

**The definitive edition of the first truly British herbal ever published**

William Turner, *The First and seconde partes of the herbal ... corrected and enlarged with the thirde parte*. Cologne: Arnold Birckman, 1568. 11 5/8 inches x 7 1/2 inches (295 x 191 mm), 830 pages, illustrated throughout.

William Turner (1509–68) is known as the “Father of British Botany,” and it is no exaggeration to claim that the history of botany in England begins with Turner’s herbal. His work has several features that distinguish it from its derivative predecessors. Banckes’s *Herbal* (1525) and *The Grete Herball* (1526), for instance, draw their material from the continental European rather than the British flora. Turner’s *New Herball*, of which this is the definitive edition, was preceded by his *Libellus de re herbaria novus* (1538) and *The Names of Herbes* (1548). Turner was also an uncompromising Protestant, whose theological convictions, pugnaciously expressed during the religious oscillations of the late sixteenth century, required occasional periods of foreign residence.

The original edition of his *New Herball* (London, 1551) was published during the brief and friendly reign of Edward VI but banned (and copies largely destroyed) under his successor, the Roman Catholic Queen Mary. Turner again went into exile, publishing the second part of his *Herball* in Cologne in 1562, both for reasons of freedom of the press and for his publisher’s access to the woodcuts used in Fuchs’ herbal — Turner had in fact corresponded with the German botanist (and visited many others) during his years of exile. A third and final part was completed only a few months before Turner’s death, and issued in 1568, again in Cologne, with revised and enlarged versions of the earlier parts.

This final redaction is essentially a new work, a new *New Herball*, describing for the first time 238 species native to England, some of which Turner was the first to name. His more poetical inventions — yellow loosestrife, bitter sweet, and goat’s beard — have endured. Most of the wood-engravings — some 400 — are derived from the 1545 octavo edition of Fuchs. Fuchs’ works had also been banned by the church; like Turner and many other herbalists of the time, he was associated with the Reformation. A certain religious truculence informs some of Turner’s judgments about the

old wives' tales so common in herbalistic writing. He delights in detecting superstition and error in science as in religion, debunking Mattioli with no less zeal than the Pope and his "Romyshe Wolfe"—to cite a phrase from one of Turner's controversial works (*Catalogue of the library of Albert C. Burrage* [Manchester, MA: privately printed, 1930], p. 89).

This copy, from the Chicago Botanic Garden Library, is a quarto in a binding of early twentieth-century limp vellum with gilt titling. There is a pencilled price of 30 pounds and an old signature on the title page of "R. Dawges" or "R. Dawyes," contemporary marginal notes to text (trimmed), and some additional colored marginal drawings of plants. The front pastedown bears the Massachusetts Horticultural Society bookplate ("Gift of Albert Cameron Burrage [1859–1931], June 28, 1931" but, according to a pencilled note, received from the orchidologist's estate only in August 1941).

Octavo code: turher