

Bad Books – III

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INTRODUCTION

This is the third in a series concerning “books” on Mollusca that are being sold on the Internet. There are several genres of reprinted and “manufactured” books, but the publication discussed here is the only one of its kind located.

THE BOOK

The subject of discussion is titled “A Catalogue [sic] of Recent Species of The Genus *Cancellaria*” with G. B. Sowerby shown as author. Having co-authored two editions of *Catalog of the superfamily Cancellarioidea Forbes and Hanley, 1851 (Gastropoda, Prosobranchia)* (Petit & Harasewych 1990 & 2005), I was immediately drawn to the title, and a copy was ordered. As it is a POD (print on demand) book, it is available from a multitude of dealers.

It is obvious that in the title “Catalogue” is a corruption of “Catalogue.” There is no title page or date of publication within the book. The first page of text is headed: “A catalogue of Recent species of the genus *Cancellaria*, by G. B. Sowerby” [in all capitals; *Cancellaria* not italicized]. That Catalogue covered Parts 9–13 (the *Cancellaria*), of the *Conchological Illustrations* written by G. B. Sowerby I and G. B. Sowerby II in 1832–1841. This was the first monograph finished and thus was the first Catalogue issued. The *Conchological Illustrations*, when terminated in 1841, consisted of 200 hand-colored plates with a catalogue or list for each genus or family included.

This book is rather more than the title implies as the *Cancellaria* actually occupy only nine pages (catalogue) and five plates; the remainder being occupied by other parts of the original work. In addition to the *Cancellaria*, this “Catalogue” contains the text (lists) and plates for *Murex*, *Typhis*, *Ranella* (the misspelled

Renella printing), *Monoceros*, *Eburna*, Cypraeidae and *Conus*. This represents 113 plates of the 200 in the entire work.

The black and white plates are very poor copies of the original hand-colored plates. However, they are as useful as many of the “identification books” with photographs. As the shell groups most popular with collectors are covered, the originators of this reprint would have been much better off if they had found out more about what was being copied, and been more careful with the plate scans.

This reprint, easily spotted by its misspelled title, is available from numerous book dealers at prices ranging from \$15.04 to \$50.01. Although several different covers are shown in the listings, they are considered to be identical as the variety of covers is standard practice in the POD [Print on Demand] industry, and it is highly unlikely that two different scans were made of the same Parts and with the same misspelling.

DISCUSSION

With an original hand-colored *Conchological Illustrations* costing upwards of \$6,500, a good reprint should be in demand. A recent check reveals that the entire work appears to have been scanned as a POD. A copy has not been seen but it is certainly not in color. Based on a different cover that has been noted only on this one reprint, there are evidently at least two versions, but it is difficult to tell. Few vendors even give the pagination, but those who give it for this work list it as having 350, 440, or 520 pages. Also, there are some listings of a “Volume 2” and a “Volume 12.” It is possible that it has been broken into two volumes as the work contains 200 plates which, if printed only on one side, would account for 400 pages in addition to the text (lists or catalogues) which is about 60 pages. These reprints are listed at around \$36. Whether or not that is reasonable

depends upon the quality. If any reader wishes to obtain a copy, it is suggested that it be purchased through a company that has a no-reason return policy. Most of the POD printers place multiple disclaimers in their listings stating that a copy may have flaws, etc.

PRINT ON DEMAND

The above paragraph ventured into the different world of old books that have been scanned and are printed on demand. That type of POD will be the subject of another paper.

CONCHOLOGICAL ILLUSTRATIONS

The *Conchological Illustrations* has recently been collated and described in detail by Petit (2009: 18–26).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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- Sowerby, G. B., II (ed.) (1832–41) *The Conchological Illustrations*. London. 200 Parts [200 plates with lists. See Petit 2009 for description and collation.]

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- No. 11. Petit, R. E. 2012. Bad books - II 5 pp.

NOTE

Although no nomenclatural action is taken in this paper, this note is to declare that it is being published for the permanent scientific record and copies are being sent to numerous systematists and institutions. It is being reproduced in ink on paper in over fifty simultaneously produced identical copies. It is also being made available as an electronic file.

Conchologia Ingrata is available without charge.