

# Nature and Metamorphosis

A Study of Carl Adolph Agardh's Latin Dissertations  
and Monographs on Botany and Biology

Magnus Krook  
Department of Languages and Literatures

Academic dissertation in Latin for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,  
to be publicly defended, by due permission of the Dean of the Faculty of  
Humanities at University of Gothenburg on Friday November 25, 2022,  
10:15, Sal C350 (Lilla hörsalen), Humanisten, Renströmsgatan 6,  
Gothenburg



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

## Abstract

Title: Nature and Metamorphosis. A Study of Carl Adolph Agardh's Latin Dissertations and Monographs on Botany and Biology

Author: Magnus Krook

Language: English with English and Swedish abstracts

Carl Adolph Agardh (1785-1859), professor of botany and practical economy at Lund University, published a large corpus of Latin dissertations and monographs on plant systematisation and plant physiology which merit a thorough examination both on account of their importance for the then contemporary natural science but also as they in hindsight constitute a corpus of Latin texts from the last period in which Latin was still a viable means of communication in the scientific community. Agardh's most distinguished contribution to botany and biology is found in his work on algae, their systematisation and their physiology. An outcome of the latter is a theory concerning the metamorphosis of algae.

The aim of this study is to analyse how Agardh verbalises these instances of metamorphosis in his Latin works, with a focus on the dissertation *De metamorphosi algarum* from 1820. To understand the observations of metamorphosis, Agardh's underlying conception of nature is first examined. It displays influences from German idealism, in particular from the German philosopher F. W. J. von Schelling, from the Swedish Linnaean tradition, and from vitalism, a theory which was then prevalent among international naturalists. The outcome of the analysis of the verbalisations of metamorphosis is that Agardh neither establishes a terminology nor coins any neologisms to cope with the descriptions of the instances of metamorphosis. Instead, he uses already extant non-technical Latin terms and expressions signifying change to provide detailed descriptions of each observed instance of metamorphosis. Thus, Agardh's verbalisations of the observations of metamorphosis show that a defined Latin terminology is not a prerequisite for exactness in scientific descriptions.

Keywords: Latin dissertations, Neo-Latin, botanical Latin, early modern period, Carl Adolph Agardh, F. W. J. von Schelling, history of botany, history of biology, historical algalogy, metamorphosis

ISBN: 978-91-8069-023-2 (printed)

ISBN: 987-91-8069-024-9 (pdf)