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## Mixing up the medicine: Garcia de Orta on the problems with Eurocentric philosophy

Saloni de Souza 

Department of Philosophy, Bath Spa University, Bath, UK

### ABSTRACT

Garcia de Orta (1501–1568) is largely remembered in academic circles as a minor figure in the history of medicine. The son of converts from Judaism to Catholicism, he fled escalating persecution in Portugal and settled in Goa, where he practised medicine and wrote *Colóquios dos simples e drogas da Índia*, a dialogue that is generally viewed as nothing more than an unorthodox manual of tropical *materia medica*. However, here, I cast light on an important philosophical contribution that de Orta makes through this dialogue. I argue that he points to several epistemological failings made by most European natural philosophers in Europe. For de Orta, I argue, the tendency towards four forms of Eurocentrism is a significant cause of these errors. However, de Orta is prone to two of the very sorts of Eurocentrism to which he objects. He is therefore guilty of some of the same failings. Consequently, he makes for a complex opponent of Eurocentrism in the history of philosophy: whilst he provides a nuanced philosophical critique of Eurocentrism, he shows signs of struggling to entirely escape Eurocentrism himself.

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### 1. Introduction

Garcia de Orta (1501–1568) was born in Portugal, educated in Spain and initially practised medicine and lectured in Portugal. The son of ‘New Christian’ converts from Judaism to Catholicism, in 1534, he fled escalating persecution in Europe; after travelling around Asia, he settled in Portuguese India until his death. There, in Goa, he researched the natural world and local medical practices, practised medicine, and wrote a dialogue, titled *Colóquios dos simples, e drogas he coisas medicinais da Índia, e assi dalgúas frutas achadas nella onde se tratam algúas cousas tocantes amediçina, pratica, e outras cousas boas, pera saber* (*Conversations on the simples, drugs and medical matters of India, and*

**CONTACT** Saloni de Souza  [s.desouza@bathspa.ac.uk](mailto:s.desouza@bathspa.ac.uk)

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also of some of the fruits founds there and other good things to know about) (1563), abbreviated to *Colóquios dos simples e drogas he coisas amediçina da Índia*<sup>1</sup> (*Conversations on the simples, drugs and medical matters of India*, henceforth *Colóquios*) after the first edition.<sup>2</sup> It yields, amongst other things, detailed descriptions of the properties and medicinal uses of natural substances (plants, herbs, fruits, animals and their products, stones, minerals), disease and treatments, around the world, particularly India.<sup>3</sup>

The way that some historians have characterized de Orta's intellectual ambitions hints at a tension regarding Eurocentrism. They maintain that although de Orta aimed to unite European and non-European thought, he was not entirely successful in doing so – partly because of personal failings, such as not learning Sanskrit (Soler and Pimental, "Painting the Naked Truth") and limited contact with Hindu physicians (Grove, "Indigenous Knowledges"). This implies that although de Orta attempts to reject the Eurocentric attitude that assumes that European ideas are superior to non-European ones, he struggles to do so. However, these historians do not explicitly discuss Eurocentrism; indeed, the term 'Eurocentrism' is not, as far as I am aware, used in existing historical literature.<sup>4</sup> Thus, no case has been made for the view that de Orta rejects but falls prey to Eurocentrism, let alone Eurocentrism of any particular form. In this paper, through a close reading of the *Colóquios*, I fill this gap. In doing so, I show that even though de Orta has received no detailed philosophical attention, he makes an important philosophical contribution in the history of philosophy.

I argue that de Orta objects to what I term 'Identity Eurocentrism', 'Geographical Eurocentrism', 'Devaluing Eurocentrism', 'Preference Eurocentrism' on the grounds that they lead to four epistemological failings that are widespread amongst Europeans. However, since de Orta is prone to falling prey to Identity and Preference Eurocentrism to some degree, he is faced with an epistemological problem: he is also liable to error.

## 2. You're gonna get hit: European epistemological failings

The *Colóquios* is preceded by de Orta's dedication to his patron Martim Afonso de Sousa, the influential Catholic Governor of Goa. Exceptionally complimentary, it was a wise political move; as New Christians, he and his family

<sup>1</sup>I state these titles as they appeared in the original editions, i.e. in Old Portuguese.

<sup>2</sup>The *Colóquios* is divided into fifty-nine numbered, chronologically ordered conversations. References are to de Ficalho's two-volume 1891 edition (*Colóquios 1–25* (vol I); *Colóquios 26–59* (vol.III)). Translations are mine.

<sup>3</sup>The *Colóquios* bears strong resemblance to *materia medica*. However, it was unusual for *materia medica* to be written in dialogue form (Pimental and Soler, "Painting the Naked Truth", 109); Županov, "Context and Afterlife"). Moreover, its scope is far wider, e.g. *Colóquios* 21 explicitly excludes medical matters (303(vol.I)); 342–343(vol.II) concerns caste and religious practices.

<sup>4</sup>Contra terms such as 'anti-Semitism', 'colonialism' (e.g. Arrizabalaga, "Garcia de Orta"; Brentjes, "Issues of Best Historiographical Practice", 8; Pimental and Soler, "Painting the Naked Truth").

would have been viewed with suspicion across the Portuguese empire (Boxer, *Two Pioneers*, 10–11).<sup>5</sup> It also leads the reader to expect material in the *Colóquios* that applies to Europeans from all over Europe:

I could have written this treatise in Latin, as I had written it many years before, and it would have been more palatable to your Lordship; for you understand that better than your mother tongue, but I have translated it into Portuguese because it is more common, and because I know that all those who live in these Indian regions, knowing to whom it is addressed, have enjoyed reading it.

5(vol.I)

De Orta explains that he had previously written the *Colóquios* in Latin. This indicates that the dialogue is relevant for people who read Latin but not Portuguese, i.e. Europeans outside Spain,<sup>6</sup> Portugal, or Portuguese India.<sup>7</sup> However, despite acknowledging that the governor would have been more amenable to his Latin version, de Orta has chosen to publish his Portuguese translation. This is because the translation is more accessible and has been well-received by his test audience, Portuguese-reading Europeans in India.<sup>8</sup> Thus, although his audience is Europeans outside India who read Portuguese, the reader is led to expect material in the dialogue that applies to Europeans generally.<sup>9</sup>

As I show now, at the beginning of the dialogue, this is just what the reader finds. With *Colóquios* 1–2, I argue, de Orta points to four widespread epistemological failings evident *throughout* Europe – in ways that relate to insularity and displaying attitudes of superiority. He achieves this by prompting the reader to reflect on Europeans' attitudes to inquiry and the persecution of New Christian academics.

*Colóquios* 1 opens with the conversation already underway, occurring between the dialogue's main characters: de Orta himself and Ruano, a Spanish doctor with no historical counterpart, who studied at university with de Orta. It is clear from the outset that Ruano and de Orta are inquisitive Europeans, who are unusually committed to inquiry into matters that lie far beyond Europe through extensive travelling and taking direct observation

<sup>5</sup>There is some evidence that de Orta and his family secretly observed Judaism (Arrizabalaga, "Garcia de Orta"; Boxer, *Two Pioneers*, 6, 10–11; da Silva Carvalho, *Garcia d'Orta*, 74, 159). Although de Orta was protected in his lifetime, de Orta's sister was burnt at the stake (1569) and he was posthumously convicted of being "a secret Jew" at an *auto-da-fé* (1580); his remains were exhumed and burnt alongside an effigy of him (see Boxer, *Two Pioneers*, 11; da Silva Carvalho, *Garcia d'Orta*, 74, 159, 202–212).

<sup>6</sup>There were many Portuguese-readers in Spain.

<sup>7</sup>Referring to a Latin version also serves to underscore that de Orta is highly educated (Brentjes, "Issues of Best Historiographical Practice", 97; Iken, "Linguistic Aspects", 79–80, 84–87).

<sup>8</sup>Portuguese-readers in India were limited to Europeans.

<sup>9</sup>This is reflected in its reception. Clusius produced an annotated, edited Latin translation (Clusius, *Garcia de Orta*) (and subsequent editions), which was translated into Italian and French (Briganti, *Dell'istoria de i semplici aromati*; Colin, *Histoire des droges*). De Orta's thought was transmitted to non-Portuguese reading Europeans via others' work, arguably through plagiarism (e.g. Fragoso, *Discursos*; De Acosta, *Tractado*.)

and testimony outside Europe seriously. This is presented in a positive light, as an attitude that facilitates epistemic progress. In the first lines of the dialogue, de Orta asks Ruano what he is doing in Goa (19–20(vol.I)). Ruano explains that his lengthy journey is, like de Orta’s presence in Goa, motivated by his desire to learn about matters in India, primarily those relating to natural substances and their medicinal properties (19–20(vol.I)). De Orta, Ruano suggests, is a particularly good person to learn from. This is because de Orta has acquired both direct experience and the testimony of credible sources who have had direct experience of these things (19(vol.I)).<sup>10</sup> Partly as a result, de Orta reports the truth (*verdade* (20(vol.I))); indeed, he claims to know (*soube* (20(vol.I))) about such matters. Furthermore, de Orta seems to be an epistemic source of the kind that does not exist in Europe; Ruano has already asked the most viable alternatives in Europe for the information he seeks: “natural philosophers (*físicos*)<sup>11</sup> who have visited Spain”, an academic centre,<sup>12</sup> i.e. European scholars who are interested in travelling (albeit not necessarily from India)<sup>13</sup> to exchange knowledge across borders. Yet, Ruano reports, they are unable “to give me a reason (*razam*) … nor will they satisfy my understanding” (20(vol.I)).

In *Colóquios* 2, the reader discovers that most Europeans do not share de Orta and Ruano’s enthusiasm for learning about matters outside Europe – and that the reasons for their disagreement are problematic.<sup>14</sup> Just how different their attitudes are begins to emerge with a discussion about Ruano’s proposed methodology: addressing natural substances in alphabetical order (23(vol.I)). De Orta objects to this method, and so expresses anxiety about the ramifications for his reputation if Ruano’s record of their conversation were published.<sup>15</sup> Attempting to relieve de Orta’s discomfort, Ruano claims that the only (apparent) evil (*mal*) that could come to *mordaces* (biting) readers is the truth (*verdadeiras*, 24(vol.I)). However, the word

<sup>10</sup>De Orta is a committed empiricist – on the power of direct experience see, e.g. 143–145(vol.I), 208(vol.I), Da Costa and de Carvalho, “Between East and West”.

<sup>11</sup>“*Físicos*”, is a word de Orta reserves for Europeans unless qualified – e.g. ‘*físicos Arabios*’ 72(vol.II), ‘*físicos da Persia*’ 250(vol.II), ‘*físicos Indianos*’ 320(vol.II).

<sup>12</sup>The intended reader would have been aware of the large concentration of universities in Spain including de Orta’s alma maters, Salamanca and Alcalá, a fact revealed later (24(vol.I)).

<sup>13</sup>No points of departure are specified.

<sup>14</sup>One might argue that Ruano represents any Iberian physician before travelling to India because of the literal meaning of ‘Ruano’ (‘man in the street’, ‘anonymous’) (Pimental and Soler, “Painting the Naked Truth”, 109). If so, one might think, *all* Iberian physicians are interested in matters outside Europe. However, there are other ways to interpret the reason why de Orta chooses ‘Ruano’. My suspicion is that de Orta is making a joke – much time is spent worrying about *names* of things in the dialogue. This is substantiated by the fact that jokes are made about the name ‘de Orta’ through references to de Orta’s garden (*orta* means ‘garden’).

<sup>15</sup>As well as a serious methodological point, this seems to be a joke. The *Colóquios* was the fifth European work printed in Goa and amongst the first in India (Markham, *Colloquies*, xi), Primrose, “The First Press in India”, 241–250). The first edition was riddled with typographical errors. It had a twenty-page list of errata and an acknowledgement that this was almost certainly incomplete (Boxer, *Two Pioneers*, 13). For a discussion of what went wrong, see de Carvalho, *Os desafios de Garcia de Orta*, ch.4.

*mordaces* suggests that these potential readers would have significant animosity towards and contempt for de Orta, i.e. they would forcefully reject any of his writings, even though they contain many truths.

According to Ruano, this dismissal would be irrational:

Many of your things (cousas) have never been known to the natural philosophers (físicos) who have visited Spain, let alone to the natural philosophers of Europe, because I have already asked natural philosophers in Spain what they are up to, and they gave me no more reason than that which we all knew there (não me deram mais razam que a que lá sabíamos todos),<sup>16</sup> and amongst these men, a few were scholarly (doctos), except that they spend more of their time thinking about making themselves rich than about philosophy (filosofar).

24(vol.1)

European natural philosophers, including the apparently inquisitive travellers mentioned in *Colóquios* 1 (“natural philosophers who have visited Spain”), are entirely ignorant of many of the sorts of things in which de Orta is interested and knows about. These things, as already implied by the earlier reference to de Orta’s extensive travel outside Europe (19–20 (vol.I)) and confirmed by the content of the rest of the dialogue, are natural substances and disease outside Europe, especially India. Ruano has discovered why Europeans are ignorant of the truths that de Orta can impart by investigating their rationale for ignoring these matters; he has apparently asked many natural philosophers in Spain what they are so busy doing instead. In response, they simply point to “that which we all knew there”. Thus, what underlies the rejection of de Orta’s writings is the widespread and mistaken belief that whatever most Europeans in Europe already know includes knowledge of the things in which de Orta is interested, namely natural substances and disease outside Europe. This belief, Ruano claims, is held even by the most academic, the “scholarly” (doctos), i.e. those who spend some (limited) time investigating and therefore do not hold that they know everything about *all* natural substances and disease.<sup>17</sup> Presumably, this erroneous belief is also held by those philosophers who spend no time investigating natural substances and disease, i.e. those who believe they know everything about all natural substances and disease. In both groups, insularity and an attitude of superiority amongst most European natural philosophers are

<sup>16</sup>Markham translates: “they gave me no reason other than that they knew all” (Markham, “Colloquies”, 5). However, he does not translate ‘a que’. He also assumes that ‘lá’ is the definite article for ‘todos’ – but “lá” and ‘todos’ do not agree. Therefore, my translation is preferable.

<sup>17</sup>The fact that their philosophical activity is constrained by making money is striking. Many such people would have attempted to make money by trading in non-European natural substances. Successfully doing so would have required extensive knowledge of the properties of these substances, especially their medicinal properties, as de Orta repeatedly emphasises later in the dialogue (e.g. 50 (vol.I), 82 (vol.I) 261 (vol.II)). Thus, philosophical investigation into natural substances, one might think, ought to take (greater) priority.

displayed; unlike de Orta and Ruano, most European natural philosophers believe that they do not need to look outside Europe for knowledge of at least one sort. It also implies an epistemological problem:

F1. Failure to acknowledge that European natural philosophers do not possess complete knowledge of natural substances and disease or complete knowledge of natural substances and disease outside Europe.

Since the fictional de Orta does not disagree with Ruano's criticisms, I presume that de Orta himself agrees with F1.

The second and third epistemological failings emerge from some concessions that Ruano makes in order to reassure de Orta. Given the resistance of European readers, Ruano promises to attempt to share his record of their conversation with only a few people in Europe, who, presumably, are innocent of F1: "some of our fellow students ... and some of your disciples" (24(vol.I)). Ruano explains why he picks these specific disciples:

...some of your disciples who are so scholarly (doctos) that you and I will be able to learn from them, because they have given little of themselves to activity and a great deal to the universities (ás escholas) and we have done the opposite.

24(vol.I)

They have learnt more than de Orta in some respects about the sorts of things in which he is interested, i.e. natural substances and disease, predominantly outside Europe – but not, strikingly, through straightforwardly applying de Orta's methods. He has spent most of his time on "activity" outside Europe (studying natural substances and disease through direct observation, gathering and probing oral testimony). They have committed most of their time to working in European universities (the very institutions at which those guilty of F1 would be employed), i.e. to critically discussing texts. These texts would, I take it, include the obvious sources of the (purported) knowledge about de Orta's interests for those who are guilty of F1: those by the ancient Greeks and Romans, who were widely taken to be authorities about matters of medicine and pharmacology in Europe at the time (Nutton, *A Short History of European Medicine*, Chapter 4). They would also include any other texts that de Orta takes seriously, most obviously, those like his own writings: credible reports of observations and testimony gathered far away from Europe. De Orta does not disagree with what Ruano says, implying agreement.

If Europeans in Europe inquire appropriately, as these followers do, then, they are *able* to learn about natural substances and disease – especially natural substances and diseases outside Europe, like de Orta. Yet, Ruano will share his record with a small number of de Orta's disciples and a handful of others in Spain. So, only a tiny number of Europeans in Europe are *willing* to do so. This points to two further failures amongst European

natural philosophers, which could obviously underlie and reinforce F1 and are connected with insularity:

F2. Relying solely or too much on ancient Greek and Roman philosophers regarding natural substances and disease.

F3. Seeking out and using credible sources that exist or stem from independent activity outside Europe regarding natural substances and disease – either too little or not at all.

The final epistemological failing stems from a complaint Ruano makes about being unable to share the record of his conversation with de Orta with their former lecturers and teachers:

... the thing that bothers me the most about this is that you and I have no teachers or masters to whom I can show your work, neither in Salamanca nor in Alcalá, because they are all dead or banished far away from Spain.

24(vol.I)

These academics no longer exist in Europe; they were nominal or genuine New Christians who had been murdered or fled Europe. The reason Ruano finds this so frustrating, I take it, is because he is now unable to consult his and de Orta's academic role models, i.e. the most knowledgeable people in Europe. The fact that *all* these academic role models were New Christians suggests that their academic excellence was connected to their (historical) Judaism; their openness and access to Jewish philosophy *better* placed them to make epistemic progress.<sup>18</sup> This passage, therefore, hints at attitudes of superiority in Europe: the views of peoples or traditions seen as inferior do not belong in Europe; indeed, they are not European at all. It also points to a further failing:

F4. Elimination, disregard or minimisation of good epistemic sources.

F4 in turn reinforces F3.

In *Colóquios* 1–2, where de Orta sets up the plan for the dialogue, he points to four related epistemological failings in Europe, connected with attitudes of superiority and insularity. Thus, the reader is led to expect this to be significant and illuminated in what follows. As I show, this is exactly what she finds. Although a word for 'Eurocentrism' was not available to de Orta, by reflecting on the main body of the dialogue, the reader discovers that he objects to four forms of Eurocentrism on the grounds that they lead to the epistemological failings in *Colóquios* 1–2.

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<sup>18</sup>De Orta was familiar with Jewish philosophy. Knowledge of different languages is key to de Orta's methodology (see Pimental and Soler, "Painting the Naked Truth"). Thus, for de Orta, Hebrew, which he also knew, would have been beneficial beyond simply enabling one to read Jewish texts.

### 3. Mixing up the medicine: proper inquiry

In this section, I address a methodological issue that is crucial for understanding de Orta's forms of Eurocentrism and why he finds them problematic. I argue that for de Orta, there are particular rules about inferences, seeking and weighing testimony.

Curiously, given that Ruano's initial request was about India, de Orta addresses natural substances and disease in places very far beyond India from the very beginning of their investigation. One explanation for this is that, for de Orta, if one seeks knowledge about natural substances and disease, one ought to consider them globally; de Orta says that if he is to "know the truth perfectly" (*saber huma verdade perfeitamente*), he requires access to testimony from around the world (152 (vol.I)).

Why? Part of the answer hangs on three observations made by de Orta. First, some natural substances and diseases are found only in particular areas, sometimes small or remote. For example, de Orta lists many places where the benjuy tree cannot be found and two where it can (84 (vol.I)). He reports that galangal grows exclusively in China and Java (353 (vol.I)), whilst cloves grow in three of the Maluku islands (362 (vol.II)). Ruano notes substantive differences between disease in Spain and in Goa; de Orta does not disagree (263–264 (vol.I), 13 (vol.II)).

Second, the properties and behaviour of natural substances and diseases can differ according to location. For example, the colour and density of opium differ in Cairo, India, Aden and around the Red Sea (173 (vol.II)). Coconuts are found in many places but only certain kinds of coconut, found exclusively in the Maldives, are antidotes (146 (vol.I)). Cholera is more acute in India than in Portugal (266–267 (vol.I)). One reason why is that different variants of fruits, plants, and animals exist in different places (e.g. 59 (vol.I), 198(vol.I), 48 (vol.II), 232 (vol.II), 287 (vol.II), 292 (vol.II)). Another is that the environment affects the properties and behaviour of natural substances and the body;<sup>19</sup> de Orta notes factors such as humidity, temperature, rainfall, distance from the sea, altitude, (proximity to) human habitation, what grows in a patient's locality (e.g.142,157–158, 211–212, 236, 263–265, 326 (vol.I), 199, 277 (vol.II)).

Third, the properties of natural substances can vary with change of location due to differences in the environment or transportation process. Thus, de Orta says, the practice of transplanting plants from one land to another "makes diversity" (203 (vol.I)); Ruano remarks that "if planted in another land, acoro would not be warm" (145 (vol.I)). When costus root is transported over long distances by land, it rots and changes colour and taste (258 (vol.I), 398–399 (vol.II)).

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<sup>19</sup>Da Costa notices weather and its effects on the body (Da Costa, "Geographical expansion", 77).

These observations obviously have significance for the inferences that an investigator must avoid if she is to guarantee escaping error. She cannot assume that just because a natural substance or disease exists in one place, it will exist in another – especially if the environment is different. She cannot infer from the fact that a natural substance or disease has certain properties or behaviour in one place, that the same properties and behaviour will hold of it elsewhere. Hence, de Orta remarks:

... you can believe that those properties that you find there, we do not find here; and those who wrote this from over there in Europe said the truth; and we speak truth, speaking in this land of what we know.

398-399(vol.II)

Nor should she assume that natural substances will have the same properties or behave in the same way after transplantation or transportation. Furthermore, unless it is based on her own observation or credible testimony (especially based on direct observation), she should not make claims about what natural substances or diseases exist or what their properties and behaviour are (either in a particular or a general area), nor how they change through transplantation or transportation. I assume in what follows that de Orta subscribes to these rules.

De Orta's observations also affect how the investigator ought to seek and weigh testimony if she is to acquire knowledge and avoid error in ways. She must consider how likely a source is to have directly observed the natural substances or diseases, as well as where they observed them and how far that supports the geographical scope of their claims. Thus, in showing Ruano "how badly this author (Vartomano) testifies about matters concerning India", de Orta notes that Vartomano never travelled to Cochin or Calicut (106 (vol. I)). I presume de Orta himself accepts this.

## 4. Cheaters and four-time losers: forms of Eurocentrism

### 4.1. Do not follow leaders: identity eurocentrism

I turn now to address each form of Eurocentrism in turn. De Orta regards an ancient philosopher as Arab (*arabios*), Greek or Roman according to whether they (primarily) wrote in Arabic, Greek or Latin.<sup>20</sup> Ancient philosophers are allocated by de Orta to Arabic, Greek, and Roman traditions according to language, so that these are three, distinct traditions.<sup>21</sup> Hence, he distinguishes between "the Greeks, the Latins and the Arabs" (179 (vol.I)) and Ruano asks if "any Arab or Greek author" has written about benjuy ((104), vol.I). De Orta seems to agree with the general European consensus at the time that the Greek and Roman traditions are European and the Arabic

<sup>20</sup>This is a controversial view, e.g. de Orta regards Galen as Roman but one might disagree on geographical grounds; Galen was born in Asia Minor.

<sup>21</sup>Again, this is controversial.

tradition is non-European, hence, he calls Europeans “modern Latins” (*Latinos modernos* (179 (vol.I))).

However, whereas he regularly challenges the Greeks and Romans, de Orta regards most Europeans as near fanatical in their commitment to Greeks and Roman views, confessing “Even I, when in Spain, did not dare to say anything against Galen or against the Greeks” (83–84 (vol.II)). Instrumental to their commitment is bias:

I wouldn’t want you to be so fond of these modern writers, who, because they praise the Greeks so much, bad mouth the Arabs (arabios)<sup>22</sup> and a few Moors born in Spain, and others from Persia, **calling them barbarian “Maumetistas” (which they hold to be the worst epithet in the world)**, especially the Italians, alongside the Greeks ...

31 (vol.I)

Immediately preceding this passage, Ruano expressed puzzlement about why Muslim use a recipe for pills for the plague that differs from the one that apparently originated in Galen. In doing so, Ruano used the religious slur ‘Maumetistas’ to describe Muslims, following Ruel, a French translator of and commentator on Dioscorides.<sup>23</sup> Modern European scholars, elevate ‘their’ European Greek and Roman philosophers over the ‘other’, non-European sources of testimony,<sup>24</sup> where this is caused by bias against non-Europeans; this bias is evident in insults (“barbarian”, ‘Maumetistas’, “the worst epithet in the world”). I term this practice ‘Identity Eurocentrism’.

Identity Eurocentrism is problematic:

And God always wanted us to seek and inquire into medicines and since this is so, the lovers of the Greeks, when they find (achão) medicines that are tried and tested in countries where they grow and where Avicenna, Avenzoar, [al-]Razi, Isaque, and others who cannot be denied to be learned (letrado) used them, vilify (vituperão) the medicines just as much as they vilify the authors.

179 (vol.I)

De Orta here describes the attitudes of European “lovers of the Greeks” towards people like Avicenna, Avenzoar, al-Razi (philosophers who wrote in Arabic) and Polqar (a Jewish philosopher, who wrote on theological matters), i.e. people from the Arabic and Jewish traditions. First, he suggests that these Europeans do not *seek out* the views of philosophers from the Arabic and Jewish traditions. Second, they dismiss or minimize their views when they come across them.

The reader is aware that it is not lack of access that leads to these Europeans’ failure to seek out philosophical testimony from the Arabic and

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<sup>22</sup>De Orta uses *arabios* of a person in present times if they originate in roughly the Arabian Peninsula.

<sup>23</sup>De Orta notes that Ruel translated Dioscorides (85 (vol.I))).

<sup>24</sup>De Orta standardly includes Persians and (European-born) Moors in groups of non-Europeans (e.g. 52, 204 (vol.I)).

Jewish traditions. Arabic texts were central to the European educational curriculum and de Orta himself points out that many were widely and increasingly available in Latin and European translation (e.g. 85 (vol.I)). Furthermore, de Orta himself can apparently read Ibn-Sina in Arabic so well that Ruano regards him a good judge of the quality of a recent Latin translation (36 (vol.I)).<sup>25</sup> This suggests that Arabic could be learnt to a high standard by a European. Polqar's inclusion in 179 (vol.I) is exceptionally striking; unlike the giants Avicenna, Avenzoar, and al-Razi, Polqar was a relatively minor figure. However, I suggest that de Orta opts for Polqar to represent the Jewish tradition because Polqar wrote much of his work in Spanish. It was therefore easily accessible to many Catholic Portuguese Europeans who could not read Hebrew, de Orta's primary audience. This prompts the reader to think of other Jewish philosophers whose work was accessible to non-Hebrew reading Europeans, e.g. Crescas, who wrote in Catalan and even Maimonides, parts of whose *Guide of the Perplexed* had been translated into Latin.<sup>26</sup> De Orta also makes it clear that these Europeans do not dismiss or minimize the views of Arab and Jewish philosophers as a result of properly investigating and assessing them; belittling their medicines is tied to belittling the authors who endorse them. Instead, the reason that these Europeans do not seek out non-European Arab and Jewish philosophical testimony and dismiss or minimize it when they find it is because they are "lovers of the Greeks", i.e. they are so committed to 'their' European philosophy that they elevate it over the views of non-Europeans who maintain views from non-European traditions. This is clearly due to bias against non-Europeans. Avicenna, Avenzoar and al-Razi are described elsewhere as "Arab" (47–49 (vol.I)), 78 (vol.I), i.e. people whom most Europeans would call "barbarian", "Maumestias", hence they are vilified. Polqar is also "vilified" – unsurprising, given the widespread anti-Semitism in Europe. Thus, these Europeans are guilty of Identity Eurocentrism.

Identity Eurocentrism, the reader learns in 179 (vol.I), is problematic because it inhibits knowledge acquisition. According to de Orta's views on methodology outlined above, these Europeans are failing to seek out and are dismissing or minimizing the very testimony that they ought to look for and take seriously. After all, philosophers from the Arabic and Jewish traditions are not only experts but 'learned' insofar as they were using substances to treat disease which grew in their non-European locality and with which they were therefore very well-acquainted by direct experience. Hence, Identity Eurocentrism clouds Europeans' judgement in a way that

<sup>25</sup>On the historical accuracy of this claim, see de Carvalho, *Os desafios de Garcia de Orta*, 5; Brentjes, "Issues of Best Historiographical Practice", 111–112.

<sup>26</sup>Arguably, this translation was targeted at Christian Europeans (Pick, "Members of the Covenant").

leads to F2-3. This in turn generates errors and gaps, such that F1 is problematic.

Likewise, consider:

Musa,<sup>27</sup> summarising everyone's<sup>28</sup> comments, speaks a great dishonour in calling zedoaria “barbarian”; and the name “barbarian” is the worst insult that can be hurled at it.

(357 (vol.II))

Zedoaria, as the reader would have been aware, was grown in Southeast Asia and used by Chinese and Indian physicians working in the Indian Ayurvedic and Chinese medical traditions – taken by both de Orta and Europeans generally to be non-European (363–369 (vol.II)). As de Orta repeatedly points out throughout the *Colóquios* and demonstrates by example, Europeans were well able to seek out and properly investigate Chinese and Indian testimony (e.g. 137(vol.II), 266(vol.II)) – even if it required more effort than seeking out and properly investigating testimony from the Arabic and (to a lesser extent) Jewish tradition, e.g. travelling, overcoming more language barriers (e.g. 70 (vol.II)). Instead, the problem is Identity Eurocentrism. De Orta is making the point that *all* Europeans dismiss testimony from people from non-European Ayurvedic and Chinese traditions even when they come across it; they call their medical practices “barbarian”. Whilst de Orta does not explicitly say that Europeans do this *in order* to elevate their own tradition, this is implied by the back-reference to 31 (vol.I) quoted above – notice “barbarian” and the emphasis on how offensive the insult is occurs in both passages. This widespread Identity Eurocentrism is again problematic for epistemological reasons. Medical experts working in the Chinese and Indian traditions are familiar with zedoaria since it grows in their locality. Thus, these Europeans “heap a great dishonour (*deshonra*) on zedoaria”; they *irrationally* dismiss its medicinal value, leading to F3 and thereby F1.

#### 4.2. Do not wear sandals: preference eurocentrism

I turn now to argue that de Orta objects to ‘Preference Eurocentrism’: irrationally minimizing or disregarding the testimony of a non-European because of bias. This is different from Identity Eurocentrism in that it need not be motivated by elevating the Greeks and Romans over testimony from the non-Europeans. Thus, it applies even to those scholars who are critical of the Greeks and Romans. In addition, de Orta provides a more detailed explanation as to why Preference Eurocentrism is problematic.

De Orta points to Preference Eurocentrism as a phenomenon that is prevalent both amongst those who are guilty of Identity Eurocentrism and those

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<sup>27</sup>An Italian scholar – more on him below.

<sup>28</sup>i.e. everyone European.

who are not. For example, at one point, de Orta implies that Ruel's bias against Judaism and Islam leads him to ignore the views of people from Palestine and India (105–106 (vol.I)) – Ruel, recall, was a prime example of somebody who is guilty of Identity Eurocentrism (31 (vol.I)) At another point, Ruano, somebody who is generally happy to criticize the Greeks and Romans on all manner of subjects, is puzzled that de Orta is happy to trust the word of the Chinese, citing a stereotype of a large nomadic Chinese indigenous group, the “Asian Scythians” as “very wild and barbaric” (260(vol.I)).

Preference Eurocentrism, according to de Orta, inhibits epistemic progress for two reasons. First, testimony from people from non-European cultures, religions or ethnicities can be a superior or the only means of correcting error or acquiring information for a European. Sometimes somebody most familiar with an area is best or uniquely placed to identify or distinguish indigenous natural substances; this *must* be a person of a certain ethnicity, religion or culture. Hence, de Orta denies that the Asian Scythians are “very wild and barbaric”, painting them as culturally different and wise. They are good sources of testimony precisely because of their nomadic culture; they are familiar with a wide range of natural substances from a wide range of places (260(vol.I)). De Orta suggests that although the Portuguese cannot tell the difference between two kinds of sandalwood, a worker (i.e. a Goan, standardly viewed as inferior), who works closely with sandalwood, might be able to (284(vol.II), see also 247, 380); likewise, he says “Clove trees reach maturity in eight years, according to information from the natives, and they last for a hundred years” (364(vol.II), see also 379 (vol.II)). The *Colóquios* was published in 1563 and Goa was colonized by the Portuguese in 1510. De Orta, then, is pointing to the fact that Europeans required (reliable) testimony from non-European ordinary folk of cultures, religions or ethnicities viewed as inferior to acquire information that requires lengthy observation. Second, physicians, healers, and druggists indigenous to a particular area, working in traditions tied to their religion or culture, have different ideas, as well as more experience of the effects of local substances and treatments; consequently, they can pass on novel ideas and information to somebody from elsewhere. Hence, it is only by taking Chinese medics seriously that de Orta discovers treatments for dysentery and ocular pain (71(vol.II)). Likewise, he remarks “The Gentios<sup>29</sup> understand because they treat by experience and custom” (137(vol.II)); their non-European methodology and culture yields understanding – including medicines and treatments that de Orta considers unique or superior to European alternatives. The problem with Preference Eurocentrism, then, is that Europeans' bias against non-Europeans leads them to *irrationally* disregard or minimize non-Europeans' testimony, leading to F3-4. Since this would lead to extensive errors or gaps in

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<sup>29</sup>Hindu physicians.

information regarding natural substances and disease outside Europe, F1 is problematic.

One might object that ‘Preference Eurocentrism’ is not, in fact, a form of Eurocentrism since de Orta holds that bias also causes Europeans to irrationally minimize or disregard the testimony of other Europeans, namely Jewish or New Christian Europeans. However, the grounds for this objection are very weak. Every time de Orta refers to Jewish people he has met, he emphasizes that they are *not* European, e.g. “Isaac of Cairo, a Jew who came to Portugal” (85 (vol.II)), “they were inhabitants of Jerusalem” (34 (vol.I)). Indeed, the closest de Orta comes to suggesting that any New Christian is European is in the way he writes about his own relationship with Europe, notably “our Europe” (*nossa Europa*, 120 (vol.II)), “we Portuguese” (342(vol.II)). However, in other places he explicitly distances himself from Europe; “*your* land of Europe” (160 (vol. 60)). Moreover, the fact that the Portuguese believe that Hindu physicians are Jewish (“We Portuguese call them Jews but that is wrong. They are Gentios …”) (342 (vol.II)), apparently because they do not differentiate between Jewish and Hindu religious practices, implies that, from the general European perspective, Jewish people are not European. Likewise, the fact that de Orta makes it clear in 24 (vol.1), quoted above, that so many New Christians had been murdered or fled Europe indicates that as far as most Europeans are concerned, (nominal) New Christians are simply not European at all. Therefore, this objection does not stand up to scrutiny.

#### **4.3. Doin’ it again: geographical eurocentrism**

According to de Orta, ancient Greek, Roman, and Arabic authors sometimes made inferences or weighed and sought testimony in ways that, for de Orta, are illegitimate. They made general claims about natural substances and disease based only on localized direct observation or dubious testimony (333(vol.II)). They made particularized claims but without direct observation or using dubious testimony (66(vol.I)). They relied on unreliable second-hand reports for claims about natural substances and disease (347(vol.I)). Thus, they made mistakes: neglecting important substances altogether (78, 174, 235, 289–290(vol.I), 18(vol.II)), misattributing properties and behaviour to natural substances and disease in particular places and globally (e.g. 31, 47–50, 201, 209(vol.I)), not recognizing changes in substances after long journeys from Asia to Europe (201, 209(vol.I)). Nonetheless, de Orta stresses, these errors were often forgivable. Since ancient authors and their sources of testimony had limited access to parts of the globe, it was difficult for them to directly observe, acquire or accurately test testimony regarding natural substances and disease in places far away and with very different environments from where they were born (242–243 (vol.II)). Hence, “long distances make

long lies" (154(vol.I)); "it seems to me that treatment and navigation weren't used as much; that's why information was false and sparse" (305(vol.II), see also 66(vol.I), 304(vol.II)).

De Orta uses this point in a criticism:

De Orta: Everyone agreed, with one voice, not to tell the truth, but Dioscorides deserves forgiveness because he believed false information and at a great distance and the sea was not as well navigated as it is now. He was copied by Pliny, Galen, Isidore, Avicenna, and all the Arabs. But those who write now, like Antonio Musa and the Friars, are more to blame, because they do nothing more than repeat in just the same way without paying attention to things as well-known as the appearance of the tree, the fruit, how it ripens and how it is harvested.

Ruano: Are all those you've mentioned in error?

De Orta: Yes, if you call saying what is not the case error.

242–243 (vol.II)

De Orta argues that Greek philosopher Dioscorides' mistakes were forgivable because Dioscorides did not have access to reliable testimony about or direct observation of distant parts of the globe. Similarly, ancients who made mistakes by copying Dioscorides should be exonerated; although they simply assumed his word was authoritative, they were also geographically limited. However, modern authors have far easier access to testimony about and direct observation of natural substances and disease far away than Dioscorides or those who copied him. Yet, they also parrot people they take to be authoritative, namely European Greeks and Romans (see also 52–54, 290 (vol.II)). Consequently, they inexcusably make the very same mistakes, even about matters that are now "well-known" (see also 213–214 (vol.I)).

As indicated by the examples of Musa and the Friars, de Orta's modern targets are specific scholars: philosophers whom he regards as atypical and radical in two respects. First, they did not treat the Greeks and Romans as authorities and regularly challenged their views using observation and especially testimony. Hence, de Orta suggests that the Friars mention treatments that the Greeks and Romans do not (345–355 (vol.I)) and characterizes Musa as a "curious and intelligent" thinker (355(vol.I)), who "did not revere any master" (33 vol.I). Second, although they are never presented as entirely free from Identity Eurocentrism, they consider the Arabic tradition when probing Greek and Roman authors. Hence:

The Italian Friars ... so curious and such good druggists, did not hold carpaccio (of the Greeks) to be anything other than the cubeba of Serapio<sup>30</sup> and Avicenna.  
(290 (vol.I))

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<sup>30</sup>More likely Serapio the Younger than Yahya ibn Sarafyun. De Orta sees Serapio the Younger as part of the Arabic tradition (289 (vol.I)).

Similarly, de Orta reports that Musa sided with Serapio, not a Greek or Roman, on the question of how to identify cubeba (292 (vol.I)).

Once we recognize that de Orta's complaint in 242–243 (vol.II) is about these radicals, we can see that his objection concerns a discrepancy in their approach to European sources. I call this discrepancy 'Geographical Eurocentrism'. When it comes to investigating natural substances and diseases *inside* Europe, they criticize European (purported) authority. In doing so, they use direct observation, testimony – even consider Arabic texts. However, when it comes to matters *outside* Europe, they assume the European Greeks and Romans must be correct, leading to F2. They therefore ignore direct observation and credible testimony that stems from investigation *outside* Europe – whether carried out by somebody ancient or modern, European or non-European (213–214 (vol.I)), leading to F3. Together, this leads to F1.

#### 4.4. Stay away: devaluing eurocentrism

The third form of Eurocentrism, which I term 'Devaluing Eurocentrism', is similar to Geographical Eurocentrism in that it also involves a discrepancy the ways that Europeans think about matters inside and outside Europe. However, Devaluing Eurocentrism concerns a discrepancy regarding the epistemic value of natural substances inside and outside Europe.

Consider:

The Portuguese, who sail over the greater part of the world, don't seek to know anything other than how to make their goods better, what to take when they go there and what to bring back from the journey; they aren't curious about the things that are on earth, and if they recognise them, they don't tell those who bring them to them if they can taste the tree, and if they see it they don't compare it to another tree of ours, nor do they ask if it has leaves or bears fruit, and what it is.

151 (vol.I)

Here, de Orta claims that since the Portuguese have access to most of the globe, they are easily able to learn a great deal about natural substances, including how they differ from place to place. Moreover, they can do so by the best possible means. They can directly observe ("see", "taste") and seek testimony ("ask") from those whom they have excellent grounds to believe have directly observed in detail.<sup>31</sup> Yet, concentrating solely on trade, they do not do so (see also 131–306, 373(vol.II)). De Orta does not name any natural philosophers or mention any texts here. The point, then, is about the whole epistemic culture: *everyone*, scholar or not, is completely

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<sup>31</sup>This would enable them to fill gaps left by the geographically restricted Greek, Roman, and Arab philosophers and correct their errors.

disinterested in learning about natural substances outside Europe, even when knowledge about them is at their fingertips. Thus, they devalue the natural world outside Europe. Indifference to learning seems to be a particularly pronounced problem in the case of the Portuguese (e.g. 131 (vol.II)), presumably because their extensive colonization and trading provided them with such extensive opportunity to learn. However, de Orta thinks Europeans more generally are guilty of this indifference. For example, he points out that a lack of curiosity in spices (a large proportion of non-European natural substances) applies to people from Portugal, Spain, Italy, France, Germany, Belgium, and Europe more generally (e.g. 185 (vol.I), 241(vol.II))

De Orta, one might think, attributes this to a lack of curiosity in the natural world *everywhere* (“the things on earth”), not just outside Europe. However, although he often complains about Europeans’ lack of curiosity generally (e.g. 248(vol.II)), he characterizes their disinterest as asymmetric. For example, it seems that Portuguese druggists have some minimal interest in Portuguese red sandalwood but none whatsoever in Indian areca, although both are useful and easy to obtain (74 (vol.II)). So, he considers the systematic, deep-rooted attitude of regarding natural substances and disease of Europe as having *more* epistemic value than elsewhere an additional problem. This is Devaluing Eurocentrism.

Devaluing Eurocentrism would obviously lead to F1 and F3. Hence, de Orta complains that although Indian areca is a useful treatment, druggists and physicians in Portugal have no interest in it (325–326, 328(vol.II)).

I have argued that for de Orta, Eurocentrism of four sorts is a major cause of the widespread epistemological failings by Europeans set up in *Colóquios* 1 and 2, namely:

F1. Failure to acknowledge that European natural philosophers do not possess complete knowledge of natural substances and disease or complete knowledge of natural substances and disease outside Europe.

F2. Relying solely or too much on ancient Greek and Roman philosophers regarding natural substances and disease.

F3. Seeking out and using credible sources that exist or stem from independent activity outside Europe regarding natural substances and disease – either too little or not at all.

F4. Elimination, disregard or minimisation of good epistemic sources.

Identity Eurocentrism is elevating the views of the European Greeks and Romans over those of non-Europeans because of bias against non-Europeans. It leads to F2-3 and thereby F1. Geographical Eurocentrism is an asymmetric attitude to investigation, and it leads to F2-3. It occurs where one is willing to criticize European (purported) authority regarding natural substances and disease *inside* Europe, using direct observation

and testimony. However, when it comes to matters *outside* Europe, one assumes that the European Greeks and Romans must be correct; one therefore entirely neglects direct observation and credible testimony from anybody about what lies *outside* Europe. Devaluing Eurocentrism is assuming that natural substances and diseases of Europe have more epistemic value than those outside Europe. This leads to F1-3. Preference Eurocentrism is dismissing or minimizing non-European testimony because of bias against non-European religions, cultures or ethnicities. It is different from Identity Eurocentrism in that it need not be motivated by elevating the Greek and Roman European over the non-European. Preference Eurocentrism leads to F1, F3, F4.

## 5. Try to be a success: global methodology

De Orta successfully avoids Geographical Eurocentrism and Devaluing Eurocentrism. Unlike those guilty of Geographical Eurocentrism, de Orta obviously challenges the Greeks and Romans on European *and* non-European substances and diseases throughout the dialogue. In doing so, he uses detailed information about nature and medicine from *outside* Europe, gained from reflection on masses of observation and testimony acquired over many years. His dedication to avoiding Devaluing Eurocentrism is most clearly reflected in the sheer amount of information and reflection about natural substances and disease outside Europe in the dialogue. It is also evident in his characterization of himself; de Orta expresses resentment about the fact that his old age and political situation mean that he “cannot travel all over the land” to learn (151–152 (vol.I)).

However, de Orta’s relationship with Preference and Identity Eurocentrism is more complex. De Orta shows many signs of attempting to avoid Preference Eurocentrism. He often seeks out non-European testimony and takes it seriously. He cites first – and second-hand reports of claims made by non-European and non-Christian physicians, healers, religious figures, and ordinary folk, as well as consulting them himself – unusual habits for a Portuguese settler and risky for a New Christian, since Muslims and Hindus were persecuted and Muslim and Hindu converts to Catholicism were also viewed with suspicion.<sup>32</sup> As sources of testimony, de Orta often approaches them with the same degree of scepticism as his European contemporaries or treats them as credible, as good as or superior to Europeans (see, e.g. 160, 278, 281(vol.I), 31 71, 137(vol.II)). At one point, de Orta, enthusiastic about showing local expertise to Ruano, invites an Indian druggist, Maluppa, to join the conversation (331–332(vol.II)).

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<sup>32</sup>‘Secret’ Hindus and Muslims were burnt alongside de Orta’s remains and effigy at the *auto-de-fe* (Boxer, *Two Pioneers*, 11; da Silva Carvalho, *Garcia d’Orta*, 74, 159, 202–212).

Likewise, de Orta seems keen to reject Identity Eurocentrism. He apparently has no allegiance to the Greeks or Romans; despite his impressive familiarity with Greek and Roman texts, he describes himself as “not a good Greek” (35(vol.II)) and is willing to challenge even the most reputed figures from both traditions: “Do not try to frighten me with Dioscorides or Galen merely because I speak the truth and say what I know” (105 (vol.I)). He clearly seeks and values testimony from other traditions, for instance, he is especially interested in healers from the Ayurvedic tradition in his locality (Da Costa, “Geographical expansion”, 78; Grove, “Indigenous Knowledges”) and the scholar most often mentioned is Ibn-Sina (Brentjes, “Issues of Best Historiographical Practice”, 111). Most significantly, he is willing to claim that testimony from people whom he regards as non-European is *better* than testimony from the European in at least some respects: “regarding these Indian lands, the Arabs knew more ... they erred less than the Greeks” (333 (vol.II)).

However, de Orta is prone, albeit in a more limited way than his opponents, to Identity and Preference Eurocentrism. His willingness to seek out or take seriously Indian and African testimony seems limited. For instance, there is hardly any first – or second-hand African testimony, despite the fact that the Portuguese had increasingly extensive access to East Africa and de Orta discusses African natural substances (e.g. 46, 203 (vol.I), 6, 353(vol.II)). Nor are there are references to Sanskrit texts. This suggests that de Orta either made little attempt to find such testimony or dismissed it when he discovered it. Furthermore, de Orta does not consistently take Indian testimony seriously. This is most evident in an asymmetry in the way he treats Europeans and Indians. For example, de Orta has apparently talked to many yogis (400(vol.II)). He claims that they are inconsistent (“What they say today, they deny tomorrow” (400(vol.II))) and have some knowledge of medicine and treatments but are ignorant of others (182–184(vol.II)); consequently, he is only interested in their entertainment value (182–184(vol.II)). Yet, he does not treat inconsistency or partial knowledge as grounds for disengaging with Europeans. For instance, despite accusing Simon of Genoa of lying (305(vol.I)), de Orta does not object when Ruano later cites him as an authority (367–368(vol.II)). He frequently engages with Europeans whom he regards as outlandish or fraudulent (e.g. Fuschs (379–389(vol.II)), Vartomano (106–107(vol.I))).

De Orta also elevates the European over the non-European Ayurvedic tradition, thereby failing to seek, dismissing or minimizing views from the latter. For example, European treatments from ‘his’ European medical background universally trump those of the “other” Ayurvedic medical tradition: “first I try the medicines of *my* doctors and when they do not work, I use those of the *Brahmins*<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup>I.e. Hindu experts in the Ayurvedic tradition.

*of this land*’ (139(vol.II)).<sup>34</sup> De Orta entirely dismisses some Ayurvedic treatments simply on the grounds that they are Indian and not European; “bhangra is not one of *our* remedies,<sup>35</sup> even if it is one *there*; let’s not waste our time on it” (97–98(vol.I)). Likewise, he defaults to European frameworks when explaining how disease and treatments work (Da Costa and de Carvalho, “Between East and West”, 5), showing no signs of taking Ayurvedic frameworks into consideration. For instance, de Orta never considers Ayurvedic elements as an alternative to Galenic humours; he simply assumes the latter.

The cause of his failure to seek, and to dismiss or minimize African and Indian testimony is, I suggest, caused by bias. Likewise, his elevation of views from the European tradition over views from the non-European Ayurvedic tradition are due to bias. This bias is hinted at by his ownership of a Goan slave, Antonia, but is particularly evident in de Orta’s derogatory comments. For instance, he describes indigenous people of Sofala, Mozambique and nearby as “barbaric people, not accustomed to speaking” (180–181(vol.I)) and of Madeira as “very barbaric” 203 (vol.I) – and the racial slurs he uses of black people are incredibly offensive, both historically and today (e.g. 25 (vol.I)). He calls Hindu physicians “bugio” (howler monkeys) (137 (vol.II)), an exceptionally offensive term (Brentjes, “Issues in Best Historiographical Practice”, 120–121). De Orta says of Hindus “All of them believe in reincarnation and, even besides this, there are a thousand things worthy of much laughter, which I won’t repeat, because I’m not going to waste my time” (105–106(vol.II)) and of Goans, “many natives are wild (*silvestre*) and know little” (312(vol.II)). Thus, he seems prone to Preference Eurocentrism regarding people from India and Africa. This would likely lead to F2-4. Likewise, he himself seems prone to Identity Eurocentrism in the case of the Ayurvedic tradition and, therefore, to F2-3.

## 6. Conclusion

De Orta makes for a complex opponent of Eurocentrism. For him, four forms of Eurocentrism are a major contributor to widespread epistemological failings amongst Europeans in matters of natural philosophy: Identity Eurocentrism, Geographical Eurocentrism, Devaluing Eurocentrism, and Preference Eurocentrism. However, de Orta is himself prone to Identity Eurocentrism concerning the Ayurvedic tradition and to Preference Eurocentrism regarding non-Europeans from India and Africa. Therefore, he is not only guilty of inconsistency but also vulnerable to error.

<sup>34</sup>“My doctors” refers to European and not New Christian/Jewish doctors (D’Cruz, “Documenting the Medical-Botanical Traditions of India”, 49; Da Costa and de Carvalho, “Between East and West”, 78; Grove, “Indigenous Knowledges”); in the dialogue, de Orta standardly prioritises *European* treatments over Indian ones.

<sup>35</sup>“Our remedies” clearly refers to European, not New Christian/Jewish, remedies; the treatments they move onto are European.



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## ORCID

Saloni de Souza  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9441-2062>

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