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AMBRA GRISEA

(Ambra. gris.)

Zoological name : *Physeter catodon* Linn. **Order:** Cetacea **Family:** Physeteridae
Synonym : *Physeter macrocephalus* Linn.
Common names : *English:* Sperm whale, Ambergris; *French:* Amber gris; *German:* Graue ambra.

Description : A morbid secretion mass of intestine or liver or biliary origin and also found among the excreta of the animal. Found as solid, spongy, round balls, occasionally bears parrot's beak shaped horn-like projections on the surface; weighing from 50 to 200 pounds; greenish brown to black externally, with black and yellowish-red streaks and whitish specks internally; fractured surfaces honey yellow to orange-yellow when fresh; under ultra-violet light (365 nm) internal surface shows yellowish, brick-red or orange fluorescence sections show concentric layers of different colours; surface dull, sticky, fat or wax like and greasy to touch; though friable it is rubbed to powder with difficulty; softens like wax by the warmth of the hands and inflammable, its consistency becomes ointment-like at 60° and becomes liquid if heated in boiling water; the substance can be kneaded and cut when warm. Soluble in *alcohol*, *ether* and in fatty and volatile oils. Specific gravity ranging from 0.780 to 0.926, gets volatilised at 100°. Almost tasteless and with aromatic odour. Three major compounds isolated from it are ambrein (hydrocortisone), epicoprostanol and coprostanone.

Distribution : Eastern coast of Japan, on the shores of the Pacific and Indian Oceans; most esteemed ones found from Madagascar to Sumatra. Found floating on the seawater and often thrown upon the coast.

Identification :

- (1) Concentrate Mother Tincture to remove *alcohol* and extract it with *chloroform*; evaporate the chloroform extract to dryness. To the residue add *acetic anhydride* and concentrated *sulphuric acid*. A violet colour is produced.
- (2) To 1 ml Mother Tincture add one drop of *furfural*. Pour this mixture on 1 ml *sulphuric acid*. A violet ring or violet red colour is appeared.
- (3) Carry out TLC of the Mother Tincture on silica gel G coated plate; use *toluene* : *isopropyl ether* (4:1 v/v) as solvent system and examine plate under UV light; two spots appear at R_f 0.35 (greenish blue) and 0.70 (yellow).

History and authority : Proved by Hahnemann; Allen, T. F., *Encyclop. of Pure Mat. Med.*, 1876, 1, 238; Clarke, J.H., *A Dict. of Pract. Mat. Med.*, 1900, 1, 74.

Preparation :

(a) Trituration 1x Drug strength 1/10

Ambra Grisea in *coarse powder* 100 g

Saccharum Lactis 900 g

to make one thousand grammes of the Trituration.

(b) Potencies: 2x and higher to be triturated in accordance with the method HPI. 6x may be converted to liquid 8x, HPI. 9x and higher with *Dispensing Alcohol*.

(c) Mother Tincture φ Drug strength 1/100

Ambra Grisea in *coarse powder* 10 g

Strong Alcohol in sufficient quantity

to make one thousand millilitres of the Mother Tincture.

(d) Potencies: 3x and higher with *Dispensing Alcohol*.