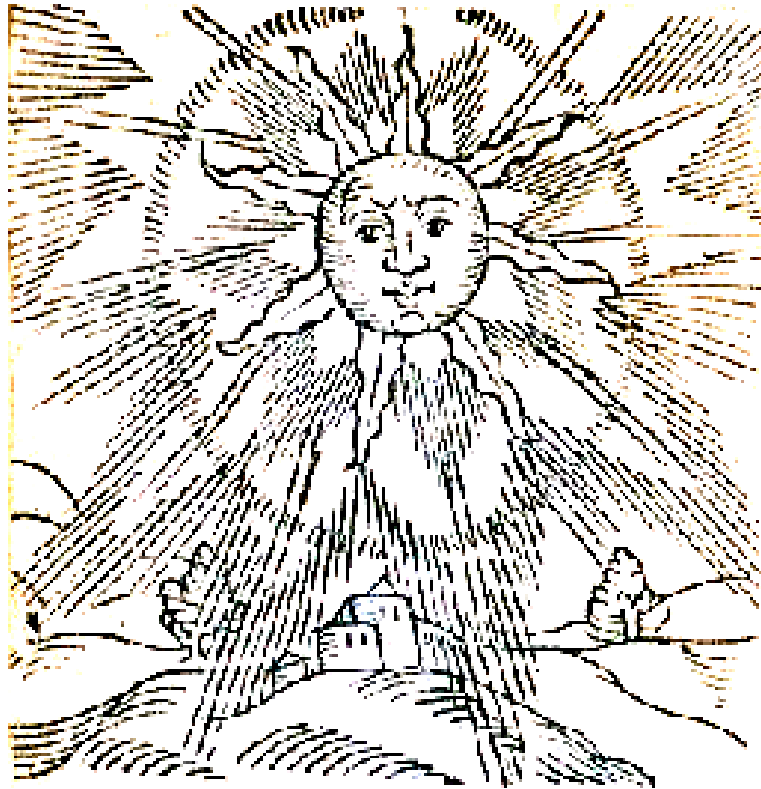


# Artephius



## His Secret Book concerning the Philosophers Stone.

An early 12<sup>th</sup> Century Alchemy manuscript.

# THE EPISTLE OF JOHN PONTANUS

(mentioned in the Preface to the Reader of Artephius his Secret Book) wherein he bears witness of the Book: Translated out of the Latin copy: Extant in the third volume of *Theatrum Chymicum*, at the 775<sup>th</sup> page.<sup>1</sup>

I, John Pontanus<sup>2</sup>, have traveled through many Countries that I might know some certainty of the Philosophers Stone, and going through as it were all the world I found many false deceivers but no true Philosophers yet continually studying and making many doubts, at the length I found the truth, but when I knew the matter in general, I yet erred two hundred times before I could attain the true matter with the operation and practice thereof. First I began to work with the matter by putrefaction nine months together and I found nothing, then I put it into *Balneum Mariae* for a certain time and therein I likewise erred: Afterwards I put it into the fire of calcinations for three months space and I wrought amiss, I tried all kinds of distillations and sublimations (as the Philosophers *Geber*, *Archelaus* and all the rest either say or seem to say) and I found nothing. In short, I assayed to perfect the *Subject* of the whole Art of Alchemy by all means possible to be devised by dung, baths, ashes and other fires of diverse kinds, which yet are all found in the Philosophers Books, but I found no good in them. Wherefore I studied three whole years in the Books of the Philosophers, especially in *Hermes* alone, whose brief words do comprehend the whole Stone, though he spoke obscurely of the Superior and Inferior (or that which is above, and that which is below) of heaven and earth. Therefore our instrument which brings the matter into being in the beginning, second, and third work, is not the fire of a bath, or dung, nor of ashes, nor of the other fires which the Philosophers have put in their Books. What fire is it then which perfects the whole work from the beginning to the ending? Surely the Philosophers have concealed it: But I being moved with pity will declare it to you together with the complement of the whole work. The Philosophers Stone therefore is one, but it has many names and before you know it, it will be very difficult, for it is *watery*, *airy*, *fiery*, *earthy*, *phlegmatic*, *choleric*, and *melancholy*; for it is Sulphurous, and it is likewise *Argent vive* and it has many superfluities, which by the living God are turned into the true essence, our fire being the means: and he that separates anything from the subject, thinking it to be necessary, he truly knows nothing at all in *Philosophy*, for that which is superfluous, unclean, filthy, feculent and in sum, the whole substance of the subject, is perfected into a fixed spiritual

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<sup>1</sup> For a comparison to this text look at the 1976 R.A.M.S. transcription of the William Salmon text of the same title for subtle differences in translation.

<sup>2</sup> (b.1571-d.1640)?

body by the means of our fire. And this the wise men never revealed, and therefore few do come to the Art, thinking there is some superfluous or unclean thing. Now we must see and find out the properties of our fire, and whether it agree to our matter, after the manner that I have said, to wit, that it may be transmuted, whereas that fire does not burn the matter, it separates nothing from the matter, it divides not the pure parts from the impure, as all the *Philosophers* say, but it turns the whole subject into purity. It does not sublime as *Geber* makes his sublimations; *Arnold*<sup>3</sup> likewise and others speaking of sublimations and distillations, to be done in a short time. It is mineral, equal, continual, it vapours not, except it be too much stirred up: it partakes of Sulphur, it is taken from elsewhere then from the matter, it pulls down all things, it dissolves and conceals, likewise it both congeals and calcines, and it is very artificial to find out, and is a compendious and near way, without any cost, at least with small cost: and that firing is it, with a mean firing, for with a soft fire all the whole work is perfected, and it performs withal, all the due sublimations. They that should read *Geber* and all the other *Philosophers*, though they should live an 100,000 years, could not comprehend it, because that fire is found by deep and profound Meditations only, and then it may be gathered out of books, and not before. And therefore the error of this Art is, not to find the fire which turns the whole matter into the true Stone of the *Philosophers*. And therefore study upon it, for if I had found that first, I never [would have] erred 200 times in my practice upon the matter: wherefore I do not marvel, if so many and great men have not attained to the work. They do err, they have erred, they will err because the *Philosophers* have not put the proper *Agent*, save only one which is named *Artephius*, but he speaks for himself or by himself; and unless I had read *Artephius* and felt him speak, I had never come to the complement of the work. But the *practice* is this: Let it be taken; and ground with a physical contrition, as diligently as may be, and let it be set upon fire, and let the proportion of the fire be known, to wit, that it only stir up the matter, and in a short time, that fire, without any other laying on of hands will accomplish the whole work, because it will putrefy, corrupt, engender and perfect and make to appear the three principle colours, black, white and red. And by the means of our fire the medicine will be multiplied, if it be joined with the crude matter, not only in quantity, but also in virtue. With all thy strength therefore search out this fire, and you shall attain your wish, because it does the whole work and is the key of the *Philosophers*, which they never revealed: But if thou muse well and profoundly upon these things that have been spoken concerning the properties of the fire you may know it, otherwise not.

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<sup>3</sup> Arnold de Villa Nova. c.1235 – 1311.

I being moved with pity, have written these things, but that I may satisfy you fully, this fire is not transmuted with the matter, because (as I said above), it is not of the matter. These things therefore I thought fit to say, and to warn the prudent, that they spend not their money unprofitably, but know what they ought to look after. For by this means they may come to the truth of the Art and not otherwise.

*Farewell.*

Finis

**The Preface**  
**To the Reader, in the French and Latin Copies.**

Amongst all the other *Philosophers* (loving Reader (only our *Artephius* is not envious, as he affirms of himself in many places, and therefore he lays down the whole *Art* in most open words in this *Treatise*, interpreting as far as he may, the doubtful speeches and *Sophismes* of others; Nevertheless least he should give to the wicked, ignorant, and evil men, occasion and means to do hurt, he has a little veiled the truth in the *Principals* of the *Science* under an Artificial Method, sometimes affirming, sometimes denying, and making as though he often repeated one and the same thing, whereas in those repetitions he always changes some words, seeming often to say the contrary of what he had said before, willing to leave to the judgment of the Reader, the way of *Truth*, *Virtue*, and true *Working*, which if any man find, let him give immortal thanks to God alone; but if he be that he walks not in the right way, let him read over this *Author* again and again until he understand his meaning. So did the learned *John Pontanus*, which said in his Epistle printed in *Theatrum Chemicum*: *They err* (said he, speaking of them that labour in this *Art*) *they have erred, and they will always err, because the Philosophers in their books have never set down proper Agent, except only one, which is called Artephius, and understand whereof he spoke, I had never come to the Complement of the work*: Therefore read this Book and read it again, until you understand his speech, and so obtain the desired end. It shall be needful so speak any more concerning our *Author*; it suffices that by the grace of God, and the use of this wonderful *Quintessence*, he lived a thousand years, as witnessed *Roger Bacon*, in his Book *of the wonderful works of nature*, and also the most learned *Theophrastus Paracelsus*<sup>4</sup>, in his Book of long life: which term of a thousand years, none of the other *Philosophers*, no nor the Father of them, *Hermes* himself, was able to attain to. Look therefore, whether peradventure this man have not understood the virtues of our *Stone*, and the manner how to use it, better than the rest. Howsoever it be, use it and our labours, to the glory of God, and the profit of this Kingdom.

Farewell.

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<sup>4</sup> b.1493 – d. 1541.

# Artephius.

## His Secret Book

### concerning the Philosophers Stone.

*Antimony* is of the parts of *Saturn*, and has in every respect the nature thereof: for this *Saturnine Antimony* agrees with the *Sun*, having itself *Argent vive*, wherein no metal is drowned but *gold*; that is to say; *Gold* only is drowned in *Antimonial Saturnine Argent vive*, and without that *Argent vive* no metal can be whitened: it whitens therefore *Leton*, that is *Gold*; and it reduces a perfect body into its first matter, that is, into *Sulphur* and *Argent vive* of a white color, and shining more than glass. It dissolves I say, the perfect body which is of his nature; for this water is friendly, and pleasant to the *Metals*, whitening the *Sun*, because it contains a white *Argent vive*. And from hence you may draw a great secret, to wit, that the water of *Saturnine Antimony* ought to be *Mercurial* and *white*; to the end that it may whiten the *Gold*, not burning it, but dissolving and afterwards congealing it to the form of white *Cream*. Therefore, say the *philosopher*, that this water makes the body to be *volatile*; because after it has been dissolved in this water, and cooled again, it mounts aloft upon the surface of the water. Take (said he) crude *gold*, foliated, laminated, or calcined with *Mercury*, and put it into our *Vinegar, Antimony, Saturnine, Mercurial*, and drawn from *Sal ammoniac* (as is said) in a broad vessel of glass, four fingers high or more; and leave it there in a temperate heat, and in a short time you will see lifted up, as it were a liquor of oil swimming aloft, in manner of a thin skin: That gather with a spoon or with a feather, dipping it in; and so doing many times in a day, until there does nothing more arises; afterward make the water vapour away by the fire, that is to say, the superfluous humor of the *vinegar*, and there will remain to you a *fifth essence* of *gold*, in the form of a white oil incombustible, wherein the *philosophers* have placed their greatest secrets; and this *oil* is exceeding *sweet*, and is of great power to mitigate the pains and grief of wounds.

All the secret then of this secret *Antimonial*, is that by virtue thereof we know how to extract and draw out of the body of the *Magnesia, Argent vive*, not burning, (and this is antimony, and a mercurial sublimate) that is, we must draw a water living, incombustible, and then congeal it with the perfect body of the *Sun*, which is done by dissolving therein, into a nature and substance white, congealed as if it were cream, which makes it all to become white. Nevertheless, first of all this *Sun* in his putrefaction and resolution in this water, in the beginning will loose

his light, be darkened, & become *black*; and afterwards will lift himself upon the water, and there will swim upon it by little and little a white colour in a white substance. And this is called to the *whiten the Red Leton*, to sublime it *philosophically*, and to reduce it into his first matter; that is to say, into white *Sulphur* incombustible, and into *Argent vive* fixed; and so the terminated moisture, that is to say, *Gold*, our *Body*, by the reiteration of Liquefaction in this our dissolving water, is turned and reduced into *Sulphur*, and *Argent vive* fixed. And so the perfect *Body* of the *Sun* takes life in this water; is revived, inspired, increased, and multiplied in his kind, as all other things are; for in this water it comes to pass, that the *Body* compounded of *two bodies*, of the *Sun* and of the *Moon*, puffs up, swells, putrefies as a grain of Corn, becomes great with young, is lifted up, and increases, taking the substance & nature, living and vegetable.

And our water, or our foresaid *vinegar*, is the *Vinegar of Mountains*, that is to say, of the *Sun* and *Moon*, and therefore it is mixed with *Sun* and *Moon*, and cleaves to them perpetually: to wit, the *Body* takes from this water the tincture of *whiteness*, and with it (the water) shines with inestimable brightness. He therefore that knows how to turn the body into white silver medicine, he may afterward by this white *gold*, easily turn all imperfect metals into very good and fine silver. And this *white gold*, is by the Philosophers called, their *white Moon*, the *white Argent vive* fixed, the *Gold of Alchemy*, and the *white Smoke*. Therefore without that our *Antimonial vinegar*, the *white gold* of *Alchemy* cannot be made. And because in our *vinegar* there is a double substance of *Argent vive*, one of *Antimony*, and another of *Mercury* sublimed; it does therefore give a double weight and substance of fixed *Argent vive* fixed, and also augments therein (*in the gold*) the natural colour, weight, substance and tincture thereof.

Therefore our dissolving water, carries a great tincture and great fusion, because that when it feels the common fire, if there be in it the perfect *Body* of the *Sun* or of the *Moon*, it suddenly makes it to be melted, and to be turned into his substance, *white* as it is & adds colour, weight, and tincture to the body. It has also power of dissolve all things that may be melted and it is a ponderous body, viscous, precious, and honourable, resolving all crude bodies into their first matter, that is, into *Earth*, & a viscous powder; that is to say, into *Sulphur* and *Argent vive*. If therefore you put into this water any metal, filed, or attenuated, and leaves it for a time in a gentle heat, it will be all dissolved, and changed into a *viscous water*, or *white oil*, as is said. And so it mollifies the *Body*, and prepares it to *fusion* & *liquefaction*; nay, it makes all things fusible, that is, stones and metals, and afterwards gives them

spirit and life. Therefore it dissolves all things with a wonderful solution, turning the perfect *Body* into a fusible medicine, melting, or penetrating, and more fixed, increasing the weight and colour.

Work therefore with it, and you shall obtain from it that which you desire, for it is the *Spirit* and *Soul* of the *Sun* and the *Moon*; it is the *oil*, the dissolving *water*, the *fountain*, the *Balneum Mariae*, the *fire against Nature*, the *moist fire*, the *secret*, *hidden* and *invisible fire*, and the most sharp vinegar, of which a certain ancient *philosopher* said, *I besought the Lord, and he showed me a certain clear water, which I knew to be the pure vinegar, altering, piercing, and digesting*. The vinegar I say penetrative, and instrument moving the *gold* or the *silver*, to putrefy, resolve, and to be reduced into his first matter, and it is the only *Agent* in the whole World for this Art, that can resolve and reincrudate, or make raw again the *Metallic Bodies*, with the conservation of their *species*. It is therefore the only fit and natural mean, by which we ought to resolve the perfect bodies of the *Gold* and the *Moon*, by an admirable and solemn dissolution, with the conservation of their *species*, and without any destruction, unless it be to a new, more noble, and better form or generation, that is to say, into the perfect *Stone* of the *Philosophers*, which is their wonderful and hidden secret.

Now this water is a certain middle substance, clear as pure *Silver*, which ought to receive the tinctures of the *Sun* and the *Moon*, to the end that it may be congealed and converted into white and living *Earth*; for this water has need of the perfect bodies, that with them after dissolution, it may be congealed, fixed, and coagulated into a white *Earth*; and their *solution* is also their *congelation*, for they have one and the same operation, for one is not dissolved, but the other is congealed, neither is there any other water which can dissolve the *Bodies*, but that which abides with them in the matter and form; nay, it cannot be permanent, except it be of the nature of the other body, that they may be made one together. Therefore when you see the *water* coagulate itself with the *Bodies* that be dissolved therein; rest assured that thy *Science*, *Method*, and operations, are true and *philosophical*, and that you proceed aright in the *Art*.

*Nature* then is *amended by its like nature*; that is, *Gold* and *Silver* are amended in our water, as our *water* also with the *Bodies*; which water is called the mean of the *Soul*, without which we can do nothing in this *Art*; and it is a vegetable, animal and mineral fire, preserving the fixed spirits of the *Sun* and the *Moon*, the destroyer and conqueror of *Bodies*; because it destroys, dissolves, and changes *Bodies* and metallic forms, and makes them to be no *Bodies* but a fixed spirit, and turns them into a

fluid substance, which has ingression and power to enter into other imperfect *Bodies*, and to be mixed with them by the smallest parts, and to colour them and make them perfect; which they could not do when they were *Metallic* bodies dry and hard, which have no entrance, nor power to colour and make perfect imperfect *Bodies*. And therefore to good purpose do we turn the *bodies* into a fluid substance; because every tincture will colour a thousand times more, when it is in a soft and liquid substance, than when it is in a dry one, as appears by *Saffron*: and consequently the transmutation of imperfect *Bodies* is impossible to be done by perfect *Bodies*, while they are dry; except they be first brought back into their first matter, soft and fluid: from hence we conclude, that we must make the *Moisture* return, and so reveal that which is hidden; which is called the *reincrudation*, or the making raw again the *Bodies*, that is, the boiling and softening them, until they be deprived of their hard and dry *corporality*; or bodiliness; because that which is dry doth not enter into, nor colour any more than itself. Therefore, the dry Earthly *Body* does not teine, except it be teined, because as is above-said, that which is thick and Earthy enters not, nor colours; and because it enters not, therefore it alters not; wherefore *Gold* colours not, until the hidden spirit be drawn from the belly thereof by our *white water*, and that it be made altogether a spiritual and *white fume*, the *white spirit*, and a *wonderful Soul*.

Wherefore we ought by our water to attenuate, alter and soften the *perfect Bodies*, that they may afterward be mixed with the other *imperfect Bodies*: And therefore if we had no other profit by that *Antimonial water*, then this that it makes the *Bodies* subtle, soft and fluid, according to his own nature, yet it were sufficient for us: for it brings back the *Bodies* to their first original of *Sulphur* and *Mercury*, that of these we may afterwards in a short time, in less than one hour of the day do that above ground which Nature wrought underground, in the mines of the Earth in a *thousand years*, which is as it were miraculous. And therefore our small secret is, by our water, to make the *Bodies volatile, spiritual*, and a teining water, which has ingression or entrance into *Bodies*: for it makes the *Bodies* to be a very *Spirit*, because it does *incerate* (that is, bring to the temper and consistence of wax) the hard and dry bodies, and prepares them to fusion, that is, turns them into a permanent or abiding water. It makes then of the *Bodies* a most precious blessed *Oil*, which is the true tincture, and the *white permanent water*, of nature hot and moist, temperate, subtle, and fusible as wax, which pierces, reaches to the bottom, colours and make perfect. Therefore our water does incontinently dissolve *gold* and *silver*, and makes them an incombustible *Oil*, which may then be mixed with other imperfect *Bodies*: for our water turns the *Bodies* into the nature of a fusible *Salt*, which is by the

*Philosophers* called, *Sal Alebroe*, which is the best and noblest of all *Salts*, being in the regiment thereof fixed, and flying the fire, and it is indeed an *Oil*, of a nature hot, subtle, penetrating, reaching to the depths and entering, called the complete *Elixir*, and it is the hidden secret of the wise *Alchemists*. He therefore that knows this *Salt* of the *Sun* and *Moon*, and the generation, or perfection thereof, and afterwards how go mix it, and make it friendly to the other imperfect bodies, he in truth knows one of the greatest secrets of Nature, and one way of perfection.

These *Bodies* thus dissolved by our *water* are called *Argent vive*, which is not without *Sulphur*, nor *Sulphur* without the nature of *Luminaries* (or lights) because that the lights (the *Sun* and *Moon*) are the principal means, or middle things, in the form by which *Nature* passes in perfecting and accomplishing the generation thereof: And this *Quicksilver*, is called the *Salt* honoured, and animated and pregnant, (or great with Child) and *fire*, seeing that it is nothing but *fire*; nor *fire*, but *Sulphur*; but *quicksilver* drawn from the *Sun* and *Moon* by our water, and reduced to a stone of great price; that is to say, it is the matter of the *Lights*<sup>5</sup>, altered from baseness to nobleness. Note that this white sulphur is the Father of *Metals*, and their Mother together, it is our *Mercury*, and the *Minera* of *Gold*, and the *Soul*, and the *ferment*, and the mineral virtue, and the living *Body*, and the perfect *Medicine*, our *Sulphur*, and our *Quicksilver*, that is, *Sulphur* of *Sulphur*, and *Quicksilver* of *Quicksilver*, and *Mercury* of *Mercury*. The property therefore of our water is that it melts *gold* and *silver*, and augments in them their native colour; for it turns the *Bodies* from *Corporality*, into *Spirituality*; and this water it is which sends into the *Bodies* a white fume, which is the white soul, subtle, hot and of much fieriness. This water is also called the *bloody stone*, and it is the virtue of the spiritual blood, without which nothing can be done; and the subject of all liquable things, and of liquefaction, which agrees very well, and cleaves to the *Sun* and the *Moon*, neither is it ever separated from them, for it is kin to the *Sun* and the *Moon*, but more to the *Sun* than to the *Moon*; *Note this well*: It is also called the *mean* of conjoining the tinctures of the *Sun* and the *Moon* with imperfect *Metals*; for it turns the *Bodies* into a true *tincture* to teine the other imperfect *Metals*, and it is the water which *whitens*, as it is *white*, which quickens as it is a *Soul*; and therefore (as the philosopher said) soon enters into its *body*. For it is a living water which comes to moisten its *earth*, that it may bud, and bring forth fruit in his time, as all things springing from the *Earth*, are engendered by the *dew* or *moisture*. The *Earth* therefore buds not without watering and moisture: it is the water of *May-dew*, that cleanses the *Bodies*; and pierces them like rain water, whitens them, and makes *one* new *Body* of *two* *Bodies*. This water of life being rightly ordered

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<sup>5</sup> William Salmon refers to the *Sol* and *Luna*.

with his *Body*, whitens it, and turns it into his white color; for the *water* is a white fume, and therefore the *Body* is whitened with it: *whiten the Body then, and burn your Books*. And between these two, that is, between the *Body* and the *water*, there is friendship, desire, lust, as between the *male* and the *female*, because of the nearness of their like natures: for our second living water is called *Azot*, washing the *Leton*, that is, the *Body* compounded of the *Sun* and the *Moon* by our first water. This second water is also called the *Soul* of the dissolved *Bodies*, of which *Bodies* we have already tied the *Souls* together, to the end that they may serve the wise *philosophers*. O how perfect and magnificent is this *water*, for without it the work could never be brought to pass! It is also called the vessel of *Nature*, the belly, the womb, the receptacle of the tincture, the *Earth*, and the Nurse<sup>6</sup>. It is the Fountain in which the *King* and *Queen* wash themselves; and the *Mother* which must be put and sealed in the belly of her *Infant*; that is, the *Sun* which proceeded from her, and which she brought forth: and therefore they have love one another as a *Mother* and a *Son*, and are easily joined together, because they come from one and the same root, and are of the same substance and nature. And because this water is the water of the *vegetable* life, it gives *life*, and makes the dead body to vegetate, increase and spring forth, and to rise from *death* to *life*, by *solution* and *sublimation*; and in doing the *Body* is turned into a *Spirit*, and the *Spirit* into a *body*, and then is made amity, peace, concord, and union between the contraries, that is, between the *Body* and the *Spirit*, which reciprocally change their natures, which they receive and communicate to one another by the least parts, so that the *hot* is mixed with the *cold*, the *dry* with the *moist*, and the *hard* with the *soft*; and thus is there a mixture made of contrary natures, that is, of *cold* and *hot*, and of *moist* with *dry*, an admirable connection & conjunction of enemies. Then our dissolution of *bodies*, which is made in this first water, is no other thing than a killing of the *moist* with the *dry*, because the *moist* is coagulated with the *dry*, for the moisture is contained, terminated, and coagulated into a *Body*, or into *Earth*, only by *dryness*. Let therefore the hard and the dry *bodies* be put into our first water in a vessel well shut, where they will abide until they be dissolved, and ascend on high, and then they may be called a *new body*, the *white gold of Alchemy*, the *white stone*, the *white Sulphur*, not burning, and the *Stone of Paradise*, that is, the *stone* which converts imperfect *Metals* into fine white silver: Having this, we have also the *Body*, *Soul* and *Spirit*, all together; of which *Spirit* and *Soul* it is said, that they cannot be drawn from the perfect *Bodies*, but by the conjunction of our dissolving water, because it is certain that the thing *fixed*, cannot be lifted up, but by the conjunction of the things *volatile*. The *Spirit* then by the mediation of *water* and the *Soul*, is drawn forth from the *Bodies*, and the *Body* is made no *Body*, because

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<sup>6</sup> Hans Nintzel, 1976, notes to *See Hermes*.

at the same instant the spirit with the soul of the mounts on high into the upper part, which is the perfection of the *Stone*, and is called *sublimation*. This *sublimation* (said *Florentius Catalanus*) is done by things sharp, spiritual, and volatile, which are of a sulphureous and viscous nature, which dissolves the *Bodies* and makes them to be lifted up, into Air in the spirit. And in this *sublimation* a certain part and portion of our said first *water* ascends with the *Bodies*, joining itself to them, ascending and subliming into a middle substance, which holds the nature of the two, that is, of the *Bodies* and of the *water*; and therefore it is called the Corporeal and spiritual compound, *Corsufle*, *Cambar*, *Ethelia*, *Zandarach*, the good *Duenech*, but properly it is only called the *water permanent*, because it flies not in the fire, always adhering to the commixed *Bodies*, that is, the *Sun* and the *Moon*, and communicating to them a living tincture, incombustible and most firm, more noble and precious than the former which these *bodies* had, because from henceforth this tincture can run as *oil* upon the *bodies*, perforating and piercing with a wonderful *fixion*, because this *Tincture* is the *spirit*, and the *spirit* is the *soul*, and the *soul* is the *body*, because in this operation the body is made a *spirit* of a most subtle nature; and likewise the *spirit* is *incorporated*, and is made of the nature of a *body* with *bodies*, and so our *Stone* contains a *body*, a *Soul*, and a *Spirit*. O Nature, how you change the *body* into a *spirit*, which you could not do, if the *spirit* were not incorporated with the *bodies*, and the *bodies* with the *spirits* made volatile, or flying, and afterward *permanent* or *abiding*. Therefore they have passed into one another, and are turned the one into the other by wisdom. O *Wisdom*, how you make *Gold* to be *volatile* and fugitive, although by nature it be most fixed. It behoves therefore to dissolve and melt *Bodies* by our water, and to make them a permanent water, a *golden water* sublimed, leaving in the bottom the gross, earthly, and superfluous dry. And in this sublimation the fire ought to be soft, and gentle; for if in this sublimation the *Bodies* be not purified in a lent or slow fire, and the grosser earthly parts (*note well*) separated from the uncleanness of the *dead*, you shall be hindered from ever making your work perfect; for you need only subtle and light nature of the dissolved *Bodies*, which our water will easily give you, if you proceed with a slow fire, for it will separate the *Heterogeneal* (or that which is of another kind) from the things *Homogeneal* (or that which is all of one kind).

Our compound therefore receives mundification or cleaning by our *moist fire*, that is to say, dissolving and subliming that which is pure and *white*, and casting aside the *feces*, like a voluntary vomit (said *Azinaban*). For in such a dissolution and natural sublimation, there is made a loosing, or an untying of the *Elements*, a cleansing and separation of the pure from the impure, so that the pure and white

ascends upwards, and the impure and earthly fixed remains in the bottom of the *water*, or the *vessel*, which must be taken away and removed, because it is of no value, taking only the middle *white substance*, flowing and melting, and leaving the *feculent earth*, which remained below in the bottom, which came principally from the water, and is the dross, and the *damned earth*, which is nothing worth, nor can ever do any good, as does the pure, clear, white and clean matter, which is ought only to take. And against this *Capharean rock*<sup>7</sup>, the *ship* of knowledge of the *Scholars* and *Students* in *Philosophy*, is often (as it happened also to me sometimes) most imprudently dashed and beaten, because the *Philosophers* do very often affirm the contrary, namely, that nothing must be removed or taken away, but the moisture, that is, the *Blackness*; which notwithstanding they say and write, only to deceive the unwise, gross, and ignorant, which of themselves without a *Master*, unwearied *reading*, or *Prayer* to *God Almighty*, would like conquerors carry away this golden fleece.

Note therefore, that this separation, division, and sublimation, is without doubt the *key* of the whole work. After the putrefaction then, and dissolution of these *Bodies*, our *Bodies* do lift themselves up to the surface of the dissolving water, in the colour of *whiteness*, and this *whiteness* is *life*; for in this *whiteness*, the *Antimonial* and *Mercurial Soul*, is by the appointment of nature, infused with the *Spirits* of the *Sun* and *Moon*, which separates the subtle from the thick, and the pure from the impure, lifting up by little and little, the subtle part of the *Body*, from the dregs, until all the pure be separated and lifted up: And in this our *Philosophical* and natural sublimation fulfilled: And in this *whiteness* is the soul infused into the *Body*, that is, the mineral virtue, which is more subtle than *fire*, being indeed the true quintessence and life, which desires to be born again, and to put off the gross earthly *feces*, which it has taken from the *Menstruous* and corrupt place of his *Original*. And in this our *Philosophical* sublimation, not in the naughty common *Mercury*, which has no qualities like to them, wherewith our *Mercury* drawn from his *vitriolate* caverns, is adorned. But let us return to our *sublimation*. It is most therefore most certain in this *Art*, that this *Soul* drawn from the *Bodies*, cannot be lifted up, but by putting to of a volatile thing, which is of his own kind; by which the *Bodies* are made *volatile* and spiritual, lifting up, subtiliating and subliming themselves, against their own proper nature, which is *bodily*, heavy and ponderous; and by this means they are made no *Bodies*, but incorporeal, and a *fifth essence*, of the nature of a *Spirit*, which is called *Hermes* his *Bird*, and *Mercury* drawn from a *red* fervent; and so the earthly parts remain below, or rather the grosser parts of the *Bodies*, which cannot

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<sup>7</sup> On the Euboea Coast

by any wit or device of man be perfectly dissolved. And this *white fume*, this *white gold*, that is, this *quintessence*, is also called the compound *Magnesia*, which as a *man*, contains, or like a *man* is compounded of a *Body*, a *Soul* and a *Spirit*: For the *Body* is the fixed *earth* of the *Sun*, which is more than most fine, ponderously lifted up, by the force of our divine water; The *Soule* is the tincture of the *Sun* and of the *Moon*, proceeding from the conjunction, or communication of these two: But the spirit is the mineral virtue of the two *Bodies*, and of the water which carries the *Soul*, or the white tincture upon the *Bodies*, and out of the *Bodies*, as the tincture of *Dyers*, is carried by water upon the *cloth*. And that *Mercurial Spirit* is the Bond or tyall of the Soul of the *Sun*; And the *Body* of the *Sun* is the Body of fiction, containing with the *Moon* the spirit and soul. The spirit therefore pierces, the *Body* fixes, the *Soul* couples, colours and whitens. Of these three united together, is our *Stone* made, that is, of the *Sun*, and the *Moon*, and *Mercury*. Then with our gilded (or golden) *water*, is extracted a nature surpassing all nature, and therefore except the *bodies* be by this our water dissolved, imbibed, ground, softened, and sparring and diligently governed, until they leave their grossness and thickness; and be turned into a thin and impalpable spirit, our labor will always be in vain, for unless the *bodies* be changed into no *bodies*, that is, into the *Philosophers Mercury*, the rule of Art is not yet found, and the reason is, because it is impossible to draw out of the *bodies* that most thin and subtle *Soul*, which has in it all tincture, if the *bodies* be not first dissolved in our water. Dissolve therefore the *bodies* in the *golden water*, and boil them, until by the water all the tincture come out into a *white* colour, or a *white oil*, and when you shall see this whiteness upon the *water*, then know that the *bodies* are dissolved or melted, and continue the decoction, until they bring forth the *cloud*, which they have conceived, dark, black and white. Put therefore the perfect *bodies* in our water, in a vessel *Hermetically* sealed, upon a soft fire, and boil them continually, until they be perfectly resolved into a most precious *oil*: Boil them (said *Adfar*) with a gentle fire, as it were for the hatching of *chickens*, until the *bodies* be dissolved, and their tincture most nearly conjoined (*mark well*) be wholly drawn out: for it is not drawn out all at once, but it comes forth by little and little, every day and every hour, until after a long time this dissolution be complete, and that which is dissolved do always arise uppermost upon the *water*. And in this dissolution let the fire be soft and continual, until the *bodies* be loosed into a viscous impalpable water, and that the whole *tincture* comes forth, first in the colour of *blackness*, which is the sign of a true *solution*: Then continue the decoction, until it become a *white permanent water*, for governing it in its bath, it will afterward be clear, and in the end become like common *argent vive*, climbing through the air upon the *first water*. And therefore when you see *bodies* dissolved into a *viscous* water, then know that they are

turned into a *vapour*, and that you have the *Soul* separated from the *dead bodies*, and by sublimation brought into the order and estate of *Spirits*, whereupon both of them with a part of our *water*, are made *spirits*, flying and climbing into the *air*, and that there the body compounded of the *male* and *female*, of the *Sun* and *Moon*, and of that most subtle nature, cleansed by *sublimation*, takes life, is inspired by his moisture, by his *water*; as a man by the *Air*, and therefore from henceforth it will multiply, and increase in his kind, like all other things. And therefore in such an *elevation* and *Philosophical* sublimation, they are all joined one with another, and the new body, inspired by the *Air*, lives vegetably, which is a wonder. Wherefore unless the *Bodies* be subtilized and made thin by the *fire* and *water*, until they do arise like *Spirits*, and be made like water and fume, or like *Mercury*, there is nothing done in this *Art*. But when they ascend, they are born in the air, and changed in the air, and are made life with life, in such sort that they can never be separated, as *water* mixed with *water*. And therefore it is wisely said that the Stone is born in the *Air*, because it is altogether *Spiritual*; for *the vulture flying without wings, cries upon the top of the mountain, saying, I am the white of the black, and the red of the white, and the Citrine son of the red; I tell the truth, and lie not.*

It suffices you therefore to put the *Bodies* in the vessel, and in the water once for all, and in the water once for all, and to shut the vessel diligently, until a true separation be made, which by the envious is called *conjunction, sublimation, assation, extraction, putrefaction, ligation, desponsation, subtiliation, generation*, etc. and that the whole *Mastery* be done. Do therefore as in the generation of a *man*, and every *vegetable*; put the seed once into the *womb*, and shut it well. By this means you see that you need not many things, and that our work requires no great charges, because there is but one *Stone*, one *Medicine*, one *Vessel*, one *Regiment*, and one successive *disposition* to the *white*, and to the *red*. And although we say in many places *take this*, and *take that*, yet we understand, that it behoves to take but *one* thing, and put it *once* into the vessel, and to shut the vessel until the work be perfected; for these things are so set down by the envious *Philosophers*, to deceive the unwary, as is aforesaid. For is not this *Art Cabalistical*, and full of secrets? And do you, fool, believe that we do openly teach the *Secrets of Secrets*? And do you take our words according to the literal sound? Know assuredly, (I am not quite envious as others are) he that takes the words of the other *Philosophers*, according to the ordinary signification and found them, he does already, having lost *Ariadne's* thread, wander in the midst of the *Labyrinth*, and has as good as appointed his money to perdition. But I, *Artephius*, after I had learned all the *Art* and perfect *Science* in the Books of the true-speaking *Hermes*, was sometimes envious, as all the

rest, but when I had by the space of a *thousand* years, or thereabouts, (which are now passed over me since my nativity, by the only grace of God Almighty, and the use of this wonderful *fifth essence*) when, I say, for so long time I had seen no man had could work the *Mastery* of *Hermes*, by reason of the obscurity of the *Philosophers* words, moved with pity, and goodness of being an honest man, I have determined in these last times of my life to write all things truly and sincerely, that you may not want or desire nothing to the perfecting of the *Philosophers Stone*, (except a certain thing, which is not lawful for any person to say or to write, because it is always revealed by *God*, or by a *Master*, and yet in this Book, he that is not stiff-necked, shall with a little experience, easily learn it). I have therefore in this Book written the naked truth, although clothed with few colors, that every good and wise man, may from this *Philosophical Tree* happily gather the admirable Apples of the *Hesperides*. Wherefore praised be the most high *God*, which has put this benignity into our Soul, and with a wonderful long old age, has given us a true delectation of heart, wherewithal it seems to me, that I do truly love, cherish, and embrace all men. But let us return to the *Art*. Surely our work is quickly dispatched, for that which the heat of *Sun* does in a hundred years in the Mines of the Earth for the generation of a *Metal*, (as I have often seen) our *Secret Fire*, that is, our fiery *Sulphureous water*, which is called *Balneum Mariae*, works in short time.

And this work is no great labor to him that knows and understands it; neither is the matter so dear (considering a small quantity suffices) that it ought to cause any man to pluck back his hand, because it is so short and easy, that it may well be called the *work of Women*, and *the play of children*. *Work* then cheerfully (my son) *pray* to God, *read* Books continually, for one Book opens another, think of it profoundly; fly all things that vanish in the fire, for you have not your intent in these combustible and consuming things, but only in the decoction of your water, drawn from your lights. For by this water is color and weight given infinitely, and this *water* is a *white fume*, which as a *Soul* flows in the perfect *bodies*, taking wholly from them their blackness and uncleanness, and consolidating the *two Bodies* in one, and multiplying their *water*. And there is no other thing that can take away their true colour from the perfect *Bodies*, that is, from the *Sun* and the *Moon*; but *Azoth*, that is, this our water, which colours and makes white the *red Body*, according to the regiments thereof.

But let us speak of the *fires*. Our *fire* is *mineral, equal, continual*; it vapours not, unless it be too much stirred up, it partakes of *sulphur*, it is taken other where then from the *matter*, it pulls down all things, it dissolves, congeals, and calcines, it is

artificial to find, it is a short way (or an expense) without cost, at the least, without any great cost; it is *moist, vaporous, digestive, altering, piercing, subtle, ayery, not violent, not burning, compassing or environing, containing but one*, and it is the Fountain of living water, which goes about, and contains the place where the *King* and *Queen* bathe themselves. In all the work this *moist fire* is sufficient for you, at the beginning, middle and end; for in it consists the whole *Art*: This is the fire *natural, against nature, unnatural*, and without burning; and finally, this fire is *hot, dry, moist, and cold*, meditate on this, and work aright, taking nothing that is of a strange nature: And if you do not well understand these fires, hearken further to what I shall give you, never as yet written in any Book, from out of the abstruse and hidden cavillation<sup>8</sup> of the Ancients, concerning *fires*.

We have properly *three fires*, without which the *Art* cannot be done; and he that works without them, takes a great deal of care in vain. The first is the *fire* of the *Lamp*, which is *continual, moist, vaporous, ayery*, and artificial to find; for the *Lamp* ought to be proportioned to the closure (or enclosure) and herein we must use great judgment, which comes not to the knowledge of a workman of a stiff neck: for if the fire of the *Lamp* be not *geometrically* and duly proportioned and fitted to the *Furnace*, either for lack of heat you will not see the expected signs in their times, and so you will lose your hope by too long expectation, or else with too much heat you will burn the flowers of the *Gold*, and so sadly bewail your lost labour. The *second fire* is the fire of *ashes*, in which the vessel *hermetically* sealed is shut up; or rather it is that most gentle heat, which proceeding from the temperate vapour of the *lamp*, goes equally round about the vessel: This *fire* is not *violent*, if it be not too much stirred up; it is digesting; altering, it is taken from another *Body* then the matter, it is but one, or alone, it is moist and unnatural, &c. The *third* is the natural fire of our water, which for this cause is also called *fire against nature*, because it is water; and yet nevertheless it makes a mere Spirit of *Gold*, which common fire cannot do; this fire is mineral, equal, and partakes of *Sulphur*; it breaks, congeals, dissolves, and calcines all, this is piercing, subtle, not burning, and is the Fountain of *living water*, wherein the *King* and *Queen* bathe themselves, wherefore we have need in the whole work, in the *beginning, middle, and ending*, but the other two above said, we do not always need, but only sometimes: Join therefore in the reading the Books of the *Philosophers* these *three* sorts of fire, and without doubt you shall understand all their cavillations concerning their fires.

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<sup>8</sup> Jest or mock.

As touching the *colours*, he that which does not make *black*, cannot make *white*, because *blackness* is the beginning of *whiteness*, and a sign of putrefaction and alteration, and that the *Body* is now pierced and mortified. Therefore in the putrefaction in this water, there first appears *blackness*, like to broth wherein some blood, or some bloody thing is boiled. Secondly, the black *Earth* by continual decoction is *whitened*, because the *Soul* of the two *bodies* swims aloft upon the water like white cream; and in this only *whiteness*, all the spirits are so united, that they can never fly from one another. And therefore the *Leton* must be *whitened*, and tear the Books, lest our hearts be broken, for this entire *whiteness* is the true *Stone* to the *white*, and the *body* ennobled by the necessity of his end, and the tincture of *whiteness*, of a most exuberant reflection, and shining brightness, which being mixed with a *Body*, never separates from it. Here then note, that the *Spirits* are not *fixed*, but in the *white* color, which by consequent is more noble than the other colours, and ought more earnestly to be desired, considering it is, as it were, the complement & perfection of the whole work. For our *Earth* is first putrefied in *blackness*, then it is cleansed in the elevation or lifting up, afterwards being dried, the *blackness* departs, and then it is *whitened*, and the dark moist dominion of the woman perishes, and then the white fume pierces into the *new Body*, and the *Spirits* are shut up, or bound together, in dryness, and that which is corrupting, deformed and *black* with moisture vanishes, and then the *new Body* rises again clear, white and immortal, getting the victory over all its enemies. And as heat working upon that which is *moist*, causes or engenders *blackness*, which is the *first* color, so by decoction ever more and more, heat working upon that which is dry, begets *whiteness*, which is the *second* colour; and afterward working upon that which is purely & perfectly dry, it causes *citrinity* and *redness*; and so much concerning the colours.

We must therefore understand, that the thing which has its *head red* and *white*, the *feet white*, and afterwards *red*; and yet before that, the *eyes black*, this only thing is our *mastery*: dissolve then the *Sun* and the *Moon* in our dissolving water, which is familiar, friendly, and of the next nature to them, which is likewise to them sweet and pleasant, and as it were a *womb*, a *mother*, an *Original*, the beginning and the end of life, and that is the reason why they are amended in this water, because *Nature rejoices in Nature, and Nature contains Nature*, and in true *Marriage* they are joined together, and made one nature, one new body, raised up, and immortal. And thus we must join consanguinity with Consanguinity, and then these natures will meet, and follow one another, putrefy themselves, engender themselves, and make one another rejoice; because *Nature* is governed by *Nature*, which is nearest and most friendly to it. Our water then (said *Danthin*) is the most pleasant, fair, and clear

Fountain, prepared only for the *King* and *Queen*, whom it knows very well, and they know it; for it draws them to itself, and they abide therein to wash themselves two or three *days*, that is, two or three *months*; and it makes them young again and fair. And because *Sun* and *Moon* have their Original from this water their Mother; therefore it behoves that they enter again into their Mother's womb, that they may be born again, and be made more strong, more noble, and more valiant. And therefore if these do not *die*, and be not turned into water, they remain alone, and *without fruit*; but if they *die*, and be resolved in our water, they bring fruit an *hundred* fold; and from that very place, where it seemed they had lost what they were, from thence shall they appear that which they were not before. Let therefore the *Spirit* of our living water, be with great wit and subtlety fixed with the *Sun* and the *Moon*, because they being turned into the nature of water, do dye, and seem like to the dead; yet afterward being inspired from thence, they live, increase and multiply like all other *vegetable* things. It is enough then to dispose the matter sufficiently from *without*, for from *within*, itself does work sufficiently to its own perfection. For it has in itself a certain and inherent *motion*, according to the true way, better than any order than can be imagined by man. And therefore do you only *prepare*, and Nature will *perfect*; for if she be not hindered by the contrary, she will not pass her own certain *motion*, as well to conceive, as to bring forth. Wherefore after the preparation of the matter, take heed only lest by too much fire you make the *bath* too hot: *Secondly*, take heed lest the *Spirit* do exhale, because it would hurt him that works, that is to say, it would destroy the work, and cause many *infirmities*, that is, much sadness and anger. From this that have been spoken, is drawn this *Axiom*, to wit, *that by the course of nature, he does not know the making of Metals, that knows not the destruction of them*. It behoves then, to join together them that are of kindred, for *Natures* do find their like *natures*, and being putrefied, are mixed together, and mortify themselves. It is necessary therefore to know this *corruption* and *generation*, and how the *Natures* do embrace one another, and are pacified in a *slow* fire; how Nature rejoices in Nature, and nature *retains* nature, and turns it into a white nature. After this, if you will make it *red*, you must boil this *white*, in a dry continual fire, until it be as *red* as *blood*, which will be nothing else but *fire*, and true tincture: And so by a continual dry fire, the *whiteness* is changed, amended, perfected, made *Citrine*, and acquires *redness*, a true *fixed* color. And consequently by how much more this *red* is boiled, and made a tincture of perfect *redness*; Wherefore you must with a *dry fire*, and a *dry calcination*, without any moisture, boil this *compound*, until it be clothed with a most *red* color, and then it will be a perfect *Elixir*.

If afterwards you would *multiply* it, you must again resolve that *red* in new dissolving water, and after by decoction *whiten* and *rubify* it by the degrees of fire, reiterating the first regiment. Dissolve, congeal, reiterate, shutting, opening, and multiplying in *quantity* and *quality* at your own pleasure: for by a new corruption and generation, there is again brought in a new *motion*, and so we could never find an end, if we would always work by reiteration of *solution* and *coagulation*, by the means of our dissolving *water*, that is to say, dissolving and congealing, as is said in the first regiment. And so the virtue thereof is increased and multiplied in *quantity* and *quality*, so that if in the first work, one part of your *Stone*, will teyne an *hundred*, in the second it will teyne a *thousand*, in the third *ten-thousand*, and so by pursuing your work, your projection will come to *infinity*, teyning truly, and perfectly, and fixedly, every quantity, how great forever it be, and so by a thing of an easy price, is added *colour*, and *virtue*, and *weight*. Therefore *our fire and Azoth are sufficient for you*; boil, boil, reiterate, dissolve, congeal, and so continue according as your will, multiplying it as much as you would, and until your Medicine be made fusible as *wax*, and that it have the *quantity* and virtue which you desire. Therefore all the accomplishment of the work, or of our *Second Stone* (note it well) consists in this, that you take the *perfect body*, which you must put in *our water*, in a house of *glass*, well shut and stopped with cement, lest the *air* get in, or the *moisture* enclosed get out; and there hold it in the digestion of a gentle heat, as if it were of a *bath*, or the most temperate heat of *dung*, upon which with the fire you shall continue the perfection of decoction, until it be putrefied and resolved into *black*, and afterwards be lifted up, and sublimed by the water, that it may thereby be cleansed from all *blackness* and darkness, and that it may be *whitened* and made *subtle*, until it come to the utmost purity of sublimation, and at the last be made *volatile*, and *white*, within and without: for the *vulture flying in the Air without wings, cries that it might get upon the Mountain, that is, upon the waters*, upon which the *white Spirit* is carried. Then continue a convenient *fire*, and that *Spirit*, that is, the subtle substance of the *Body* and of *Mercury* will ascend upon the water, which quintessence is *whiter* than the *snow*; continue still, and in the end strengthen your fire, until all which is *spiritual* mount on high: for know well, that all that is clear, pure, and spiritual, ascends on high in the *air*, in the form of a *white fume*, which the *Philosophers* call, the *Virgins milk*.

It behoves therefore, that (as *Sibill* said), *the Son of the Virgin be exalted from the Earth*, and that the white *quintessence* after his resurrection be lifted up towards the heavens, and that the gross and thick remain in the bottom of the vessel and of the *water*, for afterwards when the vessel is cold, you shall find in the bottom thereof,

the *feces*, *black*, burnt, and combust, separate from the *Spirit* and *white quintessence*, which dregs you must cast away. In these times the *Argent vive* rains from our *air* upon our new *earth*, which is called *Argent vive*, sublimed from the air, whereof is made a *water* viscous, clean and *white*, which is the true *tincture* separated from all *black feces*, and so our *brass* or *Leton*, is with our water governed, purified, and adorned with a *white* color, which *white* colour is not gotten, but by decoction and coagulation of the *water*. Boil it then continually, wash away the *blackness* from the *Leton*, not with your hand, but with the *Stone*, or the *fire*, or our *second Mercurial water*, which is the true *tincture*. For this separation of the pure from the impure, is not done with *hands*, but *nature* herself alone, by working it circularly to perfection, brings it to pass. It appears then that this composition is not a manual work, but only a change of the natures; because *nature* dissolves and conjoins itself, it sublimes and lifts up itself, and having separated the *feces*, it grows *white*: and in such a sublimation the parts are always joined together, more subtle, more pure and essential, because that when the fiery nature lifts up the subtle parts, it lifts up always the more pure, and by consequent leaves the grosser in the bottom. And therefore it behoves by an indifferent fire, to sublime in a continual vapor, that the stone may be inspired in the *air*, and live. For the nature of all things takes life of the inspiration of *air*; and so also all our Mastery consists in vapour, and in the sublimation of the *water*. And therefore our *brass* or *Leton* must by degrees of fire be lifted up, and freely without violence, of himself, ascend on high, wherefore unless the *Body* be by *fire* and *water* dissolved, attenuated, and subtilized, until it ascends as a *Spirit*, or climbs like *Argent vive*, or as the *white Soul* separated from the *Body*, and carried in the sublimation of the *Spirits*, there is nothing at all done in this Art: But when it ascends on high, it is born in the *air*, and changed in the *air*, and is made *life* with *life*, being altogether spiritual and incorruptible: And so in such a regiment the *Body* is made a *Spirit* of a subtle nature, and the *Spirit* is incorporated with the *Body*, and is made one with it; and in such a sublimation, conjunction, and elevation, all things are made *white*.

And therefore this *Philosophical* and natural sublimation is necessary, for that it makes peace between the *body* and *spirit*, which is impossible otherwise to be done, otherwise then by this separation of the parts: wherefore it behoves to sublime them both, to the end, that in the troubles of this stormy Sea, the *pure* may *ascend*, and the *impure* and earthly may descend: And for this cause it must be boiled continually, that it may be brought to a subtle nature, and that the *body* may assume and draw to itself the *white Mercurial Soul*, which it naturally retains, and suffers it not to be separated from it, because it is like to it, in the nearness of the

first, pure, and simple nature. From hence it appears that this separation must be made by decoction, until there remain no more of the *fat* of the *Soul*, which is not lifted up, and exalted into the upper part, for so they shall be both reduced to a simple *equality*, and to a simple *whiteness*. *The vulture therefore flying in the air, and the Toad going upon the Earth, is our Mastery*. And therefore when you shall gently, and with great discretion, separate the *Earth* from the *water*, that is, from the *fire*, and the *subtle* from the *thick*, then that which is *pure*, will *ascend* from Earth into Heaven, and that which is *impure*, will go down to the *Earth*, and the more subtle part will in the *upper* place take the nature of a *spirit*, and in the *lower* place the nature of an *Earthy Body*; wherefore let the *white nature* with the more subtle part of the *Body*, be by this operation lifted up, leaving the *fæces*, which is done in a short time: for the *Soul* is aided by her associate and *fellow*, and perfected by it. *My Mother* (says the *Body*) *has begotten me, and by me she herself is begotten; and after she has taken her flight, (or I have taken from her her flying) she after the best manner she can, becomes a pious Mother, nourishing and cherishing the son whom she has begotten, until he come to perfect state*. Hear this secret: Keep the *Body* in this our *Mercurial water*, until it ascend on high with the *white soul*, and the *Earthy* descend to the bottom, which is called, *the Earth remains*: then shall you see the water coagulate itself with its *body*, and shall be assured that the *Science* is true, because the *Body* coagulates his moisture into dryness, as the rennet of a *Lamb* coagulates milk into *Cheese*. In the same fashion the *spirit* will pierce the *body*, and there will be as perfect mixture made by the least parts, and the *Body* will draw to himself his *moisture*, that is to say, his *white Soul*, even as the *Loadstone* draws the *Iron*, because of the likeness and nearness of his nature; and his greediness, and then the one will hold the other, and this is our sublimation and coagulation, which retains everything *volatile*, and makes that it can fly no more. Therefore this composition is not a manual operation, but (as I said) a changing of natures, and a wonderful connection of their *cold* with *hot*, and their *moist* with *dry*: for the *hot* is mixed with *cold*, and the *dry* with *moist*, and so by this means is made the mixture and conjunction of the *body* with and *spirit*, which is called the changing of *contrary natures*; because that in such a solution and sublimation, the *spirit* is turned into a *body*, and *body* into a *spirit*; so that the natures being mingled together, and reduced into one, do change one another, in as much as the *body* makes the *spirit* a *body*, and the *spirit* turns the *body* into a teyned and *white spirit*.

And therefore (this is the last time that I will tell you) boil it in our *white water*, that is, in *Mercury*, until it be dissolved into *blackness*, and then by continual decoction, it will be deprived of his *blackness*, and the *body* so dissolved, will at length arise with the *white Soul*, and then one will be mingled with the other, and

they will embrace one another, so that they shall no more be divided asunder, and then the *spirit* is united to the *body* with a real accord, and are made one *permanent* thing; and this is the *solution* of the *body*, and *Coagulation* of the *spirit*, which have one and the self-same operation.

He therefore that knows how to *marry*, to *make with child*, to *mortify*, to *putrefy*, to *engender*, to *quicken* the *species*, to bring in the *white light*, and to *cleanse* the *vulture* from his *blackness* and *darkness*, until he be purged by *fire*, coloured and purified from all his spots, shall be the owner of so great dignity, that *Kings* shall reverence him, and do him honour.

Wherefore let our *body* abide in the *water*, until such time as it be loosed into a new *powder* in the bottom of the *vessel* and of the *water*, which is called the *black ashes*, and this is the corruption of the *body*, which is by wise men called *Saturn*, *Leton* or *Brass*, the *Philosophers Lead*, and the *discontinued powder*. And in this putrefaction and resolution of the *Body*, there appears *three* signs, to wit, the *black colour*, a *discontinuity* of the parts, and a *stinking smell*, which is likened to the smell of *sepulchers* or graves. This ashes then is that of which the *Philosophers* have said so much, which remained in the lower part of the vessel, *which we ought not to despise*, for in it is the *Diadem* of our *King*, and the *Argent vive*, black and unclean, from whence the *blackness* must be purged by continual decoction in *our water*, until it be lifted up in a *white colour*, which is called the *Goose*, and the *Pullet* of *Hermogenes*. He therefore that makes the *red Earth black*, and then *white*, has the *Mastery*, as also he that *kills* the *living*, and *quicken*s the *dead*: therefore make the *black white*, and the *white red*, that you the work perfect, and when you see the true *whiteness* appear, which shines like a naked *Sword*, know that in that *whiteness*, is *redness* hidden; and then you must not take out of the *vessel* that *whiteness*, but only boil it, to the end, that with dryness and heat, there may come upon it a *Citrine* colour, and in the end, a most shining and sparkling *red*; which when you see, with great fear and trembling, praise the most good, and most great *God*, which gives wisdom, and by consequence, riches to whom he pleases; and according to the iniquity of the *Persons*, takes them away again, and deprives them of them forever, plunging them in the servitude and slavery of their enemies. To him be praise and glory for ever and ever.

*Amen.*

**-FINIS-**

From the *printed* Latin original  
“*Liber secretus artis occultae*” by Artephius and “*Epistola de lapide philosophorum*” by  
Joannes Pontanus from *Theatrum Chemicum*, **1602**, 1613.

Other Latin editions appeared in Frankfurt, Germany as “ARTEFII ARABIS.  
*Liber secretus, nec non Saturni trismegisti, sive fratris heliae de Assisio Libellus. Quorum primus  
magicum ignem ab omnibus occultatum aperit. Alter, operandi modum aperte docet,*” 1678,  
1685, accompanied with the work “*Ordinis minorum libellus de lapide philosophorum*” by  
Helias the Franciscan.

First English translation by Eiraeus Orandus,  
*printed* in London by Thomas Snodham for Thomas Walkley,  
and was to be sold at his Shop at the Eagle and Childe in Britans Bursse. **1624**.  
Bound with Nicholas Flamel’s “*Exposition of the Hieroglyphical Figures*”.

Re-translated by William Salmon (b.1644-d.1713), professor of physic, and printed  
as part of his “*Medicina practica: or Practical physic. To which is added, the philosophick  
works of ... Artesius,*” London: Printed by W. Bonny for Thomas Howkins  
(in George-Yard in Lombard street), J. Taylor and  
John Harris (at the Harrow in the Poultry), **1692**.  
Reproduced in Lapidus’ *Pursuit of Gold*, 1976.

Artephius lived circa 1150AD. He has been attributed as the author to a number of  
alchemical text, including “*Clavis maioris sapientiae*” (The Key of Major Wisdom)  
first *printed* in France, 1609, not available as an English translation. This title is an  
13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> Century manuscript in illustrated Arabic text.  
Artephius’ work was cited many times by Roger Bacon (b.1214-d.1294).

The Salmon 1692 edition was reproduced by Hans Nintzel in **1976** for R.A.M.S.

The **1624** edition has been newly transcribed and translated to Modern English for  
this pamphlet by **Theophrastus von Oberstockstall** for R.A.M.S. digital, **2013**.  
*Emphasis* and Capitalization in this pamphlet  
are identical to the original publication.

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