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About the Institute

The Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, a research division of Carnegie Mellon University, specializes in the history of botany and all aspects of plant science and serves the international scientific community through research and documentation. To this end, the Institute acquires and maintains authoritative collections of books, plant images, manuscripts, portraits and data files, and provides publications and other modes of information service. The Institute meets the reference needs of botanists, biologists, historians, conservationists, librarians, bibliographers and the public at large, especially those concerned with any aspect of the North American flora.

Hunt Institute was dedicated in 1961 as the Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt Botanical Library, an international center for bibliographical research and service in the interests of botany and horticulture, as well as a center for the study of all aspects of the history of the plant sciences. By 1971 the Library's activities had so diversified that the name was changed to Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation. Growth in collections and research projects led to the establishment of four programmatic departments: Archives, Art, Bibliography and the Library.

Corvus?

Dear Sir,

of Ornithology,

I repeated your Request of the Drawing of the Bustard to the Duchess of Portland, & had the Pleasure to hear her give Orders for it to be done with all Speed: So that you may every Day expect to receive it in a Letter. Poor Chrest is dead, but her Grace has a very ingenious Man in her House whom she employ'd, & who I hope will execute the Drawing to your Satisfaction.

I am highly pleas'd with your Illustrations and shall wait with Impatience for its Publication. Your Synonyms must have cost you infinite Pains indeed, but the Praise you must receive from all Lovers of Science will I hope keep up your Spirits to the End of your Labours.

I am very happy to be inform'd that you have scientific Friends in your Neighbourhood, & that you have so many new Treasures pouring in upon you. I have found Nothing worth communicating to you till very lately when I had a Present made me of three stuff'd Birds from some Parts of the Eastern World; The *Psittacus Lory*, the *Psittacus Galgulus*, of Linnaeus, and a third which I take to be a Non-descript as I can find Nothing like it in that Author. It seem'd to me to belong to the Order of the *Pica* & Genus of *Coracia*.

I shall endeavour to describe it to you as well as I can. It is about the size of a Thrush with a black Beak about an Inch long, the upper Mandible a little longer than the under bent downwards a little towards the Extremity, & slightly emarginated on each side very near the Point. The Edges of the inferior Mandible are receiv'd by the upper, are quite straight & without Dent or Notch. The Nostrils are oval, and plac'd about the Middle of the Bill, reckoning from the Base of the Rictus. The Feathers of the Head are continued down to the Nostrils, but are not Velvet-like as in the *Paradisæa*, otherwise it approaches very near to that Genus. It has very few Vibriæ, & those extremely short, so as to be of little Account. The Tongue was gone, & the Eyes likewise.

The Feet are of a dark grey Colour, furnish'd each with four Claws, plac'd as it were in Pairs at their Base, the foremost Toe having a longer Nail than its Fellow, & the hindmost having a longer than its Companion. I know not whether this be any Singularity, being not sufficiently conversant in this Study. But it appear'd evident to me from the Inclination of the Toe-Nails, that notwithstanding this seeming Position of the Claws in Pairs while the Bird was dead, it must, when alive and in Motion, have extended three Claws before & one behind.

The Feathers on the Head & down to the Nape of the Neck are very black & some yellow interspers'd,

the yellow seeming to prevail & run in two
in distinct Bars, one from each Nostril continued
along the sides of the Head above the Eyes
down to the Nape. The Gula is of a very
pale yellow almost white. — All the Feathers
on the Breast, Abdomen, Hypochondria &
quite down to the Vent, are mark'd with numerous
transverse ^{alternating} Fasciae of fine Mazarine blue &
yellow; each Feather having 8 or 10 of these
Bars or Fasciae, the extreme one of which is
always yellow, except in the Parts contiguous
to the yellowish Gula before-mentioned, where
there are a few which are blue only with a
black ^{or blackish brown} Base. The blue & yellow Colours grow
less bright as they descend from the Breast
to the Vent.

The Back, Nape, & ^{lesser} covert Feathers of the
Wings are of a tawny brown.

The Quill-Feathers are of a very dark brown,
four or five of the first having their outer
Webs slightly edged with white. — Eight or ten
of the greater Coverts have their outer Webs
obliquely marked with three stripes of white
and blue, the white stripe being in the
middle between the blue ones.

The Tail is very short, wedge-shap'd, and
entirely blue, not extending above an Inch
beyond the Tip of the Wing when clos'd.

This is I think a tolerably accurate
Description of this beautiful Bird. But
I do not even imagine will have a better Idea

of it than I can give you in Words, permit me to refer you to Edwards's Figure of the *Coracias candata* of Lin: where you may see a Bill drawn as large as the Life exactly similar to that of the Bird I have been describing, except that the Vibriæ in mine are not near so long or conspicuous as in that Figure. — To help you still farther in understanding my Description, I have sent you three of the Feathers which are most remarkable for their Colours, all the rest being of one simple Colour, viz. Black, yellow, or brown, except a few of the first Quill Feathers which are mark'd as above.

Of the three I have sent you, the fasciated one was taken off the Breast, the small one just below the Gula on the Neck, and the other is one of the greater Coverts.

I have given the Bird itself to the Duchess, or else I would have sent it to you. But I hope to get a Drawing of it to show you, or at least you may have a sight of it whenever you come to London. If you know any Thing of it from my Description pray be so kind as to transmit me an Account and you will very much oblige

Y^r. most obed^t. &c. John Lightfoot

Walsbridge

Jan^y 9th 1720