

**Interpretationes
Herbarum Aliorumque Magicorum**

e papyro graeca magica XII

Interpretations

Which the Temple Scribes employed, from the Holy Writings, in translation. Because of the Curiosity of the Masses they [i.e., the scribes] inscribed the Names of the Herbs and Other Things which they employed on the Statues of the Gods, so that they [the masses], since they do not take Precaution, might not practice Magic, [being prevented] by the Consequence of their Misunderstanding. But we have collected the explanations from many Copies, all of them Secret.

Here they are:

A Snake's Head: a Leech.
A Snake's Ball of Thread: this means Soapstone.
Blood of a Snake: Hematite.
A Bone of an Ibis: this is Buckthorn.
Blood of a Hyrax: truly of a Hyrax [probably the rock hyrax, *Procavia capensis*].
Tears [Sleep Sand] of a Hamadryas Baboon: Dill Juice.
Crocodile Dung: Ethiopian Soil.
Blood of a Hamadryas Baboon: Blood of a Spotted Gecko.
Lion Semen: Human Semen.
Blood of Hephaistos: Wormwood.
Hairs of a Hamadryas Baboon: Dill Seed.
Semen of Hermes: Dill.
Blood of Ares: Purslane.
Blood of an Eye: Tamarisk Gall.
Blood from a Shoulder: Bear's Breach [probably *Acanthus mollis* L. or *Helleborus foetidus* L.].
From the Loins: Camomile.
A Man's Bile: Turnip Sap [probably *Brassica napus* L.].
A Pig's Tail: Leopard's Bane [probably a variety of leopard's bane in the genus *Boronicum*, or one of the heliotropes].
A Physician's Bone: Sandstone.
Blood of Hestia: Camomile.
An Eagle: Wild Garlic [*Trigonella foenumgraecum*, but the reading is doubtful].
Blood of a Goose: A Mulberry Tree's Milk.
Kronos' Spice: Piglet's Milk.
A Lion's Hairs: Tongue of a Turnip [i.e., the leaves of the taproot].
Kronos' Blood: . . . of Cedar.
Semen of Helios: White Hellebore.
Semen of Herakles: this is Mustard-rocket [probably *Eruca sativa*].
A Titan's Blood: Wild Lettuce.
Blood from a Head: Lupine.
A Bull's Semen: Egg of a Blister Beetle.
A Hawk's Heart: Heart of Wormwood.
Semen of Hephaistos: This is Fleabane.
Semen of Ammon: Houseleek.
Semen of Ares: Clover.
Fat from a Head: Spurge.
From the Belly: Earth-apple.
From the Foot: Houseleek.
[PGM XII.401-44]

Notes

This list (slightly adapted) is from Hans Dieter Betz (ed.), *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation including the Demotic Spells*, Univ. Chicago Press, 1986 167-169. Similar lists can be found in *De succedaneis* transmitted among the works of Galen, *Claudii Galeni Opera Omnia* (Kuhn, ed.), vol. 19, 721-47; adapted version in Paul of Aegina, *Paulus Aegineta, Corpus Medicorum Graecorum IX/2* (Heiberg, ed.), vol. II, 401-8; and in Dioscorides' *Materia Medica*.

-- John Opsopaus