

SHORT CONTRIBUTIONS

Brunus Who?

In response to the seemingly definitive, but in fact rather cursory, report on "Loss of Voice in *Brunus Edwardii*" (Hodges, H., *Recent Setbacks in Conservation*, Vol 1, 1985, ISSN 0828-2153) I feel compelled to contest the author on a few blatantly erroneous assumptions put forth in this otherwise highly competent paper. Firstly, had the examination of the specimen therein described been executed by a bruniologist even remotely acquainted with the subject, and furthermore should the illustration have been even marginally verisimilitudinous of the piece, it would have been irrefutably evident, not only by the convexity of the abdomen but also by the angle of repose of the upper thoraxial appendages, that the specimen operated upon was not *Brunus edwardii* (vulg. ed.e.bear) but an example of the rare prototype *Brunus theodorii* (vulg. ted.e.bear) the original *Brunus*. *Theodorii* antedated *edwardii* by approximately 365½ days on the Julian calendar, the anniversary falling on a rather obscure day at or around the winter solstice (*Ed's Gas Bar Calendar*) so although they are both classified as *Brunus*, they are further sub-divided into two separate and distinct species, not only by their easily discernable anatomical differences, but more specifically by the ability of vocality in *edwardii*; *theodorii* being squeachless.

Secondly and tertiary, the viscera of *edwardii* are not *ceiba casearia*, which is found only in *theodorii*. By the time *edwardii* had evolved the viscera had developed into *matrix nova* which was found to be far less susceptible to enzyme attack from the introduction of saliva, and thus was less apt to congest pneumatic chambers, *trachii*, etc.

So, Dr.Hodges *et al*, the preceding observations should make it perfectly transparent that we are dealing with an example of one of the most diabolical atrocities ever committed upon *Brunus* kind - the interspecial voice box transplant! Now you may argue that this specimen is from that rather turbid evolutionary period (the missing link as it were) but this is rather doubtful considering the high metabolic rate inherent in all *Brunii*. The evolution of *edwardii* from *theodorii* was probably

completed overnight, the night shift setting up and *edwardii* rolling down the assembly line when the day shift came on.

Furthermore and fourthly, voice box transplant is a far more common occurrence than many of us are willing to believe, and is often practiced by unscrupulous entrepreneurs in an effort to 'move' *Brunii*. This practice is not infrequently found in a small community of British parentage situated in close proximity to the Sino mainland. Many examples of the technique have been found bearing a tag stating place of manufacture - "mad einh ongk ong" - which I believe is a small community populated by those of Teutonic persuasion indigenous to that region.

The bottom line, Dr.Hodges *et al*, is tissue incompatibility resulting in rejection, and you and Al had better get that box out of that bear *ipso facto*! Tissue degeneration is not only speeding up but accelerating at a faster and faster rate. This *Brunus* will undoubtedly lose his voice again and other physical phenomena will begin to occur in rapid succession - the first being a change in ocular pigmentation. This latter manifestation of tissue rejection has been documented by that upwardly mobile young Brazilian bruniologist, Otis El Evator ("Don't it Make Your *Bruniis* Blue", K-Tel 1979).

In conclusion, confusion of contusion and conduction concerning condition and consequent consumption can connote concupiscent consciousness consistently concluded.

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U.S.S.R.

Tea

Monsieur l'Editeur,

While I was sitting outside my favorite café on the Left Bank, discussing Hegelian philosophy over a *pastis* with *mon ami* the poet Samuel O'Var, and smoking yet another pack of Gitanes, it occurred to me that perhaps a good method of toning paper would be to use tea. Of course, you say, this has been

done before. Yes, I know this; I am not an imbecile! But I ask myself (by this time my friend has departed and there is no-one left to talk to) what is the best sort to use? I decided, there and then, to conduct a little experiment.

I enlisted the assistance of the patron, Monsieur Croque, and requested six cups of tea: Lapsang Souchong, Orange Pekoe, Russian Caravan, China Black, Darjeeling and French Breakfast. I then proceeded to rend my copy of *Le Figaro* into shreds. These I immersed in the tea. By then a crowd had gathered. Who is this Breton *crétin*? they demanded. What is he doing? This also the *Sûretê* asked, who then escorted me to Fresnes prison where I am now completing this letter on the roll of perforated paper provided in my cell, which, if I am not mistaken, is made from spruce trees cut from the forest of Fontainebleau. As for the paper, *je ne sais pas*. *Alors*, conservation is incarceration. What does it all mean? Am I to be punished for conducting my experiments in public? Should not the public be made aware of what we are doing? Do they then not like the tone of this work?

Perhaps your readers would support me in this venture by offering to pay my bail money so that my work may continue. Please believe me, I am not a tea leaf, but a dedicated *restaurateur*. Perhaps that is the problem? Many people do not think I am sincere because they mistake what I am. What am I? To (‘*ow you say?*’) paraphrase my eminent countryman: "*Je pense, ergo je suis*".

Jean d'Eau,
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gravures françaises (ORGF),
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(Since receipt of this letter Monsieur d'Eau was convicted in a Paris court of causing a public mischief and banned from practising conservation for 20 years. He is currently serving a 10 year sentence on Devil's Island for attempting to use *crème caramel* as a substitute for wheat starch paste during conservation treatment of the Treaty of Pigalle*.)

Editorial Standerds

Dear Sir,

I am surprised at the extremely low editorial standards of your journal. In a profession where paranoia is rife and perfection in writing so easily accomplished, such grammatical constructions as "...necessary to carefully test..." (p.3, col.2, l.30) and "...given the first benefits from the com-

*The Treaty of Pigalle was signed in 1871 between the "ladies" of Montmartre and the occupying forces during the Franco-Prussian War agreeing that fighting must cease after dark because it was bad for business.

pleted facility..." (p.16, col.1, l.3-4) are clearly below standard. Also "occurrence" (p.18, col.2, l.32-33) is spelt wrongly. I could go on, but I feel I have made my point. What you fail to realise is that the content of your papers doesn't matter; it's the wording that counts, and if you're going to regularly split infinitives and do other modern things, paranoids in the profession who haven't written anything in decades, and don't know how to anyway, will get you. Don't forget - they're out there just waiting to get you. There's one looking over my shoulder right now! And under my desk!... In my waste paper bin....

A. Paranoid-Schizophrenic-Megalomaniac.

Not Funny

Dear Sir,

I recently received an unsolicited copy of *Recent Setbacks in Conservation* and, quite frankly, I didn't find it all funny. It is a sad day when irresponsible and childish persons can deride and humiliate our fine profession without apparent approbation. I do not know how many other complaining letters you may have received, but I am sure that many other mature and professional conservators feel as I do. Our profession is very young and fragile and it is incumbent upon all ethical practitioners to foster the highest possible standards of excellence. You have done a great disservice and little good with this second-rate nonsense. I sincerely hope you do not consider publishing a second volume.

R.L.Barclay,
Apostolic Delegate to the
Conservation Profession.

Flooded Musée

While the V&A was baling out its basement, while Hampton Court was still smouldering, while Dalhousie Law Library was all ablaze, and while York Minster was wreathed in fire from an Almighty blast, there was another disaster which failed to catch the headlines. The little-known Musée du Vin at Ste. Cathérine-sur-Lac, ignored by Hugh Johnson, spurned by Steven Spurrier, was awash with gallons of Château Pisse-Froid, causing untold damage, not only to the historical records but also in the loss of a potentially great vintage.

The Musée, devoted to the study of viticulture, housed rare historical records on

the art of wine-making, including valuable cellar books, in the same cave as the wine itself. It seems that excessive fermentation caused the oak casks to burst, spilling their contents over the cellar floor. News of the event only came to light when the local hospital began investigating the sudden increase in the incidence of drunkenness over a normally peaceful weekend.

The town of Ste. Cathérine-sur-Lac was invaded by hordes of "volunteers", making Florence seem like a picnic. The problem of how to remove all the wine from the cellar floor had to be addressed. An enterprising volunteer, Clarence Duke (no relation to the Duke of Clarence who drowned in a butt of Malmsey) suggested drinking it, whereupon the other volunteers followed suit, thus obviating the need for expensive pumps. Once the wine was removed, the recovery operation could commence.

In fact, there had to be two recovery operations: one for the artifacts, and one for the volunteers who required stomach pumps, vitamin C and large quantities of black coffee. The question remained: how to remove the red stains of the wine from the cellar books before noble rot set in. An old wife's tale (in fact, the old wife of Mr. Duke) suggesting that white wine be used, only caused more inebriation when volunteers mistook this suggestion for another taste of the grape.

The matter was finally resolved when facilities for freeze-drying from a recently defunct tuna processing plant were made available. During this operation every effort was made to bottle the extract from the pages of the cellar books with a view to recouping some of the salvage costs by selling it as genuine Canadian wine. This was passed by the Board of Management of the Musée and the plan would have succeeded had it not been for the outpourings of a weak-kneed, and practically paralytic, curator who spilled the beans.

Your Niagara Correspondent

Wet Storage and O₂(g)

The necessity of storing metal artifacts from wet sites in aqueous solutions for long periods of time has been discussed extensively in the literature and in various unpublished conference presentations. A common aim has been to devise cheap methods for removing oxygen (O₂(g)) from the storage solutions and to monitor their oxygen content. One theoretical approach has exciting potential; namely, the use of oxygen-consuming organisms in the storage tank. For example, goldfish.

If the objects and fish are placed in a tank, along with water, and the whole is sealed with an oxygen-impermeable membrane (*i.e.* aluminum foil) then obviously the fish will scavenge available O₂(g). As the (O₂(g)) levels approach zero (0), the fish will die. More fish can then be added and the effluent flushed out.

This system compares very favorably in terms of cost (fish at 25¢ per unit, versus nitrogen at \$60.00 per tank), toxicity and the effect on the metal. Also, no extraneous chemicals such as sulphites are added and there is no need for the conservator to study chemistry. The system proposed eliminates the cost of sophisticated O₂(g) monitoring equipment, the scavengers being self-indicating.

The contributors wish to point out that the idea for such O₂(g) (and other gas) indicating organisms is not new (*e.g.* canaries in mines) but to our knowledge this approach has not yet been applied in conservation. Although we have not yet tested this, we just couldn't see the point of keeping this novel and elegantly simple idea from our colleagues in the field.

(Note: it is important, we feel, to use only those organisms whose respiration devolves on dissolved O₂(g). Aquatic frogs, for example, would be inappropriate as they are air-breathers.)

J.Logan and R.Barclay (genii)