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**Amateur Naturalist and “Professional” Orientalist;
Paulinus a S. Bartholomaeo in Kerala and Rome
(18th-19th c.)¹**

From Experts to Professionals

Early modern travelers who ventured into exotic and bewildering places on the edge of the world faced two overarching problems. One was a problem of meaning and understanding, as well as reporting on foreign countries, peoples and objects. The other problem, shared with all the actors in overseas colonial enterprise was possessing, appropriating, exploiting and mastering nature and the “natives”.² The bulk of colonial writing and literature, from the early 16th century onwards is nothing more than a way of dealing with these two epistemic and material difficulties through language and narrative.³

An urgent need for a certain kind of practical expertise and of a certain kind of experts was, therefore, rapidly created regarding the non-European world. Serge Gruzinski studied a whole range of such “*praticos das coisas*”, “*passeurs*”, required by the Catholic (Iberian) Monarchy, all of whom belonged to a globalized and extremely mobile elite that circulated around and through the “four corners” of the early modern world and who wrote treatises, letters, opinions (*pareceres*), histories and accounts.⁴ They were mostly ambitious and freewheeling commoners practicing useful *métiers* such as trade, medicine, pharmacy, law and other “mechanical” crafts.⁵

¹ This article has profited from the support given by the project “Kulturno-povijesne veze Hrvatske i Indije”, Ministarstvo za Znanost Republike Hrvatske, and its head, Matišić Zdravka, professor of Sanskrit at the University of Zagreb.

² On different types of ownership, possession and mobility in the early modern world see the most inspiring statement by Greenblatt, Stephen, *Marvelous Possessions, The Wonder of the New World*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1991.

³ Rubiés, Joan-Pau, *Travel and Ethnology in the Renaissance; South India through European Eyes, 1250-1625*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

⁴ Gruzinski, Serge, *Les quatre parties du monde ; histoire d'une mondialisation*, Paris : Editions de La Martinière, 2004.

⁵ See, for example, Pires, Tomé, *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires, an account of the East... written in 1512-1515. And the book of Francisco Rodrigues, rutter of a voyage*, ed. and trans. by A. Cortesão, London: Hakluyt Society, 2nd series, 2 vols., 1944, Tavernier, Jean-Baptiste, *Les Six voyages de Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, Escuyer Baron d'Aubonne, Qu'il A Fait en Turki, en Perse, Et Aux Indes, Pendant l'espace de quarante ans, & par toutes les routes que l'on peut tenir [...]*, vols 2 (Paris: Chez Gervais Clouzier & Claude Barbin, & au Palais, 1676), Carletti, Francesco, *Ragionamento del mio viaggio intorno al mondo*, ed. By G. Silvestro, Turin, 1958, Mocquet, Jean, *Voyage à Mozambique & Goa: la relation de Jean Mocquet (1607-1610)*, texte établi et annoté par Xavier de Castro, Paris : Editions Chandeigne, Paris, 1996.

Soldiers and missionaries belonged to another subcategory of experts bound more closely, in different ways and in different times, to governing institutions and specialized political, mercantile and “spiritual” corporations such as colonial administration, trade companies and the Catholic church. These mobile experts of the 16th and 17th century, especially those profiting from the Iberian Catholic (Portuguese and Spanish) overseas networks operated in the frontier regions as veritable pioneers, on the forefront of new conquests and discoveries. They were partly clients of the colonial and metropolitan administration, partly on their own, risking their lives, their money and their reputation in order to gain personal or corporate treasures beyond imagination. What they acquired and brought back to display, sell or gift were objects and stories with unmistakably local flavor. It was specific and locally “rooted” phenomena that stuck to their feet and made it into their portfolio of expertise. Their practical, expert knowledge of the world, which gave them a sense of personal pride, and which they used as currency for the acquisition of privileges and benefits distributed by the Catholic monarchies, was thus based on empirical, positivist, secular discrete sense data. If one really wanted to define their role in advancement and theory of knowledge, it resembled closely to “filling gaps” and “bricolage”, rather than radical innovation.⁶

In a word, early modern experts, traveling through wilderness of foreign lands were obsessed with visible, possibly tactile information. They collected natural objects or man-made artifacts or reproduced them as paintings, sculptures, stuffed animals, *horti sicchi*, etc. ⁷ Just like other collectors in Europe, in the 16th and the 17th century, their eyes were set on curiosities, on the one hand, and useful and commercial valuables on the other. In this respect they were opposed to the savants and scholars in Europe for whom curiosity amounted to vulgarity. For Michel de Montaigne curiosity was “vicious”, for Blaise Pascal it was “vanity”. Even later on, in the world of collectors and collections, in the 18th century a dichotomy was established and remained between “*vrais connoisseurs*” and “*simples curieux*”.⁸

After a few centuries of accumulation of “curious” and “useful” objects from the colonies and distant places, some of which, for example, became staple food on the table of a European consumer, while other found their way to museums, laboratories and libraries, by the end of the 18th century, rather than accumulation, it was classification and synthesis that became the order of the day, at least in the scientific community dealing with natural history.⁹ Visible things (natural objects,

⁶ See Rorty on “filling gaps” in Rorty, Richard, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979.

⁷ *Horus siccus* literally means a “dry garden” and refers to albums of press-and-dried plants, a herbarium.

⁸ On collecting and collectors see works by Krzysztof Pomian, *Collectionneurs, amateur et curieux: Paris, Venise, XVIe-XVIIIe siècle*, Paris: Gallimard, 1987

⁹ Scientific culture that emerged in the early modern period, especially in the domain of natural sciences, was traversed in important ways with the culture of collecting. According to Paula Findlen’s admirable study of the late Renaissance naturalists, *sciencia* flourished in “civil” spaces, private and public, studies and museums, well provided with specimens coming from all over the world. Through friendship networks, these early scientists-collectors exchanged both objects and samples, and reflections on their meanings and position in the order of Nature. The sites of knowledge and scholars were preferably immobile, while objects and information moved in and out of their laboratories. Findlen, Paula, *Possessing Nature; Museums, Collecting and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994. Of course, some scholars traveled or at least dreamt of traveling, some “experts” dreamt of laboratories. Garcia da Orta, a famous New Christian physician (botanist and pharmacist) in the sixteenth-century Goa desired both to travel as a “*prático*” and to be allowed to pursue his studies in *otium* and in peaceful freedom. Unfortunately for him, he was allowed

artifacts, bodies, even languages and sociability) came to be considered parts of some “invisible”, but universal rationality, detectable through morphological resemblances and common origins (stems, roots).¹⁰ This rationality also generated means within its own explanatory system to order and classify the irrational and the random.

On the threshold of a modern period, travelers-experts, who collected, interpreted and disseminated information came to occupy, more and more, roles of “amateurs”, “technicians of research”, interpreters, political advisors and spies. Some of these also belonged to a new type of humanist gentlemen-travelers, who often sold their services to rich patrons and entertained connections to learned societies rather than universities.¹¹ In the long run, however, empirical and practical competence became insufficient for establishing one’s scientific credentials and professional authority. Those who joined the modern scientific sect were specialists with ever narrowing professional expertise validated by “centers of calculation” (laboratories, museums, libraries, etc.), buttressed by learned societies and journals, and located, mostly, in the metropolitan or colonial capitals.¹² The question of patronage (by the king, by the state or through private endowments) and the question of location (in a stable and rich part of the world, preferably) made all the difference in further development of any line of scientific research. In the late 18th and the early 19th century the categories such as: amateur/professional, competence/authority, local/universal, mobile/immobile, emerged as demarcation stones in a gigantic effort of writing a universal history of the world, believed to be grounded in universal scientific principles. What these were, was about to be decided.

How the line between an expert traveler-cum-missionary and a professional scholar and a curator of a museum near Rome was uneasily negotiated in a life and work of a Discalced Carmelite, Paulinus a Sancto Bartholomaeo, sent to India by the Congregation of the Propagation of Faith (Propaganda Fide) in the later part of the 18th century is the central question addressed in this paper.¹³ As many missionaries

neither. His fascinating book *Colóquios dos Simples e Drogas*, printed in Goa in 1563 and burnt during the auto-da-fé in 1680, remained a hybrid between expert and scholarly intentions. Cristovão da Costa, another physician of New Christian origin from Castille, whose *Tractado* was inspired by Orta’s book, may have had a chance to become a studious naturalist upon his return to Europe. He chose, however, at that point another type of *otium*, a “spiritual retreat”. Orta, Garcia de, *Colóquios dos Simples e Drogas he Cousas Mediciniais da India* [Goa, 1563], edited by Conde de Ficalho, facsimile of the 1891 edition, Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, 1987. Cristóvão da Costa, *Tractado delas drogas, y medicinas de las Indias Orientales, con sus Plantas debuxadas ai biuo por Christoual Acosta medico y cirujano que las vio ocularmente*, Burgos, 1578.

¹⁰ On connections between botany and linguistics in the early 19th century see Salmon, Paul B., “The Beginnings of Morphology; Linguistic Botanizing in the 18th century”, *Historiographia Linguistica*, 1974, 1:3, pp. 313-339.

¹¹ Momigliano, Arnaldo, “Ancient History and the Antiquarian”, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute*, vol. 13, No. 3/4, 1950, p. 285.

¹² Bruno Latour convincingly showed that the “scientific” authority is established and uneasily dependent on a myriad of socio-political considerations and inside controversies. Latour, Bruno, *Science in Action; How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987.

¹³ The Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (*Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*) was established in 1622. Through this institution the Papacy tried to recapture the global missionary movement, which was in hands of religious orders and the Iberian Catholic monarchies (Spanish Portuguese). The “patronage” rights conferred to the kings of Spain and Portugal in the late 15th and early 16th century, were increasingly seen as obsolete and detrimental to the world evangelization. See. Articles in *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide Memoria Rerum*, Rome, Freiburg, Wien:Herder, vol. 1/1, 1972.

before him, 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 (Indianist) 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. The qualification “professional” requires to be nuanced, since technically Paulinus continued to work for the Propaganda Fide and even his learned books on Sanskrit language and Brahmanical culture were still attached to a project of teaching future missionaries.¹⁴ The incentive and the funding provided by this important Roman institution for learning foreign, non-European languages and printing language manuals was crucial. Equally important was the fact that he became a curator of the Indological section in the Museum in Velletri, owned by Stefano Borgia, a rich aristocrat, the Cardinal and the Prefect of the Propaganda Fide.¹⁵

Paulinus was, however, first and foremost a professional missionary. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that he aspired to dialogue with other Orientalist scholars of his time and tried to earn their admiration and respect. Moreover, Paulinus very proudly displayed his membership to learned academies and various honors he acquired as a scholar.¹⁶ It is surprising then, at first sight, that he did not employ his knowledge of the “natural” history of India with more fanfare to enhance his scholarly prestige. In this article I will show that for Paulinus, the natural world of India 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.¹⁷ Paulinus shared the conviction with most of the British and French Orientalists of the late 18th and the early 19th century that it was Sanskrit that pointed a way back into the cradle of the human civilization.¹⁸ The tension between antiquarian research into the “ancient” wisdom of the Brahmans and the direct observation and experiment was often resolved in favor of the former in spite of Paulinus’ professed empirical touch.

¹⁴ On Propaganda Fide’s missionary and linguistic strategies see excellent articles by Giovanni Pizzorusso, “Agli antipode di Babele: Propaganda Fide tra immagine cosmopolita e orizzonti romani (XVII-XIX secolo)”, *Storia d’Italia, Annali 16, Roma, la città del papa*, eds. Luigi Fiorani and Adriano Prosperi, Torino: Giulio Einaudi editore, 2000, pp. 481-518 and Pizzorusso, Giovanni, “I satellite di Propaganda Fide: Il Collegio Urbano e la tipografia poliglotta; note di ricerca su due istituzioni culturali Romane nel XVII secolo”, *Mélanges de l’Ecole française de Rome, Italie et Méditerranée*, tome 116, 2, 2004, pp. 471-498.

¹⁵ See my article “Rescuing Indian Arts and Sciences, Saving Indian Souls: Paulinus a S. Bartholomaeo, The Last Missionary Orientalist (18th c.)”, in *Religion, Power, Community*, Ishita Banerjee-Dube et Saurabh Dube, eds., New Delhi: The Oxford University Press, 2007 (in press). Paulinus catalogued all manuscripts and objects in the Museum. See his, *Musei Borgiani Velitris codices avenses, peguani, siamici, malabarici, indostani, animadversionibus historico-criticis castigati et illustrati. Accedunt monumenta inedita et Cosmogonia indico-tibetana*, auctore P. P. XVII+266, 3 figures, Romae, 1793, in -4°. See also Paulinus’ notes in Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rome, Borg. Lat. 895, f.65-76.

¹⁶ He was a member of the Academies in Naples and Velletri (*Socio Academico di Velletri, e di Napoli*).

¹⁷ The most systematic book on the topic is Paulinus’ *Systema Brahmanicum Liturgicum, Mythologicum, Civile, ex Monumentis Indicis Musei Borgiani Velitris, Dissertationibus historico-criticis illustravit Fr. Paulinus a S. Batholomaeo, Carmelita discalceatus*, Romae, 1791, XII + 326, 32 figures.

¹⁸ Schwab, Raymond, *La renaissance orientale*, Paris : Payot, 1950.

Another, equally crucial reason for leaving aside his naturalist collection and writings was the lack of institutional framework and encouragement upon his return to Rome, while at the same time he was given all the opportunity to publish his Orientalist works. That is not to claim that there were no naturalists working in Rome, it was rather that the Propaganda Fide required Paulinus' linguistic and missionary expertise. He was appointed to oversee the publication of multilingual books and to teach oriental languages. On the other hand, among the Discalced Carmelites there were quite a few amateur naturalists, especially botanists and pharmacologists. The most famous *speziaria* (pharmacy) in Rome in the late 18th century was a secular annex to the church Santa Maria della Scala that belonged to the Discalced Carmelites. Fra Basilio della Concezione was a famous pharmacist as well as teacher and writer. In his only book in Italian, *Viaggio alle Indie Orientali*, Paulinus in fact paid his respects to Fra Basilio by quoting his work on healing effects of the canary's eggs.¹⁹ Alchemy, phantasm and faith worked in tandem in these secular temples that were pharmacies of the religious orders.

As for the fundamental research in natural history of India, as Paulinus probably realized himself, it required presence on the ground of scientists and technicians backed by powerful and interested patrons. Clearly, what was needed was an empire. Paulinus, however, left India too early to see the ramifications of the British colonial momentum. "The English in the second volume of the Asiatick Researches promised to give Europe Indian Botany, but I expect little or nothing [of that], because you need subjects (*Soggetti*) who know the language, time and a lot of money to make engravings of so many types of plants and simples (*vegetabili semplici*)".²⁰ Paulinus was, of course, wrong in underestimating the British, but was certainly right about the high costs of producing illustrated botanical books. He tried to compensate his own inability to raise money for the enterprise in his naturalist chapters in the *Viaggio*. With mixed success.

Missionary Tasks: Acting and Collecting

During Paulinus' stay in Malabar (a northern region of today's Kerala), where he was sent by the Propaganda Fide to minister to the community of the St. Thomas Christians from 1776 to 1789, he assembled a huge archive of documents in various languages. Some of them were collected by his predecessors in the field, Discalced Carmelite friars who were assigned the task of reviving the mission among St. Thomas Christians after almost a century of Jesuit monopoly under Portuguese royal

¹⁹ *Viaggio alle Indie Orientali, umiliato alla Santità di N.S. Papa Pio Sesto Pontefice Massimo*, da Fra Paolino da S. Bartolomeo, Carmelito scalzo, Roma 1796, XX, 404 pp., in -4°, with 12 copper plates, [henceforth, *Viaggio* and all translation is mine], p. 153

²⁰ *Viaggio*, p. 365. "The English have promised ... that they would give us Indian Botany, but I do not have much confidence in these promises, because to do it, one needs men who know local languages, time and money". [Paulinus quoted *Asiatic Research*, vol. II]. Anquetil Duperron added his own gloss to this statement in the French edition of the *Viaggio*. "Father Paulinus' remark is easily refuted. The English have the *time* and the *money* necessary for such an enterprise: and when they will want to choose their subjects, they will have no lack of their own to learn the languages of India". Perron, Anquetil du, *Voyage aux Indes orientales par le P. Paulin de S. Bathélemy, Missionnaire; traduit de l'Italaine par M***[Marchesan]*²⁰, *Avec les observations de MM Anquetil du Perron, J. R. Forster et Silvestre de Sacy; Et une dissertation de M. Anquetil sur la propriété individuelle et foncière dans l'Inde et en Égypte*. Tome troisième. A Paris, Chez Tourneisen fils, Libraire, Rue de Seine, No. 12, 1808, [henceforth, *Paulin*], vol. 3, p. 486 [commenting on p. 462, line 23]. William Carey posthumously edited and published Dr. William Roxburgh's *Flora Indica; or Descriptions of Indian Plants*, in the Serampore Press in 1820 (vol. 1) and in 1824 (vol. 2).

patronage, *padroado*.²¹ Efforts at reforming along the lines of Tridentine Catholicism these “ancient” Christians in India who prided themselves of being converted by St. Thomas the Apostle and who survived and thrived among non-Christians in Kerala for more than a thousand years before the arrival of the Portuguese and the missionaries were continuously unsettled and thwarted.²² As a result of the Synod of Diamper [Udayamperur] in 1599, which enforced Romanization of the St. Thomas Christian Chaldean liturgy and rites, the community started to splinter into smaller Christian sects, some of which continued as Catholic factions, others sought religious leadership among West Syrian non-uniate patriarchs, and later on among the Protestants.²³ The Discalced Carmelites were sent in by the Papacy and the Propaganda Fide when the Portuguese *Estado da India* lost Kochi (Cochin) to the Dutch in 1663 and was unable to exercise the *padroado* rights and duties in the region. Moreover, the Dutch banned from the territories under their control all Portuguese missionaries, while they tolerated those sent by the Papacy and preferably from non-Iberian countries.

When the Discalced Carmelites officially took over the mission in 1678, they had inherited all the problems regarding the jurisdiction between the *padroado* and the Propaganda Fide, the uneasily applied religious accommodation, the simmering dissent by the native clergy and the dependence on favors and patronage of the local political structures from the small local rulers to the Dutch East India Company and the king of Travancore.

To be able to navigate successfully in this kind of ever-changing and complicated social and political landscape, Discalced Carmelites had to develop a particular kind of missionary expertise that encompassed a wide diapason of knowledge and skills. They were, of course, all ordained priests qualified to perform sacraments and to hear confessions, but they also had to be accomplished linguists, talented ethno-psychologists, perceptive ethnologists and insightful, though vigilant, theologians. Obviously, these were difficult tasks and not all missionaries were equally competent.

Just like Jesuit missionaries before them, Discalced Carmelites understood the importance of medical and pharmacological expertise. Missionaries were required to familiarize themselves with the local medical lore and healing practices for missionary purposes, but also to be able to cure themselves and survive in the much dreaded tropical environment. Conversion and healing were inextricably entwined in missionary literature, both in metaphorical sense and literally. Hence, if one had to know a great deal about the local society in order to proselytize successfully, knowledge of nature was equally important.

²¹ Until the 17th century all Catholic missions in India were part of the Portuguese royal patronage network (*padroado*) of ecclesiastical institutions overseas. With the establishment of the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith (Propaganda Fide) in 1622, the Papacy took over under its own wing all the territories *in paritibus infidelium* left uncovered by the Portuguese *padroado*. Since the missionaries sent by the Propaganda Fide were recruited in Rome and from missionary orders that had no allegiance to the Portuguese king, the *Estado da Índia* and the Portuguese authorities in Goa often treated them as enemies. Bethencourt, Francisco, "A Igreja", in *História da Expansão Portuguesa*, Bethencourt, Francisco and Chaudhuri, Kirti, (eds), Lisbon: Circulo de Leitores, 1998, vol.1, pp. 369-386.

²² See my article "One Civility, but Multiple Religion": Jesuit Mission among St. Thomas Christians in India (16th -17th centuries)", *Journal of Early Modern History*, 9.3-4, 2005, pp. 284-325.

²³ See Brown, Leslie, *The Indian Christians of St. Thomas*, (first ed. 1956) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982. Visvanathan, Susan, *The Christians of Kerala, History, Belief and Ritual among the Yakuba*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Indian natural world, in general, had been a source of awe and wonder early on for the European travelers, colonial officials and missionaries. Exuberant, fast growing vegetation and excess of fertility were ambiguously interpreted as so many signs of special divine blessing or of diabolical curse. The beauty and plenty turned rapidly into rot, excrement and famine. Women were seen as rapidly aging after marriage in spite of their voluptuous desirability when young and virginal. According to classical humoral theory in the torrid (tropical) zone human bodies were adapted to and composed of certain kinds of humoral qualities. This is the reason why Garcia da Orta, a physician in the 16th century Goa considered imperative for the Portuguese to adopt the native diet and pharmacy in order to thrive in the difficult climactic circumstances.

The comparison between Greco-roman classical medical texts with Indian Muslim (unani) and Ayurvedic medical systems, of which the Portuguese tried to procure with difficulty the authoritative texts, showed both similarities between these systems and the superior effects of local Indian remedies. Therefore, humoral theory has initially facilitated the encounter between European and Indian medical systems. Until the demise of humoral medicine in Europe from around the 1800, physicians and missionaries in India relied to a great extent to local medical knowledge and therapeutics.

It is no wonder that upon return to Europe, missionaries usually brought with them manuscripts and notes on natural history with intention to give them to the institutions interested in collecting them such the royal libraries and museums, or to transcribe, translate and publish them themselves. At times, these publications were intended to counter exaggerations and falsifications by merchant-travelers and colonial officials who often plagiarized missionary documents and research.²⁴

When Paulinus a S. Bartholomaeo returned to Rome, he brought with him chests full of personal notes, diaries, letters and manuscripts in various European and Oriental languages. In fact, not many missionaries returned, but when they did, they brought back to Europe manuscripts and archives to be sifted through and used for teaching and preparing a new batch of missionaries. This is exactly what Paulinus did after almost 14 years of missionary travel and work in India, he brought a pile of documents, some of which he rearranged and prepared for publication during the next 17 years of his life.

The only published work in which he included reflections on and descriptions of the Indian natural world is his *Viaggio alle Indie Orientali*. Written as a travelogue in Italian and aimed at a larger public, *Viaggio* is a compendium of materials that Paulinus also used in his numerous Indological and museological books in scholarly

²⁴ The cases of plagiarism or omission to disclose sources were more of a rule than exception among the early modern European travelers in Asia. Learned missionaries in the region, who themselves often exchanged texts and opinions without keeping tract of individual authorship, were often targets of such intellectual pillaging. Thus among the famous cases is Jacopo Fenicio's text on Indian cosmology and mythology which was appropriated by many authors who never acknowledged their debt to his text. See, for example, Baldaeus, Philip, *A True and Exact Description of the Most Celebrated East-India Coasts of Malabar and Coromandel and also of the Isle of Ceylon*, (transl. From Dutch and printed at Amsterdam, 1672), (reprint: New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1996) and Sousa, Manuel Faria y, *Asia Portuguesa*, vols. 3, (Lisboa, 1666-1675). Fenicio's descriptions are also taken almost verbatim by Paulinus, especially in the passage on the creation of the world according to the Brahmans. See his *Sidharubam seu Grammatica Samscrdamica, cui accedit Dissertatio historio-critica in linguam samscrdamicam, vulgo Sanscraet dictam, in qua hujus linguae existentia, origo, praestantia, antiquitas, extensio, maternitas ostenditur, libri aliqui ea exarati recensentur, et simul aliquae antiquissimae gentilium orationes liturgicae paucis attinguntur et explicantur*, 188 pp., typis S. C. de Prop. Fide, 1790 [1791], p. 25-27.

Latin. However, glimpsing from the documents used for his “natural history”, most of which are preserved today in the department of the rare manuscripts in the Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emanuele III Library in Rome, Paulinus invested a great deal of energy in collecting various disparate data on the subject. Most of the documents are nothing but a chaos of sedimented voices in various European and Indian languages and scripts. On the pages of *Viaggio*, however, they appear tamed into classification and order and become, at times, a useful information. Let us start from the beginning, which is also the beginning of the *Viaggio*.

Building Expertise in Natural History and Medicine

When Paulinus arrived in 1776 to Pondicherry, a French outpost on the Coromandel coast in India, he was hardly a pioneer on the frontier of heathenism and an unexplored world. Missionaries and other “Franks”, as Indians continued to call what they saw as generic Europeans or western Christians, were well settled in certain regions, especially along the east and the west coast.²⁵ Uneasily embedded in the narrative of the *Viaggio* - as landscapes and objects move before the eyes of the reader - is Paulinus’ continuous dialogue with his various interlocutors, European and Indian, contemporary or ancient. In fact, from the boxes in the Roman archives filled with notes of all sorts, it is evident that Paulinus kept a diary and obsessively wrote about everything that happened in the mission.²⁶ This he did in at least four European languages - Italian, Latin, Portuguese, German and French - . Otherwise, his archives are replete with texts in Tamil and Malayalam, some in his own hand, and his various other scribbles in ancient Greek, Chaldean (old Syrian), Arabic and Sanskrit in Grantha script.

Paulinus also collected manuscripts written or collected by his predecessors in the Verapoly mission where the Discalced Carmelites resided for almost a century before Paulinus arrived. Of course, documents kept in mission residences in India proved to be volatile and fragile to climate, fires, floods, shipwrecks and other type of destructive forces.²⁷ At least once during his lifetime, Paulinus saw the archives in the Verapoly mission disappear to one or another calamity.

Some “archives” were relatively permanent, although not entirely reliable. These were accounts printed in Rome by other missionaries that he most probably consulted before arriving to India in 1776 and upon return in 1789 while he prepared his own texts for publication. In fact even the title of his *Viaggio* pays homage to a

²⁵ Subrahmanyam, S., “Taking stock of the Franks: South Asian Views of Europeans and Europe, 1500-1800”, *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, vol. XLII, no. 1, Jan.-March 2005, pp. 49-100.

²⁶ In fact, Paulinus kept a diary in various languages (Portuguese, Latin and German) at various points during his travels and work in India. Zdravka Maticic, Professor of Sanskrit at the University of Zagreb is preparing a study of his German diary and Nikica Talan, professor of Portuguese literature at the University of Zagreb is working on Paulinus’ Portuguese diary. It seems that from the time of Ildephonsus a Praesentatione, a Discalced Carmelite missionaries maintained a collective diary of the important events between 1653 and 1740. Ambrosius a Santa Teresa, *Bio-bibliographia Missionaria ordinis Carmelitarum Discalceatorum (1584-1940)*, Romae apud Curiam Generalitiam, 1940, p. 197. This text remained in manuscript entitled: “*Relazione Carmelitana delle vastissime Missioni dell’Imperio di Coccino, dall’Imperio di Samorino, e de’Regni di Gran Travancore, Poracata, Vayapura, Granganora, Magnapara, Mangata, Rapolino etc. che tutti sogetò nell’anno 1761 quel famoso RE grande Travanco: quivi aggiuntasi una revissima notizia del modo, con cui sieno diventute quelle missioni sotto la giurisdizione de’Padri Carmelitani Scalzi in che tempo, anno, ed occasione*”.

²⁷ In the *Viaggio*, he recalls a moment when he discovered in Pondicherry, before he arrived to his mission in Kerala, that the books he kept in the chest were half eaten by white ants. *Viaggio*, p. 7.

genre of travel literature in which Discalced Carmelites, who were sent before him, excelled. The first was Philippe de la Très Sainte-Trinité's *Itinerarium Orientale*, printed in Latin in 1649.²⁸ He was a general of the Order who personally sent a second reconnaissance mission to Malabar in 1656, which consisted of Giuseppe di Santa Maria Sebastiani and Vincenzo Maria di Santa Caterina da Siena.²⁹ The Discalced Carmelites were commissioned by the Propaganda Fide and the pope to remedy the explosive situation in the mission among the St. Thomas or Syrian Christians in Malabar.³⁰ Sebastiani went to India two times and wrote two separate travelogues, but it was Vincenzo Maria di Santa Caterina da Siena's *Viaggio alle Indie Orientali*, first published in Rome in 1672, that in many ways became a model for Paulinus' travelogue. Besides description of customs, religion and history, he also reported on natural history regarding south Indian plants and animals and local remedies.³¹

A work of another Italian Discalced Carmelite who actually joined the two fathers in India, Matteo di San Giuseppe, and who was proficient in Arabic and skilled in medicine became notable more for his collaboration with a famous Dutch "amateur" botanist Hendrik Adriaan van Rheedee tot Drakenstein, then for his *Viridarium Orientale*.³² Pietro Foglia alias Matteo di San Giuseppe studied medicine in Naples and entered the Carmelite Order in 1639. He traveled extensively through the Middle East before being sent to the Malabar mission where he died in 1691, the same year in which van Rheedee died at sea near Bombay before reaching the port of Surat. It seems that this Neapolitan friar who kept his own collection of drawings of plants from the Mediterranean region, from Mozambique and India gave the idea to van Rheedee to inaugurate his own botanical work which was ultimately published as *Hortus Indicus Malabaricus*.³³ In the course of the collection of plants, identification, description and sketching and painting (in ink-and-wash) of the specimens, van Rheedee gathered a whole team of local experts such as Ayurvedic physicians, learned Brahmans, Dutch draftsmen, a translator into Latin, etc. As is clear from the preface to the first volume published in Holland in 1678, Matteo di San Giuseppe withdrew

²⁸ Philippe de Très Sainte-Trinité (1603-71) published his *Itinerarium Orientale* in Lyon in 1649 and the French translation, *Voyage d'Orient* was published in 1652. Italian translations had five editions in the 17th century (1666, 1667, 1676, 1682 and 1672).

²⁹ Giuseppe di Santa Maria Sebastiani (1623-89)-, *Prima spedizione alle Indie Orientali* (Rome, 1666), *Segunda spedizione alle Indie Orientali* (1672). See Lach, Donald F. and Van Kley, Edwin J., *Asia in the Making of Europe, volume III, A century of Advance*, [henceforth, Lach] book 1, Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 1998, p. 383-5.

³⁰ See my article, Županov, Ines G. "One Civility, but Multiple Religion": Jesuit Mission among St. Thomas Christians in India (16th -17th centuries)", *Journal of Early Modern History*, 9.3-4, 2005, pp. 284-325, and Subrahmanyam, Sanjay, "Dom Frei Aleixo de Meneses (1559-1617) et l'échec des tentatives d'indigénisation du christianisme en Inde", *Archives de sciences sociales des religions*, 103 (1998), pp. 21-42.

³¹ Vincenzo Maria di Santa Caterina da Siena (alias Vincenzo Maria Murchio), *Il viaggio all'Indie Orientali del padre F. Vincenzo Maria di S. Caterina da Siena Procurator Gener. de' Carm. Scalzi, con le osservationi, e successi nel medesimo, i costumi, e riti di varie nationi, et reconditissimi arcani de' gentili, cauati con somma diligenza da' loro scritti, con la descrizione degli Animali Quadrupedi, Serpenti, Uccelli, Piante di quel Mondo Nuovo, con le loro virtu singolari, Diuiso in cinque libri. Opera non meno Utile, che curiosa*, in Venetia: appresso Giacomo Zattoni, 1678. See Lach, vol. III, book 2, pp. 891-909.

³² One copy of the *Viridarium Orientale* is preserved in the Muséum de l'Histoire Naturelle in Paris. I have consulted the one in Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emanuele III [henceforth, BNVE], Ms. Rari, Fondi Minori, Santa Maria della Scala, Varia, 178.

³³ Desmond, Ray, *Great Natural History Books and their Creators*, [henceforth, Desmond] London: The British Library and Oak Knoll Press, 2003, p. 39. Reede tot Drakestein, H.A. van. *Hortus Indicus Malabaricus*, Amsterdam, 1678-1693. 12 vols.

willingly from the enterprise in order to consecrate himself more to his missionary duties. In fact, his sketches were judged unprofessional by van Rheede's rival, a botanist who resided in Sri Lanka, Paul Herman and who published his own botanical book, *Flora Zeylanica* in 1747.³⁴

Amateur botanizing was one of the affinities that bound together a Discalced Carmelite and a Dutch official in Kochi, an important pepper and spice mart in Kerala seized by the Dutch from the Portuguese in 1663. Another was larger than a personal relationship and was a direct result of the simmering hostility between Portuguese *padroado* institutions and the Roman Propaganda Fide. Since enemies of the Portuguese were considered "friends" and since Portuguese tried in vain to expel the Roman missionaries from the territory, the Dutch judged it convenient to extend their support. Personal and political rapprochement with the Dutch authorities in Cochin enabled the Discalced Carmelites to strengthen their place in the local political theater in which they found themselves opposed at times both to the Portuguese priests and prelates sent from Goa and to the St. Thomas Christians who continued to resist both Portuguese and Roman religious and temporal overlordship. For his help in preparing *Hortus Indicus Malabaricus*, Matteo di San Giuseppe earned protection from the Dutch and even acquired land to build a church in Chethiah (today in Ernakulam), near Cochin. As for the Dutch, who made it a rule not to allow Catholic priests of Portuguese origin, they accepted for the next century the Propaganda Fide missionaries, recruited from Italy, Belgium and the Austro-Hungarian regions. Paulinus himself was born in Hof am Leithagebirge (Cimov) in Austria in a diasporic Croat family.

The principal residence of the Discalced Carmelites from the time of Matteo di San Giuseppe was in Verapoly, established in 1673, a few months after he had built a church in Chethiah. Verapoly was a much more convenient place, located north of Kochi, closer to the St. Thomas Christian settlements, protected from possible Portuguese harassment and at a safe distance from Dutch control.³⁵ It rapidly expanded into a seminary for the religious instruction of the young boys, following the precepts of the Propaganda Fide that favored instruction and formation of the indigenous clergy. The missionaries were, therefore, before anything else, "religious" experts and specialists with exhausting working hours. In addition to that, they imposed on themselves, some more enthusiastically than others, a daily bookkeeping of all that went on in the residence and the seminary. From Paulinus' daily diary entrances in Portuguese preserved in manuscript for certain periods of time, we can glimpse at a busy life in the mission in which every little and big decision had to be calculated and negotiated. For example, each and every person who entered the seminary or visited the fathers was mentioned by name and the purpose of his visit was briefly noted. At times, even the number of chickens bought on the market to be cooked for food was itemized with prices attached to them and entered in the diary. Besides this, the missionaries kept corresponding with Rome and other religious elsewhere and with people in India, from a Portuguese archbishop to the king of Travancore.³⁶

The missionaries, obviously, lived in the thick of social relations. They nurtured friendships and provoked enmities. Local missionary culture, and this is true

³⁴ It was the first book on tropical plants based on the Linnaeus's classification scheme. Desmond, p. 50.

³⁵ See articles in John, K.J., *Christian Heritage in Kerala, Cochin*, 1981.

³⁶ The letters Paulinus left behind in his archives are in Latin, Italian, Portuguese, German, English and Malayalam. BNVE, Rari, Fondi Minori, Santa Maria della Scala, 22, 30, 33, 37, 38.

of Jesuits and other missionaries in India also, was built on efforts at ever expanding networks of friendly bonds and alliances. This is why studying languages, crucial in establishing communication, was a priority. In the second place, but a matter of great importance was exchange of services, especially those that were perceived as beneficial to the wider local community. Since, unlike other European experts and colonial actors, they were neither able nor allowed to rely on monetary exchange, the missionaries' medical practice and free of charge consultation was their important asset. They presented themselves as "doctors of the soul" right from the beginning, but they also continued to improve their medical knowledge and techniques.³⁷

Circulation of Medicinal Plants and Remedies

Health, medicine and cures were, on the whole, one of the obsessions of all Europeans in Asia, and anywhere in foreign lands, for that matter. Especially in tropical climates where European mortality visibly escalated due to various endemic diseases such as malaria and yellow fever, medical practitioners were valued and recruited from the local medical communities. Just like interpreters were needed to teach languages, Indian ayurvedic, unani and siddha specialists were required to help Europeans become fully acclimatized to the exhausting environment. From the 16th to the 19th century, European and Indian medical traditions closely resembled, and were both based on humoral theories. It was humors that had to be kept in equilibrium inside the body and between the body and its physical surrounding. Local physicians and herbalist by definition had a better grasp of the efficient substances and could read better symptoms of particular ailments.

For Discalced Carmelites, as for all other Europeans, knowledge of local *materia medica* was seen as crucial for survival in India. From a collection of documents found in Paulinus' archives in Rome we get a sense of importance of sharing information with friends, acquaintances, patrons and clients. Not only was the exchange of recipes a confirmation of a bond of trust and alliance, it was also a way of cross-validating personal experience or a new experiment, and of confirming the working of certain remedies and rejecting others.

A lot has been already known at the time Paulinus came to Malabar. From the middle of the 16th century, books have been published such as Garcia da Orta's *Coloquios dos simples* and Cristóvão da Costa's *Tractado* with some general pharmaceutical instructions. The exact quantities and measures were rarely provided. These were, of course, partly well guarded secrets of the trade of various doctors and apothecaries. Among Paulinus' documents, across a half a page of a torn notebook

³⁷ In the sixteenth century, the most prominent missionary order in India, the Society of Jesus, developed a number of "health care" institutions for both Christian and non-Christian population in all Asian missions. These were supplements to Portuguese confraternities and to the Misericórdia, all of which catered exclusively to the Christians. The Jesuits were, in fact, so efficient in organizing institutions based on and enforcing social discipline that they were invited to administer the most famous Portuguese hospital in Asia, Hospital del-Rey in Goa. If the Jesuits were excellent in administering institutions which contributed also to the hygiene and orderly behavior, sometimes crucial for the recovery of the patients, they were less interested in curing bodies. The goal was to cure the souls and convert their patients to Catholicism. They often referred to themselves *as medicos da alma*, the "physicians of the soul". Some of the temporal coadjutors among the Jesuits were professional physicians. However, when ordained, they were not allowed to practice medicine especially not surgery, with a special dispensation by the pope. See Županov, Ines G., *Missionary Tropics ; The Catholic Frontier in India (16th-17th century)*, An Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2005

somebody wrote in Portuguese *Varios secretos de Medicina*. What follows is a text in French entitled *Recueil de curiosités* and written by an anonymous hand with fanciful recipes closer to black magic than medicine. “To cure a fistula, a marvelous thing. Take a live frog and put in an earthen vessel placed on fire and cover it so that it cannot escape and reduce it to ash. Put this powder on the fistula, which you have washed before in hot wine or in the urine of a male child”.³⁸ To what extent these kinds of remedies were practiced by the missionaries, may not be ascertained, since generic fistulas or ulcers were cured in innumerable ways according to other preserved documents. Many cures, however, were equally extravagant, either because of the content of the remedies or because of the illness itself.

Ailments produced by demonic forces were taken seriously. Against witches and demons, a mixture of *pepino-de-S. Gregorio* with the *fava de S. Ignacio* was recommended in *Botanica Malabar*, an anonymous manuscript manual of simples and remedies, written in Portuguese and found among Paulinus’ papers.³⁹ Another medicine against witches was *Manungal* oil which had to be smeared on the skin. The Portuguese author was unable to identify this remedy and presumed that it was made of the root of the wild Drumstick tree. On the other hand the root of the Cheese tree (*raiz de Queijo*) was excellent for those who were possessed with demon and haunted. The technique was to cut and dissolve it in lemon juice or *canja* (a light lentil soup) or some other liquid and then throw it into their eyes of a patient. “And the Demon will not wait for you to throw it a fourth time”. For less demonic, but equally vicious attacks such as erotic dreams (*sonhos venereos*), the author recommends *Nymphea* or white lotus. The choice was, therefore, copious because the humoral theory of health presupposed that what worked for one may not for another. Each person was unique in his humoral constitutions and each moment in one’s life brought invisible changes often difficult to notice. If we add to that the changing climactic constitutions outside the body, one can understand the difficulty and the polyvalence of diagnostic and cure within humoral medical system. Balancing the humors in a body was therefore based on the joint action of ingestion and expurgation. The basic effects of all herbal medication prescribed in *Botanica Malabar* were to retain or to expel the substances in human body. Some plants were good for cleaning female uterus, others to prevent miscarriages, some were diuretic; others retained water in the body.

Of course, one could also be poisoned out of malice or accidentally, and very importantly in tropical environment, one can be bitten by venomous snakes and other animals. Garcia da Orta, Cristóvão da Costa and numerous travelers and missionaries in the 16th and 17th century in India never failed to provide their own often miraculous stories of poisoning and snake bites. Paulinus’ first encounter with the dangers of animal world in India is told at the very beginning of his *Viaggio* with a touch of comedy. The scene is set in the evening at a house of the procurator of the Missions-Etrangeres in Pondicherry, Signor Jallabert, during a friendly discussion about the method of conversion of the gentiles. One of the servants sleeping on the porch stood up screaming and showing his ear. It was immediately decided that an earwig entered his ear and was trying to bite its way inside. Without a moment to lose, Mr. Jallabert

³⁸ BNVE, Rari, Fondi Minori, Santa Maria della Scala 36/G, *Botanica Malabar* (no pagination) [CDrom, folder 01, p. 0120].

³⁹In English *Pepino-de-S. Gregório* is called a *Squirting (Exploding) Cucumber* or *Touch-Me-Not*. In French *concombre sauvage*, *concombre d’ane*, in Italian *schizzetto*, *cocomero asinine*, *elaterio*. A *Bean of St. Ignatius* or *Loganiaceae*. *Ignatia amara* is a species of *strychos* native to the Phillipine Islands. The tree bears a pear-shaped fruit, containing intensely bitter seed, from which is obtained the alcoholic tincture.

applied to his ear a spoonful of *droga amara* which killed the “*bestia*” and made it slide out of the ear. Paulinus profited immediately to give a recipe for this medicinal liquid. “For 24 French bottles it is necessary to take 24 ounce of *Resina*, or *Calafonia*, 12 ounce of incense, 4 ounce of *Mastico*, 4 ounce of *Aloe*, 4 ounce of *Mirra*, and 4 ounce of *Calumba*.” The mixture is then dissolved in “*aquavite*” and exposed to sun for a month during the dry season. He also gives three sure addresses where this potion can be bought: in Pondicherry at the Speziaria of the Jesuits, in Verapoli with the Descalced Carmelites and in Surat with the Capuchins.⁴⁰

It was obviously a missionary concoction, rather than a purely local formula. What is interesting is that in the manuscript in Rome, there is a slightly different recipe written in Portuguese in Paulinus’ hand. The spirit used is the “country wine with 20 degrees of alcohol (*vinte puntos*)”, some simples like *Resina* is followed by two local Malayalam names, and there was an additional ingredient needed, *açafrão de Europa*.⁴¹ We can only speculate about the reasons of the modification in the recipe printed in the *Viaggio*: Was it a result of more testing and experiments or simply a simplified version or a cunning way not to disclose all the ingredients to the European audience?

The politics behind identifying, collecting and transporting medicinal plants and spices were often not “clean” and colonial authorities (Portuguese, Dutch, French and British) censured accounts giving away strategic information. This is what discovered a German, Everardus Rumphius when the Dutch East-India Company praised his *Herbarium Amboinense (Amboinische Kruid-boek)*, promoted his son to a rank of merchant, but refused to print it as a book lest their competitors be able to profit from it.⁴² Dutch had all the reasons to be paranoid, since just about everybody interested in spice trade was trying to snatch away and acclimate some of the most lucrative spice trees that were under their control. French travelers of the period such as Pierre Poivre, Sonnerat and Le Gentil were all prone to procuring and smuggling out of Asia both plants and curious manuscripts.⁴³ The pressure was at times also brought on the missionaries to act as spies and smugglers. Such was the case with Brahman Catholic priests of the Oratorio de Santa Cruz dos Milagres in Sri Lanka at the end of the 17th century. Among other things, they were asked to steal a cinnamon tree (a seed or a small live plant) and send it to Goa. Nothing came out of it partly because the Dutch controlled efficiently all the ports connecting the island with Indian subcontinent and perhaps the Oratorians did not try hard enough.⁴⁴

There were cinnamon trees on the Malabar Coast as well, but they were not considered as good as Sri Lankan. For botanists, this was no surprise since they knew

⁴⁰ *Viaggio*, p. 7-8.

⁴¹ BNVE, Rari, Fondi Minori, Santa Maria della Scala 36/G, *Botanica Malabar* (no pagination) [CDrom, folder 01, p. 0144].

⁴² Georg Everhard Rumpf (1627-1702). Desmond, p. 44-4.7

⁴³ Pierre Sonnerat, Pierre Poivre et J.-B. Le Gentil were all in search of plants and manuscripts. Poivre succeeded in smuggling out of Asia certain precious spice plants and he even sent Sonnerat to Manila and New Guinea in search of more botanical species. Le Gentil collected manuscripts and ideas, mostly from the Jesuits in Pondicherry. Pierre Sonnerat’s *Voyage aux Indes orientales et à la Chine, ... depuis 1774 jusqu’en 1781: dans lequel on traite de mœurs, de la religion, des sciences & des arts des Indiens, ... les Philippines & les Moluques, & de recherches sur l’histoire naturelle de ces pays*. À Paris: Chez l’auteur, M.DCC.LXXXII. 2 vols. Plates. 4°, 1782. Poivre, Pierre, *Les mémoires d’un voyageur*, L. Malleret ed., Paris: Ecole française d’Extrême-Orient, 1968, Le Gentil, J.-B., *Voyage dans les mers de l’Inde, fait par ordre du Roi de 1761 à 1769*, Suisse, 1780.

⁴⁴ See my article, Županov, Ines G., “Goan Brahmans in the Land of Promise: Missionaries, Spies and Gentiles in the 17th-18th century Sri Lanka” presented at the Conference: *PORTUGAL – SRI LANKA: 500 Years*, Centre Culturel Calouste Gulbenkian Paris, December 15-17, 2005.

very well that certain kind of plants grew better in certain climates and territories. Of course, acclimatization worked as well and this has been proven by the spread of plants and trees from Brazil and the New World in Asia. Some entered Indian cuisine and became staple items such as tomatoes and chill peppers, to a point where their “foreign” origin disappeared in oblivion. Within a generation the same happened with tobacco, to which many became addicted.⁴⁵ Thus Oratorian missionaries in Sri Lanka, complained that the stipend given to them by the Portuguese king was not enough to enjoy their daily ration of tobacco.⁴⁶

The circulation of commodities, medicinal plants included, was therefore dependent on networks established for their distribution. More commercial value they had, more there was a pressure from the colonial authorities or trading companies to control and monopolize it. More difficult, although possible to a certain extent, as the case of Rumphius showed, was to stop the information “leakages”. One of the reasons was that information networks were not easily controlled. For example, Catholic missionaries always managed to send and receive correspondence in the most hostile social environments.

However, the “facts” themselves were often not easily decipherable and needed additional interpretations and interpreters. For Garcia da Orta, one of the major tasks was to fit classical pharmaceutical names to plants and substances that he managed to get hold of or, at least, acquired detailed descriptions of them. To his dismay and elation, he discovered myriads of linguistic misappropriations by which one and the same name meant different things for different peoples, at different times. At the same time, botanical linguistic relativism allowed him to launch an attack on the Ancients, Greek and Roman naturalists and physicians, Dioscorides, Galen and Hippocrates among the most famous, and to rebel against textual authorities in general, from medieval Arabic and Jewish scholars such as Avicenna, Razi, Averroës, to his contemporaries Pietro Andrea Mattioli, Andrés de Laguna, Leonardus Fuchius and others.⁴⁷

For Paulinus, the task may not have been easier. He clearly tried to fit Malayalam and Sanskrit phytonyms on to plants “identified” by his predecessors (Portuguese, Dutch, German and French) who did not by all means agree on classifications. Besides the anonymous *Botanica Malabar*, there are among the manuscripts in the Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emanuele III at least two more separate lists of phytonyms (*Termini botanici*) as well as individual sheets of paper with names scribbled on them.

From Manuscript Secrets to Printed Display

Some of these recipes, botanical and pharmaceutical names and descriptions of Indian illnesses and remedies inhabit chapter XI (volume 2) of the *Viaggio*. “With incredible trouble and pain I gathered all these Indian Malabar names, united with Latin and Portuguese names of so many Indian simples in order to give a key to

⁴⁵ Mathee, Rudi, “Exotic substances: the introduction and global spread of tobacco, coffee, cocoa, tea, and distilled liquor, sixteenth to eighteenth centuries”, in Porter, Roy and Teich, Mikuláš, *Drugs and Narcotics in History*, Cambridge: The Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 24-51

⁴⁶ Županov, “Goan Brahmins”,

⁴⁷ The listing of all the authors cited in *Colóquios* is given by Conde de Ficalho, *Garcia da Orta e o seu tempo*, (reprodução fac-similada da 1.a edição, Lisbon, 1886), Lisbon, 1983, pp.284-297. On medieval Arabic medicine see, Bürgel, J. Christoph, “Secular and Religious Features of Medieval Arabic Medicine”, in Leslie, Charles, *Asian Medical Systems; A Comparative Study*, (first ed. 1976) New Delhi, 1998.

Malabar Botany to the *amatori* of this science.”⁴⁸ Three orders of names – Indian Malabar, Latin and Portuguese - had to be cross-linked to create intelligible whole for the European enthusiasts and experts in the science of botany. In fact, Paulinus would add a fourth one – Sanskrit - in many ways the most crucial order, in his opinion, not only for botany and medicine, but for the grasp of the whole Indian civilization. For Paulinus, it was names rather than things that needed to be analyzed first if one were looking for (and believed in) originary and universal meanings and taxonomies.

It takes a few pages into any Paulinus’ book to understand that he was obsessed with foreign, exotic names, even more than the exotic commodities themselves. In his work, one cannot but sense a certain detachment of names and things, an advanced symptom of a broken relation between the sign and the world that created in the long run an open-ended network of significations based on probability and playing with uncertainty.⁴⁹ However, for a man of religion such as Paulinus, this potentially tragic situation in which the language of God ceased to speak through natural forms had to be sublimated at all costs. If the divine ceased to inhabit the nature by way of visible marks, hints, miracles and prodigies, it was reintroduced into history as a rational “sacred” history. In the same move, demonic was expelled from the natural history in order to become irrational and ridiculous and by the late 18th century it was driven out of locations of knowledge and truth.

When discussing convulsions and hysterical ills to which Malabar women were especially prone, Paulinus rejected all supernatural influence. “I saw many times in the church at the time of the Mass some women springing up as the church bell rang and they ran and jumped as crazy (*come tante disperate od energumene*), so that some thought that they were possessed by the devil (*indiavolate*)”.⁵⁰ These were all superstitious beliefs, concluded the missionary. Such behavior was simply a humoral disequilibrium that occurred in women who “do not work” and lead a sedentary life. The best way to these “tremors and leaping which is called *tullel*” is to make women husk rice, to wash in cold water, to take some China (tamarind) and “to avoid all passions that arouse imagination, nerves and senses”. Thus, Paulinus reinterpreted a particular south Indian cultural phenomenon, the spirit or divine possession, as the consequence of climate and bodily constitution. With this move he obliterated two hundred years of speculation about south Indian demonology of which the missionaries and European travelers in the region produced ample “evidence”.⁵¹

In the divine silence, names of plants, illnesses and remedies become random choices and without any particular order inherent in them. Garcia da Orta may have experienced the same problem in finding “keys” in order to create taxonomy for his simples and remedies. He finally chose alphabetical order, which combined with an imaginary dialogue, created a sense of spontaneous direction for his “scientific” sub-narrative. Moreover, as a physician and a merchant in pharmaceuticals and precious stones, Orta celebrated material things. He also owned and enjoyed his possessions, such as fresh mangoes from his Bombaim island estate. Paulinus, on the other hand, was not allowed to possess anything. Even books, manuscripts and curious objects that he brought back to Europe were not his personal belongings. They were common

⁴⁸ *Viaggio*, p. 366.

⁴⁹ Michel Foucault identified and elaborated this point of rupture in his various books. See, *Les mots et les Choses*, Paris: Gallimard, 1966.

⁵⁰ *Viaggio*, p. 351.

⁵¹ The persistence of these social and cultural phenomena continues to fascinate and perplex anthropologists. See Assayag, J. and Tarabout, Gilles, *La Possession en Asie du Sud; Parole, Corps, Territoire*, Paris : Collection Purusartha, 1999.

property of his order and most of them were destined for the collections of the Propaganda Fide or for the Museo Borgiano in Velletri.

Although Paulinus played the game of gifting and exchanges in order to secure and consolidate the status of the Discalced Carmelites in the local social hierarchies, ownership did not mean possessing material objects. For example, he was given a white hat by the British resident in Anjengo, for which he wrote a letter of thanks in broken English.⁵² A King of Travancore gave him a gold stylus for writing on the palm leaf in exchange for Paulinus' manuscript with the basic grammar of English language with explanations in Portuguese (and Malayalam). He also organized gifts of paintings and portraits exchanged between the Pope and the king Martanda Varma.

It is only by taking a look at his "printed" archives, that is his *Viaggio* and other books, that we understand what it was that Paulinus passionately collected. He collected both words/names and languages. In his chapter on Indian Medicine and Botany, he claimed that he "[took] many names from the Father Hanxleden's Dictionary, from Biscopio, from Monsignor Pimentel, from the Herbal by Father Feraz, and from manuscripts by Father Giovanni Alvarez, Father Antonio Gomes, Mr. Queiros, Mr. Ambrosio Lopes and Vapu, all these are native Malabar botanists and doctors".⁵³ Except for the Jesuits, Johann Ernest Hanxleden, Bernhard Bischoepinck and Don Antonio Pimentel, the Archbishop of Cranganore in the first half of the 18th century, little is known about other Paulinus' medical and botanical authorities mentioned here.⁵⁴ Giovanni Alvarez, a native priest, according to Paulinus was also a translator of a Sanskrit text on Brahmanical Medicine (*Medicina Brahmanica*), which was later expanded by Hanxleden.⁵⁵ A few pages later he also boasted of actually owning various palm leaf manuscripts (*olai*) and drawings of plants made by a Malabar physician annotated by a certain Countess of Salms.⁵⁶ Those that he did not possess, he consulted in the libraries in Paris, where he stayed in 1789 on his return to Europe from Malabar and in Rome. The biggest collections of palm leaf manuscripts with Ayurvedic texts, or "those that teach the conservation of individual lives" were,

⁵² BNVE, Rari, Fondi Minori, Santa Maria della Scala 37, busta 47, letter no. 6.

⁵³ *Viaggio*, p. 367

⁵⁴ Johann Ernest Hanxleden (b.1681 Germany – d. 1732 Kerala). The first European to write a Sanskrit Grammar among other Christian liturgical texts in Malayalam and Sanskrit. He composed "Dictionarium samscredamico-lusitanum", with the assistance of the two Jesuits, Anton Pimentel and Bernhard Bischoepinck. António Pimentel was a Jesuit and the Archbishop of Cranganore from 1721-1752 and thus, in fact, hostile to the Propaganda Fide missionaries (Discalced Carmelites). According to Paulinus, he was a very learned men, also known as *Budhimetran*. *India Orientalis Christiana, continens fundationes ecclesiarum, seriem episcoporum, missiones, schismata, persecutiones, reges, viros illustres*. Auctore P. Paulino a S. Bartholomaeo, Romae, 1794, XXIII, 280 pp. , in -4°, p. 67. It is not clear who was Feraz, the author of *Herbolario*. It may be François Ferraz, mentioned in Besse, *La mission du Maduré*, Trichinopoly, 1914, vol. 1, 206. According to Nair (who does not cite his sources!), Fares (1715-1789) was a Jesuit who wrote a small Malayalam grammar in Chatiath. Nair, M. Purushothaman, "Contribution of Christian Missionaries to the Grammatical Theories in Malayalam", in John, K. J., *Christian Heritage of Kerala*, Cochin, 1981, p.136. Bischoepinck, Bernhard, (b.January 31,1690/92 Borken/Westfalen, d. ca. 1746 in Mangalore).

⁵⁵ *Viaggio*, p. 355.

⁵⁶ He adds that a certain Contessa Salms annotated this illustrated botanical manuscript with names from Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778), a Swedish botanist, physician and zoologist and the father of botanical classification. Koerner, Lisbet, "Linnaeus' Floral Transplants", *Representations*, Summer 1994, 49, pp. 144-169. *Viaggio*, p. 355.

according to *Viaggio*, in the library of the King of France, of the Propaganda Fide, of the Museo Borgiano in Velletri and in the collection of Samuel Guise.⁵⁷

So evident was his passion for words, that one of the Orientalists who certainly shared Paulinus' linguistic enthusiasm, felt compelled to denounce it. It was Anquetil Duperron. He was asked and accepted to annotate the French translation of the *Viaggio*, which he did very conscientiously. However, he died before the work was over and was replaced by Antoine-Isaac Silvestre de Sacy (1758-1838). Curiously in the printed French version the comments by J.R. Forster who translated the *Viaggio* into German were also included. The result of this international collaboration of Orientalists was that the three-volume *Voyage aux Indes orientales* resembles a libretto for four voices, each pulling in different direction and quarrelling over the smallest disagreements in form or meaning.⁵⁸ There is no doubt that Anquetil Duperron was as possessive and vain about his own knowledge of India as was Paulinus.⁵⁹ Hence, his major complaint about Paulinus' chapter on botany and medicine was that it was all taken from the dictionaries. « The names of all illnesses, as well as recipes given by the missionary in this chapter appear to be taken from the dictionary and other writings by the Jesuit Hanxleden, and from the works of different missionaries, Carmelites, Capucin that the author had in front of his eyes: little did he observe, practice himself (*lui-même a peu observé, pratiqué*) ».⁶⁰

It is certain that Paulinus had not cross-tested all the drugs, cures and antidotes he described in detail. There are some elaborate recipes among his unpublished documents that were not included in the *Viaggio*, such as the one on how to cure syphilis and gonorrhoea, probably precisely not to display what could be considered as an exaggerated interest of the missionaries in curing venereal diseases.⁶¹ On the other hand, the accusations ranging from excessive reliance on written sources of other travelers and missionaries to downright plagiarism were most common among the ambitious Orientalists and experts on India. Paulinus' *Viaggio* is filled with tirades and castigations of all disciplines and their practitioners who dared to write about India or disagreed with him, starting from geographers and ending with the philologists.

In fact a jumbled travelogue such as *Viaggio* was a perfect literary genre for showing off erudition without obligation to construct rigorous taxonomies, and for enticing the readers with curiosities that did not require immediate proofs or validation. Needless to say, Paulinus did not shy away from providing ample, at times excessive evidence when he wanted to press his point. The lists of plants and illness in the *Viaggio* may have been taken from the dictionaries, but they do not follow any visible alphabetical, neither Latin nor Sanskrit order. Some thirty illnesses are stringed

⁵⁷ *Viaggio*, p. 354-355. *A Catalogue of Oriental Manuscripts, collected in Indoostan*. By Mr. Samuel Guise, Surgeon to the General Hospital at Surat, From the Year 1777 till 1792 (printed) pp. 1-32. Borg. Lat 529, pp. 1-18.

⁵⁸ For no apparent reason in the last volume, the publisher also printed Anquetil Duperron's treatise on "la propriété individuelle et foncière dans l'Inde et en Égypte".

⁵⁹ Paulinus was difficult character. This is why he was not sent back to Kerala, as he apparently hoped for as can be read from the letter: "A Monsignor Luigi Mari di Gesù Vescovo Usuliense Vicario Apostolico del Malabar: Verapoli, 6 Ottobre 1790 ", in "Lettere della Sacra Congregazione dell'Anno 1790" (vol. 258, ff. 697b-699a), Historical Archives of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples or "De Propaganda Fide", Rome. I owe this information to David Lorenzen Sbrega who found this letter in the Propaganda archives. He presumed that the letter was written by Stefano Borgia. It seems unlikely since Borgia must have been on good terms with Paulinus, while the letter shows quite a bit of personal animosity on the part of the writer.

⁶⁰ *Paulin*, vol. III, p. 476.

⁶¹ BNVE, Rari, Fondi Minori, Santa Maria della Scala, 36, G. The text is written in Paulinus' hand.

one after another, separated by comas with their non-European names in italics. “The diseases that afflict the inhabitants of the southern part of India, that is, of Malabar, Kanara, Mysore, Madurai, Tanjore, Marava and the Parava are the following: : *Shralanòva* wind colic, *Sanivali* convulsions and nervous cramps, *Adisàram* diarrhea or a simple dissolution of stomach, *Calladapa* the stone, *Grahanni* dysentery with spasms, *Iluca* dislocation of members, *Mujali* a kind of gout, *Kaszalapani* St. Anthony’s fire with fever, *Pani* in Malabar language [Malayalam], *giurti* and *gioram* in Sanskrit, called fever, *Tridoshagioram*, that is a fever with three bad properties, which we call malignant fever, *Malapani* a one-day fever caused by a certain wind from the Ghatts, called in Portuguese a fever of the Mountain.”⁶² Although the names in Malayalam and occasionally in Sanskrit may appear opaque in their graphical and phonetical representation, the cultural authority vested in them, or so Paulinus wants us to believe, gives them an aura of trustworthiness. On the other hand, the translation, he provides attached to each term is disconcertingly vague. A wind from Ghatt mountains could be anything and was a subject to individual interpretation. Moreover, it is not clear whether these names in Italian translation represented symptoms or illnesses, or both mixed together.

Some diseases, identified as endemic in India and often referred to by other writers, acquired names that became notorious in Europe. One of them was *mort-de-chien*, a name based on French misunderstanding of a Portuguese word *mordexim* taken from Konkani, a language spoken by the majority of the Goans, which meant a deadly intestinal colic similar to cholera.⁶³ Paulinus provides it with Sanskrit appellation – *Viszuciga* – and defines its etiology in particular topology of south Indian region.⁶⁴ The causes of cholera were the cold winds of the western Ghats that blow in Malabar during the October, November and December and they are “loaded with nitrate particles of the mountains”. This particular affliction was known and identified in the early 16th century because the Portuguese felt its deadly effects early on.⁶⁵

After this first list of illnesses Paulinus focused on a chosen few bringing in more details in terms of etiology and therapeutics as well as a veritable jungle of translations of words from Malayalam and Portuguese.

He excused himself for not adding Sanskrit names and proposed to the learned readers to check them through Malayalam names in the *Vocabulario Amarasinha Brahmanico*, the most famous Sanskrit dictionary, “which [the Indians] read in school by way of Malabar language, just as we interpret a Greek author by way of Latin

⁶² *Viaggio*, p. 350. *Shralanòva* la colica ventosa, *Sanivali* convulsioni e spasmi de’nervi, *Adisàram* diarea o semplice scioglimento di ventre, *Calladapa* il male di pietra, *Grahanni* dissenteria con tenesmo, *Iluca* dislocazione dei membri, *Mujali* una specie di podagra, *Kaszalapani* erisipola con febbre, *Pani* in lingua Malabarica, *giurti* e *gioram* in Sanscrit, febbre callida, *Tridoshagoram*, cioè, febbre di tre cattive qualità, che tra noi chiamasi febre maligna, *Malapani* febbre d’unsolo giorno, procedente da qualche vento, che spira dale montagne di Ghattes, in Porhoghese febre da Serra.

⁶³ According to Hobnson-Jobson, *mort de chien* is a name for cholera in use in India up to the end of the 18th century. The word in this form is a corruption of the Portuguese *mordexim*, shaped by a fanciful French etymology. The Portuguese word again represents the Konkani and Mahratti *modachi*, *modshi*, or *modwashi*, ‘cholera,’ from a Mahr. verb *modnen*, ‘to break u p, to sink’ (as under infirmities, in fact ‘to collapse’). Yule, H., and Burnell, A.C., *Hobson-Jobson: A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian Words...* reprinted New Delhi, 1979, pp. 586-589.

⁶⁴ On cholera, See David Arnold, “The Indian Ocean as Disease Zone, 1500-1950”, *South Asia*, 14 (1991), pp. 1-22.

⁶⁵ See Orta on *mordexim*. Orta, Garcia de, *Colóquios dos Simples e Drogas he Cousas Mediciniais da India...*, Goa, 1563, (facsimile edition by Academia das Ciências de Lisboa), Lisbon, 1963, annotated edition by Conde de Ficalho, published in 1891 and reprinted in 1987, vol. 1, pp. 261-267

language."⁶⁶ Under the heading *Auszaddivargga* or "classes of medicinal simples", there were names of three hundred or more medicinal plants.⁶⁷ In the years following the *Viaggio*, Paulinus also printed the first part of this Sanskrit dictionary which he called by the name of the author (*Amarasinha*) in stead by its title, *Amarakośa*.⁶⁸ The crown in his botanical possessions were, however, palm leaf manuscripts inscribed with Sanskrit "*Sloga [śloka]*" or verses. These were, according to Paulinus, very ancient Brahman texts written by the "*Samanei*", Indian philosophers who "philosophized in short sentences according to Diogenes Laertius".⁶⁹ He then went on and included three Sanskrit *śloka* , transliterated and translated in Italian.

Ancient and contemporary are inextricably mixed in the *Viaggio*'s narrative present. It is only through Paulinus intervention either in the footnote or right in the middle of the text, usually cutting through a long list of enumeration, that we are sporadically given some notion of the chronological layers. One of the reasons, insisted Paulinus, was because medicine and botany had been cultivated in India for the past three thousand years, more than any other science. Moreover, no other country possessed so many books on medicine.

However, although he witnessed successful cures by the Indian doctors, since they often managed to heal patients abandoned as hopeless by the European physicians, he doubted that Indian medicine would "make any progress". The prohibitions imposed by the Indian legal and religious system on killing animals prevented the study of anatomy.⁷⁰ The Brahmanical system that ruled Indian social and religious life was also more than three thousand years old and, implied Paulinus, completely unchanged. In that respect, it was a living history of the European past and, therefore, the ancient Egypt and Greece were comparable in everything to the contemporary India.

In this kind of ancient, immutable system, plants were botanical specimens, remedies and religious objects. "The *Villapatti*, or *Kūvalam* in Malabar language, *Marmoleira* in Portuguese is a kind of quince (*Cotogno*) dedicated to the God *Lingam* or *Priapo*...On Greek vases published by *Hamilton* you can often see some people, or a husband who presents his wife with a quince in an act of consecrating it in her hands. This rite is considered to signify a type of sacrifice to the *Lingam* or the *Fallus*

⁶⁶ *Viaggio*, p. 367.

⁶⁷ *Viaggio*, p. 355. *Amarasinha. Sectio prima, de Coelo. Ex tribus ineditis codicibus indicis manuscriptis*, XII+60, figures, Roma, 1789. According to the M. Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (1st ed. 1872), New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas Publishers, 1999, *aushadha* or *oshadhi* means medicament, drug, herbs used in medicine. *Aushadhavali* is a medical work composed by Prānakrishna.p. 240. The same is said in William Jones, "The Design of a Treatise on the Plants of India", *Asiatic Researches*; or, *Transactions of the Society Instituted in Bengal, for Inquiring into the History and Antiquities, the Arts, Sciences, and Literature of Asia*, volume the Second, Printed verbatim from the Calcutta Edition, in Quarto. London: Printed for Vernor and Hood, in the Poultry, 1799. " The *Amarakosa*, an excellent vocabulary of the Sanskrit language, contains in one chapter the names of about three hundred medicinal vegetables", ch. XXII, p. 345.

⁶⁸ *Amarasimha's Namalinganusasana*, better known as the *Amarakośa*, is the most famous and the oldest extant lexicon of the Sanskrit language written in the sixth century AD. *Amarakosa : With the Commentary of Mahesvara/Ramakrishna Gopal Bhandarkar*. Revised enlarged edition. New Delhi, Cosmo, 2004, 469 pp.

⁶⁹ *Viaggio*, p. 355. Diogenes Laertius was a biographer of ancient Greek philosophers. His book, *The Lives of the Philosophers*, in ten volumes, are an important source of information on the development of Greek philosophy.

⁷⁰ *Viaggio*, p. 355.

(*Fallo*) of the Greeks."⁷¹ Paulinus provided a few samples of the religious use of certain plants such as lotus, tulsi basil, banana and some others, but refused to "develop" further "the symbols and the follies of the Gentiles".⁷² In fact, he did develop these to a minute detail in other parts of the *Viaggio* and in his *Systema Brahmanicum*.

Paulinus' effort at translation reshuffles endlessly names, things and practices. It is as if one name beckons another, as if each name is in search of another name and when no exact translation is possible, Paulinus comes up with analogies and metonymies that lead to other analogies. The translation usually proceeds from an Indian name or phenomena towards a name in any of the European languages.

However, certain concepts may be discussed the other way round. "Indian Trinity is called *Trimùrti* in Sanskrit. *Tri* three, *murti* body, *punya mùrti* holy body *Vishu mùrti* idol, body of *Vishu*. This is the significance of the word *mùrti* in Father Hanxleden's Sanskrit Dictionary (*Dizionario Granthamico*), in Monsigneur Pimentel's and in the *Mahàbharada* book. Therefore *Trimurti* does not mean three gods, or three potencies, but three visible bodies, created by the goddess [of Nature] *Bhavani*, in one body."⁷³ As if the words failed him, Paulinus invited the reader to look at the picture on the same page of the Trimurti as it "figures" (*essa è figurata*) in the very ancient (*antichissimo*) temple on the island of Elefanta (near Mumbai). **[Plate 1].**⁷⁴ As Paulinus' Trimurti moves from one erudite statement to another with dozens of references and other type of learned quotations, the reader is lost in details. In spite of the chaos of information, we can discern a specific point Paulinus is trying to make. In fact, we cannot miss this point, because it is repeated throughout his work whenever he writes about Indian theogony or religion. He is trying to persuade the reader by way of various proofs (material, linguistic or literary) that Indian civilization is as old as Egyptian, if not older. "The temple in Elefanta is ancient (*antichissimo*) and it should be seen whether the monument in Caylus and the Egyptian pyramids surpass the antiquity of this underground temple."⁷⁵ If for Athanasius Kircher, Egypt was the home of the Trinity, Paulinus was pressing for a radical revision of the sacred geography.⁷⁶

His ultimate argument about the antiquity and cultural supremacy of the Brahmans compared to the Egyptians and the other classical peoples was based on Sanskrit.

From Zoology to Divine Providence

Paulinus' trust in Sanskrit did not blind him to direct observation of nature. It is just that nature appeared to the missionary as infinitely easier to describe and to

⁷¹ *Viaggio*, p. 359. See Partha Mitter on the discovery of erotic gods in India in the 18th century. Mitter, Partha, *Much Maligned Monsters, A History of European Reactions to Indian Art*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992.

⁷² *Viaggio*, p. 359

⁷³ *Viaggio*, p. 281.

⁷⁴ *Viaggio*, p. 281 an 280.

⁷⁵ *Viaggio*, p. 281. Caylus, Anne Claude Philippe de Tubieres de Grimoard de Pestels de Levis, Comte de, Marquis d'Esternay, baron de Bransac (1692-1765) was a French archaeologist and man of letters. He was an active member of the Academy of Painting and Sculpture and of the Academy of Inscriptions. Among his antiquarian works are *Recueil d'antiquités égyptiennes, étrusques, grecques, romaines, et gauloises* (6 vols., Paris, 1752-1755).

⁷⁶ Findlen, Paula (ed.), Athanasius Kircher, *The Last Man Who Knew Everything*, New York and London: Routledge, 2004, p. 33.

understand than culture, especially an ancient pagan culture. If for a natural scientist it was crucial to cut things open and see what was inside, and how various parts worked and produced the harmonious whole, an equivalent procedure for an Orientalist was to break through the grammatical forms in order to get to the smallest elements of language. Early in the 19th century, Friedrich Schlegel, a German Orientalist likened comparative grammar to comparative anatomy.⁷⁷ Other Orientalists defined their philological studies as very similar to “botanizing”. In fact, many British Orientalists were amateur botanists in their own leisure time, and the metaphor used only confirms that the methods applied to one field were also helpful in another. Paulinus seemed to have “botanized” too, mostly in his Sanskrit dictionaries, and that is why he was unable to keep his subject within one particular order, the order of natural history, but kept on slipping back into philology or comparative mythology.

In the two chapters mostly dealing with description and enumeration of Indian animals, Paulinus gets as close to the ground and the material world as he possibly could on the pages of the *Viaggio*. As if filling up the storehouse, the author piles up names one after another, in a procedure similar to that applied to plants and illnesses. The principle of semantic identity and phonological difference helped the accumulation of names *ad infinitum*. The movement of signification can either move from a known European name to various Indian names, or vice versa in case of a “new” or unusual animal. “The elephant in Malabar language is called *Aana*, in Sanskrit *Dandi*, *dandavala*, *hasti*, *gagia*, *naga*, *cugnara*, *cari*, *duiba*, *madamghegia*, these are all words that express some of its qualities.”⁷⁸ There is no explanation provided about what those qualities exactly were, as if the reader could easily check those words in a Sanskrit dictionary. He, of course, recommended just that in his botanico-medical section and earned an instant sneer in Anquetil-Duperron’s footnote.⁷⁹ The reason why Paulinus did not restrain his erudition even when it meant providing catalogues of foreign words without proper translations was the fact that storing knowledge in this manner was a common antiquarian practice and that the editorial authorities in Rome were not interested in censoring “secular” details. The *Viaggio* obviously targeted a wide readership, but also provided condensed “scientific” information for the experts and professionals. The thick folds of specialized facts and knowledge are responsible for the *Viaggio*’s heavy and, at times, indigestible narrative.

It gets more complicated for an average reader when Paulinus comes up with his own zoological observations. “In *Vaypur*, in *Puttenpalli*, in *Mohatushe* I saw a flying cat, which is the *Lemur caudatus*, or *Vespertilio admirabili* of the naturalists, or *Chat Volant* of the French. In Malabar language it is called *Parraciatten*, and is surely a species of *squirrel*, as big as a cat with a thick and long tail, which serves it as a rudder when it flies and with two cartilage wings as a bat. Its skin is of silver color with delicate fur. It lives on *Mava* tree or *Mangueira* (mango tree), the fruit of which it eats. This animal is different from Malabar *Marpatti* or *Serval* of the naturalists...

⁷⁷ Paul B. Salmon, "The Beginnings of Morphology; Linguistic Botanizing in the 18th century", *Historiographia Linguistica*, 1:3, 1974, pp. 313-339. Olender, Maurice, *Les langues du Paradis, Aryens et Sémites: un couple providentiel*, Paris: Gallimard/Le Seuil, 1989, p. 20.

⁷⁸ *Viaggio*, p. 150.

⁷⁹ “I had not given names because all those who know Malabar (Malayalam) can find Sanskrit words in the Amarasingha dictionary”. To this laconic statement from *Viaggio*, Anquetil-Duperron added a commentary. «I think that the missionary, who writes in Europe and for Europe, should have included a Sanskrit name to Malabar names; because we do not have here Malabar schools where they read Amarasingha by way of modern languages». *Paulin*, p. 487. .

which is a species of stone marten”⁸⁰. In this labyrinthine description, the animal in question is just as its name suggests – “flying”. It is high up over our heads and flying from one tree of signification to another. Its morphological characteristics are defined in terms of analogies with otherwise very different animals – a bat, a cat and a squirrel – and in terms of difference with “a species of stone marten”. This is a typical method by which Paulinus creates his own “new” objects, which he endows with mixed, fluid and confusing identities.

A way to add another layer of legitimation to his discoveries was to conjure up textual authorities. For the flying cat he summons a German zoologist Eberhard August Wilhelm von Zimmermann’s *Specimen Zoologiae geographicae...* (1777), as well as Buffon and Johann Gottlob Theaenus Schneider, another German classicist and naturalist.⁸¹ In the course of the *Viaggio*, naturalist writers such as Ulisse Aldrovandi, Walter Carleton, Carl Linnaeus, and many others are invited to play a background part for his own musings on natural history. Sometimes, they confirmed the facts he presented, but mostly they appear at points where he disagrees with them. His blanket accusation is that “they all write without monuments [material documents] and experience”.⁸² The flying cat and the “species of stone marten” provoked Paulinus to castigate Zimmermann, Buffon and Schneider for many errors by which they “attribute an animal to a neighboring country... and confound their species”.⁸³

These citations are in fact revealing of how Paulinus advanced in constructing his animal classificatory passages. Since at the very beginning of the chapter, the missionary divided all animals according to the Linnean method into six classes, the reader may expect that he would stick to this framework. He managed to do that for the quadrupeds (*qudrupedi*), birds (*volatili*) and amphibians (*amfibi*). For the next three classes of fish, insects and vermin, Paulinus broke out of the purely zoological bounds and the chapter contains many other topics such as rivers, ships and a whole treatise on serpents and their various cultural uses in India. It is in the details that we get a sense of Paulinus’ difficult choices in putting together and naming the elements in his collection. We can almost picture Paulinus with his fieldwork notes in front of him, his various dictionaries and grammars of Indian languages on one side and learned naturalist works of the Europeans on the other. Fitting the three of them together, seamlessly and unambiguously required concentration, skill and motivation. A suspicion lingers, however, that his fieldwork notes on animals were meager compared with his thick dictionaries and natural histories. Unfortunately, unlike for botany, Paulinus’ archives in Rome contain very few traces of his zoological documents, if there ever were any.

Another, indirect indication, that Paulinus’ animal world was mostly constructed from zoological books is author’s overemphasis on his first-hand

⁸⁰ *Viaggio*, p. 152-153.

⁸¹ Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (1707-1788) is author of *Historie Naturelle (Natural History)* (1749). Eberhard August Wilhelm von Zimmermann (August 17, 1743 – July 4, 1815) was a geographer and zoologist, professor of Natural Science at Brunswick. He wrote *Specimen Zoologiae Geographicae Quadrupedum* (1777), one of the first works on the geographical distribution of mammals. J. G. Schneider, (ed.) *Opiani Poetae Cilicis de veneratione et piscatione libri*, Argent, 1776. Walter Carleton (1617-1707) was a titular physician of Charles I and a writer on theology, natural history and antiquities. See also *Visions of Empire : Voyages, Botany, and Repesentaitons of Nature*, ed. David Philip Miller and Peter Hanns Reill, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. For a remarkable work on Ulisse Aldrovandi, see Findlen, *Possessing Nature*.

⁸² *Viaggio*, p. 162.

⁸³ *Viaggio*, p. 153.

observation. For example, he took to disagree with Pliny, Zimmermann and Linneus about the Malabar leopard and immediately included a witness story that sealed any possible further discussion. “In 1876 I was in Vaipur in the church and examined the accounts with the managers (*economi*). In the middle of the day 15 steps from the church entered the town a *puli* or leopard, it carried away the dog that played there in front of 200 people”.⁸⁴ The stone of discord with the European authorities was the leopard’s “form” since according to them it was white with black spots, while the Malabar variety seen by Paulinus was yellow with black spots.

Paulinus made a strong point on a few occasions that what he saw was closer to truth than what others wrote about it, but as if it was not enough, he also inscribed other acts of witnessing. One of them was that he hunted some of the animals himself. With two Englishmen, Mr. Hutchinson and Crozier he killed a few civet cats which enabled him to prove that the musk was in their testicles, contrary to the opinions of some other naturalists in Europe.⁸⁵ After seeing and shooting, Paulinus also tasted the flesh of certain animals such as bats. “They had a flavor of roasted hares”.⁸⁶ And finally, he admitted his willingness to collect certain objects and to bring them back to Rome, and his inability to do so because of the space they took in his luggage. What he collected were nests of the Weaver bird called *Olamari* in Malabar, *Baya* in Indostani and *Berbera* in Sanskrit. This bird is famous for its elaborate hanging nests woven out of grass and leaf strips. Obviously, Paulinus had those nests in his hand, but it did not prevent him to weave curiously anthropomorphic elements into the story of the building of the nest. The nest that resembles a family house with rooms for each member is also decorated with a dead firefly in order to serve as “light in the night”.⁸⁷

A penchant for anthropomorphizing animal behavior was not yet sociobiology, of course, but rather a sense of awe and admiration at the divine creation. Thus when a small, non-venomous snake *Tevi* is killed, “many other of the same [snake] race come to see it” and stay for two to three days in the that place. Although, it sounds incredible, Paulinus assured his readers that this had happened in *Ambalacati* (in a Catholic college) in front of thirty students and professors. He ascribed zoological curiosity to some instinct or smell of the dead snake that attracts the others to render themselves to its burial place. Even more impressed was Paulinus with the sea urchins and the way they protect themselves from the predators. Moreover, it is in different “small things (*minime cose*)”, such as insects and starfish, all of which live in “a sort of society” which is “regulated, pacifist and political” that the missionary saw the true “Wisdom of God” and the “Providence of the Supreme Being”.⁸⁸ These were the “invincible arguments of nature.... against our insane philosophical spirits”.⁸⁹ A well organized society was closer to an insect world for this staunch opponent of the revolutionary ideas. He had a chance to experience first hand and in action their, in his opinion, devastating effects while passing through France in 1789 on his way back to Rome from the Malabar coast.

More than culture, therefore, nature for Paulinus clearly worked within a divinely ordained system. Environment and climate were, for the missionary, a direct result of the divine intervention. It was God, the Creator of the World, who made the water around the equator more salty and made the winds, storms and movement of air

⁸⁴ *Viaggio*, p. 152.

⁸⁵ *Viaggio*, p. 155.

⁸⁶ *Viaggio*, p. 158.

⁸⁷ *Viaggio*, p. 159.

⁸⁸ *Viaggio*, p. 173.

⁸⁹ *Viaggio*, p. 173.

stronger and more frequent in order to preserve the Torrid Zone from putrefaction and corruption. This is why the coasts of India were inhabitable and salubrious.⁹⁰ It was also Divine Providence that brought annual rain that made the rivers flowing down the Ghatt mountains wash away and “purge” the Malabar region from the poisonous snakes.⁹¹

Paulinus did not hide his admiration and marvel at the natural world and phenomena that he experienced in India. Everywhere around him he saw fertility. The abundance of rice made the population grow. The poorest among the inhabitants, on the other hand, ate fish. There were so many good fish in the sea that they fed it to the pigs or used it as compost for the coconut trees.⁹² At the same time, scores of dangerous creatures were everywhere, such as snakes, and he was even ready to believe in the existence of dragons.⁹³ He betrays a spectacular credulity when he admitted that, although he did not see the dragon himself, he knew the nephew of the person who actually killed it for the king of Travancore. The nephew “still lived when I left Malabar”.⁹⁴ All kinds of marvelous stories, employed by Paulinus as an opening to enter the opacity of Brahmanical culture - which he admired as philosophical, and despised as heathen – grew ultimately over his recklessly disordered naturalist taxonomies.

Perhaps aware of the errancy of language, Paulinus takes Sanskrit names – denoting animals or plants or medicine – as signs, marks and entry points for something else: for a chance to glimpse the social and cultural system ordained by the Divine Providence. He called it a “Brahmanical system”.

Sanskrit: Beyond Zoolatry

European naturalists who failed to understand this point were discredited with one powerful stroke: “they write without [knowledge of Indian] languages and without Indian books”.⁹⁵ He, therefore, situated himself in the company of a distinguished few, even though he never lost a moment to criticize them for ignorance and misinterpretation. These were the British Orientalists, his contemporaries connected with William Jones and the Asiatic Society in Calcutta (established in 1784) and its journal *Asiatic Researches* (published from 1789-1839). Within a decade, the most talented linguists among the Calcutta Orientalist inaugurated an era of rapid professionalization that emphasized a new type of exclusive authority based on exceptional philological competence. Bound to Christian Orientalist paradigm, their methods and their immediate research goals corresponded to that of Paulinus and of his French Jesuit predecessors: to confirm the Mosaic account of human history and the chronology of Christian revelation, and to determine the antiquity of the ancient nations (Greeks, Egyptians, Sumerian, etc.) and their “sciences”.⁹⁶

Being an eye-witness traveler ceased to be a measure for truthful representation, while profound knowledge of Indian classical and vernacular

⁹⁰ *Viaggio*, p. 164

⁹¹ *Viaggio*, p. 183

⁹² *Viaggio*, p. 168.

⁹³ *Viaggio*, p. 181.

⁹⁴ *Viaggio*, p. 181.

⁹⁵ *Viaggio*, p. 167

⁹⁶ Trautmann, Thomas, *Aryans and British India*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), New Delhi: Vistaar Publications, 1997, [Henceforth, Trautmann] p. 37, Murr, Sylvia, *L'Inde philosophique entre Bossuet et Voltaire, l'indologie du Père Coeurdoux; stratégies, apologétique et scientificité*, 2 vols., Paris : EFEO, 1987.

languages, Sanskrit above all, became the key to understanding all that was considered worth in Indian civilization. The close association between language and ethnology was partly a result of Orientalists' early fixation on "the science of (Sanskrit) grammar or Vyākaraṇa".⁹⁷ Indian linguistic tradition led them to believe in "unity of all languages as corruptions of eternal and incorruptible Sanskrit language."⁹⁸

The obsession with Sanskrit grammar was something Paulinus shared with British Sanskritists, although they thought at the time that his knowledge of Sanskrit was insufficient and mistaken. Alexander Hamilton, the first Sanskrit professor in Britain who taught Friedrich Schlegel in Paris as well as a whole new generation of French metropolitan Orientalists, snubbed Paulinus by writing that "[Paulinus] betrays a complete ignorance of that language, and quotes books for facts that are not to be found in them. His Sanskrit dictionary (which we have in vain endeavored to procure) is, we will venture to assert, a dictionary of the Malabar idiom, which bears the same relation to the Sanskrit that Italian does to Latin".⁹⁹

This judgment, from an otherwise excellent Sanskritist, betrays a typical misunderstanding among Orientalist scholars. Principally, it concerns geographical location. Paulinus transcribed Sanskrit sounds from its southern transcription into Grantha script and taught by the Brahman teachers whose native tongue was Malayalam and Tamil, while British Orientalists in Calcutta had access to Sanskrit texts in Devanagari script and followed the pronunciation of their Bengali pundits. In addition, in transcribing Sanskrit into Latin script, Paulinus adjusted it to Italian phonetic, while the British obviously adjusted it to English sounds.¹⁰⁰ The second problem was that Paulinus' various books on Sanskrit printed in Latin in Rome (*Sidharubam seu Grammatica Samscrdamica*(1791), *Amarasinha. Sectio prima, de Coelo* (1789), *Vyācarana seu locupletissima samscrdamicae linguae institutio*, 1804) never reached British Orientalists, as can be sensed from Hamilton's remark. Taken for fanatical and cunning instruments of conversion to Popish religion, Catholic missionaries who often spoke vernacular languages fluently were called on by the British only when they needed them as "native" informants and, consequently, they were equally mistrusted.¹⁰¹

One of the paradoxes of Orientalist scholarship is its double bind to Indian sources that have to be authenticated by Indian scholars, and a simultaneous emphatic distrust of Indian scholarship and epistemic cognition. Thus Paulinus was able to

⁹⁷ Trautmann, p. 136.

⁹⁸ Trautmann, p. 136.

⁹⁹ Trautmann, p. 36.

¹⁰⁰ Taking up William Jones's opinion that "[our] English alphabet and orthography are disgracefully, and almost ridiculously, imperfect", Paulinus adds his own more devastating appraisal. "The English alphabet is not only imperfect but plainly ridiculous when it comes to expressing Indian nouns, they horribly corrupt them when writing them in that alphabet." But, of course, the way history unfolded, these linguistic decisions were not left to the Italians. [William Jones], "A dissertation on the Orthography of Asiatick Words in Roman Letters by the President", *Asiatic Researches*; or, *Transactions of the Society Instituted in Bengal, for Inquiring into the History and Antiquities, the Arts, Sciences, and Literature of Asia*, volume the First, Calcutta Printed in 1788. London Reprinted, for Vernor and Hood, No. 1, Poultry, 1798, p. 13. See Paulinus' *Examen Historico-criticum Codicum Indicorum Bibliothecae Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide*, Romae, 1792, in -4°, p. 6., See also Paulinus a S. Bartholomaeo, *Dissertation on the Sanskrit Language*, translation and introduction by Ludo Rocher [Henceforth, *Dissertation*], Amsterdam: John Benjamins B.V, 1977 p. 95.

¹⁰¹ Abbe Dubois, Jean-Antoine Mœurs, *institutions et cérémonies des peuples de l'Inde*, Paris, Imprimerie Royale, 1825 (2 vol.). Lorenzen Sbraga, David, "Marco della Tomba and the Brahmin from Banaras: Missionaries, Orientalist and Indian Scholars", *Journal of Asian Studies*, Feb. 2006 (in press).

underline in his chapter on Malabar Zoology that “Europe will never understand the bases of religion and natural philosophy of the Brahmans until Brahmanical [dictionary] *Amarasinha* is published together with a clear and perfect translation”.¹⁰² He had translated into Latin a small part of it, mostly concerning entries dealing with theological questions. In spite of all this “indigenous” knowledge that he so avidly excavated from the authentic manuscripts,¹⁰³ Paulinus was convinced that both Indian classical texts and the contemporary Indian physicians had very imperfect understanding of natural phenomena and their origins. This opinion, he shared with his predecessor, a Discalced Carmelite traveler to Malabar, Vincenzo de Santa Caterina da Siena.¹⁰⁴ Similar ideas were expressed by William Jones and other British Orientalist, who also thought that “On the whole we cannot expect to acquire many valuable truths from an examination of eastern books on the science of medicine; but examine them we must, if we wish to complete the history of universal philosophy and to supply the scholars of Europe with authentic materials for an account of the opinions anciently formed on this head by philosopher of Asia.”¹⁰⁵

Studying natural history was, therefore, only a way to get at philosophy and theology of the Brahmans. The reason why, it was considered a worthwhile project is their common conviction that the Brahmans have preserved the oldest language as well as the oldest culture (liturgy, rites, customs, literature) that existed anywhere in the world. This also brought them to suspect that it was India the cradle of the world rather than Egypt as was commonly believed by their contemporaries in Europe at the end of the 18th century. However, even if only learned Brahmans were able to teach and explain the fine points of Sanskrit language, all Orientalists agreed that it did not mean that they were able to understand the deeper meanings of the words. Brahman penchant for exaggeration, fables and fantasy, moreover, made them transform events and facts into allegories.

A professional Sanskritist was, therefore, called not only to decipher the language and its grammar, but also to erect a solid scaffolding of sacred history in order to trim down Brahmanical delusions, such as exaggerated chronology that surpassed the Mosaic chronology for millions of years. At stake was the oldest history of the world, according to Paulinus, buried in fables, allegories and symbols. By translating these Indian fables into a secular register, the truth of the Mosaic sacred history can be proven beyond doubt. More importantly, Indians have not only preserved their ancient books just like the Jews, but also their ancient way of life, customs, and thinking.¹⁰⁶ Therefore, India as a whole was an ancient book that can help Europeans and Christians understand and authenticate their own history.

Parallel to his study of empirical nature, therefore, Paulinus passionately observed the nature in Sanskrit texts and dictionaries, where he thought, the truth of Creation may be discernable at the end of the line. For example, he clearly identified the “sacred animals” and “plants” that are connected with gods and sacrifice.¹⁰⁷ The tortoise, the elephant, the cow, the serpent, they all have names denoting the empirical beings as well as elements in Brahmanical theogony. To understand that, one had to

¹⁰² *Viaggio*, p. 162. He estimates that this Sanskrit dictionary was three thousand years old.

¹⁰³ *Viaggio*, p. 165

¹⁰⁴ Lach, III, 2, 899.

¹⁰⁵ William Jones, “Botanical Observations on Select Indian Plant”, *Asiatic Researches*, no. 4, 1793-4, 239-140. Quoted in Mark Harris, “Medicine and Orientalism”, in Biswamoy Pati and Mark Harris, eds., *Health, Medicine and Empire, Perspectives on Colonial India*, Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2001, p. 59.

¹⁰⁶ *Viaggio*, p. 156.

¹⁰⁷ *Viaggio*, p. 149.

go back to Sanskrit, “a mother language, sacred and literal” in which one animal may have dozens of different names.¹⁰⁸ At least one of the names would immediately refer to a fable or a divine being. Zoolatry and phytolatry, so prominent in the cosmogony of the Brahmans was nothing else but the use of “symbols, emblems and enigmas” to teach the divine and moral precepts.¹⁰⁹ Point by point and with numerous repetitions throughout the *Viaggio*, and in other printed works, Paulinus undressed these various allegories from all fabulous veneer added by the Brahmans. “The *Sarparagia*, also called *Vasughi*, is a Serpent which in the opinion of the Brahmans encompasses the whole world and is a symbol of life and death, of generation and corruption, because everything is born and dies and comes back to be reborn again. This is a Platonic idea which Pythagoras learnt from the Indian Magi.”¹¹⁰

Learning Indian mythology was obviously a way to deepen the Judeo-Christian sacred history and to rechannel it away from the reigning Egyptophilia in Europe. When moving further backwards in time from the Indian Magi or the gymnosophists, as they were also known in history, an antiquarian such as Paulinus necessarily arrived at the period of fables. In his *Dissertation on the Sanskrit Language*, he defended fables because, he wrote, they are “generally more ancient than real history”.¹¹¹ He was certainly not the first, nor the only one to ponder over comparative mythology. Moreover, from Lorenzo Pignoria to Athanasius Kircher, a tradition of reflecting on history and society in terms of cultural diffusionism has been a major research line for the Catholic scholars, especially in Jesuit and other religious circles in Rome. Kircherian scientific method of connecting all different kinds of knowledge and then displaying them in one printed book after another gave way later on to, as Paula Findlen showed, “increasingly specialized and jealously guarded expertise”.¹¹² Paulinus was a heir to Kircherian obsessive “assemblage” of facts and of finding connections at all costs. Especially the *Viaggio* fell victim to the excess of erudition of its author and his overenthusiastic religious convictions, and to the lack of editorial advice or professional censure.

Just like Kircher, Paulinus wanted to explain everything about India and the cadence of his published texts from the day of his return to Rome is impressive in spite of the fact that he had to take refuge in Vienna and Padua during the revolutionary upheavals.¹¹³ The Printing Press of the Propaganda Fide and Paulinus’ powerful mentor the Cardinal Stefano Borgia provided the best possible logistical support for the publication and dissemination of his books and ideas. In fact, after the suppression of the Society of Jesus, oriental manuscripts and objects were dispersed through various Roman ecclesiastical institutions. Some may have found their way into Stefano Borgia’s collections and from there into Paulinus’ books. A painting of a second incarnation of Visnu in a form of a tortoise printed in the *Viaggio* and annotated as belonging to the Borgia’s Museum in Velletri may have been in Kircher’s possession at one point [**Plate 2**].¹¹⁴ It was Heinrich Roth, a Jesuit missionary at the Mughal court in Agra, who brought to Rome the ten paintings of Visnu incarnations

¹⁰⁸ *Viaggio*, p. 162.

¹⁰⁹ *Viaggio*. P. 161.

¹¹⁰ *Viaggio*, p. 183.

¹¹¹ *Dissertation*, p. 111, *Viaggio*, p. 71.

¹¹² Findlen, *Athanasius Kircher*, p. 7.

¹¹³ During the troubled revolutionary years in Rome of 1798-1800, Paulinus went to a voluntary exile in Vienna, Venice and Padua.

¹¹⁴ *Viaggio*, between pp. 160-161.

and the Sanskrit grammar in Devanagari script, all of which were reproduced in Kircher's *China Illustrata*.¹¹⁵

The most favorable printing conditions that Kircher enjoyed with his publisher Joannes Jansson van Waesberghe in Amsterdam in addition to the generous subvention given by the Habsburgs were not possible any more in Paulinus' time. One of the biggest attractions of Kircher's books were the most incredibly vivid illustrations that made imaginary look so real, it was claimed, that they tricked the eye to feel the movement of objects. The illustrations in Paulinus' books were, on the other hand, no more than static, benumbed and poorly executed engravings. Leaving his pages on natural history densely descriptive, but without a single botanical or zoological picture, reveals, after all, that natural history was not Paulinus' priority discipline. In fact, when he chose to represent for example a tortoise or a lotus tree, he borrowed pictures and monuments found in the Museo Borgiano in Veletri [Plate 3]¹¹⁶. These were neither "realist" nor "naturalist" illustrations of the objects in question and the viewer was instantly transported to the religious and mythological level of signification.

Paulinus was obviously following "missionary" directives that guided the printing production of the Propaganda Fide press. Foreign and arcane languages and alphabets of both Christian and non-Christian peoples were the privileged topics. These books were supposed to prepare and accompany the "native" clergy when they returned back to their countries after studies in Rome. It is very unlike Kircher's published works intended for the consumption of the learned and curious native Europeans who desired to travel in space and time, but not necessarily in body. Kircher's books combined expertise and charlatanism to an admirable degree of poetic sublimation and his work inspired real professionals of his time to start their own serious scientific research.¹¹⁷

The decisive Orientalist cum museological turn in Paulinus' Roman career came when the Cardinal Stefano Borgia employed him as a "professional" curator of his Asian collection of objects and manuscripts, most of which were on display in his Museum in Velletri. Paulinus' choice of this particular secular profession was therefore also partly a response to an institutional demand. Under his curatorship, Rome became at least for two decades a center of Indological knowledge in Europe. Although Stefano Borgia's museum is known for its antiquarian materials, there may have been a project of collecting natural specimens, perhaps even employing scientists or curators to organize it. Paulinus did mention various natural objects such as shells that were also stored in the museum. However, the political upheavals and the death of Borgia in 1804 put a stop to such projects, if they ever existed. What remained behind are hints and marks that the learned Cardinal was interested. A letter by Giuseppe d'Amato from Burma containing a most exquisitely executed watercolor painting of a lotus flower, accompanied by a minute description can be found today in the Borgia Latin collection in the Vatican Apostolic Library as well as other short descriptions of animals.¹¹⁸ Among the scattered notes in the same manuscript folder, there is a description of antelope's antlers, written in Paulinus' hand, with a

¹¹⁵ For a complicated lineage of these iconographic representations see Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters*, p. 57, (footnote) p. 298.

¹¹⁶ *Viaggio*, between pp. 174 and 175.

¹¹⁷ See Findlein, *Athansius Kircher*, p.9

¹¹⁸ Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rome, *Borg. Lat.* 295, f. 277, 288.

commentary that the actual object was brought from India by Paulinus and deposited in the Velletri Museum.¹¹⁹

For Paulinus, just as for the British Orientalists in Calcutta who published naturalist and Orientalist pieces side by side in their *Asiatic Researches*, there was no firm border line between studying nature and culture. Indian nature and Brahmanical ancient culture were a constant source of awe and wonder at the mysterious ways of the Divine Creation. Studying one or the other lead towards the same goal – insufflating a whiff of sacred history into the secular, scientific fields that were about to break out from the Christian religious clasp. By the end of the 1830s, the tension between scientific approaches (geology, botany) and religion-culture based Orientalist idiom came to the apogee and contributed to the demise of the *Asiatic Researches*.

By that time, Paulinus' name sank into oblivion and most of his archives, after his death, remained untouched in a forgotten chest in the Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emanuele III. Angelo de Gubernatis, according to his own words, discovered these texts and manuscripts in the middle of the 19th century.¹²⁰ From his point of view, it went without saying that Paulinus was no naturalist, but even his Orientalist claims were weak. "In everything Paulinus writes we can, on the contrary, admire his erudition and sometimes even his talent and always a certain independence of judgment, but rarely did he provide a clear, exact and complete notion of the question he posed."¹²¹ With these words de Gubernatis condemned Paulinus to further anonymity in the newly established "scientific" and professional Orientalist studies. As just another "antiquarian" with a penchant for embedding misplaced philosophical and missionary opinions in his work, Paulinus' manuscripts remained in the boxes and his books on the shelves of the libraries for another two centuries without attracting much interest from the community of Indologists and Indian studies scholars. However, during the two decades in Rome, he published around twenty books and wrote hundreds of articles on various topics, from Indology and Sanskrit to comparative linguistics and museology. What he lacked was neither knowledge nor method, but a community of Orientalists, a scientific laboratory and a learned society to belong to. In a touching passage in his *Disertation on the Sanskrit Language*, Paulinus invited his European colleagues to come to Rome and check his Sanskrit manuscripts and sources.¹²² Instead they all went to London and Paris, which according to Trautmann "became a hub of new Orientalism" in the first decades of the 19th century. Paulinus was, therefore, left behind in the "older", missionary Orientalism, in which philology and natural sciences supplemented each other seamlessly and, according to its critics, confusingly.¹²³ In the late Enlightenment Europe professional scientists and professional philologists parted their ways. Paulinus belonged to the last generation of Catholic missionary Orientalists still willing to believe in Kircherian dream of intrinsic connectivity of all knowledge.

¹¹⁹ Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rome, *Borg. Lat.*, f. 288.

¹²⁰ De Gubernatis, Angelo, *Matériaux pour servir à l'histoire des études orientales en Italie*, Paris, 1876, p. 333.

¹²¹ De Gubernatis, *Matériaux*, p. 333.

¹²² *Disertation*, p.165.

¹²³ For a French Jesuit, Father Pons, Sanskrit grammar was one of the most important "sciences". See, « Lettre du P. Pons, missionnaire de la Compagnie de Jésus, Au P. du Halde de la même Compagnie. A Careical, sur la côte de Tajaour, aux Indes Orientales, ce 23 Novembre 1740 », *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, écrites des missions étrangères, par les missionnaires de la Compagnie de Jesus*. XXVI. Recueil. A Paris, rue S. Jacques. Chez P. G. Le Mercier, Imprimeur-Libraire, au Livre d'Or, près S. Yves. Et Chez Marc Bordelte, vis-à-vis le Collège de Louis le Grand. MDCCXLIII. Avec Approbation & Privilège du Roy [vol. XXVI, p. 218-256, Paris, 1743]. Bibliothèque Mazarine, Paris, 23023W.

