

THE EPISTLE OF  
ARNOLDUS *d e* VILLA NOVA  
TO  
THE KING OF NAPLES

Epistle of *Arnoldus de Villa Nova* written to  
the King of Naples, in the 13th Century.

Translated from the German by:

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(FOR THE USE OF HIS FRIENDS)

Great and mighty King! In answer to thy Request, know that the Ancient Philosophers have mentioned many things in their Work and many Labours, such as DISSOLVING and COAGULATING; many Vessels and proportions of weight, which they did to blind the Ignorant, but to explain the work to the Wise.

And Thou O King! Take Notice! That the Philosophers have declared the Work in very few words, although they have added many Superfluous Things, in order that no one, but a True Son of Art, should comprehend them.

The Wise Men before me have declared that there is ONE ONLY STONE, composed of 4 Elementary Principles, that is  $\triangle$ ,  $\triangleleft$ ,  $\nabla$ , and  $\nabla$ , or HEAT, COLD, HUMIDITY & DRYNESS; and this Stone by Comparison and in some measure is a Stone, yet no Stone according to its Nature, but a Composed METALLIC SUBSTANCE.

It is a Composition, when managed rightly, in which there is nothing Superfluous, nor any thing wanting, nay all things necessary are to be found in this OUR STONE (i.e. the pure  $\bar{a}\bar{a}\bar{a}$ )  $\text{???$  .

And although it be a compounded substance, called a STONE, yet it is only OF ONE, MERCURIAL NATURE, and but ONE THING, ( $\bar{a}\bar{a}\bar{a}$ ) which Thing, during the Decoction in the  $\triangle$  generates and showeth various Colours, before it becomes a white perfect Tincture.

Moreover O King! Thou shalt notice, that the above Stone, the longer it stands in the fire, the more it improves in goodness and is ameliorated, which is not so in other perishable substances.

999 (THE TRUE MATTER ,i.c. THE PURE CLEANSED  $\bar{a}\bar{a}\bar{a}$ , is AN HOMOGENIOUS METALLIC MATTER, which consists of a pure revived  $\text{☿}$  intimately united with MERCURIALISED  $\text{☉}$  IN REBIS, and the  $\text{♁}$  animated by  $\text{♂}$ , and married to SOL, is here also  $\text{♀}$  ialised; Therefore we have here 4 Mercuries, of  $\text{♁}$ , of  $\text{♂}$ , of  $\text{☉}$  and of SECRET  $\triangle$  REVIVED, and therefore this Our  $\bar{a}\bar{a}\bar{a}$  contains in itself Every principle necessary for the Stone, and only wants Digestion, Calcination, Etc.)

All other Things are burnt in the fire, and loose their original Radical Humidity, but THIS OUR STONE is amerliorated in the  $\triangle$ , its Virtue increases therein, and the  $\triangle$  is its Nutriment.

And this is a Token, Visible and Laborous, to know OUR STONE.

Thou art also to know, that this Composition of our Stone, before its Operation, MUST BE SEPARATED AND DIVIDED TWO WAYS, One division is CORPOREAL, the other SPIRITUAL, and one proceeds from the other and is united, and the one is governed with the other, and so THE ONE ameliorates the other.

The ONE the philosophers have called THE MASCULINE, the other the FEMININE principle (Rebis).

And again O King! Thou art to notice attentively that when the Philosophers have mentioned ARGENT VIVE AND MAGNESIA and when they say: Congeal the ARGENT VIVE in the BODY OF MAGNESIA, that they do not mean common quicksilver but they intend to signify, that their ARGENT VIVE is a Humidity (  $\text{♀}$  ) of the before mentioned Stone. ( $\bar{a}\bar{a}\bar{a}$ )

The Philosophers have called by THE NAME MIRC. THE WHOLE COMPOSITION or the MIXED PRINCIPLE, in every one of those principles, the before

mentioned humidity is contained, WHICH IS THE ARGENT VIVE OF THE PHILOSOPHERS. (vulgar mercury) (āāā).

This Humidity is not like other humidity, because this Our Humidity flows in the  $\triangle$ , and is therein dissolved, congealed and becomes BLACK and WHITE, and finally RED and brings THE WHOLE COMPOSITION (the pure āāā) to final perfection.

Thou must O King! Take notice! That in this our work not many Things are put together, but only one Thing (the purified āāā) and there is no necessity of handling that Thing with your fingers, nor to add any thing besides, what it contains.

(Consequently there is no need of adding  $\odot$ , as it is already contained mercurialised IN REBIS in the āāā) (if you add fresh  $\mathcal{M}$ , you introduce new foeces)

Further take notice O King! That the Snow White  $\nabla$  is the WHITE PERFECT STONE, and the Red  $\nabla$  is called THE RED PERFECT STONE.

And that the White  $\nabla$ , by the Regemen of the Work, without the help of any other Thing, is converted into redness.

The HUMIDITY which is in OUR STONE (āāā) is called the  $\nabla$  or OUR ARGENT VIVE.

(i.e. the revived secret  $\triangle$ , intimately combined and āāāted with the mercurialised  $\odot$  IN REBIS).

(THE HARPIES having been previously washed from it by the cleaning of THE AUGIAN STABLES, as performed by HERCULES).

And take notice! Whilst the  $\nabla$  or HUMIDITY, goes out of the composed matter, that is: OUT OF THE STONE, (āāā) the Whole Composition is

converted INTO BLACKNESS, settling on the bottom of the glass.

(this is the LAST BLACKNESS of the  $\overset{\sim}{\text{a}}\overset{\sim}{\text{a}}\overset{\sim}{\text{a}}$ )

And as you now continue with an easy heat, THIS BLACKNESS CONTAINING OUR METALLIC HUMIDITY, displays many various Colours, and terminates finally in perfect Whiteness. (TR. alba)

This OUR HUMIDITY (Our  $\text{♀}$ ) is called  $\nabla$ , which  $\nabla$  or  $\nabla$  is combined with its own  $\nabla$  and with the other Elements concealed in the Stone, until PERFECT WHITENESS is obtained, wherein the Elements are fixed.

And here, O King, take notice! That the just now mentioned AIRY HUMIDITY, which is OUR ARGENT VIVE with the before mentioned  $\nabla$  (Rebis) and other Elements concealed in the Stone, are but ONE THING.

(i.e. a Solar, antimonial, Martial and Mercurial  $\overset{\sim}{\text{a}}\overset{\sim}{\text{a}}\overset{\sim}{\text{a}}$ )

This HUMIDITY (OUR  $\text{♀}$ ) although there is but little of it, yet it is more than sufficient for the Nourishment of THE WHOLE STONE, from this very humidity does proceed.

This HUMIDITY is enough to bring the Stone to full perfection. (to perfect white and redness.) (especially if you have in the beginning employed a sufficient number of EAGLES or VIRGINS.)

Thou shouldst also know, that in our first mentioned Composition or composed Matter, that is in the Stone, are united BOTH SOL AND LUNA, according to their power and operation, as well as in the Elements and Nature of the Stone.

If SOL and LUNA were not in our Composition, neither  $\odot$  nor  $\ominus$  could be generated; yet is this  $\odot$  not like vulgar  $\odot$ , nor is OUR LUNA like vulgar Silver, because OUR SOL AND LUNA contained in our composition

are far better in their Nature than those 2 vulgar metals, because OUR UNITED SOL AND LUNA (Rebis) are living, whilst the vulgar metals are dead.

Yet it is to be understood, that Sol and Luna vulgar are related to our Sol and Luna, concealed in OUR STONE and although the Philosophers have called the Stone itself SOL and LUNA, yet these 2 are only to be understood according to their power and operation, but ARE NOT VISIBLY IN THE STONE.

Thou must also know, that this Stone or the composed and UNITED MATTER, is but ONE ONLY THING (the  $\text{ããã}$ ) and of one only Nature (  $\text{♀}$  ial) and that therein is to be found all what is necessary, and therein lyeth also concealed what ameliorates and perfects it.

This Composition altho' called one only Thing, does not imply a meaning, as if it were a work made of animal or vegetable substances; but the meaning is ONE ONLY PURE METALLIC NATURE, taken from its own mines, which afterwards by a prudent Regemen of the fire, is transmuted, DOES PUTRIFY IN BLACKNESS AND DEATH, and becomes WHITE AND RED and displays many other beautiful transient Colours.

Again O King! Thou must notice, that our before mentioned Humidity, which is OUR ARGENT VIVE, (sophic  $\text{♀}$  ) causes the destruction of THE STONE (of the  $\text{ããã}$ ) and makes it BLACK AND WHITE.

And thou must observe, that the Philosophers say: Ye shall make the body fusible, and decoct it until it is converted into  $\nabla$  (into  $\text{♀}$  ).

This is to be understood of Our Composition, which must be rendered fluid, and then coagulated, and then it is called EARTH.

Thou must also observe, that the philosophers call it WATER when THE STONE is SOFTENED and LIQUIFIED IN ITS OWN  $\nabla$  (in its own sophic  $\text{♀}$ ) which is otherwise fixed in the Stone ( $\odot$  in Rebis in the  $\text{ããã}$ ) which  $\nabla$  ( $\text{♀}$ ) then runs or floweth, and looks  $\text{☾}$  WHITE, like other  $\nabla$  (like  $\text{♀}$ ).

And take Notice, O King! That this  $\nabla$  is converted into  $\triangle$ , which is to be understood that THIS  $\nabla$  ( $\text{♀}$ ) must be coagulated and converted INTO EARTH as it was originally.

This Body (the coagulated massa) now remains so long in this Regimen of heat, until it is converted into a SUBTIL SPIRITUALISED BODY, and at last into PERFECT WHITENESS, and this Whiteness has been called  $\triangle$  by some philosophers.

Then, when they say, that the AIR must be transmuted INTO AIR, you are to understand, that this Composition, called AIR (TR. alba) must stand in a strong heat so long, until it is rubified and has attained PERFECT REDNESS, and this is called FIRE, or REGENERATED  $\odot$ .

O King! Thou must also observe: that our Work is prepared of one only Composition or Compounded Matter, and of no other.

Take this compounded matter ( $\text{ããã}$ ) quite clean and pure without any Impurities; which are therein naturally but must be separated, I mean to say, that the matter ought to be well purified.

This Composition place on the fire, and govern it, as Nature requires, and Thou art especially to notice, that in the beginning of the Work, there is much danger in the Regiment of Heat, as Thou mayst soon destroy the Work by too much heat; But when putrifaction is over, afterwards it is not easy to commit Errors.

After putrefaction, the heat must be between gentle and strong, until the spirit has separated itself from the body, and has ascended on high, above the Earth, whilst the Body lays dead below in the bottom of the Vessel, Without its Spirit or Soul.

During this period, take this as a sign, THAT THE MATTER MUST NOT FLOW NOR SUBLIME DURING PUTREFACTION, if it does, Thy Fire is too strong, and Thou wilt destroy the Work.

If Thy Work goes on quietly, the spirit leaves the Body, but must be brought back to the dead Body, from whence it came, analogous to Resurrection.

This spirit resembles A BLACK CLOUD full of Rain  $\nabla$ . This spirit is called the  $\nabla$  OF LIFE, which doth preserve the Body, with whom this spirit rests a while, and finally resuscitates with the Glorified body.

Thou art to notice, that the often mentioned Composition (first Rebis and Secret  $\Delta$ , afterwards the pure  $\bar{a}\bar{a}\bar{a}$ ) contains that fiery principle or  $\Delta$ , which killeth and vivifieth, and for this very reason the composed matter becomes BLACK, WHITE AND RED, without the help of any foreign Thing.

Finally Observe, that in the beginning of the Work, the heat under and about the glass, must be gentle and kind, in the middle after putrefaction it must be stronger, but still moderate up to the White, but from the perfect White to the Red, the Heat must be strong.

So that the  $\Delta$  must be gradually increased, until the Stone has obtained PERFECT WHITENESS, and still more, until the Highest Redness is accomplished.

Finis.