

THE TREASURY OF PHILOSOPHY  
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There is one who created all things out of nothing, and to whom all things belong--sky, earth, and sea. He bound together all harmony and all dissonance, and of his great goodness willed to cure disease with his medicines. Wise men in ancient times fully understood two methods and wrote them down in their books. One method is true; the other is deceitful. The true method they set forth in obscure terms, so that only their disciples could fully understand it. They concealed it to keep impious men from seizing knowledge and using it for profane ends. They would have to pay the penalty for their sins. So, dear reader, do not share any of this knowledge with an unworthy person. Keep it secret, like a true philosopher. When you finally test it out in a real experiment, you will love and esteem it all the more.

The false method they set forth in very clear terms. I am not going to repeat the method or the errors and what causes them. But listen and understand, dear reader, and may God illumine your mind. Know that our science is the science of the four elements, the four times, the four qualities, and all of these in reverse. All philosophers agree about that. And know that the four elements exist in everything under heaven. You will know this by their effects, not by observation. So the philosophers have handed down this science in the guise of a science of the elements. And they have caused it to operate without understanding the literal account of the operations. They have tried to do operations with things like blood, hair, and eggs. I have tried too, and have been reduced to a daze. I nearly despaired of science altogether and discarded all its teaching. I blamed others for the feebleness of my own intellect. At last I came to my senses and began to ponder what Avicenna had pondered: "If something exists, how does it exist? And if it does not exist,

how does it not exist?" Therefore I discovered that the matter and seed of every metal is Mercury that has been boiled and thickened in the bowels of the earth. It has been boiled at sulphuric temperatures. According to the different varieties of sulphur, different metals are produced in the earth. Their first matter is one and the same. They differ only in their inessential activity and whether they have been boiled in a greater or lesser fashion, at moderate or excessive temperatures. Some has been burned, others have not; and all the philosophers are in agreement about this. It is certain that everything comes out of or from whatever it is dissolved into. For example, ice becomes water when heat is applied. Clearly, then, it began as water. In the same way, all metals become Mercury, since they were made of it in the first place. Later I shall show how to convert them into Mercury. Once this is understood, the saying of Aristotle in Book IV of the Metaphysics makes sense: "Alchemists must understand that specific types of metals are immutable." That is true, as long as they are not reduced to their first matter. Such a reduction is possible, even easy, since everything that lives and grows can be multiplied. All plants and trees and animals demonstrate this. Out of one grain come a thousand grains: out of one tree come a thousand little branches, and out of one man comes the entire human race. Just as everything is increased in its own kind, so a metal can increase its substance by its own agency. And it makes no difference, as Aristotle says, whether this is done by natural or artificial means. All metals live and grow in the earth. Therefore it is possible to increase and multiply them to infinity. But it can only be done through a more perfect agency--the consummate medicine of the perfect generation of metals, which is called the elixir of the philosophers. The only way to acquire this elixir is through its

own medium. Notice that it is the nature of this medium to be stable and free of extremes. The extremes are sulphur and mercury, and the finished elixir. The better and more perfect ones--also the more accessible--are the ones that have been more thoroughly purified, decocted, and digested. Dear reader, do not err: whatsoever a man soweth, that also shall he reap. It is obvious what the stone becomes, and what kind of medicine it makes, if nothing extraneous is added and any excess is removed. Only what is by nature close to a substance is suitable to it. Now, dear reader, I shall explain the sayings of the philosophers, the obscure words of the wise that are hidden in parables. Then you will know that I understand their words and faithfully represent them. First comes the process which the philosophers called solution. It is the foundation of the art, as Maria says: "If you join gum with more gum in a true matrimonial union, you will have a torrent of water." The philosopher Rosinus says: "Unless you can turn bodily substance into incorporeality, you labor in vain." Parmenides also dealt with solution in the Turba: "Some people have heard of solution and believe it can be done without the body it is joined to. But they are permanently one. This is not the philosophers' solution of a watery cloud, but solution or conversion into the water from which it was made in the first place--that is, into Mercury. In the same way, ice turns into the liquid water it once was. By the grace of God, see now this one element called water, and the reduction of a body to liquid water. The next step is that earth is made out of water in a slow decoction, repeated until it is predominantly black." Avicenna says in his treatise on Humors: "Heat working in a moist body first produces blackness, as you can see in lime made by the common people." Menabdes says: "I bid posterity to make bodies incorporeal by dissolution, and turn incorporeal substance into bodies by gentle decoction. But you must

be very careful not to let the spirit turn into smoke and vanish because the fire is too hot." Maria says; "Watch over it, and be careful not to let anything escape in smoke. Do not let the fire get any hotter than a July sun. Then the water will thicken in a gentle and slow decoction, and the earth will turn black. Now you have another element, earth. And the third step is to purify this earth." Morienus says: "This earth putrifies with its water and is then purified. When it is purified, the entire teaching will be directed with God's help." Hermes also says: "Azoth and fire cleanse the lato and take away its blackness." The philosopher says: "Whiten the lato and restore its offspring lest your hearts should break." This composition belongs to all the wise, and is also one third of the entire work. Then, as it says in the Turba, join the dry to the moist--that is, the black earth to its water--and boil it until it turns white. The fourth step is to cause the water, now thickened and coagulated with earth, to rise by sublimation. Then you will have earth, water, and air. And this is what the philosopher says: "Whiten it, and sublimate it quickly over the fire until a spirit comes out of it. This spirit that you will find in it is called the bird or the ash of Hermes." Morienus says: "Do not hold the ash cheap, for it is the very diadem of your heart, the ash of the things that last." The book called Turba reads: "Speed up the procedure of burning, and after the whitening stage will come cineration or formation of ash. This is known as calcined earth, and it has a fiery nature. You now have the four elements in the proportions predicted: dissolved water, whitened earth, sublimated air, and calcined fire." Aristotle speaks of these four elements in his letter to Alexander on the rule of princes: "When you have formed water from air, air from fire, and fire from earth, you will possess the

art of philosophy in all its fullness." And this is the end of the first composition, as Morienus says. Now let us move on to the second composition, which has to thicken, tinct, and bring the first composition to life. Calindus the philosopher says: "No one has ever been or will ever be able to tinct foliated earth with anything other than gold." Hermes has the same precept: "Sow your gold in white, foliated earth that has become fiery, fine, and airy through calcination. We sow it with gold whenever we put the tincture of gold in it. But gold can never tinct anything but itself to perfection. In actual fact, it can only be done by means of art." Raymundus says: "This stone of ours already contains a tincture in itself, naturally. It has been perfectly remade into the body of magnesia. But it can be made perfect only by art and operation." Geber says in his Operation of roots: "The purpose of the operation is to make the tincture of gold that is in gold even better than it is in nature. Also to make an elixir as in the allegorical fable of the wise, a clear condiment made of different species. It is the antidote and medicine to cure, purge, and transform all bodies into true silver-and gold-producing substances." Listen to what Hermes says about whether we need gold alone and no other body: "The father is hot and dry in order to produce tincture. The mother is cold and moist in order to nurture offspring. So both gold and silver in themselves are very difficult to unite. Even when they join in a way that causes solidification into gold, they pour off very quickly." Maria says: "Take a projecting body or a clearly-defined mound which has not putrified and pound it with a stone until it takes on the tincture of spirits. Then set it near the fire. It will all melt quickly if you have cast over it its wife, silver. If there were anything else in our stone, the medicine could not flow out so freely, nor could it give a tincture. And even if it could, it could only tinct according to what

it was itself, and the rest, including Mercury, would fly off in smoke. There would be no receptacle in it to receive a tincture. But our final secret is how to have a medicine that flows before the Mercury escapes. The conjunction of these two is absolutely necessary in our work." Geber says: "In a perfect teaching, the supremely perfect metal is gold. With its tincture of redness it transforms every other body. It is a yeast that converts the entire lump of dough into its own nature. Further, it is the soul that unites body and spirit. Just as the human body is dead and immobile without the soul, so any other body is unclean, earthbound, and lifeless without the yeast that is its soul. For the yeast of the prepared body converts the entire lump of dough into its own nature. And there is no yeast other than gold and silver that has been taken from the planets. Just as the Sun and the Moon reign over all the other planets, so these two bodies reign over all other mineral bodies. These other bodies are fittingly converted into the nature of the first two. It is proper to call it yeast, since without it the grains cannot undergo change." Raymundus says: "You will not be able to work these changes unless you refine it by art and operation beforehand." Hermes says: "Son, extract the shadow from the ray of light." So we must complete the preparation and refining of the yeast. It is like a fountain, for it arises perfectly with respect to creation, but not to operation. It must first be fed a little milk, then more, and finally a large amount. This is just what happens with our stone. Then take a fourth part of it--that is, one part of the yeast, and three parts of the imperfected body. Dissolve the yeast in an equal amount of mercurial water. Cook it all together over a very slow fire. Then coagulate the yeast until it becomes like the imperfected body. Let it sit in the orifice of a closed vessel, by the method and steps described above. Hermes has the same precept: "Dear reader, mix the equal parts together at the beginning of a fresh operation. Pound it

until it joins as in a betrothal. Feed it until conception takes place at the bottom of the vessel and generation takes place in the air." Also, Morienus says: "First cause red smoke to capture white smoke in a strong vessel. This should happen by a firm conjunction without any exhalation of spirits. This is the fifth step. The sixth step is to join a fourth part of refined yeast with three parts of whitened earth. Absorb its water into it until the two bodies becomes one, and there is no difference in color." Morienus says: "Once the white body is calcined, put in a fourth part of the yeast of its gold. For gold is like yeast in bread, which converts the entire lump of dough into its own nature. Cook it in its water until it becomes one substance and one dry body." Maria says: "Let the air strike and congeal it and it will be one body. That is the secret of Scalia. Then the yeast can be introduced into the body, since it is its soul." This is what Morienus says: "Unless you cleanse the unclean body, make it white again, and send its soul back into it, you have not carried out any of this teaching. This is how yeast mixes with a changed body, not with an unclean body." Gasius, in his perfect teaching, says: "Stones cannot receive each other unless they have first been cleansed. A body cannot receive a spirit, nor a spirit receive a body--so that the spiritual becomes corporeal and the corporeal spiritual--unless they have first been completely purified of all filth. Once they are cleansed, body and spirit soon embrace each other. Then a single perfect operation arises from them, because nature has remade them, and whatever was thick and gross is now refined." Astanus says in the Turba: "Spirits cannot unite with bodies until they have been completely stripped of all impurities. In the hour of their conjunction the greatest of miracles appears: the imperfect body takes on a stable color by means of the yeast, since the yeast is its soul. And the spirit, by means of the soul, unites with the body, takes on the color of the yeast in that instant, and becomes one with them." This is

the elixir, as Avicenna explained to the philosopher Assis. It is tinted with its own tincture, submerged in its own oil, and fixed in its own lime. We discover its water as living silver in minerals, its oil as sulphur or arsenic in minerals, and its lime as lime in minerals. The work itself is noble, abundant, and sublime. Whiteness is the mark of the three in which there is no fire; and the color yellow spins on four wheels. Maria speaks of these wheels: "In that school there is nothing but marvels. Four stones enter, and their procedure is genuine. Therefore anyone who has a subtle mind or intuition knows that philosophers tell the truth in obscure words. For they say: 'Our stone is made of the four elements,' and they have compared it to the elements. It has first been shown how the four elements are present." As Rasis says: "Everything that the great creator has placed beneath the moon's sphere has a share in the four elements. This can be seen by the effects, not by observation. For the stone is one single thing--only one substance, one root, and one nature." Hermes says: "In the Lord's name, begin to understand the nature of the stone. It comes from the root of its matter, since it is both in it and of it. Nothing can enter into it that did not arise from it. In reality, it is not fitting to a thing unless it is naturally quite close to it. For every single thing loves what is similar to it." Therefore Plato says: "It is one substance and one essence: in it alone hot, cold, moist, and dry are present. And it has been called a minor universe, since from it, through it, in it, and with it exist all metals. Further, it is like a tree whose branches, blossom, and fruit are both from it and in it, and it is alike throughout. Every single thing can only produce what is similar to itself and of its own kind. And so this thing is one and the same, and whatever comes from it is one and the same, in no way different. The philosophers call this stone by the name of the body of each thing and each species." Pythagoras



says: "It is called by every name, though only one name is proper to it."

Hence the verse: "This one single Moon is known by every name."

And Phieras says: "Have nothing to do with the proliferation of gloomy names. Nature is one, and is above all things. All the different natures together cannot change that single thing. On the contrary, there is only one nature, and it causes itself to germinate." Therefore, as Diomedes says: "The nature we make use of is venerable indeed, since nature can be changed only by its own nature. Do not think you can bring in so much as dust or any other thing that is alien to it. All the diverse things together cannot change it, for it causes itself to germinate."

Maria says: "The whiteness and moist lime which come out are one single thing from one single thing, and are the very roots of this art." The philosophers gave all possible names to it, yet it is only one thing, as Morienus says. In all truth I tell you that the multitude of names is the only thing that has led modern men into error. But let every wise man know that these names are nothing but colors appearing in conjunction. Consequently, you will not wander along the road of the work, even though philosophers have come up with so many sayings and so many names. Still, they refer to one thing only, one means of operation, and one change of temperature (or of color). And note that no such variety of colors appears in our stone or in the conjunction of soul and body, as Morienus has it. Just one change of temperature restores all the various colors. The philosophers have said that the stone is composed of body, soul, and spirit, and they are right. For they called an imperfected body a body, yeast a soul, and water spirit; and they have done well. For an imperfected body in and of itself is heavy, weak, and actually dead. Water is the spirit that purges, refines, and

whitens a body. Yeast is the soul that gives life to an imperfected body. It had no life before; now it is brought to a superior form. The body is Venus, a woman; the spirit is Mercury, a man; and the soul is both Sun and Moon. The body must be melted into its first matter, which is Mercury, as Morienus says. Mercury can only be procured from the liquefaction of liquified bodies. It is not common liquefaction, but the kind that lasts until you join them in true matrimonial union, when they are united and attain to whiteness. Note that the body is completely liquified when blackness appears in decoction. Bonellus says: "When you see that blackness is about to overtake that water, know that the body is now liquified. Then cook it in water over a slow fire until it dries up with its attendant vapor. It then becomes a thing which can be introduced into its own body. The spirit converts the refined body into itself and penetrates it. Therefore it is called aqua permanens and aqua vitae." Mundus says in the Turba: "Mercury is aqua permanens, and without it nothing can be made. Its strength is of the spirit and its blood is ground down. When it turns into spirit along with the body and both are mixed together, they are reduced to oneness. This occurs in the measure of strength in which the body incorporates spirit. The spirit turns the body into tinted spirit, as if it were blood. For whatever has a spirit has blood as well. Blood is the natural humor that strengthens nature. And know that the longer it is boiled and purified in its humor, the clearer and better it looks." But, as Morienus says: "Nothing but azoth can remove the shadow from lato. It should be boiled in azoth until it turns it several colors and then as white as fish eyes. Then the good part comes forth and joins with the yeast. Note that the yeast is the fixed soul of the stone, and that it tincts, brings to life, and enfolds." Maria says: "The fixed body is made of material of Saturn. It encompasses the digestion of tinctures and fills it with wisdom. Without it this teaching will never come to full effect until the Sun

and Moon are united in one body. For the entire artifice of this art, as Euclides says, is in the Sun and Mercury." When these are joined as one, they possess an infinite tincture. In a work it waits for a color that is redder than blood. When a little bit of this color is poured into white, it turns even a large expanse of white into yellow. You can test this by tossing blood into milk or water. Therefore, as Josephus says: "Mix fire and water, and there will be four: then make them all one, and you have reached what you were looking for. The body will no longer be a body, weak over a fire that is not weak; and peace will rest upon it." From start to finish the preparation of these things consists of fixed water. It is honorable because it shows tincture in projection. It is also the intermediary between opposites, and is itself beginning, middle, and end. Whoever understands it grasps wisdom. Some of the philosophers have said: "Unless you turn bodies into what is incorporeal, and incorporeal substance into bodies, you have not yet found the rule of truth." And they are right. For the body first becomes water, and so corporeal substance becomes incorporeal--that is, spirit. Therefore Hermes says: "Convert natures, and you will find what you have been looking for." And that is true. For in our teaching we first bring a delicate substance out of a thick one--water from a body. Afterward we bring dry from moist--earth from water. And so we really do convert natures, because we bring spiritual from corporeal and corporeal from spiritual." This is what Senior says: "There is a conversion of bodies from one state to another, from one substance to another, from infinity to potency, from thickness to slenderness, from body to spirit. In the same way, a man's seed is converted in a woman's womb from one substance to another by a natural process of conversion. At last a perfect human being is formed. From this process come the root and principium of a person, and no change can be brought out of the root by any process of division." As Aristotle says: "All generation comes from appropriate sources

in nature." That is true, especially in the case of generation of metals. The philosophers say: "Let no foreign substance enter into it, whether dust, water, or anything else. If something foreign does enter, it will corrupt and destroy it." A king named Arabs has said: "Water can only adhere to something similar to its own sulphur, because it comes from it. So we make it into something higher, as we do with what is lower. Namely, the spirit becomes body and the body spirit. This happens in sublimation just as it does at the beginning of our operation. What is lower is like what is higher: it all turns into earth." Therefore Hermes says: "What ends up higher after sublimation becomes lower after descension, and what is lower after constipation is like what is higher after ascension. They all work miracles in this one respect: water and earth have a lower place." Air and fire rise higher. Water and earth conceive and nurture. Air and fire are active and conjoining. And all four come together in our stone, as Senior says: "The four elements are found purified in our stone. In it, water is fixed, air is stable, earth is at rest, and fire surrounds everything." They come together in the stone in spite of all resistance. And their four natures are generated in the stone, from it, and through it. This is clear from the above premises, since our stone is made of all four elements. So the philosophers have said: "Our stone contains body, spirit, and soul. All three come from one nature, one substance, one water, and one root." They are definitely right. For our entire teaching is performed with our water. From it and out of it come all necessary things. It dissolves bodies, not by the common process of solution that the ignorant use to turn clouds to water. It is done by true philosophic solution, which converts clouds to the water they came from in the beginning. Socrates says: "The secret and the life force of every single thing is water. It dissolves body into spirit and restores the dead to life. It is the extremely sour vinegar that overhangs and overpowers all things. So pound our stone with this sour vinegar, and boil it in the same vinegar until it thickens. Boil it

very quickly so that the vinegar will not turn to fumes and disappear. Then this same water calcines the bodies and reduces them to earth. It then turns these bodies black, white, and red in turn. It then transforms them into ashes, pulverizes them, and enters them." On this subject, Marchos the king says: "Our water dissolves bodies, then congeals them and turns them black. It also cleanses every body, takes away all blackness, and tincts whatever is black. It makes them white, and then tincts them to make them red. And it reanimates and brings to eternal life whatever has dies. Therefore this water is praised, exalted, and proclaimed mistress of all things. Nothing else can perform its operations." Morienus also says: "Azoth and fire cleanse and purify lato. They completely remove any trace of darkness from it. Lato is an impure body, but azoth is mercury. And this water unites diverse bodies that have been prepared for the conjunction according to the method described. For fire cannot separate them. The water effects a marriage between body and yeast. It then turns their oneness into something else, and keeps them from being burned by fire. For the calcined and whitened earth seeks a higher place. It has become airy and spiritual. And whatever is airy and spiritual is incorruptible and able to penetrate." Hermes says: "Aqua aeris exists between earth and sky, and is the life of every single thing. It is the intermediary between fire and water through its heat and moisture. From those the water takes in air, for air itself takes in fire. It is like fire because of its heat, and close to water because of its moisture. Therefore it causes a matrimonial union of man and woman. In fact, every spirit consists of the fineness of smoky air. For every living, vegetable substance draws spirit and life from air. Therefore fire brings dead aqua aeris to life, causes a matrimonial union, and keeps the composite from being burned by fire." And so the philosophers have said: "Convert water to air

so that life can exist. Life exists with life, because it is itself life and the spirit that it enters into." Therefore our water sublimes bodies, though not by a common process of sublimation--which is what idiots intend to do when they consider sublimation better than ascension. So they take calcined bodies and mix them with sublimated spirits, such as sulphur and mercury with sal ammoniac. Over a strong fire they bring about sublimation. The bodies rise along with the spirits, and then they say that both spirits and bodies are sublimated and completely purified of any excess. But they are deluded. Afterward they find them even more impure than they were before. For art is weaker than nature, as Albertus says in his book about minerals: "The two extraneous humors have been purged of the substance of sulphur both by artifice and the genius of nature. Art cannot purge or cleanse them as well. For the artifice of nature is more sure and more sublime than any kind of art." So our sublimation is not superior to ascension. The sublimation of the philosophers comes from a simple, lowly, and corrupt source. But it can become great, exalted, and pure. So we say: "This has been sublimated to Episcopus (bishop), in fact promoted to Episcopus." That is to say, promoted to a rank of dignity. So we say that bodies have been sublimated or refined, as well as transferred to another nature. So sublimation is the same as refining, and our water achieves all of this. Morienus says: "Water taken from a dead body which the soul has left removes any stench. And once it has whitened and sublimated the soul and guarded the body, it removes any darkness or bad odor from it." Albides also says: "Take things from their minerals, sublimate them to a higher place, send them down from their mountain peaks, and reduce them to their roots." Therefore, to sublimate is to refine something gross. Hermes says: "Sublimate the fine from the thick very gently and skilfully. Earth rises to the sky and then falls

back to earth again. It receives power to penetrate what is high and fine as well as to remain in the heaviness of what is lower. This is how you should understand sublimation of the philosophers. There are many who have been wrong about it. So our water brings bodies to life and then deprives them of life. It leads them to their fall and then back to their rising. In the process of mortification it causes black colors to appear. They are then turned into earth by putrefaction. Afterward, many different colors appear before whitening, but they all cease when a stable whiteness takes over. It is like a grain of wheat falling to earth, which unless it dies, it remains alone. So the seeds of everything that the earth produces change and putrify, until at last corruption overtakes them. Then they germinate and increase like the very earth they take root in. So our water is nourished, putrified, and corrupted. Then it germinates, rises again, and bestows new life on itself." Therefore Calidus says: "When I saw the water congeal itself, I was certain that this thing is true as claimed. Cook it along with its body until its moisture dries up from the fire and it is entirely dry. Then it collects its spirits and makes its dwelling in the root of its element. This will happen once you have mortified it and boiled the white body. It will then become aqua spiritualis, able to convert natures into other natures. It will also give life to dead bodies and make them germinate." Our water is the mother of many marvellous colors, since through it diversity of color appears. This will take place especially in the sprinkling of water from a prepared and fermented body. An infinite number of colors will appear--as many as can be imagined. For the spirit is united with body and soul. The spirit is the dwelling place of the soul, and the soul is taken out of bodies by the tincture of water. Senior says: "This water is a tincture dissolved on a body, just as the tincture of tinctures is carried on a piece of cloth.

Then the water recedes in dessication, and the tincture remains in impression. It is the same way with water of the soul that carries the tincture. One can bring it back to its parched, white earth in foliated pieces. Hermes calls this water the gold of thorns, flowers, and saffron, since it tincts their calcined earth." He also said: "Sow gold in foliated earth. Then the agua spiritualis recedes, and the soul, which is the tincture of the sun, remains in the body. It is like a fine smoke, imperceptible, appearing only in its effects. But its action is the manifestation of colors, and fire generated from fire and nourished by it. In fact, the soul is the daughter of fire and must be led back to fire without fearing it, just as a child is led back to its mother's breast."

Some of the philosophers have called this stone of ours white copper. Lucas and Eximius say in the Turba: "Let everyone who seeks knowledge know that a tincture can only be made with our white copper. Our copper is not common, corruptible copper that contaminates everything it touches. The copper of the philosophers perfects and whitens whatever it comes into contact with." And so Plato says: "All gold is copper, but not all copper is gold. For in nature gold is similar to copper in weight and texture. But in the nature of copper there is nothing that is not in the nature of gold, as seen from its corruption in the earth, and its remaining patiently in fire and the sea. And so our copper has body, soul, and spirit, and the three are one. For spirit, body, and soul are one, because they all come out of and from one thing, and are with one thing--their root. The copper of the philosophers is their elixir made perfect and complete out of spirit, body, and soul. Therefore the philosophers have given various names to the stone, to make it evident to the wise and hidden from fools." But whatever it is called it is always one and the same, and comes from the same thing, as Mercurinus says in this poem:



The stone is hidden, and buried at the depth of a fountain.  
It is held cheap and cast out as if it were covered with smoke or dung.  
But this one living, sacred stone bears all names,  
as Morienus, a wise man filled with God's grace, has said.  
This stone is not a stone, nor something any animal could produce.  
Nor is it a bird, neither stone nor bird.  
This stone is the structure, the offshoot, and the offspring of Saturn.  
It is Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, and Venus; it is  
Winged Mercury, and it is the Moon, alone brighter than all others.  
Now it is silver, now gold, now an element,  
Now water, now wine, now blood, now chrysoline,  
Now virgin's milk, now sea foam, now vinegar,  
Now it distills urine in fetid bilge,  
Now too the gem of salt, almizadir, general salt,  
The pigment of gold constituting the first element,  
Now the purged sea purified with sulphur,  
Transposed in a way that they will not reveal to fools.  
And so let the wise man envision this and never be deceived,  
And let what he handles never be dealt out to fools.

As Morienus says: "Our stone and the carrying out of this teaching is like the creation of man. For first comes coitus, then conception, then pregnancy, then birth, and nourishment comes fifth." Dear reader, understand these words of Morienus, and truly you will never go astray. Open your eyes and you will see that the seed of the philosophers is aqua viva, while earth is an imperfected body. It is right to call earth mother, for it is the mother of all the elements. When the seed of mercury unites with the earth of an

imperfected body, the process is called coitus. The earth of the body then dissolves into water of the seed, and it becomes water with no division. Hali says: "The solution and coagulation of a body are two processes, but they have only one operation. Spirit cannot coagulate without the solution of the body, and when body and soul unite, each does what is like itself. For example, when water unites with earth, it tries to dissolve it with its moisture and its power. For it makes earth finer than it was before, and makes it more like itself. Water is finer than earth. The soul in the body works similarly. In the same way, water thickens along with earth and becomes almost as dense, since earth is thicker than water. There is no time difference between solution of the body and coagulation of the spirit. Nor is there any different working, and nothing that one can do without the other. That is because there is no divergent span of time in the conjunction of water and earth. It is easy to realize this if they are united or if one is separated from the other during their operations. In the same way, a man's seed is not separated from a woman's seed at the time of coition. There is one goal, one project, and one identical operation occurring to them both. So Mercurinus calls coition the mixing and producing of all things."

Seeds mix together like milk and then appear mixed. Next comes conception, when the earth dissolves into black dust and begins to retain a little of its mercury. The masculine element is then acting on the feminine, or azoth on the earth. Arisleus says: "Males cannot bear young with each other, nor can women conceive. Generation requires both male and female. When men marry women, nature rejoices, and true generation occurs. But if nature is joined to an alien, unsuited nature, it cannot produce real seed. Therefore unite your son Gabricus, most beloved of all your children, with his sister Beya, a lovely, gentle, and delicate girl. Gabricus is male and Beya female. She gives him all

that she has, and even though Gabricus is worth more than Beya, still there can be no generation without her. As soon as Gabricus lies with Beya, he dies, for Beya climbs on top of him and encloses him in her womb. Nothing more is seen of him. But she has embraced him so lovingly that she conceives him entire in his own nature and divides him into various parts." This is what Mercurinus says:

What was once white as milk now is changed by blood in conception.

Pale things grow black; red and ample things grow black.

Next comes pregnancy. The earth whitens as water takes over, then grows and multiplies. From it comes an abundance of new offspring. Then you must wash the black earth and whiten it over a hot fire. Hali says: "Take what has fallen to the bottom of the vessel and wash it with hot fire until its blackness disappears and its thickness lessens. Make the added moisture blow away until it becomes an extremely white and spotless lime. Then the earth is pure enough to receive a soul." Mercurinus says:

Pregnancy promises a space in which change can take place.

What purgation can release is tied by bonds of peace.

Next comes birth, when yeast unites with whitened earth, and they become one in substance and color. Then our stone is born to eternal life, for then the spirit unites with the body as the soul mediates between them. This is composition, which, as Hali says, happens when putrefaction and matrimonial union occur. Matrimonial union is the mixture of fine matter with gross, thick matter. It is also the mixture of soul and body. Putrefaction is the process of roasting, pounding, and watering until they are all mixed together and become one. Then there is no diversity, no separation from the water that has been mixed with water. And the thick matter tries to hold on to the fine matter, while the soul tries to contend with fire and survive it. Also, the spirit,

entire teaching." O dearest and most beloved friend, you can now easily understand obscure words because of what you have learned, and you will know that everyone agrees with them, since there is no teaching other than what I have told you. Now you hold in your power the solution of bodies and the reduction of them to first matter. Then you also have in your power their conversion into earth, along with the whitening of black earth and levitation into air. By distilling the moisture found in it, it becomes airy as it ascends, while the earth remains calcined and of a fiery nature. And you hold in your power the conversion of all these from one state to another. And you are able to increase them in a way that will be so useful to you that you will never entirely grasp it with your reason. Amen.