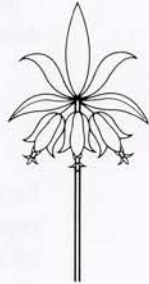


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Book Reviews and Announcements

Ed. Note: In recent years, unanticipated circumstances have led to our accumulating a backlog of books to be reviewed. Now that we are getting back on track with book reviews and announcements, we are working to catch up on the older material as well as to review recently received books in a timely manner. Thus for the next several issues, while we process the remainder of the books we have in hand, there will be reviews in this section spanning a longer period than would normally be the case.

Goyne, Minetta Altgelt. *A life among the Texas flora: Ferdinand Lindheimer's letters to George Engelmann.* College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1991. xvi, 236 pp., frontis. (port.), facsimis., ports., illus. \$44.50. ISBN 0-89096-457-2.

"I cannot think of anything I prefer to wandering around and gathering plants and collecting and preserving them." Ferdinand Jacob Lindheimer, 1801-1879, wrote this from Texas where he spent many years collecting plant specimens to send to George Engelmann, Asa Gray and other scientists. *A life among the Texas flora* contains translations of letters that Lindheimer wrote from 1841 through 1847 to George Theodor Engelmann, 1809-1884, St. Louis physician, botanist and founder of the St. Louis Academy of Science. The Southwest in the 1830s as seen through the letters of an observant and articulate traveler is the setting of a fascinating narrative, and Minetta Altgelt Goyne has linked these letters with chapters containing historical details, biographical accounts, personal comments and explanations that enhance the story. Goyne was faced with a formidable task when she was asked to translate these letters. Lindheimer wrote in German script, often illustrated over the text, wrote crosswise over the illustration and continued the letters with postscripts on the envelopes. Yet from this confusion the author has produced a vivid portrait of a man and an interlude in his lifetime.

The picture of Lindheimer that evolves from these letters is that of a complex individual—sometimes impatient and sharp, at other times poetic and tender, but most of all a survivor. He traveled through the Southwest in a time of unrest between Mexico and Texas, disputes between pro- and anti-slavery advocates and skirmishes with Indians over the boundaries of their hunting grounds. He often endured pain as well as many deprivations such

as the lack of funds, food and shelter, but he succeeded in becoming known as "The Father of Texas Botany." When Lindheimer finally settled in New Braunfels, Texas, he acquired another distinction—that of being the founder and editor of the *Neu-Braunfelser Zeitung*, the first German newspaper in Texas. The 19th century saw a great influx of Germans into the United States, and colonies were formed as individuals joined members of their family, friends and others from the same area in Europe. New Braunfels, Texas, had such a colony, and Lindheimer was active in its politics. Early in 1852 the leaders of the group chose Lindheimer to be the first editor of their newspaper. He tackled this responsibility as assiduously as he had tackled plant collecting, and he never missed publishing an issue even though there were times when he had to print the newspaper on butcher's wrap, on the back of wallpaper or even on silk tissues intended for his specimens.

Because Lindheimer's interests were numerous, this volume should have wide appeal. Plant scientists will appreciate his exact descriptions of locations and conditions in which plants were found; those who enjoy American history will get a unique view of the Southwest through the eyes of a German immigrant, and still others will want to read it for the beauty of Lindheimer's prose captured in Goyne's expert translations. In the preface to the work, the author explains how she came to translate the letters and describes the reasoning used in the translation and spelling of the plant names. The introduction consists of biographical background information. The footnotes at the end of the work are organized by chapter and are replete with valuable data—a reference source in themselves. A bibliography and index complete the volume. Botanical libraries, historical libraries and general libraries should all place a copy of this volume on their shelves.

Anita L. Karg
Hunt Institute

Hocker, Sally Haines. *Herbals and closely related medicobotanical works, 1472-1753, in the Department of Special Collections, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, and the History of Medicine Collection, Clendening Medical Library.* (University of Kansas Publications. Library series, no. 50.)

Lawrence: University of Kansas Libraries, 1985. viii, 94 pp., illus. \$12.00 (paper).

Sally Haines Hocker's catalogue contains brief bibliographic descriptions of over 260 herbals and related works contained in the two Kansas library collections specified in the title. In addition to herbals, other works having significant sections of herbal information are listed and described, including encyclopedias, pharmacopoeias, medical texts and agricultural works, as well as a few selected monographic studies on single plants or groups of plants having medicinal applications. Hocker has used the Linnæan cutoff date of 1753 to limit the catalogue, but she notes that fewer than 10% of the inclusions are 18th-century works, most being published between 1470 and 1670.

Arrangement is generally alphabetical (with some exceptions, explained in the introduction) by author or main entry, and the bibliographic descriptions include copy-specific notes and, in some cases, expanded notes about specific features, such as woodcuts. Provenance information is included only in relation to the four major collection builders of the libraries represented. The catalogue is capped by a chronological index, in which the earliest entry is the *Etymologiae* of Isidore of Seville (1472) and the latest is Newton's *A compleat herbal* (1752).

As Hocker notes in the introduction, a catalogue such as this one is valuable not only as a record of a scholarly resource but also as a source of information for readers with a wide variety of interests, including historical aspects of botany, horticulture and medicine, art history, the history of science and historical bibliography.

Charlotte Tancin
Hunt Institute

Livre des simples medecines. Codex Bruxellensis IV. 1024. A 15th-century French herbal. Introduction and adapted text, Carmélia Opsomer. English translation, Enid Roberts and William T. Stearn. Commentaries, Carmélia Opsomer and William T. Stearn. Antwerp: De Schutter, 1984. 2 vols. in slipcase. 24,000 Belgian francs. ISBN 2-8023-0001-6, v. 1; ISBN 2-8023-0002-4, v. 2 (English ed.) [Published in numbered, limited edition of 2,000 copies.]

The work known as the *Livre des simples medecines*, here reproduced as a facsimile and translation of Codex Bruxellensis IV. 1024, is a major text in the history of medieval science. The prototype for the *Livre* was that venerable compilation of Dioscoridean plant knowledge, the *Circa instans* of Platearius. In the tradition of herbals which built upon their predecessors, the *Livre* was widely distributed under several titles in manuscript and, later, in

printed form, the latter under the titles of *Arbolayre* and the *Grant herbier en François*. Printed in at least 10 editions between 1488 and 1548, this work was also translated into English as the *Grete herball*, bringing mainstream European knowledge of medicinal plant usage to England.

While the *Circa instans* is a clear source work for the *Livre*, the link between the two is the *Tractatus de herbis*. The *Tractatus* was modelled on the *Circa instans*, retaining its prologue, general arrangement and much text. This however was then substantially augmented by Bartholomew Mini of Siena, who added information from a variety of sources, including the *Herbarius* of Apuleius, *Macer floridus*, a Latin version of Dioscorides' writings, and other unknown sources. Before being translated from Latin into French, the *Tractatus* was apparently enhanced by a copyist who added articles describing food plants, and then by the translator who added further remarks, observations and recipes from yet additional sources. The resulting *Livre* is, as noted by Opsomer and Stearn, "an amalgam of material extremely diverse in origin."

The De Schutter facsimile has many appealing features. Physically, with their imitation parchment bindings, the volumes evoke their predecessors. Volume 1 contains a facsimile reproduction of the French manuscript, with text in brown or maroon, rubricated and with color illustrations. In addition to 394 plant illustrations, there are illustrations depicting animals, minerals and various scenes of medieval life, including garden work, farmstead and home life and hunting. The illustrations have something of the same quality as those in other herbals of the period, but they are generally better drawn and show considerable sensitivity to shading and color. William Stearn states that approximately 282 of the plant pictures seem to have been drawn from nature, a very high number for this period. The colors are bright, with a foliage palette including unusual shades such as olive, chartreuse and turquoise green.

The entries in the manuscript include synonyms, brief description, category of plant part to be used, place of origin, an indication of habitat and remedies for medicinal applications, these last based on the humoral doctrine espoused by Galen. The body of the text was written in a single hand, with annotations in the margins by others. The illustrations seem to have been done by several persons.

Volume 2 is available in either modern French or English; our copy is in English, translated from a transcript in modern French published in 1980 by Carmélia Opsomer. It contains a translation of the manuscript text, with numbered entries and added notes on identification and current scientific name when known. [Stearn suggests that at least 129 of the plant illustrations must be seen as fictitious.] Other features include a table of sources, indexes of scientific and English names and an index cor-

relating the French manuscript pagination to the entry numbers in the English version.

Charlotte Tancin
Hunt Institute

Rosengarten, Frederic, Jr. *Wilson Popenoe: Agricultural explorer, educator, and friend of Latin America.* Lawai, Hawaii: National Tropical Botanical Garden, 1991. v-[viii], 182 pp., maps, ports., illus. \$22.95. ISBN 0-935868-53-4.

"Remarkable" is an adjective often used to describe the life and career of Frederick Wilson Popenoe, 1892-1975. In this biography of 182 pages filled with photographs, maps, geographical descriptions, historical accounts and humorous anecdotes, Frederic Rosengarten Jr. proves the appropriateness of the description. Because of his father's experiments with diverse ways of earning a living, Wilson Popenoe discovered early in life his affinity for exploration and love of tropical and subtropical plants. He was nine years old when his father went into the mining business in Costa Rica, and it was there that Wilson discovered that he possessed a "tropical soul." When the mining venture failed, Popenoe senior went into the nursery business and in 1912 sent Wilson and his older brother to the Middle East to purchase date palms.

In 1913 David Fairchild invited Wilson to become an agricultural explorer for the United States Department of Agriculture. As an explorer he traveled through Central and South America to find the best plant products to introduce into the U.S.A. And in 1921, after much traveling, Wilson settled in Washington, D.C., and became Acting Head of the Office of Seed and Plant Introduction, where he soon realized that he was not suited for bureaucratic work. In May 1925, he wrote to Fairchild, "Things in the Bureau have reached the point where it seems useless for me to hang on any longer." Two months later Wilson resigned from the U.S.D.A. and accepted a job with the United Fruit Company in Honduras. He became the first director of the Lancetilla Experiment Station near Tela, Honduras; later he became technical advisor at the company's divisions in Central America and the Caribbean. In 1941 Wilson became the founding director of Escuela Agrícola Panamericana in Zamorano, Honduras, where he remained until his retirement in 1957. In telling the story of Popenoe's life Rosengarten includes information about persons who influenced and were influenced by him and also includes many events from Wilson's personal life, such as the fascinating story of the restoration of the house in Antigua. The volume concludes with a list of Wilson Popenoe's publications, a bibliography and an index.

Frederic Rosengarten Jr. knew his subject and the region well. In 1940, he worked as Popenoe's assistant in Guatemala, and their friendship endured throughout Popenoe's lifetime. The author and his family lived for many years in Guatemala, where he managed plantations of coffee, essential oils, cardamom spice and macadamia nuts. His knowledge of the region is obvious in the vivid descriptions of people, foods, plant life and landscapes contained in the volume.

Those interested in horticulture, agricultural exploration, economic botany, tropical agriculture and Latin American affairs will appreciate this work, but it would be a valuable addition to any library—especially high school libraries where its palatable presentation of many activities and places might stimulate the desire for knowledge.

Anita L. Karg
Hunt Institute

Rydén, Mats. *The English plant names in the Grete herball (1526): A contribution to the historical study of English plant-name usage.* (Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis. Stockholm studies in English, no. 61.) Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1984. 110 pp. \$25.00. ISBN 91-22-00710-5 (paper).

Like the *Livre des simples medecines* (also reviewed in this issue), the *Grete herball* is a descendent of the *Circa instans* of Platearius, by way of the *Grant herbier en François*, of which it is a translation. The *Grete herball* was the first illustrated book on plants to be printed in England, and to some extent it shows English plant name usage at the end of the medieval period. However, as it is largely a translation from the French, a number of the English names are merely translations or adaptations of names appearing in the *Grant herbier*. Even so, the *Grete herball* yields considerable information about both traditional and emerging principles for the formation and application of plant names in English in the early 16th century.

Mats Rydén has produced a systematic analysis of the English plant names in the *Grete herball*, in which he examines their synonymy, the rivalry between popular and scholarly names and the development and evolution of plant name usage over time. In his introduction, he discusses work done previously by others on the historical usage of English plant names, making a good argument for the study of early herbals and floras as significant linguistic documents as well as landmarks in botanical history.

The introduction also contains some discussion of plant coverage in the *Grete herball*. Rydén points out that the

plants described in the *Grete herball* were for the most part only those seen as useful or dangerous, "which of course markedly limits our knowledge of the actual floras of the time and of the native nomenclatures." He also notes that the *Grete herball* was not an English flora, but it reproduced information on plants described in the *Grant herbier*, "of which some 150 may also be recognized as British, which of course does not necessarily mean 'native species' as known to the translator." He briefly outlines the organization and entry format of the *Grete herball* and discusses the botanical and non-botanical content.

The next section of the book discusses plant names: Their arrangement in the *Grete herball*, their frequency, provenance and typology, the kind of explanations for names that are occasionally presented, problems of identification and nomenclature and a list of plant names which antedate the earliest entries in the *Oxford English dictionary*.

Rydén then proceeds to present the series of analytical lists of plant names in the *Grete herball*, at which point it becomes even clearer what he means by studying herbals as linguistic resources. There is a preliminary list of plant names appearing as chapter headings, which gives the heading form (e.g., De solatro rustice) and the English form (Dwale or more morell) as they appear in the *Grete herball*. This is followed by the "overall list," which gives the English plant name in the *Grete herball* (noting whether the name was first recorded in Old English, Middle English or in the *Grete herball*), the modern English name, the Latin heading and the modern scientific name (e.g., alysamder, alexanders, De Petrocilio macedonico, *Smyrnium olusatrum*). This list is followed by expanded notes on many of the English name forms in the *Grete herball*, with comparisons made to forms appearing in selected other works of the period, such as *The vertuose boke of dystyllacyon* (1527).

There is an appendix to the overall list, containing short lists of plants qualified in the *Grete herball* as common, garden/tame or wild, and another list of plants qualified by other terms (e.g., pepper—black, white, long). There is also a list of modern scientific names corresponding to English names in the *Grete herball*, and Rydén notes here that the numerous uncertain plant references in the source work make this list only tentative. The book is completed by a bibliography.

Charlotte Tancin
Hunt Institute

Waiser, W. A. *The field naturalist: John Macoun, the Geological Survey and natural science.* Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1989. x, 253 pp., ports., illus., maps. \$35.00. ISBN 0-8020-2686-9.

A chance encounter while on a plant collecting trip started John Macoun on a career that he described as a dream fulfilled. In 1872 while collecting in the Owen Sound region of Canada, Macoun met Canadian Pacific Railway engineer-in-chief Sandford Fleming and was invited to join a party surveying the proposed Yellowhead route for the transcontinental railway. It was an invitation that led to an introduction to A. R. C. Selwyn, Director of the Geological Survey of Canada, and to a career with the Survey that spanned 31 years. John Macoun began his career with the title of Botanist, then was promoted to Dominion Botanist and finally Naturalist of the Geological Survey of Canada. During these years he published *Manitoba and the great north-west*, *Catalogue of Canadian plants*, *Catalogue of Canadian birds* and many reports relative to the natural history of Canada.

Macoun was born in Belfast, Ireland, in 1832 and immigrated to Canada at the age of 18 with his widowed mother, two brothers and a sister. The study and collection of Canadian flora became an obsession with John Macoun, and he collected as widely and thoroughly as possible, usually working from dawn to dusk. It was on one of these collecting trips that he first met Sandford Fleming. John Macoun attributes his success in the Geological Survey to hard work and enthusiasm. One of his maxims was "Enthusiasm wins everytime and only those who are full of it rise to the top and stay." But it becomes evident as the story unfolds that astute politics as well as expertise helped Macoun's career. "Lavish tributes" commemorated his death in his 90th year on 18 July 1920. Waiser used the papers of Macoun's scientific contemporaries and political connections and the records of governmental departments, commissions and councils to unfold the story of the man, the Geological Survey and the influence of government on the employees and the organization.

The field naturalist is a scholarly, objective account of natural history in Canada from the mid-19th through the early 20th centuries—a period of dissension between the specialists and the generalists and between advocates of comprehensive research and those who felt that field work should take precedence. This volume should be a part of every natural-history library, but those who are interested in political science and economics will also appreciate the story. It is an excellent source for information on Canadian field naturalists. The extensive notes contained in the volume are indicative of the thorough research done by the author using both primary and secondary sources. Maps, portraits, illustrations and an index enhance the work.

Anita L. Karg
Hunt Institute

West, Keith. *Painting plant portraits: A step-by-step guide.* London: The Herbert Press in association with The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, 1991. 112 pp., 120 color plates. £14.95. ISBN 1-871569-29-X.

This is a thoughtful guide to painting plants in transparent watercolor. Author Keith West has selected as subjects 12 readily available plants flowering through the seasons: Snowdrop, Daffodil, Windflower, Iris, Pink, Field Poppy, Sweet Pea, Rose, Harebell or Bluebell, Sunflower, Fuchsia and Peruvian Lily. After introducing each plant, he provides instructions for painting them. For example, for the Windflower (*Anemone blanda*) he covers drawing, shading, first green coat, first petal coat, yellow and red, second coats of green and blue-violet, final touches, rhizome drawing and rhizome painting. Ample color illustrations show progressive steps in the completion of each artwork. West has written for both the beginner (particularly his brief chapters "Equipment and Materials" and "Techniques") and the more experienced painter, although his *How to draw plants: The techniques of botanical illustration* (1983) remains the classic work for the career illustrator.

James J. White
Hunt Institute

Wijnands, D. O. *The botany of the Commelins: A taxonomical, nomenclatural and historical account of the plants depicted in the Moninckx Atlas and in the four books by Jan and Caspar Commelin on the plants in the Hortus Medicus Amstelodamensis 1682-1710.* Rotterdam: A. A. Balkema, 1983. 298 pp., 65 color plates. \$71.50. ISBN 90-6191-262-8.

Wijnands presents a detailed analysis and description of nine volumes of 420 watercolors, referred to as the "Moninckx Atlas" at the Hortus Botanicus of the University of Amsterdam. These watercolors were used for the published works of the botanists Jan Commelin (1629-1692), a merchant in pharmaceutical commodities and Director of the Amsterdam Physic Gardens, and his nephew Caspar Commelin (1667?-1731), a physician and professor at the Amsterdam Athenaeum.

Most of the paintings, prepared ca. 1700, are by Jan Moninckx and Maria Moninckx, but some are by Alida Withoos and Johanna Helena Herolt (daughter of Maria Merian), and others are unsigned. (Volume nine, unrelated to any publication, includes works by Dorothea Storm and J. M. Cok.)

Part one (History) contains short chapters on the Hortus Medicus Amstelodamensis (1682-1710), Jan and Caspar Commelin and the Moninckx Atlas. The second part (Taxonomy and Nomenclature) deals with the influence of the books by the Commelins, notes on typification, presentation of the texts on the watercolors and engravings and discussion on the plants—the latter taking up most of the book and illustrated with 165 black-and-white photos of artworks from the Atlas. Arranged alphabetically by families and genera, this compilation appears to be carefully researched, with Latin names and information on publication, artist, taxonomic notes, distribution, introduction and specimens seen.

Appendices include a listing of books in the library of the Hortus Medicus, biographical notes on persons connected with the books and plants of the Commelins, a key to the Moninckx Atlas and the Commelin volumes, a bibliography and an index. This most useful key to the Atlas and the Commelin volumes (Appendix C) relates almost 200 of the watercolors to engravings in two volumes of the *Horti medici amstelodamensis* (1697-1701) and relates under 50 each to *Praeludia botanica* (1703) and *Plantae rariorae & exoticae* (1706). The reader is informed that a full listing of the contents of the Atlas with a concordance to the published volumes is in the library of the Hugo de Vries laboratory in Amsterdam. Color reproductions from the Atlas occupy the last 64 pages of the clothbound commercial edition only.

The value of this work to the taxonomist doubtless will be in the brief chapter "Notes on typification" and in the detailed taxonomic notes found in the chapter "Discussion on the plants," where a number of Commelin's plates have been designated as lectotypes.

The first volume of the *Horti medici amstelodamensis*, on the plants of the East and West Indies, was Jan Commelin's most important contribution to botanical knowledge. He also wrote the first flora of Holland in 1683. Caspar posthumously published volume one of the *Horti* and was author of the second volume and also of *Flora malabarica* (1696) and *Praeludia botanica* (1703). Interestingly, in 1705 he provided botanical annotations for artist Maria Sibylla Merian's *Metamorphosis insectorum surinamensium*. The Commelins published the first illustrations of many species, and Linnaeus cited 259 of their 305 published plates. The two botanists were honored by Linnaeus, who named the genus *Commelina* for them.

James J. White
Hunt Institute

