Portrait of Michael Sendivogius engraved from an oil painting (frontispiece in *Michaelis Sendivogii Novum lumen chemicum aus dem Brunnen der Natur durch handangelegte Erfahrung bewiesen...*, Nuremberg 1766).

Rafał T. Prinke

The Twelveth Adept

Michael Sendivogius in Rudolfine Prague

The first quarter of the 17th century was the turning point in the intellectual history of Europe. It was the time when religious and magical systems of earlier centuries reached their apogeum and the world was anxiously awaiting some entirely new development. This millennial atmosphere which pervaded the inquisitive minds of the learned produced the ephemeral phenomenon known as Rosicrucianism. Ever since the publication of the two Rosicrucian manifestos - *Fama* (1614) and *Confessio* (1615) - there has been an unending debate on whether the Rosicrucian Order really existed as a formal organisation. While this question may never be conclusively answered, it is now pretty certain that even if there had been a fraternal order with initiatory rituals, degrees and teachings, calling themselves Orden des Rosenkreutzers prior to the publication of the manifestos - it was of relatively little importance. It may even be said that its very inexistence or insignificance was responsible for its enormous success, creating increased interest and the atmosphere of secrecy through the failure to contact that elusive group of *adepti* by many "erudites of Europe" to whom the manifestos had been addressed. The symbolic meaning of the order's name, which could not be fully rationalised, proved to be so enchanting that it was used by various occult and freemasonic groups and is still around today.

The objective of many scholarly analyses of that phenomenon was to establish the authorship of the manifestos and membership of the fraternity. This produced several critical surveys of relevant publications from the period and other sources but the results were inconclusive or debatable.[1] In order to give the research on Rosicrucianism a new perspective, Frances A. Yates suggested that the term could be applied to "a certain style of thinking which is historically recognizable without raising the question whether a Rosicrucian style of thinker belonged to a secret society".[2] In fact the development of such an approach could already be seen in earlier studies and is now generally recognized as valid. Rosicrucians, in this sense, were therefore all those great minds of the early 17th century who were steeped in the earlier Hermetic tradition and at the same time sensed the need for the future experimental method, believed in the need for secrecy in alchemical studies and yet understood the importance of exchange of one's findings with others, accepted the rules of the feudal society and still hoped for a new utopian reformation. They were typically Paracelsist physicians and alchemists, trying to reconcile the spiritual and material aspects of their science, the unity of which had already been undermined by the Renaissance, and also prolific writers of books which veiled more than they revealed.

Many of the most prominent figures usually associated with that milieu were for at least some time living in Prague which had, under the rule of Emperor Rudolf II, become a Mekka for alchemists and Rosicrucian adventurers. They included Heinrich Khunrath (c.1560-1605), the author of *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae*, the first edition of which was published in

[1] The most comprevensive accounts of early Rosicrucianism are: Arthur Edward Waite, *The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross*, London 1924; Hans Schick, *Das ältere Rosenkreuzertum*, Berlin 1942; Will-Erich Peuckert, *Das Rosenkreuz*, Berlin 1973 (and its version of 1928 entitled *Die Rosenkreutzer*, which is slightly different); Frances A. Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, London 1972; Christopher McIntosh, *The Rosy Cross unveiled*, Wellingborough 1980.

[2] Yates, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

Prague in 1598, John Dee (1527-1608) and Edward Kelley (1555-1597), well known for their "spirit actions" later published by Meric Casaubon, Martin Ruland (1532-1602), the author of *Lexicon alchymiae* (1571), and his son of the same name (1569-1611), Cornelis Drebbel (1572-1633), the Dutch inventor and alchemist, Oswald Croll (c.1560-1609), the German physician and Paracelsist, and Michael Maier (c.1568-1622), who is now especially remembered for his books illustrated with engravings of strange beauty which attempted to explore the secrets of alchemy in series of emblems, often accompanied by allegories, poems, and even music - as in his *Atalanta fugiens* (1618). Maier served Rudolf II as his personal physician and after his death went to serve Moritz landgrave of Hesse in the same way. He travelled extensively around Europe, where he had many contacts at the courts of German princes, and also visited England, where he may have visited Robert Fludd, though the main purpose of his stay there was to learn English in order to translate Samuel Norton's *Ordinal of alchemy* into Latin.[3] Michael Maier himself never pretended to be a member of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood but defended it fervently and even wrote down its laws in *Themis aurea* (1618) - a behaviour very typical for all the leading Rosicrucian authors.

As he was also involved in the political aspect of Rosicrucianism through his contacts with James I[4] and actual presence at the wedding of his daughter with Frederick V Elector Palatine of the Rhine[5] (whose brief reign as the "Winter King of Bohemia" was the main theme of Frances A. Yates's absorbing but controversial book *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*), it is no surprise that many modern authors see him as "the architect of the Rosicrucian Movement"[6] and Yates herself suggested that "the traditions of the court of Rudolph II in Prague were expanding into the Palatinate through Maier and his work".[7] In her view, these traditions stemmed originally from the influence of John Dee who visited Bohemia in 1585-1588 but it seems that it was very much overestimated.[8] Maier, at least, did not come to Prague before the late 1590's so could not meet Dee there, while his visit to England took place several years after Dee's death. Therefore, even if Frances A. Yates was partly right about the role John Dee played in initiating the Rosicrucian Movement, there must have been some intermidiary figure who would "pass on the torch".

The major work of Maier's - *Symbola aureae mensae* (1617) - presents twelve greatest adepts of twelve nations, most of whom are traditionally included in the alchemical areopagus:

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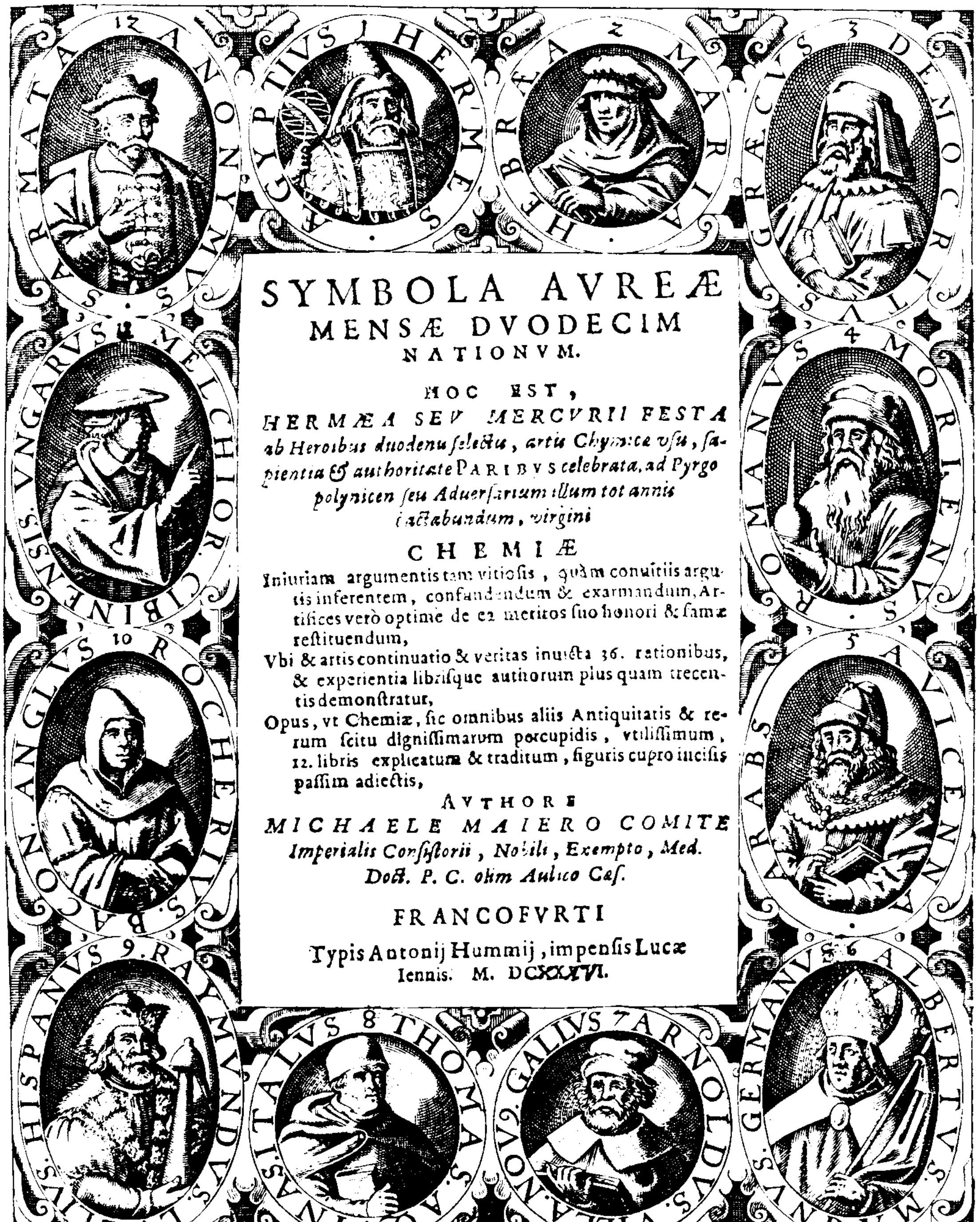
[3] Ron Heisler, "Michael Maier and England", *The Hermetic Journal*, 1989. Electronic version available at Adam McLean's *The alchemy web site and virtual library*, www.levity.com/alchemy/h_maier.html.
[4] Adam McLean, "A Rosicrucian Manuscript of Michael Maier", *The Hermetic Journal* 5 (Autumn 1979).
[5] Heisler, *op. cit.*
[6] Adam McLean , "Introduction" to his edition: *The Hermetic Garden of Daniel Stolcius*, trans. Patricia Tahil, Magnum Opus Hermetic Sourceworks No. 5, Edinburgh 1980.
[7] Yates, *op. cit.*, p. 231.
[8] Robert G. W. Evans, *The making of the Habsburg monarchy*, Oxford 1979, p. 355.

1. Hermes the Egyptian
2. Mary the Hebrew
3. Democritus the Greek
4. Morienus the Roman
5. Avicenna the Arab
6. Albertus Magnus the German
7. Arnoldus of Villanova the Gall
8. Thomas Aquinas the Italian
9. Raimundus Lullius the Spaniard
10. Roger Bacon the English
11. Melchior of Cibi the Hungarian
12. Anonymous the Sarmatian



SYMBOLA AVREÆ
MENSÆ DVODECIM
NATIONVM.

HOC EST,
HERMÆA SEV MERCVRII FESTA
ab Heroibus duodenis selectis, artis Chymicæ usu, sapientia & authoritate PARIBVS *celebrata, ad Pyrgo polynicen seu Aduersarium illum tot annis iactabundum, virgini*

CHEMIÆ

Iniuriam argumentis tam vitiosis, quàm conuitiis argutis inferentem, confundendum & exarmandum, Artifices verò optime de ea meritos suo honori & famæ restituendum,

Vbi & artis continuatio & veritas inuicta 36. rationibus, & experientia librisque authorum plus quam trecentis demonstratur,

Opus, vt Chemiæ, sic omnibus aliis Antiquitatis & rerum scitu dignissimarum percupidis, vtilissimum, 12. libris explicatum & traditum, figuris cupro incisis passim adiectis,

AVTHORE
MICHAELE MAIERO COMITE
Imperialis Consistorii, Nobili, Exempto, Med. Doct. P. C. olim Aulico Cæs.

FRANCOFVRTI
Typis Antonij Hummij, impensis Lucæ Iennis. M. DCXXXVI.

Title page of Michael Maier's *Symbola aureae mensae* with the portrait of "Anonymus Sarmata" in the top left corner.

The engraved title page shows twelve medallions with portraits of the *adepti* and there are also emblematic engravings presenting their teachings at the beginning of every part of the book. The most intriguing is obviously the last one, because he is not named. Sarmatia was the 17th century name for Poland, whose nobility was then believed to be descendants of the ancient Sarmatian tribes. It was widely used and even now "Sarmatism" is the name for certain typically Polish trends in Baroque literature and painting. Moreover, the anonymous adept is depicted - both on the title page and on the emblematic figure - in the traditional dress of Polish noblemen, so there is no doubt about his nationality. But Maier gives some additional clues: on page 555, just below the illustration of the Twelveth Adept, he says:

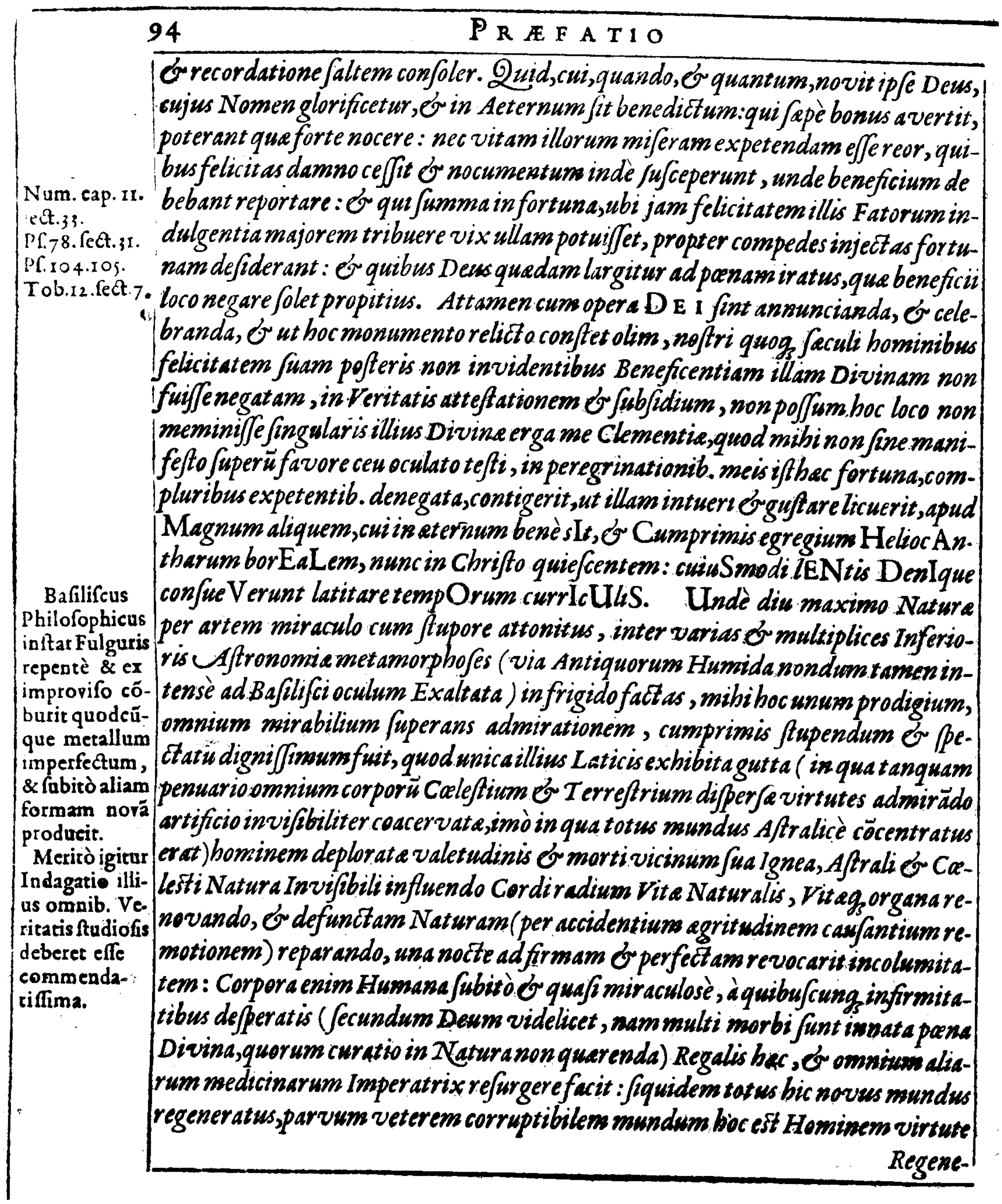
Symbolic engraving depicting "Anonymus Sarmata" and his teachings (from Michael Maier's *Symbola aureae mensae*).

> *I must bear testimony to* Heliocantharus Borealis [Glorifier of the Northern Sun]*, whose tincture of admirable potency I have seen myself - with my own eyes - projected on diverse metals, and all of them were converted into gold.*

And in a gloss on the margin next to the above, there is a further veiled remark:

M.S.
Os. Cr.
Heliocan-
tharus Bo-
realis à
Crollio di-
ctus.

The initials "M.S." must be those of the adept's real name, while "Os. Cr." and "Crollio" clearly refer to Oswald Croll, who lived in Prague from 1593 until his death in 1609 and thus must have been known personally to Maier. Frances A. Yates points out that Andrea Libavius (c.1560-1616) in his attack on Rosicrucians makes Croll the most prominent representative of this current of thought. On the other hand, two major books written by Croll were dedicated to Christian duke of Anhalt, "the master mind behind the Palatinate policy",[9] and Peter Vok of Rožmberk, whose brother had been John Dee's patron in Bohemia. Yates concludes that "Libavius might therefore be suggesting that the [Rosicrucian] manifestos belonged in an atmosphere congenial to Anhalt, an atmosphere in which influences from John Dee mingled with those of Croll".[10] And yet it was not Croll whom Maier made the greatest adept of his time, but one whom Croll called "Heliocantharus Borealis".



94 PRÆFATIO

& recordatione saltem consoler. Quid, cui, quando, & quantum, novit ipse Deus, cujus Nomen glorificetur, & in Aeternum sit benedictum: qui sæpè bonus avertit, poterant quæ forte nocere: nec vitam illorum miseram expetendam esse reor, quibus felicitas damno cessit & nocumentum indè susceperunt, unde beneficium debebant reportare: & qui summa in fortuna, ubi jam felicitatem illis Fatorum indulgentia majorem tribuere vix ullam potuisset, propter compedes injectas fortunam desiderant: & quibus Deus quædam largitur ad pœnam iratus, quæ beneficii loco negare solet propitius. Attamen cum opera DEI sint annuncianda, & celebranda, & ut hoc monumento relicto constet olim, nostri quoq; sæculi hominibus felicitatem suam posteris non invidentibus Beneficentiam illam Divinam non fuisse negatam, in Veritatis attestationem & subsidium, non possum hoc loco non meminisse singularis illius Divinæ erga me Clementiæ, quod mihi non sine manifesto superũ favore ceu oculato testi, in peregrinationib. meis isthæc fortuna, compluribus expetentib. denegata, contigerit, ut illam intueri & gustare licuerit, apud Magnum aliquem, cui in æternum benè sIt, & Cumprimis egregium HeliocAntharum borEaLem, nunc in Christo quiescentem: cuiuSmodi lENtis DenIque consueVerunt latitare tempOrum currIcUliS. Undè diu maximo Naturæ per artem miraculo cum stupore attonitus, inter varias & multiplices Inferioris Astronomiæ metamorphoses (via Antiquorum Humida nondum tamen intensè ad Basilisci oculum Exaltata) in frigido factas, mihi hoc unum prodigium, omnium mirabilium superans admirationem, cumprimis stupendum & spectatu dignissimum fuit, quod unica illius Laticis exhibita gutta (in qua tanquam penuario omnium corporũ Cælestium & Terrestrium dispersæ virtutes admirãdo artificio invisibiliter coacervatæ, imò in qua totus mundus Astralicè cõcentratus erat) hominem deploratæ valetudinis & morti vicinum sua Ignea, Astrali & Cælesti Natura Invisibili influendo Cordi radium Vitæ Naturalis, Vitæq; organa renovando, & defunctam Naturam (per accidentium ægritudinem causantium remotionem) reparando, una nocte ad firmam & perfectam revocarit incolumitatem: Corpora enim Humana subitò & quasi miraculosè, à quibuscunq; infirmitatibus desperatis (secundum Deum videlicet, nam multi morbi sunt innata pœna Divina, quorum curatio in Natura non quærenda) Regalis hæc, & omnium aliarum medicinarum Imperatrix resurgere facit: siquidem totus hic novus mundus regeneratus, parvum veterem corruptibilem mundum hoc est Hominem virtute Regene-

Num. cap. 11. sect. 33. Ps. 78. sect. 31. Ps. 104. 105. Tob. 12. sect. 7.

Basiliscus Philosophicus instar Fulguris repentè & ex improviso cõburit quodcũque metallum imperfectum, & subitò aliam formam novã producit. Meritò igitur Indagatio illius omnib. Veritatis studiosis deberet esse commendatissima.

Page from Oswald Croll's *Basilica chymica* with the name of Michael Sendivogius encoded with capital letters.

[9] Yates. *op. cit.*, p. 16.
[10] Ibid., p. 53.

Following Maier's clue, we find that Oswald Croll on page 94 of the preface to his celebrated *Basilica chymica* (1609) describes in a flowery and veiled style how he was "fortunate to witness with his own eyes what had been refused to others", and how he was shown various "metamorphoses of Inferior Astronomy" [i.e. alchemical transmutations] and other natural miracles by a man of great learning - Heliocantharus Borealis. His true name is not revealed - but looking at the original text, one is intrigued by several capital letters inside words which look like a cryptic message. Indeed, when read by themselves, they spell out the name of the adept so admired by Maier and Croll:

MICHAEL SENDIVOIUS

It is the name of the Polish alchemist Michał Sędziwój (1566-1636), better known under its Latinized version as Michael Sendivogius. It is interesting that in Croll's cryptogram the "G" is missing which indicates that he Latinized the Czech version of the name - Michal Sendivoj - by which he knew him in Prague.

The copper plates with symbolic engravings from Maier's *Symbola aureae mensae* were used again in *Viridarium chymicum* (1624) by Daniel Stolcius, but this time the Twelveth Adept's name was fully revealed as:

MICHAEL SENDIVOGIUS POLONUS

The picture is accompanied (as are all the emblems in this book) by a short poem:

Though this name in the past
Has been kept in oblivion,
Its praise now penetrates the darkness,
As it ought to be, indeed.

Prague in Bohemia
Has well acknowledged his works.
He has written twelve books
And taught accordingly.

He said: Saturn
Himself must water the earth
If it, dear sun and moon,
Shall bear your beautiful flowers.[11]

Stolcius was a graduate of the university in Prague, where he received the Bachelor's and Master's degrees for two theses dealing with astrology in 1618 and 1619, and in 1621 studied at Marburg.[12] He was a disciple of Maier[13] and certainly must have met Sendivogius personally, so his testimony is very important. Interestingly, the third line of the poem above in the original Latin contains the phrase "Fama e tenebris" which may be a hidden reference to *Fama Fraternitatis*.

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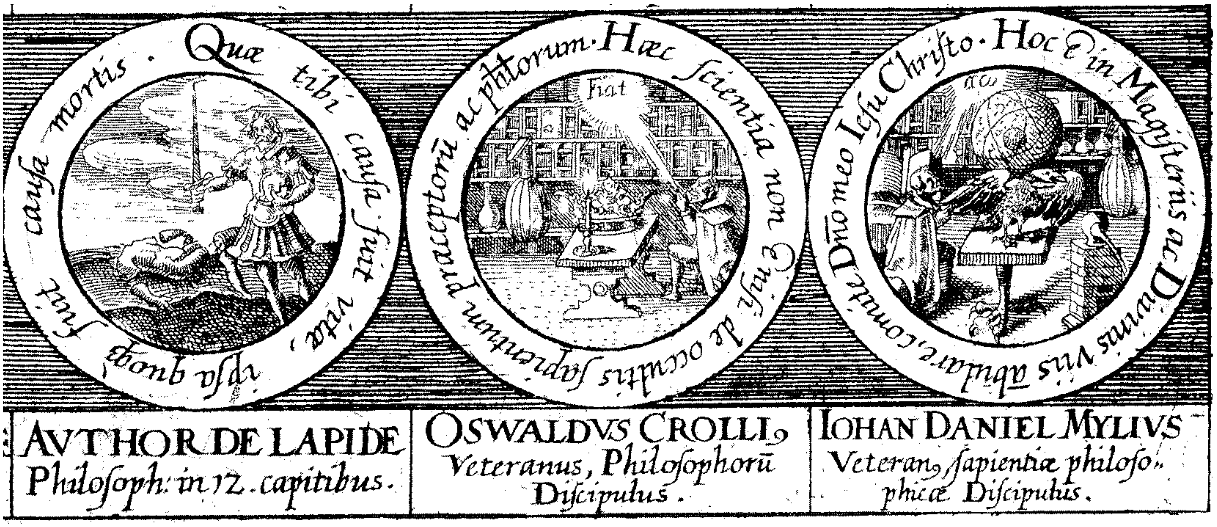
[11] The translation from Paul Allen (ed.), *A Christian Rosenkreutz Anthology*, Blauvelt 1981, p.461.
[12] John Read, *Prelude to chemistry*, London 1936, p. 314.
[13] *Ibid.* p. 255. See also Yates, *op. cit.*, p. 88-89.

Symbolic "seal" of "Anonymus Sarmata" (from Johann Daniel Mylius's *Opus medico-chymicum*).

Another catalogue of great adepts and alchemical authors was included in *Opus medico-chymicum* (1618) by Johann Daniel Mylius (1585-after 1628) as a series of 160 "Seals of the Philosophers", among whom there is also one for *ANONYMUS SAERMATA Chymicus.* The fact that the name "Sarmata" is misspelt may indicate that Mylius was not aware of its meaning and the alchemist's identity but simply incorporated Maier's list of 12 adepts into his own. The list of Mylius also starts with Hermes Trismegistos and ends - in a less humble way than Maier's – with his own name. The philosopher preceding him is twenty years older Oswald Croll - which clearly suggests that Mylius regarded him as his immediate predecessor and master. The one before Croll is *AUTHOR DE LAPIDE Philosophorum in 12. capitibus*, apparently Croll's teacher in this succession of philosophers - who can be none other than Michael Sendivogius, or Croll's and Maier's "Heliocantharus Borealis", whose most celebrated work *Novum lumen chymicum* was first published in Prague in 1604 under the title *De lapide philosophorum tractatus duodecim*.



The last three "seals of philosophers" in Johann Daniel Mylius's *Opus medico-chymicum*.

Daniel Stolcius used these engravings for his other book - *Hortulus hermeticus* (1627) - but the original order was slightly changed because the copper plates were cut into smaller sets.[14] This time he did not reveal the hidden name of the anonymous adept under either of his seals, presumably because he was asked not to do so and to comply with Sendivogius's wish to remain unknown - just as Croll and Maier did before him. The same attitude can be found in Arthur Dee's - the son of John Dee - *Fasciculus Chemicus* (first published in Paris in 1631). He makes it clear that he knows the author in question (perhaps even personally) but does not reveal his name when he writes:

> As for that clear water sought for by many found by few, yet obvious and profitable unto all, which is the base of the philosophers' work, a noble Polonian not more famous for his learning then subtlity of wit (not named, whose name notwithstanding a double Anagram hath betraied). In his Novum Lumen Chymicum, Parabola and Aenigma, and also in his tract on Sulphur, he hath spoken largely and freely enough; yea he hath expressed all things concerning it so plainly, that nothing could be more satisfactory to him that desireth more.[15]

An "Unknown Philosopher" is also mentioned in the writings of other alchemical authors of the early 17th century and it is almost certain that in most cases it is Michael Sendivogius who is hidden behind that name. In the second quarter of the 17th century, when Sendivogius's name became widely known, many more alchemists quoted him with great reverence, no longer keeping the secret. One of the more interesting testimonies - especially in the Rosicrucian context - is found in the poem by John Gladbury included in the Preface to *Sal, lumen & spiritus mundi philosophici* (London, 1657):

> Nor dare I without Sendivogius' Torch,
> Approximate you neerer then the Porch
> Lest I (presumptuous) should be gaz'd upon
> By those that have their Wedding-Garments on.[16]

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[14] Adam McLean, "Introduction", *op. cit.* The original arrangement of the seals is reproduced in Stanislas Klossowski de Rola, *The golden game. Alchemical engravings of the seventeenth century*, London 1988, p. 149.

[15] The London edition of 1650, p. 169. Quoted in Zbigniew Szydło, *Water which does not wet hands. The alchemy of Michael Sendivogius*, Warszawa 1994, p. 121.

[16] Quated in Zbigniew Szydło, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

The alusion is clearly to the *Chymical wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz* (1616) to which only those knowing the teachings of Sendivogius can be admitted, while others must stay in the porch of the church and thus cannot witness the ceremony.

John French (1616-1657), another English alchemist and the translator of Sendivogius's main works published as *A new light of alchymie* (London 1650), in the Preface to his famous *Art of distillation* (London 1651) quotes the Polish alchemist extensively, and calls him "the last of known philosophers" - thus following Maier, Stolcius and Mylius in granting him that eminent place in the succession of alchemical adepts. He completes the Preface with a statement which refers to the meaning of Heliocantharus Borealis or Glorifier of the Northern Sun - the name given to Sendivogius by Oswald Croll:

> I am of the same mind with Sendivogius that the fourth monarchy which is northern is dawning, in which (as the ancient philosophers did divine) all arts and sciences shall flourish, and greater and more things shall be discovered than in the three former. These monarchies the philosophers reckon not according to the more potent, but according to the corners of the world, whereof the northern is the last and, indeed, is no other than the Golden Age in which all tyranny, oppression, envy, and covetousness shall cease, when there shall be one prince and one people abounding with love and mercy, and flourishing in peace, which day I earnestly expect.[17]

The "fourth monarchy" or "Quartam Monarchiam" was an important political concept of the Rosicrucian *Fama* of 1614 but is earlier described at length in the Preface to the *Treatise on Sulphur* by Sendivogius (Cologne 1613) to which John French refers.

All of this evidence proves beyond any reasonable doubt that Michael Sendivogius was very highly regarded - even worshipped - by his contemporaries of the Rosicrucian period, and yet he is perhaps the most ill-treated and misrepresented figure in the history of alchemy. Most modern accounts of his life picture him as a charlatan and "puffer"[18], and most discussions of early Rosicrucianism do not even mention him.[19] One reason that may account for removing Sendivogius from the high place in the alchemical pantheon given to him by Michael Maier is certainly his obsession with secrecy, but it was the publication of a certain letter in 1655 which determined the attitude of most historians of alchemy towards the Polish alchemist for the next 300 years.

The letter in question,[20] dated 12th June 1651 from Warsaw, is one of the three known early biographies of Michael Sendivogius. It was written by Pierre Des Noyers de Lamotte (d. 1693) to a friend of Pierre Borel, who included it in his *Trésor de recherches et antiquités gauloises et françoises* (Paris 1655). Des Noyers was a secretary to Marie-Louise, the queen of Poland, and in 1658 was granted the rights of Polish nobility for his services to king John Casimir. The main purpose of his letter was to prove that Michael Sendivogius was not the author of *De lapide philosophorum* (*Novum lumen chymicum*) but acquired it - together with a small amount of alchemical tincture - from a mysterious Cosmopolite, whom he had helped to escape from prison in Saxony. That Cosmopolite, whose real name Des Noyers did not

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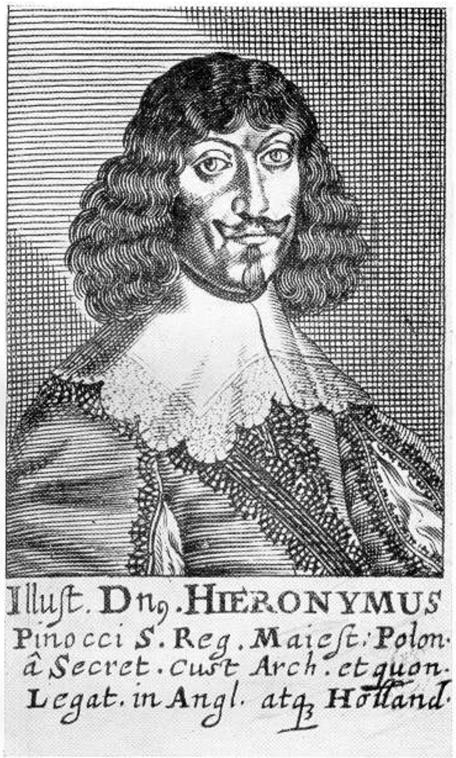
[17] Transcription at Adam McLean's Web site at http://www.levity.com/alchemy/jf_pref.html.
[18] See for example: Arthur Edward Waite, *Alchemists through the ages*, Blauvelt 1970; Jacques Sadoul, *Alchemists and gold*, tr. by Olga Sieveking, London 1972; Kenneth Rayner Johnson, *The Fulcanelli phenomenon*, Jersey 1980; Klossowski de Rola, *op. cit.*
[19] For example Yates, *op. cit.*, Waite, *op. cit.*, McIntosh, *op. cit.*
[20] An English translation of the main part of it can be found in Sadoul, *op. cit.*, p. 130-134.

know,[21] was later identified with the Scottish alchemist Alexander Seton, even though he is called "an Englishman" by both Des Noyers and another early biographer - Girolamo Pinocci. In the 17th century it was impossible for a well educated person - the royal secretary who had to deal with international politics all the time - to confuse the kingdoms of Scotland and England. This is an important point undermining the reliability of this source and, as we shall see, suggesting a totally different interpretation of the whole episode. Pierre Borel, the publisher of the letter, was not quite convinced, as he included another - probably earlier - biography of Sendivogius in the same volume*: Vita Sendivogii Poloni nobilis baronis* written by an anonymous German and based on the information obtained by him from Jan Budowski, a servant and companion of the alchemist. It presents an absolutely different picture of Sendivogius, one of an alchemical philosopher and adept possessing the Philosopher's Stone, performing numerous transmutations - but also clever enough to fake some of them, pretending that he was an ignorant in order to escape the attention of greedy princes. And yet it was dismissed by later historians of alchemy as unreliable.

The third of the early biographers - the already mentioned Girolamo Pinocci (1613-1676) - was a secretary to king John Casimir of Poland and a friend of Des Noyers. He was a man of great merit to Polish culture as the editor of the country's first newspaper, reorganiser of the Royal Chancellary, and collector of old manusripts.[22] His version of the alchemist's life was published in French in 1669 as *Lettre missive, contenant la vie de Sendivogius*[23] by Poliarco Micigno (an anagram of his name). It is obvious that Pinocci used the information of Des Noyers so the story is basically the same, though some facts - probably obtained by him from other sources - differ considerably and are mutually incompatible.



Portrait of Girolamo Pinocci.

[21] He says "I call him by this name because I was unable to discover his real name", *Ibid.*, p. 130.
[22] Karolina Targosz, *Hieronim Pinocci*, Warszawa 1967.
[23] As an appendix to *Les Oevvres du Cosmopolite*, Paris 1669. In 1683 a German translation was published in Hamburg as a separate print *Michael Sendivogii Leben* and differs in some details from the French version.

The authorship of *Novum lumen chymicum* is of crucial importance because of its later inormous influence, so I will briefly discuss some of the factual statements in Des Noyers's letter in the light of primary sources examined by Polish and Czech researchers, whose work remains practically unknown to their Western European and American colleagues. First of all we must note that there are very few verifiable facts given by him, even though the whole episode of the Cosmopolite's escape from prison is described in such amusing detail as:

> He [Sendivogius] went to the prison in a little carriage such as was used in that part of the country, and fetched the Cosmopolite, whom he had to carry out [...]. He insisted on going round by way of the house where his wife was living, because he wanted to take her with him; and when she came out he sent her back to find some of the powder that he had hidden, after which she made all speed to get into the coach.[24]

Writing half a century after the events which he purports to describe and which were not witnessed by anyone, Des Noyers certainly could not know these details and therefore most of his account is pure literary fiction. What he could know, on the other hand, is either lacking or wrong. As already mentioned, he does not know the real name of the Cosmopolite and makes him an Englishman - but he also does not know the name of the duke of Saxony who imprisoned him! The major facts that can be verified are the following:

1. "Michael Sendivogius, whom a Polish author accidentally listed among the Polish nobility, was a Moravian, born in Moravia but living in Cracow."[25]

This statement shows to what extent Des Noyers was misinformed. The Polish author whom he does not name was certainly Bartosz Paprocki (1543-1614), a prolific writer, often called the father of Polish and Czech genealogy because he wrote the earliest genealogical works about the nobility of both nations.[26] He did not, however, list the family of Michael Sendivogius in any of those books, as it was relatively unimportant. It was only after he had met Sendivogius personally that he dedicated one part of his history of the world - *Ogród królewski* [*The royal garden*] (1599) to the Polish alchemist. Instead of just a plain dedication he wrote a lengthy letter (15 pages *in quarto*) dated 16 August 1599 from Prague, preceded by a woodcut of Sendivogius's coat-of-arms and delineating the genealogy of his family which can be confirmed by Polish primary sources.[27] Even more importantly, in 1600 the Polish parliament (Seym) granted Sendivogius the right to alter his arms and issued a diploma signed by king Sigismund III Vasa and all senators of the Kingdom of Poland in which he is expressly identified as a Polish nobleman from the county of Czchów. Two copies of this entry in the Royal Metrica have been preserved.[28] Even many years later - in 1626 - when he was made Privy Counsellor to the emperor Ferdinand II, the nomination was formally confirmed at the castle court in Cracow and he was called a subject of the king of Poland.[29] In the records of a court case against him in Prague in 1599 - in which Oswald Croll was one of the witnesses - he is also called "polnische Herr" [Polish gentleman] and "polnische Herr

[24] Sadoul, *op. cit.*, p. 131.
[25] *Ibid.*
[26] Karel Krejčí, *Bartoloměj Paprocki z Hlohol a Paprocké Vůle. Život - dílo - forma a jazyk*, Praha 1946.
[27] Rafał T. Prinke, "Michał Sędziwój - pochodzenie, rodzina, herb", *Gens. Kwartalnik Towarzystwa Genealogiczno-Heraldycznego*, 1992, no. 4, p. 33-49.
[28] Transcription is available on my Web site at http://main.amu.edu.pl/~rafalp/HERM/SENDI/sedz-agd.htm. I am indebted to Jerzy Michta for allowing me to use it.
[29] The entry from the castle court records in Cracow was found by Roman Bugaj and published in his *Michał Sedziwój (1566-1636). Życie i pisma*, Warszawa 1968. p. 146-148. This book remains the fundamental and most comprehensive work on the life of Sendivogius.

Arzeney" [Polish gentleman Doctor].[30] Contemporary alchemical authors - including Michael Maier and Daniel Stolcius, both of whom knew him personally - and publishers of his treatises call him "Polonus" or "Sarmata". Thus there is no trace of doubt about his nationality and noble status.

Michael Sendivogius's coat-of-arms (from *Ogród królewski* by Bartosz Paprocki).

2. "After his [Seton's] death Sendivogius thought that the wife might know something of her husband's secret, so he married her in the hope of getting it out of her."[31]

There is no evidence that Michael Sendivogius married again after his first wife Veronica Stiebar died in 1599. We do know, however, that he was engaged to Anna Belvičova of Štampach at that time but the engagement was broken in 1605.[32] Girolamo Pinocci differs from Des Noyers on this point and says that Seton's widow became Sendivogius's lover. As usual, it seems that he had heard something, but the information was far from precise. The alchemist indeed had a lover in Cracow but she certainly was not Seton's widow. Walerian Nekanda Trepka, a Polish nobleman living near Cracow, who spent most of his life tracing people falsely pretending to be of noble status, wrote down all his findings during the years 1615-1640. His manuscript is an important source for the history of social relations and mentality of the 17th century Poles, but has no connection to alchemy and therefore is highly credible for us. The relevant fragment of it says:

[30] Bugaj, *op. cit.*, p. 93-94. These records were found by Bedřich Peška and used for his article "Pražský měštan a polský alchemista" [Prague burgher and Polish alchemist], *Světozor*, 1872, 40-42. They were re-examined by Roman Bugaj and discussed in his monograph.
[31] Sadoul, *op. cit.*, p. 132.
[32] Bugaj, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

> Rusino[w]ski was the name of a plebeian from Kazimierz near Cracow [...] He served Stanisław Dębieński in the county of Cracow for several years in 1630 and later. His sister was a whore for nearly twenty years to the alchemist Sendivogius who lived in Cracow beyond the gate of St. Anna until 1626. Later that Sendivogius went to Germany and lived there.[33]

Thus there is no place for marrying Seton's widow in the tight chronology of Sendivogius's relationships with women.

3. "On returning to Moravia he was arrested by a local nobleman [...] and was made a prisoner in the belief that he knew the secret. [...] [Sendivogius] cut through one of the bars on the window of his cell. Then he made a rope of all his clothes and escaped stark naked. He accused his captor to the emperor, who imposed a large fine and made him give a whole village to Sendivogius, one of whose daughters later had it as a marriage dowry."[34]

This episode is composed from elements of several independent events and shows how imprecise information Des Noyers had, and how he produced literary fiction from these. Josef Zukal - a Czech historian - analysed all available archival sources from the area and period in question and found no confirmation of Sendivogius's imprisonment in Moravia. He points out that an event like that could not have passed unnoticed in contemporary sources and tradition.[35] The accusation, court case, fine, giving a village to Sendivogius and then to his daughter - all would have been properly recorded. Most probably Des Noyers heard something about Sendivogius's imprisonment by Johann Heinrich von Mühlenfels in the castle of Neidlingen (during his visit at the court of Frederick, duke of Württemberg, in 1605), from which he indeed escaped. Both king Sigismund of Poland and emperor Rudolf reacted immediately and Mühlenfels was executed in Stuttgart in 1607. The court records were published by Christoph Gottlieb von Murr in 1805[36] and show that Sendivogius was given the Neidlingen estate by duke Frederick. It was not, however, the same estate which was held by his daughter as her marriage dowry - the villages of Kravaž and Kouty in Silesia - because that was given to Sendivogius by emperor Ferdinand II in 1630[37] and later passed on to her husband's family, the barons of Eichendorf.[38]

4. "On his return to Poland, Sendivogius protested to Wolski, the Grand Marshall of the Kingdom, that if he had the means to do the Work he could have made a similar powder. [...] The Grand Marshall, finding himself defrauded of 6,000 francs, told Sendivogius that he was a rogue and that if he wished he could have him hanged".[39]

Mikołaj Wolski (1553-1630) was a lifelong patron and friend of Sendivogius but he became the grand marshall of Poland only in 1616[40] while the events described here were supposed to take place shortly after the alchemist's return to Poland in 1606. Des Noyers suggests that Sendivogius defrauded Wolski's money but again we do not find any confirmation of this.

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33 Walerian Nekanda Trepka, *Liber generationis plebeanorum (Liber Chamorum)*, ed. Włodzimierz Dworzaczek et al., Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków 1963, p. 465-466. A new edition prepared by Rafał Leszczyński, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków 1995, p. 352.
34 Sadoul, *op. cit.*, p. 132-133.
35 Josef Zukal, "Alchymista Michal Sendivoj pánem na Kravařich a Koutech. Hlavně dle akt Zemského archivu opavského", *Věstnik Matice opavské věnovany kulturním a vědeckým potřebam slezským*, 1909, no. 17, p. 2. Quoted in Bugaj, *op. cit.*, p. 113.
36 Christoph Gottlieb von Murr, *Litterarische Nachrichten zu der Geschichte des sogennanten Goldmachens*, Leipzig 1805, p. 54-79.
37 Josef Zukal, *Slezské konfiskace 1620-1630*, Praha 1916, p. 116.
38 Christian Ritter d'Elvert, "Der Alchemist Sendivogius, der Gründer der freiherrlichen Familie Eichendorf in Mähren und Schlesien", *Notizen-Blatt der historisch-statistischen Section der kais. königl. mährisch-schlesischen Gesellschaft zur Beförderung des Ackerbaues, der Natur- und Landeskunde*, Brünn 1883, no. 3.
39 Sadoul, *op. cit.*, p. 133.
40 Antoni Gąsiorowski (ed.), *Urzędnicy centralni i nadworni Polski XIV-XVIII wieku. Spisy*, Kórnik 1992, p. 80.

Quite the contrary, Michael Sendivogius appears several times at the municipal court in Cracow as a plenipotentiary of Mikołaj Wolski, who wanted to buy a certain house in the town, as late as 1626.[41] It is difficult to assume that Wolski would allow someone who defrauded his money to represent him at court.

5. "Having worked unavailingly on the Cosmopolite's memoirs, he proposed publishing the book."[42]

The chronology of Des Noyers is obviously impossible: he made the Cosmopolite die in January of 1604, which was followed by Sendivogius's marriage to his widow, then his travels and extravagant life, then his attempts to produce the tincture and defrauding lots of money, then his charlatanry, and eventually publishing the Cosmopolite's treatise. But *De lapide philosophorum* had at least 2 editions in the year 1604 itself: in Prague and in Frankfurt (the edition without the place of printing was probably identical with that published in Prague).[43] Moreover, a copy which served J. B. Bruck of Rotenperk as the basis for his translation into Czech (completed in January of 1605) has a note made by him which says he received the book on 20th September 1604 from one Adamus Giskry Bielsky, a burgher of Prague New Town, who brought it from the Imperial Library in the castle of Krumlov.[44] Thus we can pinpoint the publication date to the first half of 1604 - and maybe even earlier - leaving no time for Sendivogius to even bring it to Prague, had he obtained it from the Cosmopolite's widow after their marriage.

6. "In the hope that it would be thought to be his own work, he introduced into it a certain number of words that he felt might persuade readers that he was the author [...] But he had not quite the effrontery to sign his name to it openly, so he made an anagram of it: *Autore me qui DIVI LESCHI GENUS AMO*."[45]

The logic of this statement is so strange that even Girolamo Pinocci, who otherwise repeated Des Noyers's story, found it difficult to believe: "I am of a different opinion. It would be a great absurdity to think so, when he himself [Sendivogius] through hiding his name intended to remain unknown".[46] It is important to note that Sendivogius did not dedicate his books to any rich patrons, princes or kings, as did most other authors of the time, which shows that he was financially and politically independent. At least 11 editions of this treatise printed before 1613 were anonymous when one entitled *Tripus Chymicus Sendivogianus* was published in Strasburg, still not revealing the author's full name. It was only in 1624 that Daniel Stolcius divulged the secret in *Viridarium chymicum* and - in the same year - Ortelius published in Erfurt his commentary entitled *Michaelis Sendivogi Poloni Lumen chymicum novum XII*. Later publishers did not take Des Noyers's fantasies seriously: out of 48 editions of *Novum lumen chymicum* before 1800 only one - printed in Hamburg and Leipzig in 1751 - was attributed to Alexander Seton. So we have the word of Des Noyers against that of a multitude of alchemical authors and publishers! Most importantly, Daniel Stolcius, living in Prague and certainly knowing all the gossips about Sendivogius,[47] wrote: "He has written twelve books

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[41] Stanisław Tomkowicz, *Przyczynki do historii kultury Krakowa w pierwszej połowie XVII wieku*, Lwów 1912, p. 277-280.
[42] Sadoul, *op. cit.*, p. 134.
[43] Bugaj, *op. cit.*, p. 284.
[44] This copy is bound together with Bruck of Rotenperk's translation now in the collection of the National Museum in Prague. The note is quoted in Bugaj, *op. cit.*, p. 112.
[45] Sadoul, p. 134.
[46] Poliarco Micigno*, Lettre missive, contenant la vie de Sendivogius*, p. 27. Quoted in Bugaj, *op. cit.*, p. 211.
[47] Roman Bugaj (*op. cit.*, p. 111) found records of a court case of 1604 in Prague against one Jindřich Krynger alias Želynsky, a servant of Piotr Tarnowski, who disseminated malicious gossips about Sendivogius. He was found guilty and had to apologise to the alchemist.

and taught accordingly" which should not leave any trace of doubt concernig the authorship of *De lapide philosophorum tractatus duodecim*.

7. "Sendivogius died during the year we arrived in Poland, that is in 1646, destitute, in poor health, and at a great age."[48]

Nothing can be more convincing about the unreliability of Des Noyers's information that this statement. Apart from the "great age" of Sendivogius, everything else can be proved wrong by many independent primary sources, of which I will only mention the most important. Extensive reaserch by Josef Zukal in court records of Silesia and Moravia[49] shows that Sendivogius is last mentioned as living on 20th May 1636, while on 12th August 1636 Maria Veronica "a daughter of the late Sendivogius", appeared at court and demanded 4000 ducats which the district of Opava owed to her father. In Cracow, where Sendivogius owned several houses, his inheritance was discussed by municipal court in 1637.[50] The date given by Des Noyers cannot be interpreted as a misprint because he is known to have arrived in Poland accompanying Marie-Louise Gonzaga, whose secretary he had been before, and she married king Ladislaus IV Vasa in 1646 (and later his brother John Casimir in 1649). This misinformation alone - an error of 10 years in dating an event closest to him in time - disqualifies the whole of his relation completely. As far as the financial situation of Michael Sendivogius at the end of his life is concerned, he owned the largest estate in the Krnov district, consisting of three villages, the value of which was estimated in 1636 to be worth 15,000 thalers.[51] He also had a house in Olomouc and several houses in Cracow. Before moving to Kravaž he had a residence outside the Cracow city walls consisting of two houses and a large garden, which he sold for 5000 florins in 1625 to Krystyna Grochowska who funded the building of a church and monastery for Reformed Franciscans there[52] (destroyed in 1655 during the Swedish war). This cottage can be seen on a large (over a meter long) panorama of Cracow engraved in 1619 by Matthaeus Merian (1593-1650), the well known illustrator of many alchemical emblem books.[53] Of his other houses in Cracow, the one at St. Thomas Street (also called Jewish Street), near St. Stephen's church, was known as "the house of Sendivogius" as late as the 19th century, and was eventually pulled down in 1908.[54] It is, therefore, evident that it was not Des Noyers who gives correct information, but the anonymous *Vita Sendivogii Poloni* printed together with it by Borel and dismissed as untrustworthy by later historians. The statement in the latter that Sendivogius lived like a prince in Kravaž, received visits and correspondence from learned men from the whole of Europe, is fully corroborated by primary sources. Similarly, the statement about his poor health is obviously exaggerated. Sendivogius travelled extensively until his last days - in December 1635 he went to the imperial court in Vienna, asked by the local parliament of Opava for help to lessen the obligations of the district. The records of the parliamentary sessions say that all previous attempts were fruitless but as "lord Sendivogius is in great favour of the Emperor [...] even one letter of lord Sendivogius would do more [...] than any other actions of our parliament",[55] which also shows his social status and political influence

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48 Sadoul, *op. cit.*, p. 134.
49 Zukal, "Alchymista Michal Sendivoj...", *op. cit.*
50 Ambroży Grabowski, *Starożytnicze wiadomości o Krakowie*, Kraków 1852, repr. Kraków 1985, p. 280.
51 Zukal, "Alchymista Michal Sendivoj...", *op. cit.*, p. 7.
52 Jan Pasiecznik, *Kościół i klasztor reformatów w Krakowie*, Kraków 1978, p. 17.
53 One copy of it is in the Czartoryskis' Museum in Cracow. Merian was also the author of another panorama of Cracow in 1638. See: Krystyna Dąbrowska-Budziło, *Wśród panoram Krakowa*, Kraków 1990, p. 120-122.
54 Adam Chmiel, *Szkice krakowskie*, Kraków 1939-1947, p. 188.
55 Zukal, "Alchymista Michal Sendivoj...", *op. cit.* Quoted in Bugaj, *op. cit.*, p. 154-155.

shortly before his death. It is possible that he suffered from attacks of gout, as reported by Constantin Schaum to Samuel Hartlib in 1655,[56] but otherwise was quite vigorous and well.

Having thus proved that the relation of Des Noyers - the only source of the standard and often repeated story - is totally unreliable, we can now move to the other element of it, the Scottish alchemist Alexander Seton. As already mentioned, Des Noyers did not know his Cosmopolite's name and called him an Englishman (followed in this by Girolamo Pinocci). Later authors identified the two individuals as the same person and added a few other transmutation stories as also performed by Seton. Curiously, however, historians of alchemy do not know anything about Seton prior to March of 1602, when he supposedly went to the Continent for the first time, while he is believed to have died on 1st January 1604. During that year and a half he travelled all around Europe, performed many transmutations, fell in love and got married, was imprisoned and tortured, escaped from prison, and eventually died in Cracow. The chronology is indeed very tight and it is obvious that many elements of the story were invented, especially as they are first told by late 17th and 18th century authors.

Some historians (Johann Joachim Becher, Christoph Gottlieb von Murr) tried to identify Alexander Seton with Alexander von Suchten, the chemist from Gdańsk/Danzig, but he died abount 1590,[57] so is out of question. Olaus Borrichius sugested he was really James Butler, a Scottish alchemist active during the reign of James I, which is much later than the accepted lifetime of Seton. Others proposed the Italian alchemist-magician Girolamo Scotto (Otakar Zachar, Włodzimierz Hubicki), but there is equally little to support this hypothesis. The most often quoted testimony of Johann Wolfgang von Dienheim, a professor of medicine at the university in Friburg, relating his meeting with Alexander Seton in 1603, was published in his *Medicina universalis* (Strasburg 1610). He descibed a transmutation performed by the Scottish alchemist in the presence of Jacob Zwinger, a professor from the university in Basel, whose own account of the same event was published by his great-grandson in 1690. The latter was found suspect by Włodzimierz Hubicki, who inspected the originals of Zwinger's letters and found out that one of them (the famous one addressed to Dr. Schobinger) was written in a different later hand.[58] Whether it is really so or not, there are other letters by and to Zwinger in which Seton is discussed, and one letter to the alchemist himself written in 1604. This would mean that he did not die on the first day of that year, as stated by Des Noyers. Moreover, Dienheim, writing shortly before 1610, says:

> Setonius and his servant also remain on this earth, the former is in Germany and the latter in England. I could even give their exact addresses, but this might cause them to be pestered by enquiries from people anxious to know how this great man has fared.[59]

Pinocci also states that Seton, after being rescued by Sendivogius, went to Germany. In order to make his information compatible with that of Des Noyers, he made Seton die there after a few months, after which Sendivogius contacted his widow, who became his lover.[60] Both versions are obviously just absurd literary fiction, but Seton's return to Germany can be further confirmed by an important primary source. On 18th March 1605 duke Frederick I of Württemberg issued a warrant in which he asked everyone to help his agent find a Scotsman

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[56] Ephemerides 1655 part 3, 29/5/29A-42B, *Hartlib Papers CD-ROM*, University of Sheffield 1995. I am indebted to Judith Crawford for references to Sendivogius in *Hartlib Papers*.
[57] Włodzimierz Hubicki, "Alexander von Suchten," *Sudhoffs Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin und der Naturwissenschaften*, 44 (1960), 54-63.
[58] Włodzimierz Hubicki, "The mystery of Alexander Seton, the Cosmopolite", *Proceedings of the XIV International Congress of the History of Science*, Tokyo-Kyoto, 1974, II, 397-400. I am indebted for this reference to Roman Bugaj and Zbigniew Szydło.
[59] Quoted in Sadoul, *op. cit.*, p. 122.
[60] Poliarco Micigno, *op. cit.*, p. 24. Quoted in Bugaj, *op. cit.*, p. 107-110.

calling himself Alexander Sydon or Sylon or Stuuart, who had showed him a transmutation in Stuttgart and promised to disclose alchemical secrets, but then disappeared with a considerable sum of money.[61] It is inconceivable that this important German prince with passionate interest in alchemy and occultism,[62] who obviously had his informants and spies at the courts of other rulers, would not have heard about the spectacular escape and death of Seton which is supposed to have taken place over a year earlier. What is especially interesting, however, Frederick had quite intensive correspondence with Michael Sendivogius in 1604 and 1605, persuading him to come to Stuttgart,[63] which is quite incompatible with the story told by Pierre Des Noyers. If Sendivogius's alchemical knowledge, the tincture he owned, and his main treatise all came from Alexander Seton, and Frederick had already found out that Seton was a cheater, why would he invite Sendivogius and give him the land estate and castle of Neidlingen? These two facts - the warrant and Frederick's correspondence with Sendivogius at the same time - actually appear to indicate that the whole episode of Seton's imprisonment by Christian of Saxony and escape with the help of Sendivogius may have been a product of Des Noyers's imagination or that of his informants. Or - and this is the most probable explanation - he mixed elements of stories he heard about various alchemists and produced one piece with a colourful romantic hero. Anyway, Seton was most certainly alive in 1605, and quite possibly also as late as 1610. This conclusion is further confirmed by Benedictus Nicolaus Peträus, very well informed on details of other alchemists' lives, who says that Alexander Seton, also known as Carnobe, was a friend of Michael Sendivogius and visited Andreae ab Habernfeld, an author of several alchemical works, in Zealand, before going back to England, where he spent the rest of his life in peace.[64] That the friendship of both alchemists - Seton and Sendivogius - started much earlier is also indicated by Friedrich Roth-Scholtz, the editor of collected works of Sendivogius, who planned to write his biography and collected information about him. Unfortunately, that biography was never published, but he stated elsewhere that they met for the first time at the university in Altdorf.[65]

All these conjectures about the identity of Alexander Seton and his relationship with Michael Sendivogius found quite unexpected clarification in the reasearch of Henryk Barycz on Jan Osmolski.[66] Osmolski (c. 1510-1593/1594) was quite rich and very well educated - which was typical for calvinist nobility in renaissance Poland - but for political reasons left Poland after the election of Stephen Bathori to the throne. He took with him the enormous sum of 80,000 thalers and settled down in Basle, where he attended public lectures at the university and made friends with its professors. His house soon became a center of informal university life and he became so popular and respected that Johann Nicolaus Stupanus, professor of mathematics, preceded a collection of physical and astronomical treatises published by him in 1577 with a lengthy and enthusiastic presentation of Osmolski as a great lover and patron of the arts and sciences, and later also dedicated to him the Latin translation of Machiavelli's works (1580). Theodore Zwinger, perhaps the most famous Basilean professor of the time, dedicated to Jan Osmolski the third volume of his monumental *Theatrum humanae vitae* (1586) and corresponded with him whenever Osmolski left Basle - as did Johann Jacob Grynaeus and Christian Wurstisen (who introduced Galileo to the idea of heliocentricity). At the same time Osmolski helped many Polish students financially, bringing them to Basel and sending to other universities. In 1578 he went to Poland, travelling via Friburg (where he was

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[61] This document was published by Fr. von Weech in *Zeitschrift für Geschichte des Oberrheins*, Bd. 26 (1874), p. 469. Its transcription can be found on my Web page at http://main.amu.edu.pl/~rafalp/HERM/SETON/fryd1.htm.
[62] Yates, *op. cit.*, p. 31-35; Bugaj, *op. cit.*, p. 114-117.
[63] Murr, *op. cit.*, p. 65; Christian Friedrich Sattler, *Geschichte des Herzogthums Würtenberg unter Regierung der Herzogen*, vol. V, Ulm-Stettin 1772, p. 268. Quoted in Bugaj, *op. cit.*, p. 118.
[64] Benedictus Nicolaus Peträus, preface to *Fr. Basilii Valentini Chymische Schriften*, Hamburg 1717, p. [37].
[65] Quoted in Bugaj, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
[66] Henryk Barycz, "Przyjaciel i protektor zagranicznych uczonych" [in his:] *W blaskach epoki odrodzenia*, Warszawa 1968, p. 141-160.

immatriculated at the university), Nuremberg and Prague (where he contacted emperor Rudolf II). After a short stay in his estate in Osmolice, he returned to Basle, taking with him his two nephews - Piotr and Adam Gorajskis - who were immatriculated at the university for the academic year 1579/1580. Professor Grynaeus dedicated to them his *Chronologia brevis evangelicae historiae* (published in March 1580), in the preface to which he glorifies their uncle as "the best and most generous patron of scholars". Osmolski's position in the university milieu was so high by then, that he was allowed to participate in the meetings of its senate as the only non-professor.

In 1585 he went to Poland again but on his way back the following year, he stayed in Nuremburg because of an illness and uncertain situation in Poland after the death of king Stephen Bathori. He wrote to his friends in Basel that he would soon return to his beloved city - but then he made an acquaintance which kept him in the capital of Frankonia for nearly five years - until at least April 1591. His new friend was none other than "Alexander Seton, a Scottish count", as he called him. Osmolski described his contacts with Seton in letters to professors Theodore Zwinger and Johann Jacob Grynaeus, some of which have fortunately survived and were studied by Henryk Barycz in the Basel University library.[67] Initially, as a stern calvinist, he did not hide his reserve towards the Scotsman's alchemical experiments, but later his scientific curiosity won and he wanted to learn more about the hermetic secrets. Seton, however, was very secretive, "did not allow a single accidental word to slip out of his mouth and always spoke like an oracle". Nevertheless, they were working together and soon became so well known that the city council of Nuremburg received them with great honours in the town hall. In the winter of 1586/1587 Alexander Seton performed a spectacular transmutation in the presence of margrave of Ansbach (who blew the bellows himself), count of Mansfeld, a local doctor, and Jan Osmolski. The result was changing, during less than two hours, of mercury into "purissimum aurum", as he enthusiastically reported in his letters to the friends in Basel. Later in 1587 Seton left Nuremburg and went to Danzig but they remained in contact through lively corespondence. These letters are not known but Osmolski says in others that he received several of them, in which Seton informed him about the political situation in Poland and that they were only "minimally magical".

Osmolski's letters are a very important source for many reasons. First of all, they prove that Alexander Seton did not appear out of nowhere, or left Scotland, in 1602, as he had already been travelling around Europe and performing transmutations almost twenty years earlier. It becomes clear why the transmutation performed at Basle in 1603 and later described by Johann Wolfgang von Dienheim took place in the presence of Jacob Zwinger - the son and successor of Theodore Zwinger - with whom Seton had a previously arranged appointement (as is evident from his story).[68] Jacob Zwinger had obviously known Jan Osmolski and was intrigued by his reports about Seton's transmutations. They must have corresponded for ten years or so before the Scottish alchemist came to Basel, so it is not unlikely that some of their letters are still waiting to be discovered. It also explains why Dienheim called him "quite elderly" (*maturus sane*) in 1603 and makes the romantic story of ravishing a pretty girl who fell in love with him in Munich and eventually marrying her rather unbelievable. As Osmolski - himself a learned man - stressed Seton's erudition and never said he was a young man, we may assume that in 1586 he must have been over thirty years old, and therefore was born about 1550 or even earlier.

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[67] Some of Osmolski's letters were published in Wotschke, *Der Briefwechsel der Schweizer mit den Polen*, Leipzig 1908, but not the ones concerning Seton.

[68] The partial English translation of Dienheim's relation in Jacques Sadoul, p. 121-122 is so corrupted that it hardly resembles the original. I am indebted for the unpublished translation from the original Latin to Roman Bugaj.

Another important lead is the fact that Jan Osmolski, who was childless himself, was the uncle of Piotr and Adam Gorajskis mentioned above, whom he took to Basle in 1579. Adam Gorajski (died 1602) remained in contact with the university there for many years and was the executioner of his uncle's will, who left his substantial library to professor Grynaeus and some donations to the university. His brother Piotr (died 1619) was greatly interested in alchemy and mining throughout his life, offering his services and inventions to king Sigismund III of Poland, emperor Rudolph II, elector of Brandenburg, and even the Republic of Venice.[69] As he said himself, he had spent 200,000 ducats on alchemical experiments, which shows how enthusiastic he was about it. A nephew of the two brothers - Marcjan Gorajski - was also an alchemist of some reputation. There is a manuscript in the British Library (Sloane 2083) which includes *Sequentia ex auditionibus Hermetis, descripta ex Libro D. Marciani Gorayski de Goray, Nobilis Poloni 1622*. The anonymous English author contacted him personally, as the following section of the same manuscript contains his notes "from the colloquium with the same Sir Gorayski de Goray".[70]

Returning to Michael Sendivogius, we may recall that the third part of *Ogród królewski* by Bartosz Paprocki was dedicated to him in 1599. The second part was ascribed to archduke Maximilian, the former candidate to the Polish throne whom both Paprocki and Osmolski had supported, while the first part (or actually the whole book) was dedicated to none other than Piotr Gorajski.[71] Paprocki glorifies the friendship between Sendivogius and Gorajski, who had "similar spiritual and heroic virtues" and "are like brothers". He also wrote a collection of short poems in Czech, some of which were again dedicated to Sendivogius, his sons, and his friend Ludvik Korálek of Těšín (*Jiná částka*, Prague 1598). He was so popular at that time that other poets also wrote panegyrics intended to gain the alchemist's sympathy. One of them was the court poet of emperor Rudolf II - Georg Carolides of Karlsperk (1579-1612) - who published a collection of poems dedicated to the elder son of Sendivogius entitled *Praecepta institutionis generosae indolis, jambico dimetro conscripta ad Illustrissimi et Magnanimi Herois, Domini Michaelis Sendivogii, de Skorsko et Lukovisze Lib. Baronis filium primogenitum Christophorum Michaelem Sendivogium* (Prague 1598), which included a number of shorter pieces ascribed to other members of Michael Sendivogius's family - his uncles and cousins - as well as the brothers Adam and Piotr Gorajskis, thus confirming Paprocki's statement about their great friendship.

Putting together all these pieces of our puzzle known so far, it seems that Jan Osmolski, after his contacts with Seton in Nuremburg in 1586 and 1587, and later correspondence, was so impressed that he wanted his nephews to learn alchemy from the Scottish adept and sent them to the university in Altdorf near Nuremburg (founded by Rudolf II in 1578) where other known alchemists also studied, including Michael Maier and Ludvik Korálek.[72] As Seton had been so well received there earlier, he certainly visited Nuremburg again and met with the Gorajskis. Michael Sendivogius was immatriculated there in 1594, already called a courtier of emperor Rudolf II, but he may have stayed in Altdorf or Nuremburg earlier. As alchemy was not officially taught at universities, it was customary for people interested in it to meet informally at those centres of learning. We find a further confirmation of Sendivogius's longer stay in the area of Nuremburg in the elegy of Joannes Chorinnus (Chorinský) on the death of the alchemist's wife on 23rd October 1599, entitled *Illustris foeminae D. Dn. Veronicae Stiberiae é nobiliss. familia apud Francos oriunde, ilustris: D. D. Michaelis Christophori Sendivogij de Skorsko et Lukovicze L. B. Serenis: Regis Poloniae Secretarii conjugis*

69 Halina Heitzmanowa, "Żywot człowieka poczciwego. Piotr Gorajski", *Teki Historyczne*, vol. III, 1949, p. 156-184.
70 Stanisław Kot, "Anglo-Polonica", *Nauka Polska*, vol. XX, p. 94-96.
71 Krejči, *op. cit.*, p. 193.
72 Elias von Steinmeyer (ed.), *Die Matrikel der Universität Altdorf*, vol. I, Würzburg 1912. Quoted in Bugaj, *op. cit.*, p. 68-69.

desideratissime. Paprocki also mentions her in *Ogród królewski* as "Veronika s Tyberin from Frankonia" but no other details about her family have been known so far. Fortunately, the Polish heraldic author included a small woodcut illustration of her coat-of-arms which allowed me to identify her as a member of the Stiebar von Buttenheim family.[73] The Stiebars were one of the oldest families of Frankonian nobility, known as early as the 13th century and holding large estates in the area of Nuremburg (including at least three castles). It is surprising how she could marry a comparatively poor Polish gentleman - unless the story of ravishing his beloved attributed to Seton was an echo of a similar feat of Sendivogius. The particulars of this marriage need further elucidation, but it is evident that part of the very high social position of Sendivogius from the very beginning of his stay in Prague was connected with it. The elder of their two known sons was born in 1594 so if we allow for a period of the couple's acquaintance and engagement, and assume that Christoph Michael was not conceived immediately after the wedding or was not the first child (taking into account high infant mortality), we may date the marriage even back to 1590. Actually, in that year he was immatriculated at the university of Leipzig,[74] which is not far away, but only for the winter semester. This would mean that he lived in the area of Nuremburg and Altdorf long enough to meet Michael Maier (who studied at Altdorf in 1589 and received his M.A. degree in Frankfurt a. d. Oder in 1591) and Alexander Seton, as reported by Friedrich Roth-Scholtz. Moreover, Sendivogius may well have been one of Jan Osmolski's protegees (of whom there were many), which would explain both his early meeting with Seton and close friendship with Piotr Gorajski. Interestingly, Sendivogius's arrival at Prague is dated to 1594 - according to his own testimony at a later court case - which is the year of Osmolski's death.

Roth-Scholtz informs us further that during his studies in Leipzig (1590), Sendivogius made friends with two professors of that university: Joachim Tancke, who later included Sendivogius's treatise in his *Promptuarium alchemiae* (1614), and Johann Thölde, publisher and possible author of the alchemical treatises attributed to Basilius Valentinus.[75] It was the home town of Heinrich Khunrath, so he most probably stayed there after receiving his degree at Basel in 1588 (where he studied under Theodor Zwinger!).[76] Two years earlier - in 1586 - John Dee and Edward Kelley went to Leipzig for a short visit of about a week.[77]

The continental adventures of the two Englishmen are quite well known from Dee's diaries until his return home in 1588, but the later spectacular career and equally spectacular fall of Edward Kelley has not been adequately researched yet.[78] Some Czech records were found by the journalist Josef Svátek in the 19th century and incorporated in his books.[79] Unfortunately, he did not give precise references for particular facts - just indicating which archival collections he had used. Nevertheless, it is quite trustworthy for detailed information whenever it is not derived from earlier authors, as indicated by Otakar Zachar - the most scholarly of Czech historians of alchemy - in his lengthy review of that book, which he calls "a great step foreward in comparison to earlier works on the subject".[80]

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[73] Ernst Heinrich Kneschke, *Neuses allgemeines Deutsches Adels-Lexicon*, vol. 9, Leipzig 1870, p. 36-38
[74] Stanisław Tomkowicz, *Metrica nec non liber nationis Polonicae universitatis Lipsiensis ab anno 1409 - usque ad 1600*, Kraków 1881, p. 29.
[75] Quoted in Bugaj, *op. cit.*, p. 65.
[76] Carlos Gilly, *Johann Valentin Andreae 1586-1986. Die Manifeste der Rosenkreuzerbruderschaft. Katalog einer Ausstellung in der Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica*, Amsterdam 1986, p. 33.
[77] Meric Casaubon (ed.), *A true and faithful relation...*, London 1659, p. 421[misprinted as 417]-423. Modern fascimile edition by Clay Holden, New York 1992. See also the itinerary of their continental journeys on my Web pages at http://main.amu.edu.pl/~rafalp/HERM/DEE/dee-tab.htm.
[78] The fullest account remains that in Charlotte Fell-Smith, *John Dee (1527-1608)*, London 1909.
[79] Josef Svátek, *Culturhistorische Bilder aus Böhmen*, Wien 1879, and its expanded version in Czech *Obrazy z kulturních dějin český*, Praha 1891.
[80] Otakar Zachar, "Rudolf II. a alchymisté", *Časopis Musea Královstvi Českého*, LXXXVI, 1912, p. 417-424 and LXXXVII, 1913, p. 148-257.

It is known that during their stay in Třeboň, Dee did not travel much, while Kelley often went to Prague and Cracow. After the former's departure, he was ennobled by Rudolf II in 1588 and received Czech citizenship in August 1589. His unwearying patron Vilém of Rožmberk (1535-1592) gave him substantial land realty: the castle of Libeřice and the estate of Novy Libeň near Jílové with adhering areas. The formal deed of the transaction, seen by Josef Svátek, was sign on 12th April 1590 in the Rožmberk Palace in Prague. Kelley then bought a town estate called Fumberk in Jilove, which consisted of a large house, brewery, mill and a few smaller buildings, as well as the Kopovský house in Prague, where he lived with his family for some time.[81] His downfall began at the end of April 1591 when he killed Jiří Hunkler in a duel - which was expressly forbidden by the emperor. At first he was kept under house arrest together with his family and servants, and then was imprisoned in the Chuderky tower in Křivoklát. Svátek quotes a letter from the imperial bailiff Hayden to the commander of the Prague castle dated 8th February 1592, in which he is instructed to find out from Kelley how to prepare "the tincture for precious stones" and how to make *aurum potabile*.[82] It is not certain if he escaped from the tower and broke his leg, as the often repeated story goes. Nevertheless, he was released somehow and regained his estate, as in 1594 he is recorded as owing money to someone in Prague - and that was the year when we know Michael Sendivogius and Piotr Gorajski arrived in Prague. According to Josef Svátek, Kelley met Sendivogius in Germany in 1590, when he was travelling to Poland. As we have seen above, the Polish alchemist studied there in that year. Kelley had earlier visited Leipzig, so could go there in 1590 again - especially as there lived several famous alchemists. It is certainly going too far to suggest that he visited Alexander Seton in Nuremburg and met Sendivogius through him, but it is not an impossible hypothesis at all.

Before coming to Prague itself, Sendivogius and his family stayed at one of Kelley's houses in Jilove. Probably Piotr Gorajski was with him, because the town was famous for its gold mines and the mint, in which both of them were interested throughout their lives. Svátek gives the reason of Kelley's invitation as his unwillingness to let Sendivogius access to the imperial court because he might take his place there, but that must be his own literary elaboration.[83]

The years 1594-1599 in the life of Michael Sendivogius are exceptionally well documented with primary sources. Ironically, the bulk of these come from the court case in which Sendivogius was accused of poisoning Ludvik Korálek by his sisters. It was held before the municipal court in Prague and there were many witnesses audited, including Sendivogius himself. These court records were first discovered by Bedřich Peška before 1872 and investigated again by Roman Bugaj for his monograph published in 1968.[84]

When the whole party arrived in Prague in 1594, they stayed initially at the inn At Three Feathers (U Tři Per) in Coal Market (Uhelný Trh), identified by Peška as "the house with arcades", now house number 9.[85] Then Sendivogius fell ill and contacted the Prague Old Town farmacist Mikulaš Lev of Lövenštejn, who was so impressed by his medical and alchemical competence that invited him to his own house near the church of St. Nicolaus. Sendivogius stayed there with his family and servants for several weeks. Through this new acquaintance he met Václav Lavin of Ottenfeld in Moravia, a doctor of medicine, personal

[81] *Ibid.*, p. 422-423.
[82] *Ibid.*, p. 423.
[83] *Ibid.*, p. 244.
[84] The following account is based on Bugaj, *op. cit.*, p. 82-97. He found errors in Peška's publication on comparing it to the original records.
[85] Martin Stejskal, *The Secrets of Magic Prague*, Prague 1997, p. 57-58. I am indebted to Michal Pober for this reference.

physician of Vilém of Rožmberk,[86] and author of an alchemical treatise entitled *Tractatus de coelo terrestri*,[87] who in turn introduced him to Ludvik Korálek of Těšín, a rich merchant and great lover of alchemy. Korálek had a large library of alchemical books and his own laboratory, in which he worked with several friends - including Jan Kapr of Kapršteјn, doctor of law and councillor of Rudolf II - and even employed special assistants. Sendivogius was soon admitted to participate in their experiments and became the teacher of the group.

The most intriguing part of these court records are the testimonies of all those Korálek's friends who said that Sendivogius performed successful transmutations of base metals into silver. Mikulaš Lev reported that he had some white and red powders which he used for curing people and with which he saved the life of Lev's son. Sendivogius gave him a little of the white powder with which he performed a transmutation of mercury into silver himself. Later, at Korálek's laboratory, another transmutation was performed by Sendivogius - this time an iron nail and a screw drawn out of the wall were smeared with some liquid and held for a while over the fire. They were afterwards examined by Jan Kapr and found to be of pure silver. The Polish alchemist stressed it that he had not prepared the tinctures himself but was given some amount by his "*praeceptor* from Egypt". This statement was clearly a means to prevent possible attempts of the greedy to learn the secret from him by force. It shows, however, that Sendivogius performed public transmutations as early as 1595, nearly ten years before he was supposed to obtain the tincture from Alexander Seton's widow, as told by Des Noyers.

Korálek let Sendivogius an appartment for 100 thalers in a house at St. Stephen's street in Prague New Town which he owned, and the Polish alchemist organised his own laboratory there. At about the same time Edward Kelley, at whose estate in Jilove Sendivogius also had a house leased to him, was arrested in his cottage in Novy Libeň, where he worked on his alchemical treatises. In November 1596 he was sent to state prison in Most, while his wife was offered 900 thalers and a hiding in a monastery in Prague. She refused and moved to Most, to be close to her husband. A year later, on 1st November 1597, he attempted to escape but was soon caught and brought back to prison, where he died in the presence of his wife and daughter - or rather step-daughter, Elizabeth Jane Weston (Westonia).[88] His death was described by Šimon Tadeáš Budek of Falkenberk in his manuscript, containing notes of various current events connected with alchemy at the court of Rudolf II, which was examined by Svátek .[89]

As Sendivogius was living partly in Jilove when Joan (Jane) Kelley and Westonia stayed in Most, he had to be in touch with them - at least to pay his rent. It is therefore quite possible that he had his hand in Kelley's escape from prison. Would this be the real source of the Seton affair, about which we have no reliable sources? And there is more to it than that. After the death of Edward Kelley, Sendivogius borrowed a large sum of money - 5,695 Meissen marks - from Ludvik Korálek and bought the Fumberk estate in Jilove from the widowed Joan Kelley. Thus we have all the elements of the story: an imprisoned Englishman (this

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[86] Vladislav Zadrobílek (ed.), *Opus magnum. Kniha o sakrálni geometrii, alchymii, magii, astrologii, kabale a tajných společnostech v Českých zemích*, Praha 1997, p. 55.
[87] I found it quoted in "Aurum superius & inferius. Aurae superioris & inferioris hermeticum" by Christian Adolph Balduin, included in *Miscellanea Curiosa Medico-Physica Academiae Naturae Curiosorum*, vol. 4-5, Frankfurt-Leipzig 1688, Appendix p. 105. A French translation was later published by Jean Maugin de Richenbourg in vol. 4 of his collection *Bibliotheque des philosophes chimiques*, Paris 1740-54.
[88] The relationship between the poet Westonia and Lady Kelley is discussed in Susan E. Bassnett, "Revising a biography: A new interpretation of the life of Elizabeth Jane Weston (Westonia), based on her autobiographical poem on the occassion of the death of her mother", *Cahiers Elisabéthains* 37 (1990), p. 1-8, and Louise Schleiner, "Elizabeth Weston, alchemist's step-daughter and published poet", *Cauda Pavonis*, New Series vol. 10, no. 2 (Fall 1991), p. 8-16.
[89] Zachar, *op. cit.*, p. 424 and 255.

nationality was ascribed to the Cosmopolite by both Pierre Des Noyers and Girolamo Pinocci), his escape and death, and Sendivogius's dealings with his widow - all confirmed by primary sources.

The fact that early biographies of various alchemists often follow the same pattern was observed by many serious researchers. John Read wrote:

> [...] at the opening of the seventeenth century, came an even more detailed and circumstantial account of the alchemical odyssey of Alexander Seton, the so-called "Cosmopolite," whose meteor-like career is said to have ended in tragedy at Cracow in 1604. The verisimilous accounts of successful transmutations in the Setonian epic are closely analogous to those occuring in the narratives of van Helmont and Helvetius, later in the seventeenth century; these, in turn, are reminiscent in some respects of the equally circumstantian account (written in the first person) of the much earlier transmutations alleged to have been accomplished by Nicolas Flamel [...]. All such gold-making episodes are deeply tinged with an element of fantasy, and contribute little to a realistic visualisation of the operations and environment of an alchemist at work.[90]

Otakar Zachar wrote a very well researched biography of Sendivogius which he presented to the Royal Society of Sciences in Prague in 1911 and announced as being at the printers in 1913,[91] but unfortunately it seems that it has never been printed. Roman Bugaj tried to find it in Czech libraries and in the collection of Zachar's manuscripts at the National Museum in Prague but without success.[92] In his article about alchemy at the court of Rudolf II, Zachar wrote:

> I have elucidated the entangled identities of Seton, Cosmopolite and Scotto, about whom no certain information can be found, in the same biography of M. Sendivogius. I consider them to be compound names used as aliases for other alchemists.[93]

The fame of Sendivogius quickly spread around Prague because of his alchemical knowledge and the transmutations he performed. He soon bacame the leading figure in the Korálek's circle and most probably also worked with the greatest Czech alchemist, Bavor the Younger Rodovský of Hustiřany (1526- abt. 1600), who lived at Bosácek in Prague New Town at that time, and later worked in the castle of Jan Zbynek Zajíc of Hazmburk in Budyně (d. 1616), to whom he dedicated some treatises.[94] Jan Zajíc was a magnate, a friend and political ally of Vilém of Rožmberk (earlier patron of Rodovský, as well as of Dee and Kelley), who also wrote two alchemical treatises himself.[95] Interestingly, it was at his castle where Bartosz Paprocki lived and wrote the book dedicated to Piotr Gorajski and Michael Sendivogius, while his other works were dedicated also to Jan Zbynek Zajíc and Vilém of Rožmberk.[96] Roman Bugaj made an in-depth comparative analysis of the manuscript treatises of Rodovský and those of Sendivogius, arriving at the conclusion that the latter was clearly influenced by

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[90] John Read, *The alchemist in life, literature and art.*, London 1947, p. 26.
[91] Zachar, *op. cit.*, p. 244.
[92] Roman Bugaj, personal communication.
[93] Zachar, p. 245.
[94] Otakar Zachar, "Z dějin alchymie v Čechach", *Časopis Musea Královstvi Českého*, LXXIII, 1899, p. 244. On Bavor Rodovský see *Ibid. passim*, and also Vladimír Kuncitr, "Alchymie v Česých zemích" [in:] Zadrobílek, *op. cit.*, p. 60-62 (English translation on p. 279 of the same).
[95] Now in the library of the National Museum in Prague.
[96] Krejči, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

the former, especially by *Řeči filosofské* and his Czech translation of a treatise by Bernard of Treviso, whose vision may have inspired Sendivogius's *Aenigma philosophicum*.[97]

There is, indeed, source confirmation of Sendivogius's stay in Budyně in the Prague court records. Ludvik Korálek wanted him to come back to Prague and sent Jan Kapr of Kaprštejn with a letter and a gold chain as a present. He did not find Sendivogius there, however, as the alchemist "had left with the duke of Braunschweig". It is also recorded that earlier, in 1597, he went to Saxony at the invitation of duke Christian II - the same who is said to have imprisoned Alexander Seton six years later.[98] At about the same time - in 1598 - he was made Privy Councillor by emperor Rudolf II, while in the records of 1599 he is styled "truksas of His Imperial Majesty" (i.e. a person allowed to sit at the table with the emperor) and "volny pan" ("free lord" or baron), both of which titles must have been granted to him by Rudolf II, as well as "secretary to the king of Poland". Such close association with so many monarchs - and there certainly were others - made him one of the most important and influential persons in Prague in the last years of the 16th century.

It is usually stated that he performed the famous transmutation in the presence of Rudolf II in 1604 with the Seton's powder. Pierre Des Noyers reports that the emperor was so impressed that "he ordered a marble plaque to be set into the wall of the room where the experiment was conducted, with the following words engraved on it:

> Faciat hoc quispiam alius
> quod fecit Sendivogius Polonus.[99]

which means:

> Let anyone else do
> What Sendivogius the Pole has done.

He also says that he saw it still in place in 1650, even though this statement undermines the logic of his relation. If the Seton story had been true, either Rudolf II or the succeeding emperors would have found out the truth (especially as Des Noyers could learn about it during his short stay in Prague) and removed it. Not only did not they do it, but they continued to esteem Sendivogius and use his services. Roman Bugaj tried to find out what had happened to that plaque while doing research on Sendivogius in Prague in 1962 and 1963 but no one knew anything. He concluded that it must have been removed in 1757 and placed along with other objects from Rudolf's collection in the basements of the castle, and in 1782 thrown into the Stag Moat where it may still be.[100]

The known facts clearly indicate that the transmutation in the Prague Castle must have taken place between 1595 and 1598, which explains the great admiration for Michael Sendivogius expressed by everyone - from the members of Korálek's circle, through Paprocki and other poets, to the magnates and princes interested in alchemy, and Rudolf II himself. That admiration was not expressed with words only. When Sendivogius did not manage to pay his debt back to Korálek during two years (as initially agreed), Piotr Gorajski wanted to pay the remaining 2,000 Meissen marks for him but Korálek refused, saying that he can wait. After his death, when Korálek's family demanded the money at the court, it was Jan Zbynek Zajíc

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[97] Bugaj, *op. cit.*, p. 84, 214-215, and 233
[98] Bugaj, *op. cit.*, p. 84.
[99] Sadoul, *op. cit.*, p. 132.
[100] Bugaj, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

who paid it immediately so that Sendivogius could be set free and return to his laboratory.[101] It was at the same process in 1599 that Oswald Croll appeared as a witness defending Sendivogius against the accusations of poisoning Korálek. He testified that after everyone - including himself - left Korálek as an incurable case (actually, he was an alcoholic), "the Polish doctor" stayed with him to the end and was very helpful to him in his last moments.[102]

Korálek's alchemical circle with Rodovský, Sendivogius and Croll (who lived in Prague from 1593 until his death in 1609), and possibly Heinrich Khunrath (the first edition of his *Amphitheatrum* was published in Prague in 1598), may be seen as the nucleus of the informal "Prague Alchemical Society", later joined by Michael Maier (who was a courtier of Rudolf II from before 1600 till 1601 and then his physician from 1608 till the emperor's death in 1612), Martin Ruland the Elder (also appointed Rudolf's physician in 1607), Cornelis Drebbel (invited to Prague in 1610, left it in 1612 to return again later as a tutor of emperor Ferdinand II's sons), and the young Daniel Stolcius. All of those esteemed alchemical authors admired Sendivogius as their master and a true adept, whose wish to remain unknown was carefully observed by them. It may be added to what has already been said that Martin Ruland the Elder published one of the earliest editions of *Cosmopolitani novum lumen chymicum* in Frankfurt ("curis Ruhlandi apud Palthenium 1606"),[103] without revealing his true identity and certainly with his approval. The contacts of Drebbel with Sendivogius were presented by Zbigniew Szydło in his recent book,[104] where he also discusses at length the Polish alchemist's theory from the chemical point of view, as well as its influence on the history of science. Edward Kelley's step-daughter Elizabeth Jane Weston or Westonia appears to have been their "muse" as her poem dedicated to Oswald Croll is included in the latter's *Basilica chymica* (1609).

We have thus returned to the early 17th century Prague with a much better understanding - supported by primary sources - of the position Michael Sendivogius held in the alchemical milieu there, which proves to be quite different from what most books in English tell us. Unfortunately, the old story is still copied not only by popular or "inspired" books of passing interest, but also by such scholarly and well researched works as *The golden game* by Stanislas Klossowski de Rola. This truly magnificent book will certainly be one of the most important reference works for the future generations of alchemical scholars, so it is so much more a pity that it will fix the unjust and historically wrong picture of Sendivogius.[105] The author further amplifies his justification for including that story by the following statement about the twelveth adepts in Maier's *Symbola aureae mensae*:

> [...] the roster is ironically completed by the presence of an Anonymous Sarmatian. The latter's anonymity has not deterred the artist from providing us with two likenesses; the one on the title-page differs in every way from the other in the text.[106]

This opinion is highly exaggerated, not to say wrong, as the two likenesses are quite similar and obviously depict the same person. Moreover, they are the most naturalistic of the whole set of twelve. There exist two other portraits of Michael Sendivogius. One is the engraved frontispiece to the Nuremburg edition of *Novum lumen chymicum* of 1766 which was engraved by J. C. Reinsperger in 1763 from an oil painiting in the bedroom of "a certain prince of the Holy Roman Empire" and represents a true effigy of "*Nobilis Illius Poloni et*

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[101] Bugaj, *op. cit.*, p. 85 and 96.
[102] The full text of Croll's testimony is quoted in Bugaj, *op. cit.*, p. 92-94.
[103] The bibliography of Sendivogius's works in Bugaj, *op. cit.*, p. 285.
[104] Szydło, *op. cit.*
[105] Klossowski de Rola, *op. cit.*, p. 116.
[106] *Ibid.*, p. 114.

Praeclari Philosophi Hermetici Michaelis Sendivogij". The other one was discovered by Roman Bugaj in the library of Warsaw University and is a line drawing executed about 1630 which shows Sendivogius in old age.[107] Even though all those portraits were produced at different times and in different artistic techniques, certain similarities of facial features are clearly discernible.

Portrait of Michael Sendivogius from the title page of Michael Maier's *Symbola aureae mensae*.

Portrait of Michael Sendivogius in his late years (from a manuscript in the University Library in Warsaw).

[107] Bugaj, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

What I have presented above is just a small fragment of what is known about Michael Sendivogius and is directly relevant to his life and position in Rudolfine Prague. I have not dealt with his earlier extensive journeys to many European universities, his diplomatic missions to Constantinople and Moscow, his work as as a mining engineer and manager for Mikołaj Wolski in Poland and for emperor Ferdinand II in Silesia, the other transmutations he performed (including the famous one in the presence of king Sigismund III Vasa of Poland), his visits at the courts of several German princes, his correspondence with various alchemists (including Johann Rudolph Glauber), and much more. I summarized these in English elsewhere,[108] and further details can be found in Roman Bugaj's monograph of 1968 which still remains the most comprehensive and definitive work on the life of Michael Sendivogius. The same scholar also translated Sendivogius's treatises into Polish and edited them with extensive introduction and commentary.[109] What remains to be discussed here, however, is the influence of the Polish alchemical philosopher on the Rosicrucian movement[110] - both in the narrow sense of the manifestos and in the wider perspective of the intellectual current called by recent scholarship "the Rosicrucian Enlightenment".

Frances A. Yates attempted to show that Rosicrucianism should be seen "as a movement ultimately stemming from John Dee"[111] and yet at the same time she says that "Paracelsist physicians like Fludd, Maier, Croll, represent the thought of the movement"[112] and that "Stolcius provides a link between the alchemical emblem movement around Maier and the Bohemian side of the movement which came to so disastrous an end in 1620".[113] As we have seen above, all of those major representatives of alchemical Rosicrucianism (with the exception of Fludd whose interest in alchemy was rather marginal), as well as Johann Daniel Mylius, whom Yates calls "a disciple of Maier",[114] pointed to Michael Sendivogius as the most celebrated philosopher of their time, while they hardly - if ever - refered to John Dee, whose continental mission proved to be a total failure.

One of the major arguments put forward by Yates to defend her thesis was the fact that *Consideratio brevis* of Philippus à Gabella, to which the *Confessio* was merely an addition or continuation, was based on Dee's *Monas hieroglyphica* (actually quoting verbatim from it). As Frances A. Yates says: "The Dee-inspired *Consideratio Brevis*, and its prayer, seems absolutely assimilated to the Rosicrucian manifesto, as an integral part of it, as though explaining that the 'more secret philosophy' behind the Rosicrucian movement was the philosophy of John Dee, as expounded in his Monas hieroglyphica".[115] But only a part of this work is based on Dee's *Monas*, while the remainder is purely alchemical and is clearly based on Sendivogius's *De lapide philosophorum*. There are numerous statements either taken directly from it or summarising its fragments, or saying the same things in different words. For instance the piece in the last paragraph of chapter 5 starting "If Hermes, the father of philosophy, were to be brought back to life today..." is taken from the second page of the First Treatise, while the description of the working of Nature summarises the teachings of Sendivogius. Also the explanations about Mercury and its role in Nature set forth in chapter 6 show deep understanding of Sendivogius's theories on "our water that does not wet hands" referred to many times in *De lapide philosophorum*.[116]

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108 Rafał T. Prinke, "Michael Sendivogius. Adept or impostor?", *The Hermetic Journal,* 15 (1981), p. 17-24.
109 Michał Sędziwój, *Traktat o kamieniu filozoficznym*, tr. and ed. by Roman Bugaj, Warszawa 1971.
110 See also Rafał T. Prinke, "Michael Sendivogius and Christian Rosenkreutz. The unexpected possibilities", *The Hermetic Journal,* 1990, p. 72-98 (also available at Adam McLean's Web site at www.levity.com/alchemy/sendi.html).
111 Yates, *op. cit.*, p.39.
112 *Ibid.*, p. 222.
113 *Ibid.*, p. 89.
114 *Ibid.*, p. 89.
115 *Ibid.*, p. 47.
116 Christopher Atton's translation of *Consideratio brevis* was published in *The Hermetic Journal*, 1989, p. 79-97.

There is, however, one fragment quoted verbatim - that is the last paragraph of chapter 6 which comes from the Fifth Treatise with the opening statement added: "As I have often told my sons of knowledge and wisdom...". So we have a quotation introduced in the first person with Sendivogius's favourite form of addressing his readers and fellow alchemists: "sons of knowledge and wisdom". The identity of Philippus à Gabella is totally unknown but Frances Yates suggests it must be a pseudonym referring to "Cabala". Perhaps it stands for the "Caballa of Philosophers", which is the name of the society mentioned in Sendivogius's *Philosophical letters* and which I will discuss below. Could thus the whole text have been written by Sendivogius himself? It is not quite impossible - he had been acquainted with Dee's philosophy through his association with Edward Kelley in Prague, certainly knew *Monas hieroglyphica* from the imperial library there, and may have even met him personally in Cracow or in England during his studies in Cambridge.

One of the key reformatory statements in the *Fama* is the following:

> Howbeit we know after a time there will now be a general reformation, both of divine and human things, according to our desire and the expectation of others. For it is fitting, that before the rising of the sun, there should appear and break forth Aurora, or some clearness, or divine light in the sky [...].
>
> In *Politia* we acknowledge the Roman Empire and *Quartam Monarchiam* for our Christian head; albeit we known what alterations be at hand, and would fain impart the same with all our hearts to other godly learned men [...] we shall help with secret aid this so good a cause, as God shall permit or hinder us.[117]

It was clearly inspired by the expectation of some profoud changes which was felt throughout Europe and gave rise to a number of utopian visions of a perfect society, but in this case there is a striking similarity to the ideas taught by Heliocantharus Borealis or Michael Sendivogius, so admired by John French in his already quoted *Art of distillation*. The Polish alchemist himself described his doctrine briefly in *Treatise on Sulphur* (first published in Cologne 1613) in the following words:

> The times are at hand when many secrets of Nature will be revealed to men. The Fourth or Northern Monarchy is about to be established; a happy age is coming; enlightenment, the Mother of Sciences, will soon appear; a brighter Sun than in any of the preceding three Monarchies will rise and reveal more hidden secrets. This Monarchy (as the ancients foretold) God's Omnipotence will found by the hand of a prince enriched with all virtues who, it is said, has already appeared in this present age. In this our northern region we see a prince of uncommon wisdom and valour, whom no king can surpass in victories or in love of men and God.
>
> There is no doubt that in this Monarchy God will reveal to us more secrets of Nature than it took place in the pagan darkness or under the rule of tyrants. Philosophers used to describe these Monarchies not according to their powers but by their placement and the parts of the world they cover. On the first place they place the Eastern, then the Southern, then the Western and finally the Northern and last one which is expected in these countries and about which I will speak at length in my "Harmonia".

117 Thomas Vaughan's translation of 1652 in Yates, *op. cit.*, p. 249.

> In this Northern coming polar Monarchy (as the Psalmist says) mercy and truth will meet together, peace and justice will kiss each other, truth will spring up from the ground, and righteousness will look down from heaven. There will be one Shepherd and one fold, and knowledge will be the common property of all without envy. I look forward to all this with longing.[118]

He must have taught it well before 1609 when Oswald Croll called him Heliocantharus Borealis and the similarity with the views expressed by the author or authors of the *Fama* is evident. The idea of the Fourth Monarchy can be traced to the Biblical vision of Daniel and was quite popular among Renaissance prophetic writers including Paracelsus. Their interpretation was, however, catastrophic, quite different from the utopian vision of Sendivogius and the *Fama*. But we find - quite unexpectedly - that Tycho de Brahe (1546-1601) in his treatises on the *stella nova* of 1572 and the comet of 1577 predicted great changes in Northern Europe which will precede "major reforms of both spiritual and lay kingdom". He was convinced that the great conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in Aries in 1603 will inaugurate the age "of greater happiness and glory than had ever been experienced in the earlier times".[119] These prophecies were repeated in his *Astronomiae instauratae progymnasmata* (1602) written in Prague, where he stayed from 1599 until his death in 1601. As Brahe was also a Paracelsist, interested in chemistry and medicine,[120] Sendivogius certainly was in contact with him and that was the direct source of his idea of the Northern Monarchy. The treatise on *Harmony*, to which Sendivogius refers, was identified by Roman Bugaj as one published by Jacques Nuysement in Paris in 1618 and subsequently attributed to him.[121] It was also published in English (1657 and 1658), in the translation by Robert Turner, but I have not been able to get access to it yet.

It is now quite certain[122] that the Rosicrucian manifestos were composed about 1610 at the university of Tübingen, in the circle of the learned doctor Tobias Hess (1568-1614), to which belonged young Johann Valentin Andreae (1586-1654), the author of the *Chemical wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz* (1616), later an esteemed Lutheran theologian and utopian writer, and Christoph Besold (1577-1638), a professor and political philosopher with chiliastic beliefs. According to the most recent scholarschip, these three persons were the authors of the manifestos.[123] It should be noted that Hess was of the same age as Sendivogius and came from Nuremburg, and we have Andreae's testimony that he was interested in alchemy, chiliastic prophecies and "Naometry".[124] The last of these is a reference to *Naometria*, an apocalyptic-prophetic book (still unpublished) written by Simon Studion at the court of Frederick, duke of Württemberg, in Stuttgart, which was completed in 1604. It may be remembered that Michael Sendivogius corresponded with duke Frederick and visited his court in 1605-1606.

Another important visit of Sendivogius was that to Marburg in or shortly before 1616. He visited the university and the laboratory of Johann Hartmann (1568-1631), the famous Paracelsist who was made "professor of chymiatry" by Moritz landgrave of Hesse in 1609.

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[118] The English version of this fragment as published by Arthur Edward Waite in *The Hermetic Museum* (reprinted by Llanerch Enterprises in 1989) is slightly abridged. The above quotation is based on the 1616 Cologne edition via Roman Bugaj's Polish translation in his edition of the collected works of Sendivogius.
[119] Charles Webster, *Od Paracelsusa do Newtona. Magia i powstanie nowożytnej nauki*, Warszawa 1992 [Polish edition of *From Paracelsus to Newton: magic and the making of modern science*, Cambridge 1982], p. 37-38 (quotations retranslated from Polish).
[120] *Ibid.*, p. 18.
[121] Roman Bugaj, personal communication. He is preparing a scholarly edition of this treatise in Polish.
[122] Schick, *op. cit.,* and most later researchers.
[123] Carlos Gilly, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
[124] Johann Valentin Andreae, *Memoralia, benevolentium honori, amori et condolentiae data*, Strasburg 1619. Quoted in Arthur Edward Waite, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

His students were taught to prepare iatrochemical medicines as described in *Basilica chymica* by Oswald Croll, the old friend of Sendivogius. Among the students in 1615-1616 there was one Szymon Batkowski who may be the same as Jan Budowski, on whose relation the German *Vita Sendivogii Poloni* was based.[125] The alchemist must have been invited by landgrave Moritz, who was greatly interested in alchemy,[126] and spent some time at his court. The duke's court physician at that time was Michael Maier, who had known Sendivogius very well from his Prague years and made him the last of the twelve greatest adepts in his *Symbola aureae mensae* published in 1617. It is thus possible that the transmutations he had winessed were performed by Sendivogius at the court in Kassel during that visit. But it was not only Maier who was there. The other most important representative of the emblematic alchemy of the Rosicrucian type - Johann Daniel Mylius - was the son-in-law of Hartmann and another physician of landgrave Moritz![127] It was also at Kassel that *Fama fraternitatis* was first published in 1614, printed by Wilhelm Wessel. The priviledge for running his business, issued to Wessel by landgrave Moritz in 1594, stated that he could only print texts handed to him by the duke and was obliged to keep all secrets connected with them.[128] Inviting Michael Sendivogius shortly afterwards (we do not know exactly when he arrived at Kassel) may have been an attempt on the part of Moritz of Hesse, Michael Maier, and Johann Daniel Mylius to form a fraternity along the lines described in the *Fama* and *Confessio*, in which the Twelveth Adept would be an esteemed member.

These patrallels, though interesting, do not provide a tangible proof of Sendivogius's involvement in or influence on the original Rosicrucian manifestos. The prophecies about the imminent coming of a great reformation were so widespread that they may be seen as *signum temporis*, rather than ascribed to any particular thinker (actually, they can be traced back to Paracelsus[129]). Similarly, the idea of a secret society of the learned can be traced back to the Italian Academy of Secrets (Accademia dei Segreti), founded about 1560 in the house of Giambattista della Porta in Naples.[130] The Rosicrucian Brotherhood of the manifestos can be seen as just one of many similar societies and fraternities which quickly became the generic term for "a certain style of thinking" (to use the phrase of Frances A. Yates) and certain type of learned societies.

In this wider sense the Rosicrucianism of Michael Sendivogius is perhaps best seen in his idea of a secret hermetic society codified in *Statutes of the Society of Unknown Philosophers*. This little known work was published only once in 1691 in the French edition of the collected works attributed to the Cosmopolite, but earlier manuscript versions in Latin are known to exist.[131] The *Philosophical letters* of Sendivogius were addressed to a "newly accepted member of the Society of the Cabala of Unknown Philosophers" and mention the Latin statutes sent to him. The French version was recently translated into English and published with commentary by Zbigniew Szydło.[132] Interestingly, the 1791 English translation of the *Philosophical letters* by Ebenezer Sibly was entitled *Letters of Michael Sendivogius to the*

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[125] Bugaj, *Michał Sędziwój*, p. 138-141.
[126] The voluminous correspondence of Moritz with alchemists is preserved. I have not been able to consult the recent research on this in Bruce T. Moran, "The alchemical world of the German Court: occult philosophy and chemical medicine in the circle of Moritz of Hessen", *Sudhoffs Archiv*, Stuttgart 1991.
[127] Ron Heisler, "The Forgotten English Roots of Rosicrucianism", *The Hermetic Journal*, 1992. The electronic copy is on Adam McLean's Web site at http://www.levity.com/alchemy/h_ros.html.
[128] Roland Edighoffer, *Różokrzyżowcy*, Warszawa 1998, p. 95 (Polish edition of *Les Rose-Croix*).
[129] They are discussed by Webster, *op. cit.*, p. 25-52.
[130] Webster, *op. cit.*, p. 62.
[131] Bibliotheque de Carpentras MS 288; Wellcome Institute MS 3560; British Library MS Sloane 1724; MS Sloane 3644.
[132] Zbigniew Szydło, "Michael Sendivogius and the *Statuts des Philosophes Inconnus*", *The Hermetic Journal*, 1992, p. 72-91. See also the same author's *Water which does not wet hands*, p. 222-236 and discussion in text.

Rosey Crucian Society,[133] while *Bibliotheca Esoterica Catalogue* (Paris 1941) calls him "Grand Master of the Rosy Cross and founder of the alchemical branch of the Rosicrucians which was called the 'Society of Unknown Philosophers'".[134] Both are examples of the extended use of the term advocated by Frances A. Yates.

STATUTS

Des Philosophes inconnus.

CHAPITRE I.

Division de toute la Compagnie.

Article I.

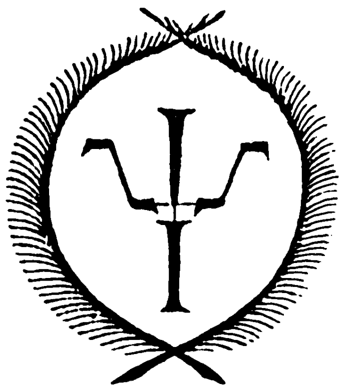
De quel païs doivent être les Associez.

Title page of the *Statutes of the Society of Unknown Philosophers* composed by Michael Sendivogius.

In comparison with the *Fama* and *Confessio*, the *Statutes* are much less provoking and do not contain any mythical or literary fiction, nor any apocalyptic prophecies. It is a perfectly sober scheme of a society which would promote synchronised advancement of learning within the field of alchemy through sharing of experience and knowledge. The *Philosophical letters* were actually intended as an example of the kind of information exchange among the members of the Society. Sendivogius explains in the preface to the *Statutes* that such a secret society is necessary because otherwise nothing can be achieved. Members should be free and independed of any obligations, so that no one can force them to be unfaithful to the Society. This means exclusion of members of monastic orders, as they take oaths of obedience, and of kings and princes, as they are motivated by ambition. The poor, on the other hand, should not be admitted because they would have no financial means to carry out the Great Work. The proposed organisational structure of the Society, admission procedure, means of communication between members, occassional meetings, and precausions aimed at keeping the secrets from the outer world, are all perfectly sensible within the mental frame of the period.

[133] Ron. Charles Hogart, *Alchemy. A Comprehensive Bibliography of the Manly P. Hall Collection of Books and Manuscripts*, Los Angeles 1986, p. 297. Another copy is Glasgow University Library MS Ferguson 25, which was transcribed by Justin von Bujdoss and published by Adam McLean at http://www.levity.com/alchemy/send10.html.
[134] Quoted by Szydło, *Water which does not wet hands*, p. 128.

SOMMAIRE ABREGE
De tout ce qui est contenu dans ces Lettres, renfermé dans un Sceau ou Hieroglife de la Societé des Philosophes inconnus.



Hieroglyphic seal of the Society of Unknown Philosophers, bringing together the teachings of John Dee's *Monas hieroglyphica* and Michael Sendivogius's *Parabola seu aenigma philosophicum*.

To the *Statutes* is appended the "Seal or Hieroglyph of Unknown Philosophers" with an interpretation very reminiscent of John Dee's *Monas hieroglyphica*. The seal is the Trident of "the Neptune of our parable, which contains in abbreviated form the entire theory and practice of the Hermetic Science"[135] and all elements of it are treated at length on a few pages. The parable referred to is obviously the *Parabola seu aenigma philosophicum*, which forms a part of *Novum lumen chymicum*, and in which Neptune is the main character.

All of such and similar societies promoting general reformation of the whole world - of religion, human mentality and scientific research - eventually lead to the foundation of the Royal Society (1660) and Académie des Sciences (1666), as discussed by Frances A. Yates. One of the main influences in its developing phase was the circle of intellectuals formed around Samuel Hartlib (about 1600-1662) in London. He came to England in 1628 from his home town of Elbing in Poland and was later joined by Jan Amos Komenský (Comenius) (1592-1670), also arriving from Poland in 1641, and others in promoting the advancement of learning. Among the topics discussed by them through extensive correspondence there was also Michael Sendivogius and his works.[136] One of the most interesting references in the *Hartlib Papers* is that in 1631 Cyprian Kinner - a friend of Hartlib and Comenius - refused invitations to become the rector of the Racovian Academy (run by Polish Brethren or socinians) and the Klausenburg school in order to accept that from "*celeberrimo barone Michaele Sendivogio*" to the imperial court in Prague. He did some services for Sendivogius there and was ennobled at his request by the emperor Ferdinand II in 1633.[137]

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[135] Zbigniew Szydło, "Michael Sendivogius and the *Statuts des Philosophes Inconnus*", p. 89.
[136] *Hartlib Papers CD-ROM*..
[137] G.H. Turnbull, *Hartlib, Dury and Comenius. Gleanings from Hartlib's Papers*, London 1947, p. 384. I am grateful to Ron Heisler for bringing this reference to my attention. See also *Hartlib Papers CD-ROM*..

Portrait of John Jonston.

During Comenius's first stay in Poland (1625-1641), his main patrons were Rafał Leszczyński and his son-in-law Zbigniew Gorajski (abt. 1590-1655), the son of Adam and nephew of Piotr, the two brothers with whom Sendivogius first arrived in Prague! What is more, one of his greatest friends was Jan Jonston (1603-1675), a teacher at the Leszno gymnasium, of which Comenius was the rector, a physician of the Leszczyński family, and famous polyhistor. He was born in the family of a Scottish immigrant in Poland and attempted to create a monumental synthesis of all knowledge, cooperating with Comenius along the pansofic ideas. Quite interestingly, many of his books were illustrated with copper plate engravings by Matthaeus Merian. In 1630 he stayed at the house of Robert Fludd (1574-1637) in London for several months before going to Cambridge in 1631, and also contacted Johannes Hunnyades, the Hungarian alchemist.[138] The meaning of this cordial relationship with Fludd is further strengthened by a rare ephemaral print with poems written by Jonston's friends in 1637 to celebrate his marriage. The author of the first piece in the collection is "*Daniel Stolcius de Stolcenberg, Philos. et Med. Hermeticus. P.L.C.*" - the same who revealed the identity of "Sarmata Anonymus" of Michael Maier![139] Furthermore, Jonston was one of the doctors who examined Christina Poniatova, whose prophecies were later published by Comenius in *Lux in tenebris* (1657), thought by Frances A. Yates to be of great importance.[140] In his medical works Jan Jonston was the follower of Pracelsus and often mentions Oswald Croll and Johann Hartmann of Marburg. In one of his most famous works - *Naturae constantia* (1632), also published in England as *An history of the constancy of nature... by*

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[138] Tadeusz Bilikiewicz, *Jan Jonston (1603-1675). Żywot i działalność lekarska*, Warszawa 1931, p. 39.
[139] *Honori solennitatique nuptiali... Dn. Johannis Jonstoni... cum... Christina Hortensia... Votiva amicorum acclamatio*, Leszno 1637.
[140] Yates, *op. cit.*, p. 158-159.

John Jonston of Poland (1657) - he lists briefly the great alchemists of earlier times including Paracelsus and his followers "*Suchteno, Dorneo, Thurnheusero, Severino, et Crollio*"[141] and then stressing the necessity of the experimental approach to physics expounded in the works of Francis Bacon, he mentions "many histories about transmutations of other metals into gold by Paracelsus, Kelley and Seton".[142] No mention of Michael Sendivogius is quite striking in a work by a Polish friend of Daniel Stolcius! At the end of the next paragraph, however, after discussing the possibility of metalic transmutation, he makes a mysterious remark: "I also believe that everyone knows what a certain Polish doctor has done for vivifying planets". There can be no doubt at all that the Polish doctor was Michael Sendivogius, who was still alive at that time. Interestingly, in the same year Jan Jonston wrote a historical treatise entitled *De quatuor Monarchiis*! So the only conclusion we can draw is that this "second generation Rosicrucian" honoured the great alchemist's wish expressed in *Novum lumen chymicum*, as did Oswald Croll and Michael Maier before him:

> If you ask who I am: I am Cosmopolita, citizen of the world. If you know me and wish to be good and honourable men, keep my name a secret. If you do not know me, forbear to enquire after my name.[143]

POST SCRIPTUM

After this article had been typeset, I became aware of the newly published book *Alchemie. Lexikon einer hermetischen Wissenschaft* edited by Claus Priesner and Karin Figala (Verlag C.H. Beck, München 1998). It is a very comprehensive summary of current research on alchemy by many leading scholars. The entry on Alexander Seton (p. 335-336) was written by Julian Paulus who established that the Scottish alchemist died shortly before September 1606 in his own house in Basel. Paulus found a letter from Johannes Hartmann, the professor of "chymiatry" from Marburg, to the alchemist Joseph Duchesne (Quercetanus), in which he says he had been informed about Seton's death by professor Jacob Zwinger from Basel. He also states that the whole story about Seton's imprisonment by Christian II of Saxony and his escape with the help of Sendivogius is a later invention, as are many other legends connected with the Scotsman's name.

This important discovery confirms my own hypothesis that the story of Seton's escape and Sendivogius's dealings with his widow were distorted reminiscences of the latter's contacts with Edward Kelley and buying land property from the Englishman's widow. It should also put an end to speculations about the authorship of *A new light of alchymie (Novum lumen chymicum)* and other treatises written by Michael Sendivogius.

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[141] Jan Jonston, *Naturae constantia*, Amsterodami 1632, p. 77.
[142] *Ibid.*, p. 81.
[143] *The new chemical light*, translation from *Concerning the Secrets of Alchemy and other tracts from the Hermetic Museum*, Llanerch Enterprises 1989, p. 128. Also on Adam McLean's Web site at www.levity.com/alchemy/newchem2.html.