

# Sources and Studies on the History of Homeopathic Medicine (Volume 20)

**Stefan Mayr, The production of homeopathic drugs. From Hahnemann to Schwabe's pharmacopoea (1872)**  
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This work has dealt with homeopathic pharmaceuticals, starting with Hahnemann and running through to the appearance of Schwabe's influential pharmacopoeia in 1872. Thus, there is now a historical overview available, which deals explicitly with the production of homeopathic medication in the early period of homeopathy.

After Hahnemann discovered the law of similars, he began his homeopathic practice with the medicaments and dosages used in allopathic medicine during the latter years of the eighteenth century. He soon realised that the orthodox teachings regarding dosage were inappropriate for the special requirements of homeopathy. He began reducing the quantity of the prescribed medicaments and diluted them. From a series of dilution steps and mechanical impact, Hahnemann was able to create the potentisation method. The theory applied was that the specific homeopathic effect of the medication could be increased through the so-called potentising. Hahnemann continued to adapt the potentisation method according to his current level of knowledge. In the course of his investigations, he varied the dilution ratio and medium, as well as the type, duration and intensity of the mechanical processing (dynamisation).

The founder of homeopathy designed his preparation of medicaments according to the principle of simplicity. At the beginning, the medical substances were dissolved. Accordingly, dilution and dynamisation occurred in liquid media. Preparation with lactose trituration was originally intended for insoluble preparations. Later, the antipsoric preparation of medication, a combination of C3 trituration and subsequent liquid potentisation, was applied to practically every medication substance.

Although, at the beginning, the medicaments were dispensed in a solution, Hahnemann soon preferred the use of *globuli*, tiny cane sugar spheres of a defined size moistened with potentised solution, which he considered to be a characteristically homeopathic form of dispensation.

The sixth edition of the *Organon* was Hahnemann's last homeopathic work and thus represents the conclusion of his research in the field of pharmaceuticals. The long unpublished text mentions the fifty-thousandth potencies for the first time.

Hahnemann's pupils were called upon by their master to create the medicaments themselves and to dispense them to their patients. As, during the course of his practice, the founder of homeopathy continually changed the requirements for this and some pupils attempted to develop their own ideas and perceptions, the result was a vast range of homeopathic medication. The participation of supportive apothecaries saw a growth in the requirement for a homeopathic pharmacopoeia. In consequence, a series of publications on the preparation of medicaments was published. These were received with varying levels of success by homeopaths, amongst whom a dispute had broken out. The apothecary Willmar Schwabe was able to combine both the irreconcilable interests of Hahnemann's pupils and the scientific, critical homeopaths, who took their ideas from the Enlightenment, in a single work. Schwabe's *Pharmacopoea homoeopathica polyglottica* became the official work on homeopathic medication and was the predecessor of today's German *Homöopathisches Arzneibuch*.

This work carried out a comparison between Hahnemann's directions and the contents of Schwabe's pharmacopoeia. In so doing, it was possible to determine that Hahnemann's instructions for the manufacture of homeopathic medication were not only expanded to include the requirements of the scientific, critical homeopaths, but also that Hahnemann's directions were ignored in many areas.