, s.v. *Venus*, and Figure 1 (inserted after line 40), in which the hexagon actually represents the dodecahedron, one of the five regular solids known to Pythagoras and discussed in Plato's *Timaeus* 55a–c. The first four regular solids were associated in the Renaissance with the four sublunary elements (Figure 1 identifies the icosahedron with water), but the dodecahedron was identified with the heavens in their entirety (Plato says God used it as a pattern for the universe, i.e., as a model for the twelve-fold division of the zodiac; see Heninger, *Touche of Sweet Harmony*, 107–11; *Cosmographical Glass*, 129 and illustrations). Jones thus labels it the "fifth

essence” or quintessence, the pure substance of which the celestial bodies were made, and in his *Index* (s.v. *Venus*) he identifies it with the Zoroastrian “Embleme of goodnesse or God” (see 6.357n). The epigram below the Figure (“In number, Time and measure all thinges beare / Theyr witnessse of perfection’s Hemisphaere”) is adapted from the Book of Wisdom 11:21, a favorite text of Renaissance Neoplatonists: “thou hast arranged all things by measure and number and weight.” For the alchemical elaboration of this formula by Petrus Bonus and others, see *Aurora Consurgens*, 279–80; see also Debus, “Mathematics and Nature.”

1.41 *Crollius*. Oswald Croll, whose *Praefatio Admonitoria* (the *Admonitory Preface* to his *Basilica Chymica*) is cited in the margin of Jones’s MS. This text first appeared in 1609 and was translated into English in 1657 (Wing C7023); see *DSB*, 3:471–72; and Hannaway, *The Chemists and the Word*, chap. 1, for an analysis of the *Preface*.

1.47 *Doctor D’Avison*. William Davisson or Davidson (ca. 1593–ca. 1669); in addition to writing a popular textbook on chemistry, he published (1660) a long commentary on Severinus’s *Idea Medicinae Philosophicae*, one of the major syntheses of Paracelsian doctrine (see Debus, *Chemical Philosophy*, 1:129–31). Davisson is also cited in Jones’s *Index*, s.v. *Mars*.

1.69 *Cohobatinge*. See *Appendix*, second list of operations.

1.93 *longetayle-trade*. Possibly from *longtailed*, “(of words) having a long termination (*jac.*)” (*OED*), with reference to the Latinate and obscure terminology of alchemy (?).

1.94 An earlier version of the passage following line 94 has been cancelled:

Soe he accosted him with bended knee
And back blowe-ward, was tane most comicly;
When, by his *Godten aven* and the ringe
On his fore finger, th’ Author soone could bringe
This stranger’s Doctorated pedegree
From th’ Academic Chayres of Germanie.

1.104 *Allslagen*. See *Index*.

1.131 *Nocopa*. See *Index*.

1.132 *Spinthelius*. See *Index*.

1.137 *new light*. In margin of MS: “*Novem Lumen Arnoldi*,” i.e., the *New Light* of Arnald of Villanova (*Arnoldus*, line 135), some versions of which bear a dedication to Pope Benedict XI; Thorndike’s discussion of Arnald (vol. 3, chap. 4) notes that other works are addressed to various popes, and recounts the commonplace belief that Arnald made artificial “wands of gold” at Rome (“Roome,” line 139).

1.142 *true Hermaphrodite*. Philosophical mercury combines the male and female principles of mercury and sulphur.

1.162 *Gordian Knott*. See *Index*.

1.165 *In Ure*. In use, operation.

1.170-73 The closest statement to this found in Aristotle’s *Politics* occurs at 3.12.1: “The virtue of a man and that of a citizen in the best state must of necessity be the same” (Loeb Classical Library [1944], 273; H. Rackham’s introduction shows how this idea is central to both the *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*).

1.176-89 In margin of MS: “Ovid: *Metamorphoses*, Book II”; for the aftermath of Phaeton’s disastrous driving of Phoebus’ chariot, paraphrased here, see esp. 2.401–507. At line 186, the *Nymph of Nonacris* (i.e., a mountain and city in Arcadia) is Callisto, a follower of Diana or *Phoebe* (189), who gives birth to Arcas (q.v. in *Index*).

1.177 *Engross’d*. Written in large letters.

1.191-92 The story of how *Cephalus* tragically kills his beloved *Procris* is in *Metamorphoses* 7.694–862; *Aura* was the name Cephalus gave to a breeze, which *Procris* mistook as the name of another woman and so brought about her own death at Cephalus’ hands. In margin of MS: “See *Venus* [i.e., in *Index*].”

1.196 *Table greene*. The “Emerald Table” or *Tabula Smaragdina* of Hermes Trismegistus (197), some famous sayings of which are translated at lines 199–202 from the following interpolated passage: “Pater eius est Sol; mater eius est Luna; et portavit eum ventus in ventre suo.” For the complete text, see Holmyard (97–100) and Read, *Prelude* (54).

1.202 Figure 2, representing the fixing of mercury by gold (the sun) is inserted after this line. Caption: “The Sun speaks.” Motto: “Since thou art hither come, pround Mercurie, / I’le fetter

thee though in the field I die.”

1.210 *Hermes* . . . *booke of Alkhemie*. The *Tractatus Aureus* (various titles; see Ferguson 1:390–91), in which the Hermetic vessel is described; see Jones’s other quotations from this work, 2.9–12n, 3.79n, 4.3n, 5.185–91n.

1.212 *Prometheus*. See *Index* and *Preface* 5n.

1.229 *Phaetonlicly*. With reference to lines 180ff., where Phaeton causes the fire in Arcadia.

1.235. *rules rhetoricall*. See *Liptotlicly*, line 4 above, and in Figure 3.

1.236 Figure 3, depicting the “philosophical egg” or hermetic vessel with the gentle heat of the hen, is inserted after this line. Motto: “Let all such know, as would my name descric, / ’Tis Conformation or Prosopopei.” *conformation*: i.e., *conformatio*, a figure of speech, especially a prosopopoeia. *prosopopoeia*: personification.

1.237 *Dulman’s master*. *Dulman* (“dull man”) seems to be a common type name (Swift uses it in “A Description of a City Shower,” 11), but no specific dramatic source for the incident here described has been found.

1.259ff. Several alchemical works are attributed to Maria the Prophetess (sometimes identified as Moses’ sister Miriam and reputed inventor of the bain-marie); in the margin Jones writes, “Intit. Miriae Prac. ad Aron,” i.e., *Practica Mariae Prophetissae in Artem Alchemiam*, printed in *Artis Auriferae*, 3 vols. (Basel, 1610), 1:205–8 and elsewhere. This work concludes with these interpolated verses (translated at lines 262–70):

Maria mira sonat breviter cum talia tonat,
gummis cum binis fugituum figit in imis,
horis in trinis tria vinclat fortia fumi;
Maria lux roris ligam ligat in tribus horis;
filia plutonis consortia Jungit amoris;
gaudet in assata sata per tria sociata.

These verses were also sometimes attributed to Arnaldus of Villanova, as in *Theatrum Chemicum*, 4:543; see Introduction to the verse translation (ca. 1700) in Part Four, below.

1.274 *the farmour's sonnes*. Interestingly, this is Francis Bacon's little parable (based on Aesop, *Fables* 33) on the value of the alchemists' work, which he otherwise disparages: while they found no gold or philosopher's stone, their experimental work provided many useful technical discoveries. See *The Advancement of Learning* (*Works*, 3:289) and *Thoughts and Conclusions* (Farrington, *The Philosophy of Francis Bacon*, 87).

1.280 *giglish*. Lively, flighty (*OED*, s.v. *giggish*), or giddy, from *giglet*, *giglot* (*OED*)

1.281 *Daphne*. Read (*Prelude*, 163) quotes a 20-line poem from Ashmole's *Theatrum* on this allegory, in which Daphne represents the female principle, Phoebus the male (see also Read, 260; and Allslagen's alchemical explication below, 5.157ff.).

1.284 *disembogue*. Flow out.

1.287 In margin of MS: "See clangor: Buchina," i.e., *Buccinae Clangor* ("The Cry of the Trumpet"). This work, first published in *De Alchimia Opuscula* (Frankfurt, 1550; see Ferguson, 1:161), is the source of the dialogue in lines 287–302, part of which Jung quotes, from a 1593 ed., in *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, 438n; compare the parable of the sower (Mark 4:3–20) with lines 290–91.

1.302 *fluxion*. Flowing

1.306 *attome-wise*. See lines 327ff.

1.310 *Phylosophic Turb*. Marginal note: "See Plato in Turba [i.e., *Turba Philosophorum*]. And the Latin Copy [of Jones's *Lapis Chymicus*] in p. 49," which quotes Plato's only speech in the *Turba*. However, Plato's speech (see Waite's trans., 142) contains no reference to dust. See *Index*, s.v. *Turb[a]*.

1.315 *Ovidian shirt*. The robe smeared with the Centaur's blood (which had been poisoned by Hercules' arrow, soaked as it was in the blood of Hydra, "the Snake of *Lerna*"), that Deianira gave to Hercules (*Metamorphoses* 9.159ff.).

1.318-19 *what . . . part*. I.e., his "earthly" or mortal part, his mother being Alcmena, his father Zeus (Jove, who accounts for "his heavenly part").

1.336 Figure 4, showing two men working in the alchemical laboratory, is inserted after this line. The caption is: "Mercurie Speakes out of the ashes." Motto: "Twixt me and Phoebus,

Reader, if you can, / I pray now Judge Whoe is the Gentleman.”
Figure at left: “Would you have it smaller Sir?” Figure at right:
“’Tis impalpalbe.”

1.340-42 *Adam . . . name.* I.e., Allslagen’s name means what it says, since Adam’s names for the creatures bespoke their very natures.

1.349 *in the Suddes.* Unfinished; in perplexity or disgrace; but also with reference to the literal meaning of *suds*: dregs or ashes (350) of the incomplete work, now in the state of *putrefactio*.

Chapter Two

2.9-12 Translating the interpolated passage, “Ex aqua fumum depono. Ex unguento nigredinem. Et ex faece mortem,” from “*Hermes’* booke of Alchemie” (line 7), i.e., the *Tractatus Aureus* (*Theatrum Chemicum*, 4:648).

2.15 *the Poet.* Unidentified; these interpolated lines are loosely adapted in 17–24, below:

Ardua quippe magis res est cui vita sub auras
cessit, ei absumptae sua reddere lumina vitae,
quam facere ut mortem simul appetat, atraque discat
claustra subire Erebi; maior se spiritus illis
hisce effert operis, et aperta in luce refulgent
clara Dei monumenta, hominis non sorte laborum.

(“For it is a harder thing when a man’s life has gone below the upper world [lit., “the breezes”] to restore to him the light of his consumed life than, at the same time, to make him seek death and learn to approach the black barriers of Erebus. A spirit greater than those rises by these efforts, and in the open light shine the bright monuments of God, not of the chance labors of man.”)

2.25 *Necyomantic.* See *Index*. In right margin, written vertically: “Remember Erictho in Lucan [*Civil Wars* or “*Pharsalia*” 6.569ff., where this Thessalian witch revives a dead body in

order to learn the outcome of the war], and in Heliodorus [of Emesa's Greek romance *Aethiopica* 6.14–15, where an old Egyptian woman performs a necromantic ritual to reanimate the corpse of one of her sons, so that she can demand the future of her surviving son].”

2.27 *Jesse*. Possibly a figurative application of jess, the leash attached to a hawk's legs: “restraint”(?).

2.28 *Kinge's soule*. Allegories of kings being killed and revived (standing for the putrefaction of matter and its eventual “re-birth” and “marriage” as the perfect philosopher's stone) abound in alchemical literature (see Coudert, *Alchemy*, 132 and Bernardus Trevisanus in this collection, Part Four); at this point, Jones merely adopts another conventional metaphor.

2.29-30 *Ladds of Aristotle*. Like the episode here described, these nocturnal peripatetics are unidentified, but see *Lipara* in *Index*. Aristotle himself does write of the volcanic eruption on the Aeolian island of Hiera that buried the nearby island of Lipara, in terms that may imply he had visited the spot (*Meteorologica* 367a1–8).

2.35 *Adrastia*. See *Index*.

2.41 *Cumaean sybill*. See *Index*, s.v. *Cumaean*; early in *Aeneid* 6 she foretells Aeneas' wars in Latium.

2.45 *Kinge of Argives*. Agamemnon, King of Argos.

2.48 Figure 5, depicting the alchemist (in the form of Agamemnon?) making an offering to Adrastia (the “goddess” of the motto, q.v. in *Index*). Motto: “Thou triple limbo Goddesse, shew thy glorie / Now by discouv'ringe *Lixir's* purgatorie.”

2.57 *Maggie-gown*. A derisive term for the dress of an Anglican bishop (from his black chimere and white rochet—*OED*); *tippet* likewise refers to a part of ecclesiastical dress (cf. also the anti-clerical implications of 2.58 and 2.127, below).

2.75-76 *Azoc*, *Paidowra*, *Oxosa*: see *Index*.

2.93 *Merlin's Allegorie*. See *Index*, s.vv. *Allegorie*, *Merlin*. In margin of MS: “Allegoria Merlini de Arc: Lap:” i.e., the *Allegoria de Arcano Lapidis*, printed as early as 1520 and appearing in *Artis Auriferae*, 3 vols. (1610), 1:252ff. A summary of the entire parable appears in Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, 266–68; it has to do with the revival of a dead king by Egyptian and

Alexandrian physicians (see lines 95–96) by tearing him in little pieces, heating them, washing them, etc. For the mythic origins of alchemical dismemberment and restoration, see Coudert, *Alchemy*, 126–27. Merlin is the “Author’s” countryman because Jones, like the mythical Merlin, was Welsh.

2.98 *Psychegetic*. Calling up spirits.

2.100 In margin of MS: “Heere he wishd theyr bodies unconsum’d, for then, with Caliope in Lucan’s Supplement, he could have drensh’d them with blood, to cause them speake.” Calliope, Muse of epic poetry, does not appear in Lucan’s only surviving poem, *The Civil Wars*; the “Supplement” is unidentified. Perhaps Jones is again thinking of the witch Erichtho (cited above 2.25n) who causes a corpse to bleed afresh before it tells the future (Lucan 6:667ff.).

2.103 *Decanomantie*. See *Index*. A decan was the astrological ruler of 10 parts or degrees of a zodiacal sign (see lines 105–7).

2.104 Figure 6, showing a large alchemical furnace and a workman, is inserted after this line.

2.130 *Toutguerres*. See *Index*.

2.137 *Pulpitt man*. See 2.54–60, above.

2.142 *Joviall Philosopher*. In margin of MS: “See Mr Randalls Aristippes.” Thomas Randolph’s satirical play, *Aristippus, or the Jovial Philosopher* (1630) has a fantastical quack-doctor, Signior Medico de Campo (see line 144), who boasts of various marvelous cures, the most spectacular of which is paraphrased in lines 144–58 (see Randolph’s *Works* 1:31–32). The cure recounted by Toutguerres (159ff.) resembles two others of Medico de Campo, in which he restored both the head of Prester John after it had been taken to China and buried for two weeks, and a gentleman’s lost thumb, cut off two months earlier (Randolph 1:27–28). Interestingly, *Aristippus* contains much incidental satire on alchemy, as well as the story of “Scoggin’s fleas” (Randolph, 1:29; cited below at 4.495). For similar stories about replacing body-parts, in relation to Robert Fludd, J.B. van Helmont and others, see Debus, *Chemical Philosophy*, 1:247.

2.150 *out of hand*. Straightaway.

2.161 *demur’d*. Tarried, lingered.

2.162–190 *a farre greater cure*. For the point of the preceding

“cure” (2.140–58) and of this jocular but lurid digression, see *Index*, s.v. *Archas*.

2.164 *Sharge*. The first of several phonetic spellings to remind the reader of Toutguerre’s French accent. Jones’s treatise on philosophical grammar, *Herm’aelogium* (1659), manifests an interest in the question of the varieties of pronunciation in different languages (see e.g. Preface, sig. A5r, and compare 2.197, 2.227, etc. below).

2.185 *a Parting water*. A liquid that facilitates separation or dissolution of solids.

2.188 *carnositie*. Fleshiness.

2.193 *Patient*. The “King” of the alchemical work underway, last rendered as dust or “powder” (194).

2.203–20 An allegorical retelling of the Author’s false start in attempting to make the stone; on the incest motif in alchemical allegory, see indexes in Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy*, and Coudert, *Alchemy*.

2.204–5 *six large Provinces*. I.e., the metals other than gold. *Orcadian*: subterranean; see *Index*.

2.241 *Medea’s art*. In margin of MS: “See Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Booke 7” (i.e., 7.162–293, where Medea restores Aeson’s youth by her black magic; included in this passage are those lines [195–212] paraphrased by Prospero in *The Tempest* 5.1.33–50).

2.265 *Pneumatics*. See *Index*.

2.268–69 *how / That*. This long speech, here begun as indirect discourse, goes to line 437.

2.269 *Nature’s Ens transcendent*. *Ens* means being, entity; the whole phrase (repeated at 5.808, 6.320, 323) seems to suggest the Creator, or Mind of the universe, as the marginal note to 6.320 indicates: “unum, verum, bonum.” In strict alchemical usage, “Ens is the First Extract of Mineral Natures which have not yet attained their final perfection, and are richer in seminal virtue. Hence it is also termed First Matter, which is that principle of every genus out of which the first natural life-impulse derives to the substance of that genus, and possesses potency like unto it” (Rulandus, 136).

2.273ff. The congruence of these various trinities, common in medieval alchemy, was given new significance by the *tria prima*

of Paracelsus (sulphur, salt, mercury, line 277) and by the elaborations of other Renaissance Neoplatonists (see also 278n); for *number, time, and measure*, see 1.39n above.

2.278. A marginal note in the MS refers to Jones's *Lapis Chymicus*, 52, for a gloss on the word *trinus* ("trinity"), which appears in a verse passage quoted from Michael Scot (the same passage is incorporated below: see 3.61–68n). Translated, the gloss reads: "See the first letter of John the Evangelist, ch. 5, verses 7–8, where it is to be noted that both αἷμα ["blood"] and ἄνεμα ["wind, spirit"] come from ἄω ["blow"], and that *aether* ["upper air"] is derived διὰ τὸ αἰεὶ θεῖν ["from the fact that it is always running," i.e., from its perpetual motion], according to Scapula, who got it from Aristotle." The relevant passage from John ("For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one") contains (verse 7) the famous "Comma Johanneum," the only scriptural basis for a trinitarian theology, now recognized as a late interpolation (see Gore et al., *Commentary*, Part 2, 669). Jones cites both verses again below (5.456–57n) as proof for his Neoplatonic trinitarian theory of matter; see also 6.308. Thomas Vaughan (*Magia Adamica*, 1650) also cites this biblical text in relation to natural and supernatural trinities (e.g., *Works*, 162, 540).

2.288 seeds. In margin of MS: "Germen." *seventh property*: a reference to the seven-step mathematical progression whereby "unity proliferates into multitude until the limit of physical extension is realized" (Heninger, *Cosmographical Glass*, 97), and the World-Soul (line 293) is created. For the "platonian lambda," by which this process was represented, see Jones's *Herm'aeologium*, 93; Heninger, 98; and Macrobius' *Commentary*, ed. Stahl, 108–9 (Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* was a key text for Jones: see Epigraph above and *Herm'aeologium*, 37). In his *Lapis Chymicus* Jones identifies six "properties" (hot, cold, moist, gentle warmth, humidity, dryness) and notes that the seventh property is "in truth rightly tempered"; all seeds come from this property, "from which the ancients derived the doctrine of the world soul" (45, marginal gloss).

- 2.291** *Woord*. In margin of MS: ὁ λόγος (“the word”).
- 2.293** *world’s sowle*. In margin of MS: “anima mundi.”
- 2.294** *theyr writinges*. In margin of MS: “See *Plato in Timeo*”; i.e., *Timaeus*, 35B–C, the ultimate source for the Neoplatonic theories of spirit and number, as developed by Macrobius and others.
- 2.303** *Seculum*. *Saeculum*: a generation, or the full period of a creature’s life.
- 2.318** An echo of the second aphorism in Hermes’ *Emerald Table*, “What is below is like that which is above, and what is above is like that which is below, to accomplish the miracles of one thing” (Read, *Prelude*, 54; see also 3.73–76n below).
- 2.329** *destillation laterall*. See *Appendix*, under the “Second 18 Operations.”
- 2.336** *Your Master’s forme*. In margin: “Quaere of *Paracelsus his Homunculus*.” Rulandus defines *homunculus* as “the Minute Image of Man, . . . the invisible sidereal man made in the likeness of man” (175); see Paracelsus, *The Nature of Things* (English trans., 1650), 8–9; and *A Book Concerning Long Life* (*Writings*, trans. Waite, 2:120ff.; also 1:124, 2:334).
- 2.338** *Chaos*. A key alchemical concept, an important text for which was *Metamorphoses* 1.5–19; see Simon Forman’s poem in this collection, *Of the Division of the Chaos*.
- 2.342** *Jacob Behmen’s goste*. In margin: “See his answer to Dr. Walber concerninge the Sowle.” Jones is thinking of Jakob Boehme’s *Forty Questions Concerning the Soul* (1647), whose title page says the questions were “Framed by a Lover of the great Mysteries, Doctor Balthasar Walter” (i.e., Walther, Boehme’s intimate friend). The context suggests that Jones may be recalling questions 1, 2, or (especially) 5. These deal with the nature and properties of the soul, but the latter asks “How the Soul is peculiarly formed and fashioned and framed” (1665 ed., 150) and deals with the form needed by the body before it can accommodate a soul. Jones’s spiritual alchemy shares much with the attempt of Boehme (1575–1624) to achieve a mystical harmony of universal phenomena.
- 2.345–46** *Solution, Reduction*. For these and other technical terms (e.g. at 357–58), see Jones’s *Appendix*.

- 2.360** *three bodies.* Mineral, vegetable, animal.
- 2.364** *controvertible.* I.e., convertible.
- 2.367** In margin of MS: "Matt. 3:9" ("and do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham").
- 2.375-78** *Chelidon.* Celandine, or swallow-wort. Marginal note in MS: "see Garland de Alc: Chapter 14," i.e., the commentary on the *Emerald Table* attributed to John of Garland, or Hortulanus, where we find this proof that mercury can be derived from a vegetable body: "et sunt hec mercurialis portulaca marina que lac album facit et celidonia, cuius mercurii sic inventi nulla fuit differentia ad alium mercurium qui venalis invenitur. Ergo lapis ex vegetabilibus est" (quoted in Thorndike, 3:181n; this can be translated: "And there are this mercurial seapurslane, which creates white milk, and celandine whose mercury thus found showed no difference from other mercury which is found on sale. So stone comes from vegetables").
- 2.378** *emaninge.* Emanating.
- 2.385** *The Persian.* Zoroaster, on whom see *Index*, s.v. *Venus*.
- 2.395** *them.* Pagans (like the "Persian"), in contrast to *we* (396) Christians.
- 2.397** *Charger.* A large plate or platter.
- 2.400** *Camber, Gomerus.* See *Index*.
- 2.401** In margin of MS: "Anthropopathia," i.e., anthropopathy, the ascription of human feelings to the Deity.
- 2.408** *Adam's sin.* In margin of MS: "See *Mr Salmon of the Anti-Christ.*" Joseph Salmon's *Anti-Christ in Man* (1647; Wing S413): "And as *Adam* in the History, so all [men] in the Mystery commit dayly fornication with the *Whore*, our fleshly wisd[o]me" (4).
- 2.421** *naked.* In margin of MS: "Igne nudo."
- 2.424** *Azoc.* See *Index*, s.vv. *Vulcan, Styx* and lines 2.424-37.
- 2.426** *Miriam, Aron.* See 1.259, above; and *Marie's bath*, 4.320, 4.481, below.
- 2.429** *Hendrages.* See *Index*.
- 2.432-33** *Antipater.* See *Index*. *Hoof of Mule:* see *Index*, s.v. *Styx*; and Preface, line 207.

2.438 Figure 7, showing a woman blowing at the fire and two other pieces of alchemical apparatus, is inserted after this line. Caption: "The Weoman speakes." Motto: "Ere I will longer thus my beuty waste, / I'le likewise gette an artificiall blaste."

The following 16 lines, originally following 438, are cancelled:

The Author now with Joy begins his tale
Of thanks unto his frenshman, being growne pale
With admiration, at his reasons deepe
And Hiroglyphic playne, in t' which to peepe
He longes; yet first, thus parles; *Mounsieur* I crave
Your pardon that with fond discourse I have
Soe longe you interrupted from this high
Manifestation of Phylosophie.
Phylosophie! said he; what doe you meane?
For I thought nothings save t' relate my dreame;
Which if it serious was, you are to thanke
The Goast; or else my ould Italian's pranke.
But heere comes *Doctor Allslangen* in view;
Let him be Judge whether my dreame be trew.
How e're Ile fall agayne my Salt to roste,
Least my ould Master be for ever lost.

2.447 *minced Archas*. See above, lines 2.162–90n.

2.456 *weygh more Beech with father Ben*. In the margin is written: *δῆσουργός* ("ridicule"). Crossed out in margin: "Ben: Johnson in his play on the Alchemist." In *The Alchemist*, Face explains to Sir Epicure Mammon that he threw away "many a coal, / When 'twas not beech; weighed those I put in, just, / To keep your heat still even" (2.2.22–23); beechwood made the best charcoal.

Chapter Three

3.10. *Nitre cleere*. Perhaps the "Transparent Salt" that Rulandus (238) identifies as one of the names of Nitre (i.e., saltpeter).

3.15 *Basiliskish eies*. “The Chemical Philosophers have sometimes given this name [Basilisk] to their Mercury, because it dissolves everything. Some understand it to refer to the Stone at the White Stage, others to the Stone at the Red Stage, because . . . the powder of projection made of the stone at the white or the red stage, and projected upon Mercury or other metals, kills them, so to speak, by fixing them (as the eye of the basilisk killed also by fixing its victims) and transmutes them into silver or gold” (Rulandus, *Lexicon*, 340–41).

3.16 *Cock . . . Henn*. A traditional metaphor for the successful fusion (conjunction) of red and white stone, fixed and volatile, male and female principles.

3.21 *Hermaphroditic kow*. The hermaphrodite is a common symbol for alchemical conjunction (cp. 3.16n), but no “cow” so named has been found.

3.24 *the first*. I.e., the first of four *fusions* (by which solids are made to flow by heating) described in lines 24–44. Each fusion (also *fluxion*, as at 28) demonstrates the stone’s perfection by showing its possession of the four elements in heightened form (see 45–50): (1) fire, (2) water, (3) air (eagle), (4) earth (toad).

3.25 *Vulcan*. Fire (see *Index*). *Saturne*: lead.

3.34 *without cnock or call*. Without having to knock or call, i.e., freely, unhampered.

3.44 *Scotus’ Toad*. In margin of MS: “See Scotus de virt[ute]: Bufonis.” Michael Scot’s *Liber Luminis Luminum* (early 13th c.) frequently alludes to the “great virtue” of various animal substances, including the toad. As the first step toward making the stone, he shuts five toads up in a vessel and makes them drink the juices of various herbs with vinegar (see Thorndike, 2:337). Toads (like serpents and dragons, with which they are associated) generally represent base matter which, though “venemous,” contain the philosopher’s stone within (see Coudert, *Alchemy*, 145).

3.61-68 Translating these interpolated lines, whose source is identified in the margin (“Scot: *ibid*,” cited above, 44n):

Lapis est unus, et trinus, Spiritus, Corpus, anima;
Deificum munus bene sapere haec nomina.

Est vera comparatio ipsius trinitatis,
Et nulla divisio respectu deitatis.

See also 2.278n, above for Jones's biblical corollary to this trinity.

3.73-76 Translates these interpolated lines from the *Tabula Smaragdina*: "quod est inferius est sicut id quod est superius. Et quod est superus est sicut id quod est inferius, ad facienda miracula unius rei" (see also 1.196n, 2.318n, 2.375-78n).

3.77 *learned Ligon*. Jones's *Lapis Chymicus* (53) calls him "Domin: Ligon: Regis Romanorum Archiphilosophus" (arch-philosopher of the king of the Romans); otherwise unidentified.

3.78 *Elenchic*. Although *OED* gives *elench* (meaning a "sophistical argument" or "fallacy"), Jones seems to be adapting the Latin *elenchus*, "costly trinket," so his neologism in this context (and in *Index*, s.v. *Vulcan*) seems to mean something like "metaphorically deceptive" or "misleading on the surface." He may also be distinguishing between the exoteric (practical, material) and esoteric (spiritual, meditative) levels of meaning in his text. There may also be an allusion here to an untraced "Treatise called *Elenchus Errorum in Arte Chemica Deviantium*, which indeed is so plain, so full, and so convincing a Book, that more cannot be desired," cited by George Starkey, *The Marrow of Alchemy* (1654), sig. A3v.

3.79 *four arabic names*. The following passage interrupts the text after line 80 and is duly translated at 81-88:

<i>xir</i>	}		{	<i>Solvitur in aquam:</i>
<i>Ixir</i>				<i>Destillatur in aerum:</i>
<i>Lixir</i>				<i>Reducitur in Ignem:</i>
<i>Elixir</i>				<i>Coagulatur in terram</i>
<i>Lapis</i>				<i>Perficitur firma fixatione:</i>
<i>Tum fit (inquit) medicina universalis.</i>				

Nicolas Flamel (*Exposition of the Hieroglyphicall Figures* [trans. 1624; STC 11027, 79) calls *Xir* or *Iris* a "name for the first matter." The term *Ixir* occurs several times in *Turba Philosophorum* (see index to Waite's trans.) but never with reference to air. Rulandus gives one meaning of *Isir* as "the Elixir at the White [Stage]," when it is ready to be multiplied (379). And Jones's

Latin text has this gloss (56) on the physical attributes of the “metallic stone”: “Certus auri color & natura est dulcedo, ideo de eo sericum constituimus quod est IXIR” (“It has the unchanging color of gold and its nature is sweetness; so from it we make silk, which is IXIR”); Jones cites chap. 1 of Hermes’ *de Compos.* (i.e., *Tractatus Aureus*), but the passage actually comes from chap. 7 (*Theatrum Chemicum*, 4:697).

3.91 *that playne Hiroglyphic.* That is, the “Corollarium” from Jones’s Latin text (p. 58), which is to be inserted below (see 3.96n).

3.94 *that Curse.* In margin: “Moriet[ur] Apoplexia”; i.e., “he shall die from a stroke.” The source of this saying and the identity of the “Seere” (95) are unidentified, though many texts emphasize the need to conceal the secrets of alchemy from the vulgar or uninitiated (see e.g. *Aurora Consurgens*, 200–201).

3.96 Inserted after this line in the manuscript is a rough tracing of Jones’s emblem (“Corollarium”) from his *Lapis Chymicus* (58), indicating his intention to reprint the illustration here. Accordingly, Figure 8 reproduces the original engraving. On its import, see next note.

3.97ff. This note at the end of the chapter identifies the characters in this tableau: “The Representators are: *Purelius*, a wanton Lecher; *Zeugenius*, kinsman and humble friend to *Purelius*; *Gaia*, a melancholly weoman; *Hudra*, a proud damoselle; *Saturn*, a Philosopher.” For some explanation of this allegory (yet another version of the alchemical marriage, destruction, regeneration), see *Index*, s.vv. *Aphroditic*, *Nero’s napkin* (for line 130), and *Vesta*.

The remainder of the chapter translates the following interpolated verses, which also appear in Jones’s Latin text (59), opposite his emblematic “Corollarium”:

Quam sum lethiferis percussus fulcifer hastis
queis, Phoebi in Daphnen nil nisi ludus erant
collatae flammae [φίλτρον] praescribat at o! si,
quis mihi, nunc divus, numen et usque foret.
Inde senex, lascive Puer, nonne oscula confers
Gaeiae grata labris blandaque Zeugenii

quotidie auxilio? Si nescis putide, nescis,
cognati vestes indue, teque cito
confer in hanc cellam, si teque receperit Hudra,
taedaque succedat maechae memento senis.
Finierat dictum simulac, Pyrelius omne
jussum perficiens, Hudra quieta manet
amplexus maechi, quoad ambo libidine foeda
mersi (quod dictu tristius) intereunt
Conveniunt vicini omnes, Saturnus et ipse
spectator lepidus funeris huius erat.
Cui (postquam, lini viventis Syndone, putre
vertitur in cinerem) squalida turba dicat.
A quo fonte Stygis mox et circulitus, eccum,
pensandus Doctis nascitur inde Lapis.

Repraesentatores sunt:

Pyrelius amarus Iuvenis. Zeugenius Pyrelius
cognatus, et humilis amicus. Gaia melancholica
faemina. Hudra clara virgo. Saturnus Philosophus.

These two marginal notes appear in Jones's Latin text:
"Quod philosophi de scientiis celaverunt literis septem scribitur;
duas enim sequitur Alpha Yda; et Librum similiter sequitur Sol,
volens tamen dominare, Artem custodire, Iungere Rubae aquae
filium, qui est Iupiter" ("What the philosophers have concealed
about the sciences is written in seven letters; for Alpha Yda
follows two [of the letters], and similarly the Sun follows Liber
[*Librum*, "book"; possibly an error for *Libram*, "Libra"?], hoping
nevertheless to be the master, to guard this Art, to join the son,
who is Jupiter, to the Ruba water [*rub[r]ae aquae*; probably an
error for *bubae aquae*, see below]). The source cited is chap. 4
of Hermes' *De com: Alch:* (i.e., *Tractatus Aureus*), which corre-
sponds to that in *Theatrum Chemicum* 4:668, except that *bubae*
replaces *Rubae* (see Jones's verse translation of this passage be-
low, 5.185–91 and note). The anonymous *scholium* on this pas-
sage (probably written by Israel Harvetus [Pagel, *Van Helmont*,
76n], whom Jones cites at 6.98) suggests that the seven letters
probably mean the seven planets; *Alpha* and *Yda* are taken to
mean Sol and Luna in conjunction, but the mysterious *bubae*

aquae is not explained.

The second note is “*Saturnia proles Iupiter hic lapis est Mars, Sol, Venus, & Lapis hic est*” (“Jupiter, child of Saturn, is this stone, Mars. Sol, Venus and this is the stone” [?]); source cited is Merlin’s *Allegoria de Arcano Lapidis* (see 2.93n), but no verses are found in the version in *Artis Auriferae* (1610), 1:252–54.

3.117 *title*. Tittle; i.e., the smallest detail.

3.127 *cohonest*. A Latinism, from *cohonesto*, to honor fully, celebrate.

3.130 *liveing flaxe*. See *Index*, s.v. *Nero’s napkin* and 4.11.

Chapter Four

4.3 *Rosarie*. Several alchemical texts bear this name, the most important being the *Rosarius Philosophorum* attributed to Arnald of Villanova (see Ferguson, 2:287; Thorndike 3:55–59); but the tetrad cited here appears in the anonymous commentary on the passage quoted from Hermes’ *Tractatus Aureus* above, 3.97n (*Theatrum Chemicum*, 4:697–99). This passage is discussed by Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, 11.

4.8. *Cephalus*. In margin: “In merc: Triumph. lib. 4.” This is Arioponus Cephalus (alias Martinus Copus), *Mercurius Triumphans & Hebdomas Eclogarum Hermeticarum*, published at Magdeburg in 1600; Ferguson (1:150) notes it being called by one authority “a Latin poem with expositions of mystical and theosophic tenor” (see also Thorndike, 7:157). The following lines, interposed in the text, are translated in 9–16 below:

Tu compone prius sua quod putrefactio mergat,
Membra situ putrefactaque solve, solutaque rursum
Divide; sed divisa, suo purgamine lustra
Quo decet; ac lustrata, sua vice coge sub unum
Corpus, ut exacta tibi iam de sorte laborum
Spes veniat simul egregia, et tua vere serenet
Vota novo, ac viridem texat de flore Coronam.

- 4.11 *Nero's napkin*. See *Index*; and "liveing flaxe," 3.130.
- 4.21 *Ingression*. "That action by which substances combine in such a manner that they cannot afterwards be separated. Putrefaction operates this change during the period of perfect dissolution, and when the Matter is in the Black State" (Rulandus, *Lexicon*, 378).
- 4.27-28 The story of one in Tiberius Caesar's time who could render glass unbreakable and malleable is found in several ancient sources (e.g., Petronius, *Satyricon* 51) and is repeated by many later writers, like Avicenna, Bartholomaeus Anglicus (see Holmyard, 112-13), and Thomas Vaughan (*Magia Adamica* in *Works*, ed. Rudrum, 195, 469).
- 4.29 *arride me*. Makes me laugh.
- 4.32 *Izac Hollandt's sone*. Isaac Hollandus appears to be the father, Johann Isaac Hollandus the son (Ferguson, 1:412-15); the corresponding passage in Jones's Latin text cites the latter's compendious *Opera Mineralia* (publ. 1600; reprinted in *Theatrum Chemicum*, 3:304-515).
- 4.46 *Synechdochic sence*. See *Index*, and the attention to rhetoric in 1.3-4, 235; 4.95, 98; 5.282, etc.
- 4.53 *Hoofe of Mule*. See Preface, 207; 2.433.
- 4.56 *incerate*. To make moist, like wax.
- 4.59 *Olybian Lamp, in Padua*. See Preface, 208n and 4.68n. Giambattista della Porta refers briefly to the Paduan lamp (*Magia Naturalis* 12.13); for other accounts of perpetual lamps, see Shumaker, *Natural Magic and Modern Science*, 152-53, 217. Such lamps were still being discussed in 1684, in the *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society (Thorndike, 8:395).
- 4.64 *The Garland of Varietie*. Unidentified, but similar stories of the philosopher's stone being hidden in a wall by a monk of Reading Abbey, and of a vial of the "Red Tincture" being found in the walls of Bath Abbey are recorded by Jones's contemporary, Elias Ashmole (Josten 1:78-79; 2:588).
- 4.68. *Apian in's Antiquities*. In margin of MS: "See *Theatr. Chym.*, vol 1. p. 27." This is the "Manifest Proof of the Chemical Art from the Antiquities of Peter Apian" (1495-1552), in the form of two inscriptions found at Padua; it was printed in the 1602 ed. of Robertus Vallensis' *De Veritate et Antiquitate*

Artis Chemicæ and in *Theatrum Chemicum* (1659), 1:29 (see Ferguson 2:496–97, Thorndike 5:623n). The Latin inscriptions (one supposedly on the outer urn, the other on a smaller inner one which contained the two vials of the lamp’s fuel; see Preface 208n) are interposed after line 68 in Jones’s MS and translated at lines 69–76 and 85–92:

Plutoni sacrum munus ne attingite fures,
Ignotum est vobis hac quod in urna latet:
Namque Elementa gravi clausit digesta labore,
Vase sub hoc modulo, maximus Olybius.
Adsit foecundo custos sibi copia cornu,
Ne pretium tanti depereat Laticis.

Abite hinc Pessimi fures;
Vos quid voltis vestris cum oculis emissitiis?
Abite hinc vestro cum mercurio petasato caduceatoque.
Maximus maximo donum Plutoni hoc sacrum facit
(text corrected slightly from *Theatrum Chemicum*, 1:29).

These inscriptions also found their way into Jenkyn Gwynne’s 1569 rendering of *Tyrocaesar*, where the story of their origin is traced to one Evonimus (*Secretum Secretorum*, ed. Manzalaoui, 545–46; for Evonimus (i.e., Conrad Gesner), see Ferguson 1:313–16, and Debus, *Chemical Philosophy* 1:18, 22–23).

4.98 *Metonymie*. Metonymy: substituting an associated name for the item intended; the following lines explain the application here; see also 46, 95 above.

4.113 *our Lion*. Of the many lions in alchemical symbology the most important is the Green Lion, defined by Rulandus as (*inter alia*) “the Ore of Hermes, Glass, and Vitriol, also the Blood from Sulphur, the first Mercury of Gold, altered by means of the Lunar Body” (*Lexicon*, 206); see also note on Frontispiece.

4.117 *Minerva*. See *Index*.

4.118 *plumous Alomme*. Plumose (“feathery”) alum, one of the “most useful” of the three commonly occurring kinds of alum described in Albertus Magnus, *Book of Minerals*; when cleaved it “appears feathery on the cleavage surface and has a colour like

silver" (trans. Wyckoff, 244).

4.120 *Pausanias*. Whose second-century A.D. *Description of Greece* depicts a golden lamp made for the shrine of Athena (Minerva) on the Acropolis—a lamp that burns day and night for a full year (1.26.6–7).

4.121 *Faber . . . chymic sprights*. Albertus Otto Faber, physician to Charles II after the Restoration, published in 1668 *Some Kindling Sparks in Matters of Physick: To satisfie some physicians who are of the opinion, that spirits (which they call hot things) do burn and inflame the body* (Wing F70).

4.127 *perennitie*. Perennity, perpetuity.

4.131-34 *Mathematic horse . . . new Arithmetic*. Unidentified.

4.152 *rotall*. Circular, repetitious.

4.156 *the Ela strayne*. The highest note in the musical scale of Guido Aretinus.

4.157-58. *grape . . . Cupp of Aesculape*. A metaphor for *aurum potabile*, which the corresponding passage in Jones's Latin treatise identifies as the height of philosophy (57).

4.162 *Hollandt*. See 4.32n, above.

4.175 *Crollius*. See 1.41n above.

4.183 *slight*. So MS reads; possibly a slip for *spright*, as at line 180. *hit*: it.

4.195 *weale publique*. Most alchemists claim to be public-spirited, but Jones's emphasis on the medicinal uses of the philosopher's stone prepares for the first part of chap. 5 and all of chap. 6, which are devoted to that subject.

4.203 *Rulandus*. Martinus Rulandus the Elder, whose *Progymnasmata Alchemiae* (1607) is cited in the margin of the MS, referring to "Alc: quaest: 66." See Ferguson (2:303) and Thorndike (7:159–60) who says this work is by Martinus the Younger; and below 5.381n.

4.210 *Dayrelius' sprite*. The spirit of Solar gold; see *Index*, s.v. *Dairelius. Maia's sone*: Hermes, fathered by Zeus; see also *Index*, s.v. *Maia*.

4.225-26. *good seed . . . evill one*. Implicit here is the Paracelsian theory of disease as being caused by a "seed" (*astrum*), rather than (as in Galenic theory) an imbalance in the four hu-

mors; see Pagel, *Paracelsus*, 126–202, and (for Oswald Croll’s application of this theory to therapeutic practice), Hannaway, *The Chemists and the Word*, 38–43.

4.236 *Coppell*. Variant spelling of *cupel*: a small shallow porous cup usually made of bone-ash, and used in assaying gold or silver with lead; as a verb: to assay or refine in a cupel (*OED*).

4.241 *mercurial sobbe*. Sop; i.e., a soaking in mercury.

4.246 *Paracelsus’ Chirurgie*. In margin of MS: “Chirurg: magna Paracelsi,” an English translation of which can be found in *Paracelsus his Dispensatory and Chirurgery*, trans. W.D. (1656; Wing B3541).

4.259–68 Similarly, Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa claims to be able to extract the seminal power (*spiritus mundi* or quintessence) from gold, and to transmute base metals into gold with it, but he says that the resulting gold will be only as great as the amount with which he began (*De Occulta Philosophia*, 1.23–24; cited in Nauert, *Agrippa*, 267).

4.268 I.e., the medicinal power of the stone is greater and of more worth than its metallic power.

4.271 *delicate*. Delicacy. *Promethean banquet*: see Preface, 32n, and *Index*.

4.282 *Crollius*. The following interpolated lines (translated at 284–95) are identified in the margin as being from Oswald Croll’s “*Baz[ilica] Chym[ica]*, pag: 256,” but they vary somewhat from the text in British Library copy (Frankfurt, 1609; 1400.e.21): “Inter coelestia Sol obtinet primas. Inter vegetabilia, vinum; inter animalia, homo. Inter mineralia, aurum. Sol ergo metallicus animatus, ac per regenerationem astralis factus, solis vegetabilis seu spiritus vini appropriato menstruo, Soli animali seu cordi microcosmico hominis viz: spiritui vitae tanquam simili applicandus est.”

4.310 *Oxe’s tounge*. See *Appendix*, in the first 18 operations, s.v. *Filtration*.

4.315 *vinall*. Vinal: Produced by wine or originating in wine (*OED*); cf. “grape,” line 297.

4.320 *Marie’s bath*. The bain-marie (from *balneum Mariae*) or water-bath, a vessel for holding warm water, in which other vessels are placed, as in a double-boiler.

- 4.369 *Energiuous*. Energetic, energetic, or “powerfully active” (*OED*).
- 4.372 *Muscadine*. Muscatel.
- 4.381 *boult’s head*. A globular flask with a long cylindrical neck, used for distillation.
- 4.386-87 *convexed fence / To*. I.e., a curved barrier or protection for: the shape of the frozen brandy.
- 4.393 *Ruby Stone*. The Red Stone, to be complemented by the White Stone (395).
- 4.404 In margin of MS: “See Cap: 1.” Especially relevant are Callisto (1.186ff.) and Daphne (1.281ff.); see also lines 406, 412 below.
- 4.409 *emissives*. Those things emitted.
- 4.412 *Carante*. A running (*courant*), or a dance (*courante*) characterized by a running or gliding step. In margin of MS: “In opere solis est saltus Lunae.”
- 4.418 *feste*. Fast.
- 4.419 *Krisis*. Crisis, the critical point in the course of a disease, when it turns toward abatement or death. *Phoebe’s Jest*: her notable deed (*gest*); or, the moon’s “prank” (*jest*) in causing disease.
- 4.431 *Caementation*. See *Appendix*.
- 4.434 *Vulcan’s fleete Aeolian toole*. Probably a bellows; Aeolus was god of the winds.
- 4.463 *flower of Saphir*. “The spiritous *Flos*, or Flower, is the substance of a thing. Every flower of a matter is in itself volatile and spirituous, although it is possible to fix it by a masterly skill” (Rulandus, *Lexicon*, 147). *Saphir*: “the Gem Sapphire, closely allied to Jasper” (Rulandus, 286).
- 4.471 *power*. Pour.
- 4.477 *Inclination*. Rulandus’ only definition has to do with “the bent of Nature” (182), not with a technical operation.
- 4.482 *anhele*. Anneal (which usually means to bake or toughen by the force of heat) in its rare transferred meaning, applied to the hardening action of frost in forming icicles, etc. (*OED*, 4.c); see also following note.
- 4.484 *In Styryion’s forme*. In the shape of an icicle, from Latin *stiria*.

- 4.494** *Pandora's quicker flies.* The "astrall maladies" (see 5.60) that flew from her infamous box; see *Index*, s.v. *Prometheus*
- 4.495** *Skogin's fleas.* See *Index*; like *Medico de Campo* (2.142n above), Scoggin's fleas appear in Thomas Randolph's *Aristippus* (*Works* 1:29).

Chapter Five

- 5.5** In margin of MS: "Aph: 27 liber 2," i.e., the aphorism of *Hippocrates* (line 9), paraphrased in lines 6–10; see 6.21n below.
- 5.11** *tumours scrofulous.* The "King's evil," supposedly curable by "th' Regall touch."
- 5.16** *our Physic Cupp.* In margin of MS: Illustration of a cup with letters written on it and "See Urampela in table," i.e., the *Index*, where this cup is fully explained. See also the recipe for the *Antimoniall Cup*, at the end of Jones's *Appendix*, and 5.826n, below.
- 5.27-28** *rules . . . pricks.* The method of diagnosis based on geomancy, whereby bits of earth (*mowlds*) were thrown on some surface and random dots (*pricks*) were jotted down on paper. See 30n.
- 5.30** *Peucer.* In margin of MS: "See Peucer: de sortileg," i.e., Gaspar Peucer, whose *Commentarius de Praecipuis Divinationum Generibus* (1553) surveyed of all kinds of divination, including sortilege, or divination by lots (see Thorndike, 6:495–501).
- 5.32** *nayle of Devill . . . Pie.* I.e., that there is any demonic element in geomancy or the other forms of natural magic catalogued in the following lines.
- 5.38** *armorious unguent.* The "Weapon Salve" attributed by Oswald Croll and others to Paracelsus; the weapon causing a wound was anointed with this "unguent," and "the cure is done by the magnetique attractive power of this Salve, caused by the Starres, which by the mediation of the ayre, is carried and adjoined to the Wound, that so the Spirituall operation thereof may bee effected" (Daniel Sennert, *The Weapon-Salves Mal-*

adie [1637], quoted in Debus, *English Paracelsians*, 121; Sennert [1572–1637] is cited directly by Jones, 5.298 below).

5.40 *Adamant right intelligible*. Like the “weapon-salve” and *Pestillential fowle* (39), the reputed virtues of the magnet were attributed to the universal powers of sympathy and antipathy that manifested themselves in the linkages (astral or “spiritual”) between macrocosm and microcosm. See lines 47–48, and the allegory of Prometheus, 70ff. For the magnet in Robert Fludd and Helmont, see Debus, *Chemical Philosophy*, 1:286ff., 2:303ff.

5.43 *Felganor*. In margin of MS: “See his Epist: printed in the Dutch tounge.” The Flemish astrologer, Paul Felgenhauer, chap. 5 of whose *Jehior: Aurora Sapientiae* “in the German-language edition” is cited in Jones’s Latin text (57); this work was translated in William Cooper’s *Philosophical Epitaph* (1673, Wing C6062; identified in Linden, *Catalogue*, entry 105 and p. 41). Felgenhauer’s “messianic almanacs” are discussed in Trout, “Magic and the Millennium,” chap. 3 and 302–303.

5.49–50 *Prometheus Kinge . . . first mention*. I.e., in Preface 5, 32 and notes, q.v. He is not usually portrayed as a “king,” but according to Michael Maier, “*Aeschilus* doth attribute the invention of *Pyromancy*, the composition of Medicines, the first working upon Gold, Iron, and other mettals, to *Prometheus*; hence the Athenians erected an Altar common to him, *Vulcan*, and *Pallas*, considering how much fire conduced to the finding out of the secrets of nature” (*Themis Aurea*, English trans. [1656], 29).

A.-J. Pernety gives an even more specific alchemical interpretation of Prometheus than that offered in lines 49–204; after recounting the whole myth (as in Jones’s *Index*), he writes: “Les Philosophes hermétiques trouvent dans cette fable un symbole de leur oeuvre, & disent que Prométhée représente leur soufre animé du feu céleste, puisqu’il est lui-même une miniere de ce feu, selon le témoignage de d’Espagnet. Le Soleil est son père, & la Lune sa mere: c’est dan sa volatilisation avec le mercure qu’ils s’envole au ciel des Philosophes, où ils s’unissent ensemble, & remportent ce feu en terre; c’est-à-dire, qu’ils en impregnent la terre qui est au fond du vase, en se cohobant avec elle. En se fixant avec elle, Prométhée se trouve attaché par Mercure

sur le rocher, & les parties volatiles qui agissent sans cess sur cette terre, sont le vautour, ou l'aigle, qui lui déchirent le foie. Hercule, ou l'Artiste, le délivre de ce tourment en tuant l'aigle, c'est-à-dire, en fixant ces parties volatiles" (*Dictionnaire Mytho-Hermétique*, 407).

5.56 *'topp on's oaken toole*. On the top of (atop) his oaken ferule (see line 99).

5.58 *Epimetheus' love*. Pandora (see *Index*).

5.67-69 *compound rhetoric*. See 4.46n. *enucleate*: draw the kernel out of; expound, clarify. *Submutation*: in margin of MS: "Hypalage," i.e., *Hypallage*, the figure of speech in which there is an interexchange of two elements of a proposition, their natural relations being reversed; in Quintilian 8.6.23, the same as *metonymy* (*OED*).

5.70 *his name . . . descries*. I.e., Prometheus means "forethought."

5.85 *his*. I.e., of the *grave Galenic hood* (83), the traditional Galenic physician.

5.92 *that liveinge Kernell*. The vital solar essence or "seed," related to that of the solar metal gold; see 109ff., below.

5.95 *Character of that Sun*. I.e., the traditional sigil for the sun and gold, a circle with a point in the center, which is illustrated in the margin of the MS. *both / Of Phoebus' wagen* (97-98): the two golden wheels of Apollo's sun-chariot, which Ovid says turned on a golden axle (*Metamorphoses* 2.105-8).

5.102 *Chaywoorke Turnors*. Chaise-work (*Chay*: corrupt form of *chaise*, light carriage); *turnor*: turner, one who turns (as on a lathe) a piece of metal. See Figure 9, which is inserted after this line in the MS. It depicts Prometheus stealing the fire from Apollo's chariot, the alchemist with the symbol of gold in his hand, and a lathe-worker. Motto: "'Allight, Prometheus, off thy Goddesses' wings, / And let me fier thy stick,' the Turner singes."

5.107 *Illusion*. In margin of MS: "Ironia."

5.120 *Hiroglyphic*. In margin of MS: "to witt, in Chapter 1." I.e., Figure 2, following 1.202.

5.125-28 *to beach*. Literally, to give a beakfull (of meat) to a young bird, esp. in falconry to whet the appetite of a hawk. *tire*:

to prey on, tear the flesh of, esp. used of a hawk. *Nares*: the nostrils, esp. of a hawk. *first part of this discourse*: see Preface 5; 1.212ff.

5.155 *To winne the whetstone*. I.e., “to deserve the whetstone,” since liars were punished by having a whetstone hung around their necks (Tilley, *Proverbs* W298); that is, the mythological “historie” (154) is far-fetched, as Allsragen explains with regard to Prometheus’ eagle, lines 139–44. Francis Bacon makes a similar argument in his Preface to *De Sapientia Veterum*: “some of them [myths] are so absurd and stupid upon the face of the narrative taken by itself, that they may be said to give notice from afar and cry out that there is a parable [allegorical significance] below” (*Works* 6:697).

5.156 *Ovid*. In margin of MS: “*Met[amorphoses]*”; see 1.281ff., above for the story of Daphne and Apollo, explicated here.

5.163 *Paeneus*. See *Index*.

5.173ff. *Epapus, Archas, Io*. See *Index* and *Metamorphoses*, Book 1, cited in margin of MS.

5.185-92 Translating the following interposed passage from Hermes’ *Tractatus Aureus* (marginal note in MS: “*De Comp: Alc: c. 4*”): “*Librum sequitur Sol. Volens tamen dominare, artem custodire; iungere Bubae aquae filium qui est Iupiter.*” This is the same passage (from *Theatrum Chemicum*, 4:668) cited at 3.97n, except for the variant reading noted there.

5.190 *Heyfar*. Heifer, the form to which Io had been changed by Jupiter; cf. *unheyfard*, line 201.

5.196 *Maya’s sone*. Mercury.

5.197 Argus guarded Io (as heifer); the peacock is Juno’s bird, in whose tail (which in making the philosopher’s stone symbolizes the necessary sequence of colors) she set the many eyes of the slain Argus (see *Metamorphoses* 1.588ff.). *to quick*: to quicken, restore to life or vigor.

5.205-8 On the tradition of reading mythology generally as an alchemical allegory, see Read, *Prelude*, 160–63 and (on Michael Maier’s *Atalanta Fugiens*) 236–46. Jones may also have in mind here an important Ovidian passage for alchemists, 15.237–51, where the transmutability of the four elements into each other is explained.

5.219 *our Harper.* Apollo, who served as a shepherd in Elis (*Metamorphoses* 2.677ff.); see Figure 10, following line 232.

5.224 *theyr Antique cick.* Their antics kick.

5.232 See Figure 10, which is inserted in the MS after this line. The lower diagram (with the caption “See Aristotle, *De caelo et mundo*, lib: 2” crossed through) represents the concentric spheres of the elements, planets, and zodiac. The upper one depicts the conjunction of various planets/metals (Saturn/lead with moon/silver; Mars/iron with Venus/copper; Jupiter/tin with Mercury/quicksilver), as described at lines 5.219–52.

5.248 *Sendivogius.* The Polish alchemist Michael Sendivogius (1556–1636). No specific work is cited in the MS, but the purification of Diana (Luna) by joining with Apollo (Sol) is recounted allegorically in his *Tractatus de Sulphure*, translated as *A Dialogue of the Allchymist and Sulphur* in this collection (see Introduction and lines 424–88), Part Four.

5.249 *Atlante’s Nephew.* Atlante is another name for Maia (see 196 above); “nephew” refers jocularly and euphemistically to her illegitimate son by Jupiter.

5.254 *twofold Venus.* See *Venus* in *Index*.

5.261 *Lycaon’s guest.* See *Index*.

5.268 The following lines (probably based on Macrobius’ *Commentary* 2.1.14, 2.3.7–10) have been cancelled:

Hence is the number seven deified,
And th’ Number sixe as royal magnified
On earth; and soe the mathematics quote
This Number as compleate in music note.

There are also biblical glosses for *seven* (Malach: 4.10; but chap. 4 has only 6 verses) and *sixe* (Apoc: 13:18: “This calls for wisdom: let him who has understanding reckon the number of the beast, for it is a human number, its number is six hundred and sixty-six”; see *Index*, s.v. *Hercules*).

There follows a musical staff with notes, “ut, re, mi, fa, sol, la,” and these unidentified Latin verses, “Ut releuet, inservum fatum, solitasque labores / eni, sit dulcis, musica noster amor,” translated as

To recreate my faylinge Sowle
Late after taedious wayes,
As help most meete I doe enrowle
Sweet music's roundelayes.

Numerological analogies were important in the magical music theory of Marsilio Ficino and others (see Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, passim). For Pythagorean and Cabalistic number symbolism, and its relation to music and thence to alchemy (especially in Michael Maier), see Read, 246–54, and Yates, *Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, 205; see also Debus, “Mathematics and Nature.”

5.279 *this Learned man.* Prometheus.

5.283 *metaleptic skill.* See *Index*.

5.284 *Layic.* Laic: belonging to laymen or the uninitiated, hence “superficial”; or possibly “poetic,” a neologism from *lay*, poem or song (?).

5.286 *then 's.* Then his.

5.287 *cest.* Cestus, the belt or girdle of Venus.

5.290 *thunder.* The beginning of a long explication of Promethean “thunder,” i.e., the explosion caused in the chemical operations described below. The passage that follows is part of an on-going discussion in chemical circles, concerning air as being necessary to both life and fire. The debate began with Paracelsus, who posited the existence of an aerial sulphur and an aerial nitre, and who taught that aerial nitre caused explosions in the heavens just as terrestrial nitre (saltpeter) does in gunpowder; it ended with Lavoisier (ca. 1775) who proved oxygen to be a constituent of air (see Debus, *Chemical Philosophy*, 1:107–108, 2:492–99).

5.298 *grave Senertus . . . Doctor Browne.* Marginal note: “In [Sir Thomas Browne’s] *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, l[iber] 2. ch. 5” (first ed., 1646). Here, at the end of a discussion of a white gunpowder that is “discharged without report,” Browne cites Daniel Sennert, *De Chymicorum cum Aristotelicis et Galenicis Consensu ac Dissensu* (1633), 410, as against the opinion of Oswald Croll’s *Basilica Chymica* (1609), 212ff. See Browne, ed. Robbins, 1:134, 2:759–60; and for Sennert, Debus, *Chemical*

Philosophy, 1:191–200.

5.301 *Regall water*. *Aqua regia* or *aqua regis*, a mixture of nitric and hydrochloric acids, so called because it can dissolve “kingly” metals like gold.

5.309-10 The two examples cited by Browne (“the preparation of Crocus Metallorum,” and the dissolving of iron in *aqua fortis* or nitric acid) are identified and analyzed in lines 311ff. Partington summarizes Browne’s discussion, which he sees as anticipating that of John Mayow: “Sir Thomas Browne said the explosion of gunpowder is due to the generation of a large bulk of air; thunder is due to nitrous and sulphureous exhalations set on fire in the clouds, and earthquakes are caused by a similar process in the earth. There is an antipathy or contention between saltpetre and sulphur, and in the deflagration of antimony [sulphide] with nitre the sulphur of the antimony reacts. The effervescence and fumes when iron is dissolved in aqua fortis are ‘caused from this combat of the sulphur of iron with the acid and nitrous spirits of the aqua fortis’” (Partington, 2:599; see also Guerlac, “The Poets’ Aerial Nitre,” esp. 251–52). Throughout Jones’s discussion there is an important distinction made between “vulgar sulphur” and “fixt” or “philosophical” sulphur, the latter being (with mercury) one of the ultimate constituents of metals.

5.322 *Liver*. In margin of MS: “Hepar Antimon:” “the liver of antimony.” James Primerose’s *The Antimoniall Cup* (1640), 23, refers to “*Crocus metallorum* [see preceding note], otherwise called *Hepar antimonii*, the liver of *antimony*”; but Basilius Valentinus distinguishes between these two substances and gives a different process for each (see his *Triumphal Chariot*, trans. Waite, 130–33, 138–39). See also *Calcination* and *Extinction* in the *Appendix*, below; and for antimonial cups, *Urampela* in the *Index*.

5.325 *bookes*. Written in margin of MS: “See Ewald: Hogeland: *de met: trans.*”; i.e., Ewaldus de Hoghelande, *Historiae Aliquot Transmutationis Metallicae pro Defensione Alchymiae contra Hostium Rabiem* (1604), a collection of successful transmutations (see Ferguson 1:411–12; Thorndike 5:647–48).

5.350 *dimidiate*. Reduced to half.

5.364 *impeded*. Hindered, impeded.

- 5.365** *Layic scaenes*. See above, 5.284n.
- 5.381** *Rulandus*. In margin of MS: "In prog: Alc: Quaest. 52"; see 4.203n, above.
- 5.385** *gumme of Lacc*. Resin of certain trees which when melted and strained produces shellac.
- 5.389** *Galban*. Another gum resin (see 381).
- 5.397** *Campanella*. In margin of MS: "In l[iber] de sensu rerum"; i.e., Tommaso Campanella (1568–1639), *De Sensu Rerum et Magia Libri Quatuor* (Frankfurt, 1620), the last book of which explains natural magic in relation to the innate sympathies and antipathies between objects (see Thorndike 7:298; Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, passim; and, for a full analysis of this work, Shumaker, *Natural Magic and Modern Science*, chap. 4).
- 5.401** *each body mixt's ingredient / True principles*. Each mixed body's true principles (that enter into it).
- 5.402** *discent*. Dissent.
- 5.406** *Similitude of formes*. The essential correspondences between and among various realms of being. *fate*: i.e., fat, oil.
- 5.410** *slitt*. Divide, separate.
- 5.426** In margin of MS: "See the Preface"; probably lines 115–18 are meant.
- 5.456** *John*. In margin of MS: "Ep: 1. c. 5. v. 38"; but chap. 5 of John's First Epistle General has only 21 verses. Jones must mean verses 7–8, which he cites above (see 2.278 and note) and in his *Herm'aelogium*, 73, in relation to the three-fold nature of matter (see "pure trinitie," line 454). For a similar application of John's "trinity" see Thomas Vaughan, *Magia Adamica* (*Works*, 162). See 6.308n.
- 5.485** *Crollius*. In margin of MS: "Baz: Chym: p. 169" (see above, 1.41, 4.175, etc.).
- 5.505** *Menstruum*: "that from which all metals are derived. It is of two kinds. One is like unto whey, and this is useless. The other is mercurial, and this is of good account. It is the Mercury wherein gold is dissolved" (Rulandus, 228).
- 5.517** *Tartar vitreolate*. The salts of tartaric acid treated with vitriol (here a sulfate, probably of iron used in medicaments), as described in the following lines.
- 5.528** *spoil your sport*. I.e., the bubbling mixture will over-

flow a "short" or shallow container.

5.537 *Accend.* Kindle, fire.

5.541-43 Whence comes the kindling of the sulphur vitriolate (when combined with the "solar sprite") and the sharp saltpeter (?).

5.550 *gun-powder weede.* The only possible meaning in the context seems to derive from a contrast between *weed* (as "garment") and "body bare" (554) or unclothed; see *garment*, line 633 below.

5.559-64 The syntax here is strained.

5.562 *actuatus.* Made active.

5.567 *precipit.* Precipitate. *lay:* allow to settle to the bottom of the vessel (?); see lines 576, 640.

5.571 *Hartmannus there.* A marginal note to line 840 below identifies the source as Johann Hartmann's *Praxis Chymiatrica* (1648; see Ferguson 1:365-66); cf. also lines 597ff. *assoile:* solve, unloose the knot of.

5.572 *affusion.* Pouring upon.

5.609 *Crollius.* See line 485n, above.

5.612 *tonitruous.* Thundery (earliest usage in *OED*: 1693).

5.616 *Playntiff.* Plaintive, complaining; see *defendant*, 624.

5.618 *Gunpowder.* The usual formula is 75 per cent saltpeter (nitre), 10 per cent sulphur (brimstone), and 15 per cent carbon in the form of charcoal.

5.633 *brode.* Broad.

5.642 *praecipit . . . right.* I.e., "must, by rights, be precipitated."

5.644 *deliquiate.* Deliquated, melted down.

5.650 *kindred.* Kinship.

5.653 *Do' th'.* Doth the.

5.660 This saying does not appear in Tilley or in other dictionaries of proverbs.

5.666 *dos.* Dose, quantity.

5.677 *Hine.* Servant.

5.684 *Marsil: Ficinus.* Marsilio Ficino, Florentine Neoplatonist (d. 1499), whose *De Vita Longa* (Book 2 of *De Triplici Vita*, first publ. 1489) is cited in the margin of the MS. Jones's Latin text (37) cites also Book 3, the *De Vita Coelitus Com-*

paranda, which deals with the astral influences on the body. All three books are concerned with the human *spiritus*, on which see Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, 3–6 et passim. The “Sympathie” between wine’s “Coelestiall sprite” and our own is developed especially in *De Vita Longa* 2.18 (see *Three Books on Life*, 225–27). The idea of the solar properties of wine and gold is a characteristic element of Ficino’s (and Jones’s) sympathetic magic; see Yates, *Bruno*, esp. chap. 4. For Ficinian magic in relation to the alchemical tradition generally, see Debus, *Chemical Philosophy*, 1:31–33; see also Jones’s use of Ficino at 6.213n and *Index*, s.v. *Venus*.

5.689-92 Translating the following interpolated lines: “Solis aeterna est Phoebos, Bacchoque Iuventus / nam decet intensus crinis utrumque Deum.” Jones’s Latin text (36–37) identifies the source as Petrus Arlensis de Scudalupis, whose book on the natural sympathies of metals, gems, and planets, *Sympathia Septem Metallorum ac Septem Selectorum Lapidum ad Planetas*, appeared in 1610; see Thorndike 6:301–302.

5.699 See textual note.

5.701-12 Translates these interposed lines from Horace’s *Odes*, 1.22.21–24: “Pone sub curru nimium propinqui / Solis in terra domibus negata: / Dulce ridentem Lalagen amabo / Dulce loquentem.”

5.736 *frith*. Metathetic form of *firth*: an arm of the sea; hence, “foames the frith.”

5.746 *Water Pontic*. Rulandus (458): “one of the many names which have been given to the Mercury of the Sages; in this case, the reference is to that Pontic quality [i.e., having a sour or astringent taste] which has otherwise obtained for it the appellation of a most sharp Vinegar.” The term “water of Pontus” is referred to in procedures described by Maria the Jewess, in some of the earliest alchemical manuscripts (see Patai, “Maria the Jewess,” 180).

5.750 *wennes*. Warts or cysts.

5.761-72 Translating the following interpolated verses from Michael Scot (see 3.44n, 59, 61–68n):

Spontaneo actu tollit morbos sine tactu,
Cum res sit clausa, nec adhuc mihi cognita causa
Qualiter expellat morbos, medicosque repellat,
Dissipet utrumque morbum calidum gelidumque
Arceat atque domet, metrice canit ore suomet.

5.764 *s' ract.* So racked, tormented (a doubtful reading; the word is blotted in the MS).

5.774 *Crie out.* Exclaim

5.777 *Valesco de Tarant.* Valescus de Taranta, whose *Tabula Capitulorum Philonii* (bk. 8, chap. 12) is cited in margin of MS. Lines 781–92 translate this interpolated passage: “Tota substantia agere est quaedam virtus, vel naturalis positio continens immediate formam substantialem rei, acquisita cum influentia corporum supra caelestium ad hoc specialem influentiam habentium, introductione formae &c.” Michael Maier’s *Themis Aurea* (cited often in Jones’s poem) also quotes this passage from Valesco (English trans., 1656): “But to speak truly and clearly as it becomes Philosophers, we hold that there is a natural vertue and certain predestination flowing from the influence of heavenly bodies, so particularly disposing the Form to be introduced, that it is (as it were) determined to its proper object, whereby after due preparation of the matter, and conjunction of the form, the whole Substance or mixed body necessarily produces a proportionable effect” (34).

5.779 *substance universe.* “Universal substance” (?); cf. *totall substance*, line 775.

5.804 *lurkes.* Escapes observation.

5.808 *Ens.* See above, 2.269.

5.810 *Plato.* In margin of MS (some words cropped or obscured, so the reading is conjectural): *de particular[is?] de sens[ibus?] obviis et de ente transcendent[e?] non est disputandum* (“concerning the meetings of particulars of the senses and concerning the transcendent entity there can be no dispute”?). The source is unidentified, but see above, 2.294n.

5.813-18 Behind these lines are the Neoplatonic ideas of emanation and “undiminished giving,” by which the physical man-

ifestation of the divine power (whether in fire, light, or love) causes no diminishment of that power, even in the vehicles of creation like the stars (see Wallis, *Neoplatonism*, 62, and below 6.145, where Jones develops this notion).

5.821 *Ezechia*. Hezekiah, for whom the Lord reversed the course of the sun as a sign (2 Kings 20:11).

5.826 *goulden Marchasite's enchaunted bowle*. The “Antimioniall Cupp” (marginal note in MS); see 5.16n, above.

5.831 *Extinction*. See the last term in Jones’s *Appendix*.

5.832 *chathartic*. Cathartic, cleansing.

5.840 *those*. In margin of MS: “See Hartman: in *Prax: Chym:* p. 549”; cf. 5.571n, above.

5.841 *exorce*. Exorcize.

5.843 *Guilbertus' goast*. In margin of MS: “See his booke *Contra Alc:* Where he sayth that R[aymond] Lullie was taught this art by Diab: in spir.” Nicolas Guibert’s *Alchymia Ratione et Experientia ita Demum Viriliter Impugnata et Expugnata* (1603) suggests that Lull and Arnaldus of Villanova were quacks and heretics, deluded by demons (Thorndike 6:244; also above, Preface 153, 156n).

5.844 *by entayle*. By entail, meaning both “by necessary sequence” and by legal succession—i.e., Jones is a “descendant” of Raymond Lully.

5.854 *Crab-lock*. I.e., crabbed lock or difficulty: one perversely intricate or hard to decipher.

Chapter Six

6.11-12 *Physic hood . . . philosophic*. Both physician and philosopher. See *gowne* at line 65, below.

6.19 *supervenient*. Occurring subsequently.

6.21 *Hurnius*. In margin of MS: “See Com: Hurn: in Aph: 22, l[iber] 2”; i.e., the commentary on and Latin translation of the *Aphorisms* of Hippocrates, in *Hippocratis Coi Aphorismi Graece et Latine* (Leyden, 1601), by the Paracelsian physician Johannes Heurnius (1543–1603). See above, Preface 96 and 5.5n.

- 6.29** *some trusty mate.* Alluding to the Paracelsian and Hermetic medical principle that “like cures like,” as opposed to the Galenic notion of dietary and herbal cures by contraries (on the two systems, see Debus, *Chemical Philosophy*, 2:454 et passim).
- 6.30** *corroborate.* Strengthen.
- 6.35** *seventh proprietie.* See 2.288n.
- 6.37** *Equinoctiall gate.* I.e., the equinoxes, about March 21 and September 23, when day and night are equal everywhere (lines 39–40); *line* (40): equator.
- 6.41** *rodde.* I.e., a shoot, still part of a tree, bush, etc.
- 6.50** *Crittic dayes.* Relating to the crisis-point of a disease; cf. 4.419n above.
- 6.52** *Porcius . . . to Cateline.* The following interpolated quotation (identified as *Porcius ad Catilinam* in Jones’s Latin text, 43, but untraced) is translated in lines 53–64: “Num in negotiis agendis ignoras sequendas temporum oportunitates? et in occasione rerum desidiam ac tarditatem omnem quam diligentissime fugiendam? mirabilissime quidem sunt Deorum voluntates; et fortunam cum abire permiseris, frustra postmodum discedentem ac fugientem sis imploraturus &c.”
- 6.64** See textual note.
- 6.68** *Mayerus.* Michael Maier, whose “*liber de frat: Ros: Crucis*, c. 4” (i.e., *Themis Aurea* [Frankfurt, 1618; English trans. 1656], chap. 4) is cited in the margin. This work summarizes the laws of the Rosicrucian Brethren, as set out in earlier manifestos (see Yates, *Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, 86 and below, *Index*, s.vv. *Rozencraus*, *Turb[a]*). Chapter 4 extolls “the excellency of Medicine above other Arts” and explains that any of the Rosicrucian brethren who travel “must professe Medicine and cure gratis without any reward” (1656 ed., 25). An excerpt from this chap. on the nature of Rosicrucian medicine is quoted above, Preface 32n.
- 6.73** *Ease and Payne.* In margin: “A Iuvant: et laedent:” (from *iuvo*, to help; *laido*, to hurt).
- 6.74** *Gyges-ringed-Deere.* The hidden disease; see *Index*.
- 6.75** *gravells.* Confounds, perplexes.
- 6.82** Translating “quid ante quid, quid cum quo, quid post quid etc.,” in margin of MS.

6.86 *Machaon's scholler*. See *Index*.

6.87-92 Asclepiades of Prusa was an influential medical practitioner (1st century B.C.) whose atomic theory of medicine opposed the traditional humoral theory of Hippocrates and Galen. Celsus (1st century A.D.) cites him often in his *De Medicina*, noting at the beginning of bk. 5 his rejection of medicaments, since nearly all of them "harm the stomach and contain bad juices" (Loeb ed. [1961], 2:3).

6.94 *claudicate*. Limp.

6.97 *Aesculapius*. The Roman god of medicine, not to be confused with *Asclepiades* (88); here jocularly for "physician."

6.98 *Harvettus' booke*. In margin is an abbreviated reference to Israel Harvetus, *Defensio Chymiae adversus Apologiam & Censuram Scholae Medicorum Parisiensium* (Paris, 1604); see Debus, *French Paracelsians*, 58-59, for the role of this work in the Parisian chemical debate, to which Jones alludes in his Preface, 141-56.

6.101-362 The fullest exposition of Jones's spiritual or contemplative alchemy; see also 2.273n and 3.61n, above.

6.107 *Zerubabell*. A marginal note in the MS cites Zechariah 4:10. Here the angel says to the prophet Zechariah, regarding Zerubbabel's laying the foundation of the new temple, "For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth." The "seven eyes" are those engraved on a stone which the Lord laid before Joshua (Zech. 3:9). Jones, extending the biblical typology of stones, sees a parallel between the philosopher's stone, Christ (e.g., at Matt. 21:42), and this one. See also 343-46n, below.

This passage from Zechariah is also quoted at the beginning of Nicolas Flamel's *Exposition of the Hieroglyphicall Figures* (English trans., 1624; sig. A5r). Jones's contemporary Thomas Vaughan finds the "Christian Philosopher's stone" adumbrated repeatedly in the Bible: "This is the *Rock* in the *wilderness*; in the *wildernesse*, because in great *obscurity*, and *few there are* that know the *right way* unto it. This is the *stone of fire* in *Ezeckiel*; this is the *stone with seven eyes* upon it in *Zacharie*,

and this is the *white stone* with the *new Name* in the *Revelation*. But in the *Gospel* where *Christ* himself *speakes*, who was born to *discover Mysteries*, and communicate *Heaven* to *Earth*, it is more clearly describ'd. This is the *Salt* which you ought to have *in your selves*, this is the *Water* and *spirit* whereof you must be *born again*, and this is that *seed* which falls to the *ground*, and *multiplies* to an *hundredfold*" (*Works*, ed. Rudrum, 132–33). On the *Christ-lapis* parallel in alchemy generally, see Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy*, 345–431.

6.117 See John 1:1–7, where the Word is identified with the Light.

6.127–28 Marginal note lists the following works: Jean Fernel, *De Abditis Rerum Causis* (1548); Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa, *De Occulta Philosophia* (1531); and Tommaso Campanella, *De Sensu Rerum*, on which see above, 5.397n.

6.135–39 These lines can be traced ultimately to the supposed direct quotation from Pythagoras in Justin Martyr: "God is one. And He is not, as some think, outside the world, but in it, for He is entirely in the whole circle looking over all generations. He is the blending agent of all ages; the executor of His own powers and deeds; the first cause of all things; the light in heaven; the Father of all; the mind and animating force of the universe; the motivating factor of all the heavenly bodies" (quoted in Heninger, *Touches of Sweet Harmony*, 202; for various Pythagorean notions of deity as interpreted in the Renaissance, see Heninger's ch. 3).

6.139–40 *Gods . . . Jupiter*. In margin of MS: "See Lucan, liber 6, 'diis omnia plena. Iupiter est quodcumque Vides.'" This passage is actually paraphrased and quoted from the speech of Cato in Lucan's *Civil Wars* ("Pharsalia") 9.580: "Juppiter est, quodcumque vides, quodcumque moveris" ("All that we see is God; every motion we make is God also," Loeb ed. [1928], 548–49).

6.141 *Agrippa*. Marginal note cites Agrippa's *In Artem Brevem Raymundi Lullii Commentaria* (written ca. 1517; printed in Lullius' *Opera*, 1598), part 3.

6.145ff. The opening lines of Genesis were often glossed alchemically (see e.g. the poem on Chaos by Simon Forman in

this collection and Thomas Vaughan's *Magia Adamica* in *Works*, 175ff.); they were also harmonized with Neoplatonic writings, as in the following lines. *Creation's Light, Lief, Love* (149) suggests the Neoplatonic emanation, which "dematerializes" the physical notion (e.g. of fire) into a spiritual principle (Wallis, *Neoplatonism*, 61), blended with the Christian Logos (see 6.117n above).

6.152-53 *Chaldee Oracles, Iamblichus*. The *Chaldean Oracles* were a kind of sacred text upon which Iamblichus (d. ca. 326 A.D.) commented in his *De Mysteriis*, a work translated by Ficino. The *Oracles* describe the divine Intelligence as fire and further identify the Supreme Deity as "Father" and as a "trinity-in-unity" (see Wallis, *Neoplatonism*, 105-106 for sources). Using these and similar texts, Renaissance Neoplatonists like Agrippa thus believed that the "ancient theologians" had a trinitarian concept of God.

6.158-60. *Planett . . . Venus*. On her origin and twofold aspect, see above 5.254 and *Index*, s.vv. *Aphroditic, Venus*.

6.175ff. The Platonic origins of this definition are made clear at lines 194-95.

6.180 *pathetic lind*. A sympathetic line or thread.

6.190 *proove*. Approve; experience for ourselves.

6.192 *Beuty*. In margin: "desider[ium] pulchri[tudinis]"—a longing for beauty.

6.194 *bespott*. Bespouted, recited with pompous elocution.

6.194-212 *Socrates . . . Diotimic fable*. The myth of Love's origin from *Symposium* 203b-c, summarized in these lines. *Porus* (198): plenty; *Providence* (199): Zeus or "Joue"; *Paenia* (201): poverty. See *Index*, s.v. *Diotimic*.

6.197 *trowle the bowle*. "Pass round the (drinking) bowl."

6.199-204 The *Symposium* follows not this version of events but that in lines 205-209.

6.201 *tottered*. Tattered.

6.213-70 This allegorical interpretation of the "Diotimic fable" is virtually a versification of the opening paragraphs of Marsilio Ficino's *Commentary* on Plato's *Symposium*, 6.7 (itself based on Plotinus, *Enneads* 2.5.2-10, 5.8.13). Compare the following passages from Sears Jayne's translation (all on p. 116) with the corresponding lines from the poem:

“*On the birthday of Venus*, that is, when the Angelic Mind and the World Soul (which we call Venuses, for the reason which we have given elsewhere [*Commentary* 2.7]) were born from the supreme majesty of God” (lines 6.213–22).

“*While the gods were feasting*, that is, while Uranus, Saturn, and Jupiter were enjoying their respective powers. For at the time when the intelligence in the Angel and the power of procreating in the World Soul, powers which we rightly call twin Venuses, first came into being, the supreme God, whom they [the Platonists] call Uranus, was already in existence; moreover, existence and life, which we call Saturn and Jupiter, already existed in the Angelic Mind; and also in the World Soul there already existed the knowledge of the superior things and the moving of the celestial bodies, which powers, again, we call Saturn and Jupiter” (lines 6.223–33).

“*The garden of Jupiter* means the fertility of the Angelic life, into which, when that *Porus*, that is, the ray of God, descends, once united with *Penia*, that is, the previous poverty [lack of sight] of this [Angelic Mind], he creates love. In the beginning the Angel exists and lives through God. With reference to these two, existence and life, the Angelic Mind is called Saturn and Jupiter. It has in addition the power of understanding, which we think is Venus. This power is of its own nature formless and dark unless it is illuminated by God, like the eye’s power before the arrival of the sun. This darkness we think is *Penia*, a lack, as it were, or deficiency of light. Finally, that power of understanding, turned by a certain natural instinct toward its parent, receives from Him the divine ray, which is *Porus*, or plenty. In this ray, as though in a kind of seed, the Reasons of all things are contained. By the flames of this ray that natural instinct is kindled. This fire, this desire, rising out of the former darkness and the light added to it, is love, born of poverty and plenty” (lines 6.233–65).

“*In the garden of Jupiter*, that is, born under the shadow of life. Certainly, since immediately after the vigor of life, arises a desire to understand. But why do they introduce *Porus* as *drunk with nectar*? Because he overflows with the dew of the divine vitality” (lines 6.266–70).

VII. Commentary: Chapter Six

Jones probably makes use of Ficino's *Commentary* again in his *Index*, s.v. *Venus*.

6.215 *before*. I.e., at 6.158–60; see also *Index*, s.v. *Venus*.

6.217 *series*. Sequence; i.e., the series of events that comprised “th’ world’s creation.”

6.218 *Perspective*. Seeing truly or clearly.

6.224 *Celius*. I.e., Caelus (“Sky”), father of Saturn (and according to Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* 3.23.59, of the first Venus). *Saturnus*: see *Index*.

6.234 *Grove*. *In margin*: “*virgultum*,” i.e., thicket, copse.

6.253 *Indigence*. Lack, deficiency.

6.272 *Reason*. *In margin of MS*: ὁ λόγος “the word.”

6.273ff. *Genius*. Natural ability, quality of mind, with a hint at the idea of guardian angel. *state*: four kinds of mental dispositions or occupations are given in lines 277ff.: Oeconomic, Politic, Scholastic (which includes the “faculties” of Law, Physic, and Philosophy—the latter being applied to alchemy and metaphysics), and Ecclesiastic (line 335, which seems to be identified with the “Pneumatic science,” 325). These categories are modeled on those in Franco Petri Burgersdijck’s *Idea Philosophiae tum Naturalis tum Moralis* (Oxford, 1631), from which Jones also borrows a passage with which to conclude his entire work; see the note at the end of his Appendix and 6.281–82n.

6.281–82 *conjugall degree*. Referring to the married life. *Patriall*: “fatherly.” *Herall*: from *herilis* or *erilis*, “of a master or mistress” (Burgersdijck’s fifth chapter of his *Idea Doctrinae Oeconomicae* [part of the *Idea Philosophiae*, cited in preceding note] is entitled “De Societate Herili”).

6.283 *its eight acquiring wayes*. Not identified.

6.294 *This place unable is*. Marginal note in MS: “see Alsted: his *Encycloped: Philosophica*,” i.e., Johann Heinrich Alsted (1588–1638), *Cursus Philosophici Encyclopaedia* (1620; eds. after 1649 entitled *Scientiarum Omnium Encyclopaedia*). Alsted had surveyed the various branches of learning in an earlier work, *Methodus Formandorum Studiorum* (“Method of Forming Studies”; see Thorndike 6:433–36, 7:383).

6.296 *visitor*. With *trie* (“test or examine”), this word can be taken in the sense of one who officially “visits” (e.g. an aca-

demic institution) for the purpose of inspection. Hence alchemy (*our Art*, 295) scrutinizes natural philosophy. The following lines (297–318) sum up the main aims of Jones’s physical alchemy.

6.301-3 For the various tetrads (elements, qualities, etc.) associated with Pythagoras, see Heninger, *Touches of Sweet Harmony*, 151–56.

6.306 *mixed*. I.e., mixed body, one composed of the four elements. As the context makes clear, Jones is speaking of how alchemy reduces such bodies to their “First matter” (cp. *Chaos*, above 6.145ff. and note).

6.308 *the word Fiat*. Given Jones’s trinitarian matter-theory (see esp. 2.278n, 5.456n, 6.152n), he is probably alluding here to the Paracelsian notion of prime matter or “chaos” (see previous note). This is rooted in two important scriptural texts, the beginning of the fourth Gospel and Genesis 1. In John’s Gospel, “the foundation of the world was the Word (Fiat) and the Word became Flesh. With the materialisation of the Word, God created water as the matrix or seed of all other creatures. At one level water was an incorporeal spiritual entity, at another the material substratum for the basic chemical principles. By this means the Paracelsian cosmogony could be firmly related to the text ‘the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters’ (Genesis 1:2). From the prime matrix emerged salt, sulphur and mercury, the *tria prima*, which were the source of the four Aristotelian elements, or all species of the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms. . . . [T]he adoption of *three* principles was related to the trinitarian basis of the ‘Triune’ word Fiat. The Godhead had a threefold nature which was reflected in his Word, which in turn marked the beginning of heaven, earth and all creatures. This trinitarian relationship of the three-principle theory was also emphasised in Jacob Boehme’s *Signatura Rerum*, which was translated by John Elliston in 1651” (Webster, *Great Instauration*, 330, citing Pagel, *Paracelsus* and others; the “‘Triune’ word Fiat” is discussed in Henry Pinnel’s *Philosophy Reformed & Improved* [1657], 31–33). Oswald Croll, whom Jones cites elsewhere, “treated the elixir as the visible counterpart of the invisible Word of God” (Willard, “Alchemy and the Bible,” 119).

VII. Commentary: Chapter Six

6.320 *Ens*. In margin of MS: “unum, verum bonum.” See above 2.269n, 5.808.

6.325 *Pneumatic science*. See *Index*.

6.329 *Ius divinum*. Divine law (but perhaps ironical, since in Latin usage *fas* is the word for divine law, *ius* meaning law as established by public authority or custom).

6.330 *Number, weight, and fallshood*. Deliberate bathetic parody of “number, weight, and measure” a favorite biblical phrase cited by Neoplatonists (see above, 1.39n).

6.332 *meteing*. Meting, measuring.

6.333 *Tane*. Taken. *th’ writt*: the Bible (cp. “Holy Writ”).

6.338 *Lycurgus*, legendary legislator of Sparta, was said to have received the laws he gave to Sparta from *Pythia* (339), Apollo’s priestess at Delphi (337).

6.339-62 The climax of the poem, these lines recapitulate the various allegories and formulations of the philosopher’s stone, making them congruent with Jones’s Neoplatonic mysticism. *Porus*: see above, 198, 236ff.

6.342 *divine vivacitie*. See 268 above and 213–70n.

6.343-46 Marginal notes in the MS provide the following biblical citations, here expanded:

stone held by Zerubabell (Zechariah: 4:10; see above, 6.107n).

Jasper (Apocalypse 21:10–11): “And in the Spirit he carried me away to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like jasper, clear as crystal.”

from the Strong (Judges 14:14): the riddle Samson put to the Philistines, the answer to which has to do with the bees making honey in the carcass of a lion: “Out of the eater came something to eat. / Out of the strong came something sweet” (cp. Virgil’s *Georgics* 4.528–56, where bees are born from a bull’s carcass).

6.347 *clouded Sun*. Marginal note in MS cites Matt. 23:37, where Jesus curses the Scribes and Pharisees: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!”

6.349-50 *Purelius . . . Hudra*. See their allegory above, 3.97ff.

6.351 *Israelitish Harper*. Probably a glance at King David, to whom the Psalms (literal meaning, “play a stringed instrument”) were attributed, but Jones here conflates David as sacred harper with the “Harper” Apollo above (5.219ff., q.v.), who makes the planets “daunce.” See also 5.232n, regarding Figure 10.

6.353-54 On Prometheus, see Preface 5, 1.212 and notes.

6.355-58 See 1.39n.

6.357 *Center of Zoroaster*. Jones calls this “an Embleme of goodnesse or God” in *Index*, s.v. *Venus*; see also 1.39 and Figure 1, above.

6.358 *Portius in his Epigramme*. In margin of MS: “Custodes Ovium teneraeque propaginis Agnum / Quaeritis Ignem? Itē huc, quaeritis? Ignis homo est.” This is from Porcius Licinus (ca. 2nd c. B.C.), whose epigram (four lines in all) is preserved in Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, 19.9.13; this excerpt is translated in lines 359–62.

6.362 In margin of MS: “See Acts: 19.19”; i.e., the account of the many miracles and exorcisms performed by Paul in Ephesus, to the chagrin and fear of the unconverted who had pretended to such powers: “And a number of those who practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all; and they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver.”

The Author’s Corollarie on his Mercurie

These verses and the accompanying Figure 11 are meant to sum up, epigrammatically and emblematically, the whole work. A corollary is “an appendix, a finishing or crowning part” (*OED*). The general drift of the *Corollarie* is given in *Index*, s.v. *Vulcan*, where Jones explains his presentation of Vulcan as a painter. He is pictured with horns probably because he was cuckolded by Mars.

1-4 These Latin verses, which also appear as the epigraph to Jones’s *Lapis Chymicus*, are apparently the author’s own: “Beloved Mercury who tumbled down from heaven revived in

the Sun. He understands alchemical learning when he fixes Mercury's flight in the furnace."

5 *Servant truant*. Hermes or Mercury, the sandal-winged *Poste* (6) or messenger of the gods who, as the alchemical mercury or quicksilver, is "truant" or difficult to fix.

7 *towring*. Towering, soaring aloft.

8 *a Scholler*. Figure 11 shows Mercury, with his winged sandals removed, looking over the shoulder of Vulcan, as he paints the Promethean "feast" (18).

10 *this Paynter's*. I.e., "this Painter is." In margin of MS: "Camarbher; *Katakhresis*," i.e., the metaphorical identification of Vulcan with Kamber the son of Brutus who gave his name to Kambria, or Wales. See the Welsh verses attached to Figure 11, and *Index*, s.vv. *Camber*, *Vulcan*.

13 *Caballistic*. In this context, the word seems not to refer technically to the Hebrew mystical tradition, but to be a synonym for "secret."

19 *scarlett Doctor*. I.e., of the highest rank, having the most profound knowledge (?).

20 *Dictat*. Dictate, maxim; here, the preceding verses or the Welsh verses of the emblem.

21 *the Art's closett*. The innermost secret of the art of alchemy.

23 *Pensill Sybill*. Pensile: suspended (the Cumaean Sibyl was hung up in a jar); see also *Index*, s.v. *Cumaean*.

25 *taste*. Originally this word was followed by "wine," which is crossed out in the manuscript.

26 *Grape fiery 'n grott*. Wine hot as fire (i.e., having solar properties) in a grotto; the last phrase may suggest the link between the (solar) "heavenly vine" and gold, as found in the earth (see notes to Frontispiece, 5.681-92, and 5.684n).

27 *by lott*. By chance or destiny. *ungrablinge*: *OED* gives only *grabble*, "to grope about," or (trans.) "to handle roughly or rudely."

28 *Sin's oaken sement*. The MS is clear here, but the meaning of these words is not. Jones never spells "cement" (or "caement," his usual choice) in this way; *oaken*, however, probably refers to Prometheus' "oaken tool" or ferrel, by which he animated "his man" (see 5.56), and this was his "sin" against the gods.

29-30 If *its tinder* refers to the inner “fire” of wine or the philosopher’s stone, these lines mean that the divine, life-giving spark of the quintessence lasts as long as the sun itself.

30 Figure 11 is inserted after this line. The Welsh verses are as follows:

Nôl yr Kyrnig dig gael duo duwgad
Gwas ar y hediad gwus a rhedo,
drwu gelfyddhud drud fe dro y Gywelu,
ay win, heb allu y wan bwullo.

To the translation of these lines kindly provided by Mr. Graham Thomas of the National Library of Wales, I have been able to add only a few explanatory glosses: “After the angry Horned-one [i.e., Vulcan, cuckolded by Mars] blackens the army of God [the alchemist’s fire reduces metals to the state of putrefaction?], a servant in flight [Mercury] a summons will run, through brave art; his [Vulcan’s] bed-fellow [Venus] turns with his wine, without being able to weaken his senses [?].”

This enigmatic allegory probably refers to the experiment of William Davisson (alluded to in Jones’s *Index*) in which iron (Mars) was converted into copper (Venus), thereby offering a kind of proof for the transmutation of metals. As Sir Isaac Newton noted, “Some believe that this operation was one of the secrets of Pythagoras of which Ovid speaks in his *Metamorphoses*, and that the conversion has been recorded hieroglyphically in the amours of Mars [iron], Venus [copper] and Vulcan [fire]” (see *Index*, s.v. *Mars*).

PART FOUR:
SIX ANONYMOUS VERSE
TRANSLATIONS

Six Anonymous Verse Translations, ca. 1700

All six texts in this section are verse translations of well-known alchemical works, four of which were originally written in prose. The translations come from two British Library manuscript volumes, Sloane 3637 and Sloane 3641, both produced by the same unknown hand, around the year 1700. While the identity of this industrious translator remains hidden, his manuscripts reveal something of his alchemical and literary tastes; as well, they provide general evidence for the continuing interest in speculative alchemy at the turn of the eighteenth century.

Altogether, the two Sloane manuscripts contain twenty translations, six in verse and the rest in prose; all are based on printed texts, in Latin or French, from the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Sloane 3641 (a total of sixty-three folios) contains six prose translations and the first four poems printed in this section: Mary the Prophetess, Dionysius Zacharias, Bernardus Trevisanus, and Aristeus. The first three of these are particularly interesting because each of them was initially translated into prose, but immediately afterwards into verse. The Zacharias and Trevisanus texts are wholly allegorical, and both seem to have been deliberately excerpted from works that contain other kinds of material. The translator perhaps felt that verse-form was somehow appropriate to the symbolic mode of these works (the same seems to be true of his translations from Michael Sendivogius, q.v., below). In the case of *The Practice of Mary the Prophetesse in the Alchemical Art* (fols. 1r-8r), a medieval Latin prose work concluded by half a dozen lines of enigmatic verse, he translates the main text in prose, but hesitates at the rhyming Latin verse: "The six monkish rymes (for verses I dare not call them) I render thus verbatim [in a prose paraphrase]" (fol. 7r). Later,

apparently with some reluctance, he returned to the text and added the twelve-line verse translation which is the first item below. Perhaps he did so because of the epigrammatic force of the original verses, however offensive their vulgar Latin was to him.¹ The Aristeus text (which alone of the four poems survives in a second copy), is also noteworthy, in that the original gives the text in both Latin verse and French prose; our translator chooses verse, apparently having no need for an intermediary prose rendering.

In addition to these seven translations in both prose and verse, we find also in Sloane 3641 three other prose translations: "Mr Doctour Beckerus's Pantaleon unmaskt" (fols. 9r-16v); Bernardus Trevisanus' "Parole delaissée or a Word Slipt out," from a Paris, 1618 edition (fols. 36r-48r); and "The Adventures of an unknown Philosopher" (fols. 49r-60v).² The first of these is a translation of Johann Joachim Becher's *Pantaleon Delarvatus*, an attack on the alchemist Franz Gassmann, whose pseudonym was Pantaleon. Assuming that our translator had no access to Becher's work in manuscript (though this is not beyond the realm of possibility, since Becher was in London by the end of 1679 and may have died there in 1682),³ this item may help to date the composition of Sloane 3641. The earliest printed edition of *Pantaleon Delarvatus* as yet discovered is 1706.⁴ If this is the first, the translation at hand must be later than that date, and the whole manuscript volume—on the basis of both paleographical and this internal evidence—may with all likelihood be said to date from the first decade of the eighteenth century.

Sloane 3637 (107 folios) is a much larger manuscript, but it also contains ten translations; however, only two, those from

¹It is possible, however, that he intended later to make a verse translation of the entire text, because his prose version is written on the recto leaves only, as if to leave space for a later versification.

²On this item the translator notes, "Borellus [Pierre Borel, *Bibliotheca Chimica*, 1654] says this Authour was one Belinus an Abbot."

³J.R. Partington, *A History of Chemistry*, 4 vols. (London, 1961-62), 2.638.

⁴In Johann Michael Faust's *Phylaletha Illustratus* (Frankfurt, 1706); see Ferguson, 1:90, 266; 2:166.

Michael Sendivogius' prose dialogues, are in verse. The prose translations include four anonymous tracts (on the obscure names of the philosophical "Matter," a dialogue between an "Adept Master" and his "Scholar," "The Summ of the German Rhymes concerning the Universall Work," and "Of the Originall of the Philosophers Stone"), as well as "The Epistle of Haimo," a work attributed to Nicolas Flamel, Jean de La Fontaine's *The Fountain of the Lovers of the Science* and Bernardus Trevisanus on the philosophical egg.⁵ Again interesting is the translator's choice of medium. For two texts (*Summa Rhythmorum Germanicorum de Opere Universali* and Jean de La Fontaine's *La fontaine des amoureux de science*) he had verse originals but chose to translate them into prose. In the case of La Fontaine's famous allegory of the fountain, this is surprising. Perhaps, unlike William Backhouse, whose 1644 verse translation appears in this collection, our versifier was daunted by the poem's length, put off by what he probably saw as the barbarities of the Old French, or dissuaded by a recognition of the difficulties of accommodating the rough verse of the original. (If the latter, he may have been right; his clear and at times more accurate prose version has been useful in deciphering the obscurities of Backhouse's rather crabbed verse translation, which attempts perhaps too close an imitation of the vocabulary and verse-form of the fifteenth-century French text.) On the other hand, he chose verse for his two translations from prose works by Michael Sendivogius: the *Ænigma Philosophicum* and an excerpted passage from the *Tractatus de Sulphure*. Both of these are allegorical dream-visions mainly in dialogue form, the latter being the only such passage in the *Tractatus*.

It would appear, then, that our Restoration-Augustan translator was at home in a wide range of alchemical materials, from the Middle Ages to the seventeenth century, in both Latin and

⁵The following sources are identified: *Ginaeceum Chemicum* (Lyons, 1679; for two items); Zetzner's *Theatrum Chemicum*, vol. 6 (1661; 2 items); *Le grand esclaircissement de la pierre philosophall* (Paris, 1628; one item); the third edition of *La metallique transformation* (Lyons, 1590) for Jean de La Fontaine's poem; and Bernardus Trevisanus' *Traicté de la nature de l'oeuf des philosophes* (Paris, 1659). No printed sources are identified for one of the longest items ("Of the Original of the Philosophers Stone," fols. 135v-69v) or for the two Sendivogius texts (see introduction, below).

French. Moreover, he had a particular liking for allegorical narratives, and more often than not he thought verse to be the most appropriate vehicle for his translations of them. It is likely that he was not a practitioner of the physical art, but a speculative alchemist who enjoyed pondering the conundrums and obscurities of esoteric alchemical symbolism. His skill at versification and his occasionally learned embellishments of the texts he translates (see the introductions and notes to each text below) suggest a well-read gentleman with the time to pursue arcane studies. Unfortunately, he provides few editorial comments in his manuscripts that might illuminate further his intellectual and literary values, though we have seen his disdain for medieval Latin verse and his scholarly instinct to check Pierre Borrel's bibliography to ascertain the authorship of an unattributed work. The only other comment afforded us is this one, in relation to his translation from *Le grand esclaircissement de la pierre philosophall*: "Printed Paris 1628. But pretended to be written July 7, 1466, and said to be Flamell's, which I believe not, and by no means approve of, be it whose it will: But I thought fit to translate the following Philosophicall Remarks and Definitions" (Sloane 3637, fol. 69v). Whoever he was, our translator thought himself well-informed in alchemical matters, and his twenty translations are striking reminders that esoteric alchemy was still alive and well, even in the early years of the Age of Reason.

The Texts

As already indicated, both manuscripts from which these six poems are taken, British Library Sloane 3637 and Sloane 3641, are written in the same hand. The texts of all the poems appear to have been carefully corrected by the translator himself, and they offer little difficulty in transcription. Punctuation (including quotation marks for dialogue) is full, though not of course consistent. Great care has been taken to ensure proper scansion, especially in Zacharias and in Sendivogius' *Dialogue*. The poet

Introduction

regularly makes elisions for the sake of meter,⁶ but in these two cases he seems to have gone through the texts again, after they were copied out, to insert elisions in certain words not originally contracted. The textual notes for each poem indicate scribal revisions, editorial emendations, variant readings (in the case of Aristeus only), and so on.

⁶For example, he scrupulously distinguishes *Emperour* from *Emprou* (or *Emp'rour*) and the disyllabic *passed* from the monosyllabic *past*; see Zacharias, 91, 93 and 99, 101.

VIII. Epigram from
The Practice of Mary the Prophetess
in the Alchemical Art

Mary the Prophetess, also called Maria the Jewess, is one of the few women associated with alchemy, although she and a Cleopatra (not the queen) were held even in ancient times to have been among the earliest practitioners. While many legends grew up around her name, the historical Maria may have been an Alexandrian living in the second or third century A.D.¹ No Greek texts of hers have survived, but she is often quoted at length by early Hellenistic alchemists, and her theoretical teachings can be inferred from these passages and from those preserved in later Arabic translations or citations.²

In addition to its theory and terminology, Maria is also associated with the practical apparatus of alchemy. Zosimus of Panopolis (ca. 300 A.D.), one of our earliest sources for Maria, is particularly helpful in this regard. He quotes at length her

¹Indispensable for Maria is Raphael Patai, "Maria the Jewess—Founding Mother of Alchemy," *Ambix* 29 (1982): 177–97; this account is based largely on Patai's, but see also Arthur John Hopkins, *Alchemy: Child of Greek Philosophy* (1933; repr. New York, 1967), 74, 99, 106ff.; John Read, *Prelude to Chemistry* (1936; repr. Cambridge, Mass., 1961), passim; F. Sherwood Taylor, *The Alchemists* (1952; repr. St. Albans, 1976), 31, 40–41; E.J. Holmyard, *Alchemy* (Harmondsworth, 1957), 48–50.

²Many of these became the staples of alchemical belief and lasted well into the early modern period: e.g., that all nature was one; that there was an analogy between human beings and metals; that, like humans, metals were male and female, and possessed body, soul, and spirit; that the hidden nature of metals could be made manifest through specific technical processes; and that all this was a "great mystery" directly revealed to her by God and which must be kept secret from the Gentiles (see Patai, 192 and passim).

detailed instructions for making a *tribikos*, or three-armed still, using copper or bronze tubes and earthenware vessels, and her descriptions of furnaces, glass, and various kinds of caulking or sealants. Maria is also credited with the invention of the *kerotakis*, an apparatus used by Alexandrian artisans and alchemists, and with the bain-marie (double-boiler), which takes its name from her. Many of these devices, invented or described by her, remained in use virtually unchanged until the eighteenth century, and were as long-lived as her alchemical theories.³

By the sixteenth century, if not before, Maria was identified with Miriam the sister of Moses, and several Latin alchemical treatises are ascribed to her. At least some of these seem to be translations of Arabic texts which may have derived from Greek originals, directly or indirectly. There is a degree of continuity between the earliest Greek testimonials to her and the latest texts going under her name, some of which exist only in Latin versions. The six-line Latin epigram translated here (which exists in several variant forms) usually serves as a concluding summary to the Latin prose text, *Practica Mariae Prophetissae in Artem Alchemicam*, a dialogue with the philosopher Aros (possibly Horos in a distant Greek version) on the subject of the alchemical marriage, which is accomplished by Maria's special "gums." But the poem was often copied separately and appears so in various manuscripts.⁴ It is sometimes attributed to Arnaldus de Villanova and is said to be his summing up of Maria's teachings. Indeed, a full elucidation of these few verses seems to require knowledge of several of her other works.

However obscure its exact meaning may be, Maria's riddling epigram held the interest of alchemists for a long time. Another English translation, in prose, dates from the sixteenth century;⁵

³For Maria in relation to ancient technology, see Paul T. Keyser, "Alchemy in the Ancient World: From Science to Magic," *Illinois Classical Studies* 15 (1990): 353-78, esp. 362, 365-66.

⁴The *Practica* was printed in *Artis Auriferae* (1593, 1610) 1593 and in other collections. Patai (192) gives a helpful translation of a shortened version of this text; see appendix at the end of the commentary. For fifteenth-century manuscripts, see Singer's *Catalogue*, 2:511-12.

⁵British Library MS Sloane 1451, fols. 25r-26r; unpublished.

Mary the Prophetess

and all six verses were incorporated bodily into Bassett Jones's long poem, *Lithochymicus* (ca. 1650), in this collection (see commentary, 1.259). The anonymous eighteenth-century writer of the version printed here may have been disdainful of the unclassical Latin of these "monkish rymes" (see introduction to Part Four), but he was compelled to put his pen to them, just the same.

VIII. Epigram from
The Practice of Mary the Prophetess
in the Alchemical Art

Mary briefly soundeth forth
Strange things like Thunder round the Earth.
She with two Gumms makes in the Bottome stay
What else would fly away. 5
Three things if you three hours attend
Are chained togeather in the End.
Mary, the Light of dew, an Art has got
In three hours to tye the Knot.
Pluto's Daughter, it is she
Who bindeth Love's confederacy. 10
Joynd with three seeds she does aspire
To be exalted in the Fire.

VIII. TEXTUAL NOTE

Text from British Library MS Sloane 3641, fol. 8r.

VIII. COMMENTARY

See Introduction on the relationship between the verse text and the prose *Practica* of Maria. Several slightly different versions of the Latin verses are known. For one, see Bassett Jones's *Lithochymicus* in this collection, 1.259n. Another appears in *Theatrum Chemicum*, 6 vols. (Strasburg, 1659–1661), among four short *Carmina* attributed to Arnaldus de Villanova (4:543):

Maria, mira sonat, breviter quae talia sonat:
Gumi cum binis fugitivum figit in imis:
Horis in trinis tria vincula fortia finis:
Maria lux roris legem ligat in tribus horis:
Filia Platonis [sic] consortia jungit amoris:
Gaudet massata, quando tria sunt sociata.

The most likely version used for the eighteenth-century translation printed here is the one accompanying the prose text of *Practica Mariae Prophetissae*, as in *Artis Auriferae*, 3 vols. (Basel, 1610), 1:208:

Maria mira sonat breviter quod talia tonat.
Gummis cum binis fugitium figit in imis.
Horis in crinis tria vinclat fortia finis.
Maria Lux roris ligam ligat in tribus horis.
Filia Plutonis consortia iungit amoris,
Gaudet in assata sata per tria sociata.

Patai (“Maria the Jewess,” 193) translates the latter version

VIII. Commentary

(with *vinceat* instead of *vinclat*) as follows:

Marie utters wonders briefly, for she thunders such things
She fixes the fugacious matter with the double gum in the
last hour

She binds three powerful substances into the ends of the
tubes

Maria, the light of the dew, binds a band in three hours.

Daughter of Pluto, she unites love's affinities

Delights in things roasted, sown, assembled in threes.

The following commentary is greatly indebted to Patai's notes on the poem (*ibid.*) and incorporates material from his discussion of Maria's other works. The most relevant of these is given in the appendix below.

1 *briefly soundeth forth.* I.e., Maria tends to speak in brief, enigmatic sayings or aphorisms, like the famous "One becomes two, two becomes three, and by means of the third the fourth achieves unity; thus two are but one" (Christianos [seventh c., A.D.], quoting Maria; quoted in Patai, 182).

1-2. *soundeth . . . like Thunder.* This description probably refers to the tradition that Maria gave an "ecstatic shriek" when uttering aphoristically the essence of her teaching (see Patai, 182).

3-4 The *two Gumms* are the white and red gum by which Maria taught the volatile matter had to be fixed. Believing that there were two kinds of bodies—volatile and fixed, or incorporeal and corporeal—Maria taught that from the corporeal metals (e.g., copper, lead, zinc) their bodies had to be taken away by sublimation and then endowed with new colors and properties, restored to them. This led to the oft-repeated axiom found in the Greek texts, "If the bodies are not rendered incorporeal, and the incorporeals corporeal, nothing of that which one expects will take place" (Patai, 183-84).

5 *three things.* See Patai's translation, above: He believes the "tubes" refers to the three tubes of the *tribikos* invented or described by Maria (193; see also introduction, above).

7 *the Light of dew*. Unexplained.

8. *In three hours to tye the Knot*. Alluding to the tradition according to which Maria completed the Great Work in three hours, uniting or binding together various substances (see appendix).

9 *Pluto's Daughter*. The name Pluto ("wealth") was applied to Hades in his role as provider of earthly riches, his realm being the "underground" source of everything produced in the earth. Among the alchemists, Michael Maier seems aware of this association when he says that Pluto inhabited the Pyrenean mountains, which "refer to the mines wherein the metal is sought by the Phoenicians" (*Arcana Arcanissima* [n.d.], cited in Craven, *Count Michael Maier*, 40). Maria is Pluto's daughter, then, because of her ability to make gold.

10 *bindeth Love's confederacy*. Refers to Maria's notion that the transmutation consists of a union, or marriage, of male and female substances (see, e.g., first paragraph of appendix, below).

11-12 These lines seem to be mistranslated. In Patai's version (see headnote to commentary, above), Maria "delights in things roasted" because of her description of the burning of copper, sulphur, and other substances; things "sown" refers to the mysterious white herb (probably lunary) grown on the mountain (see appendix, paragraph two); and "assembled in threes" refers possibly to three kinds of "divine water" (white, yellow, black), or to Maria's doctrine by which two must become three (see line 1n, above).

APPENDIX

Excerpte ex Interlocutione Mariae Prophetissae Sororis Moysis & Aaronis, habita cum aliquo Philosopho dicto Aros de Excellentissimo opere trium horarum, from *Theatrum Chemicum*, 6:479-80. This is an abbreviated version of the *Practica* of Maria (see introduction), translated by Patai ("Maria the Jewess," 192):

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Excerpts from the dialogue of Maria the Prophetess, the sister of Moses and Aaron, which she conducted with a certain philosopher named Aros about the most excellent Work of three hours.

Take white gum and red gum, which is the Kybric [sulphur] of the philosophers, and their gold, and join the gum with the gum in a true marriage, that is: make it like running water, and vitrify this divine water made from the two Zaybechs [sulphurs] over a fixed body, and liquify it by the secret nature in the vessel of philosophy. Conserve the fume and take care least [sic] any part of it escape, and make the measure of your fire as the measure of the heat of the sun in the months of June and July. And remain near the vessel and observe how it becomes black and white and red in less than three hours of the day, and the fume will penetrate the body, and the spirit will be condensed, and they will become like milk, wax-like, and melting, and penetrating. And this is a hidden secret.

Take the white, clear, honoured, finest herb which exists on the small mountains, and pound it when fresh just as it is in the hour of its birth, and it is the true fixed body which does not flee from fire. The people really do not know this regimen with their haste. Then burn or vitrify over it the Kybric and the Zaybech [sulphur and mercury], because these are two fumes which envelop the two luminaries, and project over it the complementing tincture, and pound all of it and put it on the fire, and you will see from it wonderful things. The regimen consists of the timing of the fire. O how wonderful is the way it is moved from colour to colour in less than the hour I stated. And when it comes to the goal of becoming white and red, then extinguish the fire and let it cool down, and when it becomes cool and is opened up you will find that body pearl-like, clear, in the colour of the poppy of the forest mixed with white colour, and it is wax-like (*incerans*), liquifying and penetrating. And its golden colour (or nature) falls over a thousand thousands and two hundred thousands [i.e. the pearl-like body transmutes metals 1,200,000 times its own weight into gold].

Take that clear body which grows upon the small mountains, which does not catch putrefaction or movement, and pound it with the gum Elzarog and with the two fumes. Because the gum Elzarog is a body which seizes. And pound

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it all [until] all will liquify. If you project it over that same fume, it will become like distilling water, and when he beats it it will congeal in the air and become one body.

The roots of this Work are the aforementioned two fumes and humid lime. But the body is fixed from the heart of Saturn which comprises the tincture. And its peer is the white and clear body from the small mountains. The vessel of Hermes which the philosophers have hidden is not the vessel of the necromancers, but the measure of your fire.

IX. Dionysius Zacharias

The Third Part of the Work of Dionysius Zacharias, concerning the Practise of the Divine Work

Only one work, the *Opuscule Tres-Excellent de la vraye Philosophie naturelle des Metaux*, is associated with the pseudonym Denis Zacheire, or Dionysius Zacharias. This treatise received at least three printings in its original French (Antwerp, 1567, 1568; Lyons, 1574) before being translated into Latin and German in the early years of the seventeenth century, and it appears in several major collections, including those of Zetzner and Manget. The present verse translation, though partial, is the only one known in English. Whether the author was an alchemist or a satirist of alchemy has been questioned, given the humor of the work and what one scholar calls its presentation of “faulty reasoning so plausibly that it appears preposterous.”¹ But the *Opuscule* was valued as an authentic expression of alchemical theory and practice from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. Initiates in the art could easily explain away humor and

¹Tenney L. Davis, “The Autobiography of Denis Zacheire: An Account of an Alchemist’s Life in the Sixteenth Century,” *Isis* 8 (1926): 287–99, quotation from 299; this article is largely a translation of part one of the *Opuscule*. A.E. Waite also based his account of Zacheire on this material (*The Secret Tradition in Alchemy* [New York, 1926], 189–94), but takes him to be a genuine alchemist. Davis’s view that the author is “a gentleman satirist of alchemy” (298) is based on the notion that a pseudonym would be necessary to someone of rank who wished to attack alchemy. This is repeated by Holmyard (249–55), who does little more than quote large excerpts of Davis’s article. A riddle added to the Lyons, 1612 edition of the *Opuscule* claims to hide the actual name of the author (Davis, 299 and plate), but this has not been deciphered. Bibliographical information here is based on Davis and Ferguson, 2:561–63.

even ridicule as being aimed not at true alchemy, but at charlatanry; in fact, satirical diatribes against false practitioners are common in alchemical writings.² As for the “faulty reasoning” so annoying to modern readers, that was simply the veil needed to obscure the sacred truth from the unworthy. As Michael Sendivogius (q.v., below) was to say, if alchemical texts are obscure and even contradictory, it “must be so.”

The *Opuscule*, or *Opusculum Philosophiae Naturalis Metallorum* (the Latin version used by our translator), has three parts: an entertainingly ironical and circumstantial autobiography; a theoretical discourse, based on analyses of earlier alchemical texts and extrapolations from them; and an allegorical description of how to carry out the Great Work (the subject of our verse translation).

The autobiography has preoccupied most modern scholars. Here Zachaire claims that he was born a gentleman in Guienne, southwest France, in 1510; that he studied arts at Bordeaux and law at Toulouse, but that his true passion was alchemy; that after moving to Paris in 1546 to devote himself to the Art he pored over Arnaldus, Lully, Bernardus, Jean de Meun’s *Complaint of Nature*, the *Turba Philosophorum* and others, finally transmuting mercury into gold in 1550. Having secretly paid his creditors, contributed to the poor, and compensated his disapproving and despairing relatives, Zachaire retired to “a certain very renowned city in Germany,” to live quietly and avoid notoriety.³

The second, theoretical part of the *Opusculum* has received no serious scholarly attention. Davis’s comment, that its “style is such that it is difficult to tell whether the author is conscious

²See, e.g., Thomas Norton’s *Ordinall of Alchimy*, in *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, ed. Elias Ashmole (1652; facs. repr. New York, 1967), 17; George Ripley’s *Compound of Alchymie*, *ibid.*, 153–50; *Bloomfields Blossoms*, *ibid.*, 308–9.

³Holmyard, noting some striking similarities between this “life” and the autobiography attributed to Bernardus Trevisanus, wonders whether the story “was not a popular fiction fathered, with suitable variations, on more than one alchemist” (257); see further on Bernardus, below. The autobiography certainly had its appeal. It was retold in verse, with the addition of what Davis calls the “romantic ending” demanded by Zachaire’s eventful life—he is murdered in his bed for the stone—by Rudolf II’s court poet, Mardochée de Delle; it was also the basis of a novel by Percy Ross, *A Professor of Alchemy* (London, 1887).

of the flaws in his reasoning or is trying to make the faulty arguments appear plausible for the purpose of satirizing them" (297), is an ahistorical complaint that could be levelled at virtually any pre-scientific text when judged by modern standards. His conclusion—that the author is probably satirizing his material “since he is writing under a pseudonym”—also seems rather dubious, especially in light of the longstanding tradition of secrecy and disguised attribution in alchemy. At any rate, this part of the *Opusculum* was not eschewed by the adepts. Edward Cradock translates a substantial passage from it in his verse *Treatise*, ca. 1570 (q.v. in this collection, line 210n), and it is often cited by later writers, notably Martinus Rulandus, here and there in his *Lexicon Alchemiae* (1612).

Interestingly, it is only the allegorical third part of the *Opusculum*, which stands as the *Practica* to the *Theorica* of part two, that our early eighteenth-century translator has chosen to versify (his penchant for alchemical symbolism is noted in the introduction to this section). While this is a common bipartite division in alchemical treatises, Zachaire shifts his rhetorical mode from discursive to narrative just at the crucial point when his theories are to be applied to actual material operations. Further, he deploys political and military motifs as vehicles for these operations, but at various points these motifs carry a moral freight as well as an alchemical one.

The first section of our 255-line poem is a denunciation of those who worship only dross and an assertion that “Intrinsecally valuable things / Are seldome known to Emperours & Kings” (16–17); hence, the truly wise leave the known world of appearances and seek out “other Regions, where / The Strength & Powr of Wisdome might appear” (44–45).⁴ After this prologue, the main narrative begins, with an abrupt shift from real to allegorical monarchs who stand for alchemical substances: “So did

⁴The poem actually begins with an embellishment by the translator, a reference to Columbus which also is interestingly ambiguous. Columbus’ “navigation to his World of Gold” can be seen as just another example of the greed that is being denounced here; but Columbus is also like those wise men who seek “other Regions,” and specifically he is like the philosophical alchemist who seeks his *spiritual* “World of Gold.” The historical allusion to Columbus (like another insertion by the translator, the reference to Machiavelli at lines 84–85) complements those already in the text.

a Prince who governd well the Land / Heav'n had entrusted under his Command" (47-48). The Prince at first appears to be likened to the philosophical alchemist himself, but as the narrative proceeds, different meanings appear to be intended. The following summary and interpretive comments, the latter offered with some temerity, may be useful in suggesting the drift of the allegory.

The good Prince or "Governor" (Philosophical Gold, or the "seed" of Gold, to become the philosopher's stone) wishes, without ambition, to extend the "sweetness of his Reign" (52) to all the world, so he begins the seige of an "Imperiall Town" (78) renowned for its "Riches, trade & Strength" (i.e., crude matter or unrefined gold?). The Prince is guided by a faithful "Steward" (the alchemist) who, when the Emperor is reinforced by many Kings, advises the Prince to retreat with his retainers (the inferior metals) to an impregnable castle, the alchemical furnace (107-14). The enemy attacks, but the trusty Steward has already blocked up all entrances to the castle and secured provisions for his beleaguered sovereign. The Prince resides in an inner "round & secret little Den" (137) and is sustained through ingenious underground passageways (the still or alchemical vessel is sealed, but "feeding" the alchemical matter is accomplished by interior circulation). The stubborn Emperor continues the seige until winter forces him to withdraw (182ff.), followed by his minions; but the "most potent Nobles of the Land" (189) continue the seige. When the Steward informs the Prince that a year has passed, he orders his men to attack the attackers and capture their standards (218-33: the process during which the material undergoes a series of color changes, each of the captured standards representing a specific color in the sequence; this is one of the "Deep mysterys" learned by the Steward from some "Gallick Prince of old"). Now the Prince captures the Emperor's ensign; as for his faithful followers, "Each in the Field was dubbd a noble Knight, / And so returnd most radiantly bright" (243-44)—i.e., each of the inferior metals was perfected or turned to gold. The allegory concludes with an ironic moral twist reminiscent of its beginning. Not only does the defeated Emperor have to submit to the Prince, but all

IX. Introduction

The Tyrants, Rulers of this Earthen Ball,
Whether themselvs they Emperours doe call,
Or Popes, or Turks, or Kings, doe still bow down
Before the Powrs of this bewitching Crown.
For evry one of these themselvs have sold
To this great Lord of Lords, most high & Mighty Gold.
(246–51)

From one point of view, this narrative has “explained” why those in power worship gold; from another it presents the conquest of Philosophical Gold over the entire mineral realm.

Some sense of how Zacheire’s contemporaries read his allegory can be gained from two citations by Alexander von Suchten (fl. 1546–60), in his exposition of Paracelsus’ *Tinctura Physicorum* (though since von Suchten’s own work is fraught with obscure allegory and symbol, one can scarcely hope for a clear explication). Describing the combination of Philosophical Sulphur and Philosophical Mercury in the vessel, he writes:

Now, since all the oil or spirit [Philosophical Sulphur] does not go over [within the vessel] at once, . . . [alchemists] moistened the *corpus mortuum* (residuum) with spirits and, after a month’s putrefaction, again distilled over as at the first, thus obtaining more of the oil. This moistening, putrefying, and distilling they repeated until the earth was wholly dissolved, and had given up its entire treasure, all the gold having distilled over and become a Mercury, i.e., Water, which has its coagulation or its [fixed] sulphur in its depths. . . . Dionysius Zacharias well describes this process in his *Practice*: “After the Governor of the Firetown (oven, furnace) had retreated, his remaining warriors had long fought the enemy with fire, until they escaped the said enemy by retreating over the water and bridges which they had thrown up behind themselves.”⁵

The passage cited corresponds to lines 88–102 in our text; if von

⁵*An Explanation of The Natural Philosopher’s Tincture, of Theophrastus Paracelsus*, in Benedictus Figulus, *Pandora Magnalium Naturalium Aurea et Benedicta* (1608), trans. A.E. Waite as *A Golden and Blessed Casket of Nature’s Marvels* (1893; repr. London, 1963), 218–19.

Suchten can be trusted, it is clear at the very least that the general interpretation offered above is lacking in many details.

Later on, von Suchten describes the various powers of the philosopher's stone itself:

But, as regards his other powers and influence over the metals, a means is necessary whereby to reduce, punish, and humble his rebellious people. Theophrastus [i.e., Paracelsus] here indicates gold as this means. Our Stone is first to conclude unity and friendship with the same, i.e., they are both to be fused together. [Here he quotes seven verses from Giovanni Aurelio Augurello's poem *Chrysopoeia*, describing the combination of the Stone and gold and the extraction of the latter's seed.] But he [Augurello] conceals the important point, for this fusion suffices not, if such molten matter be not heated during the proper time in a vessel with philosophical coction. For by this means the operator obtains full power over his Lord the King, thereupon reducing the subjects to obedience, as related by Dionysius Zacharius [sic], a knack unknown to many operators, who have consequently not known how to set about the projection. (252-54)

Here von Suchten is probably thinking of the final conquest by Zachaire's Prince, now the philosopher's stone, which has been managed by the Steward, or alchemical "operator." One thing is clear: the more one can bring to an allegory like Zachaire's, the more one can take from it.

IX. Dionysius Zacharias

*The Third Part of the Work of Dionysius Zacharias,
concerning the Practise of the Divine Work*

[f. 20r]

Before the Southern Tracts were found, or bold
Columbus did adventure to unfold
The navigation to his World of Gold,
Onely three portions of the Earth did ly
Within the knowledge of Geography. 5
East, West & South & North had shown no more
Than Europe, Africk, & the Asian Shore.
And these were cantond into sundry Lands,
Isles, & Dominions under the Commands
Of many Emp'rours, Potentates & Lords, 10
Ruling with Sceptres & with Iron Swords.
They, disagreeing in the Way to Blisse,
Plact their delights in diverse things: "O this
Is precious for its scarcity." But few
The things of Worth from gawdy Trifles knew. 15
Intrinsecally valuable things
Are seldome known to Emperours & Kings.
This I, alas, by sad Experience found
In ev'ry Region, as I traverst round
The great terraqueous Globe. Ah woe is me, 20
That I should in my weary travells see
An Host of learned & judicious Men

(Whose conversation Heav'n would not disdain)
Beneath the feet of vulgar Blockheads trod, 25
While rich & ignorant was ador'd as God.
But where the close & niggard hand of Heaven
Had very few of skill & Learning given,
And all the rest were ignorant & dull,
There did I see the thick & stupid Skull
And the Great Rich ones bowing at their Feet, 30
As stocks & stones did once Amphion's Musick greet.
So in the Climats where no mines doe grow
(The living Fountains whence the Metalls flow),
How they ador'd a piece of yellow Coin, [f. 20v]
The smallest Fragment of the noble Mine,
Contemptible to those, & unregarded, where
The rich Spring-heads & Sources first appear!
He onely happy, who so arms his Ey
With the Perspectives of Philosophy, 40
That no terrestriall Coruscations blind
The ratiocination of the Mind.
Wherefore the learnd, disdainning thus to see
The idolizing of Stupidity,
Betook themselves to other Regions, where
The Strength & Powr of Wisdome might appear. 45
So did a prince who governd well the Land
Heav'n had entrusted under his Command.
'Twas not Ambition, but desire that all
The realms extended on the earthen Ball
Should by his mild Administration feel 50
(Rather than by the Terrour of his Steel)
The sweetness of his Reign. To compass this,
He chose his faithfull Steward's good Advice.
Thus he determind; but, alas, what Ey
Can pierce so deep in human Hearts, to spy 55
Inbred perfidiousness & Treachery?
How fals is forreign Aid? It flys away,
And for the hopes of sordid lucre they
To Princes, Kings & Emperours betray

IX. Practise of the Divine Work

The Councils of his Cabinet. But Kings 60
And Emprours never start at little things,
Thinking their Pow'rs as great as his on high
That rules the radiant Empires of the Sky.

While therefore all their Palaces did ring
With Musick's Ecchoes; while they laugh & sing, 65
And precious Time, that flies too fast away,
Is murderd at a miserable Play,
In Cupid-courtships & lascivious Balls,
Dancing & rev'lling round the spacious Halls; [f. 21r]
While Flatt'ers onely have the Prince's Ear,
Making their Fools the men of learning jeer
(And even by that name which heretofore
The sacred Orientall Monarchs bore,
And modern Emprours would not now forsake,
Did they but Wisdome's holy Councill take)— 75
In the meantime the Governour began
To draw his Troops into a spacious Plain
And form the siege of an Imperiall Town
For Riches, trade & Strength of high Renown.
Th' allrum'd Empr'our, circled round with Kings, 80
Into the Field his num'rous Army brings.
Now was the Battle ready to be fought,
When the good Governour himself bethought
That wheresoe're the Lyon's skin did fail,
'Twas to be pieced with the Foxe's Tail, 85
So his faithfull Steward's Councell took,
And marching off, the dangrous Siege forsook.
He went alone into a Castel, &
His men the Foe did valiantly withstand.
Six thousand Horse & fifty thousand Foot 90
Into the Field the Emperour had brought,
And warlick Engines, murd'ring Pieces more
Than any Emp'rour had amast before.

Therefore the wise & prudent Governour,
Leaving the City with the Iron Tow'r, 95
Marshald his Army in due order, so
That they retiring could repell the Foe.

There was a River which in his retreat
He regularly passed over, yet
He providently did esteem it fit 100
To break the Bridge which he had past, whereby
He baffled the insulting Enemy. [f. 21v]
The next Aurora from the Eastern Skys
Had hardly opend sleepy Mortalls' Eys,
When th' adverse Army, wafting ore the Flood, 105
Upon the Banks in martiall order stood.
The Prince again, as wise men all should doe,
Consulted with his faithfull Councill, who,
As the good Steward represented, saw
Necessity that they should all withdraw 110
Into a place impregnable—so strong
It should not fear a Siege, altho' as long
As the great Journey which the mighty Sun
Does round the Circle of the Zodiack run.
'Twas fortifyd with Royall Bastions, which 115
Were all surrounded with a double Ditch.
Just in the Center stood a solid Rock,
And strong enough to undergoe the shock.
Should the World crack again, the noble Seat
Would stand unconquerd by the Hand of Fate. 120
Near it there stood another Towr so high
That it receivd the Influence of the Sky.
Through it there was a Passage under-ground,
Which his good Steward either made or found,
A naturall or artificiall Mine. 125
By this contrivance, of his Foes unseen,
He still reliev'd the Prince that dwelt within.
Romanian Naples so was heretofore,
When the fierce Turkish Solyman for more
Than twenty Years enviroind it around, 130
Supplyd by Burroughs running underground.
Nor could the dull Barbarians once perceive
The means which did the lab'ring Town relieve.
But, to return: the prudent Prince, who now [f. 22r]

IX. Practise of the Divine Work

Had plac'd his Men within the Works below, 135
Retir'd alone into the Castle, then
Into a round & secret little Den.
'Twas round & little as a Hermit's Cell,
But was adorn'd & furnisht wondrous well.
There was whatever could oblige a Prince, 140
Or what was worthy of his Excellence.
In this retirement he did so delight,
That here he spent the Day & here the Night.
'Twas built like one that's situate in Lorrain,
Where the Originall does still remain. 145
It had four Windows which beheld the East,
The North, the South & then the setting West.
From thence he saw the Stratagems of all
His Enemy's around the outer Wall.
In vain, in vain the Heathens rag'd around 150
The limits of the consecrated Ground,
But found no entrance, for his Steward so
(Except the secret Avenues below)
Had blockt up all, that ev'n malicious Fate
Had not the Pow'r to open any Gate: 155
And in the space of one revolving Year
There was no Want of Necessarys there.
They rag'd the more, and ev'ry Sun that came
Added new fewell to the angry Flame.
For ev'ry day they made Assaults, but vain 160
Were all th' assaults of all the numrous Train.
This made the Prince divide his weary men
Into five severall Battalions; then
Duly reliev'd, they could by day & night
Watch in their turns, & in their turns could fight. 165
The Siege had now endured long, & so
The furious Leaders of the Baffled Foe [f. 22v]
Doe thus accost the Emperour. Say they,
"If we break up the Siege & march away,
'Twill much eclipse your Glory & renown, 170
Your Majesty & your Imperiall Crown.
The Prince will boast of Victory & say

He chac'd your Army, & you fledd away.
Nay, he will seek revenge on us, for we
Were of his order & his dignity, 175
But our unworthy usage made him fly;
He fled, we us'd him so injuriously."
Such words as these cast forth did evry hour
Assault the Ears of the dull Emperour,
And made him obstinately persist to have 180
The Prince's Army & the Prince his slave.
But Winter with his cold Artillery
Drawn from the frozen Regions of the sky,
The shiv'ring Northern Pole, came pressing on
And forc't the tender Zany to be gon 185
And keep his paultry body in a Court,
To which his Parasites did soon resort,
Minions & Prostitutes of evry sort.
But the most potent Nobles of the Land
Left not the Siege, & under their command 190
The Works were stormd; but like their Sovrein, they
From those Assaults were always driv'n away.
Their Sov'rein's charge was they should keep their Ground
Untill the Year had turnd his circle round.
This when the Prince by his good Steward knew,
He calld his Bands together. "Each of you [f. 23r]
Shall sally forth & from yon coward Crew,
Dastard Imperiall Troops, shall bring to me
The Badge of Valour & of Victory,
Some captive Standard. Your Reward shall be 200
Not onely lawrell Crowns, for you shall see
A tide of Riches & be happier farr
Than all those fop Imperiall Nobles are.
But who fulfills not my commands shall feel
The cruell Indignation of my Steel. 205
Rewards & Punishments may move, but I
Will move you more. Ile sally out & dy,
Ile fighting dy, or in the open day
The first Imperiall Ensign bear away."

IX. Practise of the Divine Work

The Bands were thus by exhortation fir'd, 210
Their Leader's Courage had their Souls inspir'd;
They did their Task, & Time had sooner tir'd
Than they in doing what their Prince requir'd.
The Standards all were taken; this was done
Within the Circle's duplication 215
(Deep mysterys, which a Gallick Prince of old
Unto his faithfull Steward did unfold).
The Standard taken first was black as either
Was German Horse, or wicked Raven's Feather.
The next did many gawdy Colours show 220
And ornamentall as the heavnly Bow.
The third was not unlike what they advance
In Scutcheons charged with the Arms of France.
In the fourth Banner was a Crescent found,
And Argent also was the Field around. 225
The fifth was like, but not the very same,
Wherein was cypherd the Imperiall Name.
This fir'd the Prince's Valour so that [f. 23v]
Another Time pursuing Victory
Fought round the Walls. How glorious was the day 230
Wherein he fought, & fighting bore away
The true, the great Imperiall Ensign! Fame,
Fill now thy Trumpet with the Victour's name.
The glorious Labour now began to tire
The Body, tho' the Soul's unwearyd Fire; 235
But he returning soon was comforted
With the Provisions which his Steward had
Duely prepared e're the Siege was laid.
So he was fed, so he returnd again,
So he pursu'd the Foes around the Plain, 240
Till they were all in bloody Battle slain.
The Captains, his Assistants in the Fight,
Each in the Field was dubbd a noble Knight,
And so returnd most radiantly bright.
Whereby it after came to pass that all 245
The Tyrants, Rulers of this Earthen Ball,
Whether themselvs they Emperours doe call,

Dionysius Zacharias

Or Popes, or Turks, or Kings, doe still bow down
Before the Powrs of this bewitching Crown.
For evry one of these themselvs have sold 250
To this great Lord of Lords, most high & Mighty Gold.
So 'twas decreed by him that rules on high
In the eternall Empires of the Sky,
Whom let forever & forever more
Mankind with all humility adore. 255

IX. TEXTUAL NOTES

Text: British Library MS Sloane 3641, fols. 20r–23v.

The MS shows signs of revision. For example, a rejected version of the first half of line 31 has been cancelled, and some interlinear word substitutions have been made: *Worth* for *Price* (15), *learning* for *Wisdome* (75).

Title] From the prose version by the same translator which immediately precedes the verse text (fols. 17r–19v).

IX. COMMENTARY

The text has been compared with the Latin version in J.J. Manget's *Bibliotheca Chemica Curiosa*, 2 vols. (Geneva, 1702), 2:348–49, from which Latin quotations in the commentary are taken; and with the translator's prose version in the same manuscript, fols. 17r–19v.

2 The reference to Columbus is the translator's addition; see introduction.

12 *the Way to Bliss*. This phrase may be an allusion, conscious or unconscious, to Elias Ashmole's edition of an anonymous prose tract on alchemy, *The Way to Bliss* (1658).

30 *their Feet*. The feet of the learned.

31 *Amphion's Musick*. This allusion to the harper whose musical skill caused stones to form the walls of Thebes is the trans-

lator's addition.

40 *That*. So that. *Coruscations*: glitterings, sparklings; here, of bright metal.

54 *determind*. Decided.

57 *forreign Aid*. The prose translation explains that after consulting his Steward and thinking further about his plans for extending his rule, the prince "joyned unto himself diverse & sundry forreiners."

72 *that name*. In margin of MS: "Sophi" (i.e., "the wise").

76 *Governour*. I.e., the Prince (46); Latin text: "Gubernator."

84-85 This reference to Machiavelli, whose ideal prince combines the fierceness and power of the lion with the guile of the fox, is the translator's addition.

92 *warlick*. Warlike.

95 *Iron Tow'r*. According to the prose version, the city was "streth'ned with an Iron Tower."

117-18 *a solid Rock, / And strong enough*. A rock (the *Seat* of 119, and *Castle* of 136) solid and strong enough.

128-29 *Romanian Naples . . . Solyman*. The prose version is "Napoli di Romania, while Soliman the King of Turkey besieged it twenty years." Naples (if *Romanian* means that in Italy) indeed has underground passages and catacombs, but I can find no account of a siege by Sulayman the Magnificent (1494-1566).

137 *round & secret little Den*. This name for the alchemical vessel (often called a vase, egg, etc.) seems to have special significance. Commenting on George Ripley's use of the term, Æyrenæus Philalethes gives a minute description of "an ovall Vessel; of the purest White Glass, about the bigness of an ordinary Hen-Egg" whose narrow neck is "melted together Artificially, that no Spirits can get out, nor no Air can come in, in which respect it is named a secret Den." It is also given this name "because of the secretness of Ashes or Sand, in which in a Philosophical Athanor it is set, the doores being firmly shut up, and a prospect left to look in by a Window, wither to open a little, as much as is convenient sometimes, as occasion requires, or else with Glass put into it, to admit the view of the Artist; together with a light at hand to shew the colours" (*An Exposition upon Sir George Ripley's Vision* [1677], in Klossowski de Rola, *Alchemy: The Secret*

Art, 26–27).

144. *one . . . in Lorrain.* Apparently a famous castle in the Duchy of Lorraine, but not identified (Latin version: “in Ducatu Lotharingiae”).

185 *tender Zany.* Effeminate or delicate fool, simpleton.

215 *Circle’s duplication.* Latin version: “medio duplicationis circuli, quam docuerat oeconomum suum Princeps quidam Galliae”; prose version: “by the means of the duplication of the Circle, which a certain Prince of France had taught his Steward.” Rulandus’ article on the Circle is suggestive of the alchemical process indicated here: “In terms of Hermetic Science, [the Circle] signifies the Circulation of the Matter in the Egg of the Philosophers. It is in this sense that they call their operation the Movement, or Revolution, of the Heavens, the Circular Revolution of the Elements, and that they also name the Grand Work the Quadrature of the Physical Circle. Moreover, they divide the practice of the Philosophical Stone into seven circles or operations, each of which consists, nevertheless, of solution and coagulation. . . .” (347); see also *Circulatio* (105). The “Gallick Prince” (line 216) is unidentified.

218ff. The color sequence represented by the captured standards is comparable to those described in many texts, as the material in the vessel passes from putrefaction (nigredo stage, black) to perfection or the stone (red). Here the sequence seems to be black, the “peacock’s tail” or rainbow, blue, white (“Argent”), citrine (?), and red (the “Imperiall Ensign”). For some of the variations on this theme and ways of representing color change, see Read, 145–48.

219 *German Horse:* Latin version: “Primum vexillum erat nigrorum equitum Germanorum, quos vocant Reutherorum atrorum”; prose version: “The first ensign was of the black German Horsemen, which they call black Reuthi (I believe *Curassiers*).”

235 *the Soul’s.* The Soul is.

X. Bernardus Trevisanus

*The Fourth Part of the Book of Bernard,
Count of Marchia Trevisana,
of the Practise of the Philosophick Stone*

Bernardus Trevisanus, a figure whose actual name and history have been obscured, is the reputed author of several famous alchemical texts. As in the title of the work translated here, Bernardus is often called a Count or Earl of the March (i.e., county or territory) of Trevisa (Treviso, Italy). But early manuscripts indicate that he was in 1385 “a citizen of Treves” (Trier, Germany), and in one major text he signs himself *Trevirensis*. He is therefore now usually identified with the historical Bernard of Treves.¹ Perhaps best known for his alchemical correspondence with Thomas of Bologna (the father of Christine de Pisan), Bernardus flourished in the second half of the fourteenth century.² His *De Chimico Miraculo* contains an autobiographical account of the many lost years and vain searches that preceded his success at making the philosopher’s stone. Although some of its details may be based in fact, this narrative can hardly be taken at face value, the more so because it bears some striking resemblances to the supposed autobiography of Denis Zacheire

¹This account is based on Thorndike, 3:611–27, who has tried to clarify these issues; Holmyard’s brief sketch (256–58) consists mainly of quotations from Thorndike. For Bernardus’ works, see Ferguson, 1:100–104.

²For citations of the *Responsio ad Thomam de Bononia*, see in this collection, Edward Cradock’s *Treatise*, 117, 469n, 527n; and Bassett Jones’s *Lithochymicus*, 1.4ff. *Hermetick Raptures* (874, 972) refers directly to the allegory translated here.

(see the introduction to Zacharias, above).

The present text is a translation of part four of the *De Chimico Miraculo* (also called *De Alchimia Liber*), which, like the *Practise* of Zacharias, is devoted to the material operation of alchemy and is conveyed as an allegory.³ As with Mary the Prophetess and Zacharias, our translator has first made a prose rendering, followed immediately by one in verse (324 lines in couplets). To him, Bernardus was an important author; he also translated (in prose) two of his other works: *La Parole Delaissée*, which follows the present verse text in MS Sloane 3641, and a treatise on the "Egg of the Philosophers," in MS Sloane 3637.

The allegory of the *Practise of the Philosophick Stone* describes the alchemical work in a vision. Bernardus, having mastered the secrets of alchemy and being commanded to speak only to other adepts, travels the world, arriving at last in India. There a king awards him a golden book for his most learned disputation on the Art (1–34). After this introduction, the main parable (35–246) begins. Walking with his prize in the fields, Bernardus comes upon a fountain hidden in a hollow oak (the alchemical vessel), whose workings are explained to him by a "Venerable Priest." The latter tells of the plight of a King in the fountain (i.e., the matter that becomes the philosopher's stone) who is killed, stripped of his variously-colored garments, and rejuvenated. For the most part, the outlines of this story (also told pictorially in many manuscripts and books from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century)⁴ will be familiar to students of alchemy, though as C.J. Jung points out, this version is rather unusual in that there is no female figure corresponding to the King.⁵

³Many editions of the *De Chimico* would have been accessible to our translator; the text corresponds to *Quarta Pars Libri Bernardi Comitis Marchiae Trevisane, de Practica Philosophici Lapidus*, in Zetzner, *Theatrum Chemicum* (1603) 1:772–76; and (same title) Manget, *Bibliotheca Chemica Curiosa* (1702) 2:397–99.

⁴See, e.g., C.G. Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy*, 2nd ed., trans. R.F.C. Hull; Bollingen Series 20 (Princeton, 1968), figs. 79, 149, 154, 155, 173, 175; and Allison Coudert, *Alchemy: The Philosopher's Stone* (Boulder, 1980), figs. 36–38, 41–43, 45.

⁵*Mysterium Coniunctionis*, trans. R.F.C. Hull, Bollingen Series 20 (New York, 1963), 70–72; note, however, that Zacharias' allegory, above (which bears a general similarity to this one) shows a Prince alone in his "Den" (alchemical vessel). For Jung's other comments on Bernardus' parable, see 153n, 162, 269, 330n. An example of tradi-

Bernardus' parable was a popular one, however, and it is given verbatim in Arthur Edward Waite's Supplement to Martinus Rulandus' *Lexicon Alchemiae*, under the entry for "Visions."⁶

After the "rev'rend Man" or Priest leaves, Bernardus describes how he himself made the stone (251–93). He then addresses this rather daunting warning to any reader who has still not grasped the symbolism of the fountain, the various colors of the King's shirts, his retainers, and their aspiration to his throne:⁷

Who in my Book the Secret cannot see
Must never hope to compass his desire
By manifold Experiments of Fire. (295–97)

Yet, a few lines later—before concluding with an admonition to work naturally, to seek God's inspiration, and to exercise Christian charity once the stone is achieved—he adds this reassurance:

. . . this my Parable the whole work contains
In Practice, Colours, Days, and Regimens;
Ways, Dispositions & Continuance,
Till Fate & Heavn conclude the Mystick Dance. (302–305)

As with other alchemical allegories, we may never be able to decipher this one to our complete satisfaction. Some help is forthcoming, however, in the comments of the Paracelsian, Alexander von Suchten. Several of his notes illuminate details in Bernardus' allegory; these have been incorporated into the commentary.

tional male (solar) and female (lunar) allegorical figures can be seen in Sendivogius' *A Dialogue of the Alchymist and Sulphur*, below.

⁶A *Lexicon of Alchemy*, trans. A.E. Waite (1893; repr. London, 1964), 448–50.

⁷These details represent, respectively, the alchemical vessel or fire; the physical changes in the Great Work, indicated by a sequence of colors; the other metals; their possibilities of being transmuted or perfected.

X. Bernardus Trevisanus
*The Fourth Part of the Book of Bernard,
Count of Marchia Trevisana,
of the Practise of the Philosophick Stone*

[f. 29r]

When Heav'n had so much blest me to impart
To me the wondrous Miracle of Art,
Command was givn me to converse with none
But the elect Copartners of the Stone. 5
For men possest of Sciences divine
Should, like the radiant Galaxy, combine
And mix their Lights to make the Paths of Heaven shine.
So I, obedient to the great command,
Resolvd to search & travel evry Land
The Globe had ever shown. At length I came 10
To golden Ganges in the Land of Fame,
And Appuleia is the Citty's name,
Where dwelt a Man (alas that hee's no more,
Renderd immortall than he was before),
A man I say whom Fate had chosen forth 15
To crown him King of all the Mysterys the Earth
With all her wise Inhabitants can see
On this side Heaven & Eternity.

This King had made his Proclamation: he
Of all th' Hermeticall Fraternity 20
Can best explain that deep Philosophy
In disputation, his Reward shall be
This Book, whose Leaves are pure & precious Gold,
And Gold's the Cover does the Leav's enfold.
My Courage here began to fail, but I 25
Soon reassum'd it & resolv'd to try
The Powrs of Fortune, knowing well that they
Can never bear bright Victory away
That shun the Mighty contest of the Day.
So hee advis'd, & his advice I took, 30
Who had propos'd the Proemium of the Book.
And I disputed till I won the Prize,
The fatall Gold so dazling mortalls' Eys
Almost as much as he that Centers in the Skys.
Then I retir'd, endeavouring to find 35
Some recreation to relieve my Mind,
Fatigu'd with Study. Walking in the Fields [f. 29v]
To see the Product lovely Nature yields,
I chanc't upon a Fountain did abound
With limpid Water. Twas enviro'nd round 40
With curious Stone, & on the Top I found
Twas cover'd with an Oaken Trunk, for fear
Beasts should defile it, or the Fowls o' th' Air
Should bath themselves or wash their Feathers there.
Upon the Bank I sate contemplating 45
The admirable Beauty of the Spring
And found it clos'd above, When, lo, there came
A man whom I saluted by the Name
Of Venerable Priest: "Pray tell me why
The little Fountain, which I here espy, 50
Is so shut up & strongly fortify'd
Over & under & on evry side?"
Hee answer'd thus: "Tis terrible," said he,
"And strange the Vertue of the Spring you see.
Of all that burst from underneath the Ground 55
Its parallell is never to be found.

X. Practise of the Philosophick Stone

So it belongeth to the King alone,
Who knows it well, and's by the Fountain known.
In passing by, it allways draws the King,
Who, notwithstanding, never draws the Spring. 60
Two hundred eighty & two days he hath
To spend in the inclosure of the Bath,
Which makes him young again, & stronger than
The stoutest Hero of the Race of Man.
Therefore he caus'd it carefully to bee 65
With a white stone surrounded, as you see,
Wherein the Water of the Spring does shine
Like Silver bright, or th' Heavn Cristalline.
And that it might be stronger to defy
The force of an invading Enemy, [f. 30r]
Around the Top he plact an aged Oak
Which had been with an artificiall Stroak
Cleft in the middle, & thereby he made,
Fenc't from the Sun, a most delightfull shade.
Then as you see, it is inclosed all 75
First with hard Stone & a transparent Wall,
Then with a hollow Oak, because its Nature's such
When 'tis excited & inflamd too much,
It is most terrible & penetrates
Even the hardest Adamantine Gates, 80
And so would vanish quite away; alas,
We were undone if that should come to passe."
I askt him whether he had seen the King
Within the said inclosure of the Spring.
He answerd, he had seen him entring, where 85
He from his entrance did no more appear,
After his Keepers had enclos'd him there,
Untill the hundredth & the thirtieth day,
When he arose in a refulgent Ray.
"He at the Gate, that is his Keeper, hath 90
A solemn charge to dayly warm the Bath
With such a Heat & in proportion so
As fire is hidden in the Source below,
And day & night no intermission know."

I askt the Colour of the King. "Behold," 95
Said he, "at first you'l see him cloathd in Gold.
His second Garment is of silk, but black,
And a black Doublet on his mourning back.
The next he wears are white triumphall Cloaths: [f. 30v]
A Shirt as white as are the Mountain Snows.
His blood was red, his flesh (not so before)
Was as Vermilion or the crimson Gore."
I further askt him, whether he had seen
The King have servants when he enterd in.
He answering smild, but answerd as a Friend, 105
"No Courtiers here upon their King attend;
He leaves his Followers & his Servants all.
They must not enter the diaphanous Wall,
And none approach the Fountain-head but he
Who does the Heat continuall supply, 110
An office that may easily be done
Ev'n by a simple, a most simple one."
Then I demanded of him, if the King
Had any great affection for the Spring,
And that for him. Again he answerd me, 115
"They love & are beloved mutually.
The Fountain does attract the King, but he
Draws not the Fountain. Yet he loves no other,
For to the King the Fountain's as a Mother."
My Question then was, if the Monarch was 120
Descended of some ancient Royal Race.
He said, "He was descended of the Spring,
Which without adding any other thing
Had made him as he was, an honourable King."
Next I enquird, what Nobles did resort 125
To th' other Presence-Chambers of the Court.
Hee told mee there were onely six who had [f. 31r]
Great expectations if the King were dead.
When that should happen they would serve no more,
But have the Kingdome as he had before. 130
They now are but Assistants of his Throne,
In hopes of the Reversion of the Crown.

X. Practise of the Philosophick Stone

Then I desir'd to be informd, how old
The Monarch was, & I by him was told
That he was older than the Spring & farr 135
Maturer than his other Subjects are.
"How comes it then to pass," said I, "that they
Kill not the King to bear the Crown away,
Since he's so much in Years?" "Tho' he's so old,"
Says he, "he can endure both Heat & Cold 140
And Wind & Rain & Labour. None of them
Can violently seiz the Diadem.
Nor could they all, should they combine in one,
Murder the Monarch to possess his Throne."
"Then what succession can they hope, when he 145
Cannot be murderd, & shall never dy?"
"But you, my Friend," said he, "must know that those
Six of his Subjects from the Fountain rose,
And such Existence as they have they took
Out of the Emanations of the Brook, 150
As did the King. So they're attracted all
By it, as things by their Originall.
The Fountain kills the King & them, but then
The Fountain brings the King to life agen.
He so reviv'd, a distribution makes,
And whosoever of the Gift partakes, [f. 31v]
Tho' ne're so little is the Portion, he
Is in Possession of the Royalty
Equall to Kings in Pow'r & Riches." Then
I askt my kind Informant once agen, 160
If there were any Time allotted they
Should in the doubtfull Expectation stay.
He smild again, & told me how the King
Without his Train descends into the Spring,
Altho' it loves them too, but that it must not be: 165
They have not yet deserved the dignity.
"When the King enters he is strip't of those
Which he brought in, his Coronation Cloaths,
That were as rich as eys did e're behold

With golden Leavs & Wefts of purest Gold. 170
This he bestows on his first Chamberlain
(We call him Saturn), which he does retain
Entirely forty days (sometimes two more
Augment the number of th' Account before).
The black silk Doublet is the proper fee 175
Of Jove, the second Chamberlain, & he
Keeps the Possession twenty days; which done,
He by command resigns it to the Moon.
Lune, the third Person, has the fairest Face
Of any Daughter of the heavnly Race, 180
And shee enjoys the Garment twenty days.
Then comes the King clad in a Shirt as white
As is the Snow, or flowr of Salt, & bright
As Ariadne in a frosty Night.
The King puts off his shirt, which is the share [f. 32r]
Of stern Gradivus, the fierce God Warr,
Who after forty days sometimes disdains
A Resignation, & by Force remains
Two other days to sway th' Imperiall Rains.
Then Mars retiring, to the Sun gives Place, 190
Who wears a yellow vizard on his Face,
But is not clear as the celestiall Lights
Till after forty days & forty nights.
And then the Sun sanguineous appears,
Seizing the Shirt that crimsons all the Spheres. 195
So flaming Hercules on Oeta stood,
Fird with the Shirt dy'd in the Centaur's Blood."
I askt th'event of all these things. Says he,
"The fountain Gates you then shall open see
To all of them, & as before they sought 200
And had his Shirt, his Doublet & his Coat,
So now his red & bloody Flesh they got
To eat among themselvs, the precious Hire
Of all their Work, & Crown of their Desire."
I askt agen, "Must they so long remain, 205
And can no sooner some reward obtain
For service done, unlesse they all attend

X. Practise of the Philosophick Stone

Till the whole Circle of their Labours end?"
The Answer to my Question was, That when
The glorious white, the snowy Shirt was seen, 210
Of the six Courtiers four might then possess
Them selvs of Powr & Riches numberless.
But they would then but half the Kingdome gain, [f. 32v]
Wherefore they are contented to remain
A little longer in suspence to see 215
The full Event & End of Destiny,
Which in like Manner should conferr on them
Their King's bright Coronation Diadem.
I askt what Doctours, or what Medicine
Was sent the King, while he remaind within. 220
He made me Answer, That they sent him none,
No man came near him but that onely one,
His Keeper mindfull to perpetuate
A constant, vap'rous, circulating Heat.
I askt him, "Is the Keeper's Labour great?" 225
"More at the first than in the End, for then
The Fountain is inflam'd." I askt agen
Whether it had been seen by many Men.
"The World," said he, "has seen it, & it lyes
Self-evident to ev'ry Mortall's Eys; 230
Yet all of them that gaze thereon doe know
No more than what the outward Husk does show."
Then more at large I askt, "What may they doe?"
"Those six," said he, "may purge the King again
(Three days he in the Fountain shall remain, 235
According to th' contents it does contain),
In circling round the Place. On the first Day
He gives his Doublet, next his Shirt away,
And on the third his bloody Flesh." Said I,
"Tell me the depth of the whole mystery."
To which he made no more than this Reply: [f. 33r]
"I now am tird so long with answ'ring thee."
Which I perceiving, had no more to say,
But waiting on him as he went away,

A thousand Thanks I gave; a thousand more 245
Were ready from my unexhausted store.
He was a rev'rend Man, so wise that even
The astrall Orbs, & wheeling Spheres of Heaven
Obeyed him: all things before him shook
And, trembling, bow'd at his Majestick Look. 250
Now I, with suddain drowsyness opprest,
Beside the Fountain did intend to rest,
And sitting on it I could not forbear,
But I must open all th' Apartments there.
In the mean Time I did so often look 255
On my reward, the golden-leaved Book,
Its heav'n-born Splendour did so much surprize
And overpower the vigilance of my Eys,
That, as before it did my Head oppress,
It so augmented now that drowsyness, 260
That my said Book by inadvertence fell
Out of my hands into the little Well;
Which much afflicted me, because I thought
To keep the Prize my Disputation got.
I lookt into it, but alas, no more 265
Could see the Book I had enjoyd before.
Believing therefore that my Volume fell
Into the very bottome of the Well, [f. 33v]
I did attempt the watry Source to Drain, 270
So that ten parts should with a tenth remain.
And when I went to draw it all, I saw
It was so viscous that it scarce would draw.
While I was toying thus industriously,
I spy'd a Tribe whose coming hinderd me
From drawing more; yet e're I left it I 275
Shut all the Fountain round, for fear that they
Like wicked Thievs should steal my Book away.
But Fire was then enkindled round the Spring
To warm the Bath wherein to wash the King.
I for my Crime was hurry'd thence away; 280
Full forty days I in a Prison lay.
When they expir'd, I was releast, & then

X. Practise of the Philosophick Stone

Returnd to see my Fountain once agen,
Where there appeard thick foggy Clouds, as I
Have often seen hang round A winter Sky, 285
Which lasted long. But in the End I found
Without much Labour all my Wishes crownd.
But 'tis no Labour, you will surely say,
If choosing right, you never turn astray
In Paths erroneous & the crooked Way. 290
Let your Endeavour allways be to trace
The Steps of Nature in her wonted Race;
Then you the lovely Queen shall in your Arms embrace.
Therefore concluding, I pronounce that he
Who in my Book the Secret cannot see 295
Must never hope to compass his desire
By manifold Experiments of Fire. [f. 34r]
My Pitty & Compassion mov'd my heart
For those that wander in the precious Art.
Therefore to them I have reveald it all, 300
And prov'd the Operations naturall.
For this my Parable the whole work contains
In Practice, Colours, Days, and Regimens;
Ways, Dispositions & Continuance,
Till Fate & Heavn conclude the Mystick Dance. 305
To end then this my Book, I pray that God,
Who in the Heavns has fixt his grand Aboad,
And who alone commanded me to write,
Would thence impart an intellectual Light
To searching Tyros who have Hearts upright 310
And Minds sincere. To them there shall remain
Nothing too hard, provided they abstain
From dreaming Fancys & the Subtletys
Of cheating Sophisters, who by surprize,
Like Mountebanks impose on vulgar Eys. 315
The Way is Nat'rall & but onely one,
Which I have in my Speculation shown.
I bid you all farewell in Christ, & be
Mindfull of those that sink in Poverty,

While Treasures unexhausted you possess,
Whom the peculiar Hand of Heavn does bless
With Riches equally & happiness.

320

Pray then to God to send you down a Ray
Out of the Fountain of Eternall Day.

X. TEXTUAL NOTE

Text: British Library MS Sloane 3641, fols. 29r-34r

title] From the prose version which immediately precedes the verse text (fol. 24r).

X. COMMENTARY

“Prose version” refers to the same translator’s prose rendering, on fols. 24r-28r in the same manuscript.

12 *Appuleia*. No such city in India has been found (Apulia is a region in southern Italy.) Prose version: “I past thro’ Appulea, a certain famous city in India.” Regarding such geographical references, Alexander von Suchten says, “When Theophrastus [i.e., Paracelsus] further speaks of Hungary, Istria, the South, or Cyprus, he gives you to understand in which countries our matter ought to be sought, and he leaves it to you whether you will have two different substances which, as regards their genus, are of one and the same nature. Therefore, seek the one, the Lion, in Hungary; but the Eagle in Istria. But if you rule your work through one thing, thus proceeding from Unity to Duality, and thence to three things, then travel to Cyprus. There you will be refused nothing.

“Bernhardus has travelled yet farther, saying that he fetched his man, viz., the chosen jewel, the golden book, from India” (*An Explanation of the Natural Philosopher’s Tincture, of Theophrastus Paracelsus*, in Benedictus Figulus, *A Golden and Blessed Casket*, 249-50).

30 *hee advisd*. In the prose version, the speaker receives encouragement from “a most learned man,” not the King himself.

31 *Præmium*. Premium, reward.

42 *Oaken Trunk*. See 71–79n.

59–60 Prose version: “It always draws hither to it self the King passing by, & is not drawn by the King”; see also 117–18, below. “Whatsoever is to be prepared by Chemistry and brought into its Arcanum, its Tincture, or Quintessence (in which is the power and virtue of all creatures), or is to be cleansed from impeding impurities, that must be done by Distillation or Extraction (which is the same as Solution). There is no other means. As Bernhardus says: ‘The King never goes forth except the Fountain attract him’” (von Suchten, *The Natural Philosopher’s Tincture* [see 12n, above], 222–23).

68 *Heavn Cristalline*. Prose version: “of a heavnly Colour.”

71–79 This is a description of the alchemist’s furnace. Alexander von Suchten cites Bernhardus’ theoretical work on the need to seal the alchemical vessel, lest the volatile “seed” of gold escape; he then goes on: “Hence the ‘triple vase’ commonly used by Philosophers, and the ‘old hollow oak split through the middle,’ viz., the oaken sphere of Bernhardus, in whose middle is the clear stone, in which stood the bath. All this was done to ward off the too strong rays of the Sun, that our male and female seed might, without hindrance, remain together to the birth: ‘For the separation of active and passive necessarily prevents generation’” (248–49). For other instances of an oak tree representing the furnace, see Read, 62, 99, 162; C.G. Jung (*Mysterium Coniunctionis*, 70–72) discusses the possibility that the oak itself may represent the female principle, citing analogous cases in other texts.

88 *the hundredth & the thirtieth day*. Discussing the time needed for the stage of putrefaction, von Suchten writes: “Bernhardus says: ‘In 130 days the King puts off his blackness, and appears in his white shirt.’ *Scala Phil[osophorum]* gives 140 days for such putrefaction. . . . After these follow the other perfect colours, as the white of complete coagulation. Thus, putrefaction takes place in humidity, but the end of putrefaction is dryness: and incineration is a gentle induration, and occultation of humour, the fixation of spirit, the collecting of things diverse, the Renovation of Homogeneity, the adaption to fire of things fleeing

therefrom, and is the colour of regeneration and of semicoction. It lasts also a long time—according to Bernhardus almost 82 days—which is a sign of fixation according to the Dictum of Lucas in the *Turba*: ‘When our Magnesia is white it lets not the spirit go from it.’ Theophrastus [Paracelsus] sets no limit of time to such colours, for it depends on the matter” (240–41; on Bernardus’ 82 days, see our text, lines 171ff. and note).

95-103 On the color sequence in the alchemical work, see Zachaire above, 218n; and Read, 145–48.

104 *servants*. Prose version: “a great train of forreiners & ordinary people.”

117-19 Cf. 59–60, above.

119 *Mother*. In the *Philosophical Rules or Canons Concerning the Philosopher’s Stone*, “The Glass, or vessel, is called the ‘Mother’” (in Benedictus Figulus, *A Golden and Blessed Casket*, 287).

127 *onely six*. I.e., the other planetary metals, aside from gold; see 172n.

170 *Wefts*. Threads or layers.

171ff. On the amount of time required for the matter to be fully purified and perfected, and on the significance of the other metals in this process, compare with lines 171–212 the following commentary of Æyrenaeus Philalethes (1677) on George Ripley’s *Vision*, which says that 84 days are needed: “This time [required] is not certainly agreed upon by Authors: But in this they all agree, they prescribe so long time until the Complement. One writes, *that this Blackest Black indures a long time, and is not destroyed in less than five months*. Another [here he is quoting Bernardus himself] writes, *That the King when he enters into his Bath pulls off his Robe, and gives it to Saturn, from whom he receives a Black Shirt, which he keeps forty two days*: And indeed it is two and forty days before he put on this Black Shirt instead of his Golden Robe, that is, be destroyed as touching his Solary Qualities, and become instead of Fixt, Citrine, Terrene, and Solid, a Fugitive, Black, Spiritual, Watery, and Flegmatick Substance: But Putridness begins not till the first Forms be put off; for so long as the Body may be reduced into its former Nature, it is not yet well ground and imbibed: grind therefore

and imbibe, till thou see the Bodies to become no Bodies, but a Fume and wind, and then circulating for a season, thou shalt see them settle and putrifie.

“*Saturn* then will hold the Earth, which is Occidental, Retentive and Autumnal, in the West; then proceed to the North, where *Mercury* holdeth the Water, where the Matter is Watery and Flegmatick, and it is Winter, and the North expulsive. But they who divide the Operation into *Saturn*’s Rule, and after him succeeding *Jupiter*, ascribe to *Saturn* the whole of Putridness, and to *Jupiter* the time of variety of Colours. After *Jupiter*, who holds but twenty or two and twenty days, comes *Luna*, the third Person, bright and fair, and she holds twenty good days, sometimes two over and above: In this Computation it is good to count from the fortieth or fiftieth day of the first beginning of the Stone, to the fourteenth or sixteenth day of *Jupiter*’s Reign, wherein in the washing of *Laton* there is still Blackness, though mixed with variety of gay Colours, which amounteth to the sum of days allowed by the Author in Putrification, to wit, Eighty four days” (repr. in Klossowski de Rola, *Alchemy: The Secret Art*, 29).

172 *Saturn*. I.e., lead; the other metals signified by their corresponding planets in the following lines are tin (Jupiter or “Jove,” 176), silver (the moon or “Lune,” 179), and iron (Mars or “*Gradivus*,” 186).

178 *by command*. Prose version: “the King’s so commanding.”

183 *flour of Salt*. “*Flos Saltis* is the Greek *Alasanthos*. Fine Salt” (Rulandus, 148); “Flower of Salt, a species of Zoophyte, which comes from the sea, and is an efflorescence of the sea. In the laboratories it is called Sperma, Seed of Whale, or Sea Monster, Pale Amber, Spermaceti, or Cetine, possibly from its efficacy in certain diseases” (Rulandus, 283).

184 *Ariadne*. This reference is the addition of the translator (though he does not include it in the prose version). I can find no source for her brightness “in a frosty night.” For two alchemical texts bearing the name of “*Ariadne*’s Thread,” see Ferguson, 1:276, 2:249.

186 *Gradivus*. I.e., Mars.

196-97 This reference to Hercules’ suffering (from the shirt

X. Commentary

of Nessus) and death (on a pyre) on Mount Oeta is the poetic embellishment of the translator.

203 *Hire*. Payment, reward.

211 *Of the six Courtiers four*. See 172n, above for the four metals, lead, tin, silver, iron; apparently these four might now be transmuted into gold.

234-39 Prose version: "If they would, those six can again purge the King in the Fountain in three days, by going round the place according to the content contained, by giving the first day his doublet, the second his Shirt, & the third his bloody flesh" (see also 88n, above).

269-72 Prose version: "I begun to draw out the Water, yet with this intention, so that there should not remain in it, except a tenth part of it with ten parts. And when I endeavord to draw forth all, they were very tenacious."

295 *Secret*. Identified in prose version as "the Stone."

317 *Speculation*. Prose version: "which by my speculative par[able] is demonstrated."

323-24 Prose version: "Pray to God, who will instruct ye further."

XI. Aristeus Pater

*The Words of Father Aristeus to his Son,
done out of the Scythian Character or Language
into Latin Rhyme*

The printed source for this verse translation is a Latin alchemical poem, *Verba Aristei Patris ad Filium, ex Caractere et Idiometate Schitico, Latino Rithmo Donata*, published anonymously by the French courtier, diplomat and alchemist Alexandre Toussaint de Limojon de Saint Disdier (1630-1689), in his *Lettre d'un philosophe, sur le secret du Grant Oeuvre. Ecrit au sujet de ce qu'Aristée a laissé à son fils, touchant le magistere philosophique*.¹ Although the *Verba Aristei Patris* had circulated for at least seventy-five years (see below), it was first given prominence in Limojon's *Lettre*, where it is the subject of a detailed explication. The "letter" of the title is ostensibly from Limojon (who identifies himself only in an anagram on the title page) to another alchemist, who had sent him the Aristeus verse

¹(The Hague, 1686; Paris, 1688). The most famous book associated with Limojon is *Le triomphe hermétique* (Amsterdam, 1689; trans. as *The Hermetical Triumph*, 1723), but he is probably the author of only some of the texts in that collection (Ferguson 2:468, 486; see also 2:39-40 for a brief biographical notice and list of other works). *Le triomphe* has been edited with introduction and notes by Eugène Canselier (Paris, 1971); it also contains a convenient reprint of *Lettre d'un philosophe* (256-307, with notes by René Alleau), as well as facsimiles of Limojon's MS notes in his copy of Sendivogius' *Novum Lumen Chymicum*. Canselier (75-98) suggests that Limojon died before the end of 1689, probably lost at sea when returning from a diplomatic mission in Ireland, where he had represented Louis XIV in negotiations with the deposed James II of England. Unless otherwise noted, citations from *Lettre d'un philosophe* below are from the Paris, 1688 edition.

text for his perusal. Dated 9 May 1686, it excerpts passages for analysis, in the course of which Limojon cites a host of alchemical authorities: Synesius, Arnaldus de Villanova, Flamel, Basilius Valentinus, Paracelsus, d'Espagnet, and the Cosmopolite (Michael Sendivogius). The letter is followed by the whole text of the Latin poem, with a French prose translation on facing pages (42–61), both texts being divided into 50 numbered sections.

The *Verba Aristei Patris* itself, here translated into 160 lines of couplets as *The Words of Father Aristeus*, has four main parts. (1) In a prologue (1-52) Aristeus extols the great secret and describes the powers of the stone, both in perfecting metals and in curing human disease. He then enjoins his "Son" to preserve in secrecy the momentous legacy now bequeathed to him, as the ancient sages have always done. (2) Aristeus now states the general principle that while everything on earth has a different "Specifick Form," all things come ultimately from the elemental Air, which is "universall & originall." Paradoxically, this primal substance both nourishes and corrupts all things (53-89). (3) The "Air Divine" is now given a theoretical exposition. In order to master all of Nature's secrets, one must know how to extract it from ordinary air. Since all things in nature are attracted by their like, this can be done by "catching" the Air with the "baits" of snow and ice, which are only "Air congealed" (90-122). (4) Finally, the "Son" receives instructions on the material operation and the creation of the philosopher's stone (123-60).

While "Aristeus" cites no sources and thereby aligns himself with no antecedent alchemical tradition, one can observe certain similarities between his theories and those of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Neoplatonic alchemists. His notion of the Air, for example, resembles that of Jean d'Espagnet's "Universal Spirit." And, while Michael Sendivogius gives a more fully developed theory of the generation of metals, he too sees the Air as the vehicle or repository for celestial virtues, and he uses similar terminology. Given the theoretical content of the text and two early seventeenth-century citations of Aristeus, in Flamel

and L'Agneau,² it is almost certain that the author of the *Verba Aristei* is a late sixteenth-century follower of Paracelsus. He draws on the same pool of ideas developed later by d'Espagnet (fl. 1623), Sendivogius (d. 1636), and other post-Paracelsian writers.³

That leaves us with the pseudonym Aristeus, the claim that the Latin verse is itself only a translation "out of the Scythian Character or Language," and the problem of the provenance of that Latin text. What, aside from an aura of antiquity, did the author hope to gain by adopting this name and linguistic origin? And what is the text's history before Limojon's edition? Neither of these questions can be answered definitively, but at least a beginning can be made.

Some guidance regarding the pseudonym is offered, for example, by the publisher-bookseller of Limojon's edition. His *Avertissement* identifies the author with the "ancient philosopher" Aristeas of Proconnesus mentioned by Herodotus, and asserts that he lived at least 400 years, thanks to the "universal medicine."⁴ Herodotus, writing ca. 450 B.C., does indeed speak of Aristeas of Proconnesus as the author of a poem on the Arimaspeans (one-eyed people of the far North), and he cites it as a source for the history of the ancient Scythians. Nowhere, of course, does Herodotus call Aristeas an alchemist, but the latter's marvellous history would have lent itself to an appropriation

²Nicolas Flamel, *Les figures hieroglyphiques* (first ed., 1612; see the 1624 trans., *His Exposition of the Hieroglyphical Figures*, 94); and David L'Agneau *Harmonia Chymica* (first ed., 1611; see the repr. in *Theatrum Chemicum*, 4:713 [the passage paraphrased at p. 764 is indeed from Aristeus, despite the erroneous reference to Arisleus in both text and margin; see below on the Aristeus/Arisleus confusion]).

³For Paracelsus' theory of the air as the source of life, and for the notion of "balsams" (cp. our text, 56n), see Walter Pagel, *Paracelsus: An Introduction to the Philosophical Medicine of the Renaissance* (New York, 1958), esp. 117ff., and *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings*, 2 vols., trans. Arthur Edward Waite (1894; repr. New York, 1967), passim. For d'Espagnet and Sendivogius, see the Introduction to the translations of the latter's work, below. Sendivogius, like Aristeus, speaks of "crude air," sees dew as a means of conveying vivifying powers, and refers to the "central fire" of the earth—a point that comes out explicitly in Waite's version of Aristeus (see passage quoted in commentary, 123n), though not in our verse translation.

⁴Sig. A2v; the publisher also takes credit for having had the Latin text translated into French prose, "de mot à mot."

by later hermetic writers. For Herodotus recounts the story that Aristeas, a well-born man of Proconnesus, died and then mysteriously disappeared, only to turn up again seven years later to compose his poem, the *Arimaspeia*. His poem written, he disappeared again, yet returned some 240 years later in the Italian town of Metapontion, where he instructed the people to set up an altar to Apollo, together with a statue of himself. Aristeas was to accompany the god in the form of a raven when Apollo came to them. Having consulted the oracle at Delphi, who bade the Metaponites to obey these requests, they did so, and the altar and statue still stand, says Herodotus.⁵

If the publisher is correct in identifying this Aristeas as the source of the author's pseudonym, we can see the logic behind such a choice.⁶ While the Scythians were considered barbarians by the ancient Greeks, they were (like the ancient Egyptians over whom the legendary Hermes Trismegistus reigned) remote and mysterious. Though not himself a Scythian, the assertion that Aristeas wrote a poem on the ancient history of that people would be enough to account for the claim that "Pater Aristeus" originally composed his hermetic legacy in "the Scythian character or language." And Aristeas's association with the sun-god Apollo would appeal to the alchemical imagination (sun=gold). Just as important, his longevity (or his resurrection from apparent death), could be attributed (as the *Avertissement* to Limojon's edition says) to the preservative effect of the "universal medicine."

There is, however, another Aristeas to whom the pseudonym may allude. One of the most famous texts in biblical history is *The Epistle of Aristeas*, which dates from the first century B.C. to the first century A.D. This document purports to be a contemporary record, by an officer at the court of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285–247 B.C.), of the circumstances leading up to the compo-

⁵*The History of Herodotus*, 4.13–16; see the trans. by G.C. Macaulay, 2 vols. (London, 1914), 1:297–99.

⁶If we did not know that the Aristeus text existed before he was born, we might suspect that Limojon himself was the author of the Latin poem and that the "publisher-bookseller" was merely a convenient vehicle for this explanation. Such disguises and subterfuges are not unknown in the bibliographical history of alchemy.

sition of the Septuagint, the oldest Greek translation of the Old Testament. While the genuineness of this letter was first questioned by Ludovicus de Vives in 1522, its authenticity was still being defended by scholars in the nineteenth century.⁷ During the Renaissance its account of the Septuagint's having been produced in seventy-two days by seventy-two translators was widely known. In addition, the *Epistle* contains a minute description of an elaborately wrought golden table encrusted with precious stones—just the sort of detail that could provide an imagined link with alchemy. But that the author of our Latin alchemical poem had this Aristeas in mind when choosing his persona remains only a possibility.

There are still other possible sources for "Pater Aristeus." René Alleau, for instance, conflates Herodotus' Aristeas with the Aristaeus of classical mythology: the son of Apollo and the nymph Cyrene who was worshipped as a god of husbandry, especially bee-keeping. Alleau says that "according to the alchemical tradition, he was the symbolic type of the 'celestial husbandman,'" but he cites no evidence for this. To complicate the question further, Alleau glosses "la langue schiite" in Limojon's letter (*ex Caractere et Idiomate Schitico* in the Latin title) as referring to the Shiites, the sectarians of Islam who emerged in the seventh century to create one of the great divisions of that religion. Without explanation, Alleau thus posits an Arabic origin or intermediary for the text and ignores the even more exotic fiction of an ancient "Scythian" heritage insisted upon by the Latin original.⁸ Modern scholars have indeed discovered a flourishing mystical alchemy among the medieval Shiites,⁹ but this anachro-

⁷See *The Letter of Aristeas*, in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, 2 vols., ed. R.H. Charles (Oxford, 1913), 2:83-122.

⁸See his notes to *Lettre d'un philosophe*, in *Le triomphe hermétique* (1971), 263, 265. One could see how the myth of Aristaeus, as set out in Virgil's *Georgics* 4:315ff., would appeal to the alchemical imagination, for there he is able to generate new swarms of bees from the decaying carcasses of bulls. But I have been able to find no antecedent "alchemical tradition" attached to this myth.

⁹Most notably in Jabir ibn Hayyan (8th century); see, e.g., Paul Kraus, *Jabir ibn Hayyan*, 2 vols. (Cairo, 1942), 2:61, 97, et passim; Manuchehr Taslimi, "Conspectus of Recent Research on Arabic Chemistry" (M.Sc. Thesis, University of London, 1951), 16, 41ff., et passim; Louis Massignon, "Inventaire de la littérature Hermétique Arabe,"

XI. Introduction

nistic reading back into history does little to clarify either the linguistic or historical origins of our text, whose content—for all its ancient trappings—reveals a Renaissance provenance.

A final source of muddle relating to the reputed author of *Verba Aristei Patris* lies in the fact that the name Aristeus is occasionally confused with Arisleus, the Pythagorean sage whose epistle introduces the *Turba Philosophorum*, and to whom other alchemical works are attributed. This is undoubtedly the result of scribal or compositorial error, but it has perhaps led to Aristeus being subsumed by the more well-known Arisleus and hence to the neglect of the former.¹⁰

Not only, therefore, is there nothing known of the actual author of this text, but we can only surmise the intended allusive force of his pseudonym (whether derived from Herodotus' Aristeas, the Aristeas of biblical legend, or Virgil's Aristaeus). Moreover, we must be wary of obscuring the name Aristeus altogether, by mis-identifying it with Arisleus.

The provenance of the printed text of *Verba Aristei Patris* is no less problematical. It appears in none of the standard bibliographies of alchemy, and I have been able to find no printed version before Limojon's of 1686. We have already noted that at least two references to the *Verba Aristei* from the early seventeenth century show that it was in circulation—whether in manuscript or in print—long before Limojon's edition. What appears to be a third such reference seems to offer a fruitful line of inquiry, but the original text of our poem remains elusive. To his 1893 translation of Martinus Rulandus' *Lexicon Alchemiae* (first ed., Frankfurt, 1612), Arthur Edward Waite adds an alphabetized Supplement which contains (among many other entries) the "Great Secret of Aristeus." This entry gives the entire Aristeus text as in Limojon, but with some additional matter.

in Andre Marie Jean Festugière, *La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*, 2nd ed., 4 vols. (Paris, 1950–54), 1:384–400, esp. 397.

¹⁰For the Aristeus/Arisleus confusion, see Ferguson, 1:41; Singer's *Catalogue*, 1:1–2; and *The Turba Philosophorum*, trans. Arthur Edward Waite (1896; repr. London, 1970), 1n. In the reprint of L'Agneau's *Harmonia Chemica*, "Aristeus" appears in the list of authorities cited, but "Arisleus" is given in the text itself and in a marginal note; see *Theatrum Chemicum*, 4:713, 764, and the note on L'Agneau above.

Waite's Supplement, which in form and style appears to be part of Rulandus's own work, does not, however, appear in the original 1612 edition or the 1661 reissue of the *Lexicon*, nor does Waite identify its origin. The title page of his translation states clearly that he is rendering the 1612 edition of the *Lexicon*, but it is most likely that Waite compiled and added this Supplement himself, since it contains material published even after the latest reported seventeenth-century edition of Rulandus' *Lexicon*.¹¹ Waite was certainly adept at compiling such information, since a year after his translation of Rulandus was published, he appended his own "Short Lexicon of Alchemy" to his translation of Paracelsus' *Hermetic and Alchemical Writings* (2:348–86).

In any case, the Supplement's Aristeus entry begins by saying that the text is taken from *Albertus Parvus Lucii Libellus*. But here is another dead end, since there is no trace of this Latin work. The earliest version I have been able to identify is a French translation of 1668, but it does not contain the Aristeus material.¹² The latter does appear, however inexplicably, in an early eighteenth-century edition, and here, though entirely in French prose, the text corresponds exactly to that translated in Waite's Supplement.¹³ There is still, however, no trace of the original Latin verse text before Limojon's 1686 edition, despite the references some seventy-five years earlier by Flamel and L'Agneau; and we still do not know from which text Waite made his English prose translation. It is perhaps fitting that the textual history of the *Verba Aristei Patris* is as confused and as uncertain, as are the origin and significance of the name Aristeus itself.

Since, aside from the present verse translation, Waite's is the

¹¹Ferguson, 2:303, notes a 1671 edition mentioned elsewhere, but was not able to locate a copy.

¹²Lucius Albertus (pseud., Parvus), *Les secrets merveilleux de la magie naturelle du Petit Albert* (Lyons, 1668; facs. repr., Paris, 1868: British Library copy 7320.aaaa.13). Ferguson lists only a reissue of this (Lyons, 1743) and says it "is not an alchemical book" (1:17).

¹³*Le solide trésor des merveilleux secrets de la magie naturelle & cabalistique du Petit Albert* (Geneva, 1704; British Library copy 1040.b.36), 141–47; this corresponds to Waite's Supplement in Rulandus, *A Lexicon of Alchemy* (1893; repr. London, 1964), 370–73.

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only English version of Aristeus, and since his version supplies material not otherwise available, I give here the opening section of his entry for the "Great Secret of Aristeus":

The *Albertus Parvus Lucii Libellus* has the following account of a process which is attributed to this celebrated artist. If the great name of Aristeus had not become celebrated among those of Adepts in the high operations of philosophy, it would be difficult to give credit to the writing which he has addressed to his son by election, as an instruction for the undertaking of the great philosophical work. It will be discerned amidst the obscurities of the document that Aristeus considered the mysterious Stone of the Philosophers to be composed of condensed air, artificially rendered palpable. And this is how he instructs his son upon the all-important subject.¹⁴

Only with the recovery of earlier texts of the *Verba Aristei Patris* will we be able to identify more precisely its provenance; and only with further study of its literary and scientific contexts will we be able to grasp the full significance of its attribution, and of its place in the alchemical tradition.

A Note on the Text

Of the six translations in this section, *The Words of Father Aristeus* is the only one to exist in more than one manuscript copy. It appears in MS Sloane 3641 (copy text for this edition and the source of the three preceding poems above) and in Sloane 2567, also an early eighteenth-century manuscript. The former manuscript is clearly the better text, given the number of its superior readings. Sloane 2567 is nevertheless important, for it provides a fuller title which translates exactly that of the source text. For other details and variant readings, see the textual notes below.

¹⁴*A Lexicon of Alchemy*, Supplement, 370; what follows corresponds to our verse translation. See also the Commentary on our text (160n), for a brief concluding passage from Waite's Supplement which appears in neither Limojon's text nor our translation, but which does (like the passage just quoted) correspond to the French edition of *Petit Albert* noted above (Geneva, 1704), 147.

XI. Aristeus Pater

*The Words of Father Aristeus to his Son,
done out of the Scythian Character or Language
into Latin Rhyme*

[f. 61r]

And now my Son, first having givn to thee
The proper Maxims of Philosophy
That guide the Race of humane Life, & then
Those theorems that doe the best explain
All the Phænomena which the Heavns can show 5
And th'ever-changd & changing Earth below,
There yet remains what I have long conceald
And never yet to living Man reveald:
That I deliver up to thee the Keys
Of Nature's hidden Treasures; & of these 10
The chief is this, that shines like purest Gold,
Admir'd by Heav'n & Earth. This does unfold
What all those other sevrall Keys doe hold
Lockt in their choicest Cabinets. Lo, here
Th' inestimable Fountain does appear 15
Of that great Universall Work, which we
Doe most undoubtedly confess to be
The highest Gift of the Divinity.
How vile to this all earthly Riches are!
There is no treasure can with this compare. 20

XI. Father Aristeus to his Son

For what is Wealth if Asthmas stop my Breath,
And what are Treasures in the Hour of Death?
At his approach I must my Treasures leave,
But if this Key I in possession have, 25
Death's overcome & sinks into the Grave.
Having this Key, I have the Secret here,
And with this Secret I can conquer Fear.
Treasures & Wealth into my bosome flow,
Beyond what all proud Earthly Monarchs know. 30
Pale Death's arrested, & he flies away;
Nor can his sickly Troops behind him stay
While in my hand I grasp the golden Key. [f. 61v]
This now, my Son, I give to thee alone;
But I conjure thee by that living one 35
Who sits upon the everlasting Throne
That thou this Secret unto none impart,
But lock it in the Cabinet of thy heart.
If thou doest use it, it will bring to thee
A tide of Wealth, & cure each malady 40
That age brings on. But Chronos strives in vain
To make thee old, for this revives again
The Seeds of youthfull fire, & healeth all
Humane Distempers, tho' Originall.
It enlightens all the Metalls & does bless 45
Its owners with perpetuall Happiness.
This is the Mistery which heretofore
Our Philosophick Fathers knew, but swore,
In sacred Oaths to Heav'n, deep secrecy.
And thus their Sons must allso act, & we 50
So recommend it to Posterity.
Then learn it well, & let not then the Poor
Be driv'n unassisted from thy Door.
All things which are beneath the Heavns have now
Their different Specifick Forms, altho' 55
Unto one onely Principle they ow
Their first Existence, & this lower Sphere
Sprung from the Emanations of the Air.
All nutriments doe their first Fountain show:

All live on that from which they first did flow. 60
The fish enjoys & thrives in water best;
The tender Infant sucks the Mother's Breast.
If moisture is detained from it, the Tree
Shall not produce delicious fruit for thee.
By life the Principle of things is known; [f. 62r]
Air is their Life, & we must therefore own
That Principle to be in Air alone.
All Bodys likewise doe corrupt in Air;
What giveth Life, does also Life impair:
So all things have of Life & death their share.
Wood, Stones, & Iron are dissolv'd in Fire, 70
And all to their Originall retire.
But that which causes Generation is
(Altho' they seem such contrarietys)
The Cause of all Corruption; & on these
Like Wheels the whole Creation turns, & shall 75
While there are Entitys corporeall.
When the sick Creature's in a passive State,
Opprest by Time or the defects of Fate,
The Air relieves them; they are cur'd by Air.
What did imperfect & infirm appear, 80
Thereby is renderd vivid, fresh & fair.
The Trees, the Herbs, & Earth with Heat decay
And languish with an over-torrid Ray,
But soon are reinstated & amend
With Balmy Dews which from the Air descend. 85
Since then no creature can amend, but in
That Nature which is thereunto a kin,
And since the Air's the Fountain of them all,
Tis universall & originall.
In this the Life & Seed of all things lyes: 90
Their Death, their Sickness, & their Remedys.
Her Treasures Nature has included here
And stor'd them up as in their proper Sphere.
It is the truly golden Key to know
How to unfold these airy Doors, & how [f. 62v]
To draw an Air out this Air below.

XI. Father Aristeus to his Son

But if you know not how to fish for Air,
Hope not to find the thing that can repair
All humane Frailtys, & shall chase away
Invading Regiments of Diseases—nay, 100
It calls them back to Life again who have
Been allmost swallowd by the opening Grave.
That common Fountain then you must be sure
To find, if you would all Distempers Cure.
Nature its like does from its like produce; 105
What is not Naturall, Nature does refuse.
If thou, my Son, canst catch this Air Divine,
The golden Key of Nature shall be thine.
All Creatures know this Air, but onely they
Who can produce it shall have Nature's Key. 110
Tis a great Secret, & he's more than Man
Who from the Air's extended Bosom can
The blest Arcanum draw; for to him now
The powers of all this Orb Terrene shall bow.
A secret 'tis to know the inbred force 115
All things have drawn from their Originall Source,
And see the Baits that are for Nature laid:
By her own Species she is captive made.
As fish by fish & Birds by Birds are caught,
So to sweet Air the Air is allso brought. 120
The Snow & Ice but Air congealed are,
Which Nature made a Bait to catch the Air.
Put one of these into a vessell seald, [f. 63r]
And round it thou shalt take an Air congeald.
This thou shalt in another Vessel keep, 125
Which shall be strong, thick, clear, well-clos'd & deep.
Then gently still to get the Solar Ray
Or else the paler sister of the day.
Thy Vessell, when half full, close up for fear
The heavnly Spark should turn again to Air. 130
Fill then as many Vessels as you please,
But of your Operations upon these
Learn thou the silence of Harpocrates.
Erect thy Furnace, fit thy Vessel there,

Close it with mighty diligence & Care, 135
Being half filled with thy attracted Air.
Let such a fire be kindled, that full oft
The pure thinn part of Smoke may fly aloft:
As Nature in the Earth maintains a fire,
To make the Air in circulation stirr. 140
That Fire, let it be gentle, moist & sweet:
Like that of Birds when on their Eggs they sit.
So being enkindled, look thou dayly to't,
That it burn not, but boyl the golden Fruit:
Till length of Time & motion fix it so, 145
That it lye quiet in the Nest below.
Add to this Air, fresh Air, but let it be
According to the Rules of Decency.
Let this dissolv, rot, & be blackened,
Harden'd, congeald & fixt in fiery Redd. 150
Then from th' impure divide the purer Part
By Fire's Assistance & the heavnly Art. [f. 63v]
To that hard Part with Purity endu'd
Joyn thou more Air that is both pure & crude.
Dissolve, conjoyn, make black, then white again; 155
At last, forever in the Redd remain.
This crowns the Work: the grand Elixir's thine
Which works those Wonders that thy Eys have seen;
And hast the Key, the golden Draught of Health,
A Panacea, & perpetuall Wealth. 160

XI. TEXTUAL NOTES

Copy Text: British Library MS Sloane 3641, fols. 61r–63v; variant text: MS Sloane 2567, fols. 63r–68r.

title] From Sloane 2567, fol. 63r.

Substantive variants from Sloane 2567:

- 24 But] And
- 38 will] shall
- 49 their] your
- 85 descend] descends
- 96 out] out of
- 99 Frailtys] frailty
- 129 half] tis
- 130 Air] her
- 145 fix] tire
- 160 perpetuall] Eternal

XI. COMMENTARY

Citations of the Latin text are from Alexandre Toussaint de Limojon de Saint Disdier, *Lettre d'un philosophe, sur le secret du Grant Oeuvre* (Paris, 1688).

1 *first having givn to thee.* Aristeus has already instructed his adopted “Son” in the basic principles of alchemy, but he is about to reveal the final secret.

13 *those other sevrall Keys.* The “Maxims of Philosophy” (i.e., natural philosophy, science), line 2.

15 *Fountain*. Source.

40 *Chronos*. Time, but also identified with Saturn (Kronos) the destroyer; this personification is the translator's rendering of the Latin *Senex*.

43 *tho' Originall*. Even if they be congenital.

56-57 *& this lower Sphere / Sprung from . . . Air*. I.e., "and this lower sphere itself has derived from the emanations of the air." The rest of the poem explains the importance of the elemental air.

58 *nutriments*. Nourishing foods; *Fountain*: source.

115-17 Translating "Secretum hoc magnum est, vis insita re-bis; / Captivantur naturae suis speciebus."

123ff. The practical operation described here is translated thus in Waite's Supplement to Rulandus (see Introduction, above): "Place thou, therefore, one of these two things in an earthen or metallic vessel, well closed, well sealed, and take thou the Air which congeals round this vessel when it is warm. Receive that which is distilled in a deep vessel with a narrow neck, neat and strong, so that thou canst use it at thy pleasure, and adapt to the rays of the Sun and Moon—that is, Silver and Gold. When thou hast filled a vessel cork it well, so that the heavenly scintillation concentrated therein shall not escape into the air. Fill as many vases as thou wilt with liquid; then harken to thy next task, and keep silent.

"Build a furnace, place a small vessel therein, half full of the Liquid Air which thou hast collected; seal and lute the said vessel effectually. Light thy fire in such a manner that the thinner portion of the smoke may rise frequently above. Thus shall Nature perform that which is continually accomplished by the central fire in the bowels of the earth, where it agitates the vapours of the air by an unceasing circulation. The fire must be light, mild, and moist, like that of a hen brooding over her eggs, and it must be sustained in such a manner that it will cook without burning the aerial fruits, which, having been for a long time agitated by a movement, shall rest at the bottom of the vessel in a state of perfect coction.

"Add next unto this Cocted Air a fresh air, not in great quantity, but as much as may be necessary; that is to say, a

little less than on the first occasion. Continue this process until there shall be no more than half a bowl of Liquid Air uncooked. Proceed in such wise that the cooked portion shall gently liquefy by fermentation in a warm dunghill, and shall in like manner blacken, harden, amalgamate, become fixed, and grow red. Finally, the pure part being separated from the impure by means of a legitimate fire, and by a wholly divine artifice, thou shalt take one part of pure crude Air and one part of pure hardened Air, taking care that the whole is dissolved and united together till it becomes moderately black, more white, and finally perfectly red. Here is the end of the work, and then hast thou composed that elixir which produces all the wonders that our Sages aforetime have with reason held so precious; and thou dost possess in this wise the Golden Key of the most inestimable secret of Nature—the true Potable Gold and the Universal Medicine” (372).

127 *still*. Distill. *Solar Ray*: the masculine principle; also called philosophical sulphur; his *paler sister* (128) is the “lunar ray,” or the female principle, also called philosophical mercury. For these terms and concepts, see Sendivogius’ *Philosophicall Ænigma* below, 218n, 252n, 352n.

130 *heavnlly Spark*. The quintessential “Solar Ray.”

133 *Harpocrates*. Greek and Roman god of silence, depicted as a boy with a finger on his mouth—an addition by the translator.

154 *Air . . . both pure & crude*. I.e., some of the purified air and some of that not yet purified (as at line 151; cp. 123n, above).

160 Here is the concluding passage of the text from Waite’s Supplement to Rulandus: “I bequeath unto thee a small sample, the quality and virtues of which are attested by the perfect health which I enjoy, being aged over one hundred and eight years. Do thou work, and thou shalt achieve as I have done. So be it in the name and by the power of the great Architect of the [U]niverse” (372–73). Waite’s text goes on to give a recipe for a “Balm of Mercury,” with which, when “combined with the Elixir of Aristeus, it will be possible to perform such marvels as might be expected from so admirable an experiment” (373).

Michael Sendivogius

XII. *The Philosophicall Ænigma*

XIII. *A Dialogue of the Allchymist and Sulphur*

Michael Sendivogius (1566–1636) was born near Cracow and educated at the universities of Leipzig and Vienna. By 1594 he had entered the service of both Emperor Rudolf II and the Polish King Sigismund III. In his official capacities as imperial emissary and royal secretary—and as Rudolf’s confidant and fellow-chemist—he met many prominent political and scientific figures; he numbered among his friends the alchemists Oswald Croll, Martin Ruland, and Michael Maier. Although he did have a remote connection with John Dee’s companion, the notorious Edward Kelley (he purchased an estate near Prague from Kelley’s widow in 1597), Sendivogius’ reputed exploits with the Scottish alchemist Alexander Seton (whom he supposedly helped escape from prison so as to recover his transmutative powder) are now considered a fiction.¹ Sendivogius’ documented life was not without its scrapes, however. In 1599 the Prague municipal court found him responsible for the death of a Bohemian merchant and alchemist, Louis Koralek, and he was able to avoid imprisonment only after King Sigismund intervened. And in 1605, having claimed in print that he knew the secret of alchemy, he was detained in Stuttgart by Duke Frederick of

¹So are the 55 letters attributed to him and printed in Jean Jacques Manget’s *Bibliotheca Chemica Curiosa*, 2 vols. (Geneva, 1702), 2:493ff. The present biographical sketch is based on Włodzimierz Hubicki’s article in *DSB* (1975), 12:306–308; for the Seton stories, see Ferguson *Bibliotheca Chemica*, 2:368–69, and E.J. Holmyard, *Alchemy* (Harmondsworth, 1957), 231–32.

Württemberg; once again, only diplomatic pressure could secure his release (the embarrassed Frederick had to place the blame for Sendivogius' detention on his own hapless court alchemist, one Heinrich Mühlentfels, who was sent to the gallows). Some of Sendivogius' troubles may have resulted from his operation as a kind of double agent. In any case, his career as a courtier and scientific adviser continued, in Poland and then (around 1619) in Germany, when he transferred his allegiance to Emperor Ferdinand II. For the Polish king he established many iron and brass foundries and other metal-works; for Ferdinand he set up lead foundries in Silesia. In 1626 he was appointed the latter's privy councillor, and in 1631 he was rewarded for long service with estates in Moravia, where he died in 1636.

Sendivogius' most important work, the *Novum Lumen Chymicum*, was first published in 1604, the same year he is reported to have performed a transmutation in Prague for Rudolf II. His other major works, often printed with subsequent editions of the *Novum Lumen*, are the *Dialogus Mercurii, Alchymistae et Naturae* (1607), the *Tractatus de Sulphure* (1616), and the *Ænigma Philosophicum*. Between 1604 and 1700, scores of editions and translations (German, French, English) of these works appeared, often under Sendivogius' adopted name, *Cosmopolitus*.² Historians of science are interested in Sendivogius chiefly for his theories on the components of air. He thought the air contained a hidden life-giving and fire-supporting agent, the "invisible niter" or "philosophical saltpeter," which was born in the rays of the sun and moon, and transmitted to the earth in rain or dew in an on-going but unnoticed process. This description is said to contain "the first idea of the existence of oxygen."³ Sendivogius himself did not influence the development of chemistry, though he did play a posthumous part in the "Aerial Nitre" debate of the latter

²Alexander Seton had used this name, Holmyard claiming that Sendivogius adopted it from the Scottish alchemist, who died in 1603 or 1604 (*Alchemy*, 232, 236). Hubicki (308) says that over 80 editions and translations are now known, including versions in Polish and Russian.

³Hubicki, 307; but Walter Pagel has shown that the notion of "a vital nitrous part of the air" originates in Paracelsus (*Paracelsus* [New York, 1958], 118). See the verse *Dialogue*, 318n, below.

seventeenth century.⁴ Among students of alchemy, however, he was one of the most popular and influential figures of his own and the next century.⁵

Throughout his writings, Sendivogius expounded an alchemy that applied to all physical and biological changes, and he emphasized its consistency with the workings of nature. God was a "Great Distiller," using the earth's central fire; the great work of alchemy therefore followed nature's example. The twelve tracts of the *Novum Lumen* focus on two main topics, the generation of metals in nature and in alchemy, and the perfecting of metals by the alchemist.

Sendivogius' theory is grounded in the four elements, each of which is said to have (in nature) a "thinness or subtlety," called its seed or sperm. As with human generation, the seed of each element is cast in the empty center of the earth, where the Archeus, "the servant of nature," mixes the different seeds and sends them out again. The mixture of elemental sperms (the "balsam of sulphur," "quintessence," or "radical moisture") is the same for all things, but different substances are produced according to where they are lodged in the earth (Treatises 1-2). Metals require two specific matters: "philosophical mercury" ("a certain humidity mixed with warm air") and a "covering or shadow" of Sulphur ("the dry heat of the earth") (Treatise 3). Stones and metals are thus generated in the earth when the mixture of sperms rises through the earth's pores, becoming more subtle and perfect through a continuous circulation (Treatises 4-5). Treatises 6-8 show how all three of nature's kingdoms (mineral, vegetable, animal) act through seeds. A seed naturally joins with one from its own kingdom; they congeal in an appropriate matrix or womb. Sometimes the seeds of metals fail to mature if "crude air" is present in the surrounding earth, but art (alchemy) can complete and perfect the process.

The alchemical means of perfecting metals, particularly gold,

⁴Allen G. Debus, *The English Paracelsians* (London, 1965), 134n.

⁵The following summary of Sendivogius' alchemy is based on Betty Jo Teeter Dobbs, *The Foundations of Newton's Alchemy* (Cambridge, 1975), 157-59; the two extended quotations are from John French's translation, *A New Light of Alchymie* (1650), 27-28, 41.

is taken up in the remaining Treatises (9–12). First, the metallic seed must be extracted from gold. This is done by the “Chalybs” or “magnet” (an idea Sendivogius shared with Jean d’Espagnet and others), described in this key passage:

[T]here is granted to us one Metall, which hath a power to consume the rest, for it is almost as their water, & mother: yet there is one thing, and that alone, the radicall moisture, viz. of the Sunne, and Moon that withstands it, and is bettered by it; but that I may disclose it to you, it is called Chalybs, or Steel. If Gold couples eleven times with it, it sends forth its seed, and is debilitated almost unto death; the Chalybs conceives, and bears a son, more excellent then his father: then when the Seed of that which is now brought forth is put into its own Matrix, it purifies it, and makes it a thousand times more fit, and apt to bring forth the best, and most excellent fruits. There is another Chalybs, which is like to this, created by it self of Nature, which knows how to draw forth the vertue of the sun beams (through a wonderfull power, and vertue) that which so many men have sought after, and is the beginning of our work.

Nature is said to have “two heats,” that of the sun and that of the earth’s central fire; each of these must be cooled and tempered by water and air. This topic is completed in an Epilogue, where the air (rather like the “universal spirit” of d’Espagnet and other Neoplatonists) is described as the repository of all circumambient celestial and terrestrial virtues, and the “Chalybs” or loadstone is further defined as the matrix of this life-giving force:

the matrix of it [the air] is the Center of the Sun, and Moon, both celestiall, and terrestriall: and to speak more plainly, it is our Loadstone, which in the foregoing Treatises I called Chalybs, or Steel: The Air generates this Loadstone, and the Loadstone generates, or makes our Air to appear, and come forth.

However obscure his “Chalybs” or “air” might be on first reading, it is clear that Sendivogius has developed a coherent, even “naturalistic” (Dobbs, 157), matter theory—deriving of

course from earlier systems, particularly that of Paracelsus—that is consistent within itself.

Sendivogius' ideas were of great interest to English readers, and all his major works were translated by the puritan physician John French, in *A New Light of Alchymie* (1650; reissued 1674).⁶ Many English students of alchemy also read Sendivogius in the original. He is cited, for instance, by Thomas Vaughan, Sir Thomas Browne, Sir Kenelm Digby, Ralph Bathurst and John Mayow, as well as by two alchemist-poets in this collection, Bassett Jones (*Lithochymicus* 5.248) and the anonymous author of *Hermetick Raptures* (885, 978); for the latter, Sendivogius is the only “modern” numbered among the genuine followers of Hermes.⁷

One late seventeenth-century figure whose use of Sendivogian ideas is worth considering briefly here is Sir Isaac Newton. His manuscript notes throw light on our verse texts, which were being made during Newton's extended preoccupation with Sendivogius (see commentaries). Newton began a systematic study of the *Novum Lumen* and other works in 1669, turning first to the notion of “magnets.” Newton attempted to explain the Sendivogian “Chalybs” in terms that are fascinating for their blend of ancient Neoplatonic and mechanist terminology: Robert Boyle's corpuscularian chemistry cheek-by-jowl with the *prisca sapientia*.⁸ In the early 1670s, the laboratory experi-

⁶There is an earlier, unpublished translation of the *Ænigma* in Bodleian MS Ashmole 1459, fol. 22v. That Sendivogius was still of interest in the eighteenth century is witnessed by John Digby's translation, *A Philosophical Account of Nature in General* (1722; see Ferguson 2:367). Modern prose renderings of the verse texts edited here appear in *The Hermetic Museum* [1687], 2 vols. trans. A.E. Waite (1893; repr. New York, 1976), 2:109–15, 149ff. For a version of the *Ænigma* that seems to have been appropriated by Johann Daniel Mylius (1613) and then attributed to Basilus Valentinus, see John Read, *Prelude to Chemistry* (1936; repr. Cambridge, Mass., 1961), 268, 316–17n, who does not recognize Sendivogius as the source of this “Riddle of the Philosophers.”

⁷See the Introduction to *Hermetick Raptures*; and *The Works of Thomas Vaughan*, ed. Alan Rudrum (Oxford, 1984), index; Browne's *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* 2.3; Dobbs, 188–90; Hubicki, 308; and Debus, 115, 134.

⁸Dobbs, 152–55; the rest of this paragraph is based on Dobbs, esp. 156, 160, 191 (quotation on esoteric-exoteric alchemy), 206, 230. As Dobbs shows (100–105), the general motive behind Newton's alchemical studies was theological. Studies emphasizing the influence of the *prisca sapientia* and pre-Renaissance alchemical tradition

ments through which Newton sought one of the most elusive of alchemical secrets, the “philosophical mercury” (which later he believed he had attained), were firmly based on Sendivogian theories. And in the mid 1680s—when he was also writing the *Principia*—Newton was still puzzling over the Polish alchemist, entitling one manuscript, “Sendivogius Explained”; his experiments now pursued a specifically *alchemical* line, rather than a more general natural-philosophical one. In fact, the overall movement of Newton’s earlier studies in alchemy (ca. 1669–ca. 1675) was “decidedly a movement from exoteric to esoteric chemistry.” After 1675 Newton’s efforts were more and more to integrate alchemy and the mechanical philosophy, but even here—in his theories of metallic generation, in his formulation of the combinative process of matter at the earth’s center, and in his essentially alchemical view of all natural processes—Sendivogian concepts still prevail. While scholars are still debating the degree to which Newton maintained his alchemical beliefs during his later years, no one now doubts that ideas such as the universality of matter (Newton’s “one Catholick Matter”) and the transmutation of metals were fundamental to his understanding of the material world throughout his life. While Sendivogius was only one of many alchemical authors studied by Newton, he was a major one.

are J.E. McGuire and P.M. Rattansi, “Newton and the ‘Pipes of Pan,’” *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* 21 (1966): 108–43; and P.M. Rattansi, “Newton’s Alchemical Studies,” in *Science, Medicine and Society in the Renaissance*, 2 vols., ed. Allen G. Debus (New York, 1972), 2:167–82.

XII. *The Philosophicall Ænigma*

and

XIII. *A Dialogue of the Allchymist and Sulphur*

Sometime around 1700, an unknown contemporary of Newton turned his attention to two works by Sendivogius, the *Tractatus de Sulphure* and the *Ænigma Philosophicum*, and produced the verse translations that are printed here for the first time. (This same versifier and collector of alchemical texts made prose translations of several other pieces from Latin and French, and he is also responsible for the translations of Maria, Aristeus, Bernardus Trevisanus, and Zacharias printed above.) Like the *Novum Lumen*, these works express the theories of generation and perfection of metals, and deploy the same terminology, described above; unlike that earlier work, they are almost wholly symbolic and allegorical in presenting these ideas. It is difficult to know why, after his relatively straightforward exposition in *Novum Lumen*, Sendivogius later composed these allegorical dialogues and dream-visions. His most recent biographer describes a third such work, the *Dialogus Mercurii, Alchymistae, et Naturae*, as “a kind of satire on alchemy,”⁹ but he does not explain why it was printed with the *Novum Lumen* from an early date, or why Sendivogius would want to satirize “alchemy” per se (as opposed, say, to its false practitioners). Perhaps by adopting the time-honored motifs of vision and allegory Sendivogius hoped to associate himself with the ancient tradition of alchemy. In the *Tractatus de Sulphure*, for example, he clearly sees himself in the line of Hermes, Morienus, and Geber, and he stresses the importance of interpreting them “philosophically,” not literally. Like earlier writers, he insists that obscurity and even contradiction are to be expected, “for so it must be, lest the Art be

⁹Hubicki, 307; on this work, see below.

too plainly disclosed.”¹⁰ In the same work (see below), Sendivogius also refers directly to his use of narrative and dialogue, and implies that these literary devices bestow upon it a kind of dignity—just as alchemical poets claimed that verse-form reflects the esteem due to their sacred subject. It is possible, too, that these works were intended as perverse jokes on the unwary, or as entertainment—humor is certainly not lacking in them—for the adepts who already understood the *Novum Lumen* but who could enjoy the perplexities of fictionalized seekers of these same secrets. Whatever the case, we know that in addition to the *Novum Lumen* Newton read seriously and made notes from the *Ænigma* (Dobbs, 152–53), and it is almost certain that he read the *Tractatus de Sulphure* as well.

The two versifications printed here actually present quite distinct experiences to the reader. Both use the dream-vision motif and dialogue form, and both deploy a good deal of humor, but narrative structure and tone differ considerably.

The *Philosophicall Ænigma* (422 lines) is an accurate translation of the *Ænigma Philosophicum*. It has a preface (1–126) in which Sendivogius himself boasts that in the preceding tractates of the *Novum Lumen* he has spoken clearly of the workings of nature, though “Idiots” may have failed to understand. Urging his reader against interpreting the ancient masters too subtly and enjoining piety, he promises to tell how to find “the thing whence Nature formed Gold” (79). He then identifies himself as the Cosmopolite (89–100) and concludes his preface by swearing to the truth of what he is about to say, asserting the spiritual tenor of his aims, and decrying those motivated by greed (101–126).

The *Ænigma* proper (or “Parable”) is an allegorical first-person narrative of Sendivogius’ own initiation into the secrets of nature. Having travelled the world (i.e., labored long in his mind) and finding himself guided to a “Shore,” the speaker falls asleep and has a vision. Neptune guides him to an island garden (the “Elysium” of philosophers) where the Solar and Lunar trees grow (153–89). As the speaker contemplates the living

¹⁰A *Treatise of Sulphur*, in *A New Light*, 127.

water that is needed to purify metals here on earth, Neptune vanishes, only to be succeeded by Saturn (217ff.), who demonstrates the dissolving of the Solar Fruit and explains both the theory and practice of producing the philosopher's stone. The "Chalybs" or magnet, here called "living water," extracts the seed of gold, putrefies it, and produces the "Blood of the Salamander," or philosopher's stone. The seeker presses Saturn for more and more details, but the god's voice is so loud that it awakens him. Sendivogius then admonishes the reader not to seek any further than he did with Saturn: no volumes of the sages "are so plain as what are writt by me" (348). Sleep again overcomes him, however, and Neptune returns, to rejoice with him at being granted a vision of the golden apples of the "Hesperian Garden." The alchemist asks Neptune to explain why Saturn used only the apples of the Solar (male) tree, when all of nature requires both male and female. Neptune explains the female function of the philosophical water (385–402), but to the alchemist's further questions only refers him to the "Reality" of the "Speculations" and "Experience" that Saturn has already shown him. Neptune departs, but not before returning Sendivogius "awake on th' European Shore." The Cosmopolite concludes: "And so, kind Reader, as it was to me / Let what is written be enough to thee."

The *Ænigma* can be seen as a kind of riddling epitome of the whole *Novum Lumen*. Sendivogius is clearly having fun here, much of the humor deriving from the irony that the importunate alchemist—whose questions are so insistent as to drive both Saturn and Neptune away—warns the reader against being too inquisitive. The English verse translator's laconic couplets enhance the humor of the original. He also extends the "neo-classical" elements of Sendivogius' mythologized prose piece by adding Boreas (76) and a reference to Hybla (250); an inserted historical allusion (114) underscores the moral seriousness of the alchemical quest.

The somewhat longer *A Dialogue of the Allchymist and Sulphur* (624 lines) is quite different.¹¹ First, rather than translate

¹¹The wording of the translator's title is somewhat misleading, in that the dialogue

the entire *Tractatus de Sulphure*, our versifier has selected for his text a narrative interlude from near the end of that substantial work. The *Tractatus* itself, which covers some 70 pages in French's prose translation, has a formal Preface and Conclusion, and seven separately-titled sub-sections. The Preface links the topic of sulphur to the twelve tractates of the *Novum Lumen*, and offers both general moral admonition and some millenarian predictions about the "fourth Monarchy of the North."¹² The Conclusion sums up the theories presented in the whole treatise and offers an interesting analysis of a scientific argument attributed to Albertus Magnus, which is proven false by an application of Sendivogius' theory of the role of sulphur in the generation of metals. Of the seven intervening sections, the first six are devoted to sulphur generally as the "second principle" of matter; to each of the four elements (their seeds and celestial virtues in relation to sulphur, mercury, and salt); and to the three principles considered in relation to each other. The longest and last of these sections, "Of Sulphur," for which all the preceding have been preparing, formally takes up the topic of the treatise as a whole, the nature and operation of "philosophical Sulphur." From this section comes our narrative, the context of which is as follows.

Sendivogius begins by stating that Sulphur has always been ranked first among the three principles; he then asserts that there are three kinds of Sulphur: one that tinges or colors; one that congeals Mercury; one that is "essential, and ripening." Then, in an unexpected reference to his foregoing treatise, *A Dialogue between Mercury, the Alchymist and Nature*, he says, "but because we have set forth one of the Principles [i.e., Mercury] by way of Dialogue, so also we shall conclude the rest, lest we should seem to be partial, and detract from either of them" (*A New Light*,

actually takes place between the Alchemist and Saturn, who discuss the *subject* of Sulphur.

¹²Sendivogius' millenarianism has not, I think, been explored by historians. It may have been one feature that moved the puritan John French to translate Sendivogius' works, just as the Fifth Monarchist John Rogers in 1654 was drawn to Paracelsus because of the latter's millenarian prophecies; see Paul A. Trout, "Magic and the Millennium: A Study of the Millenary Motifs in the Occult Milieu of Puritan England, 1640-1660" (Ph.D. diss., University of British Columbia, 1974), 18-19.

126). It is as though the form of dialogue somehow has an intrinsic value. Perhaps our English versifier took his cue from this comment, and this is one reason he chose only the part of the *Tractatus* cast in vision-dialogue form to accompany his translation of the *Ænigma*. In any case, notice how Sendivogius leads up to the narrative, as his introduction proceeds:

Sulphur is more mature then any of the other Principles, and Mercury is not coagulated but by Sulphur: therefore our whole operation in this Art is nothing else but to know how to draw forth that Sulphur out of Metals, by which our Argent vive in the bowels of the Earth is congealed into Gold, and Silver: which Sulphur indeed is in this work in stead of the Male, but the Mercury in stead of the Female. Of the composition, and acting of these two are generated the Mercuries of Philosophers.

We told you in the Dialogue of Mercury with the Alchymist, of an Assembly of Alchymists that were met together to consult out of what Matter, and how the Philosophers Stone is to be made, and how that by the misfortune of a tempest they were without any conclusion dispersed almost through the whole World. For there arose a strong tempest, and very great Wind, which dispersed them all abroad, and so blowed through some of their Heads, that till this time they can not yet recover themselves, by means of which divers sorts of Worms are bred in their brains. Now there were amongst them Men of divers opinions, and conditions, and among the rest there was this Alchymist, which in this Treatise I shall discourse of: he was otherwise a good Man, but without a conclusion, or unresolved, also of the number of those who propound to themselves to find out the Philosophers Stone casually, and he was Companion to that Philosopher who disputed with Mercury [see the verse *Dialogue* below, line 520]. Now this man said, If it had been my fortune to have spoke with Mercury, I should have fished him dry in few words; that other, saith he, was a foole, he knew not how to proceed with him. Mercury indeed never pleased me, neither indeed do I think there is any good in it: but I approve of Sulphur, because at that meeting we discoursed most excellently of it: if that tempest had not disturbed us, we had concluded that that had been the first Matter, for I am not wont to trouble my

self with light and trivial matters, my Head is full of profound Imaginations. And so being full of confidence he resolves to work in Sulphur; he began therefore to distil it, to sublime, calcine, to fix it, to make Oyl *per Campanam* of it, sometimes by it self, and sometimes with Crystals, and Eggshells, and he tryed divers other Operations about it: and when he had spent much time and costs, and could find nothing to his purpose, he was sad, and being in a miserable perplexity passed over many nights without sleep; also oftentimes he went forth out of the City, to behold things, that he might the more conveniently devise something that was certain in his operation: Now it fell out upon a time, as he was walking up and down, he fell into an extasie with beholding of things, and came unto a certain green Wood. (*A New Light*, 126–28)

As Sendivogius implies, the following narrative or “dialogue” is parallel to that in his prose *Dialogus Mercurii, Alchymistae et Naturae*: two erroneous alchemists presume to know the workings of the two chief philosophical principles, Mercury and Sulphur. For our English translator, however, the narrative interlude in the *Tractatus de Sulphure* stands as a different kind of companion-piece—as an antithesis to the dialogue in the *Ænigma*, where Sendivogius himself is initiated by Saturn (the same character who addresses the Alchemist here). His juxtaposition of the two pieces in his manuscript collection (see below) heightens Sendivogius’ wit, as the ironic parallels between the genuine and ignorant alchemist emerge.

For the verse *Dialogue* presents us with a would-be alchemist who receives good instruction but who clearly isn’t worthy of the sacred knowledge offered; he is one of Sendivogius’ “Idiots” from the preface to the *Ænigma* (31). Like the first-person narrator of the *Ænigma*, the Alchemist, through “Speculation in an Extasy” finds himself in a fertile grove, rich in all forms of life but lacking in (philosophical) water. Two shepherds inform him that this is Venus’s wood. Pleased to be here, but disgruntled that he has wasted so much time and money in his vain search for Sulphur, he laments his state and eventually falls to cursing the “Blessed Sulphur” (46). A mysterious “Voice”—later identified as that of Saturn—asks the cause of his imprecation and says

he knows where “divine Sulphur” lies a prisoner (62–85). By questioning Saturn (who represents both the metal Lead—the “superintendent” of Sulphur’s jail—and the traditional revealer of alchemical secrets), the Alchemist learns of the many vivifying powers of Sulphur (98–133), how he is recognized (136–41), and how he relates to other metals (his “Brothers”) and Mercury (his “Sister”; 144–54). Only the ancient philosophers knew how to free Sulphur, and when they did, he gave them a knowledge of the workings of the whole universe; Saturn explains the universality of Sulphur’s power, and that knowledge of it comes only from experience, not at second hand (162–213). The Alchemist rashly claims that he “can compose that sovraign Medicine” (276), but he has mistaken vulgar sulphur for sophic Sulphur (276–94). Answering more questions, Saturn explains how Sulphur is held prisoner, what his food is, and why he is at enmity with his “keepers” (296–344). Boasting of his wisdom and practical skill, the Alchemist now insists that he can “reconcile the Strife & set him free” (345), but he’s not sure where to look for Sulphur’s “prison,” even though Saturn says that it’s in “all things which are subject to the Ey” (383). Wishing the Alchemist well, Saturn vanishes.

In a dream-within-a-dream, the Alchemist falls asleep and has another vision. He sees Sulphur and Salt walking, but they come to blows; Salt wounds Sulphur, from whose side flows a white stream. Diana (Luna) comes to bathe in the stream and is seen by a noble Prince (Sol); they feel mutual love. Diana begins to drown, and the Prince—whose servants (the other metals) are too fearful to venture into the stream—tries to save her. Both drown, but while their bodies remain below the water, their souls move on the surface and tell the Alchemist that they will be reunited with their bodies, once the latter are purged (424–88). The Alchemist dreams again. Many other alchemists come and seize parts of Sulphur’s slain body and go off to work on it.

Apparently after waking from these inner dreams (the text is unclear), he too goes off to work on Sulphur, but Saturn reappears to question him about his progress (489–501). The Alchemist insists on making philosophical Sulphur by using common sulphur alone, but all he can produce is kitchen matches

(510–38). Seeing his failure, Saturn himself undertakes the work, using Mercury with Sulphur, and quickly produces the stone (542–60). The Alchemist dances joyfully with the glass, but breaks it in his ecstasy; Saturn flees. The Alchemist awakens once and for all to find only a handful of matches in his “Sulphur-Pot.” In despair, he leaves the true path and becomes a quack (561–79).¹³

The narrator—Sendivogius himself—now comes forward to address those, like himself, who have labored hard and long in true alchemy (“saild these seas of Troubles o’re / And safely landed on the Halcyon Shore,” 585–86). He briefly explains what processes must be undertaken and how Sulphur and Mercury must be used together. He then offers us one last glimpse of the hapless Alchemist, who laments that he had not asked Saturn which of the innumerable salts had to be used to subdue Sulphur. He went home dispirited, we are told, and “the rest he told his wife.”

The metaphor of the journey and arrival at a safe “Shore” is but one of many details linking this poem to the *Enigma*, and confirming that one is the inverse of the other. Our translator has again made a few minor but apt embellishments to the original (Aurora, 31; Erycina as Venus’s name, 28; the allusion to Diana as the whole secret of alchemy, 582; and Halcyon, 586). The comic treatment of the ignorant, boasting alchemist seems to catch Sendivogius’ tone of ironic mockery. When, for example, Saturn first comes upon the cursing Alchemist, he says,

Full well, my Friend, I have this Sulphur known
To be the reall Subject of the Stone:
Most divine Sulphur. But I never knew
Of your Philosophizing, or of you. (66–69)

And after the Alchemist brags that he’ll set Sulphur free:

I see, my Friend, that thou hast Bulk enough
And a great Head cramm’d with a deal of Stuff:

¹³Here the verse translator omits a brief authorial comment on the failure of some alchemists to follow nature.

But thy unusuall Bulk & Bigness brings
No understanding of mysterious things. (351–54)

At one point, our translator has the narrator of the *Dialogue* say (in another embellishment of the original text) that in past ages “immortall Verse” has “celebrated” the philosopher’s stone (558). While neither of his renderings of Sendivogius’ alchemical visions could be called such, they can fairly be seen as lively versions of Sendivogius’ own witty prose dialogues, for which the Polish alchemist himself seems to have had a particular fondness.

The Texts

No printed source is identified in the manuscript for the two verifications of Sendivogius printed here. Since many editions of Sendivogius were available by 1700, it is impossible (and unnecessary) to determine which one was used, though since Zetzner's *Theatrum* was the immediate source for two other texts in the same manuscript, it may also have been used for the *Ænigma*; the *Tractatus de Sulphure* does not, however, appear there (see headnote to the Commentaries for editions consulted).

Michael Sendivogius

XII. *The Philosophicall Ænigma,*

[f. 71r]

To the Sons of Truth: a Preface to the
Philosophicall Ænigma

And now to you, ye Sons of Science, who
By Learning or by Inspiration know
Those Truths which from th'eternall Fountains flow,
The Talent I possess, I freely show.
My former Lines sufficiently have shown
Dame Nature sitting on th'Imperiall Throne,
The Practick & the Theoretick Part,
How both concurr to perfect sacred Art.

5

But least you of a Laconism complain,
Whereby my former Lines would be in vain,
I am resolv'd to tell the Art to you
In an Ænigma that's intirely true.
Here ye may see the Gifts which have been giv'n
To me, directed by the hand of Heav'n.

10

O how voluminous are the Books which treat
Of this great Work? But all are incompleat.
Therefore I undertook to write the more,
Because I met with many heretofore
Who thought they knew all the Philosophers,
The mystick Sence of their divinest Verse:
Yet I found their Interpretations high'r
Than Nature, which is simple, does require.

15

20

XII. The Philosophicall Ænigma

Nay, all I said was but absurd & vile [f. 71v]
To those who worshipt things incredible.
Sometimes it hapned that I told them all, 25
Ev'n Word for Word, which was materiall;
But I by them was still misunderstood
Because they never did believe there could
Be Water in our Sea; yet they rehearse
The Apothegms of Philosophers. 30
Since, then, those Idiots could not understand
The Words which needed not to be explaind,
I fear no more, as other Sophi did
Who Truth have so industriously hid.
But I proclaim it, I proclaim aloud, 35
That it descends from Heav'n, it is the Gift of God.
'Tis true indeed if Chymia did require
Heads of an extraordinary Fire
And subtle Witts, or if the vulgar Ey
Could but distinguish what we dayly see, 40
They'd soon discover our Philosophy.
But take my Counsell, & in Simpleness
Be not too wise before you doe possess
The grand Arcanum. Having that, you have
The greatest Blessing Heaven ever gave.
Then Prudence follows; you may then endite [f. 72r]
Many Ænigmas, & whole Volumes write:
For in the Center you shall see from thence
More than another who is led by Sence
And wanders in the dull Circumference. 50
The second Water I've describ'd to you,
And set it in a clear & open View.
But let me warn thee, if thou dost desire
The grand Arcanum which is found in Fire,
First offer him thy dayly Pray'r & Praise, 55
Whom Prophets term the Ancient of Days;
Next, love his Image he imprest on Man.
Lastly, be sure the Text you never strain
To Subtletys too nice: remain, remain

In Nature's open Ways, or Work is all in vain. 60
In downright Plainness you'l perceive it more,
Than when your Thoughts in Flights sublimer soar.
By Words consider what's inferrd from thence,
The inward Meaning, not the outward Sence;
Provided your determinations be 65
Always in Nature's Possibility.
Ere you your Time in fruitless Labour spend,
Consider what you seriously intend:
The Mark you aim at & your finall End.
For cheaper 'tis, what ere you seek, to find [f. 72v]
In the Imagination of the Mind.
I say you must seek out that hidden Thing
From which by Art there does a Moysture spring,
Dissolving Gold: Gold gently melts therein.
So in warm Water I have often seen 75
Congealed Ice, the Work of Boreas,
Softly dissolve without contentious Noise.
When this dissolvent you have found, behold,
You have the thing whence Nature formed Gold.
Metalls & all things sprung from hence, but yet 80
Nothing so friendly as is Gold to it.
All other Things are sordid; Gold alone
Can plead a Title to Perfection:
Then Water is the Mother, Gold the Son.
Now for Conclusion, if from what I writt 85
You cannot understand & compass it,
Excuse the Writer, who desir'd to be
A faithfull Guide, a Morning Starr to thee.
If you demand from whence & who I am,
My Family from Father Adam came: 90
Cosmopolita is his proper Name
Whose Habitation's the whole Earthen Frame.
If you allready know me, & you are
Persons of such Integrity as dare [f. 73r]
Be honest in a wicked World, you then
Will sure conceal me from ungodly Men.
But if you know me not, doe not desire

XII. The Philosophicall Ænigma

Acquaintance with me or my Name inquire,
For none by me shall be informd of more,
Than what my Writings have proclaimd before. 100
Hear me, ye Heav'ns, & thou, O Earth, O hear
The Words I speak with an attentive Ear:
And so may I receive my finall Doom
At that Tribunall which is then to come.
Were I not in the Station which I am, 105
No Syren Courts, no Blandishments of Fame
Should draw me from the Pleasures I should have
In the Enjoyment of a lonely Cave:
And if a Cave I want, & Heav'n so please,
Of a poor Tub, with poor Diogenes. 110
This World is bought & sold, & all ye see
Is onely sublunary Vanity.
Vertue is now by Avarice overcome,
As once Jugurtha said of Pagan Rome.
But let them trade & traffick on, while I 115
The Blessings of another World descry,
And future Glorys in this World enjoy, [f. 73v]
Anticipating Heav'n. I now no more
Admire at those, as I have done before,
Who having This, have not endeavoured 120
The Prolongation of the Vitall Thread,
And scornd to stretch it out. He, onely he,
Is in Possession of Philosophy,
Who knows thereby how all this Mundane Mass—
How th' Earth & circumambient Air—shall pass, 125
And sees the Things to come as in a Looking-Glass.

[f. 74r]

A Parable, or Philosophicall Ænigma

I'hd sailed from th' Artick to th' Antarctick Pole,
And view'd the Host of flaming Orbs which roll
About them both & (marching round the Sphere)

Compose the spangled Circle of the Year, 130
When on a suddain I by his Command,
Who ballances the Heavens in his Hand,
Was cast upon the Shore. The Shore I knew
Of that great Sea, & ev'ry Avenue
Of this new World, but there did not appear 135
To me the Fish calld Echineis there
(A little Fish it is indeed, but yet
Much sought for by the little and the great).
But I beholding this great Land & Sea,
Soon saw the Nymphs and the Melosynee, 140
Which swam together. I was weary now
(Not with the Labour which affects the Brow,
For he who can exert his Thoughts shall find
Much greater is the Labour of the Mind),
When the sweet Murmurs of the rolling Deep 145
Lulld every Sence & seald my Eys in Sleep.
But still the Soul's awake, it never sleeps, & I [f. 74v]
Out of our Sea arising did espy
Neptune the old, the rev'rend, hoary God,
Who on the Backs of curling Billows rode. 150
Him I saluted, he saluted me;
After our mutuall Salutation he
Led me into a pleasant Isle. The Isle
Was in the South, upon whose happy Soil
The Face of Heavn did forever smile. 155
Twas stor'd with all the Earth produc't & more
Than any Island had possest before.
Let Virgil sing of his Elysian Fields,
And all the Harvest youthfull Nature yields;
When he has sung them all, they all will come 160
Short of our Isle, our blest Elysium.
The verdant Myrtle round the Shores was set,
And there the Rosemary & Cypress met.
The Flow'rs in Meads did one another greet,
Both to the Ey & to the Odour sweet. 165
The Hills are deckt with Vines, & on their Sides
The Olive & the lofty Cedar rides.

XII. The Philosophicall Ænigma

The publick Ways are all with Lawrell crown'd,
And the Pomegranat, inter woven round, [f. 75r]
Does with refreshing Shade oblige the Ground.
In short, with what so e're the World possest
This happy Island is forever blest.
Says Neptune to me, as we walkt, "Behold,
There is a Rock which does two Mines infold;
The one is Chalybs, & the other Gold." 175

Not farr from thence he led me to a Mead
With choice variety of Flowrs bespread,
And to a Garden planted well with Trees,
But Trees which were unknown to vulgar Eys.
Seav'n out of these were of the chiefest Fame, 180
And each of them obtaind a noble Name.
But of those seav'n I observ'd that two
Above the other five aspir'd, & grew
To more Maturity & Beauty. One
Had Fruit as glittering as the radiant Sun. 185
The Stemm was golden & the Root below,
And golden Leavs adorned every Bough.
The next had silver Leavs & Fruit as white
As Lillys in the Lawn of pure untinctur'd Light.
I stood amaz'd. Said Neptune then to me, 190
"This is the Lunar, that the Solar Tree.
But tho' this Isle was farr above the rest [f. 75v]
Of all the Earth with Nature's Bounty blest,
Yet, as th' Almighty had decreed, to show
Totall Perfection cannot here below 195
Nor in this frail Mortality be found:
There was no water to refresh the Ground.
By Wells & Channells some did seek for Springs;
Some would extract it out of other Things.
But vain were their endeavours, all in vain. 200
The Water which they labour'd to obtain,
If they got any, what was gotten thus
Unprofitable was & venomous,
Unless it were, which few could bring to pass,

Drawn from the Solar or the Lunar Rays. 205
But the chief Favorite Fortune ever saw
More than ten Parts from thence could never draw."
It was miraculous, & these Eys of mine
Have this strange water's snowy whiteness seen,
And I have felt it, & the blessed Sight 210
Did all the Powers of my Soul delight.
While I was ravisht thus in Extasy,
Old Neptune vanisht from my seeking Ey,
And a tall Man succeeded in his Place,
Taller than any born of humane Race;
Upon his Forehead I beheld engraven [f. 76r]
The name of Saturn by the Hand of Heaven.

He took a Vessell into which he drew
Ten Parts of Water, & to that he threw
The blessed Solar Fruit: then soon I saw 220
The Fruit dissolve & melt, as Ice does thaw
In Water warm, & now is Ice no more,
But Water such as it had been before.
I told him, "Sir, I'm in a great Surprize,
And yet I cannot disbelieve my Eys. 225
A Water allmost out of Nothing sprung,
The golden Fruit put to it was not long
Before it melted. Why is this?" But he
With gracious Condescention answerd me:
"My Son, the thing is wonderfull you see, 230
But wonder not, for so it needs must be.
Water of Life this Water is, & she
Can Mend the fruit & can amend the Tree.
It mends it so, that it shall need no more
Planting & Grafting, as it did before, 235
But onely by its Colour it shall make
T'other six Trees their former Names forsake,
And of the noble Solar Vertue all partake.
This Water allso to this Fruit is as
Its proper female, whence it comes to pass [f. 76v]
That in this Water, & this onely, wee
Can putrefy the Product of the Tree.

XII. The Philosophicall Ænigma

The Fruit it self is wonderfull, but yet
If here it putrefys, it does beget
The Salamander living in the Fire, 245
Whose precious Blood (the Treasure we require)
Has got the Power of making fertile these
(These six you see, so much inferiour Trees),
And Apples sweeter than whatever we
Tast in the Cells of the Hyblean Bee." 250
I askt him, "Sir, how is it to be done?"
"I told you that the Apples of the Sun
Are sweet & living, yet whereas but one
Can with this Fruit (as now it is) be fed,
When in this Water reincrudated, 255
Reincrudation will encrease the Store
Enough to feed & feast a thousand more."
I askt again of him, How strong a Fire,
And how much time the boyling did require.
"This Water has intrinsick Fire," says he, 260
"But being helpt with Heat continually,
Three of the Body's Parts it burns with this,
This Body of the Fruit. The Remnant is
So small a Part that it will scarce remain [f. 77r]
In the Imagination of the Brain,
But to recount the Pow'rs it does contain
Would baffle all th' Arithmetick of Man.
Seav'n Months the Master boils it first, & then
Again he works it, & he boyls it ten.
Mean while there doe appear & pass away 270
Strange things & allways near the fiftieth day."
Then I again accosted Saturn, "Pray,
Is there some Water of some other Spring
To boyl this Fruit, or add you any thing?"
Quoth he, "This Region or this Isle has none, 275
No usefull Water but this onely one.
No other Water has the Pow'r to goe
Thro' all the Apple & its Pores. And know
The Solar Tree did from this Water grow,

This Water by the Magnet's Force brought down 280
Out of the Cisterns of the Sun & Moon;
Wherefore together they so much agree,
That much in vain would all Addition be.
With strange Additions there could not be done
What is performed by themselves alone. 285
Then leave them by themselves, & only see
You add the fruit pluckt from the Solar Tree,
Which by Decoction shall immortall be.
And having Life & Blood, shall have the Pow'r
To make the barren Stemm which never bore 290
Produce a Fruit, whose Nature is the same
As the first Apple out of which it came." [f. 77v]

I askt if any other Way there were,
Of if it could be compast every where.
He answerd me, It was in every Place, 295
Without it no man could prolong his Days,
And that it was extracted wondrous Ways,
But that alone deserv'd the greatest Praise
Which by the Vertue of our Chalybs came
That's found within the Belly of the Ramm. 300

I askt its use. He answerd me, "Before
Its due Decoction, 'tis a Poyson more
Than vulgar ones, & then a Med'cine good,
Affording eight & twenty Grains of Blood,
And ev'ry Grain of them shall give to thee 305
Eight hundred sixty four Fruits of the Solar Tree."

Then I demanded of him, if he thought
That it could be to more Perfection brought.
"The sacred Philosophick Books," said he,
"Bear witness how its Vertues multiply. 310
The first is ten, the next a hundred fold,
A thousand then, & thousands more are told;
Nor shall you find the End of its increase
Till all Accounts & Numeration cease."

"Sir, are there many who doe know this same? 315
Or has this Water any Proper Name?"
He spoke aloud, & said there were but few

XII. The Philosophicall Ænigma

Who this prodigious Water's Vertue knew:
"But all have seen it and doe dayly see
And love it as the Apple of their Ey. [f. 78r]
Many and different are its names, but we
Call it the Water of our Sophick Sea:
A Water which no vulgus understands,
Water of Life, which never wets the Hands."
"Do others use it other ways?" said I. 325
He answerd me, that all beneath the Sky,
All Creatures use it, but invisibly.
Then I demanded, what from it was bred.
He told me, all things out of it were made,
And in it all their Life & being had. 330
Altho' it could not properly be said
That ought was in it, 'tis a thing which shall
And does forever mix it self with all.
Then I demanded, if it were of use,
Without those Apples which the Trees produce. 335
"In this our Work," quoth he, "it is of none.
For onely by the Apples of the Sun
Can be performed Melioration."
Then I began to ask him, "Sir, I pray
Name it so plain that I no longer may 340
Have any doubt of any thing you say."
He raisd his Voice & I awak't; therefore
I could not ask, he could not answer more.
Rest then contented, & believe that none
Can speak to thee more plain than I have done.
Go read the Volumes of Philosophy, [f. 78v]
Those learned leavs of Truth, & you shall see
None are so plain as what are writt by me.
When Saturn fled, new Sleep, & not in vain,
Invaded me, for Neptune came again, 350
Congratulating my Felicity
That I should the Hesperian Gardens see.
I in his Hand a Mirrour did espy,
Wherein the lovely Face of Nature he

Did represent unto my wondring Ey. 355
 Much we discourst, & many thanks I gave
That I should by his prudent conduct have
A happy Introduction into these
Most fortunate Gardens of th' Hesperides,
To view the Secrets of the Solar Trees, 360
And talk with Saturn of these Miracles.
 "But because Saturn did no longer stay
And vanished, alas, too soon away,
Be mercifull, good Father Neptune, pray,
That I of you the Favour may obtain 365
To solve some Scruples which doe still remain.
I've read the Sophi's learned Books, & they
Doe all of them unanimously say
That Generation is accomplished
In Male & Female & in Nature's Bed. [f. 79r]
Yet I did in my former Vision see
Onely the Apples of the Solar Tree.
You, being master of this Sea, can well
The dark Ænigma's Explanation tell."
 Said he, "My Son, Know then that all you see 375
From Male & Female draw their Pedegree,
But different Ways: for in this Property
Nature's three Kingdomes doe not well agree.
One Way is formd the four-foot Animall,
Another way the Worms which on the Earth doe crawl. 380
The Worms have Senses, Hearing, Sight & Eys.
But ne're the less their Being does arise
From Putrefaction, so the Place or Earth
Wherein they putrefy to have a Birth,
Is as the Female. So the Sophi say, 385
That in their secret Operation they
Esteem the Water (which so well you know)
To be the Mother of the Embrio.
But what from this Originall does flow,
Does all like Worms by Putrefaction grow. 390
The Sophi, then, cooperating with Fate,
The Salamander thence & Phoenix did create.

XII. The Philosophicall Ænigma

Whatever from two Bodys being hath
Becomes obnoxious to the Pow'rs of Death. [f. 79v]
But this the former Body does destroy,
And then a new-returning Life enjoy,
Which no Corruption ever can annoy.
For Death is onely a Division
Of what before seemd to combine in one.
But in this Phoenix it so happens that 400
Out of the Bodily corrupted State
Life by it self, it self doth separate."
Again I askt: "Are there more things," said I,
"Or Compositions in this Mystery?"
He answerd, "Tis not mixt, tis onely one, 405
The Philosophick Water of the Stone
(Which in a Vision has to you been shown),
And to the Body must be ten to one.
Believe then firmly, & believe it true,
What by the Custome of this Island you 410
Have been informed by Saturn & by me,
To be no Dream, but a Reality:
A Truth establisht incontestably,
Which by Experience you shall allso find,
That acts the Speculations of the Mind. 415
But hope not for it till the Pleasure be
Of that great Artist who does work on high."
I urg'd again my Questions, or'e & or'e, [f. 80r]
But he, departing without anwering more,
Set me awake on th' European Shore. 420
And so, kind Reader, as it was to me
Let what is written be enough to thee.

May Praise & Glory be to him alone

Who's three in one.

XII. TEXTUAL NOTES

Text: British Library MS Sloane 3637, fols. 71r–80r.

178 Garden] *Interlinear insertion above*: Orchard
301 askt] *MS reads ast, a slip from the usual spelling, as at 258, 293, etc.*

XII. COMMENTARY

The text has been compared with the Latin version from which it was translated, *Ænigma Philosophicum ad Filios Veritatis*, in Zetzner's *Theatrum Chemicum*, 4 vols. (Ursel, 1602), 4:502–507, also 6 vols. (Strasburg, 1659–61), 4:442–47; and with John French's English translation in *A New Light of Alchymie* (1650; Wing S2506), 47–58. Quotations from the *Ænigma* in these editions (which sometimes clarify the meaning of the verse text) are cited as *TC* and *NL*, respectively. Quotations from Sendivogius' separately titled work, *A New Light*, are also from French's 1650 translation, but they are cited by this title.

5 *My former Lines*. *NL*: “in the foregoing Treatise,” i.e., *A New Light* proper, which precedes the *Ænigma*, as it does in *TC*.

9 *least*. *Lest*. *Laconism*: Briefness, and hence obscurity.

21 *high'r*. More subtle (*TC*: “scripta longe subtilius explicare”).

29 *Water in our Sea*. The “Sophick Sea” and its transformative “water,” the philosopher’s stone; see 84n, 322n below.

30 *Apothegms*. Aphorisms, short pithy sayings.

30–34 Since the uninitiated cannot even understand unadorned truth, I have no more fear of revealing secrets to the unworthy than the great masters did, who wrote with deliberate obscurity.

XII. Commentary

- 46** *endite*. Indite, compose, write.
- 51** *The second Water I've describ'd*. "You have the second matter of all things most clearly described unto you" (*NL*), in *A New Light* proper.
- 56** *Ancient of Days*. The Almighty is so called in Daniel 7:9. For the possible millenarian significance of this reference, see below, *Hermetick Raptures*, 273n, 277n.
- 72-74** *That hidden thing . . . Dissolving gold*. For the dissolvent of gold, see 218ff., below.
- 76** *Boreas*. The north wind; hence, winter.
- 84** *Water is the Mother, Gold the Son*. In *A New Light*, Sendivogius describes the epithets of "Hermes' bird" thus: "O our Water! O our Mercury! O our Salt-nitre abiding in the sea of the world! O our Vegetable! O our Sulphur fixed, and volatill! O our *Caput Mortuum*, or dead head, or feces of our Sea! Our Water that wets not our hands, without which no mortall can live, and without which nothing grows, or is generated in the whole world!" (44).
- 91** *Cosmopolita*. "One that can live anywhere" (*NL*). Here the name adopted by Sendivogius, but see Ferguson 2:367, 369 as to Alexander Seton's use of this name.
- 101-4** I.e., may my salvation rest on the truth of what I am about to say.
- 109** *want*. Lack.
- 110** *Diogenes*. The Cynic philosopher (4th c. B.C.) whose famous austerity is said to have included living in a large earthenware tub.
- 114** *Jugurtha*. Jugurtha (d. 104 B.C.), ambitious and unscrupulous King of Numidia who used bribery to stay in power. This allusion, not in Sendivogius, is the translator's embellishment.
- 119** *Admire at*. Wonder at.
- 120** *This*. The philosopher's stone, which could prolong life.
- 127** *I'hd*. I had.
- 136** *Echineis*. Echeneis: the remora, or sucking-fish, supposedly able to hold back a ship by attaching a sucker on its head to the underside of the vessel; cf. *NL*: "yet I knew not whether in those Coasts was bred that little fish, which was called the

Remora, which so many men of great and small fortunes have hitherto so studiously sought after.” While the reality of the remora was still being discussed in the seventeenth century (see Thorndike vols. 7, 8, *passim*), Rulandus explains that the name “has been applied by the Philosophers to the Fixed Part of the matter of the Work by allusion to the supposed property possessed by this fish—namely, that it can arrest a ship in its course” (418).

140 *Melosynee*. NL, “Mermaides,” translating TC, “Melosynas.”

158 *Elysian Fields*. See *Aeneid* 5:735, 6:744; *our blest Elysium* (161) is the heaven or garden of the philosophers. Compare the details here (162–72) with those of Daniel Stolcius’ ideal alchemical garden: “As a garden grows green with excellent herbs and plants, so this our garden presents a many-coloured spectacle. On this side is the iris, the vine, lunny and moly, corn-harvests, and thy flower, oh blushing rose, the fruits of the Hesperides, the mulberry and runaway Daphne, also the golden bough, the myrtle, olive and saffron” (*Viridarium Chymicum*, 1624, quoted in Read, 259, who gives the alchemical equivalents of each of these plants, and who discusses a number of other alchemical gardens, 255–78). For other gardens in alchemical poems, see Sendivogius’ *Dialogue*, John de La Fontaine, and Bernardus Trevisanus in this collection, and *Blomfild’s Blossoms* (1557), ed. Schuler, *Three Renaissance Scientific Poems*, stanzas 5–51. See also line 352 below, where the Elysian Fields are identified with the Garden of the Hesperides.

175 *Chalybs*. Literally, iron or steele (from Gk., *chalups*), but *chalybs* is Sendivogius’ term for “magnets” or the “matrices which drew other things—bodies or spirits—to themselves by virtue of an attractive power and then somehow made manifest and substantial a new form for what had been drawn in” (Dobbs, *Newton’s Alchemy*, 153). See the passage from *Novum Lumen* quoted in the Introduction; and 198n, 280n, below.

180 *Seav’n*. The seven metals (each associated with one of the seven planets) were often represented as trees (or blossoms on trees), since metals were thought to “grow” in the earth. The Solar and Lunar trees are described in the following lines.

198ff. There is also a lack of life-giving water in the vision-garden of Sendivogius' *Dialogue* (lines 13–23) in this collection. There (as in 204–205 below) only the “living water” extracted from lunar or solar “rays” will vivify other metals; in both cases, the water is white (“snowy,” 209; cf. *Dialogue*, 429). This water is the same as the Chalybs itself; see the passage from *Novum Lumen* quoted in the Introduction, where the Chalybs is said to be the “water, & mother” of all metals; and 218n.

217 *Saturn*. As in many other alchemical works, Saturn is the instructor of the would-be initiate; see *Hermetick Raptures* in this collection, 273n.

218ff. The dissolving of the “Solar Fruit” (gold, from the Solar Tree) is described above, 72ff. When Sir Isaac Newton discovered what he thought was philosophical mercury (that which dissolves gold), he wrote this comment on a corresponding passage from Sendivogius: “It is needful to search out the occult matter from wch in a wonderfull manner such an humidity is made as dissolves [gold] without violence and noyse so sweetly & naturally as ice melts in hot water. Then have you the same matter of wch [gold] is produced by nature, to wch [gold] is friendly & as it were its mother. For no impurity adheres to [gold]” (quoted by Dobbs, *Newton's Alchemy*, 186, who explains that this philosophical mercury is “something of life and activity . . . drawn from the great ‘universal spirit’” which “vivifies common (dead) gold and makes it begin to grow again”).

245 *Salamander*. Thought to be able to live in fire, the Salamander was one of the names for the indestructible stone. According to Michael Maier, “As the Salamander lives by the fire, so doth the Stone. . . . the Stone does not reject the fierce burning of flames, for it was born in constant fire. The Salamander, being cold, quenches the heat and comes forth free; but the Stone is hot, and therefore heat, being like it, agrees with it” (*Atalanta Fugiens* [1618], quoted in Read, 244–45). Here, the identification with the stone is made clear at line 247.

250 *Hyblean Bee*. From Hybla, a town in Sicily famous for its bees and sweet honey.

252 *Apples of the Sun*. The “Solar Fruit,” or gold (cf. 220)

252–57 *NL*: “I told thee (saith hee) that the fruit of that tree is

living, and sweet; but whereas one is now sufficed with it, when it is boyled in this water, a thousand may then bee satisfied with it."

255 *reincrudated*. Boiled.

260-63 *NL*: "That water hath an intrinsecall fire, and if it be helped with a continuall heat, it burns three parts of its body with this body of the fruit, and there will remain but a very small part, which is scarce imaginable, but of wonderful vertue."

280 *the Magnet's Force*. *NL*: "this water [is] extracted out of the beams of the Sun and Moon by a magnetick vertue"; see *chalybs* at 175n above, and compare this passage from *A New Light*, Tractate 9: "There is another Chalybs which is made like this, created of itself from nature, which knows how to draw from rays of the sun that which so many men have sought, and it is the beginning of our work" (1650 ed., 28; quoted Dobbs, *Newton's Alchemy*, 153).

300 *Belly of the Ramm*. *NL*: "in the belly of Aries." Newton, who identified Sendivogius' Chalybs (175n, 280n, above) with antimony, wrote this gloss on the Latin version of this passage, which he had transcribed: "[the best water is drawn] by the power of our sulphur which lies hid in Antimony. For Antimony was called Aries with the Ancients. Because Aries is the first Zodiac Sign in which the Sun begins to be exalted and Gold is exalted most of all in Antimony" (quoted Dobbs, *Newton's Alchemy*, 154).

302 *Decoction*. Boiling or "cooking" (see *reincrudated*, 255). *a Poyson*: Sendivogius' *Dialogue* claims that "latent Poyson" lies in the stone and can shorten life if it is used "unskillfully" (lines 252-57).

322-24 See 29n, 84n, above. Rulandus gives one definition of *aqua vitae* as "mercury"; and *aqua philosophica* is called "Perennial Water, which does not wet the hands" (35, 36).

352 *Hesperian Gardens*. A favorite symbol in alchemy because in Greek mythology, this garden far in the west held a tree that produced golden apples (see the "Solar Fruit," 220, 252, etc., above); it was guarded by the Hesperides ("Daughters of Evening") or by a dragon (which in one version Hercules killed in order to claim the apples). See 158n, above.

353-54 *Mirroure . . . Face of Nature.* That is, Saturn reveals the secrets of nature by an alchemy that is true to Nature ("reflects" her processes accurately); cf. the author's "Looking-Glass" (126, above) and the similar figure in Sendivogius' *Dialogue*, line 185, where Sulphur has such a mirror.

378 *Nature's three Kingdoms.* The mineral, vegetable, and animal worlds, all of which are animated, but each of which has a specific means of generation. Cf. Sendivogius' *Dialogue*, 177n.

387-88 *Water . . . Mother of the Embrio.* See 198n, 218n, above.

389 *this Originall.* The primordial water (387).

392 *Salamander.* See 245n, above. *Phoenix:* traditional symbol of rebirth, often associated with the alchemical work, since it requires putrefaction before the stone can emerge. Like the Salamander, the Phoenix was either "the Quintessence of Fire, or the Illustrious Philosophic Stone" (Rulandus, 249). Compare lines 391-97 with *NL*: "therefore the Philosophers have created a Phenix [sic], and Salãmander. For if it were done by the conception of two bodies, it would be a thing subject to death; but because it revives itself alone, the former body being destroyed, it riseth up another body incorruptible."

394 *obnoxious.* Susceptible, liable.

408 *ten to one.* *NL*: "there is only one thing, with which there is mixed nothing else but the Philosophicall Water shewed to thee often times in thy sleep, of which there must be ten parts to one of the body"; see also 218ff., above.

417 *that great Artist.* The notion of God as an alchemist, derived largely from hermetic interpretations of Genesis, was a prominent feature of seventeenth-century alchemy; see Debus, *The Chemical Philosophy*, passim.

Michael Sendivogius

XIII. *A Dialogue of the Allchymist and Sulphur*

[f. 81r]

It hapned on a certain Time that he
By Speculation in an Extasy
Came to a Grove most green & flourishing,
Adornd with every most delightfull Thing.
The Earth, with subterranean Treasures rich, 5
Had Mines of Metalls & of Mineralls, which
She had within her fertile Bosome bred,
And by continuall Contribution fed.
With Herbs & flow'rs the Surface was bespread
Like Carpets on the Ground for conquering Kings to tread. 10
And Beasts & Birds were mixt in every Field;
Beasts did their Service, Birds their Musick yield.
And many Aquæducts did allso there
In various Forms & different Shapes appear.
For living Water was the onely thing, 15
Was wanting there, because there was no Spring.
But Water many did attempt to bring
By Instruments & winding Channells made
With the laborious Pick-Axe & the Spade.
But that than others had a fairer Face 20
Which was extracted from the Lunar Rays.
Yet what was thus allured from above [f. 81v]
Was for the Nymph presiding in the Grove.
Ramms allso there & Bulls together fed,

XIII. A Dialogue of the Allchymist and Sulphur

And two young Pastours overlook't the Mead. 25
To whom the Alchymist: "Whose Wood is this?"
They made him Answer, "It is Venus' fair,
Fair Erycina's, who inhabits there."
The Alchymist therein took much delight,
But Sulphur was his Study Day and Night. 30
He sought for Sulphur when Aurora rose,
And Sulphur allso when the Shades did close
The Evening's Eys. When he had walkt about
Fatigu'd & tortur'd with the restless Thought,
He sate upon a Bank, & in the Shade 35
By the sweet Branches of the Mirtle made,
He in most dolefull Manner did lament
The time & money he had vainly spent.
Tho' he was ign'rant & erroneous, yet
He was not an insinuating Cheat. 40
 "How can it be," said he, "that all doe say
It is a common, vile & easy Way?
I know I'm learned; Why must I be one
Who cannot light on this unlucky stone?"
 From Lamentation he proceeds to worse; 45
The Blessed Sulphur he begins to curse,
That he therein his Labour & his cost [f. 82r]
And precious Time had miserably lost.
As yet the Alchymist had not understood
That Sulphur allso was within the Wood. 50
While thus he curst & mournd, he heard a Noise
And then an audible articulate Voice,
As if it from some aged Person came:
Voice: Why dost thou curse most holy Sulphur's Name?
 The Alchymist lookt round, & seing none, 55
 Wonderd that Voices could exist alone.
 Then said the Voice to him again:
Voice: I find
 That Sorrow too much overwhelms thy Mind.
 The Alchymist then taking courage said:
Alchymist: As hungry Wretches allways think of Bread, 60
 So is the Stone forever in my Head.

- Voice:* But why thy Curse on Sulphur dost thou lay?
Alchymist: The Stone is in it, as the Sophi say,
But I therein wrought many a weary Year,
And yet, alas, could never find it there. 65
- Voice:* Full well, my Friend, I have this Sulphur known
To be the reall Subject of the Stone:
Most divine Sulphur. But I never knew
Of your Philosophizing, or of you.
Sulphur lyes chaind in an obscure Recess, 70
Which the sweet Eys of Heav'n doe never bless:
A dismall Dungeon, whence he goes not out,
But when his Keepers carry him about.
- Alchymist:* But thou, O Voice, who e're thou art, say Why [f. 82v]
Does he in such a wicked Prison lye?
- Voice:* Because he would submissively obey
Th' insipid Tribe of Alchymists, & they
Abus'd him much, enforcing him to doe
The things his Mother had forbidden, who
Commanded him to wait on those alone, 80
Who paid due Homage to her mighty Throne.
And so she chaind him, bound him Hand & Foot,
Confind him close, & plac't a Watch about:
A Guard so strict, that he should never have
A free Egress, without his Keepers' Leave. 85
- Alchymist:* Most sad Disaster! Now I plainly see
The Reason why he could not succour me,
And am convinc't a Parent may become
A Tyrant to the Ofspring of her Womb.
But have the Fates no Time ordaind when he 90
Shall from this Prison have his Liberty?
- Voice:* By Length of Time, my Friend, & Labour great
The Sophick Sulphur does his Freedome get.
- Alchymist:* But what are those who are his Keepers there?
Voice: Of the same kind, but Tyrants most severe. 95
- Alchymist:* And who art thou, who speak'st & yet doest ly
Conceald from all the Searches of my Ey? [f. 83r]
- Voice:* I am Th' Intendant of the Jails; I claim
The Judgment Seat, & Saturn is my Name

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- Alchymist:* Then doe you Sulphur in your Pris'n detain? 100
Voice: Sulphur inclosd does in my Pris'n remain,
But others keep him in the darksome Den.
- Alchymist:* If Sulphur so unfortunately dwell
Within the Darksome Circle of thy Cell,
How does he act or live?
- Voice:* He acts whatere 105
He is commanded by his Keepers there.
- Alchymist:* And what does he perform?
- Voice:* A thousand things
He by his Labour to Perfection brings,
And is the Heart of them. All Metalls he can mend,
And meliorate them, as Nature did intend, 110
But could not reach to her intended End.
Unto the Animall Kingdoms he supplys
The proper intellectual Facultys.
He weavs the Flow'rs upon the Herbs & Trees;
Nay, he corrupts the circumambient Air, 115
Then mends again what is corrupted there.
All Odours he does by his Art compose,
And ev'ry Colour from his Pencill flows.
- Alchymist:* From what Materialls are the Flowers made,
So struck with Light, so interwove with Shade? 120
- Voice:* All the Materialls & the Vessells are
Provided for him by his Keepers' Care, [f. 83v]
But he digests. By the diversity
Of his digesting his Materialls, he
Produces that immense Variety 125
Of Odours to the Nose & Colours to the Ey.
- Alchymist:* Pray, Sir, how old is he?
- Voice:* He is so old,
His Age can by no History be told.
He does the Vertues of all things enfold.
By birth the second, but the first of those 130
Which from corporeall Origin arose:
Stronger & worthier, yet he's truly stil'd
His Mother's humble & obedient Child.
- Alchymist:* Pray, Sir, what are the Marks & Signs whereby

- He is distinguished apparently? 135
Voice: By strange & wondrous Ways. But best of all
By Vitall Acts in ev'ry Animall;
In Metalls by the Colour; by the Smell
Which does around each Vegetable dwell.
His Mother rules her Empire by his Hands; 140
He executes her sovereign Commands.
Alchymist: Tell me if he's his Mother's onely Heir,
Or has he Brothers who must have a Share
In the Inheritance?
Voice: There's but this one
Whom she regards, & unto him alone 145
The Empire shall belong. His Brothers all,
Working Iniquities unnaturall,
Debarr'd themselvs, that there remains for them [f. 84r]
No Hopes of the Imperiall Diadem.
He has a Sister, whom he does above 150
The rest of all the whole Creation love;
And she reciprocally loves her Brother,
For she to him is as it were a Mother.
Alchymist: Sir, is he uniform?
Voice: He allways is,
But in the horrid Prisons where he lyes, 155
He is too often chang'd, but yet his Heart
Is allways pure. That blest ethereall Part
Cannot be foul'd with Dross, but yet his Cloaths,
Which first were clean as are the Mountain Snows,
Are oftentimes defild.
Alchymist: Pray, Sir, has he, 160
In former Times, enjoyd his Liberty?
Voice: He had his Freedome uncontrould, when
There lived wise & Philosophick Men
In golden Ages, & he knew no other
But those who had a Friendshipp for his Mother. 165
Alchymist: Who were those Men?
Voice: Their Number does surmount
The Pow'rs of Arithmetically account.
In the fore front of them there does appear

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Old Hermes, Nature's Privy-Councillor,
But some affirm he was the same with her. 170
And after him, great Kings & Princes came,
And many wise Men canoniz'd in Fame,
As Avicenn & Aristotle's Name. [f. 84v]
These Men freed Sulphur from his Bonds, for they
Untyd the Knot & knew the secret Way. 175
Alchymist: What did he give to those who set him free?
Voice: He gave three Kingdoms. For whenever he
Is once dissolv'd & set at Liberty,
He grows victorious, & subduing them
Who dispossess him of his Diadem, 180
His most Tyrannick Keepers, he bestows
The Great Imperiall Diadem on those
By whose Assistance he was freed. But O,
There are no Crowns, no Kingdoms here below,
So precious as his Mirrour is, wherein There are three 185
Parts of Nature's Wisdome seen:
The past, the Present, & the Things to come,
From their Creation to their finall Doom.
Here Avicenn & Aristotle saw
The Rules of Fate & that eternall Law 190
By which the World was formd. They learnt from thence
The heavnly Vertues & their Influence
Upon inferiour things. They found the Weight of Fire,
Which Nature's Operations doe require
In Compositions. Then ascending high'r, 195
They measurd there the Journeys of the Sun,
Th' erratick Starrs & swift revolving Moon.
But yet, above all other Motions they [f. 85r]
Did well that Universall one survey,
By which his Mother's ruld. They there did see 200
Hot, cold & moist & dry in each Degree,
And all the Powrs of Herbs: hence they became
Skillfull Physicians & of mighty Fame.
And he's a vain Impostour who shall claim
A true Physician's venerable Name, 205
Unless he knows why such an Herb is dry,

- Or moist or Hot, in this or that Degree:
Not out of Galen's Book, or Avicenn's,
But out of Nature's living Fountains, whence
They drew the noble Science. This they all 210
Consid'ring well, have left their Works, which shall
Survive to after-ages to excite
Men's Minds to higher things, & guide their Studys
right:
To let loose Sulphur, & to set him free
From the sad Chains of his Captivity. 215
But in this wicked Age of ours you see
Such shallow Dablers in Philosophy,
Who have for fundamentall Maxims laid,
"So Galen," or "so Aristotle said,"
And found their Knowledge on the Learning of the Dead.
Alchymist: But, my good Master, pray inform me how
One shall the Herb, without the Herball, know.
Voice: All the Receipts the ancient Sophi knew, [f. 85v]
They from the Depths of Nature's Fountains drew.
Alchymist: How did they get this Learning?
Voice: Know that all 225
Existing in or on this Earthen Ball
Are from three Principles produc't, & tho'
They seem sometimes but to proceed from two,
Yet there adheres a third. He then who knows
That all things from three Principles arose, 230
And the true Weight of them (which Nature takes
In all the Compositions which she makes),
Shall by Decoction eas'ly understand,
In any Subject which he takes in Hand,
Its just Degree of Fire, & whether it be 235
Or more, or less decocted. And from thence
They learnt each Vegetable's Influence.
Alchymist: How are these Vertues manifested to Sence?
Voice: Either to Tast, or Smell, or to the Sight 240
In sundry Rays of their emanant Light.
By these three Sences is conceived all
The Ternary of treasures Philosophicall,

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And how they are dococted.

- Alchymist:* Sir, I have been
Informd that Sulphur is the Medicine.
- Voice:* He is both Medicine & Physician. He, 245
As I have said before, who sets him free,
Shall in return receive his Blood, which we
Esteem the onely sovereign Remedy. [f. 86r]
- Alchymist:* When Man this Universall Med'cine hath,
How long may he stave off assaulting Death, 250
And live to take the Food of vitall Breath?
- Voice:* Untill the Time decreed by Heav'n. But see
You use it not unskillfully.
For those who have not found the proper Ways,
Instead of lengthning, cut off half their days. 255
- Alchymist:* Can you affirm such Contrarietys,
That latent Poyson in the Med'cine lyes?
- Voice:* Have you not heard, "A greater Stream of Fire
Consumes a less, as smaller lights retire
From the approaching Sun"? But know that there's 260
A Sect we call Semi-Philosophers,
Made by Communication alone,
Another's Skill & Labour not their own.
Such have no Centrall Knowledge of the Stone,
Computing vainly, that the oftner they 265
Exalt the Tincture of the Solar Ray,
They mend the Med'cine. Whereas those who know
That but a Grain, which is exalted so,
Shall on a Lump of melted Metall flow,
Tinging so many thousand Parts, & pass 270
Like Lightning thro' each Atome of the Mass,
Make a true Inference, & consider how [f. 86v]
That Grain would pierce a humane Body thro'.
- Alchymist:* How must it then be us'd?
- Voice:* To nourish, yet
Not overcome thy Native share of Heat. 275
- Alchymist:* I can compose that soverain Medicine.
- Voice:* More blest than Kings art thou, if thou hast been
Possest of Sulphur's precious Blood, wherein

- Lyes the intrinsick Vertue which can give
The Solar form, congealing Argent vive, 280
Perfecting Metalls for Increase of Wealth,
And humane Bodys for a State of Health.
Alchymist: I can distill the Oyl of Sulphur well;
I can sublime it in a glazen Bell,
Or from calcined Crystals.
- Voice:* Now I fear 285
Thou art some spurious Philosopher
Of that Assembly whose remains we find
Blown round the World by Hurricanes of Wind.
If I mistake not, as you construe me,
So you interpret all Philosophy. 290
- Alchymist:* Is not this Oyl the Blood of Sulphur?
Voice: No.
None can the reall Blood of Sulphur know,
But those who from his Prisons set him free
To full Enfranchisement & Liberty.
- Alchymist:* Has Sulphur over Metalls any Power? [f. 87r]
Voice: He knoweth all things, as I said before,
But yet in the Metallick Kingdome more
Than any where beside. His Keepers know
He soon may thence get out of Bondage, so 300
There in the worst of all their Prisons they
Closely confine him from the Ey of Day,
Least he should find the Royall Palace, where
He might imbibe the blest ethereall Air
- Alchymist:* Is he imprison'd thus in ev'ry Minerall
And evry Metall?
Voice: Not alike in all. 305
In some more strictly, & in others he
May sooner gain his ancient Liberty.
- Alchymist:* Why is he worst chaine'd up in Metalls? Why
Doe there his Keepers show such Tyranny?
Voice: 'Cause he no more would stand in fear of them 310
Who now usurp the noble Diadem.
If he but once should touch the Palace Gate,
He soon becomes a noble Potentate.

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- Then from his Windows he is freely seen,
And freely served by his Friends within, 315
Tho' not according to the full Extent
Of his Desire, the totall Complement.
- Alchymist:* What is his food?
- Voice:* He feeds upon the Wind, [f. 87v]
But well decocted, which he soon can find,
When he has Freedome; when he is not free, 320
He is compell'd to feed on Crudity.
- Alchymist:* I love Pacification. May not I
Compose this turbulent Hostility?
- Voice:* You may, if you be wise.
- Alchymist:* Why does not he
Make Propositions to them, to agree, 325
And lay aside their ancient Enmity?
- Voice:* He cannot by himself, because he flys
Into a Passion, & where Passions rise
Reason is shipwrackt.
- Alchymist:* I would have him choose
Some grave Commissioner to treat with those 330
You call his Keepers, or imbitterd Foes.
- Voice:* Thrice happy would he be, & make his Name
Eternall in the Memory of Fame,
Whose artfull Hand could make these Discords cease
And ty them up in Bonds of mutuall Peace. 335
But this, O Alchymist, is the Boon of Heav'n,
And can unto no mortall Man be giv'n,
Unless he gain his Mother's free consent
And be with Nature co-intelligent.
For if this Friendshipp once were made, you'd see
How with joynt Forces they would both agree [f. 88r]
To make immortall Things. Believe me, he
Who can compose this Feud deservs to be
Eternalliz'd in heavnly History.
- Alchymist:* I'le reconcile the Strife & set him free 345
Out of the Dungeons of Captivity.
For I'm in all things a most learned Man,
In Wisdom's Councils I have led the Van.

- Besides, I am a good Practitioner,
Especially about the grand Affair. 350
- Voice:* I see, my Friend, that thou hast Bulk enough
And a great Head cramm'd with a deal of Stuff:
But thy unusuall Bulk & Bigness brings
No understanding of mysterious things.
- Alchymist:* I am afraid, my Lord, perhaps that you 355
Are ign'rant what we Alchymists can doe.
For when we come to Disputation, we
Are allways confident of Victory;
And I am not the last of them. Could I
Come to a Treaty, you should quickly see 360
His Foes would yield & bow themselvs to me.
At the first Treaty I am sure I could
Let Sulphur loose & gain his precious Blood.
- Voice:* I like your Fancy, & am glad you are
Rather for Peace than for promoting Warr. [f. 88v]
- Alchymist:* Then tell me further, if this Sulphur be
The reall Sulphur of Philosophy.
- Voice:* 'Tis reall Sulphur, but 'tis you must know
Whether 'tis Philosophicall or no. 370
But I have told enough of Sulphur now.
- Alchymist:* Yet if I find his Prisons, can I free
The Sophick Sulphur from Captivity?
- Voice:* You may deliv'r him, & 'tis easier farr,
Than to discover where his Prisons are.
- Alchymist:* If I obtain him, shall I make from thence 375
The precious Philosophick Quintessence?
- Voice:* That thou shouldst know, for 'tis not giv'n to me
To dive into obscure Futurity.
But if his Mother thou hast fully known,
And in thy Praxis follow her alone 380
Dissolving Sulphur, thou shalt have the Stone.
- Alchymist:* And in what Subject does it hidden lye?
- Voice:* In all things which are subject to the Ey.
Large is his Empire, for he dwells in all—
In ev'ry Metall, ev'ry Minerall, 385
Stones, Herbs & Trees & ev'ry Animall.

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- Alchymist:* What Dæmon has the skill to find him out,
When he's so scatterd & disperst about
The grand terraqueous Globe? Inform me now
From which of those Materialls & how 390
The Sophi draw their Sulphur.
- Voice:* O my Friend, [f. 89r]
You draw too near the Point. But to the End
You may receive th' Instruction you intend,
Know Sulphur's ev'ry where. But yet he has 395
Some specially appointed Palaces,
Where he gives Audience to the Wise, & they
To him the proper Adoration pay
When they behold him swimming in their Sea,
And he does in the Arms of fiery Vulcan play.
And yet his Garb is vile, which vulgar Eys 400
(Which gaze on gawdy Trappings) still despise,
And onely the elected Sophi know,
Worshipping Sulphur in Incognito.
- Alchymist:* And what is in the Sea, why have not I,
Since there 'tis hid in less Obscurity? 405
- Voice:* His Keepers, as I've said, doe him detain
In the most darksome Prisons which they can,
And the remotest from the Ey of Man.
'Tis in one Subject onely; if at home 410
You cannot find it, you need never roam
About the Forrest or the shady Grove,
Scenes more adapted to the Queen of Love.
But that I may not drive thee to despair
And seem to murder a Philosopher,
I swear by him who does forever live [f. 89v]
That Gold & Silver most Perfection give,
But that it easiest is in Argent vive.
- Alchymist:* Sir, I desire to make the Stone.
- Voice:* 'Tis true
Sulphur would allso be dissolv'd by you,
And would no longer in his Prison stay. 420
(So Saturn spoke and vanisht quite away.)

The weary Alchymist slept upon the Grass,
And in his Sleep he saw this Vision pass.

A Fountain filld with Water did appear
In that delightfull Grove, & Sulphur there 425
And Salt were walking. As they walkt, there rose
High Words, which after quickly came to Blows;
Salt wounded Sulphur, from whose bleeding Side
Gusht out a white, instead of crimson Tide.

As white as Milk it was, or that which they 430
Who Poets are doe call the Milky Way;
And soon a nobler River it became
Than those renown'd in Cosmographick Fame.

Out of that Grove the fair Diana came,
Diana glorying in a Virgin's Name, 435
To bath her Limbes in the decurrent Stream.

A certain Prince past by the Fountain, farr
More valiant than his other Subjects are,
Wondring to see so fair a Virgin there.
The more he lookt the more he did admire, [f. 90r]
And Admiration did create Desire.

He lov'd the more, because he saw that she
Had with his Nature great Affinity.
And for the Prince, her Love was just the same;
Her Bosome felt a sympathizing Flame, 445
Where with she fainting was in Fear to drown,
For she, alas, was allmost sinking down.

The Prince commanded that his Men should save
The Virgin struggling with the fatall Wave.
But they were all possest with Fear, & stood 450
Upon the Brink of the tremendous Flood.

Again the Prince unto his Servants said:
"Why hast ye not to fair Diana's Aid?
Give quick Assistance to the heav'nly Maid."
They answerd him, "Altho' the River be 455
Sometimes so little, that it seemeth dry,
Yet 'tis most dangerous. On a Time when we
Attempted it without your Privity,
We hardly scap't eternall Death. Beside,

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We know our mis'erable Fore-fathers dy'd, 460
Caught in the Surge of this unruly Tide."
The Prince, disdain'd thus ungenerously
To see a Virgin's cruell Death, laid by
His gross exterior Cloak, & armed as he stood— [f. 90v]
Arm'd cap-a-pe—he jumpt into the Flood
To give his Hand to chaste Diana. She
Striving for Life, grasp't him so hard that he
Sunk down with her, & both, alas, became
A common Prey to that devouring Stream.
Their Bodys stayd beneath, their Souls above 470
Did on the surface of the Waters move,
And said:
Souls: Tis well, 'tis very well with us,
The fatall Sisters preordain'd it thus,
And fatall Laws must be obeyd, else we
Could never have been purifyd & free 475
From sordid Spots of Terrestreity.
Then askt the Alchymist,
Alchymist: Shall you any more
Possess those Bodys you possest before?
Souls: Not while they are polluted so, but when 480
They shall be purgd to be forever clean;
And that this River shall no longer run,
Dryd with the Heat of the prevailing Sun;
And all this Province be serene & fair,
Examind often by the searching Air.
Alchymist: What will ye doe untill that time doe come? 485
Souls: We'l wait with Patience for our finall Doom,
And hov'ring here upon this River stay,
Untill these Clouds & Tempests pass away. [f. 91r]
The Alchymist fell then into a Dream
Concerning Sulphur, & behold there came 490
Many more Alchymists such as he; & they,
As they sought after Sulphur, in their Way
His Carcase found, which by the Fountain lay,
Slain there by Salt; & gladly seizing it,

Each by Division got a precious Bit. 495
Our Alch'mist allso took his share, & he
As all the rest returned home to try
To work in Sulphur many a different Way;
And so they work unto this very Day.
But Saturn met our Alchymist, & said: 500
Saturn: My Friend, how thrives thy Alchymistick Trade?
Alchymist: My Lord, most admirably well. My Wife
Will not believe I ever in my Life
Saw such a Scene of wondrous things. Lo, here's
The Sulphur of the wise Philosophers. 505
Assist me now, & both of us shall be
Adepts & Brothers in Philosophy.
Saturn: With all my heart; give me a Glass, & give
Some Sulphur allso & some Argent vive.
Alchymist: I'le have no Argent Vive, no Mercury, [f. 91v]
For he's a fugitive Impostour; he
Has cheated all us Chymists, & i' th' End
He'l but delude me, as he did my Friend.
Saturn: Without a Share of Argent vive you bring, 515
Within whose Kingdome Sulphur is a King,
We work in vain, for neither I nor they
Who liv'd before us knew another Way.
Alchymist: I will have Sulphur, & from that alone
I am resolv'd I will compose the Stone.
Saturn: Then be it so. But much I fear, my Friend, 520
That you will fail of your intended End.
Yet to't they went, the mighty Work begun
In a sulphureous Operation.
Such Sulphur as the Alchymist had got
He first enclos'd in his calcining Pot, 525
Working upon it many wondrous Ways
In adm'rably contrived Furnaces.
Then he calcind, sublim'd, calcind again,
But all his Calcinations prov'd in vain,
Nor could his Labours any more obtain, 530
Than some Card-matches, such as Cooks require
In Hast to kindle Culinary Fire.

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Then he begun the Work afresh, & he
Belabour'd Sulphur with Allchymy, [f. 92r]
Which he sublimd & then again calcind,
According to the Whimsys of his Mind.
But all his conj'ring could produce no more
Than such Card-matches as he got before.
Says he to Saturn,
Alchymist: Now I plainly see 540
I have ben labouring erroneously;
Now let us work by your Philosophy.
Says Saturn then,
Saturn: Behold & learn from me. 545
He therefore took two Argent vives he knew
To be of diff'rent Substance, tho' they grew
From the same Root. The same Originall Source
Was both their Parent & their common Nurse.
He washt them in his Urine, & he said,
"Sulphurs of Sulphurs they shall be," & made 550
A Composition where he duly mixt
The volatile together with the fixt,
True shares of both, & he inclos'd it then
In an exact proportionable Den. 555
And least the Sulphur should evaporate,
He plac't a Guard, who strictly kept the Gate.
He bath'd it after by a gentle Fire,
As Nature & the Matter did require.
Therefore they made what the Philosophers
Have celebrated in immortall Verse, [f. 92v]
For in due Matter duely handled, Fate
Cannot deflect from Truth & deviate.
The Allchymist snatcht up the Glass to see
A Colour such as Blood combust would be, 565
And over-joyfull in his Extasy
Began to dance, but in his Dance, alas,
He most unhapp'ly letting fall the Glass,
It dasht in Pieces on the Ground; & then
Fled Saturn, never to return agen.

The Alchymist, awaking, onely got 570
Handfulls of Matches from his Sulphur-Pot.
The Store was also flown away, & still
It flys, & therefore is calld Volatile.
Thus the Improvement which our Chymist had
From this great Vision was, but how they made
Matches, the vilest Beggar-woman's Trade.
Then leaving Hermes, he became a Quack,
And got a Stone which did torment his Back.
So he consum'd his Life in Misery,
Like those Impostours whom we dayly see 580
Who fall to Quacking & to Surgery.
Which I pronounce to be the Fate of all
Who by Receipts or casuall Hear-say shall
Dare to approach our chast Diana's Shrine,
To beg Acquaintance with the Art Divine. [f. 93r]

But to you, Tyros, now I write no more.
You who have saild these Seas of Troubles o're
And safely landed on the Halcyon Shore,
I challenge you to name the Region where 590
The Man espous'd a Wife whose Nuptialls were
Held in the House of Nature. Have ye known
How Sulphur has to vulgar Eys been shown,
As to your selvs? If ye would therefore see
Old Women practise your Philosophy,
Show th' Dealbation of these Sulphurs. Say 595
To the vile Rabble, "Come & see the Way,
For now our Water is divided, now
The Sulphur is extracted." Show them how
It shall return in Whiteness, & congeal
The Waters. Burn your Sulphur, burn it well, 600
Burn it by Sulphur incombustible.
Wash & dealbate, & then rubify,
Till you turn Sulphur into Mercury,
And Sulphur you from Mercury behold;
And then adorn it with the Soul of Gold. 605
For out of Sulphur, Sulphur must sublime,

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And make a Merc'ry from a Merc'ry climb,
Or you have not obtaind that Quintessence
Which is created & distilld from thence.
For what has not descended never can
Ascend to Heaven's bright Meridian.

[f. 93v

In Preparation many lose that Part
Which is the most essentiall in the Art.
By Sulphur, Mercury must be acuated,
Or nothing shall from Mercury proceed.
Where you a Prince without a People see,
He's but a wretched Man; & so is he
Who has no Sulphur to his Mercury.

615

Now I have finisht, if, kind Reader, you
Can understand what I am sure is true.

620

The Allchy'mist then went home & did deplore
The Stone he lost. And he lamented more
Because he had not question'd Saturn what
Most admirable sort of Salt was that,
Since there were more than he in all his Life
Had ever known. The rest he told his Wife.

XIII. TEXTUAL NOTES

Text: British Library MS Sloane 3637, fols. 81r–93v.

The mixture of narration and dialogue makes for some awkwardnesses in applying modern punctuation. Speech-headings appear throughout the poem, even when they are not necessary (as at 54, 57, 472, 476, 539, 542). When they appear, I have omitted quotation marks; but when dialogue is incorporated into narrative, I employ modern conventions.

The following words have superscript marks like apostrophes inserted above certain vowels, apparently to indicate elision for the sake of meter. Accordingly, I have deleted the indicated vowel and inserted an apostrophe:

9 flow'rs]
39 ign'rant]
373 deliv'r]
496 Alch'mist] 527 adm'rably]
565 unhapp'ly]
605 Merc'ry, Merc'ry]
612 Merc'ry]

Emendations

27 Answer, "It is] *MS reads* Answer it. It is
175 knew] *MS reads* kenew
318 *Voice:] MS omits*
532 to] *MS omits*
584 Tyros] *MS reads* Tyro's

XIII. COMMENTARY

The text has been compared with the Latin original, *Tractatus de Sulphure* (first edition Prague, 1604; edition cited, Jean Jacques Manget, *Bibliotheca Chemica Curiosa*, 2 vols. [Geneva, 1702], 2:488–92); and with John French’s English translation, *A Treatise of Sulphur*, in *A New Light of Alchymie* (1650; Wing S2506), 126–42. Quotations from these texts, which sometimes clarify the meaning of verse passages, are cited as *BCC* and *NL*, respectively. Quotations from Sendivogius’ separately titled *Novum Lumen Chymicum* are also taken from French’s 1650 translation, but they are cited as *A New Light*.

1 *he*. The Alchemist (see line 26 and the Introduction for the abrupt opening).

3 *a Grove*. The fruitful, harmonious grove or garden was a common alchemical allegory. See Sendivogius’s *Philosophicall Ænigma*, above, line 158n.

15 *living Water*. As in the *Philosophicall Ænigma*, there is “no Spring” here, but the “water of life” necessary for making the stone is of course not ordinary water. See *Ænigma*, 84n, 324n; and below, 599n. Compare also the *Lunar Rays* (21) with “Solar or the Lunar rayes” in the *Ænigma*, 205.

28 *Erycina’s*. Erycina is one of Venus’s titles, deriving from her sanctuary on Mount Eryx. Her fecund grove here recalls Lucretius’ famous invocation of Venus as the one alone who governs the nature and generation of all things (*De rerum natura* 1.1–18).

30 *Sulphur*. The “Sophick Sulphur” (93), not ordinary sulphur; see Introduction and 283n, 599n, below.

40 *insinuating Cheat*. See the Alchemist’s ultimate turning to “Quacking & to Surgery” (579).

50–52 These lines suggest that the “Voice” is that of Sulphur, but the speaker later identifies himself as Saturn (99).

79 *his Mother*. Perhaps Nature (cf. 338–39) or, as Jung spec-

ulates, Venus herself (*Mysterium Coniunctionis*, 116).

98 *Intendant*. Superintendent.

99 *Saturn*. For the figure of Saturn as guide and revealer of secrets, see *Hermetick Raptures*, 273n, in this collection, and Sendivogius' *Ænigma*, 217, above.

102 *darksome Den*. For the figure of the *Den* here and at 552 below, see Zacharias, above, 137n.

107 On the qualities of sulphur, see 599n, below.

130 *By birth the second, but the first*. Earlier in the *Tractatus de Sulphure*, Sendivogius says, "Argent vive is the first Matter of that Work, and truly nothing else; whatsoever is added to it ariseth from it" (French's trans., 125); see below 543ff., where Sulphur is extracted from Mercury. The usual term for the "first Matter" was *materia prima* or "chaos"; following Sendivogius, Eirenaeus Philalethes says that "Sophick Mercury" is truly "a Chaos" (*Secrets Reveal'd* [1669], 6). Cf. the version in *NL*: "Friend, know that Sulphur is the vertue [i.e., power] of all things, and is the second by birth, but yet older than all things, stronger, and more worthy, yet an obedient child."

143 *Brothers*. The other metals, which are by their natures inferior to Sulphur and his *Sister* (150), Mercury.

157 *blest ethereall Part*. The metallic "seed" containing the "life" and essence of Sulphur; see 177n, below.

169 *Hermes*. Hermes Trismegistus, the legendary founder of magic and alchemy. In his *Emerald Table*, he claims this surname "because I hold thrice parts of the wisdom of the whole world" (Holmyard, 98); some alchemists related this threefold wisdom to the three domains of mineral, vegetable, animal, while philosophical hermeticists saw Trismegistus as priest (or prophet), philosopher, and king.

170 *her*. Nature.

173 *Avicen & Aristotle's Name*. At least three major alchemical works are attributed to Aristotle (Ferguson 1:41-42). Avicenna (Arabic, Ibn Sinna; 980-1037), called the "Aristotle of the Arabians," followed Jabir (Geber) in the sulphur-mercury theory; his *De Mineralibus* was sometimes attributed to Aristotle himself, but has been shown to be genuine (Holmyard, 92-94); see 208n, below.

177 *three Kingdoms.* I.e., the sages gained knowledge and control over all things mineral, vegetable, and animal, since philosophical Sulphur perfects everything in each of these domains. In *Novum Lumen*, Sendivogius calls the primal mixture of sperms in all things “Elixir” and “the Balsome of Sulphur, which is the same as the Radicall moisture in metals” (*A New Light*, 5–8). See 109–14, 169n above, and cf. Rulandus: “Sulphur is a formative principle, partly gaseous, partly fiery, partaking of an ethereal nature; it is that whence strength proceeds, and life inheres in things. Hence it is called the Balm of Nature—Sal Terminator, Sulphur Informator—possessing plastic virtue” (306). For Sulphur’s work on metals and the human body, see lines 277–82, below.

185 *his Mirrour.* Compare 183–91 with this parallel passage in Rulandus: “The illustrious Cosmopolite, whose high achievements are among the glories of Hermetic history, also declares that the Philosophical Stone is nothing else but a mirror in which may be perceived the three divisions of the wisdom of the world. He who possesses it is wise as Aristotle or Avicenna” (446). The mirror may suggest that alchemy “reflects” Nature accurately, as in the *Ænigma*, line 353.

193 *the Weight of Fire.* Perhaps weight here means “degree” or even “proportion,” as in the “true weight” of the “three Principles,” sulphur, mercury, salt, 229–31, below.

199 Perhaps the “Universall” motion is the ordering principle of the cosmos; cf. *NL*: “By this they learned what were the influences of the Celestial vertues upon inferiour Bodies, and how Nature by the Weight of Fire Compounds things; as also the motion of the Sun, and Moon: especially that universal motion, by which his Mother is governed: by this they knew the degrees of heat, cold, moisture, dryness, and the vertues of Herbs, and indeed of all things, whence they became most excellent physicians.”

208 *Galen’s Book, or Avicenn’s.* Following Hippocrates, Galen (ca. 130–ca. 200 A.D.) tried to balance or harmonize the four humors (blood, phlegm, black bile, yellow bile) by adjusting, through diet, the four qualities (hot, cold, moist, dry) whose specific combination governed them; if phlegm, e.g., is cold and

moist, its excess could be treated by herbs that are hot and dry (see 206–7). Avicenna (see 173n) was the most renowned name in medicine from 1100–1500, his masterpiece being the *Canon*.

227-28 *three Principles . . . two*. Earlier in the *Tractatus de Sulphure*, Sendivogius says, “Now the Principles of things, especially of Metals, according to the Ancient Philosophers are two, Sulphur and Mercury; but according to the latter Philosophers [beginning with Paracelsus] three, Sal, Sulphur and Mercury”; for Salt, see below, 426ff.

233 *Decoction*. Boiling, “cooking” (digesting), achieved by the warmth of nature or the alchemical fire; see 235n.

235 *Degree of Fire*. In *Novum Lumen* Sendivogius speaks of two natural heats, that of the sun and that of the earth’s central fire. With regard to the alchemist’s fire, compare the following lines with Rulandus: “The four grades of fire must be studied by operators, for so is fire distributed, there being not one grade merely as the crowd conceive; so also the beginning, middle, and end of these stages must be considered, as they were observed by the primeval philosophers. They must be appreciated, however, not by the senses only, but by their effect in their proper subjects, and by judgment joined to the perceptions of sense, and chiefly of sight and touch” (180; each of the four grades is then described in detail); see also Read, 143–44.

249 *Universall Med’cine*. The philosopher’s stone is universal because it cures all diseases; Rulandus devotes several articles to this topic, 438–48.

257 *latent Poyson*. Sendivogius’ *Ænigma* says that before its full decoction, the stone is “a Poyson” (302).

258-60 The source of this saying has not been identified (*NL*: “Hast not thou heard that a great flame of fire destroys a little one?”)

260-63 *made by communication alone*. At second hand; cf. *NL*: “There were many Philosophers, which received the art from other mens experience, which did not so throughly search into the vertue of the Medicine.”

278-82 “For the blood of that Sulphur is that intrinsecall vertue and siccity [dryness] that turnes, and congeals Quick-silver, and all Metalls into Gold, and mens bodies into health” (*NL*).

The blood of Sulphur, again referred to at 291–93, is released by Salt and becomes the purifying Hermetic stream at 424ff., below.

283 *Oyl of Sulphur*. Rulandus identifies this with one of the general species of common sulphur (“similar to Liquid Bitumen, derived from Liquid Sulphur [or] Native Sulphur,” 307)—hence Saturn’s scandalized response to the Alchemist’s boast: he is confusing a base, ordinary substance with an elevated philosophical principle. See the outcome of the erroneous Alchemist’s ways of working, lines 522ff.

318 *Wind*. I.e., “philosophical” air, which in Sendivogius is comparable to the alchemist’s “universal spirit”: “[air] is the Matter of the ancient Philosophers . . . by which all things grow, and are nourished” (*A New Light*, 41; see Introduction and for Sir Isaac Newton’s commentary on the passage from which these words come, see Dobbs, *Newton’s Alchemy*, 159–60). Sulphur remains imperfect as long as it “feed[s] on Crudity” (what Sendivogius calls “crude air”), or until the alchemist releases it from the earth and perfects it (Dobbs, 158).

359 *last*. Least.

360 *Treaty*. Discussion, entreaty.

376 *Quintessence*. For Sulphur as the Quintessence, or the “soul of metals,” see 599n, below.

387–89 *What Dæmon . . . Globe?*. A rhetorical question to the effect that not even a spirit could possibly know where to find the elusive Sulphur.

401 *still*. Ever, always.

402 *elected Sophi*. Those chosen (by God) to know the secrets of nature.

404–405 “Sir, in the sea, why then is hee not mine, since hee is hid here so neer?” (*NL*; the original reads, “Domine in mari illud quare non est meum; cum hic propinquius sit absconditum,” *BCC*).

412 *Queen of Love*. See Venus’s grove (26ff., above) and the mutual love of the Prince and Diana, 437ff.

424ff. This parable is discussed in Jung’s *Mysterium Coniunctionis* (115–16, 120–22), where Sal (Salt) in wounding Sulphur is said “to play the sinister new-moon role of Luna” (252). Gen-

erally the story represents the “death” (putrefaction) of the “seeds” of gold and silver, and their eventual exaltation (as “souls”) and purification.

434 *Diana*. Newton, following Sendivogius, interpreted Diana (a name for the moon—hence Luna, silver, the female principle) as the quintessence, or most pure silver (Dobbs, *Newton’s Alchemy*, 182). An alchemical parable similar to that in lines 434ff. is presented pictorially in Johann Daniel Mylius, *Basilica Philosophica* (Frankfurt, 1618): Luna (Diana, sophic mercury) stands in the Hermetic stream and is approached by Sol (masculine principle, sophic sulphur); see Read, 83 and (for another similar emblem), 271–72 and plate 58. See also the references above to the “blood of Sulphur,” 278–82n, 291–92.

436 *decurrent*. Running down.

452 *Servants*. Jung suggests that these fearful servants are “the alchemists, and the stream or its water symbolizes the [psychic] danger threatening them, which is clearly the danger of drowning . . . , the irruption of the unconscious and the ‘loss of soul’ caused thereby” (*Mysterium Coniunctionis*, 121n). If, however, the Prince is Sol (see 434n, above), the servants could be the other (inferior) metals which would only perish where Sol and Luna are perfected.

453 *hast*. Haste.

458 *Privity*. Private knowledge.

493 *His*. Sulphur’s; see 426ff., above.

520 *my Friend*. The ignorant alchemist who engaged in a debate with Mercury and Nature in Sendivogius’ *Dialogus Mercurii, Alchymistae et Naturae*; see the discussion of the narrative context of the present poem in the Introduction.

525 *calcining Pot*. Vessel for reducing a substance to powder.

528 *sublim’d*. Converted to a vapor.

531 *Card-matches*. Matches made from a piece of paper, cord, cloth, etc. dipped in melted sulphur—the vulgar sulphur employed by the Alchemist (524; see 283n).

543ff. Saturn’s process of joining the philosophical principles of Sulphur and Mercury to produce the philosopher’s stone first necessitates converting Mercury into Sulphur. Rulandus says the “internal Sulphur is the power which makes and prepares the

XIII. Commentary

body”; it is “born in Mercury” by the “external Sulphur” (306). See 130n, above, and note that Sulphur can also be converted to Mercury (599n and 601, below).

554 *plac't a Guard*. I.e., sealed hermetically.

558 *in immortal Verse*. NL: “Then they made the Philosophers Stone, because of the true matter a true thing must needs bee made”; BCC: “Fecerunt itaque Lapidem Philosophorum, quia ex debita materia non-nisi debitum opus evenit.” The reference to verse is the translator’s (self-referential?) addition.

576 *a Stone which did torment his Back*. NL: “by searching after the Stone of the Philosophers he got the Stone of the Kidneys.” The translator’s phrasing makes possible also an allusion to the stone of Sisyphus, whose fruitless labors were sometimes compared to those of the alchemists (Read, 161).

582 *our chast Diana’s Shrine*. The phrase “our Diana” is often used in alchemical writing to denote the whole secret of the Art, and is not to be confused with the Prince-Diana (Sol-Luna) allegory above. As Acteon’s unworthiness to view the chaste Diana was signified by his destruction, only the pious initiates of alchemy could approach the secret unscathed. For similar references, see John French’s Preface to *A New Light*, A3v; Elias Ashmole’s *Theatrum*, 447; and Rulandus, 356.

584-89 NL: “But that I may not direct all things I say to the new beginner only, wee shall say something to you also who now have passed over these painfull labours. Have you seen that Country, where a man married a wife, whose nuptialls were celebrated in the house of Nature?”

586 *Halcyon Shore*. Peaceful respite or destination (after having won the stone after an arduous “journey” or search).

588 *Man espous’d a Wife*. That is, the “marriage” of the Prince and Diana (462-88) and of Sol and Luna by Saturn (543-60). There are also ironic contrasts with the Alchemist and his wife (502, 624).

593 *Dealbation*. Whitening (see 429, 600).

599 *Sulphur incombustible*. “Incombustible Sulphur, the perfect work of Gold and Mercurial Water of the Perfect Body, the soul of the metals, which operates in the Mercury, and the masculine seed which has in itself the property of all Metals, and

is their key. But it cannot tincture of itself without the spirit. It is an essential fire which surpasses the flames; it does not destroy the Mercury, but changes the lowest part of it with its qualities. When it is like a gum, it is called Mercury; when it is hard and white, it is called Sulphur. The Sulphur of Metals is Quintessence" (Rulandus, 308). See also Introduction.

601 *turn Sulphur into Mercury.* See 543n, above.

608-609 Cf. Hermes' *Emerald Table*: "With great sagacity it doth ascend gently from Earth to Heaven. Again it doth descend to Earth, and uniteth in itself the force from things superior and things inferior" (Holmyard, 98).

612 *acuated.* Literally, sharpened, made pungent; here, "vivified" (NL: "for our Mercury is quickned with Sulphur, else it would be of no use").

614 *a Prince without a People.* NL: "A Prince without a People is unhappy; so is an Alchymist without Sulphur and Mercury. If thou hast understood me, I have said enough." Our verse translator now omits about a page and a half of concluding admonition to the reader.

623 *more.* I.e., more kinds of salt (Rulandus, 279-86, lists over 45 different salts).

PART FIVE:
HERMETICK MYSTICISM
and
AUGUSTAN SATIRE

XIV. *Hermetic Raptures*

by “Torrescissa”

Written near the end of the most intense half-century of alchemical activity in England, *Hermetick Raptures* (ca. 1700) is a fitting text with which to conclude this collection. In its ecstatic celebration of enlightenment through spiritual alchemy, the poem strikingly witnesses the survival of late Renaissance Neoplatonism. At the same time, in an excoriating attack on “Impostours & Pretenders,” it provides a valuable retrospective critique of the material, medical, and spiritual alchemies of the seventeenth century, and of the divers configurations of politics, religion, and natural philosophy that inform them. This critique is offered, however, not from the vantage point of scientific rationalism, but from that of a rarefied hermetic mysticism anxious to distinguish itself from perversions of the sacred art.

The oscillating form of this three-part “Heroick Poem” of 1001 lines reflects the doubleness of its themes, for it combines—in a rather tenuous balance—the qualities both of serious epic and of mock-epic. Parts I and III (300 and 139 lines, respectively), in the elevated style, tell how the author is taken up through the spheres and then led by the planetary god Saturn to an empyrean of alchemical sages presided over by Hermes Trismegistus. These sections contain “the most sublime Notions in Theology, Physiology [i.e., natural science], Astrology & Geography,” in which discourse “the great Secret [of alchemy] is Learnedly set forth.” The tone is serious, and the final effect is probably supposed to be something like reverential awe.

Interrupting this story of alchemical apotheosis—just before the adept and his guide reach the celestial abode of initiates—is

Part II (562 lines), a “diverting Satyr” on “the modern Tyro-Chymists.” This is spoken mainly by Saturn who, in response to the adept’s questions, describes first the inhabitants of a limbo of failed but sincere seekers of alchemy and then the “dark vales” or Hades of alchemical frauds and cheats.¹ The machinery of epic is maintained—this is in effect the “descent to the underworld”—but in the mock-heroic vein. There are some witty treatments of classical and Miltonic motifs: one inmate carries his pitiful version of Sendivogius’ *novum lumen* which illuminates nothing in the darkness of hell (436–37); an infernal river of flaming urine engulfs one of the charlatans who had claimed that substance to be an ingredient in the “great work” (441); and we see parodies of Ixion’s wheel (475) and Orpheus in the underworld (765–66), a “Chymick Tantalus” (742–64), and even a mock-Persephone, “that their Hell, like th’old, may have a Queen” (700–711).² Here, tone and style recall Butler’s *Hudibras* in its use of irony, exaggeration, innuendo, and simple invective, though the latter often degenerates into gross personal abuse.

The author of *Hermetick Raptures* is certainly aware of the satirical possibilities of the mock-heroic, but he is unperturbed by the fact that Butler, Davenant, and Hobbes had, some fifty years earlier, dismissed serious epic as a viable form for supernatural themes—above all, enthusiastic notions like inspiration, whether of the poetic or Hermetic kind. Similarly, he is unmoved by the connotations of the “Raptures” of his title: Butler, for

¹While this is not an uncommon device of satire, an alchemical antecedent exists in *Mr Culpeper’s Ghost* (1656), in which the voluminous translator of iatrochemical works. Nicholas Culpeper (d. 1654), meets in the Elysian Fields Robert Fludd, Raymond Lully, and others, and sends back proof to the living that Galenic, not Paracelsian, medicine is the true one. For excerpts and a summary, see F.N.L. Poynter, “Nicholas Culpeper and the Paracelsians,” in *Science, Medicine and Society in the Renaissance: Essays to Honor Walter Pagel*, 2 vols., ed. Allen G. Debus (New York, 1972), 1:201–20.

There is also an interesting verse satire (1672), in the form of a broadside ballad, against the “chymick physicians”; though it gives no names, it reflects the general conflicts within the medical profession in the years 1665–72. See Allen G. Debus, “‘The Devil upon Dun’: A Seventeenth-Century Attack on the Quack Chemist,” *Die ganze Welt im Apotheke: Festschrift für Otto Zekert*, Salzburger Beiträge zur Paracelsusforschung, Heft 8 (Salzburg, 1969), 47–63.

²There are also Shakespearean and Miltonic echoes or allusions at 146–47, 515, 566, 729; and 180–201, 400, 437.

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instance, refers scathingly to “Poetique Raptures” of “Heroick fustian” at least twice in *Hudibras*.³

Sensing the violence of the poem’s tonal shifts from the sublime to the ridiculous (and noting the panoply of preliminary matter—see below), a modern reader familiar with Restoration and Augustan satire might suspect that the grave first-person narrator of Parts I and III is in fact an ironic device, a persona meant to undermine the very ecstasy he celebrates. But the state of the poem’s manuscript (see below) and its overall content indicate that the author is no Swiftian ironist, but a spiritual alchemist of a particular sort, writing in a well-established tradition of alchemical poetry and Hermetic vision-literature.⁴

At the same time, though, some puzzling inconsistencies do persist, and it is difficult not to feel, at least on first reading, that the satirical attack on false alchemy (which is longer than the other two parts combined) overbalances and renders anticlimactic the culminating apotheosis of the last section. A brief synopsis of the whole poem will indicate more clearly the dynamics of its structure and will facilitate a discussion of some of the difficulties it poses.

Part I (1–300). The speaker describes himself as having mastered the secrets of planetary motion, meteorology and the movements of rivers and oceans, and as having written about them for “the yet unknowing world” (1–21; we learn later that he has made the philosopher’s stone or “scarlet tincture,” 173). Aspiring higher “to fathom vast Eternity” (23), he is suddenly

³See the ed. by John Wilders (Oxford, 1967), 117, 163.

⁴On the visionary elements, see below and the Commentary on Part I. Satirical attacks on false alchemists are conventional features of alchemical poetry. From the fifteenth until the seventeenth century, e.g., Chaucer’s *Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale* was read both as a serious alchemical poem and as an exposure of cheaters’ tricks; satirical passages also appear in George Ripley’s *Compound of Alchemy* (1471), Thomas Norton’s *Ordinal of Alchemy* (1477), *Blomfild’s Blossoms* (1557, the most frequently copied alchemical poem of the sixteenth century), and the *Lithochymicus* of Bassett Jones in Part Three, above. See Robert M. Schuler, “The Renaissance Chaucer as Alchemist,” *Viator* 15 (1984): 305–33; for Blomfild, see *Hermetick Raptures*, line 72n and lines 120–62 of the edition cited. Of Blomfild’s “*Catalogue of the chief of this Tribe [of pretenders] in his time*,” Elias Ashmole says the reader “shall gain much benefit by this *Worke*, if he pick but out what is said concerning them, and study that *First*” (*Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* [1652], 468).

overcome by a fierce light of illumination (21–52). He hears a terrible noise, at which nature trembles as though it were the “last & gen’rall summons” (65), but when this is succeeded by a “quiet silence” a “vernall gale” comes from the farthest region of the sky and he is wafted aloft by “nine white-feathered Eagles” (71). Ascending, he wishes his native England peace and “Empire o’er the main” (77), and yet sees the smallness of the world and of all human ambition (53–105). As he proceeds through the planetary spheres (the obsolete Ptolemaic system is adopted by poetic license, as the epistle to the “Learned Reader” explains), the speaker addresses each planet, revealing his knowledge of them, and in turn receives gifts or new illumination; for instance, Mercury greets him as a “new divinity” (135) and offers his caduceus as a sign of his alchemical mastery. Part I ends when he reaches the last planetary god, Saturn, who takes him beyond the “last extent of place” toward the “great Assembly of the wise” (286, 298).

Part II (301–862). Carried by Saturn, the adept sees in the distance the city of the blessed; here Saturn conveys “th’ elect” (323), who await the return of peace and truth to the world (301–30). Dispersed about the “ethereal plains” are those who honestly pursued the “noble science,” but who through misfortune failed to achieve the secret. Of these, Saturn describes four men and one woman (331–99). Next, the adept spies “dark vales . . . on the left,” the dungeons reserved for charlatans in the art; Saturn describes various sorts, singling out some seventy individuals, some of them in great circumstantial or biographical detail (400–806).

As Saturn and the adept approach the source of the celestial flame, they see crowds “of those good souls half blest / With sophick revelations”; these, who reside outside the “adamantine gates” of the “promist land” (813), rush forward, but they are turned back by Saturn. Just before the gates, the adept sees “seaven more adordnd with crowns of Gold,” dressed in purple robes, “& purple rays, / Like majesty, surround[ing] ev’ry face” (824–26). The adept thinks he recognizes one holy man from the world below, but Saturn hurries him on. Showing his caduceus, the speaker is admitted, while the hymns of angels praise their

Creator. The adept is sent forward by Saturn to a "bright palace all of massy gold" to meet the "rev'rend Synod," while Saturn himself returns to his waiting planetary sphere.

Part III (863–1001). The adept sees Hermes Trismegistus enthroned above a great council comprised of Geber, Raymond Lully, Arnald of Villanova, Trevisan, and Sendivogius, "with some few more, whom heaven's just decree / Had preordained from eternity" (887–88; Artephius, Senior, and Nicolas Flamel are named later). Hermes, placing his Emerald Table before them, solemnly urges these great masters to conceal the secrets of alchemy from wicked men. He then turns to the adept, welcomes him, and takes him to a golden throne even greater than his own (920). Abashed by Hermes' praise of his "Godlike acts," the adept hesitates, but the other sages place him in the "Imperial Throne." Hermes asks him if virtue, justice, truth, and peace now flourish on earth, but he is sadly told of discord and wars that self-destructive men have brought on themselves, whereat all the sages weep. To divert them from sadness, the adept addresses a number of the wise and briefly expounds their chief or characteristic symbols or allegories. He concludes by telling them that he has seen the Great Work perfected in the alchemical wedding of sun and moon.

What kind of alchemy, first of all, does the poem celebrate? As the commentary on Part I suggests, the adept's "rapture" or ecstatic illumination has relevant antecedents in the *Corpus Hermeticum* and in alchemical treatises from ancient times to the early modern period. Parts I and III together could, in fact, be seen as a kind of "alchemical *Poimandres*" in which the adept—made "divine" by virtue of the gnosis he is granted—is incorporated into the pantheon of alchemical sages, who are represented here as being spiritually perfect. The ascent through the spheres therefore symbolizes a knowledge of both the celestial and material worlds (the astronomical and astrological qualities of each planet, and the properties of each corresponding metal), but it also symbolizes a personal ascent from (rational) earthly knowledge to (mystical) spiritual enlightenment. Indeed, the Hermetic *Nous* or "divine mind" seems to be directly alluded

to at line 309. For the uninitiated reader, of course, the exact nature of this ineffable experience will remain as impenetrable as the alchemical enigmas rehearsed at the very end of the poem; in fact, Hermes himself insists that such secrets not be revealed.

On the other hand, we can, to a degree at least, locate the poem's spiritual alchemy within a matrix of theological, scientific, and political values so as to render it historically intelligible. One clue to the poem's orientation lies in the sages who make up Hermes' "rev'rnd Synod" in Part III. Usually found in alchemical writings is a linkage to past adepts and the claim—made with special force in this text—that the author is in the tradition leading directly to Hermes Trismegistus himself. What sets *Hermetick Raptures* apart in this regard is that it includes only one "modern" among the eight adepts in Hermes' council, Michael Sendivogius (1566–1636; see lines 437, 885, 978). This Polish alchemist was supposed to have effected a transmutation before Rudolph II at Prague, and his *Novum Lumen Chymicum* was first published in that city in the same year, 1604. The most obvious connection between *Hermetick Raptures* and Sendivogius can be seen in the narrative role and symbolic function of Saturn, which seem to be inspired by the allegories in Sendivogius' *Ænigma Philosophicum* and *Tractatus de Sulphure*, often printed with the *Novum Lumen*. In these works, verse translations of which can be read in this collection, Saturn appears in the role of initiator, as he instructs perplexed alchemists in their dreams how to practice the sacred art.⁵ That our poet has one or other of these works in mind is confirmed near the end of *Hermetick Raptures* when the adept chooses to begin his "Discourse more pleasing to a Sophick mind" by explicating to Sendivogius a fable of Saturn (977–78).

But Sendivogius' influence probably goes well beyond the adaptation of this narrative motif. Dobbs has shown that Sendivogius was one of the most frequently printed seventeenth-century alchemical writers, and that the "Neoplatonic alchemy"

⁵For a biographical sketch of Sendivogius, see the Introduction to the versifications of his texts in Part Four. Another interesting motif in both Sendivogius and in the present poem is a reference to Daniel's "Ancient of Days," often invoked in millenarian writings (see Commentary, 277n).

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of Sendivogius and of Jean d'Espagnet's *Enchiridion Physicae Restitute* (1608) influenced the writings of Eirenaeus Philalethes and the alchemical theory and experimentation of Isaac Newton. In Newton's case, the study of these two writers led to a shift from the exoteric (material) to the esoteric (meditative): to a "more philosophical—but non-operational—variety of alchemy."⁶

While *Hermetick Raptures* contains no exposition of any specific alchemical ideas (either exoteric or esoteric), we can reasonably infer the kind of thinking that appealed to its author by comparing a key passage in the poem with some collateral ones in d'Espagnet and Sendivogius. In the adept's paean to the sun while passing through the spheres, we hear not only of its life-giving properties in relation to animals, plants, gems and metals, but also of its spiritual effects on man's soul:

And now I Come to the Phoebean ray,
The fountain and originall of day.
How come my optick nervs so strong to bear
The emanations of the flaming sphere,
That from the sources of eternall light
Come gushing forth, & dash against my sight?
O sacred orb of fire! heav'n's glorious eye,
The firmament's resplendent Majesty;
Sole measurer of time, that glideth by
In ages, days & hours incessantly
Into the Ocean of eternity;
Great Planetary God, that dost disperse
Thy all-preserving heat through th' universe!
Thee all the lower world with joy receive,
And seem with thy approaches to revive.
At thy bright smiles the meads their verdure show;
To thee the trees their leavy garments ow;

⁶Betty Jo Teeter Dobbs, *The Foundations of Newton's Alchemy: or "The Hunting of the Greene Lyon"* (Cambridge, 1975), 191; see also 52, 153, 156, and (for an analysis of Sendivogian texts) 157–60. It is interesting that these are the very two authors that Samuel Butler identifies (ca. 1667–69) with his "Hermetick Philosopher" who forbids "his Disciples to read any modern Books, but only *Sandivogius* [sic] and *Enchiridion physicae restituta*" (*Characters*, ed. Charles W. Daves [Cleveland, 1970], 143).

Bacchus & Ceres by thy influence grow.
The Orientall gemms, the western gold
Breed in those beds which thou dost most behold.
To man himself thou dost new soul inspire,
Kindling within him a more youthfull fire.
(180–201)

These lines are heavily indebted to d’Espagnet’s description of the “Universal Spirit” or “Soul of the World,” a spiritual force second only to God:

It was not an improbable assertion of some of the Philosophers, *That the soul of the World was in the Sun, and the Sun in the Centre of the whole*. For the consideration of equity and nature seem to require, that the body of the Sun should have an equal distance from the fountain and rise of created Light, to wit, the *Empyrean Heaven*, and from the dark Centre the Earth, which are the extreames of the whole Fabrick, whereby this lamp of the world, as a middle Nature and Joyner of both extreames, might have its scite in the middle, that it may the more commodiously receive the rich treasuries of all powers from the chief Spring, and upon a like distance convey them to things below.⁷

In Sendivogian terms, the “Universal Spirit” becomes a special “air.” This key passage from *Novum Lumen* develops this idea in his own terminology and with special reference to Hermes’ *Emerald Table*, which is venerated in *Hermetick Raptures*:

[The air] is the Matter of the ancient Philosophers. . . . [I]t is the water of our dew, out of which is extracted the Salt Petre of Philosophers, by which all things grow, and are nourished: the matrix of it is the Center of the Sun, and Moon, both celestiall, and terrestriall: and to speak more plainly it is our Loadstone, which in the foregoing Treatises I called Chalybs, or Steel: The Aire generates this Loadstone, and the Loadstone generates, or makes our Air to appear, and come forth. . . . And so in this place thou shalt have the true, and

⁷*Enchiridion* (English trans., 1651), 19–20; quoted in Dobbs, 38. See also lines 30–52 in our poem, and note that the epistle to the “Learned Reader” reminds us that the poem has adopted the outmoded geocentric universe, which is implicit in d’Espagnet’s description, by poetic license.

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right explication of Hermes, when he saith, that the father of it is the Sun, and its mother the Moon, and that which the wind carryed in its belly, viz. *Sal Alkali*, which the Philosophers have called *Sal Armoniacum*, and vegetable, hid in the belly of the *Magnesia*.⁸

It is likely that these kinds of ideas lie behind the spiritual alchemy of the poem and provide a theoretical framework for it. Generally, our author probably viewed Sendivogius in these terms, voiced by the translator of his *Novum Lumen*: “if anyone should ask me, what one Book did most conduce to the knowledge of God and the Creatures, and the Mysteries thereof; I should speak contrary to my Judgment, if I should not, next to the sacred Writ, say *Sendivogius*.”⁹

This emphasis on the “two books” of knowledge—Scripture and Nature—is central to Paracelsian and Neoplatonic thought; it is a prominent feature in the three documents that precede the text of the poem proper, and from these we can gain further insight into its spiritual alchemy. The “Publisher’s Epistle” informs us, for example, that the publisher, himself a long-time student of the “Metallick Philosophy,” views his personal acquaintance with the author as a providential event, “one of the greatest blessings of [his] life.” He defends both the anonymity of the author (whose identity he would not reveal even if he knew it) and the satire of Part II, since “no worthy sons of this art can bee offended thereat.” “The Author’s Epistle to the Publisher,” in its turn, acknowledges the publisher as a singular and “ingenious person, . . . haveing so clear a System of the Theoreticks.” And in biblical terms he wishes the ultimate blessing on him, which is at once material (he will succeed where the would-be gold-makers displayed in Part II failed), bodily (“pale meager Sicknesse never shall prevail to unfortunate your life”), and spiritual:

⁸*A New Light of Alchymie* (trans. by J[ohn] F[rench], 1650), 41; quoted in Dobbs, 159. Sendivogius refers to the third and fourth aphorisms in the *Emerald Table*.

⁹I quote from the 1674 ed. of *A New Light*, sig. A6v; the rendering is that of the Puritan physician and translator of other alchemical and occult works, John French (see Charles Webster, *The Great Instauration: Science, Medicine and Reform 1626–1660* [London, 1975], 279).

Jewels, Pearl, Gold & Silver, pretious stones white, red, & green & azure as the firmamentall orbs, shall be to you vile as the yellow sand, that beds the rowling Ocean. And even yet beyond their terrene lustre . . . the Hermetick rays doe emulate heaven's everlasting fires.

These comments, along with other details from the poem itself, show that the alchemy of the poem resembles certain other spiritual alchemies of the mid-to-late seventeenth century, but also that it is distinct from them. It has, for instance, many elements in common with the purely contemplative (esoteric) alchemy of the secret "Society of the Sun in Aries," which required its members to meditate on specific biblical texts and to study d'Espagnet's *Enchiridion*. The charter of this society does not, however, mention any material or medical benefits of such contemplation (though its "Grand Arcana"—which was transmitted orally—may have included them). There are similarities, too, between the alchemy of *Hermetick Raptures* and that of John Everard who, in both his commentary on Hermes' *Emerald Table* (1640) and in his translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum* (1650) explicitly identified the Hermes of alchemy with the author of the philosophical Hermetic writings. Everard, however, was a Familist, and he seems to incorporate certain soteriological doctrines from that sect into his specific alchemical system.

Again, *Hermetick Raptures* invokes both the notion of the "elect" (323) and of the millennium (e.g., 277n, 310–12, 322–30, 923–30), ideas that were current among alchemists who interpreted the *adeptus/electus* connection strictly in terms of Calvinist theology, and among those sectarian radicals of the 1640s and 1650s who incorporated alchemy, astrology and prophecy into their beliefs.¹⁰ However, it is more likely from other details in

¹⁰For manuscript documents relating to the "Society of the Sun in Aries," Everard, and the Calvinist *adeptus/electus*, see Robert M. Schuler, "Some Spiritual Alchemies of Seventeenth-Century England," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 41 (1980): 293–318; see also *Hermetick Raptures*, 865–72n. The connections between radical sectarians and alchemy have been explored by a number of scholars, whose work is surveyed and scrutinized in J. Andrew Mendelsohn, "Alchemy and Politics in England, 1649–1665," *Past and Present*, No. 135 (1992): 30–78. Millenarian elements in alchemy are explored in Paul A. Trout, "Magic and the Millennium: A Study of Millenary Motifs in the Occult Milieu of Puritan England, 1640–1660" (Ph.D. diss., University

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Hermetick Raptures that the poem inhabits a theological and political world that is much more conservative.¹¹ The generalized notion that “There are but few whom fate has chosen forth / To disengage their souls from sordid earth, / And lift their minds so high” (Saturn’s words, 854–56) is a common motif in alchemy, and the millenarianism of the poem is mystical and personal, not political. Both the idea of election and that of the millennium could, in fact, be accommodated by moderate Anglicanism, which is probably the position of our author.

This religious and political conservatism invites comparison with three other spiritual alchemists of the mid-century—Bassett Jones, Elias Ashmole, and Thomas Vaughan—but again crucial distinctions exist. Ashmole and Vaughan were public in their support for the royalist cause, and were high-church Anglicans; while there is some ambiguity, most of the available evidence suggests that Jones shared these leanings. But where *Hermetick Raptures* satirizes the Rosicrucians, Jones, Ashmole and Vaughan whole-heartedly embraced them.¹² All three figures, however, revered Sendivogius, and they cite most of the same authorities celebrated in Part III.

A final preliminary document, the epistle to the “Learned Reader,” adds no further details about the poem’s actual origins or historical connections, but it is a most useful record of early eighteenth-century spiritual alchemy. For instance, the unknown author (see below) of this sympathetic epistle praises the “universality” of the poet’s knowledge but professes no per-

of British Columbia, 1974), esp. 69ff.; for these elements in the science of the later seventeenth century, see Ernest Lee Tuveson, *Millennium and Utopia: A Study in the Background of the Idea of Progress* (1949; repr. New York, 1964), esp. chap. 3. See also note 5, above.

¹¹See, for example, the mockery of predestination (471); the satirical attacks on Muggletonians and other nonconformists (594, 740), and on Catholics (448, 746, 645, 779, etc.); the comments on the Popish Plot (595); the monarchism and British jingoism of the preliminaries and the text (787, 794); the anti-Whig sentiments (747).

¹²For Jones, see the Introduction to his *Lithochymicus*, in this collection, above; compare Ashmole’s view of the “Universal Spirit” (*Theatrum*, 446–47) with the commentary on the second title page of the *Raptures* (and with that of Everard, in Schuler, “Spiritual Alchemies,” 313). Thomas Vaughan is attacked in the poem; see below and the notes to line 765. On the varieties of religious orientation in relation to alchemy, see the Introduction to this volume.

sonal connection with him, nor does he claim to penetrate the poem's deepest secrets. Instead, he seems to have studied the text humbly, finding proof of the author's spiritual gifts in his knowledge of Scripture and of all the sciences, and in the discovery of a political prophecy in the poem which has since come true. This reader of *Hermetick Raptures* values it as a source of inspirational meditation.¹³

The last clues as to the alchemy of *Hermetick Raptures* are to be found in the satire of Part II, from which we can infer by negatives something of what the poem values. Some difficulties arise here, though, not so much because the satire itself is out of place (see note 4), but because the poem seems not wholly consistent or clear in its antagonisms. Who, for the author of this poem, were the false alchemists? Unfortunately, there is no "Complete Key" to the identities of the seventy or so "modern Tyro-chymists, Impostours & Pretenders" indicated in Part II. Only a dozen or so are more or less directly named by the author, and of these only nine have been identified: Johann Joachim Becher, Peter Bellon, Edward Bolnest, William Cooper, William Salmon, Jacob Toll, Basil Valentine, David von der Beck, and Thomas Vaughan.¹⁴ From circumstantial details and name-puns, a number of others have been determined (some tentatively): Johann S. Küffeler, Cornelis Drebbel, Galileo, John

¹³Interestingly, this response echoes that expressed by John French in regard to Sendivogius, whose influence hangs over the poem (see above). The genuineness of this response is perhaps underscored by two inaccuracies which would not appear if, say, this letter were a fictional creation of the author himself: (1) he mistakenly refers to the "Satyr in the middle of the 2nd part of the first book," which in fact constitutes Part II; and (2) he seems to have confused the poem's description of Mars with the sun when he says the author refers to the latter as a "running Gyant" (see Commentary). The enthusiasm of this reader for the text is seen in his finding rather a great deal more in it than its present editor can verify; see the textual note to the "Learned Reader" and the Commentary on the Scriptural and classical references he adduces.

¹⁴The one anomaly here is Basil Valentine, since the works attributed to him were believed to date from the fifteenth century or earlier, and he was widely acknowledged as one of the adepts. It is possible that the satire at lines 640-42 is directed against the unnamed "Chymick Surgeon" who misuses Basil's work, but this seem improbable, given the details at 645; see the Commentary. Perhaps the author suspected from their content that Basil's works were in fact "forgeries" from ca. 1600; see J.R. Partington, *A History of Chemistry*, 4 vols. (London, 1961), 2:182.

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Frederick Helvetius, Johann Grasshoff, Adam or Edward Cook, Bassett Jones, George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham, Elizabeth Murray, Duchess of Lauderdale, Lady Theodosia Stepkins Ivy, Mary Carey, John Hall, Johann Seger von Weidenfeld, Baron Bengt Skytte, Anton Gunther Billich, Thomas Revell, the Abbé Pregnani, and Thomas Henshaw. Even if only some of these are correct, it is clear from those about whom there is no doubt that the poem rejects a very wide range of alchemical and chemical practice available in seventeenth-century England: the mystical alchemy and medicine associated with the Rosicrucians; medical astrology like that of William Salmon; various kinds of Paracelsian medicine, including that of the Helmontians David von der Beck, Peter Bellon and Edward Bolnest, the latter of whom was involved in one of the major medical controversies of the century, the attempt to found a "Society of Chymical Physicians" in the 1660s; and chemical experimenters in the production of solvents who wrote without pretence and obfuscation, like Weidenfeld.¹⁵

The comprehensiveness of the author's condemnation is indicated in his mockery of the "fables printed by the *Pelican*" (656), i.e., the sign of the pelican in Little Britain, under which William Cooper—author, editor and publisher of alchemical books, bookseller and book auctioneer—carried out his various enterprises. Eight of the nine named figures who have been certainly identified (all but Jacob Toll) appear in Cooper's *Catalogue of Chymicall Books* (1673–88), which lists his stock of over 400 titles, as do two others who have been identified from details in the text (Helvetius, Weidenfeld). As disseminator of such alchemical books, Cooper seems to embody much of what *Hermetick Raptures* is against.¹⁶

¹⁵For the interesting case of Bolnest—and for his dispute with Thomas Vaughan over alchemical secrets—see line 612n. Weidenfeld (see lines 539–45n) was a friend of Robert Boyle, "whom he [Boyle] admired for writing plainly and clearly and who received him graciously when he visited England" (Partington, *History of Chemistry*, 2:182). Several other names appear incidentally, e.g., Lady Theodosia Stepkins Ivy, who apparently spent a good part of her husband's fortune on alchemy (see 777n).

¹⁶For the contents of Cooper's various catalogues and a full account of his career and activities, see Stanton J. Linden, ed., *William Cooper's A Catalogue of Chymicall Books, 1673–88: A Verified Edition* (New York, 1987), which is invaluable for the

Ironically, though, Cooper's *Catalogue* also includes translations of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, alchemical works attributed to Hermes, and all but one (Senior, for whom no English translation has ever been published) of the other ancient masters in the alchemical heaven of Part III. This, of course, is to be expected, in that alchemists generally trace their lineage through revered masters back to Hermes Trismegistus. But it is not always clear, within the context of *Hermetick Raptures*, why certain alchemical writers are rejected and others defended. For instance, there is a kind of consistency between the high place given to Sendivogius and the rejection of Rosicrucians, since Sendivogius himself is said to have declined membership in the society (even though he was called a member by later writers; see Ferguson, 2:369). But that a number of those satirized—including Thomas Vaughan and J.J. Becher—admired the work of Sendivogius is not enough to save them.¹⁷ And in the case of the Henry More–Thomas Vaughan controversy, our author clearly sides with More: but in his own discussion of enthusiasm, More cites Sendivogius (along with Paracelsus and Vaughan) for his irrationality!¹⁸

A possible exception to the poem's satire on seventeenth-century alchemists (aside from Sendivogius himself) seems to be J.B. van Helmont (1577–1644), the famous "chymical physician" and visionary whose medical writings began to appear in English in the 1650s, and which stimulated much of the mid-century conflict between the traditional Galenists in the College

study of science and alchemy in the later seventeenth century. It is worth noting that some of the authors satirized in the poem (e.g., Toll) had not been translated into English, though Cooper's catalogues include many translations; our author was obviously at home in Latin.

¹⁷See Vaughan's *Works*, ed. Alan Rudrum (Oxford, 1984), 65.584, 331.1186–88, et passim. Becher is an interesting case; perhaps he is dismissed as a "Quack" merely because he took issue with van Helmont (see below). But in 1703, just when *Hermetick Raptures* was being prepared for publication, Becher's *Physica Subterranea* (first publ. 1669) was being hailed as one of the most important chemical texts ever written, by Georg Ernst Stahl, who edited and wrote a commentary on it: see Allen G. Debus, *The Chemical Philosophy: Paracelsian Science and Medicine in the Seventeenth Century*, 2 vols. (New York, 1977), 1:90n; 2:458–63.

¹⁸Dobbs, *Newton's Alchemy*, 117; for More's own interest in alchemy and a discussion of his views, see Dobbs, 116–118, 120.

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of Physicians and the iatrochemists. Helmont is not praised directly, but an opponent of his is attacked (see lines 478–84), and it may be Helmont's theory of the moon's light that is alluded to with favor at lines 114–15. But again, the assault on Helmont's detractor does not necessarily valorize Helmont himself. After all, he was—like most of those pilloried in Part II—a follower of Paracelsus, and as already noted some of the figures satirized (e.g., David von der Beck, Peter Bellon, Edward Bolnest) were themselves Helmontians.

It may seem odd that many major figures from the period—Lefèvre, Glauber, Robert Boyle, Helmont himself—appear not at all or only indirectly in the poem. But the author seems more interested in satirizing those who pursue material transmutation without a proper spirituality, those who pretend to heal through alchemy without illumination, and those who pretend to illumination but do not have it, than in taking on those who practiced (in widely varying ways) a proto-scientific (rationalist-materialist) chemistry itself.¹⁹ However, he does conclude the whole catalogue of false alchemists with this couplet: “For each Mechanick in this seeking age / Must act his part upon the Chymick stage” (803–4). “Mechanick” could easily include both alchemist-inventors like Cornelis Drebbel (see 411–12n) and the chemical followers of the “mechanical philosophy,” i.e., the corpuscularians like Robert Boyle and Weidenfeld (see note 15). In any case, the satire in Part II of *Hermetick Raptures* testifies just as provocatively to the multifarious rifts within the hermetic-alchemical camp itself, as it does to any conventional positivist, reductionist opposition between rationalist-mechanists and mystical alchemists. That such satirical energy existed at this date shows—as does Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* (1704, written by 1696)—that all kinds of alchemical ideas were still current and were taken seriously enough to be attacked. Similarly, the positive alchemical *gnosis* of Parts I and III of the poem—like the alchemy

¹⁹Debus sees three main areas in which the chemical philosophy persisted in the second half of the seventeenth century: the beginnings of the phlogiston theory of matter (in which J.J. Becher plays an important part), the theories of the corpuscularians (Boyle, John Mayow, Newton), and the continuation of iatrochemistry; see *The Chemical Philosophy*, 2:447ff.

and mysticism of Swift's contemporary, Isaac Newton—is a useful reminder that by the turn of the eighteenth century the so-called Age of Reason had not yet fully arrived.

Authorship and Date

While one can infer a number of key scientific, religious, and political attitudes in *Hermetick Raptures*, it is unfortunately the case that there is no biographical information about its author available to flesh out the rather abstract impression gained by such inferences. If the “Publisher’s Epistle” is to be believed, however, the deliberately anonymous author can be imagined as an Englishman “upwards of fifty years of age”; he was of medium height, of ruddy complexion, “his hair inclining to black”; he was well-dressed and of a courteous disposition, and he spent much time abroad. The title page tells us he is “a person of Quality,” and the author’s own epistle refers to “Septennial Visits” that he regularly made to his native land, as well as to the “crowds of ignorants . . . [he] met withall in Towne, . . . which you [the Publisher] by [the satire in Part II of] the enclosed poem may perceive was not a few.” That is, he gives the impression of having had personal contact with the various figures attacked in the poem (whose activities date from the 1650s to the 1680s). All these details, like those describing how the poem was sent in a letter to the publisher to be made public at his discretion, may be fictional, of course, but their purpose may simply be to establish a circumstantial reality from which the mystical experience of the poem can emerge.

The pseudonym *Torrescissa* may hide a yet undiscovered clue as to the writer’s identity, but it is likely that it—like other alchemical pseudonyms—has been adopted from an earlier text. In fact, only one other occurrence of the name has been found to date. British Library MS Sloane 3831 contains a late seventeenth-century translation of the alchemist Senior’s treatise: “A Conference between a Young man new come at age and Senior, an Arabian Sophos, done from the Original into Latin by the [. . .] William of Torrescissa, a Midland Britain, & now

made English by [. . .].”²⁰ Two alchemical works attributed to Senior were indeed originally written in Arabic, but until modern times they had been known only in Latin versions.²¹ None of the printed Latin versions of Senior’s work, moreover, identifies this “Midland Britain” or anyone else as the translator from the Arabic, and the Latin text of *De Chemia* was in print by about 1560, so the same “Torrescissa” could not have been both its translator and the author of *Hermetick Raptures*.²² The ascription of the translation in Sloane 3831 may, therefore, be a later invention (conceivably, even by the author of *Hermetick Raptures*, with which the manuscript is contemporary), or the author of our poem may have seen this ascription and adopted the pseudonym in homage to the reputed translator of Senior. Senior, in any case, is numbered among the sages in Part III; one of the symbols associated with him—that of nine eagles—may be alluded to in the celestial flight of the adept; and he is possibly associated with Saturn, who takes him the rest of the way to “heaven” (see lines 71n, 273n, 986n). The pseudonym chosen by the author of *Hermetick Raptures* may, therefore, be hinting at a special affinity with the alchemy of Senior, just as other details suggest a kinship with Sendivogius.

If the deliberate mystification and secrecy surrounding the authorship and publication of the poem seem the stuff of fiction, we can reply first that these are common elements in many

²⁰Sloane 3831, fol. 1r; the brackets and ellipses denote blank spaces deliberately left in the MS, perhaps to indicate omissions from an original copy, or to provide space for later insertions. The MS bears no signs of provenance or ownership. The text covers fols. 1–7, and is of some interest, as no English translation of Senior (also called Zadith Senior, or Zadith son of Hamuel) has ever been published. No other reference to Torrescissa appears in the catalogues of the British Library, Bodleian, or other major manuscript collections, or in the standard sources for alchemy, whether printed or in manuscript. Nor has Torrescissa been verified as a surname or place-name. It may even be a coinage, based on the Latin *torresco*, “to become parched or burned,” with reference to the purifying alchemical fire.

²¹For Arabic and Latin texts of *De Chemia Senioris Antiquissimi Philosophi Libellus* and *Tabula Chimica*, see Henry E. Stapleton et al., “Three Arabic Alchemical Treatises by Muhammad ibn Umail,” *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 12 (1933): 1–213. The *De Chemia* is the text translated in MS Sloane 3831.

²²See *De Chemia Senioris Antiquissimi Philosophi (Zadith) Libellus nunc Primum in Lucem Seditus* (Strassbourg, 1560?; British Library copy 1033.e.1); this text also appears in the collections of Zetzner, Manget, and the *Philosophiae Chymicae* (1605).

published alchemical works of the period. A nearly contemporary example of a publisher in mysterious communication with a writer of alchemical tracts is the same William Cooper whose alchemical publications are satirized in the poem (see note 16, above). He claims in his *Collectanea Chymica* (1684) that Eirenaeus Philalethes' *Arcanum, or Secret of the Immortall Liquor Alkahest* "was bestowed upon and sent unto me by a Generous Stranger, who was pleased to take notice of my care in the preserving the *Porta Prima* at the end of [his 1678 edition of] *Ripley Reviv'd*" (sig. a2v). Moreover, there is a striking similarity between Cooper's description of Philalethes himself and that of "Torrescissa" in the Publisher's account already cited: "which Author is acknowledged by all hands to be an Englishman, and an Adept & supposed to be yet living, and travelling, and about the age of 55 years, but his Name is not certainly known."²³ Ironically, the maligned Cooper would have been an apt (and no doubt ready) publisher for a poem like *Hermetick Raptures*.²⁴

Secondly, whatever their actual intentions and motives, such mysterious figures did exist and were taken seriously by men of good faith. Consider, for instance, John Evelyn's account of the elusive alchemist "who went under the name *Mundanus*, that sometime came among the Adepti &c: but was unknown as to his Country or abode."²⁵ To this Theodore Mundanus, Edmund Dickinson, physician in ordinary to both Charles II and James II, attributed his interest in alchemy, and to him he wrote a long epistle on the subject, published in 1686.²⁶

But if author and prospective publisher of *Hermetick Rap-*

²³*Advertisement* to his *Collectanea*, quoted in Linden, *Cooper's Catalogue*, 152.

²⁴Of course, such preliminary letters, introductions, prefaces, and obfuscations regarding authorship and the mysterious circumstances of publication became the subjects of satire, as in *A Tale of a Tub*.

²⁵*John Evelyn's Diary*, ed. E.S. de Beer, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1955), 5:599.

²⁶See his *Epistola . . . ad Theodorus Mundanum* (Oxford, 1686), which contains Mundanus's answers to his alchemical queries, dated Paris, 10 October 1684. There were, of course, those who only pretended to have been initiated by (imaginary) masters in order to increase their own authority, as George Starkey may have done by invoking the mysterious Eirenaeus Philalethes, for whom he claimed to be the agent; see Webster, *The Great Instauration* (392), though Linden's recent review of this vexed question supports the separate identities of the two (*Cooper's Catalogue*, 149–56).

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tures resist identification, we come a bit closer to verifiable reality in the epistle addressed to the "Learned Reader," arguments for whose genuineness have been offered above (see note 13). The author of this letter claims to have come upon the poem in December, 1703. If we can trust this assertion, it helps to date the poem, which cannot have been completed before 1688 (in which year Jacob Toll's *Manuductio*, cited at line 575, was first published), or after 1703.²⁷ The author of this epistle is one Robert Kellum, a collector of alchemical manuscripts, who probably also served as general editor of the various materials that make up our text.

Only one manuscript (British Library Sloane 3632, fols. 148r-87v) of *Hermetick Raptures* exists, but it is clear that it was being prepared carefully for publication. The first signal is the elaborate series of preliminaries: formal, descriptive title page with Virgilian epigraph; an epistle from the publisher; a Latin commendatory poem by one "J.D."; a second descriptive title page with Horatian epigraph; the epistle to the "Learned Reader," and "The Author's Epistle to the Publisher." We know that Robert Kellum owned all these papers, and his signature appears at the end of the "Learned Reader," though it was subsequently all but obliterated.²⁸

Furthermore, all these materials have been collected and deliberately organized by someone, probably Kellum himself, as an examination of the scribal hands shows. The first title page, the publisher's letter, the Latin poem, and the main text of the poem are all in one hand, while the second title page, Kellum's

²⁷The section on Toll may, however, have been added after the rest of Part II was composed (see textual note to lines 575-81). Even if we doubt the epistle's reference to 1703, the epistle itself cannot have been written before 25 July 1704, since it refers to the battle of Schellemburg, fought on that day (it also refers to Queen Anne as still on the throne, so it must be from before 1714). The poem itself, then, must have been completed between 1688 and 1704.

²⁸Kellum, about whom nothing else is known, owned a number of other alchemical MSS in the British Library collection: Sloane 3646 (ff. 95-147v), 3686-3689, 3697 (ff. 53-60), 3758 (ff. 39-48v), as well as a detailed "Catalogue of printed books chiefly surgical," Sloane 3798. See *Index of Manuscripts in the British Library*, 10 vols. (Cambridge, 1984-86), vol. 6, s.v. Kellum; the *Index* says Kellum was the owner of the MS of *Hermetick Raptures* and identifies the signature at the end of the address to the "Learned Reader" as his.

“Learned Reader,” and that of the “Author’s Epistle” are in another.²⁹ In addition, the address to the “Learned Reader” is written by someone assuming the role of an editor. It refers, for example, to the “Printer” and to details on the “title page.” And in its encomiastic account of the poem, the epistle alludes to a number of specific passages from it which remain to be identified by page and line references. Spaces for these have been left, so that insertions could be made once the poem was set up in type. Kellum therefore expected to read proof of the poem and to make these insertions (see textual note to “Learned Reader”).

Another indication that the poem was to be made public is the state of the verse text itself, especially in the number and kind of corrections or cancellations. There are few of these in Part I, and none in Part III; but in Part II, the satire on false alchemists, we find many editorial excisions, cancellations, and revisions (see textual notes). In at least one case (see textual note 769) a proper name seems to have been deleted (though about a dozen—whether given directly or thinly disguised—stand untouched); potentially blasphemous references (e.g., to the Holy Ghost, line 621) have been deleted, and some politically sensitive words have been taken out at line 499. In some instances (e.g., the anti-Catholic satire at 778–79; see also 468–70, 475) the editor seems to have reconsidered an excision and has restored the obliterated words, or written “stet” in the margin. It is clear, in any case, that whoever collected these materials and worked through the text of the poem was anticipating the response—whether official or personal—of its readers.³⁰

A special case is the attempted obliteration of the name of the author of the address to the “Learned Reader.” That Kellum had second thoughts about revealing his name may be attributable to political concerns, but it is just as likely that he—like “Torrescissa” himself—is observing the tradition of secrecy common to alchemists in all periods. Despite the many

²⁹But the latter sections cannot positively be said to be in Kellum’s. There are some differences between this hand and that at fols. 133v–42v, which is identified in the Sloane *Catalogue* as “the writing of Robt Kellum.”

³⁰See also the comments of the Publisher who, in commending the style of the poem, claims that it will “stand the test of all the envious *Criticks* of the age.”

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gaps in our knowledge—about the author and editor, about the circumstances of its composition, and about many of its contemporary allusions, *Hermetick Raptures* remains a fascinating document of late Restoration culture.

[f. 148r]

HERMETICK RAPTURES

or

An Heroick Poem,

being a most Philosophicall
description of the true natures and
virtues of all the Terrestriall Planets,
in a flight through their Cælestiall orbs,
wherein the great Secret is Learnedly sett forth.

Togewater

with remarques & animadversions on the modern
Tyro-Chymists, Impostours & Pretenders.

Made

By a certain Anonymus,
before his late departure
from this land.

Sic itur ad Astra

[f. 149r]

The Publisher's Epistle to the Reader

Courteous Reader,

It being my fortune to usher into the world the following *Poem*, it will bee expected I should say something both of the *Poeme* it self, of the Authour of it, of my acquaintance with him, & the manner of my obtaining it from him.

First, then, as to the *Poetry* it self, although my commendation can add but little to it, I question not but the Judicious Reader will find the *Authour* a person not onely well skilld in the ancient Greek & Roman learning, but also in most modern sciences. The aptness of the numbers, & evenesse of the stile, will recommend it self to all Harmonious souls, & stand the test of all the envious *Criticks* of the age.

Secondly, as to the *Authour*, could I my self arrive at the knowledge of his name, I should most certainly conceal it; but as hee himself was never willing to reveal it, even to mee, in all the time of my conversation with him, I never thought it prudence to demand it [f. 149v] twice. But to give you soe much as I know my self without any detriment to him (which I would not doe for all the golden treasures celebrated in his works), I judge him to bee upwards of fifty years of age; of stature hee was indiffrent tall, his face fresh colourd, his hair inclining to black; in his apparell decent, in his behaviour exceeding courteous. As I before said that his name, so likewise his habitation during the time of his aboad in London was utterly unknown to mee. But by his being so perfect a Master of the English tongue & by the following Epistle, as I did likewise by his clear pronounciation, you may conclude hee was a native of this land, though (by what I collected from him) has been many years abroad in forrein Countrys. And more then this you can't expect from one that has so great a care as I have to conceal him & all the favours I received from him, till further leave from the originall, from [f.

150r] whence they came.

Thirdly, As for my acquaintance, though to mee at first it seemd (as it would alsoe to any other man, could the circumstances bee made publick, which I am foridd to doe) purely accidentall, yet I have often since in my secret meditations esteemd it providentiall and the hand of God, & taken it for one of the greatest blessings of my life; and when I cease to acknowledge it as a favour farr above what I deserved or could hope, let mee cease to breath. After our first acquaintance, I informed him of the place of my habitation, whither hee very often but at very uncertain hours repayred & invited mee abroad, to blesse mee with his happy conversation.

Fourthly, as to the manner of my obteining this *Poem* together with the leave to publish it, I cannot give the Reader [f. 150v] ampler satisfaction then by annexing hereunto the letter I received from him & wherein the *Poem* it self was inclosed, which hee sent mee not long before his departure.

One thing more I had forgot to speak of, which is concerning the Characters in the second book.¹ Truly, though I have spent many years in the studys of the Metallick Philosophy, yet my having been perswaded that in all speculative sciences & even in all practicks also that are any thing elevated above the vulgar sphere, privacy was still the best & that in those circumstances hee (*Bene vixit qui bene latuit*)² has been the occasion of my utter ignorance of all transactions there mentioned. Wherefore I'm sure no worthy sons of this art can bee offended thereat, & none can pretend themselvs injured unlesse they first by their own application & acknowledgement [f. 151r] of guilt choose to list themselvs in the motly regiment there musterd. Yet, if my counsell may bee taken, I should advise them rather according to the old English proverb to put their horns in their pockets then proclaime them to their neighbours.³ But bee it as it will, I'le show my self more a friend to truth and art, then to bury in oblivion such a work as may prove a scourge to evill-minded cheats, a manuduction⁴ to the searching Tyros, & gratefull to all true Hermetick Artists; which I belive to bee the Authour's, & I am sure is the onely intention of the Publisher.

[f. 152r]

*Eruditissimo Anglicani Poematis insequentis Authori
Quem vere suum Scientiae Antistitem
Laureatum Poesis Vatem,
Fidelem seduli Tyrones Ducem,
Meritissimum scelerati Impostores flagellum
Suumque vere comparem
Peritissimi artis adoranda Filii,
Omnino confiteri tenentur,
Haec (voluit meliora) suae tentamina Musae.
Dat, Donat, Dedicate.*

J. D.

*Aetherea linquens regna stellarum choros
Et inexplicabilis auream lucis domum,
Deitatis almae sedem, in hunc terrae globum
Quae flamma cecidit? An coruscanti Angelus
Synodo polorum missus obscurum nova
Telluris orbem lampade ornatum venit? 5
Agnosco tandem. Sanctus e caelo meat
Rutilae Magister artis. Enfulvo coma [f. 152v]
Splendescit auro, tempora micanti undique
Cinctus tiara, dextera Phoebum sua 10
Laeva Dianam portat. Hinc sydus Iovis,
Inde alma Venus, hinc triste Saturni iubar,
Illineque Maiiae natus, & Mavors ferum
Iam exutus ensem vulnera ostendunt sua,
Suosque morbos, quos vel a primis male 15
Traxere cunis; pauca rubicundae sibi
Efflagitantque grana medicinae dari,
Quae pestilentem funditus tabem auferant.
Portenta rerum! Totus in focos abit*

Hermetick Raptures

<i>Ergone mundus, torridum jussus pati</i>	20
<i>Examen ignis? Judice sub isto nihil</i>	
<i>Purum peribit, nihil et impurum stabit.</i>	
<i>Quae nova sed oculis scena se praebet meis?</i>	
<i>Septemplicesne video flammaram globos?</i>	
<i>Septemque Soles lumine effuso novum</i>	25
<i>Rutilantioremque tribuunt orbi diem?</i>	
<i>O sancta salve, magna tantorum parens</i>	
<i>Miraculorum, Chemia! O salve nimis</i>	
<i>Dilecte coelo! Nosse cui tantum datum est</i>	[f. 153r]
<i>Fato secretum. Longa tibi placidae precor</i>	
<i>Trahant sorores stamina & semper tuum</i>	
<i>Vigiles superne caelites gressum regant.</i>	
<i>Sed quia necesse est omnibus mori, tui</i>	
<i>Quando hora fati venit, olorinis polum</i>	
<i>Revehare pennis, debitas olim tibi</i>	35
<i>Haereditates inter astrorum globos</i>	
<i>Nacturus. Aeternam tuae Ariadne comae</i>	
<i>Mittet coronam, fulgidam tradent domum</i>	
<i>Septem Triones; namque Borealis tibi</i>	
<i>Plaga eligenda est, unde felicem diu</i>	40
<i>Nativitatis insulam aspicias tuae,</i>	
<i>Et nos beato supplices astro pias</i>	
<i>Fundamus ore semper e puro preces.</i>	

J. D.

[f. 154r]

Πνευμα Ποιησεως Καθολικον

or

The Universall Spirit of Poetry,
Comprehending the most sublime Notions

In

Theology, Physiology, Astronomy,

Astrology & Geography,

Mixt with diverting Satyr

On a Tribe of Pretenders,

And allso

Illustrated with the Truths of Hermes

Learnedly describ'd in Severall Raptures

Thro' all the Heav'nly Orbs.

Writ by a person of Quality

Under the fictitious name of

TORRESCISSA

prodest

*Aerias temptasse domos animoque rotundum
Percurrisset Polum.*

Horat:

[f. 155r]

Learned Reader

That the title page may not bee thought, before you begin the perusal of the Book it selfe, onely a vain ostentation of the Printer, I take it as a Duty incumbent on me to say somewhat for the defence & in proof thereof. As to the Universality of the Poem, I dare challenge any yet extant to muster so numerous an Army, as I may say, of apt & proper expressions in all Knowledge, Arts & Sciences, both Practicall & Theoretick. The instances I could produce would swell my Epistle to a Volume, but I must herein bee more brief than I could wish to be. First, then, as to Theology, see [lines 24–65, 81–83, 191–92, 286ff., 324–30, 865ff., 890ff., 946–68, 978ff.?]: A more exact Paraphrase on some parts of Job, Genesis, the Psalms & Revelations I have not read, & no Divine, auncient or modern, can disallow it.¹ And allso [lines 191–201?, 283–84]: with what strength of Argument does hee confute that spurious dogma of the casuall Atoms of Democritus, Leucippus, Protagoras, & all the Atheistick Tribe? And before [lines 427–30?], how he has assigned them their proper place, i.e., Hell, & scourg'd them there?² Of his Physiology³ I need give you no instances, it being apparent thro' the whole work, [f. 155v] except what is reducible to those other heads. But one thing I cannot passe by without advertising the Reader of it, which is his most Naturall description of the growth & nourishment of seeds, Plants, Trees & all the Vegetable Kingdome [lines 17, 195–97]. In Astrology hee surely had none of the follis of that canting Crew, but winnowd all the chaff away, & took the precious Corn. Whatever in that Art was true & solid was not unknown to him. Witnesse that most proper & apposite scheme⁴ [lines 665–79], where (by the way), tho' I cannot affirm it to be that Person's true Nativity, yet I can prove the rest of the story there described to have been very true, & so the scheme will affirm it self. Now

to examine his Astronomy, how handsome a description there is of Venus, & her cornicular⁵ Phases like the Moon [lines 5–8], that her apparent Diameter is lesse when she is at her full, than in increas or wane. Then the Satellites of Jupiter [lines 270–72].⁶ His ayry visits to all the Planets in the first part of the first book show like the obsolete Ptolemaick Hypothesis. But here Poetick license must bee allow'd, or else hee must [f. 156r] have made unseemly retrogradations in his journey. And that hee maintaint with all the learned of this Age the Heliocentrall opinion of Copernicus—*vide* [lines 191–92?]⁷—as David did,⁷ hee calls the Sun a running Gyant, & [line 188] affirms him to bee the first mover of all the Planetary System. And that the Planetts doe all move swifter in their Perihelions, or approximations to the Sun, is a Phænomenon now actually beheld in Telescopes.⁸ For Geography, [lines 81–85] are a concise survey of allmost all the Globe. His Satyr in the middle of the 2nd part of the first book⁹ is a Hell full of Cheats, ignorants, or Impostours, whereof the Reader, if he pleases, shall bee the Rhadamanthus,¹⁰ & judge them all againe. The doctrines of the auncient Hermes¹¹ are apparently conspicuous & will shew themselvs being clad in richer Robes than they have worn before.

And now, Reader, to conclude, I will demonstrate his Prophetick Spirit. Tis vaunted of, I know, by all the Poets, but may bee attributed more justly to our Authour, than any of them or their Pagan Oracles, whose answers [f. 156v] were but doubtfull riddles, sententious aenigmas and allways unintelligible before th'event. In the year 1703, when the Armes of the Confederates¹² were at so low an ebb that they were driven out of Italy, beaten in Flanders, on the Rhine, & twice on the Danube; when they had lost Landaw, part of Franconia & Austria & allmost all Suabia, that the Imperiall Crown & the Gates of Vienna trembled, Our Authour promist [lines 76–80?] in plain & positive words, that our present most Victorious Queen Ann, Who allso then reign'd, and may She long continue so to doe, should send her conqu'ring Armys to the relief of the oppressed Empire. Let any learned & unbyast Reader consider well the Words; & that those lines were transmitted to mee in the month of December in the above

Hermetick Raptures

named year 1703, I have sufficient attestation of severall Worthy Gentlemen to whome I lent them to bee perused, & who all came to mee after the Battles of Schellemburg and Blenheim,¹³ acknowledging their Surprise [f. 157r] in the Wonderfull Accomplishment. And now, Gentle Reader,

His other praises if I over look,
Correct my errours, & peruse the Book.

[Robert Kellum]

[f. 158r]

The Author's Epistle to the Publisher

Dear Sir,

Being in this one of those Septenniall Visits, which I had vow'd unto my Native land, detained longer then my intended time, I am very glad that after such crowds of ignorants, as I had met withall in Towne, I found so ingenious a person as your selfe to passe away my time with, & if my many visits have not been a trouble to you, I am sure your conversation was not so to me. Of all that I have lately seen or known, which you by the enclosed poem may perceive was not a few, I have not truely seen any of a more agreable Genius to my owne, you haveing form'd your self so clear a Systeme of the Theoreticks. May the Divine light that guided the Children of Israel in the gloomy obscurity of the night, & the dark Labyrinths of the Wildernesse for forty tedious years, bring you at last into the long desired Land of Canan, from Whence [f. 158v] Ægyptian darknesse is forever banisht;¹ & where you may behold that fruitfull Virgin earth on which our ever-fulgent Sun, & never-fading Moon, project their radiant beams.² If next to Providence my good instructions bee the means, whereby you get the *Summum terrenum bonum*,³ with bended knees first thank the Lord of Hosts, & then remember all that need, while your enjoyments are so great. At last, be in your Memory at least gratefull to me, who have reveald to you all that a Brother to a Brother⁴ should, or can. So shall your blessings be as numberlesse as all the labours & the toils of those that my second book has doom'd to the dark Vales. Think not that these shall consummate your felicity, for if you thereunto are call'd, fresh mysterys shall ev'ry day unfold themselves unto your wondring eys. You shall see Nature from a stepdame turn'd into a loving Mother, & in [f. 159r] her adore th' Almighty's works.

Hermetick Raptures

Jewels, Pearl, Gold & Silver, pretious stones white, red, & green & azure as the firmamentall orbs, shall be to you vile as the yellow sand, that beds the rowling Ocean. And even yet beyond their terrene lustre (O pardon me, you fixt perpetuall Camps that deck the Zodiack round, and you, bright Hyperion, if I say) the Hermetick rays doe emulate heaven's everlasting fires.⁵ But whither runns my nimble pen? Stay thy career, for the base, ungratefull world does not deserve a catalogue of all our noble Secrets. But one thing more to comfort you: pale meager Sicknesse never shall prevail to unfortunate⁶ your life; were wee not Mortall by creation made, you'd [f. 159v] overcome the fatall powers of death. But since before our cradles wee're decreed subjects to fate, all that is left to man is to abate the venome of the sting, and passe with ease unto the everlasting mansions of the blest, whither there can noe Sonne of Adam goe, but through Our blessed Christ.

P.S. These papers you may dispose on
to your friends or otherwise
according to your discretion.

[f. 160r]

XIV. *Hermetick Raptures*

Part the first

Nature's Arcana lay before my eys,
And I, unrav'ling her hid mysterys,
Unto the yet unknowing world did show
What circles Phoebus & the starrs doe goe:
When Venus & how often Phoebe wanes, 5
And why the interposing Earth disdains
That shee should fill up her whole orb of light
And overwhelms her with the shades of night;
How slowly aged Saturn walks, & where
Is nimble Mercury's more active sphere; 10
How soon the winter suns doe set, & why
Night hangs so long upon the Northern sky, [f. 160v]
With all the rest of heav'n's variety.
I writ of whispring winds, Æolian blasts, 15
How Jove his lightning & his thunder casts;
How rigid frosts, how hoary snows are bred;
How sucking plants with nightly dewes are fed;
How bubling fountains from the earth do spring,
Which rivers back into the Ocean bring;
How often Neptune storms the shores &, when 20
Weary, retires into his urn agen.

At last my towring thoughts aspir'd too high,
Aiming to fathom vast Eternity,
When a thick mist, such as foreruns a damp,
With azure wings did hang about my lamp. 25
My flame grew dimm; the overpowred light,
Fading, retir'd into the womb of night.
My hand was with benumbing palzys seizd,
And sacred flames were in my bosome raizd.
Amaz'd, I started, & behold! the sky, [f. 161r]
Op'ning the treasures of serenity,
Darted such beams of light into my eye
As did amaze my weak mortality.
O hold it back, good heav'n: the flam's too fierce
And does like flights of winged arrows pierce 35
The nervs of human sight; it will destroy
Those eys that would too much at once enjoy.
As pris'ners to a dungeon long confind,
When to their liberty they are resign'd,
Must by degrees view the celestiaall ray, 40
And sparingly at first make use of day:
So show these glorys to my weaker sight,
For our world's noon day to this glorious light
Is Stygian darknesse & Cymmerian night.
But stay, methinks I've viewd these flames so long, 45
That with the very sight my eys grow strong.
Like a true chicken of the Eagle now,
Contracting furrowd wrinkles on my brow,
With an unconquerd sight I can behold
All the bright beams that heaven could unfold; [f. 161v]
Outstare the midday Sun, & with my eye
Strike back these rays into their native sky.
 Whilst thus my soule was lost in extasys,
Ravisht & swallowd in ethereall bliss,
In which I wisht for long eternitys, 55
A sudden murmur did surprize my ear
With ghastly horroure & the world with fear,
As though the winds had all combind in one
To shake the stedly world's foundation.

XIV. Part the First

The sound encreasing flew from pole to pole 60
And round the surface of the earth did rowl;
The hollow waters roard, the ecchoing waves
Were rent, & showd the seamen's liquid graves.
Nature her self stood all agast, & thought
This voice her last & gen'ral summons brought. 65
But after this a quiet silence came
And recompos'd the earth's disorderd frame;
When from farr distant regions of the sky,
More milky now then th' auncient Galaxy,
A vernall gale (each moment wonders brings) [f. 162r]
And nine white-featherd Eagles with their wings
Waft mee aloft: I force the yeelding air
And cut my passage tow'rd the starry sphere.
Farewell, dull Earth; England, a long adieu—
England, my native Country, I of you 75
Must take my leave. O mayst thou e're retain
Peace in thy self & Empire o'er the main,
Thou Island destind (if fore knowledge can
Bee harboured within the brest of man)
To honour's most sublime meridian. 80
And now methinks the drossy globe of Earth
Is shrinking into what was first its birth,
An empty nothing; the vast tracts o' th' East
And all the golden Kingdoms of the West,
The Northern Crowns, & the black Africk shore 85
Can show themselvs unto my eys no more.
O foolish man! that canst employ thy mind
To heap up Treasures thou must leave behind;
Foolish Ambition, that dost strive t' attain [f. 162v]
That height from whence thou headlong falst again;
More foolish they that in loose pleasures live,
Making their names in infamy survive.
The world is now compact of such as these,
And man, alas, is swallowd up in vice.
Fraud, malice, treachery & avarice, 95
And heaping riches up by bloody crimes
Is the continuall practise of these times.

Hermetick Raptures

But you Philosophers, whose pious mind
To th' search of reall knowledge is inclind,
Mount up with mee; this region doth not know 100
Those dangers that you live in there below.
Here, here you'r safe, the threatning storms are past;
You can't bee reacht by the Æolian blast.
The grumbling Thunders farr beneath appear,
Bursting themselvs & rend the troubled air. 105

 But while I speak, behold I'm hurry'd on,
And now I'm past the regions of the Moon.
All Hail, fair Cynthia; thy argent light
Seems more like Empresse of the day then night.
Those cloudy spots that hung upon thy brow, [f. 163r]
Of which poor Mortalls talk so much below,
Are vanisht quite, & a new heav'n-born grace
Irradiats all the circle of thy face.
Surely this lustre wee thy own may name,
Nor is thy brother authour of this flame. 115

 Who next is hee, that in the neigh'b'ring sphere
Unconstant still & wav'ring does appear?
It should bee Mercury, but that my eys,
Surpriz'd with manifold varietys,
Distrust themselvs: but yet I see tis hee, 120
By often change & instability.
And now approaching, I perceive his hand
Grasping the powerfull Hermetick wand.

 "Hail, heaven's chief Ambassadour! By thee
The Gods to man reveal what they decree 125
In their celestiall courts. But pardon, O,
If from the Earthy regions below,
Without thy previous summons, I presume
To enter thy bright circle; for I come, [f. 163v]
Calld by great Hermes up." "Welcom," said hee,
"For each that knows the form of Mercury,
And finds the Center of my blest abroad,
Himself assumes the nature of a God,
And travels freely through the starry road.

XIV. Part the First

Wherefore, thou new divinity, receive 135
The greatest present Maia's Sonn can give,
My fam'd Caduceus, & therewith command
The ayry heav'n, the liquid Seas, the Land
And the dark bottomeless abysses. The wind
I can by this in stronger fetters bind 140
Then they in the Æolian caverns find.
I stay the falling thunder, I appease
The furious tumults of the angry Seas.
As to the earth's Inhabitants, on them
I bring illusions, with a golden dream 145
Feeding their fancys. The Imperiall theme
Swells up their hopes, till they forget that they,
Like other Mortalls, are compact of clay.
Yet they at last, like others, find they have
A naturall declination to the grave. [f. 164r]
The gloomy land of silence, when I come,
Yawns wide & opens ev'ry marble room,
For mee to choose out of what ever tomb
I please to call the sleeping bones. Nay even
Beyond the bank of Lethe there is given 155
To mee eternall pow'r. From all the stores
That have inhabited those darksome shores
So many ages, I can bring what soul
I order to review the starry pole."
This said, with colours more then the bright bow 160
Upon the arch of watry heav'n does show,
Hee open'd all the treasures of his light
To my amazed eys, then vanisht out of sight.
At his departure, though, the nimble God
(Behold!) enrich mee with his magick rod. 165
Bright Venus next I see: Fair beauty's queen
Whose inward tincture is the purest green,
Th' Embleme of vegetation, altho'
Thy outward garments have a Solar show.
But they are truly Sophi who doe know [f. 164v]
What you produce when, with your Lover met,
You'r clos'd in Vulcan's artificiall net.

Yet, if the scarlet tincture I have made,
Like to those ruddy drops that, when you strayd
In search of your Adonis, you did shedd 175
Upon the maiden rose & dy'd it redd,
Bee then propitious & doe not disdain
T' admit th' approaches of a mortall man
Unto thy lucid orb.

And now I Come to the Phœbean ray, 180
The fountain and originall of day.
How come my optick nervs so strong to bear
The emanations of the flaming sphere,
That from the sources of eternall light
Come gushing forth, & dash against my sight? 185
O sacred orb of fire! heav'n's glorious eye,
The firmament's resplendent Majesty;
Sole measurer of time, that glideth by
In ages, days & hours incessantly
Into the Ocean of eternity; [f. 165r]

Great Planetary God, that dost disperse
Thy all-preserving heat through th' universe!
Thee all the lower world with joy receive,
And seem with thy approaches to revive.
At thy bright smiles the meads their verdure show; 195
To thee the trees their leavy garments ow;
Bacchus & Ceres by thy influence grow.
The Orientall gemms, the western gold
Breed in those beds which thou dost most behold.
To man himself thou dost new soul inspire, 200
Kindling within him a more youthfull fire.

But what a change is here? Behold, I see
('Twould strike a terrour in another's eye)
Some Martiall Gyant in bright armour clad;
An Iron Helmet does surround his head, 205
Hee's all compact of Ir'n, and all around
The cannon's rowling Eccho's doe resound,
Instead of musick. Crimson Ensigns beat
The wav'ring air, & make the winds retreat.

XIV. Part the First

His eys speak fury, his contracted brow [f. 165v]
Presages dismall warrs at hand, & now
Hee draws his cruell faulchion; streams of blood
The fearfull glimmering of the steel doe cloud.
 “Great Centinell of Heav’n, stern God of warr,
Withold thy angry blow, till I declare 215
The cause that brought mee to thy Martiall sphere.
I come not armed with a Scythian blade,
That might with rude hostility invade
Thy sacred territorys. O, behold
This branch of ever-vegetable Gold, 220
This lamp enclosing an ethereall ray,
The type & embleme of eternall day.”
This said, his fury spent it self; his face
Was all becalm’d with a majestick grace.
So, sure, hee looks when, from the warr’s allarms 225
Returning to his lovely Venus’ arms,
Shee melts his anger with her pleasing charms.
But then, in answer, with a voyce as loud
As thunder bursting from a hollow cloud:
 “Go on,” said hee, “& bee the happiest [f. 166r]
That nature ever with these secrets blest.
Go on, thou glory of the Earthen orb;
My arms thy passadge never shall disturb.”
 Jove was the next; his glorious charriot shone
Not much inferiour to an argent throne. 235
 “Wellcome,” said hee, “to my dominions, O
Thrice happier then those thou lefst below.
Let diamonds impale the Regall brow,
Let golden circles on their foreheads grow,
And numerous troops of trembling nations bow— 240
Their subjects’ love they never truly know.
That which to beasts is common they enjoy,
But cannot like your all-discerning eye
Pierce to the depth of nature’s secresy,
Which they would wish they could with Empires buy. 245
While they to baser pleasures are inclin’d,
Pure Contemplations are your joys, refind

Hermetick Raptures

Above the region of a vulgar mind.
Thoughts subtiliz'd, an elevated soul
Whom all the pow'rs of fate cannot controul, [f. 166v]
Fixt like the starr that keeps the Northern pole—
While all the rest o' th' giddy world does rowl,
While the weak scepter & the tottring Crown
From their unstable basis tumble downe.
Great Sons of art, Inventors of no lesse 255
Then negro Africk's Kingdoms doe possesse;
Then old Asturia, or the glittering oar
Columbus found upon the western shore;
Then all the di'monds that the Orient sees,
Or diving pearls that fill the Persian seas— 260
Masters of secrets, that from th' vulgar eye
Doe coucht in the Metallick Kingdome lye
(Secrets wherein the Angels doe rejoyce,
Chanting them forth with their melodious voyce;
Secrets which heaven does so rarely show, 265
And never but upon th' elect bestow)—
Bee private still: as seamen rocks, so shun
The crowned head & the vainglorious throne.”

Thus having said, hee sent mee from his side
One of his bright Attendants for a guide, [f. 167r]
Who, when hee came in view of Saturn's fire,
Back to his former station did retire.

“Grave Father Saturn, does that hoary snow,
That sits upon thy lofty forehead, show
The number of thy years? or dost thou choose 275
This form wherin to show thy self to us,
As long since did the auncient of days,
When hee to Daniell showd his rev'rend face?”

“Dear Son,” said hee, “in thirty solar years
I move around the Planetary spheres; 280
In thirty circles I've scarce thirty known
That e're the whiteness of these locks would own—
Like those Philosophers that seing snow
Disputed whether it was black or noe.

XIV. Part the First

But now together let us hast away: 285
The great Assembly of the wise doe stay.”
 Then Father-like hee claspt me in his arms,
In whose embrace I felt so many charms—
Surely the Angels in immortall bliss
Can hardly find more solid joys then this. [f. 167v]
Wee fly, like arrows from the cretan bow,
And leave our towring Eagles farr below.
Wee mount up to those sacred regions where
The bright æthereall beams did first appear,
Regions beyond the reach of human eye, 295
Beyond the view of dark astronomy
With long-stretcht telescopes. Methinks wee passe
To th’ utmost bounds & last extent of place:
So farr true science is sublim’d above
What other Mortals most adore & love. 300

[f. 168r]

Part the second

While thus wee posted through that ayry way
That leads to regions of eternall day,
My eyes perceivd amidst those radiant beams
An opacke solid masse; and now it seems
A citty standing on th' ethereall plains, 305
Which nothing but the liquid air sustains,
And circumfused light. Then Saturn said,
 "View the foundations well that here are layd;
This is the seat that the eternall mind
For universall monarchy designd. 310
No nation then shall bee unconquerd, none
But must submit to this Imperiall throne.
When to these misterys time shall give birth, [f. 168v]
It shall possesse the navel of the earth.
Now 'tis the mansion of those lofty souls 315
Whose speculations soar beyond the poles.
They, aiming at *Hermetick secrets*, fly
Above the middle regions of the sky
Upon the backs of winged Eagles; I
Receive them there, & th' other part o' th' way 320
Doe them enclasping in my arms convey.
This is the business that I must effect,
Till I compleat the number o' th' elect.
Then heav'n's great Emp'rour shall his mercy show,
Strewing his blessings equally below. 325
Truth & firm peace o're all the world shall reign;
Justice from heaven shall return agen

XIV. Part the Second

To bee for ever conversant with men.
The fabrick of the Earth shall bee renewd, the face
Of heav'n illustrated with a more youthfull grace." 330
 "But father Saturn, who are those I see
Disperst about the plains?" "They are," said hee,
"Some pious souls, well wishers to these arts, [f. 169r]
Who with intents sincere & honest hearts
This noble science studyed to attain; 335
Though by ill chance their studys prov'd in vain,
Surprized either with their Country's fall,
Or their own unexpected funerall.
These has great heaven's all-rewarding grace
Blest with the neighb'rhood of this happy place. 340
 "Hee that you see in armour clad, design'd
To have left the warrs & have improv'd his mind
In sophick knowledge, but his country calld;
His sov'raine Prince, in fear of being enthralld,
Did crave his aid. He drew his sword, he fought; 345
The conquest with his death was dearly bought.
Eternall memory preservs his fame,
And after ages shall adore his name.
 "But there is one most of his time had spent
To form the method of an argument 350
In prating Logick, till at length hee bent
His mind to Alchymy—too late, alack,
So great an enterprize to undertake. [f. 169v]
His secret caverns, his immortall fire,
The apparitions answerd his desire. 355
The crow was gon, the silver Dove was near,
And a celestiall candour did appear
Ore all the mass. I' th' middle of his joys,
Death him together with his work destroys.
Unhappy hee! that had not in his youth 360
Searcht for this hidden, for this onely truth.
All other sciences are frail & vain,
Slight as the frothy bubbles of the main.
 "There goes a noble soul; his lofty mind,

Aiming above the rest of human kind, 365
Had with this art no lesse a change designd
Then that of th' universe: America
Had seen her Isthmus cut, & Africa
By tides of Erythræan waves been rent
Forever from the wondring continent. 370
Hee'd searcht the secrets of the North & made
His mariners the frozen seas invade,
To force a passage for Cataian trade. [f. 170r]
But Christianity so much posest
And had the Empire of his tender brest, 375
That above all things, hee did first intend
To force the sword of Mahomet to bend
Beneath the conqur'ing Crosse.
Their Crescent att his sight began to wane,
Presaging the downfall of Ottoman. 380
But time was not yet ripe enough to show
Those long-expected blessings there below.
 "Shée, though a woman, sought the Golden Fleece,
As long since did Mary the Prophetesse.
Her silver hair about her shoulders spred, 385
Her smiling babe does leane his tender head
Upon the milky breast whereon hee fed.
Hee was soe nearly linkt unto her heart,
That, as on earth, soe here they could not part.
 "The last that comes in view is one who, though 390
Hee in this search did youthfull years bestow,
Yet tedious processes in abstruse verse,
And the Ænigmas of Philosophers, [f. 170v]
Dedalean tracks, & Labyrinthian ways 395
Too soon consum'd the number of his days.
Hee markt his eggs with figures, & hee thought
The art might bee by calculation got.
Good man! that took Astrology to bee
The key of Hermes's Philosophy."
 "But, O good Father, what dark vales are those?" 400
"Those on the left? The dungeons that enclose
All that on studious Tyros did impose,

Or gulld the credulous Adventurer
With hopes of Golden mines, I know not where.
The Sun, the starrs, nor all these beams of light 405
Can pierce the darknesse of their foggy night;
Onely false fire with a glow worme ray
Shows a dull draught of counterfeited day.
“Here is a troop of diverse sorts: the one
Attaind the knack of hardening a gun; 410
“Th’ other would sink the Thunderer of France
By hop poles, charg’d with *pulvis Fulminans*. [f. 171r]
“That made Granados, from whose bursting womb
Sulphureous fires, like those of Ætna, come
To send mankind to their untimely graves, 415
Involvd in flames, or swallowd up in waves.
“There goes the Paduan; to advance his trade,
Hee thought the great Elixir to have made.
But erring, on our books the fault hee laid,
Prophand the writings of the just, & rayld 420
At all the righteous, because he faild.
“And there’s another. Astrologick Sot!
In his starcht band & his lac’t Chamelot Coat,
Like the Hague Calf hee over all the nation,
To ev’ry audience with a feeling passion, 425
Relates his autopsy of Transmutation.
“Three more there are in those dark vales confind
For sin committed onely in their mind:
It was no less then a prophane desire
Prometheus-like to steal th’ Immortall fire. 430
“The next went merchandizing up & down
To buy up all th’ experiments o’ th’ Town;
Runns to the presse & vents them for his own, [f. 171v]
Till at length palsys, time, & hastend age
Finisht the scene, & pulld him from the Stage. 435
“His man behind him carrys at his back
The *novum Lumen* of th’ Infernall Lake.
’Cause sulphur vulgar is too small a curse,
These sinners for themselvs invent a worse:

Hermetick Raptures

Instead of *Styx*, *Cocytus*, *Phlegeton* 440
They choose to flame in *Urine* of their own.
“Hee diggd & delvd his garden round about
To find the vegetable Secret out,
And told admiring fools how hee had seen
Th’ *Hesperian* fruit on trees forever green. 445
“His namesake swore he had the Golden truth,
And took his God a wisse to his oath
In sacramentall *Elements*; but when,
Five hundred sterling being spent in vain,
The valiant *Collonel* no more could drain 450
From his poor *Cully*, to reward him after
Hee offerd him a *Philipp* at his daughter. [f. 172r]
“There’s a bold Briton, with his portion thought
An *aqua gradatoria* to have bought;
But the grosse cheat made him in anger call 455
For the last refuge of great Hanniball.
See how hee, there in’s priestly robes, impleads
His adversary, whom Alecto leads
Before the Grossian throne, where hee amain
For holy Church’s sake prays for his gold again. 460
“Next is the Turk; a thousand gunnys bleed
To sow his Holy Isle with Mustard seed.
“Hee with black tresses & a swarthy face,
As if descended of a Magick race,
Neglecting all the Learned Sophi said 465
And bidding heav’n defiance, to his aid
Invoked ev’ry diabolick Shade.
“Ther’s a Caball of twelve formd in a dream,
When bred from Claret fumes the Nightmare came
And rid the snoring Trunck. The revelation 470
Was soon emproved by Predestination.
Argues the Cynick: ‘tis ordaind, I see,
Wee should o’ th’ number o’ th’ Apostles bee.’
Their Gownman’s purblind, soe hee hopes to feel
The stone. The drunken Brother Sots, being still 475
Desirous that their giddy brains should reel,
Have been at charge to buy Ixion’s wheel.

XIV. Part the Second

A Quack was Oratour that would have shown
Diana's nakednesse to all the Town,
But was mistaken & produc't his own: 480
For which hee now blames Æolus & raves
For winds to ruffle the Batavian waves,
And bury all his works in watry graves,
As hee supprest his Anti-Helmont leaves.
And now, to crown the Tribe, I cant afford 485
Their Corypheus to bee lesse then Lord.
Had man the calm tranquillity of Heaven,
And all the Patience of an Angel given,
'Twould raise disdain & Anger in his heart
To see them thus debauch the noble Art 490
With Nectar bowls, & Hermes's royall book
So balderdasht with Littleton & Cook." [f. 173r]
 "But who is hee that does ignobly shrowd
His gloomy head within a sable cloud?"
 'Tis one, whose glittering temples all around 495
Were heretofore with noble garlands bound,
But all being spent, was pointed at & shown
The odium & the laughter of the Town,
The sables remnant of ——.
Fantastick man! that would so soon have gaind 500
What th' auncient wisemen with long toils attaind,
And would not stay the time that fate ordaind.
A year, a month, a week's too long delay;
The Coach, the park, the Court call him away.
O, could it but bee compast in a day, 505
No man had been more diligent then hee
In search of this profound Philosophy.
 "Cartoon waits on him, holding in a string
(The bearer had deserved some such thing)
His Golden sixpence, for those thresholds yet 510
Were never shutt against a fawning cheat,
But like the gates of Hell, lay day & night [f. 173v]
Open to every damnd accursed Hypocrite.
 "That unborn Doctour to the world did come

Hermetick Raptures

Untimely taken from his mother's womb. 515
Ungratefull Viper! that could sting to death
The tender Parent that first gave him breath.
Yet, O what heaps of treasure has hee got
By picling Venus in a mustard pot?
"Hee with all other seekers is at odds, 520
Offering his painted Cabalistic Godds
May dew in sponges & divining Rodds.
"The next is wise: from his own onely store
Hee drew supplys unto his Athanor,
And thus farr forth attained his desire 525
Never to want materialls for his fire.
"This plac't his heaven in Transparency,
Like the Chrystalline bubble of the Tree
That heretofore entombd the Roman Bee.
"That with false Opticks magnifyd a mole 530
Into an Atlas to uphold the Pole.
Yet all his Art hides not his golden wyre [f. 174r]
Soe long excruciate in Spirituall fire,
Untill nine Eagled gallons doe expire.
"The next with his Thermometer in's hand 535
For refuge fled into that darksome Land.
Tis much, when Chymicks turn State Pamphleteers,
That they goe home intire with both their ears.
"And hee you see so busy's working still,
And rowls the Stone up the Sisypian Hill. 540
Fantastick menstruums of severall sorts,
Inclos'd in thirty severall retorts,
Digested in alcoholized wine—
Untill at length hee made his chamber shine
With reall flames, & took them for divine. 545
"But see how haughty looks the Swedish Lord
That would have bought the crown of Mombelliard,
To make Stanchiani Captain of his guard,
"While good Rabell's curing with Vitrioll
His wounded cat & keeps her bleeding soul 550
From transmigrating through a oylet-hole.

XIV. Part the Second

“Joachime Beker, thou Bavarian Quack, [f. 174v]
States-man & privy-Counsellour, alack
Thy *Minera Arenaria* proves a Sack
Of reall sand, to load thy groaning back, 555
From which & linseed oyl thy friends doe hold
Thou didst extract thy Horizontall Gold.

“But good friend Casimer, why dost thou *Tann*
Thy Lyon green, & make him look so wann?
Let him not roar so terribly, I pray, 560
To fright friend *Billing* that hee cannot weigh
The augmentation of his Western clay.

“Besides, thy whelps are noxious to the *Hunn*,
The Wilton Operatour; Such a tunn
Of humane garbadge never yet was shown 565
Since Sir John Falstaffe layd his carcasse down.”

“And Gracious father, pray informe mee what
Most strange Amphibious animall is that?”

“T’s a Soland bird whose cradle was the Seas,
Plowd with as many furrows as his face; 570
Bred up a Tartar, by his trade he cheats
The world with six & thirty Alphabets. [f. 175r]
To brimstone therefore & to fire I see
Ely in anger hath condemned thee, 575
With Jacob Toll, to whom free leave was giv’n
To carry down with him his Chymick Heav’n
And make a Sale in Hell. For Amsterdam,
From whence the Merchant & his Cargo came,
Lov’d present Money better than the Name
Or hopes of any sort of Heav’n; & so 580
Down, down he dropt to market there below.

“*Stay see!* there’s one says hee has seen eleven,
But never yet could make his number even
By getting twelve. The next with pains & toil 585
Conveyd himself into that little Isle,
And thought to plant it with Adepts; the soil
Not being fit for bearing such a grain,
Hee’s for that *Scurvy* whimsy of his brain
Condemnd like the Danaides in vain

To fill those urns that still run out again. 590
 "With them's a *Ridgell*, in a Consultation
About the dangerous posture of the nation.
Nor was hee safe, till hee to York had got
To keep his Protestant dissenting throat
From th' holy daggers of the Popish plot. 595
Where, sparing Nature giving him but one,
Hee would not wear it out, least having none
And failing of the Artificial stone,
Hee should at th' fair bee for an Eunuch shown. [f. 175v]
 "Now, if your eyes can pierce so deep, find out
In that great pond the little *Salmon* trout.
See how industriously hee plys about,
As when at Court hee gave his suppliant bills
To have a patent for his Fam'ly Pills,
And sell the Pow'rs of herbs without their wills. 605
 "There goes a shoale of giddy-headed fools,
Distorted in their bodyes all, but more distorted souls.
This trades in Cocheneal; the one-eyd Sot
Pudders in Sal Enixe & Alembrot;
A third in Chrystall: can't that ugly face 610
Make him in anger break his looking-glasse?
 "The fourth did th' help of Torrid Vulcan crave;
'Twas well his flaming house was not his grave.
Yet hee's for this preferrd before the rest:
Hee Phoenix-like made *Bold* to fire his *Nest*. 615
 "The fifth was for a gentle heat, & so
Hee lives *in fimo & in Balneo*.
 "The sixt was haughty, ignorant, & rich;
He profferd summs of ready coin, for which [f. 177r]
Hee's thither damnd: as great a sin, almost,
As Magus purchasing the Holy Ghost.
 "The seaventh's a Mountebank that stands before thee:
Stantem oportet Imperatorem mori.
In glazen orbs hee caught the golden ray,
The pure ethereall essence of the day. 625
From whose example his disciples soon
Betooke themselvs to milk the Lab'ring Moon.

XIV. Part the Second

‘The Divel’s in’t,’ cry they, ‘if joynd in one
These two ferment not to the Sophick stone.’
“There’s a Conjunction triple of the Savoy Cheat, 630
A smith & Consul, all Confederate,
To sham projection by a Golden crown,
And make a doting Alderman o’th’ Town
A hundred ounces to the work advance,
Which fizz’d away in *aurum fulminans*. 635
“But is not this a shark, that at a chop
Has eaten upp a famous Drugster’s shop?
Therefore, but with great secresy, I tell yee
The learned Chymick Surgeon in his belly [f. 177v]
May find the Stone. There’s Antimony first,
His tender Sophick infant, to bee nurst
By Basile Valentine, & with great care
Provided of a Coach to take the air.
Nay, rather than not his due Attendance have,
Three hundred Monks shall wipe the little knave. 645
His Sister Ar’snick next & Marcasite,
With store of Lazuli & Haematite;
Brimstone & Nitre exc’lently refind,
And Montispelian Tartar new calcind;
Man’s blood & hair, dung, excrement & lice, 650
Arabian gumms & Orientall spice
Duly collected from the Asian shore;
Talc, Allum, Sandover & thousands more
Then *Revell’s* art of memory can scan:
More then the dull Arithmetick of man 655
Or fables printed by the *Pelican*.
Ah cankerd varlets! An ungracious race
As ever yet inhabited the face [f. 178r]
Of a most blessed Isle. How oft have I,
In nightly visions from the azure sky 660
Descending down, & in the open day,
But all in vain urgd you to cast away
These fond Chimaeras?”
“Who there is hee that frowns so sullenly?”

“Tis one at whose confus’d Nativity 665
Heav’n & the fatall Sisters lookt awry.
His Saturn first with a quadrantall ray
Defil’d the dawn of his unlucky day.
Then Mars, in square to Maia’s winged Son,
And in conjunction partile with his moon, 670
Afflicts her influence; to the falling Sun
Jove was oppos’d & Venus in exile:
Sad scheme indeed, where not a starr did smile.
But though to him the heavens were so unkind,
Yet hee still keeps the Angells in his mind, 675
And dunns them for the golden Recipe,
Urging the bond which in the bloome of May
His adversary is oblig’d to pay, [f. 178v]
Without deceit, abatement or delay.
 “There’s a whole painting family—the brother, 680
The sister, with the Father & the Mother—
All carefully conceal from one another
Their secret work which is indeed (O rare!)
Eggshells calcind & Elementall air,
With flying Engines got & brought with care 685
From regions beyond the Atmosphere.
 “And there’s one *Revells* in the art; pray see
What a compound hee makes of Auchymy!
Who can abstain from ridiculing such
A role of signposts who admire so much 690
The Doctours making all the Planets touch?
 “Let us not here forget the fam’d *Beloon*,
In print who strongly promist to the town
That hee’d make this Metropolis his seat—
After so many travells the retreat 695
Of his old age. And yet how soon could hee
(More then mercurial instability)
Exchange great Julius Caesar’s auncient Towr [f. 179r]
For oyster pools upon the Essex shore?
 “Now that their Hell, like th’old, may have a Queen, 700
See there comes down a stately Proserpine,
Dropt from the Colledge. Her first bankrupt love,

XIV. Part the Second

At sight of her, fled to that thorny grove,
For hee by curst experience did know
No thorn was sharper then an untam'd shrow. 705
Yet now shee's gentle, leading in her hand
Th' adopted son of Ione's Stygian band
(Poor caterpillars of th' Alsatian land),
Which to deserve, hee to the world did show
His horns could by anticipation grow, 710
Before the Church's ceremoniall rite
Made them one Chymicall Hermaphrodite.
"But good Sir yorkshire, with your hic & haec,
Pray vail your bonnet to Romancing Beck.
O heav'n, that in the dungeons under ground 715
Miraculous experiments are found—
Full four & twenty ounces from a pound!
Now the two fishes & the barley bread, [f. 179v]
That by divine multiplication fed
Of godly Jews above a thousand head, 720
Will want due admiration, if wee
Allow these things in human Chymistry.
"Gentleman Joyner! pray why didst thou yoke
Thy flying Windmills at St Saviour's Dock
To tumble thither? Thy extract of chalk 725
Is but the *Caput mortuum* of the Lake
That is forever damnd to mourn in black.
Thy soapy bubbles, which thou didst compare
To the bright arch of Juno's messenger,
Are broken all & vanisht into air." 730
"But who is hee so jocund & so gay?
His nimble stepps seem to devour his way."
"A hasty Doctour travelling to Dover,
Whose Rosy-crucian friend sent for him over. 735
And so hee posts along, but in their prime
His joys were blasted. In the nick of time
His correspondent falls & (which is worse)
Kickt by an ignorant Anti-sophick horse. [f. 180r]
"Call, call the Smithfield farrier! Arise,

Hermetick Raptures

Thou Muggletonian with thy goggling eyes, 740
To blesse his bursten belly as hee dyes.
 “Then see the Chymick Tantalus, a wight
Fam’d in all vice—a thief, a Sodomite,
Incestuous, blasphemmer, parricide—
False to himself & all the world beside. 745
His faith at first was of a Popish hew,
Next Teckelitish; then from Turk & Jew
Hee centerd in the Atheistick crew.
Ah daring sinner! that with hands so foul,
A heart ungodly & polluted soul, 750
Wouldst make essentiall purity. Yet can
There bee a crime that is too black for man,
When, like th’ old Gyants, they would pull their God
Down from his blest ethereall abroad?
But Divine vengeance finds them out, though late, 755
And the pale wretch sinks underneath the weight
Of the Almighty’s scourge. Wherefore you see
The hunger-starved Caitif’s chain’d to the tree, [f. 180v]
Where golden fruit still tempt his longing eye,
Yet from his cursed hand the loaded branches fly. 760
Beneath him streams of Chrystall waters glide,
But when hee stoops their currents turn aside.
And yet to this, to add eternall smart,
Nine vulturs gnaw his still-renewing heart.
 “Ah poor Eugenius! how cam’st thou to fall, 765
From Anthroposophia magicall,
Into the burning lake? Nay then I see
(Though men said one) that thou hadst ne’re an eye.
Yet thou disputest *More & More*. They say
Sweet Orpheus once with his harmonious lay 770
Did charme the list’ning rivers & the lakes,
The Hills with their green garments on their backs;
And to his voyce tame Lyons with the Lamb,
The wolvs in peace, the fawns in friendshipp came,
And tygers mixt with sheep. But I’m afraid
That thou hast preacht thy congregation madd. [f. 181r]
 “Shee crownd with *Ivy*, like Llewellyn’s head,

XIV. Part the Second

Believd the Art, 'cause shee believ'd her bread
By Rome's impostors transubstantiated.
Rare Oculist indeed! that can deny 780
The pow'r of seing to a perfect eye.
Yet, though vast summs blowing the coals shee spent,
Lost nothing by the fiery Element,
But thrive from ashes. There goes after her
One that from Mercury & gunpowder 785
And artificial spawds proceeded on,
Th' Imperiall Image of his prince to coin.
But law & Justice would not give him scope:
Hee found himself intangled in a rope.
"That Wapponeer, with his Pistolls d'Espaign 790
Wrapt upp in *Ivy* leaves, crossing the main
Did like a vagabond ore Gallia roam,
To seek the stone hee could not find at home.
But having searcht that land of slaves in vain,
Cent livres hee from his Abbee did drain
For wafting back his varnisht nose again. [f. 181v]
"Lost bee the name of that perjurious Imp
That was so soon transmuted to a Pimp,
With Viper-wine kindling Venereall flame
Through all the Court & all the Courtly Dames. 800
"Then enter th' Barber, th' unlearn'd Alchymist,
The weaver, fidler & the Uxbridge Priest—
For each Mechanick in this seeking age
Must act his part upon the Chymick stage.
But O, no more, now turn thy pious eys 805
Forever from this land of miserys."

Thus Saturn spoke, showing the diffrent state
Of the rewards & punishments that fate
Bestowd on diffrent lives. But as wee came
Nearer the source of this celestiall flame, 810
Wee met whole tides of those good souls half blest
With sophick revelations, who possest
Onely the borders of the promist land.
In vain, around each stretcht his longing hand

Hermetick Raptures

To bee admitted in, but stood in aw [f. 182r]
Of hard necessity's eternall law:
Forbid to come within the sacred bound,
Till time again had turnd his circle round.
And Saturn checkt 'um: "What rash flames inspire
Your zealous minds with such a fond desire, 820
To hope to frustrate the severe decree
Writ in the volumes of eternity!"
They shrunk away, & as hee spoke, behold
I saw seav'n more adornd with crowns of Gold;
Their robes were purple all, & purple rays, 825
Like majesty, surrounded ev'ry face.
"O there is one that I must surely know,
Surely I knew him in the world below;
So did hee look, with such a heav'nly grace,
When in th' untimely middle of his race 830
Hee stoopt to death. So Roman storys tell
The valiant Decii for their Country fell.
O gentle father Saturn, let mee stay,
Till at this altar I my offrings pay:
Afford mee but the comfort of a day [f. 182v]
To give him." But O, I'me torn away,
The hurrying orbs will grant mee no delay;
Th' inexorable fates refuse to hear
Th' intreatys of a mollifying tear.
Are not their laws too rigid & severe? 840
Then did wee reach the adamantine gate,
Where, clad in robes like driven snow, there sate
A bright Angelick Century. I showd
The peacefull signall of my golden rod,
And had admittance. All the bending spires 845
And bowing towrs saluted us; the Quires
Of heaven sung three Alleluiahs
In their Omnipotent Creatour's praise,
That hee vouchsaf'd to hasten on the day
For which the just unanimously pray. 850
"But father Saturn, what is this I see?
Mansions like those of blest eternity,

XIV. Part the Second

Yet uninhabited?" "O son," said hee,
"There are but few whom fate has chosen forth
To disengage their souls from sordid earth,
And lift their minds so high. But O, behold,
In that bright palace all of massy gold
The rev'rend Synod is Assembled. Here
My treasures I deposite, here my care
And labour finds a welcome end; my sphere,
To which Fate now commands me to retire,
Wonders so long to want its usuall fire."

[f. 183r]

860

[f. 184r]

Part the third

Saturn had left mee now, & I alone
With reverence approached tow'rd the throne
Of auncient Hermes, who in Royall state— 865
Chief president of this great Counsell—sate:
Hermes, the father of Philosophers,
Whose pious works unburied with his hearse
Doe stand recorded in eternall verse;
Hermes, in nature's threefold wisdom known, 870
Whom matchless Ægypt for her chief did own,
And grac't his learning with a royall crown.
Next him was Geber, who on earth did sway
The potent Scepter of Arabia, [f. 184v]
Rich in perfumes, where ev'ry fruitfull field
Soe often did its spicy harvest yield.
Yet hee was with more precious treasures blest:
The great Metallick secret hee possest.
On Raymund Lully then I cast my eye;
By him his Master Arnold I espy, 880
With indefatigable Trevisan.
Full sixty rowling years this course hee ran;
With fewer toyls hee had deservd the prize,
But that no toyl can bee too much for this.
Ther's Sendivogius, too, whose works cast forth 885
Bright beams of science in the gloomy North,
With some few more, whom heaven's just decree
Had preordained from eternity.
But Hermes only spoke, & having laid

XIV. Part the Third

Before them his Smaragdine Table, sayd, 890
 “Hear mee, ye Sons of this great science, hear
The words I speak with an attentive ear.
As your forefathers’ labour it has been
These secrets to conceal from wicked men, [f. 185r]
Let it be yours. They that divulge this art,
May Promethean vulturs gnaw their heart;
May they bee banisht from their native land,
And persecuted by th’ Almighty’s hand
With plagues, as Ægypt was when Shee did rise
Tumultuous in arms, & rebel-wise 900
Shook from her neck my awfull yoke. But Who
Is hee that our retirements comes to view?
Has us, then, heaven’s kind endeavour blest
With the approach of such a welcome guest?
Rise & salute him brethren! O, I see 905
The radiant beams of light’s eternity,
The branch of living gold. Bright Titan’s ray
Surrounds his head, & virgin Cynthia,
With all the lustre of her maiden grace,
Adorns the bashfull blushes of his face.” 910
Thus Hermes to his brethren spoke, & then,
Attended on by all his rev’rend train,
Advanc’t to welcome my arrivall. O,
What streams of blood into my cheeks doe flow [f. 185v]
From ev’ry vein, astonished to see
So many Royall Princes bow to mee!
In this confusion of my thoughts, behold,
Great Hermes led mee to a chair of Gold,
A seat of Maiesty, a radiant Throne
Transcending ev’n the lustre of his own. 920
And kindly then, “Receive, at length receive,
This place of honour which Just heav’n does give,
Thrice-noble son, of this great science. Thee
The fates of lab’ring nations groan to see;
Hermetick oracles blazon thy name, 925
And prophecys thy Godlike acts proclaim,
For which the world with long impatience stays.

But O, rejoyce! for now the happy days
Are coming on. Time's long-expected birth
With tides of Miracles is teeming forth." 930
Dasht with these glorys then, "O, spare," said I,
"These high Elogiums undeservedly
Bestow'd on mee; surely these youthfull days
Cannot have merited so great a praise. [f. 186r]
Tis rather due unto that hoary snow
That does thy gravity & wisdom show."
But then they all did with a generall voice
Proclaim their approbation of the choyce,
And placed mee (although unwilling) on
The Seat of glory, an Imperiall throne 940
Then bowing, said grave Hermes, "Let us know,
Since you came latest from the world below,
If golden Justice on the earth doe reign;
If truth & peace bee yet ador'd by men;
If morall vertue & Philosophy 945
Flourish amongst them?" "Doe not," then said I,
"O doe not soe much urge mee to declare
That which when told you'l not rejoyce to hear.
My tender heart, with sorrow burst, supplys
Large tears of blood unto my weeping eyes, 950
When I reflect on those calamitys
Under whose yoke the world in thraldome lyes.
Plagues, worse then those that the Almighty's hand
In vengeance threw on the Ægyptian land,
Harasse the earth. Discord & lasting warrs, [f. 186v]
Fire, rapine, sword, poysons & civill warrs
Swallow up nations. All beneath the Sun
Into the gulph of ruine headlong run.
Ne're had mankind more need of that great art
Thy holy bookes did to the world impart, 960
Then now it has, wherewith to countermand
The poysons temperd in the Gallick Land.
The Flow'r de luce grows pale, the fearfull crown
Staggers, as though it were a tumbling down.

XIV. Part the Third

Th' infernall venom by degrees does creep 965
And spread all over; death's eternall sleep
Insensibly seals his astonisht eyes:
Poor soul, hee gasps & knows not how hee dys."
Here sighs my speech did intercept, & all
The grave Assembly into tears did fall. 970
So suddain torrents from the mountains flow,
When scorching Suns dissolve their crowns of snow.
Thus with united griefs did they lament
The fall of man. But when their sighs were spent,
And tears had somewhat giv'n their sorrows vent, [f. 18
I, to divert their dolefull thoughts, did find
Discourse more pleasing to a Sophick mind.
To Sendivogius I of Saturn spoke;
To Trevisan I showd his hollow oake
And marble wall transpierced with the beams 980
Of Chast Diana's silver-footed streams—
Whereon hee did with such amazement look
That hee let fall his golden-leaved book.
Then came Artephius, & at his desire
I explicated his Immortall fire. 985
Grave Senior brought his Eagles, & I said
They the foundation of his work had layd.
Then Flammel showd his divine imag'ry,
Where secrets coucht in various figures lye,
Which I did clearly to them all expound: 990
The dreadfull dragon lying on the ground,
And him with party-colourd wings that flies
(If you provoke him) to assault the skys,
Till, often weary'd, hee returns agen,
And wedds himself forever to his den. [f. 187
At last, I told them how I saw the Sun
Betrothed firmly to the radiant Moon,
His mother, Sister, and himself made one.
Amazed Nature wonderd at the sight,
And heav'n adornd them with a crown more bright 1000
Then new born beams of Orientall light.

XIV. TEXTUAL NOTES

Text: British Library MS Sloane 3632, fols. 148r–187v.

Learned Reader

This epistle refers to a number of specific (but unidentified) passages in the poem, and the MS has left spaces for the later insertion of page and line numbers, once the text was set up in type. With some trepidation, and certainly without complete success, the present editor has attempted to identify the relevant passages. The conjectured line references have been inserted in square brackets; the more dubious entries are followed by a question mark (see also the Commentary on this epistle).

fol. 157r Robert Kellum] *This name is scratched through; see Introduction.*

Hermetick Raptures

- 468 twelve formed in a dream] *inserted in margin, restoring the original words, which had been thoroughly obliterated*
469 Claret fumes the Nightmare] *inserted over the same words, which had been cancelled, as at 468*
470 rid the snoring Trunk. The revelation] *inserted over cancelled words, restoring them*
475 drunken Brother Sots] *inserted over the same words, which had been cancelled*
499 ———] *three words completely obliterated (the rhyme word seems to be “Crown”) and seven hyphens inserted above*
575-81 *These lines are found on the leaf that was to constitute fols. 176r–v (its position identified by the bleed-through of ink from the previous leaf); this sheet has been torn in half vertically and then pasted onto another sheet. These lines appear on one side of the half-sheet that remains (fol. 176r),*

XIV. Commentary

but there is no indication in the manuscript where they were meant to be inserted. Their present placing is based solely on content and context. On the reverse (fol. 176v), probably in a different hand, is the following note, which may refer to Toll's work (see 575n in Commentary), which I have not been able to examine: "pag. 15 Of the maturation of the philosophers' [mercury] from [copper] not by the material but by the celestial fire and its transmutation into [silver] of cheating and vagabond Chymists."

- 621 the Holy Ghost] *crossed out but still legible*
644 Nay] *appears on line by itself; new line begins with Rather*
769 More & More] *two words following and the next two lines, in which one word (in capitals) seems to be a proper name, thoroughly obliterated. They say inserted interlinearly*
778 'cause shee believed her bread] *a line is crossed through these words, but "stet" in margin*
779 impostors] *this word is obliterated, but impostors written above; transubstantiated] a line through, but "stet" in margin*
848 Omnipotent] *MS reads Ompipotent*
891 ye] *MS reads yea*
918 led] *MS reads lead*

XIV. COMMENTARY

On the number and kinds of contemporary allusions—many of which are untraceable—see the Introduction. Glosses to prefatory matter in prose are keyed to superscript numbers in the text.

Title Page

Sic itur ad Astra. "So man scales the stars," from *Aeneid* 9.641, where Apollo addresses Ascanius, son of Aeneas; this and the following line (*dis genite et geniture deos*, "O son of gods and sire of gods to be!") anticipate the apotheosis of the speaker of

our poem (lines 133–35, 926).

The Publisher's Epistle to the Reader

1 *Characters in the second book.* I.e., those historical personages lampooned in Part II; a *character* is “a report of a person's qualities” (*OED*), as in Samuel Butler's *Characters*.

2 *Bene vixit qui bene latuit.* “He who hides well his life, lives well,” from Ovid, *Tristia* 3.4.25; Ovid's poem is addressed to a friend, warning against seeking prominence or aspiring too high. As poems of exile, the *Tristia* were a “favorite text among royalists in the 1640s and 50s” (Graham Parry, “A Troubled Arcadia,” 53); they may still have had royalist associations by the end of the century. The need for secrecy among adepts—traditional in alchemy—is stressed by Hermes himself in our text, lines 891ff.

3 Cp. Tilley (H623): “He had better put his Horns in his pocket than wind them” (ca. 1678).

4 *manuduction.* Guidance, direction.

[Address to Author and Commendatory Poem]

Eruditissimo . . . Authori.

This formal inscription, which is difficult and sometimes ungrammatical, has been construed thus by Professor Keith Bradley:

To the most learned author of the following English poem, whom (*quem*) truly his sons (i.e., alchemical followers), most skilled in the art worthy of worship, freely call their priest of knowledge, laurelled bard of poetry, faithful leader of the sedulous novice, most meritorious scourge of the wicked imposter, and truly their compeer: J.D. gives, donates, and dedicates these attempts of his Muse (he wishes they were better).

Aetherea . . . preces.

Whoever “J.D.” was, he was familiar both with the details of *Hermetick Raptures* and with the standard symbols of alchemy.

XIV. Commentary

In saying that the planetary gods ask to be cured, he is speaking of material alchemy's power to perfect metals, but he also clearly endorses the spiritual alchemy celebrated in Parts I and III of the poem. The "Holy Master" in the second section must be Hermes Trismegistus himself, but the final part of the poem seems to refer to the apotheosis of the first-person narrator. The following translation is by Keith Bradley.

Leaving behind the kingdom of the heavens, the constellations of the stars, and the golden house of light that cannot be explained (the seat of the gentle Deity), what flame is it that has fallen into this circle of the earth? Or is it that an angel, sent from the shining company of the heavens, has come with a new harp to bring light to the earth's sphere? In the end I cannot say.

From heaven the Holy Master of the fiery art proceeds. He is resplendent, see, with hair of tawny gold, his temples bound with a diadem that gleams in all directions. He carries Phoebus in his right hand, Diana in the left. Here the star of Jupiter, there gentle Venus, here the sad radiance of Saturn, there the son of Maia [Mercury] and Mars (his wild sword cast aside)—all display their wounds and diseases, which they have evilly withstood from the cradle. They demand that they be given a few grains of the red medicine to cure the corruption of their disease completely. Portents of things to come! Is the world disappearing then to ashes, ordered to endure the fire's torrid rage? Under that judge, nothing pure will perish, nothing impure will remain.

But what new vision presents itself to my eyes? Do I see the seven-fold circles of flames? Do the seven suns, with light diffused, afford the earth a new and redder day? Hail, O holy Alchemy, the mighty father of such great miracles! Hail, O one too much beloved of heaven—you to whom it has been given by fate to know so great a secret! May the peaceful sisters spin out long threads of life for you, I pray, and may the watchful gods above always direct your course.

But because all must die, when your fateful hour comes, return to heaven on the wings of a swan and, among the spheres of the stars, come into the inheritances long owed you. Ariadne shall send an everlasting crown for your hair, the Bears shall bring a gleaming horse. For you must choose

a region in the northern sky from which you might look down upon the happy island of your birth. And we, as supplicants, shall pour forth our holy prayers to your blessed star, from lips ever pure.

[Second Title Page]

The title (*Pneuma Poieseos Katholikon*) probably alludes both to the *anima mundi*, the animating spirit of the whole world (see Introduction and lines 180–201n), and to the “Universal Spiritual Medicine.” Under the latter heading, Waite’s Supplement to Rulandus’ *Lexicon* has a long disquisition on spiritual alchemy, the following excerpt from which is especially relevant to the “Author’s Epistle” and to the spiritual enlightenment hinted at in Parts I and III of the poem: “God ranks the Adepts of our art next to the saints of His religion. Hence it was concluded that the ancient sages must have been in enjoyment of the Philosophical Stone, that Adam received it from the hands of God Himself, that the Hebrew patriarchs and King Solomon were initiated into the secrets of Alchemy, and that the same inestimable treasure has been promised to all good Christians by that passage in the Apocalypse: To him that overcometh I will give a White Stone [Rev. 2:17]” (446–47).

prodest . . . Polum. Horace, *Odes* 1.28.4–6. By removing a negative particle and eliminating the context, our author is able to reverse Horace’s meaning and tone in his address to the Pythagorean philosopher Archytas on the universality of death: “nor doth it aught avail thee that thou didst once explore the gods’ ethereal homes and didst traverse in thought the circling vault of heaven.” In the context of *Hermetick Raptures*, the adaptation of this passage is a celebration of the spiritual ascent and divine knowledge of the adept.

Learned Reader

1 Alchemical commentaries on the Bible—especially on the first acts of creation in Genesis 1:1–8—were common among

Renaissance writers. Debus (*Chemical Philosophy*, see index, s.v. Creation) gives examples from Paracelsus, Gerhard Dorn (who interprets each of the six days in alchemical detail), Robert Fludd (who also saw George Ripley's "Twelve Gates" as the gates of the New Jerusalem ["Truth's Golden Harrow," 121]), Helmont, and others. See also Simon Forman's "Of . . . Chaos" and Bassett Jones's *Lithochymicus* (esp. chap. 6, lines 145ff.), both in this collection, and Thomas Vaughan's *Magia Adamica* in *Works*, ed. Rudrum (also index, s.v. Biblical references).

In the *Novum Organum* (1620), Francis Bacon was scandalized at the "extreme levity" of those moderns who go "so far as to attempt to found a system of natural philosophy on the first chapter of Genesis, on the book of Job, and other parts of the sacred writings," but in *The Advancement of Learning* (1605) he himself had cited (among many other scriptural references) no fewer than six passages from "that excellent book of Job" to show that it is "pregnant and swelling with natural philosophy," including cosmography, astronomy, "matter of generation," and "matter of minerals" (*Works*, 4:66, 3:298).

While it is difficult to know with certainty which Biblical passages the author of this epistle has in mind, some of the possible ones to which the conjectured lines inserted in the text may refer are the following: lines 24–65 (the ascent into heaven, the loud voice, etc): Job 34:15–16, Rev. 1:10, 19:6; lines 81–83: Genesis 1:2; lines 191–92: Psalms 19:1–4 (see also note 7 below, this section); lines 286ff. (Saturn carries the adept toward heaven): Rev. 17:1–3; lines 324–30: Rev. 21:1–4; lines 865ff. (Hermes and his council): Rev. 4:4ff.; lines 890ff. (hidden wisdom): Job 28:21; lines 946–68 (evil on earth): Rev. 2–3; lines 978ff.: Job 28:15 (?). See also line 277n, on Daniel 7:9.

2 Democritus of Abdera (b. ca. 460 B.C.) developed the atomic theory propounded earlier by Leucippus, about whom very little is known. Protagoras the sophist (b. ca. 485 B.C., also at Abdera) was expelled from Athens for his atheistical opinions. Lines 191–201 could be seen as an affirmation both of the design of the universe and the connections between the celestial and terrestrial realms—propositions central to alchemy but denied by Democritus. These three philosophers may be the ones

“confind / For sin committed onely in their mind” (427–28), but the Prometheus reference in the next line does not seem apt. As the first title page says, the satire in Part II is aimed at “modern Tyro-Chymists, Impostours & Pretenders,” not at the ancients, but at lines 283–84 (in Part I) there is a clear reference to Anaxagoras and/or Lucretius, both of whom are associated with atomism (see Commentary). The word “before” may imply that the pagan philosophers are confuted in Part III and punished in Part II, but there seems to be no relevant passage in Part III. The author of the “Learned Reader” was either ignorant of or unimpressed by the attempts of those who had tried to rehabilitate atomism by identifying the Phoenician Moschus—the traditional founder of the theory—with Moses, a process begun as early as 1598 and continued by Daniel Sennert, Pierre Gassendi, and Isaac Newton (see Debus, *Chemical Philosophy*, 2:532 and sources cited).

3 *Physiology*. Natural science, study of natural objects.

4 *Scheme*. Horoscope.

5 *cornicular*. Horned, horn-like; that Venus is horned and has phases like the moon was common knowledge in scientific circles by 1631 (Thorndike, 7:56).

6 *Satellites of Jupiter*. The four largest were discovered by Galileo in 1610; they were much observed and discussed in the later seventeenth century by Borelli, Newton, and others.

7 *David*. Probably a reference to Psalms 19:1–4, “The heavens declare the glory of God. . . . In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun”; cf. lines 180–201n and especially 191–92, the only ones in the poem that can be construed as confirming heliocentricity. Perhaps in saying that Torrescissa “calls the Sun a running Gyant,” the author of this epistle is thinking of the description of Mars as a “Martial Gyant” (lines 204ff.), which follows immediately on the description of the sun (*hee* cannot refer to David: none of the many references to the sun in Psalms employs this simile, nor does it appear in David’s exploits in 1, 2 Samuel).

8 Kepler had propounded elliptical planetary orbits in his second law (*Astronomia Nova*, 1609), and he had observed that Mars moved faster when closer to the sun and slower when it

was further away; Newton gave mathematical formulation to elliptical planetary motion in the *Principia Mathematica*, 1687.

9 *2nd part of the first book.* Apparently an error for the second book, or “Part the second,” as the MS says, fol. 168r. (see text, line 301).

10 *Rhadamanthus* was a son of Zeus and Europa who became one of the judges of the dead.

11 See Introduction and notes to lines 130, 865.

12 I.e., the league of England, Holland, and most of the German states (opposed to France, Spain, Bavaria, Portugal and Savoy) in the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–14). It is difficult to find in the poem the “plain & positive words” of prophecy alluded to later in this sentence, but lines 76–80 seem to be the only ones that could be meant here.

13 On July 2 and August 13, 1704, respectively. Blenheim was a major engagement of the War of the Spanish Succession at which the combined armies of England (under John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough) and Austria (under Prince Eugene of Savoy) defeated a Franco-Bavarian force, thus saving Vienna, conquering Bavaria, and checking the territorial ambitions of Louis XIV beyond the Rhine.

The Author's Epistle

1 See Exodus 13:21–22, 40:38 on the pillar of fire that guided the Israelites by night out of Egypt and toward the promised land of Canaan. The “promist land” of the poem (line 813) is the achievement of the stone, or spiritual enlightenment.

2 The “our” indicates that these are the adepts’ “Sun” and “Moon,” i.e., the spiritual “seeds” of gold and silver that will grow in the fertile “earth.” For this motif in the Greek alchemist Olympiodorus, see Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, 31; see also Coudert, *Alchemy*, 111. The Blessed Virgin was also seen as “terra virgo” by Tertullian and Augustine (Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy*, 152, 306, 446). *ever-fulgent*: always brilliant, resplendent.

3 *Summum terrenum bonum.* “The greatest earthly good,” the philosopher’s stone.

4 *Brother to a Brother*. Implying the oral tradition of alchemy whereby the most profound secrets were transmitted by one adept to another.

5 This passage, part of which paraphrases Job 28:12–21 (see “Learned Reader,” note 1), anticipates the poem’s theme of spiritual illumination as identified with the true seeker’s achievement of the stone. *Hyperion*: the sun.

6 To make unfortunate; not given as a verb in *OED*.

Hermetick Raptures

3 *did show*. The poet’s claim that he has mastered the secrets of nature and has composed scientific treatises or poems on them (“I writ,” line 14) prepares for the contrast between mere scientific knowledge (5–21) already achieved and the divine knowledge (22–23) of the Hermetic *gnosis* he is about to experience. The contrast also recalls the rejected opening lines of Virgil’s *Aeneid*—much studied in the Renaissance—in which he recalls having written on humbler themes in the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* before turning to epic (see H. Rushton Fairclough’s notes to Loeb rev. ed. [1935], 1:240–41).

5 *Venus*. See the epistle to the “Learned Reader,” note 5.

18–21 Geography (which included the study of seas, rivers, springs, mountains, and minerals) was one of the preliminary subjects advocated in J. B. van Helmont’s proposals for curriculum reform in the universities. He and others thought the earth’s shape could be determined through a study of its river systems, and springs and rivers were thought to play a part in the generation of metals (Debus, *Chemical Philosophy*, 2:337–39, 378).

44 *Stygian*. Of the underworld. *Cymmerian*: in Homer the Cimmarians inhabited a land on the limits of the world, enshrouded in mist and untouched by sunlight.

47 *Eagle*. Eagles were thought to be able to look directly at the sun, in the following lines a metaphor for being able to apprehend divine knowledge. See also the eagles at lines 71, 292, 319, 986.

71 *nine white-feathered Eagles*. Eagles are legion in alchemical symbolism (see, e.g., Read, index; Dobbs, *Newton’s Alchemy*,

168–70, 174); the number nine recalls Senior’s *De Chemia*, although his nine eagles are not white and seem to represent the different colors of the Work; see 986n below. The following passage from Benedictus Figulus’ collection, *Pandora Magnalium Naturalium Aurea et Benedicta* (Strasbourg, 1608) associates the white eagle both with a “spiritual water” achieved by distillation and the soul of the world; with its Hermetic and biblical citations, this account accords well with the kind of *gnosis* suggested here, which is both a spiritual illumination and a granting of knowledge about the material world:

By distillation conduct one part [of the water] on high, making of it a clear, heavenly Spiritual Water, here called a White Eagle. For, as no bird is so keen-sighted, or soars so high as the eagle, so also we know of no water so volatile, so penetrating as this, for it ascends to the Heavens. . . . Our Eagle is the true key to human renovation, and the bath of new Birth and Rejuvenation, as saith the Psalmist: “Like the Eagle shalt thou renew thy youth.” It is a white transparent Water of heavenly colour, according to Alanus and Bernhardus, and hence is by many called Heaven (*Coelum*) by reason of its lofty qualities.

This Eagle is the first part of the water which ascends on high, the *Ascendens* of Hermes mentioned in his *Tabula*.

Esdras, Book 4, calls it: “The Spirit of the Firmament.” Other philosophers term it “Water, Spirit, or Soul of the World. . . .” This [spirit], embracing all things, is always the Bird (Eagle), always the root, ever bringing forth and perpetuating life.

At length, imprisoned in yellow gold, itself seeks the hand of the artificer, who may loose its bonds, and, by its virtue, become powerful (trans. A. E. Waite, 205–207).

See also Jones’s *Lithochymicus* above, Frontispiece and notes thereon.

72ff. This journey through the spheres (see 107ff.) is reminiscent of many alchemical and Hermetic dream-visions and accounts of *gnosis* or enlightenment, but it is very close to the archetype of these, *Corpus Hermeticum* I or the *Poimandres*:

My Thoughts being once seriously busied about the things

that are, and my Understanding lifted up, all my bodily Senses being exceedingly holden back, as it is with them that are very heavy of sleep, . . . me thought I saw one of an exceeding great stature, and an infinite greatnesse call me by my name, and say unto me, *What wouldest thou hear and see? or what wouldest thou understand, to learn, and know?*

“Then said, I, *Who art thou?* I am, quoth he, *Poemander*, the minde of the great *Lord*, the most Mighty and absolute *Emperor*: I know what thou wouldst have, and I am alwayes present with thee.

“Then said I, *I would learn the things that are, and understand the nature of them, and know God.* How? said he. I answered, That I would gladly hear. Then he, Have me again in thy minde, and whatsoever thou wouldest learn, I will teach thee.

“When He had thus said, he was changed in his *Idea* or *Form*, and straight-way in the twinckling of an eye, all things were opened unto me: And I saw an infinite sight, all things were become light, both sweet and exceedingly pleasant; and I was wonderfully delighted in the beholding of it.

“But after a little while, there was a darknesse made in part, coming down obliquely, fearfull and hideous, which seemed unto me to be changed into a certain *moyst nature*, unspeakably troubled, which yielded a smoke as from fire; and from whence proceeded a voyce unutterable, and very mournfull, but inarticulate; insomuch that it seemed to have come from the Light.

“Then from that Light, a certain *holy Word* joyned it self unto *Nature*, and out-flew the pure and unmixed Fire from the moyst Nature upward on high: it was exceeding *light*, and *sharp*, and *operative* withall. And the *Air* which was also light, followed the *Spirit* and mounted up to *Fire*, (from the Earth and the Water) insomuch that it seemed to hang and depend upon it (*Hermes Mercurius Trismegistus, His Divine Pymander*, trans. Everard, 15–17; where the text has gothic type, I use italics).

In his introductory discussion of the antiquity of Hermes, one J.F. notes that Hermes himself claims to be “the Son of Saturn,” while others deem him “the scribe of *Saturn*” (sig. A5v); our poem may be playing on these associations in its figure of Saturn,

for which see 273n.

Gnostic dream-visions that are explicitly alchemical are at least as old as Zosimos (ca. A.D. 300; see Taylor, *The Alchemists*, 57–61). A Tudor verse example claims, “*In spiritu rapt I was, soodenly into heauen*” (*Blomfild’s Blossoms*, in *Three Renaissance Scientific Poems*, ed. Schuler, 22, 43n5); and the vision of Basilius Valentinus begins, “Being removed from all worldly care by the fervour of prayer and heavenly thoughts, I determined to yield up my soul to those spiritual inspirations without which it is impossible to have a right knowledge of created things. I proposed to furnish myself with wings wherewith I might ascend to the stars and inspect the heavens, as Icarus had done before me, if we may believe the old writers” (*Triumphal Chariot*, trans. Waite, 183). See also lines 133, 273 below and the “Learned Reader,” where the poet’s license in adopting the outmoded Ptolemaic universe is discussed. For the mind’s ascent, from classical times to Milton, see Gordon W. O’Brien, “Milton, Hermes, and the Rhetoric of Mental Flight,” *Cauda Pavonis*, n.s. 7 (1988): 1–8.

110 *spots* The craters on the moon observed by Galileo (1610) were much debated thereafter.

114–15 While some writers of textbooks on natural philosophy (e.g., the Jesuit Rodriguez Arriaga (d. 1667) and Franco Petri Burgersdijck [d. 1635]) thought that the moon had some light of its own, it was J.B. van Helmont (1577–1644) who, following the Bible’s account of the two great luminaries, affirmed that all the moon’s light was its own (Thorndike, 7:221, 401, 403–4).

118 *Mercury*. The planetary god, as distinguished from Hermes Trismegistus; see 130n.

123 *Hermetick wand*. The “fam’d Caduceus” (137) later given to the speaker. In alchemy, the three parts of the Caduceus (golden stem or rod, iron apple, two intertwining serpents about to eat the apple) were seen allegorically: “One of these serpents represents the volatile portion of the matter of the Philosophers, the other signifies the fixed part, and these strive with one another in the vessel. They are united, equilibrated, and restrained in the poise of fixation by the philosophical gold, typified in the stem or rod, and thus they are inseparably united in one body”;

as a whole the Caduceus represents the alchemical “dissolvent” (Rulandus, 344). Below (see 220, 907), it is identified with the golden bough, by which Aeneas was able to enter the underworld (*Aeneid* 6.136). The golden bough itself had long been associated with the gold-making powers of the stone (e.g., in Michael Maier’s *Septimana Philosophica* [1620]; see Read, 259).

130 *Hermes*. Hermes Trismegistus, the central figure in Part III. This is the first indication that the speaker is aware of the nature of his celestial journey. Note, however, that the planetary god Mercury also provides the speaker with a kind of *gnosis* at line 162.

133 *the nature of a God*. The hailing of the speaker as a “new divinity” (135) takes the Neoplatonic idea of man’s divine potential to its limit, though such an idea is clearly stated in *Corpus Hermeticum*, Libellus XI: “If therefore thou wilt not equall thyself to God, thou canst not understand God. For the like are intelligible by the like. Increase thy self unto an immeasurable greatness, leaping beyond every Body, and transcending all Time, become Eternity, and thou shall understand God: If thou believe in thyself, that nothing is impossible, but accountest thyself immortall, and that thou canst understand all things, every Art, every Science, and the manner and custom of every living thing” (*Divine Pymander*, trans. Everard, 155). See also the Hermetic *Asclepius*, the text upon which Pico della Mirandola’s *Oration on the Dignity of Man* rests (see Yates, *Giordano Bruno*, esp. 35, 88, 90–91, 110–11); and compare Bassett Jones’s *Lithochymicus* 6.131–32, in this collection.

136 *Maia’s Sonn*. Mercury.

146–47 *Imperiall theme swells up their hopes*. Compare “happy prologues to the swelling act / Of the imperial theme” (*Macbeth* 1.3.127–28). This is the first of several Shakespearean adaptations and allusions; see 515, 566, 729.

156 *stores*. Storehouses; i.e., graves. The classical Mercury’s (Hermes’) role as *psychopompos*, or conductor of the souls of the dead to Hades, is seen, e.g., in Lucian’s *Dialogues of the Dead*; his ability to take souls up to heaven may be an adaptation of that idea.

166–69 Venus’s “inward tincture is the purest green” perhaps

because according to Rulandus “the Step or Grade of Venus” represents “the Mildness and Sweetness of Nature, the life of Verdure” (436).

170-72 “That metals are transmutable is shown by the conversion of iron into copper, which may be observed when one adds iron filings to a solution of vitriol of Venus [copper sulphate]. Some believe that this operation was one of the secrets of Pythagoras of which Ovid speaks in his *Metamorphoses*, and that the conversion has been recorded hieroglyphically in the amours of Mars [iron], Venus [copper] and Vulcan [fire]” (William Davisson, *Les élémens de la philosophie de l’art du feu ou chimie* [Paris, 1651], quoted in *The Correspondence of Isaac Newton*, 1:13). On this passage from Davisson, see in this collection Bassett Jones’s *Lithochymicus*, “Index,” s.v. Mars.

173-76 The Red Tincture is one name for the philosopher’s stone; Venus’ reddening the white roses with her tears for Adonis is one way of describing the color changes in the Great Work (Read, 12, 148, 240).

180-201 This passage is reminiscent of several Renaissance paeans to the sun. For Jean d’Espagnet (1608) it was not unlikely that “the soul of the World was in the Sun, and the Sun in the Centre of the whole,” and he described the effect of the sun’s spiritual rays in alchemical terms. Fifty years earlier (1543) Copernicus had written: “In the middle of all sits the Sun enthroned. In this most beautiful temple could we place this luminary in any better position from which he can illuminate the whole at once? He is rightly called the Lamp, the Mind, the Ruler of the Universe; Hermes Trismegistus names him the visible God, Sophocles’ Electra calls him the All-seeing. So the Sun sits as upon a royal throne ruling his children the planets which circle round him.” And the alchemist-cabbalist Robert Fludd (1638) echoed these words: “this Royal *Phoebus* doth sit in his chariot, even in the center or middle of the heavens, glittering with his golden hair, as the sole visible Emperour, holding the royal Scepter and government of the world, in whom all the vertue of the celestiall bodies do consist” (all three quotations cited by Debus, who notes their common Neoplatonism and interrelations; see *Chemical Philosophy*, 1:88, 230).

Our passage also has many affinities with Milton's description of the "arch-chemic" sun (*Paradise Lost* 3.571-612).

212 *faulchion*. Falchion, sword.

257 *old Asturia*. Asturias, ancient kingdom on Iberian peninsula, now NW Spain. The Astures, subdued by Roman legions (26-19 B.C.), furnished gold and minerals to their conquerors; they are surveyed by Pliny, *Natural History* 3.28. *oar*: ore, i.e., gold.

270 *One . . . attendants*. One of the satellites of Jupiter; see the epistle to the "Learned Reader," note 7.

273 *Father Saturn*. In classical mythology, Kronos or Saturn ruled in the age of gold, an obvious link with alchemy. That Saturn is the speaker's means for the final ascent to the Empyrean also has to do with the Neoplatonists' identification of *Kronos* (Saturn) and *Chronos* (Time): "They interpreted Kronos, the father of gods and men as *Nous*, the Cosmic Mind, and could easily merge this concept with that of Chronos the 'father of all things,' the 'wise old builder,' as he had been called" (Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology*, 74). Thus Time the Revealer (see line 313) merges with a Hermetic *gnosis* (in the *Poimandres*, the first book of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, *Nous* appears in a dream and instructs the dreamer in the mysteries of the Divine Mind and in the secrets of the universe; see 72n above).

A further identification occurs repeatedly in alchemy between Saturn, Senior (the "Elder" or Wise Philosopher), and the Ancient of Days: see Read, 156, 199, 268, and 277n below. Saturn is also a source of knowledge in Jones's *Lithochymicus*, 3.97ff.

277 *the auncient of dayes . . . Daniell*. After dreaming of the four beasts, Daniel beholds "the Ancient of days, . . . whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool" (Daniel 7:9). The beasts represent the four kingdoms; the Ancient of Days, God's judgment. The books of Daniel (esp. chap. 7) and Revelations were the sole Scriptural authorities for Christian millennialism; see Peter Toon, "Introduction," *The Millennium*, 17. For the millenarian elements in the poem, see 310, 322-30 and Introduction. The Ancient of Days is also referred to in Sendivogius' *Philosophicall Ænigma* (Part Four,

above), 56.

283-84 *those Philosophers*. Anaxagoras, a predecessor of the atomists and sceptical about the accuracy of sense-perception, is said to have argued that snow must really be black: "snow is frozen water, and water is black, whence it follows that snow is black" (Kirk et al., *Presocratic Philosophers*, 371). Though Lucretius does not mention snow directly, he makes the same argument as Anaxagoras, in explaining that atoms themselves are without color: "mark my words . . . lest perchance you suppose all these white things which you see bright before your eyes to be made of white first-beginnings, or those that are black to be born of seed that is black. . . . [Since atoms] are endowed with various shapes, from which they beget all sorts of various colours . . . you could very easily explain on the spot why those things which were black a little while before can suddenly become a shining white; as the sea, when great winds have stirred up the surface, turns into hoary waves with a white sheen; for you could say that often what we see as black . . . immediately thereafter seems to be bright and white" (*De rerum natura* 2.730-33, 757-71).

309 *eternall mind*. The *Nous* of the *Corpus Hermeticum* (see 72n and 273n, above).

310 *universall monarchy*. A glance at the "fifth monarchy" of the millennium; see 277n above.

314 *navel of the earth*. The Omphalos, a conical block of stone, stood in or near the temple of Apollo at Delphi; it was regarded as the central point or "navel" of the earth. Here, its future "possess[ion]" may suggest that the (Hermetic) "universall monarchy" will subsume all knowledge, even that of the revered Delphic Oracles.

323 *elect*. A common idea in alchemy, that only certain people were worthy to be adepts; see Introduction.

331ff. *those . . . Disperst about the plains*. A kind of middle Paradise, perhaps of the kind Milton briefly associates with the Moon (*Paradise Lost*, 3.460-62); see also 809-13, below.

341-48 *Hee . . . in armour clad*. Unidentified; perhaps one who died in a battle won by the royalists during the Civil War?

349-63 *one . . . prating Logick*. Unidentified, but the Paracel-

sians and Helmontians, no less than the Baconians, rejected the scholastic method as being too reliant on logic and mathematical reasoning.

355 *apparitions*. The colors of the alchemical process given in the following lines: crow (nigredo stage, black or putrefying matter); dove (white stage, probably a white sublimate); and “celestiall candour” (i.e., brilliant whiteness); see Read, 13–17, 92, 160.

364–82 *a noble soul*. This remarkable figure, who combines the prowess of a Henry Hudson with the missionary zeal of a John Sobieski, is unidentified.

369 *Erythræan*. Pertaining to the Red Sea.

373 *Cataian*. Cathaian; i.e., Chinese.

383–89 *Shee*. Unidentified.

383 *Golden Fleece*. The philosopher’s stone.

384 *Mary the Prophetesse*. The author is having fun here by identifying one Mary Cary who made a well known prophecy that “making of Gold shal be vulgarly knowne [by] 1661” with the esteemed Egyptian alchemist, Maria Prophetissa, or Mary the Jewess, sometimes identified with Miriam, sister of Moses. The former Mary is mentioned in the correspondence of Henry Oldenburg, Robert Boyle, and Samuel Hartlib (Mendelsohn, “Alchemy and Politics,” 52); for the latter, see the Introduction to her poem, Part Four, above.

390–99 *The last*. This writer of “abstruse verse” might be the fifteenth-century alchemist-poet Thomas Norton, whose *Ordinal of Alchemy* covers the first 106 pages of Ashmole’s *Theatrum*. Norton claims to have learned the secret at the early age of twenty-eight and insists on the “concorde” between the alchemical work and the “spere of hevyn” (see Reidy’s ed., lines 2601–22, 2937–70). Ashmole cites both these passages and has a long discussion of the importance of astrology (*Theatrum*, 438, 450–54); he also reproduces an illustration (from one of Norton’s MSS) of the horoscopes that are described for each stage of the work in Norton’s poem (*Theatrum*, 91). While Norton does not directly mark “his eggs [alchemical vessels] with figures [horoscopes]” (396), this may be a deliberate overstatement. Ashmole (449) considers Norton *vere adeptus*, though he is erroneously

thought by some who mis-read his poem not to have achieved the "Red Medicine."

400 *dark vales*. The underworld of charlatans, where the only light is fittingly that of "counterfeited day" (408). The description at 401–408 owes much to *Paradise Lost* 1.61–74; see also 437n below.

409–10 *the one*. Unidentified, but as late as the 1680s it was not understood why the casting of iron ore from different regions—and hence with different proportions of sulphur and phosphorus—produced some cannons that were brittle and others that were reliable (see Cipolla, *Guns and Sails*, 71; a famous founder of cannon in the time of Charles I was John Browne: *ibid.*, 42n3, 65).

411–12 *Th' other*. Probably Johann Sibertus Küffeler, an inventor and metallurgist who developed his "firework" or torpedo from the prototype of his father-in-law Cornelis Drebbel. In 1653 he presented to the Council of State his "dreadful Engine for the speedie and effectuall destroying of Shipping in a Moment" for use in the Dutch War. It was demonstrated in 1658 with great success and was widely discussed by Robert Boyle and others. A letter from Samuel Hartlib to Boyle indicates that Küffeler performed dangerous experiments with *aurum fulminans* (Webster, *Great Instauration*, 390–91); this may be the *pulvis fulminans* ("exploding powder") of line 412; but see 635n below).

Thunderer of France: The bellicose Louis XIV who throughout his reign (1643–1715) was called names like "French Ruf-fian," "The Bully King," etc., by English propagandists (Capp, *Astrology and the Popular Press*, 99, 248).

hop poles: tall poles on which the climbing hop plant was trained.

413–16 Cornelis Drebbel (see preceding note), Dutch alchemist and inventor, moved to England in 1604 and in 1628 was in charge of fireships and water petards during the Duke of Buckingham's expedition to La Rochelle (Thorndike, 7:497); he may, therefore, be the maker of "Grenados" (grenades) to be used on the "waves."

417–21 *The Paduan*. Possibly Galileo himself, who (though there is no record of his having tried alchemy) mocks the al-

chemical allegories drawn out of classical myths, as well as such “puerilities” as the occult properties to which Kepler assented; see his *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*, trans. Drake, 110, 462.

423 *Chamelot*. Camlet, a composite fabric made to resemble the costly eastern cloth of this name.

424 *the Hague Calf*. John Frederick Helvetius’s tract, *Vitulus Aureus* (Amsterdam, 1667), trans. as *The Golden Calf* (1670), which narrates in detail a transmutation that took place at the Hague in 1666; this text was reprinted by William Cooper (see 656n) in his *Philosophical Epitaph*, 1673. Helvetius (1625–1709), physician to William III of Orange, wrote on physiognomy, astrology, and medicine (see Thorndike, 8:314, 361–62, 469–71); apparently, he is the “Astrologick Sot” of line 422.

431-37 *The next*. Unidentified.

437 *novum Lumen*. *Novum Lumen Chymicum* is the name of a famous alchemical work by Michael Sendivogius, who is presented as one of the true philosophers below (885, 978; and see Introduction); here used ironically. *Infernall Lake*: the “burning lake” mentioned below (726, 767), which is more Miltonic (see *Paradise Lost* 1.229) than classical as a feature of the underworld.

438 *sulphur vulgar*. Presumably the burning sulphur of the underworld, as opposed to “sophic sulphur,” one of the constituents of the stone.

440 *Styx, Cocytus, Phlegeton*. Three rivers of the underworld.

442-52 It is just possible that this passage refers to Bassett Jones (author of *Lithochymicus*, in this volume) and his kinsman Colonel Philip Jones. See the Introduction to Part Three for their various animosities. There is, however, no record of Cromwell’s “Collonel” being interested in alchemy, or of his “namesake” (Bassett Jones) being a Catholic, as line 48 suggests.

445 *Hesperian fruit*. The golden apples of the Hesperides; in alchemical terms, the philosopher’s stone.

451 *Cully*. Dupe or gull. *Philipp* (452) puns on “fillip.”

453-60 *Briton*. I.e., a Welshman; unidentified, though if the Joneses are the subjects of 442–52, there may be an implied

connection with them. As at line 463, the MS begins a new verse paragraph here, but this passage could be a continuation of 442–52.

454 *aqua gradatoria*. “Aqua Fortis [nitric acid], increased by careful mixture, to be suitable for certain purposes, is called Gradatoria, which is applied to the graduation of dyes” (Rulandus, 34).

456 *last refuge of great Hanniball*. Suicide by poison.

457 *impleads*. Sues in a court of justice.

458 *Alecto*. The name given to one of the three Furies by Virgil and others.

459 *Grossian throne*. Perhaps this is a throne made from coins, from *gross*, “a name for various foreign coins; e.g. the German *groschen*, and the Italian *grosso*” (*OED*). Or perhaps a pun on the pseudonymn Grossaeus of the Pomeranian Johann Grasshoff, who published German and Latin alchemical works in the early and middle years of the seventeenth century (see Ferguson, 1:338–41).

461–62 *the Turk*: unidentified; *guinnys*: the guinea coin was first struck in 1663. *Mustard seed*: perhaps with an ironical glance at the parable in Matt.: 13:31.

463–67 *Hee with black tresses*. The MS indents at line 463, but this passage seems to be a continuation of the portrait of the *Turk* (461).

468–92 *a Caball of twelve*. The famous five-member Cabal of ministers under Charles II fell in 1673; this phrase may refer retrospectively to the Earl of Middleton’s attempt in 1663 to exclude from power twelve men, including the Duke of Lauderdale and his friend Sir Robert Moray, in the Act of Billeting (see Mackenzie, *Life and Times of . . . Lauderdale*, 252–53; *DNB*, 12:808). For Lauderdale (who of course was a member of the later Cabal) and Moray, see below 569n.

470 *rid*. I.e., rode upon (?). *Trunck*: trunk, “the body considered apart from the soul or life” (*OED*).

471 *emproved*. Either “improved” or (more likely) “proven most assuredly,” where the prefix is an intensifier; in either reading, the tone is ironic.

474 *gownman*. Gownsmen: lawyer, barrister, judge; or clergy-

man.

477 *Ixion's wheel*. As punishment for his attempted seduction of Hera and ingratitude toward Zeus, Ixion was bound to an ever-turning wheel; here an irony for drunkenness.

478-84 *A Quack . . . Anti-Helmont leaves*. The Belgian Jean Baptiste van Helmont (1577-1644) was the most important proponent of Paracelsian iatrochemistry; he also demonstrated the material nature of gases and their variety. English translations of Helmont's works appeared as early as 1650, and until the devastation of the great plague of 1665 the Helmontians or "chymical physicians" were in the ascendant, having received encouragement from the restored Charles II. Helmont's chief antagonist on the continent was (since 1614) one Henry van Heer (Thorndike, 7:228-29; Pagel, *Van Helmont*, 8-9), but the "Anti-Helmont leaves" referred to here probably emerged from the controversy involving the Royal College of Physicians, the chymical physicians, and the apothecaries. See Rattansi, "Helmontian-Galenist Controversy"; Henry Thomas, "The Society of Chymical Physicians"; Debus, *English Paracelsians*, passim; Pagel, 199-200; and 612n below.

Helmont's son, Francis Mercury (1614-99), was in England for most of 1670-79, when he published works by his father and himself, and was part of a circle that included Samuel Hartlib, Henry More, Robert Boyle, and Anne, Viscountess Conway (see *Conway Letters*, 309-77; Webster, *Great Instauration*, 276ff., 303ff., et passim).

479 *Diana's nakednesse*. This was beheld by Acteon, for which he was turned into a stag and torn to pieces by his own hounds; in alchemy it represents the deepest secret, revealed only to the blessed (see, e.g., Ashmole's *Theatrum*, 447; Read, index). The reference to *Æolus* (481), which is probably the antecedent of *hee* (484), is unexplained.

482 *Batavian*. Dutch.

486 *Their Corypheus*. I.e., the *Cabal's* (468) coryphaeus, the leader of the chorus in Greek drama. Possibly a reference to the Helmontian Thomas Williams, created "chymical physician to the King" in 1670 and a Baron (see "Lord," 486) in 1674 (Rattansi, "Helmontian-Galenist Controversy," 11).

492 *balderdasht*. Mixed with inferior ingredients, adulterated (*OED*). *Littleton & Cook*: These names, often cited together in this way, refer most immediately to the standard authority on English property law, Littleton's *Tenures*, on which the jurist Sir Edward Coke (1552–1634) had written a famous commentary (I owe this reference to John Money). These august legal figures may, however, have had seventeenth-century alchemical namesakes who are humorously juxtaposed with them. For example, there is an Edward Cooke listed among the “Chymical Students and Practitioners” in Dr. George Thomson's 1665 *Loimologia* (see Henry Thomas, “Society of Chymical Physicians,” 65); and one Adam Cook who had a sweating bath in Newgate Market in 1682 (British Library MS Sloane 3788, fol. 98r).

493-513 Possibly George Villiers, 2nd Duke of Buckingham (1628–87), who was satirized in similar terms as Zimri (“chymist, fiddler, statesman and buffoon”) in Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681), lines 544–68). For Buckingham's own alchemical experiences, plus his involvement in the attempt to establish a society of chymical physicians, see Thomas, “Chymical Physicians,” 63; and Rattansi, “Helmontian-Galenist Controversy,” 12–13; and 612n, below. See also textual note 499.

508 *Cartoon*. Caricature (though *OED* gives this meaning only to the verb before 1863).

514-19 *That unborn Doctor*. Unidentified. *Untimely taken*: Cf. “Macduff was from his mother's womb / Untimely ripped” (*Macbeth*, 5.8.15–16); see 146 above. This practitioner may have become wealthy either by treating venereal disease or by performing abortions (“picling Venus in a mustard pot”).

516 *Viper*. Alluding to the belief that the female viper was killed by her young eating their way out at birth (*OED*).

520-22 *May dew* figures in Philaethes as a synonymn for sophic mercury, in William Salmon's *Polygraphice*, and in the *Mutus Liber* (see Read, 92, 157; and 601n below for Salmon). *Cabalistic Rodds*: a number of alchemists combined the art with Cabala (see, e.g., Thorndike 7:274, 439, 443; 8:388), but since *divining Rodds* (522) were often called “Mosaical rods” (Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, 185, 235, 271), this may simply be a scoff at a diviner with elaborate equipment.

524 *Athamor*. The alchemist's furnace.

527-29 Although he does not specifically mention bees, Pliny argued that amber, in which "certain objects, such as ants, gnats and lizards" are visible, is the hardened sap of a certain pine tree (*Natural History* 37.42-46); he did not know that the resin was fossilized. Pliny also discusses the medicinal uses of amber, and these were pursued by Paracelsus (*Hermetic and Alchemical Writings*, ed. Waite, 2:54) and many others; but the alchemist who "plac't his heaven in Transparency" is unidentified.

528 *Chrystalline bubble*. I.e., of amber.

530-34 *That with false Opticks*. Unidentified, but this seems reminiscent of Samuel Butler's verse satire, in which a mouse trapped in a telescope leads certain members of a "learn'd Society" to see "The Elephant in the Moon" (*Satires*, ed. Lamar, 3-30).

533 *excruciate*. Tortured.

534 *nine Eagled gallons*. A gallon is a "vessel for holding liquids"; *Eagled*: "furnished with the image of an eagle"—hence perhaps an ironic glance at this charlatan's failure to see Senior's "nine eagles" (see 71n, 986n).

535 *Thermometer*. Various kinds of thermometers were in use by the later seventeenth century; the word first appeared in English in 1633 (*OED*; Thorndike, 7:593).

537 *Chymicks turn State Pamphleteers*. Some astrologers and alchemists, both before and after the Restoration, wrote polemical almanacs, pamphlets, and alchemical-medical works (e.g., the notorious William Lilly; see also 601n below). Here, the Cromwellian pamphleteer, poet, and translator of Hermetic and Rosicrucian works, John Hall (1627-56) may be meant; he contributed a commendatory poem to Bassett Jones's *Lithochymicus*, in this collection. Another possible referent is the Helmontian physician and propagandist (and friend of Milton), Marchamont Nedham (1620-78), "who had changed sides several times during the Civil War period, and employed his pen on the side of Charles II at the Restoration" (Rattansi, "Helmontian-Galenist Controversy," 17). Or perhaps the Royalist astrologer and pamphleteer John Gadbury (1628-1704), who in his later years was known as a notorious crypto-Catholic Jacobite, may

be intended.

538 *with both their ears.* Cutting off the ears was a common punishment for publishing scandalous or seditious opinions, or for perjury.

539-45 Though the burning down of his house (544-45) has not been verified, the person referred to here is almost certainly Johann Seger von Weidenfeld, whose *De Secretis Adeptorum sive de Usu Spiritus Vivi Lulliani* (London, 1684; trans. as *Four Books*, 1684) was dedicated to his friend Robert Boyle and printed under royal license. This collection of 150 menstrua or solvents, divided into 24 classes, asserts that "all the Secrets of *Chymy* depend upon one only Center of the Art, namely the *Spirit of Philosophical Wine*" (sig. b4v; cf. line 543); see also Partington, 2:182, 495-96.

546-48 *Swedish Lord.* He may be Baron Bengt Skytte (1614-83) who tried to promote in England a European Protestant alliance and related scientific society (Purver, *Royal Society*, 220-21, 226-32), or perhaps the German alchemist Johann Kunckel who in 1689 went to Sweden as Charles XI's minister of mines and was made a Baron by him in 1693 (Partington, 2:363); but none of the other details here can be verified. *Mombeliard*: Montbéliard, town in eastern France which constituted part of the county and then dukedom of Württemberg. *Stanchiani* (548): unidentified.

549-51 *good Rabell's . . . Vitrioll.* Unidentified, though possibly an allusion to the "vitriol" (satire) of Rabelais, who received a famous translation in the 1650s.

551 *oylet-hole.* oillet, eyelet.

552-57 *Joachime Beker.* Johann Joachim Becher (1635-82), physician to the electors of Mainz and Bavaria who came to England in 1680; his *Experimentum Chemicum Novum* (Frankfurt, 1671) showed how from ordinary mud and any fat, like linseed oil (line 556), genuine metal could be produced. His *Minera Arenaria* (London, 1680) presents a plan to extract gold from sea sand (Thorndike, 7:581). Becher was Imperial Commercial Councillor (see line 553) to Leopold I; see his *Magnalia Naturae: or, the philosophers-stone lately expos'd to public sight and sale* (1680), which describes the transmutations effected by the

Austrian friar Wenceslaus Seilerus before the Emperor's court at Vienna (Partington, 2:637-52; Debus, *Chemical Philosophy*, 2:445-46, 458-63; *DSB* 1:548-51). *Horizontall Gold* (557): Rulandus (376) gives *Horizontis* as "Potable Gold."

558 *Casimir*: Unidentified. *Tann*: Possibly the Josua von der Tann to whom John Henry Alsted addressed an epistle (1618) on the physical science that was magical, alchemical (Paracelsian), and astrological (see Thorndike, 6:433-34).

561 *friend Billing*. Anton Gunther Billich of Oldenburg (fl. 1621-43), nephew and student of the Italian chemist Angelo Sala, and an anti-Paracelsian (Ferguson, 1:107; Thorndike, 8:113-16; Partington, 2:203, 280-81; Pagel, *Van Helmont*, 81-84).

563 *Hunn*. Unidentified.

564 *Wilton Operator*. Unidentified, but presumably referring to Wilton, Wiltshire.

566 *Falstaffe*. For other Shakespearean references, see 146-47n, above.

569 *Soland bird*. Solan or soland goose: the gannet, a large sea-fowl usually identified at this time with the "barnacle goose"; this creature, found only in northern Scotland and its islands, was thought to hatch from the "shells" growing on certain trees or from barnacles—theories being discussed in the *Philosophical Transactions* as late as 1678 (Thorndike, 8:50). Here, as in other satirical works of the period, *Soland* seems to be an derisive term for a Scot: see Samuel Butler, *Hudibras*, ed. Wilders, 251, 431n.

A number of Scottish alchemists from the Renaissance and Restoration periods are known, but none seems to fit exactly the description that follows here. However, the freemason Sir Robert Moray (1607?-1673) practiced alchemy and was fascinated by the various letters he discovered in the pentacle (cf. "Alphabets," line 572, and see Stevenson, *Origins of Freemasonry*, 86n and ch. 7); and his fellow Scot Robert Murray (d. 1673), first president of the Royal Society, wrote an account of the generaion of solan geese, wherein he "asserts that he himself had seen the young birds come out of their shells." Both these men had connections with John Maitland, Duke of Lauderdale (see lines 468n above, and 700n, below); for Murray's geese, see *Letters from Archibald, Earl of Argyll, to John, Duke of Laud-*

erdale (Edinburgh, 1829), 1n, and for Moray, Mackenzie's *Life and Times of . . . Lauderdale*, passim.

571 *Tartar*. "A strolling vagabond, a thief, a beggar" (*OED*); here perhaps these associations are mingled with "cheat, charlatan."

572 *Alphabets*. Perhaps the author has in mind a work like the *Ars et Theoria Transmutationis* of J. A. Pantheus (1518), a cabbalistic-chemical system which gave numerical values to Latin, Greek, and Hebrew letters; see Thorndike, 5:538; Debus, *Chemical Philosophy*, 1:35n.

574 *Ely*. Presumably the bishop of Ely, but this incident has not been identified. It may have involved Peter Gunning (1614–84), bishop of Ely from 1675 until his death, who had been an ardent royalist, preaching against the parliamentary party; he is said to have been harsh with non-conformists when bishop, and he opposed the lately founded Royal Society, fearing it would undermine revealed truth (*DNB*, 8:788–91).

575 *Jacob Toll*. Jacobus Tollius (d. 1696), Dutch physician, philologist, and alchemist whose *Manuductio ad Coelum Chemicum* (Amsterdam, 1688) is referred to in the following lines (see Ferguson, 2:458–59; Partington, 2:186, 363); a contemporary unpublished English translation is in BL MS Sloane 3768. See textual note.

582 *one . . . eleven*. See the "Caball of twelve," 468 above (?).

584–85 *The next . . . little Isle*. A number of utopian communities were proposed in the mid-century, e.g., by followers of Samuel Hartlib and Comenius. Two published projects that envisioned a scientific or alchemical "college" as a central feature were the *Christianopolis* of Johann Valentin Andreae and the *Macaria* of Gabriel Plattes (see Dobbs, *Newton's Alchemy*; and Webster, *Great Instauration*, passim).

589–90 *the Danaides*. The daughters of Danaus who, having killed their husbands, were condemned to this perpetually futile act in Hades.

591 *a Ridgell*. Ridgel, a male animal with only one testicle; the person intended is unknown. See the *double entendre* on the philosopher's "Artificial stone" (598). The reference to the

Popish Plot (595) suggests Israel Tonge, an alchemist who introduced Titus Oates to the supposed conspiracy (see Hill, *World Turned Upside Down*, 234); but while much is known of Tonge (see Kenyon, *Popish Plot*, passim) none of the other details of this sketch has been confirmed.

601 *little Salmon trout*. William Salmon (1644–1713), Whig almanac-maker and voluminous writer of astrological and medical works (see Wing A2314–24, S420–457) who was in constant conflict with the College of Physicians. He is satirized in Samuel Garth's *The Dispensary* (in *Poems on Affairs of State*, 6:81–82; see also Capp, 52–53). The reference to “Fam’ly Pills” may have to do with Salmon’s dedication of two books of his *Synopsis Medicinæ* (1671) to Dr. Peter Salmon, a wealthy physician, and Thomas Salmon of Hackney; he was related to neither, though he sought “obviously without their consent, to associate himself in the public eye with them” (*DNB*, 17:698)—hence “without their wills” (605).

608 *Cocheneal*. Cochineal, a scarlet dye-stuff made from the bodies of insects. *one-eyed sot* (see also 768): the foolish alchemists and natural philosophers in Joseph Hall’s Rabelaisian satire, *Mundus Alter* (ca. 1605), “have but one eye apiece” (trans. John Healey as *The Discovery of a New World*; cited in Eurich, *Science in Utopia*, 83).

609 *Pudders*. muddles, dabbles. *Sal Enixe & Alembrot*: “Dissolved Salt” and “Acid Salt,” respectively (Rulandus, 279, 281). *Alembroth*: “an old name for the double chloride of mercury and ammonium, once believed to be an alkahest” (*OED*).

612 *the fourth*. Edward Bolnest (see the puns at 615), whose books include *Medicina Instaurata: or a brief account of the true grounds and principles of the art of physick made by chymical operation* (1665), and *Aurora Chymica: or, a rational way of preparing animals, vegetables and minerals for physical use, and preservation of the life of Man* (1672; Latin trans., Hamburg, 1675). The first of these was dedicated to the Duke of Buckingham (see 493–513n, above), with whom Bolnest implies a personal connection. See Partington, 2:181–2, 242; and for an account of a lawsuit between Bolnest and Thomas Vaughan— involving exchange of alchemical secrets—see Vaughan’s *Works*,

ed. Rudrum, 17–21. Bolnest was a signatory to two documents urging the establishment of the “Society of Chymical Physicians” (1665), and was thus on the Helmontian side of the Galenist-iatrochemist dispute; see the articles by Henry Thomas (esp. 57, 59, 63) and Rattansi (12, 15), as cited at 493–513n, above.

617 *in fimo & in Balneo*. “In dung and in the bath,” i.e., two sources of “gentle heat” (616) used in alchemy; here the bath may suggest one treatment for venereal disease.

621 *Magus*. Simon Magus, the Samaritan sorcerer of Acts 8:9–24 who attempted to buy spiritual powers from the apostles; see textual note.

623 *Stantem oportet Imperatorem mori*. “It is proper that the general die on his feet”; untraced, but probably not a classical quotation.

627 *milk . . . Moon*. This may be *Lac lunare* (galactites: Thorndike, 6:320) or the *lac virginis* of the alchemists, also called “Lunar and Solar Sap” (Rulandus, 188).

630–35 These figures are unidentified, but *Savoy* may refer to the precinct of the Savoy Palace in London.

635 *aurum fulminans*. Fulminating (“thundering”) gold, a powder made from gold which, when ignited by fire or the heat of the sun, exploded. Experiments with and recipes for medical applications of this substance were frequent among seventeenth-century writers, including Oswald Croll (1609) and Mersenne (before 1627); see Thorndike, 7:438, 612, 626; 8:143, 149; Partington, 2:176; and above 411–12n

636–56 This catalogue—with some satirical additions—alludes to the chemically prepared medicines advocated by the “chymical physicians” who followed Paracelsus.

640–42 *Antimony . . . Valentine*. Referring to Basil Valentine’s *Triumphal Chariot of Antimony*, an English translation of which first appeared in 1660; see the ed. by Louis Kelly (New York: Garland, 1990). The mocking reference to “Monks” (645) is based on the story that Basil Valentine was a Benedictine or Cistercian monk; the works attributed to him are actually from the early seventeenth century (see Read, 183–85 and Partington, 2:183–202).

647 *Haematite*. Bloodstone; Rulandus (171–73) has an exten-

sive discussion of various kinds.

649 *Montispelian Tartar*. Tartar is the salt of tartaric acid; the kind indicated here may have derived from or was associated with the French city of Montpellier. Followers of the sage Aristeus (see Part Four, above) are said to prepare a Balm of Mercury by purifying fine mercury “three times through a skin, and once by calcined Montpellier Tartar” (Waite’s Supplement to Rulandus, 373)

653 *Sandover*. Sandiver, a liquid saline matter found floating over the glass after vitrification; glass-gall (*OED*).

654 *Revell’s art of memory*. No surviving published work bears his name, but perhaps the figure satirized here and at 687 below is the Thomas Revell who contributed a commendatory poem to the pseudo-Rosicrucian John Heydon’s *Wise-Man’s Crown* (1664; sig. C4v–C5r); see also 734n below.

656 *Pelican*. The sign in Little Britain under which William Cooper, in addition to other activities, sold and published alchemical books, including many of those satirized in *Hermetick Raptures*; see Introduction and Linden’s ed. of Cooper’s *Catalogue of Chymicall Books*. A “pelican” was also a specially shaped alchemical vessel.

665–79 *one at whose confus’d Nativity*. For a comment on the “scheme” or horoscope given here, see the epistle to the “Learned Reader,” above; the persons intended in this passage are unknown.

669 *Maia’s winged Son*. Mercury.

670 *partile*. Within a degree.

675 *Angels*. Gold coins, as well as spirits who supposedly possessed secrets about the material world.

680 *painting*. Deceiving or talking speciously (*OED*). The “family” has not been positively identified, nor has the project to retrieve elemental air from its sphere beyond the earth; it is possible, however, that the Henshaw family is intended. Thomas Henshaw, alchemist and dedicatee of Thomas Vaughan’s *Magia Adamica* (1650), was a member of Samuel Hartlib’s circle. Hartlib said Henshaw’s father was a “great chymist” and “so is his mother”; Henshaw himself had planned to set up a “chymical college”: see Rudrum’s ed. of Vaughan’s *Works*, 11–13;

Partington, *passim*; Webster, *Great Instauration*, *passim*. The Nathaniel Henshaw whose *Aero-chalinos: or a Register for the Air* (Dublin, 1664) advocated the medical benefits of an "Air-Chamber" equipped with bellows and barometer, is called M.D and F.R.S. by Thorndike (8:423); no familial connection with Thomas has been established.

687 *Revells* . . . *art.* See 654n above.

690-91 *a role* . . . *touch.* I.e., the roll or list of foolish admirers of those who think they can manipulate metals.

692-99 *Beloon.* Peter Bellon, Helmontian medical writer. In the first of his three published works, he invites potential customers for his distilled "preservatives" (including potable gold) to visit his "Laboratory over against the *Cross-Keys* in *Bedford-street Covent Garden*" (*Potable Balsome of Life* [1675], sig. A1v). In the last, written in Ireland, he says he has left his native soil "to end the remainder of my days in the Service of my most Gracious King" (*The Irish Spaw* [1684], sig. A2v); this work is dedicated to the Duke of Ormond, Lord-lieutenant of Ireland and one of the public figures who had supported the application of "chymical physicians" for their own society (Rattansi, "Helmontian-Galenist Controversy," 13). No biographical details linking Bellon with Essex have been found.

700-12 *a Queen.* Although the scientific interests of Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle (who visited the Royal Society, sometimes called a "Colledge") might qualify her for this title, it probably belongs to the notorious Elizabeth Murray, Countess of Dysart, later Duchess of Lauderdale (d. 1697). She had scandalized the court by forming a liaison with John Maitland, Duke of Lauderdale, before her first husband's death, and she was rumored to have been the mistress of Oliver Cromwell (see lines 710-12). As Lauderdale's mistress and then wife, she partook both in his great power and his unpopularity. Lauderdale shared an interest in alchemy with his fellow ministers of the Cabal, Buckingham (see 493n) and Shaftsbury, and with his ambitious wife as well; see *DNB*, 12:804-11; 13:1253-54, and Cammell, *Heart of Scotland*, 223. See also 468n and 569n, above.

707 *Ione's.* I.e., Jones's (?); unidentified. *Stygian:* relating to the river Styx or the underworld; infernal; dark, gloomy.

708 *Alsatian land*. Perhaps the geographical Alsace, but more likely “Alsatia”: “cant name for the precinct of White Friars in London, once a sanctuary for debtors and criminals” (*OED*).

712 *Chymicall Hermaphrodite*. The androgyne, a traditional alchemical allegory for the “marriage” of the white and red stones, here used ironically.

713 *good Sir yorkshire*. Unidentified.

714 *vail your bonnet*. Take off your hat as a sign of respect (*OED*). *Beck*: the Helmontian David von der Beck, whose *Experimenta et Meditationes circa Naturalium Rerum Principia* (Hamburg, 1674) was given a mixed review in the *Philosophical Transactions*, vol. 9, no. 103 (1674), 60–64. He is probably called *Romancing* (i.e., exaggerating, engaging in fantasies) because he “was interested in the strange force of imagination and in the causes of monstrosities. He believed that seeds contained specific ideas, and that ideas or characters remained in the bodies of animals after death” (Thorndike, 7:236).

718 *fishes . . . bread*. All four gospels tell the story of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, but only John (6:9) identifies the bread as barley.

723-30 *Gentleman Joyner*. Possibly a play on the name of Agricola Carpenter, whose *Pseuchographia Anthropomagia* appeared in 1652.

724 *St Saviour’s Dock*. Unidentified, though in Elizabethan times John Stow mentioned a dissolved monastery and a parish church of St. Saviour in Southwark (*Survey of London*, passim).

726 *Caput mortuum*. Literally, “dead head”; the residuum remaining after distillation or sublimation— here probably figurative for “worthless residue.” *Lake*: see 437n, above.

729-30 Cf. *The Tempest* 4.1.70–71, 150.

733 *A hasty Doctour*. Unidentified.

734 *Rosy-crucian friend*. Unidentified, but the 1650s and 1660s were full of books and translations relating to the Rosicrucians; see, e.g., Stanton J. Linden’s ed. of Cooper’s *Catalogue*, entries 195–203 for the translations of John Heydon (also *DNB*, 9:768–69; and above 654n).

740 *Muggletonian*. Follower of Lodowick Muggleton (1609–98) and his cousin John Reeve (d. 1658), both tailors, who

claimed to be the two witnesses of Revelations 11:3; in 1652 they founded an anti-trinitarian sect holding that God had a human body, that Eve was the incarnation of the evil spirit, and that the sun travels around the earth. Their cosmology posited a pre-existing chaos from which God made the world and has affinities with alchemical interpretations of Genesis that were current at the time, though it may have come from Boehme or the Ranters. By the 1670s, Reeve having died, members of the sect were being called Muggletonians. At any one time between 1652 and 1700 there were never more than several hundred members, mostly artisans and shopkeepers, though one blacksmith (see line 739) is recorded. Although some members had formerly been Behmenists, there is no connection with the Rosicrucians, as implied in this passage; Muggleton's hostility toward the medical profession may be the inspiration for the grotesque imagery of 739–41. See Christopher Hill et al., *World of the Muggletonians*, 31, 49, 51, 55, 87, 107n.

742 *Chymick Tantalus*. The classical Tantalus sinned against the gods—in varying accounts—by serving his son Pelops' flesh to them, by stealing their nectar, or by revealing their secrets. His punishments are described below, 757–64; the person meant here is unknown.

747 *Teckelish*. From *Teckelite*: "A nickname given in 1683 to the Whigs, alleged to sympathize with Count Teckely in waging war against a Roman Catholic government"; Teckely was a "Hungarian Protestant leader who rose against the persecuting Austrian government and allied himself with the Turks, whom he joined in the siege of Vienna in 1683" (*OED*). The point here is that the "Chymick Tantalus" could embrace any religious or political creed, however contradictory to his previous allegiances.

751 *essential purity*. The philosopher's stone.

753 *Gyants*. The mythic battle between the giants and the gods (*gigantomachia*) was a popular theme in ancient literature.

765 *Eugenius*. Eugenius Philalethes, pseudonymn of Thomas Vaughan (1622–66), whose *Anthroposophia Theomagia* (line 766) appeared in 1650. See Rudrum's ed. of *Works* and 612n above. On the "burning lake" (767), see 437n.

769 *More & More*. Henry More (1614–87), the Cartesian Cam-

bridge Platonist with whom Thomas Vaughan engaged in an acrimonious—and protracted (“More & More”)—controversy. For a recent reevaluation, see Mulligan, “‘Reason,’ ‘Right Reason,’ and ‘Revelation,’” 384ff. See textual note.

770 *Orpheus*. The power of this legendary Thracian bard’s music (770–75) is mentioned in *Paradise Lost* 7.30–38.

777 *Shee . . . Ivy*. This Catholic patroness of alchemy is Lady Theodosia Stepkins Ivy, whose “desertion” of her husband, Thomas Ivy, leaving him with debts in the amount of 3000 pounds, led him to publish *Alimony Arraing’d* (1654; see Wing I1108–1109); see also the account of the *Famous Triall* (1696; Wing F386). Her implied associations with the counterfeiter (785) and the “Wapponeer” (790) have not been documented.

Llewellyn’s head: Although the ivy crown was usually associated with Bacchus and hence wine and revelry, it may here be a substitute for the laurel, in which case Martin Llewelyn or Lluellyn (1616–82) may be meant. He was a poet (most notably in *Men-miracles*, 1646), royalist, and (after 1648) physician—first to Charles II and later in High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire (*DNB*, 11:1319–20)—but he seems not to have been an alchemist.

785–89 No English counterfeiter meeting this description has been found, but Thorndike (7:188) mentions a French alchemist, one Chandoux, who had propounded a new alchemical philosophy to Descartes and others in 1628, but who was hanged for counterfeiting three years later. *spawds*: spawds, or powders (made from talc, gypsum, or spar) used to form molds, for casting metals (*OED*); or perhaps the molds (*artificial*: fake) themselves.

790 *Wapponeer*. *Wappon* is obs. form of *weapon*, but earliest usage of *weaponeer* in *OED* is 1945. Perhaps a pun on *Wappineer* (an inhabitant of Wapping, a part of London close to the docks; by 1792 slang for “an inferior order of beings”) is intended. Similarly, *Pistols d’Espaign* may signify both weapons and *pistolets*, Spanish coins (?).

791 *Ivy leaues*. See 777n; *Gallia* (792): France.

795 *cent livres*. One hundred pounds sterling. The *Abbe* may be a glance at the Abbé Pregnani, who came as Louis XIV’s secret envoy in 1669, under the pretext of assisting Charles

II's alchemical pursuits (Rattansi, "Helmontian-Galenist Controversy," 11n, cited in Mendelsohn, "Alchemy and Politics," 62)

796 *varnisht nose*. A sign of advanced venereal disease.

797 *perjurious Imp*. Presumably the *Wapponeer* of 790.

801-2 At least one of these pretenders to alchemical learning may be particularized, given the first half of the pretentious title of Richard Mathews's *Unlearned Alchymist his Antidote, or a more full and ample explanation of the use, virtue and benefit of his diaphoretick and diuretick Pill; together with a precious pearle in the midst of a dunghill, or the preparation of the Oyl of Amber, Oyl and Balsom of the pine-tree* (1660, etc.; see Cooper's *Catalogue*, ed. Linden, entry 251).

803 *Mechanick*. A sneer at the ignorant and at those who are interested only in material alchemy.

811 *good souls half blest*. Those who came even closer to the Hermetic truths than those "Disperst about the plains," catalogued above, 331ff.

827 *one I must surely know*. Unidentified, but associated with the *Decii* (832), Roman father and son, both named Publius Decius Mus, who rushed into death in order to attain victory in the Latin War (340 B.C.) and at the battle of Sentinum (295 B.C.), respectively.

843 *Angelick Century*. A group or division of one hundred angels.

846-47 In the *Poimandres*, the invisible body leaves behind at each successive sphere a particular immoral inclination, as it ascends through them; finally, "it cometh to the eighth Nature ["zone," or sphere], having its proper power, and singeth praises to the Father with the things that are, and all they that are present rejoyce, and congratulate the coming of it; and being made like to them with whom it converseth, it heareth also the Powers that are above the eighth Nature, singing praise to God in a certain voyce that is peculiar to them. . . . This is the Good, and to them that know to be deified" (Everard's *Divine Pimander*, 33-35).

865-72 *Hermes*. Hermes Trismegistus, legendary sage of the *Corpus Hermeticum* and the founder of magic and alchemy. The

most famous of his writings is the “eternall verse” (869) of the “Smaragdine Table” (890), a collection of fifteen enigmatic aphorisms that could be interpreted both as a summation of alchemical matter-theory (as in the commentary of John of Garland; see Read, 52), as well as a program for the regeneration of the fallen body and the perfection of the post-lapsarian spirit (see Introduction, and the commentary by John Everard [1640], which is clearly inspired by his study of d’Espagnet and the *Corpus Hermeticum*, in Schuler, “Some Spiritual Alchemies,” 313–17). Hermes is “Thrice-Great” (cf. “threefold wisdom,” 870) because he was king, philosopher, and priest (or prophet); see Yates, *Giordano Bruno*, 48–49.

873 *Geber*. Anglicized name of Jabir ibn Hayyan, an eighth- or ninth-century Arabic alchemist whose works were highly influential on Western alchemy; see Holmyard, 68–82, and *The Works of Geber*, trans. R. Russell (1678).

879 *Raymund Lully*. Like Arnaldus de Villanova (880) and Bernardus Trevisanus (881), one of the masters of alchemy; see the Introduction to this volume and the text attributed to Bernardus in Part Four, above.

885 *Sendivogius*. Polish alchemist (from the “gloomy North,” 886), whose influence on *Hermetick Raptures* is discussed in the Introduction; see also 978n, below.

896 *Promethean vulturs*. One of the punishments of Prometheus, who stole the gods’ fire, was to have his liver—restored each day—eaten by an eagle. Alchemical texts often threaten or curse those who might reveal sacred secrets to the vulgar; see, e.g., *Lithochymicus*, 3.94n, above.

899 *Ægypt*. Ficino, in his preface to his trans. of the *Pimander* or *Corpus Hermeticum*, repeats Cicero’s claim that Hermes Trismegistus was lawgiver to the Egyptians and adds that he founded the city of Hermopolis (Yates, *Giordano Bruno*, 14), but no account of Hermes’s rebellious subjects has been found; see 953–54n below, however, on the Egyptian plagues in Exodus.

905–10 The spiritual perfection of the speaker is signaled by the eternal light of the “branch of living gold” or caduceus-golden bough (see 123n above) and the light of the alchemical sun (“Titan’s ray”) and Moon (“Cynthia”).

929 *Times long-expected birth.* For the millenarianism of the poem, see Introduction and 273n, above.

932 *Elogiums.* Sayings, maxims.

943 *golden Justice.* Astraea, virgin goddess of justice who lived among humans in the Golden Age, but who retreated to the skies (as the constellation Virgo) because of their wickedness. Her return would signal the millennium (see 929n).

962 *poysons tempered in the Gallick land.* This could refer generally to the bellicose policies of Louis XIV: England was at war with France during most of 1690s, and France supported the deposed James II; the War of the Spanish Succession raged from 1701–14. But the apparent lament for the French crown at 963–68 is puzzling.

977–1001 This “Discourse more pleasing to a Sophick mind” simply recalls some of the more celebrated incidents or details in a number of major alchemical texts.

978 *Sendivogius . . . Saturn.* An allusion to Sendivogius’ allegories in which Saturn instructs the searching alchemist. See, in Part Four above, his *Philosophicall Ænigma*, 212ff., and *A Dialogue of the Allchymist and Sulphur*, 99ff., 501ff. See also 885n, above.

979–83 For these details of Trevisan’s vision, see *The Practise of the Philosophick Stone*, in Part Four, above, 35ff.

984 *Artephius . . . his Immortal fire.* See the *Hydropyrophorum Hermeticum . . . the fiery water of the philosophers, which Artephius and Pontanus call, their fire*, in John Frederick Houpreght’s *Aurifontina Chymica* (1680), 1–39. In *Artephius His Secret Book* (1624) there is a discussion of three kinds of fires (201–206), but not of “immortal fire.”

986 *Senior.* Senior or Zadith Senior, son of Hamuel, is the reputed author of two Latin treatises, *De Chemia Senioris Antiquissimi Philosophi Libellus* and *Tabula Chimica*, the Arabic originals of which have been discovered. In the first of these, nine eagles shoot their arrows at Hermes; see Jung, *Aurora Consurgens*, 255; *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, 304. See also Introduction and 71n, 273n, above.

988 *Flammel.* Nicolas Flamel, a fourteenth-century Parisian scrivener famous for a pictorial allegory of alchemy; the two

dragons cited here are explained as symbols of sophic sulphur and sophic mercury, the fixed (or male) and volatile (or female) principles in *His Exposition of the Hieroglyphicall Figures, which he caused to bee painted upon an Arch in St. Innocent's Church-yard in Paris*, trans. Eirenaeus Orandus (1624), 43–44, 64–81. See the edition of this text by Laurinda Dixon.

996-1001 The alchemical wedding or union of male-female, gold-silver, sulphur-mercury is the central image in alchemy; for its various versions and motifs (e.g., that of incest), see Coudert, *Alchemy*, 114ff.; Taylor, *The Alchemists*, 117ff.; and Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, passim. For an interesting version of this motif resulting in the filling of the whole world with “gold, and pearls, and precious stones,” see Benedictus Figulus, *A Golden Casket*, trans. Waite, 256–58.

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This is an index of names—historical, biblical, and legendary—mentioned in the texts and commentaries. In each entry, a roman numeral identifies the poem (as in the Table of Contents and running heads), while an Arabic number refers to the line (or, in the case of text VII, chapter and line, separated by a period). References like “VII: *Index*” or “XIV: *Author’s Epistle*” are to various prose passages associated with these texts. References followed by *n* indicate that the citation is found only in the commentary, not in the verse text itself. Useful glossaries of alchemical terms and processes can be found in text I (see Introduction thereto) and in the *Index* and *Appendix* to text VII (pp. 327ff.).

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