



Brill's Indological Library, Dragon's Brain Perfume: An Historical Geography of Camphor

Donkin

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In the *Dragon's Brain Perfume* (a Chinese description of Camphor) once more the existence and importance of *world systems of exchange* becomes clear. In the pre-industrial world aromatic substances have always counted among the most prominent items of long-distance trade. The finest camphor came from Malaya, Borneo and Sumatra, but long-distance trade took it to societies at the geographical poles of demand - China and the medieval West already in late Antiquity (ca. 6th century A.D.). In *India* it was in use at an even much earlier period. The present monograph opens with a survey of *aromata* generally - origins, time and place of demand - from the Ancient Civilizations to the Age of Discoveries. Chapter two concerns the natural history of camphor; subsequent chapters are organized by regions (*India, Western Asia, the medieval West, South East Asia, China and Japan*), with a postscript on Origins and Diffusion. Evidence is drawn from an extensive range of sources in natural and cultural history. The work includes 15 original maps, 28 illustrations, and an extensive bibliography.



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