

MARGAREETE OTTER

THE FIRST OFFICIAL ESTONIAN PHARMACOPOEIA

Every country makes itself a system of laws to fix its internal foreign relations. For centuries pharmacopoeias – official collections of obligatory instructions about the preparation, storage and quality of medicines and the doses of toxic substances and of those having strong effect [3], have determined pharmacy. The first collection of that kind of instruction in Europe was published in 1498 in Florence. The first Latin pharmacopoeia in the Russian Empire appeared in 1778. It took 108 years to translate it into Russian and make it an official pharmacopoeia (it was published in 1886). Russian pharmacopoeias were used in the Estonian as well.

By the time of the foundation of the Republic of Estonia a wide network of chemist's shops had been formed in towns and in the country. The first town chemist's was first mentioned in Tallinn in 1422 and 4 years later in Tartu. Physician and publicist P. E. Wilde (1732–1785) opened the first country chemist's in 1776 in Põltsamaa. Thus the history of pharmacy in Estonia is long. In Tartu University the first independent department of pharmacy was opened in 1842 and in 1844 the first institute of higher education for training pharmacutists was established. Mastering all the local languages made it easy for the Estonian pharmacutists to use different pharmacopoeias. During the first years of independence there was no urgent need for pharmaceutical legislation because the pharmacutists worked on the basis of Russian Pharmacopoeia. A pharmaceutical inspectorial office was formed in the Ministry of Education and Social Care. In Estonia existed pharmacutists societies, which were united into an association, and two periodicals – *The Estonian Pharmacist*, and *Pharmacia* were issued. [8]

At the end of 1936 there were 211 chemist's shops in Estonia out of which 91 belonged to the first class and 120 to the second class. The first class chemist's shops had full equipment and pharmaceutical laboratories and all drugs according to the pharmacopoeia on sale. In the second class chemist's shops the list of drugs was more limited and the existence of a laboratory was not obligatory [6]. A successfully developing pharmaceutical industry, an increasing number of pharmacutists and students of pharmacy which reached

308 by the year 1934 being the greatest then caused the need for its own legislation [4]. By the time there were 26 pharmacopoeias all over the world, the Estonian one becoming the 27th; of about 30 European countries 20 had their own pharmacopoeias, Estonia becoming the 21st.

In Estonia on February 7, 1934 the director of the Health and Care Department appointed a committee to work out a pharmacopoeia. It was made up of the representatives from the Health and Care Department, the Health Department of the Army, the veterinary department of the Ministry of Agriculture, the Association of Pharmacist's Societies and from the Association of Doctor's Societies. Already in April 1934 special committees were formed to compose the articles of pharmacopoeia. The heads of the committee were: professor Henn Parts – head of the committee of pharmaceutical chemistry; professor Johannes Stamm – pharmacognosy; private assistant professor *Dr. pharm.* Nikolai Veiderpass – galenic pharmacy; professor Karl Schlossmann – bacteriology; professor Georg Barkan – pharmacology; professor Karl Saral – head of the veterinary committee.

The main co-ordinator of these special committees was private inspector of pharmacy, assistant professor *Dr. pharm.* H. Salasoo. He was a man whose energetic and practical activities made it possible to finish the pharmacopoeia in a short time. *Mag. pharm.* A. Änilane, *Dr. pharm.* A. Tomingas, *Mag. pharm.* V. Kuusik, *Dr. med.* E. Käär-Kingisepp and H. Peterson, the head of the State Serum Institute also took part in composing the articles of pharmacopoeia [6].

The articles of Estonian Pharmacopoeia were based on the 5th Swiss Pharmacopoeia (1933), the 6th Russian Pharmacopoeia (1910) and the 6th German Pharmacopoeia and on the standards worked out at an international conference that took place in 1925 in Brussels. On June 5, 1936 the articles were looked through by the State Health Council and presented to be published.

The Estonian Pharmacopoeia appeared on January 30, 1937. Thus it was completed and published between April 1934 and January 1937. In other countries it took 8 to 10 years to make a pharmacopoeia (1922–33 in the Netherlands, 1928–33 in Hungary, 1926–36 in the USA) [7].

A lot of time was allowed for passing over to the requirements of the new pharmacopoeia. The 1st Estonian Pharmacopoeia was adopted in January 1938 and it was in force together with Russian Pharmacopoeia until January 1, 1939 when it became the only official pharmacopoeia in Estonia. Estonian Pharmacopoeia consists of a general part that contains instructions about preparing, testing, packing and storage of medicines, a special part and appendices. The definition of a medicine sounds completely up-to-date. The drugs were divided into 4 groups: chemically homogeneous, chemically non-homogeneous, galenic preparations and immune substances. The special part contains 805 articles about drugs and descriptions of their initial substances.



EESTI FARMAKOPÖA

ESIMENE VÄLJAANNE

PHARMACOPOEA ESTONICA

EDITIO PRIMA

SOTSIAALMINISTEERIUMI
FARMAATSIA INSPEKTUURI
VÄLJAANNE



TALLINN

1937

Title page of the first Estonian Pharmacopoeia

The drugs are given in alphabetical order according to their Latin names. To make it simpler, the articles of Estonian Pharmacopoeia are divided into parts by subtitles. After the title comes a short definition of a drug, a formula and the molecular weights in case it is a chemical compound. Drugs of plant and animal origin are defined according to their origin and the ways of preparation. The names of the plant families are given according to A. Engler. The laboratory equipment of chemist's shops was taken into account when working out instructions given in the pharmacopoeia. A great number of articles about physical and chemical testing of drugs and the quality requirements were very strict. The appendices contain 16 tables (tables of drops, maximal doses, A- and B-list substances) [2].

As compared with the British Pharmacopoeia of 1948, the Estonian Pharmacopoeia was on quite a high level for its time. The methods of identification and quality resemble those of other pharmacopoeia [1].

At the present time the nomenclature of that pharmacopoeia is being used in the Estonian language but great and inconsiderable changes have been made in it [5]. The names of drugs and other medical terminology need a linguistic regulation. The publication to the history of Estonian medicine, especially pharmacy. It was a remarkable event in the whole culture of Estonia.

60 years have passed from that time. Now we have not a new Estonian Pharmacopoeia but every year a new issue "*Pharmaca Estica*" is published. "*Pharmaca Estica*" gives information about official drugs in the Estonian Republic. In January of 1998 there about 1800 preparations [5] are registered.

References

1. British Pharmacopoeia. – 1948.
2. Estonian Pharmacopoeia. – Tallinn, 1937.
3. Estonian Soviet Encyclopaedia, II. – Tallinn, 1987.
4. Esser, J. H. The Estonian Pharmacist. – 1937. – 8. – 237–240.
5. Pharmaca Estica. – 1998.
6. Salasoo, H. The Estonian Pharmacist. – 1937. – 2. – 32.
7. Salasoo, H. The Estonian Pharmacist. – 1937. – 6. – 177–180.
8. References of University // The Estonian Pharmacist. – 1935. – 7. – 178–179.
[References 2–8 in Estonian language.]

Margareete Otter, Doc., Ph. D.
Biomedicum, Farmakologia Instituut
Ravila 19, Tartu 50411, Estonia