

THE ORIGINAL PUBLICATION OF *HETEROTIS* HEMPRICH AND  
EHRENBERG, 1828. Z.N.(S.) 1807  
(see volume 24, pages 291-293)

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D'Aubenton and Daget (1967) recently noted that although Ehrenberg brought to the attention of other ichthyologists (by unknown means) a fish from the Nile that he called *Heterotis niloticus*, there is no evidence that he published a name, description or plate of the fish in order to legally place the name into zoological nomenclature. This comment is found in the above-mentioned authors' petition to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature to place the name *Heterotis* Ehrenberg, 1829 on the official list of generic names in zoology.

Recently while working on a study of the Osteoglossidae, I discovered in the rare book room of the library of the American Museum of Natural History two folios authored by Hemprich and Ehrenberg with a publication date of 1828 and containing three plates depicting and naming *Heterotis niloticus*. One folio (Hemprich and Ehrenberg, 1828a) contains a tinted plate (plate I) made from a steel engraving labelled "*Heterotis Nilotica* H & E" and signed "F. W. Linger jun. sculp. Berlin 1827". The complete fish is illustrated in lateral view and small numbers are placed near the branchiostegal rays and the fins to indicate their counts. The outline of a transverse section through the body and two illustrations of scales are included on the plate. The other folio (*ibid.* 1828b) contains two steel engravings depicting the internal anatomy of *Heterotis*. Plate VIII, labelled "*Heterotis nilotica*" is a lateral view of the skeleton, a ventral view of the skull, a ventral view of the palate, a dorsal view of the lower jaw and branchial arches, a frontal view of the skull and a view of two vertebrae with associated arches and ribs. Plate IX, labelled "*Heterotis niloticae*", illustrates the suprabranchial organ, the viscera, a gill arch, the nasal epithelium, the semicircular canals and the brain.

The two 1828 folios are obviously part of the more widely-known series of folios published by Hemprich and Ehrenberg between 1828 and 1845 based on their collections from Africa and the Near East. The two folios are printed in identical format with the other folios and circumstantial evidence indicates that they are similar in ageing. Except for the legends on the plates and the contents listed on the back cover of the two folios, no commentary is known to accompany the plates.

In 1899, a team of editors in Germany published the plates in question in the apparent belief that the plates were still unpublished. In the foreword to their 1899 publication of Hemprich and Ehrenberg's plates they state "Ehrenberg hat die 'Symbolicae Physicae' nicht vollendet. Eine Anzahl von Abbildungen sind unter seiner Leitung angefertigt worden, gelangten aber bis jetzt noch nicht zur Veröffentlichung". The possession by the Library of the American Museum of Natural History of the two folios would seem to negate this statement. To what extent other copies were distributed besides the ones in the possession of the American Museum seems unlikely to be discovered at this late date. Present evidence, however, would indicate that for reasons unknown the two folios in question had a much more restricted distribution than the other folios in the series.

The two folios were examined in regard to publication date by the following members of the staff of the American Museum of Natural History: Mr. George Goodwin, former Librarian; Dr. Bobb Schaeffer, Department of Vertebrate Paleontology and Dr. Eugene Eisenmann, Department of Ornithology.

As the two folios are available in the Library of the American Museum of Natural History, and in order to conserve the generic name, *Heterotis*, which has been long known and widely used, *Clupisudis* Swainson, 1839 should again be considered a junior synonym of *Heterotis*. Also, as the 1828 plate is labelled "*Heterotis nilotica*



H & E", the proper citation is to be: *Heterotis niloticus* Hemprich and Ehrenberg 1828, rather than *Heterotis niloticus* Ehrenberg (without date), the practice heretofore.

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Roellig, H F. 1969. "The original publication of Heterotis Hemprich and Ehrenberg, 1828. Z.N. (S.) 1807." *The Bulletin of zoological nomenclature* 25, 194–195. <https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.part.23993>.

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