

**PSEUDO-LULL, *Liber de secretis naturae seu de quinta essentia* [including *Tractatus septem rotarum quarum sex sunt volubiles*, *Questiones arboris phylosophiae*, two versions of the *Tertia distinctio*, and *Disputatio monachi cum Raymundo*]
In Latin, illustrated manuscript on paper
Italy, Venice, 1498**

iii (all paper, ii, earlier leaves) + 182 + i folios on paper, unidentified watermark (fragmented), early (eighteenth-century?) foliation in ink top outer corner recto, possibly missing one leaf from the original first quire, the volume has been re-sewn, and ff. 1-19 are now bound incorrectly (collation, i⁸ ii⁶ iii⁵ [structure uncertain, catchword on f. 16 is evidence it was once at the end of a quire and was followed by f. 20, the catchword on f. 18 correctly matches the text on f. 19; these first three quires were originally two quires of 10, i=ff. 1-7, 17, 18, now missing one leaf, without apparent loss of text, possibly cancelled?, ii=ff. 19, 8-16] iv-xix¹⁰ xx³ [appears complete, 3 is single], vertical catchwords, no leaf or quire signatures, ruled in blind with the top two and bottom two lines full across and double full-length vertical bounding lines, (justification, 115 x 70 mm.), copied in a small, precise humanistic bookhand with many cursive features in thirty long lines, red rubrics and paragraph marks, blanks for two-line initials, crude seven-line initial, f. 1, added later, TWO ILLUSTRATIONS, f. 10, drawings in red ink of alchemical vessels, and f. 36, detailed drawing of "furnus Athanor" in text ink with red highlights, TWENTY-THREE CHARTS AND OTHER FIGURES, ff. 47v, 48, 139v, 142, 152v, 165, 167, 174-182, in red or red and brown (some using yellow and green ink as well), spotting from mold, ff. 1-7v, some foxing and minor stains, significant worm holes throughout, but rarely affecting legibility (many now with modern repairs/reinforcements), ff. 178-end, stained top margin, on some folios extending through the text, which remains legible. Bound in modern brown leather over pasteboard, spine tooled in blind with four raised bands, in good condition apart from very slight scuffing and wear at extremities of the spine, housed in brown modern fitted box, spine labeled, Ramon Lull, *Naturae Secretorum*. Dimensions 164 x 115 mm.

This is a hitherto unrecorded copy of the central text of the Pseudo-Lullian alchemical corpus, a text that has rarely been available for sale. There is no modern critical edition, and early printed editions do not preserve the complete text. This manuscript, signed and dated by its scribe while working in the house of the Doge of Venice, Leonardo Loredano, includes the complete text and two versions of the of "tertia distinctio" (probably only one of three manuscript with two versions) and thus deserves careful study. The drawings and numerous Lullian charts and figures add to its interest.

PROVENANCE

1. Copied in Venice in 1498, and completed on October 8; signed and dated on f. 174 by the unrecorded scribe Johannes Cyprianus Theatinus (not listed in Bénédictins du Bouveret, *Colophons de manuscrits occidentaux*, or in Krämer, *Scriptores possessoresque*, Online resources), who says he copied the manuscript in the house of Leonardo Loredano (1436/8-1521), Doge of Venice from 1501 until his death. When the manuscript was copied he was procurator of St. Mark's ("*Magistri Domini Leonardi Loredani procuratoris sancti marci*"). Leonardo Loredano is most well-known today as the subject of the famous portrait by Giovanni Bellini, now in the National Gallery, London. Leonardo's brother, Pietro, is said to have moved to Padua, and devoted himself to the study of alchemy. The first printed edition of this text was published in Venice in 1514 while Leonardo was Doge.

In general this is a very clean copy, lacking in the copious notes, soiling and stains found in many other alchemical manuscripts; an exception are the folios with the diagrams on ff. 47v-48, which are quite soiled. There are a few added notes and pointing hands (for example, ff. 35, 56, 96v, 99v, and 100), and on f. 114 a very detailed and realistic pointing hand observes, "Questio valde notanda."

2. Note in Italian, front flyleaf, f. ii,
3. Recipe, *Ad faciendum oleum tartari*, incipit, "Accipe libro duas tartri albi . . .," added front flyleaf, f. iii, (added eighteenth century?);
4. Belonged to Petrus Joseph Puccius, Urbinas probably in the eighteenth or nineteenth century; inscribed front flyleaf, f. iii.
5. Sold at Christie's, 17 July 1985, lot 303 to Alan Thomas; his catalogue 48, 1986, no. 3; sold at Sothebys, 21 June 1988, lot 90 to Tenschert.
6. Belonged to Joost R. Ritman (b. 1941), the Dutch businessman and distinguished collector of art and books, who acquired it from Tenschert in 1992; *Bibliotheca Philosophia Hermetica* MS 100 (bookplate front flyleaf f. i); described in Gentile, 1999, no. 36, pp. 221-224.; briefly described in *Medieval Manuscripts in Dutch Collections* (Online Resources).

TEXT

ff. 1-4, [prologue] *Incipit liber prime distinctionis Naturę secretorum seu quinta essentia Sacre Doctoris Magistri Raymundi Lulii de Insula Maioricarum qui doctrinam dat eius extractionis et Applicationis ad Corpora humana ad opera terribilia totius artis Medicine procuranda. Et etiam de metallorum transmutatione obitruitur. Qui est ymago omnium librorum super hiis tractantum. De Contristatione Raymundi et Eius lamentatione*, incipit, "Contristatus erat Raymundus et non modica desolatione repletus . . ."; [Authorial Prologue] f. 3v, incipit, "Deus gloriose cum tue cum sublimis bonitatis ac infinite potestatis uirtute. Incipit liber secretorum nature seu quinta essentia qui doctrinam dat eius extractionis et applicationis ad corpora humana ad opera terribilia totius artis medicine procuranda . . . verba physica adiungemus";

ff.4-36v, [Book one], incipit, "Ordinur namque tibi fili quod necesse est tibi scire . . . non discrepat quantum ad principium sui. Finis";

ff. 36v-47 [Book two] *Dicto de Magisterio primi libri in quo dedimus Theoricam Quintę Essentie et declarauimus modum extractionis eius a quacumque re elementata . . . Vnde iste liber sic intitatur. Deus ad te summe metuendum qui es finis et perfectio omnium qui te metuunt et a quo omne quod et optimum procedit. Incipit secundus liber huius voluminis qui apellatur de remediis ultimatis generale ad comodum corpors <nostri?> conditum*, incipit, "Fili in hoc presenti libro tractare intendimus de applicatione quintę esentie ad corpora humana . . . sufficient causa breuitatis," *Finis secundi libri. Deo gratias*;

ff. 47- 89v, [book three] *Dicto de Medicina et Magisterio Quintę essentie ad humana Corpora. Prosequi intendimus de eius applicatione ad artem transmutatoriam cuius in exordio libri hac tractatione promisimus. Vnde Incipit Tertia Distinctio seu Tertius liber huius voluminis qui sic intitatur. Deus cum tua magnitudine et affluentis Largitatis. Incipit Tertia Distinctio seu Tertius Liber huius voluminis qui est de arte et alteratione metallorum ad te sume metuendum et diligendum et amandum et ad tuam sanctam fidem magnificandum et est ut secreta sensualia filiis ueritatis patefiant. Et prima sequitur Arbor philosophalis*; ff. 47v-48, figures; f. 48v, *Ista Regula Infrascripta*

datur de lineis quae oriuntur ab R S T V. Arboris phylosophalis superscripta, incipit, "Iste linee que veniunt de R S T V ad B significant ...; f. 49, Incipit Tertia Distinctio, incipit, "Hec est Tertia Distinctio huius liber que est de cura corporum metallorum. In compositione lapidis phylosophorum ...; f. 62v, De Tertia parte principali prime partis huius distinctione.. In opera minori secundum hunc tractatum ...; f. 68, De secunda parte practicali ...; ... [f. 89v] Finis et conclusio contentorum in libro, incipit, "Diximus de modo mixtionis ... dicta sunt procedure possit artista." Deo Gratias Amen. Sanctissima Virgo Maria Mater Domini Nostri Yhesu Christi filii vivi et eterni dei patris tua solita clementia deprecare pro me miserrimo peccatore. Tu virgo sanctissima quae in partu ante et post partum virgo fuisti. Et quae spiritu sancto cooperante eundem genuisti amen;

ff. 90-94v, Incipit liber qui dicitur figura lata. Septem rotarum quem aliqui dicit esse sequelam Tertii liber uel Tertie distinctionis ante scripte quintae essentiae, incipit, "Protinus ut ars et scientia transmutatoria quam in precedenti volumine diximus ... Nam plura hic explicauimus que implicita errant in principiiis huius ortis ad laudem dei et utilitatem cristianorum amen. Deo Gratias. Amen,"

This short treatise, *Liber septem rotarum*, is here clearly copied as part of the *Liber de secretis nature seu de quinta essentia*; Pereira has noted that it follows the *Tertia distinctio* in manuscripts with the "first" version, as it does here; it is absent in manuscripts with the "second" version (Pereira notes that she refers to them as the first and second based on their order in the manuscript in Florence, and the terminology does not imply that one pre-dates the other, since their textual history is not yet determined); it also circulated independently in six manuscripts (see Pereira, 1989, pp. 17 and 77, I.39b, and its online update, Online Resources); see also Glorieux, 1933, mk; Thorndike and Kibre, 1963, 1145; and Singer, 1928-31, 246-7.

ff. 94v-115v, Incipiunt questiones Arboris Phylosophiae, incipit, Et in ista parte intendimus soluere questions que fieri possunt in arte ista ... Ratio est in homine specifico," Finis Deo Gratias Amen,

*ff. 115v-169, [Book Three, the "tertius distinctio," second version], Dicto de Medicina et magisterio Quinte Essentiae Ad humana Corpora prosequi Intendimus de Eius applicatione ad Artem Transmutatoriam Cuius In Exordio Libri hac tractatione promissimus. Vnde Incipit Tertia Distinctio Seu Tertio Liber huius Voluminis qui sic intitulatur. Deus cum tua magnitudine et Affluentis Largitatis Incipit Tertia distinctio Seu alias tertius liber huius voluminis qui est de Alteratione metallorum ad te Summe diligendum. Et ad tuam Sanctam fidem Magnificandum et Est ut secretata sensualia filiis ueritatis patefiant. Alia Tertia Distinctio, incipit, "Hec est Tertia distinctio Seu Tertius liber huius Voluminis que uel qui est de Metallorum cura et istorum magisterio In compositione lapidis phylosophorum in opere Maiori et Minori... habebis de scientia figurarum"; [f. 147] Diximus de Scientia que per figuras haberi potest. Nunc dicendum est de ultima parte huius libri que est de Questionibus secundum quas multam doctrinam postes habere. In latitudine magisterium huius artis per quas mult opera secreta tibi reuelabitur. Et primo de Questionibus figure fundamentalis incipiemus, incipit, "[F]ilidamus tibi doctrinam per questiones ad finem ... ad finem optatum"; f. 168v, *De figura anime Rationalis*, incipit, "Hec figura dicitur anime rationalis ... falsitatis huic arti repugnantem";*

Another version of the third *distinctio*; note f. 139 ends, "Et sic fili mi finite est figura fundamentalis doctrine quantum ad opus singularitas metalli. Vnde sequitur figura," *Volve et Videbis formam figure*; on f. 139v, full page circular figure in red, yellow and green; f. 141 ends, ... *Hec est figura Arboris*, but f. 141v is blank. (Another smaller circular figure, "Individuorum" on f. 142). In the questions beginning on f. 147, the second part on f. 153 includes questions related to the *arbor phylosophali*, then f. 165v, questions related to *figura quadrangularis*, and then a very short section, ff. 168v-169 on *De figura anime Rationalis*.

ff. 169-174, *De disputatione Monachi cum Raymundo*, incipit, "Cumque Raymundus librum supra quod rogatus fuit a monacho . . . Quem quidem librum christi Custodie Commendauit. Finis deo gratias amen," *Finiuit Raymundus hunc Librum Parisiis Anno ab Incarnatione domini nostri ihesu Christi Millesimo ccc xix In Monasterio Sancti Benedicti Centuriensis [sic] extra Ciuitatem. Ego autem Ioannes Cyscurius Theatinus Rescripsi Venetiis In domo Magistri Domini Leonardi Loredani procuratoris sancti marci Anno eiusdem Millesimo CCCC Lxxxviii Die Octauo Octubris. Vnde Sequuntur figure.*

De disputatione monachi cum Raymundo (The disputation of the monk with Raymond) forms the conclusion or epilogue to the work, returning to the dialogue form used at the beginning; it was not included in printed editions, and was published for the first time by Pereira, 1986, pp. 765-767.

ff. 174-182, Figures and tables, incipit, "Hec est prima figura huius artis que est de mixtione principiorum Arboris phylosophye"; f. 174v, "Hec est figura secunda huius que est de mixtione principiorum figure fundamentalis etc."; f. 175, "Tabula est dat modum qualiter extrahatur noster mercurius a Vino albo et Rubeo . . ."; f. 175v, [circular "Figura Indiuuorum"]; f. 176, "Arbor philosophie"; f. 176v, circular figure, with explanation below, "Opus philosophale magis nobile et figura significationis et radix supradicti arboris. Que sequitur est figura artis fundamentalis cum suis tabulis significationibus coloribus quam etiam superius est designata suo loco"; f. 177, blank; ff. 177v-182, eleven tables and figures with explanations [f. 182v, blank with later note].

ILLUSTRATIONS

The use of genuine Lullian devices is an important feature of the *Tertia distinctio*, including the tree or *arbor philosophicalis*, the circular *figura S* and *figura indiuiduorum*, alphabets, with each letter corresponding to one alchemical principle, and tables, arranging the letters so that practioners can discover ("*invenire*") the true alchemical processes (Pereira, 1989, p. 15). This manuscript includes two detailed drawings of alchemical equipment, f. 10, drawings in red ink of alchemical vessels, and f. 36, detailed drawing of "furnus Athanor," and a full complement of Lullian figures, including ff. 47v-48, Radix Arbor phylosofalis, and the circular figure "S," with explanations, f. 139v, a very detailed circular "figura S," f. 141v, "Hec est figura arboris," followed by a blank page, f. 142, f. 142v, circular "figura indiuiduorum," f. 152v, small diagrams, ff. 165 and 167, circular figures, ff. 174-182, tables and figures described above (see especially the complex circular figures on ff. 176v, 179v, 181v, and 182). The complex geometry and the use of different colored inks in many of these figures make them attractive examples of this type of illustration.

Liber de secretis naturae seu de quinta essentia (The Book of the Secrets of Nature or of the Fifth Essence), although ascribed to Raymond Lull (1232-1316), was in actuality by an author who probably considered himself a disciple of Lull, and dates from the end of the fourteenth century. There is no modern critical edition of the text, which varies considerably in different manuscripts; none of the printed editions, for example, Venice, 1514, 1521, 1542, Augsburg, 1518, Strasbourg, 1541 and 1616, Nuremberg, 1546, Cologne, 1567, and so forth, include the complete text and the text they do print also varies; none of these editions includes the conclusion, or epilogue, printed in Pereira, 1986. Pereira, 1989, p. 77, I.39, and its online update, lists sixty-six manuscripts, not including the manuscript described here; only three are in the United States, Bethlehem (Penn.), Lehigh University Library, MS 1; formerly Washington D.C. (Brookland), Holy Name College, MS 16, now at the Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University, NY, and New Haven, Connecticut, Yale University, Beinecke Library, Mellon Collection, MS 12; see also, Singer, 1928- 1931, p. 255, Glorieux, 1933, jv, lc, lm, ml,

oj, Corbett, 1939-51, vol. I, p. 136, Thorndike, 1934, vol. IV, 39, 648, and Thorndike and Kibre, 1963, pp. 263, 408, 602, 1018. This manuscript appears to be the only copy of this text sold in many decades.

The text in this manuscript is now bound out of order; correct order: ff. 1-7v, ending "... sicut declaravimus"; followed by ff. 17-19v (incipit, "In plurimus libris et potuissime ... celeste quod ipsum med//"; followed by ff. 8-16v (incipit, "///icum preuidere oportet ..), and then continuing on f. 20 to the end.

The *Liber de secretis naturae seu de quinta essentia* (The Book of the Secrets of Nature or of the Quintessence) is the central work in the Pseudo-Lullian Alchemical corpus, a large collection of as many as 143 different texts that circulated as the work of Raymond Lull (Ramon Lull or 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.

The author of the *Liber de secretis naturae* used large sections of the earlier work by John of Rupescissa (c. 1310-c. 1362), *De consideratione quintae essentiae omnium rerum* (On the Consideration of the Fifth Essence of All Things), a treatise linked alchemy with medicine by describing the process of producing *aqua vitae* by the distillation of wine, producing a substance that he said could prevent corruption and decay, and thus prevent illness and premature aging. The *Liber de secretis naturae*, in contrast with Rupescissa's text, was not primarily interested in the medical application of the quintessence, but instead interpreted these ideas as part of an alchemical system formulated in the Pseudo-Lullian *Testamentum* (see TM 692 on this site) that included medicine, the transmutation of metals, and the artificial production of precious stones. Rupescissa's work is dated 1351-2, establishing the *terminus post quem* for the composition of this work. In contrast with the earliest works in the corpus such as the *Testamentum*, it is explicitly attributed to Lull. The rubric here on f. 174, *Finiuit Raymundus hunc Librum Parisiis Anno ab Incarnatione domini nostri ihesu Christi Millesimo ccc xix In Monasterio Sancti Benedicti Centuriensis [sic] extra Ciuitatem* (Raymund finished this book in Paris in the year of our Lord Jesus Christ 1319 in the monastery of St Benedict of the Carthusians (here "Centuriensis") outside the city) occurs with variations in many of the manuscripts of the text (some recording 1330 or 1333 instead of 1319), and is clearly a fabrication by the author, who seems to have known the authentic list of Lull's works that states that he assembled his works in three places, including the Carthusian monastery in Paris.

The structure of the *Liber de secretis naturae* is complex, and as mentioned above, the text in different manuscripts and different printed editions varies considerably. There has been no systematic study of all the extant manuscripts that allows a comparison of their contents. The text of the manuscript described here, however, is certainly of textual importance, and can be linked to two other manuscripts that also include two versions of the third book, the so-called "*tertia distinctio*." One of the versions in Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 244, copied in England by John Kirkeby in 1455, is said by the scribe to be copied from an exemplar "de regno Portugalie" that is, the King of Portugal (two versions of the *Testamentum* are also found in this Oxford manuscript, one in Latin and the other in Catalan). Florence, Biblioteca nazionale centrale, MS BR 52 (II iii 27), datable c. 1475, is a beautifully illuminated copy, made for an unknown patron, but certainly someone of wealth (both manuscripts are studied by Pereira,

1989, pp. 16-17, Pereira and Spaggiari, 1999, *passim*, and pp. 534-535, 591-600, and Pereira, 1984). A detailed comparison of the text of these three manuscripts (and of other manuscripts with comparably complete texts and two versions of the *tertia distinctio* if such manuscripts come to light), would certainly represent a major step forward in our understanding of this text. A superficial comparison of the manuscript described here and the Oxford and Florence manuscripts based on the rubrics provided in the descriptions in Pereira and Spaggiari, 1999, pp. 591-600, and Pereira, 1986, suggests the text in our manuscript is certainly similar to the text in the Florence manuscript (albeit with some differences that should be investigated).

The complete text of the *Liber de secretis naturae*, as it is found in this manuscript includes a prologue (incipit, "Contristatus erat Raymundus"), and an Epilogue, "De disputatione monachi cum Raymundo," fictional dialogues between the author, Raymond, and a Benedictine monk, that link alchemy to Lull's system of thought; the prologue even argues that statements against transmutation found in Lull's works should be understood as remarks concerning "false" alchemists. Following an authorial prologue (incipit, "Deus gloriose"), the first two books of the treatise follow Rupescissa's work closely, discussing the theory of the fifth essence of wine and its extraction (significantly reinterpreting alcohol as a means of transmutation), followed by the practical discussion of the second book, which focusses on the use of the quintessence for human healing. The third book, called the *Tertia distinctio* – this author's most original contribution to alchemical thought – discusses the transmutation of metals and the philosophers' stone using alphabets, figures and trees taken from Lull's authentic works; *the arbor philosophalis* (the Philosophical Tree) is used to discuss the alchemical work using the fifth essence of wine, and other organic substances, and the "figura S," the preparation of the philosophers' stone by means of minerals and metals. This is followed by the text known as "Tractatus septem rotarum quarum sex sunt volubiles" (here ff. 90-94v, incipit "Protinus ut ars"), and then a series of questions (*questiones*) dealing with alchemical topics discussed in this treatise. A second version of the third *distinctio* follows (here beginning on f. 115v), which presents much of the same material as the first version in a shorter form, and in a different order; this version does not include the *Tractatus septem rotarum*. The epilogue, or "De disputatione monachi cum Raymundo," follows, and an extensive series of Lullian figures and tables conclude the work.

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