Science in the Early Modern Garden (Lisbon, 20-21 Jul 20)

National Library of Portugal, Lisbon, Jul 20–21, 2020
Deadline: Apr 30, 2020

Denis Ribouillault, University of Montréal

Organizers: Denis Ribouillault (University of Montréal, Department of Art History) and Ana Duarte Rodrigues (University of Lisbon, Centro Interuniversitário de História das Ciências e Tecnologia).

Although the history of early modern gardens has benefited in recent decades from an increasingly wide range of methodologies, the role played by these spaces in the development of science has been the subject of a relatively small number of inquiries. A majority of them concentrates on botanical gardens and the history of botany [Baldassari 2017], though it is now recognized that mathematics, pneumatics or astronomy found in gardens a privileged ground for experimentation and display [Fischer et al. 2016; Ferdinand 2016].

A primary aim of this workshop is to interrogate and document what we could call (anachronistically) «scientific practice» in early modern european gardens. How were gardens used to advance scientific knowledge? Examples range from the growing of medicinal plants, astronomical observation, physical experiments and so forth. Gardens were also important places for teaching and for debates and discussion pertaining to the various branches of natural philosophy.

Furthermore, we encourage scholars to pay attention to how this function of gardens as «academies», as platforms for the production and display of knowledge, as stages of scientific sociability and as pedagogical tools, affected the gardens from a formal, artistic, iconographic and hermeneutic point of view. It is not just a matter of documenting and reconstructing what happened in gardens. More precisely, it is a question of showing how what happened in gardens can lead us to a renewed understanding of the physical appearance (at a given moment) of the gardens themselves. This calls for a fruitful – yet difficult-to-achieve - intermingling of the methodologies of the history of science and of the history of art under the aegis of garden history, such as:
- Fabrizio Baldassarri, Oana Matei (eds.), Gardens as Laboratories. A History of Botanical Sciences, Journal of Early Modern Studies, 6 -1, Spring 2017.
- Juliette Ferdinand, From Art to Science. Experiencing Nature in the European Garden, 1500-1700, Treviso, Zel Edizioni, 2016.
- Hubertus Fischer, Volker R. Remmert, Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn (eds.), Gardens, Knowledge and the Sciences in the Early Modern Period, Basel, Birkhäuser, 2016.

Papers should be about 25 minutes long. Q & A and intensive discussion will follow each presentation. We intend to publish the proceedings of the workshop. Contributors' travel and accommodation costs will be covered.

Please send a proposal of 550 words max. with a title and a short bio to denis.ribouillault@umontreal.ca before April 30, 2020.

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The workshop will take place during the exhibition at the National Library Jardins Históricos em Portugal, organized by the Associação de Jardins Históricos and the landscape architect Teresa Andersen, with the collaboration of Ana Duarte Rodrigues, as part of the programme 'Lisboa Verde 2020'. Visits of the exhibition and of relevant gardens and monuments are planned for the workshop participants.
http://www.bnportugal.gov.pt/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=233&Itemid=255&lang=pt

Reference:

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