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The Construction of History: Mapping Paratextual Strategies in Vernacular and Latin Printed Herbals (c. 1500-1700)

With his aphorism on the 'true botanist' in his *Fundamenta botanica* (1736), Linné ultimately formalized the very notion of the botanical scholar: *7. Botanici (veri) ex Fundamento a genuino Botanicam (4) intelligent, omniaque Vegetabilia (2) nomine intelligibili nominare noscunt; sunt Collectores vel Methodici* ("7. (True) Botanists understand Botany (4) from its very foundation, and they know to name all plants (2) with an understandable name; they are Collectors or Methodologists."¹ But how did we arrive at that point? The often marginalized paratexts of early modern printed herbals enabled the formation and construction of the botanical science regarding its practices as well as its scientific community. Hereby, their authors simultaneously crafted an extremely powerful historiography of the yet emerging discipline. Indeed, their influence can still be felt today.

In my talk, therefore, I will focus on the authorial strategies in enumerating and categorizing authorities and contributors they deemed part of their scientific community. Deploying digital tools like *Palladio* and *Gephi*, I will analyze and compare these authorial strategies. Who was described as contributor of the botanical science and who was left out or devalued? Which were shared efforts, which individual ones? Questions, that become even more intriguing when comparing vernacular and Latin print works.



Portrait of a Botanist (1629), oil on Panel, currently on view
in Allen Memorial Art Museum (Object-number: 1972.41)

Date and Venue:

Monday, 10th October 2022, 6pm
Zentrum für Alte Kulturen („Atrium“), SR 1
Langer Weg 11, 6020 Innsbruck

¹ Linné, *Fundamenta botanica* (1736, p. 7 [A4r]).