

Medical Books: The Codex de la Cruz-Badiano

At the moment when Spanish colonizers arrive in the territory of what later they would call New Spain, a process of scientific exchange begins, religious and cultural between two worlds with conceptions of the world completely different. For a long time it was intended that, in this exchange, knowledge European scientist dominated without mixing with indigenous science or that it did not exist. It was until very recently it was recognized that an alloy of elements was formed aboriginal and European to constitute the medicine that was developed in New Spain; and that European medicine itself adopted certain elements of the New World for its science.

This paper defends that the Codex of the Cross-Badiano documents the miscegenation of the

indigenous medicine of New Spain influenced by European medical knowledge at an early time of colonization. Being also a sample of recognition made to indigenous healers of medical knowledge that they owned by the Spanish Crown and that were crystallized in this herbal.

The Royal College of Santiago Tlatelolco was founded on January 6, 1536 by friars of the San Francisco order. Headed by Friar Jacobo de Grado, in this place he they taught the principles of western culture to the children of noble natives belonging to the monarchy of Emperor Moctezuma. These „literate Indians“ received European teaching and were able to speak and write Latin, Spanish and Nahuatl.

The plants New Spain medicinals had attracted attention in Europe, they were considered appropriate in many diseases and the traditional pharmacopoeia of Dioscorides and Galen had had to admit, along with other classics, the incorporation of New elements arrived from the new world. Probably based on these facts, Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza, assumed that a plant book Mexican medicines, reproduced with the illustrated technique of the Aztecs could serve of a dignified reminder for the King Carlos V.

An indigenous doctor named Martín de la Cruz, probably dictated in his native language the properties and uses of the therapeutic elements obtained from nature that were most used in medicine Mexican. A trilingual disciple of the Royal College of Santiago Tlatelolco, Juan Badiano, pass the text or words of Martín de la Cruz into Latin, while some third collaborators but who were probably native artists, with office of „tlacuilos“, they painted, conserving glyphs and pre-Hispanic procedures, the same plants that are cited in the text. The result

was a medieval herbarium, which focused on the enumeration of remedies, their composition and the order in which they should be administered. The headings of the different sections of the chapters, always refer to diseases, so it is possible to identify the pictures pathologies that Martín de la Cruz recognized and the way in which he intended to solve problems.

This herbarium, whose true title is „*Libellus de Medicinalibus Indorum Herbis*“, constitutes for the medical history of Mexico one of the most important and least contaminated sources of information. The *Libellus* documents the cross-breeding of medicine New Spain indigenous influenced by Europeans. This mix where it's hard distinguish “between indigenous and European attributes and their concepts on health and medical practices.“

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