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Face of a Bird, Legs of an Eagle:
The Hybrid Venus in Medieval Texts of Image Magic and the So-Called Talisman of Catherine de' Medici

Abstract: This article examines the imagery of the goddess Venus in medieval sources of astrological magic, focusing on a zoomorphic hybrid Venus characterized by avian features. Furthermore, the article examines the transmission of this motif into early modern printed sources and talismans. The most renowned among surviving items related to the hybrid Venus is the 18th-century medallion known as Catherine de Medici's talisman, depicting on one side a classical Venus figure, and on the other, a seated Jupiter alongside a hybrid with the head and feet of a bird. In previous scholarship it has been argued that the hybrid figure, interpreted as Venus, derives from Cornelius Agrippa and the medieval magical compendium *Picatrix*.

The study demonstrates that the same hybrid Venus appears in several other medieval sources predating Agrippa and independent of the *Picatrix*. These sources, explored in this article in detail, offer a new insight into the evolution of the zoomorphic Venus, providing a deeper understanding of the ways in which non-Christian and non-classical astrological iconography was transformed and found pathways within medieval literature. Based on the findings of this research, *De sigillis* attributed to Arnoldus Saxo, seems to provide the most direct model for depicting two distinct Venus figures within the same talisman. The article further argues that the avian hybrid Venus was a dynamic figure among non-classical hybrids, appearing in a relatively wide range of sources, including contexts where astrological hybrids were a rarity.

Keywords: Talisman, Image Magic, Venus, Cornelius Agrippa, Picatrix, Arnold of Saxony

Fig. 1–2. The so-called talisman of Catherine de' Medici: the obverse above, the reverse to the right. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Departement des medailles, monnaies et antiques, Medailles magiques.

Face of a Bird, Legs of an Eagle:

The Hybrid Venus in Medieval Texts of Image Magic and the So-Called Talisman of Catherine de' Medici

Lauri Ockenström

Introduction

In the collections of the National Library of France (BnF), there are preserved a few copies of the medallion known as the talisman of Catherine de' Medici (figs. 1, 2).[1] It portrays figures, celestial symbols, and various astrological or magical signs alongside textual elements. On the front side of the oval-shaped medallion a naked female figure is depicted, standing in light contrapposto and holding a heart-like object in her right hand, a comb in her left. Facial features and other details have been worn away. Around the figure are names written in Latin capitals (e.g. HAGIEL, HANIEL, ASMODEL) and letter-like signs. On the other side of the object two figures appear: on the right, a bearded man with a crowned head sits on a covered throne holding a scepter. There is an eagle under the seat. On the left stands a slightly androgynous feminine figure with an arrow in her right hand. In the left hand she holds a stemmed object. This figure is a hybrid with the face and feet of a bird. The figures are also surrounded by names and signs. On both sides of the medallion, a string of letters runs around its edge.

This talisman was the subject of relatively lively debate in the 18th century, with many sources claiming that the object had belonged to Catherine de' Medici (1519–1589), a descendant of the famous Florentine Medici family,

Queen of France and consort of Henry II (1519–1559). It has been the subject of modern research since the end of the 19th century to this millennium.[2] Today the object's persistent influence can be seen on the internet, where numerous astrologers make references to it, and replicas of varying quality are available for purchase in various online astrological stores.

The talisman might also be the most famous surviving object, whose iconography, symbolism and signs are based on the literary tradition of Renaissance and Medieval astral magic. Pierre Behar, who in 1996 made the most extensive analysis of the meanings of the talisman, has argued that almost all words, letters and symbols can also be found in *De occulta Philosophia libri tres*, written by the German humanist, occultist and astrologer Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa of Nettesheim at the beginning of the 16th century.[3] The iconography of the human figures on the talisman has been considered to be based also on Agrippa's *De occulta*. Both female figures are identified as Venuses (also the partly zoomorphic hybrid) and the seated man as Jupiter, corresponding to Agrippa's descriptions of planetary personifications in Book II.[4] In turn, the iconographic descriptions in Agrippa's work have themselves been observed to draw upon certain passages from the Latin *Picatrix*[5] – an extensive magnum opus of magic adapted from Arabic into Latin in the middle of the 13th century. *Picatrix* later greatly influenced Renaissance magic and, starting with Warburg, has been used to interpret Renaissance art and visual culture.[6]

Surprisingly little attention, however, has been paid to the iconography of the figures of the talisman. Behar focused on names and symbolic signs (that is, *characteres*, as they are called in the sources of medieval astral magic), and he mostly ignores the iconography of the figures, except for brief references.[7] Furthermore, previous research has largely overlooked the fact that the iconography only partially aligns with Agrippa's work and diverges significantly in certain aspects.[8] For example, the object in the left hand of the zoomorphic figure, which is usually interpreted as a mirror, is not mentioned by Agrippa. Nor has careful attention been paid to the mutual contradictions of the textual sources: in Agrippa's description, the zoomorphic Venus holds an arrow in her hand, which does not appear in the corresponding description of *Picatrix*.[9] As Luisa Capodieci assumes, in addition to Agrippa's *De occulta*, other texts have undoubtedly been used as sources for the talisman, whose connection to the medallion has not yet been found.[10]

This article examines in detail a specific visual motif found in the talisman described above, tracing its historical migration and the transformations it experienced: the figure named Venus, depicted with a bird's head and eagle's feet. This visual motif, presumably inherited from the ancient world, is significant for several reasons. In the sources of medieval astrological magic, there are in fact numerous different instructions related to Venus, and the image of bird-headed, eagle-footed Venus also appears, along with the *Picatrix*, in several quite different sources circulating in Europe before Agrippa's era. The primary aim of this article is to examine the medieval textual sources in which the bird-formed hybrid Venus appears, and to analyse the interrelations among these sources, primarily from an iconographic perspective. In addition, the article examines how these medieval sources may have informed or influenced later interpretations of the hybrid Venus found in the work of Cornelius Agrippa and in the so-called talisman of Catherine de' Medici. Below, following the background sections on the history of talismans and the history of Catherine's talisman, I examine the sources that, based on previous research, can be linked to the bird-headed female figure depicted on the object – namely, Agrippa and *Picatrix*. Subsequently, I analyse other medieval European textual sources that present the same visual type.

Talismans, image magic and hybrids from the Middle Ages to the Early Modern era: Background and earlier scholarship

The culture of talismans was particularly rich in the civilizations of the ancient Near East and Greco-Roman antiquity, as evidenced by the extensive archaeological corpus – most notably engraved stones – that bears witness to talismanic practices in the ancient world.[11] The case of Christian Europe differs significantly from that of antiquity, as only a handful of surviving non-Christian astrological talismans – actual physical objects – are known to contemporary scholarship.[12] In contrast, a considerable body of astro-magical[13] writings – mostly unillustrated – has survived, describing talismans or providing instructions for their fabrication.

The first phase in the scholarly investigation of the Medieval European talismanic literature took shape in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Pioneering figures such as Joan Evans and Lynn Thorndike undertook extensive surveys of lapidary texts and the written tradition of magic, while art his-

torians Aby Warburg and Jean Seznec, though addressing astro-magical images only briefly, engaged with the iconographic motifs found in talismanic imagery, underscoring the significance of the *Picatrix* as a source.[14] The study of medieval treatises on talismans between the 1970s and the 1990s was advanced most significantly by David Pingree, who produced a critical edition of the *Picatrix* and demonstrated the connections between its unusual iconographic motifs and the visual traditions of the Middle East.[15]

The 1990s saw a significant intensification of scholarly attention to the textual corpus of medieval learned magic. From the beginning of this millennium, the Latin tradition of medieval and Renaissance learned magic has often been divided into the four main categories of natural magic, image magic, ritual magic and divination.[16] Literature concerning talismans falls predominantly within the category of image magic, which, in the Christian West, perpetuated the iconographic traditions of talismanic magic as transmitted from the ancient world and the Arabic culture. Image magic[17] usually refers to texts that describe magical objects adorned with images, figures, patterns, or symbols, or that provide instructions for their fabrication. A significant part of the Latin corpus of image magic was translated from Arabic during the 12th and 13th centuries. Their doctrinal foundations were often connected to astronomy, as the efficacy of talismans was believed to originate from celestial bodies and to depend on the movements of the stars and the conjunctions of planets. Additionally, they were often connected to the traditions of natural philosophy and medicine. It was believed that materials possessed hidden properties, and in some cases, that an appropriately crafted image could enhance the secret power of a stone or metal. Despite recent developments, the study of medieval image magic remains a relatively marginal field of research, which has thus far concentrated on a limited number of the most prominent and widely disseminated texts.[18] A comprehensive understanding of the broader textual corpus has yet to be achieved.

During the Renaissance, medieval talismanic literature found its way into printed encyclopedic works, such as Marsilio Ficino's *De vita libri tres*, Cornelius Agrippa's *De occulta* philosophia, and Camillo Leonardi's *Speculum lapidum*, through which it was transmitted into the early modern period. There is also evidence that medieval magical texts – both handwritten manuscripts and materials printed during the early modern era – appear to have maintained an

engaged readership well beyond the medieval period. Even books on image magic found their way into many prominent European collections from the 16th to the 18th centuries, including royal collections, such as those of Queen Christina in Sweden and, later, in Rome.[19]

While the medieval corpus of image magic remains only partially understood, even less research exists on its transmission to the early modern era and its impact on early modern visual culture. From the 1960s onward, many dominant scholarly traditions focused on Renaissance learned magic, approached primarily through intellectual and theoretical frameworks, while medieval and the more practical sources remained more or less overlooked. The study of early modern magic and astrology has often focused on the printed works of famous Renaissance authors (Marsilio Ficino, Cornelius Agrippa, Girolamo Cardano, Giordano Bruno, etc.), sometimes as if under the assumption that the phenomena of magic and astrology – and their imagery – primarily or exclusively relied on these texts, while largely overlooking their antecedents and preceding medieval traditions.[20]

Over the past three decades, the study of early modern magic has undergone significant renewal. Recent scholarship has emphasized the popularization of learned magic and the dissemination of magical traditions – especially through texts and the book market – to increasingly broader segments of society.[21] This renewal, however, pertains to the broader tradition of magic, while the early modern tradition of image magic – such as texts dealing with talismans – has remained largely unexplored. Recent scholarship on learned magic has also emphasized continuity, interchangeability, and hybridity as its defining characteristics – that is, the ways in which magical traditions recycle older material, recombine it into new configurations, and transmit it in ever-evolving forms across historical periods.[22] However, most studies have overlooked the temporal trajectory extending from the medieval period, treating early modern magic as a temporally isolated phenomenon, without comparison to potential medieval antecedents. For this reason, I argue that long-term investigations tracing specific phenomena from the medieval period into the early modern era would be particularly valuable for future research – and this article seeks to contribute to such an approach.

The primary sources of this article – texts concerning magical images known in medieval Europe – varied greatly in both format and content, making their

classification inherently difficult. Nevertheless, some principal types can be discerned within the tradition. Some pragmatic works of natural philosophy – such as medical handbooks exemplified by the *Cyranides* – presented images to be engraved on stones alongside therapeutic recipes. Another genre within the *Naturalia* in which magical images occasionally appeared was the lapidary. This genre, inherited from antiquity, formed part of practical natural philosophy and described both the visible and hidden properties of stones. A notable example of a lapidary that includes engraved stones is the *Damigeron-Evax*, an ancient and comprehensive text in which a few stones are associated with specific iconography.[23] In these sources, the effect is attributed to the occult properties of natural species, typically with no direct reference to astronomical correspondences.

Most sources dealing with magical images are underpinned by an astrological framework, however, and have been broadly divided into two main categories. First, in "purely" astronomically oriented sources, there are hardly any ritual elements, and spiritual beings are not mentioned.[24] Second, image magic includes a number of works in which the ritual elements are essential, and there are often connections to non-Christian spiritual beings. The majority of texts within this latter category have been classified as Hermetic by modern scholarship.[25] In some cases, scholarship has distinguished a subcategory known as "ceremonial Hermetic magic," in which rituals – such as prayers, incantations, sacrifices, and the invocation of spiritual beings – play a crucial role in the process of creating the image.[26] The aforementioned *Picatrix* contains some material exemplifying this type of image magic. In addition, the category includes a number of lesser-known and rare texts. This group includes at least two texts in which the zoomorphic hybrid Venus appears: A brief excerpt from a manuscript preserved in Florence (BNCF II.iii.214), and the *De duodecim annulis* attributed to "Toz" and "Germa".

In the Middle Ages there were also textual genres that can be located somewhere between lapidaries and astrological image magic. Of particular relevance to the hybrid Venus is the textual tradition associated with the work known as the *De lapidibus*, sometimes attributed to the pseudo-author "King Azareus." It followed the format of a lapidary but included an image for each stone, the majority of which depicted celestial constellations. It often circulated with, and sometimes integrated into, various versions of the somewhat similar *Liber*

sigillorum attributed to the pseudoauthor Techel (or Thetel, Theel etc.) – in this article I designate this group of works as the Techel family. For this reason the Azareus text has sometimes been considered a "Techel" text or part of the same "complex."[27] Both Azareus and the Techel family present personifications of planets alongside depictions of constellations.[28]

In addition to the study of medieval manuscript material, this article aims to advance the iconographic analysis of image magic within the broader fields of both the history of magic and art history. In the contemporary research the study of talismans within art history and cultural history has often concentrated on themes related to the materiality and agency of images, or on talismans originating from the Islamic world.[29] The study of medieval learned magic has in turn largely been focused on approaches rooted in the history of books, with particular emphasis on the corpus of ritual magic. The iconography of talismans in medieval and early modern Europe has received little scholarly attention. However, I believe that traditional iconographic research, supported by varied textual sources, could be of considerable value here as well. The study of the multimodal transmission of visual motifs across various formats sheds light on the processes through which iconographic content is selected, shaped, and disseminated, while also offering insight into how written traditions influence visual culture and the cognitive frameworks that categorize and help to interpret the visual realm.

The iconography of image magic and talismans has at times been linked to the history of hybrids of different species. During the Middle Ages hybrid figures were an integral part of visual culture, natural philosophy and the symbolic language of Christian ethics.[30] A common medium for the appearance of hybrids – whether between humans and animals or between different animals – was traditional astronomical sources, introducing constellations rooted in classical mythology and Greco-Roman astronomy, such as the centaur. Another significant genre that provided a medium for hybrids was bestiaries, which featured hybrid figures drawn from classical sources.[31] In scientific contexts, hybridity was sometimes neutral quality. In religious contexts however – such as exempla sermons or moral philosophy – and quite often in visual arts, bestiality and composite forms were generally perceived as negative qualities, associated with vice or irrationality.[32]

Hybrids were likewise included in the iconographic repertoire of image

magic; yet, contrary to what one might expect, they appear relatively infrequently in medieval Latin sources. The Latin corpus of medieval image magic comprises approximately thirty to forty works, of which only half a dozen contain any mention of hybrids at all. Among these are the aforementioned Azareus and the texts of the Techel family, which are the only widely circulated medieval image magic works to include hybrids. In addition, hybrid figures appear in the *Picatrix* and in a handful of ceremonial Hermetic texts. Even within these sources, hybrids constitute at most only around fifteen percent of the total amount of images described in the texts, the majority of which comprise more conventional human, animal, and vegetal motifs.[33]

Azareus and the Techel family commonly feature astronomical hybrids such as the centaur, drawing from the visual tradition of classical myths and astronomy, though they also present a different category of hybrids that are not rooted in classical sources. Examples include a man with a lion's head and eagle's feet, illustrating a more eccentric approach to hybrid imagery beyond the conventional classical framework. Similar unusual hybrids also appear in the *Picatrix* and the individual sources included in or related to ceremonial Hermetic magic. As we will see, the hybrid Venus with avian features appears specifically in these lastly mentioned sources, as well as in one unusual version of Azareus. But it is important to emphasise that non-classical hybrids are comparatively rare even within these sources, and, more broadly, they remain exceedingly rare in medieval Latin literature beyond the *Picatrix*, Techel, and Azareus traditions.

The so-called talisman of Catherine de' Medici: sources and interpretations

A total of four versions of the talisman of Catherine de' Medici adorned with the same iconography are known today, with three in the French National Library and one in Vienna.[34] Before the documented appearance of physical copies, the talisman was the subject of literary debates for a long period from the late 17th century to the first half of the 18th. At least two different iconographical models appear in written descriptions.[35] In a text published in 1696, the anonymous author claimes to have seen the medallion in the possession of the de Mesmes family. The text furthermore argues that Queen Catherine would have given it to Henri de Mesmes in a box, and that his family inherited the object after his death in 1596. According to this source, there is no zoomorphic female figure in the illustration of the talisman: the talisman depicts the

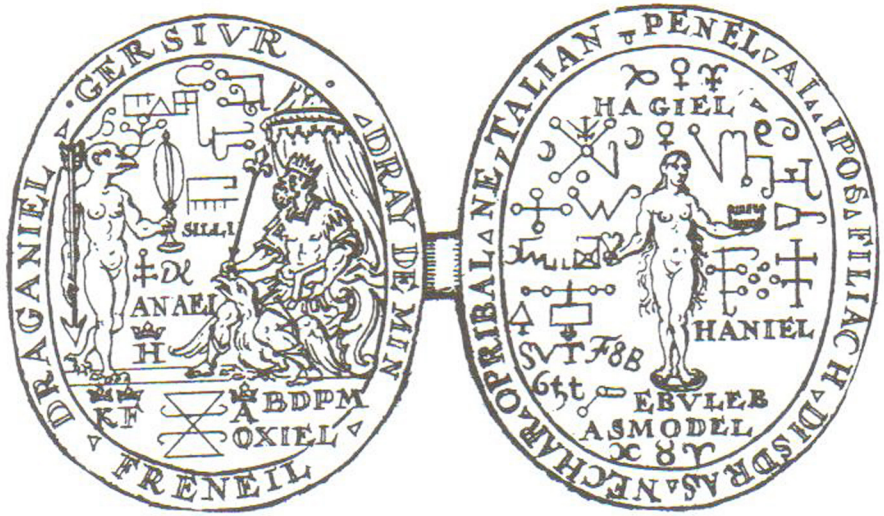

Fig. 3. Catherine de Medici's talisman as presented in Journal de Trévoux *in 1704. Wikimedia commons (CC BY-SA 4.0).*

queen kneeling, close to her male heirs, adoring a horrible "demon" appearing on the throne.[36]

In 1704, the prominent sceptic philosopher and Huguenot Pierre Bayle criticized the anonymous text: he questioned whether the object existed at all, and if it did, he claimed it was not commissioned by Catherine, but was the work of her opponents, the Catholic League.[37] In December of the same year, the Jesuit *Journal de Trévoux* sought to prove the existence of the object. The article was anonymous, but in 1742 it was attributed to the eminent Jesuit Jean Hardouin. The article claimed that the object was in the possession of the de Mesmes family, but that it had been made by the Huguenots. The iconography is now described differently and no longer contains the image of the queen. The illustration on the reverse side of the medal features a seated man identified as Jupiter; next to the man stands a woman with a bird's head, an arrow and a mirror. This report from 1704, likely written by Hardouin, preserves the earliest known iconographic depiction of the talisman, in which a bird-like hybrid Venus appears. What makes this case particularly noteworthy is that the *Journal de Trévoux* published an illustration by Franz Ertinger (1640–1710), depicting the talisman in a form strikingly similar to those that have survived. (Fig. 3

reproduces with considerable accuracy the illustration found in the *Journal*.) There are severe doubts however about the credibility of the source: Hardouin, whom Capodieci refers to as 'one of the least reliable authors of his time', was notorious for his controversial claims, which today would be called conspiracy theories.[38]

In April 1705 Claude-Francois Ménestrier, a connoisseur of medals, wrote in the same *Journal de Trévoux* about a similar medal, but presented a different interpretation of its iconography. Another source from 1709 associates the talisman not with Catherine but with the Queen of Navarre. It was claimed that the talisman was crafted by Huguenots, thus continuing its use as an instrument for anti-Protestant propaganda.[39] The story continued in the 1740s, when the *Journal de Henri III* – a collection of notes on Henry III, originally written by Pierre de L'Estoile (1546–1611) and edited by Nicolas Lenglet Du Fresnoy and published in 1744 – reported that the talisman was made by "Sr Regnier", that is, Cosimo Ruggieri, Catherine's Italian magician-astrologer, who had used Catherine's birth horoscope as a basis. The *Journal de Henri III* also published an image of the talisman, but the illustration differs from Ertinger's version. In the former, the human figures are more roughly rendered, and astro-magical signs and astrological details differ from those described in the sources of the first decade of the 18th century.[40]

All surviving information considering the history of the different versions of the talisman until the end of the 18th century is based on these textual sources. The earliest relatively reliable documentation of the existence of a physical talisman dates back to 1797, when one version entered the collections of the French National Library. It is therefore unclear what versions (if any) of the talisman existed before, and what the relationship of the printed sources was to the items that might have existed in the early 18th century or that are known today. It is also not certain whether the talismans and the textual sources dealing with them have anything to do with Catherine and the French Royal house of the 16th century. As Capodieci suggests, the stories and debates regarding the talisman may only be part of Catherine's later legend:[41] there is no documentation of Catherine's talisman containing a zoomorphic Venus before the 18th century, and it is possible that the items that have survived to the present day were inspired by early 18th century textual sources, not the other way around.[42]

In the interpretations of the 18th century, the figures of the talisman were

identified with deities of Greco-Roman antiquity or Egypt, and their meanings were intertwined with the political landscape of France or the personal life of Catherine. In 1704, the *Journal de Trévoux* (i.e. Hardouin) interpreted the bird-headed woman as the Egyptian goddess Anubis, who symbolised the people of France. Jupiter, in turn, was identified as Henry III.[43] In 1705, Claude-Francois Ménestrier interpreted the goddess as Catherine in the guise of Isis and Jupiter as Henry II, her consort. According to Ménestrier, a poppy stem protrudes from the hawk's beak, the ends of which are diadem-shaped: He regarded this as a symbol of the queen's fertility. Nevertheless, given the absence of any contemporary source linking the talisman to the events of the 16th century, interpretations associated with the persons and political situation of the 16th century remain largely speculative.

At the end of the 19th century, numismatic research placed the talisman in a new interpretative framework. Adrien Blanchet argued in 1894 that Agrippa's *De occulta* was the central source of the talisman.[44] During the 20th century, the dependence of Agrippa's iconographic depictions of planetary deities described in the *Picatrix* became clear to scholars, and, apparently based on this, Karl Anton Nowotny in 1967 briefly declared "*Picatrix* and Agrippa" as the sources of the talisman.[45] In 1979, Catherine's biographer Ivan Cloulas considered the talisman to be Catherine's and, like some previous commentators, attributed the fabrication of the object to the royal physician Jean Fernel. Based on the letters depicted in the talisman, Cloulas associated it with Henri II and his sons, but he appears to have had an incomplete understanding of earlier sources, as he interpreted the object held in the right hand of the female figure on the front of the talisman as a heart, not an apple, as Agrippa attests (Agrippa's depiction of the figure is examined in detail in the following chapter).[46]

In 1996 Pierre Behar situated the fabrication of the talisman within Catherine's circle during the 1550s. He identifies "Sr. Regnier" as the Florentine court astrologer Cosimo Ruggieri, whose father was physician-astronomer to Catherine's father, Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino. Behar considers Ruggieri's assumed authorship to be wrong, because Ruggieri junior was too young to be the author of the talisman in the 1550s. On the other hand, he does not consider the authorship of Jean Fernel (d. 1558) to be completely impossible, albeit not very probable.[47]

According to Behar's interpretation, the medallion depicts a traditional

Venus on the front, with Jupiter and a partly zoomorphic Venus on the reverse; he considers the iconography to be based on Agrippa. He also recognises numerous symbols of the Zodiac signs depicted on the talisman, as well as the characters of the planets, for example the sun. He argues that the talisman represents the conjunction of two planets, Venus and Jupiter, where Venus strengthens the influence of Jupiter. Venus, in general, bestows peace, strength and beauty, while Jupiter's function is to preserve the dynasty and mutually strengthen the conjunction. The talisman as a whole is meant to generate or maintain love. Behar sees the talisman as referring to the marriage between Catherine and Henry II and speculates that Catherine sought benefices of Venus to influence the king and protect her children.[48] More recently, Luisa Capodieci agrees that Agrippa and astral magic provide the appropriate horizon for the interpretation of both images and characters in the talisman. She nevertheless criticizes Behar's interpretation for romanticizing the narrative and approaching earlier sources uncritically, adopting herself a more sceptical stance towards interpretations that date the origin of the talisman to the 16th century.[49]

Agrippa's descriptions of the planet Venus

Cornelius Agrippa's *De occulta philosophia libri tres* (Three Books on Occult Philosophy) is a large, three-book compendium of the different fields of magic and occult thought, which was based on ancient and medieval sources and served as a central influence on numerous currents of magic, esotericism and occultism in the following centuries. The second book of *De occulta philosophia* concerns the effects of the stars and presents various ways of depicting the heavenly bodies visually. Agrippa introduces several personifications for each planet, the descriptions of which appear to be largely derived from *Picatrix*. In this, he follows the first famous user of *Picatrix*, Marsilio Ficino, who, while presenting images for talismans in his *De vita libri tres* in 1489, drew on *Picatrix*'s descriptions of the planets. However, whereas Ficino's planetary deities are anthropomorphic (allowing himself only one hybrid figure, the bird-legged Mercury), Agrippa does not hesitate to employ *Picatrix*'s zoomorphisms more extensively, such as the camel-legged Saturn and the lion-headed Jupiter.[50] Agrippa introduces three personifications of the planet Venus, all of which have a parallel in the *Picatrix*. The first of these – the one that Behar considered to be the model of the zoomorphic figure of the talisman – is as follows:

De occ. II.xlii (2.42), p. 361

Ex operibus Veneris faciebant imaginem quae conveniebat ad gratiam et benevolentiam, hora Veneris, ipsa ascendente in Piscibus, cuius forma erat imago mulieris, habens caput avis et pedes aquilae, in manu sagittam tenens.

From the works of Venus, they [i.e. ancient sages] used to fabricate an image which was suitable for grace and benevolence, at the hour of Venus, herself ascending in Pisces, the form of which was the image of a woman, having the head of a bird and the feet of an eagle, holding an arrow in her hand.[51]

The description resembles in many respects the hybrid figure of Catherine's talisman. Despite the slightly androgynous features, the figure is feminine; she has the head of a bird and the claws of an eagle, with an arrow in her right hand. However, Agrippa does not mention the object seen in her left hand (most likely a mirror).

Agrippa's next depiction of Venus is a naked girl holding a mirror and being led on a leash by a male figure. This «Venus on a leash» type appears in the *Picatrix* and other medieval astro-magical sources.[52] Agrippa's third description corresponds in some respects to the Venus figure on the front of Catherine's talisman:

De occ. II.xlii, (2.42), p. 361

Faciebant aliam Veneris imaginem, prima facie Tauri vel Librae vel Piscium cum Venere ascendente, cuius figura erat puella diffusis capillis, longis et albis induta vestibus, laurum vel pomum vel flores in dextra tenens, in sinistra pectinem: fertur efficere hominem placidum, iucundum, robustum, alacrem et conferre pulchritudinem.

They fabricated another image of Venus, the first the face of Taurus or Libra or Pisces ascending with Venus, whose figure was a girl with flowing hair, dressed in long white clothes, holding a laurel or an apple or flowers in her right hand, and a comb in her left: it is said that it makes a man (human being) calm, pleasant, strong and lively, and confers beauty.

There are only a few minor differences between Agrippa's description and "Catherine's talisman". First, Agrippa mentions laurel and flowers as alternatives to the apple. Furthermore, the talisman shows an unclothed figure while Agrippa speaks of long white clothing, a detail that appears in the *Picatrix* as part of the depiction of Venus according to the opinion of "other sages," but

not in the context of Venus that holds an apple and a comb.[53] Behar argues that the medal's extensive wear makes it challenging to determine if the figure is clothed, suggesting that the figure may have originally worn a thin garment. He reminds us that during the Renaissance, and especially within the Fontainebleau school, it was typical to represent female characters in transparent clothes. However, the assumption is not completely convincing, especially concerning the correlation between Agrippa and the talisman. Such an outfit as Agrippa describes could not have been worn by a figure whose entire naked body is visible, so, despite the wear, it appears more plausible that the hybrid Venus was meant to be unclothed, as was also the case in medieval astro-magical sources, which will now be addressed.

Ghāyat al-Hakīm *and the Latin* Picatrix

The Latin *Picatrix*, considered the source of Agrippa's depictions of Venus, is an extensive four-book collection of astrological magic and magical knowledge. *Picatrix* is based on an Arabic compendium *Ghāyat al-Hakīm* (The Goal of the Sage), ascribed to al-Qurtubī, who compiled the work in Islamic Iberia possibly in the mid-10th century. Texts from numerous sources have been combined into the collection, and apparently the compiler has sometimes heavily edited the texts he used. The compendium contains theoretical knowledge deriving from Hermetic, Gnostic, Neoplatonic and many other sources and introduces hundreds of practical instructions for talismans, ritual procedures, experiments and recipes.[54] This compilation was translated in the court of Alfonso X of Castile in the 1250s, first into vernacular, then into Latin as *Picatrix*. The new versions were more adaptations than translations, with changes, errors and omissions. The medieval circulation of the Latin *Picatrix* appears to have been limited, and the work was poorly known until the last half of the 15th century, when several copies began to circulate in Europe and soon left their mark, for example on Marsilio Ficino and Agrippa.[55]

Both *Picatrix* and *Ghāyat al-Hakīm* introduce planetary images in two successive sections in the second book. The first section describes the images of seven planets according to four different sources or authors, which are in *Ghāyat al-Hakīm*, the Lapidary of Utārid, Apollonius, Kriton's book of talismans translated by Buqrātīs, and "other sources". The equivalents in the *Picatrix* are wise Mercurius (= Utārid, i.e. Hermes Trismegistos), Beylus (i.e. Apollonius of Tyana), and wise Picatrix (deformation of Buqrātīs) and "other sages".[56] The second section (henceforth "talisman section") includes dozens of individual talismans arranged according to planets.[57] In the first section, according to Apollonius/Beylus, Venus is a woman holding an apple. Buqrātīs/Picatrix produce a more rich description: Venus is a woman with an apple in her right hand. In her left, she holds a comb that resembles a tablet, with signs written on it.[58] This description resembles the front side of Catherine's talisman and the third description of Agrippa, except that Agrippa does not mention the signs and does not compare the comb to the tablet. Utārid/Mercurius introduces the hybrid Venus, but without the mirror and the arrow: "And according to the Book of Uses of the Stones of Utārid, she has a form with the body of a human-being, the face of a bird, and feet of an eagle."[59] It may be noteworthy that the Latin text of the *Picatrix* uses the word *homo*, which can refer to both sexes or exclusively to the male gender.[60]

The talismanic section introduces thirteen talismans of Venus. The first one combines in an intriguing manner the iconographic models provided by Buqrātīs/Picatrix and Utārid/Mercurius into a single talisman. In the *Ghāyat al-Hakīm*, the image is to be carved on a ruby stone at the hour of Venus, when Venus is in the ascendant. The image must show a woman with an apple in her right hand and a comb resembling a tablet in her left, on which the characters (i.e. signs) are engraved. The "image" should have the body of a human being, the face of a bird, and the feet of an eagle, and it will make its bearer loved by all.[61] *Picatrix* relates identical iconographical information (albeit in a different order), but does not mention the stone or the astrological timing.[62] As will be seen below, this amalgamation of two iconographic types recurs in various forms across numerous sources disseminated in medieval Europe from the 13th century (if not earlier) onwards.

The Lapidary of Alfonso X

In Madrid a luxury manuscript is preserved (Madrid, Escurialense H. I. 15), commonly known as Alfonso X's lapidary. It has likely been produced within the milieu of Alfonso X's court during the 1240s, and it contains four works concerning stones in Castilian, which are obviously translations or adaptations of Arabic material.[63] The third work introduces engraved stones connected to the planets. From an iconographic standpoint, it includes a significant amount

of material resembling the models found in the *Ghāyat al-Hakīm* and *Picatrix*. The first seven stones of Venus contain the same images and effects as the first seven talismans of Venus in the *Picatrix*, but the emphasis is different: in Alfonso's lapidary, the properties of the stone and the astrological relationships of the talisman play a more important role than the images.[64]

The first stone of Venus includes the hybrid Venus.[65] It presents parallel information to that of the *Ghāyat al-Hakīm* while enriching the exposition with intricate astrological details. The stone is "robi" (an obvious variant of the ruby mentioned in *Ghāyat al-Hakīm*) and the astrological timing is the hour and exaltation of Venus. In addition, the relationship with Jupiter is defined and it is stated that the stone belongs entirely to the sun, and to a large extent to Venus. The effects are the same as in *Ghāyat al-Hakīm*: the wearer of the stone is universally beloved and held in high esteem. The iconographic description does not mention "the human body" and speaks unequivocally of one female figure. She holds an apple in her right hand and a comb in her left, which resembles a tablet. The woman has the face of a bird and the feet of an eagle. The characters should be engraved on the comb, but they are not shown in the manuscript.

Hybrid Venus in magical Hermetic works: The BNCF II.iii.214 and **De duodecim annulis** *of Toz and Germa*

The bird-faced hybrid Venus appears in at least two medieval sources, which are considered exemplars of ceremonial Hermetic magic. The manuscript II.iii.214, copied in the 15th century and housed in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Florence, contains numerous texts of natural magic, astral magic (mostly Hermetic) and Solomonic ritual magic.[66] The copies are somewhat careless and corrupt, and do not represent the most reliable copies of the works. The manuscript includes some works or short excerpts of astral magic that can be found in their surviving Latin form only here. Among these is a standalone instruction for crafting a Venus ring, unconnected to any broader work. The author is not mentioned.[67] The text is very likely translated from Arabic, but the date of the creation of the Latin version remains uncertain.[68]

The instruction guides how to make a ring of Venus containing an illustrated stone, which is consecrated with rituals. Both the material for the ring itself and the stone to be embedded in it are specified as red copper (*de ere rubeo*). The illogical repetition is likely an error made by the scribe. *Rubeo* might indicate that in the archetype the stone was a ruby, as in the *Ghāyat al-Hakīm*. The ring must be made in the first hour of the day of Venus, Venus residing in the 7th degree of Sagittarius. At the beginning of the iconographic description, it is specified that the image should show a female figure with an apple in her right hand and a comb in her left. The characters (that are drawn in the manuscript) are to be added to the item. Next, an obscure expression follows: "*et medie a capite infra sit corp(us) ho(min)is*." This could be interpreted, for example, as: 'When viewed from the uppermost point downward, in the center there is a human body.' According to a straightforward interpretation, the female figure therefore has a human torso (*corpus hominis*), but the fact that the text now describes the image in a different way and provides instructions for placing the image onto the object can also give rise to the impression that two separate figures are involved. Lastly, the hybrid characteristics are presented: the figure has the mouth and face of a bird and the legs of an eagle.[69]

The instruction ends with a long description of the ritual: In short, the process involves sacrificing a white dove, the bird of Venus, and collecting its blood, with no further mention of its purpose in the text. The ring is then placed under a clear sky for seven nights and fumigated with aloe wood at dusk; then it is washed with wine. After several intermediate steps, the ring's seal is printed on the dough (made from flour sourced from seven different mills), which is moistened with ritual water. The ultimate objective is to attain love, as the individual who consumes the product made from the dough will subsequently follow the maker of the ring to his home.[70]

Another appearance of the hybrid Venus can be found in a family of magical texts attributed to pseudo-authors Toz Gr(a)ecus and Germa Babilonensis.[71] The earliest surviving manuscripts are from the 14th century, but the name Toz Grecus and his works are mentioned in Latin sources as early as the 12th-13th centuries.[72] A text referred to in modern scholarship as *De duodecim annulis* introduces twelve rings, with the initial four associated with Venus and the remaining eight with other planets.[73] The four rings of Venus contain textual descriptions of images that also appear among the Venus talismans in the *Picatrix*.[74] The first three rings are attributed to Toz Grecus, the fourth to Germa.

De duodecim annulis has survived in four manuscripts. Scholars have distinguished two recensions within the textual tradition: Recension A, which survives in three manuscripts, contains a shorter version with more concise

descriptions and fewer ritualistic details.[75] Recension B, that survives in only one manuscript stored in the Vatican, presents extensive descriptions with a great deal of astrological and ritualistic information.[76] The amount of iconographic data provided in textual form varies across different manuscripts. The image of the first ring (Venus on a leash) is described in all copies. Recension B describes the images of the second and third rings, but A omits the images. For the fourth ring, A introduces only the classic Venus with a comb and an apple. Recension B instead presents the composition we are already familiar with, which includes both the classic Venus and the zoomorphic hybrid:

De duodecim annulis, recension B, Vat. Lat. 10803, 57r.

Dixit germa babilonensis sculpitur hic annulus die veneris in ortu solis venere in vii gradu piscium ioveque in xvo gradu arietis morante in gemma iacincta et sculpetur mulier*um** y(mago) et in cuius palma dextra sit malum et in sinistra sit pecten in similitudine tabule et sculpatur strami(n)e quod sit sub gemma littere que sunt in fine huius capituli et sit (ymag)o corpus hominis et facies *sav*is pede aquile.

Germa the Babylonian said: "This ring is to be carved on the day of Venus at sunrise, Venus in the 7th degree of Pisces, and Jupiter in the 15th degree of Aries, on a jacinth gem, an image of a woman is to be carved, and in whose right palm there should be an apple and in the left hand there should be a comb in the likeness of a booklet. On the backplate should be carved the letters, which are at the end of this chapter, and let the image be a body of a human being with the face of a bird and eagle's foot."

*In the Latin text, the term referring to the woman appears in the plural *mulierum*, yet the latter part of the sentence speaks of a single agent.

As the quotation indicates, the astronomical definitions and the stone differ from all the sources discussed above, but the iconography follows the same pattern. The only clear exception, *facies savis* is clearly a mistake or a modification by the copyist of the reading found in other sources, i.e. *facies avis* (bird's face). The description detailing the positioning of the characters (i.e. signs, called *littere* in this source) and the zoomorphic image – *stramine quod sit sub gemma* – is intriguing. In its basic sense, *stramen* usually refers to straw or litter spread as a base layer. If taken literally, the letters and the zoomorphic image should be positioned beneath the stone within the base material, perhaps on the ring under the stone, or possibly on the reverse side of the stone – in any case, in a

location distinct from the female figure holding the apple. Despite the differences, the language used in the iconographic description appears to have a connection to the Florentine manuscript, and its textual structure may elucidate certain obscurities in it.[77]

The iconographic part is followed by a long ritual, which is similar in many respects to the Florentine version. A bird is sacrificed, and the *sigillum* crafted during the ritual is placed under the sky and the exorcisms are read for seven nights. Then, the sigil is fumigated with aloe and other incenses and washed with wine. Finally, after certain intermediate steps, the sigil is dipped in water, and the person who drinks the water comes to the operator and obeys him.[78] The ritual also has a kinship with those other works of Toz Grecus, which focus on the planet Venus. The text refers to the prayer of Venus and her angels presented also in Toz's *Liber Veneris* and mentions "station" (*statio*), a key term in another text attributed to Toz.[79]

Recension A introduces the same stone and the same astrological timing, but the iconographical passage describes only a classical Venus.[80] Numerous steps have been omitted from the rituals, such as the animal sacrifice. The object is fumigated with incense and the image is printed on wax, which is immersed in water or wine. The person who drinks the liquid obediently comes to the fabricator of the object. This can be considered a purified and shortened version, which eliminates zoomorphic figures and rituals that could be interpreted as heretical from the church's point of view.

These ritual texts of the Florentine manuscript and of Toz and Germa use the same iconographical type of hybrid Venus, but place it in a different framework, where the role of astrological relationships and rituals is emphasized. Although bearing numerous similarities, these sources represent an autonomous tradition distinct from the *Ghāya*, *Picatrix*, and Alfonso's lapidary, where the emphases, details and vocabulary are different. It is also noteworthy that the texts can be interpreted in such a way that there are two separate images, each positioned in different areas of the stone or ring. This possibility becomes even more evident in the following case.

De sigillis lapidum *of Arnold of Saxony and* **De lapidibus** *of King Azareus*

Arnold of Saxony (Arnoldus Saxo) is a poorly known encyclopedic author of the first half of the 13th century.[81] There are four surviving works from the

Middle Ages considered to be his.[82] The most significant is the encyclopedic *De floribus rerum naturalium*, which is divided into four parts.[83] The third part dealing with stones, *De virtutibus lapidum* (or *De gemmarum virtutibus*), consists of three books: *De virtutibus lapidum* (introduces stones in alphabetical order), *De sigillis lapidum* (images carved on stones and their properties), and *De coloribus gemmarum* (on the colors of stones)[84]. *De sigillis lapidum* includes the hybrid Venus.

Arnold's *De sigillis lapidum* is known from nine medieval manuscripts. The encyclopedia *De floribus rerum naturalium* survives in its extensive form in three copies, two of which, the Erfurt 77 and Lüneburg manuscripts, include *De sigillis*.[85] In addition, according to Isabelle Draelants' research, the stone section alone or parts of it appear in seven manuscripts deriving from the 14th-16th centuries, all of which include *De sigillis*. In two manuscripts (Bamberg and Erfurt Amp. 386) it differs structurally from other copies.[86] It is probable that additional copies existed in the past, suggesting that *De sigillis* was at least moderately renowned and relatively widely disseminated in the Late Middle Ages.

During the 13th century it was customary for encyclopedias and natural histories to adapt material from various sources or to incorporate entire earlier works. Similarly, *De sigillis lapidum* is not an original composition by Arnold, but a version of a widespread astrologically related treatise on stones. I make reference to the aforementioned treatise occasionally attributed to "King Azareus,"[87] commonly recognized under the titles *De sculpturis Lapidum* or *De Lapidibus*, which circulated either independently or as part of other works and as many different variations in numerous other encyclopedias. In total, several dozen copies of Azareus's *De lapidibus* have survived.[88] The text introduces c. 20–30 images carved on stone, most of which are images of constellations and planetary deities familiar from ancient astronomical literature.[89] In addition to Arnold's *De floribus*, different versions of it were included in at least the encyclopedic works of Thomas of Cantimpré, Vincent of Beauvais, and Albertus Magnus, and were also discussed by Pietro d'Abano. It was therefore a widely distributed treatise that reached a large number of readers during the 13th and 14th centuries.[90]

The treatise circulated in structurally distinct and divergent versions. One common type usually begins with the "winged horse" (*equus alatus*, i.e. Pegasus) and ends with Orion.[91] At the end there usually is an epilogue that

mentions the Temple of Apollo and King Xerxes. Another one begins with the signs of the Zodiac presented in four triads and ends with the two Bears.[92] The manuscripts display significant individual variation, with numerous copies incorporating images that are likewise present in other medieval works, such as the Damigeron-Evax lapidary. Arnold's *De sigillis* differs slightly from these standard types and is more extensive compared to, for example, the version included in Thomas of Cantimpré's work: Arnold's version averages 29 image descriptions, whereas Thomas's version comprises 24.[93]

It is significant that of all the versions of Azareus' work, only Arnold's *De sigillis* contains the bird-shaped hybrid Venus. For this study I have examined four copies representing its two main types. The Erfurt Amp. 77 (of which the edition has been made)[94] and the Paris lat. 7475 represent the common type of *De sigillis*. The Erfurt manuscript contains the entire *De Floribus*, whereas the Paris manuscript presents only *De virtutibus gemmarum* and *De sigillis* from Arnold's encyclopedia. In the Paris manuscript, the works appear anonymously, with no reference to Arnold. This common version consists of 29 chapters, 28 of which each focus on a single image. The chapter including the hybrid Venus is the third last of these. The Bamberg manuscript and the Erfurt Amp. 386 manuscripts include the variant of *De sigillis*. In both manuscripts, *De sigillis* is the only text based on Arnold's encyclopedia, and it does not introduce any attribution to Arnold. This version contains 34 chapters, the fourteenth of which introduces the hybrid Venus. The description of the hybrid Venus remains largely consistent across all manuscripts, with only relatively few orthographic variations. In the Paris manuscript, Venus is described as follows:

Paris BnF Lat 7475, f. 140r.

In quo gyroguntos inveneris et mulierem que in manu dextra tenet malum, et in sinistra pecte(*n*) in similitudinem tabule quadrate et in alia parte lapidis sit ymago hominis. que imago habet faciem avis et pedes aquile et sint iste littere sculpte in parte ubi erit ymago hominis. [characters] hic lapis potentiam habet reconciliandi amorem inter virum et mulierem.

In which you should[95] find the *gyroguntos* and a woman who holds an apple in her right hand and a comb in her left in the likeness of a square tablet, and on the other side of the stone there should be the image of a human being. That image has the face of a bird and the feet of an eagle, and let these letters to be carved on the side(/part) where the image of the human being will be. [characters] This stone has the power to reconcile love between a man and a woman.

The description does not include timing, astrological references or rituals. The stone differs from all previously discussed cases, and is described in different ways in all the compared manuscripts.[96] In its initial part, the iconographic description follows the familiar pattern: the image includes a woman, an apple in her right hand and a comb in her left, which resembles a *tabula* – which here is specified as square (*tabule quadrate*). From this point onward, the description diverges from that found in other sources. *In alia parte lapidis* implies that another image is meant to be depicted on another part of the stone, possibly (if not probably) on the reverse side. The second image is a "human being" or a "man" (*imago hominis*) with the face of a bird and the feet of an eagle. In the same part as the zoomorphic image are the characters that are drawn in the manuscripts. The effect of the image is related to love but differs slightly from the other sources.

Although the description does not contain rituals, the lexical and iconographic connections confirm that it belongs to the same Latin tradition as the hybrid Venus descriptions in the Hermetic sources discussed earlier. It remains a mystery, however, why the zoomorphic Venus is included in the Azareus that accompanied Arnold's work, but not in the other versions of the work. The ultimate reason eludes us, but it seems obvious that the textual history of Azareus and the other chapters of the work have created favourable conditions for Venus and influenced the description of Venus. The hybrid Venus seems to have a connection with the chapter that precedes it in the common version represented by the Erfurt 77 and Paris manuscripts, where the previous chapter (before the very short chapter in between on the lion) introduces Mars and Venus wearing a stole. In the variant found in the Bamberg and Erfurt Amp. 386 manuscripts, Mars or Venus wearing a stole appears in the third chapter, whereas the chapter 31 includes a variation of the same iconographical motif, with Mars or a maiden dressed in a stole, albeit without association with Venus. It is notable that this type, without mentioning the name of Venus, is prevalent in other versions of Azareus. These versions feature either only Mars and/or "a maiden" clad in a stole, or present an "armed man" and/or a woman wearing a stole. Nor are the effects the same, insofar as they are mentioned.

The differences within the Azareus tradition can possibly be attributed to the presence of the same image in another significant lapidary, the Damigeron-Evax. In this latter work, the image is to be engraved on jasper stone (Latin: *iaspis*). Jasper is occasionally mentioned within the Azareus tradition as well (e.g., in the Arundel manuscript, see above), but more often the texts refer only to "stone" (in the textual tradition of image magic, the term *iaspis* is frequently transformed into *lapis* ("stone")). The image in the Damigeron-Evax corresponds to that found in most copies of the Azareus tradition: it references only the maiden, with no mention of Venus's name. The effects attributed to the stone and image differ from those described in Azareus, although certain features seem to have filtered into the Azareus tradition: Thomas of Cantimpré's version refers to consecration, and Arnold's *De sigillis* alludes to beauty and protection against the dangers of water.

Arnoldus Saxo, De sigillis*, Paris 7475, 140r.*

In quocumque lapide inveneris martem armatum aut venerem cum stola tenentem laurum. cum mag(na) veste ille lapis dat pulcritudinem et le*v*itatem. et potestatem et perf(ectionem) auf(ert) timorem aq(ue).	On any stone you will find an armed Mars or a Venus with a stole holding a laurel, with a large robe. That stone gives beauty and lightness and power and perfection, and takes away the fear of water.

Arundel 342, 70v (*independent circulation*)

In iaspide oportet scribi martem armatum et virginem …	On the jasper should be an armed Mars and a virgin should be inscribed …

Clm 3206, 125r (*included in Thomas of Cantimpré's* De natura rerum)

In quocumque lapide sculptum inveneris hominem armatum aut virginem cum veste circumfusa laurum tenentem consecrationis signum est in lauro* et liberat a casibus adversis.	In any engraved stone you should find an armed man or a virgin, with a garment wrapped around her, holding a laurel; the sign of consecration is in the laurel[?]; and it frees one from adverse events.

*The illogical form *in lauro* is apparently a corruption originating from Damigeron, which discusses the use of laurel in a coherent manner.

Damigeron-Evax (*Evans, p. 206*)[97]

... qui eum portaverit a pueritia. nunquam mergetur neque vexabitur. Pulchrum quoque facit gestantem et fidelem et potentem et omnia perficientem. Sculpere oportet in eo martem armatum aut virginem stolatam cum veste circumfusa tenentem laurum. Consecratum enim est perpetua consecratione.

... whoever carries it from childhood will never drown nor be troubled. It also renders the bearer beautiful, faithful, powerful, and capable of accomplishing all things. It should be engraved with an armed Mars or a maiden dressed in a robe with a flowing garment holding a laurel. For it is consecrated by a perpetual consecration.

The evolution has probably been as follows: Mars and Venus were a well-known pair in mythographic sources. Because of the armed man mentioned in the text – often identified as the god Mars – it has been tempting to interpret the maiden as Venus. The name of Venus has in turn formed a context in which adding an independent description of Venus to the text has become relevant. Furthermore, most versions of Azareus mention all the other planets of the Ptolemaic system except Venus, so the editor may have intended to "complete" the series of planets with a description of Venus found in another source.[98] It also seems evident that the effect of restoring love of the hybrid Venus in Arnold's *De sigillis* has been borrowed from another description in the same work. In most Azareus versions, it typically appears as an effect of the image of Andromeda, and this is also the case in Arnold's *De sigillis*.[99] The inclusion of the description of the hybrid Venus in Arnold's version (and its final form) is therefore most obviously inspired by the textual tradition of Azareus.

The two Latin traditions and the fortune of the hybrid Venus in medieval Europe

It may be inferred from the Arabic *Ghāyat al-Hakīm* that the descriptions of the hybrid Venus were very likely transmitted to Europe from Arabic literature, the Pyrennean peninsula being the main route. It also testifies that the amalgamation of two iconographical types – the classical Venus with the comb and apple and the hybrid Venus – within the same talismanic instruction had already occurred in the Arabic tradition. In Christian Europe, this zoomorphic Venus appears in several Latin or vernacular sources by the 13th century at the latest. The descriptions can be divided into two traditions, with one comprising *Ghāyat al-Hakīm*, *Picatrix* and Alfonso's lapidary. *Ghāyat al-Hakīm*'s description is somewhat ambivalent, leaving it unclear whether all the traits belong to one figure. In the adaptations of the same image created in Alfonso's circle, *Picatrix* and Alfonso's lapidary, on the other hand, the image of the talisman shows one figure, a woman with bird-like features. In this tradition, astrological timing is described briefly (apart from in *Picatrix*), and there are no rituals involved. Another tradition is represented by *De duodecim annulis* attributed to Toz and Germa and the Venus description of the Florentine manuscript II.iii.214. These descriptions contain long rituals (which probably are different interpretations of the same prototype) and plenty of astrological details. *De duodecim annulis* in particular suggests the presence of two distinct images situated on different parts of the object, even if its description is somewhat ambiguous. Lexical differences indicate that the latter tradition is not based on the Latin *Picatrix* or Alfonso's lapidary, but represents an independent tradition, probably transferred from an Arabic tradition to a Latin form in the 13th century, if not already in the 12th century.

The description attached to Arnold's *De sigillis* contains no rituals and is the only source of hybrid Venus without astrological connections. Nevertheless, the vocabulary and the iconographic description, introducing two distinct figures on separate sections of the object, indicate that it aligns more closely with the latter tradition rather than with the *Picatrix*. Additional confirmation for this connection can be obtained by comparing the characters described in the manuscripts. In *Ghāyat al-Hakīm* and *Picatrix*, the description in the talisman section introduces the characters resembling the Latin letters: ΛΟΙΟΛΟ (in *Ghāyat al-Hakīm*) or ΟΛΟΙΟΛ (in *Picatrix*).[100] In other sources, the characters look completely different. The Florentine manuscript shows a row of calligraphically refined signs, but they have no clear parallels elsewhere.[101] Regarding the *De duodecim annulis*, however, there are clear similarities among the characters found in the different copies. In the Vatican and Arundel manuscripts (fig. 4)[102], the row of signs ends with an arrow pointing to the right and a horizontal line, with two balls on either side of the centre (although the signs are in a different order in the testimonies). Both copies also contain signs resembling the letter B and the number 4. The characters in the Julius Cotton copy resemble those in Arundel (fig. 5).

Interestingly enough, the characters in the Venus chapter of Arnold's *De sig-*

illis bear many similarities to those found in the *De duodecim annulis* tradition, particularly to those in the Vatican manuscript:[103] They begin with characters resembling the letters E and B, followed by a character resembling the number 4; at the end are a line with balls and an arrow.[104] (Figs. 6, 7) This further supports the assumption that the hybrid Venus included in Arnold's *De sigillis* is rooted in the same tradition as the descriptions found in the *De duodecim annulis*, albeit with some alterations: all astrological information and any rituals deemed heretical during the Middle Ages have been eliminated.

It is a very intriguing question why, of all the known iconographic alternatives of the Venus imagery, it was the hybrid Venus that ended up in Arnold's work. What makes the choice particularly remarkable is the fact that zoomorphic hybrid personifications of stellar bodies were quite rare in the Latin sources outside the tradition of the decan deities presented, for instance in the *Picatrix*. Elsewhere in Latin astro-magical literature they appear mainly in two clusters: First, in a few Hermetic texts, such as *Liber planetarum*, that introduces images of Saturn, Jupiter and Mars (and uses the same zoomorphic image types as *Ghāyat al-Hakīm*); the texts in this group were exceedingly rare, and there is scarcely any evidence regarding their circulation in the 13th and 14th centuries. Second, the works attributed to Techel and some related works, such as Azareus, introduce a few hybrid figures, but in fact the majority of hybrids in Techel's works originate from the aforementioned *Liber Planetarum*, indicating that they too are rooted in the same tradition as *Picatrix*.[105]

Compared to the general rarity of zoomorphic planetary personifications, the bird-like hybrid Venus seems to have been a relatively popular and vital figure that attracted interest outside its original context. It is one of the very few hybrid figures apparent in magical Hermetic sources that found their way into other genres and established themselves in widespread and generally accepted works, such as Arnold's *Compendium*. This suggests that there were likely factors, many of which remaining unknown to us, that contributed to its popularity and potential as a symbolic figure. Given this perspective, it is not particularly surprising that the figure found its way into Agrippa's work and was included in the illustration of the "Catherine's talisman." However, the sources also attest to the ambivalent and perhaps fear-laden attitudes of medieval readers towards the hybrid Venus: in *De duodecim annulis*, excluding the Vatican manuscript, the hybrid features were removed from the description along with

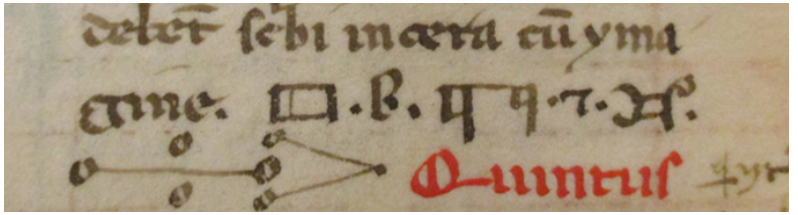

Fig. 4. Magical characters. 15th century. British Library, London, Arundel ms. 342, f. 81v. Photo by the author. Published with permission from the British Library.

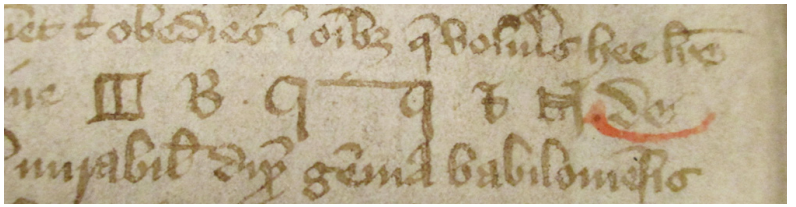

Fig. 5. Magical characters. 1400–1540. British Library, London, Cotton Julius D. VIII, 125v. Photo by the author. Published with permission from the British Library.

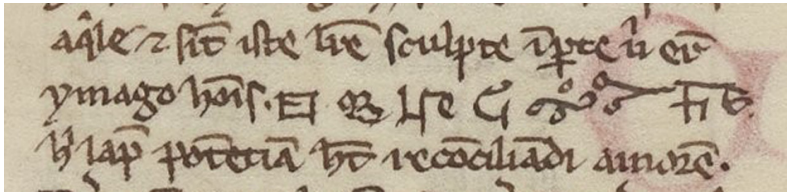

Fig. 6. Arnoldus Saxo, De sigillis. 1290–1305.
Paris, Bibliotèque Nationale de France, Lat. 7475, 140r.

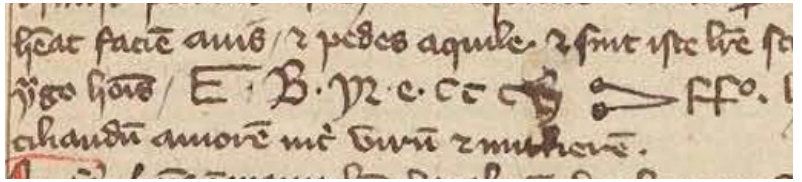

Fig. 7. Arnoldus Saxo, De sigillis. *15th century. Erfurt, Wissenschaftl. Allgemeinbibl., Ampl. qu. 368, 82r.*

the excision of rituals. This tells about the controversial and complex nature of the hybrid Venus and indicates that it did not always (and not universally) align with the contemporary understanding of iconographic norms. The same controversy appears to have continued into the early modern period: as demonstrated by the material analysed by Capodieci, the "Talisman of Catherine" was apparently utilised as an instrument of political propaganda aimed at discrediting political opponents.

The relationship of medieval tradition to Agrippa and Catherine's talisman

Cornelius Agrippa's planetary iconography can, as in the case of Marsilio Ficino's *De Vita* 3.18, mostly be traced back to the *Picatrix*. Agrippa's descriptions of planetary personifications are amalgamations, however, incorporating material from various sections of the *Picatrix* and presumably other sources, and he clearly seems to have had an extensive knowledge of a wide range of medieval astro-magical sources. Just before the planets and their effects are being introduced, Agrippa quotes certain sections from Azareus's *De lapidibus*.[106] A comparison of the texts shows that some versions of Azareus may also have influenced some parts of Agrippa's Venus descriptions. Agrippa's third description of Venus relates that Venus holds "a laurel or an apple or flowers in her right hand." The *Picatrix* does not mention the laurel as an attribute of Venus, but in Azareus and Damigeron-Evax, in the chapter on an armed man and a maiden discussed above, the maiden's attribute is the laurel.[107] The woman holding the laurel is named as Venus only in Arnold's *De sigillis*, and considering the relatively wide circulation of the work in Germany, it seems likely that Agrippa was familiar with this version of Azareus included in Arnold's work.

Regarding the case of the "Catherine's talisman," the medieval textual tradition discussed above can explain some iconographic choices that do not have a basis in Agrippa's work. Unlike Agrippa, none of the medieval descriptions of Venus holding an apple and a comb mention clothing in association with the figure: this may well explain the classical Venus's nudity, which is evident in the remaining talismans. Second, the description contained in Arnold's *De sigillis* indicates that the same object bears two different images: the classical Venus, with a comb and an apple, and a figure with the face of a bird and the legs of an eagle. Thus, the medieval tradition and *De sigillis* in particular provide a more direct model for the Venus figures in the talismans than Agrippa's *De occulta*.

The obscure origins of the talisman naturally make it impossible to prove a connection definitively, but it is worth noting that *De sigillis* was known in at least nine manuscripts in France and Germany, and probably in many more.

Moreover, there is constantly emerging evidence of the early modern reading and reuse of medieval works on image magic. From the 16th to the 18th centuries, multiple manuscripts containing magical texts found their way into new hands and even into notable collections.[108] At the same time, medieval sources of astrological image magic influenced the magical tradition and contributed content to the manuals of magic and encyclopedias with magical undertones published from the 16th to the 18th centuries.[109] Considering this overall trend, it is plausible that a work like Arnold's *De sigillis*, relatively well-preserved for a text of image magic, found its readers in the early modern period, and it is very possible that its description had influenced the textual descriptions of "Catherine's talisman" and the objects themselves.

As Luisa Capodieci has pointed out, many medieval astrological sources regarded the astronomical conjunction of Venus and Jupiter as particularly auspicious.[110] It is noteworthy that certain sources on medieval image magic also recognise the power of this conjunction and suggest depicting the personifications of these planets within a single talisman. In addition to Alfonso's lapidary, the *De duodecim annulis* mentions specifically the astrological timings of Venus and Jupiter in the description of the zoomorphic Venus. Venus and Jupiter appear as a couple in amorous or marital contexts in other sources as well, such as in *De imaginibus septem planetarum*, a work classified under the umbrella of Hermetic literature.[111] However, the arrow and mirror held by the zoomorphic Venus remain enigmatic. No medieval source mentions a mirror in the hands of the bird-shaped hybrid Venus. The mirror is, of course, a classical attribute of Venus and thus an understandable addition. Capodieci's suggestion that the mirror symbolises the reciprocal influence between Venus and Jupiter, reflecting their conjunction, presents one plausible explanation for the mirror's appearance in the talisman.[112]

The arrow depicted in the talisman appears in Agrippa's description, but Agrippa's source remains a mystery. No known text preceding him places the arrow in Venus's hand. *Sagitta* may possibly be a borrowing from another Venus image, apparent, for example, in the *Picatrix* and Agrippa's *De occulta*, where a putto accompanying Venus holds a bow and arrow. One can only

speculate that Agrippa either relied on a source unknown to modern scholarship or modified the iconographic type himself on the basis of criteria that remain unknown to us.

Concluding remarks

The Latin *Picatrix*, based on the Arabic magical compendium *Ghāyat al-Hakim*, has often been cited as a source for certain astro-magical imageries of the Renaissance and early modern period. Its influence on the descriptions of planetary personifications by figures such as Marsilio Ficino and Cornelius Agrippa is evident. Nevertheless, certain iconographic motifs found in the *Picatrix* were also disseminated through various other sources and had been familiar in Europe long before the Latin *Picatrix* began to circulate in the second half of the 15th century. Foremost among these are the Techel family and Azareus, which – together with the *Picatrix* – constitute the principal sources in which hybrid figures most frequently appear within the Latin tradition of image magic. Outside of their textual traditions, hybrids – especially non-classical hybrid figures – were extremely rare, but some exception exist: A notable example of a hybrid figure that had some independent success is the bird-faced and eagle-footed hybrid Venus. This research has shown that this hybrid Venus appears in five different works in the Middle Ages and in a total of at least twelve surviving manuscripts outside the textual tradition of the Latin *Picatrix*. This means that according to current knowledge, it is the most widespread non-classical hybrid planetary personification in the field of image magic, outside the *Picatrix* tradition and the Techel–Azareus. What also makes this iconographic type particularly exceptional is its appearance across a diverse range of sources, whose agendas range from iconographic descriptions to texts grounded in ritual or astrologically oriented ceremonial magic.

In the 16th century the description of the hybrid Venus found its way into Cornelius Agrippa's *De occulta philosophia*, which underwent multiple printings during the early modern centuries. Later it was immortalized in a medallion, commonly known as the Catherine de' Medici talisman, with printed documentation about it appearing in the 18th century. Agrippa's *De occulta* likely served as a primary source for the general visual design of this medallion, but the medieval tradition preceding Agrippa probably also influenced the overall iconography of the talisman through other channels. In particular the lapidary

De sigillis lapidum (which itself is a version of Azareus's pseudepigraphic *De lapidibus*) included in Arnold of Saxony's encyclopedia provides a clear model for placing the two different Venuses, classical and zoomorphic, in the talisman, mirroring the arrangement observed in the "Catherine's talisman".

The links between medieval manuscript sources and early modern talismanic culture remain insufficiently understood in many respects. As the material examined in this study suggests, the tradition of image magic bears evidence of iconographic transmission across a variety of media – including textual descriptions, book illustrations, visual representations on objects, and presumably also oral transmission based on memory. A comprehensive analysis of this network of channels constitutes a central task for future iconographic research into image magic. This multimodality extends to the talismans themselves, which, depending on the source, could be produced using various stones and metals. In light of this, early modern collections of engraved stones and medals should increasingly be examined through the lens of the textual tradition of image magic.

In recent decades many fields of study have emphasized the continuity of medieval traditions and the uninterrupted use of medieval sources in early modern Europe. For example in the study of symbols it has been pointed out that iconographic types and meanings based on medieval manuscript sources persisted into the early modern period, with only stylistic changes occurring.[113] As this study demonstrates, the same development can be seen, at least to some extent, also in the imagery of astrology and magic. The fortune of the hybrid Venus serves as a prominent example of the enduring influence of medieval tradition throughout the centuries of the modern era.

Notes

1 Bibliothèque nationale de France, Departement des medailles monnaies et antiques, Medailles magiques, plateau 91, 4e rangée, alvéoles 3, 4, 5. See Capodieci, "Vénus et Jupiter," 341, n. 1. – From the early modern period, at least one other astrological talisman has survived which depicts a female figure with the feet of a bird. This object, a metal tablet preserved in the collections of the British Museum (OA.1361.b), portrays a female figure identified as Venus. Peter Forshaw has discussed the talisman briefly (Forshaw 2015). The figure has a human head – unlike the so-called Catherine de' Medici talisman, where the figure's head is avian. The present article is confined to examining the iconographic type featuring a bird-headed female figure. I will study the British Museum talisman OA.1361.b in greater detail in forthcoming publications.

2 The most comprehensive (yet short) summary of the object's research history has been presented by Luisa Capodieci. See Capodieci 2011a, 348–349, and note 40.

3 Behar 1996, passim. The first manuscript version of *De occulta philosophia* was completed around 1510, and the revised and extended version was printed in 1531 (the first book only) and 1533 (all the three books). Perrone Compagni, "Introduction," 3, 7–10.

4 Behar 1996, 63, 72–74; Capodieci 2011a, e.g. 349–350; Agrippa, *De occulta*, 361, II.xlii, (2.42).

5 Capodieci 2011, 349–350.

6 Warburg, for example, discovered a connection between the *Picatrix* and the decan figures in the frescoes depicting the months in Ferrara's Palazzo Schifanoia, and connected, albeit incorrectly, the number square of Dürer's *Melencolia I* with the *Picatrix*. See e.g. Burnett 2011, 25–28, 34–38. Later, David Pingree has interpreted other motifs in *Melencolia I* based on the *Picatrix*. Pingree 1980a, 257, n. 4.

7 Behar 1996, 63, 72–74.

8 Capodieci has acknowledged that the symbols and signs do not entirely correspond to Agrippa's descriptions. See Capodieci 2011b, 121. However, little attention has been given to the iconographic differences in the human figures. See the following note.

9 Capodieci has indeed recognized that Agrippa's descriptions are only partially derived from *Picatrix*; however, this issue has not been examined in detail. See, again, Capodieci 2011b, 121.

10 Capodieci 2011a, 358.

11 The Campbell Bonner Magical Gems Database offers a useful gateway to the archaeological corpus and iconography of magical images engraved on gemstones preserved from antiquity. See http://cbd.mfab.hu/.

12 For the few known exemplars, see e.g. Forshaw 2015; Weill-Parot 2002.

13 In this article, the terms astrological magic and "astro(logical)-magical" refer to the branch of image magic that comprises a number of texts dealing with illustrated astrological talismans. In previous research, partly the same set of sources has also been referred to with the term "astral magic". For example, Liana Saif refers to "astral magic" as operative magic of Arabic origins (presented, for example in *Picatrix* and *Liber vaccae*) that uses natural ingredients, astrological knowledge and talismans. Liana Saif, "The Cows and the Bees," 17.

14 Evans 1922; Thorndike 1923; Seznec 1940; Warburg 1999a, 1999b.

15 David Pingree has demonstrated that many of the planetary personifications found, for instance, in the *Picatrix* are based on Persian, Indian, and Babylonian astrological planet iconography. Pingree 1980b.

16 The division is established, for example, in Boudet 2006, and Láng 2008, and followed, for example, in Klaassen 2013.

17 A fully standardised definition of image magic has yet to be established, and opinions on the composition of the textual corpus also vary to some extent. For works included in the genre of image magic, see e.g. Láng 2008, and Klaassen 2013.

18 Scholarly attention has focused particularly on the *Picatrix* and widely circulated works such as the pseudo-Ptolemaic treatise on talismans. See e.g. *Images et magie* 2011; *Picatrix* 2019; Boudet 2008.

19 For example, in the collections of Elias Ashmole and Sir Hans Sloane, many manuscripts contain texts on image magic. For instance, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 1471 preserves *De quindecim stellis quindecim lapidibus quindecim herbis et quindecim imaginibus* (ff. 50r – 56r – for *De quindecim stellis*, see e.g. Ockenström 2022) and *Liber sigillorum* ascribed to Techel (ff. 65v–67v – this article will return to Techel's *Liber* in greater detail in a later section), while London, British Library, MS Sloane 3663 contains a series of magical texts that also appear in Camillo Leonardi's *Speculum lapidum* (1502) as well as in numerous seventeenth-century printed sources (for Sloane 3663 and its background, see Ockenström 2022, and Kuha & Ockenström 2026). MS Sloane 1784 includes yet another version of Techel's *Liber* (5v–12v). Johannes Virdung's collection, which was transferred in the 17th century from Heidelberg to the Vatican Library, contained several magical manuscripts (e.g. Pal. Lat. 1375, which introduces the images of the Sun and the Moon, f. 270v – for Virdung, see Láng 2008, 107, 115), as well as the collections of Rudolf II and a few Bohemian nobles, which ended up in Sweden in the 1640s and became part of Queen Christina's collection. Christina herself is known to have acquired astro-magical works after moving to Rome (for Christina's collection, see Nilsson Nylander 2011, 49–52; Boeren 1974, ix–x, xiii–xx; Åkerman 2008, 28–30.). For texts of image magic in early modern collections, see e.g. Klaassen 2013, 37; Láng 2008, 107, 115–118, and Ockenström 2024b, passim.

20 In brief, the Renaissance-centered perspective on the development of learned magic appears to have emerged from the dominant currents of twentieth-century art history

and cultural history, in which the Italian Renaissance occupied a particularly prominent position. A Renaissance-centered perspective has been advanced by Warburgian scholars such as Ernst Gombrich (Gombrich 1948; 1972) and Frances Yates (1964), and later by Brian Copenhaver (e.g. Copenhaver 1984) and Paola Zambelli (2007). The approaches to the history of magic represented by this tradition appear, in some cases, to remain influential into the 2020s (see Waddell 2021). Beginning in the 1980s and 1990s, the scholarly focus on learned magic began to shift toward the medieval period, a development reflected in the influential works of scholars such as David Pingree, Richard Kieckhefer, Claire Fanger, and Nicolas Weill-Parot.

21 See e.g. Doering-Manteuffel & Bachter 2004; Barbierato 2011; Klaassen 2013, 37, 181–82.

22 Otto 2016.

23 For lapidaries, see Evans 1920 and Buettner 2022. Frank Klaassen includes the lapidary of Marbodus of Rennes in the genre of image magic. Klaassen 2013, 35. For Damigeron, see Pingree 1987, 59–61, and Buettner 2022, 78–79.

24 This division, often applied in modern scholarship, is based on the *Speculum Astronomiae*, a work written in the 13th century that classified the works attributed to Pseudo-Ptolemy and Thabit ibn Qurra as purely astronomical and thus permissible. See e.g. Pingree 1994, 42–44, 50.

25 In the fields of historical research, "Hermetic" usually refers to the literary works attributed to mythical Egyptian sage Hermes/Mercurius Trismegistus or to his successors, or connected to his legacy. Hermetic literature has been divided into philosophical/theoretical *Hermetica*, which includes the most renowned works such as *Corpus Hermeticum* and *Asclepius*, and into technical/practical *Hermetica*, which contains e.g. astrological, botanical and magical manuals, including astromagical treatises. See e.g. Fowden 1993; Broek 2005a, 2005b; Lucentini & Perrone Compagni 2005.

26 "Ceremonial Hermetic magic" refers to magical *Hermetica* that present astrological talismans and include ceremonial and ritualistic elements, such as prayers, invocations, sacrifices and suffumigations. Lucentini & Perrone Compagni 2005, 517–21.

27 Katelyn Mesler has called the set of texts attributed to Techel, Azareus's work, and the fragments that sometimes circulated with them, the Techel-Azareus complex. Mesler 2014. For example Pingree has considered Azareus and Techel as separate works. Pingree 1987, 64–68.

28 Recently, I and Vajra Regan have demonstrated that the earliest version of the Techel textual family is a direct adaptation of the *Liber Planetarum*, a work of Hermetic astrological magic that itself is a translation from Arabic. See Ockenström & Regan 2023. Scholarship typically refers to a single work of Techel under the title *Liber Sigillorum*, but in reality, it constitutes a family of several independent texts. I shall examine this issue in greater detail in my forthcoming monograph.

29 See e.g. Anderson 2023, 11.

30 The study of hybrids and other "monstrous" figures occupies a longstanding place within the discipline of art history, with early contributions by Rudolf Wittkower (Wittkower 1977). More recent approaches to the subject are exemplified by scholars such as Simona Cohen (2008).

31 For the history of bestiaries, see e.g. Hassig 1999 and other of Hassig's studies. See also the previous note.

32 E.g. Cohen 2008.

33 The statistical analysis on which these figures are based was conducted in one of my earlier articles, which, regrettably, is available only in Finnish (See Ockenström 2020). The Hermetic texts are three unica in the manuscript BNCF II.iii.214: *Liber Mercurii* (24v–26r), excerpts on the folio 26, and *Liber planetarum* (33r–38r), and the *De duodecim annulis*. For the Hermetic texts in BNCF II.iii.214, see e.g. Ockenström & Regan 2023; Pingree 1994.

34 Capodieci, 2011a, 341, also n. 1. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Departement des medailles, monnaies et antiques, Medailles magiques, plateau 91, 4e rangée, alvéoles 3, 4, 5. The Vienna copy: Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, 38783 1914 B, weight 16,5 g, height 44,6 mm, width 34,4 mm. A Venus figure endowed with avian feet yet otherwise fully human in appearance is also found on a talisman in the British Museum; see note 1.

35 Capodieci 2011a, 347–348.

36 Capodieci 2011a, 342, Behar 66. The original source: *L'art d'assasiner les Rois chaîne par les Jésuites à Louis XIV et à Jacques II*, London 1696. For the full title and further information, see Capodieci 2011a, 342, n. 5. According to Capodieci, the information is deliberately misleading. In reality, the work was possibly printed in Amsterdam. The full description is as follows (the transcription follows the original orthography): "C'étoit une medaille de cuivre, ovale, en forme de bouclier ou de rondache semblable à celles que les anciens romains consacroient à leurs faux dieux. La gravure de cette medaille representoit Catherine de Medecis étant à genoux en forme de supliante, faisant offrande au demon qui étoit peint sur un thrône relevé avec des traits les plus afreux & les plus horribles que l'on puisse imaginer." *L'art d'assasiner les Rois*, 176.

37 Capodieci 2011a, 342–343.

38 Behar 1996, 65; Capodieci 2011a, 343.

39 Behar 1996, 65–66; Capodieci 2011a, 345–347. Interpretations of the talisman's iconography are discussed in more detail later in this article.

40 Behar 1996, 66–67; Capodieci 2011a, 347–348. For the image of the illustration published in the *Journal de Henri III*, see Capodieci 2011b, 129, fig. 16.
41 Capodieci 2011a, 357.
42 It is noteworthy that the earliest source from 1696 adheres to typical elements of "miracle narratives" commonly found in hagiographies and other legends. These narratives aimed to provide an authentic origin for a particular object, relic, or cult, often with a somewhat fragile connection to reality.
43 Capodieci 2011a, 343–44.
44 Capodieci 2011a, 349.
45 Capodieci 2011a, 349.
46 Cloulas 1979, 366; Behar 1996, 68.
47 Behar 1996, 68–71. According to Behar, the object was originally attributed to Jean Fernel due to the inscription "Freneil" found on it. However, Behar points out that Freneil is a Hebrew conjuration formula and therefore does not refer to Fernel.
48 Behar 1996, 73–74, 76, 82–83.
49 Capodieci 2011a, 356-57.
50 Ficino 1989, 334–337 (chapter 3.18); Agrippa 1992, 358–359 (chapters 2.38-39). Cf. *Picatrix* 1986, 65–66 (chapter 2.10). For Ficino as a reader of medieval image magic, see Ockenström 2014.
51 Translations are by the author unless otherwise noted. The page numbers refer to Perrone Compagni's edition of Agrippa's *De occulta* (Agrippa 1992).
52 Agrippa 1992, 361 (2.42); *Picatrix* 1986, 70 (2.10.57); *Picatrix* 2019, 110–111. For other sources, see e.g. *Liber sigillorum* attributed to Techel/Thetel, for example, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz, MS lat. 20 307 (956), 22rv.
53 *Picatrix* 1986, 67 (2.10.30). For "other sages", see the next chapter of this article.
54 For *Ghāyat al-Hakīm*, see e.g. Attrell et. al., 1–7, and Pingree 1980b, 1–15. For the authorship and date, see Fierro 1996.
55 Benedek Lang has written shortly on the "rediscovery" of the *Picatrix* in the 1450s and 1460s. Láng 2008, 96–103.
56 "*Picatrix": Das Ziel des Weisen*, 115-119. This German translation of the Arabic *Ghāyat al-Hakīm* is probably not error free. *Picatrix: The Latin Version of the Ghāyat Al-Hakīm*, 65–68 (2.10.10–38).
57 "*Picatrix": Das Ziel des Weisen*, 119-131. *Picatrix: The Latin Version* 2.10.40–87, pp. 68–74.
58 "*Picatrix": Das Ziel des Weisen*, 115: "Nach dem Buche der Erklärung der pneumatische Talismane hat sie die Gestalt einer stehenden Frau mit einem Apfel in der Rechten und in der Linken einem Kamm, ähnlich einer Tafel, darauf Zeichen stehen." *Picatrix: The Latin Version*, 2.10.27, p. 67: "Forma Veneris secundum opinionem sapientis Picatricis est forma mulieris tenentis in eius dextra manu malum et in sinistra pectinem similem tabule et istis figuris scriptum: ΟΛΟΙΟΛ. Et hec est eius forma."
59 "*Picatrix*": *Das Ziel des Weisen*, 115: "Und nach dem Buche des Nutzens der Steine von Utarid hat sie eine Gestalt mit dem Leib eines Menschen, dem Gesicht eines Vogels und Füssen eines Adlers."
60 *Picatrix* 2.10.28, p. 67: "Forma Veneris secundum opinionem sapientis Mercurii est forma habens corpus hominis et vultum et caput avis. pedes vero aquile. Et hec est eius forma."
61 *"Picatrix": Das Ziel Des Weisen*, 121. "Man graviert für Venus auf einen Ringstein von Rubin das Bild einer Frau mit einem Apfel in der rechten und einem Kamme, ähnlich einer Tafel, in der linken Hand, darauf folgende Zeichen stehen : ΛΟΙΟΛΟ. Das Bild hat den Leib eines Menschen mit dem Gesicht eines Vogels und den Füssen eines Adlers. Dies Bild macht seinen Träger bei allen Leuten beliebt. Die Zeichnung dieses Bildes [muss geschehen] in ihrer Stunde und ihrer Exaltation."
62 2.10.55-57, p. 70. "Ymago Veneris. Si ex formis Veneris feceris formam mulieris cuius corpus sit humanum. caput vero avis necnon et pedes aquile, in dextra manu malum, in sinistra vero pectinem tenentis ligneum similem tabule talibus figuris scriptum: ΟΛΟΙΟΛ. qui hanc ymaginem secum portaverit bene recipietur et ab omnibus diligetur."
63 Rodriguez M. Montalvo, 1981, "Introduccion," 11–13.
64 *Picatrix: The Latin Version* (2.10.55-61); *Lapidario*, 196–198.
65 Madrid, Escurialense H. I. 15, 104r, b. *Lapidario*, 196. "Dela piedra que a nombre robi. [R]obi es piedra que, magar es toda del Sol, a en ella muy grand parte Uenus. Ende qui esta piedra touiere consigo en hora de Uenus, seyendo ella en su exaltation et en su ascenden <de>t, et catada de Iupiter de bon catamiento, sera amado et bien quisto delos omnes, et diran bien del. Pero esto se muestra mas complida mie[n]te descendiendo sobresta piedra la uertud de figura de mugier que tiene en la mano diestra maçana, et en la siniestra un peyne fecho como tabla, en que esten tales figuras como aqui estan figuradas [not shown] et el rostro dela mugier que sea de aue, et los pies de aquila."
66 Florence, Biblioteca nazionale centrale [hereafter BNCF], II.iii.214. For the whole manuscript, see Pingree 1994, 43–53. For the Hermetic texts in the manuscript, see Lucentini & Perrone Compagni 2001, 59–79.
67 BNCF, II.iii.214, 26v.
68 David Pingree argued that all the treatises on folios 1–49 had been translated from Arabic in Spain in the twelfth century or at least by c. 1225. He also assumed that all this material, both Salomonic and Hermetic, had been collected into the same corpus already during the first half of the thirteenth century. Pingree 1994, 41–42, 52, 54.
69 BNCF II.iii.214, 26v. "Veneris anulus. fac anulum de ere rubeo cuius gemma sit de ere

rubeo. et sculpe in ea hora prima diei veneris ymaginem mulieris in dextra manu pomum tenentis et in sinistra q(uas)i pectem et est tabula adde scribendos sequentes. karacteres et medie a capite infra sit corp(us) ho(min)is. sed facies eius et os sic(ut) avis et pedes aquile. venere directa in. vii. gradu sagittarij." – My deepest gratitude goes to PhD Miika Kuha, for his careful review of the transcriptions of the manuscript excerpts cited in this article, his invaluable assistance with paleographical challenges, and his comments on the translations from Latin into English.

70 BNCF II.iii.214, 26v. "Anulo toto perfecto decolla super illum avem veneris. et est collumba alba. et collige sanguinem in nocte sequenti que est sabbati. pone anulum sub celo sereno. et in die in domo. Hoc fac vii diebus. et semper fumiga in crepuscullo diei. et noctis cum ligno aloe. Quo facto lava cum vino. quod tunc protrahatur de vegete et post fac de auro vas. et repone *capas* annuli. et cum volueris scribe nomen cuius vis in ere et matris sue et tuum cum charateribus que sunt in anulo deinde ablue cum vino optimo puro et cum hoc vino massa farinam septem mulinorum et in pastam imprimatur lapidem anulli et iterum mades pastam illam aqua illa et qui comederit pastam et biberit aquam. sequatur te in domum tuam. hii sunt karacteres." In the Latin transcriptions within this article, uncertain readings are indicated in italics. Standard abbreviations are expanded in the text. Dubious or unusual cases are indicated in parentheses.

71 These texts are classified as hermetic works by Lucentini & Perrone Compagni 2001, 83–92.

72 In the 12th century Toz is mentioned by Daniel of Morley and Domenicus Gundissalinus, in the first half of the 13th century by William of Auvergne. See Ockenström 2024a.

73 Lucentini & Perrone Compagni 2001, 91–92.

74 In *Picatrix: The Latin Version*, 2.10.57; 2.10.60; 2.10.56; 2.10.55.

75 London, British Library [hereafter BL], Arundel 342, 80v–83r; BL, Cotton Julius D. VIII, 125rv; Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. Lat. 1188, 129v. See Lucentini & Perrone Compagni 2001, 91–92.

76 Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 10803, 56v–59r.

77 The ambiguous phrase within the Florentine manuscript – "*... karacteres. et medie a capite infra sit corpus hominis*" – may have arisen as a result of misunderstandings and textual corruptions, from the amalgamation of two elements, which, in the Vatican manuscript, are distinct entities (*littere que sunt in fine huius capituli / et sit ymago corpus hominis*).

78 Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 10803, 57rv. In this version as well, the image of the seal is printed on and the images of the desired persons are written on an edible material.

79 I refer to a text known as *De stationibus ad cultum Veneris*. See Lucentini & Perrone Compagni, *I testi*, 84–86. *De stationibus* is only partially preserved and survives in a single manuscript in Biblioteca Marciana, Venice. In the Marciana manuscripts, it seems to form a unity with Toz's *Liber Veneris*, and the texts may have a common genealogy. See Ockenström 2024a.

80 BL, Arundel 342, 81v. "Sculpetur in iacinto ymago mulieris in cuius palma sinistra sit malum. in dextera pecten."

81 Valentin Rose and Isabelle Draelants have dated Arnold to the era of the early encyclopedists of the 13th century. Rose 1875, 323; Draelants 2001, e.g. 1–2, 5.

82 Draelants 2001, 14–16.

83 These are: *De celo et mundo*, *De naturis animalium*, *De virtutibus lapidum* (or: *De gemmarum virtutibus*), and *De virtute universali*. Draelants 2001, 14.

84 Draelants 2001, 17.

85 Draelants 2001, 15: A wider presentation of the manuscripts on pages 21–29. These manuscripts are: Erfurt, Wissenschaftliche Allgemeinbibliothek, Amplon. oct. 77, folios 1-63 (14th century); Oxford, Bodleian Library Lat. Misc. e. 34 (= 33408 on catalogue), folios 1-89v (13th century); Lüneburg 28, Ratsbücherei, Theol. 4° 20, folios 89r–114r (14th century).

86 Draelants 2001, 31–55. Prague, Nàrodni Knihovna (Bibl. Univ.) XI.C.2. (n° du cat. 2027), folios 238v-250r; Heidelberg, Universitätsbibl., Cod. Pal. Germ. 263, folios 161r-172r.; Paris, Bibl. Nat. de France, lat. 7475, folios 125r-140v; Erlangen, Universitätsbibl. Erlangen-Nürnberg 423, folios 147-158.; Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, lat. qu. 288, folios 1r–9v; Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Misc. Nat. 5 (previously Königliche Bibl. H.J.VI. 31), folios 53–54; Erfurt, Wissenschaftliche Allgemeinbibliothek, Ampl . qu. 368, folios 81v–82r.

87 The attribution to "Azareus" is misleading because the name appears in only a few manuscripts; despite this limited occurrence, it has nonetheless been employed as the "standard name" for the unknown author in the few studies addressing the text. See e.g. Pingree 1987, and Mesler 2014.

88 For Azareus, see Pingree 1987, 66–67, and Mesler 2014, passim. So far, no comprehensive study has been published on the circulation of the work. Draelants recognizes that Azareus has similarities with Arnold's *De sigillis*, but she does not clearly point out that Arnold's *De sigillis* is practically a version of the text in question. Draelants 2001, 490–491.

89 The constellations appear roughly in the same sequences as in ancient sources, e.g. in *Hyginii De Astronomia*. See e.g. Hyginus and Ghislaine Viré. *Hygini De Astronomia*. Stutgardiae: Teubner, 1992.

90 See e.g. Pingree 1987, 67; Thorndike 1923, 389; Weill-Parot 2002, 120–122.

91 This type usually occurs in the independent circulation and occasionally circulates with Techel. See e.g. Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz, MS lat. 20 307 (956), 22v.

92 Type 2 usually precedes Techel's lapidary included in Thomas of Cantimpré's *De natura rerum*.

93 *Thomas Cantimpratensis Liber de natura rerum*. 14.69, ed. Boese (Azareus, 370–71).

94 For the edition, see *Die Encyklopädie des Arnoldus Saxo, zum ersten Mal nach einem Erfurter Codex*, hrsg. von Emil Stange. Erfurt: Bartholomäus, 1905.

95 Typically, in *De sigillis lapidum*, chapters begin with the formula "*in quocumque lapide inveneris*" ((if) you find in any stone) or "*si inveneris in quo sit*" (if you find (a stone) in which there should be (described)). The anomaly in this chapter is likely due to it being an addition from a different source, or to the confusion caused by the unusual stone for the copyists.

96 The Erfurt Amplon. oct. 77 provides "gyrgi" (followed by a lacuna), the Erfurt Ampl. qu. 368 introduces "girguntos." None of these variants of the name appear in common Latin lapidaries.

97 I refer to the edition by Joan Evans in *Magical Jewels* (1989), which is based on two manuscripts.

98 Hybrid personification of a planet is not a total exception in an astrological context, and in Azareus there is already a hybrid Jupiter with a ram's head. See e.g. BL Arundel 342, 69v: "Est et alius in quo habetur iuppiter habens formam hominis et caput Arietis."

99 *Die Encyklopädie des Arnoldus Saxo*, 76: "Si inveneris Andromadam, id est puellam, que habet crines sparsos atque manus remissas, ille lapis, in quo hoc sigillum inveneris, habet potestatem reconciliandi amorem inter virum et mulierem et inter adulteros."

100 As Ritter and Plessner point out, these resemble Arabic numerals: I = 1, O = 5, Λ = 8. The significance of the numerals in this context remains unknown. "*Picatrix*": *Das Ziel des Weisen*, 121, n. 6.

101 Only the cross-like sign appears in a slightly different form also in the Vatican copy of *De duodecim annulis*.

102 For the Vatican manuscript, see the online version, folio 57v. URL: https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.lat.10803

103 For the characters in Arnold's *De sigillis*, see e.g. the online version of the Paris BnF Lat. 7475, folios 140r. URL: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84900936

104 However, none of the characters included in the medieval descriptions of the hybrid Venus appear in Catherine's talisman in exactly the same form.

105 Ockenström & Regan 2023.

106 After introducing the faces of the signs of the Zodiac, Agrippa discusses a few images associated with constellations (beginning with Pegasus, Andromeda, and Cassiopeia) and their effects, which probably originate from Azareus. Agrippa 1992, 355–357.

107 For example, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 3206, 125r.

108 See note 19.

109 For example, Rudolph Goclenius the Younger's 1608 *Oratio, qua defenditur vulnus non applicato etiam remedio* (Marpurgi 1608 [Marburg]) and a compilation entitled *Trinum Magicum sive Secretorum Magicorum Opus* (Francoforti 1614) introduce talismans based on medieval traditions. These examples are likely just the tip of the iceberg. See Ockenström 2022; Kuha & Ockenström 2026.

110 Capodieci 2011a, 122–123; 2011b, 353, 355.

111 For *De imaginibus septem planetarum*, see Lucentini & Perrone Compagni 2001, 80–83.

112 Capodieci 2011a, 123; 2011b, 353. On the other hand, Agrippa's depiction of the 'Venus on a leash' type features a mirror in Venus's hand, suggesting that the inclusion of the mirror may derive directly from this iconographic tradition. However, also in this case the origin of the mirror remains ambiguous, as the parallel image in Agrippa's probable source, *Picatrix*, does not mention or depict a mirror in its representation of Venus. Agrippa 1992, 361 (2.42). *Picatrix: The Latin Version*, 70 (2.10.57).

113 See Cohen 2008, xxxiii, xxxvii.

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