

Healing in the Changes of Time - Aqua Reginae Hungarie

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Among the medicines with an incredibly miraculous effect was also **Aqua Reginae Hungarie**, i.e. the Water of the Queen of Hungary (fre. Eau de la Reine de Hongrie), or abbreviated Hungarian Water (lat. *Aqua Hungarica*, hun. *Magyar Víz*, fre. *Eau de Hongrie*), Queen's Water (hun. *Királynévíz*).



Figure 1: Elizabeth of Poland (pol. *Elżbieta Łokietkówna*) married Charles I. Robert, King of Hungary, at the age of 15 on July 20, 1320. She was his fourth wife, to whom she gave birth to a coveted heir and four other sons. According to the preserved data, Elizabeth of Poland, Queen of Hungary, was healthy, attractive, and full of life thanks to the miraculous water until old age. Allegedly, a twenty-five-year-old Polish king asked for her hand, but then seventy-year-old queen rejected him. Possible heroines of this legend are: Elizabeth Łokietek (1305 - 1380), the wife of Charles I Robert, Elizabeth of Bosnia (1339 - 1387) wife of Louis the Great, Elizabeth of Hungary (1207 - 1231), daughter of King Andrew II of Hungary, and Elizabeth of Sicily, Queen of Hungary (1261 - 1304) married to Ladislaus IV of Hungary.

According to a legend, seventy-two-year-old Elizabeth of Poland (1308 - 1380), the wife of Charles I of Hungary (1308 - 1342), received a prescription for the medicine from a certain hermit. Another version of the legend says that she received the miracle cure from an angel. According to the written sources, the queen, who suffered from gout, rubbed her hands, feet, and face with the miraculous water, drank it daily, and took a bath in it. She recovered from gout, was full of life, and completely rejuvenated. Allegedly, when Charles Robert first saw her, he immediately fell in love with her and asked for her hand. Even the finding of the famous recipe has two versions. According to the first, Queen Elizabeth's recipe was found in the Royal Library in Vienna, and according to the second, the Queen's handwritten recipe was found in her prayer book. Apparently, it was an afterthought story of sellers with the intention of better selling the medicine. The panacea helped ease headaches, pain in the hands and feet, treat bruises, sustained digestion and appetite, bile secretion. It also relieved the symptoms of gout, stimulated blood circulation, maintained eyesight, restored strength, protected against infections, and prolonged life.



Figures 2 and 3: The basic component of the magical medicine was rosemary (*Rosmarinus Officinalis*, also called the Tree of the Virgin Mary). Lemon balm (*Melissa Officinalis*) as a component of *Aqua Reginae Hungariae*.

The cure with miraculous effects was used by rubbing it into the skin to eliminate the pain. It was applied to painful areas of the body or a cloth soaked in tincture was applied to the face,

forehead, or it was inhaled. The tincture diluted in water was taken in the morning on an empty stomach once or twice a week. A sweetened tincture was drunk as a cordial that drove away grief and brightened the mood. It was also used as a cosmetic elixir that toned the skin, removed wrinkles and scars, or even as a perfume Eau de Hongrie.

The original medieval recipe was as follows: *“Take: 6 parts lemon balm, 4 parts chamomile, 1 part rosemary, 3 parts common marigold, 4 rose petals, 1 part lemon peel, 1 part sage, 3 parts comfrey, wine or apple cider vinegar, rose water or water from witch-hazel. Preparation: Put all the grass in a container with a wide neck, pour in 3-4 fingers of vinegar, put a light blanket over the container, and keep in a warm place for 2-3 weeks. Then strain it, add half a cup of rose water or water from witch-hazel. Lastly, you can add 1-2 drops of rose or lavender oil. Keep in clean containers.”*

The composition and method of preparation of the drug have changed over the years. Sometimes it was just mixed, and it was ready to use, other times it was distilled. The original composition was supplemented with mallow flower, sage leaves, peppermint oil, and myrtle. In 1666, Joannes Praevotius, a physician from Padua, published a reference to Aqua Reginae Hungariae and its preparation in *Opera Medica*. According to the author, the queen treated gout with miraculous water. The Water of the Hungarian Queen was known throughout Western Europe and enjoyed unprecedented fame. The recipe was also mentioned in Nicholas Culpeper’s pharmacopoeia from 1683, or in the Oxford Dictionary from 1888 under the entry “Hungary water”. In pharmacopoeias, the medicine existed until the 20th century.

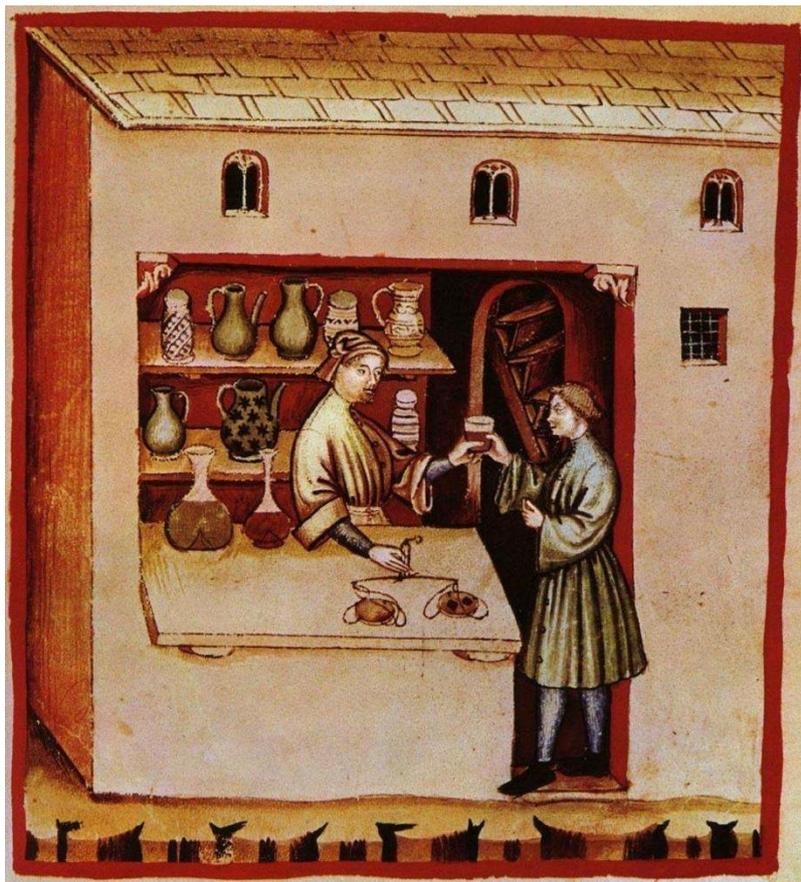


Figure 4: Pharmacy from the 14th century on a German engraving. Aqua Hungarica has been a popular medicine for centuries. The priests also refreshed themselves with the Water of the Queen of Hungary during long sermons. Rumour about the medicine was also reflected in folk tales, for example, the tale about the Sleeping Beauty from the Brothers Grimm.

Illustrations were used from the following Internet websites:

[https://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/A1%C5%BEb%C4%9Bta_Polsk%C3%A1_\(1305%E2%80%931380\)](https://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/A1%C5%BEb%C4%9Bta_Polsk%C3%A1_(1305%E2%80%931380))

https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eau_de_Hongrie

<http://www.botanical.com/botanical/mgmh/r/?C=N;O=D>

<http://powo.science.kew.org/taxon/urn:lsid:ipni.org:names:450084-1>

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