

Anatole Tchikine

Sixteenth-century plant hunting: Francesco Malocchi's travel report (1600) for the Orto Botanico in Pisa

The holdings of the State Archive in Pisa include a small sixteenth-century bound volume entitled “Spese occorse nel viaggio fatto da un’ semplicista per ritrovare piante e minerali d’ordine di S[ua] A[ltezza] S[erenissima] e compre fatte di d[ett]e piante e minerali” – “Travel expenses of an herbalist sent on a trip in search of plants and minerals by order of His Most Serene Highness, and purchases made of these plants and minerals.”¹ This manuscript, finished around 31 October 1600, is a comprehensive record of a two-month botanizing expedition to Liguria undertaken a year earlier, in July–September 1599, by Fra Francesco Malocchi (d. 1614) on the authority of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Ferdinando I de’ Medici (r. 1587–1609). Between 1595 and 1614, Malocchi – a Franciscan Minorite friar and practicing herbalist – was the superintendent of the Orto Botanico in Pisa, a university-affiliated botanical garden founded under the grand ducal patronage. Given the form of a diary that details Malocchi’s itinerary, findings, and incurring costs, this document highlights the crucial role of travel in the context of sixteenth-century botanical practice. For the purposes of the present volume, it also offers an interesting point of comparison with later travel reports left by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century gardeners, written at the time when systematic visits to gardens and plant nurseries across different countries of Europe, often in conjunction with long- or short-term apprenticeships, became an integral part of these men’s professional training.²

Malocchi’s report consists of fifteen handwritten folios (i.e. thirty pages of text) that provide a day-by-day account of his movements, activities, and expenses, to which are appended nine other folios with lists of plants and naturalia that he acquired in the course of his journey. The object of his travel is indicated in the opening sentence. Malocchi states that he set off for Genoa and the coastal areas of eastern and western Liguria in search for medicinal plants for the Orto Botanico, also looking for samples of minerals, metals, and other natural curiosities for

1 Pisa, Archivio di Stato (hereafter ASP), Università, I, 530; partially transcribed in *Livorno e Pisa: due città e un territorio nella politica dei Medici*, Nistri-Lischi/Pacini, Pisa, 1980, pp. 589–593.

2 See Anatole Tchikine (ed.), Travel and landscape (special issue), *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes*, 36 (2016), 3, especially essays by Hubertus Fischer and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn.

the garden's museum (*galleria*).³ The report finishes with his declaration that this expenditure incurred in conjunction with the above-stated goals, followed by an affirmation by Malocchi's superior, Monsignor Cappone Capponi (d. 1603) – the superintendent of the University of Pisa – that the given figures appeared correct and justified. A pair of similar statements was added after the list of naturalia purchased by Malocchi, attesting that all of these objects had been consigned to their appropriate storage.⁴ The purpose of Malocchi's report was, therefore, not only to record his findings indicating their exact value and provenance, but mainly to account for his elevated expenses, itemizing every amount that he had spent on his voyage. Indeed, the total cost of his trip reached a substantial sum of 1,365 lire or 195 florins.⁵ For comparison, the herbalist's wages for 1599 were at a monthly rate of 12 florins, whereas the salary of his colleague Giuseppe Rovezzano (d. 1602) – the university's lecturer in materia medica (the sixteenth-century forerunner of modern botany) – amounted to even less, only 50 florins per annum.⁶

Since the principal goal of Malocchi's trip was the development of the Orto Botanico, the equal emphasis that his report lays on the acquisition of plants and naturalia is certainly worthy of note. Representing two cognate aspects of natural history, early modern botanical gardens and cabinets of curiosity were conceived in close relationship with one another, which was often expressed in terms of their physical contiguity.⁷ Atypically in this context, the Orto Botanico in Pisa did not have its own museum until 1596, five years after its move to the current location in Via Santa Maria, south of the religious center of Pisa, the Campo dei Miracoli (fig. 1).⁸ The core of this collection was formed by the naturalia previously

3 ASP, Università, I, 530, fol. 1r: "... per andare a Genova e per la riviera di ponente, e di levante per ricercare piante medicinali per il Giardino de' Semplici dello Stud[i]o di Pisa e miniere, e minerali, sughi, e riminerali, terre, e altre cose naturali per la galleria del sopradetto Stud[i]o, tutto per comessione di S[ua] A[lt]tezza S[erenissima], si come per lettere del Sig[no]r Lor[en]zo Usimbaridi, e di saputa di Monsig[no]r Cappone [Capponi]."

4 ASP, Università, I, 530, fols. 15r, 32r.

5 ASP, Università, I, 431, fol. 25r.

6 ASP, Università, II, Sez. G 77, fols. 363v, 364r.

7 John Dixon Hunt, Curiosities to adorn cabinets and gardens, in: Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor (eds.), *The origins of museums*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1985, pp. 193–203; Anatole Tchikine, Echoes of empire: redefining the botanical garden in eighteenth-century Tuscany, in: Yota Batsaki, Sarah Burke Cahalan and Anatole Tchikine (eds.), *The Botany of Empire in the Long Eighteenth century*, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, DC, 2016, p. 97.

8 Prior to that, this garden was documented in three successive locations: behind the Palazzo Medici (formerly the Palazzo Appiani d'Aragona, 1545); inside the Cittadella Vecchia close to the Medici Arsenal (1564, 1568); and near the church of Santa Viviana (1583). Its transfer to Via Santa Maria was begun by Lorenzo Mazzanga in 1590; see ASP, Università, I, 528, loose folios, not numbered. For the controversy concerning this garden's early history, see Anatole Tchikine, Gardens of mistaken identity: the Giardino delle Stalle in Florence and the Giardino dell'Arsenale in Pisa, in: *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes*, 33 (2013), 1, pp. 44–48. The assumption that the Orto Botanico had a museum ("Historiae Naturae Museum") from the time of its founding, put forward in the eighteenth century by Giovanni Calvi, is not supported by documentary evidence; nor did the garden's locations in the Cittadella Vecchia

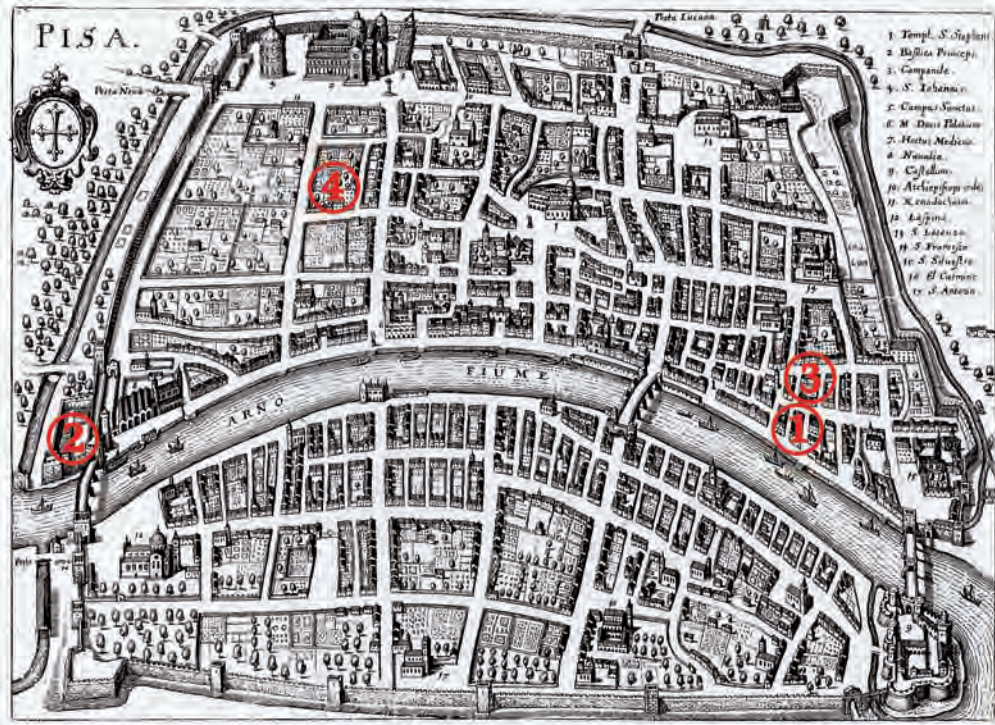


Fig 1 Matthaeus Merian's 1646 map of Pisa, showing the successive locations of the Orto Botanico (1) behind the Palazzo Medici (1545), (2) inside the Cittadella Vecchia (c. 1564), (3) near the church of Santa Viviana (c. 1583), and (4) in Via Santa Maria (from 1590)

in grand ducal possession, including the objects amassed by Giuseppe Casabona – the Fleming Josef Goedenhuize (d. 1595), a leading naturalist in late sixteenth-century Tuscany and Malocchi's predecessor as the keeper of the Orto Botanico – as well as curiosities from the New World procured by Augusto Tizio, the Medici agent in Seville, and a portion of the celebrated *Metallotheca* assembled in Rome by the papal physician Michele Mercati (1541–1593).⁹ The task of consolidating

or the area of Santa Viviana include spaces suitable for housing such collections. Cf. Giovanni Calvi, *Commentarium inserviturum historiae pisani vireti botanici academici*, Pizzorni, Pisa, 1777, pp. 33, 42, 59, 60, 67, 68; Lucia Tongiorgi Tomasi, *Il Giardino dei Semplici dello Studio Pisano. Collezionismo, scienza e immagine tra Cinque e Seicento*, in: *Livorno e Pisa*, 1980 (see note 1), p. 515 (“Una raccolta di oggetti naturalistici, esotici, di curiosità di ogni genere ed anche di quadri era annessa all’orto botanico fin dalla sua origine ...”), the statement corrected by the author in a later publication: Fabio Garbari, Lucia Tongiorgi Tomasi and Alessandro Tosi, *Giardino dei Semplici. L’Orto botanico di Pisa dal XVI al XX secolo*, Cassa di Risparmio di Pisa, Pisa, 1991, p. 158 (“Una raccolta di reperti naturalistici, di oggetti esotici e di curiosità di ogni genere, che comprendeva anche quadri e numerosi libri, era annessa al *Giardino dei Semplici di via Santa Maria* fin dall’origine”; my italics).

⁹ Florence, Archivio di Stato (hereafter ASF), Guardaroba medica, 189, insert 8, fols. 1027r–v (“Inventario di più cose naturale [sic] che si consegnano al presente Fra Franc[esc]o Malocchi semplicista di S[ua] A[lt]tezza S[erenissima] [Ferdinando I] avute dalla detta Altezza che parte d’essi esserli statj donati da M[esser] Agusto Titij,” 22 April 1596), 1028r–v (“Index matalicorum R[everendissimi] Michaeli Mercati,”), 1032r–1033r (“Inventario di varie cose nat[ur]alle che M[adonn]a Madalena Maruc[ella] già moglie di

these miscellaneous holdings following their transfer from Florence to Pisa fell to Malocchi. As his travel report and other related documentation indicate, he carried out his duties with dedication and diligence, turning the museum of the Orto Botanico, at that time located directly below his lodgings, into an exemplary university collection (fig. 2 a–b).

Malocchi's broad range of interests and responsibilities draws attention to a fundamental distinction between herbalists and gardeners, recognized in the six-

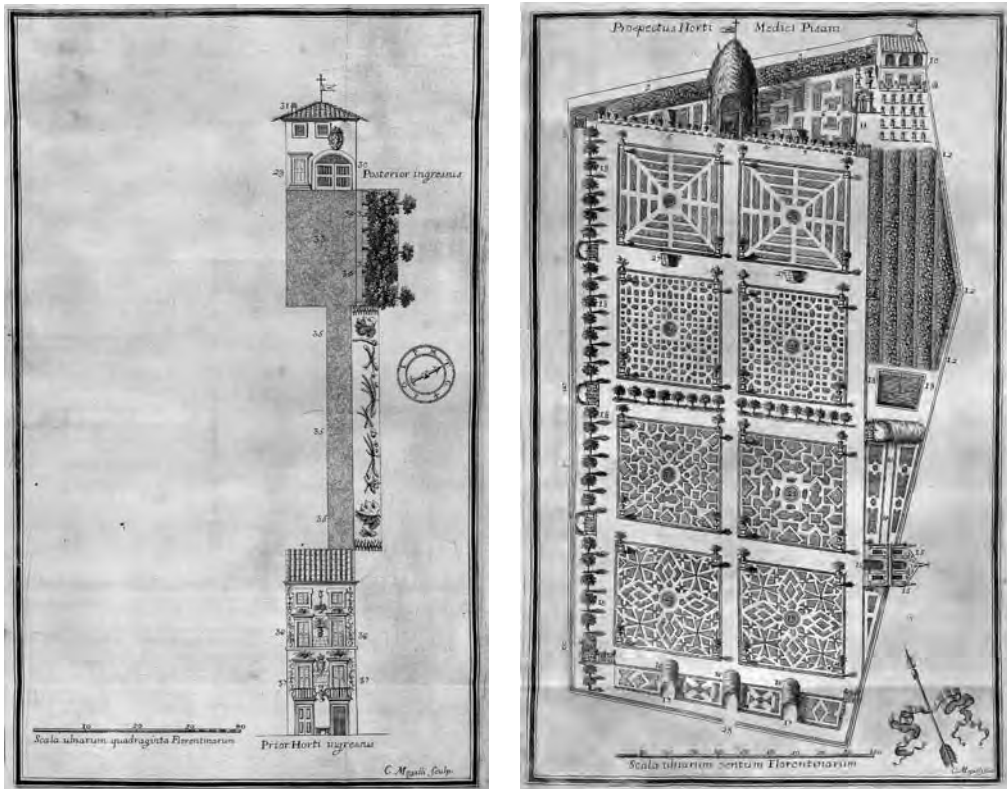


Fig 2a + 2b Plans and elevations of the Orto Botanico in Pisa, from Michelangelo Tilli, *Catalogus plantarum horti pisani ...* (1723). Figure 2a shows the entrance in Via Santa Maria, with the garden's museum on the piano nobile level and the custodian's lodgings located above (marked by numbers 37 and 36 respectively). The garden itself was accessible through the building known as the distillery (marked by numbers 29–31 in figure 2a, 15 in figure 2b). The layout conveys a close relationship between the garden and the museum since their founding in Via Santa Maria. (Photo: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection)

M[esser] Giuseppe Casabuona semplicista di S[ua] A[ltezza] S[erenissima] e a nome del detto consegna per via della guardaroba di S[ua] A[ltezza] S[erenissima] al R[everen]do prete fra Franc[esc]o Malocchi fiorentino del ordine de minorj osser[van]ti come robe di S[ua] A[ltezza] S[erenissima],” 2 February 1596). These documents were partially transcribed in *Livorno e Pisa*, 1980 (see note 1), pp. 587–89. Similar objects from other grand ducal collections are inventoried in the same volume on fols. 1029r, 1030r–v. For Casabona's acquisition of objects from Mercati's *Metalloteca*, see Alessandro Tosi (ed.), *Ulisse Aldrovandi e la Toscana: carteggio e testimonianze documentarie*, Olschki, Florence, 1989, p. 415 (Ulisse Aldrovandi to Girolamo Mercuriale, 29 August 1595).

teenth century.¹⁰ In the Renaissance, gardening was largely a stationary occupation, with training and experience generally acquired through practicing horticulture on a particular property, such as a villa or a farm. The Florentine writer and gardener Agostino del Riccio (1541–1598), for example, claimed firsthand knowledge of the Villa Gambarà (now Lante) at Bagnaia or the gardens of Cardinal Ippolito d’Este (1509–1572) in Rome and Tivoli only because, as a Dominican friar, he had been stationed at the sanctuary of Madonna della Quercia near Viterbo and, at a different time, had been permitted a two-months-long stay at the papal capital.¹¹ Gardeners seldom traveled, usually on business authorized by their patrons, which typically involved obtaining or selecting specific plants. In this case, they could also serve as messengers carrying gifts of food items that included garden produce.

This pattern is evidenced by a series of documented exchanges between the courts of the Medici in Florence and the Gonzaga in Mantua in the last quarter of the sixteenth century.¹² In October 1585, Grand Duke Francesco I de’ Medici (r. 1574–1587) sent to Mantua his gardener Agnolino carrying saplings of lemon trees and a bird-hunting net as presents for his son-in-law, Prince Vincenzo Gonzaga (1562–1612).¹³ Agnolino returned home with a barrel of large carp from Lake Garda and a crate of wild strawberries as offerings from Vincenzo’s wife, the grand duke’s daughter, Princess Eleonora de’ Medici (1567–1611).¹⁴ The following year, in November 1586, the Gonzaga couple sent to Florence Giovanni Radici, their gardener from the Villa Marmirolo near Mantua, to obtain certain plants

10 Tomaso Garzoni, *La piazza universale di tutte le professioni del mondo...*, Somasco, Venice, 1588, pp. 185–191 (“De’ semplicisti, et herbolarij”), 894–900 (“De gli hortolani, et giardinieri”). In this regard, one needs to point out the misleading title of a book devoted to Casabona: Lucia Tongiorgi Tomasi and Fabio Garbari, *Il Giardiniere del Granduca: storia e immagini del Codice Casabona*, Edizioni ETS, Pisa, 1995. The grand ducal herbalist was not a gardener and was typically styled as *semplicista* in contemporary documentation.

11 Agostino del Riccio, *Agricoltura sperimentale*, Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale (hereafter BNCF), Targioni Tozzetti, 56, I–II, fols. 32v, 40r, 78r, 169r, 242r, 244v, 252r, 328r–v, 373v–374v, 423v–424r (pagination is continuous between two volumes); Detlef Heikamp, Agostino del Riccio. “Del giardino di un Re,” in: Giovanna Ragionieri (ed.), *Il giardino storico italiano: problemi di indagine, fonti letterarie e storiche*, Olschki, Florence, 1981, pp. 81, 84–85, 87, 94–95, 110, 121.

12 I am indebted to Edward Goldberg for verifying and augmenting the transcriptions of some of this correspondence, which I am familiar with through the documentary database of the Medici Archive Project in Florence (<http://www.medici.org>).

13 ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 2939, folio not numbered (Vincenzo Gonzaga to Francesco I, 8 October 1585): “Ho havuto da Agnolino giardiniero di V[ostra] Alt[tezza] le piante de’ limoncini et la rete, che mi sono state carissime ... Ho dato ordine che siano prese le porcellette per far prova se sarà possibile il condurle vive costà.” For Agnolino or Agnolo di Giuliano, who was in charge of the hanging garden of the Loggia dei Lanzi in Florence, see ASF, Guardaroba medicea, 111, fol. 586r (17 June 1586): “Jo Angniolo di Giuliano giardiniero al corridore del gran duca ho ricevuto ... cassette venti a modo dj orticini chano [che hanno] a servire per il giardino di piazza”; ASF, Depositeria generale, 389 (“Ruolo de’ famigliari del Serenissimo [gran duca] di Toscana,” ca. 1588), (“Agnolino giardiniero sopra la loggia”).

14 ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 2939, folio not numbered (Eleonora de’ Medici to Francesco I, 14 October 1585): “Ho fatto consignare ad Agnolino giardiniero di V[ostra] Alt[tezza] un barille de’ carpioni del laco [sic] di Garda, accomodati di maniera che potranno durare un anno, quali mando all’Alt[tezza] V[ostra] sperando che siano per piacerli, essendo per se stessi buoni e la concia non mala. Il med[esim]o [Agnolino]

while carrying a gift of trout. The grand duke reciprocated with a basket of mushrooms that prompted a return present of fish, to which Francesco responded with an offering of biscuits and a wether (castrated ram), considered appropriate for the winter season.¹⁵ Analogous exchanges involving gardeners continued under Francesco's younger brother and successor, Ferdinando I, with Radici returning to Florence on at least two other occasions, in 1593 and 1596.¹⁶ In one particular

anco le presenterà una cassetina di maiole, che per essere diverse da quelle che vengono costì, come l'istesso Agnolino riferirà a V[ostra] A[ltezza], ho giudicato che le saranno care.” For the identification of *maiole* with strawberries (“[le] maiole, o fraghe”), see Agostino Gallo, *Le vinti giornate dell'agricoltura...*, Borgomineri, Venice, 1572, p. 140.

- 15 ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 2939, folio not numbered (Eleonora de' Medici to Francesco I, 11 November 1586): “... venendosene costù Giovanni [Radici] giardiniere, mandato dal Ser[enissi]mo S[igno]r mio [Guglielmo Gonzaga], ho voluto visitarla con queste quattro righe ...”; Archivio di Stato di Mantova, Archivio Gonzaga, 1114, insert 8, fol. 660 (Traiano Bobba to the court of Mantua, 22 November 1586): “... el granduca mio signore ha dato ordine a Meo Nerini, suo giardiniere, che trovi le piante che la principessa domanda et le consegna al giardiniere di Mantova,” cited in Roberta Piccinelli, *Le collezioni Gonzaga: il carteggio tra Firenze e Mantova (1554–1626)*, Silvana Editoriale, Milan, 2000, pp. 88–89; ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 2940, folio not numbered (Eleonora de' Medici to Francesco I, 2 January 1587): “Dal giardiniere ho ricevuto la cassetta de' prugnuoli, che V[ostra] A[ltezza] è restata servita di mandarmi, che mi sono stati gratissimi gustando d'essi molto insieme col Sig[no]r Principe mio [Vincenzo Gonzaga] ...”; 2940, folio not numbered (Vincenzo Gonzaga to Francesco I, 8 January 1587): “Havendomi detto il mio giardiniere di Mar[miro]lo [Giovanni Radici] che le trutte [trote] ch'io mandai a V[ostra] Alt[ezz]a per lui, le erano piaciute, et essendomi capitati questi tre maschi, de' quali difficil[men]te per qualche mese non si potranno havere, ne esendo le femine durabili, li mando all'A[ltezza] V[ostra] ancor che non siano di quella grossezza che haverei desiderato, perché le goda insieme con la Ser[enissi]ma Gran Duchessa [Bianca Cappello] per amor mio e per segno della molt'aff[ettio]ne et osservanza mia verso l'Altezza loro.” Another letter refers to this follow up exchange: ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 270, fols. 28v–29r (Francesco I to Vincenzo Gonzaga, 18 January 1587): “Claudio portò le trote ben conditionate, le quali ci siamo godute la Gran Duchessa [Bianca Cappello] et io, non solo per la bontà loro, ma anco per amore di V[ostra] Alt[ezz]a ... alla quale per hora non ho con che altro corrispondere se non con inviarle alcuni biscottini, et un castrato, che a questi freddi sogliono essere molto buoni accetti con il buon animo, che non può essere ne migliore ne più pronto di quello, che sarà sempre verso di lei. Et perché da Claudio intenderà particolarmente del buon esser di tutti noi, non mi estenderò in altro.” I was not able to establish the identity of Claudio.
- 16 ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 2942, folio not numbered (Vincenzo I Gonzaga to Ferdinando I, 29 September 1593): “Venendo il presente Giovanni Radici mio giardiniere di Marmiruolo a Firenze per alcuni affari, lo racc[oman]do a V[ostra] Alt[ezz]a a fine che le piaccia di comandare ch'egli sia presto spedito et se ne possa quanto prima ritornare in qua”; 2942, folio not numbered (Eleonora de' Medici to Ferdinando I, 29 September 1593): “Il presente giardiniere di Marmiruolo presenterà a V[ostra] Alt[ezz]a a in mio nome alcune cose, le quali le piacerà d'accettare in memoria della servitù mia ... Et se sarà servita l'Alt[ezz]a V[ostra] di comandar' che col ritorno del med[esi]mo mi siano mandate alcune inserte per un giardino mio che l'S[igno]r Duca [Vincenzo Gonzaga] mi ha donato qui a Poggio Reale, V[ostra] Alt[ezz]a me ne farà favore et mi saranno car[issi]mi. Quand'io fui a Firenze si compiacque l'Alt[ezz]a V[ostra] di promettermi di quei suoi pavoni bianchi, però s'ella resterà servita con l'occasione dell'istesso giardiniere di farmene gratia, et anco di quelle sue anitre d'India, mi saranno sopra modo care,” with a list of desired plants attached on a separate sheet (see note 17 below); 282, fol. 187v (Ferdinando I to Eleonora de' Medici, 9 October 1593): “Ho visto volentieri il giardiniere di V[ostra] A[ltezza] et le cose mandatemi che come rare, e curiose, mi sono state carissime, ne mancherò di rimandarnelo con li pavoni bianchi desiderati da lei ...”; 282, fol. 187v (Ferdinando I to Vincenzo I Gonzaga, 9 October 1593): “Rendo gratie a V[ostra] Alt[ezz]a dell'amorevole lettera scrittami per il Radici suo giardiniere il quale ho visto volentieri et ordinato sia spedito subito come farò sempre in ogni occasione in che V[ostra] Alt[ezz]a si compiacerà

instance, in September 1593, Eleonora used Radici's visit as an opportunity to ask Ferdinando for grafts of eleven species of plants that included cherry laurel, holly, wayfaring tree, strawberry tree, mastic, yellow jasmine, Persian lilac, and marsh mallow for her new garden of Poggio Reale at Porto Mantovano (across the river Mincio from Mantua).¹⁷ She also reminded her uncle about two white peacocks and Muscovy ducks – birds native to Central and South America – that he had promised to send her earlier.

Only rarely could this exchange of courtesies lead to more prolonged stays abroad, when gardeners acted as “on loan” instructors in particular styles of plant arrangement (usually with the help of preexisting drawings or pattern books). One instance of such professional sojourns was a six-year period spent in the 1560s in France by Bastiano d'Antonio, a gardener from the Giardino delle Stalle in Florence – a large rectangular property near Piazza San Marco, which, in 1587, Casabona transformed into a botanical garden, the Giardino dei Semplici.¹⁸ Bastiano departed for the Valois court on request of the dowager Queen Catherine de' Medici (1519–1589), who had asked her distant relative Duke Cosimo I (r. 1537–1574), the father of Francesco and Ferdinando, for images of some of his pleasure gardens and the services of a gardener. In June 1563, the desired drawings – which included plans of the Boboli Gardens and the Giardino delle Stalle, with indications of names and groupings of their plants – were handed over to the queen's agent in Florence.¹⁹ Soon afterwards, Bastiano d'Antonio followed them to France.²⁰

di farmi sapere la sua volontà ...”; 2942, folio not numbered (Eleonora de' Medici to Ferdinando I, 5 April 1596): “... non ho anche voluto tralasciar questa [occasione] della venuta di M[aest]ro Giovanni [Radici] giardiniere, per mezzo del quale, e di queste poche righe supp[lic]o l'Alt[ezz]a V[ostra] a favorirmi di mettere alc[un]a volta in opera la m[olt]a autorità che ella ha di comandarmi.” White peacocks desired by Eleonora were presumably the pair that Ferdinando, in 1591, sought to obtain from Bologna; see ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 280, fol. 88v (Ferdinando I to Raffaello Riario, 31 August 1591): “Ritrovandomi io qui in Pratolino, il pavone bianco, che V[ostra] S[ignoria] mi ha mandato, è stato consegnato in Fiorenza al mio giardiniere, et essendomi stato carissimo, sicome mi sarà gratissima la femmina, se ella la potrà trovare, gliene aggradisco con molto affetto.”

17 The list of plant names attached to Eleonora's letter of 29 September 1593 included *lauri di Trabizonda*, *agrifoglio*, *lentag[li]ne*, *hortine*, *corbezoli*, *lentischi*, *gialsomini gialli*, *rovistico di levante*, *rosoni doppi*, *garattole*, and *bamia*. For the identification of *bamia* with marsh mallow, see Del Riccio, *Agricoltura Sperimentale*, BNCF, Targioni Tozzetti, 56, I, fols. 103v (“*Bamia o altea*”), 168r–v, 170v.

18 Tchikine, *Gardens of mistaken identity*, 2013 (see note 8), pp. 40–44.

19 ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 219, fol. 124v (Cosimo I to Catherine de' Medici, 7 June 1563): “Ancorché io habbia scritto alla M[aest]rà V[ostra] con l'occasione del S[igno]r Gio[vanni] And[re]a Ondadei, al quale si son' dati li disegni et piante [canceled: che] di luoghi ch'ella desidera insieme con il giardiniere”; ASF, *Scrittoio delle fortezze e fabbriche, Fabbriche medicee*, 49, fol. 43r (5 June 1563): payment to “Federigo dipintore ... per havere dipinto el disegno de' Pitti mandato S[ua] E[ccellenza] [Cosimo I] in Francia et la pianta del giardino”; Giovanni Gaye, *Carteggio inedito d'artisti...*, Molini, Florence, 1840, Vol. III, p. 113 (Tanai de' Medici to Cosimo I, 17 May 1563): “E' si manda a V. E. I. la pianta del giardino delle stalle, come da Francesco di Ser Iacopo mi è stato ordinato per parte di V. E., e su la qual pianta vi s'è notato tutte le sorte delle piante che vi sono, come V. E. vedrà.”

20 ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 609, fol. 977r (30 June 1563, record of payment of 32 *scudi* to “Bastiano d'Antonio giardiniere alle Stalle per donativo per andare in Francia”).

Despite this auspicious start, Bastiano's career at the Valois court was thwarted by the queen's chronic lack of funds, as the country slid into the deepening political crisis of the Wars of Religion. Only a year after his arrival, Catherine's financial situation left Bastiano without means of support. On 24 June 1566, the Medici ambassador in France, Giovanni Maria Petrucci, wrote to Prince-Regent Francesco explaining the gardener's predicament.²¹ Yet, Bastiano had to wait for another three years before the pleas of his desperate wife and family, whom he had left in Florence, have finally reached the duke. On 15 June 1569, Cosimo I instructed Petrucci to negotiate the gardener's release from the French royal service.²² After that, Bastiano d'Antonio's name disappeared from diplomatic correspondence, suggesting his eventual discharge from his duties and return to Italy.²³

21 ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 4596, fol. 68r-v (Giovanni Maria Petrucci to Francesco de' Medici, 24 June 1566): "Per obedir alla Reg[in]a [Catherine de' Medici] io scrivo al S[igno]r Duca mio S[igno]re [Cosimo I] di man' prop[ri]a quanto la vedrà. Il Duca mio S[igno]re intorno a tr'anni sono mandò il giardiniere del giardino costà alle stalle di S[an] Marco a servir' qua alla Reg[in]a conservando' il giardino costà con sua solita provisione per sua moglie, et figli. Hoggi che li viene scritto che il giardino non patì, et che c'è, chi cerca far' cavar li suoi figli di quel' luogo mi s'è venuto a raccomandare, ch'io ne scriva un' motto a V[ost]ra E[ccellenza] [Francesco de' Medici], dicendoli che qua non è pagato già due anni, et che la fa molto male, et se non gl'è fatto gratia di perpetuarlo in la sua piazza che li suoi figli anderanno cercando, et quanto fusse con sua buona gratia procurerebbe licentia che poter' tornarsene, perché così non puo stare, ne vuol partire senza la buona gratia di V[ost]ra E[ccellenza] essendo stato mandato dal S[igno]r Duca in questo servitio." In his response, however, Francesco ordered the gardener to remain in the queen's service; see ASF, MP, 4602, fol. 20v (Francesco de' Medici to Petrucci, 9 August 1566): "Al giardiniere direte, che attenda a servire, et non si dia fastidio."

22 ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 221, fol. 59v (Tommaso de' Medici to Petrucci, 15 June 1569): "Il duca s[igno]r nostro [Cosimo I] mi ha comandato che io scriva a V[ost]ra S[ignoria] qualmente più tempo fa S[ua] E[ccellenza] I[llustrissima] [Cosimo I] mandò alla Regina di Francia [Catherine de' Medici] un giardiniere nominato Bastiano il quale stava qui nel giardino di S[ua] E[ccellenza] I[llustrissima] vicino alle stalle. E perché il detto Bastiano sono molto mesi et forse anni che non provvede qua cosa alcuna alla sua moglie la quale patisce, la prefata S[ua] E[ccellenza] I[llustrissima] vorrebbe che la S[ignoria] V[ost]ra procurassi di parlargli et intendere da lui come sia trattato e se pensa haver licentia di tornare consiglandolo et aiutandolo in quello che li occorressi per tornare con buona gratia della Regina e non altrimenti. E quando non pensi potersene tornare così presto V[ost]ra S[ignoria] lo esorti a sovvenire la sua povera famiglia."

23 Although rare, such requests for gardeners' services abroad were not exceptional. In 1607, for example, Inigo de Cárdenas (d. 1617), the Spanish ambassador in Venice, wanted to invite a Florentine gardener to work on his estate outside Madrid, offering more generous terms of employment that had been granted to Bastiano d'Antonio. See ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 3000, fol. 140r-v (Asdrubale Barbolani da Montauto to Belisario Vinta, 14 July 1607): "L'ambasciatore di Spagna fu avant'hieri da me ... et infine mi pregò a far opera perché se gli trovasse un giardiniere fiorentino da mandare in Spagna vicino a Madril otto miglia in una sua terra, dove ha sito da fare giardini belli et vorrebbe coltivarlo et ridurlo all'uso d'Italia promettendo che al giardiniere sarà dato commodo per il viaggio per se, et anco per la moglie et famiglia se l'havesse, che sarà all'ambasciatore più caro et saranno anco ben trattati nel luogo. Di questo io ne scrivo anco al Cavaliere [Vincenzo] Giugni, che l'ambasciatore mi dice sapere che ne ha mandato uno in Lorena." This request is again referred to on fol. 147v (Montauto to Vinta, 28 July 1607): "Ho fatto mezza scusa con l'amb[asciato]re di Spagna per conto del giardiniere, che pur spera che deve esserle trovato dal Cav[alier]r Giugni." I am grateful to Edward Goldberg for signaling and transcribing the second of these documentary references.

While these examples show that sixteenth-century gardeners, if they traveled at all, generally did that by commission, the mobility of herbalists was inherent in their profession. Their expertise revolved around the study of the morphology and properties of “simples” (i.e. medicinal plants), whose natural habitats and methods of cultivation they knew in minute detail.²⁴ Conceived under the broad umbrella of Paracelsian medicine, this knowledge was supplemented by closely related enquiries into the animal and mineral kingdoms of nature, since powered naturalia in combination with herbal infusions served as ingredients for various potions and theriacs. While these interests were also shared by apothecaries, what made the two related professions distinct was a stronger emphasis that herbalists laid on the identification and classification of plants rather than the methods of using them in medicinal preparations.²⁵

Given the growing prestige associated in sixteenth-century Europe with the possession of rare and exotic plants, especially flowers,²⁶ the emerging practice of botany attracted representatives of different social and professional groups that included university lecturers, apothecaries, physicians, garden custodians, and noble enthusiasts. By the end of the sixteenth century, these shared pursuits resulted in the formation of cross-European correspondence networks of scholars, collectors, and practitioners. Based in Pisa, the garden superintendent Malocchi, for example, was in contact with such renowned plant connoisseurs as the university lecturer Carolus Clusius (Charles de l'Écluse, 1526–1609) in Leiden, the apothecary Ferrante Imperato (1550–1631) in Naples, and the nobleman Matteo Caccini (1573–1640) in Florence.²⁷ Since new information circulated among members of

24 Garzoni, *La piazza universale*, 1588 (see note 10), pp. 185–186, 190–191.

25 Garzoni, *La piazza universale*, 1588 (see note 10), p. 186: “Ma singolarmente per gli Herbolarij è da avvertire la diligentissima divisione di tutte le herbe, & semplici del mondo”; cf. pp. 662–666 (“De’ speciari, ovvero aromatarii”).

26 For the role of floriculture in the context of early modern collecting, see Georgina Masson, Italian flower collectors’ gardens in seventeenth century Italy, in David Coffin (ed.), *The Italian garden. Dumbarton Oaks colloquium on the history of landscape architecture*, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, DC, 1972, pp. 63–80.

27 ASP, Università, I, 518 (volume containing loose sheets of numbered payment orders authorized by Malocchi): no. 164 (2 August 1604): “... per una pianta un vaso cola terra cioè una pianta di leucoio del fior doppio consegnatoli dal Sig[nor] Fer[r]ando Imperato di Napoli di mia comessione[sic] di suo nolo da Napoli a Pisa”; no. 2 (15 November 1605): “... per quat[t]ro cipolle d’iride bulbosa tutta gialla mandatami dal Sig[nor] Matteo Caccini che me la fatte venire di Fiandra di mia comessione [sic]”; no. 10 (3 December 1605): “... per avere condotto da Pisa a Firenze dua vasi grandi pieni di terra dentrovi una pianta d’aracio per comessione di S[ua] A[ltezza] S[erenissima] [Ferdinando I] per li Pitti e uno di litospermo per M[esser] Matteo Caccini portò sotto di 18 di novembre 1605 e da Firenze a Pisa”; no. 53 (2 March 1606): “... per 2 scatole di piante una mandata a Roma a M[esser] Enrigo Corgo Corvini e l’altra a M[esser] Matteo Caccini”; no. 55 (28 April 1606): “... per una pianta grande di leucoio bianco doppio fattomi venire di mia comessione per servitio del giardino de’ semprici di Pisa ... d’ordine del Sig[no]re Matteo Caccinj di Firenze ... e fatta venire di Brescia in vaso grande di terra ...”; no. 64 (28 April 1606): “... per una scatola di più sorte [di] piante per servitio del giardino mandatami da Firenze dal Sig[nor] Matteo Caccini”; no. 69 (11 June 1606): “... per tanti colori mandatami di Firenze da M[esser] Giulio Marucelli spetiale in Firenze di mia comessione per dipingere certe piante per mandare di fuori a Carlo Clusio per servitio del giardino.”

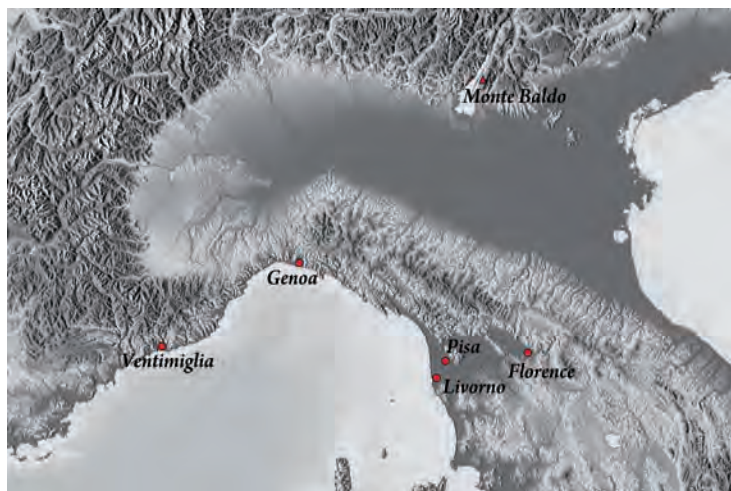


Fig 3 The geography of Francesco Malocchi's travels in July–September 1599 (with the addition of Florence and Monte Baldo)

this international community mainly in the form of letters, drawings, and samples, travel and fieldwork provided the essential resources that enabled this material and intellectual exchange.

Sixteenth-century Italian herbalists usually favored mountainous destinations – such as the Pratomagno and the Montagna Pistoiese in Tuscany or, most famously, Monte Baldo east of Lake Garda near Verona – where the changing elevation allowed a succession of different climate and vegetation zones (fig. 3). They also tended to retrace the routes of their colleagues, taking advantage of previous indications concerning the objects and logistics of their travel. Malocchi's itinerary was consistent with this practice. In geographical terms, the coastal promontories of western Liguria – where high mountain altitudes burrowed in valleys and gorges rose steeply above the shoreline – created a high concentration of different microclimates and habitats (littorals, grasslands, woodlands, and riverbeds) promising ample botanical rewards to those who braved trekking through this forbidding region. The proximity of the sea with its traffic of patrol galleys, merchant feluccas, and postal boats provided a speedy means of transport and regular opportunities for shipping living specimens to temporary plant depots (usually the gardens of local apothecaries and physicians) instead of risking to carry these delicate findings on the rest of the voyage. Situated close to the Ligurian coral fisheries, the port city of Genoa was a busy center of antiquarian trade, offering a wide selection of natural curiosities that could satisfy even the most discerning tastes at a fairly affordable cost. Finally, Malocchi had the additional advantage of

The dates may not be accurate, since Malocchi switches between Pisan and Florentine styles of dating. For contacts with Clusius, see Malocchi's letters (20 June and 8 November 1606) in the library of the University of Leiden; Pietro Ginori Conti, *Lettere inedite di Charles de l'Escluse (Carolus Clusius) a Matteo Caccini floricultore Fiorentino*, Olschki, Florence, 1939, pp. 36–37, 38, 40, 42, 54, 80 (relating to the period of 1606–08).



Fig 4 Malocchi's principal destinations on the Ligurian riviera in July–September 1599

carrying lists of local plants left by Casabona,²⁸ who had explored the same area on at least three occasions, in 1578, 1581, and 1587.²⁹

Malocchi's itinerary involved day-long stretches of sea travel alternating with brief – up to three days – inland or coastal excursions, usually on horseback, but occasionally on foot. Leaving from the Medici port of Livorno in early July, when the Ligurian waters were most navigable, he sailed on board a grand ducal galley to Genoa. Bedridden there with fever for almost a week, he then proceeded to Ventimiglia, the westernmost point of his travels, lodging in a Franciscan friary and undertaking several trips in the surrounding countryside to explore the riverine flora of the torrents Roia and Nervia and climbing up Monte Grammondo that stood on the border with the Duchy of Savoy. His return journey progressed in a circuitous fashion, generally in the direction of Savona, passing along the coast through Sanremo, Porto Maurizio (now Imperia), Alassio, and Albenga, but with detours to visit the alpine areas around Bajardo, Triora, and Pieve di Teco; the island of Gallinara south of Albenga; and Monte della Guardia near Noli (fig. 4). Towards the end of his trip, in early September, Malocchi once again reached Genoa, where, delayed by contrary winds, he continued botanizing in the neighboring hills, shopping for naturalia, and spending evenings in the company of

28 ASP, Università, I, 530, fols. 5v, 6r, 8v.

29 ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 713, fol. 104r (Casabona to Francesco I, 18 July 1578, writing from Triora): “... mi hora al presente trove [sic] ne gli confini di Genova & P[i]emonte tra quelli aspri monti dove io ho trovato varii et diverse belli pianti”; Erlangen, Universitätsbibliothek Erlangen-Nürnberg, Briefsammlung Trew, Casabona, fol. 5r (Casabona to Joachim Camerarius the Elder, 4 August 1581): “... trovandomi per al presente in Genova per andarne in P[i]emont”; Briefsammlung Trew, Casabona, fol. 23r (Casabona to Camerarius, 24 October 1587): “... io sono stata [sic] in Lombardia P[i]emont et Genova et ritornai a Fiorenza a dì 15 d’october [sic].”

local naturalists, including the prominent Genoese physician Camillo Boerio (d. 1614).³⁰

Without downplaying the hardships and dangers of his trip, Malocchi's report reveals the extent to which the success of such expeditions depended on the collective knowledge accumulated by the larger community of naturalists and the collaboration of the local population. Lodging in coastal villages and mountain hamlets, the herbalist came in contact with a wide spectrum of their inhabitants – innkeepers, ship captains, shop owners, craftsmen, peasants, and fishermen – on whose goodwill and services he had to rely. He also received generous assistance from local apothecaries, who helped him hire guides (indispensable on any, however short, botanizing trips), find saddle horses and beasts of burden, and store and package his findings. Sometimes – as was the case with Casabona's old acquaintance Giuseppe Borello, whom Malocchi met in Pieve di Teco – they even volunteered to join him on his excursions.³¹ What such support meant for the herbalist is indicated by the scarcity of human and material resources that plagued him on his travels through a poor and underpopulated region in the heat of the summer, when most locals and their animals were busy with agricultural work.

Throughout his journey, Malocchi subsisted on a diet of wine, bread, cheese, eggs, vegetables, and greens (which he dressed with oil and vinegar carried in a small double flask), rarely supplemented by sausages, meat, and fruit. Replenished on a daily basis, these provisions were carried in a large wicker hamper, which, together with a valise containing his belongings, were the only personal items that the herbalist brought on his trip. The rest of his luggage consisted of an assortment of boxes, baskets, and crates of different capacity and size, covered as well as open. Usually ordered and manufactured on site, they contained his various findings. Malocchi's chief concern was for the safety of his plants. Transported in coverless boxes with rope handles (or, as a cheaper option, large baskets), they had to be covered with earth, stored in cool shaded places, and needed regular watering – which meant that, when shipped, they had to be accompanied by a barrel of fresh water.³² Fragile naturalia, carefully wrapped in raw cotton and packed in small individual containers tightened with string, eventually filled two sizable crates. The majority of these curiosities were different pieces of coral, intricately shaped or grown on other marine objects, such as sponges or shells. To these rarities were added miscellaneous purchases: a palm tree trunk that Malocchi bought in Sanremo, large enough so as to be carried by two men;³³ a broken oriental

30 For Malocchi's contacts with Boerio, see ASP, Università, I, 530, fols. 2r, 5v, 11v, 12r, 13r.

31 ASP, Università, I, 530, fols. 8v–9v, 13v. Malocchi's contacts with Borello continued after this trip; see ASP, Università, I, 518, no. 64 (3 May 1606): "... per una cassetta venuta di Genova mandatami da M[esser] Ioseffe Borello spetiale di mia comesione piena di ermodatili del Mattiolo."

32 ASP, Università, I, 530, fol. 10v.

33 ASP, Università, I, 530, fol. 7r.

(“Turkish”) jar, noteworthy mainly on account of the coral that grew over it;³⁴ and an ancient bronze statuette about 0.5 m high found in the sea near Sardinia, which the herbalist thought might have been of interest to his patron Ferdinando I.³⁵

For herbalists like Malocchi, travel was not an educational activity – which was the significance that it acquired in the context of the Grand Tour – but a professional necessity. For this reason, his response to the landscapes that he passed through on his voyage merits particular attention. For Grand Tour travelers, the Ligurian coast – the modern Côte d’Azur or Costa Azzurra – was one of two main points of entry into Italy that often made the first and lasting impression of the peninsula’s rich and diverse flora. When sailing past Sanremo in November 1646, the Englishman John Raymond admired the shore “all covered with Orange, Citron, and Date Trees.”³⁶ Malocchi, however, noted nothing of the kind. To him, the coastal settlements between Ventimiglia and Savona, now dotted with expensive holiday resorts and famous for their flourishing entertainment industry, were wretched and inhospitable places inhabited mainly by the families of poor fishermen. “Sono paesi strani,” “sono [le] gente goffe” – “these are foreign lands,” “boorish people,” he complained, commenting on the almost deserted, barely inhabited villages populated by rustics.³⁷ What concerned him most were adverse weather (such as dense fog that at one point nearly drove him into danger),³⁸ bad roads, and rough seas, not the stark beauty of the Ligurian coastline.

In this way, Malocchi’s report gives us an inkling of how sixteenth-century herbalists perceived the natural environment, where a significant part of their activities had to unfold. What filled them with excitement were not, as scholars tend to assume, breathtaking mountain views whose experience reflected the growing appreciation of contemporary Flemish paintings and prints,³⁹ but agglomerations of different plant habitats – a mode of perception that, at a risk of sounding anachronistic, might be described as an “ecological” reading of landscape. In this context, the unexpected encounter with a specimen of black salsify (*Scorzonera hispanica* L.) – a Mediterranean root vegetable, poorly known at the time, which Malocchi came across on the coast near Albenga – could acquire momentous sig-

34 ASP, Università, I, 530, fols. 14r (“una mezza giara turchesca con brache di corallo sopra cosa rarissima”), 31r (“[u]na meta d’una broccha turchesca con brane di corallo”).

35 ASP, Università, I, 530, fols. 14r (“una figura o statua di bronzo alta un braccio antica, pescata in Sardinia a coralli cosa rara”), 32r.

36 John Raymond, *Il Mercurio italico communicating a voyage made through Italy in the years 1646 & 1647...*, Moseley, London, 1648, p. 8.

37 ASP, Università, I, 530, fols. 8r, 8v.

38 ASP, Università, I, 530, fol. 9v (“... e quando fummo a mezza strada si fece una nebbia tanto folta, che noi non ci vedevamo l’uno l’altro; si smarri la strada, e trovammo certi segatori, che se non erano loro albergavamo alla campagna al buio.”)

39 Cf. Pamela H. Smith and Paula Findlen, Introduction, in: Pamela H. Smith and Paula Findlen (eds.), *Merchants & marvels: commerce, science, and art in early modern Europe*, Routledge, New York i.a., 2002, p. 9 (with reference to Francesco Calzolari).



Fig 5 Itineraries and destinations of botanizing trips undertaken from Florence by Giovanni Targioni Tozzetti (1743) and Saverio Manetti (July–August 1758). Targioni traveled to explore the surroundings of marble caves near Stazzema and Seravezza via Poggio a Caiano, Pistoia, Borgo a Buggiano, Lunata, Ponte a Moriano, and Barga, returning via Lucca, Pistoia, and Poggio a Caiano; he visited this region again in 1746. Manetti investigated the mountainous areas around Castellina, Monte Morello, Madonna del Sasso, Vallombrosa, Monte Senario, Monte Giovi, Monte Ferrato, and Monte Cuccoli

nificance. As he wrote with genuine emotion towards the end of his report, “Ma la scorza nera sola vale più che tutte le piante che si trovano in q[uest]o viaggio, e am[m]azza che importa” – “But the scorzonera alone is worth more than all other plants found on this trip, and God witness how much it matters!”⁴⁰

Malocchi's report highlights the crucial role of travel in the context of sixteenth-century study of nature, emphasizing the close relationship that existed at the time between plant hunting and various other forms of collecting. Fieldwork continued to play a significant part in later botanical practice. Documents pertaining to the history of the Giardino dei Semplici in Florence, for example, convey the importance attached to botanizing trips by the garden's eighteenth-century directors Giovanni Targioni Tozzetti (1712–1783) and Saverio Manetti (1723–1785), who went on similar expeditions during the 1740s–1750s (fig. 5).⁴¹ The logistics of their travels remained largely the same. Just as Malocchi, Targioni Tozzetti relied on guides when traveling during the night or visiting poorly accessible sites (including jasper and marble quarries near Pietrasanta in Tuscany); purchased locally made baskets and wooden boxes for transporting plants as his journey progressed; and suffered from inclement weather, such as torrential rain

40 ASP, Università, I, 530, fol. 38v.

41 Florence, Biblioteca Botanica dell'Università di Firenze (hereafter BBUF), Manoscritti, 97, fols. 97v–98r, 118r, 119r, 120r–141r, 144r, 145r–146v.

that flooded the countryside, turning every river and stream into a dangerous crossing (although, unlike earlier naturalists, he carried a practical novelty in the form of a folding umbrella).⁴² Perhaps one crucial difference was that Targioni Tozzetti's missions were no longer entrusted to him by his sovereign, the grand duke of Tuscany, but were undertaken on behalf of a learned society (in his case, the Società Botanica Fiorentina, founded under the Medici patronage in 1716). Such institutions played an increasingly dominant role in coordinating eighteenth-century botanical research.⁴³

An even more fundamental change was the choice of itineraries and destinations, which for eighteenth-century Tuscan naturalists increasingly focused on their native region. When, in late 1646, the British traveler John Raymond reached Pisa, he admired the Orto Botanico and its collections – initiated by Casabona and Malocchi and enriched by their successors – as a garden that was “more for use than [sic] delight,” being “cover'd with simples, outlandish Plants and the like.” He also noted the adjoining museum “abounding with all curiosities of Nature, as foreign creatures, Stones, Mineralls, and whatsoever strange the farthest Indies produce.”⁴⁴ Paradoxically, by the beginning of the eighteenth century, this influx of exotic objects and flora spurred an equally compelling interest in the “indigenous” nature.⁴⁵ What was changing, however, was not the scope of botanical exploration or the focus of collecting, but the relative significance attached to the notions of “native” and “foreign.”⁴⁶ This growing awareness of regional identities as expressed in specific environmental characteristics gave rise to systematic descriptions of a particular country or region comprising its geography, history, and natural resources, which started to appear alongside of more traditional books (such as catalogs of botanical gardens). In fact, in the case of Targioni Tozzetti, it was his multi-volume chorographic survey of Tuscany rather than the committed involvement with the Giardino dei Semplici that marked the true measure of his

42 BBUF, Manoscritti, 97, fols. 145r–146v.

43 Tchikine, *Echoes of empire*, 2016 (see note 7), p. 103.

44 Raymond, *Il Mercurio italico*, 1648 (see note 36), pp. 21–22.

45 Alix Cooper, *Inventing the indigenous: local knowledge and natural history in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge i.a., 2007; for Tuscany, see Tchikine, *Echoes of empire*, 2016 (see note 7), pp. 105–06. This interest, however, developed parallel with broader imperial or colonial agendas, as manifest in the ambitious botanical missions subsidized during the eighteenth century by the Spanish Bourbons and the Austrian Habsburgs. See Daniela Bleichmar, *Visible empire: botanical expeditions and visual culture in the Hispanic Enlightenment*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2012; Hans Walter Lack, *The Bauers: Joseph, Franz & Ferdinand: masters of botanical illustration*, Prestel, Munich i.a., 2015.

46 In the sixteenth century, Agostino del Riccio distinguished plants into “nostrali” and “pellegrine”; Tomaso Garzoni made a threefold distinction between medical herbs that were “nostrane,” “straniere,” and “incerte per non essere ancora ben conosciute.” See Del Riccio, *Agricoltura Sperimentale*, BNCF, Targioni Tozzetti, 56, I–II, fols. 25r, 75r, 198r, 378r; Garzoni, *La piazza universale*, 1588 (see note 10), p. 186.

scholarly achievement.⁴⁷ While travel remained a fundamental means of access to new knowledge, for eighteenth-century botanists, unlike their contemporary gardeners, it often meant the “rediscovery” of the local rather than better acquaintance with the foreign.

⁴⁷ Giovanni Targioni Tozzetti, *Relazioni d'alcuni viaggi fatti in diverse parti della Toscana per osservare le produzioni naturali, e gli antichi monumenti di essa...*, Stamperia Granducale/Gaetano Cambiagi, Florence, 1768–79 (12 vols., second amended edition).