

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
UNITED STATES NATIONAL MUSEUM
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

April 16, 1964

Bob
Please read & return

Dr. H. B. Stenzel
SHELL DEVELOPMENT COMPANY
Exploration and Production Research Division
P. O. Box 481
Houston 1, Texas

Dear Dr. Stenzel:

Thank you for your letter concerning Crassostrea and the copy of your letter to Harold Vokes with new ostreid names. I agree that no true living Crassostrea have "denticles" (what are you calling them?). I have scanned the Museum Mollusk collections and found none. The possible relationship between my "denticulate" Cretaceous forms and Saccostrea is well worth investigating, and I will certainly undertake this carefully before arriving at any conclusion regarding a new name for the Cretaceous forms.

O. coxi is decidedly a Cubitostrea, and I have already suggested in my manuscript that it be made a monotypic subgenus of this genus. Apparently it is a short lived evolutionary experiment of Cubitostrea. The cardinal area is strikingly comparable to that of Exogyra, and were it not for the absence of evolutionary stages between them and the obvious tie of coxi to Cubitostrea, one might be tempted to say "this is what happened to Exogyra when the Tertiary came along." There is of course no basis for this. C. coxi is easily separable from Exogyra internally by the type and distribution of "denticles," and the shape and orientation of the posterior adductor scar. Exogyra seems to lack a Quenstedt's muscle too (Pedal retractor). The two apparently did have the same mode of opening the valves, however, and were functionally distinct from other ostreids in this respect. Thank you for your comments on this matter.

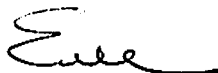
If I can solve the Cretaceous "denticulate" Crassostrea problem, my little manuscript will be ready to go. I would like very much to have you as one of the critics if you can find time.

Norm Sohl and I just returned from 3 weeks in Puerto Rico collecting silicified Cretaceous material - absolutely beautiful preservation. We also found time for some diving, allowing me to get nice populations of living Isognomon, Crassostrea, Lopha, and other pelecypods. It was a very rewarding experience, and yielded us the largest Caribbean Cretaceous fauna, by about 10 times, that has yet been reported.

- 2 -

I look forward to our next oyster session. All the Mesozoickers send you their best regards.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Erle'.

Erle G. Kauffman
Associate Curator
Division of Invertebrate
Paleontology

EGK:rm