MACER FLORIDUS: A MIDDLE HEBREW FRAGMENT WITH ROMANCE ELEMENTS*

GERRIT BOS AND GUIDO MENSCHING

In this article we present an unedited fragmentary Hebrew version of the Medieval Latin herbal De virtutibus herbarum. In section 1 we introduce the original Latin text and the Hebrew translation, taking into account the most important textual and linguistic characteristics of the latter. In section 2 we offer a critical edition of the Hebrew text, using a synoptic format in order to facilitate comparison with the Latin text. This section also includes an English translation. Since the Hebrew version was most probably made in southern France, it contains a considerable amount of Romance and Latin elements, which are listed and discussed in section 3. In section 4 we briefly summarize the findings of this article and make some comments on the philological and historical value of the text.

1. Introduction

In this article we present the edition of an anonymous Middle Hebrew translation of the herbal De virtutibus (or viribus) herbarum, better known as Macer Floridus, which has been preserved in one manuscript (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz 241, 4, fols. 72a–73b). De virtutibus herbarum was one of the most popular herbals in the Middle Ages. Written in Latin verse, the first manuscripts date from the 13th century, though the work had already been mentioned in the 12th century. In the early manuscripts the author’s name is already indicated as Macer, often with the addition Floridus. Thus, the older reception of the text identified the author as Publius Aemilius Macer, a Roman poet of the 1st century BCE, who is mentioned by Ovid1 and is known to have written a poem about plants. However, as Choulant observes in the introduction of his critical edition, some medieval authors are mentioned in the poem.

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1 See pne volucras legi mihis grandior aevum, / Quaeque nocet serpens, quae noxit herba Macer (Ovid, Tristia 4.10.44).
and some of the plants described were introduced to Europe by the Muslims. Today, the name Macer indicated in the text is considered a pseudonym, and the real author is believed to have been Odo from Meung on the river Loire, who lived in the first half of the 11th century. Apart from its original meaning, the epithet Floridus might be interpreted as Floridus, i.e., Macer from the city of Fleury, according to Bazzi.  

In addition to the original Latin text, which has survived in numerous manuscripts, the text became even more popular through its translations. The first translations are in Spanish and Italian; the latter, from the 13th to the 15th centuries, one verse and six prose versions were composed. The first translations into English date from the 14th century; and before 1500, twenty-five versions had been made. Turning to the Romance-speaking regions, there is an Italian prose version from the 15th century and a verse translation of some chapters into French by Tremblay, printed in 1588. Interestingly, there is an earlier and broader vernacular tradition on the Iberian Peninsula, where there are manuscripts from the 14th century in Castilian, Aragonese, and especially Catalan. In Occitan, beginning at the same time or even earlier, at least four versions have been known since the 14th century. Although there is no direct connection between the Occitan versions and our Hebrew text, as we will demonstrate in this article, it is quite significant that the Hebrew translation is also of Occitan origin.

Apart from the Berlin manuscript, a minor fragment, edited below (§2.3), has been preserved in MS Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek 291, fols. 119b–120a, possibly dating from the 15th century. This fragment quotes two recipes by Macer against fistula. The Berlin manuscript was copied by Solomon Ben Elia, who completed his work in May 1414. The anonymous translator of the Macer text preserved in this manuscript is possibly identical with the one mentioned in MS Paris, BN hebr. 1190, no. 23, who in the list of translations prepared by him between 1197 and 1199 refers to “another herbal book, called Macer, after the name of its author.” The translator adds that it “refers to herbs neglected by other authors.”

According to Choulant’s critical edition, the original Latin text consists of approximately 2300 hexameter verses, divided into 77 chapters, with each chapter describing the property of one plant. Our Hebrew text shows the first five chapters, which usually appear in the same order (artemisia, abrotanum, absinthium, urtica, and allium) in the Latin text manuscripts. The Hebrew translation almost literally follows the Latin text, as can be seen in our synoptic version in section 2.1. Let us briefly compare some verses with the Hebrew translation:

Latin:
[79] Et claros oculos reddit cum melle peruncta. / [80] Hoque modo sugillatis superaddita prodest. / [81] Decoctaevae vapor obstruas liberat aures /


3Cf. Lexikon des Mittelalters, 6:1560, s.v. Odo von Meung.

4Cf. Bazzi, “Un inedito erbario del secolo xv.”

5L. Tremblay, Les fleurs du livre des vertus des herbes, composé jadis en vers Latins par Macer Floridus (Rouen, 1588).

9All of these derive from a common Ibero-Romanic prose tradition most probably of Navarro-Aragonese origin. On another occasion I argued that the Latin Macer text (which is of French origin, as above) might have arrived at that region through the Provençal settlers who were numerous in Navarra and Aragon between the 11th and the 14th centuries (Guido Menching, “El 'Macer Floridus' en la Peninsula Ibérica: Efectos y efectos secundarios de un herbário medieval,” in Navarro, M. T. y Sánchez, N. [eds.], Textos medievales y renacentistas de la Romania. Homenaje a María Teresa Herrera (Madison WI, in press).


10If this is correct, the Hebrew version edited in this article is the earliest translation of Macer Floridus.

Hebrew:

[79] המאיר העיניים הפしぴות פנמי על הבשר. [80] על הלכלוך הכלמת המחstudents
ה fscanf שער הלכלוך ממעין [81] أما הים הלועה של המיסטעשה ממחᐈ
ורשלבר המים لإילימ.

[It lightens up the eyes on which it has been rubbed with honey. It is
good for blavuras, i.e., those spots of the sick that are of a bluish color.]

When put above the vapor (estuba) it opens blocked ears (resolvera).]

The sequence of the Latin verses is strictly followed, and no additional
information was added on the subject at hand; the only additions are explanations (such as “i.e., those spots of the sick that are of a bluish color”) and Romance glosses (e.g., estuba, resolvera).

The high degree of exactitude becomes even more clear when we
compare this piece with some of the Romance versions:

Occitan:

[79] P(er) mal d'uellis. Ad home que a mals els uuls prin l'ieuxins e
pista lo ab mel e tu lo mit sus los uulis e gitara foras lo mal. Per mal
d'aurreillas. [81] Ad home que a mal en las aurellas prin l'ieuxins e
perfuma las aurellas per tres o per quatre) lo matin e'l ser atresssi con
l'erba es cremada, mais avant vol esser cuetsa en vin, (et) er garitiz.
(C.B., p. 157)

[For the disease of the eyes. For a person who has sick eyes, take
wormwood and pound it with honey, and put all that under the eyes
and it will cast away the sickness. For the disease of the ears. For a
person who has a sickness in his ears, take wormwood and fumigate
the ears three or four (times) in the morning and in the evening while
the herb is burned—although first it must be cooked in wine—and he
will be cured.]

Catalan:

[79] It, ha altra virtut; que si és mesclada ab mel se-n unta hom los
uyils, val molt a la dolor d'aquells. [81] It can és cuyta [la babor de]
esta erba profita a les oreyles qui son plenes de serx si és mes sa dins,
e val molt a aquells qui oyt no poden12(Faroado13).

First, verse 80 is missing in the Romance tradition and, more important,
the Catalan and Occitan texts are not at all literal, but rather,
periphrastic, a fact which may be explained by hypothesizing the
mediation of a Latin prose version. In contrast, such an assumption
is not necessary for explaining our Hebrew translation, which can
perfectly derive from the original work written in verse. A further
contrast that can be seen in this passage is that the Occitan version
contains additional information (e.g., on the time and the frequency
of the medication) that does not derive from the original text.

The five plants described in our texts were widely used in the
medicine of the Middle Ages, and are still in use today. For garlic
(Allium sativum), Fischer (p. 193) confirms its use in the Middle Ages
against kidney diseases (used in a poultice), intestinal parasites and
urinating difficulties. In addition to what is mentioned in the Macer
text, garlic was used, according to Fischer, for a whole series of other
diseases (e.g., hoarseness, spitting of blood, deafness, anal prolapse,
and epilepsy). It was also employed as an aphrodisiac, while a garlic
elixir was used externally for a migraine. Nettles (Urtica, especially
Urtica dioica and Urtica urens) were used against the spitting of the
blood, cancer, and diseases of the spleen (see Fischer, p. 197). Usually,
for afflictions other than those mentioned in the Macer text, the
seeds were used (against expectoration from the throat, ache in the
breast and gastric complaints), while its juice was supposed to help
with aches and pains in the joints and purulent wounds, and its roots
against nose-bleeding. Other medical uses mentioned by Fischer which
do not appear in the Macer text are against angina, headache (exter-
ernally), kidney diseases, and the removal of foreign bodies, and
swollen glands. Artemisia vulgaris was called mater herbarum in
Medieval Latin. Some of the pharmacological properties mentioned
are confirmed by Fischer (p. 224) as attributed to this plant in the
Middle Ages, including its use against angina, lung diseases, men-
suration problems and generally for the healing of the womb. It was
also used against fainting, neuralgias (as nowadays), fever and foot
ache. For wormwood (Artemisia absinthium), Fischer (p. 224) con-
firmsthat most of the therapeutic qualities mentioned in the text
were, in fact, common in the Middle Ages: namely, against cough,

12 We introduced the words “la babor de” in accordance with the Castilian and the
Aragonese versions, which represent an older stage than does the Catalan (see Men-
sching, in press). On the same evidence, we emended the words in italics: oyt ‘to hear’
(where the Catalan manuscript has dormir ‘to sleep,’ and serx ‘wax’ instead of carm
‘flesh’).

13 L. Faroado de Saint-Germain, “Una versió catalana del Libre de les herbes de
Macer,” Estudis Romànics 5 (1955) 11.
mushroom poisoning, intestinal parasites (as today), liver diseases (including liver abscesses and liver sclerosis) and tumors. Applied externally, it was used against stomach-ache and vomiting, whereas the powder was supposed to help against eye-ache, and the plant was used as a component of salves for wounds. The numerous other applications of this plant described by Fischer include afflictions like flatulence, swollen testicles (in a poultece), fever, insomnia and podagra (as today). For the therapeutic qualities of *Artemisia abrotanum*, the following uses mentioned by Fischer (p. 224) more or less coincide with those found in our text: against serpents, the removal of foreign bodies from the skin, the effect against stitches in the breast and against cough. In addition, the seed was employed against asthma. For nervous diseases, Fischer mentions frenzy and obsession. Other diseases not appearing in Macer are, among others, headache, stomach-aches, scurf, boils and gout.

An interesting characteristic of the Hebrew Mace text is the use of Latin and Romance lexical elements. Some Latin words like *hydropicus* seem to have been taken from the original Latin text but, in other cases, different Latin forms were used, as, e.g., *uvilla*, the usual Medieval Latin word rather than the more classical *uva* used in the Latin Macer Floridus. Other elements are clearly Romance, e.g., *ortiga/orrega*. Most of these are similar or identical in many Romance languages, but some clearly belong to the Occitan/Catalan region, e.g., *blavures* ‘livid spots’ and *fastig* ‘disgust.’ Since Old Occitan and Old Catalan were very similar, the exact provenance of the text is not clear, though there are some hints which make Occitan seem more probable: *lucta* ‘uvilla’ is not documented in Old Catalan according to the dictionaries we consulted, and in one case we find the spelling *-gl* for the sound [ɑ]; *granogla* ‘frog,’ is usually spelled *granoya* or *granola* in O. Cat. and *granola* in O. Occ., but in the latter *-gl* was sometimes used instead of *-lh.* Nevertheless, this is not definitive, since Catalan writers frequently used Old Occitan until the beginning of the 14th century and, on the other hand, there were Catalan influences in the medico-botanical literature of Occitan.

Given the fact that there was a rather important vernacular tradition of the Mace text in Romance-speaking areas, particularly in the Occitan and the Catalan regions, the question might arise whether the glosses were taken from some Romance manuscript. However, the comparison between the Hebrew and the Romance texts (see above) shows that the former is totally independent of the Occitan Macer Floridus tradition. As a matter of fact, the Romance words appearing as glosses in the Hebrew text (e.g., *estuba* and *resolvera* in our example) do not actually appear in the Romance versions. It is therefore not very probable that the Hebrew translator used not only the Latin, but also some Romance version, from which he copied the glosses. Rather, it has to be pointed out that the use of such glosses in Romance and other languages was a typical procedure in Hebrew and Arabic medico-botanical literature, as has been shown by, among others, Langermann. As Ferre observes in her study of the Latin elements in Hebrew medical texts from the same geographical area, the influence of Occitan and Catalan, that is, the languages in which the physician would talk to his patients, also has considerable importance in the transmission of scientific knowledge. However, the study of these Romance elements (as the ones to be observed in our text) has not yet been done. Their systematic investigation is the objective of a joint project by the authors of this article.

Finally, some rather striking words ending with *waw*, like *prwthw*, *prwthw* or *grwtw*, have to be discussed. These would not be strange in an Old Spanish text, since -o is a regular ending in this language, developed from the -u in the Latin ending -um. This ending was also used in Old Spanish to adapt Latin words, a frequent procedure in the medico-botanical vocabulary. Old Occitan and

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14 Latin elements in Middle Hebrew medical texts written in the Catalan-Occitan region are studied by Lola Ferre, “La terminología médica en las versiones hebraicas de textos latinos,” *Miscelánea de estudios Árabes y Hebraicos* 40 (1991) 87–107. Among others, she examines the way in which Latin terms were transcribed into Hebrew.

Old Catalan, however, had lost this ending, so that this hypothesis cannot hold here. Should these words, then, be considered as Old Spanish, perhaps because they were familiar to the writer or he had an Old Spanish glossary at hand? This is possible, due to the geographic and cultural proximity of the regions. It does not, however, seem very probable in our case because we do not find any "regular" Spanish words in our text, such as, e.g., ajenjo, which was the usual word besides the Latinizing absincio. All of these words are Latin, apart from their ending. How, then, can these cases be explained? Most often these forms are used after prepositions (see section 3, s.v. "psynsw, sl mwnt?nw, pwwr
w"), so that we can think of the final waw as a Latin ablative ending. In some cases, even the Latin Macker text shows this form. Independent evidence for the assumption that inflected forms were copied from the Latin text is the form 'ydw-pwyx', where the original reads hydropis. There are still some words for which this explanation does not seem to be valid (though it must be admitted that we do not know the Latin manuscript from which our text was translated). Another solution to our problem seems to be that these forms represent the letter -u, stemming from the usual abbreviated form of -um: u with a stroke over it. Instead of resolving this abbreviation, the Hebrew writer copied the Latin words as they were written, without the bar, because the Hebrew writing system had no comparable symbol, so that aprotanu was copied 'pwnw. The stroke above the -u is only one of the numerous abbreviations and ligatures used in Medieval Latin texts, yet the Hebrew writer seems to have understood all the others. Tzvi Langermann suggests that perhaps the answer lies in the pronunciation of the words. The Latin was read aloud, and the writer recorded the words as he heard them. This proposal seems to us a reasonable assumption, given the fact that, at least in France, the final -m in Medieval Latin was not pronounced.

In section 2, which follows, we transcribe the text, comparing it line by line with the Latin critical text established by Chouant. (On pp. 32–33, below, the order of the Hebrew text differs from the Latin as edited by Chouant. But since the Hebrew makes good sense as given in the manuscript, we kept the order as is and rearranged the corresponding Latin lines to maintain the synoptic correspondence.) Words and passages missing in the Hebrew translation have been set in italics; those with a different meaning have been underlined.

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2. The text
2.1 Synoptic Hebrew and Latin text (Berlin manuscript)

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I. Artemisia

*Herbarum quasdam dicturus carmine vires*

Herbarum matrem, dedit Artemisia nomen
*Cui gracces sermo, justum, puto ponere primo.
Huius opem fertur prior invenisse Diana,
Artemis graece quae dicitur, indeque nomen
Herba tenet, quia sic inventix dictur eius.
Praecipue morbis mallebrisus ista medetur:
Menstrua deducti eius decocito sumpta,
Hoeque facit, matrix si saepe fovetur cadem,
Vel si cruda mero sociata terendo bibatur,
THE JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW

II. Abrotanum

Tertius Abrotano legitur gradus esse caloris,
Et desiccandi semen ferventius herba est,
Unde iuvat nervos et causas pectoris omnem,
IIlius elixi s i sit decoctio sumpta.

Sic quoque dysnoicis prodest tussisimque repellit
Et prodest lumbis, sic vulvarumque querculis.
Omnibus his crudum cum vino proderit haustum,
Urinam purgat sic et prae cordia roundat,

Sic curat sciatis, Sic sumptam menstrua purgat,
Serpentes nidos fugat, hibitumque venena
IIlorum extinguit, sedat quoque frigora febris
Antea quan venient si mixto semitur amne,
THE JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW

MACER FLORIDUS—BOS AND MENSCHING

Aut oleo quo decoquitur ei membra perungas.

Lumbricos ventris haec saepe bibendo necabas.

Huic panis micas et mala cidonia iungens

Insimul amne coquas, oculorum cocta dolori

Apponas vel fervori, curabit utrumque.

Stirpes inixas et spinas abstrahet ipsum

Appositum per se vel adeps si iungitur illi.

Haec etiam venerem pulvino subdita tantum

Incitat, et veneri nocius potata resistit.

III. Absinthium

In primo calor esse gradu, vis sicca secundo

Dicitur Absinthii: stomachum corroborat herba

Illius quocunque modo quis suspenderit illam,

Sed melius pluviae si sit decoccta, liquore,

Et sic sub divo prius infrigidata bibitur,

Sic poterit variis eius succurrere morbis,

Hocque modo pellit lumbricos, mollit et alvum,

Eros et immoicium sedat sic sumpta dolorem,

Urinam, potu producit, menstrua solvit.

Illi si nardum, quam profert Gallia, iungas

Et contingat teras et multa trita resolvias,

Præcipue tali pargabat menstrua potu,

Hoc quoque præstabat cum lana subdita mollis.

Si siler et tardus et acetum iungitur illi

Noxiet detersus potu fastidia tali.

Gramina si rutae iungas huic salique piperque

Cumque mero tundens des haec decoctave potum,

Noxiet et crudus stomachi purgabatur humor.

In concrecta: pectus mie ireuat hausta.

Acri cum vino trita se quilibet ungens

Non mutet culices, ustaque fugantur odor.
THE JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW

MACER FLORIDUS—BOS AND MENSCHING

Ictericis crudam dabis hanc apio sociatum,
Curat hepar, sibi si uingatur gallica nardus,
Spleenque sibi iuncto potata invabit aceto.

Sic quoque fungorum depellit sumpta veneram,
Obstet letiferæ cum vino sumpta cicutae,
Sicque venenatis occurrit morsibus hausta,
Et claros oculos reddit cum melle peruncta.

Hocque modo sugiillis superaddita prodest.

Decoctaque vapor obturatus liberat aures,
Si manant sanie cum melle terens superadde.

Subvenit anginae melii nitroque iugata.

Vulneribus prodest contrita, recentibus illa,
Si superaddatur capitis sic ulcera curat;

Pruritusque iuvat eius decoctio fotu.

Nauseoa non poterit quemquam vexare marina,
Antea commixtum vino qui sumpserit illam.

In lini panno si circumsincta geratur

Iuguinis immodicum fertur cohibere tumorem.

Olfactu somnum capiti vel subdita, praestat,
Hanc sibi supponi si non praeoempairit aeger.

Denigrat crines hisus eius, si bene mixtus

Ceroio fuerit et eo sint saepè peruncti,

A lineis tatum reddi qua conditioner arcam.

Sub lingua factum curat cum melle tumorem,

Livreomque nigrum, qui circa luminis orbeh
Apparere solet, purgabit idem medicamen.

Annis depellit sonitum cum felle bovino.

Durtiam, splenis eius cataplasma resolvit.

Coniuncto sibi melle strene si subditur herba

Desiccati cem, manareque menstrua coges;

Ex oleo fuerit viridis si cocta, iuvabit

Non modice stomachum, quot erit hoc unguenea fotus

Lucastum vino, quo sit macerata, resolve:
Si scribis chartam mus non tenet amplius illam,
Plinius attollit magnis hanc laudibus herbam,
Romanosque refert sacris ex more diebus
Dum quadrigrarum cursu certare solerent,
Absinthii succum solitos donare bibendum
in capitoline victorii sede locato,
Credentes pretium prae cunctis reddere dignum
Illi, quo firmam posset servare salutem,
quae constat mundi pretio pretiosior omni.

IV. Urtica

Dicimus Urtican, quam Graecus Acalype dicit,
Fervida non modice vis illi dicitur esse,

Unde nec immerito nomen sumpsisse videtur,
Tacta sequit exurry digitos Urtica tenentis.
Haec solent ictericos cum vino sumpta juvare,
Illius semen colicis cum melle medetur
Et tussim vetem curat, si saepe bibatur.
Omnibus his prodest pulvis cum melle iugatus,
Aut success viridis cum vino saepius haustus.

Frigus pulmonis pellit ventrisque tumorem.
Cum sale de folis eius factum cataplasm,
Ulcercibus prodest et sordida vulnera purgat.
Et contra morsus valet hoc cataplasm caninos,
Hocque reformatur caro, quae discis sit ab osse

Et cancrus et parotides luxataque curat,
Et solet humores hoc desisare nocentes.
Acri cum vino radix contrita tumorem
Compescit splenis, podagrae sic subventit illa
Omnibus et morbis sic subventit articulorum,
Omnibus his prodest superaddita, vel si iuncto
Si coquis hanc oleo fevesque hoc ungue membra.
Naribus impositus succus foliuntve cruem rem
Elicit; innatis vis est sibi tanta caloris,
Quod si manantem cupias retinetre cruem rem,
Urticae succo frontem linea, reprimis illum.
Si supponatur cum myrrha menstrua pellit,
Si claudit vulvam matrix humore gravata
Urticae foliis revocabitur illa fricata.

Semen, si sumptum fuerit cum melle ingustum,
pleureticos, pectus, pulmones adivae eius
Cum vino bibitum venerem semen movet eius,
Et melius tritae si iungas melque pipereque
Et si cum vino praedicto morbo bibatur
Cum multis bibitum lotium producit abundans.
Herba recens eius oferum si more coquatur,
Detur et illius decoctio, molillet alvum.
Ore diu clausus succus si volvitur eius
Uvae non modicum poterit sedare tumorem.
Sudorem movet ex oleo decocta perunctis.
Si quadrupes quaerantque marem perferre rescusat,
Urticae foliis illius vulva fricetur.
Sic naturalem calor excitat ille calorem.
Deffluvium capitis, succo seminis huius
Ungas saepe caput, reprimis dicit Galienus,
Illius semen collectum tempore messis
Et desiccatum multis erit utile causis.

IV. Allium

Scorron argive sunt Allia dicta latine,
Huitis vim medici calidam sicemanque periti
In quarto posuere gradu. Mansum vel inunctum
Curat, quos serpens vel scorpionis intuit, ictus;

Et nocui vermes viti pellitantur odore.

Sauut et appossum morsus cum melle caninos
In melis coctum commixtum cui sit acutum.
2.2 Critical apparatus

B¹ = Note in the margin of MS Berlin
B² = Note under or above the line of MS Berlin
*= conicrèmus vel cores crèmus
B¹ delevit (15) (16) (10) (20) (21) (23)
B² delevit (15) (16) (10) (20) (21) (23)

Praxagoras illo fuit usus cum coriandro
Et vino, causis sic curam ictericorum.
Et sic potatum dicit quod molliat alvum.
Cumque faba coctum capitis sedare dolorem
Dicitur, attrito si tempora perlinis illo.
Anseris haec adipent iungas tepidumque dolenti
Infundas auri, praeclare subvenit illi.
Elixum iussim iuvavit et suspiria sedavit.
Clarificat raecum cruda coctum quoque vocem.
Sed magis elixum iuvavit ilam saepè comestum.
Aduavit incoctum puliti sumptumque tenesmon.
Porcino itingens adipi si conteris ipsum.
Non modicos reprimes superaddens saepè tumores.
Hunc ignotarium. potes non laedit aquarum
Nec diversorum mutatio facta locorum,
Allia qui mane ictuino sumperit ore.
2.3 The fragment from the Munich manuscript

This fragment alludes to the following two verses of the Latin text (vv. 1423–24):

Fistula curatur huius radicibus herbas,
Si bene purgatis eius loca concava farcis;

2.4 English translations
2.4.1 MS Berlin

Says the author, the physician whose name is Macer: I (always) wanted to speak about the powers of the drugs and healthy (i.e., health-providing) herbs, and therefore I will now inform (you) about some of them according to my ability.

Artemisia

Artemisia is Artemisia and shwmy because [2] it is called the mother of the herbs. [5–6] The Greeks call her Artemis. It is therefore called Artemisia because [7] above it heals women's diseases. [8] When one takes a decoction of it, it induces menstruation. [9] It has the same effect when the uterus is frequently fomented with it, [10] or when it is pounded in a raw state and drunk with pure wine, [11] or when it is pounded when it is fresh and bound on the belly opposite the uterus for the night. [12] When it is drunk or put into the vagina it expels the foetus which died in the uterus, [13] removes the hardness of the uterus or a tumor in it, [14] induces micturition and removes stones. [15] When frequently taken with wine, it is good for icterus. [16–17] Pliny the physician has said and recommended to put it with fat on the swollen glands of the neck, and ordered to pound it and drink it frequently with wine. [18–19] If taken with wine it saves them who took (an overdose of) opium.

[20–22] It is said that if someone carries it no harmful ingredient (poisonous drug) can harm him, nor the bite of any wild animal. [23–24] The poison of the animal called ranah and of the animal called granogla cannot harm him who carries its root around his neck. [25] Nor can it harm someone who takes a drink prepared from it with wine. [26–27] If the fresh herb (plant) is pounded and conserved with wine, then that wine is good for the affictions mentioned (above); [28–29] it tastes and smells good and strengthens the stomach and heals the respiratory organs. [30] It is also good for many other things. When someone who travels by foot holds it in his hand he will not suffer from pain caused by the walking.

Abrotanum

[31] It is hot and dry in the third degree. [32] Its seed is hotter than the plant; [33] therefore it is good for the nerves and for all the things which affect the chest [34] when one drinks a decoction of it. [35] It is also good for dysnoia which is asthma and for cough. [36–37] It is beneficial for the genital organs and uterus when something is drunk from it in a raw state with wine. [38] It induces micturition and cleanses the respiratory organs. [39] It heals sciatica and purifies the menses. [40–41] Because of its smell it chases away serpents, and when it is drunk it removes (neutralizes) their poison. It alleviates the coldness of fevers [42–43] when one drinks it with water before the onset of the fever or when one rubs the organs, above all the spine, with some of the oil in which it has been cooked. [44] It kills intestinal worms when it is drunk frequently. [45–47] If one cooks breadcrumbs and quinces in water and applies this for pain or heat in the eyes it heals both of them. [48–49] It extracts thorns stuck in someone's flesh when applied to it either on its own or mixed with fat. [50] When one makes one's bed with it, it strengthens the lust for sexual intercourse. [51] When one drinks it, it protects against (harmful) sexual intercourse, i.e., it reduces it...

20 B delevit. מה לאולב.
21 Fennel; Foeniculum vulgare.
22 Hebrew bešah, Latin struma.
when drunk. Explication: The bed made with it strengthens the lust but the opposite occurs when one drinks it.

Absinthium

[52] It is hot in the first degree and dry in the second. [53–54] When one takes its plant in whatever way one wants, it strengthens the stomach. [55] But the best way is to boil it in rainwater [56] and to let it cool under the open air and to drink it. [57] Thus it can be beneficial and help against different diseases (i.e., those that do not resemble each other). [58–59] and thus it expels (lit., chases away) worms, it brings relief and allays the severe pain in the stomach. [60–61] It induces micturition when it is drunk, and induces menstruation when it is mixed and pounded with Celtic nard. [62–63] When it is drunk with mead, it purifies the menses most of all. [64] It has the same effect when it is applied in a suppository. [65–66] When drunk with sil montana and vinegar, it removes nausea. [67–69] When it is mixed with rue, salt and pepper and then everything is pounded with pure wine and boiled and drink, it cleanses the crude humor from the stomach. [70] Drunk with Illyric iris it is beneficial for the chest. [71] When pounded with vinegar and rubbed in one’s body, [72] one does not have to fear for flies26 because its smell chases them away. [73] The plant should be administered raw to those who suffer from icterus. [74–75] When mixed with Celtic nard and drunk with vinegar it cures the liver. [76] When imbued it removes (neutralizes) the poison of mushrooms if someone takes these. [77] It protects against the poison of fatal hemlock [78] and against the bites of poisonous animals. [79] It lightens up the eyes on which it has been rubbed with honey. [80] It is good for blavuras, i.e., those spots of the sick that are of a bluish color. [81] When boiled,27 the vapor opens blocked ears. [82] When pounded with honey it cleanses purulent matter in the ears. [83] Mixed with honey and natron it saves from and helps against angina. [84] Pounded it heals fresh wounds when it is put onto them; [85] similarly head wounds. [86] A decoction of it is beneficial for itching. [87–88] Pounded with wine and drunk it annuls the lust for vomiting (need to vomit). [89–90] Pounded and put into a piece of cloth it removes a tumor in the groin. [91–92] Put under the head of someone who is ill while he is unaware of it makes him fall asleep because of its smell. [93–94] Its plant mixed with wax prepared from two parts of tar and one part of wax blackens the hairs when it is smeared on them repeatedly. [95] The box it is in will be safe from moths. [96] Mixed with honey it cures a tumor on the tongue. [97] It is also good for livid spots that usually appear under the eyes. [99] Mixed with the gall of a bull it removes sound and noise in the ears. [100] A plaster with it softens the hardness of the spleen. [101–2] When the plant is mixed with honey and put into the vagina, it purifies it and induces menstruation. [103–4] When it is boiled—while fresh—with oil and then some of it is rubbed on the stomach, it is very good for it. [105–6] If it is drunk with pure wine it is very good for the preservation of health. [107–11] Pliny the physician praises this plant exceedingly and relates that the people of Rome would first of all drink the absinthus potion when they were holding races during their festivals and then they would put some of the plant on the winner to honor him. A great name and service (is offered to the winner) by the plant which was considered (a price worthy) above (all things, because it would help him to conserve his health), which is known to be a precious property.28

Urtica

[115] This is a plant which in Greek is called Akalyphe. [116] It is hot and its heat is immoderate, i.e., it is too hot. [117] It is called by this name [118] because it stings the fingers which touch it. [119] Drunk with wine it is beneficial for icterus. [120] (When one takes)

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26The Latin reads culices (gnats).
its seed with honey it is good for a bad colic. [121] When it is drunk frequently it cures old (chronic, inveterate?) cough. [123–24] When one takes its powder with honey or takes fresh juice prepared from it frequently with wine it is beneficial for all these diseases: [122] coldness of the heart, \textsuperscript{29} tumors in the stomach. [125–26] A plaster prepared from the leaves with salt\textsuperscript{30} is good for ulcers and purifies wounds. [127] It is also good for the bites of a dog [129] and fills up the flesh that is lost, corrupted and wasted away (from the bones)\textsuperscript{31} in the flesh because of a disease and many other things. [128] When boiled it cures cancer and an abscess\textsuperscript{32} in the ears [130] and dries harmful humors. [131–32] When its root is pounded with vinegar it cures a tumor of the spleen and is good for podagra [133] and all the diseases of the joints.\textsuperscript{33} [134–35] It is good for all these diseases on its own or boiled with oil when some of it is rubbed on the organs which have the disease. [136–37] When the extract of its leaves is put into the nose it makes blood flow from it because of its great heat. [138–39] If you want to stop the blood from flowing you should rub some of the extract of urtica on the forehead. [140] When it is put into the vagina mixed with myrrh it induces menstruation. [141–42] If the uterus which is burdened by humors and [the vagina which is] closed is rubbed with some of the leaves the orifice will be opened; then the uterus will be purified since it is open. [143–47] The seed mixed with honey and drunk is good for pleuritis, the chest and the lungs. When the seed is drunk with wine it strengthens (the lust for) sexual intercourse; above all when it is pounded and mixed with honey and pepper and then drunk altogether. [148] When the seed is drunk with mead it induces micturition. [149–50] If a fresh plant is boiled just like cabbage and the decoction is administered it softens the belly. [151–52] If its juice is kept in the mouth for a long time it reduces a tumor on the uvula. [153] When the plant is boiled with oil it induces perspiration. [154–56] When quadrupeds are not being impregnated by males, the vagina should be rubbed with an urtica leaf because the heat of the urtica increases the natural heat. [157–58] When the head is frequently rubbed with its juice it stops a defluxion from it according to Galen.\textsuperscript{34} [159–60] Its seed collected in the time of the harvest and dried is good for many things.

\textbf{Allium}

[161] is \textit{shwnyn}, and it is called \textit{scorodon} in (the Greek) language. [162–64] The expert physicians say that it is hot and dry in the fourth degree. Applied in a dressing or rubbed it cures the bite of a scorpion. [166] Harmful worms flee from the smell of pounded garlic. [165] Applied in a dressing with honey it cures bites. [167–68] When it is boiled with mead and mixed with vinegar and drunk it kills worms and expels them from the stomach. [169–70] When it is boiled with its own stalk and with oil it renders the bites of poisonous creatures harmless when they are rubbed with it. [171] If you rub the body with it, it is cured as well.\textsuperscript{35} [172] Pain and tumors in the bladder are reduced when it is applied in an ointment. [173–74] Hippocrates has said that it expels the placenta if the womb is fumigated with it. [175] When drunk with wine it is good for diseases of the lungs; [176] it is good for them when either drunk or consumed raw. [177–78] Diocles prescribes it with centaureum for those suffering from dropsy because it dries the watery humors; he also prescribes it for those who suffer from kidney stones.

2.3.2 \textit{MS Munich}

Macer the physician said: If one pounds gentian into a fine substance, it kills a fistula. Macer also said: If one pounds \textit{aristolochia rotunda} into a fine substance and puts it on a fistula, it heals it.\textsuperscript{36}

3. Glossary of foreign terms

\textit{‘wbwl} \textsuperscript{37} (152): “uvula”—\textit{Latin uvula}. Celsius (1st century CE) used \textit{uva} for denoting the fleshy lobe in the center of the posterior part of the soft palate. This is also the form which appears

\textsuperscript{29} The Latin text reads “lung.”
\textsuperscript{30} According to the Latin text. The Hebrew reads “applied while it is hot.”
\textsuperscript{31} Cf. Latin quae discessit ab osse.
\textsuperscript{32} The Latin text has parotitis (parotitis).
\textsuperscript{33} Translated after the Latin articula. The Hebrew text has “fingers.”
\textsuperscript{34} “It stops a defluxion from it,” translated after the Latin; the Hebrew text reads “it stops something...”
\textsuperscript{35} Translated after the Latin. The Hebrew text is corrupt.
\textsuperscript{36} Only the recipe with \textit{aristolochia rotunda} features in Macer floridus, ed. Choult, II. 1423–24.
in the Latin Macer text. During the Middle Ages the diminutive form "uula" appearing in the Hebrew text was more usual. Another diminutive was "uvita", from which O. Occ. "lueta" (PSW 4.414: "lueta tombada") derives, cf. Old and Middle French "luete" (mod. Fr. "luette"). DETEMA 1614c ("uula" as used in O. Sp. texts), DuC 8.397b, FEW 14.90b–91a, Gammilschege 580b.

אילוס "עִבְּרִית" (158): "śwryg" (155): "śwryg" (156): "śwryg"/śwrryq. The forms "śwryq"/śwrryq may have been influenced by O. Occ. variants like "horeg" mentioned by CB 449. DECLC 6.127a–128b, DETEMA 1154ab, FEW 14.66a–69b.


Ailios "śphyqys" (178): "dropsy sufferers"—Either Lat. hydropecis (dat. or abl.), as used in the Latin Macer text, or O. Fr. idropiques (the Old Occ./O. Cat. form would have been idropie). FEW 4.523a.

Ailios "ślyxś" ślyyqyś (70): "Illyric iris"—The form ćlis should be interpreted as a corrupt form of ćris (= Lat. and Romance) in which -r- was changed into -l- through the influence of Illica. Alternatively one might think of an influence of O. Fr. līs/līs (lily). According to Pliny the most highly esteemed species of iris is found in Illyria.37 In medieval glosses the following plants are given as synonyms: liliun celiniun, liliun purpureum, gladiolus hortensis, soldagine (CGL 3, 539.52, 539.66, 591.36, 540.5). See also Theophrastus 9.7.4 (Enquiry into Plants), DETEMA 890b, FEW 1.485ab.

Ailios "śylw" (81): "bath of vapor or the room where it was taken"—Old Occ., O. Cat., O. Sp. estuba. DCECH 2.816a–817b, DETEMA 692c, FEW 13.457/485bc.

Ailios "śqun"śqun (15); Lat. syrinus "śqunyś" (73, 119): "icterus"—Variants of Lat. ictericia, synonym of icterus, also used in Romance (ictericia: O. Occ., O. Cat., O. Sp., with variants like ictericia,ictericia, ytricia (see CB 486 for O. Occ., ytericia, ictericia). Latin -ct- was most probably pronounced -r- in all Romance lan-

38 Cf. also V. Bertoldi, "Di alcuni nomi dell'iris florentina e di altre specie affini," Archivum Romanicum 6 (1922) 280–284, particularly p. 283.

bwlw (76): “mushroom”—Lat. boletus ‘a kind of mushroom, fungus,’ Old Occ. and O. Cat. bolet ‘mushroom.’ The form found here might be interpreted as boletotrum. FEW 1.426h–427a, LR 1.234a, DECLC 2.676–68b.

blywrs (80) בְּלַיוֹרָס: “livid spot(s)”—O. Occ. or O. Cat. blavor or blavura ‘lividity,’ ‘bluish spot,’ both derived from blau (fem. blava) ‘blue.’ Not all the forms could be documented in the older stages, but if they cannot be found elsewhere they are to be postulated on the evidence of our manuscript. Cf. Mod. Occ. and Cat. blavor (Alibert 1.162a, DCVB 2.521b), O. and Mod. Cat. blavura (DECLC 1.835b, DCVB 2.521b).

gysnys’n (MS Munich §2.3): “gentian”—Latin/Romance gentiana/genticiana. The usual Romance forms were O. Occ. gansana (FEW 4.109, CB 446), O. Cat. genç(i)ana, O. Sp. genciana (DETEMA 768b–769a; Sin. 70.14, 71.38, 114.6; comm. 195). The recipe given in the Hebrew text does not derive from the Latin Macer text but must be based on another source. For recipes in which genciana is indicated together with aristologia (especially a. longa) see DETEMA (t.c.).

gly’n (158): “Galien”—Galienus was a usual medieval Latin form of Galenus, cf. the Latin Macer text. Other manuscripts have Galenus, to which Choulant (p. 34) remarks: “Galenus rectius legitur, ut hodie adhuc Galien apud Francogallos.” The form Galieno used in Hebrew might be a Latin infllected form (some manuscripts have “reprimis doctore Galeno” instead or “reprimi dict Galienus,” see Choulant’s critical apparatus) or O. Sp.

40 Christian Foltys suggests that the plural form should be read either blavors or blavures, since there is no aleph in the ending; the same might be the case in blywrs above (to be read bubes rather than bubs); whereas weyrs below might be vesice (= the genitive or dative form vesica, as in the Latin text). Since the graphemic study of Romance and Latin words in this and other texts is still in process, we did not include this kind of conjecture in the article, although they are worthwhile considering. We thank Christian Foltys for other helpful comments, particularly on the words ylyry, grylge, kadd’h, and dysny’h. For the sake of brevity, not all of his ideas could be included in the present article.

41 In Old Occ. we find biavaca (LR 226a), and it is very probable that biavura existed too, according to O. Occ. word formation rules. There are several documented parallels in the deajecival formations of both types: dolseta-dolseta ‘sweetness,’ longuer-la-longura ‘length,’ sometimes with color adjectives of type negreca-negura ‘blackness’ as is the case with blavura here. Cf. E. L. Adams, Word-Formation in Old Provençal (New York, 1913).
The Hebrew quarterly review 48

MACER FLORIDUS—BOS AND MENSCHING


*ψυκτρία* (161)—“wild leek”—Greek σκόρδος/Latin *scordoe(n)*, probably *Allium ampeloprasum*, cf. Sin. 211, 251.

*ψυχρά* (129)—“cancer”—Probably Latin *cancre(n)*, acc. of cancer.

A medicinal *qrw* (10)—“raw,” Latin *crudus, crudum*. The form *qrwdw* may be interpreted as *crudum* or *crudo* (dat. or abl. sg. masc./neut.).

A medicinal *qqâb* (76)—“hemlock”—O. Occ. *cicuta* or rather *cocuda ‘cicuta’*. Cf. FEW 2.668a, PSW 1.272.

A medicinal *râna ‘frog’* (23)—Lat. *rana* ‘frog’.

A medicinal *ryswibâ* (81)—O. Occ. *resolvera*, 3. pers. sg. future of resolver/resolver.


4. Summary and prospects

Due to the Occitan elements in the text, the Hebrew translation of Macer Floridus may be considered as a further piece of evidence for the reception of the Macer Floridus in Southern France, which complements the situation that is reflected in the edition of four different Occitan Macer manuscripts by Corradiini Bozzi. In contrast to these Romance translations, the Hebrew translation is clearly the most thorough and literal. As we have shown in our synopsis, we can usually follow the Latin text line by line. If our hypothesis about the anonymous translator is correct, the Hebrew text can be considered
the first non-Latin version of Macer Floridus, not only regarding Romance, but also in general. Finally, the Occitan elements in the text can be interpreted in relation to the importance of Occitania with respect to Jewish medicine. Since the middle of the 11th century, Montpellier had been a center for the study and practice of medicine while Jewish physicians played a prominent role at its famous medical school.  


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