

2. Text and Commentary

First translation, as was at the disposal of M.-L. von Franz
(Numbers give page and line in CALA I, passages to be omitted or corrected are in cyan blue.)

Ameliorated translation of CALA I (green)

Text

(3.4) In the name of the merciful and compassionate God. My success comes only from God, on Him I depend and to Him I turn repentantly. Muḥammad ibn Umail said: (3.6)

67

[Text 3.6–7.1 contains the introduction that was not available to M.-L. von Franz.]

(7.1) The names of the stone of the philosophers are as follows: The first of its names is the fountains of copper and magnesia, fountains, tin, zinc, iron, [...] and silver [*waraq*⁹³], and the holy thirsty earth, the white earth, the earth of the pearls, the earth of silver [*fiḍḍa*], the earth of gold, the starry earth and the snowy earth. And when they say: the filings of silver [*waraq*] and the filings of gold that is pure, without cheating. They mean by that their second stone, which is fountains of copper and it is their silver and there is in it what they want. Its spirit, which they extracted from the first operation of their white body. (7.8)

sages
lead-copper ... lead
... [-] ... copper
debasement
lead-copper. It
their body to which they
return back its spirits ...
their first body at the
beginning of the operation

⁹³ *Waraq* is usually the Arabic word for leaf. In alchemy it stands for the silver of the sages.

Comment

68 The text does not begin conventionally with the *prima materia* but goes right to the definition of the goal. All usual introductory invocations and rhetorics are omitted.⁹⁴ This is probably the case because it is an ‘Explanation of Symbols’ (*Ḥall ar-rumūz*), i.e. a later commentary to Ibn Umīl’s former works. If we compare it with the *al-Māʾ al-waraqī*, it begins with the so-called ‘second body’, i.e. with an advanced stage of the preparation of the philosophers’ stone. Our text first calls it «fountains of copper».⁹⁵ According to contemporary views, copper is the microcosm, i.e. man himself. Ar-Rāzī, in his *Šawāhid*, says: «Copper is like a human being. It has a Spirit, a Soul and a Body».⁹⁶ As Stapleton points out, this goes back to the book of Zosimos *On the Explanation of the Ten Preparations*.⁹⁷ There Zosimos writes: «Copper is like a human being: it has a spirit, a soul, and a body. It is necessary before everything to break up and cause to crumble the grossness of the body, and to turn it into a tincturing spirit, agreeable to everybody.»⁹⁸ According to this statement, copper is the *prima materia*.

69 But according to the *Visions of Zosimos* it is also an image for the completed philosophers’ stone. Towards the end of his treatise *Peri Aretes*⁹⁹ (*On Virtue*) Zosimos writes: «In short, my friend, build a monolithic temple like the vessel, in marble, which has no beginning and no end in its construction. In its innermost centre there is a very pure spring of water, shining like the sun [...] a dragon is lying at the entrance of the temple [...] sacrifice it and use it as a step to enter the temple. There you will find what you are looking for, the priest, the man of copper, whom you may see sitting in the spring, collecting in himself all colours; do not look at him as being a man of copper: he has changed the colour of his nature: he has become a man of silver. If you want it, you will soon have a man of gold.»¹⁰⁰

70 The allusion to copper as a microcosm clearly points to the fact that for the author the alchemical process takes place *within man*. The work of

⁹⁴ The missing text with the introduction to the *Ḥall ar-rumūz* was found in Ms D. It comments on the attitude towards the work and on the symbolic character of the process. Either this passage got lost in Ms G or it did not seem relevant for the copyist. The Ms D was only found after M.-L. von Franz passed away.

⁹⁵ The editor of the private edition, mentioned in the foreword, changed the text of von Franz from the first incorrect translation of *abār-nuḥās* as ‘fountains of copper’ to the later correct translation ‘lead-copper’. This led to an incomprehensible inconsistency in the commentary of Marie-Louise von Franz, e.g. why does she not comment on lead?

⁹⁶ H. E. Stapleton, *Three Arabic Treatises*, *ibid.*, p. 137.

⁹⁷ Copy of Ms in Cairo, fol. 5r, lines 3–11 (*Kitāb Maḥāṭiḥ aṣ-ṣanʿa*).

⁹⁸ H. E. Stapleton, *Three Arabic Treatises*, *ibid.*, p. 137, note 1.

⁹⁹ M. Berthelot, *Alch. Grecs*, III, I. 100 *Ibid.*, p. 120.

alchemy is performed on man himself, not on his ego, but on what the old alchemist called the divine God-man or Anthropos, who is buried in the depths of the human being. In an obscure Tibetan tradition the continuity of royalty from the first recorded king onwards is somehow connected with the fact that the copper coffins of the former king are poured out onto the earth. The dead king's corpse is elevated in a high tomb and then, when the vessels of copper are poured out from above, the successor can establish himself as king. Copper seems therefore to represent the mystical *mana* of the king, which is passed on to the successor. It is his God-man quality.¹⁰¹

This view is already clearly formulated by Zosimos and also by 71
 Arabic authors of the mystical branch of alchemy, for instance Morienus, who says: «This stone is that thing which more than anything else is within you, created by God, and you are its prima materia, and it is extracted from you and wherever you will be it remains inseparable from you [...] and, just as man is composed of the four elements, so is the stone, and he (the stone) comes from man and you are its prima materia, namely on account of the procedure, and it is extracted from thee, namely on account of the science. In other words the object is within you, namely in the Mercurius of the wise. You are its prima materia, it is included in you, you keep it hidden in you and it is extracted from you, as it is you who reduce it to its essence and dissolve it, because it cannot be completed without you and you cannot live without it, and thus the beginning reminds one of the end and vice versa.»¹⁰²

This passage, which must have been known to the author, clearly 72
 expresses the idea that the lapis is the inner man. Zosimos and the gnostic tradition around him taught that the divine Adam or cosmic Anthropos sank down into creation and dwells in everybody. It is therefore the task of the mortal man to redeem this cosmic inner Anthropos.¹⁰³ For our author the alchemical opus is therefore primarily an inner-psychoic work which strives to redeem the inner man. This inner Anthropos was later most beautifully described by Ibn ʿArabī (born 1165) in his famous *Meccan Revelations (Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīya)*: When Ibn ʿArabī circled around the Kaaba he found himself in a kind of vision of «the eagle stone of the Youth, zealous in devotion, of the silent speaker who neither lives nor dies,

101 J. Bacot, F. W. Thomas, Ch. Toussaint, *Documents de Touen-Houang relatifs à l'histoire du Tibet*, p. 123 ff. I owe this information to Dr Barbara Davies.

102 Rosinus ad Sarratantem Episcopum, in: *Artis Auriferæ*, p. 178 ff. See also C. G. Jung, *Aion*, [Coll. Works 9/2], § 256, § 258 ff.

103 H. Corbin, *L'Homme de Lumière dans le Soufisme Iranien*.

the noncomposed, the all encompassed encompasser».¹⁰⁴ This divine youth is a kind of personification of the black stone, which is inserted in a corner of the Kaaba.

73 Looked at from the outside, the Kaaba is only a dead stone. The youth however is its revealed mystery, the divine Anthropos. In answering the question of Ibn ʿArabī, asking who he was, the youth says about himself: «Behold the articulation of my nature and the order of my structure and from them thou wilt find what you are asking for. For I am no speaker and no partner in conversation. My knowledge extends only to myself and my essence extends only to myself. I am the knowledge, the known and the knower. I am the wisdom, the work of wisdom and the wise.»¹⁰⁵ Later he continues: «I am the garden of the ripe fruit, I am the fruit of totality, lift my veil and read what is chiselled in the lines of my existence.»¹⁰⁶ Fritz Meier¹⁰⁷ and Henry Corbin¹⁰⁸ rightly interpret this figure as the Alter Ego or the self of Ibn ʿArabī, a concept which goes back to the Hellenistic *Theology of Aristotle*, a Neoplatonic work. In a later passage, Ibn ʿArabī makes it even more clear that this mysterious youth who evokes in him passionate love is none other than the inner Godhead or the divine I, as Corbin calls it. What Ibn ʿArabī reveals in clear words, Ibn Umail also alludes to, but he keeps it more hidden under the veil of alchemical expressions; but he is clearly concerned with this mystical figure and not with chemistry.

74 I think it is even possible that our author did not operate chemically at all, but through a kind of yoga meditation, worked directly on his endosomatic life, which was regarded at that time as being a subtle body within the body. He obviously continues the tradition of Zosimos who also used a kind of meditation or active imagination to further the alchemical process.

75 Copper is the metal of Venus, which alludes to the fact that the philosophers' stone springs from the erotic inner life of the human being. In the context of Islamic mysticism this means that the prima materia of the alchemist is his eros, which has to be sublimated into the love of God, but which is first experienced as ordinary love or as love for the imam. The 'fountains of copper' are in that sense the creative Spirit of God in the psyche of man, which induces man to search for God. Our text speaks of

¹⁰⁴ See W. Neumann, *Der Mensch und sein Doppelgänger – Alter Ego Vorstellungen in Mesoamerika und im Sufismus des Ibn ʿArabī*, p. 157. Translation into English by the author. Cf. also F. Meier, *The Mystery of the Kaaba*, p. 149–168.

¹⁰⁵ W. Neumann, *Der Mensch und sein Doppelgänger*, p. 159 f.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

¹⁰⁷ F. Meier, *The Mystery of the Kaaba*.

¹⁰⁸ H. Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn ʿArabī*.

the ‘fountains of copper’ also as magnesia, and the latter he calls *abār nuḥās*.¹⁰⁹ According to Ruska, *abār nuḥās* is the Arabic translation of *molybdochalkos*, an alloy of lead and copper, which plays a role in the writings of Zosimos and Olympiodorus.¹¹⁰ There it means the whole of the work.¹¹¹ The explanation is to be found in *al-Māʾ al-waraqī*, where we read: «Mariyah has called Abar Nuhas the ‘Honoured Stone’, and this is the completely perfect and super-perfect Abar Nuhas that imparts colour. Consequently it gives birth to the Perfect Gold, for the latter is inferior to it (the Abar Nuhas), because it (the Gold) is (only) perfect, whereas that (the Abar Nuhas) is super-perfect. Surely and undoubtedly this Abar Nuhas is (completely) perfect.»¹¹² In the context of Islamic mysticism something completely perfect can only be Allah Himself. Thus the philosophers’ stone is the identity of the perfected man with God. The living impulse, the flow of love towards God, is the real philosophers’ stone.

[After the magnesia, which is not commented on,] the third designation of the stone is the tin, the zinc, the iron and the silver,¹¹³ a variation of the many famous *tetrasomias*, the quaternarian components of the stone, like the four directions of the compass, the four elements, the four basic principles of matter, the four letters of Adam, etc. This leads to the enumeration of the silvery earth and its many variations. ‘Fountains of copper’ designate more the dynamic, active aspect of the stone; the many earths, the receptive, passive aspect. They symbolize the subtle body-soul of the alchemist when it has been completely sublimated by the process and is ready for the union with God. Henry Corbin has shown that many Islamic mystics practiced a kind of active imagination by which a new earth was created that lies in between the sphere of material reality and the Platonic realm of ideas.

Through his active imagination the alchemist came in contact with an inner subtle body reality, which is a whole cosmos in itself. This earth *hūrqaḷyā* is the purified soul (*nafs*) and the purified world soul in its material-nonmaterial aspect (*Suhrawardī*).¹¹⁴ These ‘white earths’ (the *terra*

¹⁰⁹ This is an unfortunate misunderstanding as *abār nuḥās* means lead-copper, a symbol that was first translated as ‘fountains of copper’.

¹¹⁰ J. Ruska, *Arabische Alchemisten*, p. 21; H. E. Stapleton, *Three Arabic Treatises*, *ibid.*, p. 153, note 8. The symbol lead-copper will be amplified in CALA I B.

¹¹¹ M. Berthelot, *Alch. Grecs*, III, XXVIII. 2.

¹¹² J. Ruska, *Arabische Alchemisten*, p. 21, p. 25. H. E. Stapleton, *Three Arabic Treatises*, p. 130.

¹¹³ These are the four metals given in the Ms G, whereas in the Mss A, B, and D we find copper instead of zinc.

¹¹⁴ Cf. H. Corbin, *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth*, p. 84 ff.

alba foliata of the Latins) are also called by the author ‘ashes’ or ‘ash of ashes’, which is the ‘crown of victory’.¹¹⁵ As Stapleton points out, this phrase is of Alexandrian origin. Elsewhere in *al-Mā’ al-waraqī* it is quoted as a saying of Theodorus: «Take one part of those ashes and keep it with you for it is the crown of victory».¹¹⁶ The ashes are produced through a process which the Latins called *contritio*. This word reveals the psychological meaning. It is a ‘pulverization’, a reduction to ‘dust and ashes’ through repentance. Through the tears of remorse, depression and suffering, the adept is reduced to ashes and thus becomes purified, spiritualized, and open to the reception of the divine spirit. The ‘crown of victory’ comes into existence by the annihilation of the ego. Then, as *al-Mā’ al-waraqī* says: «The lower body rejoices in the heavenly nature because it is of the same form and it is produced from it.»¹¹⁷ This union takes place between the subtle bodies.

Text

- 78 (7.9) And when the stone becomes white, they named it the flower of the salt. **And it grows to a part of the ancient and glorious philosophers.** **The envious ones of the sages named it zinc ore and earthen zinc ore. ... zinc ore is the white body** That is before it becomes black for the second time, after which comes the whiteness, after which comes the redness. And it is the filings of silver [*waraq*], the filings of burnt copper, ashes, dust, the slave and the student. It is the thing which is dyed and the dyer, **the one who catches and the one who controls, the one who completes.**¹¹⁸ (9.1) **holder, the regulator and the clinger. And it is the oxymel.**¹¹⁹

Comment

- 79 This is a continuation of the description of the white earth, which is clear by itself. Only a few expressions need an explanation. The ‘flower of salt’ is a new word for the goal of the work. It reminds one of the ‘golden

¹¹⁵ *al-Mā’ al-waraqī*, in: H. E. Stapleton, *Three Arabic Treatises*, *ibid.*, p. 162.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 137, note 1.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

¹¹⁸ *Akṣmīl* was initially read as being related to *akmala*, ‘to complete’.

¹¹⁹ Oxymel stems from Greek *oxymeli*, being a mixture of vinegar and honey.

flower' of Chinese alchemy. As Jung has shown, salt in alchemy is a symbol of love, the wisdom of achieved and differentiated eros.¹²⁰

The slave is known as the *servus fugitivus* of the Latins and he is 80
Hermes. But a new expression is introduced by the word 'student', which clearly expresses that the adept himself is meant. The dyed one and the dyer are the lover of God and God Himself. The one who catches, who controls and who completes is the sheikh or the imam and thus again ultimately God Himself.

In this beginning of the text the author obviously presupposes that 81
the reader knows his other works and knows the symbolism of alchemy. For such a reader he becomes quite explicit: the philosophers' stone is nothing other than the unification of man with God, a unification which takes place in the psychic subtle body or sublimated soul of the mystic.

Text

(9.1) The explanation of the 'moderator': and the explanation of the 82
that is when the stone became moderate in oxymel is the moderator. That
its mixture so that it becomes neither hot nor cold, neither moist nor dry. And it is
named *būrnaḥīs* when it became white, and pyrite
with ten colours, and the ten things are the [-]
magnesia. [...] the body and the water [...] And when ... became red
after the dye, they named it the golden flower of gold
flower. (9.7)

Comment

This allusion of the text to the stone being balanced links the 83
author's teaching directly with the Ġābirean Corpus. As Paul Kraus has proved, the teaching of the balance (*mīzān*) is of central importance to Ġābir, and Kraus even sees in it the beginning of quantitative chemistry.¹²¹ The latter seems to me doubtful, but we certainly have here the archetype which lies behind quantitative chemistry, consisting in the idea that anything of more lasting consistency in this world, be it psychic or material, is held together by a certain *homeostasis* or balance of energy. According to Ġābir, this balance is the soul of each object and its very essence. It is expressed in numbers. In this first allusion our text only hints at the four basic qualities of matter: hot, cold, dry and wet.

¹²⁰ C. G. Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, [Coll. Works. 14], Chapter *Sal*, III. 5, § 234 ff.

¹²¹ Cf. P. Kraus, *Jābir ibn Ḥayyān*, *ibid.*, Chapter: La théorie de la balance, p. 187 ff.

84 The name *būrnaḥīs* is unknown to me,¹²² but it is clearly a designation of the prima materia or the stone, because it is identified with magnesia. The text gives it the attribute of ten colours or ten things. As Stapleton points out, *al-Māʾ al-waraqī* alludes to the tetractys of the Pythagoreans in the following words: «Then they say four, which (then) becomes (with the previous six) outwards ten, but in its hidden meaning it is (still only) four. This number completes the magnesia, which is *abār nuḥās*, which is composed of four. The ten are four, and from the ten proceed four, and from the four proceed ten. Consequently these (four) are the four natures, earth, air, water and fire: and all created beings come into existence from them. Understand this!»¹²³

85 This points to the completion of a cosmic totality in which all basic qualities are united by the soul and the tincture. The result our text calls a ‘golden flower’. This is an important name because it might point to Chinese influence. In Taoist alchemy the goal of the inner process is most frequently described as a golden flower. This image reappears in Buddhism, but the idea in itself also existed before this in antique Hellenistic alchemy.¹²⁴ In the *Book of Sophé* we read: «The science and the wisdom of the best rule over both [the Hebrews and the Egyptians], they came from ancient tradition and their generation is without a king, autonomous, immaterial; it [wisdom] seeks nothing in the material, corruptible bodies, it operates without suffering their influence, being held together by prayer and divine grace. The symbol of alchemy is derived from the creation. [It is the alchemists] who save and purify the divine soul, which is fettered in the elements, and above all which separates the divine spirit, which is lost in the flesh. Just as there exists a sun, a flower of the fire, a heavenly sun, the right eye of the cosmos; in the same way the copper, when it becomes a flower through the purification, becomes an earthly soul, which is the king on earth like the sun is the king of heaven.»¹²⁵

86 This text, which is also attributed to Zosimos, renders the same Gnostic views, namely that the World Soul, the Wisdom of God, has to be liberated from matter into which she has been lost. This liberated divine soul appears as a sunlike golden flower. This text suffices as a source for

¹²² *Būrnaḥīs* = pyrite, a sulfide of iron and copper, stems from Greek *pyrites*, being firestone. The main source for obtaining copper is copper-pyrites (CuFeS₂), thus it is related to copper.

¹²³ H. E. Stapleton, *Three Arabic Treatises*, *ibid.*, p. 19, lines 2–4. This has been discussed more in detail by J. Ruska, *Turba philosophorum*, p. 297 ff. on the basis of an Arabic text of the *Turba*, found by P. Kraus in Paris (Ms 5099, fol. 223v).

¹²⁴ See *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, translated and explained by Richard Wilhelm.

¹²⁵ See M. Berthelot, *Alch. Grecs*, III, XLII. Rendered in English according to the translation of Ch.-E. Ruelle.

Ibn Umail, but his designation of the goal might also have been influenced by Taoist yoga, which calls the result of the opus a golden flower. Perhaps the two sources came together in early Arabic alchemy.

Psychologically, the symbol of the flower, in contrast to human or animal symbolism, points to a spirituality which is far removed from ego consciousness. A flower does not move, but wherever fate places it, it quietly grows according to its own inner laws. As a symbol it is the birthplace of the inner realization of the divinity, as the Eastern symbol of the lotus proves. In Jungian terms it symbolizes the self, that is, the slow gradual realization of a divine cosmic centre in the unconscious psyche of the individual. 87

Text

(9.8) In the whiteness they named it the 'white lead' and the 'lead enlightened by a luminous white'. And it is called *qašhaš* with the letter *qāf*. More often it is used with the letter *bā*⁷ for its strong whiteness and the *baṭbarīš* and the *naṣṭarīṭ*. All of that is because of its strong whiteness and the corporeal *ḥaršaqḷā*. All these are the names at the time of its second whiteness, after which comes the purpleness. They name this whiteness the one that produces oxidation [rust]¹²⁷ and the making of the rust, and the rust is making red. (9.14) 88

lead *ibšimīš*. And it can be named *ibšimīṭ* and it is named *iššimīš* with the [letter] *fā*⁷.
 alabaster
 chrysocolla¹²⁶
 the rusting

Comment

I have not been able to find out what the words *qašhaš* and *ḥaršaqḷā* mean, but they are clearly other names for the white earth, i.e. for the lapis in the state of the albedo.¹²⁸ 89

¹²⁶ A greenish-blue mineral consisting of hydrated copper silicate; used in ancient times for soldering gold.

¹²⁷ Oxidation or rust is the name for the Greek *iosis*, which is the last completed stage of the lapis (Comarius).

¹²⁸ On the basis of a wrong reading (*fā*⁷ and *qāf* differ in Arabic just by a point), M.-L. von Franz commented: «The letter *qāf* might hint at the world mountain *Qāf*, or at the *Qā'im*, the hidden lost Imam who will appear at the end of the world.»