

# Ecphrastic Ecology in Renaissance Visual Culture

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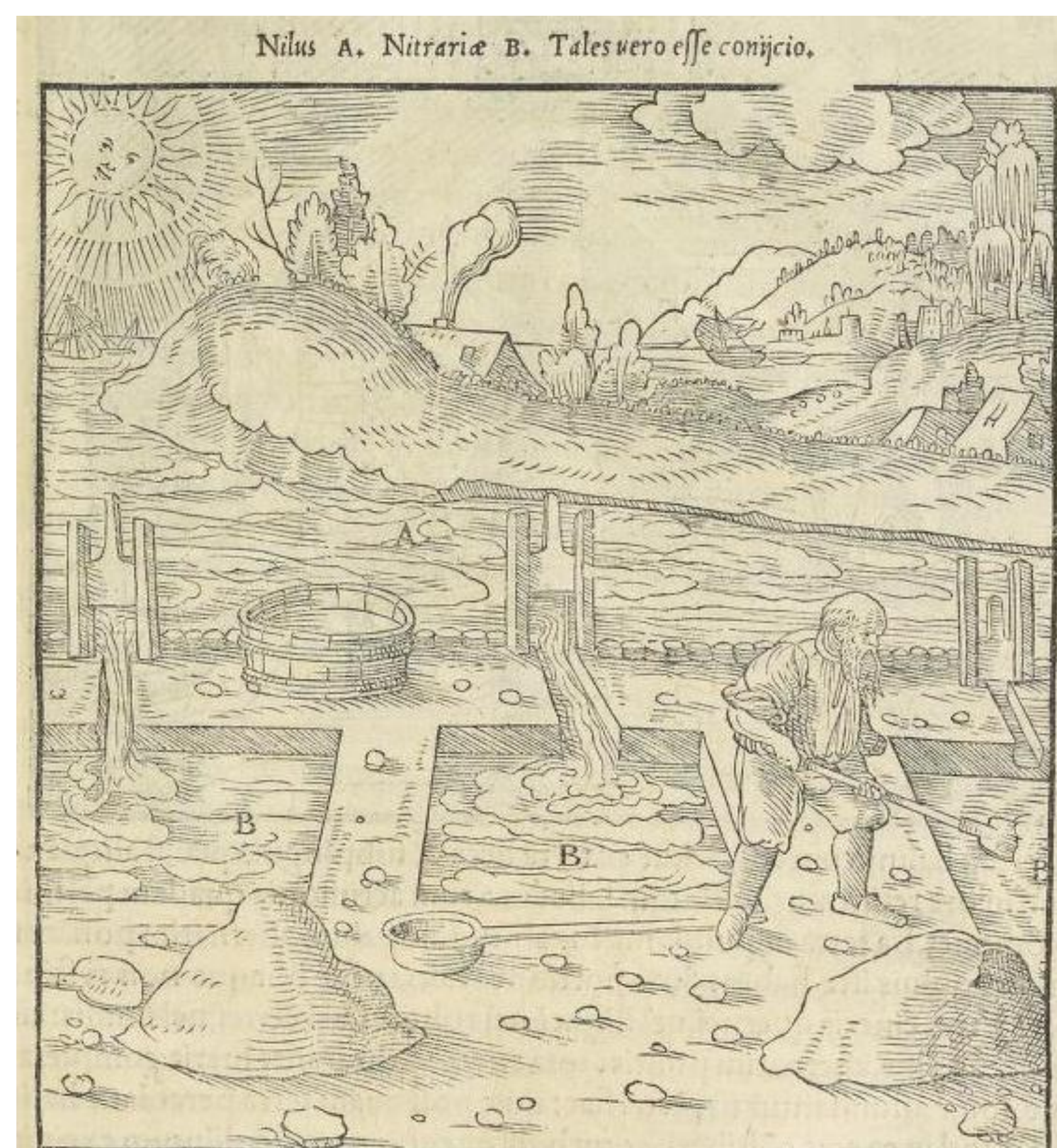
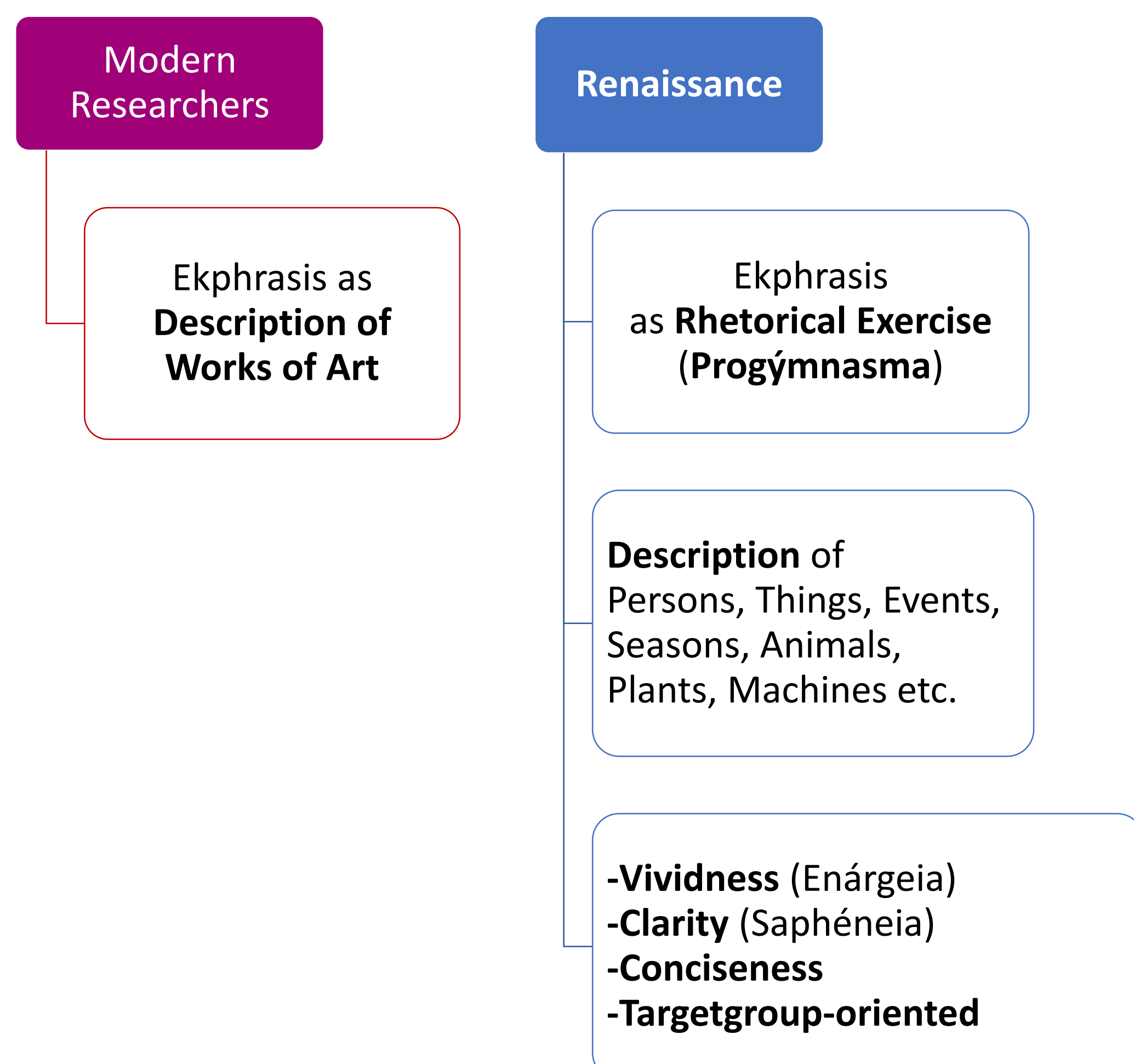
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## Summary

This project aims to reveal the **ancient ecphrastic coinage of pre-modern ecology ideas in Renaissance visual culture**. Most researchers focus on Renaissance Ekphrasis as an aesthetic category related to the description of works of art. Little has been written about the popularization of ecphrastic literature and the cultural impact of ancient descriptions on the construction of Renaissance scientific identity, especially regarding the **creation of new visual knowledge about natural environments**. This project closes this research gap focusing on the **identification and critical analysis of ecological representations** that can be traced back to ancient descriptions.

## Understanding Ecphrasis



Soda Production at the Nile,  
Plinius, *Naturalis Historia*, XXXI,46

"In Egypt it is made **artificially** [...] **in the nitre-beds it is the water of the river Nilus**; a water [...] **impregnated with nitrum** [...]. As soon as any quantity of nitrum has formed, **it is immediately removed**, in order that it may not melt in the beds. [...] **the piles of nitrum** are as hard as stone, and **many of the heaps become changed into rocks.**"

Woodcut from Georgius Agricola's *De re metallica* (1556) and Plinius' Corresponding Description

## Working Plan at the GRI

