

## A Singular Remedy

Stefanie Gänger explores how medical knowledge was shared across societies tied to the Atlantic World between 1751 and 1820. Centred on Peruvian bark or cinchona, *A Singular Remedy* shows how that remedy and knowledge about its consumption – formulae for bittersweet, ‘aromatic’ wines, narratives about its discovery or beliefs in its ability to prevent fevers – were understood by men and women in varied contexts: Peruvian academies and Scottish households, Louisiana plantations and Moroccan court pharmacies alike. This study in plant trade, therapeutic exchange and epistemic brokerage exposes how knowledge weaves itself into the fabric of everyday medical practice in different places.

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# A Singular Remedy

*Cinchona Across the Atlantic World, 1751–1820*

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Stefanie Gänger

*Heidelberg University*



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and Extinction in the Viceroyalty of New Granada, 1752–1811’, Vol. 24/4, 2919) in Chapter 5.

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## A Note on Source Material

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This book brings together evidence from a wide array of sources, variable with respect to genre, language and origin – ranging from imperial bureaucratic reports to domestic recipe collections – and scattered, much like its subject matter, across the Atlantic World. In order to reassemble the history of the bark’s harvest, and of Spanish trade and Portuguese, British, Dutch and French contraband in it, the book relies primarily on official correspondence and reports, legal files and royal orders from the General Archive of the Indies (*Archivo General de Indias*) in Seville, the Spanish state archives in Simancas (*Archivo General de Simancas*), the archives pertaining to Spain’s Royal Palace (*Archivo del Palacio Real*) in Madrid, the Portuguese Overseas Archive (*Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino*) in Lisbon and the Ecuadorian National Historical Archive (*Archivo Nacional de la Historia*) in Quito. The records contained in these archives revealed the bark’s passage into a vast array of territories far beyond the Spanish and Portuguese empires – primarily, though not exclusively, across Europe and the societies within or adjoining its colonial possessions and commercial and evangelizing entrepôts rimming the Atlantic basin. Moving beyond traditional archival research, the book follows the pathways alluded to in these Iberian records, alongside those mentioned in the extant historiography, to archives, libraries and repositories, both physical and digital, elsewhere, for print and manuscript sources on bark use in these other societies. I primarily searched pharmacopoeias, medical treatises and various genres of popular print, especially published self-help manuals, recipe collections and almanacs, for bark recipes, stories and medical understandings. Specifically, I selected and probed into medical and popular print sources from Spain and Portugal, the Viceroyalties of Peru, Brazil, New Granada and New Spain, the Dutch, British and French West Indian possessions, the Kingdom of France, England and Scotland, British India, the Habsburg territories and the Swiss Confederacy, the Italian Peninsula, the Portuguese and British enclaves along the African coast and the French and British North American colonies – or, after 1776, the United States. I also drew on

Russian pharmacopeias, wherever they were available in Latin. To verify, at least selectively, whether readers heeded the medical advice these formats dispensed I consulted a selection of manuscript notebooks of medical recipes kept by women and men for domestic use – from Britain, France, various German- and Italian-speaking territories, the Portuguese Empire and the Viceroyalties of Mexico and Peru – kept in the archives and manuscript collections of London’s Wellcome Library, Portugal’s National Library (*Biblioteca Nacional*), Peru’s National Library (*Biblioteca Nacional de Lima*) and the University of Zurich (*Archiv für Medizingeschichte*), all of which hold national as well as international collections of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century recipe books. Studies that operate on a geographical and socio-political canvas more extensive than one empire, or nation-state require a measure of reliance on the work of specialists in other world areas. On account of the impossibility of mastering all the languages and visiting all the archives of the places where the bark’s pathways lead, I relied primarily on secondary literature for evidence on bark use in Sweden, the Sultanate of Morocco, the Dutch colonies, the Ottoman Empire, the Chinese and Mughal empires and Tokugawa Japan.

## A Note on Language and Translation

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The research for this project was conducted in many languages. I have worked with primary sources in English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Latin, German and Italian. All translations of these sources into English are my own, unless otherwise noted. I also benefitted from the translations, and linguistic advice, of other scholars with sources and literature in languages I have not mastered: Maïke Lehmann and Ingrid Schierle with Russian, Meike Knittel with Dutch, Jean-Baptiste Pettier with Chinese and Katalin Pataki with Hungarian. I am particularly grateful to Sırma Hasgöl and Sibylla Wolfgarten for their translation of Bursalı Ali Münşi's eighteenth-century essay on cinchona – 'Tuhfe-i Aliyye', or 'Kına Kına Risâlesi' – from Ottoman Turkish. To avoid ambiguity, I have usually given the English translation or transliteration of quotations (or proper names, for that matter) and provided the original in parentheses.

## A Note on Weights, Currencies and Measures

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The situation with regard to weights, currencies and measures in the late 1700s and early 1800s is generally one of great complexity, to say the least, and the more so in a book that adopts a transatlantic perspective. Weights, currencies and measures varied not only from area to area during that period, but to some extent also over time. I have converted the various historical units of weight and mass into kilograms, the base unit of mass in the current metric system, and units of length into metres. To avoid ambiguity, and ensure transparency, I have indicated both the conversion and the original units of mass and length throughout the text. I have chosen not to convert historical to other, or present-day, currencies, but found it preferable to give the reader an idea of their value by referencing their purchasing power in the period and society under consideration.

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