

Bad Books – II

Richard E. Petit

806 Saint Charles Road, North Myrtle Beach, SC 29582 r.e.petit@att.net

INTRODUCTION

This second paper about Bad Books concerns one that not does contain much bad or incorrect information, but is a total rip off in that all of the included data can be obtained with a few key-strokes on a computer. The example treated is one in a very long series of similarly produced “books” which consist almost entirely of material taken from Wikipedia, which in turn is a collection of material taken from various sources and compiled by a collective of individuals and computer programs.

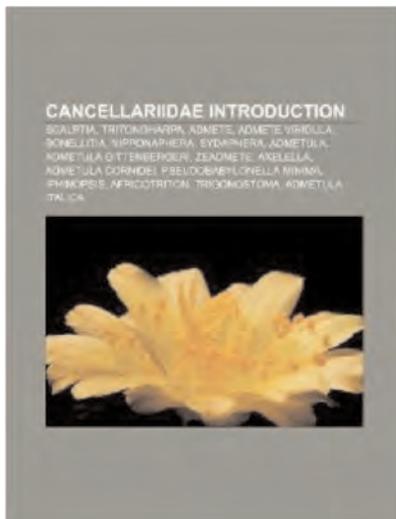


Figure 1

THE BOOK

The subject of this discussion is titled *Cancellariidae Introduction*. The name appears on the slick paper cover above six lines of randomly selected Cancellariidae genera and species

names. The cover illustration is an unnamed flower (see Figure 1). The verso of the front cover is blank with no publisher information, no date, and no ISBN number. The back cover is blank except for a bar code in the middle of the exposed back. The first page has the title below which these two lines are printed in small type:

Books LLC®, Wiki Series, Memphis, USA, 2011.
www.booksllc.net

Copyright: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en>

The remainder, which is the great majority, of the first page, together with page 2 and over a third of page 3 consists of the Contents. The Contents is a series of Cancellariidae genera arranged alphabetically with the included species following each genus, again in alphabetical order. At least one vernacular name appears in the Contents reflecting its use in the “text” where it also appears under its correct name.

The book is perfect bound with glossy covers and consists of 47 numbered pages, printed in 3-column format. The unnumbered verso of page 47 contains only a small imprint on the bottom giving a web address for “CPSIA information” and a bar code.

Cost of the book from Amazon.com was \$14.14 plus \$3.99 shipping in December 2011. It no longer is listed there but is listed by Barnes & Noble at \$12.72 for the English version and \$17.99 for either of the two Vietnamese versions, shipping cost not stated. Higher prices have been noted on other sites.

BOOK INTRODUCTION

Following the Contents there is an Introduction consisting of three short paragraphs. The first paragraph concerns the “publisher’s book club.” The second paragraph explains how to use the links to Wikipedia that are supplied for each entry. Included is the statement: “Click the version history tab to see the chapter’s contributors.” More about that later herein.

The final paragraph obviously is a “catch all” for other copy work by this firm as it states that:

“A large and diverse editor base collaboratively wrote the book, not a single author. After a long process of discussions and debate, the chapters gradually took on a neutral point of view reached through consensus. Additional editors expanded and contributed to chapters striving to achieve balance and comprehensive coverage. This reduced the regional or cultural bias found in many other books and provided access and breadth on subject matter otherwise little documented.”

After seeing the book, it is difficult to work through that discourse without gagging.

WoRMS

Before proceeding, it must be pointed out that almost all of the Wikipedia data which is copied in this book was compiled or “data-mined” by Wikipedia from the World Register of Marine Species, an authoritative data base which can be found at <http://www.marinespecies.org/index.php> or by searching for its acronym, WoRMS. Bad data is sometimes entered there as it is on other data bases. Incorrect data placed on WoRMS is corrected there as soon as it is noted, but if incorrect data is picked up by Wikipedia, it remains static until individually edited. Not all incorrect data in this book can be attributed to WoRMS, even some for which Wikipedia gives WoRMS as the source.

CONTENTS

Following the Introduction just described, the rest of the book consists of names of genera and species in the family Cancellariidae. The genera

are arranged alphabetically with the species following them in alphabetical order. The species are separated from each other by a faint horizontal line. The genus name appears in this format:

“*Admete* is a genus of medium-sized sea snails, marine gastropod molluscs in the family Cancellariidae, the nutmeg shells.”

Following that statement, all species of *Admete* listed on Wikipedia are listed with authors and dates. Lastly in the genus section is a “Names that have become synonyms.” It is in this latter section that confusion may occur as you will find such things as “*Admete microscopica* Dall, 1889: synonym of *Microcancilla microscopica* (Dall, 1889)” that are a reflection of the unusual terminology used by WoRMS which considers all genus-species combinations other than the one currently accepted to be “synonyms.”

Next follows a list of each species with genus and species name in large bold type, without author and date, listed in the form:

“*Admete aethiopica* is a species of sea snail, a marine gastropod mollusk in the family Cancellariidae, the nutmeg snails. Source (edited):

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Admete_aethiopica”

With very few exceptions the wording for each and every species is identical except for the last portion of the Wikipedia link. Very rarely a bit of distribution or other data will be included.

This format is followed for each listed genus except, strangely, for *Cancellaria*. All of the species placed in *Cancellaria sensu stricto* are listed without authors and dates.

ERRORS

Errors of various types that have been noted include some attributable to a lack of proofreading and/or knowledge of the subject matter. On page 18 *Scalptia nassa* and *Cancellaria nassa* are listed with different Wikipedia references. This does not reflect well on Wikipedia either.

Brocchinia septentrionalis appears on page 22 instead of on page 15 with its congeners.

Among the synonyms listed under *Narona* is “*Narona mitriformis* (G.B. Sowerby I, 1832):

synonym of *Herleinia mitriformis* (G.B. Sowerby I, 1832).” Aside from the misleading terminology, there is no evident reason to list this species in the genus *Narona* as that is not its original placement although it was so placed for some time. Neither the genus *Hertleinia* nor the species *Hertleinia mitriformis* appear in the lists of valid species.

On page 43 the species *Tritonoharpa cubapatriae* (Sarasúa, 1975) appears twice, once spelled incorrectly. On the following page where the species are listed without authors, it only appears once.

“Cooper’s nutmeg” is listed under that vernacular name on page 20 after being already listed on page 16 as *Cancellaria cooperii*.

There are three more grievous errors:

- (1) Included is *Belomitra climacella*. Neither the genus nor species name has ever been placed in the Cancellariidae. On Wikipedia it is listed at the top of the page as being in Cancellariidae but in the box giving Phylum, etc., it is properly stated to be in Buccinidae as it is in WoRMS.
- (2) *Pisanella* is incorrectly stated to be in Cancellariidae with *Pisanella antiquata* (Hinds, 1844) stated to be a synonym of *Tritonoharpa antiquata*. *Tritonoharpa antiquata* is listed in its proper position under *Tritonoharpa*.
- (3) Worst is the inclusion of *Tritonium* about which there is a discussion, a rare occurrence in this book. The discussion begins with a statement that “The genus name *Tritonium* has been given twice to species with a [sic] different type species.” Listed are:

* *Tritonium* O.F. Müller, 1776: type species: *Buccinum undatum* Linnaeus, 1758 (given by Stewart in 1926); this makes this name an objective synonym of *Buccinum*.

* *Tritonium* Röding, 1798: type species: *Murex tritonis* Linnaeus, 1758 (given by Cossman [sic] in 1903); this makes the name an objective synonym of *Charonia* Gistel, 1847.

These synonymies should make it obvious that *Tritonium* cannot be a valid genus for any member of Cancellariidae. The following statement is

copied from WoRMS:

“The authors of the World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS) have arbitrarily attributed the species now placed in Buccinidae, Muricidae, and other neogastropod families, to *Tritonium* O. F. Müller, 1776. The species now placed in Ranellidae and Bursidae, have been attributed to *Tritonium* Röding.”

The above statement is on page 43. It is copied out of context but even on WoRMS the reason for these assignments is not really clear. As WoRMS includes all forms of marine life, it is that data base’s practice to give an ordered list for each name: Animalia > Phylum > Class > Subclass > Order > Superfamily > Family. It was thus necessary to assign the varied species under both uses of *Tritonium* to families.

There is one species included in this book under *Tritonium*, *Tritonium submuricatum* Schrenck, 1862. It is not in Cancellariidae and has never been placed there. Under the species listing we find this strange statement: “As the genus name *Tritonium* is no longer accepted, this species name has become a ‘species inquirenda’.” The species may indeed be a *nomen inquirendum*, but that has nothing to do with the genus name being unavailable.

WIKIPEDIA

As the overwhelming majority of the listings in this book are from Wikipedia, a few words about it are in order. Wikipedia contains a lot of information and is often a good place to find sources. However, in this application to molluscan taxa, where data is automatically picked up from other web sites, its value is questionable, especially when such data has been overridden by “editors.”

Provision for posting notices about errors in Wikipedia is available but difficult and there is no provision for contacting an “editor.”

Wikipedia does give sources for much of the listed data, and it is suggested that such sources always be checked to determine if they have been correctly copied and/or interpreted. It is not suggested that Wikipedia not be used, only that it be used with caution, a caveat that applies to all internet sources.

SIMILAR “BOOKS”

Listings on the internet indicate that there are probably hundreds of titles similar to this one by the same firm. They have similar cover designs, differing in color and the illustration, most seen being flowers. Searches revealed the titles Muricidae, Volutidae and Conidae and many beginning “Moluscos: Conus, etc. [pick a genus]”. To get an idea of the number, search Barnes & Noble for almost any family name or ABE Books by putting a family name in the Key Words. Most are more expensive than the Cancellariidae work. The one on Muricidae is much larger and is just over \$30.00 on Barnes & Noble. All titles seen also have two versions in Vietnamese, usually with a different color cover and a different flower, but with identical descriptions of contents (consisting of a list of taxa). In Muricidae two versions are also available in Scandinavian languages.

The authors of the English language volumes is shown as “by Source: Wikipedia” and on the Vietnam versions as “by Ngun: Wikipedia.” The Scandinavian ones are by “Bron: Wikipedia.”

For information about, and comments on, the publisher, there are a number of comments as well as further references on http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_LLC.

SUMMARY

It is difficult to complain about a book that costs so little, but for a book that does not deliver what is expected, any price is too high. In this case, anyone wanting information about the family Cancellariidae other than an incomplete list of names will be disappointed. There is nothing about their morphology or ecology. Anyone seeking simply a list of Cancellariidae would be better served by going to the WoRMS website and printing out a list from there. It would be more current, more inclusive of synonyms, and more complete. Also, on WoRMS one has the benefit of knowing the source of the data and who is responsible for it being there. Data is entered by real people with real names who can be contacted by email to WoRMS.

Those who are considering purchasing a volume with any title produced by this firm are strongly advised to reconsider. As the publishing firm is not mentioned in most of the listings, watch for a lack of authorship and the use of “Wikipedia” in listings.

REFERENCES CITED

WoRMS [**World Register of Marine Species**] is a data base web site that can be accessed by searching for that acronym or at <http://www.marinespecies.org/index.php>. Last accessed 25 March 2012.

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.

Back issues of *Conchologia Ingrata*

Available free of charge
from <http://conchologia.com>

- No. 1. Petit, R. E. 2008. ICZN Article 9.1 – Why? 4 pp.
- No. 2. Petit, R. E. & Callomon, P. 2009. The distressing case of *Polyhomoa itoi* Azuma, 1949 and *Kyidris mutica* Brown, 1949. 4 pp.
- No. 3. Petit, R. E. 2011. Reprint of Lamarck's 1816 "Liste des objets". 19 pp.
- No. 4. Petit, R. E. 2011. A review of *Rare and Unusual Shells of the Florida Keys and Adjacent Areas* by Edward J. Petuch and Dennis M. Sargent, 2011. 5 pp.
- No. 5. Petit, R. E. & Tucker, J. K. 2011. A name too far. (Review of "Taxonomic review of the *Conus spectrum*, *Conus stramineus* and *Conus collisus* complexes (Gastropoda – Conidae) – Part I" by R. M. Filmer, 2011). 6 pp.
- No. 6. Matsukuma, A. 2012. Index to mollusks in *Tableau Encyclopédique et Méthodique*, part 23, pls. 391-488 by J. B. P. A. Lamarck. 10 pp.
- No. 7. Petit, R. E. & Van der Bijl, A. N. 2012. P. P. Carpenter's 1857 "Mazatlan Catalogue". 7 pp.
- No. 8. Petit, R. E. 2012. A review of *Rare and Unusual Shells of Southern Florida (Mainland, Florida Keys, Dry Tortugas)* by Edward J. Petuch and Dennis M. Sargent. 9 pp.
- No. 9. Petit, R. E. 2012. A critique of, and errata for, *Recent Cancellariidae* by Jens Hemmen, 2007. 9 pp.
- No. 10. Petit, R. E. 2012. Bad books - I. 5 pp.