



Snakes to Simillimum

Demystifying Venoms

Farokh J. Master

B. Jain Archibel s.p.r.l., 2008, hardcover, 811 pages with a DVD included, Price EUR 49,- (US\$ 67.50), ISBN: 978-2-87491-001-2

Reviewed by J. Rozencwajg, New Zealand

I previously read the booklets *Farokh Master* published about snakes; they were very short and concise descriptions of the major snakes with mainly clinical indications. I was very surprised and excited to receive a massive text like this one.

This must be the most comprehensive book about the use of snake venoms in homeopathy. The first chapter is about the general anatomy of the snakes, including some of their physiology. The taxonomy, or classification follows: apparently it is impossible nowadays to escape listing this. Then we have very interesting chapters about the mythology and the symbolism of snakes, going shortly through most if not all civilisations, religions and philosophies.

Surprisingly there are only two pages about the modern use of snake venoms, whereas they are very much used especially as thrombolytics and in some instances as cardiac drugs and pain relief substances; nevertheless the interested reader is referred to more detailed websites.

After another 27 pages of a detailed list of snakes with their scientific and common names, and yet another list of classification and taxonomy of the venoms used in homeopathy, we finally are treated to practical, useful information: first a chapter of symptoms and signs common to the snakes in general, then each of the twenty-five venoms is reviewed with generalities about the snake itself, provings, cases, and symptoms. Of course some are more detailed than others: *Lachesis* occupies 85 pages whereas *Bothrops jararacussu* has only ten.

As usual, Master is mostly a practical writer and has included an important paragraph with each chapter called "Bedside symptoms" that allows, once read and understood, if not memorised, to make very quick prescribing decisions; really useful as those remedies are often needed in urgent situa-

tions where there is not much time to waste in musings.

There is an important Appendix with frequent complaints, some of the major remedies used for those complaints and a comparative table allowing fast differentiation between the remedies; very practical indeed.

A first reaction when getting to the end of the book is "where is the repertory?" But then most of the homeopathic software allows for the creation of a repertorisation either with animal remedies only or even families like snakes with one or two clicks, so in reality, most of us do already have a repertory of this type on our computers.

There is a DVD included with the book but it contains only pictures of the snakes and zoological information about them; interesting to watch, not very useful.

This is an impressive work whose main emphasis is on practicality and clinical use. I certainly would recommend this book if you want to know how to use snake venoms in a competent manner.