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THE PLANTS IN THE COMPOSITION OF THE GREAT AND HOLY CHRISM

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Abstract: The paper is an analysis of data extent in the Romanian and foreign literatures, found in the networks of the main churches of Romania: Orthodox (1906 and 1993) and the Greek-Catholic Church (1777) and it is an attempt to determine the species or kinds of plant as the source for every ingredient of the Great and Holy Chrism. Whether for the most ingredients the taxonomy was correctly determined by the Romanian literature, we believe that there are mistakes or contradictions connected with seven names found in the recipe with seven of these sources: *lignum balsami*, *spina alba*, *myrobalanus indicus*, *piper longum*, *fructus balsami*, *cypericum radix*, *lignum aloes*, and that supplementary information is requested with four others and that, the 1906 receipt of the Holy Synod permitted another alternative.

Having taken into account the practices of the last decade, attention is being paid to the use of essential oils in the trade of the holy oil and in the replacement of musk with seeds of *Abelmoschus moschatus*, instead of the stipulated drug, given the violence procedure of the animal origin substance out-taking.

Key words: Great Chrism, essential oils, Christian rituals, Eastern European churches

Introduction

The Great and Holy Chrism is an odorous preparation viewed "*…not only a symbol or an image, but substance of the Holy Ghost "* (Răducanu 2002, p. 11) and used by the Orthodox and Greek-Catholic churches only in three circumstances: *i*) in the Chrism anointment ritual (after the baptizing), *ii*) in the ritual of the church holy dedication and *iii*) in the ritual of the Antimyse consecration.

Beyond the symbolical traits, the Great and Holy Chrism is endowed with real medicinal properties, acting on almost all the senses and parts of the human body, as we have recently demonstrated (Cristea *et* Tămaş 2008) and as anyone can intuitively find, after the parts of the body where it is used: *"Anointment with the Holy Chrism is done on the forehead, eyes, nostrils, mouth and ears for blessing the senses, on the chest and on the back for blessing the heart and the will, on the hands and on the feet for blessing the paths and the deeds of the Christian "* (Răducanu 2002, p. 11).

The official preparation recipe and the consecration sermon of this product are strictly observed and are found in the so called Bishopcanon, church books including the sermons of the Bishop (according to the 6th Canon of Cartagene Synod of 449 A.D.)(Răducanu 2002).

The Romanian Orthodox Church (BOR) and the Romanian Church United with Rome (BU or Greek-Catholic) utilize almost the same ingredients: olive oil, proper wine, 28 plant extracted drugs, seven resin and musk of pharmacy type drugs, all bearing names in common Latin.

Although the preparation of this Chrism has been made in our country ever since the first half of the 18th century, for the Romanian Church United with Rome and since 1882 for the Orthodox Church, respectively (at once with the getting of its autocephalous status), the

taxonomy of all these ingredients is not entirely clarified. Approaching of this issue in Romania has been focused upon pharmacists so far (Răducanu 2002, Bojor *et* Răducanu 2007), philologists (Bârcă 1999, Nuțiu 2007) and, indirectly by botanists (Tătaru 1993, Stana 2004).

The aim of the present paper is, first and foremost, to bring further clarification about the very same taxonomy and, secondly to launch a debate about correctness or incorrectness of drugs replacement by extracts of essential oil type.

We started in our approach from the following ***premises***: *i*) the plant used should be odorous and medicinal in the same time; *ii*) it should belong to a circum- Mediterranean site or it should have been part of inter-regional exchange and circulation in the days of the Holy Fathers and beyond; *iv*) it should be of very high quality and in harmony with the whole complex of ingredients, in this symbolic preparation.

Discussions

Starting with the above mentioned premises and with the rich literature in the field that we have found abroad about the plants in the Bible, the medicinal plants and the odorous plants, the opinion of the various Romanian authors about the taxonomy of the ingredients in the Great and Holy Chrism was synthesized (Tab.1) and our own analysis-based opinion of relatively recent bibliographical sources has been added.

1. Under these circumstances, we believe that the following seven ingredients are associated with the ***incorrect taxonomy***:

- lignum balsami, appreciated by most of the Romanian authors as " *a pathologic product obtained by incision made in the rind of the tree trunk of* Myroxylon balsamum *Harms*., *var*. pereirae *Baillon* (Ban 2007, p. 146), " *tree of whose glands produce a gluey pleasantly odorous substance*" (Răducanu 2002, p. 31). Given the fact that the receipt requires for the "lignum" and not for the secretion and the origin of the species is in the Central America (and, as a matter of consequence, it could have been known by the Europeans only in the second half of the 16th century), we believe that this ingredient is from *Amyris gileadensis* (syn. *Commiphora opobalsamum*, *C. gileadensis*, *Balsamodendron opobalsamum*; fam. *Burseraceae*). Whether in practice they utilize the "Peru Balsamum", then, on logical basis, the ingredient should be considered as belonging to the "resin" typology and not to the plant typology wherein ingredients of the official receipt are grouped;

- spina alba indicates the species *Silybum marianum* (syn. *Carduus marianus*, fam. *Asteraceae*) and not in the least *Eryngium campestre*. A similar name has been, partially, preserved in French ("epine blanche", more frequently "chardon-Marie"), and in Spanish ("cardo lechoso") while the Italians call it "cardo di Santa Maria" etc. The popular name such as *Milk Thistle* or *Blessed Milk Thistle* given by some authors, nevertheless and especially is a derived translation from the English and refers to the legend. According to it the white stripes along the leaves veins cold represent the milk drops dripping out of the Holy Mary bosom while she was hiding with Jesus from Herod's blood stained chase.

At least, our opinion is partially consistent to the 1906 recipe that specified: "*oder Frauen Disteln*" (germ.), in this context "oder" meaning "or", that is 'synonymous to' and not another option.

A complication arises with the information within the brackets ("*sive iuncus aromaticus*"), "*Cameels stroh*" an aspect which would lead us into considering other species like *Cymbopogon* and not in the least "*spina*", and to an alternative indicated by the above mentioned receipt.

- piper longum belongs to the species *Piper longum* (fam. *Piperaceae*), widely spread in South Asia, where it is also used by the Indian and Indonesian cooking and, above all, in the Ayurveda treatments.

The name of this ingredient "*long pepper* or *clove*" in the Greek-Catholic Bishopcanons, actually emphasize an alternative to one or another of the two plants, given the difficult purchasing of the "long pepper".

- **fructus balsami**, in spite of its name it could refer to the bud of *Populus balsamifera* ssp. *balsamifera* (fam. *Salicaceae*), a North-American and East-Asian species. This premise is founded on the material elaborated by the Holy Synodus (in 1906) mentioning that "*karpobalsamos, fructus balsami* (*recte gemae balsami*)", meaning that the drug used is represented by the buds and not by the fruit! Within this genus we could mention *P. euphratica*, also found along the Jordan.

If we strictly consider "fructus balsami", then we cannot accept but its belonging to *Balanites aegyptiacus* (fam. *Zygophyllaceae*), with spicy fruit and wood secreting an oilgumresinous substance that could be the ingredient called "*myrobalams indicum*". As a matter of fact, it could be the same plant used for both its resin and its fruit.

However, Romanian authors think this ingredient (*balsam fruit*) to be the fruit of *Myroxylon balsamum* var. *pereirae* (fam. *Fabaceae*), but its monospermous pods do not have the necessary features for the Chrism, as their resin solely is used in medicine and perfumery.

- **cypericum radix**. If accepted *ad literam*, this denomination would refer to the genus *Cyperus* (fam. *Cyperaceae*). But if we consider the 1906 specification: "*kyper (kyperon), Cypericum (radix cyperici) fouchet (sive galanga), Galgant*", the matter becomes complicated, and the terms "galanga", "Galgant" take us back to the genus *Alpinia* (fam. *Zyngiberaceae*). We will focus especially on *A. galanga* (Germ. "grosser Galgant"), and *A. officinarum* (Germ. "keine Galgant") – Southern Asian species whose fragrant rhizomes are used in culinary arts and therapy.

While Nuțiu (2007) is partially justified when, based on the name used by Grigorie Maior's Euchologion ("cypress"), he attributes this ingredient to the *Cupressus sempervirens*, Răducanu (2002) does not bring arguments in support of the idea that we are dealing with *Cyperus flavescens*.

In view of the fact that: *i)* for both genera (*Cyperus* and *Alpinia*), the parts used are the subterraneous ones ("radix", actually the rhizomes); *ii)* the 1906 source specifies "*sive galanga*"; *iii*) some species of the former genus are sometimes known as "*galingale*" (which resembles "Galgant"), we believe we might be dealing with species belonging to one of these two genera. These species may originate in the subtropical climate of Eurasia and Northern Africa (*Cyperus esculentus* var. *esculentus* and var. *sativus*, *C. longus* etc.), or in the tropical climate (*C. articulatus*, *C. odoratus* etc., respectively *Alpinia galanga*, *A. officinarum*), taking into account, of course, only the aromatic and/or medicinal species.

- **lignum aloes** originates in several species of the genus *Aquilaria* (syn. *Gyrinopsis* p.p., e.g. *A. malaccensis*, syn. *A. agallocha*; *A. sinensis* etc., fam. *Thymeleaceae*), shrubs and trees from India, Indonesia, Malaysia and China. The former species is known by the English as the "Shoot of Paradise" or "Paradise Wood", and Duke, Duke *et* du Cellie (2008) state categorically that this is the "aloe" of the Old Testament, which is, according to biblical sources, the only tree brought down from Eden by Adam, who took a "root" and planted it on Earth.

The wood of the trees may be attacked by the hyphomycete *Phialophora parasitica* (syn. *Phaeoacremonium parasiticum*), which produces the so-called chromoblastomycoses. Under its attack, the wood grows coloured and becomes more and more odorous in the part infected by the fungus, as the accumulation of odoriferous compounds (sesquiterpenes and chromones) represents a reaction of the plant to the infection.

All Romanian authors attribute this ingredient to the various species of Aloe (especially *A. vera*, *A. succotrina* etc.), although it is well known that from such species it is the juice of the leaves, not the "lignum", which gets utilized.

- **myrobalanus indicus** Most authors refer to species of *Terminalia* (fam. *Combretaceae*); few attribute it to the genus *Phylantus* (fam. *Euphorbiaceae*); Nuțiu (2007) thinks it is *Myrobalanus indica* (syn. *Scleropyrum wallichianum*, fam. *Santalaceae*); but the most recent bibliographical sources speak of *Balanites aegyptiacus* (one of the names mentioned by the 1906 recipe being "*balanus egyptiaca*").

In the first case, besides the wide use in Arab phytotherapy, arguments are founded on popular names: "Echte Myrobalane" – Germ. for *Terminalia arjuna*; "Belleric Myrobalan" – Engl. for *T. bellirica*; "black Myrobalan" – Engl., or "Mirobalanos indicos" – Spanish for *T. chebula* (syn. *T. reticulata*, *Myrobalanus chebula*); "Indische Myrobalane" – Germ. for *T. catappa* etc.

Still, all these species concern trees whose medicinal applications involve their fruits or bark, while the recipe of the Great Chrism places this ingredient in the category of resins. A kind of resin is only harvested from *T. angustifolia* (syn. *T. bentzoe*, *T. bentzoin*, *Croton bentzoe*), a sacred plant of Indian temples, where the product is burnt without the knowledge of medicinal uses. While this species might correspond, due to its usage in rituals, it bears no popular name containing the word "myrobalan".

As regards the *Phyllanthus*, this genus accommodates medicinal species (*Ph. emblica*, *Ph. amarus*, *Ph. urinaria*) utilized by Ayurvedic medicine, but it is their "herba" that is used, and only the former is sacred for the Hindu and also bears the English name of "Emblic Myrobalan", besides the more frequent "Indian Gooseberry".

We are therefore tempted to agree with Duke, Duke *et* Cellie, who attach the term "myrobalan" to the *Balanites aegyptiacus* shrub (syn. *Balanus aegyptiaca*, fam. *Zygophyllaceae*). Their arguments are the following: *i*) the monks of Jericho sell another "oily gum" obtained from the plant fruits; *ii*) Indian Muslims worship this shrub; *iii*) it has some very complex medicinal virtues. Although it is known mostly as the "Desert Date" (Engl.), "dattier du désert" (Fr.), it also has such synonyms as "Egyptian Myrobalan" (Engl.), "myrobalan d'Egipt" (Fr.), "mirobalano de Egipto", while Palestinians call it "balm" or "balsam".

2. Several observations contained by the recipe published by the Holy Synod of the BOR in 1906 provides some alternatives, presumably in the event of the impossibility to acquire the "traditional" ingredient. This is why we think that taxonomic categorization should be ***completed*** for the following ingredients:

- **cassia lignea** is the bark of *Cinnamomum cassia* (syn. *C. aromaticum*, fam. *Lauraceae*; the China cinnamon), and the association with the species of the genus *Cassia* (fam. *Fabaceae* s.l.), whose fruits and leaves are used, cannot be justified.

The specification given between brackets by the 1906 recipe ("*sive lignum acaciae*") refers to some species of *Acacia* (fam. *Fabaceae* s.l.), whose wood was used by Jews to make tabernacles. Since the bark of *A. tortilis* ssp. *raddiana* is used as an antiseptic, antiedemic, astringent, antifebrile substance etc., it could also be interpreted as "lignea", that is, as an alternative provided by the recipe.

- **folium nardi indicae**. If we consider only this denomination, botany will lead us to a gramineous plant used as fodder, known formerly as "nardus indica", and today as *Microchloa indica* (syn. *M. setacea*), quite frequent in the subtropical climate of Africa and Asia, but which does not meet the basic conditions (odorant and/or medicinal) for such an ingredient.

It seems much more likely that there is a connection between the name "*folium nardi indicae*" and another gramineous plant, *Cymbopogon nardus* (syn. *Adropogon n.*), whose English names are "Ceylon citronella grass", "Indian grass", "Nardus grass", and whose leaves ("folium") are used rather as an odorant and an insectifuge than as medicinal (carminative, spasmolytic, antiseptic). Still, taking into account that many species of this genus growing in Asia and Africa are well known and used even today in medicine and perfumery, we can think that "*folium nardi indicae*" belongs to one of the species *C. martini* (syn. *Andropogon m.*, *A. schoenanthus* var. *m.*, "Palmarosa", "Gingergrass" – Engl., "nard" – Fr.), *C. schoenanthuus*, *C. citratus* (the celebrated "Lemongras" of culinary art and perfumery), *C. winterianus* ("Citronela de Jawa").

The specification of the Holy Synod's 1906 text: "*sive spica indica, Indianische Spicanardt*" leads to *Nardostachys jatamansi* (syn. *N. grandiflora*, *Valeriana j.*, *V. wallichii*,

fam. *Valerianaceae*), one of the most important odoriferous plants ("Spikenard", "Indian Spikenard", "Indian Valerian" – Engl., "épi de nard" – Fr., "nardos" – Gr., "naird", "nerd", "nard"- Hebr.). But again, it is the rhizomes, and not the leaves (folium) of this species that are used, which makes us see this case, too, as an alternative provided by the recipe.

- **stachis** refers to the European species *Stachys officinalis* (syn. Betonica *off*., fam. *Lamiceae*), possibly some Mediterranean species of the genus, but certainly not the *S. germanica*, as Nuțiu (2007) thinks. However, in this case too, through a parenthesis in the 1906 recipe, "*sive marubium album*", the church offers an alternative, not a synonymy. Therefore, when short of "stachis" one can use *Marrubium vulgare* or *M. album*, ("weisser Andorn", "Mutterkraut" – Ger., "White Horehound" – Engl., "marrube blanc" – Fr. etc.) – which are species frequently met in Southern Asia, Northern Africa, and whose herba give out a *Thymus* smell and taste bitter.

- **styrax** is named "*Storax calamita*" in BU, while the BOR 1906 recipe specifies "*styrax (liquida) sive (calamita)*", which automatically leads us to two options: a solid or a liquid product.

In the former case, it is certain it originates in representatives of the genus *Styrax*, a series of species that secrete a liquid oilresin which becomes hard in contact with the air. If we were to take the habitats of various species as a guide, we can assume that the myrth the Bible mentions could come from: the *S. officinalis* ("True Storax" – Engl., "Storaxbaum" – Ger., "livneh", "mir" – Hebr.) of Southern Europe and Southern Anatolia; *S. obassia* (from China and Japan); *S. tonkinense* ("Siam benzoin", a protected species in Indochina); or the *S. benzoin* ("Sumatra benzoin", "the benzoe resin" of Borneo, Sumatra and Java – the species with the largest productivity: approximately 10 kg/tree/year).

The second case ("*styrax liquida*") could only refer to the genus *Liquidambar* (fam. *Hamamelidaceae*): *L. orientalis* ("Oriental Sweetgum", "Turkish Sweetgum", "Assian Styrax" – Engl., "nataf" – Hebr.), originating in Anatolia; *L. formosana*, from China and Taiwan, and *L. styraciflua*, improperly named "copal" by the Mexicans and used in various rituals. The latter species is also the one most used nowadays, since its liquid resin, extracted from incisions on the trunk and branches, is utilized in the food industry (in Mexico and the east of the USA) and in perfumery.

3. Given the aggressive harvesting of the product from the most vigorous male musk plants, ***we suggest*** that it be replaced with the seeds of the *Abelmoschus moschatus* (syn. *Hibiscus abelmoschus*, fam. *Malvaceae*); such a solution would be in more agreement with the Great Chrism than the usage of the synthetic product. This oil has a musk smell (due to the ambretollide), a floral fragrance (given by farnesol) and is used in fine perfumery, the beauty industry etc. In some countries, its seeds are used to give fragrance to coffee and even as aphrodisiacs.

At the same time, we think it is necessary for the Church to take a stand towards the increasing amount of essential oils (natural or artificial) involved in preparing this product, which thus replace the plant drug and implicitly impoverish its material virtues. Such a clarification is all the more necessary since the only layman who takes part in the preparation of the Great Chrism in the BOR, the pharmacist D. Răducanu (2002), admits: "*Today we have come to the synthetic preparation of some resins and gum resins, such as, for instance, myrrh, incense, musk etc., which are sold as natural products for fantastic prices*" (p. 39).

According to the same author, the Great Chrism prepared in 2002 contained three drugs that are not in the official recipe (hyssop, vanilla, white pepper), one synthetic product (musk essence), and 19 essential oils, 12 of which came from species that are not included in the recipe (cedar, laurel, basil, cypress, coriander, juniper, myrtle, santalwood, roses, lavender, salvia, and punch).

Finally, we must note the development of the "chrism" trade, promoting a product that has nothing to do with the Holy and Great Chrism, but is a mere odorous oil with a spiritual value.

As a **conclusion**, we appreciate the efforts of the people who have undertaken the botanical clarification of these ingredients and we think that the "plants of the Bible" can still provide trans- and pluri-disciplinary topics of debate.

Table 1: Ingredients used for the Great and Holy Chrism by the Orthodox Church (BOR) and the Romanian Church United with Rome (Greek-Catholic, BU)

Nr. crt.	BOR: the name in the Bishopcanon, 1993	BOR: the name given by the Holy Synod, 1906	BU: the name given in the Bishopcanon Gr. Maior, 1777	Taxonomy after various Romanian authors	Taxonomy in our opinion
1.	***Proper olive oil***	Proper (olive) oil	oil	*Olea europaea* (N, R, B-R)	*Olea europaea* var. *sativa*
2.	***Proper natural wine***	Natural wine, proper, odorous	wine	*Vitis vinifera* (N, R, B-R)	*Vitis vinifera*
3.	***Hypericum***	hypericum sive costum, Gelb Johannis Kraut	St. John's herb, called in Greek 'coros'	*Hypericum perforatum* (N, R, B-R)	*Hypericum perforatum*
4.	***Lignum balsami***	lignum balsami, balsam Holz (Balsam wood)	Balsam wood	*Myroxylon balsamum* var. *pereirae* (N, R, B-R)	*Amyris gileadensis* (syn. *Commiphora g., C. opobalsamum, Balsamodendron o.*)
5.	***Spina alba***	spina alba (sive iuncus aromaticus), Cameels Stroh, oder Frauen Disteln	Flavoured cub rush; asfalatos (a thorny wooden fruit is made by Istru and in Syria and in Rod)	- *Eryngium campestre* (N) - unspecified (R, B-R)	- *Silybum marianum* (syn. *Carduus marianus*), for „spina alba" - *Cymbopogon* sp. for „sive iuncus aromaticus"
6.	***Piper***	piper, Pfeffer	piperi	*Piper nigrum* (N, R, B-R)	*Piper nigrum*
7.	***Myrrha***	myrrha, Myrrhen	myrtle	- *Commiphora myrrha* (N) - *Myrtus communis* (B-R) - unspecified (R)	*Commiphora myrrha* (syn. *C. molmol)*
8.	***Cassia lignea***	cassia lignea (sive lignum acaciae), Cassienholz	Aegyptian sloe wood or cassiia	- *Cynnamomum cassia* (N, R) -*Cassia angustifolia, C. acutifolia, C. obovata, C. auriculata, C. aromaticum* etc (B-R)	- *Cynnamomum cassia* (syn. *C. aromaticum*) for "cassia lignea" - *Acacia tortilis* ssp. *raddiana* , for "lignum acaciae"
9.	***Folium nardi indicae***	folium indicum (folium nardi indicae (sive spica indica), Indianische Spicanardt	Indian leaves	- *Microchloa indica* (syn. *Nardus indica*; N) - *Nardostachys jatamansi* (R, B-R)	- *Cymbopogon nardus* for „folium nardi indicae" -*Nardostachys jatamansi* for „Indianische spicanardt"

10.	***Piper longum***	piper longum, Lang Pfeffer	Long pepper or clove	- *Eugenia caryophyllata* (N) - unspecified (R, B-R)	- *Piper longum* - *E. caryophyllata* for „or clove”
11.	***Fructus balsami***	fructus balsami (recte gemae balsami), Balsam Knospen	Balsam fruit	- *Myroxylon balsamum* var. *pereirae* (syn. *Balsamum peruvianum*; (N) - *Balsamum tolutanum* (R) - *Myroxylon balsamum*, *Abies balsamea*, *Copaifera*, *Dipterocarpus* (B-R)	- *Balanites aegyptiacus* for „fructus balsami” - *Populus balsamifera* ssp. *balsamifera*, *P. euphratica* for „recte gemae balsami”
12.	***Cypericum radix***	Cypericum (radix cyperici) fouchet (sive galanga), Galgant	-	- *Cupressus sempervirens* (N, B-R) - *Cyperus flavescens* (R)	- *Cyperus longus, C. odoratus, C. esculentus* for „cypericum radix” - *Alpinia galanga*, *A. officinarum* for „sive galanga”
13.	***Visci***	visci grana, Mistel Beeren	Mistletoe beans	- *Viscum album* (N) - Folium Visci cum Stipites (R) - neprecizat (B-R)	*Viscum album* (fructus)
14.	***Saliunca***	saliunca (celtica nardus)	Mary Magdalene herb, “chelticos” in Greek	- *Nardus celtica* (syn. *Valeriana celtica*; N) - unspecified (R, B-R)	*Valeriana celtica* (syn. *V. saliunca, Nardus celtica*)
15.	***Cassia nigra***	cassia nigra	The black cassiia	- *Cassia nigricans* (N) - *C. nigra* (B-R) - *Cinnamomum cassia* (R)	*Cassia acutifolia, C. angustifolia, C. officinalis, C. occidentalis, C. nigrescens*
16.	***Caryophilli (cuişoare)***	caryophilli, Würz Neglein	-	*Eugenia caryophyllata* (N, R, B-R)	*Eugenia caryophyllata* (syn. *Syzygium aromaticum, Caryophyllus aromaticus*)
17.	***Rosmarini (semen)***	semen roris marini (sive folia roris marini), Galben Kraut	Officinal rosemary seed	- *Rosmarinus officinalis* (N, R, B-R)	*Rosmarinus officinalis*
18.	***Cinnamomum (scorţişoară)***	cinnamomum (recte cortex cinnamomi), Zimmet	cynnamon	*Cinnamomum zeylanicum* (N, R, B-R)	*Cinnamomum zeylanicum* (syn. *C. ceylanicum, C. verunm*), also *C. burmannii, C. loureiri*
19.	***Asarum (radix)***	asarum (recte radix asari) cabaret, Wurz Hasel	A herb which is called in Greek ‘asaron’	*Asarum europaeum* (N, R, B-R)	*Asarum europaeum*
20.	***Maceris***	maceris	the wood of St. Thomas, ‘makaros’ in Greek	*Myrisrtica fragrans* (N, R, B-R)	*Myristica fragrans*, seed aril (caruncle)
21.	***Stachis***	stachys (sive marubium	Herb which is called	- *Stachys germanica* (N)	- *Stachys officinalis* (syn. *Betonica*

		album), weisser Andorn	stahos in Greek	- *Betonica officinalis* (R) - unspecified (B-R)	*officinalis*) for „stachis” - *Marrubium vulgare*, *M. album* for „sive marubium album”
22.	***Zingibens***	zinziberus, Ingber	ginger	*Zingiber officinale* (N, R, B-R)	*Zingiber officinale*
23.	***Palitum (caulismuscota, nucşoara)***	palitum (caulis muscata sive odorata)	-	*Myristica fragrans* (N, R, B-R)	*Myristica fragrans*, seed without aril (caruncle)
24.	***Maiorana (magheran)***	maiorana	marjoram	*Majorana hortensis* (N, R, B-R)	*Majorana hortensis* (syn. *Origanum majorana*)
25.	***Zedoaria***	zedoaria, Zitwer	A kind of plantation called ‘zutompa’ in Greek	- *Curcuma zedoaria* (N) - unspecified (R, B-R)	*Curcuma zedoaria*
26.	***Calamus aromaticus***	folia peregrina et ea quidem calamus aromaticus, Calmus	Foreign leaves and these are of spicy reed	- *Acorus calamus* (syn. *Calamus aromaticus*; N) - *Calamus draco* (R) - unspecified(B-R)	*Acorus calamus* (syn. *Calamus aromaticus*)
27.	***Inula***	inula, aulnée, Alandt	Herb called elenion or rasdon	*Inula helenium* (N, R, B-R)	*Inula helenium*, also *I. graveolens, I. viscosa* ssp. *mediterraneum*
28.	***Aristolochia***	aristolochia, rattelou-sarrazine, Langer Ostterlucy	a flower, aristolohia in Greek or birth wort	*Aristolochia clematitis* (N, R, B-R)	*Aristolochia clematitis*
29.	***Iris (stânjenel)***	iris, gladiolus, flambe, glaicul, Florentinische Beil-Wurzel	Herb which grows from water, petetos in Greek	- *Iris florentina* (N) - *I. Pseudo Acorud* (R) -unspecified (B-R)	*Iris germanica*, *I. florentina*, *I. pallida*
30.	***Lignum aloes***	agallochon, lignum aloés, Paradis oder Aloe Holz	alois wood	- *Aloe* (N, B-R) - *A. ferox, A. vera, A. succotrina* (R)	*Aquilaria malacensis* (syn. *Gyrinopsis m.*)
31.	***Terebentina***	terebinthi, Terpentin	Ligneous resin, terebintis in Greek	- *Pinus sylvestris* (N) - *Pistacia terebinthus* (B-R) - *Pinaceae* (R)	*Pinus pinea*, *P. pinaster*, *P. halepensis* (s.l.), *P. sylvestris* etc.
32.	***Myrobalanus indicus***	myrobalanus indicus, balanus aegyptiaca, glandes unguentariae	Indian poppy, Mirobalanon in Greek, to be found with doctors	- *Myrobalanus indicus* (N) - *Terminalia indica, T. bellirica* (R) - unspecified (B-R)	*Balanites aegyptiacus* (syn. *Balanus aegyptiaca*)
33.	***Landanum***	ladanum	ladanus	*Cistus labdanum* (N, R, B-R)	*Cistus ladanifer, C. villosus* ssp. *creticus* (syn. *C. creticus*)
34.	***Olibanum (tămâie)***	olibanum, Weihrauch	Incense of Livan	- *Boswellia serrata* (N),	*Boswellia carterii* (syn. *B. sacra*), *B.*

				- *B. carterii*, *B. sacra* (B-R), - *B. c.*, *B. serrata*, *B. papyrifera* (R)	*frereana*, *B. serrata* (syn. *B. glabra*)
35.	***Bdelium***	bdelium	Araviia wood, bohos in Greek	- *Commiphora africana* (N) - *C. agallocha* (R) - unspecified (B-R)	*Commiphora africana* (syn. *Balsamodendron africanum*), *C. wightii*
36.	***Styrax***	styrax (liquida) sive (calamita) Styrax	storax calamita	*Styrax benzoin* (N, R, B-R)	- *Liquidambar orientalis*, *L. styraciflua*, *L. formosana*, for „styrax (liquida)" - *Styrax officinalis*, *S. benzoin*, *S. tonkinense*, *S. obassia*, for „sive (calamita)"
37.	***Onobalsamum***	Opobalsamum	Balsam gravy (juice)	unspecified (N, R, B-R)	*Commiphora opobalsamum*, but for „opobalsamum" and not „onobalsamum"
38.	***Moschus***	moschus (verus)	moshos	*Moschus moschiferus* (N, R, B-R)	- *Moschus moschiferus* - we suggest the use of the seeds of *Abelmoschus moschatus* (syn. *Hibiscus abelmoschus*)
39.	-	-	Cypress tree	*Cupressus sempervirens* (N, R, B-R)	*Cupressus sempervirens*
40.	-	-	Chamomille	*Matricaria recutita* (N, R, B-R)	*Matricaria recutita*
41.	-	-	Casiia reed	- unspecified (N, R, B-R)	- ?

N- Nuțiu 2007, **R**- Răducanu 2002, **B-R**- Bojor *et* Răducanu 2007

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PLANTELE DIN COMPOZIȚIA SFÂNTULUI ŞI MARELUI MIR

(Rezumat)

Pornind de la importanța simbolică deosebită (și chiar medicinală) a Sfântului şi Marelui Mir din Biserica Ortodoxă Română şi din Biserica Unită (Greco-Catolică), precum şi de la existența unor neconcordanțe privitoare la apartenența taxonomică a ingredientelor acestuia (tab. 1), autorii fac o analiză critică a opiniilor din literatura românească, comparativ cu cele din lucrări străine recente, referitoare la plantele din Biblie.

După publicarea unui articol axat pe virtuțile plantelor din Sfântul şi Marele Mir (Cristea *et* Tămaş 2008), lucrarea de față insistă asupra necesității dezbaterii următoarelor trei aspecte:

1. Mai întâi, asupra apartenenței taxonomice a 7 dintre ingrediente (*lignum balsami, spina alba, myrobalanus indicus, piper longum, fructus balsami, cypericum radix* şi *lignum aloes*), cărora literatura românească de specialitate le atribuie o apartenență taxonomică ce nu corespunde din mai multe puncte de vedere denumirii date de rețetele oficiale (din *Arhieraticoane*).

2. Apoi, pornind de la rețeta BOR din 1906, autorii consideră ca aceasta oferă câteva opțiuni (alternative, iar nu sinonimii) în cazul ingredientelor *cassia lignea, folium nardi indicae, stachis* şi *styrax*, pentru situațiile în care ingredientul „tip" nu poate fi procurat.

3. În fine, se propune înlocuirea moschu-lui de origine animală cu planta *Abelmoschus moschatus* (syn. *Hibiscus a.*), autorii declarându-se şi împotriva substituirii drogurilor vegetale cu extracte de uleiuri esențiale, fie ele chiar şi naturale.

Desigur, decizia o pot lua doar conducerile celor două biserici, articolul de față deschizând poarta dezbaterilor pluridisciplinare pe această temă.

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