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A Brief History of the British Pharmacy in Istanbul

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Introduction

This paper examines the British Pharmacy in Istanbul, Turkey, which deserves special attention in the history of pharmacy in the Ottoman Empire. It was the first large-scale drug manufacturer of the 19th century in Turkey. The paper focuses on its history from 1833 to 1965 when the pharmacy was closed. It also mentions the pharmacy's own pharmaceutical preparations and discusses possible reasons for the use of 'British' in its name, which displays the British impact on the pharmaceutical progress of other countries. In the development of this paper, in addition to the resources mentioned at the end of this article, related historical materials which belonged to the pharmacy, such as its envelopes, invoices, postcards, advertisements, etc., were carefully evaluated.

British and London Pharmacies in the Ottoman Empire

Pharmacy education was first offered in the Ottoman Empire in 1839, during the reign of Sultan Mahmud II, with the opening of a pharmacy class at the Military School of Medicine (*Mekteb-i Tibbiye-i Sahane - Ecole Impériale de Médecine*) in Istanbul.¹ It initially aimed to supply pharmacists to the Ottoman army and to state hospitals. Since there were no adequate teaching personnel in Istanbul at that time, foreign teachers were brought in to try to compensate for this shortage. Monsieur Calleja, a French chemist, was invited from Paris to organise a 3-year pharmacy curriculum for the school.² Due to a huge lack of pharmaceutical materials such as books, journals and so on in Turkish, the main language, education continued to be given in French until the 1870s.³

Public opinion in those days was that the pharmacy profession was only suitable for either non-Muslim or minority background pharmacists. This view was prevalent throughout the country until 1895 when the first Muslim pharmacy owner, pharmacist Hamdi Bey (1860?-1909) appeared.⁴ For this reason, 19th century Ottoman pharmacies were mostly managed by non-Muslim or minority background people. Some of them were even foreigners from different nationalities, e.g. French, Italian, Hungarian, British, German and so forth.⁵ Most of these pharmacies were located in Istanbul, especially along the Grande rue de Péra (Beyoglu) which today is called Istiklal Street.⁶ The British Pharmacy, Della Sudda Pharmacy, Pharmacie Hongroise, La Grande Pharmacie de Paris were among these pharmacies.⁷

In fact, the names 'British Pharmacy' and 'London Pharmacy', both of which indicate the British impact on the Ottoman pharmacy of that time, were used in

other parts of the country. It is assumed that some of these pharmacists either received their pharmacy education in England or had British origins. Here is a short list of the British-related pharmacies in the Ottoman Empire:⁸

British Pharmacy, founded by N. Canzuch in 1833 in Istanbul;

London Pharmacy, founded by A. Moore in the 1880s in Izmir;

London Pharmacy, founded by Kharitun Hintlian in the 1900s in Izmir;

Central British Pharmacy, founded by D. Kondomitros in 1915 in Canakkale;

British Pharmacy, founded by Moses M. Albert et Co. in the 1910s in Beirut.⁹

British Pharmacy in Istanbul (1833-1965)

According to the oldest records, the British Pharmacy was founded in Istanbul in 1833 by a pharmacist with Italian roots, Noël Canzuch.^{10,11,12} It was located in Beyoglu, at No. 178 in the Grand Rue de Péra, which was a district famous for its embassies and commercial shops. The pharmacy was the first large-scale drug manufacturer of that day in Istanbul, hence the most famous one. The reason why the name 'British Pharmacy' was chosen is not obvious today; it may be because of this pharmacy's reputation for serving 11 embassies including the British Embassy.

Noël Canzuch laid the foundation of this very famous and long-running pharmacy. He had 3 sons, François, Joseph and Natale, who would all become pharmacists in the future. Although the exact date is unknown, after his death the pharmacy was the responsibility of the older brother François for some years. During his term, he developed the pharmacy and increased its existing reputation. Apart from his pharmacy work, François also wrote some articles for the *Journal de la Société de Pharmacie de Constantinople*.^{13,14} After François' death in 1897, the pharmacy work was carried on by his extroverted younger brother, Joseph Canzuch, who was an outstanding pharmacist with entrepreneurial skills.¹⁵

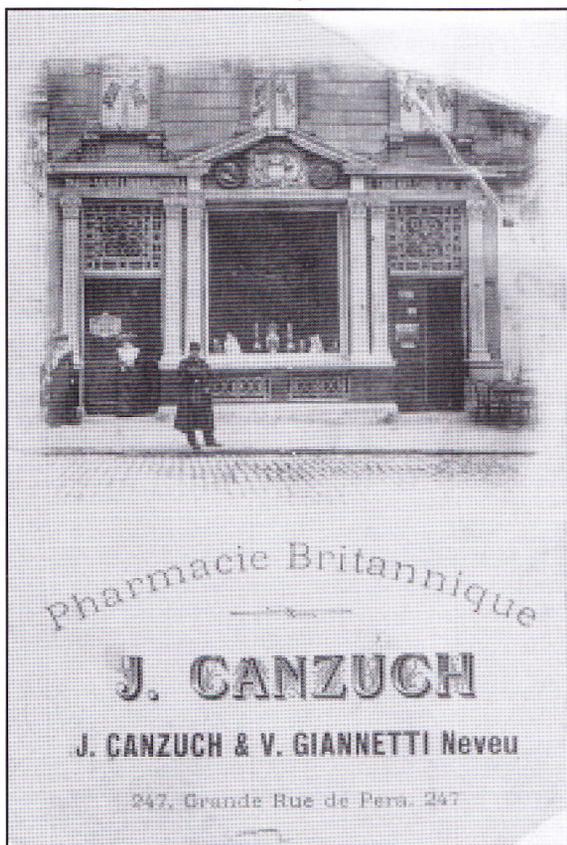
Joseph was a member of the Société des Pharmaciens de Paris and Société d'Hygiène de France. He also attended the International Medical Congress in London in 1881 and was awarded a 'diplome de mérite' for his special preparation '*Elixir Toni - Digestif de J. Canzuch*'.^{16,17,18} It is interesting that some publications (Sandalcı 1997, 46) mention his graduation from the London School of Pharmacy, although we have not found any information confirming this. In fact, our research into the Society's exam participants in the 1880s, using the archives of the Library of the RPSGB, has not provided the slightest clue about it. Hence it might be that he studied pharmacy in London, came back to Istanbul and then became the pharmacist of the British Pharmacy.

During these years, as mentioned above, the pharmacy was very famous for serving as the



Pharmacy's stationery, ca. 1890s (Belgelerle Turk Eczaciligi, 2000)

pharmacy for 11 embassies and producing numerous pharmaceutical preparations like Liqueur de Cola Cacao, Elixir de Pepto Kola, Crème de Glycerine Rose, Balsamine Orientale, Granules Dynamophores, Lotion du Dr. Wilson, Sirop du Dr. Leon and so forth.¹⁹ It is possible to claim that Joseph, who received two of the Ottoman Empire's Imperial Honours (Mecid-i Nisani & Nisan-i Osmani), was solely responsible for the hard work needed to make this pharmacy well-known all across the country.²⁰



One of the oldest photos of the British Pharmacy in Istanbul, ca. 1890s
(Courtesy of Prof. Afife Mat)

Some advertisements from the British Pharmacy, especially those dated 1888-1890, reveal that there was a huge rivalry between two pharmacies using the same name: British. For this reason, the advertisements of the British Pharmacy, directed by Joseph, strongly emphasised that they did not have any other branch in Istanbul.²¹ Recent research indicates that a conflict occurred between the two brothers, Joseph and Natale, before the 1890s, after which Natale decided to set up his own pharmacy with a similar name, English Pharmacy (Pharmacie Anglaise) first at No. 47 in Nisantasi Street and later at No. 4, Hamidiye Street in the Bahçekapu district.^{22,23} Upon Natale's death in 1904, his English Pharmacy was bought by Apik Karis Utucuyan.²⁴

After the other brother Joseph's death in Athens in 1911, his nephew Vincent Gianetti became fully responsible for the pharmacy, perhaps because Joseph did not have any children.²⁵ Vincent endeavoured to set up a new laboratory as well as to develop the existing pharmacy. He took part in the Pharmaceutical Society of Istanbul and was elected as a member of the Pharmacy Legislation Committee there.²⁶ His brother, Sylvio Gianetti, a chemist, joined him in 1913.²⁷



Mr. Gianetti, ca. 1910s (Turk Tibbi Mustahzarati, 1929)

During World War I, the name of the pharmacy was changed to 'Canzuch Pharmacy' due to citizens' negative attitudes towards Britain, which was one of the countries fighting against the Germans and their allies, the Ottoman Empire.²⁸ However, the original name reappeared shortly after, in the 1920s. Upon Vincent's death on April 20, 1929, the pharmacy was

run by other pharmacists until September, 1932 when pharmacist Muhittin Husnu Kansuk (1901-1969) took over responsibility for the pharmacy.^{29,30,31,32}

Kansuk followed a similar path to his predecessors: he used the name British together with his surname, Kansuk, which is slightly different from Canzuch;³³ he gave importance to drug manufacturing; and he added some new formulas to the pharmacy's own preparations. It is known that a staff of 16 was working behind the counter in addition to others working in the laboratory.³⁴ According to official records, the pharmacy produced more than 30 different medicines including cough syrups, antiseptic lozenges, purgative suppositories, eye preparations, tablets, even cosmetic preparations like antiperspirants.³⁵ Moreover, Mr. Kansuk established a drug warehouse, named Kansuk Ecza Deposu, at No. 73 Havyar Han, which then moved to a new address at No. 4 Galata Mumhane Street Fransiz Gecidi in Istanbul.³⁶



A photo of the laboratory in the Pharmacy, ca. 1950s

(Courtesy of Prof. Afife Mat)

The pharmacy was in service at its last address, at No. 241 in front of the Cicek Pasaji, until 1965 when Mr. Kansuk had a sudden stroke. At that time the name Kansuk appeared as a drug manufacturing company under the name Kansuk Laboratuvar (Laboratory). The laboratory, which was founded by Dr Ismet Sezen (1929) in February 1960, has continued until today.^{37,38} It is of note that lozenges which contain eucalyptus-menthol, the British Pharmacy's own original production from its early years, are still being manufactured with the same formula by the aforementioned company in Istanbul.

It is interesting that during the course of its history, each owner of the pharmacy has strongly emphasised 'British' or 'Britannique' in its name on its envelopes, invoices, stamps and other stationery. By and large, the name was accompanied by a lion, a horse and a crown together with the motto of the British Monarch: Dieu et mon droit, which is very similar to that on the Royal Coat of Arms of the United Kingdom.³⁹

Conclusion

The British Pharmacy (1833-1965) in Istanbul was one of the pioneer pharmacies of the Ottoman Empire because of the large scale of its drug manufacturing

business, especially during the 19th century. For almost a century, it served in Grande rue de Péra (today Istiklal Street) in the Beyoglu District of Istanbul, where it was continued by different generations of the same family: Noël Canzuch, Joseph Canzuch, François Canzuch, Vincent Gianetti and Sylvio Gianetti. Among them, pharmacist Joseph Canzuch was remarkable because of receiving a 'diplome de mérite' at the International Medical Congress (London) in 1881. In 1932, the pharmacy was purchased by pharmacist Muhittin Husnu Kansuk who continued to use the same name with only a slight difference. He ran the British Kansuk Pharmacy until 1965. In 1960, M. H. Kansuk and Dr. Ismet Sozen set up a drug manufacturing company under the name Kansuk Laboratuari (Laboratory) which is still part of the Turkish pharmaceutical market today.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Ms. Briony Hudson who kindly assisted me in my search for related documents in the Library of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (RPSGB). I would also like to express my gratitude to Prof. Afife Mat, a renowned authority on the history of pharmacy, H. Nezhik Kansuk, the nephew of the deceased pharmacist Muhittin Husnu Kansuk, and Dr. Ismet Sozen, the owner of the Kansuk Laboratories. Without their kind support a large number of documents would certainly have been left out of this study.

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Endnotes and References

1. This school was followed by the Civil School of Medicine (Mekteb-i Tibbiye-i Mulkiye-i Sahane) in 1867, the Haydarpaşa Military Health School (Haydarpaşa Askeri Sağlık Mektebi) in 1876, the School of Medicine in Damascus (Sam Tibbiye Mektebi) in 1903, and finally the School of Pharmacy (Eczacı Mektebi Alisi) in 1908. (Baytop T. *Türk Eczacılık Tarihi*, İstanbul: Yayına Hazırlayan Prof. Afife Mat, İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları No: 3358, 2001).
2. Asil E., Özcelikay G. *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Eczacılık*, Ankara: Osmanlı Devleti'nde Sağlık Hizmetleri Sempozyumu, Ajans Türk Matbaacılık, 2000: 210.
3. This makes us think that the Ottoman pharmacy was highly influenced by the European pharmacy. Indeed, Ottoman pharmaceutical preparations were mostly made according to the *Pharmacopée Française* (French Pharmacopoeia) for almost a century. (Baytop T. *Türk Eczacılık Tarihi Arastirmalari*, İstanbul: Sinangin Matbaasi, 2000: VIII).
4. Baytop T. *Türk Eczacılık Tarihi*, İstanbul: (Yayına Hazırlayan: Prof. Afife Mat), İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları No: 3358, 2001: 115.
5. Nicolas M. La Pharmacie et l'État – La Pharmacie Ottomane a İstanbul, *Rev Hist Pharm* 2002; 334: 257-270.
6. Reference 4: 115.
7. Reference 5: 257-270.
8. Sandalci M. *Belgelerle Türk Eczacılığı I (2) (1840-1948)*, İstanbul: Dr. N. F. Eczacıbasi Vakfi, Mas Matbaacılık, 2002.
9. Ibid.

10. Baytop T. *Türk Eczacılık Tarihi Arastirmalari*, Istanbul: Sinangin Matbaasi, 2000: 131; Sandalci M. *Belgelerle Türk Eczaciligi I (1840-1948)*, Istanbul: Dr. N. F. Eczacibasi Vakfi, Mas Matbaacilik, 1997: 46.

11. Altun M. *Tahlilhane'den Ilac Sanayine Bir Asirlik Birliktelik*, Istanbul: Turkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfi, Step Ajans, 2003: 255.

12. The foundation date of the pharmacy was 1859 according to Sehsuvaroglu B. *Eczacilik Tarihi Dersleri*, Istanbul: Istanbul Universitesi Yayinlari No: 1582, Husnu Tabiat Matbaasi, 1970: 253. However recent research agrees on a date of 1833.

13. Canzuch F. Quelques Observations sur l' Art de Formuler. *Journal de la Société de Pharmacie de Constantinople*, 1879; 1: 82.

14. Canzuch F. Exposé sur la Défectuosité de la Préparation du Vin de Quinquina du Codex Française et Nouveau Mode de le Prépare, *Journal de la Société de Pharmacie de Constantinople* 1879; 1: 118.

15. Reference 4: 115.

16. Indeed, the 7th International Medical Congress in London was to prove to be the largest and most successful ever. Under the patronage of Queen Victoria, the Congress was opened in St. James' Hall, Piccadilly in the presence of HRH The Prince of Wales (the future King Edward VII). There were 3,181 participants including Pasteur and Koch. As part of the social programme, Baroness Burdett-Coutts held a garden party at her Highgate home. This occasion was also recorded in a large group portrait, which is now in the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, London. (The Wellcome Trust Library Records; Sakula A. Baroness Burdett-Coutts' Garden Party: The International Medical Congress, London, 1881, *Journal of Medical History* 1982; 26: 183-184.)

17. Unfortunately no documents about the Congress mention either Joseph's attendance or his certificate of merit.

18. Sandalci M. *Belgelerle Türk Eczaciligi III (1840-1948)*, Istanbul: Dr. N. F. Eczacibasi Vakfi, Mas Matbaacilik, 2000: 61.

19. The original names of drugs belonging to Joseph's period are as follows: Balsamin Sarki, Vitalin Surubu, Korisit, Sirop Pektoral, Katran Suyu, Anti-malaria, Linimentol, Alexin Jaun, Pastil Leon, Elefterin, Borosalina. Tahaffuz Merhemi, Suppogliserin, Juvantin Sarki (Reference 11: 267).

20. Reference 11: 267.

21. Sandalci M. *Belgelerle Türk Eczaciligi II (1840-1948)*, Istanbul: Dr. N. F. Eczacibasi Vakfi, Mas Matbaacilik, 1998: 79.

22. Sandalci M. *Belgelerle Türk Eczaciligi I (1840-1948)*, Istanbul: Dr. N. F. Eczacibasi Vakfi, Mas Matbaacilik, 1997: 46.

23. A prescription stamped by N. Canzuch, dated to 1897.

24. Reference 21: 79.

25. Reference 4: 343.

26. The meeting occurred on August 20, 1908 with the participation of almost 250 pharmacists in Istanbul. Hamdi Bey, P. Apéry, Della Suda, Reboul Hasan Rauf Efendi and Tchitcekan were the other members of the Legislation Committee (Reference 10: 24).

27. Reference 21: 83.

28. Reference 4: 115.

29. Reference 21: 83.

30. Reference 4: 115.

31. Kumbaracilar I. *Eczacilik Tarihi ve Istanbul Eczahaneleri*, Istanbul: Celik Gulersoy Vakfi, Istanbul Kutuphanesi Yayinlari Tarih Dizisi, 1988: 85.

32. Muhittin Husnu Kansuk (1901-1969) graduated from the School of Pharmacy (*Eczaci Mektebi*) in Istanbul in 1922. He was the owner of the Sifa Pharmacy in Koyunpazari, Ankara before his move to Istanbul (Reference 8: 76).

33. Turkish citizens began to use surnames for the first time thanks to the Surname Law N: 2525 (accepted on June 21, 1934). (Anonymous, *Turkiye'nin 75 Yili*, Istanbul: Hurguc Gazetecilik A.S.,

Hurriyet Ofset Matbaacilik, 1998: 58) Mr Muhittin Husnu decided to take the surname Kansuk, which had a pronunciation close to and had only a one letter difference from the original name of the pharmacy, in order to benefit from Canzuch's renowned name. (Interview with Mr H. Nezhik Kansuk, 2nd July 2006)

34. Reference 18: 69.

35. Sari N et al. *1910-1928 Yillari Arasinda Yayinlanan Eski Harfli Reklamlarda Turk Mustehzaratciligi*, Ankara: II. Turk Tip Tarihi Kongresi Bildirileri, Turk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, 1999: 118).

36. Reference 18: 61.

37. Reference 4: 115.

38. Dr Ismet Sozen, born in 1929 in Usak, Turkey, graduated from the Istanbul University School of Medicine in 1953 and set up the Kansuk Laboratory together with Mr M. Hunsu Kansuk in 1960. In 1969, he became the executive member and then then president of the Turkish Drug Manufacturing Association. Today, he continues his work as the owner of the Kansuk Laboratories in Istanbul. (Dr Ismet Sozen's letter, dated July 28, 2006, Istanbul).

39. Reference 21: 77.

The Queen of Hungary's Water: a further note on early British sources

W A Jackson

I read 'Queen of Hungary's Water' by Patrizia Catellani and Renzo Console [*Pharmaceutical Historian* 2006; 36 (3): 47-52] with great interest. As usual with their work, the amount of research which they had undertaken was most impressive. However, I believe that I have found some English references to this product that predate those quoted by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, 1989 or the CD Rom version of 1999:

1. Moses Charras. *The Royal Pharmacopoea (sic), Galenical and Chymical*. London: John Starkey and Moses Pitt, 1678, Part 3, Book 1, Chapter 13, p. 20.

Under 'Distillation of Flowers of Rosemary' Charras gives detailed instructions for its preparation, and warns that some ignorant and wicked people in the provinces 'leave a great part of the Herby part' with the flowers. This gives a stronger but more tart and unpleasing product. Some also use ordinary Aqua Vitae instead of rectified Spirit of Wine in its preparation. He states that it was given the name of the 'Queen of Hungary's Water' because of its wonderful effect on her when she was 72 years old.

2. W Salmon. *Pharmacopoeia Londinensis, Or The New London Dispensatory*. London: Dawks, 1678, Lib. 1, Cap. 5, 5, p. 119a. Anthos, flores Rosmarini.

He states 'Of these flowers is made the Queen of Hungaria's water, so much esteem'd and cry'd up all the world over'.

3. W Salmon. *Doron Medicum: Or, A Supplement To The New London Dispensatory*, 2nd edition. London, Dawks, Bassset, Chiswell, Wotton and Conyers, 1688, Lib. 2, Cap. 1, 9, p. 402a. Aqua Reginae Hungaricae, The Queen of Hungaries (sic) Water.

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