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**Molluscan taxa in the publications of the Museum Godeffroy of
Hamburg, with a discussion of the Godeffroy Sales Catalogs
(1864–1884), the *Journal des Museum Godeffroy* (1873–1910),
and a history of the museum**

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Abstract

The Museum Godeffroy (1861–1885), a private natural history museum in Hamburg (Germany) founded by the merchant John Cesar VI Godeffroy, functioned as a research and public display museum, as well as a natural history specimen dealership. Large collections of zoological, botanical, ethnographic, and anthropological specimens were obtained by company employees and an international group of contract collectors, mostly in the Pacific, made available for study to specialists, and placed in the museum's holdings or distributed by sale. The museum produced two series of publications, both containing descriptions of new zoological taxa as well as *nomina nuda*: a set of *Museum Godeffroy Catalogs* (1864–1884) and the *Journal des Museum Godeffroy* (1873–1910), both described and dated in detail herein. This paper summarizes the history of the museum and its collecting efforts, with special focus on malacological research and the development and fate of molluscan collections of the Museum Godeffroy, with much of the material having passed to Hamburg's Naturhistorisches Museum where they were largely destroyed during World War II. Using a species-level numbering system, the *Museum Godeffroy Catalog* series (and the labels associated with Museum Godeffroy specimens that were sold and traded worldwide) introduced hundreds of gastropod and bivalve *nomina nuda* into the molluscan literature. Previously uncertain dating of the malacological publications in the Museum's *Journal*, mostly by Rudolph Bergh on Pacific nudibranchs, similarly created taxonomic confusion as many of the supposedly new taxa were near-simultaneously published also in other serial publications. 591 molluscan names in the *Museum Godeffroy Catalogs*, and 59 in the *Journal* are discussed. It is shown that 42 molluscan names date from these publications, all of them gastropods: 1 (preoccupied) genus-group name and 4 replacement species names by J. D. E. Schmeltz, 5 genera and 31 species-group taxa by R. Bergh, and 1 species by F. Heynemann.

Key words: mollusks, taxonomy, species, Oceania, South Sea, Australia, Pacific

Introduction

The Museum Godeffroy of the north German port city of Hamburg was a privately owned museum focusing on the natural history, ethnography, and anthropology of the “South Seas”. During its relatively short existence (1861–1885) it developed into one of the leading natural history museums and commercial specimen supply houses of Europe. It sponsored massive collecting efforts, supplied numerous researchers in many fields of science with specimen material, and published various technical publications, including a nine-part series of *Museum Godeffroy Catalogs* (1864–1884; now exceedingly rare) and the more formal and lavishly illustrated 17-part *Journal des Museum Godeffroy* (1873–1910). Both publication series contain formal introductions and *nomina nuda* of