



THE RESEARCH WITH TROPICAL MEDICINAL PLANTS IN THE FACULTY OF PHARMACY, UNIVERSITY OF COIMBRA (1902-1978)

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Abstract

The Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Coimbra possesses a valorous museologic collection. The field of pharmacognosy and related sciences is one of the two most representative areas of this collection. The pharmacognosy is intimately related to the teaching of pharmacy since its foundation at the University of Coimbra in the 16th century. The natural history of drugs became an essential research area in the Faculty of Pharmacy that even possessed a botanical garden.

The Laboratory of Natural History of Drugs (founded in 1902) originated later on the Laboratory of Pharmacognosy. Between the end of the seventies and the beginning of the eighties, two important periods of the laboratory finished: its institutionalization and its scientific consolidation.

The collection of museologic interest precisely translates the interest given to the teaching and research of pharmacognosy in the Faculty of Pharmacy of Coimbra since the 19th century until the present. The collection is constituted by a vast diversity of equipment, objects, instruments, drugs, some models from manufacturer R. Brendel (late nineteenth century); glass containers of various sizes and formats where we find plant parts (roots, stems, leaves, flowers and fruits), a reference collection of E. Merck entitled *Drogen-Lehrsammlung*; flasks containing essential oils, resins, fatty oils, gums and waxes, etc. The origin of the products was not only Portugal, but also other provenances such as Brazil, Angola, Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe, and Cape Verde.

In this communication, bearing in mind the politic and scientific contexts, the authors unravel the collection of drugs of natural origin prepared in the Faculty of Pharmacy of the University of Coimbra in the forties of the 20th century and that has a big interest to the tropical medicine. This presentation also relates the collection with the research carried out in the Faculty of Pharmacy in tropical medicinal plants and the founding sources.