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978-0-521-12401-0 - Inventing the Indigenous: Local Knowledge and Natural History in Early Modern Europe

Alix Cooper

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Inventing the Indigenous

In the wake of expanding commercial voyages, many people in early modern Europe became curious about the plants and minerals around them and began to compile catalogs of them. Drawing on cultural, social, and environmental history, as well as the histories of science and medicine, this book shows how, amidst a growing reaction against exotic imports – whether medieval spices like cinnamon or new American arrivals like chocolate and tobacco – learned physicians began to urge their readers to discover their own “indigenous” natural worlds. In response, compilers of local inventories created numerous ways of itemizing nature, from local floras and regional mineralogies to efforts to write the natural histories of entire territories. Tracing the fate of such efforts, the book provides new insight into the historical trajectory of such key concepts as indigeneity and local knowledge.

Alix Cooper is Assistant Professor of History at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, where she teaches early modern European history and the histories of science, medicine, and the environment.

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ALIX COOPER
State University of New York,
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*To my parents
and to Tim*

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Acknowledgments

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