

Jakob Sturm

Verzeichniss meiner Insecten-Sammlung (1796)



Jakob Sturm (1771-1848) was born in Nuremberg, Germany, the only son of engraver Johann Georg Sturm. He received only a modest formal education before entering his apprenticeship under his father, who trained him in the art of drawing and copperplate engraving.

Sturm first came to the attention of the scientific world at the age of sixteen, when he was sent by his ailing father to deliver a copperplate engraving of insects for a work by Pallas. The botanist Johann Christian Daniel Schreber (1739-1810), overseeing the publication, rejected the father's plate and sent Jakob to the physician and entomologist Georg Wolfgang Franz Panzer (1755-1829), living in Nuremberg, to see the insects in question and make the engraving. His plate succeeded where his father's had failed, and the course of his life was set. Schreber and Panzer remained life-long patrons and friends of Sturm, for whom he did some of his most famous work and through whom he met and worked with many of the most prominent natural scientists in Germany, including Esper, Hoffmann, Hoppe, Nees von Essenbeck, and Sternberg.

In 1791-1792 he published a set of 100 hand-colored copperplate engravings of insects called *Insekten-Cabinet nach der Natur gezeichnet und gestochen* [Insect cabinet, drawn and engraved from nature]. The engravings, each measuring only 9x12 cm. (approximately 3 1/2 x 4 3/4 in.), were printed in black and white and then individually colored by hand. This work, printed at Sturm's expense in - no doubt - an extremely limited edition, is very scarce and is held by only one library in the U.S. (the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia).

Published without text, these illustrations inspired Panzer to undertake a similar but larger work. Begun in 1792 and coming out in parts over the next twenty years, the remarkable *Faunae Insectorum Germanicae Initia* [Elements of the German insect fauna] (Nuremberg, [1792-]1793-1813, in 109 parts - the dates vary amongst the bibliographic sources consulted - and pt. 110 [1823] by C. Geyer) contains Panzer's short textual descriptions and Sturm's individual, hand-colored engravings of more than 2600 insects. The work was continued through part 190 (1829-1844) by G.A.W. Herrich-Schaeffer. The Smithsonian Institution Libraries holds a copy of the Panzer/ Sturm sequence (pts 1-109) in eighteen volumes, each measuring 11x15 cm. (approx. 4 1/4 x 6 in.).

In 1796 Sturm published the catalog of his own insect collection, reproduced here. It also is quite small, only 14 cm. (5 1/4 in.) tall. As a result of his work and expanding network of contacts with entomologists and other scientists, his collection grew so rapidly that he issued an enlarged second edition only four years later, in 1800, and eventually a third in 1826 and a fourth in 1843. His became one of the largest and most valuable private collections in Europe, consulted and cited by entomologists throughout the scientific world.

Although his particular fascination was beetles (Coleoptera), Sturm had wide-ranging interests in natural history and became a founding member of the Naturhistorische Gesellschaft zu Nürnberg in 1801.

As the measurements of many of his publications indicate, most of Sturm's engravings were very small. He wanted his works to be accessible and inexpensive, unlike the beautiful but over-sized and pricey "coffee-table" folios available only to the wealthy. Wilfred Blunt and William T. Stearn note (*The Art of Botanical Illustration*, 1994, p. 258-60): "Engravings of the German flora existed already; but, as Sturm wrote in 1796, 'some of them are badly drawn and coloured; some have been broken up and dispersed; some are only to be found in large and splendid publications which often even the lover of botany does not get a chance of seeing once in a lifetime.' He thus deliberately chose this minute format in order to make a knowledge of the German flora available by pictures to as many as possible and as cheaply as possible. Despite their smallness, they carry a surprising amount of detail."

From the 1790s until his death in 1848, Sturm produced engravings for a wide array of

natural-history publications in Germany. In his own right he published (items held by SIL in **bold**):

- *Deutschlands Flora in Abbildungen nach der Natur mit Beschreibungen* [Germany's flora in illustrations from nature, with descriptions] (Nuremberg, [1796-]1798-1848[-1862]), containing 2472 engravings in over 160 parts, each measuring only 13-15 cm. (5-6 in.) tall, with textual descriptions by eminent botanists including Schreber, Hoppe, Reichenbach, and Koch. After Sturm's death the work was continued by his son Johann Wilhelm Sturm.
- *Deutschlands Fauna in Abbildungen nach der Natur, mit Beschreibungen* [Germany's fauna in illustrations from nature, with descriptions] (Nuremberg, 1797-1857), for which he and his sons produced more than 500 engravings (again, only 13 cm. tall) of beetles, birds, amphibians, and other animals in the thirty-five parts that appeared before his death.
- *Abbildungen zu Karl Illigers Uebersetzung von Oliviers Entomologie* [Illustrations for Karl Illiger's translation of Olivier's "Entomologie"] (Nuremberg, 1802-1803). Beetles only, ninety-six plates.

And he engraved the illustrations for the following works, among others (items held by SIL in **bold**):

- Schreber's *Beschreibung der Gräser nebst ihren Abbildungen nach der Natur* [Description of the grasses with illustrations drawn from nature] (Leipzig, [1766-]1769-1772[-1779], new ed. 1810).
- Panzer's *Deutschlands Insectenfaune* [German insect fauna] (Nuremberg, 1795); and *Kritische Revision der Insectenfaune Deutschlands...* [Critical revision of the German insect fauna] (Nuremberg, 1805-1806).
- Albrecht Wilhelm Roth's *Catalecta Botanica quibus Plantae Novae et Minus Cognitae Describuntur atque Illustrantur* [Botanical account in which new and lesser known plants are described and illustrated] (3 vols. Leipzig, 1797-1806).
- Kaspar Maria Graf von Sternberg's *Versuch einer geognostisch-botanischen Darstellung der Flora der Vorwelt* [An attempt at a geognostical-botanical presentation of the flora of the primeval world] (Leipzig, Prague, & Regensburg, [1820-]1825-1838) and *Revisio Saxifragarum Iconibus Illustrata* [Revision of the Saxifrages, illustrated by pictures] (3 vols. v.1-2: Regensburg, 1810-1822; v.3: Leipzig, 1831).
- Christian Gottfried Daniel Nees von Essenbeck's *System der Pilze und Schwämme* [System of fungi and mushrooms] (Wurzberg, 1816) and *Bryologia Germanica, oder Beschreibung der in Deutschland und in der Schweiz wachsenden Laubmoose* [German mosses, or Descriptions of deciduous mosses growing in Germany and Switzerland] (Nuremberg, 1823-1831).
- David Heinrich Hoppe's *Caricologia Germanica, oder Beschreibungen und Abbildungen aller in Deutschland wildwachsenden Seggen* [German sedges, or Descriptions and illustrations of wild-growing sedge grasses in Germany] (Nuremberg, 1835).

In his later years, he was assisted in his work by his sons, Johann Heinrich Christian Friedrich Sturm (1805-1862) and Johann Wilhelm Sturm (1808-1865).

A modest man, Sturm was apparently not much celebrated in his own city of Nuremberg during his lifetime. Elsewhere, however, he was recognized and honored for his work. Many of his colleagues named new insect and plant genera and species in his honor. He was made an honorary member of many prestigious scientific societies throughout Germany, Russia, and Sweden, as well as of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia and the General

Union Philosophical Society of Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania (at which Spencer F. Baird, later the Secretary of the Smithsonian, was a student and professor in the late 1830s and mid-1840s). In 1846 he was awarded a Doctorate of Philosophy honoris causa by the University of Breslau.

He died quietly in his home in Nuremberg in 1848, at the age of seventy-seven.

The book

Jakob Sturm. *Verzeichniss meiner Insecten-Sammlung* [List of my insect collection]. Nürnberg: gedruckt auf Kosten des Verfassers [printed at the expense of the author], 1796. QL468.2.S93 1796 Ent.RB.

Pagination: 64 pp., 4 pls. (engravings, hand-colored). 13 cm.

Collation: A-D⁸; 4 lvs. pls.

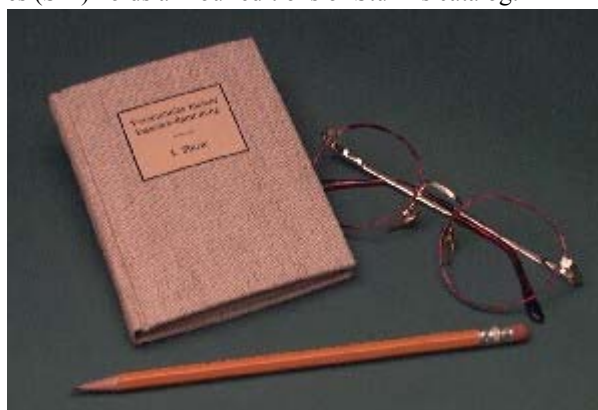
[A1]	[1]-[2]	Title page
A2-A4	[3]-8	"Vorbericht"
A5-C2r	[9]-35	Text: "I. Abschnitt. Alphabetisches Verzeichniss..."
C2v-D [8]	36-64*	Text: "II. Abschnitt. Beschreibungen nebst Abbildungen..."
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* Page 46 mis-numbered as 64. Numbering continues correctly through the true p.64.

Smithsonian Institution Libraries (SIL) copy: Leaves A4 (p.7-8) and [D8] (p.63-64) are replacement photocopies; for this digital edition those pages have been scanned from a copy owned by Dr. F. Christian Thompson, Systematic Entomology Laboratory, U.S. Department of Agriculture. The covers and end-leaves are a modern re-binding by the Book Conservation Laboratory, Smithsonian Institution Libraries; tissue guards between the plates were also added (not scanned).

The Smithsonian Institution Libraries (SIL) holds all four editions of Sturm's catalog:

The 1796 edition reproduced here is held by only six libraries in U.S. (the Smithsonian, the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University, the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, North Carolina State University-Raleigh, and the University of California-Berkeley) according to the OCLC and RLIN databases and the *National Union Catalog - Pre-1956 Imprints (NUC)*.



A second expanded edition was published in Nuremberg in 1800 (xvi, 112, [4] pp.; 4 pls.; 21 cm), with the sub-title "oder Entomologisches Handbuch für Liebhaber und Sammler" [or, Entomological handbook for fanciers and collectors]. It is held by seven libraries in the U.S. according to listings in OCLC, RLIN, and the *NUC*. The four plates are

different from those in the first edition and include enlarged views of microscopic anatomical details. (SIL: QL468.2.S75 Ent.)

A third edition was printed in Nuremberg in 1826 under the title *Catalog meiner Insecten Sammlung* [Catalog of my insect collection] (viii, [2], 207, [1], 16 pp; 4 pls.; 23 cm). It is held by sixteen libraries in the U.S. according to OCLC, RLIN, and the NUC. The four plates again are different from those in the first two editions. (SIL: QL468.2.S93 Ent.)

A fourth edition was published with two additional plates in Nuremberg in 1843 under the title *Catalog der Kaefer-Sammlung* [Catalog of the beetle collection] ([2], xii, 386 pp; 6 pls.; 23 cm). It is held by fourteen libraries in the U.S. according to OCLC, RLIN, and the NUC. The six plates, drawn by Sturm but engraved by his sons, are different from those previously published. (SIL: QL577.S9X Ent.)

The donor

SIL's copy of the 1796 edition of Sturm's *Verzeichniss meiner Insecten-Sammlung* was part of the library of Thomas Lincoln Casey (1857-1925), an Army officer who studied entomology and conchology as an avocation. His interest was serious and life-long, resulting in scholarly publications describing and naming thousands of new species, and he was considered one of the foremost coleopterists in America. To support his research Colonel Casey built a library of historical and contemporary works in the relevant subjects. The Casey entomological and conchological collections, and his research library, were bequeathed to the U.S. National Museum (Smithsonian Institution) at his death in 1925.

Source

- Buchanan, L.L. "Thomas Lincoln Casey and the Casey collection of Coleoptera" in *Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections*, v.94 no.3, Washington 1935.



Sources

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- 1840. Swainson, William. *Bib. of Zool.*: 338. Includes bibliography. (Not seen)
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- 1850. S.M. "IV. Mélanges et nouvelles: Notice nécrologique sur Jacob Sturm" in *Revue et Magazine de Zoologie* (2) 2: 135-137.
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- And the library databases OCLC, RLIN, and the *National Union Catalog: Pre-1956*.

Note: Due to the publishing practices of the 18th and 19th centuries - especially that of issuing works in parts over many years, and that of issuing (and dating) the title page at the end of the publication process - there is often considerable confusion regarding the actual dates of publication of an entire work. Certain sciences require such information, and researchers therefore have investigated such matters where possible, examining copies with original dated part-wrappers, for example, or searching out references in contemporary journals. The dates cited for the various works discussed in this essay are based on those in the bibliographies and catalogs listed here, but even these differ amongst themselves on occasion. When such differences arose, precedence was given to Stafleu & Cowan for botanical works, and Nissen for zoological ones.

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Home



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