

A RARE BOOK SHEDDING LIGHT ON THE HISTORY OF PHARMACY in TURKEY: TURKISH PHARMACEUTICAL PREPARATIONS (1929)

Turkish Pharmaceutical Preparations (1929)

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ÖZET

Cumhuriyet'in ilânından kısa süre önce ülkenin ekonomi politikalarını belirlemek amacıyla İzmir'de bir İktisat Kongresi düzenlendi. Burada alınan kararlar arasında özel teşebbüsü teşvik edecek ve yerli sanayiye dış rekabetten koruyacak adımların atılması da yer alıyordu. Buna dayanarak 1927 yılında yürürlüğe giren Teşvik-i Sanayi Kanunu, ülkedeki eczacıların kendi müstahzarlarını piyasaya sunmaları için uygun zemin hazırladı. 1929 yılında Eczacı Mehmed Daim Bey, yerli müstahzarların Türkiye'deki hekim ve eczacılar tarafından daha iyi benimsenmesini sağlamak ve yerli müstahzar üreticilerini tanıtmak amacıyla *Türk Tıbbi Müstahzaratı* başlıklı 269 sayfalık bir kitap yayımladı. Sahipleri eczacı olan toplam 29 yerli laboratuvar ve bu laboratuvarlarda üretilen müstahzarların tanıtıldığı kitabın baskı adedi tam olarak bilinmemekle birlikte bugüne dek tespit edilebilen kopya sayısı sadece ikidir. Kitabın, bahsedilen döneme ilişkin pek çok bilinmeyeni açığa çıkararak Türk eczacılık tarihine katkıda bulunacağı düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Eczacılık, Ekonomi, Tıp tarihi (20. Yüzyıl)

ABSTRACT

Shortly before the proclamation of the Republican regime in Turkey, a congress was held in Izmir in 1923 to determine the country's new economic policy. One of the decisions made at this congress was to encourage private entrepreneurship and to protect domestic industries from outside competition. As a consequence, the Law for the Encouragement of Industry was enacted in 1927. This led to a flourishing climate in which pharmacists brought their own preparations (products) to the market. In order to encourage physicians and pharmacists to use domestic products and to introduce their producers to the public, a 269-page book entitled *Turkish Pharmaceutical Preparations* was published in Istanbul in 1929 by pharmacist Mehmed Daim. This book includes information on laboratories of 29 pharmacists and their pharmaceutical products. Despite the fact that the exact number of copies of the book is still unknown, only two copies have been found so far. Since so much from this period remains unknown, an examination of this book is believed to contribute to the field of Turkish history of pharmacy.

Keywords: Economics, Pharmacy, 20th Cent. history of medicine

INTRODUCTION

Shortly before the proclamation of the Republican regime in Turkey on 29 October 1923, a congress was held in Izmir to determine the country's new economic policy.¹ One of the decisions made at this congress was to establish a national economy by encouraging private entrepreneurship and protecting domestic industries from outside competition.^{1,2} Consequently, the Law for the Encouragement of Industry was enacted in 1927.³ Additional steps were taken in the pharmacy field during these years as well: the government published a red list of 308 pharmaceutical preparations prohibited from import (1926); a new law for pharmacists and pharmacies (1927) and law for pharmaceutical preparations (1928) were enacted; the first national pharmacopeia (*Türk Kodeksi*) that considered Turkey's specific needs and conditions were published in 1930.⁴⁻⁶ This led to a flourishing climate in which Turkish pharmacists brought their own preparations to the market.

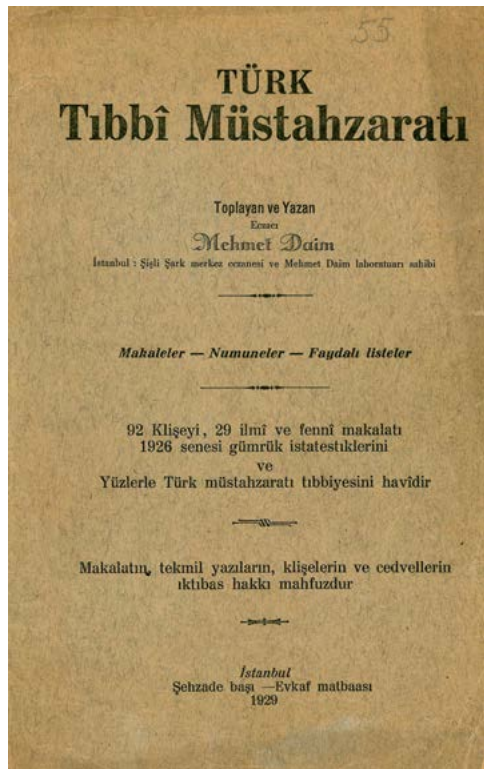
In order to encourage physicians and pharmacists to use domestic products and promote their producers, a 269-page book entitled *Türk Tıbbî Müstahzaratı* (*Turkish Pharmaceutical Preparations*) was published in Istanbul in 1929.⁷ Since so much from this period still remains unknown; an examination of this book is believed to contribute to the field of Turkish history of pharmacy.

TRKISH PHARMACEUTICAL PREPARATIONS (1929)

Even though a sole author (Mehmed Daim) appears on the cover, this book is a joint work between Daim and his colleague, Nizamettin Talip [Diler] (1901–1970) (*Picture 1*).

The author has a *nationalistic* voice in his writings, praising Turkish products by emphasizing their great contributions to the national economy. In the foreword, he expresses his purpose behind publishing this book with following sentences:⁸

“The Turkish nation completely understands that it should not need European manufacturers and sources. We [authors] promote our own pharmaceutical preparations to all intellectuals in the country. (...) Domination of the Turkish pharmaceutical preparations will improve the Turkish drug industry and save millions of Liras for the nation. (...) Turkish pharmaceutical preparations deserve your confidence since they are new, safe, well formulized, cheap, and presented with elegance.” Apart from presenting (and sometimes interviewing) pharmacists, their laboratories and pharmaceutical/cosmetic/orthopedic products; the book includes the following content:

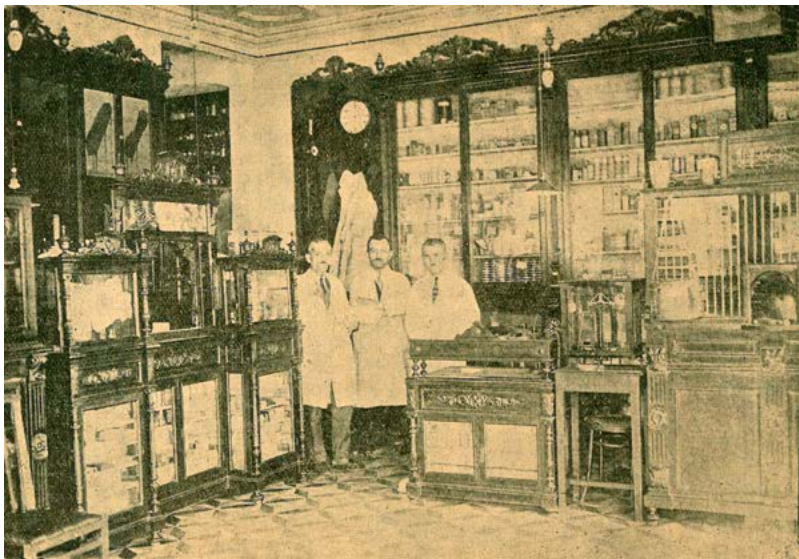


Picture 1. The cover of the book includes the following subtitle: Articles, Examples, and Useful Lists (M. Sandalcı Collection)

- Author's personal articles addressing physicians, mainly focusing on the current developments occurring as a result of Turkish pharmacist-entrepreneurs' efforts, and the necessity of using domestic products to help the national economy;
- An open letter to the Minister of Health, Dr. Refik Bey [Saydam] (1881–1942), warning him about the smuggled import products on the market;
- Physicians' comments on and praise for domestic pharmaceutical preparations based on the author's three-question survey;
- Statistical information on Turkey's medical/pharmaceutical imports in 1926;
- A detailed reminder list of suggested preparations per malady;
- Prescription samples for physician's use;
- Pharmaceutical advertisements and photos (*Picture 2*).

Physicians' Comments and Praises on Domestic Preparations

As previously mentioned, the main purpose of this book was to promote domestic preparations to a wider medical/pharmaceutical environment and encourage physicians to use domestic products for their patients. Hence, the author prepared a three-question survey for physicians, asking:



Picture 2. Pharmacist Beşir Kemal was one of the pioneers of drug manufacturing in early Turkey. This photo, selected from the book, shows his pharmacy inside in the 1920s.

- whether they think it is possible to substitute pharmaceutical preparations imported from Europe with their domestic equivalents;
- whether they have used Turkish pharmaceutical preparations before; and if so,
- whether they were satisfied with the results.

Physicians' responses to this survey were by and large very positive. As an exception, however, Dr. Hahamyan was strongly opposed to ready-made pharmaceutical preparations, believing that pharmacy is the art of drug making/formulation, and

medicines should be prepared according to "patient-specific" prescriptions written by the physician.⁹ Besides supporting the use of domestic preparations, Dr. Bahaeddin Lütfi and Dr. İhsan Şükrü were rather moderate in that they accept that Turkish capital was not sufficient to tackle technological problems, yet there were still some very important preparations (i.e., hormone preparations) that could only be obtained via European producers. Dr. H. Sedat Bey suggested not simply copying European formulas in drug making, but creating original ones. The common complaints of physicians were due to a huge lack of promotion and insufficient distribution of free samples to medical staff and hospitals.

Statistical Information on Turkey's Pharmaceutical Imports in 1926

Based on the official records of the Turkish Customs Office, the book includes a detailed list of names and costs of medical/pharmaceutical items imported to Turkey in 1926.

The total cost of 5.208.709 TL (Turkish Liras) was distributed mainly between two countries, Germany and France, which were followed by Britain, Italy, and the Netherlands as shown in *Figure 1*. According to *Figure 2*, the most imported pharmaceuticals were quinine, sulfites-sulfate, pure cotton, fish oil, and lime putty.

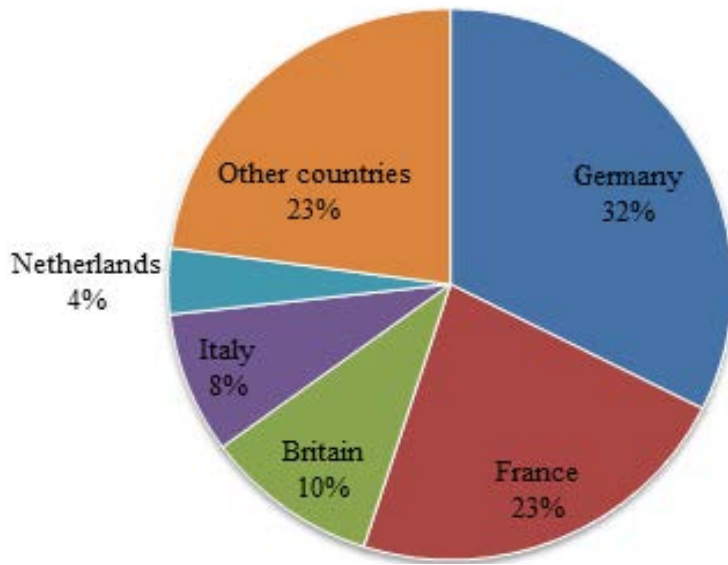


Figure 1. Distribution of costs of pharmaceutical imports per country in 1926

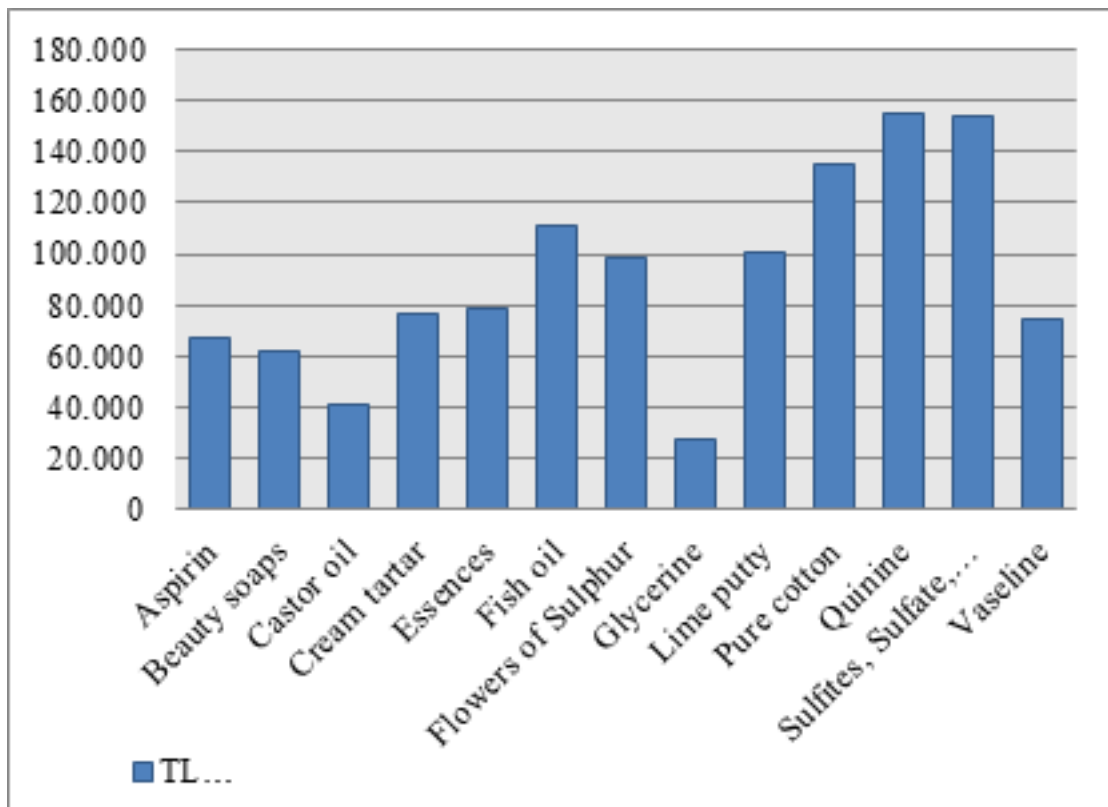


Figure 2. Distribution of costs of some pharmaceutical imports in 1926

Pharmacist Mehmed Daim

It is a pity that our information about Mr. Mehmed Daim is very limited (Picture 3). He was an apprentice of one of the pioneers of Turkish pharmacy, Mr. Edhem Pertev (1871–1927), when he was a student at Istanbul University School of Pharmacy. After graduating, he started working at the Şark Merkez Eczahanesi (Central Orient Pharmacy) in the Osmanbey district of Istanbul, where he would soon establish the Mehmed Daim Laboratory. He was elected as secretary general of the Turkish Pharmacists' Society in 1929. He is believed to have died in the 1930s, possibly in 1933, since this is the last year his name was engraved on the pharmacy stamp for prescriptions filled in his pharmacy. Ephemeral documents in the private collection of Gülnur and Mert Sandalcı also indicate that his pharmacy was continued by first Pertev Perçim, and then İsmail Hakkı Çağlayan.¹⁰



Picture 3. Pharmacist Mehmed Daim in the 1920s

DISCUSSION AND RESULT

In addition to the book's historical value, some claims about the products are now scientifically proven incorrect or controversial. For instance, the book claims that a few drops of *Hasan Kolonyası* (*Eau de Cologne*) can be dispensed to a cup of water and then be taken internally for a refreshing feeling. This product, however, includes *denatured alcohol* that is not suitable for drinking due to its additives (i.e. pyridine, wood naphtha) and has a potential toxicity in humans when used internally. Interestingly, pine-tar (*Pix Liquida*) was used as popular medicine to treat respiratory diseases, especially in a syrup formulation.

Another interesting thing about the book is that while the author strongly emphasized using domestic products instead of their European counterparts, a great deal of the Turkish products' raw materials were, ironically, being imported from Europe, and then simply compounded and packaged in Turkey. For instance *Beşir Kemal Subyesi* and *Hasan Balık Yağı* were originally imported from Norway and sold as Turkish pharmaceutical preparations (Picture 4). Mehmed Daim's toothpaste, *Mimoza Daim*, used packaging that

was imported from Germany. Similarly, in the interview with Pharmacist Evliyazade Nureddin Bey, he proudly announced that he always orders high quality essences from original (?) flowers from "European" producers. It is also noteworthy that only two copies of this book have been found so far; one is in the private collection of Mr. Mert Sandalcı, and the other is registered in the Library of Istanbul Municipality. Although the reason for this shortage is still not clear, we assume that the author's death in the beginning of the 1930s was the major reason for the weak distribution of this self-published book.

As a result, *Turkish Pharmaceutical Preparations* is a unique reference for the Turkish history of pharmacy. It not only provides detailed information about famous pharmaceutical preparations and pharmacist-entrepreneurs during the second half of the 1920s, but it also witnesses the effects of Turkey's early policy of nationalization to create a self-sufficient economy, particularly in the field of pharmacy.

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Picture 4. Hasan Balık Yağı (Fish Oil) was originally imported from Norway and sold as a Turkish pharmaceutical preparation in the early 1930s. (M. Sandalcı Collection)

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