

Some Bibliographical Notes concerning Thomas Say's *American Entomology* (Philadelphia, 1817)

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The duties of an editor, considered by some to be limited to debating with contributors over the content of papers and urging printers to keep up schedules, sometimes transcend such practical necessities and lead to discoveries which are not only gratifying but exciting.

Upon first reading the typescript of Dr. Cyril dos Passos' article on Thomas Say's *American Entomology* (1817), which will appear in Vol. I, No. 1 of *SBNH: Notes of the Society for the Bibliography of Natural History in America*, I was reminded by Dr. dos Passos' remarks that only a few copies of Say's little fascicle were known to exist. Among the rarest of entomological publications, the 1817 Say qualifies as a separate imprint because although it was to be "Vol. 1, No. 1" of the author's projected *American Entomology*, the project temporarily foundered, and when the first volume of the *American Entomology* was finally printed in 1824, the preface in the lone fascicle was discarded and a new one was substituted. The text accompanying the six 1817 plates was considerably altered, some changes in names were made, and the plates with their new text were distributed within the volume, reset of course.

Say later claimed that the 1817 fascicle was not "properly published". To be precise, in the preface to the first volume of *American Entomology* (1824) he stated that "Six plates of the present volume, together with their accompanying text, were printed off in the year 1817, but as they were never properly published, it has been thought advisable to include them in the present work". Say's criteria for "proper publication" are unclear here, but the fascicle was obviously printed for some sort of distribution and meant to be only the first part of an extensive survey, inspired by Edward Donovan's *The Natural History of British Insects*, which had been published in parts between 1792 and 1813.

My correspondence with various librarians established the fact that as many as *eleven* of the fascicles of the 1817 Say are still extant, and the more remarkable fact that almost all of the copies are still in their original boards, as issued. Copies were located at the Linnean Society of London; the Zoological Society of London; the Royal Entomological Society of London; the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University; the John Crerar Library, Chicago; the American Museum of Natural History, New York City; the New York Public Library, New York City; the Museum of Science, Boston (Boston Society of Natural History); the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia; the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts; and the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia (American Entomological

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Society). Some of these copies are of interesting provenance, having belonged to such entomologists as Stainton, Hagen and Scudder.

Until this "census", it was not known exactly *how* the 1817 *American Entomology* was issued, but that is now quite clear. In the case of the two copies which have been well known to scholars, the AMNH copy is obviously rebound, and the RESL copy is in boards with an octagonal paper title vignette pasted on the front board. This copy had been assumed to be in a later binding, with the vignette cut from the original wrapper and applied. However, as descriptions and photocopies began to arrive from other libraries, it became increasingly apparent that the RESL copy is indeed "as issued" in its original boards, and that there were no wrappers involved. It is interesting that a number of the other librarians also assumed that their copies had been bound at a later time with the application of a paper cutout from original wrappers. Photocopies proved that the octagonal vignettes were all precisely superimposed, and a personal research trip to examine a number of the fascicles has left the matter beyond doubt. Say had his fascicles printed and bound in paper-covered boards, with an octagonal title vignette applied with adhesive to the front board. The label depicts two cherubs, one pursuing a generalised butterfly and another grasping at a beetle of the genus *Alaus* (Coleoptera: Elateridae), bears the title AMERICAN ENTOMOLOGY, identifies the lone fascicle as "Vol. 1. No. 1" and is signed "Kneass, Young & Co. Sc."

My examination of a number of copies has resulted in the following ideal description: engraved title, [A]⁴B—D⁴, 6 coloured plates. Only B₁^r, C₁^r and D₁^r are signed, as B, C, and D. Pagination: engraved title, [i]—x, 22 pp. Contents, with names used by Say: engraved title, verso blank; [A₁^r] printed title, verso blank; [A₂^r]—[B₁^v] Preface; plate of *Papilio philenor*; [B₂^r]—[B₃^r] its text; [B₃^v] blank; plate of *Geotrupes tityus*; [B₄^r]—[C₁^v] its text; plate of *Nemognatha immaculata*; [C₂^r]—[C₂^v] its text; plate of *Notoxus monodon* and *Notoxus bicolor*; [C₃^r]—[C₃^v] text for *monodon*; [C₄^r]—[C₄^v] text for *bicolor*; plate of *Berytus spinosus*; D₁^r—[D₂^r] its text; [D₂^v] blank; plate of *Cicindela formosa* and *Cicindela decemnotata*; [D₃^r]—[D₃^v] text for *formosa*; [D₄^r]—[D₄^v] text for *decemnotata*; [D₄^v] Index.

The thick wove text paper of the examined copies showed no watermarks. The plates are on a standard unwatermarked art paper, are unsigned, and bear no numbers or text except that the anatomical drawings on the *immaculata* plate are numbered 1-5. Plate numbers were added in the 1824 edition, and the engraved title differs in that the 1817 title is signed with both "C. A. Le Sueur del." and "Kneass, Young & Co. Sc.". The latter of these was not included in the 1824 engraved title; moreover, the style of the engraved AMERICAN ENTOMOLOGY was altered. The printed 1817 title is reproduced in

H. B. Weiss and G. M. Ziegler, *Thomas Say: Early American Naturalist* (Springfield and Baltimore, 1931), p. 40.

I am indebted to Dr. dos Passos as the inspiration for this research, and refer readers to his forthcoming paper for other details about Say's interesting fascicle.

Notes and Observations

LITHOPHANE SEMIBRUNNEA HAW. (TAWNY PINION) IN NORTH KENT. — I had a specimen of this species at a sugared oak bole in Darenth Wood on 5th October, 1974. I had resorted to sugaring tree trunks during that autumn because of the atrocious weather conditions which prevailed throughout October, making the spreading of the mixture on foliage in the usual manner almost impossible. In fact the nightly turn-out at the sugared trunks far exceeded in numbers anything I had previously attained on foliage; for example on one evening almost two hundred *Conistra vaccinii* L. and *C. ligula* Esp. were observed at several strips, along with other autumn moths. — J. PLATTS, 11 Maydowns Road, Chestfield, Kent.

COLEOPHORA OCHREA (HAWORTH) IN DORSET IN 1976. — While entomologising near Swanage on 5th June, my friend Mr. S. C. Scarsdale Brown and I found a number of the case-bearing larvae of this local moth which were mining the leaves and flower-buds of *Helianthemum chamaecistus*. As far as is known, the species had not been seen in Dorset since E. R. Bankes took it there towards the end of the last century. — J. M. CHALMERS-HUNT.

EPIBLEMA GRANDAEVANA (L. & Z.). — This species is usually supposed to have been imported with ballast from the Baltic, and so far as I can ascertain was never found apart from the old ballast heaps near Hartlepool. There is a long account of its history in Barrett, Vol. xi, 146-148, and for many years from 1870 to 1910 it was common in its rather restricted locality.

My late friend J. W. Corder of Sunderland and myself had several talks about its disappearance in 1925, when I arranged for him to stay at the keeper's cottage at Blean for a couple of months. He informed me that it entirely disappeared during the 1914-1918 War, that he gave up collecting during the war and afterwards none of the Durham entomologists had seen it. At any rate, before 1910 it was abundant in its one place, and when John Gardner wanted any he went to the sand-heaps at the end of May and soon had a cocoa-tin of pupae.

Corder and I endeavoured to account for its disappearance. We did not think, as has been suggested, that Gardner over-collected it, since the female contains a large quantity of eggs and the food (coltsfoot) was universal where the moth was found. We had two ideas which seemed feasible. Firstly, the moth having been introduced, the alterations in conditions due



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