

Contributions to the History of Herpetology / Biographies: 1800-1820
Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles, Oxford (Ohio)
1989, Volume 1, pp. 20-21

BOJANUS, Ludwig Heinrich (1776-1827).

Bojanus, a veterinary anatomist and author of the finest iconography of the turtle, was born in Buchsweiler (now Bousville), France, in what was then the province of Alsace, on 16 July 1776, but he soon moved to Darmstadt. He attended the University of Jena (M.D. 1797) and then



L. Bojanus

practiced medicine for a short time in Darmstadt. Shortly afterwards he was invited by the government of Hesse-Darmstadt to establish a school of veterinary medicine there but after many frustrating delays he accepted an offer from Russian officials to become Professor of Veterinary Medicine at the Imperial University of Vilna. He spent 18 productive years there before returning to his boyhood home in Darmstadt, in 1824, on medical advice to seek a more moderate climate, but in the meantime he had become a respected member of the Russian scientific community and was appointed Rector (or president) of the University of Vilna in 1822. He died in Darmstadt on 2 April 1827.

Bojanus published some 70 titles on anatomy and veterinary medicine, of which seven concerned the anatomy of turtles and snakes. His most famous work, and the book on which his reputation rests, was his "Anatome Testudinis Europaeae," published in two parts (1819, 1821; reprinted 1902, again in 1970), which is arguably the best atlas of any submammalian vertebrate ever published. The book includes 40 folio plates which depict the detailed anatomy of the European pond turtle, *Emys orbicularis*; the "text" is, in fact, a series of captions to these plates. Bojanus began working on this atlas shortly after arriving in Vilna and devoted a decade of work to the project before the first part was issued. He made most of the original drawings, paid for the printing himself (the original edition was limited to only 80 copies), purchased paper of the highest quality to hold the fine lines of the etched copper plates, and even imported a German artist to do the final drawings. The result was a magnificent atlas whose value continues to endure after more than a century and a half.

• *References:* "Ludwig Heinrich von Bojanus," by A. W. Ouo, *Nova Acta Akad. Naturforsch. Halle*, 15(1): xxxix-xlv, 1831; "Memoria . . . Professoris Ludovici Henrici Bojani," by E. Eichwald, *Acad. Med.-Chirurg. Typogr., Vilna*, ii, 57 pages, 1835; "Ludwik Henryk Bojanus," by Z. Fedorowicz, *Polska Akad. Nauk, Inst. Zool., Memorabilia Zool.*, 1: 1-47, 1958; "Bojanus and the Anatomy of the Turtle," by A. S. Romer, p. iii-v. *In Bojanus's Anatome Testudinis Europaeae*, repr. ed., Soc. Study Amphib. Rept., Athens (Ohio), 1970. • *Portrait and signature:* From Eichwald, 1835.