

Ulisse Aldrovandi Encyclopedia Article

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Ulisse Aldrovandi

1522-1605

Italian physician and one of the founders of modern natural science. Aldrovani studied law, mathematics, philosophy, and medicine at the universities of Bologna, Pisa, and Padua, receiving his medical degree from Bologna in 1553. He did not practice medicine, but became a junior member of the university's medical faculty. The income from this post enabled him to collect natural history specimens throughout Italy, often with colleagues or students. Later appointed to teach the history of medicinal plants, he also established and directed a botanical garden, but soon was covering all natural history. Owing to increasing student interest in his subject, he was made a full professor of the natural sciences at Bologna in 1561. He did pioneering work in chick embryology and became an authority on both pharmacology and on civic hygiene for the City of Bologna. His dozen sumptuously illustrated published works, most of which appeared after his death, were published with financial assistance from Pope Gregory XIII. They included studies of mammals, birds, reptiles, fish, and invertebrates.