

T H E T R U E B O O K
O F T H E L E A R N E D

S Y N E S I U S

A Greek Abbott

T A K E N O U T O F T H E
E M P E R O U R ' S L I B R A R Y

concerning the

P H I L O S O P H E R ' S S T O N E

*Hac partim ipse tuo perpendens pectore tecum,
Partim Divum aliquis tibi suggarat.*

HOMER

To so great a Mystery, who shall Aspire?

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The TRUE BOOK of the learned Greek Abbott

S Y N E S I U S

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Though the Ancient Philosophers have written diversly of this Science, concealing under a multitude of names the true principles of the Art; yet have they not done it but upon important considerations as we shall hereafter make appear. And though they are different in their expressions, yet are they not any way discordant one from another, but aiming all at one end, and speaking of the same thing, they have thought fit (above all the rest) to name the Proper AGENT, by terms, strange, nay sometimes contrary to its nature and qualities.

Know then, my Son, that almighty God together with this Universe created two STONES, that is to say, the WHITE and the RED, both which are under one and the same subject, and afterwards multiplied in such abundance, that every one may take as much as he please thereof. The matter of them is of such a kind, that it seems to be a mean between METAL and MERCURY, and is partly fixed and partly not fixed, otherwise it could not, be a mean betwixt METALS and MERCURY; and this matter is the instrument whereby our desire is accomplished, if we do but prepare it. Hence it comes that those who bestow their endeavours in this Art without the said MEDIUM, loose their labour, but if they are acquainted with the MEDIUM, they shall find all things feasible and fortunate. Know then that this MEDIUM, being aerial, is found among the celestial Bodies, and that it is only there are found the Masculine and Feminine Gender, (to speak properly) having a constant, strong, fixed and permanent Virtue of the essence whereof (as I have told thee) Philosophers have expressed themselves only by Similitudes and Figures. This they did, that the science might not be discovered by the Ignorant, which if it should once happen, all were lost; but that it might be comprehended only by those patient souls, and subtilized understandings, which being sequestred from the soiliness of this world, are cleansed from the filth of that terrene dunghill of Avarice, whereby the ignorant are chained to the earthiness of this World, which is (without this admirable quintessence) the receptacle of poverty; it being certain, that those divine souls, when they have dived into DEMOCRITUS'S FOUNTAIN, that is to say, into the truth of Nature, would soon discover what confusion might happen in all estates and conditions, if every one could make as much Gold as he would himself. Upon this ground was it that they were pleased to speak by figures, types, and analogies, that so they might not be understood but by such as are discreet, religious, and enlightened by (divine) Wisdom. All which notwithstanding, they have left in their writings a certain method, way and rule, by the assistance whereof the wise man may comprehend whatever they have written most obscurely, and

in time arrive at the knowledge of it, though haply wading through some error, as I have done, praised be God for it. And whereas the Vulgar ignorant person ought to submit to these reasons, and consequently adore, what is too great, to enter into his Brain, he on the contrary accuses the Philosophers of imposture and impiety, by which means, and the scarcity of wise men, the Art falls into contempt.

But for my part, I tell thee, they have always expressed themselves according to certain Truth, though very obscurely, and sometimes fabulously, all which I have disciphered in this little Treatise, and that after such a manner that the earnest desirer of Science shall understand what hath been mystically delivered by the Philosophers. And yet if he pretend to understand me and know not the nature of the Elements and things created, as also our rich Metal, he doth but lose his labour; but if he understand the Concord and Discord of Natures, he will by God's assistance arrive to the rest? It is therefore my suit to God, that he who shall understand the present Secret may work to the glory and praise of the sacred Divinity.

Know then my dear Son, that the ignorant man cannot comprehend the secret of the Art, because it depends upon the Knowledge of the true Body, which is hidden from him. Know then, my Son, PURE and IMPURE, the CLEAN and UNCLEAN Natures, for there cannot come from any thing that which it hath not. For things, that are not or have not, cannot give but their own Nature; make use then of that which is most perfect and nearest in kind, thou shalt meet with, and it shall suffice. Avoid then that which is MIXT, and take the SIMPLE, for that proceeds from the QUINTESSENCE. Note that we have two bodies of very great perfection, full of MERCURY: Out of these extract thy MERCURY, and of that thou shalt make the MEDICINE, called by some QUINTESSENCE, which is a Virtue or power that is imperishable, permanent, and perpetually victorious, nay it is a clear Light, which sheds true goodness into every soul that hath once tasted of it. It is the knot and link of all the Elements, which it contains in it self, as being also the Spirit which nourisheth all things, and by the assistance whereof Nature works in the Universe. It is the force, the beginning and end of the whole work, and to lay all open to thee in a word, know, that the QUINTESSENCE and the hidden thing, which Stone is nothing else then our viscous, celestial and glorious Soul drawn by our Magistery out of its Mine, which engenders it self, and that it is not possible for us to make that water by Art, but Nature alone begets it, and that water is the MOST SHARP VINEGAR, which makes Gold to be a pure spirit, nay it is that BLESSED NATURE which engenders all things, which through its putrefaction is become a Tri-unity, and by reason of its Viridity causes an appearance of divers colours. And I advise thee, my Son, make no account of any other things, (as being vain) labour only for that WATER, which BURNS TO BLACKNESS, WHITENS, DISSOLVES and CONGEALS. It is that which putrefies, and causes GERMINATION, and therefore I advise thee, that thou wholly imploy thy self in the decoction of this water, and quarrel not at the expence of time, otherwise thou shalt have no advantage. Decoct it gently by little and little, until it have changed its false colour into a perfect, and have a great care at the beginning that thou burn not its Flowers and its vivacity, and make not too much haste to come

to an end of thy work. Shut thy Vessel well, that what is within may not breathe out, and so thou mayst bring it to some effect. And note, that to DISSOLVE, to CALCINE, to TINGE, to WHITEN, to RENEW, to BATHE, to WASH, to COAGULATE, to IMBIBE, to DECOCT, to FIX, to GRIND, to DRY, and to DISTILL, are all one, and signify no more then to CONCOCT Nature, until such time as it be perfect. Note further that to extract the soul, or the spirit, or the body, is nothing else then the abovesaid Calcinations, in regard they signify the operation of VENUS. It is therefore through the fire of the extraction of the soul that the spirit comes forth gently, understand me. The same may also be said of the extraction of the soul out of the Body, and the reduction of it afterwards upon the same Body, until the whole be drawn to a commixtion of all the four Elements. And so that which is below, is like that which is above, and consequently there are made therein two luminaries, the one fixt the other not, whereof the fixed remains below, and the volatile above, moving it self perpetually, until that which is below, which is the male, get upon the female, and all be fixed, and then issues out an incomparable Luminary. And as in the beginning, there was only one, so in this Matter, all proceeds from one and returns to one, which is called a conversion of the Elements, and to convert the Elements, is as much as to make the humid dry, and the volatile fixed, that so that which is thick may be made thin, and weaken the thing that fixeth the rest, the fixative part of the thing remaining intire. Thus happens the life and death of the Elements, which composed germinate and produce, and so one thing perfects another; and assists it to oppose the Fire.

The Practice.

My Son it is necessary that thou work with the MERCURY of the PHILOSOPHERS, and the wise, which is not the VULGAR, nor hath any thing of the VULGAR, but, according to them, is the FIRST MATTER, THE SOUL OF THE WORLD, THE COLD ELEMENT, THE BLESSED WATER, THE WATER OF THE WISE, THE VENEMOUS WATER, THE MOST SHARP VINEGAR, THE MINERAL WATER, THE WATER OF CELESTIAL GRACE, THE VIRGIN MILK, OUR MINERAL AND CORPOREAL MERCURY. For this alone perfects both the stones, the WHITE and the RED. Consider what GEBER says, that our Art consists not in the multitude of several things, become the MERCURY is but one only thing, that is to say, one only Stone wherein consists the whole Magistery; to which thou shalt not add any strange thing, save that in the preparation thereof thou shalt take away from it whatsoever is superfluous, by reason that in this matter, all things requisite to this Art are contained. And therefore it is very observable that he says, we must add nothing that is strange, save the Sun and Moon for the red and white Tincture, which are not strange (to it) but are its Ferment, by which the work is accomplished. Lastly, mark my Son, that these Suns and Moons are not the same with the Vulgar Suns and Moons. For our Suns and Moons are in their nature living, and those of the Vulgar are dead in comparison of ours, which are existent and permanent in our Stone. Whence thou mayst observe that the Mercury drawn out of our Bodies, is like the aqueous and common Mercury, and for that reason, enjoys it self and takes pleasure in its like, and is more glad of its company, as it happens in the

simple and compound, which thing hath not been discovered by the Philosophers in their Books. And the advantage therefore which is in this Art, lies in the Mercury, Sun and Moon. DIOMEDES saith, make use of such a matter as to which thou must not introduce any strange thing, neither powder nor water, for that several things do not improve our Stone is not drawn from any thing but the Mercury of the Philosophers; which is their principle, their root, and their great Tree, sprouting forth into boughs and branches.

The first Operation.

S U B L I M A T I O N .

It is not Vulgar but Philosophical whereby we take away from the Stone whatever is superfluous, which, in effect is nothing else, but the elevation of the not fixed part by fume and vapour, for the fixed part should remain in the bottom, nor would we that one should be separated from the other, but that they remain and be fixed together. Know also that he, who shall sublime our Philosophical Mercury (wherein is all the virtue of our Stone) as it ought to be done, shall perfect the Magistry. This gave GEBER reason to say that all perfection consists in SUBLIMATION, and in this Sublimation all other operations, that is to say, DISTILLATION, ASSATION, DESTRUCTION, COAGULATION, PUTREFACTION, CALCINATION, FIXATION, REDUCTION OF THE WHITE AND RED TINCTURES, procreated and engendered in one furnace and in one Vessel, and this is the ready way to the final Consummation, whereof the Philosophers have made divers chapters, purposely to amuse the Ignorant.

Take then in the name of the great God, the venerable matter of the Philosophers, called the first HYLE of the Sages, which contains the above named Philosophical Mercury, termed, the first matter of the perfect Body, put it into its Vessel, which must be clear, diaphanous and round, and closely stopped by the SEAL OF SEALS, and make it hot in its place, well prepared, with temperate heat, for the space of a PHILOSOPHICAL MONTH, keeping it six weeks and two days in the sweat of Sublimation until it begins to be putrefied, to ferment, to be coloured and to be congealed with its metallick Humidity, and be fixed so far, that it do no more ascend in AIERY FUMOUS SUBSTANCE, but remain fixed in the bottom, turned from what it was, and divested of all viscous humidity, putrefied and black, which is called the sable Robe, Night or the Crows-head. Thus when our Stone is in the vessel, and that it mounts up on high in fume, this is called SUBLIMATION, and when it falls down from on high, DISTILLATION and DESCENSION. When it begins to participate of the fumous substance, and to be putrefied, and that by reason of the frequent ascent and descent it begins to coagulate, then it is PUTREFACTION and devouring Sulphur, and lastly through the want or privation of the humidity of the radical water is wrought CALCINATION and FIXATION both at the same time, by decoction alone, in one only Vessel, as I have already said. Moreover in this sublimation is wrought the true separation of the Elements, for in our Sublimation the ELIXIR is turned from Water into a terrestrial Element dry and hot, by which operation it is manifest, that the separation of the four Elements in our Stone is not Vulgar but Philosophical. Hence also is it, that in our

Stone there are but two FORMAL Elements, that is to say, Earth and Water; but the Earth hath in its grossness, the virtue and drought of Fire; and the Water contains in it self the air with its humidity. Thus we have in our Stone visibly but two elements, but effectually there are four. And by this thou maist judge, that the separation of the four Elements is absolutely physicial not vulgar and real, such as the ignorant daily employ themselves in. Continue therefore its decoction with a gentle fire, until all the black matter appearing in the superficies be quite dissipated by the Magistry, which blackness is by the Philosophers called the dark mantle of the Stone, which afterwards becoming clear is termed the cleansing water of the earth, or rather the Elixir. And note, that the blackness which appears is a sign of putrefaction. And the beginning of the dissolution is a sign of the conjunction of both Natures. And this blackness appears sometimes in forty days, more or less, according to the quantity of the matter, and the industry of the Operator, which contributes much to the separation of the said Blackness. Now my Son, by the grace of God thou art acquainted with one Element of our Stone, which is the black earth, the Ravens head, by some called the obscure shadow, upon which earth as upon a base all the rest is grounded. This terrestrial and dry Element, is called, LATEN, the BULL, BLACK, DREGGS, OUR METAL, OUR MERCURY. And thus by the privation of the adust humidity, which is taken away by Philosophical sublimation, the volatile is fixed, and the moist is made dry and earth; nay, according to GEBER, there is wrought a change of the complexion, as of a cold and humid Nature, into dry choler; and according to ALPHIDIUS, of a liquid into a thick. Whence is apprehended what the Philosophers mean when they say, that the operation of our Stone is only a transmutation of Nature and a revolution of Elements. Thou seest then how that by this incorporation the humid becomes dry, the volatile fixed, the Spiritual corporeal, the liquid thick, water fire, air earth, and that there happens an infallible change in their true nature, and a certain circulation of the four Elements.

The second Operation,

D E A L B A T I O N .

It converts our MERCURY into the WHITE Stone, and that by decoction only. When the earth is separated from its water, then must the Vessel be set on the Ashes, as is usual in a distilling furnace, and the water be distilled by a gentle fire at the beginning, so that the water come so gently that thou mayst distinctly number as far as forty names, or pronounce fifty six words, and let this order be observed in all the distillations of the black earth, and that which is in the bottom of the Vessel, that is, the FECES remaining to be imbibed, with the new water, will be dissolved, which water will contain three or four parts more then those FECES, that so all may be dissolved and converted into Mercury and ARGENT VIVE. I tell thee that this must be done so often,

that there shall remain nothing but the Merc. For this distillation there is no time limited, but it is done sooner or later according to the greater or lesser quantity of the water, proportionably to the quantity of the fire. Then take the earth which thou shalt have reserved in a Vessel of Glass, with its distilled water, and with a sort and gentle fire, such as was that of Distillation, or purification, or rather one somewhat stronger, continue it, till such time as the earth be dry and white, and by reason of its drought, drink up all its water. This done, put to it some of the abovesaid water, and so, as at the beginning, continue on the same decoction, until that earth is become absolutely white, cleansed and clear, and have drunk all its water. And note that the said earth will be washed from its blackness by the decoction, as I have said, because it is easily putrefyed by its own water, and is cleansed, which is the end of the Magistry, and then be sure to keep that white earth very carefully. For that is the WHITE MERCURY, WHITE MAGNESIA, FOLIATED EARTH. Then take this white earth rectified as abovesaid, and put it into its vessel upon the ashes, to a fire of Sublimation, and let it have a very strong fire until all the coagulated water, which is within, come into the Alembick, and the earth remain in the bottom well calcined; then hast thou the earth, the water, and the air, and though the earth have in it the nature of the fire, yet is it not apparent in effect, as thou shalt see, when by a greater decoction thou shalt make it become red; so that then thou shalt manifestly see the fire in appearance, and such must be the proceeding in order to Fermentation of the white earth, that the dead body may be animated and enlivened, and its virtue be multiplied to infinity. But note, that the Ferment cannot enter into the dead body, but by the means of the water, which hath made a contract and a marriage between the Ferment and the white earth. And know that in all Fermentation the weight is to be considered, that so the quantity of the volatile exceed not the fixed, and that the marriage pass away in fume. For, as SENIOR says, if thou convert not the earth into water, and the water into fire, there cannot be a conjunction of the spirit and body. To do this take a LAMEN or plate red hot and cast on it a drop of our Medicine, which penetrating, it shall be of a perfect colour, and will be a sign of perfection. If it happen it do not tinge, reiterate the dissolution and coagulation, until it do tinge and penetrate. And note, that seven imbibitions, at the most, are sufficient, and five at the least, that so the matter may be liquified, and without smoke, and then the matter is perfect as to whiteness, for as much as the matter sometimes requires a longer time to be fixed, and sometimes is done in a shorter, according to the quantity of the Medicine. And note that our Medicine from the creation of our Mercury requires the term of seven months to compass the whiteness, and, to arrive at the redness, five; which put together, make twelve.

Of The Third Operation,

R U B I F I C A T I O N .

Take of the white Medicine, as much as thou wilt, and put it with its Glass upon the hot ashes, till it becomes as dry as the ashes. Then put to it some water of the Sun, which thou hast kept purposely for that end, and continue the fire to the second degree, until it become dry, then put to it again some of the abovesaid water, and so successively imbibe and dry, until the matter be rubified, and fluxible as wax, and cover with it the red LAMEN, as hath been said, and the matter shall be perfect as to REDNESS. But note that at every time, thou needest put no more of the water of the Sun then is barely necessary to cover the body, and this is done that the Elixir sink not and be drowned, and so the fire must be continued unto desiccation, and then must there be made a second imbibition, and so proceed in order to the perfection of the Medicine, that is to say, until the force of the digestion of the fire convert it into a very red powder, which is the TRUE HYLE of the Philosophers, the bloody Stone, the purple red Coral, the precious Ruby, red Mercury and the red Tincture.

P R O J E C T I O N .

The oftner thou shalt dissolve and coagulate it, the more will the Virtue of it be multiplied to infinity. But note that the medicine is multiplied later by SOLUTION, then by FERMENTION. Wherefore the thing dissolved operates not well, if it be not before fixed in its ferment. Nevertheless the multiplication of the Medicine by solution is more abundant then that of the Ferment, by reason there is more subtilization. Yet I advise thee that in the multiplication thou put one part of the work upon four of the other, and in a short time there will be made a powder, all Ferment.

The Epilogue according to

H E R M E S .

Thus art thou to separate the EARTH from the FIRE, the GROSS from the SUBTIL gently, with great Judgement, that is to say, separate the parts that are united to the Furnace, by the dissolution and separation of the parts, as the earth from the fire, the subtle from the gross, & etc. that is to say, the more pure substance of the stone, until thou hast got it clean, and free from all spots or filth. And when he saith, IT ASCENDS FROM THE EARTH UP INTO HEAVEN AND RETURNS AGAIN INTO THE EARTH, there is no more to be understood by it then the SUBLIMATION of

the Bodys. Further, to explain what distillation is, he says THE WIND CARRIES IT IN ITS BELLY, that is, when the water is distilled by the Alembick, where it first ascends by a wind full of Fume and Vapour, and afterwards returns to the bottom of the Vessel in water again. When he would also express the congelation of the matter, he says, ITS FORCE IS ABSOLUTE, IF IT BE TURNED INTO EARTH, that is to say, be converted by decoction. And to make a general demonstration of all hath been said, he says, IT SHALL RECEIVE BOTH THE INFERIOUR AND SUPERIOUR FORCE, that is to say, that of the Elements, for as much as, if the Medicine receive the force of the lighter parts, that is to say, air and fire, it shall also receive that of the more grave and weighty parts, changing it self into water and earth, to the end, that the Matters being thus perpetually joined together, may have permanence, durance, constancy, and stability. Glory be to God.

F I N I S .