

April 1, 1966

Dr. W. E. China, Assistant Secretary
International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature
c/o British Museum (Natural History)
Cromwell Road
London, S.W.1, England

Dear Dr. China:

Your airmail letter of 25 March 1966 has been received, and I wish to thank you for your informative reply. About the delay, you need not be apologetic about it. We all know how difficult this sort of work is; it takes great circumspection, compromise, and fact to lead people to a consensus in nomenclatorial matters and that takes time.

In response to the information contained in your letter, I have prepared an auxiliary statement, which is enclosed herewith. I hope it will be of some help.

Sincerely yours,

H. B. Stenzel

HBS:cas

Enclosure: Auxiliary Statement (*original & 14 xerox copies*)

cc: Bernhard Kummel

SHELL DEVELOPMENT COMPANY
Exploration and Production Research Division

AUXILIARY STATEMENT
prepared 4 April 1966
by H. B. Stenzel

The information concerning Drepanites Benett, 1831, given by Sherborne (1926, pt. 9, p. 2019) and Neave (1939, v. 2, p. 155) and in the original request submitted 8 January 1963 is somewhat confused and is in need of correction and amplification.

Drepanites appeared in two works by Miss Etheldred Benett, both dated 1831. The first one of these two to appear is:

Benett, Etheldred, 1831a, A catalogue of Wiltshire fossils, p. 117-126 of v. 3, pt. 2, of Hoare, Sir R. C., 1822/44, A history of modern Wiltshire: London, J. Nichols & Son, 14 pts. in 6 vols.

In this publication "*Drepanites, striatus, n.g." is merely listed on p. 121 under Testacea. As explained on p. 118: "Those marked with an asterisk are in my own cabinet,...." There is no description, no definition, no indication, and no illustration. It is a nomen nudum. I have inspected a copy of this publication at the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., U.S.A., and checked by letter on two other copies in this country.

From internal evidence in its text it is clear that the following work is of later date:

Benett, Etheldred, 1831b, A catalogue of the organic remains of the County of Wilts: Warminster, J. L. Vardy, iv + 9 p., 18 pls.

Although the second work is largely derived from the first one and treats the same subject, it is no mere separate or excerpted reprint, because its title and text are different and plates have been added. It was printed by a different print shop and in a different town; it was not published under the aegis of Sir R. C. Hoare. Sherborne, Neave, and the original request are in error in attributing Benett (1831b) to Hoare's publication.

In Benett (1831b, p. 3 and pl. 16, top left-hand figure)
"Drepanites, striatus, n.g." is listed and illustrated. The figure
 fulfills requirements of Article 16(a).

There is considerable doubt whether the work fulfills the Criteria
 of Publication, because Miss Benett had stated: "I have preferred printing
 a few copies only for the acceptance of my friends" (Benett, 1831b). The
 late Dr. L. F. Spath (in Wright & Wright, 1949, p. 481 footnote) and
 Wright & Wright (1949, ibidem) all regarded this work as "technically not a
 publication" because it was reserved for private circulation. These three
 are the first investigators to take note of this question, and it might be
 well to accept their judgement, because they were the first to come to a
 conclusion in this matter. However, Miss Benett's statement quoted above
 does not prove beyond a reasonable doubt that copies of the work were not
 obtainable in 1831 by the general public through purchase from the printers
 or the authoress or through free distribution from Miss Benett herself, as
 required in Article 8(3). The work is very scarce. There seems to be only
 one copy in the United States of America, at the Academy of Natural Sciences
 in Philadelphia. Possibly it was acquired with the fossil collection of
 Miss Benett by Thomas Wilson, who took the collection to Philadelphia.
 This copy was inspected by me.

Sherborne, Neave, and the original request interpreted the original
 figure as representing a Bivalve. However, Wright & Wright (1949) pointed
 out that it appears to depict the filling of the body chamber of an ammonite
 shell of the genus Hyphoplites Spath, 1922. Their interpretation is convincing.

The word Drepanites attributed to Benett, 1831b, is found only in
 the following three works, as far as I have been able to ascertain:

- (1) Sherborne (1926, pt. 9, p. 2019); given with the annotation "[n. et f.]",
 which means nomen nudum accompanied by figure.

- (2) Neave (1939, v. 2, p. 155); given with the annotation "—Moll.(Lam.)".

The fact that in his Nomenclator Zoologicus Neave listed Drepanites without qualifications and without rejecting it does not mean that he regarded it as an acceptable generic name. In the Editor's Preface (v. 1, p. vii) he stated: "Owing...to the absence from the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature of any clear definition of what constitutes publication, I have been compelled, with some reluctance, to include names that appear in privately printed works". This and other statements in Neave's Preface show that the Nomenclator Zoologicus includes generic names that he approved of and regarded as available as well as others that he knew were in need of further investigation and concerning which he had not come to any conclusion pro or con.

- (3) Wright & Wright (1949, p. 481, footnote). Regarded by them as not fulfilling requirements of publication and definitely suppressed in favor of Hyphoplites Spath.

The late Dr. L. R. Cox wrote in a letter addressed to me and dated 10 November 1964: "I would support your application to the International Commission for the suppression of Drepanites Benett. I see that in Part L of the Treatise, page L162, an ammonite genus Drepanites Mojsisovics, 1893, is accepted, while there is no reference to Benett's generic name."

[See Arkell, Kummel, & Wright, 1957, p. L162].

A. B. Stenzel

REFERENCES

- Arkell, W. J., Kummel, Bernhard, & Wright, C. W., 1957, Systematic descriptions: Treatise on Invertebrate Paleontology, pt. L Mollusca 4, p. L129-L490.
- Benett, Etheldred, 1831a, A catalogue of Wiltshire fossils, p. 117-126 of v. 3, pt. 2, of Hoare, Sir R. C., 1822/44, A history of modern Wiltshire: London, J. Nichols & Son, 14 pts. in 6 vols.
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- Neave, S. A., 1939, Nomenclator zoologicus, etc., v. 1 (A-C), xiii + 957 p.; v. 2 (D-L), 1025 p.: Zool. Soc. London.
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- Wright, C. W., & Wright, E. V., 1949, The Cretaceous ammonite genera Discohoplites Spath and Hyphoplites Spath: Geol. Soc. London Quart. Jour. v. 104, pt. 4, p. 477-497, pl. 28-32, (30 June 1949).