

THE OCCURRENCE OF *HELICELLA HERIPENSIS* (MABILLE)
IN GREAT BRITAIN.

By A. W. STELFOX.

Read 12th January, 1912.

PLATE II.

IN the month of October, 1907, when collecting in the neighbourhood of Canterbury, I found a shell which appeared to me to be distinct from any known British species. It was evident from the first that it belonged to the group of *Helicella caperata* (Mont.), and most collectors to whom I showed specimens were inclined to consider them as a variety of that common species. Some examples were sent by Mr. A. S. Kennard to the late Professor Boettger, who pronounced them to be *Helicella Heripensis* (Mab.),¹ but that in his opinion this was not specifically distinct from *H. caperata* (Mont.). Since 1907 I have collected this shell many times in the southern counties, and have observed no trace of an intermediate form between *H. Heripensis* and *H. caperata*, although they live frequently in close proximity to each other. Though it is with great diffidence that I venture to differ from Dr. Boettger, I do not think we can do otherwise than regard *H. Heripensis* as a good species.

In case the accompanying illustrations are not sufficient to permit of the separation of the two shells mentioned above, I give below what appears to me to be the chief distinguishing characters of each, though it is a much easier matter to observe these in actual specimens than to describe them on paper.

HELICELLA CAPERATA (Montagu).
(Figs. 12-17.)

HELICELLA HERIPENSIS (Mabille).
(Figs. 1-11.)

GENERAL COLOURING.

Varies greatly in colour from pure white to almost black.

Usually of a creamy-brown colour, but often pale cream, with radiating markings.

BANDS.

Montagu's type has a dark band above the periphery, visible on all the whorls, while "at the base of the shell are generally several small circular bands; these are frequently interrupted or broken, and appear spotted".

The bands above the periphery are always more or less interrupted and faint, and never as dark nor as distinct as in certain forms of *H. caperata*. Bands beneath, numerous, seldom interrupted, and frequently darkening near the lip, and then ceasing abruptly.

¹ Bull. Soc. Zool. France, 1877, p. 304.

HELICELLA CAPERATA (Montagu). HELICELLA HERIPENSIS (Mabille).

SIZE.

Montagu gives the diameter of the shell as "three-eighths of an inch, rarely half an inch". This equals 9·5–12·7 mm. The largest examples which I possess from the south-east of England are, however, all under 10 mm. in diameter. (In the west of Ireland this shell attains a maximum diameter of about 12 mm.)

Usually larger than *H. caperata*, but not always so. Specimens from the Thames Embankment near Laleham, Middlesex, do not measure more than 8 to 9 mm. The average diameter is from 10 to 12 mm. It sometimes, however, exceeds 13 mm.

SPIRE.

Spire usually distinctly raised, and somewhat conical.

Spire low, and pyramidal rather than conical.

SUTURE.

Marked by a distinct furrow.

Less distinctly marked.

UMBILICUS.

Well marked, deep, and of more or less uniform rate of increase throughout. The reflection of the lip tends to obscure the umbilicus.

Narrow, until the last whorl is reached, then increasing with remarkable rapidity. The chief superficial character of the shell.

STRIATION.

Very strongly marked, but irregular and rugged when examined closely.

At a rough glance the shell appears to be smooth. In reality it is closely, finely, and regularly striated in comparison with *H. caperata*.

PERISTOME.

Sharp, and not reflected, except towards the umbilicus. Furnished with a strong white internal rib.

Sharp, but more delicate than that of *H. caperata*. The internal rib is frequently of a flesh colour, and is not so strongly marked.

HABITAT.

More commonly met with in open and uncultivated ground than in shady places.

Hedges and grassy banks. Common in the autumn months in certain places on the withered stems of *Sisymbrium officinale*, upon which its colouring renders it great protection.

The range of this shell would appear to be confined in these islands to southern Britain. Thanks to Mr. A. G. Stubbs—who appears to have been the first in this country to observe the differences between these two shells, but has not published his discovery—and Mr. A. S. Kennard, I am able to record it here from many localities that I have

not visited myself. Mr. C. E. Wright has also separated the shells, and a number of his records are given below. The remainder are from shells in the cabinet of Mr. R. J. Welch, of Belfast.

SURREY. Addington (A. S. Kennard); Merrow Down (A. W. Stelfox, 24th October, 1906); Ranmore Common (A. W. S., 24th May, 1908).

WEST KENT. Luddesdown, Wrotham, Cobham, and Erith (A. S. Kennard).

EAST KENT. Canterbury (A. W. S., 14th October, 1907).

EAST SUSSEX. Lewes (A. W. S., September, 1911).

WEST SUSSEX. Devil's Dyke (A. G. Stubbs; also A. W. S., 17th February, 1908); near Duncton (A. W. S., 5th April, 1908).

SOUTH HANTS. Stoner Hill, Petersfield (A. W. S., 31st May, 1908).

MIDDLESEX. Thames Embankment, near Laleham (A. W. S., 3rd November, 1907); River Gate, Hampton Court (A. W. S., 16th November, 1907).

BUCKS. Wendover (A. W. S., 3rd May, 1908); Stony Stratford (C. E. Wright, 1909).

HERTS. Near Watford (A. W. S., 10th November, 1907).

EAST SUFFOLK. Blythburgh and Kessingland (A. S. Kennard).

SOUTH LINCOLN. Ruckland, near Louth (A. S. Kennard).

NORTHANTS. Ringstead, Weldon, Oakley, and Kettering (C. E. Wright, 1909).

HUNTS. Buckden (C. E. Wright, 1909).

CAMBRIDGE. Cambridge (C. E. Wright, 1909).

LEICESTERSHIRE. Market Harborough (C. E. Wright, 1909).

EAST GLOUCESTER. Tredworth and other localities (A. G. Stubbs).

PEMBROKE. Pembroke (C. E. Wright); Tenby (J. W. Boulton, 1899, ex coll. R. J. Welch).

SOUTH-WEST YORKS. Pontefract (A. G. Stubbs).

SOUTH-EAST YORKS. Brough, near Hull (J. W. Boulton, 1909, ex coll. R. J. W.).

NORTH-EAST YORKS. Scarborough (J. W. Boulton, 1909, ex coll. R. J. W.).

It is probable that *H. Heripensis* is the *H. caperata*, var. *Gigaxii*, of Jeffreys and other British authors, and from the description given in the *Fauna Europæa Molluscorum Extramarinorum Prodromus* (1876) it is the *H. Gigaxi* of Westerlund.

In this work (p. 111) Westerlund records *H. Gigaxi* as occurring in "Lusitania, Gallia, Britann., Belgia".

Locard¹ includes twenty-three 'species' under the group of *H. Heripensis*, one of which is *H. Gigaxi*. This latter form is stated to be met with in southern France, while *H. Heripensis* is recorded from northern and central France.

¹ *Catalogue Général des Mollusques vivants de France*, 1882, pp. 107-11.



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