

November 29, 1962

Dr. Joseph J. Graham  
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Dear Joe:

It was good to get your aerogram letter of November 5, and to see that you are settled now. The town is quite pleasant, I understand, and you will like and enjoy it.

As you know oysters have me completely preoccupied these days, and it so happens there are some very important type specimens of oysters in Vienna. These are the types of recent oysters originally described by Ignatius von Born in 1778 and 1780. According to Brauer, 1878, these type specimens were on deposit at the kaiserlich Zoologische Museum in Vienna, which presumably is now called the Naturhistorische Museum.

Among these types, the one species that interests me most is Ostrea cristata von Born. According to the brief notes published by Brauer, 1878, p. 140, the species Ostrea cristata von Born is the same as Ostrea plicatula Lamarck = O. plicata Reeve. This assertion needs to be checked; it may be correct. Would it be possible for you to locate the type specimen or specimens figured as O. cristata by von Born in 1780? Please make several photos of them, measure them and describe them as carefully as you can. Perhaps you are good at sketching, perhaps some molds or casts can be made.

If the museum has some specimens of Ostrea Cumingiana Dunker also, could you compare them with the type specimens of O. cristata Born? I suspect they are the same species.

All this is important for the oyster manuscript, because this species is the type species of a genus and the confusion of names has to be cleared up, if possible. You are at the fountainhead of information on this particular question. I would be willing to spend a moderate amount of money for this question.

In Paris I was able to clear up a great deal of this particular question, but the last step remaining in this problem is the inspection of the type of O. cristata in Vienna.

The 2 1/2 weeks in Paris were very useful as to literature, type specimens, and personal connections. A thousand notes are the result and must be digested now.

My right hand was operated on for removal of a piece of muscle that had grown cross-wise. It seems to be in good shape now.

Dr. L. W. Stephenson, formerly of the U.S.G.S., an old friend of mine, died October 13. He was 86 years old.

Best wishes for success,

Yours truly,

H. B. Stenzel

HBS:cd

**Literature:**

**Brauer, Friedrich, 1878, Bemerkungen über die im Kaiserlich zoologischen Museum aufgefundenen Original-Exemplare zu Ign. von Born's Testacea Musei Caesarei Vindobonensis: Kaiserliche Akad. Wissensch. (Wien) Sitzungsberichte, Mathemat.-Naturwiss. Classe, vol. 77, Abt. 1, no. 2, pp. 117-192.**

**von Born, Ignatius, 1780, Testacea Musei Caesarei Vindobonensis quae jussu Mariae Theresiae Augustae disposuit et descripsit: Vindobonae [Vienna], Joannus Paulus Kraus.**