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Memory's Garden and other Wondrous Excerpts:

Ernst Brinck (1582–1649), Collector

That exotic, preternatural, curious, and/or wondrous items were regarded in the early modern era with interest unto compulsion is by now a familiar feature of the historical landscape. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries throughout Europe princes, pharmacists, patricians, painters, and others assembled collections of varying degrees of grandeur and varying scales; they have come to be known as *«Kunstkammern»*, *«Wunderkammern»*, or *«cabinets of curiosity»*. These vast compilations contained varied entities ranging from natural items (*naturalia*) and man-made objects (*artificialia*) to non-European goods (*exotica/ethnographica*) and instruments (*scientifica*). Over the past decades a great deal of scholarly attention has been paid to these collections, highlighting such facets of the phenomenon as the relationship between collecting and knowledge; the relationship between collecting and power; the sociology of collecting; the religious, political, professional dimensions of collections—to name a few. Occasionally, discussions revert to a theme introduced a century ago in the landmark study by Julius von Schlosser—namely, the national or regional character of collecting practices.¹

This essay profits from the generous literature to date and the range of subjects it encompasses, in order to introduce the all but unknown early modern Dutchman and collector Ernst Brinck (1582–1649).² What follows is a prolegomenon to an ongoing study of Brinck, whose literary legacy comprises an extraordinary resource for the study of seventeenth-century practices as varied and as interconnected as reading, collecting, diplomacy, trade, and travel—and more. While early modern collecting was an international phenomenon whose success depended on the cultivation of networks reaching across local, national, and even global terrains and borders, Dutch collecting practices tend to be studied locally and relatively speaking less avidly than other European instances of early modern curiosity in practice.³ Among other things, this introduction to one aspect of Brinck's many pursuits aims to help redress this imbalance.

The Dutch landscape of collecting

Dutch collections of naturalia and remarkable specimens assembled by the textile merchant Levinus Vincent (1658–1727) and the medical doctor Frederick Ruysch (1638–1731) or the mayor of Amsterdam, traveler, and maecenas Nicolaes Witsen (1641–1717) are relatively familiar landmarks of the European phenomenon writ large.⁴ These later seventeenth-century collections were widely renowned in their own time. In scope and character they bridge the gap between the Renaissance *«studioli»* and post-Enlightenment museums of natural history. Early seventeenth-century Dutch collections such as Ernst Brinck's have left a

considerably lighter mark in the historical record. They were not open to a paying public, as was Vincent's, for example, and although Brinck's contemporary and friend Bernardus Paludanus (1550–1633), city doctor in Enkhuizen and fabled collector, did attract visitors from far and wide, the learned Dutch gentleman's collection was not, in the early seventeenth century, on a par with princely or imperial ambitions. – Cosimo de' Medici visited Dutch collections in 1667–1669, and Ruysch sold his anatomical cabinet to Peter the Great in 1717.⁵ – The earlier collections adhered, generally speaking, to the model proposed by Francis Bacon in his *Gesta Grayorum*, where a philosophically inclined counselor proposes that a ruler who would rule by knowledge (of nature, rather than by force, for example) assemble a library, a garden, a collection, and a still house or laboratory. This counselor prescribes

a goodly, huge Cabinet, wherein whatsoever the hand of man by exquisite art or engine has made rare in stuff, form or motion; whatsoever singularity, chance, and the shuffle of things hath produced; whatsoever Nature hath wrought in things that want life and may be kept; shall be sorted and included.⁶

The landmark 1992 study and exhibition catalogue *De wereld binnen handbereik* picks up speed after mid-century; where earlier collections are cited, they function as harbingers of things to come rather than as the focus of study or analysis. Nonetheless there is evidence that Baconian cabinets were more frequent in early seventeenth-century Holland than generally acknowledged. Eric Jorink's recent study, *The Book of Nature*, describes several such collections, among them Brinck's, for the first time.⁷ Even the statesman and man of letters Constantijn Huygens (1596–1687) participated in the phenomenon: in 1630 he wrote that «he himself collected such things, which are contained in over 900 boxes».⁸ Huygens's collection has not, however, made more than a cameo appearance in histories of Dutch collecting.

One Dutch collection that does feature in histories of the time, often forming the *terminus post quem* for studies of Dutch collecting, is that of Paludanus.⁹ Paludanus traveled widely before taking up that post of city doctor of Enkhuizen in the north of Holland in the 1580s. During his travels in Italy, German territories, eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Egypt, he accumulated not just medical education—he received his doctorate in medicine in Padova—but experience of collections and items for his own collection, the contents of which were predominately natural, generally unusual, and in some cases religious.¹⁰ A contemporary description that survives of a visit in 1594 to this cabinet of wonders gives a vivid sense of the encounter with such a vast assemblage of goods:

The other day I visited Paludanus [...]. He showed me his collection, which had such varied and numerous items that I scarcely believed they existed in nature. Nature herself seems to have moved into his house, entire and unmutilated, and there is nothing written down in books that he cannot present to your eyes. That is why the great man Joseph Scaliger gave all his rarities (which were both numerous and spectacular) to Paludanus, saying, «Here are your things, which I have possessed unjustly».¹¹

The Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) was particularly inspired—or perhaps confused—by Paludanus's extensive possessions, which he described as «Thesaurus Orbis, Totius compendium/ Arca universi, sacra Naturae penus, Templumque Mundi...».¹² Around the turn of the seventeenth century, at a time when he maintained intense contacts and interaction with the merchant-voyager and

author Jan Huygen van Linschoten (1562–1611), the ‘Dutch Magellan’, Paludanus began to collect ethnographic items in large numbers for display and study as well. His collection evolved over time, and Paludanus sold it off on at least two occasions prior to his death. His involvement with trade—primarily by way of van Linschoten, and also as a result of his living in a port town, Enkhuizen—and with trade in the East and the North in particular accounts for the inclusion of ethnographica in his collection over time.

Elsewhere, I have written about the Leiden pharmacist Christiaen Porret (1554–1627), and explored some of the ways in which Porret’s collection may have functioned.¹³ Like Brinck, Porret was known in the seventeenth century but has been overlooked since, and Porret’s collection bears recalling by way of introducing Brinck’s. On 28 March 1628, within a year of his death, the well-respected pharmacist’s collection was put up for auction in Leiden. What became of the stunning range of objects listed under 719 headings in the printed catalogue is not known. The title page of the auction catalogue announces the sale of:

Exceptional items or curiosities and rare naturalia (*sinnelickheden*) [...]. Indian and other foreign conches/ shells/ terrestrial and sea creatures/ minerals/ and also strange animals; as well as some artfully made handicrafts and paintings/ which Christiaen Porrett [sic], Pharmacist of late/ assembled in his *Cunstcamer*.¹⁴

Like the phrases on the title page, the entries in the catalogue vacillate between categories in ways that could seem bewildering. However, within the European context of collections assembled in the sixteenth and seventeenth from the courts from Prague and Petersburg to Lisbon and The Hague and in ducal residences in between, as on a smaller scale privately, the combination in Porret’s «Cunstcamer» of natural items, works of art and handicraft, ethnographic specimens, and even optical devices is entirely congruent with more general developments. The fact that it was assembled and maintained by a Dutch pharmacist may have doubly condemned it to historical oblivion. Pharmaceutical collections have often been overlooked as ‘mere’ professional efforts, rather than as the loci of natural history and natural philosophy, and as hubs of social and trade networks that spread far and wide; and the history of Dutch collecting has, as suggested above, focused on later developments and remained relatively insular.

Ernst Brinck – scholar, traveller and political agent

While Ernst Brinck remains all but unknown to contemporary historians, there is ample evidence that he was well-known among contemporaries and that his collection was renowned. Rather uncannily, the fellow resident of Harderwijk Wolter van Speulde described him in ca. 1700 as

Mr. Ernst Brinck, mayor of this city during his lifetime and a great researcher of antiquities, who shall be remembered for his unusual knowledge of various languages, his own *Konstcamer* and other curiosities, known through his writings on Harderwijk [sic].¹⁵

This quotation dates to well after Brinck’s death in 1649 and to well before the modern literature made an effort to catch up with his accomplishments in the nineteenth century, and it manages perfectly to capture the salient aspects of his life and remains most pertinent to this article. Brinck was born in Durlach, Germany, to a well-to-do family from Harderwijk. He studied in Leiden and subse-

quently with the great philologist Isaac Casaubon (1559–1614) in Paris, traveled to Constantinople in the service of the first ambassador of the States General of the Netherlands to the Ottoman Empire, and later served as mayor of Harderwijk, the city from which his family hailed.¹⁶ Brinck's literary remains include annotations, inscriptions, lists, and commentaries contained in his *Adversaria* (nearly fifty notebooks, never previously published or studied in detail) preserved in the regional archives in Harderwijk and three *alba amicorum*, in the collection of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in The Hague. In the latter three well-preserved volumes Brinck collected signatures over the course of his adult life, beginning in the first decade of the seventeenth century, from anyone who was anyone as well as examples of as many (he claimed) as two hundred languages.¹⁷ Inscriptions and pasted-in portrait prints of Leiden academic luminaries historian Joseph Scaliger (1540–1609), Professor of Greek and Latin Bonaventura Vulcanius (1538–1614), and botanist Carolus Clusius (1526–1609) vie for space in the albums with vividly painted coats of arms of Gelderland nobility Brinck came to know; the signatures of the calligrapher/artist Jan van de Velde (1593–1641), the poet and artist Anna Maria van Schurman (1607–1678), and the composer Jan Pietersz. Sweelinck (1562–1621); and records of encounters with medical professionals and collectors Bernardus Paludanus and Ferrante Imperato (1525?–1615?) in Naples. In his capacity as secretary to the Dutch ambassador in Constantinople, Cornelis Haga (1578–1654), Brinck collected inscriptions during his travels, from samples of foreign script to records of encounters with foreign potentates and in some cases, as in the Ottoman inscription highlighted with gold by the Grand Vizier Halil Pasha (d. 1629), a combination of both. It was during his return to the Netherlands from Turkey via Italy in 1614 that Brinck visited with Imperato in Naples and, in Florence, he met Galileo Galilei, whose signature accompanies an autograph sketch of the moons of Jupiter.¹⁸ Brinck cultivated a vast network of acquaintances with the same zeal with which he collected information—about, for example, the 200 languages he claimed to know of, from Brazilian Pitiguar and the language of peasants in Schlesien to quack-doctor-speak and the «language of Utopia». He also amassed a vast array of curiosities and antiquities, a substantial library, and an expansive garden. Brinck garnered a reputation as a signal figure in Harderwijk, the port town where his family was from and where he served as librarian to the Gymnasium as well as mayor after pursuing his studies and a career as a political agent. Brinck's endeavors—as agent, as collector, as social networker, as librarian, as civic representative, as author—qualify him as a key figure in the networks of knowledge his interests and his experience spanned in early seventeenth-century Europe.

Brinck's notebooks and early modern cultures of collecting

In addition to the *alba amicorum* in The Hague, just under fifty notebooks compiled by Brinck survive.¹⁹ These notebooks, the *Adversaria*, contain extensive textual annotations and observations—sixteen of the notebooks are devoted to annotations on texts, and two additional notebooks contain notes on the Bible; almost just as many pocket-size volumes contain descriptions of local or foreign places Brinck visited. Three volumes contain notes and observations on natural historical subjects—birds, four-footed animals, and fish—and there are many filled with memorabilia, including multiple lists and indices.

The individual notebooks are octavo or duodecimo in format, and run to roughly one hundred folios each; they are bound in parchment; and each of them bears a title penned by Brinck. The titles include, for example, «Observations and Annotations from Various Authors», «Wondrous Observations on the Nature of Some Birds», «Wondrous and memorable accounts of our times». The contents of the individual notebooks bear subtitles or subject headings—for example, «Good times when things were cheap», «Of esteemed pictures», «Of jokes of nature», «Of notable thefts», «Of false witnesses and false trade», «On the human soul», «On thunder and lightning», «Observations on fruits», «Remarkable aspects of flowers», «On princes who practice mechanical arts and various hobbies». Brinck also compiled lists. One notebook contains a plethora of lists. It opens with a list of fish, subdivided in to fish caught in the Zuyderzee and fish brought to market from the sea and proceeds through lists of local animals and birds to names of ships—with individual subheadings for the sorts of ships: those formerly used, vessels currently in use, ships for traveling inland and fishing, river vessels, and smaller ships usually without sails.

There are lists of the names of fruit-bearing trees in the Veluwe, the local landscape, as well as of non-fruit-bearing trees; of berries; of grains and legumes; of names of apples and pears and vegetables and salad herbs that grew in Gelderland; and of the contents of Brinck's garden in 1608 and subsequent years, as well as of the contents of ships returning from the East and West Indies. Brinck's *Adversaria* offer a crucial, vast resource for the reconstruction of the who, what, and when of early modern collecting and trade in exotica: he provides first-hand information about who owned what wondrous objects where; recounts the contents of his virtually unknown collection; records the sale of numerous exotic and luxury goods, such as shells purchased by Marie de' Medici and items sold to Emperor Rudolf II; describes rulers' artisanal skills; notes wondrous objects made of gold, silver, and copper, as well as wondrous smells and sounds. Brinck's notebooks are filled with accounts of trade and global exploits; of wondrous and otherwise noteworthy events; of recently painted works of art in painters' ateliers and of prices fetched at auctions as well. He was an amateur linguist; and he compiled observations on fauna both indigenous and exotic. Throughout the *Adversaria*, Brinck records and participates in the circulation of knowledge in ways that are relevant to the cultural history of early modern science. These notebooks comprise an invaluable «ego document» and indefatigable resource for information garnered on the streets of Amsterdam, in the ports of the Republic, in the quiet of Brinck's Harderwijk library, in courts and residences throughout Europe, and in the studious presence of east Indian dried birds' beaks.

While the scope and range of their contents is dizzying—the contents of the *Adversaria* and the three surviving *alba amicorum* comprise a virtual, text-based sort of *Wunderkammer*—Brinck's literary remains were composed and collected in accordance with standard practices of the era. The note-taking and list-making drive in evidence throughout the notebooks is entirely congruent with «repetition and copying out [...] the keystones of Renaissance pedagogy», and the management of information so genially described by Ann Blair.²⁰ His famous contemporary the virtuoso, scholar, and collector the Frenchman Nicolas Fabri de Peiresc (1580–1637) also assiduously, compulsively took notes—in order to

preserve information from oblivion. Peiresc took notes on sheets of paper, employed scribes to assist, and

acted as a clearinghouse for all kinds of information, antiquarian and natural philosophical, and regularly entered and retrieved information in his papers to share with others who requested it.²¹

No correspondence from or to Brinck survives; his annotations remained private. It is worth noting that his practice of taking notes resonates with the advice of his Paris mentor Casaubon, also an avid note-taker and author of a commonplace book, who admonished, «Remember to set down everything you read in books of excerpts. This is the only way to aid your failing memory».²² Early modern humanist pedagogical treatises therefore emphasized the necessity of taking notes for all readers, regardless of whether they were historians or not. «It is no waste of time to take notes», advised one, «but rather to read without taking notes».²³

The commonplace books or *Adversaria* Brinck composed extend well beyond excerpts from texts, to include all sorts of observations, hearsay, experiences, data: Brinck was an *admirator* and administrator of nature and natural knowledge and his textual remains comprise an archive of early modern knowledge formation, production, and collection.

In ways this article can only adumbrate, Brinck's literary remains are everywhere redolent of the collecting impulse, the drive to compile. He cites contemporary local and foreign events—in one notebook, for example, he lists notable thefts committed in the Netherlands; remarkable events beginning with the baptism of forty children in the Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam in 1619; «*Lusibus naturae*» observed in Enkhuizen, in Padova, in Constantinople and elsewhere and in another he lists such «Items worthy of being remembered» as a red cape belonging to Rabelais; a femur bone of Jan Hus in the Hussite Church in Prague, which Brinck visited in 1615; the pulpit from which Martin Luther preached in Padova en route to Rome.²⁴ The same reportorial mode adheres in Brinck's observations on objects in his and other collections. With a similar commitment to the texture of facts he list objects he observed in the Leiden University anatomical theater, foreign collections, homes of Amsterdam collectors, and among the curiosities belonging to Paludanus in Enkhuizen; Brinck also enumerates and comments on objects in his own vast collection as well as in his garden. With the exception of the garden, the contents of which he recalls in one lengthy passage of a single notebook, the references to objects in his own and other collections are scattered throughout the *Adversaria*, where they are entered under a variety of headings in a number of different locations.

Brinck's literary remains refer to and at the same time embody collecting practices of the early modern era—especially if we understand the accumulation of information by way of note-taking as culturally akin to the practice of collecting. Blair writes that:

The stockpiling of notes was part of a larger cultural phenomenon of collecting and accumulating in early modern Europe that generated not only textual compilations in manuscript and in print but also collection of natural and artificial objects, from plants and minerals and medals, paintings, and «curiosities».²⁵

The preserved literary remains in Harderwijk include clippings from contemporary newsheets as well as individual sheets of notes and lists presumably intended to be processed, entered in to the notebooks in time. One set of unbound

Logum Scabigeri Bibliotheca Lugdunens.
 stat ex 208 libris M. S. Graecis. Hebraicis,
 Chald. Syr. Arab. Aethiop. Sic. Arm. Russ.
 In area horti Medice Lugdunens. quaedam lignum
 & in lapidelem gereunt.
 ita, Lignum, qd appulsa granorum, tactu
 In Anatomia vivante. Logg feralis Aegyptiacae
 opculo Hydri affigie insignitur, continens Cor Mag
 nativ Aegypti in Munita gitta ante a nos 1300.
 icuncula alijs Aegyptiacae ex sepulchris allatae;
 Vnaq feralis Romana. Noctua.
 Cucullus niger, monachi Moscovitica.
 7 calculi vesicae po morte reperi in corpore
 Joh. Henery
 Crespida ex fide Orient. Regno Siam
 Cucurbita vitrea, qd hodie medicam vivente Aegyp
 ty & Syriae.
 Brachia seu caputis fons, seu fontanella, qd in ni
 fantibus e membranae, et visa interdum in mulie
 ribz 26 aetate mundi induruisse, ac ingruente
 capitis dolore, subinde delatata fuisse, tot dantimo.
 Caput alcidis ex venenis Magni Ducis Moscovici.
 Elephantis caput ex Angula advenit a. 1620
 Soolobon aqta; caput tyridis. Orbis marion
 ordinatq. Camb vesica; Scing pifas. Sanguis
 cunctis, qd oculus claros ofi cecaturibus
 sos reddat.

1 Ernst Brinck, *Adversaria*, Harderwijk Gemeentearchief OAH 2024a.

notes on small slips of paper, smaller than the pages in the notebooks, records observations made in Leiden. One sheet contains a list of all of the animals whose skeletons kept in the anatomical theater at the Leiden University, from a whale, *in cella*, and a fox to a weasel and a swan, and hastily noted additional objects such as anatomical figures («plurimae Tabulae Anatomicae»), the skin of a human, the bones and teeth of a whale, and anatomical instruments. An additional note records the number of cloth shearers living in Leiden in 1645 (900);

that there were 40 booksellers in Leiden above and beyond the printers; and other local data. A third sheet is covered recto and verso with chorographical notations relating to the holdings of civic institutions (Fig. 1): Brinck notes that the great philologist and antiquarian Joseph Justus Scaliger (1540–1609) left 208 manuscripts to the university library, in a variety of languages; he records having seen various stones and wood in the garden; and he lists a number of wondrous objects in the anatomical theater, a renowned site of curiosities—Brinck’s list includes a mummy, a Roman funeral urn, seven stones removed from the body of Johannes Heurnius (1543–1601), Professor of Medicine at Leiden, shoes from the King of Siam, the wing of a flying fish, a crab from the East Indies, an elephant head brought from Angola in 1620, the head of a tiger, the blood and eye of a crocodile, and such objects, which correspond to early records of the collection housed in the anatomical theater.²⁶ Brinck studied at Leiden in the first decade of the century, collected numerous signatures from luminaries at the university in 1606, but the notes described here probably date to a later visit. One of the sheets bears Brinck’s writing in two different inks—the majority of the notes are in Latin and the later darker emendations are in Dutch—suggesting that he subsequently emended the notes.

It seems likely that these sheets are surviving preliminary notes, made on site in this case, and that Brinck’s intention was to enter them in to notebooks later, re-ordering them as he did so. This practice exemplifies contemporary note-taking modes codified in manuals that stressed the importance of recording one’s reading experience—and at the same time it goes far beyond humanist reading practice. Brinck’s notebooks were structured to serve as digests of larger terrains of knowledge: a library could be condensed, indexed, and referenced by way of excerpts organized in notebooks.²⁷ Merchants’ notebooks were formally analogous, insofar as merchants kept both daily records as well as ledgers in which the journal transactions were indexed according to categories. Data, observations, annotations, sums, experience: all were note-worthy subjects, to be collated and indexed, recalled. Francis Bacon directly compared one of his own notebooks, the «Loose Commentary» of 1608, which contains all manner of data and observations, to a «merchant’s waste book, where to enter all manner of *remembrancia* of matter, service, business, study...either sparsim or in schedules, without any manner of restraint».²⁸

Language, antiquity, nature and the limits of memory

Eric Jorink, the only scholar who has to date endeavored to describe Brinck’s collection, suggests that it was a product of Brinck’s philological interests. Brinck was an early modern antiquarian or student of antiquity—hence his interest in languages in general and his qualifications to serve as secretary to the ambassador to Constantinople in particular (Jorink surmises that Brinck knew Arabic and Turkish). It is unclear what Brinck studied formally in Leiden, but he did spend nine months under the tutelage of Casaubon in Paris, and his notebooks are written in a fluid mixture of Latin, Dutch, French, and Italian (diplomatic *lingua franca*) and contain smatterings of German as well. In addition, he proudly listed in one of the albums presently in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in The Hague (135 K 4) upwards of 200 languages with which he was familiar. The list, titled «Catalogus Linguaru[m] & varioru[m] dialectoru[m], quoru[m] singularu[m] specimen

extat in meo alba», may have been inscribed on the opening sheets of the volume (fols. 1–3) with the intention of transcribing said specimens in to the album. The list is by and large fluidly composed, the bulk of it having been penned in one go. Later pages of this album contain some specimens of some of the languages listed. The initial folios contain inscriptions in a variety of languages and scripts Brinck collected while he was in Constantinople as secretary to the Dutch ambassador—calligraphy signed by the poet to the Sultan; an entry by Andrea Negroni, ambassador to the Porte, signed in Italian beneath an Arabic inscription dotted in gold ink; inscriptions by the Greek and the Armenian Patriarchs of Constantinople—as well as inscriptions he acquired on his journey home, from Galileo, Imperato, Fabio Colonna, Giovanni Battista della Porta, and others. Other pages contain pasted-in samples of Chinese and Malaysian texts, as well as transcribed specimens of many different scripts, from Utopian (!) and Chaldean to Babylonian and Cabbalistic, and several pages with descriptions of gestures and their meanings in Ottoman/Seraglio Sign language.²⁹ Brinck's linguistic ambitions echo and are one with his collecting impulse, and the two are forms of a paradigmatic early modern drive to know.

Brinck's collection is no longer; like so many others of its time it survives only on paper. As outlined in the foregoing pages, the form in which it comes down to us, as an assemblage of notes in Brinck's *Adversaria*, is part and parcel of the culture in which the collection was amassed. The remainder of this article will summarize the textual remains of Brinck's collection, touching on the rhetoric of its representation and presenting the general contours of what is preserved, by way of recommending it for future study. Brinck's personal collection is said to have been housed in his library in Harderwijk, where he lived before he departed for Turkey in 1612 and after his return a little over two years later.³⁰ The majority of Brinck's references to his own collection are undated, but the dates of his observations on other collections suggest that his was a product of the last three decennia of his life. It is clear from his notes that he visited Paludanus's collection in 1610,³¹ and his travel notes dating to 1612–1614 are filled with references to collections and curiosities he saw along the way. Those references, a few of which I cite here, are symptomatic of Brinck's interests and at the same time of the contemporary vocabulary relating to the contents and the sites of collections.³²

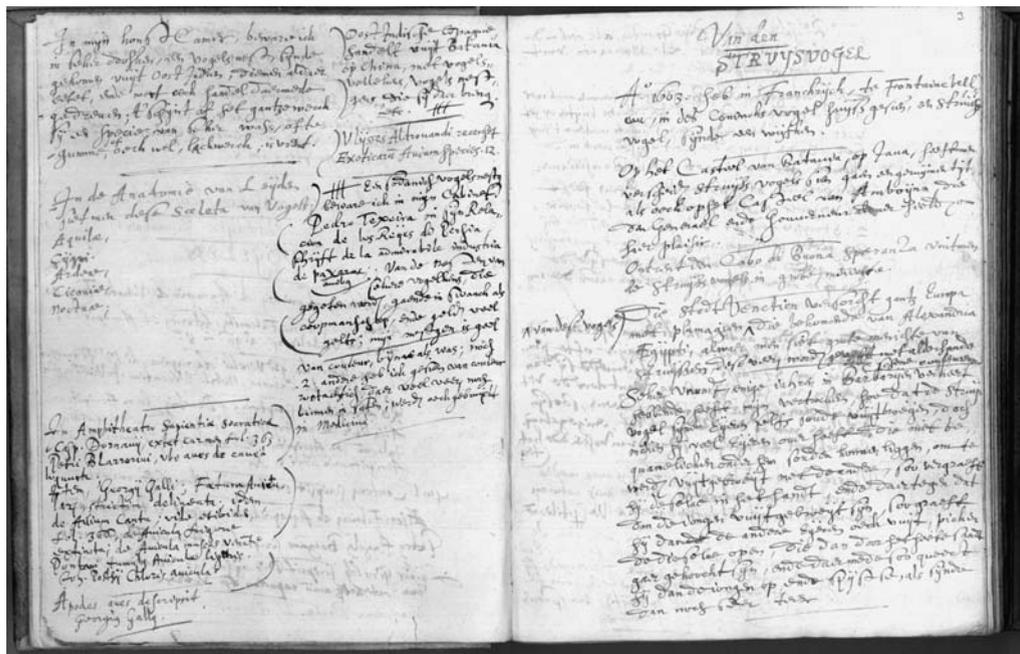
In 1614, when Brinck returned from his service in Turkey, he traveled by way of Greece and Italy. In Naples he met the apothecary Ferrante Imperato (1550–1631), and viewed his collection; Imperato signed Brinck's album and although his inscription is undated, Brinck dates their encounter in the volume of his *Adversaria* dedicated to birds: «Anno 1614 heb ik te Napels gesien, auem Trochijlum qua purgat dentes Crocodilorum; in wijtvermaerde constkamer van Fernando Imperato». ³³ In the same year, in Rome, he saw, «in the *Cabinett* of Pope Paul V an ostrich egg in which the Passion of Christ was very artfully carved, and another on which the Agnus Dei was engraved, very fine». ³⁴ In his notes on animals, Brinck refers to the «Garderobbe» of the same pope, where he saw a beautiful Rhinoceros horn. In the «Schatkamer» (treasury) of the Grand Duke in Florence, he saw the horns of a male and female rhinoceros; and he mentions visiting Paolo Veneto's «musaeum». ³⁵ His travels also took him to the renowned «Lusthuijss» of the Grand Duke in Pratolino outside Florence, where he viewed many wondrous

antiquities and naturalia; Brinck reserved special praise for the aviary, one of many such collections he mentions in a section on «Renowned birdcages». ³⁶ Brinck describes the aviary at Fontainebleau at some length, and his notes include references to an aviary maintained by Prince Maurice in The Hague, as well as to living and stuffed birds and eggs and beaks and nests he observed in Prague and in Rijswijk, in Dresden (a dried phoenix no less!) and in Enkhuizen. ³⁷

Brinck's *Adversaria* contain references to a range of types of collections—cabinets, treasuries, pleasure gardens, aviaries, menageries, *Kunstkammern*, to the East and West India Company headquarters in Amsterdam (*Oost-Indisch Huis* and *West-Indisch Huis*) as repositories of exotica, from Chinese paintings to shells and more, and even to the «Rustcamer/Wapencamer» (armory) in Dresden, which housed extraordinary feathers of inestimable value. ³⁸ Collectors are referred to by name and/or title and in some cases he refers to anonymous «*liefhebbers*» or «*amateurs*». Often, when referring to a collector or collection he uses the preposition «at» in the sense of «chez»—for example: «At D. Paludano in Enkhuizen I saw various beautiful birds of paradise, as also at Mr. Wickefoort in Amsterdam». ³⁹ In references to his own collection, Brinck uses the terms «*Konstcamer/Constkamer*» and «*Cabinett*» regularly and interchangeably.

Brinck's *Adversaria* attest to his having maintained a «goodly, huge Cabinet» with its due share of and sheen. The objects he declares he owned compare well with those collected by his contemporaries Paludanus and Porret: most are natural, some are ancient, and many are exceptional. A poem by the classicist poet Nicolaus Heinsius (1620–1681) refers to Brinck's *Pinacotheca* or *Thesaurum* as containing shells, stones, coins, animals, and all sorts of other things from the entire world; the collection brings together objects from near and far and, as such, offers «an effigy of the world». ⁴⁰ Brinck's notebook on birds opens with a notation concerning a bird's nest in his «*Konstcamer*», in a certain box; the nest came from the East Indies where, Brinck writes, it is eaten as well as being used in commerce. The entire thing seems to be covered in wax or resin or lacquer, he notes. In the margin next to this description, Brinck states that the East India Company trades in birds and birds' nests; below this he refers to Ulisse Aldrovandi's *Ornithologiae* (1581), Pedro Teixeira's *Relaciones* (1610), and other texts, lists skeletons of birds in the Leiden University anatomical theater, and describes other nests he owns and has seen. ⁴¹ (Fig. 2)

He owned a foot or ankle of an ostrich, as well as seven beautiful ostrich eggs, one of which has a silver cover—it is a drinking vessel of a sort widely familiar in such collections. ⁴² Brinck owned «one very beautiful» bird of paradise, whose body and feathers he lovingly describes, concluding that it was decorated with at least eight different colors; ⁴³ two very beautiful eagle's claws, the head of an eagle, and a few wings, as well as some bunches of eagle feathers; ⁴⁴ penguin wings; a parrot egg laid in Kampen; a stone from a bird from Mauritius, a Dodo with medicinal properties; two West-Indian birds and a very small West-Indian bird's head and beak, very beautiful in color, lapis blue and purple; ⁴⁵ various items made of woven peacock feathers, such as a fan and table coverings and a bunch of white peacock feathers; fourteen small grey, white, and brown stones from the stomach of a korhaan (bustard), «very good eye stones». ⁴⁶ The collection also contained Egyptian figurines, three armadillos, the teeth of a hippopotamus, a bracelet made of shells, and countless other items, much too numerous to cite

2 Ernst Brinck, *Adversaria*, Harderwijk Gemeentearchief OAH 2057 2v and 3 r.

here. The contents of Brinck's collection are natural and preternatural, but not unusual for the time. They are only incidentally artistic or artificial: an ostrich egg set in silver, for example, or woven peacock feathers. Brinck writes about works of art in his *Adversaria*, but his collecting impulse did not extend to the domain of the visual arts.

A great deal more remains to be said about Brinck's collection. One notable aspect of his notes is the form of attention so vivid in the descriptions of objects in his possession; the descriptions are often most precise in the specification of color and frequently refer to the beauty of the objects. This is an *aesthetic morphology* that finds its counterpart in the work of Carolus Clusius for example—a figure Brinck rather surprisingly does not cite much if at all. These are not the only features of the rhetoric and structure of the descriptions in his *Adversaria* that are striking, however. Two aspects of the remains of Brinck's collection seem especially worthy of attention here. First, his records of objects in his own collection are interwoven with references to other objects in other collections, in a way that embodies and in a sense re-activates the patterns of observation and description and association that structured early modern natural inquiry. Consider, for example, the presentation of information about the bird of paradise, cited and illustrated above. Brinck's descriptions of the peacock feather objects in his collection are likewise set in a *«pastiche»* of commentary that ranges, in this case, from courtly use of peacock feather fans at German courts and woven items made from the quills of the feathers to practices for obtaining white peacocks. Brinck writes that, according to German practice, to obtain a white peacock one should lay down white sheets when the bird broods eggs or paint the walls

white, as this will have the necessary effect on the imagination to change the color of the eggs. Brinck notes on this same page that he saw in 1614 in the collection of Pope Paul V «an altar, very beautifully woven of only peacock feathers, ad so artfully done that the image appears to have been painted». Immediately following this note, Brinck describes peacock flesh as rather yellow and difficult to digest.⁴⁷ The object at hand, the bird in this case, the peacock, is a sort of mirror, directing refracting observations that call up and cull from past experience, practices, and text. This is but one example, peacocks in Brinck's *Adversaria*, of many that exemplify the way in which knowledge was set in to place, much like the juxtaposition of items in collections of the time. The second feature of Brinck's *Adversaria* and of his collections that merits highlighting is the temporal shuffle of his recollections and observations. His garden, another sort of collection, is recalled in one of the notebooks, where he attempts to itemize its contents. The heading under which he does so is «Index omnis generis Florum», the extensive subheading of which reads:

that are found in our lands [...] most of which I have had and many more others which have not survived because when my garden existed in the years 1608–9–10–11–12 I had over 300 sorts of plants, the names of some of which elude me.⁴⁸

Brinck's text is motivated by an encyclopedic drive to list all of a kind, but gives way to the indomitable passage of time and the loss of memory. Order is only as good as its memory; this brief paragraph is redolent of the keen struggle to preserve and to structure a sea of particulars. Bacon recommended that

whatsoever the hand of man by exquisite art or engine has made rare in stuff, form or motion; whatsoever singularity, chance, and the shuffle of things hath produced; whatsoever Nature hath wrought in things that want life and may be kept; shall be sorted and included.⁴⁹

and in Brinck's compilations of data we encounter just that shuffle, sorted and included.

Annotations

1 The literature on the history of collecting is too extensive to cite more than summarily here: See principally Julius von Schlosser, *Die Kunst- und Wunderkammern der Spätrenaissance. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Sammelwesens*, Leipzig 1908; Oliver Impey and Arthur Macgregor, eds., *The Origins of Museums. The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe*, London 2001; 1st ed. 1985; Adalgisa Lugli, *Naturalia et Mirabilia. Il collezionismo enciclopedico nelle Wunderkammern in Europa*, Milan 1983; Antoine Schnapper, *Le géant, la licorne, et la tulipe. Collections et collectionneurs dans la France du XVII^e siècle. I – Histoire et histoire naturelle*, Paris 1988; Joy Kenseth, ed., *The Age of the Marvelous*, exh. cat., Hanover, NH 1991; Ellinoor Bergvelt and Renée Kistenmaker, eds., *De wereld binnen handbereik. Nederlandse kunst- en rariteitenverzamelingen, 1585–1735*, 2 vols., exh. cat., Amsterdam 1992; Ellinoor Bergvelt, et al., eds., *Verzamelen. Van rariteitenkabinet tot kunstmuseum*, Heerlen 2005; Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, «From Mastery of the World to Mastery of Nature: The *Kunstammer*, Politics, and Science», in: *The Mastery of Nature. Aspects of Art, Science, and Humanism in the Renaissance*, Princeton 1993, p. 174–194; Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature. Museums, Collecting and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, 1994; Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature 1150–1750*, New York 1998, esp. chapters IV and VII; Bob van den Boogert et al., *Rembrandt's Treasures*, exh. cat., Zwolle 1999; Eric Jorink, *Reading the Book of Nature in the Dutch Golden Age, 1575–1715*, Leiden 2010.

2 On Brinck, see F.A. van Rappard, Ernst Brinck, eerste secretaris van het Nederlandse gezantschap te Konstantinopel..., Utrecht 1868; Jorink 2010 (as note 1), p. 289–299 and 332; Henk Hovenkamp, Ernst Brinck (1582–1649), een bijzondere Harderwijker, Harderwijk 2012. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Jorink for encouraging me to study Brinck further, and to Mr. Hovenkamp and the Streekarchivariaat Noordwest-Veluwe for having welcomed me. Brinck's oeuvre is multi-faceted and multi-lingual and, in its complexity, calls out for collaborative study. I could ask for no finer introduction to a long-term collaborative study than these two scholars have so generously offered. I would also like to thank Jaap van der Veen for very fruitful conversations and generous feedback.

3 Language is a formidable barrier, and there is excellent literature in Dutch—much of it, as explained shortly, focusing on later seventeenth-century developments. See, for example, Bergvelt and Kistemaker 1992 (as note 1); Jaap

van der Veen, «De verzamelaar in zijn kamer. Zeventiende-eeuwse privé-collecties in de Republiek», in: *Ons soort mensen. Levensstijlen in Nederland*, ed. by H. de Jonge, Nijmegen 1997, p. 125–158; *Schatten in Delft. Burgers verzamelen 1600–1750*, ed. by Ellinoor Bergvelt et al., Zwolle 2002. Notable recent exceptions to the tendency to publish studies of Dutch collecting in Dutch (only) include Jorink 2010 (as note 1) and, though not strictly about collecting, Florike Egmond, *The World of Carolus Clusius: Natural History in the Making, 1550–1610*, London 2010.

4 On Dutch collecting in general, see further Roelof van Gelder, «De wereld binnen handbereik. Nederlandse kunst- en rariteitenverzamelingen, 1585–1735», in: Bergvelt and Kistemaker 1992 (as note 1), p. 15–38. On the collection housed in the gallery of the Leiden University hortus, see Erik de Jong, *Nature and Art. Dutch Garden and Landscape Architecture, 1650–1740*, Philadelphia 2001, esp. p. 136–157.

5 David Freedberg, «Science, Commerce, and Art. Neglected Topics at the Junction of History and Art History», in: *Art in history. History in art*, ed. by David Freedberg and J. de Vries, Santa Monica 1991, p. 377–428; J. Driessen, *Tsaar Peter de Grote en zijn Amsterdamsse vrienden*, Amsterdam 1996; J. J. Driessen-van het Reve, *De Kunstkamera van Peter de Grote. De Hollandse inbreng, gereconstrueerd uit brieven van Albert Seba en Johann Daniel Schumacher uit de jaren 1711–1752*, Amsterdam 2006; Daniel Margocsy, «A Museum of Wonders or a Cemetery of Corpses? The Commercial Exchange of Anatomical Collections in Early Modern Netherlands», in: *Silent Messengers. The Circulation of Material Objects of Knowledge in the Early Modern Low Countries*, de. by Sven Dupré and Christoph Lüthy, Berlin 2011, p. 185–215. On Witsen, see Marion Peters, *De wijze koopman. Het wereldwijde onderzoek van Nicolaes Witsen (1641–1717), burgemeester en VOC-bewindhebber van Amsterdam*, Amsterdam 2010.

6 Francis Bacon, *Gesta Grayorum*, London 1688, p. 35.

7 Jorink 2010 (as note 1). See also Egmond 2010 (as note 3).

8 J.A. Worp, *De briefwisseling van Constantijn Huygens, 1608–1687*, 6 vols., The Hague 1911–1917, vol. 1, nr. 482, p. 272–273, 1 January 1630 to Caspar Barlaeus.

9 Index Rerum Omnium Natvralivm, a Bernhardo Palvdano, Medicinæ Doctore, et Civitatis Enckhvsensis Physico experientissimo, collectarum, in: *Warhafftige Beschreibung Zweyer Reisen*, Tübingen 1603; F.W.T. Hunger, «Bernardus Paludanus (Berent ten Broecke) 1550–1633. Zijn verzamelingen en zijn werk», in: *Itinerario*

voyage ofte schipvaart van Jan Huygen van Linschoten naer oost ofte Portugaels Indien 1579–1592, ed. by H. Kern, 8 vols., The Hague, 1910–1957, vol. 3, p. 249–268; Marie-Christine Engels, «Een combinatie van Kunst en Wetenschap: de verzameling van Bernardus Paludanus (1550–1633)», in: *Steevast* (Jaarboek van de Vereniging Oud Enkhuizen) 1997, p. 32–36; Roelof van Gelder, «Paradijsvogels in Enkhuizen. De relatie tussen Van Linschoten en Bernardus Paludanus», in: *Souffrir pour Parvenir. De wereld van Jan Huygen van Linschoten*, ed. by Roelof van Gelder, Jan Parmentier and Vibeke Roeper, Haarlem 1998, p. 30–50; Florike Egmond, «Een mislukte benoeming. Paludanus en de Leidse universiteit», in: *ibid.*, p. 51–64; Harold J. Cook, *Matters of Exchange. Commerce, Medicine, and Science in the Dutch Golden Age*, New Haven and London 2007, esp. Chapter 2, «Reformations Tempered: In Pursuit of Natural Facts», p. 82–132; and, most recently, Jorink 2010 (as note 1), esp. p. 266–278.

10 The religious articles listed in the 1617 inventory of Paludanus's collection are cited by Jorink 2010 (as note 1), p. 272–273.

11 Raphael Pelecius to Caspar Bauhin, 20 Aug. 1594 (Basel UB, MS. Fr.Gr. II.1, p. 42, IV), as cited and transl. by Brian Ogilvie, *The Science of Describing. Natural History in Renaissance Europe*, Chicago 2006, p. 41.

12 «Ad Paludanum de ejus Admirandis», Hug. Grotius, *Poemata Omnia*, Leiden 1645, p. 232–233.

13 Claudia Swan, «Making Sense of Medical Collections in Early Modern Holland: The Uses of Wonder», in *Knowledge and its Making in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Pamela H. Smith and Benjamin Schmidt, Chicago 2007, p. 199–213.

14 «Sonderling-Heden oft Rariteyten ende Wtgelesen Sinnelickheden/ Van Indiaensche ende andere wtheemsche Zee-horens/ Schelpen/ Eerd ende Zeegewassen/ Mineralen/ ende oock vreemde Gedierten; mitsgaders eenighe constichlijck ghemaecte handwercken ende schilderijen/ Die Christiaen Porret, wijlen Apoteker/ in zijn Cunstcamer vergadert had». See Swan 2007 (as note 13), p. 199–213. Oddly, Porret does not figure in Jorink 2010 (as note 1). One copy survives in the RKD in The Hague and another in Dresden. See Frits Lugt, *Repertoire des Catalogues de Ventes Publiques Intéressant l'Art ou la Curiosité. Première Période vers 1600–1825*, The Hague 1938, no. 2; E.W. Moes, «De sonderling-heden oft rariteyten ende wtgelesen sinnelickheden van Christiaen Porret», in: *Leids Jaarboekje*, 1905, vol. II, p. 93–100; introduces the collection and the collector; other biographical information is to be found in Henriëtte A. Bosman-Jelgersma, «De lotgevallen van een apothekersleerling in het 17de-eeuwse

Leiden», in: *Leids Jaarboekje*, 1987, vol. LXXIX, p. 62–81.

15 «De Heer Ernst Brinck in leven Burgemeester deser stadt en een groot ondersoeker van outheden, wiens gedachtenis om zijn sonderlinge geleertheit van verscheiden talen, en desselfs Konstcamer en andere curiositeiten hier na sal gedaght werden, bekent in sijne aentekeningen over Harderwijk». Hovenkamp 2012 (as note 2), p. 3.

16 Van Rappard 1868 (as note 2); Hovenkamp 2012 (as note 2).

17 Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague, 133 M 86, 135 K 4, 133 M 87, (KB).

18 KB 135 K 4, fol. 63r. Galilei's entry states: «An: 1614. D.19 Novembris | Ut Nobili, ac generoso studio | D: Ernesti Brinckii rem grata | facerem Galileus Galileis Flo- | rentius manu propria scripti | Florentie». See *The Origins of the Telescope*, ed. by Albert van Helden, Sven Dupré, Rob van Gent, and Huib Zuidervaart, Amsterdam 2011, fn. 1.

19 Streekarchivariaat Noordwest-Veluwe, archief stadsbestuur Harderwijk 1231–1813 (OAH), in.nrs. 2013–2061, *Adversaria van Dr. Ernst Brinck*, 46 volumes and 3 portfolios, (OAH).

20 Ann M. Blair, *Too Much to Know. Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age*, New Haven and London 2010, p. 76.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 87.

22 Cited in Anthony Grafton and Joanna Weinberg, *I have always loved the Holy Tongue. Isaac Casaubon, the Jews, and a Forgotten Chapter in Renaissance Scholarship*, Cambridge MA 2011, p. 15, fn. 57. Over 60 books of *Adversaria* by Isaac Casaubon are in the collection of the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

23 Blair 2010 (as note 20), p. 78, citing Jeremias Drexel, SJ, *Aurifodina atrium et scientiarum omnium; excerptendi sollertia*, Antwerp 1638.

24 OAH nr. 2038, fol. 6r-v, fol. 23r, fol. 57r-v; OAH nr. 2037, fol. 46r.

25 Blair 2010 (as note 20), p. 64.

26 OAH nr. 2024a. See J.A.J. Barge, *De oudste inventaris der oudste academische anatomie in Nederland*, Leiden 1934; Henricus Cramer, A catalogue of all the chiefest rarities in the publick theater and anatomie..., Leiden 1727. The objects listed by Brinck correspond by and large with those «In the great Cupboard I on the South-side of the Anatomie», p. 11–13.

27 In addition to Blair 2010 (as note 20) see Alberto Cevoloni, *De arte excerptendi. Imparare a dimenticare nella modernità*, Florence 2006, with Italian translations of sections of key texts (Sacchini, Drexler, etc.); Jean-Marc Chatelain, «Humanisme et culture de la note», in: *Revue de la Bibliothèque nationale de France*, 1999, Bd. 2, p. 26–36.

28 Deborah E. Harkness, «Accounting for

Science. How a Merchant Kept his Books in Elizabethan London», in: *The Self-Perception of Early Modern Capitalists*, ed. by Margaret C. Jacob and Catherine Secretan, New York 2008, p. 205–229, at p. 205.

29 KB 135 K 4, fols. 81, 121; see also 144–145; notations on sign language of the Seraglio begin at fol. 184; cf. OAH 2046, fol. 45r.; see also Jorink 2010 (as note 1), fig. 49.

30 Jorink 2010 (as note 1), p. 290; on the location of Dutch collections within homes, see van der Veen 1997 (as note 2).

31 Brinck's album KB 133 M 86, fol. 199r contains an inscription by Bernardus Paludanus dated 26 May 1610. To the best of my knowledge, Brinck did not sign Paludanus's album; the latter is preserved in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek (133 M 63) and contains upwards of 1900 signatures. See also Louise E. van Wijk, «Het album amicorum van Bernardus Paludanus», in: *Het Boek* 1948, 29, p. 265–286.

32 I am deeply grateful to Henk Hovenkamp for sharing his transcriptions of passages from Brinck's *Adversaria* and albums, organized chronologically.

33 Imperato's signature is found at KB 135 K 4, fol. 61r; the notes on birds are in OAH 2057, fol. 154r.

34 «Anno 1614 heb ick te Romen in het Cabinet vanden Paus Paulo .V. gesien een struijss eij, op het welcke seer constich gesneden was die Passie Christi; Item noch een ander op het welcke gegraviert was, een Angus Dei, seer aerdich». OAH 2057, fol. 5v.

35 OAH 2058, fol. 8r. He uses the term *musaeum* elsewhere, as for example with reference to Pieter Pauw in Leiden at OAH 2057, fol. 14r («Pica Indica»). This may be a reference to the Leiden anatomical theater or to the botanical garden.

36 «Te Pratelino (Pratolino). 5. mijlen van Florentz gelegen, heb ick A° 1614 oeck met geuechten besichtiget, het wijtvermaerde Lusthuijss des Groothartogen aldaer, twelck is een seer voortreffelijck Palatium, alwaer te sien sijn schone lusthoven, fontijnen, ende veel wonderbaerlicke antiquiteijten ende rarieteijten [...] voor all is daer waerdich om sijn, het Aviarium [...] door dit vogelhuijss loopt oeck een klein beecksgen, is veel konstiger ende natuijrlicker, als dat tot Fontainebelleau, het welcke naer dit schijnt gemaect te sijn; Dit te Pratelino, is 40 treden lanck, is boven over heen met ijsdraet ende tralikens toegemaect, daerin bevinden haer etlicke duijsent vogelen van allerleij soorten». OAH 2057, fol. 173v.

37 «In het vogelhuijss van Prints Maurits, in den Haghe, heb ick Anno 21. gesien, en gants witten exter, hebbende oeck een witten beck, was uijjt Brabant gekomen; was in een kouwe apart. Aldaer heb ick doenmaels oeck gesien in

een kouwe een grauwen exter». OAH 2057, fol. 77. On the phoenix, see fol. 16r.

38 For example, shells in the West India Company headquarters at OAH 2059, fol. 82r. «In de Rustcamer van der Churvorst van Saxen te Dresden; in een bijzondere camer wierden mij Anno 15 vertoont, allerleij vederboschen, soo van swaerte als witte Reijgers, waeronder dat was een bosch van swarte Reijgers vederen geestimeert op .5000. daelders, den welken van Keijser Rodolphs .2. vereert was anden Churvorst». OAH 2057, fol. 123r. At OAH fol. 15v, Brinck mentions seeing ten birds of paradise together, in the same collection.

39 OAH 2057, fol. 15r. In Dutch, «Bij...», «Wickefoort» in Amsterdam is likely the diplomat Joachim Wickefort/Wicquefort (1596–1660), whose correspondence with Caspar Barlaeus was published.

40 A portfolio containing loose leaves, OAH 2061. The poem is by Nicolaus Heinsius and in Latin. The portfolio contains another poem on the collection, in Dutch, by G. Caroli (?).

41 OAH 2057, fol. 2v.

42 OAH 2057, fol. 5v.

43 OAH 2057, fol. 15v.

44 OAH 2057, fol. 27r. These could not have been preserved from his own eagle, which died in 1637. Brinck states that he had had this eagle for ten years. See OAH 2057, fol. 26v.

45 OAH 2057, fol. 14v. See also Jorink 2010 (as note 1), p. 291.

46 OAH 2057, fol. 71r.

47 OAH 2057, fol. 43r. The featherwork image of *The Mass of St. Gregory* (Musée de Jacobins, Auch, France), ca. 1539 is the oldest-known surviving colonial work of its kind; it was presented as a gift to Pope Paul III.

48 «Index ois. generis florum diemen in dese onse Contreijten is hebbende dese naegespecificeerde heb ick meist alle gehadt, ende noch veel meer anderen die vergaen sijn want doen mijn Hortus Floridum anno .1608.9.10.11.12 noch in esse was, soo heb ick daerin bevonden over de 300 verscheiden soorten van bloemen, waer van sommiger namen mij ontgaen sijn». OAH 2033, fol. 70r.

49 See above, note 6.