

Sussex University contribution to the Botany in British India: enhancement through transcription project: a note

1. Project summary

- To use the Transkribus transcription tool to create transcriptions of the digitised Botany in British India collections, and to make these available for bulk download and reuse alongside catalogue metadata.

2. The collection

- Botany in British India (1780-1890) <http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelpregion/asia/india/indiaofficerecords/botanymat.html>
- The records of the East India Company and India Office are a rich source of information about surgeon-naturalists, economic and medicinal botany, and the establishment of botanic gardens in the UK and India.

2.1. Institutions:

- Botanic and spice gardens at Bangalore, Calcutta, Dapuri, Marmalong, Oootacamund, Pune, Saharanpur, Samalkot, Tinnevely to name a few.

- The Royal Asiatic Society in the 1790s and 1830s, Harold H. S. (1981), 2.3 (e)-3 (a) -6.6 (r) 11.1 (i) -43.1 (s) 12.3 (e) a 31.8 (s)

Lush, 1797-1845, surgeon botanist | Robert Wight, botanist | Hugh Falconer, 1808-1865 | Willconer, 18 | Clements Markham, 1830 | Robert Kyd, 1746-1793, botanist | James Anderson, 1738-1809, botanist | Andrew Berry, 1764-1833 | Nathaniel Wallich, 1785-1854, botanist | William Roxburgh, 1751-1815, botanist | Hugh Cleghorn | William Augustus Gott | Dr John Forbes Royle, 1798-1858, naturalist

Plants and commodities:

Including cannabis, cassia, cinchona, cinnamon, cochineal, cotton, hemp, indigo, nutmeg, rubber, senna, silk, sugar, tobacco.

3. The project

- India Office staff will set up a private collection on the Transkribus server and provide access to an initial 200 images drawn from the BIBI collection. We will provide you with a copy of the catalogue metadata, and you can select items of particular interest to yourself.

- Training in the tool will be provided by Alex Hailey and Antonia Moon during a visit to Sussex.
- Once 100 / 200 pages have been transcribed, the Transcriptorium project will train their handwriting recognition tool on the “ground truth” transcriptions and images.
- From this point only the baselines of images need to be marked up: the automatic transc

- The botany material represents a tiny sample of the Board's collections and the Government Proceedings, which contain many hundreds of thousands of manuscript pages. The small manual input has the potential to produce a significant output in terms of automated transcribed pages in the long term.
- The Library would demonstrate its willingness to engage with emerging trends in digital research, strengthen existing relationships with research institutions working in this area, and show a commitment to enhancing its existing digital resources.