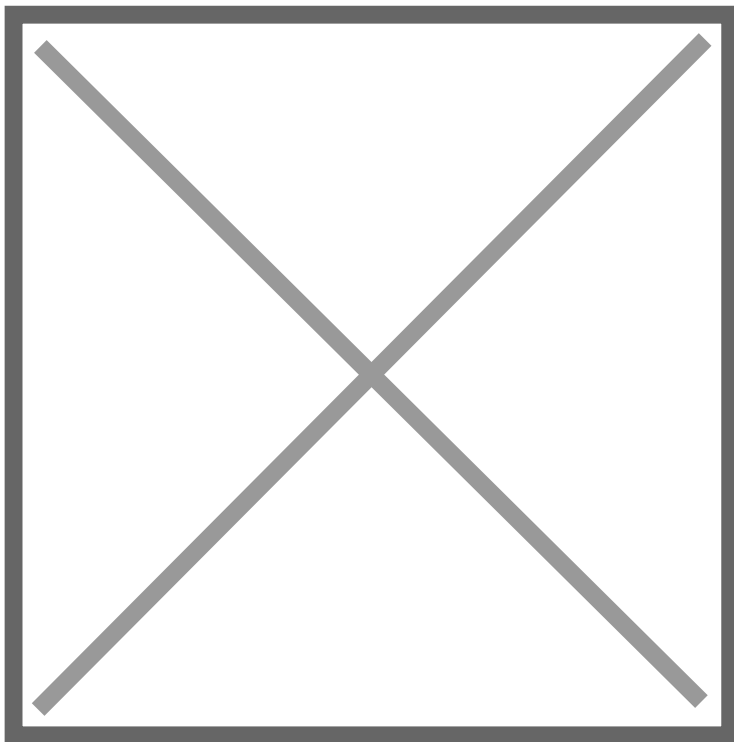


# 45 Paracelsus

Behind Nicholas Flamel in popularity as an alchemist is Paracelsus, born Theophrastus Philippus Aureolus Bombastus von Hoenheim in 1493 in Switzerland. A wandering physician, alchemist, theologian, anti-establishmentarian, contrarian, and generally unlikeable fellow, his writings, all in German, were gathered after his death to be published for the first time. Some of what he says makes sense, and consequently he is elevated to Early Scientist. But some of what he says makes no sense at all, and he is labeled the worst sort of alchemist.



At this point I'll say: I started writing an extensive biography, but then realized that it just wasn't needed. One thing about the writings of Paracelsus is that his personality really comes through, so let's just read him. Watch for when he speaks as a strict Aristotelian, or as an alchemical reformer, or as a looney. If you want the biography, read a book or read the Wikipedia page on him.

*A New Light of Alchymie . . . Written by Micheel Sandivogius [sic] . . . Also Nine Books of the Nature of Things, written by Paracelsus . . . Translated by J. F. M. D. "London: printed by Richard Cotes, 1650."*

“ Of the nature of things

From Book I: of the generations of Naturall things.

The generation of all natural things is twofold: Naturall and without Art; and Artificiall, viz. by Alchymie. Although in generall it may bee said that all things are naturally generated of the Earth by means of putrefaction. For Putrefaction is the chiefe degree and first step to Generation. Now Putrefaction is occasioned by a moist heat. For a continuall moist heat causeth putrefaction, and changeth all naturall things from their first form and essence, as also their vertues and efficacy, into another thing. For as putrefaction in the stomach changeth and reduceth all meats into dung; so also putrefaction out of the stomach in a glasse, changeth all things from one form into another, from one essence into another, from one colour into another, from one smell into another, from one vertue into another, from one power into another, from one property into another, and generally from one quality into another. For it is evident and proved by daily experience that many good things which are wholsome and medicinable, become after putrefaction naught, unwholsome, and meer poison. So on the contrary, there are many bad, unwholsome, poisonous, and hurtfull things, which after their putrefaction become good, lose all their unwholsomnesse, and become wonderfull medicinable: because putrefaction produceth great matters, as of this wee have a most famous example in the holy Gospel, where Christ saith: Unless a grain of Wheat bee cast into the Earth, and be putrefied, it cannot bring forth fruit in a hundred fold.<sup>1</sup> Hence also we must know that many things are multiplyed in putrefaction so as to bring forth excellent fruit. For putrefaction is the change and death of all things, and destruction of the first essence of all Naturall things; whence there ariseth a regeneration, and new generation a thousand times better, &c . . .

And here wee must take notice of something that is greater and more then this: viz. if that living Chicke be in a vessell of glasse like a gourd, and sealed up, burnt to powder, or ashes in the third degree of Fire, and afterward so closed in, be putrefied with the exactest putrefaction of Horse-dung, into a mucilaginous flegm, then that flegm may be brought to maturity and become a renewed and new made Chicke: to wit, if that flegm bee again inclosed in its former shell or receptacle. This is to revive the dead by regeneration and clarification, which indeed is a great and profound miracle of Nature . . .

Wee must also know that after this manner men may bee generated without naturall Father, or Mother, i.e., not of a Woman in a naturall way: but by the Art and industry of a skilfull Alchymist may a Man bee borne and grow, as afterwards shall bee shewed.

It is possible also that men may be born of beasts, according to naturall causes, but yet this cannot bee done without much impiety and heresie; to wit, if a man should couple with a beast, and that beast should, as a woman doth, receive the Sperm of the man with desire and lust into her matrix, and conceive: then the sperm doth of necessity putrefie, and by the continual heat of the body, a man and not a beast is thence produced. For alwaies as the seed is that is sown, so

also is the fruit that is brought forth; and unlesse it should be so, it would be contrary to the light of Nature, and to Philosophy . . .

In like manner also it is possible, and not contrary to Nature, that an irrational bruit should bee produced by a woman and a man. Neither are wee to judge of, or censure the woman, as the man (in the former case); shee therefore is not to bee accounted impious or hereticall, as if shee acted contrary to Nature, but it is to be imputed to her imagination. For her imagination is alwaies the cause of it. And the imagination of a breeding woman is so powerful, that in conceiving the seed into her body, shee may change her infant divers wayes: because her inward starres are so strongly bent upon the infant that they beget an impression and influence upon it. Wherefore the infant in the Mothers wombe in its forming is put into the hand and will of its Mother, as clay in the hand of the Potter, who thence frames and makes what his will and pleasure is: so the Woman that is breeding forms the fruit in her body according to her imagination and her starres. Therefore it often falls out, that of the seed of a man, Cattle, and other horrid Monsters are begot, according as the imagination of the Mother is strongly directed upon the Embryo, &c. . . .

But wee must by no means forget the generation of Artificiall men. For there is some truth in this thing, although it hath been a long time concealed, and there have been no small doubts and questions raised by some of the ancient Philosophers, whether it were possible for Nature or Art to beget a Man out[side] of the body of a Woman, and naturall matrix? To this I answer, that it is no way repugnant to the Art of Alchymy and Nature; yea it is very possible; but to effect it, we must proceed thus.

Let the Sperm of a man by it selfe be putrefied in a gourd glasse, sealed up, with the highest degree of putrefaction in Horse dung, for the space of forty days, or so long untill it begin to bee alive, move, and stir, which may easily be seen. After this time it will bee something like a Man, yet transparent and without a body. Now after this, if it bee every day warily and prudently nourished and fed with the Arcanum<sup>4</sup> of Mans blood, and bee for the space of forty weeks kept in a constant, equall heat of Horse-dung, it will become a true and living infant, having all the members of an infant which is born of a woman, but it will bee far lesse. This wee call Homunculus, or Artificiall. And this is afterwards to be brought up with as great care and diligence as any other infant, untill it come to riper years of understanding. Now this is one of the greatest secrets that God ever made known to mortall, sinfull man. For this is a miracle and one of the great wonders of God, and secret above all secrets, and deservedly it ought to bee kept amongst the secrets until the last times when nothing shall be hid, but all things be made manifest . . .

Here it is necessary that we speak something of the generation of Metalls; but because we have wrote sufficiently of that in our book of the generation of

Metals, wee shall very briefly treat of it here, only briefly adding what was omitted in that book. Know that all the seven Metalls are brought forth after this manner, out of a threefold matter, viz. Mercury, Sulphur, & Salt, yet in distinct and peculiar colours. For this reason Hermes did not speak amisse when he said, that of three substances are all the seven Metalls produced and compounded, as also the Tinctures and Philosophers Stone. Those 3 substances he calls the Spirit, Soul, and Body: but hee did not shew how this is to be understood, or what hee did mean by this, although haply hee might know the three Principles, but did not make mention of them. Wherefore we do not say that he was here in an error, but only was silent now, that those 3 distinct substances may be rightly understood, viz. Spirit, Soul, and Body, we must know, that they signifie nothing else but the three Principles, i.e. Mercury, Sulphur, Salt, of which all the seven Metalls are generated. For Mercury is the Spirit, Sulphur the Soule, and Salt the Body, but a Metall is the Soul betwixt the Spirit and the Body (as Hermes saith) which Soule indeed is Sulphur; and unites these two contraries, the Body and Spirit, and changeth them into one essence, &c.

Now this is not to bee understood so as that of every Mercury, every Sulphur, or of every Salt, the seven Metalls may be generated, or the Tincture, or the Philosophers Stone by the Art of Alchymie, or industry, with the help of Fire; but all the seven Metalls must be generated in the mountains by the Archeius<sup>5</sup> of the Earth. For the Alchymist shall sooner transmute Metalls, then generate or make them.

Yet neverthesse living Mercury is the Mother of all the seven Metalls, and deservedly it may be called the Mother of the Metalls. For it is an open Metall, and as it contains all colours, which it manifests in the Fire, so also occultly it contains all Metalls in it selfe, but without Fire it cannot shew them, &c.

But generation and renovation of Metalls is made thus: As a man may return into the womb of his Mother, i.e. into the Earth, out of which hee was first made a man, and shall again bee raised at the last day: so also all Metalls may returne into living againe, and become , and by Fire bee regenerated and purified, if for the space of forty weeks they bee kept in a continuall heat, as an infant is in his Mothers wombe. So that now there are brought forth not common Metalls, but Tinging Metalls. For if Silver bee regenerated (after the manner as wee have spoken) it will afterward tinge all other Metalls into Silver, so will Gold into Gold, and the like is to be understood of all the other Metalls.

Now forasmuch as *Hermes* said that the soule alone is that medium which joins the spirit to the body, it was not without cause hee said so. For seeing Sulphur is that soule, and doth like Fire ripen and digest all things; it can also bind the soule with the body, incorporating and uniting them together, so that from thence may bee produced a most excellent body. Now the common combustible Sulphur is not to bee taken for the soule of metalls, for the soule is another

manner of thing then a combustible and corruptible body. Wherefore it can bee destroyed by no Fire, seeing indeed it is all Fire itself: and indeed it is nothing else but the quintessence of Sulphur, which is extracted out of reverberated Sulphur by the spirit of wine, being of a red colour and as transparent as a Rubie: and which indeed is a great and excellent Arcanum, for the transmuting of white metalls, and to coagulate living into fixt and true Gold. Esteeme this as an enriching treasure, and thou maist bee well contented with this onely secret in the Transmutation of Metalls. . . .

## Book 2: Of the growth, and increase of Natural things.

It is sufficiently manifest and knowne to every one, that all naturall things grow and are ripned through heat and moisture, which is sufficiently demonstrated by rain and the heat of the sun. For no man can deny that rain doth make the Earth fruitfull, and it is granted by all that all fruits are ripened by the sun.

Seeing therefore this is by divine ordination naturally possible, who can gain-say or not beleeeve that a man is able, through the wise and skilfull Art of Alchymy, to make that which is barren, fruitfull, and that which is crude, to ripen, and all things to grow, and to be increased . . .

It is possible also that Gold, through industry and skill of an expert Alchymist, may bee so far exalted that it may grow in a glasse like a tree, with many wonderfull boughs and leaves, which indeed is pleasant to behold and most wonderful.

The process is this. Let Gold bee calcined with *Aqua Regis*, till it becomes a kind of chalke, which put into a gourd glasse and poure upon it good new Aqua Regis, so that it may cover it foure fingers breadth, then again draw it off with the third degree of fire, untill no more ascend. The water that is distilled off, poure on againe, then distill it off againe. This doe so long untill thou seest the Gold to rise in the glasse and grow after the manner of a tree, having many boughes and leaves: and so there is made of Gold a wonderful and pleasant shrub, which the Alchymists call their Golden hearb and the Philosophers Tree. In like manner you may proceed with Silver and other Metalls, yet so that their calcination bee made after another manner, by another *Aqua fortis*, which I leave to thine experience. If thou art skilled in Alchymie, thou shalt not erre in these things.

## Book 4: Of the life of Naturall things.

No man can deny that Aire gives life to all things, bodies, and substances that are produced and generated of the Earth. Now you must know what, and what manner of thing the life of every thing in particular is; and it is nothing else then a spirituall essence, a thing that is invisible, impalpable, a spirit, and spirituall. Wherefore there is no corporeall thing which hath not a spirit lying hid in it, as

also a life, which, as I said before, is nothing but a spirituall thing. For not only that hath life which moves and stirres, as Men, Animalls, Vermine of the earth, Birds in the Aire, Fish in the sea, but also all corporeall and substantiall things. For here wee must know that God in the beginning of the Creation of all things, created no body at all without its spirit, which it secretly contains in it.

For what is the body without a spirit? Nothing at all. Wherefore the spirit contains in it secretly the vertue and power of the thing, and not the body. For in the body there is death, and the body is the subject of death, neither is any else to be sought for in the body but death.

For that may severall wayes bee destroyed and corrupted, but the spirit cannot. For the living spirit remains for ever, and also is the subject of life: and preserves the body alive; but in the ruine of the body it is separated from it, and leaves behind it a dead body, and returnes to its place from whence it came, viz. into the Chaos, and the Aire of the upper and lower Firmament. Hence it appears that there are divers spirits, as well as divers bodies.

For there are spirits Celestiall, Infernall, Humane, Metalline, Minerall, of Salts, of Gemmes, of Marcasites, of Arsenicks, of Potable things, of Rootes, of Juices, of Flesh, of Blood, of Bones, &c. Wherefore also know that the spirit is most truly the life and balsome of all Corporeall things. But now wee will proceed to the species, and briefly describe to you in this place the life of every naturall thing in particular.

The life therefore of all men is nothing else but an Astrall balsome, a Balsamick impression, and a celestiall invisible Fire, an included Aire, and a tinging spirit of Salt. I cannot name it more plainly, although it bee set out by many names. And seeing wee have declared the best and chieftest, wee shall bee silent in these which are lesse materiall.

The life of Metalls is a secret fatnesse which they have received from Sulphur, which is manifest by their flowing, for every thing that flowes in the fire, flowes by reason of that secret fatnesse that is in it: unlesse that were in it, no Metall could flow, as wee see in Iron and Steel, which have lesse Sulphur and fatnesse then all the other Metalls, wherefore they are of a dryer Nature then all the rest .  
. .

The death of all naturall things is nothing else but an alteration and destruction of their powers and vertues, a predominancy of that which is evill and an overcoming of what is good, an abolishing of the former nature and generation of a new, and another nature. For you must know that there are many things that, whilst they are alive, have in them severall vertues, but when they are

dead retaine little or nothing of their vertue, but become unsavory and unprofitable. So on the contrary many things, whilst they live, are bad, but after they are dead and corrupted, manifest a manifold power and vertue, and are very usefull. Wee could bring many examples to confirme this, but that doth not belong to our purpose. But that I may not seem to write according to mine own opinion only, but out of my experience, it will be necessary that I produce one example, with which I shall silence those Sophisters, who say that wee can receive nothing from dead things, neither must we seek or expect to find any thing in them. The reason is because they do esteem nothing of the preparations of Alchymists, by which many such like great secrets are found out. For looke upon Mercury, crude Sulphur, and crude Antimony, as they are taken out of their Mines, i.e. whilst they are living, and see what little vertue there is in them, how slowly they put forth their vertues; yea they do more hurt then good, and are rather poison then a Medicine. But if through the industry of a skilfull Alchymist they bee corrupted in their first substance, and wisely prepared (viz. if Mercury be coagulated, precipitated, sublimed, dissolved, and turned into an oyle; if Sulphur bee sublimed, calcined, reverberated, and turned into an oyle; also if Antimony bee sublimed, calcined, and reverberated and turned into oyle) you shall see how usefull they are, how much strength and vertue they have, and how quickly they put forth and shew their efficacy, which no man is able to speak enough in the commendation of, or to describe. For many are their vertues, yea more then will ever bee found out by any man. Wherefore let every faithfull Alchymist and Physitian spend their whole lives in searching into these three: For they will abundantly recompense him for all his labour, study, and costs.

But to come to particulars, and to write particularly of the death and destruction of every naturall thing, and what the death of every thing is, and after what manner every thing is destroyed: you must know therefore in the first place, that the death of man is without doubt nothing else but an end of his daily work, the taking away of the Aire, the decaying of the Naturall balsome, the extinguishing of the naturall light, and the great separation of the three substances, viz. the body, soule, and spirit, and their return from whence they came. For because a naturall man is of the earth, the Earth also is his Mother, into which hee must return, and there must lose his natural earthly flesh, and so be regenerated at the last day in a new celestiall and purified flesh, as Christ said to Nicodemus when hee came to him by Night. For thus must these words bee understood of regeneration.

The death and destruction of Metalls is the disjoining of their bodies and sulphureous fatnesse, which may bee done severall ways, as by calcination, reverberation, dissolution, cementation, and sublimation . . . [The balance of this chapter provides many examples of metallic death or mortification; its sequel, the sixth book, treats "Of the Resurrection of Naturall things."]

## Book 7: Of the Transmutation of Naturall things.

If wee write of the Transmutation of all Naturall things, it is fit and necessary that in the first place wee shew what Transmutation is. Secondly, what bee the degrees to it. Thirdly, by what Mediums, and how it is done.

Transmutation therefore is when a thing loseth its form and is so altered that it is altogether unlike to its former substance and form, but assumes another form, another essence, another colour, another vertue, another nature, or property, as if a Metall bee made glasse or stone: if a stone bee made a coale: if wood be made a coal: clay be made a stone or a brick: a skin bee made glew: cloth be made paper, and many such like things. All these are Transmutations of Naturall things.

After this, it is very necessary also to know the degrees to Transmutation, and how many they be. And they are no more then seven. For although many doe reckon more, yet there are no more but seven which are principall, and the rest may bee reckoned betwixt the degrees, being comprehended under those seven: And they are these, Calcination, Sublimation, Solution, Putrefaction, Distillation, Coagulation, Tincture. If any one will climbe that Ladder, he shall come into a most wonderfull place, that hee shall see and have experience of many secrets in the Transmutation of Naturall things.

The first degree therefore is Calcination, under which also are comprehended Reverberation, and Cementation. For betwixt these there is but little difference as for Matter of Calcination: wherefore it is here the chieftest degree. For by Reverberation and Cementation, many corporeall things are calcined and brought into Ashes, and especially Metalls. Now what is calcined is not any further reverberated or cemented.

By Calcination therefore all Metalls, Mineralls, Stones, Glasse, &c. and all corporeall things are made a Coal and Ashes, and this is done by a naked strong Fire with blowing, by which all tenacious, soft, and fat earth is hardened into a stone. Also all stones are brought into a Calx, as wee see in a Potters furnace of lime and bricks.

Sublimation is the second degree and one of the most principall for the Transmutation of many Naturall things: under which is contained Exaltation, Elevation, and Fixation; and it is not much unlike Distillation. For as in Distillation the water ascends from all flegmatick and watery things and is separated from its body; so in Sublimation, that which is spirituall is raised from what is corporeall, and is subtilized, volatile from fixed, and that in dry things, as are all Mineralls, and the pure is separated from the impure . . .



Let that which is sublimed be ground and mixed with its feces, and bee againe sublimed as before, which must bee done so long, till it will no longer sublime, but all will remaine together in the bottome and be fixed.

So there will bee afterward a stone, and oyle when and as oft as thou pleasest, viz. if thou putttest it into a cold place, or in the aire in a Glass. For there it will presently bee dissolved into an Oyle. And if thou putttest it againe into the fire, it will againe bee coagulated into a Stone of wonderfull and great vertue. Keep this as a great secret and mystery of Nature, neither discover it to Sophisters . . .

The third degree is Solution, under which are to bee understood Dissolution and Resolution, and this degree doth most commonly follow Sublimation and Distillation, viz. that the matter be resolved which remaines in the bottome. Now Solution is twofold: the one of Cold, the other of Heat; the one without Fire, the other in Fire.

A cold dissolution dissolves all Salts, all Corrosive things, & all calcined things. Whatsoever is of a Salt and Corrosive quality is by it dissolved into Oyle, Liquor, or Water. And this is in a moist, cold cellar or else in the Aire on a marble or in a glasse. For whatsoever is dissolved in the cold contains an Airy spirit of Salt, which oftentimes it gets, and assumes in Sublimation or Distillation. And whatsoever is dissolved in the cold, or in the Aire, may again by the heat of the Fire bee coagulated into powder or a stone . . .

Putrefaction is the fourth degree, under which is comprehended Digestion and Circulation. Now then Putrefaction is one of the principall degrees, which indeed might deservedly have been the first of all, but that it would be against the true order and mystery, which is here hid and known to few: For those degrees must, as hath been already said, so follow one the other, as links in a chain or steps in a ladder.

For if one of the linkes should bee taken away, the chain is discontinued and broken, and the prisoners would bee at liberty and runne away. So in a ladder, if one step bee taken away in the middle and bee put in the upper or lower part, the ladder would be broken and many would fall down headlong by it with the hazard of their bodies, and lives . . .

Now putrefaction is of such efficacy, that it abolisheth the old Nature and brings in a new one. All living things are killed in it, all dead things putrefied in it, and all dead things recover life in it.

Putrefaction takes from all Corrosive spirits, the sharpnesse of the Salt and makes them mild and sweet, changeth the colours, and separates the pure from the impure; it places the pure above and the impure beneath.

Distillation is the first degree to the Transmutation of all naturall things. Under it are understood Ascension, Lavation, and Fixation.

By Distillation all Waters, Liquors, and Oyles are subtilized; out of all fat things Oyle is extracted, out of all Liquors, Water, and out of all Flegmaticke things Water and Oyle are separated.

Besides there are many things in Distillation fixed by Cohobation, and especially if the things to bee fixed containe in them Water, as Vitriall doth, which if it bee fixed is called Colcothar . . .

Moreover, in Distillation many bitter, harsh, and sharp things become as sweet as Honey, Sugar, or Manna; and on the contrary, many sweet things, as Sugar, Honey, or Manna may bee made as harsh as Oyle of Vitriall or Vineger, or as bitter as Gall or Gentian, as Eager as a Corrosive . . .

Coagulation is the sixth degree: now there is a twofold Coagulation, the one by Cold, the other by Heat, i.e. one of the Aire, the other of the Fire: and each of these again is twofold, so that there are foure sorts of Coagulations, two of Cold, and two of Fire . . . the Coagulation of Fire, which alone is here to bee taken notice of, is made by an Artificiall and Graduall Fire of the Alchymists, and it is fixed and permanent. For whatsoever such a Fire doth coagulate, the same abides so.

The other Coagulation is done by the Aetnean and Minerall Fire in the Mountains, which indeed the Archeus of the Earth governs and graduates not unlike to the Alchymists, and whatsoever is coagulated by such a Fire is also fixed and constant; as you see in Mineralls and Metalls, which indeed at the beginning are a mucilaginous matter, and are coagulated into Metalls, Stones, Flints, Salts, and other bodies, by the Aetnean fire in the Mountaines, through the Archeus of Earth, and operator of Nature . . .

Tincture is the seventh and last degree, which concludes the whole worke of our mystery for Transmutation, making all imperfect things perfect and transmuting them into a most excellent essence, and into a most perfect soundnesse, and alters them into another colour.

*Tincture therefore is a most excellent matter, wherewith all Minerall and Humane bodies are tinged and are changed into a better and more noble essence and into the highest perfection and purity.*

For Tincture colours all things according to its own nature and colour. Now there are many Tinctures and not only for Metalline but Humane bodies, because every thing which penetrates another matter, or tingeth it with another colour, or essence, so that it bee no more like the former, may bee called a Tincture . . .

For if a Tincture must tinge, it is necessary that the body or matter which is to bee tinged, bee opened and continue in flux, and unless this should bee so, the Tincture could not operate . . .

Now these are the Tinctures of Metalls, which it is necessary must bee turned into an Alcool by the first degree of Calcination, then by the second degree of Sublimation, must get an easy and light flux. And lastly, by the degree of Putrefaction and Distillation are made a fixt and incombustible Tincture and of an unchangeable colour.

Now the Tinctures of Mens bodies are that they bee tinged into the highest perfection of health and all Diseases bee expelled from them, that their lost strength and colour bee restored and renewed, and they are these, viz. Gold, Pearles, Antimony, Sulphur, Vitriall, and such like, whose preparation wee have diversly taught in other books . . .

## Book 8: Of the Separation of Naturall things.

In the Creation of the world, the first separation began from the foure Elements, seeing the first matter of the world was one Chaos.

Of this Chaos God made the greater world, being divided into four distinct Elements, viz. Fire, Aire, Water, and Earth. Fire is the hot part, Aire the moist, Water the cold, and Earth the dry part of the greater world.

But that you may in brief understand the reason of our purpose in the 8<sup>th</sup> book, you must know that we doe not purpose to treat here of the Elements of all Naturall things, seeing wee have sufficiently discoursed of those Arcana in the *Archidoxis* of the separation of Naturall things: whereby every one of them is apart and distinctly separated, and divided materially and substantially, viz. seeing that two, three, or foure, or more things are mixed into one body, and yet there is seen but one matter. Where it often falls out that the corporeall matter of that thing cannot bee known by any, or signified by any expresse name, untill there bee a separation made. Then sometimes two, three, four, five or more things come forth out of one matter, as is manifest by daily experience in the Art of Alchymie.

As for example, you have an *Electrum*, which of it selfe is no Metall, but yet it hides all Metalls in one Metall. That if it be anatomized by the industry of Alchymie and separated: all the seven Metalls, viz. *Gold, Silver, Copper, Tinne, Lead, Iron*, and *Quicksilver* come out of it and that pure and perfect.

But that you may understand what Separation is, note that it is nothing else then the severing of one thing from another, whether of two, three, four, or more things mixed together: I say a separation of the three Principles, as of

Mercury, Sulphur, and Salt, and the extraction of pure out of the impure: or the pure, excellent spirit and quintessence from a grosse and elementary body; and the preparation of two, three, four, or more out of one: or the dissolution and setting at liberty things that are bound and compact, which are of a contrary nature, acting one against the other untill they destroy one the other . . .

The first separation of which wee speake must begin from man, because hee is the Microcosme or little world, for whose sake the Macrocosme or greater world was made, viz. that hee might be the separator of it.

Now the separation of the Microcosme begins at his death. For in death the two bodies of Man are separated the one from the other, viz. his Celestial and Terrestrial body, *i.e.* Sacramental and Elementary: one of which ascends on high like an Eagle; the other falls downward to the earth like lead . . .

After this separation is made, then after the death of the Man three substances, viz. *Body, Soule, and Spirit* are divided the one from the other, every one going to its own place, viz. its own fountaine, from whence it had its originall, viz. the body to the Earth, to the first matter of the Elements: the soul into the first matter of Sacraments, and lastly, the spirit into the first matter of the Airy Chaos . . .

## Of the Separation of Vegetables (Book 8), Concerning Physicians.

All these Separations being made according to the Spagiricall Art, many notable and excellent medicines come from thence, which are to be used as well within as without the body.

But now seeing idlenesse is so much in request amongst Physitians, and all labour and study is turned only to insolency, truly I do not wonder that all such preparations are everywhere neglected, and coales sold at so low a price that if Smiths could be so easily without coales in forging and working their Metals, as Physitians are in preparing their Medicines, certainly Colliers would long since have been brought to extream want.

In the mean time I will give to Spagiricall Physitians their due praise. For they are not given to idlenesse and sloth, nor goe in a proud habit or plush and velvet garments, often shewing their rings upon their fingers, or wearing swords with silver hilts by their sides, or fine and gay gloves upon their hands, but diligently follow their labours, sweating whole nights and dayes by their furnaces.

These doe not spend their time abroad for recreation but take delight in their laboratory. They wear Leather garments with a pouch and Apron wherewith they wipe their hands. They put their fingers amongst coales, into clay and dung, not

into gold rings. Thy are sooty and black, like Smithes or Colliers, and doe not pride themselves with cleane and beautifull faces. They are not talkative when they come to the sick, neither doe they extoll their Medicines: seeing they well know that the Artificer must not commend his work, but the work the Artificer, and that the sick cannot be cured with fine words.

Therefore laying aside all these kinds of vanities, they delight to bee busied about the fire and to learn the degrees of the science of Alchymie . . .

## [Conclusion of Book 8: On the “final separation” / Last Judgment].

And lastly in the end of all things shall bee the last separation, in the third generation, the great day when the Son of God shal come in majesty and glory, before whom shal be carried not swords, garlands, diadems, scepters, &c. and Kingly jewels with which Princes, Kings, Cesars, &c. doe pompously set forth themselves; but his Crosse, his crown of thorns, and nails thrust through his hands and feet, and spear with which his side was pierced, and the reed and sponge in which they gave him vineger to drinke, and the whips wherewith hee was scourged and beaten. He comes not accompanied with troopes of Horse and beating of Drums, but foure Trumpets shall bee sounded by the Angells towards the foure parts of the world, killing all that are then alive with their horrible noise, in one moment, and then presently raising these again, together with them that are dead and buried.

For the voice shall bee heard: *Arise yee dead, and come to judgment.* Then shal the twelve Apostles sit down, their seats being prepared in the clouds, and shal judge the twelve Tribes of *Israel*. In that place the holy Angels shall separate the bad from the good, the cursed from the blessed, the goats from the sheep. Then the cursed shall like stones and lead be thrown downward: but the blessed shall like eagles fly on high. Then from the tribunall of God shal go forth this voice to them that stand on his left hand: *Goe yee cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the Devill and his Angells from all eternity: For I was an hungry, and yee fed me not; thirsty, and you gave no drink; sick, in prison, and naked, and you visited me not, freed mee not, cloathed me not, and you shewed no pity towards me, therefore shalt you expect no pity from me.* On the contrary, hee shall speak to them on his right hand: *Come yee blessed, and chosen into my Fathers Kingdome, which hath been prepared for you, and his Angells from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me meat; thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was a stranger, and you took me in; naked, and you covered me; sick, and you visited me; in prison, and you came unto me. Therefore I will receive you into my Fathers Kingdom, where are provided many mansions for the Saints. You took pity on me, therefore will I take pity on you.*

All these being finished and dispatched, all Elementary things will returne to the first matter of the Elements and bee tormented to eternity and never bee consumed, &c. and on the contrary, all holy things shall return to the first matter of Sacraments: i.e. shall be purified, and in eternall joy glorifie God their Creator and worship him from age to age, from eternity to eternity, Amen.

## Book 9: Of the Signature of Naturall things (Of Minerall Signes).

. . . But to returne to our purpose concerning Minerall signes, and especially concerning the Coruscation of Metalline veins, we must know that as Metalls which are yet in their first being send forth their Coruscation, i.e. Signes, so also the *Tincture of the Philosophers*, which changeth all imperfect Metalls into Silver and Gold (or White Metalls into Silver, and Red into Gold) puts forth its proper signs like unto Coruscation, if it be Astrally perfected and prepared. For as soon as a small quantity of it is cast upon a fluxil metall, so that they mixe together in the fire, there ariseth a naturall Coruscation and brightnesse, like to that of fine Gold or Silver in a test, which then is a signe that that Gold or Silver is freed and purged without all manner of addition of other Metalls.

But how the Tincture of Philosophers is made Astrall, you must conceive it after this manner: First of all you must know that every Metall, as long as it lies hid in its first being, hath its certaine peculiar stars.

So Gold hath the stars of the Sun, Silver the stars of the Moon, Copper the stars of Venus, Iron the stars of Mars, Tinne the stars of Jupiter, Lead the stars of Saturne, Quicksilver the starres of Mercury.

But as soon as they come to their perfection and are coagulated into a fixt Metalline body, their stars fall off from them, and leave them as a dead body.

Hence it follows that all such bodies are afterwards dead and inefficacious, and that the unconquered star of Metalls doth overcome them all, and converts them into its nature and makes them all Astrall . . .

For which cause also our Gold and Silver, which is tinged and prepared with our tincture, is much more excellent and better for the preparation of Medicinall secrets then that which is naturall, which Nature generates in the Mines and afterwards is separated from other Metalls.

## Chap. 1: Of the original of the philosophick stone.

*Adam* was the first Inventor of Arts, because he had the knowledge of all things, as well after the fall as before the fall; from thence he presaged the worlds destruction by water; Hence also it came to pass that his Successors erected two tables of stone, in the which they ingraved all Natural Arts, and that in Hieroglyphical Characters, that so their Successors might also know this presage, that it might be heeded, and provision of care made in time of danger. Afterwards, *Noah* found one of the tables in *Armenia* under the Mount *Araroth*, when the deluge was over; In which [Table] were described the courses of the superiour Firmament, and of the inferiour Globe, and [also] of the Planets; then at length this Universal Notion of Knowledge was drawn into several particulars, and lessened in its Vigor and Power, in so much that by means of that separation, One became an Astronomer, another a Magus, another a Cabalist, and a fourth an Alchymist: *Abraham* that most great Astrologer and Arithmetitian conveyed [it] out of the Countrey of *Canaan* into *Aegypt*, whereupon the Egyptians arose to so great a head and dignity, that the wisdom [or science] of the same thing was derived from them to other Nations and Countreys. And for as much as the Patriarch *Jacob* painted [as twere] the sheep with various colours, it was done by a part or member of Magick; for in the Theology of the Chaldeans, Hebrews, Persians and Egyptians, they proposed these arts (as the highest Philosophy) to be learned by their chiefest Nobles and Priests: So it was in *Moses* his time, wherein both the Priests and even the Physitians were chosen amongst the *Magi*; they indeed [*viz.* the Priests] for the Examination or Judging, of what related to soundness or health, especially in the knowledge of the Leprosie; *Moses* likewise was instructed in the Egyptian Schools at the Costs and Care of *Pharaohs* daughter, so that he excelled in all their Wisdom or Learning; So was it with *Daniel*; he in his young dayes suckt in the Learning of the Chaldeans, so that he became a Cabalist, Witness his Divine foretellings, and expounding of those words, *Mene Mene Tekel Phares*: These words are to be understood by the Prophetick and Cabalistick Art: The Tradition of this Cabalistical Art, was very familiar with *Moses* and the Prophets, and most of all in use; The Prophet *Elias* foretold many things by his Cabalistical Numbers. Even so the Antient wise men, by this Natural and Mystical Art, learned to know God rightly, and abode and walked in his Laws and statutes very firmly; It likewise is evident in the Book of *Samuel*, that the Berelists did not follow the Devils part, but became (by Divine permission) partakers of Visions and true Apparitions, the which we shall treat more largely of in the book of Supercelestials. The gift thereof is granted by the Lord God to the Priests who walk in the divine precepts. It was a custom amongst the Persians, never to admit any one as King, unless a Sophist [or Wise man] exalted both in reality and name; and this is clear by the usual name of their Kings, for they were called Sophists. Such were those Wise men and Persian Magi that came from the



East to seek out Christ Jesus, and are called natural Priests. Likewise the Egyptians having obtained this Magick and Philosophy from the Chaldeans and Persians, would that their Priests should also learn the same wisdom, wherein they became so fruitfull and succesfull, that all the neighbouring Countreyes admired them. This was the cause why *Hermes* was truly stiled *Trismegistus* because he was both a King, a Priest, and a Prophet, a Magitian, and a Sophist of Natural things; such another also was *Zoroastes*.

### Chap. 3: What was taught in the Schools of the Egyptians.

The Chaldeans, Persians and Egyptians had [all of them] the same knowledge of the secrets of nature and the same Religion, the names only being changed. The Chaldeans & Persians called their doctrine Sophia and Magick; and the Egyptians, because of the sacrifice, called their wisdom the Priest-hood. The Magick of the Persians, and Theology of the Egyptians were both of them heretofore taught in the Schools. Albeit there were many Schools and Learned men in *Arabia, Africa & Greece*, as *Albumazar, Abenzagel* [Abenragel?], *Geber, Rasis* and *Avicenna* amongst the Arabians; *Machaon, Podalirius, Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, Democritus, Plato, Aristotle* and *Rodianus* amongst the Grecians; but yet there were various opinions amongst themselves as to the Egyptian wisdom, wherein they differed, and disagreed from it. For this cause *Pythagoras* would not be called Sophist, because the Egyptian Priesthood and Wisdom was not at all perfectly taught as was fitting, although he received thence many Mysteries and Arcanums; and *Anaxagoras* [had received] most or exceeding many. This appears by the disputations which he made of *Sol* & the stone thereof, & which he left after his death, yet he was in many things contrary to the Egyptians; Wherefore even they would not be called Sophists nor Magi, but imitating *Pythagoras* in that thing they assumed the name of Philosophy; but yet they reaped no more then a few Glances like shadows, from the Magick of the Persians and Egyptians; but *Moses, Abraham, Solomon, Adam, Elias*, and the Magi that came from the East to Christ, were true Magi, and Divine Sophists, and Cabalists; which Art and Wisdom the Grecians knew very little of, or none at all; and therefore we shall leave that Philosophical Wisdom of the Grecians as a Speculation widely and largely distant, and separated from other true arts and sciences.

[In chapters 2 - 15, Paracelsus discusses several erroneous approaches to making the philosopher's stone, as well as the arcanums of arsenic, vitriol, and antimony.]

### Chap. 16: Of the universal matter of the stone of the philosophers.



After the mortification of Vegetables [they] by the concurrence of two Minerals, as Sulphur and Salt, are transmuted into a Mineral nature, so that at length they become perfect minerals; for in the Mineral holes and dens and wide fields of the earth, are found Vegetables which in long success of time, and by the continued heat of Sulphur, do put off the Vegetable nature, and put on a Mineral; And that doth chiefly happen, where the appropriate nutriment is taken away from these Vegetables, whereby they are afterwards constrained to take their nourishment from the Sulphurs and Salts of the earth, so long, untill that which was afore a Vegetable, do pass into a perfect Mineral; And thus out of this Mineral condition a certain perfect Mettallick essence doth sometimes arise, and that by the progress of one degree into another; But to return to the stone of the Philosophers, the matter whereof (as some have mentioned) is a most difficult matter of all others to be found out, and abstruse for the understanding; Now the way and the most certain rule of the finding out of this as well as of all other things, what they contain, or are able to do, is a most diligent examination of their Root and Sperm, whereby knowledge is attained; for the accomplishment of which, the consideration of principles is very necessary; as also by what way, and medium nature doth at first go from imperfection to the end of perfection; For the consideration whereof, tis chiefly requisite, most certainly to know, that all things created by nature do consist of three principles, viz. of natural Sulphur, Mercury, and Salt, mixt into one, [so] that in some things they are Volatile, in other things fixt: As often as a corporal Salt is thoroughly mixt with a spiritual Mercury and Animated Sulphur into one body, then doth nature begin to work in subterranean places, (which serves for its vessels,) by a separating fire, by which the gross and impure Sulphur is separated from the pure, and the Earth from the Salt, and the cloudiness from the Mercury, those purer parts being reserved, the which parts nature doth again decoct together into a pure Geogamick body. The which Operation is accounted [of] by the Magi, as a mixtion and conjunction by the Union of the three, viz. body, soul, and spirit. This Union being compleated, from thence doth result a pure Mercury, the which if it flows through the subterranean passages and Veins thereof, and meets with a Caheick Sulphur, the Mercury is Coagulated by this [Sulphur] according to the condition of the Sulphur. But notwithstanding, tis as yet volatile, and scarce decocted into a mettall for the space of an hundred years. Thence arose this so much common an opinion, that Mercury and Sulphur are the matter of mettals, the which is also evidenced by the Relation of the Miners. Yet common Mercury and common Sulphur are not the matter of mettals, but the Mercury and Sulphur of the Philosophers are incorporated and innate in perfect mettals, and in the forms of them, that they never fly from the fire, nor are depraved by the force of the corruption of the Elements. Verily by the dissolution of that same natural mixtion our Mercury is tamed or subjected, as all the Philosophers speak; Under [or from] this form of words, comes Mercury to be extracted out of perfect bodies, and [out of] the virtues [and puissance] of the earthly planets. The which *Hermes* affirms in these words, The Sol and Lune (saith he) are the roots

of this art. The Son of *Hamuel* saith that the stone of the Philosophers is a Coagulated water, *viz.* in Sol and Lune; from whence tis evidently cleer, that the matter of the stone is nothing else but Sol & Lune; this is also hereby confirmed, in that every like thing generates and brings forth its like; And we know that there are no more but two stones, white and red; there are also two matters of the stone, Sol and Lune coupled together in a proper Matrimony, both natural and artificial; And as we see, that either man or woman cannot generate without the seed of both; in like manner, our Man Sol and his Woman Lune cannot conceive, or frame ought for generation without both their Seeds and Spermes; Thence have the Philosophers gathered, that a third thing is necessary, *viz.* the Animated seed of both, of man and woman, without the which they have judged all their whole work to be vain and foolish: Now such a Sperm is [their] Mercury the which by a natural conjunction of both bodies of Sol and Lune receives their nature into itself in Union; and then at length and not before is the work fitted for congress, ingress and Generation by the manly and feminine virtue and power. On this account the Philosophers took occasion to say, that Mercury is composed of body, soul, and spirit, and that it hath assumed the nature & property of all the Elements. Therefore from a most powerfull ingenuity and discretion or understanding they have affirmed their stone to be animal, the which also they have called their Adam, who carryes his invisible Eve hidden in his own body, from that moment of time wherein they were united by the power of the most high God, the framer of all the creatures; for which cause it may deservedly be said, that the Mercury of Philosophers is nothing else but their most abstruse compounded Mercury, and not that common Mercury: Therefore have they discretly told the wise, that there is in Mercury whatsoever the wise men seek. *Almadir* the Philosopher saith, we do extract our Mercury out of one perfect body, and two perfect natural conditions incorporated together; the which indeed doth thrust forth its perfection outwardly, whereby tis able to resist the fire, and that its intrinsecal imperfection may be defended by the extrinsecal perfections; By this place of the most witty Philosopher, is the Adamical matter understood, the Limbus of the Microcosm, the homogeneous, Only matter of all the Philosophers, whose sayings also (which we have aforementioned) are meely golden, and to be had in most high esteem, because they containe nothing superfluous, or invalid; Briefly therefore the matter of the Philosophers stone is nothing else but a fiery and perfect Mercury, extracted by Nature and Art, that is the artificially prepared and true Hermaphrodite *Adam*, and Microcosm, That most wise *Mercurius* the wisest of the Philosophers affirming the same, hath called the stone an Orphan: Therefore our Mercury is that very same that contains in it self the perfections, forces and virtues of the Sun, and which runs through the Streets and houses of all the Planets, and in its regeneration hath acquired or gotten the virtue of things above and beneath; to the marriage also of which [things *viz.* above and below] it is compared, as is evident from the whiteness and redness wound or heaped up together therein.

## 17: Of the preparation of the matter of the philosophers stone.

This is that which nature doth most chiefly require, *viz.* that its own Philosophick man be brought into a Mercurial substance, that it may spring forth into the Philosophick stone. Moreover you are to note, that those common preparations of *Geber, Albertus Magnus, Th. Aquinas, Rupescisca, Polidorus*, and such like, are nothing else but some particular Solutions, Sublimations and Calcinations, not at all pertaining to our Universal [work] which [work] doth want only the most secret fire of the Philosophers; Therefore the fire and Azoth may suffice thee; [And whereas] the Philosophers do make mention of some preparations, as of putrefaction, distillation, sublimation, calcination, coagulation, dealbation, rubification, ceration, fixation, &c. you are to understand, that in their Universal [work] Nature it self doth accomplish all the operations in the said matter, and not the workman, [and that] only in a Philosophical Vessel, and with a such like fire, not a common fire. The white and the red do proceed out of one root, without any medium. Tis dissolved by it self, coupled by it self, albifies, and rubifies; is made saffrony and black by it self, marries itself, and conceives in it self: Tis therefore to be decocted, to be baked, to be fused, it ascends, and descends. All which Operations, are indeed [but] one Operation made by the fire alone; But yet some of the Philosophers have by a most high-graduated essence of Wine, dissolved the body of Sol, have made it Volatile, so as to ascend by an Alembick, supposing that this is the Volatile, true Philosophick matter, whereas it is not; And although it be no contemptible Arcanum, to bring this perfect mettalline body into a Volatile and spiritual Substance, yet notwithstanding they err in the Separation of the Elements; the which process of [those] Monks, *viz. Lully, Richard the Englishman, Rupescisca*, and others, is erroneous; By which [process] they supposed to separate gold by this way into a subtile, spiritual, and elementary power, each one a part; [and] afterwards by circulation and rectification to couple them again into one, but in vain; for verily, although one Element may after a sort be separated from another, yet nevertheless every element, after this manner separated, may again be separated into another element, the which parts cannot at all (afterwards) either, by pellicanick circulation or distillation, return into one again, but they always remain a certain volatile matter, an *Aurum Potabile* as they call it; The cause why they could never arrive to their intention, is this; because nature is not in the least willing to be thus distracted or separated, by humane disjunctions, as by terrene [things] glasses and instruments. She her self alone, knows her own operations, and the weights of the Elements, the separations, rectifications and copulations of which she accomplisheth, without the help of any Operator or Manual artifice; Only the matter is to be contained in the secret fire, and in its occult Vessel; The Separation therefore of the Elements is impossible [to be done] by man; which separation should it have some appearance, yet notwithstanding is not true, whatsoever is spoken thereof by *Raimond Lully*, and his English golden noble

Work, which he is falsly supposed to have framed. For Nature it self hath in her self her proper Separater (which doth again conjoyn what it separates) without the help of man, and doth best know all [her Trade] and the proportion of every element, and not man; whatever such erroneous Scriblers do (in their frivolous and false receipts) boast of this their volatile Gold. This [then] is the opinion [or mind] of the Philosophers, that when they have put their matter into the more secret fire, it be all about cherished with its [own] moderate Philosophical heat, that [so] beginning to pass through corruption it may grow black; This operation they call putrefaction, and the blackness they name the head of the Crow: They call the ascension and descension thereof distillation, ascension and descension; they call the exsiccation, coagulation; and the dealbation, calcination: And because it is fluid and soft in the heat, they have made mention of Ceration; when it hath ceased to ascend and remain liquid in the bottom, then they say fixation is present.

After this manner therefore, the Appellations and terms of the Philosophical operations are to be understood, and no otherwise.

## 18: Of the Instruments and Philosophical Vessel.

The Putatitious Philosophers have rashly understood [and imagined] the Occult and Secret Philosophical Vessel, and *Aristotle* the Alchymist (not that Grecian Academical Philosopher) hath [conceited it] worsen, in that he saith the matter is to be decocted in a threefold Vessel; but he hath worst of all [understood it] that says, viz. that the matter in its first separation, and first degree, requires a Mettalline Vessel; in the second degree of Coagulation and dealbation of its [own] earth, a glass Vessel; and in the third degree, for fixation, an earthen Vessel. Nevertheless the Philosophers do understand by this [Vessel] one Vessel only in all operations, even to the perfection of the Red Stone; seeing therefore, that our matter is our root for the white and the red; tis necessary that our Vessel ought to be on this wise, that the matter therein may be governed by the Celestial Bodies; for the invisible Celestial Influences and impressions of the Stars are exceeding necessary to the Work; otherwise 'twill be impossible for the invincible Oriental, Persian, Chaldean and Egyptian Stone to be accomplished; by which [Stone] *Anaxagoras* knew the vertues of the whole Firmament, and foretold of the great Stone that should descend [down] upon the earth out of Heaven, the which also happened after his death. Verily our Vessel is most chiefly known to the Cabalists, because it ought to be framed according to a truly Geometrical proportion and measure, and of [or by] a Certain [and assured] Quadrature of a Circle: or thus, *that the Spirit and soul of our matter, may in this Vessel, elevate with themselves (answerable to the altitude of the heaven) the [things] separated from their own body*. If the Vessel be narrower or wider, higher or lower then is fit, and then the ruling and operating Spirit and Soul desires the heat of our Philosophical Secret Fire (which is indeed most acute) would stir up the matter too violently, and urge it to overmuch operation,

that the Vessel would leap into a thousand pieces, to the hazard and danger of the body and life of the Operator: whereas contrariwise, if it be more wide or capacious then for the heat to operate upon the matter according to proportion, the work will also be frustrate and vain. And therefore our Philosophical Vessel is to be framed with the greatest diligence: But as for the matter of this our Vessel, they alone do understand it, that in the first Solution of our fixt and perfect matter, have adduced or brought this [matter] into its first Essence; and so much for this. The Operator must likewise most accurately note what it is, that the matter (in the first Solution) lets fall, and casts out from it self: The manner of describing the form of the Vessel is difficult; it must be such as nature it self requires [tis] to be sought for and searcht after, out of one and the other, that [so] it may (from the altitude of the Philosophick Heaven, elevated from the Philosophick Earth) be able to operate upon the fruit of its own earthly body. Verily it ought to have this Form, that a separation and purification of the Elements (when the Fire drives the One from the other) may be made, and that each [Element] may possess its own place in which it sticks; and the Sun and the other Planets may exercise their operations round about the Elemental Earth, and the course of them may not be hindred in their circuit, or be stir'd up with too swift a motion: Now according to all these things here spoken of, it must have a just proportion of Roundness and Height: But the Instruments for the first mundification of Mineral Bodies, are melting Vessels, Bellows, Tongs, Capel, Cupels, Tests, Cementatory Vessels, Cineritiums, Cucurbits, Boccia's for *Aq[ua] fort[is]* and *Aq[ua] regia*, and also some things as are necessary for projection in the last Work.

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