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MUSEUM OF THE FACULTY OF DENTISTRY

MUSEUM OF THE FACULTY OF DENTISTRY. In 2013, the Faculty of Dentistry (University of Debrecen) established a museum. The part of the museum, created primary, deals with the past of the faculty, documenting the establishment of its predecessor, the Stomatology Polyclinic, and later the Clinic itself. Its professors are ranged until the year 2000 and the textbooks and manuals in Hungarian-language are presented from 1871 to 1948. The world's first dental journal from 1839 and the first Hungarian-language newspaper from 1892 are also shown. Longstanding tools and instruments are correspondingly on display. Dental posters, recon bills and other old documents can also be seen. The glass-walled contemporary dental office, established in 2017, displays three classical dental units and machinery from the 1880s to the 1930s. A contemporary medical cabinet displays old tools, medications, and dental materials. On the wall besides the original poster, the medical diploma and the old photo, a medical caricature can also be seen. The museum principally collects contemporary dental tools and documents related to Hungary and holds only original resources. One of the largest dental museums in Hungary has been established over the years.

Keywords: Museum of Dental History, dental tools, medical diploma, dental office

A FOGORVOSTUDOMÁNYI KAR MÚZEUMA. 2013-ban a Debreceni Egyetem Fogorvostudományi Kara múzeumot hozott létre. Az elsőként kialakított múzeumi rész a Kar múltjával foglalkozik, az előd, a Stomatologiai Poliklinika, majd Klinika létrejöttét dokumentálja. Sorra veszi professzorait 2000-ig, és bemutatja a magyar nyelvű tankönyveket, kézikönyveket 1871-től 1948-ig. Ki van állítva a világ első fogászati folyóirata 1839-ből és az első magyar nyelvű újság is 1892-ből. Régi eszközök és műszerek, valamint fogászati plakátok, számítógépek és egyéb régi dokumentumok láthatók. A 2017-ben berendezett üvegfalú régi fogászati rendelő három korabeli széket és gépeket mutat be az 1880-as évektől az 1930-as évekig. Egy korabeli orvosi szekrényben régi eszközök, gyógyszerek és fogászati anyagok láthatók. A falon eredeti plakát, orvosi diploma és régi fotó, valamint orvosi karikatúra van kihelyezve. A múzeum elsősorban magyar vonatkozású korabeli fogászati eszközöket, dokumentumokat gyűjt és csakis eredeti anyagokat tartalmaz. Hazánk egyik legnagyobb fogászati múzeuma jött létre az évek során karunkon.

Kulcsszavak: fogásztörténeti múzeum, fogászati eszköz, orvosi diploma, fogászati rendelő



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Soon after the Stomatology Polyclinic's inaugural, in February 1935, András Csilléry, specialist lecturer, raised the need for creating a library and a museum. In his lecture given on the first anniversary of the Polyclinic, he said:¹

“Nevertheless, both the scientific work and the professional training require the accessibility of a particular library and a museum's collection appropriate for teaching. Unfortunately, partly because of financial and partly because of our short-term existence, it did not allow us to implement either through purchase nor through our own assembling. By then I had the idea of turning to the doctors of the country, and especially to my dentist coevals. For the reason of our efforts for the Hungarian culture, within the walls of the university and beyond, it is the duty of every dentist to support me in my endeavors. Led by this idea, I appealed to all the doctors of the country, to the heads of the institutes, to support me in creating a library and museum of the institute with their contributions. Thank God and collegial solidarity, my coevals have received my plea empathetic. Day by day, the post office brought books, magazines, special prints, tools for the museum, models, artefacts. Nowadays, we have a prestigious library of more than approx. 500 volumes. This enables both teaching and learning, as well as scientific research.”

Thus, the need for a museum arose already by the cradle of the Stomatology Clinic. Unfortunately, no picture, any description or inventories of the museum have survived even in traces, the war and thereafter the ideology of the fifties. However, there were some who have saved tools and objects that are enriching the current museum. Today's museum began to take shape in 2010, at the initiative of Professor Csaba Hegedűs, the dean at that time. He spared no expense; artful table and wall display cases were made of beech with safety glass.

This part of the museum was completed in 2013 and is located in the second floor, on the corridor of the old building. This corridor has an exit to the roof, where various machines and air conditioners are placed. On the glass of the exit door the Faculty of Dentistry's coat-of-arms is engraved and it is covered with an ultraviolet (UV) protection film.

In the wall display cases the descriptions and the picture-series brush up the past and show the spaces of the Stomatology Polyclinic. This was located in the east wing of the Surgical Clinic by then. The photos were provided by Ede Bohn, Assistant Lecturer, in his article about the history of the polyclinic.² A photograph of the oath of Professor András Csilléry, taken on July 18, 1940 in the rector's office can also be seen.

¹ Különszám, *Fogorvosi Szemle*, 29 (1936):1–31.

² BOHN Ede, „A Debreceni Stomatológiai Poliklinika története”, *Stomatológiai Közlöny*, 3 (1939): 255–266.



Fig. 1. Show cases with museum glass for displaying books, smaller artefacts and tools

This is followed by photos of the Stomatology Clinic's rooms, which was inaugurated in November 1940, this was placed already in the side wing of the Ophthalmology Clinic.³ Due to the circumstances of the war, the construction of a new building was out of the question. It was still a huge challenge that a new department could be formed. This was also the merit of András Csilléry. Next to the photos, we put a contemporary medical degree on display. This was handed over under Professor András Csilléry's dean's period in the autumn of 1944, but it was not signed by him, due to his departure to the west. In the following wall display Hungarian dental awards of our second professor, Péter Adler, and the engraved silver bowls, received by the staff on ceremonies are shown. On the wall next to the wall displays are Professor Adler's German and Austrian honorary doctorates. (All glazed pictures on the walls are UV-protected, under the so-called museum glass, which filters out 75% of the fading UV rays).

The following wall display case shows the original bound volume of the world's first dental journal from 1839, published in the United States. This is *The American Journal of Dental Science*. Next to it are the very first Hungarian periodicals (first the German-language *Oesterreichisch-ungarische Vierteljahrsschrift für Zahnheilkunde*, published in 1885) and the first Hungarian-language dental journal, the *Odontoskóp*. This was published in 1892. Old objects (eg. toothbrushes, Odol cups, old drill holder) and one other artefact was exhibited in this case. We were able to acquire a prepared shark jawbone with teeth. This we could also exhibit here in front of a great mirror (hence the back of the jawbone can be seen, which contains several rows of so-called spare teeth).

³ SALAMON Henrik, *A magyar stomatologia (fogászat) története* (Budapest, 1942), 372–387.



Fig. 2 Display of the world's first and earliest national dental journal, as well as old toothbrushes together with a shark jaw

We have placed the Hungarian dental manuals and textbooks in the desk display cases. The first display case contains old dental textbooks published from the 1800s to World War I. All of them are original, except for the very first Hungarian book of dentistry. This was published in 1831 and by the 1930s only 3-4 copies were known in the country. It is a German translation and could only be obtained as a photocopy. Nevertheless, Ignác Barna's book, entitled *Fogászat* (Dentistry), comes first. This is truly the first work written in Hungarian and was published in 1871. However, German-language books continued to be published in Hungary (for example, Professor József Árkövy's famous work about pulpitis).

In the second show case, we exhibited the most important dental textbooks of the astonishingly productive time-period between the two world wars without claim to completeness.

In the next showcase there are foreign dental textbooks written by famous authors, on display. Furthermore, here are the publications of our first and founder professor, András Csilléry's as well.⁴

The fourth display covers Professor Péter Adler's works. He is known for his comprehensive and productive scientific and literary work.⁵ He has written several textbooks and translated two into German-language. All these are on display. The works of our third professor, József Szentpétery's and our fourth professor, Gusztáv Keszthelyi's book and mourning report can also be found here.⁶

⁴ KELENTEY Barna, „A Debreceni Stomatológiai Klinika kialakulásának története”, *Gerundium – Egyetemtörténeti Közlemények*, 8, 3. sz. (2017): 44–57.

⁵ KELENTEY Barna, „A Debreceni Stomatológiai Klinika története Adler Péter professzor vezetése alatt (1946–1979)”, *Gerundium – Egyetemtörténeti Közlemények*, 9, 3. sz. (2018): 11–23.

⁶ KELENTEY Barna, „A Debreceni Stomatológiai Klinika története Szentpétery József és Keszthelyi Gusztáv professzorok vezetése alatt”, *Gerundium – Egyetemtörténeti Közlemények* 10, 3–4. sz. (2019): 203–219.



Fig. 3. Books written and translated into German by Professor Péter Adler, as well as books written by Professor József Szentpétery and Professor Gusztáv Keszthelyi

Subsequently, the museum presents our professors until the year of 2000. Furthermore, their photos can also be found in the faculty's library. Professor Péter Adler's off-print collection is also in the library. For this a separate wall display case was made and it is from the legacy of his widow.

The Post-World War II Hungarian-language textbooks and manuals are located in a separate shelf in the Faculty of Dentistry's library. Sorted according to the 1950s, '60s, '70s and '80s.

The last display case is quite diverse, here we placed human teeth with unusual anatomy, old toothpicks, tooth-powder boxes, old tools and X-ray films. You can see also a World War II English cap badge worn by dentist-soldiers. Here we also placed approx. 5000 years old incisors from a grave under a tumulus (barrow) of the Yamnaya culture.

Lockers under the display cases allow the storage of smaller objects and devices properly.

On the wall opposite the displays are old dental posters and posters of oral hygiene, as well as a stunning enameled large Odol advertisement.

Furthermore, on this wall we placed 3 certificates of a master dental technician from Budapest. These give proof that he received his certificate in 1915 and issued by whom, as well as he has been working on the field for 25 years, and that in 1949 he received the qualification of "Examined Dental Master", qualifying him on limited patient care.

Moreover, on this wall is our recon-bill and card calendar collection placed on separate boards. The previous ones were trendy between the two wars (as a kind of advertisement), the latter prevalent between the 1960s and 1990s.



Fig. 4. Old dental tools, teeth with peculiar anatomy, toothpowder containers



Fig. 5. Poster collection and enameled board for advertising (at the left edge)

On further wall boards there are contemporary dental advertising postcards, stamps, and old recipes. The boards are designed so that they can be easily accessed and redesigned at any time. The boards are equipped as well with UV-protective glass.

Thus, this part of the museum mainly contains documents related to dentistry and some interesting tools and artefacts.

The other part of the faculty's museum was completed in 2017. This is separated from the part described earlier on purpose. It is located as well in the entry on the first floor of the new building and is separated by glass walls. We have set up a contemporary dental office, which spans through several eras approx. between 1880 and 1945. It has three dental units, the first of it is a dental chair with crank.



Fig. 6. Our recon-bill collection



Fig. 7. A dental office equipped with contemporary units, machinery and tools from the 1880s till 1940s

Next to it there is a foot-operated drill, used in the 1880s-90s. The next unit already used oil pump and electric motor for drilling, which is mounted on a stand and dates from the 1920s. The third unit and machinery were made in the late 1930s and here a uniform device can already be seen. In other words, the machine is equipped with a tool tray, drills, a spittoon, water syringe and a lamp. This unit may have belonged to Professor Csilléry. There is an old Art Nouveau medical cabinet in the display area, filled with contemporary medications, tools, filling and impression materials. You can also see a sterilizer from the 1950s as well as a large quartz lamp with goggles and a wall clock telling the time of quartzing. Furthermore, on the wall is a medical diploma from 1940, issued by the Royal Hungarian Tisza István University of Debrecen, as well as a map of historical Hungary besides the advertising posters and photos. A drawing



Fig. 8. Foot-operated drill and chair with crank from the 1880s to 1890s

of a caricaturist doctor is likewise presented. We also put up an old information poster (from 1940s) that may have been in a dental waiting room at the time. These are all original and are similarly under UV-protected glass. We swung a contemporary medical gown and a gauze mask on an old hanger. Lighting is provided by spotlights. This part of the museum is placed fortunately as many patients walk besides it and attracts their attention. It is an eye-catcher mainly for children and the elderly.

Many ask how do we obtain so many items? Not one elderly dentist sent us their old and precious tools and equipment, led by the idea that they land in a good place. They had a hard time parting from them, there were some who waited years, wondering if to send them. The museum has also grown through national and international online shopping.

There were also interesting cases. From old dental tools advertised on an internet marketplace in Transdanubia revealed that they belong to our first professor to András Csilléry (1935-44). They were found in the attic of a house in Debrecen, in a small suitcase wrapped in a sack. It also turned out that they were sold by an antiquarian in Debrecen. After buying them, they were brought into the faculty by the local antique dealer himself. The fact that András Csilléry's copper nameplate was also in the suitcase helped the identification.

In general, it can be stated, that we collect principally Hungarian-related items and documents, thus dental hungaricums are in the first place. Another key aspect is that we only place original items into the museum, even if they are worn, or faded. We merely clean them, but do not renovate, or restore them.

Hopefully our stock will continue to grow in the future and more and more people will come and see our exhibition. Nowadays this is perhaps the most complete assembly of dental history in Hungary.