



THE SKÅNELAHOLM COLLECTION - PRE- OR POST-LINNEAN?

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The 17th cy. mansion of Skånelaholm, situated about 40 km north of central Stockholm, Sweden, and bequeathed in 1962 to the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities by the historian dr. Herbert Rettig as part of the Rettig Cultural Foundation, a.o. objects houses a double chest of drawers chiefly containing a collection of materia medica.

In 1952 Telemak Fredbärj, MD and Linnaeus specialist, claimed that this collection be pre-linnean (Carl Linnaeus lived 1707 – 1778). He based his claim on the presence of stone and concrement samples, described in 1726, and on what he considered to be “bauhinian” botanic nomenclature used in the collection’s hundreds of labels, disregarding or being unaware of the pharmaceutical nomenclature of its time.

We have examined the chests and their contents from various aspects, and we refute Fredbärj’s conclusion.

In our opinion the collection consists of three distinct parts:

-one comprising human concrements, such as gallstones, and minerals, collected by Olof Bromelius (1639 – 1705) and his son Magnus von Bromell (1679 – 1731), both MDs, between ca 1700 and 1725,

-one – the major part – comprising about 600 samples of about 380 different vegetable drugs, presumably collected in mid-18th cy. and augmented as late as 1788, by Friedrich Ziervogel (1727 – 1792), pharmacist, and

-sundry additional material, primarily 18th cy. print relating to Linnaeus, collected after 1930 by dr. Rettig.

In the presentation our investigation, the material underpinning our conclusions, and our opinions will be discussed.