



Lecture 04 Prima - second stage - separation

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The end of the putrefaction has left us with either the completed fermentation or the alcohol(/water)extraction, where the result is a fluid containing the elements of the herb in chaos.

The next stage is to separate the elements fully, the one from the other. The first step in this separation is to remove the herb-body from the fluid and this is done by 'filtration'. That is, the entire mass is put through a filter (or through a straining cloth, which might be more practical if you have a lot to work with.)

That vegetable matter is warmed until it is bone-dry and stored away from dust.

Next the coloured (tinctured) liquid is taken and put into a retort or distillation train. If the volume of liquid is too much to fit in the flask you have, this step in the process will have to be repeated in batches, until all the tinctured liquid is processed.

The tinctured liquid is then distilled, beginning gently. The alcohol (mercury) will rise and come-over first. That is stored in an air-tight jar (get in the habit of labelling everything clearly.) Next any water will come over. When the volume of water falls low you will notice (if you take the distillation far enough) that the tincture (the dissolved sulphur/oils) will start to form a ring around the inside of the flask. Once this starts the distillation should be stopped and left to cool. When cool the contents of the flask should then be transferred to an evaporating dish and in a warm place the remaining water gently driven off the sulphur.

(Note: for practical purposes it will be found that this evaporation might be better performed in a fire-proof dish that can handle high temp's.)

The evaporation dish will contain the sulphur in the form of a glue-like sticky resin/oil. This should be covered, to keep out the dust.

You now have the vegetable-matter, bone-dry, from which the alchemic-salt will be extracted. The alchemic-mercury is separate in its own air-tight jar, and the alchemic-sulphur in its fire-proof dish. These are the three alchemical principals (or the three principal elements) in their 'crude' state separated one from the other completely. All that remains of the element of earth is its residue, as an impurity, adhering to the principals, from which they must be cleansed in the next stage.

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