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[Alchemy: Seals of the Seven Planets]
In German, Latin, and Hebrew, illustrated manuscript on paper
[Germany, late 16th century]

9 ff. of paper (watermark: armoiries, écu avec pal arqué, en haut coupé en forme de nuage, not identified), complete (collation $i^{(8+1)}$), written in a single hand on 18-23 long lines in brown ink in a cursive hand (justification c. 130 x 170 mm.), with seven pen and ink drawings and 28 diagrams. Modern binding, with title "L / ..ro / Graf" (In good condition throughout). Dimensions 200 x 160 mm.

Of a modest appearance, this small manuscript, written in cursive script and illustrated with meticulous pen and ink drawings, is most likely a manual for the composition of talismans or seals perhaps for use by a physician-chemist. Its pages present a combination of astrological seals with diagrammatic talismans in Greek and Hebrew letters along the lines of those created by Agrippa and Paracelsus.

PROVENANCE

1. Unidentified alchemist who has corrected several of the figures. The annotations translate some of the Latin expressions, leading us to believe that the original owner who used the manuscript was not well versed in Latin.
2. Private Collection, Europe.

TEXT

f. 1r-1v, Title, "De sigillo Lunae"; incipit, "Daß sigillum [symbole] ist calculirt und genommen aus dem ersten Himmel Schmaym. Diß soll gemacht werden wenn luna regiret in ihrem Lage und Stunde ... die Räucherung ist mastix, aloës und weißer Sandel";

ff. 2v-3r, Title, "De sigillo Martis"; incipit, "Dieses Sigill ist genommen ex sphaera quinta Macheim genandt, soll gemacht werden in seinem Tag und Stunde, gegossen ex venere Martis ... mit Sandel und Pfeffer";

ff. 3v-4r, Title, "De caractere Mercurii"; incipit, "Dieses Sigill ist genommen ex sphaera secunda, soll gemacht werden in Tage und Stunde Mercurii, und ist auf dieses Planeten hochachtung zu

geben ... dieses Siegel vermag nach viel anderer Dinge, so dem Beitragenden in der Zeit vor sich selbst wirdt offenbahr warden";

ff. 4v-5r, Title, "Sigillum Jovis"; incipit, "Dieses Sigill ist genommen ex Sphaera sexti coeli, Oebuel genandt. Dieses ist ein vortrefliche Sphaera zu aller Gottesfurcht ... alles was lieblich reuchtt";

ff. 5v-6v, Title, "De sigillo Solis"; incipit, "Daß sigillum ist genommen ex sphera 4. Coeli und sindt signa Angelorum so da herschen uber den 4. Himmel, Machon genandt ... mit Sammet uberzogen undt also getragen";

ff. 7r-7v, Title, "Sigillum Veneris"; incipit, "Dieser Character und Nahmen ist ex coelo tertio, soll gemacht werden wann Venus ist im Zeichen Tauri oder Libra, ist gar gut ... sonsten werden sie in virtutibus corrupirt";

ff. 8r-8v, Title, "De sigillo Saturni"; incipit, "Dieses Sigill und nomina sindt genommen aus dem 7. Himmel oder Sphaera Saturni, oder Machator genat, soll gemacht werden von Bley oder auf jungfrauen Pergament ... mit sammet uberzogen und also getragen warden";

This manuscript belongs to the tradition of German esoterica with a particular importance accorded to the asters and the planets for their use in natural magic. The characteristics and magical powers of the planets are in effect called to manifest themselves and amplified by graphic representations and by the creation of metal talismans or on blank parchment. These talismans, called "seals" in the estoteric tradition or "astrological images" in historical studies, are more than just medical amulets: the astrological seal, being engraved at the moment when the planet or constellation is astrologically dominant, is said to appropriate the power of this constellation and finds itself on the border between astrology and magic.

The astrological images encountered most frequently in medicine are the zodiacal seals, in particular the seal of the lion, utilized against the problems of the kidneys, of which doctors as prestigious as Arnold of Villanova and Pietro d'Abano made use in their practice. In 1301, Pope Boniface VIII was spectacularly cured of his kidney problems thanks to Arnold of Villanova's use of the seal of the lion. The presence of similar seals in the inventories of the belongings of doctors and the explicit mentions in Arnold's works attest to the use of such seals (see Delmas, 1976, and Agrippa, 1967, pp. 719-727), even if their importance should not be overestimated before the fifteenth century, which marks a turning point.

Between 1426 and 1428 at the faculty of medicine at Montpellier a polemic broke out over the question of the medical use of the seal of the lion. Jean Gerson was invited to judge and he condemned the use of the "talisman." The appearance in 1489 of *De Vita* of the Florentine physician and philosopher Marsilius Ficino rescued the "science of images" with Neoplatonism, which reinforced the "natural" justification. The Valencien physician Jerome Torella, who makes use several times of Ficino (without citing him), wrote an *Opus praeclarum de imaginibus astronomicis* (1496), which offers the most complete assessment of this question and which he dedicated to King Ferdinand the Catholic. The tradition is taken up again and augmented by the German esoterics: well attested in the works of Agrippa de Nettesheim (*De occulta philosophia*, Bk. II, ch. 22-

23, ed. Nowotny, 1967, pp. 157-167), it is found again in the *Archidoxe magique*, a work published under the name of Paracelsus at the end of the sixteenth century. In this last work, each of the twelve astrological signs appears as a double-faced talisman, bearing the signs and the Greek and Hebrew letters, while the planets have a talisman composed of a representation in human form on one side and a magical square on the other. These signs differ considerably from those described and used by Arnold of Villanova.

The magical squares associated with the planets take up an old Arabic tradition known in the West from around 1400 and of which the squares, with some variation, are more or less identical (see Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 5239, fol. 147v-149r). They are not however mentioned by the *Veterum sopherum sigilla et imagines* published in 1612 (description of the human figures on pp. 32-34 and of the metals on pp. 49-50) whose attribution to Johann Trithemius is doubtful (see Arnold, 1991, p. 259). This form of talisman is taken up again by Heinrich-Cornelius Agrippa and differs from the simple "signatures of the planets" as they are described by Johann Rudolph Glauber.

In the present manuscript, there are several talismans for each planet and for the sun, with five faces for each planet. The representation of the planets in the form of divinities with human figures comes last and alone. Two double-faced talismans precede them: the first modeled on the zodiacal talismans; the second comprising the magical square. These magical squares and representations of the divinities are identical to the Paracelsian talismans (magical squares of the same number of columns and of the same numbers, representing respectively the indications in the text).

The second talisman comprises several esoteric signs that we find in the pentacles and seals contained in certain editions of the Key of Solomon (ed. A. Savy, 1976). They differ largely from the "pentacles" and seals constructed, often in a geometric manner, represented in the manuscript and printed traditions of the Key of Solomon at the end of the work (see ed. Mathers, 1888; Lévi, 1895; Ribadeau Dumas, 1972), but combine on the other hand the characters, letters, and seals of the angels, the spirits and the planets that are found at the beginning of the work.

The face of the second seal, which comprises the magical square on the reverse, is related to seals utilized in magic for invoking and conjuring the devils (see *Grimoire du pape Honorius*) even if the forms and the principles are very different. The collection described and represented at the end of the seventeenth century in the works of the Strasbourg author Julius Reichelt is, on the contrary, very close (pl. III et IV, ill. Agrippa, 1967, p. 717-718). They take up the Pseudo-Paracelsian medals with their figuration under human form and magical square, but show also the use of other signs for the planets. The work of Julius Reichelt proves however that the talismans became an object of archeological curiosity, and it seems that their attraction as a medical object decreased. This manuscript, by its date and its fabrication, seems to be most probably a practical handbook accompanying a medical alchemist for the realization of astrological seals.

ILLUSTRATION

For each planet, three talismans are represented: First, there is the planetary signature on the recto and the seal of the planetary angel on the verso (see Marquès-Rivière, 1938, p. 283); the whole is accompanied by symbols of the zodiacal and planetary signs. For Mercury, recto and verso are

reversed and the name "Michael" is placed for "Raphael" which the seal represents. The seal of Anael, the planetary angel of Venus, is placed for the sun and bears a tortoise in the representation of the talisman of Venus where the name Anael is curiously replaced for Raphael. Second, there are on the recto a square with the signs of the planets and constellations and a name. The first and the last signs are those of the planets. On the verso we find the magical square of the planet. For the moon, the magical square is associated with a representation of the moon in human form, and the recto of the second seal is missing.

f. 1v, Seal of the Moon: *Pbul, Malcha* (diameter 30 mm.);

f. 1v, Seal of the Moon: *Gabriel, spiritus timoris* (diameter 30 mm.);

f. 2r, Seal of the Moon: *Luna*, representation of the moon in the form of a nude female on a crescent and holding a crescent, the figure placed in a square inscribed in a circle (diameter 68 mm.);

f. 2r, Magical Square of the Moon, whose sum is 369 (diameter 68 mm.);

f. 3r, *Phalec, Graphiel* (diameter 43 mm.);

f. 3r, *Camael, spiritus consilii, Samael* (diameter 43 mm.);

f. 3r, *Namarail* (diameter 45 mm.);

f. 3r, Magical Square of Mars, whose sum is 65 (diameter 56 mm.);

f. 3r, *Martis*, representation of Mars in the form of a standing warrior arms, with a star above his helmet (diameter 54 mm.);

f. 4r, *Michael* (diameter 44 mm.);

f. 4r, *Ophiel, Tiriël, Michael spiritus pietatis* (diameter 44 mm.);

f. 4r, *Mercurius*, representation of Mercury in the form of a winged man with a star on his forehead and a caduceus in his right hand (diameter 42 mm.);

f. 4r, *Amyunper* (diameter 47 mm.);

f. 4r, Magical Square of Mercury, whose sum is 260 (diameter 90 mm.);

f. 5r, *Betor, Jophiel* (diameter 44 mm.);

f. 5r, *Sachiel* (corr. *Zadkiel*) *spiritus intelligentiæ* (diameter 44 mm.);

f. 5r, *Lachlim* (diameter 45 mm.);

- f. 5r, Magical Square of Jupiter, whose sum is 34 (diameter 45 mm.);
- f. 5r, *Jovis*, representation of Jupiter in the form of a standing bearded man reading, a star over his head (diameter 54 mm.);
- f. 6v, *Och, Michiel* (diameter 47 mm.);
- f. 6v, *Raphael spiritus fortitudinis* (diameter 46 mm.);
- f. 6v, *Math neceil* (diameter 58 mm.);
- f. 6v, Magical Square of the Sun, whose sum is 111 (diameter 59 mm.);
- f. 6v, *Sol*, representation of the Sun in the form of a man seated on his throne, legs nude with a scepter and a lion lying at his feet (diameter 42 mm.);
- f. 7v, *Hagit, Haniel* (corr. *Hagiel*) (diameter 47 mm.);
- f. 7v, *Haniel, spiritus scientiæ ; Anael* (corr. *Raphael*) (diameter 47 mm.);
- f. 7v, *Bechomidin* (diameter 63 mm.);
- f. 7v, Magical Square of Venus, whose sum is 175 (diameter 67 mm.);
- f. 8v, *Aratron, Zazel* (corr. *Agiel*) (diameter 47 mm.);
- f. 8v, *Zaphkiel, spiritus sapientiæ ; Cassiel* (diameter 47 mm.);
- f. 8v, *Arelail* (diameter 49 mm.);
- f. 8v, Magical square of Saturn, whose sum is 15 (diameter 50 mm.);
- f. 9r, *Saturnus*, representation of Saturn as an old man tilling the earth with a star above his head (diameter 51 mm.);
- f. 9r, Magical Square of Saturn, whose sum is 25 (diameter 51 mm.);
- f. 9r, *Venus*, representation of Venus as a scantily dressed woman, a star over her head, holding a lute and accompanied by a Cupid (diameter 51 mm.);

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