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THE SEARCH FOR THE 'SAL' BY SAMUEL HAHNEMANN

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In 1800 and 1801 S. Hahnemann published the chemical preparation of an alkaline salt, named by him 'Alkali pneum'. The preparation had demanded long-lasting efforts and Hahnemann attributed to this chemical important medicinal properties. Although it came later out that the salt was nothing new, but was simply borax – a fact that Hahnemann apologetically accepted – the story may be considered to have particular importance, if one connects it to the three Paracelsian 'first principles', i.e. sulphur, mercurius and sal. In the time of Hahnemann the first two of them could be considered to be connected with the chemicals sulphur and mercury ('mercurius solubilis' was also prepared by Hahnemann), both used extensively for treatment and, moreover, the first one connected to the 'psoric miasma' of homeopathy and the second one to 'syphilitic miasma'. The preparation of a substance that would correspond to Paracelsian 'sal', could complete the 'triad' and create something that could act eventually as treatment for the third homeopathic miasma, the 'sycotic' one.

Here it is attempted to investigate possible relationships of this enterprise of S. Hahnemann, both to the Paracelsian-alchemic tradition and to the theory and practice of Hahnemannian homeopathy.