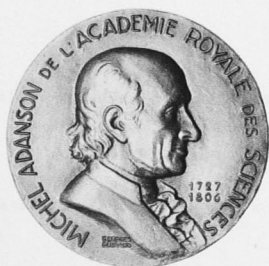


ADANSON

The Bicentennial of Michel Adanson's
«Familles des plantes»

Part Two



The Hunt Botanical Library
Carnegie Institute of Technology Pittsburgh Pennsylvania

1964

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Contents

Foreword		ix
Figures		vii
Adanson et le Mouvement Colonial	<i>Jean-Paul Nicolas</i>	393
Les Dessinateurs d'Histoire naturelle en France au XVIII ^e siècle	<i>Gabrielle Duprat</i>	451
Mathematics and Classification, from Adanson to the Present	<i>Peter H. A. Sneath</i>	471
L'Ouvre zoologique d'Adanson	<i>Théodore Monod</i>	499
Adanson's Sources, References, and Abbreviations	<i>Frans A. Stafleu</i>	529
The Adanson Medal		
Response	<i>Frederick Seitz</i>	619
Presentation of Plaque	<i>Walter J. Blenko</i>	621
Greetings and Salutations	<i>Roger Heim</i>	622
Franco-American activities in botany	<i>Roger de Vilmorin</i>	625
Index		631

Foreword

Part One of the volume titled *Adanson* published in August 1963, provided in full the papers given in summary at the first session of an international symposium on Michel Adanson and his contributions held at The Hunt Botanical Library on August 18 and 19, 1963. Part Two of the volume, presented herewith, comprises the full text of the papers of the second session together with addresses and responses given at the closing evening session.

The emphasis of the first session was on Adanson the man, on all aspects of Adanson's *Familles des plantes*—the bicentenary of whose publication was the *raison d'être* of the symposium, and on the scope and significance of the Adanson collection of botanical books, letters, and manuscripts acquired for this Library by Mr. and Mrs. Roy Arthur Hunt. The emphasis of the second session was on other aspects of Adanson's life and accomplishments quite apart from the botanical, and on present-day developments whose origins can be traced in part to his contributions. Three of those papers were given by French scholars recognized as without peer in their areas of speciality: Jean-Paul Nicolas, Adanson's biographer; Madame Gabrielle Duprat, Conservateur en Chef of the Bibliothèque Centrale, of the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, in Paris; and Professor Théodore Monod, zoologist and naturalist with a lifetime experience on the fauna of tropical Africa and Directeur of the Institut Français d'Afrique Noir, at the Université de Dakar, in Senegal. These papers are presented here in their original French, as submitted by their respective authors. To each has been added either an English summary or—as for M. Nicolas' longer paper—an English translation of the Editor's selection of passages from that presentation. Subsequent students of the subjects, citing these papers, should base their opinions on the original papers and not on the translations, since only the Editor is responsible for the accounts in English.

In addition, there was given a very stimulating paper by Dr. Peter H.

A. Sneath, a physician whose professional background of research in medicine and bacteriology led him to investigate the mathematical logic which he associated with the classification of bacteria. Early in his investigations into the origins of these associations he was led to Adanson, and to his writings on the subject, and has interpreted the French naturalist's philosophy to provide some of the foundation stones of thoughts currently held by a growing coterie of scientists that seeks to give greater precision and objectivity to the principles of classification; a discipline of classification that many others continue to treat from a purely subjective approach. Dr. Sneath presents here a synthesis of modern thought on this approach to the subject, basing some of his interpretation on the precepts set forth two hundred years ago by Michel Adanson.

In addition to the papers of the second session, there is provided a documentation assembled by Dr. Frans A. Stafleu on the sources, references, and abbreviations used by Adanson in the preparation and writing of the *Familles des plantes*. This material was prepared as part of Dr. Stafleu's study of the *Familles des plantes* (see *Adanson* 1: 123-264), but could not be included with that paper.

The closing session of the Symposium, held in the evening of 19 August, witnessed the presentation by Prof. Heim—in behalf of the Académie des Sciences, of which he was President, and the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, of which he is Director—of a bronze medal designed in 1963 by Georges Guiraud of Paris and coined at the National Mint of France. The first copy was presented to Prof. Frederick Seitz, Prof. Heim's counterpart as President of the National Academy of Sciences, who accepted it in behalf of that institution. Copies were later distributed to all in attendance. In token of the appreciation of Carnegie Institute of Technology for the honor of serving as host institution for the occasion, Mr. Walter J. Blenko—representing the Institute's Board of Trustees—presented to Prof. Heim, for deposit at the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, a walnut panel bearing bronze casts of the artist's large clay models for the obverse and reverse faces of the Adanson medal. The short addresses and responses associated with those exchanges are included in this record. All present will long remember the very moving and glowing tribute rendered to his hosts, in French, by Prof. Heim—one given with unforgettable eloquence, and later supplied by him in English translation for inclusion in this volume. The Hunt Botanical Library includes in its archival records, and available to scholars

concerned, tape recordings of all the papers and addresses of the symposium; those given in French are counted as models of their kind.

The primary address of the evening was given by Dr. Roger de Vilmorin, doyen of the renowned family of many generations of French nurserymen, seedsmen, and scientists, and himself Past-President of the Académie d'Agriculture de France. He is widely known among plant geneticists for developing new varieties of cereals and sugar-beets. His address, although at times very personal and intimate, gave warm evidence of past and present bonds of cooperative activity on the part of botanists and plantsmen of France and America.

The two parts comprising the volume *Adanson* present a record of a man whose importance was neither perceived nor appreciated in his day, of a man who himself made the cloud in whose shadow he stood, but also of a man whose stature we now can contemplate in retrospect and in the perspective of the national environment in which he was captive. Michel Adanson was a man of vision, of originality of thought, and of independence in spirit. He would seldom hesitate to disagree with his colleagues, or to defend his position in opposition. Now, two centuries later, through the concentration of effort on the part of the scholars who have contributed to these proceedings, students of the future may find here a reorientation of thought, a new evaluation of both old and hitherto unavailable data, and—as expressed in the Foreword to Part One of this volume—a new fabric to be recognized for its strength and for its clarity of pattern.

George H. M. Lawrence
Editor

12 October 1964

