



ORIGINS

of

CONCENTRATE

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PART
2

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The discovery of Cannabis and the psychoactive properties of its resin happened early in our migration on the Asian continent, possibly hundred of thousands of years before the first known semi-permanent site in Afghanistan over 50,000 years ago.¹

When the planet became colder, during the last Ice Age of the Pleistocene epoch (25,000 to 15,000 years B.C.), it triggered the collapse of a whole eco-system (the Mega-flora and Mega-fauna), which in turn gave rise to the development of agriculture and of the first semi-permanent dwelling sites in the Hindu Kush and the Fertile Crescent of Central Asia. Only the strongest and the most adaptive flora and fauna survived that time.

Cannabis is one of the best examples of plant adaptation on the planet, and was among the first unconscious breeding and cultivating experiments triggered by humans so that the chances of survival in the richer environment of a semi-permanent site would have furthermore contributed to its thriving.

It is relatively easy to collect fresh resin from live plants but a totally different story when the flowers are dry and broken up to harvest seeds. The process necessary to separate chaff/trims from the resin glands and to collect the separated trichomes is totally dependent on some customized basketry and a tightly woven fiber receptacle to catch and contain the falling resin.

Let's take a little historical perspective on the art of weaving

basketry and textiles.

Weaving is the oldest human craft with tool making and was perfected early in our evolution so that the main characteristics of basketry are the same today as they were before 3,000 BC²; the origin is simply the rudimentary lacing of two flexible branches or fiber together³.

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The oldest known baskets have been found in Egypt and have been carbon dated to be between 10,000 and 12,000 years old; 7,000 years old baskets have also been discovered in Central Asia⁴.

The concept of weaving fiber involved in basketry is also used to make rough textiles or floor covering; the creation of textile has evolved from basketry techniques⁵.

The oldest evidences of textiles were found in clay fragments dating to around 30,000 BC with clear impressions of a finely woven textile similar to linen⁶.

Cotton was one of the first domesticated plants around 7,000 years ago in what is now Pakistan and Northern India⁷.

Silk was first developed in China,

possibly as early as 6,000 BC and definitely before 3,000 BC.

The origins of carpets remain a mystery but woven floor coverings were in use before 7,000 BC by nomadic tribes in Central Asia.

Solid evidences show that we had not only the means to collect dry resin tens of thousands of years ago but that the three potential birth places of Cannabis are also the birthplace of agriculture and of most textile production. Quite the coincidence!

There is no archeological evidence or reference of sieving Cannabis resin or Hashish until the 9th century and the apogee of the Muslim empire; however, solid evidence of various sieving procedures going far back in time are abound.

The earliest direct evidences of humans processing pre-domesticated wild grains, seeds and cereals have been found in Mozambique, Africa. They are over 100,000 years old⁸.

Traces of starch grains on grinding stones recovered from archaeological sites in Italy, Russia and the Czech Republic are solid evidence that our ancestors were grinding flour and roots at least 30,000 years ago, which could not be consumed without some sort of sieving.

Archeological evidence of plant samples, classified as "finely sieved by-products" by modern scientists, have been found in Jetum, Central Asia and dated to 6,000 BC⁹.

Despite so many archeological validations of diverse types of sieving,

Cannabis historian Michael Aldrich believes that the first sieved Hashish may not have been produced until the 17th century, after the introduction of tobacco from the New World.

Robert C Clarke describes the two oldest known forms of resin collection in his book "Hashish", however these methods cannot be considered as true sieving techniques.

The first is simple; let the plants dry indoors in a windless room, raised over a clean woven material, the drying resin heads will fall at the slightest touch.

The second technique is called "carpet collection". Cannabis plants are threshed over a tightly woven carpet. When all parts of the plants have been thoroughly broken up, the debris is moved back and forth lightly by hand to dislodge all the resin before being brushed out. The fine resin powder collects between the closely knotted fibers of the carpet and is then gathered by turning the carpet over and gently beating the resin out. The carpet collection method is a little more advanced but very awkward. It is also remarkable that the birth and evolution of woven flooring from rough woven fiber to tightly knotted wool carpet would not have offered our ancestors many clues and opportunities to a more efficient sieving process.

These collecting techniques do not offer a logical evolution when you think that we have been processing plants, including Cannabis, for their seeds and grains for hundred of thousands of years. The oldest form of a tool adapted to the



separation of seeds and grains from chaff is a wide, elongated and loosely woven fiber container that is still in use in all tribal cultures around the planet.

It is a device, which lets a large amount of the finest threshed or grounded material fall through; most certainly the actual ancestor of all sieves.

There is no archeological evidence of a logical co-evolution with any other type of sieving technique or sieving material developed by humanity, which makes the origins and evolution of sieving Cannabis resin a complete mystery.

The oldest resin collection technique is Charas but, while offering a unique live resin concentrate, hand rubbing is wasteful; the process is time consuming and the harvesting window is small and seasonal which would be reason enough for an improvement of the collecting process.

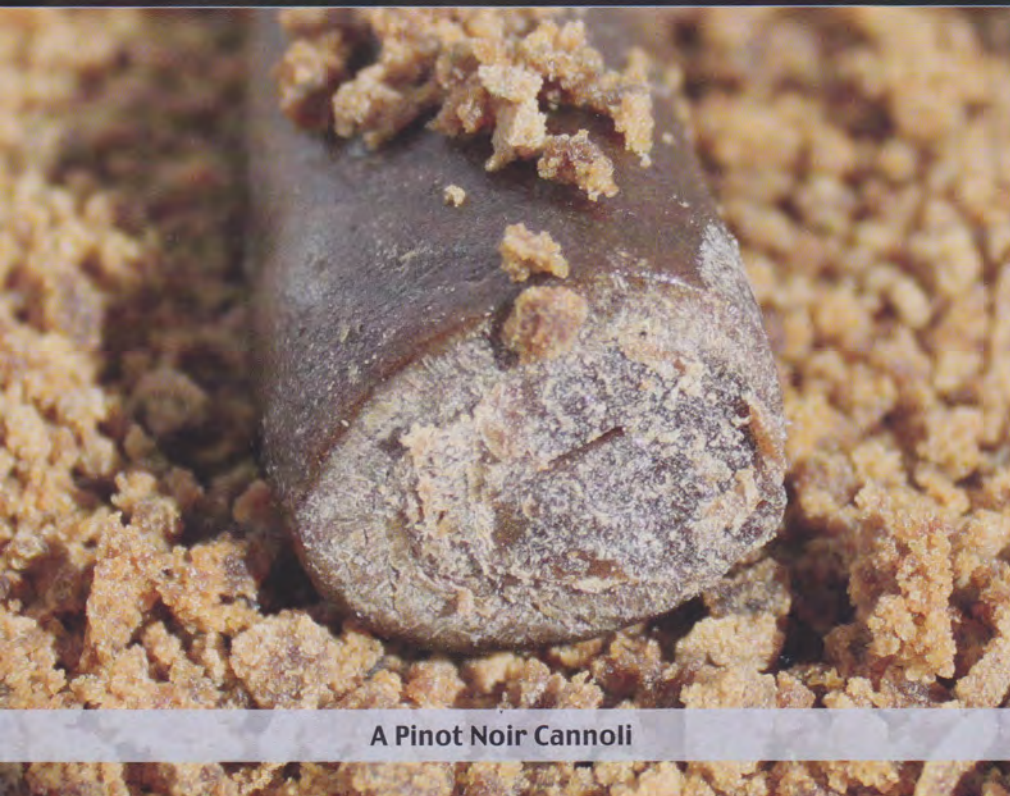
Our ancestors would have experienced dry resin at an early stage of their contact with the Cannabis plant simply because seeds and fiber are always collected when plants are dry.

Dry resin sticks on hands when breaking up flowers to harvest seeds but a lot is lost and the birth of dry sieving most certainly came from simply salvaging as much of the resin as possible, which is logical if you know its psychoactive and medicinal properties.

Sieved Cannabis resin and Hashish manufacturing may have been kept secret for millenniums simply because of religious beliefs and/or trade advantages.

The religious and commercial correlation around the use of Cannabis resin cannot be ignored and can logically be related to the birth of incense as well, which has been burned for sacred and healing purposes since the rise of humanity. The realization that scents produced by burning materials could heighten the senses and alter perceptions must have come early in our quest to control fire; the smell of aromatic woods, herbs and leaves can offer rare sensory pleasures. A gradual development of specific recipes has ensued from those early olfactory experiences and been passed down from generation to generation to become what is known today as aromatherapy.

Many types of incense were more valuable than gold or silver and their origins and recipes were well kept secrets¹⁰.



A Pinot Noir Cannoli

Pressed Cannabis resin was most certainly first burned as incense, its value would have been high, the "formula" and its origins worthy of total secrecy.

The oldest myths concerning Hashish come from the Persian and Arab world around 1100 AD. The legends of Hasan ibn al-Sabbah, the "Old Man of the Mountain" who terrorized the civilized world with his infamous sect of assassins¹¹ and of the Sufi master Sheik Haidar who (re)discovered Charas/Hashish or Cannabis¹² are some of the earliest written accounts of the assumed use and the intoxicating powers of Hashish¹³, interestingly enough there are earlier Muslim medical texts debating the pros and cons of eating Hashish.

The great ninth-century Islamic physician Rhazes¹⁴ prescribed Hashish and his contemporary, the Arab physician Ibn Wahshiyah¹⁵, warned of the potential lethal effects of it, which he labeled a poison.

Some of the earliest references on Hashish are found in *One Thousand and One Nights*¹⁶, also known as *The Arabian Nights*, the thousand year old Arabic manuscript, and in the *Zahr al-'arish fi tahrim al-Hashish*, the oldest monograph on Hashish, written in the 13th Century but since lost.

Hashish is the substance of legends, the source of numerous myths from diverse cultures born from millennium of secrecy; its origins may sadly be forever lost to us.

The birthplace of sieving and Hashish is more easily determined but remains an educated guess nonetheless; it is most certainly the Hindu Kush Mountain range, one of the potential birthplace of Cannabis, oldest center of plant domestication and repository of the most ancient Hashish traditions.

Traditional sieving techniques from Afghanistan, Lebanon and Morocco will be the subject of the third part of "Origins of Concentrate".

References:

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14. *Mohammad-e Zakariya-ye Razi*, (854 CE – 925 CE), was a Persian polymath, physician, alchemist and chemist, philosopher and important figure in the history of medicine.
15. *Ibn Wahshiyah* (9th/10th centuries) was an Iraqi alchemist, agriculturalist, farm toxicologist, Egyptologist and historian born in Iraq. He was one of the first historians to be able to at least partly decipher what was written in the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs. He wrote a toxicology treatise *Book of Poisons*, combining contemporary science, magic and astrology.