

Everburning Lights of Trithemius

This text from MS. Ashmole 1408 p. 239-243, in Oxford, purports to give two recipes for constructing ever-burning lights, ascribed to Johannes Trithemius (1462-1516), Abbot of Sponheim, an expert in cryptography and the occult arts. - Adam McLean

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Everburning Lights ascribed to Trithemius.

Two eternall unquenchable burning temporall lights of Mr Trittemio Abbot at Sponheim, described by the hande of Bartholomeus Korndorffer.

Two unquenchable eternall lights are founde and to be seen hearin, which I Bartholomeus Korndorffer have written of a disciple of Mr Trittemius Abbot of Sponheim, which did affirme with an oath that they were never published nor opened before, only that his Mr the Abbot had bestowed one of them unto a great potentat. this famous Maus Trittemius, which lived in time of the great Imperiour Maximilian the first, and none like unto him was to be founde in his age, hath done much good with his artes, not mingled with divilish worcke, as some malicious men doe accuse his, butt he did knowe all what was done in the world of what he desireth by the starres of ministerie, he hath also tolde of things to come manie times. Once as was travaling, came to S. Moritz, and found an acquaintance to whome I spoke, he was glad to see mee, he invited mee to dinner, and another named servatius Hohel, which had been with the Abbot at Sponheim and served him 12 years. He wwas vere civill, yet sometime he spoke a word of this arte. Now as wee came together, and dinner beyng past Mr Hohell desireth mee to goe with him to his chammer, which i did discoursing of diverse matter of artes and seying he was an antient man, I desired to leave him allone to his studie butt he would not left mee, and bespoke a meale by his hostess, which wee two did take in his chammer. Mr Hohel did bestowe uppon mee that time, the handwriting of Mr Trittemius whearin thease two incombustible lights were wrytten, and some magick peeces, which I did trye 7 prouve affterwards & founde them to be vere true & right. Mr Hohel tolde mee also that his Mr Trithemius had bestowed one of those lights unto this great potentat the Emperour Maximilian, and placed it in a glass in his chammer, which the sayd potentat had kepte vere well, and many had seen the lightning thereof. After that a sickness aryseth that the Emperour did departe from that place, & came not to this place again in 20 years: but as he came theather at the least, Mr Trittemius beyng dead long before, he remembered this light & went presently to see it, which was found theare with all tokens unquenchable as Mr Trittemius had lefft it, & the people of that castel tolde the Emperour that they had seene continually a lightning in that place, licke a lampe in a church. Wherefore this Emperour lefft the light years still burning wheare it shall surne still at this daye, which is a great secret in this worlde. the Emperour Maximilian hath given 6000 crownes for those temporall everlasting lights.

Hearuppon followeth the process & practica.

Take 4 unces of sulphur, & so much of calcyned alume, bruse them together, put it into an earthen sublimatorie, place it into a coale fier, well lited, let the sulphur ascend through the Alume, and in 8 houres is it prepared.

Thearof take at the lesse 2 1/2 unces, and one unce of good christallick venetian porras, bruse them two small together, put it into a flat glasse that it may lye flatly, poure uppon it a stronge sharpe 4 times distilled spirit of wine uppon it, & extracte it in ashes sofftly to the oyle, poure it uppon again, extracte it to the oyle, poure it uppon again & drawe it of agayne; take a litle of the sulphure, laye it uppon a red hott copper plate, and when it floweth like wax without smoking then is it prepared, if not then must thou extract theareof more of the spirit of wine, till it sustineth the proove & it is prepared.

Nowe take alumephume, make therof a top not as long as a little finger, and halfe as thicke, foulde it about with whyte silke, put it thus whole into a venetian little glasse, & joyne thearunto of the prepared sulphure, place it a day & night in hott sande, that the top be continually in the sulphur. Nowe take the top thearout, and put it into such a glasse, that the top looke out a little, adde thearunto of the prepared incombustible chyburals, place the glasse into hott sand till the sulphure melteth, and cleaveth beneath and upward about the top, that it be seene but a little above, kindle the top with a common light, & it beginneth to burne presently, and the sulphure remaineth flowing, take the light and place it where you wilt, and it burneth continually for ever.