



A Dictionary of Western Alchemy

By Jordan Stratford, Jeffrey S Kupperman

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From Arabic al-kimia (of Egypt) and old Egyptian keme (black, fertile soil), alchemy is the ancient science of elements and interactions in both the natural and the spiritual realms. Spanning 2,500 years and informed by Hermetic and Neoplatonist influences, it has been practiced in the classical Greco-Roman world, medieval Europe and the medieval Middle East and Orient, and up to the present in esoteric circles. Alchemists have three main pursuits:

- the transmutation of base metals into gold by means of the Lapis Philosophorum, the Philosopher's Stone;
- the concoction of the Elixir of Life, a universal medicine;
- the reconciliation between spirit and matter and direct knowledge of the Divine

This concise dictionary of alchemy provides clear access to one of the major roots of Western esoteric thought. Subjects include alchemical processes and procedures, the natural elements and apparatus used, major practitioners and philosophers, and concepts and beliefs. Distinguishing this guide from similar ones is the addition of etymology, connecting the language of alchemy to its Latin, Greek, and Arabic sources. Symbolic pictographs accompany half of the over four hundred entries, and a fascinating illustration from the long tradition of alchemical art introduces each letter of the alphabet.

Most important is the author Jordan Stratford's unique perspective as both a modern Gnostic priest and a Freemason. He also brings to bear extensive knowledge of the depth psychology of C. G. Jung, who based his key concept of individuation on the premise that what the ancient alchemists truly sought was inner transformation.

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Editorial Review

Review

"An extremely useful compilation of alchemic terms and symbols, explained with admirable clarity. Anyone interested in alchemy for its own sake or as an important cultural stream in Western thought will benefit from having this work to consult." -Excerpted from: *Theosophy Forward*

"An amazing storehouse of information, *A Dictionary of Western Alchemy* focuses on terms related to the history of alchemical ideas rather than the scientific aspect that is more frequently examined. With an easy-to-read introduction explaining the history of alchemy and what it means today, Stratford delivers a whirlwind tour through the ancient history of this captivating science" --Excerpted from: *Journal of the Western Mystery Tradition*

"Alchemy is written in the language of the unconscious. In *A Dictionary of Western Alchemy*, Jordan Stratford brings cryptic words and images alive with rich, deep and practical meaning. Heading each letter with a quote from one of the great masters adds a unique touch to this clear and concise dictionary. It is filled with fascinating etymological and historical detail. Dragon's blood, beeswing, Red Lion - these strange words are among four hundred terms defined in this insightful work that does not spare the kind of accuracy needed in a working alchemical laboratory" --**Thom F. Cavalli, Ph.D.**, psychologist and author of *Embodying Osiris: The Secrets of Alchemical Psychology*, and *Alchemical Psychology: Old Recipes for Living in a New World*

"The fascinations and wonders of alchemy have been with us for a long time. Jordan Stratford's fine encyclopedic work on this subject is precisely what has been missing on the shelf of every student of the 'great art.' Its content is accurate, insightful and accessible!

" --**Stephan A. Hoeller**, author of *Alchemy for a Volunteer Society*, *The Gnostic Jung and the Seven Sermons to the Dead*, and other works

"A useful glossary of metals and minerals; black, red and green lions; alchemists; mythical beasts and mysterious processes. Discover the keys to the salt, sulphur and mercury of alchemy in this succinct dictionary.

" --**Andrew Phillip Smith**, author of *A Dictionary of Gnosticism*

About the Author

Born in Prince Rupert British Columbia, **Jordan Stratford** studied writing at the University of Victoria, where he was influenced by the fine art of the Victoria exhibition group The Limners. He found work early on in photography and in the field of digital layout and typography, and then freelanced as a writer, publisher and interactive designer until founding Arc New Media as the Creative Director in 1994. Stratford received his Licentiate of Sacred Theology with his ordination as a priest in the Apostolic Johannite Church in 2005 and briefly studied the DMin program at Wisdom University. He is currently pursuing a Doctorate of Ministry Studies at St. Raphael the Archangel Theological Seminary. He served as the Rector of the AJC's Regina Coeli Parish in Victoria BC from its founding until 2008. Stratford is also an outspoken local advocate for the rights of the homeless and mentally ill. In 2006, *U.S. News & World Report* interviewed Stratford along with NT Wright and Dr. Marvin Meyer for a feature article on Gnosticism, and his work has also been cited in college course material and doctoral dissertations. Additionally, Stratford has regularly

contributed to blogs relating to Gnosticism, Esoteric Christianity, Paganism, new religious movements and the Independent Sacramental Movement. Stratford is also a screenwriter, independent filmmaker and artist, and has had several art shows at Michelle Frost Gallery and Rogue Art in Victoria. Currently he supports artists, writers, musicians and filmmakers as a creative coach, and has work-shopped over 30 screenplays from concept to draft. He serves on the board of directors for the Vancouver Island Film Producers' Association and the South Island Film Commission. In addition to *A Dictionary of Western Alchemy*, Stratford is the author of *Living Gnosticism* (Apocryphile Press 2007), reviewed in the Summer 2008 edition of *PanGaia Magazine*.

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