

PSEUDO-LULL, *Theorica testamentum* [*Testamentum*, book one]; Alchemical and Medical Recipes

In Latin and English, manuscript on paper
England, after 1446-c.1475

i (modern paper) + 112 + *i* (modern paper) on paper, watermark, triple mountain (unidentified in watermark repertories), early (original?) foliation in Arabic numerals in ink top outer corner recto, 1-113, lacking f. 107, early modern pagination in ink lower margin (collation, i-iv¹⁶ v²⁴ vi² vii¹⁸ [structure uncertain, but certainly lacking f. 107, with loss of text, presumably 17, and with the final leaf cancelled] viii⁶), horizontal catchwords, leaves signed in Arabic numerals in the first half of each quire bottom outer corner recto, quires numbered in modern pencil, frame ruled in blind with all rules full-length (justification, 130-124 x 90-85 mm.), written on the top line in a small, compressed secretary script in thirty-two to twenty-eight long lines, rubrics in red through f. 65, and in ff. 92-end, otherwise in text ink, guide letters for initials, blanks for two-line initials, space left blank for figure on ff. 68v-69, edges repaired f. 1, text darkened (possibly treated by a reagent) ff. 1-2v, 108rv, and 112v-113v, many signs of use throughout, margins stained and dirty, first and last folios of each quire darkened, ff. 107v- end very dark, with edges worn. Bound in a modern vellum binding tooled in gold with triple fillets on the front and back covers, smooth spine with simple gold fillets, in very good condition, housed in modern blue folder and matching slip case with leather spine, lettered in gilt, "Theorica Testamenti, Lull, MS. 1446." Dimensions 208 x 140 mm.

This is an early copy, made in England, of the Latin version of one of the most important fourteenth-century alchemical texts, likely dating within twenty-five years of the first translation of this text from Catalan into Latin. It includes only the first book of the *Testamentum*, which is largely theoretical in content, but it also includes a series of practical, alchemical recipes in Latin and English, as well as copious evidence of use (note dirt, every quire is significantly darkened on the opening and closing folios), contemporary corrections, and annotations.

PROVENANCE

1. Copied in England after 1446, the date of the translation recorded in the final rubric on f. 108; the script is a secretary script that retains some Anglicana features (note especially the pendular abbreviations, and the use of a split "r"; the round cursive "e" is also noteworthy, although not exclusively an Anglicana feature), clearly supporting an origin in England, and suggesting that it may have been copied in the third quarter of the fifteenth century, rather than later; the general upright appearance of the script, rather than a stretched-out "splayed" appearance may also be noted.

Although this appears to be written by one scribe, unusual features in the format and quire structure suggest something happened in the midst of copying: quire five, with twenty-four leaves begins on f. 65; by the end of the quire the scribe is copying in a compressed manner, trying to squeeze as much text as possible onto the page; he failed, and therefore quire six, with only two leaves, ff. 89-90v, was needed – and notably, the format here is quite expansive, and the text ends mid-line, leaving two lines blank at the end. This seems to suggest that the section of the text beginning in quire seven may have been copied earlier.

2. This is a formal manuscript, carefully copied with contemporary corrections throughout, usually supplying omissions (for example, ff. 5, 16, 30, 35v, 71), on f. 11 ten lines are marked for deletion, and on f. 43 a paragraph is marked "vacat" and scratched through. The manuscript includes numerous signs of use, including short notes throughout indicating subjects discussed in the text in a contemporary hand (for example, f. 9, 14v, 18, and so forth), nota marks, and later notes, as ff. 17v and 52v. Note in bottom margin over-painted in blue f. 46; blue also used to trace the letters of a marginal note on f. 60v, and before a note on f. 61.
3. Belonged to Robert B. Honeyman (1897-1987), engineer and noted collector, who assembled an important library of books and manuscripts associated with the history of science; his MS Gen.sci.3 (Bond and Faye, p. 20, no. 3); his sale, London, Sotheby's, 2 May 1979, lot 1101.
4. Belonged to Joost R. Ritman (b. 1941), the Dutch businessman and distinguished collector of art and books; acquired from Sotheby's; Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica MS 16 (bookplate front flyleaf f. i); briefly described in *Medieval Manuscripts in Dutch Collections* (Online Resources), and in Gumbert, 1987, no. 118; mentioned in Gentile, 1999, p. 222.
5. Modern owners' and dealers' notes include, inside front cover, notes on the text in pencil, and small round sticker HH 55 (or 4H 55): and inside back cover, annotations in pencil from BPH (Soth Hun/1101/FTTT; 84912-BPH 16; and 35P2H).

TEXT

ff. 1-108, *Incipit theorica testamentum* <?>, incipit, "Deus qui gloriose omnipotens existis propter te amare intelligere et recolere ..."; ... f. 106, *De latitudine complexionis et quomodo comprehenditur in duobus terminis*, Rubrica 96, incipit, "Fili omnis latitudo complexionis ... de latitudine dicti termini//"; f. 107 now missing; f. 108, incipit, "///aerem et ignem ... diximus post considerationem capituli quod incipit lapis modo remaneat in omnibus suis elementis," *Explicit theorica testamenti translata de hispanica linguam latinam Anno 1446*;

Pseudo-Ramon Lull, *Testamentum*, book one, or *Testamentum theorica* (as it is called in this manuscript); here with ninety-seven chapters, now missing f. 107, so f. 106v ends imperfectly in chapter 96 (ed. p. 300, line 41), and f. 108 begins imperfectly in chapter 97 (ed., p. 304, line 30). The text on f. 68v ends after four lines, *Sequitur figura*; remainder and f. 69 left blank for the figure that was never added; on f. 11, a section of text was expunged.

Modern critical edition by Pereira and Spaggiari, 1999, includes the Catalan and the Latin text, listing seventy Latin manuscripts, pp. 527-528, including this manuscript as Amsterdam, BPH, MS 16 (presumably this manuscript is also the manuscript listed as San Juan de Capistrano, Honeyman Collection, MS B). Pereira and Spaggiari suggest the Latin recension of the text can be grouped into three families; the text in this manuscript appears closest to the family that includes Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 244, a manuscript that includes the text in both Latin and Catalan (see especially pp. 529, and 539-555). There is another later Catalan manuscript in Paris; the text also circulated in French and English. The sixteenth- and seventeenth-century editions (listed in Pereira, 1989, p. 83) all included only books one and two. On the text and its manuscript tradition, see also Pereira, 1989, pp. 83-84, and its update (Online Resources, I.61, *Testamentum*). Earlier references in Corbett, 1939-51, vol. I, 191, 240,

274, Glorieux, 1933 kq, kq1, nv; Thorndike, 1932, vol. IV, 651-2; Thorndike and Kibre, 1963, 410; Singer, 1928-31, 244.

The *Testamentum* is the earliest work in the Pseudo-Lullian Alchemical corpus, a large collection of as many as 143 texts that circulated as the work of Raymond Lull (or Ramon Lull, Raimundus Lullus; 1232-1316), the famous Catalan philosopher, theologian, and mystic. Despite the long tradition associating Lull with these works, it is now well-accepted that none of this large and important body of alchemical texts are authentic works by Lull (see in particular the works by Michela Pereira cited below). Although Lull's reputation as an alchemist still lingers today, he speaks of alchemy negatively in his authentic works, and none of the alchemical texts associated with him date from his lifetime. Instead, the *Testamentum* was likely written by an anonymous fourteenth-century Catalan scholar, now known as the "Magister Testamentum," who probably studied medicine at Montpellier and was active in Catalonia, Southern France, and England. The evidence of the colophons preserved in a number of manuscripts of the *Testamentum* suggests it was composed in London in 1332. Although it does not seem to have circulated originally as Lull's, it was attributed to Lull by the end of the century by the author of the *Liber de secretis naturae seu de quinta essentia* (see TM 695), and it makes use of elements of Lull's thought, as well as the alphabets and figures that are used so prominently in Lull's Art.

The lengthy colophon in Oxford, Corpus Christi College 244, which includes the text in Latin and in Catalan, explains it was written in London near the Tower in 1332 during the reign of Edward III (reigned 1327-1377), that it was translated from Catalan into Latin in 1443 by Lambert in London at the priory of St. Bartholomew, and that John Kirkeby had both the Catalan and Latin versions copied, since he did not agree with the translation in many passages, completing his work in 1455. John Kirkeby was chaplain to the King, and one of a group of physicians who petitioned King Henry VI in 1456 for permission to make the "*mater medicinarum*," or the alchemical elixir. Yale, Mellon MS 12, states simply that it was translated from Catalan into Latin in 1443. The colophon in the manuscript that is described here states that it was translated from Spanish (an interesting difference) into Latin in 1446.

The date of 1332 found in some of the manuscripts can almost certainly be accepted as the date of the composition of the text (it is not contradicted by the text, which does not cite earlier works, Lull is not mentioned by name, and both England and Catalonia were areas rich in alchemical activity around that time – Edward III is known to have protected many alchemists). Moreover, although no fourteenth-century copies survive, it is cited by the *Liber de secretis naturae seu de quinta essentia* (the text found TM 695 on this site), a work that dates from the second half of the fourteenth century (see discussion in Pereira, 1989, p. 3).

As Michela Pereira, the modern authority on the Pseudo-Lullian Alchemical corpus has stated, "The significance of this work for late-medieval alchemy and natural philosophy can scarcely be over-emphasized." The complete text includes the *Theorica*, the *Practica*, the *Liber mercuriorum* (Book of Mercuries), and the *Practica de furnis* (A Practical Treatise about Furnaces), followed by the *Cantilena*. As noted above, this manuscript includes only the first part, the *Theorica*. In it, alchemy is defined as a hidden part of natural philosophy that is concerned with the transmutation of metals, the enhancement of health, and how to enhance and produce precious stones ([alchemy is] "an occult part of philosophy, the most necessary, a basic art which cannot be learned by just anyone. Alchemy teaches how to change all precious stones until they achieve the true balancing qualities, how to bring human bodies to their healthiest condition, and how to transmute all metals into the true Sun (gold) and the true Moon (silver), by means

of a unique body, universal medicine, to which all particular medicines are reduced"; quoted in Periera, 1995, p. 42). It was one of the first texts to develop the idea of the elixir, or the philosophers' stone, as the agent of the general perfection of matter – able to "cure" the imperfections of base metals and thus turn them into gold, as well as to "cure" precious gems, and to maintain human health by curing disease, and thus prolonging life. This was the seminal text in the development of medical alchemy (a discipline associated in the sixteenth century with Paracelsus).

There are only two recorded copies of this text in the United States, both at Yale in the Mellon Collection; one of which, Mellon MS 39 also includes only the *Theorica* (this manuscript is listed twice, San Capistrano, California, Honeyman Collection, MS B, and as Amsterdam, BPH, MS 116). The text has not often been available on the market; a copy was sold to Yale by Witten in 1980, and this copy changed hands in 1979 (earlier sales for other manuscripts in 1966 and 1935), according to the Schoenberg Database.

ff. 108-113v, Recipes, added by as many as nine different hands including, f. 108, two recipes, treated by reagent?, incipit, "<...> sufficit ad malgamandum ita subti<lis?> ..."; incipit, "Recipe predictus..."; f. 108v, incipit, "Tres sunt modi operandi auro quorum duo sunt ipsius et aliorum tertius. Ipsius et aliorum. Primus est ut in eo dissoluto extingantur laminae calefacte ..."; incipit, "Nota quod ag[ua?] auri v ... arse<nici?> calide et humide ..."; incipit, "... aurum vinum dissolvat ita quod magnam ..."; *Modus operandi auro v cum ceteris adnunculo[?]*, incipit, "Recipe salis petro ..."; *Nota bene de sale arico*, incipit, "Sal arico vertit et solvit ..."; f. 109, *Confectus aqua plumbi et iovis*, incipit, "In vna 2 aceti distillati ..."; incipit, "Recipe mercurium sublimatum ter uel quatuor inter <?> et calixem ..."; *Aqua martis sic fecit etc.*, incipit, "Recipe vitrioli ..."; *De inceratione solis uel lune ...*; f. 109v, *Preparatio solis frigitivo[?]*, incipit, "Recipe aurum v bene pul et ..."; ... *Sublimatio auri vinum ...*; *Fixacio auri vinum*, incipit, "Accipe salis ..."; f. 110v, *Sublimatio auri vinum ...*; f. 111v, *Thys medycyn was <?> ... a man of darby namyd saul*, incipit, "Recipe ..."; *Contra paralysym vngumentum*, incipit, "... medicus capellani apud Wodestoke ...", and f. 112v, *Radulf holonde For ye stone ... and colicke ...*, f. 113v, two recipes in English, the second beginning, "Take and sethe eggs harde. Then take a"

Approximately fifty alchemical and medical recipes added to the manuscript by successive users, and/or owners, in Latin and English; note the references to "a man of Derby named Saul," and an ointment of use against paralysis mentioning a doctor at "Wodestoke" on f. 111v, and a remedy by Radulf Holonde (Ralph of Holland?) for stones and colic on f. 112v.

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ONLINE RESOURCES

The Ritman Library (Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica)
<http://www.ritmanlibrary.com/collection/collection-profile/>

Medieval Manuscripts in Dutch Collections (as Amsterdam, BPH, MS 16)
<http://www.mmdc.nl/static/site/>

Michela Pereira, "Catalogue of the Alchemical Works Attributed to Ramon Lull," (Update to Pereira, 1989, above)

http://www.ramonlull.net/sw_studies/pdf/s_pseudo_1.pdf

http://www.ramonlull.net/sw_studies/l_br/s_pseudo_0.htm

"Alchemy," in the *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*

<http://xtf.lib.virginia.edu/xtf/view?docId=DicHist/uvaBook/tei/DicHist1.xml;chunk.id=dv1-04>

Alchemy Website

<http://www.alchemywebsite.com/index.html>

Bibliotheca Chymica

http://herve.delboy.perso.sfr.fr/bibliot_phil_chim.html

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