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Camellia   *Theaceae*

Camellia commemorates a Moravian (nowadays Czech) Jesuit missionary, pharmacist and naturalist, Georg Josef or Jacob Kamel (1661-1706) – this name latinized, when he became a Jesuit, to 'Camellus'. After five years in the Mariana Islands in the North Pacific Ocean, the Order moved him to the Philippines in 1688 where he set up a free pharmacy for the poor of Manila. (Some authorities suggest that he was also sending secret reports to Spain on the islands' natural resources which the Spanish hoped to exploit.) While pursuing his missionary work he maintained his interest in plants. This included cataloguing herbs and medicinal plants on the main Philippine island, Luzon, in his *Herbarium aliarumque stirpium in insula Luzone Philippinarum prima noscentium* which was published (without Kamel's illustrations) as an Appendix to the English naturalist, John Ray's (1627-1705) *Historia plantarum; species hactenus editas insuper multas noviter inventas & descriptas complectens*. Kamel's notes and observations on Philippine flora and fauna are said to have been published in *The Philosophical Transactions* of The Royal Society. Both are said to have attracted much attention in Europe. Kamel's illustrations now displayed at the Jesuit College in Louvain are believed to have been made from growing plants, an unusual approach as at that time in Europe plants were normally drawn from dried specimens. The Royal Society is said to maintain Kamel's archive. A measure of the regard in which Kamel must have been held by the Swedish naturalist, Carolus Linnaeus (1707-1778) and his peers, when he honoured him in naming this genus accordingly is, perhaps, well matched today by the decision of UNESCO to include the 300th anniversary of his death in the list of anniversaries with which that body wished to be associated in 2006.

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