

8.1. Gender and other diversities. The empirical, scholarly, written and tacit knowledge and its transfers in plantology, ecology and agriculture (Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century)

Panel organiser: Rippmann Tauber, Dorothee, University of Zurich, Switzerland

Up to now the importance of women in the history of agricultural science has been mostly neglected. A further academic lacuna is the study of 'male' and 'female' in the concepts of natural philosophy and agricultural science. In the panel, the characteristics of female knowledge and the conditions of knowledge acquisition and transfer are looked at under the aspects of gender and gender difference. The focus is on three time-periods. In the beginning, the Encyclopedia of Bartholomew of England (13th century), the manuscripts of which were distributed widely in Europe, shall serve as an example to introduce a theory of the interaction of male and female principles in the macro- and microcosms with which the author explained the life cycle of plants. This explanatory model survived in parts up until the establishment of the modern natural sciences and further into alternative "unscholarly" circles. Secondly, using the example of German high-ranking noble women it can be shown that the sixteenth-century princely court was a 'site of knowledge' in which agricultural and economic practice went hand in hand with the development of theoretical knowledge. These noblewomen could actively further agricultural progress in the manorial oeconomia. We can study the knowledge of a Dresden noblewoman, her interest in agricultural progress and her experiences in practical agriculture through different sources, in contexts of variedly transmitted communication. Thirdly the panel discusses the "passion and profession" of the female pioneers of organic farming in Europe. The importance and the role of women in the history of organic farming is a field into which more academic research is desirable. This lacuna is due to the fact that the historiography of science too has focused on the success stories of "great men", further to the institutionalisation and academisation of organic farming and thus also a changed estimation of knowledge and the definition of academic research in general. There were an astonishing number of women taking part in the development of organic farming in the formative years of its development. What standing did these first-generation female agricultural pioneers have in the "scientific community"? What do their research biographies and achievements look like? Awareness of natural cycles, the interactions and mutual dependency of earth, plants, animals and humans and the emphasis on the fundamental importance of soil fertility have been basic principles of organic farming since its beginnings.

Chair: van der Burg, Margreet, Wageningen University, Netherlands

Wednesday, 21 August 2013 // 1100 – 1300 // Session 8 – Room A-126

8.1.1. „...quod terra est mater et sol est pater plantarum“. Bartholomäus Anglicus' Book of Plants

Rippmann Tauber, Dorothee, University of Zurich, Switzerland

Of the Encyclopaedias of the 13th century, Bartholomäus Anglicus' *De proprietatibus rerum*, widely distributed in the Middle Ages and Early Modernity, is the subject of discussion in this paper. The 17th book *De plantis et herbis*, discusses the Being, Growth and Decay of plants as part of living nature and image of creation. The text, usually analysed for assistance to prayer and moral and theological teachings, shall now be looked at regarding ecology and agrarian history. The hypothesis: The author is reflecting the environment with its ecosystem as well as the results of human ecology and the man's colonisational intervention with nature, through the medium of the encyclopaedia. In the talk, the terminology with which Bartholomäus describes his botanical material is discussed. He uses binary oppositions to illustrate the propagation and growth of the plants. He explains the distribution of seed and the principle of procreation through extrinsic macrocosmic powers, the characteristics of the *anima vegetabilis*, the species and biodiversity, and the comparison of wild and cultivated plants (*silvaticus / domesticus, hortensis*). Bartholomäus judges certain gardening techniques such as grafting to be positive, as long as the domestication transmutes bad natural characteristics into good ones. The question remains, whether there was an interdependency between scholarly transmission of knowledge and the agrarian practice in the age of the deforestation and colonisation of land.

8.1.2. Diversity of media – diversity of gender and social strata

Schlude, Ursula, Associated with the Institute for Saxonian History and Cultural Anthropology (ISGV), Dresden, Germany

European agrarian knowledge seems to be 'scientific' from around 1800, when it was transformed into an academic discipline. This is significant from the perspective of both gender and social history, since the production of agrarian knowledge thus appears as a

qualitatively new, 'male'-connoted, academic scientific practice. The printed agronomic texts of classical antiquity and its reception by humanist scholars (16th century) as well as the printed Hausvater (*paterfamilias*) literature (17th/18th centuries) are regarded as proto-scientific (male) contributions. Viewed from this perspective, the agrarian practice of earlier periods appears in a less favourable light, namely as the unchanging application of "traditional" knowledge. Using archival sources from the sixteenth-century electoral court at Dresden, it is possible to demonstrate that handwritten notes and oral communication were more relevant for scientific practice than the printed agronomic texts, which seem to have been of more interest to (male) philologists and moralists. Given the existence of handwritten communication (letters, reports, rescripts, monographs, geomantic inquiry), it appears likely that people – including peasant people and women – were seeking quite formal scientific information at an earlier date than has been assumed thus far.

8.1.3. Deviant Concepts of Knowledge: Women Pioneers in Organic Farming and Gardening

Spieker, Ira, Institute of Saxon History and Cultural Anthropology, Dresden, Germany

Schmitt, Mathilde, Institut für Interdisziplinäre Gebirgsforschung der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Innsbruck, Austria

There were an astonishing number of women taking part in the development of organic farming and gardening during its initial phases in the early 20th century. The reasons for the intensive participation lay presumably in their passion for a sound environment and food. Furthermore, during this stage it was possible to gather experience, implicit knowledge and scientific data in the field of organic agriculture "at home", in the garden, the kitchen or on window sills. The fact that there was little professionalism with respect to teaching, research and consulting activities in the field made it also possible for women without academic backgrounds and credentials to contribute to the advancement of knowledge. This paper is based on our research on women pioneers in organic farming which started in 2002 with a research project entitled "Passion and Profession. Women Pioneers in Organic Agriculture". The key objective is to trace down, evaluate and establish the achievements of women during the various phases in which organic agriculture crystallized and record their contributions to the development of the theories and methods employed. The paper focusses on the various research approaches and contexts to clarify how gender parameters influenced knowledge concepts which can be characterized by review and experimental development of collected knowledge under local conditions; tacit knowledge and empathy; great need for the dissemination of knowledge; disregard of research results.

8.1.4. „For the Edification of the Common People“: The Parish Library in Eighteenth-Century England

Allen, David, University of St. Andrews, UK

The paper takes as its subject the rural parish library in eighteenth-century England. It will consider the impact of mechanisms for providing access to books and facilitating reading within rural communities, demonstrating the importance of lending libraries for the dissemination of knowledge in a society that enjoyed relatively high levels of literacy but which was in this period also experiencing increasing social dislocation and economic change as agrarian systems were being radically transformed. Among the issues I shall discuss are how far these institutions were either elite-imposed or alternatively were actually led and shaped to some degree by genuine public demand; the extent to which parish libraries, despite their ostensibly religious intent, assisted in much broader forms of cultural diffusion, including relevant technical knowledge for rural readers in the fields of law and agriculture as well as other bodies of learning such as historical writing and imaginative literature; what we can say about how parish libraries served the needs of different groups of rural readers including women in particular; and the ways in which book culture and the circulation of printed texts, in developing shared beliefs, assumptions and understanding (religious, cultural, political, scientific) across the widely-scattered and still largely rural population of eighteenth-century England, assisted in the formation of coherent public identities in this period.

Participants

Allan, David

David Allan is Reader in History at the University of St Andrews. He has held visiting fellowships at Yale, Harvard and the Huntington Library and his research focuses on the cultural and intellectual history of early modern Britain. He is the author of eight books, including *A Nation of Readers: The Lending Library in Georgian England* (2008) and *Commonplace Books and Reading in Georgian England* (2010).

Rippmann Tauber, Dorothee

Dorothee Rippmann Tauber, Prof. Dr phil., MAS, Historian and Archaeologist. Researches on town-country-relations, the life in rural society, and on gender relations. Other fields of research: The history of food and drink and environmental history; the interdisciplinary history of garden and plants (archaeology and history). Teaches medieval history at the University of Zurich/Switzerland since 2004. Studied History, Prehistory, Medieval Archaeology, and Museology at the University of Basel.

Schlude, Ursula

Ursula Schlude, M. A., is a free lance historian, associated with the Institute for Saxonian History and Cultural Anthropology (ISGV), Dresden, Germany. Studied philosophy, Russian philology and social history at the University of Konstanz. Worked in various research projects (Oral History, History of photography and media, Russian History, Early Modern Agrarian and Gender History). Author and director of various documentary films for the German Public TV (Agrarian History, Russian History, Early Modern Gender History).

Schmitt, Mathilde

Mathilde Schmitt, Dr. Sociology and Dipl. Ing. Agricultural Science, worked as researcher and guest professor at Humboldt University, Berlin, and at the Universities of Essen, Göttingen, Innsbruck and Mount Holyoke (USA). Senior scientist at the Institute for Interdisciplinary Mountain Research of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Innsbruck since 2008. Special interests: gender studies, rural sociology, agriculture, food & sustainability, inter- and transdisciplinarity.

Spieker, Ira

Dr. Ira Spieker, Institute of Saxon History and Cultural Anthropology Studies at the University of Göttingen: Cultural Anthropology, Medieval and Modern History, and Media Studies. Worked at the Open-Air Museum Detmold, the Institute of Rural Development (University of Göttingen) and the Institute of Cultural Anthropology / European Ethnology (University of Göttingen and Jena). Research areas: Rural history, Gender & Science, Migration studies, popular culture.

van der Burg, Margreet

Dr. Margreet van der Burg is rural gender historian at Wageningen University, NL. She published several books and many articles on rural women within agricultural and rural modernisation programming with respect to labour, education, extension, self-organisation, representation, and agricultural research. From NL, she first broadened her view to Europe and the western world, and expanded the last decade to global and transnational change. She served as chair and board member in organisations on women's history, rural women's studies and agricultural or rural history, and is now on the editorial board of *Agricultural History*.