

42 Bernard of Trevisan

In the 1500's and 1600's, a series of compilations of alchemical texts were published. This has always been a thing since Al-Khalid began summarizing the Alexandrian alchemy back in the 800's. One thing these compilations do is introduce new texts, manuscripts we don't have individually. It also brings some doubt into the reality of the texts: maybe they were written by the compiler when the volume wasn't big enough.

Bernard, Earl of Trevisan, was supposed to have lived and worked in the late 1400's, but based on the content and ideas mentioned, he's not discussing the ideas of the late 1400's, which were influenced by the arrival of the original Greek texts from the fall of Constantinople in 1452. Most of his ideas were current around 1350. So this is probably someone else. The Wikipedia [page](#) mentioned several possible authors.

This is from *Collecticanea Chymica: A Collecton of Ten Several Treatises in Chymistry* ("London: Printed for William Cooper, at the Pelican in Little Britain, 1684")

“ Considering the long Desires and Hopes of the Students in the Chymick Art, I will in the present Treatise briefly and openly declare this Art. First therefore the Subject of the Art is to be known; in the second place, the Foundation; in the third, the Progress; fourthly and lastly, the Extraction of the Elements: Which being known, every one may most easily attain the end of the Art.

The Subject of this admired Science is *Sol* and *Luna*, or rather Male and Female, the Male is hot and dry, the Female cold and moyst, and know for a certain that our Stone is not compounded of any other thing, although many Philosophers name several other things, of which they speak Sophistically.

Nevertheless by *Scotus*, *Hortulanus*, *St. Thomas*, and *Christopher Parisiensis*, and very many others, many other things for an other Cause are sophistically reckoned up, that Ignorant Men may be deceived, because it is not fit for Fools to know our Secrets: And this is it, which I thought fit at this time to propound concerning the Subject of our Art.

The Foundation of this Art, is the Knowledge of the four Qualities, and that in the beginning of the work, Coldness and Moysture have the Dominion: For as *Scotus* saith, As the Sun dryeth up the abundance of Water in Fenny and Boggy Places, after the same manner our Sulphur when it is joyned with its Water or Mercury, doth by little and little consume and drink up the same by the help of the Fire, and that by the assistance of the only living God.

The Progress is nothing else than a certain contrary Action, for the Description of contrary things is one and the same, and if thou shalt have twice made this equality, thou shalt finish the whole Progress.

But now all skill consisteth in drawing forth the Elements, wherefore read over that which followeth so often, until thou canst conceive and understand it; and know that no one ever spoke so plainly as I in this Place, as thou wilt find by what followeth: Therefore give thanks to the great God, and be grateful to thy Friend who communicated to thee this Tractate: Live also according to God and reason, because Divine Wisdom will not enter into a wicked Soul, nor into a Body subjected to Sins.

The Extraction of the Elements is a certain Composition of Blackness, Whiteness, Yellowness, and Redness: And know that Natures ought to be drawn from their Root. But the Root is a certain Congregation of Elements, consisting in Sulphur and Mercury, which they call a confused Mass. But the Natures, which are drawn forth from the Root are Sulphur and Mercury, which when they are joyned together are separated, and purified, that they may be the better mingled afterwards, and united with the Body, out of which they are drawn. And after the Colours have passed, and that which is above, is made like that which is below, and that which is below like that above, then Miracles will from thence appear. Which being done, thou hast a Triangle in a Quadrangle, and a fifth thing which is contained in four.

Now remaineth the Multiplication, in which this briefly is to be noted; That the Elixir ought to be nourished out of the same things, from which at first it had its Composition. No Philosopher before now hath so openly declared this, as I have here done; and that for two Causes, first because from the beginning to the end of the work a long time is required, although some Philosophers do say, the Stone may be made in one day, and others in one month: But know that they speak Enigmatically, and that their words ought not thus to be understood.

Nevertheless I say with Scotus that the Stone or perfect work may be made in one year. Secondly, because Man's Life is short, and he groweth Old before he comprehendeth and understandeth what is needful to be done in the Composition of the Stone. And therefore I have here so openly explained all things, lest this, so noble a Science, should be lost and perish.

The Theory of the Same Author

Use venerable Nature, for the Philosophers from their own Authority have imposed various Names on this Nature, by reason of divers Colours appearing in its Alteration. For when it appeareth under the form of Water, they have called it Argent vive, Permanent Water, Lead, Spirit, Spittle of Lune, Tinn, &c. And when it's made dry and becometh white, they have named it Silver, Magnesia, and

white Sulphur. And when it groweth red, they call the same Gold and Ferment. But they do not vary in the thing it self, when that is always one thing only, and the same matter, and always of the same Nature, in which nothing entreth which is not drawn from it, and this which is next to it, and of its Nature. And this is most true, to wit, the Stone is one, and one Medicine, and it is a Water clear, and bright, permanent, pure and shining, of a Celestial Colour. And if Water did not enter into our Medicine, it could not purifie nor mend it self, and so thou couldst not obtain thy desire: But that which doth mend it is Sol, for the Water cannot be made better without it: For without Sol and his shadow a tinging Poyson cannot be generated. Whoever therefore shall think that a Tincture can be made without these two Bodyes, to wit Sol and Lune, he proceedeth to the Practice like one that is blind. For Body doth not Act upon Body, nor Spirit upon Spirit: Neither doth Form receive an Impression from Form, nor Matter from Matter, when as like doth not Exercise either Action or Passion upon its like: For one is not more worthy than an other, wherefore there can be no Action betwixt them, when as like doth not bear Rule over like. But a Body doth receive Impression from a Spirit, as Matter doth from its Form, and a Spirit from its Body, because they are made and created by God, that they may Act and suffer each from other. For Matter would flow infinitely, if a Form did not retard and stop its Flux. Wherefore when the Body is a Form informing, it doth inform and retain the Spirit, that it afterwards cannot flow any more.

The Body therefore doth tinge the Spirit, and the Spirit doth penetrate the Body, whereas one Body cannot penetrate an other Body, but a subtil Spiritual congealed Substance doth penetrate and give Colour to the Body. And this is that Gummy and Oleaginous Stone, proportioned in its Natures, containing a Spiritual nature occultly in it self together with the Elements purifyed. Therefore the Philosophers Stone is to be wholly reduced into this Gumminess by the last Reiteration or Inceration of a certain gentle Flux, resolving all the Elements, that they flow like Wax. But when it is the Stone, it appeareth like Copper, whereas notwithstanding it is a certain Spiritual Substance, penetrating and colouring or tinging all Metallick Bodys.

From hence thou mayst easily guess, that this doth not proceed from the crassitude and grossness of the Earth; but from a Spiritual Metallick Substance, which doth penetrate and enter. Wherefore it behoveth thee to resolve the Body into a subtil Metallick Spirit, and afterwards to congeal and fix, retain and incerate it, that it may flow before it tinge. For Gold doth Colour nothing besides it self, unless first its own Spirit be extracted out of its own Belly; and it be made Spiritual.

And know that our Mercurial Water is a living Water, and a burning Fire, mortifying and tearing in pieces Gold more than common Fire. And therefore by how much more it is better mixed, rubbed and ground with it, by so much more it destroyeth it, and the living fiery Water is more attenuated. But now when

three are made one in the Form of a congealed Substance, then it hath in it a true Tincture, which can endure the Violence of the Fire. Therefore when the Body is so tinged, it can tinge another, and it hath in it self all Tincture and Virtue. And from hence all they who tinge with Sol and his Shadow, (viz.) with the Poyson,⁵ that is Argent vive, do perfectly compleat our Stone, which we call the great and perfect Gumm. And know for certain that it is not necessary, that our Stone or Gumm lose its first Mercurial Nature in the Sublimation of its crude and first Spirit: for the Oyl and Gumm pertaining to this Stone are nothing else, then the Elements themselves Mercurialized, and made equal together, shut up and coagulated, resoluble and living, retained or bound in the viscosity of the Oily Earth, and inseparably mixed. And we ought to know that that Gum or Oyl is first drawn out of the Bodys, which being added, it is reduced into a Spirit, until the superfluous humidity of the Water be turned into Air, drawing one Element out of another by digestion until the Form of Water be converted into the Nature of Oyl, and so our Stone in the end getteth the Name of Gumm and Sulphur.

But whosoever hath brought the Stone thus far, that it appear like a mixing Gumm, and suffereth it self to be mixed with all imperfect Bodies, he verily hath found a great Secret of Nature, because that is a perfect Stone, Gum and Sulphur.

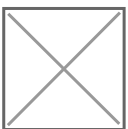
This stone then is compounded of a Body and Spirit, or of a volatile and fixed Substance, and that is therefore done, because nothing in the World can be generated and brought to light without these two Substances, to wit, a Male and Female: From whence it appeareth, that although these two Substances are not of one and the same species, yet one Stone doth thence arise, and although they appear and are said to be two Substances, yet in truth it is but one, to wit, Argent vive. But of this Argent vive a certain part is fixed and digested, Masculine, hot, dry, and secretly informing: But the other which is the Female, is Volatile, crude, cold and moyst; and from these two Substances the whole may easily be known, and the whole Stone intirely understood. Wherefore if our Stone did only consist of one Substance, in it there could be no Action and passion of one thing towards the other; for one would neither touch nor come nigh or enter into the other: As a Stone and piece of Wood have no Operation on each other, since they do consist of a different matter, and hence they can by no means, no not in the least be mixed together, and there is the same reason for all things that differ in matter. Wherefore it is evident and certain that it should be necessary for the Agent and Patient to be of one and the same Genus; but of a different species, even as a man differeth from a Woman. For although they agree in one and the same Genus, yet nevertheless they have diverse Operations and Qualities, even as the Matter and Form. For the Matter suffereth, and the Form acteth assimilating the matter to it self, and according to this manner the Matter naturally thirsteth after a Form, as a Woman desireth an

Husband, and a Vile thing a precious one, and an impure a pure one, so also Argent vive coveteth a Sulphur, as that which should make perfect which is imperfect: So also a Body freely desireth a Spirit, whereby it may at length arrive at its perfection. Therefore Learn thou the Natural Roots, and those that are better, with which thou oughtest to reduce thy Matter, whereby thou mayst perfect thy work. For this blessed Stone hath in it all things necessary to its perfection.

The Practick of the same Author

If we well consider the Words of Morienus that great Philosopher in Alchimy, who saith, Mix together Water, Earth, Air, and Fire in a due weight, without doubt thou wilt obtain all the Secrets of this Divine Science. And first, when he saith, put into the Water, or putrifie the Earth in Water, this signifieth nothing else, then the Extraction of Water out of Earth, and the pouring of Water upon the Earth, so long until the Earth putrifie and be cleansed, otherwise it would not bring forth its Fruit. Secondly when he saith, mix Water and Air, it's no more then if he should have said, mix Water now prepared with Air dissolved, or joyn and mix together dissolved Air with Water. Judge ye your selves: For you know that Air is warm and moyst, and ye have the saying of Morienus concerning the dissolution of Air, Earth, Fire and Water. Some when they speak of Dissolution, say that the Solution of the Fire is better, because whatsoever is dissolved in the Fire, that floweth in the Air. And Note that the Fire of the Philosophers is nothing else then the Air dissolved and congealed. This you may better comprehend from similitude, and suppose that first you have Air dissolved and congealed, to which add Fire. The Earth ought to be first prepared, and the Fire dissolved, before they are mixed.

For the Earth together with the Fire ought to be put into a fit Vessel, and after is to be introduced the inextinguishable Fire of Nature, which when it descendeth upon the Earth, devoureth the whole together with its Gumm, and converteth it into its own Nature. Wherefore if ye consider well the Sayings and Precepts of the Philosophers, and understand their Mystical Sence, ye shall come to all the Secrets of the Divine Chymick Art.



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