

someone whose acts were always indicative of a gentleman. He was elected a Fellow of the Linnean Society on 5th June 1821, his form having been signed by Alexander Macleay, Joseph Sabine, T. Forster, Thomas Hare, Thomas Horsfield, Edward Sabine and John Deas Thomson.

Much of the above information has been extracted from the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.

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From: KEES ROOKMAAKER

University Museum of Zoology,
Cambridge. 3 October 2005.

As stated in Gavin Bridson's letter (*The Linnean* July 21(3) page 12), iconographic collections of animal representations were more commonly used in the 19th century than is commonly realized. It gave the naturalist a chance to compare the likeness of a selection of species, of which in many cases actual specimens were unobtainable or extremely expensive. The Artis Library in Amsterdam has one of the largest such collections encompassing the entire animal kingdom. This *Iconographia Zoologica* contains an estimated 100,000 prints stored in 226 boxes arranged according to systematic position. It was founded by T.G. van Lidth de Jeude and continued by Robert T. Maitland.

I came across a reference to a similar collection of plates illustrating birds begun by Georges Cuvier in Paris and expanded by Du Bus in Brussels, while summarizing the correspondence of Hugh E. Strickland. The letter concerned is part of the material donated by Strickland's widow to the University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge, in 1867, consisting of 6006 bird skins, his manuscripts and letters which he received from naturalists around the globe. Bernard Leonard Du Bus de Gisignies (1808–1874). Director of the Royal Museum of Natural History in Brussels 1846–1867, wrote on 8 May 1847 that he had abandoned a first attempt to collect original and coloured depictions of all bird species due to the expense. He took up the project again in summer 1846 when he was fortunate enough to buy, in the sale of the books of Frederic Cuvier, the collection of coloured bird drawings brought together by Georges Cuvier, including all the plates of Buffon and Temminck, many of them annotated.

Du Bus asks Strickland's assistance to obtain plates from works published in England. It appears therefore that Cuvier not only maintained a paper museum of paleontological specimens, but also one of birds (and other groups?), possibly helping him to compile his *Règne Animal*. The collection may still be in Belgium, but its whereabouts are unknown to me.

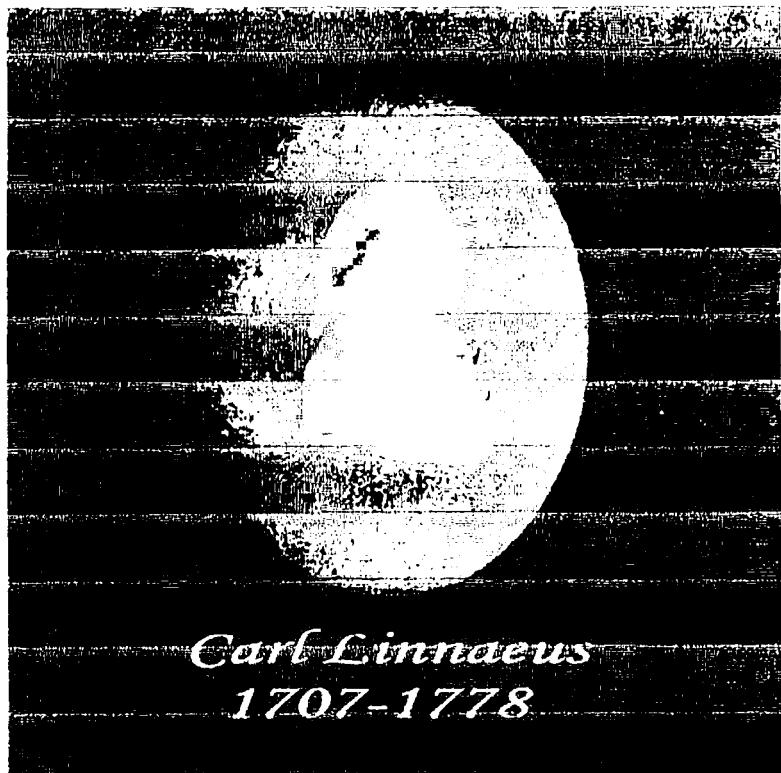
These iconographic collections are a cataloguer's nightmare because the origin of the plates is rarely recorded and animal names have changed in time. Archival material in zoological institutions is often poorly indexed and even large collections will only be found by chance. However, they give an important insight into the making of science in the 19th century.

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Carl Linnaeus
1707-1778

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