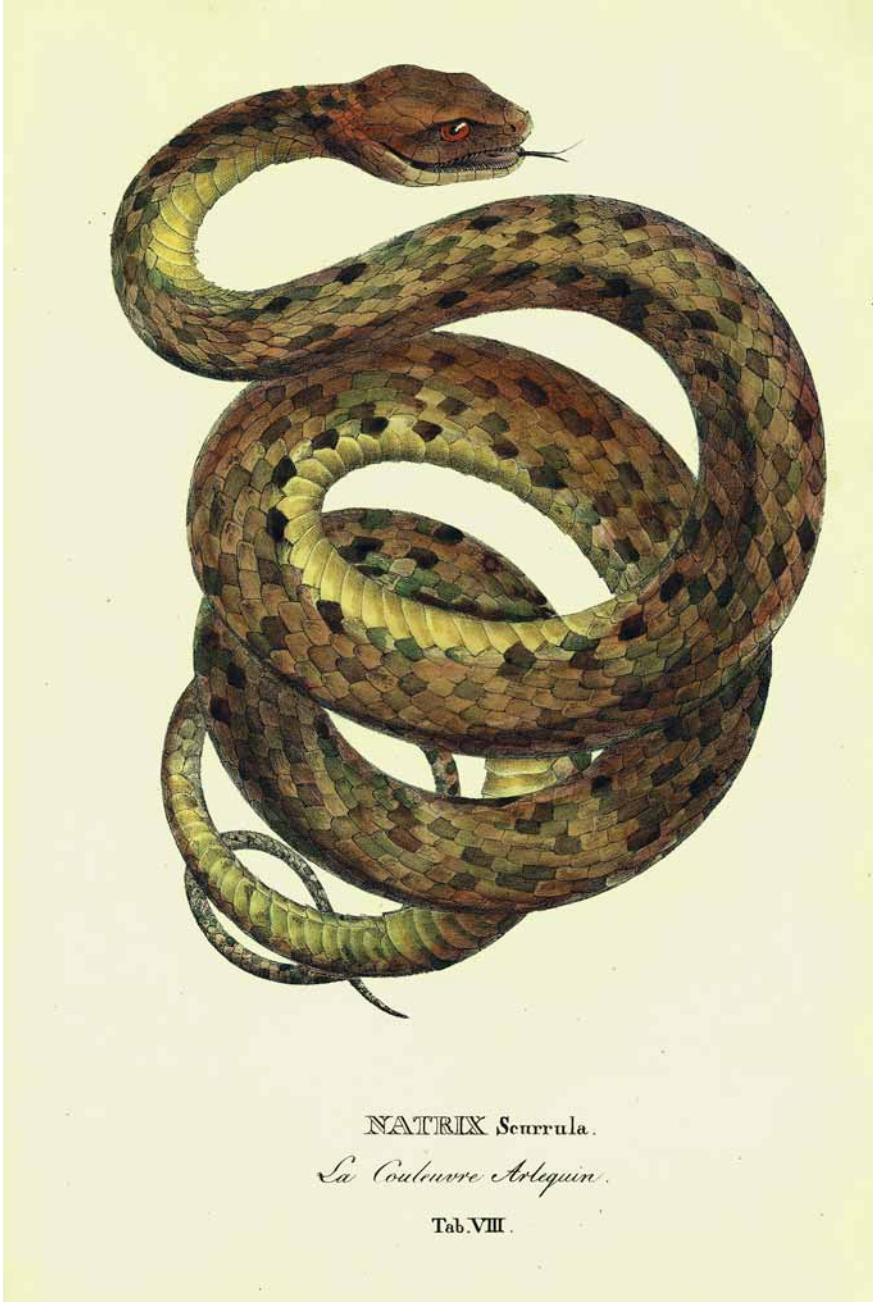




International Society for the History and Bibliography of Herpetology

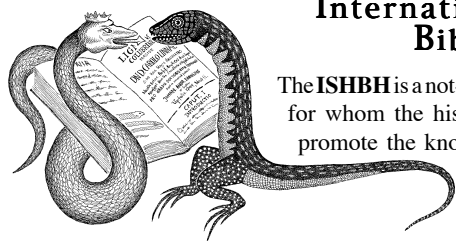


NATRIX Scurrula.

La Couleuvre Arlequin.

Tab. VIII.

VOL. 1, No.1, 1999



International Society for the History and Bibliography of Herpetology

The ISHBH is a not-for-profit organization established to bring together individuals for whom the history and bibliography of herpetology is appealing and to promote the knowledge of related topics among members and the general public. Membership is open to anyone who shares the aims of the society.

International Society for the History and Bibliography of Herpetology, ISHBH

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Membership. The biennial fee (1999-2000) is \$30 (students \$10). This fee includes a subscription to the society's biannual newsletter. Members are encouraged to contribute with articles, news of meetings, hints on antiquarian trade, book reviews or participate in a literature exchange forum.

The society organizes seminars, visits to libraries, museums, research stations, etc. in connection with herpetological meetings with international participation. The society works to facilitate informal contacts among members so that the members can informally meet, offer support in knowledge and transact exchanges of literature and ephemera.

Formal application for membership shall be directed to the chairperson and should be addressed:

The Chairperson

ISHBH

PO Box 2123,

S-220 02 Lund, SWEDEN

Please do not send funds. You will be billed later.

Message from the editor.

Greetings! This marks the first issue of the Newsletter of the ISHBH. As is typical with such projects it took a little more time than anticipated, but I hope you all agree that it was worth waiting for. This first number was primarily the work of the ISHBH board, but that was only to get the ball rolling. The rest of you are encouraged to contribute with articles, news items, hints on antiquarian trade, notes of historical interest, book reviews or anything else that you feel is appropriate to our concept. At present the plan is to produce two newsletters per year. Deadlines for the next two issues are Sept. 1, 1999 and March 1, 2000. I would especially like to thank Thomas Madsen (University of Sydney & Lund University) for squeezing in some time between field trips to draw the ISHBH logo. Please send your submissions to me at:

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About the cover. This illustration of *Natrix Scurrula* = *Chironius scurrulus* (Wagler, 1824), Wagler's sipo, can be found in Johann von Spix's and Johann Wagler's 1824 *Serpentum Brasiliensium* and is perhaps the finest work of art in this volume. This treatise is one of three books describing the herpetological collections of the Spix-Martius expedition to Brazil. The first book, *Serpentum Brasiliensium*, was written from Spix's notes by Johann Wagler, who was appointed assistant to Spix and Karl von Martius at the Munich Academy after their return.

Reference

Vanzolini P.E. 1981. The scientific and political contexts of the Bavarian expedition to Brasil. In: Adler, K. (Ed.) 1981. Introduction to the SSAR facsimile reprint of von Spix, J. B. & J. G. Wagler 1824. *Serpentum Brasiliensium*.

www.teorekol.lu.se/~rana/ISHBH

Message from the Chairperson

Professionals and amateurs alike, who are active in any or several of the diverse fields of herpetology, have habitually a profound interest in the history and bibliography of the science. The idea to shape an association had become ripe after informal contacts over a long period among a few dedicated herpetological book enthusiasts. It was felt that it would be both enjoyable and beneficial if a forum that has the potential to provide room for exchanges of ideas and knowledge on these topics can be established. A tiny group met in conjunction with the 3rd World Congress of Herpetology in Prague 1997 to discuss the prospect. All were very much in favor hence a foundation committee was formed consisting of four members. The appropriate time for an organizational meeting was in the end decided to be together with the joint meetings of the ASIH, HL and SSAR in Guelph last year. Twelve persons attended the meeting that was held on 17 July. A constitution was provisionally accepted and an executive committee was elected. The Society was formed.

This printed newsletter constitutes the first achievement of the society. We aim to maintain a newsletter either in printed form or distributed on the Internet. Other activities will be seminars, visits to libraries or other institutions and social gatherings, all in connection with herpetological meetings with international participation. Already now can we look forward to meeting, first in the forthcoming business meeting on June 27 in Penn State and followed by a lunch together. On July 1 we will take pleasure in a full day out which will include a visit to the historical library of the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia that was founded in 1812.

We will probably stay as a rather small society but with a cosmopolitan scope. For a successful operation the executive committee will depend on members' active participation and intellectual support. Please let us know what you anticipate from the society.

ISHBH meeting associated with the 1999 ASIH/AES/HL/SSAR joint meeting at Penn State, Pennsylvania, USA

There will be a business meeting of the society at 11 AM on Sunday, June 27th. This will be held in the Penn State Conference Center. At noon on the same day there will be an informal lunch gathering of all members and potential members at the restaurant in the conference center. **The restaurant will reserve space for us, so interested persons should contact Aaron Bauer several weeks in advance** so that an appropriate number of spaces can be set aside.

A program has been set up for the day following the close of the main meeting at Penn State. The venue for these ISHBH events will be the Philadelphia area. This is a 3.5 - 4 hour drive from Penn State, but because Philadelphia International Airport may be a convenient departure point for those traveling by air and because members coming from the east coast of the US may be passing through Philadelphia anyway, it is hoped

that this will not be too inconvenient. Philadelphia also makes sense as a place to meet because it was, for more than a century, the center of herpetology (and natural sciences generally) in America. The region is rich in herpetological history and in quality antiquarian 'bookshops! Philadelphia is also the type locality for many of the most common and well-known American species of amphibians and reptiles. **All members wishing to participate in the July 1 trip to Philadelphia should contact Aaron Bauer as soon as possible as the number of participants will be limited!**

Our program will start at noon with lunch at Old Bookbinders, a famous Philadelphia Restaurant with a name appropriate to our group. Lunch will be followed by a visit to the library of the Academy

Continued on p. 19 ...

Ernie Liner Receives Honorary Doctorate

Ernest A. Liner, of Houma, Louisiana, received an honorary Doctor of Science degree from the University of Colorado, Boulder, at its summer commencement ceremonies on August 8, 1998. Describing that event is a letter from Hobart M. Smith reproduced below. The letter was originally sent to a few friends after the ceremony, but Hobart has graciously given his permission to the ISHBH to print it in our Newsletter. It was Hobart Smith and David Chiszar, both professors at the University of Colorado, who organized the letter-writing campaign (the "copies of letters" referred to at the end of the letter, nearly 200 of them from leading herpetologists throughout the world who know and appreciate Ernie, as he is dearly known throughout the North American herpetological community) and engineered the administrative work necessary to have the university award Ernie his doctorate.

In addition to being an amateur herpetologist and a member of the ISHBH, Ernie also served as a Marine in the Pacific Theater during World War II, hence the appropriateness of the presence of the Marine honor guard. Since that time he has published nearly 100 titles, mostly on the herpetofaunas of Mexico and his home state Louisiana. He is also an incredible bibliographer and is currently in the process of completing a monumental index to the entire multivolume series *Biology of the Reptilia*, edited by Carl Gans. A new edition of his 1978 *A Herpetological Cookbook* has not yet appeared; a new publisher has taken it over and it should be published soon.

"All went well, and Ernie did us proud, hobnobbing with high officials as easily as with the rest of us, never at a loss for words, charmed by everything, but nevertheless with no apparent egotism or arrogance. He was as detached as though the honor was for someone else, even though he extracted every bit of enjoyment from the various events involved. On Friday noon there was a luncheon with the chancellor and maybe a dozen other campus bigwigs, and on Saturday morning he joined the president and other top administrators on the podium in

full regalia, hood, cap, gown and all for the main ceremony. That was followed by a luncheon that he attended, again surrounded by the elite of the campus. He seemed to glory in every minute of it. The most touching moment of all, to me, was the presence of an honor guard from the local Marines: two in full parade uniform who flanked Ernie, to the sides, and saluted him when he received his diploma. It was a fitting tribute (adroitly arranged by Chiszar).

I am impressed by this man as much by his personality as by his achievements. It is indeed a rare individual who can endure the horrors of war as he did, and emerge unscathed mentally. He was in the most dangerous facet of the military: the demolition division, responsible for attacking pillboxes, bunkers and caves, using hand grenades, rifles, flame throwers and bazookas. It was a miracle he survived, where most of his comrades were felled. And he went into the heat of two campaigns, the second one after recovering from his first wound. He participated in some of the most violent battles of the war, but his only scar is physical, on one arm. To have endured all of that, and returned to carve an admirable career as a herpetologist, a salesman, a horticulturist and a cook, bespeaks one of a kind. He did himself proud, and the university proud, without a show of egotism. Incredible.

While he was here, Chiszar took Ernie on a few tourism jaunts, to Central City and the Face on the Barroom Floor, Golden and Buffalo Bill's grave, and across the divide at Berthoud Pass to Granby. Local newspapers carried an account of the affair, and Ernie hauled off a pile of those too. Dave had prepared a collection of copies of the letters written in support of the honor, and of course Ernie devoured that too with gusto.

So now we have two weeks before the thundering herd descends on us on the 24th. I hope you had a pleasant respite in the interim. Thank you very much for your support and encouragement through all of this.

Best,

Hobart
Hobart M. Smith"

Fine Antiquarian Books on Herpetology in Recent Catalogues

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Antiquarian book dealers who trade in fine books traditionally exhibit their stock and new acquisitions in printed catalogues. Some dealers print their catalogues with an amazingly high quality while others settle for less costly leaflets. The Internet has developed rapidly during the last few years as a market place for old and secondhand books. More and more dealers join as players in this modern marketing game, which supports devices as search engines and automatic want lists. A few old timers in the trade even market their new acquisitions on the Web before they send out their catalogues. When we as a clientele wish to buy (or sell) secondhand and old books in the future we will have to accept and to adapt to act more on the Internet scene. The Web certainly refines the market for antiquarian books by facilitating the spread of information at low cost from the seller to those buyers who take the time to pick it up. As a result the prices will be more homogeneous with this increasing sophistication of the market. This is no doubt of benefit to the scientists who are buying for their academic needs and will actually use the literature in their research.

Now, the books I will discuss in this essay have generally lost their scientific significance in terms of biological disciplines but they do put them into a historical perspective. The antiquarian books that are still relevant for the scholars of today, e.g. in systematics, can very often be obtained as reprints on the new or ordinary secondhand markets. The reasons why some people develop into book connoisseurs and acquire old books for money have been written and discussed in various forums but has a commonly accepted answer ever been

presented? I will not go much further into this question here but remark that I think that the enjoyment of the book hunt in itself is such an important element that it should be considered by the merchants. A similarity may be seen to sport fishing, which, I feel, is done much more for the excitement than for the food. I have seen reports that the amounts spent on tackle widely exceed the value of the catch. Browsing in the catalogues, especially those that are exquisitely produced and illustrated in color, is still to most people a more stimulating method of finding books for their libraries and a more pleasing way to spend time than sitting it in front of a monitor. Do the folk who are active on the Web have the affection for books that lack modern scientific relevance that is necessary to make them important customers? Or are they more inclined to allocate their spending power on even more enhanced computer gadgets? The fact that the stream of expensive catalogues from reputable dealers continues parallel with the Internet without any signs of decline suggests that catalogue browsers do assert their existence by remaining good customers.

A customer oriented dealer should wait until his catalogues have reached the clientele before advertising on the Internet much in the same manner as when he carefully distributes them in intervals so that the globally dispersed customers receive them on the same day.

The catalogues that I have reviewed and report on in this essay were issued during 1998 and up to April 1999. I will once in a while present the individuals behind these creations and sometimes give remarks that are not found in the descriptions in the catalogues on the

merchandise. An asterisk after the title indicates that the publication was still available when this paper went into print. The \$ prices are my conversions to US currency at the most recent rates. They are for purposes of information only. If you wish to contact the dealers in order to inquire about the books brought up or to request to be added to their catalogue mailing lists I have listed them at the end with addresses and Web sites, when applicable. Always keep in mind that if you wish to remain on mailing lists you need to buy something every now and then, even if it is merely as a courtesy.

Antiquariaat Junk B. V. in Amsterdam is well known in the market specializing in the finely illustrated, scarce and old books of historical importance in natural history. I have met more than one that has been deceived by the name and thought that they deal mainly in in obsolete paperbacks. They are entirely mistaken. On the contrary, Allard Schierenberg, the chairperson and manager, does not trade in the ordinary second-hand book assortments at all. Antiquariaat Junk issues annually about two catalogues of magnificent quality. They constitute one of the finest in natural history that you can receive free of charge. They are collector's items in themselves on account of their beauty, including as they do, plenty of color pictures from the publications they are offering combined with detailed descriptions of the books and historical background of the authors. Junk's catalogues indeed provide both worthy and enjoyable reading. Their first catalogue for 1998, number 276 (they are a long-timer) came out in February. The quality and superb selection is of course reflected in the prices, which generally are in the top echelon. I am not necessarily asserting that Junk is expensive. They list an almost complete suite of Linnaeus' original dissertations*, 183 of the 186, published between 1743 and 1776, bound in nine contemporary half-calf volumes. Linnaeus was prolific in a wide array of subjects but about 30 are zoological theses, although no more than eight or so of those fall in a herpetological sphere. The cost is substantial,

Hfl. 38,000 (\$18,630), but the price appears to me to be relatively low for so much original Linneana, but when based on the few herpetological items it contains, the price will of course be high. To try obtaining Linnaeus' herpetological dissertations separately will eventually turn out to be a financially better deal, as they do come up occasionally at least on the Swedish antiquarian market. Still, it took me ten years to gather all eight and even then I am missing a few illustrations. The dissertations were reprinted three times in the 18th century as *Amoenitates Academicæ* ("academic amusements"), the first two published and re-edited by Linnaeus himself. The first volume of the reprint series includes three theses (of the eight) on museum collections with predominantly herpetological contents. This publication alone is certainly worth looking for in the antiquarian market as the cost is usually reasonable for an odd volume of *Amoenitates*.

Another precious piece in Junk's catalogue is the collection of five tracts of "*Museum Schlosserianum*"* (1768-1772), three of which concern herpetological topics, listed by Junk for Hfl. 3,000 (\$1,471). Joan Albert Schlosser wrote the first of the tracts, *Epistola ... de Lacerta amboinensi*. It has one large folded engraved handcolored plate of great beauty depicting the sail-tailed water dragon in handsome scenery. Herpetological book illustrations in the 18th century were otherwise seldom painted with any settings at all. Pieter Boddaert authored the other four "epistola", all accompanied with handcolored engravings. The two of concern to us are titled *de Testudine cartilaginea* and *de Rana bicolore*.

The work with what are commonly considered the finest illustrations of tortoises and turtles is James de Carle Sowerby, Edward Lear and John Edward Gray (1872) *Tortoises, Terrapins, and Turtles drawn from Life*. Junk is asking Hfl. 19,000 (\$9,314) for their copy in contemporary cloth. Fifty-seven of the 60 lithographed plates are handcolored.

Catalogue 277 from Junk came in November. The covers are illustrated in color, with an approaching red-footed tortoise *Chelonoidis carbonaria* (Spix, 1824) on the front and on the back with an Indian star tortoise *Geochelone elegans* (Schoepff, 1794) that is appropriately walking away from the reader. The pictures are taken from Sowerby and Lear's *Tortoises* ... mentioned above but the copy they are now offering is bound in new half morocco with gilt spine and the price has escalated to Hfl. 25,000 (\$12,255). These are now seemingly legitimate prices for illustrated turtle books, inasmuch as both sold quickly. Lamentably, turtle books have become attractive to bibliophiles other than herpetologists. Two more books should be mentioned. F. M. Daudin *Histoire naturelle des rainettes des grenouilles et des crapauds* published in Paris 1802 has 38 handcolored engraved plates, bound in contemporary half calf. Junk asks Hfl. 11,000 (\$5,392) for the present copy. The illustrations are certainly colorful and detailed but artistically speaking I would hardly agree that they are particularly imposing. They had a copy ten years ago in original wrappers but with the engravings not colored, offered at that time for Hfl. 2,300 (\$1,128). Patrick Russell's 1796 *An Account of Indian Serpents*... bound with the second part 1801 *A Continuation of An Account of Indian Serpents* is an attractive set with 86 handcolored plates (90 in all), depicting the snakes life-size. Measuring 55 by 38 centimeters and weighing 8 kilos, it is equally impressive by virtue of its dimensions but the physical size also influences the price, which is Hfl. 15,000 (\$7,354).

It is worth noting that buyers living in the EU pay VAT on books, the amount of which depends on the country where the purchase is made. The Dutch dealers mentioned here do not include the 6% VAT in their prices. The VAT on books in Britain is zero.

Dr. W. Backhuys is a book dealer of new and antiquarian books as well as a publisher located in Leiden, Holland. The lay out of their catalogues is quite modest but Backhuys does

not trade much in exclusive books. Catalogue 38 with books on vertebrates was distributed in February 1999. A gem is a bound copy of the reptile and fish sections of Linnaeus' 12th edition of *Systema Naturae*, 1766, in contemporary calf with anonymous annotations from the period. It is priced at Hfl. 500 (\$245) but was quickly bought by a US client. The rest of the herpetological section consists mainly of recent titles but also worth mentioning is a little French book for children by a S. Auboin 1831 on reptiles and fishes. It contains four handcolored plates and the price, Hfl. 95 (\$47), seems to be a real bargain. I know a prolific buyer of old herpetological printed matter of every kind but he detests children's books. How many of the prominent herpetologists have not sprouted from the fascinating stories about the creepy, crawly animals told in often nicely colored juvenile books? They play an important role in the history of our science.

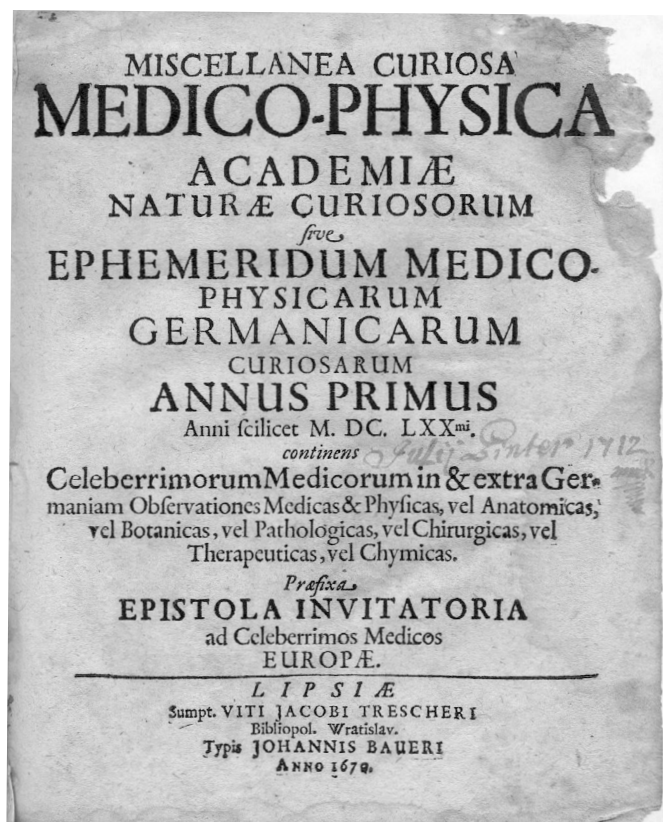
Dieter Schierenberg BV is another Dutch dealer located in Amsterdam who specializes in natural history and related subjects. The brothers, Dieter and Allard Schierenberg, inherited their profession as dealers in Natural History books from their parents, but the businesses are run entirely separately. Now Dieter's son Jeroen is an apprentice, who increasingly cares for the customers' inquiries and desiderata. They issue one to two catalogues per year. They have glossy wrappers but the illustrations are in black and white. With 120 pages, excluding the plates and written in a small font, they have managed to squeeze nearly 1,000 items into catalogue 74, which arrived in June, but only twenty or so concern herpetology. The books listed generally have quite extensive descriptions with information on the contents, the history of the books or of their authors.

In the General Sciences section you will find the first publication with contents of interest to the herpetologist, an almost complete set of the *Miscellanea curiosa medico-physica Academiae Naturae Curiosorum**, published by the German natural history academy Leopoldina, 1670

to 1694, with an asking price of Hfl. 7,500 (\$3,677). The volumes contain hundreds of folded engravings, usually of quite bizarre medical themes. The contributions deal with various scientific topics, but several are of herpeto-medical concern. The fallacy that lizards, frogs and snakes could inhabit the human stomach was widespread in antiquity but also in 17th to 20th century Europe. Published in *Miscellanea curiosa* are six cases with snakes in the stomach, three with lizards, four with toads and two with frogs, e.g. D. Georgii Segeri *Serpentum Vernatio, Ovorum Exclusio, Anatomia* (3 pp.) and D. Salomonis Reiseli *Serpens In Stomacho Cervi Petrefactus* (5 pp.). The 1st "annal" (Leipzig 1670) finishes with a more serious contribution: a 40-page long translation from Italian to Latin of Francisci Redi's *Observationes de viperis ... scriptae in literis ad Laurentium Megalotti*. In the 2nd "annal" (Jena 1671) is a 19-page long Latin translation of

Francisci Redi's *Adaliquas oppositiones factas in suas Observationes circa Viperas. Scripta ad Dn. Abbatem Bourdelot et Dn. Alexandrum Morum*. These are two of Redi's contributions written as letters but in a book form about the cause of death in humans from viper bites. His views sparked a controversy in Europe that remained unsolved until Redi's successor, Felice Fontana, demonstrated in 1767 and 1781 that Redi was correct in his observations. These translations have escaped the notice of Peter K. Knoefel, who in 1988 published his beneficial *Francesco Redi on the Vipers*, a translation into English of the Italian letters. In the introduction of the book he states that the two first Latin translations are from Paris 1672 (1st letter only) and Amsterdam 1675. Another tidbit in *Miscellanea curiosa*, probably not known to the salamander "mob", is Thomæ Bartholini's 5-page long "observation" *Sirene Danica*.

Other publications in Schierenberg's catalogue that are of interest to the herpetologist are arranged in the section Zoology. They represent all types from recent second-hand to star-rated antiquarian. A. Duméril's important treatise on snake classification, 1853 *Prodrome de la classification des Reptiles Ophidiens* with two plates, is cheap at Hfl. 250 (\$123). C. Giebel's 1861 encyclopaedic third volume of *Die Drei Reiche der Natur Amphibien und Fische** at Hfl. 600 (\$294) appears to me to be on the high side of the price scale. There are probably no new data and the illustrations are quite poor. I gave the equivalent of \$6 for my copy at a local book fair in southern Sweden but that sort of price comparison is perhaps not appropriate here. Another work in which the herpetological significance is

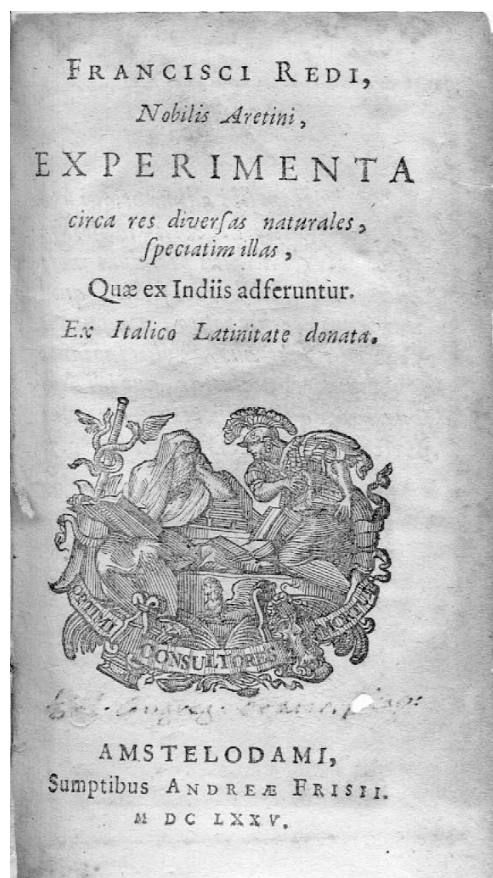


not conspicuous is Coenraad Temminck's 1839-1844 *Verhandeligen** covering the surveys of the Natural History Commission of the Dutch Indies in New Guinea and other parts of the Far East. It contains many contributions and ten herpetological folio color plates, two made by Herman Schlegel in person. The price Hfl. 12,500 (\$6,126) is humble considering there are 89 handcolored plates in all.

The last item in Schierenberg's catalogue I will mention is maybe the finest of all books I have treated in this essay: August Roesel von Rosenhof's 1758 *Historia Naturalis Ranarum Nostratium** in a large folio with one frontispiece and 24 engravings, all handcolored. It is unchallenged as the most beautiful illustrated work on frogs ever published. It is priced at Hfl. 22,000 (\$10,782) but has since undergone a costly restoration and the price is now Hfl. 25,000 (\$12,248). Schierenberg now offers a 10% discount to ISHBH members.

Chimaira based in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, is a name known to many of us as a publisher of herpetological books. The retail book and antiquarian parts of the business were previously operated under the name Bücher Kreth. Since 1998 they have been trading under the name Chimaira for the whole business. Andreas S. Brahm is the knowledgeable manager and he distributes annual catalogues specifically in herpetology. The antiquarian section in 1998 lists more than 1,200 titles out of which several are old and rare. The prices compared to other dealers mentioned in this article are on average quite high although most readers of Chimaira's catalogues ought to find something worth the price. It must also be emphasized that prices include 7% VAT, which will be deducted for non-EU buyers. This is the catalogue for the buyers who want to find exceptional titles and are prepared to sacrifice their money.

The oldest herpetological book that I have found in any recent catalogue is Andrea Baccius' *De Venenis et Antidotis**. The year of publication, 1586, is marked with an exclamation sign in the



bulletin. It is a first edition, bound in contemporary vellum. For the 83 pages, they want DEM 1,680 (\$927), which sounds quite reasonable to me. Chimaira sells the 1889 edition of *Catalogue of the Chelonians, Rhynchocephalians, and Crocodiles in the British Museum (Natural History)* by George A. Boulenger for DEM 1,280 (\$706). In a statement on the historical background, it is said that J. E. Gray prepared the first edition of the catalogue on shield reptiles 1855-1873, which the compiler of the catalogue claims should consist of a series in four parts. He cannot help pointing out that Kraig Adler erroneously stated in his 1989 account that the number of parts is five. In fact, it is Chimaira that is mistaken omitting to count Gray's last volume *Hand-List of the Specimens of Shield Reptiles*, 1873, an octavo book with no illustrations. This fifth catalogue is even referred to on the first text page in the very book that

Chimaira is selling. *The Tailless Batrachians of Europe**, also by Boulenger, 1897-1898, is listed for DEM 1,680 (\$927). Dr. J. G. Fischer's 1856 *Die Familie der Seeschlangen systematisch beschrieben* bound with his *Neue Schlangen des Hamburgischen Naturhistorischen Museums** is a beautiful book with four double page handcolored plates, one of them being a fascinating *Dendroaspis jamesoni*, at DEM 1,880 (\$1,036). Wilhelm C. H. Peters' 1882 *Reise nach Mossambique - Amphibien* is sold in a portfolio with 33 plates out of which only four are partly colored and the text is in photo-facsimile. The portfolio of the plates without the original text appears quite often on the market, usually with a price tag similar to Chimaira's, which is DEM 1,580 (\$871). Antiquariaat Junk lists an identical portfolio* in his catalogue 276 for Hfl. 2,000 (\$978). To judge from the frequency they appear in the new portfolios of identical format, they evidently originate from the printer's surplus stock of mainly uncolored plates. The book was originally published with 28 lithographic colored and 5 uncolored plates. The atlas in the portfolio should not, therefore, be taken for a proper book in which the text is parenthetically missing. I regard the price the dealers often ask for the portfolio-set as too high.

A classic that seldom appears on the market is George Shaw's 1802 *General Zoology or Systematic Natural History* Vol. III*, in two parts on Amphibia. This is the first world survey of herps in the english language. Shaw used "Amphibia" in the Linnean sense, including all reptiles and amphibians. Chimaira wants DEM 2,480 (\$1,367), which, now when prices for herpetological books are escalating fast, is quite fair. You who missed the original Shaw or cannot afford it can look forward to the reprint that SSAR has in the pipeline.

Maggs Bros Ltd. in London issued catalogue 1259 in October last year. It is a general natural history catalogue with more than 900 items out of which I counted fifteen that treat herpetological topics. A unique item is Francesco Cetti

1778 *Anfibi e pesci di Sardegna* in contemporary vellum binding with a few engravings. The amphibian part makes up only a third, 70 pages, of the book, the rest of course dealing with fish. The price tag for the small book shows £675 (\$1,106) but more than one individual placed an order for it. Other bargains are F. W. Fitzsimons' *The Snakes of South Africa, their venom and the treatment of Snake bite* in the 1910 and 1919 editions, both priced at £70 and £38, respectively (\$115 and \$62).

Original letters hand written by prominent herpetologists of the past are too seldom offered for sale but Maggs makes an exception now. They have obtained and now list nine letters from the hand of George Boulenger on herpetological matters written on British Museum (Natural History) letterhead. They were penned during the period 1895 - 1903, all addressed to Edward Bartlett, who was the Superintendent at London Zoo. The price £25 (\$41) is modest.

Wheldon & Wesley Ltd. run their business from a lodge located in the tranquil countryside of England. Visits are by appointment only but you always receive a warm welcome if you go there. You can easily spend a full day rummaging through the stock of mostly old books, all on natural history subjects. It is with melancholy that we now learn that the cottage is up for sale and they will move the enterprise to smaller premises. Anthony Swann, the manager, states in the news release "Those of you who have collections of books may care to note that we will shortly have a very significant amount to invest in quality stock". The universal situation among book dealers I have dealt with here is that the bottleneck in the industry lies in acquiring new stock, not selling. W&W issued three catalogues in 1998 and one this year. The first section in each catalogue contains the fine and rare works. A very early account in herpetology is Ulisse Aldrovandi 1640 *Serpentum et Draconu Historiae* bound with a treatise by the same author on certain marine animals. The volumes have numerous superb woodcuts

and are bound in contemporary vellum. It is priced at £2,500 (\$4,095). In the July catalogue, they offered a copy of Albert Günther's 1885-1902 *Biologia Centrali-Americana - Reptilia and Batrachia*. It is an authoritative account that is wanted by many and Anthony told me that it was sold at once although priced at £2,950 (\$4,832). Wheldon & Wesley's record of accomplishments with respect to fine books in herpetology is phenomenal but this was the first copy they could offer in twenty years. It had belonged to the library of G. S. Myers who lived in California after his retirement and the book now went back to the USA. Another rare object Wheldon & Wesley are able to offer in the July catalogue is Jacques von Bedriaga's amphibia-reptilia part of *Przewalski's Expedition to Central Asia*, 1898-1912. It is labeled as high as £1,300 (\$2,129) by virtue of its extreme rarity and importance although the ten highly detailed plates also influence the price. Clifford H. Pope's 1935 *The Reptiles of China. Turtles, Crocodilians, Snakes, Lizards* is offered now at £550 (\$900). Two decades ago one could buy it directly from the publisher, The American Museum of Natural History in New York, for \$20! W&W also list Edward Drinker Cope's 1900 *The Crocodilians, Lizards and Snakes of North America**. It is an imposing book with much valuable information. W&W want £100 (\$164), which is just slightly above the price this book had on the market two decades ago. Strange, because it is still a standard text on North American herpetology and Cope's importance scientifically is legendary. Albert Günther's 1877 [1878] monumental *The Gigantic Land-Tortoises (living and extinct) in the collection of the British Museum* is listed for £500 (\$819) and was eventually sold to a Swedish collector (not me!). The less costly second-hand books on reptiles and amphibians in Wheldon & Wesley's catalogue usually number 50 to 60 items. They are decently priced. I recommend anyone to consult W&W's catalogues or the company directly when looking for a particular book in natural history.

Raymond M. Sutton, Jr. in Kentucky, USA, publishes bulletins regularly of books in natural history, often with a fair selection in reptiles and amphibians. In September, they issued bulletin 65 dedicated mainly to herpetology, listing more than 300 items. As usual for Sutton, it includes some fine works. Francesco Redi, who I have referred to earlier, had in 1664 for the first time demonstrated that vipers caused death by injecting the fluid from the teeth into the blood stream. Sutton is now selling a copy of the original Italian book *Osservazioni Intorno Alle Vipere**, albeit in a Naples 1687 edition, for \$975. The Latin translations appeared in many editions and Sutton is offering Redi's contributions assembled under the title *Observationes de Vipera** among others by Redi in the Amsterdam 1685-86 translation for \$585. Redi's views were controversial at the time. Felix Fontana, who published his results in French about 100 years later, resolved the matter. For sale at Sutton's is now the first English translation (1787) of Fontana's accounts of the viper's venom with other treatises by Fontana. The price is \$1,000 but the book is heavy.

Aldrovandi's 1640 *Serpentum et Draconu Historiae* that earlier was announced in Wheldon & Wesley's March 1998 catalogue is now appearing also in Sutton for \$3,500, which is much the same price. In fact, Sutton had this copy already in his 1996 herpetology catalogue. I presume this is teamwork of two reputable dealers announcing enchanting merchandise in several catalogues in order to reach a wider clientele.

Johannes Albertus Schlosser's 1768 account *Epistola ... de Lacerta Amboinensi**, with the condition of the binding not the best, is still available and Sutton wants \$850. It may be a better deal, though, to buy all five tracts from Antiquariaat Junk.

Noriko I. Ciochon Natural History Books is based in Iowa, USA. A couple, Noriko being the wife originating from Japan and Russ, a profes-

sor in animal anthropology, runs the business. In 1998 they issued two catalogues in natural history. The layout of the catalogues is not as grand as those issued by Maggs, Don Connor, Junk and others, but the elaborate descriptions of many of the items furnished by Russ are enjoyable to read. The prices are generally on the upper edge but they have an impressive selection of good herpetological works. In catalogue 25, they list one first edition of Charles Pitman's 1938 *A Guide to the Snakes of Uganda* in a two-tone binding described as being issued by the original publisher. The original "Snakes of Uganda" appears in both numbered and unnumbered versions. I have looked at several copies of the numbered edition and all have been in blue half cloth. The two unnumbered copies I have come across have been in identical brown boards different from the copy Ciochon is listing. Incidentally, the pagination of part III runs out of sequence in the brown board edition. I have not been able to determine which of the two came first but I would not be so certain that Ciochon's copy in the strict sense is a true "original" product. It has a correct pagination but it is not numbered. Could it be an unknown, third printing? It is nevertheless a remarkable and a scarce production with an appropriate price. Russ has even reduced the price from \$1,275 to \$1,100 for ISHBH members. George A. Boulenger's *The Tailless Batrachians Of Europe** in two volumes mentioned earlier costs \$850 in Ciochon's catalogue 26. Originating from the library of Thomas Barbour, each volume has his signature on the front endpaper, which possibly can justify the high price. He is offering \$50 reduction on it to our members. Moichiro Maki's three-volume set *A Monograph of the Snakes of Japan* in its first printing 1931 does, indeed, appear very seldom on the market. The price of \$3,500 is certainly not too arduous. There are 87 other herpetological books in the last catalogue out of which there are three with distinctions that render their prices above \$500.

The rumor had it last summer at the joint meetings of the ASIH, HL and SSAR in Guelph that

somebody somewhere in the USA was filling the market with herpetological books of high caliber but few possessed knowledge where they originated and it remained a mystery to the book collecting assembly. It was for example unmistakable that Noriko Ciochon had a steady inflow of good stock in portions or on special orders. The key to the secret came in January this year.

Don Conner Fine Books in Sacramento, California, at that time distributed his catalogue of herpetological books originating from the library of Dr. George Sprague Myers, as well as from Conner's previous stock. The catalogue is one of the finest compilations of classics in herpetology since Andrew Isles' catalogue of the herpetological library of David McPhee in June 1996. Two assistants to Donald Conner, namely Rebecca Fredrickson and Suzy Tyler, have produced the catalogue. They have collected much data on the books they are describing in order to give extensive accounts for many of them. Several of the books have prices that have been claimed as high. About 60% of the stock remained after two weeks and still do but certainly many of the top ranked items were gone. In all it contains 365 items out of which ten are in a quality range motivating prices between \$1,000 and \$8,500. Four plates taken from books in the catalogue are reproduced in color. The green mamba, *Dendroaspis angusticeps*, on the front cover is from Vivian Fitzsimons' *Snakes of Southern Africa* 1962 selling for \$125. Two of the other illustrations are taken from Hermann Schlegel's opus *Abbildungen neuer oder unvollständig bekannter Amphibien* (1837 - 1844). The atlas in folio contains 50 handcolored plates of striking splendor. The price for the atlas and the text volumes is \$3,000, which must be considered a decent charge. The fourth illustration, a *Tupinambis rufescens*, is from Albert Günther 1882 *Observations on some rare Reptiles and a Batrachian now or lately living in the Society's Menagerie**. It is a slim quarto volume but it has some lovely plates in color and black and white. \$150 is a nice price for a nice paper. Boulenger's

1889 *Catalogue of the Chelonians* ... mentioned earlier costs at Don Conner \$750, which is more than what his German colleague demands. James E. De Kay 1842 *Zoology of New-York or the New-York fauna* in the reptiles, amphibian and fish parts is sold in both colored and plain* versions. The market appreciation of colored plates in a book can be seen from the price tags: \$1,750 for the colored atlas with text and \$350 for the black and white variant and the latter is still available! Albert Günther's 1864 *The Reptiles of British India* is a monumental atlas of the area. It appears occasionally on the market although the original edition was limited to 750 copies. Wheldon & Wesley sold it 1977 for £95 (\$156) and I bought my copy from W&W in 1988 for £150 (\$246). Junk had one in 1992 for Hfl. 2,900 (\$1,418), Andrew Isles sold one at the Adelaide congress 1993-1994 for about US\$700, and again in June 1996 in his David McPhee's library catalogue for AU\$2,250 (US\$1,505). McPhee's copy appeared again half a year later in D. Schierenberg's catalogue 71, now at Hfl. 3,700 (\$1,809). Don Conner stays in the same price range and quotes \$1,500 for it.

A complete set of 11 volumes (in ten) of A. M. C. Duméril and G. Bibron's 1834-1854 *Erpétologie générale ou histoire naturelle complète des reptiles* with the handcolored atlas volume costs \$8,500. They are bound in quarter leather with raised bands on the spine but whether they are old or new is not stated. The condition reports on the books are generally good in the catalogue but omission of details like this is unfortunate because the age of the binding has an influence on the price. A distinctive catalogue as Don Conner's will have a lasting value in any herpetological library for pleasure reading or as a thesaurus.

Bibliomania! (the exclamation mark is not my writing but it is part of the name!) specializes wholly in herpetology and have an immense



HERPETOLOGY

Don Conner Fine Books

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stock of scientific separates and journals along with the books. The proprietor, Breck Bartholomew, who operates out of Salt Lake City, is relatively new in the game and does the marketing of the business primarily on the Web and as direct e-mails for those who wish to subscribe. Nonetheless, in 1997 he also produced a delightful catalogue featuring herpetological books, separates and prints, as well as related philatelic and numismatic matters. He regularly issues "colorful" lists, four last year and one in January. The list dated 30th March 1998 includes a 1603 edition of Baldi Angeli Abbati *De admirabili viperae natura et de mirificis ejusdem facultatibus Liber*. It is a compilation of the viper's anatomy with five engraved plates. Bibliomania!'s copy is in new half calf and listed at \$1,950. This book was published for the first time already in 1589. A copy in early

vellum in good condition of the first edition* was listed in the November 1998 catalogue of the respectable London based antiquarian book firm Bernard Quaritch at £1,800 (\$2,950).

Bibliomania! has many more classics in this list, e.g. Charles Pitman 1938 *A Guide to the Snakes of Uganda* in the original blue binding (\$1,500) and J. V. Barboza du Bocage 1895 *Herpétologie d'Angola et du Congo* with the twenty plates colored (\$1,300). M. A. Severino 1651 *Vipera Pythia** (\$2,500) is available in contemporary vellum with the portrait of the author, which is scarce. This book is largely a reproduction of the descriptions and figures in Abati 1589, which was printed for the last time in 1650.

The next list was made especially for the joint meetings in Guelph in July 1998. Bibliomania! was represented in person but did not bring any books along. Many fine books had been added. An attractive work is of course Albert Günther 1885-1902 *Biologia Centrali-Americana - Reptilia and Batrachia**, which I already mentioned under Wheldon & Wesley. This is not, what you would normally suspect, the same copy. One of the colored plates is missing in Bibliomania!'s set (\$4,550). I have earlier made remarks about Francisci Redi and his works on the viper*. Here comes more: Bibliomania! can offer the 1675 Amsterdam edition *Experimenta circa res diversas naturales; Observationes de viperis; Epistola ... Ad aliquas oppositiones factas in suas observationes circa Viperas. Scripta ad D. Alexandrum Morum & D. Abbatem Bourdelot* and a few more tracts in a 12mo early vellum binding (\$575). Bartholomew states that this is the first Latin translation to most of the tracts and refers to Knoefel, 1988, page xiii. As evidenced above this is not the case.

Andrew Isles (Natural History Books) has been referred to earlier for his maestro catalogue issued in 1996. As a delightful and beneficial

herpetological catalogue, it had to my knowledge no modern forerunners and remains unbeaten. The prices were generally very decent albeit somewhat inconsistent. A Sowerby and Lear 1872 *Tortoises, Terrapins, and Turtles* cited earlier in a not colored edition was price-tagged at AU\$1,850 (US\$1,237). This was too good. Andrew Isles issued two natural history catalogues in 1998 and one in this year. Spectacular items have been few but he is a reputable dealer and you never know what will happen in the next catalogue. An aspiration, he told me once, is to be entrusted with the cataloguing and marketing of another large herpetological library. Edgar White 1898 *A popular account of Australian snakes, with a complete list of the species and an introduction to their habit and organisation** in a later cloth is a scarce work indeed that appeared in the October catalogue. The price is AU\$1,400 (US\$936). J. R. Kinghorn 1929 *Snakes of Australia* in the 12mo oblong format is a nice piece at very low AU\$175 (US\$117) but it has some bruises.

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Notes on John White's *Journal of a Voyage to new South Wales* (1790), a Classic of Australian Herpetology

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Unfortunately for collectors of herpetological literature, many general and regional works on natural history, and many comprehensive reports of voyages of exploration, contain important sections dealing with amphibians and reptiles. I refer to this as unfortunate because the herpetological sections of such works are infrequently available separate from the complete works, which themselves are often prohibitively expensive, chiefly because of the inclusion of more extensive and desirable sections on birds, molluscs, or other groups. For many herpetological collectors, when finances are a limiting factor, such works are frequently given a lower priority than books that deal exclusively with amphibians and reptiles. This need not always be the case, however, and I here provide some information about a classic work of general natural history that I was able to obtain at a very reasonable price.

White's *Journal of a Voyage to new South Wales* is a classic among Australian natural history books. It was the first major work on the flora and fauna of Australia to appear after the arrival of the First Fleet at Port Jackson in 1788 (Rienits 1962; Nelson 1998a) and as such holds pride of place in any library of Australiana. John White was the Surgeon-General to the First Fleet and thereafter to the fledgling New South Wales settlement of Port Jackson. Although White remained in Australia until 1794, his journal of observations was recorded in 1787 and 1788 was dispatched to England on 19 November 1788 (Nelson 1998a, b) along with various natural history specimens. The work was there edited by Thomas Wilson, who incorporated into the manuscript the observations of several

noted British scientists on the specimens provided by White. Also included in the manuscript were 65 plates prepared by Sarah Stone and Frederic Nodder, among others, and based on original sketches apparently executed by convict artists in White's service (Rienits 1962; Nelson 1998a). *Voyage to new South Wales* was published prior to August 1790 (Crittenden 1981) in an original print run of at least 718 copies, for sale at a price of £1, 16 shillings (Nelson 1998a).

Although far outnumbered by birds, amphibians and reptiles constitute a significant portion of White's *Voyage*. They are curiously arranged from p. 242 to p. 261, with five bird accounts and one section each on fish, plants, and arthropods interspersed. Of the 65 plates, 10 are herpetological, featuring several newly described species: *Rana caerulea* (= *Litoria caerulea*) text p. 248, pl. 33; *Lacerta taeniolata* (= *Ctenotus taeniolatus*) p. 245, pl. 32, fig. 1; *Lacerta platura* (= *Phyllurus platurus*) pp. 246-247, pl. 32, fig. 2; *Lacerta varia* (= *Varanus varius*) p. 253, pl. 38, *Lacerta muricata* (= *Amphibolurus muricatus*) p. 244, pl. 31, fig. 2; and *Lacerta scincoides* (= *Tiliqua scincoides*) pp. 242-243, pl. 30, fig. 1. In addition, several other species were figured but are not associated with newly coined names: *Lacerta muricata* var. (= *Physignathus lesueurii*) p. 255, pl. 40, and a series of unnamed snakes (*Pseudonaja textilis*? - pl. 32, fig. 1, p. 258, pl. 43; *Morelia spilota* - p. 259, pls. 45, 46, fig. 1; *Vermicella annulata* - p. 259, pl. 46, fig. 2; *Dendrelaphis punctulata* - p. 258, pl. 44).

Authorship of the amphibian and reptile names in White has remained problematic. Whereas

some authors (e.g. Cogger *et al.* 1983; Nelson 1998b) have credited the names of the five lizards and one frog described in the work to White himself, others (e.g., Adler 1989) have credited the herpetological component of the work to George Shaw (1751-1813) (Adler 1989). More recently Shea (1993) has presented evidence that the description of *Lacerta scincoides* (*Tiliqua scincoides*) was written by British anatomist John Hunter (1728-1793), although it remains unclear if the Latin binomial was actually supplied by Hunter or perhaps by Thomas Wilson, White's editor.

An excellent description of the work, including reproductions of three plates, including that of the blue frog is found in the Wettenhall Library catalogue issued by Andrew Isles and Hordern House in 1995 (items 280 and 281). Other plates and descriptive text are provided in several other catalogues by these Australian book dealers, although recently published details reveal previously unappreciated variety among the copies of the book that have usually been neglected in catalogues. Nelson (1998a) reviewed 68 copies of the book in a variety of libraries. He identified two issues (final and original) distinguished from one another chiefly on the basis of corrections and alterations made to the List of Plates, p. 240, and pp. 255-256, with a few other typographical errors corrected on other pages as well. Each of these issues is represented by two or more states, differing from one another in minor details. Although it has been erroneously stated that only uncolored copies were originally produced (Mathews 1924), both colored and uncolored copies exist. Wantrup (1987) noted that the paper for the plates in the copies intended for coloring were watermarked "JWhatman," whereas the paper for uncolored copies was softer, sometimes bearing the watermark "RG" (Wantrup 1987; Nelson 1998a). In Nelson's (1998a) survey of copies 30 (44%) were colored.

In 1962 a reprint edition of White's *Voyage* was published by Angus and Robertson (Chisholm 1962). This version, which was issued in a dust

jacket reproducing the title page of the 1790 book (but in color), also includes an extensive General Introduction by Geoffrey C. Ingleton (pp. 1-8), an Editor's Introduction by Alec H. Chisholm (pp. 9-16), and a Biographical Introduction by Rex Rienits (pp. 17-34), along with detailed reference notes, a bibliography, and index. Neither the plates nor the text are reproduced in the original format. The text has been entirely reset and original pagination is not maintained, although the original page breaks are noted. All 65 of the original plates, as well as a facsimile of the title page and a frontispiece not from the original edition, are supplied in a total of 39 plates, of which only the frontispiece (a painting of White and others at Botany Bay) and the Tabuan Parrot (plate 11 from White 1790) are reproduced in color.

A facsimile reprint was later published by Arno Press and the New York Times as part of the Physician Travelers series (White 1971). It is a reproduction of the final issue of the original edition. All of the original 65 plates are present in black and white. A short (two paragraph) biography of White, written by Robert W. Goldwyn, the Physician Travelers editor precedes the facsimile itself. A third reprint, another facsimile, was to have been edited by E. Charles Nelson, but never appeared (Nelson 1998a).

A search of three popular rare and used book web-sites (Advanced Book Exchange, Bibliofind, and Bibliocity) revealed 27 copies of White's *Voyage to new South Wales* for sale. Six of these are first editions. These range in price from approximately \$3250 for a copy described by the seller as having "slight staining on page edges, coverboards beginning to separate, spine somewhat torn ... good condition" to almost \$13,000 for a "particularly clean copy with wide margins ... one of the special copies with coloured plates" bound in original morocco with contemporary respining. The cheapest copy does not mention the condition of the plates, but they are probably uncolored. Another copy without colored plates was on offer at \$4900,

whereas additional colored copies were demanding \$6500, \$8985, and \$9000. The remaining 21 copies offered were split between the two reprint editions of the book. Fifteen copies of the 1962 Angus and Robertson reprint were offered at prices ranging from \$50 to \$98 (as well as \$193 for a morocco bound copy in a cloth box). Six 1971 Arno Press reprints were available at prices between \$78 and \$127.

The web-listed prices for White (1790) appear to bracket the range I have seen for this work over the last three years, although occasionally higher prices are asked. On average, copies from Australian dealers are often priced somewhat higher than those from American dealers, owing to the higher demand from collectors of Australiana. In addition to copies offered through web or hard copy catalogues, I have seen several colored copies of White (1790) for sale at the New York Antiquarian Book Fair. Although \$8000-12,000 appears to be the fair market value of copy in good condition, I have seen copies for up to £12,000. Given such high prices, how can the average serious collector of herpetological works afford to add this classic to their libraries? One solution was offered in Andrew Isles' Catalogue 23 (June 1996) featuring the herpetological library of David McPhee. In this catalogue a set of the colored amphibian and reptile plates with accompanying text leaves, title page, dedication and advertisement was offered for AUS\$2500. This offering of the herpetological sections of the book was, to my knowledge, unique, but did provide a "cheap" alternative to the purchase of the entire book. Another alternative is to purchase an uncolored copy, or a copy in poor condition, although even such copies are rarely available for less than \$4000-5000.

I was fortunate to find a bargain. My copy is complete except for the Dedication pages A-A1. There is a repair to the title page and there is water staining affecting the edges of all pages, damage incurred during the rescue of the book from a fire. The staining does not effect the print

or the plates, however, and the copy is actually quite clean, despite its unfortunate history. The book has been rebound in quarter calf with raised bands and fine tooling on the spine. The text is the final issue, but rebinding has obscured the key information needed to distinguish between the first state and second state of this issue (leaves Hh4 and Kk4 tipped-in versus reprinted and inserted). On the basis of the JWhatman watermarks, mine is one of the originally colored versions. Because of the water staining, the book was obtained cheaply by the dealer from whom I purchased it. Attention to avoid warping of pages from the water damage and the attractive rebinding rescued the book and it was offered at a very reasonable price - \$1250. This is fully \$2000 less than the cheapest of the less desirable black and white copies currently on offer.

White (1790) is both valuable as the source of the original descriptions of several well-known Australian herps and desirable because of its numerous, well-executed plates. In addition, the fact that several variants exist and are documented (Wantrup 1987; Nelson 1998a) enhances its intrinsic interest to the bibliophile. Despite the prices associated with the *Voyage to new South Wales*, the relative abundance of copies on the market precludes the book from being considered truly rare. This abundance also means that copies of different states and issues, colored and uncolored, and in different conditions will become available with some regularity. Although real bargains may be few and far between, the serious collector, with patience, can hope to find a fairly priced copy of this book to round out his or her library of Australian herpetological works.

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...ISHBH meeting program continued from p. 3.

of Natural Sciences, founded in 1812. As the oldest museum library in America, the Academy Library contains an excellent collection, including many important herpetological works. The library Director, Dan Elliot, has agreed to set up a display of classic herpetological works for our visit, including Holbrook and other American herpetological classics, fine illustrated herpetological works from around the world, and selected association copies and original manuscripts of works associated with some of Philadelphia's most well-known herpetologists of the past, such as Say and Cope. Time permitting we will take a short walking tour of sites of herpetological interest in Philadelphia (Cope's house, Independence Hall - the site of Peale's Museum, the first public natural history museum in America, etc.). For those remaining in the area overnight, an evening gathering for

informal discussion will also be arranged. Although members must find their own transportation to Philadelphia, it may be possible to help arrange for transfers to the Philadelphia airport if advance notice is given. Maps and further details will be available at the Penn State meeting and interested persons may contact A. Bauer for information about lodging in the Philadelphia area. Finally, a guide to the used and antiquarian bookshops of Pennsylvania will be available to ISHBH members upon request.

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