The conference brought together historians, art historians, philologists and anthropologists from universities in Spain, Germany, the UK, France, Norway, the Netherlands and the US. The aim of the conference was to come to a better understanding of the function and agency of so called cultural encyclopaedias within the Early Modern context. The term „cultural encyclopaedia“, which derives from the research on early colonial New Spanish manuscripts, thereby served as a starting point and heuristic tool to classify a heterogeneous corpus of manuscripts and printed works, which can be characterized as regional specified knowledge compilations.

The discussed knowledge compilations stem from different regions in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas, most of them are contextualized in an Early Modern colonial or imperial context or can be linked to the Christian mission and theology. The works collect, edit and present information about local inhabitants and their religion, customs, language and history, often flanked by geographical data or information on the regional fauna, flora and minerals. The knowledge compilations, which refer to themselves mostly as „Histories“ (Historias), can be placed at intersection areas of different fields of the history of knowledge: They combine elements of chorographies, chronicles, mission reports and travelogues with natural history and pre-modern linguistic, medical, botanical and zoological knowledge, ethnography, moral history and cultural anthropology as well as maps and image series. Via structuring elements (like the thematic and visual organisation or the interlocking of texts, images and maps) the compilations create a framing narrative, which constructs a display of regional specified knowledge. In some cases, this display also serves as a display of a regional specified cultural identity, linked to an Early Modern comparison and classification of civilizations.

After welcoming words by MICHAEL FRIEDRICH and an introduction by ANNA BOROFFKA (both CSMC, Universität Hamburg), HANNA VORHOLT (University of York) opened the first section, dedicated to European and Chinese-Japanese forms and traditions of knowledge compilation, with an analysis of the mid 15th century Codex Aldenburgensis from the Benedictine Abbey of Oudenbourg and its assumed relationship to Lambert of Saint-Omer’s Liber Floridus, a famous encyclopaedic work from 12th century Flanders. By analyzing the visual organisation of the Codex Aldenburgensis and the Liber Floridus, Vorholt assessed the role of images as media of knowledge compilation and argued for the prior existence of an illuminated encyclopaedic manuscript, contemporary with Lambert’s autograph, which served as a source for the Codex Aldenburgensis.

In continuation, MATTHIAS HAYEK (Université Paris Diderot) explored the narrative structure of the printed book Wakan Sansai Zue, or Japanese and Chinese illustrated Encyclopedia of the Three Powers. The Wakan Sansai Zue, compiled by Terashima Ryōan, a physician from Osaka, is organized in three parts, corresponding to the three powers (sansai/sancai) which are „Heaven“, „Earth“ and „Man“; it thereby adapts a thematic structure that stems from older Chinese models to a Japanese context. Hayek pointed out, that the thematic organisation of the Wakan Sansai Zue is far from being arbitrary, as Michel Foucault and Jorge Luis Borges would have us think, but in fact applies a strict hierarchy to all the realms and categories.

MICHAEL FRIEDRICH (CSMC, Universität Hamburg) opened the next session dedicated to Early Modern regional specified knowledge compilations, rooted in imperial, colonial or missionary contexts. Friedrich analyzed mission reports on China, among them the Historia de las cosas más notables, ri­tos y costumbres del gran rey­no de la China
(Rome 1586) by the Augustine Juan González de Mendoza, and De Christiana Expeditione apud Sinas Suscepta ab Societate Jesu (Augsburg 1615), which comprises an extensive description of China by Matteo Ricci and later monographs on China. By focusing on the interpretation and representation of the Chinese script, Friedrich demonstrated the European struggle to understand non-European writing systems.

The following paper, presented by JOANPAU RUBÍES (ICREA & Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona), was dedicated to the visual organization and authorship of the Boxer Codex. The late 16th century manuscript, written and painted on Chinese paper, describes and depicts the inhabitants of the Mariana Islands, the Philippines, Manila, Borneo, Java, the Moluccas, Siam and China and concludes with an image series on regional birds and fantastic animals. Rubíes pointed out, that the sequencing of the 75 ethnographic images follows a geographical organization; he furthermore discussed Juan de Cuéllar, secretary to governor Gómez Pérez Dasmariñas, as potential author of the manuscript (both might also be depicted on the deck of a Spanish ship on a fold-out illumination of the codex, although the younger man could also be the governor’s son Luis).

ERLING SEVERDRUP SANDMO (Universitetet i Oslo) concluded the first day of the conference with a talk on the circulation and reception of the Carta Marina (Venice 1539) and the corresponding Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus (Rome 1555), both composed by the exiled Swedish bishop Olaus Magnus. After discussing the thematic organisation, aims and potential literary models of Magnus’ Historia, Sandmo underlined its influence on the re-construction of a Northern Antiquity. By concentrating on the interlocking of images and texts, Sandmo analyzed the reception of the Carta Marina and the Historia by later editions and translations and demonstrated to what extent these works preserved the original text, but altered and transformed Olaus’ imagery.

The second day of the conference opened with a summary of the previous presentations and discussions by MARGIT KERN (Universität Hamburg). The introduction was followed by ANNA BOROFFKA (CSMC, Universität Hamburg), who gave a talk on Bernardino de Sahagún’s Historia universal de las cosas de Nueva España (1577). After discussing the interpretation of the Historia as an “Aztec encyclopaedia”, “ethnographic encyclopaedia” or a “cultural encyclopaedia” by Mesoamerican scholars, Boroffka focused on the thematic organization of the manuscript. She showed that the narrative of the Historia, which follows the systematic of a Scala Naturae and concludes with an account of the Spanish conquest, reconstructs the Nahua past and thereby constructs a Nahua cultural heritage and pre-Christian identity, rooted in an Early Modern cultural discourse and the aims of the Franciscan mission in Central Mexico.

The following presentation, given by SUSANNE GREILICH (Universität Regensburg), was dedicated to José de Acosta’s Historia natural y moral de las Indias (Seville 1590), an influential work until the late 18th century, when it was, among others, received by Guillaume Thomas Raynal’s History of the two Indies. Greilich analyzed Acosta’s method of compiling and organizing knowledge against the background of more recent research on encyclopaedias. She discussed his ability of creating a homogeneous narrative from his sources, as well as the Historia’s characteristic combination of a natural history in tradition of Pliny the Elder’s Naturalis historia and a moral history on pre-Hispanic customs and traditions, used by Acosta to argue for a praeparatio evangelica.

Thereafter MARIANA DE CAMPOS FRANÇOZO’s (Universiteit Leiden) paper compared Willem Piso’s and George Marcgraf’s Historia Naturalis Brasiliae (1648), a knowledge compilation on Brazilian botany, zoology and ethnology, with Willem Piso’s De Indiae Utiriusque re naturali et medica (Amsterdam 1658), a collation of the HNB and Jacob Bontius’ De Medicina Indorum (1642) on the medicines of the Dutch East Indies. By exploring the visual organization and the interlocking of images and Tupi vocabulary with the main text in Latin, de Campos Françozo showed how both books made use of indigenous knowledge and culturally-specific markers and how formal
qualities and editorial choices influenced their reception in scientific circles of the 18th century.

The next speaker, FEDERICO PALOMO DEL BARRIO (Universidad Complutense de Madrid), focused on the Franciscan contribution to natural knowledge in the Early Modern Portuguese Empire. His analysis of the book *Frutas do Brasil numa nova e ascetica monarchia* (Lisbon 1702), written by the Franciscan friar António do Rosário, showed how an extensive textual catalogue of plants and fruits from the Portuguese America was used to build a complex plant-based allegory with clear moralizing and political connotations about Brazil: The fruits of the New World, as well as their characteristics and qualities, were proposed as moral metaphors which set out a specific ideal of monarchy and Christian society in the tropics.

The following presentation was given by RENATE DÜRR (Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen), who presented a paper on the Jesuit Journal *Der Neue Welt-Bott*, which was edited in several volumes by Joseph Stöcklein SJ since 1726. The *Neue Welt-Bott* is a compilation and German translation of Jesuit letters, written between 1642 and 1726, and comprises accounts from the Jesuit missions in China, India, the Americas and the Lev-ante. By analyzing the frontispiece, imagery, layout and organization of information in the publication, Dürr debated the function and agenda of the journal, which she characterized as an „information fair“ that wasn’t limited to a Jesuit readership, but strove to reach a wide German-speaking audience.

In addition, the next talk given by IRINA PAWLOWSKY (Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen) focused on the maps included in the *Neue Welt-Bott*. Pawlowsky stressed that research on Early Modern Jesuit writings often focuses on issues of global history, like the relationship between cultural contact and the production of knowledge. However a growing interest in Jesuit cartographic works exists, many studies are still limited to the function of maps in missionary contexts or the circumstances of their production. By discussing different types of cartographic representation and the interrelations between texts and maps in the *Neue Welt-Bott*, Pawlowsky showed how effectively maps guided the reader’s perception. Maps did not only combine, highlight and conceal information, they also offered particular interpretations of texts.

The last talk of the conference was given by CÉCILE FROMONT (Yale University). By analyzing a corpus of images, which Kongo and Angola Capuchin missionaries created in the 17th and 18th century, Fromont showed that the Capuchin central African depictions form a category of their own within Early Modern European representations of the overseas. The images reflect the relationship between Capuchin missionaries and the populations of Kongo and Angola, which followed neither the templates of colonial proselytism in the Early Modern Americas, nor the strategies of the Asian missions, but instead were defined by fraught cooperation and carefully calibrated interactions between the clerics and their elite Kongo hosts.

The conference concluded with a final discussion and closing remarks by ANNA BOROFFKA (CSMC, Universität Hamburg). The case studies, brought together during the conference, showed the fullness of the material and the necessity of further investigations on the topic. They also made clear that further analysis should not be limited to a labelling or definition of the genre but must include a thorough contextualization of the compilations in the different branches and traditions of the history of knowledge in order to better understand the new function and agency these regional specified knowledge compilations gained within the Early Modern context.

**Conference Overview:**

Chair (Day 1): Margit Kern (Universität Hamburg)

Michael Friedrich (Director CSMC, Universität Hamburg): Welcome

Anna Boroffka (CSMC, Universität Hamburg): Introduction

Section I: European and Chinese-Japanese Forms and Traditions of Knowledge Compilation

Hanna Vorholt (University of York): Encyclopedic Compilations: The Case of the Codex *Aldenburgensis*
Matthias Hayek (Université Paris Diderot): Collecting Knowledge and Ordering the World: The Inner Hierarchy of Terashima Ryōan’s Japanese and Chinese Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Three Powers (Wakan Sansai Zue, ca 1715)

Section II: Early Modern Regional Specified Knowledge Compilations in Imperial, Colonial or Missionary Contexts

Michael Friedrich (CSMC, Universität Hamburg): Gleanings from the Study of Jesuit Reports on China

Joan-Pau Rubiés (ICREA & Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona): The Boxer Codex as an Enigma: In Search of an Authorial Voice

Erling Sverdrup Sandmo (Universitetet i Oslo): Histories of a Historia: The Reception and Transformations of Olaus Magnus’ History of the Northern Peoples

Chair (Day 2): Margit Kern (Universität Hamburg) / Anna Boroffka (CSMC, Universität Hamburg)

Anna Boroffka (CSMC, Universität Hamburg): Compiling Knowledge in New Spain: Bernardino de Sahagún’s Historia universal as a „Cultural Encyclopaedia“?

Susanne Greilich (Universität Regensburg): Order and Organization of Knowledge on the New World in Early Modern Spanish Compilations: José de Acosta’s Historia natural y moral de las Indias

Mariana de Campos Françozo (Universiteit Leiden): A Dutch Natural History of Brazil Gone Global? Exploring Johannes de Laet’s and Willem Piso’s Editorial Strategies

Federico Palomo del Barrio (Universidad Complutense de Madrid): Franciscans and Cultural Encyclopedias in 17th Century Portuguese America: Parables, Commonplaces and Natural Knowledge in Fr. António do Rosário’s Frutas do Brasil

Renate Dürr (Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen): How to Interpret all this Variation? Joseph Stöcklein’s SJ Neuer Welt-Bott as an „Information Fair“

Irina Pawlowsky (Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen): Texts and Maps: Cartographic Organization of Knowledge in Joseph Stöcklein’s SJ Der Neue Welt-Bott (18th century)

Cécile Fromont (Yale University): Images on a Mission: Envisioning Early Modern Kongo and Angola

Anna Boroffka (CSMC, Universität Hamburg): Final Discussion / Closing Remark


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