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Cambridge Scholars Publishing

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This book first published 2017

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN (10): 1-4438-5575-8
ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-5575-4

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List of Illustrations

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful for the assistance of the following libraries and institutions: British Library, London; Bodleian Library, Oxford; Rare Books Collection, Brotherton Library, Leeds University; Ferguson Collection, University of Glasgow; Wellcome Institute Library, London; Warburg Institute Library, University of London; Alnwick Castle archives, Alnwick, Northumberland; Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich; Beinecke Library, Yale University; Getty Research Institute Library, Los Angeles; Institute of the History of Art Library, Jagiellonian University, Kraków; Fisher Library, University of Sydney; University of Queensland Library, Brisbane; Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Florence; Biblioteca Nazionale-Centrale, Florence; Alsóvárosi Templom (Lower City Franciscan Church), Szeged; Krestoproishozhdenskyy Monastery, Pidkamin, Ukraine; Cathedral of SS. Peter and Paul, Kamieniec Podolski, Ukraine; Chapel of Our Lady of Ostrabrama, Vilnius; Stary Ratusz, Gdańsk; Muzeum Narodowe, Gdańsk; Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Gdańsk; Muzeum Narodowe, Warszawa; Cathedral of St. Clemens, Aarhus.

Many colleagues over the years have offered advice and engaged in valuable discussions concerning the history of art and alchemy in the Renaissance and early modern period. I would particularly like to acknowledge the encouragement and interest of Professor Bernard Smith and Dr. Mark Pritchard of the Power Institute, University of Sydney. I also had the good fortune to be able to consult with the late Dame Frances Yates and Mr. Daniel Walker Pickering at the Warburg Institute. I would also like to thank the School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies at the University of Leeds for facilitating research funding and study leave.

Urszula Szulakowska
2016

INTRODUCTION

A little remarked issue in the history of western esotericism is the manner in which Protestant alchemists of the 16th and 17th centuries continued to draw on Roman Catholic doctrine and visual imagery in generating their alchemical symbolic language, despite the fact that the Reformed Churches had condemned many of these teachings. No scholarly research so far has investigated the reasons for this deployment of Catholic ideas by Protestant Hermetic philosophers. For an earlier period the use of Catholic imagery in alchemical illustration prior to the Reformation has been the subject of Barbara Obrist's indispensable study.[1] More recently, Roberta Albrecht has discussed the use of Catholic Mariology in a literary context, examining the alchemical concepts of the 16th century poet and Anglican priest, John Donne.[2] The purpose of the present study is to investigate the use of Marian theology and iconography in the alchemical works composed by Lutheran and Anglican esoteric philosophers.

The discussion of a "Lutheran" confessional alchemy commenced with Frances Yates' pioneering study of the alchemists involved in the Rosicrucian movement of the 17th century.[3] A related question is whether there also existed an identifiably "Roman Catholic" type of alchemy in the same period.

Certainly, some alchemists and other esoteric philosophers were prepared to reach across the confessional divide in tolerance of their official religious opponents. One such example was the Silesian nobleman and alchemist, Abraham von Franckenberg (1593-1652) who, like other radical thinkers in the Protestant camp, was relatively free of the bigotry endemic on each side of the Catholic/Protestant divide. This does not mean, however, that he was considering any personal conversion to the Catholic faith. Even those alchemists who occasionally deployed fragments of Catholic doctrine in their writings and illustrations, nevertheless, remained

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[1] Barbara Obrist, *Les débuts de l'Imagerie alchimique (XIVe–XVe siècles)* (Paris: Le Sycomore, 1982).
[2] Roberta Albrecht, *The Virgin Mary as alchemical and Lullian reference in Donne* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2005).
[3] Frances Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (London: Routledge, 1972).

within the orbit of the Reformed Churches, in particular, that of the Lutheran confession. As shown in the definitive study of the German Spirituals by André Séguenny, the most significant Lutheran dissidents, such as Casper Schwenckfeld (1489/90-1561), despite their irenic outlook, found the Roman Church as an institution to be totally irrelevant to their concerns.[4] Instead, like Paracelsus (1493-1541), they were intent on remodelling the configuration of Protestant theology and discipline into a personalised religious faith, specific to the individual and released from the jurisdiction of any established Church. The leading Protestant Spirituals, such as Paracelsus (Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim), Valentin Weigel (1553-58) and Jacob Boehme (1575-1624), drew not only on the traditional dogmas of Christianity, whether Lutheran or Catholic, but also on the Western esoteric tradition, thereby engaging with late Hellenistic Hermeticism, astrology, kabbalism and alchemy. They engaged heavily with non-Christian sources, most especially investigating the late antique texts associated with the mythical Egyptian magus, Hermes Trismegistos (2nd to 4th century AD). The Hermetic corpus had been translated from Greek into Latin in the late 15th century by the Italian humanist, Marsilio Ficino (1433-99) and these translations (including vernacular editions) spread rapidly among the intellectual circles of Western and Eastern Europe. It was such novel esoteric currents that encouraged a less sectarian attitude on the part of some Protestant free-thinkers. Among them, there were alchemists who took whatever conceptual and visual materials they required from both pagan and Christian belief-systems, including those of the defunct Catholic tradition, and integrated this syncretic mix into their own practical and spiritual alchemical programmes.[5]

On the other side, the Catholic alchemists of the late 16th century in Italy, Spain and France were slow to adopt the medicine and alchemy

[4] The dismissive, yet tolerant, attitude towards Catholicism on the part of 17th century Spiritual dissenters from the Lutheran Church has been discussed at length in André Séguenny, *Les spirituels*: *philosophie et religion chez les jeunes humanistes allemands au seizième siècle* (Baden-Baden: Éditions Valentin Koerner, 2000), pp. 14, 131, 251-258.

[5] See, for example, Urszula Szulakowska "The Apocalyptic Eucharist and Religious Dissidence in Stefan Michelspacher's Cabala," *Aries. Journal for the Study of Western Esotericism*, 3 (2003), pp. 200-223. See also Urszula Szulakowska, "The Paracelsian medicine and theosophy of Abraham von Franckenberg and Robert Fludd" in Stanton J. Linden (ed.), *Mystical metal of gold: essays on alchemy and Renaissance culture* (New York: AMS Press, 2007), pp. 277-298.

developed by the followers of Paracelsus since these ideas had originated in the Protestant milieu of Northern and Central Europe. Nevertheless, by the early to mid-17th century, irrespective of the state censors, some Catholic natural philosophers had begun to explore Hermetic mysticism, along with the chemistry and medicine of the Paracelsians. Gradually, the alchemical treatises spuriously associated with Paracelsus percolated into the Catholic realms of Central Europe and Italy. From the outset, Rudolf II (1552–1612; Holy Roman Emperor, 1576–1612) displayed a high degree of tolerance of both pagan Hermeticism, as well as of the Paracelsians' spagyric medicine and alchemy, such practices being encouraged in his laboratories at the royal castle at Prague.[6] Even so, the Empire as a whole remained a dangerous place for radical thinkers, especially for those caught up in the esoteric spiritual currents. For, by the late 16th century the Jesuit Order had established its religious and political jurisdictions in the Austrian territories centred on Innsbruck. At the court of Prague Jesuit priests supervised the activities of the Emperor and reported back to the Papacy which reacted with dictates to Rudolf, intent on restraining his irenic impulses. On their own initiative the Jesuits were responsible for sending to the galleys those leading intellectuals who were propagating Paracelsian alchemy and theosophy in the southern German states, most notably, Adam Haselmayer (Haslmayr) of the Tyrol (1550-after 1617).[7]

In spite of the political forces that limited the development of religious toleration at this time, the alchemists as a group tended to incline towards a *laissez-faire* approach in regard to Catholicism. Evidence of this more liberal attitude is revealed by the manner in which they appropriated the cult of the Virgin Mary. Two specific types of Marian imagery were adopted: that of the Apocalyptic Woman as described in the Book of Revelation 12 and that of the Immaculate Conception, a type derived from the apocalyptic Mary. Illustrations of the Apocalyptic Woman had appeared in religious literature as early as the 8th century, most especially

[6] As an introduction there is the definitive study by Peter Marshall, *The Magic Circle of Rudolf II: Alchemy and Astrology in Renaissance Prague* (New York: Walker & Co., 2006), passim.

[7] Carlos Gilly, *Adam Haselmayer: der erste Verkünder der Manifeste der Rosenkreuzer: mit der Faksimile-Wiedergabe der Antwort An die lobwürdige Brüderschafft der Theosophen vom RosenCreutz aus dem Jahre 1612 und dem Verzeichnis von Haselmayers Werken im Nuncius Olympicus von 1626* (Amsterdam: in de Pelikaan, 1994), passim.

in the *Beatus Apocalypse* illuminated in Spain.[8] Prior to the Protestant Reformation, the Apocalyptic Woman had been interpreted by Catholic theologians as an allegory of the Virgin Mary. Her specific "apocalyptic" attributes in Revelation 12 included a crown of twelve stars and a crescent moon at her feet, while an aura of sun-rays shone about her. The Woman bore a Child in her arms, identified by the Church with Jesus Christ, while a dragon lurked nearby, said to be the Anti-Christ, the son of the Beast (Satan, Lucifer) (Revelation 13). These iconographic details have been constant features of the apocalyptic Mary down through the centuries and they have become standardized in Marian iconography. From this earliest iconographic type there developed a closely-related image of Mary as the Immaculate Conception.[9] In addition to these two universally popular icons there existed yet another visual image which similarly became the focus of a popular Marian cult in the Catholic Church, that of Mary as Queen of the Rosary. It should be noted that alchemical artists appropriated the iconography of the Apocalyptic Woman and, occasionally, that of the Immaculate Conception, but they never took recourse to that of the Queen of the Rosary.

The Immaculate Conception and the Queen of the Rosary were petitioned for aid by the Western powers against the enemies of Christendom. Such foes included the Muslim Turks, as well as a medley of heretics and apostates.

In the 1370s Christian imagery had appeared for the first time in the earliest alchemical treatises to be fully illustrated. Subsequently, in 1419 an anonymous Franciscan friar completed the manuscript of *Das Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* (Book of the Holy Trinity) which included imagery of the Virgin Mary, as well as of the Holy Trinity, Jesus Christ, St. Francis, Adam and Eve and, not least, the Anti-Christ. The visual and textual allusions in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* to the apocalyptic Mary and to the Anti-Christ reflected the intensity of the wide-spread obsession with eschatology in late medieval society. From the 14th to the 15th centuries the extreme branch of the Franciscan Order played a decisive role in the production and dispersion of apocalyptic prophecies

[8] See Barbara A. Shailor, *A Spanish Apocalypse: the Morgan Beatus manuscript*. Introduction and commentaries by John Williams (New York: George Braziller and the Pierpont Morgan Library, 1991).

[9] Mirella Levi d'Ancona, *The Iconography of the Immaculate Conception in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance* (College Art Association in conjunction with the Art Bulletin, 1957), pp. 28-43. See also Suzanna L. Stratton, *The Immaculate Conception in Spanish Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 7-39.

and eschatological writings. These radical members of the Order were known variously as "Poverelli," "Fraticelli," "Joachimites," or in modern parlance, "Spirituals." The radical Franciscans were also responsible for significant developments in alchemical theory and visual illustration.

The strong Franciscan connection to alchemy has already been well-considered by historians, such as Joachim Telle,[10] Barbara Obrist and, most recently, Leah De Vun.[11] However, the introduction of specifically Marian discourse into alchemy by the Franciscans has not been remarked by scholars. The first time this occurred was when the anonymous Franciscan who composed the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* employed Marian iconography as an allegory of the alchemical "mercury." From this mystical substance the quintessence (fifth essence) was distilled in the production of the Philosopher's Stone. In later 16th century alchemy the emblem of Mary represented the white alchemical tincture, or elixir, made from the Philosopher's Stone.

The Fraticelli had an exceptional interest in alchemy. (Dominican monks also participated in alchemy, but with less distinction). Of great importance in the history of alchemy was the pharmacology of the Spiritual Franciscan, John of Rupescissa (d.1366). He focused on the distillation of the fifth essence and his theories and practical techniques became the foundation of all subsequent European alchemy, especially influencing the medicinal alchemy of the 16th and 17th centuries. The purpose of Rupescissa's fabled quintessential elixir was to succour the health of radical preachers (Spiritual Franciscans, Waldensians and others) who were instigating socio-political and religious discord in the course of their wayfaring missions. In the second half of the 14th century these unauthorised evangelicals, both friars and laymen, were proclaiming the imminent Second Coming of Christ and the Time of Tribulations prior to his re-appearance.

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[10] Joachim Telle (ed. and comm.), *Rosarium Philosophorum. Ein alchemisches Florilegium des Spätmittelalters*, 2 vols. Translated from Latin to German by Lutz Claren and Joachim Huber (Weinheim: VCH, 1992). The facsimile in volume one is of [Anon.] *Rosarium philosophorum secunda pars alchimiae de lapide philosophico vero modo praeparando, continens exactam eius scientiae progressionem* ... (Frankfurt-am-Main: Jacobus Cyriacus, 1550). For the historiography of the *Rosarium* see Telle, *Rosarium Philosophorum*, 2, pp. 161-201.

[11] Leah DeVun, *Prophecy, alchemy, and the end of time: John of Rupescissa in the late Middle Age*s (New York; Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2009), pp. 32-51, 64-79.

A particular focus in the present study will be the alchemy of the 16th and 17th century "Paracelsians," the followers of Theophrastus von Hohenheim, since the alchemists who occasionally employed Catholic imagery also belonged to this same group. In particular, the spurious alchemical texts written in the name of Paracelsus, with their pagan gnostic theology, exerted a decisive influence on the development of 17th century mystical alchemy. Paracelsus himself had been an active participant in the eschatological currents of his time, writing prophecies and commentaries, as well as astrological predictions that speculated on the forthcoming apocalypse in which the current political order would be destroyed.[12]

There are additional political issues involved in the Virgin Mary's presence in alchemy which are related to the long historical struggle by the European powers against the invading forces of the Turkish Ottoman Empire. Scholars have not, so far, examined the eschatological role of alchemy within the history of the Turkish wars. The Turks were feared through-out Europe as the forces of the Anti-Christ foretold in the Gospels and in the Book of Revelation. The popular view held that the battle against the Turks was an eschatological conflict between God and Satan and that the Turks were an omen of the looming apocalyptic conflagration in which the world would perish. The struggle against the Ottoman assailants is first mentioned in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* as a major reason for the practice of alchemy. The defence of Europe was the "raison d'etre" for alchemists such as the Italian Giovanni Mercurio da Correggio (1451-?), as it was for the Hungarian alchemist known as "Melchior Cibinensis" whose 15th century treatise was reprinted by Michael Maier (1568–1622).[13] The miraculous Stone of the Philosophers and the Elixir, it was argued, would serve to strengthen the power of the political and military leaders of the European armies. Maier illustrated the text of Cibinensis with an image of the Virgin Mary shown in her

[12] See Kurt Goldammer, "Paracelsische Eschatologie. Zum Verständnis der Anthropologie und Kosmologie Hohenheims," *Nova Acta Paracelsica*, 5 (1948), pp. 45-85.

[13] Michael Maier, *Symbola aureae mensae duodecim nationum, hoc est Hermaea seu Mercurii festa ab heroibus duodenis selectis, artis chymicae usu, sapientia et authoritate paribus celebrata, ad Pyrgopolynicen seu adversarium illum tot annis jactabundum, virgini Chemiae injuriam argumentis tam vitiosis quam convitiis argutis inferentem, confundendum et exarmandum, artifices vero optime de ea meritos suo honori et famae restituendum* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Lucas Jennis, 1617), pp. 507-552.

apocalyptic form as described in Revelation 12.[14] This image may, in fact, be identified as an early type of the "Turkish Madonna," a Marian icon popularized in Germany and Eastern Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries.[15] The attribute of the crescent-moon, the sacred emblem of Islam, lying prone under the feet of the apocalyptic Mary proclaimed her victory over the Turks.

Since the earliest Christian centuries the attribute of the crescent-moon in Marian imagery has been a political signifier. From the time of her first appearance in Revelation 12 where she and her Child were pursued by the dragon, the woman on the crescent-moon has appeared in some kind of embattled political context. The historical background to the Book of Revelation was that of the persecution of the Christians by the Emperor Nero in the first century. In the same manner, when the Apocalyptic Woman put in her first appearance in the shadow world of alchemy in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* then it was in the middle of an armed contest, that of the long-running dispute between the Papacy and the Holy Roman Emperor. The author of the text was generically anti-papal due to his (probable) Spiritual Franciscan connections and he was firmly on the side of the Emperor.

The Apocalyptic Woman in Revelation manifests on the battlefield in the midst of the universal catastrophe prior to the Last Judgement (Revelation 12: 1).

> Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars …
> (New King James Version)[16]

The Woman is pursued by a red dragon (Revelation 12: 2-5).

> [2] Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.[3] And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. [4] His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her

[14] Maier, *Symbola aureae mensae*, p. 509.
[15] Leo Stausberg, "Türkenmadonnen im Kreise Ahrweiler. Eine Studie zur Heimat- und Weltgeschichte" online http://www.kreis-ahrweiler.de/kvar/VT/hjb1958/hjb1958.38.htm (retrieved 25. 4. 2016)
[16] All biblical quotes in the present study are drawn from the New King James Version Bible (New York: HarperCollins; Nelson, 1982.) Originally known as the Revised Authorized Version.

> Child as soon as it was born. [5] She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron.
> (New King James Version)

In later centuries the crescent moon and the dragon transformed into a serpent became attributes of Mary in her form as the Immaculate Conception, a type derived from the Woman of Revelation. The dragon in Revelation 12 was related to the serpent of Genesis 3:1-4 where God had informed the snake that, since it had lured humanity into sin, then it would have its punishment with the coming of a new woman. The Catholic Church identified this person with Mary in the form of the "Second Eve." She it was who would crush the serpent's head under her feet (Genesis 3: 14-15). The image of Mary crushing the serpent (Satan) eventually led to the development of the icon of the Immaculate Conception which became an important recourse for Catholics seeking to defend both the Church and the wider body politic against their foes. The veneration of the Virgin Mary in her role of guardian of the Catholic Church against political disorder has endured to the present day.

For example, the Marian apparitions associated with the cult of the "Miraculous Medal" reportedly occurred during the revolution in France of 1830. The apparition was recorded as manifesting itself again during the 1848 revolution and then once more in the course of the siege of Paris by the Prussians in 1870, as well as during the anti-clerical Paris Commune in 1871. Catherine Labouré had first experienced the vision of the Virgin Mary on 27th November 1830. The Virgin was standing within an oval mandorla, her feet on a globe, treading down a serpent as in the imagery of the Immaculate Conception, although from her hands there now shone rays of light. On the edge of the mandorla there appeared the words: "Ô Marie, conçue sans péché, priez pour nous qui avons recours à vous" ("O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you").[17] The Labouré apparition was engraved onto the "Miraculous Medal." The frame around her displayed a circle of twelve stars, as in the image of Mary Immaculate. The Miraculous Medal was the proto-type for the later Marian visions witnessed by Bernadette Sibirous at Lourdes, commencing on 11th February 1858.[18] The figure at Lourdes eventually revealed herself

[17] René Laurentin, *The Life of Catherine Labouré, 1806-1876*. Translated by Paul Inwood (London: Collins, 1983), pp. 214-219, 250-256.
[18] Laurentin, *Life of Catherine Labouré*,

to be the "Immaculate Conception."[19] It is to be noted that these two apparitions of Mary Immaculate did not include the emblem of the crescent moon, since the figures had manifested in the physical realm, not in the heavens.

However, contemporary icons of the Immaculate Conception continue to include the emblem of the crescent-moon. Apart from that detail the popular image of the Immaculate Conception in the present time differs somewhat from the imagery of the 16th and 17th centuries since it was created on the model of the 19th century Marian apparitions, those of the Virgin of the Miraculous Medal and of Lourdes. In these modern versions Mary's hair is no longer loose as a sign of her perpetual virginity, but is covered with a white veil to signify her motherhood and her submissive humility. Her pose has become stiff and hieratic, unlike the dynamic flight of the Baroque Immaculate Virgins. She currently stands firmly on the earth, rather than being elevated to heaven (although the moon is present) and her mood is distanced and removed, rather than exalted and ecstatic as in earlier portrayals by Spanish painters of the 16th and 17th centuries.

In another political conflict, this time in Poland, in August 1921 there appeared a vision in the sky of the Immaculate Conception with the moon at her feet. It was said to have been witnessed by Polish soldiers during the Battle of Warsaw against the troops of Soviet Russia. In the same historical context there is an example of the manner in which the sign of the crescent moon was used to "militarize" the image of the Virgin Mary. This happened in the case of the painting of the Virgin of Ostrabrama in Vilnius, Lithuania. This icon still hangs over the eastern gate to the city where it was originally supposed to defend both the city and the whole of Eastern Europe against invasion from the East, whether by Tartars, Muscovites, or Soviet Russians. An imposing golden crescent-moon was attached to the silver-cope of the icon in 1848 and this has since become its main attribute. The sign of the moon explicitly refers to the protective function of the Virgin Mary in the defence of Europe against barbarians.[20] In similar manner the concept of a crusade against heresy and other threats to Catholicism was associated with the cult of the Immaculate Conception by Maximilian Kolbe (1894-1941). Kolbe was a Conventual Franciscan friar and his devotion to the Immaculate Conception was an indispensable aspect of his membership of that Order. In 1922 Kolbe founded the journal

[19] Francis Trochu, *Saint Bernadette Soubirous, 1844-1879*. Translated by John Joyce (Hampton Court: The Across Trust, 1979: first French edition 1954), pp. 43 ff.

[20] See Maria Kałamajska-Saeed, *Ostra Brama w Wilnie* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1990), pp. 110, 204ff.

Ryczerz Niepokalanej ("Knight of the Immaculate") and in 1927 he instituted the Conventual Franciscan monastery at Niepokalanów near Warsaw. He also established the "Crusade of Mary Immaculate" (*Militia Immaculatae*) whose prime obligation is prayer to the Immaculate Conception.[21]

In addition, there exists a third widely-venerated contemporary Marian type based on the visions at Fatima in Portugal which commenced on 13th May, 1917. This particular apparition has been identified as that of Mary, Queen of the Rosary and she is also invoked for the protection of European Christianity.[22] It is popularly believed that a campaign of prayer with the aid of the rosary secured Austria against permanent Stalinist occupation in 1945-55.[23]

The translation of the image of the Virgin Mary to an alchemical location in the early 15th century caused the disruption of some fundamental dogmas of the Christian faith, most especially, that of the Trinitarian God who had been similarly relocated to an alchemical setting. Moreover, Mary's appearance within her new role in alchemy could be in unfamiliar guise since the original Marian attributes could be subject to modification in order to accomodate alchemical theory and also to express the eschatological mood of the times.

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[21] *Our Lady's Fool: Father Maximilian Kolbe, Franciscan Conventual Friar*. By a Sister of Mercy (Langley, Bucks: St. Paul Publications, 1964). This is a hagiography but it makes the point about the Franciscan/ Marian connection. See also Maximillian Kolbe, *The crusade of Mary Immaculate: ideals aims mission* (Manchester: Crusade of Mary Immaculate Press, 1958 -).

[22] The Fatima image is clad completely in white, with gold embroidery around the edges of the long veil and a gold star on the lower edge of the gown. She carries a gold rosary.

[23] See, for example, the article online http://www.returntofatima.org/tag/rosary-miracle-of-austria/ (retrieved 25. 4. 2016). At the end of the war in 1945 Soviet troops occupied Austria and this was expected to be permanent. However, the Franciscan Father Petrus Pavlicek, inspired by the Marian apparition at Fatima, founded the Expiatory Rosary Crusade to pray for peace in the world and for the freedom of Austria. Hundreds of thousands of Austrians prayed for these intentions. Finally, in 1955 the Soviet Army withdrew from Austria. The Austrian Chancellor announced the withdrawal of the Soviet Army on the 13th of May which was the anniversary of the first apparition at Fatima. The treaty of 15 May, 1955, re-established an independent and sovereign Austria.

CHAPTER ONE

ALCHEMY, APOCALYPTIC DISCOURSE AND THE SPIRITUAL FRANCISCANS

What was alchemy? There is disagreement among scholars on this issue because the historical alchemists from the 2nd C AD onwards have revealed a variety of intentions in their diverse practices. They were not solely concerned with the creation of the Philosopher's Stone. In fact, this supernatural object was unknown to Hellenistic alchemists. Moreover, by the 14th century the alchemists' interest in the transmutation of metals was being replaced by a new medical concern involving the production of the Elixir of Life, also known as the Universal Panacea.

In this context one of the foremost 20th century historians of alchemy, Francis Sherwood-Taylor, has written that

> Alchemy is not easy to define. Some would restrict its meaning to "transmutation of metals"; others wish to include within its scope all that relates to the exaltation and regeneration, whether of metal or of the human mind. Alchemy is not the same as mysticism, nor as metallurgy.[1]

Another definition has been offered by Robert Halleux who has proposed that alchemy was a "conglomerate (ensemble) of practices and speculation related to the transmutation of metals."[2] Halleux emphasizes the technological aspects of alchemy, as well as the manner in which the alchemists devised philosophical and theoretical models concerning the structure of matter.

One of the first alchemical texts, *Φυσικά και μυστικά* (*Physika kai Mystika*), composed by the Greek Democritus (ca. 100 AD) described an art in which metals were transmuted to a higher form and this process was

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[1] Francis Sherwood-Taylor, "The Origins of Greek alchemy," *Ambix*, 1 (1937), pp. 30-47; quote from page 30.

[2] Robert Halleux, *Les textes alchimiques, typologies des Sources du Moyen Âge Occidental* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1979), p. 49.

explained in both physical and mystical terms.[3] Knowledge of Greek alchemy was transferred to the West during the 12th century in Latin translations of Arabic texts. The legacy of the Greeks had been elaborated by the Arabs, most especially the distillation of alcohol which led to the production of new kinds of medicines. A variety of late Hellenistic Hermetic texts were translated from the Arabic into Latin, most especially the *Emerald Table* and the *Turba philosophorum*, to which were added texts composed by Latins in the name of the Arabian alchemists. The most important of these was the pseudo-Geberian corpus spuriously attributed to the authentic Arab alchemist Jabir al-Hazzan, but in actuality composed either in Italy, or Spain.

In the 14th to 16th centuries the new pharmacological concerns were incorporated into the Western alchemical programme. To such material aspects there were added a variety of philosophical and religious issues encompassing both speculations on the structure of natural phenomena, as well as on the problem of human salvation from a Christian perspective. An older generation of historians such as H. J. Sheppard,[4] as well as psychologists such as C. G. Jung[5] and the mythographer Mircea Eliade[6] have laid stress on the spiritual aspects of alchemy which they saw as displacing practical chemistry from centre stage. In contrast, the contemporary historian Rafał Prinke insists that the field of alchemy has always included both practical physical and spiritual aspects, although by the 16th century these two aspects had become distinguished from one another. In the 17th century a predominantly mystical type of alchemy did, in fact, emerge, one influenced by the Paracelsians and by the disciples of the mythical Rosicrucian Brotherhood. Nevertheless, the practical tradition also continued unabated and it was further developed by chemists such as Robert Boyle (1627-91) and Johann Hevelius (1611-87). They continued to experiment within the empirical tradition of the 13th century scholastics, in particular, Roger Bacon (ca. 1214-92) and Albertus Magnus (1200-80).

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[3] Rafał Prinke, *Zwodniczy ogród błędów. Piśmiennictwo alchemiczne do końca XVIII wieku*. Monografie z Dziejów Nauki i Techniki, 164 (Warszawa: Instytut Historii Nauki im. Ludwika i Aleksandra Birkenmajerów, Polska Akademia Nauk, 2014), passim.

[4] For example, see H. J. Sheppard, "The Ouroboros and the Unity of Matter," *Ambix*, 10 (1962), pp. 83-96.

[5] Most especially, there is Carl Gustav Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968). See also the general argument in Carl Gustav Jung, *Mysterium coniunctionis* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963).

[6] Mircea Eliade, *The forge and the crucible*. Translated by Stephen Corrin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), passim.

By the 16th century there had also emerged an extensive chemical industry engaged in the manufacture of nitric products (gunpowder and fertilisers) and in textile dyeing and metallurgy, as well as in the distillation of alcoholic and pharmaceutical preparations. Historians of science such as William Newman have emphasized the history of this industrialised production from the 15th century. It was then that practical chemists like Vannoccio Biringuccio (1480-1537) and Georg Agricola (1494-1555) distanced themselves from the alchemical art of transmutation, or they expressed scepticism about such ideas.[7] Even committed alchemical authors such as George Starkey (1628–65) were scornful of the labours of unskilled and ignorant alchemists.[8]

In fact, the arguments of modernist historians of science have their limitations. The studies of William Newman are a case in point since he takes no account of mystical alchemy and does not consider the role of alchemy within religious history. Although his research also involves the role of practical chemistry in the physical crafting of paintings and sculpture, yet, Newman takes no account of the visual imagery as a conceptual and aesthetic phenomenon. He ventures no further than the technological aspects involving the brute materiality of art-practice. Newman, like most other historians of science, ignores the subject-matter of the visual emblems and he has no interest in their historical importance as art-works. It is surprising that Newman should purport to be undertaking a study of the art/science divide in the context of historical alchemy and at the same time he is avoiding any engagement with the allegorical content of alchemical illustration. His emphasis is skewed towards minor figures in artistic/ alchemical practice of the 16th and 17th centuries, while ignoring the more important artists who created the emblematic woodcuts and engravings, among whom there were Matthias Merian, Johann Theodore de Bry, Johann Daniel Mylius, Stefan Michelspacher and Robert Fludd.[9] Newman's text limps strangely on one foot like alchemical Saturn into its own idiosyncratic direction, away from mainstream studies of art and alchemy. His argument neglects any mention of the alchemical emblematic tradition as if it had never existed.

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[7] See the argument in William R. Newman, *Promethean ambitions: alchemy and the quest to perfect nature* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2005), passim.

[8] William R. Newman, *Gehennical fire. The Lives of George Starkey. An American alchemist in the Scientific Revolution*, (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2003), pp. xvii-xviii.

[9] See Newman, *Promethean Ambitions*, pp. 238-289.

Prinke has attempted to reconcile the conceptual polarisation of the "two cultures" (in C. P. Snow's terms[10]), that is, the sciences versus the humanities and the arts. Prinke suggests that alchemy was not a religion, but neither was it a science, only an area of study concerned with the philosophical understanding of nature, combined with a process of psychological self-discovery.[11] Four fields of alchemical endeavour can be identified, according to Prinke, first, the transmutation of metals into gold, then the purely practical, non-mystical aspects of industrial and proto-chemistry and, third, the mystical aspects of alchemy. Finally, there were the medicinal concerns of the alchemists. Prinke comments further that in the existing literature on alchemy there are three perspectives on alchemical history.[12] First, alchemy is treated as a disorderly collection of superstitions, myths and chemical practices bordering on magic, an aberrant cultural singularity practiced by charlatans, or dreamers. More charitably, comments Prinke, there is also some recognition of alchemy as an early stage of chemistry which eventually developed into a scientific discipline. Finally, it is conceded by scholars that there existed alchemical texts carrying a religious, esoteric and psychological meaning and which deliberately sought to cut the historical ties of the alchemists to practical experimentation. Modernist historians, according to Prinke, have defined these three fields as, respectively, pseudo-science, proto-science and para-science. [13]

It may be argued that the development of the spiritual type of alchemy with its complex visual imagery was the product of Franciscan eschatology.[14] The most decisive confluence of apocalyptic prophecy, Franciscan radicalism and alchemy is encountered in the early 15th century

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[10] Charles Percy Snow, *Two Cultures and Second Look* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), passim.

[11] Rafał T. Prinke, "Beyond patronage Michael Sendivogius and the meanings of success in alchemy" in Miguel López Pérez, Didier Kahn and Mar Rey Bueno (eds.), *Chymia: Science and Nature in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), pp. 175-231.

[12] See for example Bruce T. Moran, "Alchemy, chemistry and the history of science," *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, 31: 4 (2000), pp. 711-720, 713-714.

[13] Prinke, *Zwodniczy ogród błędów*, p. 26. Prinke has also referred to the work of Joseph Zon (ed.), *The Fringe of science. Protoscience - parascience - pseudoscience*, Philosophy of Nature and Sciences, 3 (Lublin: Catholic University Publishing House, 2009). See also, Stephen A. McKnight (ed.), *Science, pseudo-science, and utopianism in early modern thought* (Columbia; London: University of Missouri Press, 1992).

[14] DeVun, *Prophecy, Alchemy and the End of Time*, passim.

Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit, originating in Germany and composed, it seems, by a Franciscan friar.[15]

The interest in apocalyptic prophecy extends to the ancient Hebrew era when popular speculation concerning the end of the world and life after death was enlivened by visions foretelling a narrative of final disastrous events. The term "apocalypsis," however, is Greek in origins, simply meaning a vision, though the word was amplified in the early Christian era so that it gained the sense of a divine revelation of the specific events leading to the last days. The original Greek name of the Book of Revelation was the "Apocalypse of St. John." Much more ancient apocalyptic writings are found in Hebrew prophecies dating from the 3rd century BC through to ca. 100 AD. The Old Testament books of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Enoch, Baruch and Daniel are of particular significance, but there are many other apocalyptic predictions dispersed through-out the Hebrew Scriptures. These concern the advent of the Messiah, the Judge of humanity on the Last Day. The early Christians, including Paul himself, had believed that the Second Coming of Christ was imminent. In the medieval period authors such as Rupert of Deutz (ca. 1075-1129), Otto of Freising (d.1158), Anselm of Havelberg (d. 1158) and Richard of St. Victor (d. 1173) issued new apocalyptic predictions. The radical Franciscan Joachim del' Fiore (1131-1202) brought these prophetic currents to a head.[16]

The Spirituals (Fraticelli, Poverelli, or Joachimites) as a group were antagonistic towards the Papacy and they predicted the forthcoming demise of the Church's magisterium, spiritually and politically. They were imbued with millenarian ideas foretelling the advent of the age of the Holy Spirit when the "Eternal Gospel" would replace the Church and its Scriptures. Utopia would ensue.[17] Originally, Joachim del' Fiore, the

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[15] See Wilhelm Ganzenmüller, "'Das "Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit'" in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Technologie und der Alchemie* (1956), pp. 231-272. Also see Herwig Büntz, *"*Das Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit-sein Autor und seine Überleiferung*," Zeitschrift für Deutsches Altertum,* 20 (1971), pp. 150-160. In addition, see Uwe Junker, *Das "Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit" in seiner zweiten, alchemistischen Fassung (Kadolzburg 1433)* (Cologne, 1986), pp. 1-2, 17-21.

[16] Robin Bruce Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis: Apocalypticism in the Wake of the Lutheran Reformation* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1988), pp. 20-23.

[17] R. E. Lerner, *The Feast of Saint Abraham: Medieval Millenarians and the Jews* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000). See also Bernard McGinn, *The Calabrian Abbot: Joachim of Fiore in the History of Western Thought* (New York: MacMillan, 1985), pp. 89-110. Also there is the indispensible study by

source of the extreme Franciscan current, had been inspired by sections of the New Testament that prophesied a new era for humanity. He taught that after the "Age of the Father" (the Old Testament era) and the "Age of the Son" (the New Testament period) there would follow an "Age of the Holy Spirit," a period of social equality and brotherly love. Joachim had foretold that the Second Age of the Son, the Christian era, would conclude in 1260 when the Anti-Christ would appear on earth, followed by a new Third Age.[18] St. Francis was identified by the Franciscan radicals with the Prophet of the Third Age, a new Christ in effect who had introduced the Age of the Holy Spirit in which there would take place the Last Judgement and the descent of the New Jerusalem to earth. Church authorities, fearful of the popular ferment, determinedly condemned the teachings of Joachim as heresy.

Another source of strife between the Spiritual Franciscans and the Papacy was the fact that the radical Spirituals insisted on living in conditions of extreme poverty (hence also their designation as “Poverelli) in obedience to Francis’ Testament where he had prescribed poverty and mendicancy for all Franciscans.[19] The authorities of the Order had mitigated the extreme implications of this requirement and the friars were permitted to own property. The Pope and the Franciscan Order condemned the radicals as heretics since they continued to follow Francis’ original intentions. The Spirituals, in turn, regarded the Church as deviant since in the authentic rule, as approved by Pope Honorius III in his Bull, *Solet annuere* (1223), Francis had undeniably stated that the friars could not receive money in any kind. The controversy did not cease but rather increased until John XXII was forced to suppress the Spiritual Franciscans in 1317, issuing the Bull, *Quia nonnunquam* (1322).[20]

Already in the 12th century Western alchemists from the outset were incorporating Christian eschatology into their writings, as in the case of the Latin translation of the Arabic *Turba philosophorum* (Arab original ca.

Marjorie Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study in Joachimism* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), pp. 62, 69, 72,175, 299-301.

[18] Steven Ozment, *Mysticism and dissent. Religious ideology and social protest in the sixteenth century* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 106.

[19] John Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order: From its Origins to the year 1517* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), pp. 90-91, 117.

[20] David Burr, *The spiritual Franciscans: from protest to persecution in the century after Saint Francis* (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press; London: Eurospan, 2001), pp. 97-98, 196-206.

900). By the 13th century most of the leading natural philosophers and alchemists were engaged in eschatological prophecy. Even the scientific ideas of Roger Bacon (1219-92) concerning universal knowledge reveal Joachimite influences. Bacon himself belonged to the Franciscan Order. In his *Medicina Philosophica* he proposed an alchemical theory of the perfectibility of the human body and he emphasized the role of alchemy in medicine, not only in metallurgical transmutation. [21] Another influential alchemist was Arnald of Villanova (ca. 1240–1311), a Catalonian medical practitioner and prophet, who worked on the theory of the quintessence first explained by Aristotle in his *Physics*.[22] Arnald translated Arabic medical works and he also composed the treatises *Speculum medicinae* and *Regimen sanitatis ad regem Aragonum*.[23] In addition, he wrote in favour of the reform of the Church and issued his own prophecies concerning the Last Days. Both he and his contemporary John of Rupescissa were associated with radical groups of preachers, most of all the Waldensians who disregarded the disciplinary codes of the Church and wandered about preaching without canonical dispensation, urging freedom of association and discourse outside the Church. They put into question both the hierarchical structures of the Church and the secular political status-quo. These included evangelical groups associated with John Wycliffe (ca.1320–84), Jan Hus (ca.1369–1415) and the mystics of the German Rhineland: Eckhart von Hochheim (ca.1260–ca.1328), Johannes Tauler (ca.1300-61) and Heinrich Suso (1295-1366). All of these dissidents maintained that it was possible to gain personal access to God without the mediation of Catholic priests and the sacraments of the Church. They also subscribed to the eschatological ideas of the Joachimites.[24]

The French alchemist John of Rupescissa (Jean de Roquetaillade) (ca. 1310-66/70) was yet one more dissenting member of the Franciscan Order. In 1332 he commenced his study of alchemy and in his public critique of

[21] DeVun, *Prophecy, Alchemy and the End of Time*, pp. 82, 85-89.

[22] See Manfred Gerwing, *Vom Ende der Zeit: der Traktat des Arnald von Villanova über die Ankunft des Antichrist in der akademischen Auseinandersetzung zu Beginn des 14 Jahrhunderts* (Munster: Aschendorff, 1996). See also DeVun, *Prophecy, Alchemy and the End of Time*, pp. 59-95.

[23] The alchemical *Rosarius Philosophorum*, the *Novum Lumen* and the *Flos Florum* are spuriously attributed to him. Editions of these were later printed in Lyon in 1504 and 1532, Basel in 1585 and Lyon in 1586.

[24] Jeanne Ancelet-Hustache, *Master Eckhart and the Rhineland Mystics*. Translated by Hilda Graef (New York: Harper Torchbooks; London: Longmans, 1957), pp. 45-88, 139-178.

the Church and of the Avignon Papacy Rupescissa sided with the Franciscan Spirituals. In 1349 he was brought to trial before the court of canon law at Avignon where he pleaded his case before Pope Clement VI himself. This led to his imprisonment, although he was eventually exonerated of heresy in 1354. While in prison Rupescissa composed apocalyptic prophecies on the Anti-Christ (*Visiones seu Revelationes* (1349), *Vade Mecum in tribulatione* (1356) and *Liber Ostensor* (1356)).[25] Simultaneously, in circa 1350 he began to produce alchemical texts influenced by the ideas of Arnald of Villanova, Ramon Lull[26] and Roger Bacon.

Rupescissa was especially concerned with the distillation of alcohol in order to develop a medicinal elixir intended to prolong the life of those whom he termed "the poor evangelical preachers."[27] He called his elixir the "aqua vitae," stating that it contained the distilled fifth essence.[28] In his treatise *De consideratione quintae essentiae* (ca. 1351-52) Rupescissa claimed to have produced this alchemical elixir, or tincture, by means of extracting the fifth essence from gold. He called it the "coelum" (or "man's heaven" in English translations). It was so named since the skies were said to be composed of the same incorruptible spiritualized matter. Rupescissa claimed that when his "coelum" was made into a potable elixir and imbibed, then human-life was greatly extended since the elixir removed the physical corruption causing the body to decay and perish. Gold was the substance used for the work since it was believed to be the equivalent of the sun in the heavens. The metal had to be purified and distilled with alcohol and the resulting combustible oil ("aqua ardens") was regarded as being the quintessence of gold, the Universal Panacea that cured all ills.[29]

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[25] DeVun, *Prophecy, Alchemy and the End of Time*, pp. 57-62, 73-79, 105-109.
[26] DeVun, *Prophecy, Alchemy and the End of Time*, pp. 80-81, 95-99.
[27] DeVun, *Prophecy, Alchemy and the End of Time*, pp. 18-31, 34-35, 41-42.
[28] DeVun, *Prophecy, Alchemy and the End of Time*, pp. 32-51, 64-79.
[29] Rupescissa's original text *De consideratione quintae essentiae* was printed in French in Lyon in 1549. The first Latin edition appeared in 1561 edited by Guglielmo Gratarolo (1516-68) (*De Rerum omnium consideratione Quintæ essentiae, opus sane egregium*). Gratarolo published a compendium of alchemical texts, the *Verae Alchemiæ* … (1561) which included another text by Rupescissa, the *Liber lucis*. Rupescissa's alchemical writings are very practical and he gives recipes for the working of mercury with iron, or copper sulphate, and saltpetre (nitrate), as well as sulphur. He examines amalgams of gold which he treats with vinegar, or urine. He also distils antimony with vinegar. He was interested in the mineral acids and their sublimation and distillation. In fact, his pharmacological chemistry pre-dated that of Paracelsus and his disciples.

Rupescissa's text was appropriated by the pseudo-Lullians, late anonymous disciples of the Catalan theologian Ramon Llull (Eng. Lull) (ca. 1232-ca. 1315) although, in reality, he had never practiced alchemy.[30] Thus spuriously attributed to Lull, Rupescissa's treatise was published as *De secretis naturae* in 1514 (translated into German in 1532 and into Italian in 1557). The text also appeared in the pseudo-Lullian *Testament*.[31] The process of distillation described by Rupescissa was further employed by the German Hieronymus Brunschwig in his *Liber de Arte Distillandi* (Strasbourg, 1512).[32] It was from these sources that Paracelsus (1493/94-1541) learned the arts of the still. As demonstrated by Michela Pereira, the concept of the Elixir originated in the Christian eschatology of the resurrected body and its physical and spiritual perfectibility after death.[33] The Philosopher's Stone was one such resurrected and perfected body, while the elixir made from it offered an extension of life and a return to perfect health. The discussion concerning the perfect body of the Stone was the central theme of pseudo-Lull's *Testamentum*, as well as of pseudo-Geber's *Summa perfectionis magisterii*. To produce the Stone it was necessary to balance the four Galenic temperaments in a "complexio aequalis" (choleric, sanguine, melancholic and phlegmatic). The four humours of Hippocratic medicine were black bile (Gk: μέλαινα χολή), yellow bile (Gk: χολή), phlegm (Gk: φλέγμα) and blood (Gk: αἷμα).[34]

These concepts of the perfectible body were related to Hebrew and Christian prophecies concerning the resurrection of the physical body after death and the exact nature of its now immortal materiality. The Books of Ezekiel (37:12-14) and Revelation (1: 17-18) foretold the resurrection of the dead, fully-fleshed, to stand for sentence before the Son of Man who in Christian understanding was Christ as the Universal Judge. In Paul's terminology the resurrected body would be transfigured, or glorified

[30] DeVun, *Prophecy, Alchemy and the End of Time*, pp. 95-101.

[31] See the argument in Michela Pereira, *The Alchemical Corpus Attributed to Raymond Lull* (London: Warburg Institute, 1989), pp. 1-15, 17-20, 22-28.

[32] The *Liber de Arte Distillandi* was translated into English in 1527, then into Latin by Philipp Ulstad and republished with his own attribution as *Coelum philosophorum* (1525). See Tillmann Taape, "Distilling Reliable Remedies: Hieronymus Brunschwig's Liber de arte distillandi (1500) Between Alchemical Learning and Craft Practice," *Ambix*, 61, (2014), pp. 236-256.

[33] Michela Pereira, "Uno Tesoro Inestamibile: Elixir e' Prolongatio Vitae' nell' Alchimia del '300'," *Micrologus. Nature, Sciences and Medieval Societies, I Discorsi dei Corpi* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1993), pp. 161-187.

[34] Jacques Jouanna, *Greek medicine from Hippocrates to Galen: selected papers*. Edited with a preface by Philip van der Eijk. Translated by Neil Allies (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012), pp. 335-359.

("glorificatum"), that is, made incorruptible, subtle and able to penetrate solids. This new glorified body would be both spiritual and material.[35] In these religious teachings the late medieval alchemists perceived similar eschatological aspects to their own art. One especially influential text in this context (and among the earliest to be illustrated with figurative narratives) was the early 15th century *Aurora Consurgens*, composed during the Church Council at Lake Constance in ca. 1414-17.[36] Attributed spuriously to Thomas Aquinas, it provided a lengthy account of the end of time. The author referred to Paul's teaching concerning the resurrection of the body. In his sixth parable he even provided a detailed and influential analogy between the Philosopher's Stone and the Second Adam who was Christ in the form of the Eucharistic bread and wine. This was one of the earliest such identifications of the Stone with Christ. In Corinthians (15: 21-54) Paul had stated that when the mortal should put on immortality and corruption put on incorruption, then death would be swallowed up in victory. Just as all died in Adam, so in Christ all would live. The first Adam originated in corruptible elements, but the Second Adam (Christ) was made from pure elements and he entered heaven in his physical body.

The account by Paul describing Christ as the Second Adam was perhaps a source for the frequent depiction of Adam in alchemical illustration, commencing in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* (1419). Adam was used as a personification of the four prime elements, the components of the red earth from which he had been created. In an alchemical context he represented impure prime matter which after purgation was transformed into the Second Adam, the Christ-like Philosopher's Stone. There exists a well-known image of the dying Adam and Eve in a manuscript of alchemical compendia held by the Laurentian Library in Florence. This treatise has been identified by the present author as being Paduan in origins, dating from the 1470s (MS Florence Medicea-Laurenziana Ashburnham 1166. d. e, *Miscellanea d'Alchmia*).[37] Giovanni Carbonelli has examined this codex earlier and he has provided interpretations of the imagery, including that of Adam whom he identified

[35] Caroline Walker Bynum, *The resurrection of the body in Western Christianity, 200-1336* (New York; Chichester: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp. 259-263.
[36] "Aurora consurgens …" in *Auriferæ artis, quam chemiam vocant, antiquissimi authores, siue Turba philosophorum. (Cuiusdam epistolæ quæ Alexandri ... nomine circumfertur interpretatio, abditam philosophici lapidis compositionem ... declarans)* (Basileæ: apud Petrum Pernam, 1572. First edition).
[37] Urszula Szulakowska, "The Tree of Aristotle: Images of the Philosophers Stone and their Transference in Alchemy from the Fifteenth to the Twentieth Century", *Ambix* (1986), pp. 53-77.

as an emblem of prime matter.[38] In this manuscript Adam is depicted lying on the ground with an arrow in the right side of his chest, not in his left where his heart is located. His phallus grows prolifically into the form of a great tree (f. 16r). Eve on the succeeding folio lies on the ground next to a sarcophagus and another tree grows from the top of her head (f. 17v). These two miniatures may even be the proto-types for the imagery of the male and female principles in the *Rosarium philosophorum* where they are further illustrated as undergoing the "coniunctio" and "mortificatio" in a sarcophagus. The problem is to determine whether the illustrator of the *Rosarium* could have had access to that Italian source.

In the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* and in its derivatives, the *Rosarium Philosophorum* (1550) and the *Pandora* (1582; 1588), the Philosopher's Stone in the mineral kingdom is the counter-part to Christ in the human world. Accordingly, the depictions of Christ's passion and resurrection by the artists are intended to be allegories of the perfected Stone.

The eschatological and apocalyptic currents in alchemy are linked to the first appearance in the late 14th century of detailed alchemical narratives and figurative imagery. The first sequence of such illustrations, according to Barbara Obrist, appeared in a manuscript composed by a certain Constantinus, *Le livre des secrets de ma dame alchimie* (ca. 1370) (MS Vienne Bibliothèque Nationale, MS 2372).[39] Another illustrated alchemical treatise produced in the same years was that of Gratheus, *La Sagesse de Salomon* (ca. 1370) (MS Vienne Bibliothèque Nationale, MS 2372, ff. 57v-). The eschatological system employed by Constantinus, as well as his visual iconography appears to have been developed in a Spiritual Franciscan milieu. Obrist has argued that the function of the new visual forms employed by Constantinus and Gratheus was rhetorical.[40] They were a strategy designed to outwit the scholastics who were raising objections to the alchemists' contention that metals changed species in the process of transmutation. The scholastics were in agreement with Aristotle in maintaining that species constituted distinct orders that could not inter-change their formal qualities. In response, the alchemists produced a rhetorical device enabling them to ignore these objections and they turned to Catholic religious iconography. Thereby, the alchemists were able to give their claims the status of Catholic doctrine and to silence effectively

[38] Giovanni Carbonelli, *Sulle fonti storiche della chimica e dell'alchimia in Italia tratte dallo spoglio dei manoscritti delle biblioteche con special riguardo ai codici 74 di Pavia e 1166 Laurenziano,* etc. (Roma, 1925), pp. 111-115.
[39] Obrist, *Les débuts de l'Imagerie Alchimique*, pp. 67-116.
[40] Obrist, *Les débuts de l'Imagerie Alchimique*, pp. 55-65, 248-49.

all the scholastic quibbles. From the early 15th century such imagery of the passion of Christ and of the Virgin Mary were appropriated to serve as allegories of the alchemical process.

In the 16th century, at a time when Catholic images were being trashed by the Protestant Reformers in Germany, the traditional iconography continued to play a significant role in the illustrated treatises of Lutheran alchemists. This was no hermetic, hidden presence since alchemical literature was often issued in large print-runs and in lavish editions. A case may even be made that the universal loss of Catholic icons was one reason for the popularity of these richly-illustrated alchemical books. The awe-inspiring alchemical illustrations with their aura of the sacred may have offered some degree of psychological compensation for the brutal severance with the devotional tradition that had once sustained the medieval Christian.[41] In fact, Martin Luther (1483-1546) was not altogether an iconoclast and he tolerated the existence of a newly-devised, archaic type of religious imagery. This official Lutheran religious art was sucked dry of all sentiment and piety. For example, crosses were made plain and the body of Christ was removed, thereby ensuring that the image would repel any impulse to venerate it in an idolatrous manner. To replace the Catholic icons which had offered a glimpse of heaven, Luther advocated the presentation of a down-to-earth narrative, such as Christ with the children, or a crudely-drawn composition, unrealistic in style and further safeguarded with copious inscriptions rebuffing any empathetic identification by the viewer with the characters portrayed. These unemotive scenes replaced the older miraculous icons and the naturalism of Catholic narrative scenes. However, unlike Luther, many other Reformers were completely antagonistic to the use of any visual imagery at all. This iconoclasm may have precipitated a spiritual and conceptual crisis among the members of the Lutheran community. The ensuing void in religious practice may have been partly alleviated, if only subconsciously, by the development of elaborate engravings in alchemical and other magical books, as well as in books of prophecy. They sold well and were published in large print-runs. In the comparable context of Protestant England, Roberta Albrecht has shown that the remaining traces of Roman Catholicism were difficult to eradicate, since they were so deeply culturally-embedded. Catholic ideas and imagery did not obediently disappear from hearts and minds at the imperative of the Protestant Reformers.[42]

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[41] Urszula Szulakowska, *The Alchemy of Light: Geometry and Optics in Late Renaissance Alchemical Illustration* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp. 5ff.
[42] Albrecht, *Virgin Mary*, pp. 21-24.

It could be argued further that the reliance of 16th and 17th century alchemists on the Catholic teachings discarded by the Protestant confessors was necessitated by the conceptual imperatives arising from the alchemical programme. Their claims for the transmutation of base matter were paralleled in the dogma of Eucharistic transubstantiation, while their concepts about the feminine principle of alchemy were expressed by similar ideas located in popular Marian devotions.

The alchemical treatises produced by the Protestant alchemists of the 16th and 17th centuries were composed in the same atmosphere of eschatological expectation as those of the radical Franciscans from the 12th to the 14th centuries. A wide-spread fear in the commonality was triggered by the predicted advent of the Anti-Christ who was due to appear in the last days. In the New Testament Christ is recorded as warning that false Christs (the Anti-Christ) would appear in these last days, masquerading as the Messiah.

> Jesus answered and said to them: 'Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, "I am the Christ," and will deceive many' " (Matthew 24: 4, 5)
> (New King James Version)

The term Anti-Christ is also based on passages in 1 John and 2 John. This name began to be employed polemically in the early medieval period. Arnulf, archbishop of Reims, was the first to apply the concept of the Anti-Christ to the Pope when he designated John XV in this manner at the Council of Reims (991 AD). Later, Gregory VII was similarly accused of being the Anti-Christ by Cardinal Benno, as was Gregory IX in 1241 by the Archbishop of Salzburg, Eberhard II von Truchsees. Subsequently, Luther made the same identification, as did John Calvin and John Knox. However, in the wider Catholic community it was the invading Ottoman armies who were identified with the forces of the Anti-Christ, or of Gog and Magog and the presence of the Anti-Christ on earth was indicated by signs such as the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453. The Anti-Christ became a central figure in the alchemical discourse of the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* (1419; 1433).

In the later 16th century expectations of the Second Coming of Christ reached a crisis point when this event was believed to be due in the years around 1600. The looming Last Judgement was supposedly evidenced by heavenly phenomena such as comets and new stars, as well as by the universal European religious and political strife and the Turkish wars. The main effect of such speculations was experienced in the political centres of

Lutheran reform. Although Luther did not entirely accept the authenticity of the Book of Revelation, he did, nonetheless, identify himself with the Last Prophet predicted therein and he retained Revelation in the authorized Lutheran biblical corpus due to its popular esteem. He even produced a commentary on Revelation.[43] The prophetic texts most widely consulted by the Lutheran prophets were those of Ezekiel, Daniel, Enoch and, most especially, the fourth Book of Esdras (II Esdras in modern editions) which foretold a period of tribulation prior to Judgement.

In the course of the German Reformation the laity had been liberated from the censorship of the Roman Church and until the Protestant authorities imposed similar constraints the invention of printing encouraged the growth of an outspoken popular press and of open religious debate. Notable examples of prophetic texts issued in the early years of the printing industry were the pre-Reformation astrological predictions of Johann Lichtenberger (d. 1503), a source for Luther's own prophecies. An influential work of church history that tapped into the apocalyptic furore was the *Magdeburg Centuries* (1559-74), issued in twelve volumes and illustrated with inflammatory anti-Papal engravings in which the Pope was depicted as the Whore of Babylon.[44] The text of the *Magdeburg Centuries* was composed by a group of Lutheran theologians led by Matthias Flacius Illyricus (b. 1520). It was an ecclesiastical history reviewing a period of thirteen hundred years whose subject was the pernicious influence of the Papacy as the Anti-Christ and its role in perverting the history of Christianity.

Augmenting the universal paranoia and the resulting social and political instability was the notorious presence of Paracelsus (Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim) (1493-1541). He was an innovative chemist and a revolutionary medical practitioner, as well as being an extremely radical theologian who issued many of his own commentaries and prophecies. Like Luther, Paracelsus was markedly

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[43] See Richard Bauckham, *The climax of prophecy: studies on the Book of Revelation* (Edinburgh: T and T. Clark, 1993), passim.

[44] "Centuriators of Magdeburg," *Ecclesiastica Historia, integram Ecclesiae Christi ideam, quantum ad Locum, Propagationem, Persecutionem, Tranquillitatem, Doctrinam, Hæreses, Ceremonias, Gubernationem, Schismata, Synodos, Personas, Miracula, Martyria, Religiones extra Ecclesiam, & statum Imperii politicum attinet, secundum singulas Centurias, perspicuo ordine complectens: singulari diligentia & fide ex vetustissimis & optimis historicis, patribus, & aliis scriptoribus congesta: Per aliquot studiosos & pios viros in urbe Magdeburgicâ* … (Magdeburg, 1559-74).

interested in the "Last Prophet" (known in esoteric circles as "Elias Artista") whose arrival was foretold for 1603.

When a new star appeared in 1604 eschatological anticipation rose to fever pitch and the onset of the Last Times was frantically awaited.[45] The figure of the Last Prophet played an important role in the fictional account also of Christian Rosenkreutz created by the anonymous and equally fictional "Rosicrucian Brotherhood." The story of the founding father of the Brotherhood, identified with "Elias Artista," was published in the Rosicrucian Manifestos, *Fama Fraternitatis* (Kassel, 1615) and *Confessio Fraternitatis* (Kassel: 1616). Christian Rosenkreutz was reported to have wandered far afield, beyond Europe in search of wisdom. He travelled to Turkey and to Damascus where he learned from the Arabian masters the alchemical knowledge of gold-making. He acquired Arabic and discovered much about the wonders of Nature. Rosenkreutz came across the "Book M" which he translated into Latin. This book was said to be the foundation of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood and of all their teachings and healing powers. Rosenkreutz next travelled on to Fez in Egypt where, purportedly, he learned kabbalistic magic and philosophy. In addition to the Manifestos there appeared a fictional Rosicrucian novel written in the form of an alchemical allegory, the *Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosencreutz anno 1459* ("The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz in the year 1459") (Strasburg, 1616).[46] The author is likely to have been Johann Valentin Andreae (1586-1654), a Lutheran cleric associated with the theological circles at the University of Tübingen.[47] It seems that this group could also have been responsible for the Rosicrucian Manifestos. Certainly, they were followers of the alchemical teachings of the Paracelsians.

It was popularly expected from the predictions of Christ himself that miracles and signs would occur in the period of religious, social and political unrest preceding the Last Day. Among such miracles there would appear the alchemists' Universal Panacea and the Philosopher's Stone. In some 17th century alchemical publications, such as Stefan Michelspacher's

[45] Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis*, pp. 5ff, 216-219.

[46] Johann Valentin Andreae, *Fama fraternitatis (1614); Confessio fraternitatis (1615; Chymische Hochzeit: Christiani Rosencreutz Anno 1459 (1616*). Edited by Richard van Dülmen with commentary (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1994), pp. 7-12, 18, 30.

[47] Donald R. Dickson, *The Tessera of Antilia: Utopian Brotherhoods and Secret Societies in the early Seventeenth Century* (Boston, Massachussetts: Brill, 1998), pp. 18-61.

Cabala Spiegel der Kunst und Natura ... (Augsburg, 1616),[48] as well as in the Rosicrucian Manifestos, there are references to the coming apocalypse.

In the new illustrations devised for the Lutheran alchemists in the 16th and 17th centuries the figure of the Virgin Mary continued to have importance. She appeared specifically in the form of the Apocalyptic Woman and her alchemical and eschatological significance was further amplified by recourse to the books of Wisdom in Hebrew Scripture. The image of Mary was used by the alchemists to personify both Holy Wisdom, the Bride of the Trinitarian Godhead, and the New Jerusalem, the Bride of Christ after the world's end. These references were drawn from Catholic Marian theology. In alchemical terms, the Virgin Mary was eulogised as being the mother of the Philosopher's Stone. She was also the philosophical mercury which was the source of the quintessential tincture, the Elixir of Life.

[48] There are other editions such as Steffan Michelspacher, *Cabala, speculum artis et naturae, in Alchymia; ... e Germanico Latnio [sic] versa a strenuo sapientiae cultore* (Augsburg: Sumptibus Joannis Weh. Bibl. Aug., 1654).

CHAPTER TWO

THE WOMAN ON THE CRESCENT MOON AND HER SHADOWS: THE VIRGIN MARY IN CATHOLIC DOCTRINE AND IN ALCHEMY

The cult of the Virgin Mary in the Catholic Church involves a unique type of veneration termed "hyperdulia" in which she is awarded greater reverence than the saints, but not the worship due to God alone in the form of the Holy Trinity. Like the saints she is supplicated by her devotees to pray to God on their behalf. She is said to intercede with God, although not in the same way as Jesus Christ, the Son of God, whose sacrificial death on the cross was an act of expiation for human sin. Thereby, Christ had rescued humanity from the consequences of its evil deeds, that is, from death itself. The reverence accorded to Mary is only in her role as the Mother of God, although the Catholic Church also views this role as being that of a participant in the redemption of humanity supporting Jesus Christ. This is not the same expiatory role as that of Christ. Mary is only said to have participated in her son's passion. Luther himself defended certain aspects of traditional Mariology, most especially her immaculate conception, but eventually he restricted his veneration of Mary solely to her role as the Virgin Mother of Christ.[1]

Catholic Marian doctrine was transposed to alchemy both in the texts and in the visual iconography, so that the alchemical Marian emblems retain at least some of their original sanctity as religious icons despite their relocation to an irregular setting. For, in instances where sacred imagery has been adapted to a secular purpose, there ensues a semiotic process whereby the original icon is transformed into an emblem. Namely, it loses

[1] See, for example, Horst Dietrich Preuss, *Maria bei Luther* in *Schriften des Vereins für Reformationgeschichte,* 172, 61, 1 (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmänn, 1954), pp. 7-34. And also see Brunero Gherardini, *La Madonna in Lutero* (Rome, 1967), pp. 83-159, 211-78.

its original significance as an object of cultic veneration becoming instead an index, a symbol with an instrumental purpose; in this case, one intended to facilitate the comprehension of the alchemical procedure and its successful practice. In the process of transposition from iconic to instrumental symbol, however, the image does not necessarily lose its original sacred aura. In fact, as Obrist has argued, this is the main reason for the adoption by the alchemists of icons such as those of the Holy Trinity, Christ, Mary and saints such as Francis. The alchemists sought to transpose the authority of the sacred icon from a religious to an alchemical context, the intention being to protect the alchemists from abuse on the part of academic disbelievers and of the political authorities. As an alchemical index the religious emblem is no longer a public image but speaks to one practitioner, or at most to a small group. As an art-work the meaning and function of an index is no longer dependent on aesthetic modes as is the icon, that is, on artistic style and physical materials. Rather the alchemical index has lost the essential material presence of the religious icon (its physical actuality to the viewer) becoming instead a conceptual didactic instrument, an emblem that is an extension of the accompanying text.

Such didactic aspects are shared with religious icons, of course, but whereas the religious image (once the general conceptual context has been grasped) may be approached spatially and physically as a discrete material entity, the alchemical emblem only exists conceptually, as comprehended within the pages of the particular text that it illustrates. This is not true of religious icons located in prayer-books, since all of these can be lifted free of the text by those familiar with the religious discourse, without rendering their iconography incomprehensible. In the specific instance where Marian icons are employed by the alchemists, it is no longer as "closed" signs in linguistic terms, with boundaries that frame immutable doctrinal teachings. For, in the process of transposition from the religious to the alchemical context these boundaries have become fractured, permitting further transgressions of meaning and, indeed, of form. This is the reason, for example, why in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* the original Catholic icons of Christ and Mary become melded into the bizarre form of the alchemical hermaphrodite, the emblem of the alchemical Anti-Christ.

Marian iconography draws its formal attributes and emblematic meanings from the ancient Christian allegory of the Apocalyptic Woman. In Catholic art the Apocalyptic Woman is always shown with her Child and her attributes are those described in Revelation 12: 1-6, 13-17, that is, a woman clothed in the sun, standing on the moon and crowned with twelve stars. She gives birth to a Child and is pursued by a dragon who

desires to devour them. The woman flees into the desert and God snatches the Child into heaven. This allegory was interpreted from the earliest times as alluding to the Catholic Church and later to the Virgin Mary who personified the Universal Church which was the Bride of Christ in the New Jerusalem. Such ideas are found in the writings of the earliest Church Fathers, in particular, Epiphanius of Salamis (ca. 310/20 -403), Tychonius Africanus (379–423?), Cassiodorus (ca. 485–ca. 585) (*Complexiones in Apocalypsi*, ca. 570), Andreas of Caesarea (563 – 637) and Oikoumenios (Oecumenius), possibly Bishop of Trikka in Thessaly, writing in ca. 990. The Lutheran Church, on the other hand, re-interpreted the same narrative as a prophecy concerning the persecution of the Reformed Church by the Papacy.[2]

The text of Revelation 12:1-14 reads as:

> 12:1 Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. 2 Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. 3 And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. 4 His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. 5 She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. 6 Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days. 7 And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, 8 but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. 9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him … 13 Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. 14 But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place ...
> (New King James Version)

These apocalyptic motifs of sun-rays, crown of stars and crescent moon were used generically in pictures of the Virgin Mary through-out the medieval period though by the 17th century they had become particularly associated with the iconography of Mary Immaculate. Mostly, it is the older narrative of the Apocalyptic Woman that is appropriated by alchemical

[2] Levi d' Ancona, *Iconography of the Immaculate Conception*, pp. 26-28.

illustrators, but in a few cases the Immaculate Conception is also encountered in alchemical woodcuts and engravings.

Both the figures of the Apocalyptic Woman and the Immaculate Conception played a role in the political iconography that developed during the European struggle against the Turks and it is as political propaganda that these two icons were also-re-used also in their new alchemical context on some occasions.

The cult of Mary as the Immaculate Conception is of special interest since it was a belief sponsored primarily by the Franciscan Order whose members also produced influential works of alchemy. The doctrine was delineated by the Franciscan Duns Scotus in the 13th century who claimed that from the moment that she was conceived in the womb the Virgin Mary was free of original sin. This state of grace she retained through-out her life, along with her perpetual virginity. A popularized account of Mary's Immaculate Conception is found in the *Protoevangelium of James* (140-70 AD), also known as the *Infancy Gospel of James*. However, this idea was such an object of controversy among theologians that it was not pronounced dogma until the 8th December, 1854, when Pope Pius IX defined it in the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*. The cult of Mary Immaculate was firmly opposed by leading Catholic clerics such as Bernard of Clairvaux (a Cistercian) (1090-1153) and the Dominicans Albertus Magnus (1200-80) and Thomas Aquinas (1225-74). Hence, it was Franciscan support that propelled the belief in Mary's Immaculate Conception. John Duns Scotus (1266-1308) had formulated the specifics of the teaching in his *Scriptum Oxoniense* (ca. 1300).[3] The doctrine was promoted in Spain from 14th century by the Franciscan Order and the Habsburg dynasty.[4] The Dominicans, rivals of the Franciscans, adamantly rejected the cult of the Immaculate Conception.[5] In the end, it was a Franciscan pope, Sixtus IV, who introduced the Feast of the Conception of Mary to the diocese of Rome in the Bull *Cum praeexcelsa* (28th February, 1477) and on the 4th September, 1483, Sixtus named the feast as "the Conception of Immaculate Mary ever Virgin." The decree was reaffirmed by the Council of Trent and Pope Pius V in 1570 included the feast, although without the adjective "Immaculate," in the Tridentine Calendar. [6]

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[3] Levi d' Ancona, *Iconography of the Immaculate Conception*, p. 10

[4] Stratton, *Immaculate Conception in Spanish Art*, pp. 7-39.

[5] T. McGrath, "Dominicans, Franciscans, and the art of political rivalry: two drawings and a fresco by Giovanni Battista della Rovere," *Renaissance Studies: Journal of the Society for Renaissance Studies*, 25 (2011), pp. 185-207.

[6] Christiaan Kappes, *The Immaculate Conception: Why Thomas Aquinas Denied, While John Duns Scotus, Gregory Palamas, and Mark Eugenicus Professed the*

The visual iconography of the Immaculate Conception developed in the course of lengthy experimentation between the 13th and the 18th centuries. By the 17th century this Marian type had acquired the attributes of the Apocalyptic Woman, but earlier there had existed other compositions tentatively floated by artists. These fell out of favour and largely out of memory. Surprisingly, one of these extinct variants of the Immaculate Conception is encountered in 17th century alchemical illustration.[7] In the search for the definitive image of the Immaculate Conception artists of the 16th century had previously worked with an earlier design in which the standing Virgin Mary was flanked by her parents Joachim and Anna.[8] This same composition also appears in an alchemical engraving designed by Johann Daniel Mylius for his *Philosophia Reformata* (1622) (fig. 2-1). Mylius depicts a young woman clothed in antique wet-look garments, with the unbound hair of a virgin girl. She is crowned with four stars and stands on the surface of the sea. The girl is both the Star of the Sea (an attribute of the Virgin Mary in the Litany of Loreto) and a personification of the alchemical quintessence. The five stars directly above her head represent the fifth essence. There are five more stars at her left and four at her right. The five on the left indicate the five impure metals awaiting their alchemical perfection and the four on the right represent the four earthly elements. To the left of the girl there appears a male figure with the sun for a face, dressed in antique armour, and to the right there stands a woman whose head is the moon. These are the parents of the alchemical Mary, sun and moon, Joachim and Anna. In the corners of the image there are emblems of the four winds that are blowing the water of the sea into waves. They indicate the need to increase the heat of the fluids in the distillation apparatus by the use of bellows.

Absolute Immaculate Existence of Mary (Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2014), pp. 39-61.

[7] Stratton, *Immaculate Conception in Spanish Art*, p. 49.

[8] Stratton, *Immaculate Conception in Spanish Art*, pp. 21-24, 49, see fig. 30, an illustration of a painting by Joan de Joanes, *The Virgin Tota Pulchra* located in Sot de Ferrer, Castellon parish church. This was an early experiment in establishing the definitive composition of the Immaculate Conception.

Fig. 2.-1 The quintessence between her parents, the Sun and Moon, in Johann Daniel Mylius, *Philosophia Reformata* (Frankfurt: Luca Jennis, 1622), n.p. With the permission of the British Library: Shelf-mark 1033. i. 7

The modern type of the Immaculate Conception was created by the Spaniard Diego Velazquez (1465-1524), although the most popular version was eventually developed by two other Spanish artists, Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-1682) and Juan de Nisa Valdés Leal (1622-1690).[9] The model for this iconic form was taken from the parallel iconographic tradition of Mary's physical assumption into heaven at her death.[10] In the Spanish paintings the Virgin is shown as a young girl standing alone on the moon which can take either a crescent form, or that of an orb. She is crowned with twelve stars and she is often surrounded by angels located

[9] Stratton, *Immaculate Conception in Spanish Art*, p. 130.
[10] Pope Pius XII, "Munificentissimus Deus-Defining the Dogma of the Assumption," Vatican, November 1, 1950. See also Stephen J. Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002; 2006), passim.

within a deep sky-scape.[11] Around her there glows a corolla of the sun's rays set within a darker sky. Her hair is loose and her head is uncovered. Her feet crush the head of a serpent. The number of the twelve stars was interpreted by the Franciscans as representing the twelve graces of Mary. Unlike the Apocalyptic Mary of previous centuries, the Immaculate Conception is not a mother. She is depicted in her form at the moment of her human conception, freed from original sin by a unique act of God's grace.

An image of the Immaculate Conception is found in the form of an interesting alchemical variant in Robert Fludd's *Utriusque Cosmi ... Historia* (Oppenheim: Johann Theodore de Bry, 1, 1617), as well as in the *Pandora* (both the 1582; 1588 versions and that of 1706). The same Marian type is later encountered in an 18th century copy of pseudo-Nicholas Flamel's alchemical treatise, the *Traité des figures hiéroglyphiques d'Abraham le juif* (Mellon Collection, Yale, Beinecke MS 101) (ca. 1750).

The Apocalyptic Mary is encountered for the first time in alchemy in three illuminations painted for the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* where in addition there is a picture of the Coronation of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Trinity.[12] Mary and Jesus are the main subjects of the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*, along with the parents of Mary, Joachim and Anna. Following this model, a woodcut of Mary's coronation and another of Christ's resurrection were also introduced into the *Rosarium Philosophorum cum figuris* (1550). These scenes were drawn directly from the Catholic iconography of the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* without any changes being made to accommodate alchemical theory. In contrast, for the later *Pandora* (1582; 1588) (influenced by the *Rosarium philosophorum*) some additional illustrations were composed based on the image of the apocalyptic Mary and on that of the Immaculate Conception. These later woodcuts were heavily amended, however, in order to carry an alchemical significance. The author of the *Pandora* also copied the three woodcuts of Christ's passion found in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*. In fact, the artist of the *Pandora* appropriates Catholic visual imagery far more openly than does the artist of the *Rosarium philosophorum* where it is rather the text that alludes to Catholic Marian doctrine. The text of the

[11] Stratton, *Immaculate Conception in Spanish Art*, p. 126

[12] For example see MS Bayerische StaatsBibliothek Buch der heiligen Dreifaltigkeit - BSB Cgm 598, f. 22r, Virgin with God the Father and Christ, f. 26r, Coronation of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Trinity, f. 79r, the Virgin at the foot of the lily-cross on which Christ is crucified, f. 81 r, another Virgin at the foot of the lily cross set within a much larger aureole of the sun, wearing a much heavier crown lower down on her brow and with twelve stars surrounding her.

Rosarium develops an account concerning the female principle of alchemy in the role of the Bride in the scriptural Song of Songs and in Ecclesiastes 24. These Hebraic references had been identified with the Virgin Mary by the Catholic Church.

In the 17th century there appeared an apocalyptic Mary in Michael Maier's *Symbola aureae mensae duodecim nationum* … (Frankfurt: Luca Jennis, 1617). This scene was then copied and further adapted by Johann Daniel Mylius for his *Opus Medico-Chymicum* (Frankfurt: Luca Jennis, 1618). This engraving is of special importance to the present argument.

In his interpretation of the Hebrew Wisdom Scriptures Paracelsus had written at length on the Virgin Mary, perceiving in her a manifestation, though not an incarnation, of the eternal Sophia residing within the Godhead. Less heretical was Jacob Boehme's subsequent account of the Divine Virgin as Holy Wisdom in his *Aurora Signatura Rerum oder Morgenrothe in Anfang* (1612) and in later works, most notably *De Tribus Principiis* (*The Three Principles of the Divine Essence*) (1618–19). Boehme used the figure of the Virgin Mary to personify the perfected alchemical tincture. He was alluding not merely to the "white" alchemical tincture, customarily a feminized lunar substance which was merely a preliminary stage to the final production of the masculine red tincture associated by the alchemists with Christ. In Boehme's theological alchemy there was only one alchemical "tincture" and this was his name for the aura of God in which Holy Wisdom had been conceived. In the course of human history it was Holy Wisdom who filled the earthly Mary with the Spirit of God. In spite of such alchemical allusions Boehme's Mariology was mostly conventional Lutheran doctrine and he never identified Mary with Divine Wisdom, seeing in her only a normal human being, though one divinely graced. In contrast, Paracelsus had denied Mary any earthly materiality whatsoever. Boehme does not seem to have had access to the Marian writings of Paracelsus which remained in manuscript through to the present day.

The continued use of Marian imagery by some Protestant alchemists was due to the authority of the *Rosarium Philosophorum* (Basel, 1550). As Helena de Jong has revealed,[13] Michael Maier in his *Atalanta Fugiens* (Oppenheim, Johann Theodor de Bry, 1617) was basing himself substantially on the *Rosarium* (as well as on the *Aurora Consurgens* and the much older *Turba Philosophorum,* although there are no Marian

[13] Helena Maria Elisabeth de Jong, *Michael Maier's Atalanta fugiens*. *Bronnen van een alchemistisch emblemenboek. Proefschrift* … (Utrecht, 1965), pp. 57, 58, 74, 75, 88, 93, 95

images in these works).[14] Then, there is the case of the Anglican Robert Fludd (1574-1637), a medical practitioner, Christian kabbalist, theosophist, alchemist and visionary. In devising his concept of the alchemical elixir Fludd drew on Catholic Eucharistic doctrine to such an extent that he was even accused of being a crypto-Catholic. Furthermore, in one of his most innovative images that of the figure of "Natura" governing the cosmos (*Utriusque Cosmi ... Historia*, I, 1617), Fludd was clearly influenced by Catholic paintings of the Immaculate Conception.

The appropriated Marian emblems were employed by the alchemists to signify philosophical mercury, a substance which was not necessarily the same as common mercury. It had been represented since ancient times, like the apocalyptic Mary, by the sign of the crescent moon. The distant origins of the cult of the "moon woman" lay in pagan myths about the moon's feminine nature and its association with the element silver. According to Stephen Manning the Egyptian cult of Isis, with her moon diadem, had been the source for the Christian veneration of the Virgin Mary.[15] In Roman religion the colour blue was associated with the mother-goddess Demeter and her symbology was transferred to the figure of the Virgin Mary.[16] Colour symbolism plays an essential role in alchemy, identifying the different stages of the process. Blue, however, is not a colour that appears in the alchemical process. Hence, whenever it is used by an artist in alchemy, then it is an allusion either to the Virgin Mary, or to the quintessence. For, just as the Virgin Mary had been bodily elevated into heaven in a "glorified" body, in the same manner the quintessence distilled from mercury, as the prime matter, was such an ethereal body in the microcosm of nature.

The impure prime matter ("prima materia") contained the "menstruum" which was identified with the biological process culturally associated with the cycles of the moon. The menstruum was stated to be a dark, poisonous substance. It was the shadow side of the alchemical Mary, the moon-woman. The alchemical procedure involved the destruction of prime matter whose composition consisted of both feminine and masculine principles. The male principle was said to be Sulphur, or Sol, while the female was Mercury, or Luna. Exactly what may have been the physical substances designated by these terms remains a mystery. Sol and Luna then united in the chemical and mystical "coniunctio," after which they "died" and putrefied. The alchemical marriage was incestuous, coupling

[14] De Jong, *Michael Maier's Atalanta fugiens*, pp. 11, 22.
[15] Stephen T. Manning, *Psychology, Symbolism and the Sacred: Confronting Religious Dysfunction in a Changing World* (Dooagh: Checkpoint, 2007), p. 126.
[16] Manning, *Psychology, Symbolism and the Sacred,* p. 159.

mother and son, brother and sister. The story of the siblings Beya and Gabricius was a well-used referent by alchemical authors, not least those of the *Rosarium Philosophorum* and *Pandora*. In this allegory Beya absorbs Gabricius into her womb from which he is reborn as the alchemical Stone. In the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* the Philosopher's Stone is said to be the product of the mystical union of Christ and Mary. The text states that when Jesus and Mary are one, then the Holy Spirit is the third.[17] They are depicted here as united in the form of the hermaphrodite. This figure is shown twice. The first time it is said to depict the Anti-Christ.

In other alchemical works, such as the *Aurora Consurgens*, the alchemical couple are murdered by a third party (the alchemist), or they kill one another. After the conjunction the materials are purified in the process of distillation during which the spirits are led off, while the remaining black dregs are heated in a dry process that calcinates them (turns them white). Finally, the distilled spirits are reunited with the dregs and (given divine favour and luck) the materials are said to be reborn, or resurrected, in the form of the androgynous "Philosopher's Stone," red in colour.

The Stone was often described as the Christ of the microcosm. From the Stone the alchemists sought to produce the Elixir, or Universal Panacea, in the form of a white and then a red tincture. This could transmute base matter into a higher form and also cure disease and extend human life.

[17] See Junker, *"Das 'Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit',"* p. 15.

CHAPTER THREE

THE TURKISH MADONNA

The first mention in an alchemical context of the Turkish invasions is found in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* (completed in 1419) and this work also included the first visual imagery of the apocalyptic Mary. The author explained that his intention in writing the treatise was to help the Christian Church prevail over Jews, heathen and heretics in the apocalyptic war fought against the Anti-Christ and the Devil. He states that such action would take place aided by the grace of the Virgin Mary who was enshrined within the Holy Trinity.[1]

The figure of the Anti-Christ is centrally featured through-out the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*, especially in the closing pages where the apocalyptic context of the treatise becomes particularly vehement, to the point of obsession according to Junker.[2] The two pictures of the alchemical hermaphrodite are identified in the text with the Anti-Christ, son of Satan, and called here "Lucifer anticristus."[3] The *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* prophesies the advent of the saviour of Europe in whose support it was said to be composed, a future protector of the true Christian faith, a defender against heresy and a bringer of peace. He would be a descendant of the German house of Stauffen and would be elected as the Holy Roman Emperor. The future Emperor is equated symbolically with the Universal Panacea (the elixir) of alchemy as one who would heal society and the Catholic Church by destroying the Anti-Christ whose forces were heretics (including Muslims) and Jews.

In several alchemical treatises of the 16th and 17th centuries there are further references to the use of alchemical resources in order to empower

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[1] Junker, *"Das 'Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit',"* p. 15.

[2] Junker, *"Das 'Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit',"* p. 16. See especially on page 95 the transcript of MS Wolfenbuttel Codex Guelf 188 Blankenberg, f. 5r: "… also offenbar sal man diss buch juden heiden christen keczern kundigen einen waren cristenglauben uber alle empfahende/ dar maria/ also gros hoch in der gotheit spigel/ der heyligen drivaldikeit ist das beczeuget sie selber jndem buch do sie sprichet …"

[3] In Wolfenbüttel Codex Guelf 188 Blankenberg, f. 114r.

the Christian forces in the struggle against the Turks. The quintessential elixir would provide them with strength and vigour in their military prowess. The European struggle against the Ottoman Empire was the subject of a later alchemical treatise by Giovanni Mercurio da Correggio (1451- ?) called *De Quercu Iulii pontificis sive De lapide philosophico* (London, British Library Harley MS 4081), which has recently been discussed by Wouter Hanegraaff.[4] He has stated that:

> The *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* comes into play as a possible (direct or indirect) source for Correggio, all the more because of its pronounced apocalyptic elements, which would have resonated well with Correggio's own apocalypticism.[5]

The philosopher Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500) had been Correggio's pupil and he provided an account of Correggio's life, although some scholarly authorities believe the person of Correggio to be entirely fictional. In the manuscript of *De Quercu* addressed to Pope Julius II (Giuliano della Rovere, Pope, 1503-13) Correggio commences with a short introduction warning the Pope against "Barbarians, Turcs and Scyths." The text concerns the alchemical "Phoenix," used as an emblem of the perfected Elixir. With its aid the Pope would scatter and defeat the armies of the Turks, the Mohammedans and all pagan nations, without the use of weapons, or a great army. For, the purified mercurial elixir would grant Pope Julius superhuman powers and he would conquer the pagans and Turks, not with force and armour, but with the word, the Spirit and the rod of virtue.[6]

In the following century more alchemical illustrations of the apocalyptic Mary were placed into an anti-Turkish context on the model of the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*. The most important of these was the engraving illustrating the alchemical mass of Nicolaus Melchior Cibinensis in the treatise *Processus sub forma missae*, published in Michael Maier's *Symbola aureae mensae duodecim nationum* (Frankfurt: Lucas Jennis, 1617) (fig. 3-2). This is a compendium of twelve texts composed by alchemists of different nationalities.[7] The alchemical mass is

[4] Wouter J. Hanegraaff, "Pseudo-Lullian Alchemy and the Mercurial Phoenix Giovanni da Correggios De Quercu Iulii pontificis sive De lapide philosophico" in online website of academia. edu (retrieved 1. 5. 2016)
[5] Haanegraaff, "Pseudo-Lullian Alchemy and the Mercurial Phoenix," p. 107.
[6] Hanegraaff, "Pseudo-Lullian Alchemy and the Mercurial Phoenix," p. 109.
[7] Maier, *Symbola aureae mensae duodecim nationum* … (1617), p. 509.

said to have been written by an unidentified Hungarian author.[8] In this work the author from the outset mentions the Turkish peril. The artist Matthäus (Matthias) Merian (1593–1650) engraved a picture of the Virgin Mary to accompany the mass. Merian was a Swiss-born engraver who worked in Frankfurt where in 1623 he took over the publishing house of Johann Theodore de Bry. It is possible that Maier may have commissioned Merian to produce this image of the Apocalyptic Woman in direct reference to the Turkish wars, in particular to the campaigns against the Ottomans led by the kings of Hungary. Merian's illustration shows Mary breast-feeding an infant. Her hair is flowing loose in the manner of an unmarried virgin and she is seated on a large crescent moon with the blazing rays of the sun shining around her in a glory.[9] Her twelve-starred crown is absent. She hovers in the air behind a priest standing at an altar on which there lies a Eucharistic wafer.

From the 14th to the 18th centuries the European states were engaged in military and naval campaigns against the invading Turks. In 1396 the Turks fought the Hungarians led by their king Sigismund (later German Emperor) at Nicopolis near the Carpathian Mountains. In 1453 Constantinople itself was taken by the Turks and the Eastern Roman Empire was destroyed. Most of Serbia was occupied by the Turks by 1459. The south-western part of Hungary was conquered and occupied after the Battle of Mohács in 1526, a state of affairs that lasted into the late 17th century and even then some parts of the country were not reconquered until 1718. After Mohács the Ottomans conducted further campaigns in the same region from 1526 to 1556. In 1529 they launched the first serious attack on Austria in the first siege of Vienna, but were defeated. In 1541 the Turks occupied Buda and Pest and a campaign was fought inconclusively in 1552. The Ottomans then threw another major army into the field against the Habsburg Emperors and the unconquered Hungarian territories in 1566-68.[10]

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[8] "… jac. anno 1531 capite plectitur. post ejus exitum repertum est hoc opus chymicum sub forma myssae descriptum. rex ladislaus natus est anno 1440. mortuus 23 novembris hora 23 anno 1458 …"

[9] For his biography see Lucas Heinrich Wüthrich, *Das druckgraphische Werk von Matthäus Merian d.Ä.,* 1; 2 (Basel, 1966); 3 (Hamburg (1993); 4 (Hamburg, 1996). Also see Lucas Heinrich Wüthrich, *Matthaeus Merian d. Ä. Eine Biographie* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe; Darmstadt: Lisenzausgabe: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007).

[10] Brian Davies, *Warfare, State and Society on the Black Sea Steppe, 1500–1700* (London: Routledge, 2007), passim. Also see John Stoye, *The Siege of Vienna* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2006), pp. 115-152, 188-190, 150-154 and also Militiades

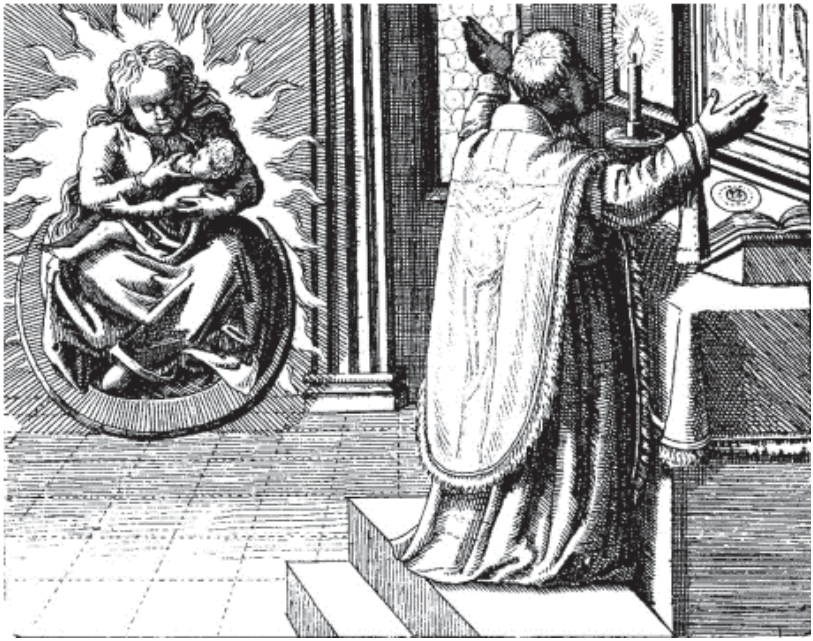

Fig. 3-2 Apocalyptic Woman, Michael Maier, *Symbola Aureae Mensae Duodecim Nationum* (Frankfurt: Luca Jennis, 1617), p. 509. With the permission of the British Library: Shelf-mark 1033. k. 6

In this period of desperate engagement with the Ottomans Cibinensis may have been in contact with the royal court of Hungary since he dedicated his alchemical mass to Vladislaus (1456–1516), the king of Hungary and Croatia from 1490 (also known as Ladislaus Jagiellon). It has been claimed by some scholars that from 1490 Cibinensis was serving as chaplain and astrologer to Vladislaus until he was killed at the battle of Mohács fighting against Suleyman the Magnificent (29th August, 1526). Cibinensis also dedicated his treatise to the reform of the Church. (Luther's defiance of the Papacy took place at Wittenberg on 31st October, 1517.)[11] Cibinensis may have been executed by Emperor Ferdinand I in

Varvounis, *Jan Sobieski: the king who saved Europe (*Dartford: Crossways: Xlibris Corporation, 2012), pp. 1-26, 100, 151-173, 157-169.

[11] The dedication to the reofmr of the Church is found in the section know as the "Secretum" of the Eucharistic rite, viz, "Secretum. Salutarem victimam omnipotens Deus tuae maiestati alacriter immolamus Et suppliciter tuam precamur

1531 for his dissenting views. In the unsuccessful attempts to identify "Cibinensis" some authorities have alleged that his surname refers to his town of birth in Transylvania which was Sibiu, or Cibiu (Ger. Hermannstadt; Hung. Nagyszeben; Latin Cibinium). This was sited on the front-line of defence against the Ottoman armies. In the 1470s the town council of Sibiu fortified the town with a series of defences against the Turks. The financial obligations and military duties of the townsmen were recorded in registers called "duodecimali," kept by those responsible for the defence of each tower. All citizens were obliged to man one of the twelve towers in the perimeter walls for a week.[12]

Emperor Rudolf II (1552 –1612) had been Maier's patron and the presence of the Turkish Madonna in the *Symbola aureae mensae* could also be a tribute to Rudolf's own victories against the Turks.[13] Maier was admitted to the Emperor's service as a doctor and an imperial counsellor. In recognition of his duties he was elevated by the Emperor to the hereditary nobility and granted the title of Count Palatine.[14] Maier left the Emperor's service in April, 1611.[15] His *Symbola aureae mensae* was published in 1617 after the death of Rudolf in 1612. Maier was no longer working for Rudolf by the time that he published his major alchemical works (commencing in 1617 and into the 1620s). However, during Maier's time at the Imperial court, Rudolf had been heavily involved in extensive military campaigns. The Turkish allusions in the treatise of Cibinensis may explain Maier's decision to include it in the *Symbola aureae mensae*.

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clementiam ut hoc nostrum artificium ad honorem nominis tui et benedictae artis Alchimiae tuo glorioso nomini sit semper dicatum et Ecclesiae salutaris Reformationi consentaneum per Dn. N. J. C. Amen."

[12] Farkas Gábor Kiss, Benedek Láng and Cosmin Popa-Gorjanu, "The Alchemical Mass of Nicolaus Melchior Cibinensis: Text, Identity and Speculations," *Ambix*, 53, 2 (2006), pp. 143–159. See also Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy*, pp. 396-404. Jung gives similar details about Melchior without acknowledging any sources.

[13] Rudolf was Holy Roman Emperor from 1576, as well as King of Hungary and Croatia (1572–1608), King of Bohemia (1575–1608/1611) and Archduke of Austria.

[14] De Jong, *Michael Maier's Atalanta fugiens*, pp. 22 ff. See also Marshall, *The magic circle of Rudolf II*, pp. 132-134.

[15] Karin Figala and Ulrich Neumann, *"Michael Maier (1569-1622): New Bio-Bibliographical Material"* in Z.R.W.M von Martels, *Alchemy revisited: proceedings of the International conference on the history of alchemy at the University of Groningen, 17-19 April 1989* (1ª ed. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990), pp. 34–50. *S*ee also Hereward Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix: Spiritual Alchemy and Rosicrucianism in the Work of Count Michael Maier (1569–1622)* (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), pp. 30ff.

Rudolf had gained considerable prestige among the Western powers for his prowess on the battle-field and the success of his campaigns. He certainly considered his actions against the Ottoman Empire to be the outstanding achievement of his reign.

In 1595 Rudolf had signed a Treaty in Prague planned by Pope Clement VIII, along with Sigismund Bathory of Transylvania, Aron Vodă of Moldavia and Michael of Wallachia. The Turks had besieged Vienna and Rudolf attempted to recapture central Hungary. The main battle took place at Mezőkeresztes in Hungary on 24th-26th October, 1596. Although Rudolf himself was resolved to drive the Turks out of Central Europe, the Hungarians wanted an end to the wars and in 1604, led by Stefan Bocskay, they rebelled against him.[16] In 1605 Rudolf was forced by his family to give the Hungarian territories to his younger brother Archduke Matthias (1557-1619) who in 1606 made peace with the Hungarian insurgents (Peace of Vienna) and also with the Turks (Peace of Zsitvatorok, 1606). Matthias and the Hungarians forced Rudolf to surrender Hungary, Austria, Moravia and Croatia to Matthias in 1608 and Bohemia in 1611, leaving Rudolf with the meaningless Imperial crown until he died.

In his alchemical mass Cibinensis begins and concludes his text with references to the Turkish invasions. At the start the reader is informed that the Stone of this blessed art is for the salvation of the world, to inspire the light of knowledge in order to eliminate the Turk.

> Hagie lapis benedictae artis … qui pro mundi salute inspirasti lumen scientiae ad extirpandum Turcam … Eleyson. Kyrie.[17]
> (Holy Stone of the blessed art (alchemy) …which for the safety of the world inspired the light of knowledge for the elimination of the Turk ...)

In the liturgy of the "Kyrie Eleyson" the author has changed the authorized text so that it now reads as a prayer to the Lord, the fount of goodness and the inspirer of the sacred art of alchemy: "Christ, Holy One, blessed Stone of the art of "scientia" ("science," meaning alchemy) who for the salvation of the world has inspired the light of knowledge, for the extirpation of the Turk, have mercy."[18]

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[16] R. J. W. Evans, *Rudolf II and his world; a study in intellectual history, 1576-1612* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), pp. 75-78.

[17] As in the full text of the mass edited by Popa-Gorjanu, Kiss and Láng in (Ibid), "Alchemical Mass of Nicolaus Melchior Cibinensis," p. 155.

[18] Popa-Gorjanu, Kiss and Láng, "Alchemical Mass of Nicolaus Melchior Cibinensis," p. 155: "Fons bonitatis, inspirator sacrae artis, a qua cuncta bona tuis fidelibus procedunt. Eleyson. Christe. Hagie lapis benedictae artis, qui pro mundi salute inspirasti lumen scientiae ad extirpandum Turcam. Eleyson. Kyrie. Ignis

The treatise concludes with the usual dismissal of the congregation: "Ite missa est." Here there is another reference to the annihilation of the Turks:

> Sumpsimus hunc in nostrae salutis ac valetudinis auxilium et agentes gratias tuae maiestati rogamus ut proficiat nobis ad salutem corporis et animae sitque. Turcarum extirpatio per D [Dominum] N. [Nostrum] J. [Jesum]. C. [Christum]. Amen etc. Ite missa est. Alleluia.[19]
> (We have received the help of this [art of alchemy] for our health and to aid our salvation and giving thanks to Thy majesty, we ask that it may profit us for the safety of our body and soul and the extirpation of the Turks by Our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Go, [the mass] is ended. Alleluia.)

Merian's engraving of the apocalyptic Mary was copied almost immediately by Johann Daniel Mylius (ca. 1583–1642) for his contemporary *Opus Medico-Chymicum* (Frankfurt: Luca Jennis, 1618), an extensive pictorial gallery of the masters of alchemy. Mylius' image may also reference the Turkish wars in a different manner and may thereby serve to substantiate the identification of Maier's original image as an early type of the 17th and 18th century "Turkish Madonna." Mylius was a great publicist and money-spinner on the watch for the most striking visual motifs already in print, selecting for his own use the publcations of Maier and Fludd. His artists reconstructed the originals into new compositions. In his *Opus Medico-Chymicum* (1618) Mylius additionally copied some of Fludd's illustrations from the 'Macrocosm' (*Utriusque Cosmi ... Historia*, I, 1617)), while in his *Philosophia Reformata* (Frankfurt: Luca Jennis, 1622) Mylius reproduced in detail Maier's emblems from the *Atalanta Fugiens*.

In the *Opus Medico-Chymicum* each famous alchemist is characterised by his own distinctive emblem. In order to represent the ideas of the Catalonian philosopher Raymundus Lullius (ca. 1232/3-ca.1315) Mylius has re-used Merian's apocalyptic Mary from the *Symbola Aureae Mensae*

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divine pectora nostra iuva, ut pro tua laude pariter sacramenta artis … expandere possimus. Eleyson."
Variant MSS have "corporis et animae sitque Turcarum extirpatio per D. N. J. C. Amen etc. Ite missa est. Alleluia": ad salutem mentis et corporis, etc. Benedictae Artis Alchimicae Beneficia fiat totius haereseos et Turcarum extirpatio atque catholicae fidei corroboratio per eundem Dominum nostrum." And also there may appear in other editions "Benedicamus in laudem Domini omnes hanc artem laborantes et sint bendicti in aeternum. Soli sit gloria Christo."

[19] Verses 170-17 in Popa-Gorjanu, Kiss and Láng, "Alchemical Mass of Nicolaus Melchior Cibinensis," p. 159.

(fig. 3-3). One should note, however, that the authentic Lull never practised alchemy and the spurious works composed in his name were produced, according to Michela Pereira, in northern Italy from the 1370s onwards.[20]

The authentic Lull was born on the island of Majorca, reconquered by the Catholic kings of Spain from the Arabs. His main purpose in life was the conversion of the Islamic world to Christianity, as well as the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre (the site of Christ's resurrection) from the Muslim conquerors of the Holy Land. This would not be by force of arms and in his philosophical and theological writings and lectures Lull argued that all the mysteries of the Christian faith could be proved by reason. It has been remarked by scholars such as Lynn Thorndike that

> [Lull's] crusading and missionary methods were somewhat peculiar, involving not only a long preparatory educational period, especially in the study of oriental languages, but also the refutation of Arabian philosophy, particularly that of Averroes, and toward that goal the conciliation of philosophy and theology in the Christian world.[21]

To this end, Lull persuaded the king of Aragon to establish a school in 1276 for the study of Arabic in Majorca and in 1311 at the Council of Vienne he persuaded the pope to approve the founding of chairs in Greek, Hebrew, Chaldean and Arabic at Rome, Paris, Oxford, Bologna, and Salamanca. Lull was a member of the Franciscan tertiaries, lay members of the Order. Like Francis before him, Lull put into action a peaceful mission to Islam, arguing that the conquest of the Holy Land should be through tears and prayers. He was active in the conversion of Saracens in the Balearic Isles, Cyprus and Armenia and he even travelled to Egypt in 1219 to preach to the Sultan. He went three times to Algeria and Tunisia where he was imprisoned, then banished and stoned to death in Algeria in 1316. He was beatified by the Church as a martyr of the faith.[22]

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[20] Pereira, *Alchemical corpus attributed to Raymond Lull*, pp. 6-8, 12-15, 17-20, 22-28.

[21] Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1924-58) 1, pp. 862 ff.

[22] George W. Braswell, *Islam: Its Prophet, Peoples, Politics and Power* (1996), pp. 256-260. See also Sebastián Garcias Palou, *Ramón Llull y el Isla* (Palma de Mallorca: Impresos Lope,1981), passim.

Fig. 3-3 Emblem of Raymundus Lullius in Johann Daniel Mylius, *Opus Medico-Chymicum* (Frankfurt: Luca Jennis, 1618), n.p. With the permission of the British Library: Shelf-mark 1033. l. 4

Doctrinally, Lull is important for his role in the development of Marian theology. Lull deeply venerated the Virgin Mary and he composed many popular devotional works in her honour which took the form of Provençal troubadour songs.[23] This could be the reason why Mylius selected Merian's image of the alchemical Mary for Lull's emblem. In this image Lull appears dressed as a gentleman of the 17th century. He salutes the Virgin who is depicted accompanied by her apocalyptic attributes, seated on the crescent-moon and nursing the Child. The dazzling rays of the sun obliterate her facial features. Lull is quoted in the frame of the image as saying,

> Corpus Infantis ex masculo et foemina procedit in Actum
> (The body of the Infant proceeds from the union of male and female)

[23] Lull's Mariological compositions are discussed by Simone Sari (ed.) *Hores de nostra dona Santa Maria: desconhort de nostra dona/ Ramon Llull; edició crítica* ... (Palma de Mallorca: Patronat Ramon Llull, 2012). See also Albrecht, *The Virgin Mary*, pp. 27 ff, 78 ff.

There is no textual allusion to the Turk in Mylius' treatise, but the presence of Lull, the apostle to Islam, standing in front of Merian's Madonna of the Turks may be read as a reference to the Turkish wars.

Like Francis and Lull there were other Christian authorities who rejected armed action against the Turks, particularly Martin Luther (1483 –1546) who similarly argued against a crusade since he did not want to advance the Gospel by force. He argued that only constituted authorities could wage war against the Turks and only as a defensive action. However, unlike Lull and Nicholas of Cusa (1401–64), Luther did not view Islam as a heretical Christian sect and he was not concerned with conversion since he regarded Muslims as unyielding in their beliefs. For Luther there could be no dialogue with an alien culture that did not acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Saviour.[24] Islam, according to Luther, was the enemy of God because it denied the Sonship of Christ, but he encouraged translations of the *Koran* since it was necessary for the purpose of religious resistance to know its content. (Theodore Bibliander produced a German translation of the Koran in 1542.) Although Luther agreed that Europe should, indeed, defend itself against the Turks, however, he regarded the Ottoman invasions in eschatological terms as God's just punishment on the evil Holy Roman Empire in the last days.[25]

In contrast, Roman Catholic political and religious authorities adopted a considerably more belligerent response to the Ottoman invasions. To ensure the success of their military efforts the role of the Virgin Mary was regarded as being of critical importance. From the outset the cult of the rosary had been associated with the defeat of the enemies of the Church. In 1208 St. Dominic, reportedly, had been graced with a vision of the Virgin Mary in the church of Notre Dame de Prouille who had taught him to pray the rosary, telling him to use this devotion as a weapon for the defeat of heretics. Accordingly, in 1456 Pope Callistus III ordered the entire West to pray daily for the defeat of the Turks on the sounding of the noon tontine bell and from 1475 the rosary was popularized as a specific prayer against the Turks. The Dominicans especially championed the devotion of the rosary. Alanus de Rupe (1428-75), a French Dominican friar, also related how the Virgin Mary had appeared to him in visions, exhorting him to spread the practice of the rosary in the defence of Europe.

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[24] Carter Lindberg, *The European Reformations* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 362 ff.

[25] See also Johannes Ehmann, "Turken und Islam-Luthers theologische Unterscheidung. Uberlegung zu ihre Actualitat," *Luthe*r, 78, 2 (2007), pp. 89-94.

From 1529 the Turks had been moving against the West by sea, attacking Malta and Cyprus in 1565. Pope Pius V (a Dominican) financed the main naval campaign against them and in 1571 he called into being the Holy League of Spain, Venice, Genoa, the Knights of Malta and the Papal States. In the same year Pius also called on all Christians to pray the rosary for victory. On 7th October, 1571 the Holy League defeated the Turkish fleet in the Battle of Lepanto in the strait between the Gulf of Corinth and the Ionian Sea.[26] With gratitude, in 1573 Pope Gregory XIII changed the festal allocation for the 7th October to that of the Feast of the Rosary.[27]

The commander of the fleet, Don Juan of Austria, son of Emperor Charles V, attributed his victory at Lepanto to the power of the rosary and Pius V gave a new title to the Virgin Mary, that of "Our Lady of Victories." This title had originally been associated with the reconquest of Spain from the Moors. On board the ship of the admiral Andrea Doria there was an image of Our Lady of Guadelupe, presented to him by Philip II of Spain.[28] The Guadalupe Virgin was the focus of the Spanish cult of the Virgin of Victories in Extremadura. The title and significance of the original Guadalupe Mary was subsequently introduced to the conquered territories of Mexico by Hernando Cortés (1485-1547). A new painting appeared (miraculously according to the legend) which was given the name of the original early medieval Spanish statue. In Mexico the painting known as the Virgin of Guadalupe, regarded as a type of the Immaculate Conception by the Spanish conquerors, was similarly venerated as a conquering victor over the indigenous non-Christian peoples.[29]

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[26] Catherine Beebe, *St. Dominic and the Rosary, San Francisco*, Ignatius Press (1996). See also McGrath, "Dominicans, Franciscans, and the art of political rivalry" (2011), pp. 185-207.

[27] Niccolò Capponi, *Victory of the West*: *the* story *of the Battle of Lepanto* (London: Macmillan, 2006), pp. 7-45, 70-74, 91-116. See also Hugh Bicheno, *Crescent and Cross: the Battle of Lepanto 1571* (London: Cassell, 2003), pp. 7-45, 70-74, 91-116, 123-124, 126 and especially page 288, fig. 7, Veronese, *Battle of Lepanto* (ca. 1572).

[28] Paul Badde, *Maria von Guadalupe: wie das Erscheinen der Jungfrau Weltgeschichte schrieb* (München: Ullstein, 2004), pp. 13-44, 205-211; figs. 17, 19.

[28] Capponi*, Victory of the West*, pp. 123-124, 287-288.

[29] The possibly spurious Codex Escalada (not discovered till 1995) refers to the story of the vision of the Guadelupe Virgin seen by the peasant Juan Diego and gives a date of 1548, see D. A. Brading, *Mexican Phoenix: Our Lady of Guadalupe: Image and Tradition Across Five Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 117-118, 359. The details of the Guadelupe Virgin as a type of the Immaculate Conception (sunburst, stars on the cloak and crescent-

In 1683 the Virgin Mary was awarded the status of the defender of Europe. In that year the Ottoman Turkish forces, led by the Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa, once again surrounded Vienna in the second siege. Opposing them was the imperial army led by Charles of Lorraine, allied to a Polish army led by Jan III Sobieski. On 12th September, 1683, at Kahlenberg, near Vienna, the Turks were defeated and Vienna was liberated. This broke the power of the Ottomans and they abandoned their plans of further European conquest, although the war continued until 1698. Gratefully Pope Innocent XI moved the Feast of the Holy Name of Mary to the 12th September and prescribed it as a feast-day for the whole Church.[30] Prior to the battle Sobieski had entrusted the protection of Poland to Our Lady of Częstochowa and Our Lady Piekarska (Matka Boska Piekarska) and he venerated the relics of the True Cross. There soon circulated a myth that a cloth banner painted with the image of the Immaculate Conception was discovered either before, or after, the battle in the tent of the Grand Vizier of the Turkish forces. It was said that written on the banner were the words, "erit victor Johannes" (John [Sobieski] will be the victor). A later Polish king, Władysław IV, in the defence of the Commonwealth attempted to set up a chivalric Order of the Immaculate Conception. An emblem of the Virgin and Child on the crescent moon was to be worn on the breastplate of the hussaria. This was in the years 1633-37 at a time when the Commonwealth was under attack from Swedes to the north, Muscovites from the east and Ruthenian, Cossack and Tatar allies of the Turks from the south.

In this context it may be the case that Merian's depiction of the Apocalyptic Woman was a form of the "Turkenmadonna," the "Turkish

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moon) were added later to the original image in the 16th century and the early 17th century in order to de-emphasize her character as an indigenous mother deity. Miguel Sanchez, the author of the first published account in 1648 (*Imagen de la Virgen Maria, Madre de Dios de Guadalupe*) identified the figure as being the Woman of the Apocalypse from Revelation 12: 1 and as a representation of the Immaculate Conception. Sánchez also commented that this image signified the defeat of the Mexicans by the Virgin Mary. For this history see Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Goddesses and the Divine Feminine: A Western Religious History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), pp. 190-219. Also, refer to Robert Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico*. Translated by Lesley Byrd Simpson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), pp. 188 ff. The face of the Virgin of Guadelupe is of an Indian ethnic type, but this detail was not introduced into the image in deference to the Indian converts. Rather, it was a statement of their subjugation to the conquerors.

[30] Michał Rożek, *Zwycięstwo Jana III Sobieskiego pod Wiedniem: echa wiktorii* (Kraków: Petrus, 2008), p. 28.

Madonna." This was an iconographic type that developed in Central and Eastern Europe in the course of the 16th and 17th centuries and was popular through to the 18th century. From the late 16th century (and, perhaps, even earlier from the 15th century) this iconic image had become associated with victory against the Turks. The standard form is that of the apocalyptic Mary with the Child Jesus and the attributes of crescent-moon, sun-rays and starry crown, but with some additional Turkish motifs. Quite frequently, the "Turkish Madonna" stands on a Turk's decapitated body. She may even wield a sword and Jesus is often depicted clutching the head of a Turk by the hair. These are not present in Merian's engraving but the textual references to the Turks serve to contextualize the picture. The crescent moon under Mary's feet is always lying on its back in the manner of the Islamic emblem.[31]

Leo Stausberg is one of the few historians to have studied the iconography of the "Turkenmadonnen" in Germany, focusing his research on the Ahrweil region on the north-west border with France, near Bonn and Koblenz.[32] In this area there have survived statues and relief carvings of the Turkish Madonna dating from the 16th through to the 18th centuries. The earliest of these has been lost and now exists only in two copies. The original was once located at Waldorf Vinxtbachtal, an old Marian shrine.[33] In a Waldorfer song and prayer book published in 1720 there is a print of the Virgin of Victories which purports to be an image of the now lost Turkish Virgin.[34] The Virgin is crowned with the stars and surrounded by the sun's rays, although the crescent moon is absent. She carries the Infant Christ in her left hand and a sword in her right, while the Infant dangles a Turk's head by the hair from his left hand. There are triumphs of war at her feet, such as a turban, bow and arrow, lances and flags.

Another triumphalist Turkish Madonna at Ahrweil from the Baroque period (in private ownership) consists of a relief displaying the Virgin standing on the hemisphere of the earth behind which there spring the massive horns of a crescent-moon. Under the moon's left horn there is a

[31] See Leo Stausberg, "Türkenmadonnen im Kreise Ahrweiler Eine Studie zur Heimat- und Weltgeschichtevon" see online http://www.kreis-ahrweiler.de/kvar/VT/hjb1958/hjb1958.38.htm (retrieved 25. 4. 2016)

[32] Stausberg, "Türkenmadonnen im Kreise Ahrweiler," passim.

[33] In the early 18th century this prayer-group was rededicated to the Virgin of the Rosary. The original image was lost during the partial demolition and reconstruction of the parish church in 1867, but there exists a copy whose style of presentation, in particular the border of the image, is Renaissance in character.

[34] This is the same image that is also depicted on a copper-plate engraving preserved in the Waldorfer parsonage.

death mask in profile, while, on the right, a decapitated corpse lies on the ground. There is a sword in Mary's right hand, while the Infant holds up a Turk's head by the hair. There are triumphs of war, flags and spears.[35] There also exists a later Turkish cross at Beller (1725-28) carved from basalt with an image of the Queen of the Rosary. It was carved by a south German sculptor. The Virgin with the Child on her left arm is surrounded by a rosary. She stands bathed in the rays of the sun on the headless corpse of a Turk and she flourishes a sword in her right hand. The infant Jesus holds the orb of the earth in his right hand, while his left grasps the decapitated Turk's head. At the base of the cross there lie a skull and cross-bones. Another such bloodied Lady of Victories is located at Kirchsahr church where a polychrome wooden statue dates from the same period as the Beller Turkish cross. The iconography here is that of Mary, Queen of Heaven, holding the infant Jesus Child. She is surrounded by a rosary and by the rays of the sun. Jesus bears an orb in his right hand and in his left a Turk's head. However, the sword in the right hand of Mary at Beller has here been replaced by a sceptre and the corpse of the Turk has been omitted.

To this plain-speaking imagery of Mary as Victor there may be added a different type of Turkish Madonna prevalent through-out the German states and Eastern Europe. In this version the Virgin stands on a tall pillar and the Infant Jesus is often absent since she sometimes represents the Apocalyptic Woman and, at other times, the Immaculate Conception. The original model for these imposing monuments was the pillar surmounted by the Immaculate Conception standing in front of the basilica of Sta. Maria Maggiore in Rome, erected in 1614 after the design of Carlo Maderno. The version at Sta. Maria Maggiore in Rome was itself modelled on a proto-type in Zaragoza in Spain which was associated with the legend of James, the brother of Christ. On the 12th October, 40AD, Mary was said to have appeared standing on a pillar to James while he was preaching in pagan Zaragoza near the Ebro River. She handed the pillar to James, with a wooden statue of herself, and he was ordered to build a chapel. A Bull of 1456 by Pope Calixtus III encouraged pilgrimages and the name the *Lady of the Pillar* was confirmed.[36]

In Germany the iconography of the Virgin on the pillar was connected integrally with the struggle against the Turks. As one example there is the

[35] See also Joachim Gerhardt et al. (eds.), *Die Kunstdenkmäler des Kreises Ahrweiler* … Bearbeitet von Joachim Gerhardt, Heinrich Neu, Edmund Renard ... Albert Verbeek, mit einem Beitrag von Rafael von Uslar (Düsseldorf, 1938).

[36] Francisco Guttierez Lasanta, *Historia de la Virgen del Pilar* (Zaragoza: F. Gutiérrez Lasanta, 1971).

Virgin and Child on a column in the Marienplatz next to the town hall at Munich (the "Mariensaule"). In 1683 Elector Max Emanuel II of Bavaria (1662–1726) commenced his campaign against the Turks from the foot of this column.[37] The column in Munich instigated the building of many others through-out Catholic Europe such as those in Vienna, Prague, Warsaw and further east in Polish Ruthenia, as at the cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul in Kamieniec Podolski. These later examples were situated on the south-eastern borders of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, on the ultimate frontier of the defence against the Turks. In 1672 Kamieniec-Podolski fell to the Ottomans. The Turks on their occupation of the city converted the cathedral into a mosque. The chapel standing against the left side of the cathedral façade was remodelled into the base of a Muslim minaret, thirty-three and a half metres in height and crowned with a crescent-moon. On the defeat of the Turks Podole was returned to the Commonwealth by the Peace of Karlovici (1699) and the cathedral was duly reclaimed by the Catholics. Since in Islam all places consecrated for Muslim worship remain inviolably sacred, the Turks requested the Poles not to destroy their minaret. The Poles acquiesced, but they stood a wooden figure of the Virgin on top of the prone Islamic crescent-moon crowning the minaret.[38] This simple action transformed the sacred sign of Islam into a Catholic icon, that of the Immaculate Conception and of the victorious Virgin on the Pillar.

There was a similar situation further west in the monastery at Podkamień, near Lwów, which long endured attacks by Turks, Tatars and Cossacks between the 15th and the 17th centuries. In the main grounds of the monastery there is a tall Corinthian column on which there stands an early 18th century statue of the Apocalyptic Woman and Child. In the sculpture the Christ-Child pierces a reptile wreathed around the globe of the earth on which the Virgin stands. The column was funded in 1719 by Stanisław Ledóchowski to commemorate the withdrawal of Saxon and Russian forces beyond the eastern frontiers of Poland.[39] On the pedestal

[37] It was copied from an original depicting the "Patrona Bavariae" made for Maximilian I's residence. Friedrich Wilhelm Bruckbraeu, *Geschichte der Mariensäule in München. 1638-1855* (München, 1855), pp. 26 ff.

[38] Aleksander Rasszczupkin, *Katedra św. Apostołów Piotra i Pawła w Kamieńcu Podolskim* (Kamyanec Podilskij: Ojum [Оіюм], 2003). See also Urszula Szulakowska, *Art, Architecture and Humanism in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth* (Saarbrucken: The Scholars' Press, 2015), pp. 241-42.

[39] The figure of the Virgin was placed on the column on 19th August, 1719. It is the work of the sculptor Christian Szobert, a goldsmith from Gdańsk. See

there are zinc tablets dating from October 1877 which probably replaced the original early 18th century stone tablets. On one side there is a quote from Ecclesiastes 24, the biblical text adopted by the Catholic Church to describe the Virgin Mary as replete with Divine Wisdom. In the text on the pedestal the Virgin herself is speaking, stating that her Throne is powerful and she strengthens the households [Latin: "penates": household gods] of the unfortunate,[40] that is, the image is a protector of the Christian homeland.

In contrast to such justifiable fears expressed in the anti-Turkish iconographic programme there were also many positive benefits for European culture from contact with Turkey and the wider Islamic world. The influence of the art, craft skills and scientific knowledge of the Muslim countries of South-Eastern Europe and the Middle East were reflected in novel architectural motifs, military defences and arms, flamboyant dress and piquant cuisine. The ruling-classes of Eastern Europe developed a taste for collecting fine armour, glorious textiles and carpets and even Islamic calligraphy. In the development of chemistry important techniques were transferred from Turkish chemists to their Christian counter-parts in the course of the invasions in the 14th and 15th centuries. It was then that the Turks introduced their advanced skills of distillation to Western Europe. The basic technique of distillation had already been developed much earlier by the Arabs in the 8th century. (Ibn Yasid may have discovered the use of the alembic.) However, it was in the 11th century that Avicenna invented a coiled pipe which allowed vapour to cool more effectively and it was this particular technique that was passed on to European chemists during the Turkish invasions. Hence, in the 14th

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Szulakowska, *Art, Architecture and Humanism in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth*, pp. 279-280.

[40] Thronus meus in Columna Eccl. 24.
Fortius ut miseros possim fulcire penates, Fulcra mei Solii, celsa Columna subit.
Et Deiparae Virgini Mariae
Advocatae suae Clementissimae
Stanislaus Ledochowski
Succamerarius Cremenecensis.
D. D. D.
Anno Salutis 1719 die 19 Augusti
Authori sacrae sis praevia Virgo figurae
Possit ut aeternam per Te reperire salutem.

century the use of distilled alcohol in medicine was facilitated due to this refined procedure.[41]

From the 15th century the Turks were also making an exotic entry into alchemical illustration, both in Italy and later in the German Empire. In the case of the Arab alchemist "Geber" (originally Ibn al' Jabir, but transformed into the "Latin Geber") from the 15th century he was consistently depicted in Turkish dress, as in one example from the title-page of the *Basilica Chymica* (Frankfurt, 1608) composed by the Paracelsian Oswald Croll (ca. 1563-1609).[42] (Croll was a professor of medicine and alchemy at the University of Marburg in Hesse, Germany.)[43] The title-page of the *Basilica Chymica* consists of a detailed engraving by Jan Sadeler displaying portraits of Hermes Trismegistos, Morienus, Lull, Geber, Roger Bacon and Paracelsus. Yet another portrait of Geber in westernised Turkish dress may be encountered in the margins of the title-page to Michael Maier's *Symbola Aureae Mensae* (1617). In these engravings Geber always wears a Turkish turban, a long kaftan and over-garment, with voluminous pantaloons. Geber's apparel is distinguished from that of the mythical father of the Western esoteric tradition, Hermes Trismegistos, who is universally shown in generic "Eastern" garb, recalling the ritual dress of Jewish rabbis with breast-plates and tassels and with a fantastic array of hats. Both of these alchemists, along with Aristotle, are depicted in subtly distinguished ethnic clothing in the Florentine manuscript, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana Ashburnham MS 1166, d. e (*Miscellanea d'Alchimia*) of the 1470s. Here, Hermes wears a Judaic-style ritual garment of brocade with decorative fastenings (f.1v), while Geber is clad in a more ubiquitous long tunic (f. 12r). Distinctive turbans with crowns mark both the figures of Hermes and Geber, while Aristotle is clad in a Western-style academic long-coat and head-dress to denote the central importance of his ideas in the development of Western scholasticism (f. 6r).

Even greater respect for Arabic alchemy and occult learning was demonstrated in the early 17th century amid the excitement generated by the fictional Rosicrucian Brotherhood. In the legend associated with the mythical figure of Christian Rosenkreutz, the founder of the Rosicrucians, the Turks and Arabs were elevated to the position of mentors to the West

[41] Kenneth F. Kiple and Kriemhild Coneè Ornelas (eds.), *The Cambridge World History of Food*, 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 654 ff.
[42] Allen G. Debus, *The Chemical Philosophy: Paracelsian Science and Medicine in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York: Science History Publications, 1977), 1, pp. 117-126.
[43] He published in one volume in 1609 two books, the *Basilica Chymica* and *De Signatura Rerum* with a preface explaining his Paracelsian ideas.

since they had exceptional intellectual and spiritual authority. It was from the Muslims that Rosenkreutz was said to have learned alchemy, kabbalistic magic and philosophy. He was also said to have discovered among the Arabs of the Middle East the mythical "Book M," the fount of all wisdom and second in importance only to the Christian Scriptures. In the Rosicrucian narrative Rosenkreutz travelled to Turkey and Damascus, then on to Fez in Egypt, as is recounted in the *Fama Fraternitatis* (1615) and *Confessio Fraternitatis*, Kassel (1616).[44]

Hence, in the same period that the Western European powers were fighting for their existence against the Ottomans, regarded as the Anti-Christ, there were contrary artistic and intellectual currents encouraging scholars to seek for scientific and mystical knowledge in the Muslim cultural sphere.

[44] Dickson, *Tessera of Antilia*, pp. 8-61.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE APOCALYPTIC MARY IN THE *BUCH DER HEILIGEN DREIFALTIGKEIT* (1419; 1433)

The *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* (1419) was composed in Germany as a political polemic, entering the fray in the wars between the German Holy Roman Emperor and the Pope, with its author favouring the Imperial cause.[1] This treatise was not the earliest illustrated alchemical treatise since it was preceded in about 1370 by that of Constantinus of Pisa,[2] as well as by the anonymous late 14th century *Le Livre de ma Dame Alchimie* and the early 15th century *Aurora Consurgens*. However, the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* was the earliest alchemical text to be written in vernacular German, rather than in Latin, and it was the first alchemical treatise to employ visual images of the Virgin Mary and textual allusions to her.

The *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* is strongly eschatological in both intention and conceptual construction. The author states that his purpose is to strengthen by means of alchemy the Imperial champion of Europe in his battle against the Turks and heretics.[3] The first three books of the treatise are replete with religious and, most especially, apocalyptic discourse. Much of the third book of this treatise is concerned with the apocalyptic war against Lucifer and the Anti-Christ.[4] It is mainly in the fourth book that the alchemical process itself is described. Despite the symbolic language much of the text can, in fact, be translated into chemical procedures of a more or less rational nature.

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[1] Obrist, *Les débuts de L'Imagerie Alchimique*, pp. 117-182.

[2] Barbara Obrist, *Constantine of Pisa, The Book of the Secrets of Alchemy*, *Collection de Travaux de l'Académie Internationale d'Histoire des Sciences*, 34 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990).

[3] The manuscript illuminations in the present study are drawn from Codex Munich Staatsbibliothek BSB Cgm 598 (dated after 1467).

[4] See, for example, Wolfenbüttel Codex Guelf 188 Blankenberg, ff. 66v-84r.

The first scholars, prior to Barbara Obrist, who examined the history of the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* were Wilhelm Ganzenmüller,[5] Gustav Hartlaub[6] and Herwig Büntz.[7] Uwe Junker has provided a transcript of Wolfenbüttel Codex Guelf 188 Blankenburg, a copy of the now lost codex MS Kadolzburg which was the second, expanded version of the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* dated to 1433.

As noted by Junker, the author of the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* was apparently a Spiritual Franciscan (a Poverello, or Joachimite).[8] This is evidenced by the mystical tenor of the text, as well as by an illustration of St. Francis receiving the stigmata from a winged crucifix. This story of Francis' reception of the stigmata was central to his image as a type of the Second Christ in the posthumous cult developed by his more extreme followers. To the most radical of his disciples the stigmata proved that Francis was, indeed, the prophet of the Joachimite Third Age of the Holy Spirit.[9] The manuscript MS 8006 held in the Nuremberg German National Museum also includes a list of the different ranks of the Franciscan Order.[10] Ganzenmüller has floated the possibility that one "Ulmannus" was the author.[11] In the 16th century the humanist Michael Cochem had made this identification, repeating an earlier mention by Marsilio Ficino who had described an alchemical book that depicted the Passion of Christ, along with an androgynous figure holding a sceptre. These details accord with the miniatures in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*. Another scholar Herwig Büntz has also found the name "Ulmannum" in a German work *Uralter Ritterkrieg,* produced by Johann Sternhals, a 15th, or 16th, century alchemist.[12] There were several other attributions made in the late Renaissance and 18th century which have since been recovered by

[5] Ganzenmüller, "Das 'Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit'," pp. 231-272.
[6] Hartlaub, G. F., "Signa Hermetis, Zwei alte alchemistische Bilderhandschriften" in N. Miller (ed.), *Kunst und Magie: gesammelte Aufsätze* (Hamburg, 1991), pp. 111-143. First published in *Zeitschrift des deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft* (1937), pp. 93-112.
[7] Büntz, "Das 'Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit'," pp. 150-160.
[8] Junker, "Das 'Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit'," p. 4.
[9] As in Munich, Staatsbibliothek MS BSB Cgm 598, f.167r.
[10] The Franciscan connection is discussed in Obrist, *Les débuts de L'Imagerie Alchimique,* pp. 133 ff.
[11] Wilhelm Ganzenmüller, "Das Buch der heiligen Dreifaltigkeit. Eine deutsche Alchemie aus dem Anfang des 15. Jahrhunderts," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, 29 (1939), pp. 93-146.
[12] Herwig Büntz, *"*Das Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit-sein Autor und seine Überleiferung*," Zeitschrift für Deutsches Altertum,* 20 (1971), pp. 150-160.

contemporary scholars.[13] The tenor of the text and its accompanying illustrations is firmly anti-papal and this further serves to support the contention concerning the probable Franciscan affiliations of the author.

There are mentions of the Emperor Frederick in the text as leading the Christian forces against their enemies on behalf of God himself.[14] The author states that he had been working on the text from 1410 to 1419. He presented it to Sigismund of Luxemburg, King of the Romans and Emperor-Elect, at the Council of the Church held at Lake Constance.[15] This must have been while the text still remained incomplete. The book was dedicated to Frederick, Baron of Nuremberg and Margrave of Brandenburg (1373-1440), whom the author probably encountered in 1416-17 at Lake Constance. Scholarly authorities consider that the treatise was completed and illustrated in 1419. Frederick practised alchemy and he drew up a contract with his brother-in-law, Johann von Sagan, that his own son Johann (1406-64) should be taught the art. Frederick had yet another son, Albert Achilles (1414-86), who was similarly instructed in alchemy when he served as a page at the court of Sigismund's wife, Barbara von Cilli, a practising alchemist (although the records of this activity date from the years after Sigismund's death in 1437).[16]

The *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* has survived in four copies dating from the 15th century.[17] There also exist a further twenty-four manuscripts and other fragments of the treatise dating from the 15th to the 17th

[13] See Joachim Telle, "Ulmannus" in 2 *Verfasserlexikon* 11 (2004), column 1573-1580. Also see Hartlaub, "Signa Hermetis, Zwei alte alchemistische Bilderhandschriften" in Miller (ed.), *Kunst und Magie*, pp. 111-143. See also Marielene Putscher, "Das Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit unde seine Bilder in Handschriften des 15. Jahrhunderts" in Christophe Meinel (ed.), *Die Alchemie in der europäischen Kultur- und Wissenschaftsgesichte* (Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 1986), pp. 151-178.

[14] Junker, "Das 'Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit'," p. 5.

[15] Imre Takács, *Sigismundus rex et imperator. Kunst und Kultur zur Zeit Sigismunds von Luxemburg 1387-1437*, exhibition catalogue (Mainz, 2006), pp. 464 ff.

[16] Obrist has argued that Albert Achilles could have learned the practice of alchemy from his uncle Johann von Sagan and she has suggested that Henri von Freyberg had taught Johann.

[17] Namely, MS Codex 78 A 11 (Berlin) (1410-1419); MS Heidelberg Cpg 843 Fasc. 3 (15th century); Munich Staatsbibliothek MS Cgm 598 (after 1467) and St. Gallen, Kantonsbibliothek VadSlg MS 428 (1488).

centuries.[18] There is disagreement concerning the original. Some authorities argue that the version held in the Wellcome Institute, London, is the original of 1419 due to its emendations and marginal notes. It includes sketches for the illustrations and colour schemes, but it lacks the dedication to Frederick. However, other scholars assert that the manuscript in Berlin, MSS Codex 78 A 11 (1410-19), is the original one. In addition, a revision of the 1419 treatise was produced in 1433 in the Nuremberg, or Kadolzburg, region where Johann von Sagan had lived. This was at the request of Johann, the Margrave of Bayreuth (1406-64), who was Frederick of Brandenburg's eldest son.[19] This second version has led to a different run of copies. It has more illustrations than the first version of 1419.[20] The various copies of the revised version of 1433 include the important manuscript discussed by Junker which is held in Wolfenbüttel at the Herzog-August Bibliothek (MS Codex Guelf 188 Blankenburg) dated 1471. Obrist has identified three groups of copies originating in different prototypes and the Wolfenbüttel copy is classified by Obrist and Büntz in group two.[21] A third group of distinctive manuscript copies includes the one in Manchester at the John Rylands Library, MSS Germ. 1 (first half of the 15th century).

The main visual image in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* is that of the Holy Trinity as Father, Son and Holy Spirit who are represented in the act of crowning the Virgin Mary, attended by the symbols of the four evangelists, as in the manuscript held in the Bavarian State Library in Munch, MS BSB Cgm 598 (f. 26r), dated from the second half of the 15th century (fig. 4-4). In the original Catholic context the scene of the coronation of the Virgin Mary was a type of bridal scene in which Christ was shown placing a crown on his mother's head. Sometimes Mary was even depicted leaning on Christ's shoulder affectionately. In these quasi-marital scenes Mary personifies the Church, the New Jerusalem who is the Bride of Christ at the end of time. In doctrinal terms the souls of all

[18] Telle, "Ulmannus" in 2 *Verfasserlexikon* 11 (2004), column 1573-1580. See also Büntz, "Das Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkei-sein Autor und seine Überleiferung," *Zeitschrift für Deutsches Altertum*, 20 (1971), pp. 150-160.

[19] Copies of this second version include MS Dresden N 110 (1492); MS Gotha Landesbibliothek Ch. B. 254 (17th century); German National Museum Nuremberg MS 80061; John Rylands Library MS Germ 1; London Wellcome Institute MS 164 and there are still more extant.

[20] Junker, "Das 'Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit'," p. 368.

[21] Hella Frühmorgen-Voss, Norbert H. Ott, Ulrike Bodemann and Gisela Fischer-Heetfeld (eds.), Bd *Katalog der deutschsprachigen illustrierten Handschriften des Mittelalters*, 1 (München, 1991), pp. 35-37.

Christ's followers, male and female alike, are his "brides," to be united with him eternally after death and judgement. However, in the context of alchemy the under-lying incestuous connotations of this coronation/marriage scene are inevitably picked-up, so that the mystical union of Christ and Mary becomes a scene of the alchemical "coniunctio" of Sun and Moon, Sulphur and Mercury. In the alchemical hermeneutic this bridal couple are brother and sister, or son and mother. In fact, the author of the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* specifically states that the alchemical work is dependent on the mystical union of Christ with Mary.[22]

Junker has observed that the scene of the coronation of the Virgin in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* of 1419 is one of the earliest depictions of the "three-figure" type of Marian coronation which includes God the Father, Christ and the Virgin Mary, with the Holy Spirit present as a dove. The three-figure compositional type is first pictured in the Berlin manuscript of the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* (MSS Codex 78 A 11) (1410-19). This miniature pre-dates the earliest panel-paintings of the three-figure coronation, including, for example, a well-known version painted by Alvise Vivarini and Giovanni d'Alemagna for the church of St. Pantaleone in Venice (1444).[23]

The earliest scenes of the coronation in Italian Byzantine-style frescoes and panel-paintings had shown only Mary alone with Christ, without God the Father, or the Holy Spirit being present.

Hazarding a startling heretical modification of doctrine, the author of the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* refers to a Holy Trinity which is not that of the dogmatic Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but rather an alchemical readjustment of Father, Son and Mother (Virgin Mary).[24] The invention of this variant is probably intended merely to facilitate the development of the alchemical discourse and is unlikely to be meant as a deliberate challenge to Catholic doctrine.

[22] Junker, "Das 'Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit'," p. 15.
[23] Junker, "Das 'Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit'," pp. 19, 31.
[24] Junker, "Das 'Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit'," p. 18.

Fig. 4-4 Coronation of the Virgin Mary in *Das Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek MS BSB Cgm 598, f. 26r. With the permission of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich

In the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* the alchemical process for making the Stone of the Wise is structured in terms of a religious allegory.[25] The task of the alchemist, as described in the first book, is to order the "seven wounds of Christ." The four evangelists are invoked as representing the four elements, fire, air, water and earth.[26] Reference is made to Mary and Jesus through-out, right from the very first folio, both in relation to their religious function in redeeming humanity and also in their alchemical roles as Moon and Sun in the "coniunctio." In the third book of the treatise an account is provided of the lineage of Mary and her parents, Joachim and Anna, who similarly play a role in the text.[27] More specifically, the emblem of the Virgin Mary is used to personify one of the primary principles, mercury, while in later alchemical treatises her figure also signifies the fifth essence. The scene of the coronation of the Virgin represents the perfection of the white tincture, the elixir. It is a quintessential substance and from it there is produced the red tincture that tinges gold and which is the Universal Panacea.[28] These identifications of Mary with the tincture are constant through-out the two German works directly influenced by the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* which are the *Rosarium philosophorum cum figuris* (1550) and the *Pandora* (1582; 1588) and they continue into the alchemical hermeneutic of Jacob Boehme.

The use of a Marian emblem for the rarefied quintessence and the elixir, or tincture, was appropriate since Mary was popularly believed to have ascended bodily to heaven on her death. Like Christ she gained a "glorified" body in place of her former earthly shell. The glorious body was a spiritualized and deathless, though still material, object. The Evangelist John, as well as Paul, had taught that the bodies of all those redeemed by Christ at the General Resurrection would have the same qualities as the resurrection body of Christ. In the New Testament this was said to be the same as his earthly body, though in a glorified condition (John 20:27). The glorified body had unearthly properties such as the ability to pass through solid walls (John 20:19). Moreover, Jesus was able to ascend directly into heaven in his bodily form (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9). Paul claimed that such would be the destiny of all justified believers in Christ (1 Corinthians 15:51–52).

> Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— [52] in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.

[25] Junker, "Das 'Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit'," pp. 15.
[26] Junker, "Das 'Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit'," p. 6.
[27] Junker, "Das 'Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit'," p. 9.
[28] See Codex Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek MS BSB Cgm 598, f. 26r, Coronation of the Virgin Mary.

> For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.
> (New King James Version)

And in Philippians 3:21, in speaking of Christ, Paul proclaims

> … [he] will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.
> (New King James Version)

In relation to these glorified bodies Paul explains further that:

> For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."
> (2 Corinthians 5:1)
> (New King James Version)

In fact, the author of the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* transgresses against the doctrinal account concerning Mary's presence in heaven and he enters the territory of gnostic Sophology when he identifies Mary with Divine Wisdom. He states that the Father and Son are identical with the Mother, for in the Mother we recognise the Son, Jesus Christ.[29] In this Son we know the Father. Everything is one thing. Then there follows another of those irregular theological assertions when the text states that Maria has been hidden within the Godhead.

> Vater son ist muter/ Son vater ist muter In der muter maget maria bekennen wir den son ihesum cristum In disem sone bekennen wir den vater almechtig uber alle ein got und mensche/ Omnia sunt unum esse [sic][30]

The author alludes to the "drei göttlichen Gestalten," the Three Persons of the Godhead who are God the Father, Christ and Mary who now replaces the Holy Spirit.

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[29] Codex Guelf 188 Blankenberg, f. 24r.

[30] Junker, 18: Codex 188 Blankenberg, f. 24r: "Vater son ist muter/ Son vater ist muter In der muter maget maria bekennen wir den son ihesum cristum In disem sone bekennen wir den vater almechtig uber alle ein got und mensche/ Omnia sunt unum esse/ Also fur war mag es rechte wol sein alle ein dreyfalt hercze schilt den man nirgent mer enfindet/ also recht vernommen han unde kan/ mag es wol wesen das die lauter reyne clar mensscheit maria In der gotheit ist gewesen verborgen [sic]."

> Also fur war mag es rechte wol sein alle ein dreyfalt hercze schilt den man nirgent mer enfindet [sic][31]

An explanation is offered to explain this novel formation, stating that when Christ and Mary are One, then the Holy Ghost is the Third.[32] What this seems to mean is that when Sulphur and Mercury (male and female, Sun and Moon) are united to form one substance, then the quintessence is created. This is the "aqua vitae," or, as in Rupescissa's texts, the "coelum" (although this term is not employed in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*).[33] The "aqua vitae" is made from the Stone of the Wise ("stein des Weisen").[34]

There are echoes present here of the concept of Mary as Wisdom incarnated, Wisdom herself being an integral part of the Godhead.

> … mag es wol wesen das die lauter reyne clar mensscheit maria In der gotheit ist gewesen verborgen [sic][35]

This allusion will become a central aspect of the discourse in the later *Rosarium philosophorum* where there are references to the biblical Wisdom passages in the Books of Solomon and Ecclesiastes. In chapter eight of the Book of Wisdom (included only in the Catholic version of the bible known as the Vulgate) there are accounts of Wisdom as the Heavenly Bride. In Catholic doctrine the earthly Mary as the mother of Christ was the Bride of the Godhead and she was replete with the qualities of Holy Wisdom, the original Bride of God from all eternity. Wisdom 9 describes this Divine Bride as the source of all God's actions within his creation.

> [2] Wisdom I loved and searched for from my youth; I resolved to have her as my bride, I fell in love with her beauty.
> [3] She enhances her noble birth by sharing God's life, for the Master of All has always loved her.
> [4] Indeed, she shares the secrets of God's knowledge, and she chooses what he will do.

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[31] Junker, 18: Codex 188 Blankenberg, f. 24r.
[32] Junker, "Das 'Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit'," p. 15. Junker provides a concordance between the Berlin and the Wolfenbuttel Kadolzburg manuscripts indicating where the illustrations are in each codex, see pp. 32-33.
[33] Junker, "Das 'Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit'," pp. 17-28.
[34] Junker, "Das 'Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit,'" p. 13.
[35] Junker, 18: Codex 188 Blankenberg, f. 24r. See footnote 166 above.

> [9] With you [God] is Wisdom, she who knows your works, she who was present when you made the world; she understands what is pleasing in your eyes and what agrees with your commandments …
> (Roman Catholic Vulgate)[36]

Nearly two centuries later in a different confessional environment Jacob Boehme would enthrone the Heavenly Virgin Sophia ("Weisheit") at the heart of his spiritual alchemy.

The distinctive Christly and Marian illustrations are inter-woven in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*. First in the Christ scenographic sequence there appears a Melusina (a snake with a woman's head) who thrusts a spear into the side of the first man, Adam, personifying alchemical prime matter. Eve is depicted with him.[37] The author informs the reader that God formed Adam in his own likeness from the ashes of the fire of the sun and that he was made from eight component parts: earth, sea, stone, the clouds of heaven, wind, sun, the light of the world and the Holy Spirit.[38] All men are made from eight parts in the same way as Adam. There is a further scene of Christ on the cross accompanied by another crowned Melusina holding a spear.[39] In medieval Christian allegory Christ was described as the second Adam, just as Mary was the second Eve. The Melusina was introduced into Western art in the late 13th century and she is often painted as the serpent in the Garden of Eden, as in the scene of Adam and Eve by the Flemish artist Hugo van der Goes (*Vienna Diptych*, or *The Fall and Redemption of Man*, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, second half of the 15th century). The alchemical Melusina is an acidic, or alkaline, substance which dissolves matter. These early sections of the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* deal with the alchemical "putrefactio" of prime matter.[40] The text states that the true alchemy is the work of Christ.[41] The passion of Christ as an emblem of the Philosopher's Stone is represented by another miniature showing him carrying the cross,[42] while a later scene depicts his resurrection from a stone sepulchre.[43] Finally, there is an illumination of Christ as the Universal Judge on the Last Day, seated on

[36] See online website *Catholic Online*
http://www.catholic.org/bible/book.php?id=27 (retrieved 17. 10. 2016)
[37] Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek MS BSB Cgm 598, f. 2r.
[38] See, for example, MS Codex Guelf 188 Blankenberg, f. 30r.
[39] Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek MS BSB Cgm 598, f.78 v.
[40] Junker, "'Das Buch der Heiligen Dreifatigkeit'," p. 35.
[41] Junker, "'Das Buch der Heiligen Dreifatigkeit'," p. 38.
[42] Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek MS BSB Cgm 598, f.103r.
[43] Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek MS BSB Cgm 598, f.104v.

the rainbow within a mandorla.[44] The composition of these last three scenes concurs with the established iconography of the Catholic Church, unlike the flagrantly heretical adaptations of the earlier compositions involving the alchemical Adam/Christ.

Most of the rest of the visual imagery in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*, however, is highly irregular and in certain pictures the illustrator has broken through into a new symbolic realm. For example, there is a powerful emblem representing the Holy Trinity in an innovative manner that involves great conceptual subtlety (fig. 4-5).[45] The title explains that this picture is a "mirror of the Trinity" ("speculum Trinitati"). The text below describes the solution of the materials. The heraldic black double-headed Imperial eagle dominates the composition, but its main purpose is to signify the process of distillation and the release of the volatile spirits. Probing deeper into the emblem's complexities, there can be traced a biblical source for the iconography which is not so immediately obvious. In fact, this emblem has to be read in the light of the text of Revelation 21 concerning the re-creation of the world after the Last Judgement. The eagle is the emblem of John the Evangelist and whenever his heraldic insignia appears in this treatise then it bears some apocalyptic significance, often linked to the Imperial political cause.

In this particular image the black eagle is standing above a strange double-torso, two figures joined at the waist. In the alchemical sense the double-figure alludes to the successive silver and gold works in the laboratory process which produce, first, the silver-tingeing Stone and, then, the gold-tingeing one. The double-figure is the Rebis, the dual-natured alchemical entity which is the Stone of the Philosophers and which is also personified by the figure of the hermaphrodite. Usually, the two aspects of the Rebis are gendered masculine and feminine, but here these Siamese twins are both male for theological reasons. The younger one is clad in green, the colour of spring and rebirth. He wears a black crown to display his allegiance to the Imperial black eagles depicted above him. Meantime, the figure on the right, with the white hair and beard of an older man, wears red, the colour of suffering and martyrdom, to indicate the trials that the prime matter has to "endure" in the alchemical process. The old king wears a silvery crown, the colour of uncorroded lead. He represents Saturn who in alchemy is associated with poisonous "lead," commonly described as the prime matter. Yet, red is also the colour of the perfected Philosopher's Stone. In fact, Saturn in classical mythology was

[44] Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek MS BSB Cgm 598, f. 116r.
[45] Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek MS BSB Cgm 598, f. 24r.

both the god of the Golden Age, as well as that of fallen humanity, of old age and death. Saturn, thus, has a double nature in alchemy where he signifies both prime matter, as well as the glorious Stone of the Wise. In this particular illustration, it is God the Father who plays the role of alchemical Saturn, the beginning and end of all that has been created, as in Revelation 21: 6. The young king dressed in the green colour of spring is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. The Second Person as the Universal Judge "makes all things new" in Revelation 21: 5 which is the likely scriptural source for this composition.

> Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away … [5] Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new" … [6] And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.[7] He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.
> (New King James Version)

The colour green was never included in the colour symbolism of alchemy. Its presence in this particular context is not accidental and must carry some import. The usual colours of alchemy are, in order, black, white and red (or citrine), indicating the chemical responses of matter to the heat of the laboratory furnace. (The multi-coloured peacock, or rainbow, is also recorded as appearing briefly near the end of the process.) The green colour in this picture is, hence, a strictly theological allusion indicating the renewing power of God's Spirit as related in the apocalyptic narrative of Revelation 21.

The old king is the God the Father, co-joined with the Son who proceeds from him. In the dogma of the Holy Trinity Father and Son are said to exist in a hypostatic union. Late medieval depictions of the Holy Trinity often showed a single figure with three faces on its head. The double-figure in *Das Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* is referencing the same iconographic tradition. In this miniature the Second Person of the Trinity also re-appears above the eagle in his incarnated form this time as Jesus Christ. He is the Stone of the Philosophers. In a very strange and naïve detail, his two bare feet appear below the eagle, standing on each head of the double-bodied figure. Even more peculiar, his two hands are shown at the top of the two wings of the Imperial eagle. In fact, Christ's figure is that of his crucified form, but with the Imperial eagle as his torso, arms and legs. His hands touch a crown on each side. A third crown encircles what should be Christ's chest.

Fig. 4-5 Cryptic emblem of the Holy Trinity from *Das Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek MS BSB Cgm 598, f.24r. With the permission of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich

In addition, a subtle detail is that the heads of the Imperial eagle clutch their wings in their beaks, thereby adopting the form of an Ouroboros, an emblem involving birds, or serpents, or both, on different occasions. There are three more eagles above the Imperial one. To the left and right are

shown single-headed eagles, coloured gold and holding red and gold crowns. These colours are associated with the perfected Stone and its powers of healing and transmutation. The unification of the Imperial eagle with the figure of Christ is both a political and an alchemical statement. The political meaning supports the cause of the Holy Roman Emperor in his contention against the Papacy, displaying the rectitude of the Emperor's struggle for power since as a political authority his cause is that of Christ the Redeemer and is sanctified by him. Alchemically, the emblem is an account of the production of the volatile spirits from black prime matter.

In the centre of the upper register of the picture, standing above Christ's head, there is another double-headed Imperial eagle, this time coloured blue. Its two heads refer to the dualism of matter and spirit and it is another Rebis, as is the black Imperial eagle. The blue colouring, however, is a Marian reference and the dualism alludes to her physical body and its spiritualization. The eagle's position may signify Christ's incarnation on earth through the Virgin Mary. The Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, is customarily signified by a dove and, following the sense of this Trinitarian emblem, the blue eagle here should carry the same significance. Its blue colour, however, relates the bird rather to Mary. Hence, it seems that the double-headed blue eagle pictures the statement in the text that when Jesus and Mary are one, then the Holy Spirit appears as the third. Therefore, the blue eagle is the Third Person of the Trinity as a combination of Mary in union with the Holy Spirit.

The blue colour also references the "fountain of the water of life" in Revelation 21: 6. It is the "aqua vitae" of the alchemists, the quintessential elixir.

Further, Mary is the apocalyptic Bride who is the New Jerusalem of Revelation 21. 2.

> [2] Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
> (New King James Version)

The Marian miniatures in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* are interspersed among the scenes involving Christ. The first shows Mary kneeling in prayer with loosened hair, dressed in deep blue.[46] On the same page there are images also of God the Father in a red robe and Christ dressed in green, accompanied by a black eagle. The colour symbolism and figurative symbols are exactly the same as those in the emblem of the

[46] Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek BSB Cgm 598, f. 22r.

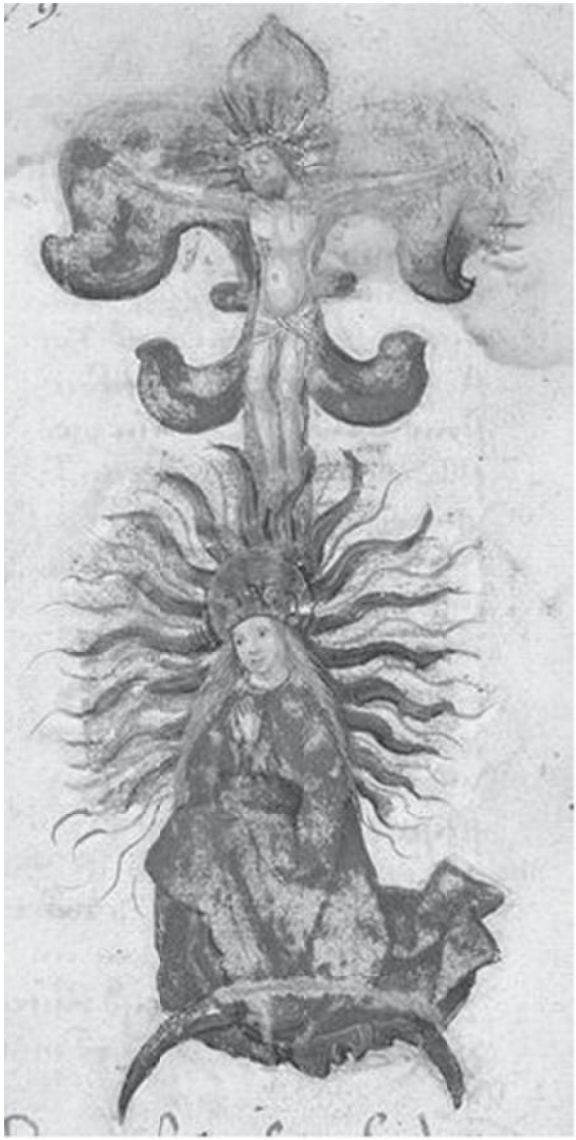

Fig. 4-6 The first image of the Virgin Mary beneath the Lily Cross in *Das Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek MS BSB Cgm 598, f. 79r. With the permission of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich

double-bodied Godhead (fig. 4-5).[47] Both of these miniatures, in fact, display the alchemical Trinitarian Godhead in its form as Father, Son and Mother, as described in the text.

There succeed two miniatures each showing much the same image of the Virgin Mary who has now been placed above the down-turned horns of a crescent moon with a human profile. Behind her there stands a lily-cross on which hangs the figure of Christ (fig. 4-6). The accompanying text in Codex Guelf Blankenberg 188 states that Mary is clad in blue, with folded hands. Her hair hangs down her back.

> Sancta maria blae gecleidet und siczet mit gefalden henden/dan har hanget zrucke abe

The rest of the commentary describes Mary as shining with the sun and with the light of twelve stars.

> Sancta maria/ jn der sonnen mit czwelf sternen maria bedeutet sol und steet uff luna der sprichet luna sol caritas est castitas iovis/ an ihrem rücke stet auffgerichtet ein blac lilie mit einem langen blauen stamme. In der lilien ist unseres herren marter/ und steet geschriben uber der lilien sanctitas die lilie/ die rechte handt humilitas die linke handt puritas/Die wurden jn der seyten pietas … [sic].”[48]

However, the stars are missing from the miniature of the first Mary that is found in the Bavarian State Library manuscript MS BSB Cgm 598 (f. 79r). Nor are there any stars in the equivalent scene in Codex Guelf 188 Blankenberg. Behind her, the reader is informed by the text, there is a lily with a blue stem in the midst of which there hangs Christ crucified. The text states that the emblems of the moon and sun shown here represent charity and chastity. The right side of the lily represents humility and the left, purity. The image is an emblem of piety. In MS Munich BSB Cgm

[47] Munich Bayerische StaatsBibliothek BSB Cgm 598, f. 24r.

[48] Wolfenbuttel Codex Guelf 188 Blankenberg ff. 88r- v. Transcribed in Junker, “‘Das Buch der Heiligen Dreifatigkeit’,” pp. 36-37: “Maria hat gebelen vor uns und ist gewert uff das wirdester stercker getsehn jn dem rechten cristenglauben So wil uns get ihesus cristus ob allen künsten hie geben und offenbaren ein verborgen jnnestecket und auch wie ir die siben met allen und das fleissche und das blut einem iglichen besunderlich vornemen/ zu wircken stein clar hie aus … Sancta maria/ jn der sonnen mit czwelf sternen maria bedeutet sol und steet uff luna der sprichet luna sol caritas est castitas iovis/ an ihrem rücke stet auffgerichtet ein blac lilie mit einem langen blauen stamme. In der lilien ist unseres herren marter/ und steet geschriben uber der lilien sanctitas die lilie/ die rechte handt humilitas die linke handt puritas/Die wurden jn der seyten pietas … [sic].”

598 (f. 81r), as in the Blankenberg codex, the second Virgin at the foot of the cross is a variant of the first (f. 79r). She still kneels on the reversed crescent moon, but she is now set within a much larger aureole of the sun's rays and she wears a much heavier imperial crown which slips down over her brow. Twelve stars shine around her which were absent from the first image (f. 79r). In Codex Guelf 188 Blankenberg the Virgin is shown with a huge sun-disc glowing around her, while the crescent-moon at her feet is also considerably larger. Junker accounts for these changes of scale in the two Virgins by suggesting that the first image of Mary pictures her in her earthly form, while the second shows her as ascended to Heaven. He considers that the first of the two miniatures of Mary with the lily-cross refers to her mortal nature. The second one depicts her as a medium betwixt and between heaven and earth, that is, as the "aqua vitae," or the fifth essence.[49] Hartlaub also considered that the lily flower symbolized the quintessence and that this emblem pictured the sublimation of the Stone in the laboratory process.[50]

The last time the Virgin Mary appears in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* is as a head and shoulders holding the golden imperial eagle. The face of the suffering Christ appears in the midst.[51] The eagle signifies the integrated and purified elixir. This same detail is shown in the Coronation of the Virgin Mary where the heraldic shield with Mary is shown at the foot of the scene (fig. 4-4).[52] It is a variant of the double-headed blue eagle standing on the head of Christ in the miniature of the cryptic Trinity (fig. 4-5).

The strangest alchemical emblem ever devised, that of the hermaphrodite, plays a central role in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*. It has a covert Marian association lurking within the shadows of its form, a significance explained by the text. The hermaphrodite is a Rebis, a dual natured, masculine and feminine entity (fig. 4-7). The origins of the specific emblem in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* lie in the story of the Apocalyptic Woman in Revelation 12 and that of the Anti-Christ in Revelation 13. The first time that the hermaphrodite had appeared in alchemical imagery was in the slightly earlier *Aurora Consurgens* where a skinny, naked figure is gripped in the talons of a black eagle. The figure is plain in form, without any spectacular attributes, save that of being Siamese twins. There are no references in the *Aurora Consurgens* to Anti-

[49] This second image is on f. 89v of the Wolfenbuttel Blankenberg codex. See Junker, "'Das Buch der Heiligen Dreifatigkeit'," p. 37.
[50] Junker, "'Das Buch der Heiligen Dreifatigkeit'," p. 37.
[51] MS Munich Bayerische StaatsBibliothek BSB Cgm 598, f. 127 v.
[52] MS Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek BSB Cgm 598, f. 24r.

Fig. 4-7 The first alchemical hermaphrodite as the Anti-Christ in *Das Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek MS BSB Cgm 598, f. 105v. With the permission of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich

Christ, or to the Virgin Mary. In contrast, in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* the two hermaphrodites have now acquired some startling accessories which refer back to the apocalyptic scenario in the Book of Revelation. The first hermaphrodite personifies the alchemical prime matter in its impure state.[53] It wears a skirt tinted red on the male side and

[53] MS Munich Bayerische StaatsBibliothek BSB Cgm 598, f. 105 v.

white on the female side. The crowned male-half carries aloft an Ouroboros, a Hellenistic symbol of a snake biting its tail, while the female-half bears a chalice filled with three writhing snakes. Above the figure there shines a five-pointed star, the quintessence.

The kingly half signifies Sulphur, or Sun, and his queenly counterpart is Mercury, or Moon. The wing of the male is coloured gold and the female's is blue, the Marian colour. In short, the hermaphrodite is the shadow reflection of the mystic union of Christ and Mary. According to the accompanying text it is an image of the Anti-Christ, the son of Lucifer, as in Revelation 13.[54]

The two hermaphrodites have dragon's wings shaped like those of a bat and this is a consistent attribute repeated in the comparable illustrations of the *Rosarium philosophorum* and the *Pandora*, with one exception in the latter case where the fourth hermaphrodite suddenly appears with feathered birds' wings, while the snakes in its chalice are also transmuted into birds. This detail signifies that the quintessence has been purified and fixed and that the Stone is complete. One must resist the inclination to interpret the dragon or bat-wings in a histrionic modern sense as signifying some evil aspect in the figure. Rather, within the conceptual context of alchemy and of this figure, in particular, the bat-wings are another attribute representing the double nature of the Rebis. For, the bat is a creature of both earth and air, an animal that flies. There is an elemental opposition here which will eventually be resolved in the form of the Stone of the Philosophers. The bat, like the dragon, is a mercurial creature, in other words. As such it is a symbol of quintessential mercury in the process of purification.

To the left of the figure there stands a tree with sixteen red flowers representing the successive stages of the laboratory work that produces the gold-tingeing Stone. The tree on the right bears sixteen silver heads denoting the work of the silver-tingeing Stone, the penultimate stage of perfection. The male foot of the hermaphrodite stands on a gold rock, while the female stands on a green one. A gold-coloured beast lurks at the foot of the page. It is half-bird and half-reptile. Its beak clutches at the red pipe running from the rock on which the King's tree stands, while another head in its tail pecks at the white pipe proceeding from the rock on which the female stands. According to the text of MS Guelf 188 Blankenberg, the curled snake in the male's hand represents the coagulation of the materials. The chalice with the three snakes held by the female signifies the process

[54] See Junker, *"Das 'Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit',"* p. 15.

of sublimation in the course of which base matter is elevated to a purer form just as when poison transmutes into wine.

The first hermaphrodite is the Anti-Christ.[55] The text states that it represents the union of "Lucifer anticristus" and his mother (the shadow-side of Christ and Mary). Together they are the personification of all evil.[56] The "anticristus" is a mirror-image of Christ and Mary conjoined within the Holy Trinity, appearing here in a devilish character.

> …manlich und freulich voreijnet/ auch heissen sie lapis rebis die nature die die frauen geberen von manlichen samen das die Kinder warden usgenommen wann sie erate von der werlde kommen … Mercket hie an dise figure der grausamkeit des ewigen todes Lucifer anticristus und/ sein muter ein leip und sele ist fix und volatile… Die siben totliche sunde der hellen abgrunt ir wurczel ist anticristi unde seiner muter mit allen den freuliche manlich ein leichnam die die sunde nicht nach lassen woollen …[sic][57]

The dragon depicted in the miniature is a scaled-down version of the second beast in Revelation 13: 1-18 who is the Anti-Christ and who encourages the worship of the first beast that can be identified with Lucifer.

> [1]Then I stood on the sand of the sea and I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. [2.] … The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority … [11]. Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. … [12]. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast …
> (New King James Version)

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[55] MS Codex Guelf 188 Blankenberg text, f. 96r.

[56] Junker, *"Das 'Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit',"* p. 41: (f.96r) … "Also liep als euch got und euer sole sey nemet seinen schaezes nicht noch seiner gabe nicht und glaubet ym auch nicht/ wann glaubet slecht jn den rechten cristenglauben so steet ir stercklichen alle betrigung ze … [sic]" p. 42 (f. 114r): "…manlich und freulich voreijnet/ auch heissen sie lapis rebis die nature die die frauen geberen von manlichen samen das die Kinder warden usgenommen wann sie erate von der werlde kommen … Mercket hie an dise figure der grausamkeit des ewigen todes Lucifer anticristus und/ sein muter ein leip und sele ist fix und volatile… Die siben totliche sunde der hellen abgrunt ir wurczel ist anticristi unde seiner muter mit allen den freuliche manlich ein leichnam die die sunde nicht nach lassen woollen … [sic]"

[57] Junker, *"Das 'Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit',"* p. 41.

Revelation does not use the name "Anti-Christ" as such, but it can be found in 1 John 2:18, 4:3 and 2 John 1:7, 2:22. There are also references to the "enemy of Christ," though without the term "Anti-Christ," in Matthew, Mark and in Paul's Letter to Thessalonians.

There are further apocalyptic and Marian allusions in the illustration of the hermaphrodite. For example, the chalice with the snakes is the attribute of John the Evangelist, the supposed author of the Book of Revelation. In addition, the blue wing of the female-half has the colour of the Virgin Mary. The five-pointed star above signifies the quintessence and also references the starry crown of the Apocalyptic Woman, as do the silver, star-like flowers on the tree growing next to the alchemical female. The star is also Mary's attribute in the Litany of Loreto as the "star of the sea." The double-headed bird-reptile at the feet of the hermaphrodite recalls the two beasts of Revelation and also the snake in the Garden of Eden signified by the two flowering trees.

The drawing of the second hermaphrodite in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*, according to Junker, still bears a negative connotation (fig. 4-8).[58] However, it needs to be remarked that in the later treatises of the *Rosarium philosophorum* and the *Pandora* the final emblem of the hermaphrodite carries the meaning of the perfected Philosopher's Stone. Junker claims that the second hermaphrodite in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* represents the "wrong kind of alchemy," namely, that which seeks for gold alone, rather than for divine grace and salvation through the art of alchemy. In particular, the woman's head represents worldly things, while the dragon below (again with a woman's head) represents lust.[59] The present author, however, would argue that the textual discourse has a merely generic concern with the dualism of good and evil, of faith and apostasy. Consequently, she disagrees with Junker concerning the meaning of this emblem whose significance is mainly as a practical account of the laboratory process now nearing perfection. The textual references to apostasy and faith are a residue of the earlier apocalyptic context of the first hermaphrodite drawn from Revelation 13 where the Anti-Christ speaks falsehoods and encourages the worship of Lucifer by apostates.

In fact, there is a straight-forward chemical description in the accompanying text which treats of the working of the "green lion," that is, copper-oxide (CuO), or it could be antimony (Sb). The author mentions "vitriolum romanum" whose chemical formula is provided by Junker as

[58] Munich MS Bayerische Staatsbibliothek BSB Cgm 598, f. 106v.
[59] Junker, *"'Das Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit',"* p. 42.

$FeS04_4.7H_20$. The alchemical process is aimed at producing the philosophical mercury.[60]

In the image of the second hermaphrodite the king is now clad in armour and he wears a crown. He also carries a sword on which there hangs a red crown. His wing is coloured green as in the earlier image of the Imperial eagle where the figure dressed in green had represented Christ, the king of the reborn earth in Revelation 21 (fig. 4-5).[61] As in that earlier miniature, the green colour here similarly refers to Christ, but as the resurrected Philosopher's Stone risen to glory.

The queen's wing is still coloured blue. She holds a golden crown and is clad in a long golden gown. A Melusina snake, having a female head on the king's side and a male head on the queen's side, twines its way up each leg of the figure. The two snakes arise from a single body which has a pair of bird's legs. This formation is a type of Ouroboros which represents the volatile chemicals in the distillation flask. It is the same two-headed dragon that had appeared at the feet of the first hermaphrodite, now transformed into a Rebis in which the elemental opposites have been unified in concord: female into male, male into female.

The Johannine iconographic references of Revelation 12 are absent from the second hermaphrodite (there is no chalice), apart from the presence of the dragon, and this emblem is more specifically alchemical in meaning here. The matter has been purified and the process is now complete, as is signified by the golden colour of the queen's robe and her crown. The king as the alchemical Christ has been awarded the sword of ultimate authority. The poisonous dragon has also been transmuted to a more elevated, spiritual, form. The distillation ("circulatio") of the spirits and their fixation is complete.

Junker has commented on the Augustinian theology of the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* in which God, the Ultimate Good, is the foundation of all being and the proto-type of all created things. All is good because all is modelled on the Good. This argument is at odds, Junker has observed, with the gnostic thought also operating in the text in parallel to the Augustinian positivism. According to his argument, there is present a conceptual dualism of Good versus Evil. Matter itself is evil, a characterization that contradicts the Augustinian concept of a divine creation.[62] In order to escape the darkness of matter, it is necessary to follow the light of Christ and his Spirit. Accordingly, in order to counteract the evil nature of matter, the author of the *Buch der Heiligen*

[60] Junker, "'*Das Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit',"* p. 43.
[61] Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek MS BSB Cgm 598, f. 24r.
[62] Junker, *"'Das Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit'*," p. 50.

Fig. 4-8 The second alchemical hermaphrodite in *Das Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek BSB Cgm 598, f. 106v. With the permission of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich

Dreifaltigkeit has developed an unrelenting Christology whose central focus is the "unio mystica" of Christ and Mary. The Virgin Mary closes the divide between God and humanity since the Second Person of the Trinity has become incarnate in her. In a similar manner, in alchemy the Stone of the Philosophers unites spirit and matter.[63]

The *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* influenced the illustrative repertoire of the German *Rosarium philosophorum cum figuris* (1550), as well as some of the imagery in the two versions of the *Pandora* (1582; 1588, and the new version of 1706). In these works the Virgin Mary continues to play a significant role, albeit she is referenced more often in the text of the *Rosarium* than in the illustrations. The textual allusions are less direct, although of great significance in the alchemical context. This diffidence in enunciating Mary's name results from the doctrinal changes effected by the Protestant Reformers in that period. The authors of the *Rosarium* and *Pandora* have, consequently, eliminated the Catholic religious discourse that was the subject of the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*, as well as its political polemics. However, the illustrator of the *Rosarium* has retained the apocalyptic connotations of the hermaphrodites and the artists of the *Pandora* elaborate the visual iconography of these figures still further. The artist of the *Rosarium* has also copied from the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* both the scene of Christ resurrecting from the tomb, as well as that of the coronation of the Virgin Mary. The rest of the Marian visual imagery has been discarded. Nevertheless, the Virgin Mary re-appears in a different form in the text of the *Rosarium* as Holy Wisdom, the Bride of God. There are also cryptic references in the text to the resurrection of Christ as the philosophical Stone, in addition to the overt visual depiction of his resurrection. The author of the *Pandora* in his own treatise drops the *Rosarium*'s allusions to Wisdom, although Mary re-appears, with some alterations, in two new woodcuts where in three different forms she continues to personify the quintessential Elixir. The *Pandora* also copies three of the Christological scenes from the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*.

The *Rosarium philosophorum* reflects some ideas from the Paracelsian alchemical corpus and these were employed more extensively in the philosophical and chemical programme of the *Pandora* (1582; 1588), especially in its expanded edition as re-edited by Michael Faustius in 1706 where Paracelsian disciples, such as Michael Sendivogius, are quoted. In the case of the *Rosarium philosophorum*, however, the laboratory-work generally continues to rely upon much the same, well-respected, medieval writings that had resourced the alchemical concepts of the *Buch der*

[63] Junker, "*'Das Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit'*," p. 51.

Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit. These same authorities also continue to be referenced respectfully in the *Pandora*, despite the new material drawn from the Paracelsians.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PARACELSIAN TINCTURE AND THE OIL OF GOLD

It was the disciples of the German medical practitioner, surgeon and theosophist Paracelsus (Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim) (1493 –1541) who developed a form of alchemy based on the master's medical and esoteric ideas. Contrary to the established view recent scholarship has proved that Paracelsus himself never authored any alchemical tracts. In fact, he distanced himself from the attempt to transmute metals into gold. In a genuine work *Das Buch Paragranum* he dismissed the pursuit of alchemical transmutation and he retained only the technical procedures of the alchemists in the production of drugs.[1] Paracelsus' sole concern in his chemistry was pharmacological. He did name alchemy as being the third of the four pillars of medicine (along with philosophy, astrology and natural virtue), but he used the term to mean distillation techniques.[2] It was the spurious texts written by the followers of Paracelsus, according to Rafał Prinke, which inspired an increased interest in alchemy in the later 16th century.

The alchemical currents at this time were further augmented by the increased status of pre-Paracelsian alchemical texts which the Paracelsians also referenced in their own writings.[3] A number of prestigious editions of

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[1] Prinke has recently provided a critical account of the development of the myth of Paracelsus and the questioning of his reputation by more recent historians in terms of his actual achievements as a supposedly "progressive" philosopher, theologian and medical man. See Prinke, *Zwodniczy ogród błędów*, p. 233. See also Theophrast von Hohenheim Paracelsus, *Neun Bücher Archidoxis 1525-1526* in Karl Südhoff (ed.), *Medizinische, naturwissenschaftlische und Schriften philosophische* (München und Berlin: Verlag von R. Oldenbourg, 1930), pp. 3, 86-200.

[2] Andrew Weeks (ed.), *Paracelsus (Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, 1493-1541): essential theoretical writings* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2008), pp. 210-211.

[3] Prinke, *Zwodniczy ogród błędów*, pp. 233-236.

medieval alchemical treatises were published in the course of the 16th century. In August 1541 there appeared in Nuremberg the first printed compendium of medieval works, *De Alchimia*, which included four treatises by pseudo-Geber, as well as those of Roger Bacon, Richard of England and the Arab Calid (Ḫālid ibn Yazīd). In his genuine attributed work it is clear that Paracelsus was well-aware of medieval pharmacology and palliatives, particularly the substances mentioned by pseudo-Arnald of Villanova and pseudo-Lull. Historians have shown that Paracelsus was especially indebted to John of Rupescissa's theory of the "coelum," or "man's heaven."[4] Webster considers, however, that Paracelsus obtained his knowledge of the Rupescissan quintessence indirectly by reading the texts of pseudo-Lull such as *De Secretis Naturae, Seu de Quinta Essentia* (published in 1514).[5] Paracelsus himself had made scathing remarks concerning the medieval "coelum" but, despite this, the "coelum" seems to have provided the source for his own concept of the "azoth" (quintessence).

In the spurious *Liber Azoth* pseudo-Paracelsus refers to the "azoth" as an aerial nitre, or saltpetre, transmitted from the spirit of the sun to the earth by rain-fall. The followers of Paracelsus such as Severinus, de Vigenère, Sendivogius, Quercetanus and Fludd developed the full theory of the aerial saltpetre. Fundamental to Paracelsus' original views was the conviction that the efficacy of all medicines depended on the heavenly bodies, so that astrology was an essential part of healing. In the *Volumen medicinae paramirum* (ca. 1520) Paracelsus urged the physician to acquire a sound knowledge of astronomy in order to understand the effects of the astral emanations. In the *Grossen Wunderarznei* he explained that astral virtues were impregnated into salts by the aerial virtue, or "azoth." On this astrological basis Paracelsus devised a new medical theory in which he argued that physical ailments were the result of external forces and were not caused by an imbalance of fluids, as was taught in the currently-accepted theory of the four humours. Paracelsus believed that every illness originated in a particular star whose virtue was embodied in the corresponding earthly "arcanum," a medicine that could heal the ailment.

Ganzenmüller and Pagel have discovered in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* a unique proto-type for an influential concept later developed by the disciples of Paracelsus in his name, that of the three principles of matter, namely, Sulphur, Mercury and Salt. In the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* alchemical Mercury had corresponded to Spirit, Sulphur to

[4] Prinke, *Zwodniczy ogród błędów,* p. 232.
[5] Charles Webster, *Paracelsus. Medicine, magic and mission at the end of time* (New Haven, Connecticut; London: Yale University Press, 2008), p. 274.

Soul and Salt, or ash, to the Body.[6] Pagel noted that the same pattern re-appeared in the authentic Paracelsian text, *De natura rerum*, where this idea is referred to the authority of Hermes. Pagel argued convincingly that the original source for the three primary elements was the late medieval *Hermetis Trismegisti tractatus aureus* which drew on Islamic texts.[7]

In actuality, Paracelsus himself employed only the conventional medieval theory of the four elements and he hardly mentioned the three primary elements of Mercury, Sulphur and Salt. These were later described in the pseudo-Paracelsian writings as being the foundation of his alchemy, as in the *Liber Paramirum*.[8] Sulphur was said to cause combustibility, Salt to give strength to the chemical body, while from Mercury there originated the properties of moistness and malleability. Mercury was the agent of transformation. Salt provided mass and stability and Sulphur gave form to the materials. In the highly influential *Philosophia ad Athenienses* (whose authority is evident in the writings of Robert Fludd) pseudo-Paracelsus described a cosmos in which God separated the elements from one another in the manner of a chemist in his laboratory.[9] The first to appear were the four proto-elements, the qualities of fieriness, airiness, wateriness and earthiness, which, in turn, created the secondary elements of fire, air, water and earth.[10] These four material elements pseudo-Paracelsus termed the "Ilyaster."[11] The elements emerged

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[6] Wilhelm Ganzenmüller, *Paracelsus und die Alchemie des Mittelalters, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Technologie und der Alchemie* (Weinheim: Verlag Chemie, 1956), pp. 300-314.

[7] Prinke, *Zwodniczy ogród błędów,* p. 237. See also Walter Pagel, *Medicine, science and culture. Historical Essays in honor of Owsei Temkin* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1968), pp. 51-75.

[8] Debus, *Chemical Philosophy*, 1, pp. 51-61, 76, 86-87. The main texts discussed here may be found in Karl Südhoff (ed.), *Theophrast von Hohenheim gen. Paracelsus*, *Medizinische, naturwissenschaftlische und philosophische Schriften* (Munich: Otto Wilhelm Barth, 1924-), I, 8; "Das Buch Paragranum," pp. 31-126 (see especially pages 31, 115, 133). Also see Sudhoff, *Theophrast von Hohenheim*, I, 9; "Opus Paramirum," pp. 37-223 and Sudhoff, *Theophrast von Hohenheim*, I, 10; "Der Grossen Wunderarznei," pp. 7-487.

[9] Südhoff, *Theophrast von Hohenheim,* I, 13; "Philosophia ad Athenienses," p. 393.

[10] Südhoff, *Theophrast von Hohenheim*, I, 13: "Philosophia ad Athenienses," pp. 396-398. See also Debus, *Chemical Philosophy*, 1, pp. 51-61.

[11] Debus, *Chemical Philosophy*, 1, pp. 51-61. Also see Walter Pagel and Marianne Winder, "The Higher Elements and Prime Matter in Renaissance Naturalism and in Paracelsus," *Ambix*, 21 (1974), pp. 93 ff.

from the "mysterium magnum," a prime matter understood to be life itself, or the soul.[12]

From the 1560s there appeared in print substantial numbers of Paracelsian writings, including the definitive edition of Johannes Huser in 1589-91 (ten volumes, Basel, 1589-91; three volumes, Strasburg, 1603-05).[13] The spurious writings that deal with alchemical transmutation and magic are mostly from the later 16th century. From 1560 the disciples of Paracelsus Adam von Bodenstein (1528-1577), Michael Toxites (1514-1581), Gerhard Dorn (ca. 1530/1535-after 1584) and Alexander von Suchten (ca. 1520-75),[14] published in Latin both the authentic German texts of Paracelsus, as well as an increasing number of spurious ones.[15] Bodenstein and Toxites issued the inauthentic *Liber vexationum* (Book of affliction) (1567), the *Manual de lapide philosophorum* (Instruction on the Stone of the philosophers) (1572) and the *Thesaurus thesaurorum alchemistarum* (Vaults of treasure) (1574).[16] Prinke comments that some authentic texts

[12]Südhoff, *Theophrast von Hohenheim*, I, 13, "Philosophia ad Athenienses," pp. 390-392.

[13] Karl-Heinz Weimann, *Paracelsus-Bibliographie, 1932-1960. Verzeichnis mit einem neu-Handschriften entdeckter Paracelsus (1900-1960)* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1963). See also Julian Paulus, *Paracelsus-Bibliographie, 1961-1996* (Wiesloch: Palatin (1997). And most especially there is Südhoff (ed.), *Theophrast von Hohenheim gen. Paracelsus.* "Das Buch Paragranum", 8, 1924-). Another essential resource is Will-Erich Peuckert, *Pansophie. Ein Versuch zur Geschichte der weißen und schwarzen Magie*, third ed., *Pansophie*, 1 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1976), pp. 78-98, 207-214.

[14] Ole Peter Grell, "The enigma of Paracelsus (Introduction)" in Ole Peter Grell (ed.), *Paracelsus. The man and his reputation, his ideas and Their Transformation* (Leiden-Boston-Köln: Brill, 1998), pp. 1-18.

[15] For the standard collections of Paracelsica see Wilhelm Kuhlmann and Joachim Telle (eds.), *Corpus Paracelsisticum*. *Band I: Document frühneuzeitlicher Naturphilosophie in Deutschland. Der Frühparacelsismus. Erster Teil, Frühe Neuzeit 59* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2001). See also Wilhelm Kuhlmann and Joachim Telle (eds.), *Corpus Paracelsisticum. Band II: Document frühneuzeitlicher Naturphilosophie in Deutschland. Der Frühparacelsismus. Zweiter Teil, Frühe Neuzeit, 89* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2004). Finally, there is Wilhelm Kuhlmann and Joachim Telle (eds.), *Corpus Paracelsisticum. Band III: Document frühneuzeitlicher Naturphilosophie in Deutschland. Der Frühparacelsismus. Dritter Teil, 2, Frühe Neuzeit, 170* (Berlin-Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2013).

[16] Joachim Telle, "Paracelsus als Alchemiker" in Heinz Dopsch and Peter F. Framml (eds.), *Paracelsus und Salzburg, Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für Salzburger Landeskunde*, 14 (Salzburg Gesellschaft für Salzburger Landeskunde, 1994), pp. 157-174. See also Karl Südhoff, *Bibliographia Paracelsica.*

referred to as "alchemical" are really chemical, or pharmaceutical, or they deal with natural philosophy, though all have theological and philosophical foundations.[17]

The inauthentic Paracelsian texts include a work on the alchemical tincture, the *Libellus de tinctura physicorum* (Medical tinctures) (1572). The Paracelsians explained that by extracting the "azoth," or quintessence, from prime matter the alchemist could produce the red tincture that transmuted base matter into gold and also acted as a medical elixir and panacea. (A tincture in practical chemistry is any substance in solution that has been distilled.) Furthermore, in the first part of the *Neun Bucher Archidoxis* (ca. 1526-27; 1570's) pseudo-Paracelsus discusses the "tinctura physicorum" which is said to obtain its transmuting and healing powers, not from earthly chemicals, but directly from the spirit of the sun. Rudolf Werner Soukup has recently discussed how the alchemists of the late 16th and early 17th century prepared a substance called the "mercurius solis" (solar mercury).[18] The chemical process involved the dissolution of gold in the proper solution to obtain a red elixir.[19] The "mercurius solis" was mentioned by followers of Paracelsus such as Matthäus Erbinäus von Brandau (1526-1620),[20] Martin Ruland the Younger (1569–1611), Oswald Croll (ca. 1563-1609), Andreas Libavius (ca.1555 –1616) and Heinrich Khunrath (1560 –1605). The treatise *Lux in tenebris lucens* by an early editor of Paracelsian texts, Benedictus Figulus (1567-after 1619), discusses the preparation of the "mercurius solis," a procedure which originated with the Paracelsian Adam Haselmayer (ca. 1550– after 1617).

Werner Soukup has worked out the chemistry of the preparation of the mercury of gold as recorded in the *Lux in tenebris lucens*. He explains that

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Besprechung Theophrast unter der von Hohenheim's Namen 1527-1893 erschienenen Druckschriften, Versuch einer der Kritik der Echtheit Paracelsischen Schriften, I (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1894), pp. 183-207, 215-217, 239-341.

[17] Prinke, *Zwodniczy ogród błędów*, p. 232. The other spurious Paracelsian alchemical texts include *Coelum philosophorum*, *Manuale de lapide philosophico*, *Ratio extrahendi ex omnibus metallis mercurium*, *Archidoxis magica* and the *Liber principiorum*.

[18] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium philosophorum*, 1, p. 11; 2, p. 16.

[19] See Rudolf Werner Soukup, "Mercurius Solis: Hunting a Mysterious Alchemical Substance. Extended version of a paper presented at the international workshop "On the Fringes of Alchemy", Budapest, 9 – 10 July 2010, online file:///C:/Users/Windows%20User/Downloads/'documents.tips_mercurius-solis-562a6d5981111.pdf' (retrieved 2. 6. 2016)

[20] See Vladimír Karpenko, "Matthäus Erbinäus von Brandau: alchymie mezi realitou a fantazií" in *Alchymie a Rudolf II.: hledání tajemství přírody ve střední Evropě v 16. a 17. Století* (Praha: Artefactum, 2011), pp. 393-421.

the dissolution of gold in "aqua regia" will produce yellow tetrachloroauric(III)-acid. When this is cooled, then crystals of the chemical goldtrichloride appear. Further heating produces decomposition and the addition of a reducing agent results in coloured colloidal gold solutions being obtained. There is a passage in the authentic Paracelsian *De vita longa* in which Paracelsus praises "Mercurius Solis" and "Mercurius Lunae" as medicines for leprosy. Paracelsus notes that

> … this Mercurius is, of course, no tincture of metals, but in the [human] body it is able to restore health … Of all elixirs, *aurum potabile* is the best … Since gold performs its effect not without a corrosive, it follows that its solution must be decomposed.[21]

In the treatise *Lux in tenebris lucens* the author speaks of how the matter is converted into a yellowish-brown oil that transforms glowing metals into gold. After the *nigredo* (black) and the *albedo* (white) stages the materials reach the state of the *rubedo* (reddening).[22] This red colour would have been produced by gold salts reacting with most organic materials. In chemical terms such mixtures become colloidal Au-clusters.[23] As a fact, natural elemental gold occurs in many different colours such as ruby, purple, even blue and black. Red as a colour in alchemy is connected with the male principle Sulphur, Sun or Anima (Soul) and with the Stone of the Philosophers.

In contrast, the feminized alchemical substances (apart from the white tincture, or elixir) are characterized in negative terms, in particular, the solvent known as the "menstruum," a poisonous dark substance compared to menstrual fluid. The 15th century English alchemist Sir George Ripley (ca. 1415–90) wrote several influential treatises on the preparation of the

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[21] Quoted in Werner Soukup, "Mercurius Solis", no pagination.

[22] Werner Soukop explains in detail the chemistry of the production of the red-coloured product of decomposition as follows "During the heating process the decomposition of AuCl3 (present in excess) takes place: AuCl3 → AuCl + Cl2 (above 150oC). Not only may the occurrence of a yellow gold(I)-chloride31 be observed, but also that of gold(I,III)-chloride. Gold(I,III)-chloride is a claret-red, nearly black solid of the chemical formula Au4Cl8, that contains gold in two different oxidation states: +1 and +3. Au4Cl8 is photosensitive. During further heating, AuCl decomposes: 2 AuCl → 2 Au + Cl …," see Werner Soukop, "Mercurius Solis," no pagination.

[23] Werner Soukup (o cit.) also comments that: "Adding alkaline substances to solutions of auric chloride gold(III)-hydroxide Au(OH)3 results in a precipitate. On heating, this substance loses water resulting in gold(III)-oxide Au2O3. Gold(III)-oxide is an intense red to brown solid substance – almost black ... "

"menstruum," as in his *Five Preparations of the Philosopher's Mercury* located in the *Liber Accurtationes*.[24] Ripley's "menstruum" seems to have been the chemical methanol, occasionally confused with "aqua vitae" (brandy). Both of these substances are derived from grape-wine which Ripley specifies as his primary material. Methanol is methyl alcohol, also called wood alcohol, wood naphtha, or wood spirits (formula CH3OH, abbreviated as MeOH.) Ripley relates that this spirit has the potential to dissolve, putrefy and purify bodies, as well as producing a wonderful salt. Ripley's "water" had a sharp taste and a noxious smell. Hence, it was called "stinking menstruum." This substance continued to play an essential role in later Renaissance alchemy, including that of the Paracelsians. There are instructions for processing the "menstruum" with flakes of gold in order to produce a medicinal substance. It is named as the prime matter of alchemy in influential Paracelsian writings such as the series of texts constituting *De Causis Morborum Invisibilium* (of questionable authenticity) on the causes of disease and plague.

In addition, the Paracelsians also devised another universal solvent of their own known as the "alkahest." Though similar in purpose to the "menstruum," it was more rarefied and fiery in character, the result of a longer process of distillation. Further, the caustic alkahest was derived, not from Ripley's methanol, but from carbonates such as lime, alcohol and carbonate of potash.[25] Martin Ruland in his *Lexicon Alchemiae* (Frankfurt, 1612) explains that "alkahest" was the name of the mercury compound identified with tartar (a carbonate). It is noteworthy that the refined "alkahest" was no longer gendered feminine, as was the darker, watery and abject "menstruum."[26]

In the image of the alchemical hermaphrodite in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* the "menstruum" is signified by the chalice of poisonous snakes held aloft by the queenly-half of the two hermaphrodites and it is

[24] These texts can be found in Oxford, Bodleian Library MSS Ashmole 1490, Ashmole 1492 and Ashmole 1508. See also L. M. Eldredge, *The Index of Middle English Prose, Handlist IX: Manuscripts in the Ashmole Collection Bodleian Library, Oxford* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1992; 2007), p. xxvii.

[25] Marco Ghione, "Alkahest. Vizi e virtù di un dissolvente universal" online https://wwwacademia.edu/4403079/Alkahest._Vizi_e_virt%C3%B9_di_un_dissolvente_universale (retrieved 28. 6. 2016)

[26] In fact, according to Marco Ghione, the liquor "alkahest" is mentioned only once by Paracelsus himself in the second book of *De viribus membrorum* (not published until 1572). The concept of the "alkahest" was developed rather by his disciples, such as Michael Toxites (Michael Schütz) (1514-81) in his lexicon, *Onomastica* (1574).

these writhing beasts that have to be transmuted into a life-giving Elixir. This detail of the chalice of snakes continues to have the same meaning in the scenes of the hermaphrodites in the *Rosarium philosophorum* and in the *Pandora* (1582, 1588 and 1706). The enduring notion of the "evil" nature of the bloody menstrual cycle caused problems for many Catholic theologians in their image of the immaculate Virgin Mary. Some denied that she had ever menstruated, since the biological process was connected with the sexual act preceding conception. Worse still, it was a punishment inflicted on Eve and her daughters after the fall of humanity. Menstruation was a sign of their sinful condition.[27] Paracelsus managed to avoid all such complications in his Marian writings by refusing to accept that Mary had any kind of a human body at all. He left her in the divine realm of Sophia of whom she was a manifestation, pristine and untouched by corrupt materiality, or by the sin of Eve.

[27] See Paulette Leclercq, "Le sang et le lait de la Vierge" in *Le sang du Moyen Age. Actes du 4-iem Colloque international de Montpellier*, Montpellier: C.R.I.S.I.Ma (1999), pp. 145-162. Also see Charles T. Wood, "The Doctors' Dilemma: Sin, Salvation and the Menstrual Cycle in Medieval Thought," *Speculum*, 56, 4 (1981), pp. 710-727. In addition, there is Danielle Jacquart and Claude Thomaset, *Sexuality and Medicine in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1988), pp. 71-78. On Arnald of Villanova and his alchemy employing human blood see DeVun, *Prophecy, Alchemy and the End of Time*, pp. 119-125.

CHAPTER SIX

THE ALCHEMICAL BRIDE IN THE *ROSARIUM PHILOSOPHORUM* (1550)

The *Rosarium philosophorum* first appeared in print as the second part of a compendium of medieval alchemical texts, the *De alchimia opuscula complura veterum philosophorum* (Frankfurt: Jacobus Cyriacus, 1550).[1] The full title of the treatise was *Rosarium philosophorum sive pretiosissimum donum Dei,* translated as "the rose-garden of the philosophers or the most precious gift of God."[2] Subsequently, other copies of the *Rosarium* were issued both in print and in manuscript, both with and without illustrations. It is likely that the printed versions were, in fact, the originals and that all the existing manuscripts are copies of the 1550 printed edition. About thirty such manuscripts are known to scholars. The original 1550 edition of the *Rosarium* included twenty woodcuts with German language captions and a title page depicting a group of philosophers. Four of the pictures were copied directly from the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*: those of the two alchemical hermaphrodites, as well as the resurrection of Christ and the coronation of the Virgin Mary. The woodcuts were re-cut when the *Rosarium philosophorum* was reprinted in another collection of alchemical texts, the *Artis Auriferae* (Basel: Pietro Perna, 1572). Later Johann Daniel Mylius commissioned from the artist Balthazar Swan yet another version of these twenty woodcuts for his *Philosophia reformata*

[1] This compendium had been published earlier without the *Rosarium philosophorum* by Johannes Petreius in Nuremberg (1541).

[2] The full title of the Cyriacus volume is *Rosarium philosophorum. Secunda pars alchimiae de lapide philosophico vero modo praeparando, continens exactam eius scientiae progressionem. Cum figuris rei perfectionem ostendentibus* (Frankfurt-am-Maine: Jacobus Cyriacus, 1550). The original 1550 publication of the *Rosarium* is not paginated. In the present study the pagination adopted is that of the edition by Joachim Telle, Lutz Claren and Joachim Huber (eds.), *Rosarium philosophorum: ein alchemisches Florilegium des Spätmittelalter* (Weinheim: VCH, 1992).

(1622). In addition, the various manuscript copies display a variety of artistic styles and skills.[3]

The definitive study of the *Rosarium* is the two volume edition by Joachim Telle, Lutz Claren and Joachim Huber. The second volume provides a German translation of the text, with additional essays and bibliographies.

Nothing has ever been discovered concerning the author of this treatise. From the conceptual structure of the discourse and the imagery it is possible to assume that it was composed by a Lutheran. Moreover, the *Rosarium* was published by the firm of Jacob Cyriacus (active between 1539 and 1551) in Frankfurt which was a predominantly Lutheran city, although Cyriacus himself was personally associated with high profile Protestant dissidents rebelling against established Lutheranism, most notably Sebastian Franck (1499 – ca. 1543).[4]

The text of the *Rosarium* is an entirely new composition and does not draw on the theological discourse of the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*. The political context of Pope and Emperor has been removed, as has most of the Christian visual iconography, re-using only two of the former religious images. Instead, there are long textual references to the Book of Ecclesiastes 24 which has Divine Wisdom speaking of herself in terms transposed by Catholic theologians to the Virgin Mary as the Bride of the Holy Trinity. Although this interpretation is no longer mentioned directly by the author of the *Rosarium*, the older Catholic connotations continue to hover around the text, especially in the vicinity of the woodcut of the coronation of the Virgin Mary where the older Marian bridal theme is resumed. However, the two pictures from the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* with the Virgin Mary at the foot of the crucified Christ have not been reproduced. In their place there are textual passages adapted from Ecclesiastes 24 and the Song of Songs. Mary is present visually only once in the woodcut of the coronation where her figure, according to the textual context, signifies the sublimated mercurial elixir. In fact, most of the woodcuts in the *Rosarium* are secular in character, quite unlike those in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*. Instead, in the *Rosarium* the textual discourse and its illustrations are concerned primarily with the effects of the sexual encounters of the alchemical king and queen. These are

[3] Karen-Claire Voss, "The Hierosgamos Theme in the Images of the *Rosarium Philosophorum*" in *Proceedings of the International Conference on the History of Alchemy*. Edited by Z. R. W. M. von Martels (Leiden: 1990), pp. 148 ff.

[4] See "Jacobus Cyriacus" in *Katalog der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek* online https://portal.dnb.de/opac.htm?method=simpleSearch&cqlMode=true&query=idn%3D119720027 (retrieved 20. 9. 2016)

identified in the text with Beya and Gabricius, the sibling bride and groom. The alchemical "coniunctio" is now described in terms of a human union, replacing the more subtle idea in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* of Christ and Mary united mystically within the Holy Trinity.

The miniatures of the two hermaphrodites in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* have been relocated to the *Rosarium philosophorum* where they also take centre-stage, but in the new context the allusions to the Anti-Christ have been removed. Instead, there is an account of the alchemical process. Nonetheless, the attributes of the Apocalyptic Woman of Revelation 12 are still present in the iconography of the hermaphrodites. Indeed, the first hermaphrodite in the *Rosarium* stands on a crescent moon, whereas in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* the crescent moon had been omitted. The presence of the moon emphasizes the apocalyptic origins of this first figure and its Marian associations, as well as carrying the meaning of the philosophical mercury. In the *Rosarium* the iconographic attributes of the hermaphrodites reflect in detail the account of the Woman and Child pursued by the dragon in Revelation 12: 1-6, 13-17. The theologians of the reformed confessions had disassociated this allegory from the cult of the Virgin Mary and it was interpreted instead as a prophecy of the persecution of the Protestants by the Papacy. However, in the archaic mind-set of the 16th century alchemists, with their tendency to horde and amplify symbols, even those discarded in their original contexts, the association between the Apocalyptic Woman and the Virgin Mary was retained. Moreover, that distinctive symbolic domain was further enriched by resonant paraphrasing of the Wisdom Scriptures in the text.

Otherwise, the text itself makes little reference to eschatology. In fact, the *Rosarium* is a very different type of treatise from the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*. The author of the *Rosarium* is predominantly concerned with the alchemical tradition and with specific chemical procedures. The allegories described in the text are, on the whole, the traditional ones employed by the medieval alchemists. There is neither any sign of political partisanship in the *Rosarium*, nor of any overt confessional prejudice. On the contrary, there are present visual scenarios drawn from Roman Catholic iconography such as the coronation of the Virgin and the resurrection of Christ, as well as from Catholic dogma, namely, the Eucharistic emblem of the pelican feeding its young which is present in the image of the second hermaphrodite.

It should be noted that it is possible to translate the symbology of the text into rational laboratory procedures and to identify many of the chemicals involved. In fact, this is also possible in the case of the symbolic

content of the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit.* For all their elaborate hermeneutics both of these treatises are fundamentally instructions for practical work, insofar as it is possible to describe the quest for the Philosopher's Stone and the quintessential elixir as any sort of rational project.

At the start of the *Rosarium* some Paracelsian terminology is introduced in the image of the Green Lion which is called the "true matter of the work" and is identified with the "adrop," "azoth," or the "green Duenech." The "aurum potabile" (potable gold) plays a central role as the earlier term for the substance known to Paracelsus and his followers as the "mercurius solis." These references are made prior to the major publications of the Paracelsian corpus from the 1560s to the 1580s.

In the *Rosarium* the account deals with the cleansing of corrosive mercury on the model of Geber's twelve stages of the work. The "alchemical mercury" as a term refers to the caustic chemical substance which Ripley and others had called the "menstruum." In contrast, the "azoth" (the quintessence distilled from gold) is symbolized by a dove in the *Rosarium*, the sign of the Holy Spirit. In the following woodcuts the dove is shown descending from heaven to earth, indicating that the azoth has both an earthly and a heavenly nature. "Spiritus" partook of both material and immaterial natures in distinction from "Anima," or "Soul," which was completely immaterial.

The first picture is that of a fountain with three spouts, around which there appear the sun, moon, five stars and a double-headed dragon. The dragon is the Rebis, shown here to signify first matter in its discordant condition of conflicting opposites. A verse in German below the picture states that the things shown here are the beginning and first nature of metals. By art the high tincture is made from these. The text speaks in the first person. There is no fountain, nor water, comparable to "me." "I" heal and help both the rich and the poor, but "I" am filled with a harmful poison.[5] The "I" is the tincture speaking in its early stages as the malignant menstruum. This would be an alkaline such as lime, or potash which dissolves matter. The accompanying text explains that the "solution" is made from "our wine" and the author refers to "aqua vitae" and to spirit of wine, as well as to vegetable substances among which is "lunaria," a common herb. The writer also mentions the fifth essence which is stated to be identical with these same liquors and vegetation. The English folk name of "lunaria" is "honesty," a wild plant which has papery silver seeds taking a round moonlike-form. It belongs to the "brassica" (cabbage) family.

[5] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, pp. 10ff.

"Our wine," we are informed, is the juice of lunaria which is "our solution" and "our potable gold."[6] The "menstruum" is described as corrosive, a "water" that dissolves bodies. The text states that this "water" transforms bodies into ashes and creates the "white" and the "red." These are references to the white elixir, or tincture, which turns base matter into silver and also to the red elixir which produces gold.[7] This "water" both kills and revivifies, burns and makes hot, dissolves and congeals, putrefies and is the cause of new and contrary things being created.[8]

The ensuing discourse concerns the production of the white and red tinctures, the silver-making and the gold-making elixirs respectively. The Arab philosopher Geber is introduced to explain the nature of the seven component parts of the final perfected "stable and fixed Stone."[9] Chief among these is the tincture. The seven components of the Stone are stated to be oiliness, thinness, affinity of substance, radical moisture, purity, clearness, a fixing earth and the tincture. The Stone, we are told, has a clear and bright tincture within itself which is white and red, pure, incombustible, stable and fixed. The *Rosarium* explains that the tincture provides the finished Stone with a bright and perfect colour, both white and deep red. The tincture is the very opposite of the "menstruum" which is dark, poisonous and corrosive, burning and reductive and, above all, feminine, whereas the red tincture is masculine in gender, light, bright, fertile and generative, turning any base substance into true gold, or silver.[10]

The artist of the *Rosarium* introduces a scene of the marriage of the male and female principles in the forms of the king and queen of alchemy. They are shown with their astrological attributes: the sun for the male, while the female stands on the crescent-moon.[11] The sun is the emblem of sulphur and gold, while the moon signifies mercury and silver, as well as earth. In the picture the dove of the Holy Spirit descends from heaven holding an olive branch which intersects in a star-shape the two branches held by the king and queen. A six-pointed star shines above. This is not the star of the quintessence which always has five points. Rather, it represents the six imperfect metals which are lead, iron, mercury, copper, tin and silver. Immediately succeeding this scene there appears another picturing the same pair stripped of their clothing and ready for the marital

[6] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, pp. 11-13.
[7] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, p. 18.
[8] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, pp. 12-14.
[9] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, pp. 14-18.
[10] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, p. 18.
[11] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, p. 19.

bed.[12] The king and queen address each other as "Sol" and "Luna," the king mentioning the "medicina" that will result from their union.

Geber's twelve stages of the alchemical process are detailed next. "Geber" is now thought to have been a Spanish alchemist of the 13th century who composed the spurious Latin manuscripts circulated in the name of the Arab Ibn al' Habir. The *Summa perfectionis* of pseudo-Geber was held in exceptional esteem right through to the 18th century, although recent research has established that it was not a translation from the Arabic. It is possible that the text had been produced by an Italian alchemist of the late 13th century, perhaps Paolo di Taranto in Assisi (yet another Franciscan monk).[13] The *Summa* established the common sequence of the twelve stages involved in the alchemical process. The author also adopted the Arabic theory of the metals as being composed of sulphur and mercury. The transmutation of metals commenced with the purification of common mercury in order to produce the "philosophical mercury." In the ninth of Geber's stages, as described in the *Rosarium,* the "water" (mercury as the menstruum) is produced as a pure liquid out of the blackness of the dragon (prime matter). Many colours appear in the water until it stabilizes, taking on the colour of milk. The eleventh stage involves the whitening ("dealbatio") of the ashes of the dragon, born in his blackness and fed with his own mercury.[14] The dragon kills himself and his ashes are calcinated (burned) by the alchemical fire until they take on the appearance of white marble. These actions eventually lead to the production of the white elixir. In the twelfth stage the whiteness is transformed into a ruby-red elixir, or tincture. The text quotes from a late medieval alchemical source, the *Speculum Alchimiae* (Mirror of Alchemy), stating that the elixir, or tincture, has to be purer and more finely processed than even the Philosopher's Stone itself.

The male and female principles are depicted in the following illustration which has them bathing in a fountain, presided over by a dove. The text explains that the Stone is said to be a three-fold entity, composed of body, soul and spirit, or body, ferment and water. According to Hermes, the dragon (prime matter) dies with his brother and sister (Sol and Luna, Sulphur and Mercury) and after purification there appears the "permanent water" of the Philosophers. This liquid is created after the putrefaction and separation of the elements. It is termed "stinking water" (meaning the

[12] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, p. 27.
[13] William R. Newman, *The Summa perfectionis of Pseudo-Geber: a critical edition, translation and study* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), pp. 79 ff.
[14] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, pp. 23-26.

"menstruum").[15] The succeeding woodcut shows the king and queen in sexual union.[16] The "coniunctio" of the male and female principles, Sol and Luna, is described in terms of a chemical process of fermentation in which the "menstruum" is purified by means of heat. The reader is instructed to join "our ferment" with his "sweet sister" and they will beget a son who will not resemble his parents. The text recounts the alchemical allegory of Beya and her brother Gabricius.[17] It continues further that the white woman should be married to the red man so that they can embrace and couple. They are dissolved by themselves and are brought together again so that two may be made into one body. The text moves on to the discussion of the quintessence, calling it a tingeing spirit which is strong and is able to penetrate matter. Various alchemical treatises are quoted in the discussion of how to extract the fifth essence which cannot be done without "water" (such as *Liber Trium Verborum*).[18] What is this "water"? The author of the *Rosarium* mentions a "second spirit" outside the body that has a watery nature. It is a tingeing body in the form of an elixir.[19] This watery body appears to be a corrosive alkali, or acid, since the reader is told that "our water" is stronger than fire since it is able to transform a body of gold into spirit, an action that cannot be accomplished by fire alone. In fact, ordinary fire is no more than water in respect to "our fire."[20]

At the end of the "coniunctio" there appears a woodcut of a hermaphrodite lying in its sepulchre. This is the king and queen conjoined.[21] Conception and putrefaction take place following the death of the king and queen. The "soul" is extracted from the putrefying hermaphrodite, as in the picture where a small naked form rises up into a cloud from the grave.[22] The four elements are separated alchemically from the body and the text now explains that the Stone is said to have body, soul and spirit. By the body is meant the impure body, by the soul is meant the ferment and by the spirit is meant the fifth essence.[23] Likewise, the aforesaid Stone is called "Rebis", that is, two united in one. In succession the following woodcut reveals dew falling from heaven and washing the dead hermaphrodite in

[15] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, pp. 23-26.
[16] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, p. 46.
[17] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, pp. 46-47.
[18] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, p. 50.
[19] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, p. 50.
[20] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, pp. 48-54.
[21] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, p. 53.
[22] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, p. 55.
[23] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, pp. 55-63.

Fig. 6-9 The first alchemical hermaphrodite in the *Rosarium Philosophorum* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Cyriacus Jacobus, 1550). With the permission of the British Library: Shelf-mark 1032. c. 1

the tomb.[24] Meanwhile, Hermes in the text commands, "Divide the subtle from the gross," calcinate the earth and sublime the water. The earth will

[24] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, p. 77.

remain at the bottom of the flask, while the water ascends. The earth is purged by calcination, the water by sublimation and both by putrefaction. They are then made one and inseparable, since one cannot be without the other.[25]

Both the text and the next woodcut describe the return of the soul to the body in the process of sublimation.[26] In this work the dry particles of the material are circulated within the flask by the action of heat to purify and reinforce their essential nature. Aristotle is referenced as stating that sublimation is of two types. The first concerns the reduction of bodies into a spiritual form, while the second consists of extracting the fifth essence from the elemental faeces.[27] This fifth essence, according to Aristotle, is a "tingeing spirit" which has to be washed in order to remove the oily "arsenic," the residue of the impure faecal matter.[28] The dark metallic, liquid menstruum is now transformed successively into a "living tincture" and then into the Philosopher's Stone.[29] The medieval alchemist Alanus explains that there is one thing which is of a black and blue colour, having a metallic and liquid form, hot and moist, watery and burning. It is living oil and a living tincture, a mineral stone and a wondrous water of life.[30] The gloss in the text explains that for the production of the white elixir, or silvering tincture, only three things are necessary, namely, oil, tincture and calx. In contrast, the red elixir requires oil, calx, tincture and another tincture called fire. Calx was an oxide produced by heating metals, or minerals with a dry heat. The text refers to Avicenna's explanation that no fire is required to produce the final elixir because one of the two tinctures is fiery by nature. [31] This sounds like potash, or a lime-based alkali.

The following woodcut shows a naked hermaphrodite standing on a crescent-moon. This time it is the male half who carries the chalice with the three serpents, while the female part has a crowned snake winding around her arm (fig. 6-9). (In the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* the attributes were reversed.) In the vicinity there grows a tree bearing thirteen heads.[32] The accompanying verse introduces a Marian allusion in the

[25] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, pp. 78-82.
[26] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, the woodcut is on page 85.
[27] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, pp. 89-93. Vincentius in his *De Lapide Elixir* is referenced here.
[28] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, pp. 88-89.
[29] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, pp. 86-89.
[30] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, pp. 88.
[31] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, p. 91: "De Complemento Elixir."
[32] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, p. 95.

mention of the mother of the Son who becomes her Father.[33] This can only be a reference to Jesus Christ who was Mary's human child, as well as her Creator, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. The verse includes a prayer to Christ and refers to his work on earth through the Holy Spirit. Here is born the wealthy and noble Empress.

> O here Jhesu Christi …
> Durch deinen heilygengeist so gut …
> … Hier ist geboren die edele Keyserin reich ...

Luna (the "Empress") speaks of herself as being both mother and virgin. She gives birth without sin, just like the Virgin Mary.

> … Die vermeret sich
> gebiert finder ohn zal
> Sein undötlich rein
> unnd ohn alles mahl …[34]

The concepts in the text of the *Rosarium* recall the discourse of the bride in the Song of Songs, reputedly written by Solomon and there are similarities also to accounts in the Wisdom biblical texts also attributed to Solomon. De Jong has referred to an earlier alchemical reference to Solomon in the *Aurora Consurgens* (early 15th century) where Wisdom is said to be more precious than wealth (as also in the Book of Proverbs). Even earlier, the *Pretiosa Margarita Novella* by Petrus Bonus of Ferrara (1338 (?), or 1350 (?)) had spoken of "Sapientia" in an alchemical context. In the Hebrew Scriptures the Wisdom Books are those of Wisdom (Wisdom of Solomon), Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Wisdom of Syracides, the Song of Songs (Song of Solomon), Job and Sirach. They provide accounts of the attributes of Holy Wisdom.

It was Helena de Jong who first drew attention to the fact that Ecclesiastes was one of the Old Testament sources for the alchemical symbology of the *Rosarium*. The wealth of the Heavenly Virgin, both material and spiritual, is described in Ecclesiastes 24, 1-2, 8-12 and the paraphrases of such passages in the *Rosarium* similarly promised the alchemists that they will find wealth, health and spiritual benefits by means of the divine Stone and Elixir. In addition, the *Rosarium* alludes to the Book of Wisdom and the Song of Songs.

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[33] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, pp. 95-97: "Das Mein Son mein Vatter vardt…" (on page 97).
[34] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, p. 97.

In the *Rosarium* Solomon is brought in to praise the "Queen from the East" who comes to see her "daughter." In the alchemical context the daughter is the lunar, or white, elixir.

> Solomon Rex haec est filia abque regina austri ab oriente dicitur venisse, ut aurora ...[35]

There follow paraphrases of the Song of Songs, erotic love-poetry traditionally attributed to King Solomon and supposedly addressed to the Queen of Sheba. In the *Rosarium* Solomon declares that power, honour and virtue have been conferred into the Queen's hand. On her head a crown shines with the beams of the seven stars, as if she was a bride adorned for her bridegroom. On her garments there are inscribed gold letters in the Greek, barbaric and Latin languages, stating that she is the sole daughter of wise men, entirely unknown to fools.[36] Similar Solomonic references are found later in Michael Maier's *Symbola Aureae Mensae Duodecim Nationum* (1617) where Maier mentions the legend that Solomon was an alchemist and had power both on earth and in heaven. Maier accepted Solomon as the author of the Book of Wisdom, also known as the Wisdom of Solomon. The Protestant Churches rejected this book as apocryphal, while the Catholic Church awarded it a secondary status among the Scriptures as deuterocanonical. The author of the *Rosarium*, thus, seems to have referenced the Catholic Vulgate.

The rest of the text describes the alchemical Queen as the producer of riches in the same terms as those in the Books of Wisdom and Ecclesiastes. This noble and rich Queen increases and gives birth to an infinite number of children who are immortal, pure and spotless. She hates death and poverty. In her quality she excels silver, gold and precious stones and is more valuable than any medicine.[37]

> Die Königen hasst ded todt und armuth:
> Sie ubertrisset goldt silber eddel gesteyn …[38]

This is drawn from the Book of Wisdom where Wisdom is said to have knowledge of the natural world, a divine insight that would be indispensable to any alchemist in his search for God's grace and

[35] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, p. 98.
[36] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, pp. 98-99.
[37] De Jong, *Michael Maier's Atalanta fugiens*, pp. 93, 95, 96.
[38] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, p. 96.

illumination. In Wisdom 7: 14-21, she is described in terms comparable to these sections of the *Rosarium*.

> [8] I esteemed her more than sceptres and thrones; compared with her, I held riches as nothing.
> [9] I reckoned no precious stone to be her equal, for compared with her, all gold is a pinch of sand, and beside her, silver ranks as mud.
> [10] I loved her more than health or beauty, preferred her to the light, since her radiance never sleeps.
> [11] In her company all good things came to me, and at her hands incalculable wealth
> …
> [14] For she is to human beings an inexhaustible treasure, and those who acquire this win God's friendship, commended to him by the gifts of instruction
> [17] He it was who gave me sure knowledge of what exists, to understand the structure of the world and the action of the elements …
> [21] And now I understand everything, hidden or visible, for Wisdom, the designer of all things, has instructed me.
> (Roman Catholic Vulgate)[39]

All of these allusions to Holy Wisdom in the Books of Wisdom and in the Song of Songs were appropriated by the Catholic Church as attributes of the Virgin Mary who was filled with the Holy Spirit in which Wisdom dwelt. It is not accidental that the author of the *Rosarium* has returned to those scriptural passages using paraphrases in which the person of the Virgin Mary may be veiled, but is still present as a personification of the queen of alchemy, Solomon's Queen from the East. In the Hebrew imagery of Sophia, as well as in the Catholic descriptions of the Virgin Mary as filled with Holy Wisdom, the alchemists found analogies with their own Stone of the Philosophers and with the Universal Panacea, the healing elixir.

In the emblem of the hermaphrodites in the *Rosarium* there are also present some Christly allusions in the symbol of the chalice held aloft by the two hermaphrodites. Alchemically the three snakes in the chalice signify the three parts of matter - body, spirit and, soul, as mentioned in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*. They also signify earth, mercury (or moon) and sulphur respectively, as well the Paracelsian trinity of Salt, Mercury and Sulphur.

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[39] See online website *Catholic Online* http://www.catholic.org/bible/book.php?id=27 (retrieved 17. 10. 2016)

The motif of the snake-chalice was an iconographic attribute of John the Evangelist, although in Catholic imagery the chalice held only one serpent. In the *Legenda Aurea* (Golden Legend) (1275) of Jacobus da Voragine, archbishop of Genoa, he recounts how John was given poisoned wine to drink without any ill-effects. As a result he was made the patron saint of wine (as well as the unofficial patron saint of alchemy). In describing his death Jacobus da Voragine provides particulars that are encountered also in the woodcuts of the *Rosarium philosophorum* such as a sepulchre, manna from heaven, springs of water and wells, in addition to textual references to the healing of the sick. Moreover, John was believed to have ascended bodily into heaven like Elijah, Christ and Mary.

> After that he had made his prayer much amorously and piteously, anon came upon him great clearness and light, and so great brightness that none might see him, and when this light and brightness was gone and departed, there was nothing found in the pit or grave but manna, which came springing from under upward, like as sand in a fountain or springing well, where much people have been delivered of many diseases and sicknesses by the merits and prayers of this glorious saint. Some say and affirm that he died without pain of death, and that he was in that clearness borne into heaven body and soul, whereof God knoweth the certainty.[40]

Other miracles attributed to John have an alchemical character to them, including the creation of precious gems from ordinary stones and gravel, the raising of the dead and the drinking of venom without pernicious results. Isidore, Bishop of Seville (Isidorus Hispalensis, ca. 560–636) in his biography of the holy saints and fathers, *De Ortu et Obitu partum,* related that John had transformed rods of trees into fine gold and the stones and gravel of the sea into precious gems.[41] The small broken pieces of gems he reformed into their first nature. He drank venom without hurt or peril. In other words, at this very early date in the Christian centuries before Western alchemy had even commenced as a field of knowledge, John was acting in the manner of a proto-alchemist.

The chalice held by the hermaphrodite in the *Rosarium* is also the chalice of Christ at the Last Supper and in the Eucharist, for John had been closely involved in the events at the cenacle. This is an appropriate

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[40] Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend, or Lives of the Saints (1275).* Edited by F. S. Ellis (Temple Classics, first edition, 1900. Reprinted in Great Britain by T. and A. Constable Ltd, University Press, Edinburgh (1922, 1931)). The quotation is from the first edition of 1900.

[41] Cesar Chaparro-Gomez (ed.) *Isidore de Seville, de Ortu et Obitu Patrum* (Auteurs Latin Du Moyen Age) (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2012), chapter 72.

allusion in the alchemical context of the Elixir, since Christ's chalice was the cup of eternal life, resurrecting body and soul. John had been present at the crucifixion of Christ and he is always depicted in this scene, as in the central panel of the *Isenheim Altar* by Matthias Grunewald (Colmar, 1510-15). In other scenes of the crucifixion such as the painting by Perugino's in Sant'Agostino, Siena (1503-6) angels are shown collecting Christ's blood in a chalice. Like Christ's blood the alchemical tincture would purify base matter, raising it from death and transforming its corruption into an imperishable "glorious body."

The first hermaphrodite in the *Rosarium* stands naked in order to represent formless base matter, but the allusions to flight in its birds' wings signify that the process of distilling the volatile spirits is being referenced here (fig. 6-9). In alchemy the primary materials were often signified by the Adamic figure in the Garden of Eden, as in Genesis 3: 5-7. Adam was the primeval father of humanity, the equivalent of alchemical Saturn, the god of lead, old age and death. Accordingly, in the depiction in the *Rosarium* there is present a raven, a bird that eats carrion and so signifies death. The point being made is that of the abject condition of the base fabric used by the alchemists (never securely identified, or even identifiable).

> [5] "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." [6] When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. [7] Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.
> (New King James Version)

The following woodcut displays the king and queen sexually re-united in the tomb. They have bird's wings to indicate their fugitive qualities. This illustration is entitled "Fermentatio."[42] The author informs the reader that gold is the ferment of the work, because it is like the leaven of dough, the curd of milk in cheese and musk in perfume.[43] It produces the white tincture. The ferment of gold is gold, just as the ferment of bread is bread.[44]

[42] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, pp. 107, 108-12.
[43] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, p. 108.
[44] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, p. 108.

There follows a scene entitled "Illuminatio" which depicts the sun arising from the tomb.[45] This scene describes the planting of gold as a seed in the purified alchemical flux called "Magnesia" which now contains its own tincture.[46] Gold adds the red tincture to the chemical matter which will soon be transformed into the perfected Philosopher's Stone. According to Geber, gold is the most precious of metals since it is a soul conjoining the spirit with the body. For the tincture of redness transforms every body.[47] The picture may also refer to the illumination of the alchemical matter with sun-light. This was an action mentioned in alchemical literature from the late Renaissance, especially in the 16th and 17th centuries when working with nitre, according to Sendivogius and Newton. An earlier text concerning this procedure, though later than the *Rosarium*, is that of Claudio de Dominico Celentano di Valle Nove, *Chemical purification through sunlight and moonlight* in his *Book of Alchemical Formulas* (Naples, 1606).[48]

Fixation is the final process in perfecting the Stone and such is the title of the next illustration. The woodcut depicts the soul departing yet again from the body of the hermaphrodite.[49] A note explains that this is the work of Luna and states that here ends the life of Luna and the spirit ascends on high.[50] Lelius the Philosopher comments that in the end a king will come forth, crowned with a precious crown, shining like Sol, glistening like a ruby, melting like wax, persevering and abiding in the fire, penetrating and retaining silver. Arnoldus (Arnald of Villanova) states that the colour of redness is created in the digestive process. Hence, he explains, it is by means of the cooking process that the white elixir is turned into the red tincture, that is, by fire. In the dry process of calcination the white elixir turns red like cinnabar.

Calcination is a dry procedure and no "water" should be added until all the materials have turned red. According to Arnoldus, the "water" involved in this process is a spirit which extracts the soul from the body. The "soul" of these materials is the red tincture itself. When this spiritualised water is poured onto the white foliated earth (produced by

[45] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, p. 119.
[46] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, pp. 120-122.
[47] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, pp. 120-121.
[48] "Chemical purification through sunlight and moonlight (1606)" in Claudio de Dominico Celentano di Valle Nove, *Book of Alchemical Formulas* (Naples, 1606), pp. 8-9. Located in the Getty Research Institute, Manly Palmer Hall Collection of Alchemical Manuscripts 950053, Box 22.
[49] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, p. 133.
[50] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, p. 134.

calcinating the materials into a white powder), then the spiritual water is dried-up. Then the soul remains in the body in the form of the tincture of the air. This procedure involving the spiritual water and the white calcinated powder recalls the effects of an alkali such as bleach (NaClO; sodium, chorine and oxygen). Bleach is the sodium salt of hypochlorous acid (chlorine as a solution of sodium hypochlorite), while calcium hypochlorite is the active compound in bleaching powder.[51]

The following process is that of multiplication which is illustrated accordingly by an image of the king and queen in the sepulchre in the form of a hermaphrodite, while heavenly showers rain down upon them.[52]

The woodcut of the second hermaphrodite illustrates the succeeding section which is entitled "Revivificatio" (fig. 6-10).[53] The verse next to the picture describes the Stone of the Philosophers as a king and the image itself is called the "Aenigma Regis."[54] This particular hermaphrodite does not stand on the crescent moon, but directly above a serpent lying on the ground. The crescent moon in the woodcut of the first hermaphrodite had represented the impure mercury from which the volatile spirits were to be distilled, leaving the dregs behind (indicated by the black raven). In this first picture the heads on the tree had been moon-like, another allusion to the mercurial substance and its impurity. The crescent moon of the first hermaphrodite indicated that a rarefied chemistry was involved.

The second hermaphrodite, however, stands on the ground to indicate that the quintessential spirits have been, or are about to be, "fixed" so that they are no longer fugitive. The figure is said to have been "revived," or resurrected. The first hermaphrodite, unlike those in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*¸ had had the wings of a bird, whereas the second one has the wings of a bat, as in the earlier treatise. The spirits involved in the process described by the first hermaphrodite had been fugitive, hence the bird symbology. In the second image the spirits have been fixed and the symbolism is more earthy, no longer moon-like, or aerial. The dragon below the second figure is now dribbling venom, indicating that the mercury still requires further processing. The method to be used is indicated by the image of the pelican at the back-right of the figure. The hermeneutic involved here is complex since the pelican is both a theological referent, as well as simply indicating the practical laboratory equipment known as the "pelican," a circulatory distillation vessel consisting of a rounded, sealed glass vessel from which there extend two

[51] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, pp. 141-145.
[52] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, pp. 146, 147-149.
[53] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, pp. 156, 157-159.
[54] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1 (1992); the woodcut is on page 166.

Fig. 6-10 The second alchemical hermaphrodite in the *Rosarium Philosophorum* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Cyriacus Jacobus, 1550). With the permission of the British Library: Shelf-mark 1032. c. 1

arms that feed condensed gases back into the material being processed. It was thought by the alchemists to produce exceptionally concentrated compounds.

The poem that accompanies the woodcut explains that here is depicted the riddle of the king. Here is born the king of all glory. Nothing has been created in the world, neither by art, nor by nature, that is greater. The Philosophers call him their son. He grants endless wealth, as well as gold, silver and precious stones. He bestows fortitude, long life, beauty and purity and he expels anger, sorrow, poverty and diseases. Blessed is he on whom God confers this gift. The verse also speaks of "Luna the Queen."[55] The eulogy of the queen repeats word for word the earlier text in the *Rosarium* in relation to the first hermaphrodite (fig. 6-9).[56]

The second hermaphrodite it is presented clothed (fig. 6-10), since it now represents the Philosophers' Stone, robed in the power and glory of a monarch as in the case of the comparable image in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*. The male half continues to hold aloft the chalice with the three serpents but they are now crowned, as is the snake around winding around the arm of the female half. There is a writhing three-headed dragon in the form of an Ouroboros at the feet of the figure, in the same position as the snake in the icon of Mary Immaculate. The serpent crushed by Mary's feet in that image was a symbolic allusion to Genesis 3:15 where God had told the serpent that the offspring of Eve (interpreted by Christians as Christ) would crush its head under his feet. In the history of the iconography of the Immaculate Conception the attribute of the serpent was transferred from Christ to Mary as the Second Eve. In Genesis 14-15 God says to the woman after she has plucked the apple from the tree:

> [15] And I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."
> (New King James Version)

The trees alongside the hermaphrodites in the *Rosarium* invoke the Genesis account of the tree with the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:5-7). The gift of the tree is knowledge, but also death.

In the *Rosarium* the text explains that the alchemical procedure involved here is that of the cold and moist Mercury (called here "our Mercury") which is the material of all minerals, an airy element fleeing the fire (referring to the image of the dragon). "Our Mercury" is the source of

[55] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, p.167.
[56] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, p.167.

the white and red elixirs in the form of "permanent water," the water of life and death. Mercury is the virgin's milk, the cleansing herb and the animal fountain. Whoever drinks from it will not die. However, Mercury is also a poison (as the prime matter of the menstruum and as the pictured dragon whose three mouths are slavering over some unspeakable substance). Moreover, Mercury is a dragon who marries himself, impregnates himself and gives birth, killing all animals with his poison. He is an Ouroboros, in short. However, the fire destroys him. [57]

On the right of the second hermaphrodite a pelican is shown feeding its young with the blood drawn from its own breast. This venerable emblem is a widely-diffused and long-enduring Catholic symbol that signifies the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on behalf of humanity. This image of the pelican is also an allegory of the Eucharistic miracle of the transubstantiation of wine into the blood of Christ, a wholly Catholic doctrine and one that was bitterly and bloodily disputed in this period. It is astonishing to find the allegory of the pelican in a context such as this, presumably a Lutheran treatise due to its publisher and place of publication. The presence of the pelican theme evidences the uninterrupted recourse to Catholic dogma and iconography by alchemists of the Reformation period. In the context of the *Rosarium* it is an additional cryptic signifier of the diffident Christly and Marian allusions in the image of the hermaphrodite.

In addition there is a lion lurking behind this figure whose import is explained in the next woodcut which depicts the Green Lion, called "Our Mercury." He devours the Sun whose blood flows out onto the earth.[58] In the emblem of the second hermaphrodite the green lion constitutes a pair with the venomous dragon below as Sulphur and Mercury, respectively, or as Sol and Luna. The heads on the tree in this woodcut now appear sun-like with fiery rays, having been transformed from the wan, bald-headed moons in the first scene of the hermaphrodite. They indicate that the Stone, henceforth, has the power of transmuting base metals and of healing disease.

The "green lion" had first appeared in the *Aurora Consurgens* of the early 15th century where it personified the mineral form of vitriol from which sulphuric acid (H_2So_4) is produced. The emblem describes the process of mixing gold with sulphuric acid, one of the initial stages in the process of creating the "aurum potabile." This will need to be further treated at a later stage with "aqua regia," a mixture of one part nitric acid and three parts of hydrochloric acid and which uniquely dissolves gold.

[57] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, pp. 173 ff.
[58] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, p. 173.

This same procedure appears in other alchemical recipes for a potable gold. The green lion in the *Rosarium* may also be referring to the processing of "fool's gold," the salt of green vitriol which is produced when iron pyrites is exposed to the air. This was also thought to be the vitriol of gold, or of the sun ("sol"). It was treated with "aqua regia." Such a process was described later by Johann Glauber (1604-70) as the production of his "green lyon", as discussed in a study of Glauber's chemistry by Anna Marie Eleanor Roos.[59] Oil of vitriol (sulphuric acid) was made in this period by roasting green vitriol, a form of iron sulphate, in an iron retort. In ancient times the name "vitriol" referred to a group of glassy minerals known even to the ancient Sumerians who had classified them into different categories. Likewise, the ancient Greeks had been acquainted with these minerals and acids. For example, Dioscorides, a medical practitioner of the first century AD, mentioned the use of vitriol, as did Galen and Pliny the Elder. In the Hellenistic period the alchemist Zosimos of Panopolis discussed vitriol in his treatise *Physika kai Mystica*. The Arab alchemist Jabir ibn Hayyan (ca. 721-ca. 815), known to the West as "Geber," described the properties of vitriol. Razi ("Razes") (865-925) and Ibn Sina ("Avicenna") similarly placed great emphasis on the importance of vitriol in alchemy. The earliest western alchemists such as Vincent of Beauvais and Albertus Magnus (*Compositum de Compositis*) had also displayed great interest in vitriol.[60]

The penultimate image in the *Rosarium* is basically the same picture as in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* which depicts the coronation of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Trinity.[61] Joachim Telle interprets this scene in relation to the final one showing Christ rising from the tomb. According to Telle, the coronation of the Virgin alludes to the "tinctura alba rubeficatio," the reddening (rubefication) of the white elixir, while the final image of Christ describes the red elixir itself, the "tinctura rubea."[62] In the accompanying text the Arab Senior explains the nature of the feminine lunar, white tincture (symbolized in the woodcut by the Virgin Mary). Luna's alchemical son is described by Senior in phrases that

[59] Anna Marie Eleanor Roos, *The Salt of the Earth: Natural Philosophy, Medicine, and Chymistry in England, 1650-1750: Natural Philosophy, Medicine, and Chemistry in England, 1650-1750* (History of Science and Medicine Library) (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2007), pp. 43-44.

[60] Vladimir Karpenko and John A. Norris (2001) "Vitriol in the history of Chemistry," *Encyclopædia Britannica* 26 (11th ed.), pp. 65–69.

[61] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, p. 182.

[62] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 2, p. 186. See woodcut No. 18, "The Coronation of the Virgin" and woodcut No. 19, "The Risen Christ."

parallel the New Testament accounts of Christ's resurrection from "the red tomb of rock." Addressing the reader in the first person, an unidentified entity in the text relates that his beloved parents should "taste of life," be fed with milk (white in colour) and be made drunk. If they lie in "my bed," then they will beget the "Son of Luna" who will excel all his ancestors. "My beloved" (again not identified) should carry the "Son of Luna" from his "red tomb of rock" and taste of the "fountain of his mother." If this "beloved" is then fed with "my red wine" and coupled with "me" freely, then "I" (the unidentified narrator) will conceive and bear a mighty son, ruling and reigning over all kings and princes on the earth. He will be crowned with a golden crown of victory, of the most high God who lives and reigns world without end. This cryptic account in which the first person speech-form alternates between at least two different protagonists tells of the coupling of the male and female principles across two generations of the same family, their placement into a liquid and their production of a "son" who is described in terms of an unorthodox Christology.

Next, Hermes leaps in quoting from his "Third Treatise" and calling on all the sons of Wisdom to rejoice and make merry since death is conquered and "our son" reigns and is clothed with a red ornament and with flesh. Hermes then continues in alchemical metaphors that "our son," having been born as a king, takes the tincture from the fire. Now death, the sea and darkness flee from him. The dragon flies from the rays of the sun. Our son, having been being dead, now lives. A king comes from the fire and secret things will appear, and "our son" is made a warrior in the fire and he is the most powerful of tinctures.[63] In short, the red tincture is the alchemical Christ, as is demonstrated by the last woodcut of Christ rising from the tomb, also copied from *Das Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*.[64]

In fact, the subject of the *Rosarium* is not only that of the creation of the Philosopher's Stone, but also that of the production of the white and red tinctures. In the *Rosarium* the final stages of the creation of the red and white elixirs recall alchemical recipes, some from the Paracelsian corpus, concerning the "mercurius solis." This is the prime matter of alchemy and it was said to be found in gold. The "mercurius solis" is both a panacea and a gold-producing tincture. In the *Rosarium* there is no reference to the "mercurius solis," but it does discuss the "aurum potabile," potable gold,

[63] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, pp. 183-190.
[64] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, pp. 191.

which is the same substance according to Telle.[65] The *Rosarium* makes much of the seeding of gold (Sol) in the cleansed matter.

Rudolf Werner Soukop has examined the probable chemistry involved in the making of "aurum potabile," or "mercurius solis".[66] The recipe provided in the *Rosarium* dissolves gold in the corrosive "water" (menstruum). A similar recipe is later encountered in the second edition of Libavius' *Alchymia* (Frankfurt, 1606, p. 235) where Libavius quotes Bernard Georges Penot, a Paracelsian physician from Aquitaine. Penot speaks about dissolving gold in "aqua regia" (a mixture of nitric and hydrochloric acids) and of the formation of crystals on distilling and cooling the solvent. This recipe is also provided by Lazarus Zetzner in his *Theatrum chemicum*.[67] Possibly, suggests Werner Soukop, the final composition of this gold chloride and acid mixture consisted of a powdery aurous chloride (AuCl), gold oxide, and grey amorphous colloidal gold. Werner Soukop remarks that most alchemical texts conceal the need for a reducing agent at the stage when gold has been decomposed in an acid solution. The *Rosarium*, however, does infer this and the treatise *Lux lucens in tenebris* states clearly that the gold compound crystals should be converted into "mercury" by means of decomposition and additives. These will break down the "corpus solis" (body of the gold) and change it into the prime matter. The *Rosarium* states, however, that one should not add metallic mercury as the additive.

In actuality, the term "mercurius" is problematic to define. Werner Soukop lists three different meanings of "mercurius": first, common quicksilver, next, compounds of mercury such as sublimate, or calomel, and, finally, the essence of all metals. In this context one pseudo-Paracelsian treatise, *De Tinctura Physicorum*, exerted a considerable influence on 16th and 17th century alchemists. Paracelsus had eulogised the "mercurius solis" in his genuine works, regarding it as the Universal Panacea produced from gold.[68] In a passage in his authentic *De vita longa* (1562) Paracelsus praises both "Mercurius Solis" and "Mercurius Lunae" as medicines for

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[65] Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 1, p. 11. And see also Telle, Claren and Huber, *Rosarium*, 2, pp. 6, 25.

[66] Rudolf Werner Soukup, "Mercurius Solis: Hunting a Mysterious Alchemical Substance" see online file:///C:/Users/Windows%20User/Downloads/'documents.tips_mercurius-solis-562a6d5981111.pdf' (retrieved 2. 6. 2016)

[67] Zetzner, *Theatrum Chemicum,* 2 (1602), p. 155.

[68] O. Humberg, "Über den Mercurius metallorum," *Hermes*, 21 (2002), pp. 16–26. See Kühlmann and Telle, *Corpus Paracelsisticum,*1*: Der Frühparacelsismus* (2001), pp. 999ff.

leprosy, stating that "aurum potabile" is the best medicine. However, gold will not produce its beneficial effects without first the addition of a corrosive water (acid) to decompose the gold.[69] The reception of the term "Mercurius solis" commenced in 1514 with the Latin manuscript of *Lux lucens in tenebris*. (Figulus edited this treatise in 1608 in German, using a translation made by the Tyrolean Paracelsian Adam Haselmayer.) In 1570 Leonhard Thurneysser mentioned Mercurius solis in his compendium *Quinta Essentia* (I: IV).[70]

Both the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* and the *Rosarium philosophorum* provided ideas and imagery for the treatise *Pandora, Das ist die Edelste Gab Gottes …* ("Pandora, That Is, the Noblest Gift of God ...") (Basel, 1582; 1588). This is an anonymously authored work supposedly edited by the Swiss doctor Hieronymous Reusner (1558-?). A second, greatly enlarged, edition of the treatise appeared in 1706 which was redacted by Michael Faustius (1663-1707), a medical practitioner of Protestant persuasion from Switzerland.

[69] Theophrastus Paracelsus, *De Vita longa, breui, et sana ... vero opera et studio Gerardi Dornei Commentarijs illustrati* (Frankforti: Christoff Rab, [no date]).
[70] See Werner Soukop, "Mercurius Solis," no pagination.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MARIAN IMAGERY IN REUSNER'S *PANDORA* (1582; 1588)

Both editors of the *Pandora*¸ first Hieronymous Reusner (Reussner) and then Michael Faustius, stated that the *Pandora* had been anonymously composed by one "Franciscus Epimetheus," which is a pseudonym. No further information is provided. "Franciscus" is probably not a personal name, but, rather, a descriptive term referring to a member of the Franciscan Order. "Epimetheus" was the brother of the mythical Prometheus who could be called the first alchemist since he had stolen fire from the gods. "Epimetheus" is derived from the Greek word for "after-thought, while "Prometheus" is derived from one meaning "fore-thought." In comparison to Prometheus who gave knowledge and the arts to humanity, Epimetheus is described in the Greek myth as foolish. According to the Greek epic poet Hesiod (8-7th century BC) in his *Theogony* (lines 507-612) and his *Works and Days* (lines 63ff.), Epimetheus was foolish enough to accept from the jealous gods the gift of Pandora for a wife. Pandora opened the forbidden box (another lethal gift from the gods) and released discord into the world. Only hope was left.[1]

This accounts for the title of the alchemical treatise, but here Pandora is described as the "noblest gift of God," probably because she retained hope for humanity and alchemy is, indeed, a most hopeful activity. Pandora in the original Greek myth was a negative figure, the first woman, the first bride and an unfaithful misery to men. However, the name "Pandora" means "she who gives all gifts" and "she who was given all gifts" and the name was also used for the goddess Gaia, the earth-mother and source of all goodness. The box that Pandora opened was originally a jar known as a "pithos," a huge storage jar buried in the ground, but it was mistranslated to mean a casket, or box. It was the Dutch humanist Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536) who had made the alteration and had

[1] See especially the extended discussion of the myth in Willem Jacob Verdenius, *A Commentary on Hesiod "Works and Days" vv.1-382* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985), pp. 62ff.

presented the myth of Pandora as a warning to his contemporaries about the high cost of obtaining knowledge.[2] Other Renaissance literary figures such as the French humanist poets, Pierre Ronsard (1524-85) and Joachim du Bellay (ca. 1522-60) took delight in the ambiguous character of Pandora, the first woman and the first wife who was a mixture of good and evil. Du Bellay compared the "new Pandora," the city of Paris filled with good things, with the "old Pandora," the city of Rome and the source of evil. The Dutch poet, philologist and historian Daniel Heinsius (1580-1655), a Calvinist who was a professor at the University of Leiden wrote a commentary on Hesiod's myth of Pandora, offering a more positive account. (Heinsius's major interest lay in emblematics.)

In fact, as has been remarked by Deborah Lyons, in the course of the 16th century, the figure of Pandora was redeemed and her name was even used as an honorific. She was regarded as the giver of divine gifts.[3] The name was also later used by the Paracelsian author Benedictus Figulus (1567- ?) in his alchemical treatise, *Pandora Magnalium Naturalium Aurea et benedicta, de Benedicto Lapidis Philosophorum Mysterio*, published by Lazarus Zetzner in Strasburg (1608). (This was not illustrated.) The work was a compendium of various short alchemical tracts from the Paracelsian corpus, including that of Paracelsus on potable gold and another anonymous work on the same topic, plus two anonymous texts concerning the tincture and several by the leading Paracelsian author Alexander von Suchten.[4]

In Reusner's treatise the reference to Pandora is similarly a positive one, as an emblematic allusion to the bounty of God's providence. Pandora is "Alchimia" herself, the noblest gift of God. She is a form of the earth-mother, the source of bounty and of all gifts. This theme is not developed further by Reusner and there is no reference to the casket itself. It is the nurturing aspects of Pandora as the wife of Epimetheus which are the focus in both the title and also in the rest of the treatise where the feminine aspects of the alchemical materials are personified in a sympathetic manner in the illustrations. Moreover, Pandora is described as the Stone of the Wise in the title. Hence, her status is absolute and, at least in the title, the Stone is gendered female which certainly does not recur in any other alchemical work of this period.

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[2] See Immanuel Musäus, *Der Pandoramythos bei Hesiod und seine Rezeption bis Erasmus van Rotterdam*, (Göttingen, 2004), pp. 192-207.

[3] Deborah Lyons, "Pandora" in *Gods, Goddesses and Mythology*, I (New York; London; Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Corporation, pp. 1079-1082.

[4] Translated into English by Arthur Edward Waite as *A Golden and Blessed Casket of Nature's Marvels* (London: J. Elliott, 1893. Reprint, London: Watkins, 1963).

> *…oder der werde und heilsame Stein der Weysen, mit welchem die alten Philosophi, auch Theophratus Paracelsus, die unvollkommene Metallen durch gewalt des Fewrs verbessert ...*[sic]

The Franciscan origins of this work seem to be, at first, dubious, since the text is not Roman Catholic in tenor, but is a typical example of the alchemical literature of the late 16th century with influences from the Paracelsian corpus. However, it should be noted that the illustrator of the *Pandora* has returned to the pictorial cycles of the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* and he has copied the Christly narrative. Although the artist did not re-use the Marian images in their original versions (apart from the coronation of the Virgin), even so, among his many innovative designs he also drew on the Catholic iconography of the Immaculate Conception and the Apocalyptic Woman providing new alchemical variants of Marian icons. In the latter part of the *Pandora* (1582; 1588) there is a sequence of eighteen woodcuts, some copied from the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*.[5] Reusner included one picture that is currently found only in the Stockholm manuscript of *Das Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*. [6] The text of the *Pandora* belongs to the mainstream alchemical tradition in its mystical hermeneutics and practical chemistry which draws on both the medieval alchemists and the Paracelsians. (Paracelsus is mentioned in the title.) The author of the *Pandora* does not emulate the theological discourse of the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*. However, it may be that Reusner and Faustius by their allusion to one "Franciscus" are referencing the rumoured Franciscan author of the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*. It could be that they regarded the *Pandora* as a continuation in some manner, or a revision of that earlier treatise and, hence, they continued to attribute it to the former 15th century author, or to another member of the same Order. In any case, Reusner and Faustius who were working in the Calvinist polity of Basel could never have attributed the *Pandora* to any contemporary Franciscan friar, since none were around.

The question of why the *Pandora* should be thus credited and of who may have been the real author remains unresolved. The *Pandora* appeared in print in Basel in 1582 and was re-issued in the same city in 1588 (apud Sebastian Henricpetrus).[7] The conceptual structure and the visual imagery

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[5] Reusner, *Pandora* (1588), pp. 255, 257, 245.

[6] Reusner, *Pandora* (1588), p. 259.

[7] This is Hieronymous Reusner (ed.), *Franciscus Epimetheus, pseud., Pandora: das ist, die edelste Gab Gottes, oder der werde und heilsame Stein der Weysen, mit welchem die alten Philosophi, auch Theophratus Paracelsus, die unvollkommene Metallen durch gewalt des Fewrs verbessert* … (Basel, 1582; 1588). There exists

of the *Pandora* are influenced by the *Rosarium Philosophorum cum figuris* (Basel, 1550). The *Pandora* is one of the earliest illustrated alchemical works in print, anticipating the richly illustrated tomes of the early 17th century which commence with Heinrich Khunrath's *Amphiteatrum Sapientiae Aeternae* ... (Hamburg, 1595; second edition Hanau, 1609).

Reusner was a medical practitioner and surgeon from a family of distinguished lawyers and a Paracelsian. In addition to the *Pandora* Reusner produced other books on natural philosophy and medicine such as the four volumes of the *Singularia* (1599-1601). In 1610 he published one of the earliest medical texts written in German, the *Tractatus Medicus Physicus und Historia des fürtrefflichen Casimirianischen Sawer Brunnen/ unter Libenstein/ nicht fern von Schmalkalden gelegen* (1610). He issued another alchemical work in 1615, the *Syntagmatis alchimiae arcanorum*, concerning the manufacture of tin chloride, but he was not the first to deal with this substance. For, in the early 15th century "Ulmannus" had already recorded the recipe for tin chloride in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit.* Reusner dedicated the *Pandora* to his mentor Martinus Rulandus the Younger (1569 –1611), another Paracelsian. Rulandus the Younger was born in Lauingen in Bavaria and he became a well-known physician and alchemist. He practised at Regensburg in the 1590s and subsequently at the court of Rudolf II in Prague.[8] His father Martinus Rulandus the Elder (1532–1602) had also followed the teachings of Paracelsus and he too had been a physician and alchemist. The elder Rulandus had published a medical work, the *Curationum empiricarum et historicarum Centuria* (Basel, 1578-96). Later the younger Rulandus would become famous for his dictionary of alchemy, *Lexicon alchemiae sive Dictionarium alchemisticum. Palthenius (*Frankfurt, 1612). In fact, prior to Rulandus at an earlier date Reusner had already composed his own dictionary which he included in the *Pandora* of 1582.

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also another edition published in 1627 in Basel of the original Reusner *Pandora* but under a different title. It was produced by Heinrich Petrinisch, namely, Franciscus Epimetheus, pseud. *Guldenes Schatzkästlin. Darinnen die edle Gab Gottes (Pandora. Das Buch genannt die köstlichest Gab Gottes gemacht durch Franciscum Epimetheum), der Stein der Weysen auffbehalten wird* ... In Truck gegeben durch Christianum Crucigerum … Edited by H. Reusner. (Basel : Bei den Henricpetrinischen, 1627).

[8] Martinus Rulandus, *A Lexicon of Alchemy. Or Alchemical Dictionary Containing a Full and Plain Explanation of All Obscure Words, Hermetic Subjects, and Arcane Phrases of Paracelsus*. Translated by Arthur Edward Waite (London: Watkins, 1964).

The visual repertoire of the *Pandora* (1582) was conceptually based on both the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* and the *Rosarium*, but it was extensively elaborated either by Reusner, or by the supposed anonymous author. The text is considerably more discursive with a greater reliance on the alchemy of the Paracelsians in addition to medieval authorities. The alchemical procedure broadly follows the same sequence as the *Rosarium*, being loosely based on the Geberian twelve stages. The author of the *Pandora* does not return to the eschatological discourse of the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*. Nor does he re-employ the paraphrases of the Wisdom Scriptures and the Song of Songs in the *Rosarium*. There is no Mariology in the text of the *Pandora*¸ only in two specific woodcut illustrations whose subject is that of the alchemical elixir and in another scene of the coronation of Mary. Nor are the four hermaphrodites in the *Pandora* intended to be images of the Anti-Christ as in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* where this figure was said to portray Jesus and Mary co-joined. None of the hermaphrodites stand on the crescent moon in the manner of the second hermaphrodite in the *Rosarium*. In fact, the apocalyptic connotations of these figures in the *Pandora* have a more general relation to Revelation 12. The allusions to the Apocalyptic Woman have been relocated to two new illustrations where the female figures bear all of her attributes from Revelation.

At the present time, there is no objective scholarly study of the two Reusner and Faustius versions of the *Pandora* and their contextual history. The existing published material has appeared in more popular accounts of alchemy and the visual images are presented in a decorative manner. These pictures also appear in the psychological writings of Carl Gustav Jung and his followers. In view of the current scholarly obscurity of the *Pandora* it has seemed appropriate in the present context to offer a lengthier account of the illustrative sequences devised by Reusner and Faustius.

The first scenario in the *Pandora* involves the "coniunctio" of the king and queen, duly illustrated by a royal couple while the accompanying text explains the nature of the "oleum philosophorum." This then becomes the subject of a lengthy textual account, illustrated with a profuse woodcut repertoire.[9] This oil of the philosophers appears to be the same substance named as the oil of gold in the *Rosarium*. In the following scene the king and queen have been stripped of their clothing as in the *Rosarium*, but in the woodcut there appears a new figure not encountered in the earlier treatise. This figure is also naked and it has been placed into a laboratory

[9] Reusner, *Pandora* (1588), p. 22.

flask that is placed above the king and queen. Other novel details in the illustration include disembodied heads to the left and right representing the impure metals.[10] The naked king and queen embrace each other in the succeeding picture, while below them there appears a naked winged cupid. More heads at the four corners of a second flask are labelled with the names of the four elements.[11]

There succeeds an unimaginative and tedious, but doubtless work-a-day, series of alchemical flasks: one is labelled "aqua,"[12] another contains a dragon accompanied by a text entitled "Der Schwebel der philosophen" ("the melting-pot of the philosophers").[13] An indifferent glass vessel follows on labelled "aqua."[14] The text now refers to worms in the earth and three worms are duly depicted in one more glass vessel.[15] There are further such containers. One is unlabelled while in the text nearby there is mention of the "oleum philosophorum."[16] Then there is a picture of a glass flask holding nine flowers.[17] This same vessel is next shown with the nine flowers all-aflame and labelled "eschen der philosophen" ("the ash of the philosophers"), while the neighbouring text is called "Eschen aller Eschen" ("ashes of all ashes").[18] This succession of laboratory glass-ware illustrates the cleansing of the alchemical "water," that is, the mercury of the philosophers. The process is explained as the killing of the dragon ("menstruum," or poisonous mercury) who decomposes along with his parents, sulphur and mercury, so that worms come and devour their corpses. The impure materials are submitted to the dry heat of the furnace until they turn to ashes which are then calcinated until they grow white in colour.

The next sequence of woodcuts in Reusner's *Pandora* introduces innovative figurative scenes of a rich and complex diversity, while the process moves forward to the production of the silver and red elixirs, or tinctures. However, these scenes are set in a plethora of additional glass accoutrements which the viewer is obliged to navigate. In one such vessel there stands a crowned queen clad in royal robes while a five-petalled rose grows out of the opening of the flask. Below the queen there is a

[10] Reusner, *Pandora* (1588), p. 25.
[11] Reusner, *Pandora* (1588), p. 27.
[12] Reusner, *Pandora* (1588), p. 29
[13] Reusner, *Pandora* (1588), p. 30.
[14] Reusner, *Pandora* (1588), p. 32.
[15] Reusner, *Pandora* (1588), p. 35.
[16] Reusner, *Pandora* (1588), p. 37.
[17] Reusner, *Pandora* (1588), p. 40.
[18] Reusner, *Pandora* (1588), p. 42.

geometrical diagram consisting of a semicircle divided into three parts, the middle triangle being narrower (with acute angles) than the two on either side. The neighbouring text refers to the silver work, instructing the alchemist to "wash Latona", that is, wash the "feminine" component of the prime matter (mercury). There is a mention of Morienus the Arabian philosopher.[19] The next emblem labelled "Die Rot Rose" depicts a five-petalled flower arising out of a glass vessel which contains a crowned and royally-robed king. The text explains "I am the red elixir" and alludes to Thomas Aquinas, Duenech and the Paracelsian azoth (quintessence).[20] In this section there commences the production of the quintessence from the oil of gold. The text quotes from famous alchemists, after a preliminary account of the alchemical process.[21]

In Reusner's *Pandora* the most important section concerns the distillation of the fifth essence and it is called "Miesterschafft des funtsten essens."[22] Most of the imaginative illustrations in this part of the treatise are unique to the *Pandora*. First there appears a naked crowned woman holding two flaming torches which are pointed downwards in order to extinguish them. This is an ancient emblem of death, as in the funerary imagery of the antique Roman period. In the late Renaissance and early Baroque periods this emblem experienced a revival, particularly in Protestant countries. Behind the figure of the woman there grows a fruit–producing tree, as in the scenes of the hermaphrodites in the *Rosarium*¸ while the sun and moon stand to left and right of her. Birds are flying up and down the page and one is perched on the woman's crown. She stands on two alchemical furnaces containing distillation apparatus.[23] The birds symbolize the volatile spirits being processed in the still. This can only happen after the conjunction and death of the sun and moon, the principles of prime matter and the parents of the Stone. They will be reborn eventually in a new form and will bear rich fruit.

An important scene in Reusner's *Pandora* had originated in the early 15th century *Aurora Consurgens* whose subject is that of an Arab alchemist known to the Latins as "Senior." He reveals an open book with drawings of the sun, moon and Ouroboros on the left and two suns and a moon on the right. Five philosophers dressed in medieval gowns are

[19] Reusner, *Pandora* (1588), p. 45.
[20] Reusner, *Pandora* (1588), p. 48.
[21] Reusner, *Pandora* (1588), pp.97ff. Pages of practical laboratory equipment are displayed with explanatory text (page 152) and the customary "Practica" (practical work) is included (pages 153 ff).
[22] Reusner, *Pandora* (1588), pp. 189ff.
[23] Reusner, *Pandora* (1588), p. 211.

holding a discussion around him. There are white doves in flight which carry bows and arrows. Another three doves on the right are armed in the same manner. Two more birds soar up and down above the head of Senior.[24] This same illustration is re-used in the Faustius *Pandora* (1706).[25] The process described is the circulation of the volatile spirits now drawn off the matter after the joining of sulphur with mercury. The two suns on the right represent Spirit and Soul, while the moon is "corpus," physical matter. These are also the three Paracelsian prime principles of Sulphur, Mercury and Salt.

Another scene of similar exceptional complexity had developed from the medieval iconography of the Fountain of Youth, with people of different ages and social groups crowded around. In Reusner's *Pandora* the original scene has been transformed into a scholarly disquisition on the process of distillation, as is indicated by the presence of much glass-apparatus and volatile birds. Groups of philosophers are gathered together, holding discussions. Stars shine and more flasks are displayed above their heads. Yet another philosopher stands-by. Two lions perch on the rim of the fountain. In the water two dragons are biting one another's tails so that they take the emblematic form of the Ouroboros. There are glass vessels in the waters of the fountain. Apart from the philosophers another crowd of lay men and women has also congregated. One man holds a sword and stares at a lion perched on the fountain-rim at the right. This creature signifies the oil of gold which is undergoing the process of distillation. It will presently experience an unhappy outcome.[26]

The first emblem in the *Rosarium* had also depicted a fountain, but the design of the one in the *Pandora* is far more complicated. In fact, it is a distant copy of a miniature located in an Italian manuscript of pseudo-Lullian texts, dated 1472 (MS Florence Biblioteca Nazionale-Centrale, II, iii, 27, f. 112r). The miniature was painted by the North Italian artist Gerolamo da Cremona who produced all of the illustrations in this manuscript. This same illustration was soon after copied into a manuscript of the late 15th century now located in S. Marco Library, Venice from where it migrated, in parallel, both into the *Ripley Scrowles* created in Lubeck in 1588 and into Reusner's *Pandora* of 1582.[27]

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[24] Reusner, *Pandora* (1588), p. 227.
[25] Faustius, *Pandora* (1706), fig. "K."
[26] Reusner, *Pandora* (1588), p. 213.
[27] See Urszula Szulakowska, "The Tree of Aristotle: Images of the Philosophers Stone and their Transference in Alchemy from the Fifteenth to the Twentieth Century," *Ambix. Journal of the Society for the History of Alchemy and Chemistry* (1986), pp. 53-77. See also Urszula Szulakowska, "The Pseudo-Lullian Origins of

In the following emblem in Reusner's *Pandora* a king and a queen are standing in a flask labelled "Mars" and "Venus," although they are not the metals iron and copper, but rather the two principles of sulphur and mercury. An Ouroboros in the vicinity takes the form of a bird and is perched above two more Ouroboros birds, biting one another's tails.[28] The product of the conjunction of the king and queen is displayed in the succeeding illustration where a crowned egg stands on a vase that sits on top of a dragon. This has a bird's body and male and female heads in both of its two tails.[29] The Ouroboros emblems in Reusner's *Pandora* are variants of a composition found originally in the second group of copies of the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* (the version produced in 1433).[30] The Ouroboros dragon originating in 1433 re-appears subsequently in Reusner's *Pandora* at the top of a tree where it encircles a double-headed imperial eagle hovering in the midst of eight rays emanating from a red and white star. Two horizontal rays descend to symbols of the sun and moon. Four rays from the star end in smaller stars, while two more rays fall into a pool of water beneath the tree. There are yet more types of Ouroboros in the *Pandora*, either taking the forms of birds, or appearing in scenes where there is more than one such dragon.

Moreover, in the second group of manuscript copies of the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* of 1433 there had appeared a different kind of Ouroboros, one lying on its back within a circle.[31] This image has similarly been conscripted into Reusner's *Pandora*.[32] A third distinctive Ouroboros type was originally found in the second group of copies of the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* (1433 version) from where it also made its way into Reusner's *Pandora.* The original version in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* had shown an alchemical flask surmounted by a

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George Ripley's Maps and Routes", *Cosmos*, 9, *Mapping Invisible Worlds* (University of Edinburgh, School of Scottish Studies, 1993), pp. 107-126.

[28] Reusner, *Pandora* (1588), p. 215.

[29] Reusner, *Pandora* (1588), p. 217. More alchemical equipment follows with imagery of distillation vessels, ovens and a bath and sandpit (page 219).

[30] See Obrist's second group of copies of *Das Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* in Obrist, *Les débuts de l'Imagerie Alchimique*, pp. 269-271. For Manchester John Rylands Library MSS Germ.1 see Obrist, *Les débuts de l'Imagerie Alchimique*, p. 274, fig. 14. Leiden Universiteits Bibliothek Codex Vossianus Chym. F. 29 and Wolfenbüttel Codex Guelf 188 Blankenberg are discussed in Obrist, *Les débuts de l'Imagerie Alchimique*, Plate 31, as well as in Junker, "'Das Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit'," fig. 28.

[31] The picture is found in the manuscript Manchester John Rylands Library MSS Germ.1, f. 10, as well as in Basel Universitätsbibliothek MSS LIV 1 (ca. 1550).

[32] Reusner, *Pandora* (1588), p. 257.

golden crown. In the flask there was an Ouroboros on top of whom there were perched two grey and silver birds. The flask had a red and silver border with three silver and three red eagles. The moon was shown on the left and the sun on the right.[33] The source of this third Ouroboros type was the *Aurora Consurgens*, according to Obrist, where the picture had also included the figure of a man. There is a copy of this particular Ouroboros in both Reusner's *Pandora* (1582; 1588) and also in the 1706 Faustius edition where a two-headed bird stands on a dragon, accompanied by the seven planets and the sun and moon.[34]

There exists a conceptual and visual relationship between the theme of the Ouroboros and that of the alchemical hermaphrodite, since the serpents in the scenes of the hermaphrodite occasionally adopt the form of the Ouroboros. The tail-biting snake has a double nature in the same manner as the hermaphrodite. The Ouroboros is similarly male and female, positive and negative in character. The circular format adopted by the snake, or by two birds in some cases, indicates that the dualities within the original prime matter of alchemy are in the process of being resolved into a unity. This is an essential stage during which the poisonous materials are purified and transformed into beneficial substances. The circular form of the Ouroboros also refers to the process of distillation whereby the gases released from prime matter are circulated in the flask and purified.

There is a distinctive sequence of illustrations in Reusner's *Pandora* illustrating the theme of the alchemical hermaphrodite. The repertoire has been extended and there are now four of them. The hermaphrodites of the *Pandora* allude in a general manner to the text of Revelation 12 and its author John. They continue to hold John's poisoned chalice containing the three snakes. The other apocalyptic attributes of the hermaphrodites include dragons, serpents and five-pointed stars. On either side of these figures there grow flowering trees representing the stages of the alchemical process. The flower-heads take the forms of the moon and the sun.

However, in the *Pandora* (1582; 1588) the first hermaphrodite is an original figure that owes nothing either to the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit,* or to the *Rosarium*. It is a robust crowned entity striding to the left, with Janus faces on the back and front of its head (male and

[33] Obrist, *Les débuts de l'Imagerie Alchimique,* pp. 273-274. Variants of the same are found in Leiden Bib. Univ. Vossianus Chym. F. 29, f. 73v and in Wolfenbüttel Codex Guelf 188 Blankenburg, f. 144. See Obrist, *Les débuts de l'Imagerie Alchimique*, Plate 32, as well as in Junker, "'Das Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit'," fig. 30.

[34] Reusner, *Pandora* (1588), pp. 241, 243.

female), while its body is half male and half female. Clad only in tights and a vest, it carries a sceptre.[35] The drawing is naïve in style and its vigour relates it to popular German artistic production of the late 16th century. The second hermaphrodite of the *Pandora* is copied directly from the second one in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* and in the *Rosarium.* It is winged with serpents twining up its legs. The male aspect is on the left half of the body and it holds a crowned sword, while on the right the queenly half holds up a crown. The figure stands on a two-headed dragon-bird with human faces embedded in its necks.[36] The third emblem of the hermaphrodite is also winged and this too is referencing the second hermaphrodite of the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* and the *Rosarium*. There is a five-pointed star in the sky (the quintessence). The female half holds the chalice with the three serpents, while the male holds a coiled Ouroboros. From the rocks on which the figure is standing there runs a pipe to the heads of a dragon, a practical detail related to the alchemical equipment in the process of distillation when the purified fluids are drawn off. There are seven sun-heads growing on a tree at the king's side and a tree with seven moons on the female side.[37]

The emblem of the fourth hermaphrodite is winged. This time the queen holds a chalice containing three birds representing the fixed volatile spirits. The kingly half holds a coiled Ouroboros signifying the perfection of the matter. On the king's side the tree is now flowering with five blossoms, as is the one on the queen's side. The flora refers to the fixed quintessence. At the feet of the hermaphrodite there is a dragon with a snake in its mouth. A seven-pointed star above signifies the seven metals. "Ignis" is written on the side of the king and "aqua" on the side of the queen.[38] The opposites signified by fire and water have been reconciled and transmuted into a higher single substance, the Stone of the Philosophers and the Elixir.

One particular image in Reusner's *Pandora* was taken straight out of the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* and it had not been admitted to the visual repertoire of the *Rosarium*. This is the emblem of the crowned Melusina holding a spear that pierces the left side of Christ. Blood pours out. The wounded figure has the traditional face of Christ, the Second Adam, but he is also intended to represent the First Adam, for Eve is also there with him. Behind Adam/Christ there is a large furnace containing

[35] Reusner, *Pandora* (1588), p. 221.
[36] Reusner, *Pandora* (1588), p. 223.
[37] Reusner, *Pandora* (1588), p. 225.
[38] Reusner, *Pandora* (1588), p. 247.

three flasks.[39] These allude to the three Paracelsian first principles of matter: Sulphur, Mercury, and Salt. The succeeding image of the coronation of the Virgin with the Imperial eagle is also copied directly from both the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* and the *Rosarium*.[40] It carries the same significance of the perfecting of the quintessence to create the silver-tingeing form of the Elixir.

The *Pandora* was subsequently re-edited by Johann Michael Faustius (1663-1707) with a greatly elaborated text including the nineteen illustrations re-drawn by an inept hand.[41] Manuscript copies exist both of the Reusner *Pandora* and of the Faustius version. These hand-drawn images vary greatly in graphic skill, being naïve in form which in itself indicates that they are unconfident copies of an original printed version. This had also happened in the case of the *Rosarium*. The main compensation for the deplorable artistic qualities of the manuscript copies is the fact that they are coloured which serves to illuminate more details concerning the alchemical processes being described. The printed images are also commonly encountered with added colour put on by hand.

The new edition by Faustius was renamed the *Compendium alchymisticum novum, sive Pandora explicata* ... (Frankfurt; Leipzig: Johann Zieger, 1706).[42] Faustius was a medical practitioner from Frankfurt and a member of the "Academia naturae curiosorum." He was acquainted with the work of Robert Boyle the English chemist, but his main interest was in the writings of the anonymous alchemist Eireneaus Philalethes, so that he

[39] Reusner, *Pandora* (1588), p. 235.
[40] Reusner, *Pandora* (1588), p. 237.
[41] Other works of his include Johann Michael Faust, *Quaestionum de visu dodecas, In Academia Argentoratensi ad disputandum proposita, praeside D. D. Jo. Valent. Scheid* ... A Jo. Michaele Faustio, Argentorat. med. stud. A. et R. ... (1684); Johann Michael Faustius, *Quaestionum de visu dodecas* (Johann Valentin Scheid, 1684); Johann Michael Faustius, *Dissertatio inauguralis medica, oeiptarmou; sive, De sternutatione* (1688); Johann Michael Faustius, *Philaletha illustratus, sive, Introitus apertus ad occlusum regis palatium, novis quibusdam animadversionibus explanatus* ... (4 eds. 1706-28).
[42] The full citation is Johann Michaelis Faustij, *Compendium alchymist. novum, sive, Pandora explicata & figuris jllustrata, das ist, Die edelste Gabe Gottes, oder, Ein güldener Schatz mit welchem die alten und neuen Philosophi, die unvollkommene Metall, durch Gewalt des Feuers verbessert, und allerhand schädliche und unheylsame Kranckheiten innerlich und äusserlich, durch deren Würckung vertrieben haben : dieser Edition wird annoch, nebst vielen Kupffern und über 800 Philosophischen Anmerckungen, ein volkom̃enes Lexicon alchymisticum novum, und ein vollständiges Register rerum & verborum, beygefüget* (Verlegts Johann Zieger in Franckfurt und Leipzig, 1706).

journeyed to England to investigate him further. Faustius edited an edition of Philalethes' *Introitus Apertus ad occlusum regis palatium* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Johann Philipp Andrea, 1706). In the *Pandora* Faustius cites traditional authorities such as John of Rupescissa and Johannes Aurelius Augurellus (1441–1524). Of equal importance to Faustius, however, are the ideas of his contemporary alchemistical colleagues whose texts are referenced abundantly, alongside his own commentaries on the illustrations of the *Pandora*. Faustius publishes extracts from the alchemists so that the treatise reads as a compendium of authoritative selections. This is much like the format of the *Rosarium*. Paracelsus is frequently cited by name and the concept of the three parts of matter, Sulphur, Mercury, Salt, is fundamental, with especial emphasis on the role of the Salt. There are many extracts from Paracelsian disciples such as Michael Sendivogius (1566–1636), a practical chemist with an international reputation who authored *De Lapide Philosophorum Tractatus duodecim e naturae fonte et manuali experientia depromti* (1604), better known as *Novum Lumen Chymicum*. Faustius has also included extracts from the less well-known work of the Pomeranian jurist and alchemist Johannes Grasseus (Grasshoff, Grasshof or Grasse) (ca.1560–1623) whose publications included the *Aperta Arca arcani artificiosissimi* (1617) and *Cabala Chymica* (1658), as well as, perhaps, *Dyas chymica tripartita* (1625).

One of the visual images found in both the Reusner and the Faustius *Pandora* is an adaptation of the iconography of the Immaculate Conception (fig. 7-11).[43] In this picture there are shown two female figures. On the left (labelled A) a naked woman with wings signifies the volatile spirits. At her feet there appear the sun and moon and she stands on a knight's crest below which there stands a heraldic shield (labelled C). It is decorated with an emblem of a white bird standing on the back of a black bird. There is also a Rebis dragon with male and female crowned heads at the tip of its tail. The entire alchemical process is present in this emblem which describes the sexual union of mercury and sulphur (moon and sun), their death, purification and their resurrection to a higher spiritual level as the Rebis, the hermaphroditic Stone. This is indicated by the title of the picture with its references to putrefaction, sublimation and coagulation.

[43] Also found in Reusner's *Pandora* (1588), p. 231. In the Faustius, *Pandora* (1706) this is figure "M." There is no pagination provided for the Faustius woodcuts which are labelled alphabetically and are gathered together at the end of the treatise.

Fig. 7-11 The "Old" and "New" Eves in Michael Faustius, *Pandora* (Frankfurt, 1706), fig. "M." With the permission of the British Library: Shelf-mark 1152. a. 23

To the right of the naked woman (A) there stands another figure (labelled B), that of a robed female holding a stone above her head. She is burning in the flames of a fire, with the rays of the sun shining around her. Seven stars appear beside her, so that there are present all of the attributes of the Apocalyptic Woman, apart from the Child. The seven stars represent the seven metals. She is crowned. She too stands on a knight's crest and the heraldic shield beneath (labelled D) shows a sun's head and a black bird hovering over a white one which perches on an Ouroboros dragon. The two women represent the silver and red elixirs, as is explained in the accompanying text entitled "generatio elixir albi et rubi" which is a dissertation on the alchemical water. The commentary states that "A" (the naked female) is the mother of the Stone, the fixed made fluid, while "B" (the clothed queen) is the fluid made fixed and the mean of the philosophers, the daughter of the Stone. "C" is a green shield and teaches the manner in which the volatile [spirits] are contained. "D" is a brown shield with the bird of Hermes which [if comprehended], according to the Text, "then I too can call it and know that it is a wise bird.

There is a significant change in the gender relations described in the *Pandora* since the female principle in this particular case has been elevated to represent the red elixir (or tincture) rather than, as was the case in the *Rosarium*¸ the emblem of the resurrected Christ being used to signify the elixir. This is the first time that both the white and the red elixirs, or tinctures, have been signified by female figures. Even so, this is an exception to the rule. The possible reason for the momentary rise in importance of the feminine gender is that both of these figures bear some of the attributes of the Immaculate Conception. Whenever the Virgin Mary enters the discourse of alchemy, then the feminine symbology is boosted to a more equal level in relation to the masculine signifiers, in this case the feminine gender even usurps the primacy of the masculine symbolic order, at least temporarily.

The naked woman carries the globe of the earth which is always located in Catholic iconography beneath the feet of Mary Immaculate. The stars of the second clothed female recall the corona of stars around the head of the Immaculate Conception. The aura of fiery flames is an attribute of both the apocalyptic Mary and of the Immaculate. Moreover, these two females are types modelled on the Catholic iconography of the Old and New Eves, the "Old" Eve of the Garden of Eden, the naked figure, and the "New" Eve, the crowned and robed queen, who was the Virgin Mary. The early Church Father, Irenaeus, (early second C-ca. 202 AD) in his *Adversus Haereses* (ca. 180) (an attack on the Gnostics) wrote about this association of Mary with Eve.

> So the knot of Eve's disobedience was loosed through the obedience of Mary; for what Eve, a virgin, bound by her unbelief, that Mary, a virgin, unloosed by her faith.[44]

While, Jerome (ca. 347-420) Doctor of the Church, stated succinctly, "Death by Eve, life by Mary."[45]

There is another disguised Marian emblem in the *Pandora,* of a crowned woman, and it appears both in Reusner's edition and in the Faustius 1706 version (fig. "S").[46] The woodcut is labelled "elixir album" and "tres facies in uno homine" (a man with three faces). At the woman's feet is a label explaining that she represents the "mercurius fixus" (fig. 7-12). There are other inscriptions stating that we are dealing here with "our mercury." The image of the Virgin Mary had been used to signify mercury in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* and in the *Rosarium.* The mention of the "man with three faces" is reminiscent of archaic Catholic emblems where the Holy Trinity was depicted as a figure with three faces. This iconographic type fell out of favour in Renaissance art, but the mention of such a form here is an allusion to the alchemical Holy Trinity. The inscription concerning the "three in one" infers that the woman below is another type of the alchemical Mary shown in her relation to an invisible Trinity as inferred in the title.

As in the image of the two Marys/ Eves she also carries the globe of the earth in her hands, labelled as such in German. The woman, "A," wears a white dress and she carries a dragon labelled "B" which the text explains is the "Salz" (Salt). Here, therefore, the three principles of matter are the three Paracelsian ones. In the commentary "A" is said to represent the white elixir for the silver work. Her feet are placed on the "fons aureus" (gold fountain) on the left and on the "fons argenteus" (silver fountain) on the right. There is a star above her crown. The source of this illustration is the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* of 1433, as in Stockholm National Museum of Sweden MS B 1587 which has a miniature of a crowned female figure, the sun in her right hand and a dragon in her left.

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[44] Irenaeus, "Adversus Haereses," III, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1. Edited by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson and A. Cleveland Coxe (Buffalo, New York: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885).

[45] Jerome, "Letter 22" in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, second series, 6. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Buffalo, New York: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1893).

[46] Faustius, *Pandora*, fig. "S."

Fig. 7-12 The "elixir album" in Michael Faustius, *Pandora* (Frankfurt, 1706), fig. "S." With the permission of the British Library: Shelf-mark 1152. a. 23

Her feet are set in two basins taking the shape of lead coffins which are connected by a pipe and two feathered wings appear behind the basins.[47] This same image is also found in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifalitgkeit* in Codex Manchester John Rylands Library, German MS 1, f. 10v.[48]

The woodcut of the Coronation of the Virgin Mary shows the unorthodox Marian Trinity in which Mary replaces the Holy Spirit within the Godhead. The various labels explain that God the Father is "Sapientia" (Wisdom), the Virgin Mary is the "Corpus" (body) and Christ is "Anima" (soul). The four evangelists around the scene represent the four elements. The picture is entitled "Imbibitio Corporis" (the feeding of the body, one of the final stages of the alchemical work).[49]

There are four alchemical hermaphrodites in the Faustius *Pandora*¸ as in Reusner's. The first is the powerful image of a large figure striding energetically across the page to the viewer's left.[50] It is dressed only in a parti-coloured vest and tights and it is not winged in order to indicate that it is the impure base matter. The figure is crowned and it carries a lily-headed sceptre. The lily motif in medieval iconography is an attribute of both the Virgin Mary and of Christ. Here the lily symbolises the alchemical trinity of Salt, Mercury, Sulphur, for the text refers to "generatio in trium principiorum" (generation in the three principles). The second hermaphrodite in the *Pandora* is much like its prototype in the *Rosarium*.[51] A snake with a man's head twines itself up the leg of the king and another with a woman's head appears on the queen's side. The wings of the figure are those of a bat as in the second hermaphrodite of the *Rosarium* on which the emblem in the *Pandora* is closely modelled. The king bears a sword surmounted by a crown and the queen carries another crown. Under their feet there is a double-headed, long-legged dragon. The text states that this is the "rebis hermaphrodit" [sic].

The third hermaphrodite is also very similar to the one in the *Rosarium*.[52] It is called "Rebis. Putrefactio" and it describes the decomposition of the conjoined alchemical sulphur and mercury. The male is a bearded man and the female on the right shares his crown and tunic. It is the queenly half this time which holds the chalice with the three snakes, unlike the scene in the *Rosarium,* while the king carries the Ouroboros. The trees beside the figure bear seven suns on the king's side and seven moons on

[47] Obrist, *Les débuts de l'Imagerie Alchimique*, fig. 92.
[48] Obrist, *Les débuts de l'Imagerie Alchimique*, p. 274, fig. 16.
[49] Faustius, *Pandora*, fig. "P."
[50] Faustius, *Pandora*, fig. "G."
[51] Faustius, *Pandora*, fig. "H."
[52] Faustius, *Pandora*, fig. "I."

the tree beside the queen. The king is standing on a stone labelled "Der Stein des golds" (the gold-making Stone). The queen is standing on a stone labelled "Der Stein des silbers" (the silver-making Stone). Huge bat-like wings rise above the head of the figure and a five pointed star is placed in their midst. The fourth hermaphrodite is labelled "perfectio operis."[53] An old crowned king looks to the left. He clutches a snake. The female half carries a chalice but the three snakes have now been transformed into birds to indicate that the quintessence has been released and purified from the venomous "menstruum." The wings on the back of the figure have also transformed into those of a bird. There stands a tree on each side bearing five flowers and there is a dragon underneath carrying another serpent in its mouth. The star of the quintessence shines above them.

The four hermaphrodites are chronicling the sequence of transformations in the alchemical process from the base matter represented by the first figure to the perfected work in the last. The poisonous venom is transmuted into the shining quintessence and the wings of the figures signify the spiritualization of base matter. The sun and moon trees depict the process of gold and silver transmutation by means of the Stone, or the elixir made from it. They also allude to the transmutation of the six imperfect metals into the imperishable condition of gold.

The illustrations in Reusner's *Pandora* (1582; 1588), as well as those in Faustius' edition are frequently reproduced in contemporary popular works on alchemy, usually out of context and solely for their exotic appeal. No scholar as yet has initiated a thorough research programme so that their real intellectual and artistic value may be revealed, as well as their historic importance. Even in comparison to the publications of Khunrath, Maier and Mylius the two versions of the *Pandora* impress with their imaginative scope.

Only the luminous vision of Robert Fludd outshines the conceptual range of these alchemical authors, as does the grandeur of Jacob Boehme's alchemical cosmos. Both of these philosophers functioned within a different intellectual realm from their alchemical predecessors and peers who had remained caught within the microcosm of the laboratory. The laboratory of Fludd and Boehme was the universe in which the Virgin Mary assumed the roles of the Holy Virgin Nature, the Cosmic Woman with the crescent moon, and, even more profoundly, the role of the creative power of God. Earlier Paracelsus had argued that the Virgin Mary had always been present within the Godhead and that she had never become an earthly creation. She existed eternally and integrally within the

[53] Faustius, *Pandora*, fig. "T."

Hypostatic Union of the Holy Trinity. To Paracelsus the earthly Mary was not a material creature. She was an incarnation of “Sophia,” “Weisheit,” Holy Wisdom in hypostatic union within the Godhead.

CHAPTER EIGHT

MARY AS SOPHIA, THE HOLY VIRGIN, IN PARACELSIAN THEOSOPHY

In Christian theology Sophia (Gk. "Σοφία") is the personification of the Wisdom of God the Father. The concept originated in the Hebrew Scriptures and in the Greek translation known as the "Septuagint" the term "Hochmah" (חכמות) was translated as "Sophia" (Wisdom).[1] The Old Testament books dealing with the theme of Divine Wisdom are Proverbs, Psalms, the Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, as well as the apocryphal texts of Wisdom, Wisdom of Syracides and, in parts, Baruch. Recent theologians such as Joan Chamberlain Engelsman[2] and Rosemary Radford Ruether[3] have argued that the Hebrew sources should not be misread as asserting that Wisdom was equal to God, nor that she was a God in her own right.

The doctrine of Holy Wisdom was central to both Roman Catholic and Eastern Christian teachings, as well as to the Gnostic religions. "Sophia" was initially identified with Christ, the "Word" of John 1: 1-5, who had created the universe. However, the Book of Proverbs had feminized Wisdom, while the Book of Wisdom had described her as the Bride of God and the Co-Creator of all existence. Hence, the Christian identification of Wisdom with Christ read awkwardly, particularly since

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[1] The Latin "septuaginta" means seventy. This is the name for the primary translation into Koine Greek of the "Tanakh," the canonical Jewish Scriptures.

[2] Joan Chamberlain Engelsman, "Sophia: the Gnostic archetype of feminine soul-wisdom" in Shirley Nicholson (ed.), *The Goddess re-awakening: the feminine principle today* (Wheaton, Ill.: Theosophical Publishing House, 1989), pp. 95-120.

[3] Ruether, *Goddesses and the Divine Feminine*, pp. 90-97, 127-131; see pages 137-139 for the Church as Christ's Bride, as in Ephesians 5:26-27. For Origen on the Song of Songs see Ruether, *Goddesses and the Divine Feminine*, pp. 138-142. For Gregory of Nyssa on the Song of Songs and St. Jerome see Ruether, *Goddesses and the Divine Feminine*, pp. 142 ff, as well as the patristic theology concerning Mary in the New Testament in *Ibid*, pp. 146-158. The first mention of Mary's redemptive role is encountered in the *Protoevangelium of James*, the Infancy Narrative, along with the story of Joachim and Anna, see in Ruether, *Goddesses and the Divine Feminine*, pp. 151-152.

the Latin word "Sophia" was feminine. In addition, the Wisdom of Syracides 24:14 states that Wisdom was "created in the beginning." This statement does not apply to Christ since in the dogma of the Holy Trinity the Second Person, the Son of God, was begotten, not created.

Even more serious theological problems arose when the identification of Sophia was transferred to the figure of the Virgin Mary, for Christ was God incarnate, whereas Mary was mortal. Hence, she could not be identified with Holy Wisdom in exactly the same manner as Christ. Nonetheless, at an early date the first Church Fathers perceived in the figure of the Mary the qualities traditionally associated with the scriptural Sophia. The Virgin Mary was believed to be filled with the divine qualities of Holy Wisdom since she had agreed to be the mother of God's incarnated Son.[4] In Hebrew texts such as Sirach 24:14 God the Creator was mentioned as resting in the tabernacle of Wisdom. Early Christian theologians interpreted this passage as referring to the divine motherhood of Mary "Theotokos" ("God-bearer"). The recognized doctors of the Catholic Church, in particular Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) (and a later theologian, Alphonsus Liguori (1696-1787)) concluded that Sophia was the celestial model for God's creation of the earthly Mary. However, they firmly denied that Sophia was the same entity as Mary. Even more urgently, Christian scholars have always denied that Sophia was a Fourth Person in a hypostatic union with the Holy Trinity.

Despite such protests, ancient or modern, the Wisdom Scriptures and the theology of Mary as the Bride of God did lend themselves to such misreading. Indeed, they were so misread by Renaissance Hermeticists, in particular by Paracelsus, Weigel, Boehme and Fludd. Some theosophists in the 16th and 17th centuries identified Sophia with Mary and even made changes in the orthodox dogma of the Trinitarian God. Paracelsus and after him Valentin Weigel transformed Mary into a divine being, eternally present within the union of the Holy Trinity. They argued that Mary herself was the manifestation, though not the incarnation, of Holy Sophia who had never abandoned her divine nature during her presence on earth. Wisdom had never, in any way, become a physical human-being

In the Eastern and Western Churches Mary was regarded as being the most perfect creation of God, free of original sin, higher than the angels and elevated far above human-kind. She was awarded all the qualities of Holy Wisdom as drawn from the Hebrew Scriptures, though she was not herself the Holy Wisdom. Since at least the 8th century the Church had

[4] Sophia was depicted as an enthroned Queen in Eastern Orthodoxy, as well as in the visual imagery of the Roman Catholic mystic Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179).

drawn on the Wisdom texts from Proverbs, Wisdom and Syracides in prayers and liturgies dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Most especially in the wide-spread monastic and private devotion of the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary where she is made to speak a passage from Syracides 24: 24-28.

> [24] I am the mother of fair love, and of fear, and of knowledge, and of holy hope. [25] In me is all grace of the way and of the truth, in me is all hope of life and of virtue. [26] Come over to me, all you that desire me, and be filled with my fruits. [27] For my spirit is sweet above honey, and my inheritance above honey and the honeycomb. [28] My memory is unto everlasting generations.
> (Little Office of the BVM)[5]

The Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a shorter form of the Divine Office (Hours) of the Virgin Mary. This is a cycle of daily prayers modelled on monastic devotions. The Little Office seems to have originated in the mid-8th century and it was first prayed by the Benedictine monks of Monte Cassino.[6] The Benedictine Peter Damian (ca. 1007 – 1072/73) encouraged the introduction of the Little Office into other monastic houses in Italy. By the 14th century the Little Office was obligatory for all clergy and was commonly practised also by the laity. The Office was standardized by Pope Pius V in 1585. The prayers said on each day of the week develop the theology of the incarnation of Christ in which Mary is bride and mother.

> Truly, you are blessed among women,
> because, though a woman by nature,
> you will become, in reality, God's mother.
> If he whom you are to bear is truly God made flesh,
> then rightly do we call you God's mother.
> For you have truly given birth to God.
> (Little Office of the BVM)[7]

There is also a reference to Mary as the “Second Eve”.

> Truly, "you are blessed among women."
> For you have changed Eve's curse into a blessing;

[5] See online http://www.liturgies.net/Liturgies/Catholic/LittleOffice.htm (retrieved 16. 10. 2016)
[6] Benedict of Nursia, the founder of western monasticism, lived in ca. 480-543/47.
[7] http://www.liturgies.net/Liturgies/Catholic/LittleOffice.htm (retrieved 16. 10. 2016)

and Adam, who hitherto lay under a curse,
has been blessed because of you.
(Little Office of the BVM)[8]

Then, there are allusions to Mary's role as the eternal Bride of God and as the temple of Holy Wisdom and sanctuary of the Holy Spirit.

The Lord has chosen her,
his loved one from the beginning.
- The Lord has chosen her,
his loved one from the beginning.
He has taken her to live with him,
- his loved one from the beginning …
(Little Office of the BVM)
I bow before you, Virgin of virgins,
resting-place of the divine Bridegroom,
temple of eternal Wisdom,
sanctuary of the Holy Spirit,
palace of the Blessed Trinity …
Who can ever do justice to your glory,
to your Queenship of grace?
(Little Office of the BVM)[9]

Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria (ca. 296/8 –373), stated that through communion and union with the Word Mary's mortal body on her death had been made immortal. Although it was a living body it had become a spiritual one. Though it was made from the earth it had passed through the gates of heaven.[10] According to Aelred, the Cistercian abbot of Rievaulx (1109-67), Mary as the mother of Christ was the mother of human wisdom and justice, of humanity's holiness and redemption. [11]

In another popular prayer of the Catholic Church known as the Litany of Loreto the Virgin Mary was awarded the attribute of the "Seat of Wisdom." The Litany of Loreto, designated after its place of origin, was

[8] http://www.liturgies.net/Liturgies/Catholic/LittleOffice.htm (retrieved 16. 10. 2016)
[9] http://www.liturgies.net/Liturgies/Catholic/LittleOffice.htm (retrieved 16. 10. 2016)
[10] From a letter by Athanasius (Bishop), *Epist. Ad Epictetum*, 5-9 in Jacques Paul Migne (ed.), *Patrologia Graeca* (PG), 26, cols. 1058, 1062-1066 (in *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, 1857-).
[11] From a sermon by Aelred (Abbot), *Sermo 20*, *Nativitate beatiae Mariae* in Jacques Paul Migne (ed.), *Patrologia Latina* (PL), pp. 195, 322-24 (in *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, 1844-55).

first recorded in 1558. The Litany was approved in 1587 by Pope Sixtus V. In this prayer Mary is called

> Health of the sick,
> Refuge of sinners,
> Comfort of the afflicted …[12]

The Litany of Loreto lists the three most popular Marian iconographic types

> Queen conceived without original sin
> [Immaculate Conception]
>
> Queen assumed into heaven
> [Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary]
>
> Queen of the most holy Rosary
> [Dominican Queen of the Rosary] …[13]

Paracelsus wrote several unpublished tracts on the Virgin Mary of a radical and unorthodox character. The most irregular texts such as those concerning Christ's body, or the divinity of Mary as Sophia have been made available by scholars only very recently. It is debatable how much was known about the religious views of Paracelsus in his own time, even by his most devoted followers. The historian of Paracelsian alchemy and theosophy, Walter Pagel, has characterized the theological speculations of Paracelsus and his followers as "gnostic" on the model of the late antique religious currents in which Christian and pagan Greek ideas were united. These beliefs developed outside the jurisdiction of the Pauline Church that had become the official cult of the Roman Empire. According to Carlos Gilly, it was Abraham von Frankenberg who first spied the similarity between the religious ideas of Paracelsus and the gnostic teachings of the heretic Valentinus (ca. 100-ca. 160AD). Paracelsus had no respect, observes Gilly, for Luther and Zwingli, nor for the Pope, as was reported by his medical assistant Oporinus. Instead, he aimed at an inner spiritual condition in which any person could develop their relationship with God, free of all interference on the part of the Churches.[14] Despite the caution of

[12] See https://www.ewtn.com/faith/teachings/maryd6f.htm (retrieved 17. 10. 2016)
[13] See https://www.ewtn.com/faith/teachings/maryd6f.htm (retrieved 17. 10. 2016)
[14] Carlos Gilly, "'Theophrastia Sancta' – Paracelsianism as a Religion in Conflict with the Established Churches" in Ole Peter Grell (ed.), *Paracelsus: The Man and*

Paracelsus in releasing his extreme theological writings for public consumption, Protestant theologians managed to discern heresies in the religious ideas already present within his published medical texts.

The printed editions of Paracelsian medicine and natural philosophy appeared in Basel, Cologne and Strasburg where they roused increasing opposition on grounds of heresy. Thomas Erastus weighed in against Paracelsus in 1571-72 and went as far as requiring the death penalty for his followers, since he found Paracelsus to be the most extreme heretic that he had ever encountered. As Gilly narrates, Erastus had not, in fact, read any of the theological texts, only the letter written by Oporinus in 1565 which described Paracelsus' attitude towards religion. The followers of Paracelsus such as Bodenstein and Toxites simply disregarded the theological works such as the spurious *Philosophia ad Athenienses,* lest their notoriety impede the further publication of the Paracelsian medical corpus. Others distanced themselves from these views, while a few such as Bernard Penot supported the religious validity of Paracelsus' spiritual concepts. Alexander von Suchten similarly asserted that Paracelsus's theological works were directly inspired by God. These Paracelsian ideas merged into the general discourse of the "Theologia Deutsch," a religious current of marginalized theologians from the 14th century, including those such as Casper Schwenckfeld (1489/90-1561). The major disciple of the Paracelsian Theophrastic religion was Valentin Weigel (1533- 88) (although recent research has rejected as spurious most of the texts formerly attributed to him.)

Among the secret teachings of Paracelsus and pseudo-Paracelsus some have only recently come to light. Dane T. Daniel has now examined the gnostic and docetic doctrines in Paracelsus' treatise on the Last Supper, *De Cena Domini, ex Psalterio* (1530). In this unpublished manuscript Paracelsus produced a new theological account of the flesh of Jesus Christ.[15] He proposed that Christ and the saints, including the Virgin Mary, had two kinds of flesh, the earthly type and a non-human spiritual and subtle form and that they co-existed in time. The human flesh would perish and would not inherit immortality, an assertion that contradicted the teachings of the Church. Paracelsus was loosely interpreting Paul's teaching concerning the "glorious body" which Christians would acquire

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his Reputation, his Ideas and their Transformation (Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp. 151-186.

[15] Dane T. Daniel, "Paracelsus on the "new creation" and demonic magic: misunderstandings, oversights, and false accusations in his early reception" in Allison B. Kavey (ed.) *World-Building and the Early Modern Imagination* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 5-33.

at the General Resurrection. Baptism in the Holy Spirit was essential, stated Paracelsus, because it was this sacrament that bestowed the eternal flesh of Christ on humanity. Lacking baptism this glorified flesh would not be available and the unbaptised human could never enter eternity. The "new creation" proclaimed by Paul in 2 Corinthians 5 was interpreted by Paracelsus as a new stuff reuniting soul and body in the same form as that taken by Christ at his resurrection. The Eucharistic bread and wine were also composed of the same substance. Christ would remake humanity from his own body and blood, as in Matthew 26. 26-27 where Christ breaks the bread and tells them to eat it, for this is his body and blood. Paracelsus regarded this action as being the creation of the new immortal human body.[26]

There was a Monophysite aspect to Paracelsus' theology in his denial that Christ had a dual nature, both divine and human. Paracelsus argued that Christ's flesh was a heavenly flesh like that of the angels and that he did not take on a mortal human body when he was born of Mary. He remained undefiled, a virgin born of a virgin. Mary's flesh similarly was not human, for she had received an immaculate body made by Christ for the new creation (Paracelsus, *Astronomia Magna*, III, 1571).

Some of Paracelsus' disciples may have had access to the manuscripts of these unorthodox works. Weigel certainly appears to have been familiar with them since his own doctrine of the Eucharist, published in the late 1610s, was similar to that of Paracelsus. Weigel, a Lutheran pastor in Zschopau, regarded Luther, the Pope, Zwingli and the other established Reformers as forms of the Antichrist and he considered that his own role as a pastor was futile. He held the view that each person embodied a spark of the divine and, hence, no-one required the paraphernalia of the established Churches, including Scripture and theology. Knowledge of God (gnosis) arose intuitively.[16] After the death of Weigel some of his writings on the Book of Revelation were published in Halle (1609).

Gilly attributed the first public use of the name "Theophrastia Sancta" to the Paracelsian Benedictus Figulus who first employed the name in his preface to the *Pandora magnalium naturalium aurea et benedicta* (1608) where he described himself as a student of the "Sacrosancta Theophrastia" and of the immortal philosophy of Christ." However, Gilly finds the actual origins of the term in the manuscripts of Adam Haselmayer from Tyrol (ca. 1550-after 1617). With time, the term "theosophy" has come to be

[16] Valentin Weigel, *Selected Spiritual Writings, Classics of Western Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 2003). See also Wilhelm E. Peuckert and Wilhelm Zeller (eds.), *Valentin Weigel: Sämtliche Schriften*, 5 (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1962-1978).

used by historians for the radical theological ideas that drew elements from ancient pagan religions. In the earlier Christian centuries "theosophy" as a term had been used interchangeably with "theology." It was only in the 16th and the 17th centuries that the term began to be used in reference to the Hermetic currents activated in the 15th century by the Latin translations from late Greek mystical texts made by Marsilio Ficino (1433-99). The name "theosophy" came to refer to a type of spiritual practice in which each individual sought inner guidance in their quest for the divine. The ideas involved were drawn from pagan Hermetic teachings, Christian kabbalism, alchemy, astrology, astral magic and often also from the most fervent Christian convictions. Jacob Boehme (1575-1624) is a prime example of such a philosopher/theologian employing all of these pagan and Christian sources in his work.

The authentic Paracelsian theology that appeared in print was unremarkable in comparison to the unpublished and often spurious teachings. The published materials included commentaries on the Books of Daniel and Isaiah, the Ten Commandments, Psalms and the Gospel of Matthew. Paracelsus wrote on issues being discussed in the course of the early Lutheran Reformation, such as, the historical validity of the sacraments of baptism, penitence, matrimony, as well as Christian ethics. However, more radically and in secret Paracelsus incorporated the Gospels into his own theories of natural philosophy and magic and altered the established doctrines. Both the authentic and the spurious writings, especially the *Paramirum* texts and the *Book on the Generation of Sensible Things* contain the most irregular Marian theology.[17]

Paracelsus diverged from Luther's Mariology which at first had been little more than moderated Catholic doctrine. Luther's position eventually hardened into a definitive rejection of any supplications being addressed to Mary and the saints, for the reason that this usurped the intercessory role of Christ. In most other respects Luther did not distance his own Marian concepts too far from the original Catholic doctrines in which he had been raised. As a result the Lutheran confession admitted such teachings as that of the Immaculate Conception and the perpetual virginity of Mary.[18] After

[17] Andrew Weeks, *Paracelsus: Speculative Theory and the Crisis of the Early Reformation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), pp. 10, 79, 80-89, 110. See also John R. Partington, *A History of Chemistry*, 2 (London: Macmillan, 1961), pp. 115-151. And also see Walter Pagel, *Paracelsus. An Introduction to philosophical medicine in the era of the Renaissance* (Basel; London: Karger, 1982), pp. 130-158, 267-269.

[18] Eric W. Gritsch, "The Views of Luther and Lutheranism on the Veneration of Mary" in H. George Anderson, J. Francis Stafford and Joseph A. Burgess (eds.),

1516 Luther taught that Christ was the sole redeemer of human-kind and the only mediator between humans and God, not Mary and the saints.[19] Concerning the assumption of the Virgin Mary, body and soul, into heaven Luther stated that there was nothing about this in the Scriptures, although he continued to refer to Mary as the "Queen of Heaven," while being cautious in employing this title. Luther's main ideas are found in his *Commentary* on the *Magnificat* where Mary is venerated solely as the Virgin mother of the Son of God.[20]

Paracelsus launched into a defence of the cult status of the Virgin Mary in 1524 and also of the saints, although (according to Andrew Weeks) his Mariology was not Lutheran, but largely of his own devising.[21] In the same manner as Luther Paracelsus defended Mary's role in Christ's work of human salvation, with the difference that whereas Luther demoted Mary and removed her from prayer, Paracelsus, on the contrary, elevated her status to one in which she became the divine Sophia, the Bride of God the Father. Paracelsus never published his treatise *De invocatione beatae Mariae virginis* (written in the late 1530s), but his ideas were circulated in five manuscript copies between 1560 and 1610.[22] In his short treatises *De invocatione Beatae Mariae Virginis* and *De Virgine Sancta Theotoca* Paracelsus insisted that Mary as Sophia had existed eternally within God's own being. Hence, Mary was a divine principle in her own right, not merely a created object.[23] Similarly, in his account of the Trinity Paracelsus exhibited other vagaries in his arguments.[24] In the *Liber de Sancta Trinitate* he put forward the idea that God was at first only one, but then he created a Trinity out of his own original unity. This is not orthodox Christian doctrine which teaches that the Triune God has existed as such

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The One Mediator, The Saints, and Mary, *Lutherans and Roman Catholic in Dialogue*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1992), pp. 235-248, 379-384.

[19] Earlier, Luther had insisted on Mary's role as mediatrix as in Catholic thought, see Hartmann Grisar, *Martin Luther*. Translated by E.M. Lamond. Edited by Luigi Cappadelta, 6 vols. (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co. 1915), 4, pp. 502-503.

[20] This belief was officially confessed by Lutherans in their Formula of Concord, Article VIII 24, see Theodore G. Tappert, *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), p. 595.

[21] Weeks, *Paracelsus* (1997), p. 79.

[22] Katharina Biegger, "*De invocatione beatae Mariae virginis": Paracelsus und die Marienverehrung (Kosmosophie. Forschungen und Texte zur Geschichte des Weltbildes*, *Der Naturphilosophie, Der Mystik und des Spirituelismus vom Spatmittelalter bis zur Romantik*, VI) (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1990). The edited text is on pages 150-191.

[23] Weeks, *Paracelsus*, p. 80

[24] Weeks, *Paracelsus*, p. 83.

forever and that the Second Person of the Son is "eternally begotten, not created" from God the Father. The Holy Spirit in Western Catholic doctrine proceeds from both the Father and the Son eternally. In contrast, Paracelsus specifically describes the transformation of one God into two Persons-in-One so that he can transform the Virgin Mary into a divine principle in hypostatic union with God. Together Mary/Sophia and God the Father generate the Second Person of the Son and the Third Person of the Holy Spirit, so that there are effectively four Persons in the Godhead.[25] These last two Persons are generated not directly out of God the Father, as was Mary/Sophia, but from a union between God and Mary/Sophia.[26]

In contrast, the earthly Mary, the mother of Christ, Paracelsus argued, was a manifestation on earth of eternal Sophia, though not her earthly incarnation. Sophia did not become a material being.[27] Paracelsus argued that, although Mary was a created creature, she was not created from earthly materials. Through-out the *De invocatione BMV* Paracelsus contrasts the heavenly Mary with her earthly daughter Eve who had been made of earth and eventually returned to earth, whereas Mary was made of heavenly materials and was restored to heaven at her assumption.[28] Paracelsus distinguishes Mary absolutely, in every possible way, from earthly Eve and her daughters since it was Mary who gave birth to God. Thus, she could never have been a mere creature of earth.[29] Paracelsus turns to the biblical text of Ecclesiastes 24 in which Divine Wisdom (Sophia) speaks of herself in words adopted by the Catholic Church as attributes of the Virgin Mary.[30] Paracelsus totally acquiesces with this traditional Catholic teaching, but he reads the text far more literally than was ever permissible in any Catholic context. The result is that, according to Paracelsus, Mary at the incarnation of Christ was not merely filled with the Holy Spirit. More than that, she was and always had been Divine Wisdom herself, the eternal Bride of the Holy Trinity, temporarily manifest on earth but retaining her celestial substance and supernatural qualities. Sophia may have descended to earth in the person of Mary, but in no way was she ever prone to sin and corruption. Mary was not human, in short. She was not the daughter of Joachim and Anna, but of God alone. To this end, Paracelsus sought support from the words of Divine Wisdom in Ecclesiastes 24, as if it was Mary speaking about herself.

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[25] Weeks, *Paracelsus*, p. 83.
[26] Weeks, *Paracelsus*, p. 88.
[27] Biegger, "De invocatione beatae Mariae virginis," pp. 23-28, 49-56.
[28] Biegger, "De invocatione beatae Mariae virginis," p. 160.
[29] Biegger, "De invocatione beatae Mariae virginis," p. 161.
[30] Biegger, "De invocatione beatae Mariae virginis," p. 163.

> Eccles. 24: 18 (Vulgate) Ego sum mater pulchrae dilectionis et timoris et agnitionis et sanctae spei
> (I am the mother of fair love, and fear, and knowledge, and holy hope)

Parcelsus comments:

> Allso sagt die Götliche Weissheit inn der person Maria durch den propheten "ich bin ein mutter der hübschen erwöhlung oder liebe unnd ein mutter der frucht der erkhandtnus unnd der seeligen hoffnung" [sic]
> (Thus says Divine Wisdom in the person of Maria according to the prophet "I am a mother of fair love, and a mother of the fruit of knowledge and holy hope …)

He also examines the statement of Wisdom that "in mir ist jetz himmel unnd erdten…" [sic] ("in me there is now heaven and earth").[31] Maria is the highest creation of God, sinless, heaven-born and she is Divine Wisdom, the succour of humanity.[32]

Those immediate disciples who were writing spurious alchemical texts in the name of Paracelsus did not employ Marian discourse. It was his followers in the next generation and later who adopted Catholic Marian teachings in their alchemical writings, although probably not as a result of encountering the unpublished *De invocation BMV*. Instead, for their Marian emblems the author of the *Pandora* (1582; 1588) and then Maier and Fludd looked to the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* (1419; 1433), as well as to the *Rosarium philosophorum cum figuris* (1550).

It may be that Boehme was similarly modelling his own Marian alchemy on the *Rosarium philosophorum* and the *Pandora* where the alchemical tincture had been associated with qualities attributed to Sophia in the Wisdom Books. Indeed, although Boehme prioritized the importance of Divine Wisdom in the divine work of creation, even so, he denied that she had manifested in human flesh specifically as the Virgin Mary, as Paracelsus had argued. Boehme's concept of the divine figure of the "Noble Virgin" was derived from the allegory of Wisdom as described in Proverbs 8: 22-24, 30-31.

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[31] Biegger, "De invocatione beatae Mariae virginis," p. 164.
[32] Biegger, "De invocatione beatae Mariae virginis," pp. 164-177; see page 169, "Allso soll Maria gehalten werden. Wie die götlich weissheit in ir person anzaiget, das uns zeugkhnus gnugsamb ist."

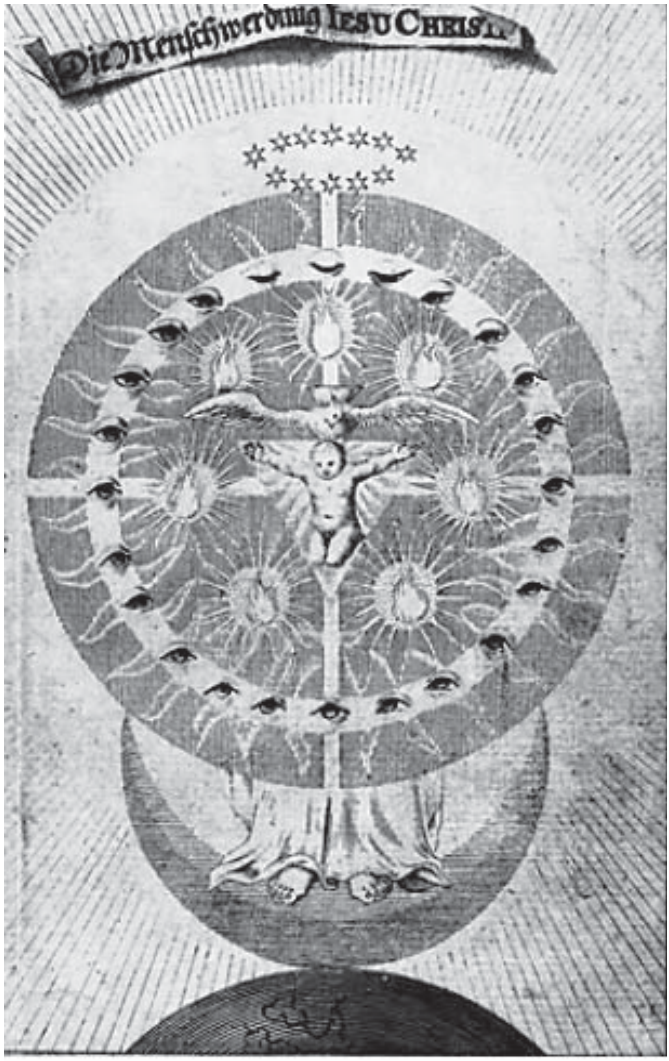

Fig. 8-13 Emblem of the Immaculate Conception from Jacob Boehme, *De incarnatione verbi, oder Von der Menschwerdung Jesu Christi* (1620) in Johann Georg Gichtel and Johann Wilhelm Ueberfeld (eds.), *Theosophia Revelata. Alle Gottliche Schriften des Gottseligen und Hocherleuchteten Deutschen Theosophi Jacob Bohmens* (First edition Amsterdam: Johann Georg Gichtel, 1730; Second edition Hamburg, 1715.) With the permission of the British Library: Shelf-mark 765. i. 12

He stated that his Noble Virgin was Wisdom who was present both in Christ and in Nature and he located her within the Holy Trinity. In his treatise, the *Aurora Signatura Rerum oder Morgenrothe in Anfang* (1612),[33] Boehme calls Nature by the name of the "Celestial Virgin of Divine Wisdom."[34] This Noble Virgin was not identified with the Virgin Mary, although it seems probable that the concept arose in Boehme's thinking out of his more general reflections on the character of Mary in Catholic theology.

Among the engravings in the published edition of Boehme's works by Johann Georg Gichtel in Amsterdam (1730), there are two in particular that refer to the Catholic iconography of the Virgin Mary as the Apocalyptic Woman and as the Immaculate Conception. Boehme himself mentions the woman who stands on the crescent moon. The first selected edition of Boehme's work was edited by Johann Georg Gichtel and Johann Wilhelm Ueberfeld and it was published by Gichtel in Amsterdam in 1682. The first complete edition of Boehme's writings had to wait until 1730 at the same printing firm. In the engraving provided in the 1730 edition to accompany Boehme's *De incarnatione verbi, oder Von der Menschwerdung Jesu Christi* (1620) (the incarnation of the Word Jesus Christ) there is an abstract image of a cross on whose cross-arms there kneels a naked baby (fig. 8-13). (This text is absent from the 1682 edition). Above the child there appears the dove of the Holy Spirit and below it there shines a crown of twelve stars. At the base of this design, beneath a long garment, there appear two naked feet standing on a recumbent crescent moon. All of these details are iconographic attributes of Mary as the Apocalyptic Woman and the Immaculate Conception. The engraving depicts emblematically the incarnation of Christ in the womb of the Virgin Mary through the work of the Holy Spirit of God the Father.

The second Marian engraving is located in both the 1682 and 1730 editions by Gichtel and Ueberfeld. The illustration is shown on the title-

[33] The *Aurora* was circulated in manuscript only from 1612 and was first published in the compendium of Boehme's work as *Jacob Boehme Theosophisches Wercken*. Edited by Johann Georg Gichtel (Amsterdam, 1682). The text of the "Aurora Signatura Rerum oder Morgenrothe in Anfang" may be found in Will-Erich Peuckert, *Jacob Boehme Samtliche Schriften* (Stuttgart: Frommanns Verlag, 1955), 1, pp. 263-284.

[34] See Johann Georg Gichtel's Foreword ("Vorrede") to the *Aurora* in the 1730 Amsterdam edition. The facsimile may be found in Will-Erich Peuckert (ed.), *Jacob Boehme Samtliche Schriften*, 1, pp. 263 ff. As well, see Andrew Weeks, *Boehme. An Intellectual Biography* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), p. 83.

page to Boehme's *Psychologia Vera, oder Viertzig Fragen Von der Seelen* (1620) (fig. 8-14). The design is totally abstract but in its centre there shines a crown of twelve stars. This is so specific an attribute of the Virgin Mary that there can be no other reference intended here. Also included in the emblem is a shining sun appearing above the crown of twelve stars, with a crescent moon beneath. Since Gichtel and Ueberfeld did include figurative imagery of Christ and angels elsewhere in other engravings, it is interesting that the Virgin Mary should not be detailed in any realistic manner. This could simply indicate the Protestant prejudice against Marian iconography, despite the use of such imagery in textual allusions by Boehme through-out his works.

In a letter to Caspar Lindern of Beuthen und Falckenheim, written in 1621, Boehme provided an account of the manner in which material creation came into existence and he described the role of Sophia as the executor of God's creative intentions. As a mark of his reverence, Boehme even dated this letter "Gorlitz, on the day of Mary's Ascension, 1621."[35]

In another letter written to Abraham of Sommerfeld, Boehme discusses his earliest book, the *Aurora,* but he includes in the letter a new description of the surpassing virtue of Sophia's "pearl" (her virginity).[36] Boehme introduces direct alchemical references in this particular context when he states that the Philosopher's Stone is a garland that clothes in purity the renewed soul and body. He states that the Stone itself is the Divine Sophia and this is a gift vouchsafed by God. The precious Philosopher's Stone is described in the letter as being the ground of all mysteries.

Boehme states that this garland (Stone) is a Virgin, pure and chaste, who comforts the afflicted mind and who accompanies humanity to death itself. It (the Virgin Stone) has no death within it, but it lives from all eternity. It guides seekers to heaven and it is the joy of angels. The Philosopher's Stone/garland/Virgin can be compared only to God. It gives new life in God's Kingdom. It conquers the devil, death and the world. However, it is hidden in a dark valley so that it remains unknown to the reasoning mind. In its own time the Stone springs up like a lovely lily (another Marian attribute). It is sown in tears but it is gathered in joy.

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[35] See the twelfth letter in Peuckert (ed.), *Jacob Boehme Samtliche Schriften*, 9, 21. "Epistolae theosophicae, oder Theosophische Send-Briefe (1618 bis 1624), pp. 41-59. Also see in this context Peuckert (ed.), *Jacob Boehme Samtliche Schriften,* 44, paragraph 8 on Wisdom.

[36] See the tenth letter in Peuckert (ed.), *Jacob Boehme Samtliche Schriften*, 9. 21, "Epistolae theosophicae, oder Theosophische Send-Briefe (1618 bis 1624)," pp. 29-41.

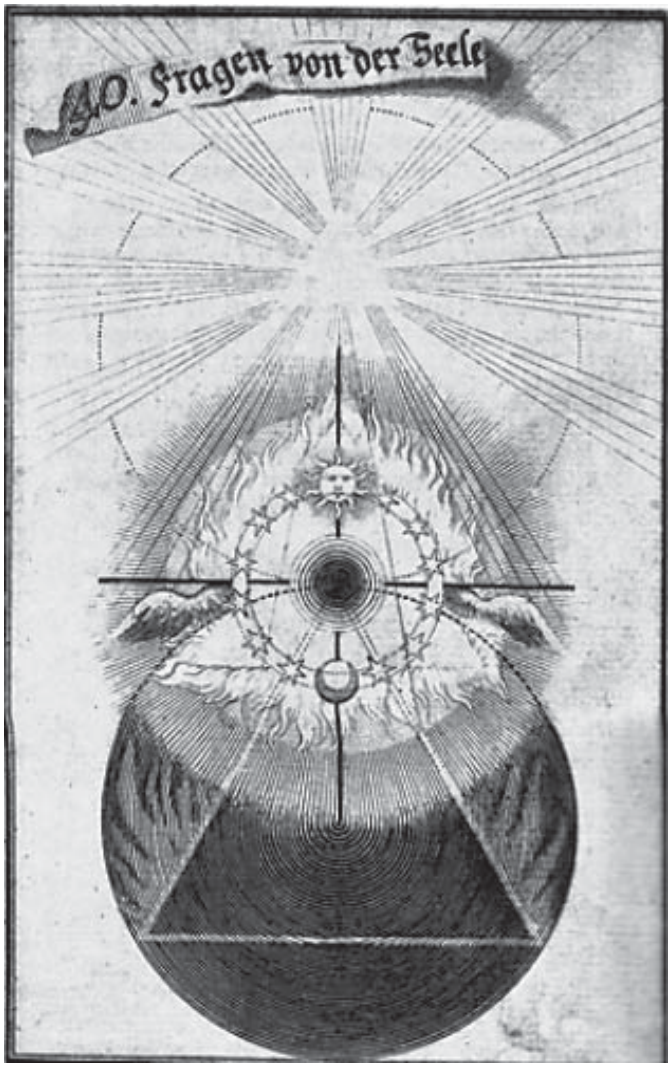

Fig. 8-14 Emblem of the Immaculate Conception from Jacob Boehme, *Psychologia Vera, oder Viertzig Fragen Von der Seelen* (1620) in Johann Georg Gichtel and Johann Wilhelm Ueberfeld (eds.), *Theosophia Revelata. Alle Gottliche Schriften des Gottseligen und Hocherleuchteten Deutschen Theosophi Jacob Bohmens*) (First incomplete edition 1682. First complete edition Amsterdam: Johann Georg Gichtel, 1730; Second complete edition Hamburg, 1715.) With the permission of the British Library: Shelf-mark 765. i. 12

Reason despises this garland but he who can gain it will regard it as his greatest treasure.[37]

In other texts Boehme attempted to explain his identification of the Divine Virgin with the alchemical tincture, the healing medicine. In the key to his terminology composed in 1624, Boehme explains that the "tinctura" exists in all three Principles of the Holy Trinity. The tincture is the Wisdom of the Holy Trinity. It is the Life from Fire and Light. It is the highest wonder of all. With this tincture gold is made, but the tincture is the life of Wisdom. The Holy Spirit is all Life. It is at the centre of Nature.[38] Boehme states that the tincture is a Virgin, the Life of Wisdom. She is the Life of the Godhead. She has a fleeting spiritual life (an allusion to alchemical spirits). Through the tincture/Wisdom the Holy Spirit works wonders.[39] Boehme also relates the tincture and Holy Wisdom to the quintessence, stating that the quintessence is Paradise in the realm of heaven. In the lower world it is hidden. When the quintessence is liberated then it is also the tincture, but in the fire it is only half apparent. Our fire is the tincture and the tincture is always hidden within fire. In the new man the quintessence is revealed.[40] Boehme in his reference to the Paradise in the realm of heaven is drawing on John of Rupescissa's old concept of the "coelum."

The reference to "our fire" is a specifically alchemical reference and Boehme contrasts it with ordinary fire in the hearth, or the furnace, which cannot release the quintessence. The meaning of "our fire" very much

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[37] Peuckert (ed.), *Jacob Boehme Samtliche Schriften*, 35, paragraphs 22-24: "Dieses Krantzlein ist eine Jungfrau, und eine Zucht und Zierath Gottes, eine Freude des Lebens … eine Fuehrerinder Himmel …"

[38] See Peuckert (ed.), *Jacob Boehme Samtliche Schriften*, 9, "Clavis oder Schlussel das ist eine Erklarung … (1624), p. 120: "Tinctura" ist in allen dreyen Principien: Ist die Weisenheit der h. Dreyfaltigkeit. Ist keine Macherin, sondern das Leben vom Feuer und Licht … in den Wundern Allws in des hochsten Grad zu fuhren. Wie die ausserste Tinctur Gold machete: … Tinctura ist das leben des Weisheit; Der h. Geist ist aller Leben. Kraft gebet aus dem Centro des Natur …"

[39] Peuckert (ed.), *Jacob Boehme Samtliche Schriften*, 9, "Clavis oder Schlussel das ist eine Erklarung …" (1624), p. 118: "… Tinctur ist Jungfrau, als das Leben des Weisheit: hat fliegend, geistliche Leben … Ist des h. Geistes oder der Gottheit Leib. In ihr eroffnet der h. geist die Wunder …"

[40] Peuckert (ed.), *Jacob Boehme Samtliche Schriften*, 9, "Clavis oder Schlussel das ist eine Erklarung …" (1624), p. 119: "Quinta essentia ist Paradeis-Qual in der himmlischen Welt: In der aussern Welt ist sie eingeschlossen. Wenn sie ausgelofet wird, ists als Tinctura; Doch weils im Feuer ist, ists nur halb offen: … Aussern feuer ist Tinctura und Tinctur wieder eingeschlossen. Im neuen Menschen ist sie in Quinta Essentia offen …"

depends on the alchemical context. In this particular case "our fire" has the spiritual sense of the fire of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit imparts an epiphany to the devout Christian, healing his sinful condition and transforming him into a more elevated being, the "new man." Boehme's mention of the "new man" is an allusion to those who have undergone spiritual baptism by fire, by means of a direct revelation vouchsafed by the Spirit of God as an inward Pentecost.

According to Boehme, humans had to be made worthy of the Virgin by first themselves being made virginal.[41] Before the birth of Christ God had recognized himself as a Virgin and this Virgin was a mirror of God's Wisdom. Boehme means here that God created a mirror-image of himself in the form of Holy Wisdom. Unlike Paracelsus and Weigel, Boehme makes a distinction between the Virgin in God's Person who is his creative principle and the human Mary. He firmly rejects the idea that Mary could have been an eternal virgin, not born from human parents.[42] Boehme insists that Mary had to be born as a human-being in order that the incarnation of the Son of God could serve its purpose. This purpose was that the Son of God should be offered as a human sacrifice to God in recompense for the sins of humanity. Boehme denied that Mary was an incarnation of the celestial Virgin in the same manner that Christ was an incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity. However, although she had ordinary human parents and was even herself born sinful, Mary was pervaded by the divine Virgin of Wisdom and she was graced by Christ with the condition of freedom from sin, becoming immaculate when she became his mother (*De Triplici Vitae hominis*, 1620).[43]

In *De Triplici Vitae hominis, oder vom Dreyfachen Leben des Menschen* (1620) Boehme associated the human Mary, like the heavenly Virgin, with the alchemical tincture. Indeed, it is in this context that Boehme refers to Mary as the woman standing on the crescent-moon (the Immaculate Conception). Mary is also compared to the morning star, although she is only beatified and not deified. She is not a goddess, unlike the Divine Virgin. All of Mary's grace came directly from Christ and she is called "blessed" in the New Testament by Gabriel only due to her humility and not on account of any other virtues. The kingdom of this world still imprisoned Mary, but the tincture of her blood was kindled with the divine tincture. Boehme identified both the heavenly Virgin and the

[41] Weeks, *Boehme* (1991), p. 102.
[42] Peuckert (ed.), *Jacob Boehme Samtliche Schriften*, 9, 5, "De incarnatione verbi, oder Von der Menschwerdung Jesu Christi" (1620), p.8.
[43] Peuckert, *Jacob Boehme Samtliche Schriften*, 3, "De Triplici Vitae hominis, oder vom Dreyfachen Leben des Menschen" (1620), p. 257.

human Mary with the alchemical tincture since it was composed of a celestial matter, that of the quintessence which was the material of the heavens, of the moon, planets and stars. It was the heavenly spirit materialized, like Mary who was filled with the spirit of God and with his Wisdom. The tincture imparted life and health, transmuting base matter to a higher form in the same way that Mary provided for human salvation and eternal life by bearing the Saviour Jesus Christ. Where Boehme followed Paracelsus more closely was in his theology of salvation. Humans were of necessity to be made worthy of the Virgin by being made virginal[44] and this is a theme common to both Paracelsus and Boehme.

[44] Weeks, *Boehme*, p. 102.

CHAPTER NINE

CATHOLIC ICONOGRAPHY IN PROTESTANT ALCHEMY AND LUTHERAN RELIGIOUS IMAGERY

The intercessory role of the Virgin Mary and her unique status in relation to the Godhead were casualties of the 16th century religious reforms. In Protestant belief the role of Mary was diminished in the scheme of human salvation and prayers were no longer addressed to her. She was no longer venerated as the unique vessel of God's grace. Yet, such aspects of religious practice rejected by the Reformers proved to be indispensable to alchemy since they supported their contentions with regard to the transmutation of base matter.[1] In addition to the re-emergence of Marian references in the alchemy of Lutheran alchemists, there were also traces of the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation in which bread and wine were ritually changed into the body and blood of Christ. If bread and wine could become God, then, with many invocations to divine grace, why could not the alchemists accomplish a parallel miracle in the case of base matter, transmuting it into a rarefied substance similar to the "glorified body" of the Resurrection?

Whereas the Lutheran and Calvinist confessions had little use, or none, for visual imagery, the alchemists continued to value certain icons of Christ and Mary. It was due to the influence of *Das Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* and the *Rosarium philosophorum* that there was a continued Catholic presence in the alchemy of early 17th century Lutheran alchemists and of the Anglican, Robert Fludd. The specific Marian iconography preserved by the Protestant alchemists included that of the Apocalyptic Woman, the Immaculate Conception (both Mary alone and with her parents), as well as the Coronation of the Virgin Mary. In addition, there was the alchemical hermaphrodite who could signify both the Anti-Christ,

[1] See the argument in Urszula Szulakowska, *The Sacrificial Body and the Day of Doom. Alchemy and Apocalyptic Discourse in the Protestant Reformation* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2006), pp. 121-140.

as well as the mystical union of Christ and Mary in an emblem of the philosophical Stone.

The authors of a recent study of the Catholic mass of Cibinensis included in Maier's *Symbola Aureae Mensae* (1617) have concluded that

> … Whether the whole text is a treatise on the manipulation of various metallic substances enciphered in secret religious symbols, or is a long prayer rich in alchemical metaphors, is hard to tell. The only certainty is that we are witnessing here a fertile and a rather organic combination of two kinds of rich symbolism, alchemy and the Christian liturgy.[2]

The alchemical mass of Cibinensis had already appeared in print before its publication in Maier's compendium of twelve alchemical texts composed by different nationals. The mass had been included in the third volume of the *Theatrum Chemicum* of 1602 edited by Lazarus Zetzner in Strasburg.[3] Hungarian scholars Farkas Gábor Kiss, Benedek Láng and Cosmin Popa-Gorjanu have compared the various manuscript and printed editions of the mass and they have discovered that the text has also survived in two early manuscripts in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna which have provided some additional information concerning the author.[4] There is a notice preceding the alchemical Mass which claims that this text was anonymously composed and that it was offered by the last Bosnian king Stephen (d. 1463) to the Hungarian and Bohemian king Ladislaus V (1440–58), whose chaplain edited it.[5] The editor is identified as Nicolaus Matzerus Cibinensis Transylvanus.

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[2] Kiss, Láng and Popa-Gorjanu, "The Alchemical Mass of Nicolaus Melchior Cibinensis," pp. 143–159.

[3] The text was published as Lazarus Zetzner (ed.), "Addam et processum sub forma missae, a Nicolao Cibinensi, Transilvano, ad Ladislao Ungariae, et Bohemiae regem olim missum" in *Theatrum Chemicum*, I (Basel: Lazarus Zetzner, 1602), pp. 853-855. In the third volume of the 1602 print-run the text re-appears yet again as "Processus Sub Forma Missae a Nicolao Melchiori Cibinensi Transiluano, ad Ladislaum Ungariae et Bohemiae Regem olim missum" in *Theatrum chemicum*, III (Basel: Lazarus Zetzner, 1602), pp. 758–761.

[4] Kiss, Láng and Popa-Gorjanu list the manuscripts of the text which are Vienna MS Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, Austria, Codex Lat. 11133, ff. 308r–309r, as well as Vienna MS Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Codex Lat. 11347, ff. 9r–12r.

[5] Quoted by Kiss, Láng and Popa-Gorjanu as"… Processus Chymicus. Serenissimo Hungariae et Boemiae Regi Ladislao a Stephano ultimo Bosniae rege communicatus et a Ladislai Capellano in hanc theoriam redactus. Cujus praxin expertus dominus Nicolaus Matzerus Cibinensis Transsylvanus qui summe erat familiaris Bohemo Andrea Schampasa … Pattenstati, cum quo res illorum

Cibinensis described the alchemical process, at least in part, according to the rubric of the Catholic mass. He observed the liturgical sequence which consisted of the *Introitus Missae*, *Kyrie*, *Graduale*, *Versus*, *Offertorium* and *Secretum*, but he altered the content so that it now described alchemical concepts such as the Philosopher's Stone, the alchemical conjunction, the sperm of the philosophers and its union with the virgin, as well as the chemicals saltpetre and vitriolic acid. Cibinensis eliminated that part of the liturgy which involved the reading of the Gospels, the *Sequentia Evangeli*, replacing this instead by an account of the alchemical death of prime matter, the conjunction, the conception and the resurrection of the Stone. Cibinensis avoided all direct Christly allusions, although he made free with the original Marian content of the mass and he retained the customary prayers to the Virgin. In Cibinensis' version of the Eucharist, however, there remained only a general adherence to the usual sequence of the mass. In fact, his mass concluded prior to the Words of Institution in the Catholic ritual which are said to cause the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. In the alchemical mass this central component of the mass has been removed, so that the residue is primarily Marian, with additional alchemical content.

In other words, the mass of Cibinensis is no longer a sacrifice with eschatological overtones anticipating the Second Coming of Christ. Instead, Cibinensis has converted the rubric into an alchemical devotion directed to the Virgin Mary. The focus of this "mass" is the creation of the Philosopher's Stone and the sequence commences with the statement that the basis of the Art is the dissolution of the bodies, although this is sung to the tune of the liturgical "Gaudeamus."

Hence, in this carefully modified text the original Eucharistic liturgy is only inferred. As a result, it is Merian's engraving that introduces the full ritual implications of the mass into the treatise of Cibinensis. It is difficult to ascertain why Maier should have commissioned such a heretical visual image. Perhaps he would not have interpreted it in these terms. With the addition of the engraving the treatise not only returns to the Eucharistic theme, but, furthermore, it also turns into a statement about alchemy as a religion in its own right, a claim that probably neither Cibinensis, nor Maier would have ever intended. Moreover, the illustration of the Eucharist introduces that most controversial Catholic doctrine into Lutheran esotericism. It has to be stressed that Merian's image of the mass

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thesaurorum arcanum propalaretur, taleros excussit bonitate et regios superantes quibus delatis aufugit nobilis et compraehensus presbiter. Divo Ferdinando regnante hic Pragae proxima die Veneris post Phil."

describes the actual sacrifice of Christ. In Catholic teaching this was neither a memorial of the original historical event, nor its re-enactment, but a rejoining of the faithful in the present moment to the original crucifixion of Christ. It has to be stressed that the presence of this engraving may have been unacceptable to both Catholics and Lutherans.

In Merian's engraving the woman hovering in the air is clearly identifiable with the Virgin Mary (fig. 3-2). To her right there stands a priest at an altar on which there has been placed a Eucharistic wafer stamped with a cross. The back of the priest's chasuble is embroidered with an image of Christ crucified. This is a specifically Catholic reference since by this time Protestants were using plain crosses, omitting the body of Christ in order to avoid idolatry. Scenes of the crucifixion continued to be painted for the Lutheran community, but such compositions now employed the symbolic stylisations introduced by Hans Cranach the Younger (1515-86). In Merian's engraving the retable above the altar reveals the lower part of a painted crucifixion scene in which Christ is present (his feet are visible). There is a skull, by tradition that of Adam, lying at the foot of the cross. The fact that the altar is made of stone signifies that a sacrifice is taking place, as in the Catholic rite. When the German Reformers replaced the concept of communion as a sacrifice by that of an evening-meal ("abendmahl"), then the communion-rite was moved to a plain, specifically wooden, dining-table, displaced from the back wall of the chancel to its entrance closer to the congregation. This was intended to emphasize the point that communion was a simple meal. It was not a sacrifice. Luther had accepted the physical presence of Christ, but only alongside the unaltered bread and wine. (Calvin had allowed for the Real Presence of Christ in the communion, but only in a spiritual sense.) In addition, in Merian's engraving the priest has his back to the congregation, a stance that conserves the sense of mystery, exclusion and the sacerdotal privilege of the ritual. He opens his hands in prayer in the customary "oramus," or "let us pray," pose.

The priest is also wearing Roman vestments, namely, alb, stole, cincture and chasuble. Lutherans had discontinued the use of these Catholic vestures due to their association with the mass as a sacrifice. In contrast, Lutheran pastors wore secular, rather than priestly, garments, consisting of a white robe, white neck-ruff, black university gown, cap and scarf. The focus was on the word of God in Scripture, rather than on visual ritual, along with communal participation in prayer and the singing of psalms. The pastor was no more than a schooled theologian and leader of his flock, not an initiated and authorised sacerdotal actant. In fact, Christ's

own words at the Last Supper may be read in such a manner that the communion rite is understood as being both a memorial and a sacrifice.

> [19] And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." [20] In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.
> (Luke 22: 19-20)

It may be that Michael Maier, like Robert Fludd (and perhaps John Dee and Edward Kelly before them) had certain sympathies with Catholic teachings, if not with that Church as an institution. This is speculation and at this time there is no conclusive evidence to support such a conjecture. However, most of the alchemists included by Maier in his *Symbola Aureae Mensae Duodecim Nationum* had been working prior to the Reformation, or were currently Catholic like the "Saramatian" alchemist now identified by scholars as Maier's contemporary, Michael Sendivogius.

The Virgin Mary in Merian's engraving represents the later stages of the alchemical process in which the perfected alchemical elixir is fed back into the calcinated ashes of the prime matter. The infant personifies the Stone of the Philosophers, while the crescent moon on which they are seated alludes to Mary's alchemical character as the quintessential mercury. Her specific image here is that of the Apocalyptic Woman who gives birth to the Child. There is no dragon present and also her starry crown of twelve stars is missing, but her other attributes have been included - the aura of sun-rays and the crescent-moon. Cibinensis has replaced the Eucharistic rite that follows the reading of the Gospel by the Marian hymn "Ave Praeclara." The second line of the hymn refers to the Woman of Revelation and praises her as the Queen of Heaven. Cibinensis adds a note that this Marian hymn is the testament of the whole art. He also cites the eschatological texts of Isaiah 65: 17 and 1 Enoch 72: 1, as well as the reference in Revelation 21: 1 to the new heaven and new earth that would succeed the Universal Judgement.

Merian's Virgin is seated on a throne formed by the upturned horns of the crescent moon. In the earlier *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* the Virgin was seated on a crescent-moon with its horns turned downwards.[6] It may be that the reversal of the horns of the moon refers to the crescent moon of Islam and to the Turkish wars. The German Turkish Madonnas of the 16th to 18th centuries always stand on moons that lie on their backs in

[6] The latter illumination is published in Hartlaub, "Signa Hermetis" in *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Vereins* (1937), pp. 93-162; 110, fig. 8.

the manner of conquered Turks. In fact, the prone horned moon is an indispensable iconographic attribute in 17th century icons of the Immaculate Conception. The motif of the Virgin seated on the upturned horns of the moon is also encountered earlier in German Renaissance art, as in Albrecht Durer's (1471-1528) wood-cut *The Virgin of the Crescent Moon* (1511). This picture may have even provided a source for Merian since he shows Mary in the same pose. Durer's other prints of the Virgin and Child have her standing, rather than sitting, on the crescent moon. The Virgin seated on the moon appeared in Durer's edition of the life of the Virgin Mary, *Epitome in divae parthenices mariae historiam* (Nuremberg: Albrecht Dürer, 1511), a series of woodcuts with accompanying verses.

The physical type of the woman in Merian's own image is rather coarse and it accords with the vigorous Maries created by Durer. Merian's emblem also recalls the types created a century-and-a-half earlier in the Netherlands by the Master of Flémalle (perhaps identical with Robert Campin, ca. 1375 – 1444). There is some similarity between both Durer's and Merian's Virgins and the one in Flémalle's *Madonna before a Fire-Screen* (National Gallery, London, 1430).[7] Here the broad-faced, lusty Madonna feeds her weakling child. Another source could have been the engravings of Martin Schongauer from Colmar (ca. 1445-91) which were influenced by Flemish painting, for example, his *Madonna and Child in a Courtyard* (ca. 1474) (London, Victoria and Albert Museum). However, the direct conceptual, as opposed to visual, model for Merian's Virgin would have been the apocalyptic Mary of the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*, although in that context the Virgins were willowy, underfed creatures, straight out of a convent-garden. The crucified Christ hanging above Mary in the miniatures of the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* has also been transferred by Merian to the embroidered chasuble of the priest in his own engraving.[8]

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[7] Lorne Campbell, David Bomford, Ashok Roy and Raymond White, "'The Virgin and Child before a Firescreen': History, Examination and Treatment," *National Gallery Technical Bulletin,* 15 (1994): (NG 2609) (Plate 1). The painting came to the National Gallery as part of the bequest of George Salting (1836–1909) (note 1).

[8] Merian's engraving has not received any substantial study on the part of contemporary scholars. The image is mentioned in Stanislas Klossowski de Rola, *The Golden Game* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988), pp. 115-116. Klossowski states that the image refers to the mercurial water. See also Hereward Tilton, *The Quest for the Phoenix* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), passim. He is more concerned with the textual content and does not examine Maier's illustrations in any detail.

In the alchemy of Robert Fludd (Robertus De Fluctibus) (1574 - 1673) there exist even closer similarities to the Eucharistic rite and in one engraving he seems also to be drawing on the iconography of the Immaculate Conception, as well as referencing textually the discourse of Holy Wisdom. Fludd was one of the leading esoteric philosophers of the late Renaissance. Although he gave his allegiance unequivocally to the Anglican Church (evidenced by his position as physician to James I), nonetheless, he was accused of harbouring Roman Catholic inclinations. This charge was prompted by sections in Fludd's *Medicina Catholica* (Frankfurt: William Fitzer, 1629-31) where he described an alchemical procedure for the distillation of wheat in order to produce a blood-like elixir. In this account Fludd also eulogized the life-giving and spiritual properties of bread, both of the common and of the heavenly kind (communion). All of which seemed to suggest that he was introducing the Catholic Eucharist into his alchemical practices.[9] Fludd's dominating theme through-out his *Medicina Catholica* concerns the healing power of the heavenly bread. In his account of the production of the blood-red elixir made from wheat he describes how it is created by the action of the rays of the sun in whose orb there stands the throne of Metattron, the kabbalistic angelic form of the Hebrew Messiah. In Christian kabbalism Metattron was identified with Jesus Christ.[10]

Fludd produced a large number of encyclopaedias taking an obsessively complicated form.[11] His importance for alchemical history lies in his

[9] Szulakowska, *Sacrificial Body,* pp. 124-125, 127-128.

[10] Godwin has produced an interpretation of the main engravings, though from the point of view of twentieth-century theosophy and Jungian psychology. See Joscelyn Godwin, *Robert Fludd, Hermetic Philosopher and Surveyor of Two Worlds* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), passim. The most extensive discussion of Fludd's intellectual development has been provided by Huffman, although he disregards the illustrations and focuses on the texts written in English. See William H. Huffman, *Robert Fludd and the End of the Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 1988).

[11] Fludd's published works which are relevant to the present discussion include Robert Fludd, *Apologia Compendiaria, Fraternitatem de Rosea Cruce suspicionis*… (Leyden: Gottfried Basson, 1616); Robert Fludd, *Tractatus Apologeticus integritatem Societatis de Rosea Cruce defendens* … (Leyden: Gottfried Basson, 1617); Robert Fludd, *Tractatus Theologo-philosophicus* … (Oppenheim: Johann Theodore de Bry, 1617); Robert Fludd, *Anatomiæ Amphitheatrum* (Frankfurt: J. T. de Bry, 1623); Robert Fludd, *Sophiæ cum Moria Certamen* (Frankfort: J. T. de Bry, 1629); Robert Fludd, *Utriusque Cosmi ... Historia ... metaphysica, physica atque technica Historia* … (Oppenheim and Frankfurt: J. T. de Bry; "Macrocosm," 1, Part 1, 1617); "Macrocosm," 1, Part 2

concept of an alchemical universe which he modelled on the chemical theory and cosmology of the Paracelsians. In his encyclopaedic writings Fludd engaged with a universal range of topics ranging from magical practices such as alchemy, astrology, kabbalism and divination to a theosophical cosmology concerning the inter-relation of God with the natural and human worlds. Paracelsus is frequently mentioned in his alchemical sections.

Between 1591 and 1598 Fludd was reading for his master's degree at St. John's College, Oxford, after which in 1598-1604 he was travelling around the continent. He obtained a post as tutor to the children of some aristocratic French Catholic families and this religious milieu was intensified when he spent a winter in the foothills of the Pyrenees in the company of a group of Jesuit priests. The encounter was less than ordinary because Fludd records that the Jesuits taught him various magical practices, among which there was an art of divination which he passed on to his readers. The contact with the Jesuits may have coloured both Fludd's religious, as well as his esoteric concepts to an extent underestimated by historians. He was, after all, in prolonged contact with members of an Order instituted in 1541 by Ignatius Loyola (1491–1556) precisely to combat Protestant heresy. Jesuits were highly educated and cultivated men, superbly skilled in the art of rhetoric. It is difficult to see how Fludd could have escaped with his vague Anglicanism inviolate.[12]

On his return to England Fludd undertook further medical training at Christ Church College, Oxford, and in 1604 and 1605 he was awarded his degrees of M. B and M. D respectively. Fludd was rejected six times by his university examiners due to his offensive remarks concerning the medical system of the ancient Greek physician Galen, whose writings were the foundation of the university medical curriculum. In his place Fludd was proposing the medical theories of Paracelsus and his followers. In 1609 he was finally granted admission to the College of Physicians and

(1618); "Microcosm," 2, Part 1 (1619); "Microcosm," 2, Part 2 (1621); Robert Fludd, *Philosophia Sacra et vere Christiana* … (Frankfurt: J. T. de Bry, 1626); Robert Fludd, *Medicina Catholica* … (Frankfurt: William Fitzer, 1629–31) in five parts; second volume was not published and is not known; Robert Fludd, *Philosophia Moysaica*… (Gouda: Petrus Rammazenius, 1638). English edition: *Mosaicall Philosophy* … (London: H. Moseley, 1659); Robert Fludd, *Declaratio breuis*, unpublished manuscript, written by amanuensis, Codex London British Library, Royal MSS 12 C. ii.

[12] C. H. Josten, "Robert Fludd's Theory of Geomancy and His Experiences at Avignon in the Winter of 1601 to 1602," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 27 (1964), pp. 327-335.

was duly authorised to practice. Despite this connection with the medical establishment the foundation for Fludd's medical practice, as well as for his religious and philosophical ideas, continued to be the alchemical medicine and theosophy of the Paracelsians.

Fludd achieved notoriety when he published his *Apologia* (1616), one of the earliest polemics written in support of the "Rosicrucian Manifestos." He expanded this pamphlet into the *Tractatus Apologeticus* (1618). The Rosicrucian Manifestos consisted of two texts, the *Fama Fraternitatis* (1614) and the *Confessio* (1615), which had been published anonymously in Kassel. Their tenor was firmly Protestant and scholars agree that they are a direct response to the conversionary activities of the Jesuits. The actual existence of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood in the form presented in the Manifestos has been definitively dismissed by modern historians. In their own time, nevertheless, they were supported by an eager and varied group of prestigious Lutherans, among them the pastor and Hermeticist Johann Valentin Andreae (1586 –1654) and others at the theology school of Tübingen University. It has gained acceptance recently that it was the Tübingen theologians who composed the Manifestos.[13] Other Rosicrucian followers included magical practitioners and alchemists involved in the study of the late antique magus Hermes Trismegistos, as well as Jewish and Christian kabbalists. They further subscribed to the more current magical ideas of Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa (1486-1535) and to the Theophrastic religion of the Paracelsians. All of these fellow-travellers, like Fludd, may be loosely termed "Rosicrucians."

Fludd's most famous work is the *Utriusque Cosmi ... Historia* (1617-21), published in five volumes by Theodore de Bry in Oppenheim. The two worlds under discussion are those of the Microcosm of human life on earth and the Macrocosm of the universe (including the spiritual realm of the Divine). Perhaps the most extraordinary aspect of Fludd's exhaustive and exhausting output is the range of copper-plate engravings in his works. Due to the originality of his designs Fludd's visual images are likely to have been the product of his own imagination. Kabbalistic elements are included in this imagery. There were three alchemical authors undertaking extra-ordinary visionary excursions between 1595 and the 1630s, Khunrath, Maier and Fludd. Each of them devised an absolutely unique visual imagery that owed nothing to the work of the other two.

Fludd's cosmological system is an inventive reworking of Paracelsian ideas. In his first volume of the *Utriusque Cosmi ... Historia*, concerning the "Macrocosm" (1617), Fludd devised a lavishly illustrated account of

[13] Dickson, *Tessera of Antilia*, pp. 1-17, 30, 62-87, 89-144.

the origins of the universe, describing how its materials were separated out of Chaos by God who acted like an alchemist, mixing, distilling and purifying the different elements. In the "Macrocosm" (*UCH*, 1617) Fludd's cosmos was structured by three generative principles invented by himself, those of Light, Darkness and Water. From these were generated the three Paracelsian primary elements: first, the "Prima Materia," or Salt, which arose from Darkness, then, the Soul, or Sulphur, which came forth from Light and, finally, the Spirit, or Mercury, which emerged from Water. These three elements, in turn, produced four qualities (already established in antique and medieval physics) those of Heat, Cold, Dryness and Moistness.

Another important resource for Fludd's theosophy was the kabbalism of the Jewish *Sepher Yetzirah*. (He also mentions the *Zohar*.) Fludd also drew heavily on the Christian kabbalah developed by the German humanist, Johannes Reuchlin (1455-1522), as well as on the ideas of Giovanni Pico della' Mirandola (1463-1494). Some of Fludd's most extraordinary imagery depicts a kabbalistic universe of Hebrew letters and names centred on the letter "Vav," representing the Second Person of the Christian Trinity, Jesus Christ. Fludd equated Christ with the kabbalistic angel Metattron, the heavenly form of the Jewish Messiah (*UCH*, 2 1621: 2-5) who was the soul of the world. Fludd also related Mettatron to the late antique Hermetic "anima mundi or Anthropos" (*UCH*, 2 1621, Tract II, Sect I: 8-9). Fludd went on to argue that the first manifestation of the Godhead in the Jewish kabbalah "Hochmah" ("Wisdom") was the same Hypostasis as the Second Person, Jesus Christ. He was the "Verbum" ("Word"), as in the first verse of the Gospel of John. In turn, the Christian "Word" is also the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, "Aleph." The "Verbum," or Metattron/ Christ/ Messiah, as the form of God, resides in the sun.

Fludd's medical treatises comprise the *Anatomiae Amphiteatrum* (Frankfurt: J. T. de Bry, 1623), the *Medicina Catholica* (Frankfurt: William Fitzer, 1629-31), the *Philosophia Sacra* (Frankfurt: J. T. de Bry, 1626), the *Clavis Philosophiae* (Frankfurt: William Fitzer, 1633) and the *Philosophia Moysaica* (Gouda: Petrus Rammazenius, 1638) which was translated into English as the *Mosaicall Philosophy* (London: H. Moseley, 1659). Fludd accepted the ancient theology of sin being the cause of sickness, to which he added the effects of the angels who governed meteorological phenomena. Fludd's medical practice was practically devoid of chemical remedies and almost entirely dependent on prayer and the use of the name of Jesus in its Hebrew form. In his medical practice Fludd also employed the magical theory of the occult virtues hidden in names. Both Pico and Reuchlin had laid emphasis on the Hebrew name of

Jesus, while Cornelius Agrippa had also introduced the names of the angels. By the late 17th century magi such as John Dee (1527–1608/9) and Edward Kelly (1555–97) were invoking the angels. Fludd certainly refers to the kabbalistic names of those who control the winds as the causes of disease but he only employs the kabblistic name of Christ in his healing.

Devotion to the name of Jesus had developed as a cult in the earliest times. Paul in Philippians 2: 10 states that all should bow at the name and in Romans 10: 13 he announces that all who call on the name of the lord will be saved. In John 16: 23 Christ states that if anyone should ask God the Father for anything in his name, then he would be granted his request. There are also several episodes (as in Mark 8: 38-39) where demons are driven out in the name of Jesus and other miracles are recorded in the Acts of the Apostles (3:6, 4: 7-11, 9:3-4, 16: 18). In James 5: 14-15 Christ orders his disciples: "[14] Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. [15] And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven." (New King James Version) The established Protestant churches had rejected this aspect of Christ's teaching on the grounds that such healing powers had been restricted to his closest disciples and that the authority to perform miracles had not descended to their successors. The Roman Catholics, in contrast, continued to recognise the existence of miracles and healing powers in the cult of the saints.

In Fludd's medical theories the operation of the aerial nitre, or quintessence, in the human body was of critical importance to health. The essence of the aerial nitre was the celestial light originating in the tabernacle of the sun. It was breathed in through the lungs and carried to the heart, where it was separated from the air and dispersed as the vital spirit through-out the body. In his short text the "Tractatus de Tritico" ("Tractate on Wheat") which reappeared in his *Anatomiae Amphiteatrum* (1623) and again in the *Philosophia Moysaica* (1638), Fludd described the distillation of this aerial nitre from wheat using the heat and light of the sun's rays. Fludd claimed that this distilled spirit was the Universal Panacea, a generative celestial fire drawn out of the sun. In this context, Fludd produced an extended exposition concerning the healing power and sacred nature of wheaten bread in a manner that echoed the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. In fact, from his account, Fludd's Universal Panacea seems to be identical with the physical body and blood of Jesus Christ. Similar Eucharistic references are found in the writings of another contemporary English alchemist, Sir Kenelm Digby, a Roman Catholic, temporarily turned Anglican.

Fludd's theological vagaries were forcefully criticised by Pierre Gassendi (1592 –1655) in his publication *In Fluddanae philosophiae examen* (1630). He was a French Catholic priest, natural philosopher and astronomer Abetted by another French priest Marin Mersenne (1588–1648), similarly a noted philosopher and scientist, Gassendi rejected Fludd's syncretic philosophy in which alchemy, kabbalism and Christian doctrine carried equal weight. In his *Quæstiones Celebres in Genesim* (1623) Mersenne attacked Fludd's appropriation of Catholic doctrine and his use of magic. Fludd replied to Mersenne in *Sophiæ cum Moria Certamen* (1629) and in *Summum Bonum* (1629), rejecting his accusations of crypto-Catholicism and unlawful theurgical practices.

However, other leading Renaissance alchemists made similar allusions to the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, for example, Heinrich Khunrath (1560-1605) who was a Lutheran pietist and likely dissenter from the institutionalized Church. He did not employ overtly Catholic imagery in his *Amphiteatrum Sapientiae ... Aeternae* (first edition, Hamburg, 1595; second edition, Hanau, 1607). However, he did make such allusions in a covert manner. For, there certainly exists at least one reference to the Catholic Eucharist in a circular engraving dating from the Hamburg edition of 1595. This picture depicts an alchemist in his laboratory who kneels and prays before a richly-decorated Turkish tent inscribed with the Hebrew four-letter Name of God. Within this tent there stands an altar on which there are displayed two books with geometrical emblems, located where the Catholic missal would be placed. One of these shows a diagram of the squaring of the circle, an impossible task in Euclidean geometry. The picture of the Oratory-Laboratory belongs to the emblematic tradition of "Melancholia", introspective contemplation on the nature of the world, which originated in Durer's engraving of that name in 1514. The image had become a generic type by the late sixteenth-century, incorporating motifs from perspectival geometry, architecture, Pythagorean mathematics and alchemy, as well as music.[14]

A quote from Psalm 149 is inscribed on the book on the right, while the other displays geometrical symbols consisting of an upright pentacle in a circle on the left and, opposite, an diagram of the squaring of the circle on which there appears the word "Time" and the Tetragrammaton. In the *Occulta Philosophia* (1533) Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa (1486-1535) had employed the pentacle in his account of the harmonic relations between

[14] The classic account of the history of this theme is that of Raymond Klibansky, Fritz Saxl and Erwin Panofsky, *Saturn and Melancholy; Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion and Art* (London: Nelson, 1964).

the Macrocosm and the human body.[15] Agrippa also published the work of Peter of Abano from Padua (ca. 1257-1316) on magical sigils and the rituals associated with them. In the fourth book of this treatise Abano described the rites associated with the "pentacle" and Agrippa added an illustration of this sigil which takes the form of a six-sided star composed of two inter-locking equilateral triangles. The Catholic mass is also introduced into the ritual by Abano and it is employed for a magical purpose, against its original intent, in order to sanctify the sigil and to protect it and its user from demonic forces. It may be the presence of the mass in Abano's text that triggered the concept of the two diagrams in Khunrath's illustration which symbolically allude to the mass and to the transubstantiation of the bread and wine.

In his writings Khunrath had stated quite clearly his opposition to any form of demonic magic, probably meaning by this term amulets and star-magic. Nonetheless, he did approve of Agrippa whom he would have regarded as a Christian kabbalist like himself. Khunrath draws on Agrippa's pentacle for his own "annulus," although this is a five-pointed star. This diagram is, in fact, a symbolic image of the cosmic "Anthropos" who was pictured in human-form by Agrippa in his *Occulta Philosophia.* Khunrath's meaning for the pentacle is that it symbolizes Christ as the "anima mundi," the soul pervading the universe. The pentacle is an allusion to the alchemical "azoth", the quintessence which in Khunrath's theosophy is identical with Christ. The pentacle is placed opposite the image of the squaring of the circle which expresses the same Christology. Since the solution of this Pythagorean problem could only be a superhuman feat, hence in Khunrath's theosophy it becomes an icon of the incarnation of Christ, in whom were reconciled spirit (the circle) and matter (the square). The diagram also signifies the transubstantiation of matter into the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist. Khunrath is pictured contemplating both Christ's incarnation within the individual soul and his Real Presence in the alchemical mass.

This diagram of the circle squared was used by Michael Maier in another of his writings, the *De Circulo Physico, Quadrato* (Oppenheim: Luca Jennis, 1616), where he uses the diagram as an allegory of the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Inevitably, there also arises the concomitant association of Christ's physical presence in the materials of the mass. Maier, like Khunrath, used the image of the squared circle as a theurgical sigil, representing the spiritual and alchemical union of opposites in the

[15] Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa, *Opera (1600)* (Hildesheim; Georg Olms, 1970), Bk. II, Ch. 27, illustration, p. 239. See also Chs. 23-27, pp. 226-235.

"azoth". A circle appears on the title-page of his treatise bearing the names of the four universal qualities, "calidum siccum frigidum humidum", while a rectangle lists the four elements. The main subject of this essay is the Paracelsian theory of the universal panacea, the potable gold. According to Maier, the universal panacea resolved the problem of the squaring of the circle.[16]

Another alchemist and medical practitioner to employ Catholic emblems was Stefan Michelspacher of the Tyrol who had moved to Augsburg, commencing his writing career in 1615. Little is known about this person.[17] Michelspacher's *Cabala: Spiegel der Kunst und Natur, in Alchymia* appeared in 1615 at the press of David Francke, with plates engraved by Raphael Custos, or Custodis. Three further Latin translations entitled *Cabala, Speculum Artis et Naturae, in Alchymia*, were published in Augsburg in 1654, 1667 and 1704. The treatise consists of four large engravings loosely related to a very brief textual account describing three mirrors which display four different visions. The fourth engraving depicts Christ as the Philosopher's Stone seated in a baptismal font. At the top right of the engraving there appears the Roman Catholic emblem known as the Mystic Wine Press which shows Christ for a second time as a small figure standing in a wine-press. Like the emblem of the pelican and its young, that of the Mystic Wine-Press asserts the doctrine of the Eucharistic transubstantiation. It is the blood of Christ himself which becomes the communion wine. In the *Cabala* Christ is used to personify the Paracelsian "azoth."

There are many apocalyptic references in the *Cabala*, including the second engraving which shows a beast wearing a papal crown, its form being drawn from engravings of the Antichrist in Luther's published writings. Michelspacher's Beast is a composite of four characters from Revelation: the Beast from the Sea, the Beast from the Earth, the dragon who pursues the Apocalyptic Virgin and the Whore of Babylon. A comparable image appears on the frontispiece to Paracelsus's commentary on the "Nuremberg Figures" published in 1569 in Basle. Michelspacher's *Cabala* seems to be a polemical treatise responding adversely to the persecution of Paracelsians and other religious dissidents by the established Churches.

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[16] Michael Maier, *De Circulo Physico, Quadrato* (Oppenheim: Luca Jennis, 1617), p. 4.

[17] See Urszula Szulakowska, "The Apocalyptic Eucharist and Religious Dissidence in Stefan Michelspacher's *Cabala*", *Aries. Journal for the Study of Western Esotericism* 3 (2003), pp. 200-223.

Hence, the Eucharistic doctrines of the Catholic Church re-appear on a number of occasions in other Lutheran alchemical treatises, as do some other Marian references.

The Marian aspect of Fludd's thinking is evidenced in a somewhat different context from that of his Eucharistic medicine and it has more in common with Boehme's near-contemporary account of the role of Sophia, Divine Wisdom in her creative operations through-out nature. There is a depiction of the Virgin "Natura" as a naked woman in Fludd's "Macrocosmos." This figure of Natura has certain Marian attributes. The engraving is entitled by Fludd "Integra Naturae Speculum Artisque Imago," referring to the mirror of nature in art.

Natura is joined by a chain to the Empyreum in which there radiates the Hebrew name of God, the Tetragrammaton 'YHWH' (יהוה). The sun is resting on the Virgin's right breast and there is a crescent-moon on her left. The sun on her right breast pours out its rays onto the earth, where they are refracted optically to take the form of the physical sun. Another crescent-moon lies across her belly. Her hair is loose like that of an unmarried virgin. In addition, she has a halo of twelve stars as in Marian iconography (eleven are clearly displayed and one more seems to be half-hidden behind her hair).

Fludd's Virgin in her pose, starting to walk forward while gazing downwards, recalls the imagery of the Immaculate Conception where Mary similarly lowers her gaze and sways as she steps forward. The style of the hair is similar, as is the facial type of a young girl. The right foot of Fludd's Virgin stands on the earth, while her left foot is set in water. Another figure in the same picture is that of an ape which is explained as being Nature's assistant in the realm of creative human activity. The ape signifies the concept of art (as artifice, including the art of alchemy) which artificially apes, or imitates nature. The scheme of circles beneath refers to the three realms of animal, vegetable and mineral activity on earth.[18]

The accompanying text provides a brief account of this engraving in terms that closely parallel Boehme's accounts of his own Divine Virgin. Fludd reveals that the woman represents Nature, who is a Virgin of the sub-lunar world made from the four elements. She is not herself a divine goddess, but the most intimate minister of God at whose command she governs the sub-celestial worlds. Fludd refers to the mercurial spirit living

[18] Fludd, *Utriusque Cosmi ... Historia*, I, p. 4.

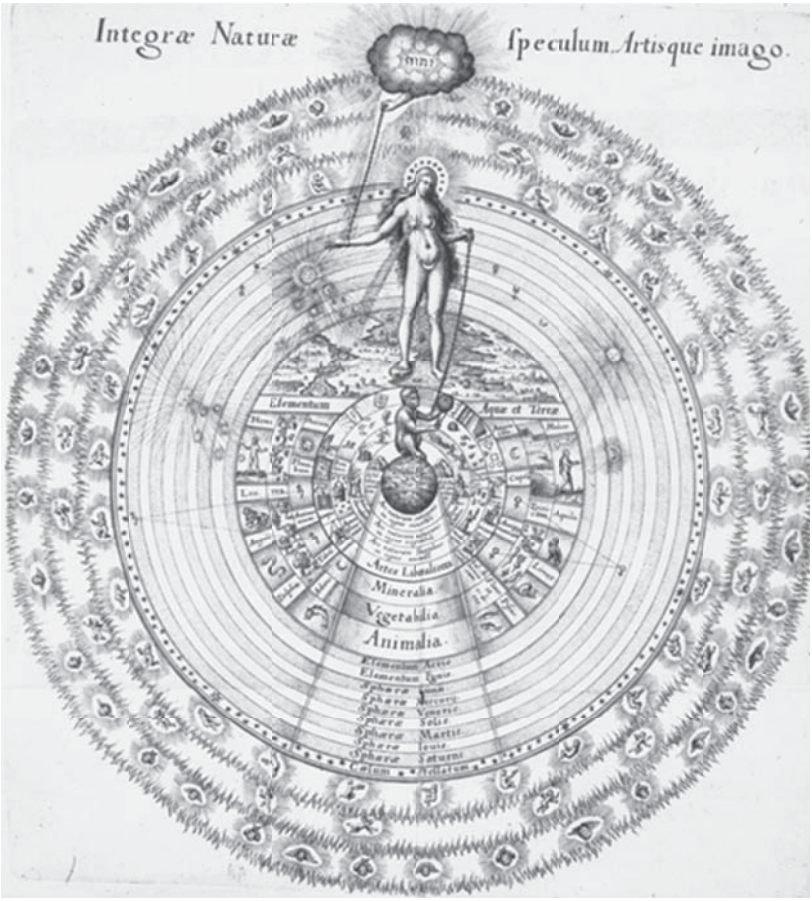

Fig. 9-15 Figure of "Natura" and the Empyreum in Robert Fludd's "Macrocosmos," *Utriusque Cosmi ... Historia*, I (Oppenheim: Johann Theodore de Bry, 1617), p. 4. With the permission of the British Library: Shelf-mark C. 79. d. 7

in the Virgin's womb, while her heart gives light to the stars. This mercurial spirit whom the philosophers call the Spirit of the Moon is sent down to the centre of the earth, quickening it into life. In another of his works, the *Tractatus Theologo-Philosophicus* (Oppenheim: Johann Theodore de Bry, 1617) Fludd describes another comparable virginal figure that of the Virgin Psyche, daughter of Nature, as a pure bride. She is described as being a tabernacle of the Holy Spirit [in the same manner as Holy Wisdom in Ecclesiastes 24 and in Marian theology]. Fludd states that

his noble and most pure Virgin is decked with divine light. She is this splendid Nature, this Psyche, the minister of life to all creatures and the airy virtue of the admirable Father and Son, or the Holy Spirit of intelligence who has placed his tabernacle in her. In other words, this is an allusion to Holy Wisdom and even to the Virgin Mary in the Father/Son references.

Fludd's engraving of the Virgin has been modified from Catholic iconography to accord with his own alchemical theories, not least in denuding the figure of Mary. Her origins as an image most clearly lie in the Immaculate Conception, rather than in the Apocalyptic Woman. The nakedness of Fludd's Virgin also recalls that of Eve. In fact, Fludd has created a unique image of the Virgin "Natura," telescoping iconographic elements drawn from both the "First" and the "Second" Eves as in the Catholic narrative of human salvation. His Virgin is naked like the First Eve, but her pose and iconographic details are those of the Immaculate Conception, the Second Eve. The two Eves were popularly depicted together in medieval imagery. In a well-known miniature from the missal of Bernhard von Rohr, Archbishop of Salzburg (ca.1481) the sinful Eve and Immaculate Mary stand one on each side of the Tree of Life. [19]

An imaginatively re-worked copy of Fludd's Cosmic Virgin is found in Mylius' *Opus Medico-Chymicum* (Frankfurt: Luca Jennis, 1618) (fig. 9-16). Here the Virgin is accompanied on the left by the naked figure of a man who holds the sun in his right hand, while she holds the moon in her left. They represent Adam and Eve. Both are tied by chains, as in Fludd's original image, to the circling spheres of the stars and constellations above. At the head of the page is the Empyreum of God.

The man is supported by a heraldic lion rampant, while the virgin is supported by a stag-headed man, an image of Actaeon who spied on the goddess Diana in antique myth and was hounded by her nymphs in the form of a stag. Fludd's Divine Nature with her Marian attributes has been given the additional attributes of Diana by Mylius. Yet the Marian cosmic symbols are still present in the figure of the Virgin, as is her primary character as Mother Eve. This time it is a star along with the crescent-moon that adorns her breasts and a crescent-moon is laid across her genitals to signify her untouched and sealed virginity. The star is an additional pagan reference made by Mylius who has classicized his Fluddian original. A shower of stars floods out of the Virgin's right breast as in the antique myth of the infant Hercules who attempted to suckle

[19] This image has been published on the front cover of Roger Cook, *The Tree of Life* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1974).

Juno. Startled, she arose and her milk flooded out to create the stars of the Milky Way. The starry breast recalls, further, the icon of the lactating Mary who feeds humanity with divine grace. Between Adam and Eve/Mary there is a new figure, that of the alchemist clad in starry robes, half-light, half-dark and wielding starry axes to cleave apart the alchemical prime matter, the Rebis in the shape of a double-bodied lion.

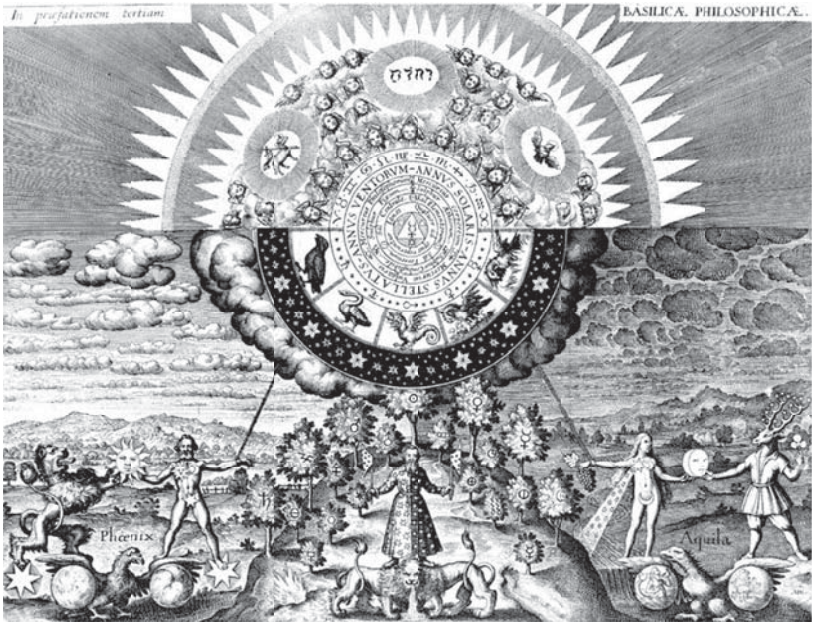

Fig. 9-16 The alchemist with Adam and Eve in Johann Daniel Mylius, *Opus Medico-Chymicum* (Frankfurt: Luca Jennis, 1618). With the permission of the British Library: Shelf-mark 1033. l. 4

In order to contextualize such appropriation of Catholic imagery for a Lutheran alchemical context, it is necessary to bring into consideration some other fields of artistic endeavour, but in quite conventional religious situations, where a comparable type of cross-confessional borrowing was occurring. Most especially, a hybrid confessional iconography appeared in geographical regions where there existed strong interactions between Catholic and Lutheran cultures, such as the border regions of Pomerania on the Baltic coast, as well as further south in Silesia. In such prosperous and cosmopolitan areas of the early 17th century the Protestants, mostly Lutherans, lived and worked in relative ease with the Catholics. For

example, in Gdańsk and its hinterland there was an important group of mannerist artists, Calvinist Dutch in origins, who settled permanently in the city. One exceptional example of hybrid Protestant/Catholic iconography has survived in the Old Town Hall (Stary Ratusz) of Gdańsk. The walls of the meeting-room known as the Sala Mieszczańska are adorned with a painted cycle of twelve Sibyls which has been relocated from its original site in a chapel in Fichtlów Street (Podwale Staromiejskie, 69/70). These panel paintings are not dated but they have been attributed to Adolf Boy (1612-80), one of the most acclaimed masters working in Gdańsk during the mid-17th century.[20] The figures of the Sybils have been copied in the Dutch Mannerist style from French engravings made by Gilles Rousselet, after drawings by Claude Vignon.[21] The pictures were originally commissioned for a German Lutheran audience of burghers and merchants, but the eschatological scenario of the imagery features Roman Catholic iconography.

Each painting consists of a large solitary figure of one of the Sibyls dressed in fantastic orientalised clothing. Behind her in the landscape there is a scene drawn from the narrative of the incarnation of Christ and also from Marian iconography.

The Sybils of antiquity had been co-opted by Western theologians as proto-Christian prophets who had foretold the incarnation of Christ and his return on the Last Day. The Gdańsk cycle of Sybils is didactic and moralistic, Protestant in mood. The scenes are narrative in composition, rather than presenting icons for adoration. The artist has placed the history of salvation into the context of the apocalyptic mood prevailing among Lutherans in the second half of the 17th century. The paintings incorporate poetic couplets of a prophetic nature and the visual imagery takes an emblematic form, a popular literary and visual convention in the Renaissance period. The works consist of three components: first, the visual depiction of the Sibyl), then the "explicatio" which is a scene in the background taken from the life of Christ and Mary and, finally, there is a prophetic couplet.

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[20] For Adolf Boy see "Benezit Dictionary of Artists" in *Oxford Index* (2006). Published online November 2011| e-ISBN: 9780199899913) online: http://oxfordindex.oucom/view/10.1093/benz/9780199773787article.B00025130 (retrieved 26. 6. 2016)

[21] Gdansk City Council, *Gedanopedia* (Gdansk Encycolpedia) "Malarstwo" (Painting) online http://www.gedanopedia.pl/gdansk/?title=MALARSTWO (retrieved 25. 6. 2016)

For example, in the background of the scene of the fourth Sybil, the "Sybilla Persica," there is an image of Mary as the Apocalyptic Woman who is treading down the serpent. The couplet states:

> Der Heiden heil Der Seelen hirt.
> Der Schlangen kopff Zertreten wirt.
> (The Saviour of the pagans and the shepherd of souls will tread on the head of the serpent.)

The Woman of the Apocalypse is crowned with the twelve stars and she shines with the rays of the sun. She is associated in this context with the Christian struggle against paganism and with the efforts to convert unbelievers to Christianity. This would also be the customary reference to the battles against the Turks, the Anti-Christ symbolized by the serpent. In another scene, that of the Delphic Sybil, there is a depiction of the Epiphany, of the arrival of the Three Kings at the stable in Bethlehem. The allusion, once more, is to the conversion of the pagans.

> Ein Stern Der heiden Volck her lenckt.
> Das ihm gold Weirauch mirrhen schenckt.
> (The star which leads the pagans here offers him gold, frankincense and myrrh.)

The picture of the Cumaean Sibyl, in turn, incorporates an image of the resurrection of Christ and the theme also returns to the Virgin Mary. The martial reference in the accompanying couplet could be to the confessional wars, or to the struggle against the Turkish, or both, or it could allude to the final battle of Armageddon in Revelation 19 and the advent of the New Jerusalem.

> Die Jungfrau kömpt ihr Sohn aufteht,
> Der krieg Hört auff Der Fried angeht.
> (There comes a Virgin whose Son resurrects. The war is ended. Peace follows.)

The last, twelfth, Sibyl is the Phrygian who reveals the Last Judgement and the couplet ends the series on an eschatological note, as is customary in Protestant religious imagery.

> Das heer Horn Schallet in der lufft,
> Und vor Gericht Die Welt beruff.
> (The horn of the lord will sound in the air and call the world to judgement)

Similarly originating in this same context of Lutheran-Catholic iconographic engagement there exists another intriguing painting in Gdańsk, that of "Charity" whose attributes are closely modelled on a medieval image describing the ancestry of Jesus Christ. The Gdańsk panel-painting is known as the Tablet of Charity (Pol. *Tablica jałmużnicza*) (1607) and is the work of Anton Möller. The painting is located in the Basilica of St. Mary. Möller, a German Lutheran, was born in Königsberg, but he resided in Gdańsk from 1587 to 1611.[22] As a painter he composed allegorical and historical compositions, biblical themes and portraits, working on murals and panel paintings for town halls and churches, as well as for private clients. From 1578 he studied in Prague at the court of Rudolf II and he travelled to the Low Countries (Antwerp and Amsterdam). It is assumed that he was in Italy in 1585-87. In 1588 he produced five small paintings for the Judicial Benches of the Artus Court in Gdańsk, a lay college for the professionals and guildsmen of the city and in 1603 he painted *The Last Judgement* for them. The *Tablet of Charity,* or *Almspanel*, for St. Mary's was produced in 1607 and it is the only one of his surviving works to reveal such Catholic influences.

Charity had been a common theme in Catholic countries since the medieval period, because in the teachings of the Catholic Church "good acts" were essential for human salvation. In Catholic iconography the figure of Charity took a specific form, consisting of a young female figure with her breasts exposed and being engulfed by a myriad of infants waiting to be fed. This was a separate iconographic tradition from that of the lactating Virgin Mary and Child. In Möller's Lutheran context the two Marian and Charitative iconographic traditions have been merged. Here, there is a woman inclining her head towards a child which is cradled next to her face. This motif is taken from imagery of Mary and the infant Christ, not from the emblem of Charity. There are four more children at the woman's feet, as in the Charity type, but their poses are more like those of flying angels as in Marian iconography.

As well as drawing on compositional motifs from the Marian tradition, Möller has also employed an ancient emblem known as the Tree of Jesse which displays the ancestry of Christ from King David as listed in the

[22] See G. Cuny, "Möller (Moller, Miller), Anton, the Elder" in Ulrich Thieme, Felix Becker et al., *General lexicon of visual artists from antiquity to the present*, 25 (Leipzig: E. A. Seemann, 1931), pp. 4–5. See also *New German Biography* (*NDB*), 17 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1994), pp. 637 ff (also digitized) and, in addition, see Joachim Bahlke and Arno Strohmeyer, *Confessionalisation in East-Central Europe- impact of religious change in the 16th and 17th Century in government, society and culture* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1999), pp. 273-274.

Book of Kings and adapted by the Church to his parents Mary and Joseph. In this iconography Jesse is shown lying down while the tree of the ancestors grows from his side. In Möller's adaptation, in place of the figure of Jesse, it is that of Faith who is lying on the ground, while holding a crucifix. From her side there rises a tree, but its trunk now consists of the figure of Charity with the children. From the branches of the tree grow the seven virtues.

Another possible Catholic model for Möller's painting is that of the Virgin of the Rosary, as in Lorenzo Lotto's iconic depiction of the Virgin and Child surrounded by medallions with scenes from the fifteen mysteries of the rosary. There also exist local types of the Virgin of the Rosary just south-west of Gdańsk, where there is a crowned icon of Our Lady of Kościerzyna in the parish church of the Holy Trinity. This is a copy of the image of Our Lady of the Snows from the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome. The Virgin and Child depicted at Kościerzyna are surrounded by nine medallions which are joined together as in a rosary and these contain scenes from the life of the Virgin. The image dates from the early 17th century and was venerated as a miraculous icon by the Catholic population through-out the Kaszuby region.

The scholar Viola Hildebrand-Schat has also commented on the Catholic character of Möller's iconography and she has similarly identified a Marian prototype for the figure of Charity. She has traced the origins of the design from the Tree of Jesse in which Mary is shown as the New Eve and a symbol of the Catholic Church. The theme of "good Works" in the painting is a Catholic teaching utterly rejected by Luther from the very outset, since humanity in its fallen condition could do nothing of its own accord that could win heaven. Only faith in Christ alone and the willing reception of his saving grace due to his sacrifice could redeem the sinner. The Gdańsk *Charity* is a special case, an exception in Lutheran painting, according to Hildebrand-Scat. She argues that this image is an example of Lutheran-Catholic co-operation specific to Gdańsk where the Calvinists were attempting to dominate the life of the city. Lutherans joined with the Catholics in making a stand against them and the *Charity* is one instance of such an inter-action, a conscious adaptation of Catholic theology and iconography to a Lutheran context for entirely political reasons.[23]

In addition, Marian imagery is further encountered in Lutheran sculpture as in a pulpit at the Lutheran church of Świdnica (Ger. Schweidnitz),

[23] Viola Hildebrand-Schat, "Die Danziger Gebote-Tafeln als Spiegel ihrer Zeit," *Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici*, *Zabytkoznawstwo i Konserwatorstwo*, 42 (Toruń, 2011), pp. 518 ff.

further south in Silesia. This is known as a Church of Peace since it was named after the Peace of Westphalia of 1648. The treaty permitted the Lutherans in the Roman Catholic parts of Silesia to build three wooden churches outside the city, though without steeples, or church bells. The rich sculptural decoration of the pulpit at Świdnica includes a prominent image of Charity alongside the virtues of Faith and Hope. This figure of Charity, like that of Möller, similarly draws on the traditional iconography of the Virgin and Child, but this time without any alterations being made at all to accommodate the new confessional context. The Catholic image has simply been transposed to a Lutheran context and given a new identity. The modelling of the sculpture is monumental but archaic, late medieval Gothic in form. The Virgin Mary/Charity displays the Christ Child on her right arm and there are no other children around as in the authentic Charity type.

There exist yet other examples of hybrid Catholic/Protestant images, especially those employing the older Marian conventions. It was common practice in these borderland regions for Lutherans to re-use Catholic iconography when there was some specific political purpose to be served. Hence, the Protestant alchemists were not alone in their recourse to Marian iconography.

It remains to consider the contrary situation in which Catholic alchemists may have been adopting alchemical concepts from the Germanic Lutheran milieu, specifically from Paracelsian medicine and theosophy. Such an investigation takes the scope of the present study beyond the specific issue of Marian iconography in Lutheran alchemy, but this is a necessary excursion in order to describe, at least partly, the political context of the 16th and 17th centuries and its effects on the general development of Western alchemy.

CHAPTER TEN

WAS THERE A "ROMAN CATHOLIC" ALCHEMY?

As it is possible to recognize Catholic influences in the alchemy of Lutherans and Anglicans, then one may justifiably enquire about an identifiably "Roman Catholic" type of alchemy. This would be one reflecting the specific beliefs of Catholics in distinction from the types of alchemy that were practiced indiscriminately by both Catholics and Protestants. Of the latter situation there is no doubt. Of the Catholic type of alchemy there is no trace. Paradoxically, it was the Protestants who employed Catholic doctrine and iconographic motifs, whereas Catholic alchemists rigorously avoided any reference to Catholic teachings and imagery in their alchemical publications. Most especially no Catholic alchemist in that period would have referenced the Eucharistic miracle of transubstantiation. To do so would be to commit the most extreme act of blasphemy, a transgression so heinous in the eyes of Catholic authorities as to require the death penalty.

Martha Baldwin has been one of the earliest historians to research the Jesuit involvement with alchemy and she has described the unease of Jesuit priests in being described as practitioners of alchemy. In spite of this, some Jesuits did continue with their pre-occupation in transmuting base matter, although they never entered the realm of mystical alchemy. Certainly, no Jesuit would have dreamt of engaging with the Theophrastic religion that was spreading in Paracelsian circles in Central Europe.

One of the most outstanding and original thinkers of the period was the Jesuit priest Athanasius Kircher (1602-80). His range of interests was encyclopaedic and his literary production was unsurpassed for its imaginative scope and intellectual energy. Although Kircher advocated one particular type of alchemy, he did condemn certain other kinds. For, much like other 16th and early 17th century Catholic philosophers and scientists he abhorred what he regarded as the mis-use of sacred imagery and doctrine by the alchemists. Such misappropriation, he believed, was prompted by the devil in an aping of the Catholic faith. The only type of

alchemy that Kircher could endorse was the practical type of laboratory work which had as its goal the production of chemicals and medicines, or industrial/agrarian substances. In his *Mundus subterraneus* (1665) Kircher condemned alchemy as an art of transmutation, but he praised the alchemical preparation of remedies with the use of the still for extracting the quintessence from plants and minerals.[1] Kircher assiduously investigated what he thought of as "Egyptian alchemy," but his alchemy was practical and he modelled his laboratory practice on what he knew of the forces of nature operating within the subterranean world. Kircher also enjoyed the theatricality of the alchemical process as described in medieval writings - the "flash/ bang" school of alchemy. The theatrical performance was a rhetorical strategy devised by the Jesuits as a way of attracting Catholic converts. To Kircher alchemical theatrics were justified in order to prove the efficacy of the laboratory arts.

However, in a recent new development the Hungarian scholar Farkas Gábor Kiss has problematized the accepted picture of Jesuit alchemists as being opponents of alchemical practice, as in Baldwin's original argument. Farkas Gábor Kiss has succeeded in qualifying the general idea among scholars that Kircher had succeeded in swaying members of his order into rejecting the claims of alchemy. He has reconsidered the history of Kircher's vehement opposition to the alchemy of Paracelsus and his conviction that Paracelsian claims for the possibility of transmutation were false. (Kircher had argued that Paracelsus had entered into a pact with the devil.) As Farkas notes, Kircher was unlikely ever to take recourse to sacramental doctrine in an alchemical context.[2] Nonetheless, there were other Jesuit alchemists in the Austrian Empire who did not accept Kircher's outright rejection of alchemical transmutation and who defended the alchemical tradition.[3]

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[1] See Paula Findlen, "Athanasius Kircher: the last man who knew everything … or did he?" in Paula Findlen, *Athanasius Kircher: The Last Man Who Knew Everything* (New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 1-48. The most useful work for Kircher's illustrative programme is Joscelyn Godwin, *Athanasius Kircher's Theatre of the World: The Life and Work of the Last Man to Search for Universal Knowledge* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2009).

[2] Farkas Gábor Kiss, "Alchemy and the Jesuits: Communication Patterns between Hungary and Rome in the International Intellectual Community of the Seventeenth Century" in Gábor Almási, Szymon Brzeziński, Ildikó Horn, Kees Teszelszky and Áron Zarnóczki (eds.), *A Divided Hungary in Europe. Exchanges, Networks and Representations, 1541-1699*, I, *Study Tours and Intellectual-Religious Relationships* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), pp. 157-182; esp. pp. 168-170.

[3] Farkas Gábor Kiss, "Alchemy and the Jesuits," pp. 171 ff.

Martha Baldwin has also provided an account of the alchemical concepts of other Jesuit alchemists, most especially Kircher's own disciple Gaspar Schott (1608-66). The most distinguished Jesuit alchemist was Francesco Lana Terzi (1631-87) who carefully distinguished between alchemy and chemistry and favoured a strictly experimental approach to scientific investigation, avoiding all mystical involvement.[4] Lana Terzi in 1652-54 was collaborating with Kircher on the development of medicinal drugs. In his own treatise, *Magisterium naturae et artis*. *Opus physico-mathematicum* (Brescia, poi Parma: Giovanni Maria Rizzardi; poi Giuseppe Dall' Oglio, 1684; 1692) Lana Terzi discussed alchemical recipes and the preparation of the Philosophers' Stone, although solely from a practical point-of-view. This pragmatism is typical both of Jesuit alchemy and of the alchemy of Italian and Spanish Catholics in general.[5]

A recent study of Jesuit science by Mark Waddell has revealed unique aspects of the manner in which Jesuit scholars explored the natural world, including alchemy. The Fathers adapted the rigorous contemplative practices devised by Francesco Loyola to their research into the hidden causes of nature, such as magnetism, occult virtues in animals and plants and the forces of the earth. Waddell argues that the genuine achievements in the advancement of science made by clerics and monastic orders in the Catholic Church have been underestimated. He includes among these outstanding results the critical, yet visionary, manner in which the Jesuits investigated laboratory alchemy and applied chemistry.[6]

In an English context Roberta Albrecht has presented an argument for the influence of Marian theology on the poet and Anglican priest John Donne (1572-1631) who had originally been born into a Catholic family. He had converted to Anglicanism, though he appears to have retained

[4] Martha Baldwin, "Alchemy and the Society of Jesus in the Seventeenth Century: Strange Bedfellows," *Ambix*, 40: 2 (1993). Reprinted in Allen G. Debus, *Alchemy and Early Modern Chemistry: Papers from Ambix* (Huddersfield, Yorkshire: Jeremy Mills Publishing, 2004), pp. 427-430. See also Martha Baldwin, "Alchemy in the Society of Jesus" in Z. R. W. M. Von Martels (ed.), *Alchemy revisited : International conference on the history of alchemy: Paper,*(Leiden; New York: E. J. Brill, 1990), pp. 182-187.

[5] Baldwin, "Alchemy in the Society of Jesus" in Martels (ed.), *Alchemy Revisited* (1990), pp. 182-187. Also there is Carlos Ziller Camenietzki, "Jesuits and Alchemy in the Early Seventeenth Century: Father Johannes Roberti and the Weapon-Salve Controversy," *Ambix*, 48, 2 (2001), pp. 83-101

[6] Mark A. Waddell, *Jesuit Science and the End of Nature's Secrets* (London: Routledge, 2016), passim.

certain crypto-Catholic tendencies.[7] Albrecht has perceived the effects on Donne of Lullism, including the spurious alchemical texts. She demonstrates, for example, that Donne employed Lull's "ars combinatoria" and also drew on his Marian poems and hymns. However, there was, in fact, a Catholic in England with a higher public profile than Donne, but with the same alchemical interests, namely, Sir Kenelm Digby (1603 –65) whose natural philosophy has been the subject of studies by Bruce Janacek. Digby had been born into a Catholic family, but he subsequently converted to Anglicanism, obliged by the political necessities of his time. Digby continued to serve at the English court despite the fact that his father had participated in the Gunpowder Plot against James I and had been duly executed in 1606. Eventually Digby returned to his original Catholic faith in 1635, with flags flying, and he commenced writing persuasive apologies on behalf of the Roman Church in the hope of attracting converts. One of the best-known is his justification for his reconversion, *A Conference with a Lady about choice of a Religion* (1638), although this was not published in England, but in Catholic Paris.[8] Digby had originally studied alchemy and astrology with the artist Jan van Dyck (1599-1641), the court painter in the 1630s to Charles I who also practised alchemy.[9] Janacek has shown that Digby's alchemical ideas, like those of Fludd in the same period, were centred on the miracle of Eucharistic transubstantiation.[10] Janacek considers that this deployment of Eucharistic doctrine in Digby's alchemy is a marker of his Catholicism.

In response to Janacek, it should be noted that such application of Eucharistic doctrine to alchemy is almost unknown among Catholics and Digby's case is highly unusual. It needs to be remembered that he had spent years as a member of the Anglican Church and, as in the case of Fludd, this may have liberated him to explore Catholic doctrine from an alchemical viewpoint. There are other rare instances of alchemical

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[7] Roberta Albrecht, "Alchemical Augmentation and Primordial Fire in Donne's "The Dissolution," *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 45, 1 (2005), pp. 95-115. See in addition Albrecht, *The Virgin Mary as Alchemical and Lullian Reference in Donne*, pp. 27 ff, 78 ff.

[8] Bruce Janacek, "Catholic Natural Philosophy: Alchemy and the Revivification of Sir Kenelm Digby" in Margaret J. Osler (ed.), *Rethinking the Scientific Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 89-118.There are also Kenelm Digby's letters to George Digby, Earl of Bristol (1612-1677) published as Sir Kenelm Digby, *Letters between the Ld George Digby, and Sr Kenelm Digby Kt, concerning Religion* (London: Humphrey Moseley, 1651).

[9] Janacek, "Catholic Natural Philosophy," pp. 89-118.

[10] Janacek, "Catholic Natural Philosophy," pp. 89-118.

treatises originating in the Catholic context that identify Eucharistic transubstantiation with alchemical transmutation, such as the French manuscript examined by Didier Kahn which provides a recipe for the conversion of bread into flesh and blood.[11] Digby would probably not have made references to the Eucharist had he been residing in a Catholic country where he would have been subject to legal retribution. In this period it was Protestant alchemists like Fludd who took recourse to aspects of Catholic teaching such as transubstantiation. The Protestant political order in England did not censor traces of Catholicism in the obscure world of alchemy (unlike the severe penalties applied in other affairs of the realm).

A more indicative marker of confessional loyalty among alchemists of the early 17th century was their degree of enthusiasm for the Paracelsian alchemical and medical corpus. By the end of that same century Catholic alchemists and medical practitioners had accepted most of these theories. Catholics also became increasingly involved in the course of the 17th century in the Rosicrucian fervour that had originated in German Paracelsian circles. Earlier, however, Catholic medical doctors and alchemists were slow to adopt German spagyric chemistry and healing practices, let alone the gnostic theology of Paracelsus and his followers (what little of it was made publically available).

In fact, during the 16th century the medieval pre-Paracelsian texts were experiencing a revival among alchemists of all confessions. At the same time as the Paracelsian corpus was filtering into all corners of Europe, substantial compendia of medieval alchemical texts began to be published in the Lutheran centres of Germany. The first such collection was *De Alchemia Opuscula complura veterum philosophorum* (Nuremberg, 1541; re-issued by Jacob Cyriacus in Frankfurt, 1550). The most influential of these early alchemical collections was the two-volume *Artis Auriferae quam chemiam vocant* (Basel: Pietro Perna, 1572). This was reprinted in 1593 in Basel by Konrad Waldkirch, Perna's son-in-law, and again in 1610 with a new third volume added. There followed the enduring and magisterial six volume collection produced by the Zetzner family, the *Theatrum chemicum* (Basel: Frankfurt, 1602-61).[12] They omitted the

[11] Didier Kahn, "Une recette alchimique au XVIIe siècle pour convertir le pain en chair et en sang" in Alain Mothu (ed.), *Révolution scientifique et libertinage* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), pp. 177-191. Also see Frederic Hitz. "L'age d'or de l'alchimie en France," Masters Thesis, Rice University (1991) online http://hdl.handle.net/1911/13500 (retrieved 4. 6. 2016)

[12] Lazarus Zetzner; Eberhard Zetzner (eds.), *Theatrum Chemicum, præcipuos selectorum auctorum tractatus de Chemiæ et Lapidis Philosophici Antiquitate,*

Paracelsian corpus in this particular compendium, but they published separate collections of pseudo-Paracelsian texts, as well as the Rosicrucian writings. In the *Theatrum chemicum* Lazarus Zetzner (1551-1616) and his heir Eberhard Zetzner (1622-58) included only the medieval alchemists such Roger Bacon (ca.1214–ca.1292), George Ripley (ca. 1415–90), Thomas Norton (ca.1433-ca.1513), Arnald of Villanova (ca. 1240–1311) and John of Rupescissa (d. 1366). They did not include pseudo-Lullian alchemy, although they did publish Lull's authentic "ars combinatoria." Above all, the Zetzners valued the Latin translations of the Arabs from the 12th century onwards, most especially Geber (Abu Mūsā Jābir ibn Hayyān, fl. ca. 721–ca. 815). They also profiled another respected work of considerable influence, namely, the *Turba philosophorum* (written in Arabic ca. 900). The Zetzners also included Morienus "the Greek" (a Byzantine monk, known as "Marianos"). His letter to Prince Khalid ibn Yazid (d. 704) was translated from Arabic into Latin by Robert of Chester in 1144 as *Liber de compositione*, the first alchemical work to be translated into Latin and which inaugurated the Western alchemical tradition.[13]

In Italy all manifestations of religious reformism entering from Germany were firmly repressed. As a result, according to Antonio Clericuzio, Italian Catholics at first reacted suspiciously to Paracelsian ideas and they returned to the medieval mentors such as pseudo-Lull and Roger Bacon.[14] The pseudo-Lullian texts were of exceptional interest in Italy where they experienced a revival in the 16th century. They were North Italian in origins (composed from ca. 1370) and the texts incorporated an extensive practical content. Pseudo-Lull had been of great interest also in pre-Reformation Northern Europe where much earlier in the 15th century the English Augustinian canon George Ripley (ca. 1415–1490) had developed

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veritate, jure præstantia, et operationibus continens in gratiam veræ Chemiæ et Medicinæ Chemicæ Studiosorum (ut qui uberrimam unde optimorum remediorum messem facere poterunt) congestum et in quatuor partes seu volumina digestum (Basel; Frankfurt, 1602-61).

[13] Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, 1, pp. 862 ff. For a more general over-view see Lynn Thorndike, "Mediaeval Magic and Science in the Seventeenth Century," *Speculum*, 28, 4 (1953), pp. 692-704. Also there is Michela Pereira, "Lullian Alchemy: Aspects and problems of the Corpus of Alchemical Works Attributed to Ramon Lull (XIV-XVIII Centuries)', *Catalan Review*, 4 (1990), pp. 41-54.

[14] Antonio Clericuzio, "Alchimia, iatrochimica e arti del fuoco Il Contributo italiano alla storia del Pensiero – Scienze (2013) fuoco" Online http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/iatrochimica-e-arti-del-fuoco alchimia_%28Il_Contributo_italiano_alla_storia_del_Pensiero:_Scienze%29/ (retrieved 27. 6. 2016)

his alchemy according to ideas drawn from that corpus. Later, the German author of the *Rosarium Philosophorum* made frequent mention of "Raymundus" (Lull) in the mid-16th century. Pseudo-Lullian texts conformed to the mind-set of early 16th century Italian chemists since these texts held no threat to the political authorities in the Catholic states.

Alchemy as an intellectual pre-occupation and a cultured pastime was wide-spread through-out Renaissance Italy. It is not surprising to find Italian artists, in particular, practicing alchemy in view of their proficiency in making their own pigments and in their knowledge of metallurgy in casting with precious metals. The prevailing classical aesthetic involved the concept of transmutation since artists sought to transform rude nature into a semblance of Platonic Beauty. Alchemical adepts included Parmigianino (Francesco Mazzola) (1503-40), Piero di'Cosimo (1462-1522) and Benevenuto Cellini (1500-71). There were also many practitioners higher up the social scale, even among the political elite, and these included Caterina Sforza, Countess of Forlì and Lady of Imola (1463–1509), Cosimo I de' Medici (1519-74) and Francesco I de 'Medici (1541–87), Grand Dukes of Tuscany. A critical influence on the development of alchemy had been the Florentine philosopher Marsilio Ficino (1433–99). Although he seldom mentioned alchemy, yet as the first translator of the antique Greek Hermetic texts on magic, astrology and theosophy, Ficino's influence was felt through-out all the esoteric practices. Specifically for alchemy he was important for the development of the theory of the quintessence. One of the earliest scholars to examine the history of this concept was Daniel Pickering-Walker who explored Ficino's concept of a spiritualized matter pervading the world as the "anima mundi," the soul of the world.[15] The concept of the "anima mundi" led to the elevation of the medieval quintessence into a religious principle. The fifth essence had been the critical ingredient in the medicinal alchemy of John of Rupescissa, Arnald of Villanova and the pseudo-Lullians.

Another Hermetic influence on the development of magic and alchemy in the 16th century was the work of the poet and kabbalist Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447–1500) who was another famous translator of late antique Hermetic texts. Similarly, the ideas of Giulio Camillo (ca. 1480–1544) affected alchemical thought. The *Ars transmutationis metallicae* of the Venetian priest Joannes Pantheus (Giovanni Antonio Panteo (1446-96)) was published in 1518, the first Italian work of alchemy to appear in print. An equally prominent work was his unpublished manuscript of the

[15] Daniel Pickering Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella* (reprint Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), passim.

Voarchadumia (1530) in which Pantheus demonstrated the use of magical cryptography, a type of kabbalistic magic employing the Latin alphabet. An important development in alchemical hermeneutics was the work of the humanist Giovanni Aurelio Augurello of Rimini (1441–1524) who published a Latin poem entitled *Chrysopoeia* (1515) (gold-making). Augurello employed the ancient classical myths as allegories of the alchemical process. His lesser-known contemporary Giovanni Bracesco (fl. first half of the 16th century) developed similar types of emblematic texts and imagery. This sort of allegorized and classicized alchemy attained the height of artistic ingenuity in the graphic expression of Matthieu Merian in his engravings for Michael Maier.

However, of far greater importance to Italian chemists in this period were contemporary industrial advances and they excelled in pursuing innovative developments in chemistry and in metallurgy. In the course of the 14th century German mining-technologists had migrated into northern Italy, Tuscany and Sardinia, bringing with them new technological advances. Developments made by Italian technicians in the sciences of metallurgy and pyrotechnics were recorded in *De la pirotechnia* (1540) by Vannocio Biringuccio (ca. 1480–ca. 1539), superintendent of mines at Boccheggiano.[16] In the second half of the 16th century the various minerals and metals were classified by Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522–1605), Francesco Calzolari (1522–1609), Andrea Bacci (1524-1600) and Michele Mercati (1541-93). These sciences were of special interest to the alchemists. Of major importance to all European chemists in the late 16th and 17th centuries was the preparation of vitriol (iron sulphate) which was described by Vicenza Angelo Sala (1576-1637) in his *Anatomia Vitrioli* (1617). Since he was a Calvinist Sala was obliged to leave Italy.[17] Italians were also interested in the preparation of medicines by distillation on the model of Roger Bacon and Arnald of Villanova. Taddeo Alderotti (1215-95) distilled an "aqua ardens" (alcohol) from herbal materials. Subsequently, the Paduan Michele Savonarola (1385-1468) discussed such procedures in his *Libellus de aqua ardentia* (1484), while Petrandrea Mattioli (1501–77) distilled metallic preparations for medical use, a

[16] Andrea Bernardoni, *La conoscenza del fare. Ingegneria, arte, scienza nel "De la pirotechnia" di Vannoccio Biringuccio* (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2011), pp. 80-81. See as well as the edition by C.S. Smith and M. T. Gnudi (eds.), *The Pirotechnia* of *Vannoccio Biringuccio* (New York: MIT Press, 1943).

[17] Antonio Clericuzio, Germana Ernst and Maria Conforti (eds.), *La critica della tradizione. Medicina paracelsiana e farmacologia spagirica, in Il Rinascimento italiano e l'Europa. Le scienze* (Vicenza: Angelo Colla Editore, 2008), pp. 367-390.

procedure advised by Paracelsus to replace traditional herbal treatments. The definitive text on distillation was produced by Giovanni Battista della' Porta (1535 -ca. 1615) in the tenth book of his remarkable compendium of esoteric and natural sciences, the *Magia naturalis* (1568). This section was later published on its own as *De distillatione* (1609).[18]

The prevailing concern of the Italians with practical metallurgy and chemistry in the 16th and early 17th century differentiated their type of alchemical practice from that of the German Paracelsians. In fact, the political establishment of Catholic Italy suppressed any initial enthusiasm for the work of the Paracelsians, but despite censorship by the early 17th century Paracelsian iatrochemistry continued to infiltrate Italian medicine and alchemy. At first this was a qualified interest on the part of the Italians, limited due to their suspicion of any publications issued in centres of Protestant reform. The printed prophetic and theosophical texts of Paracelsus and his followers were not widely circulated in Italy. Nor initially was the spagyric chemistry of Paracelsus and his followers found acceptable to Italian philosophers and alchemists since it eliminated and replaced Aristotelian physical theory. Neither was there much enthusiasm for Paracelsian pharmacology. (There was a comparable situation in France.) As had transpired earlier in the German states and in England, the rejection by Paracelsus of the medicine of the Greeks (Galen in particular) roused similar adamant resistance in 17th century Italy. Nonethless, in spite of the barrage of outrage the spagyric medical theories percolated steadily into the Italian peninsula. There may be a very early Paracelsian influence, in fact, in the work of the Venetian doctor Angelo Forte (fl. first half of the 16th century). He was composing texts on alchemy, magic, astrology and medicine. Like Paracelsus, Forte rejected the university medical curriculum with its sources in Hippocrates, Galen and Avicenna. Instead, he began to produce drugs by distilling the alchemical quintessence (alcohol). Moreover, like Paracelsus, Forte proposed to base medical practice on the investigation of nature and on direct experience.

However, the first really influential Italian supporters of the Paracelsian corpus were Leonardo Fioravanti from Bologna (1517–88) and Zefiriele Tommaso Bovio in Verona (1521-1609) who denied the worth of Galenic practice in his treatise *Flagello de' medici rationali* (Venice,

[18] Robert Multhauf, "The significance of distillation in Renaissance medical chemistry," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 30 (1956), pp. 329-346.

1583). Fioravanti introduced new drugs such as mercuric oxide (HgO).[19] By the early 17th century the spagyric pharmacology was establishing itself through-out Italy largely due to the influence of the French Calvinist Joseph Duchesne ("Quercetanus") (ca.1544-1609). His *Pharmacopeia dogmaticorum* (1607) was translated into Italian in 1619. During the plague of 1630 many doctors employed Paracelsian medicines based on tartar, mercury, vitriol (iron sulphate) and antimony.[20] In Italy, as in the rest of Europe, the publication of the *Ortus medicinae* (1648) of Jean Baptiste van Helmont (1580-1644) gave further impetus to the adoption of Paracelsian inorganic medicine.

By the late 17th century Paracelsian alchemy had attracted a much broader audience through-out Catholic Europe. One of its most notable enthusiasts was Queen Christina of Sweden (1626–89) who practised alchemy through-out her adult life. The Queen had abdicated from the throne of Sweden on her conversion to Catholicism and between 1655 and her death she resided mainly in Rome. Historian Susanna Åkerman has commented that the Queen's interest in alchemy was located integrally within the Rosicrucian intellectual currents. Johannes Bureus, the royal antiquarian in Stockholm, may have allowed Christina to view his *Fama e Scanzia Redux* (1616) which was his reply to the Rosicrucian *Fama Fraternitatis*. According to Åkerman, Christina had also been contacted by the alchemist Johannes Franck who interpreted her reign as fulfilling Paracelsus' prophecy of the return of Elias Artista. In his *Colloquium philosophicum cum diis montanis* (Upsala. 1651), Franck urged the Queen to find the Philosopher's Stone. In 1652 Christina was offered a magical kabbalistic text by the engraver Michel Le Blon and he also obtained a copy of Jacob Boehme's prayer book from Abraham von Franckenberg and translated it into French. [21]

In Rome the Queen established herself at the Palazzo Riario (today Palazzo Corsini) on the Janiculum hill from where she exerted a

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[19] See William Eamon, *Science and the secrets of nature. Books of secrets in Medieval and early modern culture* (Princeton; Chichester: Princeton University Press, 1994).

[20] Philip Wheeler (ed), "Tract on the Tincture and Oil of Antimony by Roger Bacon," *Restorers of Alchemical Manuscripts Society*, 12 (2013).

[21] Susanna Åkerman, "Christina of Sweden (1626-1689), the Porta Magica and the Italian poets of the Golden and Rosy Cross" online http://www.levity.com/alchemy/queen_christina.html (retrieved 27. 6. 2016) See also Susanna Åkerman, *Queen Christina of Sweden and Her Circle. The Transformation of a Seventeenth-Century Philosophical Libertine* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), passim.

considerable influence on the spread of alchemical practice. She ordered the construction of a laboratory operated by the alchemist Pietro Antonio Bandiera. Leading names to frequent her academy at the Riario included the physician and esoteric scholar Giuseppe Francesco Borri (1627-95), the alchemist Francesco Maria Santinelli (1627-1697), as well as the mathematician, astronomer, astrologer and engineer Giovanni Domenico Cassini (1625 –1712). Even Athanasius Kircher was present on occasion. One nobleman especially swayed by Christina's intellectual interests was the Marquis Massimiliano Palombara Pietraforte (1614-80) who attended her court from 1656. In 1655-80 at the Villa Palombara on the Esquiline Hill Palombara was constructing the "Alchemical Door" ("Magic Door," "Door Hermetic," or "Gate of Heaven"). This monument is said to commemorate a successful alchemical transmutation performed in Christina's laboratory at the Palazzo Riario. The doorway is embellished by carved emblems including alchemical insignia and Latin devices, some now lost, which have still not been entirely deciphered.

The Queen's interest in Paracelsian alchemy and theosophy is evidenced by the contents of her library. Susan Åkerman has noted the presence of works by Italian followers of the Rosicrucians and there are Rosicrucian references in contemporary Italian poetry associated with Christina's court. The alchemical contents of the Queen's library included substantial numbers of works by medieval authors who described practical laboratory work. Åkerman lists works by pseudo-Geber, Johannus Scotus, Arnold de Villanova, Ramon Lull, Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, Bernard Trevisan, George Ripley, George Anrach d'Argentine, Johan Grasshof, as well as a copy of the *Rosarium Philosophorum*.[22] This collection of practical, but conceptually archaic, medieval texts may be categorised as a "Catholic alchemical library." For, the Queen and her advisers, like other 17th century Italian alchemists, demonstrated a marked interest in pre-Paracelsian alchemy. The presence of the pseudo-Lullian works is typical of such a mind-set.

On the other hand, Christina also collected works of the newer chemistry in the Paracelsian corpus, as well as Rosicrucian-influenced treatises. Åkerman has noted that the Queen's library included some two thousand manuscripts of a mystical character. Many of these were the most recent Hermetic texts including Trithemius' *Steganographia* (MS Reg. Lat. 1344) and John Dee's *Monas Hieroglyphica* (MS Reg. Lat. 1266). There were also older magical books such as parts of a *Picatrix* (a

[22] Åkerman, "Christina of Sweden (1626-1689), The Porta Magica and the Italian poets," passim.

medieval Arabic book of magic) and a Latin kabbalistic work, *Sefer-ha-Raziel* (MS Reg. Lat. 1300) which described angel magic. There were several thousand printed items including editions of Paracelsus and his followers such as Johannes Thurneysser. In 1655 Christina gave a large collection of alchemical manuscripts obtained from Prague to her librarian Isaac Vossius. These had once belonged to Rudolf II and are currently lodged at the University of Leiden as "Codices Vossiani Chymici." Åkerman has commented on the list of the Queen's collection that exists in the Vatican (in MS Vat. Lat. 8171) which has a frontispiece illustrated by a bee and a spider and the words, "Mel ibit tibi fel." She recalls a similar emblem of a bee, cobweb and rose at the head of Robert Fludd's treatise, *Summum Bonum* (Frankfurt, 1629) and the words, "Da Rosa Mel Apibus."

In the kingdom of Spain through the 16th into the early 17th centuries alchemy took a practical form similar to that in Italy since in this period Spanish alchemy was cultivated by Italian practitioners. Foreign alchemists were migrating to the court of Philip II due to his support of the art, necessitated by a permanently drained treasury. In spite of the Church's antagonism, alchemists in Spain managed to survive during Philip's reign, though not after he had died. By the 1560s with so many unsuccessful experiments the king had lost interest in trying to transmute metals and he had turned instead to medicine, specifically to the production of the Universal Panacea. Philip hired Flemish distillers who prepared various drugs, liquors and perfumes for the royal household and in 1564 they introduced Paracelsian ideas into Spain. According to William Eamon, Italian alchemists and distillers attended the Spanish court, particularly Italians from the kingdom of Naples which had become a leading centre for Lullist ideas and it was here that Leonardo Fioravanti (1517-1588) began his own pursuit of alchemy. In Venice in 1556 Fioravanti had already encountered Ettore Ausonio (fl. 1520-70), an optician and alchemist from Milan. Ausonio was an avid follower of pseudo-Lullian alchemy. Eventually Fioravanti organized an academy for foreign adepts in Naples where the alchemical courses were based on Lullism. Many students arrived from Spain and Fioravanti himself was appointed to the royal court in Madrid where he resided from 1576 to 1577. The incoming Italian alchemists were not popular with the court physicians and Fioravanti was accused of poisoning the king's servant.[23]

[23] William Eamon, "Masters of Fire: Italian Alchemists in the Court of Philip II" online http://www.williameamon.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Masters-of-Fire.pdf (retrieved 27. 6. 2016). Also see Puerto Sarmiento, S.J., "The golden panacea. Alchemy and distillation in the court of Philip II (1527-1598)," *Dynamis*, 17 (1997), pp. 107-140.

There was no fortunate outcome in this clash of political interests between the Lullian alchemists and the traditional physicians in Spain and alchemy as a sponsored royal interest was eventually eliminated from intellectual endeavour in that country.

For the French Renaissance the influence of Paracelsus and his followers on French alchemy has been examined in depth by Hélène Metzger, Auguste Georges-Berthier, Wallace Kirsop and, most especially, the leading historian Didier Kahn.[24] The latter has remarked on the tardy reception of Paracelsian ideas also in France. Kahn has examined the work of an important group of alchemists gathered at the chateau of Flers, including Nicolas de Grosparmy (?-1541), Nicolas Valois (1475-1541) and Pierre de Vitecoq, or Vicot (d. 1548), but the dates here are too early for any Paracelsian influence.

In 1488 to 1531, especially between 1504 and 1557, alchemical treatises began to be published in France, a considerable amount of material being printed for the Lyonaise and Parisian book-market.[25] Paracelsian texts first appeared in Parisian editions in 1559-61.[26] The humanist writers referenced alchemy in their production, for example, Barthélemy Aneau (ca.1510–61), François Rabelais (1483/94?-1553) and the poet and Paracelsian Jacques Gohory (1520-76). In the 1560s, nonetheless, the influence of the Paracelsians was still negligible.[27] It was only later between 1568 and 1594 that Paracelsian materials became more widely acceptable in French medical circles.[28] Not entirely though, since in 1578 Claude Rousselet, Dean of the Parisian Faculty of Medicine, took legal action against the physician Roch Le Baillif (1540-98) for his Paracelsian impieties.[29] He was forbidden to practice medicine, although the trial itself never came to judgment. In addition, from 1603 the Faculty of Medicine was making efforts to stop the work of the Paracelsian physician Joseph du Chesne (1546-1609). There were also attempts by the same Faculty to obstruct the Swiss physician Théodore Turquet de Mayerne (1573-1654/55). Both of these figures were Protestants and physicians to the

[24] Didier Kahn, *Alchimie et paracelsisme en France à la fin de la Renaissance (1567-1625)*(Genève: Droz, 2007), p. 29.
[25] Kahn, *Alchimie et paracelsisme en France à la fin de la Renaissance*, pp. 70-80.
[26] Kahn, *Alchimie et paracelsisme en France à la fin de la Renaissance*, pp.124-194.
[27] Kahn, *Alchimie et paracelsisme en France à la fin de la Renaissance*, pp. 129-131.
[28] Kahn, *Alchimie et paracelsisme en France à la fin de la Renaissance*, pp. 195-351.
[29] Kahn, *Alchimie et paracelsisme en France à la fin de la Renaissance*, p. 280.

French king Henry IV. The dispute in France over the Paracelsian corpus continued to be vigorously argued through-out the early 17th century.

In 1623-24 additional excitement was created in Paris with the arrival of the Rosicrucian Manifestos (*Fama Fraternitatis*, Kassel, 1615; *Confessio Fraternitatis*, Kassel, 1616). It was Étienne Chaume and his friends who posted notices in the streets of Paris announcing the existence of the brothers "R. C." and their quest for new recruits.[30] An inexplicable incident in this context was the Sorbonne's condemnation in 1625 of Heinrich Khunrath's *Amphitheatrum Sapientiae Aeternae* (1595; 1609). Khunrath was a professed follower of Paracelsus, as well as a dissident Lutheran with free-thinking persuasions, and inclined to mystical rapture. It may have been this combination of heretical religion and spiritual unconventionality that led to his censure.[31]

However, in the main, such reactionary defence of Gallenic medicine was carried-out on behalf of the French medical establishment, rather than in defence of the Catholic Church. For there was a kinship of purpose transcending confessional divisions among those who accepted the new spagyric chemistry. Even so, in Catholic France, as in Italy, there was not the same enthusiasm as in Germany for the Theophrastic religion of the Paracelsians in the 17th century.

An important phenomenon in this respect was pseudo-Nicolas Flamel whose writings, most especially his *Testament*, caused a storm when they were "re-discovered," copied and published in the later 17th century.

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[30] Kahn, *Alchimie et paracelsisme en France à la fin de la Renaissance*, pp. 413-499. Also see Didier Kahn, "The Rosicrucian Hoax in France (1623-1624)" in Anthony Grafton and William R. Newman (eds.), *Secrets of Nature: Astrology and Alchemy in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge (Mass.); London: MIT Press, 2001), pp. 235-344. Also Didier Kahn, " L'alchimie sur la scène française aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles," *Chrysopœia*, 2 (1988), pp. 62-96, as well as Didier Kahn, "Recherches sur l'alchimie française des XVe, XVIe et XVIIe siècles", *Chrysopœia*, 5 (1992-1996), pp. 321-452 and again Didier Kahn, "Entre atomisme, alchimie et théologie: la réception des thèses d'Antoine de Villon et Étienne de Clave contre Aristote, Paracelse et les "cabalistes" (24-25 août 1624)", *Annals of Science*, 58 (2001), pp. 241-286. See also Didier Kahn, "Paracelsisme et alchimie sous le règne de Henri III" in Isabelle de Conihout, Jean-François Maillard and Guy Poirier (eds.), *Henri III mécène des arts, des sciences et des lettres* (Paris: PUPS, 2006), pp. 91-103 and Didier Kahn, "King Henri IV, Alchemy and Paracelsianism in France (1589-1610)" in Lawrence M. Principe (ed.), *Chymists and Chymistry. Studies in the History of Alchemy and Early Modern Chemistry* (Sagamore Beach: Watson Publishing, 2007), pp. 1-11.

[31] Kahn, *Alchimie et paracelsisme en France à la fin de la Renaissance*, pp. 569-593.

Flamel had once factually existed as a scribe in 14th century Paris, although without any known alchemical interests. The illustrated manuscripts were a spurious 17th century invention. The *Testament* became immensely popular among all ranks of Catholic society in France, both clerical and secular, and it swept the board in terms of its wide dispersal also in Protestant countries such as England where translations from the French into English were soon available in the same century.

The pseudo-Flamelian corpus is something of an exception to the situation described above where Catholic alchemists were avoiding any reference to their own religion. In fact, the spurious *Testament* reveals both Catholic iconography and the influence of Lutheran eschatology. The engraving customarily included in the published editions depicts the General Resurrection of the Last Day. This scene is accompanied by portraits of the deceased Nicolas Flamel and his wife Pernelle. Such an integration of portraits of the dead with the scene of the General Resurrection belongs to a type of funerary memorial encountered throughout Lutheran Germany. The same compositional type is also common in Scandinavian countries, as in the remarkable and extensive collection of 17th century Lutheran wall-memorials (painted on panel) in the Cathedral of St. Clemens, Aarhus, in Denmark.

Here, the donor portraits of richly dressed burghers and their wives occupy more than half of the panel space. They are located above a smaller scene of Christ in Judgement who presides over luminous scenarios of colourful Hells still lower down. The central image in Lutheran funeral art is that of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ as Universal Judge and the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. The purpose of the donor portraits is to proclaim the deceased as justified by faith in Christ and, hence, granted salvation, being entitled to pass unimpeded through the forensic process to attain eternal life. Medieval Catholic funerary monuments had been different in purpose, theological concept and visual form, although they also commonly included life-size sculptures, or painted portraits of the dead. However, prior to the Baroque period when artists elevated the deceased and introduced the theme of earthly glory, the mood of earlier Catholic memorials had been supplicatory, requesting prayer from the living and forgiveness from God. In most instances the dead person was bound for Purgatory to expiate their sins. In contrast, in 16th and 17th century Lutheran epitaphs the dead in the portraits are already justified by their individual faith in Christ's sacrifice and are saved from the pit of damnation. They gaze out placidly at the spectator.

The compositional design of the engraving in Flamel's *Testament* is basically the same as these Lutheran funerary types where portraits of the dead hover above an apocalyptic landscape. The main difference lies in the artistic style of the Flamel engraving. Here, the scenes take an emblematic form, rather than depicting the figures and landscape in three-dimensional reality as in the Lutheran epitaphs. The Flamel engraving is supposed to be a copy of a sculpted original. Although the presence of the saints behind the donors locates the scene within the tradition of Catholic memorial imagery, even so, the Lutheran imprint is present in the combination of apocalyptic scenes with large donor figures and with the central image of Christ as the Universal Judge. Moreover, the two patrons have the calm air of those who have already entered heaven in the company of Christ's two leading apostles. However, St. Paul is not the patron saint of Nicolas. Peter with his keys may be Pernelle's patron, but Nicolas should have St. Nicholas standing behind him, not St. Paul with his sword. The references here are not to the Catholic tradition of name-saints and the two saints are present, rather, to serve as alchemical emblems.

The keys of Peter as an alchemical symbol had appeared in earlier contexts to indicate that the text would provide the key to opening the secrets of alchemy,[32] although the figure of Peter himself had not been used before. Similarly, this is the first time that Paul is encountered in an alchemical treatise. He is the major source for the development of Christian eschatology in his teachings concerning the resurrection of the body. Paul's image is more related to the apocalyptic emblems depicted below him, as well as to the sections of the text concerning the end of time. Peter and Paul were the founders of Western Christianity and their presence may proclaim that Flamel's work has the full sanction of the Catholic Church and that his writings carry the authority of sacred Scripture.

The eschatological discourse continues through-out the text of the *Testament*, inter-linking the Jewish anticipation of their Messiah with that of Christian apocalyptic prophecy. In the 17th century legend of Flamel he had discovered a mysterious treatise dating from the 14th century. This supposed "original" was "reproduced" in the 17th century in both manuscript and in print. In reality, there is no original manuscript of the *Testament* pre-dating the known 17th and 18th century codices.[33] The legend, however, does draw on authenticated archival materials related to

[32] See, for example, MS Florence Biblioteca Nazionale-Centrale II, iii, 27, *Raymundi Lullii Opera Omnia*, f. 112v.

[33] The oldest manuscript of these figures is Arsenal Library, MS 3047 of the mid-17th century.

the genuine 14th century character who had once worked as a scribe in the city of Paris. In 1386 he was living in the rue des Ecrivains near la Chapelle Saint-Jacques de la Boucherie. The alchemical narrative, on the other hand, is entirely fictional. It provides an account in the first person of how Flamel studied alchemy and gained possession of a very old gilded book, made from the bark of shrubs. Its cover was of copper engraved with strange letters and figures and it was written in Greek, or some other ancient language. Flamel relates how on the first page of the original manuscript there was written in large capital letters in gold "*Abraham Juif, Prince, Prêtre, Lévige, Astrologue, Philosophe, à la Nation des Juifs, par l'ire de Dieu dispersée aux Gaules* SALUT. D.I.," after which there came maledictions and warnings with the word "Maranatha" often repeated. This is a word associated by St. Paul in his letters with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. It means "Come Lord," or "The Lord Comes." Flamel read on the second page how the scribe was consoling his people, the Jewish nation, counselling them to flee vice and idolatry and await the coming of the Messiah with patience. The scribe advises his people on the third page and in subsequent pages on the art of alchemical transmutation to help them pay their tribute to the Roman emperors.

According to pseudo-Flamel, the Jewish book consisted of twenty-one bark folios, the seventh of which was always illuminated.[34] These same pictures are reproduced in the engraving accompanying the *Testament* which supposedly copies some sculpted reliefs placed by Flamel above the entrance to the Cemetery of the Innocents. In fact, the engraving is not a copy of any relief sculpture, let alone of any 14th century Hebrew codex, none of which ever existed. The published text of the *Testament* explains the engraving of the said relief above the entrance to the cemetery, stating that it shows emblems of the alchemical process, as well as being an apocalyptic narrative concerning the Day of Judgement. The emblems include banners displaying eschatological texts and there are scenes of the resurrection of the dead, rising fully-fleshed from the grave, with angels everywhere. According to the *Testament* the two dragons shown on the relief represent legions of malignant spirits. A man and woman standing next to the dragons are said in the text to be painted orange and blue on an azure field. The text states that the colour azure blue reminds us that we must think of future heavenly things and say "Homo veniet ad Judicium Dei", that is to say, "Man will come to the judgment of God." The

[34] On the seventh page there was a rod with serpents encircling it. On the second seventh page, there was a cross on which a serpent was crucified. On the last seventh page there were depicted deserted lands with beautiful fountains from which there came serpents.

resurrection of the dead in the engraving has two men and a woman arising, one out of a sepulchre, the other two from the earth. Two angels call the dead to judgment. They are described as being orange in colour on a blue field and they hold scrolls on which is written

> Mortui, venite ad Judicium Domini mei
> (Dead, get up, come to the judgment of my Lord)

St. Peter is also said to be dressed in orange-red and he places his hands on Pernelle, who is similarly clad in orange. Behind Pernelle there is a kneeling angel holding a roll on which is written, "Salve Domine Angelorum: Hail, Lord of Angels."[35]

In another pseudo-Flamelian manuscript of the early 18th century there is found an unusual emblem of the Virgin Mary. She is placed in a scene which describes an allegory of the release of the volatile quintessence from base matter. The miniature is located in a manuscript copy of the *Traité des figures hiéroglyphiques d'Abraham le juif* (Yale University, Beinecke Library Mellon MS 103) (ca. 1750). The Mellon codex includes new imagery up to the number of thirteen, among which there is this scene of the ascending Virgin.[36] The original emblems have been recopied by an amateur hand in more or less their original form, but the new illustrations consist of scenes from the Book of Revelation.[37]

In the miniature the Virgin Mary has been provided with the attributes of the Apocalyptic Woman. Her dress is red in colour, her hair is loose and

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[35] See the edition edited by Laurinda Dixon, *Nicolas Flamel: his exposition of the hieroglyphicall figures (1624)* (New York;
London: Garland, 1994).

[36] Claude Gagnon, "Le Livre d'Abraham le Juif ou l'influence de l'impossible" in Didier Kahn and Sylvain Matton (eds.), *Alchimie art, histoire et mythes. Actes du 1er colloque international de la Société d'Etude de l'Histoire de l'Alchimie* (Paris, Collège de France, 14-15-16 mars 1991) (Paris: SEHA; Milan: ARCHE, 1995), pp. 497-506.

[37] Mellon Collection, Yale University Library MS 103 (ca. 1750): *Abraham Juif, Prince, Prêtre, Lévite, Astrologue (et) Philosophe ... Livre des Figures hiéroglyphiques*. Originally it was in the possession of the 19th century occultist Stanislas de Guaita, from whom it passed to the Duveen collection and it is currently in the Paul and Mary Mellon collection at Yale. For the printed editions of Flamel's Testament see Claude Gagnon (ed.), *Description du Livre des figures hiéroglyphiques attribrué à Nicolas Flamel; par Claude Gagnon suivie d'une ré-impression de l'édition originale et d'une reproduction des sept talismans du Livre d'Abraham auxquels on a joint le Testament authentique dudit Flamel* (Montreal: Éditions de l'Aurore, 1977).

her head is uncovered in the manner of the Immaculate Conception. Her pose is that of the Virgin Ascendant, or the Virgin Immaculate, with hands clasped in prayer as she gazes upwards. Other apocalyptic Marian attributes in the Mellon illustration include twelve stars around the woman's head. The threatening red dragon has seven heads, as in the account in Revelation 12:7 concerning the war in heaven. As in that account the dragon's tail sweeps the stars from the heavens. There are five stars in the Flamel image which refer to the quintessence, or to the five base metals, lead, mercury, iron, copper and tin. There is also present an angel who carries a spear and attacks the dragon as in Revelation 12:7 where Michael and his angels battle against the forces of Satan. Finally, Flamel's woman is clad in the rays of the sun and she stands on a crescent-moon.

The Mellon manuscript (MS 103) is written and illuminated on parchment. The watermark indicates that the paper originated in the Holland with the firm of J. H. & Zoon (Jan Honig and Son) papermakers at Zaandijk, north-west of Amsterdam.[38] This detail reveals nothing concerning the author, nor about the scribes and illustrators of the treatise. Authorities regard the illustrations in this codex as the work of a single artist in the 18th century. The text was also inscribed by a single hand. Mellon MS103 does not contain any corrections and it has few marginalia so that nothing is revealed concerning either its provenance, or the circumstances of its production. One surmises that the codex was composed in a Catholic context, since the patrons of other manuscripts in the Flamelian corpus dating from the 17th century were Catholics engaged at the French royal and aristocratic courts. Cardinal Mazarin, advisor to Louis XIII, was one such patron.[39]

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[38] Yale University Library, Mellon alchemical manuscripts, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, see http://orbis.library.yale.edu/vwebv/holdingsInfo?searchId=418&recCount=50&recPointer=80&bibId=1108506322 (retrieved 28. 6. 2016). And also there is Laurence C. Witten and Richard Pachella, *Alchemy and the Occult: A Catalogue of Books and Manuscripts from the Collection of Paul and Mary Mellon* given to Yale University Library, 4, "Manuscripts, Mellon MS 103," New Haven: Yale University Library (1968-77).

[39] The binding of the Mellon codex is significant as well, being Parisian in origins of the 18th century (dark olive morocco). There are thistles embossed at the four inner corners, while the six spine panels also bear a thistle, along with three five-pointed stars representing the quintessence, or maybe the three Paracelsian elements of sulphur, mercury and Salt. There are additional emblems of the sun. The thistle is a symbol of the Duchy of Lorraine and it is prominently displayed in the coat-of-arms of the regional capital Nancy. The thistle was included in this

One final consideration in this discussion of alchemical activity among Catholics has to be the character of the alchemical circles operating at the court of Emperor Rudolf II. This was a relatively irenic milieu in comparison to the Italian states, or Spain and France.[40] Figures present there included the Lutheran Michael Maier, as well as the Roman Catholic Michael Sendivogius. John Dee and Edward Kelly had sojourned at the court with disastrous results, although Dee's diaries do not refer to any confessional persecution. They were obliged to depart rapidly after Dee had castigated the Emperor for his immoral life-style.[41] The Jesuits at the court in Prague were suspicious of the two English magi for reasons of international politics, as well as due to their openly admitted practice of angel magic.[42] In fact, Dee and Kelly do not appear to have held any particularly strong religious views, as has been remarked by Peter Marshall. They were of a Protestant persuasion, but are known to have attended Catholic masses at the imperial court. In fact, their inclination was towards a Hermetically-influenced spirituality, underpinned by conventional Christian doctrine.[43]

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particular coat-of-arms after the defeat of the Charles, duke of Burgundy, by the English in 1477. The motto adopted by Nancy is *Non inultus premor* ("I cannot be touched with impunity"), emulating the spiney thistle. Nancy and its environs had been the site of some intense alchemical activity in the course of the Renaissance. In the early 17th century Henri II, duke of Lorraine (1563-1624) had installed a couple of fraudulent alchemists in his chateau at Condé, near to Nancy. This episode became notorious through-out France. However, in the period in which the Mellon codex was made such activity was subdued. This was the period in which Stanisław Leszczyński (1677 –1766), the King of Poland, had organized a culturally-elevated court in Nancy as the Duke of Lorraine (1737-66). His mecanate was expansive and although he himself had no interest in alchemy or Hermeticism, he did establish a great library for which the Mellon codex may have been produced.

[40] On Rudolf's religion see Evans, *Rudolf II and his World* (1973), pp. 35-37, 84-115, 196-274.

[41] On intellectual and religious freedom at Rudolf's court, see Marshall, *The Magic Circle of Rudolf II*, pp. 3-5, 34-35, 87-96, 97-109, 234-235.

[42] Marshall, *The Magic Circle of Rudolf II*, pp. 185-198.

[43] Marshall, *The Magic Circle of Rudolf II*, pp. 110-112.

CONCLUSION

It is not surprising that the character of the female in Renaissance alchemy conformed to contemporary stereotypes of women's social and economic roles. Commencing in the *Aurora Consurgens* of the early 15th century she was represented by emblems of the moon, mercury and the menstruum, as well as in her roles as bride and queen. The feminine principle was depicted as being solely a sexual partner and mother, albeit an embattled bride who occasionally strove to murder her husband. In the *Aurora* she was depicted giving birth, her genitals on show with the amniotic fluid flooding-out in a large pool on the floor. The alchemical image of bride, sexual partner and mother remained fixed through-out 15th and 16th century visual imagery and texts. Obstetric discourse pervaded alchemy. In the absence of a science of physical matter, specifically of chemistry, natural philosophers turned to the example of nature in their quest for appropriate concepts and terminology. A parallel situation was encountered in the arts where the Florentine Giorgio Vasari (1511–74) in his *Lives of the Famous Artists, Sculptors and Architects* ... (1550; second ed. 1568) used analogies drawn from obstetrics to provide a chronology for the revival of classicism in Italy. The Renaissance was born and grew to maturity in the manner of an infant.

The female in alchemy was conventional in her behaviour according to the earliest illustrated alchemical works, namely, the *Aurora Consurgens*, the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*, the *Rosarium philosophorum* and the *Pandora.* She was characterized by emblems of the crescent moon since she personified philosophical mercury. She was further equated with the dark "menstruum," the caustic prime matter and she was displayed as a naked bride in sexual union with her husband. Beyond these conventional female roles, the only political activity for the female in 15th and 16th century alchemy was that of queen, crowned and clad in royal robes.

From the early 15th century the religious image of the Virgin Mary was included in alchemical allegories. The alchemical Mary had a spiritual status superior to that of the alchemical queens. Admittedly, her doctrinal standing as co-monarch of heaven and earth was derived from her son Jesus Christ. Mary was not supposed to be equal in divinity to the Holy Trinity and she was supposed to be not divine at all, not even in heaven. Mary was never a goddess in Catholic doctrine. Despite the political and

dogmatic limitations placed on her religious character by the institutionalized Church, nonetheless, the Hebrew accounts of Holy Wisdom served to elevate Mary's political stature. When these accounts were appropriated by the alchemists, then they served to confuse Mary's standing in relation to the Holy Trinity whose image had also been transposed to alchemy.

In the *Rosarium philosophorum* the author had praised the alchemical Bride and Queen, speaking of her in terms drawn from the Book of Wisdom and the Song of Songs which had been applied by the Church to the Virgin Mary. In the manner of Holy Wisdom and of Mary, Queen of Heaven, the alchemical Bride became the source of all that was desirable on this earth, the very fount of riches, health, power and happiness. In other words she equalled the masculine Philosopher's Stone portrayed by the figure of Christ in the *Rosarium*. The unusual favouring of the denigrated feminine gender is an intriguing aspect of the *Rosarium*, especially since it exerted such an important influence on later alchemists, particularly on Maier, an issue that requires further investigation.

In addition, in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit,* the *Rosarium* and in the *Pandora* the status of feminine principle of alchemy was further elevated by the alchemical account of the elixir, or tincture. The tincture was awarded an exalted ranking in the *Rosarium* where it was personified by the Bride of the Song of Songs and by Mary in the scene of her Coronation. This demonstrates the change of emphasis in 16th century alchemy from transmutation to pharmacology, that is, from the Christ-Stone to the dual-gendered tincture, the elixir of life. Due to John of Rupescissa and the pseudo-Lullian corpus, as well as to Arnald of Villanova and the later Paracelsians the purpose of alchemy was being refocused onto the quintessential elixir. One instance has been cited earlier from the Faustius *Pandora* in which the feminine principle had taken two visual forms adapted from the imagery of the Immaculate Conception. One of these, uncommonly, acted the primary role of the red elixir, or tincture. The red elixir was otherwise always provided with a masculine signifier, that of the Red King.

Despite this unaccustomed elevation, now and again, in the part played by the feminine principle of alchemy, her continued identification with the dark lunar "menstruum" served continually to demote her status to the most abject level. In alchemical discourse of the Renaissance, as in its socio-political context, the placement of the feminine was ambivalent. She could be both the Virgin Mother of God and the satanic bride of the Anti-Christ, as in the imagery of the hermaphrodites in the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*.

During the 17th century, in addition to the older symbology and religious appropriations, new types of feminine iconography developed in alchemical illustration. These took the form of realistic narrative in the case of Maier's *Atalanta Fugiens* (Oppenheim: Johann Theodore de Bry, 1617; 1618). Here the female principle was provided with a variety of roles, though always of a subservient character. Maier's illustrator Merian was influenced by stylized Mannerist classicism, as well as by the naturalistic accounts of northern artists. The women shown in the *Atalanta Fugiens* originate in all classes, although they are always performing "women's work" such as washing clothes (Emblem III), nursing an infant (Emblem V) and cooking (Emblem XXII). In the fifth emblem a bare-breasted woman appears, maybe a woman of the streets. Others are shown as Indians of the conquered New World, as in the eleventh emblem, reflecting the colonizing enterprises of the period. Some of the portrayed females continue to act out the traditional roles of the alchemical queen (Emblem XXVI), as in the picture of the queen laid in the grave (Emblem XXVIII). Among these scenes there also appear classical legends with gods and goddesses, as in the engraving of Venus copulating with Apollo (Emblem XXXVIII). There is nothing subversive about any of these diverse representations of a woman's role in European society and cultural myth of the 17th century.

In more subtle allusions a female figure may also signify the natural origins of the alchemical process as in the scene of the alchemist following "Natura" on the title-page of the *Atalanta Fugiens*. Nature is also the subject of Robert Fludd's illustration in the *Utriusque Cosmi ... historia* (I, 1617) where she adopts the iconographic attributes of both Eve and of Mary Immaculate, uniting heaven and earth. In this half-earthly, half-heavenly, character Nature reflects the qualities of the Virgin Mary and she personifies the alchemical quintessence. The alchemical tincture is derived from the purified quintessence within the Philosopher's Stone and it is a more sublime form of the Stone.

In 16th and 17th century alchemy the figure of the woman on the crescent moon served to promote the status of alchemy as a philosophical and medical practice, as well as a quasi-sacred ritual. The woman herself underwent many strange transformations. The presence of the alchemical Mary in the text and visual imagery of the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit*, the *Rosarium philosophorum* and the *Pandora* carries more significance than has been realised. In fact, it could be argued that the status of the Virgin Mary was higher in late medieval and Renaissance alchemy than in Roman Catholic doctrine. In the *Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit* she had become the Third Person of the Holy Trinity,

replacing the Holy Spirit. That is, she was equal to the first two Persons of the Godhead, not subordinate to them. Paracelsus similarly integrated Holy Wisdom, the heavenly form of the Virgin Mary, into the eternal essence of the Holy Trinity. These heretical ideas were reflected in alchemical iconography, most especially in the *Rosarium philosophorum* where Mary personified the female aspect of the elixir, or tincture, and, thus, gained equal stature to Jesus Christ, representing the Stone of the Wise.

The Woman on the crescent moon has cast a long shadow. Some contemporary feminist theorists have regarded the Sophia figure of the Old Testament as a subversive factor undermining the political structure of the patriarchal order. Certainly, in alchemy when the Marian Bride who is Holy Wisdom and the New Jerusalem makes her entry to become the alchemical tincture, then she agitates the stability of the text and visual imagery and the conventional order of gender relations. She is presented more forcefully and at greater length in the text of the *Rosarium* than is Christ as the Philosopher's Stone. Of equal importance is her re-appearance in 17th century alchemical discourse in the works of Michael Maier, Daniel Johann Mylius, Jacob Boehme and Robert Fludd. Her presence in these Protestant contexts demonstrates that Catholic Mariology had a long period of survival in esotericism, despite the dismissal of Mary's central role from the creed of the Reformed Churches.

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