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○ LORCA [see LURKA].

— LOS PEDROCHES [see FAḤṢ AL-BALLŪṬ].

✱ LOT [see LŪṬ].

○ LUBĀN (*lūbān*, *lawbān*) is frankincense, the dried-up sap produced by notching some kinds of *Boswellia*, obtained in Somalia and South Arabia in the form of yellow resin-grains. As is well-known, the term is Old Semitic: Assyr. *lubānu*, old South Arabian *l-b-n*, Hebr. *lbonā*, Aram. *lebontā* (*lebottā*), Eth. *lābān*, from which have been derived the loanword *λίβανος*, *λιβανωτός*, Latin *olibanum*, with derivations in the Romance languages. The name can be traced back to the original meaning "white" (Hebr. *lābān*), after the colour of the fresh, milk-white gum-resin, exuded abundantly from the notched trunks and after some time solidified into yellow grains, which are then detached from the trunks or gathered from the soil. At least as often as *lubān*, there appears in Arabic the synonym *kundur*, according to most authors of Persian origin, but perhaps to be derived from *χόνδρος* "grain"; this term may have become an independent form, derived from the combination *χόνδρος* *λιβάνου* "frankincense-grain".

The frankincense trade is extremely old and has been treated repeatedly—but at times inadequately—in comprehensive descriptions. In the first place, frankincense—together with myrrh—formed the richness of the old South-Arabian states of the Minaeans and Sabaeans; the loss of the frankincense monopoly was one of the main causes of the collapse of this commerce fundamental for their existence, and consequently of cause of their downfall around the middle of the 6th century A.D. (see the good survey by W. W. Müller, *Alt-Südarabien als Weihrauchland*, in *Theol. Quartalschrift*, cxlix [1969], 350-68). The Arabic sources point in the same direction. According to al-Aṣmaʿī, three items were found only in the Yemen, and indeed abundantly there: *al-wars* (*curcuma*, a dye-plant), *al-lubān* and *al-ʿasb* (*Poterrum*) (cited in al-Dīnawarī, *The book of plants*, ed. B. Lewin, Wiesbaden 1974, no. 627). According to a Bedouin from ʿUmān (in al-Dīnawarī, *Le dictionnaire botanique*, ed. Hamidullah, Cairo 1973, nos. 971, 979), frankincense is only found in al-Shiḥr, in Shiḥr ʿUmān in fact, as a small briar which reaches up to two cubits high and which grows only in the mountains; its leaves resemble those of the myrtle [see *As* in Suppl.], as do its fruits, which have a bitter (read *marāra* instead of *ḥarāra*) taste; its resin, also used for chewing and called *kundur*, wells up in some places struck with the hatchet and stays there until harvest. According to al-Dimashqī, *Nukhba*, ed. Mehren, St. Petersburg 1866, 87, frankincense is obtained on *Sukutṛā* (Socotra) and in some regions of the Yemen. After Matt. ii, 11, al-Ṭabarī, i, 729, 1, reports verbatim that the Magi brought gold, frankincense and myrrh. Lice infestation is caused by two different things: by taking excessive delight

in dried figs and by burning frankincense (Ibn Kutayba, *ʿUyūn*, iii, Cairo 1930, 294).

The best frankincense comes from the male plant (*lubān dhakar* = the *λιβανωτός ἄρρηγ* of Dioscorides); it is white and firm and has round grains which are gummy when broken open. The white frankincense (*lubān abyad* = *λιβανωτός λευκός*) is also named as a noble variety; finally are to be mentioned the Javanese (in fact, Sumatran) frankincense (*lubān djāwī*), i.e. benzoin, obtained from various kinds of styrax-trees whose fumes are said to remove a cold in the head, and the reddish, Indian frankincense. When, however, the geographers speak continuously of the frankincense of Arabia, this statement is based more on a literary topos than on knowledge of things on the spot. The critical Marco Polo remarks explicitly that he does not want simply to repeat these literary accounts, but to report the personal information of the frankincense-traders. According to these last, frankincense was particularly cultivated in two regions of South Arabia in "Escier"—apparently al-Shiḥr—and "Dufar", the ancient Zafār. In al-Shiḥr, he further reports, the lord confiscates the entire harvest, pays the cultivator a low price, and sells it to the traders at a sixfold price (for this report, see W. Heyd, *Histoire du commerce du Levant*, ii, Leipzig 1886, 614-16). Some other places named by the geographers which produced frankincense lie close to each other and belong to the region of Mahra [q.v.]. The fact that at times scanty production of frankincense could not always satisfy the sustained and high demand in East and West, led to numerous adulterations (S. Labib, *Handelsgeschichte Ägyptens im Spätmittelalter*, Wiesbaden 1965, 334). Nahray ben Nissim, a Jewish scholar, merchant and banker, called *al-tādjir al-maghribī* and well-known from the Geniza documents, carried on a widespread trade in frankincense in the Mediterranean area in the 5th/11th century (S. D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean society*, i, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1967, 154).

The medicinal use of frankincense, described extensively by Ibn al-Bayṭār, goes back for the greater part to Dioscorides, from whom was also borrowed without examination the enumeration of several kinds, together with their Greek names. According to him, frankincense has a heating, drying and astringent power, expels darkening of the pupils, causes wounds to scar over and checks haemorrhage. It softens virulent abscesses and, applied in combination with vinegar and pitch, removes warts and eruptions. It is good for earaches and, combined with other medicines, for illnesses of the trachea and of the intestines. For healthy people, it can be dangerous, for it may cause madness and, if drunk with wine, even death. Frankincense is burned by putting it in a mussel-shell and setting fire to it. Shortly before it is fully consumed it must be covered up so that the fire is smothered completely in order that the frankincense is charred and not reduced to ashes; it can then more easily be pulverised. Various supplementary observations were made by the Arab physicians, such as the following: frankincense "burns" pathological phlegms, dries up excessive humours in the breast, strengthens the stomach and warms up a cold liver. Dissolved in water and taken daily, it increases the reasoning power and eliminates loss of memory. It checks diarrhoea and vomiting, calms palpitation of the heart but can also lead to mental disturbances. When chewed, it strengthens the gums. Its bark is good for haemorrhages and intestinal ulcers. The bark of the frankin-

Proceedings of the First International Symposium on Studies in the History of Arabia,
23rd - 28th of April, 1977, sponsored by the Department of History, Faculty of Arts,
University of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

UNIVERSITY OF RIYADH PRESS

VOLUME I

191134
TUSA (79-89)

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1399 A.H. 1979

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ARABIAN FRANKINCENSE IN ANTIQUITY ACCORDING TO CLASSICAL SOURCES

Walter W. Müller

The species of trees of the genus *Boswellia* which produces the genuine frankincense, Arabic *lubān*, is only to be found in the central coastal region of South Arabia, on the island of Socotra, in Somalia and on the Indian coast of Coromandel. Due to its pleasant odour and other qualities, frankincense in antiquity in almost all countries of the Near East and of the Mediterranean Sea, belonged to the most demanded and most expensive spices. It was not only indispensable for sacrifice in divine worship, but was also burnt at funerals, profane festivities and in honour of living persons and used to a great extent for the preparation of medicines.

The Greek names which designate frankincense, *líbanos* and *libanōtós*, from which late Latin *libanus* and *libanum* are derived, have long been considered to be of Semitic origin. They are not only Semitic, but strictly speaking loanwords taken over directly from the ancient languages of South Arabia, where the form *libān* still survives in the Arabic dialect of the frankincense region Zafār and was recorded for other parts of South Arabia as well. A Latin-Arabic glossary which originated in Islamic Spain¹ records under the entry *tus*, i.e. *incensum hoc est libanum*, the Arabic equivalent vocalised explicitly as *libān*. Perhaps this form as well as *libān* in the Arabic dialect of Egypt² reflects the original type of morpheme, whereas Classical Arabic *lubān* is the result of a regressive labialisation of the first vowel. Various words from different languages of Ethiopia can also be derived from a South-Arabic *libān* which is in fact not attested in the ancient epigraphic sources from Arabian soil. I am well aware that there is a supposed Sabaic form *lb'nhn* in CIH 338 = Glaser 1209 which was translated by "two frankincense plantations" or "two containers (or boxes) for frankincense". However, a good photograph of this rock-inscription from Hajar Zahra in the region of Arḥab, which was placed at my disposal by Mr. F. Kortler, shows that the reading based on the squeezes of Glaser is defective and that the word in question is in fact *lb'nhn* "two lions", a dual-form likewise attested in Ry 538,31 and Iryānī 21 § 1. As a result, the assumed "frankincense" has to be discarded from lines 8 and 9 of this inscription, the context of which speaks of the building and erection of a house, various kinds of altars and of two lions, probably made of bronze.

The earliest evidence of the Greek word *líbanos* is to be found in a wedding-song by the poetess Sappho³ (c. 600 B.C.), where it is said that myrrh, cassia and frankincense were mixed together. Not only *líbanos* but also the two other nouns for spices, as well as *libanōtós* which occurs in a fragment of poetry also attributed to Sappho⁴, are Semitic loan-words attested for the first time in the Indo-European languages. It is of interest to see that these foreign imports and their use brought forth the same literary form in Greek

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27 Kasım 2015

3186 LE MAGUER, Sterenn. The incense trade during the Islamic period. *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, 45 (2015) pp. 175-184. 7th-16th centuries. T.C.İ.C. 131134