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**John Gould the Bird Man: Associates and Subscribers.**—Gordon C. Sauer. 1995. Martino, Mansfield Center, Connecticut. 190 pp., 1 photograph. Limited edition of 300 numbered and signed copies (available from Maurizio Martino Fine Books, P. O. Box 373, Mansfield Center, Connecticut 06250). Cloth, \$48.00.—Through a distinguished career as a professor of medicine, Gordon C. Sauer has maintained a passionate avocation of accumulating materials for a comprehensive understanding of the life and times of John Gould, the 19th century impresario of sumptuous illustrated bird books. Sauer's learned papers, books, and even newsletters on this subject span nearly half a century, the best known being his 1982 book *John Gould, The Bird Man: A Chronology and Bibliography* (reviewed by Marianne Ainley, *Auk* 100: 1016-1017).

The present volume is a modest offshoot of that earlier work and consists of an alphabetical listing of Gould's "associates" and the subscribers to his many lavish volumes. Associate is used in a very broad sense to include correspondents and other persons and institutions, even journals in which Gould published, who can somehow be associated with Gould or his publications. The book contains some 2,777 entries we are told. Each is briefly identified, some with the single word "subscriber," others with more or less extensive references to literature or archives. The whole can be viewed on one hand as an expanded, annotated cross-index to Sauer's larger work, but on the other as an eclectic compendium of resources for

biographers and historians of Victorian zoology in general. The work concludes with a seven-page bibliography.

Because this is an outgrowth of the 1982 book, Ainsley's perception that that work emphasized Gould as artist-entrepreneur over Gould the systematist holds true for the newer volume as well. For example, Gould published many original descriptions of new species in such journals as *Annals and Magazine of Natural History* and *Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London*, but frequently would send advance notices of these to *The Athenaeum*, a London "Journal of Literature, Science and the Fine Arts." In too many cases, the *Athenaeum* notice was published first, with sufficient description of the new species that for purposes of priority it must take precedence over the description in the scientific journal. Our diligent scholar disappoints here, however, as Sauer does not mention *The Athenaeum*, either in the present work nor in that of 1982, which is all the more unfortunate because Richard Bowdler Sharpe, in the bibliography published with his *Analytical Index to the Works of the Late John Gould* (1893), also omits the *Athenaeum* notices. This is of very minor importance in developing a biography of Gould the book producer, although it will be significant to the systematist or scientific bibliographer.

Sauer's enthusiasm and productivity have spawned popular attempts at biographies of Gould in which Sauer was either a participant or is given much credit in the acknowledgments. The first of these, by Maureen Lambourne (*John Gould—Bird Man*, 1987), though accurate and attractively illustrated, is very brief and has more the appearance of a book for younger readers. A much more studious biography was essayed by Isabella Tree (*The Ruling Passion of John Gould*, 1991), who, however, was utterly clueless as to the aims and conduct of systematic ornithology, which, with her superimposition of late 20th century "correctness" on a Victorian corpse, makes portions of her book so inexpressibly bad as to render futile the search for sufficiently poignant adjectives. Gould has more than once been portrayed as a social-climbing entrepreneur who took advantage of the talents of others to advance his business in an attempt to rise above his own class. Tree has milked this flabby udder dry, which, we may hope, will free others to pursue more fruitful lines of inquiry. In a day in which curatorships and professorships for ornithologists were essentially nonexistent, Gould made an extremely successful livelihood out of the study of birds. This accomplishment ought to count very heavily towards his greater glory.

Recall that it was Gould who straightened out Darwin's muddled notions concerning the finches of the

Galapagos, masterfully recognizing them all as close relatives and naming them in the single genus *Geospiza*, this immediately before setting off to Australia where he was instrumental in elucidating the practically unknown birds and mammals of an entire continent. It seems almost ironic that not long after he returned from remote Australia, Gould was the first ornithologist to describe a new species of bird (*Pipra vitellina*) from the long-traversed isthmus of Panama, later to be such a mine of new species for others to name. The single sentence that would adequately summarize Gould's contribution to our knowledge of hummingbirds will never be written.

Although Gould is thought of as having contributed little to African ornithology, he was the original describer, in 1852, of that quintessence of the Ethiopian avifaunal realm, the Shoebill (*Balaeniceps rex*). What can that have been like? Imagine being the first with knowing eyes to see a specimen of such an incredible bird. In the manner of his day, Gould named *Balaeniceps* in a two-page note and reckoned it to be a grallatorial manifestation of the Pelecanidae. Sciolists soon removed it to the vicinity of storks. More than a century after Gould, Patricia Cottam remarked upon the pelecaniform characters of the skeleton of *Balaeniceps*, but she was ignored in favor of Sibley's evanescent meringues and Cracraft's cladistic harangues. Now, with systematics in the mortal coils of DNA, we have come full circle, with Sibley placing *Balaeniceps* back in the Pelecanidae. This is progress?

For much of his career, John Gould probably knew the birds of the world and their literature better than any other person on earth. The number of new taxa that he recognized and described rank him among the great taxonomists of all time in ornithology. Gould not only flourished in, but was one of the principal foci of, an era of ornithological discovery the intensity of which makes the remarkable times of a Walter Rothschild seem almost pedestrian by comparison. Here must lie a wonderful story waiting to be told. Gordon Sauer has provided an extremely rich supply of resources for the Gould historian and is now at work assembling Gould's correspondence for publication. When this is done, Sauer will have provided us with almost all of the inscribed vestiges of John Gould, *Homo sapiens*, fully invested in the sediment of his times. Let us hope that some knowledgeable historical biologist will then extract from this a detailed assessment of the breadth and depth of Gould's lasting contributions to ornithology. Only then will we understand fully just how extraordinary Gould's accomplishments really were.—STORRS L. OLSON, Department of Vertebrate Zoology, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560, USA.