The spagyric manufacturing process

In plant spagyrics, as in spagyrics in general, the consideration of processes plays a central role.

In spagyrics, the effect of a plant is determined not only by its natural ingredients, but also by the specific way it is processed.

The spagyric production process is based on the alchemical principle of "purification" and "reunification" of plant components. It typically involves the steps of fermentation, distillation, and ashing (calcination), which are considered the separation, purification, and reunification of the three essential principles of the plant: "sulfur" (soul, ethereal components), "mercury" (spirit, alcoholic or volatile components), and "sal" (body, mineral residues).

For the terms Sulfur, Mercurius, and Sal, see the download "The Effect of Spagyric Essences."

The spagyric manufacturing process is therefore about refining and intensifying the plant's effectiveness in all its aspects, both physical and energetic, for therapeutic use. Spagyric essences thus offer an effect that goes beyond the mere application of the plant and aims for a deeper healing effect on body, mind, and soul.

Paracelsus strongly influenced the idea that nature can be "purified" through an alchemical process and thus concentrated in its highest healing power. He developed the concept that medicinal plants contain the three "essential principles" (sulfur, mercury, sal), which can be separated, refined, and then reunited in a purification process to achieve optimal, holistic healing effects.

1. Prima Materia

Before explaining the manufacturing process in more detail, the role of the "prima materia" should be briefly explained.

In alchemy, there is the basic idea that everything originates from a primordial substance, a "prima materia." This primordial substance is considered the basis of all being and is immutable in its quantity (its mass or size). However, it can be altered in its quality (its nature, state, or property) and take on new forms.

For the production of spagyric remedies, this means that a remedy can be produced from different starting materials (i.e. plants, minerals, etc.) if these starting materials are first returned to the “prima materia” and then reformed again.

In other words, the plant is “stripped” during the production process (through splitting, mechanical crushing, fermentation, chemical processes, etc.), the unformed original substance, which contains all the potential active forces and qualities of the plant, emerges and is then reassembled into a new quality.

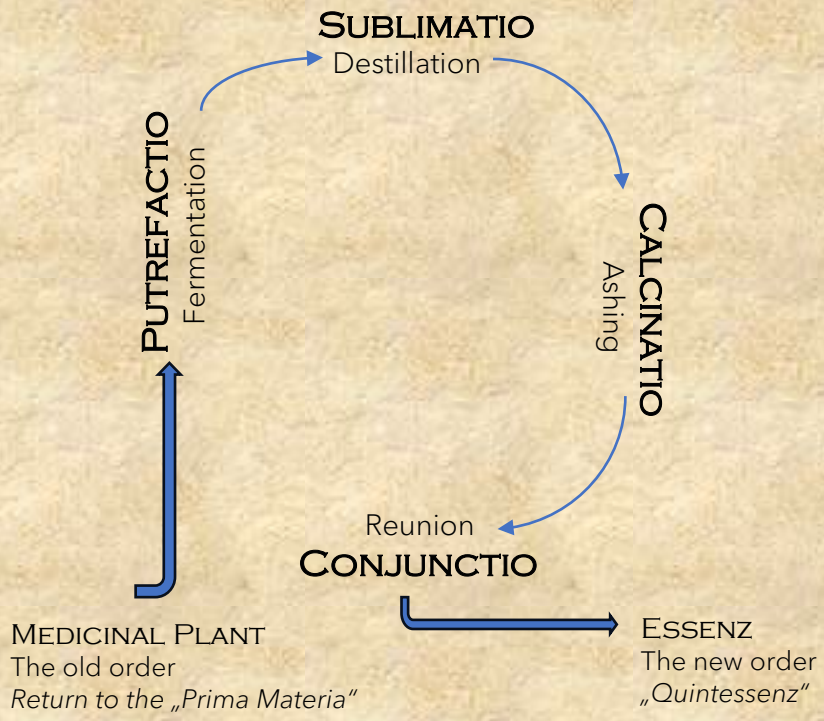
2. Spao te ageiro – the path of the plant to the essence

The expression "spao te ageiro," from which the word "spagyric" is derived, means "I separate" (spao) and "unite" (ageiro). This alchemical principle describes the process of spagyrics, in which the plant is separated into its essential components (i.e., purified) and then reunited to create a refined essence, the quintessence.

Through the steps of separation and reunification, the principles hidden in the “Prima Materia” are exposed, recombined, and their therapeutic effect is maximized.

The transformative changes that occur during the production of a plant essence can be described by the model of the three principles: Sal, Mercurius, and Sulfur. These principles are gradually released from the plant substance during this process.

The change in the plant material corresponds to a four-stage **alchemical transformation**, reflecting the ancient alchemical processes of fermentation (putrefactio), distillation (sublimatio), ashing (calcinatio) and reunion (conjunctio).



2.1 FERMENTATION (PUTREFACTIO)

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First, the fresh or dried plant material is ground and then mixed with a specified amount of water, yeast, and sucrose. This mixture is then allowed to ferment. After a certain period of time, fermentation begins, with the carbohydrates or sugar being enzymatically broken down by the yeast. The duration of this process varies depending on the plant and can last several days to weeks. This first phase of the spagyric process is only considered complete when no further fermentation activity can be detected.

Fermentation breaks down and transforms the plant substance, producing primarily alcohols, acids, and carbon dioxide. At the same time, new fragrances are released, which means that the scent of the fermented plant mixture is often significantly different from that at the beginning of the fermentation phase (unless it is from plants with a high content of essential oils). From an alchemical perspective, the carrier of the **mercurial-principle** (i.e., the spirit) is released from the plant during fermentation and transformed, manifesting itself in the form of the plant's own alcohol and other fermentation products.

2.2 Destillation (Sublimatio)

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After fermentation is complete, the fermented plant matter is distilled. This is done by steam distillation, in which hot steam flows through the fermentation mixture, dissolving and carrying away all volatile substances. The steam condenses, and the collected water contains primarily plant-derived alcohols and other fermentation products from the fermentation mixture.

The main purpose of distillation is to extract the transformed carriers of the Mercurius principle (alcohol, essential oils and other steam-volatile plant ingredients) from the plant mass.

During distillation, not only the mercurial principles but also the carriers of the sulfur-principle, such as essential oils and other distillable substances unchanged by fermentation, are extracted from the plant. Unlike the transformed mercurial principles from fermentation, no transformation takes place with sulfur. The essential oils remain unchanged during fermentation and are merely dissolved from the plant material. Thus, only the sulfur is separated or liberated from the plant.

After distillation, two fractions are formed: a distillate containing all steam-volatile substances from the fermentation batch and a residue in the distillation vessel containing all non-volatile components.

2.3 Ashing (Calcinatio)

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After distillation, the remaining residue is further processed. It is highly moist and is dried. The residue is calcined (ashed) at a temperature of 400 °C until all organic components are broken down and only a grayish-white ash remains. Sometimes repeated ashing is necessary to eliminate all coal residue.

Through calcination, the previously burned and charred plant residues undergo a significant chemical transformation. The plant's minerals are returned to the inorganic state.

Photo: private

The calcinate, the ash, is ultimately chemically indistinguishable from rock flour. However, the chemical composition often varies considerably from plant species to plant species. The chemical elements are usually present in the form of carbonates or oxides. From an alchemical perspective, the minerals, as carriers of the **sal-principle** (i.e., the solid components) of the plant, have been transformed and can be described as "pure" in the spagyric sense.

Calcination is a special feature in spagyrics. In contrast to conventional phytotherapy, the residues of the plants are not ignored in the preparation of spagyric essences.

Plant spagyrics integrate this residue of the plant, while in phytotherapy only the soluble minerals of the plant juices flow into the remedy.

2.4 Unification (Conjunctio)

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In the three steps of **fermentation**, **distillation**, and **calcination**, the carriers of the three philosophical principles (salt, mercury, and sulfur) were extracted from the plant and processed. This corresponds to the "spao" (the "dissolving") of the spagyric concept.

The fourth and final step leads to the **alchemical unification (conjunctio or "chemical wedding").**

This union corresponds to the "ageiro" of the alchemical concept and characterizes a kind of rebirth. The combination of distillate and calcinate creates a new unity of salt, mercury, and sulfur, the spagyric essence.

In the practical implementation of the **"chemical wedding"**, the ash is added to the distillate while continuously stirring. The water-soluble salts of the calcinate are absorbed by the distillate, while the insoluble residue gradually sinks to the bottom. The liquid is then sealed and left undisturbed for a few days.

At the end of the process, a filtration process takes place, which retains all undissolved components. These undissolved components are referred to in alchemy as the **"caput mortuum"** ("skull"; in the alchemical sense of "worthless stuff").

The filtrate finally represents the finished spagyric essence and is ready for use.

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The union brings about a new structure within the plant. The old structure of the plant is irretrievably destroyed, but the plant's central principles are not lost. They now continue to exist on a "higher level" as **quintessence**. In the spagyric process, they have undergone a metamorphosis, have been transformed, and released from the plant.

The resulting essence is, in the philosophical sense, an evolved plant that has been reborn in a new guise.

3. Quintessenz

In plant spagyrics, the finished spagyric plant essence represents the **"quintessence of the plant."** In contrast to other alchemical philosophies, the quintessence here does not represent a highly effective substance extracted from the source material. Rather, it is viewed as a **transformed state** of the medicinal plant used. The plant essence does not contain the quintessence as a separate component; rather, **the plant essence is itself the quintessence**. In this context, the quintessence is a natural substance (the plant) that has achieved a new form (spagyric essence) on a higher level.

Paracelsus himself considered it the noblest task of the alchemist to transform natural substances into a higher state.