

**CATALOGUE OF THE TYPE
FOSSILS IN
THE WOODWARDIAN
MUSEUM, CAMBRIDGE**

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Catalogue of the type fossils in the Woodwardian Museum, Cambridge by Henry Woods

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HENRY WOODS

**CATALOGUE OF THE TYPE
FOSSILS IN
THE WOODWARDIAN
MUSEUM, CAMBRIDGE**

FROM THE
WOODWARDIAN MUSEUM,
CAMBRIDGE.

TYPE FOSSILS
IN THE
WOODWARDIAN MUSEUM.

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CATALOGUE OF THE TYPE FOSSILS

IN THE

WOODWARDIAN MUSEUM,

CAMBRIDGE.

BY

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WITH A PREFACE BY

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CAMBRIDGE:

AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS.

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PREFACE.

BY a 'type' is meant the original specimen to which any generic or specific name was first assigned. Subsequent observers in examining specimens which agree in general characters with an already described form, often notice differences which may indicate a new species, may be only due to incomplete description, or to the imperfect state of preservation of the type. In order to determine these points, it is necessary for them to see the actual fossil, which the author of the species had before him, when he wrote his description.

The importance of preserving and distinctly marking figured and described specimens, has only of late years been generally realised. A committee of the British Association reported upon the subject last year¹. In the Woodwardian Museum such specimens have been mounted on tablets of a special colour,—at first pink was used, but now blue, a more stable colour is being substituted. The plan of exhibiting all the types by themselves, on the top of the cabinets was tried, and, except where they are mounted on coloured tablets, this method can be recommended, as in every museum of importance, inferior specimens are continually being replaced by better ones, and thus the type, which is sometimes a poor specimen may perhaps get lost sight of. As soon however as the types

¹ Rep. *Brit. Assoc.* (Leeds), 1890, p. 339.

were mounted on tablets of a conspicuous colour, we found that they could be safely put into their proper places in the series, and that it was better to display on the top of the cabinets those specimens which best showed generic and specific characters, and were thus of greatest educational value and general interest.

In addition to indicating in the museum the importance of such specimens, it is most desirable to publish a catalogue of them, so that specialists may know where to find the types, and this task has been most ably performed for the Woodwardian Museum by Mr H. Woods, whose knowledge of the Museum and of Palæontology, eminently qualified him for the work.

Besides the types and other figured fossils, there are a great number of specimens *referred to*. An author mentions for instance, that there is in the Woodwardian Museum, in such and such a series, a fossil which illustrates some point under discussion. These specimens have been labelled as 'mentioned.'

There is another series, the acquired importance of which is often almost equal to that of types, namely, the specimens which have been determined for us by high authorities, and we have endeavoured to indicate this in the case of all those which we have recently acquired, or which have been lately determined, but it will be long before we can overtake the work of indicating by labels who is responsible for the determination of each specimen, even of those for which we know or can ascertain the authority. But in a museum of any antiquity, the authorities for the determination of the larger number of the specimens must remain for ever unrecorded.

We have not included, in this catalogue, the described and figured fossils in the collections of the seventeenth century, now in our Museum. For instance, incorporated into the original museum of Dr John Woodward, we have the collection of Agostino Scilla, a distinguished painter and naturalist, who was born at Messina in 1639. He subsequently removed to Rome, where he became President of the Academy of Painting. A few of his pictures are to be found in Rome, and the churches of

Messina possess a considerable number. He is mentioned in many places in the works of Boccone the great naturalist with whom he travelled in Sicily. Scilla published in 1670 a book¹ the object of which was to prove by direct comparison, that fossils were not, as many held in those days, merely accidental forms or freaks of nature, but really the remains of organisms which had lived, died, and been buried in the mud and sand. With a view to proving this, he collected fossil and recent shells, bones, etc., and made excellent pencil sketches of some of the specimens in his collection, from which the figures in his work were drawn. The collection itself was acquired by Dr Woodward, and the University now possesses, not only the very specimens upon which Scilla based his observations, but also the original drawings which he made for the engraver. Dr Woodward highly prized these drawings for he wrote on the fly leaf of the copy of the work with which they were bound up

“Liber ingentis Pretii quippe qui exhibet Archetypas Fossilium
Imagines, ipsius Augustini Scillæ, præclari Pictoris, primo
Messanæ, exinde Romæ, insigni Penicillo delineatas.”

This book, with the original drawings, I found behind a case in the Woodwardian Museum, its very existence having been previously unknown.

Our own countryman Lister did not share the views of the Sicilian, and in 1688 published a work containing an article ‘De Conchitis sive Lapidibus qui quendam similitudinem cum conchis marinis habeant.’ We have the original fine specimen of *Productus giganteus*, which he looked upon as only a piece of stone having an accidental resemblance to a marine shell.

In the works of Dr Woodward very few fossils are figured, though many are described, and points of interest and of controversy in his time are referred to and illustrated by the specimens in his cabinets. For example, I remember the late

¹ *La Vana speculazione disingannata dal senso, etc.*, Naples 1670. A Latin translation was published in Rome in 1747, and later editions in 1752 and 1759.