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The shell collection of J. H. Chemnitz in the Zoological Institute, St.-Petersburg

A. V. MARTYNOV

Laboratory of Marine Researches, Zoological Institute RAS, Universitetskaya emb. 1, 199034, St.-Petersburg, RUSSIA; martyn@AM3963.spb.edu

ABSTRACT. A part of the famous Johann Chemnitz's collection described in the "Conchylien Cabinet" has been found in the Zoological Institute of Russian Academy of Sciences, St.-Petersburg. The collection was purchased for the Russian Imperian Academy of Sciences at a public auction in Copenhagen on December 7, 1802. At the moment, about 100 specimens have been found, which belong to approximately 72 nominal species. They include about 25 syntypes of nominal species described mainly by Johann Gmelin in 1791.

Totaling ten volumes, Johann Hieronimus Chemnitz's "Conchylien Cabinet" is one of the most famous conchological works from the end of 18th century. In the 13th edition of Linnean "Systema Naturae", Johann Gmelin [1791] gave binominal names for numerous common warm-water molluscs, on the basis of "Conchylien Cabinet", which was not fully binominal. Names were also applied to Chemnitz's species by Spengler [1798], Schreibers [1793] and others. Despite this, traces of Chemnitz shell collection have almost disappeared. Probably the most well known extant shell is the holotype of *Conus gloriamaris* Chemnitz, 1777, stored in the Zoological Museum, University of Copenhagen. Only occasionally one comes across records of Chemnitz's types in taxonomic works. The known specimens include the lectotype of *Tectarius grandinatus* (Gmelin, 1791) [Rosewater, 1972] and the type (sic) of *Tapes literatus* L. var. *adspersa* Chemnitz [Fisher-Piette, Métivier, 1971]. More recently bivalves from the genus *Spondylus*, figured in the "Cabinet", were mentioned in the paper of Lamprell and Willan [2000]: some types were found by Tom Schiøtte with uncatalogued material from the Moltke and Spengler collections in the Zoological Museum, University of Copenhagen. Nevertheless, in general, the fate of the Chemnitz collection is unknown [Schιøtte, 1992]. Against this background looks rather strange statement of Winckworth [1943: 146]: "The Chemnitz collection eventually came to the Zoological Museum of the University of Copenhagen, where I saw it in 1937".

In the late 1990s, Richard Kilburn (Natal Museum) talked to Yuri Kantor (Moscow) about the possibility of presence of the Chemnitz's collection in St.-Petersburg. In 2000 our department received a request from Pascal Tchudin (Basel) regarding bivalves of the family Glycymerididae, stating that the Zoological Museum, University of Copenhagen, where a small part of the Chemnitz collection is kept, had indicated that a considerable part of the personal collection of Chemnitz had ended up in the Czar Peter the Great Kunstkammer in St.-Petersburg. This suggests that some documents pertaining to the fate of the collection remain in the Copenhagen University Museum, although this was not mentioned by Schiøtte [1992].

The search has been started. Some specimens bearing old numbers were soon discovered. These had earlier drawn the attention of Emma Egorova (St.-Petersburg), during a search for shells from the famous collection of Seba (a Dutch naturalist from the early eighteenth century), but no evidence that these belonged to Chemnitz's collection was found. At last, in October, 2001, Rachel Collin (Field Museum, Chicago) inquired about types of *Crepidula aculeata* (Gmelin, 1791), a species based on the description and images from "Conchylien Cabinet". This proved to be the key request. I found three shells of *C. aculeata*, two with old typographically printed numbers "1144" (attached with glue). Immediately after this, the catalogue of 1802's public auction [Holten, 1802], which was also used as a taxonomic work [Winckworth, 1943], was found in the Library of the Zoological Institute. Comparing the above mentioned numbers on *Crepidula aculeata* and some other shells to the catalogue, we demonstrated a match between the numbers of each species in the catalogue and the numbers on the shells (e.g., No. 1144, *Patella aculeata*). In addition, the species names in the catalogue match the old labels, which often accompany the shells and contain only binominal names.

After reorganization of Peter the Great's Kunstkammer, the shell collection was transferred to the new Zoological Museum [Brandt, 1865; Strauch, 1889a,b]. Because most specimens were not accompanied by detailed labels, but merely a name or number, the collection of shells from the Kunstkam-