Hahnemann's First Provings

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Abstract: This essay explores the early provings of Hahnemann and attempts to place them into some kind of historical and conceptual context.
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"From the earliest beginnings until now, the materia medica has consisted only of false suppositions and fancies, which is as good as no materia medica at all." [The Organon, v.110]

"Medicine tests [provings] constitute one of the most critical points of Hahnemann's teachings. This grandiose attempt to acquire unhypothetical medical experience was outwardly justified by the complete lack of objective methods of investigation and experimental systems in those days...[Hahnemann had] the courage to break away from hypotheses and systems..." [Gumpert, 122]

Introduction

The first provings of Hahnemann really need to be measured in two ways... first, against what came after them and the way homeopathy unfolded forwards from that point, which is the view most homeopaths adopt; and second, against what existed before the provings and where he got his remedies from. The plain fact is that most of the remedies initially came from the allopathic materia medica. Without doubt also, translation work opened up for him *"a world rich in the most glorious prospects,"* [Goethe] of medical data, therapeutic hints, clinical observations and notes about drug actions, which must have enormously enriched his medical thinking and which practically no one else was party to. So, Hahnemann must have been imbibing a wealth of clinical and therapeutic ideas from his many translations and historical researches, during the 1780s and 1790s.

Measuring backwards from what followed is an inherently deceptive approach as it fails to fully illuminate certain crucial aspects of the project as it must have been conceived in Hahnemann's mind. The idea of experimentation on healthy subjects was more or less floating in the air in that epoch: Haller expressed it clearly, Stork also and Alexander, for example, made in 1766 a proving of *Camphora* some years before Hahnemann's experiment with Cinchona bark. The idea of conducting provings probably came to Hahnemann from Von Haller:

> *"Indeed, a medicine must first of all be essayed in a healthy body, without any foreign admixture; when the odour and taste have been examined, a small dose must be taken, and attention must be paid to every change that occurs, to the pulse, the temperature, respiration and excretions. Then, having examined the symptoms encountered in the healthy person, one may proceed to trials in the body of a sick person." [von Haller, 12]*

However, four key points seem clear about the first provings. Firstly, they derived from his studies and detailed knowledge of drugs in use at the time; secondly, that as the project evolved empirically Hahnemann must have been made acutely aware that the number, subtlety and diversity of symptoms produced by a drug were much greater than the clinical records had initially suggested; thirdly, that he involved members of his family and circle of close friends from an early stage: *"the family... and every free moment of every one of them, from the oldest to the youngest, was made use of for the testing of medicines and the gathering of the most precise information on their observed effects."* [Gumpert, 114] Fourthly, Hahnemann realized that the instructions to provers had to involve them recording everything, every subtle change in their psycho-physical totality and consciousness and not just the main physical symptoms. Hahnemann gives *"pure experiment, careful observation and accurate experience alone,"* [Gumpert, 144] as the sole determining factors that can generate any authentic medical theory. He *"demanded a complete break with everything,"* [Gumpert,

149] that had gone before.

Hahnemann sought *"to discover the specific relations of certain medicines to certain diseases, to certain organs and tissues, Hahnemann strove to do away with the blind chimney sweeper's methods of dulling symptoms."* [Gumpert, 99] Hahnemann *"instituted "provings" of drugs upon himself, members of his family, friends, students and fellow practitioners, keeping all under the most rigid scrutiny and control, and carefully recording every fact and the conditions under which it was elicited."* [Close, 147-8]

"If one has tested a considerable number of simple medicines on healthy people in this way... then one has for the first time a true materia medica: a collection of the authentic, pure, reliable effects of simple medicinal substances in themselves; a natural pharmacopoeia..." [*The Organon*, v.143]

The second and fourth points meant that Hahnemann was more or less forced into a deeper appreciation of the reality of holism in the organism simply by conducting provings, in other words from his empirical studies. This must have been a wholly unexpected aspect for him. What started as merely a test of one drug soon became a revelation as it *"ceased to be a little trickle...it became a broad flood,"* [Wells] and an entirely new materia medica took birth, unfolding before him in incredible and undreamt-of detail. The third point suggests that he realized at a very early stage that a drug's impact upon the female system is rather different from its impact upon the male, and though complementary to each other, these two aspects of a proving reflect entirely different dimensions of the same drug. From the minute details of a proving, a new sense of completeness eventually developed in his mind, so spawning a synthesis: the drug picture. Likewise, in accordance with his initial aim in conducting provings, Hahnemann obtained for each drug a reliable database, based on experiment and in which personal responses as well as general effects were all compiled into the final picture.

The importance of the first point simply means that Hahnemann obtained his first hunches about the therapeutic activity of drugs partly from using them himself, and partly *"as Hahnemann explored the muttering tomb,"* [Auden, New Year Letter, 217] of his translation work, during which Hahnemann 'saw into' the apparent sphere of action of a drug from reading the accounts of many others in the past who had observed their action or seen them cure specific diseases or symptom clusters. Thus, Hahnemann probably realized in advance of the actual provings that most drugs tend to have a multifaceted action upon the organism.

Always intimately tied in with his views of drugs was his interest in and study of poisonings: *"I found from the toxicological reports of earlier writers that the effects of large quantities of noxious substances ingested by healthy people...largely coincided with my own findings from experiments with those substances on myself or other healthy people."* [Hahnemann, 1810, v.110] *"Hahnemann collected histories of cases of poisoning. His purpose was to establish a physiological doctrine of medical remedies, free from all suppositions, and based solely on experiments."* [Gumpert, 92] The proving is in fact merely a mild and subtle form of poisoning, what we might term a 'micro-poisoning,' during which the power of the drug 'takes hold' of the prover and so reveals its therapeutic 'sphere of action'.

First Proving

His studies of drugs had led him to the realization that 'single drugs in moderate doses' offered up the best if not the only hope of creating a gentle and effective system of curative medicine. That point implicitly involved a prior and firm rejection of the Galenic diktat of using mixed drugs in strong doses, because instinctively and temperamentally Hahnemann was *"a most passionate opponent of mixed doses that contained a large number of ingredients."* [Gumpert, 96] This sets the scene for the first proving, of *Cinchona* in 1790, deriving as it did both from a translation work and from his own intimate knowledge and personal use of the drug in question. Here we have to note a possible peculiar sensitivity of Hahnemann himself to Cinchona bark, as he had contracted malaria in his youth, during his Hermanstadt journey.

It is important to recall that the first proving was not actually designed at the outset to study the effect of a drug on the entire human system, to prove a drug, as is often claimed. No, rather it was specifically designed to test a claim by Cullen that Cinchona acts curatively on fever because of its bitter action on the stomach. It is precisely this point which he set about to test for himself: *"in the following year, 1790, Hahnemann translated Cullen's Materia Medica. Cullen (II. 108) explains the efficacy of Cinchona in intermittent fever by the 'strengthening power it exerts on the stomach,' and adds, that Hahnemann has never met with anything in any book which made him doubt the truth of his view."* [Ameke, 62] It is this point which inspired Hahnemann to see if the drug would indeed affect the stomach as Cullen suggested. To his surprise, Hahnemann found it did not do that and his testing of it proved to be a revelation in other ways.

Hahnemann thus resolved to test the drug on himself. He *"criticised the opinion of Cullen that the action of Peruvian bark [quinine] was that of a tonic to the stomach...and proceeded to argue that quinine*

acts in malaria because in healthy people it can produce symptoms similar to intermittent fever." [Bodman, 3-4] In this first proving experiment, Hahnemann observed symptoms broadly similar to those of malaria, including spasms and fever. [Cook, 59; Haehl, I, 37, 39] With *Cinchona*, Hahnemann had *"produced in himself the symptoms of intermittent fever."* [Haehl, vol. 1, 39]

Much has been written about the first proving that need not be repeated here, but the main consequence of it conceptually for Hahnemann was that after 'single drugs in moderate doses,' the first proving firmly and irreversibly established his third axiom of homeopathy: the law of similars, and realization of its significance must have finally extinguished any remaining fragmentary attachments he may still have harboured concerning the therapeutic possibilities of contraries: *"dying to embers from their native fire!"* [Keats, line 366] The *"similia similibus principle,"* [Gumpert, 96] was indeed Hahnemann's *"brilliance of idea,"* [Gumpert, 97] and was also *"the doctrine which was to redeem him from the medical nihilism of despair."* [Gumpert, 104] This new principle, *"was to him what the falling apple was to Newton, and the swinging lamp in the Baptistery at Pisa was to Galileo."* [Dudgeon, xxi] As Dudgeon says, *"from this single experiment his mind appears to have been impressed with the conviction that the pathogenetic effects of medicines would give the key to their therapeutic powers."* [Dudgeon, xxi]

With the three axioms comprising the core of his newly emerging system: single drugs, moderate doses and similars, the drug proving thus became the fourth homeopathic axiom and around these axioms homeopathy not only more sharply crystallized and defined its doctrines and methods, but in this manner it finally separated itself entirely from its Galenic predecessor, emerging *"from the ashes as a new phoenix,"* [Hirsch, et al] and shaking off any remaining association with the dreaded 'bleed and purge' method of mixed drugs in high doses. It was this latter method that Hahnemann had so detested and which had filled him with horror even from his first medical lectures in Leipzig and Vienna, for he was indeed, *"a most passionate opponent of mixed doses that contained a large number of ingredients."* [Gumpert, 96]

1790s Provings

Now, it would seem, Samuel Hahnemann towered like a colossus over the medical past and potentially over its entire future. It was doubtless at this *"a crucial moment,"* [Doren, 7] that Hahnemann finally becomes a truly great pioneer, engaged in something momentous, prior to which he was only a potentially important figure. At this point, Hahnemann probably first received *"a hint of his future greatness"* [Doren, p.7], because it can hardly have escaped his attention that here was a magnificent moment, a turning point not only of solving a huge problem he had first set out to explore in 1783 when he gave up medical practice, but because in those moments he no doubt heard the *"loud hymns that were the royal wives of silence?"* [Auden, Kairos & Logos, 309] and saw the *"shadows and sunny glimmerings"* [Palgrave, Wordsworth] of a new plan before him, the germ of an entirely new system pinned out like an architect's drawing: *"my system of medicine has nothing in common with the ordinary medical art, but is in every respect its exact opposite...the new method of treatment, called homeopathy, being the exact opposite of the ordinary medical art hitherto practised, has no preparations that it could give to the apothecary, has no compound remedies..."* [Gumpert, 176-7] Hahnemann had also manifested, *"the courage to break away from hypotheses and systems...zones fatal to the human spirit."* [Gumpert, 122]

All Hahnemann now needed were more provings—many more provings—and the opportunity to utilize these newly proven drugs on patients, on actual cases of sickness. *"Day after day, Hahnemann tested medicines on himself and others. He collected histories of cases of poisoning. His purpose was to establish a...doctrine of medical remedies, free from all suppositions, and based solely on experiments."* [Gumpert, 92]

"Many before Hahnemann, from Hippocrates down, had glimpses of the law [of similars], and some had tried to make use of it therapeutically; but all had failed because of their inability to properly graduate and adapt the dose." [Close, 1924, p. 215]

The bright prospect that emerged from the provings meant that everything that had gone before was only theoretical, but now Hahnemann stood on the brink of a new practical method and the exultation of being able to go beyond and take forward the work of his vitalist predecessors, Stahl, van Helmont and Paracelsus [*"Paracelsus's system...was a rude form of homoeopathy...but it was not equal in value to Hahnemann's system..."* [Dudgeon, 14]] in being able to adapt that previously elusive and will-o-the-wisp 'law of similars' into a practical working method, rather than just a theoretical aim, a hopelessly wistful medical dream: *"Hahnemann fought with redoubled energy for the purity of medicine,"* [Gumpert, 96] and *"strove to do away with the blind chimney sweeper's methods of dulling symptoms."* [Gumpert, 99] The grim and ground-breaking task before him in the 1790s was therefore to conduct as many provings as possible. And that is precisely what Hahnemann did: *"undeterred by the magnitude of the task, Hahnemann set about creating a materia*

medica which should embody the facts of drug action upon the healthy." [Close, 147]

It is worth stating that very little of a hard factual nature is known about precisely which drugs Hahnemann proved and when. We have to try to piece that together from only *"a few crumbs."* [Adams] Although in 1790 Hahnemann had only proved one drug in Cinchona, yet he had proved 27 by 1805, when he published his Fragmenta: *"Hahnemann's 'Fragmenta de viribus medicamentorum positivis'... gives us, for the first time, an insight into the remarkable, and so far unknown, methods of investigation, which Hahnemann employed. It supplies reports on the tests of twenty seven medicines, the results of years of experiment on himself and his family."* [Gumpert, 122]

Given that the *Fragmenta* probably contained work completed up to the year 1804, when Hahnemann settled in Torgau, then he had proved 27 drugs in only 14 years...almost two per year. Even by modern standards that is impressive progress. Indeed, such impressive progress for a *"a cautious man, notwithstanding his utmost circumspection"* [Wollstonecraft, p.12] like Hahnemann suggests that he knew very clearly in his own mind that he was engaged in something *"supremely important,"* [Columbia, 7] and which demanded his complete attention at all times. Otherwise, such progress would inevitably have been slower, far less impressive, less driven and presumably much more haphazard.

The actual situation is complicated by the fact that in the same decade Hahnemann was moving about all over Saxony with his growing family. The decade of the 1790s saw Hahnemann living in many different places and coincides with his most intense period of *"wandering, yearning, curious—with restless explorations."* [Whitman, line 91] Hahnemann changed town or residence fifteen times between 1789 and 1805: he lived in Leipzig, [1789-92], then *"in 1791, poverty compelled him to remove from Leipzig to the little village of Stotteritz."* [Bradford] In 1792 Hahnemann was in Gotha [1792], then Georgenthal [summer 1792 to May 1793], nursing Klockenbring; Molschleben [1793-4], Gottingen [1794], Pyrmont [Oct 1794-Jan 1795], Wolfenbuttel [1795], Brunswick [1795-6], Koenigslutter [1796-8], Hamburg, Altona [summer 1799], Molln, near Hamburg [Sept 1800-1801], Machern & Eilenberg, nr Leipzig [1801], Dessau [1802-4], Torgau [June 1805 to summer 1811].

It is also complicated by the fact that in 1792-3, for almost a whole year, Hahnemann was resident in Georgenthal treating the insane patient, Herr Klockenbring. All such factors reduce the time Hahnemann could have devoted solely to provings to something like twelve or thirteen years and means he either proved several drugs back-to-back or he managed to prove several simultaneously using different groups of people. Furthermore, the remedies in the *Fragmenta* do contain a few surprises and it is very informative for us to scour the 1790 decade for other hints of what remedies Hahnemann was scrutinizing at what point. For example, Bradford mentions [p.57] that Hahnemann was using *Hepar sulphuris c.* in 1794.

In 1796, in his "Essay on a New Principle," Hahnemann mentions the following 46 remedies, of which 19 [41.3%] later appear in the *Fragmenta* as fully proven drugs: *Nux vomica* [p.318 p.278] *Mercurius* [287], *Chamomilla* [267], *Achillea* [269], *Valeriana* [269], *Viscum* [269], *Conium* [270], *Aethusa* [271], *Cicuta* [271], *Cocculus* [271], *Paris* [271], *Coffee* [271], *Dulcamara* [272], *Belladonna* [273], *Hyoscyamus* [275], *Stramonium* [276], *Tabacum* [277], *Ignatia* [279], *Digitalis* [279], *Viola* [281], *Ipecac* [281], *Arbutus* [282], *Rhododendron* [282], *Ledum* [282], *Opium* [283], *Plumbum* [287], *Arsenicum* [291], *Taxus* [290], *Aconite* [291], *Helleborus* [292], *Anemone* [293], *Geum* [293], *Drosera* [294], *Sambucus*, [295], *Rhus toxicodendron* [295], *Camphor* [295], *Ulmus* [298], *Cannabis* [298], *Crocus* [298], *Scilla* [299], *Veratrum album* [303], *Sabadilla* [302], *Agaricus* [303], *Nux moschata* [303], *Rheum* [Rhubarb] [303].

That *Valeriana, Hyoscyamus, Stramonium, Ignatia, Mercury* and *Belladonna* were among the first drugs proved in the 1790s might arouse curiosity and raise a few eyebrows. It somehow implies that Hahnemann regarded such predominantly 'mental' drugs, and perhaps mental symptoms in general, as highly important aspects of health and sickness in general. The degree to which this might also derive in part from his treatment of Klockenbring in 1792-3 seems also to be an interesting point to raise. After the *Cinchona* proving of 1790 Hahnemann spent some time treating an insane man in 1792-3, but no mention is made of remedies...then in 1795 Hahnemann mentions remedies like *Ignatia* and *Hyoscyamus* which might have been needed for his insane case; it is thus tempting to presume some undisclosed connection between that insane case of 1792-3 and his apparent use of remedies like *Hyoscyamus, Stramonium* and *Ignatia* with such very strong mental profiles. It also seems to suggest *"entirely changed points of view,"* [Whitman, lines 8-9] with him coming to regard mental symptoms as very valuable in all remedies around this time. It implies that Hahnemann was widening his concept of the nature of sickness beyond a small compass of physical symptoms, which was at that time the standard allopathic conception in which he had been trained. It is difficult to discern exactly when Hahnemann abandoned specific allopathic concepts and then placed his adherence solely upon specifically homeopathic

ones. All these conceptual changes arguably derive from the provings.

The drugs in this list are ones Hahnemann was using, ones he had read about and had an interest in, and some that he was proving or had proved. These were all drugs that stood out as significant to him; they were clearly all on his 'shopping list' for deeper investigation. It is clear that Hahnemann was focused at this time on 40-50 drugs which he believed, when used singly, acted by similars and which he could add to his growing materia medica.

In 1798, the remedies mentioned in the essay "Antidotes to Some Heroic Vegetable Substances," [*Lesser Writings*, pp.322-29] are as follows: *Camphor, Mezereum, Coffea, Ignatia, Veratrum album, Gamboja, Antimonium tartaricum, Stramonium, Cocculus indicus, Arnica, Opium, Cantharis, Scilla* - thirteen remedies of which nine [69%] appear also fully proved in the *Fragmenta* of 1805.

The *Fragmenta*

The 27 drugs proved in the *Fragmenta* are as follows [Haehl, vol 2, p.82]:
(followed by number of symptoms obtained by Hahnemann/ and those by others)

Aconitum napellus 138/75 (Hahnemann got 65% of symptoms)
Acris tinctura (*Causticum*) 30/0 (Hahnemann got 100% of symptoms)
Arnica montana 117/33 (Hahnemann got 78% of symptoms)
Belladonna 101/304 (Hahnemann got 25% of symptoms)
Camphora 73/74 (Hahnemann got 50% of symptoms)
Cantharis 20/74 (not listed by Bradford, p.80) (Hahnemann got 21.3% of symptoms)
Capsicum annuum 174/3 (Hahnemann got 98% of symptoms)
Chamomilla 272/3 (Hahnemann got 99% of symptoms)
Cinchona 122/99 (Hahnemann got 55% of symptoms)
Cocculus 156/6 (Hahnemann got 96.3% of symptoms)
Copaifera balsamum 12/8 (Hahnemann got 60% of symptoms)
Cuprum vitriolatum 29/38 (Hahnemann got 43.3% of symptoms)
Digitalis 23/33 (Hahnemann got 41% of symptoms)
Drosera 36/4 (Hahnemann got 90% of symptoms)
Hyoscyamus 45/290 (Hahnemann got 13.4% of symptoms) (104/478 according to Seror)
Ignatia 157/19 (Hahnemann got 89.2% of symptoms)
Ipecac 70/13 (Hahnemann got 84.3% of symptoms)
Ledum 75/5 (Hahnemann got 93.8% of symptoms)
Helleborus 32/25 (Hahnemann got 56% of symptoms)
Mezereum 6/34 (Hahnemann got 15% of symptoms)
Nux vomica 257/51 (Hahnemann got 83.4% of symptoms)
(*Papaver somniferum*) *Opium* 82/192 (Hahnemann got 47% of symptoms)
Pulsatilla 280/29 (Hahnemann got 90.6% of symptoms)
Rheum 39/13 (Hahnemann got 75% of symptoms)
Stramonium 59/157 (Hahnemann got 51% of symptoms)
Valeriana 25/10 (Hahnemann got 71.4% of symptoms)
Veratrum album 161/106 (Hahnemann got 60.3% of symptoms)

As we can see, the number of symptoms which Hahnemann recorded for each drug ranges from 12 for *Copaifera* to 280 for *Pulsatilla*. Perhaps as an insight into his personality, or constitutional type, Hahnemann himself obtained the maximum number of symptoms from *Chamomilla, Pulsatilla* and *Nux vomica;* and the least number from *Cantharis, Copaifera, Digitalis* and *Valeriana*.

The *Materia Medica Pura*

This work was published 1811-31, and contains the following 65 fully proven drugs:

Aconitum napellus, Ambra grisea, Angustura, Argentum, Arnica, Arsenicum, Asarum, Aurum, Belladonna, Bismuthum, Bryonia, Calcarea acetica, Camphora, Cannabis sativa, Capsicum annuum, Carbo animalis, Carbo vegetabilis, Chamomilla, Chelidonium, China, Cicuta virosa, Cina, Cocculus, Colocynthis, Conium, Cyclamen europaeum, Digitalis, Drosera rotundifolia, Dulcamara, Euphrasia officinalis, Ferrum, Guaiacum, Helleborus niger, Hepar sulphuris calcareum, Hyoscyamus, Ignatia, Ledum, Magnes, Magnetis polus arcticus, Magnetis polus australis, Menyanthes trifoliate, Mercurius, Moschus, Muriaticum acidum, Nux vomica, Oleander, Opium, Phosphoricum acidum, Pulsatilla, Rheum, Rhus, Ruta, Sambucus, Sarsaparilla, Scilla, Spigelia, Spongia, Stannum, Staphisagria, Stramonium, Sulphur, Taraxacum, Thuja, Veratrum album, Verbascum.

The Chronic Diseases

Contents of *The Chronic Diseases* [1829]:

Agaricus, Alumina, Ammon carb, Ammon mur, Anacard, Ant cCrud, Arsenic, Aurum, Aur mur, Bar c, Borax, Calc carb, Carb-an, Carb-v, Caustic, Clem,

Coloc, Conium, Cuprum, Digitalis, Dulc, Euphorb, Graph, Guiacum, Hepar Sulph, Iodium, Kali-c, Lyc, Mag-c, Mag-m, Manganum, Mez, Muriat ac, Natr carb, Natr mur, Nitr ac, Nitrum, Petroleum, Phosphorus, Phos ac, Platina, Sars, Sepia, Silicea, Stannum, Sulph, Sul-ac, Zincum [48 drugs]

A comparison of the remedies listed in the *Fragmenta*, the *Materia Medica Pura* and *The Chronic Diseases* is most informative and *"throws a totally different light on,"* [Berger] some interesting questions about Hahnemann's methods and why certain remedies seem to 'come in and then go out' of favor. This is a very interesting study and presumably throws to light aspects of his changing views as the provings progressed. My own tentative view of this is that though Hahnemann was initially excited by every new proving, as time wore on Hahnemann sometimes saw few applications, or few successful applications, of some drugs in cases of sickness.

In this sense, his initial excitement for a freshly proven drug must have given way to a sense of disappointment about, say, its limited therapeutic application. In such an eventuality Hahnemann was forced to downgrade such remedies as 'lesser' while retaining his enthusiasm for those 'higher' remedies, which tended to match many disease states and which had thus shown an ability to produce some successful cures. This seems be the best explanation of why remedies do appear to come and go across the visor of homeopathy as it evolved. I hold this view primarily because Hahnemann was above all else an empirical and pragmatic man and nothing seemed to have impressed him more than results. He wished for a medicine *"without the superfluous rubbish of hypotheses."* [Gumpert, 26] Everything *"that savoured of theory was swept dramatically out of his mind. In his opinion there was only one criterion: success."* [Gumpert, 24] It also reveals the basic nature of the materia medica as it exists today with some 50 or 100 remedies doing most of the work and dozens of others that are very rarely used. That the materia medica is like this would simply seem to be an *"inexorable law of nature."* [Harding, 20]

Another issue concerns the provings Hahnemann published. For example, why does Hahnemann fail to include the *Fragmenta* drugs in the *Materia Medica Pura* or *The Chronic Diseases*? It seems strange that Hahnemann did not aggregate these separate publications as he proceeded into a growing and expanding work showing all provings in one volume - a growing homeopathic materia medica. Hahnemann even updated the MMP and CD *as separate works* as time went on and failed to add some of the drugs in the *Fragmenta*. This would seem to reflect a mysterious and undisclosed attitude on Hahnemann's part in relation to the provings. Why leave drugs out of later works that were fully proved in earlier publications? It does not seem to make any sense.

The following analysis of the drugs Hahnemann proved yields many interesting facets of this subject:

1. Remedies mentioned in 1796-8 and then appearing in the *Fragmenta* are:
   acon, bell, canth, camph, cocc, dig, dros, hell, hyos, ign, ledum, mez, nux-v, opium, rheum, stram, val, veratr = 19/27 or 70.4% match between previous mention and proving in *Fragmenta.*

2. Remedies mentioned in 1796-8 and appearing in *MMP*:
   acon, arn, bell, cann, camph, canth, cham, cicuta, cocc, con, dig, dros, dulc, hell, hyos, ign, ledum, merc, nux v, opium, rheum, sambuc, scilla, stram, taxus, val, veratr = 27/65 or 41.54% match between previous mention and proving in *MMP*

3. Remedies mentioned in 1796-8 and appearing in *CD:*
   Dig, dulc, agar, arsen, con, hepar, mez = 7/48 or 14.6% match between previous mention and proving in *CD.*

4. Remedies mentioned 1790s but never proved by Hahnemann:
   achillea, aethusa, anemone, arbutus, crocus, gamboja, geum, paris, plumbum, rhodo, sabadilla, tabacum, taxus, ulmus, viola, viscum = 16/51 or 31.4% mentioned in 1790s but never proved later

5. Remedies in *Fragmenta* never previously mentioned:
   caust, copaifera, cupr, puls = 4/27 or 14.8% no previous mention and proving in *Fragmenta*

6. Remedies in *MMP* and never previously mentioned:
   ambra, argent, angustura, asaraum, aurum, bism, bry, calc-ac, carb an, carb veg, chel, cina, coloc, cycl, euphras, ferrum, guiac, magnetis arct, magnetis austr, manganum, mur ac, oleandr, phos ac, puls, ruta, sarsap, spig, spong, stann, staph, sul, thuja, verbasc = 35/65 or 53.85% of *MMP* Remedies never previously mentioned

7. Remedies common to *Fragmenta* and *MMP*:
   acon, arn, bell, camph, cham, china, coccul, copaifera, dig, dros, hell, hyos, ign, ipecac, ledum, nux v, opium, puls, rheum, stram, val = 22/65 or 33.85% overlap between *Fragmenta* and *MMP*

8. Remedies in *CD* also in *MMP*:
aur, carb an, carb v, coloc, con, dig, dulc, guiac, hep, manganum, mur ac, phos ac, sars, stram, sulph = 15/48 or 31.25% overlap between *MMP* and *CD*

9. Remedies in *Fragmenta* and *CD*:
caust, cupr, dig, mez = 4/48 or 8.3% overlap *Fragmenta* to *CD*

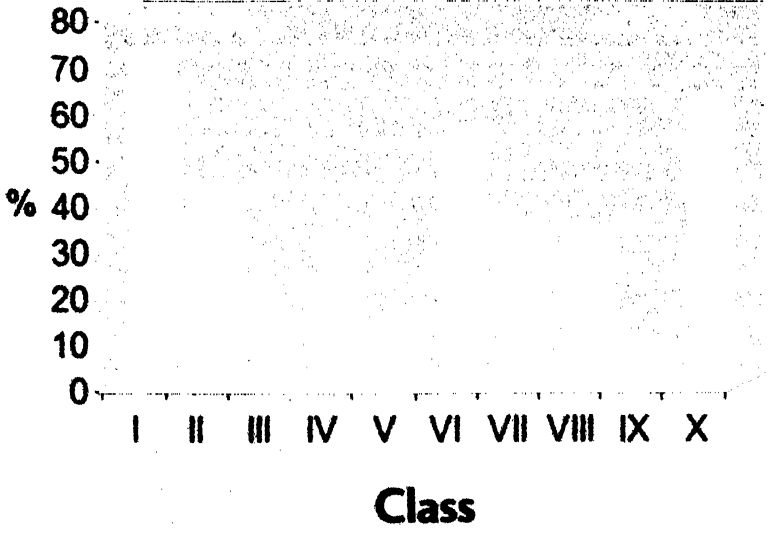
10. Remedies with no previous mention but in *CD*:
agar, alumina, ammon carb, ammon mur, anac, aur-m, bar-c, borax, calc-c, clematis, coloc, euphorb, graph, iod, kali-c, lyc, mag-c, mag-m, nat-c, nat-m, nit ac, nitrum, petr, phos, platin, sep, sil, sul-ac, zinc = 29/48 or 60.42% *CD* remedies totally new and previously unmentioned

This data can be summarized in Tabular form and presented as a bar chart:

	ratio	%	status
I	19/27	70.4	Previous in Fragmenta
II	27/65	41.5	Previous in MMP
III	7/48	14.6	Previous in CD
IV	16/51	31.4	Mentioned but unproved
V	4/27	14.8	Unmentioned in Fragmenta
VI	35/65	53.85	Unmentioned in MMP
VII	22/65	33.85	In Fragmenta and MMP
VIII	15/48	31.25	In MMP and CD
IX	4/48	8.3	In Fragmenta and CD
X	29/48	60.42	Unmentioned but in CD

Interpretation of the data

First Provings



The data shows the following points:

1. As 70% of the remedies mentioned in the 1790s later appear in the *Fragmenta*, this justifies the view that the drugs Hahnemann was studying and mentioning in that decade can be regarded as reliably foreshadowing what was to appear later in the *Fragmenta*. Because most of those drugs Hahnemann mentioned in 1795-8 later appeared in the *Fragmenta* of 1805, it suggests that the drugs mentioned were ones Hahnemann knew about and used within allopathy as well as ones Hahnemann read about in his translation work. In both cases, they must have held some therapeutic promise in his estimation, and that is why they attracted his attention, were mentioned by him, and were then proved.

2. However, this 70% foreshadowing of the *Fragmenta* then drops to only 41% when we consider how much influence those drugs mentioned in the 1790s had on the *MMP*. Only 41% of such drugs mentioned then appeared later in the *MMP*. This shows a diminishing influence of the 1790s drugs in his work by 1810-1. It shows Hahnemann was moving on and extending his interest to other drugs, casting his net ever wider, as would be natural.

3. When we then compare the drugs mentioned in the 1790s to those in the *CD*, we find only 7 out of 48 or 14.6%. Again this reinforces the view that the remedies Hahnemann was studying in the 1790s had only a short-lived influence and by 1829 that influence had diminished considerably. This drop from 71% to 41% and then to 14.6% shows a definite pattern in the decline in importance of the 1790s drugs. This pattern again reflects his move to examining new drugs not mentioned in the 1790s.

4. Likewise, we can say that while only 14.8% of the drugs in the *Fragmenta* had never been mentioned or were completely new, this figure rises to 54% when we look at the *MMP*, which contains 35 entirely new drugs out of a total of 65. Arguably this shows that his search for new drugs had indeed been extended and had revealed many new ones in the period

between the 1805 *Fragmenta* and the *MMP* of 1810-11. It is also an impressive feat to have found and proved 36 previously unmentioned drugs in only 5 years.

5. As with the shift from 1790s drugs to the *Fragmenta*, so there is a similar crossover effect between *Fragmenta* and *MMP*. Some 34% of the drugs in the *MMP* are also in the *Fragmenta* which shows a shadow effect transferred from 1805 to 1810-11.

6. There is a similar overlap of 31% between *MMP* and *CD*, even though only 8% of the remedies in the *CD* are common to the *Fragmenta* [4 out of 48].

7. By the time of the *CD* we see that almost two-thirds of the drugs in it [60.4%] are completely new: 29 out of 48 drugs. This shows Hahnemann was, between 1811 and 1829, investigating entirely new drugs. However, it seems only fair to add that the *CD* rests on an entirely new premise—the miasm theory—and thus it is not so much an extension of the previous provings as a completely new materia medica in its own right. In truth, it is a mixture of both. Clearly, most [2/3] of the drugs in the *CD* are ones Hahnemann must have discovered and proved between 1810-11 and 1829, or were ones which brought themselves to his sustained attention in some way during that period.

8. Finally, there are those remedies mentioned in the 1790s but which never appear in any of Hahnemann's provings: 16 out of 51 = 31%. That's quite a high percentage and probably shows that these drugs, for some reason or another, did not show themselves suitable or broad enough for his use. Many of them were eventually adopted into homeopathy or proved at a later stage; for example, *Sabadilla, Tabacum* and *Plumbum*. Such remedies presumably, as Hahnemann saw it, failed to fulfill their original promise.

Hahnemann's Empirical Stance

Hahnemann's venture into the proving of drugs can be justifiably regarded as an example of his impeccable credentials as a leading experimentalist of his day. This empirical approach has become so dominant in the last two centuries that it is easy for us today to lose sight of the revolutionary nature of this approach in the 1790s.

Hahnemann's attitude towards knowledge was very modern; he took a very scientific approach. To be regarded as *"fully successful, a scientific theory must provide us with a literally true description of what the world is like."* [Zynda] The *"acceptance of a scientific theory involves the belief that it is empirically adequate,"* [Zynda] which basically means it must be in accord with all the observations of the matter concerned, not just some of them or some of them some of the time. A scientific theory *"is "empirically adequate" if it gets things right about the observable phenomena in nature."* [Zynda] What counts as "observable" *"is what could be observed by a suitably placed being with sensory abilities similar to those characteristic of human beings..."* [Zynda] This attitude is called, *"Sola Experientia: any claim to knowledge, any support for opinion, must come from experience; experience trumps all."* [Van Fraassen; 120] *"The empirical sciences do live by the rule of Sola Experientia: nothing trumps experience. The bottom line is agreement from experimental and observational fact."* [Van Fraassen; 152] For Hahnemann experience did trump all. Repeatedly in his writings, Hahnemann mentions observation and experience as the sole arbiters of truth, in contradistinction to the received authority and cherished theories of long-dead, revered figures from the medical past.

A 'good scientist' should be able to view all results, all patterns and all outcomes neutrally, willing and able to accept as valid any result. It is clear that Hahnemann was of this attitude as he changed his opinion many times, revealing his neutral stance. Rather than building a new medical system on fine-spun theories to which he doggedly clung, Hahnemann built a system on experiment, experience and meticulous observation.

Having said that, however, Hahnemann's discoveries found themselves strongly at variance with the orthodox medicine of his day. This inevitably placed him in an awkward position, in the position of a heretic. It is well-known that Hahnemann soon came to regard mainstream medicine as *"an ossified system,"* [Berlin, 1996; 62] badly in need of revision if not wholesale reform. Rebellion against such a *"formal and schematic orthodoxy"* [Berlin, 1996; 71] was therefore left to persons like himself, gifted persons who defied such dogma by *"a great act of rebellion."* [Berlin, 1996; 61] Hahnemann regarded mainstream medicine and its theories of health and disease as *"the integuments of orthodoxies which are the congealed answers to dead or obsolescent questions,"* [Berlin, 1996; 75] conformity which Hahnemann also regarded as a huge barrier to progress, because such a system not only inherently resists change, but it also seeks to thoroughly denounce those creative visionaries and *"their capacity to improvise."* [Berlin, 1996; 52] Such orthodoxy sought to have such visionaries *"slaughtered on the altar of some dogma"* [Berlin, 1996; 75] and *"brought into conformity with the new despotism."* [Berlin, 1996; 76]

Hahnemann regarded the ideas of allopathy as *"constructions of the intellect, something that was not*

found but made...an enormous fallacy," [Berlin, 1979; 301-2] and he therefore sought personally to *"break through the orthodoxy...[and] sweep away the painstaking edifices of their honourable but limited predecessors who...tend to imprison thought within their own tidy but fatally misconceived constructions."* [Berlin, 1996, 72] As far as Hahnemann was concerned, to *"confuse our own constructions with eternal laws or divine decrees is one of the most fatal delusions of men."* [Berlin, 1997a; 303] Such pretty formulas are *"artificial constructions, logical figments with no necessary relation to the outside world,"* [Berlin, 2000; 123] which always *"leave out the richest and most important part of human experience...daily life, history, human laws and institutions, the modes of human self- expression."* [Berlin, 2000; 110] In such a situation, for innovative and pioneering people like Hahnemann, then *"the Tree of Knowledge has killed the Tree of Life."* [Berlin, 1997a; 303] Thus, Hahnemann can be depicted as a man *"swimming against the current of his time,"* [Berlin, 1997b] not quite in his empirical stance, but certainly in his disputatious approach to adherents of mainstream medicine who refused to acknowledge the importance of his discoveries.

It is clear that Hahnemann was a rebel, or, more accurately, Hahnemann was rendered a rebel by the refusal of his medical confreres to accept his doctrines and methods into the mainstream. People like Hahnemann are born to rebel in a sense because of their innate pioneering genius. Such *"men of authentic genius are necessarily to a large degree destructive of past traditions...[such rebellious persons] always transform, upset and destroy." [Berlin, 1996; 70] Such rebels are "bound to subvert, break through, destroy, liberate, let in air from outside..."* [Berlin, 1996; 67]

Hahnemann doubtless sought, through his rampant empiricism, to invalidate *"the elegant euphemisms"* [Auden, Ode to Terminus, 809] of a hopeless theoretical medicine and *"cut the brambles of men's errors down."* [Auden, Luther, 301] Seen from without, then, Hahnemann's work in the creation of homeopathy mostly from observation and experiment, especially in the provings of medicines, has to be regarded as a truly scientific enterprise, and this renders Hahnemann a true scientist and homeopathy a true science.

This essay has hopefully provided a good insight into the 1790s and shone a light into a previously neglected decade in which Hahnemann was busy conducting the first provings and compiling his new materia medica. I have deliberately resisted any temptation to comment on the methods Hahnemann adopted for the provings, which in any case have been more than adequately commented on elsewhere.

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