

by Theophrastus:<sup>1</sup> it is produced in Syria from a plant called *πάναξ* ("all-heal"); it is only the juice (*ὀπός*) which is called *χαλβάνη*, and which "was used in cases of miscarriage as well as for sprains and such-like troubles, also for the ears, and to strengthen the voice. The root was used in childbirth, and for flatulence in beasts of burden, further in making the iris-perfume (*ἴρινον μύρον*) because of its fragrance; but the seed is stronger than the root. It grows in Syria, and is cut at the time of wheat-harvest."<sup>2</sup>

Pliny says that galbanum grows on the mountain Amanus in Syria as the exudation from a kind of *ferula* of the same name as the resin, sometimes known as *stagonitis*.<sup>3</sup> Its medicinal employment is treated by him in detail.<sup>4</sup> DIOSCORIDES<sup>5</sup> explains it as the gum of a plant which has the form of a *ferula*, growing in Syria, and called by some *metopion*. Abu Mansur<sup>6</sup> discusses the drug under the Arabic name *quinna* and the Persian name *bārzād*. During the middle ages galbanum was well known in Europe from the fourteenth century onward.<sup>7</sup>

The philological result is confirmed by the botanical evidence, although Twan Č'eñ-ši's description, made from an oral report, not as an eye-witness, is naturally somewhat deficient; but it allows us to recognize the characteristics of a *Ferula*. It is perfectly correct that the leaves resemble those of the asafœtida *Ferula*, as a glance at the excellent plates in the monograph of BORSZCZOW (*op. cit.*) will convince one. It is likewise correct that the leaves grow at the ends of the twigs, and usually by threes. It is erroneous, however, that the tree does not flower or bear fruit.<sup>8</sup> The process of collecting the sap is briefly but well described. Nothing positive is known about the importation of galbanum into China, although W. AINSLIE<sup>9</sup> stated in 1826 that it was

<sup>1</sup> *Histor. plant.*, IX. 1, 2; IX. VII, 2; IX. IX, 2. The term occurs also in the Greek papyri.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the new edition and translation of Theophrastus by A. HORT (Vol. II, p. 261). I do not see how the term "balsam of Mecca" (*ibid.*, p. 219), which is a misnomer anyhow, can be employed in the translation of an ancient Greek author.

<sup>3</sup> *Dat et galbanum Syria in eodem Amano monte e ferula, quae eiusdem nominis, resinae modo; stagonitim appellant* (XII, 56, § 126).

<sup>4</sup> XXIV, 13.

<sup>5</sup> III, 87 (cf. LECLERC, *Traité des simples*, Vol. III, p. 115).

<sup>6</sup> ACHUNDOW, Abu Mansur, p. 108.

<sup>7</sup> See, for instance, K. v. MEGENBERG, *Buch der Natur* (written in 1349-50), ed. F. Pfeiffer, p. 367; FLÜCKIGER and HANBURY, *Pharmacographia*, p. 321.

<sup>8</sup> The fruits are already mentioned by Theophrastus (*Hist. plant.*, IX. IX, 2) as remedies.

<sup>9</sup> *Materia Indica*, Vol. I, p. 143.