

Tyto alba – the Barn Owl an homoeopathic remedy proving



conducted and edited by Jörg Wichmann and the „Bergische Homöopathie-Schule“

Introduction:

This proving is to my knowledge the first full proving of a remedy of the order of the owls (Strigiformes) – together with another one published in January by Liz Stone, Wales

We chose the barn owl (*Tyto alba*), since it lives next to humans (in barns etc.) and because there already existed a well prepared and documented remedy of *Tyto alba* (bei Remedia, Mag. R. Müntz, Eisenstadt, Austria, www.remedia.at).

The proving of *Tyto alba* was done from May to September 2004 in the last year of the 3-years-course of the homeopathic graduate course in the Bergische Homöopathie-Schule after the strict rules laid down by Jeremy Sherr in his „Dynamics and Methodology of Homoeopathic Provings“.

10 provers, 8 supervisors and one conductor of the proving took part. Up to the very last discussion the remedy was only known to the conductor, so the proving was simple blinded. All provers took *Tyto alba* C 30.

Tyto alba is now available from Helios (Liz Stone's proving), Remedia (our proving) and Leonardo pharmacy, Hamburg (new).

The remedy was given to the Remedia Pharmacy by the German homeopath Herbert Sigwart, who brought it from a Danish museum of the university of Aarhus, where he got a deep frozen wing of a barn owl, from the muscle and feathers of which an alcoholic extraction was taken and succussed.

Why an owl? This proving has a long and colourful history, that must be mentioned to understand the whole context.

In July 1996 I had a humorous talk with some colleagues joking about weird methods of prescribing remedies. During this conversation I came up with the idea to write an article about a remedy that was utterly fantacized and suggested „owl's milk“ as something obviously absurd. Uta Santos wrote part of the article, I did the other and together we sent it to the editors of Homeopathic Links, where Harry commented on it and published it in winter 1996. Following is only my part of it:

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Encountering a fascinating new remedy: „Owl's Milk“ (Lac-o [Lac-owleum])

The idea to use this new remedy occurred to me in a dream I had during a time, when I was thinking intensively about a proper remedy for a patient, where I was mainly considering snake poisons.

In this dream I saw my patient sitting in front of a snake and an owl staring at both of them in confusion. Thinking about this I recognized how much owls and snakes have in common. Both of them show these large staring eyes, both animals have been attributed with wisdom, both are predators catching their prey by quick motion and both of them lay eggs. - So maybe many of our „snake-patients“ would have been better off with an owl's remedy.

To find the possible simillimum for my patient, I read a lot about owls and tried to find out, which kind of „owl substance“ would be the most appropriate for a remedy. Blood would be convenient, but is not known as a healing substance at all, neither are feathers or egg shells. At last I stepped upon a note about a certain secretion of the rump-gland of these birds, which was commonly called „owl’s milk“ by hunters. The owls apply the substance of this gland next to their tail with the help of their beak onto wounds, especially for their young ones. In former days people thought, the birds were feeding their young with this secretion and therefore erroneously called it „owl’s milk“. Since wounds treated with this substance heal very fast, it was used widely in folk medicine during the medieval times, though rare and expensive. Later the whole thing was disregarded as superstition, until in the late seventies an hungarian biologist rediscovered the healing properties of this secretion of the owl’s rump-gland.

Taking into account that my patient Sonja M. had suffered from cracking and bleeding skin since twenty years now, showing no reaction towards any other therapy, I decided to give her „owl’s milk“ as the most proper simillimum. Immediately the skin symptoms vanished after the usual initial aggravation. Above this the patient who did not know the remedy’s name until then told me, that her daily rhythm had changed totally and that she now at last was able to work before onset of dawn - a wonderful confirmation for this first owl’s case. The only disturbing thing were a few dreams of hers, she refused to tell more about but just mentioned they had to do with mice.

During the following weeks I did a little proving with our group of colleagues. As modern homeopaths we didn’t care much about those time-wasting double blind methods of course, but met the remedy consciously and face to face. In addition to the mentioned skin symptoms and day-night-rhythm the proving showed the following symptoms either in dreams or phantasy-travels or on the so called objective level: a strange wink of the eyes (2), lids as if flapping; very fine stucture of the hair; delusion as if soaring (3); food des. meat, esp. rabbit (2); av. bathing and diving; memory active; vision reduced, < day, > night; and most striking: periodic retching in the throat with ejection of lumpy remains of food, then > (keynote). These symptoms are already prepared as additions to the repertory of course, some of them quite similar to the original wording.

A few weeks later - I was just succussing elephant’s skin for a case of lymph edema - a greek woman from Athens consulted me. She was suffering from a globus feeling in the throat, felt depressive, had an allergy against sunshine, and told that she was unforgiving and could never forget anything. First these symptoms didn’t remind me of a specific remedy, but I had a clear feeling, that it must be a so-called „small remedy“. For such cases we are used to consider the „Dictionary for Mythology and Symbols“ as the most appropriate repertory since it encompasses the deep levels of our patients’ personalities much more than the common works of Kent & Co. more or less superficially looking only at the body. Coming from Athens seemed the most prominent symptom in this case for it had never before occurred in my practice. So I opened the book under the rubric „Athens“ and there I found „Athena, goddess of crafts, wisdom and cunning, patroness of Athens; symbolic animal: the owl“. So there I was with my proper remedy, which really helped the patient a lot for some time. By the way, the globus feeling in her throat dissolved into the retching of food remains well known from the provings. So we can add Lac-o under: globus hystericus (or throat, lump) and under: sensitivity sun, against.

If you, dear colleagues, have any ideas, cases or dreams regarding Lac-o, let us put them together to get a full picture of this fascinating new remedy, which will probably show to be of special importance for our Greek colleagues.

Jörg Wichmann, Cologne

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This joke then became a very special one because on the one hand it was surrounded by an astonishing amount of coincidences (read Harry van der Zee’s comment in Links 4/96), which stretched until years later the article was translated for a german edition, and while the translator worked on it, someone rang at her door to bring her a wounded barn owl for healing. On the other hand it was striking how many took this very obvious joke for serious, which fact opens for a few conclusions, that we don’t want to dwell on ...

Yet since that article I knew I owed the owls something, whom I had mistreated in this way for a mere joke, in which their spirit had taken part extensively, I'm glad to say. So eight years later I started a full and serious remedy proving, which enables us to introduce the first fully proven owl remedy.

Interestingly and typically at the same time (or even earlier with respect to the actual proving time) there was published another proving of the barn owl:

<http://www.welshschoolofhomoeopathy.org.uk/>

And in autumn 2004 a children's movie came to the cinemas, called „Bibi and the Secret of the Blue Owls“, where „blue owls' dust“ (an idea as weird as owl's milk) is a powerful magical ingredient.

To use a bird like the owl for healing of humans is not a pure offspring of the overheated imagination of some weird homeopaths, but has an old tradition. Eggs, feathers and other parts of these birds have always been used for different medical and magical purposes in many parts of the world.



Barn Owl Distribution



The Barn Owl - *Tyto alba*



The proving

Carried out by Jörg Wichmann and Bergische Homöopathie-Schule.
Proving was blinded simple – the remedy only known to the conductor.
Each prover was referred to a certain supervisor.
Begin of proving: 22. May 2004, ca. 10.00
Summarizing discussion: 4. September 2004.

10 provers, 8 women, 2 men (# 2, # 3) - 8 supervisors

Prover 1, fem., 51 Years
Prover 2, male, 38 Years
Prover 3, male, 41 Years
Prover 4, fem., 39 Years
Prover 5, fem., 45 Years
Prover 6, fem., 37 Years
Prover 7, fem., 35 Years
Prover 8, fem., 50 Years
Prover 9, fem., 44 Years
Prover 10, fem., 34 Years

Many thanks to all who took part with their personal energy and time, their diligence and willingness to suffer physical and psychological symptoms and pains. They have made this proving possible and given their share to all insights that are published here.

Thanks also to the spirit of the barn owl, who has guided us to try this proving and sent us all of these insights, the dreams and the symptoms. Without the willingness of the spirit of the remedy to meet and impregnate human being, body, mind and energy such provings could never take place.

**Central symptoms from the first edition
of the homoeopathic proving**

Mind, mental:

- confusion and lack of clarity. Forgetfulness of everyday things (make-up, keys, dates) – almost all #
(also an outstanding feature of the Welsh proving)
- in polarity to it: the issue of order, structure, systematization (#3, #10).
(Welsh proving: Confident/confused. - memory weak and making mistakes)
- clouds and motions on the fringes of the visual field (#8, #9), that couldn't be referred to anything, and on the mental level (#3) strange observation on the fringe of consciousness.

Mind, emotional:

- delimitation and participation as general main issues
- not being able to stand closeness – or surprisingly suddenly yes (#1, #5, #10)
- telling their opinion clearly and disassociating (#1, #2, #7, #9)
- disassociating to the point of „what the fuck, who cares ...“ (#1, #5 und #6)
- finding clear good-byes to old situations (#1, #7)
- being able to care for themselves and not only think of others (#7, #5, #1)
- aversion to talk *(also strong in Welsh proving: des. to be alone)*
- having talked intensively about dying and death (#7 und #10). *(even stronger in Welsh proving, where this is a central feature)*
- sadness without obvious reason and much weeping (#9 und #10)
- rapid changes of mood within short time (#4 und #9)
- feeling to be harassed by the illnesses of others (#1 und #9)
- unusual tranquility (#5 und #10) *(also strong in Welsh proving)*

Mind, incidents:

- birds of prey fly along conspicuously (#3, #4, supervisor, report of Sigwart)
(same occurrences in the Welsh proving: many sightings of bird, thoughts about them)

Generals

- nap at noon ameliorates
- being cold (very strong, #3)
- extreme tiredness <--> awakening fresh and early
(Welsh proving had sleeplessness in the night and sleepy in afternoon)
- sensation of crawling animals (#10; maggots through the skin, #6)
- cold drinks ameliorate symptoms in mouth and throath
- sides: left 59 x mentioned, right 90 x mentioned.

Dreams:

generally many and intensive dreams.

- collective threat, resp. threat against a group (village, town, etc.), but no personal menace towards the dreamer
- explosions and floods (a real one during the final meeting)
- to speak one's mind openly

Head

- much headache, pressing
- headache with much pressure upon the eyes
(headache symptoms confirmed by Welsh proving)

Eyes and Vision:

- clouds or movements in the field of vision (#8, #9), that cannot be referred to anything, on the mental plane (#3), and strange observations on the fringe of consciousness
- pressure, itching, pinching, burning in the eyes
- photophobia
(*symptoms in eyes and vision confirmed by Welsh proving*)

Mouth

- dry, sticky, burning, swollen
- tongue is burning and coated
- gums inflamed and bleeding
- accidents with the teeth
(*Welsh proving had soreness and ulcers on tongue*)

Throat

- pain in the throat with fierce inflammations, partly with expectoration
- > cold drinks
(*Welsh proving had soreness and tickling in throat*)

Respiratory

- no symptoms of respiration or cough at all (despite having colds!)
(*Welsh proving had several symptoms here*)

Digestion

- diarrhoe and flatulence
- pains (pressing, burning) in stomach and pressure in abdomen and liver
- long standing pain in stomach healed (#10)

Female

- menses too late (#7 and #10) or too early (#7)
- increased sexual desire
- leucorrhoea changed (yellow, dark, offensive, tenacious)

Skin

- small red spots on the skin, with unsystematic distribution, vanishing soon (#6, # 5)
- pimples
- itch
(*all skin symptoms exactly confirmed by Welsh proving*)

Mind

mental

- #3) 4. 19: What happens there next to my reality?
 This morning when going to my clinic and in the evening when coming home I had the sensation of something happening on the fringes, which always vanished, when I focused my attention on it.
 Near the clinic I suddenly saw a large animal flit from a tree. Just from the corner of my eye, but looking I didn't see anything. What kind of animal was that?
 Then coming to my flat something fell down while I was going through the hall. I went to the room, from which the noise had come, but again no answer.
- #9) Supervis. 3.: field of vision today: Is seeing something black, like shadow, moving. Looking, doesn't see anything.
- #9) Supervis. 5.: Vision: Afraid to look into shadow, as if someone was behind her, looks back.
- #10) 15.: Sometimes the feeling, everything around was unreal. Was that really so, or did I only dream it was?
- #1) 2.1: Forgot to put on my earrings, (never happened before) and several times during the last days. Also forgotten to put on my lipstick. Simply forgotten.
 translation to be continued

strange incidents

- #3) 18.: I find it continuing difficult to stay in contact with the proving. The sequence of dreams has somehow been cut off. – Jogging today suddenly the proving started again. Running meditatively in the pouring rain I became conscious of a rustling in the bushes. Again the feeling that there is a large animal in the forest, and when I try to see it, there is nothing to be found. What does that mean. Usually I am not that jumpy in the wood in the middle of the day.
- #3) 27.: I run through the forest alone as often. And I have the feeling that the birds (especially a bird of prey that I cannot identify) communicate with me. It is such an intensive perception of these birds' voice, that I am deeply moved. No fear, just the feeling of being really connected to the birds!!!
- one of the supervisors reports after the proving: In the first week of the proving I had two identical experiences: After having just flow through the air, a bird falls dead form the sky directly in front of my car – in the middle of the city. As if from sudden cardiac death, I thought. Strangely enough I connected this event to the proving in the same moment. My thought: They have taken a dead bird.
- the same supervisor reports after the proving: During four weeks after the proving I found dead animals on the roadside or on the road. This was so conspicuous that I asked friends how often they find that.
- During the final discussion: Coming to the schoolrooms the back-room is under water because the heating system has overflown and the security valve directed the water into the room (instead of into the sink). – see also dream #7.4.

Dreams

- #1) 2. Dream: I was alone with our stage director and he observed me acting. All the others were still asleep. But they weren't the other actors but my siblings. Felt very well.
 Next dream: Being too late to come to school. Then saw that it was only seven and early enough.
- #2) 6.: Dream: A terrorist hides a tank with a cauterising gas in the sewer system of a city. This tank will be corroded by the gas after some time and the gas starts to corrode the underground pipes as well. Following in the city there are power outages and explosions. I can watch all this but not interfere. During the whole time I don't see any people but just houses where the light goes out or that collapse because of explosions.

- #3) 2. Dream: Being too late to an appointment with an osteopath, who herself is even later and says she is very tired and soon a well-known politician will come for treatment. After the poor treatment I tell her to please destroy my patients card since I won't ever come back.
- #3) 4. Dream, morning: I have opened a large practice with (name). He has a small and I have a larger room. At his door a phone is ringing. I think it could be a call for me as well and pick it up. But a patient of his is calling. I ask him but he is cool and doesn't want to talk to her. I shall say that he is in a conference. He looks different with red hair in a terrible state and looks cool. I feel awful and find his behaviour indecent. I say my opinion openly. But we are disturbed by workers in his office. I ask him to my room, but here are unbidden guests as well. Then I see that the handset of my phone is offline, which is embarrassing. It is a very old nostalgic plastic phone. I wake up from a loud busy tone.
- translation to be continued

Sleep

- #10) 15.: I slept for almost 12 h and had an awful nightmare. Dreamt, I had gone asleep and had a dream, that I had gone asleep – a dream in the dream of the dream. It was extremely difficult to get out of it; I had to struggle to wake up. And then it was a dream again. I just couldn't get out.
- translation to be continued

