

CLASSICAL POETRY IN THE SYSTEMA NATURAE OF LINNAEUS*

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In an article published some twenty-five years ago, I tried to illustrate Linnaeus's knowledge of classical mythology by a study of the trivial names applied in the margins of the first (zoological) volumes of the tenth and twelfth editions of the *Systema Naturae* (1758 and 1766-67) for reference to the various species of the genus *Papilio*. This was a very large genus (192 species in the tenth edition) which Linnaeus arranged in groups or *phalanges* defined morphologically but designated mythologically—*Equites Trojani*, *Equites Achivi*, *Heliconii*, *Danai*, etc.—in such a way that the trivial name of any species would suggest the group to which it belonged: Apollo and Melpomene to the *Heliconii*, Aeneas and Priamus to the *Equites Trojani*, and so on.¹ Since, however, many of the names listed under the various groups referred to quite obscure persons (e.g., the "Argonauts" Neleus and Pinthous or the "Danaids" Daplidice and Hyparete) and some seemed to be either mistakes (e.g., the "Nymph" Jurtina for Juturna) or deliberate creations (e.g., the "Plebeian" Argiolus, a diminutive of Argus), it was necessary to search among classical and early modern authorities for the secondary sources from which Linnaeus might have drawn his trivial names, before coming to any conclusion about either the precise identity of the persons named or Linnaeus's accuracy and the extent of his knowledge. It turned out that these sources could be identified beyond question. The earliest was the *Natural History* of Pliny, from which

* This essay is dedicated to my distinguished colleague and friend, Professor Alexander Turyn.

¹ "Classical Mythology in the *Systema Naturae* of Linnaeus," *TAPA* 76 (1945) 333-57. My study of course omitted the trivial names in this genus which were obviously not mythological. The principles on which these names were assigned have been investigated by T. W. Langer in *Svenska Linné-Sällskapets Årsskrift*, 41 (1958) 51-60.

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(57) 32 (47) fn. on *Vespertilio* 4-7 (3-6) (cf. the fn. on the preceding page: *Vespertilionum* genus nocturnum . . .):

Ovid. met. IV: 12 [i.e., 414-15]. *Lucemque perosae*

Nocte volant, seroque tenent a vespera nomen. [The unmetrical *vespera* in the 10th edn. could be a misprint (for *vespere*) but it led to the "correction" *seraque* in the 12th edn. L's numeral 12 refers to an edition which enumerated the *fabulae* within each book, e.g., that of D. Heinsius (Lugdb. 1629), who also reads *tenent* where most later editions prefer *trahunt*. Bochart also cites (II, col. 350) line 415 as from *libri quarti fabula duodecima*, but he does not have the end of the preceding line. Both lines are cited entire (and with *tenent*) by Gessner, *Av.* 694, but L. doubtless knew the lines anyway.]

(58) 56 (104) *Rhinoceros* 1 unicornis, under the descriptive note:

Animal mite, ni lacessetur, tum arbores fragore prosternit, cornu eiecit omnia (under *Habitat* in 12, with some minor variations)

Quantus erat cornu, cui pila Taurus erat. *Martialis* [Spectac. 9.4, where Lindsay reads *Quantus erat taurus* with the better mss., noting that the *Itali* emended to *cornu*. Possibly cited from Gessner (*Quadr. vivip.* 845) who tells the story of the rhinoceros exhibited by Domitian, tossing a bull high in the air and again a bear, and cites the last two lines of the epigram (reading *cornu*); but Bochart (I col. 932) also cites the last line in the form above and explains the point. Aldrovandi (*Quadr. solid.* 402) cites all four lines but does not explain. Elsewhere, however, L. cites Martial independently; see on no. 65 below.]

(59) 139 (230) *Phoenicopterus* 1 *ruber*, descriptive note (in 12, under *Habitat*):

"*Dat mihi penna rubens nomen, sed lingua gulosis*" *Apicio, Caligulae, Vitellio, Heliogabalo expetita fuit, testantibus Plinio, Martiali* [xiii.71.1], *Suetonio, Lampridio*. [The keynote here was struck by Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* 10.133): *Phoenicopteri linguam praecipui saporis esse Apicius docuit nepotum omnium altissimus gurgis; for the other gourmands see Suet. Calig. 37 (and 57), Vitell. 13, and Lamprid. (SAH) Elag. 20. Gessner (Av. 689) has most of the passages; Aldrovandi (Ornith. vol. 3.323) has Pliny, Martial (the next line as well as this one), and a bit of Suetonius. All the passages are cited in full by J. Douglas in an article in the *Philosophical Transactions* (of the Royal Society), vol. 29, no. 350 (1715), 523-41, to which L. referred in his abundant synonymy for this species; but here he has cleverly contrived to make Martial's epigram refer to the whole complex by substituting *expetita fuit* for the *nostra sapit* with which Martial continues and by adding the emperors to Pliny's Apicius in explanation of *gulosis*.]*

(60) 142 (234) *Ardea* 4 *Grus*, descriptive note (in 12, under *Habitat*):

Trans pontum fugat & terris immittit apricis. *Virg.* [*Aen.* 6.312. The line