HOMŒOPATHIC POSOLOGY *

The Evolution of Hahnemann's
"new altered but perfected method" †

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† Organon, 6th edition, §246 footnote

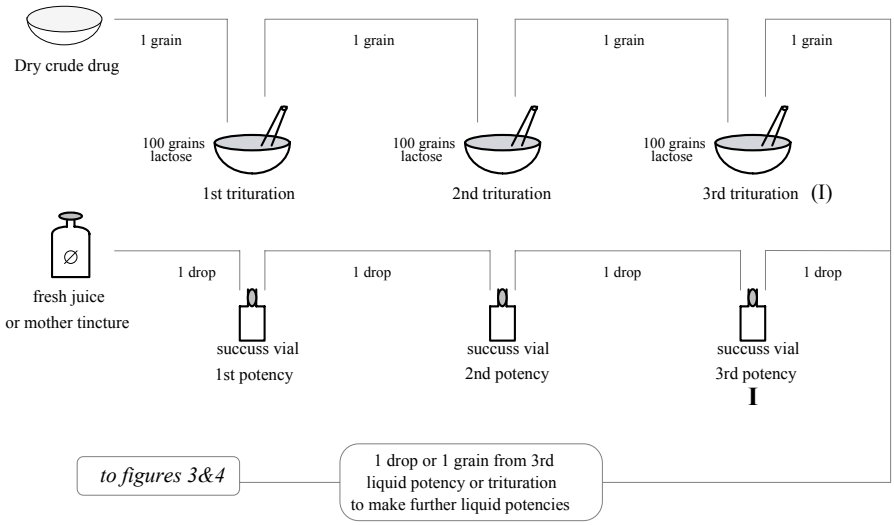
This discussion is intended for students already possessing a basic knowledge of pharmacy in general and homœopathic pharmacy in particular. The focus of this present work is the evolution of Hahnemann's posology from the preparation of potencies to dispensing methods he developed. It is recommended that the reader familiarise themselves with original sources referred to throughout this discussion.

First Preparations

Hahnemann began by using medicines diluted in the ratio of 1:100 — those today referred to as '*centesimal*' potencies. The basic procedure for processing from the crude drug is shown as follows:

Figure 1

Schematic representation of the general method of potentisation of solid (trituration) and liquid (succussion) substances as directed by Hahnemann in his earlier method. Note that all potentisation after the 3rd potency is done via serial dilution/succussion in a fluid vehicle.



These potencies have long formed the mainstream of homœopathic dispensing, such that potencies of this scale are referred to simply by the number of the potency, without needing to suffix the letter 'C' to indicate that they are centesimal. Thus, 30C can be written simply as 30; 200C as 200, etc. In Europe however, the practice is to attach the suffix 'C' only when the potencies are prepared according to the Hahnemannian (separate phial) method. Some manufacturers use the suffix 'CH' for 'Centesimal Hahnemanni'. I prefer to consider the separate phial method of Hahnemann as standard, using a suffix only for other methods of potency preparations e.g., 200K for Korsakovian, 200F for Finckean, etc. The reasons for such widespread general use of centesimal potencies, include the fact that Hahnemann's later method was not published until the publication of the 6th edition *Organon* in 1921 by Bœricke & Tafel of Philadelphia, with the resultant use of the centesimal potency scale by Dr.Kent (who died in 1916, and was therefore unaware of the 50-millesimal scale), and its extension into higher and higher potencies by the methods of the Russian General; Korsakoff (single phial method).

The two other scales of potency used in Homœopathy have their own conventions in terms of their written communication. Decimal scale potencies (prepared with a dilution factor of 1:10 at each step) are denoted by the suffix 'X' (Australia, England) or 'D' (France, Germany, and other European countries), such that the 30th decimal potency must be written as 30X or 30D to indicate its preparation. 50-Millesimal potencies are indicated by the prefix '0/', such that the 30th potency of the 50-Millesimal scale is written as 0/30. In England, the prefix 'LM' is used to indicate a 50-Millesimal potency (*eg*, 0/30 would be written as LM30), but this is not acceptable, since, as correctly pointed out by Dr.Hansjörg Heé of Switzerland, 'LM' is an abbreviation for "50 thousand",

whilst the potencies on this scale involve a 1:50,000 or in other words, a 50 *thousandth* dilution. In most parts of Europe, these preparations are referred to as 'Q' potencies, the Q representing the term "Quinquagiesmillesimal", the Latin term for "50 thousandth".

So, Hahnemann began to systematically prepare medicines by serial dilution (& succussion) in the proportion of 1:100, and this was kept up until the adoption of his latest method which he called the "new altered but perfected method", wherein he directed the preparation of medicines in the proportion of *approximately* 1:50,000.

The question to be asked is why did Hahnemann, after nearly half a century of applying the principle of Similia in clinical practice, seek to develop a new method of preparing and dispensing medicines? There is only one possible answer to this question. Hahnemann was not completely satisfied with the tools (the medicines) he was using in his application of Homœopathy; there was always some dissatisfaction with the amount of aggravation he observed, and he continually experimented with the adjustment of dose in his dispensing, and ultimately, in the method of manufacture of the potencies themselves.

This ongoing development in Hahnemann's posology was the result of his increasingly accurate prescribing, which especially coincided with the development and fine-tuning (from around the mid-1820's) of his *chronic disease theory* and its application to the case-taking and evaluation, resulting in Hahnemann seeking to match the entire array of *peculiar* or *characteristic* symptoms across the whole history of a patient's chronic illness (and thereby adding a *temporal* component in the determination of the *totality* of symptoms), thus making his prescribing much more accurate than it had been in similar cases previously.

Understandably, with growing accuracy in prescribing, Hahnemann increasingly found that the dose of medicine had to be reduced in order to avoid unnecessary aggravations and thereby adhere to the ideals expressed in § 2 of his *Organon of Medicine*. His initial experiments in dose reduction involved the prescribing of the homœopathically selected medicine in quantities of only a small portion of a drop.

Hahnemann's Potency Symbols

Hahnemann used a sequence of Roman numerals to represent the potencies he used, such that each single ascendant represented a rise in 10^{-6} or the 3rd centesimal potency. Thus the Roman numeral **I** represented the millionth attenuation (*i.e.,* six ciphers in the denominator; 10^{-6} or 3rd potency); the Roman numeral **II**, 10^{-12} or the 6th potency; the Roman numeral **III**, 10^{-18} or the 9th potency; **V** for the 10^{-30} or the 15th potency; and the **X** numeral represented the 30th potency, and so on. (*Chronic Diseases*, vol.1., p.149 footnote; p.150.) The following is a list of Roman numerals and the potencies they represent.

(Refer MMP, II, p.61 under Magnes; also throughout various remedies in MMP wherein he equates the 30th potency with decillionth and marks it with the roman numeral X; also see Organon, 5th ed., § 287 footnote)

I	=	millionth	=	10^{-6} = 3	.....(refer MMP, II, p.209 under Muriatic acid, 1826)
II	=	billionth	=	10^{-12} = 6	.....(refer MMP, II, p.270 under Oleander, 1830)
III	=	trillionth	=	10^{-18} = 9	
IV	=	quadrillionth	=	10^{-24} = 12	.....(refer MMP, I, p.117, under Arsenicum, 1833)
V	=	quintillionth	=	10^{-30} = 15	.....(refer MMP, I, p.117, under Arsenicum, 1833)
VI	=	sextillionth	=	10^{-36} = 18	.....(refer MMP, II, p.61, under Magnes, 1826)
VII	=	septillionth	=	10^{-42} = 21	
VIII	=	octillionth	=	10^{-48} = 24	.....(refer MMP, I, p.117, under Arsenicum, 1833)
IX	=	nonillionth	=	10^{-54} = 27	
X	=	decillionth	=	10^{-60} = 30	.....(refer MMP, I, p.117, under Arsenicum, 1833)
XX	=	vigesillionth	=	10^{-120} = 60	(refer MMP, II, p.648, under Thuja, 1826)
L	=	quinquagintillionth	=	10^{-300} = 150	
C	=	centillionth	=	10^{-600} = 300	(refer MMP, II, p.61, under Magnes, 1826)

Thus, one can see that Hahnemann spoke in multiples of the millionth (million-fold) attenuation. Why this was done at first seems unclear, but a little careful thought on the information he has left behind does provide an answer.
In the following quote, Hahnemann has just finished describing the process of triturating 1 grain of the crude drug in 100 grains lactose (in 3 separate stages) up to the 1st (centesimal) potency. He then says:

Chronic Diseases, I, pp.147-150 (2nd edition, 1835-9) - 2 succussions = 1835 - 1837

…the powder is preserved in a well-stoppered bottle with the name of the substance and the signature 100 because it is potentized one hundred fold.

After repeating this procedure using the first (centesimal) trituration, Hahnemann says of the resulting powder:

…put into a stoppered vial with the signature $\overline{10000}$ as it contains the medicine potentized to the ten thousandth attenuation.*
The same is done with one grain of this powder (marked $\overline{10000}$) in order to bring it to I, and thus to attenuate it to the million-fold potency.

* in a footnote to this paragraph he says:
Thus it will be seen that every attenuation (that to $\overline{100}$, that to $\overline{10000}$, and also the third to $\overline{1000000}$ or I) is prepared by six times triturating for six minutes and six times scraping together for four minutes each time. Thus each one requires one hour.

At this point, Hahnemann states:

Chronic Diseases, I, p.149

In order to produce homogeneity in the preparation of the homœopathic and especially the antipsoric remedies, at least in the form of powders, I advise the reducing of medicines only to this millionth potency, no more and no less and to prepare from this the solutions and the necessary potencies of these solutions; this has been my own custom. … Now in preparing the solutions from this, and in bringing the medicines thus potentized one million-fold, into the fluid form, (so that their dynamization may be still further continued), we are aided by the property of *all* medicinal substances, that, when brought to the potency I, they are soluble* in water and alcohol; this property is still unknown to chemistry.

* Chemistry now recognises that such dilutions form a non-precipitating suspension (colloid) of the original drug substance (which produces a cloudy appearance when held up to a light source due to the fine particles interfering with the passage of light), are therefore not accurately termed a "solution" (which, by contrast, is not cloudy).

Hahnemann then goes on to describe the further potentisation of such 3rd (centesimal) triturations, with specific reference to the symbols he used in indicating potency:

Chronic Diseases, I, p.150

The first solution cannot be made in pure alcohol, because sugar of milk will not dissolve in alcohol. The first solution is therefore made in a mixture of half water and half alcohol. To one grain of the medicinal powder triturated to the million-fold potency I, fifty drops of distilled water are dropped in and by turning the vial a few times round on its axis it is easily dissolved, when fifty drops of good alcohol are added, and the vial, which ought only to be filled to two-thirds of its capacity by the mixture, ought to be stoppered and shaken twice (*i.e.,* with two down-strokes of the arm). It is marked with the name of the medicine and $\overline{100\ \text{I}}$. One drop of this is added to ninety-nine or one hundred drops of pure alcohol, the stoppered vial is then shaken with two strokes of the arm and marked with the name of the medicine and designated $\overline{10000\ \text{I}}$ One drop of this is added to ninety-nine or one hundred drops of pure alcohol, the corked vial is then shaken with two strokes of the arm and marked with the name of the medicines and $\overline{\text{II}}$. The preparation of the higher potencies is then continued with two strokes of the arm every time to the $\overline{100\ \text{II}}$, $\overline{10000\ \text{II}}$, $\overline{\text{III}}$, etc., but to attain a simple uniformity in practice only the vials with the full numbers $\overline{\text{II}}, \overline{\text{III}}, \overline{\text{IV}}, \overline{\text{V}},$ etc., are used in practice, but the intermediate numbers are preserved in boxes or cases with their labels. Thus they will be protected from the effect of daylight.

Now, back to the question of why Hahnemann used this particular terminology, in multiples of millionths (10^{-6}), for his potencies. Basically it was because of simple language parameters. You see, our language, even today, only has terminology representing multiples of one million. For instance, we talk about money in terms millions, billions (million^2), and even trillions (million^3). There is no terminology to represent squares of one hundred (first centesimal potency) or squares of ten thousand (second centesimal potency). So Hahnemann saw his potencies in multiples of one millionth, which can be represented as follows.

$$\frac{1}{\text{million}},\ \frac{1}{(\text{million})^2},\ \frac{1}{(\text{million})^3},\ \frac{1}{(\text{million})^4},\ \frac{1}{(\text{million})^5},\ \text{etc.}$$

Each of these individual steps were achieved through three separate dilution stages, each of which was $\frac{1}{100}$ (centesimal) dilution, such that the 1st and second potencies were merely stepping-stones to the 3rd or millionth (I) potency; whilst the 4th and 5th potencies were stepping-stones for the billionth (II) potency; the 7th and 8th for the trillionth (III), etc. Through the use of this notation, Hahnemann was conveniently able to refer to his medicines according to a standardised notation.

Dispensing in small portions of a drop

Now, getting back to Hahnemann's dispensing only small portions of a drop, of a potency, rather than the whole drop itself. The reasons for this can be appreciated in the following statements:

MMP, II, p.459 under Sarsaparilla (1825)

For homœopathic use the undiluted tincture in the dose of one drop is much too strong.

MMP, II, p.439 under Ruta (1825)

A dilution which in every drop contains 1/100,000 of a grain (10^{-5}) of this juice, one drop for a dose – *all heterogenous irritants being kept away* – I have found to be even somewhat too large a dose in many cases.

MMP, I, p.47 under Ambra grisea (1827)

This furnishes a potentized millionth attenuation of ambergris, a small portion of a grain of which is not only sufficient for a dose for most homœopathic purposes, but is often to be quite too powerful…

Hence, in order to try and reduce the strength (and minimise on aggravations), Hahnemann continued to experiment with dosage, by subdividing the dose and giving only a portion of a drop. This became a matter of increasing necessity as his prescribing became finely tuned, as mentioned before, especially when he began considering diseases as more than just the totality of symptoms *at the present*, and instead looked at *totality of symptoms in time*. On this subdivision of doses Hahnemann says:

Chronic Diseases, I, p.149, footnote

In the beginning I used to give a small part of a grain of the powders potentized to the $\overline{10000}$ or the I * degree by trituration, as a dose. But since a small part of a grain is too indefinite a quantity, and since Homœopathy must avoid all indefiniteness and inexactness as much as possible, the discovery that all medicines may be changed from potentized medicinal powders into fluids with which a definite number of pellets may be moistened for a dose, was of great value to me. From liquids the higher potencies may also be easily prepared.

* these represent the 2nd and 3rd (centesimal) potencies respectively.

We should remember that Hahnemann's ideas on disease in general and chronic diseases in particular were developing over many years, and culminated in his initial expressed concepts as early as 1827, publishing his work on Chronic Diseases the following year. With this kept in mind, we can read sequentially through his writings in materia medica, and note the changes in dosage. For example:

MMP, II, p.587 under Stramonium (1825) - the freshly expressed juice + equal parts of alcohol
A drop, often even but a small portion of a drop of the trillion-fold dilution of the juice, is an adequate homœopathic dose, all other extraneous medicinal influences being removed.

And in the same year (1825), he was more direct in his findings:

MMP, II, p.674 under Veratrum album
I have never found it necessary to give a dose of more than a single drop, often only a small portion of a drop, of white hellebore tincture, diluted to such an extent that one drop contains a quadrillionth of a grain of this root.

MMP, I, p.182 under Aurum
By further trituration and dilution the power of gold is still more developed and spiritualized, so that I now employ for all curative purposes only a very small portion of a grain of the quadrillion-fold dilution for a dose

MMP, II, p.47 under Ledum
The dose, in cases of disease for which Ledum in homœopathically adapted, I have found, by numerous trials and multiplied experience, requires to be reduced to a small portion of a drop of the quintillion-fold attenuation of the tincture

Notice that, within the same year (1825), he has recommended various preparations ranging from less than a drop of the tincture, to a small portion of a drop of the quintillionth (15th centesimal potency).

The very next year (1826), we read:

MMP, II, p.131 under Menyanthes trifoliata - the freshly expressed juice + equal parts of alcohol
The smallest portion of a drop of the undiluted juice I have found to be an adequate dose for homœopathic employment in every case; further experience will perhaps show that a further dilution will suffice for sensitive persons or children

MMP, II, p.453 under Sambucus - the freshly expressed juice + equal parts of alcohol
For homœopathic use we require only a small part of a drop of the above-mentioned juice for a dose in order to effect all that can be done with it in a curative way.

MMP, II, p.209 under Muriatic acid
One globule the size of a poppy seed, moistened with this million-fold dilution, is given for a homœopathic dose. This represents the smallest portion of a drop, for with one drop 200 such globules are sufficiently moistened. Yet this million-fold dilution, although administered in such a small volume, will be found in many cases to be still too powerful when muriatic acid is homœopathically indicated, because this medicine possesses a high degree of efficacy.

MMP, II, p.319 under Phosphoricum acidum
A sugar globule the size of a poppy seed, and moistened with this trillion-fold dilution, is administered for a homœopathic dose.

MMP, II, p.480 under Spigelia
For the homœopathic employment the decillion-fold dilution, each diluting phial of 100 drops being shaken not oftener than twice, is almost too strong, even when but a small portion of a drop of it is given for a dose.

And so, in 1826, Hahnemann is seen to recommend up to, but not exclusively, the decillionth (30th potency) attenuation. And there was not much change by 1827:

MMP, II, p.527 under Stannum
…a very small portion of a grain of the above-described million-fold dilution of tin powder is more than sufficient for a dose.

MMP, II, p.510 under Spongia
…I found a still farther dilution and diminution of the dose necessary – latterly a very small portion of a drop of the decillion-fold dilution for a dose

But, by 1830 and beyond, every medicine which Hahnemann discusses in his *Materia Medica Pura*, was recommended as most serviceable in the decillionth (30th) potency. Some examples include:

MMP, I, p.4 under Aconitum napellus
…its curative power is marvellous, when…it is given alone, all other medicinal substances, even vegetable acids, being avoided, in the dose of a thousandth* part of a drop of the decillionth development of power.

* That is, a small globule the size of a poppy-seed moistened with it, of which more than a thousand are moistened by one drop of spirits of wine, and which are so small that 300 of them weigh only one grain.

MMP, II, p.146 under Mercurius
One small globule (300 of which weigh one grain), moistened with the last dilution (X), is the appropriate dose of the very medicinal metal for all suitable cases.

Similarly, *Cannabis, Cantharis, Cina, Dulcamara, Nux vomica*, (all recorded in 1830), were recommended in the 30th potency. The same is true of the medicines therein recorded in 1833 - *Arsenicum, Bryonia, Ferrum, Ignatia, Pulsatilla, Rheum, Rhus toxicodendron,* have all been recommended in the 30th potency. Examples include:

MMP, II, p.346 under Pulsatilla
The proper dose is a small globule moistened with the thirtieth potency, repeated at most every twenty-four hours; in acute diseases the olfaction of a globule the size of a mustard seed is preferable.

MMP, II, p.391 under Rheum
A very minute globule moistened with the thirtieth dilution (X) suffices for all homœopathic curative purposes, to be repeated if necessary. The olfaction of a globule the size of a mustard seed moistened with this dilution is almost always sufficient.

MMP, II, p.401 under Rhus toxicodendron
One single globule, the size of a mustard seed, moistened with the thirtieth potency effects a magical cure.

And so, we see that, as time progressed, as Hahnemann's prescribing was sharpened with experience and his ever-increasing study of the phenomenon of disease (and the consolidation of his ideas on chronic disease), he became more and more aware of the increased utility of higher potencies, and simultaneously, of the absolute need for smaller (less troublesome, more manageable) doses. It is important here to realise, that in the above examples from Hahnemann's own writings, *dose*, refers to actual physical amount, whereas *potency* refers to the process of attenuation (dynamization, succussion/trituration).

From the preceding, we see that, regardless of the potency used, Hahnemann recommended a small portion of a drop be used as a dose. This was soon common-place in Hahnemann's posology, and eventually he would always use only a small portion of a drop (obtained by saturating globules the size of which a large number would absorb one drop). In his *Materia Medica Pura*, under *Arsenicum*, we read:

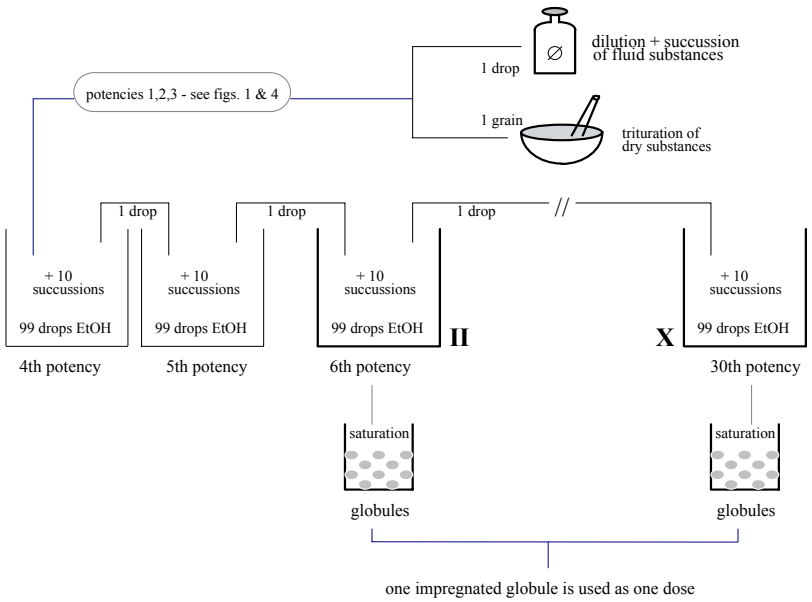
MMP, I, p.119 under Arsenicum (1833)
It is much better to make a quantity of globules so saturated with the tincture* for dispensing purposes than to moisten one globule every time it is required…

* the tincture here refers to the liquid decillionth potency

In other words, he would carry around and use only the globules of the prepared centesimal potencies. Now then, with this in mind, let us summarise the process of centesimal potency preparations up to this point. The following diagram shows how globules were simply moistened with the previously prepared liquid medicinal potency of the medicine. The globules were then no more than a vehicle for the proper small dose dispensing (of a portion of a drop) as required by Hahnemann.

Figure 2

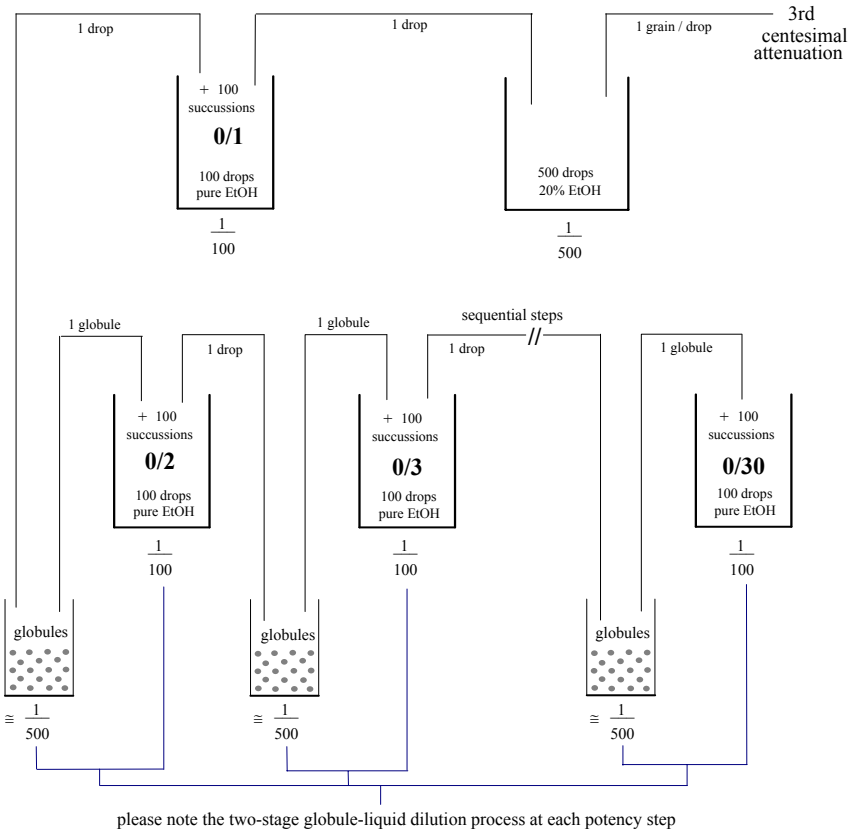
Schematic diagram of the steps involved in the impregnation of globules with liquid stock potency. Soluble substances are potentised through dilution/succussion of the mother tincture whilst insoluble substances are triturated in a mortar and pestle (as per Hahnemann's directions in the footnote to § 270 of his *Organon*) until the 3rd potency, by which stage they are able to form colloidal suspensions and they are then potentised through dilution/succussion steps in liquid. As described in the text, the Roman numerals represent multiples of 3 successive potencies on this scale. Note that the succussion number indicated at each step is in accordance with Hahnemann's last directions for this scale of potency, as detailed in his Chronic Diseases. Note also the impregnation of globules which can then be used in clinical practice occurs only at multiples of three potency steps (10^{-6}). Please compare this diagram with that shown in Figure 4.



It is important to realise that a globule, prepared according to the above manner, of say the 30th potency, is able to absorb only a small portion of a drop (depending on globule size) before reaching full saturation with that potency. From here, it was a simple step for Hahnemann to go to his *new altered but perfected method* of potency preparations as detailed in the 6th edition of his *Organon*. Figure 3 below illustrates this last posological method of the great Hahnemann.

Figure 3

Diagrammatic representation of Hahnemann's "new altered but perfected method" of potency preparation (today known as the 50-Millesimal potency scale). The starting point is the 3rd centesimal preparation, from which a two-stage dilution of approximately 1/50,000 (2×10^{-5}) is achieved (the 0/1 or first potency on this scale). The next step involves another two-stage dilution, the first stage of which incorporates the globule dilution factor of approximately 1/500 (globules have been specified as the size of which approximately 500 absorb one drop), and the second stage which is 1/100 dilution in ethanol. Note that the process is very similar to the previous method (centesimal) shown in Figure 2 except that there is an extra dilution factor of 1/500 at each step, achieved by using globule impregnated with the liquid potency of the previous stage.



Simply put, what Hahnemann did was to incorporate the impregnated globules within the actual preparation process, as an integral part of preparing the higher from the lower potencies, rather than as an adjacent step. By studying Figure 3, we notice that this results in a two-stage globule → drop dilution process at each potency step, as opposed to the single-stage process in the earlier method (Figure 2). Indeed, if we remove the second (globule) stage of the dilution phase, the remainder of this process resembles that of the centesimal scale potencies, even as far as the 1/100 dilution factor, the main remaining difference being that the number of succussions here is 100, whilst that of the centesimal potencies was finally set at 10 by Hahnemann (1837, Chronic Diseases, vol.1., p.159).

When we carefully compare the earlier manufacture of potencies (1:100) with the latter method (≅ 1:50,000) adopted by Hahnemann, it is quite clear there was no quantal leap in the development of Hahnemann's posology. Rather, one gradually flows into the other, without any disconnection or sudden change in step.

One vital point to remember is that the final dilution ratio is not precisely 1:50,000, since the globule size is never exactly uniform. This means that these potencies are not accurately termed 50-Millesimal. Indeed, Hahnemann did not call them 50-Millesimal potencies at all, rather, he acknowledged that the distinction came in the method of manufacture incorporating the globule as an integral component of the process. He thus called this the method "au globule" (of the globule), as opposed to the earlier method "a la goutte" (of the drop).

The question therefore arises as to what we should call these potencies. Certainly the term LM is unacceptable (for the reason given above). But since we know that the ratio is not exact, then any name based on a ratio of dilution (eg. 50-Millesimal) is also misleading. The written designation for these potencies is much easier. Hahnemann used a small "0" to indicate the new globule method, with the potencies written as 0/1, 0/2, 0/3, etc., up to 0/30. But what shall we call them verbally and in written communications, in overview? We could term them 'O' (representing the globule) potencies, but this is not ideal. Perhaps 'G' for potencies au globule is another idea. However, I think that 'Q' for *Quinquagiesmillesimal* (50 thousandth - my thanks to Dr. K-H Gypser for the correct Latin), as used in European countries, is a good compromise.

'Q' POTENCY PREPARATION

The mother tincture or trituration?

So far we have looked at the potentisation component of our pharmaceutical preparations, but let us now focus our attention on the "mother" preparation (tincture/trituration) for this scale of potencies. In the last (6th) edition of the *Organon*, in §270, Hahnemann details the preparation of medicines under this new method (au globule; 'Q' potencies) in which he outlines the trituration of a dry substance up to the 3rd (centesimal) potency, before further processing it according to the new method.

This does not mean, as some have wrongly suggested, that Hahnemann directed *all* medicines which are to be potentised according to his "new altered but perfected method" be processed in this way; that even succulent, fresh plants (which yield their medicinal virtues in fluid extracts and tinctures) should be first dried and then processed in this manner. Rather, if we carefully look at the *Organon*, we see that it was only *by way of example* that Hahnemann described the trituration of a dry substance. We read:

> §270
> In order to best obtain this development of power, a small part of the substance to be dynamized, say one grain, is triturated for three hours with three times one hundred grains sugar of milk according to the method described below up to the one-millionth part in powder form.

It is quite clear by his words "say one grain" that he is only speaking of the dried solid substance as an example. But to convince ourselves of this, we can turn to the following references in the very same (6th) edition of *Organon*:

> §266
> Substances belonging to the animal and vegetable kingdoms possess their medicinal qualities most perfectly in their raw state.
>
> §267
> We gain possession of the powers of indigenous plants and of such as may be had in a fresh state in the most complete and certain manner by mixing their freshly expressed juice *immediately* with equal parts of spirits of wine of a strength sufficient to burn in a lamp. After this has stood a day and a night in a close stoppered bottle and deposited the fibrinous and albuminous matters, the clear superincumbent fluid is then to be decanted off for medicinal use. All fermentation of the vegetable juice will be at once checked by the spirits of wine mixed with it and rendered impossible for the future, and the entire medicinal power of the vegetable juice is thus retained (perfect and uninjured) for ever by keeping the preparation in well-corked bottles and excluded from the sun's light.*
>
> * *In a footnote to this aphorism, Hahnemann says:*
>
> Although equal parts of alcohol and expressed juice are usually the most suitable proportion for effecting the deposition of the fibrinous and albuminous matters, yet for plants which contain much thick mucus…or an excess of albumen…a double proportion of alcohol is generally required for this object. Plants that are very deficient in juice…must first be pounded up alone into a moist, fine mass, and then stirred up with a double quantity of alcohol, in order that the juice may combine with it, and being thus extracted by the alcohol, may be pressed out; these latter may also when dried be brought with milk-sugar to the million-fold trituration, and then be further diluted and potentized (*v* §271).
>
> §268
> The other exotic plants, barks, seeds and roots that cannot be obtained in the fresh state the sensible practitioner will never take in the pulverized form on trust, but will first convince himself of their genuineness in their crude, entire state before making any medicinal employment of them.

So it is very clear, that in the edition of his *Organon* where Hahnemann first describes his new 'au globule' method, providing an example of the dynamization of a dry substance, that in this very same work he clearly directs the fresh plant be used wherever possible. Indeed, Hahnemann held a great respect for the inherent value of the juice of fresh plants, and unlike the pharmacy of our modern times (where the juice is simply equated with distilled water) he viewed the fresh plant juices as containing much of the life force, and that wherever possible, he would use the fresh plant from which to extract its whole medicinal virtue. But how did Hahnemann actually prepare his crude substances for further potentisation?

In general, Hahnemann directed the preparation of substances obtained as dry solids (salts, minerals, metals) or with low moisture content (roots, barks, etc.), as well as substances with high mucilaginous or oil content (*Petroleum, Turpentine*, etc.), to be carried out by trituration with lactose up to the 3rd (centesimal) potency, before further processing in the liquid form. Those substances obtained in the liquid form, or with a high moisture content, were recommended to be mixed with alcohol (forming the mother tincture) and processed through succussion. This point is made clear in the following remarks:

> *Chronic Diseases, II, p. 1460 under Sulphur (German original, Vol.5, 1839)*
> Formerly I considered the extract of sulphur, made with alcohol and called tinctura sulphuris, as sufficient; but now, after having experimentally compared it, I consider it far inferior to the other preparations, effected by triturating the flowers of sulphur with one hundred parts of sugar of milk, up to the millionth-potency and the further dynamization of the solution of this potency, in the manner employed with other dry drugs. The latter dynamization I am compelled to recognize as the most perfect sulphur-medicine. The alcohol in the tinctura sulphuris seems only to attract some particular portion of the sulphur, but not all of its constituents without exception, i.e., not the entire sulphur.

However, he had previously been dissolving the sulphur powder in an alcoholic solution (*tinctura sulphuris* - refer 5th edition *Organon*, §271) before potentising this solution using dilution / succussion. But, as expressed in the above quotation, he later found that the dry sulphur powder, even though soluble, is best prepared by trituration up to the 3rd (centesimal) potency before further potentising it in a liquid form, and he settled on this as a general rule for all substances which are naturally obtained in their dry state. Again we read:

> *Chronic Diseases, II, p.1323 under Sarsaparilla (German original, Vol.5, 1839)*
> The tinctures drawn out with alcohol from all the dry drugs, do not contain all their medicinal virtues. I have become convinced of this by experience now for several years.

On the other hand, substances obtained in the fresh state, and whose medicinal virtues can be extracted by a fluid vehicle (ethanol / water) were potentised from the very first step by serial dilution and succussion of the mother tincture. Hence:

> *Chronic Diseases, II, p.1525 under Sulphuricum acidum (German original, Vol.5, 1839)*
> One drop of sulphuric acid in its concentrated state is dynamized for homœopathic use by being shaken up with 99 drops of distilled water by concussive strokes. To continue this potentizing, one drop of this potency is shaken up with 99 drops of alcohol, and so on for further potencies.

> *Chronic Diseases, II, p.971 under Manganum (German original, Vol.5, 1839; MMP 1828-1830)*
> From this white carbonate of manganese one grain is dynamized for homœopathic use, as is done with other dry medicinal substances; or it is dissolved, by boiling it in distilled vinegar, until a saturated solution is obtained, which is then boiled down to the consistence of syrup (*Manganum aceticum*). Of the latter substance one drop, being taken as a unit, is homœopathically dynamized like other fluid medicinal substances, by means of one hundred drops of alcohol successively in each of thirty attenuating vials.

As we can see, even some dry substances were able to be potentised by forming a liquid "mother" preparation for further dilution / succussion. However, as early as 1835, he directs all substances, whether obtained in liquid or dry form, to be processed through trituration with lactose up to the 3rd potency, before further attenuation in liquid. The following is quite clear:

> *Chronic Diseases, I, p.147 (2nd edition, 1835-9; 2 succussions = 1835 - 1837)*
>
> In this *preparation*, peculiar to Homœopathy, we take one grain in powder of any of the substances treated of in the six volumes of Materia Medica Pura,* and especially those of the antipsoric substances following below, *i.e.,* of silica, carbonate of baryta, carbonate of lime, carbonate of soda and sal ammoniac, carbonate of magnesia, vegetable charcoal, animal charcoal, graphites, sulphur, crude antimony, metallic antimony, gold, platina, iron, zinc, copper, silver, tin. …
>
> * Vegetable substances which can only be procured dry, e.g., cinchona bark, ipecacuanha, etc., are prepared by the same kind of trituration and will completely dissolve when potentized a million fold, not less, with their peculiar powers, in water and alcohol, and may then be preserved as medicines far more easily than the easily spoiled alcoholic tinctures. Of the juiceless substances, such as oleander, thuja, the bark of mezereum, etc., we may, without making a mistake, take of each about one and a half grains of the fresh leaves, bark, root, etc., without any further preparation, and triturate the same three times with 100 grains of sugar of milk to the millionfold powder trituration. A grain of this dissolved in alcohol and water may then be developed in the diluting vials with alcohol to the necessary degree of potency of their powers by giving for each potency *two succussive strokes*. Also with the freshly expressed juices of the herbs it is best to at once put one drop of the same with as much sugar of milk as is taken for the preparation of the other medicines, so as to triturate it to the millionfold powder attenuation, and then a grain of this attenuation is dissolved in equal parts of water and alcohol, and must be potentized to a further dynamization through the twenty-seven diluting vials by means of *two succussive strokes*. The fresh juices thus seem to acquire more of dynamization, as experience teaches me, than when the juice without any preparation by triturating is merely diluted in thirty vials of alcohol and potentized each time with two succussive strokes.

Note Hahnemann's comments in the last sentence to this above footnote, suggesting some superiority in preparing the liquid substance by trituration of a drop in lactose, as opposed to dilution/succussion in liquid, yet offering both methods as options in the preparation of potencies. By around 1837-1839, he is still in support of both options of using either trituration in lactose or succussion in alcohol for the preparation of liquid substances. We read:

> *Chronic Diseases, I, under Conium maculatum (10 succussions = post 1837; (German original, Vol.3, 1837;)*
> The juice freshly pressed from the whole herb, just as it has begun to bloom, is mixed with an equal quantity of alcohol. As is done in Homœopathy with all the plant-juices which are preserved from corruption in this manner, two drops of this mixture are dropped into a vial which is filled two-thirds full with 100 drops of alcohol; it is well stoppered and shaken with *ten strokes* of the arm. One drop is then further diluted through twenty-nine other such vials (each containing 100 drops of alcohol), and each attenuation is thus potentized by *ten succussive strokes* to the decillionth (X) dynamization. But instead of this we might also triturate two grains of the fresh leaves of this plant with sugar of milk to the millionth powder attenuation, within three hours, and then, dissolving this preparation, potentize it further.

> *Chronic Diseases, I, p.671 under Digitalis (10 succussions = post 1837; German original, Vol.3, 1837)*
> The homœopathic medicine is prepared from this plant by dynamizing one drop of its freshly expressed juice, mixed with ninety-nine drops of alcohol, by *ten strong succussive strokes*, which is then repeated in twenty-nine other vials, as has been taught at the conclusion of Part I. of the Chronic Diseases as to the second method. Instead of this we can triturate two grains of the fresh herb with one hundred grains of sugar of milk, and then develop it to the thirtieth potency of its medicinal powers, as is usually done with dry medicinal substances.

During this same period however, Hahnemann is recommending the preparation of some liquid substances via succussion in a liquid vehicle, rather than by trituration in lactose. We read:

> *Chronic Diseases, I, p.559 under Causticum (10 succussions = post 1837; (German original, Vol.3, 1837)*
> Of this distillate put one drop in a vial filled about $^2/_3$ with 99 or 100 drops of alcohol, potentize the mixture by *ten succussive strokes* and continue in this manner through 29 similar vials with alcohol, developing each attenuation and potency with *ten succussive strokes*, carrying it to the decillionth (causticum X) dynamic development.

Hence this dispels the notion that in all cases the triturate is superior to the tincture preparation, as it seems he had suggested earlier in his work on *Chronic Diseases* (vol.1, p.147), when he had said:

> The fresh juices thus seem to acquire more of dynamization, as experience teaches me, than when the juice without any preparation by triturating is merely diluted in thirty vials of alcohol and potentized each time with two succussive strokes.

However, if we look at this entire reference, we find at that time (1835-1837), Hahnemann was using and recommending only 2 succussions be used in the potentisation process. But later (post 1837), whilst he was using and recommending 10 succussions between potencies, he did not state that there was any advantage to triturating liquid substances, rather he simply left it as an option. Even so, even though he mentions this as an option, he does so not in all cases, as we see by his directions under Causticum (reproduced above), wherein he describes its preparation in a fluid vehicle. But finally, if we again turn to his last work, the 6th edition of *Organon* (1842), §267 footnote, we read:

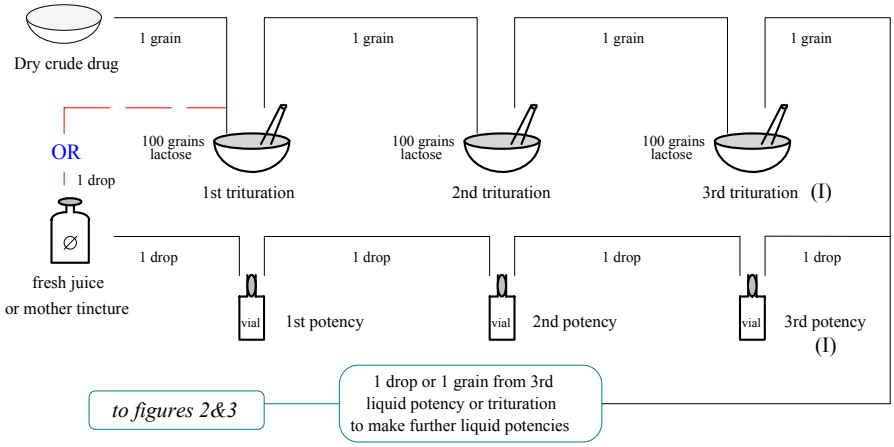
> Although equal parts of alcohol and expressed juice are usually the most suitable proportion for effecting the deposition of the fibrinous and albuminous matters, yet for plants which contain much thick mucus…or an excess of albumen…a double proportion of alcohol is generally required for this object. Plants that are very deficient in juice…must first be pounded up alone into a moist, fine mass, and then stirred up with a double quantity of alcohol, in order that the juice may combine with it, and being thus extracted by the alcohol, may be pressed out; these latter may also when dried be brought with milk-sugar to the millionfold trituration, and then be further diluted and potentized (*v* §271).

This reference was reproduced earlier, but its significance becomes even clearer now that we have studied the rest of Hahnemann's writings on the subject, and that we fully appreciate his *final* view.

In the end, Hahnemann maintained his initial view that, for those substances in their crude form obtained as dry solids (salts, minerals, most metals, etc.), or which have a too low moisture content (roots, barks, etc.) or a too high mucilage or oil content (*e.g., Petroleum, Turpentine*, etc.) to allow a proper extraction via a fluid vehicle, that all such substances are best prepared by *trituration with lactose* up to the point of the 3rd potency, at which point they are able to form colloidal suspensions in a fluid vehicle, and are then able to be further processed by serial dilution / succussion as in the case of all other medicinal preparations. Fresh (or moist) substances are preferably processed in a liquid vehicle whilst carefully accommodating for the properties of the crude drug (eg. mucilage, resins, oils, etc.) for maximum extraction in the formation of the mother tincture, and then processed through succussion. The following diagram is almost identical to figure 1, except that, it includes the option of triturating a liquid crude substance up to 3rd potency (**I**).

Figure 4

Preparation of starting material up to 3rd potency via serial trituration or succussion stages. Trituration may be carried out in the case of dry substances or plants with little moisture, high mucilage or natural oils content. There are certain guidelines to remember: Succussion can only be carried out on soluble starting material either extracted as a fresh juice (e.g., succulent plants), or which can otherwise form a mother tincture.



There are many other aspects regarding homœopathic posology which warrant detailed study and discussion. Hahnemann's use of varying sizes of globule, which, along with their composition and saturation properties influences the final product dilution ratio (and hence the specific potency). Also, there are many more aspects of dispensing practice untouched by this relatively short paper, such as the influence on potency or efficacy of variations in final dispensing volume and stirring/shaking/succussing at the hand of the patient, etc. These questions remain largely to be explored, which perhaps accounts for this subject of homœopathic posology experiencing the most diversity and confusion of views and practices in the history of our therapy. Many methods of pharmaceutical preparation and an even greater number of dispensing practices makes it especially difficult for the student or recent graduate to see a clear and unequivocal logic in posological approach to case management.

Whilst there is perhaps the greatest scope for flexibility within Homœopathy in this very field of posology (since the principle of Similia is fundamentally independent of potency or dispensation methods), yet this has so often resulted in a too easy formulation of approaches based entirely upon untested or untestable opinion, rather than on a comparison of proving and clinical data. Most are taught one or other practice (e.g., that cases of severe tissue pathology require frequent repetition of low potencies, whilst those of predominantly mental disease require single doses of high potency) and, with little or minor modification, accept that as the truth, for, even with years of clinical experience, they tend to hold stronger and stronger conviction of such views, since they have set out, from the beginning, to *verify* such views, to support them in clinical practice, rather than, as proper scientific method demands, to *falsify* them. It is only the lack of *falsifiability* of a postulate, hypothesis, belief, etc, that we can give greater and greater weight to its support.

Let us teach our students to be discerning, to look at the facts, and to learn *how* to apply their reasoning in the design of experiments to *disprove* our popularly held beliefs. Let us teach our students a *method* of learning, rather than simple facts. Facts can always be acquired with time. Method needs to be implanted, nurtured, and developed from the very beginning. In this way have those greatest exponents of Homœopathic practice, including Hahnemann himself, been able to develop the strongest of conviction, and to yield the best of results.