

# *The Power of Flowers: 1500-1750*

*14 June*

**(9:45) Far Removed from the *Hortus Conclusus*: Women Harnessing Flowers and Power (Part I)**

## ***Flower Girls: Pastoralism, Fashioning, and Gender Politics in Eighteenth-Century France***

Zara Kesterton (Cambridge)

This paper uses Louis Carrogis de Carmontelle's (1717–1806) portraits as a starting point to examine how and why women incorporated flowers into fashion. Although floral prints have adorned textiles for centuries, the use of three-dimensional flowers in women's fashion blossomed in eighteenth-century France—thanks in part to growing interest in artificial flowers. I explore how Carmontelle's work highlights themes of artificiality, nature, sensuality, and playfulness in his depictions of women wearing flowers. I also consider how donning floral fashion could be construed as a powerful act: expressing the mastery of craftspeople over nature, and French colonial power over exotic flora. Finally, I suggest that—in a world in which a career in botany was impractical or implausible for most women—fashion enabled women to express their knowledge of the natural world, and explore their own agency through creative responses to nature in dress.

*Zara Kesterton is a doctoral candidate at the University of Cambridge, supervised by Prof. Ulinka Rublack and funded by the Wolfson Foundation. Her thesis explores representations of nature in eighteenth-century French fashion. Zara holds an MLitt degree in Dress and Textile Histories from the University of Glasgow (2022), an MPhil degree in Early Modern History from the University of Cambridge (2020), and a BA (Hons) in English Literature and History. She is the current editor-in-chief of *Doing History in Public*.*

## ***A Rose from Lima and Kantutas for Pomata: Saint Rose of Lima, Our Lady of Pomata, and the Construction of the Symbolical Garden of the Colonial Andes***

Lucia Querejazu Escobari (Zurich)

This paper seeks to analyze the visual and silent dialogue of flowers displayed by the Dominican iconographies generated between Lima and Lake Titicaca for Saint Rose of Lima and for Our Lady of Pomata. On the one hand, the image of the Virgin, planted in the heart of Andean cosmology, was successful among the Andean population that offered her sacred *kantutas*. The portraits of her image reflect them in the arches of flowers that will be typical for her iconography, as if allowing a constitutive element of Andean sacrality to survive in reverence of Mary. On the other hand, Saint Rose of Lima, the “first flower of sanctity” in the Americas, born in a seeming perfect criollo ambient molded after the image of Christian virtue. However contradicting, both images and devotions will be successful for its complex society and the floral practices will dialogue eternally.

***Lucía Querejazu Escobari*** is a historian specialized in colonial Andean painting. Currently she is working as a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Zürich within the project entitled *Global economies of salvation*. She obtained her PhD in History from the University of Buenos Aires. Her research has been supported by the Thoma Foundation (Visiting Scholar Grant 2018). Previously, she was the curator and director of the National Museum of Art in La Paz, Bolivia and the editor of the exhibition catalogue *Dios y la Máquina: Serialidad y singularidad en la pintura andina colonial* (2020). She contributed to *The art of painting in Colonial Bolivia* (2017) and to the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Religion* among other publications. She is a member of the *Bolivian Society of History* and the *Association of Bolivian Studies*.

## (11:15) Far Removed from the *Hortus Conclusus*: Women Harnessing Flowers and Power (Part II)

### ***Exchanging Seeds: Agnes Block and her Flower Drawings***

Henrietta Ward (Cambridge)

The botanist and art collector, Agnes Block (1629–1704) commissioned many artists to paint the plants in her garden at her country estate, Vijverhof on the River Vecht not far from Utrecht. From 1670 to around 1700, Block amassed hundreds of watercolours that are today dispersed all over the world—some of these drawings can be found in the Fitzwilliam Museum’s collection. Often inscribed on the verso, Block’s drawings provide vital information about her knowledge, networks and commissioning practices. A closer look at the drawings themselves—the depiction of seeds and roots in particular—can tell us more about Block’s knowledge and her awareness of the discoveries being made by botanists at the time. This paper will examine the importance of seeds to Agnes Block, both in terms of how her artists depicted them and her role in their global exchange; how did seeds empower and honour a woman in the male-dominated field of botany?

**Hettie Ward** is the Curator of Northern European Paintings & Drawings at the Fitzwilliam Museum. She has curated several exhibitions including *Crawling with life: Flower drawings from the Henry Rogers Broughton Bequest* and *Making Waves: Discovering seascapes through drawings and watercolours*. She is currently researching the Fitzwilliam’s significant collection of flower paintings and botanical drawings with a particular focus on women painters and patrons, while also developing an interest in seeds, their histories and the vital role they play in our daily lives. She recently co-organised *Growing Networks* (23–27 January), a colloquium and series of workshops for curators of botanical drawings and prints with support from the Getty Foundation through its *Paper Project* initiative. Before joining the Fitzwilliam in 2015, Hettie was Curatorial Fellow at Dulwich Picture Gallery, London and Curatorial Trainee supported by the Art Fund at the National Gallery, London during which time she also worked at Manchester Art Gallery to research and redisplay their Dutch and Flemish collection. Hettie received her History of Art BA (Hons) from the University of Nottingham and her History of Art MA from the University of Bristol.

## ***The Private Garden as a Symbol of Innovation and Power at the Noble Women's Courts in Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century***

Bożena Popiołek, Anna Penkała-Jastrzębska, and Urszula Kicinska  
(Krakow)

Presenting the specificity of the noblewomen's court is a fundamental step in the studies on the activities of magnates and nobility in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the Saxon era. In Polish historiography, women's role in organizing the structure of the Court private gardens has been poorly recognized and underestimated. It is significant, as long as we have a lot of preserved sources to investigate this topic (property and goods inventories, income and expenses registers, correspondence). The purpose of the research is not just the presentation of new established gardens in women's private courts in Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1st half of XVIII century. Preserved handwritten sources allow us to approach this subject with much greater perspective than before, regarding such aspects as: (1) multidimensional research on the unexplored area of women's activities in forming and maintaining their private gardens, (2) participation of estate's owners in global trade of flowers and plants, (3) local knowledge transfer (cultivation techniques, hired staff). The important goal includes a holistic presentation of the process of transformation of a eighteenth-century female Court, as it became the center of innovation and the form of expression of power (in such ways as finances, prestige, influence).

***Bożena Popiołek*** is a professor in the Institute of History and Archival Studies at the Pedagogical University of Cracow, Member of The Department for Court and Elite Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Grant holder "Women's noble court in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the Saxon times. Structure, people, culture, functions" (2022-2026). Author of the book "Benefactors and clients. The specificity of female patronage and client relations in the Saxon era" Warsaw 2020.

***Anna Penkała-Jastrzębska***, Doctor habil. (dr hab.) of humanities in the field of history, is assistant professor at the Institute of History- Pedagogical University of Krakow. A Foundation for Polish Science START, French government SSHN and Herder Institute scholarship holder. Recipient of an NCN grant entitled "Benefactors and clients. Female patronage and client relations in the Saxon era" and head of an international research project financed by Friedrich-Christian-Lesser-Stiftung

***Urszula Kicinska*** is professor at the Pedagogical University. She deals with the modern history of Poland. Her research interests include: history of mentality, family history, thanatology, parenetics, functioning and organization of noble manors. She is the author of nearly eighty scientific and popular science texts, including two books.

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Women's noble court in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the Saxon times.  
Structure, people, culture, functions (No 2021/41/B/HS3/00253).*

## (14:00) Philosophy and Medicine: The Intrinsic Power of Flowers and Fruits, Real and Imagined (Part I)

### ***The Silence of the Lambs: Sensitive and Vegetative Powers in Plantanimals***

Fabrizio Baldassarri (Venice)

One entry of Denis Diderot and Jean D'Alembert's *Encyclopédie* titles *Agnus scythicus*. Accordingly, this was a plant growing in the land of Tartary, whose fruit is a lamb. Conceived as either a zoophyte or a mythological body, the Tartary lamb attracted the attention of scholars from the late Middle ages to the seventeenth century, when the fellows of the Royal Society dismissed it as a fable. Throughout the Renaissance, it paralleled the case of the barnacle goose (*concha anatifera*), a goose growing from trees in Northern Europe, and several other cases of bodies half plants and half animals. While these zoophytes stand in between vegetables and animals, exemplifying the missing link in the great chain of beings, they also represented the playfulness of nature, calling the traditional understanding of living bodies into questions. Indeed, zoophytes display sensitive powers that are traditionally attributed to the soul of animals, and should not arise from the seeds of plants. In this paper, I aim to discuss several plant animals in order to disclose the variety of powers these bodies possess, reconstructing a scale of zoophytes according to the powers plant display. For instance, barnacle geese fly away from the plant (motion), while the Tartary lamb grazes the herb around the plants (nutrition), the *mimosa pudica* shows a sentient response to touch (sensation), mandrake cries when extracted from the earth (speech), just to name a few cases. Proceeding beyond the mere vegetative powers, these bodies show a fascinating combination of powers in vegetal bodies, which ultimately results in an alternative understanding of vegetation as such. Developing from fables and mythological narratives describing zoophytes, an alternative interpretation of vegetal bodies as endowed with superior faculties traditionally attributed to animality shaped the philosophical study of plant life of pre-modern natural philosophies, ultimately revealing a movement from natural history broadly understood to natural philosophy. As a result, early modern philosophies discussed and appropriated the knowledge of popular culture to bridge the gaps in understanding the life of plants, a more silent field of knowledge.

***Fabrizio Baldassarri*** is a Marie Skłodowska Curie fellow at Indiana University Bloomington and Ca' Foscari University of Venice, with a project on plants in early modern natural philosophy. He has widely published on René Descartes' studies of particular bodies (plants) and medicine, as well as on plants from a philosophical perspective.

## ***Violet Powder: The Perfume of the Flower and the Scent of the Iris***

Océane Magnier (Tours)

At the crossroad between therapeutics and cosmetics, violet powder became very popular in the 16th century. The precious violet flower gives its name to this fragrant powder, yet the flower is often absent from the composition. To extract its perfume, practitioners use mainly iris and more particularly the Florentine iris, whose rhizome's smell recalls that of the violet. For this powder, as for other aromatic products containing iris or violet: of the power of the violet's fragrance, its therapeutic power, or the fragrant power of the iris, which then prevails? Relying upon the study of a corpus of sources from the 16th century (botanical works, recipe books, pharmacopoeias), this research shows how the status of the two plants and their power differ according to the products. It also offers insights into the ambivalent nature of certain aromatic products, implying different accepted practices in the use of the substances.

***Océane Magnier*** has a Master's degree in Conservation-restoration of works of art (painting), from the *École Supérieure des Arts Saint-Luc* in Liège (Belgium) since 2020, as well as a Master's degree in Renaissance Cultures and Heritage from the Center for Higher Studies in the Renaissance (University of Tours) since 2022. Because of her first training, both technical and scientific, she developed a particular approach to materiality, which naturally led her to the history of science and technology. The subject of her Master 2 thesis at the CESR was the study of perfume plants and a specific perfumed product: violet powder, which allowed her to establish the link between botany and perfumery during the Renaissance and to highlight the value of using multidisciplinary approaches to the study of perfumes during this period. Currently in the first year of her PhD, for which she obtained a grant, Océane Magnier is pursuing her research on perfumed products in 16th century France.

## **(15:30) Re-Centering the Garden: The Garden as a Backdrop for Memory, Art, and Networking**

### ***Re-Centering the Garden in Philosophical Life: Hondius's Dapes inemptae of 1618/1621***

Arjan van Dixhoorn (Utrecht)

This paper investigates a long 'botanical poem' published in 1621 by the Calvinist horticulturalist Petrus Hondius. The poem puts gardening at the center of the philosophical life that he envisions. The garden as a site in the global exchange of *naturalia*, emerges with the library as the ideal microcosmos for the philosopher to study the world of Creation. I will focus on the meaning Hondius attached to flowers, in particular also in the context of the war between the Dutch Republic and Spain.

*Arjan van Dixhoorn* acquired his Ph.D. from the VU University, Amsterdam in 2004 with a dissertation on the socio-cultural history of the chambers of rhetoric, organizations of literary sociability in the Dutch-speaking early modern Low Countries. Since then, he has been a teacher and postdoctoral researcher at the universities of Antwerp, Ghent, Maastricht, Utrecht and, with a Fulbright Junior Scholarship, at the University of California at Los Angeles. From 2013 till 2023, he held a Special Chair in the History of Zeeland in the World established by the Familiefonds Hurgronje at Utrecht University. Arjan teaches history at Utrecht's University College Roosevelt in Middelburg.



## ***Bruegel's Spring Garden as Mastery of Nature***

Tine L. Meganck (Brussels)

My lecture considers Bruegel's Spring drawing (1565, Albertina, Vienna) a view of the suburban garden of the Jonghelinckshof and a trace of the lost painting that originally comprised Bruegel's cosmic cycle of the Seasons. Adjacent Bruegel's renderings of sunlit agricultural fields, and of wild woods with snowcapped mountains, the garden would have represented nature closest to home. The lady of the house oversees male and female servants constructing a geometrical garden – from the digging of the allotments, to sowing, planting, and watering. By 1565 gardening had become the latest fashion among the Antwerp urban elite. That same year, Christoffel Plantin commissioned and published *Landwinnighe ende Hoeve*, a Dutch translation of Robert Estienne *L'Agriculture et Maison rustique* (1564). Looking through the lens of this early modern gardener's book, what does Bruegel's image of suburban gardening reveal about man's –and the artist's -mastery of nature?

**Tine L. Meganck** is the author of several publications, including: *Bruegel e l'Italia. Bruegel and Italy*, editor, with Sabine van Sprang and with collaboration of Maria Clelia Galassi, *Studia Academiae Belgica* #3, 2023. "Bruegel's Seasons, Italian Landscapes and Villa Culture," Tine L Meganck and Sabine van Sprang (eds.) with collaboration of Maria Clelia Galassi, *Bruegel e l'Italia. Bruegel and Italy*, *Studia Academiae Belgica* #3, 2023, pp. 117-138.

## ***From Rubens's Garden to The Swan Inn. Tulips and Trust in Early Modern Antwerp***

Klara Alen (Antwerp)

While the tulip mania received extensive treatment as a Dutch phenomenon in art-historical and socio-economic literature, the existence and repercussions of a tulip craze in the Southern Netherlands never received proper scholarly attention. Recent archival research into the garden of Rubens and his milieu made it possible to dig up a group of hitherto unknown tulip enthusiasts in Antwerp in the 1630s. Growers and collectors were tied up in formal and informal networks around the *tapissierspand* and the Church of Saint George. Based on various archival sources and contemporary horticultural literature, this paper focuses on identifying the Antwerp collectors of *naturalia* and their role as patrons in the arts. In addition, the newly discovered documents make it possible to reconstruct a catalogue of tulip cultivars that were available in Antwerp. Finally, it should be questioned if and to what extent the monkey satires or *singeries* with tulips painted by Jan Brueghel the Younger around 1640 mock the specific context of an Antwerp tulip mania.

***Klara Alen*** studied art history at the University of Leuven and the Universiteit van Amsterdam. She co-developed Project Cornelia and works as an independent scholar at Still Life Studies for national and international museums and institutions. Currently she is appointed as a researcher for the new garden of the Rubens House in Antwerp. Klara has published papers and given lectures on the early development of still life painting in the Northern and Southern Netherlands, 17th century Antwerp horticulture, Rubens' garden, women artists and the social and entrepreneurial strategies of early modern artists and art dealers. Together with Sam Segal, Klara is the author of 'Dutch and Flemish Flower Pieces. Paintings, Drawings and Prints up to the Nineteenth Century' (Brill, 2020).

## ***Handling Flowers in Early Modern Europe: A Florilegium of Gestures***

Claudia Swan (St Louis)

***Claudia Swan*** received her PhD in Art History at Columbia University. Swan's principal scholarly commitment is to northern European art, with a focus on the Netherlands in the seventeenth century. Her work on early modern art and visual culture contributes to intersections of art history, history of science, material culture studies, and the history of global trade and politics. She is the author of many books and articles, and has been an invited speaker at universities, museums, and conferences internationally. Her monograph *Rarities of These Lands: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Dutch Republic* was published by Princeton University Press in 2021. She was also a co-author of the volume *Conchophilia. Shells, Art, and Curiosity in Early Modern Europe* (out in 2023 in paperback). She is currently co-editing two books with colleagues: one is on early modern conceptions of the elements and the arts, *Elemental Forces in Early Modern Culture* and the other is *Thinking Inside the Box: Early Modern Cabinets, Chests, Cases*. She is also working on two books of her own; one is a *Short History of the Imagination* and the other is on the Dutch Colonial Imaginary.

*15 June*

**(9:30) Trading, Exchanging, and Controlling Plants and Flowers  
(Part I)**

***New Flowers in Old Yamato***

Philippe Depairon (Kyoto)

Among the objects and technologies introduced to Japan by the Portuguese and the Spanish all along the 16th century, we count gunpowder and pictorial perspective, which were wrought and adopted by the Japanese. One plant they also brought was maize, which seems not to have been cultivated for its nourishing properties, but rather for its flowers, its decorative aspects. In this paper, I retrace the dense network that the introduction of maize underlies, which binds together the European age of colonization with the rapidly changing political and natural ecologies of Japan. I argue that the introduction and the subsequent depictions of maize flowers were part of a budding articulation between the local and the global. More specifically, traditional painting styles played a key role in the adoption of this flower and, further, in appeasing anxieties of invasions from the Other. The end of the Muromachi (ca. 1550 - 1600) and the first century of the Edo period (ca. 1600 - 1715) were marked by a surge in construction, which was a main cause in the massive deforestation of Japan (excluding Hokkaidō). The cutting of local trees species (such as *hinoki* and *sugi*) allowed invasive pine species (*matsu*) to thrive, thus drastically changing the composition of the forests and, more broadly, of the landscape. In parallel, the introduction of Chinese botanical manuals in 1607 underlined the importance of observation in the understanding of natural phenomena. This context favoured the use of the *yamato* style of painting, which favours gold leaf, references to famous places and emphasises on seasonal plants became crucial in the idealized depiction of the land (also called Yamato). Previously rare pictorial motifs, cypress and cedar trees became increasingly popular with leading artists such as Kanō Eitoku: painted in the *yamato* style, these paintings both attempt to preserve the last standing trees of Japan, and construct a nostalgic view of the plentiful forests of yore. I argue, then, that paintings of maize flowers by Sōtatsu Tawaraya and his students attend to the growing interest in botany (both local and foreign) and multiplied contacts with Europeans. This paper investigates those unattended depictions of maize flowers, especially as they are framed by native species: surrounded by coxcombs and morning glories, this paper seeks to examine how new flowers were domesticated, pacified even, by their depiction in the *yamato* style. Further, I argue that maize flowers, as they symbolized newness, and along with cedar and cypress, became pictorial metaphors of political and natural change.



## ***How Botanical Gardens Helped to Shape International Law***

Elena Falletti (Castellanza)

As is well known, as colonialism expanded, the role of the botanical garden was shaped by the new colonial powers, first the Dutch one, later the British one. The point was to study and understand how to produce marketable goods such as exotic spices and plants as efficiently as possible. The purpose of this abstract is to understand how, through these laboratories of knowledge, it was possible to find the basis for international trade rules in exotic goods. On the other hand, it could be investigated how this approach still influences legal debate today, particularly concerning cultural heritage and biodiversity protection.

***Elena Falletti*** is Senior researcher of comparative private law and law and technology at the Carlo Cattaneo University, Castellanza (VA), Italy. She carried out her PhD in Comparative Law at the University "Statale" in Milan in 2006. When she was PhD candidate she gained a DAAD Stipendium and a Marie Curie Fellowship at the Westfälische Wilhelm-Universität Münster (Germany). She gained a post-doctoral Fellowship at the Max Planck Institut für Geistiges Eigentum of Munich (Germany). She published several articles in peer-reviewed journals and publications and undertook experiences of teaching and research in Europe and abroad beginning in 2007. In 2023, she taught in Belgium.

## (11:00) Trading, Exchanging, and Controlling Plants and Flowers (Part II)

### ***Art in Bloom: The Polysemy of Flowers in Colonial Mexican Visual Culture***

James M. Córdova (Boulder)

In colonial Mexico (1521-1821), flowers and floral imagery often connected key aspects of Indigenous and Spanish cultural knowledge and practices. This paper examines key colonial Mexican artworks to argue that artists creatively used floral imagery in a manner that successfully established points of compatibility across cultures. Some of these works are grounded in Mesoamerican cultural practices and knowledge that persisted through colonial times. However, ruptures and confluences in the meaning of flowers could coexist in a single work of art due to the polysemy of flowers in a culturally diverse society. Although these works did not entirely reconcile Mesoamerican and European worldviews and systems of knowledge, they did harmonize certain aspects of both. The strategic inclusion of flowers and floral imagery in some works of colonial Mexican art allowed for an ethnically diverse audience to relate to them along multiple lines, which became increasingly blurred in the developing colonial milieu.

***James M. Córdova*** is Associate Professor of Art History at the University of Colorado at Boulder where he teaches courses on Pre-Columbian and colonial Latin American topics. He is the author of *The Art of Professing in Bourbon Mexico: Crowned-Nun Portraits and Reform in the Convent* (2014) and his scholarship has been published in *The Art Bulletin*, *Word & Image: A Journal of Verbal/Visual Enquiry*, *Res: Journal of Anthropology and Aesthetics*, and *Colonial Latin American Review*, and the edited volume *Flower Worlds: Religion, Aesthetics, and Ideology in Mesoamerica and the American Southwest*, among other venues. Recently, he was an Aisla Mellon Bruce Visiting Senior Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study of the Visual Arts, a division of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC.

***The Flowers of St Thomas: Colonial Botany and the Hortus malabaricus, c. 1680***

Daniel Margócsy (Cambridge)

Stationed in Goa in the 1680s, the Italian discolored carmelite priest Matteo di San Giuseppe repeatedly claimed that he was the true author of the *Hortus malabaricus*, the pioneering encyclopedia of South Asian botany, which was printed with the authorial name of the Dutch colonial commander Hendrik Rheede tot Drakesteyn on its title page. My talk offers an account of the of the *Hortus malabaricus* from the perspective of Matteo. By focusing on his rarely studied manuscripts, which are scattered across various libraries, this talk shows how the production of this botanical encyclopedia intersected with the religious and political activities of various Western and Eastern Christian churches in contemporary Malabar, which played an important role in the pepper trade, but also in managing relations between Europeans and Indians. I claim that Christian religious mysticism played a significant role in the development of colonial botanical knowledge in the South Asian context.

***Daniel Margócsy*** is Professor of the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine at the University of Cambridge. He is currently working on a book on Dutch colonial natural history.



## **(13:30) Philosophy and Medicine: The Intrinsic Power of Flowers and Fruits, Real and Imagined (Part II)**

### ***Arvid Månsson's Örta-Book: Translating Medicinal Plant Knowledge in Seventeenth-Century Sweden***

Anna Svensson (Uppsala)

This paper analyses contested medical authority, specifically tension around the medicinal power of plant-knowledge, in seventeenth-century Sweden through the publication and use of the earliest printed herbal in Swedish: Arvid Månsson's *Örta-book* (literally "book of herbs"), a popular translation/compilation of predominantly German and Latin authorities that ran through eight editions between 1618 and 1654. Published post-Reformation, the herbal is a balancing act around the central question of authority: educated locally rather than at university or abroad, Månsson presents himself as an authoritative guide who can make the mysteries of medicine accessible also to common people, discerning between the godly and idolatry or superstition, selecting trustworthy from untrustworthy authors, and prioritizing local plants over foreign plants. In contrast to the botanical activity at Uppsala University, where two editions were published, rural plants and plant knowledge remain elusive to the historian. However, extensive user-traces suggest that this knowledge was widespread and thriving.

*Anna Svensson is a researcher at the Department of History of Science and Ideas, Uppsala University, with the project Botanical Marginalia (2021-2023) funded by the Swedish Research Council. The project explored pressed plants in primarily early modern books in relation to the history of botany and current collection management practices. Her research draws on a range of fields including history of the book, history of science, collection history, and digital humanities. With a background in English Literature and Museum Studies, she defended her thesis in the History of Science, Technology and Environment at KTH, Royal Institute of Technology (2017).*

## ***Herbal Books at Court as a Gesture of Medical Erudition and Medical Providence***

Dominic Olariu (Marburg)

Herbal books made for emperors and empresses, kings and queens or dukes and duchesses seem to have a long tradition going back to antiquity. After this practice had apparently fallen into oblivion for a long time during the early and high Middle Ages, it was rediscovered in Italy at the end of the fourteenth century at the latest. This paper will focus on a group of herbal books of the sixteenth century, illustrated and equipped with dry plants. They were gifts to rulers or commissioned pieces for them. This paper proposes to understand these books as the materialization of specific statements of a new kind of plant and medical culture at princely courts, which had been formulated from the fourteenth century onwards. On the one hand, physicians used the herbal books they executed, or that were commissioned from them, to dedicate them to aristocrats in order to convince the latter of their own medical abilities as healers. The herbal books were thus tantamount to a kind of business card of the doctors' medical knowledge. Not infrequently, the dedication was linked to the hope of employment as a court physician. On the other hand, the herbal books seem to have underpinned the position of the princes and princesses of the early modern period as promoters of health. As owners of herbal books that presented the latest knowledge about plants, the princes and princesses could furthermore claim to be scholars of medicine, or at least possess the latest knowledge on medicinal herbs and be connoisseurs of herbs and horticulture.

***Dominic Olariu*** teaches medieval art history at the University of Bern, Switzerland. He received his bi-national PhD from the *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales Paris* and the *Staatliche Hochschule für Gestaltung Karlsruhe* with a book on the first resembling portraits of the Middle Ages, and his habilitation from the University of Marburg with a book on illustrated herbal books of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. He has been a visiting professor at the universities of Dijon, Düsseldorf, and Munich, and has been a visiting researcher at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin, the Herzog August Library Wolfenbüttel, and the Gotha Research Center, among others. His latest publications include “Georg Öllingers. *Kräuterbuch. Ein Apotheker erforscht die Pflanzenwelt der Renaissance*” (2023) and *Maraviglia. Rezeptionsgeschichte(n) von der Antike bis in die Moderne* (together with Peter Bell, Antje Ferhmann, and Rebecca Müller, 2022).

## **(15:00) Paper Plants and the Epistemic Power of Flower Imagery (Part I)**

### ***On Being Planted and Portrayed: Horticulture and Floral Imagery in Seicento Rome through the works of Anna Maria Vaiani***

Clio Rom (Springdale, Arkansas)

In 1630s Rome, Jesuit professor Giovanni Battista Ferrari wrote *Flora overo cultura dei fiori*, a text concerning the practice and rhetoric of cultivating ornamental flowers. This paper goes beyond the confines of studies of gardens, botanical illustrations, and still life imagery in *seicento* Italy. Instead, it focuses on a common element: flowers. Three case studies on selected works by Anna Maria Vaiani consider Ferrari's rhetoric, *seicento* horticultural practices, and material culture to understand how nobles considered and used flowers. Through this lens, the traditional boundaries set by previous scholars between botanical images and still life paintings become less clearly defined. The rising practice of horticulture used botanical data to produce visually delightful objects, such as flowers in vases. Once flowers were visually represented, they became tools to signify the social and financial status of the nobles who owned these images, while also serving as enchanting, portable proxies to the patron's garden.

*Clio Rom holds a Master of Arts in Italian Renaissance Art History from Syracuse University, and she earned her Bachelor of Arts in Art History from the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. She has previously taught the basic art lecture course for the University of Arkansas and has assisted with lectures and site visits which included Palazzo Barberini, Galleria Borghese, Santa Maria Maggiore, and the Vatican museums in conjunction with the University of Arkansas Rome Center. Rom now works at Arts One Presents, a new arts non-profit organization in Northwest Arkansas focusing on making visual and performing arts equitable for and accessible to the public. Her primary research interests lay in the augmentations of the natural world in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Italy and the artistic rendering thereof for the sake of hegemonic and religious power. She is further interested in the role of public art in place, its patronage, and audience reception throughout modern urban development.*

## ***Hortus florens Archiducis Leopoldi or the Power of Flowers at the Service of the Archduke Leopold Wilhelm (1614-1662)***

Lara de Mérode (Brussels)

The collection of floral paintings of the Archduke Leopold Wilhelm of Austria (1614-1662) will serve as a case study to highlight how this genre sometimes served political and religious power. This collection reflects the rich personality of the Hapsburg Prince, friend of the arts and defender of the catholic faith. It reveals his taste and scholarship, as well as his political and devotional aspirations. Displayed around his portrait or right at the front of military victories, flowers elegantly glorify the power of the Archduke. However, a call to spiritual elevation and humility always remains as a reminder that power is fragile. Relying on a local pictorial tradition, the Archduke mastered the art of subtly intertwining flowers, power and devotion to raise floral motifs to a personal and powerful meaning. This case study will thus allow us to understand how floral motifs sometimes conveyed messages of affirmation of devotion and power.

***Lara de Mérode*** is curator at the Royal Museum of Fine Arts of Belgium since 2019 (Flemish, Italian and French Painting 17th-18th centuries). She graduated in 2013 from the Free University of Brussels. After devoting her Master's dissertation and her researches to the study of medieval herbals, she started a PhD 2019 focusing on the links between art, botany and devotion in the Southern Low Countries during the early modern period (17th-18th centuries).

## (16:15) Paper Plants and the Epistemic Power of Flower Imagery (Part II)

### ***Giovanni Battista Ferrari's "Flora, overo Cultura dei fiori" (1638)***

Sheila Barker (Philadelphia)

One of the most important books to have been published on flowers in the seventeenth century outside of the field of botany is Giovanni Battista Ferrari's *Flora, overo Cultura dei fiori* (1638). Although Ferrari's volume is frequently cited in individual studies of the famous painters who designed some of its engraved plates, its contents have received far less attention. The book provides a range of insights into the cultural uses and significance of flowers in Baroque Rome and beyond, information on the technical heights reached in the cultivation and display of flowers, the relationships between the cultivation of flowers and allied sciences such as astronomy, as well as notes on of the master gardeners of that era.

***Sheila Barker*** directs research on women artists at the Medici Archive Project and is executive director of Studio Incamminati School for Contemporary Realist Art in Philadelphia. She has published extensively on the art, science and culture in 16th- and 17th-century Italy. In 2020, she curated the exhibition "The Immensity of the Universe in the Art of Giovanna Garzoni" for the Uffizi.

## ***Painting Plants, Engraving Gloire***

Katherine M. Reinhart (Broome County, New York)

Books were important conduits for scientific ideas in the early modern period. This talk will focus on one suchbook: *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire des plantes*, published in 1676 by the Académie royale des sciences of France. Established on behalf of King Louis XIV in 1666, the Academy was one of the first and most prominent scientific societies in Europe. Some of the images of flowers contained within the volume were celebrated for their artistic skill as well as scientific accuracy, while others were contested and derided by Academy members. Yet, beyond botanical themes, the book contained numerous images meant to constantly remind readers of who provided the funding for, and harnessed the knowledge of, the new Academy. This talk will show how the *Histoire des plantes* was a book both in the service of knowledge production, on the one hand, and, on the other, as a means of broadcasting monarchical power.

***Katherine Reinhart*** is an assistant professor of Art History at Binghamton University, State University of New York. She specializes in the history of art, science, and visual culture of the early modern period, with a particular focus on the creation, use, and circulation of images in the formation of knowledge. She is currently in the midst of completing an edited volume (with Matthijs Jonker) on the visual culture of early modern scientific societies, and a monograph focused on the Académie royale des sciences.