

Aurum

Argentum

Ferrum

Cuprum

Magnesium
carbonate

Phosphorus

Thuja

Lac caninum

In this series of masterclasses, I will be considering eight major remedies from a symbolic, mythological and homeopathic perspective to better penetrate the unique genius of each substance and reveal its emotional, psychological and spiritual healing power. Studying homeopathic remedies in this way opens the mind and heart to the mysteries of life and the cosmos and imprints the healing images at the deepest level. The use of the words he or she in these articles refers to the male or female principles present in all of us and is not related to gender. Certain remedies are more conveniently spoken of as male, for example Aurum, and others as female, for example Cuprum, however, when their characteristics match the picture of the patient, they are suitable for the treatment of either gender.

by David Lilley

Cuprum metallicum

COPPER – THE ELEMENT



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Goddess of love and beauty

To the ancients and the alchemists, copper was imbued with the nature and inner qualities of Aphrodite or Venus: the goddess of beauty and love, of creativity and procreation and of sexual desire. Likewise, in astrology copper is associated with the planet Venus, which graces the night sky with a radiant beauty that outshines all other heavenly bodies. Copper delights the eye; it has lovely warmth, richness and depth of colour, which is friendly and inviting, and worn decoratively it clasps the arm with intimate, yielding softness. Traditionally worn as a talisman to protect the wearer against the risk of cholera and ease the stiffness and pains of arthritis, it is protective, nurturing and caring.

There are various versions of the birth of this most exquisite goddess, each

revealing a different aspect of the collective unconscious. One of the most ancient and primal was that she arose naked from the foam of the sea, riding on a scallop shell, borne by gentle spirits of the wind, and alighted on the island of Cyprus. As she stepped ashore, spring blossomed into fullness and her joy, laughter and desire swept over the land. Wherever her delicate feet touched the earth, grass and flowers sprang into being; everywhere she drew forth the hidden promise of life. Petals of red and pink roses were strewn in her path. Her five graces attended her: Flowering, Growth, Beauty, Joy and Radiance. In this myth she is visualised as an aspect of the great mother goddess herself, and symbolises the emergence of all life from the sea. Botticelli's masterpiece, *The Birth of Venus*, incomparably captures

the enchanting image of the goddess' voyage towards Cyprus on her mollusc shell. Significantly, Cyprus was the main source of copper in classical times.

The emasculated father

In later times, a more primitive, convoluted (psychopathological) explanation for her birth was added: a story sometimes metaphorically relevant to the emotional life of Cuprum. As Aeschylus tells us: "The great and amorous sky (Ouranos) curved over the earth (Gaia) and lay upon her as a true lover." From this repeated union the Titans were born. Ouranos hated and feared his progeny and hid them within the folds of Gaia's body. In revenge, Mother Earth persuaded the Titans to attack their father. Her youngest son, Kronos, lay in wait for him, and when Ouranos descended to couple with Gaia, he severed his father's genitals with a sickle and cast the dismembered organs into the sea. Amidst the foaming of sea and semen arose the form of a most beautiful woman – the goddess Aphrodite. This myth establishes her primacy: she is more ancient and primordial than the Olympian gods.

The mother-metal

Copper is the mother-metal of civilisation; the first metal to be discovered and fashioned into useful and decorative implements. The Copper Age gave birth to the Bronze Age through the alloying of tin to copper. Bronze became the favoured material for the sculptor and was employed in the creation of musical instruments. The dominance of copper coincided with the pre-eminence of the worship of the feminine by many different cultures in the East and West. The advent of iron and the Iron Age, which eclipsed copper, coincided with the rise of the patriarchal society, based upon the power of the warrior archetype (Ferrum). The mother was suppressed and minimised as these societies sought to force the power of the feminine into an obscure and subservient role, discrediting those of her symbols, such as the serpent, that could not easily be assimilated.

The Cuprum remedy picture arises from the ever-present domination of the feminine by the masculine principle, with all its attendant suppression, injustice, discrimination and exploitation. The same sequence, of copper yielding to iron, is seen in the evolving physiology of life forms. In the transition from marine invertebrate to vertebrate life, the role of copper is taken over by iron

in the shift from haemocyanin, necessary for water breathing, to haemoglobin for the breathing of air.

Copper is the mother-metal of the sea and its creatures.

A wanton metal

Aphrodite was sensual, seductive, and promiscuous and the protectress of courtesans and prostitutes. Because of the ease with which the metal combined with all the acids and transformed, the alchemists named copper "the harlot of metals". Homeopathy calls her "shameless". In mythology Aphrodite was married to Hephaistos, God of the Forge, the divine craftsman and inventive genius (Roman – Vulcan; homeopathic – Sulphur). He had a misshapen foot and walked with a limp. In his subterranean smithy, he used volcanic fires to fashion the most beautiful objects – exquisite artworks, utensils, weapons and armour for the gods and heroes.

How often is a beautiful young woman seen in the company of an unprepossessing, older man who, in return for her favours, keeps her, pampers her and showers her with jewellery and expensive gifts? She may well be a Cuprum and he a Sulphur. The archetype loves to be doted upon and spoilt and delights in adornment and luxury. They have a particular preference for wearing gold. In the myth, Aphrodite and Ares (Ferrum) cuckold Hephaistos; together they form the eternal triangle of husband, wife and lover. This triangle, fraught with passion, love, jealousy, deceit, resentment, anger and hate, is reflected in the geology of the Earth. The most abundant and important copper ore is chalcopyrite, a copper-iron-sulphide; literally a combination of Aphrodite, Ares and Hephaistos or Cuprum, Ferrum and Sulphur. Myth and fact walk hand in hand.

Copper and colour

Copper and gold are the only metals that are vividly coloured but it is the ores and salts of copper, not gold, that glorify nature's palette with an exquisite spectrum of colours. The pure metal varies from yellow-red through orange-red, rose-red, sunset-red to brownish-red. It possesses a rich, honey-like beauty. Honey belongs to the language of love – honeyed words, honeyed lips and the honey-colour of semen. When burnished, copper becomes fiery and shimmers intensely like gold. It burns with a brilliant blue-green flame tinged at the tips with red. Ultra-thin leaf-copper appears bluish-green.

Copper combines in nature with all the acids and in doing so transforms into magnificent greens, blues and violet, as well as reds, oranges and yellows. Cuprum is therefore an important fundamental remedy of the materia medica and influences all the chakras. When exposed to the atmosphere, the combined effect of moisture and carbon dioxide (carbonic acid) causes the metal to develop a thin coating of green rust known as patina, which protects it against further corrosion and adds a noble beauty to copper works of art. Once clad in its mantle of green, copper can resist the ravages of time.

Green is the colour of the fourth or love chakra; Cuprum is a remedy for the pangs of unrequited love and for obsessive love. Green is also the colour of nature and plant life; Cuprum loves gardens and gardening.

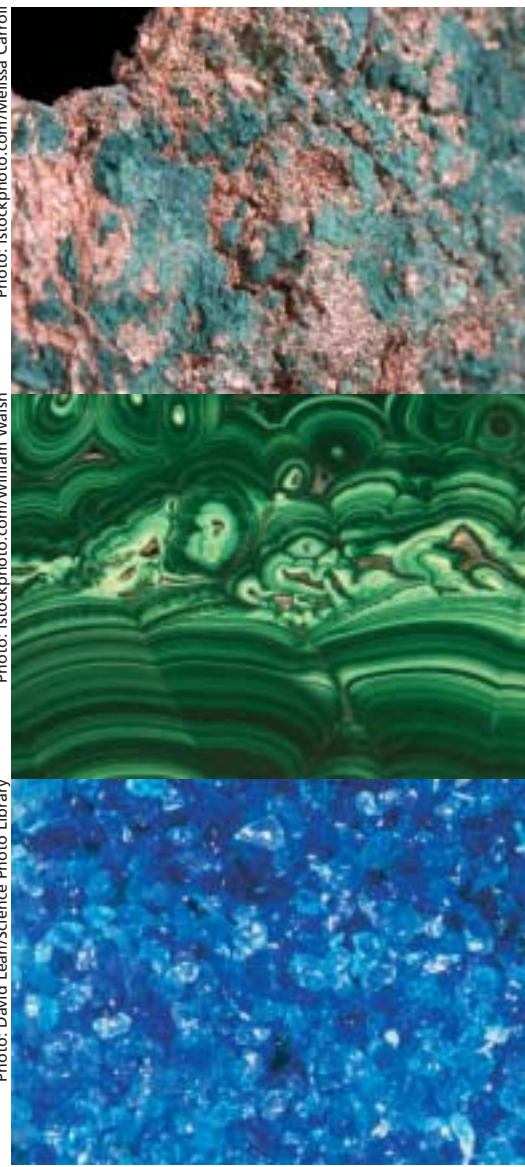
Red – the first chakra

The presence of red is vibrantly visible

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in copper; it is a fiery passion glowing within the metal. It connects Cuprum to the first chakra and also to Ferrum, which, through haemoglobin, is responsible for the red colour of blood. This fundamental relationship between Cuprum (copper) and Ferrum (iron) reflects a deeper one connecting the Goddess of Love, mischievous, seductive, fun-loving, golden Aphrodite, with the God of War, blood-thirsty, headstrong, dour, ever-amorous Ares – an eternal, tempestuous relationship forged in heaven, but far from heavenly. Together, they represent the basic instincts of survival, identified by Freud as sex and aggression.

Sex comprises all the instincts based on the reproduction of the species and aggression comprises all the instincts based upon survival, attack and defence of the self. The element connected with the first chakra is earth, symbolic of the matter into which we descend through incarnation, but also the “citadel” of

our situation, which must be defended and preserved. Cuprum shares with Ferrum a war-like perception of life and the necessity for preparedness, proficiency and performance to avoid being disadvantaged or displaced. Much of their push for excellence and superiority may be subconsciously due to a determination to avoid vulnerability.

The love and union between Aphrodite and Ares is symbolically celebrated in the simple solenoid, one of the basic elements of electro-technology. The phallic rod of iron is enfolded and wrapped round by coils of copper wire through which flows an electric current that magnetises and activates the iron. Feminine dawn and dusk (Cuprum) herald with glorious russet rays the ascent and descent of the masculine sun: the return and departure of the hero (Ferrum). These are the special times of Cuprum, beneficial times of change and transition, of renewal and replenishment – and times for making love.

Orange – the second chakra

Orange is the colour most closely related to the nature and personality of Cuprum, seen in the common yellow-red shade – a golden, honey-like colour. This is the colour of the second or sacral (pelvic) chakra, which is associated with the element water and functionally with the genito-urinary tract and the lower, small intestine. Orange is feminine red and yin. In orange, the life frequency has moved upwards, outwards and away from the dense earthiness, groundedness and aggressive passion of red. The passion remains, but no longer anchored to issues of survival and security; orange broadens life, looks for change, moves on, initiates and seeks to express itself uniquely and creatively. Like water, through expansion, orange and Cuprum can overcome barriers, even shatter rocks and dissolve obstacles: a metaphor for the breaking up and dissipation of deeply repressed emotions, destructive habituation and the dire effects of suppressed function. The energy of the second chakra is expressed through change, motion, duality, polarity, desire, freedom and the interplay between yin and yang: a ceaseless flow that brings constant change – a quality inherent in water, copper and electricity.

The orange/copper personality

Both orange and Cuprum are extroverts and sociable; they love parties, dancing and singing, are full of fun, mirth and mischief and love to mimic and tease. They are flirtatious, witty and socially

and sexually confident. To achieve its ends orange uses diplomacy, seduction and, if needed, deceit and is willing to bide its time. In their negative presentation, however, they cease to flow – they stagnate, contract, suppress and become closed, rigid and fixed in their emotions, holding onto grief and grudge. Often there is outrage at having been exposed to injustice, cruelty or severe abuse. Such an injured Cuprum loses her burnish and becomes dull copper – mat and muddy – unsociable, introverted and restrained – yet with seething, pent-up currents of repressed suffering always in danger of venting violently, either by furious, emotional outbursts or through cramps, spasms and even convulsions. When indicated, homeopathic Cuprum has the power to dissolve, resolve and establish a healing flow.

Flow and sensitivity

Like silver, copper possesses an inner, fluid state revealed in its plasticity: the ease with which it can be fashioned by hammering and pressing without cracking (malleability) and its ability to be drawn into extremely thin wires without breaking (ductility). This quality of liquidity and flow is paralleled by the metal's excellent electrical and heat conductivity; second only to silver. Conductivity, in human terms, indicates sensitivity to both their inner and outer environment, manifest in the Cuprum individual as intense aesthetic and sensual awareness, which affords them immense pleasure. Their love of beauty in all its forms embraces both nature and culture. Cuprum espouses especially the ephemeral and elusive beauties, those that bud, blossom and eventually blanch: a magnificent sunset, the freshness of dawn, the magic of spring, the beauty of a garden, the loveliness of a countenance, the fickleness of fashion and the act of love; ephemeral yet eternal, because always renewable. Though transient, Aphrodisiacal beauty makes everyday life more charming, more civilised and more passionate. However, Cuprum's sense of the beautiful can surpass that which simply pleases the eye – the formal perfection of an image, the physical attraction of a lover – and can touch that which lies beyond, as, when in profound sexual union, pleasure transports to ecstasy and becomes sanctified.

Since antiquity, musical instruments have been fashioned out of copper and bronze, hence it is not surprising that the copper-being loves music, dancing and singing. They are hypersensitive to

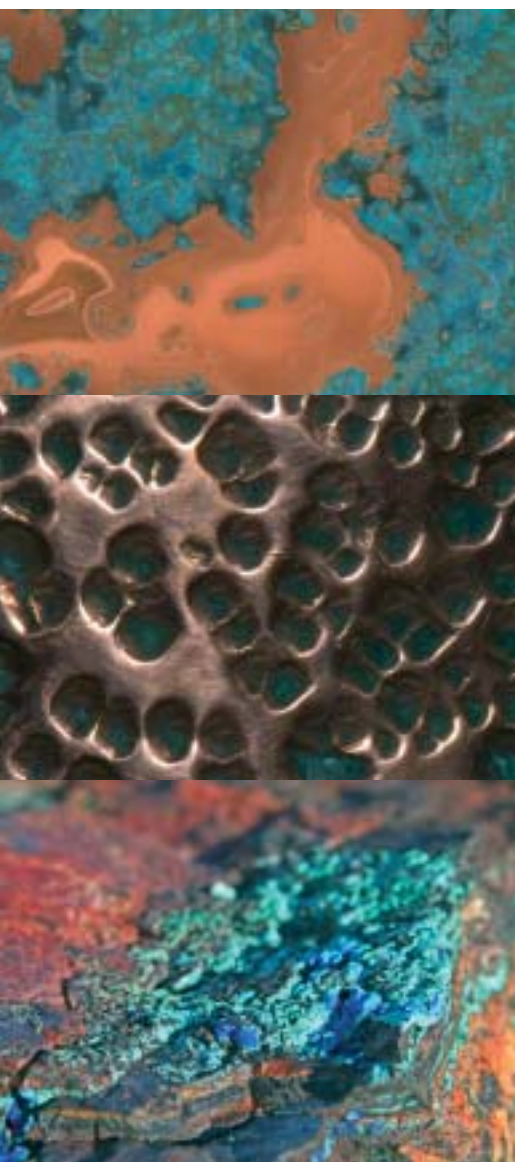


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touch, especially an intimate caress, and to being observed, especially the caressing glance of an admirer. Their tolerance for pain is low. The charisma of a strong, magnetic personality can easily infatuate them. They pick up on human mannerisms and frailty and can make both the butt of their gift of mimicry and their wicked wit. They have a telepathic awareness of other people's thoughts and feelings. These may impinge uncomfortably on their emotional state. They have well developed "gut instincts" about people and situations.

Cuprum and water

The spasmodic conditions of the Cuprum clinical picture – cough, colic, spasms, hiccough and vomiting are all relieved by drinking cold water. All the associations of copper point to its profound relationship to water; the same conclusion was common to many traditions. Greek Aphrodite arose from the ocean-foam. The Aztecs regarded copper as the symbol for water and, by extension, equally the symbol for plant life; a symbolism highlighted by the green patina of old copper. Green and red were of equal potency, both expressing the life force and both vigorously manifest in copper. With intuitive insight, their myth perceived that copper-coloured sunbeams are the celestial pathways for water, only visible when they shaft through dank mists and storm clouds, penetrating the earth to great depths where the water is transformed into copper. The myth of another culture envisaged copper coming down from a red heaven of blood, fire, war and divine justice in the form of thunderbolts that cleave the earth and deposit the red, fiery metal.

The homeopathic provings of Cuprum enable us to unravel the veiled wisdom implicit in these cultural myths, just as we can interpret the personal, dream myths of patients. In psychology, water represents the energy of the unconscious and also its mysterious depths and perils. These depths are known as the shadow: the personal abyss. On the spiritual path of unfoldment, the energy of the unconscious needs to be expressed: the repressed, unrealised and undeveloped aspects of the Self must be resurrected, resolved and brought to fulfilment. These myths portray in lurid metaphor the reverse process, by which the traumas, storms and battles de-



manded by destiny in the "red heaven" of life, are violently thrust into the interior as a Cuprum psychopathological state instead of being lived-out and overcome. Implosion of such destructive energy must ultimately lead to explosion. Note well the phallic words I have used to convey the myth image: shaft, penetrating, thunderbolt, cleaving! The deadly inversion of copper energy is often the effect of masculine oppression and abuse, often sexual.

Suppression – Cuprum's Nemesis

Cuprum must flow outwards emotionally, sexually and functionally. Her enormous, externalising energy may not be stifled. Throughout the clinical picture of Cuprum we witness the phenomenon of suppression: things that should come out on to the surface, fail to do so, due to either non-development or suppression. On the emotional plane, powerful feelings and impulses – from injury (especially head injury), shock, fright, grief, bereavement, disappointed love, anger, jealousy, humiliation, assault, abuse and rape – are repressed. In order to repress intense emotions, the Cuprum subject has to control and rigidly close down all tender feelings, needs, instincts, self-expression and even their sexuality. In achieving this they become extremely closed, serious, cold, rigid and uncompromising. They adopt a bureaucratic-like fidelity to responsibility, ambition, rules and regulations, order and work. What is marked in Cuprum is the total nature of the close-down and the tendency for this almost absolute control to break down periodically and unpredictably, with outbursts of most violent emotions. In extreme cases, in the throes of such an emotional convulsion their behaviour is maniacal: they turn on their adversary with all the savagery of a wild-eyed, harlot – spitting, scratching, biting, striking and pulling hair.

Repression of the feminine

In myth, the inherent Aphrodite energy within all women rose from the bosom of mother ocean as an independent, all-powerful, generative, primal force, ruling both heaven and earth, or was born out of the emasculation of Ouranos, which symbolises liberation from the misogynistic domination of the male principle. Repression of the feminine in any form is a transgression against this freedom, independence and power and will ultimately bring dysfunction or pathology, which may become a Cuprum state. A vital force that is not recognised and valued becomes negative. The use of the contraceptive pill is an abuse of the feminine through suppression of the procreative aspect of the goddess and must exact its penalty. The often unconscious repression of the feminine may be a defensive response against male chauvinism, abuse, domination and neglect. The myth of the disembodied genitals has then another meaning: the soulless, faceless phallus in the night may represent the rapist, but also a barren relationship devoid of love, beauty and grace in which release and self-gratification are the motive for intimacy. Sexuality has lost its voluptuous magic; it is neither sin nor sacrament. Gone are its wondrous colours, neutralised to the grey of sexual platitude. To survive, Cuprum turns off the honey of her love, turns off Aphrodite, and she, the most tactile and lovely of archetypes, becomes averse to touch and the eye of the beholder. She withdraws her caring, nurturing, vulnerable, sensual, feminine nature and asserts her critical, domineering, exacting, masculine aspect: a patina with which she masks her grief, her humiliation and her indignation.

The return of Aphrodite – the apotheosis of Cuprum

Aphrodite always returns to the sea, immersing herself in the pulsing rhythms of the tide and restoring her virginity. So it is between lovers whose souls touch; immersed in the enveloping, aquatic world of the goddess; all is flow, moisture, foam and wavelike movement; streams of energy which unite and mount to climactic liquefaction, bringing that ephemeral moment when the partner assumes an incandescent beauty and golden Aphrodite grants a glimpse of eternity. It is always unique; it is always the first time: a paean to Cuprum!

David Lilley MBChB FFHom is an internationally renowned teacher of the materia medica who has developed his practice in South Africa over the last 40 years after training at the Royal London Homeopathic Hospital.

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