



GEORGOFILI WORLD

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ITALIAN PHARMACOPOEIAS. A GENERAL SURVEY (PART II - XVII- XIX CENTURIES)

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It is not a surprise to find so many pharmacopoeias in the sixteenth century. In the years of the Holy Roman Emperor of Charles V and of his son Philip II, King of Spain, we see the birth,

or the strengthening of several principalities in Italy, like the Duchy of Florence and each state's correlated necessity of a stronger civil organization. The world of diseases and of remedies had political links and it was better to give the concrete idea of the state's presence everywhere, especially as it related to the life and to the death of the people. The cases of the terrible plague in 1527 and 1576 are truly eloquent in this sense.

Rome was waiting for a practical tool for the preparation of remedies and, at last, in 1585, thanks to Pope Gregorius XIII Boncompagni, we see the *Antidotarium Romanum seu modus componendi medicamenta quae sunt in usu*. The work was printed in Venice, the most important typographical centre in Italy. In a woodcut on its frontispiece appeared the pope's coat of arms, with a dragon and the words *Opus pharmacopolis medicisque non minus utile quam necessarium*. As in the other Italian states, Gregorius XIII planned to regulate the different and complex ways in which remedies were prepared; this volume was created with this purpose. In addition, science was slowly coming to the church. Latin was somewhat removed from daily life so this work was translated by Ippolito Ceccarelli and published in 1639 by Facciotti in Rome with the Roman and Egyptian treatises on *theriaca*.

A new pharmaceutical manual on the preparation of herbal remedies, oils, syrups, pills and unguents was compiled by Giuseppe Donzelli, Baron of Digliola, in the second half of the seventeenth century. His rich *Teatro farmaceutico dogmatico e spagirico* had a great success. It was printed for the first time in Naples in 1667. This model was followed by the Venetian apothecary Antonio de Sgobbis, who made a real universal pharmacopoeia, with the significant title, *Nuovo et universale teatro farmaceutico*. The work was printed in Venice also in 1667, with a marvelous frontispiece in which the masters of the past (Hippocrates, Galenus, and Masawaiyh) were present, along with allegorical images of all the operations for preparing remedies. Over the ages, pharmacy has truly been the symbol of public health. The number of bibliographical quotations present in this volume is impressive. De Sgobbis offers us an image of the progress of pharmaceutical science. The old concept of the four elements based on the human body: blood, phlegm, bile, and black bile were now weaker, like the influence of the stars and planets. The essential lines of Galileo Galilei's lesson had been well understood.

The Age of Enlightenment was near, with the triumph of chemistry and of the experimental method, thanks to Nicolas Lemery, Antoine Laurent de Lavoisier, and Jean Antoine Chaptal. A new official pharmaceutical textbook was needed in Italy and the *Ricettario Sanese* appeared in Siena, published in that Tuscan town by Bindi, in 1777. In 1789, a new edition of the *Ricettario Fiorentino* was published in Florence, by order of Grand Duke Pietro Leopoldo. This edition of the oldest Italian pharmacopoeia is quite interesting because the text was "*ridotto all'uso moderno*" and totally rewritten. After few years, in 1798, there appeared in Brescia Francesco Marabelli's *Apparatus medicaminum*, a manual for hospitals and, in Ferrara, Antonio Campana's famous *Pharmacopea Ferrarese* appeared in 1799. This pharmacopoeia had an incredible success. Reprinted many times, it was even pocket-sized for large part of the nineteenth century, its invaluable text used in different Italian states. Chemistry was now the basis of all pharmaceutical processes and Luigi Valentino Brugnatelli's magistral work soon appeared.

Brugnatelli, professor of chemistry in Pavia and a friend of Alessandro Volta, made a new, interesting pharmaceutical textbook that was printed by Capelli in 1802, again in Pavia. Its title was clear: *Farmacopea ad uso degli speciali e medici moderni della Repubblica Italiana*. The adjective “modern” is the true image of the French Revolution and its heritage, in the hands of Napoleon Bonaparte in that period. The text for the preparation of all kinds of remedies was simple and clear, filled with useful plates. It had the honor of being translated into French, appearing in France in 1811 as the *Pharmacopée Générale*. An indisputable triumph for Italian pharmacy.

The road had been opened and, in 1826, Giovacchino Taddei produced a new four-volume pharmacopoeia. The priceless contribution was printed in Florence by Pezzati, with the noteworthy title of *Farmacopea generale sulle basi della Chimica Farmacologica o Elementi di Farmacologia clinica*. A new discipline was born: pharmacological chemistry. The world of the ancient apothecaries and their herbal remedies was in its twilight. In 1849, Giuseppe Orosi had his *Farmacologia teorica e pratica, ovvero Farmacopea Italiana* published in Leghorn, by Mansi, inflicting the final blow to the Italian pharmacy’s past. The words in the title already contained the ideal perspective of the country’s political unity. In 1861, this long-awaited dream became reality.

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