

## Freeman 375: A chimerical version of *Origin of species*

By J. David Archibald

In 1965 R. B. Freeman published the first edition of what would be the landmark bibliography of Darwin's works – *The works of Charles Darwin: an annotated bibliographical handlist* (Folkestone: Dawson, 1965). In this work Freeman lists the 1859 first edition printing of 1,250 copies and the 1860 second edition printing of 3,000 copies, both by John Murray, London. The 1859 first edition is not identified as such on the title page nor is the 1860 identified as the second edition but rather is called the "fifth thousand" on the title page. All subsequent Murray editions of *Origin of species* are identified as such on the title page as well as on the lower left of the epigraphic page facing the title page. In his 1965 edition Freeman provided a numbering scheme with 112 for the 1859 first edition and 113 for the 1860 second edition.

In 1977 Freeman's considerably expanded second edition handlist appeared with the same title and publisher. (Corrected and expanded as the Freeman Bibliographical Database in *Darwin Online*) In this second edition he provided a new numbering system, with the 1859 first edition now numbered 373 and the 1860 second edition numbered 376. Number 374 referred to a 1968 facsimile reprint of the first edition. Number 375 was called the first issue of the second edition and referred to two copies, one at Yale University and another at the University of Southern California (USC).

When closely examined, these appear to be a concatenation of parts of the 1859 first and 1860 second editions. Freeman indicated that they are both in the original dark green cases or boards identical to variants of the 1860 second edition, but neither was in good condition. He also noted that neither had inserted Murray advertisements found at the back of the work.

Investigating this mysterious number 375, in 2022, I contacted Timothy Young of Beinecke Library where the Yale copy is housed. Young kindly provided photographs of their copy and verified the absence of advertisements. Melinda Hayes, Special Collections, USC noted that their copy does possess advertisements dated "Albemarle Street, London. / June, 1859" as found in the 1859 first edition.

Both the Yale and USC copies possess title pages of the 1859 first edition. In both, three epigraphs are found on the page facing the title page as is seen in all editions after the first. Also in this second edition the phrase found on the lower left of the epigraphic page reads "Down, Bromley, Kent, / October 1st, 1859. (1st Thousand)." This is the case in the USC copy, whereas the Yale copy, although possessing the three epigraphs of the 1860 second edition, has the phrase as the 1859 first edition reading "Down, Bromley, Kent, / October 1st, 1859." Freeman recognized this unique state in the Yale copy that must have been printed after the 1859 first edition but before that of the 1860 second edition. As far as can be determined based on information supplied by Timothy Young, the text of the Yale copy conforms to that of the 1860 second edition, whereas based on information supplied by Melinda Hayes, the text of the USC copy conforms to the 1859 first edition. More detailed inspections are required of the text of both copies for verification.

In summary, the USC copy appears to conform in almost all respects to the 1859 first edition including the advertisements. The exception is the epigraphic page, which conforms to the 1860 second edition with three quotations. The Yale copy is unique in having an epigraphic page with the three quotations of the 1860 second edition but a date on the lower left conforming to that of the 1859 first edition. The title page of the Yale copy is of the 1859 first edition, the text is that of the 1860 second edition, and advertisements are lacking. Both copies are in original dark green boards. In his 1977 handlist Freeman identified these two copies as being the first issue of the second edition, a system followed here, but distinguishing them as variants F375a (Yale) and F375b (USC).

To these two chimerical copies can be added a third briefly described in '[On the Origin of Species An introduction by R. B. Freeman](#)' in *Darwin Online*. This is a revised version of what he wrote in his 1977 second edition annotated handlist with a correction date of 1986, the year of his death. In this revised version he wrote that he was made aware in March 1977 of a "third copy, in commerce in America" that possessed aspects of the Yale and USC copies. He wrote that "[t]his one was in excellent condition and had inserted advertisements dated June 1859, in the third variant [of the advertisements] referred to above. The case was precisely the same as those of the other two." He did not supply any further details.

John van Wyhe suggested that I contact the University of Toronto where Freeman's archives are housed. Garrett Herman, a Darwin collector in Toronto referred me to Alexandra Carter, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto. Carter kindly searched for any relevant correspondence or notes that might shed light on this copy in commerce but to no avail.

In April 2022 Hugo Wetscherek of Antiquariat Inlibris allowed me to examine a copy of *Origin of species* that seems to combine aspects of the 1859 first edition and 1860 second edition. Freeman wrote in his revision noted above that the "in commerce" copy was in original dark green bindings, whereas the Inlibris copy is rebound in "20th century blue half morocco binding with cloth covers." Thus, this is a fourth chimerical copy. This copy has an epigraphic page and text conforming to the 1860 second edition whereas the title page and advertisements are those of the 1859 first edition. [F375d]

One can only conjecture as to how these four volumes came to be. There was certainly little thought to just how important this book would eventually become. Garrett Herman contacted David McClay at the University of Edinburgh, formerly curator of the John Murray Archives, at the National Library of Scotland, to ascertain if any publishing records might shed light on these chimerical volumes. Nothing could be located. It seems most likely that both the Yale and USC copies and the now missing 'copy in commerce' [F375c] were originally bound in dark green boards by John Murray, or rather at the printers W. Clowes and Sons or the binder, [Edmonds & Remnants](#). Because little over two months separate the 1859 first edition and the 1860 second edition, it seems most likely that for a short time remainders from the 1859 edition were used in compiling the earliest copies of the 1860 edition. Because the Inlibris copy is not in its original binding its history is less discernible. Whatever transpired, these four volumes represent no new scientific ideas in the short interval between their respective appearances but are best viewed as publishers, printers, and binders' oddities.

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**1859. *On the origin of species by means of natural selection, or the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life*. London: Murray. [2d ed., 1st issue.] F375**