

# THEOPHRASTUS' *HISTORIA PLANTARUM* BOOK IX READING GROUP

## Meetings

All the proposed readings are from Theophrastus' *Historia Plantarum*, but we invite comparisons with Dioscorides, Galen, and other relevant texts. We did not provide any recommendations about further readings, feel free to give suggestions before/during discussions.

- Session 1. Monday, November 16, 2 pm (London Time)  
**Introduction on the history of the text** (ed. S. Amigues Belles Lettres, Introduction Tome 5).  
**Different types of plant juices** (chapter 1).  
This introductory chapter in which Theophrastus gives the basic technical information on plant secretions might provide interesting observations both from the botanical and linguistic point of view.
- Session 2. Monday, November 30, 2 pm (London Time)  
**Resins** (chapters 2-3). The resins of pine trees, the method of collection and the production of pitch. Part 1.  
These chapters investigate the different species of resinous trees, the methods of resin production by the plant and its collection/extraction by man.
- Session 3. Monday, December 14, 2 pm (London Time)  
**Resins** (chapters 2-3). The resins of pine trees, the method of collection and the production of pitch. Part 2.
- Session 4. Monday, January 11, 2 pm (London Time)  
**Frankincense and myrrh** (chapter 4).  
These two resins, to which this chapter is dedicated, have a long and wide history of use for their medical properties and their fragrance.
- Session 5. Monday, January 25, 2 pm (London Time)  
**Cinnamon and Cassia** (chapter 5).  
The *vexata quaestio* about the species identification of cinnamon and cassia.
- Session 6. Monday, February 8, 2 pm (London Time)  
**Geographical distribution of medicinal plants** (chapter 15). In this chapter Theophrastus offers a general picture of the regions of the world rich in medicinal plants, and what they are famous for. A special focus could be placed on Theophrastus' references to other Greek literary texts as well as on other authors' passages suggested by editors and translators.
- Session 7. Monday, February 22, 2 pm (London Time)  
**Prolonged use affects efficacy** (chapter 17).  
Poisons and antidotes.

## Works and Editions:

- Théophraste. *Recherches sur les plantes. Tome V: Livre IX*. Texte établi et traduit par Suzanne Amigues. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2006.
- Théophraste. *Recherches sur les plantes: à l'origine de la botanique*. Texte établi et traduit par Suzanne Amigues. Paris: Belin, 2010.

[This translation is based on the Belles Lettres edition. However, it is enriched by hundreds of plant photos and footnotes abounding in botanical details].

- Theophrastus. *Enquiry into Plants, Volume I: Books 1-5*. Translated by Arthur F. Hort. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916.
- Theophrastus. *Enquiry into Plants, Volume II: Books 6-9. On Odours. Weather Signs*. Translated by Arthur F. Hort. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916.
- Pedanius Dioscorides of Anazarbus. *De Materia Medica*. Translated by Lily Y. Beck. Hildesheim: Olms-Weidmann, 2005.