

# THEOPHRASTUS

ENQUIRY INTO PLANTS  
AND MINOR WORKS ON ODOURS AND  
WEATHER SIGNS

WITH AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY  
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IN TWO VOLUMES

II



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## BOOK IX

### OF THE JUICES OF PLANTS, AND OF THE MEDICINAL PROPERTIES OF HERBS.

*Of the various kinds of plant-juices and the methods of collecting them.*

I. <sup>1</sup> Moisture belongs to plants as such and some call it the 'sap,' to give it a general name; and it plainly has <sup>2</sup> special qualities in each plant. This moisture is attended by a taste, in some cases more, in some less, while in some it would seem to have none, so weak and watery is it. Now all plants have most moisture at the time of making growth, but it is strongest and most shows its character when the plant has ceased to grow and to bear fruit. Again in some plants the juice has a special colour; in some it is white, as in those which have a milky juice; in some blood-red, as in centaury <sup>3</sup> and the spinous plant which is called distaff-thistle; in some green: and in some of other colours. And these qualities are more obvious in annual <sup>4</sup> plants and those with annual stems than in trees.

Again in some plants the juice is merely thick, as in those in which it is of milky character; but in some it is of gummy character, as in silver-fir fir terebinth Aleppo pine almond *kerasos* (bird-cherry) bullace Phoenician cedar prickly cedar acacia elm.<sup>5</sup> For

<sup>4</sup> ἐν inserted here by W. instead of before τοῖς ἐπερείοις.

<sup>5</sup> πτελέας after κέδρου P<sub>2</sub>Ald.; transposed by Sch. after Tobias Aldinus. cf. Plin. 13. 67.

surprising that part of the same 'root' should purge upwards and another part downwards, as is the case with *thapsia* and *iskhas* — which some call *apios* (spurge) — and with *libanotis*; for<sup>1</sup> it is not strange that on the other hand the same parts should purge both upwards and downwards, as is the case with 'the driver.'

<sup>2</sup> *Thapsia* has a leaf like fennel, but broader, a stalk like that of ferula, and a white root.

<sup>3</sup> *Iskhas* (or *apios*) has a leaf like rue and short, three or four prostrate stems, and a root like that of asphodel, except that it is composed of scales; <sup>4</sup> it loves mountain districts with a gravelly soil. It is collected in spring. Now this account applies only to the above-mentioned plants.

*Of hellebores, the white and the black: their uses and distribution.*

X. <sup>5</sup> The white and the black hellebore appear to have nothing in common except the name. But accounts differ as to the appearance of the plants; some say that the two are alike and differ only in colour, the root of the one being white, of the other black; some however say that the leaf of the 'black' is like that of bay, that of the white like that of the leek, but that the roots are alike except for their respective colours. Now those who say that the two plants are alike describe the appearance <sup>6</sup> as follows:—the stem is like that of asphodel and very short; the leaf has broad divisions, and is extremely like that of ferula, but is long; it is closely attached to the root and

<sup>4</sup> cf. Diosc. 3. 134.

<sup>5</sup> Plin. 25. 47-61. See Index. cf. 9. 11. 5 n.

<sup>6</sup> i.e. of the two plants regarded as one; but the text of the following description seems to be hopelessly confused.