THE PIG AND THE SEA-HARE

[OV.] Hal. 132 lolligo durique sues sinuosaque caris

Surrounded as it stands by a mollusc (lolligo) and a crustacean (caris), there seems to be no point in trying to find for sues a suitable fish in the
scientific sense of the word. Hence one is bound to take issue with every approach so far\(^1\) and explore new avenues in quest of a more cogent identification.

It strikes me that suus here may well be identical with the animal always, as far as my scholarship extends, referred to by Latin authorities as lepus (marinus). With regard to the linguistic possibility of the name “pig” being given to this mollusc, surely I shall not be accused of chauvinism if I bring forward Galician porco\(^2\): as a matter of fact it is the only instance known to me. This of course is not strong enough evidence to show that the ancients themselves took advantage of such a possibility as well. Nevertheless, a hint in favour might be sought in Pliny’s description\(^3\) of the item as offa informis, presumably because of its fatness, an external trait which provides a point of resemblance with the pig\(^4\), rather than in a remark by Apuleius involving details of internal anatomy\(^5\).

If suus = lepus is right, the twofold conclusion offers itself that: (i) dirique should in all probability be emended to dirique\(^6\), in view of the reputation of being extremely poisonous that the sea-hare had in antiquity\(^7\); and (ii), whatever the origin of the unanimous reading in the MSS, lepores at v. 126 proves untenable, for in addition to the ichthyological implausibility as set out by De Saint-Denis\(^8\) no reason appears for the repetition of one and the same thing under two names.

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SU SENOFONTE EFESIO 3, 9, 1

In 3,9,1 il testo degli Ephesiaca di Senofonte Efesio non è ancora stato sanato in modo soddisfacente. Nel codice Conventi Soppressi 627 della


\(^3\) *Nat. 9. 155* „Nec uenena cessant dira, ut in lepore marino... in nostro (sc. mari) offa informis, colore tantum lepori similis”.


\(^5\) *Apol. 40* “...pisciculum, quem uos leporem marinum nominatis... solus ille... cum sit cetera exossis, duodecim numero ossa ad similitudinem talorum suillorum in uentre eius conexa et catenata sunt”.

\(^6\) As early as C. Gesner’s edition (Tiguri 1556), but for reasons other than mine.


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It strikes me that sues here may well be identical with the animal always, as far as my scholarship extends, referred to by Latin authorities as *lepus* (marinus). With regard to the linguistic possibility of the name „pig“ being given to this mollusc, surely I shall not be accused of chauvinism if I bring forward Galician *porco\(^2\)*: as a matter of fact it is the only instance known to me. This of course is not strong enough evidence to show that the ancients themselves took advantage of such a possibility as well. Nevertheless, a hint in favour might be sought in Pliny’s description\(^3\) of the item as *offa informis*, presumably because of its fatness, an external trait which provides a point of resemblance with the pig\(^4\), rather than in a remark by Apuleius involving details of internal anatomy\(^5\).

If *sues = lepus* is right, the twofold conclusion offers itself that: (i) *durique* should in all probability be emended to *dirique\(^6\)*, in view of the reputation of being extremely poisonous that the sea-hare had in antiquity\(^7\); and (ii), whatever the origin of the unanimous reading in the MSS, *leporis* at v. 126 proves untenable, for in addition to the ichthyological implausibility as set out by De Saint-Denis\(^8\) no reason appears for the repetition of one and the same thing under two names.

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