

## 600 years of Town Hall Pharmacy (Raeapteek) in Tallinn, Estonia

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The Town Hall Pharmacy (Raeapteek) in the Town Hall Square of Tallinn, Estonia (N59°26'16.001" E24°44'45.412") was first mentioned in historical records on 8 April 1422. To our best knowledge, the Raeapteek is the oldest community pharmacy in Europe which has operated on the same premises since the beginning. There are several hypotheses about the actual opening time of Raeapteek: it is possible that the pharmacy was operating on the square of the Tallinn Town Hall as early as in 1415, 1420, 1392 or even in 1248. In the territory of present-day Estonia, two pharmacies (in Tartu first mentioned in 1430) were already in business in less than 200 kilometres from each other before community pharmacies were opened in Russia, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Lithuania, and other cities. The Raeapteek played an essential role in the establishment of the current Estonian History Museum, the Estonian Pharmaceutical Factory, K. C. Fick's faience manufactory and other dignified institutions had their beginning at the pharmacy. Now, the pharmacy functions hand-in-hand with the museum which is supported by the city of Tallinn.

### 1. Introduction

For long times since the antiquity, pharmacies were merely warehouses. The first European pharmacies where medicines and their ingredients were stored and prepared and sold along with necessary counselling were founded, following the example of Arab countries, in Naples in 1140, in Paris in ca 1180, in Cologne in 1220, and thereafter in other towns. The oldest pharmacy in the Baltic countries operated in Riga as early as 1357, but its building has not been preserved (Lehbert 1922; Raal 2005).

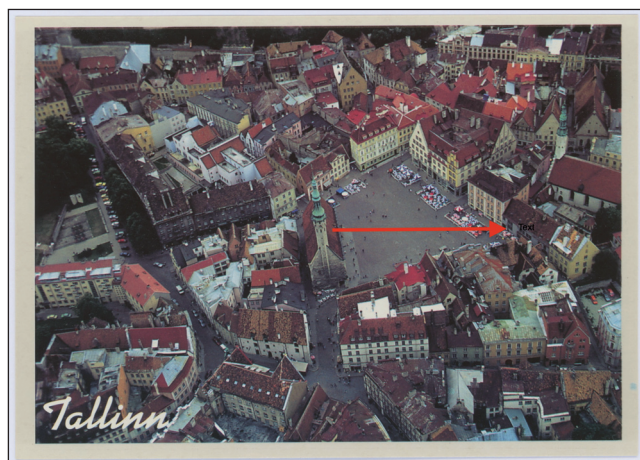


Fig. 1: The Tallinn Town Hall (on the left) and Raeapteek. Postcard, 1997.

The medieval centre of Tallinn took shape by the early 14<sup>th</sup> century; life was concentrated around the market, and the Town Hall was also next to the marketplace. Although Tallinn town council was not engaged in trade, it owned most of the shops and rented them out to merchants (Kala, 2019). Thus, founding the pharmacy near the Town Hall was a logical step.

From 1365, there is a mention of a hospital named "Holy Spirit" and a chapel of the poor house (*capella domus St. Spiritus et pauperum*), which was located next to the current church in a group of buildings on the side of the town hall, and around which there was probably a cemetery. The hospital (seek) located next to the church was a place of care for the poor, sick, homeless and old men, which could accommodate 30-50 people. Unlike other hospitals in the city, it also had a paid department for the care of wealthy citizens, it could also be a place to stay for guests visiting the city. In summary, the hospital (seek=almshouse) operated near the pharmacy building or even partly at its location, i.e. people's health was taken care of in this place even before the establishment of the first pharmacy in Estonia or at the same time. Such hospitals also operated in Riga, Tartu, Haapsalu and Pärnu (Peets and Naha, 1933; Selart, 2012; Kala, 2019). Thus, the seek operated in the immediate vicinity of the pharmacy building or even partially above it, and people's health was taken care of in this place even before the opening of the first pharmacy in Estonia, or at the same time.

### 2. The first mention and possible antecedent of the Raeapteek

The first written record about the pharmacy in Tallinn (Ger. 'Reval') Town Hall Square (N59°26'16.001" E24°44'45.412") dates from "the Monday before Palm Sunday in the year of our Lord fourteen hundred and twenty-two" or 8 April 1422. Then the apothecary Nyclawes (Claus) most probably the third in succession – had come to the town council meeting and announced that the Raeapteek with its furnishings was owned by a number of respectable people, mostly councilmen, whose names he read out there". In 2022, 600 years passed from this event. As there is no documentary evidence about the precise opening time of the Raeapteek, its recorded history begins from its first mention. To our best knowledge, the Raeapteek is the oldest community pharmacy in Europe which has operated on the same premises since the beginning. It is also known to be the oldest-running Estonian enterprise and health care institution (Gustavson 1972; Raal 2022).

In 1992, the creators of the concept for the restoration of the town hall pharmacy building have published an assumption that the pharmacy is probably even older in this place, which would make it as long as 1392 at the time of the pharmacy's establishment, which is not impossible, but remains in the realm of fantasy (Raeapteegi..., 1992). The writer Aarne Ruben (2013), who wrote more about the town hall pharmacy, has assumed that since Tallinn was granted city rights in 1248, there could have been a medicine shop at the Tallinn town hall, although it is more likely that the city's citizens obtained their medicines from monasteries or doctors.

According to Baltic German historian Erich Seuberlich (1882–1946) apothecary Johann Molner was a physician and master and he is likely to have founded the Raeapteek as early as 1415 or 1420 and sold it to apothecary Hermann before 1422 (Seuberlich 1912).

While the sale of the pharmacy is documented, there is unfortunately no historical evidence of when the pharmacy was opened. It is also not known the basis of which Seuberlich proposes the year 1415, but as he claims that Hermann had died before 1422, the pharmacy must have been operating earlier. Referring to the register book, he considers Molner to be the probable founder of the pharmacy from 1420 (Kõige..., 1921). The book "History of Estonia II" also states, without referring to the original source: "A pharmacy operated in Tallinn around 1415, from 1422 as a town hall pharmacy" (Selart 2012: 376).

From about 1430, Johann Molner's letter to the town council of Tallinn has been preserved, in which he notes that he sold the pharmacy to the apothecary Hermann, who owed him money for the purchase, and as financial cover "he gave me some medicines instead of seven marks" (Gustavson 1972: 57). The same letter shows that Hermann became ill and was not able to run the pharmacy. After his death the pharmacy remained closed for a while, until the council took over running it.

Rudolf Leibert, the later owner of Raeapteek, writes (1922) that Hermann was left with so little money that it was not even enough to bury him, and that probably some members of the town council jointly took over the pharmacy and ran it at their own expense, until in 1422 a new pharmacist, Nicolaus or Claus confirmed that

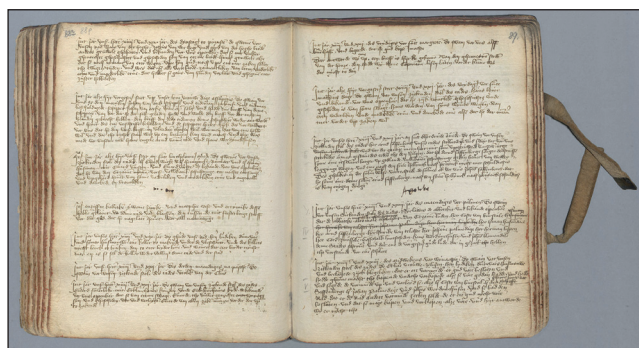


Fig. 2: The account book (1377-1455) where Raeapteek is mentioned for the first time on 8 April 1422. Tallinn City Archives.

the pharmacy is the property of the city council members and that he has been appointed as its manager.

Thus, the documented opening time of Raeapteek will probably remain a secret. Considering this, it is interesting to mention that master Johann Molner was invited to Tartu (Ger 'Dorpat') in 1422 to found a pharmacy there. The foundation time of this pharmacy is not known either; it was mentioned for the first time in 1430. So, in the territory of Livonia (present-day Estonia and Latvia) three pharmacies (Riga (1357), Tallinn (1422), Tartu (1430)) were already in business before community pharmacies in Russia, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark and elsewhere (Raal, 2022).

### 3. The apothecaries, owners and renters of the Raeapteek

#### 3.1. The first apothecaries of the Tallinn Raeapteek in the 15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries

City doctors (*physicus*) operated in Tallinn at least a hundred years earlier than pharmacists (Kala 2019). The first apothecary of the Raeapteek was presumably Johann Molner; the second was Hermann (Hermannus) who failed in business and died in poverty. These two men were sole proprietors of the pharmacy, but in 1422, the pharmacy already belonged to the town council and was leased to the apothecary. Its first renter in 1422–1440 was the above-mentioned Nyclawes (Gustavson, 1969; 1972; 1973).

The fourth apothecary was Nicolaus (Claus) Schulte (held the job from 1441–1493). In 1481, Schulte bought a house for himself, which testifies to his wealth and prospering business at the pharmacy. The town council as the owner took care of the maintenance of the pharmacy building and the premises, but at some time, Schulte bought the furnishings of the pharmacy from the town council. In 1493, there is a note in the town council account book that the council had bought the furnishings of the pharmacy back from him. In Schulte's time, two other apothecaries have been mentioned in the documents of Tallinn: Johan Brasche in 1452, but there is reason to believe that this man born in Tallinn was the town apothecary of Tartu rather. The other – Pawel – may have been an assistant hired by the aged Nicolaus Schulte for himself (Seuberlich 1912; Leibert 1922; Gustavson 1972).

In 1493–1497, Conrad (Goerd, Coerd) Malstrop has been mentioned as the keeper of the Raeapteek. In 1498–1500, the pharmacy was rented by Jacobus. There are no data about the renters of the pharmacy from the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century (1500–1507), but the town council account book shows that the rent was lowered year by year. Conrad Malstrop came back from Tartu to work as the apothecary of the Raeapteek from 1507–1519, but in 1520, Fabian Below (related to the pharmacy from 1520–1531) became the new renter of the pharmacy. His prospering business allowed him to buy a house near the pharmacy and later to acquire a medicinal plant garden. Along with Below, Sebastian (Bastian) Conrad (held the job until 1550) has been mentioned as the apothecary of the Raeapteek from 1527. After his death, Wolfgang Hol(t)zwirt (held the job from 1550–1553) from an ancient family in Halle on the Saale was employed for three years. His successor was Johannes Dick (Dyck) from Tartu (held the job from 1553–1562). The next apothecary at the Raeapteek was Peter Görbandt (Gerbrandt, held the job from 1562–1566), born in Friesland, who took the oath of office in front of the town councilmen and the town physician in the Holy Ghost Church on 6 June 1562. After him, Johannes Dick, who had led an adventurous life meanwhile, returned to keep the pharmacy from 1566–1570 (Seuberlich, 1912; Leibert, 1922; Gustavson, 1972; Raal, 2022).

Data on the interim years are lacking, but thereafter the pharmacy was taken over by Hans Paduel (held the job from 1576–1579), born in Rösels, who had worked in Tallinn as a surgeon-barber for twenty years. From 1580–1581, the pharmacy was managed by Christoph(er) Linbecker (Limpecker) from Jelgava (Latvia) who had been court apothecary of Courland and founded the Old Pharmacy of Tartu in 1594. The next head of the Raeapteek was Andreas Hamer (held the job from 1581–1582), a member of the Brotherhood of Blackheads (Seuberlich, 1912; Leibert, 1922; Gustavson, 1972).

#### 3.2. The Burcharts' era in the Raeapteek

The Burcharts' dynasty ruled over the Raeapteek for more than three hundred years. Out of its ten members, the first eight were physicians and the last two pharmacists. Apothecary's apprentice Burchard von Béllavary de Sycava or Johann Burchart I (1546–1616; at the Raeapteek 1580–1610), was a Hungarian nobleman born in Bratislava. His ancestors had been promoted to nobility for bravery in a war with Turkey and acquired the additional surname Béllavary de Sycava. In Tallinn, he had worked as an apothecary's apprentice

from 1580 already; in 1583 he rented the pharmacy from the town council for five years for 100 thalers, 15 pounds of dainty morsels and 13 stoups of claret per year. Several complicated circumstances almost led the pharmacy to bankruptcy, and when Burchart I quit the job, the era of their dynasty was interrupted for 1610–1617. In that period, Dirck Ketelauer (1610) and Georgius Buhmann (held the job from 1610–1614) from Lübeck are mentioned in the documents of Tallinn as apothecaries of the Raeapteek; after them, the Jelgava town physician Jacobus Praetorius (held the job from 1614–1615) was invited to work as the town physician and apothecary. His direct successor is not known, but in 1616 pharmacist Heinrich Ossenbrugg (held the job from 1616–1617) arrived from Hamburg. Within the next half year, he made the pharmacy bankrupt; as a result, the town council dismissed him in 1617 and appointed Johann Burchart II (1583 (1585) – 1636; apothecary of the Raeapteek 1617–1636) as keeper of the pharmacy. The new keeper of the pharmacy concluded a lease agreement with the town council in 1617. According to this, only the building of the pharmacy remained in the ownership of the town council, but all the furnishings and equipment went into the ownership of the Burchart family. The business of Burchart II flourished.

His widow Agneta continued to fulfil the lease agreement of the pharmacy in 1636–1649, employing three pharmacists and two town physicians in succession, until Johann(es) Burchart III (1605–1671; at the Raeapteek 1649–1671), who had been born in Tallinn and studied in the Netherlands, took the pharmacy over. As a respected man, the apothecary was elected alderman of the Great Guild in 1668. After his death, the pharmacy business was managed by his widow Catharina (née von Thieren; held the job from 1671–1675) who was successively helped by two pharmacists.

Johannes Burchart IV (1651–1691; related to the Raeapteek from 1676–1691) learned the trade from his father and upgraded his skills by working in the pharmacies of Lübeck and Stockholm. On 26 August 1689, the enterprising man succeeded in getting the ownership of the pharmacy from the Tallinn town council to the Burcharts' dynasty. When he died, his son was still too young to take over the pharmacy, and his widow Catharina (née Cahl) managed the pharmacy from 1691–1710.

Johannes Burchart V (1683–1738; owner of the Raeapteek 1710–1738) became a Doctor of Medicine in Stockholm and returned to his birth town in 1710 as a plague doctor. He had to cope with the tasks of the apothecary and town physician, being also the doctor of the navy hospital and garrison. As an enterprising and respected man, he acquired several buildings near the pharmacy and was in favour with the Russian Emperor Peter I.

In 1738–1743, the pharmacy was managed by Burchart V's widow Marie (née Wengler) who achieved the confirmation of the pharmacy privilege by the Russian government. As stated in an application to Emperor Ivan VI, she established the so-called *Fidei-commisum familiae* (entailed estate), according to which the immovable property of the family had to remain "for eternity within the holding of the eldest live son of the Burchart family in the male line." The enterprising widow also had a new laboratory built in the yard of the pharmacy in 1742. After her, the pharmacy was managed by Hamburg-born Georg Friedrich Tintelmann (worked from 1743–1745).

Johannes Burchart VI (1718–1756; owner of the Raeapteek 1745–1756) was born in Tallinn, but went to study and live an adventurous life abroad. Only two years after his mother's death, he as the entailed estate's heir took on the post of the town physician and the duties of the apothecary. His business prospered, and a year before his rather early death, he bought a haberdashery shop in Saiakäik (White Bread Alley). His widow Margarethe (née Westinghausen) remained the owner of the pharmacy for 1756–1772 but was not interested in keeping it. The management of the pharmacy was entirely taken over by Carl Christian Fick (held the job from 1770–1772) who later became known as the founder of the Tallinn faience manufactory.

Johannes Burchart VII (1748–1808; apothecary of the Raeapteek from 1772–1808), also born in Tallinn, returned to his birth town from Germany in 1772 and took over the pharmacy but had a

lengthy court trial with his mother's second husband because of confusion over the inheritance. He also had to compete with the so-called Green Pharmacy. It was called green because of the colour of its facade; the building in Kuninga (King) Street has been destroyed.

Johannes Burchart VIII (1776–1838; owner of the Raeapteek 1808–1838) also came back to his birth town with a degree Doctor of Medicine after having studied medicine in Germany and took over the management of the pharmacy along with his work as a doctor. He is the most famous member of the Burcharts' dynasty for cultural history. Being interested in history, he laid the foundation to his home museum of rarities called *Mon faible* (Fr 'My Weakness') in 1802. The collection of this intelligent and erudite man with broad interests later became the oldest collection of the Estonian History Museum.

In 1842, the pharmacy was inherited by his widow Maria Elisabeth (née Bluhm), who authorised pharmacist W. H. Richter, the head of the pharmacy until then, to continue working there.

Johannes Burchart IX (1808–1869; related to the Raeapteek 1842–1869) was born in Tallinn and came to take over the pharmacy from Tartu where he had become a pharmacist and worked as apothecary of university hospital. Because of poor health, he did not become a practising apothecary in Tallinn, and, on 26 June 1853, he leased the pharmacy to Piers Rudolf Lehbort.

Johannes Burchart X (1843–1891; related to the Raeapteek 1869–1891) was born in Tallinn as the last male heir of the Burchart Béllavary de Sycava family. Because of poor health, he did not take greater interest in the pharmacy. He preferred to live in Kharkiv (Ukraine), which was more favourable to his health, and came to Tallinn from time to time to extend the lease agreement with Lehbort.

Therefore, the last two Burcharts (IX and X) acquired the pharmacy specialty at the University of Tartu. Several articles have been published in *Pharmazie* about pharmacy at this famous university and about the most famous professor of pharmacy, Georg Dragen-dorff (Tankler et al. 2002; Hinrikus et al. 2005; Raal et al. 2009; Kapp et al. 2012; Raal et al. 2020).

### 3.3. The Lehborts' era in the Raeapteek

The last two Burcharts leased the pharmacy belonging to their family to Piers Rudolph Lehbort in 1853 until his son Carl Rudolf Lehbort bought the pharmacy from a female heir of the Burcharts in 1911 (Gustavson, 1972). Father Piers Rudolph Lehbort I (1820–1888; at the Raeapteek 1853–1888) was from Valmiera (Latvia), had worked as an apothecary's apprentice in Pärnu and as an apothecary's assistant in Tartu. He studied pharmacy at the University of Tartu and worked as an assistant in the university's chemistry laboratory. In 1847, he passed the pharmacist's exam and worked thereafter as pharmacist in Th. Scharte's pharmacy. Being a renter of the Raeapteek, he also filled the duties of the pharmacist of the Health Department at the Government of the Governorate of Estonia. Under the enthusiastic apothecary, the pharmacy that had been taken over in a poor state got a new life. The turnover increased; the laboratory equipment and furniture were renewed (Seuberlich 1912; Lehbort 1922; Gustavson 1972, 1979).

Carl Rudolf Georg Lehbort II (1858–1928; at the Raeapteek 1883–1928) studied pharmacy at the University of Tartu from 1879–1883. Initially, he came to work for his father as the apothecary's assistant and laboratory assistant, and continued from the end of 1885 as a pharmacist. In May 1888, he concluded a lifetime lease agreement for the pharmacy with Burchart X. Lehbort II had the building and its equipment renovated and started producing Ferratol, an aromatic iron elixir used against anaemia. Lehbort II has remained in the history of Estonian science as a botanist; he was the founder and honorary member of several cultural and professional societies, an enthusiastic researcher of local history and one of the first nature photographers in Estonia. He introduced keeping the Raeapteek chronicle book where the names of approximately 160 staff members of the pharmacy from 1853–1920 were recorded (Lehbort, 1911; 1920; Gustavson, 1972; Ruben, 2013).

### 3.4. The Raeapteek in the Republic of Estonia, 1918–1940

In January 1921, Karl Schneider, also a German, became the co-owner of the pharmacy; he was helped by several pharmacists. After Lehbert II's death in 1928, he remained the sole proprietor of the Raeapteek. The number of prescriptions was ever growing; twice a week the pharmacy was on night duty. In 1940, the pharmacy staff included, in addition to the head, six assistants, two apprentices, three servants, two cashiers, an office clerk and an accountant. In March of the same year, Schneider, who had resettled from Estonia to Germany, sold the pharmacy to the ethnic Estonian pharmacists Theodor Rosenvald and Christian Päss who introduced the Estonian language and the Estonian mentality to the pharmacy. As there were several thriving pharmacies with modern equipment (the City Pharmacy, pharmacy of the Joint Health Insurance Fund (Ühise Haigekassa apteek) in Tõnismägi Street and others), the Raeapteek did not do particularly well in this period (Gustavson 1972, 1973, 2020).

### 3.5. The Raeapteek in the Soviet time (1940–1991)

After the Soviet occupation of Estonia and its annexation to the Soviet Union, the Raeapteek was nationalised like other businesses. This happened in October 1940. During the following German occupation in 1941–1944, the staff carried some losses, and a fire destroyed part of the loft. After the re-occupation of Estonia by the Soviet Union, the pharmacy was given a number instead of the name, as customary in the Soviet Union: at first “4”, later “16”. In the early 1970s, the Raeapteek had one of the greatest turnovers in Tallinn and stood out with particularly quick and polite service. Compared to Lehbert II's time in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the number of prescriptions had increased about tenfold. In the 1950s, the pharmacy was open 14 hours a day; there was no night service. In the second half of the 1980s, the staff of the Raeapteek was 47 people. The pharmacy had 239.2 m<sup>2</sup> of production area and two sales points – at Tallinn central market and at Vaida village outside Tallinn. In the Soviet time, the Raeapteek was the only one in Estonia where medicinal leeches were sold. For a long time, the head of the Raeapteek was pharmacist Hailo Liias (held the job from 1950–1985); his successor was pharmacist Enn Kanter (held the job from 1985–1998). In his time, great political and economic rearrangements took place in Estonia as the independence of Estonia was restored in 1991 (Gustavson, 1972; Kanter, 1997 a,b).



Fig. 3: Raeapteek in 2021. Photo by T. Aunaste.

### 3.6. The Raeapteek after the restoration of Estonia's independence

After the restoration of Estonia's independence in 1991, most pharmacies were privatised, but the Raeapteek remained in municipal ownership. In 1990–2000, the pharmacy was thoroughly renovated. After Enn Kanter left, pharmacist Liia Vollrat (held the job from 1998–2000) became head of the pharmacy. After renovation,

the pharmacy also acquired the function of a museum oriented to foreign tourists and local seekers of curiosities. Along with the sales of marzipan, medicinal plants, spices, etc. the selection of souvenirs was broadened; tours and workshops were arranged. Heads of the Raeapteek have been Mall Männil (held the job from 2000–2003), Kadri Tammepuu (2003–2010), Anne Keero (2010–2015), Liivi Allikas (2015–2017), Anne-May Rogenbaum (2017–2019), Triinu Entsik-Grünberg (from 2019) (Raal 2022).

## 4. The building and rooms of the Raeapteek

The current pharmacy building (address: Raekoja plats 11) originally combines three separate, almost equal sized buildings – first weighing house (*libra*) operated as early as 1358, where goods being transported in and out of Tallinn were measured and weighed. When a new, large weighing house was built on the north side of the Town Hall Square in the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the old building was called the small weighing house. In 1688, the small weighing house became the property of the pharmacy and was connected to it. The pharmacy, which operated in 1422, was located in the middle part of the current pharmacy. These three separate buildings, which were repeatedly renovated in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries and finally connected under one roof. In 1736, in addition to the small weighing house and buildings in the courtyard of the Church of the Holy Spirit, the part of the building to the right of the current pharmacy was purchased, where the rectory of the Church of the Holy Spirit used to be located (Kangropool 1975; Kala 2019).

The current pharmacy building was formed in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century when three different, medieval buildings with high pointed roofs were connected, then the late Baroque style prevailed. Throughout times, the building has been renovated and the furnishings renewed many times, more thoroughly in the 1440s, 1550s, 1630s–1670s, 1900s–1920s, 1960s and 1990s (Ruben 2013; Raal 2022).

In 1740, a new laboratory building was built in the yard of the pharmacy; a memorial plaque has been placed on its wall. The panels of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century outer door bear the images of snakes; they function as advertising for the pharmacy and are visible only when the doors are open. The allegorical paintings depicting muses on the window jambs date from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The painted wooden ceiling has been stripped of plaster. The furniture in the museum room dates from 1929. To the right of the entrance to the pharmacy, there is a balustrade of dark oak with a lectern and a medicine cabinet that date from 1887. The more than three centuries old tincture press of the previous laboratory is now displayed in the dispensary of the pharmacy. The vessels filled with red and blue fluids on the window sill of the back room are related to Hippocrates' teaching about humoral or body fluids symbolising blood (warm or red) and phlegm (cold or blue). The tiny crocodile hanging from the ceiling of the pharmacy emphasises the similarity with the apothecary; like the crocodile walks under water, the apothecary acts, in addition to the visible sphere, in the deeper spiritual world (Raeapteegi..., 1992; Ruben 2013; Raal 2020).

The paintings in the pharmacy building dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries are of a remarkably high standard (Üprus 1956: 29): “It is understandable that not every citizen in the city could afford such paintings, which were constantly changing by changing decorative forms. The doctor and the pharmacist, as the most prominent representatives of the city's intelligentsia, kept up with the new interior design styles more vigorously than the city's ordinary merchants or craftsmen.” The luxuriousness of the interior design is emphasized by the fact that the paintings reflect, among other things, the most important events of the Burchart family. Even the difficult years of plague and war did not prevent the rooms from being decorated with paintings. The oldest of Tallinn's painted beamed ceilings date back to the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, such a tradition lasted until around the 1770s, thus also including the Raeapteek (Eesti..., 2005).

Proof of the great need for medicinal plants is still provided by two peasant boxes without any iron parts with dimensions of approx-

imately 110 × 66 × 85 cm. One of them has the inscription “HB: *Millefolii*” (abbreviated yarrow herb) and the number 32, the other “HB: *Viol. Tricolor*” (wild pansy herb) and the number 47. So there must have been at least this many medicinal plant storage boxes at one time. The capacity of such drug boxes is impressive. Each rental agreement with the apothecary also addressed requirements for the collection of medicinal plants and the storage of drugs (Ruben 2013; Raal 2022).



Fig. 4: Officina of Raeapteek in 2021. Photo by T. Aunaste.

## 5. Claret and marzipan

Apart from the rent paid in cash, the apothecary had to supply the mayors with wine and sweets for various holidays and celebrations. The city, for its part, constantly took care of glazing the windows of the pharmacy building, repairing the furnaces and other repairs. In addition to medicines, the pharmacy also traded in paper, ink, writing varnish, playing cards and even gun powder and shotguns. Reinvein, or claret, treated with special additives in the pharmacy, was stored in a cellar room set aside for this purpose (Gustavson 1972; Raal 2022).

In the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times, claret and marzipan as the two most popular products of the present Raeapteek were much more than an alcoholic drink and a sweet – they were used as medicines. According to historical records, claret, which is based on Rhine wine and includes classical spices, has been produced in the Raeapteek since 1467. Its historical ingredients are the following: 36.9 litres of Rhine wine, 3.629 kg of sugar, 465 g of ginger and cinnamon, 52 g of cloves and 26 g of saffron. Along with the duty to supply the town councilmen with sweets, the Raeapteek had to send them claret “free of charge, for tasting, as a token of friendly recognition”. For example, according to the 1583 lease agreement, Burchart I had to send the councilmen ten stoups of claret and ten pounds of dainty morsels annually. Claret as an elitist drink was also a noble gift to other dignitaries and could also be sipped on the premises of the pharmacy in good company. The claret sold at the Raeapteek now is made after the 16th-century recipe, which includes the same amount of galangal as cloves (Gustavson 1972).

Along with many other sweets, marzipan has been made in the Raeapteek from the 1550s at latest. In 1600, the pharmacy ordered two new marzipan moulds with the images of the big and small coats of arms of the town. Marzipan was current in the transactions between the councilmen and the pharmacy as a peculiar means of payment and diplomatic influence. It was also offered to other dignified ladies and gentlemen. This sweet had an important function during the fast. With its high energetic value, marzipan proved to be a good substitute for meat, as it decreased appetite and created a feeling of satiety. According to an urban legend, Tallinn was even the birthplace of marzipan, although another Hanseatic town – Lübeck – has also claimed to be its first producer. Actually, marzipan originates in Persia where almond trees grow in abundance (Ruben 2013; Raal 2022).

## 6. The Raeapteek throughout times

The major anniversaries of the Raeapteek were celebrated in 1922 and 1972 when a number of printed publications were issued and souvenirs produced. Because of the respectability of the Raeapteek and the role of claret in socialising, the oldest pharmacy of Estonia also had a social significance and an important dimension in cultural history. The Raeapteek played an essential role in the establishment of the current Estonian History Museum; the Estonian pharmaceuticals factory, K. C. Fick’s faience manufactory and other dignified institutions had their beginning at the pharmacy. The first nature photography exhibition and the first art exhibition in Estonia were arranged in the rooms of the Raeapteek, and the Estonian Chamber Music Society was founded there. During Burchart VII, Isis, the first Freemasons lodge in Estonia, found its home there. Now, the pharmacy functions hand-in-hand with the museum which is supported by the city of Tallinn (Raal 2022).



Fig. 5: President of the Republic of Estonia Alar Karis and staff of the Raeapteek on 21 December 2021. Photo of the Office of the President.

## 7. Conclusions

During the long history, many worthy men have worked as pharmacists in Tallinn Town Hall Pharmacy (Raeapteek). This pharmacy is the oldest continuously operating community pharmacy in Estonia and throughout Europe, which has operated on the same premises since the beginning. It is also the oldest continuously operating company in Estonia. During the long history, there have been periods, when the pharmacist was also the town doctor. In addition to medicines, other goods were also bought from the city pharmacy. In the Middle Ages claret and marzipan were much more than an alcoholic drink and a sweet – they were used as medicines. In today’s terms, Raeapteek can be compared to a cafe, where you enter to listen to the news and talk about it. The Raeapteek was also a meeting place for respectable people, mostly councilmen and other important persons. Here claret was drunk, councils held, and agreements made. It is believed that Raeapteek had a significant impact on life in Tallinn. Today, the pharmacy operates together with a museum, which organizes tours and workshops for both children and adults.

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