

## **Breakout Session Record**

**Amanuensis:** Melissa L. Rickman

**Date:** 14 July 2005

**Institution:** Victoria and Albert Museum

**Title of Breakout session:** 'Botanical Illustrations'

**Names of Breakout session leaders:** Gill Saunders, Henrietta McBurney

### **General themes discussed at the Breakout session:**

There are both printed books and prints at the Victoria and Albert. They were collected because of their bindings or illustration techniques. Many of the books and prints that this museum has acquired have been through gifts of the collections of artists or designers. Often these volumes were part of such collections because of their unusual design or their inspirational value. In this way, botanical illustrations were obtained by accident as when they are bound in an unique volume.

### **Object Information 1**

Prints of the Red Lily and the Sow Thistle (1620)

These images come from *Herbaeum miniato*. **I think that this is the wrong name.**

Questions:

What is the relationship between these and Mattioli? There are references for their medicinal properties on the sides of these images. They were not an illustrated accompaniment to these volumes, however.

Does this comment go along with these images? In the Barberini court of 17<sup>th</sup> century Rome, Cassiano Dal Pozzo came into contact with illuminati and artists. He was one of the Lincei whose goal was empiricism based on making drawings of natural history rather than copying or writing descriptions. Taxonomy and classification, therefore, went alongside dissection and examination.

### **Object Information 2**

Three pages of citrus fruits.

Comments:

These images were commissioned. These images were part of the process of classifying all the citrus fruits in Citology. Cassioni's drawings (1646) were the plates for this work. Cassioni used several artists for this work and this explains the varied techniques amongst the images.

### **Object Information 3**

*Hesperides sive Malorum aureorum cultura et usus* (1646) by Giovanni Battista Ferrari.

Comments:

This is a citology volume from Cassiano Dal Pozzo's collection, known as the paper museum. This volume contains recipes, classifications, and images and was part of an attempt to classify all the types of citrus plants.

### **Object Information 4**

Anonymous image of chickory believed to be 16<sup>th</sup> century Italian on vellum.

### **Object Information 5**

Image by Jacques Lemoine.

Comments:

This is a stylized arrangement of Strawberries, a moth, and a Carnation. Another image of Borage is much more naturalistic. It is interesting to note that during Lemoine's career he was part of the French expedition to Florida with Ribaud. This expedition was routed by the Spanish and Lemoine ended up in London painting for the gentry. His new world drawings were printed by DeBry.

### **Object Information 6**

Georg Ehret (1708-1770) watercolours from his work *Plantae selectae* (Nurmeberg 1750-1773): Magnolia, Turk's Cap Lily from the 1740's.

Comments:

This was Ehret's own publication. The information is very informal as though bits of paper were put together on the page. There is a bit of trompe l'oeil also. At this time, he is not using any Linnean names but there is great descriptive detail. We know that he painted from living plants because he wrote details on pages that refer to where he painted them. He drew many images from various gardens including Chelsea Physic Garden while Miller was there.

The **questions** from the audience:

Tell us about the relationship between Ehret and Linnaeus. How did Ehret disseminate his ideas? This was the great moment of importing New World specimens and drawings between Ehret and Mark Catesby.

Catesby took two voyages to America. During the second venture, he was able to work on his own projects and collect for others. He was a botanist, horticulturalist, and an artist. He collected seeds for many but especially for William Young. His drawing became *The Natural History of Carolina*, the first major natural history written by an Englishman to come from the Americas. In this work, Catesby emphasizes the illustrations. Most of these original drawings are now held by Windsor Castle. Catesby had been the first to publish Ehret's work in England. Catesby drew and etched for Ehret but also learned and changed his artistic technique alongside Ehret.

Ehret worked very closely with Linnaeus later in his career. Linnaeus encouraged him to move toward a more close description of the flower. As a result, Ehret's images changed to being more within the florilegia tradition but with dissections.

Who was Ehret's patron for the vellum works? It was meant for publication but also for Christopher Jacob Trew and Peter Collinson who were his patrons. Trew and Clifford wanted their collections organized according to Linnaeus' system and Ehret did this work.

### **Object Information 7**

The florilegia *Hortus Itsteinensis* (1654-1674) by Johannes Walther.

Comments: This volume was created for his patron the Count of Nassau-Ildstein. These are clearly plant portraits and were taken from the patron's gardens. These volumes were given as formal gifts meant to delight. They were not personal or picture books and they were not scientific.

### **Object Information 8**

Image (1787) by Redouté.

Comments:

This work shows the transition of illustration purposes. Redouté's work is between flower painting and botanical illustration. This work on vellum was a gift. Because of this vellum, the watercolours have a translucency that can be seen in the sheen on the flower petals and the gauziness of the insect wings. These images rival the reputation of Ehret.

### **Object Information 9**

Nicholas Eisenberger (1707-1771) artist of **Name of the work?** (1770)

Comments:

Eisenberger also worked for Trew. He worked on paper and displayed a much freer style that can be seen here.

### **Object Information 10**

*Eicones Plantarum Rariorum* Vol. 3 (1781-1793) edited by Nicolao Josepho Jacquin.

Comments: It is thought that the Bower brothers might have been the artists of this work. This is a 'scientifically' respectable publication with its Linnaean binomial nomenclature as compared to the more imaginative Thornton work Temple of Flora. Thornton's work is very atmospheric with its aquatints, engravings, and full scale plates with plants in the landscape.