

Bailey

## More on Margaritiferidae

In a recent issue of SYSTEMATIC ZOOLOGY (Volume 5, pp. 141-142) there is an article by Mr. Donald F. McMichael on the petition by Mr. A. E. Ellis for the preservation of the family name Margaritiferidae Haas 1940. I agree with Mr. McMichael that this would be an undesirable step for the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature to take, but I find myself in complete disagreement with him on every other point, especially the alternative course which he recommends in order to resolve this difficulty.

In the first place, it must be remembered that the purpose of authority citations is, not to honor any scholar who has made a significant or important contribution to our knowledge of the group to which he has given a name, but to give a clue to subsequent scholars as to where he may find the original use of the name. This is particularly true in the case of names which happen to be homonyms. In this case the name Margaritiferidae is not a homonym, but the name of the genus upon which it is based and from which is derived, *Margaritifera*, is a homonym, as I shall show later. The student who wishes to find where the name Margaritiferidae was first published, and seeing it credited to Ortmann, would naturally not think of looking through Haas' work to find it until after making a vain search through the writings of Ortmann; a search which may well exhaust his patience.

Actually the simplest way for the Commission to rectify the situation would be for the Commission to suppress the name *Margaritifera* Schumacher 1816 altogether, and to validate *Margaritana* Schumacher 1817. The earlier of these names is objectionable because for nearly a century it had been used for an entirely different genus, now known as *Pinctada* (Röding in) Bolten 1798. It is true that none of these usages complies with the requirements of the present code of rules, but that fact does not make it any the less confusing when one name is used with two widely different significations. It

must also be remembered that the rules were not in existence when Woodward, Browne, Humphrey, and Megerle wrote, and no doubt their usage was considered quite correct at the time they used the name *Margaritifera*. Apparently Schumacher himself thought so. Presumably this is why he proposed the new name *Margaritana* only one year after he had published *Margaritifera*.

From 1817 until 1925 the name *Margaritana* was in universal use for this genus. The name *Margaritifera* was not forgotten, however, for during this interval it was used by H. and A. Adams, Harris, Jameson, and Michimoto in its original sense for the genus now called *Pinctada*.

Then in 1925 Kennard, Salisbury, and Woodward discovered Schumacher's use of the name in 1916 which they sought to restore. Almost immediately Henderson (1928), while admitting the justice of this claim under the rules, wrote "This seems to be an instance justifying the committee on zoological nomenclature in exercising its discretionary power by validating the name *Margaritana*." Whether Henderson ever submitted such an application to the commission I do not know; if he did it became lost during the inactivity of the commission before it was reactivated by Mr. Hemming. At the time I was under the impression that he had done so, or I would have done so myself.

Since Mr. Ellis' application was published in the *Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature*, several comments upon it have appeared. Dr. Henning Lemche has urged the validation of *Unio* and *Lymnaea*, but not of *Margaritifera*, which he ignored; Dr. Altena has urged the validation of *Unio* but has expressed no opinion as to *Lymnaea* or *Margaritifera*; Dr. Baker has observed, "*Margaritana* has been used more than *Margaritifera*, but either would be acceptable."

In addition to the arguments set out hereinabove there are two other objections to the use of *Margaritifera*. The first

is that it is not a noun but an adjective, and generic names should be nouns. The second is that the name proposed by Schumacher in 1816 actually was not *Margaritifera* but *Margartifera*. This misspelling may have been a typographical error, but there is no evidence in the original publication to show that it was, and emendations of supposed errors can be made under the rules only when evidence of error occurs in the original publication. If the Commission wishes to validate *Margaritifera* under the rules it must date this name from 1925 when it was first published, suppressing both of Schumacher's publications; if it wishes to validate *Margaritifera* as of Schumacher 1816 it must suspend the rules, and if the rules are to be suspended they might better be suspended in favor of the more desirable name.

To return to the family name Margaritanidae: This name was not only used by Ortmann, but also by Hannibal, Simpson, Walker, and Frierson. Hannibal's work is of no particular value, but the other four were the world's leading authorities on this group and the name which they used should be preserved, as it has gained recognition through the weight of authority.

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