

LEO CADOGAN RARE BOOKS

74 Mayton Street, London N7 6QT

RARE ALCHEMY FROM KOŠICE

Marsciano, Francesco Onofrio di: Clavis arcis Hermetis epistolae tres responsoriae Comitum Francisci Onuphrii de Marsciano authoris ad Comitem Caesarem de Kulmiski a praedicto conscriptae, quas responsorias epistolas idem Comes de Kulmiski pro hujus sacrae hermeticae scientiae inquisitorum eruditione propriis sumptibus typis edi curavit, anno salutis 1743. in gratiam filiorum artis, ac sub auspiciis illustrissimi domini, domini Baronis Caroli Matthaei de Rechpach, Domini in Mederndorf, Neuhauss, & Drassing, & caet. Sacrae Majestatis Reginae Unariae, Bohemiae, & caet. Consilarij Provincialis, nec non Inclytae Provinciae Carinthiae Deputsti Actualis, exhibitas, dicavit [...] [Cologne] [c.1743]

4to. (20 cms. x 16 cms. in binding) , pp. 134 [2]. Small woodcut of a pestle at pp. 40, 66, 83, and of an alembic at p. 84. Light browning and foxing, a tiny trace of worming, a very good copy in quarter-leather and brown marbled pastepaper boards, a dark green spine possibly of skiver, with gilt lettering and decoration (slight rubbing and peeling to binding and loosening at head of spine, but binding again very good). Early 19th-cent. bookplate, "A M. Bourrée, Doct.-Médecin, à Chitillon-sur-Seine".

Only edition of this rare collection of three highly detailed letters on alchemy, originally sent in 1739, 1740, and 1741 to a Count Caesar von Kulmiski, who had them printed in the present publication in Cologne. The volume is dedicated to Baron Karl Matthaues von Rechbach, who was an official of the Holy Roman Empire. Ferguson notes of the author: "It is said of him that he attracted much attention while he lived, and had still (in 1788) many adherents".

Besides alchemical works (printed and manuscript), Marsciano also wrote a book of Italian poetry, 'L'Ebreo ingannato'. In that book the author is noted to be a nobleman of Orvieto and Foligno. A place of printing is given there as 'Cascioviae' (cf. SBN), which is the same place that the present letters are written from. In the SBN catalogue this is believed to be Košice in present-day Slovakia.

Ferguson II 79. OCLC shows copies in National Library of Israel, University of Strathclyde, Slovenia (National and University Library, and another in union cat.), Bibliothèque Nationale, and Glasgow.

[ref: 3208] **£2750**