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Dedicated to Mrs. W.S.S. van Benthem Jutting

Bleeker's collection in the Zoological Museum of Amsterdam

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It is of importance to know the history of zoological museum collections for it gives information about the trustworthiness of the habitat and the determination of the specimens in the collection. Mrs. Tera van der Feen-van Benthem Jutting, to whom this publication is dedicated, now that she is leaving the museum, has given an excellent account of the mollusc collection, which she had in care for so many years.

In this short paper I shall try to give some information about the history of the ichthyological collections and specially of Bleeker's collection.

Dr. Pieter Bleeker, the wellknown Dutch ichthyologist died in 1878 and on the first of December 1879 his ichthyological collections were auctioned in Leiden. Such questions as who were the bidders at the auction and who bought the fishes have never been answered properly. In the summer of 1958 Mr. Robert R. Rofen, at that time Director of the George Vanderbilt Foundation at Stanford University, undertook investigation of Bleeker's collection in the major European museums, but the results never have been published although the typescript for a publication, whereof I have a copy, was almost ready for the press. I have hope that Mr. Rofen soon will find time to publish his very interesting account.

Rofen visited the Zoological Museum of Amsterdam in 1958, and in 1960 asked me information about these collections. I made all the investigations possible and mailed the results to Rofen. As a preliminary of Rofen's paper here follows what I found.

The printed catalogue of the auction was made by Dr. A. W. Hubrecht, at that time curator at the Leiden museum, later on professor at the University of Utrecht. Hubrecht divided the collection in 15 (I—XV) systematic groups and each group again in 5 lots A to E.

A is the most complete and contains all the monotypes, the other lots consisted of duplicates, the B, C, D and E lots had progressively fewer

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specimens. Now the notary record of the auction, consulted by Rofen, tells us that Hubrecht bought A for the Leiden museum and that Prof. W. Berlin, professor of Zoology at the Amsterdam University, bought from B the fishes of the groups VI and XIV.

The Zoological Museum of Amsterdam possesses a copy of the catalogue wherein all species of B in group VI and 42 of the 82 species of B in group XIV are marked with a pencil stripe. As far as checked all the marked species are present in the Amsterdam Museum. The fishes reached the Amsterdam Museum in large jars, each jar containing a number of species, wrapped in cloth and provided with a label, exactly as they were sorted and packed by Hubrecht for the auction. A great part of the collection remained in that state in the museum, a part was sorted and catalogued by the late Prof. L. P. de Bussy, at the time he worked as "student-assistant" at the museum. The collection of group XIV is still in the original condition and consists of three jars, the first with 36 species which are not marked in the catalogue, the missing species from B, group XIV partly have been removed from the jars, partly may have been lost. The species in the second and third jar are all marked in the catalogue. It looks as if the not marked species in the first jar came from another source than the marked one in the other jars, but in the first jar three, in the second jar one, in the third jar four species occur which according to the catalogue were only present in lot A and B, and as Berlin bought lot B we can take it that the contents of all three jars belong to Berlin's purchase. Why they are partly marked and partly unmarked in the catalogue is a puzzle. Perhaps the clue is that in the catalogue in group XIV species 18, *Paradiodon hystrix* is marked with a B in pencil and 19, *Paradiodon novemmaculatus* with an F, and also 14, *Aracana hexagona* has an F and 15, *Aracana aurita* a B. Now formerly Berlin was professor in anatomy and zoology, but in 1879 Max Fürbringer took over the chair of anatomy. There are reasons to believe, too long to explain here, that part of Bleeker's collections came to the laboratory of anatomy, where Sagemehl used some of the material for his well known studies of the fish group he coined Ostario-physi. Is it possible that Berlin and Fürbringer divided Bleeker's fishes bought at the auction and that B means Berlin and F Fürbringer? However, finally the whole collection came back to the museum.

So far the fishes bought by Berlin, but there are much more fishes of Bleeker's collection in the Amsterdam museum. When Bleeker was still in the East Indies he sent large shipments of fishes to the Leiden museum between 1855 and 1858. In the archives of the Zoological garden of Amsterdam, the original owner of the zoological museum, I found that Temminck, Director of the Leiden museum, presented in 1855 a collection of 100 fishes from the East Indian Archipelago to the Amsterdam Zoo. We may take it that they belonged to the collection Bleeker had sent to Leiden. The specimens *Atherina eendrachtensis* and *Atherina lacunosa* (= *forskali*) labelled: "old collection Bleeker" in the Amsterdam museum may belong to this lot.

Consulting our copy of the catalogue I find that besides the groups VI and XIV there are pencil stripes on fishes of groups III, V, VII, VIII, IX, X,

XI, XII and XIII, and as far as checked all these marked specimens are present in the Amsterdam museum. Moreover I found that the museum possesses a few species from groups I and II, not marked in the catalogue. I often heard from Prof. Max Weber that Berlin bought the lot B of Bleeker's collection and that the Amsterdam Zoo bought another part and that both collections later on have been united in the Zoological Museum of Amsterdam. We know that Berlin bought only part of B. The rest was not sold. The dealers E. Gerrad, London, bought C and D. E was not sold. The Amsterdam Zoo did not buy anything at the auction, but it is quite possible that after the auction it got fishes from the not sold collection, either from E or from the not sold part of B. By checking the species in the catalogue I find that a few came from B, as they are absent in E, the others can as well come from B as from E, but not all species available from B or E were obtained. Apparently a choice was made. I have not found any references of a purchase or a donation of fishes in the archives of the Amsterdam Zoo, so it remains unsolved how they found their way to the Museum. In all there are about 470 species of Bleeker's collection in the Amsterdam Museum.

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