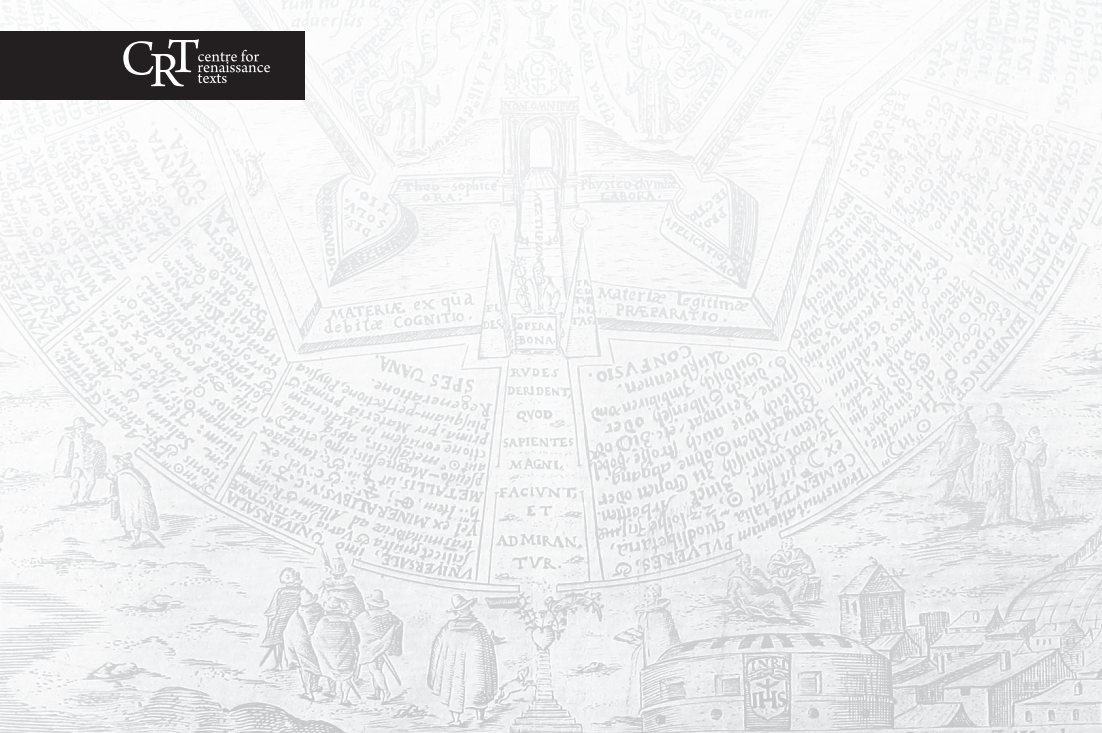


Latin Alchemical Literature of Czech Provenance

Tomáš Nejeschleba – Jiří Michalík (eds.)

Proceedings from The Centre for Renaissance Texts Conference [16-17 October 2014]

CRT centre for
renaissance
texts



...e, Naturalis, & Materiâ & Formâ totâq. Constitutione ne Esse suo, Mercurialis, validissima, MAGNESIA, quasi Magnesi-ferâ, vel mag-
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...iale, Saleum, Triunum, hoc est, MERCURIVM Philosophorum, Præ-materiale, Universalem ac Saleum, solum & omne in Rerum Naturâ, inter
...RCURVIALE, Vulcanicâ atq. Neplunicâ Præparatione (Artis secreto secundo) Spagyricè penetrare; illud realiter adipisci, atq. ad pluriquam

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Preface

In the scientific community alchemy has not traditionally enjoyed much respect; in fact since the Middle Ages it has been associated with charlatans, swindlers and adventurers attempting to trick trusting people in order to gain money and property by easy means. Unfortunately, such lack of trust has prevented and even today often prevents serious historical research into this type of knowledge or phenomenon, which is an integral part not only of European culture. Only gradually in the second half of the twentieth century did works start to appear pointing to the historical importance of alchemy, and the study of alchemy (e.g. historical, sociological and philosophical, etc.) started to establish itself in academia.

Accordingly, researchers at the Centre for Renaissance Texts established at the Faculty of Arts of Palacký University, Olomouc, have opted for alchemy as one of their research areas. It was in fact from the 15th to the 17th centuries, which is the main research period of the Centre, when the interest in alchemy in Western Europe experienced its peak, and it was in the Czech lands where it was very popular at the turn of the 16th century. The theme of the conference held on 16 and 17 October 2014 in Olomouc was "Latin Alchemical Literature of Czech Provenance". The Conference was supported by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Czech Government within the framework of the Centre for Renaissance Texts. The present volume is a collection of the majority of the contributions presented at the conference.

The first paper of the proceedings is entitled "Agricola's *Bermannus*: Learning about Minerals and Metals in the Mines of Jáchymov"; in this paper John Norris deals with Agricola's dialogue, written by the famous humanist in Jáchymov (1530), where he arrived attracted by the developing mining town with state-of-the-art mining and metal processing technology.

The time frame of the remainder of the papers is the era of the Emperor Rudolf II. Martin Žemla's paper entitled "Valentin Weigel and Alchemy" with an original subtitle "not only in the court of Rudolf II" demonstrates how Valentin Weigel has been included in the tradition of spiritual alchemy although he did not deal with alchemy himself. Two of the papers deal with the work of Heinrich Khunrath *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae* (1595). The first of them entitled "Perspective, Vision and Dream: Notes on the Plate 'Oratory-laboratory' in Heinrich Khunrath's *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae*" by Ivo Purš analyses the famous circular engraving from the work, known as

Oratorium et laboratorium, by Hans Vredeman de Vries, a Rudolphine artist. In the second, entitled “Cosmological and Alchemical Aspects of the Body, Soul and Spirit Triad in H. Khunrath’s work *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae*”, Jakub Hlaváček looks for an interpretation key to the complex and difficult to interpret work of Khunrath.

Famous alchemists working in Bohemia at the end of the 16th century undoubtedly include John Dee, discussed by György E. Szönyi in his paper entitled “Layers of Meaning in Alchemy in John Dee’s *Monas Hieroglyphica* and its Relevance in a Central European Context”, and Michael Sendivogius, whose Bohemian treatises are dealt with by Rafał T. Prinke in his paper entitled “New Light on Michael Sendivogius’ Writings: The Treatises Written in Prague and Maybe in Olomouc”. These two alchemists most probably influenced Václav Lavinius from Ottenfeld, whose treatise *Tractatus de coelo terrestri* is analysed by Jiří Michalík in his paper entitled “Wenceslaus Lavinius of Ottenfeld (1550–May 1602) and His *Earthly Heaven*”.

The editors would like to express their thanks to Jaroslava Hausenblasová and Jan Čížek for reviewing the conference proceedings, and to the staff of the UPLift language school at Palacký University, Olomouc for proofreading the texts.

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Agricola's *Bermannus*: A Dialogue of Mineralogical Humanism and Empiricism in the Mines of Jáchymov

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(Independent scholar)

Abstract | Georgius Agricola's (1494–1555) first book on mining and mineral subjects, the *Bermannus* (1530), was written while he was a physician in the mining town of Jáchymov. The text relates a dialogue between two physicians, both of whom are familiar with the classical literature on minerals, and an educated mining official who shows them minerals as they occur in the mines. Coming from a background in medical humanism, the dialogue reflects the way Agricola himself began learning about metals, minerals, and mines upon his arrival in Jáchymov in 1527. Though there has been little study of the *Bermannus* in modern scholarship, the book has been noted as demonstrating the interaction of humanism and empiricism in Renaissance science. Knowledge about pyrites as a compositionally variable group of minerals provides an example of this interaction, in which Agricola's view, originating from his commixture of classical learning and empirical knowledge from the miners of Jáchymov, is compared with the opinions of two contemporaries, Vannoccio Biringuccio (1480–1539) and Paracelsus (1493–1541), and the authority of Albertus Magnus (1193–1280). Agricola's humanist approach to understanding minerals, aided by the rich and unusual mineralogy of the Jáchymov ore deposit, led him to a radically different theory: breaking with contemporary ideas, he rejected the compositional directionalism in which pyrites were believed to represent impure metallic matter, regarding them instead as minerals of variably mixed compositions.

Key words | Agricola, Albertus Magnus, *Bermannus*, Biringuccio, empiricism, Hannaway, Jáchymov, Joachimsthal, metallogenesis, Morello, Paracelsus, pyrites, Renaissance humanism, sulfur-mercurius.

Introduction

Georgius Agricola's (1494–1555) first book on minerals, metals, and mining, *Bermannus, sive de re metallica* (1530), is a dialogue in which two classically trained physicians in the mining town of Jáchymov (then called by its German name, Joachimsthal) visit a mine with an educated mining official. The setting strikes one as being unusual: two physicians, both of whom are interested in minerals and metals based on their study of Greco-Roman and Arabic medical and natural history works, descending into a mine with a miner literate in Latin and conversant in the works of Pliny (23–79) and Dioscorides (40–90). However, the three interlocutors were partly based on people whom Agricola knew. Though Nicolaus Ancon, the expert in medieval Arabic medicine and science, was perhaps entirely fictitious, Agricola actually befriended Johann Naevius (1499–1574), present in the dialogue as the authority in Greco-Roman medical and scientific classics, while they were both medical students in Italy. In fact, Naevius became a municipal physician in Jáchymov in 1533.¹ The educated miner, Bermannus, is based on Lorenz Bermann (also Wermann, d. 1532/3), about whom little more is known other than that he worked in the mining administration in Jáchymov and died in battle against the Turkish army in the region called Spiš (Zips in German), now part of central Slovakia, in 1532 or 1533.² In addition to the evidence provided by his employment, his literacy and expertise in mining are directly attested to by Agricola, who mentions Bermann in the introduction to the *Bermannus* as one of the people from whom he learned the most about the Jáchymov mines (see below).

In the dialogue, Ancon, Naevius, and Bermannus discuss the nature, composition, and nomenclature of the minerals they encounter. Information related by the physicians from classical authors such as Pliny, Dioscorides, and Galen (130–200), is juxtaposed with Bermannus's knowledge from direct experience. The work is probably a fictionalized account of how Agricola himself supplemented his classical knowledge of minerals and metals with that of the miners in Jáchymov. The work thus utilizes the unique situation of Jáchymov's new, extensive mines for comparing and combining two ways of learning about minerals and metals in the sixteenth century: from literary sources, and from observing examples in nature. Though Agricola's subse-

¹ Georgius Agricola, *Georgius Agricola Ausgewählte Werke*. Vol. 2, ed. Hans Prescher. (Berlin, 1955), 306. See also Friedrich Naumann, *Georgius Agricola: Berggelehrter, Naturforscher, Humanist* (Erfurt: Sutton, 2007), 47.

² Agricola, *Ausgewählte Werke* 2, 271; Naumann, *Agricola*, 47.

quent works continued to rely on both of these approaches, it will be shown below that his emphasis on direct experience, which began in Jáchymov, strengthened his ability to explain composition and generative processes in ways that were distinct from the ideas of earlier and contemporary authors.

Agricola's Medical Humanism and Appointment in Jáchymov

Agricola's early education and professional experience involved studies in classical languages. In addition to his skills in Latin, it is believed that he cultivated a knowledge of Greek during four years of study at the University of Leipzig (1514–1518), where the latter language was being taught at the time by Petrus Mosellanus (1493/4–1524). Agricola subsequently began teaching Latin and Greek at the Latin School in the town of Zwickau, where he was appointed rector in 1520. He left the school two years later, returning to the University of Leipzig for further study. This time, Agricola began as a theology student, but soon switched to medicine, apparently drawn to the subject by an interest in humanist scholarship.³ Indeed, it seems that medical humanism may have interested Agricola more than did medical practice.⁴ In this respect, attending the medical schools of Bologna and Pavia during the years 1523–1526 must have been a profound experience for him. And though he wrote little or nothing about the medical theory and practice he learned at these universities, he comments enthusiastically about the revival of the classical languages he encountered there. In the foreword of the *Bermannus*, Agricola relates his amazement that Latin was not only being revived at the Italian universities, but was positively thriving.⁵ Another influential experience for him was his participation in preparing the Greek *editio princeps* of the works of Galen for the Aldine press in Venice (1525). Indeed, it would seem likely that Galen's tract *De simplicibus medicamentorum*, with

³ Owen Hannaway, "Georgius Agricola as Humanist," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 53 (1992): 553–560, on 556–557. For more on Agricola's humanist background, see Naumann, *Agricola*, ch. 3–4.

⁴ On Agricola and medical practice, see Fritz Krafft, "Agricola und die Pharmazie," and Rolf Winau, "Georgius Agricola und die Medizin seiner Zeit," in *Georgius Agricola 500 Jahre*, ed. Friedrich Naumann (Berlin et al.: Birkhäuser, 1994), on 454–465 and 478–497, respectively.

⁵ References to the *Bermannus* use an edition and two translations: Georgius Agricola, *Bermannus, sive de re metallica* (Basel: Hieronymus Frobenius, 1530), 11; Georgius Agricola, *Bermannus, aneb rozmluva o hornictví*, transl. Jan Reiniš (Praha: Československá akademie věd, 1957), 54; and "Bermannus oder über den Bergbau. Ein Dialog," in Agricola, *Ausgewählte Werke* 2, 66–67.

its descriptions of minerals and their occurrences, including a discussion the ores and copper-rich vitriol of Cyprus, was especially influential in this respect.

What is certain is that Agricola came away from the experience with an intense interest in understanding the minerals and metals referred to in the classical literature of medicine and natural history. In a passage that offers a surprising contrast to the claims of novelty and the disregard of the medical classics that constituted the thrust of the newly arising chymical medicine, Agricola asks

Who today does not know how useful to medicine, and especially to its practice, the *metallica* are? (By this term I mean metals and the substances that occur along with them, and also all that is extracted from them in the furnace, or finally all that is made from them in any other way.) Anyone who has read the books of Galen, the greatest of all physicians, or of Dioscorides, knows this.

Though Agricola was thrilled with the contemporary flourishing of Latin and Greek, he nonetheless recognized the degree to which the names of mineral substances described by the classical authors had become corrupted or disused by his time:

But who can clearly say what *molybdæna*, *pyrites*, *chalcitis*, *misy*, *sory*, *pompholyx*, *spodium*, *diphryges*, and other *recrementa* of the metals really are? Nor are *stibium*, *spuma argenti*, *arsenicum*, *cerussa*, etc. hardly available at the apothecaries where all types of medicines are prepared – nor, truth be told, do the physicians themselves know what they are. It is to our shame that these names are so often read, and so often spoken, though we do not know the materials to which they refer.

A physician or apothecary who does not know these substances is likened to a sailor who knows nothing about the parts of the ship on which he sails.⁶ We see here the influence of Mosellanus on Agricola's humanist attitude; for, as Owen Hannaway (1939–2006) pointed out, like his former teacher at Leipzig, Agricola considered this loss of language to be equivalent to a loss of knowledge.⁷ It is this state of ignorance that Agricola blamed for the supposed failure of his contemporaries to cure diseases as effectively as the ancients did. Whether motivated more by interest in a pristine understand-

⁶ Agricola, *Bermannus, sive de re metallica*, 12–13; *Bermannus, aneb rozmluva o hornictví*, 55–56; "Bermannus oder über den Bergbau," 68.

⁷ Hannaway, "Humanist," 556, 558.

ing of classical texts, or by the demands of medical practice, he decided to familiarize himself directly with the substances to which the names found in the classical sources refer. "This is the principal reason," he writes about his appointment as municipal physician in Jáchymov, "that I came to a place where metals abound".⁸

Agricola in Jáchymov

The town of Jáchymov (then called Joachimsthal) arose quickly following the discovery of rich silver ores there in 1516. The original town of Konradsgrün, in which there had been about 100 homes, was quickly overwhelmed and renamed as miners and their families rushed in. By 1520 there were about 5,000 inhabitants, rising to 18,000 during the 1530s. This staggering growth is noted in the *Bermannus* as the interlocutors approach the mine they will visit, when Naevius exclaims

Good Lord! So many fine houses! They cover the entire valley, as if they have been stuck onto both sides of the mountains. It appears as though the houses are lying on one another. I would almost believe that I am looking at one of our larger towns, such as Erfurt, or it seems to me that I see Prague or the great Italian towns of Bologna and Padua.⁹

Bermannus affirms the rapid development that had occurred in a mere 12 years: "That hill, which, as you see, is entirely cleared of trees was [originally] covered in thick forest. And the valley in which several thousand people now live was a den of wild animals."¹⁰

If a desire to obtain a direct acquaintance with minerals and metals is what really lay behind Agricola's acceptance of the appointment at Jáchymov in 1527, he could hardly have made a better choice. By 1528, there were more than 700 active mines, being worked by more than 3200 miners.¹¹ This extensive and entirely new mining activity naturally utilized the most

⁸ Agricola, *Bermannus, sive de re metallica*, 13–14; *Bermannus, aneb rozmluva o hornictví*, 56–57; "Bermannus oder über den Bergbau," 68–69.

⁹ Agricola, *Bermannus, sive de re metallica*, 24; *Bermannus, aneb rozmluva o hornictví*, 70–71; "Bermannus oder über den Bergbau," 76–77.

¹⁰ Agricola, *Bermannus, sive de re metallica*, 25–26; *Bermannus, aneb rozmluva o hornictví*, 72; "Bermannus oder über den Bergbau," 78.

¹¹ Josef Sudlovský and Vladimír Horák, *Kronika horního města Jáchymova a jeho hornictví v kontextu dějin země koruny české* (Ústí nad Labem: Studio 071, 2009), 27–28.

current technology, which could only be implemented with difficulty and prohibitive expense at older mines. Such deep, fresh mines were favorable for observing the natural occurrence of minerals and ore veins. The minerals of the Jáchymov ore deposit were especially abundant and varied, with many unusual metallic sulfides containing such strange metals as antimony, zinc, bismuth, and cobalt, in addition to the rich occurrences of silver and lead ores.¹² All of this made Jáchymov the perfect place for Agricola to act upon his new directive to learn all he could about minerals and metals. Fortunately, there were even suitable people to learn from. In the foreword of the *Bermannus*, Agricola specifically names Lorenz Bermann and Bartholomäus Bach (fl. 1530), both of whom "are knowledgeable not only in literature, but especially in mining. I have many times bored them, and others besides, with all my questions toward attaining some acquaintance with mining".¹³

Pyrites and the Confluence of Mineralogical Humanism and Empiricism in the *Bermannus*

In a volume of articles published in 1994, commemorating the 500th anniversary of Agricola's birth, the geoscience historian Nicoletta Morello (1946–2006) brought attention to the *Bermannus*. She noted that it has generally been neglected in modern scholarship, hidden in the shadow of the spectacular *De re metallica* (1556). In demonstrating the significance of the *Bermannus*, Morello discussed how the humanist movement, with its thorough and critical study of Latin and Greek texts, effectively revealed the limits of classical knowledge. As sixteenth-century naturalists encountered objects in nature that were unknown to the ancients, the classical knowledge was revised and expanded, leading to real scientific discoveries. Her main point was that one sees this process in action in Agricola's *Bermannus*.¹⁴

Owen Hannaway similarly remarked that the combination of Renaissance humanistic learning and scientific knowledge is nowhere better illustrated than in Agricola's works.¹⁵ Both he and Morello brought attention to the *Bermannus* as embodying the conjunction of humanism and empiricism in

¹² Petr Pauliš, *Nejzajímavější mineralogická naleziště Čech II.* (Kutná Hora: Kuttna, 2003), 19–21, 24.

¹³ Agricola, *Bermannus, sive de re metallica*, 14; *Bermannus, aneb rozmluva o hornictví*, 57; "Bermannus oder über den Bergbau," 69.

¹⁴ Nicoletta Morello, "Bermannus' – the names of things," in *Agricola 500 Jahre*, 73–81.

¹⁵ Hannaway, *Humanist*, 554.

Renaissance science. The way this process works in the *Bermannus* is that the two physicians, Ancon and Naevius, converse with the learned miner, Bermannus, about the minerals they encounter as he guides them through one of the relatively new mines at Jáchymov. At each stop, the physicians relate their knowledge of the observed minerals from the classic Greco-Roman (mainly Dioscorides, Pliny, and Galen) and medieval Arabic sources (such as Serapion (12th–13th century) and Avicenna (980–1037)), as they, for the most part, had never before seen the minerals themselves. Bermannus then augments and often corrects their information with his knowledge from direct experience. Morello and Hannaway thus wished to bring more scholarly attention to this, one of Agricola's most neglected works, though, unfortunately, neither author discussed any specific cases from the text itself.

As an example of the positive interaction between humanism and empirical knowledge described by Morello and Hannaway, we will consider the knowledge of pyrites¹⁶ as revealed in the *Bermannus* and subsequently developed in Agricola's later works. There are at least two reasons why this focus on pyrites will be particularly instructive. First, as minerals with a metallic luster, but with little or no perceptible metallic content, pyrites were a curiosity about which an ancient and contemporary literature existed. Second, focusing on pyrites accentuates the significance of Jáchymov as the place where this specific didactic undertaking occurred, as the ore deposit there held an abundance of unusual varieties. In what follows, it will be shown how the familiarity with these minerals that Agricola attained in Jáchymov, with its primary impetus in medical humanism, led him beyond the knowledge of the classical authorities and the theories of his contemporaries.

A little way through the mine, Bermannus leads Ancon and Naevius to an ore vein containing pyrites. Naevius notes their remarkable silver color, and Bermannus affirms that they do indeed contain silver, which can be smelted from them. This astonishes the two physicians, as Pliny had also noted that pyrites can be silvery in appearance, but neither he nor any of the ancient authors reported that silver could really be extracted from them. Bermannus, who at times begins to lose patience with his two guests, asks: "Do you believe that the ancients, considering the multitudes and variations of

¹⁶ In early-modern mineral science, the term *pyrites* was used to refer to minerals with a metallic appearance, but with little or no discernible metallic content. This loosely-defined group would have included minerals known today as pyrite and marcasite (FeS₂), arsenopyrite (FeAsS), chalcopyrite (CuFeS₂), and other relatively poor metallic sulfides that would be difficult or impossible to distinguish when occurring together in a single mass.

such things, could perhaps have not known something, or do you believe that they knew everything and left it all in writing?" Naevius concedes that, indeed, there must exist things in nature about which the ancients did not know. Just as there are animals with which the ancients were entirely unfamiliar, so it is with mineral substances, Bermannus replies, especially given the potential for geographical variations in their occurrence and composition. Moreover, the ideas that Bermannus relates about pyrites and their range of compositions are not of his own formulation, he says, but are the results of experience. The two physicians are familiar with the extraction of copper from pyrites, as reported by Dioscorides and the Arabic medical author, Serapion, and remark on the ancient division of silver-, copper-, and gold-colored pyrites; but are astonished anew when Bermannus informs them that copper can be extracted from all of these, including the silvery one. Naevius is especially surprised that the latter can contain copper in addition to the presence of silver that had previously shocked him. Both he and Ancon are perhaps a bit embarrassed to learn that these minerals, about which they thought they had a thorough knowledge, could even contain more than one metal. Bermannus coolly replies: "Some contain only silver, some only copper, some silver and copper, some silver and lead, some even more metals, and some are completely barren." Furthermore, he tells them that all these types of pyrites can even occur together, not only in the same region or in the same mine, but together within the same mass.¹⁷

Ancon and Naevius are astounded by the revelation of this compositional complexity, and their confidence in the edifice of the classical literature is consequently diminished. Additionally, they have learned something about nature from someone whose knowledge comes from experience. This is exactly the type of interaction generally described by Morello and Hannaway, and certainly mirrors the way in which Agricola himself learned about minerals when he arrived in Jáchymov in 1527, fresh from the environment of medical humanism in Italy, with his mind full of book-learning, and an interest in gaining first-hand knowledge of the substances named in the works of the ancients.

Frank acceptance of this compositional complexity led Agricola to subsequently develop generational theories that explain the variable compositions of pyrites and other minerals. The geological works that he wrote during the years following the publication of the *Bermannus* were published

¹⁷ Agricola, *Bermannus, sive de re metallica*, 51–55; *Bermannus, aneb rozmluva o hornictví*, 113–118; "Bermannus oder über den Bergbau," 99–102.

together in 1546, including one on the generation of metals, minerals, and stones (*De ortu et causis subteranneorum*), and a categorization of the same based on physical properties such as solubility, fusibility, and composition (*De natura fossilium*). In response to what he had learned and observed, Agricola developed the idea that metals and minerals all formed from a liquid state, in which “juices” (*succi*) formed when various earthy matters were absorbed by water, resulting in a juice that eventually attains the composition of one or more metals or minerals. This matter could subsequently be is congealed by cold (e.g. metals, stones) or heat (e.g. salts). The pyrites are remarkable for their metallic appearance, but metal-poor composition (even when they contain extractable metal, they are still quite poor relative to other ore minerals). In these works Agricola defines pyrites, and similar metallic minerals (i.e. metallic sulfides), as *mistæ*, or compound minerals, formed from the juice of one or more metals, mixed with that of a stony composition to become a single, unified body.¹⁸ This is how he accounted for their metallic appearance, but metal-poor and highly variable composition, with a metallogenic theory.

Though Agricola’s opinion about pyrites might not seem so spectacular at first sight, it must be noted that his theory, encompassing generation and composition, is vastly different than those of his contemporaries and their principal authority, the *De mineralibus* of Albertus Magnus (1193–1280). Following a synopsis of Albertus’ opinion on pyrites, we will briefly consider the ideas of two of Agricola’s contemporaries: Vannoccio Biringuccio (1480–1539), and Theophrastus von Hohenheim, called Paracelsus (1493–1541).

Each of these three authors held to some form of the *sulfur-mercurius* theory,¹⁹ by which metals were thought to be composed of a combination of compositional principles, not identical to, but likened to the common substances of sulfur and mercury. Differing proportions of these principles, both of which could vary widely in purity, accounted for the qualitative differences among the known metals. It was also generally believed that, as long as metals remain within the Earth, the subterranean heat would continue to pro-

¹⁸ Georgius Agricola, *De ortu et causis subteranneorum*, 80; *De natura fossilium*, 366: (2nd ed., Basel: Hieronymus Frobenius, 1558). For more on Agricola’s metallogenesis, see John A. Norris, “Early Theories of Aqueous Mineral Genesis in the Sixteenth Century,” *Ambix* 54 (2007), 69–84, on 73–76.

¹⁹ The convention of designating the sulfur and mercury principles as *sulfur* and *mercurius* has been adopted after the usage in Ivo Purš and Vladimír Karpenko (eds.), *Alchemie a Rudolf II.* (Praha, 2011).

cess their *sulfur-mercurius*, thereby gradually increasing their compositional purity. Because pyrites have a metallic appearance and yet seemed devoid (as far as he knew) of any metallic content, Albertus classified them as *media*, or middle-minerals: not quite metal, and not just stone, but something compositionally in between. He remarked that they have the weight and luster of metals but that no metal could be extracted from them. Thinking in terms of Aristotelian causes, he thus reasoned that pyrites were metals that had not yet attained their specific form; or, in other words, they seemed to be proto-metallic matter that had not yet reached the stage of compositional development at which they would have all the properties of a true metal. Influenced apparently by attempts to smelt them, he believed that their composition was rich in mineral impurities that further subterranean processing would have eventually driven away.²⁰

De mineralibus gave a very thorough treatment of the generation of metals based on the *sulfur-mercurius* theory, and proved to be highly influential. When, during the first half of the sixteenth century, the Italian metallurgist Vannoccio Biringuccio penned his work *De pirotechnia* (1540), he also included a chapter on pyrites in his consideration of the known metals and metallic minerals. Albertus was naturally among his literary sources, but he also had his own experience to draw upon. As with the former, Biringuccio considered pyrites to be semi-minerals, compositionally intermediate between metals and stone. He noted their metallic weight and luster, and added that “no metal can be extracted by any means that I know from any semi-minerals.”²¹ Attempts to do so only result in “an unliquefiable and wholly burned viscous earthiness with a very unpleasant sulphurous odor”. In extrapolating their composition from the results of such failed smelting tests, he explicitly engaged the *sulfur-mercurius* theory, concluding that pyrites must be comprised of too much *sulfur*, and a volatile, poorly-mixed *mercurius*.²²

Interestingly, these observations led Biringuccio to consider two theories for the origins of these strange minerals, both of which follow the idea (encountered in Albertus) of pyrites representing impure metallic matter. Based on what he knew of their properties and composition, Biringuccio reasoned

²⁰ I have used the following translation: Albertus Magnus, *Book of Minerals*, transl. Dorothy Wyckoff (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 246.

²¹ I have used the following translation: Vannoccio Biringuccio, *The Pirotechnia of Vannoccio Biringuccio*, transl. and ed. Cyril Stanley Smith and Martha Teach Gnudi (New York: Basic Books, 1959), 78.

²² Biringuccio, *Pirotechnia*, 93.

that pyrites must represent either a compositionally undeveloped metallic ore, or the fumosities, the mineral impurities themselves, that are exhaled during the compositional development of the metals and subsequently solidify. In weighing these two possibilities, he recalled a huge mass of pyrites he had once observed in the mountains of north-eastern Italy. If this merely represented the exhaled impurities from an ore mass at greater depth, than the latter would necessarily have been improbably large. He therefore decided on the former theory, agreeing with Albertus that pyrites were simply compositionally immature metals.²³

Biringuccio would perhaps have had more in common with Lorenz Bermann than with Georgius Agricola. Clearly in possession of some formal education and a subtle sense of humor built from confidence in his skills and experience, he was principally a hard worker with a low tolerance for vagary concerning the working of metals. Though clearly literate, and familiar at least with Albertus's *De mineralibus*, Biringuccio's book was not written in Agricola's cherished Latin but in his vernacular Italian. Also unlike Agricola was Theophrastus von Hohenheim, better known as Paracelsus, who grew up among the mountains and mines of Switzerland, where his father had been a physician. Though he supposedly obtained some medical education in Italy and was a surgeon/physician himself, Paracelsus had nothing to do with the medical humanism that so interested Agricola. He wrote his works, proudly though somewhat self-consciously, in German instead of Latin. As an outspoken critic of the contemporary medical establishment and an iconoclast to the ideals of classical learning, he was no stranger to the fact that there was much in nature about which the ancients were entirely ignorant; and this is perhaps the one point on which he and Agricola would have found any agreement. He was as skilled laboratory chymist and a thoughtful theorist, whose work occasioned interesting ideas about the processes of nature and the composition of the substances of our world. There is much in his published works that concerns the generation and composition of minerals.

Paracelsus viewed composition in terms of his own version of the *sulfur-mercurius* theory, which also included a saline principle: i.e. his *tria prima* of *sulfur*, *mercurius*, and *sal*. All of nature was composed from these, with each natural entity, each different tree and herb, each metal and mineral, being composed of *sulfur*, *mercurius*, and *sal* specific to its composition. Still, his interpretation of pyrites, apparently based on his laboratory work and knowledge from the mining sites among which he lived and worked during

²³ Biringuccio, *Pirotechnia*, 92–94.

several periods of his life, had much in common with that of Albertus (whom he had almost certainly read) and Biringuccio. Consistent with the latter two, Paracelsus found these minerals to be barren of any true metallic content. He believed that metals exhale impurities in the form of *tria prima* components that are unsuitable to their compositions as they continue to be processed in the subterranean heat. As this process continues, the incompatible *tria prima* are eliminated, while those contributive to the compositions of the developing metals remain, gradually resulting in a residuum of increasing purity. His designation of pyrites and similar minerals as *cachimia* relates his understanding of them as mineral excrements. Paracelsus thus found in favor of the formation theory considered and rejected by Biringuccio; namely, that pyrites represent the fumosities or impurities ejected from a developing metallic body. In Paracelsus's view, they comprised a concretion of *tria prima* that were in some sense metallic, but could never attain the composition of a metal.²⁴

How different the theory arrived at by Agricola, which involves no mention of *sulfur-mercurius* (a terminological usage that he disdained)²⁵ or of compositional impurities. The idea of *media* or semi-minerals, and that pyrites represent failed attempts to create pure metals, is completely absent from his explanation. To him, based on the knowledge imbibed from his trusted mining authorities in Jáchymov, pyrites simply represented a variable mixture of metallic and stony compositions, completely apart from the compositional ideals that characterized the mineralogical and alchemical concepts of his time.

It must also be noted that in Jáchymov, Agricola had experience with a wider range of pyrite minerals than what was usual. The most common form of pyrite (FeS_2) cannot be used as an ore, and would not easily reveal its iron content on smelting. Instead, an oxide, unrecognizable to early modern workers as iron, would result, corresponding to the sulfurous, burned, earthy matter referred to by Albertus and Biringuccio. Nonetheless, there exist relatively copper-rich varieties, the most common of which are chalcopyrite (CuFeS_2) and tetrahedrite ($(\text{Cu, Fe})_{12}\text{Sb}_4\text{S}_{13}$). While not nearly as common as the iron-pyrite,

²⁴ Paracelsus, *Etliche Tractat Philippi Theophrastus Paracelsi* (Strassburg: Christian Müller, 1582), 452–456. For more on Paracelsus's metallogenesis, see Norris, "Early Theories," 76–80.

²⁵ For Agricola's misgivings about the *sulfur-mercurius* theory, see John A. Norris, "Auß Quecksilber und Schwefel Rein: Johann Mathesius (1504–65) and Sulfur-Mercurius in the Silver Mines of Joachimstal," *Osiris* 29 (2014), 35–48, on 39–40; and John A. Norris, "Dolování a představy o metalogenezi v Čechách 16. století," in *Alchemie*, 657–670, on 662–664.

these copper-bearing forms are present in the mines of Jáchymov, in addition to more unusual ones such as the silver-bearing argentopyrite (AgFe_2S_3).²⁶ Though these minerals are visually recognizable to experienced eyes, they would be, very difficult to distinguish when occurring together within the same mass or vein. Moreover, at least in Jáchymov, the value of these minerals was only recognized from the results of smelting. We have testimony about this from another Jáchymov resident, and friend of Agricola, Johann Mathesius (1504–1565), who reports in his *Sarepta, oder Bergpostill* (1562) that the ore veins often contained such a variety of minerals, that it was hardly possible to distinguish them all. Miners learn to recognize them only after long practice and experience, and “the assaying oven makes miners wise and knowledgeable” about the metallic contents of these minerals.²⁷ Naturally, Agricola was not performing any assaying or smelting operations himself, but was able to rely on the results of those with experience in working among the unusually rich and varied ores of the Jáchymov mines.

Conclusion

Though Agricola’s works seem to have been widely read by contemporaries, his ideas on the generation and composition of minerals do not seem to have been widely influential. One finds mostly silence, and otherwise criticisms, concerning his theories in the contemporary and later literature, which generally continued to deploy explanations involving the *sulfur-mercurius* theory. Still, one can unapologetically admire the simplicity and independence of his view relative to those of his contemporaries and an authority of the stature of Albertus Magnus. He achieved this by unreservedly supplementing the classical learning, of which he was very fond, with the knowledge revealed to him by the miners of Jáchymov. Even if medical humanism was the *raison d’être* of Agricola’s interest in minerals and mining, his experiences in Jáchymov engendered a trust in contemporary empiricism that became his principal strength when formulating theoretical explanations for the mineral phenomena he observed.²⁸

²⁶ Pauliš, *mineralogická naleziště*, 23–24. Jáchymov is the type-locality for the mineral argentopyrite.

²⁷ Johann Mathesius, *Sarepta, oder Bergpostill*. 3rd ed. (Nürnberg: Dietrich Verlag, 1571), fol. cx^b.

²⁸ Acknowledgment: Much of the research presented here was conducted while benefiting from a Mellon Travel Fellowship at the History of Science Collections, University of Oklahoma, during June and July 2014.

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Valentin Weigel and alchemy¹

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Abstract | The Saxon Lutheran pastor Valentin Weigel (1533–1588) was marked by modern scholars as a mystic, a theosopher, or a Paracelsian. Despite the inspiration he drew from Paracelsus and his natural philosophy, nevertheless, his interests in nature were rather limited. He was no physician, no astronomer – and no alchemist. As the critical edition shows, the alchemical themes appear only marginally in his works. Obviously, he is interested in theological topics for the most part. However, his followers allegedly built him a tombstone with alchemical symbols, and some alchemical works were later published under his name. By the end of the 17th century, he is mentioned as one of the figures in the uninterrupted chain of German adepts who reaped the ‘golden harvest’, and even as late as 1869 the *Histoire de la Chimie* classifies his work as the symbolic and spiritual alchemy. Such a reputation could be established largely due to pseudonymous texts that together with Weigel’s authentic works began to spread in print editions after 1609, arousing considerable interest, both positive and negative. The image of Weigel as an alchemist was strengthened when his works appeared together with works of Paracelsus and other authors that used alchemical symbolism and natural-philosophical concepts (e.g. *Philosophia Mystica*, 1618). However, already his texts circulating in manuscript copies made a noticeable impression on alchemistic authors; Weigel was for example praised by two Paracelsian physicians and alchemists associated with the Imperial Court in Prague, Heinrich Khunrath and Oswald Croll. The latter also apparently procured Weigel’s manuscript *Der güldene Griff*, which has been preserved in the manuscript volume bound for the emperor Rudolf II, together with works on magic and practical alchemy. As a heir of the German Mysticism translated in the language of the Reformation, and a disseminator of some concepts of Paracelsus (esp. his concept of ‘two lights’ or man as microcosm), Weigel could create a general philosophical-theological and epistemological framework suitable also for alchemy. For some, he was a theosophist and

¹ This study is a result of the research funded by the Czech Science Foundation as the project GA ČR 14-37038G “Between Renaissance and Baroque: Philosophy and Knowledge in the Czech Lands within the Wider European Context”.

alchemist, aiming not at the transmutation of metals, but at the transformation and rebirth of man. His critics connected his ideas with the Rosicrucianism, but he was also believed to have authored works on laboratory alchemy. His authority as an alchemist was such that his name appeared on an alchemical treatise as late as 1787.

Key words | Valentin Weigel; Paracelsus; Heinrich Khunrath; Oswald Croll; Johannes Siebmacher; Giovanni Augurelli; Andreas Glorez; Paracelsism; materia prima; alchemy; pseudo-weigeliana; book of nature; light of nature; Prague; Rudolph II.

Introduction

Modern scholars have described the Saxon heterodox Lutheran pastor Valentin Weigel (1533–1588) as a mystic, a theosopher, or a Paracelsian – and for good reason. Weigel was the first theologian to have consciously and deliberately combined elements of the German Mysticism, particularly the teachings of Eckhart, John Tauler, and the *Theologia Deutsch*, with the ideas of Paracelsus, to which he added a blend of ideas of Boëthius, Hugh of St. Victor, Nicolas of Cusa, Pico della Mirandola, Sebastian Franck and others. Although he was strongly influenced by Paracelsus' natural-philosophical works he was not interested as much in natural phenomena as such as he was in nature's symbolism. He was no physician, no astronomer, and obviously also no alchemist. As is evident from the new critical edition of his works, any explicit references to alchemy or genuinely alchemical motifs in his work are rather marginal and generic. And still he has played an important role in the alchemical tradition of the 17th century.

Alchemical themes in Weigel's work

Although Weigel certainly was no practitioner of alchemy and his alchemical interests were very limited to say the least, as a matter of fact, general alchemical concepts of a Paracelsian bent can be found in his interpretations of the first chapters of the Book of Genesis. His interest in Genesis was more than cursory: he devoted four treatises to the topic,² and he mentioned its importance also in his other works. So, for example, he describes the earth

² Valentin Weigel, *Sämtliche Schriften: Natürliche Auslegung Von Der Schöpfung [u.a.]*, Neue Edition. Vol. 11, ed. Horst Pfefferl (Stuttgart and Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 2007); hereinafter PW.

as the “ejecta and excrement of subtle elements and stars” and considers the world a “compressed, coagulated smoke”.³ Similarly to the pseudo-Paracelsian *Philosophia ad Athenienses*,⁴ he attributes the knowledge of the process of Creation, i.e. of the natural “separation” (*Scheidung*), to the “light of nature”. Weigel’s primary interest was in proving that the statement “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gn 1:1) in fact refers to the creation of both the visible (elemental) and the invisible, i.e., also the creation of angels from the “upper waters” (the “waters above the firmament”). The first created thing was a chaotic *prima materia*, which contained formless germs of both the visible and invisible worlds – the elemental, astral, and angelic. Equally important for Weigel is the interpretation of Gn 1:2: “The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.” According to him, the “Spirit of God” in this verse does not refer to the Holy Spirit, i.e., the third Person of the Trinity, as the more common interpretation holds, but the “Spirit of the Lord” (*Geist des Herrn*), identified with Divine Wisdom,⁵ which is in turn believed to have created the primordial “matter of light and darkness”, i.e., the “waters that lied above the abyss”.⁶ The Spirit of the Lord is the only entity that remained out of the waters which gave birth to all things “eternal and non-eternal”, the “spirit of the image that Lucifer forfeited [upon his fall]”,⁷ that is, a divine spirit not affected by the fall, or a divine presence in the world.⁸

Besides these general observations, purely alchemical notions rarely appear in Weigel’s works. When he describes the *prima materia* as formless chaos containing the potentialities of all things, he employs a simple alchemical simile, saying that lead subjected to calcination contains, similarly, in an invisible form, all colours which are revealed in the process of “separation”.⁹ Weigel repeatedly mentions an “artist” (an alchemist), who is able to draw

³ Weigel, *Natürliche Auslegung*, PW 11, 174nn; cf. *ibid.*, 262 f. and 329.

⁴ [pseudo-]Paracelsus, *Sämtliche Werke. 1. Abteilung: Medizinische, naturwissenschaftliche und philosophische Schriften*, vol. 13, ed. Karl Sudhoff (München – Berlin: Oldenbourg, 1922–1933), 393.

⁵ Possibly in reference to Sir 24:3–5.

⁶ Weigel, *Natürliche Auslegung*, PW 1, 156; vgl. Weigel, *Viererlei Auslegung*, PW 11, 242 ff.

⁷ Weigel, *Vom Ursprung aller Dinge*, PW 11, 363.

⁸ The role of the “Spirit of the Lord” is described in a number of passages in the Bible, for example Isaiah 11:2, Isaiah 61:1 or Wisdom 1:7.

⁹ Weigel, *Natürliche Auslegung*, PW 11, 160.

the *quintum esse* from plants and metals, and he likens Christ and his operation on a Christian to the separation of pure gold from “cinder”.¹⁰ In his late *Dialogue on Christianity*, a conversation between a layman, preacher, and Death, Weigel alludes to the idea that a common metal must die so that it can be transformed into a more precious metal. But at the same time, the “Death”, a representative of Christ, dismisses medical quests as well as the search for the “philosophers’ stone”.¹¹ In each of these instances, the alchemical imagery is used only vaguely and figuratively.

That being said, it may be surprising to read that Weigel’s followers erected him a tombstone adorned with alchemical signs (as did Jacob Böhme’s at a later time).¹² Moreover, Weigel was spoken of highly by at least two famous alchemical authors associated with the Prague of Rudolf II: Heinrich Khunrath (1560–1605) and Oswald Croll (1563–1609). The treatise *Ovum Hermetico-Paracelsico-Trismegistum* (1694) later describes Weigel as one of the links in the continuous chain of German adepts who reaped a “golden harvest”; and again, Weigel is the only one among authors like Bernard Trevisanus, Basilius Valentinus, Paracelsus, Trithemius, Heinrich Khunrath, and Michael Maier who actually *did not* practise laboratory alchemy.¹³ The court chemist in Dresden Benedict Hinckelmann is reported to have had over thirty of

¹⁰ Weigel, *Natürliche Auslegung*, PW 11, 171; cf. Weigel, *Viererlei Auslegung*, PW 11, 259.

¹¹ Weigel, *Viererlei Auslegung*, PW 11, 314. – Valentin Weigel, *Dialogus de Christianismo*, ed. Alfred Ehrenreich (Stuttgart: Frommann – Holzboog, 1967), Bd. 4 [hereinafter ZW], chap. 3, ZW 4, 73: “und je öfter ein Metall stirbt, je edler wird es mit der Abwerfung des alten Leibes”; *ibid.* chap. 4, ZW 4, 88, where “Death” says: “ich frage nichts nach der Arznei, auch gar nichts nach dem lapide philosophorum”.

¹² Cf. Bernard Gorceix, *La mystique de Valentin Weigel 1533–1588 et les origines de la théosophie allemande* (Lille: Université de Lille, 1972), 63 f.; a description of the supposedly alchemical symbolism of the tombstone is given by Johann Gottlob Reichel, *Vitam, fata et scripta M. Valentini Weigelii ex genuinis monumentis comprobata atque a compluribus naevis ac lapsibus purgata* (Wittenberg, 1721), 17.

¹³ Johann Ludwig Hanneman, *Ovum Hermetico-Paracelsico-Trismegistum* (Frankfurt am Main, 1697), 127 ff., quot. in: Hereward Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix: Spiritual Alchemy and Rosicrucianism in the Work of Count Michael Maier (1569–1622)* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), 246. Nevertheless, Hanneman takes Weigel (“Valentin Weigelius, hic in arte Chymica magni aestimandus est”) as the author of “aureum vellus” and “quaedam de igne & Azot” (*ibid.*, 130). Obviously, these are references to the German translation of Augurelli’s *Vellus aureum*, falsely attributed to Weigel, and to the pseudo-Weigelian *Himmlisch Manna, Azoth et Ignis*, see below. Therefore, Hanneman’s classification of Weigel as an alchemical adept is in fact unfounded.

Weigel's books.¹⁴ The Danzig physician Daniel Rudolph complained allegedly that all doctors relied on Weigel and his ilk instead of reading the Scripture.¹⁵ Weigel's publications were also read by one of Jacob Böhme's patrons, Kaspar of Fürstenau (1572–1649), also a practitioner of alchemy¹⁶ – and the list goes on. Even in the *Histoire de la Chimie*, published as late as 1869, Weigel is classified as a representative of the symbolic and spiritual alchemy because he “tried to explain the teaching of transubstantiation through the transmutation of metals”¹⁷

How did Weigel end up being associated with this tradition?

Weigel's key ideas

Before we continue our study of Weigel's influence in alchemical circles, we need to understand his principal ideas as set forth in his authentic works.

Generally, Weigel's basic concern is man's relationship to God. He draws on Paracelsus' (1493–1541), Ficino's (1433–1499), and Pico della Mirandola's (1463–1494) ideas of man as a microcosm containing in himself everything: the earthly (elemental and astral), the heavenly, and also the divine. Therefore, the primary issue is self-knowledge: it enables us to see that we are a unity of these “layers” and to ponder the implications this has for us. Similarly, to know God means to know man and to understand the nature of the world. And finally, knowledge of the world enables us to know man and God. In this context, Weigel speaks about the three divine “books”: man, the world, and the word of God, i.e., the Bible, or elsewhere, the embodied Word, Christ.

¹⁴ Hinckelmann (1588–1659) was a relative of Balthasar Walther (1558–1631), an inspirational friend of Jacob Böhme (1575–1624), and he is mentioned in Böhme's letter from 15 May 1624; see Carlos Gilly, “Zur Geschichte und Überlieferung,” in *Jacob Böhmes Weg in die Welt*, ed. Theodor Harmsen (Amsterdam: in de Pelikaan, 2007), 47.

¹⁵ Harmsen, *Jacob Böhmes Weg in die Welt*, 89; cf. the letter by Daniel Rudolph addressed to Wilhelm Schwartz dated 18 March 1638: [http://192.124.243.55/cgi-bin/gkdb.pl?x=u&t_show=x&wertreg=PER&wert=felgenhauer%2C+paull++\[Betroffener\]&reccheck=,16429,16491](http://192.124.243.55/cgi-bin/gkdb.pl?x=u&t_show=x&wertreg=PER&wert=felgenhauer%2C+paull++[Betroffener]&reccheck=,16429,16491).

¹⁶ Penman, *Böhme's Intellectual Networks*, 62.

¹⁷ Ferdinand Hoefler, *Histoire de la Chimie II* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1869), 125: Weigel “prétendait expliquer le dogme de la transsubstantiation par la transmutation des métaux”. Hoefler seems to have had no first-hand knowledge of Weigel, instead, he refers to Johann Wilhelm Hilliger's *De vita, fatis et scriptis Val. Weigelii* (Wittenberg, 1721).

Weigel distinguishes between the internal and external man, or the heavenly and earthly man. In this sense, man is endowed with two (Paracelsian) lights through which he comes to all knowledge: the “light of nature” and “the light of mercy”. This is further specified when three components of man are distinguished: the elemental body, the astral body (or the spirit), and the divine spirit (or the soul). These are associated with three levels of knowing, or three “eyes” (a concept coined by the 12th century Neoplatonist Hugh of Saint Victor). It is Weigel’s universal conviction that all external phenomena are manifestations of some inner principle or force. So also, knowledge does not flow from the outside in, that is, from the external object to the “eye”, but always comes from the inside out. It follows that any subjective knowledge reflects rather the nature of the *observer* than the essence of the object observed – as Weigel knows from Boëthius.¹⁸ Unlike the two lower faculties, which are active, the “eye of mind”, i.e., the highest faculty of cognition, is where man apprehends passively (*leidtlich*) “as if he was dead”; he must rest in the “Sabbath”, quieten and shut off all his external senses including imagination and reason and turn to the “innermost ground of the soul in quiet resignation (*Gelassenheit*) to await God within”, forget oneself, “die off” (*abesterben*) and “forget about all art or wisdom”.¹⁹ This “eye” is the cognitive power in which God is both the object and subject and enters actively from within into the passive subject (a person) to “see Himself through Himself”. Since the subject of knowing in this case is not man, but God Himself, it is the only reliable and authentic way of knowing, one and common to all.²⁰

Weigel was in full agreement with Luther’s doctrine of salvation by grace alone and through faith alone, so he occasionally called this knowledge faith. However, he identified it with “Christ within”, “new creation”, etc., as did (partly) Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466–1536) and Sebastian Franck (1499–1542/3).²¹ Genuine faith is not a “dead fable” (*totter erdichter wahn*), but a profound “experience”, the experiential nature of which is underscored by Weigel’s calling it a “lively feeling” (*lebendiges befinden*).²² He who has this faith has

¹⁸ Boëthius, *Consolatio Philosophiae*, V, 4 and 6; cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 12, a. 4 co.

¹⁹ Weigel, *Der güldene Griff*, chap. 8, PW 8, 30 ff.

²⁰ Weigel, *Der güldene Griff*, chap. 12, PW 8, 48 a 51; cf. *ibid.*, chap. 13, PW 8, 56: “Vnsere augen seint gottes augen, sie sehen was got wil, vnd nicht was wir wollen...”

²¹ Weigel, *Der güldene Griff*, chap. 13, PW 8, 55 f.

²² Weigel, *Der güldene Griff*, chap. 19, PW 8, 77; cf. chap. 18, PW 8, 75.

the Holy Spirit, genuine knowledge of God, and cannot ever get lost.²³ Such an “essential” (*wesentlich*) faith can be found even in those who have never heard of Christianity.²⁴ Consequently, all rituals and sacraments are useless,²⁵ as are all religious communities and “sects”.²⁶ Such a spiritualised conception of the church is naturally accompanied by Weigel’s appeal to tolerance.²⁷

In relation to the “essential faith”, Weigel borrows Paracelsus’ and Caspar Schwenckfeld’s (1489–1561)²⁸ conceptions of the reborn, transformed, “supernatural, new, heavenly, and clarified body”²⁹ that does not dwell in any particular place and is completely different in nature to the earthly body, just as the body of Jesus Christ is different to our natural body.³⁰

Another important and often repeated consideration is the question of the “place of this world”.³¹ Weigel explains that the category of place exists only in this world, so the world itself does not exist in any place, but in “nothingness”; hence, God, hell, and the Kingdom of God are not located in any place, but are out of this world, that is, out of *any* place. This means that God, hell, and the heavens are everywhere – and in every man. The crucial question

²³ Weigel, *Der güldene Griff*, chap. 19, PW 8, 77n; *ibid.*, chap. 20, PW 8, 79; *ibid.*, chap. 23, PW 8, 87 f.

²⁴ Weigel, *Zwei nützliche Tractate* I, chap. 6, ZW 3, 31; cf. the same later in Weigel, *Vom Leben Christi*, chap. 29, PW 7, 100.

²⁵ Cf. e.g. Weigel, *Vom Leben Christi*, chaps. 2, 47, PW 7, 34 and 155, etc.; Weigel, *Kirchen- und Hauspostille* I, 3, PW 12/1, 22.

²⁶ Weigel, *Vom Leben Christi*, chap. 29, PW 7, 99 f.

²⁷ Cf. Pfefferl, “Einleitung,” in: PW 12/1, XLVIII. Weigel, *Kirchen- und Hauspostille* I, 17, PW 12/1, 117 (the spiritual concept of the church); Weigel, *Vom Leben Christi*, chaps. 8, 9, PW 7, 48 f., etc. (criticism of the death penalty).

²⁸ Schwenckfeld’s influence on the formulation of this frequent argument of Weigel is questioned by Winfried Zeller, *Die Schriften Valentin Weigels. Eine literarkritische Untersuchung* (Berlin: Ebering, 1940), 46, note 33); on Paracelsus, cf. *ibid.*, 47. Fritz Lieb, *Valentin Weigels Kommentar zur Schöpfungsgeschichte und das Schrifttum seines Schülers Benedikt Biedermann* (Zürich: EVZ, 1962), 144, describes this conception as “profoundly Paracelsian”.

²⁹ Weigel, *Vom Ort der Welt*, chap. 22, ZW 1, 76 ff. Weigel explicitly invokes Paracelsus’ *Astronomia magna* (*ibid.*, 79); cf. Weigel, *Der Güldene Griff*, chap. 17, PW 8, 72; *ibid.*, chap. 26, PW 8, 95; *Die Kirchen- und Hauspostille* I, 212–218 (Zeller, *Die Schriften Valentin Weigels*, 47); Weigel, *Informatorium*, PW 11, 121; Weigel, *Vom Leben Christi*, PW 7, 32 and 145.

³⁰ Weigel, *Dialogus de Christianismo*, chap. 1, ZW 4, 17.

³¹ See esp. Weigel’s *Vom Ort der Welt*.

then is to what ends man directs his will, what things he chooses to awaken in himself.

Of interest to us here is also the idea that Weigel often reiterated and which had been expressed earlier by Pico della Mirandola in his *Heptaplus*, i.e., that the first chapters of the Book of Genesis contain in themselves the whole Bible. For this reason, Weigel's interpretation of the biblical account of the first six days of Creation is an important part of his speculations. Similar conception can be found for example in the works of Heinrich Khunrath, Oswald Croll, Aegidius Gutman (1490–1584) or Jacob Böhme (1575–1624).

The spread of Weigel's works and the initial reception of his ideas

Weigel's works started coming out in print as late as 20 years after his death in 1588. The years following 1614 witnessed a veritable Weigelian publishing craze that produced a variety of critical responses as well as a crop of pseudo-Weigelian texts. But Weigel's ideas had been known within certain circles long before his books were printed.³² This "well-informed" group included primarily Weigel's deacon Benedikt Biedermann (ca. 1545–1621) and Christoph Weickhart, the author of many pseudo-Weigelian texts and later Weigel's cantor. They also collaborated partly with Weigel on his texts during his life.³³ But Weigel's name was known far beyond the boundaries of his parish, as evidenced by a letter from the Paracelsian physicist Abraham Behem (ca. 1455–1599), the brother-in-law of the publisher of Paracelsus' works and Görlitz alderman Bartholomeus Scultetus (1540–1614), sent to Weigel

³² During his life only one work came out in print: *Unterricht Predigte*, [sine loco] 1576; cf. Horst Pfefferl, *Die Überlieferung der Schriften Valentin Weigels*, (Diss. Teildruck, Marburg/Lahn, 1991), Teil II, chap. B, II and Teil IV, chap. B, p. 53. – A "wider circle of followers" is mentioned by Siegfried Wollgast in "Valentin Weigel in der deutschen Philosophiegeschichte," in *Valentin Weigel. Ausgewählte Werke*, ed. Siegfried Wollgast (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1977), 48; the existence of a secret "circle of friends" is disputed by Gorceix, *La mystique de Valentin Weigel*, 61. Cf. also Pfefferl, *Überlieferung*, Teil IV, chap. B, 53 ff.; Wollgast, "Valentin Weigel in der deutschen Philosophiegeschichte," 49 ff.; Andrew Weeks, "Introduction," in *Valentin Weigel. Selected Spiritual Writings*, trans. Andrew Weeks (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2003), 19; Julius Otto Opel, *Valentin Weigel. Ein Beitrag zur Literatur- und Culturgeschichte Deutschlands im 17. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig: T. O. Weigel, 1864), 80; Walter Nigg, *Heimliche Weisheit. Mystiker des 16.–19. Jahrhunderts* (Olten – Freiburg i. Br.: Walter, 1975), 99 and 110; Zeller, *Die Schriften Valentin Weigels*, 28 f.; Hans Maier, *Der mystische Spiritualismus Valentin Weigels* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 1926), 31.

³³ As indicated in the Leiden manuscript which we shall discuss later.

from Görlitz in 1579.³⁴ Even before his books were printed, Weigel had been praised by the Paracelsian physicist and alchemist Heinrich Khunrath, and Oswald Croll quoted a long passage from Weigel's text, as did the Protestant theologian and Paracelsian-influenced mystic Johann Arndt (1555–1621) who corresponded not only with Weigel's sons, but apparently with Weigel himself.³⁵ Several works by Weigel were available in the rich library of August of Anhalt-Plötzkau (1575–1653), placed at the avid readers' disposal, including the Augsburg town physician and adherent of Paracelsianism Carl Widemann (1555/6–1637),³⁶ the pharmacist in Hall in Tirol (who made for him two copies of Weigel's texts as early as 1602)³⁷ Johannes Pistorius (1546–1608), the author of the first response to the Rosicrucian manifestos and a promoter of Rosicrucian teachings Adam Haslmayr (1550–1617), or the "immortal" teacher of Johann Valentin Andreae (1586–1654),³⁸ Tobias Heß (1558–1614).³⁹ Another author acquainted with Weigel was the enthusiast Esaias Stiefel (or Stieffel,

³⁴ This allusion is interesting not only because it proves Weigel's early connections to the hotbed of contemporary Paracelsianism, Görlitz, but also because it was here that some thirty to forty years later, Weigel-influenced ideas would be conceived by Jacob Böhme. – Cf. Wollgast, "Valentin Weigel in der deutschen Philosophiegeschichte," 43 f.; Andrew Weeks, *Boehme. An Intellectual Biography of the Seventeenth-Century Philosopher and Mystic* (New York: SUNY, 1991), 30.

³⁵ Cf. Carlos Gilly, *Adam Haslmayr. Der erste Verkünder der Manifeste der Rosenkreuzer* (Amsterdam: Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, 1994), 131.

³⁶ In 1606, Widemann made a copy of Weigel's *Gebetbuch*, cf. Pfefferl, "Einleitung," PW 4, XXVI; on more copies, cf. XXXVIII. Cf. Julian Paulus, "Alchemie und Paracelsismus um 1600," in *Analecta Paracelsica*, ed. Joachim Telle (Stuttgart: Fanz Steiner, 1994), 335–406; Gilly, *Adam Haslmayr*; Günther Hoppe, "Zwischen Augsburg und Anhalt. Der rosenkreuzerische Briefwechsel des Augsburger Stadtarztes Carl Widemann mit dem Plötzkauer Fürsten August von Anhalt," *Zeitschrift des Historischen Vereins für Schwaben* 90 (1997), 125–157.

³⁷ These were *Gnothi seauton* and the first part of *Vom Leben Christi*. On Arndt and Pistorius (not to be confused with Johann Pistorius the Elder), see Wollgast, "Valentin Weigel in der deutschen Philosophiegeschichte," 51 f.

³⁸ Cf. Andreae's *De immortalitate Tobiae Hessi* (1619).

³⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 132; Carlos Gilly, *Das Erbe des Christian Rosenkreuz. Johann Valentin Andreae 1586–1986 und die Manifeste der Rosenkreuzerbruderschaft 1614–1616* (Amsterdam: in de Pelikaan, 1988), 80, 87; *Id.*, *Adam Haslmayr*, 107, 110, 125, 126. Besides Tobias Heß, Christoph Besold was another theologian from Johannes Valentinus Andreae's circle who was familiar with Weigel, as was Andreae himself Cf. Carlos Gilly, *Cimelia Rhodostauritica. Die Rosenkreuzer im Spiegel der zwischen 1610 und 1660 entstandenen Handschriften und Drucke* (Amsterdam: In de Pelikaan, 1995), 65 f., 89.

ca. 1561–1627), criticised by Böhme extensively in two of his works.⁴⁰ The preserved manuscript of Weigel's *Der güldene Griff*, kept at Leiden University Library,⁴¹ contains critical objections (*Admonitio*) by a certain Johannes Albergius and two responses to them by Weigel. Interestingly, this manuscript, dating from 1578–1583, was included as the introductory text to a collection of texts bound in one volume for the emperor Rudolf II.⁴²

The Leiden manuscript

It will not be without interest to look first at the volume in the possession of Rudolf II. Apart from Weigel's treatise, we find here two texts of a substantially dissimilar nature: the incomplete treatise *De magia*, which is an excerpt from the magic book *Arbatel* (first printed in 1575),⁴³ containing, among other things, a great number of magic diagrams. The last work in the book is an extensive, but fairly haphazard text titled *Liber secundus de alchemia*, an anthology of works by the great contemporary alchemists containing laboratory instructions.⁴⁴

If we have a look at the Leiden manuscript we see some portions of it were underlined, indicating passages that caught the reader's attention, or perhaps recommended the reader to study them in close detail. For example, the text of the second chapter titled "Not knowing eternal God and His works and not knowing oneself is the source of all evil and darkness" is underlined

⁴⁰ Siegfried Wollgast, *Philosophie in Deutschland: Zwischen Reformation und Aufklärung 1550–1650* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1993), 593 f. and 598; cf. Weeks, *Boehme*, 162. – The treatises in concern are the *Antistiefelus, oder Bedencken über Esaiae Stiefels Büchlein* (1622) and *Anti-Stiefelus II, oder Vom Irrthum der Secten Esaiae Stiefels und Ezechiel Meths* (1622).

⁴¹ Leiden, Universiteitsbibliothek, Ms. Voss. Chym. Q 52.

⁴² Cf. Alena Richterová, "Alchymické rukopisy ze sbírek Rudolfa II. v zahraničních knihovnách," in *Alchymie a Rudolf II. Hledání tajemství přírody ve střední Evropě v 16. a 17. století*, eds. Ivo Purš and Vladimír Karpenko (Praha: Artefactum, 2011), 262 and 266 (fig.); for a more detailed account, see Ivo Purš, "Zbytečné cennosti a cenné zbytečnosti? K povaze a osudu alchymických rukopisů Rudolfa II. v majetku královny Kristýny a Isaaqa Vossia," in *Vzácné knihy jako švédská válečná kořist z třicetileté války. Miscellanea oddělení rukopisů a starých tisků 20* (Praha: Artefactum, 2008), 33–62.

⁴³ Cf. Carlos Gilly, "The First Book of White Magic in Germany," in *Magia, alchimia, scienza dal '400 al '700*, vol. I, ed. Carlos Gilly a Cis van Heertum (Venezia – Amsterdam: Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica – Centro Di, 2002), 209–217.

⁴⁴ For a description of the manuscript, see in Boeren, *Codices Vossiani Chymici*, 221–223.

in several places, as are passages in chapters 3 and 4 which deal with the relationship between the eye and the object, that is, with the activity of the knowing subject “coming out” to its object. In chapter 19, there is a marginal note (“NB”) calling attention to the idea that God is everywhere where there is faith. The chapters with the highest proportion of underlined texts are chapters 13 and 14 which explain that in the highest, “supernatural” act of cognition, God Himself is man’s “eye”, and thus, through this knowledge, and only through this, the unity among the pious can be established.

The objection appended to the book and the two long responses deal with one and the same topic which seems to be the leitmotif of the whole Weigelian part of the volume: the question whether everything flows from the inside out, as Weigel contends, or if it is the other way round.

Weigel’s text, which consists of predominantly theoretical theological, metaphysical, anthropological, and gnoseological speculations, is strikingly juxtaposed with texts of a purely practical nature. The whole collection is thematically very diverse, or even incongruous: the lacunas and omissions in *On Magic* leave the reader with the impression that the work is of a provisional nature, rather than being the result of an earnest editorial effort. Although Weigel’s treatise is at odds with the other two texts and its inclusion seems rather incidental, the magic and alchemical context that it was placed in indicates some of the ways of the reception of Weigel’s ideas. There is also an early pseudo-Weigelian text, *Anacrisis*, which is a commentary on the most widely read tract on *magic* by the “hermit Pelayo” (an inspiration also for the authors of the idea of Rosicrucianism),⁴⁵ penned as early as 1579. So it is no wonder that over one hundred years later, an anthology of mysticism and magic *Geomantia nova* (Duisburg – Frankfurt 1686) could be published under Weigel’s name. The texts of his deacon Biedermann, full of apocalyptic-astrological musings, have especially served to reinforce this association.

⁴⁵ Cf. Jean Dupèbe, “L’ermite Pelagius et les Rose-Croix,” in *Die Rosenkreuzer als europäisches Phänomen im 17. Jahrhundert. Akten zum 35. Wolfenbütteler Symposium*, ed. Carlos Gilly (Amsterdam – Stuttgart: in de Pelikaan, 2001), 137; on the influence of Pelayo on Rosicrucianism, see François Secret, *Hermétisme et Kabbale* (Napoli: Bibliopolis, 1992), 92–118.

Oswald Croll (1563–1609)

The intermediary who most probably procured Weigel's manuscript for emperor Rudolf II was the famous physician, Paracelsian, and alchemist Oswald Croll. He stayed in Prague during the years 1597–1599 and 1602–1609, i.e., at a time when the court was attended by many learned men such as the astronomer Johannes Kepler (1571–1630); the court's physician and Paracelsian Martin Ruland Jr. (1569–1611); the Czech alchemist Bavor Rodovský of Hustiřany (1526–1592); the alchemist and personal physician to Rudolf II, Tadeáš Hájek of Hájek (1525–1600); the Paracelsian physician and alchemist Michael Maier (1568–1622); the Paracelsian physicist Anselm Boëtius de Boodt (1550–1632); the English alchemist Edward Kelley (1555–1597); or the astronomer (and practising alchemist) Tycho Brahe (1546–1601). Croll held Weigel in high regard, as evidenced in his correspondence with Weigel's sons⁴⁶ and in the mention that he made of Weigel in the introduction to his famous *Basilica chymica* (1609), written in Prague. Croll describes Weigel as one of the pious and learned followers of Paracelsus who genuinely tried to achieve a synthesis of philosophy (the study of the "way of nature") and theology (the study of "the way of Christ"), and he makes reference to the notion of the third eye, characteristic of Weigel's gnoseology.⁴⁷ Moreover, almost the entire text of chapter 23 of Weigel's *De vita beata*, one of the first of Weigel's works to have been printed that came out in the year of Croll's death in 1609, was tacitly included, along with other Paracelsian and Weigelian addenda, in a more or less verbatim quotation in the introduction to Croll's *De signaturis internis rerum* (published as an appendix to *Basilica chymica* and dedicated to Petr Vok of Rožmberk [1539–1611]).⁴⁸ This chapter by Weigel is again concerned with the idea that "everything flows from the inside out ... and nothing is gained from the outside". Here, Weigel posits three worlds, "each included in the other": 1. God, 2. angels, and 3. the visible universe. He mentions the "eye of mind" and the "sensory eye", and points out the possibility of ascending from the knowledge of the created world to the knowledge of God as well as descending again from God to His creation;

⁴⁶ On Croll's activities on Rudolf's court, see Jaroslava Hausenblasová, "Mezi lékařstvím a politikou. Působení Oswalda Crolla v českých zemích v době vlády Rudolfa II.," in *Alchymie a Rudolf II.*, ed. Ivo Purš & Vladimír Karpenko (Praha: Artefactum, 2011), 367–380. In one of his letters, Croll mentions the purchase of some (Paracelsian) books from Weigel's sons who shared their father's non-orthodox views. Cf. Wollgast, *Valentin Weigel in der deutschen Philosophiegeschichte*, 50.

⁴⁷ Oswald Croll, *Basilica chymica* (Frankfurt am Main, 1609), 70.

⁴⁸ See Oswald Croll, *De signaturis rerum* (Frankfurt am Main, 1609), *Praefatio*, 31–35.

the idea that the lower is always contained in the higher; that everything flows from the inside out to lower, external things, so that angels depend on God, stars (i.e., the invisible forces in things) depend on angels, and forms (or bodies) depend on stars. This way, what is in God “divinely” corresponds to what is on Earth “physically”. Similarly to Nicholas of Cusa, Weigel explains the relationship between God and the universe in terms of *complicatio* and *explicatio*, or as *centrum* and *circumferentia*.⁴⁹ Especially, the idea that external forms are manifestations of the inner essences of things is important for Croll and for his concept of *signatures* of things. He also echoes Weigel’s notion that the inner forces present in things, their “stars” (*astrum*), are seeds “curled up” (*complicari*) inside them. Equally the idea that the lower and the higher mirror each other on different levels can be found also in Weigel.⁵⁰

The fact that Croll shared the ideas of Valentin Weigel was not lost on later observers. Already the preface by the anonymous publisher of Weigel’s *Postille*, which came out in 1617, mentioned Croll’s appreciation of Weigel.⁵¹ Several years later in 1634, the anonymous polemical text *Gründtlicher Beweis* lumped Croll, along with Weigel, in a group of “theosophers” and “new masters”, liars, blasphemers and “enemies of the real Body of Christ”;⁵² noting that Croll “like Weigel is devoted to a secret art and to revelations”; the author maintained that “Paracelsus, Weigel, Croll, and their like have not proven anything and barely moved a single straw with their exalted fantasies and [purely] natural faith”. Croll is still described as a “devout Weigelian” (*zärtlicher Weigelianer*) in Ernst S. Cyprian’s *Fernere Proben von Gottfried Arnolds Partheylichkeit* in 1723.⁵³

⁴⁹ Weigel does not state this explicitly, however, in the following chapter of *De vita beata* (chap. 24) Christ is depicted as a centre and believers as lines radiating from it. This chapter is indebted to Nicholas of Cusa’s *De ludo globi*.

⁵⁰ On the relationship between Croll and Weigel, see also Wilhelm Kühlmann, “Oswald Crollius und seine Signaturenlehre. Zum Profil hermetischer Naturphilosophie in der Ära Rudolphs II.,” in *Die okkulten Wissenschaften in der Renaissance*, ed. August Buck (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrasowitz, 1992), 103–123.

⁵¹ See Pfefferl, “Einleitung,” in Weigel, *Kirchen- oder Hauspostille*, PW 12/1, XX.

⁵² [Anonymous] *Gründtlicher beweis wie Theophrastus Paracelsus, Valentinus Weigel, Paulus Felgenhawer, Nicolaus Teringe, und andere jhres gleichen, mit grosser Heucheley, mit groben Lesterungen, und mit falschen Weissagungen umgehen ...* (1634), 5; for more quotes, 31 and 51.

⁵³ Ernst S. Cyprian, *Fernere Proben von Gottfried Arnolds Partheylichkeit*, in Gottfried Arnold, *Unpartheyische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorien*, Bd. 3 (Schaffhausen, 1742), 113; cf. Wilhelm Kühlmann and Joachim Telle, “Einleitung,” in Oswald Croll, *De signaturis internis rerum*:

Heinrich Khunrath (1560–1605) and Johann Arndt (1555–1621)

Another famous Paracelsian physician and alchemist to have worked in Prague for some time, the writings of whom contain evidence of the dissemination of Weigel's manuscripts, is Heinrich Khunrath.⁵⁴ In his highly acclaimed *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae*, more specifically, in the *Interpretationes et annotationes*, Weigel ("Vigelius") is mentioned in the same breath as other *virii doctissimi*, Johann Reuchlin, Paracelsus, Agrippa of Nettesheim, Erasmus, Martin Luther,⁵⁵ and other notable authors – a fairly diverse company. It should be noted that what can be said of Croll's alchemy also holds for Khunrath's: practical laboratory procedures are supported by a systematic theoretical framework that draws on many sources ranging from natural philosophy to spiritual alchemy and theo-alchemy.

The affinity between Khunrath's and Weigel's thought go much deeper than Khunrath's occasional mentioning of Weigel may suggest. In his *Von Hylealischen, das ist Pri-Materialischen Catholischen oder Allgemeinen Natürlichen Chaos* (Magdeburg 1597) we can read, for example, that it is important to be "endowed by God and wisdom, enlightened by the light of nature and cognizant of ourselves";⁵⁶ we are encouraged to "read in the world's book of nature and in ourselves"; we ought to draw from the light of the Scripture and from the light of nature; enlightenment cannot come from reading paper books or from the "academic spirit", but only from God's mercy for which we must plead; we should be guided by the light of the Scripture, nature and our own light;⁵⁷ man is a threefold being consisting of an earthly body, a heavenly spirit, and an animating soul;⁵⁸ God is our teacher in everything we

die lateinische editio princeps (1609) und die deutsche Erstübersetzung (1623) (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1996), 8.

⁵⁴ Lynn Thorndike in *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1923), 276, describes Khunrath as an author in whose works natural magic is dissolved in theosophy and alchemical mysticism.

⁵⁵ Heinrich Khunrath, *Amphitheatrum Sapientiae Aeternae* (Hanau, 1609), 30, annot. 66; cf. Gilly, "The *Amphitheatrum Sapientiae Aeternae* of Heinrich Khunrath," in *Magia, alchimia, scienza dal '400 al '700. L'influsso di Ermete Trismegisto / Magic, Alchemy and Science 15th–18th Centuries. The influence of Hermes Trismegistus*, ed. Carlos Gilly (Venezia – Amsterdam: Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica – Centro Di, 2002), 342.

⁵⁶ A quote from the edition Heinrich Khunrath, *Alchymisch philosophisches Bekenntnis vom universellen Chaos der naturgemässen Alchymie* (Leipzig, 1786), 7.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 7, 18; against "paper books" see Weigel, *Der güldene Griff*, kap. 16.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

do, and we shall achieve the “Sabbath of Sabbaths”.⁵⁹ Also Khunrath’s assertion that anybody with at least a “spark” of alchemical universal knowledge would have been in agreement with his own conclusions can be compared to Weigel’s claim concerning the rational apprehension of the fundamentals of philosophy, universally available through the “light of nature”.⁶⁰ It is this rational, universally available method to reach the supra-rational realm, that is the “Golden Grasp” that Weigel gives to the world and the discovery of which he considers the turning point in his quest.⁶¹

Johann Arndt, the author of the famous and widely popular *Four Books on True Christianity* certainly realised the analogy between Khunrath and Weigel. In 1595, just one year after the publication of Khunrath’s text, Arndt made mention in his *Ikonomographia* (1596)⁶² of the “amazing *Amphitheatrum*” by the “exceptional philosopher and scrutinizer of nature” Khunrath. Arndt himself drew profound inspiration from Weigel’s work and he borrowed some chapters of his *Vom Gebet* to quote them practically verbatim in his second book of *True Christianity*.⁶³ Arndt, who was no alchemist but a theologian, praised Khunrath’s ability to interpret God’s signs in nature, a skill he demonstrated himself in the fourth book of *True Christianity*. Moreover, in a 1599 letter, Arndt – referring to Khunrath’s *Symbolum Phisico-chymicum* (1598) – mounted a defense of Paracelsus’ and Weigel’s ideas.⁶⁴ Yet most importantly, Arndt wrote his *Iudicium und Bericht eines Erfahrenen Cabalisten und Philosophen über die 4. Figuren des grossen Amphitheatri D[octori]. Henrici Khunradi,*

⁵⁹ Ibid., 53; Heinrich Khunrath, *Alchymisch philosophisches Bekenntnis* (Leipzig, 1786), 235.

⁶⁰ Weigel, *Kurzer Bericht und Anleitung zur Deutschen Theologie*, ZW 3, 94 f.

⁶¹ Cf. Weigel’s account in *Der güldene Griff*, PW 8, 89n; for an exposition of the same passage see below, 55.

⁶² Johann Arndt, *Ikonomographia: gründtlicher vnd Christlicher bericht von bildern, jhrem vhrsprung, rechten gebrauch, vn missbrauch im Alten vnd Newen Testament* (Halberstadt, 1596).

⁶³ *Vom wahren Christentum* (Braunschweig, 1606), Book II, chap. 34 (divided into 12 sub-chapters). For a comparison of the two texts see Pfefferl, “Einleitung,” PW 4, XLVI–XLIX. – Arndt also wrote a critical piece on Weigel’s *Dialogus de Christianismo* (his probably most intransigent polemic against the contemporary Lutheran orthodoxy) which was published under the title *Kurtzes Bedencken über Valentin Weigels Dialogum de Christianismo* in 1615 in Halle.

⁶⁴ Gilly, “The *Amphitheatrum Sapientiae Aeternae*,” 345.

which was published anonymously in 1608 as an appendix to Khunrath's *De igne magorum*.⁶⁵

Arndt, above all, praises the comprehensive triadic structure set out by Khunrath in his *Amphitheatrum*, dealing with "basics of natural magic", "supernatural Cabala", and "divine theology".⁶⁶ This testifies the affinity between Khunrath's ideas and the philosophy of Pico della Mirandola, many times cited by Khunrath, but it also indicates the influence of Weigel who also drew on Pico. Just as when Arndt says that Khunrath divided the universe into three parts (God, man, and nature), we are presented here with three Weigelian "books" that man ought to "read", i.e., the knowledge of God (through the Scripture and in Christ), man's self-knowledge, and the knowledge of nature.⁶⁷ Furthermore, Arndt calls attention to the concept of the three lights of wisdom found in Khunrath's work, these being the light of nature, or the "magic" light, which includes the art of "signatures"; the supernatural light, or angelic, Cabalistic light; and lastly the divine light, which is the Holy Spirit, or theology.⁶⁸ Though the concept of three lights cannot be found in this particular form in Weigel's work, there is the similar conception of the three eyes, *oculus sensualis, rationalis, and mentalis, or intellectualis*. The anthropological conception of the three parts, or layers of man, being the elemental body, the astral spirit, and the divine, immortal soul, is Weigelian-Paracelsian. The emphasis on reading in the three books – God, man, and nature – is also echoed in the fourth image of Khunrath's *Amphitheatrum*, the so-called *oratorium-laboratorium*.⁶⁹

It should be noted that unlike Weigel who identifies the light of nature with natural, rational thinking and knowledge, Khunrath (following Paracelsus) considered the light of nature to be identical with nature itself which is described as a "powerful and magic light and fire, yes, a great spirit and spiritual force that flows from ... God to the hylic, i.e., primaterial aquatic chaos,

⁶⁵ The book was republished under Arndt's name as *Judicium über die ersten vier Figuren deß großen Khunrathischen Amphitheaters* in 1783, once again together with *De igne magorum*.

⁶⁶ Arndt, *Judicium* (1608), 108.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 109.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 109 ff.

⁶⁹ Cf. Forshaw, "The Alchemy of the Amphitheatrum," 199 f.

created in the very beginning of the world,⁷⁰ or the divine power, or the spirit emanating from the Triune God.⁷¹

Johann Siebmacher (1561–1611)

Johann Ambrosius Siebmacher von Nürnberg⁷² is another important author of alchemical texts belonging to the Weigelian circle. In 1618 and 1619, he published most of the books through the well-known publisher of Paracelsian and Weigelian literature, Lucas Jennis.⁷³ Siebmacher was most probably the author of the well-known (and anonymously printed) treatise *Wasserstein der Weisen* (1619; again in 1661), which draws parallels between Christ the “cornerstone” and the philosophers’ stone. An appendix signed with his acronym “Huldreich Bachsmeier von Regensbrunn” was also appended to the last text of the anthology *Philosophia Mystica* (1619), the *Introductio hominis oder Kurtze Anleitung zu einem Gottseligen Leben* (which included a mention of another work of the author, *Das güldne Vliess*, not printed until 1737). Perhaps was Siebmacher the publisher of the whole Paracelsian-Weigelian anthology.⁷⁴

In the *Wasserstein der Weisen*, we can identify several Weigelian themes. Most importantly, perhaps, the idea that the object of observation merely stimulates the observer’s sensory faculties and activates his pre-existing knowledge, so that the object itself is not a source of knowledge; or the notion of text as a testimony of the inner knowledge vested in man by God.⁷⁵ The central analogy between Christ and the philosophers’ stone corresponds to the basic Weigelian idea that external phenomena are manifestations of the inner essences of things, because, according to Siebmacher, the philosophers’ stone is a faithful earthly reflection of the true, spiritual, heavenly

⁷⁰ Khunrath, *Alchymisch philosophisches Bekenntis*, 63 f.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁷² He was perhaps the author of the influential, re-printed and repeatedly amended book of coats of arms (*Wappenbüchlein*, 1596; *Newes Wappenbuch*, vol. 2, 1605 and 1609).

⁷³ Cf. Andreas Deppermann, *Johann Jakob Schütz und die Anfänge des Pietismus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 11; Fritz Schiele, “Zu den Schriften Valentin Weigels,” *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 48, *Neue Folge* 11 (1929): 382, 388.

⁷⁴ Cf. Wilhelm Kühlmann and Friedrich Vollhardt, eds., *Offenbarung und Episteme. Zur europäischen Wirkung Jakob Böhmes im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 198.

⁷⁵ [Johann Siebmacher,] *Wasserstein der Weisen* (Frankfurt am Main, 1661), 68 f.

cornerstone, viz., Jesus Christ.⁷⁶ Equally Weigelian is the assumption that for a person who does not fully understand Christ (and has not actualised His life in him or her), the (false) knowledge of Christ will be a path to damnation rather than salvation (cf. 1J 4);⁷⁷ the fulmination against Aristotelians as pagan philosophers;⁷⁸ the need for rebirth by the Holy Spirit and of spiritual death which will sweep away the old nature, the old Adam,⁷⁹ etc. The matter of the stone is described as a “universal scintillating fire of the light of nature that contains in itself the heavenly spirit which pierces through everything and through which God has animated nature since the beginning”, it is the soul of the world and the Spirit of the Lord that pervades the world and that hovered above the waters in the beginning.⁸⁰ The purpose of spiritual alchemy is here expressed clearly: the essence of God can be known only after the “image of God” has been dissolved and purged in the soul of man;⁸¹ the philosophers’ stone cannot be found without the true knowledge of Christ, the heavenly cornerstone.⁸²

Printed editions and pseudepigraphic texts

The above mention of the *Philosophia Mystica* brings us to the new phase of the reception of Weigel’s ideas. It was, as we know, the printed editions of his works that made him famous. The texts started coming out in 1609 beginning with the Latin treatise *De vita beata*. It was followed by the book of prayer *Gebetbuch* (1612 and 1617), the treatises *Der güldene Griff* (four editions from 1613 to 1618), *Vom Ort der Welt* (1613), *Dialogus de Christianismo* (three editions from 1614 to 1618), *Gnothi seauton* (1615), a commentary on the *Book of Genesis* titled *Informatorium* (1616), and a collection of sermons *Postille* (1617). The year 1618 saw the publication of a total of 18 texts by Weigel and Weigelian pseudepigrapha – a rich harvest, and not the last.

Many of the works attributed to Weigel were written by aforementioned Benedikt Biedermann whose thoughts went in directions that Weigel himself

⁷⁶ Ibid., 63.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 78.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 80 f.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 30, 90, 106, 109.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 34.

⁸¹ Ibid., 76.

⁸² Ibid., 116.

did not pursue.⁸³ Biedermann tended to explore apocalyptic themes and had a penchant for expansive astrological, mystical, and pseudo-Cabalistic (especially numerological) speculations interests which were more or less foreign to Weigel.⁸⁴ Regarding astrology, a special attention should be paid to the second volume of the treatise *Gnothi seauton*⁸⁵ titled *Astrologia theologizata*,⁸⁶ and the third, also pseudepigraphic, volume; as for apocalyptic themes, Biedermann's commentary on Paul Lautensack's (1478–1558) *Apocalipsis Jhesu Christi* is of interest.

Authentic or not, these publications earned the author an enthusiastic readership, but also provoked severe criticism that was directed against not just Weigel, but also his supposedly numerous followers.⁸⁷ We shall now focus on some of these texts as they have a bearing on the continuing development of Valentin Weigel's image as an alchemist.

⁸³ Biedermann is the author of, among other works: *Informatorium theologicum* (1579/80, not printed), *Moise Tabernaculum* (1583/84; printed 1618), *Theologia Weigelii* (1584; printed 1618), *Gnothi seauton* II (tj. *Astrologia theologizata*, 1587/88; printed 1618) a *Gnothi seauton* III (i.e., *Philosophia antiquissima*, 1587/88), *Studium universale* (circa 1590; printed 1618) and several others, see Lieb, *Valentin Weigels Kommentar zur Schöpfungsgeschichte*, 47 ff. and the overview on 151 f. On the complex relationship between Weigel's *Informatorium* and Biedermann's Latin treatise *Informatorium theologicum* cf. *ibid.*, especially 83–94.

⁸⁴ Cf. Lieb, *Valentin Weigels Kommentar zur Schöpfungsgeschichte*, 11.

⁸⁵ *Ander Theil Gnöthi Seauton: Nosce teipsum. Heisset Astrologia Theologizata, Auff den Andern Theil des Menschen die Seel nemblichen / so auß dem firmament formieret / geführt vnnd gestellet* (Halle, 1618), 111 pages. – It is precisely this pseudepigraph that Jacob Böhme recommends, see his *Epistolae Theosophicae*, 28, 14, in Jacob Böhme, *Sämtliche Schriften* (Faksimile-Neudruck der Ausgabe von 1730), Bd. 9, ed. Will-Erich Peuckert (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1956), 104.

⁸⁶ *Astrologia Theologizata, Hoc Est: Quod Externus Homo Cum Omnibus Operibus ... Deponi, Abnegari & Plane Emori: Internus Autem Per Lumen Gratiae Assumi ... & Soli Deo ... Vivere Debeat. Theosopho Quodam Anonymo Autore* (Frankfurt am Main, 1617), 107 pages. – There is an older publication with a similar title written by Jean Gerson, *Tractatus in trilogio astrologiae astrologizatae*, s. l. et a. (1475?), as the pseudonymous author also remarks. The treatise translated 1886 by the president of the Theosophical Society, Anna Kingsford, and published under Weigel's name is, in fact, a translation of another anonymous Latin treatise that was published in 1617 in Frankfurt. See Valentine Veigelius' *Astrology Theologized, The Spiritual Hermeneutics of Astrology and Holy Writ Being A Treatise upon the Influence of the Stars on Man and on the Art of Ruling Them By the Law of Grace* (London, 1886), which indicates 1649 as the date of the publication of the original.

⁸⁷ Cf. Opel, *M. Valentin Weigel*, 73 ff.

Motifs in pseudo-Weigelian texts

Our reflections on Weigel's contribution to the alchemical tradition can now be complemented with an examination of pseudepigrapha attributed to Weigel. However, if we were to look for explicitly alchemical imagery and themes in pseudo-Weigelian texts, we would be again disappointed.

The most significant passage with indisputably alchemical undertones is the late addendum to *A Dialogue on Christianity*, the "*Ad Dialogum de Morte*", which is missing from the manuscripts, but appears in the first edition published in Halle in 1614.⁸⁸ This brief text argues that death is the ultimate secret without which any life in nature is impossible. Nature itself reveals the truth about rebirth: a seed must die before it bears fruit; similarly, a snake that is cut into pieces and buried in the ground will yield a crop of snakes. In other words, a thing must be destroyed and restored in a more perfect form and vigour than it had before. The fact that the nobler and better is always arrived at through death can be demonstrated only through the divine art of alchemy. The rather ambiguous marginal note ("Metamorph. fol. Suchten fol. 5") probably refers to the treatise *Metamorphosis Theophrasti Paracelsi* by Adam von Bodenstein (1584)⁸⁹ and Alexandr von Suchten's essay *De antimonio vulgari*, where similar thoughts had been expressed.⁹⁰

Here, we find also is the repeated assertion that resurrection is symbolised in palingenesis, or auto re-creation;⁹¹ an idea that is later invoked by the Leipzig author Johann Praetorius in his *Anthropodemus Plutonicus* (Magdeburg 1667), specifically in a chapter dealing with "chymical people", which is an allusion to the Paracelsian concept of the artificial man, or homunculus (already mentioned in the third of the original Rosicrucian manifestos, *The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz* by Johann Valentin Andreae).⁹²

⁸⁸ See the critical edition of Alfred Ehrenreich, ZW, 170–171. – Valentin Weigel, *Dialogus de christianismo* (Hall in Sachsen, 1614), 99–104.

⁸⁹ Adam von Bodenstein, *Metamorphosis Theophrasti Paracelsi* (Basel, 1584), chap. "De morte," 50 ff.

⁹⁰ Alexandr von Suchten, *De antimonio vulgari*, in: *Chymische Schriften alle* (Hamburg, 1680), 274 f.

⁹¹ Weigel, *Dialogus de Christianismo*, 100–104.

⁹² See William R. Newman, *Promethean Ambitions. Alchemy and the Quest to Perfect Nature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 229 (chap. 4: "Artificial Life and Homunculus"), in reference to Praetorius' *Anthropodemus Plutonicus* (Magdeburg, 1667), I, 140–145.

Instrumental in the classification of Weigel as an alchemist was also the frequent appearance of his name in the context of other texts. Of importance in this regard is especially the influential and popular Paracelsian-Weigelian anthology *Philosophia Mystica* (1618),⁹³ mentioned above, which features four texts attributed to Paracelsus, six texts attributed to Weigel and one text dealing with the life and teachings of the hermit Nicolas of Flüe. This was, in fact, the first publication of Paracelsus' theological texts that we know of. The leitmotif of the anthology is the priority of the internal over the external in man and in all things, and consequently, a lessening of the importance (or rejection) of external rituals, social status, property, and all works, including all "external" ways of learning of arts and sciences, while emphasis lies on essential, life-altering faith and self-knowledge. The book also touches on the idea of the existence of two (or alternatively, three) divine books: God and nature, or man, and two lights: the light of nature and the light of mercy. The *Astronomia Olympi novi* and *Theologia Cabalistica* in this volume come from the pen of the alchemist, Paracelsian, and enthusiastic adherent of the idea of Rosicrucianism Adam Haslmayr.⁹⁴ Several other texts in the Weigelian part were authored by Weigel's deacon Benedikt Biedermann (*Scholasterium Chistianum; Vom Himmlischen Jerusalem; Daß Gott allein gut sey; Introductio hominis*). There are general astrological motifs (e.g. the substitution of the natural heaven, whose astrological effects impinge on the natural man, with the "new" heaven, represented by the word of God and the apostles as its stars).⁹⁵ Paracelsus' commentary on the Book of Daniel (fitting in the timely context of the Rosicrucian idea)⁹⁶ is a specimen of the apocalyptic genre. It contains, *inter alia*, the idea that we are witnessing a deepening of humanity's understanding of things and the word of Christ, although the exact end of time remains unknown, and that the authorities are unnecessary – a conception found also in other works by Paracelsus.⁹⁷

The Weigelian texts mainly deal with familiar topics. Of interest to us is the last, pseudonymous writing *Introductio hominis*, or "Guidance for the Christian Life". It describes certain "remarkable practices" that had sprung up at various places around the world but laments the fact that these new

⁹³ Pfefferl, "Einleitung," XXXVII and XII.

⁹⁴ See e.g. his concept of *sancta Theophrastia* in *Theologia Cabalistica*, 65.

⁹⁵ *Astronomia Olympi Novi*, in: *Philosophia Mystica*, 46; cf. *Theologia Cabalistica*, *ibid.*, 63.

⁹⁶ Cf. Will-Erich Peuckert, "Nachwort," in *Philosophia mystica* ((partial reprint of the 1618 edition), ed. Will-Erich Peuckert (Berlin: W. Keiper, 1943), 135.

⁹⁷ Paracelsus, *In Prophetam Danielelem*, in: *Philosophia Mystica*, 104, 105.

inventions had been made merely for the sake of temporal life and are therefore examples of “blasphemous foolery”.⁹⁸ One of such inventions is *chymia* or the “Art of the Stone”, which had attracted the attention of both the poor and the rich and noble who engaged in it instead of doing what they should have been doing in the first place, namely, seeking self-knowledge.⁹⁹ Yet, *chymia* is the supreme, most secret, and best founded art because it leads to the perfect understanding of not only natural things, but also divine things, and must be a gift of the Holy Spirit, although so many people regard it merely as a rational art. Any prescribed procedures are in fact unnecessary. What really matters is God’s mercy and goodness.¹⁰⁰ The nature of this particular art is such that the “observer” identifies with the “observed” in quiet equanimity.¹⁰¹ To use Weigel’s terminology, it is about seeing through the “eye of mind”, that in which God comes to see Himself in the quiet Sabbath.

The text also alludes to the idea of man as a microcosm and as a being with three *corpora*: the body, the soul, and the spirit.¹⁰² God, too, is immanent in man.¹⁰³ Similarly as in *Wasserstein der Weisen*, Christ is referred to as the “cornerstone of heaven” and emphasis is placed on the need to “till the fields of one’s heart”. On subsequent pages, the author draws on *Theologia Deutsch* and later on Tauler, echoing also the idea that God does not want to exist without His creation. In this connection, he talks about man’s need for Christ’s presence and mentions the “school of the Holy Spirit”.¹⁰⁴

The last text in the collection is “Bachsmeir’s” (i.e. Siebmacher’s) “Appendix”, which once again brings up the topic of the “secret of the philosophers’ stone” and makes reference to Siebmacher’s alchemical treatise *Das güldene Fließ* which was to come out in print much later.

Another publication that significantly influenced the general reception of Weigel’s and which is worthy of mention here, although not being an alchemical text, is the 1619 treatise *Offenbahrung Jesu Christi*. The volume features a pseudepigraphon (allegedly dating from 1545), including several letters by

⁹⁸ *Introductio hominis*, in: *Philosophia Mystica*, 231, 268 f.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 234.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 231 f.

¹⁰¹ This will become the topic of the pseudo-Weigelian text *Studium universale* (Frankfurt–Leipzig, 1700), chap. 3, towards the end.

¹⁰² *Introductio hominis*, in *Philosophia Mystica*, 237, 239.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 241.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 259 f.; *Theologia Deutsch*, ed. Hermann Mandel (Leipzig, 1908), chap. 29.

the Nuremberg painter of apocalyptic themes Paul Lautensack and “Weigel’s” (in fact, Biedermann’s) commentaries. This very popular book¹⁰⁵ dealt with the mystic-apocalyptic symbolism of the Cross and the inscriptions on the Cross. It contains four tables and figures by Lautensack as well as tables accompanying the pseudo-Weigelian interpretations. Emblematic of these Weigelian interpretations are the repeated mentioning of the importance of “*gnothi seuaton*” (self-knowledge) and the symbolism and significance of the number 666. This emphasis is also found in the text by Lautensack and is characteristic also for other of Biedermann’s pseudo-Weigeliana. One of the commentaries attributed to Weigel (allegedly written in 1592, i.e., four years after Weigel’s death!) titled *Super divam apocalypsin Iohannis Evangelistae et apostoli (Compendiosa via seu perfecta Methodus ad veram Theologiam, h.e. ad omne genus scientiarum. Valentin Weigel, anno 1592)* placed Weigel firmly in the context of apocalyptically impassioned authors, an association for which there are no grounds in his authentic texts.

The collection *Eröffnetes Wunderbuch* by the Moravian author Andreas Glorez (ca. 1620 – ca.1700) was published in Regensburg in 1700. Appended to it was another alchemical treatise by “Weigel” *Das Himmlische Manna, oder die unaussprechlichen Kräfte des köstlichen Wundersteins der Natur*.¹⁰⁶ It was, in fact, the first entirely practical-alchemical text published under Weigel’s name, reedited later as *Himmlisch Manna, Azoth et Ignis, das ist Guldenes Kleinod* (1787).¹⁰⁷ The author of the first text in the collection, Andreas Glorez, was considered an important writer in the tradition of the so-called

¹⁰⁵ Although the pseudo-Weigelian interpretation of Lautensack’s figures is less systematic and less easily comprehensible than the expositions offered by Abraham Meffert († 1617) or Paul Kaym († 1634), the fact that it was printed and bound together with the only two authentic works by Lautensack published in the 17th century meant that it would have a major influence on Lautensack’s reception in the decades to come, during which Lautensack’s ideas came to be closely associated with Weigel’s. Cf. Berthold Kress, *Divine Diagrams: The Manuscripts and Drawings of Paul Lautensack (1477/78–1558)* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), chap. 6: “The Reception of Lautensack’s Works,” 281.

¹⁰⁶ The title page calls Glorez “the Moravian Albertus Magnus” and gives the book a telling title *Eröffnetes Wunderbuch von Wassersalben, s. g. zauberischen Krankheiten, Wunderkuren, wie sie die heilige Schrift lehrt [...] Erforschung der Krankheiten durch den urin, und andern merkwürdigen Geheimnissen aus handschriftl. Klosterschätzen*. The book of Glorez was reprinted in Freiburg am Breisgau, 1979.

¹⁰⁷ [pseudo-Weigel,] *Himmlisch Manna, Azoth et Ignis, das ist Guldenes Kleinod...* (Amsterdam – Frankfurt am Main – Leipzig, 1787).

Hausväterliteratur.¹⁰⁸ His *Eröffnetes Wunderbuch* dealt with magic and sympathetic remedies and ointments such as the well-known *Waffensalbe*. The appended pseudo-Weigelian treatise borrowed only a few of Weigel's basic ideas and spiced them up with Paracelsian concepts to continue with purely alchemical interpretations and experiments relating to the philosophers' stone and meant to provide an illustration of certain theological problems, such as the secret of the Trinity.¹⁰⁹

Another interesting treatise appeared in 1716 in Hamburg. It was a German translation of the alchemical text *Vellus aureum et chrysopoeia* by the well-known Italian humanist, poet, and alchemist Giovanni Augurelli (1441–1524), which bore Valentin Weigel's name on the title page.¹¹⁰ Augurelli, a friend of Ficino, experimented with metal and pigment fabrication. The Latin original of this allegorical poem (translated into German in prose), which described the fabrication of gold was published in 1515¹¹¹ and brought fame to its author.¹¹² However, the praise was probably not universal, for Khunrath bluntly rejected a *Vellus Aureum* in his *De igne magorum* (1608).¹¹³

The core of the text consists of allegorical interpretations revolving around ancient deities, remarkable musings on the birth of metals in the earth, and descriptions of mining works¹¹⁴ as well as practical (again, partially

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Johann Christoph Adelung, *Fortsetzung und Ergänzungen zu Christian Gottlieb Jöchers allgemeinem Gelehrten-Lexicon*, Bd. 2 (Leipzig, 1787), Sp. 1489.

¹⁰⁹ See [pseudo-Weigel,] *Himmlich Manna, Azoth et Ignis, das ist Güldenes Kleinod...* (Amsterdam – Frankfurt am Main – Leipzig, 1787), 23.

¹¹⁰ Giovanni Aurelio Augurelli, *Vellus aureum et chrysopoeia ... Das ist Gülden Vließ* (Hamburg, 1716).

¹¹¹ I refer to the edition: Ioannis Aurelij Augurelli P. Ariminensis *Chrysopoeia et Vellus aureum*, s. l. 1639.

¹¹² Cf. François Secret, "'Chrysopoeia' et 'Vellus aureum,'" in *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 38 (1976): 109 f.

¹¹³ Heinrich Khunrath, *De igne magorum* (Straßburg, 1618), p. 94. – Not all authors were convinced of the irreconcilable conflict between Augurelli and Khunrath, as evidenced by Nathan Albinus' *Bibliotheca Chemica Contracta* (Genève, 1653), an anthology of alchemical texts featuring, *inter alia*, Augurelli's *Chrysopoeia*. In the introduction to the volume, Khunrath's *Amphitheatrum* is recommended for further reading (see Thorndike, *A history of magic and experimanental science*, vol. 7, 155. In fact, there were more works of this name, including one by Paracelsus, see Hermann Kopp, *Die Alchemie in älterer und neuerer Zeit I* (Heidelberg, 1886), 242–244.

¹¹⁴ Cf. esp. *Vellus aureum et chrysopoeia*, 14 ff.

allegorical) laboratory procedures¹¹⁵ based on first-hand observations of natural processes and phenomena. If we were to find in this text something congruous with Weigel's thought it would be the fairly general (and surely non-exclusively Weigelian) idea that everything is animated from the inside by the soul (and not from the outside), the threefold conception of man (body, soul, spirit),¹¹⁶ the requirement that alchemical remedies be used in a virtuous and godly manner, the repeated appeal that people should lead a quiet, peaceful and composed life,¹¹⁷ the occasionally proclaimed need to devote the fruits of our labour to "gods"¹¹⁸ through continuous prayer, or the denunciation of the "foolish sophists".¹¹⁹

Conclusion: Weigel's influence on authors of alchemical texts

We have said that Oswald Croll considered Weigel one of the pious *and* learned followers of Paracelsus who strived towards a true and genuine synthesis of philosophy and theology, in other words, who tried to study both the "way of nature" and the "way of Christ". This association of Weigel with Paracelsus was not lost on contemporary or later critics who used Paracelsianism, Weigelianism, and Rosicrucianism as practically interchangeable terms. Weigel's works, especially in his middle period, indeed bear a visible imprint of Paracelsus, or more specifically, of some of his ideas. Weigel's interest in the Paracelsian philosophy of nature was motivated by the need to account philosophically for both the spiritual and natural aspects of man. For this reason also, Weigel put emphasis on the correct interpretation of the Book of Genesis.

In this sense, we can credit Valentin Weigel with interpreting some of Paracelsus' ideas and teachings and creating a comprehensible philosophical-theological framework for such an interpretation based on concepts and ideas borrowed from other authors. Thanks to this unifying conception, he was able to reconcile natural-philosophical (or alchemical) interpretations with the ideas of medieval German Mysticism, transformed through the lense of Reformation theology. In his time, this was an important achievement. The spread of Weigel's ideas was greatly aided by his simple style as well as by

¹¹⁵ Cf. e.g. *Vellus aureum et chrysopoeia*, 25 ff., 35 f.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 32, 61, 68.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 70.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 45.

the additional (i.a. eschatological and astrological) concepts introduced in non-authentic Weigeliana. Although he was not particularly interested in alchemy, his status in this field was such that his name continued to be used as authority in these matters even in the 18th century.

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Perspective, vision and dream: notes on the plate “Oratory-Laboratory” in Heinrich Khunrath’s *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae*¹

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Dedicated to the memory of René Alleau

Abstract | The first four round engravings from the first edition of the *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae* by Heinrich Khunrath (1595), later published in a second edition (1609), are characterized by a central arrangement. While the first three are purely symbolically conceived and both the text and illustrations play an ‘iconic’ role in them, the fourth one, called *Oratory and Laboratory* presents an extremely sophisticated scene based on the central perspective. It is the work of the significant Manneristic artist Hans Vredeman de Vries, who shortly after the publication of the first edition of the *Amphitheatrum* painted the newly built premises of Prague Castle for the Emperor Rudolf II in the prospectively conceived style in which he excelled. This contribution discusses the symbolic meanings of central perspective used on the fourth Khunrath’s plate and its pictorial and textual parallels.

Keywords | Heinrich Khunrath; Alchemy, Rudolfine alchemy; spiritual alchemy; alchemical engravings; alchemical symbolism; alchemical visions.

The alchemy of the period

There is no doubt that the turn of the 16th century marked the heyday of alchemical research. This is borne out by not only bibliographical data, which

¹ This study is a result of the research funded by the Czech Science Foundation as the project GA ČR P405-12-1268, 2012–2015, “Heinrich Khunrath’s *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae* (1609): an edited translation with an analysis of its historical, scientific and artistic aspects”.

shows a surge in publications on the topic beginning around the 1560s and lasting into the first years of the Thirty Years' War, but also by the important role that alchemy came to play at many European courts, in particular, the most important of all, the Imperial court of Rudolf II (1552–1612) at Prague. For the sake of simplification, we shall call this period the period of “Rudolfine alchemy”:²

The alchemy of this period was not a homogeneous discipline, but a pot-pourri of practices, including deceitful ones, which led many decent researchers to identify as “philosophers”, “chymists” or “sons of science”, rather than “alchemists”. We can conveniently divide the discipline into sub-fields based on the three categories of its practitioners, or *personae*, as defined by Tara Nummedal: the artisans, scholars and prophets.³

It is only logical that one cannot find any “chemically pure” representatives of these categories among the alchemists of the Rudolfine period – there are only highly individual and singular alchemical “compounds”. Alchemists of all the three categories worked in laboratories, as alchemy was a practical discipline to them. We would be hard-pressed to find many theoretical alchemists concerned only with the allegorical, philosophical and theosophical connotations of the alchemical practices.

The category of artisans (called “artists” in the then-current terminology) included alchemists whose goal was to find the Philosopher’s Stone or the Tincture capable of transmuting base metals into silver or gold. The Tincture was often identified with the “Universal Remedy”, which was believed to be

² For a wider perspective on Rudolfine alchemy, see Ivo Purš and Vladimír Karpenko, eds., *Alchymie a Rudolf II. Hledání tajemství přírody ve střední Evropě v 16. a 17. století* (Praha: Artefactum, 2011). This monograph contains extensive bibliography; an English translation is being prepared. The topic is also dealt with in the following publications: Rudolf Werner Soukup, *Bergbau, Alchemie und frühe Chemie. Geschichte der frühen chemischen Technologie und Alchemie des ostalpinen Raumes unter Berücksichtigung von Entwicklungen in angrenzenden Regionen. Chemie in Österreich. Von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Wien and Köln and Weimar: Böhlau, 2007). Robert J. W. Evans, *Rudolf II. Ohnmacht und Einsamkeit* (Graz and Wien and Köln, 1980). For a comprehensive account of Rudolf II’s relationship to alchemy, see *Corpus Paracelsisticum. Band III/1–2. Der Frühparacelsismus, Frühe Neuzeit. Band 170. Studien und Dokumente zur deutschen Literatur und Kultur im europäischen Kontext*. Ed. and comm. by W. Kühlmann and J. Telle (Berlin and Boston, 2013), 940–966. Due to the scope and character of this paper, the resources we refer to in the footnotes are selective.

³ Tara E. Nummedal, *Alchemy and Authority in the Holy Roman Empire* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 43–44.

capable of curing the majority of diseases when applied properly. The alchemical practices of the second half of the 16th century were closely related to mining and metallurgical processes. The most important representative of this strand of research within "Rudolfine alchemy" was Michael Sendivogius (1566–1636),⁴ whose principal work, *De Lapide Philosophorum, Tractatus Duodecim* (Twelve Tracts on the Philosopher's Stone), was first published in Prague in 1604 with the support of the Emperor.

The second category, i.e., the scholars, included mostly physicians who concocted their own medicines in laboratories. They drew to a greater or lesser extent on the Paracelsian vision from the second half of the 16th century of a synthesis incorporating alchemy and medicine, which would significantly shape the alchemy of the Renaissance. Representatives of this category include the physicians Martin Ruland Jr. (1569–1611)⁵ and Michael Maier (1569–1622)⁶, the latter being only indirectly influenced by Paracelsus. Another important representative of medical alchemy was Tycho Brahe (1546–1601)⁷ who devoted as much time to alchemy as he did to his astro-

⁴ Rafał T. Prinke, "The Twelfth Adept, Michael Sendivogius in Rudolfine Prague," in *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment Revisited*, ed. Ralph White (Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne, 1999). Rafał T. Prinke, "Beyond patronage: Michael Sendivogius and the meanings of success in alchemy," in *Chymia: Science and nature in medieval and early modern Europe*, eds. Miguel López Pérez, Didier Kahn, Mar Rey Bueno, (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 175–231.

⁵ Ivo Purš and Josef Smolka, "Martin Ruland starší a mladší a prostředí císařských lékářů," in *Alchymie a Rudolf II.*, 581–605; Ulrich Neumann, "Ruland (d. Jüngere)," in *Alchemie. Lexikon einer hermetischen Wissenschaft*, eds. Claus Priesner and Karin Figala (München: C. H. Beck, 1999), 310–311.

⁶ Ivo Purš and Jaroslava Hausenblasová, "Michael Maier a jeho působení v Praze," in *Alchymie a Rudolf II.*, 335–365; Karin Figala and Ulrich Neumann, "A propos de Michael Maier: quelques découvertes bio-bibliographiques," in *Alchimie – art, histoire et mythes*, eds. Didier Kahn and Sylvain Matton (Paris – Milano: Chrysopoeia, 1995), 651–664. Hereward Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix: Spiritual Alchemy and Rosicrucianism in the Work of Count Michael Maier (1569–1622)* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2003).

⁷ Vladimír Karpenko and Ivo Purš, "Tycho Brahe: mezi astronomií a alchymii," in *Alchymie a Rudolf II.*, 459–488; Alain Philippe Segonds, "Tycho Brahe et l'alchimie," in *Alchimie et philosophie à la renaissance. Actes du colloque international de Tours (4–7 décembre 1991)*, ed. Jean-Claude Margolin (Paris: VRIN 1993), 365–378; Jole Shackelford, *A Philosophical Path for the Paracelsian Medicine. The Ideas, Intellectual Context, and Influence of Petrus Severinus (1540/2–1602)* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press 2004); John Robert Christianson, *On Tycho's Island: Tycho Brahe and His Assistants (1570–1601)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

nomical observations. Operating at the boundary between this and the following category was Oswald Croll (1560–1608).⁸

The third branch of alchemy was characterised by the attribution of spiritual significance to the making of the Tincture and the Universal Remedy, framing this process as a path to understanding Creation and God Himself. This last theosophical approach to alchemy found its perfect embodiment in the physician Heinrich Khunrath (1560–1605),⁹ author of the seminal work

⁸ On Croll, see Oswaldus Crollius, *De signaturis internis rerum. Die lateinische Editio princeps (1609) und die deutsche Erstübersetzung*, ed., comm. Wilhelm Kühlmann and Joachim Telle (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1996); Oswaldus Crollius, *Alchemomedizinische Briefe*, ed., transl. and comm. Wilhelm Kühlmann und Joachim Telle (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1998); Jaroslava Hausenblasová, "Oswald Croll and his relations to the Bohemian Lands," *Acta Comeniana* 15–16 (2002), 169–182; Jaroslava Hausenblasová, "Mezi lékařstvím a politikou. Působení Oswalda Crolla v českých zemích v době vlády Rudolfa II.," in *Alchymie a Rudolf II.*, 367–380.

⁹ The following basic resources on Khunrath have been used: Lynn Thorndyke, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, Vol. VII (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958); H. Kangro, "Khunrath, Heinrich," in *Dictionary of Scientific Biography* VII (New York, 1973), 355–356; J. B. Craven, *Doctor Heinrich Khunrath: A Study in Mystical Alchemy* (Glasgow: Hermetic Studies No. 1, 1997); Ralf Töllner, *Der unendliche Kommentar. Untersuchungen zu vier ausgewählten Kupferstichen aus Heinrich Khunraths "Amphitheatrum Sapientiae Aeternae Solius Verae," (Hanau 1609)* (Ammersbek bei Hamburg: Verlag an der Lottbek, 1991); Carlos Gilly, "The Amphitheatrum Sapientiae Aeternae of Heinrich Khunrath," in *Magia, alchimia, scienza dal '400 al '700. L'influsso di Ermete Trismegisto. Magic, Alchemy and Science 15th–17th Centuries. The Influence of Hermes Trismegistus*, eds. Carlos Gilly – Cis van Heertum (Florence: Centro Di, 2001), 341–350; Peter J. Forshaw, "Alchemy in the Amphitheatre. Some Considerations of the Alchemical Content of the Engravings in Heinrich Khunrath's Amphitheatre of Eternal Wisdom (1609)," in *Art and Alchemy*, ed. Jacob Wamberg (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2006), 195–220; Peter J. Forshaw, "Curious knowledge and wonder-working wisdom in the occult works of Heinrich Khunrath," *Curiosity and Wonder from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*, eds. Robert J. W. Evans & A. Marr (London: Ashgate, 2006), 107–129; Peter J. Forshaw, "Subliming Spirits: Physical-Chemistry and Theo-Alchemy in the Works of Heinrich Khunrath (1560–1605)," in *Mystical Metal of Gold*, ed. Stanton J. Linden (New York: AMS, 2007), 255–276; Peter J. Forshaw, "Vitriolic Reactions. Orthodox Responses on the Alchemical Exegesis of Genesis," in *The Word and the World. Biblical Exegesis and Early Modern Science*, eds. Kevin Killeen and Peter J. Forshaw (Houndmills – New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 111–136; Peter J. Forshaw, "Alchymical Exegesis: Fractious Distillations of the Essence of Hermes," in *Chymists and Chymistry. Studies in the History of Alchemy and Early Modern Chemistry*, ed. Lawrence M. Principe (Sagamore Beach: Science History Publications, 2007), 25–38; Peter J. Forshaw, "Paradoxes, Absurdities, and Madness: Conflict over Alchemy, Magic and Medicine in the Works of Andreas Libavius and Heinrich Khunrath," *Early Science and Medicine* 13 (2008), 53–81; Peter

Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae (The Amphitheatre of Eternal Wisdom), published in its second, enlarged edition in 1609 with an Imperial privilege (Figs. 1 and 2). It is this work that we shall be concerned with in this paper.

Let us start with a few biographical details about the author. We shall be referring to what he said about himself in his books. Heinrich Khunrath was born probably in Leipzig in 1560 and practised alchemy since he was fifteen years old. He often travelled and like Paracelsus before him sought alchemical enlightenment from different people: old and young, experts and amateurs, Christians and Jews, theosophers and "theosophists". He also toured the private collections, libraries and laboratories of eminent personalities and purchased his own collection of exotic and enigmatic objects, paintings and manuscripts. He did not forget his *peregrinatio academica* either, completing his studies at the University of Basel on 24 August 1588 by defending a thesis titled *De signatura rerum naturalium* (The Signatures of Natural Things) and earning his degree as doctor of both medicines.

Other than that, information on Khunrath's life is sketchy, although not without interest, as it shows that Khunrath stayed at some point in Bohemia. In 1589, he was at Bremen where he met John Dee who was returning to England from his stay at the court of William of Rosenberg at Trebona (Fig. 3). It would have been only natural if Dee had informed Khunrath about his experience of staying at the court of this Bohemian patron of alchemy¹⁰ and about the alchemical research within the wider circle of practitioners assembled around Tadeáš Hájek of Hájek (Fig. 4) as well as at the Imperial court. The meeting may have given Khunrath the impetus to move to Prague, where he

J. Forshaw, "Behold, the dreamer cometh: Hyperphysical Magic and Deific Visions in an Early Theosophical Lab-Oratory," in *Conversation with Angels. Essays towards a History of Spiritual Communication, 1100–1700*, ed. Joad Raymond (Houndmills – New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 175–200; Hereward Tilton, "Of ether,entheogens and colloidial gold: Heinrich Khunrath and the making of a Philosophers' Stone," in *Alchemical Traditions. From Antiquity to the Avant-Garde*, ed. Aaron Cheak (Melbourne: Numen, 2013), 355–420; Heinrich Khunrath: *Amphitheatrum Sapientiae Aeternae – Schauplatz der ewigen allein wahren Weisheit*, eds. Carlos Gilly, Anja Hallacker, Hanns-Peter Neumann and Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann, *Clavis Pansophiae*, Band 6 (Stuttgart – Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 2014).

¹⁰ For more information on the Rosenbergs' patronage of alchemy, see Ivo Purš, "Alchymie, astrologie a poznávání přírody v prostředí posledních pánů z Rožmberka," in *Rožmberkové. Rod českých velmožů a jeho cesta dějinami*, eds. Jaroslav Pánek et al. (České Budějovice: Národní památkový ústav, 2011), 286–293, see also Vladimír Karpenko, "Bohemian Nobility and Alchemy in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century: Wilhelm of Rosenberg and Two Alchemists," *Cauda Pavonis* 15.2 (1996), 14–18.

would soon establish himself as a physician. According to the chronicler Václav Březan, Khunrath was appointed personal physician to the ailing Count William of Rosenberg (1535–1592) and given a salary of 200 thalers, three horses and four assistants¹¹ as of 15 December 1591.

The following year, Khunrath published through the Prague printer Michael Peterle astrological treatise *Zebelis regis et sapientis Arabum vetustissimi De interpretatione quorundam accidentium, tam externorum quàm internorum ... secundum lunae motum per duodecim zodiaci caelestis signa* (Fig. 5), the manuscript of which was supposedly given to one of his relatives as a gift by the prince-electoral August of Saxony. Khunrath was identified as the “*medicus ordinarius*” of William of Rosenberg on the title page of this book. In the concluding part of the German and Latin introduction, Khunrath reveals that he is working on “something better”. The timing of the publication indicates that he may have meant his *Amphitheatre of Eternal Wisdom*, which was published for the first time in 1595 in Hamburg. Khunrath probably stayed at Prague until 1593, then staying at Hamburg until 1597, and from 1598 on, at Magdeburg, Berlin and probably Dresden, too. He died prematurely on 9 September 1605 in either Dresden or Leipzig.

Khunrath was a fairly prolific author who managed to get most of his oeuvre published during his relatively short life. His first (that is, after his doctoral thesis) book to appear in print, *The Amphitheatre of Eternal Wisdom*, earned him the most fame. The edition consisted of 26 pages in large format (approximately 47 × 42 cm) that formed a commentary on and supplement to four circular, symbolic engravings that constituted the core of the publication (Figs. 6 and 7). It was an exceptional and very expensive print intended for a readership of wealthy devotees of theosophic alchemy. Other books published by Khunrath were not so lavish.

The year 1596 saw the appearance in print of Khunrath’s essay *Confessio ... De Chao physico-chemicorum catholico*, which the author significantly expanded during the following year and published in German under the title *Von hylealischen, das ist primaterialischen catholischen oder allgemeinen natürlichen Chaos* (1597) (Fig. 8). The essay deals with the topic of “universal physico-chemical chaos” and represents Khunrath’s most significant contribution to the body of knowledge of laboratory practices. Appended to it was the treatise *Treuhertzige Warnungs-Vermanung eines Getreuen Liebhaber der Naturgemessen Alchymiae*, describing 56 deceitful alchemical practices. This

¹¹ Václav Březan, *Životy posledních Rožmberků*, vol. I (Praha: Svoboda 1985), 362.

addendum shows how deeply familiar Khunrath was with the technological aspects of alchemy.¹² Other works by Khunrath worthy of mention here are *Magnesia catholica philosophorum* published in 1599 (Fig. 9), which is a reflection on the starting element of alchemical experiments; *Warhafftiger Bericht von philosophischen athanor*, an treatise focused on the alchemical furnace (athanor) and published in the same year and the posthumously published meditation on the "philosophical" fire, *De igne magorum philosophorumque secreto externo et visibili* (Fig. 10), published by Benedictus Figulus in 1608. The year 1609 saw the publication by Khunrath's disciple Erasmus Wolfart of the second edition of *The Amphitheatre of Eternal Wisdom*, which we shall discuss in the following paragraphs.

Khunrath was working on the second edition of his *opus magnum* during the last years of his life. Death prevented the realisation of his hopes of expanding the work as he had originally intended. In spite of the work's voluminousness – it contains 9 large symbolic engravings and 223 pages of text – it remained a torso. The core of the book is again formed of large symbolic plates, however, the original four circular ones (Fig. 11) were supplemented with 5 new oblong ones (Fig. 12). Unlike the original engravings, the new ones are not just symbolic illustrations of the principles of theosophical alchemy, but also contain polemical attacks against its detractors. The original large format was not retained; instead, the publication is about the size of the usual folio. All the texts that had surrounded the engravings in the first edition were collected as a separate chapter titled *Isagoge sive Introductio in figuram amphitheatri*.

Carlos Gilly and Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann have summed up the meaning of the *Amphitheatre* and the engravings as follows:

Er besteht darin, christliche Kabbala, Alchemie und Hermetik in ihrer geistlichen Dimension und Struktur einerseits sichtbar zu machen, sie zweitens mit Texten vereint innerhalb der Bilder zu erläutern und sie drittens in begleitenden Aphorismen, die wesentlich Übersetzung und Erläuterung des biblisch-apokryphen *Buchs der Weisheit* und der *Sapientia Salomonis* sind, zu kommentieren.¹³

¹² See forthcoming essay Vladimír Karpenko, Heinrich Khunraths *Vom hylealischen Chaos: chemische Aspekte*, *Studia Rudolphina* 15 (2015), Praha: Artefactum.

¹³ Heinrich Khunrath's *Amphitheatrum Sapientiae Aeternae*... (Stuttgart – Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog 2014), 7.

Khunrath's engravings bear only an indirect relationship to the Scripture, allowing space for multiple interpretations. As Gilly says, the engravings are graphic and "obvious" representations of the various spiritual, hermetic, Cabalistic and occult traditions that were summarized, without differentiation, under the catch-all term "theosophy" by, in particular, the Paracelsians in the last quarter of the 16th century. Theosophy was fittingly described by the unknown author of a 1646–1652 French handwritten translation (preserved in *Bibliotheca philosophica hermetica* in Amsterdam) as follows:

La Theosophie c'est la Theologie au ternaire. C'est a dire que la Theosophie juge toutte chose au tesmoignage de l'escripture sainte, de la nature, et de sa propre conscience, de sorte qu'il trouve six sens dans l'escripture sainte: six sens dans la nature: et six sens dans sa propre conscience, lesquels sens ont leur raport les uns [avec les] autres, car celuy de la propre conscience se prouve par l'escripture sainte, et par la nature. Celuy de la nature se prouve par l'escripture sainte, et par la propre conscience. Et celuy de l'escripture sainte se prouve par la nature, et par la propre conscience.¹⁴

The Philosopher's Stone is conceived of as a manifestation of the Triunity of God in the world. The theosophical alchemist's quest for the Stone is not motivated by personal gain, but is considered the key to the salvation and redemption of both nature and oneself:

...Khunrath asserts that Christ could be known naturally through the Stone: 'I speak without blasphemy: The PHILOSOPHER'S STONE, Servant of the Greater World, is the type of IHSVH CHRIST crucified, Saviour of the whole human race...! Both the Stone and Christ are capable of preserving and perfecting man by means of the spiritus, the former his body, the latter his soul. Khunrath regarded his alchemical work, particularly the search for the Philosopher's Stone, as an essential part of his religious activity, not merely as a mundane but a spiritual endeavour, concerned with the perfection of nature and with bringing the macrocosm to fruition.¹⁵

The engravings in the *Amphitheatre* are characterised by thematic richness and complexity of the relationships between the pictorial and textual elements. We shall be concerned with the image, which may be less intricate,

¹⁴ A quote from Carlos Gilly, "Khunrath und das Entstehen der frühneuzeitlichen Theosophie," in Heinrich Khunrath, *Amphitheatrum Sapientiae Aeternae* (Stuttgart and Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog 2014), 20.

¹⁵ Peter J. Forshaw, "Subliming Spirits: Physical-Chemistry and Theo-Alchemy in the Works of Heinrich Khunrath (1560–1605)," in *Mystical Metal of Gold*, ed. Stanton J. Linden (New York: AMS, 2007), 264.

but have a greater artistic value. What is more, they become a vehicle of symbolic meaning, which has so far not been properly examined. Of interest to us is especially the engraving traditionally referred to as the *oratory-laboratory* (Fig. 13) and its perspective construction, which has surprising antecedents and parallels in the sacral art of the Renaissance. The engraving presents an exceptionally realised perspective view of a stately hall. On the right we see a laboratory complete with vessels and furnaces; on the left there is a kneeling alchemist-theosopher communing with God before an ornate tabernacle. In the middle of the vista there is a table laid out with various musical instruments, which are meant to remind the viewer of the need to harmonise the universe (the macrocosm) and its *musica universalis* with the small world, i.e., the microcosm of the *Great Work* and the inner life of the alchemist. It is only through this harmonisation that the alchemist can find the miraculous remedy capable of healing metals and man alike, a substance that unlocks the door to the exclusive knowledge of God.

As pointed out by Gilly, Khunrath was a gifted draughtsman, as is evident from his drawings of chemical apparatuses found in his manuscripts that have survived to this day (Fig. 14). Khunrath signed all the four circular engravings as "inventor", i.e., the creator of a draft. The fourth engraving, the *oratory-laboratory*, was drawn based on Khunrath's draft by the renowned Dutch artist Hans Vredeman de Vries (1527 – c. 1607), who attended the court of Rudolf II shortly after the publication of the first edition of the *Amphitheatre*. At the emperor's request, Vredeman de Vries decorated several spaces that had recently been inaugurated at the Prague Castle with architectural frescoes in perspective – an art he excelled in. The *Amphitheatre's* engraving itself was produced by Paulus van der Doort of Antwerp.

In the first edition of the *Amphitheatre* from 1595, the engraving was surrounded by ten radially arranged captions (Fig. 15) that were retained in the second edition, but typeset separately from the image in a section called *Isagoge*. The texts describe the theosopher as a purified man who hears the voice of God (as averred above) through the Scripture, through nature and in himself. As evident from the inscriptions in the engraving, the core message here is the need for divine inspiration, without which the alchemist-theosopher cannot discover the true matter of alchemy or the way it should be treated. This is driven home by Khunrath's quote from Cicero's *On the Nature of the Gods*: "sine afflatu divino, nemo unquam vir magnus" (Without Divine Inspiration, there is no man who is great) or by the adage "*Hoc, hoc, agentibus nobis aderit ipse deus*" (When we attend strictly to our work, God Himself will aid us). The imperative "*Disce bene mori*" (Learn to die well) is not

only a principle that every good Christian should live by, but in this particular context, it is also a reminder of the initiatory character of divine inspiration, that is, the transformation of one's current existence. The portico in the back of the hall bears the unusual inscription "*Dormiens vigila*" (While sleeping, be vigilant), which we shall discuss later.

The groups of objects on the left and right in the foreground can be explained by recourse to the two main alchemical principles represented by sulphur and mercury, which the alchemist set out to purify and combine in his Great Work. With necessary simplification, we can say that sulphur symbolised the active and spiritual element, whereas mercury was symbol of the passive and material element. The spirit had to be worked in to the matter, creating a harmonious unity. This relationship is depicted in the engraving by its horizontal, left-right axis.

The elegance and lavish furnishings of the hall in the frontal plane, however, are not the most striking element of the image. More attractive, or even beguiling, is the second axis, which is perpendicular to the first one and extends from the viewer's eye towards the vanishing point of the central perspective, giving the engraving its dynamism that draws the viewer right in. Khunrath was very keen on producing this effect, which is why he commissioned the creation of the preparatory drawing for the engraving to the aforesaid illustrious "master of perspective", Hans Vredeman de Vries.

From 1560 on, Vredeman de Vries published several successful and widely popular series of perspective engravings. He also excelled in painting architectural fantasies, many of which he created for Rudolf II¹⁶ (Fig. 16 and 17) Although he was well-versed in the mathematical and geometrical theory of perspective, as it evolved in the works of Leon Battista Alberti, Piero della Francesca and others, he did not follow those principles to the letter, which is why some of his perspective constructions are somewhat off or have wrong proportions.¹⁷ His approach to perspective confirms the division between Italian art and the style used in Flanders. While the Italian perspective was purely mathematical, the Flemish approach derived from studio experience and was more empirical.

¹⁶ See Heiner Borggreffe and Vera Lüpkes and Paul Huvenne and Ben van Beneden, eds., *Hans Vredeman de Vries und die Renaissance im Norden* (München: Hirmer, 2002), passim.

¹⁷ Pascal Dubourg Glatigny, "Hans Vredeman de Vries und die Perspektive," in *Hans Vredeman de Vries*, eds. Heiner Borggreffe et al., 129.

In the case of the drawing for Khunrath's masterpiece, the central perspective is distorted even further and in fact totally divorced from the rationale for the mathematisation of space, i.e., the correct geometrical construction of space, whereby, in Alberti's words, an image is the transverse cross-section of the cone of vision that extends from the viewer's eye.¹⁸ The chequered floor, which aided the theoreticians of perspective in correctly placing objects and measuring distances, does not serve this purpose here at all and only emphasises the disproportionate elongation of the space and the extremely high position of the vanishing point, which seems to counteract the reduction of the spatial depth in the perspective construction of the scenic decorations.

Engravings in distorted perspective were a fairly common phenomenon in the second half of the 16th century, especially in Northern art. A typical example is the engraving for the title page of Hendrick Hondius' *Institutio artis perspectivae* from 1622 (Fig. 18) in which distortion is clearly used to produce an aesthetic effect and enhance the attractiveness of the title page by deepening the perspectival space. However, in the case of the drawing for Khunrath's engraving, we can safely say that the perspective construction was not a gimmick employed for aesthetic reasons, but an informed choice intended to confer symbolic meaning on the perspective itself. What goals did the creators of the engraving pursue by this?

In order to get on the right track to finding the answer to this question, we must now make an apparent digression and examine an important analogical question. As pointed out by Daniel Arasse, "il a effectivement existé, dans la peinture italienne de la Renaissance, une affinité entre le thème de l'Annonciation et l'instrument figuratif de la perspective".¹⁹ The central perspective typically found in depictions of this theme expressed the intrusion of the Divine into the physical realm, in other words, the incarnation, for according to Bernardino of Sienna, "l'éternité vient dans le temps, l'immensité dans la mesure, le Créateur dans la créature, Dieu dans l'homme, la vie dans la mort, [...] l'incorruptible dans la corruptible, l'infigurable dans la figure, [...] l'invisible dans la vision, [...] l'impalpable dans le tangible."²⁰ In Renaissance paintings of the Annunciation, the motif of divine intervention is emphasised by the placement in the vanishing point of the central perspective of a closed door, or *porta clausa*, leading to an enclosed garden (*hortus conclusus*), these being important Marian symbols borrowed from the Song of Songs (see the

¹⁸ Erwin Panofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form* (New York: Zone Books, 2005), 27–28.

¹⁹ Daniel Arasse, *L'Annonciation italienne. Une histoire de perspective* (Paris: Hazan, 2010), 7.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

Annunciation by Domenico Veneziano, coll. 1445; Fig. 19) which refer to the mystical dogma of the incarnation of Christ by the Holy Spirit. On the retable by Piero della Francesca, this motif is depicted on a marble wall that forms the backdrop to a columned corridor in perspective (Fig. 20).

This particular usage of perspective in depictions of the Annunciation scene was widespread not only in Italy, but with time, established itself north of the Alps as well. It is significant that a well-realised example of this spread of ideas can be found in the work of Vredemen de Vries (Fig. 21). In 1598, Rudolf II commissioned an altarpiece for the All Saints' Church at the Prague Castle from his four court painters: Vredeman de Vries, Bartholomeus Spranger, Joseph Heintz and Hans von Aachen.²¹ Vredeman de Vries was charged with decorating the exterior sides of wings of the altarpiece, which stand as a testament to his mastery of illusionary architectural paintings in perspective. It could certainly be said of this painting that the original iconographic purpose of the motif of perspective as a symbol of the intrusion of the Divine into the mundane is de-emphasised in favour of the virtuosity of form, however, we cannot really exclude the possibility that Vredeman's play with architectural forms, which in other of his works serves to create a backdrop to scenes of gallantry, puts its ludic qualities in the service of the depiction of the theological secret of the descent of God the Creator of All Things into the fleshly womb of the Mother of God.

If we look at Khunrath's *oratory-laboratory* engraving through this prism – without necessarily looking for a direct relationship – a new, surprising space for interpretation opens to us. The theme of the descent of the divine into the mundane (and of the spiritual into the material) can also be found in Khunrath's engraving, in which the theosophic alchemist – apparently the *alter ego* of the author – pleads for the descent of divine wisdom which is understood in the context of mystical alchemy as having the power to transform the mind and capacity to be objectified or externalised in a substance or matter.

The motif of the descent of the spiritual into the material is depicted in the engraving specifically by the figure praying (orans) before the tabernacle and by God's names in Hebrew inscribed on the tabernacle – the motif is interpreted narratively as a story or as a specific human behaviour worthy of emulation. In the engraving, the Divine is depicted in yet another, more

²¹ Heiner Borggreffe et al., *Hans Vredeman de Vries*, 344–345; on the question of the original commissioner of the altarpiece, see Štěpán Vácha, "Léta 1598, 1599, 1607: K datování tří děl rudolfínských mistrů," in *Libellus amicorum Beket Bukovinská*, eds. Lubomír Konečný and Lubomír Slaviček (Praha: Artefactum, 2013), 156–173.

sophisticated way that allows the spiritual element to enter into the human mind by way of imagination, that is, through the "mind's eye". God is represented by the vanishing point of the central perspective, which does not conform to the laws of perspective, but is perfectly consistent with the idea of the Supreme Being as the centre of a circle.²² It is the virtually infinite point of reference to which everything relates (as everything relates to God). It is this mystical, spiritual centre of the vista that the viewer should focus on to become the active participant in the process of making sense of the image, whereby the purified human mind is the "third book", or the *speculum mentis*, the soul mirror, through which God makes himself known.

This interpretation is not a mere speculation, deriving, as it does, from the framework of Khunrath's mystical philosophy, but is borne out by a careful reading of the *Amphitheatre* itself. For in a number of instances in Khunrath's interpretations of the *Book of Proverbs*, emphasis is put on the sacral symbolism of the periphery and the centre. In his commentary on Proverbs 4:12, Khunrath says: "You shall not allow philosophy or vain illusion to lead you away from the core of the theosophic truth to the periphery of shallow play with sophisms and diabolic lies. There is truth at the core and lies at the periphery. Strive to be at the centre for it is there that you shall find absolute safety."²³ In an allusion to Proverbs 8:32, he says: "To be lost at the periphery means to find oneself in the centre, that is to say, in God, and to find God in oneself. By going down this path of Wisdom with Christ at your side, you will separate yourself from the world, although you will remain in its centre"²⁴ In the subsequent interpretations of the fourth engraving, the centre is associated with the place referred to in Proverbs 4:21 as the place where the

²² We can find analogical idea also in the book of Oswald Croll: "Gott ist das centrum oder Mitte aller Creaturen / und wer dem selbigen am nächsten / der ist auch der seligste und der Veränderung am wenigsten unterworfen. Je ferner aber etwas von diesem centro, nemlich dem unwanckelbahren Willen Gottes ist / und zu der Creaturen Circumferenz / der Varietät unnd Viele weicht / das ist umb do viel desto mehr für unseliger und vollkommener und veränderlicher zuhalten." See Oswald Croll, *Basilica Chymica oder Alchymistisch Königlich Klejnod* (Franckfurth: Gottfried Tampachen, 1629), 106.

²³ "Nec seduceris, per philosophiam et inanem fallaciam, a veritatis Theosophicae centro, ad lubricam sophismatum mundanorum mendaciorum[que]ue diabolicorum circumferentiam. In centro, veritas: in circumferentia mendacium. Centralis esse studeto; nam Medio tutissimus ibis." Heinrich Khunrath, *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae* (Hanau, 1609), 6.

²⁴ "In circumferentia mundana se ita amittere, est in Centro, hoc est, Deo se invenire, Deumque in se reperire. [...] Hac Sapientiae via, cum Christo secedis e mundo, quamuis vivas et converseris quotidie in Mundo, etiam in medio inter mundane viventes." *Ibid.*, 23.

soul is alone and withdrawn and can have an encounter with God, which is to take place at the deepest and most precious core of the soul or heart.

I conjecture that the elongation of the space “ad infinitum” in Khunrath’s and Vredeman de Vries’ engraving is as well a deliberate allusion to the phenomenon that has been known to humanity since the moment it first came into existence, the deformation of space occurring in a dream or fantastical vision. The old alchemists considered dreams the “royal way” to divine inspiration, in other words, the oft-mentioned *Donum Dei*, or the gift of God. In the *Amphitheatre*, Khunrath makes mention of this “royal way” to knowledge in a commentary on Proverbs 3:24: “In a dream, i.e., in the mirror of a virgin mind cleansed through penance of the stain of sin, you shall be reminded, edified and educated by saintly visions and fulfilled by a fecund doctrine.”²⁵ The quote refers to a specific kind of dreaming which was understood as an awakening to a higher form of consciousness – that is precisely what was meant by the aforementioned inscription “*Dormiens vigila*” (While sleeping, be vigilant), which appears in the background in the fourth engraving on the portico which you would pass through on your way from the “oratory-laboratory” to other rooms, beckoned on by the open door situated on the composition axis, which is the centre of the symbolic radiation of the whole engraving. It seems only logical that Khunrath associated the mystical principle “*Dormiens vigila*” with the symbolism of the rising sun appearing in Wisdom 16:28. “Hence, the Sun that rises in us is described in the Song of Songs by the verse: I sleep and my heart is awake.”²⁶

We can find many examples of visions in alchemical literature of which they were a characteristic feature from the third century AD (beginning with Zosimos of Panopolis) well into the 19th century. There are both *bona fide* accounts of visions, similar to those of Saint Hildegard of Bingen, and literary fiction. The visions are occasionally humorous. For example, Michael Sendivogius describes an alchemist who receives an important piece of information in a dream. The information is given to him in such a loud voice that instead of him retains it, he suddenly awakes.²⁷ Many of these texts consist of descriptions of fantastical sceneries or of visions of spaces rich in

²⁵ “*Et dormiens, in mentis virginea, hoc est, a peccatorum sordibus, poenitentiae lactifera mundatae, speculo, Visionibus Divinitus admoneberis, doceberis, institueris, doctrina lactifera plene refertis.*” Ibid., 168.

²⁶ “*Solem in nobis ex orientem describit Canticum: Ego dormio, et cor meum vigilat.*” Ibid., 79.

²⁷ *De Lapide Philosophorum, Tractatus Duodecim* (Francofurti 1611), 35.

symbolism. Going back to Khunrath's "oratory-laboratory" engraving, let me provide a quote from one of the texts which in my opinion form a parallel to the image, although the text first appeared in print a many years after the inception of the engraving. This brief account is titled *A green dream* (*Le songe vert*) and has often been attributed to Bernard Trevisan.²⁸ At the end, the narrator is walking through the rooms of a palace that differ in decorations and colour palettes:

Je m'enquis où étaient le maître et la maîtresse du logis. On me dit qu'ils étaient cachés dans le fond de cette chambre es qu'ils devaient passer dans une autre plus éloignée, qui n'était séparée de celle-ci que par quelques cabinets de communication, que les meubles de ces cabinets étaient de couleurs toutes différentes, les uns étant d'un tabis couleur d'isabelle, d'autres de moire citrine et d'autres d'un brocard d'or très pur et très fin.

Je ne pouvais voir le quatrième appartement, parce qu'il doit être hors d'oeuvre. Mais on me dit qu'il ne consistait qu'en une chambre, dont les meubles n'étaient qu'un tissu de rayons de soleil les plus épurés et concentrés dans cette étoffe de pourpre où je venais de regarder.²⁹

The perspective construction of Khunrath's engraving converges on a door behind which there is only empty space. I think that Khunrath wanted to suggest that whatever lies behind that door cannot be pictured. It is this mystical finality that is referred to in the related final passage of *A green dream*:

Tout ce que j'avais vu jusqu'ici n'était rien en comparaison de ce qu'on promettait de me faire voir. Cependant, je n'ai pas de peine à me consoler, lorsque je fais réflexion sur cet empire céleste, où le Tout-Puissant paraît assis dans son trône environné de gloire et accompagné d'anges, d'archanges, de chérubins, de séraphins, de trônes et de dominations. C'est là que nous verrons ce que

²⁸ Didier Kahn has shown in his detailed study, that *A green dream* was for the first time mentioned in a French treatise of the late Middle Ages *La Parole délaissée* (in *Trois Traitez de la Philosophie naturelle*, Paris 1618). The text of *A green dream* was for the first time published in anonymous work *Le Texte d'Alchimie, et le Songe-vert* (Paris 1695). According to Didier Kahn, "l'on peut, sans grand risque, formuler l'hypothèse que la publication de 1695 n'est qu'une forgerie fabriquée à partir des quelques lignes de *La Parole délaissée* mentionnant *Le Songe vert*". Didier Kahn, "Littérature ou alchimie? A la recherche de l'authentique *Songe vert*". In *The Culture of the Book. Essays from two Hemispheres in honour of Wallace Kirsop*, Melbourne, edited by members of the Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand, New Castle: Oak Knoll Press, 1999, 220. I thank very much to the author that he gave me this article.

²⁹ *Le songe vert*, in: Jean Mangin de Richebourg, *Bibliothèque des philosophes chimiques*, vol. I (Paris: André Cailleau, 1741), 529.

l'oeil n'a jamais vu, que nous entendrons ce que l'oreille n'a jamais entendu, puisque c'est dans ce lieu que nous devons goûter une félicité éternelle, que Dieu lui-même a promise à tous ceux qui tâcheront de s'en rendre dignes, ayant tous été créés pour participer à cette gloire. Faisons donc tous nos efforts pour la mériter. Loué soit Dieu.³⁰

To conclude, let us compare the *oratory-laboratory* engraving with one of the engravings created for the second edition of the *Amphitheatre* (Fig. 22). Given that this engraving was signed by Khunrath's name and dated 1602 like the other oblong engravings, we can assume that it was created in the same fashion as the circular ones – first a draft was prepared and the engraving was made based on it. The engraving in question depicts *the Gate of the Amphitheatre of eternal wisdom* and features a perspective construction or an attempt at one. Without launching into an analysis of the symbolism of the engraving, we can say that its evocative power is much less potent than that of the engraving drawn by Vredeman de Vries. It, too, depicts a passage leading to the knowledge of God, but it does not reach the artistic heights of the *oratory-laboratory*. Moreover, it shows the extent to which the “tautologic” interpretation of the emergence from the Platonic cave and the reaching out to the light of ideas is less imaginative and less inspirational than the drawing based on a simple, abstract principle that forms the substructure of a lavishly decorated image. It is precisely this synthesis of simplicity and complexity that gives the *oratory-laboratory* engraving its dialectical and paradoxical tension that can move the human spirit more than anything else.

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³⁰ Ibid, 530.

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Illustrations



Fig. 1: Heinrich Khunrath, *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae*, Hanau 1609, title page



Fig. 2: Heinrich Khunrath, *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae*, Hanau 1609, a portrait of the author

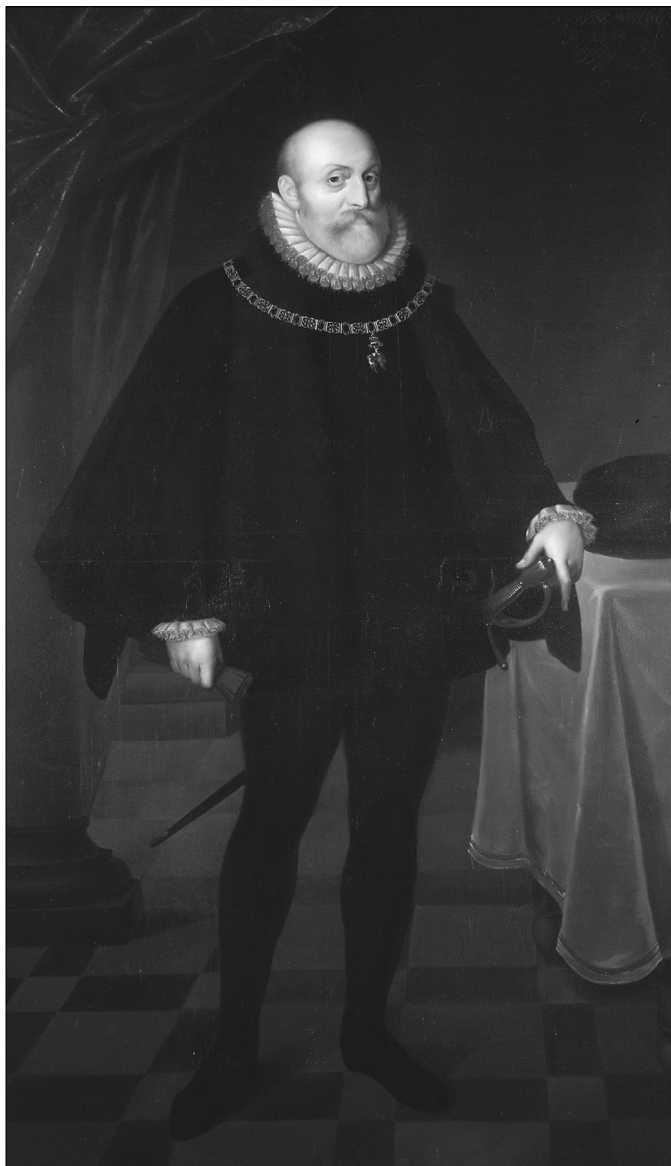


Fig. 3: A portrait of William of Rosenberg, 1580s, the Rosenberg Castle picture gallery. The image bank of Institute of Art History of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic



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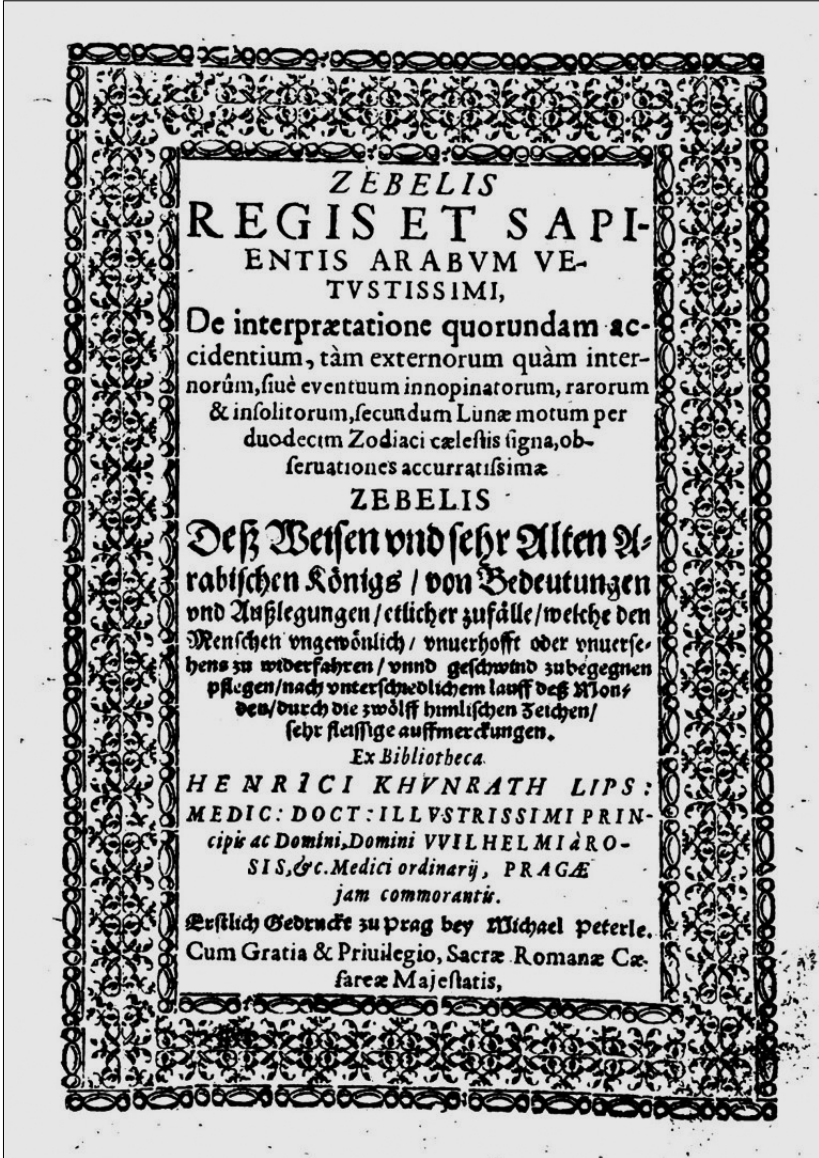


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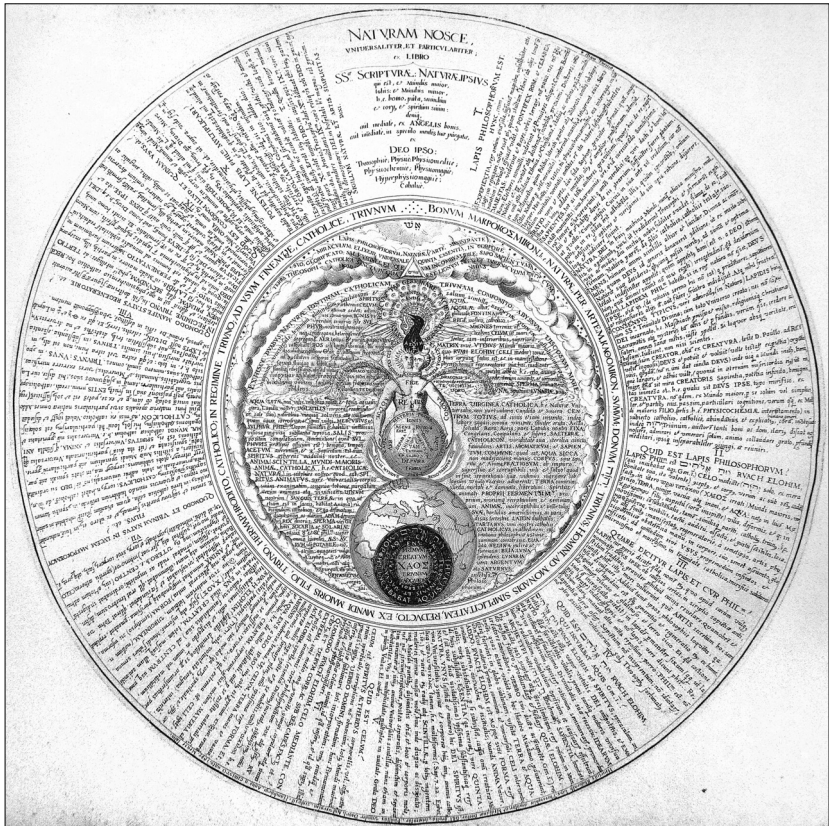


Fig. 7: Heinrich Khunrath, *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae*, Hamburg 1595, the 3rd plate

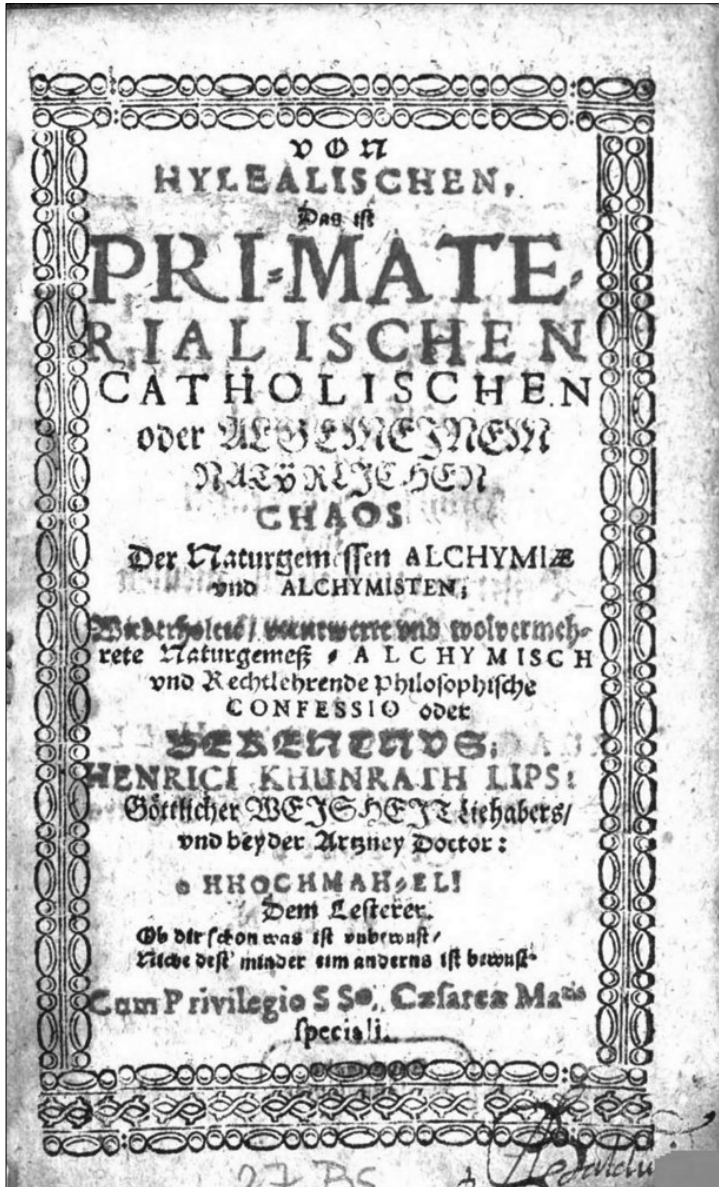


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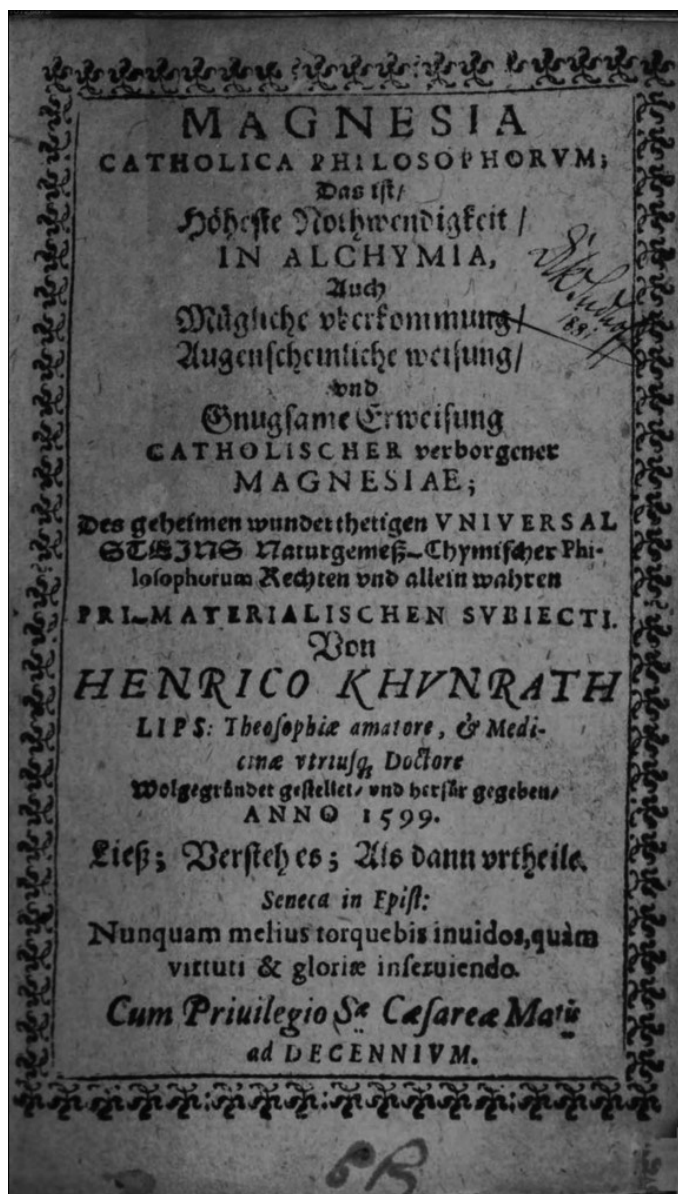


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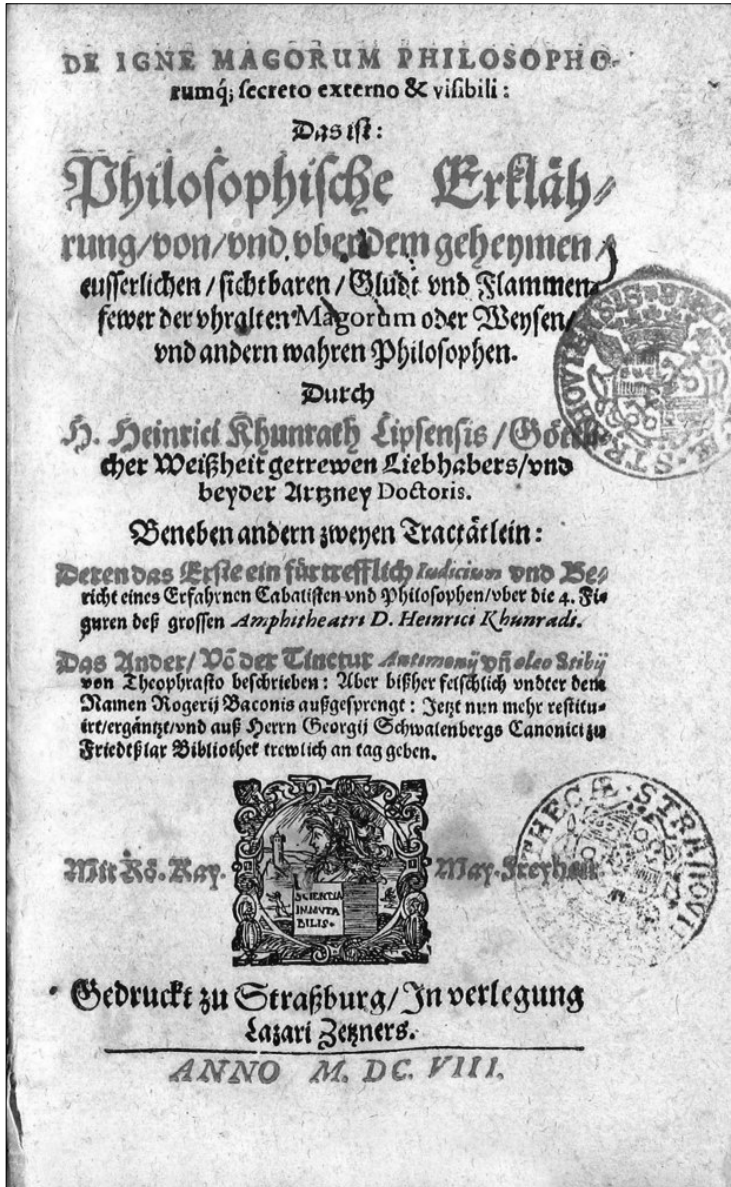


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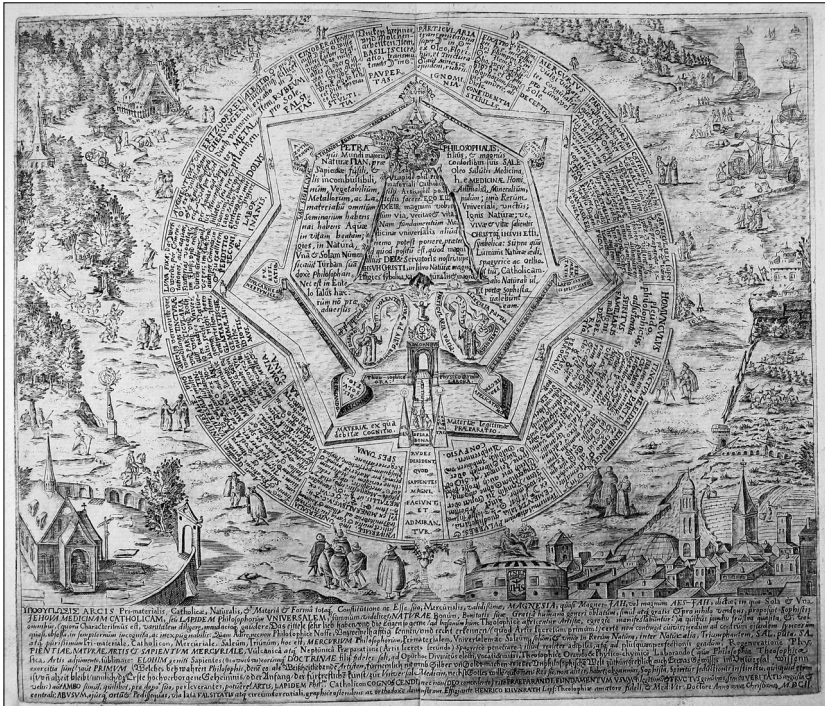


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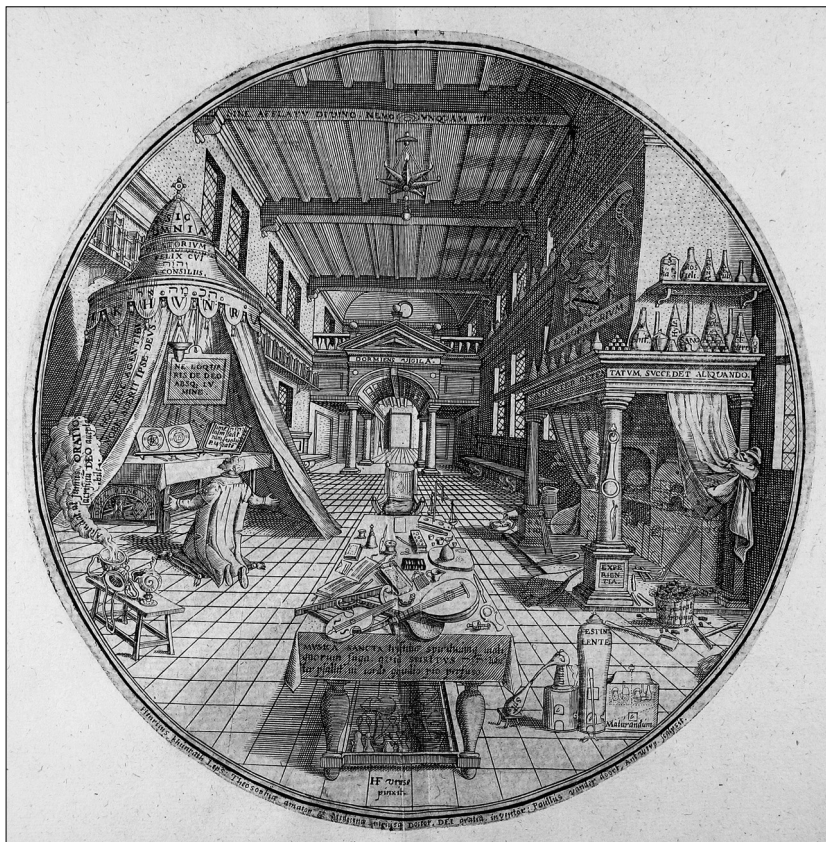


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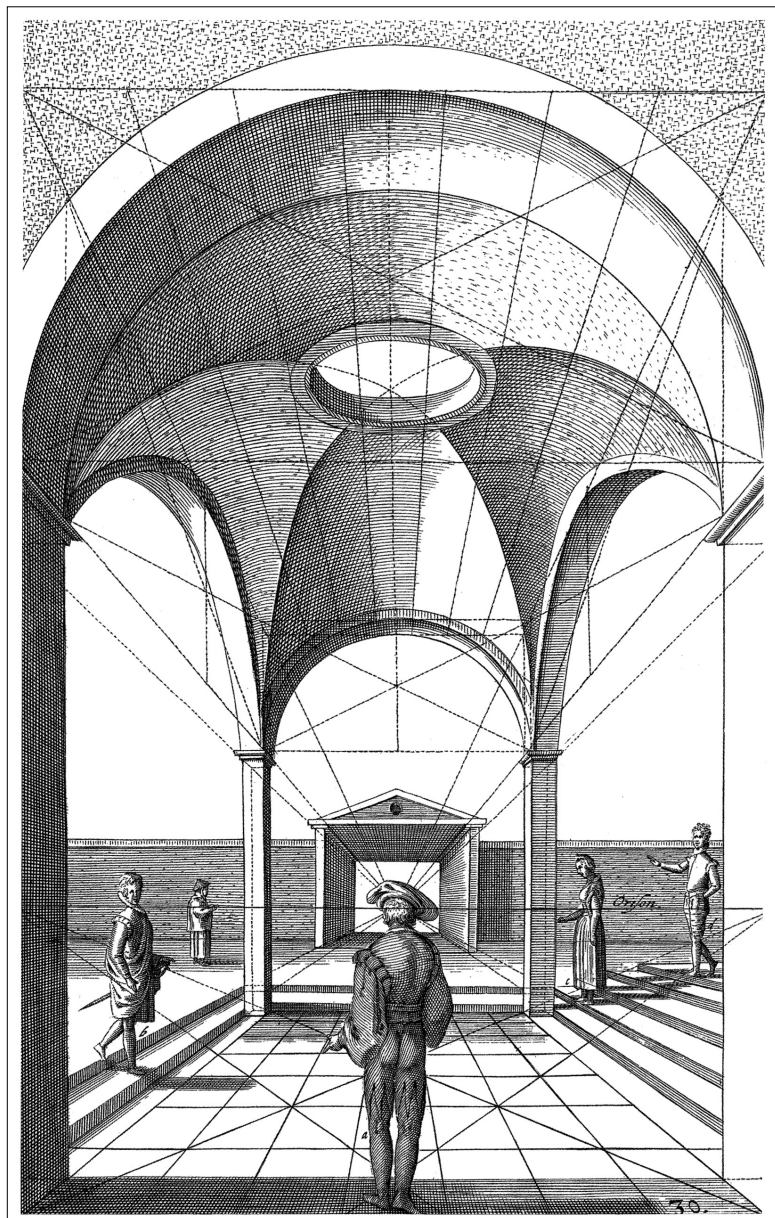


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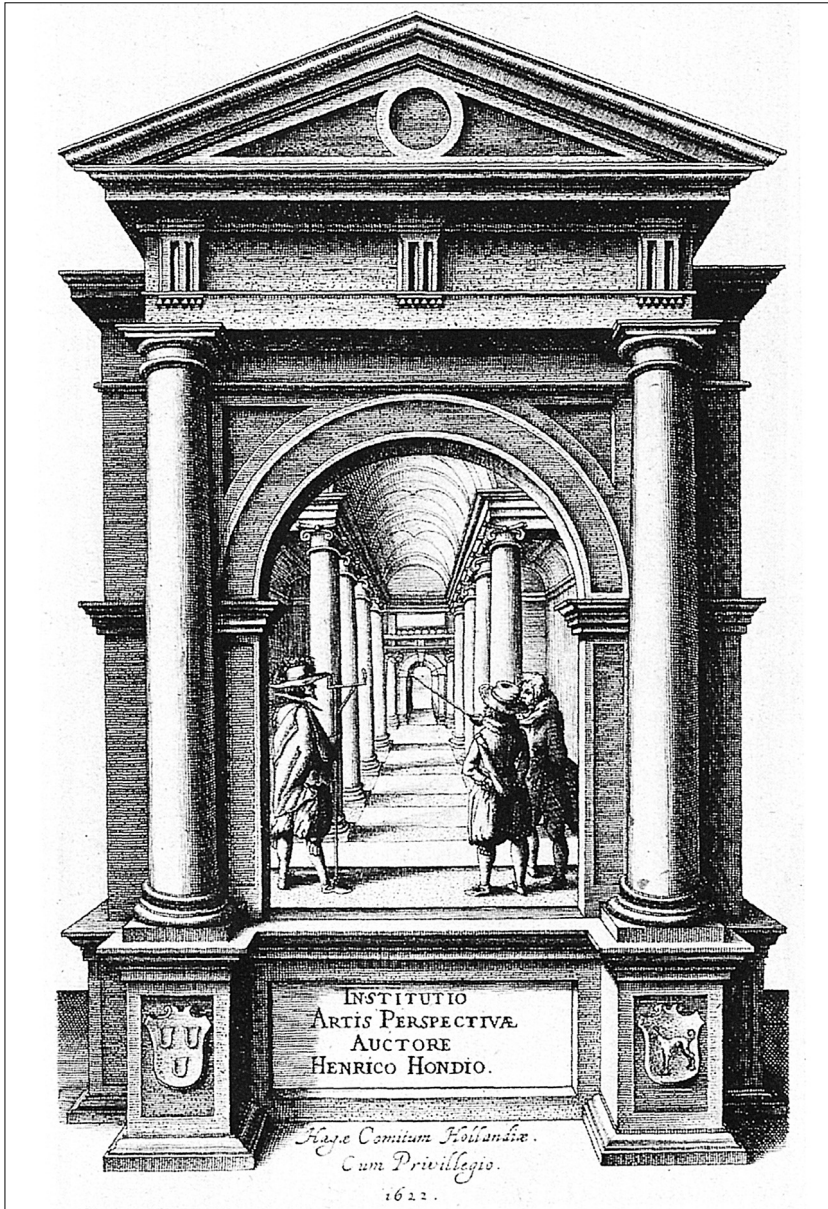


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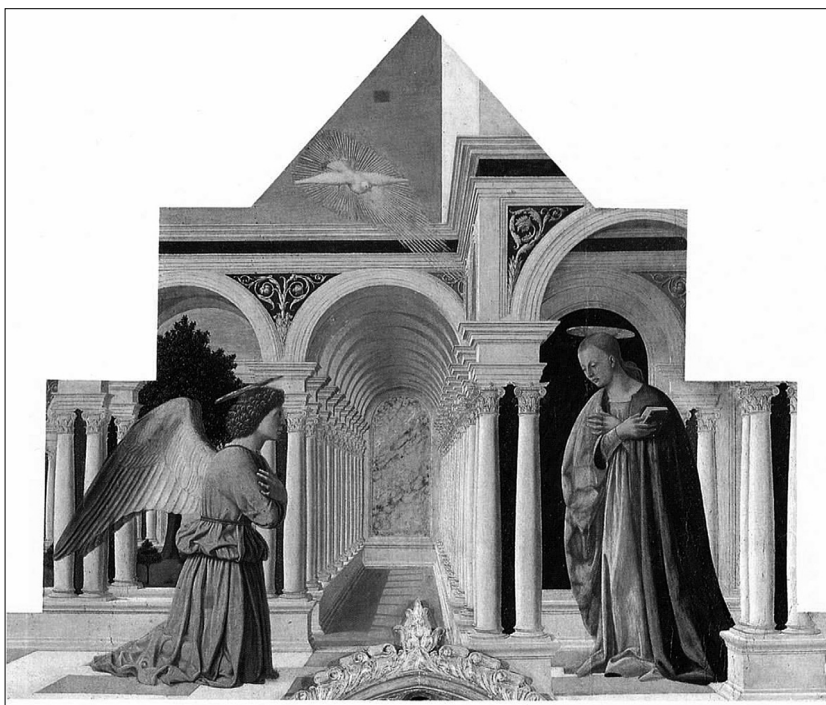


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Fig. 21: Hans Vredeman de Vries, *Annunciation*, the outer wings of the altarpiece, Prague 1598, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

Cosmological and Alchemical Aspects of the Body, Soul and Spirit Triad in Heinrich Khunrath's *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae*¹

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Abstract | The aim of the contribution is to introduce Khunrath's modification of the three alchemical principles (tria prima of Paracelsus) and their specific analogies with the cosmological triad: the substance (materia, lunar principle, Chaos), the Soul of the world (anima mundi, the solar principle) and the spirit (Ruach elohim, the mediating principle described as "the carnal spirit and spiritual body"), specifically in the works *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae* and *Alchymisch philosophisches Bekenntnis vom universellen Chaos der naturgemässen Alchymie*.

Keywords | Heinrich Khunrath; spiritual alchemy; alchemical symbolism; alchemical principles; alchemical psychology.

One of the most interesting and helpful studies in the history of ideas would involve viewing Western cultural history (as the phenomenologist Hermann Schmitz stated, "after the discovery of the spirit had obscured the body") in the light of the many variations, forms, and types of overcoming the dualism of body and soul, that is, from the perspective of the various (more or less developed and manifold) nuances and variations of the triadic structure. Alchemy and its search for a connection between the non-corporeal (spiritual-psychic) and the sensually perceptible (matter-body) brings together three basic ancient solutions: the Neoplatonic emanationism, the Aristotelian hylomorphism and the Stoic concept of matter and spirit. Even "deeper"

¹ This study is a result of research funded by the Czech Science Foundation as the project GA ČR 14-37038G "Between the Renaissance and the Baroque: Philosophy and Knowledge in the Czech Lands within the Wider European Context".

layers can be traced (in a mythological disguise) which stem from Egyptian non-dualism and its “culture of the heart”, the seat of divinity.

This paper investigates the triad *corpus, anima (spiritus), mens (ratio)*, as well as its relationship to the Paracelsian concept of the “Tria Prima” in Khunrath’s most celebrated work *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae* (in the 1609 edition). It also investigates its various interpretations presented in the concluding part of the aforementioned work by the author himself.

It should be emphasized from the start that unlike many other medical-ly-oriented followers of Paracelsus, such as Gerhard Dorn or Oswald Croll, Khunrath’s interpretations did not primarily accentuate the anthropological dimension of the stated triad, but (in connection with his reading of Genesis) a cosmological one. “The medium and the tie bonding the two extremities” (i.e., the basic pair and cosmological “limits”) represented by the *Prima Materia* (Chaos, Hyle) and *Ruach Elohim* (repeatedly – e.g. paragraphs 223 or 261 – identified with the Soul of the World, *Anima Mundi*, or nature as such!) is for Khunrath most commonly the bottom sphere, i.e., earth and water, which is “filled with *Shamayim*, the heavens, and the ethereal spirit² which penetrates through all sublunar bodies and by the grace of God is dispersed through all things and in everything”³. These heavens have traditionally a triple structure: the highest part made of fiery water: literally the *Shamayim*, the place of angels and *Empyreum*, the inaccessible light, the dwelling of God where the elements are absent. The intermediate heaven, solid and filled with ether, is situated under this: here, we find the Sun, the Moon and the planets. Finally there is the inferior heaven containing the stars and mixed with the elements.

² Hereward Tilton in his study has shown that the term ethereal spirit in Khunrath’s work was in fact diethyl ether allegedly discovered by Paracelsus. See Hereward Tilton, “Of ether, entheogen et colloidal gold: Heinrich Khunrath and the making of a Philosopher’s stone”, in *Alchemical Traditions. From Antiquity to the Avant-Garde*, edited ed. Aaron Cheak (Melbourne: Numen Books, 2013), 355–420.

³ “*Totus globus inferior plenus est Schamaim, Caelo, Spiritu Aethereo, omnia enim corpora penetravit massae sublunaris, voluntate Dei diffusum per et in omnia, nec quicquam (Experientia teste) reperitur in toto orbe Terrarum ambituque Oceani totius, quod eius scintilla careat. Mixtum hic habitat, reperitur atque versatur cum elementis fructibusque eorundem, coagulatum et congelatum, in nonnullis etiam fixum. Hoc ignis Giggas Naturae iudicans singular, a vinculis coagulationum fixationumque Phisico-Chemice relaxat atque resolvit in Spiritum ad spectabilem sensibusque obvium omnibus, separando, a superfluitatibus ei admixtis, depurate et primordiali sic restituit libertati. Hoc, Caelum inferius primum, cuius scintilla Alciool vini, quod spiritus, Aqua et Ignis.* See Heinrich Khunrath, *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae* (Hanau, 1609), para. 261.”

This “double intermediary” (the heavens and earth/water) will be returned to later when describing the famous engraving which represented this cosmological scheme in the *Amphitheatrum*. As regards the triadic anthropological structure, Khunrath identifies the link between the body and the Spirit of God (*Ruach Elohim*) with the soul, which he most frequently calls “mind” (*mens*), but in many places replaces with the term *anima* (“soul”, see e.g. para. 261). Unlike Paracelsus and his other followers, he completely avoided the notion of the astral soul⁴ (or astral body – *evestrum* of Paracelsus), the privileged vehicle of the imagination. For Khunrath, the imagination actually plays a relatively unimportant role⁵ compared to later Theosophists.⁶ The merging of *anima* and *mens* (as the highest part of the soul corresponding not to its rational capacity, but – in the Neoplatonic tradition – to its intellectual power which allows man to consort with angels and even – as Khunrath himself mentions several times – connects man directly with God) is not, after all, anything exceptional.

⁴ “Astral body”, a key concept of Paracelsus’ anthropology, had a complicated and long genesis. According to Dodd, it combined Plato’s image from *Timaeus* where the immortal parts of the soul were set in stars as if on carriages, with Aristotle’s concept of *pneuma*, the dwelling of the nourishing and sensitive soul, and responding to the matter which formed the stars. These theories, complemented with the pneumatic psychology of the Stoics, formed an amalgam which is in all probability the starting point for the “astral body” theories of Neoplatonism. Porphyry described how the soul in its descent to Earth absorbed air humidity and slowly “decayed” and clouded its *pneuma* received in heaven; and after death, by means of teurgy or philosophy, the soul could return it to its celestial origin. Iamblichus defined this “astral body” as “ethereal and radiant receptacle”, a receiver of divine imagination (*fantasia*). Oswald Croll described the role of the astral body as: “*the invisible body, stellar, ethereal, and astral carriage of the soul (which connects the intellectual soul and the terrestrial body, as a knot or glue connecting both ends or a bond of a contract; this third intermediary participating at both ends unites both and merges them into one unit: Man). By its means, first the ethereal body (the intellectual spirit at God’s command) with the aid of intelligence, that is, godly spirits, flows and descends into the center of the heart, the center of the little world (i.e., the human body) and then spreads to all parts and limbs of the body, (...) through heat with the spirit coming from the heart, through the spirit immerses into blood through which reaches the limbs and so the soul is equally close to all these parts. The mentioned ethereal body is present in heaven, thus, has an identical course with the course of the heavens whose forces it attracts...*” See Oswaldi Crollii *Basilica chymica: pluribus selectis et secretissimis propria manuali Experientia approbatis Descriptionibus, et Usu Remdiorum chymicorum selectissimorum* (Genevae: Chouet, 1643), 32.

⁵ It appears in the *Amphitheatrum* only once (para. 123) and with a negative connotation.

⁶ See Arthur Versluis, *Wisdom’s Children: A Christian Esoteric Tradition* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1999).

Latin works most frequently use four terms for the soul: *anima*, *animus*, *spiritus* or *mens*. In classical Latin, the term *anima* was closer to the term *spiritus*, meaning a universal vital breath while *animus* was commonly used only for the soul of man, distinguishing him from animals. Cicero, however, has already used the term *animus* to translate both the Greek word *psyche* and the Platonic term *nous* (intellect), in addition to its common translation *mens*. Latin Neoplatonic philosophy followed the same plan, replacing *spiritus* with *animus*, which was used simultaneously with *mens* (as the leading part of man) and added to it attributes of the Stoic *pneuma*.⁷ Similarly, the terms *spiritus mundi* and *anima mundi* (its identification with the Holy Spirit was rejected by the 1140 Synod of Sens in connection with the trial against Peter Abelard) coincide in the cosmological context.

This Stoic concept of the *spiritus* as a divine breath (whether of a fiery or ethereal nature) is common to both the alchemical and Hermetic tradition⁸ and becomes highly important in the works of Christian medical alchemy and theosophy in the 17th century when it is usually connected with the Paulian *pneumatic*, spiritual and celestial body of the Resurrection (see 1 Cor 15:35–47).⁹

⁷ See, for instance, Macrobius in the *Commentary on the "Dream of Scipio"*, *ComSS* 1, 14, 3–4: "*Animus enim proprie mens est, quam divinorem anima nemo dubitavit. (...) Cum ergo dicit, hisque animus datus est ex illis sempiternis ignibus, mentem praestat intellegi, quae nobis proprie cum caelo sideribusque communis est, cum vero ait, retinendus animus est in custodia corporis, ipsam tunc animam nominat, quae vincitur custodia corporali, cui mens divina non subditur.*" The Classical (stoic) declaration of human and divine togetherness through their participation in the divine fiery principle is also found in Seneca: "*That men are of the divine spirit is true, namely that a part leapt down onto the earth just as some sparks from the stars do and became fixed to an alien place.*" Seneca, *De otio*, V, 5. See Seneca, *On Leisure*, transl. Timothy Chandler, accessed December 10, 2016: <http://artsonline.monash.edu.au/colloquy/files/2012/11/seneca.pdf>.

⁸ See, for instance, Asclepius, VI, 3; XVII, 1, in *Thrice-Greatest Hermes*, Vol. 2, transl. G. R. S. Mead (London 1906), 317; 337–338. "*Spirit, with which they all are filled, being interblended with the rest, doth make them live. (...) It is by Spirit that all species in the Cosmos are [or] moved or ruled,—each one according to its proper nature given it by God. Matter, or Cosmos, on the other hand, is that which holds all things,—the field of motion, and the that which crowds together all; of which God is the Ruler, distributing unto all cosmic things all that is requisite to each. It is with Spirit that He fills all things, according to the quality of each one's nature.*" The School of Chartres developed the Stoic idea of designing fire (*ignis artifex*, *pyrr technikon*) in the 12th century. "Fire is something of an artist, an acting cause..." Thiery of Chartres, *O stvoření světa*, (Praha: OIKOYMENH, 2000), 79.

⁹ For more on the Stoic background to alchemy, see Sylvain Matton, "Alchimie et stoïcisme: à propos des récentes recherches," in: *Chrysopoeia (Revue publiée par la Société d'Étude de l'histoire de l'Alchimie)*, V, (Paris: S.É.H.A.; Milan: ARCHE, 1992–1996), 7–144.

Paracelsus usually acknowledged three types of the soul: the immortal soul found (through the breath of God) in the heart and nourished by the Word of God, "the heavenly manna"; a sidereal spirit (emanating from the Soul of the World), which Paracelsus sometimes connected with the animal soul and sometimes with the spirit floating above the waters at the time of creation; and finally the lowest soul, connected with the body and dwelling in the organs and limbs. Khunrath, in contrast, acknowledges a single soul, *anima* (surpassing even the angelic mind in its capacity to unite with God), which for him represented the mind (distinct from reason – *ratio*): "man is installed in his throne, the mind itself, thanks to which man is called God" (*Amphitheatrum*, para. 157). Paracelsus' triple division was complicated by a relatively consistent division into invisible and visible dimensions so that the basic anthropological triad *corpus – anima – spiritus* was in this way supplemented with a corporeal spirit, an astral body (*evestrum*) and a spiritual body, as the invisible dimensions or matrices of their visible and sensually perceptible counterparts). In Khunrath's *Amphitheatrum* the anthropological triad usually has the form: senses (the physical ability of perception) – reason (the deliberative capacity) – mind (the soul, the divine part of man, the dwelling of the Holy Spirit in man).

The focus will now shift to the main topic of this paper, the link between the triad *corpus – anima – spiritus* and the *tria prima*, the cosmological principles of the formation of matter (which for Paracelsus also represent archetypes, spiritual forces as well as their manifestations in things, which similarly to elements are not material, but – as Walter Pagel states – dynamic and functional); this link is typical for the majority of Paracelsian alchemists. These three celebrated principles of metals and generally all perceptible matter, forming, according to Paracelsus, the formless matter, "Ilyaster", before its elementary structuring (in the cosmological order: *Mysterium Magnum – Ilyaster – Tria Prima – elementa*), are in themselves invisible but imprint the following qualities on the matter:

Salt: firmness, color, taste thanks to the coagulation principle; most often connected with the body.

Sulphur: body, substance and transformation; Paracelsus connected it with the soul (*anima*), although for many alchemists its solar (masculine) aspect represented the principle of the spirit.

Mercury: moisture, vitality, the vegetative principle; the Paracelsian tradition related it to the spirit in the sense of *spiritus* (or *pneuma*, as in Khunrath's

Amphiteatrum, para. 261), as a changing intermediary; other authors tended to link it with the soul.

This basic correlation often takes more complicated and subtler forms if the principles are perceived from the perspective of cosmogenesis, or from the point of renewal, regeneration, through the Opus Magnum, that is, if they are related to creation, or to the return to the “blissful state”.

An illustrative example of this double character is Gerhard Dorn’s interpretation, for instance, in his *De speculativa philosophia*: From the unity (*mysterium magnum*) comes the first number, from which comes the first pair, which corresponds with the division into heaven and earth in the cosmogenetic plan, or with heavenly Sulphur (ethereal) and terrestrial Sulphur (also called Mars), subterranean Sun causing disintegration): their bond is Mercury (cosmologically and anthropologically understood as the *amor philosophicus*). This triad corresponds with the triad spirit (*spiritus*), body (*corpus*), and intermediary *anima* as an *artifex*, capable of choosing between good (the return to unity) and evil (succumbing to the body). The soul’s task is to unite with the celestial, not the terrestrial, spirit (*spiritus, animus, spiraculum vitae*). If this does not occur, *animus (spiritus), anima* and *corpus* will remain in an insoluble tension. Thus, the alchemist’s task is to separate (*separatio*) the three principles over the course of his life, thus uniting the soul with the upper Spirit. This can take place either supernaturally (through God’s grace) or with the assistance of the arts (through the effect of fire). If this occurs, earth (the lower Sulphur) turns into Terra Foliata or Salt.

A similar duality can be found in Khunrath’s work. When thoroughly studying his image of the “Philosophers’ Stone”, depicting how “light became body, that is, Salt”¹⁰, it is apparent that the aforementioned cosmogenetic pair: *Prima Materia* (Chaos, the bottom sphere) and *Ruach Elohim* (manifested as man’s mind, the immortal part of the human soul, and as quintessence, drinking-gold, or the Philosophers’ Stone in nature; it can be seen on the picture as the divine fire – *Esh*), are connected by the intermediary Azoth (most likely from the Arabic name for Mercury *al-zā’būq*) or *Rebis* (Mercury

¹⁰ “And light became body, even salt, saline body or bodily salt, the salt of wisdom: it was not just a body without a soul, or a body and soul without a spirit, i.e., salt without sulphur, or salt and sulphur without Mercury; its transformation into body or salt occurred when it in itself incorporated all, the soul, the body and the spirit; in the virgin abdomen of the chaos at the dawn of the world, i.e., in a barren and empty land (Gen 1:2)...” Heinrich Khunrath, *Alchymisch Philosophisches Bekenntnis. Vom Universellen Chaos Der Naturgemässen Alchymie* (Leipzig, 1786).

with a dual and flexible nature)¹¹. From the figure of Azoth springs Salt (in another text described as virgin land without spirit and soul, Terra Foliata, philosophers' lead, and the lunar principle) and sulphur (described as watery fire, vitriol, and ethereal spirit, "the blood of earth", where the soul dwells, the solar principle).

Khunrath consequently depicts the intermediary principle both cosmogenetically – from the point of creation – as heaven penetrating and fertilizing the earth, and at the same time as a return to unity with the aid of the Philosophers' Stone – through the two principles (of the birth of metals and of birth in general): solar and lunar (*Rebis*). Referring to an anonymous alchemist in his *Alchymisch philosophisches Bekenntnis vom universellen Chaos der naturgemässen Alchymie*, he describes both principles as follows:

Luna rules humidity and Sol is the source of all heat. Fatness, says Hermes, comes from the reign of the sun, humidity from the reign of the moon; so gold and silver are the roots of this art and two in one body, i.e., in one mass, where nothing is more closely related than the sun and its shadow, namely the moon; earth and water; the fatness of the sun and the humidity of the moon. Learn to understand correctly and you will not regret. Although we could say more precisely: Sol is the Soul of the World; Luna is the primaterial water or mucous Hyle of the origin of the world, which was compounded through Schamayim, the ethereal spirit, heaven, at the dawn of the world.

Thus, for Khunrath, the solar principle has the traditional attributes of the principle of Sulphur: it represents the "earth's fatness" and is simultaneously identified with the Soul of the World; the lunar principle is labeled as saline in the *Amphitheatrum* while the *Alchymisch Philosophisches Bekenntnis vom Universellen Chaos der naturgemässen Alchymie* calls it alternately and interchangeably as Mercurial and Saline (containing a radical, Mercurial humidity) and he attached to it the traditional attributes and names such as green lion (Venus, vitriol), humidity, "nature".

Both these principles (solar and lunar) are present in the first matter, where they form the philosophical Salt (the "heart or center of the earth", in the

¹¹ In the *Alchymisch Philosophisches Bekenntnis* Khunrath described Mercury as follows: "For this reason common philosophical mercury is also known as *succus lunariae et solariae*, virgin milk, also created and formed from common earth and water, I repeat, from one and identical substance, essence, or core, and an opportunity, which once had the primordial initial earth and water of the universal chaos created by God (*Gen 1:1*); understand, not when it was still barren and empty, but when it was generally animated by the Spirit of the Lord."

Alchymisch Philosophisches Bekenntnis, ch. 7), which as the revived/intelligent Adamah is the land from which man, Christ, and *Lapis* emerged. Khunrath also called it Magnesia or Chaos and elsewhere Mercury or Azoth, water from the original Chaos, which the fiery Soul of the World (or the inner form) took on by the effect of the Word of God.

This universal Salt as an initial subject of the return to light and unity appears as the green color over the course of the work and turns into the redness of the Philosophers' Stone.

Thus, with some level of simplification, the following cosmological scheme can be found in Khunrath. The initial unity divides into two principles: form and matter. In the next step these two principles create the first matter (the animated Chaos) through heaven; this bottom sphere is further structured with four elements. The art of alchemy consists in separation: separating soul and spirit from the body,¹² with the aid of "cooking" and the conversion of elements (water originates from earth, air from water, fire from air) and leads to the acquisition of the universal Salt which gives rise to all metals before their differentiation and maturation through the solar or lunar semen (Sulphur and Mercury).

I would like to return to the triad structure of the *Amphiteatrum* and analyze Khunrath's comparison table of numerous triad variations at the very end of his work:

He first described the triad structure of creation according to Genesis as he had interpreted it in his *Amphiteatrum* and depicted it in the following image: *Earth and water: the thick and sticky earth surrounded by water so that these two elements (some kind of "hylements") form the watery mass, one body. The first created, Trinity, Catholic being (ens); alias Chaos. 2. Heavens 3. Ruach Elohim, i.e., the Spirit of God dwelling over the waters.*

Secondly, he mentions the structure "according to Hermes and to the ancient philosophers": *The Body, that, which is at the bottom. 2. The ethereal Spirit of*

¹² See *Alchymisch Philosophisches Bekenntnis Vom Universellen Chaos Der Naturgemässen Alchymie* (Leipzig: 1786): "When the body and soul separate, the bond breaks (that is the spirit binding the soul and the body), and the soul can fly away from the body. Thus, Paul says (Phil 1: 23): *I have the desire to leave and be with Christ. For this reason, you must, my dear philosopher, capture the spirit and soul of magnesia and cleanse them like the body. Then – with God's mercy – you have to reunite this body with its clean soul (through the purified spirit). You will therefore revive it so that it will never die again. It is certain that, apart from God's will, all art depends on dissolution, division, alias chemistry, the utmost purging of both parts, i.e., the spiritual and physical, and at the right time (...).*"

the World, the spiritual body penetrating everything. That what is at the top. 3. The soul: the beatified verdure of the world, thanks to which everything may grow. The green lion, green Duenech.

In this concept, the traditional intermediary is the soul corresponding also to the vegetative power of nature.

Thirdly, Khunrath described the triad of the “ancient philosophers” corresponding with Aristotle’s “hylomorphism”: 1. *The matter, Hyle, the passive.* 2. *The intermediary, that what is somewhat non-bodily, as if already a soul, but not yet a soul, as if already a body, connecting both extremities.* 3. *The form (morfe), which gives a thing its being. Agens.*

Of particular interest is his take on the “physicochemical” or alchemist concept:

Sulphur and Salt of nature, that is fat and thick earth and dry water that does not make hands wet, the Sun and Luna of Hermes. 2. Mercury, that is, the ethereal spirit, acting according to the nature of sparks with which it unites like the planet Mercury in the sky that has a diverse and versatile nature: with warm things it is warm, with cold ones it is cold, because it follows the nature of what it unites with 3. Nature. Essence.

Complying with the structure of the preceding triads (particularly striking in the lucid arrangement of the original edition), these lines should in all probability be read in the following manner: Sulphur and Salt (the *rebis* of our image) of the matter form the bottom pole connected with their original essence by the Mercurian principle (in the *Amphitheatrum* identified with the ethereal spirit). An opposite (or simultaneous?) interpretation is also possible, however, wherein Mercury bonds the basic principles of forming Sulphur and Salt with their material and substantial (*natura et essentia*) essence.

In the final scheme, Khunrath traditionally divides the elements into passive (earth and water), active (air and fire) and calls for their intermediary quintessence.

This final table is important not only as a subject of comparative analysis but is of particular assistance when trying to understand Khunrath himself: he often uses the individual parts of the various triads interchangeably, complicating the already rampant terminology.

In conclusion, it can be argued that Khunrath’s *tria prima* cannot be definitively identified with the anthropological triad of body, soul, spirit (as e.g. in Croll or Dorn); in the cosmological perspective, however, Mercury is most

often linked with the ethereal spirit which represents the dwelling of the soul (in the sense of the divine breath, the supreme, immortal part of the human soul), *i.e.*, Sulphur. Khunrath's position is complicated by his reference to the lunar and solar principle rather than to the *Tria Prima*, the solar principle being the principle of Sulphur and the lunar principal either Saline or Mercurial.

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Layers of Meaning in Alchemy in John Dee's *Monas hieroglyphica* and its Relevance in a Central European Context

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Abstract | “John Dee and alchemy” – this phrase, particularly in and around Bohemia, almost automatically triggers the qualification: “Dee was interested in alchemy, but the real adept in their tandem was his scriber, Edward Kelly.” Well, this is not necessarily true. Although it is indeed probable that Kelly was more accomplished and also more devoted to pursuing the way of transmuting base metals to gold, his master approached alchemy in a more subtle and complex way. He did not stand next to the furnace and the alembic day and night, but in his diaries he documented his practical experiments. More importantly, however, he theorized about alchemy in an intriguingly abstract way in which he connected alchemy with other sciences, with religion, with human cognition as well as with spiritual regeneration. His work, first and foremost the *Monas hieroglyphica*, is consequently an important testimony to the recent scholarly debate about the nature of premodern alchemy, championed by William Newman and Lawrence Principe.

I would like to revisit in this paper the *Monas hieroglyphica* as a strong counter-argument against Newman and Principe's skepticism about the possible symbolic and spiritual nature of Renaissance alchemy.

Keywords | alchemy; spiritual and practical; John Dee; *Monas hieroglyphica*; Carl Jung; William Newman; Lawrence Principe.

Introduction

“John Dee and alchemy” – this phrase, particularly in and around Bohemia, almost automatically triggers the qualification: “Dee was interested in alchemy, but the real adept in their tandem was his scriber, Edward Kelly.” Well, this is not necessarily true. Although it is indeed probable that Kelly was more accomplished and also more devoted to pursuing the way of transmuting base metals to gold, his master approached alchemy in a more subtle and

complex way. He did not stand next to the furnace and the alembic day and night, but in his diaries he documented his practical experiments. More importantly, however, he theorized about alchemy in an intriguingly abstract way in which he connected alchemy with other sciences, with religion, with human cognition as well as with spiritual regeneration. His work, first and foremost the *Monas hieroglyphica*, is consequently an important testimony to the recent scholarly debate about the nature of premodern alchemy, championed by William Newman and Lawrence Principe.

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The Debate about Experimental and Spiritual Alchemy

It is worth starting with certain reminders about the recently ongoing debate about the status of alchemy in the medieval and early modern periods. Much had been said about the intertwining of chemical experiments on the one hand and the allegorical use of transmutation to facilitate speaking about the purification of the soul and preparations for salvation, when William Newman and Lawrence Principe questioned this longstanding view and stirred up the science- and intellectual historian community with their radical denial. As my former student, George-Florin Călian has called it, this developed into a scholarly struggle between the adherents of *Alkimia operativa* versus *Alkimia speculativa*.¹

¹ See George-Florin Călian, "Alchimia operativa and alchimia speculativa: Some Modern Controversies on the Historiography of Alchemy," *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU*, 166–90 (Budapest: The Central European University 16, 2010), 166–90. And also Marcos Martín-Torres, "Some recent developments in the historiography of alchemy," *Ambix* 58.3 (2011): 215–37. For the "Alkimia operativa" see William R. Newman, *Atoms and Alchemy: Chymistry and the Experimental Origins of the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006) and William R. Newman, "From Alchemy to 'Chemistry,'" in *The Cambridge History of Science*, vol. 3: *Early Modern Science*, 497–517, eds. Katharine Park and Lorraine Daston (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); William R. Newman, and Lawrence M. Principe, "Some Problems with the Historiography of Alchemy," in *Secrets of Nature: Astrology and Alchemy in Early Modern Europe*, eds. W. R. Newman and A. Grafton, 345–431 (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology [MIT] Press, 2001); William R. Newman and Lawrence M. Principe. *Alchemy Tried in the Fire: Starkey, Boyle, and the Fate of Helmontian Chymistry* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002); Lawrence M. Principe, "A Revolution Nobody Noticed? Changes in Early Eighteenth-Century Chymistry," in *New Narratives in Eighteenth-Century Chemistry*,

It will be easiest to understand their train of thought if we look at their much contested paper, "Some Problems with the Historiography of Alchemy" (Newman/Principe 2001). It was published in a volume, touching upon the relationship between astrology and alchemy in the early modern period, edited by Anthony Grafton and William R. Newman himself. The problematization of alchemy frames the volume with an introduction (Newman/Grafton 2001) and the mentioned Newman–Principe paper placed at the end. Reading together these two papers one finds certain received views of science- and intellectual history supported. The majority of the arguments, however, are aimed at radically subverting the thus far little questioned "common historical knowledge". Let us begin with the second set:

➤ Although in science historiography it is taken for granted that astrology and alchemy were interrelated and dependent on one another, according to the authors, most medieval and early modern alchemical works denied

ed. Lawrence M. Principe, 1–22 (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007); Lawrence M. Principe, *The Aspiring Adept: Robert Boyle and His Alchemical Quest* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998). Some important proponents of the "Alkimia speculativa" are Bruce Janacek, *Alchemical Belief: Occultism in the Religious Culture of Early Modern England*. The Magic in History Series (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011); Adam McLean, *The Spiritual Science of Alchemy*. (Edinburgh: Megalithic Research Publications, 1978); Daniel Merkur, "The Study of Spiritual Alchemy: Mysticism, Gold-Making, and Esoteric Hermeneutics," *Ambix* 37 (1990): 35–45. Mark S. Morrisson, *Modern Alchemy: Occultism and the Emergence of the Atomic Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Urszula Szulakowska, *The Sacrificial Body and the Day of Doom: Alchemy and Apocalyptic Discourse in the Protestant Reformation* (Leiden: Brill (Aries Book Series), 2006); Hereward Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix: Spiritual Alchemy and Rosicrucianism in the Work of Count Michael Maier (1569–1622)* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003); Michael Thomson Walton, *Genesis and the Chemical Philosophy: True Christian Science in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York: AMS Press, 2011); while its classic authorities are Carl Gustav Jung, *Alchemical Studies* (1967, Volume 13 of the Collected Works) (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983); Carl Gustav Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy* (1953, Volume 12 of the Collected Works) (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980); and Mircea Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978). Relevant recent non-English publications: Ute Frietsch, *Häresie und Wissenschaft: eine Genealogie der paracelsischen Alchemie* (München: Fink, 2013); Gioele Magaldi, *Alchimia: un problema storiografico ed ermeneutico* (Milano: Mimesis, 2010); Paola Maresca, *Alchimia, magia e astrologia nella Firenze dei Medici: giardini e dimore simboliche* (Firenze: Pontecorboli, 2012); Rafał T. Prinke, *Zwodniczy odród błędów. Piśmiennictwo alchemiczne do końca XVIII wieku* (Warszawa: IHN PAN, 2014); Ivo Purš and Vladimír Karpenko, eds., *Alchymie a Rudolf II: hledání tajemství přírody ve střední Evropě v 16. a 17. století* (Praha: Artefactum, 2011); Jörg Völlnagel, *Alchemie: die königliche Kunst* (München: Hirmer, 2012).

this fact. They instead, in one way or another, claimed that transmutation is independent from the influence of the celestial bodies. This argument is based on a strict and rather narrow definition of both astrology and alchemy: "Astrology was a form of divination along with oneiromancy, arithmology, and a host of other techniques for auguring and at times altering the future, whereas alchemy was an artisanal pursuit concerned with the technologies of minerals and metals" ("Introduction," 15). Consequently, "All the evidence points to the conclusion that alchemy and astrology were quite two distinct disciplines in the Middle Ages, although on some occasions they overlapped, as indeed astrology overlapped with medicine, architecture, and a host of other pursuits" (*ibid.*, 21).

➤ Taking the above at face value, the references to astrology in alchemical texts should be seen as rhetorical figures and metaphorical expressions rather than as scientifically meant viewpoints. Analysis shows that "even the widely revered description of alchemy as 'terrestrial astronomy' was a topological association, comparing one discipline to the other rather than using the tools of the former in the operation of the other" (*ibid.*, 27).

While the introduction established the view that alchemy should primarily be viewed as a technological, metallurgical procedure, the concluding essay of the collection (Newman/Principe 2001) is entirely devoted to detaching the art of transmutation from any spirituality, that is any ideology that could be associated with the broad field of Western esotericism. In connection with this the authors propose certain surprising arguments.

➤ They claim that the concept of spiritual alchemy is a fabrication of 19th century occultism by certain naive mystics such as Mary Anne Atwood and Ethan Allen Hitchcock, who misunderstood the nature of medieval and early modern alchemy.

➤ They also criticize two 20th century scholars: Carl Gustav Jung the psychoanalyst and Mircea Eliade the scholar of religious mythologies. They suggest that their scientific work was rooted in the above-mentioned 19th century occultism and thus has serious flaws.

➤ By generalizing from the approaches of these two scholars, Newman and Principe identify the following historical fallacies which characteristically misrepresent alchemy: the structuralist and ahistorical basis of the concept of the collective unconscious and the "panpsychic" notion of vitalism and analogical thinking. Neither of these, they claim, can be seen as the representational logic of alchemy.

It is interesting to note that both Jung and Eliade proposed a historical timeline to identify the turning point for alchemy from its rise to its decline. Jung distinguished between two periods, the "classical" – from Antiquity to the Renaissance – when alchemy represented a complex and holistic science; and the "decay," when – initiated by Paracelsus – alchemy became on the one hand a natural science and further developed as medicinal iatrochemistry and metallurgical chemistry, while on the other hand Böhme turned it into something purely mystical involving speculative theology ("Some Problems," 404). Somewhat similarly to Jung, Eliade also linked alchemy with premodern thinking and emphasized its holistic nature deeply believing in vitalism, a concept of the organic nature of the universe. This organic world view was replaced in the 17th century by the mechanistic universe, putting an end to alchemy and gradually changing it into chemistry. "For Eliade, the development of mechanism killed alchemy and inaugurated modern science. Indeed, Eliade made it clear that for him, the death of alchemy was synonymous with the death of nature." (Ibid., 409)²

Both these "historical models" tend to offer grand narratives with a number of simplifications and Newman and Principe are undoubtedly right when they warn: "a common failing of the interpretations critiqued [here] is the depiction of alchemy as a uniform and constant monolith; consequently future studies should pay attention to mapping out the development and fine structure of the discipline. [...] Such precise studies could then be drawn upon for making comparisons and contrasts between styles and contents among different schools and epochs" (Ibid., 419). It is paradoxical, however, that when they engage in such "fine tuning" examinations, they often contradict their own rigid principles and, somewhat reluctantly, hint at a variety of – often rivaling – tendencies within the complex and far from being homogeneous conglomerate of alchemy. I also want to single out here a few such instances.

➤ In the "Introduction" Newman and Grafton draw attention to the Neoplatonist hermeticism of Ficino, Trithemius, and Agrippa which changed the standard medieval view of alchemy endowing it with a cosmic character. This also effected the reading of the important and enigmatic text of the *Tabula*

² Among the contemporary, scholarly followers of Jung and Eliade, Newman and Principe pass judgment on Marie-Luise von Franz, *Aurora consurgens: A Document Attributed to Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1966); Betty Jo Teeter Dobbs, *Alchemical Death and Resurrection* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute, 1990); Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980).

smaragdina: “Medieval authors usually saw an encoded alchemical recipe in these lines, but in the 16th century the *Emerald Tablet* served as the basis for the comprehensive unification of alchemy and neoplatonizing cosmology. Trithemius, whom Agrippa follows, took it literally as a cosmological statement concerning the soul of the world.” (Newman/Grafton 2001, 25)

Here, in opposition to their opinions, namely, that spiritual alchemy only appeared after the 19th century occult revival, the spiritual turn is located in the late 15th and early 16th century. Examples multiply in the 17th century, one only has to think of St. Francis of Sales, Thomas Brown, Pierre-Jean Fabre, Elias Ashmole, not to mention Jakob Böhme, the most “disturbing” author against the technological understanding of early modern alchemy. Of these Newman and Principe write: “Although the works of many alchemical writers contain (often extensive) expressions of period piety, imprecations to God, exhortations to morality, and even to the occasional appearance of an angelic or spiritual messenger, we find no indication that the vast majority of alchemists were working on anything other than material substances toward material goals. [...] This is not to say that there was nothing whatsoever akin to a ‘spiritual alchemy’ in the broad historical spectrum of alchemy. The relationship between alchemy and religion, theology, and spirituality is complex, but still does not countenance the esoteric spiritual school of interpretation.” (Newman/Principe 2001, 397–98). Since they want to belittle the spiritual interpretation of alchemy, they explain away all early examples as mere figurative, or allegorical usage, as in the case of Böhme: “Böhme’s use of alchemical language and imagery – as extensive as it is – remains clearly of a different order than, for example, the practical and theoretical antimonial exercises of Basil Valentine, Alexander von Suchten, Eirenaeus Philaletes and others, or the rigorous Scholartic alchemy of ‘Geber’” (ibid., 399).

Among the many critiques of the Newman and Principe thesis, here it shall be enough to quote part of the conclusion of Călian:

➤ First of all, Călian emphasizes that the nature of alchemy is intricate and protean, ranging from chemical research to religious mysticism, and to question the latter is “unfortunate and error” (Călian 2010, 189).

➤ Within the wide range of characteristics outlined above, the use of *Decknamen*, that is that chemical phenomena are named with obscure, mythological-allegorical symbols, perfectly fits. However, “to generalize to the whole alchemical movement however, is too hazardous. The popularization of the idea that alchemy was only spiritual is even more harmful, as can easily be

seen in pseudo-scientific research. Both tendencies can be regarded as part of what David Fischer called the historian's fallacies."³

➤ In the end Călian summarizes his critique as follows:

1. The distinction between alchemy and chemistry can trace its roots back to the Middle Ages. [...] 3. The attempt to demolish the difference by arguing that scholars such as Jung and Eliade were influenced by the 19th century fashion for occultism and that the root of the distinction cannot be found earlier, being an "ahistorical" approach, is entirely incorrect. 4. The annihilation of the difference would leave important disciplines without subjects or restrict their subjects. One such example is the history of Western esotericism, a controversial academic discipline, but still a young and imperative one for understanding the history of Western civilization. 5. Finally, the spiritual–non-spiritual dichotomy is the result of the exclusivist and partisan character of some researchers who accentuate only the chemical aspect, while humanist researchers do not exclude the chemical nature of alchemy. (Ibid., 189–90)

An examination of John Dee's alchemy clearly demonstrates the above, as I am going to demonstrate in the remaining parts of this paper.

John Dee – East-Central Europe – Alchemy

Although in East-Central Europe Edward Kelly's reputation as an alchemist definitely overshadowed that of Dee, the English doctor also had vital contacts with aristocrats and scholars of this region, and influenced the fate of Western esotericism in Bohemia, Poland and even Hungary.

His first encounter with representatives of East-Central Europe occurred in Antwerp in 1562/63, when a young Hungarian nobleman helped him copy Trithemius's *Steganographia* as he enthusiastically reported about it to William Cecil, Lord Burghley:

Briefly to place before your eyes the chief of my request, thus standeth my case. [...] Wherein our country hath no man hable to set furth his fote, or shew his hand: as in the science *De numeris formalibus*, the science *De ponderibus mysticis*, and the science *De mensuris divinis*: (by which three the huge frame of this world is fashioned, compact, rered, stablished, and preserved) [...] after my long serche and study, great cost and travaile have fallen under my

³ Ibid. Călian here refers to David Hackett Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1970), passim.

perseverance and understanding, [...] so have forced my witt and payned my self to draw togyther and disclose by writing, such proffittable and pleasant sciences. [...] And for a profe more evident of my endeavor and purpose, that already I have purchased one booke, for which a thousand crownes habe ben by others offred. [...] The title is on this wise, *Steganographia Joannis Tritemii*. Of this booke the one half I have copyed oute. And now I stand at the courtesye of a noble man of Hungarie for writing furth the rest; who hath promised me leave therto, after he shall perceyve that I may remayne by him longer to pleasure him also with such pointes of science, as at my handes he requireth.⁴

Although the identity of this young Hungarian nobleman has not been verified without a doubt, I have suggested that it may have been Boldizsár Batthyány, a prominent aristocrat with a pioneering interest in alchemy and esoteric sciences in 16th century Hungary.⁵ It is known that between 1559 and 1561 he served in Paris at the court of François, Duc de Guise and Charles, Cardinal de Lorraine and was familiar with the royal household of Francis II and Mary Stuart. There is also some evidence that around 1556 he traveled to Brussels and visited the court of Queen Mary of Hungary, the elderly widow having been an intimate friend of his godparents from the time before the battle of Mohács in 1526 (Bobory 2009, 21n103).

⁴ London, Public Record Office, SP Domestic XXVII.63. Dated from Antwerp, 16 February 1563. Published as John Dee, *Autobiographical Tracts* [The Compendious Rehearsal. (1592); "A Supplication to Queen Mary for the Recovery and Preservation of Ancient Writers and Monuments" (January 15, 1556); "A Necessary Advertisement" (from the *General and Rare Memorials*, 1577); "A Letter Containing a most briefe discourse apologetical!" (1592)], ed. James Crossley (Manchester: Chetham Society Publications, vol. 24, 1851), 6–10. See also Julian Roberts and Andrew G. Watson, *John Dee's Library Catalogues* (with facsimiles) (London: Bibliographical Society, 1990), 76, 190; and György E. Szőnyi, *John Dee's Occultism. Magical Exaltation Through Powerful Signs* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press (Series in Western Esoterism), 2004), 105–107.

⁵ The importance of this Hungarian nobleman related to European intellectual life in the 1570s and 1580s was first highlighted by R. J. W. Evans: Robert J. W. Evans, *Rudolf II and His World. A Study in Intellectual History 1576–1612* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973). (reprint: London: Thames and Hudson, 1997) and Robert J. W. Evans, *The Wechel Presses: Humanism and Calvinism in Central Europe 1572–1627* (Oxford: The Past and Present Society (Supplement 2), 1975) and introduced in connection with John Dee by myself: Szőnyi, *John Dee's Occultism...*; György E. Szőnyi, "John Dee i jego związki ze środkową Europą" [John Dee and his Contacts with Central Europe], *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* [Warsaw] 25 (1980): 99–113. The first complete intellectual biography devoted to Batthyány is Dóra Bobory, *The Sword and the Crucible. Count Boldizsar Batthyany and Natural Philosophy in Sixteenth-century Hungary* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009).

Unfortunately even less evidence allows for the inference that during the winter of 1562 he was in the Low Countries, but there is no absolute counter evidence either, since in January 1563 he turned up in Augsburg with Ferdinand I at the Imperial court.⁶ If he met Dee in Antwerp, later that year they could have come across one another again in the Hungarian capital, Pozsony/Pressburg (today Bratislava in Slovakia) at the coronation of Maximilian II as King of Hungary and Croatia. The spectacular event inspired Dee to dedicate his *Monas hieroglyphica* a few months later to the new king, while Batthyány was also present, officially representing his father, the cup bearer of the monarch. As of the 1570s, already having sufficient funds, Batthyány became a passionate collector of books, amongst others, prints covering history, geography, alchemy, and hermetic philosophy.⁷ He also established his alchemical laboratory at his castle of Némethújvár (Güssing), employed alchemists and became engaged in extensive correspondence concerning scientific matters with a number of foreign and Hungarian practitioners.⁸

The Batthyány family acquired the castle and town of Késmárk, a burgeoning city in Upper Hungary, near the Polish border (today: Kesmarok, Slovakia) in 1527. However in 1530 the possession was transferred to the Polish magnate, Hieronim Łaski, the palatine of Sieradz. His son, Olbracht Łaski, consequently inherited the lease. Olbracht was born in Késmárk in 1536 and a few decades later became the patron of John Dee, luring him to East-Central Europe for six years. Késmárk is often mentioned in Dee's spiritual diaries (Szönyi 2004, 248) and it was here that Łaski set up his first alchemical laboratory with the employment of several adepts and humanists. It was

⁶ As Bobory writes, "Given the lack of sources to corroborate this supposition, we cannot deny the possibility that around that time he travelled to the Low Countries and there perhaps met John Dee." Bobory, *The Sword and the Crucible*, 24n124. Her main objection to this possibility is largely due to the fact, that at that time Batthyány had not been in the possession of his inheritance yet, so he could not offer Dee patronage or hospitality. Taking this into consideration, the possibility still remains that it was Dee's usual enthusiasm and pompousness that interpreted the situation as promising for a longer association. Furthermore, Dee paid for the Trithemius, then had it copied. This may mean that he paid the young Hungarian for the copying service.

⁷ See R. J. W. Evans, *The Wechel Presses...*, 35–37; István Monok and Péter Ötvös and Edina Zvara, *Balthasar Batthyány und seine Bibliothek. Bibliotheken in Güssing in 16. und 17. Jahrhundert*, Vol 2. Eisenstadt (Burgenländisches Landesarchiv (Burgenländische Forschungen, Sonderband XXVI), 2004); Bobory, *The Sword and the Crucible*, Appendix C, 121–29.

⁸ A detailed analysis of these activities can be found in Bobory, *The Sword and the Crucible*.

here that one of his scholars, the Silesian-German Adam Schröter translated Paracelus' *Archidoxae magica* from German to Latin. The work was published in Cracow in 1569 and was dedicated "Illustri ac Magnifico Domino Alberto a Lasko, Palatino Siradiensi etc.". The lengthy introductory essay by Schröter not only paid tribute to Laski as a patron (also eloquently praising his father, Hieronimus) but further testified to the magnate's genuine interest in the occult arts (Szőnyi 2004, 248). As I summarized in my book on Dee: It would be interesting to know if Dee ever received a copy of this Cracow *Archidoxae* edition, but since he lived in Laski's household, it is likely that he at least saw it. Although the English Doctor had known the text from the editions he had possessed since the 1570s, he must have been pleased to read Schröter's introduction. Schröter called Paracelsus a direct descendant of Trismegistus and Enoch, and directly referred to magical *exaltatio*, one of the notions Dee was particularly interested in: "The essence of the whole work is to teach in general how it is possible to prepare an appropriate medicine against any kind of illness and finally to reach *exaltatio*; by the help of which the human body miraculously and from all illnesses and future accidents for a long time can be liberated and immunely preserved."⁹

It is interesting to notice the similarities among Dee's East-Central European aristocratic patrons, the Hungarian Batthyány (for the time I take their acquaintance for granted), the Polish Łaski, and the Czech Vilém Rožmberk. They were all tall, sturdy, ambitious leaders of their community, exemplifying the Darwinian maxim about "the survival of the fittest". As men of power, they were always in need of more and more money, so their interest in alchemy had practical motivations. They also, however, spent much of their lives in politics, taking part in courtly intrigues as well as in military campaigns. Furthermore, all three were humanists, mastering several languages, well versed in the classics, and with their vivid intellectual curiosity urging them to look into questions of religion, theology, and, above all, natural philosophy.¹⁰ They were passionate book collectors, the 11,000 volume library of the

⁹ "ARGUMENTUM autem totius operis est, docere in genere, quomodo quaelibet cuiusquae morbi appropriata medicina, debeat et possit praeparari, et ad summum exaltari: ita ut corpus humanum per eam quasi miraculosè, certò tamen ab omni morbo, futurisque accidentibus, ad longissimam usque aetatem liberetur, et immune conservetur" Theophrastus Paracelsus, *Archidoxiae Philippi Theophrasti Paracelsi Magni ... Libri X*. Nunc primum studio et diligentia Adami Schröteri. Marginalibus annotationibus, & Indice copiosissimo, per Ioannem Gregorium Macrum (Cracoviae: Matthiae Wirzbietae, 1569), "Argumentum."

¹⁰ All three of them are introduced and characterized in Evans's *Rudolf II and His World* (1973). For more on Batthyány see Szőnyi, *John Dee's Occultism*, 243–75, 263; Bobory,

Rožmberks was remarkable on even a continental scale far surpassing Dee's also enormous, 4,000 item collection (Bůžek and Novotný 1997, 309; Roberts and Watson 1990). They also sponsored translations and publications, collected artwork and with their cosmopolitan interests and humanist network showed remarkable interconfessionalist tolerance.

Batthyány was a Protestant but served in the Catholic court of the French Guise while sustaining his acquaintance with Huguenot intellectuals, such as the ones around the Wechel Presses, e.g. the bookseller Jean Aubri (Evans 1975). At home he and his family had close ties with the Catholic Habsburgs while at the same time employing reformed preachers in his household. Among his protégées we find the younger brother of Péter Pázmány, the charismatic leader of the Counter-Reformation in Hungary (Bobory 2009, 31–33).

Łaski was also born a Protestant and supported the Lutheran community of Késmárk. He later converted to Catholicism but practiced religious tolerance while becoming a supporter of the Habsburgs. A broadsheet published in 1609 spoke of him as follows: "Happy Olbracht Łaski, Palatine of Sieradz, Socrates in the council, Achilles in the war, Ulysses in power politics" (Zieliński/Żelewski 1982, 49).

Like Batthyány and Łaski, Vilém Rožmberk was educated in a Protestant school, while the family always remained Catholic and loyal to the Habsburgs. He was intimate with Maximilian II (who also fell under the spell of Lutheranism) from his school years and accompanied the future king and emperor to Spain; in 1566 he duly became the Chancellor of Bohemia. As a patron of learning he financially supported the non-Catholic Charles Uni-

The Sword and the Crucible; on Łaski: Jan Kasprzak, "A Riddle of History: Queen Elizabeth I and the Albertus Łaski Affair," *The Polish Review* 14 (1961): 1–2; Konstanty Zantuan, "Olbracht Łaski in Elizabethan England," *The Polish Review* (1968): 3–22; Roman Żelewski, "Olbracht Łaski." In *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* (Warszawa: PIW, 18, 1973), 246–50; Ryszard Zieliński and Roman Żelewski. *Olbracht Łaski. Od Kieżmarku do Londynu* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1982). On Vilém Rožmberk: Václav Bůžek and M. Novotný, "Mecenáši," in *Dvory velmožů s erbem růže*, eds. Václav Bůžek and Josef Hrdlička (Praha: Mladá Fronta, 1997), 150–61; Vladimír Karpenko, "Bohemian Nobility and Alchemy in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century: Wilhelm of Rosenberg and Two Alchemists," *Cauda Pavonis* 15.2 (1996): 14–18; Jaroslav Pánek, *Vilém z Rožmberka: politik smíru* (Praha: Brána, 1998); Prinke, *Zwodniczy ogród błędów*, 459–65; Petr Vágner, "Dny sváteční a sváteční rožmberských alchymistů," in *Opera Historica* [University of České Budějovice] 3 (1993): 265–78; Petr Vágner, *Theatrum Chemicum. Kapitoly z dějin alchymie* (Praha: Paseka, 1995), 103–27.

versity in Prague, but also invited the Jesuits to settle in Český Krumlov and develop modern education (Bůžek/Novotný 1997, 309). Upon Rožmberk's death, in 1592, a Protestant characterized his tolerance as follows: "This Lord, although he was of the Roman religion, judged no other man's faith, and left him to exercise in freedom and peace; his symbol was *festina lente*" (Evans 1973, 66).

People often use the phrase a "small world" when they experience unexpected meetings and encounters. This was exactly the case with the patrons of Dee if one examines how fate brought them together in various ways and on numerous occasions. Boldizsár Batthyány was primarily raised by his great-uncle, Ferenc Batthyány, who was the Palatine of Hungary and his castle in Németújvár (today Güssing in Austria) was a centre for educating young aristocrats, boys and girls alike. When Boldizsár returned from France in 1561 he met at his uncle's court Dorica, the daughter of another important magnate, Miklós Zrinyi, in such a capacity. The Croatian-Hungarian Zrinyi, who was a close friend of the Batthyánys, had lost his wife earlier that year and proposed to Eva Rožmberk, Vilém's sister, with whom he became engaged in a passionate correspondence in German.

A unique event might have brought together all our protagonists in the Hungarian capital, Pozsony, in September 1563. It was the earlier mentioned spectacular coronation of Maximilian II as king of Hungary. Vilém Rožmberk must have come, since he was an intimate friend of the new king and was even more motivated by the fact that his sister Eva was about to marry Miklós Zrinyi in a few months time. Deputy Palatine Ferenc Batthyány placed the crown on the head of Maximilian at the coronation, Count Zrinyi was carrying one of the regalia, the orb, and, as has already been mentioned, Boldizsár Batthyány was the cup bearer at the feast where other young aristocrats were the waiters (Istvánffy 2003, 333–35). Count Łaski may also have been invited, since at that time he was engaged in manipulating the politics of Moldova and had just recently asked the Emperor to allow his troops to cross through Hungary (Zieliński/Żelewski 1982, 31). It is also known that John Dee was among the cheering crowd, unfortunately we do not know in whose company.

The following spring Zrinyi married Eva Rožmberk and a year later Boldizsár became betrothed to Dorica Zrinyi, thereby establishing a family relationship with the Czech magnates, Vilém and Peter Vok. Boldizsár's wedding was delayed, however, by the death of Ferdinand in July 1564, whose burial in Prague brought together the nobility of the entire Empire. Boldizsár

Batthyány turned up in Vienna in early August and at the funeral in Prague it was he who led the horse carrying the royal Hungarian coat-of-arms (Bobory 2009, 25).

Boldizsár finally married the daughter of Zriny in February 1566, however that year occasioned yet another gathering of our protagonists on a much less happy occasion. Suleiman the Magnificent attacked Hungary and besieged several important fortresses that summer. Maximilian called for an international army which slowly gathered around the city of Győr (Raab) in Western Hungary. Among those European nobles who joined this project with their private troops were Charles Guise and William II of Hohenlohe both of whom Boldizsár knew from his years at the French court. Vilém Rožmberk (Pánek 1998, 138–44) as well as Olbracht Łaski (Istvánffy 2003, 409) also found their way there.

While there was much disagreement among the captains of the camp, Miklós Zrinyi became cornered by the Sultan at his own fortress in South Hungary, Szigetvár. He was defending the town and the castle with 2,300 soldiers against a 60 thousand-strong Turkish army. The siege lasted from August 5 to September 7 and in the end the Hungarians were so overpowered that Captain Zrinyi, with his remaining comrades, decided to break out from among the ruins and fight till their death. Since the aged Sultan had also died a day prior to Zrinyi's decease, the deputy, Sokollu Mustafa Pasha, had both of them buried with military honors near the battlefield. Zrinyi's head was severed, however, and publicly displayed for some time. It was eventually sent to the Emperor's camp and finally ended up with the family in their seat, Csáktornya/Čakovec (today's Croatia). The heroic act stirred much sympathy all over Europe and the story was popularized on broadsheets in various languages (Rúzsás 1982, 251–60; summary of events in Bobory 2009, 192).

Boldizsár Batthyány was staying in the international camp while his father-in-law was defending Sziget. After the tragedy it was his task to carry the severed head to its funeral in Csáktornya (Istvánffy 2003, 429). It would be interesting to know if John Dee was informed about any of these events. At that time he had just recently returned to England. In Spring 1564 he published his main work, the *Monas hieroglyphica* in Antwerp, in its preface fondly remembering the spectacular coronation a few months earlier in Pozsony. In June he accompanied the Marchioness of Northampton from Antwerp to Greenwich (Roberts/Watson 1990, 76), then settled down in his house in Mortlake and over the following years, under the patronage of the Queen, grew into a central figure of a kind of think tank engaged in projects

aiming at the building of a British empire and fostering overseas exploration (French 1972, 126–160; Sherman 1995, 115–48). His house became frequented by courtiers, intellectuals and he also tutored young aristocrats, among others Edward Dyer and Philip Sidney. The latter soon became an European celebrity, considered by many as the embodiment of Castiglione's ideal courtier (Osborn 1972).

As is well known, advised by Dee, the promising nineteen-year-old knight and poet came to Hungary in 1573 as part of a three-year-long grand tour sponsored by his patron, Sir Francis Walsingham. Since Walsingham was the creator of the British secret service, he also entrusted Sidney to write reports to him on what he experienced in the various European countries. As historians have verified, Sidney indeed was to observe the Turkish wars and the state of the Hungarian fortifications (Gömöri 1991). Ten years later, in his *Defence of Poesy* he commemorated his having been impressed at a Hungarian noble castle where during the feast heroic songs were performed "about their ancestors' valor" (Szőnyi 2004, 245; Bobory 2009, 27).

This is yet another mystery of Hungarian cultural history: whose castle did Sidney visit while stealing away from Pozsony in September 1573? It may have been Némétújvár, Boldizsár Batthyány's family seat in West-Hungary, which was equally easily accessible either from Vienna or Pozsony. If Batthyány and Sidney ever had a chance to talk and reflect, the two Protestants could have exchanged their recollections about France, where Batthyány had lived through the persecution of the Huguenots by the Guise dukes, while Sidney had just recently witnessed the St. Bartholomew's Night in Paris.

Batthyány's alchemical laboratory had already been operating in the castle as of the year 1572 and the lord had frequent correspondence with dignitaries and intellectuals whom both Sidney and Dee had met or were going to meet on various occasions: Hugo Blotius, the chief librarian of the Imperial court; Paul Fabritius, royal astronomer in Vienna; Crato von Kraftheim, Imperial physician; Georg Purkircher, a town physician of Pozsony, Elias Corvinus, Batthyány's chief alchemy advisor and others. This was also the time when Batthyány began ordering books in greater numbers (among them many occult and alchemical¹¹) from Andreas Wechel and Jean Aubri, whom he had

¹¹ For example: "Theatrum diabolorum," "Coelum philosophorum," "Dialogi de alchimia," and Gerhard Dorn's *Lapis metaphysicae, Chemicum artificiae*. The most expensive book commissioned by the Hungarian was Paracelsus' *Disputatio de medicina nova*. Batthyány entrusted Elias Corvinus with finding some more Paracelsica in 1574. He bought the hermetic *Pimander* and Tamás Jordán's book on the plague; Martin Ruland's alchemical

known already in Paris and who hosted Sidney in Frankfurt in 1572 (Szönyi 2004, 244–5).

It seems as if Sidney was a messenger from the future, since he met all the important persons who became protagonists during Dee's stay in East-Central Europe ten years later. Sidney met Olbracht Łaski in Venice (Bobory 2009, 27), then came across with Tamás Jordán, a renowned Hungarian physician from Koložsvár (Clausenburg, today Cluj in Romania) who then stayed in Brno. He visited Cracow and on his return trip stayed with the Hungarian polymath, Andreas Dudith, former Bishop of Pécs, then an interconfessional humanist, residing in Breslau (today Wrocław, Poland). Dudith, a decade later, corresponded with the Prague astronomer Tadeuš Hájek about his intention to consult Dee using his mathematical expertise (Szönyi 2004, 245). In Dudith's house Sidney also met the earlier mentioned Krato von Kraftheim who later became a confidant of Rudolf II and frequently met Dee while the Englishman stayed in Prague (Gömöri 1991, 30).

It should be apparent from the above passages that the humanistic Republic of Letters and the theatre of early modern politics was indeed a "small world" with intricate networks that brought together people in various constellations. This network also served as a vehicle for exchange of ideas and knowledge transfer and it is clear that John Dee indeed found himself involved in this hub of Central European natural philosophy, hermeticism, alchemy and magic. This activity reached its climax when in 1583 the English doctor was invited by Łaski to come to Poland and work in his alchemical laboratory with his scryer, Edward Kelly. The story is well-known and has been told among others by myself so I will avoid the details here. With a large entourage and a sizable traveling library, the Englishmen and their families settled down on Łaski's estate, but soon parted and moved on to Prague. There Dee enjoyed the hospitality of Tadeuš Hajek, had unsuccessful audiences with Emperor Rudolf II in Prague, and once again in Cracow with the Polish king, Stephan Bathory. Upon returning to Prague he became suspected by the Papal nuncio and consequently was accused of heresy and black magic so he had to flee to Protestant Germany. A few months later he was invited back by Vilém Rožmberk to stay on his estates in Southern Bohemia, and here, for over two years, in relative quiet, he and Kelly could proceed with their alchemical experiments and angel magic. Their collaboration, however, came to an end here and Kelly moved to Prague to begin a spectacular but short career as

lexicon, Porta's *Magia naturalis*, and Chasseneux's *Catalogus gloriae mundi* in 1577. For a full list see Bobory, *Sword and crucible*, Appendix C.

an Imperial alchemist while Dee obtained permission from Queen Elizabeth to return to England.¹²

As I have pointed out in my book, Dee's Eastern adventure appears to have been a mixed bag of success. There are three groups of sources related to Dee's eventful East-Central European journeys. First, there are external references (hearsay, humanist correspondence, reports of agents, etc.) that are quite scarce. Secondly, there are Dee's "public" private diaries that reveal a busy humanist with a tight itinerary, traveling a great deal and meeting large numbers of people. Little shines through, however, about the exact nature of his contacts and the content of his conversations. (He was undoubtedly fully occupied with continual efforts to secure patronage for himself and his family.) Thirdly and the most exhaustive are his spiritual diaries, the journals of the angelic conferences, which, of course, are the most intimate of all the documents and deal not only with the séances and Dee's prophetic visions but also provide thorough insights into the everyday life of the two 'wandering prophets' and their relatives (Szőnyi 2004, 248–51). Dee was clearly dissatisfied with his own advancement in England and hoped to achieve more on the Continent. With his enthusiasm for the angelic conversations, he was also eager to share these mystical messages with attentive great powers.

In spite of the contradictory opinions of various historians, I have argued that he was not entirely mistaken in his expectations and that his five years spent in Central Europe should not be considered a complete failure. At first sight, however, the diaries seem to demonstrate that the adventures on the far side of the Continent again failed to yield the desired results. On the negative side, it should be mentioned that Laski's support soon dried up and Dee was no longer successful in Prague. Rudolf did not take to him and he was not the least inclined to give Dee the title of "Royal Mathematicien". Back in Cracow, Dee met King Bathory three times, but the ruler remained suspicious of his mission. The worst events followed after this, wherein, as a result of the machinations of the Papal Nuncio, Dee was temporarily ex-

¹² See Evans *Rudolf II and His World*, 210–41; Deborah E. Harkness, *John Dee's Conversations with Angels. Cabala, Alchemy, and the End of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 9–60; Szőnyi *John Dee's Occultism*, 241–81; also Ivan Sviták's "Rudolphine" trilogy: Ivan Sviták, *Hermetic Philosophy in Renaissance Prague: 1. John Dee in Bohemia, 2. Sir Edward Kelley, 3. Elizabeth Johanna Weston* (Chicago, CA: Private Edition, 1980–89); Rafał T. Prinke, "John Dee i Edward Kelley w Wielkopolsce (1583–1584) Epizod 'magicznej' podróży," *Pamiętnik Biblioteki Kórnickiej, Zeszyt 29* (2009): 235–248 and György E. Szőnyi, "Doslov," in *Deníky Johna Deeho*, ed. Edward Fenton (Praha: Academia, 2013), 477–510.

pelled from the Habsburg lands, but fortunately Count Rožmberk provided shelter for him and his kin.

On the positive side one should take into consideration that in spite of all their eccentricity the Englishmen were never actually expelled from anywhere or simply chased away. On the contrary, they enjoyed royal and aristocratic patronage and most of their expenses were covered for half a decade. When Dee returned to England, he traveled like a prince. Although it should be admitted that most of these expenses were covered by loans, back in England, Dee duly cashed them with his Queen (Dee 1851, 34).

Although alchemy was not John Dee's main concern over these years, he was not at all disinterested in the magisterial art, but instead viewed it as an auxiliary discipline toward a larger, holistic understanding of God's creation. It is time now to look at certain recent evaluations of John Dee's alchemy.

Dee's Alchemical Philosophy and Practice

Starting in the 1990s several important articles have contributed to our increased understanding of the nature of Dee's alchemical philosophy. In the following section I shall rely on the results of Urszula Szulakowska (1996 and 1999), Béhar (1996), Nicholas Clulee (2001 and 2005), Hilde Norrgrén (2005), Peter Forshaw (2005), Federico Cavallaro (2006), Stephen Clucas (2010), Joachim Telle (2010), and my own research (2001 and 2012).

As a starting point, Nicholas Clulee (2005, 198–201) classified the possible sources of Dee's alchemy as follows: 1. Through written records left by other alchemists, that is from books and manuscripts. As is well known, his library abounded in classical works as well as the newest Paracelsica. 2. Furthermore, communication with living practitioners was also vital and we know of his meetings with Giovanni Baptista Agnelli (who gave him the copy of Pantheus' *Voarchadumia* in 1559), Robert Gardner, Conrad Gessner, Tadeuš Hájek, Andrew Hels and others. 3. Actual practice. Dee indeed exercised it, witness to this being his "experimental household" (Harkness 1997) with its equipment, his alchemical notebooks from the years 1581 and 1607–1608 (Szulakowska 1999), not to mention his cooperation with Edward Kelly.

Kelly was undoubtedly better versed in the technology of alchemical practice and his goal was obviously the production of gold. Up to a point he indeed achieved spectacular results and his surviving writings are also mostly restricted to technical aspects of the art (Kelley 1893 and 1999). Dee saw al-

chemy in contrast as a connecting link between the physical world and the spiritual realm and understood it both as *magia naturalis* and *magia speculativa*, leading to intuitive and epiphanic knowledge.

A careful reading of the hieroglyphic monad can clearly demonstrate this.¹³ Although the interpretations of this enigmatic work widely diverge, there is consensus among the readers that its aim was to create such a “theory of everything” that encompasses all knowledge condensed into a sign or visual formula, and that can lead its user to the kind of omniscience the scholars of the Renaissance were dreaming of. The layers of meaning mirror the tiers of the *Great Chain of Being* and refer to the elemental world, the planetary (celestial) world and the world of intelligences. The common denominator is mathematical abstraction turned into geometrical components: lines, points, circles. From these abstract elements one can create the signs of the metals of the material world as well as the four elements, particularly fire. Thus, the arrangement of the monad will be an indexical and symbolic sign of alchemy. Since the same characters denote the planets, the monad also represents astrology. On top of these, the very same geometrical elements also constitute all alphabets, thus, the monad becomes a metonymy of language(s) which can be used to utter magical charms and spells, this way connecting the adept or operator to the supercelestial world.

Furthermore, the monad has various uses. It functions as a didactic picture, teaching about the worlds of the *Great Chain*, and reminding its observer of

¹³ On various approaches to the *Monas hieroglyphica* see: C. H. Josten, “Introduction,” in “A Translation of John Dee’s *Monas hieroglyphica*, with an Introduction and Annotations,” trans. and ed. C. H. Josten [with facsimile of the original], *Ambix* 12 (1964): 112–221; Michael Thomson Walton, “John Dee’s *Monas Hieroglyphica*: Geometrical Cabala,” *Ambix* 23 (1976): 116–23; P. Béhar, *Les langues occultes de la Renaissance: Essai sur la crise intellectuelle de l’Europe au XVIe siècle* (Paris: Éditions Desjonquères, 1996), chapter IV, 91–120; Håkan Håkansson, *Seeing the Word. John Dee and Renaissance Occultism* (Lund: Lund University, 2001); György E. Szőnyi, “Ficino’s Talismanic Magic and John Dee’s Hieroglyphic Monad,” *Cauda Pavonis* 20 (2001): 1–11; Szőnyi, *John Dee’s Occultism*, 161–74; György E. Szőnyi, “From the Hieroglyphic Monad to Angel Magic. Semiotic Aspects of John Dee’s Esotericism,” *Lexia – Journal of Semiotics* 11–12 (2012): 109–36; Nicholas H. Clulee, *John Dee’s Natural Philosophy: Between Science and Religion* (London: Routledge, 1988), 77–125; Nicholas H. Clulee, “*Astronomia inferior*: Legacies of Johannes Trithemius and John Dee,” in *Secrets of Nature. Astrology and Alchemy in Early Modern Europe*, eds. W. R. Newman and A. Grafton, 173–235 (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2001); Nicholas H. Clulee, “The *Monas Hieroglyphica* and the Alchemical Thread of John Dee’s Career,” *Ambix* 52.3 (2005): 197–215; Stephen Clucas, “Pythagorean Number Symbolism, Alchemy, and the *Disciplina Nova* of Dee’s *Monas Hieroglyphica*,” *Aries* 10.2 (2010): 149–67.

the correspondences among the different levels of existence and the interconnectedness of the sciences. It can also be used, however, as a revelative image, a kind of mandala, a meditation on which thrusts the operator into an altered state of consciousness and produces intuitive illumination. For the believers, the monad may also serve as a talisman, and collect the celestial influences for the benefit of the operator. Last but not least, since the monad can also be seen as an automaton capable of generating all linguistic utterances, it can also be used to cabalistically rearrange the world turning its operator into a genuine magus.¹⁴ It is not by chance that Dee emphasized: "It must, in a twofold way, conduct [the reader] into itself, namely [by teaching him] to assimilate the worthy work itself, and to imitate its worthiness" (Dee 1964, 139). He also advertised the treatise in his dedication to Maximilian as follows:

My gift is endowed with rareness also in so far as, from first to last, it is woven together by a manner of writing in which up to the present day, as far as I have been able to hear or to gather from the [literary] monuments of our forefathers, no work has ever been composed. Though I call it hieroglyphic, he who has examined its inner structure will grant that all the same there is [in it] an underlying clarity and strength almost mathematical, such as is rarely applied in [writings on] matters so rare. Or is it not rare, I ask, that the common astronomical symbols of the planets (instead of being dead, dumb, or, up to the present hour at least, quasi-barbaric signs) should have become characters imbued with immortal life and should now be able to express their especial meanings most eloquently in any tongue and to any nation? Yet a further great rareness is also added, namely that (by very good hieroglyphical arguments) their external bodies have been reduced or restored to their mystical proportions. [It is] as if in an age long past they had been the same, or as if our forefathers had wished that in the future they should be such. [...] And indeed the very rarest thing of all is that all this should be embodied in one single hieroglyphic symbol. (Dee 1964, 119–21)

Clearly, the *Monas hieroglyphica* is not a traditional alchemical work, but has important theoretical insights about a cosmic vision, in which alchemy played an important part. This is demonstrated by Federico Cavallaro, who examined the alchemical significance of this work and stated that "throughout his career John Dee had an abiding interest in alchemy. As a renaissance scientist he developed this interest in the alchemical tradition descended from the Alexandrians into a philosophy of nature that in-

¹⁴ My most detailed analysis of the *Monas* is Szönyi, *From the Hieroglyphic Monad to Angel Magic*. Here you find references to further interpretations.

cluded laboratory practice. In the *Monas hieroglyphica* he distinguished his own scholarly endeavours from the general mass of practitioners who had discredited the name of 'alchymia', and for this reason he preferred to use the terms 'voarchadumia', 'mechanical magic', or 'Real Cabala' to refer to his own work" (2006, 159).

This is also confirmed by Clulee, when he concludes: "alchemy was a significant cultural current in the 16th century, and Dee was an important part of this. He avidly collected and studied alchemical works from the 'classics' to the most up-to-date Paracelsian literature. He attempted to master the art of alchemy through experimental practice. He sought to transcend the limits of human learning with the instruction of the angels in Adam's true alchemy. Despite the frustration of his loftiest aspirations, his most enduring legacy was his integration of alchemy with his natural philosophy in the *Monas Hieroglyphica*. Here, alchemy finds a place within his conviction of the mathematical nature of divine creation and the unity of the heavens and the earth. The cosmos may be understood by mastering the language of the geometrical cabbala of the real, which speaks the truths of alchemy and astronomy, and permits the magus to attain the exalted status of adept" (Clulee 2005, 215).

From the above quotations it becomes clear that Dee's concept of alchemy is a solid argument against the thesis of Newman and Principe concerning the limited, chemical nature of premodern and early modern alchemy and the lack of speculative elements in this discipline. Dee's purpose with alchemy was far beyond making gold or the elixir of life. His philosophical programme was to reverse the Plotinian emanation and reach the One from multiplicity. As I have quoted elsewhere, Plotinus claimed that discursive reasoning implies multiplicity and the soul then misses the One and falls into a number which is the opposite of unity. An awareness of the One only occurs by a presence transcending knowledge, and by the Monad attempting to embody this transcendental presence and thus bringing the adept to *exaltatio*.¹⁵ As Clulee argued, this ambition in Dee could be inspired by Trithemius's concept of alchemical magic: a process by which diversity is restored to unity (2001, 173–4; also Clucas 2010).

And once again, I can only repeat myself when I discovered and cited the verbal model of Dee's cosmogram in Ficino's *De triplici vita*. The Neoplatonic

¹⁵ *Enneads* 6.9.4 in Szőnyi, *From the Hieroglyphic Monad to Angel Magic*, 128. On the concept of *exaltatio* I wrote extensively in Szőnyi, *John Dee's Occultism*, 34–40.

philosopher in fact called for a universal sign that would summarize “the theory of everything”, which was then constructed and visualized by Dee, holistically uniting geometry, alchemy, astrology, and magic:

But why, then, should we neglect a universal image, an image of the very universe itself? Through it, one can hope for a benefit from the universe. The adherent of these things, if he can do it, should sculpt an archetypal form of the whole world.¹⁶

The legacy of Dee's alchemy in East-Central Europe

R. J. W. Evans in his *The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy* (1979) pioneered the interest in uncovering the various occult and hermeticist tendencies still prevalent in Central Europe in the 17th century and related those to the international networks of late Humanism. This investigation was in fact an extension of the work he had begun in his *Rudolf II* book (1973) and the English mathematician, esotericist magus and traveling humanist, John Dee, featured prominently in both monographs. It is also apparent, however, that Evans's attitude about the English doctor considerably changed between the writing of the two books. While in 1973 Dee was portrayed with a Frances Yatesian enthusiasm as a “progressive” and particularly intriguing European intellectual, by 1979 he became interpreted as a relic of the past and Yates's views about his 17th century importance were also treated with open skepticism.

In *The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy* Evans seems to have somewhat condescendingly suggested that John Dee's widespread popularity in Central Europe and the persevering lure of alchemy during the 17th century became a sign of the conservative ideology of patronage and late Humanism in the context of Baroque absolutism of the Habsburg Empire (1979, 354–380). In contrast, he referred to England as a more modern country as if the founding of the Royal Society and the advancement of the Scientific Revolution would represent an ample counterpoint to the obscurantist cult of Dee in the Eastern part of the Continent. A quotation about the influence of van Helmont in England and in the Habsburg lands illustrates this view:

¹⁶ Marsilio Ficino, *Three Books on Life / De vita triplici*, ed. and transl. Carol V. Caske and John R. Binghampton (NY: Clark. SUNY Press and the Renaissance Society of America (Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 57), 1989), 342–5 [chapter 3.19]. See Szönyi, *Ficino's Talismanic Magic and John Dee's Hieroglyphic Monad*; Szönyi, *John Dee's Occultism*, 167; Szönyi, *From the Hieroglyphic Monad to Angel Magic*, 129.

The prominent and original writer, J. B. van Helmont, was influential in Austria rather for his metaphysical philosophy than for novelties in experiment. The spell of an alchemical Utopia was not broken in the mind of the educated public. That is the crucial point, for it affords another sign of major intellectual divergence from Western Europe, where some, of course still explored alchemy, but the subject gradually ceased to be 'respectable'. (Ibid., 359)

The causes and reasons for this change in attitude are easy to identify: as of the mid-1970s the appreciation of Frances Yates fell considerably and a number of science- and intellectual historians criticized her in the so called "Hermeticism debate".¹⁷ Furthermore, *The Making* deals with a period following the time of Rudolf II by almost a century, and, quite inevitably, what could have been interpreted with appreciation in a late-Renaissance/Manneristic context, might have easily appeared as stale and boring compared with the rise of the Royal Society and the spread of rationalism. Evans, in fact, developed an entire intellectual-historical paradigm based on his observations, which doubled the notion of a diverging, uneven development separating Western and Eastern Europe so well known among social and economic historians since the heyday of Marxist historiography.

Thirty five years later, at a time when the long established concept of "centres and peripheries" has been repeatedly contested by a variety of historical approaches, I suggest fine-tuning certain views of Professor Evans and this in the following respects.

There is a general notion at present that John Dee's posthumous reputation in England considerably differed from that on the Continent. While at home it was largely negative, and gradually turned the image of the Doctor into a legendary and literary character (either ridiculous or sentimentally "Gothic"), in Europe and particularly in Central Europe (meaning the German *Kulturkreis*) he enjoyed a high appreciation and became fully integrated into the occult-esoteric traditions. The reasons for Dee's disreputable image in England are usually associated with the disastrous publication of his spiritual diaries by Meric Casaubon in 1659, as well as a hypothesis according to which the Western esoteric traditions were much less present in 17th century English intellectual life than elsewhere. Although I am not going to contest the overall validity of this frame of reference, I would like to argue that a closer

¹⁷ For my summary and comments on the "Hermeticism-" or "Yates-debate" see my *John Dee's Occultism*, 9–11, 42–47.

examination of Dee's legacy both in England¹⁸ and in Central Europe reveals a much more complex and versatile picture than it might appear at first sight.

In my book on Dee (2004) I surveyed Dee's reception in Central Europe, identifying three phases in that process. It seems that during his stay in Cracow, Prague, and Třeboň between 1583 and 1589 he had a minimal impact on the intellectual life of that region. His universalist and apocalyptic messages were not taken seriously, he could not secure the kind of patronage for himself and his family that he had originally hoped for, and we do not see him joining any of the interesting heterodox movements of Central Europe, or acquiring any disciples, or even supporters, similar to the "Giordanisti" relating to Bruno.

To illustrate this, I pointed out that compared with the length of time Dee and his household spent in Germany, Poland, and the Habsburg lands, references to their stays are scarce outside Dee's voluminous diaries. It seems that Dee received the most extensive treatment in the correspondence between Tadeuš Hájek, the Czech imperial astronomer and his Silesian friend in Breslau (Wrocław), the Hungarian-born humanist Andreas Dudith. From Dudith's letters we learn that the Hungarian's initial enthusiasm for Dee quickly waned as he heard about the angelic conversations and finally turned into sarcasm (Szönyi 2004, 261; see also Clucas 2006, 272n260).

Interestingly, a few decades later, at the eve of the Thirty Years' War, the stature of the English visitor seems to have gained larger than life dimensions, as exemplified by the recollections of Václav Budovec, an important Bohemian politician and one of the leading figures of the Czech Brethren, who in 1616 remembered Dee as follows:

A learned and renowned Englishman whose name was Doctor Dee came to Prague; he predicted that a miraculous reformation would presently come about in the Christian world and would prove the ruin not only of the city of Constantinople but of Rome also. These predictions he did not cease to spread among the populace.¹⁹

Around this time Dee also became a respected author of the increasingly popular Continental vogue of alchemical and esotericist literature which

¹⁸ This paper deals with Dee's legacy in Central Europe. I intend to review his 17th and 18th century reception in England in a separate study.

¹⁹ Evans' translation (*Rudolf II*, 1973, 224) from Budovec's *Circulus horologi Lunaris et Solaris* (Hanau, 1616), 245.

encompassed the Rosicrucian movement as well as certain trends of the scientific revolution, and attracted various Protestant and Catholic circles alike. Among Dee's works the *Monas hieroglyphica* received wide European circulation.²⁰ It was also republished in great anthologies of esoteric lore such as the *Theatrum chemicum*²¹ and particularly in Germany remained an inspiring and much discussed work, as we know from the extensive studies of Peter Forshaw (2005) and Joachim Telle (2010).

There were several efforts to translate it into vernacular languages, for example an Italian version was created by the Carmelite father, Paolo Antonio Foscarini, defender of Copernicus and Galileo, and we have numerous manuscript copies of the *Monas* in various collections all over Central Europe.²²

Rafał Prinke has also identified a copy in Uppsala, originating from the Jesuit College in Poznań (2009, 244) and George Gömöri has come across yet additional copies in Poland.²³ Susanna Akermann also found a copy in Sweden which was used in 1610 by Johannes Bureus, the celebrated Rosicrucian and

²⁰ On the continent among Dee's works the *Monas* was best known, because his first publication, the *Propaedeumata aphoristica*, in spite of two 16th century editions, remained a rarity and was later never reprinted; his other published works were in English, naturally limiting international circulation.

²¹ The *Monas* was republished by Johann Wechel in Frankfurt, 1591; then in the collection, *Theatrum chemicum, praecipuos selectorum auctorum tractatus [...] continens* (Ursel, 1602, 3 vols – the *Monas* is in volume 2: 218–43).

²² For Foscarini see Andrew Campbell, "The reception of John Dee's *Monas hieroglyphica* in early modern Italy: the case of Paolo Antonio Foscarini (c. 1562–1616)," *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 43 (2012): 519–529. From Evans's book we know about copies in Austria, Bohemia and other parts of the Habsburg lands, and *The Making* (355n23) mentions a Silesian German translation. Hermann E. Stockinger's ongoing research has uncovered further translations. Telle: Joachim Telle, "John Dee in Prag. Spuren eines elisabethanischen Magus in der deutschen Literatur," in *Konzepte des Hermetismus in der Literatur der Frühen Neuzeit*, eds. Peter André Alt and Volkhard Wels (Göttingen: V & R Unipress, 2010), 287n69 provides an extensive list of the surviving manuscripts containing full or partial translations, such as Schlierbach, MS 8 (translation by the Cistercian monk, Friedrich Geissler); Berlin SBPK, MS germ. fol. 904; Erfurt, Kirchenbibliothek MS 21; Prague, Strahov Library MS DH III 25; Wrocław, Dom Library MS 38; etc.

²³ I thank Gömöri for his private communication here. In his view there are two copies in the monastic library of Czestochowa and there was a copy in the private library of the Polish-Belorus writer, Simon Polotsky.

librarian of Gustavus Adolphus. This copy was apparently brought to the court as part of the Swedish bounty from the Continent in 1609.²⁴

The story by no means ends in the 17th century,²⁵ this being when the third phase of Dee's Continental reception unfolds, in which inflated anecdotes and legends replace the historical facts and authentic works by the Englishman. As late as 1794 a collection of hermetic texts was published in Vienna under the title *Handschriften für Freunde geheimer Wissenschaften*. This included, under Dee's name, a short treatise entitled *Das Büchlein der Venus*, a manual of invocations for calling forth various spirits. Its Latin original was relatively widespread in Germany, but there is no likelihood of Dee's authorship.²⁶ As I have suggested elsewhere (2004, 269), the attribution may have been inspired by Stephanus Weszprémi, a Hungarian medical historian, in whose account of famous physicians in Hungary (published in Vienna, 1774) one finds a grandiose and fairly fictitious reference to the Englishmen:

[In 1584] Laski invited Kelly and Dee to Hungary, who were pleased to accept the offer, particularly Dee who had practised his craft of alchemy in Hungary already earlier in 1563 for a long time and to the great admiration of a number of people. [...] The chemical college was opened in Laski's castle in 1584 where the landlord received thorough instruction in the chemical arts and tortured the mineral world day and night with fire...²⁷

²⁴ Susanna Åkerman, *Rose Cross over the Baltic: The Spread of Rosicrucianism in Northern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 50; also quoted by Prinke, *John Dee I Edward Kelley w Wielkopolsce*, 244.

²⁵ Alchemical interpretations of Dee's *Monas* can be found as late as in J. J. Manget's *Bibliotheca Chemica Curiosa* (Cologne–Geneva, 1702), 2:840–5; and F. Roth-Scholtz's *Deutsches Theatrum Chemicum* (Nürnberg, 1728–32), 3:4–13 [see Evans 1979, 357n27].

²⁶ London, Warburg MS FBH 510. See Martin 1989. See also: Theresa Burns, "The Little Book of Black Venus and the Three-Fold Transformation of Hermetic Astrology," *Journal of the Western Mystery Tradition* 12.2 (Vernal Equinox 2007), who connects it to Dee's legacy in Germany as well as in England, particularly the collection of angel magic manuscripts, collected by Dr. Rudd in the mid-17th century and copied by Peter Smart in 1714. See MS Harley6482 and its edition by McLean: Adam McLean, *A Treatise on Angel Magic* (San Francisco: Weiser Books, Magnum Opus Hermetic Sourceworks, 2006).

²⁷ "Johannes Dee potissimum, qui ante iam anno 1563 in Hungaria artem transmutandi metalla, non sine multorum admiratione diu multumque agitavit, immo Maximiliano quoque Imp. et Reg. Hungariæ Monadem suam, hieroglyphice, mathematice, magice, cabbalistiche, anagogice explicatam, Antverpiæ anno 1564 impressam, inscripsit et Posonii obtulit. Anno 1584 in Castello Laszkyano Collegium alchemisticum asperitur in aurea hac arte Laszkyus fidelissime insituitur, regnum minerale vario igne diu satis torquetur, et tandem miser novissime omnium turpiter, ut fieri adsolet, delutidur." István Weszprémi,

Although Professor Evans was skeptical about Frances Yates's "fragile hypothesis" according to which a cult of Dee persisted in Central Europe (1979, 355), this enthusiastic publication may have inspired twenty years later the hermetic collection, in which *Das Büchlein der Venus* was ascribed to Dee's authorship.

In this essay I have touched upon certain disparate issues related to John Dee, alchemy, and East-Central Europe. Although there is still much to examine before the acquisition of a complete picture, I can nevertheless make reference in confidence to the following results: 1. Dee's thorough alchemical interests and his *Monas hieroglyphica* should be included with the evidence which serves to disprove Newman and Principe's views about the entirely non-spiritual and practical nature of early modern alchemy; 2. Dee's connections and his personal activities in East-Central Europe, although on a modest scale, contributed to the intellectual awareness of Western esotericism and alchemy in this region; 3. his reception became an integral part of the esoteric traditions in this part of the continent and had a long-lasting effect.

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New light on Michael Sendivogius' writings: The treatises written in Prague and maybe in Olomouc

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Abstract | Michael Sendivogius (1566–1636) was one of the most influential early modern alchemical authors. He was Polish but spent much of his life in the Czech lands, in the service of three emperors. A courtier of Rudolf II from 1594, in 1606 he left Prague and settled down in Cracow, but in 1626 returned to the court of Ferdinand II and remained the imperial counsellor until his death in 1636. In 1604 his *De lapide philosophorum* was published in Prague and two other works followed: *Dialogus* (1607) and *De sulphure* (1616). The first two texts were written at Rudolf's court, while in the third he promised to write another treatise to be entitled *De sale*. Although unknown today, some sources state that it was completed and left to Sendivogius' daughter. If it is true, then he may have written it in the land estate of Kravaře and Kouty, which he received from the Emperor in 1630, or in Olomouc, where he had a house. The paper will discuss some new discoveries about the contexts in which the first two texts were written and some speculations about the last one.

Keywords | Michael Sendivogius; *Novum lumen chymicum*; biography of alchemists; alchemy at the court of Rudolf II; alchemical treatises; microhistory.

Considering the whole of alchemical literature of Czech provenience, either in Latin or Czech, there can hardly be any doubt that by far the most influential of those texts was *De lapide philosophorum tractatus duodecim*, published semi-anonymously in 1604, without the place of publication or name of the printer. In the Paris edition of 1608 Jean Beguin gave it the title *Novum lumen chymicum*, under which it was later usually published in Western Europe, while the original title was mostly retained in Germany. With over fifty editions and translations, which appeared in print by the year 1800, its popularity by far exceeded that of any other alchemical text of the time.

Other important authors usually associated with Bohemia either did not write their best known works there (like Michael Maier) or their publications were not alchemical in the strict sense of dealing with metallic transmutation (Georgius Agricola's *Bermannus* or Oswald Croll's *Basilica chymica*). *De lapide philosophorum* may therefore be treated as the most important text on the topic of the Philosophers' Stone which was written in Bohemia – provided that its Czech provenience is confirmed. Although it is generally accepted that the first edition was printed in Prague, doubts are still raised concerning its authorship and thus the place where it was originally written. The present paper is a brief examination of those doubts and an attempt at dispersing them, also examining the provenience of other texts by the same author.¹

The title page of the original 1604 printed edition does not provide the author's name but instead reads "Autor sum, qui Divi Leschi genus amo" (I am the author who loves the race of Divine Leschus). It was, however, soon discovered by early readers, always looking for hidden clues and coded messages in alchemical texts, that the phrase was an anagram of the name of Michael Sendivogius, a latinised form of Michał Śędziwój, already well known in the alchemical circles of Prague as Michal Sendivoj.² He was a Pole born

¹ Besides the early modern editions and translations into German, French, Dutch, English and Russian, there are other remaining in manuscript and numerous modern translations, as for example: Michał Śędziwój, *Traktat o kamieniu filozoficznym*, trans. Roman Bugaj, Biblioteka Problemów, 164 (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1971); Μιχαήλ Σεντιβόγκιους, *Το Νέο Φως της Αλχημείας*, trans. Αναστασία Νάνου-Τσάκαλη (Athens: Πύρινος Κόσμος, 1992); Michael Sendivogius, *The new chemical light I. & II.*, trans. Patrick J. Smith (Edmonds, WA: The Alchemical Press / Holmes Publishing Group, 1998); D. Ž. Bor [= Vladislav Zadrobilek], *Michael Sendivogius a jeho následníci*, Knihnice Logosu, vol. 6 (Praha: Trigon, 2004).

² The standard monograph on him remains: Roman Bugaj, *Michał Śędziwój (1566–1636). Życie i pisma* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1968); for later research see: Zbigniew Szydło, *Water which does not wet hands. The alchemy of Michael Sendivogius* (Warszawa: Institute for the History of Science, Polish Academy of Sciences, 1994); Rafał T. Prinke, "The twelfth adept. Michael Sendivogius in Rudolphine Prague," in *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment revisited*, ed. Ralph White (Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne Books, 1999), 141–192; —, "Milczenie alchemików. Tożsamość Michała Śędziwoja zakodowana w tekście Basilica chymica Oswalda Crolla," *Pamiętnik Biblioteki Kórnickiej* 28 (2007): 217–241; —, "Beyond patronage: Michael Sendivogius and the meanings of success in alchemy," in *Chymia: Science and nature in medieval and early modern Europe*, ed. Miguel López Pérez, Didier Kahn, and Mar Rey Bueno (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 175–231; —, "Veronika Stiebarin, the wife of Michael Sendivogius," in *Srřatý Praž. Erich Šefčík (1945–2004). Sborník k nedožitým 65. narozeninám historika a archiváře*, ed. Jiří Hanzal and Ondřej Šefčík (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2010), 151–162; —, "Nolite de me inquirere (Nechtějte se po mně ptáti): Michael Sendivogius (1566–1636),"

most probably in 1566³ and educated at several universities, who became a courtier of Emperor Rudolf II in 1594. He retained the post until 1612 (still under Emperor Matthew) and in 1598 Rudolf also made him his counsellor. From 1600 he was at the same time a royal secretary to Sigismund III, king of Poland, and used that title throughout the rest of his life. In late 1604 he went to Stuttgart at the invitation of Frederick I of Württemberg and was imprisoned by his rival alchemist at the duke's court, Johann Heinrich von Müllenfels (1579–1607). Sendivogius eventually managed to escape and von Müllenfels was hanged, but in the meantime his fiancé who had been left in Prague – Anna Belvicova née of Štampach, widow of Jiřík Belvic of Nostvice (d. 1601) – broke the engagement and later married Jan Lorenc of Žerotín (1583–1619). Shortly before that, Sendivogius returned to Prague and tried to negotiate with Anna without success. These misfortunes in his private life, coupled with Rudolf's declining position and illness, must have been the reason why he left the Czech lands around 1607 or 1608 and associated himself with the Polish magnate Mikołaj Wolski (1553–1630). For some years Sendivogius stayed at Wolski's castle in Krzepice, helping to manage his investments in developing the metallurgical industry in the region. By 1614 the Polish alchemist had earned enough money to buy a cottage (a garden and two houses) just outside the city walls of Cracow, next to the university. He lived there for twelve years until in 1626 the next emperor, Ferdinand II, asked him to come to Prague again and made him his counsellor. For his services (probably connected with organising mines of lead and silver near the border of Silesia) Sendivogius received in 1630 the land estate of Kravaře and Kouty near Opava (earlier confiscated from the Macák of Ottenburk family), with a small castle and independent of the local administration of the *hejtman* of Krnov. Michael Sendivogius died in 1630 and was probably buried at the Minorite church of the Holy Ghost in Opava, because the church at Kravaře was in ruin.

in *Alchymie a Rudolf II. Hledání tajemství přírody ve střední Evropě v 16. a 17. století*, ed. Ivo Purš and Vladimír Karpenko (Praha: Artefactum / Ústav dějin umění AV ČR, 2011), 317–333; —, “Michał Sędziwój – początki kariery,” *Kwartalnik Historii Nauki i Techniki* 58, no. 1 (2012): 89–129

³ The exact date 2 February 1566 is now quoted by most reference works, while the sole authority from which it derives is a rather popular article which gives no primary source for this information: Ferdinand B. Mikovec, “Zlatodějové v Čechách za Rudolfa II.,” *Lumír* 5 (1855): 87–92, 112–116, 137–140, 159–162, 188–189, 207–209, 233–236, 255–258, 302–306, here 89.

The anagram used to hide the author's name in *De lapide philosophorum* alluded to his Polish nationality or "race of Leschus" (Lech or Leszek), the legendary founder of the Kingdom of Poland and brother of Czech, the founder of the Bohemian kingdom. Even though it was easy to decode, the name of Sendivogius was not immediately revealed in print by other authors. The reason was certainly his secretive nature and wish to remain unknown. It is confirmed by contemporary correspondence of people who met him that he asked them not to mention his name to others.⁴ He must have requested the same of Oswald Croll, with whom he was in close contact in Prague – they both tried to cure Ludvík Korálek, a rich merchant and patron of a circle of alchemists, who had become an alcoholic and eventually died in 1599. Therefore Croll in his *Basilica chymica* (1608), when describing the amazing elixir owned by Sendivogius, did not say what his name was, but called him "Heliocantharus Borealis" (Northern Beetle) instead. To be sure, however, that the Polish alchemist's identity is not forgotten, he encoded his real name in the text by using capital letters inside words, which spell out "Michael Sendivoius". This visual cypher was retained not only in numerous later editions of Croll's work, but even in its English translation, where that fragment was printed in the original Latin with the translator's note at the end: "Which I forbear to English."⁵

Another famous contemporary – Michael Maier – showed even greater admiration for Sendivogius and likewise did not reveal his name. In his *Symbola aureae mensae duodecim nationum* (1617) he discussed twelve greatest adepts of alchemy from twelve nations, starting with Hermes Aegyptius, and ending with Anonymus Sarmata, who – he wrote – was still alive and could be found. Maier not only referred to Oswald Croll's code name "Heliocantharus Borealis", but also gave the initials of the anonymous adept's name "M. S.", while his "Sarmatian" nationality was an allusion to Sarmatia Europea, a popular name for Poland. It is not clear whether Michael Maier and

⁴ See especially: Leigh T. I. Penman, "Climbing Jacob's Ladder: Crisis, chiliasm, and transcendence in the thought of Paul Nagel († 1624), a Lutheran dissident during the time of the Thirty Years' War," *Intellectual History Review* 20 (2010): 201–226, here 206, 214.

⁵ This is analysed in greatest detail in: Prinke, "Milczenie alchemików"; for wider connotations see: —, "Heliocantharus Borealis': Alchemy, Polish Sarmatism and the Fourth Northern Monarchy in the prophetic vision of Michael Sendivogius," in *Apocalypticism, millenarianism, and prophecy: Eschatological expectations between East-Central and Western Europe, 1560–1670*, ed. Howard Hotson and Vladimír Urbánek, *Universal Reform: Studies in Intellectual History 1550–1700*, 2 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2015 [forthcoming]).

Sendivogius ever met in person (the former arrived in Prague after the Pole had left), but it is highly probable.

Among many others who mentioned *De lapide philosophorum* with great appreciation, but without revealing the name of its author was also the Rosicrucian apologist Daniel Mögling (1596–1635), the author of what is often called “The Fourth Manifesto”, namely *Speculum sophericum Rhodostauroticum* (1618), published under the pseudonym of Theophilus Schweighardt and best known for its beautiful engraving of Collegium Fraternitatis. In the part treating of alchemy, he refers to “der zwölf Chymischen Tractätlein” which were of greatest help to his “pansopheric studies”. A short description of the chymical doctrine which follows and its depiction on one of the four engravings make it clear that these were “tractatus duodecim” of Sendivogius.⁶

The first author who openly stated the name of Michael Sendivogius as the author of *De lapide philosophorum*, pointing both to the anagram on the title page and Oswald Croll’s hidden message, was another important figure in the early Rosicrucian milieu Raphael Eglinus (1559–1622). He announced his findings in *Cheiragogia Heliana* of 1612 and was closely followed by Andreas Libavius, whose *Syntagmatis arcanorum chymicorum [...] tomus secundus* (1613) contains a lengthy summary of *Novum lumen chymicum* with his commentaries and opinions. In the preface to it, Libavius not only identified the author as Michael Sendivogius, but also mentioned some important facts about his life and about early editions of the treatise.

Ten years later Daniel Stolcius (1600–after 1644), the alchemical poet born in Kutná Hora, substituted the name of Michael Sendivogius for Maier’s Anonymus Sarmata, when he wrote epigrams for all of the latter’s twelve adepts from *Symbola aureae mensae*, illustrated with the same engravings and included in *Viridarium chymicum* (1624, also in the same year in German translation as *Chymisches Lustgärtlein*). In the same year the first work with the name of Sendivogius on the title page was published in Erfurt with the misleading title *Michaelis Sendivogi[i] Poloni Lumen chymicum novum*. It was not, as one might expect and many historians of alchemy assumed, an edition of the Polish author’s treatise but of another text found by the editor Andreas Orthelius which he claimed taught the same doctrines as Sendivogius and

⁶ On the consequences of this reference for later Rosicrucian appreciation of Sendivogius see: —, *Zwodniczy ogród błędów. Piśmiennictwo alchemiczne do końca XVIII wieku*, Monografie z Dziejów Nauki i Techniki, 164 (Warszawa: Instytut Historii Nauki im. Ludwika i Aleksandra Birkenmajerów, Polska Akademia Nauk, 2014), 551–552, 684–686.

to show this he used quotations from *De lapide philosophorum*. Nevertheless, this marketing trick shows (in addition to the above-mentioned opinions of Croll, Maier and others) how highly the name of the Polish alchemist was regarded by his contemporaries.⁷

The first edition of his three texts already attributed to him on the title page (although still in a slightly disguised manner) appeared in 1628 as *Tripus chymicus Sendivogianus*. The Geneva edition of *Novum lumen chymicum* of the same year also revealed the author's identity, but in a note at the end of the book signed "N. A. D. M.". Finally, the first publication to have the full name of Michael Sendivogius on the title page – and the only one to do so in the 17th century – was the English translation (presumably by John French) of 1650, republished in an abridged version in 1674.

It would seem that there should be no doubts about the authorship of *De lapide philosophorum* if so many of knowledgeable contemporaries testified to it. And yet such doubts were raised half a century after its publication in two letters written by foreigners living in Poland. The first one was by Pierre Des Noyers, written in French and dated 1651 from Warsaw, published in 1655,⁸ while the other one was originally written in 1661 in Italian by Girolamo Pinocci (using the anagram of his name Poliarco Micigno), but survives only in the French translation published in 1669.⁹ According to the story related by them (with minor differences), Sendivogius was not the author of *De lapide philosophorum* but only published the manuscript acquired from the widow of the real author, an Englishman, whose name they did not know and therefore called him the Cosmopolite. The source of that pseudonym was the preface to the alchemical parable appended at the end of the treatise where the author says: "Si quaeritis quis sim; Cosmopolita sum" (If you ask me who I am, I am a Cosmopolite). Even though he was clearly identified as an Englishman, a legend soon appeared that the enigmatic author was really the Scotsman named Alexander Seton, whose public transmutation was witnessed by Johann Wolfgang Dienheim and Theodore Zwinger the

⁷ For more details see: —, "Andreas Ortelius a jeho komentář k Sendivogiovi," *Logos [Přaha]*, no. 1–2 (2014): 105–109

⁸ Pierre Borel, *Trésor de Recherches et Antiquitez gauloises et françoises. Redvites en ordre alphabetique. Et enrichies de beaucoup d'Origines, Epitaphes, & autres choses rares & curieuses, comme aussi de beaucoup de mots de la Langue Thyoise ou Theuthfranque* (Paris: Augustin Courbé, 1655), 479–486.

⁹ *Cosmopolite ou nouvelle lumiere chymique*, (Paris: Jean d'Houry, 1669); it is appended at the end to some copies of this edition as: *Lettre missive, contenant la vie de Sendivogius*.

Younger in 1603. Such identification may be traced back only to 1664, when Ole Borch learned of it from Samuel Cottereau Du Clos in Paris.¹⁰

Although the Seton-Sendivogius story became very popular and is still accepted by some researchers, it is now known that Alexander Seton died in 1606 in Basel (so Sendivogius could not get the manuscript from his widow before 1604) and is not known to have ever called himself a Cosmopolite. Moreover, the fact that both Des Noyers and Pinocci called the supposed author “an Englishman” suggests that their informants used that designation in the German form or “Engeländer”, the name by which Edward Kelley was popularly known in the Czech lands. Because Sendivogius was for some time a guest of his in Jílové u Prahy and, after his death in 1597, he bought one of his houses there (the Fumberk farm, now Pražská 53) from his widow (with whom he may have lived without marriage), it is obvious that after the publication of *De lapide* rumours may have been circulated that it was really Kelley’s work. But Kelley’s known texts in no way resemble it and he certainly did not call himself a Cosmopolite (John Dee used that term, but did not apply it to himself, like for example Guillaume Postel had done before him).¹¹

The most important argument for Michael Sendivogius’ authorship of *Novum lumen chymicum* is – besides the unanimous opinion of his contemporaries, as related above – the fact that he did call himself a Cosmopolite at least five years before 1604. It is well confirmed in the book *Ogrod krolewsky*, published in Prague in 1599 by the printing press of Daniel Sedlčanský. It was written by Bartosz Paprocki (about 1540–1614, known in Bohemia as Bartoloměj Paprocký z Hlohol a Paprocké Vůle), now best remembered as the author of very important genealogical compendia of Polish, Czech, Moravian and Silesian nobility, but also as a poet and political polemist. *Ogrod krolewsky* is his last major work, devoted to the history and genealogy of ruling dynasties in Austria and Eastern Europe. It is divided into three parts, the last of which was dedicated to Michael Sendivogius and preceded by a preface of twenty-one pages, in which Paprocki praised his deeds and his ancestry. One fragment of it looks almost like a paraphrase of that in the preface to *Parabola* in *De lapide philosophorum*:

¹⁰ Not from Kennelm Digby, as I mistakenly wrote in: Prinke, “Beyond patronage,” 189.

¹¹ Detailed argumentation was presented in: *ibid.*; —, “Nolite de me inquirere”; new sources on Kelley in Bohemia (but without reference to Sendivogius) were found by: Petra Chourová, *Alchymisté nebo šarlatáni – John Dee a Edward Kelley* (Praha: Nakladatelství Libri, 2010).

[Y]ou could answer like the famous Socrates, if anyone asked Your Lordship *Cuiatem se esse dicis: Mundanum se pronunciare*, i.e. that you are a citizen of all countries in the whole world, because virtue and learning for their respectability give settlement to everyone everywhere. And therefore Your Lordship could and can, in order to proclaim that primary virtue to the world, use the words of Diogenes and call yourself *Civem mundi*.¹²

Because *civis mundi* is the Latin form of the Greek *cosmopolita*, and Paprocki uses explicitly both past and present tenses ("you could and can [...] call yourself *Civem mundi*"), there can be no doubt that he used that self-designation even before 1599. Five years later, the author of *Novum lumen chymicum* wrote:

If you ask who I am, I am one that can live any where [*Cosmopolita*]: if you know mee, and desire to shew your selves good and honest men, you shall hold your tongue: if you know mee not, doe not enquire after mee, for I shall reveale to no mortall man, whilst I live, more then I have done in this publick writing. Beleeve mee, if I were not a man of that ranke and condition as I am, nothing would be more pleasant to mee then a solitary life, or with Diogenes to lie hid under his tub.¹³

The obvious similarity of both quotations, even stronger with references to Diogenes, should disperse any remaining doubts concerning the authorship of *De lapide philosophorum*. The question remains where exactly Sendivogius wrote it. Fortunately, records of a court case of 1604 in which Sendivogius sued one Jindřich Krynger, alias Želynský, state that "Michal Zinzyvoy, counsellor, servant and Truchsess of His Imperial Majesty" had been living in the house of Barvitius for more than a year (i.e. from at least 1602) "by the order

¹² "Že iáko on slávny Socrates moglės dáč odpoviedž, gdyby byl W: W: kto spytal Cuiatem se esse dicis: Mundanum se pronunciare, to iest wszytkich kráin ná šwiečie obywatelem, gdysz cnotá á náuka dla swej zacnošči káždemu osiádlošć wszędy dawáiq, y W: W: moglės y mozesz by oná pierwsza cnota šwiát sprawowátá Dyogenesowemi słowy miánowác się Civem mundi." Bartosz Paprocki, *Ogrod krolewsky* (Praha: Daniel Sedlčanský, 1599), Book 3, List, cxli verso.

¹³ "Si quaeritis quis sim; Cosmopolita sum: Si me nostis, & boni ac honesti viri esse desideratis, tacebitis: Si me non nostis, nolite de me inquirere, nulli mortalium enim, quandiu vixero, plus a me revelabitur, quam hoc publico scripto factum est: Credite mihi, si non essem ejusmodi status ac conditionis Homo, sicut sum, nil mihi solitariam vitam foret jucundius, vel cum Diogene sub dolio delitescere.": *De lapide philosophorum*, 1604, 108; English translation from: Michael Sendivogius, *A new light of alchymy*, trans. J[ohn] F[rench] (London: Thomas Williams, 1674), 49–50.

of His Imperial Majesty".¹⁴ Therefore he must have written his treatise in that house in Prague.

Joannes Anton Barvitijs (c. 1555–1620) was the private secretary and most trusted counsellor of Rudolf II, patron of the arts and sciences, who supported the poet Westonia (she wrote a poem on his garden) and Oswald Croll, and was responsible for bringing Tycho Brahe (he dedicated the second book of *De mundi aetherei* to him) and Johann Kepler to Prague.¹⁵ He was a great benefactor of the Capuchins and left his house to their monastery in Prague (now at Loretánské náměstí 99/6), formally given to it by his son, General Johann Franz Barvitijs. The house was located next to the monastery and afterwards was incorporated into it, but the exact place is uncertain. According to the information from br. Tomáš Pracný, OFM Cap. (archivist of the monastery), the house and garden of Barvitijs were located to the east of the original area owned by the Capuchins, so covering the central yard of the present building and extending into the gardens as they are now, parallel to Kapucínská street, but not next to it.¹⁶ A different guess on its location was made by Marek Brčák, author of a MA thesis on Czech Capuchins in the 17th c.¹⁷ According to him, the house of Barvitijs with a small garden was situated in front of the monastery along the present Loretánské náměstí.¹⁸ Because the sources used by both authorities are not precise, this is probably as close as we can establish the exact place of where the original version of *Novum lumen chymicum* was written.

The 1604 edition of *De lapide philosophorum* did not have the place of publication or the name of the printer, so its attribution to Prague was based on statements of contemporary references by other authors (such as Andreas Libavius), who unanimously stated that it had been published in the capital of Bohemia. However, it was not absolutely certain and only recently Petr Voit of the Strahov Monastery Library kindly identified the printer at my request, on the basis of his analysis of the fonts and ornaments used in that

¹⁴ Praha, Archiv hlavního města Prahy, ms. 1288, fol. 120–121.

¹⁵ Michal Šroněk, "Johann Barvitijs als Mäzen im rudolfinschen Prag," *Studia Rudolphina* 8 (2008): 49–57.

¹⁶ Information kindly provided by br. Tomáš Pracný in his email of 6 October 2014.

¹⁷ Marek Brčák, *Kapucínský řád a společnost v Čechách a na Moravě v letech 1618–1673* (Capuchin Order and Society in Bohemia and Moravia between 1618–1673), diplomová práce, Univerzita Karlova v Praze, Filozofická fakulta, Ústav českých dějin, 2013; <https://is.cuni.cz/webapps/zzp/download/120136732>.

¹⁸ Information kindly provided by Marek Brčák in his email of 9 October 2014.

volume¹⁹. Thus it is now known that the original edition of *Novum lumen* was printed by the press founded by Jan Šuman (d. 1594), which was at the time run as a family business "Johann Schumann – Druckerei".²⁰ Earlier they also published "gratulatory verses" on the marriage of Barvitius (1597) and poems by Bartoloměj Paprocký, including some dedicated to Michael Sendivogius and members of his family in a volume entitled *Nova kratochvile* (1598). In 1603 Schumann's press issued Tycho Brahe's *De mundi aetherei* dedicated to Joannes Barvitius and about 1606 (without a publication year) Westonia's poetic obituary on the death of her mother, the widow of Edward Kelley. These and other connections give additional support to Petr Voit's identification of the printing press. According to older literature, it was situated in the house At the Red Deer (U Červeného jelena, čp. 491, Železná ulice 16) in the Old Town, but Petra Večeřová disproved such location, so it remains unknown for now.

The book was immediately translated into Czech by one J. B. B. of Rotenperk, probably a member of the Bruck of Rotenberg family²¹ or a relative of Jan Jiří of Rotenperk, an apothecary who lived in Malá Strana in 1604.²² The beautifully executed manuscript, containing the translation with facing pages from the printed Latin text, has a note at the end which says:

This little book *De lapide Philosophorum* was presented to me by Adam Jiskra Bielský, citizen of Prague New Town, in the Jewish Gardens in the year 1604, on the twentieth day of the month of September, on the Eve of St. Matthew, who received at the Castle of [Český] Krumlov [one of] unbound copies from the library of His Imperial Majesty, when they were being bound in the rooms there; the translation was completed by me in Hořovice in the year 1605, on

¹⁹ Information kindly provided by Petr Voit in his email of 17 March 2013; it was first announced in: Prinke, "Andreas Ortelius a jeho komentář k Sendivogiovi."

²⁰ An excellent monograph with samples of fonts and ornaments (but without mentioning Sendivogius) is: Petra Večeřová, *Šumanská tiskárna (1585–1628)*, Documenta Pragensia Monographia, 17 (Praha: Scriptorium, 2002); general information on it can be found in: Petr Voit, *Encyklopedie knihy: Starší knihtisk a příbuzné obory mezi polovinou 15. a počátkem 19. století*, 2 vols. (Praha: Libri, 2006), 803–804.

²¹ As proposed by: Adalbert Wraný, *Geschichte der Chemie und auf der chemischen Grundlage beruhenden Betrieben in Böhmen bis zur Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Praha: Fr. Řivnáč, 1902), 25.

²² Suggested earlier by: Mikovec, "Zlatodějové v Čechách za Rudolfa II.," 255.

the 21st day of January. Lord God kindly bestow good luck [upon me] in this [undertaking]. Amen. I: B: B: à Rotenperk.²³

The identity of the translator's friend who gave him the book is not known, but the fact that he received an unbound copy from the castle library in Český Krumlov, owned by Rudolf II since 1601, proves that the Emperor not only knew about the publication, but most probably inspired it, earlier insisting on Sendivogius to stay at the house of Barvitius and write it. Because Rotenperk received it in September in Prague New Town, it must have been printed in the first half of 1604, so was certainly written by Sendivogius in 1603 or early 1604. It is difficult to identify the village of Hoštice where Rotenperk lived at the time of translating *De lapide philosophorum* as there are many places of that name in Bohemia. Nevertheless, further research may provide more details on Rotenperk and Jiskra Bielský.

The second publication of Sendivogius – *Dialogus Mercurii, alchymistae et Naturae* – appeared in 1607 in Cologne. It was a humorous satire on false alchemists, but also contained serious teachings presented in such literary form. As mentioned above, from late 1604 Sendivogius was in Württemberg, for some time imprisoned by Hans Heinrich von Mühlenfels, so it is doubtful he may have written the *Dialogus* before escaping and returning to Prague where he was in 1605 negotiating his marriage with Anna Belvicova.²⁴ It is not known where he stayed when there and for how long, but it may be argued that he wrote the *Dialogus* at that time. An important clue is the statement on the title page that it was “written in gratitude to the friend Coroades” (*scriptus in gratiam amici Coroades*). Because that phrase was not included in later editions, the name did not attract much attention and was only recently identified as Dr. Rudolf Coraduz (Koraduz, Coraducius).²⁵ He was Rudolf's most trusted counselor and the vice-chancellor of the Empire,

²³ “Tato knížka *De lapide Philosophorum*: Darowana gest mi od Adamusa Giskrý Biělskeho, M. N. M. P. [Měštěnáina Nového Města Pražského] na Žýdowske zahradiě Letha 1604. dwadzateho dne Miěsycze Zaržj ů Wigilji S°. Mathaüsse: kterauz dostal na Zamkũ Krŭmlowiě, z Biblyoteky G. M. C. newazaneho Exemplarže když tam prowozowan býl po Pokogich, dokonana Odemne w Hossticzých přeloziiěnim Letha 1605. 21 dne Ledna, Pán Bůh racžiz wtom sstíěstí propŭgčizitj Amen. I: B: B: à Rotenperk.” Praha, Knihovna Národního muzea, ms. III H 20 (alternative call number as a printed book: 23 B 32), “Kamenŭ Mudrcŭv,” 125.

²⁴ Zikmund Winter, “Kámen filosofský,” *Květy* 15 (1893): 95–131, here 199; —, *Život církevní v Čechách. Kulturně-historický obraz z XV. a XVI. století* (Praha: Nákladem České akademie císaře Františka Josefa pro vědy slovesnost a umění, 1895), 333.

²⁵ Prinke, “Nolite de me inquirere,” 327.

owner of several thousands of books, interested in the Kabbalah and a "friend of alchemy".²⁶ They were close friends with Barvitius and both were instrumental in bringing Tycho Brahe to Prague. Interestingly, the third volume of the collected works of Paracelsus (*Operum medico-chimicorum*, 1603–1605), published in eleven volumes by Zacharias Palthenius in Frankfurt, was dedicated to "Domino Rodolpho Coradvicio, Sac. Caes. Maiestatis Consiliario, et Romani Imperis Procancellario". The same Palthenius published Sendivogius' *De lapide philosophorum* in 1606, edited by Martin Ruland, whose *Lexicon alchemiae* was also published by him in 1612. Coraduz died not long after 6 September 1605 (probably in 1606), when Sendivogius may have still been in Prague, so the *Dialogus* was clearly written to commemorate him or at his earlier request.²⁷ It is not possible to guess whether at the time of writing he stayed again at the house of Barvitius or elsewhere.

Between 1607/1608 and 1626 Michael Sendivogius lived in Poland, partly in the castle of Krzepice, and from 1614 in his own cottage by the city walls of Cracow. It was certainly there that he wrote his third work entitled *Tractatus de sulphure, altero Naturae principio* (published in 1616, again in Cologne), and so it is not of Czech provenience. But in the text of it Sendivogius announced his plans to write two more treatises, one entitled *Harmonia*, and the other *De sale*. There is no evidence that the former was ever written, but the earliest biography of the Polish alchemist, *Vita Sendivogii Poloni*, states that he did finish the latter:

Sendivogius wrote and completed *A Treatise on the Third Principle of Things*, namely Salt, and gave it to his major domo [...] [T]he said major domo was in Hamburg at the time of Sendivogius's death, and so Sendivogius entrusted to his daughter the *Treatise on Salt*, closed and sealed with his signet. He made her swear she would not hand it over to any other human being except the major domo. But he died in Prussia on his return journey home.²⁸

²⁶ R. J. W. Evans, *Rudolf II and his world. A study in intellectual history 1576–1612*, 2nd corrected ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press (Clarendon Press), 1984), 238.

²⁷ His date of death is sometimes given as 1612 or 1618, but the last known document signed by him is dated as stated above, while later references do not refer to him as living: Manfred Staudtinger, *Documenta Rudolphina*, <http://documenta.rudolphina.org/Regesten/A1605-09-06-02225.xml>.

²⁸ "*Scipsit & absolvit tractatum illum tertij principij rerum de Sale, eumque legendum dedit suo Oeonomo [...] [D]ictus Oeonomus tempore mortis Sendiuogij esset Hamburgi, ideo filia sua recommendavit tractatum de Sale, suo signaculo clausum & sigillatum, accepto iuramento, ne alicui mortalium alio, quam suo Oeonomo illum de manu in manum traderet, qui cum in itinere redeundi esset, obiit in Prussia.*" Borel, *Trésor de Recherches*, 478;

This sounds like a fancy legend, but the *Vita* is quite reliable in other respects, so if this fragment is also true, it seems probable that the lost treatise was written at the end of Sendivogius's life, when he lived in Czech Silesia as the lord of Kravaře and Kouty land estate. The castle of Kravaře is the most probable place where he would have done that. It was rebuilt in 1721–1728 by the Eichendorf family, heirs of Sendivogius through his daughter Veronika Marie, who married Jakub von Eichendorf in October 1636, shortly after her father's death. The original castle was located on the site of the left wing of the present building.²⁹

The other possibility is that he wrote it in a house in Olomouc. In 1626 he wrote twice to Emperor Ferdinand II, asking for two different villages and the "Mazakhischen hauß zu Olmüz" in return for the money the emperor owed him for his services.³⁰ The publisher of these sources, Christian Ritter d'Elvert, later identified the house in an article on Sendivogius as "the most beautiful house in Olomouc, where Lord von Waldstein made the quarters of King Frederick [of Palatine], which was confiscated from the wealthy wine merchant Abraham Macák".³¹ The house is now Moravské divadlo (Horní náměstí 22) and certainly was one of the most representative houses in town in the 17th century. However, it could not be confirmed that Sendivogius indeed owned it. Vladimír Spáčil, the authority on the history of Olomouc houses, kindly searched the municipal records for the years 1626–1636 at my request and did not find any mention of Sendivogius as the owner of that house. The monumental 19th century work *Die Olmützer Häuserchronik* by Wilhelm Nather states that Abraham Macák's "beautiful house remained without owner for ten and more years", so it is doubtful that Sendivogius

English translation from: P. G. Maxell-Stuart, ed., *The occult in Early Modern Europe. A documentary history* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 214.

²⁹ Erich Šefčík, ed. *Naše město Kravaře: Sborník prací k minulosti a současnosti města* (Kravaře: MěstNV v Kravařích, 1989), unpaginated; personal communication from Erich Šefčík in 2002.

³⁰ Christian Ritter d' Elvert, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der böhmischen Länder. Dritter Band, Schriften der Historisch-Statistischen Sektion der K. K. Mährisch-Schlesischen Gesellschaft zur Beförderung des Ackerbaues, der Natur- und Landeskunde*, 22 (Brünn: C. Winiker, 1875), 443, 445.

³¹ "Es waren dies die zwei Dörfer Deutsch-Krawarn, welches dem Caspar Mazak, und das ansehnlichste Haus in Olmüz, mit jenem des Herrn von Waldstein das Quartier des Königs Friedrich, welches dem reichen Weinherrn Abraham Mazak confiscirt wurde", —, "Der Alchemist Sendivogius; der Gründer der freiherrlichen Familie Eichendorf in Mähren und Schlesien," *Notizen-Blatt der Historisch-Statistischen Sektion der K. K. Mährisch-Schlesischen Gesellschaft zur Beförderung des Ackerbaues, der Natur- und Landeskunde*, no. 3 (1883): 20–22, here 21.

actually lived there³². On the other hand, the fact that he indeed lived in Olomouc is suggested by a contemporary anonymous note on his imaginary portrait: "Michael Sendivogius of Skorsko, a notable alchemist, lives in Olomouc".³³ Fortunately, a closer reading of Nather's work allowed me to find the name of the Polish alchemist there, earlier overlooked because it was misspelt. Thus I could confirm that information and identify the correct house, which belonged to Sendivogius from 1628 (so earlier than Kravaře) and was likewise inherited by his daughter (here called "sister").³⁴ The house in question is located on the corner of Dolní náměstí and Dolní (now Lafayetteova) ulice (Niederring and Niedergasse), čp. 51. It is now known as the house "At the Golden Cannonball" (U zlaté koule), the name also used by at least two other houses in Olomouc, and is situated opposite the famous Hauen-schilds Palace (Hauenschildův palác).³⁵

Summing up, it seems certain that one of the most influential texts of early modern alchemy, *De lapide philosophorum* of Michael Sendivogius, was written in Prague after ten years of his service at the court of Rudolf II and was probably inspired by him. Sendivogius worked on it at the house of Joannes Barvitijs (now within the Capuchins monastery) in late 1603 and/or early 1604. The first edition was printed at "Johann Schumann – Druckerei" in Prague before mid-1604 and part of the print run was sent to the imperial library in Český Krumlov where copies were bound. The second text authored by Sendivogius, later most-often published together with the first one under the common title of *Novum lumen chymicum*, was *Dialogus Mercurii, alchymistae et Naturae*. It was written at the request of and in gratitude to Rudolf Coraduz, most probably also in Prague. Thus, even though the author was

³² Friedrich Nather and Vladimír Spáčil, eds., *Wilhelm Nather: Die Olmützer Häuserchronik*, 2 vols. (Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého, 2005–2006), 2:55; the book was also published in Czech translation: Vilém Nather, *Kronika olomouckých domů*, trans. Vladimír Spáčil, 2 vols. (Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého, 2007).

³³ "Michał ze Skorska Sędziwuj mieszka w Ołomońcu Alchimista przedni," Warsaw, Biblioteka Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Gabinet Rycin, sygn. 477.

³⁴ "1628, 11. Mai: Michael Sentury (!) Freiherr v. Skorski, kais. Rath und Sekretär, lässt sich zuschreiben (1651) das erhaltene, dem Jaroslav Skrbenski confiscirte Haus.; 1667, Veronika Maria Aichendorf, Schwester von M. Sentury", Nather, *Die Olmützer Häuserchronik*, 1:113; Nather, *Kronika olomouckých domů*, 1:111; I am indebted to Jiří Michalík for providing copies of relevant pages from Nather's book, to Vladimír Spáčil for his help and valuable suggestions, and to Bohdan Kaňák, director of the archive in Olomouc, for finding the 1628 entry in municipal records and sending me its copy.

³⁵ Vladimír Gračka, *Domovní znamení, ochranné plastiky, a obrazy v Olomouci* (Olomouc: Krajské vlastivědné muzeum v Olomouci, 1986), 17 (nr 14).

Polish, those two works of his may be said to have been of Czech provenience. On the other hand, his *Tractatus de sulphure* was certainly written in Cracow. It is not possible to confirm that the treatise *De sale*, planned by Sendivogius, was ever written, but if it was, then it must have been either in Kravaře near Opava or in Olomouc, in his house at Dolní náměstí 37 (čp. 51).

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Wenceslaus Lavinius of Ottenfeld (1550–May 1602) and His *Earthly Heaven*¹

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Abstract | In the fourth part of the canonical collection *Theatrum chymicum* by L. Zetzner, published in Strasbourg in 1613, we find a double-page booklet entitled *Tractatus de Coelo Terrestri* by the Silesian physician and alchemist Vaclav Lavinius from Ottenfeld, who is also known by his Latin name Wenceslaus Lavinus Moravus. In this paper, I analyse firstly the contribution of this treatise, and then, I put it in the framework of contemporary alchemical production. Lavinius's alchemical treatise presents interesting evidence of the influence of Paracelsus's thought in Bohemia in the second half of the 16th century. For this reason I mainly focus on Lavinius's reception of Paracelsus.

Keywords | Wenceslaus Lavinius; Lavinus; Paracelsian alchemy; Paracelsus; Oswald Croll; biography of alchemists; alchemical principles; hermaphrodites.

The fourth part of the renowned anthology *Theatrum chemicum*, compiled by its first and best known editor L. Zetzner, contains a brief, not more than two-pages long *Tractatus de Coelo Terrestri*, written by Wenceslaus Lavinius de Moravia. This Latinised name has numerous spelling variants, and refers to MD Wenceslaus Lavinius (Václav Lavín in Czech) of Ottenfeld (Otice u Opavy).

¹ This study is a result of the research funded by the Czech Science Foundation as the project GA ČR 14-37038G "Between Renaissance and Baroque: Philosophy and Knowledge in the Czech Lands within the Wider European Context".

Brief biography

The life of Lavinius, undoubtedly one of the leading intellectuals of the Czech lands, remains a much greater mystery than he would deserve.² In the second half of the 1570s, Lavinius studied at the universities of Padua, Paris, Geneva, and at the Lutheran university of Leucorea in Wittenberg. As impressive as this enumeration may sound, it is important to realize that at Lavinius' time, students would often spend only one semester, or one year at most at any given university, and then continue again in another university city. In the second half of the 16th century, study trips abroad provided an excellent opportunity to not only gain knowledge but also to learn about the culture of the relevant country and establish friendships with the future intellectual and political elites of the most influential European countries. As is evident from fragments of preserved correspondence, Lavinius maintained such links throughout his life, which helped him in his future career at noble courts.

After his return to the Czech lands, Lavinius was hired as a teacher and doctor with the aristocratic Smiřický family in Náchod, who was an adherent of the Czech Brethren. Fairly soon (1578) he was ennobled as a reward for his services, which earned him the right to use the nobiliary particle "of Ottenfeld". Lavinius continued to associate with the Brethren nobility – he first became a tutor and then personal physician and advisor to the unofficial political leader of the Czech Brethren – Charles the Elder of Žerotín (1564–1636), whom he accompanied on study trips made between 1582 and 1587 around European universities.³ The most important leg of these study trips was the time Žerotín spent in Geneva⁴, where the Moravian nobleman studied and probably also lodged with Calvin's colleague and successor Theodore Beza (1519–1605).⁵

² He is not mentioned in the *Biographical Dictionary of Silesia and Northern Moravia* (published in Ostrava and Opava since 1993), nor in popular *Otto's Encyclopaedia*.

³ Several years earlier, Žerotín had studied at gymnasiums and colleges in Strasbourg and Basel.

⁴ Prior to that, he studied at the Strasbourg gymnasium. For more on Žerotín's study trip, see Tomáš Knoz, *Karel starší ze Žerotína: Don Quijote v labyrintu světa* (Praha: Vyšehrad, 2008), 49–51.

⁵ Noemi Rejchrtová, "Listy osamělého politika," in *Karel starší ze Žerotína. Z korespondence*, ed. Noemi Rejchrtová (Praha: Odeon 1982), 11; Knoz, *Karel starší ze Žerotína*, 49. For more on T. Beza, see David C. Steinmetz's concise portrait *Reformers in the Wings: From Geiler von Kaysersberg to Theodore Beza* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 114–123.

In late February 1583, Charles the Elder of Žerotín was forced to interrupt his study trip abroad: his father had died and Žerotín had to return to his homeland. They resumed the study trip in the second half of 1584. 1585 found them in Orleans, Paris, and Lyon. The following year, they lived in Heidelberg, Leiden, and The Hague, where they met Justus Lipsius (1547–1606). From there they continued to London and Oxford, where Lavinius earned a doctorate in 1587.⁶

Lavinius was indeed a close friend of Charles the Elder of Žerotín, which is evident in the fact that in spring 1589 he helped Charles organize his wedding to Barbora Krajiřová of Krajek.⁷ He himself was married a year later, in 1590,⁸ to the widow of Jan Škréta Šotnovský of Závõrice, the grandmother of the renowned Czech Baroque painter Karel Škréta (1610–1674).⁹ After the wedding Lavinius settled in Prague and set up a medical practice. Although by then he was no longer tutoring and educating Charles the Elder of Žerotín, who had taken over the family estates after his father's death, Lavinius and Charles remained in touch.

Within less than two years after the wedding, Lavinius was at another noble court. He became a physician of the moderate Catholic William of Rosenberg (1535–1592), and following his death he also worked at the court of his brother Peter Vok (1539–1611), who had recently converted to the Czech Brethren. Both brothers ranked as leading patrons of alchemy in the second

⁶ Robert F. Young, "Bohemian Scholars and Students at the English Universities from 1347 to 1750," *English Historical Review* 38 (1923): 74; Didier Kahn, "Les sources labyrinthiques du *Discours d'auteur incertain sur la pierre des philophes* (1590)," in *La Transmission de savoirs au Moyen Âge et à la Renaissance*, ed. Alfredo Perifano (Besançon: Presses Université de Franche-Comté 2005), 223–257, here 238–239. Cf.: František Hrubý, *Etudiants tchèques aux écoles protestantes de l'Europe occidentale à la fin du 16e et 17e siècle: documents* (Brno: Univerzita J. E. Purkyně, 1970), 55 note 3.

⁷ Hrubý, *Etudiants tchèques*, 159. (Letter of Guillaume Arragos to J. J. Grynaeus dated 6 March, 1589).

⁸ We learn about Lavinius' wedding from the letter sent by Charles the Elder of Žerotín to the Geneva-based Calvinist theologian J. J. Grynaeus, on 7 May 1590. See: Rejchrtová, ed., *Karel starší ze Žerotína*, Letter No. 7, 50; Hrubý, *Etudiants tchèques*, 56: "Lavinius uxorem duxit." See also: Hrubý, *ibid.*, 161 (letter sent by Lavinius' nephew Matyáš Timius to J. J. Grynaeus, dated 26 August, 1589, about Lavinius' plans to marry).

⁹ Rafał T. Prinke, "Nolite de me inquirere (Nechtějte se po mně ptáti): Michael Sendivogius (1566–1636)," in *Alchymie a Rudolf II. Hledání tajemství přírody ve střední Evropě v 16. a 17. století*, eds. Ivo Purš and Vladimír Karpenko (Praha: Artefaktum / Ústav dějin umění AV ČR, 2011), 317–335, here 322. The full name of Karel Škréta was: Karel Škréta Šotnovský of Závõrice.

half of the 16th century, and their courts employed prominent European authorities on the “Royal Art”.¹⁰ Lavinius is documented to have stayed with Peter Vok in Třeboň for example in September 1592; from 1595 to 1596 he is mentioned at the court of Rosenberg ruler in Český Krumlov.

In a letter dated 12 September, 1592, available in the university library in Erlangen, Bavaria, Lavinius is referred to as the “*medicus Rosembergius*”.¹¹ The chronicler of the last Rosenbergs, Václav Březan mentions Lavinius briefly in his *Chronicle of the Rosenbergs* when describing the visit of the Italian family of Ursini, and subsequently also in connection with the death of the alchemist Martin Klughar (December 1595). Březan’s second mention in particular does not present a very favourable picture of Lavinius. His words imply that to him both Lavinius and Klughar were charlatans, who had “robbed people of many thousands”.¹²

We still do not know how firm the position Lavinius held at the courts of William and Peter was or how much time he actually spent there. More likely, it seems that he lived in Prague, where he owned a house, and only commuted to the Rosenberg court. This interpretation is supported by the fact that Czech historians focusing on the Rosenberg family do not pay a great deal of attention to Lavinius.

Lavinius’ contemporary Václav Březan mentions him only twice, and today’s Czech historians specializing in the Rosenbergs largely ignore Lavinius. Moreover, not even biographies on the last Rosenbergs, written by the leading historian on the House of Rosenberg, J. Pánek, mention Lavinius. In his books, Pánek briefly outlines the alchemical hobbies of both Rosenberg brothers (William and Peter Vok), as well as their patronage granted to various alchemists. Lavinius’ name, however, is not among the Rosenberg alchemists listed by Pánek, just as it is missing from his records of the names of the physicians of the Rosenberg rulers.¹³

¹⁰ See Kahn, “Les sources labyrinthiques,” 239. It is interesting that the Rosenberg court was also where the Czech version of the remarkable alchemical florilegium “*Rosarium philosophorum*” was written by Jaroš Griemiller of Třebsko. William of Rosenberg apparently funded its publication. See Ivo Purš and Vladimír Karpenko, “Alchymie na šlechtických dvorech v českých zemích,” in *Alchymie a Rudolf II.*, 47–93, here 59–61.

¹¹ See Kahn, “Les sources labyrinthiques,” 239 note 69.

¹² See: Václav Březan, *Životy posledních Rožmberků II* (Praha: Svoboda 1985), 528–529.

¹³ Pánek, *Poslední Rožmberkové*, 267–272. See also: Jaroslav Pánek, *Poslední Rožmberk: životní příběh Petra Voka* (Praha: Brána, 1996). Nor does Pánek mention Wenceslas Lavinius, unlike his nephew Timius, in the revised edition of his previous biography on

In the second half of the 1590s, Lavinius must have made Prague his permanent residence, because he opened a pharmacy here.¹⁴ During the same period, he was the physician of a wealthy merchant and Prague burgher, Ludwig Korálek of Cieszyn.¹⁵ One of the greatest benefactors of alchemy in Bohemia, Ludwig Korálek, also owned of a large library containing alchemical texts, which featured, among other books, the work of Paracelsus.¹⁶ Around that time, when he became Korálek's doctor, Lavinius also started working as chancellor of the House of Zástřízl,¹⁷ of which most members were adherents of the Czech Brethren.¹⁸

A few years later, nonetheless, he unexpectedly died. The news of the death of Lavinius arrived in a letter sent by his nephew Matthias Timius of Ottenfeld on 22 May 1602¹⁹ to James Zwinger, son of Theodor Zwinger.²⁰

Equally scant as information about Lavinius are the facts known about his nephew Matthias. It is established that Matthias Timius chose the same career as his uncle, becoming a physician and alchemist. Upon the instigation

Vok: *Petr Vok z Rožmberka: Život renesančního kavalíra* (Praha: Vyšehrad 2010). Another telling fact is that there is no reference to Lavinius even in the collective monograph of editors Václav Bůžek and Josef Hrdlička, *Dvory velmožů s erbem růže* (Noble Courts of Rose Coat of Arms) (Praha: Mladá fronta, 1997). This text also mentions only Lavinius' nephew Timius (p. 179), ascribing him, to crown it all, the incorrect predicate "of Ottenfels". Similarly, Ivan Sviták uses the same incorrect predicate in his *Malostranská Sapfo. Opožděná recenze díla Elizabethy Johannы Westonové. 1582–1612* (Sappho of the Lesser Town. A Delayed Review of the Work of Elizabeth Johanna Weston. 1582–1612) (Praha: soukromý tisk, 1994), 68.

¹⁴ Gustav Gellner, *Životopis lékaře Borbonia a výklad jeho deníků* (Praha: Česká akademie věd, 1938), 21. Cited in: Pavel Drábek, "Farmacie v rudolfínské době." In *Alchymie a Rudolf II.*, 698. In 1597 Lavinius' stay in Prague is documented with a letter that his nephew Matthias Timius sent to J. Zwinger. See: Hrubý, *Etudiants tcheques*, 172 (Letter of 27 September, 1597).

¹⁵ See B. Peška, "Pražský měšťan a polský alchymista." *Světozor* June 1872, 471–472, 482–483, 495; here 471.

¹⁶ For more on Korálek, see the study by B. Peška and also R. T. Prinke's "Nolite de me inquirere," 322–323.

¹⁷ One member of this family, Wenceslaus, however, was a Catholic. That did not stop him from becoming a provincial judge during the Rebellion of the Estates.

¹⁸ See: Hrubý, *Etudiants tcheques*, 318, note "a".

¹⁹ In 1602 the first three parts of *Theatrum chymicum*, edited by L. Zetzner, were published.

²⁰ Hrubý, *Etudiants tcheques*, 380–381. F. Hrubý also states, however, that Lavinius died as far back as in 1601: see *ibid.*, 162, note 3.

of Lavinius, his medical education was funded by Charles the Elder of Žerotín, in whose service Timius worked. Subsequently, from December 1606 to November 1611, he served as the personal physician of Peter Vok of Rosenberg.²¹ Timius had been recommended for this position by his benefactor Charles the Elder of Žerotín.²² The letters of Charles the Elder of Žerotín also disclose that in 1609 Timius married and settled down in Vitiněves near Jičín. It seems that for some time after the wedding Timius' marital duties paralysed his scientific and social life to such a degree that he earned a mild reproach from Charles the Elder, who had not received a letter from Timius for months since the wedding.²³ In the end, Timius' career culminated, again thanks to the intervention of Charles the Elder of Žerotín, who had not forsaken Timius despite his intense married life, with the office of a Moravian provincial doctor.

Lavinius' intellectual world

In terms of his personality, Lavinius definitely does not fit the preconceived idea of alchemist as a researcher isolated in his laboratory. Like Paracelsus,

²¹ See Březan, *Životy posledních Rožmberků II*, 583, 631. Peter Vok died on 6 November, and as Březan claims, with Timius present at the deathbed. Quite entertaining is the theory of J. Pánek, who believed that Timius had been installed at the Rosenberg Court as an agent of Charles the Elder of Žerotín: Pánek, *Petr Vok z Rožmberka: Život renesančního kavalíra*, 180. I presume this statement is somewhat exaggerated because already Timius' uncle had served at the Rosenberg Court and could therefore also have arranged for him to work there. Timius probably served Peter Vok faithfully until the latter's death. Charles the Elder of Žerotín was, moreover, a Czech Brethren nobleman, as was Peter Vok, which would eliminate the need to deploy his agent at the Court. J. Pánek, however, is undoubtedly correct in that Timius probably did interfere in the ruler's politics, and also notified his friends abroad via mail on current affairs in Bohemia. These reports, however, were more brief summaries of the situation in the country rather than the divulging of secret information related to his noble patron.

²² Charles the Elder of Žerotín ultimately helped Timius also during the repression of Protestants after the Czech Rebellion of the Estates. See Knoz, *Karel starší ze Žerotína*, 42, 284. For more, see T. Knoz, "...s pomocí boží dosti mírně se mám..." Zdraví a nemoci Karla st. ze Žerotína," *Časopis Moravského muzea, Vědy společenské* 82 (1997): 183–199, here esp. 184–191.

²³ Rejchrtová (ed.), *Karel starší ze Žerotína. Z korespondence*, 260–261 (Letter No. 120). After all, even before the wedding, Charles the Elder recommended that Timius read the book by Calvinist theologian Otto Cassmann "School of Temptation." Timius might have used his marriage as a way out of a deep personal crisis, as he apparently suffered from depression or burnout. See *ibid.*, 232.

he was as much a man of the world as a laboratory alchemist, which was, after all, quite common in his time. He had friends among leading theologians, politicians, alchemists, and patrons. In addition to alchemy, he also practised diplomacy, dealt with bureaucratic issues, and was involved in the erupting religious and social conflict.²⁴ All these circumstances suggest that it would be useful to briefly introduce the spiritual milieu in which Lavinius found himself.

This was an environment of relatively cosmopolitan Protestant (but also partially Catholic) intellectuals who professed religious tolerance based on a non-adversarial approach to Christianity. These intellectuals were highly educated, having studied at universities abroad. This education qualified them to play an active role, in one way or another, in public affairs. Of these intellectuals, there were roughly four groups of people who either influenced Lavinius ideologically or with whom he traded ideas intensively.

The first group was composed of his teachers, principally those at Western European universities. The most important were humanists and theologians working in Geneva and Basel, with whom Lavinius continued to exchange letters tirelessly for the rest of his life. These scholars included J. J. Grynaeus, T. Beza, T. Zwinger.

The second group of Lavinius' friends included his noble or burgher employers and benefactors, such as Charles the Elder of Žerotín, Peter Vok of Rožmberk, Ludwig Korálek of Cieszyn, and Wenceslaus the Elder of Zástřizl.

The third group consisted of co-chemists, chiefly followers of Paracelsus. He had met these people on his study trips abroad, either as a student or as the preceptor of Charles the Elder of Žerotín. They were mostly his classmates or colleagues, predominantly from Germany and France. As with his teachers, he also kept in regular touch with the alchemists, whose interpretation of Paracelsian alchemy and medicine probably represented the greatest influence on his alchemical research. This group, likewise, provided the ideological background of Lavinius' work. Although the group must have been much bigger, alchemists identified so far include O. Croll (not very well known then; his major writings were published only after Lavinius died),

²⁴ Hrubý, *Etudiants tcheques*, 392. This is a letter from the Opava native and Basel professor Amandus Polanus von Polansdorf (1561–1610) to J. J. Grynaeus saying that Lavinius had helped Polanus publish his polemic with the active Jesuit priest Wenceslas Sturm (1533–1601), whose lampoons were directed mainly at the Czech Brethren.

Bernard Gilles Penot, and Guillaume Baucinet. Another member was Penot's pupil N. Barnaud, whom Lavinius met only as late as the 1590s.

Finally, the fourth group of Lavinius' friends comprises the intellectual and scientific elite of the day, whom Lavinius would meet in the Prague of Rudolph II. Some of them, like the Polish alchemist Michael Sendivogius and his British colleague Edward Kelly, were leading representatives of late-Renaissance alchemy. Lavinius may have even met Kelly's colleague J. Dee, who left Bohemia in March 1589, which is after Lavinius returned to his home country. This could have taken place only provided Lavinius stopped by in Třeboň, at the Rosenberg Court, to where Dee had moved following a scandal with the Papal Nuncio, after which Prague became too dangerous a place for him. However, Dee's journals, which provide detailed records of the various prominent visitors to Třeboň, do not mention any contact with Lavinius.²⁵

Evidence shows that Lavinius had met Kelly and Sendivogius – both members of a group of alchemists gathered around the aforementioned Prague merchant Ludwig Korálek, which would also meet in the residence of Tadeáš Hájek of Hájek. This is also where Lavinius might have met the Prague pharmacist M. Borbonius. Borbonius studied in Basel and maintained extensive contacts with many European alchemists. Likewise, hypothetically, Lavinius could have met Giordano Bruno, who visited Prague in 1588.

Another person Lavinius might have met at Hájek's was Tycho Brahe, with whom he could discuss at length his concept of Paracelsian alchemy.²⁶ Also, after his return to Bohemia, he could still have met, although not in Prague, Bavor Rodovský of Hustiřany (1526–1591), the doyen of Czech alchemy, one of the first to try to introduce Paracelsius' work to Czech alchemists through translation.

We must, however, include other than only commoners in our list of Lavinius' friends. The court of Rudolph II also employed the Paracelsian doctor and

²⁵ According to his journal, Dee left Třeboň on 11 March, heading for Nuremberg. Kelly had left about a month earlier for Prague. John Dee, *The Diaries of John Dee*, ed. Edward Fenton (Charlbury: Day Books, 1998), 239.

²⁶ See Ivo Purš and Vladimír Karpenko, "Summary: Alchemy and Rudolph II," in *Alchymie a Rudolf II.*, 759–781, here 766. Additionally, I discuss Tycho's reception of Paracelsian alchemy in my study: "Tycho Brahe a Alchymie" (Tycho Brahe and Alchemy), which is yet to be published under the auspices of the National Technical Museum in Prague. For more, cf. Vladimír Karpenko and Ivo Purš, "Tycho Brahe mezi astronomií a alchymii," in Purš and Karpenko (eds.), *Alchymie a Rudolf II.*, 459–489. This representative anthology dedicates a study to each of the alchemists listed.

confessor to the Emperor, Johann Pistorius the Younger (1546–1608),²⁷ as well as Paracelsian doctor Martin Ruland the Elder (1532–1602), who died the same year as Lavinius. Martin Ruland the Elder was the father of Martin Ruland the Younger (1569–1611), another Paracelsian alchemist and author of a famous dictionary of alchemy.²⁸ For the last few years before he died, Ruland was also the Emperor's personal physician. When enumerating renowned personalities, we must not overlook another famous alchemist, mineralogist and physician, Anselmus de Boodt (1550–1632).²⁹

It is symptomatic of a period of subsiding religious tolerance, on the eve of the Thirty Years War, that Lavinius' friends and correspondent partners across all four groups should include both reformers – Lutherans, Calvinists and the Czech Brethren, as well as Catholics.³⁰ The following pages will pay the most attention to the third group, i.e. Paracelsian alchemists, because it was they who probably most inspired Lavinius in his short treatise *Earthly Heaven*. We will not discuss the group of Lavinius' benefactors in a great detail, as this group is referred to throughout the entire text and the introduction in particular. Let us first briefly mention his teachers, though, because their relationship to alchemy was ambivalent.

Lavinus' teachers probably did not gravitate towards a systematic study of alchemy and natural philosophy. They were educated humanist theologians who, thanks to a dense network of their correspondents – their former university classmates or students – had a very good grasp of the situation in

²⁷ Pistorius was a friend of Johannes Kepler and a Christian Kabbalist, who published a summary of earlier Kabbalistic treatises by such authors as J. Reuchlin and P. Rici, and translated the mystical kabbalistic treatise *Sefer Yetzirah*. Titled *Artis cabalisticæ*, the anthology was published in Basel in 1587. Pistorius had his reservations about Paracelsian medicine (which was perhaps related to the fact that he was a Lutheran turned Catholic), but he also rejected the uncritical admiration of ancient medical authorities, especially Galen. In his medicine he followed the anatomic empiricism of Andreas Vesalius (1514–1564). For more on Johann Pistorius, see Ivo Purš "Přírodovědný a alchymický mecenát císaře Rudolfa II," in Purš and Karpenko (eds.), *Alchymie a Rudolf II.*, 139–205, here 169–173.

²⁸ Martinus Rulandus, *Lexicon Alchemiæ sive Dictionarium Alchemisticum* (Frankfurt/Main, 1612) (Reprint: Hildesheim, 1987). English translation: Arthur E. Waite, *A Lexicon of Alchemy. Or Alchemical Dictionary Containing a Full and Plain Explanation of All Obscure Words, Hermetic Subjects, and Arcane Phrases of Paracelsus* (London, 1893, repr. 1964). (Waite still erroneously ascribes the authorship of *Lexicon* to Ruland the Elder).

²⁹ See: Ivo Purš, "Anselmus Boëtius de Boodt: lékař, mineralog a alchymista," in *Alchymie a Rudolf II.*, 535–581.

³⁰ Knoz, *Karel starší ze Žerotína...*, 42.

Europe and were able to view the current political, social or cultural events within a broad context. With them Lavinius exchanged in particular updates on political and social events, and analyses thereof.

For example, in his letter dated 22 January, 1599, Lavinius tells the Geneva-based reformer and humanist Theodore Beza (1519–1605) about the political and military turmoil in eastern Moravia.³¹ Another partner Lavinius communicated with was the Tübingen-based humanist Joachim Camerarius the Younger (1534–1598), with whom he exchanged letters from the position of, among other titles, the “chancellor” of Wenceslaus the Elder of Zástřizl. Wenceslas was the father of George Sigismund Prakšický of Zástřizl (1582–1614),³² a student of Lavinius. The latter also had apparently played a key role in arranging George’s study abroad, as George Sigismund went to study, like Charles the Elder of Žerotín, under Theodore Beza. It is interesting that in 1598 George Sigismund bought Beza’s library for 600 ducats and transferred it to Buchlov Castle.³³

Another Swiss humanist and physician Theodor Zwinger the Elder (1533–1588) wrote one whole chapter in his *Theatrum humanae vitae* on Lavinius.³⁴ Another part of the book was after all dedicated to Lavinius’ friend Charles the Elder of Žerotín.³⁵ As we shall see further in the text, it was mainly Zwinger who was the nucleus around which the study of Charles the Elder of Žerotín pivoted, as well the study as of many Paracelsian alchemists with whom Lavinius and Charles the Elder kept in touch. Zwinger himself felt ambivalent about Paracelsus’ medicine. Although he accepted some of the teachings of Paracelsus, to others he was quite critical. His main ambition was to reconcile

³¹ Hrubý, *Etudiants tcheques*, 361–362.

³² *Ibid.*, 360.

³³ See: Hrubý, *Etudiants tcheques*, 345–346; see also *Otto’s Encyclopaedia*, entry “ze Žerotína”. Tomáš Knoz argues that this was Wenceslas of Zástřizl (probably meaning Wenceslas Morkovský of Zástřizl, brother of George Sigismund) and goes on to claim that T. Beza had bequeathed him his library, which caused Charles the Elder of Žerotín some envy. See Knoz, *Karel starší ze Žerotína*, 55. See also: Hrubý, *Etudiants tcheques*, 361–2. This is a letter Lavinius sent T. Beza on 22 January, 1599. Hrubý’s edition of documents related to the House of Zástřizl shows clearly that Tomáš Knoz is incorrect, and that it genuinely was George Sigismund and not his brother.

³⁴ The book was published in Basel in 1586. For more on the chapter dedicated to Lavinius, see: Prinke, “Nolite de me inquirere,” 322.

³⁵ Knoz, *Karel starší ze Žerotína*, 55. See also: Rejchrtová (ed.), *Karel starší ze Žerotína. Z korespondence*, 48–50. T. Knoz incorrectly refers to the book as “Teatrum” and furthermore, incorrectly claims that the entire book was dedicated to him.

Paracelsianism with traditional, particularly Hippocratic, medicine, arguing that the basic teachings of Paracelsian iatrochemistry actually developed principles that were already present in Hippocrates' work.³⁶

Following the introduction of Lavinius' teachers, we shall now focus on his colleagues and the friends he made during his travels abroad. We believe that it was this group of alchemists that had the greatest impact on his preference for Paracelsian alchemy.

While abroad, probably in Paris in 1585, Lavinius met the main representative of contemporary Paracelsian alchemy, Oswald Croll (1563–1607).³⁷ Croll showed interest in Lavinius again ten years later, in the first half of 1595, as is evidenced by his letters to the German alchemist and mine manager Franz Kretschmer (died after 1603). Croll was particularly interested in an allegedly transmuting powder that Lavinius had invented, which he intended to attain with Kretschmer's help.³⁸ A year later, Croll finally managed to meet up with Lavinius in Prague on a short visit that Croll made there in 1596. We can only speculate whether the reason for his visit to Prague was the desire to try Lavinius' powder, or rather a pragmatic effort to prepare the grounds for his own arrival at the court of Emperor Rudolph II.³⁹

In any case, the encounter between Croll and Lavinius was not a great success. A letter Croll sent to the Paracelsian French alchemist Bernard Giles Penot⁴⁰ suggests that while in Bohemia, Croll came to the conclusion that

³⁶ See: Jole Shackelford, *A philosophical path for Paracelsian medicine: the ideas, intellectual context and influence of Petrus Severinus (1540/2–1602)* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum, 2004), 158. For more on Zwinger's intellectual circle, see: Carlos Gilly, "Zwischen Erfahrung und Spekulation. Theodor Zwinger und die religiöse und kulturelle Krise seiner Zeit," *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 77 (1977): 57–137 and 79 (1979): 125–223.

³⁷ See also: Oswald Croll, *Oswaldus Crollius. Alchemomedizinische Briefe 1585 bis 1597*, eds. Wilhelm Kühlmann and Joachim Telle (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1998), 77–82 (Letter No. 15).

³⁸ See Croll, *Alchemomedizinische Briefe*, 80–81, 85–86 (Letters No. 16 and 18).

³⁹ For more on O. Croll in Bohemia, see Jaroslava Hausenblasová's study "Mezi lékařstvím a politikou. Působení Oswalda Crolla v českých zemích v době vlády Rudolfa II.," in Purš and Karpenko, eds., *Alchymie a Rudolf II.*, 367–381 and Jaroslava Hausenblasová, "Oswald Croll and his relations to the Bohemian Lands," *Acta Comeniana* 15–16 (2002): 169–182.

⁴⁰ For more on Penot, see below.

Lavinus was a trickster who had fooled him.⁴¹ Soon after, however, Croll used a somewhat more mellow tone in his letter to Franz Kretschmer that he sent two weeks later. In this letter, Croll said he did not trust Lavinus' transmuting powder, which he had wanted so much and now had at his disposal, and also described Lavinus as a "complicated" man, evidently because the latter had refused to divulge the secrets of its manufacture to Croll.⁴² Croll was interested in the transmuting powder for probably two reasons: one of them was that Lavinus had reportedly succeeded in carrying out transmutation. He had shared his joy over this alchemical achievement with his friend Camerarius in a letter on 31 December, 1594.⁴³ Croll, who also corresponded with Camerarius, probably learned about the transmutation from him, which could explain why he hungered for the secret of Lavinus' powder so much. Knowing this, one can understand his frustration over Lavinus' secrecy, and over his own failure with Lavinus' powder (which he of course only came into possession of after leaving Bohemia and thus following the personal conflict with Lavinus).

The second reason why Croll was interested in Lavinus' transmuting powder might be related to the fact that Croll had read a manuscript written by Lavinus. One of those extant, titled *Über eine Tinctur*, is now housed in the Kassel State Library, describing somewhat unsurprisingly the transmutation process.⁴⁴ Croll's disappointment at Lavinus' powder, however, did not bring a definitive end to their communication, not even on a personal level. Lavinus and Croll reunited in 1599 in order to form a team, together with the Polish alchemist Michael Sedzivoj, in an unsuccessful effort to cure the aforementioned Prague burgher Ludwig Korálek of Cieszyn. Korálek died the same year, apparently as a result of his alcoholism, which he must have developed through excessive consumption of the alchemical *aqua vita*.

⁴¹ Croll, *Alchemomedizinische Briefe*, 90–92 (Letter No. 21). Croll indeed did not hold back: "*Vostre homme Lavinus, est totalement change, et ne mesle presque point d'aultre mestier si non de tromper lez hommes, du nombre desquelz je suiz aussi à mon grand regret...*" The letter is dated 10 June, 1596, Prague. See *ibid.* Letter No. 21, 91. See also: Hausenblasová, "Mezi lékařstvím a politikou. Působení Oswalda Crolla," 369; Kahn, "Les sources labyrinthiques," 242.

⁴² Croll, *Alchemomedizinische Briefe*, 94: "...*Difficilis es admodum Lavinus...*" See Letter No. 22, 92–96.

⁴³ See Kahn, "Les sources labyrinthiques," 241–242.

⁴⁴ Landesbibliothek Kassel 4° Ms. Chem. 39.

While in Prague, Croll wrote his most important work *Basilica chymica*, which was published in Frankfurt in 1609. A major influence on contemporary alchemy, *Basilica chymica* contributed to the strengthening of Paracelsian influence in the coeval interpretation of nature. Around the same time, Croll published yet another text, in which he directly advocates the Paracelsian doctrine of the signature of things: *De signatura rerum*.⁴⁵ I. Purš believes that the two books are the most important pieces of original hermetic writings of the Prague of Rudolph II.⁴⁶ Croll openly professed his inspiration by Paracelsus, as is evident from his *Basilica chymica*, the front page of which has a picture of Paracelsus wielding a sword in the bottom right corner. Of interest is the fact that in his Paracelsianism, Croll followed the Danish Paracelsian Petrus Severinus / Peder Soerensen / (1542–1602), whose principal work *Idea medicinae philosophicae* was published in 1571.⁴⁷ Croll's concept of the Paracelsian iatrochemistry, and above all its concept of a universal cure – panacea,⁴⁸ was criticized by Andreas Libavius (1555–1616). Libavius criticized Paracelsianism from the perspective of traditional, medieval alchemy and Hippocratic-Galenic medicine; his position was, moreover, strongly influenced by the alchemical interpretation of the fourth book of Aristotle's *Meteorology*. Just as with Paracelsians, Libavius also spoke out against critics of alchemy as such; for example, he argued with T. Erastus.⁴⁹ Libavius' questioning of selected parts of the Paracelsian doctrine, however, was soon vehemently rejected by the British hermetic philosopher Robert Fludd (1574–1637).⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Croll dedicated this book to Peter Vok of Rosenberg. It was published posthumously in one volume with *Basilica chymica*.

⁴⁶ Ivo Purš, "Život a osud ‚filosofa a lékaře‘ Michaela Maiera," in Michael Maier, *Prchající Atalanta neboli nové chemické emblémy vyjadřující tajemství přírody*, trans. Jakub Hlaváček and Ivo Purš (Praha: Trigon 2006), 374–449, here 396.

⁴⁷ For more on Severinus and his influence on Croll, see: Shackelford, *A philosophical path for Paracelsian medicine*, 291–297. See also: Hiro Hirai, *Le concept de semence dans les théories de la matière à la Renaissance: de Marsile Ficin à Pierre Gassendi* (Turnhout: Brepols 2005), 217–275.

⁴⁸ For more on Croll's concept of panacea, see: Hiro Hirai, "Slovo Boží a univerzální lék v chemické filosofii Oswalda Crolla," in *Alchymie a Rudolf II.*, 381–387, esp. p. 385.

⁴⁹ For more on Erastus, see note 76. For more on Libavius, see: William R. Newman, *Atoms and alchemy. Chymistry and the Experimental Origins of the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 66–85, see esp. 68–69.

⁵⁰ Libavius studied Paracelsianism already in the 1590s. Besides Libavius' antagonistic approach to Paracelsianism, Fludd also criticised his scepticism about the Rosicrucian Manifestos. See: Andreas Libavius, *Analysis confessionis Fraternitatis de Rosae Cruce*

Despite Croll's heavy criticism of Lavinius, it is obvious that both were keenly interested in the Paracelsian concept of panacea. Proof of this common interest was several letters that Croll sent to the French Paracelsian alchemist Joseph du Chesne (1544–1609).⁵¹ In the first, dated 30 December, 1591, Croll quotes Lavinius' letter, in which the Silesian alchemist wrote about his guest, the French alchemist Baghoreus (Guillaume Baucinet), who had with him an ultimate solvent that could dissolve gold in an instant, and could then be used to treat almost any disease.⁵² He was, nonetheless, secretive about the solvent, forbidding Lavinius to even watch the whole process of dissolution. According to Lavinius, Baucinet valued his compound at 6,000 ducats and planned to sell it to one of the crowned heads of state. All that Baucinet disclosed to Lavinius was the fact that the solvent was made from parts of plants, and was even drinkable, a claim that Lavinius tested on himself.⁵³

Further proof that Baucinet was interested in panacea was the fact that he owned *Libri XIII. Paragraphorum Phillipi Theophrasti Paracelsi...*, a summary of basic Paracelsian medical propositions, translated into Latin and extensively commented on by the Tyrolean Paracelsian poet and physician Michael Toxites (1514–1581).⁵⁴

(Frankfurt/Main: Petrus Kopssius, 1615); Robert Fludd, *Apologia compendaria fraternitatem de Rosea Cruce* (Leyden: Godefried Basson, 1616). In his *Tractatus Apologeticus de Rosea Cruce defendens. In qua probatur contra D. Libavij* (Leyden: Godefried Basson, 1617) Fludd adopted a more comprehensive stand, defended his concept of Paracelsian medicine against Libavius' criticism of those aspects Paracelsianism that were close to "natural magic".

- ⁵¹ For more on this French alchemist, see: Didier Kahn, *Alchimie et Paracelsisme en France à la fin de Renaissance (1567–1625)* (Genève: Droz 2007), 233–268; Allen G. Debus, "Duchesne, Joseph," in *Dictionary of Scientific Biography III* (New York, 1971), 208–210; Allen G. Debus, *The French Paracelsians: The Chemical Challenge to Medical and Scientific Tradition in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge et al.: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 33–35, 51–59.
- ⁵² Unlike panacea, which was apparently plant-based, Baucinet's solvent was a metallic solvent, whose the final product was "potable gold" (aurum potabile). For more on this substance, see Croll, *Alchemomedizinische Briefe*, 118–119; potable gold played a major role in Paracelsian medicine, as is evident from the alchemic lexicons by G. Dorn and M. Ruland. Libavius, likewise, addressed potable gold in his *Alchemy*. See *ibid.* 118.
- ⁵³ Croll, *Alchemomedizinische Briefe*, 34–37 (Letter of 30 December, 1591).
- ⁵⁴ Full title: *Libri XIII. Paragraphorum Phillipi Theophrasti Paracelsi, Philosophi Summi, & utriusque medicinae Doctoris praestantissimi. Nunc primum a doctore TOXITE in communem utilitatem integritati restituti, latinisque explicationibus qua fieri potuit diligentia atque studio illustrati*. The book was published in Strasbourg by Christian Mylius (Müller) in 1575. The panacea is discussed mainly on pp. 170–173. Baucinet's possession of

Baucinet, who had earned his degree in Montpellier, was a French Huguenot. He was part of the inner circle of the students and friends of Theodor Zwinger⁵⁵, with whom both Lavinius and Charles the Elder of Žerotín were well acquainted. In Prague he associated with the friends of the French Ambassador Jacques Bongars (1554–1612), with whom he maintained links even after leaving Bohemia.⁵⁶ He met Žerotín and Lavinius in London, as is evident from his letter sent in 1586, in which he refers to them as his fellow researchers.⁵⁷ It is possible that he went with them to Bohemia, because already in 1588 he is known to be staying with Lavinius in Prague. In our context it is noteworthy that after returning to France, at the turn of the 17th century, Baucinet became actively involved in a dispute between the French Paracelsians and medical traditionalists.

Croll sent a further letter to Duchesne on 2 January 1593. In it, Croll refers to Lavinius' assumption that the panacea manufactured by the Paracelsian physician and alchemist Georg am Wald (1554–1616)⁵⁸ was in fact used for treatment and not for alchemical operations.⁵⁹ Furthermore, Croll mentions

the book is documented by Kahn, *Alchimie et Paracelsisme en France*, 668. Baucinet signed himself in the book and wrote a Greek quote taken from the publisher of Paracelsus' writings, Adam von Bodenstein (1528–1587) See: TGBNF (8°TE131.14) Toxités studied in Tübingen and Pavia. In Wittenberg, he was a pupil of Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560). His friends included the Paracelsians Gerhard Dorn (1530–1584), Adam von Bodenstein (1528–1577), Alexander von Suchten (1520–1575), and Johannes Huser (1545–1597/1604), whom he allegedly persuaded to publish Paracelsus' writings.

⁵⁵ See: Rudolf Kohndorfer-Fries, *Diplomatie und Gelehrtenrepublik: die Kontakte der französischen Gesandten Jacques Bongars (1554–1612)* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2009), 210. Cf.: Hugh R. Trevor-Roper, *Europe's Physician: The Various Life of Theodore de Mayerne 1573–1655* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 80.

⁵⁶ Bongars worked in the service of King Henry IV of France. He was friends with Tycho Brahe, whom he visited at his Uraniborg laboratory.

⁵⁷ See Baucinet's letter dated 9 August, 1586, London. Universitätsbibliothek Basel, signature: Frey-Gryn Mscr II 8:Bl.81. This letter has no addressee. The warm tone and the fact that Baucinet was very fond of Bongars suggest that the unknown addressee could have been Bongars.

⁵⁸ Real name Georg Baldinus. In the early 1570s, am Wald studied law in Basel. He then moved to Padua, where in 1578 he received his doctoral degree in philosophy and medicine. Wolf-Dieter Müller-Jahncke, "Georg am Wald (1554–1616), Arzt und Unternehmer," in *Analecta Paracelsica. Studien zum Nachleben Theophrast von Hohenheims im deutschen Kulturgebiet der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Joachim Telle (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1994), 213–304, here 214–218.

⁵⁹ For more on am Wald's concept of panacea, see Müller-Jahncke, "Georg am Wald (1554–1616)," 225. It is interesting that this was discussed even by a critic of selected

that G. am Wald had written a German alchemical book, in which he praised Paracelsus and spoke favourably of Duchesne.⁶⁰

The French Paracelsian alchemist Bernard Gilles Penot (1519–1617) was friends both with Lavinius and Croll.⁶¹ Penot visited Prague several times; from 1584, he lived for a while in the residence of Tadeáš Hájek of Hájek, working together with the British alchemists and magicians J. Dee and E. Kelly. On his later trips to Prague, in 1592 and then again in 1595, Penot stayed with Lavinius.⁶² In 1592 Penot travelled to the Moravian city of Olomouc to visit Lavinius' friend Charles the Elder of Žerotín.

A. G. Debus described Penot as one of the most vocal supporters of Paracelsus. Like Baucinet, Lavinius, and Žerotín, Penot also studied with T. Zwinger in Basel, earning his doctorate here in 1592. According to Debus, Penot was probably the author of *Centumquindecim curationes experimentaque*, a book published in Lyon in 1582 and attributed to Paracelsus. In the preface of this book, Penot roundly denounced traditional medicine and the Gale-nists in particular, while vehemently advocating the use of chemical medicine in the treatment of diseases.⁶³ In addition to this book, he also published the alchemical work *De mercurio philosophorum* in 1594. Reportedly, this was a manuscript of an unknown author, which Penot acquired through Lavinius. Although it is not entirely impossible that the author could be either Penot or Lavinius, Didier Kahn is more inclined to believe that it was actually an anonymous tract, and the fact that Penot published the manuscript would confirm Lavinius' role of a middleman or disseminator of alchemical manuscripts.⁶⁴ In addition to this work, he wrote several alchemical treatises, three

aspects of Paracelsian alchemy, A. Libavius. See for example his *Neoparacelsica*, published in Frankfurt in 1594, and *Gegenbericht von der Panacea Amwaldina* (Frankfurt/Main, 1595).

⁶⁰ Croll, *Alchemomedizinische Briefe*, 43–44. Cf. Müller-Jahncke, "Georg am Wald (1554–1616)," 273.

⁶¹ Information on Penot is based on Ivo Purš's study, "Tadeáš Hájek z Hájku a jeho alchymický okruh," in *Alchymie a Rudolf II.*, 423–459, here 449–452.

⁶² In the cited study on Hájek, Ivo Purš mentions only the second date of Penot's visit to Lavinius. However, the fact that Penot had stayed with Lavinius before, in 1592, is clear from a letter that O. Croll sent to Joseph Duchesne on 15 March, 1592, in which Croll writes: "*Monsieur Lauinius se porte bien.... Monsieur du Port (= Penot, J. M.) est avec luy.*" Croll, *Alchemomedizinische Briefe*, 39 (Letter No. 5).

⁶³ Debus, *The French Paracelsians*, 36.

⁶⁴ Kahn, "Les sources labyrinthiques," 244.

of which are in Part II of the popular anthology of alchemical literature, *Theatrum chemicum*.⁶⁵

The Czech Paracelsians and Paracelsus in Moravia

Lavinus' treatise *Earthly Heaven* is an illustration of the influence of Paracelsian alchemy and medicine in Czech lands of the last third of the 16th century. Naturally, Lavinius was not the only Czech person to be interested in Paracelsus. The influence of Paracelsus' view of the universe had already been discussed by Bavor Rodovský of Hustiřany, who in a letter dated 1571 and addressed to Wilhelm of Rosenberg promised the addressee that he would translate the writings of Paracelsus on the condition Rosenberg arranged his release from the debtors' prison at Prague Castle.⁶⁶

Bavor delivered on his promise only partly: The manuscript of his extensive text *Kniha dokonalého vmieni Chymického* (*The Book of Immaculate Art of Chemistry*)⁶⁷ contains the treatise *Tejnost Theofrasta Paracelsa* (*The Secret of*

⁶⁵ Published by L. Zetzner in 1602 in Strasbourg. The same volume includes, among other works, those of J. Duchesne and J. Dee.

⁶⁶ The translation, however, was never carried out. Vladimír Karpenko, *Alchymie: Svět pohádek a legend* (Praha: Academia, 2008), 242–243; D. Ž. Bor, ed., *Zázračná studánka hraběte Bernarda z Marku a Tarvis: Berhnhard Trevisanus a jeho následovníci*, Knížnice Logosu vol 3 (Praha: Trigon, 2002), 14–15.

⁶⁷ The manuscript is currently housed at the Leiden University Library, signature VCF 3. The book was brought to Leiden as part of the estate of Isaac Voss (Isaac Vossius), who lived from 1618 to 1689. Voss was a Dutch linguist and lawyer, and was the first Dutchman ever to become a member of the Royal Scientific Society. According to his contemporaries, he boasted the best private library in Europe, also thanks to the fact that he was, among other matters, an antiquarian, and was an avid collector of manuscripts (he bequeathed his library to the Leiden University). In the late 1640s he was employed as a librarian to the Swedish Queen Christina, helping to process book collections seized during the Swedish occupation of Prague. V. Zadrobílek (D. Ž. Bor) speculates that Voss could have acquired Bavor's manuscript either in Sweden or in Holland from a Czech exile. Bavor claims to have finished his manuscript in 1585, selling it four years later to an unknown physician of the Lesser Town in Prague in order to generate more funds for his alchemical experiments. What happened next remains unknown. See: D. Ž. Bor, ed., *Zázračná studánka hraběte Bernarda z Marku a Tarvis*, 19–20. D. Ž. Bor, ed., *Aurora Consurgens sv. Tomáše Akvinského*, Knížnice Logosu Vol. 10 (Praha: Trigon 2008), 14–16. In Bohemia, the first to draw attention to the Leiden manuscript was the Kladno-based brew master and brewer Otakar Zachar (1870–1921), whose passion was the study of the history of alchemy. Zachar reviewed the Leiden manuscript in his report *Alchymista Bavor Rodovský z Hustiřan a jeho rukopis nyní Leydenský* (Alchemist Bavor Rodovský of

Theophrastus Paracelsus) – one of the few pieces of writing that document Paracelsus' influence on the intellectual milieu of Czech⁶⁸ speaking alchemists and physicians in the second half of the 16th century. The question is, however, as to what impact this influence had on Bavor Rodovský, as his *Kniha dokonalého umění chemického* contains Bavor's translations of several dozen alchemical treatises, the vast majority of which were written before Paracelsus, or were not at all affected by his ideas. The works included were written by Hermes Trismegistus, (pseudo) Raymondus Lullus, Arnald de Villanova, George Ripley, Johannes Isaac Holandus, Geber, (pseudo) Thomas Aquinas, (pseudo) Aristotle, Khaled, Morienus and Petrus Bonus, among others. Only a small part of the 624 folia of the book is thus dedicated to Paracelsus. Bavor apparently more or less failed to honour the promise he had made while in prison. Once released, instead of translating Paracelsus, he focused more on translations of the classic alchemical treatises *Turba philosophorum*, *Rosarium philosophorum*: tj. růžová zahrádka filozofská (*Rosarium philosophorum*: i.e. *Rose Garden of Philosophy*), and *Vo Hermesově filozofii*, tj. o požehnaném kamenu filososofickém Berhnharda hraběte z Marku a z Terviz (*On the Philosophy of Hermes*, i.e. *On The Blessed Philosopher's Stone of Bernard of Trevisan*), which had all nonetheless been written in the pre-Paracelsian period of the history of alchemy.

The first proof of the arrival of Paracelsianism in Bohemia, however, is about three years older than the letter of Bavor Rodovský sent to Wilhelm of Rosenberg. This is a letter that Georg Joachim Rheticus (1514–1574) sent to Tadeáš Hájek of Hájek in 1567.⁶⁹ Hájek undoubtedly thought this letter was very important because he published it 17 years later in the second edition of his *Metoposcopia*.⁷⁰ A friend of Copernicus and author of the famous *Naratio prima de libris revolutionum Copernici*, Rheticus turned to studying Paracelsian alchemy in the second half of the 16th century. He probably wanted to make

Hustiřany and His Leyden Manuscript), which was published by Czech Royal Society of Sciences in 1902. See: D. Ž. Bor, ed., *Aurora Consurgens*, 16. Jiří Dolejší, "Jitřní záře české alchymie," *Logos* 16/1–2 (2000): 57–74.

⁶⁸ Due to his birthplace, German must have been Lavinius' native tongue.

⁶⁹ For more on Rheticus's letter to Hájek, see: Willhelm Kühlmann and Joachim Telle, eds., *Corpus Paracelsisticum: Dokumente frühneuzeitlicher Naturphilosophie in Deutschland, Bd. 1 Frühparacelsismus I*, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2001), 82–87. Information about Hájek drawn from the study: Ivo Purš, "Tadeáš Hájek z Hájku a jeho alchymický okruh," in *Alchymie a Rudolf II.*, 423–459, here p. 441 et seq.

⁷⁰ Full name: *Aphorismorum metoposcopicorum libellus unus, editio secunda*. (Frankfurt/Main: Andreas Wechelius, 1584). The first edition was published in Prague in 1562.

his friend Hájek follow suit, and evidently succeeded. In this letter, Rheticus sent Hájek a part of Paracelsus' *Astronomia magna oder Philosophia sagax der grossen und kleinen Welt*, a book which Paracelsus had written a substantial part of in Moravia, and finished in Bratislava in 1537, i.e. thirty years before Hájek received Rheticus' letter. Hájek's support of Paracelsianism is also evidenced by the fact that in the second edition of his *Metoposcopia*, Hájek included the interpretation of Paracelsus' doctrine of signatures. This doctrine was mentioned intentionally, as it is linked to the subject of the book: the influence of the planets on the human physiognomy, and an analysis of the correspondence between the parts of the human body and celestial bodies. This investigation was based on the application of an ancient doctrine developed by Paracelsus that dealt with the correspondence of microcosm (human being) and macrocosm (the universe, the "Great World").

Rheticus was not the only scholar with whom Hájek discussed Paracelsian alchemy. His correspondence with Tycho Brahe implies that both of them mutually consulted their alchemical laboratory research.⁷¹ Tycho had a large alchemical laboratory that employed his colleagues and students. Ivo Purš notes that in chemiatry, Tycho considered Hájek his equal, which was a great compliment for the Prague-based scientist, since Brahe valued his own knowledge in the field of alchemy highly.⁷² Tycho undoubtedly ranked among the most influential supporters of Paracelsian alchemy on the European continent. In this respect, it is somewhat paradoxical that although Tycho must have spent a lot of time in his laboratory, he left behind no descriptions of his alchemical experiments.⁷³

The examples of Bavor Rodovský and Hájek of Hájek show that Paracelsus' ideas circulated Bohemia from as early as the 1570s. Young Lavinius could thus have come across them already in his home country, despite the fact that it seems more likely that he became influenced by Paracelsianism on a more substantial level only during his studies abroad. This presumption is supported by a number of Lavinius' friends – Paracelsians, whom he met on his travels.

⁷¹ See letters to Brahe dated 1 May, 1582, and 25 August, 1585. John L. E. Dreyer, *Tychonis Brahe Dani Opera Omnia VII*, Copenhagen (reprint Amsterdam 1972), 70, 94–95. Parts of both the letters are translated and commented upon in the study by Ivo Purš, "Tadeáš Hájek z Hájku," 423–459, here 444–446.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 445–446.

⁷³ Victor E. Thoren, *Lord of Uraniborg. A Biography of Tycho Brahe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 210–213.

Although Lavinius apparently turned to Paracelsian only during his studies abroad, he is connected to Paracelsus also through the Bohemian lands. Both had worked as physicians in two branches of the same aristocratic family. It is a fairly well known fact that Paracelsus worked in Moravia in 1536 and 1537.⁷⁴ Within our context, it is useful to recall that he arrived here to treat Wenceslas of Žerotín,⁷⁵ a member of the Napajedla branch of the House of Žerotín and great uncle of Charles the Elder of Žerotín, who was descended from the Fulnek-Bludov branch. Instead of his medical successes or failures, the chief output of the time Paracelsus had spent in Moravia was his previously mentioned text *Astronomia magna*. The book had the subtitle *Philosophia sagax der grossen vnd kleinen Welt*. Published only after Paracelsus died in Frankfurt in 1571,⁷⁶ the text soon became a source of considerable controversy.

Immediately after the publication of this book of Paracelsus, Thomas Erastus (1523–1583) stepped to the fore. This compatriot of Paracelsus, whose real name was Thomas Liebler, was one of his most vocal critics. Erastus compiled his highly biased criticism of Paracelsus into *Disputationes de Medicina Nova Paracelsi*, several hundreds of pages divided into four parts. The work was published in Basel between 1571 and 1573, and serves as an important source of information concerning Paracelsus' stay in Moravia. In Part IV of his book, Erastus mentions the time Paracelsus spent in Moravský Krumlov. Reportedly, here Paracelsus failed to cure the ailments of Heinrich of Leipa and his son Berthold. Erastus goes on to mention another unsuccessful case, the epileptic seizures of the wife of John of Žerotín, the daughter of John of Pernštejn.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Vladimír Karpenko, *Alchymie. Nauka mezi snem a skutečností* (Praha: Academia, 2007), 251–252.

⁷⁵ In his authoritative work *Paracelsus, An Introduction to Philosophical Medicine in the Era of the Renaissance*, 2nd ed. (Basel et. al.: Karger, 1982), W. Pagel mentions only Paracelsus' employment with Jindřich of Lipá in Moravský Krumlov, in which Paracelsus was not very successful as a doctor. This was one of the arguments in Erastus's criticism of Paracelsus. See: W. Pagel, *Paracelsus*, 27; 327. According to Karpenko, however, besides Wenceslas of Žerotín, whom Paracelsus probably managed to cure, the alchemist also treated Joan of Pernštejn, in which case his efforts, once again, met with failure. See Karpenko, *Alchymie. Nauka mezi snem a skutečností*, 251–252.

⁷⁶ A digital copy of this edition will soon be available at the website of the Zurich Paracelsus Project: http://www.paracelsus.uzh.ch/npe/new_paracelsus_edition_11.html (downloaded: April 2015)

⁷⁷ "Accersitum tunc ad nobilem imprimis foeminam, coniugem D. baronis Ioannis à Žerotin, filliä generosi D. à Bernstein..." Thomas Erastus, *Disputationes de Medicina Nova Paracelsi*, vol. IV, 159. Cf. Pagel, *Paracelsus*, 327, note 399. Erastus worked here with the German

All is left from this episode of Paracelsus' life is his medical advice in the style of "Regimen sanitatis", which he devised for the Žerotín family. It mostly comprises hygienic and dietary advice, as well as a few recipes.⁷⁸ Erastus' criticism must have nonetheless been valid to some degree, as it seems that Paracelsus left Moravia in considerable haste, which resembled an escape.⁷⁹

Earthly Heaven

Lavinius learned about Paracelsus' alchemical concepts while studying in Germany; he probably started with practical alchemical experiments shortly after his return to his home country, at the latest when he worked as a personal physician to Charles the Elder of Žerotín.⁸⁰ It is no surprise within this context that Paracelsianism was most popular with Lutherans, a denomination followed by Lavinius, who came from Silesia, a region that was predominantly Lutheran in the second half of the 16th century.

From this perspective, it is only natural that Lavinius communicated most intensely with French and German Paracelsians of Lutheran or Huguenot denomination. In addition to this correspondence, another indication of Lavinius' contacts abroad are manuscript references to Lavinius, which to this day are stored in French libraries and archives.⁸¹ Didier Kahn pointed out the striking resemblance of Lavinius' *Earthly Heaven* to the French alchemical treatise *Discourse of an Unknown Author on the Philosopher's Stone*, which

names of the House of Pernštejn. Joan (Johanna) of Pernštejn (b. 1516), was the second wife of John the Younger of Žerotín (d. 1532; he was succeeded by his son John III of Žerotín), who, like his father, became the Supreme Moravian Chamberlain, and was the uncle of Charles the Elder of Žerotín. Joan of Pernštejn was the stepsister of Jaroslav, Vojtěch, and Vratislav of Pernštejn. The best known of them was Vratislav, who later became Supreme Chancellor of the Bohemian Kingdom. His wife Marie brought with her the world-famous Infant Jesus of Prague. The first wife of John the Younger Jana of Žerotín was Joan (Johanna) of Lipa, and so both the families were closely related at that time. (Erastus refers to the House of Lipa with the German variant "Leippa"). For more on the ambivalent Erastus and his criticism of Paracelsus, see: Charles D. Gunnoe jr., *Thomas Erastus and The Palatinate: The Renaissance Physician in the Second Reformation* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), 263–339.

⁷⁸ Paracelsus, *Theophrast von Hohenheim gen. Paracelsus: medizinische, naturwissenschaftliche und philosophische Schriften*, vol. X, ed. Karl Sudhoff (München and Berlin: Oldenbourg, 1928), 573–578.

⁷⁹ Karpenko, *Alchymie. Nauka mezi snem a skutečností*, 252.

⁸⁰ Knoz, *Karel starší ze Žerotína*, 284.

⁸¹ Kahn, "Les sources labyrinthiques," 244.

was published in 1590. Particularly remarkable to Kahn is the factual identity of certain passages in both the texts, which suggest that it was essentially a translation of either the French text into Latin or the Latin text into French.⁸²

Analysing the French text, Kahn finds that it had been edited between 1588 and 1590, and influenced by various alchemical and hermetic-apocalyptic treatises such as Lucas Rodargirus' *Pisces Zodiaci inferioris*, and the strangely titled *Apocalypsis spiritus secreti* by Giovanni Battista Agnello. French alchemical poems, likewise, demonstrate the presence of the influential alchemical treatise *Compound of Alchemy*, also known as *Twelve Gates*, which was written by the renowned British medieval alchemist Sir George Ripley (1415–1490). It is interesting that this work was published in Frankfurt in 1595, in a Latin translation by Lavinius' friend Bernard Gilles Penot. The next edition, which was much more influential, was published four years later by Penot's pupil and Lavinius' acquaintance Nicolas Barnaud (1539?–1604).⁸³

Besides the reference to the classic alchemical work, *Discourse* contains allusions to a still "more classic" book, one of the most fundamental texts of the entire alchemical tradition, *The Emerald Tablet*. It was probably a late antique oracle or mystery text that, also thanks to its enigmatic title, became one of the key authoritative texts of the alchemical and Hermetic tradition.⁸⁴ In addition to these alchemical influences, *Discours d'auteur incertain sur la pierre des philosophes* consists partly of translations of ancient poets, especially Pindar, whose texts are given a new alchemical context.⁸⁵

The question remains as to which text came first, the French *Discours* or Lavinius' *Earthly Heaven*. Both the options remain open, if only due to the fact that we do not know when exactly Lavinius wrote his treatise. It was not published until as late as 1612 by the aforementioned L. Zetzner. In the meantime, Lavinius' work could have circulated as part of a now-lost manuscript. *Earthly Heaven* itself unfortunately does not provide any clues that could help date the work.

⁸² Kahn, *ibid.*, 249–251.

⁸³ Several of his alchemical treatises were published in the third part of the popular book *Theatrum chemicum*, which was edited by L. Zetzner and published in Strasbourg in 1602.

⁸⁴ For more on this, see J. Ruska's *Tabula smaragdina. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der hermetischen Literatur* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1926); Milan Nakonečný, *Smaragdová deska Herma Trismegista* (Praha: Vodnář, 1994, 2009); D. Ž. Bor, *Otec filosofů Hermés Trismegistos*, *Knižnice Logosu* Vol. 0 (Praha: Trigon, 2001), 11–56.

⁸⁵ Kahn, "Les sources labyrinthiques," 226–232.

Lavinius could have learnt about *Discours d'auteur incertain* through his French friends, who were staying with him in Prague when *Discours* was published. These friends were, for example, the aforementioned Penot or his pupil Nicolas Barnaud, who lived in Prague in the second half of the 1590s. Another option is that *Discours* was written several years earlier than indicated by D. Kahn, making it possible for Lavinius to have learnt about it while he was in France in 1585, or possibly in 1587, if he travelled back to Bohemia from Britain through France.

As far as the other option is concerned, namely the possibility that Lavinius' *Earthly Heaven* could have been one of the sources of inspiration for French alchemical poetry, we need to again point out the role Lavinius played in distributing and procuring alchemical manuscripts, among which naturally his own could have been included.

In addition, as a highly educated humanist and Paracelsian alchemist, Lavinius was well versed in both ancient culture and canonical alchemical texts, and thus both the texts are characterized by broad cultural knowledge.

The opening lines of Lavinius' work, which are identical to the verses in *Discours*, allude to *The Emerald Tablet*; and alchemists of the Prague of Rudolph II also tended to be familiar with Ripley's work.⁸⁶ Bavor Rodovský of Hustiřany translated one of Ripley's treatises into Czech and included it in his anthology *Kniha dokonalého umění chemického*. The majority of the Latin translations of Ripley's writings were collected in a single compendium by Šimon Tadeáš Budek of Leřiny and Falkenberg (d. 1609) a few years later.⁸⁷ It is interesting that Budek provided the Latin translations of Ripley's English texts with a Czech commentary.

Another publisher of Ripley's work, Ludwig Combach (1590–1657) ascribed the translation of Ripley's works to E. Kelly, an acquaintance of Lavinius and Penot, Barnaud, and Tadeáš Hájek of Hájek. Combach consulted selected texts for his edition of Ripley with the versions of Nicolaus Maius, Imperial Councillor, manager of the Jáchymov silver mines, and friend of O. Croll,

⁸⁶ This paragraph is based on Jennifer Rampling's "Překladatelská činnost alchymistů v rudolfínské Praze: příklad Georga Ripleye," in *Alchymie a Rudolf II.*, 293–297.

⁸⁷ For more on this alchemist, see the study by Jaroslava Hausenblasová and Ivo Purš, "Šimon Tadeáš Budek a jeho kontakty u dvora Rudolfa II.," in *Alchymie a Rudolf II.*, 607–625. Budek was interested in Paracelsus' alchemy, as evidenced by his manuscript in Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (Cod. 11133), which contains Paracelsus' texts. See: Alena Richterová, "Alchymické rukopisy ze sbírek Rudolfa II. v zahraničních knihovnách," in Purš and V. Karpenko, eds. *Alchymie a Rudolf II.*, 249–293, here 278.

whose *Basilica Chymica* contains a poem by Maius. Maius even translated Ripley's *Compound of Alchemy* for Emperor Rudolph II to Latin, and as J. Rampling concludes, he was well acquainted with J. Dee and E. Kelly.⁸⁸

From the facts presented above it is clear that Lavinius' work could have influenced the French treatise, because one of the main sources of both the texts – the writings of G. Ripley – had arrived in Bohemia even before the time that D. Kahn considers to be the period in which the French *Discourse* was written. Both the texts, likewise, were influenced by contemporary Paracelsianism. Thus leaving aside the question of the time sequence of the two treatises, let us now focus on an analysis of Lavinius' text. The title of Lavinius' treatise itself requires attention. It is an oxymoron intended to confuse readers, disconcert them, and at the same time attract their attention. Each reader is bound to ask: Is there an "earthly heaven", or heaven on earth?

As mentioned above, the title of Lavinius' text could be an allusion to the opening lines of *The Emerald Tablet*. These verses convey the idea of a basic analogy between heaven and earth: That which is below is like that which is above. This statement can be interpreted in many ways with multiple levels of meaning: if my interpretation of the Paracelsian provenance of Lavinius' text is correct, then we need to consult Paracelsus in order to try to find in his writings the way by which Paracelsus himself interpreted the relevant dictum of *The Emerald Tablet*. Considering the fact that Paracelsus and Lavinius were doctors, each interpretation they make of even seemingly cosmological and cosmogonic processes is always related to medicine.

Indeed, when trying to explain the causes and development of various diseases in his treatise *Opus Paramirum*, Paracelsus writes the following remarkable sentence: "Nun ist der Mensch ein Himmel / das ist / alle Menschen ein Himmel!"⁸⁹

It is obvious that Lavinius' oxymoron could represent a coded reference to the subject of the treatise, which is medical alchemy. The treatise on earthly heaven thus turns within Lavinius' language code into a treatise on human beings. But in what sense are humans heaven and in what sense are they earth?

⁸⁸ See J. Rampling, "Překladačská činnost alchymistů," 295. Cf: A. Richterová, *Alchymické rukopisy*, 249–293, here 271.

⁸⁹ "The human being is thus also a heaven, which is to say that all human beings are these heavens." Paracelsus, "Opus paramirum," III, 6, in *Paracelsus: Essential Theoretical Writings*, ed., transl., comm. and introd. Andrew Weeks (Leiden et al.: Brill, 2008), 608–609.

Paracelsus, and following on from him the entire Paracelsian tradition all the way to Francis Mercury van Helmont, interpreted the relationship of heaven and earth, these two basic spatial and mental coordinates, as a result of God's creative process, which they envisioned as a kind of a chemical, or, in the contemporary terminology, spagyric process. The primary purpose of this process was to separate the spiritual (immortal) principle from the physical (mortal) principle. Lavinius himself points out this fact in the very first sentences of his opuscle, introducing his own concept of the alchemical spirit. This mutual mirroring of the two basic geographic coordinates of heaven-earth, above-below, and the two fundamental ontological principles of soul-body, spiritual-material, was aptly characterized by the German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) in his essay *The Thing*.⁹⁰

The separation of heaven and earth, of the waters of the earth from the waters of the heavens, as described in the Book of Genesis in the Bible, is in fact a literal guide for the physician and alchemist, who, according to Paracelsus operates with the same matter as God.⁹¹ Paracelsus discusses in

⁹⁰ Martin Heidegger, "Das Ding," in Martin Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Pfullingen: Neske 1954), 178. "Erde und Himmel, die Göttlichen und die Streblichen gehören, von sich her zueinander einig, aus dem Einfalt des einigen Geviertes zusammen. Jedes der Vier spiegelt in seiner Weise das Wesen der übrigen wieder. Jedes spiegelt sich dabei nach seiner Weise in sein Eigenes innerhalb der Einfalt der Vier zurück. Dieses Spiegeln ist kein Darstellen eines Abbildes. Das Spiegeln ereignet, jedes der Vier lichtend, deren eigenes Wesen in die einfältige Vereignung zueinander. Nach dieser ereignend-lichtenden Weise spiegelnd, spielt sich jeder Vier jedem der übrigen zu. Das ereignende Spiegeln gibt jedes der Vier in sein Eigenes frei, bindet aber die Freien in die Einfalt ihres wesenhaften Zueinander."

M. Heidegger, "The Thing." In Martin Heidegger: *Poetry, Language, Thought*, ed. A. Hofstadter (New York et al.: Harper, 2001), 177: "Earth and sky, divinities and mortals—being at one with one another of their own accord—belong together by way of the simpleness of the united fourfold. Each of the four mirrors in its own way the presence of the others. Each therewith reflects itself in its own way into its own, within the simpleness of the four. This mirroring does not portray a likeness. The mirroring, lightening each of the four, appropriates their own presenting into simple belonging to one another. Mirroring in this appropriating-lightening way, each of the four plays to each of the others. The appropriative mirroring sets each of the four free into its own, but it binds these free ones into the simplicity of their essential being toward one another."

⁹¹ Paracelsus, "Opus paramirum," II, 2, in *Paracelsus: Essential Theoretical Writings*, 448–449: "Dann der Artzt soll sein artzney nit anderst erkennen / dann wie der Moyses sagt im Buch Genesis / wie Gott der Vater / einandernach geschieden hab / heut das / morgen das / vbermorgen das. Also müssen wir auch wissen / das wir gleich ein solch ding vor vnsern henden haben / als Gott: Vnd das wir die Scientiam haben / zugleich weiss durch dieselbig auch scheyden / vnnd bereiten das schwartz vom weissen / das heyttter von dem finstern / das ist / die artzney vom koth / darinnen sie ligt: Dann also hatt jhn Gott beschaffen."

detail the analogy of heaven and earth, or the microcosm (human being) and macrocosm (the world) in the second chapter of the second book of his *Opus Paramirum*.⁹² The analogy between heaven and earth, or the microcosm and macrocosm, requires an idea of a structural similarity: the elements contained in the world are also contained in the human being,⁹³ and similarly the elements that we know from our world are also in heaven, albeit in a more subtle form.⁹⁴

According to Paracelsus, this analogy allows for interaction, or rather, for the impact celestial influences have on the earthly world. Planets primarily affect metals, stones, plants and parts of the human body that they correspond with. Paracelsus emphasizes that true medicine must consider the impact of both the earthly elements and celestial influences.⁹⁵

In his text, Paracelsus provides a distinctive explanation of the mechanism of these celestial influences. Like a lightning bolt that sets fire to a tree by igniting its flammable substance (sulphur), an invisible heavenly fire can ignite the sulphur in humans and cause fever.⁹⁶

The Paracelsian character of Lavinius' text, however, shows not only in the theme and the method of conveying the alchemical topic, but also in Lavinius' use of various alchemical terms. This connection to the Paracelsian tradition is nevertheless quite subtle – although it would be immediately

⁹² Where possible, the writings of Paracelsus are cited based on the German-English edition prepared by A. Weeks, ed., *Paracelsus (Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim (1493–1541): Essential Theoretical Writings*. We use this bilingual edition for citation primarily due to its rather wide availability. Writings that are not included in this particular edition are cited based on K. Sudhoff's edition *Theophrast von Hohenheim gen. Paracelsus: medizinische, naturwissenschaftliche und philosophische Schriften I–XIV* (München and Berlin: Oldenbourg 1922–1933).

⁹³ Paracelsus, "Opus paramirum," III, 3, in *Paracelsus: Essential Theoretical Writings: "Die-selbe ist die generation von der hie geschriben wirt / vnd ist im Microcosmo gleich wie im Himmel"* 606. See also: Paracelsus, "Opus paramirum," II, 2, 440–445.

⁹⁴ Also see e.g. Oswald Croll, *Basilica Chymica* (Frankfurt 1609), 22 et seq.; Robert Fludd, *Utrisque cosmi... historia* (Oppenheim: de Bry, 1617), 38, 140, 169; Franciscus Mercurius van Helmont, "The Second Part Concerning Microcosm: Or, Man as Being the Little World," in F. M. van Helmont, *The Paradoxical Discourse Concerning the Macrocosm and Microcosm, or the Greater and the Lesser World, and Their Union...*, London 1685, 6–7, 105.

⁹⁵ Paracelsus, "Opus paramirum," II, 2, 3, 7, in *Paracelsus: Essential Theoretical Writings*, 440–441; 446–447, 490–491.

⁹⁶ Paracelsus, "Opus paramirum," II, 6, in *Paracelsus: Essential Theoretical Writings*, 478–481.

obvious to contemporary informed readers. Within this context it is worth noting that although this was an alchemical treatise that was included in a representative anthology of alchemical texts, nowhere does it explicitly mention the “philosopher’s stone” as the longed-for outcome of the alchemist’s efforts. It might be argued that this may be related to the Paracelsian flavour of the text, or to the influence of the medical alchemy of Paracelsus. The reality is, however, more complicated. Lavinius’ treatise in fact also does not explicitly mention any potable gold (aurum potable), the result of the distillation process that was most used in medical alchemy.

We believe that the “philosopher’s stone” is actually present in the text, although not under its “traditional” name; instead it is concealed behind the hermaphrodite metaphor. Hermaphroditism plays a key role in Lavinius’ treatise, and together with Lavinius’ concept of the “corporeal spirit” it provides the main argument for placing the treatise within the Paracelsian spiritual milieu. Other indices include, for example, the express use of Paracelsus’ fundamental principles (tria prima – sulphur, mercury, and salt); another is the reference to the “dry” and “wet” alchemical path, and the theological speculations about the Trinity. Typical, but not exclusive, of Paracelsianism is also the obligatory ambiguity of concepts, their interchange, and playing with them: sometimes a part denoting a whole, a single concept referring to two different substances, or conversely a single substance is expressed by several concepts. The emphasis on the purification context of the alchemist’s work is also Paracelsian, though again not exclusively Paracelsian. Finally, the very concept of alchemy here – spagyric (Lavinus himself, however, does not use this term), which teaches the separation of right and wrong, pure and impure, is Paracelsian.⁹⁷

Paracelsian alchemy developed as a critical response to Galenic humoral pathology: instead of explaining the effects of various bodily fluids and temperaments, it mainly aspired to find hidden, invisible causes of diseases and ways to treat them. Lavinius’ treatise is an attempt to grasp and explain such an invisible agent, namely the Paracelsian “spiritus corporeus”, which on one hand is composed of three basic Paracelsian principles, and on the other, as this composite, it is essentially hermaphroditic.⁹⁸ As Lavinius, in accordance with Paracelsus, maintains that this spiritus consists of three fundamental principles (or primary substances), it is clear that he, like Paracelsus, credited it with a certain degree of physicality, meaning that it is in fact composed

⁹⁷ Paracelsus, “Opus paramirum,” I, 3, in *Paracelsus: Essential Theoretical Writings*, 340–341.

⁹⁸ Lavinius, *Tractatus*, 288.

of a very fine matter. The references Lavinius continues to make to the purification function of his spirit and to its role in the elimination of unwanted substances from the body (excrements) appear to allude to the fact that his spiritus is essentially identical to Paracelsus' Archeus, an inner spiritual alchemist within us that controls the metabolism in our bodies.⁹⁹ At the same time, it can also be identified with Paracelsian quintessence, which Paracelsus denotes as the natural character, power, medicine or the spirit of life.¹⁰⁰ This potential to identify with various substances does not deviate from mainstream Paracelsian alchemy, of which this semantic ambiguity is typical.

Lavinus believed that this corporeal spirit represented the primary thing, which was created by Nature itself. It was probably in this respect analogous to Paracelsus' matrix, a womb, and corresponded to Plato's notion of chore,¹⁰¹ in which all things originate. According to Lavinus, this corporeal spirit is common to all things, is hidden, and is the beginning and end of all things. Whilst it preserves everything that is pure and good, it destroys the impure and bad. It is also the all-uniting "clean water" (aqua pura), whose life-giving moisture hydrates our lower world. The spirit harbours an infinite force, the union of the properties and powers of heaven and earth.¹⁰² In each cosmic area, it acts as a creative force: on earth it is "steam", while in heaven it is "fire".¹⁰³

Lavinus views the spiritus corporeus as a unifying element of the whole of reality: in it various contradictions are united and merged, e.g. the contradicting properties of heaven and earth. The spirit is a mythical hermaphrodite, an androgynous creature, half man and half woman, whose constitution symbolized, especially in alchemical literature, the marriage of opposites. In addition to this, for the alchemical tradition this hermaphrodite symbolized, perhaps slightly paradoxically in our eyes, a productive force. Lavinus conveys this fact by pointing out that the epicene spiritus corporeus is the cause of growth, because it mixes with many things and embeds them with productive seeds of an ethereal world.

⁹⁹ Philip Ball, *Ďáblův doktor: Paracelsus a svět renesanční magie a vědy* (Praha: Academia 2009), 278–279; Pagel, *Paracelsus*, 104–115.

¹⁰⁰ Paracelsus, "Archidoxa magia," in *Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Paracelsus the Great*, ed. Arthur E. Waite (Washington: Alchemical Press, 1992), 22.

¹⁰¹ Plato, *Timaeus*, 49a–53c.

¹⁰² Lavinus, *Tractatus*, 288.

¹⁰³ Lavinus, *Tractatus*, 289.

This idea of Lavinius is based on a cosmological assumption about the creative power of the classical fifth element – ether, which constitutes the main material of the celestial world.¹⁰⁴ Lavinius' corporeal spirit, once born, sets out on a quasi-neoplatonic descent all the way down to the material world, bringing to this world, through ether, those seeds of a perfect heavenly substance, which ultimately makes this world more spiritual and gentler. In order for the spirit to be able to return, it must first be purified through an alchemical process, after which it is once again ready for the ascent. Lavinius compares the process to the drying of mineral waters, which, after being "cleansed" by fire, generate a "pure land" (*terra pura*), which incorporates the power of fire and water. Similarly, his spiritus corporeus descends from heaven to earth in order to join them together through the implementation of the celestial ethereal matter, which would give rise to "the earthly heaven".

Within the current context, it should be noted that this heavenly ether was identified by Lavinius' contemporary and fellow alchemist, the famous Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe,¹⁰⁵ as the alchemical quintessence, which represented the "spirit of substance" or its finest extract. Similarly, the transfer of the productive substance (which corresponds to Paracelsus' seed) through the air demonstrates the influence of Paracelsian ideas about the importance of this element as a transport medium.¹⁰⁶

The Hermaphrodite (Androgyne, Rebis) is one of the key symbols of Paracelsian alchemy. Alchemical literature naturally knew the hermaphrodite before the Paracelsians; but it was they who attributed to it the key role in the alchemical process. For pre-Paracelsian and non-Paracelsian alchemy, the hermaphrodite generally symbolized the culmination of the Great Work. Traditionally it was also associated with a metal whose Latin name it shared – Mercury. In the Paracelsian tradition, this union was reinforced by analogizing Mercury not only with the metal itself, but also with the philosophic principle. Paracelsian alchemy thus gave mercury a dual role – as the starting ingredient of the Great Work, *prima materia*, and as a productive and multiplying principle.¹⁰⁷ It is predetermined to act as the starting ingredient of the Great Work especially based on its characterization as a volatile metal – a condition which all metals undergo in the process of finding the

¹⁰⁴ The classical sources of the idea of ether are: Plato, *Timaeus* 58 D; Aristotle, *De cael.* I,3; Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos* I,2.

¹⁰⁵ See note no. 26.

¹⁰⁶ Lavinius, *Tractatus*, 288–289.

¹⁰⁷ Paracelsus, *Medizinische... Schriften*, ed. Sudhoff, Vol. 11, 347.

philosopher's stone.¹⁰⁸ As a unity of opposites, the Hermaphrodite then symbolizes both the starting substance of the alchemist's Great Work and the development of the Work, as well as its outcome. The Paracelsian alchemists are not alone in emphasizing that the alchemical "Great Work" is to some extent a cyclical process. It proceeds from the same substance – mercury – that it, once purified, returns to.¹⁰⁹ Of all the metals, mercury has the most androgynous character: "[It] is metallic yet liquid, matter yet spirit, cold yet fiery, poison and yet healing draught – a symbol uniting all the opposites."¹¹⁰

Paracelsus' idea of a hermaphrodite in itself also contains a powerful mythic component because, as the starting substance of the alchemist's work, it is an analogue of the primary, androgynous Adam. The idea of an androgynous Adam, often referred to as Adam Cadmus, was typical for some Gnostic and cabbalistic interpretations of Genesis; among other thinkers it influenced J. Böhme and through him, German romanticism.¹¹¹ For the Paracelsians, this androgynous Adam became a symbol or analogue of the unity of the trinity of the primary principles. They believed that the Biblical Adam had the first woman hidden within himself in his rib, and thus was actually an androgynous being. Only after God removed the rib from the body and made Eve did the being split.

The interpretation of the first human as a hermaphrodite had previously been professed by medieval Jewish Cabbalists. The most influential treatise of medieval Kabala was undoubtedly the mystic book of the *Zohar*. The book was written in the 13th century probably by Moses of Leon. *The Zohar*, or the *Glow*, had a major impact on the Renaissance Christian Hebraism, in which it played a key role. In the early Renaissance, the medieval mystical ideas of *Zohar* were combined with the Platonic myth of the quest for the perfect primeval androgyne as perfect existence, which can be achieved through the spiritual power of love. This interpretation of the Platonic myth was authored by none other than M. Ficino, whose treatise *De amore*, was highly influential and widely imitated in the Renaissance. The proposition of the androgynous Adam from *Zohar* and the image of the primeval spiritual androgyne from

¹⁰⁸ Paracelsus, *Medizinische... Schriften*, ed. Sudhoff, Vol. 14, 412; Vol. 11, 319.

¹⁰⁹ Karl G. Jung, "Představy spásy v alchymii," in Karl G. Jung, *Výbor z díla VI* (Brno: Nakladatelství Tomáše Janečka, 2000), 84–85.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 85.

¹¹¹ Ute Frietsch, *Häresie und Wissenschaft. Eine Genealogie der paracelsischen Alchymie* (München: Fink, 2013), 159.

Ficino's travesty of the final myth of Plato's *Republic*¹¹² were combined by Leo Hebraeus (1465–1523) in his *Dialoghi di amore*.¹¹³ As this interpretation of the androgynous Adam gives rise to two separate (albeit less perfect, because less complex) beings, it is not surprising that Paracelsian alchemy attributed to Adam a productive power.

From the gender perspective that currently enjoys popularity, it is certainly interesting that for the Paracelsians, the hermaphrodite represented a certain third gender outside the two 'traditional' genders, which in a way transcended men and women. This emphasis of the supra-gender function of the hermaphrodite has its analogue in the very concept of Paracelsian alchemy. Whilst traditional alchemy operated with two main principles: mercury and sulphur, Paracelsian alchemy works with as many as three principles. Abandoning the "traditional" concept of two opposing principles/genders, Paracelsians add principle/gender number three.

In her book on Paracelsian alchemy, aptly titled *Häresie und Wissenschaft*, U. Frietsch infers that the supra-gender concept of the hermaphrodite in Paracelsian alchemy was probably influenced by the then very important late-medieval alchemical treatise *Aurora consurgens* and the equally influential alchemical theological treatise *Das Buch der heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*.¹¹⁴

It is worth noting that based on various interpretations that surfaced soon after Paracelsus died, Paracelsus' inclination toward hermaphrodites also had its physiological reasons: Paracelsus was a completely asexual individual without any interest in women. Following a thorough forensic and anthropological analysis of his skeletal remains it was found that he probably had suffered from a severe physiognomic sexual identity disorder, which was characterized as an "innate androgenital syndrome", or "pseudohermaphroditismus masculinus". As U. Frietsch adds, the central figure of the entire alchemical history and the key alchemical symbol were thus wed in Paracelsus.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Plato applied the concept of love as a spiritual force to the interpretation of this androgynous myth; the concept shows predominantly in the dialogues of the *Phaedrus* and the *Symposium*.

¹¹³ Judah Leon Abravanel. (His book was published in 1535). See: Ruth Gilbert, *Early Modern Hermaphrodites. Sex and Other Stories*, Basingstoke (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 16.

¹¹⁴ Frietsch, *Häresie und Wissenschaft*, 160–163.

¹¹⁵ Frietsch, *Häresie und Wissenschaft*, 165.

Going back to the basic principles of Paracelsian alchemy, it is no surprise now that Paracelsians identify mercury (as the first principle) with the hermaphrodite, where sulphur symbolizes the active, fiery masculine principle and salt the passive, earthly feminine principle. As a male, active principle, mercury is then identified with the spiritual essence of the alchemical process. Consequently, while Lavinius' spiritus corporeus might be composed of these three principles, it also has a hermaphroditic nature, which makes it a productive and active force, and thus closest to none other than mercury, which is volatile. It seems that Lavinius identifies this philosophical mercury with Moses' cosmogonic principle of primary waters.

Lavinius holds that not only the spiritus corporeus, but all substances are hermaphrodite. This is due to the fact that God had placed two remedies in them – the physical and the spiritual, which can cleanse and rid all things of impurities. These potions are found in metals and in the womb of the Earth, their mother. Their growth is boosted by the sun's rays, which have a revitalizing power. A key role in extracting these drugs is held by the process of separation and cleansing, which alone can show them in their androgynous perfection: basically as *one* drug. Such a drug, which unites the opposites of the physical and the spiritual world, is then a model of perfection. As an acting spirit, it may then enter two different forms – as a storing and preserving liquid, and as a lye that dissolves and destroys.¹¹⁶ This dual role of alchemical Mercury (or corporeal spirit) is underlined at the very beginning of Lavinius' treatise: This is also why the alchemical mercury is sometimes portrayed as a bestial monster – a dragon or serpent, i.e. a symbol of the chaotic primary substance. At the same time, Lavinius also emphasizes its creative power, and identifies it with the symbol of a pelican.

Conclusion

We conclude our paper by introducing the poetic metaphor contained in the closing part of Lavinius' treatise, where Lavinius identifies his androgynous spiritus with the mythic pelican. As the pelican, often understood as a metaphor of Christ, nourishes its young with its own blood, so from the bones of this hermaphrodite, Lavinius writes, there arises a furnace whose fire revives mortals, transforming them into the King, whose virtue infinitely surpasses the others.

¹¹⁶ Lavinius, *Tractatus*, 289.

As part of the explication of the metaphor of the alchemical work, Lavinius points out the fact that should not go unnoticed. He states that this mythical bird Pelican (Phoenix) is a work of Art, which surpasses the laws of nature. This dictum to some extent, reflects a paradigmatic change that took place in Renaissance alchemy. It was this change that foreshadowed, or facilitated, the advent of modern science. Traditional alchemy was based on the notion that through his art, the alchemist basically imitates or completes nature, especially by helping it accelerate its natural processes. The traditional alchemist thus remains shackled by the laws of nature, which he cannot transgress; the maximum he can do is to draw level with nature.¹¹⁷ Lavinius, however, claims the opposite: alchemical art is above nature, and the alchemist can even afford, in a certain sense, to formulate its laws!

Lavinus' treatise was not printed until ten years after the death of its author. Such a long lapse of time may raise doubts as to whether it was genuinely written by Lavinius. Until a corresponding manuscript is found, this problem remains hard to resolve. The comparative linguistic method proposed by D. Kahn¹¹⁸ may not bring the desired result, because the treatise contains multiple technical terms and phrases on one hand, whilst on the other hand it is written in a very poetic style, as Kahn himself points out. In both of these aspects, it differs from the letters identified as written by Lavinius, which, however, mostly discuss other than alchemical issues.

Lavinus' treatise *Earthly Heaven* was published also thanks to the Swiss theologian and alchemist Raphael Eglin (1559–1622), who was linked to the Rosicrucian spiritual environment.¹¹⁹ It is possible that in this Rosicrucian-alchemical context, Lavinius' treatise could also have reached the British physician, hermetic philosopher, and inventor Robert Fludd, whose monumental

¹¹⁷ Bernhard Trevisan, "Vo Hermesově filozofiji," in D. Ž. Bor, ed., *Zázračná studánka hraběte Bernharda z Marku a Tarvis*, transl. Bavor Rodovský of Hustiřany, Knížnice Logosu Vol. 3 (Praha: Trigon 2002), 27–163, here 115–116, 133; Nicolas Flamel, "Klenot filosofie," in D. Ž. Bor, ed., *Černá Sulamit a studnice zdraví a moudrosti*, Knížnice Logosu Vol. 2 (Praha: Trigon, 2001), 197–234, here 220; Pseudo-Aquinas, "Aurora consurgens," in D. Ž. Bor, ed., *Aurora consurgens sv. Tomáše Akvinského*, Knížnice Logosu Vol. 10 (Praha: Trigon, 2008), 19–131, here 117.

¹¹⁸ Kahn, "Les sources labyrinthiques," 247.

¹¹⁹ His treatises are also included in the fourth part of *Theatrum chymicum* under the pseudonyms and anagrams Nicolaus Neiger Hapelius or Heliocantarus Borealis. It is interesting that his writings precede and follow Lavinius' tractate *Earthly Heaven* in the edition of *Theatrum chemicum*.

text *Utrisque cosmi...historia*¹²⁰ features a possible link to Lavinius' treatise, because it discusses the earthly sun. Regarding the search for other possible influences of Fludd's treatise, D. Kahn highlights some of these in connection with the related treatise *Discourse d'auteur incertaine*.¹²¹ In this case, the research focuses on the histories of alchemy and of hermetic philosophy in the 17th century, which are relatively under-researched, as a result of which interesting new discoveries are possible.

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¹²⁰ Full title: Robert Fludd, *Utrisque cosmi maioris scilicet et minoris metaphysica, physica atqve technica historia* (Oppenheim: Johann Theodor de Bry, 1617). For a possible reference to Lavinius' treatise, see page 140.

¹²¹ Kahn, "Les sources labyrinthiques," 232–236.

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