

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AND CULTURAL EXCHANGES, LISBOA 15-18 JULY 2015

P23 Medical knowledge in motion: exchange, transformation and iteration in the medical traditions of the Late Antique Mediterranean world



‘MEDIAEVAL ARABIC MINERALOGY: GALEN VS PSEUDO-ARISTOTLE’

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De Simplicium Medicamentorum Temperamentis ac Facultatibus
(*Kitāb fī quwwa min al-adwiya al-mufrada*)

- General Introduction
- Earths - What is called with the name of 'earth' (*arḍ - tasmiyyat al-arḍ*)
- Stones (*aḥḡār*)
- Simple drugs extracted from mines (*al-adwiya al-muḥtafara*)

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECTION ON DRUGS EXTRACTED FROM MINES [KÜHN 210,9]

The drugs that are generated in the mines of the earth, either by themselves, or by cooking into ‘ovens’. Together with these two varieties, there is a third one, that is the variety that people obtain with a kind of manufacture, in the way in which the cerussite, white lead, the medicine known as ‘medicine for the scabies’, the *sandiğ*, and the *qurmuz* are made. [...]

Moreover, the natures of the countries and the places in which these drugs originate are different—in fact some of them are colder, and some of them are less cold—for this reason also the textures of the mineral drugs are different. [...]

In the same way in which the major component in the different kinds of earth is the substance of elemental earth, while the minor one is the substance of fire, likewise the major component in the drugs extracted from the mines consists in the substance of fire that forms a mixture with them.

ARISTOTLE & PSEUDO-ARISTOTLE

METEOROLOGICA III, vi 2

Exhalations enclosed in the part of earth

Vaporous exhalation

(ἡ μὲν ἀτμιδώδης)



dry

Fossils

(τὰ μὲν ὀρυκτὰ)

Coloured dusts and stone

Smoky exhalation

(ἡ δὲ καπνώδης)

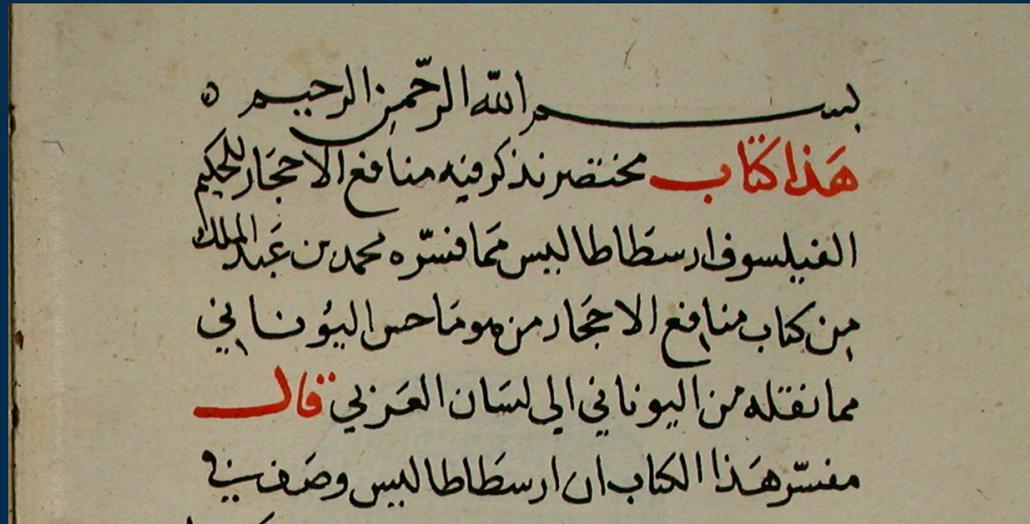


moist

Metals

(τὰ δὲ μεταλλευτὰ)

Fusible and ductile substances



Şehid Ali Pasha 1840, 1v (particular)

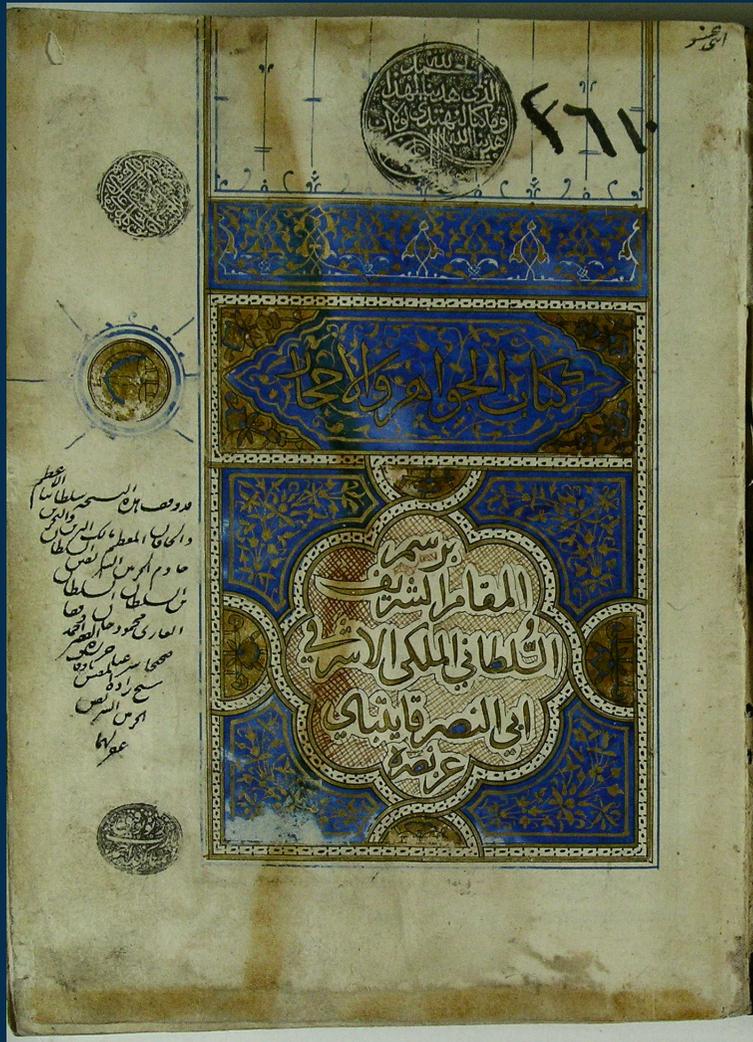
-Lūqā Son of Serapion as translator [*tarğamahu Lūqā ibn Isrāfiūn*, Paris Ar. 2772, 1r]

-Abridgement (*muḥtaṣar*) from Aristotle, translated and explained by Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Malik in relation to the book by (Ş)umāḥus (Sotakos?) [Şehid Ali Pasha 1840, 1v]

-A *mufassir* (translator and abridger) worked on the alleged Aristotelic original, that contained 700 stones

- The text is addressed to two different categories of ‘philosophers’: the experts in the (alchemical) craft, and the physicians who use mineral drugs

PSEUDO-ARISTOTLE *KITĀB AL-AḤĠĀR* ('ON STONES')



Aya Sofya 3610, 1r

PRECIOUS STONES (pearl, emerald, rubin, diamond, etc.)

MAGNETS (iron, gold, silver, copper, cotton, wool, hair, nails, etc.)

ANIMAL STONES (sea crab, snails, sea urchin, etc.)

STONES THAT MELT AND BECOME SOFT (golden, silver, copper, lead, quicksilver, etc.)

STONES THAT DERIVE FROM THE SEVEN STONES THAT MELT (verdigris, cinnabar, various oxyds, etc.)

STONES THAT HAVE THE CONSISTENCY OF DUST (*aḡḡār turābiyya*: sulphur, arsenic, vitriol, etc.)

PSEUDO-ARISTOTLE *KITĀB AL-AḤĠĀR* ('ON STONES')
STRUCTURE OF THE ENTRY

- Name(s) of the stone and definition of its varieties on the basis of the colour(s)
- Mines and places in which the stone can be found
- Properties of the stone: *Manāfi*^c and *Ḥawāṣṣ* (medical and peculiar technical properties)

HEMATITE

PSEUDO-ARISTOTLE

- Red stone with a male and a female variety
- Dyeing of silver and copper
- It softens and beautifies gold
- It softens the bodies
- It sharpens and strengthen the eyesight

GALEN

- Resemblance with the colour of blood
- Resemblance with stones that emit a liquid substance
- Same amount of cold and astringent faculty



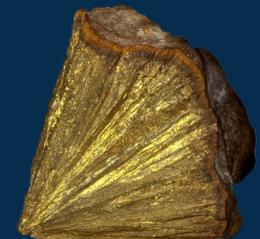
MARCASITE

PSEUDO-ARISTOTLE

- Colours and varieties
- Useful for eyesalves and collyria
- Calcification, dyeing, and stabilization of metals

GALEN

- Strong faculty
- Used in 'loosening' salves
- Useful against pains of the eye, coagulation of the blood, bleeding, and cicatrization of wounds



SULPHUR

PSEUDO-ARISTOTLE

- Colours and varieties
- Useful against seizures, migraine, consumption, fevers, swellings, black gall, moist swelling of the womb
- Sulphur thermal baths
- Inflammability

GALEN

- Attractive faculty
- Useful against many animal poisons and skin diseases
- Different possible mixtures (saliva and urine)



III. ABŪ ʿALĀ IBN ZUHR, *KITĀB AL-ḤAWĀṢṢ*

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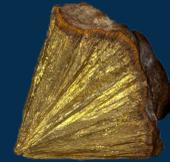


HEMATITE (*ḤAĠĀR AL-DAMM*, Saray Ahmet 2068, 32v)

The Wise said: it resembles the *al-marāzīnī* zinc (?), its form is different, it has the colour of the dust, and in it there is a perforation, it is hard. If it is ground and poured on a fresh wound or a laceration, then it will heal it, and there will be no need for other medicaments.

MARCASITE (Saray Ahmet 2068, 84v-85r)

In the *Book of Stones*: marcasite has many varieties, golden, copper-like, and silver-like. If it is burnt and calcified until it becomes similar to quicksilver, then it is used in many (alchemical) preparations, it also purifies gold. And if a stone is extracted from it, then it is similar to the iron steel that can strike fire, as solid rocks can.



SULPHUR (Saray Ahmet 2068, 76v)

It has many colours, it increases with the thunder, as the pandang plant grows only with lightnings: sulphur, as the Wise says, has to be taken when there are lightnings. The red sulphur can be found only in Western Africa, it is extracted from its mine only in its melted form. During the night, it emits an intense glow, similar to that of a lantern; but when it is extracted from its mine, it loses this glow, and this peculiar property disappears. It is useful for the epileptic man, if he inhales it. It is used in the manufacturing of gold, and it makes silver red.



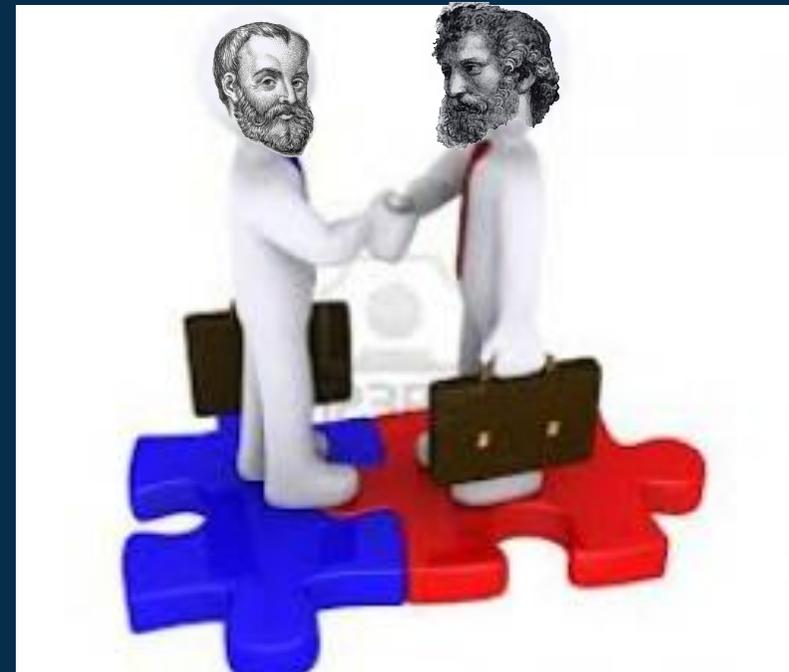
THE HERMETIC COMPONENT

-Talismanic Stones

-Engravings on stones

-Astrological component

- Occult properties



‘MEDIAEVAL ARABIC MINERALOGY:
Galen, Pseudo-Aristotle, and the Hermetic Tradition



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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