

CONCERNING THE MICROFAUNA FROM PEÑON SEEP, MATANZAS PROVINCE, CUBA¹

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IN AN article entitled "Middle Eocene Foraminifera from Peñon Seep, Matanzas Province, Cuba," W. S. Cole and D. W. Gravell (1952) present a table (p. 710) showing the local names introduced by Applin and Applin (1944, pp. 1686-1703; table 1) for subsurface stratigraphic units that they recognize in the limestone facies of the Eocene rocks on the Florida peninsula. In connection with these different Eocene units, Cole and Gravell's table names 11 foraminiferal species, which they designate "key fossils," "selected from lists given by Applin and Jordan (1945) to match the species present at Peñon Seep." The faunal assemblage lists referred to were published by Applin

and Jordan (1945, pp. 129-132) under the caption "List of common and characteristic species of Foraminifera in Florida formations." The term "key fossil" connotes a species that is confined to the stratigraphic unit from which it is recorded, but Applin and Jordan's designation of the Foraminifera as "common and characteristic," on the contrary, does not preclude the possibility that an occasional species may range through more than one unit, and we believe that the assemblage lists have, in large measure, proved useful as a guide to the identification of stratigraphic units in the Florida subsurface.

Immediately following their table of "key fossils," Cole and Gravell state: "Of the 16 previously named species considered at Peñon Seep, 11 occur in Florida, and accord-

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TABLE 1

Previously named species recognized from Peñon Seep (Cole and Gravell, 1952, p. 709)	Stratigraphic distribution in Cuba as recorded by Pedro J. Bermudez (1950, pp. 326-327)					Stratigraphic distribution in Florida as recorded by Applin and Jordan (1945, pp. 130-131)
	EOCENO					
	Superior		Medio	Inferior		
	Con- suelo	Jabaco- Jicotea	Loma Candela	Univer- sidad	Capdev. Lucero	
<i>Amphistegina lopestrigoi</i> Palmer Lake City (early middle Eocene)
<i>Asterocyclina habanensis</i> Cole and Bermudez not recorded
<i>Asterocyclina monticellenensis</i> Cole and Ponton Lake City (early middle Eocene)
<i>Cribrotextularia coryensis</i> (Cole)	not recorded	.....	.....	.. Avon Park (late middle Eocene)
<i>Dictyoconus americanus</i> (Cushman) Lake City (early middle Eocene)
<i>Dictyoconus cookei</i> (Moberg) Avon Park (late middle Eocene)
<i>Discocyclina (Discocyclina) marginata</i> (Cushman) not recorded
<i>Discorinopsis gunteri</i> Cole	not recorded	.....	.....	.. Avon Park (late middle Eocene)
<i>Eoconuloides wellsi</i> Cole and Bermudez not recorded
<i>Fabiania cubensis</i> (Cushman and Bermudez) Lake City (early middle Eocene)
<i>Gunteria floridana</i> Cushman and Ponton Lake City (early middle Eocene)
<i>Helicostegina gyralis</i> Barker and Grimsdale Oldsmar (lower Eocene)
<i>Pseudophragmina (Proporocyclina) cushmani</i> (Vaughan) not recorded
<i>Pseudophragmina (Proporocyclina) psila</i> (Woodring)	not recorded	.....	.....	..... not recorded
<i>Spirolina coryensis</i> Cole	not recorded	.....	.....	.. Avon Park (late middle Eocene)
<i>Valvulina martii</i> Cushman and Bermudez Avon Park (late middle Eocene)

ing to Applin and Jordan range from lower Eocene to late middle Eocene." The meaning of the quoted sentence is obscure but it is apparently a misstatement, for Applin and Jordan did not say that the 11 species, or any of them, "range from lower Eocene to late middle Eocene." Of five species "selected" from the 14 recorded by Applin and Jordan from the Avon Park limestone (late middle Eocene), a varietal form of one species, *Discorinopsis gunteri* Cole, is fairly common in the underlying Lake City limestone (early middle Eocene). So far as we are aware, all the "selected species" from the Lake City limestone are confined to that unit. Applin and Applin (1944, p. 1699) chose *Helicostegina gyralis* Barker and Grimsdale as the key fossil of the top zone (Zone I) of the Oldsmar limestone (lower Eocene) and pointed out (p. 1693) that the "faunal zone at the top of the lower Eocene may eventually be proved to be Mount Selman in age."

According to Cole and Gravell (p. 710), "It would appear that the 6 inch bed at Peñon Seep contains many of the key fossils by which three or four formations in Florida are recognized." They matched the species recorded from Peñon Seep with Eocene species in Florida but did not make the equally appropriate comparison between the Peñon Seep species and those recorded from forma-

tions of Eocene age in Cuba. The tabulation on page 607 shows: (1) the 16 previously named species recognized from Peñon Seep (Cole and Gravell, 1952, p. 709); (2) the stratigraphic distribution in Cuba of each of the 16 species as recorded by Bermudez (1950, pp. 326-367) in his list containing 1,511 species and varieties of Cenozoic Foraminifera; and (3) the stratigraphic distribution in Florida of each of the 16 species as recorded by Applin and Jordan (1945, pp. 130-131).

Cole and Gravell record 22 species from Peñon Seep, 10 of which are new or not shown in Bermudez's list of Cenozoic Foraminifera; the tabulation below shows that 12 species occur in one or more of four formations of Eocene age in Cuba.

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NOTES ON FORENSIC PALEONTOLOGY

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My esteemed colleague and flatterer, Carl C. Branson, has suggested in the November issue of the *Journal* that all new names proposed in this *Journal* should be accompanied by etymologies, and has presented a case which seems to have convinced the editors. I would like to comment on this proposal, with which I cannot agree.

May I preface my comments with some general statements of belief. Paleontology is the study of fossils, not the study of the names of fossils. Time spent in consideration of nomenclature is time wasted, and the waste can only be justified if the end result

is that less and less time need be so spent. Those rules are good which permit least argument. Those rules are bad which invite discussion.

Applying these principles to the naming of fossils, I would suggest that the only rule permitting objective, unambiguous, unanimous usage is this: the name of an animal shall be that combination of letters first proposed as its name. Period. This no matter how uncouth, how misbegotten, how inappropriate this name may be. This is the only name about which there can be no argument, for all can read it in the original description