

Clariss: LINNÆI. M. D.
 METHODUS plantarum SEXUALIS
 in SISTEMATE NATURÆ
 descripta





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Carl Linnaeus is famous for many things. One of these is how he came up with a system for grouping plants.

It was SCANDALOUS... kind of.

Linnaeus wanted to find a way of ordering the hundreds of plants that he knew. He could order them by colour, or by height. He could group them by their habitat, or by their textures.

In 1735, Linnaeus announced a system that he'd been working on. It was based entirely on the number of stamens and pistils the plant had. He created 24 groups of stamen-pistil combinations - the first being simple 'One stamen with one pistil' plants, and the last being plants that didn't seem to have stamens or pistils at all. He proudly called this: 'The Sexual System of Plants'.

Now, in 1735, that was probably racy enough. Yet Linnaeus went further in his descriptions. He called the first group of plants Monadria - 'One husband'. The second he called Diandria - 'Two husbands', and he cheekily added "*Mariti duo in codem conjugio*" which means "Two husbands in the same marriage [with a woman]".

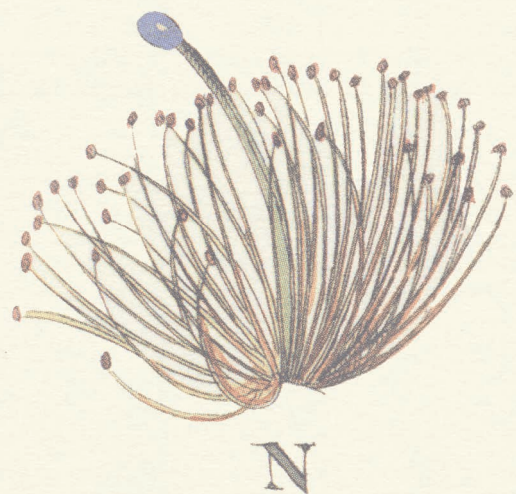
The horror! The blasphemy!

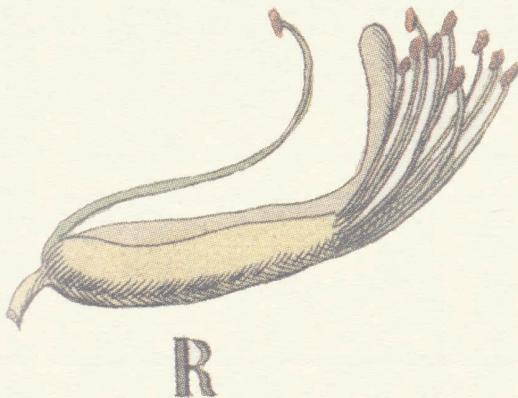
Linnaeus went on and on for 22 more categories describing more and more complex marital scenarios (e.g. Syngenesia - 'the husbands form an alliance of the genitals').

Blimey... we need to sit down!



**“ loathsome
harlotry ”**





Unfortunately for Linnaeus, this system has not stood the test of time (although it was quite successful for a while).

The Sexual System is flawed in many ways and Linnaeus himself admitted that it was a system used for ease, rather than accuracy.

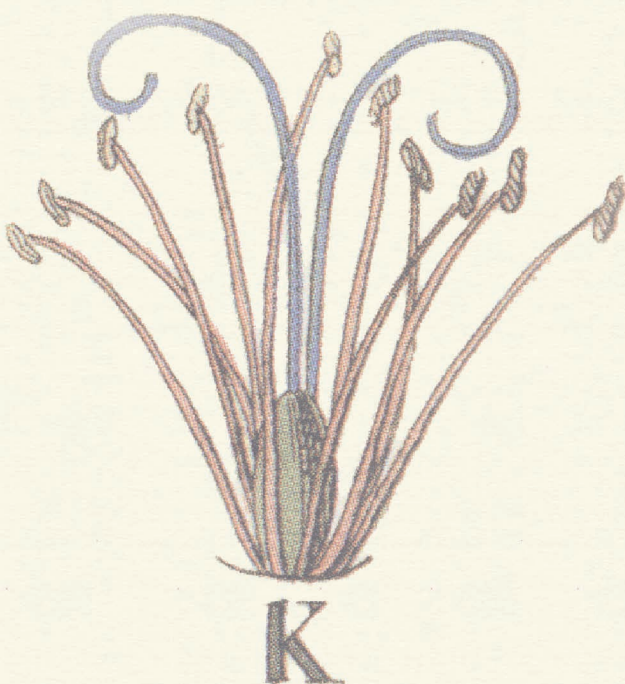
Scientists nowadays call this system 'artificial' in that it groups species based on a characteristic that doesn't reflect what truly connects them.

For example, dry broad beans (*Vicia faba*) were placed in Linnaeus' Diadelphia (R), while the flowering plants he named *Cassia* were placed in Decandria (K). They are now both understood to belong to the same Family, Fabaceae, aka legumes.

This is similar to the way you might first think that bats are birds, because they can fly, but by using a more natural system of classification you can reclassify bats as mammals, as they give birth to live young (i.e. not in eggs) and produce milk via mammary glands - neither of which birds do.

Plant taxonomy is still changing, particularly in light of DNA analysis. The current widely-accepted classification system was published in 1998, and its last update (version 4) was published in 2016.

I guess we can't blame Linnaeus for not getting it quite right in 1735.



MONANDRIA

Maritus unicus in matrimonio
Stamen unicum in flore hermaphrodito



One husband only in marriage
One stamen only in a hermaphroditic flower

DIANDRIA

Mariti duo in eodem conjugio
Stamina duo in flore hermaphrodito



Two husbands in the same marriage
Two stamens in a hermaphroditic flower

TRIANDRIA

Mariti tres in eodem conjugio
Stamina tria in flore hermaphrodito



Three husbands in the same marriage
Three stamens in a hermaphroditic flower

TETRANDRIA

Mariti quatuor in eodem conjugio
Stamina quatuor in eodem flore cum fructu



Four husbands in the same marriage
Four stamens in the same flower with fruit

PENTANDRIA

Mariti quinque in eodem conjugio
Stamina quinque in flore hermaphrodito



Five husbands in the same marriage
Five stamens in a hermaphroditic flower

HEXANDRIA

Mariti sex in eodem conjugio
Stamina sex in flore hermaphrodito



Six husbands in the same marriage
Six stamens in a hermaphroditic flower



HEPTANDRIA

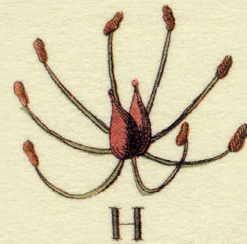
Mariti septem in eodem conjugio
Stamina septem in flore eodem cum pistillo



Seven husbands in the same marriage
Seven stamens in the same flower with a pistil

OCTANDRIA

Mariti octo in eodem thalamo cum femina
Stamen octo in eodem flore cum pistillo



Eight husbands in the same bed with a woman
Eight stamens in the same flower with a pistil

ENNEANDRIA

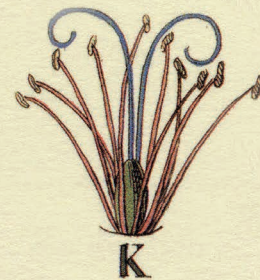
Mariti novem in eodem thalamo cum femina
Stamina novem in flore hermaphrodito



Nine husbands in the same bed with one woman
Nine stamens in a hermaphroditic flower

DECANDRIA

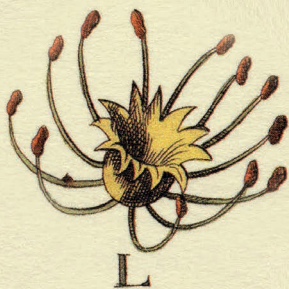
Mariti decem in eodem conjugio
Stamina decem in eodem flore cum pistillo



Ten husbands in the same marriage
Ten stamens in the same flower with a pistil

DODECANDRIA

Mariti duodecim in eodem conjugio
Stamina duodecim in flore hermaphrodito



Twelve husbands in the same marriage
Twelve stamens in a hermaphroditic flower

ICOSANDRIA

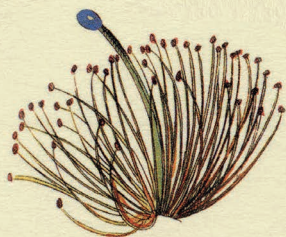
Mariti viginti communiter, saepe plures, raro pauciores
Stamina calicis lateri interno adnata



Twenty husbands, often more, rarely fewer
The stamens are inserted on the side of the calyx

POLYANDRIA

Mariti viginti & ultra in eodem cum femina thalamo
Stamina à 15 ad 1000 in eodem, cum pistillo, flore



Twenty husbands and more in
the same bed with one woman

Stamens from 15 to 1000 in the same flower, with a pistil

DIDYNAMIA

Mariti quatuor, quorum 2 longiores, & 2 breviores
Stamina quatuor, quorum 2 proxima longiora sunt



Four husbands, of which two are taller and two shorter
Four stamens, of which the nearest 2 are longer

TETRADYNAMIA

Mariti sex, quorum 4 longiores in flore hermaphrodito
Stamina sex, quorum 4 longiora, 2 autem opposita breviora



Six husbands, of which four are taller and two shorter
Six stamens, of which 4 are long, and the outer two are short

MONADELPHIA

Mariti, ut fratres, ex una basi proveniunt
Stamina filamentis in unum corpus coalita sunt



Husbands, as brothers, coming from a single base
The filaments of the stamens are linked as one body

DIADELPHIA

Mariti è duplici basi, tamquam è duplici matre, oriuntur
Stamina filamentis in duo corpora connata sunt



The husbands have a double base,
as if they came from two mothers originally
The filaments of the stamens are linked in two bodies

POLYADELPHIA

Mariti ex pluribus, quam duabus, matribus orti sunt
Stamina filamentis in tria, vel plura, corpora coalita



The husbands come from multiple bases
The filaments of the stamens come from three or more bodies



SYNGENESIA

Mariti cum genitalibus foedus constituerunt
Stamina antheris in cylindrum coalita



The husbands form an alliance with the genitals
The anthers of the stamens are bound in a cylinder

GYNANDRIA

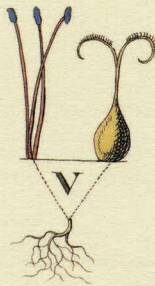
Mariti cum feminis monstrose connati
Stamina pistillis infident



Husbands with monstrously-linked women
The pistils and stamens are connected

MONOECIA

Mares habitant cum fem. in eadem domo,
sed diverso thalamo
Flores masculini & feminini in eadem planta sunt



The males live with the females in the same house,
but in different beds
Masculine and feminine parts are found in the same plant

DIOECIA

Mares & feminae habitant in diversis thalamis & domiciliis
Flores masculini in diversa planta, à femininis nascuntur



Males and females living in different houses and beds
*The masculine flowers are found in plants
different from the feminine ones*

POLYGAMIA

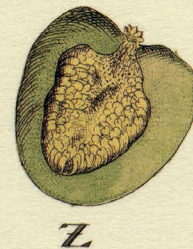
Mariti cum uxoribus & innuptis cohabitant in distinctis thal
Flores Hermaphrodit & masculini femin. in eadem specie



Husbands with wives & cohabiting in separate rooms
Hermaphroditic flowers & masculine females of the same species

CRYPTOGAMIA

Nuptiae clam celebrantur
*Florent intra fructum,
vel parvitate oculos nostros subterfugiunt*



Nuptials are celebrated privately
Flowers within the fruit, or where our eyes cannot see

