THE ORIGINS OF THE PHARMACY HISTORY IN LATVIA

Lauze Sabine¹, Sidlovska Venta¹, Maurina Baiba¹
¹Faculty of Pharmacy of Riga Stradiņš University, Dzirciema Str.16, LV 1007, Riga, Latvia, FF@rsu.lv

The oldest pharmacy in the territory of Latvia has been active since 1357 in Riga; therefore Riga and Latvia continue to draw the attention of researchers in the history of pharmacy. Here were several pharmacists who have done research in the history of pharmacy not only in Latvia, but also in the Baltic and Europe. And they have left significant contribution in this sector.

The first of pharmacists in Riga who took the studies of pharmacy history seriously was the founder of Riga Pharmacist School Carl Heinrich Frederking (1809 - 1892). He studied at the University of Jena and as his teachers Frederking considered pharmacist, chemist and professor of the University of Jena Heinrich Wilhelm Ferdinand Wackenroder (1798. -1854.) and also the professor of chemistry and pharmaceutical technology Johann Wolfgang Döbereiner (1780. -1849.). Exactly Wackenroder has encouraged Frederking to start research history of pharmacy. As time went by, Frederking wrote very valuable book in the history of pharmacy named „Grundzüge der Geschichte der Pharmazie und derjenigen Zweigen der Naturwissenschaft, auf welchem Sie basiert“. The book was published in the year 1674 at Gottingen. In his book, he collected life stories of several famous European pharmacists, and introduced readers about the major periods of the history of pharmacy. He also wrote about pharmacist role in the development of the various science and chemistry discoveries.

The history of pharmacy was also a passion of Frederking’s colleague - Ernst Ludolf Seezen (1799. -1881.). E.L. Seezen was the owner of the drug store called “King’s pharmacy” and from the year 1824 he focused on classifying and sorting the materials of the museum of a significant doctor and pharmacist - Nicolai Himsel. He also added items to the Nicolai Himsel museum exhibition from two other pharmacist personal collections. These two pharmacists were Johann Ludwig Rost, the owner of the “Elephant’s pharmacy”, and Johann Jacob Foss, the owner of the “Green pharmacy”. E.L. Seezen worked in museum till year 1864 and earned respect by his work of the citizens of Riga. Nowadays collections of Himsel museum are at a base of Riga’s History and Navigation museum, the Latvian National Museum of Art and the Latvian Museum of Natural History expositions.

History of pharmacy was also the leisure time passion for Friedrich Lihinger (1864. -1931.). He was master of pharmacy and researcher of Baltic history. His first notable work was the book „Die Geschichte der Pharmazutischen Gesellschaft zu Riga. 1803 -1903.” which was dedicated to the chemists of Riga and the Pharmaceutical Society’s centenary. It was published in the year 1903. Later he studied about the history of
pharmacy in Russia, Poland and Courland - district of Latvia. The noble work of Friedrich Lihinger life was monograph “Aus Russlands pharmazeutischer Vergangenheit”, which came out in the year 1927 in Riga. Until this day it is the most comprehensive work in this field, because it covers the period from the XVI century till year 1918. In this monograph the history of pharmacy in the Baltics was widely reported.

Latvian-born pharmacist Davis Blumenthal (1871.-1937.) all his life collected materials and subjects about the history of pharmacy. In Saint Petersburg he collected information about pharmacy history in Russia. From that all information he wrote about 400 pages long material, but unfortunately the most part of this work has not been published ever. Only in the year 1916 he published some articles from this material with title „Materials for the history of pharmacy in Russia” in Russian „Pharmaceutical journal“. In year 1920 he returned from Russia to the Latvia. He brought with him also one part of the valuable items and books about history of pharmacy from his collection, but many things he left in Russia, because of customs regulations. In Latvia based on Blumenthal’s initiative in the year 1923 started to come out Latvian pharmacist magazine. In this magazine he published 79 articles, of which 39 articles were devoted to the history of pharmacy in Latvia. Blumenthal’s first article devoted to the history of pharmacy was including information about the importance to know the profession’s history and how it is related to the nation’s past, present and future. Already in other writings he has introduced readers with major periods of the history of pharmacy in Latvia, because in this way was much easier to study and learn these things. Each of the eras of history of pharmacy he extensively characterized and provided extremely valuable information about the pharmaceutical development in Latvia. He has also done some history researches about disease witching. From the year 1920 till 1922 Blumenthal taught history of pharmacy to young pharmacists in University of Latvia. In his testament all collected historical items and materials from Russia and other countries he left the Faculty of Pharmacy at University of Latvia.

Janis Maizițe (1883.-1950.) was a professor of pharmacy at the University of Latvia and he has enormous merit in the Latvian pharmaceutical development and creation. Great his merits are associated with the work of the Latvian Pharmacopoeia compilation. J. Maizīte as a chairman of pharmacopoeia commission with his colleagues, working together in long-term (about 15 years) established Latvian Pharmacopoeia, and it was released in the year 1940. As well as invaluable work was his textbook „Introduction in practical pharmacy“, which he wrote and published in the year 1946. It is the only textbook in Latvian, which is dedicated to pharmaceutical technology. But the history of pharmacy became his passion. In 1938 J. Maizīte combined his collection with Blūmentāl’s heritage and opened a small pharmacy history museum which doesn’t exist anymore because of the Second World War. After J. Maizīte death the most part of his
collection – manuscripts, documents, books, pharmaceutical tools and subjects became a property of professor Pauls Stradins (1896.-1958.). Later in Riga (1957) the Pauls Stradins Museum of History of Medicine was opened bringing together all the medical and pharmaceutical history files that had survived during the Second World War.