

APPENDIX: A NOTE ON ARTEPHIUS

The identity of Artephius is still under discussion among scholars. The main text around which the debate focuses is usually the *Clavis maioris sapientiae*, a cosmological treatise based on the principles of alchemy;¹ in a previous volume of the *Theatrum Chemicum*, this text was erroneously attributed to King Alfonso X of Castile.² Artephius was first identified, or at least linked, with Balīnūs, i.e., Ps.-Apollonius of Tyana, as early as the Renaissance; his name was sometimes confused with Orpheus in the West.³ In 1876, Gildemeister considered Artephius as a transcription of the name of the Persian alchemist of the eleventh-century al-Ṭughrā'ī:⁴ this assumption was based on the title of one of al-Ṭughrā'ī's writings, the *Maḥāṭib al-raḥma wa-maṣābīḥ al-ḥikma* (*Keys of Mercifulness and Lamps of Wisdom*). However, the contents of the tracts differ, which invalidates this hypothesis. In 1904–5, Steinschneider assumed that Artephius, or Artesius (close to the written form Artefius), was a transcription of the Arabic name of the famous alchemist Stephanos, Iṣṭafanus.⁵ The debate went much further in 1938, when Levi della Vida identified the Arabic original of the *Clavis maioris sapientiae* as the *Miftāḥ al-ḥikma*.⁶ In the Arabic work, the author was presented as a disciple of Balīnūs called Ibn Bal'awān in most manuscripts, which is obviously not the original part of the name from which Artephius derives; this invalidates both the hypotheses of Gildemeister and Steinschneider. The redaction of the *Miftāḥ al-ḥikma* probably goes back to the tenth century.⁷ This Arabic treatise has so far been found in ten manuscripts.⁸ Carusi suggested linking the *Miftāḥ al-ḥikma* with one of the authors mentioned in Ps.-Avicenna's *De anima*, Abimazer Alfarabi, this name being the transcription of the famous philosopher Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (to whom a lost apocryphal alchemical Arabic treatise had probably been attributed). Carusi suggested that Artephius might be a transcription of Al-Fārābī through Alpharabius.⁹ This hypothesis is extremely weak, for

¹ *Theatrum Chemicum*, vol. 6 (1661), 198–213. I thank Didier Kahn for his help in revising this note on Artephius. On the mentions of Artephius in Bacon's work, cf. n. 156.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 5 (1622), 855–79.

³ Herbert D. Austin, "Artephius-Orpheus," *Speculum* 12 (1937): 251–54.

⁴ J. Gildemeister, "Alchymie," *Zeitschriften der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 30 (1876): 534–38, at 538.

⁵ Steinschneider, *Die europäischen Übersetzungen* 2 (n. 3 above), 8–9 (§141b).

⁶ G. Levi della Vida, "Something More about Artefius and His *Clavis Sapientiae*," *Speculum* 13 (1938): 80–85.

⁷ Kraus, *Jābir ibn Ḥayyān II* (n. 29 above), 298–300.

⁸ Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, 4, *Alchimie – Chemie – Botanik – Agrikultur, bis ca. 430 H.* (Leiden, 1972), 84–86, 90–91, 167; Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimpwissenschaften im Islam* (n. 3 above), 175; and more recently Paola Carusi, "Il trattato di filosofia alchemica 'Miftāḥ al-ḥikma' ed i suoi testimoni presso la Biblioteca Apostolica," *Miscellanea Bibliothecae Apostolicae Vaticanae* 9 (2002): 35–84.

⁹ Paola Carusi, "Animalis herbalis naturalis, considerazioni parallele sul *De anima* in arte alchemiae attribuito ad Avicenna e sul 'Miftāḥ al-ḥikma' (opera di un allievo

the links stressed by Carusi are far too general.¹⁰ The *Clavis maioris sapientiae* was translated several times into vernacular languages.¹¹

However, it is obviously not the *Clavis sapientiae* to which Roger Bacon refers in his works, as there is no such assertion about prolongation of life in this treatise. Other works are attributed to Artephius, among which is a *Liber secretus* (inc. *Antimonium est de partibus Saturni*; its oldest manuscripts date from the sixteenth century; the text is attributed to Artephius in the first edition in 1612 with texts of Ps.-Flamel, in Paris by Guillaume Marette), a *De characteribus planetarum, cantu et motibus avium, rerum praeteritarum et futurarum, lapideque philosophico*,¹² a *Speculum speculorum*,¹³ and an *Opus solis*.¹⁴ There is a *Liber Artefii* (inc.: *Viris prudentibus et discretis taciturnitatis modestia*) in the manuscript Montpellier, Bibliothèque de la faculté de médecine, 277, fols. 38r–40v (fourteenth–fifteenth century); according to Corbett,¹⁵ it is not the *Clavis maioris sapientiae*. Thorndike and Kibre¹⁶ called this treatise the *Liber secretorum*, and mentioned another copy in Paris, BNF, nouvelles acquisitions, 3033, fols. 1r–10r (fifteenth century); they explain that the treatise is rather more medical than alchemical. I did not inspect it.

Another work is described in the catalogue of Borel:¹⁷ “Idem [Artephius] de vita Proroganda, aitque se anno, 1025. aetatis suae scripsisse librum suum, ex Eodem [Naudaeo, i.e., Gabriel Naudé].” This title is very likely a suggestion of Borel himself, on the basis of other texts mentioning this treatise (Borel usually mentions the manuscript of the treatises that he cites). I found no edition and no manuscript of this *De vita proroganda* (Steinschneider reads *propaganda*) after a quick search.¹⁸

di Apollonio di Tiana),” in *Le crisi dell'alchimia / The Crisis of Alchemy*, Micrologus 3 (Turnhout, 1995), 45–74.

¹⁰ Cf. Moureau, “Le *De anima in arte alchemiae* du pseudo-Avicenne” (n. 3 above), vol. 1, part 1, 69–72.

¹¹ Cf. Didier Kahn, “Les manuscrits originaux des alchimistes de Flers,” in *Alchimie: art, histoire et mythes; Actes du I^{er} colloque international de la Société d'Etude de l'Histoire de l'Alchimie, Paris, Collège de France, 14–16 mars 1991*, ed. Didier Kahn and Sylvain Matton, Textes et Travaux de Chrysopœia 1 (Paris and Milan, 1995), 347–427, at 402.

¹² Herbert D. Austin, “Artephius, ‘De Characteribus Planetarum,’” *Notes and Queries* s11-II(47) (1910): 407–c–407 and L. L. K., “Artephius, ‘De Characteribus Planetarum,’” *Notes and Queries* s11-III(55) (1911): 35–f–36.

¹³ Steinschneider, *Die europäischen Übersetzungen* 2, 8–9 (§141b).

¹⁴ On the manuscript London, BL, Sloane 1118, fol. 113r–v, cf. Dorothea Waley Singer, *Catalogue of Latin and Vernacular Alchemical Manuscripts in Great Britain and Ireland, Dating from before the XVI Century* (Brussels, 1928–31), 130 (no. 146).

¹⁵ James Corbett, *Catalogue des manuscrits alchimiques latins* (Brussels, 1939–51), 2:78.

¹⁶ Thorndike and Kibre, *Catalogue* (n. 24 above), 1700.

¹⁷ Pierre Borel, *Bibliotheca Chimica. Seu catalogus librorum philosophicorum hermeticorum* (Heidelberg, 1656), 31.

¹⁸ In the catalogues of Wilson, Singer, and Corbett, as well as the catalogues of Manuscripta Medievalia, the KVK, the Manus catalogue, the National Union catalogue, and the Schoenberg database.

