1 Chapter 7: On excessive sweat

(1) Sweat can be natural and unnatural. Natural sweat is like the sweat that occurs in a wholesome crisis, in moderate exercise and in the summertime, because with this sweat only that which is not beneficial to the body is expelled from it. Unnatural sweat is like the sweat that occurs from the dissolution of the flesh, because with this sweat only that is expelled from the body which is beneficial to it. Sweat changes its natural condition either in its quality or in its quantity. Its change in quality occurs according to the nature of the superfluity that is evacuated; its color changes according to what is evacuated, whether it is red, yellow, green or white.

The verdict on its beneficial or harmful effect depends on the harmful humor [that is being evacuated]. As to its smell, it depends whether it stinks very much or not, and in the same way one should judge with regard to the color. As to its taste, it depends whether it is salty, sweet, bitter or sour. Its change in quantity occurs in two ways: it either becomes more or it becomes less. It becomes more either because the [superfluous] moisture becomes more or because it becomes thin, or because the pores become wide and porous, or because the expulsive faculty becomes stronger. It becomes less either because the [superfluous] moisture decreases, or because it becomes thick, or because the pores become narrow, or because the retentive faculty becomes strong.

(2) If sweat increases and becomes so profuse that one becomes weak, it should be checked by rubbing the body of the patient with oil of violets [Viola odorata], willow [Salix aegyptiaca], quinces [Cydonia oblonga], gillyflower [Cheiranthus cheiri] or roses, or with the oil that I prepared myself and this is its composition: Take twenty dirhams of the leaves of red roses, ten dirhams each of sandalwood [Pterocarpus santalinus], or with the oil of the wild pomegranate [Punica granatum], three dirhams of the electuary of gallnut, and one ounce

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2 “A wholesome crisis”: I.e., a sudden change in the course of an illness which restores the health of the patient.
3 “Is evacuated”: Lit., “happens”.
4 Cf. the parallel text in al-Majūsī, Kāmil al-ṣināʿa, 1:251.
5 The standard dirham is 3.125 grams; see Hinz, Islamische Masse, 3.
6 “Sandalwood”: I.e., red (Pterocarpus santalinus), or white (Santalum album).
7 “Electuary of gallnut” (rāmik): Cf. al-Kindī, Medical Formulary 109 (ed. and trans.
of fresh myrtle \textit{[Myrtus communis]} leaves. Put [all] this together and boil it in two \textit{rat\textls[8]} of water on a low fire until the\textit{9} water has dissipated but for one third. Macerate and strain [the remainder] and add half a \textit{ratl} of rose oil to the strained substance, boil it on a low fire until the water has dissipated, whereas the oil remains. Strain this and rub the patient with it. Put in front of him vessels filled with cold water, or spread myrtle, roses, and willow in the house, and let him drink a juleb beverage, or syrup of roses, or syrup of fleawort \textit{[Plantago psyllium]}, and let him beware of excessive exercise.

If it is necessary to evacuate the sweat and to let it flow, the body should be rubbed with oil of camomile \textit{[Matricaria chamomilla] and var., or Anthemis nobilis} and var.] with some Armenian soda, or with camomile oil and pepper. The same effect [i.e., to evacuate the sweat] has oil of laurel \textit{[Laurus nobilis} and var.], oil of the ben-oil tree \textit{[Moringa arabica Pers. and var.], oil of aneth [Anethum graveolens] and lily\textit{10} oil; when the back and body is rubbed with one of them it makes the sweat flow copiously. If one takes cinnamon \textit{[Cinnamomum verum]}, or false sweet-flag \textit{[Cymopogon martini}], or pyrethrum\textit{11} [root of \textit{Anacyclus pyrethrum}], or mint\textit{12} \textit{[Mentha], or cassia \textit{[Cinnamomum cassia]}, or costus [root of \textit{Aucklandia costus}, or birthwort \textit{[Aristolochia clematis]}, or balsam \textit{[Commiphora opobalsamum]} seed, or thyme \textit{[Thymus serpyllum} and var.], whatever is available, either simple or compounded, and boils it with olive oil or sesame \textit{[Sesamum indicum]} oil and rubs the body with that oil, it stimulates sweat.

Amongst the remedies which make the sweat flow when used as a fumigation is castoreum;\textit{13} when the body is fumigated with it together with pennyroyal \textit{[Mentha pulegium]} it opens the pores of the body and makes the sweat flow profusely. The same effect has balsam seed, Roman nettle \textit{[Urtica pilulifera} and var.] seed, and wild caraway \textit{[Lagoecia cuminoides]}\textit{14}


8 The weight of the \textit{rat\textls[8]} is varying according to region and period; during the Fatimid rule over the Maghreb it was \textit{437.5} grams; see Hinz, \textit{Islamische Masse}, 28–33, esp. 32.

9 “The water has dissipated but for one third. Macerate and strain [the remainder] and add half a \textit{ratl} of rose oil to the strained substance, boil it on a low fire”: Om. IO.

10 “Lily”: The arabic \textit{sawsan} designates several species of Liliaceae and Iridaceae.

11 “Pyrethrum”: Om. h.


13 “Castoreum”: I.e., a desiccated excretion of the glands of the Castor fiber L.

14 “Wild caraway \textit{[Lagoecia cuminoides]}”: For this identification, cf. Maimonides, Glossa-