

THE LYNX*.

THE gentlemen of the Academy of Sciences have given a very good description of the lynx, and have discussed, with much critical

* The lynx has a short tail, black at the end, pale yellow eyes, and long full hair under the chin. The hair on the body is long and soft, of a cinereous colour, tinged with red, and marked with dusky spots, more or less distinct in different subjects; in some they are hardly visible. The belly is whitish. The ears are erect, and tufted with long black hairs, which is the character of the different kinds of *lynx*. The legs and feet are very thick and strong. The length of the skin of a Russian lynx, from nose to tail, was four feet six inches, and that of the tail only six inches. They sometimes vary in their colour. The *lynx* from Lake Balkash, or the *Katle* of the Swedes, is whitish, spotted with black, and larger than the common kind. This variety is called by the Germans *Wolf-luchs*, and *Kalb-luchs*, on account of its size; Pennant's *Spangl. of Zool.* p. 186.

Ayç; *Altiati. lib. xiv. c. 6.* Oppian, *Cyng. iii. 84.* *Chon. lupus cervarius*, Plinii; *Raphius vel rufus*, apud Gallos, Plinio teste. In Italian, *Lupo cerviero*, *Lupo gutto*; in Spanish, *Lupo*; in German, *Luchs*; in Polish, *Kys*, *Ojstowoda*; in Swedish, *Wargh*. *Lupus cervarius*, lynx, chaus, raphius; *Gesner. Hist. Zool.* p. 678.

Lynx; Aldrov. *Quad. Dig. Fivip.* p. 90. 92. *Roy. Spangl. Quad.* p. 166. *Johanson, de Quad.* p. 83. *Klein. Quad.* p. 77.

Lynx felis, cauda abbreviata, apice atra; auriculis apice barbatis; *Lynx. Hist. Nat.* p. 63.

Loup-cervier; *Mém. pour servir à l'Hist. des Animaux, part. i.* p. 127.

Pelis auricularum apicibus pilis longissimis præditis, cauda brevi. *Lynx*, le Loup-cervier; *Briss. Regn. Anim.* p. 275.

acutenes, the facts and appellations relating to this animal, which occur in the writings of the ancients*. They have shown, that the lynx of Ælian is the same animal which they have described and dissected, and they censure, with propriety, those who have mistaken it for the *lbus* of Aristotle. This discussion is intermixed with remarks and reflections which are pertinent and interesting. After clearing their ground with so much address, we wish they had retained the true name *lynx*, instead of substituting that of *lupus cervarius*. They appear likewise, after making a proper distinction, with Oppian, of two different species or races of the lynx, the one large, which hunts and attacks the fallow deer and the stag, and the other smaller, which hunts the hare only, to have blended the two together, namely, the spotted lynx, which is commonly found in the northern countries, and the Levant or Barbary lynx, whose hair is of a uniform colour. We have seen both these animals alive. They resemble each other in many respects. They have both two long black pencils of hair on the tips of their ears. This character, under which Ælian first pointed out the lynx, is peculiar to these two animals, and probably led the gentlemen of the Academy to regard them as constituting but one species. But, independent of the difference of colour and spots

* *Mém. pour servir à l'Histoire des Animaux*, part. 3. p. 127.

of the hair, the following history and description will render it extremely probable that they are distinct species.

M. Klein says *, that the most beautiful lynx is a native of Africa and Asia, and particularly of Persia; that he saw one at Dresden that had been brought from Africa, which was finely spotted, and stood high on its limbs; that those of Europe, especially of Prussia and the northern regions, are less handsome; that they have little or no white, but are rather red, with blotched and ill-defined spots, &c. I choose not to deny absolutely what M. Klein has here advanced. I have never seen it mentioned, however, by any other author, that the lynx is a native of the warm countries of Asia and Africa. Kolbe † is the only writer who affirms, that the lynx is common at the Cape of Good Hope, and perfectly resembles that of Brandenburg, and the north of Europe. But I have discovered so many errors in the works of this author, that I give no credit to his testimony, unless when it coincides with that of others. Now, all travellers agree in having seen the spotted lynx in the north of Germany, in Lithuania, Muscovy, Siberia, Canada, and other northern regions of both Continents. But no author, whose writings I have perused, asserts that the lynx is to be met with in the warm regions of Africa or Asia. The

* Klein de Quad. p. 77.

† Mem. de Kolbe, tom. iii. p. 65.

lynx

lynx of the Levant, of Barbary, of Arabia, and other hot climates, is, as formerly remarked, of one uniform colour, without any spots: He is not, therefore, the lynx of M. Klein, which was finely spotted; nor that of Kolbe, which perfectly resembled that of Brandenburg. It would be a difficult task to reconcile the evidence of these authors with what we learn from other sources. The lynx is unquestionably more common in cold than in temperate climates, and he is, at least, very rare in warm countries. He was, indeed, known to the Greeks * and Romans. But, from this circumstance, it is not to be inferred, that he was brought from Africa, or the southern provinces of Asia. Pliny, on the contrary, says, that the first of these animals which appeared in Rome, were sent from Gaul in the days of Pompey. At present there are none in France, unless perhaps in the Alps or Pyrenees. Under the name of *Gaul*, however, the Romans comprehended a great part of the North; and, besides, France is now much warmer than it was in the time of the Romans. The finest skins of the lynx come from Siberia †, under the name of *Loup-cervier*, and from Ca-

* The Greeks, who, in their fictions, always preserved some appearance of truth, especially with regard to times and places, say, that it was a King of *Scythia* who was changed into the lynx; which seems to indicate that the lynx was a Scythian animal.

† In Russia, the lynxes are very common; their skins are beautiful, but not so valuable as those of Siberia; *Nouv. Mem. sur la Grande Russie*, tom. ii. p. 73.

nada*, under that of *chat-cervier*, because these animals, like all others, are smaller in the New than in the Old Continent; in the former, they are compared to the wolf, in the latter to the cat†.

The following circumstances might deceive M. Klein, and even men of greater ability: 1. The ancients say, that India furnished lynxes to the God Bacchus‡; 2. Pliny has placed the lynx in Æthiopia, and says §, that the hide and

claws

* The lynx of North America is a kind of cat, but much larger. He climbs trees, and lives on the animals which he seizes. His hair is long, of a grayish white colour, and makes an excellent fur. His flesh is white, and makes good eating; *Descr. des Chats l'Amérique Septentr. tom. ii. p. 441*.

† In the woods of Canada, there are a great many wolves, or rather *chat-cerviers*; for they have nothing in common with the wolf, but a kind of howling; in every other respect, says M. Surin, they are *ex genere felina*. They are excellent hunters, and live entirely on game, which they pursue to the tops of the highest trees. Their flesh is white, and good for eating. Their skin and hair are well known in France as a valuable branch of commerce; *Charlevoix, tom. iii. p. 333*.

‡ *Victa racemifero lynceas dedit India Baccho; Ovid. Metamorph.*

§ Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. viii. c. 21. et lib. xxviii. c. 2.—It is to be observed, that Pliny here speaks of the lynx, and not of the *lepus-cervarius*; that all the qualities and virtues of the hair, the claws, the uaine, &c. relate to the lynx only, which he mentions as an uncommon Æthiopian monster, and not to the *lepus-cervarius*, which he positively asserts was sent from Gaul to the public spectacles of Rome. The only thing which might create a suspicion that the *claws* or *lepus-cervarius* of Pliny was not our lynx, is his affirming, that it had the figure of the wolf, and the spots of the panther. But this doubt will vanish, when it is considered, that, of

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claws were prepared at *Carpathos*, now *Scarpanto*, or *Zerpanto*, an island in the Mediterranean between Rhodes and Candia; 3. Gesner has made a particular article of the Asiatic or African lynx, which contains the following extract of a letter from Baron de Balicze*. 'You have not mentioned,' says the Baron to Gesner, 'in your history of animals, the Indian or African lynx. As Pliny has spoken of it, the authority of so great a man induced me to send you a drawing of this animal, that you may have an opportunity of describing it. This drawing was made at Constantinople. The animal is very different from the German lynx, being larger, having rougher and shorter hair,' &c. Gesner, without making any reflections on this letter, contents himself with relating the substance of it, and informing us, in a parenthesis, that the drawing never arrived.

To prevent similar mistakes, let us observe, 1. That the poets and painters have yoked the chariot of Bacchus with tigers, panthers, or lynxes, according to their own fancy, or, rather, because all ferocious animals, with spotted skins, were equally consecrated to this God. 2. That it is the word *lynx* which creates all this ambiguity; for it is evident, by comparing different

all the carnivorous animals in the northern regions, the lynx alone has his skin spotted like that of the panther.

* Gesner, Hist. Quad. p. 683.

passages of Pliny with each other*, that the Ethiopian animal he calls *lynx*, is by no means the same with the *chous* or *lupus-cervarius*, which is a native of the northern regions; and that, by a similar misapplication of the name, the Baron de Balicez has been deceived, though he regards the Indian *lynx* as a different animal from the German *luchs*, or our *lynx*. This African or Indian *lynx*, which he says was larger and more beautifully spotted than our *lynx*, was perhaps a kind of panther. Whatever may be in this last conjecture, it is plain, that the *lynx*, of which we are here treating, exists not in warm climates, but is confined to the northern countries of the Old and New Continents. Olaus† says, that this animal is common in the forests of the northern parts of Europe. Olearius‡ makes the same remark, when treating of Muscovy. Ro-

* Pompeii Magni primum Iudi ostenderunt Chuum, quem Galli Rhaphium vocabant, effigie lupi, pardorum maculis; *Plin. lib. viii. c. 19.*—Sunt in eo genere (scilicet leporum), qui cervarii vocantur, qualem è Gallia in Pompeii Magni herma speculum diximus; *Plin. lib. viii. c. 22.*—*Lyncas* vulgo frequentes et sphingas, fusca pilo, maculis in pectore geminis, Ethiopia generant, multaque aliis montibus similis; *Plin. lib. viii. c. 21.*—From these three passages, it is apparent, that the *chous* and the *lupus-cervarius* are the same animal, and that the *lynx* is a different creature. Pliny seems to have been deceived by the name, when he tells us that the figure of the *lynx* resembled that of the wolf. The *lynx*, like the wolf, is an animal of prey nearly of the same size, and bows something like the wolf; but, in every other article, these animals are totally different.

† Hist. de Gent. Septentr. ab Olao Magna, lib. xviii. p. 139.

‡ Relat. d'Adam Olearius, tom. i. p. 121.

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sius Lentilius tells us, that the *lynx* is common in Courland and Lithuania, and that those of Cassubia, a province of Pomerania, are smaller and not so much spotted as those of Poland and Lithuania*. Lastly, to these testimonies, Paulus Jovius adds, that the finest skins of the *lynx* come from Siberia†, and that they constitute a great article of trade at Ustiava, a town six hundred miles distant from Moscow.

This animal, which, as we have seen, prefers cold to temperate countries, is one of those that might pass from the one Continent to the other by the lands to the North; and, accordingly, he is found in North America. Travellers have described him in a manner not to be misunderstood‡: Besides, his skin is an article of commerce between America and Europe: The lynxes of Canada, as formerly remarked, are only smaller and whiter than those of Europe; and it is this difference of size that has procured to them the name of *cati-cervarii*, and has induced

* Audubon Hist. Nat. Poloniae, Gabriele Raczyński.

† Vid. Aldrov. de Quad. Dig. p. 96.

‡ Among the Gaspesians, there are three kinds of wolves. The *lupus-cervarius* has silver coloured hair, and two pencils of black hair on his head (he means the ears). His flesh is pretty good, though its smell be too rank. This animal is more terrible to behold than cruel; and his skin makes an excellent fur; *Novo. Relat. de la Gaspésie, par le Père Cécilien Lesclapart, p. 488.*—In the country of the Hurons, the *lupus-cervarius* is more frequent than the common wolves, which are there very scarce; *Voyage de Saguenay Thénard, p. 307.*—In America, there are rapacious animals, as leopards, and *lupi-cervarii*, but no lions; *Singularités de la France Antiquaire, par Thevet, p. 103.*

the nomenclators to regard them as a distinct species*. Without pronouncing decisively concerning this matter, the Canadian and Russian lynxes appear to be the same species; 1. Because the difference of size is not very considerable †, being nearly proportioned to that which takes place in all the quadrupeds which are common to both Continents. The wolves, the foxes, &c. of America, being less than those of Europe, the same phenomenon should be exhibited in the lynx. 2. Because these animals, even in the north of Europe, vary in size ‡; and two kinds, a smaller and a larger, have been mentioned by authors. 3. Because they equally love cold climates, and, being of the same dispositions, the

* M. Linnaeus, who lives at Upsal, and ought to know this animal, since it is a native of Sweden and the adjacent countries, first distinguished the *lynx-cervarius* from the *catu-cervarius*. He denominates the first, *felis cauda truncatâ, corpore rufescente maculâ*; Syst. Nat. edit. 4. p. 64. et edit. 6. p. 4. and the second, *felis caudâ truncatâ, corpore albo maculâ*; Syst. Nat. ibid. In Swedish, he calls the first *Wargen*, and the second *Katlo*; Faun. Suec. p. 2. But, in his last edition, he no longer distinguishes these animals, and mentions only one species under the following short description: *Felis cauda abbreviata apice atra, auriculis apice barbatis*. Hence it appears, that this author, who at first separated the *lynx-cervarius* from the *catu-cervarius*, was persuaded, as I am, that these two animals constitute but one species.

† *Felis alba maculis nigris variegata, caudâ brevi*. . . *Catu-cervarius, le chat-cervier*—*Felis auricularum apicibus pilis longissimis præditis, caudâ brevi*. . . *Lynx, le loup-cervier*; Brisson, Règne Anim. p. 274. et 275.

‡ Lynxes ambob (magnæ et parvæ) corporis figurâ similes sunt, et similiter utriusque oculi suavitè fulgent, facies utriusque alacris præbet, parvum utriusque caput, &c.; Oppianus, lib. 2. p. 10.

same figure, and differing only in size and some shades of colour, these characters seem sufficient to authorize us to pronounce that they belong to the same species.

The lynx, of which the ancients said that his sight penetrated the most opaque bodies, and whose urine became a precious stone, called *Lapis lyncurius*, is an animal equally fabulous as the qualities they have ascribed to him. This imaginary lynx has no other relation to the true lynx than the name. We must not, therefore, in imitation of most naturalists, attribute to the former, which is a real being, the qualities of this creature of imagination, the existence of which even Pliny himself seems not to believe; for he speaks of it as an extraordinary animal, and ranks it along with the sphynx, the pegasus, the unicorn, and other prodigies or monsters brought forth in Æthiopia, a country of which the ancients had no knowledge.

Our lynx, though his sight cannot penetrate stone-walls, has brilliant eyes, a mild aspect, and an agreeable and sprightly air. His urine is not converted into precious stones; but he covers it with earth like the cats, to whom he has a great resemblance, and whose manners and love of cleanliness are the same. He has nothing in common with the wolf, but a kind of howling, which, being heard at a great distance, often deceives the hunters, and makes them imagine they

are pursuing a wolf. This alone is, perhaps, sufficient to account for the name of *wolf*; which has been given to him, and to which, to distinguish him from the real wolf, the hunters have added the epithet *ceruarius*, because he attacks the stag; or rather because his skin is variegated with spots like that of the young stag. The lynx is smaller, and stands lower on his legs than the wolf*. He is generally about the size of a fox. He differs from the panther and ounce by the following characters: His hair is longer, and his spots less lively, and not so well defined. His ears are much longer, and terminate in a pencil of black hairs. His tail is much shorter, and black at the extremity. The circle of his eyes is white, and his aspect is softer and less ferocious. The skin of the male is more spotted than that of the female. He does not run out, like the wolf, but walks and springs like the cat. He lives by hunting, and pursues his prey to the tops of the highest trees. The wild cats, the pine weasels, the ermines, and the squirrels, are unable to escape him. He likewise seizes birds; and watches the approach of stags, fallow-deer, hares, &c. darts down upon them, seizes them by the throat, sucks their blood, and opens their skull to devour their brain; after which, he often abandons them, and goes in quest of a fresh game. He seldom returns to his prey; which

* *Lynxes nostræ lapis minores sunt, tergo maculosa; Stomphiat.*

is the reason why the lynx has been said to have a very bad memory. The colour of his hair changes with the climate and the season. The winter furs are more beautiful and richer than those of summer. His flesh, like that of all carnivorous animals, is not good*.

S U P P L E M E N T.

WE here give the figure of a Canadian lynx from an excellent preparation in the royal cabinet. It is only two feet three inches long from the tip of the nose to the origin of the tail, and from twelve to thirteen inches high. The body is covered with long grayish hair, mixed with white, and striped with yellow. The spots are more or less black. The head is grayish, blended with white and bright yellow hairs, and striped, as it were, with black in some parts. The tip of the nose, as well as the margin of the under jaw, is black. The whiskers are white, and about three inches long. The ears are two inches three lines high, garnished in the inside with large white hairs, and with yellowish hairs on the edges. The outer side of the ear is covered with mouse-coloured hair, and the external margins are black. At the extremity of each ear, there is a large thin pencil of black hairs,

* Rzeczynski, *Aust. Hist. Nat. Pol.* p. 314.

seven lines high. The tail, which is thick, short, and well furnished with hair, is only three inches nine lines in length; from the extremity to the middle, it is black, and afterwards of a reddish white colour. The under part of the belly, the hind-legs, the inside of the fore-legs, and the feet, are of a dirty white. The claws are white, and about six lines long. This lynx has a great resemblance, both in the spots and nature of the hair, to that whose figure we have given; but it differs in the length of the tail and the pencils on the ears. The Canadian lynx, therefore, may be regarded as a variety very different from the lynx of the Old Continent. It may even be said to make a near approach to the caracal, by the pencils on its ears; but it differs from the caracal still more than from the lynx, by the length of the tail and the colour of the hair. Besides, the caracal is only found in warm countries; but the lynx prefers cold climates. The pencil of hair upon the tips of the ears, which is regarded as a distinctive character, is only accidental, and appears in animals of this species, and even in the domestic and wild cats. Of this we have given an example in the supplement to the article *cat*. Hence we persist in believing that the American lynx is only a variety of the European species.

The Norwegian lynx, described by Pontoppidan, is white, or of a bright gray colour, interspersed with deep spots. Its claws, like those of

other

other lynxes, resemble the claws of cats. He elevates his back, and springs upon his prey with equal quickness and address. When attacked by a dog, he lies down upon his back, and repels the enemy by repeated strokes of his claws. This author adds, that there are, in Norway, four species; that some of them approach the figure of the wolf, others that of the fox, others that of the cat, and, lastly, that there are others whose head resembles that of a colt. This last fact, which I believe to be false, creates the most violent suspicion with regard to all the rest. The author adds some articles which are more probable.

‘The lynx,’ says he, ‘does not go about the country, but conceals himself in woods and caverns. He makes his retreat deep and winding, from which he can be expelled by fire and smoke only. His sight is piercing, and he spies his prey at a very great distance. He often eats no more of a sheep or a goat than the brain, the liver, and the intestines; and he digs under the doors, in order to gain admission into the sheep-folds *.’

The species of the lynx is not only spread over Europe, but all the northern provinces of Asia. In Tartary, they are called *Chulon* or *Chelafon* †. Their skins are highly valued, and, though very common, sell equally dear in

* Pontoppidan’s Nat. Hist. of Norway.

† Hist. Gen. des Voyages, tom. vi. p. 602.

Norway, Russia, and as far as China, where they are much used for muffs and other furs.

That the pencils of hair on the tips of the ears form not a distinctive character, appears from this fact, that there exists, in the district of Alger, called *Constantine*, a species of caracal, without these pencils, and which resembles the lynx, except that its tail is longer. The colour of its hair is reddish, with longitudinal black stripes from the neck to the tail, detached spots on the flanks disposed in the same direction, a black half-circle on the top of the fore-legs, and a band of rough hair on the four legs, extending from the extremity of the foot to above the heel; and this hair inclines upward, instead of downward, like the hair of every other part of the body.

Plate CXXIV.



LYNX.



A. Hall del.

CANADIAN LYNX.