

Acteon's Dogs

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IT IS NOT CERTAIN how many dogs Acteon had on the fatal occasion when, changed into a hart, he was pursued and torn to pieces by his own hounds. Ovid¹ gives the Latinized Greek names of 36 and refers to "others whom it were too long to name." In 1566, Joannis Ravisius Textor inserts in his *Officina*² the heading *Canum Quorundam nomina*, under which he lists some 25 dogs of classic literature but refers his reader to "Ouid. lib. 3 Metam." for the individual names of Acteon's dogs. To Acteon, Natalis Comes devotes a whole chapter of his *Mythologiae*³, recording in the order of Ovid's text the names of 33 of Acteon's pack. Comes comments that some maintain Acteon had, all told, fifty dogs—a statement which Comes does not attempt to support. In 1567, Arthur Golding translated the *Metamorphoses* into English⁴ and, for the first time, listed the names of the hunter's dogs in the vernacular.

As early as 1555, Hadrianus Junius published his *Nomenclator omnium rerum propria nomina variis linguis explicata* in Latin, Greek, Dutch, German, French, Italian, and Spanish. This work went through many editions in the sixteenth century.⁵ In 1585, John Higgins added the English terms and limited the foreign tongues largely to Latin, Greek, and French.⁶ For our discussion, the Latin and English are most pertinent. Although the *Nomenclator* has no mention of Acteon, it has a topical heading "Names of Dogs," under which are listed 37 names. So far as I know, it has not been noticed hitherto that the majority of these are from Ovid's catalogue of Acteon's dogs. The list thus compiled by Junius and Englished by Higgins continued, as we shall see, in the English-Latin dictionaries through the seventeenth century.

It is desirable, however, to have before us the names we have

alluded to and which we shall need to consider in more particular detail. First, the Latinized Greek names of Ovid are here listed, for convenience, in alphabetical order:

Aello, Agriodus, Agre, Alce, Asbolus, Canace, Cyprius, Dorceus, Dromas, Harpalos, Harpyia, Hylactor, Hylaeus, Ichnobates, Labros, Lachne, Lacon, Ladon, Laelaps, Leucon, Lycisce, Melampus, Melanchaetes, Melaneus, Nape, Nebrophonus, Oresitrophus, Oribasus, Pamphagos, Poemenis, Pterelas, Sticte, Theridamas, Theron, Thous, Tigris.

In Golding's translation of the *Metamorphoses*, the English names, alphabetized, are as follows:

Blab, Blackfoote, Bowman, Chorle (Churl), Cole, Eatal, Fleetewood, Greedigut, Hunter, Hylbred, Jollyboy, Kilbucke (Kildeere), Ladon, Laund, Lightfoote, Patch, Ringwood, Royster, Ruffler, (Shaggie) Rugge, Savage, Scalecliffe, Shepeherd, Slo, Snatch, Spring, Spy, Stalker, Swift, Tawnie, Tempest, Wight, Woodman, (Little) Woolfe.

As far as we know, this is the first appearance of Acteon's dogs in English dress. If we count "Kilbucke" and "Kildeere" as one, the number in Golding's list is 34.

As the Junius-Higgins *Nomenclator* of 1585 is basic to our discussion and as the Latin and English names are most pertinent, we here transcribe these names from the Junius-Higgins, omitting the Greek and French equivalents. The *Nomenclator* has the names in alphabetical order, according to the Latin:

Aello	.....Ouid.	Swift, or tempest
Aglaodos	.....Ouid.	Whitetooth
Agre	.....Ouid.	Hunter
Alce	.....Ouid.	Stout, or royster
Anyte	.....Epig.	Makeshift, or makespeede
Argus	.....Hom.	Bright, or swift
Asbolus	.....Ouid.	Cole
Canache	.....Ouid.	Blab, or barker
Charon	.....Aeschyl.	Lion
Corax	.....Aeschl.	Crowe
Dorceus	.....Ouid.	Hunt dow, spie all, or quickeshift
Dromas	.....Ouid.	Runner, or post
Harpalus	.....Ouid.	Catch, or snatch
Harpyia	..Aesch. & Ouid.	Greddie
Hylactor & Hylax	..Ouid.	Ringer, chanter, or barker
Hyleus	.....Ouid.	Wood, wild, or sauage

Ichnobates	Ouid.	Treader, or tracer
Labros	Ouid.	Lightfoote
Lachne	Ouid.	Rug, shaghaire, or ruffen
Ladon	Ouid.	Harier, or hunthare
Laelaps	Ouid.	Whirlwind, or tempest
Laethargus	Epigr.	Close byter
Lampurus	Theocr.	Whitetail, or fox
Leucon	Ouid.	Blanch, or whitecoat
Lycisca	Ouid.	Woolfe, or churle
Melampus	Ouid.	Blackfoote
Melaneus	Ouid.	Coleblacke
Nape	Ouid.	Forrester, or ranger
Nephrobonus	Ouid.	Fawnbane
Oresitrophus	Ouid.	Hilbred
Oribasus	Ouid.	Scalecliffe, or rangehill
Pamphagus	Ouid.	Eatall, or rauener
Podargus	Hom.	Sheepheard
Pterelas	Ouid.	Spring, or flight
Sticte	Ouid.	Pied coat, or patcht
Theron	Ouid.	Killbucke, or fierse looke
Thous	Ouid.	Flight

A comparison of the Latin names in this list with the original names in Ovid (p. 3, above) shows that the *Nomenclator* omits four—Lacon, Melanchaetes, Theridamas, and Tigris, substitutes one—Podargus for Poemenis (shepherd), and adds six from sources other than Ovid—Anyti, Argus, Charon, Corax, Laethargus, and Lampurus. Of the 36 names in the *Nomenclator* list, 29 are directly from the passage in the *Metamorphoses* naming Acteon's dogs. In other words, five-sixths of the names of dogs in the *Nomenclator* are those of Acteon's hounds, but not so specified.

The English equivalents in the Junius-Higgins table may be compared with those in Golding's translation. The correspondences are obvious and, while some of these may be the result of identical translations of the same Latin words, about one-half of the English names in the *Nomenclator* seem to derive from Golding; that is, in making his list of English names, Higgins consulted Golding's translation though he did not always adopt Golding's phrasing. Among the English terms in the *Nomenclator* which reflect, wholly or partly, Golding's language are these: "Blab, or barker"; "Catch, or snatch"; "Eatall, or rauener"; "Hilbred"; "Killbucke, or fierse

looke"; "Rug, shaghaire, or ruffen"; "Scalecliffe, or rangehill"; "Whirlwind, or tempest"; "Woolfe, or churle." Three of the suggestive names in Golding which Higgins did not place in his list in the *Nomenclator* are "Fleetwood," "Jollyboy," and "Ringwood." It is surprising that "Fleetwood" and "Jollyboy" do not reappear in the catalogues of dogs' names after Golding. Of "Ringwood," we shall hear more.

The Junius-Higgins catalogue in the *Nomenclator* next appears in the *Bibliotheca Scholastica* (1589), an English-Latin dictionary with a Latin index, by John Rider. In a special section near the end of his book, Rider has class-names of colors, trees, birds, beasts, etc. Here we find the legend *nomina canum* (Cols. 1714-1715) and, underneath, the names of dogs, English and Latin, arranged alphabetically, according to the English, as "Blabbe, or barker—*Canache*"; "Blackfoote—*Melampus*"; "Blanche, or whitecoate—*Leucon*"; etc. Rider's bilingual list is identical, except for the general rearrangement and the substitution of one name, with that in the Junius-Higgins *Nomenclator*. The substituted word is "Ringwood." Whereas the *Nomenclator* has "*Hylactor*. Ringer, chanter, or barker," Rider has "Chaunter, or ringwood. *Hylactor*." Rider may have remembered "Ringwood" from Golding and preferred it to Higgins' "Ringer."

Rider's *Bibliotheca* was revised and augmented by Francis Holyoke in 1606 and printed frequently thereafter (1612, 1617, 1626, 1627, 1633, 1640, 1648-9, 1659). In these Rider-Holyoke dictionaries, the English-Latin table of dogs remains unchanged. In 1664, Francis Gouldman published *A Copious Dictionary in Three Parts* (English-Latin, Latin-English, and Proper Names), in which he borrowed freely from the Rider-Holyoke dictionary, including the bilingual list of dogs. This continued unchanged in the various editions of Gouldman (1669, 1674, 1678). Meantime, in 1677, Thomas Holyoke, son of Francis, published *A Large Dictionary in Three Parts*, based on the Rider-Holyoke, Gouldman, and others. Thomas took over intact the now conventional list of dogs' names.

George Sandys' translation of the *Metamorphoses* (1626, 1632)⁷ shows no conclusive evidence that he was familiar with the dictionary lists published before 1626 but that he knew Golding's translation and borrowed some of the names, including Ringwood, which Golding had used.⁸

In the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, the most obvious literary association with Acteon's dogs is in Shakespeare. Pistol warning Ford to look after his wife (*Merry Wives*. 2. 1. 119–20) says

Prevent, or go thou
Like Sir Acteon he, with Ringwood at thy heels.

As the *Nomenclator* does not list Ringwood among its dogs and as Rider does not associate the name with Acteon, one might infer that Shakespeare got Ringwood directly from Golding. This is probable, but there are other possibilities. Anders (*Shakespeare's Books*) cites a contemporary song entitled "Mad Tom" or "New Mad Tom of Bedlam," which has these lines:

Hark! I hear Acteon's hounds!
The Huntsmen whoop and hollowe;
Ringwood, Royster, Bowman, Jowler,
All the chase now follow.⁹

The prominence of Ringwood in this song—if known to the dramatist—would have been suggestive. In 1592, fifteen of the names in Golding's list are cited by Abraham Fraunce.¹⁰ Fraunce writes:

The names of his hounds are all set from the naturall qualities and proprieties of doggs: *Laelaps*, *Aello*, *Nebrophonus*, *Dorceus*, *Harpya*, *Lycisca*, *Melampus*, *Pamphagus*, *Agriodos*, *Pterelas*, *Hylaeus*, *Hylactor*, *Melanchaetes*, *Theridamas*, *Oresitrophos*: signifying Swift, Tempest, Killbuck, Spy, Snatch, Woolfe, Blackfoote, Eatal, Sauage, Lightfoote, Woodman, Ringwood, Black, Killdeere, Hillebred.¹¹

Here too, as Baldwin notes, "Ringwood is only one of the pack, and is taken from Golding."

Baldwin's own suggestion that the double mention of Hylax and Hylactor in the grammar school texts and especially Ben Jonson's mention of Ringwood in his entertainment called the *Satyr* (25 June 1603) may have resulted in Shakespeare's choice of Ringwood seems farfetched. What we know is that Ringwood is Golding's coinage and from Golding, directly or indirectly, Shakespeare borrowed the word.

A passage of ten lines in *Macbeth* indicates that Shakespeare may have been familiar with the *Nomenclator* or Rider's *Bibliotheca* as well as Golding's Ovid. Macbeth speaking to the Murderers, says:

Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men;
 As hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,
 Shoughs, water-rugs, and demi-wolves, are clept
 All by the name of dogs: the valu'd file
 Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,
 The housekeeper, the hunter, every one
 According to the gift which bounteous nature
 Hath in him clos'd; whereby he does receive
 Particular addition, from the bill
 That writes them all alike: and so of men. (3. 1. 91-101)

Natalis Comes writes that the names of Acteon's dogs as presented by Ovid signify colors of their bodies or *sagacitas*—acuteness of perception, shrewdness, cunning, or characteristic traits befitting dogs. The truth of the observation is obvious and it is recognized by Macbeth in the words "the valu'd file/ Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle/ The housekeeper, etc." Shakespeare did not, of course, need to consult a catalogue for the class names "hounds, greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs, etc." It should be noted, however, that the *Nomenclator* places before its list of proper names of dogs certain class names, including "bloodhound, draught hound, greyhound, a farmers dogge; a cur to keepe house (Cf. Shakespeare's "the housekeeper"), a rough or curled haire dog: a waterspaniell, a mungrel, etc." It is quite possible that the "catalogue" or "valu'd file" in Shakespeare's mind was that of the *Nomenclator* of 1585.

The lines quoted from *Macbeth* and their context revealing the protagonist's relationship to the murderers have a connection with the allegorical interpretations of the Acteon myth in contemporary emblem books. In Emblem 52 of Alciat's *Emblemata* (ed. with a commentary by Claudius Minois, 1608) is a woodcut of Acteon being seized by his hounds, with the legend *In receptatores sicariorum* (On the harborers of murderers). The six lines of Latin accompanying the cut refer to Acteon as one who had entertained robbers, thieves, and assassins and thus taken up the horns and given himself a prey to his own dogs. In his comment on the phrase "In receptatores" Minois states that there are several Acteons who seem to themselves more celebrated if they receive in their homes and at their tables any kind of murderers or indolent gluttons and men of no worth, not foreseeing with their mind's eye that they themselves will be reduced by the loss of their patrimony and will suffer the

loss of their good name and even of their life. In the circumstances, such an application would not be inapplicable to Macbeth.

NOTES

¹ Ovid's *Metamorphoses* with an English Translation by Frank Justus Miller (London, 1928). 3. 206-233.

² I have used the edition of the *Officina* published at Basle, 1566. pp. 202-203.

³ *Mythologiae, sive Explicationum Fabularum, Decem libri*. Venice, 1568. Ch. 24.

⁴ Shakespeare's Ovid Being Arthur Golding's Translation of the *Metamorphoses*. Edited by W. H. D. Rouse. London, 1904. 3. 245-281.

⁵ Here are some of the editions of Junius—Antwerp: 1557, 1567, 1576, 1583; Frankfurt: 1591, 1596, 1611.

⁶ *The Nomenclator or Remembrancer of Adrianus Junius, Physician*. Englished by J. Higgins. London, 1585.

⁷ Ovid's *Metamorphosis* [sic] *Englished, and Represented in Figures*. By G. S. Imprinted at Oxford by John Lichfield, 1632. pp. 85-6.

⁸ These are the English names in Sandys' translation: Blab, Blackfoot, Blanch, Catch, Churle, Clime-cliff, Cole, Collier, Courser, Fawnbane, Flight, Follow-dread, Greedy, Hill-bred, Hunter, Kill-deare, Light-foot, Mourner, Patch, Ranger, Ravener, Ringwood, Royster, (shag-haired) Rug, Salvage, Snatch, Shepherd, Spie, Swift, Tempest, Tracer, Tiger, Whirlwind, Whitetooth, Woolf.

⁹ See T. W. Baldwin, *William Shakspeare's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1944. 2 vols. II, 430-32.

¹⁰ *The Third Part of the Countesse of Pembroke's Yuychurch*. Quoted by Baldwin, *op. cit.*, 431.

¹¹ Baldwin, *op. cit.* Quoted from Douglas Bush's "Notes on Shakespeare's Classical Mythology," *PQ*, VI, 295.



A World Dictionary of Breeds, Types, and Varieties of Livestock. By Ian L. Mason. (Slough, England, 1951.) Technical Communication No. 8 of the Commonwealth Bureau of Animal Breeding and Genetics.

This work lists by name and by geographic area all of the better known breeds, types and varieties of most of the species of livestock. Synonyms are included, and there are many hundreds of names—mainly of geographic origin—given for the principal forms of the Ass, Buffalo, Goat, Horse, Ox, Pig and Sheep. The only important lack is the absence of the Camel and Dromedary.