

INFORMATION ON PROVINGS AND SYSTEMATICS

an interview with Jörg Wichmann published in hpathy.com 2011

Joerg, what was your purpose, your idea in setting up this website www.provings.info ?

Originally this project started in the nineties with a collection of new provings that I did for the german version of Jeremy Sherr's book on the methodology of provings and with my own book on the systematics of remedies that I first published in 1997 and revised in 2006. I had started to collect all these systematic information for my own practical work as I was much influenced by the family ideas of Massimo who was the first to bring this up on a practical level in the nineties. At that time many homeopaths didn't have a very clear idea of what exactly a certain substance was. A remedy was just a name in a book that was ordered alphabetically and which had certain symptoms to prescribe it for. For me this was totally unsatisfactory, and so I was happy to pick up Massimo Mangialavori's and later also Rajan Sankaran's ideas about families and connect our work to the other sciences.

From 2002 on I started a website with the same collection of material, at that time with quite simple and self-made files. Later, in 2008 I found a team of professional programmers and started to have a website programmed with a real database and complex search functions through all the families and provings. So the purpose was to collect primary material on provings and make them directly available if possible. And also to provide a systematic view where all the remedies could be found within their natural families. This was necessary for my own homeopathic work, and – so I thought – probably for that of many colleagues as well.

After the database was set up, I also added information on manufacturers, on toxicology, pictures etc, to make it more useful.

What kind of provings do you publish and how do you select them?

All provings that are available as a file are directly linked. I don't select them at all, but I characterize them as trituration, meditation, contact or Hahnemannian provings, so that the users are able to choose for themselves what kind of proving they want to read. Even the most unmethodological or superficial proving could contain some piece of information that is valid in a certain case. So I don't see myself as the one to decide, but just as a careful collector. When you are looking for provings of certain remedies or a group of remedies the search function makes it possible to filter the results to see only provings of a chosen method. You can also choose provings of by now ten different languages, most of them being English or German of course. But there is an increasing number of provings published in other languages. The main language of the website itself can be chosen between English and German, and all is completely bilingual.

Of course there is a focus on modern provings as most of the old ones are already incorporated in Allen's Encyclopedia, in Clarke and Hering, in the repertories, in the computer programs and so on. So the urgency to get access to the new and very new provings is much greater. New provings that are sent to me can now be published within a few minutes. That is a great advantage compared to earlier times, when it took a great effort to print them. Now they can be available fast and freely.

When you talk of free availability, why are you then charging a subscription fee for your website?

There is no charge for the provings themselves, as they are not part of my personal effort. Many of the provings are free in the www somewhere anyway, and I have only linked them – these are more than 500. And those 250 that are hosted only on my site can also be reached freely on a separate page. So the fee is only for the systematic website and the search functions, that I had to have programmed. Professional programming is so expensive that I couldn't afford it on my own only. And the yearly subscription is much less than a magazine, and I think, for such a lot of practical information it is worth it.

The database is extended all the time. In the first half of this year there have been added 160 proving entries and several hundred new remedies with information about their family and manufacturer.

I also try to find literature information about provings and add this when there is no file to be linked. But provings with no clear information about their publication are kept waiting until I have their full data. These are again several hundred on my waiting list which are mentioned as having been proved somewhere but which have not been published yet or in a place I don't know.

Only a published proving is useful for our homeopathic work. So please, all of you colleagues who have proving material in your cupboards, please make it available and publish your results !

Many homeopaths today are very critical regarding all those new provings. They think, that firstly new provings are not necessary as the old masters could heal well enough with the remedies they had. And secondly they say that the quality of modern provings is much lower than in the old days.

It is true that the old masters could heal well with what they had. But if you read their texts you will find that again and again they regretted not having enough well proved remedies. Hahnemann's writings are full of appeals to conduct more provings. And when a case did not develop as he thought it should, one of his typical thoughts was, that maybe this was due to a lack of known remedies. So I am sure that all our old masters would have been more than delighted to find such a wealth of knowledge as we have at our hands today. In treating the diseased we cannot know too much. In fact I find it a very strange idea that we should stop gathering knowledge at some point.

And as to the supposition that earlier provings are better than later ones, this can only be upheld as long as you don't read them. Many of the old provings are of quite poor quality, starting with no blinding in most of the cases, often based on very few or only one prover, often with no transparent protocol or no clear distinction between poisoning and proving. Many of them are very good, no question. And this is also true for the new provings. Their quality differs a lot. Jeremy Sherr has set the highest standards for proving quality in his book on "The Dynamics and Methodology of Homeopathic Provings" (Malvern, 1994), where he collects all of Hahnemann's and his followers' ideas on good provings, reflects on them and puts them into clear and understandable advice. Many modern provers follow his book and its rules more or less. These provings bring about reliable results. Many others follow different aims and don't want to conduct full and thorough provings, but they just want to get an impression of the overall atmosphere – or "energy" as many call it – of a remedy. So they do a small contact proving or a meditation on it or they triturate the substance in a meditative way and make a protocol of their impressions and images. This is different and brings about different results of course, mostly less physical ones and less solid. But sometimes there is a gem of understanding in a dream or an image or a thought that came to them during such a process. Whatever we do, we should know what we are doing and why, and we should be honest and clear about our methodology and declare it transparently. Then any proving can be valuable in its own right, no matter if it's old or new, large or small.

Can you tell with a few words, what the main ingredients for a good proving are, as you have conducted several ones yourself?

Following Hahnemann and Sherr, we can say that for a full proving we need several individuals of different gender and age, if possible, and of good health. They shouldn't take any medication or other drugs and live as steady and healthy as possible during the time of the proving, and of course they have to keep a daily journal of every small or great change and symptom that they experience. Today we would say, that it is important that the proving is done blind, at least on the side of provers and supervisors, to avoid phantasizing subconsciously about the supposed qualities of the substance. And – as Jeremy never stops to emphasize – good supervision is the main key to a good proving. This means: Each prover is referred to a personal supervisor. They have daily contact, and both keep a diary about this. The supervisor is responsible for the precision of the reports and also for the well-being of the prover.

So could you now tell us, what exactly your website provings.info can do for me, when I'm working on a case? How does it work, and what can I search for?

The most simple question is when repertorizing you come across a remedy that you do not know, and you want to know what it is and whether there is a proving. So you type the first letters of the remedy into the search box and you get a list of remedies that have these letters in their name. Chose the one you are looking for and you are referred to the substance page, where you find all information about the latin, common and homeopathic name of that remedy, abbreviations, family and kingdom. Maybe you can also see a picture or find a note on which manufacturers provide this substance. Beneath this kind of information you see a box about provings, author, method etc and a button to get either the literary source or to be linked directly to the text, which is possible in more than half of the cases.

DATABASE LOGIN

LOGGED IN AS
wichmann

- EDIT USER PROFILE
- LOGOUT

REMEDIES

- SUBSTANCES A-Z
- SEARCH SUBSTANCES+GROUPS

-
-

PROVINGS

- INTRODUCTION
- PROVINGS A-Z
- SEARCH PROVINGS+GROUPS
- WORD SEARCH IN PROVINGS

SYSTEMATICS

- INTRODUCTION
- ANIMALS
- PLANTS
- FUNGI
- PROTISTS
- BACTERIA
- VIRUSES
- MINERALS
- ENERGY FIELDS
- SEARCH TAXONOMY

MISCELLANEOUS

- NEWS
- BOOKS AND ARTICLES
- LITERATURE AND LINKS
- SEMINARS

[Plantae](#) -> [Magnoliophyta](#) -> [Magnoliopsida / Dicotyledonae](#) -> [Asteridae](#) -> [Asterales](#) -> [Asteraceae/ Compositae](#) -> Arnica montana

SUBSTANCE	ABBREVIATION	SYSTEMATICS
Arnica montana Leopard's Bane	Arn	Asteraceae/ Compositae
dt.: Arnika, engl.: Brusiewort, Fall Herb, Celtic Nard, Mountain Tobacco		

RESOURCES
all



[-] PROVINGS

AUTHOR
Hahnemann, Samuel

LANGUAGE/S

LINK

METHOD
Hahnemannian

PUBLISHING YEAR
1833

MANUFACTURER
selfmade

These substance pages can also be reached directly from some repertory programmes like e.g. the freely downloadable Complete Dynamics, where you can go directly from a rubric to this substance and proving information.

When you are working with a method that bases a lot on family analysis like that of the Bombay Group or Mangialavori or Scholten, very often you want to know which remedies belong to a certain group. This is very easy to get, as you can just click on a taxonomic family wherever you see it mentioned (like in the above illustration "Asteraceae" or "Asterales" and you are taken to a complete list of the remedies from this family that are in homeopathic use (which means they are mentioned somewhere in homeopathic literature, or are proved or are supplied by a homeopathic pharmacy). And not only taxonomic families are possible to chose but also groups that we find important for our work, like drugs, trees, ocean remedies, desert remedies, as well as all families that are named in the books of Sankaran and used in the Sensation Homeopathy of the Bombay group.

In case you are not acquainted at all with the current scientific taxonomy of organisms you can also use the kingdom tables that you see in the illustration under "Systematics" in the menu left, where you get basic information about the family structure and what the different levels of names mean. There you will also find the different systems of flowering plants explained, the Cronquist system that I am mainly using for homeopathic purposes and the later APG that uses genetic research and is still in development. Seeing these families you can always chose whether you want to see all their remedies or only those with a proving.

Of course you can also chose provings of a certain author, or a certain language, or a certain time period, or just those provings that are new on this website since a certain date – for the regular user who just wants to see the latest additions. Or you can combine criteria, like seeing all Compositae that have been proved be Hahnemann. You fill in Hahnemann as author and Compositae as group, and you get this list:

SEARCH WAS:

FAMILY:

ASTERACEAE

AUTHOR:

HAHNEMANN


SUBSTANCE

SYSTEMATICS

PROVINGS

Arnica montana
Leopard 's Bane


Asteraceae/
Compositae

LINK  Hahnemann,
Samuel

LINK  Hahnemann,
Samuel

Artemisia maritima/ Cina
Wormseed


Asteraceae/
Compositae

LINK  Hahnemann,
Samuel

LINK  Hahnemann,
Samuel

Matricaria chamomilla/
Chamomilla
Common Chamomile


Asteraceae/
Compositae

LINK  Hahnemann,
Samuel

LINK  Hahnemann,
Samuel

Taraxacum officinale
Dandelion

Asteraceae/
Compositae

LINK  Hahnemann,
Samuel

LINK  Hahnemann,
Samuel

If you click on the "Link" buttons you are directly taken to the text, either in german or english language as the flag indicates. All provings of Hahnemann are linked in both languages.

And there is also a full word search that searches all the linked texts, which you can use in case you remember something that was mentioned in one proving and you have forgotten which one.

A lot of the information and functions of your website can also be found in one of the several homeopathic computer programs that we are using, directly combined with repertory and materia medica. What sense does such a website make then?

Well, that is true, you find a lot in the programs, especially as the newer ones like Radar Opus are directly connected to the www and you can get instant info from wikipedia etc. But on the other hand this website is much more flexible and integrates new material very quickly. If you look for example at bird remedies, that are quite new in homeopathic use. A few years ago there wasn't half a dozen remedies based on bird substances. Now we have more than 160 different bird remedies available in the pharmacies, and 50 of them are already proved. It will take a long time until the programs are updated to this. On a website you find it faster. And by far cheaper. The fee for this site is nothing in comparison with a program. And since you can get the newest version of the Complete Repertory freely as a download and for a small fee with good analysis tools, you have access to very good and always updated working tools for almost no money. Apart from this it is the only medium that tells you which remedies of a family are generally available and where you can get them.

Where do you see the place of such a tool as your website in the development of modern homeopathy?

Looking at the development of homeopathy as a science, ie. a field of knowledge, we can see strong similarities to that of other sciences as biology or physics a few hundred years ago. They all start with some basic ideas and a more or less miscellaneous collection of facts and observations. When this collection has grown to a certain extent, knowledge enters a second stage, that of building structures, systems and setting up hypothesis about the inherent logic and mechanisms of these supposed structures. This is, where homeopathy is at the moment. Of course in this stage many different and contradictory hypothesis are formed, most of which are discarded and forgotten in the course of history. This was the case in all sciences, and it will be the same with homeopathy. At the moment we have to try out different and fallible approaches to form new theories. Some of them will stay and build the bases for future homeopaths. At this stage it is important to have as much information available as possible to try out our ideas. And this is where I see my website: as a tool that provides basic and original information for homeopathic research to build upon.

Apart from this new and fascinating development there is of course the steady growth of provings and remedies, that is going on since Hahnemann's time, which I try to give a forum on this website as well.