

SCORPIO AFER.



CHARACTER GENERICUS.

Pedes octo: insuper *Chelæ* duæ frontales.

Oculi octo: horum tres ad latus utrumque thoracis; duo in tergo.

Palpi duo, cheliformes.

Cauda elongata, articulata, terminata Mucrone arcuato.

Pectines duo subtus, inter pectus et abdomen.

Lin. Syst. Nat. p. 1037.

CHARACTER SPECIFICUS, &c.

SCORPIO pectinibus 13-dentatis, manibus subcordatis pilosis.

Lin. Syst. Nat. p. 1038.

SCORPIO INDUS.

Degeer. inf. 7. p. 341. n. 3.

Inter omnia insecta hætenus cognita, quæ venenosæ et malignæ sunt indolis, Scorpiones primo semper numerari soliti sunt. Notandum tamen est vim veneni vel augeri vel minui pro diversa hominum vulneratorum idiosyncrasia, statuque ipsius animalis, majorive minorive impetu quo plaga infligitur. Concedendum etiam est vulgarem Scorpionem Europæum, multo magis

gis quam necesse est timeri, cujus ab aculeo vix aliquid mali potest evenire. At vero ingentes Africani Scorpiones, qualis est ille qui in tabula depingitur, vulnus infligere posse jure censetur, quod dolor acerrimus, virisque gravissimum solent comitari. Venenum per tria minutissima foramina prope apicem aculei exit, a summo fere apice et ab utroque latere. Notum est multum diuque dubitasse physicos sitne foramen necne, per quod venenum effunditur, in araneorum forcipibus. Similiter de foraminibus in scorpionis aculeo dubitatum est, immo pene ad lites perventum. Celeberrimus Redi, optimis licet vitris microscopicis tunc temporis instructus, non potuit foramen discernere; qui tamen revera illud extare minime dubitavit, quippe qui ab aculeo compresso guttulam quasi liquoris albescentis juxta apicem exprimi sæpe viderat. Alii autem multi ullum esse foramen plane negarunt. Vallisneri et Leewenhoek foramina duo triangula clare visa descripserunt ab utroque latere prope apicem sita; alii tria detexerunt; unde patet Scorpionis aculeum venenum promptius efflare posse quam alius cujusvis animalis. Pars illa quæ Scorpionibus sub pectore sita est, quæque more pectinis denticulata est, hoc ipso nomine *pectinis* a Linnæo designatur; qui etiam diversas species numero dentium in pectine distinguere conatus est. Fefellit tamen multos hæc discriminandi methodus; pectinibus enim ejusdem speciei impar forsan sit numerus dentium; ideoque hoc solo signo species non possunt satis accurate dignosci. Species hic depicta est magnus Scorpio Africanus, a Linnæo Scorpio Afer nominatus. Color ejus communis est admodum fuscus, interdum pene nigricans. In magnam crescit molem, interdum multo majorem quam repræ-

repræsentat tabula. Vivipari sunt Scorpiones, et plurimos uno partu edunt pullos, qui perfecte formati, nullam aliam mutationem subeunt, nisi forte quod aranearum more exuvias abjiciant. Quæ scripserunt varia et mira de his animalibus antiquiores physici, aniles sunt fabulæ, quas præsens ævum, cui omnigena affulsit scientia, ægre et indigne audiat. Hæc igitur putida et inania lubens taceo. Unum tamen e plurimis fas mihi sit feligere; Scorpionem nempe carbonibus ignitis circumdatum, cum nullum sibi exitum patere viderit, saluti tandem desperantem, sui ipsius aculei ictibus perire. Hanc fabulam, quasi fide dignam, plures etiam nunc temporis, serio et graviter recitant, et pro unico suicidii exemplo inter inferiora animalia feligunt.

Fig. 2. Pectines.

THE
AFRICAN SCORPION.



GENERIC CHARACTER.

Eight *Legs*, besides the 2 frontal *Chelæ*.

Eight *Eyes*, viz. 3 on each side the thorax, and 2 on the back.

Two cheliform *Palpi* or feelers.

Tail long, jointed, terminated by a crooked *point*.

Two *Combs* beneath, between the thorax and abdomen.

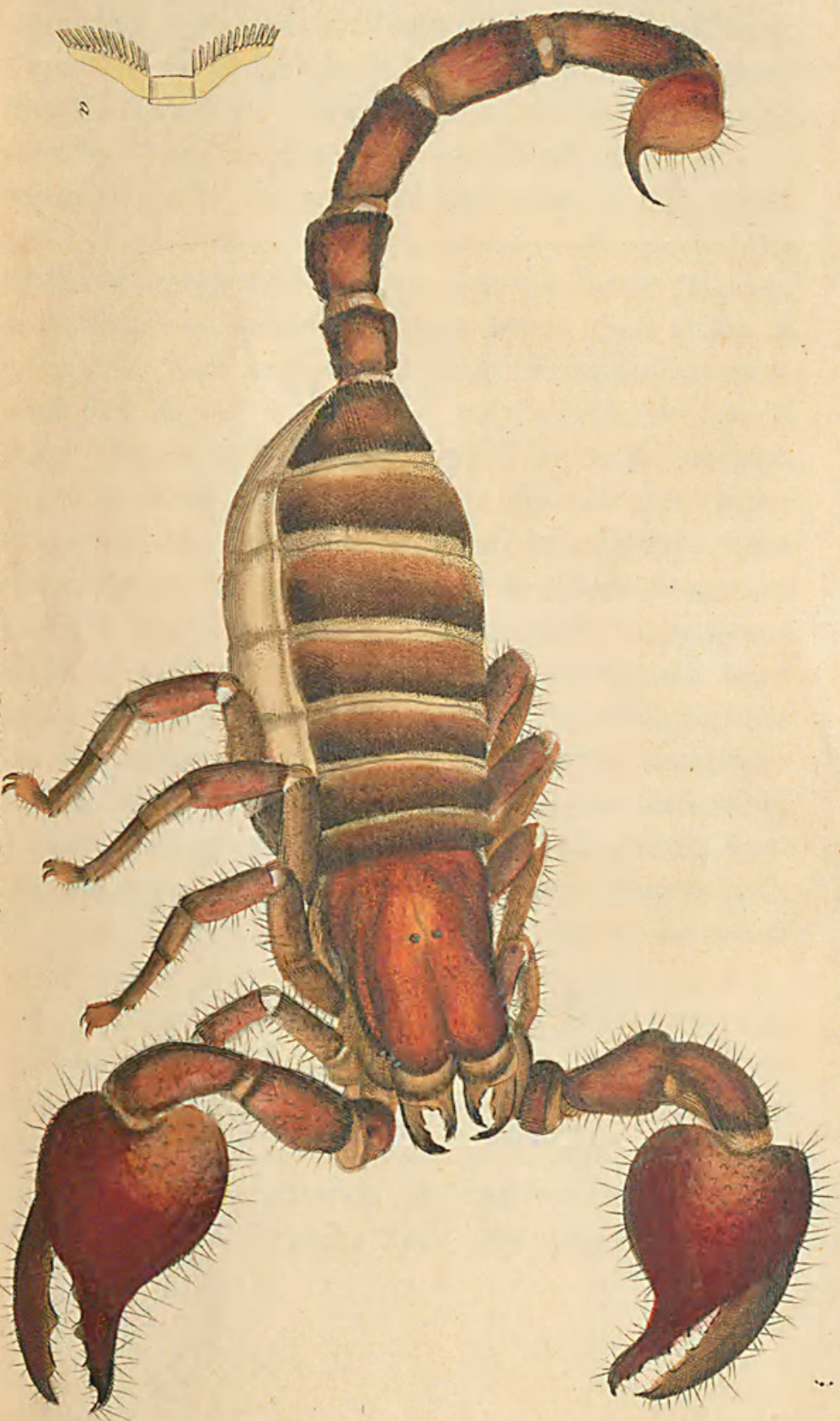
SPECIFIC CHARACTER, &c.

SCORPION with 13-toothed combs and somewhat heart-shaped hairy claws.

Swammerd. bibl. nat. t. 3. f. 3.

Roef. inf. 3. t. 65.

Scorpions may be considered as the most malignant and poisonous of all known insects. It is true that the effect of their sting will differ greatly according to the different circumstances of the constitution of the person receiving the wound, as well as of the state of the animal itself, and the degree of violence with which the wound was inflicted. It is also to be acknowledged that the common European Scorpion is not in general
of



Centruroides borealis (L.) (Scorpiones: Centruroides) (L.) (Scorpiones: Centruroides)

of so terrible a nature as is commonly supposed, and it is but rarely that any bad consequences happen from its sting. But the large Scorpions of Africa, such as here represented, may well be supposed capable of inflicting a wound of the most severe pungency and of the most dreadful malignity. The poison is evacuated through three very small foramina near the tip of the sting, viz. one on each side the tip, and the other in the upper part. It is well known that a diversity of opinion has subsisted amongst authors relative to the slit or foramen in the fangs of spiders, through which their poison is evacuated. The same contrariety of sentiment takes place with respect to such a foramen in the Scorpion's sting. The celebrated Redi, assisted by the best microscopes he could procure, was not able to discover it; though he was well convinced of its existence from perceiving the minute drop of poison exude from near the tip of the sting. Others have denied the existence of the foramen; but Vallisneri and Leewenhoek have both described two foramina, viz. one on each side the tip, and which are of a shape inclining to triangular: besides these a third foramen has sometimes been seen; so that the sting of the Scorpion can with greater facility discharge its venom than that of any other animal. The part in Scorpions which is seated below the breast and is toothed in the manner of a comb, is in the Linnean language termed the pecten; and Linnæus has endeavoured to distinguish the species of Scorpions from the number of teeth in this part; but this has been found a fallacious mark of distinction; since they vary in the number of teeth, and consequently no great certainty can be obtained from this character alone.

The

The very large species here represented is the great African Scorpion, or *Scorpio Afer* of Linnæus. Its general colour is a deep brown, nearly approaching in some specimens to black. It grows to a very large size; specimens being sometimes seen which far exceed in size the figure here represented. Scorpions are viviparous insects, and produce a very considerable number of young at once; which are completely shaped, and undergo no farther change, except (perhaps) casting their skin from time to time in the manner of spiders. Several fabulous anecdotes of these animals have been recorded by the older writers on natural history, which are totally unworthy of being related in the present enlightened age. One of the most remarkable of these legends is, that a Scorpion surrounded by live coals, finding no method to escape, grows desperate from its situation and stings itself to death. It is not uncommon to hear this quoted with serious credulity as the only instance of suicide amongst inferior animals.

Fig. 2. The pectinated parts or combs.



Shaw, George. 1792. "The African Scorpion, Scorpio afer [Pl. 100]." *The Naturalist's Miscellany* 3(XXXIII), <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.304520>.

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