

# Trent Associates Report History of Medicine Collections

David M. Rubenstein  
Rare Book & Manuscript Library

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## Archives Alive!

On a Monday morning, students pull out their notebooks and pencils. The professor plugs in his laptop to project onto a screen. All the steps that are standard for many an undergraduate course. But the professor shuts his laptop and gently says “Stop. Close your notebooks. Clear your mind and prepare for an adventure. I want you all to spend time looking at these books that have been pulled for you to examine.”

These words or their sentiments are echoed every Monday and Wednesday in an undergraduate course that Tom Robisheaux, Ph.D., teaches on artists, engineers, physicians, and scientists in the Renaissance. This class is part of Archives Alive, an endeavor to integrate special collection materials into course curriculum. At every class session, rare materials related to course readings and weekly discussion are incorporated. Students spend class time engaging with materials, as well as each other and librarians and archivists. First-year student Rayhan Jhanji notes “Having rare materials brought into our



**Professor Tom Robisheaux with students**

Photo by Megan Mendenhall/Duke Photography

class on Renaissance scientists has provided an invaluable aid to my learning. The books that are brought in allow me to learn more about the history of the time period through the historical analysis of the book as a cultural artifact.”

Archives Alive is collaborative partnership between Trinity College of Arts & Sciences at Duke and the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library. Archives Alive creates courses that enable students to develop innovative and significant projects based on original materials held in the Rubenstein Library. These courses are open to first-year and upper-class students and range from the arts and humanities to the social sciences. Scholar-teachers guide students’ explorations, providing first-hand exposure to advanced research practices and immersive learning that goes beyond traditional coursework. Students produce signature products that demonstrate their capabilities for in-depth investigation, team collaboration



**Students examine an item with Curator, Rachel Ingold**

Photo by Megan Mendenhall/Duke Photography

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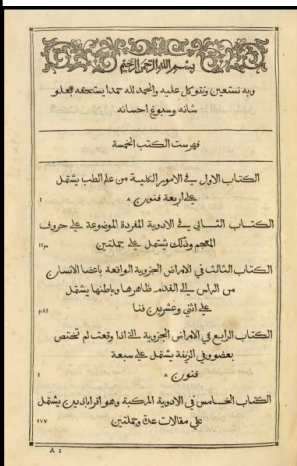
## On Display

### Translation and Transmission, an Intellectual Pursuit in the Middle Ages

**Josiah Charles**  
Trent History of  
Medicine Room  
October 16, 2018 -  
February 16, 2019

The cultural transmission that took place between the second half of the eighth century to roughly the fifteenth century engaged and transformed our understandings of medicine and related subjects.

This exhibition highlights the tremendous work of Arabic authors, scribes, and translators, showcasing items from the History of Medicine Collections.



al-Qānūn fī al-ṭibb (Canon of Medicine), Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) (Medica Press, 1593)

## Archives Alive! continued



Photo by  
Megan Mendenhall/Duke Photography

and communicating the significance of their work to others.

Professor Robisheaux's class on artists, engineers, physicians, and scientists in the Renaissance also happens to be part of Duke's FOCUS program. The FOCUS program is an opportunity for first-year, first semester students to be exposed to ideas from the vantage point of different disciplines across the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences. This program is formed around interdisciplinary seminar clusters, small group seminars, shared housing, and an integrated learning experience. Professor Robisheaux's class is one of the interdisciplinary clusters related to Scientists, Artists and Lawyers in Medieval and Renaissance Europe.

With the robust History of Medicine Collections here at Duke, the course being taught by Professor Robisheaux is a great way to integrate special collection materials into the class and provide an opportunity for students to explore and engage with items. Throughout the course, students explore four key figures: Leonardo, Paracelsus, Galileo, and Maria Sibylla Merian. Materials by and about these four, as well as other early modern scientists and physicians, are incorporated into class sessions to augment the students' experience. Students work individually and as teams to examine rare items and write response papers. The final paper for this course entails

"adopting-a-book." Students select one item and then form research questions about the text, incorporating analysis of the history of science and medicine studied over the semester. Papers include aspects of the author's and the book's contribution to Renaissance science and medicine. Students are tasked with analyzing the text in relation to society at the time as well as evidence the book provides as a product of the history of the Renaissance and its printing history. Students adopt-a-book projects have included the following titles:

- Louise Bourgeois Boursier, *Observations diverses, sur la sterilité, perte de fruics nouveaux naiz...*, 1609
- Paracelsus. *One hundred and fourteen experiments and cures.* . 1652
- Eucharius Rosslin, *Der swangern Frawen und Hebammen Roszgarten*, 1515
- Andreas Vesalius, *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem*, 1543

First year student Emma Rand explains, "When the physical pieces of history are stuck behind glass or hidden in warehouses, it makes history feel like something only for the elite, so being able to interact with the rare materials myself is an amazing experience that helps make history feel so much more alive, accessible, and enjoyable."



**Trudi Abel, Ph.D., shows students a Renaissance-era amputation saw**

Photo by Taylor de Klerk



## Recent Acquisitions

The following items were acquired through purchase and donation for the History of Medicine Collections.



**Blackwell, Elizabeth.** *A Curious Herbal, containing five hundred cuts of the most useful plants, which are now used in the Practice of Physick.* London : Printed for Samuel Harding in St. Martin's-Lane, MDCCXXXVII [1737 that is, 1737-1739].

Issued weekly between 1737 and 1739, Blackwell created this remarkable work to free her husband from debtors prison. Blackwell herself provided the illustrations and engravings based on the Chelsea Physic Garden, a seventeenth century garden created for teaching apprentice apothecaries, which in Blackwell's time introduced plants from the Americas. This copy includes hand-colored illustrations.

***The epidemic at Savannah, 1876 : its causes, the measures of prevention adopted by the municipality during the administration of J.F. Wheaton, mayor***

**by James J. Waring, Chairman Dry Culture Committee. Savannah, Ga. :**

**Morning News Steam Printing House, 1879.** The present report, compiled by Dr. James J. Waring, chairman of the city's "Dry Culture Committee," investigates the causes of the epidemic in Savannah in 1876 and proposes reforms to prevent a recurrence of the pestilence. The report places a heavy emphasis on bacteria as causing the disease, reflecting current medical thinking on the subject. The plates show the latest styles of privies, waste wagons, and tubs. The colored map shows the conditions that fostered the spread of the disease.

***Nervous and mental diseases. The practical medicine series: comprising ten volumes on the year's progress in medicine and surgery.*** Chicago: The Year Book

**Publishers, 1911-1933.** These volumes, edited by Chicago neurologist Peter Bassoe, are heavily illustrated and include details on the developing fields of psychiatry and neurology during the early twentieth century. Included are recordings of changes in psychoanalysis, developments in exploration of the brain and spinal cord in neuroanatomy, and descriptions and treatment of trauma and war neuroses.



**Ryff, Walther Hermann.** *Schwangerer Frawen Rosengarten...* Getruckt zu Franckfort am Meyn : bey Christian Egenolffs seligen Erben, MDLXIX [1569].

Ryff's work is a rare edition of a popular illustrated midwifery book, covering knowledge from conception to the treatment of childhood diseases. Woodcuts provide detailed illustrations of a fetus, birthing instruments, and more. This work borrows heavily from Eucharius Rösslin's *Der schwangeren Frauen und Hebammen Rosengarten* printed in 1513. Printed in 1569, this is a reprint of the edition published in Frankfurt in 1561,

with a new dedication to Margareth Egenolff, Frankfurt's famous woman printer and widow of Christian Egenolffs.

## HOM in the Classroom

The History of Medicine Collections worked with the following classes:

### Art History

- Body in Art

### English

- Doctors Stories

### History

- Magic, Religion, Science since 1400

### House class

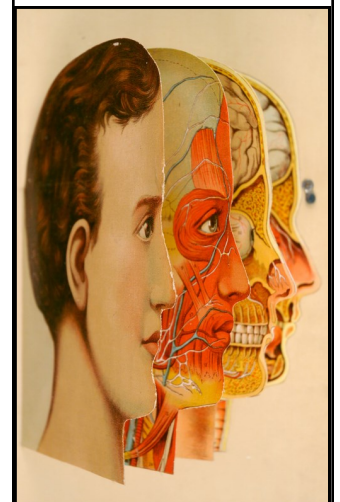
- History of Autopsy

### Theater Studies

- Medical Stories on Stage

### School of Medicine

- History of Medicine Elective
- History of Pediatrics
- History of Surgery



# DUKE UNIVERSITY

# LIBRARIES

## **History of Medicine Collections**

Rubenstein Rare Book &  
Manuscript Library  
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edu/rubenstein



## **Renew or become a member of the Trent Associates!**

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Make checks payable to Duke University and send to:  
Trent Associates for the History of Medicine  
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**Donors giving at the level of \$50 and above are listed in the  
Duke University Library Annual Report**

## **Thank you for your donation!**