

ABSTRACTS

The Revelation of Plants.**Garcia da Orta, Carolus Clusius and Asian Species in Europe**

Given that the discovery of Nature is a feature of the modern world, this article elucidates the process by which 16th century Europe gained knowledge of the Asian natural world. It is a well-known fact that the first voyage opening the maritime route to India was a turning point in the knowledge and understanding of the world. But what exactly was known about the flora and the medical substances of these areas? What data existed, which travellers contributed with their knowledge and descriptions to a new image of the natural world in the East?

In 1563, the doctor and botanist, Garcia da Orta, published the *Colóquios dos simples e das drogas da Índia* [Colloquies on the Simple and Drugs of India] in Goa. One year later Carolus Clusius, a famous Flemish botanist, acquired this work in Lisbon and, in 1567, published a Latin version, from which other editions would follow. After these publications, the name of Orta became a household word throughout Europe. The elevated value of his work is testified by countless references by travellers, doctors, druggists and scholars to the *Aromatvm et simplicivm aliquod medicamentorum apud indos nascentivm historia*, recognizing it as an invaluable contribution to the knowledge of oriental botany and medical matters. In effect, the work of Orta and Clusius constituted a singular moment in the knowledge of Asian species. Both were steeped in the same spirit: to learn about and divulge knowledge relating to plants. [Author: Marília dos Santos Lopes, pp. 10-27]

Images of the Asian Natural World in the Botanical Work of Cristóvão da Costa

Throughout the 16th century, Europeans manifested a growing interest in the exotic natural world. Cristóvão da Costa (c.1530-c.1594), doctor and surgeon, published the *Tratado*

de las drogas [Treatise on Drugs] in Burgos, in 1578. Based on the *Colloquies* of Garcia da Orta (Goa, 1563), Costa describes and illustrates the Asian natural world. Throughout his book, the doctor shows new plants and mentions their therapeutic applications, relating the clinical experience he acquired in the hospitals of the East. In *Tratado de las drogas y medicinas de las Indias Orientales*, Costa mainly refers to plants of medicinal interest. However he reserved the last pages of the volume to a small chapter entitled *Tratado do elefante* [Treatise on the elephant]. This text, more than revealing zoological knowledge, seems to reflect Costa's interpretation of India itself. The *Tratado de las Drogas* presents engravings of first hand illustrations drawn by the doctor, whose purity of line and schematic character demonstrate the unpretentiousness with which Cristóvão da Costa viewed the natural world of Asia. Author of other texts on the botany and the mineral wealth of the East that were never published, Costa published two books in Venice – *Tratado em loor de las mugeres* [Treatise in praise of women] and *Tratado en contra y pro de la vida solitaria* [Treatise on the pros and cons of a solitary life] – reflecting his own interior odyssey. [Author: Teresa Nobre de Carvalho, pp. 28-39]

Sources and Organisation of the Botanical Section of the *Itinerario* (1596)

by Jan Huygen van Linschoten
The *Itinerario* (1596) written by Jan Huygen van Linschoten contains a large botanical section, dedicated to Indian fruits, trees and medicinal plants. The main written source for all this information was Garcia da Orta's *Colóquios dos simples e drogas da Índia* (Goa, 1563). Without naming the source, Linschoten translated and rearranged extensive parts of the book and presented a selection of items divided into four thematical sections, organizing them according to commercial importance and practical use. The author was no scholarly scientist and did not read

Latin, but his learned friend Bernardus Paludanus supplied complementary botanical and medicinal information in annotations based on the Latin versions of Orta's same work and Cristóvão da Costa's *Tratado de las drogas y medicinas de las Indias Orientales* (Burgos, 1578), both prepared by the famous botanist Carolus Clusius. Written in Dutch, the botanical section of the *Itinerario* popularized scientific information and offered interesting facts about the exotic Indian flora, appealing to the curiosity of common readers who stayed at home and supplying useful and practical information for those about to travel to Asia at the beginning of the era of Dutch expansion. [Author: Arie Pos, pp. 40-55]

The Journey by Henry IV's Doctor to Goa

The object of this article is the biography of Jean Mocquet, apothecary and naturalist to King Henry IV of France, and the presentation of his *Voyage en Éthiopie, Mozambique, Goa et autres lieux d'Afrique & des Indes Orientales* (1607-1610), written while on board a ship of the *Carreira da Índia* (the round trip between Lisbon and Goa). This journey of Mocquet's was the fourth in a series made between 1601 and 1614, which took him, respectively, to the Atlantic Magreb coast, Guiana, Morocco and the Holy Land. Besides a surprising description of the living conditions aboard ships of the *Carreira* at the beginning of the 17th century, the text contains precise information on exotic diseases and medical practices, and on the embalming Mocquet was charged with performing, on the outward and return stages of his travels, on two viceroys, the Count of Feira and André Furtado de Mendonça. [Author: Dejanirah Couto, pp. 56-76]

Amateur Naturalist and "Professional" Orientalist. Paulinus a S. Bartholomaeo in Kerala and Rome (18th-19th c.)

This essay explores how the line between an expert missionary and a professional

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scholar and a curator of a museum near Rome was uneasily negotiated in the life and work of a Discalced Carmelite, Paulinus a Sancto Bartholomaeo (alias Filip Vezdin), sent to India by the Congregation of the Propagation of Faith (*Propaganda Fide*) in the latter part of the 18th century. He was a polyglot with eclectic and erudite antiquarian interests, from philology to ethno-botany. However, upon the return from his mission in Kerala, he made a career of his linguistic and ethnographic research and became one of the most famous Orientalist writers of his time in Italy and in southern European Catholic circles. His choice of becoming a “professional” Orientalist, implied a sacrifice of other fields of knowledge he cultivated during his stay in India, such as his passion for natural history, botany, pharmacology and medicine. However, the argument is made here that for Paulinus, the natural world was inextricably linked with culture and language. Understanding the “system” of the natural world in India was simply a smaller element in his ambitious project of grasping the “Brahmanical system”, the origin of human history and possibly the logic of the Creation. He belonged, therefore to the last generation of Catholic missionary Orientalists who were still willing to believe in the intrinsic connectivity of all knowledge.

[Author: Ines G. Županov, pp. 77-101]

The Euro-Asian Trade and Medicinal Usage of *Radix Chinae* in the Early Modern Period (ca. 1535-1800)

Radix Chinae or “China root” is a medicinal substance now sparsely used outside Asia. Historically, however, it featured prominently in Western pharmacology between the 16th and the 18th centuries. “China root” was procured by European merchants in Asia and traded through established trading networks via Macao, Malacca, Goa, Manila and Batavia.

One of the unique facets of *radix Chinae* is that its introduction into Western pharmacology is well attested and its links to the Chinese *materia medica* is almost

certainly beyond dispute. For much of the early modern period, clear parallels exist between Eastern and Western medicine in the preparation of decoctions and culinary delights using *radix Chinae*. Demand for this root increased significantly after the middle of the 16th century when it was successfully administered to Holy Roman Emperor Charles V to treat his gout. The ringing endorsement stemming from this high profile patient, however, was viewed critically by leading members of the medical profession on the Iberian Peninsula, Italy, France, Germany and beyond. “China root” is best remembered for its role in providing symptomatic relief for various skin disorders and specifically also in the treatment of syphilis.

[Author: Peter Borschberg, pp. 102-115]

Portuguese and Indian Medical Systems. Commonality and Superiority in the Early Modern Period

An analysis of relations between Indian and Portuguese medical knowledge and practice in the early modern period reveals an interesting dichotomy. In some areas we find commonality and mutual exchange, in others it is clear that European knowledge and practice shows at least the beginnings of superiority. These limited areas of European advantage slowly increased in the 19th century, leading to the triumph of western medicine over indigenous Asian practice and knowledge. I will first sketch medical practice in Eurasia before the 16th century, then turn to a more focussed study of the health situation in India at this time, and then narrow the focus even more, to Goa and the diseases and healing practiced there. The second section of this essay looks at the first signs of European advantage as compared with Indian systems

[Author: Michael Pearson, pp. 116-141]

Trade, Research and Science Under the Dutch in Asia

In 1778 the Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences was founded in Batavia;

as such it was the oldest European learned society in Asia. Up till then, the directors of the VOC, the Dutch East India Company, had kept their knowledge of Asia a secret. The knowledge the Company needed was mainly of a practical nature. Among the personnel there were many who were interested in science and culture. The Asian environment offered plenty of opportunity for building up collections of curiosities. The work of the great collectors Hendrik Adriaan van Reede tot Drakenstein (1636-1692) and G. E. Rumphius (1627-1702) goes way beyond practical objectives. Ministers of the church published descriptions of Hinduism and made translations of the Bible. Legal systems were studied to govern Asian subjects. Trade, science and European expansion cannot be seen independently of one another. Trade provided the stimulus for a considerable expansion of knowledge in Asia. The European standard was the point of reference in judging all moral and religious questions. In this regard, it is certainly a case of “imperialists” *avant la lettre*. The processing of this new knowledge occurred mainly in the Dutch Republic and elsewhere in Europe.

[Author: Jurrien van Goor, pp. 142-150]