

**Nenning's „dreams”:
Critical considerations on one of the primary pathogenetic sources of
the pure materia medica***

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Introduction

One of the basic pillars of homeopathy in its theoretical aspect, and directly related to the foundations of its practice, depends on the record of the data resulting from experimentations performed on healthy individuals; these symptoms constitute the pure materia medica. The latter records *all the symptoms* obtained from the individuals that have tested a given remedy. In other words, a number of healthy individuals submits voluntarily to test the effects elicited in the physical and psychological economy by the ingestion of a certain substance, in different dilutions. This is called a *proving*, and its subjects are called *provers*. The results are recorded in files of symptoms, and published in specialized journals and, eventually, pass into the homeopathic materia medica.

The aim of the present study is to research one of the *primary sources of pathogenetic symptoms*, recorded as „NG” in Hahnemann's materia medica, and later identified as *Nenning*, who supplied thousands of symptoms, already in the first editions of Hahnemann's *Materia Medica Pura*, from writings signed by *Hartlaub* and *Trinks* in several publications of that time. In the present paper, it will be examined one only domain, „dreams”, in the source mentioned.

What do the pathogenetic symptoms represent?

Pathogenetic symptoms are those which result strictly from the intake of substances, usually diluted, within the setting of a homeopathic proving. Different from the toxicological symptoms, this one is an extremely sensitive domain, involving the subjectiveness of the provers, who record everything they feel in the course of the proving. Therefore, provings are rich in subjective descriptions regarding kinds of pain, sensations „as if”, conditions of aggravation and amelioration, etc. I believe that this leads straight to three basic issues.

- 1- What does a given substance, in ponderal or infinitesimal doses, effect on a healthy human being? That is to say, the primary symptoms determined by the substance, those which depend on its *primary action* on the prover (e.g., midriasis following atropine) and that constitute the invariable core of the remedy. This question leads to the *pharmacologic* and *toxicologic* effects of substances. Because of this, a significant part of the symptoms recorded in the homeopathic materia medica come from involuntary or accidental

intoxications. Data coming from toxicology are among the most certain regarding the effects of substances on human beings. A part of the pathogenetic symptoms are significantly close to the pharmacological ones, especially in the case of provings performed by the first generations of homeopaths, where the tested substances were diluted, however, still in ponderal doses, and in some cases, the amount of the substance was progressively increased, until symptoms appeared.

- 2- What symptoms does a substance elicit in *highly sensitive* provers? These provers will manifest particular symptoms, even when the substance is employed in very small doses or homeopathic dilutions. Their record is essential to define the *domain of specific homeopathicity* (e.g., the yellow vision following digital appears precociously in sensitive individuals, but only when the intoxication is fully established in the rest). In the highly sensitive individuals, symptoms and reactions appear a while after the primary effect disappears *or* when the substance is repeatedly taken for long periods of time, repetitions being sufficient to elicit a reaction of the organism. All this would constitute the *secondary action* of the substance, which depends on the individual sensitiveness and the reactions of the sensitive organism. These symptoms are among the most important in homeopathy because, in the course of time, contributed to the deciphering of the *reactional models* of the remedies and later, to the homeopathic typologies.
- 3- What symptoms are *purely individual*? As a consequence of the pharmacological or informational stimulus represented by the substance, the body and mind of the prover react by activating his/her *own* mechanisms of reaction. This kind of reactions might be called *tertiary reaction*, which depends particularly on the prover, supplying more information on him/her than on the substance. This is not a special sensitiveness of the individual to a certain substance, but a *general* sensitiveness, which determines the appearance of symptoms that reflect his/her own story and general modes of reaction. This sort of reaction is almost impossible to perceive in a single prover in one only proving, i.e. in a „horizontal” reading of all the symptoms he/she expressed in that proving. But, if we review many provings where a same individual tested different substances, i.e. a „vertical” analysis, the apparition of the same symptoms in many or all of them might be an index of his/her individual mode of reaction.

Dreams reported by Nenning in the proving of Natrium sulphuricum

Upon studying the materia medica of *Natrium sulphuricum*, among others, I found the following symptoms in the chapter „Sleep and Dreams” in Allen’s *Encyclopaedia*, attributed to the source [a2], which Allen identified as Nenning.

- 1- Restlessness at night, which keeps her awake a long time.
- 2- Very restless night; she wakes at times from violent headache.
- 3- Restless sleep; he awoke often; had heavy anxious dreams, and afterwards raised much mucus (fourth day).
- 4- When she is hardly asleep she starts up, without waking up entirely.
- 5- Dreams often, but does not remember what.

- 6- Dreams of gardens, flowers, delightful picnics (after eight days).
- 7- Dream that she bought beautiful bouquets of flowers in the market (fourth night).
- 8- Dream of a wedding procession that passed by her (seventh night).
- 9- Dream of a lottery; he saw the numbers which he had taken.
- 10- Only anxious dreams; for instance, that she poured boiling lard into the fire.
- 11- Anxious dream that priests had discovered that she had committed crimes.
- 12- Dream that a gentleman she knew lay sick in her house.
- 13- Dream that wood was being floated down the neighboring stream, which might be the cause of much damage.
- 14- Dream that she was sailing on the Danube, and was very much afraid.
- 15- Dream of a great expanse of water, into which her daughter went, and then cried for help.
- 16- Dream that her daughter had been struck by paralysis, which frightened her so that she woke covered with perspiration.
- 17- Anxious dreams of falling from a height, etc., which made her start up.
- 18- Dream that she was flying in the air, and always feared to fall to the ground.
- 19- Dream, before midnight, that she was thrown from a carriage.
- 20- Dreams that an acquaintance was going to cut off the great toe of his right foot; the fear of it awoke him, and he felt a violent pain, as though knives were sticking in this toe, for one minute, after midnight.
- 21- Dream that her daughter had vexed her (third day).
- 22- Vexations dream that a young gentleman of her acquaintance slighted her.
- 23- Dream that he was much hurt and provoked because he had been insulted,.
- 24- Dream that insults had excited him so that he began to fight.
- 25- Dream of a mob fight, in which he became engaged.

It is immediately evident that many of the provers are female; dreams are many, agitated, anxious, extremely personal. Some themes may be distinguished:

- * Sleep and dreams restless, with starting.
- * Dreams of offence, striking, insults, fights.
- * Anxious dreams: guilt (crime); falling; height; burning, etc.
- * Dreams related to „water“: immersion, journeys.
- * Dreams with gardens, flowers, happiness, etc.
- * Dreams with misfortunes, associated to relatives or others.

A quick survey of the contents of these dreams immediately brings the problem mentioned above: are they *generated* by the intake of the substance, even in homeopathic dilutions? Can we speak here of a *primary action of the substance*? Or is it possible that the substance *aroused* subconscious motions in the provers, ruled by the hidden algorithms of the structure of their own personality, due to the fact that these provers were highly sensitive to the substance (*secondary action*)? Or, on the contrary, do these dreams *reflect* the obsessions and subconscious load of the provers, which were *revealed* on the occasion of the proving, as an inespecific reaction to a stress, thus, unrelated to the specific quality of the stimulus (the proven substance), but to the general stress represented by the proving (*tertiary reaction*)?

Dreams reported by Nenning in other remedies.

In the proving of *Magnesium muriaticum*, Nenning is mentioned by Allen as the source [a5].

- 1- Frequent vivid, but unremembered dreams.
- 2- Pleasant dreams of marriages, dances, money.
- 3 - Dreams of journeyings.
- 4- Dreams of much water.
- 5 - Dreams full of shame.
- 6 - Many anxious dreams.
- 7 - She became anxious in a dream about work that she could not accomplish.
- 8 - Dream that she became confused in a forest, and for a long time could not find her way.
- 9 - An anxious dream; she was lying in a strange house, where rubbish was constantly falling upon her; she tried to cry out and could not, because there was too great heaviness on the chest (nightmare), (after two days).
- 10 - Dreams of a fire in the vicinity, at which she was frightened, cried, and woke with wet eyes, and weak hands and feet.
- 11- If she fell asleep, all sorts of things came to her, frightful dreams of falling, and the like.
- 12 - Frightful dreams; that she was pursued by robbers; that she burned her hand by washing, etc.
- 13 - Disgusting and frightful dreams; that some one cut away one side of her face; that a skin was being taken from a dead body and the like.
- 14 - Dream that some one came to murder her; that she jumped from a window, and awoke in fright.
- 15 - Dreams of deaths.

In *Niccolum*, Nenning reports the following dreams:

- 1- Sleep always good, but with frequent though unremembered dreams.
- 2 - Constant, confused, visionary dreams while half awake (second night).
- 3 - Voluptuous dream (eighth night).
- 4 - Dream that she saw coming a man with whom she was acquainted, but whom she took for the devil, but afterward recognized, at which she was as happy as she had previously been frightened (second night).
- 5 - Dream that she lost a tooth, which caused her very great unhappiness (eighth night).
- 6 - Frightful dreams; she seemed to see the head of an acquaintance cut off, whereupon she woke in perspiration and anxiety (fourth night).
- 7 - Dream that she had pains in the right arm; she tried to rub it but could not; tried to move it and could not, whereupon she was very much distressed (twentieth night).
- 8 - Dream that she almost fell from the loft, and could with difficulty hold on, whereupon she woke in fright (second night).
- 9 - Dream that her mother fell into a cistern and was drowned, whereupon she woke trembling and weeping (sixth night).
- 10 - Dream that he ran after men, bruised and very much injured himself (first night).
- 11 - Dream that her brother, living at a distance, visited her, and she was very happy (first night).
- 12 - A dream of tombs, which he himself inhabited; afterwards a voluptuous dream (fifth night).

- 13 - Dream that persons she knew were dead; she wept.
- 14 - Dream of quarrelling with a view to death and murder; she tried to cut off the finger of an acquaintance, but could not accomplish it in spite of every effort (seventh night).
- 14- Dream that she had quarrelled with an acquaintance (sixth night).
- 15 - Dream of quarrelling and struggling with her husband, who lived at a distance, and who had just arrived, whereupon she woke (third night).

In *Oleum animale aethereum*, Nenning [a1] reported:

- 1- Dream of dead persons (second day).
- 2 - Anxious dream of murders.
- 3 - Unremembered dreams.

In *Phellandrium aquaticum* [a1]:

- 1- Dreams of lightnings, with great fright(second day).
- 2 - Pleasant dreams of gardens, parties, excitement, etc.
- 3 - Various unremembered dreams.
- 4 - Dream of a robbery, in which he received many blows.

In *Plumbum metallicum* [a4]:

- 1- Frequent dreaming, with sound sleep (first night).
- 2- Dreams of stealing fruit in a garden (first night).
- 3- Confused anxious dreams(third day).
- 4 - Heavy frightful dreams of falling (first night).

In *Sarsaparilla officinalis* [a6]:

- 1- He dreams, towards morning, several white spectres came into his room and near his bed;he was at first shocked and very much frightened, but recovered himself, and struck them down with both his fists, so that they all fell to the ground;after which his nose bled, and it woke him, and he thought he had struck himself on his nose (third day).
- 2 - He saw in his dream several long ago deceased relations (twelfth day).
- 3 - Heavy dreams, full of frights, but cannot recollect what (fifth and sixth days).
- 4 - Dreams of the business of the day before (sixth day).
- 5 - Dreams she is sleigh riding and the sleigh upsets;she starts violently and wakens up (eighth day).
- 6 - Lascivious dreams, without erections (second and tenth days).
- 7- Dreams of vexation.
- 8 - Dreams of what was talked about the day before.

In *Sulphur* [a3]:

- 1- Frightful, anxious dreams of danger of death, and of dead people.

In *Zincum metallicum* [a8]:

1- Vexatious, or quarrelsome or sad dreams.

Comparing these symptoms with the reported in *Natrium sulphuricum* it is easy to observe the reappearance of *common themes*, as if the dreams belonged to the same persons, with similar – not identical - subconscious dynamics. Almost indifferently to the substance employed in the proving, the themes reappear, which brings the problem whether the dreams may truly be attributed to the substance proved (as primary or secondary action) or are exclusively individual. To elucidate this, it would be very useful to know what the dreams of the provers were *before* any proving.

Provings reported by Nenning.

When I began this study, I knew nothing about Nenning and his contribution to the development of homeopathy. I searched in all bibliography available and it became evident that Nenning is one of the more copious sources of pathogenetic symptoms in the history of homeopathy, obtained in many provings performed in the early years of this discipline:

Dr. Roth counted more than 11,000 symptoms supplied by him in different materia medica (including Hahnemann's), published especially in Hartlaub & Trinks between 1828-1836". (19)

A simple enumeration of the remedies proven is impressive; in many cases he was the first to prove them, including policrests. In other remedies, Nenning made significant contributions, included in Hahnemann's *Materia Medica Pura* and *Chronic Diseases*. The former contains approximately 11,400 symptoms originated by this source. (27)

Below, I have listed his most important contributions to the provings of several remedies. The reason is double: first, to highlight the extraordinary extension of his contribution to homeopathy; then, to bring an example on the way how the early homeopaths reported their activity.

Natrium sulphuricum

Proved by Dr. Schreter, in Lemberg, Galicia; 1832, in Hartlaub's *Annalen*, vol. 111, No 4 and „carefully and praiseworthy” – stated C. Hering – by Nenning in Bohemia, in 1833, vo. 4 No 4. Similarly, Boericke mentions Nenning and Schlusser, 1832, but this is not a proper proving, rather, a clinical discussion of salts in the biochemistry of the organism. (2)

Natrium carbonicum

In the 3rd edition of the *Chronic Diseases* Hahnemann added about 625 symptoms to the initial list of 308, following the provings of Nenning and Schretter. (19)

Oleum animale aethereum

Proving performed by Nenning, Schreter and Trinks, Hartlaub and Trinks, R.A.M.L., vol. 2. (1)

Magnesium carbonicum

Published in Hahnemann's *Chronic Diseases*, IV, 135, following Hartlaub & Trinks, *Reine Arzneimittellehre*, „Most of the symptoms, 801 in the original form, come from Nenning” (19). (29, 30).

Magnesium muriaticum

Proving made by Hahnemann, with additions from Nenning, Hartlaub and Trinks' *Arzneimittellehre*, vol. 3, p. 237.) (1, 8, [29,30])

Magnesium sulphuricum

Hartlaub and Trinks' *Annalen*, vol. 4, p. 466.

Manganum aceticum

Nenning , Hartlaub and Trinks' *Annalen*, vol. 2, p. 20.

Muriaticum acidum

Most of the symptoms in the first two editions of the *Chronic Diseases* were obtained by Hahnemann and his assistants. Most of the additions to the 3rd edition come from Nenning. (19)

Aethusa cynapium

Nenning, *Prak. Mitth.*, 1828. „Introduction to the *Materia Medica* of Dr. Nenning, from Germany” (25) – here it is evident the mistake of O'Connor, repeated each time he mentions him. In that time, Bohemia was a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, not Germany. This mistake appears also in the writings of other authors (7, 24).

Achilea millefolium

Nenning: *Annalen hom. Klinik*, V. 4, p. 344.

Ammonium muriaticum

Hartlaub in *Annalen*, 1833.

Ammonium carbonicum

Proved by Nenning on many people; his 479 symptoms, including some of the editor, appeared in Hartlaub & Trinks' *Arzneimittellehre*. In the 2nd edition of the *Chronic Diseases* these observations were supplemented by some new ones made by Hahnemann, to a total of 789. (19)

Betula alba

Nenning: *A.H. Z.*, V. 20, p. 130) (3)

Bovista lycoperdon

Proved by Nenning and two other provers, 640 symptoms from this source appeared in Hartlaub & Trinks' *Arzneimittellehre*. According to Hughes, „it is one of the vicious symptom-lists of the sub-Hahnemannic epoch, without any information as to subjects, doses, or relations between symptoms.”) (18, 29,30).

Niccolum-met + -c

Nenning: Hartl. u Trinks, *Annalen*, V. 3, p. 353. Hartlaub (III. 3) in 1832, published a proving of nickel made by Nenning on several people, without mentioning the

preparation employed. It may be supposed that it was not pure. Trinks' statement that it was made with a carbonate cannot be believed. (15, 20)

Natrium carbonicum

Proved by Nenning and Richter, Hartlaub & Trinks, R.A.M.L., vol. 2, p. 138. „Has a special affinity for the breasts, especially the right. Pains appear in the nipples each time the child is put to feed. Pains extend inwards and to the back, towards the humerus and the sacrum”. (23)

Baryta carbonica

Hahnemann added in the 1835 edition of the *Materia Medica Pura* many symptoms reported by Nenning in Hartlaub.

Castoreum canadense

Mentioned in Allen, following Hartlaub & Trinks' Annalen, vol. 3, p. 314.

Causticum

The proving of *Causticum* has a story of its own. In *Fragmenta de viribus medicamentorum Positivis, sive in sano corpore humano observatis* (1805), Hahnemann published thirty symptoms obtained by him with a substance called „Acris tinctura”. In the first and second editions of the *Materia Medica Pura* a more extensive proving appears of the same preparation, now called „Aetzstoff Tinctur-Tinctura acris sine Kali”. To this proving (which in its final form contains 307 symptoms) belong symptoms from Becher, Franz, Hartmann, Hermann, Hornburg, Langhammer and Stapf, besides more than 100 observations by Hahnemann. In the 3rd edition (1833), the remedy was not included, this is why it cannot be found in Dudgeon's translation. However, in 1830 Hahnemann had transferred it to the *Chronic Diseases*, where 1014 symptoms are listed, the new ones coming by Rummel and himself. Now it is called „Aetzstoff” or „Causticum”, and it is prepared in a different way. In the 3rd volume of their *Arzneimittellehre*, Hartlaub and Trinks, mentioning Nenning, include 9 symptoms of the older and 70 of the new preparation. (12)

Chelidonium majus

Nenning: Hartl. u Trinks, Mat. Med., V. 3) (3)

Gambogia

„Nenning proved this remedy on many subjects, female, in doses of 30 drops of pure tincture, 25 drops in the first dilution, 20 in the second and 25 in the third, does not supply data on the provers and the dose each one took, nor indicates which symptoms appear in each prover”. (19) The symptoms appear in Allen's *Encyclopedia*, vol. 4, p. 373. (1)

Strontium carbonicum

Nenning, Schreter, Seidel, Trinks and Woost, Hartlaub and Trinks, R. A. M. L.

Tabacum

The primary provers were Nenning, Schreter, Hausbrand, Hartlaub and Trink's, Mat. Med.; Seidel's Collection, A. H. Z., vol. 12, p. 150; Allen's Encyclopedia. Nenning – number of provers unknown, method unknown, employed Hungarian tobacco. (29)

Alumina

Hartlaub and Trink's, *Arzneimittellehre*, II, 80. Contains 979 symptoms from 4 observers, Hartlaub, Nenning, Schreter, Trink's obtained with the first and sixth triturations. (19)

Indigo tinctoria

Was proved by Lembke, A. h. Z., xlv, 338 and NENNING : *Annal. Hom. Klinik*, V. 3, p 229.

Graphites

The proving of *Graphites* appeared in the first edition of the *Chronic Diseases*, with 590 symptoms. It was later proved by Nenning, on many people, and Hartlaub. In the 2nd edition of the *Chronic Diseases*, Hahnemann added 200 new symptoms and also some reported from Rummel and Kretchmar, to a total of 1,144 symptoms. (1, 17, 19)

Kalium carbonicum

Hahnemann published a proving in the first edition of the *Chronic Diseases* with 938 symptoms. In the 2nd edition, the list had increased to 650, some of them reported by Hartlaub and Goullon, and many by Nenning.

Sarsaparilla officinalis

Nenning : *Hartl. Mat. Med.*, V. 2.

Tartaricum acidum

Nenning: *Prakt. Mittheil*, 1827, p. 27. Later, mentioned by Allen.

Jalapa

„Painful diarrhea in children, with violent restlessness and crying” – Nenning. (4)

Dulcamara

Hahnemann added symptoms reported by Nenning (mentioned as „NG”) in the *Chronic Diseases*. (5)

Euphorbium officinarum

Proving performed by Hahnemann, Langhammer, Wislicenus and Nenning. (19)

Sarsaparilla

In *Materia Medica Pura*, vol. IV, 42 symptoms by Hahnemann and 111 by others. Nenning performed later a proving for Hartlaub & Trink's' *Arzneimittellehre*, vol. 2, that contains 347 symptoms. It was added to the 3rd edition of the *Chronic Diseases*. (5, 17, 19)

There are further mentions of Nenning in other remedies, from the first editions of Hahnemann's works to the main pure materia medica: *Phosphorus*, *Sulphur*, *Silicea*,

Sulphuric acidum, Zincum, Plumbum metallicum, Arsenicum album, Drosera, Ipeca, Laurocerasus, Moschus, Paris, Sabina, Secale, Carbo animalis, etc. . And probably, some symptoms of *Ratania* (18), *Silica marina, Kalium iodatum and Cantharis*. (1,5,19,17)

Reactions to Nenning's provings

Upon the first time that Hahnemann employed provings published by Hartlaub & Trinks (*Alumina*, in the *Chronic Diseases*), he remarked:

„This two letters (NG), purely anonymous, indicate the person who supplied most of the symptoms in the Annalen, although many times expressed in a negligent, diffuse and indefinite manner. I merely extracted from his provings what is useful, believing that it is a person careful and trustworthy; however, in a field as difficult and sensitive as the testing of remedies is, it would be unforgivable if the homeopathic public were to unconditionally trust an unknown person called by two letters, such as Ng”. (11)

It might be that Hahnemann *„was unjustifiedly prejudiced and reacted against the provings of Nenning, which seem to have been consciously performed, although not in strict conformity to the Hahnemannian method”.* [Brit.J. of Hom, XXXV, p. 106, commentary of Hughes on the *Organon*] (10)

Similarly, it seems that the note to chapter 143 of the *Organon*, exclusively in the 5th edition, allude to Nenning's provings, who apparently paid his provers:

„Recently, it has become customary to trust the testing of remedies to unknown persons, who are paid for their labor; data thus obtained are being published. However, in this way the most important work of all, that has as its mission to form the true and only pillars of the art of cure, and which requires the maximum of certainty and moral trustworthiness, seems to me – and I regret to say this – becomes dubious and uncertain, concerning its results, losing in this way all value.” (13)

This note of Hahnemann raised strong suspicious against the source mentioned, up to the point that some authors, as the ones that compiled the *Repertory Cypher*, eliminated all symptoms originated in it. (17, 19) Roth examined Nenning's provings, which he disbelieved, calling them *„a factory of symptoms”*, and considered his contributions dubious. (18, 27)

In his writings, Hughes makes an implicit criticism (although many times he writes sentences such as *„this proving was performed by Nenning in his usual manner, without indicating the doses, provers, etc.”*), but also explicit:

„Nenning proved Laurocerasus in his usual manner, i.e. on the employees of his wife, who were paid to do so. He reported every trifling deviation observed, and in this way he overloaded the list of symptoms with countless stitches here and there, rumblings in the abdomen, changing of seats and others of this kind, which are evidently not produced by the remedy, but incidental normal conditions of any individual.

Hahnemann only did was to extract from the contributions of this surgeon...tightly restricting their use.” (18)

Even though, he admits Nenning’s merits:

„It seems, however, that Nenning’s symptoms were obtained in a right manner, i.e. through testing in healthy individuals, yet, the paying of the provers and the lack of discernment upon taking the records have put some shadows on the results. Even though, I do not believe that it is justified to remove them all. The only thing needed by these symptoms is their clinical verification, to be tested as materials to verify the rule similia similibus curentur. If in this way, they confirm their reliability, we may consider them as admissible in the materia medica.” (18)

On the other hand, eminent homeopaths, such as Boenninghausen, Wilson and Hering gave him a vote of confidence:

„accepting the contributions of Nenning as satisfactory as the ones of other observers. Not one affirmation against him has come from this side. Therefore, we may accept the contributions of Nenning or, at least, to temporarily consider them as good and valuable additions.” (18)

Hering would call him, once and again, „the conscious and praiseworthy Nenning” and admitted that he had verified many symptoms in his clinical practice, e.g. *„Raue and Hering: a certain form of sciatica, cured with Nat-s in the second dilution, according Nenning’s proving”*. (17, 24) Or, he trusted his *clinical authority* in his *Guiding Symptoms of Our Materia Medica*, e.g. in *Sabina*, *Secale* (hypermenorrhea), *Rhus toxicodendrum* (epistaxis), *Pulsatilla* (threaten of abortion), *Colocynthis* (flatulence after falling; complicated kidney colics), *Sulphur* (ophtalmia), etc. (17)

Commenting on the proving of *Ammonium muriaticum*, Hering states, *„the first prover was the much criticized Nenning, whose masterly provings were published by Hartlaub”*. (17)

Similarly, time allowed to verify many of the symptoms of his provings, so that *„the accuracy of those symptoms was confirmed by the doctors who employed them”*, *„obtaining spectacular cures”*. (26, 27)

For instance, Farrington reports one such cure in cases of amenorrhea with *Manganum aceticum 3C*, after researching other remedies, which he chose on the grounds of symptoms described by Nenning. (9)

Who was Nenning?

The history of the anonymous provings under „Ng”, dating from Hahnemann’s time, has its own story. It was Hering who explained who this anonymous source was:

„.... a surgeon, from the area of Budweis, in Bohemia, a candid, right man, not too much learned but with good intentions, for which was known by everybody. According to the laws of the country, he was allowed to practice only surgery. But a paralysis of the right hand hindered him to continue in his profession. His wife, then, opened a

school of embroidering to sustain the family. Nenning discovered homeopathy and immediately became an ardent admirer. It was then that he had the great idea to contribute to this cause, by making provings on the girls which worked in his wife's embroidery workshop. He succeeded to convince them. Unluckily, he could only get in touch with Hartlaub, from Leipzig, instead of Hahnemann himself.

In that time, all Austrian citizens were forbidden, by stric laws, to send any printable materials outside the boundaries of the Empire. Therefore, not only Nenning, but all Austrian subjects, would appear in books only with their initials." (18)

So, Hahnemann's objection on Nenning's anonymity was unfounded, and is historically explained. Moreover, as soon as it became possible to publish abroad, Nenning himself supplied an explanation, in the *Allgemeine Hom. Zeitung* (1839):

„... if I performed many provings, and, as it has been remarked, I reported many symptoms, this, in my opinion, should have awoken more sympathy than derision. The legacy of Hahnemann, which I believe it is not merely to take profit, but to commit us to work, awoke my enthusiasm and, with the active support of Hartlaub, it was possible to do what I did, which at times surprised Hahnemann himself. A number of people, relatives and friends, was gather to perform provings, being rewarded with food and money. Together with them, two of my children also participated, and with full confidence in the honesty of all, I gave them different remedies and recording everything they reported. It was a matter of conscience for me not to omit the least detail, this is why frequent repetitions appeared, which I admit, because I thought that only in this way the field of action of a remedy could be best recognized". (18)

Being one of the main suppliers of pathogenetic symptoms in the history of homeopathy, Nenning's exemplar modesty is almost legendary. Keeping some reserve concerning the manner in which he performed the provings, Nenning may be considered as one of the unknown pioneers among the anonymous devotees who tried, with the best of will, although not always with the desired exactitude, to offer a factual foundation to homeopathy.

Instead of a conclusion...

Incursions in the history of homeopathy as the present one, focused on a single primary source and a restricted field, dreams, cannot lead to firm conclusions, which would be shallow and inconsistent.

The problems related to the reliability of the primary source of the pathogenetic symptoms „Nenning" will remain; however, the endorsement by several prominent homeopaths, who trusted and clinically verified these symptoms, helps to give significant credit to it.

However, all the discussion above reminds us of the intrinsic fragility of dreams as a feature of provings. As it could be seen, dreams, precisely because they reflect the individual subconscious dynamics, are subjected to multiple influences, among which a proving, which may give rise to individual themes; but it is impossible to distinguish between these motions and the direct action of the remedy.

An exaggerated emphasis has been recently placed on „dream provings” (31, 32), which are hard, if not impossible, to verify as reliable homeopathic symptoms. I believe that this fad is problematic and inconsistent as a ground for accurate homeopathic prescriptions. It is highly probable that the dreams appearing in provings are nothing but the reiteration of subconscious themes lying in the mind of the prover.

My intention is not to call to abolish dreams as a pathogenetic realm but, on the contrary, to call attention to them. As a general idea, a possible path is to rate *new* dreams that first appear in a proving, as *pathogenetic symptoms* (due to the primary or secondary action of the tested remedy). If dreams are repeated or existed in the prover before the proving, or reappear in several provings performed by the same individual (as it seems to be the case of Nenning’s symptoms), it is probable that they reflect the tertiary reaction of the individual, essential in his/her personal history, i.e. they are *personal dreams*, and it is hard to judge, in this case, on the effects of the tested remedy. Whenever dreams appear in a proving, they have to be taken systematically in consideration. They reflect subtle modifications in an individual’s economy, due to a stimulus that reveals deep strata of disorder. Certainly, such dreams, even if personal, cannot be ignored in the course of a homeopathic consultation.

The main themes around which the psychism of an individual gravitates may be revealed in a proving or a disease. And these themes may be significant in the field of the homeopathic typologies. However, their interpretation, as meaningful or not, in the course of a homeopathic consultation, depends on the subtleness of their details, but this is not the aim of the present paper.

To conclude, it cannot be omitted a mention to the merit of those devoted to homeopathy, virtually unknown, who did all they could for the advance of homeopathy, and no matter criticism and doubts, effected significant contributions to the history of homeopathy. This is the case of the anonymous „NG” of the first editions of Hahnemann’s *Materia Medica Pura* and *Chronic Diseases*, later identified as *Nenning, the devoted surgeon of Bohemia*.

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