

# Temperament and the Senses: The Taste, Odor and Color of Drugs in Late-Renaissance Galenism

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Received 30 June 2022 | Accepted 19 February 2023 | Published online 21 November 2023

#### Abstract

According to the medical tradition, the temperament of bodies came from the balance of their primary qualities – hot, cold, dry, and moist. However, physicians associated additional sensory properties with temperament in the field of pharmacology. These sensations included taste, color, and odor, which allow an appraisal of the constitution and active powers of drugs. The present paper examines this theme in late-Renaissance medicine, through the accounts of the French physician Jean Fernel (ca. 1497–1558) and the Italian physician Andrea Cesalpino (1519–1603). As will be shown, their respective interpretations of drug "faculties" offered original views on the relationship between temperament, sensory properties, and matter theories. Such discussions, in turn, revealed the Renaissance reception of Arabic-Latin pharmacology, Galenic medicine, and the Aristotelian physics of matter and form.

#### Keywords

Fernel – Cesalpino – Galen – Aristotle – Avicenna – Averroes – medicine – pharmacology – elements – matter – substance – qualities – humors – body – hylomorphism

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