

On the Date of Issue of No. 5 of the *South African Quarterly Journal* Containing New Zoological Names Proposed by Andrew Smith—1831 or 1832



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The *South African Quarterly Journal* (SAQJ) was a serial publication issued by the South African Institution, which had been formed in Cape Town in August 1829. The Institution amalgamated in 1832 with the South African Literary Society of 1824 to form the South African Literary and Scientific Institution (Crawford 1934). Not only is the journal extremely rare, its odd and apparently erratic system of numbering of the parts has proved a challenge to librarians. The papers contributed by the Scottish physician and explorer Andrew Smith (1797–1872), who was also the first Superintendent of the South African Museum, have attracted the attention of taxonomists to identify the new zoological names. The SAQJ is largely available on the Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL) using a copy in the Natural History Museum, London (NHM).

The SAQJ was published in three series or volumes (Rookmaaker 2016). The first series consisted of 5 numbers issued from 1830 to 1831 (or early 1832). The second series consisted of 4 numbers each containing 4 individual parts issued from October 1833 to September 1835. A third final series had just one part published in 1836 or 1837. The date of series 1 number 5 is uncertain, but is important as it contained ‘Contributions to the natural history of South Africa, &c. No. I’ (pp. 9–24) by Andrew Smith, describing several new species:

Mammals: *Erinaceus frontalis*; *Petromus*; *Macroscelides rupestris*; *Petromus typicus*; *Balaenoptera australis*.

Birds: *Ploceus stictonotus*; *Vidua* sp.; *Buphaga africanoides*; *Corythaix burchellii*; *Cinnyris veroxii*; *Alcedo natalensis*; *Otis afroides*; *Otis arabs*; *Otis ruficollis*; *Otis coleii*; *Otis afra*; *Otis torquata*; *Otis vigorsii*; *Otis veroxii*; *Otis afroides*.

Reptiles: *Alligator cowieii*; *Varanus gillii*; *Chamaeleo taeniabronchus*; *Chamaeleo namaquensis*; *Coronella leucopilus*; *Lycodon capensis*.

Amphibians: *Tremeropugus*; *Tremeropugus typicus*.

Fishes: *Diacopoma*; *Diacopoma typicus*; *Diacopoma typicoides*; *Serranus cuvierii*.

Mollusca: *Limax melanostictus*; *Limax lamarckii*; *Cyamus leachii*; *Cyamus latreilleii*.

Myriapoda: *Julus dorsalis*; *Julus erythronotus*; *Julus striatus*; *Julus cuhas*; *Julus erythromelas*.

In recent literature, these new names in the fifth number of the *SAQJ* are almost invariably associated with the date 1831, for instance mammals in Wilson et al. (2005), birds in Clancey (1980), reptiles in Ulber (1999) and Branch & Bauer (2005). Also Sherborn (1922–32) always dated all these names to October 1831. Branch & Bauer (2005), however, noticed that No. 5 was “incorrectly dated 1832 by Salvin (1880) and some other 19th-century authors”. The source of this discrepancy needs further investigation.

The Cambridge-based ornithologist Alfred Newton (1829–1907) was one of the first to point at the extreme rarity of the *SAQJ*, of which he could only locate three incomplete sets in London, in all of which No. 5 was missing (Newton 1868a). Later that same year, he could report that the Cape bibliophile Charles Aken Fairbridge (1824–93) had donated complete sets to him as well as to the Zoological Society of London (Newton 1868b). The set received by Newton himself still had the original wrappers of the various numbers, and was used by Osbert Salvin (1835–98) to reprint the ornithological contributions by Andrew Smith as facsimiles (Salvin 1880). Although Newton’s private library came to rest in the Balfour and Newton Libraries of the Department of Zoology, University of Cambridge, this set of *SAQJ* cannot now be found in the catalogues of its holdings (Balfour and Newton Libraries 2016).

Andrew Smith’s contribution in No. 5 of the *SAQJ* was reprinted by Salvin (1880: 57–63) and more recently by Branch & Bauer (2005: 42–57). These reprints, as well as the scanned pages on BHL, identify the number (no. V) and date (October 1831) at the top of page 9 (Fig 1). Page 9 was the first page, because pages 1 to 8 were never published due to a printer’s error. However, Newton (1868b) examined the wrapper of No. 5, and concluded that: “‘No. V.’ of the original Series, though called that for ‘October 1831,’ bears 1832 as the date of publication on its wrapper. Its pagination begins at page 9 and extends to page 140.” Salvin (1880: iii) reinforced this stating that “the first series contains five numbers, the first four bearing the date 1830, and the fifth, 1832” and adding in the footnote: “No. V. October, 1831. Published by George Greig, Keizersgracht; 1832.” The publisher and his address, as well as the year 1832, must have been information obtained from the wrapper as it is absent from the printed page 9 or the remainder of the printed text.

Andrew Smith himself referred a few times to his descriptions

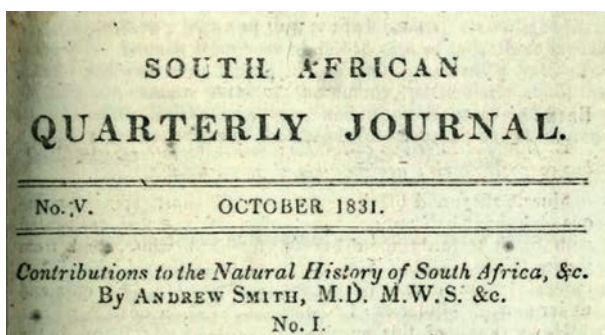


Fig 1 Top of the first page of No. 5 of the *South African Quarterly Journal*

in *SAQJ* No. 5 in his major work on the South African fauna, the *Illustrations of the Zoology of South Africa*, issued in 28 parts between 1838 and 1849 (Low & Evenhuis 2014). In the text, he sometimes gave references to the original description of a certain species, including the following:

ILLUSTRATIONS	TEXT TO PLATE	REFERENCE AS GIVEN BY SMITH
Mammalia		
Pt. 2, 1838	Pl. 3	No. 5, Oct. 1831
Pt. 9, 1840	Pl. 20	No. 5, page 2. (no date)
Aves		
Pt. 8, 1839	Pl. 35	No. 5, page 13, Oct. 1831
Pt. 11, 1840	Pl. 57	No. 5, page 13, 1831
Pt. 13, 1841	Pl. 66	No. 5, p.11, Oct. 1831
Reptilia		
Pt. 4, 1838	Pl.5	No. 5, page 18, June 1831
1848	Appendix	References to No. 5, October 1831

Smith himself therefore always gave a date in 1831, usually October as printed on the first page of that issue, but once as “June 1831”. While the significance of the latter is unknown, it may be noted that he never gave the date as 1832. Maybe he did not have access to issues of the *SAQJ* in wrappers when he was compiling his *Illustrations*, or maybe he was aware of the exact date of publication.

Only a few sets of the *SAQJ* have been preserved, but copies in which the wrappers are preserved are almost non-existent. The library of the Linnean Society of London preserves the first three numbers of the first series (1830), which fortunately still have their original green wrappers (Fig 2). Examination of the wrappers shows that the information on the wrappers is not always identical to that on the first page of each number. For instance, No. 2 has no date in the

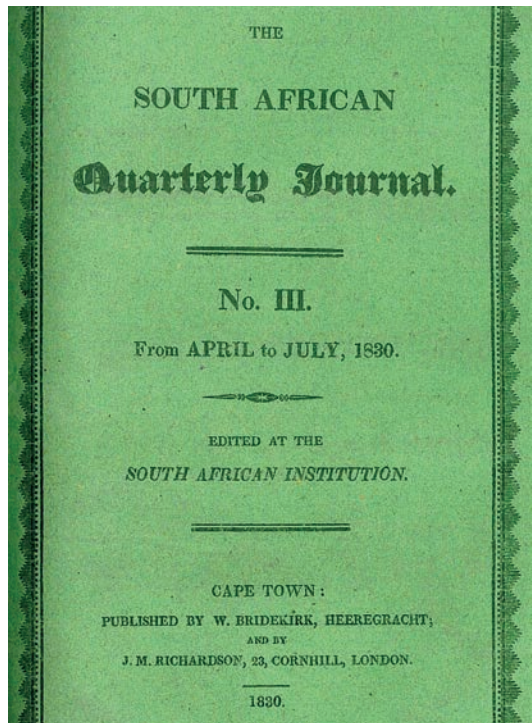


Fig 2 Front wrapper of the *South African Quarterly Journal*, First Series. No. 3 (1830)

issue itself but is dated “January to April 1830” on the wrapper. No. 3 is dated April to June, 1830 in the text (p. 225), but “April to July, 1830” on the wrapper.

The exact date of publication is always important in zoological nomenclature, when the earliest name is usually the valid name. I believe that it is almost certainly true that No. 5 of the *SAQJ* was available only during the first months of 1832, because that is the date on the wrapper according to Newton (1868b). I need to say ‘almost certainly’ because no copy of this wrapper appears to remain in existence, and hence the information can no longer be verified.

For the sake of stability of nomenclature, I believe therefore that the date of No. 5 as October 1831 should be maintained.

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