



A MEDICAL RECÍPE PREPARED BY FOR ALEXANDER THE GREAT (FROM A 15.TH CENTURY OTTOMAN MANUSCRÍPT)

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An Ottoman medical manuscript printed in 1468 bears an interesting formula: A formula prepared for Alexander the Great by Aristotle. Six different manuscripts of the same text in various libraries at Istanbul, hand-written in different dates, present the formula with the same information: "His physician Aristotle had prepared this paste for Alexander the Great" This paste is a mixture of 24 medicinal herbs and honey, and is noted for its "strengthening, invigorating, tonic effect" The formula of this paste has a special name, meaning; chosen, esteemed and appreciated paste.

Mucerrebnâme, the book in which Arítoteles's formula for Alexander the Great is written by Sabuncuoğlu in his later years and consists of formulas he himself had used numerous times with beneficial effects. At the introduction to the book, he writes that he had collected the most consequential knowledge he had gathered during his long practice as a physician.

I believe this formula I have encountered in Mucerrebnâme is a significant one due to its origins. Alexander the Great had led his life in battlefields, had an arduous life and had died at early age. Aristotle, his physician as well as his mentor, seems to have prepared a drug for the great emperor to counter the effects of his tough and strenuous life. The fact that the formula had a place in medical manuscripts of later ages could be interpreted as a proof that it had since been used by other physicians, finding its way through centuries into a classical medical manuscript of the 15th century. The drugs used in the formula are well known by the Ottoman physicians. These are easily accessible and routinely used drugs and thus the formula is presented as one that is easy to prepare.