

Significant Medical Study Written in Kosovo in the 17th Century Content Analysis of an Anonymous Medicinal Book Written In Kosovo in the 17th Century

Dr.sc.Hüsniye Koro ¹, Prof. Assoc. Dr. Shkelqim Millaku ^{2*}

¹ Faculty of Education, Prizren, New Turkish Language, Lecturer; University of Prizren, "Ukshin Hoti"- 20000 Prizren, Kosovo. husniyekoru@hotmail.com

² Corresponding author, Faculty of Philology, University of Prizren, "Ukshin Hoti"- 20000 Prizren, Kosovo. shkelqim.millaku@uni-prizren.com

Abstract: The aim of this studies is to analyze an anonymous medicinal book on medicinal herbs written in 1610 at the Halved lodge in Rahovec, Kosova. This book was written in Turkish during the Ottoman Empire and it has not been studied before. The author, a Sufi wise, wrote his works in poetic style and in Turkish, Albanian, Arabic and also French. Since this person is a well-known doctor in the region where he lives, it is thought that he treated people throughout his life and wrote this work for new doctors to use in their treatment due to the lack of doctors. The treatment information in the book has been used for many years during and after the author's time. In addition, it is thought that this information, which includes the doses of drugs and medicinal herbs used in treatment, may be useful in the treatment of many diseases with herbal methods today. Content analysis was used for the review and analysis of the selected study. The analysis and the meaning of the words were performed; the method and the quantity or dosage used is given in the pharmaceutical codex. The Latin names of the medicinal plants referred to in the book were determined. These analyses showed that this book, which is about making remedies from plants used for treatment, has a wide range of treatments for 72 different diseases. 59 different cures for these diseases are reported in the text. It has been observed that many of the treatments reported in the book are still used today. As a result, it is thought that this valuable work that has not been analyzed before will make a great contribution to the related field.

Keywords: Kosovo, medicinal plants, medical study.

1. INTRODUCTION

Health-related studies of Turks date back to ancient times. Turkish medicine before Islam can be seen in 45 texts that have survived from Uyghur Turks until today (Ayten 2004). These texts have an important place in the fields of medicine, pharmacology and language with the medical and botanical terminology they contain (Bayat 2016: 246-247). The oldest known Turkish medical book written in Anatolia is the work of Hekim Bereket named "Tuhfe-i Mübârizî", which is thought to have been written in the first quarter of the thirteenth century (Bayat 2016: 280-284). In the medical texts also referred to as "Cerrâh-nâme" or "ilâç-nâme", pastes, ointments or sherbets consisting of various compounds for the treatment of various diseases are mentioned. These are usually provided with recommendations for use as well as the recipe (Ayten 2004).

The Turks, who carried their culture to where they went with their migration towards the West, reflected the medical knowledge they acquired in Central Asia to the works they created in Anatolia and the Balkans (Bayat 2007). Sufism was present in Kosovo before the coming of Ottomans in the Balkans. The spiritual service of the followers of the creators of the lodge of the Dervish cult developed with the reign of Ottoman Empire in Serbia and the Balkans, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo the lodge (Halved) is part of the sect spreading in Macedonia and Albania. The Halved Sector has most lodges during the Ottoman period. In addition to many valuable Islamic works in these dervish lodges both before the Ottomans and during the Ottoman period, many medical works, especially on public health, were written.

Traditional knowledge includes intellectual inventories of biological resources and plant species, and also includes various practices on the use of biological and other materials for medical treatment and agriculture, production processes, designs, literature, music, rituals, and other techniques and arts (Mugabe 1998; Hansen and VanFleet 2003; Ugulu 2009). Traditional knowledge encompasses belief systems that play a fundamental role in a people's livelihood, maintaining and protecting their health. This knowledge, which is not static in nature, develops and generates new knowledge as a result of the developments and adaptation to changing conditions (Correa, 2001).

Traditional knowledge is essential to social and cultural life and is one of the main sources of many scientific and sociological studies. However, when the transference between the old and the younger generation is no longer connected, the continuation of this knowledge is jeopardized (Ugulu 2009). Whether the goals of a community are to preserve, protect or share traditional knowledge, it becomes increasingly important to record and document this information. In this respect, it is considered to be very important to analyse a medical book written in the 17th century and has not been studied before, in relation to Sufism, which has an important place in Kosovo culture.

2. INFORMATION ABOUT THE MEDICINAL BOOK

This book on medicinal herbs was written in 1610 at the Halved lodge in Rahovec. This work, written in Turkish during the Ottoman Empire, has not been studied before. As one of the ways of thinking of Sufism the author does not mention his name, considering that the important thing is not who wrote the work, but the information in it. The book is written in literary language about the medicinal curing plants, religious and celestial matters. The author several times mentions the only goal of writing his work was to be in the service of people out of mercy and praying to God for the health and blessing of the people in Kosovo.

The author, a Sufi wise, wrote his works in poetic style and in Turkish, Albanian, Arabic and also French. Since this person is a well-known doctor in the region where he lives, it is thought that he treated people throughout his life and wrote this work for new doctors to use in their treatment due to the lack of doctors. The treatment information in the book has been used for many years during and after the author's time. In addition, it is thought that this information, which includes the doses of drugs and medicinal herbs used in treatment, may be useful in the treatment of many diseases with herbal methods today. In this direction, the purpose of this study is to analyze this book, which was written in Ottoman and has not been scientifically reviewed before, with the thought that it will contribute to the relevant literature.

3. MATERIAL AND METHOD

Research Design

Content analysis was used for the review and analysis of the study. Content analysis allows scrutinizing what is and what is not within written, verbal, and visual communications. Content analysis can be used in two traditions; for example, as a method for research design and as a method for analysing the data (Elo and Kyngs 2007). In the present study, the second tradition was employed to analyse the selected study.

Study Area

Kosovo covers a territory of 10.887 km². It has 2 million inhabitants. To the west, it is bordered with Albania and Montenegro, to the south with Macedonia, and to the north and east, it is bordered with Serbia. The capital of Kosovo is Pristine. In this work, the author writes about the medicinal curing plants. This work was written in 1610 at the Halveti Tekke in the city of Rahovec, Kosovo, XVII century.

Research Material

This medicinal book was written in 1610 at the Halveti Tekke in the city of Rahovec, Kosovo. This Halveti Tekke was built by Ejub's son Sheh Sulejman at the end of the XVI century. Today, this tekke can be still seen with the semihane (rites rooms), residential rooms with café and other departments that are functional. Near the Tekke there 13 graves (kubur). In 1998 following the death of Sheh Myeddin, his nephew Sheh Besim was appointed the Sheh of the Tekke who continues the inherited path of the family¹ (information about the Halveti Tekke was obtained by Lutfi Beg, the last servant of the Halveti sect, the son of Sheh Myeddin).

The book was written in talik, which is an Ottoman writing style. The number of lines on the pages varies such as 8, 10, 15 and 21 lines. The book consists of 680 pages and is measures 14.5 cm x 7.5 cm x 6 cm.

The book covers were made of leather. The work is written in Ottoman Turkish, but there are some Arabic and Persian parts in it. In the period when the book was written, the information contained in the content of the work was supported by the Sufi literature and handled mystically. Due to the use of the Arabic alphabet in Ottoman works of the period when the book was written, Turkish text transcription was made with the Latin letters of the book. In the book, the preparation of herbs and cures used in treatments were explained in detail.

Unit of Measure

The dirham, which was used as a unit of measure in the Ottoman period, was used as the unit of measure in the book. One dirham (1 d) is equal to 4 grams.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Humanity has used plants for the treatment of diseases for ages and has been in search of plants in nature for diseases whose treatment is not yet known. Studies on medicinal plants are of great importance also in the 17th century. This study, which has never been encountered in Kosovo and discovered for the first time, is also very important in terms of medical history. This book, which is about making remedies from plants used for treatment, has a wide range of treatments for 72 different diseases. 59 different cures for these diseases are reported in the text. The Latin names of the medicinal plants referred to in the book were determined. The analysis and the meaning of the words were performed; the method and the quantity or dosage used as given in the pharmaceutical codex. At the end of the work, the original Ottoman manuscripts are presented.

According to the distribution of the herbs used in the preparation of the cures in the book, the Latin species names were determined and presented in the text. According to the identification results, it was determined that 56 different plant species were used for medicinal purposes in the book. In the preparation of the cures, annual herbaceous plants are used, as well as various parts of plants such as onion, garlic, carrot, grape, cranberry, fig, black pepper, rowans, such as root, stem, leaf, seed and fruit. Further analysis of the plants showed that the Asteraceae family is represented by the largest number of species. In addition, plants from Zingiberaceae, Lauraceae, Myristicaceae, Piperaceae, Fabaceae, Myrtaceae, Lamiaceae, Ranunculaceae and Smilacaceae families were also used.

The author of the book of medicinal herbs has a great knowledge of Kosovo and Asian herbs and tropical herbs. He also had advanced knowledge in Ethnobotany and Pharmacognosy. The author used auxiliary substances such as CuSO₄, 5H₂O Sal ammonia, honey, ash, aluminium sulphate, milk, vinegar, salt, soot, olive oil, beeswax and oil in the preparation of the cures. To preserve the resulting preparation or ointment, he placed them in glass dishes and added some substance called "kirimi tatar" to help preserve the ointment.

Some auxiliary substances were crystals of various wood plants such as *Pistacia lentiscus*, *Pinus Abies alba*, *Liquidambar orientalis*. These plants were used for the treatment of diseases with a pharmacodynamic treatment effect which was efficient, such as he used the agrimony herb for treating diarrhea. Still today the herb *Agrimonia eupatoria* is used for the treatment of diarrhea and in the group of teas, the agrimony herb is part of the combination of diarrhea treatment tea. The Latin word dysentery was not used in the work but the word (ishal)-in Turkish (Tr) diarrhea. Diarrhea of that time compared to the one today varies very much, due to the treatment medicaments used in medicine.

The author in his work regarding the fever used the word "humma". This word means the rising of the body temperature and today the meaning of the word "humma" is febris rheumatica of the joints, malignant malaria in blood². The highly educated author also achieved great success in producing the ointment in Latin called electuario. The ointment is dough-like treatment ointment, its basic ingredient is honey and the author also used various plants in preparing the ointment. At that period the author prepared the ointments with a parametric measure. He measured the amount of every substance using the measurements called dirham (1d = 4 grams). Every ointment has an open measuring system and this measurement system of the author is a good example for the present pharmaceutical measurements (²BülentÖzaltay - Abdullah Köşe: Mehmed bin Ali Terceme-iCedidefi'l - Havassî'l -Müfrede (1102/1690), Zeytinburnu Garden of Medicinal Plants, Istanbul 2006, page 8, 135).

The nature and the knowledge of man create new sources for future generations (Ugulu et al. 2009). The main factor is the level of education and the activation of the human brain. To create works for the benefit of people in the conditions of the 17th century, to study and work with medicinal plants, was a great scholastic achievement. The author could write this work only owing to his great knowledge of the location and the population as well as the knowledge of the diversity of medical plants and their curing effects according to the groups of diseases. The author through his work demonstrated his level of linguistic and scholastic knowledge in the field of treatment with medical plants. The author also demonstrated great knowledge of the Ottoman territories as well as of the skill of producing pharmaceutical, treatment ointments.

5. CONCLUSION

This 17th-century work was of great scientific significance contributing to the treatment of the population with medical plants and herbs of various diseases. The author extensively used those plants and substances for the treatment of different diseases using various amounts of preparations in the shape of powder, syrup, ointment and paste. Except for the treatment of humans, the author used the treatment ointments for the treatment of animals as well thus a rich source for veterinary medicine. This work should be a source of knowledge in studying the pharmaceutical effect by having an extensive pharmacodynamics treatment effect on the treatment of diseases at that time since the medicinal plants at the stage of reaction does not change its content and the cell genetic composition.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank the biology professor M.Sc.Cemali Koro for a scientific cooperation.

6. REFERENCES

- [1] Ahmet, Topaloğlu, İlhan, Ayverdi (2007). Turkish dictionary, Kubbealtı, Istanbul.
- [2] Altıntaş, Ayten (2004). Tabib İbn ŞerifYadigar 15th Century Turkish Medicine Book, Earth Library, Istanbul.
- [3] Baytop, T. (1997). A dictionary of vernacular names of wildplants, Publication of The Turkish Language Society, Turkey, Ankara.
- [4] Bülent, Özalay - Abdullah Köşe (2006). Mehmed bin Ali Terceme-i Cedidefi'l - Havassi'İlmüfrede (1102/1690), Zeytinburnu Garden of Medicinal Plants, Istanbul.
- [5] Correa C (2001). Traditional knowledge and intellectual property: Issues and options surrounding the protection of traditional knowledge. Geneva: Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO).
- [6] Devellioglu, Ferit (1997). The Ottoman - Turkish Encyclopedic Dictionary, Aydın Library, Ankara.
- [7] Dictionary of Sir James Redhouse (2011). An English and Turkish dictionary, Is Sev Printime and Publishing, Istanbul.
- [8] Dilçin, Cem (1983). The new assay dictionary, TDK Publications, Ankara.
- [9] Elo, S. and Kyns, H. (2007). The qualitative content analysis process. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 62 (1): 107–115.
- [10] Hansen S, VanFleet J (2003). Traditional knowledge and intellectual property: A handbook on issues and options for traditional knowledge holders in protecting their intellectual property and maintaining biological diversity. Washington, DC: American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).
- [11] Haydar, Ali Bayat (2007). Kemaliyye, Merkezefendi Traditional Medicine Association, Istanbul.
- [12] Haydar, Ali Bayat (2016). Tıp Tarihi, Medical History, Merkezefendi Traditional Medicine Association, Istanbul.
- [13] Mugabe J (1998). Biodiversity and sustainable development in Africa. – In: Mugabe, J. & Clark, N. (eds) National systems of conservation and innovation in Africa, Nairobi: African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS).
- [14] Ugulu I, Baslar S, Yorek N, Dogan Y (2009). The investigation and quantitative ethnobotanical evaluation of medicinal plants used around Izmir province, Turkey. *Journal of Medicinal Plants Research*, 3(5), 345–367.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15379/ijmst.v10i4.2221>

This is an open access article licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/>), which permits unrestricted, non-commercial use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the work is properly cited.