

THE FIERY WINE SPIRIT

BASIL VALENTINE

(from his "*Chymischer Schrifften, Ander Teil*)

Translated by: *KJELL HELLESØE*

A copper vessel has to be constructed that can be taken apart in the middle, as well as above and below the holes shown on the drawing, next page. These holes are located about half-way up the retort.

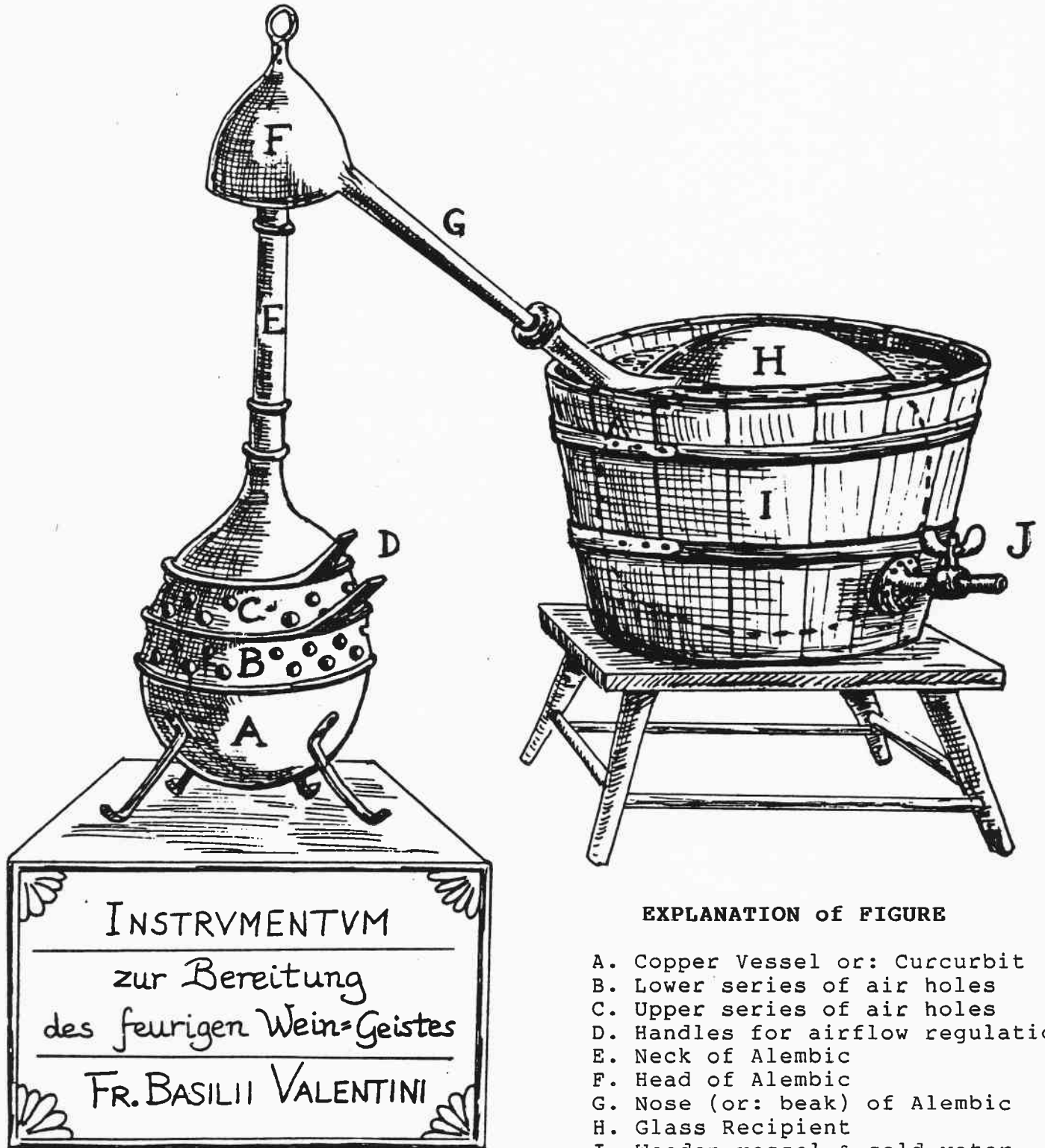
Onto this, an alembic is mounted with a tube. Everything must be made of copper except for the recipient which must be made of glass and be of large size. The latter is put into a wooden vessel, filled with cold water. The top of the recipient must also be cooled by means of wets cloths or the like, and the cloths must be replaced by fresh ones in order to enhance the cooling effect. Also, the wooden vessel must have a cock, so that the water may be removed and fresh water poured in.

When everything is ready, the prepared *Spiritus Vini* is introduced into the vessel through the lowest series of holes. When the level is just below these small holes, the SV is lit and is permitted to burn.

The air holes then force the mercury upward and the cold water causes it to liquify, so that it descends from the alembic into the recipient. This is then, the true preparation of the *Spiritus Vini*. Be sure not to neglect any of the details in the work of cooling and take care to replenish the aquam vitam so that its level does not burn too low, etc.

THE INSTRUMENT TO MAKE THE FIERY WINE-SPIRIT

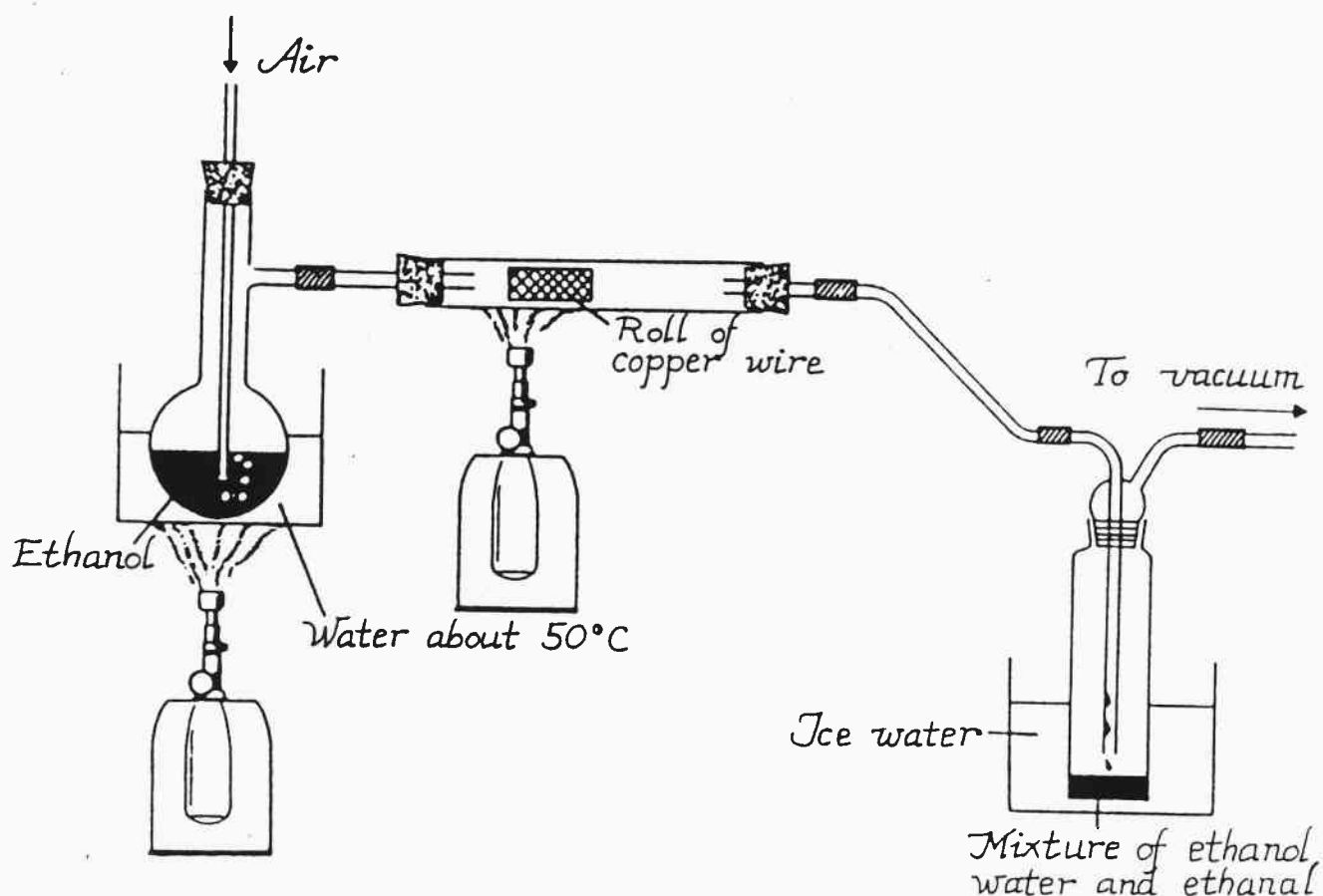
(NOTE: THIS IS ONLY KJELL HELLESOE'S CONJECTURE ON WHAT BASIL VALENTINE'S DEVICE MIGHT HAVE LOOKED LIKE VIA SKETCH)



EXPLANATION of FIGURE

- A. Copper Vessel or: Curcurbit
- B. Lower series of air holes
- C. Upper series of air holes
- D. Handles for airflow regulation
- E. Neck of Alembic
- F. Head of Alembic
- G. Nose (or: beak) of Alembic
- H. Glass Recipient
- I. Wooden vessel & cold water
- J. Cock

MODERN APPARATUS TO MAKE THE FIERY WINE SPIRIT
 (THE FOLLOWING SKETCH IS KJELL HELLESØE'S IDEA OF MODERN EQUIPMENT TO MAKE THIS FIERY WINE-SPIRIT OF BASILS)



The partial oxidation of the alcohol takes place in the horizontal tube where the copper mesh acts as a catalyst for the reaction. The equation representing this is:



From this, it is concluded that Basilus' Fiery Wine-Spirit is a mixture of water, alcohol and acetaldehyde, or ethanol. Acetaldehyde is a very volatile liquid with a boiling point of 21°C. For further information the reader can consult: Linus and Peter Pauling "Chemistry", Freeman, 1975 p.424. It should be noted that the modern spagyricist can either make this Fiery Wine-Spirit, or, in fact, can purchase the acetaldehyde and mixing it with 96% ethanol. It would no doubt be of great value to experiment with this substance as a menstruum.