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**Book Reviews**


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von Linné, C.: *Nemesis Divina*. Nach der schwedischen Ausgabe von E. Malmström und T. Fredbäri (eds. Lepenies, W.; Gustafsson, L.) Aus dem Lateinischen und Schwedischen übersetzt von R. Volz. München, Wien: Hanser 1981. 372 pp. DM 48,-.

It is surprising that it was only in 1968 that a complete Swedish edition was first published of the most curious of works of this famous biologist, who sometimes was called the 'Registrar of Our Lord'. And indeed, it is a strange case collection! Translated into German, it is now accessible to a wider audience. The only acceptable reason for the publication delay of this manuscript, hidden in the archives of the Uppsala University Library until 1878, when only an extract was published, could be that it was believed that with all the other works and notes having already come to light, nothing new could be added to the depots of history. Linné himself never intended publication of this intimate notebook. Linné's compiled private notes on the Divine Requital are the result of his observations, lectures and studies during many years. The only intention was to give pedagogic directives to his son as examples of the divine reward. They are a father's principles, designed to direct a son's behaviour, a display of a man who felt everywhere the immediate hand of God.

The edition in question rearranges the notes, which were until 1775 written on 203 loose folio sheets, into two groups: notes of general content, mostly references, and a second group which concerns contemporary persons. The title was chosen by Linné himself. The dedication, in the form of a poem, is to his only son. The sources of the compilation are the Bible, preferentially the Old Testament and classical writers such as Vergilius and Seneca. It is partially written in Latin, partially in Swedish, the only languages Linné could speak and write. The second part is a strange collection

of stories, hearsays, gossip, and scandalous affairs. The selection characterizes the misanthropy and depressions from which Linné suffered during his later years. The result is something like a moral taxonomy. It is therefore understandable that the cultus around the great taxonomist overlooked these sides of his character. Julius Sach in his 'History of Botany', 1875, suspected the importance of this Nemesis-manuscript for the insight into the great man's character, but never knew completely its contents.

Notwithstanding, this is an excellent edition of the moral herbarium of the 18th century, a key-stone for the critical act of judging Linné. In addition to information about the origin and the character of Linné's notebook, the included essays are of high quality and worth reading for themselves alone. Lars Gustafsson describes the position of the *Nemesis Divina* in the history of philosophy, Wolf Lepenies treats the moral aspects of the notebook and gives a convincing description of the place this work occupies within the framework of the thinking of the great biologist. Linné is a child of his Swedish world with its traditions, wars, intrigues and standards. A new aspect is Linné as a mysticist: everywhere in nature, in life and in the history of man, he sees the tracks of the Creator. Old-nordic, platonic and christian elements are mixed up to form the fundamentals of a moral instruction. The contradictions in Linné's work become clearer, his moves to and fro between empiricism and scholastic logic, between rationalism and a certain way of thinking in archaic analogies. Thus his *Nemesis Divina* has less a descriptive importance than a normative intention.

Two sides of a biologist's personality are reflected in this work. The long history of trying to eliminate moral and ethical problems out of biology receives an interesting eye opener. It may be that this find will enliven an old discussion. H.F. Linskens, Nijmegen

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**Corrections**


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to the review paper: Koduru, P.R.K. and Rao, M.K.: *Cytogenetics of Synaptic Mutants in Higher Plants*. Theor. Appl. Genet. 59, 197-214 (1981) on page 206, section 3.4.2, para 1.

The species is misprinted. It should read as barley instead of rye.

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