

A Recipe for Black Ink in a Manuscript of ‘Aṭā’ī’s *Ḥamse*

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Context

The short recipe presented here is found in a manuscript in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz with the shelfmark Ms. or. oct. 1629. It is a copy of Nev'izāde 'Aṭāyī's (d. 1635) *Hamse*, which was completed in Istanbul in 1684. The *Hamse* itself ends on fol. 269r, and on the last fol., 270r, someone – possibly the copyist himself – has noted a recipe for the production of a “Yāḳūt-i Musta'ṣimī” ink.²

Although not explicitly stated, it can be seen from the ingredients that the recipe is apparently intended to create black ink, based on soot and iron sulphate. The recipe does not specify the substance from which the soot is obtained, as is quite common in other formulae.

Transcription

Terkīb-i mürekkeb-i Yāḳūt-i Müsta'ṣimī

ṣabr-i soḳoṭrī³ dirhem 2

ḥinnā suyı m 2

zāc suyı m 2

māzū m 10

dūde m 3

Ḥāccī Bektaş tuzı⁴ m 2

mā'-i verd m 3

nebāt m 2

zağferān m 2

¹ A certain Ḥasan Āmidī, fol. 269r: “*an yeddi Ḥasan Āmidī.*”

² Yāḳūt al-Musta'ṣimī (el-Müsta'ṣimī in Ottoman vocalisation, d. 1299) came to the court of the last Abbasid caliph al-Musta'ṣim Bi-llāh (hence his epithet) as a slave and became one of the most important and innovative calligraphers. Through his “canonisation” of the *aḳlām-i sitte*, he became a role model for generations of calligraphers.

³ This is *aloe succotrina* whose name derives from the Island of Socotra. In order to use it as an ink raw material, the juice is pressed from its thick leaves and left to concentrate in the sun. Cf. Demir, *Gülzâr-ı Savâb*, p.155.

⁴ Salt from the Hacı Bektaş mine near Nevşehir, which is still in use today as table salt.

zamğ-i 'arabī m 13

cümle eczā dirhem 41

Evvelā zamğı havāna [!] koyub ḥall idesin ba 'dehū dūde' i içine koyasın

iki gün geregi gibi saḥḥ idüb üçinci gün eczāları ko[yu]b cümlesin

saḥḥ idesin ba 'dehū zāc şuyı ile ḥall idüb süzesiz a 'lā ola

Translation

Recipe for ink à la Yāḳūt el-Müsta'şimī

aloe, *dirhem*⁵ 2

henna water, *m*⁶ 2

ferrous sulfate water, *m* 2

nutgall, *m* 10

soot, *m* 3

salt from Ḥācī Bektaş, *m* 2

rose-water, *m* 3

rock candy,⁷ *m* 2

saffron, *m* 2

gum arabic, *m* 13

all substances *dirhem* 41

First, put the gum in a mortar and grind (lit. „dissolve“) it, then add the soot. Pound it for two days as necessary,⁸ add the [other] substances on the third day, pound all of them, then dissolve it with ferrous sulfate water and sieve it. It will be excellent.

⁵ One *dirhem* is approximately 3,2 grams.

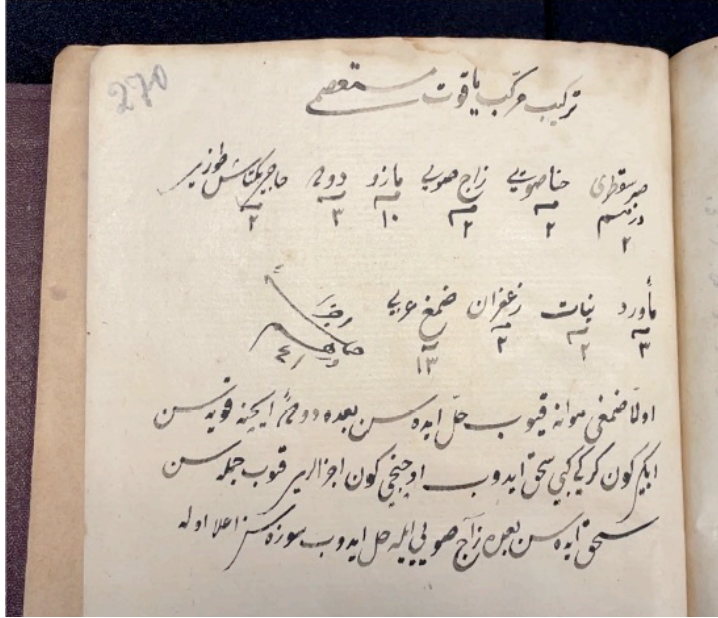
⁶ Here and passim the *m* is the abbreviation of *dirhem*.

⁷ Candy sugar was used to add shine to the ink. cf. Cf. Demir, *Gülzâr-ı Savâb*, p.155.

⁸ Ink was actually pounded for several days before it reached its optimum quality. For example, in the *Gülzâr-i Şavâb* p. 94, an ink recipe reads: "Havanda on bin kerre darb edeler". However, there are also recipes that prescribe 80,000 or even 500,000 poundings.

Cf. <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/murekkep>

Facsimile



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