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MEDICINAL PLANTS IN MONASTERIES IN DUBROVNIK

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Monastery pharmacy



Figure 1. Dioscorides '*De materia medica*' –
(copy in Arabic)

- The Bible (plants of importance in the treatment process or preserve health: figs, pomegranates, olives and vines, myrtle, rue ...)
- The monastery pharmacy was in its bloom from 6th to 9th century, based on the works of Cassiodorus and his translations of Greek medicine books, Dioscorides books on herbs; works of Hippocrates and Galen

Dubrovnik Republic (1358–1808)



- The monastery medicine and pharmacy sons of St. Benedict, Monte Cassino.
- Salerno
- Edict of Medicine of Frederick II
- Bologna, Pavia and Padova





Monastery

- Pharmacy „Mala braća”
- 1317. (- until now)
- At first, selling medicinal herbs, and later the real drugs
- “Herbarium”
- Recipes of monastery pharmacist
- Books of secret healing





*Rheum
rhabarbarum,*
Polygonaceae



Inventory of medicines

- 1553.
- Simple medicines - „simplicia“ and composed-called „composita“.
- Most of the simple medicines are herbal, so there we can find:



Cinnamomum aromaticum,
Lauraceae

Flores croci, Fl. cinae, Fructus anisi, Fruct. colocynthis, Fr. cubebae, Fr. datali, Lignum aloe, Lign. santali albi & rubri, Lign. cassiae, Herba polipodii, **Mandragora**, Rhizoma curcumae, Radix rheubarbarae, Semen mirabolani, Semen nucis vomicae.



Strychnos nux-vomica L.,
Loganiaceae



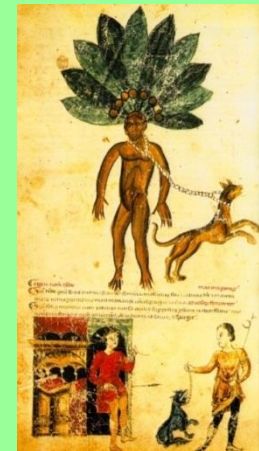
Santalum album,
Santalaceae



Mandragora

Pietro Andrea Mattioli ([Siena, 12 marzo 1501](#) – [Trento, 1578](#))

- “Discorsi del Matthioli“, Venezia, 1558.
- Mandragora
- „I've seen many times in gardens and markets of Naples, Rome and Venice. In other areas of Italy are planted both species"
- "There are two species, one is black, which is considered to be a female, has a very dense branches, smaller than lettuce, with unpleasant smell and it spreads in the ground. The other species of mandrake, which is a white male, called by some Morion ".





Mandragora



- One small glass is taken in insomnia.
- In pains similar to those when juice is given, or in a case of limb amputation so that one does not feel the pain.
- It is also given in a case of cholera and inflammation.
- Lethal if taken in overdose.
- It is also put in eye medicine similar to pain relieves the pain, and together with vinegar weighing half a coin it is given in cases of menstrual pain and birth.
- Fresh root branches are put as balm together with mashcorn for eye inflammation, pus caused by ulcers.
- Crushed roots, put with vinegar as balm, cure inflammations and snakebites.
- Smelling of the fruit causes sleepnes, similar to when eaten.
- Anyone who makes juice out of it, uses in overdose, eats or smells it, becomes mute.

Composed medicines - „composita“

- „Species dulces“ called „confectiones“ = mixtures of drugs mixed with sugar, which served as a preservative
- “Species letificante” – for cheering up - unknown ingredients
- „Condita,, is cooked vegetative parts of plant in sugar or honey
- "Syrups" from sugar cane



marzipan

Plants in the treatments

- Amatus Lusitanus (*1511, Portugal, Castelo Branco, + Solun 1568)
- The first describe the accute myocardial infarction
- Pulmonary hemorrhage with nettle juice
- **Hemorrhoidal bleeding** – put leeches on his rectum to start bleeding + laxative, decoct rhabarbarum et tamarindorum (*Tamarindus indica*, Caesalpinaceae)
- **Cough** - poppy seeds; **Acute cough** - *Succus petroselini, semen lini, foenum graecum*

Trigonella foenum-graecum





Plants in the treatments

- **Anuria** (6 month old boy) after changing the nursing women and got four prescriptions of which was the most important *Radix petroselini* and child urinated. *Radix petroselini* is still used in medicine as a diuretic.
- **In gynecologic bleeding** - Gummi tragacanthae (*Astragalus gummifer*), Sanguinis draconis (*Dracaena*), bolus armenica (lime?), a variety of other plants and **Cera alba Ragusina**.



Beeswax



Dracaena cinnabari,
Ruscaceae

Plants in the treatments



Pinellia ternata

- Against nose polyposis, syphilis, febrile illness, gout-gout, ascites, dizziness and migraines
decoct radicis synarum (Radix chinae)
(=*Pinellia ternata*, Araceae) was prescribed.
- **In case of indigestion** - Egyptian *Cassia* species (*Cinnamon*, coumarin)
- **Renal colic** - *decoctum alvae gummi tragacanthae* was prescribed.

Plants in the treatments

- The story of a patient who accidentally ate poisonous seeds of the plant called *Ricinus communis* thinking it was pistachio seeds proves the possibility of a serious mistake.
- Another woman threw out a worm in the length of four elbows, and she was prescribed *Semen cucumeris*.

Ricinus communis



Plants in the treatments

- The great Amatus gave one young man, who during coitus threw out flatus, instead of semen, which made him very sad, *Piper albus et niger*, *Semen urticae* & *Pyrethrum*.



Piper



Pyrethrum
/ Tanacetum
/ Chrysanthemum



Urtica

Conclusions

- The monastery treatment is no longer in use.
- The use of plants is now limited.
- Used evidence based medicine products of powerful pharmaceutical industry are used instead.



*Thank you for
your attention!!*

