ORIENTAL MEDICINAL PLANTS IN TAXA PHARMACEUTICA POSONIENSIS, 1745

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Fig. 1. *Pressburg in the 18th century*

Introduction

Pressburg – Posonium – Pozsony – Prešporok (today Bratislava, Slovakia)

After the Battle of Mohács (1526) the Kingdom of Hungary was defeated by the Ottoman Empire, and a big part of its territory was occupied by the Turks. In 1536 Pressburg was designated the new capital city of Hungary, becoming part of the Austrian Habsburg Monarchy. The city became a coronation town and the seat of kings, archbishops, the nobility and all major organisations and country offices. During the 18th century was the largest and most important town in Hungary. The town population tripled, and the city was the centre of social and cultural life of the region (Fig. 1).

In the middle of the 18th century in Pressburg worked 14-15 civil physicians, municipal and military hospital, two hospitals operated by religious orders (Sisters of St. Elizabeth, Merciful Brethren), and a Jewish hospital. Pharmacy care was provided by six pharmacies owned by civil pharmacists, and three pharmacies owned by religious orders (two mentioned above and Jesuits). Providing of healthcare services was organized and controlled by the officially established town physician.

Aim of the study

The aim of this study was to sum the oriental medicinal plants and herbal drugs of the Central European Materia Medica, according to a selected pharmaceutical work *Taxa Pharmaceutica Posoniensis, Cum Instructionibus Pharmacopoeorum, Chirurgorum & Obstetricum* (Fig. 2).

Taxa Pharmaceutica Posoniensis, 1745

Basic information

The Taxa prepared since 1743 and published in 1745 in Pressburg was the first official pharmaceutical rate book of the former Hungarian Kingdom. This taxa was obligatory to 1799. The Hungarian Royal Governor´s Council commissioned **Joannis Justus Torkos** (1699–1770), the town physician of Pressburg to edit the rate book.

The Taxa includes the list and pricing of the simple and composed medicinal products used in Central Europe in the 18th century. For the editing of the Taxa, the author primarily used the Vienna Dispensatory published in 1729.

Structure

The catalogue of medicines is quadrilingual, presenting 18th century medicines nomenclature in Latin, Hungarian, German, and Slovak language. The price list (currency units: *florenus, grossum, denarius*) is supplemented by Latin instructions for pharmacists, surgeons, and midwifes/ obstetricians in this era.

First part (*Pars I*) contains the list of simple medicines (*De Nativis, Crudis, Simplicibus),* while the second part (*Pars II*) the list of prepared medicinal products (*De Arte Paratis*) - Fig. 3-4. The rate book contains more than 2.100 items – *simplicia* and *composita*, and more than half of them have a plant origin.

In the section *Ex Regno Vegetabili* (*Pars I/Sectio I*) are listed 538 simple herbal drugs (25 % of the Taxa´s items) divided into 10 categories (Table 1). Drugs are derived from more than 400 plant species, and several of them have oriental origin (Table 2-3).

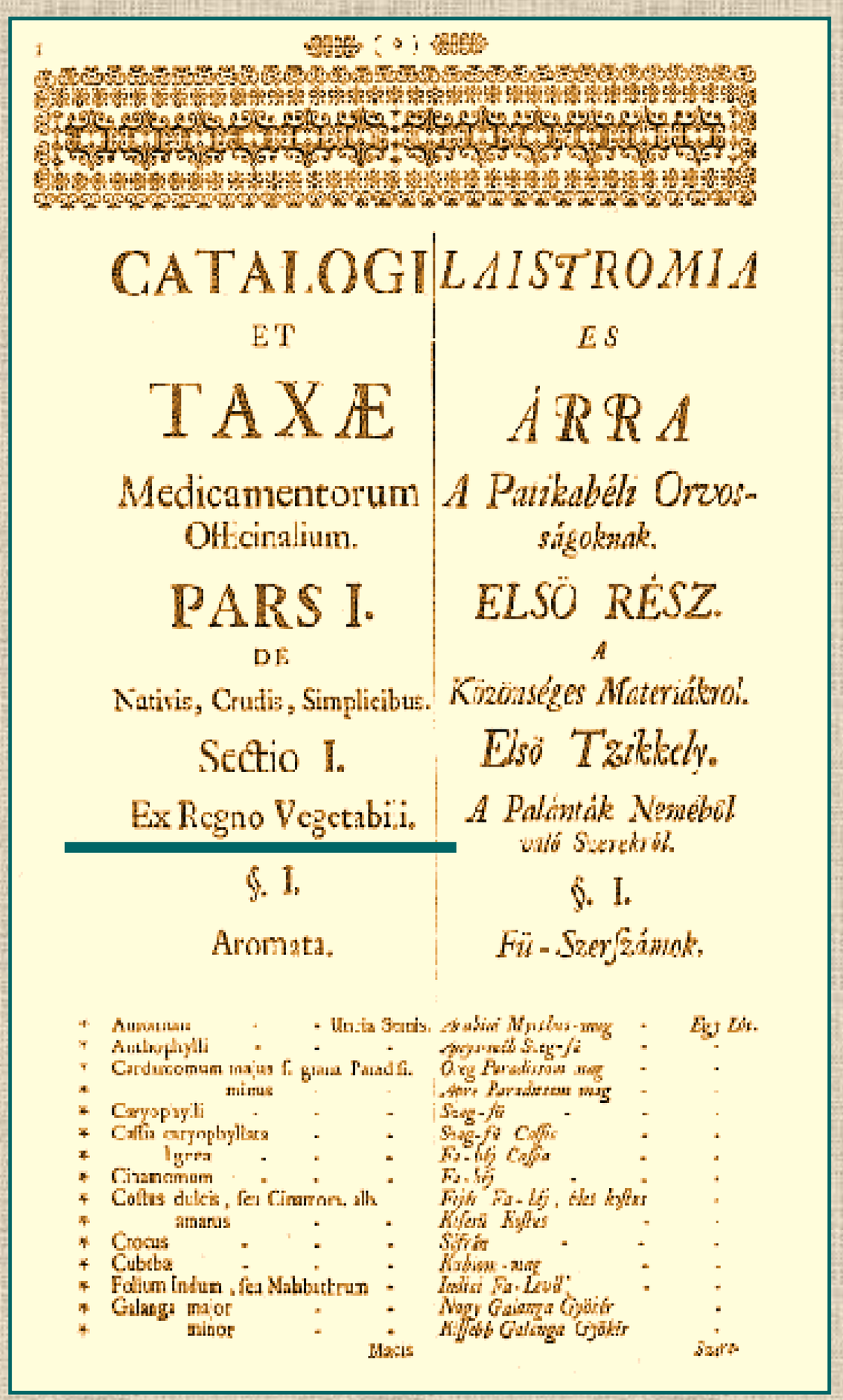
Table 1. *Categories of simple herbal drugs*

Latin name (number of items)	Hungarian, German and Slovak name mentioned in Taxa	English name
Aromata (27)	Fü-Szerszámok – Speceyene – Wonné Kořenj	spices
Cortices (22)	Héjak – Rinden – Kůrty	barks
Flores (50)	Virágok – Blumen – Kwěty	flowers
Fructus (48)	Gyümöltsök – Früchte – Owotce	fruits
Fungi (5)	Gombák – Schwämme – Hauby	fungi
Gummi* (63)	Gummák – Gummi – Gumy	gummi
Herbae (127)	Füvek – Kräuter – Byliny	herbs
Ligna (19)	Fák – Hölzer – Dřiwj	woods
Radices (99)	Gyökerek – Wurzeln – Kořeny	roots
Semina (78)	Magok – Saamen – Semena	seeds

*includes also Gummiresinae, Balsama, Succi concreti

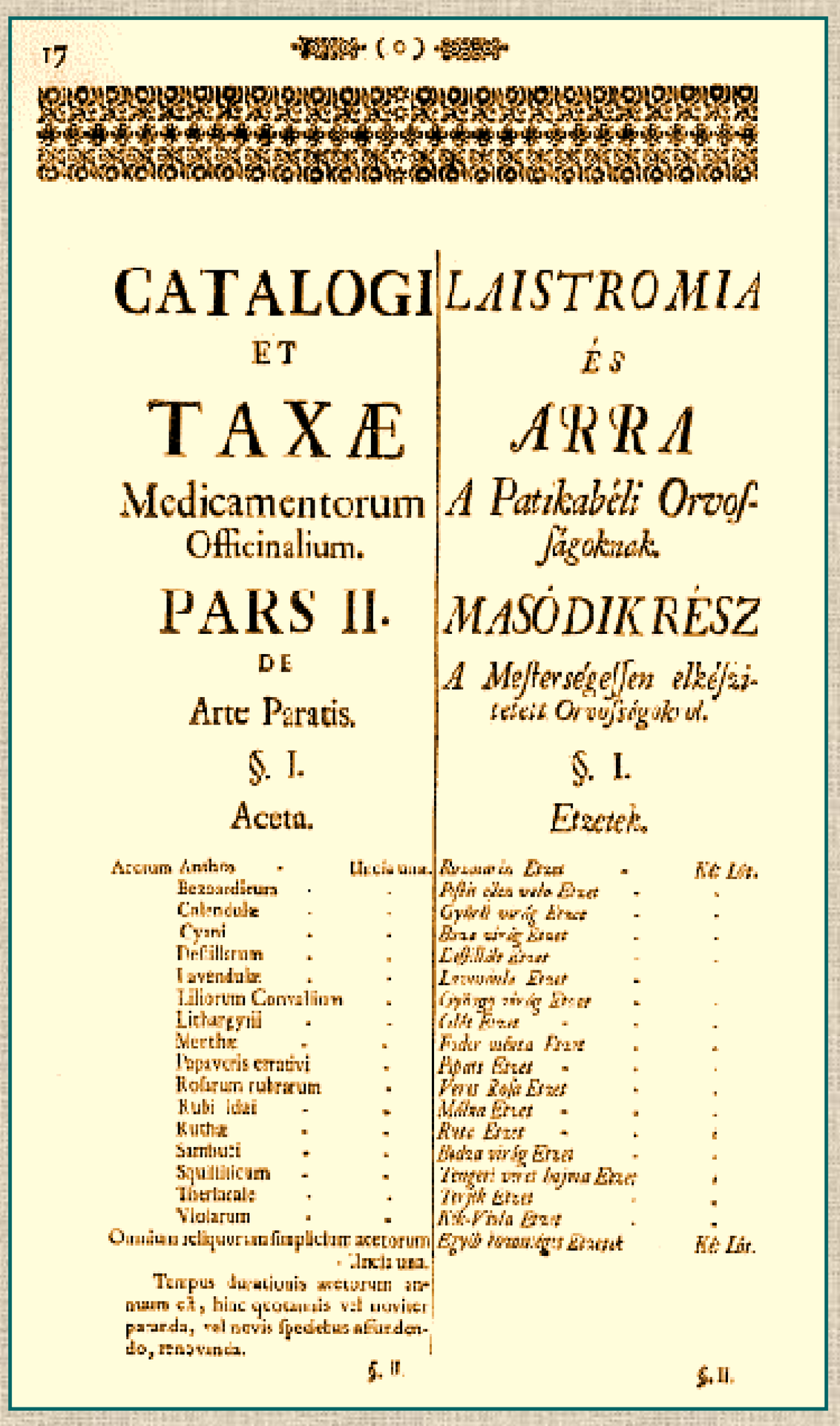
TAXA PHARMACEUTICA POSONIENSIS, Cum Instructionibus Pharmacopœorum, Chirurgorum & Obstetricum SPECIALI MANDATO EXCELSI CONSILII REGII LOCUMTENENTIALIS HUNGARICI ASSUMTA, PER REGIAM SANITATIS COMMISSIONEM REVISA, RELATA, AC PER TITULATUM EXC. CONS. REG. LOCUMTENENT. SUPERREVISA, APPROBATA; OPERA vero & STUDIO JUSTI JOANNIS TORKOS, Medicinæ Doctoris, Liberæ Regiæ Civitatis Posoniensis PHYSICI ORDINARII ELABORATA, In Publicum Usum ac Utilitatem Typis data. Posonii, Anno Christi M. DCC. XLV. Litteris Royerianis.

Fig. 2. *Title page of Taxa Pharmaceutica Posoniensis*



CATALOGI ET TAXÆ Medicamentorum Officinalium. PARS I. DE Nativis, Crudis, Simplicibus. Sectio I. Ex Regno Vegetabili. §. I. Aromata.	LAISTROMIA ÉS ÁRRA A Patikabéli Orvosságoknak. ELSŐ RÉSZ. A Közönséges Materiákrol. Első Tzikkely. A Palánták Neméből való Szerekről. §. I. Fü-Szerszámok.

Fig. 3. *Title page of the Taxa´s first part (simple medicines)*



CATALOGI ET TAXÆ Medicamentorum Officinalium. PARS II. DE Arte Paratis. §. I. Aceta.	LAISTROMIA ÉS ÁRRA A Patikabéli Orvosságoknak. MÁSODIK RÉSZ A Mesterségessen elkészíttetett Orvosságokrol. §. I. Etzetek.

Fig. 4. *Title page of the Taxa´s second part (prepared medicinal products)*

Oriental plants and herbal drugs in Taxa

Table 2. *Simple medicines and herbal drugs derived from plants with oriental origin*

Category	Examples
Aromata **(spices)**	*Cardamomum majus, Cinamomum, Galanga, Nux Moschata, Piper, Vanigliae, Zedoaria*
Cortices **(barks)**	*Cortex Cassiae caryophyllatae, Cortex Cinamomi, Cortex Thymiatis*
Flores **(*flowers*)**	*Flores Stoechadis Arabicae*
Fructus **(*fruits*)**	*Cassia fistularis, Cocculi de Levante, Gallae Turcicae, Grana Been, Tamarindi, Zizyphae*
Gummi **(*gummi*)**	*Aloë, Asa dulcis, Gummi Carannae, Gummi Myrrhae, Gummi Olibani, Manna electa, Sanguis Draconis, Storax Calamita, Terra Catechu*
Herbae **(herbs)**	*Thee Indicae, Thee de Boy*
Ligna **(woods)**	*Lignum Aloës, Lignum Rhodium, Lignum Santalium, Lignum Sassafras*
Radices **(roots)**	*Radix Been rubri, Radix Chinae, Radix Curcumae, Radix Turbith Gummosi, Radix Zedoriae*
Semina **(seeds)**	*Semen Anisi Stellati, Semen Bombacis, Semen ciceris, Semen cynae*

Table 3. *Examples of parent plants of the drugs with oriental origin*

Origin	Parent plants
Asia Minor	*Cicer arietium, Convolvulus scammonia, Helichrysum orientale, Lecanora esculenta, Liquidambar orientalis*
Arabian peninsula	*Boswellia sacra, Commiphora opobalsamum, Gossypium arborecum*
West and Central Asia	*Artemisia cina, Centaurea behen, Limonium* sp.
India	*Anamirta cocculus, Bursera acuminata, Calamus draco, Curcuma* sp.*, Moringa oleifera, Nardus indica, Tamarindus indica*
Ceylon	*Cinnamomum verum, Garcinia morella*
China	*Camellia sinensis, Illicium verum, Ziziphus jujuba*
Indonesia	*Alpinia galanga*

How did get the oriental plants and drugs to Central Europe?

In the 18th century decreased the importance of the main medieval trade routes (northern Hansa Route and southern Levant Route), and the most frequent became the overseas trade route around Africa. From the European port towns wholesalers and materialists distributed articles to Central European pharmacies.

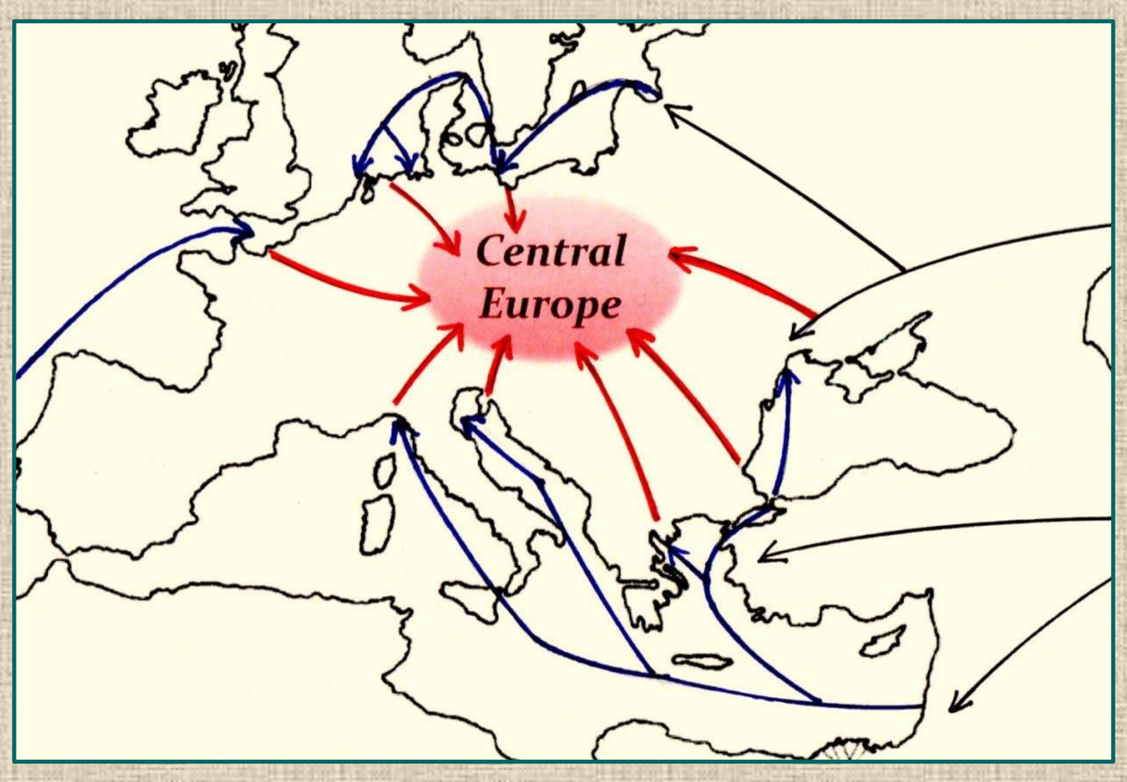


Fig. 5. *Main trade routes of oriental articles to Central Europe*

Acknowledgment

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