

THE WEST AMERICAN MOLLUSKS OF THE GENUS ALABA.

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The genus *Alaba* received a most unfortunate treatment by Dr. P. P. Carpenter in his Catalogue of Mazatlan Shells (pp. 365-370, 1856), in which he described no less than ten species, bestowing specific names upon eight, only one of which has been found identifiable to date. Mr. E. A. Smith, who has charge of the conchological collections in the British Museum, in reviewing the genus *Alaba*,^a writes on pages 538-539:

All the species above enumerated are represented in the British Museum, as are also those species described by P. P. Carpenter in the "Catalogue of Mazatlan Shells." But these, with one exception, I have purposely omitted, for the mutilated condition of the specimens is such that it is impossible to say to what genus they (when perfect) may have belonged. And here I can not refrain, although always averse to censuring criticism, from condemning most energetically that pernicious practice of describing fragments of minute specimens and assigning specific names to them. It merely results in burdening science with a mass of literature almost useless, for it is simply an impossibility for anyone to identify their specimens from the description of those miserable fragments characterized in the Mazatlan Catalogue. Describe them and welcome, for no harm is thereby done, albeit but little good; but for the sake of others let us not name them.

I heartily agree with the above sentiments.

The species described by Doctor Carpenter are:

- Alaba supralirata.*
- Alaba violacea.*
- Alaba terebralis.*
- Alaba alabastrites.*
- Alaba scalata.*
- ? *Alaba conica.*
- ? *Alaba mutans.*
- ? *Alaba laguncula.*
- ?? *Alaba*, sp. ind. (a).
- ? *Alaba*, sp. ind. (b).

^a Proc. Zool. Soc. London, 1875, pp. 538-540.

The first of these, *Alaba supralirata* Carpenter, is the only shell we have been able to recognize and we very much doubt if any of the other species described in the Mazatlan Catalogue as *Alaba* belong to this genus.

In 1905 Doctor Dall described *Alaba oldroydi*,^a which must be referred to the *Rissoina*.

To the above we now add another form, the most abundant on the west coast.

The drawings accompanying this paper were made by Miss Evelyn G. Mitchell.

ALABA SUPRALIRATA Carpenter. ^b

Alaba supralirata CARPENTER, Cat. Maz. Shells, 1856, p. 366.

Shell elongate-conic, with very strong varices, which form more or less continuous lines over the whorls, semitransparent. Nuclear whorls four, continuing the general outline of the spire with scarcely

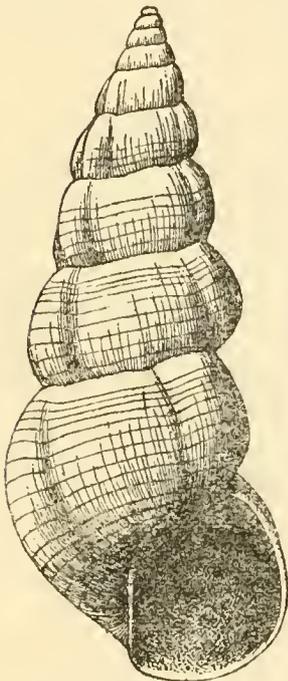


FIG. 1.—ALABA SUPRALIRATA.

any interruption; the first smooth; the rest marked by slender, axial riblets of which about forty-two occur upon each of the last two turns. The spaces separating these axial threads are about twice as wide as the threads. In addition to the axial riblets the last two turns are marked by a slender, spiral cord about one-third of the distance between the sutures, anterior to the summit. Post-nuclear whorls well rounded, appressed at the summit; the first three smooth; the fourth showing fine, irregularly spaced, incised lines, which increase steadily in size on the succeeding turns, becoming very pronounced on the last volutions; on the penultimate whorl there are ten between the summit and the periphery, and these, equally strong, pass over the varices and the spaces between them. In addition to the spiral sculpture, the



FIG. 2.—NUCLEUS OF ALABA SUPRALIRATA.

whorls are marked by conspicuous lines of growth. Suture strongly constricted. Periphery of the last whorl and the moderately long base somewhat inflated and strongly rounded, sculptured like the

^a The Nautilus, vol. 14, 1905, p. 15.

^b In the preparation of the present diagnoses the following terminology is used: "Axial sculpture," the markings which extend from the summit of the whorls toward the umbilicus.

The axial sculpture may be—

"Vertical," when the markings are in general parallelism with the axis of the shell;

"Protractive," when the markings slant forward from the preceding suture;

"Retractive," when the markings slant backward from the suture;

"Spiral sculpture," the markings following the directions of the coils of the whorls.

space between the sutures. Aperture rather large, very broadly oval; posterior angle obtuse; outer lip thin, showing the external sculpture within; columella oblique, somewhat curved and slightly revolute; parietal wall covered with a moderately thick callus.

The above description is based on two specimens. One (Cat. No. 213367, U.S.N.M.) has furnished the nuclear characters, while another (Cat. No. 4066, U.S.N.M.) has furnished the characters of the adult whorls. The latter has lost the first two nuclear whorls, has eight post-nuclear whorls, and measures: Length 6.8 mm., diameter 2.6 mm.

Specimens examined.

Cat. No.	Locality.	Number of specimens.
4066	Cape San Lucas, Lower California (described and figured).....	2
46179	Gulf of California.....	7
213367	Off La Paz, Gulf of California (nucleus described).....	2
194870	Off Cacachitas, Gulf of California.....	2

ALABA JEANNETTÆ, new species.

Shell elongate-conic, semitransparent, with strong varices scattered at irregular intervals. Nuclear whorls four, continuing the general outline of the spire, well rounded, smooth except for very faint, slender, axial threads which, in most instances, are only apparent at the summit of the whorls. Post-nuclear whorls well rounded, appressed at the summit; the early ones smooth; the later ones marked by slender, incised, spiral lines, of which those on the anterior half of the whorls between the sutures and those on the posterior half of the base are usually stronger than the rest. In addition to the spiral sculpture, the whorls are marked at irregular intervals by strong, oblique varices. Suture strongly constricted. Periphery of the last whorl inflated, well rounded. Base moderately long, well rounded, and inflated, its posterior half marked like the anterior half between the sutures, bearing the feeble extensions of the varices. Aperture very large, broadly oval; posterior angle obtuse; outer lip thin and transparent; columella very oblique and somewhat curved, slightly reflected over the reenforcing base; parietal wall glazed with a thin callus.



FIG. 4.—NUCLEUS OF ALABA JEANNETTÆ.

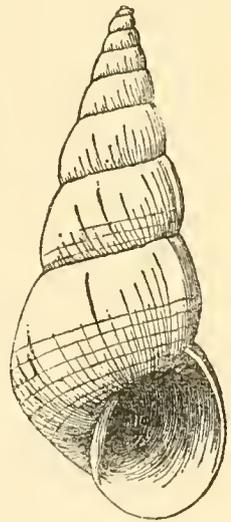


FIG. 3.—ALABA JEANNETTÆ.

The type (Cat. No. 182565, U.S.N.M.) has six post-nuclear whorls and measures: Length 5 mm., diameter 2.1 mm. The present species has been confounded with *Alaba supralirata* Carpenter. It

differs from this in the sculpture of the nucleus, which in *supralirata* is very pronounced, and also in the strength and disposition of the varices, *supralirata* usually having them form continued ridges from whorl to whorl. The spiral sculpture is also much stronger in this than in the new form.

This species is named for the late Miss Jean O'Connor, from whom over 2,500 specimens of this shell were received, collected by the late Capt. H. E. Nichols.

Specimens examined.

Cat. No.	Locality.	Number of specimens.
199178.....	San Diego, California.....	1
127541.....	San Hipolite Point, Lower California (shell drift).....	3
105472.....	Point Abrejos, Lower California (shell washings).....	3
105473.....	Scammon's Lagoon, Lower California.....	1
105556.....	Scammon's Lagoon, Lower California (on sand beach).....	2
182565 (type).....	Margarita Bay, Lower California.....	191
4066b.....	Cape San Lucas, Lower California.....	1
149344.....	Gulf of California.....	99
46178.....	do.....	2
126770.....	do.....	2,385
128226.....	San Jose Island, Gulf of California.....	56