

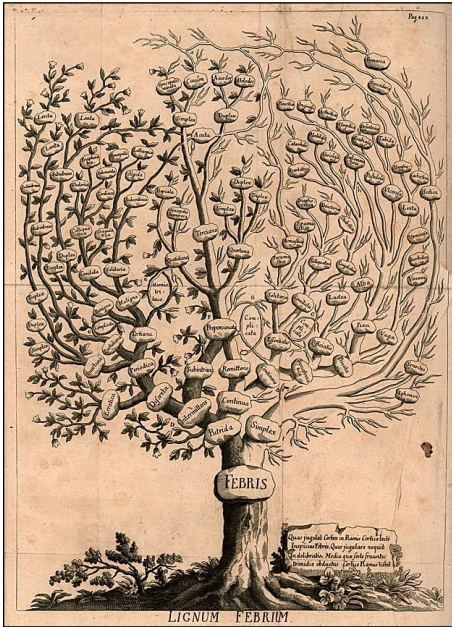


THE JOHN CARTER BROWN LIBRARY

PRESS RELEASE

New Exhibition: *Drugs from the Colonies*

October 5, 2011



"Tree of Fevers" (a highly stylized representation of the *cinchona* plant — the source of quinine). Francesco Torti, *Therapeutice specialis ad febres periodicas perniciosas*, Frankfurt, 1756.

Original in the John Carter Brown Library.

The John Carter Brown Library is a private, non-profit, independently funded and administered institution for advanced research in history and the humanities, founded in 1846 and located at Brown University since 1901.

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On the main green
8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., weekdays
9 a.m. to 12 noon, Saturday

THE JOHN CARTER BROWN LIBRARY announces the opening of a new exhibition of significance to those interested in medicine, pharmacology, history, illustration, botany, environmental studies, and the culture of the book. *Drugs from the Colonies: The New American Medicine Chest* will be on view in the Reading Room of the John Carter Brown Library until December 22, 2011. The exhibition was prepared by the Library's Curator of European Books, Dennis C. Landis.

European physicians, healers, apothecaries, and others who prepared and administered drugs for medical purposes worked for centuries with a treasury of *materia medica* that was familiar from ancient times, drawing on minerals, plant products, and other biological resources from European and nearby African and Asian sources. The discovery of the New World opened a new pharmacopoeia available to those healers. At the same time, global expansion brought with it an intercontinental exchange of disease. While Old World diseases were proving disastrous for indigenous American populations, the medical knowledge of native healers was gradually entering the consciousness of European physicians, influencing the treatments of traditional maladies known throughout the World.

The new exhibition at the John Carter Brown Library showcases the botanical and pharmacological writing and illustration that resulted from this intersection of worlds. Featured in the exhibition are manuscripts and printed books that focus on the curative powers of drugs from the New World, chronicle the remedies developed for both Old and New World diseases, and include illustrations of the new flora and fauna that were advocated for medicinal purposes.