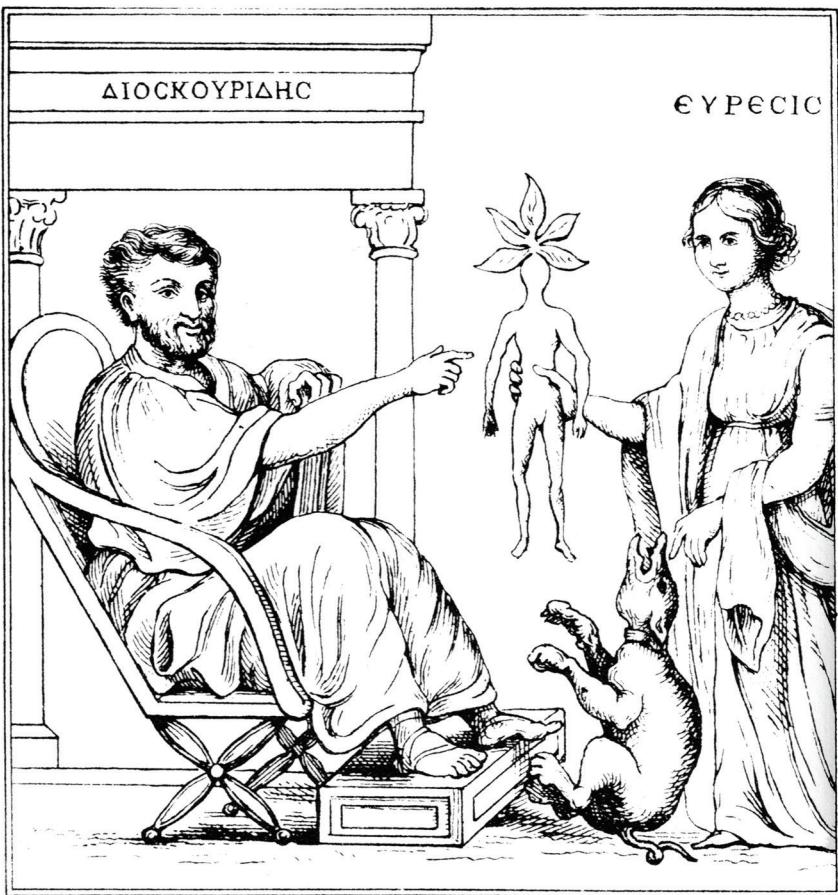


ΔΙΟΣΚΟΥΡΙΔΗС

ΕΥΡΕCΙC



THE GREEK HERBAL OF
DIOSCORIDES

FIVE REDISTRIBUTIONS
BY JORDAN DUNN

ADAPTED FROM JOHN GOODYER'S
1655 TRANSLATION

OXEYE PRESS 2017

BOOK IV SECTION 76

ATROPA MANDRAGORA: MANDRAKE

After it is stirred about and laid up in an earthen vessel, the pulp of the bark is juiced by first being beaten when it is new if the leaves are greater, whiter, broader, and smoother (as of the beet) when cut or cauterized in order to soften the apples and return them to a manner made asleep. The root is like that before it, but greater and whiter and without stalk, having been grievous before the not-feeling of pain in the upward expulsion of phlegm. Being drank too much it causes sleep and may even drive out life if previously used to soften ivory when it was with it and made ready with it to be formed into a fashion of will. When rubbed on gently for five or six days, the strokes of serpents take on a sweet scent and can be gathered up into concavity while gaining effectual tenderness in their own brine. If the time is brought to the one who ingests it like a bundle of dried leaves done through with thread, it will hang there

*Mandagoras,
which some call
Antimelon, some
call it Dircea,
some Ciraea
(some Circaeum,
some Xeranthe,
some Antim-
nion, some
Bombochylon,
some Minon, ye
Egyptians Ape-
num, Pythag-
oras Anthropo-
morphon, some
Aloitin, some
Thridacian,
some Camma-
ron, Zoroastres
Diamonon, or
Archinen, ye
Magi Hem-
inous, some
Gonogeonas, ye
Romans Mala
canina, some
Mala terrestria].*

*Since that the
root seems to be
a maker of love
medicines.*

*There is of it one
sort that is*

*foemall, which
is black, called*

*Thridacias,
having narrower
& longer leaves
than lettuce,
of a poisonous
& heavy scent
to the smell,
scattered upon
the ground,*

*& amongst them
the apples like
Service berries,
pale, of a sweet
scent, in which
the seed as of a
pear:*

*The roots two
of three of a
good bigness,
wrapped within
one another,
black according
to outward ap-
pearance, within
white & of a
thick bark, but
bears no stalk.*

*But of the male,
and white which
some have called
Norion, the
leaves are greater*

until brought down and put under a press. The apples are also juiced in this way and are used for purging the matrix. Grown in the shade about dens and low places, having the narrower and dark leaves but fewer of them, as if a long span were lying about the roots while being tender and white and about the thickness of a finger, which then being drank as little or as much as a dram and eaten with polenta will cause infatuation during sleep and unite grievously upon waking. It is used by physicians when they are about to cut or cauterize because it makes one sensible of nothing for three or four hours unless mixed with a mollifying passum fermented with serviceberries like a love medicine. If it possesses a poisonous and heavy scent, it must be wrapped with another of like kind, softened by the beaters, and scattered upon the ground to later be found by shepherds who prefer a strong scent and who derive sleep by it because they are drawn to the saffron color.



white, broad,
smooth as of
the beet, but
the apples twice
as big, drawing
to saffron
in the color,
sweet smelling
with a certain
strongness
which also the
shepherds eating
are in a manner
made asleep, but
the root is like
to that before it,
yet greater and
whiter, & this
also is without
stalk.

The bark of
the root is juiced
being beaten
when it is new,
& set under a
press. But it
will behove the
beaters, after it
is stirred about
to lay it up in an
earthen vessel, &
the apples also
are juiced in like
manner. But the
juice of them
becomes remiss.

BK II SECTION 91

THE BLENDING OF FATS WITH SCENT

Once it has congealed, take it out with a spoon, cast it into a new earthen vessel and set it up in a very cold place. You may do this with swine's fat, bear's fat, or any fat you would like to have an odiferous smell. Let it all be thoroughly beaten very small before you aromatize it and have it seethe for the third time over a slack fire. First you must take off the skin of the fat which you would like to smell sweet, and then washing it in a linen cloth, seethe it frankly in wine combined with myrtle and cypress branches. Then taking wax from the thickenings, add the seeds from the tree used by pipe-makers, set it over coals, and let it seethe three times before taking the vessel from the fire and suffering the things within it to cool for one day and one night. Then add this to old white wine eight fingers in depth until it loses its native scent and casts away all of its strong greasy smell. Let it cool, and taking the bruised flowers of marjoram and

*Calves fatt, as
also the fatt of
bulls, and of
the Hart and
ye marrow of
this creature are
made to have a
sweet smell after
this manner.*

*Having taken
off the skin from
that fat which
you would have
to smell sweet,
and washing it
as we have said,
and seething it
in odoriferous
wine, and that
without any
sea water in it,
afterward takin
it down and so
letting it contin
ue all night.*

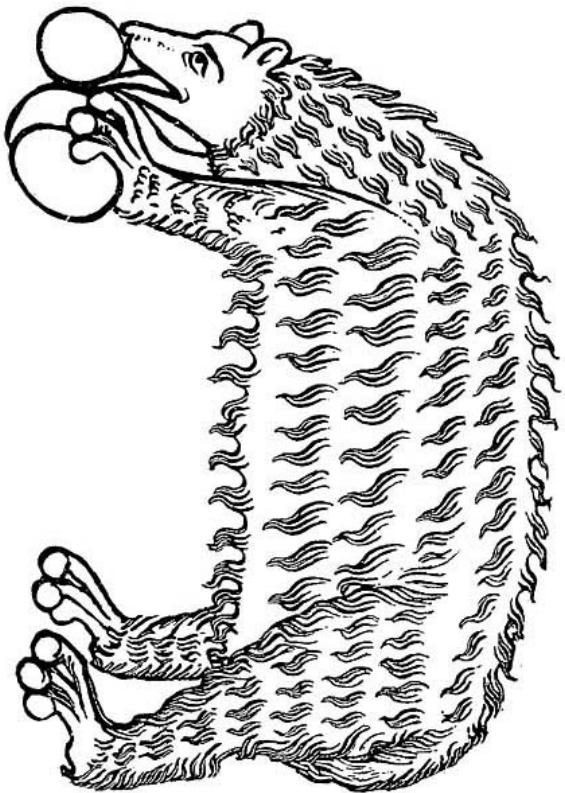
*Then pouring in
more wine of the
same kind and
of the same mea
sure with that
formerly given
and melting it,
and carefully*

*skimming of
it, into nine
Herminae of the
fat, cast in 7
drams of Iuncus
Arabicus.*

*But if you would
make it smell
sweeter, add here
forty drams of
the flowers of
the same, and as
many drams of
Palma, Cassia,
and Calamus,
and one dram
of Aspalathus,
and Xylobal-
samum, and mix
herewithall of
Cinnamon, of
Cardamomum,
of Nardus, of
each one ounce.
But let all be
beaten very
small.*

*After pour in
odoriferous wine,
and having
stopped the
vessel close, set it
fast over it there
abide all night.
Then the day
following pour
out the wine,*

the wildest Myrrh, dilute it in wine of many years standing. Of the marrow of this animal, its scent may be made sweet in this manner. To make the smell even sweeter, add forty drams of flowers and mix it together with cinnamon. Then beat it very small and take out the salt before seething it in the manner for which it was prepared. When it has seethed a third time, take it off gently and strain it such as if it were new and unmixed with blood, and so let it continue all night to drink the sweet smell of a different native scent. When the fat is congealed, take it out with a spoon, strain it, melt it, and so set it up in an earthen vessel to thicken in the manner already showed. Then pouring in wine without any sea water in it, take it down and let it continue all night. Then pouring in more wine of the same kind and of the same measure with that formerly given to melting it, carefully skim off the excess marks until you have restored the sweet scent and the fat receives all the strength and odiferous qualities of the thickenings.



and in more of
the same kind,
seethe it together
thrice in like
manner, and
take it off.

On the morrow
after having
taken out the
salt pour out
ye wine, then
having washed
the vessel and
taken away ye
filth that stuck
in the bottom,
and having melt-
ed it and having
strained it, set it
up and use it.

After the same
manner is that
which was
prepared before,
made to smell
sweet. The
aforesaid fats are
thus first thick-
ened, that they
may the more
readily receive
the strength of
the swet odor.

Acknowledgments

Pedanius Dioscorides (c. 40–90 AD) was a Greek herbalist and physician. He wrote *De Materia Medica*, a widely translated, five volume herbal and pharmacopoeia that served as the foundation for western medicine for 1,500 years.

Until recently, the only English translation of *De Materia Medica* was completed by the English botanist John Goodyer between 1652–1655. Over two and a half centuries later, it was finally compiled and edited by Robert T. Gunther, and published by Oxford University Press in 1933 as *The Greek Herbal of Dioscorides*. A facsimile edition was printed by Hafner Publishing Company in 1959 and 1968, respectively.

The italicized marginalia in this booklet are taken directly from my transcription of Goodyer's translation for each corresponding section: Stones of Swallows, Radish, Plantain, etc. The body text is largely derived from Goodyer's translation, but permuted and redistributed during composition.

In his preface, Gunther includes a special note of thanks to Miss F. A. Boustead, who faithfully copied the drawings that were used to illustrate the Oxford edition. Those drawings were copied from the Vienna Codex of 512 AD. Two of those drawings appear in this booklet—the radish on pg. 13, and the plantain on pg. 21.

The illustrations of the swallow, pg. 9, and the bear, pg. 25, are taken from *The Bestiary: A Book of Beasts*, translated by T.H. White, and published by Putnam in 1960. It is available online through the University of Wisconsin Library. The Mandrake, pg. 21, courtesy of Wellcome Library, London.

The cover image is derived from the Appendix to the Oxford edition, which itself is derived from the Vienna Codex. It was letterpress printed from a magnesium plate on Arches Textwove paper. The type is Goudy Old Style.