



BIBLIOPATHOS

Fine Arts



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FIRST EDITION

THE BIBLE OF THE BRITISH AMATEUR PLANT LOVER

HILL, JOHN. *The British herbal: an history of plants and trees, natives of Britain, cultivated for use, or raised for beauty.* London, Printed for T. Osborne, J. Shipton, J. Hodges, J. Newberry, B. Collins, S. Crowder and H. Woodgate, 1756.

Folio (41 x 25 cm), contemporary full calf binding, gilt double rule decoration at boards, 6 raised bands spine, red edges, ff. 2, pp. 535, [3], 75 plates, signatures: [A]² B-6U², title page in red and black, engraved title vignette by C. Grignion, engraved allegorical frontispiece by H. Roberts after S. Wale depicting the *Genius of Good Health* receiving tributes from the four continents, delivering them to the English readers.

75 ENGRAVED PLATES REPRESENTING MORE THAN 2000 PLANTS



John Hill's *British Herbal* falls into the category of the eighteenth-century English popular herbals. It began to be released in weekly handouts in 1756 and was completed within a year. Its interest is mainly due to the iconographic and consequently didactic aspect of the work. In 75 plates Hill gathered botanic species for their usefulness or simply their beauty and decorative purposes, presenting in each plate various illustration even of the same species, in all its varieties. In the initial text,



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printed in two columns, we find the descriptions of plants and trees grouped by families, with their names in Latin and English.

Hill's British Herbal provided an authoritative work for the amateur plant lover with an interest in plants for both medical and ornamental purposes. In this work he mainly used the older traditional names and taxonomies, rather than the new methods of categorising pioneered by Carl Linnaeus, the Swedish botanist who laid the foundation for modern plant description, sometimes using both definitions.



John Hill (1716 – 1775), was an English author and botanist who compiled the first book on British flora to be based on the Linnaean nomenclature. He contributed to



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contemporary periodicals and was awarded the title of Sir in recognition of his illustrated botanical compendium *The Vegetable System*.

CONDITION: small scratches at binding, but an amazing copy, with no defects.

PROVENANCE: I. paper ex-libris with coats of arms of *Edward Frewen* pasted at front inside board. II. ownership signature *Liber Edwardi Freweni 1761* at flyleaf. III. ownership signature *Ella Fuller Maittland 1892* at flyleaf.

REFERENCES: Nissen BBI 881; Henrey 799; Hunt 557; Pritzel 4063





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