



The forgotten Narrative of H.M.S. *Challenger* and the implications for decapod nomenclature

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Abstract

The Narrative of the *Challenger* cruise was published in 1885 and contained valid descriptions of crustacean decapod taxa. While C.S. Bate (*Challenger* Macrura) mentioned the discovery of new taxa without making them valid, J.R. Henderson (Anomura) and E.J. Miers (Brachyura) provided short descriptions including figures that made several new names available. With a few exceptions, these valid scientific names together with their date of availability have been overlooked by almost all subsequent taxonomic studies. Consequently the decapod taxa named in the *Challenger* Narrative are listed and the implications for nomenclature in each case are discussed.

Key words: *Challenger*, Narrative, Crustacea, Decapoda, Anomura, Brachyura, Macrura, nomenclature, C.S. Bate, J.R. Henderson, E.J. Miers

Introduction

In his General Introduction to the first volume of the *Challenger* Zoological Reports, Sir Charles Wyville Thomson (1880: ix) wrote:

“The first volume will contain a short narrative of the voyage, with all necessary hydrographical details: an account of the appliances and methods of observations; a running outline of the results of the different observations; and a chapter epitomising the general results of the voyage. This volume will be illustrated by a general physical chart; a series of the ship’s course; a series of diagrams of the vertical distribution of temperatures; and some photographs of scenery. It will probably be in two parts, and is being prepared by Staff-Commander Tizard, R.N., and myself”.

According to John Murray (1885: vi), due to ill health and his many professional commitments, Thomson was unable to make any progress with the manuscript except select and print thirty-seven photographic plates to accompany the text of the Narrative. Upon the death of Sir Wyville in March 1882, the Government of the day entrusted Murray with the publication of the Official Reports. Murray consulted with his former colleagues and they agreed that an account of *Challenger* voyage should comprise a general account of the scientific results of the voyage and be published in the Narrative.

Various “Abstracts” of the discoveries made during the voyage were prepared by taxonomists working with the *Challenger* material (see listed details in Narrative, Appendix VII) and these were included in the text of the Narrative. Many of the decapod scientific names made available in the Narrative are actually valid senior synonyms that have been overlooked by almost all subsequent carcinologists.

Fowler (1887), in his introduction to *Zoological Record* for 1886, acknowledged that: