



The 60th anniversary of the foundation of the Cracow Museum of Pharmacy.

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The Cracow Museum of Pharmacy is the largest in Poland and one of not numerous museums of the type in the world. The museum was founded in 1946. Its organizer and first director was Dr. Stanisław Proń, who at that time held the position of a legal adviser and administrative director of the District Chamber of Apothecaries in Cracow (*Picture 1*)

Until the end of the 80s, the Museum was located in an apartment house at Basztowa Street 3, where displaying conditions (a couple of poorly lit rooms on the first floor of the building) were not optimal (*Picture 2*). Conditions radically improved, when the Museum's collections were transferred to the building in Floriańska Street 25, which at that time had been newly-renovated (*Picture 3*).

Picture 1

Dr. Stanisław Proń (1892–1971), the organizer and first director of the Cracow Museum of Pharmacy.

Picture 2

Permanent exhibition in the house at Basztowa Street 3.

Picture 3

Museum of Pharmacy at the Jagiellonian University, 25 Floriańska Street, Cracow, Poland.

Picture 4

Sign-board of the Cracow Museum of Pharmacy. The letters U and J mean Uniwersytet Jagielloński – Jagiellonian University. In fact, the founder of the university was king Kazimierz Wielki (Kazimierz the Great [1310–1370]). Władysław Jagiello (1362–1434), who was elected the Polish king in 1386, donated to the university new building called Collegium Maius.

Similar to several neighboring houses in the area, this building was built in the 15th century. Although it was later rebuilt a number of times, some of its historical elements have been preserved until today – for example gothic, vaulted cellars, several renaissance portals (*Picture 5*) and two Renaissance wooden ceilings, one of which is still covered with original paint (*Picture 6*). Apart from that, there are three Baroque ceilings, one of which is covered with a decorative wallpaper (the so-called paper hanging – *Picture 7* and *Picture 8*) and a painstakingly renovated, 19th century fresco on the walls of one of the rooms of the 1st floor, which depicts a stylized garden in pastel colors (*Picture 9* and *Picture 10*).

Picture 5

One of renaissance portals in the Cracow Museum of Pharmacy.

Picture 6

Fragment of the Renaissance wooden ceiling.

Picture 7

One of Baroque ceilings covered with a decorative paper hanging.

Picture 8

Fragment of a Baroque ceiling covered with a decorative paper hanging.



Picture 9 and Picture 10

19th century fresco depicting a stylized garden in pastel colours.

The permanent exhibition of the Museum of Pharmacy is located on all five stories – from the cellars to the attic – which in case of cellars and the attic had a reasonable justification.

The cellar was used for storing materials, which could otherwise quickly decay in a dry compartment or under the influence of light, but not in the presence of moisture and in a dark place – namely wax, oil, etc. (*Picture 11*). Wine stored in barrels (*Picture 12*) was used by the apothecaries to produce medicinal wines. For example, in an apothecary's handbook from the 16th century, we can find recipes for a “wine suitable for cordial illness”, “wine very useful in pestilent times” or “absinthe-flavored wine, good for stomach catarrh”.

The second exhibition cellar in the museum (*Picture 13*) houses objects used in an old apothecary's laboratory: copper alembics for distillation, rows of retorts and alembics, presses for extraction of juices and oils, mills etc.

Picture 11

The apothecary cellar.

Picture 12

Wine stored in barrels was used by the apothecaries to produce medicinal wines. In an apothecary's handbook from the 16th century, we can find recipes for a “wine suitable for cordial illness”, “wine very useful in pestilent times” or “absinthe-flavored wine, good for stomach catarrh”.

Picture 13

The second exhibition cellar in the museum.

Coming out of the cellars, we enter an exhibition room in Museum's ground floor (*Picture 14*) where pieces of furniture from old monastery pharmacies have been collected (for example Baroque chest of drawers for medicinal herbs – *Picture 15*), as well as coats of arms of old pharmacies – like Lion, Eagle, or Negro (*Picture 16*) which symbolized medicinal raw materials from exotic countries, which were fashionable during late Medieval period and the Renaissance.

Picture 14

Exhibition room in Museum's ground floor.

Picture 15

The Baroque chest of drawers for medicinal herbs from a Jesuit pharmacy.

Picture 16

An apothecary coat of arms: a Negro symbolizing medicinal raw materials imported from exotic countries.

In the first of two large rooms on the 1st floor, there are pieces of pharmacy furniture in Empire style (*Picture 17*), portraits of the first professors of pharmacy at the university of Cracow, and portraits of the senior members of the Cracow Chamber of Apothecaries (*Picture 18*). The most important portrait of the gallery is portrait of Jan Szaster (1746–



1793; *Picture 19*), the first professor of pharmacy at the university of Cracow, who started giving lectures in the newly-created pharmaceutical department in 1783.

Picture 17

Pharmacy furniture in Empire style.

Picture 18

Portraits of the first professors of pharmacy at the university of Cracow (top row) and portraits of the senior members of the Cracow Chamber of Apothecaries (below).

Picture 19

Portrait of Jan Szaster (1746–1793), the first professor of pharmacy at the university of Cracow (1783).

In the other large room on the 1st floor we display pharmacy furniture in the Neo-Baroque (*Picture 20*) and Biedermeier style (*Picture 21*) and a collection of mortars. There is also a painting entitled *The Apothecary* (*Picture 22*) painted by the magnificent Polish painter Józef Chełmoński. On the same storey, there is also a small room dedicated to Ignacy Łukasiewicz, a pharmacist who was the first man in the world to distill kerosene out of petroleum and to construct (in 1853) world's first kerosene lamp. (*Picture 23*)

Picture 20

Pharmacy furniture in Neo-Baroque style.

Picture 21

Pharmacy furniture in Biedermeier style.

Picture 22

Józef Chełmoński (1849–1914), *The Apothecary*.

Picture 23a and Picture 23b

Ignacy Łukasiewicz (1822–1882), Polish pharmacist who was the first man in the world to distill kerosene out of petroleum and to construct (in 1853) world's first kerosene lamp.

In the staircase, on the walls going along the stairs, one can see portraits and a selection of valuable diplomas conferred to Polish pharmacists by Polish and foreign universities. The staircase shows also a magnificent drawing made by Piotr Stachiewicz, which presents Hygeia, mythological patroness of health (*Picture 24*), as well as a beautiful stained glass artwork depicting a mortar surrounded by medicinal plants (*Picture 25*).

Picture 24

Piotr Stachiewicz (1858–1938), *Hygeia*.

Picture 25

Stained-glass window: a mortar surrounded by medicinal plants. 19th century.

In the first of two rooms on the second floor, old apothecary vessels are presented, which come from various periods and are made of wood and tin, transparent and colored glass, faience and porcelain – for example a series of glass vessels of monastery origin (including two small monstrence-shaped jars, one for storing muscat flower oil, the other for cinnamon oil, or a collection of majolica vessels – Italian, Dutch, Spanish or British (*Picture 26*). In this room we can also find a bust of Teodor Torosiewicz (1789–1876) which reminds of an apothecary who as the first one (in a publication from

1839) who paid attention to the usefulness of brown glass vessels for apothecary purposes. Also, in this room we can find such curiosities of old-time apothecary, as a portion of theriac in a genuine, 17th century wrapping (*Picture 27*), bezoar (a concrement living in the alimentary tract of some ruminants, valued throughout centuries as an antidote), majolica jars labeled “Axungia hominis” (“Human fat” – *Picture 27*) and “Mumia vera” (“Genuine mummy” – *Picture 2*), other vessel labelled “Millepedes” (“Centipedes”), another one with inscription “Blatta orientalis” (“Cockroaches”).

Picture 26

Apothecary vessel called *albarello*. Italy, 16th century.

Picture 27a and Picture 27b

A portion of theriac (height: 4,5 cm) in a genuine, 17th century wrapping.

The second room on the 2nd floor presents, among others, table balances and small hand scales with horn scale pans, as well as sets of weights of different kinds; here, worth mentioning are weights weighing less than one gram, developed and patented by a Polish pharmacist Marian Zahradnik in 1893). In the same room one can find glass and tin measures, pill-making machine, tablet-making machine, bolus-making machine and a set for producing powders in wafers. Another subject in this room is Tadeusz Pankiewicz (*Picture 28*), master of pharmacy, the owner of the “Eagle Pharmacy” in Cracow, author of the book *The Cracow Ghetto Pharmacy*, which was translated into several languages including English, German, French, Dutch and Jewish (*Picture 29*). In this book, the author described his moving memories from the years of the German occupation. In 1983, Tadeusz Pankiewicz was awarded by the State of Israel with the “Righteous Among the Nations” medal.

Picture 28

Portrait of Tadeusz Pankiewicz (1908–1993).

Picture 29

Cover of English version of Pankiewicz’s book.

The last exhibition room in the Cracow Pharmacy Museum was arranged in the attic – this, similar to the cellar, had also a reasonable justification, since an attic, being a spacious and dry area, was often used by apothecaries to dry and store medicinal herbs. On the wooden structure of this room (*Picture 30*), similar to rafter framing, wooden frames with thick canvas stretched over them were installed. The frames were once used for herb drying. On platforms, various kinds of herb cutters, there are also sieves of various gauges, percolators, traditional repository with drawers used for storing particular herb parts (blades, stems, roots, etc. – *Picture 31*), wooden and straw containers for bigger amount of herbs (*Picture 32*).

Picture 30

The museum’s attic.

Picture 31

Traditional repository for storing particular herb parts.

Picture 32

Containers for bigger amount of herbs.



The Museum's outbuilding houses a library, where, among others, are stored old herbaria, antidotaria, pharmacopoeias and other prints connected with apothecary history (*Picture 33*), contemporary albums and handbooks treating on the history of medicine and pharmacy, archival portfolios, where there are collected documents and photographs referring to eminent Polish pharmacists, as well as movies and slides, which from different points of view illustrate the history of Polish and European apothecary (*Picture 34*).

Picture 33

One of old prints preserved in the museum's library.

Picture 34

Title-page of Galen's *Opera omnia* (Venice, 1604).

The Cracow Museum of Pharmacy is visited by ten thousand people a year, most of them being from abroad. During the Nights of the Cracow Museums the Museum of Pharmacy is visited by two thousand people, both from abroad and by citizens of Cracow.

On 16 March 2007 a formal session was held at the Museum to celebrate the 60th anniversary of its foundation (*Picture 35*). The organisers were honoured to receive the Rector of the Jagiellonian University (*Picture 36*), the Vice-Rector for Collegium Medicum (*Picture 37*), the Dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy of which the Museum is a unit (*Picture 38*), representatives of the municipality (the Museum building is property of the city of Kraków), directors of other museums in the city and of other Polish museums of pharmacy (in Warsaw, Poznań and Bydgoszcz), Polish historians of pharmacy, families of former directors of the Museum, as well as former and present staff members.

Picture 35

Prof. Karol Musiol, rector of the Jagiellonian University.

Picture 36

Prof. Wieslaw Pawlik, vice-rector for Collegium Medicum.

Picture 37

Prof. Joanna Szymura-Oleksiak, the dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy.

The session comprised papers given by Museum staff members, which were devoted to specific periods of the history of the Museum, the author's paper entitled *A Chemical Barometer Formula in a 19th c. Apothecary Manual* (*Picture 38*), and a song recital by Wojciech Ślusarczyk (*Picture 39*), an artist who earns his daily bread at the Museum of Pharmacy in Bydgoszcz (central Poland).

Picture 38

Chemical barometer made according to a formula from a 19th century apothecary manual.

Picture 39

Wojciech Ślusarczyk



The papers on the history of the Museum covered specific periods related to its successive directors, from Dr Stanisław Proń (1946–1964), the creator of the Museum, through Prof. Wojciech Roeske (1965–1987), thanks to whom the Museum occupies an impressive historical building in the centre of the Old Town, Dr Leszek Ekiert (1987–2002), who organised the permanent exhibition in the newly-acquired building, to the author of the present text (from October 2002). All the papers, richly illustrated, were published in the form of a book (*Picture 40*), which, along with other souvenirs – including so called everlasting pills (*pilulae perpetuae*, purgative pills, made of antimony, of multiple use; see *Picture 41*) – was given to all the participants for a keepsake.

Picture 40

Cover of a book entitled *Session devoted to the 60th anniversary of the foundation of the Museum of Pharmacy*.

Picture 41

One of the souvenirs given to all the participants of the session for a keepsake: so called everlasting pills (*pilulae perpetuae*, purgative pills, made of antimony, of multiple use).

During the first of two breaks of the session, the participants performed an opening ceremony of two newly-renovated Gothic exposition cellars (the ceremony was accompanied by champagne). During the other break (accompanied by coffee) they saw a temporary exhibition, entitled *60 Years of the Museum of Pharmacy in Kraków*.

The session culminated with a party, which lasted until late evening and whose guests were treated to a tincture, prepared according to a 1784 apothecary formula entitled *Elyksir długiego życia (A Tincture for a Long Life* – see *Picture 44*), which is preserved in the Museum's archive.

Picture 42

Apothecary phial labelled *Tinctura ad Longam Vitam (A Tincture for a Long Life)*. 19th century.

Picture 43

A tincture prepared according to a 1784 apothecary formula entitled *Tinctura ad Longam Vitam*.

Picture 44

A 1784 apothecary formula entitled *Elixir ad Longam Vitam (A Tincture for a Long Life 3)*.