

Herodotus¹ emphasizes that the only oil used by the Babylonians is made from sesame. Sesame is also mentioned among their products by the Babylonian priest Berosus (fourth century B.C.).²

Aelius Gallus, a member of the Equestrian order, carried the Roman arms into Arabia, and brought back from his expedition the report that the Nomades (nomads) live on milk and the flesh of wild animals, and that the other peoples, like the Indians, express a wine from palms and oil from sesame.³ According to Pliny, sesame comes from India, where they make an oil from it, the color of the seeds being white.⁴ Both the seeds and the oil were largely employed in Roman pharmacology.⁵ Megasthenes⁶ mentions the cultivation of sesame in India. It likewise occurs in the Atharva Veda and in the Institutes of Manu (Sanskrit *tila*).⁷ A. DE CANDOLLE'S view⁸ that it was introduced into India from the Sunda Isles in prehistoric times, is untenable. This theory is based on a purely linguistic argument: "Rumphius gives three names for the sesame in these islands, very different one from the other, and from the Sanskrit word, which supports the theory of a more ancient existence in the archipelago than on the continent." This alleged evidence proves nothing whatever for the history of the plant, but is merely a fact of language.⁹ There can now be no doubt that from a botanical viewpoint the home of the genus is in tropical Africa, where twelve species occur, while there are only two in India.¹⁰

In the *Fan yi min yi tsi*,¹¹ a Sanskrit synonyme of "sesame" is given as 阿提目多伽 *a-t'i-mu-to-k'ie*, **a-di-muk-ta-g'a*, i.e., Sanskrit *adhi-muktaka*, which is identified with *kü-šen* (see below) and *hu-ma*. An old gloss explains the term as "the foreign flower of pious thoughtfulness" (*šan se i hwa* 善思夷華), an example of which is the lighting of a lamp fed with the oil of three flowers (sandal, soma, and campaka [*Michelia champaca*]) and the placing of this lamp on the altar of the

¹ I, 193.

² MÜLLER, *Fragmenta historiae graecae*, Vol. II, p. 496. Regarding Egypt, see V. LORET, *Flore pharaonique*, p. 57.

³ Pliny, VI, 28, §161.

⁴ *Sesama ab Indis venit. Ex ea et oleum faciunt; colos eius candidus* (XVIII, 22, §96).

⁵ Pliny, XXII, 64, §132.

⁶ Strabo, XV. I, 13.

⁷ JORET, *Plantes dans l'antiquité*, Vol. II, p. 269.

⁸ *Origin of Cultivated Plants*, p. 422.

⁹ The Malayan languages possess a common name for *Sesamum indicum*: Javanese and Malayan *leña*, Batak *loña*, Čam *loñö* or *lañö*; Khmer *loño*.

¹⁰ A. ENGLER, *Pflanzenfamilien*, Vol. IV, pt. 3 b, p. 262.

¹¹ Ch. 8, p. 6 (see above, p. 254).