

PRÆCIPOLIUM:
or the
Immature-Mineral-Electrum.
The first
METAL:
Which is the
MINERA
of
MERCURY.

By Joh. Baptist Van-Helmont.

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**Electum Minerale Immaturum (id est) Metallus
primus est Minera Mercurii.**

TAKE of the best *Argentum vivum*¹, which you shall Distil from its own *Minera*², that is of the best *Hungarian Minera* which shall hold abundance of *Argentum vivum*, one pound will hold twelve, thirteen or fourteen ounces of Quicksilver, you shall distill this *Minera*, (first pulverized) in a Glass Retort with a Receiver, then you shall squeeze the Mercury diverse times through Leather. If you cannot get any *Minera Mercurii Hungarici*, take *Spanish Mercury*, which is the best after the *Hungarian*; squeeze it through Leather diverse times. If you cannot get this *Spanish Mercury*, take of the best *Argentum vivum*, that is to say, if you put a little of it into a Silver Spoon, and hold the Spoon over glowing Coals, and when the Mercury flies away it leaves a yellow or white spot in the Spoon, this Mercury will serve, but if the Mercury leave a black spot, it is not good for any Work. Take the Mercury which leaves a yellow or white spot in the Spoon, wash it ten or twelve times with Salt and Vinegar, and then squeeze it as many times through Leather, that it may be purged from its outward foulness, the *Hungarian* and *Spanish Mercury* are clean of themselves and need no washing.

*Imprimis*³, you are to separate the *Mercurium coagulatum*⁴ from the *Mercurius Vivus*⁵, without any corrosiveness, and that the *Mercurius Vivus* shall be

alive still, and so clear as a Venice Looking-glass: Which Mercury coagulate Paracelsus, and Helmont calls *Præcipiolum* or *Mercurius Coagulatus*, and that it shall be separated dead from its own *Minera*, and that the *Mercury Vivus* shall be still alive after that the *Præcipiolum* is separate from it, and that the *Corpus Mercurii vivi*⁶ is the *Præcipiolum Minera*, and that the *Electum Minerale immaturum*⁷, is the *Mercurii vivi Minera*⁸. Item Helmont & Paracelsus mentions that when the *Argentum Vivum* or *Mercurius Vivus* shall come to his *loca destinata*⁹, that then the *Argentum vivum* shall leave his *Præcipiolum* behind him in the form of a coagulated Mercury, and the *Mercurius Vivus* will go away alive and remain a *Mercurius Vivus*.

The *loca destinata*, where the *Argentum vivum* shall leave the *Semen Mercurii*¹⁰, and the *Præcipiolum* is Gold and Silver, Gold is the best place, by reason of the Fixation and Purity, and next to Gold is Silver.

In this *Præcipiolum* lies hidden the whole Art of the true Chemistry. If a Chemist know not how to make or separate that *Præcipiolum* from *Mercurius vivus*, he will fail of the whole Art.

This *Præcipiolum* is the matter whereof shall be made the Philosophers *Mercury*, that is, when it is reduced to his first matter, that is in a clear Water, like the Water which runs out of our Eyes now and then, and is slippery: This Water will eat and drink his own Flesh and Blood, and multiply itself with it *ad infinitum*, and this Water will bring all Gold and Silver into their first mater, before *Præcipiolum* is brought into his first matter, (it is when it is prepared Philosophically without Corrosiveness) it will cure triplicem Hydropem¹¹, podagram¹², morbum venenum¹³ and also many more sicknesses.

The Philosophers call *Argentum vivum* their Wine, and the *Præcipiolum* they call their Tartar, both makes the Philosophers *Spiritus vini Philosophicum*¹⁴, which they call now and then, *Astrum Mercurii*¹⁵, *Spiritus Mercurii*¹⁶, their Fire their *Sal Minerale* & *Sal Armoniacum*, their Horse-dung, their *Balneum Mariae*, and an hundred more names to deceive the People.

Processus compositus Præcipioli.¹⁷

Take in the Lords Name of the Mercury which is

⁶ Body of Living Mercury.

⁷ Chosen premature mineral.

⁸ Living Mercury Ore

⁹ Designated place.

¹⁰ Mercury's Seed.

¹¹ Three kinds of dropsy.

¹² Goat.

¹³ Disease of the veins.

¹⁴ Spirit of philosophical wine.

¹⁵ Star of Mercury.

¹⁶ Spirit of Mercury.

¹⁷ Processes to composite *Præcipiolum*.

¹ Quicksilver

² Ore or Iron.

³ First of all,

⁴ Fat Mercury.

⁵ Living Mercury.

well purged: ten parts of our Gold or of our Silver, (not common Gold or Silver as the common-people make use of it) take ours, that is to say, Gold which is well refined through Antimony, or if you will make it with Silver refine it with Lead, and purge those both very well from their Doss and foulness: If you have ten parts of our Mercury.

Take one part of our Gold or Silver made to fine leaves or made into fine Powder with a File, and make an Amalgam of them both in a warm Glazen or Marble Mortar, and with a Pestle of Glass mix it well, and then put this Amalgam into a Retort (as I shall give you direction below) and put it into an Earthen Copel or Earthen Pan, with one part of clear Sand, and three times as much sifted Ashes, and cover it with another Earthen Pan, and put to it a little Receiver, without luting, and then make Fire in your Furnace, and give an indifferent heat, and distil the *Mercurium* from our Gold and Silver with an indifferent heat, now and then, then take the Pan from it: If you see the Mercury is distilled from the Gold or Silver, cover it again and let the Fire go out.

The next morning take your Retort and receiver from the Furnace or out of the sand, your Mercury will lie some part in the Receiver, and some part will hang in the Neck of the Retort, which you shall wipe off with a Feather, to the other Mercury which is in the Receiver.

If you will, you may now and then hold glowing Coal under the Neck of the Retort that the Mercury may run into the Receiver.

When you have separated the *Mercurium*, then scrape the Gold which will lie at the bottom of the Retort with a crooked Iron, from the bottom of the Retort, and take it out, and put it into a Glass Mortar and powder it small, then mingle or Amalgamate your Mercury with it again by degrees or by little and little, and put your Amalgam again into the Retort, and if you shall find any Powder that will not go into the Mercury, do not cast it away, but put it with the Amalgam into the Retort (or else you will lose your *Præcipiolum*) and distil it again as it is mentioned. Now and then take the Earthen Pan from it to see if the Mercury be almost gone over, and if it be almost gone over, let the Fire go out, and cover with the Earthen Pan again, and let it stand until the next morning, and then take the Retort and the Recipient again from the Furnace or out of the Sand, and wipe your Mercury again with a Feather out of the Neck of the Retort into the other Mercury in the Recipient, and scrape again with your crooked Iron, your Gold out of the Retort as you did before, and put it again into your Glass Mortar, (observe you shall distil so that the *Argent vive* go from the Gold, and that not any *Mercury* may be found nor be seen by your Gold which remains at the bottom of the Retort.) Then take your Glass

Pestle, and Powder again your Gold very small, and Amalgam your Mercury again with your Gold, by little and little, as before is mentioned.

You will find that the Gold and Mercury will not well mix together as it did in the first and second time.

Then take it and put it again in the Retort and distil it again as it is mentioned, not casting any Powder away, which you will think to be feces, if you do cast it away, you will I say lose your *Præcipiolum*. When the Mercury is distilled away from the Gold again, take your Glass out of the Furnace or out of the Sand copel, scrape your Gold with the crooked Iron, again out of your Retort and you shall find that your Gold is much increased, if you should weigh it; the reason is your Gold is the Load-stone, which hath attracted the *Præcipiolum*, or your Gold is the Cask wherein the Philosophers Wine has let fall its Tartar which Paracelsus & Helmont calls *Præcipiolum*.

Now how shall the Philosophical Tartar or *Præcipiolum* be separated from our Gold?

Take your Gold which you have scraped out of the Retort, and put it into your Glassen Mortar, and powder it very small with your Glass Pestle and mingle your Mercury by degrees as by little and little.

Your Mercury will hardly mix with the Gold, the reason is, the Gold is full of the *Præcipiolum*, and then it is time to separate the *Præcipiolum* from the Gold and Mercury, which is a Womans work, when her Clothes, are foul, she washes them from their foulness. The same way you must cleanse your *Præcipiolum* from your Gold and Mercury as follows.

When you have the sign that your Mercury will hardly mix with your Gold, and your Gold will not enter into your *Mercurium vivum*, then pour on it the clearest and fairest Water (distilled is best) that it may go over three Fingers breadth your Gold and Mercury, then wash it well, stirring it with your Pestle the Gold and the Mercury and the Water together which is in the Mortar, I say you shall wash it together very well, until you see your Water is discoloured bluish black: Then is the sign that the Gold doth let fall the *Tartarum* or *Præcipiolum* in the Water and makes it bluish black, then pour off the Water into a Glass (observe that not any Mercury may fall with the pouring out the bluish Water) then pour more fresh Water upon your Gold and Mercury, and wash it again as is mentioned, and when your Water is blue again pour off the Water to the former Water in the Glass, and thus continue washing till your Water remain white¹⁸, then pour this Water to the other Water in the Glass, and cover your Glass very close, that not any foulness

¹⁸ Clear.

may fall into the Glass. Observe that your Gold will go again into the Mercury, when that *Præcipiolum* is washed away as Wax goes in melted Butter.

Take your Amalgam above said, make it dry upon warm Ashes very softly with a Sponge, and by a little heat that the Amalgam may be dried and when it is dry put it again in the Retort, and distil it as is before mentioned with the Mercury as with cohobating; that is to say in distilling your Mercury, so often from the Gold that the Gold will hardly mix with the Mercury, and this is the sign that the Gold hath attracted enough from the *Præcipiolum*, and then it is time to separate with washing your *Præcipiolum* from your Amalgam.

Now observe, I gave you Charge that you should keep your Glass wherein you put your bluish Water: which will be clear, and a Powder settled at the bottom, which is some of the *Præcipiolum*.

Then pour off the clear Water from the *Præcipiolum* without disturbing the Water, as soon as you can into another Glass: Now when you have that sign, that your Gold will not mix well with your Mercury, or not without great Trouble, then pour the same Water, which you poured off from your *Præcipiolum* into another Glass, as it is mentioned upon your Amalgam, and wash it again, and when your Water is bluish pour off the Water to your *Præcipiolum* into another Glass, as it is afore mentioned, upon your Amalgam, and wash it again, till all your Water has washed away the *Præcipiolum*, and then stop your Glass again that no foulness fall into it, then take your Amalgam and dry it again very gently, and distil again, as is mentioned, till you have the sign, and then you shall wash it again with the first Water, and you shall find that your *Præcipiolum* will Augment or increase daily. Thus stilling and washing shall you continue till the Mercury is freed from its Mercury coagulated or *Præcipiolum*.

Observe if the Water should grow less add to it now and then fresh Water.

Now the sign is when the *Mercurius* has lost all its Sperm, or its Tartar, or its Mercury coagulate, or its *Præcipiolum*: The Mercury and the Gold will mix always well together, and if you should distil it a thousand times that Gold and Mercury the one from the other, and if you should wash it a thousand times the one from the other with fresh Water, the Water will be clear, not bluish and so long as the *Præcipiolum* is in the Mercury, the Gold and Mercury will hardly mingle one with another, and then when you would have it mix together you must wash it, and then it will lovingly mix again when it is washed: So I say when your *Præcipiolum* is all separated from the Mercury, if you should a thousand times distil your Mercury from your Gold, it will mingle always lovingly together, and you will

not find any Powder left, it will go all into the Mercury and your Water remain clear and white.

Now further to our intent, as to make or prepare your *Præcipiolum* for a Medicine, pour your clear Water, from the Powder which lies at the bottom, in the Glass that no Water may be left by the Powder.

Put the Glass upon a little warm Ashes that the Powder may be dried, the Powder will look bluish yellow; also, put the powder into a little Cucurbit Glass, and distil five or six times *Spiritus vini* from it, then your *Præcipiolum* is made ready for a Medicine.

The Dose two Grains, or three at the most.

Compositio Aquae Albuminum Ovorum¹⁹.

Take a good quantity of Eggs, boil them very hard, then take the Whites and cut them very small, and distil them *per Cineres per Alembicum*²⁰ very softly, till you have gotten all the Water from the Whites, then take the Egg-shells, burn them to Ashes, and put those in a Retort, and pour upon them their own Water, and distil it *per arenam*²¹ very strongly, and then pour this Water upon the Ashes again, and distil it again, thus continue five or six times, the Water is ready for the *Præcipiolum*, the Mercurys coagulated Salt.

You may remember I gave you Instruction, that you should pour off the clear Water from the *Præcipiolum*, and you should make dry the *Præcipiolum*, and that *Præcipiolum* bring to a Medicinal Powder, or you shall bring all Metals, Principally his own Body into his first matter, which cannot be done without the *Præcipiolum* Salt, which is hidden in the Water you poured from the *Præcipiolum*, the same Water filter through a gray paper, and set the Water to evaporate in a round Glass very softly in Ashes, when the Water is evaporated away, you shall find at the bottom of the Glass a yellow whitish Salt, which is the Salt of the *Præcipiolum*, and the *Clavida*²² of the Philosophers, wherewith they do unlock the Lock of the *Præcipiolum*, and brings the same to his first matter.

If you know not this Salt, you know nothing of the true Chymistry: This Salt does decrease in the decrease of the Moon, and increases at the full-Moon, and one Grain will Purge very softly all Podagrous, Venemous and Hydropical Humors with two Grains of your *Præcipiolum* prepared.

How to bring the *Præcipiolum* into his first or slippery matter.

Take your Salt and twice as much of your *Præcipiolum*, when it is made dry first dissolve your Salt in fair warm Water, and pour it upon the *Præcipiolum*, and evaporate it away very gently in

¹⁹ Composition of Water of Egg White.

²⁰ By Alembic in Ashes

²¹ In Sand

²² Key

warm Ashes with a gentle Fire; then take your *Præcipiolum* with its one Salt and put it into a little Retort, nip the Neck of the Retort very close, or melt it together, or Seal it with Hermes Seal, then put it into *Balneo Vaporoso* and let it stand six Weeks in digestion or to purify, and it will turn to a slimy Water, then take your Retort, and open the Neck, then lay your Retort in a Sand Furnace and cover your Retort with an Earthen Pan, and lay a Receiver well luted, and first give a slow Fire, then a stronger, and this continue till your Spirits be well resolved into Water, first your Spirit will come in form of a white Cloud, and at last in the form of red Clouds or red Smoke, and give Fire so long till all your Spirits be come over into clear white Water, and when you have this sign, take your Receiver from the Retort, and stop the Receiver very well with Wax that no Spirit may fly away: Then let your Fire go out, then take the matter which remains in the Retort out of the Retort, and put the same into a Bolt-head and stop it well, and set it in a warm place, then take your Spirits which are in the Receiver and rectify them once, and keep those Spirits very carefully. Observe this, you may remember, when the *Præcipiolum* has lost its Mercury that the same Mercury, will be so bright, as a Venus Looking-glass; take the same bright Mercury and dissolve him in your before-mentioned Spirit, as now follows.

Take one part of your bright Mercury and put it into a Bolt-head, and pour upon it two parts of your Spirit of Mercury, and stop it very close and let it stand in a little warmth, and the Mercury will dissolve or melt in your Spirit, and then distil it together through a Retort in Sand, and again take one part of your bright Mercury and put it into a Bolt-head, and pour upon it two parts of your Spirit and set it in a warm place and the Mercury will melt in the Spirit, then distil again through a Retort in Sand, and it will come over in the form of Water; this continue as long until the half part of your bright Mercury is brought to a clear Water, when you have this clear Water, keep it very close stopped with Wax, and take your Powder, which I gave you to keep in a Bolt-head, and place it very deep in a Sand Copel, and give it a very strong Fire for twenty and four Hours, then let the Fire go out of the said Copel, and stir the Powder with a Wooden-stick, and pour upon it the half part of your clean Mercurial Water, and stop the Glass or melt the Glass-mouth together; then shake it, and let it stand in a warm place for three or four days in digestion, pour off this into another Glass, and pour upon the remainder of the Powder another half of the Water and stop or melt the mouth of the Glass again, and let it stand again for three or four days in a warm place in digestion; then pour it out to the former

Water, and stop the Glass, or melt the mouth of the Glass very close, that no Spirit may fly out or fly away, and let it stand in your *Balneo Vaporoso* eight days, and then distil it through a Retort, and if any stuff shall remain in the Retort, which will be very little, pour upon it your Spirit again, and distil it over until all is gone over.

Now is the Salt with his own Spirit mixed together and brought into the first matter, keep it very well stopped.

This is the Water that the Philosophers have given diverse, yea above a hundred Names unto it as their Horse-dung, their *Balneum Mariae*, their *Calx Vive*, and in short, this is the Philosophers true Fire, without this Fire or Water no man can do any true Work in Chemistry.

The Philosophers having brought forth this Salamander, which Salamander will never waste in the Fire, the longer the stronger.

This Water will increase or multiply *per Infinitum*, that is to say, if all the Sea should be Mercury it will turn the same into the first matter.

First you must wash your Mercury with Salt and Vinegar diverse times, and at last with Water to wash away the Salt, then mix this Mercury with *Calx Vive* and calcined Tartar, and distil it in a Retort in a Sand Furnace, and lay to it a Receiver, filled almost half full with Water, and when your Mercury is dry, then squeeze him eight or ten times through Leather, and then is your Mercury well purged from his uncleanness.

This is the Mercury you shall use in multiplying your Spirit or *Astrum Mercurii*.

Take of this Mercury purged one part, and of your Spirit or *Astrum Mercurii* two parts, put them together mixt into a Bolt-head, stop well the Bolt-head, and let it stand in a warm place one Night, and your Mercury will melt in your Spirit or *Astrum Mercurii*, and turn it into Water, and then distil it through a Retort, and thus you may do by repeating your Water with fresh Mercury as long as you please. This Water will bring or dissolve all Stones and Gold and Silver into their first matter, Item, it will bring Gold and Silver over with him, through a Retort, and that Gold and Silver will never be separated one from the other.

The reason is, Gold and Silver and all metals be of the same Nature, and have beginning from the same Water; there is nothing in the World, but has its beginning from it.

The Universal Medicine.

Take of fine Gold that is made fine Powder (that is to say, take the same Gold, which did remain, when you made your *Præcipiolum*) one part of your finest Silver, made to fine Powder two parts, put every metal by itself into a Glass, pour upon each your *Astrum Mercurii*, that it may go over it one finger

breadth, and stop each Glass very close, and let it stand in a warm place for eight days together, and your Gold and Silver will be almost dissolved into Water, then pour off the Water every one by itself in a Glass, and pour more Water to the Gold and Silver which did remain, and let it stand eight days in a warm place, and then pour your Waters off to your former Waters, and all your Gold and Silver will be dissolved into Water, and there will retain some feces; then take of both these Waters of each the fourth part, and put them together in a Bolt-head, that no more of the Bolt-head be empty then three parts, and Seal your Bolt-head or melt your Bolt-head mouth very close, and put your Bolt-head into an Athanor with your matter into a continual warm heat until it do come to a fixed red Stone or Powder; before it do come to a red Powder, will appear in your Bolt-head many Colours, as black, green, yellow and red, and when it is red and a Powder, then take your Bolt-head and bury it in a Sand Copel very deep and give by degrees Fire and at last a very strong Fire, and it will melt as Wax, and let it stand one whole week, or the longer the better, then take it out and let it cool, and break your Glass and you will find a fixed Stone, or Powder as red as Scarlet, I did give you Charge that you should keep three parts of your Gold and Silver which was dissolved into Water, put both these Waters together in a Retort, distil them, and both the Gold and Silver will go with the Water over through the Retort, with which Water you shall multiply your Medicine.

Now take one part of your Medicine made into fine Powder, and put it into a little Bolt-head, and pour upon it twice as much of your Water, as of Gold and Silver, and Seal it again, and set it into your Athanor again, until it do come into a red Powder, and then put it again into the Sand, for to give him the Fixation, that he may melt like Wax: Upon such a way you may multiply your Medicine *ad Infinitum*, and your Powder will dissolve in any Liquor.

Now as to make your *Astrum Horizontale*²³, or your Golden fixed *Præcipitate*.

Take the Gold that remains over in the working of your *Præcipiolum*, and make it into a Powder, dissolve it in your *Astrum Mercurii* as much as you will, distil through the Retort once or twice, and your Gold will go over along with your Water, and will never be separated one from the other, they are both of one Nature.

Now take your *Præcipiolum* which is made dry, (I do not mean your *Præcipiolum* which is made already dry to a Medicine) put it into a little Glass Cucurbit, and pour upon it your Golden *Astrum Mercurii*, and

distil it from it three or four times very slowly, and at last very strong, and your *Præcipiolum* will be red and fixed, if you will you may do the same with Mercury purged, it will fix the same to a red Powder, and you may do this work with Silver, and with your *Præcipiolum* or *Argentum vivum purgatum*²⁴. No man can find out all those Secrets which are hidden in this Philosophical *Menstruum*.

The Oil of Gold.

Take one part of Gold, five or six part of the best Mercury, mix them both together, and then distil the Mercury from the Gold, and then mix the same Mercury again with the Gold, and this continue until your Gold will not mix with your Mercury, then take the Gold and grind it, and put it into a clean Crucible and Calcine it, till it be almost red-hot, and then extinguish your Gold in the best rectified Spirit of Vinegar, when it is extinguished pour off your Vinegar from the Gold make your Gold dry, and then make it hot again, then again extinguish it in your former Vinegar, and this repeat five or six times, and then, take your Gold and make it dry, and Amalgam it again with the aforementioned Mercury, and distil it again as at the first, and this do so long until the Gold will not mix with your Mercury, and then Calcine your Gold again, and extinguish it in the former Vinegar five or six times, if your Vinegar decay or waste you may add to it some more fresh Vinegar. This you may continue until you think there is no strength left in your Mercury: Then you must take fresh Mercury and go to work as before, and so continue, till you think you have enough from the Gold.

Then take your Vinegar which is impregnated with the whole Essence of Gold, Evaporate it, or distil it very softly off, and it will lie at the bottom, like a yellow Salt, which you shall dissolve in fair distilled Rain Water; filter it and evaporate it again softly, and then put it into a little Retort, and place it in Sand, with an indifferent large Receiver for it, and give a Fire by degrees and it will come over in a white Spirit like Smoke, and then it will come over red like Saffron and when it is resolved into a red Liquor, let the Fire go out and keep it for use, the Dose is three or four drops.

This is (said the Author) one of the greatest Medicines under the Sun, and you can hardly get a better.

Three drops, are able to extinguish any sickness, and in this Oil of Gold is the greatest Secret of Nature.

With this Liquor Raymond Lully figured Mercury in *Excenterata Naturæ*²⁵.

F I N I S.

²³ Horizontal Star.

²⁴ Purged Quicksilver.

²⁵ Out of the Bowels of Nature.