

IMPERIAL NATURE: JOSEPH HOOKER AND THE PRACTICES OF VICTORIAN SCIENCE.

By Jim Endersby. Chicago (Illinois): University of Chicago Press. \$35.00. xii + 429 p.; ill.; index. ISBN: 978-0-226-20791-9. 2008.

It is difficult to imagine that there is anything original to say about science in Victorian England. However, Endersby has done so in this study of the eminent botanist Joseph Hooker. Many workers have stressed that Victorian naturalists were struggling to professionalize science. The author points out that such a view is somewhat anachronistic, and that the actual picture is more complex. Doing science for money—especially when it involved collecting—was considered less honorable than was making botany, in this case, more “philosophical.” Amateur was not the opposite of professional; to Hooker, it denoted someone concerned with “overwrought” local floras and not devoted to—or equipped to contribute to—the development of general principles. Although Hooker earned his living as a salaried botanist, his desire to raise the status of botany was his main motivation.

Endersby’s contribution demonstrates that the constraints of day-to-day practice can have as much influence on theory as can the community of fellow scientists and society at large. For example, he argues that Hooker’s broad species concept had as much to do with the realities of building and maintaining the massive herbarium at Kew as did theoretical concerns. It also allowed Hooker to enforce his authority and the global scope of the Kew collections against colonial “species mongers.”

A welcome aspect of this book is that it treats Hooker in his own right and not merely as incidental to Darwin. But, Endersby does contribute here with Hooker’s species concept again as the key. To Hooker, Darwin’s mechanism of natural selection was slow enough that the daily practice of classification could be carried on essentially as it had under the concept of fixed species. One could accept Darwinism and its positive impact on the status of natural history without rearranging Kew, radically undermining one’s hard-earned classificatory system and species concept and, thus, authority. Botanists will find this book of greatest interest. However, its approach and the light it sheds on the influence of daily practice on scientific concepts should make it mandatory reading for anyone interested in the history of science.

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CAROLUS CLUSIUS: TOWARDS A CULTURAL HISTORY OF A RENAISSANCE NATURALIST. *History of Science and Scholarship in the Netherlands, Volume 8.*

Edited by Florike Egmond, Paul Hoftijzer, and Robert Visser. Amsterdam (The Netherlands): Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, distributed by the University of Chicago Press, Chicago (Illinois). \$75.00. vi + 349 p. + 17 pl.; ill.; index. ISBN: 978-90-6984-506-7. 2007.

Carolus Clusius moved to Leiden in 1593 to set up its Hortus Botanicus. His life in botany spanned almost half a century. Although he is a central figure in the renaissance of botany in Europe, his work remains underappreciated. The Clusius Project was begun in 2004, its initial goal being to digitize the some 1300 letters to Clusius held by Leiden University Library. This book is based on papers given at the Scaliger Institute (also involved in this project) in 2004. If some of the articles in this volume have a rather preliminary feel, the Clusius Project will surely stimulate work on this important figure. Clusius’s network of contacts, direct and indirect, spanned the world as it was becoming known to Europeans, and he was an important intermediary in the dissemination of the knowledge that was being obtained.

Carolus Clusius is for historians of science, rather than more general readers. The opening chapter (by Florike Egmond) firmly situates the book in the context of the new cultural history of science. She outlines Clusius’s extensive web of contacts, emphasizing its rather informal nature and the conventions governing exchanges of plants and other objects. Additional chapters provide information on Clusius in France (Boutroue), contacts with Spanish botanists (Barona), and correspondence with Henrik Høyer (Lundquist) and the Hungarian magnate Boldizsár Batthyány (Bobory). Three papers deal with how Clusius treated his sources, whether printed, as in his translation of Monardes’s *Historia medicinal* (Tomás) or in illustrations (Mason; Kusakawa), while others focus on his connections with Italy (Baldriga) and Hungary (Savoia), and how the Jesuits used Clusius’s work (Anagnostou). Lewis explores the two and a half years the young Clusius spent in Montpellier. There he botanized and helped work up Guillaume Rondelet’s *Historia piscium* for publication. Somewhat surprisingly for a 16th-century botanist, he seems not to have been trained in medicine.

There is an author index, but no subject index. The 12 pages of color plates (the captions to Plates 8 and 9 have been switched) repeat some of the black-and-white illustrations in the text.

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