

**PROPOSED USE OF THE PLENARY POWERS TO VALIDATE AND
PROTECT THE FAMILY-GROUP NAME "MAYAITIDAE" SPATH
(L.F.), 1928 (CLASS CEPHALOPODA, ORDER AMMONOIDEA)**

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(Commission's reference : Z.N.(S.) 884)

The purpose of the present application is to ask the International Commission to use its Plenary Powers to preserve the family-group name MAYAITIDAE Spath (L.F.), 1928, in order to avoid the confusion and uncertainty that would result if, under the operation of the normal provisions of the *Règles*, this name were to be replaced by the family-group name GRAYICERATIDAE Spath, 1925 (Class Cephalopoda, Order Ammonoidea). The facts are set out below.

2. In 1923 (*Quart. J. geol. Soc. London*, **79** : 306) Spath founded a genus *Grayiceras*, for the "group of *Simbirskites nepalensis* Gray sp. and *S. mexicanus* Burckhardt".

3. In 1924 (*Pal. ind.* (n.s.) **9**, Mem. 1 : 11) Spath stated "the new genus *Grayiceras* is here proposed . . . (genotype : *G. blanfordi* n.n. = *Simbirskites nepaulensis* Blanford non Gray, in Uhlig [1910, *Pal. ind.* (ser. 15), **4**, fasc. 2 : 271], pl. xlvA, fig. 1)". Uhlig stated that this figure represented "the original specimen depicted by Blanford in plate 14, fig. 1, of the "Palaeontology of Niti" [1865], and that it came from the Spiti Shales of an unknown locality.

4. Taking Spath's wording literally, there are thus two genera with the same name *Grayiceras*, introduced independently at different dates and based on different type species. But contrary to Spath's assertions, it is quite possible that the type species of *Grayiceras* Spath, 1924, may be the same as one of the two syntypes of *Grayiceras* Spath, 1923. For Uhlig in refiguring Blanford's type specimen stated that it was "clearly" the same species as *Ammonites nepaulensis* Gray ([1830—32], *Illustrations of Indian Zoology* **1** : pl. 100, figs. 1, 2), and Crick (1903, *Proc. Malac. Soc. Lond.* **5** : 287, 289) in a special paper devoted to Gray's types, had affirmed that Blanford's figure was drawn from Gray's type specimen, and that the type locality was Sulgranees [=Salagrammi?] in Nepal. In that case, *blanfordi* Spath is a junior objective synonym of *nepaulensis* Gray, which then by Spath's action in 1924 becomes the type species of *Grayiceras* Spath, 1923.

5. Uhlig (*loc. cit.*) also accepted Waagen's identification of this species with a form figured by Waagen (1875, *Pal. ind.* (ser. 9) **1** : 136, pl. XXXV, figs. 2, 3)

from the Kantcote Sandstone of Cutch, which is of Upper Oxfordian date. In that case the age of the type species of *Grayiceras* is Oxfordian; but Spath considered it to be Tithonian, *i.e.*, many millions of years later.

6. Notwithstanding the irregularities and inadequacies attending the introduction of the genus *Grayiceras*, Spath in 1925 founded a family GRAYICERATIDAE (Ammonites and Aptychi, *Mon. Hunterian Museum Univ. Glasgow* : 145).

7. From paragraphs 2 to 5 above, it is evident that *Grayiceras* Spath is a *nomen dubium*, for the "genotype" of 1924 was not nomenclatorially one of the syntypes of 1923, and the date of existence and identity of both *nepaulensis* Gray and *blanfordi* Spath are uncertain, having been disputed by the chief authorities and never cleared up. Without new material collected under stratigraphical control the names *Grayiceras* and GRAYICERATIDAE cannot be used and must be left aside. It is therefore impossible yet to make any recommendations for intervention by the Commission.

8. In 1924 (*Pal. ind.* (n.s.) 9 : 9) Spath founded a genus *Mayaites*, type species by original designation *Ammonites maya* Sowerby (J. de C.), 1840 (*Trans. geol. Soc. Lond.* (2) 5 : pl. 61, fig. 8), a species indubitably of Oxfordian date.

9. In 1928 (*Pal. ind.* (n.s.) 9 : 165) Spath founded a family MAYAITIDAE.

10. Also in 1928 (*Pal. ind.* (n.s.) 9 : 224) Spath stated: "*Grayiceras* of the Spiti Shales . . . is now also included in the family Mayaitidae", adding, "I included *Grayiceras* in a separate family Grayiceratidae (1925), but its suture-line is now known and the latter name will have to be replaced by Paraboliceratidae" [another new family name, presumably based on the Spiti Shales (Tithonian) genus *Paraboliceras* Uhlig, 1910].

11. If Spath's systematic conclusions (paragraph 10 above) were accepted, the family name MAYAITIDAE 1928, would fall as junior synonym of GRAYICERATIDAE 1925. This result would be highly undesirable, in view of the fact that *Grayiceras* Spath and GRAYICERATIDAE are *nomina dubia* (see paragraph 7 above) and that Spath's systematic conclusions are therefore liable to change if further information becomes available. The name MAYAITIDAE is open to no such objections and has already been accepted by revisers (*e.g.*, Basse, 1952, *Mém. Soc. géol. France* (n.s.) 30, mém. 65; and—as the name for a subfamily—by Basse in Piveteau, *Traité de Paléont.* 2 : 629).

12. Accordingly I ask the International Commission, in the interests of nomenclatorial stability and in order to prevent confusion :—

- (1) to direct under its Plenary Powers that the family-group name MAYAITIDAE Spath, 1928, is not to be rejected in favour of the name

GRAYICERATIDAE Spath, 1925, by any worker who may consider that the respective type genera of these taxa should be referred to the same family-group taxon ;

- (2) to place the under-mentioned family-group name on the *Official List of Family Group Names in Zoology* with a note in the terms specified under the Plenary Powers under (1) above : — MAYAITIDAE Spath (L.F.), 1928 (type genus : *Mayaites* Spath (L.F.), 1924) ;
- (3) to place the generic name *Mayaites* Spath, 1924 (gender : masculine) (type species by original designation : *Ammonites maya* Sowerby (J. de C.), 1840) on the *Official List of Generic Names in Zoology*
- (4) to place the specific name *maya* Sowerby (J. de C.), 1840, as published in the combination *Ammonites maya* (specific name of type species of *Mayaites* Spath, 1924) on the *Official List of Specific Names in Zoology*.

**SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED USE OF THE PLENARY POWERS
TO PRESERVE THE GENERIC NAME "HELICELLA" FERUSSAC,
1821, FOR USE IN ITS ACCUSTOMED SENSE**

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(Commission's reference : Z.N.(S.) 214)

(For the proposal submitted in this case, see 1954, *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 9(10) : 304—308)

(Letter dated 16th February 1955)

The proposed use of the Plenary Powers to preserve the generic name *Helicella* Férussac, 1821 (Class Gastropoda) for use in its accustomed sense", as discussed by A. E. Ellis and R. Winckworth in *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 9(10) : 304 et seq., is backed very heartily by me. Their presentation of the case is excellent. Dr. Forcart apparently forgot that *Jacosta* was prior.



Arkell, W J. 1955. "Proposed use of the plenary powers to validate and protect the family-group name "Mayaitidae" Spath (L. F.), 1928 (Class Cephalopoda, Order Ammonoidea)." *The Bulletin of zoological nomenclature* 11, 229–231.
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