
Emerald Tablet of Hermes

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History of the Tablet

History of the Tablet (largely summarised from Needham 1980, & Holmyard 1957)

The Tablet probably first appeared in the West in editions of the pseudo-Aristotelean *Secretum Secretorum* which was actually a translation of the *Kitab Sirr al-Asar*, a book of advice to kings which was translated into latin by Johannes Hispalensis c. 1140 and by Philip of Tripoli c.1243. Other translations of the Tablet may have been made during the same period by Plato of Tivoli and Hugh of Santalla, perhaps from different sources.

The date of the *Kitab Sirr al-Asar* is uncertain, though c.800 has been suggested and it is not clear when the tablet became part of this work.

Holmyard was the first to find another early arabic version (Ruska found a 12th century recension claiming to have been dictated by Sergius of Nablus) in the *Kitab Ustuqus al-Uss al-Thani* (Second Book of the Elements of Foundation) attributed to Jabir. Shortly after Ruska found another version appended to the *Kitab Sirr al-Khaliqa wa San`at al-Tabi`a* (Book of the Secret of Creation and the Art of Nature), which is also known as the *Kitab Balaniyus al-Hakim fi'l-`Ilal* (book of Balinas the wise on the Causes). It has been proposed that this book was written may have been written as early as 650, and was definitely finished by the Caliphate of al-Ma'mun (813-33).

Scholars have seen similarities between this book and the Syriac Book of Treasures written by Job of Odessa (9th century) and more interestingly the Greek writings of the bishop Nemesius of Emesa in Syria from the mid fourth century. However though this suggests a possible Syriac source, non of these writings contain the tablet.

Balinas is usually identified with Apollonius of Tyna, but there is little evidence to connect him with the *Kitab Balabiyus*, and even if there was, the story implies that Balinas found the tablet rather than wrote it, and the recent discoveries of the dead sea scrolls and the nag hamamdi texts suggest that hiding texts in caves is not impossible, even if we did not have the pyramids before us.

Ruska has suggested an origin further east, and Needham has proposed an origin in China.

Holmyard, Davis and Anon all consider that this Tablet may be one of the earliest of all alchemical works we have that survives.

It should be remarked that apparantly the Greeks and Egyptians used the term translated as `emerald' for emeralds, green granites, "and perhaps green jasper". In medieval times the emerald table of the Gothic kings of Spain, and the *Sacro catino*- a dish said to have belonged to the Queen of Sheba, to have been used at the last supper, and to be made of emerald, were made of green glass [Steele and Singer: 488].

Translations

From Jabir ibn Hayyan.

- 0) Balinas mentions the engraving on the table in the hand of Hermes, which says:
- 1) Truth! Certainty! That in which there is no doubt!
 - 2) That which is above is from that which is below, and that which is below is from that which is above, working the miracles of one.
 - 3) As all things were from one.
 - 4) Its father is the Sun and its mother the Moon.
 - 5) The Earth carried it in her belly, and the Wind nourished it in her belly,
 - 7) as Earth which shall become Fire.
 - 7a) Feed the Earth from that which is subtle, with the greatest power.
 - 8) It ascends from the earth to the heaven and becomes ruler over that which is above and that which is below.
 - 14) And I have already explained the meaning of the whole of this in two of these books of mine.
[Holmyard 1923: 562.]

Another Arabic Version (from the German of Ruska, translated by 'Anonymous').

- 0) Here is that which the priest Sagijus of Nabulus has dictated concerning the entrance of Balinas into the hidden chamber... After my entrance into the chamber, where the talisman was set up, I came up to an old man sitting on a golden throne, who was holding an emerald table in one hand. And behold the following - in Syriac, the primordial language- was written thereon:
- 1) Here (is) a true explanation, concerning which there can be no doubt.
 - 2) It attests: The above from the below, and the below from the above -the work of the miracle of the One.
 - 3) And things have been from this primal substance through a single act. How wonderful is this work! It is the main (principle) of the world and is its maintainer.
 - 4) Its father is the sun and its mother the moon; the
 - 5) wind has borne it in its body, and the earth has nourished it.
 - 6) the father of talismen and the protector of miracles
 - 6a) whose powers are perfect, and whose lights are confirmed (?),
 - 7) a fire that becomes earth.
 - 7a) Separate the earth from the fire, so you will attain the subtle as more inherent than the gross, with care and sagacity.
 - 8) It rises from earth to heaven, so as to draw the lights of the heights to itself, and descends to the earth; thus within it are the forces of the above and the below;
 - 9) because the light of lights within it, thus does the darkness flee before it.
 - 10) The force of forces, which overcomes every subtle thing and penetrates into everything gross.
 - 11) The structure of the microcosm is in accordance with the structure of the macrocosm.
 - 12) And accordingly proceed the knowledgeable.
 - 13) And to this aspired Hermes, who was threefold graced with wisdom.

14) And this is his last book, which he concealed in the chamber.

[Anon 1985: 24-5]

Twelfth Century Latin

0) When I entered into the cave, I received the tablet zaradi, which was inscribed, from between the hands of Hermes, in which I discovered these words:

1) True, without falsehood, certain, most certain.

2) What is above is like what is below, and what is below is like that which is above. To make the miracle of the one thing.

3) And as all things were made from contemplation of one, so all things were born from one adaptation.

4) Its father is the Sun, its mother is the Moon.

5) The wind carried it in its womb, the earth breast fed it.

6) It is the father of all 'works of wonder' (Telesmi) in the world.

6a) Its power is complete (integra).

7) If cast to (turned towards- versa fuerit) earth,

7a) it will separate earth from fire, the subtile from the gross.

8) With great capacity it ascends from earth to heaven. Again it descends to earth, and takes back the power of the above and the below.

9) Thus you will receive the glory of the distinctiveness of the world. All obscurity will flee from you.

10) This is the whole most strong strength of all strength, for it overcomes all subtle things, and penetrates all solid things.

11a) Thus was the world created.

12) From this comes marvelous adaptations of which this is the procedure.

13) Therefore I am called Hermes, because I have three parts of the wisdom of the whole world.

14) And complete is what I had to say about the work of the Sun, from the book of Galieni Alfachimi.

[From Latin in Steele and Singer 1928: 492.]

Translation from Aurelium Occultae Philosophorum..Georgio Beato

1) This is true and remote from all cover of falsehood

2) Whatever is below is similar to that which is above. Through this the marvels of the work of one thing are procured and perfected.

3) Also, as all things are made from one, by the consideration of one, so all things were made from this one, by conjunction.

4) The father of it is the sun, the mother the moon.

5) The wind bore it in the womb. Its nurse is the earth, the mother of all perfection.

6a) Its power is perfected.

7) If it is turned into earth,

7a) separate the earth from the fire, the subtle and thin from the crude and course, prudently, with modesty and wisdom.

8) This ascends from the earth into the sky and again descends from the sky to the earth, and receives the power and efficacy of things above and of things below.

9) By this means you will acquire the glory of the whole world, and so you will drive away all shadows and

blindness.

10) For this by its fortitude snatches the palm from all other fortitude and power. For it is able to penetrate and subdue everything subtle and everything crude and hard.

11a) By this means the world was founded

12) and hence the marvelous conjunctions of it and admirable effects, since this is the way by which these marvels may be brought about.

13) And because of this they have called me Hermes Trismegistus since I have the three parts of the wisdom and Philosophy of the whole universe.

14) My speech is finished which I have spoken concerning the solar work

[Davis 1926: 874.]

Translation of Issac Newton c. 1680.

1) 'Tis true without lying, certain & most true.

2) That which is below is like that which is above & that which is above is like that which is below to do ye miracles of one only thing.

3) And as all things have been & arose from one by ye mediation of one: so all things have their birth from this one thing by adaptation.

4) The Sun is its father, the moon its mother,

5) the wind hath carried it in its belly, the earth its nurse.

6) The father of all perfection in ye whole world is here.

7) Its force or power is entire if it be converted into earth.

7a) Separate thou ye earth from ye fire, ye subtle from the gross sweetly with great industry.

8) It ascends from ye earth to ye heaven & again it descends to ye earth and receives ye force of things superior & inferior.

9) By this means you shall have ye glory of ye whole world & thereby all obscurity shall fly from you.

10) Its force is above all force. For it vanquishes every subtle thing & penetrates every solid thing.

11a) So was ye world created.

12) From this are & do come admirable adaptations whereof ye means (Or process) is here in this.

13) Hence I am called Hermes Trismegist, having the three parts of ye philosophy of ye whole world.

14) That which I have said of ye operation of ye Sun is accomplished & ended.

[Dobbs 1988: 183-4.]

Translation from Kriegsmann (?) allegedly from the Phoenician

1) I speak truly, not falsely, certainly and most truly

2) These things below with those above and those with these join forces again so that they produce a single thing the most wonderful of all.

3) And as the whole universe was brought forth from one by the word of one GOD, so also all things are regenerated perpetually from this one according to the disposition of Nature.

4) It has the Sun for father and the Moon for mother:

5) it is carried by the air as if in a womb, it is nursed by the earth.

6) It is the cause, this, of all perfection of all things throughout the universe.

- 6a) This will attain the highest perfection of powers
 - 7) if it shall be reduced into earth
 - 7a) Distribute here the earth and there the fire, thin out the density of this the suavest (suavissima) thing of all.
 - 8) Ascend with the greatest sagacity of genius from the earth into the sky, and thence descend again to the earth, and recognise that the forces of things above and of things below are one,
 - 9) so as to possess the glory of the whole world- and beyond this man of abject fate may have nothing further.
 - 10) This thing itself presently comes forth stronger by reasons of this fortitude: it subdues all bodies surely, whether tenuous or solid, by penetrating them.
 - 11a) And so everything whatsoever that the world contains was created.
 - 12) Hence admirable works are accomplished which are instituted (carried out- instituuntur) according to the same mode.
 - 13) To me therefor the name of Hermes Trismegistus has been awarded because I am discovered as the Teacher of the three parts of the wisdom of the world.
 - 14) These then are the considerations which I have concluded ought to be written down concerning the readiest operations of the Chymic art.
- [Davis 1926: 875 slightly modified.]

From Sigismund Bacstrom (allegedly translated from Chaldean).

- 0) The Secret Works of CHIRAM ONE in essence, but three in aspect.
 - 1) It is true, no lie, certain and to be depended upon,
 - 2) the superior agrees with the inferior, and the inferior agrees with the superior, to effect that one truly wonderful work.
 - 3) As all things owe their existence to the will of the only one, so all things owe their origin to the one only thing, the most hidden by the arrangement of the only God.
 - 4) The father of that one only thing is the sun its mother is the moon,
 - 5) the wind carries it in its belly; but its nourse is a spirituous earth.
 - 6) That one only thing is the father of all things in the Universe.
 - 6a) Its power is perfect,
 - 7) after it has been united with a spirituous earth.
 - 7a) Separate that spirituous earth from the dense or crude by means of a gentle heat, with much attention.
 - 8) In great measure it ascends from the earth up to heaven, and descends again, newborn, on the earth, and the superior and the inferior are increased in power.
 - 9) By this wilt thou partake of the honours of the whole world. And Darkness will fly from thee.
 - 10) This is the strength of all powers. With this thou wilt be able to overcome all things and transmute all what is fine and what is coarse.
 - 11a) In this manner the world was created;
 - 12) the arrangements to follow this road are hidden.
 - 13) For this reason I am called Chiram Telat Mechasot, one in essence, but three in aspect. In this trinity is hidden the wisdom of the whole world.
 - 14) It is ended now, what I have said concerning the effects of the sun. Finish of the Tabula Smaragdina.
- [See Hall 1977: CLVIII,]

From Madame Blavatsky

- 2) What is below is like that which is above, and what is above is similar to that which is below to accomplish the wonders of the one thing.
 - 3) As all things were produced by the mediation of one being, so all things were produced from this one by adaption.
 - 4) Its father is the sun, its mother the moon.
 - 6a) It is the cause of all perfection throughout the whole earth.
 - 7) Its power is perfect if it is changed into earth.
 - 7a) Separate the earth from the fire, the subtile from the gross, acting prudently and with judgement.
 - 8) Ascend with the greatest sagacity from earth to heaven, and unite together the power of things inferior and superior;
 - 9) thus you will possess the light of the whole world, and all obscurity will fly away from you.
 - 10) This thing has more fortitude than fortitude itself, because it will overcome every subtile thing and penetrate every solid thing.
 - 11a) By it the world was formed.
- [Blavatsky 1972: 507.]

From Fulcanelli (translated from the French by Sieveking)

- 1) This is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth:-
 - 2) As below, so above; and as above so below. With this knowledge alone you may work miracles.
 - 3) And since all things exist in and emanate from the ONE Who is the ultimate Cause, so all things are born after their kind from this ONE.
 - 4) The Sun is the father, the Moon the mother;
 - 5) the wind carried it in his belly. Earth is its nurse and its guardian.
 - 6) It is the Father of all things,
 - 6a) the eternal Will is contained in it.
 - 7) Here, on earth, its strength, its power remain one and undivded.
 - 7a) Earth must be separated from fire, the subtle from the dense, gently with unremitting care.
 - 8) It arises from the earth and descends from heaven; it gathers to itself the strength of things above and things below.
 - 9) By means of this one thing all the glory of the world shall be yours and all obscurity flee from you.
 - 10) It is power, strong with the strength of all power, for it will penetrate all mysteries and dispel all ignorance.
 - 11a) By it the world was created.
 - 12) From it are born manifold wonders, the means to achieving which are here given
 - 13) It is for this reason that I am called Hermes Trismegistus; for I possess the three essentials of the philosophy of the universe.
 - 14) This is is the sum total of the work of the Sun.
- [Sadoul 1972: 25-6.]

From Fulcanelli, new translation

- 1) It is true without untruth, certain and most true:
 - 2) that which is below is like that which is on high, and that which is on high is like that which is below; by these things are made the miracles of one thing.
 - 3) And as all things are, and come from One, by the mediation of One, So all things are born from this unique thing by adaption.
 - 4) The Sun is the father and the Moon the mother.
 - 5) The wind carries it in its stomach. The earth is its nourisher and its receptacle.
 - 6) The Father of all the Theleme of the universal world is here.
 - 6a) Its force, or power, remains entire,
 - 7) if it is converted into earth.
 - 7a) You separate the earth from the fire, the subtle from the gross, gently with great industry.
 - 8) It climbs from the earth and descends from the sky, and receives the force of things superior and things inferior.
 - 9) You will have by this way, the glory of the world and all obscurity will flee from you.
 - 10) It is the power strong with all power, for it will defeat every subtle thing and penetrate every solid thing
 - 11a) In this way the world was created.
 - 12) From it are born wonderful adaptations, of which the way here is given.
 - 13) That is why I have been called Hermes Trismegistus, having the three parts of the universal philosophy.
 - 14) This, that I have called the solar Work, is complete.
- [Translated from Fulcanelli 1964: 312.]

From Idres Shah

- 1) The truth, certainty, truest, without untruth.
 - 2) What is above is like what is below. What is below is like what is above. The miracle of unity is to be attained.
 - 3) Everything is formed from the contemplation of unity, and all things come about from unity, by means of adaptation.
 - 4) Its parents are the Sun and Moon.
 - 5) It was borne by the wind and nurtured by the Earth.
 - 6) Every wonder is from it
 - 6a) and its power is complete.
 - 7) Throw it upon earth,
 - 7a) and earth will separate from fire. The impalpable separated from the palpable.
 - 8) Through wisdom it rises slowly from the world to heaven. Then it descends to the world combining the power of the upper and the lower.
 - 9) Thus you will have the illumination of all the world, and darkness will disappear.
 - 10) This is the power of all strength- it overcomes that which is delicate and penetrates through solids.
 - 11a) This was the means of the creation of the world.
 - 12) And in the future wonderful developments will be made, and this is the way.
 - 13) I am Hermes the Threefold Sage, so named because I hold the three elements of all wisdom.
 - 14) And thus ends the revelation of the work of the Sun.
- (Shah 1964: 198).

Hypothetical Chinese Original

- 1) True, true, with no room for doubt, certain, worthy of all trust.
 - 2) See, the highest comes from the lowest, and the lowest from the highest; indeed a marvelous work of the tao.
 - 3) See how all things originated from It by a single process.
 - 4) The father of it (the elixir) is the sun (Yang), its mother the moon (Yin).
 - 5) The wind bore it in its belly, and the earth nourished it.
 - 6)This is the father of wondrous works (changes and transformations), the guardian of mysteries,
 - 6a) perfect in its powers, the animator of lights.
 - 7) This fire will be poured upon the earth...
 - 7a) So separate the earth from the fire, the subtle from the gross, acting prudently and with art.
 - 8) It ascends from the earth to the heavens (and orders the lights above), then descends again to the earth; and in it is the power of the highest and the lowest.
 - 9) Thus when you have the light of lights darkness will flee away from you.
 - 10) With this power of powers (the elixir) you shall be able to get the mastery of every subtle thing, and be able to penetrate everything that is gross.
 - 11a) In this way was the great world itself formed.
 - 12) Hence thus and thus marvellous operations will be achieved.
- [Slightly altered from Needham 1980: 371.]

TEXTUAL REMARKS

On #3 Some Latin texts have *meditatione* (contemplation), others *mediatione* (mediation). Some texts have *adaptatione* (by adaptation), some have *adoptionis* (by adoption).

On #6 'Telesmi' is a greek word, some texts have 'thelesmi'.

On #6, 7 In some texts 'Its Power is Complete' is a separate line. In the generally accepted reading, this runs into #7 producing 'Its Power is complete if versa fuerit to earth'. Where possible this has been indicated by diving these lines in 6, 6a, 7, & 7a

On #7, 8 In some texts the 'Wisdom, capacity' (*magno ingenio*) is read as referring to #7, and hence the operation of Separation is to be carried out 'carefully', in other readings the 'wisdom' is held to refer to #8 and the product of the Separation which thus ascends with 'wisdom'.

Needham quotes Ruska to the effect that sections 3, 12 and 14 are probably late additions (op. cit)

COMMENTARIES

On #1

Hortulanus: "... the most true Sun is procreated by art. And he says most true in the superlative degree because the Sun generated by this art exceeds all natural Sun in all of its properties, medicinal and otherwise" (Davis modified by `Linden')

On #2

Albertus Magnus: Hermes says "the powers of all things below originate in the stars and constellations of the heavens: and that all these powers are poured down into all things below by the circle called Alaur, which is, they said, the first circle of the constellations". This descent is "noble when the materials receiving these powers are more like things above in their brightness and transparency; ignoble when the materials are confused and foul, so that the heavenly power is, as it were oppressed. Therefore they say that this is the reason why precious stones more than anything else have wonderful powers" (60 -61). While the "seven kinds of metals have their forms from the seven planets of the lower spheres" (168).

Hortulanus: "the stone is divided into two principle parts by the magistry, into a superior part which ascends above and into an inferior part which remains below fixed and clear. And these two parts moreover are concordant in their virtue since the inferior part is earth which is called nurse and ferment, and the superior part is the spirit which quickens the whole stone and raises it up. Wherefore separation made, and conjunction celebrated, many miracles are effected."

Burckhardt: "This refers to the reciprocal dependence of the active and the passive... essential form cannot be manifested without passive materia.. the efficacy of the spiritual power depends on the preparedness of the human 'container' and vice versa.... 'Above' and 'below' are thus related to this one thing and complement one another in its regard".

Schumaker: "There are corresponding planes in various levels of creation, hence it is safe to draw analogies between macrocosm and microcosm, the mineral kingdom and the human, animal and vegetable kingdoms etc".

Needham: "the whole affirmation looks remarkably like the doctrine that extreme of Yang generates Yin, and vice versa".

On #3

Hortulanus: "our stone, which was created by God, was born and came forth from a confused mass, containing in itself all the elements- and hence our stone was born by this single miracle".

Trithemius: "Is it not true that all things flow from one thing, from the goodness of the One, and that whatever is joined to Unity cannot be diverse, but rather fructifies by means of the simplicity and adaptability of the One" "What is born from Unity? Is it not the ternary? Take note: Unity is unmixed, the binary is compounded, and the ternary is reduced to the simplicity of Unity. I, Trithemius, am not of three minds, but persist in a single integrated mind taking pleasure in the ternary, which gives birth to a marvelous offspring" (Bran)

Burckhardt: "the undivided, invisible Light of the unconditioned One is refracted into multiplicity by the prism of the Spirit". As the Spirit contemplates the Unity without full comprehension "it manifests the 'many-sided' All, just as a lens transmits the light it receives as a bundle of rays".

Schumaker: As God is one, all created objects come from one thing, an undifferentiated primal matter.

On #4

Hortulanus: " As one animal naturally generates more animals similar to itself, so the Sun artificially generates Sun by the power of multiplication of...the stone.... in this artificial generation it is necessary that the Sun have a suitable receptacle, consonant with itself, for its sperm and its tincture, and this is the Luna of the philosophers"

Redgrove: Sun and Moon "probably stand for Spirit and Matter respectively, not gold and silver".

Burckhardt: Sun "is the spirit (nous), while the moon is the soul (psyche)".

Schumaker: "If the moon is associated with water, as because of its 'moisture' [as] was usual, and the sun with fire, the prima materia is understood to have been generated by fire, born of water, brought down from the sky by wind, and nourished by earth".

On #5

Albertus Magnus: by this Hermes "means the levigatio [making light weight] of the material, raising it to the properties of Air. And why he says the wind carries the material [of the stone] in its belly is that, when the material is placed in an alembic- which is a vessel made like those in which rosewater is prepared- then by evaporation it is rendered subtle and is raised towards the properties of Air... And there distills and issues from the mouth of the alembic a watery or oily liquor with all the powers of the elements" (17). In metals the moisture is not separated from the dryness, but is dissolved in it; and being so dissolved, it moves about there as if it had been swallowed by the Earth and were moving about in its bowels. And on this account Hermes said 'The mother of metal is Earth that carries it in her belly'".

Hortulanus: "It is plain that wind is air, and air is life, and life is spirit... And thus it is necessary that the wind should bear the whole stone.... [However] our stone without the ferment of the earth will never come to the effect, which ferment is called food"

Trithemius: "the wind carries its seed in her belly".

Maier: By "the wind carried him in its belly" Hermes means " 'He, whose father is the Sun, and whose mother is the Moon, will be carried before he is born, by wind and vapour, just as a flying bird is carried by air'. From the vapours of winds, which are nothing else but wind in motion, water proceeds, when condensed, and from that water, mixed with earth, all minerals and metals arise". The substance carried by the wind is "in chemical respect.. the sulphur, which is carried in mercury". Lull says "'The stone is the fire, carried in the belly of the air'. In physical respect it is the unborn child that will soon be born". To be clearer, "'All mercury is composed of vapours, that is to say of water, which the earth raises along with it into the thin air, and of earth, which the air compels to return into watery earth or earthy water" As the elements contained within are each reduced to a watery condition, they either follow the volatile elements upward as in common mercury, or they stay below with the solid elements as in philosophical Mercury "and in the solid metals". So "Mercury is the wind which receives the sulphur... as the unripe fruit from the mothers womb, or from the ashes of the burnt mother's body and takes it to a place where it may ripen". Ripley says "our child shall be born in the air, that is the belly of the wind" [de Jong 1969: 55- 7.]

Maier (2nd Comment) on "The earth is its nurse": Food changes into the substance of the eater and is then assimilated. "This harmony dominates the whole of nature, for the like enjoys the like". The same happens in the Work and Nature "just as is the growth of the child in the mother's womb. So also a father, a mother and a nurse have been attributed to the philosophical child... it comes into being from the twofold seed and then

grows as an embryo does". As a woman must moderate her diet to avoid miscarriage, "in the same way one must set about philosophical work with moderation". The Seeds also have to be united. "Philosophers say that the one comes from the East and the other from the West and become one; what does this mean but combining in a retort, a moderate temperature and nourishment?". "One may wonder why the earth is referred to as the nurse of the philosophic child, since barrenness and dryness are the main properties of the element earth". The answer is that not the element, but the whole Earth is meant. "It is the nurse of Heaven not because it resolves, washes and moistens the foetus, but because it coagulates, fastens and colours the latter and changes it into sap and blood... The Earth contains a wonderful juice which changes the nature of the one who feeds on it, as Romulus is believed to have been changed by the wolf's milk into a bellicose individual" [de Jong 1969: 63 -5.]

Burckhardt: "The wind which carries the spiritual germ in its body, is the vital breath". Vital breath is the substance of the realm between heaven and earth, it "is also Quicksilver which contains the germ of gold in a liquid state". The earth is "the body, as an inward reality".

On #6

Burckhardt: the word talisman is derived from Telesma. Talismans work by corresponding to their prototype, and by making a "'condensation', on the subtle plane, of a spiritual state. This explains the similarity between the talisman, as the bearer of an invisible influence, and the alchemical elixir, as the 'ferment' of metallic transformation".

On #7

Hortulanus: The stone is perfect and complete if it is turned into earth "that is if the soul of the stone itself... is turned into earth, namely of the stone and is fixed so that the whole substance of the stone becomes one with its nurse, namely the earth, and the whole stone is converted to ferment"

Trithemius: it is the seed from #5 that must be cast upon the earth.

Bacstrom: "Process- First Distillation".

Burckhardt: "when the Spirit is 'embodied', the volatile becomes fixed".

Schumaker: if the prime matter is to be used it must be fixed into a substance "capable of being handled".

On #7a

Hortulanus: "You will separate, that is, you will dissolve, because solution is separation of parts.."

Burckhardt: The separation "means the 'extraction' of the soul from the body".

Schumaker "Since the volatile principle is fire -or sometimes, air- stability is produced by its removal. Or, alternatively but less probably, the earth is impurity ('the gross') and a purified fire ('the subtle') is what is wanted.

On #8

Albertus Magnus: In intending to teach the operations of alchemy Hermes says the stone "'ascends to heaven' when by roasting and calcination it takes on the properties of Fire; for alchemists mean by calcinatio the reduction of material to powder by burning and roasting. And the material 'again descends from heaven to earth' when it takes on the properties of Earth by inhumatio, for inhumation revives and nourishes what was

previously killed by calcination".

Hortulanus: "And now he deals with multiplication [of the stone]." "Although our stone is divided in the first operation into four parts... there are really two principle parts". The ascending, non fixed, and the earth or ferment. "It is necessary to have a large quantity of this non fixed part and to give it to the stone which has been made thoroughly clean from dirt.... until the entire stone is borne above by the virtue of the spirit" "Afterwards it is necessary to incerate the same stone,..with the oil that was extracted in the first operation, which oil is called the water of the stone" Roast or boil by sublimation until the "entire stone descends... and remains fixed and fluent". "That which is corporeal is made spiritual by sublimation, and that which is spiritual is made corporeal by descension".

Trithemius: "When the ternary has at last returned to itself it may, by an inner disposition and great delight, ascend from the earth to heaven, thereby receiving both superior and inferior power; thus will it be made powerful and glorious in the clarity of Unity, demonstrate its ability to bring forth every number, and put to flight all obscurity".

Bacstrom: "Last Digestion". "The Azoth ascends from the Earth, from the bottom of the Glass, and redescends in Veins and drops into the Earth and by this continual circulation the Azoth is more and more subtilised, Volatilizes Sol and carries the volatilized Solar atoms along with it and thereby becomes a Solar Azoth, i.e. our third and genuine Sophic Mercury". The circulation must continue until "it ceases of itself, and the Earth has sucked it all in, when it becomes the black pitchy matter, the Toad [the substances in the alchemical retort and also the lower elements in the body of man -Hall], which denotes complete putrifaction or Death of the compound".

Read, suggests this section describes the use of a kerotakis, in which metals are suspended and subject to the action of gasses released from substances heated in the base, and from their condensation and circulation.

Burckhardt: "dissolution of consciousness from all formal 'coagulations' is followed by the 'crystalisation' of the Spirit, so that active and passive are perfectly united."

Schumaker: "Separate the volatile part of the substance by vaporization but continue heating until the vapour reunites with the parent body, whereupon you will have obtained the Stone".

On #9

Trithemius: When the ternary has returned to Unity cleansed of all impurities "the mind understands without contradiction all the mysteries of the excellently arranged arcanum".

Bacstrom: the black matter becomes White and Red. The Red "having been carried to perfection, medicinaly and for Metals" is capable of supporting complete mental and physical health, and provides "ample means, in finitum multiplicable to be benevolent and charitable, without any diminution of our inexhaustable resources, therefore well may it be called the Glory of the whole World". Contemplation and study of the Philosopher's Stone ("L. P.") elevates the mind to God. "The Philosophers say with great Truth, that the L.P. either finds a good man or makes one". "By invigorating the Organs the Soul makes use of for communicating with exterior objects, the Soul must aquire greater powers, not only for conception but also for retention". If we pray and have faith "all Obscurity must vanish of course".

Burckhardt: "Thus the light of the Spirit becomes constant..[and] ignorance, deception, uncertainty, doubt and foolishness will be removed from consciousness".

On #10

Trithemius: The Philosopher's Stone is another name for the 'one thing', and is able to "conquer every subtle thing and to penetrate every solid". "This very noble virtue... consists of maximal fortitude, touching everything with its desirable excellence".

Bacstrom: "The L.P. does possess all the Powers concealed in Nature, not for destruction but for exhalation and regeneration of matter, in the three Departments of Nature". "It refixes the most subtil Oxygen into its own firey Nature". The power increases "in a tenfold ratio, at every multiplication". So it can penetrate Gold and Silver, and fix mercury, Crystals and Glass Fluxes.

Burckhardt: "Alchemical fixation is nevertheless more inward... Through its union with the spirit bodily consciousness itself becomes a fine and penetrating power". He quotes Jabir "The body becomes a spirit, and takes on... fineness, lightness, extensibility, coloration... The spirit... becomes a body and acquires the latter's resistance to fire, immobility and duration. From both bodies a light substance is born, which.. precisely takes up a middle position between the two extremes".

Schumaker: The product of the distillation and reunion will "dominate less solid substances, but because of its own subtlety it will 'penetrate' and hence dominate, other solid things less pure and quasi-spiritual than itself".

On #11

Burckhardt: "the little world is created according to the prototype of the great world", when the human realises their original nature is the image of God.

Schumaker: "The alchemical operation is a paradigm of the creative process. We may note the sexual overtones of what has preceeded"

On #12

Burckhardt: "In the Arabic text this is: "This way is traversed by the sages".

On #13

Hortulanus: "He here teaches in an occult manner the things from which the stone is made." "the stone is called perfect because it has in itself the nature of minerals, of vegetables and of animals. For the stone is three and one, tripple and single, having four natures.... and three colours, namely black, white and red. It is also called the grain of corn because unless it shall have died, it remains itself alone. And if it shall have died... it bears much fruit when it is in conjunction..."

Newton: "on account of this art Mercurius is called thrice greatest, having three parts of the philosophy of the whole world, since he signifies the Mercury of the philosophers.... and has dominion in the mineral kingdom, the vegetable kingdom, and the animal kingdom".

Bacstrom: the wisdom of the world (?) is hidden in "Chiram and its Use". Hermes "signifies a Serpent, and the Serpent used to be an Emblem of Knowledge or Wisdom."

Burckhardt: "The three parts of wisdom correspond to the three great divisions of the universe, namely, the spiritual, psychic and corporeal realms, whose symbols are heaven, air and earth".

Schumaker: "The usual explanation of Trismegistus.. is that Hermes was the greatest philosopher, the greatest priest, and the greatest king".

General

Trithemius: "our philosophy is celestial, not worldly, in order that we may faithfully behold, by means of a direct intuition of the mind through faith and knowledge, that principle which we call God...."

Trithemius: "Study generates knowledge; knowledge prepares love; love, similarity; similarity, communion; communion, virtue; virtue, dignity; dignity, power; and power performs the miracle".

Newton "Inferior and superior, fixed and volatile, sulphur and quicksilver have a similar nature and are one thing, like man and wife. For they differ from one another only by degree of digestion and maturity. Sulphur is mature quicksilver, and quicksilver is immature sulphur: and on account of this affinity they unite like male and female, and they act on each other, and through that action they are mutually transmuted into each other and procreate a more noble offspring to accomplish the miracles of this one thing". "And just as all things were created from one Chaos by the design of one God, so in our art all things... are born from this one thing which is our Chaos, by the design of the Artificer and the skilful adaptation of things. And the generation of this is similar to the human, truly from a father and mother".

Blavatsky: the mysterious thing "is the universal, magical agent, the astral light, which in the correlations of its forces furnishes the alkahest, the philosopher's stone, and the elixir of life. Hermetic philosophy names it Azoth, the soul of the world, the celestial virgin, the great Magnes, etc" It appears to be that which gives organisation ("the maze of force-correlations"), and form i.e. the perfect geometry of snowflakes.

Sherwood Taylor: "the operation of the Sun.. was carried out by a 'spirit', universal, the source of all things, having the power of perfecting them. Its virtue is integral [# 6a] (ie having the power to convert the diverse into a single substance), if it be turned into earth (ie. solidified). This conveyed that the Stone was to be a solidified pneuma. Pneuma was the link between earth and heaven, having the virtue of the celestial and subterranean regions- the power of the whole cosmos from the fixed stars to the centre of the earth. It overcomes every nature and penetrates every solid. It is the source of the whole world and so it can be the means of changing things in a wonderful way. The three parts of the philosophy of the whole world are presumably of the celestial, terrestrial, and subterranean regions".

Shah: The table is "the same as the Sufi dictum... 'Man is the microcosm, creation the macrocosm - the unity. All comes from One. By the joining of the power of contemplation all can be attained. This essence must be separated from the body first, then combined with the body. This is the Work. Start with yourself, end with all. Before man, beyond man, transformation".

A COMMENTARY OF IBN UMAIL

HERMUS said the secret of everything and the life of everything is Water.... This water becomes in wheat, ferment; in the vine, wine; in the olive, olive oil.... The beginning of the child is from water.... Regarding this spiritual water and the sanctified and thirsty earth, HERMUS the great, crowned with the glorious wisdom and the sublime sciences, said [#1] Truth it is, indubitable, certain and correct, [#2] that the High is from the Low and the Low is from the High. They bring about wonders through the one, just as things are produced from that one essence by a single preparation. Later by his statement [#4] Its father is the Sun and its mother the Moon he meant their male and their female. They are the two birds which are linked together in the pictures given regarding the beginning of the operation, and from them the spiritual tinctures are produced. And similarly they are at the end of the operation. Later in his statement [#7 ?] the subtle is more honourable than the gross, he means by the subtle the divine spiritual water; and by the gross the earthly body. As for his later statement [#8] with gentleness and wisdom it will ascend from the earth to the sky, and will take fire from the higher lights, he means by this the distillation and the raising of the water into the air. As for his later statement [#8a] It will descend to the earth, containing the strength of the high and the low, he means by this the breathing in (istinshaq) of the air, and the taking of the spirit from it, and its subsequent elevation to the highest degree of heat, and it is the Fire, and the low is the body, and its content of the controlling earthly power which imparts the colours. For there lie in it those higher powers, as well as the earthly powers which were submerged in it.

The natural operation and decay causes it to be manifest, and hence the strength of the earth, and of the air, and of the higher fire passed in to it. Later he said [#9] it will overcome the high and the low because it in it is found the light of lights: and consequently the darkness will flee from it. [See Stapleton et al. p 74, 81.]

APPENDIX

Translation from Roger Bacon's edition of Secretum Secretorum made c 1445

- 1) Truth hath hym so, and it is no doubt,
- 2) that the lover is to the heigher, and the heigher to the lower aunsweren.
The worcher forsoth of all myracles is the one and sool God, of and fro Whom Cometh all meruelous operacions.
- 3) So all thynges were created of o soole substance, and of o soole disposicion,
- 4) the fader wherof is the sone, and the moone moder,
- 5) that brought hym forth by blast or aier in the wombe, the erthe taken fro it,
- 6) to whom is seid the increat fader, tresour of myracles, and yever of vertues.
- 7) Of fire is made erthe.
- 7a) Depart the erthe fro the fire, for the sotiller is worthier than the more grosse, and the thynne thyng than the thik. This most be do wisely and discretly.
- 8) It ascendith fro the erth into the heven, and falleth fro heven to the erthe, and therof sleith the higher and the lower vertue.
- 9) And yf it lordship in the lower and in the heigher, and thow shalt lordship aboue and beneth, which forsoth is the light of lightes, and therfor fro the wolle fle all derknesse.
- 10) The higher vertue ouer-cometh all, for sothe all thynne thyng doth in dense thynges.

11a) After the disposition of the more world rynneth this worchyng.

13) And for this prophetisyng of the trynpte of God Hermogenes it called Triplex, trebil in philosophie, as Aristotle seith.

[See Manzalaoui 1977: 65 -6.]

Translation of same source, made c. 1485.

1) The trwthe is so, and that it is no dowght,

2) that lower thyngis to hyer thyng, and hyer to lower be correspondent. But the Werker of myraclis is on Godde alone, fro Home descendencyth euiry meruulus werk.

3) And so alle thyngis be creat of one only substauns, be an only dysposicion,

4) of home the fadyr is the sonne, and the mone the modyr,

5) qwyche bar her be the wedyr in the wombe. The erthe is priuyd fro her-to.

6) This is clepyd or seyde the fadyr of enchauntmentis, tresur of myracclys, the yessuer of vertuys.

7) Be a lytil it is made erthe.

7a) Depart that qwyche is erthly fro that qwyche is fi Fry, for that qwyche is sotel is mor wurthy han that qwyche is grose, and that rar, porous, or lyght, is mor bettyr than qwiche is thyk of substauns. This is done wyseli or dyscretly.

8) It ascendyth fro the erth in-to heuyn and fallyth fro heuyn in-to erth, and ther-of it sleth the ouyr vertu and the nedyr vertu, so it hath lorchyng in the lowe thyngis and hye thingis,

9) and thu lordschyppest vppeward and downward, and with the is the lyght of lyghtys. And for that alle derkness schal fle fro the.

10) The ouyr vetu ouircomyth alle, for euiry rar rhyng werkyth in to euiry thyk thyng.

11a) And aftyr the dysposicion of the mor world rennyth thys werking.

13) And for that Hermogines is clepyd threfold in filosofye, and of the meruellys of he world.

[See Manzalaoui 1977: 174-5]

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[Next: Glory of the World](#)

--- Translation of the first 4 Pages of the Book of Causes by Apollonius of Tayana ---
By Nineveh Shadrach

I speak concerning the antiquity of this book and to describe the maxims which prefaced it, so that you listen to my wisdom and it seeps into your understanding and arouses your [Elemental] qualities.

Anyone whose qualities move when they connect with my words is of sound qualities, free from symptoms, clear in his psyche from the darkness that is a barrier between him and the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom. Thus, he obtains through its [wisdom's] power the power of speech, to the degree of its power and to the degree of the connection of speech to it, so that he is empowered, by what he obtains through refined speech, with glimmers of wisdom, observation of compounds of qualities and the causes of all things.

If someone's qualities are not moved upon hearing [these words], it is because the darkness obscuring his light and the increase of density hinder his qualities from ascension on the ladder of the spirit of wisdom, just as dark clouds hinder the light of the illuminated vision from connecting with the radiant lights of the planets.

I will now announce my name, so that you may desire my wisdom and reflect on my words. Thus focus on these night and day, until, through their extensive study, you attain the knowledge of the secrets of creation and wonders of humanity. I am Apollonius, the lord of talismans and miracles. I am he who entered the catacombs and extracted the knowledge of the secrets of creation from the scrolls of Hermes the wise.

Through my distinction, I was given knowledge and wisdom from the administrator of the world. I was in harmony with a subtle quality that was free from afflictions, so I was empowered with and penetrated by its subtlety. I became conscious of all that was hidden from the exterior senses, using the interior senses, which are thought, insight, intelligence, determination, and discernment.

Through their exterior senses I became aware of everything in their domain, of colors, foods, scents, hearing, taste, and smell. Nothing was left of created things that are spiritual, subtle, and luminous or dense, thick, and material, which fall under the exterior and interior senses, but I became cognizant of its nature, its causes, and its creation. My writing had an effect on it by its subtlety and balance by compelling the dense physical, which is its opposite.

I am informing you, so listen to my words. Everything is derived from the four qualities, which are heat, coldness, moisture, and dryness. The qualities of everything are interconnected, circulating in the same circuit. They are united by one order. They are circulated by one orbit. Its highest are connected with its lowest and its nearest are connected with its furthest, for all of it is from one essence, united by one quality without distinction.

The parts of this essence became distinct when accidentals entered it. The creation was separated, based on the alteration of the composition of the qualities. Different names arose due to the differentiation of substances and forms. The essences, even though different in

composition, interconnect, repel each other and unite with each other. Through their union and contrariety, they evoke their shapes through their unions and they repel their opposites through their contrariety.

This is the secret of the world and the knowledge of the causes of the qualities. I only describe to you the oppositions of the four qualities with each other through union and contrariety, so that the knowledge of this will be educational.

He, who examines it throughout his night and day and doesn't abandon it, will be knowledgeable of the administration of all beings from its essences and a master of the union of the four qualities and their contrariety. Then he will be empowered, due to knowledge of the causes of things. I have spoken, using these words at the beginning of my book, so that anyone who understands is given knowledge of such secrets of creation and attains the craft of nature.

Now I will inform you about my lineage and ancestry. I was an orphan youth from a town called Tayana. I had no possessions. In my town, there is a stone statue on a golden pedestal, which has written on it: "I am Hermes thrice wise. I made this sign publically and veiled it with my wisdom so it could only be reached by a sage like me." On the chest of this statue was written in the primordial tongue: "Whoever wants to learn the mysteries of creation and craft of nature, look underneath my feet." People didn't grasp what he said and they were looking at his feet and not seeing anything.

I was weak in my qualities due to my young age. When my qualities became stronger, I read what was written on the chest of the statue. I realized what he was saying and dug underneath the pillar.

Lo! I was in a catacomb filled with darkness and no light of the sun could enter into it. If you examined it, the winds moved inside it without let up. In it, he had made a talisman for the wind and he was unrivalled in this. In this way, they had made a house in which the wind flowing through would be forever prevalent. Therefore, due to its darkness, I was unable to find a way to enter it and no torch would remain lit, due to the intensity of its wind.

I became measurably distressed, my grief intensified and my eyes were overcome, while my heart was burdened thinking of the exhaustion I had encountered. At this point, an elderly man in my own image manifested before me and said: "O Apollonius get up and enter this catacomb to reach the knowledge of the secrets of creation and from it, attain the craft of nature."

I said: "I can't see in its darkness and no torch remains lit, due to the strong winds." He said: "O Apollonius get up and enter the catacomb. Put your light in a transparent glass bottle to shield it from the winds and it will not extinguish and you will be illuminated by its light in the darkness."

I became delighted and I knew that I would attain my objective. I said to him: "Who are you for you have given me a gift?" He said: "I am your subtle perfect qualities." I awoke joyously and put the light in the glass, as my qualities commanded me; then I entered the catacomb.

Therein I found an elderly man sitting on a golden chair and in one hand was an Emerald tablet. Written on the tablet was: "This is the description of nature." Between his hands was a book; written in it was the mystery of creation and the knowledge of causes of all things. I contentedly took the book and left the catacomb.

I learned from this book the secrets of creation and attained the craft of nature and learned the knowledge of the causes of all things. My name was elevated by wisdom and I made talismans and wonders. I created the mixtures of the four qualities, their compounds, their contrast and their harmonies. I have composed this book for those who come after me, as it was composed for me by those before me, and it will not be understood except by the sages.

في ما ملاه القس ساجيوس النابلسي عند دخوله السرب المظلم
قال قد اصبحت هذه الحكمت في اخر كتاب بليثاس الحكيم * لما دخلت السرب
المعمول عليه الطلسم * وصلت الى شيخ قاعد على كرسى ذهب ويده لوح زبرجد *
واذا فيه مكتوب بسراني بلسان الاول

(١) فيه تفسير صحيح لا يشكك به *

(٢) يقول ان الاعلا من الاسفل والاسفل من الاعلا عمل العجائب من واحد *

(٣) وتلبت الاشياء من ذلك الجوهر بتدبير واحد ما اعجب عمله وهو

راس الدنيا وقيما *

(٤) ابوه الشمس وامه القمر حملته الريح في بطنها واغذته الارض *

(٥) ابو الطلسمات وخازن العجائب

(٦) كامل القوى محق الانوار *

(٧) نار صار ارضنا اعزل الارض من النار يضير لك اللطيف الزم من

الغليظ برفق وحكمة¹ *

(٨) يصعد من الارض الى السماء يقتبس الانوار من العلو وينزل الى الارض

وفيه قوة الاعلا والاسفل لان معه نور الانوار فلذلك يهرب منه

الظلمة *

(٩) قوة القوى تعلب كل شيء لطيف وتدخل في كل غليظ *

(١٠) على تكوين العالم الاكبر تكوين العالم الاصغر *

(١١) وعلى هذا سلكت العلماء *

(١٢) ولذلك سمت هرمس المثلث بالحكمة *

(١٣) وهذا كتابه الاخير الذي ستره في السرب *

This is concerning what the priest Sajijs of Nablus shared at the point of his entrance to the dark catacomb.

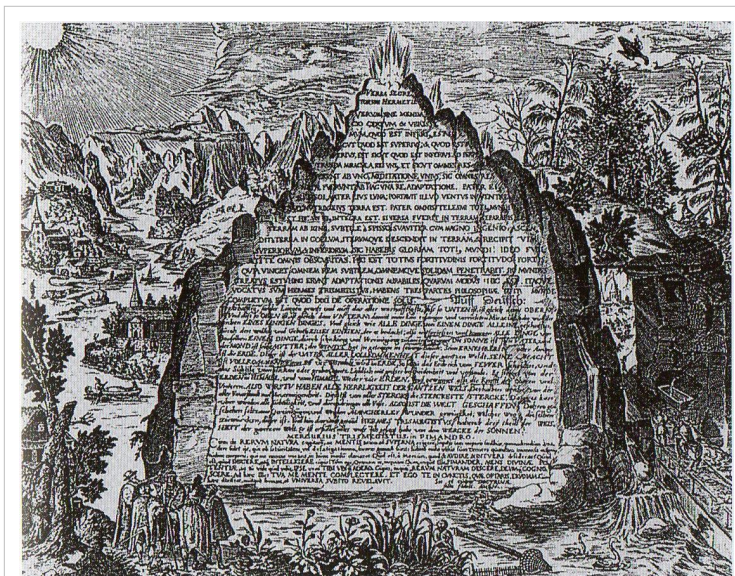
He said: I have obtained these wise sayings at the end of the book of the sage Apollonius: Once I entered the catacomb with the talisman cast on it, I came upon an old man sitting upon a golden chair; in his hand was an emerald tablet. Lo! This was written on it in Syriac, the primordial language:

- 1) It contains an accurate commentary that can't be doubted.
- 2) It states: What is the above is from the below and the below is from the above. The work of wonders is from one.
- 3) And all things sprang from this essence through a single projection. How marvelous is its work! It is the principle part of the world and its custodian.
- 4) Its father is the sun and its mother is the moon. Thus the wind bore it within it and the earth nourished it.
- 5) Father of talismans and keeper of wonders.
- 6) Perfect in power that reveals the lights.
- 7) It is a fire that became our earth. Separate the earth from the fire and you shall adhere more to that which is subtle than that which is coarse through care and wisdom.
- 8) It ascends from the earth to the heaven. It extracts the lights from the heights and descends to the earth containing the power of the above and the below for it is with the light of the lights. Therefore the darkness flees from it.
- 9) The greatest power overcomes everything that is subtle and it penetrates all that is coarse.
- 10) The formation of the microcosm is in accordance with the formation of the macrocosm.
- 11) The scholars made this their path.
- 12) This is why Thrice Hermes was exalted with wisdom.
- 13) This is his last book that he hid in the catacomb.

Emerald Tablet

The *Emerald Tablet*, also known as *Smaragdine Table*, *Tabula Smaragdina*, or *The Secret of Hermes*, is a text purporting to reveal the secret of the primordial substance and its transmutations. It claims to be the work of Hermes Trismegistus ("Hermes the Thrice-Greatest"), a legendary Hellenistic^[1] combination of the Greek god Hermes and the Egyptian god Thoth.^[2]

Below are shown several translations including the Arabic, the Latin, and one from Isaac Newton. The compact and cryptic text was highly regarded by European alchemists as the foundation of their art, in particular of its Hermetic tradition. Interpreting the layers of meanings



A 17th century depiction of the Tablet by Heinrich Khunrath, 1606

of the *Emerald Tablet*, from individual words to the overall meaning, is fraught with possibilities, but certainly Alchemy's Magnum opus and the ancient, classical, element system are the basis of any sound explanation, as they provide a key to the ideas of *earth, fire, sun, moon*, etc., common to all the translations.

Textual history

The oldest documentable source for the text is the *Kitab Sirr al-Asrar*, a compendium of advice for rulers in Arabic which purports to be a letter from Aristotle to Alexander the Great. This work was translated into Latin as *Secretum Secretorum* (*The Secret of Secrets*) by Johannes "Hispalensis" or Hispaniensis (John of Seville) ca. 1140 and by Philip of Tripoli c. 1243.

In the 14th century, the alchemist Ortolanus wrote a substantial exegesis on "The Secret of Hermes," which was influential on the subsequent development of alchemy. Many manuscripts of this copy of the Emerald Tablet and the commentary of Ortolanus survive, dating at least as far back as the 15th century.

The *Tablet* has also been found appended to manuscripts of the *Kitab Ustuqus al-Uss al-Thani* (*Second Book of the Elements of Foundation*) attributed to Jabir ibn Hayyan, and the *Kitab Sirr al-Khaliqa wa San'at al-Tabi'a* ("Book of the Secret of Creation and the Art of Nature"), dated between 650 and 830 AD.

The tablet text

Arabic translation

A new translation bypassing the Latin has just been published by Nineveh Shadrach from the original Arabic of *Book on the Secret of Creation* (also named *Book of the Causes*) attributed to Apollonius of Tyana.^[3]

1. It contains an accurate commentary that can't be doubted.
2. It states: What is the above is from the below and the below is from the above. The work of wonders is from One.
3. And all things sprang from this essence through a single projection. How marvelous is its work! It is the principle [sic] part of the world and its custodian.
4. Its father is the sun and its mother is the moon. Thus the wind bore it within it and the earth nourished it.
5. Father of talismans and keeper of wonders.
6. Perfect in power that reveals the lights.
7. It is a fire that became our earth. Separate the earth from the fire and you shall adhere more to that which is subtle than that which is coarse, through care and wisdom.
8. It ascends from the earth to the heaven. It extracts the lights from the heights and descends to the earth containing the power of the above and the below for it is with the light of the lights. Therefore the darkness flees from it.
9. The greatest power overcomes everything that is subtle and it penetrates all that is coarse.
10. The formation of the microcosm is in accordance with the formation of the macrocosm.
11. The scholars made this their path.
12. This is why Thrice Hermes was exalted with wisdom.
13. This is his last book that he hid in the catacomb.

Newton's translation

One translation, by Isaac Newton, found among his alchemical papers as reported by B. J. Dobbs^[4] in modern spelling:

1. Tis true without lying, certain most true.
2. That which is below is like that which is above that which is above is like that which is below to do the miracles of one only thing.
3. And as all things have been arose from one by the mediation of one: so all things have their birth from this one thing by adaptation.
4. The Sun is its father, the moon its mother,
5. the wind hath carried it in its belly, the earth its nurse.
6. The father of all perfection in the whole world is here.
7. Its force or power is entire if it be converted into earth.
 - Separate thou the earth from the fire, the subtle from the gross sweetly with great industry.
8. It ascends from the earth to the heaven again it descends to the earth and receives the force of things superior and inferior.
9. By this means ye shall have the glory of the whole world thereby all obscurity shall fly from you.
10. Its force is above all force. for it vanquishes every subtle thing and penetrates every solid thing.
 - So was the world created.
11. From this are and do come admirable adaptations whereof the means (Or process) is here in this.
12. Hence I am called Hermes Trismegist, having the three parts of the philosophy of the whole world.
13. That which I have said of the operation of the Sun is accomplished and ended.

Beato's translation

Another translation from *Aureliae Occultae Philosophorum* by Giorgio Beato:

1. This is true and remote from all cover of falsehood.
2. Whatever is below is similar to that which is above. Through this the marvels of the work of one thing are procured and perfected.
3. Also, as all things are made from one, by the consideration of one, so all things were made from this one, by conjunction.
4. The father of it is the sun, the mother the moon.
5. The wind bore it in the womb. Its nurse is the earth, the mother of all perfection.
6. Its power is perfected.
7. If it is turned into earth,
8. Separate the earth from the fire, the subtle and thin from the crude and coarse, prudently, with modesty and wisdom.
9. This ascends from the earth into the sky and again descends from the sky to the earth, and receives the power and efficacy of things above and of things below.
10. By this means you will acquire the glory of the whole world, and so you will drive away all shadows and blindness.
11. For this by its fortitude snatches the palm from all other fortitude and power. For it is able to penetrate and subdue everything subtle and everything crude and hard.
12. By this means the world was founded
13. And hence the marvelous conjunctions of it and admirable effects, since this is the way by which these marvels may be brought about.
14. And because of this they have called me Hermes Trismegistus since I have the three parts of the wisdom and Philosophy of the whole universe.
15. My speech is finished which I have spoken concerning the solar work.

Latin text

Original edition of the Latin text. (Chrysogonus Polydorus, Nuremberg 1541): Verum, sine mendatio, certum et verissimum: Quod est inferius est sicut quod est superius, et quod est superius est sicut quod est inferius, ad perpetranda miracula rei unius. Et sicut res omnes fuerunt ab uno, meditatione unius, sic omnes res natae ab hac una re, adaptatione. Pater eius est Sol. Mater eius est Luna, portavit illud Ventus in ventre suo, nutrix eius terra est. Pater omnis telesmi Sometimes written Thelesmi. This indicates a Greek origin. The Latin word "Tela" (ae,fem.) roughly means "loom" or "incomplete cloth". The true meaning of the word is somewhat obscure. On the other hand, telesmi appears to be the Latin transliteration of the plural form of the Greek word τελεσμός (telesmós), whose meaning is "consecration"; see: Lorenzo Rocci, Vocabolario greco-italiano, Roma-Città di Castello, Ed. Soc. Dante Alighieri - Ed. S. Lapi, 1952. totius mundi est hic. Virtus eius integra est si versa fuerit in terram. Separabis terram ab igne, subtile ab spisso, suaviter, magno cum ingenio. Ascendit a terra in coelum, iterumque descendit in terram, et recipit vim superiorum et inferiorum. Sic habebis Gloriam totius mundi. Ideo fugiet a te omnis obscuritas. Haec est totius fortitudinis fortitudo fortis, quia vincet omnem rem subtilem, omnemque solidam penetrabit. Sic mundus creatus est. Hinc erunt adaptationes mirabiles, quarum modus est hic. Itaque vocatus sum Hermes Trismegistus, habens tres partes philosophiae totius mundi. Completum est quod dixi de operatione Solis.

Contemporary rendering of Latin text

1. [It is] true, without a lie, certain and most true,
2. That which is below is as that which is above, and that which is above is as that which is below, to perform the miracles of the one thing.
3. And as all things were from the one, by means of the meditation of the one, thus all things were born from the one, by means of adaptation.
4. Its father is the Sun, its mother is the Moon, the Wind carried it in its belly, its nurse is the earth.
5. The father of the whole world [or "of all of the initiates"?] is here.
6. Its power is whole if it has been turned into earth.
7. You will separate the earth from the fire, the subtle from the dense, sweetly, with great skill.
8. It ascends from earth into heaven and again it descends to the earth, and receives the power of higher and of lower things.
9. Thus you will have the Glory of the whole world.
10. Therefore will all obscurity flee from you.
11. Of all strength this is true strength, because it will conquer all that is subtle, and penetrate all that is solid.
12. Thus was the world created.
13. From this were wonderful adaptations, of which this is the means. Therefore am I named Thrice-Great Hermes, having the three parts of the philosophy of the whole world.
14. It is finished, what I have said about the working[s] of the Sun.

Influence

In its several Western recensions, the *Tablet* became a mainstay of medieval and Renaissance alchemy. Commentaries and/or translations were published by, among others, Trithemius, Roger Bacon, Michael Maier, Aleister Crowley, Albertus Magnus, and Isaac Newton.

C.G. Jung identified "The Emerald Tablet" with a table made of green stone which he encountered in the first of a set of his dreams and visions beginning at the end of 1912, and climaxing in his writing *Seven Sermons to the Dead* in 1916.

Because of its longstanding popularity, the *Emerald Tablet* is the only piece of non-Greek Hermetica to attract widespread attention in the West. The reason that the Emerald Tablet was so valuable is because it contained the instructions for the goals of alchemists. It hinted at the recipe for alchemical gold, as well as how to set one's level of consciousness to a new degree.

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- [1] Hart, G., *The Routledge Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses*, 2005, Routledge, second edition, Oxon, p 158
- [2] (Budge *The Gods of the Egyptians* Vol. 1 p. 415)
- [3] (<http://www.sacredmagic.org/emeraldtablet.pdf>) Translation from the original Arabic of Book of Causes attributed to Apollonius of Tyana
- [4] "Newton's Commentary on the Emerald Tablet of Hermes Trismegistus" in Merkel, I. and Debus, A. G., *Hermeticism and the Renaissance*. Folger, Washington 1988.
- [5] Sometimes written *Thelesmi*. This indicates a Greek origin. The Latin word "Tela" (ae,fem.) roughly means "loom" or "incomplete cloth". The true meaning of the word is somewhat obscure. On the other hand, *telesmi* appears to be the Latin transliteration of the plural form of the Greek word *τελεσιμός* (*telesmós*), whose meaning is "consecration"; see: Lorenzo Rocci, *Vocabolario greco-italiano*, Roma-Città di Castello, Ed. Soc. Dante Alighieri - Ed. S. Lapi, 1952.

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External links

- Various Translations of the Tablet (<http://www.sacred-texts.com/alc/emerald.htm>)
 - Various Pieces on the Emerald Tablet (<http://www.levity.com/alchemy/emerherm.html>)
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Glory of the World

This text is included in the *Musaeum Hermeticum* of 1625, though it was first published in German as *Gloria Mundi sonsten Paradeiss Taffel*, Frankfurt, 1620. Contained in the third part is an explanation of the Emerald Tablet.

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The Emerald Table

It is true, without any error, and it is the sum of truth; that which is above is also that which is below, for the performance of the wonders of a certain one thing, and as all things arise from one Stone, so also they were generated from one common Substance, which includes the four elements created by God. And among other miracles the said Stone is born of the First Matter. The Sun is its Father, the Moon its Mother, the wind bears it in its womb, and it is nursed by the earth. Itself is the Father of the whole earth, and the whole potency thereof. If it be transmuted into earth, then the earth separates from the fire that which is most subtle from that which is hard, operating gently and with great artifice. Then the Stone ascends from earth to heaven, and again descends from heaven to earth, and receives the choicest influences of both heaven and earth. If you can perform this you have the glory of the world, and are able to put to flight all diseases, and to transmute all metals. It overcomes Mercury, which is subtle, and penetrates all hard and solid bodies. Hence it is compared with the world. Hence I am called Hermes, having the three parts of the whole world of philosophy.

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Explanation of the Emerald Table of Hermes.

Hermes is right in saying that our Art is true, and has been rightly handed down by the Sages; all doubts concerning it have arisen through false interpretation of the mystic language of the philosophers. But, since they are loth to confess their own ignorance, their readers prefer to say that the words of the Sages are imposture and falsehood. The fault really lies with the ignorant reader, who does not understand the style of the Philosophers. If, in the interpretation of our books, they would suffer themselves to be guided by the teaching of Nature, rather than by their own foolish notions, they would not miss the mark so hopelessly. By the words which follow: "That which is above is also that which is below," he describes the Matter of our Art, which, though *one*, is divided into two things, the volatile water which rises upward, and the earth which lies at the bottom, and becomes fixed. But when the reunion takes place, the body becomes spirit, and the spirit becomes body, the earth is changed into water and becomes volatile, the water is transmuted into body, and becomes fixed. When bodies become spirits, and spirits bodies, your work is finished, for then that which rises upward and that which descends downward become one body. Therefore the Sage says that that which is above is that which is below, meaning that, after having been separated into two substances (from being one substance), they are again joined together into one substance, i.e., an union which can never be dissolved, and possesses such virtue and efficacy that it can do in one moment what the Sun cannot accomplish in a thousand years. And this miracle is wrought by a thing which is despised and rejected by the multitude. Again, the Sage tells us that all things were created, and are still generated, from one first substance and consist of the same elementary material; and in this first substance God has appointed the four elements, which represent a common material into which it might perhaps be possible to resolve all things. Its development is brought about by the distillation of the Sun and Moon. For it is operated upon by the natural heat of the Sun Moon, which stirs up its internal action, and multiplies each thing after its kind, imparting to the substance a specific form. The soul, or nutritive principle, is the earth which receives the rays of the Sun and Moon, and therewith feeds her children as with mother's milk. Thus

the Sun is the father, the Moon is the mother, the earth the nurse -- and in this substance is that which we require. He who can take it and prepare it is truly to be envied. It is separated by the Sun and Moon in the form of a vapour, and collected in the place where it is found. When Hermes adds that "the air bears it in its womb, the earth is its nurse, the whole world its Father," he means that when the substance of our Stone is dissolved, then the wind bears it in its womb, i.e., the air bears up the substance in the form of water, in which is hid fire, the soul of the Stone, and fire is the Father of the whole world. Thus, the volatile substance rises upward, while that which remains at the bottom, is the "whole world" (seeing that our Art is compared to a "small world"). Hence Hermes calls fire the father of the whole world, because it is the Sun of our Art, and air, Moon, and water ascend from it; the earth is the nurse of the Stone, i.e., when the earth receives the rays of the Sun and Moon, a new body is born, like a new foetus in the mother's womb. The earth receives and digests the light of Sun and Moon, and imparts food to its foetus day by day, till it becomes great and strong, and puts off its blackness and defilement, and is changed to a different colour. This, "child," which is called "our daughter," represents our Stone, which is born anew of the Sun and Moon, as you may easily see, when the spirit, or the water that ascended, is gradually transmuted into the body, and the body is born anew, and grows and increases in size like the foetus in the mother's womb. Thus the Stone is generated from the first substance, which contains the four elements; it is brought forth by two things, the body and the spirit; the wind bears it in its womb, for it carries the Stone upward from earth to heaven, and down again from heaven to earth. Thus the Stone receives increase from above and from below, and is born a second time, just as every other foetus is generated in the maternal womb; as all created things bring forth their young, even so does the air, or wind, bring forth our Stone. When Hermes adds, "Its power, or virtue, is entire, when it is transmuted into earth," he means that when the spirit is transmuted into the body, it receives its full strength and virtue. For as yet the spirit is volatile, and not fixed, or permanent. If it is to be fixed, we must proceed as the baker does in baking bread. We must impart only a little of the spirit to the body at a time, just as the baker only puts a little leaven to his meal, and with it leavens the whole lump. The spirit, which is our leaven, in like

fashion transmutes the whole body into its own substance. Therefore the body must be leavened again and again, until the whole lump is thoroughly pervaded with the power of the leaven. In our Art the body leavens the spirit, and transmutes it into one body, and the spirit leavens the body, and transmutes it into one spirit And the two, when they have become one, receive power to leaven all things, into which they are injected, with their own virtue.

The Sage continues: "If you gently separate the earth from the water, the subtle from the hard, the Stone ascends from earth to heaven, and again descends from heaven to earth, and receives its virtue from above and from below. By this process you obtain the glory and brightness of the whole world. With it you can put to flight poverty, disease, and weariness; for it overcomes the subtle mercury, and penetrates all hard and firm bodies." He means that all who would accomplish this task must separate the moist from the dry, the water from the earth. The water, or fire, being subtle, ascends, while the body is hard, and remains where it is. The separation must be accomplished by gentle heat, i.e., in the temperate bath of the Sages, which acts slowly, and is neither too hot nor too cold. Then the Stone ascends to heaven, and again descends from heaven to earth. The spirit and body are first separated, then again joined together by gentle coction, of a temperature resembling that with which a hen hatches her eggs. Such is the preparation of the substance, which is worth the whole world, whence it is also called a "little world." The possession of the Stone will yield you the greatest delight, and unspeakably precious comfort. It will also set forth to you in a typical form the creation of the world. It will enable you to cast out all disease from the human body, to drive away poverty, and to have a good understanding of the secrets of Nature. The Stone has virtue to transmute mercury into gold and silver, and to penetrate all hard and firm bodies, such as precious stones and metals. You cannot ask a better gift of God than this gift, which is greater than all other gifts. Hence Hermes may justly call himself by the proud title of "Hermes Trismegistus, who holds the three parts of the whole world of wisdom."

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Synesius' Epilogue on the Emerald Tablet.

This epilogue to the true book of Synesius is included in *Basil Valentine His Triumphant Chariot of Antimony, with annotations of Theodore Kirkringius. M.D. With The True Book of the Learned Synesius a Greek Abbot taken out of the Emperour's Library, concerning the Philosopher's Stone.* London, 1678.

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The Epilogue according to Hermes.

Thus art thou to separate the *earth* from the *fire*, the *gross* from the *subtil* gently, with great Judgment, that is to say, separate the parts that are united to the Furnace, by the dissolution and separation of the parts, as the earth from the fire, the subtile from the gross, &c. that is to say, the more pure substance of the stone, until thou hast got it clean, and free from all spots or filth. And when he saith, *it ascends from the earth up into Heaven and returns again into the earth*, there is no more to be understood by it then the Sublimation of the Bodies. Further, to explain what distillation is, he says *the Wind carryes it in its belly*, that is, when the water is distilled by the Alembick, where it first ascends by a wind full of Fume and Vapour, and afterwards returns to the bottom of the Vessel in water again. When he would also express the congelation of the matter, he says, *Its force is absolute, if it be turned into earth*, that is to say, be converted by decoction. And to make a general demonstration of all hath been said, he says, *It shall receive both the inferior and superior force*, that is to say, that of the Elements, for as much as, if the Medicine receive the force of the lighter parts, that is to say, air and fire, it shall also receive that of the more grave and weighty parts,

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changing itself into water and earth, to the end, that the Matters being thus perpetually joined together, may have permanence, durance, constancy, and stability. Glory be to God.

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A Commentary on the Emerald Tablet

This 13 stanza verse may be, to those who understand it, one of the most profound examples of wordmanship ever recorded. To this writer, these words hold within their scope the essence of all scripture, myth, and spiritual metaphor.

The following interpretation of the Emerald Tablet of Hermes is offered by this writer who has spent many years contemplating, and proving, its content. My intent is only to aid those whose inner being responds to the tablet's song. Please understand that there are as many interpretations as there are interpreters, but there is only one Tablet. Did Hermes write it? Was there such a person, after all? We cannot be sure, nevertheless, the words are before us and they resonate with the truth and power of their meaning.

Each person who is drawn to the Emerald Tablet will have their own ideas and understanding of it, as it should be. Hopefully, some of these ideas will be shared so that everyone may benefit. No one person, in my opinion, can comprehend all that these words contain. - Cohn de Toraeke.

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THE EMERALD TABLET OF HERMES

I. I SPEAK NOT FICTION, BUT WHAT IS CERTAIN AND MOST TRUE.

II. WHAT IS BELOW IS LIKE THAT WHICH IS ABOVE, AND THAT WHICH IS ABOVE IS LIKE THAT WHICH IS BELOW FOR PERFORMING THE MIRACLE OF ONE THING.

III. AND AS ALL THINGS ARE PRODUCED FROM ONE, BY THE MEDIATION OF ONE, SO ALL THINGS ARE PRODUCED FROM THIS ONE THING BY ADAPTATION.

IV. ITS FATHER IS THE SUN, ITS MOTHER WAS THE MOON, THE WIND CARRIED IT IN ITS BELLY, ITS NURSE IS THE EARTH.

V. IT IS THE CAUSE OF ALL PERFECTION THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE WORLD.

VI. ITS POWER IS PERFECT IF IT BE CHANGED INTO THE EARTH.

VII. SEPARATE THE EARTH FROM THE FIRE, THE SUBTLE FROM THE GROSS, GENTLY, AND WITH JUDGMENT.

VIII. IT ASCENDS FROM THE EARTH TO HEAVEN, AND DESCENDS AGAIN TO EARTH, THUS YOU WILL POSSESS THE GLORY OF THE WHOLE WORLD AND ALL OBSCURITY WILL FLY AWAY.

IX. THIS THING IS THE FORTITUDE OF ALL FORTITUDE, BECAUSE IT OVERCOMES ALL SUBTLE THINGS, AND PENETRATES EVERY SOLID THING.

X. THUS ARE ALL THINGS CREATED.

XI. THENCE PROCEED WONDERFUL ADAPTATIONS WHICH ARE PRODUCED IN THIS WAY.

XII. THEREFORE AM I CALLED HERMES TRISMEGISTUS, POSSESSING THE THREE PARTS OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE WHOLE WORLD.

XIII. WHAT I HAD TO SAY ABOUT THE OPERATIONS OF THE SUN IS COMPLETE.

First: The meaning of the term - HERMETIC PHILOSOPHY.

The word "Hermetic" comes from the name Hermes Trismagistus; the Egyptian God of Wisdom who was blessed with three Magisteries, and who, it is traditionally believed, wrote the Emerald Tablet.
 [hermetic] - sealed and impenetrable from the outside.
 [philosophy] - from philo(s); Greek/Latin - beloved, or loving
 + sophia; Greek - wisdom. Therefore, Hermetic Philosophy means "The Sealed and Beloved Wisdom."

Hermes' words are simple and eloquent, and yet they encompass the whole Philosophy of the Great Art which includes the practical work of making the plant stone and mineral stone (referred to as The Minor Work and The Major Work, respectively).

Understand that Hermetic Philosophy IS the key. How one makes the stones, according to the sages, is as simple as making bread once the ingredients and processes are understood. They say that when the seeker understands the NATURE of the stones and their correct PROCESSES they will, with industry and perseverance, easily accomplish the work.

In this Spirit and Light Hermes' words apply to the comprehension of both stones for they are similar in nature, but very different in degree. Above all else, according to the sages, you will succeed in possessing the Stone when you have first succeeded in possessing it, metaphorically, within your heart. This is called, "At-One-ment", which is more commonly pronounced, atonement. Also - isn't it curious that At-One-ment and (S)tonement share the same numerical value of 8?

Hermes, through his words, becomes a metaphor for Creation's process.

The EMERALD TABLET OF HERMES - an interpretation.

1. I SPEAK NOT FICTION, BUT WHAT IS CERTAIN AND MOST TRUE.

"I SPEAK . . ." In the Christian Bible, at the beginning of the Gospel of St. John, it is written, 'In the beginning was the WORD, and the WORD was with God, and the Word

WAS God.' This implies sound (vibration) as the first cause or affect upon Creation by 'I' (God), the Source of all that is to follow. EveryTHING in the universe, from the incomprehensible, to the most rarefied thought, even black holes, flows from 'I' and carries the essence of 'I' within it, flesh of its flesh, so to speak.

"NOT FICTION, . . ." Fiction is imaginary falsehood. Though a thought may be false within its context, it still exists and has its being in Mind; only its application can be false. Just as there is no fiction in a giant redwood that began from a single seed, there is no fiction in Creation, which began from a single word. The first infinitesimal SOUND of the first Word instantly established infinite MIND.

"BUT WHAT . . ." This inquisition opens the void of the NO-THING like a mother's womb opens to receive her husband's seed. Though there IS only the ONE, the ONE must acknowledge Itself to become itself, and thus the Word becomes two in ONE Mind - positive, and negative, male and female.

"IS CERTAIN . . ." The first stirring of the Word is Potential, undefined yet CERTAIN (Absolute) - 'Omniscient, Omnipresent, and Omnipotent.

". . . AND MOST TRUE." Potential desires expression. Inherent within the dual nature of Mind, which is both male as LIFE, and female as LAW (here, Law implies the principles of universal structure), is WILL, which, in turn, empowers Mind's desire to express itself through CONCEPTION. Their offspring is LOVE or the REALITY of LAWful LIFE, which is the 'MOST TRUE' love.

. . . . What is more lovable than the TRUTH itself - their Son?

The phonetics of Son and Sun, or Sol and Soul, is not accidental. Life, Law, and Truth are, alchemically speaking, Spirit (Mercury), Body (Salt), Soul (Sulfur), respectively. The TRINITY.

With these first eleven words Hermes has described creation.

II. WHAT IS BELOW IS LIKE THAT WHICH IS ABOVE, AND THAT WHICH IS ABOVE IS LIKE THAT WHICH IS BELOW FOR PERFORMING THE MIRACLE OF ONE THING.

"WHAT IS BELOW IS LIKE THAT WHICH IS ABOVE, . . ." and "AND THAT WHICH IS ABOVE IS LIKE THAT WHICH IS BELOW . . ." These words bring to mind so many interpretations that it seems redundant to comment upon them. From the Bible - God speaks to Moses, I AM THAT I AM, to the most common contraction - AS ABOVE, SO BELOW.

In essence, for use with alchemical theory and philosophy, my sense is that these words should best be regarded to mean that the universal energies [ABOVE] work through and have their being in their physical counterpart [BELOW], such as a plant, for example.

I define REAL as that which is eternal, and ACTUAL as that which is temporal. Therefore, there is a Real pattern for the plant which represents its eternal idea and, for a period of time, an ACTUALized physical body. Likewise the experiences of the temporal body can exert an influence on the eternal counterpart.

A Stone is made by separating the three essentials, Salt, Sulfur, and Mercury; purifying them, and recombining them. Once done they are empowered exponentially by repeated imbibitions and circulations. The Philosopher's Stone and the Plant Stone, to a lesser degree, are like lenses through which the universal power and perfect intelligence pass. The stone focuses and concentrates the threefold primal energy of the creative Word. That is why it will transmute metal, or flesh, to its level of potency. The more potent the stone, the more profound its affects.

". . . FOR PERFORMING THE MIRACLE OF ONE THING." Transmuting lead to gold, or restoring the sick, or old, to health is unexplainable and implies a divine source for the Stone's goodness. One thing, which represents the ONE in all its forms; One Universe, One Mind, One energy, One power, One intellect, in one object - the Stone. That is a miracle!

III. AND AS ALL THINGS ARE PRODUCED FROM ONE, BY THE MEDIATION OF ONE, SO ALL THINGS ARE PRODUCED FROM THIS ONE THING BY ADAPTATION.

"AND AS ALL THINGS ARE PRODUCED FROM ONE . . ." Again, this would first imply the ONE original Source of All. Secondly, since we know that the Above has a Below, and visa-versa, it also implies a physical counterpart which is the Philosophical Mercury, the Prima Materia. Also known as the Great Sea from which springs all life, the Mother of Christ - Mary; from mare - the sea (as in, mariner, etc.). It is written that all things in the objective universe can be absorbed and dissolved in the Mercury of the Wise - without a trace. So, this One thing as a concept is represented by THE Mercury - not metallic mercury.

"BY THE MEDIATION OF ONE . . .," The mediator in alchemical philosophy is universal MIND, or SOUL, of which there can only be one. In alchemy this is represented by the philosophical Sulfur [Soul Fire] objectified in our solar system by our sun. Our planet and everything in it and on it came from the differentiation of Solar material [particles].

". . . SO ALL THINGS ARE PRODUCED FROM THIS ONE THING BY ADAPTATION." Solar particles may be looked upon as SEED ideas. From this seed grows all things by adaptation. Just as a seed adapts to its environment to grow and fulfill itself, so does a universe, a planet, or a person grow from a seed.

IV. ITS FATHER IS THE SUN, ITS MOTHER WAS THE MOON, THE WIND CARRIED IT IN ITS BELLY, ITS NURSE IS THE EARTH.

"ITS FATHER IS THE SUN . . ." The sun is radical; it radiates and is masculine.

"ITS MOTHER WAS THE MOON, . . ." The moon is magnetic; it concentrates and is feminine.

Here, the past tense of "WAS" is used. In my opinion this

means that the elemental or nuclear universe was created once only and is constantly renewing and evolving by adaptation, though stimulated by a constant barrage of NEW solar energy - therefore the sun IS its Father. To expand this concept; the infinity of suns [stars] provides the universe with constant renewal and expansion. Black holes [negative polarity] contract the universe. The universe breathes - exhaling / inhaling. In some teachings this is referred to as the Divine Breath.

These are metaphors for the duality of the objective universe. The pure spiritual energy streaming from our sun has to have some kind of body - a photon. This photon carries within itself its identity, or its soul, and as a seed represents that which is above the sun [nonphysical]. It will contribute its seminal virtue as it joins other seminal particles [protons] to coagulate within the concentrating negative field of electrons [the MOON factor], and form a more complex particle like an atom. The atoms make elements which make molecules, etc. - all by Adaptation.

"THE WIND CARRIED IT IN ITS BELLY, . . ." This, I think, is literally true. The solar wind showers our high atmosphere with photons and other solar particles [solar seeds] which are carried about the sky in the wind and moisture [when isolated from rainwater it is called Gur, or Ghur]. The seed is then brought to earth via thunder storms and charged with electrical energy. That's why the spring rain and the morning dew are so valued by alchemists; they contain electrically charged solar seed.

One of my early mentors explained that the seven color rays of the sun correspond to the seven tones of the musical scale, and they also correspond to the seven primary particles, or seeds, of material existence, at least on Earth. He taught that from these seven distinct particles, which contain the whole universe in potential, every element on the periodic scale was, by adaptation, created.

". . . ITS NURSE IS THE EARTH." Adaptive growth occurs as the earth's rich and infinite array of elements is made available to the solar seed. Whether in the mineral, vegetable, or animal kingdom, the seed will find fertile options with which and in which to evolve. Realize that we are talking about the REAL seed not a seed kernel,

like a grain of rice. One cannot see the seed, only its tangible body, the kernel.

Each of the 7 primary solar seeds [masculine] has, within the elemental mix of the earth, a crystalline counterpart that is feminine [negative]. They are alive in nature and they attract one another. The Marriage spoken of by the adepts, when they describe the making of Stones, is the purified union of these two, male and female, which are the volatile and fixed aspects of the same element. While in the marriage chamber, the philosophical vessel, the volatile becomes fixed and the fixed becomes volatile. Eventually, after they have consummated their union by consuming one another their SON (Stone) is born.

V. IT IS THE CAUSE OF ALL PERFECTION THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE WORLD.

Here, I think, is meant perfection as nature has it rather than as man would design it. The universe is slightly out of balance, though it perpetually tends toward balance. If it were in balance there would be no movement and no time, no sense of evolution or growth. However, what we experience as perfection is a form of calm balance within the fray of nature's arena. Perhaps our words joy, bliss, ecstasy, or contentment, may convey this type of perfection.

Another kind of perfection is objective perfection. Gold we say is a perfect metal, a diamond a perfect gem, and so forth. Something without flaws. We also say a strong, healthy, person, is perfectly fit, and our natural scientists are always looking for the perfect specimen. Man can recognize and facilitate what in nature he accepts as perfection, but man cannot create perfection. Only God is perfect.

To the alchemists, perfection was represented by the epitome of the world's virtue, which they thought was the universe's virtue as well - the concentration and empowerment of the Prima Materia - the TRUE Philosophical Mercury. To them, everything that had reached the zenith of its potential had arrived there by virtue of the Mercury and thus contained it, yet some

natural objects contained more than others - i.e., the metals.

VI. ITS POWER IS PERFECT IF IT BE CHANGED INTO THE EARTH.

Understand that in nature the Mercury is volatile, vaporous, and both male and female; the Spirit contains the Sulfur within it. Only after it is isolated, separated, and purified, are the male and female separately discernible.

Through art they are reunited in their perfection with their proper body [Salt] and, once empowered exponentially by many circulations, enabled to penetrate all matter and raise its vibrations to its own highest potential of perfection, like the transmutation of illness to health. Think of the Stone as a super conductor of the virtues of the sun.

The sun's light and virtue passes THROUGH the stone rather than from it. Metaphorically speaking, Jesus (God's Son) felt virtue, which he always acknowledged came from his Father in heaven, go out of him when a sick women touched the hem of his robe (his outer garment, which is analogous to the physical Earth [as the Stone] as stated in stanza VI).

Years ago I had come down with the flu. I had all the symptoms, fever, chills, dry mouth, and headache. My teacher put two drops of his preparation under my tongue and had me lie down. In two hours I was fine, even energetic. What was it? I don't know. Perhaps a charged Antamomial Theriac? By charged I mean it either contained the PM (Philosophical Mercury), or the mixture had been distilled out of a host menstruum of PM. It tasted extremely floral yet metallic.

VII. SEPARATE THE EARTH FROM THE FIRE, THE SUBTLE FROM THE GROSS, GENTLY, AND WITH JUDGMENT.

"SEPARATE THE EARTH FROM THE FIRE, . . ."

Here, Hermes talks about the process, but he's also implying that nature performs the same operation - As Above, So Below. Think of the Universe as analogous to water's characteristics. You have vapor [moisture], humidity [steam], fluid [water], solid [ice]; and before they combined to make water you had the elements hydrogen and oxygen, which are common to all its forms. Also common to all its forms is FIRE which is put there by the sun.

When you separate the water from most of its fire you have ice - its CRYSTAL formation. Likewise, even one of the most dense element known, osmium, has a melting point of 2700o C as it becomes fluid, and a boiling point of more than 5300o C as it becomes a vapor. Everything is bound by four natural qualities; warm, cold, dry, wet, and four natural states; fire, air, water, earth.

Specifically, he indicates here that the Mercury [fire] - and Sulfur - is to be separated from its body or vehicle, perhaps a plant or metallic ore.

"THE SUBTLE FROM THE GROSS, . . ." In the case of a plant, the essential oils must be separated from the gross oils. In the case of minerals and metals - the subtle fire is locked up in their crystalline structure which has to be cracked and broken.

"GENTLY, . . ." This is a primary KEY to all alchemical operations. Separation of the subtle parts from the gross parts will usually require an application of some type of externally manipulated heat. If this heat is too violent and too fast it will drive the subtle virtues away; if it is too weak, the subtle virtues can never break free. The great secret of alchemical operations is the CONTROL OF THE FIRE!

"AND WITH JUDGMENT." You do not want to destroy the life in the things you work with. Each kingdom has its own comfortable life sustaining range of temperature, even the metals.

For example: To hatch a fertilized chicken egg there must be the right amount of heat for the right amount of time - approximately 110o F. for several days. Too much heat and you have a cooked chick, too little and it cannot

germinate and grow. It is the same in the plant and mineral kingdoms. That's why an alchemist knows that a foundry cast metal is dead because the heat required to melt it drove out the spirit - its Mercury. Learning to correctly sense the heat and the character of your fire takes time and practice. Meditation upon the fire does not hurt, either.

VIII. IT ASCENDS FROM THE EARTH TO HEAVEN,
AND DESCENDS AGAIN TO EARTH, THUS YOU
WILL POSSESS THE GLORY OF THE WHOLE
WORLD AND ALL OBSCURITY WILL FLY AWAY.

At this juncture many opinions flourish. What, exactly, ascends and descends? The Mercury? The Sulfur and the Mercury? Nature herself may give a clue.

The sun radiates its energy into earth's ionosphere, stratosphere, and atmosphere, its light penetrates the cloud cover, and eventually reaches the earth's surface. Sun rays penetrate the oceans, rivers, lakes, ponds, and polar ice fields, invigorating, purifying, and sanitizing them all. It interacts with the earth's water in its various states. Water [the Moon factor] is highly magnetic, and crystalline - a liquid crystal, if you will. It is not only the most abundant fluid on the planet, but the most abundant chemical, and probably the least known and understood.

The earth is an organic, multidimensional, fluxing plasma of life forces, magnetic fields, and energy vortexes, all of which are potentially fertile and depend on water. From the arctic poles to the equator the earth's substance constantly moves. Winds, rains, erosion, volcanoes, tornadoes and hurricanes, undersea volcanic action, and tectonic plate movement all bring forth elemental material that intermixes with the Earth's water and is CIRCULATED.

"IT ASCENDS FROM THE EARTH TO HEAVEN,
AND DESCENDS AGAIN TO EARTH, . . ." The
elementally laden waters evaporate and ascend to the
high altitudes where they are charged by the Sun and
impregnated under the influence of the Moon before they
condense as rain, snow, hail, mist, or dew, and descend
back to the earth. They have regained the power to

germinate bringing forth new life that will contribute to nature's drama. This process repeats itself perpetually. All life forms cycle through their term from birth to death whether it be for millions of years, or milliseconds. It is a constant circulation that everyday, little by little, evolves the whole planet.

" . . . THUS YOU WILL POSSESS THE GLORY OF THE WHOLE WORLD . . ." Here Hermes suggests that through personal observation one will understand Nature's processes, which are gloriously straightforward, and come to know her Laws. Knowledge of the Laws of nature are indispensable in guiding one through the maze of pitfalls one encounters in producing the Great Stone. The lack of true knowledge instead of wild and confusing theory is the reason so many try, but so few succeed.

For example, observe a rose: During the night, between midnight and three, especially during the full moon, the blossom will cover its petals with microscopic droplets of its precious oil. As dawn nears the descending dew condenses on the rose petals and bonds with the tiny droplets of rose oil. As the first rays of the sun strike and warm the petals the charged water evaporates and ascends into the air with its little passenger of oil. This scene recurs with every tree, plant, and flower in our gardens and meadows and regenerates our atmosphere with its sweet aroma, to say nothing of the medicinal advantage it lends to one who breaths the morning air [prana?]. This happens over the whole planet each day. It is the natural process of steam distillation.

The dew also carries trace minerals and metals that have been exposed through the natural processes of erosion and other surface disturbance.

". . . AND ALL OBSCURITY WILL FLY AWAY." I, for one, agree with the sages; nature is our best teacher. We should study the relationship between the three kingdoms and focus on understanding natural dynamics. It is plain and simple once the concept begins to formulate and clarify. The books we pour over represent what someone else perceived - and they can keep us blind to our own light.

To quote a sage that I once studied, "You must break free from thinking with your ego and be like a child observing

the wondrous domain you call Earth. Open your heart and be like an infant suckling your daily ration of Wisdom from her breast."

The Stones are made by artificially duplicating Nature's processes as long as we follow her Laws. Indeed, there is a place in this work for Astrology, Qabala, and Magic, but true alchemy has no better friend than Nature herself.

Man is an ignorant being; his knowledge is limited, but his ignorance is infinite.< Ram Ashied

IX. THIS THING IS THE FORTITUDE OF ALL FORTITUDE, BECAUSE IT OVERCOMES ALL SUBTLE THINGS, AND PENETRATES EVERY SOLID THING.

On the mental plane, after a stone has been successfully accomplished, a humbling sense of knowing occurs which brings with it understandings of those things pondered in vagueness and obscurity before. It marks a rite of passage that leaves one aware that the accomplishment was not an end of a quest, but rather a preparation for greater responsibility.

"THIS THING IS THE FORTITUDE OF ALL FORTITUDE,..." One's meditations are deeper and more profound. A bit more weight is felt spiritually but this is accompanied with joy and a sense of well being. Yet, one may feel more isolated as one's life changes due to changes in inner values and desires. This can mean changes in relationships and social choices. The FORTITUDE to meet these challenges is in you, nor are you alone because inner dimensional assistance is certainly evident.

On the physical plane the alchemists assure us that the Stones, both Major and Minor, when ingested in very small doses, strengthen the body organically by reinvigorating each system. This is accomplished on an atomic level in each cell by balancing all forces and bringing the cell's body, mind, and spirit into perfect harmony. Fortitude in the physical sense means that one regains the ability to meet all health and personal challenges with full strength.

"...BECAUSE IT OVERCOMES ALL SUBTLE THINGS,..." Diseases are incapable of taking root in the body, the power and virtue of the Stone augments the immune system and overwhelms them. The Philosopher's Stone is, of course, more permanent and more powerful than the plant stone.

Channels are opened as the body rejects its drosses and toxins. The chakras open allowing more vital hormone secretion to occur. The body actually transfigures to a higher state of energy. And the mind opens and expands becoming more psychically sensitive.

"...AND PENETRATES EVERY SOLID THING." On the mental plane this refers to the sages' claim that one can pierce the veil and perceive past and future clearly. One's mental power increases so that one may achieve a certain power and control over the elements, especially the weather.

On the physical, it is claimed by some who write of the virtues of the Philosopher's Stone that they have experienced the renewal of teeth, darkening of hair, renewed sexual potency and desire. Women who have passed menopause conceive and give birth in their fifties and sixties. Tumors and skin blemishes disappear, such as liver spots. Glasses are put away as normal eyesight returns.

In metal transmutation the stone transmutes a metal to its next highest level, tin to copper, copper to silver, silver to gold. According to the story of Bit Nur*, a light emitting crystal called a Billur, made by monastery alchemists, Chakimim, in the Himalayas, transmuted any metal exposed to its brilliant light into the next highest metal, silver to gold, for example. The author stated that the monks told him that their crystal was the TRUE Stone of Hermes.

Are these claims true? Only those who accomplish the glorious Stone will know.

*Paracelsus Research Society, Alchemical Laboratory Bulletins 1960-1972, Page 154.

X. THUS ARE ALL THINGS CREATED.

He speaks here of All THINGS. Creation is a process that is still going on from minute to minute. A constant flow of energy expressing countless forms of objective existence that mirror the unseen. The Stones epitomize that concentrated power that is exercised every moment by Divine Mind. They are artificial, man made, but divinely directed, and yet they transmit the creative power of God.

XI. THENCE PROCEED WONDERFUL ADAPTATIONS WHICH ARE PRODUCED IN THIS WAY.

Once the Stone(s) is in hand, its bearer will be directed from within as to its use - where, when, and how, and for whom. It has been claimed that the stone will make a dead branch flower, a blind person see, a tremor removed from one, palsy from another, and a barren field produce abundantly.

XII. THEREFORE AM I CALLED HERMES TRISMEGISTUS, POSSESSING THE THREE PARTS OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE WHOLE WORLD.

There is contention here as to his meaning. Does he mean that he has achieved mastery over his Body, his Mind, and his Spirit? Or could he mean he has gained mastery or been made a Magistry over Salt, Sulfur, and Mercury in Nature. Some think he means that he is a Master Alchemist, a Master Astrologer, and a Master Magician (Qabalist). Others believe that he is one of the early incarnations of Christ. Actually, we each must decide for ourselves.

XIII. WHAT I HAD TO SAY ABOUT THE OPERATIONS OF THE SUN IS COMPLETE.

I have no more to add.

For comparison I have included another version of the Emerald Tablet. It was first written in the Chaldaen language, then translated to German, and then later to English. It has come from the Chakimim of Bit Nur. According to the story, they sang this like a hymn.

PRAISE AND HONOR BE UNTO OUR LORD WHO
CREATED HEAVEN AND EARTH THROUGH A
WORD. AND HE CREATED THAT WHICH IS
ABOVE LIKE UNTO THAT WHICH IS BELOW AND
THAT WHICH IS BELOW LIKE THAT WHICH IS
ABOVE.

HIS FATHER IS THE SUN, HIS MOTHER THE
MOON, AND HIS BREATH THE WIND BLOWED
GENTLY OVER THE EARTH FRUCTIFYING IT.

AND THE CREATURES FROM BELOW MIX THEIR
POWERS WITH THOSE FROM ABOVE AND THEY
BEGET A WONDERFUL BEING.

FOUR ELEMENTS DOES IT CONTAIN WITHIN
ITSELF.

IN ITS EARTH IS OUR LORD. IN ITS WATER IS
OUR LORD. IN ITS AIR IS OUR LORD. IN ITS FIRE
IS OUR LORD.

EARTH, WATER, AIR, AND FIRE PAY ATTENTION
TO HIS WILL, AND OBEY THE LAW OF OUR
LORD.

THUS IS THE WORLD CREATED AND THE NAME
OF OUR LORD IS THE KEY TO ITS SECRET.

If you have problems understanding these alchemical texts, Adam McLean now provides a study course entitled [How to read alchemical texts : a guide for the perplexed](#).
