

# THE PHARMACEUTICAL COLLECTION OF BRANIČEVO DISTRICT PRESERVED IN THE HEALTH CARE INSTITUTION - POŽAREVAC PHARMACY

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Figure 1: Cover page of the oldest manual of Angel Pharmacy dated 01. January 1882 - 18. March 1884 found in Braničevo District (Courtesy of the Regional Pharmaceutical Institution Požarevac)

## INTRODUCTION

Data on the pharmacy practice in Braničevo district go as far as the 19th century, when according to the preserved documents the first public apothecary shop was opened on April 3rd in 1857 in the city of Požarevac - district capital. This pharmacy like many others was opened afterwards in the 19<sup>th</sup> and in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was privately owned until the nationalization (1949) when they became public apothecaries and assembled together to form the Regional Pharmaceutical Institution of Požarevac. This marked the beginning of today's prosperous and modern pharmacy institution operating under the new name "Health Care Institution - Požarevac Pharmacy" and comprising the chain of 9 pharmacies and 7 pharmacy units allocated in the urban and rural regions of Braničevo district. The pharmacy dated 1857 is one of them operating as a modern equipped urban public pharmacy where the collection of historical objects relating to the profession is gathered. The idea of saving what remains of an interesting pharmacy from the past was arisen from the occasion of the 150th anniversary. While gathering and sorting the collectables from around the district the idea was expanded to restore and preserve some of the most valuable ones. This pharmaceutical exhibition will be displayed into the glass showcase at the executive building. The showcase will be movable, and if necessary the collection will be displaced (to some other pharmacy on the jubilee or some other important occasion).

## AIM

The aim of this paper is to briefly outline the pharmaceutical collection of Braničevo district preserved at the Health Care Institution - Požarevac pharmacy, in order to emphasize the importance of conservation and maintenance the pharmaceutical antiquities in the regional institutions and societies and to keep them preserved as a part of national pharmacy heritage.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

Unlike other countries, Serbia doesn't have a national museum of pharmacy, but unofficially the History of Pharmacy Museum at the Faculty of Pharmacy could be considered a national museum.. However, there are several collections of objects relating to the profession, many of them in the location of the public apothecary shops still having an original nineteenth-century furniture, or at least in part. They often are of importance for the local community, mainly as the places for acquiring more in-depth knowledge of the pharmacy past, but very few have a broader significance, and again, very few preserves handwritten objects. If they do there are usually official books and drug lists. Very rarely it had been apothecary's remedy book that had been used as the source of specific recipes and formulae, such as the case with the pharmaceutical collection in Požarevac. It preserves six prescription books which are extremely valuable for analyzing the *materia pharmaceutica* of 19<sup>th</sup> century Serbian history (fig.1). They provide a rich insight into pharmaceutical practice in a particular place at a particular time and could reveal all kinds of dosage forms used at a particular time in the history as well as the extent to which herbal and mineral drugs were used. Unfortunately they have received only a scant attention of pharmaceutical historians in Serbia. They will be analyzed and compared by the use of qualitative historical methods.

Table 1: Bibliographic data of 6 prescription books (*Copia receptorum*) found in Požarevac

No. of book	Size in cm (height x width x thickness)	Number of pages	Recorded period	Number of prescriptions
Book No 1	41,3 X 13,7 X 1,7	120	1.1.1882 - 18.3.1884	5.246
Book No 2	40,7 X 17,7 X 2,6	367	19.3.1884 - 30.3.1889	10.859
Book No 3	39,4 X 12,7 X 2,0	379	1.4.1889 - 31.12.1890	3.696
Book No 4	32 X 11,5 X 3,8	860	1.11.1896 - 1.5.1899	5.787
Book No 5	32,7 X 20,3 X 2,0	196	20.7.1912 - 6.11.1913	3.252
Book No 6	32,2 X 20 X 1,0	161	1.3.1926 - 17. 9.1926	2.278

## SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS

This paper emphasizes the importance of conservation and maintenance the pharmaceutical antiquities in the regional health care institutions and societies in order to keep the awareness of a neglected national pharmacy heritage. It has to be concluded that the actual importance of the pharmaceutical collection in Požarevac is focused on the fact that *Manuals receptorum* comprised knowledge on the use of certain substances and preparation for medicinal purposes and their restoration and preservation as primary sources will allow us to show to the future generation of pharmacists the roots of pharmacy practice in this part of the globe.

## Acknowledgements

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## SOURCES AND REFERENCES

1. *Manual receptorum* of Angel Pharmacy in Braničevo district (1882-1884, 1883-1889, 1889-1890, 1896-1899, 1912-1913 and 1926)



Figure 2: Balances with the Hygiea decoration of 1kg weight



Figure 3: Decorative statue of Hygiea

Table 2: Number of prescriptions per year based on analysis of 6 Manuals found in Požarevac

Year/period	Number of prescriptions
1882	2134
1883	2530
1884	2424
1885	1589
1886	2284
1887	1960
1888	2175
1889	1831
1890	1866
1896	2484
1897	2511
1898	2494
1912	3228



Figure 4: Titlepage of the *Liber defectorum* from Angel Pharmacy in Braničevo District (Courtesy of the Regional Pharmaceutical Institution Požarevac)

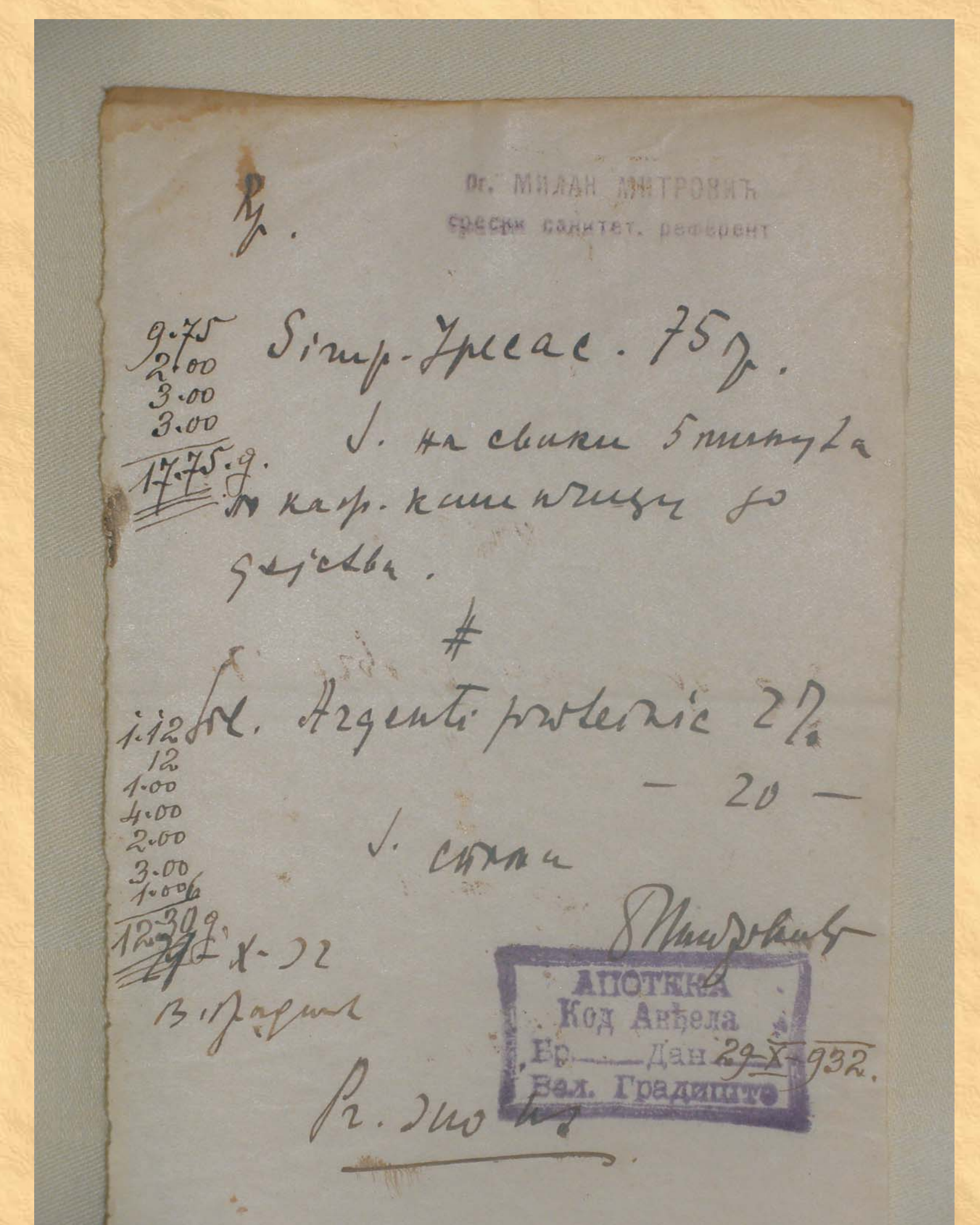


Figure 5: Original recipe from October 29<sup>th</sup>, 1934 prescribed by Dr. Mitrović, local physician. Two remedies are prescribed (*Sirupus Ipecacuanae* and *Solution Argenti proteinati 2%*) and they were for physicians' portable medicine chest. Medicines were prepared at the Angel Pharmacy in Veliko Gradište and we could see the prices for each component of both preparations.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Požarevac collection is not extremely beautiful, because it comprises a limited collection of ceramics, mortars, glasses, scales and other apothecary equipments and a few pieces of original furniture (fig. 2,3). Anyhow, its importance is even so enormous because of the small collection of rare books and hand-written objects, which consists of 43 original recipes, several printed books (i.e. taxa medicamentorum, pharmacopoeias and drugs and apothecary catalogues from different periods) and 8 handwritten objects e.g. manuscripts of remedies (fig. 4,5). These could be sorted into two categories: two books of drug deficiency (*Liber defectorum*) and six prescription books (*Manual receptorum* or *Copia receptorum*, serb. "Ručna knjiga receptata" is a handwritten prescription book kept by a pharmacist as the copy-book of all doctors' prescriptions that they made for patients). All the manuscripts are originated from the Angel Pharmacy (owned by Draškoci family) in a nearby municipality of Veliko Gradište. They differ in size and quality. Some of them are partly discolored or stained. A few angles are torn away. This part of collection will be attended with special care and will be restored. Although the health authorities in the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century required that each pharmacy store should keep *Manual receptorum*, very few of them survived till today since the most records naturally vanished over the years of difficult period and political changes occurred after the World War II.

The data of Manuals from Požarevac provide us with different information (Table 1).

One book (1912-1913) is entitled *Liber receptorum* while the other 5 books bear the same title *Copia receptorum* (figure 3). All the books are dated: 1882-1884, 1884-1889, 1889-1890, 1891-1895, 1895, 1896-1899, 1912-1913 and 1926. Two more books from the Angel Pharmacy are preserved and dated 1891- 1895 and 1895, but they are in a private possession.

The Manuals comprise the various forms of prescription medicines, most often liquids, divided powders and pills. Medicines were not of many components, mostly of 2, 3 or 4. The treatment with one or two remedies is quite often, rarely with 3 medicines for a patient, and never more than 4 medicines for one patient are prescribed.

According to the Pharmacy Act of 1865 and Health Law of 1881 all prescriptions, coming to an apothecary shop, had to be registered at the Prescription books and given back to the patients with the prices taxes, stamp of an apothecary, and signature of a qualified person that prepare it. The price of a remedy includes a fee for pharmacist's work and the highest fees for making medicines were pointed out by the Law. It was forbidden to apply higher, but allowed to apply lower fees, although it was forbidden to advertise discounts. Each record of a prescription in a book has 6 data: date, number of prescription, prescription itself, name of a doctor, of a patient and a price of medicine. Prescriptions are written in Latin. Quantities are expressed in grams and milligrams. The names of substances and doctors are abbreviated. The names of the patients to whom the remedy was intended to are illegible but they must have been local habitants. Most of all shortages are not constant. The number of prescriptions varies from year to year (table 2). The remedies may be divided into three groups: 1. preparations made of mineral and synthetic substances; 2. plant derived preparations; 3. preparations with strong effecting substances.