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The Museum of Pharmacology, section of the most articulated MUSA - University Museum of Arts and Sciences - of the University of Campania Luigi Vanvitelli, represents the scientific and cultural legacy of generations of scientists who directed the former Institute of Pharmacology.

A large part of the museum heritage currently exhibited belongs to the collections that constituted the Cabinet of Demonstrative Medicine, founded in 1862. The MUSA includes the sections of Pharmacology, Stomatology, Bibliography and Art as well as the rich monumental heritage of the Vanvitelli University.



### THE ORIGIN OF THE MUSEUM

The Museum of Pharmacology of the University of Campania Luigi Vanvitelli founded in 1862 by Francesco Briganti comprises historical instruments, a collection of drugs, books and antique furniture. Through the works contained in the museum it is possible to understand the effort of the professors of the time to provide students with the tools necessary for research and, jointly, the teaching aids indispensable for the lectures, testifying the particular cultural setting of those scholars, handed down to the following generations and based on the integration between the theoretical background of information, continuously updated, and its transmission to learners. The preparations preserved in the Museum of Pharmacology testify the development of scientific research in the Neapolitan University in a field whose origins are to be found in the teaching of

Among these, the apparatuses for animal electromagnetism experiments stand out, used in some forms also for the treatment of some psychiatric diseases in pre-psychoanalytical era. Moreover, we can recognize chimographs, voltmeters and ammeters, used for experiments on animal electricity, scales of many shapes and sizes, nebulizers, stoves, lamps, ionometers, polarimeters, rheostats, hemodynamometers, microtomes, viscometers, etc.

### CULTURAL SCIENTIFIC HERITAGE. THE LIBRARY

The Pharmacology Section has one of the oldest libraries of the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, with over 20,000 volumes and including complete collections of numerous scientific journals dating back to the last century. Many of the preserved volumes were printed between the 1500s and the early decades of the 1900s, and constitute the most precious part of the book heritage annexed to the Museum. Particularly worthy of note are a sixteenth-century edition of the Canon of Avicenna (Venice, 1582) and seventeenth-century volumes on the art of medicinal plants and the recipe books, such as

the works by Auda from Lantosca (Rome, 1660), Johannes Schroderus (Ulm, 1644) and Timoteo Rosselli (Venice, 1644). Particularly rich is the eighteenth-century section, which contains an edition of the Opera Omnia of Sydenham, collections of formularies published mostly in Venice in the first half of the century, comments on the writings of Hippocrates and texts of medical institutions. The nineteenth-century volumes include national and European pharmacopoeias, treatises of authors from beyond the Alps on physiology, surgery, pharmaceutical chemistry and microbiology, and the first treaties of important Italian authors on the positivistic and experimentalist conception of science. The museum exhibits and most of the volumes of the historical library are kept in contemporary cupboards, where they are protected from the effects of time and catalogued for use by scholars passionate of the history of sciences.

### PHARMACOPEIA

With the advent of the scientific method, pharmacopoeia, based on confused notions until the middle of the last century, had a

pharmacological disciplines. From the documents preserved in the Museum and in other Neapolitan and national archives, it is possible to trace the birth of an official chair of Medical Botany in Naples starting from the second half of the 18th century, which was entrusted with the task of teaching the art of medicinal plants and their effects.

Domenico Cirillo, an illustrious Neapolitan scientist, instituted in Naples a chair of Materia Medica, which joined the one in Botany replacing the one in Lectura Simplicium.

### THE ENCHANTMENT OF THE MUSEUM. THE COLLECTION OF DRUGS

The Museum houses a complete collection of vegetable, animal and mineral drugs dating back to the last centuries and cataloged in alphabetical order, from Aconitum napellus to Zingiber, stored in hermetically sealed glass jars or in other containers.

Alongside the drugs, there are countless samples of medicinal specialties produced between the nineteenth and twentieth century in their original packaging. Thanks to the collection of drugs, it is

possible to retrace the history of pharmacology from its origins, as a branch of botany, to its identification with the Lectura Simplicium and, finally, to becoming an autonomous science based on the experimental method. The history of drugs and the evolution of the awareness of their nature and therapeutic properties can be interpreted as the set of the progressive changes that have modified the relationship between the mineral, vegetable and animal world.

### THE HISTORICAL INSTRUMENTS

The scientific instruments, for the most part still working, exhibited are of great historical interest and represent the technological paraphernalia available in the past centuries for studies in physiology and pharmacology.

formidable development, thanks to the progressive and ever deeper knowledge of the chemical nature, of the mechanism of action, of the natural medicines and of synthetic drugs that were gradually added. The collection, derived from the one edited by the Briganti since 1812, has expanded enormously over the years, becoming one of the most significant specific collections in Italy.

