Guasparri A. 2022. — The Roman classification and nomenclature of aquatic animals: an annotated checklist (with a focus on ethnobiology).

ABSTRACT

This article provides a checklist of the aquatic animals the Romans appear to have recognized, including an overview of how they classified and named them. Indeed, in addition to providing scientific identifications of the animal referents and philological and/or linguistic data related to their names as they emerge in the ancient texts, the checklist focuses on ethnobiology. In particular, it provides ethnotaxonomic and ethnobiolinguistic data such as ethnotaxonomic rank and ethnobiological name typology (Conklin 1968; Berlin 1992) by which to reconstruct the actual folk taxa, i.e. the kinds or “groups of kinds” of animals each name covered in the ancient speakers’ minds (but a few unnamed folk taxa have also emerged). In this respect, tree diagrams are used to represent at a glance the folk taxonomic knowledge of an ideal Roman as to the main higher-order groupings of aquatic animals they were familiar with. The results are analyzed and statistical data are provided as to various relevant ethnobiological variables. The findings accord with Berlin’s universals, except for the number of additional levels where folk taxa of the life-form rank can be found, a characteristic already observed for aquatic animals in other folk taxonomies (Pawley 2006). From a more general zooanthropological perspective, these data suggest the Romans’ familiarity with the aquatic world and its inhabitants, despite their traditional self-ascribed identity as peasants and soldiers.

KEY WORDS

Ancient Rome, ethnotaxonomy, fish names, crustaceans, molluscs, sea turtles, sea mammals, sea monsters, marine invertebrates.
INTRODUCTION

This article aims to provide a checklist of the aquatic animals the Romans appear to have recognized (cf., as to snakes in ancient Greek, Bodson 2012), together with an overview of how they classified and named them. Particular emphasis will be placed on ethnontaxonomy and the related ethnobiological nomenclature. This is about how members of a cultural population categorize animals or plants according to perceived morphological, behavioural (Atran 1990) or ecological (Hunn 1999) similarities, which serve to group the recognised organisms into usually named sets (ethnotaxa or folk taxa) at several different levels of hierarchical inclusion; these levels are a maximum of six in number (Berlin 1992; see Materials and methods), each more or less corresponding to equally well recognized cross-cultural patterns of nomenclature (Berlin 1992: 34; Hunn & Brown 2011: 326). Indeed, cross-cultural ethnobiological data show how these relations of similarity tend to emerge in the morphosemantic structure of the names for living things (hereafter “ethnonyms”). As already noted elsewhere (Guasparri 2019), the Roman nomenclature of aquatic animals provides a good example of this nomenclatural descriptiveness, which is of particular value when it comes to reconstructing ethnobiological knowledge for members of ancient cultures.

As we shall see, among the distinctive features of the biological referents under examination it is not only perceptual factors (i.e. based on the external similarities mentioned above) but also culture-dependent factors (based on using animals as food, medicine, symbols, etc.) that emerge at the linguistic level (cf. a fish called gladius, literally “sword”, due to a physical characteristic, vs a fish named balleca after balle, a sauce made from it). This is not surprising since “the intrusion of utilitarian factors into otherwise general purpose categories” (Ellen 2006: 12) has long been acknowledged by ethnobiologists (e.g., Bulmer 1967; Hunn 1980: 13; 1982; Hays 1982).

In order to analyse how a historical people such as the Romans classified and named aquatic animals (or any other set of living things), one cannot rely on participant observation or interviews of any kind (e.g., sorting experiments or free listings). Instead, one must make do with the explicit or implicit information collected from written records, at best confirmed by zooarchaeological evidence. Going into the “field of texts” is indeed, mostly, an “armchair” activity, not a “hiking boots” one. However, not only do both kinds of researchers have to tackle the limits inherent in reducing a local people’s perception of their environment to the written word (e.g., Ellen 2006: 56); both also end up, as a “natural” consequence of ethnobiological research, with a list of plant or animal names whose “descriptive force” alone can provide a deep insight into “what is seen most clearly by native eyes” (Hunn 2006). If such an outcome cannot fill the unquestionable gap between face-to-face and “face-to-text” research, at least it can narrow it. Moreover, as to the ethnolinguistic population being examined, the considerable amount and quality of the ancient texts available (French 1994: 179) – with all the possible philological problems commonly related to their manuscript tradition – can further serve to reconstruct how the members of even a “dead” culture perceived, and ultimately experienced, their unique ethnobiological reality (although only limited bits of it can be disclosed).

Much like Greek aquatic animal names, the Roman ones have traditionally been a training ground for modern aquatic zoology, as represented by its “fathers”, the greatest ichthyologists of the sixteenth century: Belon, Rondelet and Salviani (e.g., Gudder 1934). They had to master both the Greek and the Latin sources if they wanted to match the ancient name and description of a marine animal to the folk names and the living species known to them (e.g., Pinon 2005: 263). Nonetheless, by the early seventeenth century onwards, with the gradual extension of the biogeographical areas naturalists took into account, ancient au-
thors such as Aristotle or Pliny became more and more obsolete (Mayr 1982: 158; Ogilvie 2006: 138, 181, 207f.) – their study remained a matter of historical interest, as shown by the detailed commentary Cuvier devoted to Pliny’s *Natural History* “zoological” books (8-11) (Ajasson de Grandsagne & Cuvier 1827, 1828). Subsequently, with possibly the notable exception of D’Arcy Thompson (1947), it was basically “pure” philologists who devoted themselves to translating the many aquatic animal names found in classical authors – either in the form of inquiries into single etymological issues or of all-encompassing works such as a specific dictionary (de Saint-Denis 1947; Fruyt & Lasagna 2015).

This is also what I have been doing myself for quite some time, by surveying the Roman literary sources from Plautus (third century BCE) to Ausonius (fourth century CE) and the Greek ones whenever, as has often been the case, the Latin name was a Greek loanword.

At first, the idea was to tackle the whole corpus of Latin aquatic animal names in order to refine and possibly correct the “traditional” biological identifications found within the existing literature. Afterwards, since a lot of etymological work was involved and several nomenclatural patterns began to emerge, the project took first an ethnolinguistic, then an ethnobiological turn. Indeed, in order to provide the most reliable identifications according to the latest checklists of Mediterranean marine species, it was essential to inspect the ethnobionyms’ linguistic form.

At the end of the analysis, the number of descriptive names, i.e. those whose morphosemantics captures a phenotypical, eco-ethological or generally cultural feature perceptually related to their biological referent, proved very high (Guasparri 2019). As expected, this cross-cultural property of descriptive names, which we may call the “referential constraint” (Guasparri 2007: 74) and which is realized in Latin aquatic animal names mostly at the phenotypical level (Guasparri 2013: 350; Fig. 1) proved crucial for disclosing the biological identifications of many ethnobionyms, notably whenever any additional information from the sources was scarce or unavailable.

Among the limits of this kind of research, one may include the impossibility of focusing on a particular place and time: the ethnobionyms under examination are not only dependent on the unpredictable – often centuries distant – chronology of the works and the authors available, but the latter may in turn deal, with second-hand data collected from different places in different times (this is famously the case for Pliny, on whose accounts most identifications rely – another inevitable limit of the research). However, the common point about the sources is their constant reference to fish, mammals, molluscs and other marine organisms of the Mediterranean Sea. This “sea in the middle of the land”, however noted for its rich biodiversity as a marine ecosystem (Cuttelod et al. 2009; Coll et al. 2010), is rather homogeneous as to the classes of human-salient organisms more likely to occur within the experiential range of a given Mediterranean community through time – suffice it to say that, with the notable exception of purple-producing molluscs, the most exploited species in the Roman period have virtually remained the same until recently, if not to this day, despite the many anthropogenic events which have shaped the area (Coll et al. 2010; Marzano 2013; Abulafia 2014).

Moreover, the peoples of the Mediterranean Basin show a vital network of contacts and hence of shared cultural traits dating back to at least 3000 BCE (Abulafia 2014), i.e. well before the Greek and Roman periods (Coll et al. 2010; Lopes 2013; Abulafia 2014).
The first step in research of this kind, based mainly on collecting ethnobiological data by going into the “field of texts”, is to build a body of ethnobionyms. This has been done by recording every name of aquatic animal found not only in the Latin literature but also in the Greek one, in case of loanwords – due to ever-increasing Greek acculturation from at least the third century BCE (e.g., Lomas 1993), one can assume that Roman speakers used Greek and Latin ethnobionyms interchangeably, as Varro (Ling. 5, 77) attests (Guasparri 2013; Bodson 2014).

As a starting point, I have simply relied on pre-existing lists of aquatic animal names taken down from the main modern glossaries on the subject (de Saint-Denis 1947; Thompson 1947), only to dismiss some entries, while adding several others, in the course of the research. Subsequently, I have recorded and reviewed all the occurrences found by searching the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae (TLG) and the Packard Humanities Institute (PHI) databases (the two main digital libraries of Greek and Latin literature respectively) through the software Diogenes (ver. 3.2.0, for Windows). The retrieved passages and the contexts in which each term occurs have been thoroughly analysed in order to assess, first of all, the legitimacy of a term as an ethnobionym and hence its actual inclusion within the corpus. For this purpose the ancient texts available have been “interviewed” in order to collect as much information as possible about the biological referent(s) and, in particular, zoanthropologically relevant data such as (a) their biological identification; (b) their ethnotaxonomic status (or their rank as ethnotaxa); (c) their cultural importance; (d) their cultural construction (or the way the ancients construed and ultimately perceived them). Naturally not all these elements have emerged in every case, as this depended on the amount of material available for the ethnobionym under examination. However, even in those cases where the data were very scarce, the sheer linguistic analysis of a descriptive ethnobionym may provide valuable information, notably as regards points (a), (b), (d), but also as regards point (c) since, for example, taxa of the folk-specific level (see below), usually named with “specific binomials” (e.g., white oak, red oak), can be named with unitary lexemes (e.g., oak, woodpecker) or with “generic binomials” (e.g., mockingbird, catfish) due to their cultural importance (Berlin 1992; for unitary lexemes see Conklin 1968; for generic and specific binomials see Hunn & Brown 2011). As to, again, (a), (b) and (d), Lat. pagurus, for instance, a loanword from Greek páguros (a traditionally unidentified crab), has been identified with the warty crab (Eriphia verrucosa (Forskål, 1775)) due to the conclusion that the name is not an unanalysable monomial (e.g., oak) but actually a binomial (e.g., woodpecker) and hence an analysable compound, whose gloss is “guardian of the reef” (Guasparri 2006a).

The fact that the referential constraint is connected to the typical rocky habitat of this crab is not only relevant to its biological identification and ethnotaxonomic status as a folk-generic (see below), but also to its cultural construction (e.g., in the ancient speakers’ mental lexicon the term will have been linked to other “guardians” such as képoutós “guardian of the garden”, mnikkhóous “warder of the interior”, nucótoiros “night-watchman”, etc.). However, besides etymology and referential constraints, the impossibility of eliciting a biological identification has been overcome diachronically, by looking for phonological similarities to ethnobionyms currently in use in the geographical area of interest. It. occhiata, for instance, is both the morphosemantic and the phonological equivalent of Lat. oculata (lit. “eyed [fish]”, with reference to the black spot near the tail of the saddled seabream (Oblada melanura (Linnaeus, 1758))), more salient than the one found on similar co-occurring seabreams (Diplodus sp.; Fig. 2); and indeed, the ancient descriptions match the biological referent of the modern name, as one may somewhat expect when inherited forms are involved.

Actually, the link between the ancient and the modern ethnobionym is not always so easy to explain. In the case, again, of Greek páguros, both Modern Greek kábouras, kábouri and Turkish pavonüra are attested as general terms for “crabs”, not as more specific terms for a particular kind of crab (and specifically Eriphia verrucosa) as the reconstructed reference of the ancient name suggests. However, given the high intraspecific similarity within Mediterranean crabs, Eriphia verrucosa (the biggest non-demersal species, hence the most visible), “could have easily served as a prototypical species to designate any kind of crab” (Guasparri 2006a: 131), which might explain, diachronically, the ethnotaxonomic shift from the ancient folk-generic (e.g., Eng. mallard) to the modern intermediate taxon (e.g., Eng. duck).

But before going deeper into ethnotaxonomic status attribution, let us briefly recall the presumed universal hierarchical levels of ethnotaxonomy whereby people the world over classify the living organisms around them (Berlin et al. 1973; Berlin 1992). In this regard, the folk-generics just mentioned above are the elemental taxa, the most numerous in every folk-taxonomy, those on which people not only base their understanding, memorization and naming of the living things around them (e.g., dog, mallard, catfish) but also construct more inclusive higher-order taxa. The latter would be, in descending order of inclusiveness,
folk-kingdom taxa (e.g., our “plant” or “animal” categories, usually “covert”, i.e. unnamed, in most cultures); life-form taxa, which directly include most folk-generics (cf., typically, the equivalents of our “snake”, “fish”, “bird”, more frequently named cross-culturally than “mammal” and “wug”; Brown 1984); intermediate taxa, usually covert categories, less common than life-form taxa and comprising much fewer and more morphologically similar folk-generics (e.g., duck, bird-of-prey). Finally, taxa of subgeneric rank go from folk-specifics – usually a few taxa named mostly through specific binomials and based on single contrasting features selected among referents subsumed by the same folk-generic (cf. white oak vs red oak with respect to oak) – down to folk-varietals (“nothing more than a structural replication of the folk-specific [ranks]” [Hunn & Brown 2011: 328]).

With this outline in hand, we can now give some examples of how to use the sources as “informants” when it comes to assigning a given taxon to one of the above ethnotaxonomic ranks. When Varro (Ling. 5, 77) numbers umbra “brown meagre” among the Roman “fish names” (vocabula piscium) formed metaphorically (cf. umbra, lit. “shade”), he provides significant evidence that this taxon is part of the life-form piscis “fish” (Fig. 3). Then again, based on the same passage, it is most likely that umbra itself, as a taxon, be a folk-generic, since the majority of folk-generics the world over is included in taxa of the life-form rank (Berlin 1992: 23; Hunn & Brown 2011: 327). This conclusion is confirmed by Columella (Rust. 8, 16, 8), who names two kinds of umbra, the indigena (lit. “native”) and the punica (lit. “Carthaginian”). Indeed this pair can be said, both semantically and linguistically, to form a “contrast set”, or one “comprised of just those taxa that are immediately preceded by the same taxon” (Berlin 1992: 169), i.e. occupy the same ethnotaxonomic level. In other words, the two umbrae are just two specifications of the kind umbra, and do not constitute a “kind” in themselves, being distinguished not by many features simultaneously but by just those single contrasting features which modify the superordinate kind umbra. This kind of relation is typically (but not necessarily) observed between a polytypic folk-generic and its folk-specifics and is reflected, ethnobiolinguistically, by the latter being commonly named through specific binomials or, more generally, “productive” (Berlin 1992: 28) binomials, i.e. compound names whose head term denotes the superordinate category the animal referent is included in. This is also the case for the relation between the two folk-specifics umbra indigena, umbra punica and their superordinate folk-generic umbra.

As one may expect, things are not always so straightforward: cross-culturally, for instance, there are many cases of folk-specifics of great cultural importance being named through monomials (alias “simple uninomials” [Bulmer 1974: 22] or “simple primary lexemes” [Berlin 1992: xx]). Thus, “ultimately a taxon is judged as folk-specific by virtue of the fact that it is immediately included in a folk-generic” (Hunn & Brown 2011: 328), which means at least that the ethnobiolinguistics of a taxon is not always a confirmation of an ethnotaxonomic affiliation. However, when working on “silent” informants as in our case, the ethnobiolinguistic structure and its regularities may be particularly useful for reconstructing the ethnotaxonomic rank of an ancient ethnobionym. Sponges, for instance, are named by the Romans (and the Greeks) through what may appear simple monomials. In fact, at least in three cases out of four (i.e. tragos, manos, Achillium), a closer look at the linguistic form of these ethnobionyms reveals not only their adjectival nature

Fig. 3. — A sample of those aquatic animals the Romans would have called piscis, i.e. fish, molluscs and crustaceans. Detail from a Roman mosaic from Pompeii, 1st century CE (Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Napoli; photo credit: A. Guasparri).
as modifiers of an understood *spongea* “sponge” (the “head” of the compounds) but ultimately their ethnobiolinguistic status as “specific binomials”. As a consequence, *spongea* of the ancients will very likely be a folk-generic taxon. This is not only revealed, perceptually, by the fact that sponges represent a very salient physical discontinuity with respect to other marine organisms (i.e. they have some very distinctive physical characteristics), but also by the fact that our ancient “informants” group sponges together with sea-anemones in a superordinate covert category (Pliny [*HN* 9, 146] speaks of animals having a “third nature”, somewhere between plants and animals; Fig. 4). Thus the sponge folk-specifies in question reflect a division into four kinds which, as one may also expect from the high cultural importance of sponges in the ancient world (Marzano 2013), does not include all the biological species found in the Mediterranean but just those collected and/or marketed – the others were simply labelled as *aplysiae*, lit. “unwashable”.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

**Annotated checklist of Roman aquatic animals**
The annotated checklist presented in Appendix 1 contains all the Roman folk taxa for aquatic animals recognized as such in the course of this study. Before presenting the list, some preliminary remarks are necessary.

Entries are ordered alphabetically according to their form in the ancient texts. The first column contains the folk taxon as named (or, in two cases, not named) by the Romans. Some entries (usually “doublets”, but there are also cases of “triplets”) are marked with either a superscript or a subscript number. The subscript number (e.g., the pair *asellus*$_2$ and *asellus*$_1$) refers to what has been called “taxonomic polysemy” (Blank 2003: 272f.; Seto 2003: 198f.), or the usage of the same term to denote “nested” sets of two related folk taxa, one unambiguously included within the other (Forth 1995: 28; 1998: 325-330; Zariquiey 2014: 264f.): e.g., Eng. *cats* denotes not only the common house pet but also those known more technically as “felines”, of which the cat is – at least for most westerners – the prototypical species, i.e. the most common and salient one (Hunn & Brown 2011: 321). Compare, in the list, the plural form *aselli* and its singular form *asellus* (entered as “*asellus*$_2$ (aselli)” and “*asellus*$_1$” respectively), the latter denoting the prototypical cod (the hake, *Merluccius merluccius* (Linnaeus, 1758)), whereas the former (found as *aselli*, the plural form, in the sources) denotes cods in general, i.e. scientifically, all Mediterranean “cod-like” fish included in the *Merlucciidae* and *Gadidae* families. In this particular case, the taxonomic polysemy involves a folk-generic (*asellus*) and an intermediate taxon (*asellus*$_2$), but it may occur between any two ethnontaxonomic levels. As for the names with a superscript number (e.g., *perca*$_1$, *perca*$_2$, *perca*$_3$), they refer to so-called “metaphoric polysemy” (Blank 2003: 268; see more recently Guasparri 2019), which comes into play when the same term is used for denoting two or more different organisms (or sets of organisms) which are somewhat related, typically because they resemble one another – cf., e.g., ethnobionyms such as *perca*$_1$, the comber
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(Serranus sp.; Fig. 5), perca², the European perch (Perca fluviatilis Linnaeus, 1758; Fig. 6) and perca³, the pike-perch (Sander lucioperca (Linnaeus, 1758)).

The second and third columns contain identification-related data. In particular, the second column contains the scientific name(s) of the denoted animal(s) or a description...
whenever the identification involves more than three scientific species (e.g., *apa* “larva of several fish”), while the third column contains the vernacular name. It is essential to note that the identifications provided (for whose details see also Guasparri 2005) accord mostly to the traditional ones, i.e., those already proposed by renaissance authors, as well as by more recent ones. In all such cases I will refer, among others, to the rich information provided by the *Thesaurus de nomes de poissons et de créatures aquatiques* developed by researchers from the Icthyta research program (Bisson et al. 2020). These and other references related to “traditional” identifications, will be quoted after the vernacular name in the third column. All the biological identifications have been either confirmed, corrected or proposed – in several cases with the help of specialists – by checking relevant information provided by the sources against updated checklists of Mediterranean fish and sealife (e.g., Coll et al. 2010), as well as detailed taxonomic inventories (e.g., Relini 2008, 2010) such as, typically, those available as web-based datasets (e.g., WoRMS [World Register of Marine Species], FishBase [Froese & Pauly 2020], SeaLifeBase [Palomares & Pauly 2020]). The latter have been also used as a reference for the vernacular English names in the third column, together with the Multilingual dictionary of fish and fish products (OECD 2008). Non-native species have been excluded to the advantage of both endemic and native ones (i.e. respectively, those which have evolved and occur naturally in a given region and those which have arrived and established there spontaneously).

The fourth column contains information about the ethnotaxonomic ranks (“FK” stands for folk-kingdom, “LF” for “life-form”, “INT” for “intermediate”, “FG” for “folk-generic”, “FS” for “folk-specific”). It is important to note that the acronym “LF+” indicates that the taxon in question has been assigned to a “supernumerary” life-form (see Data analysis). The fifth column contains one (sometimes two) Latin passage which provides the most relevant information for assigning a folk taxon to an ethnotaxonomic rank.

The sixth column contains information about the number of occurrences, i.e. how many times an ethnobionym occurs in the sources, which may be useful as a marker of both its actual spread in the Roman culture and, more generally, the reliability of the data. The “>” (“greater than”) and the “<” (“less than”) symbols are followed by a number in brackets showing the actual number of occurrences recorded in the Latin texts (not provided when occurrences exceed 30). A second value appears in case of a Greek loanword, i.e. with reference to the number of occurrences found in Greek sources. As to the definition of “occurrence”, in cases of long passages where the name has been repeated many times by the author being quoted, contextual occurrences have been taken into account, rather than strict numerical ones (i.e. the whole passage has been counted as one occurrence, even though the name occurred more than once within it).

The seventh and eighth columns indicate, respectively, the superordinate and the subordinate taxon. In fact, following Conklin’s (1968) key suggestions over what a dictionary entry for each lexeme which can be placed in a taxonomy should contain, these and other ethnotaxonomic relations (e.g., which other members of its folk taxon an ethnobionym contrasts with), are also found, more descriptively, in the cross-referenced tree diagrams (see Data analysis). Ethnobionyms separated by slashes are synonyms.

Finally, the ninth column is devoted to any linguistic, ethnobiolinguistic, zooanthropological (and sometimes philological) observation relevant to the analysis of the ethnobionym under examination. For example, remarks are made as to the reasons why a biological identification (ID) has been suggested, e.g., whether the ID is based on descriptions from the sources or just based on the name’s descriptiveness; whether it is supported by diachronic clues (i.e. modern phonological and/or semantic equivalents of the ancient name), etc. Several inventories have been consulted for retrieving the animal names currently in use in the Mediterranean area: e.g., Froese & Pauly (2020); cf. also Bini (1967-1970), Palombi & Santarelli (1986) and, for Italian “regional” names, Costa (1991) – implemented, for certain linguistic areas of the Italian peninsula, with personal survey or fieldwork (Russo 2018; Sessa 2019; Cheli 2020). The section ends with information about the ethnobiolinguistic type assigned to the name, i.e. “monomial”, “productive binomial” and “unproductive binomial”, the last two types referring to compound names whose head term is or is not a superordinate category – cf. *swordfish* (productive) vs *sea hare* (unproductive).

### DATA ANALYSIS

#### FOLK TAXA AND ETHNOBIONYMS

Since this study focuses both on classification and nomenclature, the total number of entries in the checklist refers to a “hybrid” value, in that it comprises not only the ethnobionyms, or the word-forms used by the Romans for denoting a folk-taxon, but also two unnamed folk taxa (see COVERT1 and COVERT2), which yields, as a result, a total of 386 entries. In fact, if we consider the actual

| Categories    | Number | %   |
|---------------|--------|-----|
| Fish          | 162    | 52.1|
| Molluscs      | 83     | 26.6|
| Crustaceans   | 19     | 6.1 |
| Other invertebrates | 19 | 6.1 |
| Mammals       | 12     | 3.9 |
| Reptiles      | 5      | 1.6 |
| Unidentified  | 10     | 3.2 |
| Various       | 1      | 0.3 |
| **Total**     | **311**| **100**|
number of Roman folk taxa for aquatic animals emerging in this study, i.e. the kinds or “groups of kinds” of aquatic organisms recognized by our Roman “informants”, the final figure is 311, a number which results from the very biological identifications being suggested. In particular, this value has been obtained by lumping together those ethnobionyms which label the same organisms (or groups of organisms).

As far as the number of named folk taxa (or ethnobionyms) is concerned, their figure is much higher (384) than the number of folk taxa, precisely because of the many synonyms used in the sources for denoting the same folk taxon. This figure, however, does not correspond exactly to the number of entries (386), precisely because of the two unnamed categories mentioned above.

Let us consider now the biological referents of our Roman folk taxa as they result from our identifications (Table 1): fish constitute 52.1% of the total (n = 162), invertebrates (i.e. molluscs, crustaceans and others) 38.9% (n = 121), marine mammals 3.9% (n = 12) and reptiles (sea turtles) 1.6% (n = 5). Let us analyse each category (all results, transferred into a database, were analysed through the software SPSS 20).

The fact that fish are the most recognized grouping of aquatic animals is not unexpected, given their high perceptual and ecological salience (i.e. they are both very noticeable and spread). Although with significant differences from scientific zoology (and all the more so when suprageneric categories are taken into account), this is also reflected at the level of folk-taxonomy. In this regard, in order to represent at a glance the folk taxonomic knowledge of an ideal Roman, I have used tree diagrams, i.e. branched diagrams representing taxa and the relationship between them. Each tree diagram is dedicated to one of the major suprageneric categories the Romans appear to have recognized for aquatic animals, starting from fish, i.e. *piscis* “fish”, *mollia* “cephalopods” (Fig. 7), *conchylium* “externally shelled molluscs”, *cancer/crustata* “crustaceans”, *beluae marinae/cete* (lit. “marine monsters”, e.g., marine mammals, turtles, adult tunas, etc.). Nodes represent folk taxa and are arranged hierarchically from left to right (i.e. the left-most node, corresponding to the most inclusive rank, contains all the other nodes/taxa). The acronyms at the top (FK, LF, INT, FG, FS) refer to Berlin's ethnotaxonomic ranks and identify each folk taxon in the corresponding column as belonging to the rank in question; supernumerary life-forms are indicated as “LF1+”, “LF2+”, “LF3+” – numbers followed by the “+” (plus) symbol indicate the number of extra life-form levels exceeding the “canonical” life-form level (LF) proposed by Berlin 1992 (see Materials and methods). As to the synonyms appearing in the tree diagrams (cf. the labels with two or more ethnobionyms separated by slashes), their relatively high number is very likely due to the long time span separating the Latin authors on which this study is based and to the wide usage of Greek loanwords alongside Latin ones – Greek loanwords make up 55.4% (n = 164) of all the 296 word-forms recorded in this study.
The most inclusive Roman folk taxon for denoting aquatic animals in general is the life-form *piscis*, which literally means “fish” (i.e. bony plus cartilaginous fish, alias “true fish”), evidently the prototypical aquatic animals for the Romans. However, *piscis* is also used in a second broader sense (distinguished here as *piscis*₂) for denoting other non-fish aquatic animals. This case of taxonomic polysemy involving the term for true fish is common cross-culturally, although with differences as to the higher-order biological groups denoted by the polysemically broader “fish” name (e.g., Anderson 1967, Hunn 1982, Pawley 2006: 2). In particular, the Romans used the broader term (*piscis*₂) for referring not only to true fish (*piscis*₁) but also to all aquatic invertebrates (molluscs, crustaceans, sea urchins, jellyfish, etc.). As the tree diagram in Figure 8 shows, *piscis*₁ is included within *piscis*₂ at the sublife-form level 1 (LF₁⁺), while several intermediate taxa are subsumed, in turn, by *piscis*₁ – it is relevant to note that the

### Roman Fish

The most inclusive Roman folk taxon for denoting aquatic animals in general is the life-form *piscis*, which literally means “fish” (i.e. bony plus cartilaginous fish, alias “true fish”), evidently the prototypical aquatic animals for the Romans. However, *piscis* is also used in a second broader sense (distinguished here as *piscis*₂) for denoting other non-fish aquatic animals. This case of taxonomic polysemy involving the term for true fish is common cross-culturally, although with differences as to the higher-order biological groups denoted by the polysemically broader “fish” name (e.g., Anderson 1967, Hunn 1982, Pawley 2006: 2). In particular, the Romans used the broader term (*piscis*₂) for referring not only to true fish (*piscis*₁) but also to all aquatic invertebrates (molluscs, crustaceans, sea urchins, jellyfish, etc.). As the tree diagram in Figure 8 shows, *piscis*₁ is included within *piscis*₂ at the sublife-form level 1 (LF₁⁺), while several intermediate taxa are subsumed, in turn, by *piscis*₁ – it is relevant to note that the

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**Figure 8.** – The Roman folk-taxonomy of *piscis*₁ (true fish). Abbreviations: **LF**, life-form; **LF₁⁺**, sublife-form; **INT**, intermediate; **FG**, folk-generic; **FS**, folk-specific. Symbols: *, prototypical; †, synonymy; (…), ethnotaxonomic ascription only presumed, due to lack of explicit statements in the sources; +(superscript), multiple ethnotaxonomic ascription due to different statements in the sources; ?, presumed folk taxon. See each entry in Appendix 1 for details.
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tree diagram displays only true fish included in supra-generic taxa of intermediate rank. All such intermediates not only involve taxa of significant utilitarian value for the Romans (cf. *pelamys*, *lacertus*, and *asellus*, i.e. tunas, mackerels and cods; Fig. 9), but appear to be related to special-purpose categories also in Brown’s “extended” sense (Brown 1984: 10), i.e. are defined, monothetically, in terms of “a single especially criterial attribute” rather than, polythetically, on the basis of overall morphological resemblance (cf. *saxatiles*, lit. “rock fish”, *plani*, lit. “flat fish” and *pelagici*, lit. “open sea fish”). Also worth noting here are the two prototypical taxa *asellus* “cod” and *pelamys* “little or juvenile tuna”, which are taxonomically polysemous with the intermediates *asellus* and *pelamys*, i.e. respectively, all cod-like and tuna-like fish. As to the latter (*pelamys*), this is the “trade” name for tuna and allies (tuna cuts included) and comprises the most valued fish-based food among the Romans, i.e. what they called *cetus* or, with a Greek loanword, *thynnus* “the (adult) tuna”. Equally popular, but definitely characterized by a lower status, were mackerels (*lacertus*), found again as an intermediate taxon, although in this case the prototypical polysemous folk-generic *lacertus* “Atlantic mackerel” is only presumed (see *lacertus*). It is interesting to note that *lacertus* includes the highest number of folk-specifics among Roman fish, which is further evidence of the fish’s popularity.

**Roman molluscs, crustaceans and other invertebrates**
Let us consider now the “non-fish” part of *piscis* in greater detail, first, again, in terms of higher-order biological categories (Tables 1, 2): molluscs constitute 26.6% of the total.

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**Fig. 9.** — A Roman *lacertus* (in the foreground). The one depicted is a *Scomber* sp. (Atlantic mackerel). Detail from a Roman mosaic from Pompeii, 1st century CE (Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Napoli; photo credit: A. Guasparri).

**Table 2.** — Higher-order biological categories and their distribution by ethnotaxonomic rank among the Roman folk taxa for aquatic animals.

| Folk-specifics | Folk-generics | Intermediates | Life-form | Folk-specifics? | Folk-generics? | Total |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|-----------|-----------------|----------------|-------|
| Number %       | Number %      | Number %      | Number %  | Number %        | Number %        | Number % |
| Fish           | 20 6.4        | 127 40.8      | 40.8      | 7 2.3           | 2 0.6           | 162 52.1|
| Shelled-        |               |               |           |                 |                 |       |
| molluscs       | 29 9.3        | 33 10.6       | 10.6      | 6 1.9           | 4 1.3           | 72 23.2|
| Other           | 4 1.3         | 13 4.2        | 4.2       |                 |                 | 19 6.1 |
| invertebrates  |               |               |           |                 |                 |       |
| Crustaceans     | -             | 13 4.2        | 4.2       | 5 1.6           | 1 0.3           | 19 6.1 |
| Mammals         | -             | 13 4.2        | 4.2       |                 |                 | 19 6.1 |
| Cephalopods     | 3 1.0         | 7 2.3         | 2.3       |                 |                 | 11 3.5 |
| Reptiles        | 1 0.3         | 3 1.0         | 1.0       | 1 0.3           |                 | 5 1.6  |
| Various         | -             | -             | -         | 1 0.3           |                 | 1 0.3  |
| Unidentified    | -             | 10 3.2        | 3.2       |                 |                 | 10 3.2 |
| Total           | 57 18.3       | 218 70.1      | 70.1      | 19 6.1          | 10 3.2          | 311 100|
(n = 83) – 23.2% of which is represented by externally shelled molluscs (n = 72) and 3.5% by cephalopods (n = 11); crustaceans constitute 6.1% (n = 19) of the total, the same value as the remaining invertebrates (see “other invertebrates”). However, as expected, Roman higher-order taxa differ from those found in scientific taxonomy.
To begin with, the Romans do not seem to have conceived of aquatic invertebrates as a distinct, single life-form (unless they had used a covert one for whose detection we have no sufficient data) but, by and large, distinguished shelled molluscs (*conchylium*), cephalopods (*mollia*), crustaceans (*cancer/crustata*). As to other invertebrates, sea-urchins (*echini*) were considered both shelled molluscs and crustaceans, while sea nettles (*urtica/cnide*) and sponges (*spongea*) on the one hand, and starfish (*stella*), sea cucumbers (*cucumis*) and jellyfish (*pulmo*) on the other, were probably grouped within two different covert categories, distinguished here as COVERT1 and COVERT2, both denoting “plant-like” organisms (respectively attached and unattached). Finally, sea squirts (*tetdea*) were classified both as shelled molluscs and as COVERT1.

But let us now consider these invertebrate categories in their ethnotaxonomic context as it appears from the single tree diagrams. Let us start from the life-form denoting all “externally shelled molluscs”, i.e. *conchylium*, the most numerous invertebrate folk taxon.

The tree diagram shown in Figure 10 illustrates the folk-taxonomy of externally shelled molluscs, among which the Romans included also sea urchins (*echini*). A first significant characteristic of Figure 10 is the high number of what we have called “supernumerary” life-forms, i.e. life-form “sub-levels” exceeding the universal number of taxonomic ranks proposed by Berlin (1992). Postponing the discussion as to the possible reasons for this (see Conclusions), it must suffice for now to note that *conchylium*2 includes at least two of the most culturally important marine animals for the Romans, i.e. oysters (most valued for food) and purple-dye gastropods (famously the most prized sources of dye in the ancient world – e.g., Pliny, *HN*9, 60ff.). Indeed it is within the folk-generic *ostreum*1 ("oyster") and the intermediate *murex/ purpura/pelagiae" ("dye-murices") that one finds the highest number of folk-specics (12 for oysters and six for murices), a classical instance of “overdifferentiation” (Berlin 1973: 268; Fig. 11), or the split of a scientific species in two or more folk taxa. This is another marker of high cultural relevance, also confirmed, e.g., by such toponymic modifiers as *Lucrina* (lit. "of the Lucrine lake", renowned for its aquaculture production of shellfish), which is found both as a kind of oyster (*ostrea Lucrina*) and a kind of Venus shell (*peloris Lucrina*) – the latter too was highly esteemed by the Romans. The fact that a Roman might have thought of oysters as the prototypical shelled mollusc seems proven, among other things, by the taxonomic polysemy between the folk-generic *ostreum*1 and the (level +2) life-form *ostreum*2, which widens the meaning of the lexeme *ostreum* to include all bivalves and gastropods, i.e. all shelled molluscs, sea-urchins excluded (the latter are included in *conchylium*2). Similar evidence exists for mussels. Indeed the ethnobionym *mitulus*, lit. "mussel", emerges as the prototypical mussel (*mitulus*1) at the rank of folk-species, due to its taxonomic polysemy not only with the superordinate folk-generic *mitulus*2 ("all marine mussels"), but also with *mitulus*3 at the (level +3) life-form rank, where the lexeme widens its meaning even further to denote most bivalves. In the case of *conchylium*, this loanword imported from Greek into Latin retains the original wide biological reference (i.e. “all externally shelled molluscs plus sea-urchins”) when used as the (level +2) life-form *conchylium*2, otherwise narrowing its meaning to denote both a particular mollusc-derived purple dye (the “blue” purple dye) and the mollusc which produces it, i.e. the dye-murex (*see conchylium*1). The renown of the dye murex (*Hexaplex trunculus* (Linnaeus, 1758)) will have made it the Roman externally shelled mollusc *par excellence*, which explains the taxonomic polysemy between the prototypical folk-generic *conchylium* and the life-form *conchylium*2.

A second invertebrate higher-order category subsumed by the life-form *pisces* is *cancer/crustata*, which is represented in Figure 12. As the tree diagram shows, the Romans included among *cancer/crustata* both crustaceans and sea-urchins (*echini*), which, alternatively, some Romans classified also as a kind of *conchylium*2 or shelled molluscs, as just seen. Three intermediate folk taxa emerge, and in particular: *locusta/crabus* (used...
for lobster-like crustaceans; Fig. 13), squilla/caris (denoting shrimp-like crustaceans) and cancer1 (used for all crab-like crustaceans), each corresponding to three evident physical discontinuities. In other words, these groupings of crustaceans appear to be relatively predictable, to the extent that they can be explained in terms of human perception, i.e. in terms of a universal human characteristic rather than a culture-dependent one. It is interesting to note that the distinction between locusta/carabus2 and squilla/caris, i.e. lobster-like vs shrimp-like crustaceans, is based on size more than overall body shape. The latter is at play when it comes to the third intermediate, cancer1, which includes, e.g., pinoteres1/pinophylax, the pea crab, a very small crab living inside a pen shell’s mantle cavity. As to cancer1, this appears to be the prototypical crab-like crustacean for the Romans, as attested by its polysemy with the (level +1) life-form cancer2, which shares its ethnontaxonomic role with the descriptive synonym crustata, lit. “crusted” (i.e., animals). Contrary to squilla1 and locusta1, which both represent
the prototypical folk-generics polysemous with the respective superordinate intermediates, *cancer*¹, does not appear to be a folk-generic. Indeed, if this were the case, then its subordinate folk-specific taxa would be all designated through mononomials, rather than binomial names, which does not accord with cross-cultural data for folk-specifics.

**Cephalopods and other invertebrates**

As to the remaining invertebrates (Fig. 4), the Romans grouped together, rather predictably in terms of overall resemblance, such folk-generics as those corresponding to our octopuses, cuttlefish, squids and paper nautilus, i.e. what zoologists call cephalopods, another salient physical discontinuity within marine animals. It is remarkable, however, that the Romans distinguished two octopus folk-specifics, i.e. the “terrestrial octopus” (*polypus terre¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬－
CETE OR “MARINE BEASTS” (A CATEGORY IN BETWEEN)

Coming to marine mammals (seals and cetaceans), another category shown in Table 1, once again the Romans did not use anything like the modern scientific category but, instead, seemed to have grouped them together with several fish and even some strange, imaginary, animals. Indeed such a folk category stands out when compared to all the others in that its members cross-cut higher-order biological categories (roughly coinciding with life-forms at the ethnotaxonomic level): I am here referring to the variable called “various” in Table 1. This is the life-form the Romans called both beluae marinae (lit. “marine beasts”) and cetus (see cetus₂). As the label “various” indicates, the animal referents comprised in this group are “variously” (and somewhat unpredictably) aggregated with respect to “proper” taxonomy, i.e. that based primarily on the perception of similar morphological or behavioural characteristics shared among the recognized taxa (“general-purpose classification” in Berlin’s terms).

For instance, as Figure 17 shows, tunas (thynni) and catfish (siluri), which also appear in the “fish” (piscis) life-form (Pliny, HN 9, 43-44), are grouped here with turtles (testudines), which Pliny contrasts with fish elsewhere (Pliny, HN 11, 180). Moreover, Pliny (HN 32, 144) includes Nereids and Tritons, i.e. mythological sea deities with half-human, half-fish body, which appears bizarre to us. This inconsistent mutual exclusivity, whereby animals may be grouped as much with non-animals as with other animals, is a characteristic of “artificial” (Bulmer 1974: 95) or special-purpose classifications (i.e. utilitarian and symbolic ones; e.g., Forth 2016: 35) and is not found in folk-taxonomies where, for instance, a blackbird is a bird and never simultaneously also a fish. Despite this, the taxon cetus₂ apparently retains two features of folk-taxonomies: it involves more than two ethnotaxonomic levels and all the members of a group may be assigned to it by virtue of external perceivable characteristics (size in our case). This is not the place to discuss such “mixed” pattern in detail; suffice it to say that it seems to stand as a further confirmation of the impossibility of separating artificial from natural classifications or, more generally, utilitarian factors from perceptual ones when it comes to the animal (or plant) knowledge of a given people. We should not fail to notice that the choice of regarding the folk-taxon cetus₂ and its synonym belua marina as a life-form is based on the wide range and internal diversity of the folk-generics it subsumes (Wierzbicka 1985: 189 ff.), whereas an intermediate would be a narrower, often covert taxon, usually comprised of closely related folk-generics (Berlin 1992: 149) and typically included in a recognised life-form. However, as Figure 17 shows, cetus also appears as cetus₁ within the folk-generics immediately included in the life-form as the prototypical (hence the asterisk) “extended” taxon. This is the most perceptually and/or culturally salient member of a subordinate category (usually a folk-generic, as is the case here) whose meaning has been widened by speakers so as to denote the whole superordinate class – a widespread ethnotaxonomic phenomenon called “genericisation” (Pawley 2006) or “generic name extension” (Berlin 1992: 29). It is not surprising, then, that cetus₁ denoted the large tuna, i.e. the fish par excellence according to the Romans, at least as far as the “special-purpose classification” of foodstuffs is concerned – indeed fishmongers were called cetarii, lit. “cetus dealers”, by the Romans (see cetus₁).

MORE ON ETHNOTAXONOMIC DATA

Let us now analyse our data by considering ethnotaxonomic ranks in greater detail (Table 2).

FOLK-GENERICs AND LIFE-FORMs

Folk-generics represent, as expected, the most numerous taxa, making up 70.1% (n = 218) of all the 311 Roman aquatic folk taxa recorded in this study. Fish represent the largest group of folk-generics, and in particular 40.8% of the total (n = 127), a number which decreases slightly when considering the aquatic animals actually included in the Roman life-form piscis₁ (n = 121), due to the inclusion of some fish folk-generics within the life-form cetus₂ (e.g., cornuta “devil-fish”, gladius “swordfish”, glaucus² “blue shark”; Fig. 17). The remaining folk-generics are represented mostly by shelled molluscs (10.6%, n = 33), which approximately correspond to the Roman life-form conchylium₂, a category where the Romans included also sea-urchins (echini) and sea squirts.
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(tethea) but, seemingly, not sea hares (lepus marinus), which adds up to 32 folk-generics in all (Table 3). The other Roman major categories which subsume folk-generics (Table 3) are, in descending order, cetus2 (5.8%, n = 18), i.e. marine animals equal to or greater than human size, including some "sea monsters"; cancer2 (3.9%, n = 12), a life-form that the Romans applied to crustaceans, including sea urchins; mollia (1.9%, n = 6), an intermediate taxon that the Romans used for cephalopods (octopuses and the likes); COVERT2 (1%, n = 3), i.e. "plant-like" but unattached marine invertebrates, such as cotton spinners (holothurium), barrel jellyfish (pulmo marinus) and starfish (stella).

In general ethnobiological terms, the folk-generics found among Roman aquatic animals confirm Berlin’s prediction on prototypicality (Berlin 1992: 24), i.e. their internal structure shows a recurrent pattern by which some taxa emerge as prototypical (i.e. better examples) of the whole superordinate taxon. This property is found at other levels of ethnotaxonomy and, as seen in Results and discussions, is indicated by taxonomic polysemy occurring between, e.g., a folk-generic and its superordinate intermediate taxon, whereby the latter is named after the former. Linguistically, the prototypical taxon, usually named with a monominal term, is named with an additional modifier meaning "genuine", "real", etc. when it needs to be unambiguously distinguished from other taxa of the same rank. This is the case for the folk-generic monomial umbra "meagre", which appears as the binomial folk-specific umbra indigena (lit. "native", i.e. “Roman”) when contrasted with another folk-specific such as umbra punica (lit. “Carthaginian meagre”, likely Umbrina ronchus or U. canariensis) – cf. also lupus germanus “lit. genuine seabass”, with respect to other folk-specifics such as lupus lanatus, lupus maculatus, etc. (see the respective entries in the checklist).

As Table 2 shows, the life-forms recorded in our body of data are 10, which accords with Berlin’s prediction that folk taxonomies the world over have “probably no more than ten or fifteen” taxa of life-form rank (Berlin 1992: 33). However, their most relevant characteristic in the Roman ethnotaxonomy of aquatic animals seems the fact that this relatively high number is connected to a proliferation in the “depth” of...
higher-order taxa. In particular, the number of levels at which life-forms can be found is more than one, which raises the total number of ethnobiological ranks above the “canonical” limit of six ranks established by Berlin (1992). For instance, the Roman classification of true fish (piscis), crustaceans (crustata) and cephalopods (mollia) exhibits one life-form “sublevel” (i.e. two life-form levels – see, respectively, Table 1; Figs 10; 12). This is a consequence of a taxonomic polysemy involving the Roman life-form term for “fish” (piscis), which, as seen earlier, has both a broader usage for denoting true fish plus most aquatic invertebrates (i.e. piscis) and a narrower one for denoting true fish only (i.e. piscis). The ethnotaxonomy of externally shelled molluscs (conchylium) is even deeper, with up to three sublife-form levels (Fig. 10).

This proliferation of levels is a characteristic that Andrew Pawley had already noticed for aquatic animals in Oceanic folk taxonomies of aquatic animals. For instance, in Wayan, a dialect of the Western Fijian language, the life-form term for “fish” (ika) is used both for typical fish only and, more broadly, for fish, marine mammals and turtles, thus bringing about two different folk taxa, one “nested” inside the other (Pawley 2006). Pawley puts it down to the fact that life-forms as well may be influenced by cultural factors (e.g., turtles, much like fish, are valued food sources for the Fijians) and records several instances of even two or more exceeding levels (e.g., among shelled molluscs and crustaceans, both equally valued as food sources). This seems definitely the case for Roman shelled molluscs as well, whose importance as sources of food for the Romans is confirmed by the high number of taxa of folk-specific rank, which is typical of taxa of great cultural significance (Berlin 1992; see Conclusions). In this regard, as Table 2 reveals, externally shelled molluscs present a number of folk-specifics even higher than that found among fish (i.e. respectively, 29 vs 20 out of a total of 57 folk-specifics). Moreover, as another marker of high cultural significance, shelled molluscs exhibits evident cases of overdifferentiation (i.e. rather than corresponding to single biological species, folk taxa cover several of them), in particular among oysters and purple-dye murices, which were both extremely “popular” species. However, the fact that ethnotaxonomic levels proliferate in the Roman folk taxonomy of aquatic animals may be also a consequence of the intrinsic textual nature of our data. In particular, as already noted in Data analysis and as graphically attested in the tree diagrams, the number of synonyms, i.e. of two or more ethnobinonyms used for denoting the same organism or group of organisms, appears to be high, a characteristic likely due to the long time span separating the Latin authors on whose works this study is based. Also, the high number of Greek ethnobinonyms used mostly as synonyms for the correspondent Latin ones (see Data analysis) might have further contributed to the juxtaposition of possibly different ethnotaxonomic categories and, as a likely consequence, to the growth of ethnotaxonomic levels. For instance, the (level +3) life-form cochlæ “marine gastropods” is only found once in Latin, and precisely in Pliny (HN 32, 147), when translating a passage from the Greek physician Xenocrates (Xenocrates, 23). Pliny seemingly replaces the Greek term kokklías, which he normally translates with Lat. coc(h)lea “terrestrial snail”, with the Aristotelian term kokkllos, a wider ethnobinonym used for denoting all marine gastropods (e.g., Aristotle, PA 678b 24). Indeed Xenocrates’s usage of kokklas in this latter wider sense would have been misinterpreted by Pliny’s readers, had he translated it with cochlæ: hence Pliny’s substitution and the resulting increase in the number of ethnotaxonomic levels. So, although it is not to be excluded that Roman speakers actually used the loanword kokklas, it is a fact that this database is largely founded on Pliny’s Natural History, whose debt to the Greek sources (especially Aristotle) and to Greek names used as a “supercode” to disambiguate the many “provincial” Roman names is explicitly acknowledged by Pliny himself (Pliny, HN 9, 52; see Guasparri 2013: 351). This is a further suggestion that the intrinsic textual nature of our data may be involved in the proliferation of ethnotaxonomic levels and, consequently, in the proliferation of ethnobinonyms.

FOLK-INTERMEDIATES AND FOLK-SPECIFICS

Coming to folk-intermediates and folk-specifics, folk taxa of both these ethnotaxonomic ranks have been interpreted as reflecting culturally specific values (Atman & Medin 2008: 33) and the Roman classification of aquatic animals accords with this view. The frequencies shown in Table 2 reveal that both categories are more common among marine invertebrates and fish. In particular, out of a total of 57 folk-specifics, 20 of them are used for fish and 29 for shelled molluscs; while, out of a total of 19 folk-intermediates, seven refer to fish, six to shelled molluscs and five to crustaceans. This might be somewhat expected since marine invertebrates and fish represent not only the most numerous human-salient marine animals but also the most exploited ones as sources of food the world over. However, the single tree diagrams enable us to illustrate the correlation between folk taxa of both intermediate and specific rank and culturally important species in greater detail. Figure 10, for instance, reveals that most “polytypic” folk-genericis, i.e. those subsurning one or more folk-specifics, are related to culturally important species such as purple-dye producing molluscs and oysters: both species significantly involve the highest number of folk-specifics recorded for the folk-taxonomy of Roman aquatic animals. This, as already mentioned in Data analysis, is a typical case of overdifferentiation, i.e. the split of the scientific species to which a folk-generic may correspond into distinct categories, due to the (usually cultural) importance of that species for a local people (which, as a consequence, will mark its internal differences as folk-specifics). As to folk-intermediates, they equally appear to involve those aquatic animals which were most exploited by the Romans, as clearly seen, e.g., in the cases of petalys (“tunas, bonitos and the likes”) and lacertus (“mackerels”) among piscis (Fig. 8); or in the case of murenx/purpurs/pelegius (“dye-murices”) among conchylia (Fig. 10).

1. In fact, Berlin defines folk-specifics as “two to several named subgroups” into which a folk-generic can be divided (Berlin 1992: 102). Hence for all the folk-genericis appearing in the tree diagrams as divided into one folk-specific only, I have assumed that the second folk-specific is in fact the prototypical, linguistically unmarked, one, coinciding [i.e. being polysemous] with the superordinate folk-generic, e.g., murena (i.e. the “standard” murena) and murena flata are the two constraining folk-specifics into which the folk-generic murena is divided.
NOMENCLATURE

In terms of ethnobiological nomenclature, the data shown in Table 4 accord with the generalizations on the structure of ethnobiological names suggested by Berlin (1992: 29f.). For example, most folk-specific taxa – 44 out of 57 (77%) 2 – are named with composites, alias productive binomials, i.e. compound names with the superordinate folk taxon as the head term, plus a modifier (e.g., *umbra punica*, where *umbra* is the folk-generic); on the contrary, this name type is the least spread among named folk-generics – 5 out of 283 (2%) – where, as expected, unproductive binomials are not rare – 33 out of 283 (12%) – while monomials are the norm – 230 out of 283 (81%). It is worth noting that the twofold categories called “monomial/unproductive binomial” and “monomial/productive binomial” correspond, respectively, to ethnobionyms like *canis* (*marinus*) and *cochlea* (*terrestris*), which can optionally incorporate the modifier in brackets – in which case they can be classified as binomials (either productive or unproductive).

As already noted earlier, the frequency of descriptive (or analysable) names is particularly high in the Roman nomenclature for aquatic animals – comparative data show much lower ratios (e.g., Forth 2016: 254). As Table 5 indicates, over 80% of ethnobionyms (i.e. 314 out of a total of 384) are descriptive. And, although this ratio is not evenly distributed in every higher-order biological category, even in those groups of aquatic animals which are less represented, such as aquatic reptiles or mammals, descriptive names are at least twice as many as non-descriptive (i.e. unanalysable) ones.

Considering now the distribution of descriptive names by ethnobiological name type (Table 6), the number of monomials – which one would expect to be less often descriptive than binomials are – is particularly significant (210 out of 314). Descriptive monomials are ethnobionyms in which, as Berlin (1992: 27) put it, “salient morphological and behavioural features of plant and animal species are often encoded”. Such property is made possible through a type of polysemy usually called metaphoric – but, more appropriately, “analogical polysemy” – of the kind at work in Eng. *sole* (a fish) as named after a *sole* (the underside of footwear) because of the referents’ analogical similarity (Guasparri 2019).

Table 7 shows the distribution of descriptive names across the semantic dimension at play in the analogical similarity selected for the output referent (i.e. the aquatic animal) to be named. In particular, “perceptual” refers to the typical ethnobiologi-
al naming criterion – and our data confirm this typicality – i.e. the one based on the perception of external characteristics of the referent (e.g., gladius “swordfish”, lit. “sword”, refers to the fish’s sword-like bill); “cultural” refers to culture-specific traits such as, e.g., the food-related ones (cf. a kind of tuna called cybium, lit. “little cube”, from the shape of the cut fish sold in markets); “perceptual-cultural” refers to productive binomials, typically used for naming folk-specifics, like, e.g., lacertus Sexitanus, lit. “mackerel (imported) from the city of Sex”, which combines a perceptual piece of information — lacertus, lit. “lizard”, with reference to mottled colour — and a cultural one — the toponymic Sexitanus. Lastly, “perceptual-onomatopoetic” is used for ethnobionyms based on analogical similarity involving the sound emitted by the animal being named. The single occurrence of this name type in Table 7 refers to the fish called zaeus (John Dory, Zeus faber Linnaeus, 1758), an onomatopoetic name (cf. Gr. ταῖεμι “to breathe hard”) which captures the air blowing sound emitted by this salient marine animal (cf. the Latin synonym faber, lit. “blacksmith”, with reference to the sound of a blacksmith’s bellows).

The large majority of polysemous names are related to dryland referents such as, for instance, animals or objects. This matches a statement by the Roman linguist Varro that Latin aquatic animal names are “transferred from terrestrial things similar in some part” (Varro, Ling. 5, 77), which is very accurate with respect to both polysemic and referential constraints (see Materials and methods). Significantly, from a zoontaphological perspective, Pliny (HN 9, 2ff.) backs up Varro’s remark by extending it to “the common opinion that anything born in any domain of nature exists also in the sea”, which “contains likenesses of things and not of animals only” (translation by Rackham 1940, slightly modified). Both statements are utterly consistent with our data. Table 8 shows the number of dryland-related polysemous names (i.e. 212, or about 68% of the total number of descriptives) and their distribution across the same semantic dimensions seen in Table 7: the large majority of names are perception-based (81.1%, n = 172) and most of them are related to terrestrial animals (38.3%, n = 66). In particular, as to the single categories, the highest frequency is recorded for polysemous names related to terrestrial quadrupeds (21.7%, n = 46), followed by those constructed on similarity to objects (19.8%, n = 42) – both these sets of referents were possibly the most likely to be encountered by the Romans in their everyday life. The “others” category is represented by names related to body-parts (cf. unguis, lit. “nail”), deities (cf. Adonis, Veneria, etc.), professions (cf. cinaudus, faber, etc.), and other minor semantic domains.

CONCLUSIONS

The Roman folk-taxonomy of aquatic animals as reconstructed from our “textual” informants comprises 311 folk taxa. This number is smaller than the total number of named folk taxa (ethnobionyms) recorded in the ancient sources (384), largely because of synonyms denoting the same folk taxon.

Both from an ethnotaxonomic and an ethnobiolinguistic point of view, this folk-taxonomy reflects the universals suggested by Berlin (1992). Most folk taxa, for instance, appear to be categorized and named according to typical folk-taxonomic criteria based on perceivable characteristics of the referents such as their morphology and behaviour. In addition, taxa of folk-generic rank outnumber all other taxa, and (a characteristic they share with folk-specifics) some members emerge as more typical of the category than others; also, they are named mostly with monomials or at least unproductive binomials, while, on the other hand, productive binomials are the norm for folk-specifics. As to life-forms, taxa of this folk-taxonomy involves the number of additional “sublevels” where folk taxa of the life-form rank
can be found. Externally shelled molluscs, for instance, present three sublevels beyond the one life-form level established by Berlin (1992). This proliferation can be ascribed, on the one hand, to the great cultural significance of these animals as sources of food and, on the other, to the textual nature of our information and the long time span occurring among the authors of the texts being consulted.

A folk-taxon, the life-form cetel belvae marinae (lit. "marine beasts"), has been dubbed an “in-between category” inasmuch as it presents characteristics which are typical of both special-purpose classifications and folk-taxonomies.

As far as cultural significance is concerned, ethnotaxonomic data provide good evidence of the “popularity” of some species. The frequency of folk-specifics, for instance, confirms that purple-dye murices and oysters were the most esteemed molluscs, and, more generally, that externally shelled molluscs were very popular. Folk-specifics, together with folk-intermediates, reveal utilitarian associations also among fish: e.g., mackerels (lacerti), cods (aselli) and tuna-like fish (pelamydes) emerge as very exploited species. In particular, with regard to tunas (ceti), they appear to be the fish par excellence in terms of food consumption also for nomenclatural reasons: not only were fish-mongers named after them (ceetari), but tunas were overdifferentiated to the point that some “tuna-cuts" (cf. apolecus, cybium, tritomum) were actually categorized as tuna species. This is also consistent with the nomenclatural observation that several Roman fish (and tunas among them) were named on the basis of cultural-specific criteria like the food prepared from them or visible characteristics connected to their use as food rather than, much more typically, on the basis of pure perceptual criteria like external morphology or behaviour (Guasparri 2019: 23f.).

However, from a more general zooanthropological perspective, there seems to be some evidence that the Romans did not construe the sea and its inhabitants just as an inexhaustible larder (Guasparri 2019) – which, incidentally, would have been much more justifiable than it is today. From both Varro and Pliny, for instance, the sea emerges as some kind of double, a weird version of the terrestrial world, whose generative power brings about organisms which closely resemble terrestrial animals and objects (Pliny) and hence the names for the majority of them (Varro). This, however, rather than promoting the image of the aquatic world and its inhabitants as something derived and hence remote, in line with the traditional self-ascribed identity of the Romans as peasants and soldiers (de Saint-Denis 1947; Fruyt & Lasagna 2015), seems to stress the Romans’ familiarity with it, as also suggested by our data in various respects. In this regard, one may once again refer to Pliny and in particular to his remark that marine animals, contrary to land and sky animals, are known insofar as they can all be given a name and thus, since they are less numerous than mammals (ferate) or birds (volucres), one can establish 144 as their exact number (Pliny, HN 32, 142). In sum, the Mediterranean or mare nostrum (lit. “our sea”) will have been “the Romans’ sea” not only for its relatively circumscribed borders but also for the limited number of both its organisms and, ultimately, the ways of naming them.

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| Roman ethnobionym/ folk taxon | Scientific ID/ description | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethnotaxonomic rank | Main ethnotaxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|---------|
| accipiter                   | Dactylopterus volitans (Linnaeus, 1758)? | flying gurnard                       | FG                  | Apuleius, Apol. 34: “pisicem accipitrem” | <5 (1)              | piscis, [LF1+]          | –       |
| acharne                      | Epinephelus sp. grouper (Guasparri 2005) |                        | FG                  | Lucilius, 50: “abdomina tunni [...] dabo cephalaeaque acarnae” | <5 (2); <10 (6)     | piscis, [LF1+]          | –       |
| Achillium                    | Spongia (Spongia) agaricina (Pallas, 1766) | elephant ear sponge                 | FS                  | Pliny, HN 9, 148: “spongearum [...] tenue densumque (sc. genus) ex quo penicilli Achillium” | <5 (1); spongea [FG] | –                      | –       |
| acipenser                    | Acipenser sp.                | sturgeon                            | FG                  | Cicero, Fat. fr. 5, 4: “acupenser [...] est piscis [...] in primis nobilis” (cf. Pliny, HN 9,60) | <15 (12) piscis, [LF1+] | –                      | –       |
| actinophoros                 | Aporrhais sp.                | pelican’s foot                       | FG                  | Pliny, HN 32, 145: “concharum genera [...] cohloce, quorum generis [...] actinophoroë” | <5 (1); cochloes [LF3+] | –                      | –       |
| acus1 (acus sive belone)     | Syngnathus sp.               | pipefish                             | FG                  | Pliny, HN 9, 166: “acus sive belone unus piscium [...] dehiscente [...] utero” | <5 (1) piscis, [LF1+] | –                      | –       |
| acus2                        | Belone belone (Linnaeus, 1760) | garfish                              | FG                  | Martial, Ep. 10, 37: “et satuis credis ducere tenues acus” | <5 (1) piscis, [LF1+] | –                      | –       |
| Adonis                       | Coryphobleinius galenteria (Linnaeus, 1758)?; Triglorygyn sp.? | Montagu’s blenny?, black-faced blenny? | FG                  | Pliny, HN 9, 70: “exoecatum [...] quod in siccum somni causa exeat [...] idem Adonis dictus” | <5 (1); piscis, [LF1+] | –                      | –       |
| alabeta                      | Labeo niloticus (Linnaeus, 1758)?; Nile carp? (Thompson 1947) | Nile carp?                          | FG                  | Pliny, HN 5, 51: “Nilidem. Ibi piscis [...] alabetae” | <5 (1); piscis, [LF1+] | –                      | –       |
| Roman ethnobionym/ folk taxon | Scientific ID/ description | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethno-taxonomic rank | Main ethno-taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|---------|
| alopex                        | Alopias sp.                 | thresher shark (Thompson 1947)      | FG                  | Pliny, HN 32, 145: *peculiares autem maris [...] alopex* | <5 (1); <10 (8)        | squalus [INT]          | –                       | Lit. “fox”. Greek synonym of vulpes marina. Monomial. |
| amias                         | Pomatomus saltatrix (Linnaeus, 1766) | bluefish                             | FG                  | Varro, Ling. 7, 47: *siluri [...] amian piscium nomina sunt eorumque in Graecia origo* | <5 (4); >30           | –                      | –                       | ID also supported by the current native distribution of the species, which includes the Black Sea (= Pontus; cf. Pliny, HN 9, 49; Aristotle, HA 571a 19). Monomial. |
| anguilla                      | Anguilla anguilla (Linnaeus, 1758) | eel                                  | FG                  | Varro, Ling. 5, 77: *vocabula piscium [...] transita [...] ut anguilla* | <25 (24) piscis 1 [LF1+] | –                      | –                       | A derivative from anguis “snake”, in reference to body shape. Diachronic clues (e.g., lt. anguilla). Monomial. |
| anthias¹                      | Seriola dumerili (Risso, 1810); Lichia amia (Linnaeus, 1758); Centrolophus niger (Gmelin, 1789); Campogramma gaycos (Lacepède, 1801) | greater amberjack, leerfish, rudderfish, vagido | FG                  | Pliny, HN 9, 180: *de anthia pisce* | <5 (3); piscis 1 [LF1+] | –                      | –                       | A derivative from Gr. *ánthos* (lit. “flower”; also “brightness of colours”). ID hypothesis based on Greek sources (cf. the four kinds “yellow”, “white”, “black” and “hollow-eyed”), each ascribable to each of the species listed here, respectively; cf. Oppian, Hal. 3, 205 ff.). Monomial. |
| anthias²                      | Anthias anthias (Linnaeus, 1758) | swallowtail seaperch (Rondelet 1554: 188) | FG                  | Ovid, Hal. 46: *anthias in tergo quae non videt utitur armis, vir sine novitque sae versoque supinus corpore lina secat fixumque intercipit hamum* | <5 (3); piscis 1 [LF1+] | –                      | –                       | ID supported by Ovid’s information on behaviour when caught (actually attested; see Costa 1991) and diachronic equivalents of the Greek synonym *kállikhts* (“beautiful fish”; cf. Sic. pisci beddu). Monomial. |
| aper                          | Silurus aristotelis Garman, 1890 | Aristotel’s catfish (Thompson 1947: 102) | FG                  | Pliny, HN 11, 267: *ceteri pisces [...] et is qui aper vocatur in Acheloos amne grunntium habet* | <5 (1) piscis 1 [LF1+] | –                      | –                       | Agassiz’s catfish, still found in the Acheleos river (Greece) as described by Pliny (following Aristotle). Name (lit. “wild boar”) refers to the grunting sound catfish make when caught. Monomial. |
| aplysia                       | Sarcotragus spinosulus Schmidt, 1862; S. foetidus Schmidt, 1862 | a (worthless) kind of sponge (Thompson 1947) | FS                  | Pliny, HN 9, 150: *pessimum omnium (sc. spongearum) genus* | <5 (1); <5 (2)         | spongea [FG]          | –                       | “The worst kind of all”, says Pliny (cf. Aristotle, HA 549a 4). Gr. *aplysia* (a derivative from *áplutos* “unwashed”) captures this culturally driven referential trait. Monomial. |
| apoleuctus/ apoleuctum        | The largest kind of pelamys² | –                                    | FG                  | Pliny, HN 32, 150: *pelamys – earum generis maxima apoleuctum vocatur* | <5 (3); <5 (1)         | pelamys 2 [INT]       | –                       | Gr. *apolektos* “chosen”. Food-based ethnobionym (usually a fish cut and/ or fish dish name). Monomial. |
| apricula                      | Balistes capriscus Gmelin, 1789 | grey triggerfish                     | FG                  | Apuleius, Apol. 34: *piscem apriculum* | <5 (1) piscis 1 [LF1+] | –                      | –                       | A derivative from aper “wild boar” (cf. anguilla, from anguis) because of grunting sound. See apriculus. Monomial. |
| Roman ethnobionym/ Scientific ID/ folk taxon | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Main ethno-taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------|
| apriculus | Balistes capriscus Gmelin, 1789 | grey triggerfish FG | Ennius, var. 38: “apriculum piscem scito primum esse Tarenti” | <5 (1) | piscis₁ [LF1+] | – | Lit. “little wild boar”. ID supported diachronically and through edibility rating compared to Oxynotus centrina, the other diachronically plausible candidate. See apricula. Monomial. |
| apua | larva of several fish (Bisson et al. 2020) | FG | Pliny, HN 31, 95: “is pisciculus e pluvia nascatur” | <10 (6); <10 (8) | piscis₁ [INT] | belua maurina/ cetus₂ [LF] (Fig. 17) | Gr. a-φiói, lit. “un-birth”? Morphosemantic parallels in current Southern Italian dialects (nonnate “unborn”; also spuma di mare, [lit. “sea foam”], based on the same belief about self-generation found in Pliny). Monomial. |
| aquila | Myliobatis aquila (Linnaeus, 1758); Aetomylaeus bovinus (Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, 1817) | eagle ray, bull ray (Bisson et al. 2020) | Pliny, HN 9, 78: “planorum piscium […] aquilae” | <5 (1) | plani [INT] (Fig. 8) | – | Lit. “eagle”. Diachronic clues for both IDs in current Mediterranean folk names. Monomial. |
| araneus | Trachinus sp. | weever (Bisson et al. 2020) | Pliny, HN 9, 155: “animal araneus, spine in dorso aculeo noxius” | <5 (2) | piscis₁ [LF1+] | – | Lit. “spider”. Many diachronic clues in Spanish and Italian folk names. Monomial. |
| arbor | Saccharina latissima (Linnaeus) Lamouroux, 1813 | sugar kelp (Cotte 1944: 248) | Pliny, HN 32, 144: “ut a beluis ordiamur in Gaditano oceano arbor, in tantum vastis dispensa ramis, ut ex ea causa fretum numquam intrasse credatur.” | <5 (1) | belua (marina)/ cetus₂ [LF] (Fig. 17) | – | Lit. “tree”. Although Pliny considers arbor an animal, his description is that of a “kelp forest”, seaweeds still found off the Atlantic coast of Spain (cf. in Gaditano oceano). Monomial. |
| aries | Orcinus orca (Linnaeus, 1758) | killer whale (Bisson et al. 2020) | Pliny, HN 32, 144: “ut a beluis ordiamur […] arietes” | <5 (3) | belua (marina)/ cetus₂ [LF] (Fig. 17) | – | Lit. “ram”. Name refers to similarity (eye-patches) with the Arabian oryx (Oryx leucoryx Pallas, 1766), once widespread in the Eastern Mediterranean area. See orca. Monomial. |
| asellus₁ | Merluccius merluccius (Linnaeus, 1758) | hake (Thompson 1947) | Ovid, Hal. 133: “pisces […] ut […] tam deformi non dignus nomine asellus” | <5 (2) | asellus₂ [INT] (Fig. 8) | – | Name (lit. “little ass”) is colour-driven, according to Varro (Ling. 5, 77). Prototypical taxon of asellus₁. Monomial. |
| asellus₂ | Merlucciidae, Gadidae | cods INT | Varro, Ling. 5, 77: “vocabula piscium […] translatae […] ut asellus”; Pliny, HN 9, 61: “asellorum duo genera, callariae – minores – et bacchi” | <10 (8) | piscis₁ [LF1+] (Fig. 8) | asellus₁, callarias, bacchus [FG] (Fig. 8) | Ascription to INT rank based on Pliny’s testimony and supported both in perceptual (similarity to asellus₁) and ethnobilinguistic terms (polysemy with prototypical taxon; see asellus₂). Monomial. |
| Roman ethnobionym/ vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Scientific ID/ description | Main ethno-taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| astacus                                                  | Nephrops norvegicus (Linnaeus, 1758) | Pliny, HN 9, 97: “cancrorum genera carabi astaci” | <5 (1); <15 (13) | locusta / carabus | INT | – |
| attilus                                                  | Huso huso (Linnaeus, 1758) | Pliny, HN 9, 44: “praecipua magnitudine [...] attilus in Pado” | <5 (1) pisces | | [LF1+] | – |
| aulos                                                   | Solenidae razor shell (Thompson 1947) | Pliny, HN 32, 151: “solen sive aulos sive donax sive onyx” | <5 (2); <5 (2) | pecten | [INT] | (Fig. 10) |
| aurata                                                   | Sparus aurata Linnaeus, 1758 | Columella, Rust. 8, 16, 8: “pelagios sc. pisces [...] ut aurata et denticus” | <10 (9) pelagi cũ | | [INT] | (Fig. 8) |
| bacchus<sup>1</sup>                                      | Merlangius merlangus (Linnaeus, 1758); Micromesistius poutassou (Risso, 1827) | Pliny, HN 9, 61: “asellorum duo genera, callariae minores et bacchi” | <5 (3); <10 (6) | aselli / assimilis | [INT] | (Fig. 8) |
| bacchus<sup>2</sup>                                      | Mugil sp. grey mullet | Pliny, HN 32, 77: “fel [...] bacchi, quem quidam mizyenem vocant” | <5 (1); <5 (1) | pisces | [LF1+] | – |
| balanus                                                  | Lithophaga lithophaga (Linnaeus, 1758) | Columella, Rust. 8, 16, 7: “limosa regio [...] idonea est [...] concharum pectunculis, balanis vel spondilis” | <5 (3); <10 (6) | concha | [INT] | (Fig. 10) |
| ballaena                                                 | Balaenoptera sp. whale (Bisson et al. 2020) | Pliny, HN 9, 8: “maximum animal in Indico mari pristis et ballaena est”; 32, 144: “ut a beluis ordiamur [...] ballaena” | <20 (15); belua (marina)/ cetus | | [LF] | (Fig. 17) |

The Roman classification and nomenclature of aquatic animals. Continuation.
Annotated checklist of Roman aquatic animals. Continuation.

| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ folk taxon | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Main ethno-taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|---------|
| batia                                       | Raja sp. ray (Bisson et al. 2020)    | FG Pliny, HN 32, 77: “batiae piscis fel” | <5 (3) plani [INT] (Fig. 8) | –                      | Gr. *batia* (from *bátos* [bramble]) captures salient referential trait(s) (i.e. thorny tail and/or back found in most Mediterranean rays). Semantic equivalents in diachrony (cf. It. *razza*, also attested as a “bramble” in Northern Italian dialects). See *raia*. Monomial. |
| batrachus                                   | Lophius sp. (small/midsize specimina) | FG Pliny, HN 32, 145ff.: “peculiares autem maris […] batrachus” | <5 (1); piscis₁ [LF1+] <20 (16) | – | Gr. *bátrakhos* (lit. frog). See Lat. synonym *vana*. Monomial. |
| belone¹                                     | Sygnathus sp. pipefish (Thompson 1947) | FG Pliny, HN 9, 166: “acus sive belone unus piscium […] dehiscente […] utero.” | <5 (1) piscis₁ [LF1+] | – | Gr. *bélônē* (lit. needle). See *acus*. Monomial. |
| belone² (belone aculeatus)                  | Belone belone (Linnaeus, 1760) garfish (Thompson 1947) | FG Pliny, HN 32, 145ff.: “beloneae quos aculeati vocamus” | <5 (1) piscis₁ [LF1+] | – | Distinguished from belone¹ as aculeatus (prickly) by Pliny (cf. pointed snout, absent in pipefish). See *acus²*. Monomial (or productive binomial). |
| belua (marina)                              | sea mammals, large selachians, large tuna, etc. | – | <20 (18) animalia [FK] cetus₁, arbor, etc. [FG] (Fig. 17) | belua (marina) | Lit. “marine beast” (or “monster”). Synonym of *cetus₂*. Monomial (or unproductive binomial). |
| blendium                                    | Blenniidae? combtooth blennies? (Bisson et al. 2020) | FG Pliny, HN 32, 102: “blendiorum cinis” | <5 (2) piscis₁ [LF1+]? | – | Presumed ID based on the hypothesis of a loanword from Gr. *blέννος* (lit. “slime”, in reference to slimy body). Cf., diachronically, It. *savosa*, lit. “slimy”. |
| boca                                        | Boops boops (Linnaeus, 1758) bogue | FG Pliny, HN 32, 145: “peculiares autem maris […] bocca” | <5 (2); piscis₁ [LF1+] <15 (11) | – | ID based on Greek sources and diachronic clues (e.g., Fr. *bogue*, It. *boga*). Monomial. |
| bos                                         | Mobula mobular devil fish (Bonnaterre, 1788) | FG Pliny, HN 9, 78: “planorum piscium […] bovis […] nominibus graecí appellant” | <5 (3); plani [INT] <10 (5) (Fig. 8) | – | Lit. “ox” (analogical similarity driven by “horn-like” cephalic fins). ID supported diachronically by semantic equivalents (e.g., It. *pesse vesque*, *vacca e’ mare*). See *cornuta*. Monomial. |
| bucina                                      | Charonia lampas (Linnaeus, 1758) pink lady | FG Ovid, Met. 1, 335ff.: “conchaque sonanti inspirare ibet […] cava bucina sumitur” | <5 (2) cochlos [LF3+] (Fig. 10) | – | Lit. “a shepherd’s horn” (name refers to shell used as a wind instrument). ID supported diachronically (e.g., It. *buccina*, Sp. *bocina*). Monomial. |
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| Roman ethnobionym/folk taxon | Scientific ID/(description) | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethnontaxonomic rank | Main ethnontaxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| **bucinum** | Stramonita haemastoma (Linnaeus, 1758) | red-mouth purpura (Bisson et al. 2020) | FG | Pliny, HN 9, 130: "concharum ad purpuras et conchylias [...] duo sunt genera bucium [...] alterum purpura" | <10 (8) | murex/purpura/pelagiae [INT] (Fig. 10) | – | One of the two “red” purple-dye producing gastropods in Pliny (purpura and bucinum), identified through experiments on hypobranchial glands of living murticids (Fouquet & Bieleg 1971; see e.g., Reese 2005). ID also supported by an implicit descriptive reference in Pliny, HN 9, 130 (ad similitudinem eius qua bucini sonus editor [= bucina]). See bucina, conchylium 1. |
| **calcendix** | unidentified (sea mollusc?) | – | FG | Plautus, Vid. fr. 11: "opposita est calcendix" | <5 (1) | – | – | The presumed ID with a mollusc is based on Plautus’s context (something covering a sign on a travelling-trunk found at sea) and phonological similarity to Gr. kálkhē “a kind of murex”. Monomial. |
| **callarias** | Trisopterus sp. | poor cod, pouting (Thompson 1947) | FG | Pliny, HN 9, 61: "assellorum duo generae, callariae minores et bacchi" | <5 (2); asellus, [INT] <10 (5) (Fig. 8) | – | – | ID based on Pliny’s account and referential constraint (the chin barbel) captured in the name’s morphology (lit. “similar to a kallarós [lit. imported hen]”; Guasparri 2017a). Monomial. |
| **callionymus** | Uranoscopus scaber (Linnaeus, 1758) | stargazer (Bisson et al. 2020) | FG | Pliny, HN 32, 69: "idem piscis et uranoscopos vocatur ab oculo quem in capite habet" | <5 (3); piscis, [LF1+] <20 (18) | – | – | Gr. kalídonumos (lit. “beautifully-named”) refers euphemistically to a sex-related name of the same organism. ID supported by synonymy with uranoscopos. Unproductive binomial. Cf. calvaria, lit. “skull” (Bettini 1979). Monomial. |
| **calvarium** | unidentified sea animal | – | FG | Ennius, var. 43: "calvaria pingua carme", Apul., Apol. 34: "calvaria marina" | <5 (2) | – | – | – |
| **cammarus** | Caridea, Penaeoidea, Stenopodidea | shrimps (Bisson et al. 2020) | FG | Columella, Rust. 8, 17, 14: "et hallecula [...] et cammarus exigusque gobio, quisquis denique est incrementi minutis piscis" | <15 (10); squilla/caris [INT] <10 (6) (Fig. 12) | – | – | ID supported diachronically. Morphology (very likely a derivative from Gr. kämma “tibit”) betrays a culturally driven (food-related) referential trait. Monomial. |
| **cancer, cancer** | Brachyura, Anomura | crab-like crustaceans (short-tailed crabs), hermit crabs | INT | Plautus, Pseud. 955: “vide ut transversus, non provenus, cedit, quasi cancer solet” | <25 (20) | cancer/crustata [LF1+] | maea, pagurus, etc. [FG] (Fig. 12) | ID supported diachronically. Monomial. |
| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ folk taxon | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethnontaxonomic rank | Main ethnontaxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------|
| cancer \(_2\) (cancr)                     | Decapoda                               | LF+                  | Pliny, HN 9, 97: "cancrorum genera cancri, astac[i], m[a]eae, pa[gl]uri, Heracleotici, leones et alia ignobiliora" | <10 (5) piscis \(_2\) [LF1+] (Fig. 12) | locusta/ carabus, squilla/ caris, cancer | INT (Fig. 12) | Pliny’s more inclusive ethnontaxonomic usage translates and parallels Aristotle’s malakóstraka (lit. “soft-shelled”), sea urchins excluded (see echinus), which Aristotle groups with shellfish (ostrakóderma). Monomial. |
| canicula                                  | Carcharodon carcharias (Linnaeus, 1758) | white shark          | FG Pliny, HN 32, 144: "ut a beluis ordiamur [...] caniculae"; Varro, Ling. 5, 77: "vocabula piscium [...] transita [...] ut [...] canicula" | <10 (6) belua (marina)/ cetus \(_2\) [LF] (Fig. 17); piscis \(_1\) [LF1+] (Fig. 8) | belua (marina)/ cetus \(_2\) [LF] (Fig. 17); piscis \(_1\) [LF1+] (Fig. 8) | belua (marina)/ cetus \(_2\) [LF] (Fig. 17); piscis \(_1\) [LF1+] (Fig. 8) | A derivative from canis (“dog”, see canis [marinus]). Portrayed as the man-eating shark par excellence. Ascription to both cetus \(_2\) and piscis \(_1\) due to Pliny and Varro respectively. Monomial. |
| canis caeruleus                            | a shark, possibly Prionace glauca (Linnaeus, 1758) | blue shark? (Bisson et al. 2020) | FG Ausonius, ep. 15: “currentem [...] ante canes leporem caeruleus rapuit” | <5 (2) belua (marina)/ cetus \(_2\) [LF] (Fig. 17); piscis \(_1\) [LF1+] (Fig. 8) | belua (marina)/ cetus \(_2\) [LF] (Fig. 17); piscis \(_1\) [LF1+] (Fig. 8) | belua (marina)/ cetus \(_2\) [LF] (Fig. 17); piscis \(_1\) [LF1+] (Fig. 8) | Lit. “blue dog”. ID made plausible by diachronic equivalents (cf. e.g., It. celeste, cialestru, lit. “light blue”). In fact, although Ausonius imitates Vergil (Aen. 3, 432: “caeruleus canibus resonantia saxa”, where caeruleus is generally interpreted as “glowy” and canes as “howling dogs”), his is really a “marine dog” (i.e. a shark) and he might reflect some usage he has recorded during his Mediterranean stays. Alternatively, it may be a pure synonym of canis marinus (with caeruleus = marinus). Unproductive binomial. |
| canis (marinus)                            | Lamnidae (e.g., Carcharodon carcharias (Linnaeus, 1758)), Carcharhinidae (e.g., Prionace glauca (Linnaeus, 1758)) | white shark          | FG Vergil, Aen. 6, 77: “timidos nautas canis lacerasse marinis” | <10 (7) belua (marina)/ cetus \(_2\) [LF] (Fig. 17); piscis \(_1\) [LF1+] (Fig. 8) | belua (marina)/ cetus \(_2\) [LF] (Fig. 17); piscis \(_1\) [LF1+] (Fig. 8) | belua (marina)/ cetus \(_2\) [LF] (Fig. 17); piscis \(_1\) [LF1+] (Fig. 8) | Lit. “marine dog” (see canis caeruleus). Ascription to cetus \(_2\) due to Servius’s commentary on Vergil (Servius, 5, 822); ascription to piscis, due to Varro (Ling. 5, 77), through presumed synonymy with canicula. Monomial (or unproductive binomial). |
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| Roman ethnobionym/ folk taxon | Scientific ID/ description | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethnobiographic rank | Main ethno-taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| cantharus                     | Spondyliosoma cantharus    | black seabream (Thompson 1947)        | FG                   | Ovid, Hal. 103: “gaudent pelago quales [...] cantharus ingratus suco, turn concolor illi orphos” | <5 (2)               | piscis₁, [LF1+]           | –                      | Gr. kárharios, lit. “dung beetle”, captures a dark-colour-driven referential constraint (in the dead fish). ID supported diachronically (e.g., It. scantaru, cantara). Monomial. |
| capito¹                       | Mugil sp.                  | grey mullet                           | FG                   | Cato, Agr. 158, 1, 8: “addito […] piscem capitonem et scorpionem” | <5 (1)               | piscis₁, [LF1+]           | –                      | ID supported diachronically (e.g., Sp. capitón). Referential constraint (broad flattened head) captured in the name’s morphology (a derivative from Lat. caput “head”). Monomial. |
| capito²                       | Squalius cephalus          | chub (Bisson et al. 2020)             | FG                   | Ausonius, Mos. 86: “squeueus herbosas capito interlucet harenas […] congestus aristis” | <5 (1)               | piscis₁, [LF1+]           | –                      | ID supported both diachronically (e.g., Fr. chevaine, It. cavedano, etc.) and iconimically, given the chub’s resemblance to capito¹. Monomial. Pliny’s usage reflects Aristotle’s double usage of Gr. kárabos (lit. “horned beetle”), here in its less inclusive meaning (see carabus₂). Same referential constraint as Lat. synonym locusta₁. Monomial. Pliny’s technical usage of the Gr. loanword instead of Lat. locusta reflects Aristotle’s double usage of kárabos (lit. “horned beetle”), here in its second, more inclusive, meaning (= all lobster-like crustaceans; see carabus.). Monomial. |
| carabus₁                      | Palinurus elephas          | spiny lobster (Thompson 1947)         | FG                   | Pliny, HN 9, 97: “cancrorum genera carabi, astaci” | <5 (1); >30          | locusta₂/ carabus₂ [INT] | –                      | Pliny’s usage reflects Aristotle’s double usage of Gr. kárabos (lit. “horned beetle”), here in its less inclusive meaning (see carabus₂). Same referential constraint as Lat. synonym locusta₁. Monomial. Pliny’s technical usage of the Gr. loanword instead of Lat. locusta reflects Aristotle’s double usage of kárabos (lit. “horned beetle”), here in its second, more inclusive, meaning (= all lobster-like crustaceans; see carabus.). Monomial. |
| carabus₂ (carabi)             | Decapoda (Brachyura excluded) | long-tailed crustaceans (e.g., lobster, spiny lobster, mantis shrimp, shrimps) | INT                  | Pliny, HN 9, 97: “car[i] cauda a ceteris cancris distant” | <5 (1); <5 (4)       | cancers/ crustata [LF1+] | locusta/ carabus₁, etc. (Fig. 12) | |
| carcharus                     | Carcharodon carcharias     | white shark (de Saint-Denis 1947)     | FG                   | Columnella, Rust. 8, 17, 12: “esca iacentium […] scombri carcharique […] venterculos” | <5 (1)               | piscis₁, [LF1+]           | –                      | Gr. kárharos, lit. “jagged-toothed” (typically said of dogs). Pliny (HN 13, 139; cf. Theophrastus, HP 4, 7, 2) shows the more common variant karkharas to be synonym with Lat. canicula. Monomial. |
| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ folk taxon | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethno-taxonomic rank | Main ethno-taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| **caris**                                | Caridea, Penaeoidea, Squilloidea, Stenopodidea | shrimps and prawns (Bisson et al. 2020) | Ovid, Hal. 132: "herbosa piscis luxurator haren ut […] sinusosa caris" | <5 (1); >30 cancer/crustata (LF1+) (Fig. 12) | squilla₁, pinophylax, etc. [FG] (Fig. 12) | ID and ethnotaxonomy supported by Pliny's translations of Aristotle's karis with Lat. equivalent squilla (cf. e.g., Pliny, HN 9, 142; Aristotle, HA 547b 15). See squilla₂. Monomial. |
| **cercyrs**                              | Scorpaena sp.? black/red scorpionfish? (Capponi 1972: 437) | FG | Ovid, Hal. 103: "gaudent pelago quales […] cercyroscque ferox scopolorum fine moratus" | <5 (2); <5 (3) piscis₁ [LF1+] | – | – | Cf. Gr. kerk(o)juro "bobtailed"? ID hypothesis based on the behavioural and ecological data (i.e. “painful” and rocky habitat respectively) provided by Ovid. Unproductive binomial? |
| **cetus₁**                                | Thunnus sp. tuna, albacore | FG | Columella, Rust. 6, 32, 1: "oleo detritis uel unguine ceti, quod in lacibus salitus thynnus remittit"; Celsus, Med. 2, 18, 2: "omnes beluas marinas, ex quilbus cetus est quaque his pares sunt" | <10 (5) pelamys₂ [INT] (Fig. 8); belua (marina)/cetus₂ [LF] (Fig. 17) | – | – | As the biggest kind of tuna, this is regarded as both a belua (= cetus₂; cf. Celsus) and a pelamys (cf. Columella; see pelamys₂). Gr. synonym órkunos (see crycynus), the biggest pelamys/ tuna kind, is also deemed a kētos (as cetus₂; cf. Athenaeus, 7, 301f; 303b). Given the tuna's popularity as food in ancient Rome, cetus became the prototypical fish (cf. Lat. cetarius, "fishmonger"). Monomial. Same meaning as our "cetacean" in Pliny only (when translating Aristotle), otherwise equivalent to belua marina, the common meaning of kētos in Greek (Zucker 1997). Monomial. |
| **cetus₂** (cete)                         | sea mammals, large selachians, large tuna, etc., i.e. large and hence salient marine animals beyond the size of a human (Fig. 17) | – | Vergili, Aen. 5, 822: "immunia cete et senior Glauci chorus" | <15 (13); animalia [FK] (Fig. 17) | cetus₁, orcyynus, arbor, etc. [FG] (Fig. 17) | – | Same meaning as our "cetacean" in Pliny only (when translating Aristotle), otherwise equivalent to belua marina, the common meaning of kētos in Greek (Zucker 1997). Monomial. |
| **chalcis**                               | Argentin a sphyraena Linnaeus, 1758; Atherina sp. | silver smelt, sand smelt | Columella, Rust. 8, 17, 12: "esca iacentum […] praeberti conuuent tabentis halliculas et salibus exesam chalcidem"; Pliny, HN 9, 154: "piscium [...] chalcis" | <5 (4); <20 (18) piscis₁ [LF1+] | – | – | ID based on the name's morphology (lit. "metal-like"); cf. Gr. khalkós capturing a salient referential trait. Supported by diachronic equivalents (e.g., Fr. poisson d'argent, It. argentina, etc.). Monomial. |
| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ description | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethno-taxonomic rank | Main ethno-taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| channe Serranus sp. comber (Thompson 1947)  | comber                                | FG                   | Ovid, Hal. 108: “gaudent pelago quales […] ex se concipiens channa, gemino sibi functa parente” | –                     | saxatiles [INT] (Fig. 8) | –                      | ID supported diachronically (e.g., Sic. channa). Morphology (cf. Gr. khasein "to gape") captures a referential trait also implied by the sources (cf. “wide-gaping khânnai” in Athenaeus, 7, 315f) and modern equivalents (cf. Eng. gaper). Monomial. |
| chema Bivalvia with equivalve shell, round in shape, without lateral expansions (cf. Pectinidae) or additional calcarceous pieces (cf. Pholadidae); e.g., Astartidae, Glycymeridae, Lucinidae, Ungulinidae, Cardiidae, Carditidae, Mactridae, Scrobiculariidae, Petricolidae, Veneridae. | clams                                 | FG                   | Pliny, HN 32, 147: “chemae striatae, chema leves, chema peloridum generis, varietate distantes et rotunditate, chema glycymarides, quae sunt maiores quam pelorides” | <5 (1); <20 (17) | ostreum/ testacea/ conchula/ (conchula) [LF2+] (Fig. 10) | chema striata, c. levis, etc. [FS] (Fig. 10) | Ethnotaxonomic ascription reflected in Greek sources (e.g., Galen, Bon. Mal. 6, 769; Athenaeus, 3, 87c). Monomial. (Fig. 13). |
| chema glycymaris Cardiidae (e.g., Cerastoderma glaucum (Bruguière, 1789)) | cockles (e.g., olive green cockle) | FS                   | Pliny, HN 32, 147: “chemae glycymarides, quae sunt maiores quam pelorides” | <5 (1); <5 (1) | chema [FG] (Fig. 10) | –                      | ID based on the descriptive modifier (lit. “resembling a glycymaris”; see glycymaris). Productive binomial. |
| chema levis Mactridae (e.g., Mactra stultorum (Linnaeus, 1758)) | through shells | FS                   | Pliny, HN 32, 147: ”chemae leves” | <5 (1); <5 (4) | chema [FG] (Fig. 10) | –                      | ID based on the descriptive modifier lēvis (lit. "smooth"). Productive binomial. |
| chema peloris Veneridae (e.g., Venus verrucosa Linnaeus, 1758) | venus clams (e.g., warty venus) | FS?                  | Pliny, HN 32, 147: “chemae peloridum generis, varietate distantes et rotunditate, chema glycymarides, quae sunt maiores quam pelorides” | <5 (1); <5 (1) | chema [FG] (Fig. 10) | –                      | ID based on the descriptive modifier (lit. “resembling a peloris”). See peloris. Productive binomial. |
| chema striata Arcidae, e.g., Anadara corbuloides (Monterosato, 1881); Cardiidae, e.g., Cardites antiquata (Linnaeus, 1758) | basket ark, antique cardita | FS                   | Pliny, HN 32, 147: ”chemae striatae” | <5 (1); <5 (1) | chema [FG] (Fig. 10) | –                      | ID based on the descriptive modifier striatae (lit. "striped"). Productive binomial. |
| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ vernacular description | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethno-taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|---------|
| chrysophrys Sparus aurata Linnaeus, 1758 | gilthead (Thompson 1947) | Ovid, Hal. 111: “gaudent pelago quales [...] aurichrysophrys imitata decus” | <5 (2); piscis$_1$ [LF1+] | – | Gr. khrúsophros (lit. “golden brow”) captures the same salient referential trait as Lat. aurata. ID widely supported by diachronic equivalents. Unproductive binomial. |
| cinædus Symphodus cinædus (Linnaeus, 1758); Labrus mixtus (Linnaeus, 1758); Symphodus ocellatus (Linnaeus, 1758) | peacock wrasse, cuckoo wrasse (Bisson et al. 2020) | Pliny, HN 32, 146: “cinaedi soli piscium lutei” | <5 (1); saxatiles [INT] (Fig. 8) | – | ID based on the fish’s vivid colours, prominent lips, etc. likened to the heavy make-up of a cinædus (cf. Gr. kínaidos, lit. “catamite”; “professional male dancer”). See šelepris, phyxis. Monomial. |
| citharus Bothus sp. | flounder | Pliny, HN 32, 146: “citharus, rhomborum generis pessimus” | <5 (1); rhombus/ psetta [FG] (Fig. 8) | – | Gr. kítharos captures a body-shape-driven referential trait, i.e. the analogical similarity to archaic “round-based” zithers (Gr. kíthāra), (Guasparri 2016). Monomial. |
| clupea Petromyzon sp. | lamprey (Bisson et al. 2020) | Pliny, HN. 9, 44: minimus (sc. piscis) appellatus clupea [...] morsu examinat (sc. attilum)” | <5 (1) piscis$_1$ [LF1+] | – | ID based on the name’s morphology (very likely a derivative from clupeus “round shield”, in reference to sucker-like mouth). Monomial. |
| cnide Anemonea sulcata (Pennant, 1777); Actinia sp. | sea anemone (Thompson 1947) | Pliny, HN. 32, 147: “cnide quam nos urticam vocamus” | <5 (1); COVERT$^1$ [LF1+] (Fig. 4) | – | Gr. knídí (lit. “nettle”) captures a salient referential trait (stinging tentacles). ID and ethnotaxonomy supported by both synonymsy with urtica and Pliny’s translations of Aristotle. Monomial. |
| cochlea$_1$ (terrestris) | terrestrial snails – | Pliny, HN. 9, 100: “cochlea aeratiles terrestresque” | <5 (1) coch(h)lea$_2$ [INT] (Fig. 10) | – | Lit. “land snail”. Inclusion in checklist due to ethnotaxonomic reasons, i.e. this is the prototypical taxon of coch(h)lea$_2$, and modifier terrestris is only used when in contrast set with cochlea aeratiles. Monomial (or productive binomial). |
| coch(h)lea$_2$ | all snail-like gastropods (Bisson et al. 2020) | Pliny, HN. 9, 100: “in eodem genere cochlea aeratiles terrestresque” | >30 cochlos [LF3+] (Fig. 10) | – | See cochlea$_1$, Monomial. |
| cochlea$_1$ aquatiles | water snail-like gastropods – | Pliny, HN 9, 100: “cochlea aeratiles terrestresque” | <5 (1) coch(h)lea$_2$ [INT] (Fig. 10) | – | Lit. “water snail”. Modifier aquatiles only used when in contrast set with cochlea$_1$. Productive binomial. |
| cochlea$_1$ fluvialitis | river snail-like gastropods – | Pliny, HN 32, 55: “scorpionum carnes et fluvialitium cochlearum” | <5 (4) cochlea aeratiles [FG] (Fig. 10) | – | Lit. “river snail”. Productive binomial. |
### Annotated checklist of Roman aquatic animals. Continuation.

| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID description | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Main ethnotaxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| **cochlos** all (mostly marine) gastropods  | – LF3+                               | Pliny, *HN*, 32, 147: “cochloe, quorum generis pentadactylī, item helices” | <5 (1); ostreum/ testacea/ concha/ (conchula) | [LF2+] (Fig. 10) | – | Gr. κόχλος. Pliny’s source (Xenocrates, 23) has Gr. kokhlías, which Pliny normally translates with *coccit*ēa. Maybe Pliny uses *cochlos* to disambiguate this wider meaning from *coccit*ēa’s narrower Latin usage for terrestrial snails (see *cochlea* 1). Monomial. |
| colias Scomber colias imported from Parium | – FG Pliny, HN 32, 146: “coliae ... lacertorum minimi” | <5 (1); colias [FG] | c. Parianus, c. Sexitanus | (Fig. 8) | (Fig. 8) | – Food-based ethnobionym (usually a fish cut and/or fish dish name). *Parium*, a city in Mysia (now Kamares). Productive binomial. |
| colias Parianus colias imported from Parium | – FS Pliny, HN 32, 146: “coliae sive Parianus sive Sexitanus a patria Baetica” | <5 (1); colias [FG] | c. Parianus | (Fig. 8) | (Fig. 8) | – See c. Parianus. Sex, in *Hispania Baetica* (Roman province now southern Spain, approximately Andalusia). Productive binomial. |
| colias Sexitanus colias imported from Sex | – FS see colias Parianus | <5 (1); colias [FG] | c. Parianus | (Fig. 8) | (Fig. 8) | – |
| coluthion Small murex (fam. Muricidae, e.g., *Muricopsis cristata* (Brocchi, 1814)) | small dye-murex | Pliny, *HN*, 32, 84: “murecum generis sunt quae vocant Graeci coluthia, allī coryphia, turbinata aequae sed minora” | <5 (3) murex/purpura/pelagiae [INT] | (Fig. 10) | – | Gr. *kolouthion*? Apparently a synonym of *coryphion*. Pliny’s source (Xenocrates, 22) has the form *koloulion*. Monomial. |
| concha 1 most bivalve molluscs | – INT Plautus, *Rud*. 297: “echinos, lopadas, ostreas, balanos captamus, conchas, marinam urticam, musculos”; also Columella, *Rust*. 8, 16, 7. | <20 (18) mitulius [LF3+] | balanus, chema, etc. [FG] | (Fig. 10) | (Fig. 10) | Bivalves are the prototypical *concha* (evidence from metaphorical usage, e.g., Plautus, *Rud.* 704; Pliny, *HN* 10, 43). Also used for denoting mollusc shells (which explains extension to *concha* 2 at the LF level). See *concha* 2. Monomial. |
| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ folk taxon | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethnotaxonomic rank | Main ethnotaxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| concha<sub>2</sub>                      | Bivalvia, Gastropoda (externally)    | LF2+ Ovid, Ars. am. 2, 519 “litore quot conchae, tot sunt in amore dolores” Bisson et al. (2020) | <20 (18) | conchylium<sub>2</sub> [LF1+] | cochlos [LF3+], concha, [INT], etc. (Fig. 10) | See concha<sub>1</sub>, Monomial. |
| conchula                                | Bivalvia, Gastropoda (externally)    | LF2+ and/or INT Valerius Maximus 8, 8, 1 “constat (sc. Scipionem et Lælium) […] vagos litoribus conchulas conchylias et umbilicos lectitasse” Bisson et al. (2020) | <5 (4) | See concha<sub>2</sub>, concha<sub>1</sub> | See concha<sub>2</sub>, concha<sub>1</sub> | A diminutive (or a synonym) of concha<sub>1</sub>, (Celsus, Med. 2, 29; Apuleius, Apol. 357) and/or of concha<sub>2</sub>, (Plautus, Rud. 304; Valerius Maximus, 8, 8, 17). Monomial. |
| conchylium<sub>1</sub>                   | Hexaplex trunculus (Linnaeus, 1758) | FG Pliny, HN 9, 52 “desunt [sc. in Ponto] […] conc[hy]lia, cum ostreae abundant”; HN 9, 127 “color (sc. conchyliis) austerus in glauco et irascenti similis mari” Bisson et al. (2020) | <10 (9);murex/purpura<sub>2</sub>/pelagiae [INT] (Fig. 10) | – | – | Pliny (HN 9, 130) names two shellfish kinds (purpura and bucinum) as the source of the two shellfish-derived Roman purple dyes, i.e. purpura and conchylium, apparently quoting the latter only as a colour (the “blue” purple dye). Since purpura includes two biological species (see purpura<sub>1</sub>) and one (Hexaplex trunculus) produces preferentially a blue dye (Fouquet & Biegl 1971), this will be the conchylium (Gr. konkhúlion), which Pliny considers a shellfish elsewhere. Indeed the colour name will stem from the shellfish’s (cf. concha, Gr. kónkhē), ID supported by apparent diachronic clues (e.g., Neap. scuncīgl, Tusc. gangillo; cf. Cheli 2020). Monomial. |
| conchylium<sub>2</sub>                   | Bivalvia, Gastropoda, Echinoidea (externally) | LF+ Cicero, Pis. 67, 7 “exstructa mania non conchyliis aut piscibus, sed mufa carne subrancida” Terent. Asd. 376: “piscis ceteros purga, Dromo; gongrnum istum maximum in aqua sinito ludere” Bisson et al. (2020) | <15 (10); >30 piscis<sub>2</sub> [LF1+] (Fig. 10) | – | – | Same ethnotaxonomic usage as Gr. konkhúlon. As to inclusion of sea urchins, cf. Varro, Ling. 5, 77. Monomial. |
| conger                                   | Conger conger (Linnaeus, 1758)      | FG Terence, Ad. 376: “piscis ceteros purga, Dromo; gongrnum istum maximum in aqua sinito ludere” Bisson et al. (2020) | <15 (11); >30 piscis<sub>1</sub> [LF1+] (Fig. 10) | – | – | Alternative form gonger is the Latin rendering of Gr. gόngros. Monomial. |
| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ description | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Main ethnotaxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| coracinus¹ | Sciaena umbra Linnaeus, 1758; Umbrina cirrosa (Linnaeus, 1758)? | brown meagre, shi drum? (Thompson 1947) | FG Pliny, HN 32, 106: “panos salsamenta coracinorum discutiunt” (?) | <5 (2)?; piscis¹ [LF1+] <5 (3) | | – Gr. korakinos, lit. “crow-like” (cf. kórax “crow”) refers to sound (plus dark colour in S. umbra). ID based on diachronic equivalents (e.g., Sic. curveddrum). Most testimonies are ambiguous as to ID with either Sciaena/Umbrina or Chromis (see coracinus²). Monomial. |
| coracinus² | Chromis chromis (Linnaeus, 1758)? | damselfish? (Thompson 1947) | FG Pliny, HN 9, 57: “hippurus et coracini, hieme non capti”; cf. Aristotle, HA 599b 3 | <5 (1)?; piscis¹ [LF1+] <15 (13) | | – ID suggested by apparent diachronic clues (e.g., Neap. guaracino). Reference is most likely to dark colour (see coracinus¹). Monomial. |
| coracinus³ | Oreochromis niloticus (Linnaeus, 1758); Lates niloticus (Linnaeus, 1758) | Nile tilapia and/ or Nile perch (Thompson 1947) | FG Pliny, HN 9, 56: “coracini pisces Nilo quidem peculiares sunt”; HN 32, 145: “ut a beluis ordiamur […] coracini” | <10 (5); belua (marina)/ cetus² [LF] (Fig. 17) | | – See coracinus¹, coracinus². Pliny's information on marine and river habitat tallies with the pairs damselfish : Nile tilapia and brown meagre/shi drum : Nile perch, based on the internal similarity of the respective referents. Only Nile perches can be considered beluae (“monsters”) due to size. Monomial. |
| cordyla₁ | A juvenile tuna (Thompson 1947) | (see thynnus) | FS Pliny, HN 9, 47: “cordyla appellatur partus (sc. thynnorum), qui fetas redeuntres in mare autumno comitatur; limosae vero autem aut e luto pelam[y]des incipiant vocari et, cum annuum excessere tempus, thynnii” | <5 (1); thynnus [FG] <5 (3) (Fig. 8) | | – Gr. kordúlē, lit. “club” refers to body shape. Only in Pliny (HN 9, 47) when translating Aristotle (HA 571a 16). See cordyla₂. Monomial. |
| cordyla₂ | A kind of small pelamys² | (Thompson 1947) | FG Pliny, HN 32, 146: “cybium – ita vocatur concisa pelamys […]; cordyla – et haec pelamys pusilla; cum in Pontum a Maeotide exit, hoc nomen habet”; Martial, 11, 52, 7: “max vetus et tenui maior cordyla lacerto” | <5 (4); pelamys² [INT] <5 (3) (Fig. 8) | | – Pliny’s usage of et (“also”) in the final list of Book 32 (et haec) hints at this fish being “also” – i.e. much like cybium – a small pelamys, as reflected in Martial’s usage (possibly the common Roman usage). See cordyla₁. Monomial. |
| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ description | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethno-taxonomic rank | Main ethno-taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| **cornuta** | Mobula mobular (Bonnaterre, 1788) | devil fish | FG Pliny, HN 9, 82: attollit e mari sesquipedanea fere cornua quae ab iis nomen traxit | <5 (4) belua (marina)/ cetus, [LF] (Fig. 17) | – | – | Lit. “horned” (in reference to cephalic-fins). ID based on Pliny’s description, supported diachronically by morphosemantic equivalents (MG. keratás). Monomial. |
| **corvus** | Umbrina sp.; Sciaena umbra Linnaeus, 1758; Argyrosomus regius (Asso, 1801) | drums or croakers | FG Celsus, Med. 2, 18, 7 deinde ii (sc. pisces), qui quasuis teneriores, tamen duri sunt, ut aurata, corvus, sparus, oculata | <5 (2) piscis, [LF+1] | – | – | Lit. “raven” (sound-driven). ID suggested by diachronic clues (cf. e.g., It. corvo, corbo, etc.). See coracinus, Monomial. |
| **coryphion** | Small muricids (fam. Muricidae, e.g., Muricopsis cristata (Brocchi, 1814)) | small dye-murex | FG Pliny, HN 32, 84 muricum generis sunt quae vocant Graeci coluthia, ali corphia, turbinita aequae, sed minora | <5 (3) murex, purpura, pelagiae [INT] (Fig. 10) | – | – | Gr. korúphion, lit. “pointed” or “headed” (cf. koruphé “head”, “apex”), seems to include also small gastropods of the Buccinidae, Fasciolariidae families as shown by Xenocrates (22), Pliny’s source. Monomial. |
| **COVERT1** (tertīā naturā) | half plant-half animal attached and sensible sea invertebrates (e.g., sponges) | – | LF1+ Pliny, HN 9, 146 neque animalium neque fruticum sed tertiam quandam ex utroque naturam habent, urticas dico et spongeis | <5 (1) piscis, [LF] (Fig. 4) | urtica/cnide, spongea, etc. [FG] (Fig. 4) | Marine organisms having a “third nature”, between animal and plant, i.e. marine, attached, sensible invertebrates. Pliny’s rendition of Aristotle, HA 588b 17 is relevant, if not to the Romans’, at least to his own aquatic animals ethnotaxonomy. |
| **COVERT2** (fruticis naturā) | plant-like unattached and insensible sea invertebrates (e.g., sea cucumbers) | – | LF1+ Pliny, HN 9, 154 multis (sc. aquatilibus) eadem natura quae frutici, ut [h]oloth[u]riis, pulmonibus, stellis | <5 (1) piscis, [LF] (Fig. 4) | holothurium, pulmo, etc. [FG] (Fig. 4) | Described as frutex “herb/shrub”; derelict marine, unattached, insensible plant-like invertebrates. In his rendition of Aristotle, PA 681a 17, Pliny’s choice of LF frutex instead of FK planta (Gr. text has phutón “plant”) is relevant, if not to the Romans’, at least to his own aquatic animals ethnotaxonomy. |
### Annotated checklist of Roman aquatic animals. Continuation.

| Roman ethnonobionym/Scientific ID/ description | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Main ethnotaxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| crustata                                      | Decapoda                             | all crustaceans (and occasionally sea urchins) | LF1+ Pliny, HN 11, 165: “at in marinis crustata et cartilagin[a] a primores (sc. dentes) habere [...] unde intellegi potuerit minor”; Pliny, HN 9, 83: “pisium (sc. sanguine carentum) [...] sunt autem tria genera: primum quae mollia appellantur, dein contecta CRUSTIS tenuibus, postremo testis conclusa duris.” | <5 (2) | piscis2 [LF] (Fig. 12) | locusta2/ carabus2, squilla2/ caris, cancer1 [INT] (Fig. 12) | Lit. “covered with a crust” (crusta). Monomial. |
| cucumis                                       | Holothuria sp.? cotton-spinner? (Bisson et al. 2020) | FG Pliny, HN 9, 3 in mari [...] licet intelligere intuentibus [...] cucumin vero et colore et odore similium” | <5 (2) COVERT2 [LF1+] (Fig. 4) | – | – | – |
| curalio/ curulium                             | corals (Bisson et al. 2020)          | FG Pliny, HN 32, 21: “quantum apud nos Indicos margaritis pretium est [...] tantum apud Indos curale [...] forma ei est fruticus” | <5 (3); >30 (5) COVERT1 [LF1+] (Fig. 4) | – | – | – |
| cybium                                        | A kind of pelamys2 (Thompson 1947)   | FG Varro, Ling. 5, 77: “aquatilium vocabula animalium [...] peregrina [...] cybium”; Pliny, HN 32, 146: “cybium – ita vocatur concisa pelamys quae post XL dies a Ponto in Maeotim revertitur” | <15 pelamys2 [INT] (13); <10 (7) | – | – | Lit. “little cube” or “cube-like” (cf. Gr. kúbos). Food-based ethnonobionym (usually a fish cut and/or fish dish name). Pliny’s seemingly weird statement (“a cut-up pelamys returning to the Azov Sea”) is evidence of an intertwined (in our terms) “animal-food” categorization. Monomial. |
| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ description | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethnontaxonomic rank | Main ethnontaxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| cynops Myliobatis aquila (Linnaeus, 1758)? | eagle ray? | FG | Pliny, HN 32, 148 peculaires autem maris [...] cynops | <5 (1) | piscis | pecten | Gr. ὄνος, lit. “dog-faced”. Presumed ID based on diachronic equivalent (Tusc. razza muso-di-cane [Stefano Morelli, pers. comm.]). Unproductive binomial. |
| cynosdextia unidentified sea animal | – | FG | Pliny, HN 32, 148 peculaires autem maris [...] cynosdextia | <5 (1) | piscis | pecten | Gr. κυνόσδησις?, lit. “dog bite”. Despite being a Greek word, it is not attested in Greek sources. Unproductive binomial. |
| cyprinus Cyprinus carpio (Linnaeus, 1758) | carp (Thompson 1947) | FG | Pliny, HN 9, 58 fluviatilium silurus [...] fulgere sopitur; hoc et in mari accidere cyprino putant | <5 (2); <15 (12) | piscis | pecten | Cf. κύπρος “henna” (a shrub whose dye the Greeks knew well; cf. Dioscorides, 1, 95, 1). Gr. κυπρίνος, lit. “henna-like”, refers to the fish’s bronze colour. Pliny's information on marine habitat, absent in Aristotle’s reference passage, will refer to brackish waters (e.g., the Black Sea; cf. Thompson 1947). Monomial. |
| dactylus Pholas dactylus (Linnaeus, 1758) (Pholadidae) | common paddle (Thompson 1947) | FG | Pliny, HN 9, 184 concharum e genere sunt dactyl[i]i, [ab] humanorum unguium similitudine appellati | <5 (2) | pecten | pecten | Gr. δάκτυλος, lit. “finger”, “due to similarity with human nails” (Pliny). Pliny’s additional information on luminescent properties substantiates the ID. See unguis. Monomial. |
| delphinus Delphinus delphis (Linnaeus, 1758); Stenella coeruleoalba (Meyen, 1833); Tursiops truncatus (Montagu, 1821) | dolphin (Thompson 1947) | FG | Pliny, HN 32, 144 ut a beluis ordiamur [...] delphinii | >30; >30 | belua (marina)/ cetus | belua | Gr. δέλφης “womb” (cf. also adelphōς “womb sharer”, hence “brother”) but, despite dolphins being mammals, the name’s morphosemantics (inasmuch as root-based instead of theme-based) remains opaque. Monomial. |
| dentex Dentex sp. | dentic (Bisson et al. 2020) | FG | Columella, Rust. 8, 16, 8 pelagios (sc. pisces) [...] ut auratas et dentices | – | pelag[邈]/ [INT] | pelag[邈] | A derivative from dens “tooth”, pointing to the same referential constraint as Greek synonym synodus. ID supported by diachronic clues. Monomial. |
| donax Solenidæ; | razor shell (Bisson et al. 2020) | FG | Pliny, HN 32, 103 mares ali donakas vocant, ali aulōs, feminas ōnukhas [...] dulciores feminae sunt et unicolores | <5 (2); <5 (2) | pecten | pecten | Gr. δόναξ (lit. “reed”) captures a shell-shape-driven analogical similarity. Pliny describes it as the male of razor shells (cf. Pliny’s source, Xenocrates, 28); since females are said to be monochromatic, males will be Ensis sp. See onyx. See also aulos, solen. Monomial. |
**Annotated checklist of Roman aquatic animals. Continuation.**

| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ description | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethnотaxonomic rank | Main ethnotaxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| draco (marinus)                             | Trachinus sp. weever                   | FG                  | Pliny, HN 9, 82: "draco marinus, captus atque inmissus in harenam, cavernam sibi rostro mira celerate excavat" | <10(8); <20(17)       | piscis [LF1+]           |                       | Gr. drákol (lit. “snake”) refers to venomous spines. ID supported by diachronic clues (e.g., It. tràcina, MG. drákena, etc.). See araneus. Monomial (or unproductive binomial). |
| dracunculus                                 | Echichthys vipera lesser weever, dragnet | FG                  | Pliny, HN 32, 148: "draco – quidam aliud volunt esse dracunculum; est autem gerricule amplae similis, aculeos in branchiis habet ad caudam spectantes; sic [ut] scorpio laedit" | <5(1)                 | piscis [LF1+]           |                       | Lit. “small draco” (see draco). Pliny’s allusion to a double ID and description of opercular spines add Callionymus sp. to Echichthys vipera (i.e. the smaller “proper” draco); they are similar (especially considering the female of E. vipera) and have diachronically supported names. Monomial. |
| drino                                       | unidentifed sea animal                 | –                   | Pliny, HN 32, 144: "ut a beluis ordiamur [...] drino" | <5(1)                 | belua (marina)/cetus [LF] (Fig. 17) |                       | Only a name in Pliny’s list of beluae. Monomial. |
| echeneis1                                   | Lepadogaster sp. shore clingfish        | FG                  | Pliny, HN 9, 79: "est parvus admodum piscis adsuetus petris, echeneis appellatus" | <10(6)                | piscis [LF1+]           |                       | Gr. ekhenēis, lit. “ships-detaining” (see echeneis2). ID based on habitat information (rocky reef) and comparison with Greek sources. Roman authors tend to mix traits of shore clingfish and shark suckers. Used in magic and/or in medicine. Unproductive binomial. |
| echeneis2                                   | Echeneis sp.; Remora sp. shark sucker  | FG                  | Ovid, Hal. 99: "gaudent pelago quales [...] parva echeneis (at est, mirum, mora puppis ingens)" | See echeneis1         |                       |                       | See echeneis1. Believed to detain vessels (cf. dorsal suction disc used for sticking to large sea animals or vessels). Unproductive binomial. |
| echinometra                                 | Centrostephanus longispinus hatpin urchin | FS                  | Pliny, HN 9, 100: "echini [...] ex his echinometrae appellantur quorum spinae longissimae, calyces minimi" | <5(1); <5(1)          | echinus [FG]           |                       | Gr. ekhinomētra, lit. “urchin-mother”, in reference to size (this is the biggest Mediterranean sea urchin; cf. maeae). ID based on Pliny’s description, even though Aristotle, HA 530b (Pliny’s source) will refer to the melon sea urchin (Echinus melo Lamarck, 1816). Productive binomial. |
| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ description | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethno-taxonomic rank | Main ethno-taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| *echinus* (e.g., *Paracentrotus lividus* (Lamarck, 1816); *Arbacia lixula* (Linnaeus, 1758)) | sea urchins (e.g., stony sea urchin, black sea urchin) (Bisson et al. 2020) | FG Varro, Ling. 5, 77: “in conchyliis aliqua (sc. vocabula) ex graecis, ut peloris, ostrea, echinus; Pliny, HN 9, 100 ex eodem genere (sc. cancrorum) sunt echini” | >30; >30 conchylium [LF1+]; echinometra [FS] (Fig. 10); cancer/crustata [LF1+] (Fig. 12) | Gr. *ekhînos*. Varro includes echini in conchylium, seemingly reflecting the common Roman folk-taxonomy. Pliny includes them in cancer/crustata, either because he misreads Aristotle (who, much like Varro, considers them shellfish) or reflects an alternative Roman usage. For etymology, see Guasparri (2006c). Monomial. |
| *elacata* | Acipenser sp.? sturgeon? | FG Columella, Rust. 8, 17, 12: “esca iacentium [...] scombri carcharique et elacatae venterculos” | <5 (2); piscis1 [LF1+] | Gr. *elakátē*. Presumed ID based on the metaphoric field alluded to in the name's semantics (that of spinning and weaving), also used for Lat. equivalent acipenser, in reference to a sturgeon’s spindle-shaped snout. Monomial. |
| *elephantus*1 | Homarus gammarus (Linnaeus, 1758) | common lobster | Pliny, HN 32, 148: “elephant locustarum generis nigri, pedibus quaternis bisulcis – praeterea bracchia [iis] II binis articulis singulisque forcipibus denticulatis” | <5 (1) locusta[carabus]2 [INT] (Fig. 12) | Lit. “elephant”. Name likely driven by size and dark dorsal colour. ID based on Pliny’s description, supported by apparent diachronic clues (Calab. *liofanti*). Monomial. |
| *elephantus*2 | Cystophora cristata (Eneluben, 1777)? | hooded seal? | Pliny, HN 9, 10: “destituit oceanus [...] in Santonum litore interque reliquas (sc. belus) elephantos” | <5 (2) belua (marina)/cetus2 [LF] (Fig. 17) | Lit. “elephant”. Among the “beasts” (see belua) stranded on the Atlantic coast of Aquitania. Presumed ID based on referential constraint (the adult males’ elastic nasal cavity) paired with the seal’s (current) Atlantic distribution (Vacquie-Garcia et al. 2017). Monomial. |
| *emys* | Emys orbicularis (Linnaeus, 1758) | European pond turtle | Pliny, HN 32, 32: “sunt ergo testudinum genera terrestres, marinae, lutariae et quae in dulci aqua vivunt. has quidam e Graecis emydas appellant” | <5 (1) testudo [INT] (Fig. 14) | Gr. *emús*, loanword used by Pliny for denoting the “turtles living in freshwater”. See mus2. Monomial. |
### Annotated checklist of Roman aquatic animals. Continuation.

| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ description | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Main ethnotaxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| erythinus Pagellus erythrinus (Linnaeus, 1758) | common pandora FG | Ovid, Hal. 104: “gaudent pelago quaales […] rubens erythinus in unda” | – piscis, [LF1+] | – | | Gr. eruthýnous (cf. eruthrós “red”), in reference to reddish colour. ID supported by diachronic clues (cf. lutrinu, etr, ettre, etc. in Southern Italian dialects). Monomial. |
| exocoetus Coryphoblennius galerita (Linnaeus, 1758); Tripterygion sp. | blenny, black-faced blenny (Mair 1987: 220) | Ovid, Hal. 104: “exocoetum […] quod in siccum somni causa exeat […] idem Adonis dictus” | <5 (1); <10 (5) | piscis, [LF1+] | | Gr. exōkoitos, lit. “outsleeper”. Montagu’s blennies actually “may remain out of water” (Froese & Pauly 2020). See Adonis. Unproductive binomial. |
| faber Zeus faber Linnaeus, 1758 | John Dory (Bisson et al. 2020) FG | Ovid, Hal. 110: “gaudent pelago quaales […] et rarus faber” | <5 (4) piscis, [LF1+] | – | | Name (lit. “blacksmith”) captures a sound-driven referential trait (similar to the sound of a blacksmith’s bellows; see Radford et al. [2018], with John Dory’s sound samples). ID supported by diachronic equivalents (cf. Alb. kovac, Slov. kovaè, etc.). See zaeus. Monomial. |
| fascinum Holothuria sp.? cotton-spinner? | FG | Apuleius, Apol. 35: “posses dicitis ad res venerias sumpta de mari spuria et fascina propter nominum similitudinem” | <5 (1) COVERT² [LF1+] | | | Lit. “penis”. Presumed ID based on diachronic equivalents (e.g., Sp. carajo de mar, lt. minchia di mare, MG. thalassopsōlé). See Guasparri (2017b). Monomial. |
| galeos Squalidae, Scyliorhinidae, Triakidae dogfish, sharks, catsharks, houndsharks (Thompson 1947) | FG | Pliny, HN 32, 25: “persequitur galeos […] et alios quidem pisces, sed pastinacas praecipue, sicut in terra mustela serpentem” | <5 (1); >30 squalus [INT] (Fig. 8) | – | | Gr. galeós (a derivative from Gr. gaié “weasel”) alludes to the same referential traits (slender overall appearance plus voracity) as Lat. mustela (lit. “weasel”). Although mustela denotes a different fish (see mustela), Pliny confirms the same metaphorical connection. Monomial. |
| garos unidentified sea fish | – | FG | Pliny, HN 31, 93: “hoc olim conficio futurum ex pisce, quem Graeci garon vocabant” | <5 (2) piscis, [LF1+] | – | Gr. gáros, lit. “fermented fish-sauce” (cf. Lat. garum), Food-based ethnobionym (usually a fish cut and/or a fish dish name). Despite the Greek usage, Pliny describes and lists it also as a fish. Monomial. |
| gerres Spicara smaris (Linnaeus, 1758) picarel | (Bisson et al. 2020) FG | Martial, 12, 32, 15: “fuisse gerres aut inutilis maenas odor inopidicus urcei fatebatur” | <5 (3) piscis, [LF1+] | – | | ID hypothesis based on diachronic clues (e.g., Croat. gera, Fr. gerret, lt. zero, Slov. ettre [?]). Folk-etymologically linked to Gr. géra “bullshit” (cf. “gerreal” in Plautus) because of low esteem as food. Monomial. |
| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ folk taxon | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethno-taxonomic description | Main ethno-taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------|
| gerrula                                   | unidentified sea fish               | FG?                         | Pliny, HN 32, 148: *draco – quidam aliud volunt esse dracunculum; est autem gerriculae amplae similis* | <5 (1) piscis, [LF1+] | –                       |                          | Despite the morphological link to gerrus, the denominative rather than diminutive usage of suffix -cula (cf. Priscian, Inst. 2, 44) is of no help to the ID. Monomial. |
| gladius                                   | Xiphius gladius Linnaeus, 1758      | swordfish                   | Pliny, HN 32, 15: *Trebius Niger xiphian, id est gladium, rostro mucronato esse, ab hoc naves perfossas mergi* | <5 (4) belua (marina)/ cetus, [LF] (Fig. 17) | –                       | Lit. “sword.” ID widely supported diachronically. See xiphias. Monomial. |
| glanis                                    | Silurus sp. (Thompson 1947)         | catfish                     | Pliny, HN 9, 145: *cautus (sc. piscis) qui glanis vocatur avers[o]s mordet harmos nec devorat, sed esca spoliat* | <5 (4); piscis, [LF1+] | –                       |                          | Gr. glánis. ID based on Greek sources. Inclusion among marine animals in Pliny (HN 32, 148) can be justified as referring to brackish habitat (e.g., Black Sea; see Froese & Pauly 2020). Monomial. |
| glauciscus                                | Pomatomus saltatrix (Linnaeus, 1766) | bluefish                    | Pliny, HN 32, 129: *mulleribus lactis copiam facit glauciscus e iure sumptus; 32, 148 peculies autem maris […] glauciscus; […] sumptus; gauiscus e iure facit mulieribus lactis in loculis cupias, cum sit tibi gobio tantum in loculis* | <5 (2); piscis, [LF1+] | –                       |                          | Gr. glaukiskos (cf. glaukós “bluish-green or grey”). Possibly a little specimen of glaucus (or) and/or the same as glaucus (in disambiguation from glaucis). ID hypothesis based on Greek sources. Monomial. |
| glaucus1                                  | Pomatomus saltatrix (Linnaeus, 1766) | bluefish                    | Ovid, Hal. 117: *gaudent pelago quales […] numquam aestivo conspectus sidere glaucus* | <5 (4); piscis, [LF1+] | –                       |                          | Gr. glaukis (cf. glaukós “bluish-green or grey”). ID hypothesis based on data found in Greek sources, (e.g., similarity to seabasses). Monomial. |
| glaucus2                                  | Prionace glauca (Linnaeus, 1758?)   | blue shark? (de Saint-Denis 1947; Thompson 1947) | Ennius, var. 39: *apriculum piscem […] Tarenti; Surrenti [ell]opem fac ermas, glaucunqua aput Cumas* | <5 (4); belua (marina)/ cetus, [INT] (Fig. 10) | –                       |                          | See glaukis1. ID hypothesis based on information from Greek sources (e.g., parental care (cf. Oppian, Hal. 1, 749)) and diachronous colour-based equivalents. Monomial. |
| glycymaris                                | Acanthocardia sp. rough cockle     | FG                          | Pliny, HN 32, 147: *peculies autem maris […] chema glycymarides quae sunt maiores quam peloridae* | <5 (1); concha, (conchula) [INT] (Fig. 10) | –                       |                          | Gr. glukumaris, lit. “sweet maris” – *maris* is a liquid measure. ID based on information from Pliny’s source Xenocrates (18ff.), paired with cross-cultural ethnobiological traits of prototypical ethnotaxa (largest size and highest ecological salience; see Hunn 1999). See chema glycymariss. Unproductive binomial. |
| gobio/gobius                               | Gobiidae (Bisson et al. 2020)      | FG                          | Juvenal, 11, 37: *ne mulium cupias, cum sit tibi gobio tantum in loculis* | <10 (9) saxatilies, [INT] (Fig. 8) | –                       |                          | ID based on diachronic clues (e.g., MG. gobiis, Lt. ghiozzo, Sp. gob. Ethnotaxonomy based on information in Greek sources about kobiós. Monomial. |
### Annotated checklist of Roman aquatic animals. Continuation.

| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ description | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethnob-taxonomic rank | Main ethno-taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| Gorgonia corals – FG? Pliny, HN 37, 164: “Gorgonia nihil aliud est quam curalium. nominis causa, quod in duritiam lapidis mutatur emollitum in mari” | – FG? | <5 (1) COVERT1 [LF1+] (Fig. 4) | – A kind of stone which is “nothing but coral”. Pliny also explains the name (“it petrifies”; cf. Gorgo, another name for petrifying-sighted Medusa). ID supported diachronically. See curalio. Monomial. |
| halipleumon Rhizostoma pulmo (Macri, 1778) barrel jellyfish (Thompson 1947) | FG | <5 (1); COVERT3 [LF1+] (Fig. 4) | – Gr. halipleúmōn, lit. “sea lung”. ID based on diachronic equivalents (e.g., Fr. poumon de mer, It. polmone di mare). See pulmo. Unproductive binomial. |
| (h)allecula small fish (Rondelet 1554) | FG | <5 (3) piscis1 [LF1+] | – Food-based ethnobionym (usually a fish cut and/or a fish dish name). Lit. “(h)alle(x)-related”, i.e. (small fish) used for making (h)alle(x) (fish sauce akin to garum; García Vargas et al. 2014). Diachronically supported ID (lt. alice, alece = Engraulis encrasicolus, the European anchovy). Monomial. |
| (h)allecula rivalis freshwater small fish | – FS | <5 (1) piscis1 [LF1+] | – Lit. “brook-(h)allecula”. See (h)allecula. Productive binomial. |
| helix Aporrhais sp. pelican’s foot (Thompson 1947) | FG | <5 (1); cochloes [LF3+] (Fig. 10) | – Gr. hélix, lit. “twist(ed)”, in reference to shell shape. See actinophoros, pentadactylus. Monomial. |
| helops Acipenser stellatus starry sturgeon, sturgeon (Thompson 1947; Bisson et al. 2020) | FG | <15 piscis1 [LF1+] (11); <20 (15) | – Either from Gr. (h)élōs-óps “fawn-faced” or en-lopós “scaly”. Both etymologies are likely in referential terms. Given the sturgeons’ current Mediterranean distribution, Ennius’s “western” elops will be Acipenser sturio; all the other (“eastern”) (h)elopes will be Acipenser stellatus. Unproductive binomial. |
| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ folk taxon | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethnontaxonomic rank | Main ethnontaxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------|
| hepar                                      | Gaidropsarus mediterraneus (Linnaeus, 1758)? | FG | Pliny, HN 32, 149: “peculiares autem maris […] hepar” | <5 piscis, [LF1+] | – | – | ID hypothesis based on data found in Greek sources, e.g., Aelian’s information on synonymy with Lat. mustela, whose liver (cf. Gr. ἰχθύς "liver") was consumed according to Pliny. Hence, a food-based ethnobionym? Monomial. |
| heracleoticus                              | Calappa granulata (Linnaeus, 1758) | FG | Pliny, HN 9, 97: “cancerum generarum phalaei, astac[i], m[a]eae, pal[i]uri, Heracleoticus” | <5 cancer, [INT] | – | – | Lit. “from Heraclea” (but which Heraclea?) ID. ID based on size, shape, and head found in Aristotle (HA 527b, PA 624a). Monomial. |
| hippocampus                                | Hippocampus sp.seahorse              | FG | Pliny, HN 32, 148: “peculiares autem maris […] hippocampus” | <10 piscis, [LF1+] | – | – | Gr. hippocampus (hippo-kampal-os), lit. “horse-caterpillar-like” captures seahorses’ salient appearance. Unproductive binomial. |
| hippos                                     | Ocyprodes cursor (Linnaeus, 1758)    | FG | Pliny, HN 9, 97: “in Phoenice hippocampus vocalit[ur], tantae velocitatis, ut consaequ non sit” | <5 cancer, [INT] | – | – | Gr. hippos, lit. “horse”, captures a behavioural trait. ID and ethnotaxonomy based on information from Pliny and his source (Aristotle, HA 525b). Monomial. |
| hippurus                                   | Coryphaena hippurus (Linnaeus, 1758) | FG | Ovid, Hal. 95ff.: “gaudent pelago quales […] hippuri celeres” | <5 piscis, [LF1+] | – | – | Gr. hippopurus (hippo-oura-os, lit. “horse-tail-ed”) captures a salient trait (head+dorsal fin) by analogy with a hippopus, i.e. a horsetail crested helmet. ID based on Greek sources (e.g., Oppian, Hal. 4, 404ff. [attracted by using bundles of reeds – still attested]). Unproductive binomial. |
| hirundo                                    | Hirundichthys rondeletii (Valenciennes, 1847); Cheilopogon heterurus (Rafinesque, 1810) | FG | Pliny, HN 9, 82: “volat sane perquam similis volucri hirund[i]o, item milvis” | <5 piscis, [LF1+] | – | – | Lit. “swallow”. ID based on diachronic clues (e.g., It. rondinella) and Greek descriptions of synonym kholiðún. Monomial. |
| holothurium                                | Holothuria sp. (Thompson 1947)       | FG | Pliny, HN 9, 154 multis eadem natura quae frutici, ut [hipholθu] rii, pulmonibus, stellis | <5 COVERT? [LF1+] | – | – | Gr. holothúriōn (holo-thourio-n, lit. “[which is] all sexually aroused”) refers to phallic shape. ID supported by diachronic equivalents of the “sea-penis” kind (see fascinum). See Guasparri 2017b. Unproductive binomial. |
| homo marinus                               | unidentified sea animal              | – | Pliny, HN 9, 10: “visum […] in Gaditanio oceano hominem marinum toto corpore absoluta similitudine”; 32, 144 “ut a beluis ordinamur […] homines qui marini vocantur” | <5 belua (marina)/ cetus, [LF] | – | – | Lit. “marine human”. A “beast” (see belua) spotted off the Atlantic coast of Spain (cf. in Gaditanio oceano). Unproductive binomial. |
| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ folk taxon | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Main ethnotaxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------|
| hæna                                    | unidentified sea fish                | Pliny, HN 32, 154: "et hænam piscem vidi in Aenaria insula captum" | ≤5 piscis₁ [LF1+] (1) | –                       | –                     | Gr. “hæna” (for the ancients mainly Hæna hæna, the striped hæna) applies to two fish, one of which is Diplodus puntazzo (sharp snout bream), given its stripes pattern. The other, an unidentified kētos (see cetus₂) in Oppian and Aelian (maybe Cuvier’s beaked whales, Ziphius cavirostris Cuvier, 1823), might be the same as Pliny’s hæna; but Pliny speaks of a piscis not of a cetus... Monomial. |
| ichthycolla                              | unidentified sea fish                | Pliny, HN 32, 73: "ichthycolla appellatur piscis, cui glutinosum est corium. idem nomen glutinoeius" | ≤5 piscis₁ [LF1+] (1) | –                       | –                     | Gr. *ichthukollà*, lit. “fish glue”. As a fish in Pliny only. Most likely a food-based “semantic backformation” (Queller 2003) from the name of the fish glue to the (seemingly unknown to Pliny) presumed fish from which it was prepared. Unproductive binomial. |
| ictinus                                  | Dactylopterus volitans (Linnaeus, 1758) | flying gurnard (Bisson et al. 2020) | FG | ≤5 piscis₁ [LF1+] (1) | –                     | Gr. “iktīnos”, lit. “kite”, is unattested as a fish. Inasmuch as a Greek term, Pliny seemingly includes it in his aquatic animal list instead of Lat. synonym *milvus*. Monomial. |
| isox                                    | Esox lucius Linnaeus, 1758? | P. Pliny, HN 9, 44: "in quibusdam amnium haut minores (sc. thynn) silurus in Nilo, isox in Rheno, attilus in Pado" | ≤5 piscis₁ [LF1+] (1); | ≤5 piscis₁ [LF1+] (1) | –                     | Presumed ID based on size and ecological information (Rhine fish). Monomial. |
| iulis                                    | Thalassoma pavo (Linnaeus, 1758); Coris julis (Linnaeus, 1758) | ornate wrasse, rainbow wrasse (Thompson 1947) | FG | ≤5 saxatiles [INT] (2); (Fig. 8) | –                     | Gr. *ioulis* (ioulóid; cf. Gr. *ioulos* “down [= soft hair]”) captures a salient food-based referential trait, i.e. boniness. ID based on ichthyological clues (e.g., MG. *gulos*, Heb. *yfut*, Sp. *julia*, Sic. *julo*). Monomial. |
| iulus                                    | Coris julis (Linnaeus, 1758) | rainbow wrasse (Thompson 1947) | FG | ≤5 saxatiles [INT] (1); (Fig. 8) | ≤5 saxatiles [INT] (1); (Fig. 8) | Gr. *ioulos* (lit. “down”; also “centipede”). Alternative form of *iulis*, also attested in Greek sources. Monomial. |
| juvenis marinus                          | unidentified sea animal              | Juvenal,14, 281: "Calpe relicta [...] grande operae pretium est [...] oceani monstra et iuvenes vidisse marinos" | ≤5 belua (marina)/ cetus₂ [LF] (Fig. 17) | –                       | –                     | Lit. “young marine man”. Possibly an alternative name of *homo marinus*, a “monster” to be encountered, again, beyond the pillars of Hercules (Strait of Gibraltar). Unproductive binomial. |
| lacerta                                  | Scomber scombrus Linnaeus, 1758? | Atlantic mackerel? | FG | ≤5 lacertas [INT] (1); (Fig. 8) | –                       | Name (lit. “lizard”) captures mottled green colour (black undulating markings on the back) as salient trait. ID hypothesis based on ichthyological clues (lt. *lacerta*). Apparently Cicero’s favourite target as a hobby fisherman. Monomial. |
### Annotated checklist of Roman aquatic animals. Continuation.

| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ description | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethnontaxonomic rank | Main ethnotaxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| (lacertus,) Scomber sp.? (also Trachurus sp.?) | FG | Martial, 11, 52: "cenabis belle, luli Cerialis, apud me […] tibi dabitur […] vetus et tenui maior cordyla lacerto"? | <5 (2) | lacertus₂ [INT] (Fig. 8) | – | Prototypical taxon of lacertus₂. In fact only conjectural: never attested unambiguously as FG, likely replaced by scomber. Name (lit. “lizard”) allegedly captures greenish mottled colour as salient trait, seemingly more remarkable than opercular spot in Trachurus (cf. Vergil, G. 4, 12 picti lacerti, referring to the lizard’s shaded pattern). ID hypothesis, as based on colour-pattern-driven analogical similarity to lizards, is supported diachronically (Sessa 2019). Monomial. |
| lacertus₂ (lacerti/ lacertae) | INT | Pliny, HN 32, 146: "peculiares autem maris […] colia[e] sive Parianus sive Sexitanus a patria Baetica, lacertorum minimi, […] lacertorum genera […]" | <10 (5) | piscis₁ [LF1+] (Fig. 8) | colias, saurus [FG] (Fig. 8) | Name (lit. “lizard”) captures salient traits such as mottled green colour in Scomber sp. (likely the prototypical lacertus – cf. Vergil, G. 4, 12 picti [“painted”] lacerti, said of the lizards’ shaded pattern) and, possibly, greenish colour plus opercular spot in Trachurus sp. ID based on diachronic clues (e.g., lacerto, lacierete in coastal Italian dialects). Ethnotaxonomy confirmed by Celsus’s rendition of Galen’s plural saȗroi (Med. 2, 18, 7: lacertus); also suggested by diachronic clues (Sessa 2019; Fig. 9). Monomial. |
| lacertus Byzantiacus imported from Byzantium | – | Stat., Silv. 4, 9, 13: “quales (sc. libelli) […] Byzantiacos colunt lacertos” | <5 (1) | lacertus₁ [FG] (Fig. 8) | – | Lacertus imported from Byzantium. Food-based ethnobionym (usually a fish cut and/or fish dish name). Productive binomial. |
| lacertus Sexitanus imported from Sex | – | Martial, 7, 78: “cum Saxetani ponatur coda lacerti […] bene si cenas” | <5 (1) | lacertus₁ [FG] (Fig. 8) | – | See lacertus Byzantiacus. Sex, in Hispania Baetica (now, approximately, Andalusia), was famous for its preserved fish. Productive binomial. |
| lagita unidentified fish | – | Apicius, 4, 2, 21: “patina ex lagitis et cerebellis: friges ova dura, cerebella elixias et enerva, gizeria pullorum coques. haec omnia divides praeter piscem” | <5 (2) | piscis₁ [LF1+] | – | In Apicius only, otherwise unattested. A fish (see piscis; cf. usage of verb rado “to scale” in Apicius). Monomial. |
| lamia Lophius piscatorius Linnaeus, 1758 (mature) | FG | Pliny, HN 9, 78 planorum piscium alterum est genus, quod pro spina cartilaginem habet, ut […] lamiae | <5 (1); plani [INT] (Fig. 8) | – | Gr. Lámia (cf. laimós “gullet”) denotes a “monster supposed to devour naughty children”; also “a gutton”, in reference to “ugliness”, coupled with size and (big) mouth. ID supported diachronically (Sic. lamia). Monomial. |
| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ folk taxon | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethno-taxonomic rank | Main ethno-taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| **lamiros**                               | unidentified sea fish              | –                   | FG? Ovid, Hal. 120: <5 (2)      |                      | **piscis**<sub>1</sub> [LF1+] | –                      | Cf. Gr. *lamura* “gluttonous”. Maybe an alternative form of *lamiros*. Monomial. |
| **lelepris**                              | Symphodus sp.; wrasses *(Labrus* (Thompson 1947)) | FG                  | Pliny, HN 32, 149: <5 (1);      | **piscis**<sub>1</sub> [LF1+] | –                     | –                      | ID based on Greek sources (synonymy with *phukís* in Hesychius, λ 607). See *phycis*. Supported by diachronic clues (modern names refer, folk- etymologically, to fleshy “lips”, e.g., Sic. *lippura*, Cal. *lappiru*). Monomial. |
| **leo**                                   | Homarus gammarus *(Linnaeus, 1758)* | common lobster (Thompson 1947) | Pliny, HN 32, 149: <5 (2);      | **locusta**<sub>2</sub>/ *carabus*<sub>2</sub> [INT] (Fig. 12) | –                     | –                      | Name (lit. “lion”) likely refers to size plus yellow colour underneath. See *elephantus*. Monomial. |
| **lepada**                                | Patella sp. limpet *(Thompson 1947)* | FG                  | Plautus, Cas. 493: <5 (1);      | **ostreum**<sub>2</sub>/ **testaeae**/ **concha**<sub>2</sub> (conchula) [LF2+] (Fig. 10) | –                      | –                      | ID based on diachronic clues (e.g., Sp. *lapas*, It. *lápida*). Gr. *lepás* (from *lépō* “to peel”; cf. *lepís* “scale”) captures a salient trait of limpets as seen in nature (i.e. clinging to rocks). See *lepada*. Monomial. |
| **lepus (marinus)**                       | Aplysia sp. sea hare *(Thompson 1947)* | FG                  | Apuleius, Apol. 33: <25 (20)    | **piscis**<sub>2</sub> [LF1+]? | –                      | –                      | Lit. “(sea) hare”. ID supported diachronically (cf. the many common names of the “sea hare” kind). Seemingly directly subsumed by the LF *piscis*<sub>2</sub> (or *piscis*?), due to high perceptual salience. Monomial (or unproductive binomial). |
| **lingulaca**                             | Solea sp. sole                      | FG                  | Varro, Ling. 5, 77: <5 (3)      | **piscis**<sub>1</sub> [LF1+] | –                      | –                      | Lit. “(little) tongue-like” captures a salient morphological trait (flatness). ID supported by diachronic clues (cf. e.g., *linguattola*, *lingua* in dialects of the Italian Thyrrenian coast). Monomial. |
| **locusta<sub>1</sub>**                   | Palinurus elephas *(Fabricius, 1787)* | spiny lobster *(Bisson et al., 2020)* | Pliny, HN 32, 149: <20 (19)    | **locusta**<sub>2</sub>/ *carabus*<sub>2</sub> [INT] (Fig. 12) | –                      | –                      | Name (lit. “grasshopper”) captures an analogical similarity (cf. insect-like traits such as long antennae; Fig. 13). ID supported by diachronic equivalents (cf. Ven. *grillo de mar*, lit. “sea cricket”). Monomial. |
Annotated checklist of Roman aquatic animals. Continuation.

| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ folk taxon | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethno-taxonomic rank | Main ethnotaxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| locusta<sub>2</sub> (locustae)              | lobster-like crustaceans –           | INT                  | Pliny, HN 32, 148: *elephanti locustarum generis nigri* | <5                    | cancer/crustata           | locusta,/ carabas, elephantus, etc. [FG] (Fig. 12) | ID and ethnotaxonomy both supported by Pliny’s translations of Aristotle’s károboi + astakoí with locusta (e.g., Pliny, HN 9, 158; cf. Aristotle, HA 541b 19). Monomial. |
| loligo                                      | Loliginidae, Histiotethidae squids (Bisson et al. 2020) | FG                   | Pliny, HN 9, 83: *primum genus (sc. piscium sanguinum carentium) […] mollia appellantur […] sunt loligo, sepia, polyopus et cetera* | <30                   | mollia [INT]             | (Fig. 4)               | – ID supported by Pliny’s translations of Aristotle’s teuthís + teuthós with lolligo (e.g., Pliny, HN 9, 83; cf. Aristotle, HA 523b 9). Monomial. |
| lopada Patella sp. limpet (Thompson 1947)  | FG                                   |                       | Plautus, Rud. 297: *echinos, lopadas, ostreas, balanos captamus, conchas, marinam urticam, musculos* | <5                    | ostreum,/ testacea/ concha,/ (conchula) [LF2+] (Fig. 10) | – Alternative form of lepada. Gr. lópás, (lit. “plate”) captures a salient trait of a limpet (hollowness) as seen once removed from a rock (see – conversely – lepada). Monomial. |
| lucerna Uranooscopus scaber Linnaeus, 1758; likely also Cheilodichthys lucerna (Linnaeus, 1758) | stargazer; likely also tub gurnard (Bisson et al. 2020) | FG                   | Pliny, HN 9, 82: *piscis ex argumento appellatus lucerna, linguaque ignea per os exerta tranquillis noctibus reulect* | <5                    | piscis <sub>1</sub> [LF1+] | – Name (lit. “lamp”) refers to body shape similarity to ancient oil-lamps (plus flame-like – but not luminescent – tongue in stargazers; cf. Pliny’s passage). ID based on diachronic clues (e.g., lucerna, lumera, etc. in coastal Italian dialects). Monomial. |
| lupus Dicentrarchus sp. seabass (Bisson et al. 2020) | seabass | FG | Varro, Ling. 5, 77: *vocabula piscium […] translata […] a vi quadam […] ut […] lupus* | <30                   | piscis <sub>1</sub> [LF1+] | l. germanus, l. lanatus, l. maculatus [FS] | – Name (lit. ”wolf”) refers to voracity (cf. Varro). ID supported by diachronic clues (e.g., Fr. loup, Cat. llop, Sard. lupus). Monomial. |
| lupus fluviatilis a seabass found in rivers | FS |                       | Columella, Rust. 8, 16, 4: *erudita palata fastidire docuit fluviatilis lupum, nisi quem Tiberi adverso torrente defaligasset* | <5                    | piscis <sub>1</sub> [LF1+] | – Lit. “river-wolf”. The most esteemed lupus was found in the river Tiber. Productive binomial. |
| Roman ethno-bionym/Scientific ID/ description | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethnontaxonomic rank | Main ethno-taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|----------|
| lupus germanus | Dicentrarchus labrax (Linnaeus, 1758) | European seabass | FS | Macrob., Sat. 3, 16, 14: “quid mihi negoti est cum ists nugaritoribus potius quam [...] edimus [...] lupum germanum qui inter duos pontes captus fuit [...] lupus” | <30 (25) piscis, [LF1+] | – | Adjective germanus (lit. “real”, “genuine”) refers to the river Tiber’s lupus and, as expected in ethnobiolinguistics (Berlin 1992), labels the prototypical lupus (when opposed to, e.g., lupus maculatus). Productive binomial. |
| lupus lanatus/ laneus | a seabass whose meat is particularly white and soft | – | FS | Pliny, HN 9, 61; “lupum laudatisissi qui appellantur lanati a candore marinique carnis” | <5 (2) piscis, [LF1+] | – | Lit. “woolly wolf”. Food-based attributive lanatus/ laneus (lit. “woolly”) refers to “whiteness and softness of meat” (Pliny, HN 9, 61). See lupus. Productive binomial. |
| lupus maculatus | Dicentrarchus punctatus seabass (Bloch, 1792) | – | FS | Columella, Rust. 8, 17, 8; “punctatum macula – nam sunt et uarii – lupus includamus” | <5 (2) piscis, [LF1+] | – | Lit. “spotted wolf”. ID based on name’s description paired with the (current) Mediterranean distribution of seabasses. See also Juvenal, 5, 104. See lupus. Productive binomial. |
| maea | Maja squinado common (Herbst, 1788) | – | FG | Pliny, HN 9, 97: “cancrorum genera carab[i], astac[i], melaeae, pal[g]uri, Heracleotici | 5 (4) cancer, [INT] (Fig. 12) | – | Gr. mala, lit. “good mother”, “nurse”. ID based on Aristotle’s information on size (the biggest crab), which also accounts for the Greek name (cf. echinometra). Monomial. |
| maena | Spicara maena blotched (Linnaeus, 1758) | – | FG | Ovid, Hal. 120: “herbosa piscis luxantur harena ut [...] fecundum genus menae” | <25 (21) piscis, [LF1+] | – | ID based on information in Greek sources about maina (sic) and diachronic clues (e.g., menoa, menola, minula, etc. in coastal Italian dialects). Monomial. |
| Maeotes | unidentified fish | – | FG | Pliny, HN 32, 149: “peculiares autem maris […] maetes” | <5 (1); piscis, [LF1+] | <5 (2) | Gr. Maiotès, lit. “of Lake Maeotis” (= Sea of Azov). Greek sources describe it as a fish found both in the Black Sea and the Nile. Monomial. |
| manos | Hippopon spongiosa communis (Lamarck, 1814) | honeycomb bath sponge | FS | Pliny, HN 9, 148: “spongium […] spissum et mollium (sc. genus) manos”; 9, 149: “maxime flunt manos” | <5 (2) spongea [FG] | <5 (2) | Gr. manós, lit. “loose”. Compact, very soft and the largest sponge kind according to Pliny (following Aristotle, HA 548a 31). Monomial. |
| melanurus | Oblada melanura (Linnaeus, 1759) | saddled sea bream | FG | Columella, Rust. 8, 16, 8; “saxatiles dict sunt ut merulæae turdique nec minus melanuri” | <10 (6); saxatiles [INT] | <15 (10) | Gr. melánouros (melán-our-os, lit. “black-tail-ed”) captures a salient trait. ID suggested by diachronic clues (MG. melanour, Alb. melurus). Unproductive binomial. |
| merula | Labrus merula Linnaeus, 1758 | brown wrasse | FG | Pliny, HN 32, 149: “peculiares autem maris […] merula inter saxatiles laudata” | <10 (7) saxatiles [INT] | – | Lit. “blackbird”. Name refers to dark colour, but the relation to birds is driven by the Greek and Latin name for wrasses, i.e., “thresh” (Gr. kóssuphos, Lat. turdus, lit. “thresh”; see turdus), blackbirds being a sort of “black threshes”. ID supported diachronically (e.g., Neap. meriu, Cors. merula). Monomial. |
| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ folk taxon | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethnotaxonomic rank | Main ethnotaxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------|
| dolvis | Dactylopterus volitans (Linnaeus, 1758) | FG | Ovid, Hal. 95ff.: “gaudent pelago quales [...] nigro targore milvi” | <5 (3) piscis, [LF1+] | – | – | Lit. “kite”. Bird-related name driven by colour paired with very large, fan-like, pectoral fins. Actually not a “flying” fish, despite the ancient (and modern) names and beliefs. Monomial. |
| mitulus | Mytilus sp. Mediterranean mussel; blue mussel (Bisson et al. 2020) | FS | Pliny, HN 32, 97: “degenerant (sc. myaces) in duas species: mitulos [...] myiscas quae rotunditate differunt, minores aliquanto atque hirtae, tenuioribus testis” | <5 (2) myax/mus1/ (mys)/ mitulus2 [FG] (Fig. 10) | – | – | The largest, commonest and hence prototypical mussel (in particular M. galloprovincialis). Pliny shows such usage when translating Dioscorides’s and Xenocrates’s múax (= the largest mussels) in HN 32, 98 and 32, 97 respectively. ID supported diachronically (e.g., lt. mitilo). Monomial. |
| mitulus2 | Mytilidae marine mussels | FG | Pliny, HN 9, 132: “inest his (sc. nassis) esca, clusiles mordacesque conchae, ceu mitulos videmus” | <10 (5) musculus2 [INT] musica, mucinclus, etc. [FS] (Fig. 10) | – | – | See mitulus1. Marine mussels only (cf. musculus2, which includes freshwater ones). Monomial. (Figs 11, 13). |
| mitulus3 | most bivalve molluscs | LF3+ | Pliny, HN 9, 160: “et mituli, pectines sponte naturae in harenosis proveniunt” | <5 (2) ostraeum/ testacea/ concha/ (conchula) [LF2+] (Fig. 10) | concha1, musculus [INT] (Fig. 10) | – | When translating Aristotle (HA 547b 12ff.), Pliny shows this mitulus to be equivalent with concha1 (see) – in fact it is more inclusive as it subsumes mussels (i.e. mitulus2). Cf. information in Athenaeus, 3, 85e, i.e. Romans denote clams, cockles (Gr. tellína) as mítlon (sic). Monomial. |
| mizyen | Mugil sp. grey mullet (Thompson 1947) | FG | Pliny, HN 32, 77: “fel [...] bacchi, quem quidam mizyenem vocant” | <5 (1) piscis, [LF1+] | – | – | Given the synonymy with Gr. bákkhos (see bacchus) and its double reference in Greek (Thompson 1947: 24), this will be a mullet (hence Pliny’s remark “which some call myzümem” to distinguish it from bacchus as a cod). Diachronic clues in coastal Italian dialects (e.g., musao, mazzone, muggine). Monomial. |
| molia | Cephalopoda cephalopods | INT | Pliny, HN 9, 83: “primum genus (sc. piscium sanguine carentium) [...] molia appellantur [...] sunt lolligo, sepia, polypus et cetera” | <10 (7) piscis2 [LF] (Fig. 4) polypus, sepia, etc. [FG] (Fig. 4) | – | – | Lit. “soft [animals]”. Pliny generally uses molia to translate Aristotle’s malákia. Hence: is this idiosyncratic Pliny’s usage or was the term actually spread in Latin? Monomial. (Fig. 7). |
## Annotated checklist of Roman aquatic animals. Continuation.

| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ folk taxon | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethno-taxonomic rank | Main ethno-taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| mora                                       | See echeneis\(^1\)\(^2\)             | FG                   | Pliny, HN 32, 6: “e nostri quidam Latine moram appellavere eum” <5 (1) piscis; [LF1+] | –                     | –                        | –                      | Lit. “delay”. Latin translation of Gr. ekhenéis. See echeneis\(^1\)\(^2\), Monomial. |
| mormyr(a)                                  | Lithognathus mormyrus (Linnaeus, 1758) | striped seabream (Thompson 1947) FG | Ovid, Hal. 110: “gaudent pelago quales […] pictae mormyrus” <5 (2); piscis; [LF1+] | <10 (7)               | –                        | –                      | Presumed etymology from Gr. mormyρο “to boil” captures no trait on the biological referent (this is not a sound-emitting fish). ID suggested by diachronic clues (e.g., It. mormora, Cors. mermura, etc.). Monomial. |
| mugil                                      | Mugil sp.                             | grey mullet (Thompson 1947: 108) FG | Pliny, HN 9, 144: “tardissimi piscium hi (sc. pastinaceae) mugilem velocissimum omnium habentes in ventre reperintur” <20 piscis; [LF1+] | –                     | –                        | –                      | Derivation either from muceo (cf. mucus “mucus”) or mulgeo “to suck” (cf. surface feeding habit). ID suggested by diachronic clues (e.g., Fr. muge, Sp. mujol, etc.). Monomial. |
| mullus                                     | Mullus sp.                            | red mullet (Bisson et al. 2020) FG | Ovid, Hal.118: “herbosa pisces luxantur harena ut […] squamas tenui suffusus sanguine mullus” >30 piscis; [LF1+] mullus lutarius; m. saxatilis, m. litorarius [FS] | –                     | –                        | –                      | ID supported diachronically (e.g., Cat. moll, Fr. mulle). Monomial. |
| mullus barbat(ulus)                        | Mullus sp.                            | red mullet FG?       | Cicero, Att. 2, 1, 7: “nostri autem principes digito se caelum putent attingere si multi barbati in piscinis sint” <5 (3) piscis; [LF1+] mullus lutarius; m. saxatilis, m. litorarius [FS]? | –                     | –                        | –                      | Lit. “bearded (red) mullet”. Apparently the same as simple mullus, since all red mullets have a “beard”, i.e. chin barbels. Productive binomial. |
| mullus litorarius                          | –                                    | red mullets found near the shore – FS | Pliny, HN 9, 65: “nec litorari[ ] is (sc. mullis) gratia” <5 (1) mullus [FG] | –                     | –                        | –                      | Lit. “shore (red) mullet”. Productive binomial. |
| mullus lutarius                           | Mullus barbatus Linnaeus, 1758        | red mullet FS        | Pliny, HN 9, 65: “litarum ex iis (sc. mullis) vilissimi generis appellant: hunc semper comitatur sargus” <5 (1) mullus [FG] | –                     | –                        | –                      | Lit. “mud (red) mullet”. The specification is still attested (cf. Cat. moll de fang, It. triglia di fango, etc.). Productive binomial. |
| mullus saxatilis                           | Mullus surmleurs Linnaeus, 1758       | surmullet FS         | Seneca, Nat. 3, 18, 4: “nihil est mullus saxatali mulo” <5 (1) mullus [FG]; saxatiles [INT] (Fig. 8) | –                     | –                        | –                      | Lit. “rock (red) mullet”. The specification is still attested (cf. e.g., Cat. moll de roca; Fr. rouget de roche). Productive binomial. |
| m(ura)ena                                  | Muraena helena Linnaeus, 1758         | moray eel FG         | Varro, Ling. 9, 113: “item in piscibus dissimilis murena lupo” <20 piscis; [LF1+] mure(a)ena fluta [FS] | >30 (17)              | –                        | –                      | Gr. (s)múraina. ID supported diachronically (e.g., It. murena, MG. smúrena). Monomial. |

\(^1\) FG. Scientific ID supported diachronically (e.g., Cat. moll de fang, It. triglia di fango, etc.). Productive binomial.

\(^2\) FG. Taxonomic rank supported diachronically (e.g., Cat. moll de fang, It. triglia di fango, etc.). Productive binomial.
Annotated checklist of Roman aquatic animals. Continuation.

| Roman ethnobionym/ folk taxon | Scientific ID/ description | Vernacular name (and/ or ID reference) | Main ethnotaxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| mur(a)ena fluta               | a fat moray eel            | –                                      | FS COLUMELLA, RUST. 8, 17, 8: “includamus item flutas, quae maxime probantur, murenas”; VARRO, FR. 55, 1: “murenas flutas […] in summa aqua prae pinguedine fluctuunt” | <5 (3) mur(a)ena [FG] | –                       | –                      | Lit. “floating moray”, maybe in reference to fat. Seemingly a food-based ethnobionym (“fatness” in morays was particularly esteemed). Productive binomial. |
| murex₁ (murix)                | Bolinus brandaris (Linnaeus, 1758); Hexaplex trunculus (Linnaeus, 1758) | spiny dye murex, banded dye murex (Bisson et al. 2020) | FG Pliny, HN 32, 149: “peculiares autem maris […] murix” | <20 (16) murix₂/purpura/ pelagiae [INT] (Fig. 10) | murex₁, purpura₁, conchylium, etc. [FG] (Fig. 10) | Morphology (muri-c-s, a derived from mus “mouse”) captures analogical similarity to mice’s spindle-shaped body (the siphonal canal is the “tail”), ID based on the transferred usage of Lat. murex for denoting pointed things (e.g., pointed stones, bridle-bits, caltrops, iron spikes, etc.) – under this token both species are the most pointed among Mediterranean muricids. Supported diachronically (e.g., It. murice). Ethnotaxonomy based on Pliny’s usage in the singular or as opposed to purpura (e.g., HN 9, 80). See purpura₁, Prototypical of murex₂. Monomial. |
| murex₂ (murex₁)               | Muricidae purple-dye producing molluscs | –                                      | INT Pliny, HN 32, 84: “muricum generis sunt quae vocant Graeci coluthia sive corphyia” | <20 (17) ostreum₂/testacea/concha₂/ (conchula) [LF2+] (Fig. 10) | –                       | –                      | See murex₂. Ethnotaxonomy supported by Pliny’s translation of his Greek sources’ porphúrai and kérakes (both “purple-fish”) either with purpurae (see purpura) or murex. Monomial. |
| murex Baianus                 | a murex₁ found at Baiae    | –                                      | FS Horace, Sat. 2, 4, 32: “nascentes inplent conchylia lunae; sed non omne mare est generosiæ fertili testae: murice Baiano melior Lucrina peloris” | <5 (1) murex₁ [FG] (Fig. 10) | –                       | –                      | Lit. “of Baiae”, a town in the Gulf of Naples, very fashionable as a seaside resort among the Romans and facing the Lucrine Lake, famous for its aquaculture production of shellfish. Productive binomial. |
| mureculus                     | a small mussel (Mytilidae) or rather the bearded mussel (Modiolus barbatus (Linnaeus, 1758)) | –                                      | FS Ennius, var. 44 (= APULEIUS, APOL. 39): “Coccyreae […] purpur[a], m[ūr]culi, mures, dulces quoque echini” | <5 (1) myax₂/mus¹/ (mys)/mitulus₂ [FG] (Fig. 10) | –                       | –                      | Morphologically it may be murec-ul-us, i.e. “a little murex”, but comparison with Archestratus’s (Ennius’s source) extant fragments suggests muricul-us, lit. “a little mussel (mus)”, which, as a morphosemantic equivalent of Gr. μυύκασ (see myiska, myýca), will denote the bearded mussel. Monomial. |
Annotated checklist of Roman aquatic animals. Continuation.

| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ folk taxon | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethno-taxononomic rank | Main ethno-taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| **mus**<sup>1</sup>                      | Mytilidae                           | FG?                    | Ennius, var. 35 (= Apuleius, Apol. 39): “mures sunt Aeni asper[que] ostrea plurima Abydi” | <5 | musculus<sup>2</sup> [INT] | myisca, muriculus, etc. [FS] | (Fig. 10) |
|                                           |                                     |                        |                                  | (2); <15 (12)         |                          |                        |         |
| **mus**<sup>2</sup>                      | *Emys orbicularis* (Linnaeus, 1758) | European pond turtle (Bisson et al. 2020) | Pliny, HN 32, 112: “comitiales […] datur et mustelae marinae iocur, item muris vel testudinum” | <5 | animalia [FK] | mus marinus [FS] | (Fig. 14) |
|                                           |                                     | FG                     |                                  | (1)                   |                          |                        |         |
| **mus marinus**                           | *Dermochelys coriacea* (Vandelli, 1861) | leatherback sea turtle (Bisson et al. 2020) | Pliny, HN 9, 166: “mus marinus in terra scrobe effosso parit ova et rursus obruit terra” | <5 | mus<sup>2</sup> [FG] | – | – |
|                                           |                                     | FS                     |                                  | (4)                   |                          |                        |         |
| **musculus**<sup>1</sup>                 | a whale’s calf                      | –                      | Pliny, HN 32, 144: “ut a beluis ordinalur […] musculi” | <5 belua (marina)/ cetus<sup>2</sup> [LF] | (3) | – | Lit. “mouse”. Name captures analogical similarity to mices’ colour and teardrop-shaped body. ID supported by comparison with a passage Ennius translates from Archestratus (Athenaeus 3, 92d: mûes). See mys. Monomial. |
|                                           |                                     | FG                     |                                  | (9)                   |                          |                        |         |
| **musculus**<sup>2</sup>                 | Mytilidae, Unionidae               | INT                    | Pliny, HN 2, 227: “fluvius appellatur Scatebra […] in eo […] nascuntur aquabiles musculi” | <10 mitulus<sup>3</sup> [LF3+] | (5) | myax<sup>-</sup>/ mus<sup>1</sup>/ (mys)/ mitulus<sup>2</sup> [FG] | Ethnotaxonomy supported by Pliny’s (HN 2, 227) reference to freshwater mussels. Monomial. |
|                                           |                                     |                        |                                  | (10)                  |                          |                        |         |
| **mustela**                              | Gaidropsarus sp.; Lota lota (Linnaeus, 1758) | rockling; burbot       | Varro, Ling, 9, 113: “item in piscibus dissimilis murena lupo, [h]is soleae, haec murenas et mustelae” | <10 piscis<sup>1</sup> [LF1+] | (6) | – | Lit. “weasel”. Name captures analogical similarity to weasels’ colour and slender body. ID supported diachronically (e.g., Fr. motelle; moustelo, moelle [latter two for Lota lota, the freshwater mustela]). Monomial. |
**Annotated checklist of Roman aquatic animals. Continuation.**

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|--------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------|
| *(myax₁)*                      | Mytilus sp.                | Mediterranean mussel; blue mussel      | FS                   | –                                | –                     | *myax₂/mus¹/(mys)/mitulus₂* [FG] (Fig. 10) | –          | Gr. *mūax* (a derivative from *mūs*, lit. "mouse") shows the same analogical similarity as Lat. *mus¹*. Pliny does not use it explicitly but shows to interpret it in the Greek ethnotaxonomic sense (= the largest mussels) when translating *mūax* in Dioscorides (cf. HN 32, 98) and Xenocrates (cf. HN 32, 97) with *mitulus* (see *mitulus₂*). Monomial. |
| *myax₂* *(myakes)*             | Mytilidae mussels          | FG                                     | Pliny, HN 32, 97: "myaces […] degenerant in duas species: *mitulos* […] *myiscae quae rotunditate differunt, minores aliquanto atque hirtae" | <10 | *musculus₂* [INT] (6) (Fig. 10) | *myisca, muriculus*, etc. [FS] (Fig. 10) | –          | Same morphology as *myax₁*. Pliny denotes marine mussels in general, contrary to his Greek sources' more restricted sense (see *myax₁*). Monomial. (Figs 11, 13). |
| *myisca*                       | Modiolus barbatus          | bearded mussel (Thompson 1947)         | FS                   | *peculiares autem maris […] myiscus* | <5 | *myax₂/mus¹/(mys)/mitulus₂* [FG] (Fig. 10) | –          | Greek name *(mu-šk-a, lit. "mouse-like"; cf. *mūs* "mouse") shows the same analogical similarity seen for mussels in Latin (see *mus¹*). ID based on Pliny’s description. Monomial. |
| *myiscus*                      | Modiolus barbatus          | bearded mussel? (Thompson 1947)?       | FS                   | Pliny, HN 32, 149: "peculiares autem maris […] myiscus" | <5 | *myax₂/mus¹/(mys)/mitulus₂* [FG] (Fig. 10) | –          | Gr. *muiskos*, lit. "little mouse". Apparently used by Pliny as an alternative form of *myisca*. Monomial. |
| *mys*                          | large pearl-producing mussels | –                                      | FG or FS             | Pliny, HN 9, 115: "(sc. uniones) in nostro mari reperiri solebant […] rufi ac parvi in conchis quae *myas appellant*" | <5 | *mitulus₂*, *mitulus₁* | –          | Gr. *mūs*, lit. "mouse". A Fremwort (non-integrated loanword), seemingly used by Pliny for the largest pearl-producing mussels only (contrary to Lat. *mus* – see *mus¹*). Mainly an FG in Greek but used as the prototypical FS for the largest mussels in Athenaeus, 3, 90d [Diphilus]. Cf. also *mitulus₂*, Monomial. |
| *nanta* *(narica?)*            | unidentified fish          | –                                      | FG                   | Festus, Gloss. Lat. 166: "Nantia est genus piscis minut. Plautus "muriaticam video in vasis stagnes, naricam bonam et canum […]" | <5 | – | – | After describing it as a “kind of little fish”, Festus quotes Plautus’s passage where nanta figures as narica… Monomial. |
| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ description | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethnotaxonomic rank | Main ethnotaxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| nautilus | Argonauta argo Linnaeus, 1758 | paper nautilus (Thompson 1947) | FG | Pliny, HN 9, 94: “Mucianus: concham esse acati modo carinatam [...] in hac condi nauplium, animal saepiae simile” | <5 mollia [INT] | (2); (Fig. 4) | – | Gr. nau-πλ-ος [lit. "the who the ship navigates"], i.e. a navigator) captures this “sailing" cephalopod’s salient trait. ID supported by Greek sources. See nautilos, pompilios1. Unproductive binomial. |
| nautilos | Argonauta argo Linnaeus, 1758 | paper nautilus (Thompson 1947) | FG | Pliny, HN 9, 88: “inter [...] miracula est qui vocatur nautilos ab alis pompilios [...] vadit alto Liburnicarum gaudens” | <5 mollia [INT] | (2); (Fig. 4) | – | Gr. nautilos, lit. "sailor". ID confirmed by Pliny’s source (Aristotle, HA 525a; 622b). Based on the same salient trait and analogical similarity as synonyms nautilus and pompilios1. Monomial. |
| Nereis | unidentified marine mammal | (Bisson et al. 2020) | FG | Pliny, HN 9, 10: “destituit oceanus [...] in Santonum litore interque reliquas (sc. belus) [...] Nereidas vero multas” | <5 (4) belua (marina)/cetus2 [LF] | (Fig. 17) | – | Despite Pliny’s description as half-humans, half-fish (HN 9, 9), his information about Nereides stranded on the Atlantic coast of the Santones (western central Gaul) with other “real” marine animals seems to exclude a reference to the mythical creatures called so. Monomial. |
| novacula | Xyrichtys novacula (Linnaeus, 1758) | pearly razorfish | FG | Pliny, HN 32, 14: “novacula pisce qui attacti sunt, ferrum olent” | <5 (1) piscis1 [LF1+] | – | – | Name (lit. "razor") captures the compressed body’s similarity to (ancient) razors. ID based on semantic diachronic equivalents, e.g., in dialects of the Ligurian and Provençal Coast (razū, razon; rasour). Monomial. |
| oclopeta | Todarodes sagittatus (Lamarck, 1798)? Ommastrephes bartramii (Lesueur, 1821)? | European flying squid? red flying fish? (Guasparr 2006b) | FS? | Petronius, Sat. 35: <5 (1) (lolligo [FG])? "repositoryum duodecem habebat signa in orbe disposita [...] super sagittarium oclopetam” | – | – | – | Gr. oχλο-πέτας, lit. “[in] group(s)-fli-er”, in reference to synchronized jumps out of water (Maciá et al. 2004; cf. Pliny, HN 9, 84). Only in Petronius as the iconic, arrow-like (Table 8) ingredient of the "Sagittarius dish" in Trimalchio’s banquet. Unproductive binomial. |
| oculata | Oblada melanura (Linnaeus, 1758) | saddled sea bream (Bisson et al. 2020) | FG | Celsus, Med. 2, 18, 7: “deinde ii (sc. pisces), quí quamuis teneriores, tamen duri sunt, ut aurata, corus, sparus, oculata” | <5 (2) piscis1 [LF1+] | – | – | Name (lit. "eyed"), cf. oculus “eye”) captures analogical similarity driven by black white-encircled precaudal spot. Diachronic clues (e.g., It. occhio) and Provençal Coast (e.g., in dialects of the Ligurian and Provençal Coast (razū, razon; rasour). Monomial. |
| onyx | Solen marginatus Koch, 1843; Pharus legumen (Linnaeus, 1758) | grooved razor shell, bean razor shell (Thompson 1947) | FG | Pliny, HN 32, 103: “mares ali dónakas vocant, ali auñous,feminas ónukhas [...] dulcroes feminae sunt et uniclores” | <5 pecten2 [INT] | (2); (Fig. 10) | – | Gr. ónux, lit. "nail", captures shell-shape-driven analogical similarity. ID based on Pliny’s (= Xenocrates’s) description (see donax). Monomial. |
### Annotated checklist of Roman aquatic animals. Continuation.

| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ folk taxon | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethnological rank | Main ethnontaxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| **ophidion** Ophichthidae snake eels        | (Thompson 1947)                       | FG                | Pliiny, HN 32, 109: “ophidion pisciculus congro similis” | <5 piscis, [LF1+]     | 3                        | –                      | Gr. ophid-ion, lit. “little snake” (cf. ὀφίς “snake”), captures body-shape-driven analogical similarity. ID supported by information in Greek sources about ὀφίς. Monomial. |
| **ophthalmias** Oblada melanura           | (Linnaeus, 1758)?                     | FG                | Plautus, Capt. 850: “ophthalmiam, horaeum, scombrum et tyronym et cetum” | <5 piscis, [LF1+]?    | 1                        | –                      | Cf. Gr. ophthalmós “eye”. Only in Plautus as, presumably, a fish (otherwise = “eye inflammation” in Greek medicine). Probably a fake Greek ethnobionym coined after the morphosemantics of oculata. Monomial. |
| **orbis** Tetraodon lineatus globe fish    | (Salviani 1554; Le Goic et al. 2020)  | FG                | Pliiny, HN 32, 14: “durisimum esse piscium constat qui orbis vocetur; rotundus est, sine squamis totusque capite constat.” | <5 piscis, [LF1+]     | 2                        | –                      | A Nile (puffer) fish. Name (lit. “circle”) captures body-shape-driven analogical similarity. ID based on Pliny’s description (“without scales and all head”). Monomial. |
| **orca** Orcinus orca orca (killer whale) | (Thompson 1947)                       | FG                | Pliiny, HN 32, 144; “ut a beluis orlamir […] orcae” | <5 belua (marina)/ cetus, [LF] (Fig. 17) | 3                        | –                      | Gr. orx (lit. “oryx”), an African artiodactyl, the Arabian oryx Oryx leucoryx Pallas, 1766) captures face-pattern-driven analogical similarity. ID supported by diachronic clues. See aries. Monomial. |
| **orcynus** the largest pelamides         | (see pelamys,?)                       | FG                | Pliiny, HN 32, 149: “orcynus – hic est pelamuydm generis maximus” | <5 pelamys, [LF1+]     | 1                        | –                      | The “largest” Mediterranean pelamys (see pelamys,?) will have been an adult bluefin tuna (Thunnus thynnus (Linnaeus, 1758)). ID based on information from Pliiny and his source Xenocrates (8) and supported diachronically (Tur. orkinas, MG. orkinas). See cetus, Monomial. |
| **orphus** Epinephelus caninus dogtooth   | grouper; wreckfish                    | FG                | Ovid, Hal. 104: “gaudent pelago quales […] cantharus ingratus succ, tum concolor illi orphos” | <5 piscis, [LF1+]     | 3                        | –                      | ID based on chromatic information in Ovid (“same colour as cantharus”, in reference to weak longitudinal stripes) and on Greek descriptions of orphos (or όρφος, orphós). ID supported diachronically (Tur. orfoz, MG. róphós). See acharne. Monomial. |
| **orthogoriscus** Balistes capricornus     | grey triggerfish                      | FG                | Pliiny, HN 32, 19: “Apion piscium […] tradit porcum, quem Lacedaemoni orthogoriscum vocent; grunire eum cum capiatur” | <5 piscis, [LF1+]     | 2                        | –                      | Gr. orthogoriskos (lit. “piglet”) captures sound-driven analogical similarity (“grunts when caught”). ID with Mola mola, the sunfish (Rondelet 1554), is not supported diachronically (see porcus’). Monomial. |
| **ostrea/ostreum** Ostrea sp. oyster       | (Bisson et al. 2020)                  | FG                | Pliiny, HN 2, 109: “lunari potestate ostreum conchylorumque et concharum omnium corpora augeri” | >30; ostreum, [LF2+]   | 30                       | –                      | Both forms found in Latin (ostreum is parallel to Gr. ostreum) were probably used interchangeably (but in Pliny ostreum appears mostly as ostreum,). ID based on the sources’ description and diachronic clues. Monomial. |
## Annotated checklist of Roman aquatic animals. Continuation.

| Roman ethnobionym/ folk taxon | Scientific ID/ description | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethno-taxonomic rank | Main ethno-taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| ostreum | Bivalvia, Gastropoda | externally shelled molluscs (Blisson et al. 2020) | LF2+ | Pliny, *HN* 9, 160: *qua vero siliceo tegmine operiuntur, ut ostrea, putrescente limo* (sc. provenient) | <10 | ostrea/ ostreum | ostrea/ ostreum, etc. [FG] (Fig. 10) | See *ostrea*, In Pliny only, with the ethnotaxonomically wider sense found in Aristotle (e.g., Aristotle, HA 547b 20) or in Greek medical texts (Gr. *ostrea* or *ostreion*). Monomial. (Fig. 11). |
| ostreum Britannicum | kind of oyster from Britannia | – | FS | Pliny, *HN* 32, 62: *Cyzicina (sc. ostrea) [...] dulciora Britannicae (sc. ostris)* | <5 | ostrea/ ostreum | ostrea/ ostreum, etc. [FG] (Fig. 10) | – | Lit. “of Bri(t)annia”. Cf. Juvenal, 4, 140: “Rutupinove edita fundo ostrea”. Productive binomial. |
| ostreum Brundisium | kind of oyster from Brundisium | – | FS | Pliny, *HN* 32, 61: *sic Brundisina (sc. ostrea) [...] suum retinere succum et a Lucrino adoptare creduntur* | <5 | ostrea/ ostreum | ostrea/ ostreum, etc. [FG] (Fig. 10) | – | Lit. “of Brundisium”. Productive binomial. |
| ostreum calliblepharum | kind of oyster with a purple encircled beard | – | FS | Pliny, *HN* 32, 61: *peritiores [...] calliblepharas ea (sc. ostrea) appellantes* | <5 | ostrea/ ostreum | ostrea/ ostreum, etc. [FG] (Fig. 10) | – | Gr. *kalli-bléphar-os*, lit. “beautiful-eyelid(d)-ed”. Productive binomial. |
| ostreum Circenean | kind of oyster from Circei | – | FS | Pliny, *HN* 32, 62: *Cyzicina (sc. ostrea) [...] candidiora Circenensis (sc. ostris)* | <5 | ostrea/ ostreum | ostrea/ ostreum, etc. [FG] (Fig. 10) | – | Lit. “of Circeii”. Productive binomial. |
| ostreum Coryphantes | kind of oyster from Coryphas | – | FS | Pliny, *HN* 32, 62: *Cyzicina (sc. ostrea) siccius Coryphantes (sc. ostris)* | <5 | ostrea/ ostreum | ostrea/ ostreum, etc. [FG] (Fig. 10) | – | Lit. “of Coryphas” (opposite to Lesbos). Productive binomial. |
| ostreum Cyzicen | kind of oyster from Cyzicus (Propontis) | – | FS | Pliny, *HN* 32, 62: *Cyzicina (sc. ostrea) maior Lucrinis (sc. ostris)* | <5 | ostrea/ ostreum | ostrea/ ostreum, etc. [FG] (Fig. 10) | – | Lit. “of Cyzicus”. Productive binomial. |
| ostreum Ephesus | kind of oyster from Ephesus | – | FS | Pliny, *HN* 32, 62: *Cyzicina (sc. ostrea) siccius Ephesi (sc. ostris)* | <5 | ostrea/ ostreum | ostrea/ ostreum, etc. [FG] (Fig. 10) | – | Lit. “of Ephesus”. Productive binomial. |
| ostreum Histriat | kind of oyster from Histria | – | FS | Pliny, *HN* 32, 62: *Cyzicina (sc. ostrea) siccius Histriciae (sc. ostris)* | <5 | ostrea/ ostreum | ostrea/ ostreum, etc. [FG] (Fig. 10) | – | Lit. “of Histria”. Productive binomial. |
| ostreum licien | kind of oyster from Gallaecia (Hispania) | – | FS | Pliny, *HN* 32, 62: *Cyzicina (sc. ostrea) siccius liciensis (sc. ostris)* | <5 | ostrea/ ostreum | ostrea/ ostreum, etc. [FG] (Fig. 10) | – | Lit. “of Ilici” (Galician coast). Productive binomial. |
| Roman ethnobionym/ folk taxon | Scientific ID/ description | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethno-taxonomic rank | Main ethno-taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| **ostreum Lucrinum** (ostrea Lucrina) | | kind of oyster found in the Lucrine Lake | FS | Pliny, HN 9, 168: “is (sc. Orata) primus optimum saporum ostreis Lucrinis adiucicavit” | <10 | ostrea/ ostreum, [FG] (Fig. 10) | – | Lit. “of the Lucrine Lake”. See murex Baianus. Productive binomial. |
| **ostreum Medullium** | | kind of oyster from Aquitania | FS | Pliny, HN 32, 62: “Cyzicena (sc. ostrea) […] suaviora Medullis (sc. ostreis)” | <5 | ostrea/ ostreum, [FG] (Fig. 10) | – | Lit. “of Medulliae” (Aquitanian coast). Productive binomial. |
| **ostreum pelagium** | | kind of oyster found in the open sea | FS | Pliny, HN 32, 59: “pelagia (sc. ostrea) plana et rara sunt” | <5 | ostrea/ ostreum, [FG] (Fig. 10) | – | Lit. “open-sea oyster”. Cf. Xenocrates, 26. Productive binomial. |
| **ostreum tridacnum** | | kind of large oyster found in the Indian sea | FS | Pliny, HN 32, 63: “in Indico mari […] nomenclatura tridacna appellavit (sc. ostrea)” | <5 | ostrea/ ostreum, [FG] (Fig. 10) | – | Gr. tri-daknos, lit. “to be eaten at three bites” (because of large size). Productive binomial. |
| **otion** | Haliotis sp. green ormer (Thompson 1947) | | FG | Pliny, HN 32, 149: “peculliaries autem maris […] otia” | <5 | conchylium₂ [LF1+] | <10 | Gr. OTION (ót-ion, lit. “ear-like”) captures shell-shape-driven analogical similarity. ID based on Greek descriptions and diachronic parallels (e.g., Gr. oreckia di mar). Monomial. |
| **ozaena Eledone moschata** (Lamarck, 1798) | musky octopus (Thompson 1947) | | FS | Pliny, HN 9, 89: “polyporum generis est oz[e]lena dicta a gravi capitis odore” | <5 | polypus [FG] | (1) | Gr. ozána (oz-aína, lit. “stink-er”) captures smell-driven analogical similarity. ID based on Pliny’s description plus name’s descriptiveness. Monomial. |
| **pagurus Eriphia verrucosa** (Forskål, 1775) | warty crab | | FG | Pliny, HN 9, 97: “cancerum genera […] pag[uru].” | <5 | cancer [INT] | (1) | Gr. páguorous (pá-go)-ouros, lit. “reef-guardian” refers to the crab’s habitat (Guasparri 2006a). ID based on Greek sources and name’s descriptiveness. Unproductive binomial. |
| **passer Pleuronectidae** right-eye flounders | | | FG | Pliny, HN 9, 72: “Marinorum alii sunt plani, ut rhombi, soleae ac passeres, qui ab rhombis situ tantum corporum dierunt” | <10 | plani [INT] | (6) | Lit. “sparrow”. It is difficult to spot the referential trait (colour?) captured by the metaphorically shifted name (bird-to-fish). ID based on Pliny’s description and diachronic clues (It. passera). Monomial. |
| **pastinaca Dasyatidae** stingrays (Bisson et al. 2020) | | | FG | Celsus, Med. 6, 9, 6: “plani piscis, quam pastinacam nostri, trygona Graeci uocant, aculeus torretur” | <20 | plani [INT] | (15) | Name (lit. “parsnip”) captures spine-shape-driven analogical similarity to parsnips’ taproots. ID supported by diachronic clues (e.g., Fr. pastenague, Sp. pastenaga, etc.). Monomial. |
### Annotated checklist of Roman aquatic animals. Continuation.

| Roman ethnobionym/ folk taxon | Scientific name (and/or ID description) | Vernacular name | Ethnographic folk taxon | Main ethno-taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| pecten₁                       | Pectinidae scallops (large-sized species) (Thompson 1947) | FG  | Pliny, HN 11, 267: “credatur sane aquatilium pectines stridere, cum volant” | <15 pecten₁ [INT] (Fig. 10) | – | Name (lit. “comb”) captures analogical similarity driven by overall shape and marked radial ribs. ID supported diachronically (e.g., Fr. peign, It. pettine, etc.). Monomial. See pecten. Pliny seems to group together as pectines both scallops (Pectinidae) and razor shells (Solenidae). Monomial. |
| pecten₂                       | Pectinidae and Solenidae scallops and razor shells (Bisson et al. 2020) | INT | Pliny, HN 9, 101: “pectines in mari ex eodem genere habentur […] unguesque”; 32, 103: “purpurat vesica et pectinum cibo. ex [] is mares ali donakas vocant, ali aulius, feminas ñukhas” | <5 pecten₂ [INT] (Fig. 10) | – | Lit. “little comb”. ID based on name’s morphology and diachronic clues (e.g., Fr. petoncle). See pecten. Monomial. (Fig. 11). |
| pectunculus                  | Pectinidae scallops (small-sized species) (Bisson et al. 2020) | FG  | Varro, Ling. 5: 77: “item in conchyliis aliqua (sc. nomina) […] vernacula ad similitudinem, ut surenac,pectunculi, unguess” | <10 pectunculus [INT] (Fig. 10) | – | |
| pediculus (marinus)          | marine Isopoda (e.g., suborders Flabellifera, Gnathidea) purple-dye producing mouluscs (Bisson et al. 2020) | FG  | Pliny, HN 9, 154: “etiam aestiva animalia […] quae capillus maxime cefat […] existant (sc. in mari)”; HN 32, 77: “vocant et in mari pediculos” | <5 animalia [FK] (3) | – | Lit. “(marine) louse”. ID based on Pliny’s translation of Gr. phthéir (lit. “parasite”) from parallel Aristotelian passages (Aristotle, HA 537a; 602b; see phthéir). Monomial (or unproductive binomial). |
| pelagiae                     | Muricidae (= purpura) purple-dye producing molluscs (Bisson et al. 2020) | INT | Pliny, HN, 9, 131: “purpurae nomine alio pelagiae vocantur” | <5 ostreum_ testaceal concha_/ conchula_ [L2+F] (Fig. 10) | – | Lit. “of the sea” (cf. pelagus “sea”). ID based on Pliny’s information (synonymy with purpura). Probably from pelagium, the dye extracted from murex_/ purpura. Monomial. Cf. pelagicus, lit. “of the sea”. Not used as a simple synonym of marinus (i.e. “marine”, as vs “terrestrial”) but in the specialised meaning “of the open sea”, as in the opposition saxatiles vs pelagici (Columella, Rust. 8, 17, 14). Productive binomial. |
| pelagici (pisces)             | open sea fish | – | Columella, Rust. 8, 16, 8: “harenosi gurites planos quidem non pessime, sed pelagios melius pascunt” | <5 piscia_ [LF1+L] aurata, dentex, umbra [FG] (Fig. 8) | – | |
| pelamys₁                     | a juvenile tuna (see thynnus) | – | Pliny, HN, 9, 47: “cordyla appellatur partus (sc. thynnorum), qui fetas redeuntes in mare autumno comitatur; limosae vere autem et luto pelam[y]des incipunt vocari et, cum annuum excersse tempus, thynn.” | <5 thynnus [FG] (2) (22) | – | Only in Pliny (HN 9, 47 and HN 9, 49, both taken from Aristotle, HA 571a 16; HA 598a 25 respectively). Pliny’s Latin synonym limosae (cf. limus “slime”) alludes to alleged (folk) etymology from pelós “slime” (cf. Festus, Gloss. Lat. 225). See pelamys₂. Monomial. |
| Roman ethnobionym/ Scientific ID/ folk taxon | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethno-taxonomic Main ethnotaxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| pelamys<sub>2</sub> (pelamydes)            | all scombrids (Scombridae) excluding mackerels: i.e. tunas, bonitos and the likes | INT Pliny, HN 32, 146: “pelamys – earum generis maxima apollectron vocatur, durius tritamo” | <10 (7)               | thynnus, cordylas, etc. [FG] |                       | Seemingly the Roman usage of pelamys, i.e. the “trade” food-based name for tuna and allies (tuna cuts included). See pelamys<sub>1</sub>. Monomial. |
| peloris                                      | smooth clam                          | FG Varro, Ling. 5, 77: “in conchylis aliqua (sc. vocabula) ex graecis, ut peloris, ostrea, echinus” | <10 (8)               | peloris Lucrina [FS] (Fig. 10) |                       | The largest (native) Mediterranean clam. Indeed Gr. pelóris (pél- “huge”) captures size-driven referential trait(s) (cf. Athenaeus, 3, 93a [Plato]). See chena peloris. Monomial. |
| peloris Lucrina                             | A peloris found in the Lucrine Lake   | FS Horace, Sat. 2, 4, 32: “nascentes inplent conchyla luna; sed non omne mare est generosae fertile testae: murice Baiano melior Lucrina peloris | <5 (1) murex [FG] (Fig. 10) |                       |                       | Lit. “of the Lucrine Lake”. See murex Baianus. Productive binomial. |
| pentadactylus                               | Aporrhais sp. pelican’s foot          | FG Pliny, HN 32, 145: “cochloe, quorum generis pentadactylī […] quibus radiī” | <5 (1); cochlos [LF3+] |                       |                       | Gr. pente-dáktilos (lit. “five-finger[ed]”) refers to shell shape. See helix, actínophoros. Unproductive binomial. |
| perca<sup>1</sup>                           | Serranus sp. comber                   | FG Pliny, HN 9, 57: “murena et orphus, conger, percae et saxatiles omnes” | <10 saxatiles [INT] (9); (Fig. 8) |                       |                       | Gr. pérk-ē, analysed as a derivative from pérkos or perknós “speckled”, is not convincing (sea perches have bands). ID suggested by diachronic clues (Fig. 6). Monomial. |
| perca<sup>2</sup>                           | Perca fluviatilis Linnaeus, 1758      | FG Ausonius, Mos. 115: “nec te, delicias mensarum, perca, silebo ammogienes inter piscis dignande marinis” | <5 (1) piscis<sub>1</sub> [LF1+] |                       |                       | Only in Ausonius as the freshwater perch (but cf. Aristotle, HA 568a for Greek). ID based on similarity to sea perches (combers), high esteem as food and diachronic clues (cf. e.g., Fr. perche, It. perca, etc.). See perca<sup>1</sup>, perca<sup>3</sup> (Fig. 6). Monomial. |
| perca<sup>3</sup>                           | Sander lucioperca (Linnaeus, 1758)?   | FG Pliny, HN 32, 145: “ut a beluis ordiamur […] communesque […] amni tantum ac mari […] percae” | <5 (1) belua (marina)/ cetus<sub>2</sub> [LF] (Fig. 17) |                       |                       | ID hypothesis based on size and (brackish) habitat information in Pliny, coupled with similarity to perca<sup>2</sup>. Monomial. |
### Annotated checklist of Roman aquatic animals. Continuation.

| Roman ethnobionym/ folk taxon | Scientific ID/ description | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethno-taxonomic rank | Main ethno-taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| perna                         | Pinna sp.                   | pen shell                            | FG                   | Pliny, HN 32, 154: "appellantur et pernae concharum generis, circa Pontias insulas frequentissimae" | <5 concha./ (conchula) | [INT] (Fig. 10) |                       | – Name (lit. “pig’s ham or haunch”) captures shell-shape-driven analogical similarity. ID supported by diachronic equivalents (e.g., Fr. jambonneau). See pina. Monomial. |
| phager¹                       | Pagrus sp.                  | red porgy and the likes              | FG                   | Ovid, Hal. 107: "gaudent pelago quales [...] rutus phager" | <5 piscis₁ [LF1+] |                       |                       | – Gr. phágros, lit. “whetstone”, captures sharp-teeth-driven analogical similarity. ID based on diachronic clues (e.g., Fr. pagre, It. pagro, Sp. pargo). Monomial. |
| phager²                       | Bagrus bajad (Forskål, 1775)| bayad                                | FG                   | Pliny, HN 32, 113: "phagri fluviatilis longissimus dens capillo adalligatus" | <5 piscis₁ [LF1+] |                       |                       | – Nile catfish whose Egyptian name bagar is close to the Greek one (Thompson 1947: 274); moreover not only has this fish the same salient trait as phager¹ but Greek sources describe it as a catfish. Monomial. |
| phoca                         | Monachus monachus (Hermann, 1779)| monk seal                          | FG                   | Pliny, HN 9, 19: "et vituli marini, quos vocant phocas, spirant ac dormiunt in terra" | <5 belua (marina)/ cetus₂ [LF] >30 |                       |                       | – Synonym of vitulus. Monomial. |
| phthir                        | Isopoda                     | sea woodlice, sea ice (Rondelet 1554)| FG                   | Pliny, HN 32, 150: "peculaires autem maris […] phthir" | <5 animalia [FK] |                       |                       | – Gr. phthéir “parasite” (cf. phthéiró “to destroy”). Only found in Pliny’s aquatic animals list. Although the Greek name can also refer to the “parasite” pilotfish, Pliny (HN 9, 54) translates it from Aristotle (HA 537a) with pedicus, i.e. “sea icle”. This, given Pliny’s preference for Greek synonyms in the list (Guasparri 2013), leads to the proposed ID. Monomial. |
| phycis                        | Symphodus tinca (Linnaeus, 1758); Labrus mixtus Linnaeus, 1758; Symphodus ocellatus (Linnaeus, 1758) | peacock wrasse, cuckoo wrasse (Thompson 1947) | FG                   | Pliny, HN 32, 150: "peculaires autem maris […] phycis saxatilium qua[e] e[dam]" | <5 saxatiles [INT] |                       |                       | – Gr. phúkis (phúk-id-s, cf. Gr. phikos “orchill”, a dye extracted from a lichen and used as make-up) captures analogical similarity driven by “facial” vivid colours. Supported by diachronic equivalents (Fr. vieille coquette, It. fanciulla, Sp. señorita). See telepris. Monomial. |
| physeter                      | Baleen whales (more likely Balaenoptera sp. and Megaptera novaeangliae (Borowski, 1781)) | fin whale, blue whale, humpback whale | FG                   | Pliny, HN 32, 144: "ut a beluis ordiamur arbores, physeteres" | <5 belua (marina)/ cetus₂ [LF] |                       |                       | – Gr. phusētēr (lit. “blower”) refers to the whales’ spouts. Descriptions in Latin sources ("raises itself like an enormous column"; "pours out floods from its mouth") seem to exclude the traditional ID with the sperm whale (Physeter macrocephalus). Monomial. |
| pina                          | Pinna sp.                   | pen shell (Bisson et al. 2020)       | FG                   | Pliny, HN 9, 142: "concharum generis et pina est" | <10 concha./ (conchula) | [INT] (Fig. 10) |                       | – Gr. pǐn(ṕ)(nē (pǐn)-nē, cf. Gr. pínō “to drink”) refers to saliency of upright water-filtering valves. ID supported by diachronic clues (e.g., MG. pīna). Monomial. |
| Roman ethnobionym/ folk taxon | Scientific ID/ description | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethnontaxonomic rank | Main ethnontaxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------|
| pinophylax Pontonia pinnophylax (Otto, 1821); Nepinnotheres pinnotheres (Linnaeus, 1758) | pen-shell shrimp, pea-crab (Thompson 1947) | FG Pliny, HN 9, 142: "(sc. pina est) nec umquam sine comite quem pinoteren vocunt, alii pynophylacem; is est squilla parva, alibi cancer adsectator"; Pliny, HN 32, 99: "thetea [...] fungorum verius generis quam piscium" | <5 squilla/caris (1); <5 cancer, [INT] (Fig. 12) | Gr. pinophylax (pin[n]-o-philax, lit. "pen-shield") describes the crustacean's commensal life within the bivalve's mantle cavity, ID confirmed by Greek sources. Unproductive binomial. |
| pinoteres Pontonia pinnophylax (Otto, 1821), Nepinnotheres pinnotheres (Linnaeus, 1758) | pen-shell shrimp, pea-crab (Thompson 1947) | FG Pliny, HN 9, 142: "(sc. pina est) nec umquam sine comite quem pinoteren vocunt, alii pynophylacem; is est squilla parva, alibi cancer adsectator"; Pliny, HN 32, 99: "thetea [...] fungorum verius generis quam piscium" | <5 squilla/caris (3); <10 cancer, [INT] (Fig. 12) | Gr. pin(n)otērēs (pin[n]-o-tērēa-s, lit. "pen-shield carer", cf. tērēō “to take care”) describes the crustacean's commensal life within the bivalve's mantle cavity. The ancient descriptions support the ID. Unproductive binomial. |
| pinotheras Paguridea (Clibanarius erythropus (Latreille, 1818))? | Mediterranean hermit crab | FG Pliny, HN 9, 98: "pinotheras vocatur minimus ex omni genere (sc. cancrorum) [...] huic sollertia est inanium ostrearum testis se condere et, cum adcreverit, migrare in capacioser" | <5 cancer, [INT] (Fig. 12) | Gr. pin(n)othēras (pin[n]-o-thērā-s, lit. "pen-shell hunter", cf. thērāō “to hunt”)? In fact not attested in Greek (the copyist's misspelling for pinoteres?). But Pliny's information that it moves to bigger shells is salient enough to confirm ID with hermit crab and compound's semantics ("pen-shell" here will stand for bivalves in general). Unproductive binomial. |
| piscis1 (pisces) true fish | Varro, Ling. 5, 77: "vocabula piscium pleraque translat[ae] [...] de vi quadam, ut haec: lupus, canicula, torpedo" | >30 piscis2 [LF] (Fig. 8) | asellus2, squalus, saxatiles, etc. [INT] (Fig. 8) | Used for denoting true fish (both bony and cartilaginous), which makes it the prototypical biological referent of piscis₂. Monomial. |
| piscis2 (pisces) true fish, molluscs and crustaceans | Pliny, HN 9, 83: "piscium (sc. sanguine caretum) [...] sunt autem tria genera: primum quae mollia appellantur, dein contacta crustis tenuitus, postremo testis conclusa"; HN 32, 99: "thetea [...] fungorum verius generis quam piscium" | >30 animalia [FK] | piscis1, [LF1+] (Fig. 9) | True fish aside, piscis₂ includes also most molluscs – e.g., shellfish and cephalopods (Plautus, Celsus, Pliny, Apuleius) – and crustaceans (Pliny). Monomial. |
| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ description | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethno-taxonomic rank | Main ethno-taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| pistrix | unidentified marine animal | FG | Pliny, HN 32, 144: "ut a beluis ordiamur arbores, physeteres, balaenae, pistrices" | <10 (5) | belua (marina)/ cetus [LF] (Fig. 17) | – | Appears as a mythical marine monster in poetry and in Pliny's art-devoted 36 book. Morphology (lit. "she-pounder", cf. pinso "to pound") and phonological similarity will have made pistrix a (paretymological) synonym of pristis (Thompson 1947). Monomial. |
| plagusia | unidentified marine animal (shelled mollusc?) | FG | Plautus, Rud. 297: "echinos, lopadas, ostreas, balanos captamus, conchas, marinam urticam, musculos, plagusias striatae" | <5 (1) | – | – | The adjective striatae "grooved" might fit a bivalve shellfish (cf. e.g., Apuleius, Apol. 35 conclum striatam); moreover, all other items in Plautus's list are marine invertebrates. Monomial. |
| plani (pisces) | flat fish (both bony and cartilaginous) | INT | Pliny, HN 9, 72: "marinorum ali sunt plani, ut rhombi, soleae ac passeris; HN 9, 78 planorum piscium alterum est genus, quod pro spina cartilaginem habet, ut rati ae, pastinaceae, squatinae, torpedo et quos bovis, lamiæ, aquilæ, ranæ nominibus Graeci appellant." | <5 (4) piscis [LF1+] (Fig. 8) | pastinaca, solea, rhombus, etc. [FG] (Fig. 8) | – | Lit. "flat (fish)". Found in Pliny (once in a rendition of an Aristotelian passage), Columella and Celsus. Productive binomial. |
| platanista | Platanista gangetica (Lebeck, 1801) | FG | Pliny, HN 9, 46: "in Gange Indiae plananistas vocant, rostro delphini et cauda […] in eodem esse Statius Sebous haut modico miraculo adfert vermes" | <5 (1) piscis [LF1+] | – | – | Pliny's information on the Ganges river dolphins – included in a list of piscis – derives from Statius Sebous (1st century BC). Monomial. |
| polypus | Octopoda | FG | Pliny, HN 9, 83: "primum genus (sc. piscium sanguine carentium) […] mollia appellantur […] sunt loligo, sepia, polypus et cetera" | <20 mollia [INT] (16); >30 | polypus terreus, p. pelagius, ozaena [FS] (Fig. 4) | – | Gr. polúpus (polú-pous, lit. "[having] many feet") describes salient body shape. ID supported diachronically (Fr. poule, It. polpo, Sp. pulpo). Unproductive binomial. |
| Roman ethnobionym/ folk taxon | Scientific ID/ description | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethnoch- taxonomic | Main ethno- taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|---------|
| *polypus* pelagius            | open sea octopuses        | –                                    | FS                | Pliny, *HN* 9, 85: “polyporum multa genera. tereni maiores quam pelagii” | <5 (1)               | *polypus* [FG]           | (Fig. 4) - Lit. “(open) sea octopus”. Probably just the logical consequence of a contrast set built on *polypus terrenus*. Productive binomial. |
| *polypus* terrenus            | octopuses, whenever they crawl on land | –                                    | FS                | Pliny, *HN* 9, 85: “polyporum multa genera. tereni maiores quam pelagii” | <5 (3)               | *polypus* [FG]           | (Fig. 4) - Lit. “terrestrial octopus”. Even Varro is clear about octopuses’ ability to crawl on land (Varro, *Ling*. 7. 78). Productive binomial. |
| *pomphilus*¹                  | *Naucrates ductor* (Linnaeus, 1758) | pilotfish (Thompson 1947)            | FG                | Ovid, *Hal.* 101: “gaudent pelago quales [...] tuque comes rationum [...] qua semper spumas sequeris, pompile, nitentee” | <5 (2)               | *piscis* [LF1+]          | (Fig. 4) - Gr. *pomilos* (lit. “follower”, cf. *pompē* “escort”) captures a salient behavioural trait (i.e. following boats). ID supported by diachronic clues (e.g., Sard, *pompiru*, Cat. *pāmpol*). Monomial. |
| *pomphilus*²                  | *Argonauta argo* (Linnaeus, 1758) | paper nautilus (Thompson 1947)      | FG                | Pliny, *HN* 9, 88: “inter praecipua autem miracula est qui vocatur nautilos, ab allis pompilos” | <5 (1)               | *molīa* [INT]            | (Fig. 4) - Pliny (i.e. the copyist) might have misconstrued his source (Aristotle, *HA* 525a 29). Aristotle has *pontilos* (“seafarer”, cf. Gr. *pontos* “[open] sea”), seemingly more suitable for the referent. See nautilus, nautilos, *pomphilus*. Monomial. |
| *pomphilus*³                  | tunnies (when swimming near boats) | (Bisson *et al*. 2020)              | FS                | Pliny, *HN* 9, 51: “saeepe navigia velis eunta comitantes […] qui hoc e thynnis faciant, pompilos vocant” | <5 (1)               | *thynnus* [FG]           | (Fig. 8) - See *pomphilus*. The usage for denoting tunnies is only found in Pliny. Monomial. |
| *porculus* marinus            | *Oxynotus centrina* (Linnaeus, 1758)? | angular roughshark?                  | FG                | Pliny, *HN* 9, 45: “silurus […] porculo marino similimus” | <5 (1)               | *piscis* [LF1+]         | (Fig. 4) - Lit. “marine piglet”. ID hypothesis based on Pliny’s information about similarity with European catfish and diachronic clues (e.g., Cat. *porc mari*, Sic. *porcu di mari*). See *porcus marinus*. Unproductive binomial. |
| *porcus*¹                     | *Balistes capriscus* (Gmelin, 1789) | grey triggerfish (Salviani 1554)     | FG                | Pliny, *HN* 32, 19: “Apcion piscium maxime mir] um esse tradit porcum, quem Lacedaemoni orthagoriscum vocent; grunnire eum, cum capiatur” | <5 (2)               | *piscis* [LF1+]         | (Fig. 4) - Lit. “pig”. ID based on Pliny’s information (“grunts when caught”) and diachronic clues (e.g., It. *pesce porco*). The alternative reading maximum (“huge”) instead of *maxime mirum* (“most extraordinary”) would fit the sunfish (*Mola mola*), an ID which is not supported diachronically (see *orthagoriscus*). Monomial. |
| *porcus* marinus              | *Oxynotus centrina* (Linnaeus, 1758) | angular roughshark                  | FG                | Pliny, *HN* 32, 56: “Interea venena piscium sunt porci marini spinae in dorso, cruciatus magnus laesorum” | <5 (1)               | *piscis* [LF1+]         | (Fig. 4) - Lit. “marine pig”. ID hypothesis based on Pliny’s information about dangerous dorsal spines. Supported by diachronic clues (e.g., Cat. *porc mari*, Sic. *porcu di mari*). See *porcus marinus*. Unproductive binomial. |
| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ folk taxon | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethno-taxonomic rank | Main ethno-taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------|
| pristis¹ | Pristis sp.? (Bisson et al. 2020) | FG | Pliny, *HN* 9, 41: “quae (sc. aquatilia) pilo vestiuntur, animal pariunt, ut pristis, ballaena, vitulus” | <5 (2)? | piscis₁ [LF1+] | – | Gr. pristis (prísd-ti-s, cf. Gr. prózō “to saw”) refers to salient body trait. ID based on comparison with Greek parallel passage (Aristotle, *HA* 566b 2); Pliny’s rendition, however, might be suitable for pristis¹ as well. Monomial. |
| pristis² | Physeter macrocephalus Linnaeus, 1758 | FG | Pliny, *HN* 9, 8: “maximum animal in Indico mari pristis et ballaena est” | <10 (5) belua (marina)/ cetus [LF] (Fig. 17) | – | | See *pristis¹* such as “the largest animal in the Indian sea” (Pliny), reference will be to alternative form prē̂stis (cf. Gr. prḗthō “to spout”), parallel to Gr. phusētḗr (see *physeter*). Pliny’s information and constant juxtaposition with ballaena substantiate the ID. Monomial. |
| psetta | Scophthalmus maximus (Linnaeus, 1758) | FG | Pliny, *HN* 9, 57: “condi per hiemes torpedinem, psē[a] m, soleam tradunt” | <5 (1); <20 (16) plani [INT] (Fig. 8) citharus [FS] (Fig. 8) | – | | Gr. psē̂ttta (psēkh-ia, cf. Gr. psḗkhō “to scratch”) refers to bony tubercles on the eye side. Athenaeus (7, 330b) notes that “the Romans call psēttta the turbot”, not the sole; indeed Pliny translates Aristotle’s psēttta as rhombus (Pliny, *HN* 9, 144; cf. Aristotle, *HA* 620b, 30). Monomial. Lit. “(sea) lung”. ID based both on Pliny’s translations of Aristotle’s parallel passages about halipléumōn and on diachronic equivalents (e.g., Fr. poumon de mer, lt. polmine di mare), Monomial (or unproductive binomial). ID clear enough from Pliny’s description (*HN* 9, 130). Ethnotaxonomy based on usage in the singular or as opposed either to *bucinum* (e.g., Pliny, *HN* 9, 130) or *murex*₁ (e.g., Celsus, *Med.* 2, 24; Pliny, *HN* 9, 125, where purpura = H. trunculus). See *bucinum*, *murex*₁. Prototypical of purpura². Diachronic clues (lt. porpora). Monomial. (Fig. 13). |
| pulmo (marinus) | Rhizostoma pulmo (Macri, 1778) | FG | Pliny, *HN* 9, 154: “multis (sc. aquatilibus) eadem natura quae frutici, ut [h]oloth[u]ris, pulmonibus, stellis” | <10 (9) COVERT² [LF1+] (Fig. 4) | – | | Lit. “(sea) lung”. ID based both on Pliny’s translations of Aristotle’s parallel passages about halipléumōn and on diachronic equivalents (e.g., Fr. poumon de mer, lt. polmine di mare), Monomial (or unproductive binomial). ID clear enough from Pliny’s description (*HN* 9, 130). Ethnotaxonomy based on usage in the singular or as opposed either to *bucinum* (e.g., Pliny, *HN* 9, 130) or *murex*₁ (e.g., Celsus, *Med.* 2, 24; Pliny, *HN* 9, 125, where purpura = H. trunculus). See *bucinum*, *murex*₁. Prototypical of purpura². Diachronic clues (lt. porpora). Monomial. (Fig. 13). |
| purpura₁ | Bolinus brandaris (Linnaeus, 1758); Hexaplex trunculus (Linnaeus, 1758) | FG | Pliny, *HN* 9, 160: “quae durioris testae sunt, ut murices, purpuraeae, salivario lentore (sc. proveniunt)” | <15 (14) murex₁/ purpura₁/ pelagiae [INT] (Fig. 10) purpura algensis, p. calculensis, etc. [FS] (Fig. 10) | – | | | |
### Annotated checklist of Roman aquatic animals. Continuation.

| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ folk taxon | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethno-taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| *purpura*<sub>2</sub> (purpurae)           | Muricidae                            | purple-dye producing molluscs | INT                   | <15                       | ostreum<sub>2</sub>/ testacea/ concha<sub>2</sub>/ (conchula) [LF2+] (Fig. 10) | murex<sub>1</sub>/ purpura, etc. [FG] (Fig. 10) | See murex<sub>2</sub>. Ethnotaxonomy supported by Pliny’s usage as plural or in syntagm with *genus* (lit. “kind”), e.g., *purpurarum genus* “the purple-fish kind”. See *purpura*, Monomial. |
| *purpura* algensis                         | purple-dye murex living among seaweeds | – FS | Pliny, HN 9, 131: “sc. purpurarum genus algense nutritum alga“ | <5 purpura, [FG] (1) (Fig. 10) | – | Lit. “of seaweed”; cf. *alga* “seaweed”. Productive binomial. |
| *purpura* calculensis                      | purple-dye murex living in pebbly seabeds | – FS | Pliny, HN 9, 131: “sc. purpurae genus dialut<sub>e</sub>se appellatur a calc<sub>u</sub>lo [in] mari” | <5 purpura, [FG] (1) (Fig. 10) | – | Lit. “of pebbles”; cf. *calculus* “pebble”. Productive binomial. |
| *purpura* dialutensis                      | purple-dye murex living in seabeds of “mixed” kind (e.g., both pebbly and muddy) purple-dye murex living in muddy seabeds | – FS | Pliny, HN 9, 131: “earum (sc. purpurarum genus) genera plura pabulo et solo discreta: lutense putre limo” | <5 purpura, [FG] (1) (Fig. 10) | – | Lit. “of mixed soils” (seabeds); cf. *dilutus* “tempered”, “mixed”. Productive binomial. |
| *purpura* lutensis                         | purple-dye murex living in muddy seabeds | – FS | Pliny, HN 9, 131: “sc. purpurae genus dialut<sub>e</sub>se, id est vario soil genere pastum” | <5 purpura, [FG] (1) (Fig. 10) | – | Lit. “of mud”; cf. *lutum* “mud”. Productive binomial. |
| *purpura* taeniensis                       | purple-dye murex collected on reefs | – FS | Pliny, HN 9, 131: “sc. purpurae genus taeniense in taeni<sub>[s] maris collectum” | <5 purpura, [FG] (1) (Fig. 10) | – | Lit. “of a ribbon” (in reference to a ridge of rocks, a reef); cf. *taenia* “ribbon”. Productive binomial. |
| *raia*                                     | Raja sp. ray                         | Pliny, HN 9, 78: “planis piscium altemum est genus, quod pro spina cartilaginem habet, ut raj<sub>a</sub>ae, pastinaceae” | <5 plan<sub>i</sub> [INT] (3) (Fig. 8) | – | Very likely from *rād-ja* (cf. *rádo* “to scratch”), in reference to prickly/spinulose sides (cf., diachronically, such morphosemantic equivalents as *Lig. raspo*, Eng. *thornback*). ID supported by Pliny’s rendition of Greek passages on *bátos* (see *batia*). Diachronic clues (e.g., Fr. *rate*, Sp. *raya*). Monomial. |
| *rana* (marina)                            | Lophius budegassa Spinola, 1807; Lophius piscatorius Linnaeus, 1758 (small midsize specimen) | Pliny, HN 9, 126: “at contra piscis luxantur harena ut […] mollies tergore ranae”; Cicero, Nat. D. 2, 125: “ranae autem marinae dicuntur obrure sese harena solere et […] quasi ad escap piscis cum accesserint conﬁci a rana” | <10 plan<sub>i</sub> [INT] (6) (Fig. 8) | – | Lit. (marine) “frog”. Name likely driven by amphibian-like thin and soft skin (cf. Ovid’s description). ID supported by Pliny’s rendition of Greek passages about *bátakhos*. Diachronic clues (e.g., Lt. *rana* piscatrice, *raspia*). See *batrachus*, *laiamia*, plani, *rana piscatrix*. Monomial (or unproductive binomial). |
## Annotated checklist of Roman aquatic animals. Continuation.

| Roman ethnobionym/ folk taxon | Scientific ID/ description | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethnotaxonomic rank | Main ethnotaxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| **rana piscatrix** | *Lophius budegassa* Spinola, 1807; *Lophius piscatorius* Linnaeus, 1758 (small/midsize specimen) | anglerfish (Bisson et al. 2020) | FG | Pliny, *HN* 9, 143: “nec minor sollicita ranae quae in mari piscatrix vocatur” | <5 (1) plani [INT] (Fig. 8) | – | – | Lit. “angler frog”. See *rana* (marina). Unproductive binomial. |
| **rhine** | *Squatina squatinia* (Linnaeus, 1758) | angelshark (Thompson 1947) | FG | Pliny, *HN* 9, 72: “passeres, qui ab rhombis situ tantum corporum differunt – dexter hic resupinatis est ilis, passeri laeves” | <15 plani [INT] (10); <10 (7) | – | – | Gr. *rhine* (lit. “file”, “rasp”) refers to skin’s roughness and use – attested until recently – for polishing various materials (e.g., wood). ID based on Greek authors and explicit synonymy with Lat. *squatus* (see *squatina*, *squatinia*). Diachronic clues (MG. *rhíne*). Monomial. |
| **rhombus** | *Scophthalmidae*, turbots, left-eye flounders | roughtail stingray (Le Goïc et al. 2020); sunfish? | FG | Pliny, *HN* 9, 8: “in Gaditano oceano […] apparent et rotae appellatae a similitudine, quaternis distinctae hae radia” | <5 (2) belua (marina)/ cetus, [LF] (Fig. 17) | – | – | Lit. “wheel”. Pliny’s description sounds weird and does not match with Aelian’s account of a *kítos* called *trokhós* (“wheel” in Greek), hence the ID hypothesis with a giant Atlantic stingray (Le Goïc et al. 2020). However, diachrony (e.g., *rota marina*, *pesce roda*, etc.) would lead to turbots, but also to right-eye flounders. Monomial. |
| **rota** | *Bathytosia centroura* (Mitchell, 1815); *Mola mola* (Linnaeus, 1758)? | roughtail stingray (Le Goïc et al. 2020); sunfish? | FG | Pliny, *HN* 9, 138: “mullus in viro necatus vel piscis rubello” | <5 (3) piscis, [LF1+] | – | – | ID based on name’s morphology (*rubello-*ion, a derivative from *rubello, cf. ruber* “red”), which refers to reddish colour and parallels Gr. *eruthrī* (see *erythinos*). Diachronic clues (Lig. *ruella*, *rovello*). Monomial. |
| **rubello** | *Pagellus* sp. | pandora, Blackspot seabream, Axillary seabream (Bisson et al. 2020) | FG | Pliny, *HN* 9, 151: “peculiare autem maris […] salax” | <5 (1) COVERT [LF1+] (Fig. 4) | – | – | Lit. “apt to leap” (cf. *salio* “to leap”). ID hypothesis based on Greek morphossemantic equivalent *holothúrion* (both derived from verbs meaning “to leap”, used in a sexual sense with – euphemistic – reference to phallic shape). See *holothurium*, *fascinum*. Monomial. |
| **salax** | *Holothuria* sp.? | cotton-spinner? | FG | Pliny, *HN* 9, 68: “in Aquitania salmo fluviatilis marinis omnibus (sc. piscibus) praefertur” | <5 (2) piscis, [LF1+] | – | – | ID confirmed by Ausonius’s description (Ausonius, Mos. 97ff.) and diachronic clues. Monomial. |
| **salmo** | *Salmo salar* Linnaeus, 1758 | salmon (Bisson et al. 2020) | FG | Pliny, *HN* 9, 68: | <5 (2) piscis, [LF1+] | – | – | – |
| Roman ethnobionym/folk taxon | Scientific ID/description | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethnotaxonomic rank | Main ethnotaxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------|
| salpa Sarpa salpa (Linnaeus, 1758) | goldline (Thompson 1947) | FG Ovid, Hal. 121: “herbosa pisces luxantur harena ut […] meito vallisima salpa” | <10 piscis, [LF1+] | – | ID based on information in Greek sources about salpé and diachronic clues. Monomial. |
| saperde Sciaena umbra Linnaeus, 1758; Umbrina cirrosa (Linnaeus, 1758) | brown meagre, shi drum | FG Varro, Sat. Men. 312: “omnes videmur nobis esse bellii festivi, saperdae cum simus saprói” | <5 piscis, [LF1+] | – | Food-based ethnobionym (usually a fish cut and/or fish dish name), Gr. sapérdés is (also) a kind of salted fish typical of the Black Sea region. ID based on Greek descriptions (Athenaeus, 3, 118b; 4, 157a; 7, 339e) and in particular on synonymy with Gr. korákínos as used in the Black Sea region (see coracinus1; Guasparri 2016). Monomial. |
| sarda Sarda sarda (Bloch, 1793) | Atlantic bonito (de Saint-Denis 1947) | FG Pliny, IN 32, 151: “[…] sarda – ita vocatur pelamys longa ex oceano veniens” | <5 pelamys2 [INT] | – | Lit. “Sardinian (sc. salda ‘salted food’)”. As a food-based ethnobionym, sarda is also a kind of salted fish imported from Sardinia. ID based on Greek sources (cf. Pliny’s pelamys longa, i.e. “elongated pelamys”, a rendition of Xenocrates, 35), Diachronic clues (Sp. cerda). Monomial. |
| sardina Sprattus sprattus (Linnaeus, 1758); Sardina pilchardus (Walbaum, 1792) | sprat, pilchard (Bisson et al. 2020) | FG Columella, Rust. 8, 17, 12: “esca iacetum […] praebere conuenit tabentis halleculas et salibus exesam chalcidem, putremque sardinam” | <5 piscis, [LF1+] | – | Lit. “(salted) fish from Sardinia”. Another food-based ethnobionym related to the Sardinian salted-fish manufacture (see sarda). Morphology (sarda-in) is typical not only of toponyms, but also of other meat-derived gastronyms (cf. agn-in, vitul-in, etc.). ID based on Athenaeus, 7, 329a and diachronic clues. Monomial. |
| sargus Diplodus sp. | seabream (Thompson 1947) | FG Ovid, Hal. 105: “gaudent pelago quales […] insignis sargasque notis” | <10 piscis, [LF1+] | – | Ovid’s remark (lit. “marked”) and information in Greek sources about sargds (e.g., Athenaeus, 7, 313d) allude to the larger, vertically banded species in particular (D. sargus and D. puntazzo). ID supported by diachronic clues (e.g., Fr. sar, MG. sargds, Cr. šarag). See spurus, spurus. Monomial. |
| saurus Trachurus sp. | mackerel (Thompson 1947) | FG Columella, Rust. 8, 17, 12: “praebери (sc. iacentibus piscibus) convenit […] saurorum branchiam vel quicquid intestini pelamis aut lacertos gerit, tum scombrī […] venter culos” | <5 (3) lacertos2 [INT] | – | Gr. sauros (lit. “lizard”) captures blush-green colour plus opercular spot as salient traits (see lacertus.). Lacertus in Columella’s passage will be different from saurus – and scomber; the former will be lacertus2, as paired with pelamis, another INT (see pelamys). ID based on diachronic clues (e.g., It. sauro, sauru). Monomial. |
| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ description | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Main ethno-taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------|
| saxatiles (pisces)                          | fish inhabiting rocky reefs          | INT                             | <15 (13)              | menula, turdus, etc.     | (Fig. 8)                | Lit. "rock (fish)" (cf. saxum "rock"). Productive binomial. |
| scarus Sparisoma cretense (Linnaeus, 1758) | parrotfish (Thompson 1947)           | Pliny, HN 11, 162:              | <20 pisces (LF1+)     |                          |                         | Gr. skáros. Allegedly the most esteemed fish in the imperial period. ID based on morphological (teeth) and ecological information (typical of the eastern Mediterranean Sea). Diachronic clues (e.g., MG. skáros, It. scaro). Monomial. |
| sciadeus Umbrina sp., Sciaena umbra Linnaeus, 1758 (also Argyrosomus regius (Asso, 1801)?) | shi drum, brown meagre (also meagre?) (Thompson 1947) | Pliny, HN 32, 151:              | <5 pisces (LF1+)       |                          |                         | Gr. skiadéus, a derivative from skíazó "to overshadow" (cf. skía "shadow", "shade"; see sciáena, umbra), allegedly refers to dark or shaded colour in Sciaena and Umbrina. Modern morphosemantic equivalents (e.g., It. ombrina, umbraine) are also used for another scienid, the meagre (Argyrosomus regius). Monomial. |
| sciáena Sciaena umbra Linnaeus, 1758 (also Umbrina sp.; Argyrosomus regius (Asso, 1801)?) | brown meagre (also shi drum, meagre?) (Thompson 1947) | Pliny, HN 32, 151:              | <5 pisces (LF1+)       |                          |                         | Gr. skíaina, a derivative from skíá "shadow", "shade" (see sciádeus, umbra), allegedly refers to either dark or shaded colour in Sciaena or Umbrina. Diachronic clues (MG. skíós) lead to Sciáena. Modern morphosemantic equivalents like It. ombrina, umbraine are also used for another scienid, the meagre (Argyrosomus regius). Monomial. |
| scolopendra (marina) Polychaeta (the mobile forms, or Errantia, e.g., Amphinomidae, Eunicidae, Nereididae, Nephtyidae) | marine bristle worms, bobbits (e.g., Eunice roussaei Quarefages, 1866; Hermodice carunculata (Pallas, 1766) (Bisson et al. 2020) | Pliny, HN 9, 145:              | <5 insects (LF)        |                          |                         | Gr. skolópendra. ID based on Pliny's description, supported by name's morphology, i.e. skolópente[r]a, lit. "thorny earthworms", in reference to infixed legs and/or stinging properties (Guasparrir 2000). As to ethnotaxonomy (grouped with insects), cf. Pliny, HN 11, 100. Monomial (or unproductive binomial). |
### Annotated checklist of Roman aquatic animals. Continuation.

| Roman ethnobionym/ folk taxon | Scientific ID/ description | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethno-taxonomic rank | Main ethno-taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------|
| scomber                        | Scomber scombrus Linnaeus, 1758 | Atlantic mackerel (Thompson 1947)     | FG                   | Columella, Rust. 8, 17, 12: “praeberti [sc. ipectibus piscibus] convenit […] saurorum branchiam – vel quicquid intestini pelamis aut lacertus gerit – tum scombrī […] venterculos” | <15 lacertus$_2$ [INT] (13); >30 | – | Gr. skómíbros. Ethnotaxonomy based on Columella’s passage, synonymy with lacertus, and difference from saurus (Fig. 8). Monomial. |
| scorpaena                      | Scorpaena sp. (possibly the “black” species only) | scorpionfish (Thompson 1947)         | FG                   | Pliny, HN 32, 151; “peculliaris autem maris […] scorpaena, scorpio” | <5 piscis$_1$ [LF1+] (2); <5 (2) | – | Gr. skórpaina (cf. skórpiós, lit. “scorpion”, because of poisonous sting). Pliny renders so Aristotle’s skórpios (Pliny, HN 9, 162; cf. Aristotle, HA 543a 7). Gr. skórpaina likely denotes “black” scorpionfish only. See scorpio. Monomial. |
| scorpio (marinus)              | Scorpaena sp.; Helicolenus dactylopterus (Delaroche, 1809) | scorpionfish (Bisson et al. 2020)    | FG                   | Ovid, Hal. 116: “gaudent pelago quales […] captus duro nocturum scorpios ictu” | <15 piscis$_1$ [LF1+] scorpio marinus rufus [FS] | – | Gr. skórpios, lit. “scorpion”, because of poisonous sting. Denotes both red and “black” scorpionfish (Pliny twice specifies “bile of red sea scorpion” as a medicine). See scopaena; see following, Monomial (or unproductive binomial). |
| scorpio marinus rufus          | Scorpaena sp. Scrofa Linnaeus, 1758 | red scorpionfish                      | FS                   | Pliny, HN 32, 128: “verrasca totilt […] fel scorpionis marini rufi” | <5 (2) scorpio [FG] | – | Lit. “red sea scorpion”. See scorpio. Productive binomial. |
| sepia                          | Sepia sp.                             | cuttlefish (Thompson 1947)           | FG                   | Pliny, HN 9, 83: “primum genus (sc. piscium sanguine caeretium) […] mollia appellantur […] sunt lillogi, sepia, polypus et cetera” | >30; mollia [INT] (Fig. 4) | – | Gr. sápius (sepé)-ia, cf. sápmoi “to rot”. Etymology is semantically plausible since cuttlefish ink was conceived both as blood and waste matter (e.g., Pliny, HN 9, 84; Ovid, Hal. 19; Athenaeus, 7, 321f.). Diachronic clues (e.g., L. seppia, Sp. sipia). Monomial. |
| serra                         | Pristis sp.                           | sawfish (Bisson et al. 2020)         | FG                   | Pliny, HN 32, 144: “ut a belius ordinatur […] cornuta, gladii, serra” | <5 (2) belua (marina)/ cetus$_2$ [LF] (Fig. 17) | – | Lit. “saw”. ID based on Pliny’s double juxtaposition with gladius and diachronic equivalents. Monomial. |
| silurus                        | Silurus sp.; Clarias sp. (and other Nile catfish) | catfish (Thompson 1947)              | FG                   | Pliny, HN 9, 43-44; “piscium […] praecipua magnitudine thynnī […] fiunt et in quibusdam annium haut minores: silurus in Nilo” | <25 belua (marina)/ cetus$_2$ [LF] (Fig. 17); piscis$_1$ [LF1+] | – | Gr. sílouros. For both Pliny and Juvenal the prototypical silurus is the Nile one (Pliny, HN 32, 125; Juvenal, 4, 33). Diachronic clues. Monomial. |
| Roman ethnoonym/ folk taxon | Scientific ID/ description | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethno-taxonomic rank | Main ethno-taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| smaris                      | Spicara smaris (Linnaeus, 1758) | picarel (Thompson 1947) | FG | Ovid, Hal. 20: “at contra herbosa piscis luxantur harenae ut [...] fecundumque genus menae lamiosque smarisque” | <10 piscis, [LF1+] | – | Gr. smaris. ID based on Greek sources (e.g., similarity to mainis) and diachronic clues (e.g., smidirin, smidira, marida, maridola in coastal Italian dialects). See geres. Monomial. |
| smyrus                      | Gymnothorax uniclor (Delaroche, 1809) | brown moray (Thompson 1947) | FG | Pliny, HN 9, 76: “Aristoteles zmyrum vocat maren [...] murena varia et infirma sit, zmyrus unicolor et robustus” | <5 piscis, [LF1+] | – | Gr. (s)mýuros. Described as the male moray eel, indeed its name seems back-formed as the masculine of (s)μūraina (see muraena), ID supported by diachronic clues (MG. mougrosmérna). Monomial. |
| solea                       | Solea sp. | sole (Bisson et al. 2020) | FG | Colossus, Rust. 8, 16, 7: “limosa regio planum educat piscern, uelut soleam, rhombum, passerem” | <15 plani [INT] (Fig. 8) | – | Name (lit. “sandali”) captures body-shape-driven analogical similarity. ID supported diachronically by both phonetic and morphosemantic clues. Monomial. |
| solen                       | Solenidae | razor shell (Thompson 1947) | FG | Pliny, HN 32, 151: “solen sive aulos sive donax sive onyx” | <5 pecten, [INT] (Fig. 10) | – | Lit. “pipe”. See aulos, donax, onyx. ID supported by diachronic clues (MG. solénas, Tur. solinya). See aulos, donax. Monomial. |
| sparulus                    | Diplodus annularis (Linnaeus, 1758); Diplodus vulgaris (Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, 1817) | annular seabream, two-banded seabream (Thompson 1947) | FG | Ovid, Hal. 106: “gaudent pelago quales [...] super aurata sparulus cervice refugens” | <5 (2) piscis, [LF1+] | – | ID based on Ovid’s remark (“shining upon its golden nape”), fit for D. annularis in particular, Fig. 2) and diachronic clues (e.g., sparlo, sbarrone, ispareda, sparo in coastal Italian dialects). Name (spar ulus, lit. “small sparus” or “sparus-related”) due to overall similarity to sparus and (possibly) smaller average size. See sparus. Monomial. |
| sparus                      | Diplodus sp. | seabream (Thompson 1947) | FG | Servius, 11, 682: “Verro ait sparum telum missile, a piscibus ducta similididine, qui spari vocantur.” | <5 piscis, [LF1+] | – | Cf. Gr. spáros “seabream”. Diachronic clues (e.g., lt. sparo) lead to non-multi banded species like Diplodus annularis and D. vulgaris in particular. Latin name seems paremyologically linked to sparus (lit. “hunting spear”) by speakers, most likely in reference to pointed snout in Diplodus puntazzo (cf. Servius, 11, 682). See sparus, sargus. Monomial. |
| sphyraena                   | Sphyraena sphyraena (Linnaeus, 1758) | European barracuda (Thompson 1947) | FG | Pliny, HN 32, 154: “sudis Latine appellatur, Graece sphy[r]a en[a], rostro similis nomini, magnitudine inter amplissimos” | <5 piscis, [LF1+] | – | Gr. sphúraina. Referential constraint (pointed snout) captured in the name’s morphology (a derivative from sphúra “pick-axe”). Diachronic clues (MG. sphyrinós, sphúra). Latin synonym is sudis. Monomial. |
| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ folk taxon | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethnographic taxonomic description | Main ethno-taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------|
| spondylus | Spondylus gaederopus Linnaeus, 1758 | thorny oyster (Thompson 1947) | FG | Columella, Rust. 8, 16, 7; “limosa regio [...] idonea est [...] concharum pectunculis, balanis vel spondilis” | <10 (5); <5 (1) | concha/ (conchula) | INT Pliny, HN 31, 124: “spongarium genera [...] animal esse docuimus” | – Gr. sphōndulos (lit. “vertebra”) refers to the bivalve’s peculiar hinge mechanism. Traditional ID, supported by diachronic clues (Thompson 1947). Monomial. |
| spongea | Demospongiae sponges (Thompson 1947) | FG | Pliny, HN 31, 124: “spongarium genera [...] animal esse docuimus” | >30; >30 | tragos, manos, aplysia (Fig. 4) | INT Pliny’s remark on sponges’ “animal nature” contradicts his rendition of Aristotle (PA 681b 10, etc.) in HN 9.146 (“they have a third nature, between animal and plant”), which calls for a less inclusive covert taxon (shared at least with sea nettles; see cnide, urtica). Monomial. |
| spurius | Cypraeidae? cowries? (Fig. 4) | FG | Apuleius, Apol. 35: “posses dicitis ad res uenerias sumpta de mari spuria et fascina propter nominum similitudinem: qui minus possit ex eodem fitre calculus” | <5 (1) cochlos [LF1+] | – | – | Lit. “vulva” of cowries, on seashores according to Apuleius (cf. ex eodem litore). Presumed ID, based on shell-shape-driven analogical similarity, is supported by archaeological evidence (cowries’ shells used as amulets against sterility. Cf. Bergeron 2011). Monomial. |
| squiatus | Squatina squatinus Linnaeus, 1758 | sharks, dogfish (Bisson et al. 2020) | INT | Pliny, HN 9, 78: “planorum piscium alterum est genus, quod pro spina cartilaginem habet [...] quo in numero sunt squali quoque, quamvis non plani” | <5 piscis; [LF1+] (3hy) (Fig. 8) | – | Name was probably linked paretymologically (or maybe etymologically) to squiātōs (lit. “to be rough”) by speakers, in reference to sandpaper-textured skin. Ethnotaxonomy based on Pliny’s rendition of Aristotle’s galeōdē (lit. “[fish] of the shark kind”, e.g., thresher shark; cf. Aristotle, HA 566a 31); cf. Pliny, HN 9, 78; Aristotle, HA 540b 17. Monomial. |
| squitina | Squatina squatina (Linnaeus, 1758) | angelshark (Bisson et al. 2020) | FG | Pliny, HN 9, 40: “alia (sc. aquatilia) [...] integuntur [...] aspera cute ut squatina, qua lignum et ebora poliuntur” | <10 plani [INT] (7) (Fig. 8) | – | See rhine. Fem. form of squitātus. ID based on name’s morphology (see squitātus) and supported by diachronic clues (squāena in northeastern coastal Italian dialects). Monomial. |
| squitus | Squatina squatina (Linnaeus, 1758) | angelshark (Bisson et al. 2020) | FG | Pliny, HN 32, 150: “peculiares autem maris [...] rhine, quem squatum vocamus” | <5 (3) plani [INT] (Fig. 8) | – | Lat. synonym of rhine. Latin form is phonologically parallel to skʷatos “hide, leather” (PIE *skʷatos?), which fits Pliny’s information on (historically attested) use as sandpaper (HN 9.40; 32, 108) and leather. Monomial. |
| squilla₁ | Squilla mantis Linnaeus, 1758 | spot-tail mantis shrimp (Thompson 1947: 104) | FG | Juvenal, 5, 80: “aspicie quam longo distinguat pectore lancem quae fertur domino squilla [...] qua despicat consuilia cauda” | <5 (1) squilla/ caris [INT] (Fig. 12) | – | Prototypical of squīllae. ID based on Juvenal’s pun interpreted as referring to eyespots on telson (“with what a tail it looks down upon the company”). Diachronic clues (Fr. squille, Lig. sigā, MG. skōuli[i]). Monomial. |
### Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ folk taxon

| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ folk taxon | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethno-taxonomic rank | Main ethno-taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------|
| squilla<sup>2</sup> (squillae)              | Caridea, Panaeidea, Squalloidea, Stenopodidea | shrimps and prawns (Thompson 1947: 104) | INT Martial, 13, 83: “caeruleus nos Liris amat, quem silva Maritae protegit; hinc squillae maxima turba sumus.” | <15 (10) | cancer/ crustata | squilla, pinophylox, etc. [FG] | See caris. Martial’s squillae are river shrimps. Monomial. |
| stella                                      | Asteroidea                          | starfish             | FG Pliny, HN 9, 154: “multis eadem natura quae frutici, ut [t] oloth[u]rysi, pulmonibus, stellis” | <5 (3) | COVERT<sup>2</sup> | [LF1+] | – |
| strombus | Cerithiidae, Turritellidae, Mangelidae, Buccinidae, Pisaniidae, the likes | sea snails, true whelks and the likes (Thompson 1947) | FG Pliny, HN 1, 32a, 381: “strombus sive concha longa” | <10 (3) | cochllos | [LF3+] | – |
| sudis | Sphyrana sphyraena (Linnaeus, 1758) | European barracuda (Bisson et al. 2020) | FG Pliny, HN 32, 154: “sudis Latine appellatur, Graece sphyra[e] en[a], rostra similis nomini, magnitudine inter amplissimos” | <5 (2) | piscis<sup>1</sup> [LF1+] | – |
| surena    | Pinna sp.?                         | pen shell?           | FG Varro, Ling. 5, 77: “item in conchylis aliqua (sc. nomina) […] vernacula ad simulitudinem, ut surenae, pectunculi, ungues” | <5 (1) | conchaja/ (conchula) | [INT] | – |
| sus       | Balistes capriscus                 | grey triggerfish (Salviani 1554)? angular roughshark? | FG Ovid, Hal. 126: “at contra pisces luxantur harena ut […] duri sues” | <5 (1) | piscis<sup>1</sup> [LF1+] | – |
| synodus   | Dentex sp., Pagrus sp.             | dentex, red porgy (Thompson 1947) | FG Ovid, Hal. 107: “gaudent pelago quales […] et nutilus phager et fulvi synodontes” | <5 (2); <20 (19) | piscis<sup>1</sup> [LF1+] | – |

The Roman classification and nomenclature of aquatic animals

### Annotated checklist of Roman aquatic animals. Continuation.
| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ folk taxon | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethnontaxonomic rank | Main ethnontaxonomic information | Number of occurrences Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------|
| **testacea** | Bivalvia, Gastropoda | LF2+ (externally) shelled molluscs | Pliny, HN 32, 58: "et hanc (sc. pastinacem) autem et omnia testacea modice collu[j] n'[t] cibis, quia saporis gratia perrit." | <5 (1) conchilium\textsubscript{2} mitulus\textsubscript{2}, etc. [LF1+] etc. [LF3+] | testudinum\textsubscript{2} | Lit. "shelled (animals)" (cf. testa "shell"). Pliny’s syntagm omnia testacea ("all") testacea is ethnontaxonomically relevant. Monomial. |
| **testudo** (testudines) | Testudines | INT | Pliny, HN 32, 32: "sunt ergo testudinum genera terrestres, marinae, lutariae et quae in dulci aqua vivunt" | >30 animalia [FK] | testudo | Morphology (testa-	extit{judo), cf. testa "shell") captures carapace as salient trait (cf. Varro, Ling. 5, 78). Used for all chelonians, i.e. aquatic and terrestrial; both seem equally prototypical (but only the former are ceto – cf. Pliny, HN 32, 144), Monomial. |
| **testudo fluvatilis** (Linnaeus, 1758); Mauremys sp. | European pond turtle | FG | Cicero, Nat. D. 2, <5 (1) testudo [INT] | 124: "crocodili fluvialesque testudines quaedamque serpentes ortae extra aquam simul ac primum niti possunt aquam persequeantur" | – | Lit. "river turtle" (cf. 	extit{fluvius} "river"). Pliny’s “fourth kind” of turtles, i.e. "those found in rivers" (HN 32, 40). See testudo, t. marina, t. lutaria. Productive binomial. |
| **testudo lutaria** (Linnaeus, 1758); Mauremys sp.? | European pond turtle? | FG | Pliny, HN 32, 32: "sunt ergo testudinum genera terrestres, marinae, lutariae et quae in dulci aqua vivunt" | <5 (1) testudo [INT] | – | Lit. "mud turtle" (cf. 	extit{lutum} "mud"). Pliny’s “third kind” of turtles, i.e. "those living in mud and marshes" (HN 32, 39). See testudo, t. marina, t. fluvatilis. Productive binomial. |
| **testudo marina** (Linnaeus, 1758); Chelonia mydas (Linnaeus, 1758) (also Dermochelys coriacea (Vandelli, 1761)?) | green turtle, loggerhead turtle (also leatherback turtle?) | FG | Columella, Rust. 6, 5, 3: "sanguinis marinae testudinis miscetur potio cum vini veteris sextanis tribus"; Pliny, HN 32, 144: "ut a beluis (sc. marinis) ordiamur […] testudines" | <10 (5) testudo [INT] | belua (marina)/ cetus\textsubscript{2} [LF] | Lit. "marine turtle". Modifier marina used only in disambiguation from, e.g., t. terrestris (or t. lutaria, t. fluvatilis). Also as a cetus or marine beast (see cetus\textsubscript{2}, testudo). Productive binomial. |
| **tethea** | Ascidiacea | FG | Pliny, HN 32, 99: "tethea […] inveniantur haec in folidis maris sugentia, fungorum verius genera quam piscium" | <5 (4) ostreum\textsubscript{2} testacea/ conchata/ (conchula) [LF2+] | – | Gr. 	extit{tēthea} (or 	extit{tēthua}), plural form of 	extit{tēthos} (or 	extit{tēthon}). Grouped both with externally-shelled molluscs (cf. Pliny, HN 32, 93) and, seemingly, with plant-like sea animals. Monomial. |
| Roman ethnonym/Scientific ID/ folk taxon | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethnontaxonomic main ethnon-taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| thranis Tetrapturus belone          | Mediterranean spearfish, swordfish (Thompson 1947) | Pliny, HN 32, 151: "pecuilaures autem mari [... ] thranis, quem ali xiphian vacant" | <5 piscis [LF1+] (1); <5 (2) | belua (marina)/cetus2 [LF] | belua (marina)/cetus2 [LF] | Gr. θράνων, lit. "beam", captures body-shape-based referential trait(s); Greek sources lead also to another billfish other than the swordfish (cf. synonymy with xiphias in Pliny). See xiphias. Monomial. |
| thrissa Alosa sp.                    | shad (Rondelet 1554; Salviani 1554) | Pliny, HN 32, 151: "pecuilaures autem mari [... ] thrissa" | <5 piscis [LF1+] (1); <15 (13) | belua (marina)/cetus2 [LF] | belua (marina)/cetus2 [LF] | Gr. θρίσσα (thrikh-ia, cf. Gr. thrix lit. "[a single] hair"); also "fishbone" captures salient food-based referential trait, i.e. boniness. ID based on Greek sources and diachronic clues (e.g., MG. φρίσσα, Tur. tirsi). Cf. trichias. Monomial. |
| thursio Steno bredanensis (G. Cuvier in Lesson, 1828) | rough-toothed dolphin | Pliny, HN 9, 34; "delphinorum similitudinem habent qui vocantur thursdayes, distant et tristia quidem aspectus – abest enim illa lasciviae –, maxime tamen rostris canicularum maleficentiae adsimulati" | <5 belua (marina)/cetus2 [LF] (2); <5 (1) | belua (marina)/cetus2 [LF] | belua (marina)/cetus2 [LF] | Similar to dolphins but with "a sad expression on their shark-like snout", says Pliny: beak shape is indeed a diagnostic feature of Steno bredanensis compared to other dolphins. Monomial. |
| thynnis Euthynnus alletteratus (Rafinesque, 1810) | small tunny (Thompson 1947) | Pliny, HN 32, 145: "ut a beluis ordlamur [...] communesque [...] amni tandem ac mari [...] thynnides"; HN 32, 151: "pecuilaures autem mari [... ] thynnides" | <5 belua (marina)/cetus2 [LF] (2); >30 belua (marina)/cetus2 [LF] (Fig. 17); pelamys2 [INT] (Fig. 8) | belua (marina)/cetus2 [LF] | belua (marina)/cetus2 [LF] | Gr. thynnus, lit. "tuna-like" (cf. θύννος). Pliny views it as the female of thynnis in two passages translated from Aristotle (HN 9, 47; 9, 49). ID based on Greek sources (brackish environment, Black Sea distribution) and diachronic clues (Fr. thonine, lt. tunina). Monomial. |
| thynnus Thunnus sp. | tuna, albacore (Thompson 1947) | Pliny, HN 32, 145: "ut a beluis ordlamur [...] communesque [...] amni tandem ac mari [...] thynnii" | >30 belua (marina)/cetus2 [LF] (Fig. 17); pelamys2 [INT] (Fig. 8) | belua (marina)/cetus2 [LF] | belua (marina)/cetus2 [LF] | Greek loanword (θύννος; cf. Varro, Ling. 5, 77). Latin synonym is cetus1 (cf. Columella, Rusc. 6, 32). Ascription to pelamys2 (a food-based category; see entry) based on inferences only. Diachronic clues. Monomial. |
| torpedo Torpedo sp. | torpedo (Blisson et al. 2020) | Pliny, HN 9, 78; "planorum piscium alterum est genus, quod pro spina cartilaginem habet, ut […] torpedo" | <20 plani [INT] (19) | plani [INT] (Fig. 8) | plani [INT] (Fig. 8) | Name (lt. "numbness") captures behaviour-driven analogical similarity (electric organ discharge). Same metaphorical shift for Greek synonym nárkē (lit. "numbness"). Diachronic clues. Monomial. |

The Roman classification and nomenclature of aquatic animals. Continued.
### Annotated checklist of Roman aquatic animals. Continuation.

| Roman ethnonym/Scientific ID/ folk taxon | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethno-taxonomic rank | Main ethno-taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| torpedo nigra | Tetronarce nobiliana (Bonaparte, 1835) | dark electric ray | FS | Scribonius, Comp. 11, 1: "capitis dolorem [...] tollit et in perpetuum remediat torpedo nigra viva imposita eo loco [...] parandae sunt torpedines eius generis" (fig. 8) | <5 | torpedo [FG] | – | Lit. "black electric ray". Diachronic clues (e.g., Fr. torpille noire, It. tremula nira). See torpedo. Productive binomial. |
| tragos¹ | Scalarispongia scalaris (Schmidt, 1862); Ircinia sp. | hard sponges | FG | Pliny, HN 9, 148: "spongearum [...] spissum ac praedurum et asperum (sc. genus trago vocatur)" | <5 | spongea [FG] | (fig. 4) | – | Gr. trágos (lit. "he-goat") refers to hardness and roughness (cf. Aristotle, HA 548b 5) compared to normal – i.e. usable – soft sponges (see manos, Achillium). See tragos². Monomial. |
| tragos² | Spicara maena (Linnaeus, 1758) | blotched picarel (the spawning male) (Bisson et al. 2020) | FG | Ovid, Hal. 95ff.: "gaudent pelago quales [...] rapidique lupi perque caeca tragique" | <5 | piscis, [LF1+] | (fig. 8) | – | Gr. trágos (see tragos²) is normally used for "male" (= less usable) versions of something, S. maena being characterized by marked phenotypic variations due to sexual dimorphism (Minos et al. 2013). See maena. Monomial. |
| trichias | Sardinella aurita Valenciennes, 1847 | gilt sardine | FG | Pliny, HN 9, 52: "intrantum Pontum soli non remeant trichiæ [...] hi soli in Histrum [mare] subeunt et ex eo [...] in Hadriaticum mare defluunt" | <5 | piscis, [LF1+] | (fig. 8) | – | Gr. tripodias (a derivative from thríx, lit. "[a single] hair"; also "fishbone") captures boniness as the salient (food-based) referential trait. ID based on Greek sources and diachronic clues (MG. tritías). Cf. thrissa. Monomial. |
| tritomum | a large kind of pelamys² | (Bisson et al. 2020) | FG | Pliny, HN 32, 151: "peculiare autem maris [...] tritomum pelamydum generis magni, ex quo terna cybia fiunt" | <5 | pelamys² [INT] | (fig. 8) | – | Gr. tritomon, lit. "thrice-cut". Food-based ethnonym (usually a fish cut and/or fish dish name). Unproductive binomial. |
| trochos | unidentified sea fish | – | FG? | Pliny, HN 9, 166: "qui trochos appellatur a Graecis, ipse se inire (sc. traduntur)" | <5 | piscis¹ [LF1+] | (fig. 8) | – | Gr. trókhos, lit. "wheel". Pliny might have misread Aristotle, GA 757a 4. Aelian’s (NA 13, 20) description of a kétos called so has been interpreted as referring to the sunfish (Le Goic et al. 2020). Monomial. |
| trygon | Dasyatis sp. | stingray | FG | Pliny, HN 9, 155: "nullum usquam execrabilius quam radius super caudam eminens trýgonis, quam nostri pastinacae appellant, quincunciai magnitudine" | <5 | plani [INT] | (fig. 8) | – | Gr. trugón, lit. "turtle-dove", captures a colour-driven (plus flight-like swimming) analogical similarity. ID supported by diachronic clues (MG. trudgōna and trauona/travona in Southern Italian dialects). See Lat. synonym pastinaca. Monomial. |
Annotated checklist of Roman aquatic animals. Continuation.

| Roman ethnonym/Scientific ID/folk taxon | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethno-taxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| turdus Labrus sp. (e.g., Labrus viridis Linnaeus, 1758; L. merula Linnaeus, 1758; Symphodus sp. (e.g., Symphodus roissali (Risso, 1810))] | wrasses (Bisson et al. 2020) | Pliny, HN 32, 151: "peculaires autem maris […] turdus, inter saxatiles nobilis" | <10 (6) | saxatiles [INT] | – | Name (lit. “thrush”) captures colour-driven (plus nest-building-driven) analogical similarity (cf. Varro, Ling, 5, 77). Diachronic clues (e.g., L. tordo). Cf. merula. Monomial. |
| umbilicus The operculum of Bolma rugosa (Linnaeus, 1767) | eye of Saint Lucy; Venus navel | Cicero, De or. 2, 22: "solet narrare Scaevola, conchas eos (sc. Scipionem et Laelium) et umbilicos ad Caileam et ad Laurentum legere consusesse" | <5 (3) conchylium, pecten [LF1+] | umbrina punica [FS] | (Fig. 10) | – | Lit. “navel”. Collected along the seashore by Scipio and his friend Laelius, as a form of relaxation. Diachronic clues. Monomial. |
| umbra (indigena) Sciaena umbra Linnaeus, 1758 (also Umbrina sp.; Argyrosomus regius (Asso, 1801))? | brown meagre (also shi drum, meagre?) (Thompson 1947: 241) | Ovid, Hal. 111: “gaudent pelago quales […] corporis umbrae liventes”; COLUMELLA, Rust. 8, 16, 8: “punicasque et indigenas umbras” | <5 (4) piscis, pecten [LF1+] | umbra punica | (Fig. 8) | Lat. name (lit. “shade/shadow”) refers to colour (cf. Varro, Ling. 5, 77). ID supported by diachronic clues (e.g., L. ombre). Ovid’s chromatic remark ("lead-coloured body") leads to Sciaena (the darkest species). See coracinus¹, conus, sciaena. Monomial (or productive binomial). |
| umbra punica Umbrina ronchus Valenciennes, 1843?; U. canariensis Valenciennes, 1843? | fusca drum?; Canary drum? (Thompson 1947: 242) | COLUMELLA, Rust. 8, 16, 8: “harenosi gurgites […] pelagios melius pascunt ut auratas ac dentices, punicasque et indigenas umbras” | <5 (1) pelagius [INT] | (Fig. 8) | – | Lit. “Caghagianian meagre (see umbra). ID hypothesis based on the (current) western Mediterranean distribution of both species. Productive binomial. |
| unguis Pholas dactylus Linnaeus, 1758 | common paddock (Bisson et al. 2020) | Pliny, HN 9, 101: “unguesque velut igne lucentes in tenebris, etiam in ore mandentur” | <5 (4) pectoris [INT] | (Fig. 10) | – | Lit. “nail”. Among other shellfish names given “after resemblance” (Varro, Ling. 5, 77). Synonym of dactylus. Monomial. |
| uranoscopos Uranoscopus scaber Linnaeus, 1758 | stargazer (Thompson 1947) | Pliny, HN 32, 70: “callionymus […] idem piscis et uranoscopos vocatur ab oculo, quem in capite habet” | <5 (4) | piscis [LF1+] | (2); | Gr. ouranoskópos (lit. "sky-watcher") refers to eye position. Modern morphosemantic equivalents (e.g., Sp. miracielo). Synonym of callionymus and lucerna. Unproductive binomial. |
| urtica (marina) Anemonia sulcata (Pennant, 1777); Actinia sp. | sea anemone (Bisson et al. 2020) | Pliny, HN 9, 146: “neque animalium neque fruticum […] urticae […] carnosae frondis ipsis nature” | <10 (7) | COVERT¹ | (Fig. 4) | Lit. ("marine") nettle”. Lat. synonym of cnide. Consumed as food by the Romans (cf. Plautus, Rud. 297). Monomial (or unproductive binomial). |
### Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ folk taxon

| Roman ethnobionym/Scientific ID/ folk taxon | Vernacular name (and/or ID reference) | Ethnontaxonomic rank | Main ethnontaxonomic information | Number of occurrences | Superordinate folk taxon | Subordinate folk taxon | Remarks |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------|
| uva (marina)                                | cuttlefish eggs (de Saint-Denis 1947) | FG                   | Pliny, HN 32, 151: “peculiares autem maris [...] uva” | <5 (3)                | belua (marina)/ cetus₂ [LF] | piscis₁ [LF]           | –       |
| Veneria                                     | Argonauta argo Linnaeus, 1758       | paper nautilus       | Pliny, HN 9, 103: “navigant ex iis [sc. conchis ad bucinum recurvis] Veneriae praebentesque concavam sju partem et aureae opponentes per summum aequorum velitcant” | <5 (2)                | ostreum;/ testacea/ concha;/ (conchula) [LF₂+] (Fig. 10) | –                     | –       |
| vitulus (marinus)                           | Monachus monachus (Hermann, 1779)   | monk seal            | Pliny, HN 32, 144: “ut a beluis ordiamur [...] celebrēs Homero vituli” | >30                   | belua (marina)/ cetus₂ [LF] (Fig. 17) | –                     | –       |
| vulpes marina                               | Alopias sp.                         | thresher shark       | Pliny, HN 9, 145: “at vulpes marinae similī in periculo gluttiunt amplius usque ad infirma lineae, qua facile praerodent” | <5 [LF₁+] (1)       | piscis₁ [LF₁+] | –                     | –       |
| xiphas                                      | Tetrapurus belone Rafinesque, 1810; Xiphas gladius Linnaeus, 1758 | Mediterranean spearfish, swordfish (Thompson 1947) | Pliny, HN 32, 15: “xiphian, id est gladium”; 32, 151: “peculiares autem maris [...] thranis, quem aili xiphian vocant” | <5 [LF₁+] (2); <15 (14) | piscis₁ [LF₁+] | –                     | –       |
| zaeus                                       | Zeus faber (Linnaeus, 1758)         | John Dory (Bisson et al. 2020) | Pliny, HN 32, 148: “peculiares autem maris [...] fabri sive zaei” | <5 [LF₁+] (3); <5 (1) | piscis₁ [LF₁+] | –                     | –       |

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Annotated checklist of Roman aquatic animals. Continuation.