

**On Bezoars and Other Healing Stones in Manila:
Making Knowledge Across Indo-Pacific Worlds, c.1700**

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Early modern worlds were gripped by a veritable craze for different sorts of healing stones found inside animals and plants. In addition to searching for precious metals, gems, and useful plants, enterprising individuals were scouring animal and plant bodies for stony concretions: most prominently bezoars, which were considered universal antidotes in different Eurasian healing systems. One of the most important hubs in the production and trade of healing stones was the Spanish outpost in Manila. This paper uses healing stones and Manila to revisit early modern trans-Pacific histories and present the Indian and the Pacific Oceans as a space of multiple overlapping networks and geographies, in which knowledge travelled at specific times but not at others. By tracing the trajectories of the stones, the paper will show how different colonial communities turned the objects into medicines, curiosities, or magical and religious objects. Indigenous Filipinos used their labour and knowledge to claim their stake in the enterprise but were also confronted by Christian missionaries who worked to overwrite Indigenous natural and spiritual worlds. As the stones traversed oceanic waves and sites of knowledge making, the objects became entangled in and disentangled from different systems of economy, knowledge, and labour in processes that shed light on the complex historical and cultural dynamics in Indo-Pacific worlds.



Snake stones were used as antidotes and produced, among others, by Indigenous Filipinos (c.1700).

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